

PRESS RELEASE

LET'S TAKE TOWN HALL POLITICS OUT OF THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

SCA (Sheffield Climate Alliance) is writing to all Sheffield's councillors and all candidates in the May elections to urge a common approach on housing. This week's publication of the 'Pathways to zero carbon' report prepared for the Council by Arup states that 33% of the city's greenhouse gas emissions come from housing, and a massive programme of retrofitting will be needed to eliminate these by the target date of 2030.

Such a programme will include installing insulation, draught proofing, triple glazed windows and heat pumps to replace gas boilers. The benefits for Sheffield's residents will be considerable too: warmer homes, reduced fuel bills, better health outcomes and new jobs for those engaged in the work. The report explains how a number of different funding streams can be used to pay for the work.

SCA (Sheffield Climate Alliance) believes this is a real breakthrough moment for addressing the climate emergency and is calling on councillors of all parties to support a common set of measures to implement the report's recommendations. "This isn't a time for Party politics" said SCA's Geoff Cox. "The Arup report is based on hard evidence, and the technical solutions it suggests are all tried, tested and proven already. We just need to commit to making it happen here – and now. The city needs the economic boost that these new, long term, green jobs will create as we emerge from Covid and furlough."

Initial reactions to SCA's call look positive:

- Labour candidate Alison Norris (standing for Broomhill and Sharrow Vale) said "SCC is already building 3100 desperately needed council homes and I am committed to finding the additional funding to start retrofit pilot schemes. SCC can help council workers and local building firms train to do this work properly, cutting out the cowboys. Quality jobs, warms homes that are cheap to run, cleaner air as gas boilers are replaced. We can't afford not to do this."
- Liberal Democrat councillor Tim Huggan (Crookes and Crosspool Ward) said "It's been a long two years since Sheffield declared a Climate Emergency. We must make sure that Housing under the Council's Care is a core part of Sheffield City Council's goal of going Carbon neutral and the ARUP report shows a firm pathway to that."
- Green councillor Douglas Johnson (City Ward) said "The climate crisis needs government spending on the scale of what was available for Covid and for the banks. However, at a local level, the council can lead by example by making use of

the millions of pounds in its spending power. There could be investment in projects like solar panels, using the vast amount of space on the roofs of council houses, buildings and schools. Available money could be put into transport like the electric freebee bus and making roads safer for people to walk and cycle. It should start with a proper team of sustainability officers who could start work on major projects like a solar farm, a zero-emission delivery hub and a workplace parking levy."

- Conservative candidate Sara Chinchon (standing for Dore and Totley) said "If elected I would promote and publicise the grants available for the retrofitting of housing. It is important we all work towards a net zero economy."

"Sheffield Council could make the national headlines if it can show a united response to the climate emergency in this way" said Geoff Cox. "With CoP26 being held in Glasgow later this year, this is exactly the kind of news that everyone is waiting for."

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