

Sheffield Green Party's full budget amendment - March 2019

That this council:

- (1) continues to condemn the cuts to local authority funding, which is a political choice by central government, and applauds the efforts of politicians and campaigners calling for an alternative to this policy;
- (2) notes that Sheffield's citizens have suffered through continual cuts to council funding - and consequently to services to the public;
- (3) believes that central Government has utterly failed to address the growing and substantial crisis in the care of older and disabled people and that, even passing on extra costs through council tax increases, the sum raised is still wholly inadequate to meet the cost of social care;
- (4) notes, however, that long-term, outsourced contracts with big private businesses have not taken an equivalent share of the cuts; that long-term costs of finance stretch into Sheffield's future until 2057, and that, this year, the waste management contract is set to be extended by a further two years;
- (5) therefore recognises that austerity is not going to go away and that Elected Members in Sheffield, however difficult the crisis we face, have a responsibility to do the best we can for the people of Sheffield, prioritising the available resources to protect communities and the most vulnerable and working towards a more equitable and resilient city;
- (6) accordingly, thanks the officers of the Council, voluntary and private sectors directly affected by the austerity programme, in the way they have responded to the increasing cuts and made sacrifices;
- (7) recognises the number of people in serious financial hardship and therefore welcomes the further increase in the Council Tax hardship fund, as proposed in each of the Green Party Councillors' budget proposals in recent years, to protect more of the 30,000 poorest families in the city;
- (8) recognises the particular difficulties faced by young people leaving care setting up their own homes for the first time and will therefore set aside funding to meet council tax bills paid until the age of 25;
- (9) recognises the importance to the community of small-scale spending at local level and will therefore increase 'ward pot' budgets for the forthcoming year;
- (10) will support the voluntary sector by reversing the Administration's previously agreed funding cuts to advice centres, thus protecting jobs and helping people facing the appalling consequences of universal credit;
- (11) recognises the ongoing value of the city's library service and rewards the hard work of volunteers who have supported their local branch libraries by providing funding for a paid, professional librarian in every branch library;

- (12) believes that the people of this city want a Council that listens to them and takes their genuinely-expressed concerns into account but is also accountable to them;
- (13) looks forward to webcasting of Council meetings, first proposed by Green Party councillors in 2012, but will go further towards modern standards of openness by extending the proposed webcasting to the full range of Cabinet, Scrutiny, Planning, Licensing, Health & Wellbeing, and Audit and Standards Committee meetings;
- (14) will cut political spin from the Town Hall and will remove the posts of Group Policy Officers from the Council payroll, requiring politicians to do their own research and press work;
- (15) notes that Green councillors first proposed a Living Wage in 2008 to address low pay and will now tackle the principle of income inequality head-on by reducing the pay of senior officers on salaries over £50,000 a year, narrowing the gap between the highest and lowest paid in the Council to within a 10:1 ratio;
- (16) will further reduce four posts in the HR function to protect frontline services;
- (17) regrets the lost opportunity of jobs in the renewable energy industry and thousands of cheaper energy bills for council tenants when proposed by Green Councillors in 2014; but will still promote energy efficiency schemes in maintained schools by using £500,000 of unallocated Community Infrastructure Levy receipts;
- (18) will go further and set aside £1 million from the budget for demolishing garages to introduce solar panels on council housing, to generate energy and to reduce tenants' bills;
- (19) will promote the city's economic opportunity of specialist tourism by engaging two part-time ecologists to market and lead specialist nature tours on Sheffield's nearby and unique moorland, thereby generating further income for the Council and for the city's economy;
- (20) will take steps to increase the potential for more affordable housing in the city by funding a pilot project of a small number of energy-efficient "container homes", such as those already being pioneered at Heeley City Farm;
- (21) will create an additional officer post to bring empty homes back into use in order to tackle the blight and waste of empty houses, increase housing supply with far less energy consumption than new building, and generate additional revenue through council tax and New Homes Bonus;
- (22) will fund an additional post to help tenants and take enforcement action on substandard private rented housing;
- (23) will earmark £1,000,000 of Local Transport Plan funding for active travel schemes, including providing cyclists with the protection of segregated cycle lanes, thereby improving the numbers of Sheffield citizens cycling to work and contributing towards improved physical and mental health;

- (24) will recognise the failure to build this city's cycling infrastructure and will therefore appoint a cycling officer to promote the ability of Sheffield residents to choose this form of transport;
- (25) further, will ensure that all future Local Transport Plan spending is used only on sustainable modes of transport that do not have any adverse impact on air quality;
- (26) believes the public is becoming more aware and concerned at the dangers of illegal levels of air pollution and will therefore invest in public-facing visual displays on the city's air quality monitoring stations, to ensure the public can see and monitor the measure of air pollution affecting them in real time;
- (27) will stop reimbursing car parking claims for Elected Members who do not have a blue badge.
- (28) will develop proposals to introduce a workplace parking scheme, to improve air quality and generate additional long-term revenue to invest in the city's public transport;
- (29) will reduce the price of residents' parking permits to 2010 levels and dissuade commuters from driving into the city centre by increasing on-street parking by 40p, meaning that people living in some of the most congested and polluted areas of the city are not subsidising other transport services;
- (30) will re-introduce the FreeBee bus service, with a low-emission, circulating bus in the city centre;
- (31) will fund a feasibility study on opening the Sheffield to Stocksbridge train line to passenger traffic, in conjunction with local community groups;
- (32) will promote health, activity and fun by funding outdoor gym equipment in the city's parks;
- (33) will commemorate the very origins of a municipal authority for public health by providing the public with clean, fresh water through the provision of new drinking fountains in major parks, thereby reducing waste and litter from single-use disposable plastics;
- (34) will also invest in planting trees bearing edible fruit in open spaces and parks, to be decided and distributed fairly on a Ward basis;
- (35) will employ a sustainability officer to support businesses and householders to make helpful carbon-reducing changes in response to the climate emergency;
- (36) will fund an extra four Police Community Safety Officers (PCSOs) and employ four Safer Neighbourhoods Officers to make people feel safer;
- (37) will recognise the importance, both culturally and economically, of the city's heritage and will provide funding for a dedicated heritage officer;

- (38) asserts that in a properly regulated planning system, it is essential that developers comply with planning conditions and will therefore fund an additional planning enforcement officer to maintain high standards;
- (39) will maximise the expertise of our planning officers and bring fees for pre-application planning advice for larger property developers into line with other major cities;
- (40) notes the hugely damaging impact on children, their families and communities by school exclusions and will therefore invest in a new post to develop the building of mental resilience in Year 6 children;
- (41) will reverse this Administration's proposed reduction in funding for people with learning disabilities by maintaining funding for respite through short breaks;
- (42) recognises the hard work of Sheffield citizens who have highlighted the economic risks attached to fossil fuels and the need for Sheffield City Council to do business ethically; and welcomes the inclusion, in its Treasury Management Strategy, of commitments not to hold any direct investments in fossil fuels or companies involved in tax evasion or grave misconduct;
- (43) approves the updating of the statutory Regulation 123 list to include the spending of unallocated Community Infrastructure Levy within the limits set out above;
- (44) therefore requests the Executive Director, Resources to implement the City Council's Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2019/2020 in accordance with the details set out in the reports on the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme now submitted, but with the following amendments:-

REVENUE budget proposal

	2019/20		2019/20
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Savings proposals	(£'000)	Spending proposals	(£'000)
Remove Group Policy Officers (half year saving)	74	Provide Young Care Leavers with a fund to cover Council Tax bills	30
Reduce pay on employees paid over £150,000 by 20% (assume 6 month saving)	44	Webcasting full range of Council Meetings	23
Reduce pay on employees paid over £100,000 by 15% (assume 6 month saving)	67	Reverse prior year funding cuts to voluntary sector for advice work	50

Reduce pay on employees paid over £50,000 by 10% (assume 6 month saving)	710	Increase ward pot funding	50
Remove 4 further posts in HR (assume half-year saving)	97	Staff for branch libraries (based on 16 PT members of staff)	328
Additional 40p on street parking charge	738	Additional Empty Homes Officer to bring empty properties back into use	39
Increase fees for pre-application planning advice for larger property developers	73	Additional post in Private Sector Housing	28
Remove Elected Members' car parking claims	2	Mental health development in schools	46
Use of NHB for one-off costs	338	Sustainability officer	46
		Cycling officer	45
		Four extra PCSOs	135
		Four Safer Neighbourhoods officers	137
		Heritage officer	45
		Planning enforcement officer	41
		Ecology officers to promote nature tourism (2 half-time posts)	46
		Reverse cuts to short breaks	19
		Drinking Fountains for City Centre - Maintenance	8
		Reduce Parking Permit Fees to 2010 levels	298
		Revenue costs for outdoor gym	4
		Workplace Parking Levy Study	25
		Re-introduce the Free Bee Bus - low emission vehicle	600

Set up a Feasibility study in to opening a Sheffield to Stocksbridge train line in conjunction with local community groups 100

Savings - subtotal	2143	Spending - subtotal	2143
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CAPITAL budget proposal

	2019/20		2019/20
Financing of capital proposals	(£'000)	Capital spending proposal	(£'000)
Use of unallocated CIL to establish fund for energy efficiency schemes in schools	500	Energy efficiency for schools fund	500
Reduce the Garage Improvements Budget from £1.2m to £0.2m for essential works	1000	Introduce further Solar Panels on the HRA Estate	1000
Reprioritise funding for acquiring new council homes	250	Fund to establish low-energy "container homes" pilot	250
Use of unallocated Local Transport Plan spending	1000	Improved transport infrastructure, including segregated cycle lanes	1000
Use of unallocated Local Transport Plan spending	54	Air Quality Monitoring Digital Displays	54
Use of unallocated CIL	164	Outdoor gym equipment in parks	40
		Provision of fruit trees on a ward basis	100
		Drinking Fountains for City Centre & parks	24
Use of unallocated New Homes Bonus	10	Webcasting Additional Council Meetings - Equipment	10
Financing of capital proposals total	2,978	Capital spending total	2,978