

WE ARE Labour

Sheffield Labour Group Newsletter February 2018

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Lasting Recognition for Former Women's Suffrage Shop



Celebrations have taken place in honour of the hundred year anniversary of some women gaining the right to vote.

To mark this occasion, we have announced that a former suffrage shop on Chapel Walk will have a [commemorative plaque installed at the site](#), following a successful crowd-funding appeal led by Labour members.

Sheffield has a proud history of supporting and fostering campaigns for women's rights - with the UK's first female suffrage organisation, Sheffield Female Political Association, formed in 1851.

In 1908 one of the UK's very first suffrage shops was opened on Chapel Walk and its upstairs committee rooms were the regional headquarters of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU).

Whilst there have been many great successes in the advancement of women's rights over the last century there is, of course, much more that needs to be done before full equality. Sheffield Labour councillors believe that the challenge now is to build on past achievements and push for full equality for women - financially, in the workplace, in public spaces, and in families and homes.

Councillor Olivia Blake tabled [a motion](#) to highlight the work that the council's Labour administration is undertaking to help empower women throughout the city, and reaffirmed the Council's support to the Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) campaign.

Budget proposals to meet £44 million funding gap



We have put forward [proposals to meet the challenge of a £44 million funding gap](#) – caused by rising demand for essential services and further government austerity cuts.

Proposals brought forward to meet the budget gap include savings worth £3 million through renegotiations on the Veolia waste contract, an increase to the council tax of

2.99%, following the government's long overdue decision to lift the cap from 1.99%, and a further increase to the social care precept introduced by the government in 2015. As a result Sheffield council tax payers will see an average £1.10 per week increase to their council tax bills, from April 2018.

Council Leader Julie Dore said "Putting up council tax is not easy but we find it necessary because we know that those who are struggling would struggle more if we didn't do it. We are reluctant to put it up but we feel we are forced into it."

Next year the council will invest an additional £15 million on services to provide care for adults and children, due to the high increases in demand for these services. However, despite this, these services have still had to make significant savings due to the scale of increases in need for these services in the city.

The Council has less than £10 million in reserves and these funds are needed in order to respond to additional emergencies – such as flooding. Please see [here](#) for comments from Councillor Olivia Blake, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance on the financial difficulties and how, in spite of this, we are investing in infrastructure, building new homes, transforming the city centre and prioritising vital services for those greatest in need.

The council's 2018/19 draft budget was [ratified by Cabinet](#) on 14 February, and the final budget will then need approval at a Full Council meeting on 7 March. The budget report is available [here](#)

Ambitious bid for Sheffield to become new home of Channel 4 going from strength to strength



We have big ambitions for Sheffield and will do everything we can to make the city the new home of Channel 4.

Moving the broadcaster out of London and into Sheffield could create 7, 000 jobs and boost the economy by almost £600 million.

A successful video was launched this month showcasing what Sheffield has to offer and why Channel 4 should relocate here. You can watch the star-studded video [here](#)

National league tables highlight strong performance of Sheffield's schools



National secondary league tables show that [Sheffield schools continue to perform](#) above the national average in GCSEs for the second year in a row. The [league tables](#) also highlight an increase in the number of high performing schools in Sheffield with nearly half of all our secondary schools featuring in the well above average and above average categories.

Leaping up the tables, Park Academy, Newfield Secondary School and Handsworth Grange Community Sports College were among those that achieved 'well above' on the new progress indicator, compared to the national average.

State-of-the-art community centre in to be built in Woodhouse



Plans are under way for a [£500,000 centre](#) in Woodhouse village which will include giving a new home to the local library by moving it across the road into the new state of the art building

Together with residents local Labour Councillors have been working hard for this outcome, and the project will also see new homes built and the retention of urban green spaces.

101 Telephone Service brought in-house

This month some of the responsibilities for the telephone 101 service were brought back in-house. This follows public worry over the length of time police were taking to answer calls. The hotlines handle enquiries from vulnerable adults, children and homeless people, as well as some reports of anti-social behaviour, and were entrusted to South Yorkshire Police seven years ago to become part of the 101 non-emergency numbers at an annual cost of £252,000. However, we believe bringing the services back in-house will improve call performance while making savings of almost £50,000 a year.

For much more detail on the change, please see [here](#).

Councillors call on the government to review all large public contracts outsourced



At the monthly meeting of all councillors, Labour councillors raises concerns about the collapse of Carillion. Carillion's demise will be felt right across the county and there are 250 employees directly employed in Sheffield, however, Sheffield Council has no contracts for services with Carillion.

We believe that Carillion's liquidation shows Government's negligence and corporate failure and a

thorough investigation must take place. Alarm bells have been ringing for over six months about the state of Carillion's finances, so Theresa May must answer questions on exactly why contracts were so recently awarded worth billions of taxpayers' money.

Labour is urging the Government to act quickly to bring Carillion's public sector contracts back in-house to protect public services and ensure employees, supply chain companies, taxpayers and pension fund members are protected.

Town-Hall round-up



Labour Group's allotted [two motions](#) focused on the demise of Carillion and a combined motion on the fight for women's equality—encompassing the 100 year anniversary of some women first gaining the vote - and the on-going Women Against State Pension Increase (WASPI) campaign.

We raised concerns about the collapse of Carillion, and urged the Government to act quickly to bring Carillion's public sector

contracts back in-house.

Councillor Lisa Banes (Manor Castle), who proposed [the motion](#), told Full Council that "A Labour government would review all large government contracts outsourced and in Sheffield we have already taken action where we can to bring services in-house. The council now runs council housing repairs as well as HR and payroll, and we will always look to run services in-house where this is desirable".

The [Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and Budget](#), as earlier agreed by Cabinet, was debated and agreed on by Full Council. As such Labour plans have will be implemented to [change tenancy agreements for council homes](#). Tenants will now have more freedom to have pets, but with stricter legal requirements to look after them properly and to prevent them from causing a nuisance to others. Conditions around fire safety have also been made clearer.

Opposition Watch

Sheffield Green Councillors refuse to condemn "intimidation tactics"

In sensational scenes at the Full Council meeting, all of Sheffield's Sheffield Green party councillors voted against a Labour amendment which called for abuse on all sides of the tree debate to cease. Green Party councillors also voted against calls that "no councillor is above the law".

Labour's amendment condemned "all threats and abuse regardless of which side one takes in this debate" and yet, incredibly, Sheffield Green councillors voted against this – the only political group in the council chamber to do so.

Remarkably the Green's also refused to commit to lawful activity or condemn "sinister" behaviour or "abuse". The full list of Council motions and amendments can be found [HERE](#)

Sheffield Liberal Democrats fail to condemn statue of Margaret Thatcher



Liberal Democrat Deputy Leader Jo Swinson has, incredibly, called for a statue of Margaret Thatcher to be placed in Westminster's Parliament Square. Labour Councillors called on Sheffield's Liberal Democrats to distance themselves from Ms Swinson's comments but they remained silent and refused to condemn her words.

The ignorance of the Lib Dem's to all the lives and communities that were destroyed by the Thatcher government is remarkable.

Whilst the Liberal Democrats want to honour former Tory leaders, Sheffield Labour councillors are celebrating our Sheffield women of steel.

In other News

- [£1.9m investment to retrofit 117 buses](#) across Sheffield network with emission reduction technology
- Funding secured for ambitious plans to [build 419 homes](#) in the Manor area
- 300 memorial trees to be [planted throughout the city](#)
- Council praised for making Hillsborough Park a viable venue for the biggest ever [Tramlines festival](#)
- Further details of the final development for [Park Hill estate regeneration](#)
- Campaign launched for a [Smoke-Free Sheffield](#)
- Hydrogen vehicles join Streets Ahead's [growing eco-fleet](#)

Campaigning

Want to get more involved?



No matter if you've never campaigned before or you've campaigned hundreds of times, any help leading into May's local elections would be fantastic.

For further information do please contact your branch chair for details of campaigning activity in your area.