

Questions of Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed to Councillor Paul Wood (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety)

Q.1 What are the Council's plans for Halloween and Bonfire Night, in terms of keeping people safe in particular young people?

A.1 As in previous years, the council is working in conjunction with partners to ensure the celebrations are both fun and safe. Whilst the pandemic has restricted the scope of some services - and limited the number of public events - the council will continue to work with youth services and providers to ensure as wide-ranging a programme as possible.

Q.2 What planning is taking place? And what meetings are planning to take place? Please list dates and key decisions made.

A.2 The Community Safety Partnership has formed a Dark Nights working group to plan and coordinate activity across the city. This includes:

- Co-ordinating positive activity for young people.
- Co-ordinating test purchasing at premises selling fireworks.
- Providing on-street patrols.
- Target hardening vulnerable locations, e.g. by increasing lighting and removing debris.

The planning group members for Dark Nights are mainly members that form part of one of the Partnerships Priority Theme Group's (Anti Social Behaviour and Inquisitive Crime) This group report their proposals for the Dark Nights period directly into to the Partnership's Planning Performance and Resources Group (PPRG). The PPRG leads agree to the proposals and provide the group with added support, guidance and resources. In addition, PPRG also report the group's activities directly into the Partnerships Strategic Board. There has already been one Dark Night Planning Meeting and the next meeting is planned for the 5th Oct. In addition, the group will be attending the next scheduled PPRG Meeting scheduled to take place on the 15th Oct.

The Planning meetings includes all partner agencies involved using their communication methods including social media to promote messages concerning gathering based on government guidance.

**Questions of Councillor Andrew Sangar to Councillor Paul Wood
(Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety)**

Domestic Violence

Q.1 Nationally, domestic violence incidents reported to the police have risen during lockdown, has there been a rise in reports in Sheffield? Please give monthly numbers for 2020 compared with 2019 and 2018.

A.1 Taken from DA dashboard Thursday 1st October 11:55
By Offence location and by incident created date

	Sheffield		
Date	Crime	Non Crime	Total investigations
Jan18	434	480	914
Feb 18	395	419	814
Mar 18	470	485	955
Apr 18	482	481	963
May 18	602	454	1056
June 18	568	487	1055
July 18	635	517	1152
Aug 18	623	493	1116
Sept 18	592	404	996
Oct 18	591	429	1020
Nov 18	504	385	889
Dec 18	581	436	1017
Jan 19	526	417	943
Feb 19	457	402	859
Mar 19	521	421	942
Apr 19	516	392	908
May 19	605	445	1050
June 19	533	425	958
July 19	635	430	1065
Aug 19	738	447	1185
Sept 19	620	413	1033
Oct 19	592	384	976
Nov 19	713	359	1072
Dec 19	750	423	1173
Jan 2020	641	364	1005
Feb 2020	607	345	952
Mar 2020	609	385	994
Apr 2020	615	371	986
May 2020	708	429	1137
June 2020	653	399	1052
July 2020	752	451	1203
Aug 2020	750	472	1222

Q.2 What is the council's plan to co-ordinate the action of partners in responding to domestic violence incidents across the City?

A.2 The Council facilitates the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategic Board which oversees the implementation of the city's strategy which is published [here](#). The board includes representatives from all key agencies in the city (e.g. health agencies, Police, Probation) and from council services such as Adult Safeguarding, Children's Social Care and Housing. The board acts as the Violence Against Women and Girls Theme Group of the city's Community Safety Partnership and has sub groups that consider Children and Young People affected by domestic abuse, Civil and Criminal Justice Responses, and a forum for all interested providers in the city to share good practice and discuss emerging issues. Council officers participate in the County Wide Domestic Abuse Best Practice Group which also enables coordination of responses across the four Local Authorities of South Yorkshire.

Q.3 Are there sufficient spaces in refuges within the City to meet this demand?

A.3 During lock down the housing system slowed down in Sheffield and across the country. We had fewer refuge places than usual that were available due to families not moving out of the refuges to more settled homes as they usually would. There has been increased demand on the whole of the housing system because of this. To meet this demand and support vulnerable women, men and families we have worked with voluntary sector partners to temporarily increase dispersed refuge places. We have also made use of a range of alternative options for short term housing including the council's own temporary accommodation, supported housing schemes, and hotels. It is important to note that many victims fleeing domestic abuse do not wish to move to a refuge, so the council always has a range of other options available to offer people needing safe accommodation. We also commission support provided by [IDAS](#) to people living in the community including the provision of a 'Sanctuary Scheme' which aims to enable people to stay safe in their own homes.

The situation is still not back to normal so there is still a high demand for refuge places however the Choice Based Lettings process has restarted and offers are being prioritised to refuge residents. We will be recommissioning our refuge provision during 2021 and we will be undertaking a new needs assessment which will help us determine the number of refuge places needed in Sheffield in the future.

Housing Repairs

Q.1 At the last full Council meeting, it was reported that the Council housing repairs backlog will take till March 2021 to clear. Now that the Council has been able to assess this backlog, is it possible to reduce this backlog faster?

A.1 It is still predicted that if a large number of repairs come in then it could take until March 2021. The call centre has been switched back on to general repairs and

whilst we are seeing an approx. 20% increase against the normal run rate, the live jobs has remained stable.

Q.2 Please can the council outline the schedule to reduce the backlog in repairs so that tenants can know when their outstanding repairs will be carried out?

A.2 Any pre COVID repairs are expected to be completed by November 2020. The number of pre COVID repairs has reduced by half over the last 6 weeks.

**Questions of Councillor Angela Argenzio to Councillor Paul Wood
(Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety)**

Q.1 When can the Broomhill and Sharrow Vale councillors expect a reply to our request on 17th September 2020 for (a) compensation for the residents of the Hanover Tower; (b) appropriate disciplinary action and (c) proposals for learning?

A.1 When the Hanover Cladding was removed we advised tenants that we would compensate for any additional heating costs. This has been actioned but if any tenant found they had additional heating costs during the period of the removal and replacement of the cladding then the Council would consider applications on an individual basis.

Q.2 What action has been taken since the Hanover Report publication to ensure lessons are learned and good practice is the default with all steps of decision making archived and kept safely so that they can be used in the future?

A.2 The report does not recommend any action to be taken as part of the recommendations.

Q.3 Did the deletion of project management information relating to Hanover Tower, in 2015 (only 3 years after combustible cladding was fitted) comply with the Council's policy on archiving and data retention?

A.3 The project management system held records of individual decent homes phases and individual address completions and was never intended to be a tool for holding all contract documents. Officers extracted the information that was needed to update our asset management system. The system was switched off after the end of the Decent Homes programme and it was not possible to retrieve the information. However, the Council's design team and planning records had gaps in them which has been acknowledged in the report. Record keeping of the contract is a responsibility within the contract.

**Question of Councillor Kaltum Rivers to Councillor Paul Wood
(Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety)**

- Q. What is the current position with fitting sprinkler systems to all Sheffield's tower blocks?**
- A. Feasibility work has been completed for the 4 single staircase tower blocks. Alongside communal upgrade work these blocks will have a fire misting system, updated fire alarms, new waste facilities and rechecking the fire stopping work. This work will be tendered early in 2021 and commence later in 2021, it will complete in 2024. Further feasibility work will commence on the remaining blocks in 2021, these blocks are different in design and layout.

**Question of Councillor Bryan Lodge to Councillor Paul Wood
(Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety)**

- Q. We're entering the period where the nights start to draw in and people will be thinking about Halloween and Bonfire Night. With the Covid-19 infection rates still a concern, the potential for further problems and outbreaks is a big worry. Many of the community events won't be happening for obvious reasons and so people will be left to their own devices. What measures are we taking to ensure that everyone understands that we need to keep safe and healthy so we need to discourage bonfire parties and promote the adherence to 'Rule of Six'. Can you update Council on what measures are currently being proposed by the Council and partners?**
- A. The Planning meetings for Halloween and Bonfire night includes all relevant partner agencies, using communication methods including social media to promote messages concerning gathering based on government guidance.

**Question of Councillor Zahira Naz to Councillor Paul Wood
(Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety)**

- Q. Can the Cabinet Member please outline what work is being undertaken with partners to ensure public safety over the Dark Nights period?**
- A. See A1 and A2 above.

**Question of Councillor Adam Hurst to Councillor Paul Wood
(Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety)**

Q. No one wants to see anyone homeless especially during the difficulties we have all had to bear this year. I would therefore like to thank the local people in West Ecclesfield who have understood the need for homeless people to be housed in our community during this pandemic. Following the great news that the council has secured £609,000 additional funds for rough sleepers, can the Cabinet member detail how this funding will be allocated and how local communities who have supported rough sleepers will benefit?

A. The funding secured by the Council is from the Next Steps Programme for Rough Sleepers. The funding criteria and eligibility only allowed for the Council to be reimbursed for the direct costs of providing accommodation and support services for rough sleepers in hotels/other emergency housing from the 1st July 2020. The funding secured which is c.£76,000 lower than the bid SCC submitted will therefore be used for this purpose. This shortfall does create a pressure on SCC budget. The support provided by the local community is appreciated at this time when SCC had to find accommodation very quickly in response to the COVID19 situation and we are intending to move people to suitable housing as quickly as possible to avoid a return to rough sleeping. We are working on an individual rehousing plan with everyone who has been placed in hotels and will be reducing the use of these facilities over the next few months. We are continuing to provide support from housing, health, care and community safety teams at the hotels deal promptly with any concerns that are raised.

**Question of Councillor Dawn Dale to Councillor Paul Wood
(Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety)**

Q. Following publication of the report into Hanover, can the Cabinet Member please explain what lessons have been learnt, and what changes will be looked at to improve on the findings the report raises?

A. A thorough lesson's learnt exercise has been undertaken as the investigation has been carried out including and experts opinion. These are detailed in the report and the Council will act on these recommendations.

**Questions of Councillor Ben Miskell to Councillor Paul Wood
(Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety)**

Q.1 Prior to the global pandemic, the administration made a commitment to build over 3000 social homes across Sheffield. Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the building programme and confirm that the administration is still commitment to its pledge to build these much needed homes?

A.1 The Council remains committed to building and acquiring 3,100 homes as part of the Council's Council Housing Stock Increase Programme. Although some delays have occurred during this year as a result of the pandemic any new build projects that were on site resumed within a few weeks and making excellent programme and by the end of 2021/22 will have caught up. The whole programme will be complete by 2026 as planned.

- Wordsworth Avenue Learning Disability units, handed over in August 2020.
 - Weakland on site with 10nr General Need's (GN) homes handed over in July 2020 and remaining 26nr expected in phases from October to January 2021.
 - Knutton Rise on site with completion of 4nr GN properties in December 2020.
 - Daresbury View on site with completion of 10nr GN expected August 2021.
 - Adlington Older Persons Independent Living Scheme on site with completion of 140 units with on- site support expected March 2022.
 - Berners Road on site with completion of 63nr units expected March 2022.
 - A further 4 sites currently in development and out to tender.
- And,
- 100 acquisitions (general and on development sites) per year.

630 homes have been delivered since 2014 to date, made up of 549 acquisitions, 12 new build acquisitions (Oxclose) and 69 SCC new build (Weakland, Wordsworth, Ouse & Scotia) and 243 new build work in progress currently on site.

Q.2 Food banks continue to support a large number of families across my ward in Park and Arbourthorne. Could the Cabinet Member please outline what arrangements are being made to support food banks as the pandemic progresses.?

A.2 In addition to the support SCC provide, we have received a grant from government to support people who are in crisis and need access to food. This will be administered by the Local Assistance Scheme team and will ensure people in need of food re the impact of the pandemic will receive food vouchers. The council has also committed to continue to work with the network of foodbanks to ensure we have the capacity in the city to support those in need during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Q.3 Would the Cabinet Member also please explain what arrangements are also being made to assist residents who are affected through loss of income or reduced hours in the public and private sector?

A.3 The above monies can support people in times of crisis due to the pandemic. There is also a payment of £500 for people on low incomes who are asked to self-isolate.

**Questions of Councillor Douglas Johnson to Councillor Paul Wood
(Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety)**

Q.1 Do you accept that staff of this council put residents' lives at risk by including the aluminium composite Alucobond in the contract specification for the external cladding of Hanover Tower?

A.1 The Council accepts that the cladding did not meet the relevant building regulations designed to ensure fire safety for those parts of the building above 18m high. It was compliant for the parts of the building below 18m. At the time this product was widely used in the UK above 18m and the independent report makes clear it was thought by the industry to be compliant with the regulations. However, the cladding was just one part of fire measures in place and when it was removed the other others measures were found to be intact.

Q.2 Do you accept that staff of this council informed residents that solid aluminium panels would be used for the cladding and that this was different from the combustible plastic-filled cladding that was actually fitted?

A.2 The contractor would have been responsible we believe for consulting with tenants and providing colour samples of any materials to be used for residents of council officers. Once the Council identified that the cladding was not solid aluminium it took swift action to remove the cladding material in consultation with residents and have worked closely with residents on its replacement.

Q.3 Is it your opinion that all staff have acted in this matter with the level of integrity expected of their position?

A.3 There was no evidence uncovered by the thorough investigation to suggest that staff did not act with integrity.