

Sheffield City Council

FRACKING motion 1

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) notes that the Government have granted exploratory licenses to allow companies to conduct shale gas testing at a number of sites across the country, which has included areas within Sheffield, mainly areas bordering the local authority;
- (b) further notes that approaches have been made to property owners to start surveying around Mosborough and many members of the local community have opposed the prospect of fracking in their area, including hosting public meetings to raise objections;
- (c) regrets that the Government now appear to be determined to force fracking on areas, regardless of local opinion;
- (d) supports the position taken by the Labour Party calling on the Government to ban fracking and focus on unlocking the jobs and growth that a low-carbon energy infrastructure can provide for our industry, workforce and communities; and
- (e) commits to not permitting fracking on Council-owned land and to reject approaches to do so.

FRACKING motion 2

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) notes that the Government have granted exploratory licenses to allow companies to conduct shale gas testing at a number of sites across the country, which has included areas within Sheffield, mainly areas bordering the local authority;
- (b) further notes that approaches have been made to property owners to start surveying around Mosborough and many members of the local community have opposed the prospect of fracking in their area, including hosting public meetings to raise objections;
- (c) regrets that the Government now appear to be determined to force fracking on areas, regardless of local opinion;
- (d) supports the position taken by the Labour Party calling on the Government to ban fracking and focus on unlocking the jobs and growth that a low-carbon energy infrastructure can provide for our industry, workforce and communities;
- (e) commits to not permitting fracking on Council-owned land and to reject approaches to do so;
- (f) regrets that the 2015 Liberal Democrat manifesto would have allowed fracking and notes that, under the Coalition Government, the national ban on fracking was lifted by the then Liberal Democrat Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, the Rt. Hon. Sir Ed Davey; and
- (g) regrets comments made by the Rt. Hon. Nick Clegg MP in 2013 “Fracking has a role”, and believes that the actions of the Coalition Government have paved the way for fracking to come to Sheffield.

FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT motion

RESOLVED: That this Council:-

- (a) notes reports from the International Energy Agency that at least two thirds of current fossil fuel reserves must remain unburned if warming in excess of 2 degrees is to be avoided;
- (b) further notes reports from the Carbon Tracker Initiative that investing in fossil fuel companies is an increasingly risky prospect due to the possibility of fossil fuel reserves becoming “stranded assets” when global deals to mitigate climate change, such as the Paris Climate Agreement, are implemented;
- (c) notes that once money has been divested from fossil fuels it can be reinvested in more environmentally sustainable and socially beneficial assets like renewable energy, affordable housing, and the local economy;
- (d) therefore believes that there is not only a convincing moral and environmental case for institutional investors to divest from fossil fuels, but also a compelling financial one;
- (e) welcomes the decision by Waltham Forest Borough Council’s Pension Fund Committee on 22nd September 2016 to “exclude fossil fuels from its [investment] strategy over the next five years” because “investing in companies that rely heavily on fossil fuels, at a time when the environmental impact is a matter of increasing scrutiny, is seen as risky”;
- (f) notes that the Waltham Forest commitment is the first of its kind from a Local Authority Pension Fund in the UK, and welcomes the leadership that the Waltham Forest Pension Fund Committee has shown;
- (g) further welcomes the fact that some institutional investors in South Yorkshire have also shown leadership in this area, for example:-
 - (i) the University of Sheffield’s commitment in November 2015 to divest its £39 million endowment fund from fossil fuels;
 - (ii) Sheffield Hallam University’s statement in January 2016 that it “had not and will not invest in fossil fuels”; and
 - (iii) South Yorkshire Pensions Authority’s adoption of a Climate Change Policy in March 2016 that states the Fund will “endeavour to manage a tilt within portfolios towards lower carbon assets in-line with the Paris Agreement, with a view towards progressively decreasing the Fund’s carbon exposure”;
- (h) believes that, although these are positive steps, Sheffield should set its ambitions higher with respect to fossil fuel divestment;
- (i) declares its aspiration that Sheffield should play a pioneering and leadership role in becoming fossil free as a city and recognises that, if this is to be achieved, it is important to work in partnership with stakeholders across the city to develop a collective and shared agenda that all major partners will be involved in;
- (j) believes we should look at a full range of ways in which we can reduce the city’s reliance on fossil fuels, including action on divestment and also on support for renewable energy and the green economy;

- (k) acknowledges the work of the Green Commission in the city to bring together partners to develop an ambitious and broad plan to set out how Sheffield can become more sustainable in the future and believes it is important that this is done through partnership to realise the full potential of institutions in the city who hold the power locally to make change happen;
- (l) notes that the Council's response to the Green Commission will be submitted to the Cabinet in the coming months, and that the recommendations of the Green Commission will be used to inform Council policy development;
- (m) confirms that the Council does not and will not invest in fossil fuels, demonstrating the Council's existing commitment to leading by example on fossil fuel divestment;
- (n) notes that the Administration will include a statement on ethical and environmental investment in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2017/18, incorporating the above commitment;
- (o) believes that, as a local authority, we have a considerable degree of power to act, but also believes we can achieve more by working with partners to influence wider adoption and this should inform the approach we take; and
- (p) condemns the Government's approach of stating that councils will be penalised for diverging from the same environmental and social policies of central government in its procurement practices, and believes this flies in the face of localism.