

NOTICE OF MOTION REGARDING "ENERGY" [Liberal Democrats]

Carried as amended (see below)

That this Council:-

- (a) acknowledges that this Council has declared a climate emergency and therefore needs to be doing all it can to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy;
- (b) recognises that we are facing a sharp rise in energy prices this winter, in part due to the United Kingdom's reliance on fossil fuels;
- (c) notes that over 10% of Sheffield residents live in fuel poverty;
- (d) recognises that increasing investment in, and use of, renewable energy is one of the best ways to bring down the cost of energy supply to people's homes;
- (e) also recognises that increasing use of renewable energy will help Sheffield move towards achieving its environmental targets by reducing carbon emissions;
- (f) further recognises:-
 - (i) that very large financial setup and running costs involved in selling locally generated renewable electricity to local customers result in it being impossible for local renewable electricity generators to do so;
 - (ii) that making these financial costs proportionate to the scale of a renewable electricity supplier's operation would create significant opportunities for local companies, community groups and councils to be providers of locally generated renewable electricity directly to local people, businesses and organisations, if they wished; and
 - (iii) that revenues received by such local companies, community groups or councils that chose to become local renewable electricity providers could be used to help improve the local economy, local services and facilities and to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions;
- (g) notes that the Parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee, as a result of its 2021 Technological Innovations and Climate Change inquiry, recommended that a Right to Local Supply for local energy suppliers be established to address this;
- (h) accordingly, resolves to support the Local Electricity Bill, currently supported by a cross-party group of 264 MPs and which, if made law, would establish a Right to Local Supply which would promote local renewable electricity supply by making the setup and running costs of selling renewable electricity to local customers proportionate to the size of the supply company; and that Sheffield City Council should work with partners across the city to make information accessible to private consumers and local businesses to access any such schemes;
- (i) believes that the emerging local plan should encourage the use of local renewable energy supply in any of its considerations; and
- (j) further resolves to write to local MPs, asking them to support the Bill, and to the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, Power for People, expressing its support.

LABOUR AMENDMENT – carried in entirety

[CON – ABSTAIN with exceptions in parts as below]

[LIBDEM – FOR with exceptions in parts as below]

[GREEN – FOR]

That the Motion now submitted be amended by the addition of new paragraphs (k) to (u) as follows:-

(k) notes the current gas crisis and believes that UK government needs to do significantly more to end the UK's dependence on overseas gas, and that the current energy crisis is borne out of political failings; [CON AGAINST]

(l) notes that despite headlines about record amounts of wind and solar power and record numbers of electric cars, climate change-causing greenhouse gas emissions and energy use continue to rise, and the world's thirst for fossil fuels still appears insatiable, and believes that failure to deal with these trends quickly and fairly as part of an organised and just transition will lead to further environmental destruction, social injustice, and economic chaos;

(m) believes today's soaring energy bills are also a glimpse into a future of what could happen if we do not change tack, and notes that there are myriad reasons for the current spike in gas prices: the sudden economic growth after the pandemic slump, a cold winter in Europe and Asia, local unplanned-for events, and complicated geopolitics are all partly responsible, but a domestic dearth of systemic thinking is also why many UK citizens are disproportionately affected by the increase in gas prices;

(n) believes that what this current energy crisis shows us is that, in the 1980s, government should never have sold off our North Sea assets, and instead we could have invested the monies from North Sea exploration into renewables;

(o) agrees with the comments of Tom Burke, Head of Climate Think Tank E3G, that “bad political ideas have helped pave the way for volatile gas prices. There is nothing new about volatility in commodity prices, but there has been a consistent failure to address reducing gas for heating. This is not an energy crisis, but a crisis of politics”;

(p) believes that we need to take a pragmatic approach to common ownership of the energy sector, and move away from the neoliberal dogmatic approach of recent government who have espoused a market-driven and privatised approach, which has led to spiralling fuel and energy costs; [LIBDEMS & CON AGAINST]

(q) notes that the Council is liaising with groups such as Sheffield Renewables to explore how we can deliver increased levels of renewable energy in the city, including community-owned renewable generation;

(r) believes, however, that we need significant intervention from the Government to help us go further locally; including to help us turn our waste into biogas, and to help insulate all our homes to make them more energy efficient; [CON FOR]

(s) believes that electric heating, as it currently is, may not work for all homes, especially old houses with poor insulation and, therefore, putting in solar panels and swapping out the boiler is not necessarily the answer; [CON FOR]

(t) notes that due to actions of the previous Administration, the Council purchases electricity generated from 100% renewable sources, and installed Smart Energy Meters for Council tenants – creating up to 40% saving for tenants as well as a substantial reduction in wasted energy;

and

(u) requests the Co-operative Executive to direct the Climate Change, Economy and Development Transitional Committee to undertake research, with recommendations, as what more the Council can do to help the city move to more sustainable energy and deliver on the goals of the proposed Local Energy Bill. [CON FOR]

GREEN AMENDMENT – carried in entirety

[LAB – FOR]

[CON – FOR with exceptions in parts as below]

[LIBDEM – FOR with exceptions in parts as below]

That the Motion now submitted be amended by:-

1. in paragraph (a), the substitution of the words “promote renewal energy” by the words “promote energy efficiency and renewable energy”;

2. the addition, at the end of paragraph (b), of the words “and the lack of investment in energy efficiency by previous governments”; [LIBDEMS & CON AGAINST]

3. the deletion of paragraph (d) and the addition of a new paragraph (d) as follows:-

(d) recognises that increasing investment in, and use of, energy efficiency, followed by renewable energy, are the best ways to bring down the cost of energy supply to people's homes;”

4. in paragraph (e), the substitution of the words “increasing use of renewable energy” by the words “increasing the energy efficiency of buildings and use of renewable energy”;

5. in paragraph (h), the insertion of the words “community-owned and” before the words “local renewable electricity supply”; [LIBDEMS & CON ABSTAIN]

6. in paragraph (i), the insertion of the words “community-owned and” before the words “local renewable energy supply”; [LIBDEMS & CON ABSTAIN] and

7. the addition of new paragraphs (k) and (l) as follows:-

(k) further resolves to work with local experts, such as Sheffield Renewables, to address any local barriers to installation and work together to advance community-owned and local renewable energy supplies, including exploration of the use of Council owned land and property to support community led renewable energy projects; and

(l) resolves to consider how best to incorporate the promotion of community-owned and local renewable energy supply in Sheffield's 10-point Decarbonisation Plan. [LIBDEMS AGAINST]

LIBDEM AMENDMENT – carried in entirety

[LAB – FOR]

[CON – FOR]

[GREEN – FOR]

That the Motion now submitted be amended by the addition of new paragraphs (k) and (l) as follows:-

(k) believes that:-

- (i) the emerging fuel crisis is pushing more and more Sheffield residents into fuel poverty as bills keep rising and that, as a Council, we have a duty to act;
- (ii) the emerging fuel crisis demonstrates the need for Sheffield to have more control of its own energy supplies to prepare for the greater demand for electricity locally as measures to clean up our environment are rolled out; with this additional energy needing to come from renewable sources in line with the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency;
- (iii) the infrastructure needed to provide access to clean and affordable energy should use existing networks as much as possible to reduce the use of new materials;
- (iv) building on the existing district heating system would allow us to reduce Sheffield's carbon footprint and has the potential for a clean source of heat and power; and
- (v) the Council should investigate innovative and sustainable forms of powering small scale and district heating systems that use the infrastructure already present in Sheffield; this includes exploring heat recovery from mine water which is being promoted by the Coal Authority working with academics, local authorities, central government, and others, to help realise the potential of mine water heat, and which is already being used to heat homes in the Northeast of England; and

(l) requests that the requirement for new developments to link into a district heating system where this is the most sustainable option, be incorporated into future planning policy.