

Housing Policy Committee

Friday 26 January 2024 at 10.00 am

Town Hall, Sheffield, S1 2HH

The Press and Public are Welcome to Attend

Membership

Councillor Douglas Johnson
Councillor Penny Baker
Councillor Nabeela Mowlana
Councillor Mazher Iqbal
Councillor Barbara Masters
Councillor Alison Norris
Councillor Paul Turpin
Councillor Paul Wood
Councillor Alan Woodcock

PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE MEETING

The Housing Policy Committee discusses and takes decisions on Housing matters:

- Functions of the Council as Local Housing Authority, including
 - Public sector
 - Private sector
 - Homelessness
- Supported housing
- Relationships with other social housing providers
- Refugee resettlement programmes
- Gypsy and traveller sites

Meetings are chaired by Councillor Douglas Johnson.

A copy of the agenda and reports is available on the Council's website at www.sheffield.gov.uk . You may not be allowed to see some reports because they contain confidential information. These items are usually marked * on the agenda. Members of the public have the right to ask questions or submit petitions to Policy Committee meetings and recording is allowed under the direction of the Chair. Please see the [Council's Webpage](#) or contact Democratic Services for further information regarding public questions and petitions and details of the Council's protocol on audio/visual recording and photography at council meetings.

Policy Committee meetings are normally open to the public but sometimes the Committee may have to discuss an item in private. If this happens, you will be asked to leave. Any private items are normally left until last on the agenda.

Meetings of the Policy Committee have to be held as physical meetings. If you would like to attend the meeting, please report to an Attendant in the Foyer at the Town Hall where you will be directed to the meeting room. However, it would be appreciated if you could register to attend, in advance of the meeting, by emailing committee@sheffield.gov.uk, as this will assist with the management of attendance at the meeting. The meeting rooms in the Town Hall have a limited capacity. We are unable to guarantee entrance to the meeting room for observers, as priority will be given to registered speakers and those that have registered to attend.

Alternatively, you can observe the meeting remotely by clicking on the 'view the webcast' link provided on the meeting page of the [website](#).

If you wish to attend a meeting and ask a question or present a petition, you must submit the question/petition in writing by 9.00 a.m. at least 2 clear working days in advance of the date of the meeting, by email to the following address: committee@sheffield.gov.uk.

In order to ensure safe access and to protect all attendees, you will be recommended to wear a face covering (unless you have an exemption) at all times within the venue. Please do not attend the meeting if you have COVID-19 symptoms.

It is also recommended that you undertake a Covid-19 Rapid Lateral Flow Test within two days of the meeting.

If you require any further information please email committee@sheffield.gov.uk.

FACILITIES

There are public toilets available, with wheelchair access, on the ground floor of the Town Hall. Induction loop facilities are available in meeting rooms. Access for people with mobility difficulties can be obtained through the ramp on the side to the main Town Hall entrance.

**HOUSING POLICY COMMITTEE AGENDA
26 JANUARY 2024**

Order of Business

Welcome and Housekeeping

The Chair to welcome attendees to the meeting and outline basic housekeeping and fire safety arrangements.

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Exclusion of Press and Public

To identify items where resolutions may be moved to exclude the press and public

3. Declarations of Interest

Members to declare any interests they have in the business to be considered at the meeting

(Pages 7 - 10)

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

To approve the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on

(Pages 11 - 18)

5. Public Questions and Petitions

To receive any questions or petitions from members of the public.

(NOTE: There is a time limit of up to 30 minutes for the above item of business. In accordance with the arrangements published on the Council's website, questions/petitions at the meeting are required to be submitted in writing, to committee@sheffield.gov.uk, by 9.00 a.m. on Wednesday 24 January 2024).

6. Members' Questions

To receive any questions from Members of the committee on issues which are not already the subject of an item of business on the Committee agenda – Council Procedure Rule 16.8.

(NOTE: a period of up to 10 minutes shall be allocated for Members' supplementary questions - one supplemental question on each question may be asked by the Member who had submitted the original question).

7. Work Programme

Report of the Director Policy and Democratic Engagement

(Pages 19 - 34)

8. **Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy** (Pages 35 - 56)
Report of Executive Director, Neighbourhood Services
9. **Selective Licensing Scheme Closure Report** (Pages 57 - 78)
Report of Executive Director, Neighbourhood Services
10. **Climate Statement** (To Follow)
Report of Executive Director, Neighbourhood Services
11. **Road Map to Net Zero** (To Follow)
Report of Executive Director, Neighbourhood Services
12. **Update on Housing Subsidy Loss** (Pages 79 - 88)
Report of Executive Director, Neighbourhood Services
13. **Response to Petition on Verdon Street Flats** (Pages 89 - 94)
Report of Executive Director, Neighbourhood Services
14. **Response to Government Consultation on Safe and Legal Routes Cap** (Pages 95 - 130)
Report of Executive Director, Neighbourhood Services

NOTE: The next meeting of Housing Policy Committee will be held on Thursday 21 March 2024 at 10.00 am

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ADVICE TO MEMBERS ON DECLARING INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

If you are present at a meeting of the Council, of its Policy Committees, or of any committee, sub-committee, joint committee, or joint sub-committee of the authority, and you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest** (DPI) relating to any business that will be considered at the meeting, you must not:

- participate in any discussion of the business at the meeting, or if you become aware of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the meeting, participate further in any discussion of the business, or
- participate in any vote or further vote taken on the matter at the meeting.

These prohibitions apply to any form of participation, including speaking as a member of the public.

You **must**:

- leave the room (in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct)
- make a verbal declaration of the existence and nature of any DPI at any meeting at which you are present at which an item of business which affects or relates to the subject matter of that interest is under consideration, at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.
- declare it to the meeting and notify the Council's Monitoring Officer within 28 days, if the DPI is not already registered.

If you have any of the following pecuniary interests, they are your **disclosable pecuniary interests** under the new national rules. You have a pecuniary interest if you, or your spouse or civil partner, have a pecuniary interest.

- Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain, which you, or your spouse or civil partner undertakes.
- Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from your council or authority) made or provided within the relevant period* in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

*The relevant period is the 12 months ending on the day when you tell the Monitoring Officer about your disclosable pecuniary interests.

- Any contract which is made between you, or your spouse or your civil partner (or a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest) and your council or authority –
 - under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and
 - which has not been fully discharged.

- Any beneficial interest in land which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, have and which is within the area of your council or authority.
- Any licence (alone or jointly with others) which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, holds to occupy land in the area of your council or authority for a month or longer.
- Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) –
 - the landlord is your council or authority; and
 - the tenant is a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest.
- Any beneficial interest which you, or your spouse or your civil partner has in securities of a body where -
 - (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of your council or authority; and
 - (b) either -
 - the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or
 - if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

If you attend a meeting at which any item of business is to be considered and you are aware that you have a **personal interest** in the matter which does not amount to a DPI, you must make verbal declaration of the existence and nature of that interest at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent. You should leave the room if your continued presence is incompatible with the 7 Principles of Public Life (selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty; and leadership).

You have a personal interest where –

- a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial standing (including interests in land and easements over land) of you or a member of your family or a person or an organisation with whom you have a close association to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the Council Tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which you have been elected or otherwise of the Authority's administrative area, or
- it relates to or is likely to affect any of the interests that are defined as DPIs but are in respect of a member of your family (other than a partner) or a person with whom you have a close association.

Guidance on declarations of interest, incorporating regulations published by the Government in relation to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, has been circulated to you previously.

You should identify any potential interest you may have relating to business to be considered at the meeting. This will help you and anyone that you ask for advice to fully consider all the circumstances before deciding what action you should take.

In certain circumstances the Council may grant a **dispensation** to permit a Member to take part in the business of the Authority even if the member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest relating to that business.

To obtain a dispensation, you must write to the Monitoring Officer at least 48 hours before the meeting in question, explaining why a dispensation is sought and desirable, and specifying the period of time for which it is sought. The Monitoring Officer may consult with the Independent Person or the Council's Standards Committee in relation to a request for dispensation.

Further advice can be obtained from David Hollis, Interim Director of Legal and Governance by emailing david.hollis@sheffield.gov.uk.

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Housing Policy Committee

Meeting held 14 December 2023

PRESENT: Councillors Douglas Johnson (Chair), Penny Baker (Deputy Chair), Nabeela Mowlana (Group Spokesperson), Barbara Masters, Paul Turpin, Alan Woodcock and Sioned-Mair Richards (Substitute Member)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Paul Wood, Cllr Mazer Iqbal and Cllr Alison Norris.

2. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the press and public.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no formal declarations of interest made at the meeting.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 November 2023 were approved as a correct record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 A petition was received from Akra Shaibi who did not attend the meeting. The petition had received 6 signatures. The Chair read out some of the petition details as follows:

“We the undersigned petition the council to to fix the flats from outside and inside so the rats and mice don’t go in. Block the holes and gaps between our flat and the neighbours. Sort out all the flats instead of just one because the pests come back. Fix the mould and damp problems that we all have. We all pay rent and we need this problem sorted.”

The **Chair responded** with the following:

“The North East Housing Team Environmental Services have also been commissioned by Housing to carry out a full external technical survey of each block and feedback any actions and recommendations to prevent any further infestations in the future. Housing are working with the Repairs Service to ensure that any entry points are sealed.

Prior to baiting all tenants and residents will receive correspondence to support the treatment work.

The Housing Repairs Service are prioritising reports of damp and mould. The service has undertaken work on 38 properties at Verdon Street to date. Where tenants have reported damp and mould in these blocks we aim to attend within 5 working days. A long term solution for the blocks on Verdon Street is being explored and work has been commissioned to look at this.

Officers have visited the block the petition relates to and also the neighbouring 4 blocks. Officers from the team have visited all properties in the 5 blocks, 20 flats per block. They have successfully spoken with the majority of tenants and residents, leaving contact cards for those who have not been at home encouraging them to contact their local Housing office to discuss any concerns they may have.

The Housing team have recorded full details were tenants/residents have mice within their flat and were there are reports of damp and mould.

These reports are being taken very seriously and the Housing team have met on site with officers from our Environmental Team to establish the best treatment for the infestations. Orders have been placed to bait each block at a cost of £1,866 per block.”

- 5.2 Some debate and discussion took place regarding the petition. Members gave comments and asked questions. Officer responses were provided surrounding damp, mould and the ongoing work around tackling infestation. It was stressed that work had been undertaken to the Verdon Street properties prior to the petition being received. It was also explained that the CoL crisis was exacerbating the issues. It was suggested and agreed to receive an update on the response to the petition at the January meeting. It was highlighted that there would be the anticipated updates on damp and mould across the city too. The Chair requested that the petitioner be specifically invited to the January meeting
- 5.3 Alexandra Odelga attended the Committee meeting and asked the following question:

“Is the committee able to give assurance to tenants of Sheffield City Council who have dogs already living with them as their pets or as assistance dogs on 31/12/2023, and whose dogs may fall under the type of XL bully as defined in the statutory instrument, that they will be allowed to keep their dogs in their properties”

The **Chair responded** with:

“This is a topical and relevant question. There has been some work carried out amongst staff within the Housing Service about how we as a council and landlords deal with this issue to safeguard the interest of all tenants and the dogs. The context is that the XL Bully has been added to the list of dangerous dogs and as a council we cannot ignore that and that there needs to be respect for the dog owners and non-dog owners.

The Tenancy Conditions are:

18. Unless you live in sheltered housing, you may keep domestic pets in your home subject to conditions 19-21.

19. You must not keep any animal or number of animals which could cause a danger or nuisance or which is not suitable for your property

20. You must properly look after any animal in or visiting your property and not allow it to do anything which could cause a danger, nuisance or annoyance to other people or to cause damage

21. If we tell you to remove an animal or animals from your home you must do so. You must not allow the animal or animals to return. We will tell you in writing, giving the reasons why and the date by which you must comply.

From 1st February 2024 it will be a criminal offence to own an XL Bully dog in England and Wales unless the owner has a Certificate of Exemption. For a tenant to continue to keep an XL Bully dog in their home following the aforementioned date, they must be able to produce the Certificate of Exception on request to Sheffield City Council. In addition, the tenant must, for the lifetime of the dog, hold third party public liability insurance and be able to produce evidence of this on request. That is the framework for making the decisions in.

So there will Not be a complete blanket ban but tight control to keep everyone safe”

5.4 The Chair promised a copy of the response in writing. The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services gave some clarity around tenancy conditions and responsibilities and suggested the intention to use letters and bulletins for conveying the correct information. It was also suggested to bring a report to the committee in the New Year regarding this matter.

5.5 Maggie Young attended the Committee meeting and asked the following questions:

1) What is the current timetable for the start and completion of building work on the GV Estate?

2) What is the housing offer for those people who may have to be moved?

3) What is the delivery plan for bringing the housing up to EPC Level C?

4) What are the proposals for installing renewable energy infrastructure in line with SCC's commitment to zero carbon by 2030?

5) What's the timetable for delivery of training and job opportunities for young people on the estate?

The **Chair responded** with:

A1: As you will know, inflation in the construction sector has escalated and means the £98 million doesn't go as far as when the plan was first agreed. As a result, the team has had to re-think a lot of the delivery.

The Gleadless Valley Regeneration Team is working with colleagues in other Council departments such as the Capital Delivery Service, Planning, and Housing Growth to understand construction costs for various capital elements of the project, as well as lead times for beginning major works. At present we are still determining what a phased delivery plan will look like and the cost implications.

This means we can't give dates for the start of work, never mind the finish.

However, the next things that we should see are (1) demolition work on the Castelayn and Paddock Hill former care homes so the sites can be secured to

deliver new housing and (2) a MUGA (or multi-use games area) on the Spotswood site.

Both should be underway in 2024.

A2: Elected members are agreed that it's essential to deliver new housing that residents can choose to move into before enforcing any clearances of existing homes and that is learning from previous demolition schemes.

A3: As we progress each project, surveys will be carried out to understand the level of investment needed to ensure compliance with Part L of the building regulations. This is an ongoing piece of work.

A4: A commission has been made to the council's external consultant, RLB (Rider Levett Bucknall) to co-develop a 'route map to net zero' for the Council's housing stock. This will provide a basis for asset planning and capital investment.

A lot is yet to be determined. Plans should include the installation of PV (photo voltaic) solar panels. We will need to develop a funding strategy for this, as well as policy for how the energy generated is utilised.

A5: The Gleadless Valley Regeneration Team are in partnership and working collaboratively with Opportunity Sheffield, the DWP and local GV organisations to support an employment and skills package for the people in Gleadless Valley. The funding has been confirmed, is for anyone 16+ and contracts are due to commence early in the New Year. As soon as the delivery partner/s have been confirmed, information on this will be on the Regeneration team's Facebook page and other channels.

It is also worth noting that the council employs around 125 apprentices which is an important way of training up new people to do important jobs.

- 5.6 A written response was promised by the Chair. It was also highlighted that the PERP period was underway.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

- 6.1 No Members questions were received.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

- 7.1 The Principal Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which contained the Committee's work programme for consideration and discussion. The aim of the work programme was to show all known, substantive agenda items for forthcoming meetings of the Committee, to enable this committee, other committees, officers, partners, and the public to plan their work with and for the committee.
- 7.2 Suggestions were made regarding Selective Licensing being moved to the January meeting instead of March. It was expressed that due to the Christmas holiday break it would be extremely difficult. It was agreed to explore other options outside of the meeting. Suggestions and questions were also put forwards regarding Damp

and Mould updates and Housing Strategy Member engagement. It was agreed with current timescales that a Damp and Mould report would be presented at the March meeting. It was also agreed that the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services would circulate a timeline that is currently believed to be right for the Housing Strategy.

7.3 There was discussion around the merits of including a standing item on Damp and Mould on the work programme. The Chair noted that a response to the petition received at the meeting would be added as a new item onto the January meeting workplan, and that while the possibility of a standing item would be considered by the chair, it was not open to the committee to commit future meetings to standing items, and that the work programme is where specific matters are fixed which could be by resolution of the committee.

7.4 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That:-

1. The Committee's work programme, as set out in Appendix 1 be agreed, including any additions and amendments identified in Part 1;
2. Consideration be given to the further additions or adjustments to the work programme presented at Part 2 of Appendix 1; and
3. Members give consideration to any further issues to be explored by officers for inclusion in Part 2 of Appendix 1 of the next work programme report, for potential addition to the work programme.

8. 2023/24 Q2 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

8.1 The Head of Accounting introduced the report which brought the Committee up to date with the Council's General Fund Revenue and Housing Revenue Account outturn position for 2023/24 as at Quarter 2.

8.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the **Housing** Policy Committee:-

1. Note the updated information and management actions on the 2023/24 Revenue Budget Outturn as described in this report.

8.3 Reasons for Decision

8.3.1 To record formally changes to the Revenue Budget.

8.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

8.4.1 The Council is required to both set a balance budget and to ensure that in-year income and expenditure are balanced. No other alternatives were considered.

9. CAPITAL FINANCE MONITORING REPORT

9.1 The Head of Service, Housing Investment and Maintenance introduced the report which explained that the Housing Capital Programme brought together the 5-year Capital Investment and Housing Growth proposals for Council Housing, setting out the priorities for current and future investment.

It outlined that the purpose of the plans was to continue to deliver Decent Homes, tenants' priorities and improving the quality of homes and neighbourhoods. The Housing Capital Programme is split into three distinct areas of activity; Council Housing Investment (existing stock and assets), the Council's Stock Increase Programme, funded from the Council's Housing Revenue Account, as described in the annual HRA Business Plan and the Non-HRA Capital Programme which includes programme management, Homes & Loans to private homes and investment in private homes.

The table at item 2.1 of the report showed the overall Housing Capital Programme split between Council Housing Investment, Stock Increase and Non-HRA areas of the programme.

The purpose of the report was to provide a quarterly update on progress against the approved 2023/24 Housing Capital Programme. The report focussed on providing an update on expenditure and progress against the 2023/24 Housing Capital Programme position at the end of September 2023 (Quarter 2).

The report also provided an update of the 5-year Housing Capital Programme and the final approval of the 2022/23 Housing Capital Programme outturn.

9.2 RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the **Housing** Policy Committee:-

1. Note the 2023-24 Housing Capital Programme forecasting and budget position at the end of quarter.
2. Note the update provided for the 5-year capital programme

9.3 Reasons for Decision

9.3.1 The report was to provide the Housing Policy Committee members with an update on progress against the 5-year approved Capital programme at the end of Q2 2023/24.

9.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

9.4.1 No alternative options are considered as part of this update report.

10. HNS AND REPAIRS PERFORMANCE REPORTS

10.1 The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services introduced the report which provided the Committee with an overview of housing and repairs performance for a range of services within the remit of the Committee. This report covered the period up to quarter 2 (July – September) of 2023/24. The first part of the report provided an analysis of the performance, setting this within both the national and local context in which services are delivered. A detailed appendix report was included with comparative data against other landlords and regulatory performance. The report allowed the Committee to understand and comment on the performance delivery of housing and repairs services to both tenants and citizens.

10.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the **Housing** Policy Committee:-

1. Notes the Performance Report update provided for up to quarter 2 of 2023/24.
2. Highlights any issues of concern that they may wish to receive focussed analysis in future performance report.

10.3 **Reasons for Decision**

10.3.1 The Housing Policy Committee has delegated authority to monitor the performance of Housing and Repairs services to ensure that:

- The service is delivering for tenants, and that tenant satisfaction is closely monitored.
- Limited resources are maximised due to budgetary pressures.
- The Council is delivering on corporate priorities.

Performance information is shared with external organisations such as the Regulator of Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman for scrutiny.

10.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

10.4.1 The Housing Policy Committee has delegated responsibility for the regular monitoring of data including performance and financial information, and the performance monitoring of Housing (public sector, private sector, and related functions) services. Therefore, no alternative options to the production of this report have been considered.

11. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN**

11.1 The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services introduced the report which set out the 2024/25 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan. Each year the HRA Business Plan is reviewed and updated to set budgets and charges for the year ahead and to provide an updated 5-year plan and 30-year affordability profile. The purpose of this report is to provide the Housing Policy Committee with an update on the current national and local housing context, regulatory requirements, the priorities for Committee action alongside capital and revenue spending plans for 2024/25. The Policy Committee will then be responsible for overseeing the scrutiny and, delivery of those plans on behalf of the Council housing tenants of Sheffield.

11.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the **Housing** Policy Committee:-

1. Notes that the HRA Business Plan report for 2024/25, the HRA Business Plan priorities for 2023/24 and HRA Revenue Budget 2023/24 as set out in the Financial Appendix, will go to the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee at its meeting in January 2024, for recommendation to Full Council for approval;
2. Notes that once adopted by Full Council, monitoring delivery of HRA Business Plan priorities will be within the remit of Housing Policy Committee and a regular performance reporting schedule will be approved;
3. Notes the recommendation for the increasing of Council rents for 2024/25 in

line with the Government's Rent Standard.

11.3 **Reasons for Decision**

11.3.1 The report and its recommendations, sets out the scale of the challenge ahead, the limited resources available and the difficult decisions that now need to be taken to deliver a balanced HRA budget for 2024/25 and for the overall 30-year viability. The delivery of a balanced HRA budget is dependent on setting a 7.7% rent increase for Council tenants as set out in this report.

11.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

11.4.1 The Council is required to both set a balanced in year HRA budget and to ensure that in-year income and expenditure are balanced over 30 years. No other alternatives were considered.



Report to Housing Committee

26th January 2024

Report of: Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement

Subject: Committee Work Programme

Author of Report: Rachel Marshall, Principal Democratic Services Officer

Summary:

The Committee's Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 for the Committee's consideration and discussion. This aims to show all known, substantive agenda items for forthcoming meetings of the Committee, to enable this committee, other committees, officers, partners and the public to plan their work with and for the Committee.

Any changes since the Committee's last meeting, including any new items, have been made in consultation with the Chair, and the document is always considered at the regular pre-meetings to which all Group Spokespersons are invited.

The following potential sources of new items are included in this report, where applicable:

- Questions and petitions from the public, including those referred from Council
- References from Council or other committees (statements formally sent for this committee's attention)
- A list of issues, each with a short summary, which have been identified by the Committee or officers as potential items but which have not yet been scheduled (See Appendix 1)

The Work Programme will remain a live document and will be brought to each Committee meeting.

Recommendations:

1. That the Committee's work programme, as set out in Appendix 1 be agreed, including any additions and amendments identified in Part 1;
2. That consideration be given to the further additions or adjustments to the work programme presented at Part 2 of Appendix 1;
3. That Members give consideration to any further issues to be explored by officers for inclusion in Part 2 of Appendix 1 of the next work programme report, for potential addition to the work programme;

Background Papers: None

Category of Report: Open

COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

1.0 Prioritisation

1.1 For practical reasons this committee has a limited amount of time each year in which to conduct its formal business. The Committee will need to prioritise firmly in order that formal meetings are used primarily for business requiring formal decisions, or which for other reasons it is felt must be conducted in a formal setting.

1.2 In order to ensure that prioritisation is effectively done, on the basis of evidence and informed advice, Members should usually avoid adding items to the work programme which do not already appear:

- In the draft work programme in Appendix 1 due to the discretion of the chair; or
- within the body of this report accompanied by a suitable amount of information

2.0 References from Council or other Committees

2.1 Any references sent to this Committee by Council, including any public questions, petitions and motions, or other committees since the last meeting are listed here, with commentary and a proposed course of action, as appropriate:

Issue 1	SHEFFIELD'S DIVERSE COMMUNITIES STANDING TOGETHER
Referred from	Full Council 6th December 2023
Details	Raise the alarm locally about the refugee homelessness crisis and request the Housing Policy Committee to engage with VCS, faith groups, universities and housing providers to urgently discuss this.
Commentary/ Action Proposed	
Issue 2	Climate Statement

Referred From	Strategy and Resources Policy Committee 13 th December 2023
Details	Requests that each Policy Committee consider and, if not previously agreed, agree (with or without amendments) their respective statement to ensure that the proposed actions contained in such statement are reflected in their Work Programme.

3.0 Member engagement, learning and policy development outside of Committee

3.1 Subject to the capacity and availability of councillors and officers, there are a range of ways in which Members can explore subjects, monitor information and develop their ideas about forthcoming decisions outside of formal meetings. Appendix 2 is an example 'menu' of some of the ways this could be done. It is entirely appropriate that member development, exploration and policy development should in many cases take place in a private setting, to allow members to learn and formulate a position in a neutral space before bringing the issue into the public domain at a formal meeting.

2.2 Training & Skills Development - Induction programme for this committee.

Title	Description & Format	Date

Appendix 1 – Work Programme

Part 1: Proposed additions and amendments to the work programme since the last meeting:

Item	Proposed Date	Note
MOVED: Housing Repairs Policy	March 2024	Moved from the January meeting to the March meeting to allow more time for relevant work to be carried out.
MOVED: Net Zero	Jan 2024	Moved to Jan 2024 meeting from March 2024
REMOVED: Capital Finance Monitoring Report	N/A	One report is sufficient which is being taken at the March 2024 meeting.
REMOVED: Letter to Government on Asylum Cases	N/A	This item is now covered in the safe and legal routes item
NEW: regulating the supported accommodation sector	TBC	This was a referral from FC in Nov 2023 and it was agreed to present a detailed report to the HPC.
NEW: sheffield's diverse communities standing together	TBC	This was a referral from FC in Dec 2023.
NEW: Climate Statements	Jan 2024	This is a referral from the S&R committee
NEW: Review of Petition in regard to Verdon Street Flats	Jan 2024	This is in response to a petition that was brought to the Dec 2023 Housing committee

Part 2: List of other potential items not yet included in the work programme

Issues that have recently been identified by the Committee, its Chair or officers as potential items but have not yet been added to the proposed work programme. If a Councillor raises an idea in a meeting and the committee agrees under recommendation 3 that this should be explored, it will appear either in the work programme or in this section of the report at the committee's next meeting, at the discretion of the Chair.

Topic	

Description	
Lead Officer/s	
Item suggested by	<i>Officer, Member, Committee, partners, public question, petition etc</i>
Type of item	<i>Referral to decision-maker/Pre-decision (policy development/Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)</i>
Prior member engagement/ development required <i>(with reference to options in Appendix 2)</i>	
Public Participation/ Engagement approach <i>(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 3)</i>	
Lead Officer Commentary/Proposed Action(s)	

Part 3: Agenda Items for Forthcoming Meetings

Meeting 5 2023	11 January 2024	Time				
Topic	Description	Lead Officer/s	Type of item <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Decision</i> • <i>Referral to decision-maker</i> • <i>Pre-decision (policy development)</i> • <i>Post-decision (service performance/monitoring)</i> 	<i>(re: decisions)</i> Prior member engagement/development required <i>(with reference to options in Appendix 2)</i>	<i>(re: decisions)</i> Public Participation/Engagement approach <i>(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 3)</i>	Final decision-maker (& date) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Cttee • Another Cttee (eg S&R) • Full Council • Officer
Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy	Report updating Committee on arrangements for tenant involvement and empowerment and approval of revised strategy	Janet Sharpe	Decision	Through Knowledge Briefings and LACs	Through a range of tenant consultation	This Committee
Selective Licensing Scheme Closure Report	Update on the findings of Selective Licensing scheme operating in areas on and around London Road, Abbeydale	Catherine Hughes	Post-decision (service performance/monitoring)		N/A	This Committee

	Road and Chesterfield Road					
NEW: Climate Statement	Referral from 13 Dec 2023 S&R	Nathan Robinson	Decision			This Committee
Road Map to Net Zero	Consideration of plans for achieving Net Zero across SCC homes	Nathan Robinson	Decision	Yes	TBC	This Committee
NEW: Housing Subsidy Loss	Report updating Members on proposals to fund the deficit in housing subsidy payments	Suzanne Allen Jane Wilby	Referral to decision-maker	Prior work with Members through briefings	N/A	Strategy and Resources
NEW: Response to Petition re: Verdon St Flats	Ask from the HPC in Dec 2023 Meeting following a petition.	Janet Sharpe & Dean Fearon				
NEW: Response to Government on Safe and Legal Routes Cap	Provide Policy Committee with a copy of the response to recent government consultation	Janet Sharpe	Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)			This Committee
Standing items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Public Questions/ Petitions</i> • <i>Work Programme</i> • <i>National Policy and Regulation responses</i> • <i>[any other committee-specific standing items eg</i> 					

	<i>finance or service monitoring]</i>					
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Meeting 6 2023	21 March 2024	Time				
Topic	Description	Lead Officer/s	Type of item <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision Referral to decision-maker Pre-decision (policy development) Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring) 	(re: decisions) Prior member engagement/ development required (with reference to options in Appendix 2)	(re: decisions) Public Participation/ Engagement approach (with reference to toolkit in Appendix 3)	Final decision-maker (& date) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Cttee Another Cttee (eg S&R) Full Council Officer
HNS and Repairs Performance Reports	Quarterly overview of HNS and Repairs Service performance (including Capital Programme and Stock Increase Programme updates)	Janet Sharpe Tom Smith	Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)	N/A	Performance is shared with tenants through newsletters, the website and tenant meetings	This Committee
Conditions of Tenancy	An update on minor changes to the current Conditions of Tenancy	Janet Sharpe	Decision	Prior work with Members through briefings	Through a range of tenant consultation	This Committee
Private Housing	Review of the Private Housing Standards	Alun Whitaker &	Decision	Yes		This Committee

Standards Intervention and Enforcement Policy Review	Intervention and Enforcement Policy	Catherine Hughes				
MOVED from Jan to March: Housing Repairs Policy	Approval of a revised Repairs Policy for council housing tenants	Tom Smith	Decision	Through Knowledge Briefings and LACs	Through a range of tenant consultation	This Committee
NEW: Damp and Mould Action Plan	Update	Dean Butterworth	Update	Deep Dive session for the whole committee on the 17 th January 2024.		This Committee
NEW: City of Sanctuary	Response to Full Council Motion 5/7/2023	Catherine Hughes				
Standing items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Public Questions/ Petitions</i> • <i>Work Programme</i> • <i>National Policy and Regulation responses</i> • <i>[any other committee-specific standing items eg finance or service monitoring]</i> 					
2023/24 Q3 Budget	Approval of Budget Monitoring Report	Jane Wilby	Post-decision (service	N/A	N/A	N/A

Monitoring Report			performance/monitoring)			
Capital Finance Monitoring Report	Approval of Capital Finance Monitoring Report	Janet Sharpe	Post-decision (service performance/monitoring)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Meeting 1	June? 2024	Time				
Topic	Description	Lead Officer/s	Type of item <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision Referral to decision-maker Pre-decision (policy development) Post-decision (service performance/monitoring) 	(re: decisions) Prior member engagement/development required (with reference to options in Appendix 2)	(re: decisions) Public Participation/Engagement approach (with reference to toolkit in Appendix 3)	Final decision-maker (& date) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Cttee Another Cttee (eg S&R) Full Council Officer
Older Persons Independent Housing Living Strategy	5-year strategy setting out Sheffield's strategic approaches for helping our growing older population to live independently in their own homes across all housing tenures.	Suzanne Allen	Decision	Yes; written briefings, all member briefings	Creative use of online engagement channels; working with VCF networks; stakeholder reference groups; formal	This Committee

					and informal discussion groups	
Standing items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Public Questions/ Petitions</i> • <i>Work Programme</i> • <i>National Policy and Regulation responses</i> <i>[any other committee-specific standing items eg finance or service monitoring]</i>					
2023/34 Q4 Budget Monitoring Report	Approval of Budget Monitoring Report	Jane Wilby	Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Capital Finance Monitoring Report	Approval of Capital Finance Monitoring Report	Janet Sharpe	Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Meeting 2	Sept? 2024	Time				
Topic	Description	Lead Officer/s	Type of item <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Decision</i> • <i>Referral to decision-maker</i> 	<i>(re: decisions)</i> Prior member engagement/ development required	<i>(re: decisions)</i> Public Participation/ Engagement approach	Final decision-maker (& date) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Cttee • Another Cttee (eg S&R)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pre-decision (policy development)</i> • <i>Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)</i> 	<i>(with reference to options in Appendix 1)</i>	<i>(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 2)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Council • Officer

Items which the committee have agreed to add to an agenda, but for which no date is yet set.						
Topic	Description	Lead Officer/s	Type of item <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Decision</i> • <i>Referral to decision-maker</i> • <i>Pre-decision (policy development)</i> • <i>Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)</i> 	<i>(re: decisions)</i> Prior member engagement/ development required <i>(with reference to options in Appendix 2)</i>	<i>(re: decisions)</i> Public Participation/ Engagement approach <i>(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 3)</i>	Final decision-maker (& date) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Cttee • Another Cttee (eg S&R) • Full Council • Officer
Approval of a new Housing	Consideration of a new Housing Strategy	Georgina Parkin	Decision	Significant engagement with	Creative use of online	This Committee

Strategy for the City	for the City following significant consultation and policy development			Members through Task and Finish	engagement channels; working with VCF networks; stakeholder reference groups; formal and informal discussion groups	
Now on March Cttee	Housing Policy Committee are asked to reaffirm Sheffield as a City of Sanctuary and review the powers and resources to in place to protect migrants from discriminatory housing conditions	Janet Sharpe and Beth Storm	Yes; written briefings, all member briefings	N/A	This Committee	
Asset Management Strategy	Approval of the Council Housing Asset Management Strategy	Janet Sharpe	Through Knowledge Briefings and LACs	Through a range of tenant consultation	This Committee	

Appendix 2 – Menu of options for member engagement, learning and development prior to formal Committee consideration

Members should give early consideration to the degree of pre-work needed before an item appears on a formal agenda.

All agenda items will anyway be supported by the following:

- Discussion well in advance as part of the work programme item at Pre-agenda meetings. These take place in advance of each formal meeting, before the agenda is published and they consider the full work programme, not just the immediate forthcoming meeting. They include the Chair, Vice Chair and all Group Spokespersons from the committee, with officers
- Discussion and, where required, briefing by officers at pre-committee meetings in advance of each formal meeting, after the agenda is published. These include the Chair, Vice Chair and all Group Spokespersons from the committee, with officers.
- Work Programming items on each formal agenda, as part of an annual and ongoing work programming exercise
- Full officer report on a public agenda, with time for a public discussion in committee
- Officer meetings with Chair & VC as representatives of the committee, to consider addition to the draft work programme, and later to inform the overall development of the issue and report, for the committee's consideration.

The following are examples of some of the optional ways in which the committee may wish to ensure that they are sufficiently engaged and informed prior to taking a public decision on a matter. In all cases the presumption is that these will take place in private, however some meetings could happen in public or eg be reported to the public committee at a later date.

These options are presented in approximately ascending order of the amount of resources needed to deliver them. Members must prioritise carefully, in consultation with officers, which items require what degree of involvement and information in advance of committee meetings, in order that this can be delivered within the officer capacity available.

The majority of items cannot be subject to the more involved options on this list, for reasons of officer capacity.

- Written briefing for the committee or all members (email)
- All-member newsletter (email)
- Requests for information from specific outside bodies etc.
- All-committee briefings (private or, in exceptional cases, in-committee)
- All-member briefing (virtual meeting)
- Facilitated policy development workshop (potential to invite external experts / public, see appendix 2)
- Site visits (including to services of the council)
- Task and Finish group (one at a time, one per cttee)

Furthermore, a range of public participation and engagement options are available to inform Councillors, see appendix 3.

Appendix 3 – Public engagement and participation toolkit

Public Engagement Toolkit

On 23 March 2022 Full Council agreed the following:

A toolkit to be developed for each committee to use when considering its 'menu of options' for ensuring the voice of the public has been central to their policy development work. Building on the developing advice from communities and Involve, committees should make sure they have a clear purpose for engagement; actively support diverse communities to engage; match methods to the audience and use a range of methods; build on what's worked and existing intelligence (SCC and elsewhere); and be very clear to participants on the impact that engagement will have.

The list below builds on the experiences of Scrutiny Committees and latterly the Transitional Committees and will continue to develop. The toolkit includes (but is not be limited to):

- a. Public calls for evidence
- b. Issue-focused workshops with attendees from multiple backgrounds (sometimes known as 'hackathons') led by committees
- c. Creative use of online engagement channels
- d. Working with VCF networks (eg including the Sheffield Equality Partnership) to seek views of communities
- e. Co-design events on specific challenges or to support policy development
- f. Citizens assembly style activities
- g. Stakeholder reference groups (standing or one-off)
- h. Committee / small group visits to services
- i. Formal and informal discussion groups
- j. Facilitated communities of interest around each committee (eg a mailing list of self-identified stakeholders and interested parties with regular information about forthcoming decisions and requests for contributions or volunteers for temporary co-option)
- k. Facility for medium-term or issue-by-issue co-option from outside the Council onto Committees or Task and Finish Groups. Co-optees of this sort at Policy Committees would be non-voting.

This public engagement toolkit is intended to be a quick 'how-to' guide for Members and officers to use when undertaking participatory activity through committees.

It will provide an overview of the options available, including the above list, and cover:

- How to focus on purpose and who we are trying to reach
- When to use and when not to use different methods
- How to plan well and be clear to citizens what impact their voice will have
- How to manage costs, timescales, scale.

There is an expectation that Members and Officers will be giving strong consideration to the public participation and engagement options for each item on a committee's work programme, with reference to the above list a-k.



Report to Policy Committee:

Author/Lead Officer of Report: Vicky Kennedy,
Operational Team Manager (Author)

Tel: 0114 474 2736

Report of: *Ajman Ali (Executive Director, Neighbourhood Services)*

Report to: *Housing Policy Committee*

Date of Decision: *26th January 2024*

Subject: ***Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy***

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? <i>(Insert reference number)</i> 2396				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Purpose of Report:

The current Housing and Neighbourhoods Engagement Strategy was launched in 2021. It was written in close consultation with tenants and leaseholders, and a commitment was made to review it after 3 years. That review has now happened, again in consultation with our tenants and leaseholders, and the Strategy has been updated based on their feedback.

The Action Plan which underpins the Strategy and describes how we intend to implement it has also been updated as part of this review.

Since the introduction of the new Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, the importance of listening to, and acting on, tenant views has become ever more important. Our updated Tenant and Leaseholder Strategy will help us meet those new regulatory requirements.

Recommendations:

The Housing Policy Committee is recommended to:

- Note the outcomes of the consultation undertaken as part of the Engagement Strategy Review, as described in this report.
- Approves a) the updated Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy, and b) the updated Engagement Strategy Action Plan.

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Background Papers:

(Insert details of any background papers used in the compilation of the report.)

Appendix 1 – Current Housing and Neighbourhoods Customer Engagement Strategy

Appendix 2 – Proposed Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy

Appendix 3 – Engagement Strategy Action Plan

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: <i>Helen Damon</i>
		Legal: <i>Tracy Beal</i>
		Equalities & Consultation: <i>Louise Nunn</i>
		Climate: <i>N/A – no climate-related implications of the proposals</i>
<p><i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i></p>		
2	EMT member who approved submission:	<i>Ajman Ali</i>
3	Committee Chair consulted:	Cllr Douglas Johnson
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: Janet Sharpe	Job Title: Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods
	Date: 16th January 2024	

1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The current Housing and Neighbourhood Customer Engagement Strategy was developed in 2020 and launched in 2021. It is based on a wide range of views and experience - tenants, leaseholders and Elected Members were closely involved in its development, and national tenant engagement experts TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) also provided input. A copy of the current Strategy is attached in Appendix One.
- 1.2 A commitment was made to review the Strategy after 3 years – that review has now been undertaken and the proposals in this report are a result of that review. This work has involved wide consultation with our tenants and leaseholders, as described in more detail in Section 3 below.
- 1.3 A lot has changed since the Strategy’s original development in 2020. There has been much in the news over the past few years which has had a huge impact on attitudes towards tenant involvement. This has brought into sharp focus the importance of tenant voices being heard, and as a result the new Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 was introduced.
- 1.4 In line with this new regulation, the Regulator of Social Housing is creating a set of four consumer standards. One of these will be focused on “Transparency, Influence and Accountability” - building on and replacing the existing Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard. Once approved (the Standards are currently being consulted on), this standard will mean that tenants should be able to (amongst other things):
- Influence their landlord’s decision-making
 - Understand how their landlord is performing
 - Hold their landlord to account.
- 1.5 Feedback from the consultation exercise and the new regulatory requirements have been the key drivers behind the proposed revised Engagement Strategy. Much of what was already in the Strategy has been reinforced by the review – the priorities and commitments within the Strategy are still relevant and important to our tenants and will help us meet the Regulator’s expectations.
- 1.6 However, the consultation provided some useful feedback in terms of areas of the Strategy where the commitment needs to be strengthened. There have therefore been some minor amendments and updates made to it, and a summary of these is given in section 3.9 below.
- 1.7 A full copy of the proposed revised Strategy is included in Appendix 2.
- 1.8 As part of the consultation, we also sought views on our plans for implementing the commitments made in the Strategy. The resulting Action Plan is included in Appendix 3. This describes the work which we are either already doing or have planned, to help us improve how we engage with our tenants. This Plan will be an ever-evolving document as more work is completed and more ideas put forward – by tenants, staff and Elected Members.
- 1.9 The proposed revised Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy and the accompanying Action Plan are the documents we are asking Housing Policy Committee to approve.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?

2.1 As described above, adopting this updated Engagement Strategy and the Action Plan will be a significant step in us meeting the new regulatory requirements around tenant involvement and influence. It will strengthen the voices of tenants and leaseholders, give them more direct influence over the decisions that affect them and support them to work with us to improve our housing services.

2.2 The proposed new regulatory requirements relating to tenant engagement are shown below, alongside a short description of how effective implementation of the updated Engagement Strategy will support us in meeting each one:

Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard: Tenant Engagement	
Proposed requirement	How our Engagement Strategy will support this
To give tenants a wide range of meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise their landlord's strategies, policies and services. This includes in relation to the neighbourhood where applicable.	Priority One emphasises the need to offer a wide range of different engagement activities to help ensure that we meet the diverse needs of our tenants. The range of activities we have planned as listed in the Action Plan demonstrates how we intend to achieve this. Priority Three focuses on engagement at a local community level.
To assist tenants who wish to implement tenant-led activities to influence and scrutinise their landlord's strategies, policies and services. This includes in relation to the neighbourhood where applicable.	Priority Five is focused on the support we will provide to tenants to help them challenge us and to have influence. Section five of the Action Plan describes in more detail how we will do this – including support to get online and training opportunities to increase skills and confidence in engaging with us. The Action Plan also lists all the different engagement activities we are providing for tenants who want to be involved.
To provide accessible support that meets the diverse needs of tenants so they can engage with the opportunities.	As per above, both the Strategy and the Action Plan refer to the support we will provide to help empower tenants to effectively engage with us. The Action Plan explains that support will be in a range of formats, and that tenants will be given extra support if needed to access these opportunities.
Working with tenants, to regularly consider ways to improve and tailor their approach to delivering landlord services including tenant engagement. They must implement changes as appropriate to ensure services deliver the intended aims.	The overarching aim of both the Strategy and the Action Plan is to strengthen the ways in which we work with tenants to improve services. There is also a clear commitment in the introductory section of the Strategy to make sure that tenant views are not only heard but also acted upon.

2.3 In turn, this will also help support two key priorities set out in the new Sheffield City Council Plan 2024 – 2028:

- **”Work with communities to improve the places and spaces that make neighbourhoods great places to live and be active”** - An effective engagement strategy will help ensure that we work in partnership with our tenants and leaseholders to support successful neighbourhoods where people want to live.
- **“A new approach to community empowerment and engagement, working with our VCFSE partners and through LACs”** – The updated Strategy and Action Plan include commitments to working with the LACs, and community organisations, to improve engagement at a community level.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 Consultation with tenants and leaseholders has been a key element of the Engagement Strategy review. To ensure as many people as possible could participate, surveys were carried out both online and over the telephone.
- 3.2 The telephone surveys were focused on the tenants whose views are traditionally under-represented and used to address the gaps we had identified in the demographics of those responding to the online survey. The telephone surveys were therefore targeted towards younger tenants and those from a BAME background.
- 3.3 The survey questions – online and telephone versions – focused on the 5 key commitments given in the current Engagement Strategy. We asked if these commitments are still important and relevant to tenants, and if there is anything else they feel should be included as a priority.
- 3.4 As part of the online consultation, we also shared a draft Action Plan, outlining the work we are doing or intend to do to help us deliver on the commitments in the Strategy. We sought ideas from tenants and leaseholders about what more we could do to improve our engagement work and to give tenants a stronger voice.
- 3.5 In total, 274 people have completed the surveys and a summary of the outcomes is as follows:

	Online survey	Telephone survey
Demographics data		
No. of respondents	124	150
Age profile	18-24: 2% 25-49: 26% 50-64: 39% 65+: 32%	18-24: 1% 25-49: 62% 50-64: 17% 65+: 19%
% with a disability	51%	21%
% BAME background	Not measured	56%
% with English NOT 1 st language	11%	Not measured
Feedback on existing Engagement Strategy priorities		
% rating Priority One as ‘very important’ or ‘important’	93%	87%
% rating Priority Two as ‘very important’ or ‘important’	98%	90%

% rating Priority Three as 'very important' or 'important'	98%	86%
% rating Priority Four as 'very important' or 'important'	98%	93%
% rating Priority Five as 'very important' or 'important'	98%	94%

- 3.6 We know that around 24% of our tenants are of a BAME background but are often underrepresented in our consultations, and so by using ViewPoint to target this group we are confident that their views are well represented in this consultation.
- 3.7 We also know that around 46% of our tenants are under 50, but of the online respondents only 28% were of this age group. So we also used ViewPoint to target these tenants which resulted in a more representative age-profile.
- 3.8 It is clear from these results that the existing priorities are still relevant and important to the vast majority of tenants and leaseholders, and so they need to continue to be the focus of our engagement activity.
- 3.9 The consultation also asked if there was anything else which respondents believed should be included in the Engagement Strategy or the Action Plan. Some feedback from this question was unfortunately less relevant to this review. As with many consultation exercises, a number of respondents took the opportunity to air their frustration with issues outside the scope of the consultation. These issues included:
- ASB
 - Housing repairs
 - Ability to contact the housing service
 - Complaints handling
- 3.10 Whilst not relevant to the Engagement Strategy, these are areas of our service which we know attract a significant level of customer dissatisfaction. They are all areas which are being worked on and developed by other projects and initiatives.
- 3.11 However, there were several common themes emerging from the feedback which are relevant to this review and so have been acted upon and reflected in the updated Strategy and Action Plan. These are:

Feedback / common theme	How this is reflected in the final Strategy and / or Action Plan
The Council needs to properly listen to tenants and do what it says it will in the Strategy – a strategy is meaningless if it isn't implemented effectively.	<p>By sharing the Action Plan which underpins the Strategy, we are providing clear examples of <i>how</i> the Strategy will be implemented. For every Priority in the Strategy, there are several actions listed to which we are committed to delivering.</p> <p>Going forward, we need to ensure that we regularly monitor and update tenants on our progress against this Plan – this will be done through our tenant bulletins and other communications. A commitment to do this has been added to the Strategy.</p> <p>This commitment to listening to and acting on tenants' views is included as part of the introduction to the Strategy.</p>

<p>We need to offer a wide range of ways to be involved, so that we are meeting the diverse needs and preferences of our tenants. This needs to include those without online access.</p>	<p>This was already covered in the existing Strategy under Priority One. However, that priority has now been re-worded slightly to strengthen our commitment to accommodating and supporting a diverse tenant group in being involved in our engagement work. Also, to reflect that we won't solely rely on digital engagement methods.</p> <p>The Action Plan lists different ways in which tenants can participate – these include both digital and non-digital methods, and a range of activities in which people can engage at a time which suits them. More engagement channels will be added to the list as our engagement work develops over the coming months.</p>
<p>Tenants need to be more involved in the decision-making in relation to their housing.</p>	<p>Priority Two includes a commitment to ensure tenant voices are heard by those making decisions. To support this, the Action Plan references our new 'Tenant Voices Matter' panel – a new tenant and leaseholder group who will work directly with the Housing Policy Committee to help inform housing-related decisions.</p>
<p>Communications and information needs to be in plain language and easily understandable.</p>	<p>Priority One has been amended to refer specifically to the use of plain language, and a specific action to address this has been added into the Action Plan.</p>
<p>The Council needs to work with a range of community groups, not just TARAs.</p>	<p>Priority Three focuses on community engagement and has been updated to reinforce that this encompasses work with a range of different community organisations.</p> <p>This has also been addressed in the Action Plan, with a stronger emphasis on working with a whole range of groups including but not limited to TARAs.</p>
<p>Tenants need to be supported and empowered to engage effectively and confidently</p>	<p>Priority 5 of the Strategy is focused on tenant empowerment and the Action Plan includes specific actions aimed at achieving this – through a training programme and other support.</p>

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

Equality Implications

- 4.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and no negative impacts on any group of people were identified. The Strategy supports a fully inclusive approach to engagement and should have a positive impact in terms of equalities.

Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2 There are no financial or commercial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

- 4.3 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 received royal assent on 20th July 2023. Its aim is to strengthen legislative powers to tackle failing social landlords and to provide better support for tenants living in unsafe homes.
- 4.3.1 The terms of reference of this Committee, as set out within Part 3 of the Council's Constitution provides that it has the express power to monitor data "... for monitoring the performance of services" relating to the functions of the Council as Local Housing Authority, including public sector, [and] private sector..." Further, that this Committee has the discretion to "...refer matters within its own remit to Full Council only in exceptional circumstances." Given there are no apparent exceptional circumstances, this Committee has the reserved power to determine and approve all the matters set out within the report recommendations.
- 4.3.2 Pursuant to s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, ["the Act"] the Council must in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic those who do not.
- 4.3.3 Giving effect to matters relating to the proposed Action Plan, may inevitably engage relevant equalities implications.

Climate Implications

- 4.4 There are no climate implications arising from this report.

Other Implications

- 4.5 There are no other implications arising from this report.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The alternative to updating the strategy as proposed in this paper would be to continue with the current Engagement Strategy that has been in place since 2020. However, this would be contrary to our commitment to reviewing and updating the Strategy after 3 years.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Adopting the updated Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy will enable the Council to further improve how it engages with its tenants and leaseholders.
- 6.2 It will also support the Council in meeting the requirements of the new social housing regulatory framework.

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Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy: Draft Update December 2023

Intro from *tbc*

“We want tenants and leaseholders to be at the heart of what we do. Your views are important, and our aim is to deliver high quality services which you really value.

You should be able to influence what we do, be able to challenge us, tell us when we get it right and wrong and help us find better ways of delivering services.

There has been so much in the news over the past few years which has had a huge impact on attitudes towards tenant involvement. This has brought into sharp focus the importance of tenant voices being heard, and as a result the new Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 was introduced.

Tenant engagement has always been important to us, but we recognise that we need to do more to meet your expectations, and to meet the new regulatory requirements. We need to understand your views on how your homes are managed, and act on those views when designing services and making decisions.

The Engagement Strategy was originally developed in 2020 by tenants, leaseholders and local Councillors from across the city. We have recently consulted with you on its review, and this updated version is a result of the feedback you gave us.

It sets out how we are going to improve the way we engage with you. It explains our priorities for tenant engagement over the next 3 years, and how we will make it easier for all our customers to influence the services we deliver.

I am absolutely committed to delivering the Strategy’s promises and to involving tenants and leaseholders in making it a reality. This means truly listening to what you tell us and acting on those views.”

Insert name / job title

The Strategy

Priority 1: To provide easy and convenient access to information and engagement / involvement opportunities

Information about housing services and performance will be readily available for all customers. We will aim to remove all barriers, as far as possible, to people being engaged and involved. We will use plain language in all of our communications with tenants.

We will use a variety of creative engagement methods. Online engagement is important, but will not be our only channel. Our tenants have a diverse range of needs, and there will be opportunities for all to be involved in ways which suit them.

Priority 2: To ensure that customers and their communities can influence what we do

There will be an effective user-friendly framework for customer scrutiny, influence and assurance. To support this, we will improve joint-working across our different forums and meetings.

Engagement activities and topics will be influenced by customers – topics and agendas being driven by what matters most to customers – and the voice of tenants and leaseholders will be heard by those making decisions affecting them.

Priority 3: To engage effectively with local people and communities to improve what we do

There will be more engagement opportunities at a local level. All communication and consultation will be done in a way which specifically suits the local people or community.

There will be specific focus on engaging with the young people within our communities, as their voice often goes unheard. A wide range and variety of local service partners and community organisations will be encouraged to work with us and to be involved in shaping services in their communities.

Priority 4: To make sure that all involved in our services recognise and value customer engagement

Local Elected Councillors value customer engagement and will be encouraged and supported to become more involved in housing services.

The outcomes of engagement will be communicated – to customers, staff, the services, and external organisations who work with us. We will raise awareness of the benefits that customer engagement brings.

We will promote the opportunities to be involved, so that all our customers know how they can make a positive difference.

Priority 5: To support and resource customer engagement work so that it delivers outcomes

We will encourage, empower, and support customers to be involved. We will help people to feel confident in engaging with us and to be involved in a way which suits them.

We will support Tenants and Residents Associations and other community groups to work as effectively as possible so that they can achieve the greatest benefits for the communities they serve. We will help to maximise joint-working opportunities.

Evaluating the outcomes

We will regularly review the strategy to make sure it continues to reflect what we want to achieve.

There is an Action Plan which details the actions needed to meet those commitments. The Action Plan will be regularly updated, and the latest version will always be available on our website. We will also regularly share our progress against this Action Plan in our tenant bulletins and social media posts.

Menu of Involvement

We offer a range of involvement opportunities designed to offer 'something for everyone' – whether you only have a couple of minutes to complete a quick survey or would like to spend an hour or so per month being an active member of one of our panels.

Please see [Engagement HQ] or get in touch with us at GetInvolved@sheffield.gov.uk if you would like to know more.

Engagement Strategy – Implementation Action Plan

1. The Strategy says that we will “provide easy and convenient access to engagement / involvement opportunities”

To help achieve this, we have already:

- Introduced new ways of customers engaging with us digitally, through online ‘Zoom’ meetings and through running surveys / consultations on the Council’s new online consultation platform Have Your Say Sheffield.
- Continued to promote and develop our Facebook page, full of useful housing-related content and now with over 5000 followers
- Used different kinds of surveys in recent consultations to ensure as many customers as possible can take part (e.g. online surveys and telephone surveys)
- Continued to produce an Annual Report each year, showing how we’ve done and what we have planned for the next 12 months.
- Launched two new pages on the Council’s new Have Your Say website, promoting our engagement opportunities and useful community-related information

To do even better, we plan to:

Action	By when?	How will we know we have achieved this?
Page 47 Improve online engagement through increased and more effective use of Have Your Say Sheffield	June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will have been an increase in the number of active consultation projects on HYSS • There will have been an increase in the number of active participants engaging in consultations on HYSS • Performance for TSM ‘Listens to views’ will have improved
Increase the number and range and representation of people who choose to get involved, through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a ‘menu of engagement’ which offers a variety of channels through which tenants can get involved with us. • Improved communications which are easy to understand and in plain language 	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our menu of engagement will have been published • There will have been an increase in the number of tenants engaging with us • Performance for TSM ‘Keeps tenants informed’ will have improved
Improve how we measure and capture the demographics of who get involved in our engagement activities, to enable us to identify gaps	March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our engagement profile will be more in line with our tenant profile

and focus development work accordingly to increase representativeness.		
Develop and implement an overarching 12-months communications plan for the housing service, ensuring a co-ordinated and timely approach to effective use of all of our comms channels.	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comms plan will have been agreed, covering all communication-related elements of the new Consumer Standards to help ensure that we meet those. • Performance for TSM 'Keeps tenants informed' will have improved

2. The Strategy says that we will “ensure that customers and their communities can influence what we do”

To help achieve this, we have already:

- Continued to hold regular Housing and Neighbourhoods Advisory Panel (HANAP) meetings with elected Tenant Reps, to discuss key service changes and performance information.
- Undertaken large-scale consultation with tenants and leaseholders to develop a new set of Landlord Commitments, which will guide our service’s priorities over the coming months and years.
- Started sharing regular performance updates on our Facebook page and in our tenant e-bulletins

To do even better, we plan to:

Action	By when?	How will we know we have achieved this?
Demonstrating the influence that customer feedback has had on service improvements, through a new ‘You Said We Did’ initiative. This feedback will be through several channels, such as ‘Mystery Shopping’, new Tenant Panels and Tenant Challengers group.	June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will have been an increase in the number of ‘You Said We Did’ actions being captured. • We will have regular tenant communications in place to close ‘feedback loop’ • We will have set up the Mystery shopping programme and will be learning from the results • We will have a group of Tenant Challengers trained and actively reviewing services • We will have established a set of active Tenant Panels

Introduce a new channel for tenants to talk directly to the Elected Members making decisions about their housing services, giving them more influence in the decisions affecting them. This will be called the “Tenants Voices Matter” panel	December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Tenant Voices Matter panel will be established and will be positively contributing to the decision-making process
Make increasing use of surveys – both online and over the telephone – to inform service development	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will have been an increase in the number of ‘You Said We Did’ actions being captured. We will have regular tenant communications in place to close ‘feedback loop’

3. The Strategy says that we will “engage effectively with local people and communities to improve what we do”

To help achieve this, we have already:

- Continued work in our local Neighbourhood Teams to engage with our tenants and to build links with local service providers and agencies
- Undertaken consultation with local tenants about key initiatives or plans in their area – eg. in Gleadless Valley for the ‘masterplan’ project
- Started to re-introduce the Local Housing Forums in our Neighbourhoods, with a refreshed approach to help involve more local people

do even better, we plan to:

Action	By when?	How will we know we have achieved this?
Work in partnership with LACs to support, encourage and monitor tenant involvement in local decision making.	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in tenants actively involved in LACs
Trial a new approach to community engagement through a new ‘Housing Advisory Panel’ in the North East of the city. This will involve a range of stakeholders and community organisations, and will include testing a new way of awarding of community grants	June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pilot Housing Advisory Panel will have been established and will be meeting regularly to discuss local issues The HAP grant scheme will be in place and the first round of grants will have been awarded
Improve local engagement through more effective Local Housing Forums and more geographically-focused consultation on Have Your Say Sheffield	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance for TSM ‘Positive contribution to neighbourhood’ will have improved
Improve the local engagement structure by bringing tenants and Neighbourhood Teams together to focus on neighbourhood issues	March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular Local Housing Forums involving tenants and Neighbourhood Teams will be taking place to shape community issues

4. The Strategy says that we will “make sure that all involved in our services recognise and value customer engagement”

To help achieve this, we have already:

- Shared the Engagement Strategy with all teams across our service
- Included all Elected Members on the circulation list for our regular tenant bulletins, to raise awareness and increase engagement in the housing service
- Ensured there is good-quality housing-related information in the induction packs for Elected Members

To do even better, we plan to:

Action	By when?	How will we know we have achieved this?
Page 50 Ensure that all teams have an engagement-related objective in their service plans to promote positive engagement with tenants.	June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement-related objectives will be included in all service plans
Share more widely the outcomes of engagement and consultation, so that people can see the differences that it makes – eg. through the use of a ‘You Said, We Did’ record of changes made as a result of customer feedback	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘There will have been an increase in the number of ‘You Said We Did’ actions being captured. • We will have regular tenant communications in place to close ‘feedback loop’

5. The Strategy says that we will “support and resource customer engagement work so that it delivers outcomes”

To help achieve this, we have already:

- With our partner Learn For Life Enterprise, delivered free ongoing digital support to our tenants, through a range of different classes and sessions
- Held a ‘best-practice / shared learning event at St Mary’s Church to bring different community organisations together to help encourage networking and peer-to-peer support

To do even better, we plan to:

Action	By when?	How will we know we have achieved this?
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Support tenants to access engagement opportunities and have influence by continuing to provide free digital inclusion training	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will have held a minimum of 7 digital skills sessions city-wide per week for 50 weeks of the year • Satisfaction levels with the digital engagement sessions will have improved
Hold more events for community organisations and tenants to come together and learn from each other	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will have held at least 2 engagement events during 2024
Implement a programme of training and development to support tenants to effectively engage with us – in, for example: chairing skills, mystery shopping, data protection laws and scrutiny skills. We will ensure that this training is accessible to all, providing additional support where necessary for tenants to participate in training and development.	March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A tenant training programme will be in place, be promoted widely and will be widely used by tenants

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Proposal Name: Update of the Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy
EIA ID: 2396
EIA Author: Vicky Kennedy

Proposal Outline: The current Housing and Neighbourhoods Engagement Strategy was launched in 2021. It was written in close consultation with tenants and leaseholders, and a commitment was made to review it after 3 years. That review is now being undertaken, again in consultation with our tenants and leaseholders, and the Strategy will be updated based on their feedback. The action plan which underpins the Strategy and describes how we intend to implement will also be updated as part of this review, again based on the consultation outcomes. Since the introduction of the new Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, the importance of listening to, and acting on, tenant views has become ever more important. Our updated Strategy will help us meet those new regulatory requirements.

Proposal Type: Non-Budget

Year Of Proposal: 23/24

Lead Director for proposal: Janet Sharpe (HSG)

Service Area: Housing and Neighbourhoods

EIA Start Date: 17/10/2023

Lead Equality Objective: Leading the city in celebrating and promoting inclusion

Equality Lead Officer: Louise Nunn

Decision Type

Committees: Policy Committees

- Housing

Portfolio

Primary Portfolio: Operational Services

EIA is cross portfolio: No

EIA is joint with another organisation: No

Overview of Impact

Overview Summary:

The main aims of the Engagement Strategy are to broaden tenant participation and to enable / encourage a more diverse range of tenants and leaseholders to engage with us. It should therefore have a positive impact in terms of equalities and inclusivity. The consultation exercise has used two main channels of engagement - the Council's Have Your Say platform, and telephone surveys via Viewpoint. We have used the telephone surveys to target tenants from demographic groups which were showing to be under-represented in the online survey (which, after running the online survey for 2 weeks, emerged as younger tenants and those from a BAME background). So in the consultation undertaken as part of the review, we have made real efforts to ensure that respondents are representative of our diverse tenant base.

Impacted characteristics: •

Consultation and other engagement

Is consultation or other engagement required: Yes

We have used the Have Your Say platform to get people's views on the current engagement strategy - is it still relevant, is it covering things which are important to tenants, are there any gaps? We have promoted this survey through our tenant bulletin (circulation list of around 30,000) and via our Facebook page (5000+ followers). Reminders have been issued to encourage as many as possible to complete the survey. We have also used the 'ideas board' tool on the platform, for those who prefer to give their views that way rather than complete a survey. Once the online survey had been running for a couple of weeks and we had a good response, we analysed the demographics of those who had responded. It became clear that younger tenants and those from a BAME background were underrepresented, and so we have used our telephone survey partners Viewpoint to undertake telephone surveys targeting

those two groups of tenants. They will be completing a 150 surveys so the sample size will be sufficient for the results to be valid. The online survey is here:
<https://haveyoursay.sheffield.gov.uk/engagement-strategy-consultation>

Cumulative Impact

Does the proposal have a cumulative impact: No

Impact areas:

Initial Sign-Off

Full impact assessment required: No

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Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report: Matthew Woolston, Team Manager, Private Housing Standards

Tel: 0114 2734680

Report of: Janet Sharpe

Report to: Housing Policy Committee

Date of Decision: 26 January 2023

Subject: Closure Report – Selective Licensing of London Road, Abbeydale Road and Chesterfield Road (LAC).

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? 2513				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	N/A	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-				
<p><i>“The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”</i></p>				

Purpose of Report

This report will outline findings from the recently concluded Selective Licensing designation which was in operation on parts of London Road, Abbeydale Road and Chesterfield Road as well as certain adjoining streets.

It will give background information as to why the scheme was implemented and a summary of the actions taken by Private Housing Standards in ensuring all licensable properties within the scheme met the licence conditions. It includes information relating to the inspection programme, the enforcement actions taken and a general overview of results and findings.

Recommendations

- Members are recommended to note the content of the report.

Background Papers:

Cabinet Report dated 18th June 2018 which sought approval for the selective licensing designation

<https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=123&MIId=6979&Ve r=4> Item 9

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: Helen Damon
		Legal: Tracy Beal
		Equalities & Consultation: Louise Nunn
		Climate: Darryl Smedley
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	EMT member who approved submission:	Ajman Ali
3	Committee Chair consulted:	Councillor Douglas Johnson
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: Catherine Hughes	Job Title: Service Manager, Private Housing Standards
	Date: 17 th January 2024	

1. PROPOSAL

1.1 1. Overview

1.1 The designation for the selective licensing of properties on areas of London Road, Abbeydale Road and Chesterfield Road (LAC) commenced on 1 November 2018 and ended on 31 October 2023.

1.2 Upon completion all licenced properties have been assessed to ensure that they meet the licence conditions, 99% of licenced properties have been inspected on at least one occasion. Further detail on the 1 property not inspected is in section 6.3 of this report.

1.3 All licensable properties which do not have a valid exemption had to apply for a licence, where this did not happen investigations have been carried out for failure to apply for a licence and enforcement action was taken.

1.4 Landlords have been provided with training and advice to ensure that they are correctly managing their properties and tenancies.

2. Background

2.1 The council has a statutory duty to regulate the private sector. There are over 45,000 private rented properties in Sheffield. The service responds to reports of poor property condition and / or management concerns on a reactive basis.

2.2 Selective Licensing is a discretionary power, introduced in the Housing Act 2004. It imposes a legal requirement for all residential landlords in a designated area to apply for a licence for each residential property that they rent out in that area.

2.3 Before a selective licensing designation can be considered the Council must clearly identify whether the area is suffering problems that are caused by or attributable to any of the set criteria (see 2.6) when making the designation and what it expects the designation to achieve.

2.4 Secondly, other alternative courses of action must be considered that may achieve the same objective. This could include renewal programmes, education for landlords etc. Where anti-social behaviour condition is considered, it could be that Special Interim Management Orders could be used as an alternative that would achieve the same objective.

2.5 Only where there is no practicable and feasible alternative to a designation should a scheme be made.

2.6 Before a Selective Licensing designation can be made the

Government state that any scheme must satisfy one or more of the following conditions:

- Low housing demand (or is likely to become such an area)
- A significant and persistent problem caused by anti-social behaviour
- Poor property conditions
- High levels of migration
- High level of deprivation
- High levels of crime

2.7 Prior to the selective licensing designation being proposed in this area the Private Housing Standards service spent almost 3 years working proactively in the London Road, Abbeydale Road and Chesterfield Road areas. Common issues were observed at several properties suggesting that a significant number of them had poor conditions, specifically relating to insufficient fire detection and or protection.

2.8 There was also a lack of compliance from the landlords and agents which led to the service having to take formal enforcement action on a high number of cases (just over 30%).

2.9 There was strong evidence to suggest that the concerns encountered were not isolated to just the properties which were inspected but were likely widespread within the area. The details of the findings can be found in the Cabinet Report dated 18th June 2018 which sought approval for the selective licensing designation the Cabinet Report can be found under item 9 at <https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=123&MIId=6979&Ver=4>

2.10 The Cabinet report set out 9 Performance Indicators which have been monitored and reported on throughout the designation of the scheme these are on section 18 of this report.

3. Consultation

3.1 Where a local authority wishes to designate a selective licensing area, it is required to formally consult on proposals. Government guidance states that the consultation period should be at least 10 weeks and must include all people that are likely to be affected by the scheme. The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety approved a report on 20 November 2017 which gave approval for a 13-week consultation programme to take place.

3.2 There is no requirement to carry out consultation when the designation ends.

4. Application and Licensing Process

- 4.1 All privately rented properties, unless exempt by virtue of a statutorily given reason, required a licence. As part of the licence application the applicant was required to provide the details of the individuals or company proposing to act as the licence holder as well as that of any individuals or company proposing to act as property manager.
- 4.2 Applicants were required to provide (where applicable) copies of the property's Gas Safety Record, Grade A fire alarm system certificate, emergency lighting certificate and a floor plan. In addition, a written tenancy agreement and photographic ID were also required.
- 4.3 All applications required the payment of an application fee, payable in two stages. The initial application fee was set at £500 and covered the cost of processing the application and issuing the licence. The size of the Inspection and Monitoring fee (stage 2) was risk assessed, based on the quality of information received in the application.
- 4.4 Where a complete application was made, on time and without missing information, the application was deemed to be low risk and the stage 2 fee was £250. Where an incomplete application was received on time, but missing any information required to validate it, the application was deemed to be high risk and a £500 fee was payable. Where a late application was made or where Private Housing Standards identified that a landlord had failed to licence a property, a £1000 stage 2 fee was required to be paid.
- 4.5 The higher charged inspection and monitoring fees were representative of the additional administrative work that would be required to validate the application. Landlords and property managers who failed to obtain a licence were further sanctioned by the imposition of Financial Penalties.
- 4.6 A local authority is free to set fees as it sees fit, however they must be calculated to cover the cost of administering the scheme and are not permitted to make any profits.
- 4.7 Prior to the designation it was anticipated that approximately 420 properties would require a licence, however 483 applications were received. Not all licence applications were processed to the point of the issuing of a licence due to some properties being found to be exempt from the requirement to comply with the scheme. In such cases exempt application forms and fees were returned.
- 4.8 80% of applications were deemed to be low risk, with 20% being considered high risk. This was in line with projections for the high risk / low risk split outlined in the cabinet report of 18th June 2018.
- 4.9 Upon receipt of a valid application licences were issued, prior to inspection. The licence stipulates several conditions which must be

complied with. Failure to comply with these conditions may result in enforcement action being taken against the Licence Holder. 38 compliance failures have been recorded; these have been low level compliance failures which have not warranted further enforcement.

5. Fit and Proper Person Test

5.1 The Housing Act 2004 states that all selective licence holders and managers must pass a Fit and Proper Person test. This means that they must be free from criminal convictions and be able to evidence that they have satisfactory property management arrangements in place. This ensures that tenants are protected against landlords who are not suitable individuals or who cannot appropriately manage their properties.

5.2 As part of the fit and proper test the proposed licence holder and proposed manager must confirm that:

- They do not have unspent convictions relating to offences involving fraud or other dishonesty, or violence or drugs, or any offence relating to Schedule 3 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003(a)
- There has been no finding by a court or tribunal that they have practiced discrimination relating to protected characteristics.
- There has been no contravention of any enactment relating to housing, public health, environmental health or landlord and tenant law which has led to civil or criminal judgement being made.
- They do not own or have owned, manage, or have managed, properties subject to control orders under Section 379 of the Housing Act 1985, or properties subject to enforcement as detailed in Section 5 of the Housing Act 2004.
- They do not own or have owned, manage, or have managed properties which have previously been refused a licence under Part 2 or 3 of the Housing Act 2004, or have been subject of an interim or final management order under the Housing Act 2004

5.3 In addition, the service must also be convinced that the proposed landlord had set in place satisfactory management arrangements, when not employing a professional property manager and when located in an area more than two hours travel time from their licenced address. Applicants were required to answer questions in relation to how they would deal with emergency issues at the property and how they would advise their tenants in such scenarios, what arrangements would be in place when they were unavailable for extended periods of time and how they would deal with anti-social behaviour.

5.4 Internal and external partners were consulted, along with officers from Private Housing Standards by way of an email circular which

required the receiver to notify Private Housing Standards of any concerns relating to the fit and proper persons assessment.

- 5.5 Where concerns were raised, they were discussed by a panel made up of Private Housing Standards Team Managers and Legal and Policy Officers at a monthly Fit and Proper meeting. Where the panel found that concerns were evidenced that were sufficient to warrant action, they can decide to turn down the licence application or ensure that alternative solutions were implemented to guarantee suitable management provisions were put in place and all relevant parties in respect of a licence were deemed to be Fit and Proper.
- 5.6 Feedback gathered from Fit and Proper email circulars resulted in 29 managers and or property management agents being discussed at Fit and Proper meetings. This represents roughly 10% of the overall number of interested parties named on licence applications.
- 5.7 One management company was deemed to be not Fit and Proper, and as a result their licence application was turned down and the licence holder was required to make alternative management arrangements.
- 5.8 One management company and their director were deemed to be not fit and proper following them being prosecuted for the offence as stated in Section 95 of the Housing Act 2004 of managing a house that was required to be selectively licenced, but which was not licenced. The licence application was still at the processing stage when the scheme ended and as such the property was not licenced.
- 5.9 One property owner who did not have an active role in management of their property was deemed to be not Fit and Proper. In this case additional conditions were written into the licence to limit their involvement with the property.
- 5.10 For a property to be licenced the service must be in receipt of a valid application. At the end of the scheme 7 applications were being assessed by the Fit and Proper panel and as such were not deemed to be valid. Due to this the applications did not become valid and as such the properties were not licenced.
- 5.11 Prior to the commencement of the scheme, we were aware of a number of landlords and agents operating in the area who had previously been deemed to be not Fit and Proper. Proactive enforcement work for failure to licence has discovered 3 landlords and agents who were previously the subject of Fit and Proper concerns, who were operating in the area without a licence.
- 5.12 One such landlord was found to be operating in the area following a visit to a neighbouring property. Although the property was licenced it was evident that the people named on the licence were not in control of the property but were being used by the owner to circumnavigate their

not Fit and Proper status. Subsequent investigations found that one of the properties was in fact an unlicensed HMO with several serious hazards. Action was taken to remedy the hazards and the landlord was prosecuted for the most serious housing safety offences and had a financial penalty imposed upon them for a range of other breaches of HMO Management Regulations.

6. Inspection Programme

- 6.1 The main aim of the scheme is to identify and remove Category 1 and High category 2 Hazards as defined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and to ensure compliance with licence conditions. The HHSRS is a risk-based evaluation tool which helps local authorities identify housing safety hazards and to place requirements upon landlords to undertake works to protect their tenants against potential risks and hazards to health and safety.
- 6.2 Legislation does not state that all licenced properties require an inspection, however without inspecting all properties it is not possible to ensure that properties meet the licence conditions and the Private Housing Standards service committed to inspecting all licensable properties at least once during the licensing period. All but 1 licenced property was inspected.
- 6.3 Private Housing Standards failed to gain access to 1 address to carry out an inspection. The tenant of the property had been admitted to hospital with serious mental health issues and pursuing access would not have been in their interests. In taking this decision a desktop assessment was conducted to review the safety certificates for the property. In addition, the floor plans provided raised no concerns relating to escape routes or fire detection. The licence holder for the property had several other similar properties within the scheme that were fully compliant and worked positively with the service to provide all information required.
- 6.4 Inspections were carried out on a risk-based approach. Properties deemed to be of a higher risk based on the quality of information provided at application stage were prioritised over those deemed to be of a lower risk. Of the properties deemed to be high risk 34% had 1 or more Category 1 Hazard or High Category 2 Hazard.
- 6.5 In total 492 Category 1 Hazards and High Scoring Category 2 Hazards have been identified.
- 6.6 Of the 472 licenced properties which have been inspected 219 (46%) of them contained at least one Category 1 or High Scoring Category 2 Hazard.
- 6.7 In addition to the initial inspection many properties required several revisits to ascertain whether the property was licensable, to monitor the progress of works and to assess whether required works had been

complied with. In total this meant that 700 property visits were undertaken in the 5 years of the scheme.

6.8 Works specified to remedy Category 1 or High Scoring Category 2 Hazards is governed under Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 and is therefore independent from the selective licensing scheme under Part 3 of the Act. As a result, timeframes for such works can be extended beyond the end of the scheme.

6.9 At the end of the designation date 465 (95%) of the 492 hazards identified had been removed. The remaining 27 hazards in 7 properties are in the process of being removed and will be monitored for compliance over the coming weeks.

6.10 The top 5 hazards identified during the scheme are:

- Fire Safety (142 hazards)
- Falls on Stairs (103)
- Falls Between Levels (54)
- Damp and Mould (43)
- Excess Cold (25).

6.11 These are the same 5 hazards that were the most prevalent during the proactive evidencing work that was undertaken prior to the designation of the licensing scheme and were used as evidence for the need for the scheme in the cabinet report. This demonstrates that the designation rationale was justified and well-informed.

6.12 The table below lists all 29 housing safety Hazards as defined by the HHSRS in Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004: and shows the frequency that they were identified whilst the scheme was in operation.

Hazard	Frequency
Fire Safety	142
Falling on stairs etc	103
Falling between levels	54
Damp and Mould Growth	43
Excess Cold	25
Electrical Hazards	22
Collision and entrapment	18
Food Safety	18
Personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage	17

Falls on level surfaces etc	13
Domestic Hygiene, pests and refuse	8
Flames, hot surfaces etc	8
Carbon Monoxide and fuel combustion products	5
Structural collapse and falling elements	5
Entry by Intruders	4
Excess Heat	3
Position and operability of amenities etc	2
Crowding and Space	1
Un-combusted fuel gas	1
Asbestos	0
Biocides	0
Lead	0
Radiation	0
Volatile organic compounds	0
Lighting	0
Noise	0
Water Supply	0
Falls associated with baths etc	0
Explosions	0

6.13 By considering the maximum occupancy of the properties where hazards were identified it is possible to estimate that up to 800 people have been made safer following the removal of serious safety hazards from their homes.

6.14 In carrying out work to remedy hazards, it is estimated that more than £250,000 has been spent by property owners on improvements.

7. Inspection Case Studies

7.1 *Abbeydale Road property – Fire Safety, Falls on Stairs and Falls Between Levels.* This flat had an escape route that routed the occupant through the rear kitchen which is where fires are most likely to occur and had no effective fire separation between it and the front living room

which featured a rescue window. There was very little adequate automatic fire detection.

To remedy the fire safety concerns the owner fitted a fully automated fire detection system along with a 30-minute fire door with vision panel to separate the main risk room from the remainder of the flat.

In addition to the fire safety concerns the staircase was very cramped making it difficult to be able to manoeuvre furniture upstairs when required, due to this the restraint had been removed and there was nothing to prevent falls to the lower levels. The owner fitted a removable balustrade to the stairs to both allow for increased safety but to also allow for furniture to be moved around where required.

7.2 *London Road property – Damp, Fire Safety and Excess Cold.* The layout of this flat was such that it posed a serious fire safety risk to the occupants.

To mitigate the risk whilst retaining the existing layout, the owner installed an automated water misting fire suppression system, an integrated fire system and emergency lighting, the fire detection system also linked to the adjoining licenced property which shared communal areas.

This flat had no working central heating system following a leak from the boiler, which had also caused significant damp issues in the property.

The landlord was required to install a new boiler and associated plumbing to ensure that the heating system was in good, safe working order, and took steps to remove all issues relating to the damp.

7.3 *Abbeydale Road property – Mould and Damp.* The property had several issues which were causing water ingress and water escape. In addition to this the property was insufficiently heated, the two factors were causing penetrating damp issues within the property.

The landlord better insulated the property and carried out works to service and repair the heating system, in addition works were undertaken to fix guttering and repair the roof.

8. Enforcement

8.1 Private Housing Standards have sought to take enforcement action against property owners who have failed to licence licensable properties. Unlicensed properties have been identified proactively and investigations have also taken place following reports from members of the public or partner agencies.

8.2 Properties within the designated area, which didn't have a licence or application, were cross referenced against council tax records to identify the tenure of the property. Where officers identified that a

licence was likely to be required proactive inspections took place to identify whether an offence had been committed.

- 8.3 Information provided by HM Land Registry was used to identify when properties have been sold. Desktop work has been able to identify the likelihood of the sale resulting in a licensing requirement. Where applications have not been submitted, proactive visits have taken place to evidence the need for enforcement.
- 8.4 Failure to apply for a licence is an offence under Section 95 of the Housing Act 2004 and can result in the council issuing a Civil Penalty or seeking a prosecution. The service took a zero-tolerance approach to failure to licence in the LAC area and undertook enforcement in all cases where compliance breaches could be evidenced.
- 8.5 A total of 65 Civil Penalties have been issued to 33 different individuals and 5 management agencies, for failure to licence offences at addresses within the designation.
- 8.6 Civil Penalty fines totalling £179,200 have been issued. At the time of writing approximately £70,000 had been recovered by Private Housing Standards, who continue to seek the outstanding amounts. Where fines are not received or where the individuals fail with their repayment terms, the service will look to put a charge on the property to recover the debt, in addition to other means of recover this could lead to an enforced sale.
- 8.7 Seven Prosecutions totalling 17 offences have been sought for failure to licence, and for failing to provide information, Prosecutions are considered on a cases by case basis and guided by factors such as the seriousness of the case, whether the there are repeat offenders and where a prosecution would be a higher deterrent against future offending.
- 8.8 At the time of writing 5 of the 7 prosecutions had been successfully completed and 2 are pending decisions following hearings which are scheduled for later in 2024. Fines and costs for prosecutions currently total £11,284
- 8.9 Under the Housing and Planning Act 2016 a local authority may apply to the First-Tier Tribunal (FtT) for a rent repayment order to be made, against an individual who has committed a relevant offence under Section 95 of the Housing Act 2004, failure to licence a property is one such relevant offence.
- 8.10 The FtT can issue an order for the immediate landlord to repay up to 12 months of rent to the payee. Private Housing Standards have a test case for a Rent Repayment Order and are awaiting case direction and a hearing in 2024. The case will seek repayment of rent totalling £10075 which had been made via housing benefits.

8.11 A total of 207 Informal notices and 190 formal notices were served on licence holders and managers, in addition to this 65 civil penalties for failure to licence were issued..

9. Landlord and Manager Engagement

9.1 It is a condition of the licence that all licence holders and managers attend a training course specific to the scheme which is run by the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA) admission to the course is included in the cost of the licensing fee. The course sets out to provide the attendee with the skills required to successfully manage their properties and tenancies.

9.2 Due to Covid 19, we were unable to deliver training courses as planned, where possible post Covid, courses were arranged and landlords were encouraged to attend.

9.3 A total of 172 (52%) of landlords and managers have attended training sessions.

9.4 All landlords were issued with a landlord pack which included information relating to handling ASB, overcrowding, a guide to the HHSRS and licensing conditions.

9.5 Where landlords and managers were uncertain about their obligations the service's tenancy relation officers offered specialist advice. This was especially useful to landlords who required information to legally bring a tenancy to an end. Three landlords sought advice of this nature.

9.6 Landlords and or managers were encouraged to attend inspections so that feedback could be provided. Where works were required, the officer was able to explain the defects and to advise on the correct course to remedy the issues. Dialogue remained open throughout the process allowing landlords the opportunity to contact the officer for additional advice where required.

9.7 Where informal and formal notices are issued they provide clear instruction as to what the expectations of the landlord are, as well as outlining the timeframes involved. The documents also make it clear as to how the landlord can contact the officer and how to make an appeal if necessary.

9.8 The service has taken complaints seriously and followed the council's complaint procedure where required. Three complaints have been received in relation to the scheme, all have been responded to within the timeframes set out in the procedure. Two were dealt with at problem solving stage, 1 required further investigation.

9.9 Where officers encountered empty properties that were being renovated, they sought to advise owners of the obligations to licence should the property become licensable. This has ensured that property

owners who were not originally active in the area at the time of the consultation were aware of their responsibilities.

10. Tenant Engagement

- 10.1 Whilst conducting property inspections, officers have interacted with tenants to provide advice and support. Several concerns have been noted by officers which have resulted in referrals being made to agencies such as Social Services, and the Housing Health & Needs Team. Further details are set out in section 11.
- 10.2 Prior to the scheme's commencement Private Housing Standards had concerns about the lack of engagement from tenants in the area with our service, particularly in relation to property condition. This lack of requests for service did not corroborate with the problems that we were encountering during our proactive inspection work.
- 10.3 During the designation period, 27 requests for service were received from tenants reporting issues in their homes. This represented 6% of properties within the designated area.
- 10.4 Sixty nine enquiries were received from tenants in relation to tenancy matters. Thirty nine of these enquiries related to tenants who were in receipt of a notice to leave their property, 17 serious concerns required intervention to ensure that tenants were not subject to landlord harassment or illegal eviction. Thirteen enquiries related to general advice work.
- 10.5 Working in the area over the 5 years of the designation has resulted in tenants understanding the role of Private Housing Standards and how we work to protect tenants in their home.

11. Partnership Working

- 11.1 Inspecting Officers have worked with several internal and external partners including:
- *Environmental Services* – regarding issues relating to refuse and fly tipping.
 - *South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue* – regarding to fire safety and fire standards.
 - *Building control* – regarding unsafe structures in external areas
 - *Food Safety* – regarding businesses premises associated with residential units
 - *Housing Solutions* – regarding insanitary and unsuitable properties
 - *Child Safeguarding Team* – regarding a case of destitution
 - *Police* – regarding illegal activities within licensable properties
 - *DWP* – regarding fraud and payment of benefits
 - *Council Tax* – regarding properties that weren't listed on Council Tax records.
 - *Sharrow Vale Community Forum* – Provided information for their

newsletter at around the halfway point of the scheme.

12. Scheme Completion and beyond

- 12.1 The LAC selective licensing designation ended on 31 October 2023, there were no legislative provisions that would have enabled the designation to be automatically extended. As landlords had complied with the scheme and carried out works as required, there was no further evidence of extensive poor property condition and as such no grounds for the service to seek to extend the designation.
- 12.2 Property owners were obliged to apply for a licence until the designation ended, licences were issued right up to the penultimate day of the scheme and inspections were carried out.
- 12.3 At completion of the scheme the licensing fee income which has funded the licensing officers ceased. The service will continue to investigate those properties where outstanding works are in progress to ensure that they are completed, but following this, targeted inspection works in the area will come to an end.
- 12.4 Landlords who we had fit and proper concerns about, but who did not receive a licence due to their applications being assessed at the time of the scheme ending are now known to the service which enables us to monitor their working practices across the city.
- 12.5 Upon completion of these inspections, Private Housing Standards will revert to carrying out work in the area on a reactive basis following requests for service from tenants, members of the public and stakeholders.

13. Risks

- 13.1 A dedicate resource will no longer operate in the area.
- 13.2 Landlords and agents could take a less active approach in ensuring that they comply with their statutory obligations, knowing that the area is no longer pro-actively monitored.
- 13.3 Landlords and Agents can be restricted from operating within licensing schemes, if deemed to be not Fit and Proper, this doesn't apply when operating properties which do not require a licence. When the scheme and the obligation to licence ended, we lost the ability to restrict individuals from operating in the LAC area. Tenants of certain landlords may now have less protection against poor standards of tenancy and property management. Agents who have been operating outside of the area to avoid licensing may look to move back in.

14. Risk Mitigations

- 14.1 Working in the area over the duration of the scheme has increased the services visibility. Tenants now have a better

understanding of what they can do to contact the council to rectify problems, landlords have a better understanding of their responsibilities but also understand the consequences of failing to take the appropriate actions.

14.2 We have a better understanding of those landlords and agents with who concerns were raised.

14.3 A substantial amount of work has taken place within the designation to rectify problems in properties which, were it not for the scheme would in most cases have gone unreported and promoted the service to tenants so they feel confident in contacting us for support in the future.

15. Summary

15.1 As a result of works carried out in the designated area, private rented properties have been made safer, compliance with licence conditions achieved and landlords have been supported to provide better managed tenancies.

15.2 The results of the inspection programme have reinforced the need for the scheme by evidencing a high frequency of the types of hazards that were anticipated prior to implementation. Initial concerns relating to flats above business premises were also confirmed to be warranted.

15.3 We have identified property owners who have failed to licence their properties and ensured that the correct enforcement action has taken place. This proactive work has uncovered landlords and agents who we have previously had concerns about and has enabled us to be able to better monitor their properties and management activities.

15.4 Enforcement action has taken place which has resulted in a number of individuals being prosecuted and served with Civil Penalties for failure to comply with legal notices.

15.5 Following completion of the scheme, Private Housing Standards no longer has the resources to work proactively in the LAC area, and apart from a small period of time in the months preceding the scheme, will revert to providing a reactive service in the area.

15.6 Private Housing Standards will continue in its duty to assess private rented housing and provide recommendations for intervention across the city.

16. Performance Measures

17.1 The table below sets out the achievements of the scheme against the performance indicators set out in the Cabinet Report which sought approval for the designation in 2018.

	Objective		Performance Indicator	
1.	All properties in designated area have complied with the requirement to apply	1.1	% of eligible properties with valid applications	115%
		1.2	% of properties with applications as a result of investigations (First submission incomplete, or where we have found unlicensed properties)	20%
2.	Private rented tenants are safer in their homes	2.1	% of properties with gas safety certificates (if applicable)	92%
		2.2	Number of properties where a serious hazard is removed/reduced	212 with 7 pending
		2.3	Number of properties where fire risk is removed/reduced	142
		2.4	% of licence compliant properties	100%
3.	Private rented properties become better managed	3.1	% of properties with a valid tenancy agreement	100%
		3.2	% of properties with landlord address/contact number provided	<1%
		3.3	Number of households with contact number for repairs/emergency repairs	100%
4.	All landlords and agents operating in the area are Fit and Proper	4.1	Number of landlords/agents checks carried out	250
		4.2	Number of follow up checks/investigations carried out	29
		4.3	Number of Fit and Proper refusals	3
		4.4	Number of properties where management handed over to responsible/reputable agent	1
5.	Bad landlords have been penalised for failure to apply or breaches of their legal responsibilities.	5.1	Number of inspections carried out	700
		5.2	Number of legal Notices served	397
		5.3	Number of Civil Penalties issued	65
		5.4	Number of prosecution cases	7

		5.5	Number of breaches addressed	38
6.	Properties are no longer used for illegal/immoral activities	6.1	No. of properties where illegal activities reported/addressed via multiagency operations	2
7.	Tenants are protected from poor housing or other harassment activity	7.1	Number of harassment cases investigated	17
		7.2	Number of cases referred to safeguarding	1
8.	Landlords are supported to operate in a professional business - like way	8.1	% of landlords provided with landlord information packs	100%
		8.2	% of landlords attended training course	52%
		8.3	Number of cases referred to HMRC	0
9.	We have contributed to housing growth and investment	9.1	Number of residential properties empty	34
		9.2	Number of properties brought back into use?	*
		9.3	Approximate investment amounts into properties	£250,000

Recommendations

To note the contents of the report.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Address List

Abbeydale Road	1 to 781 (odds) 2 to 666 (evens)
<u>Side roads – odd numbers side:</u>	
Fieldhead Road	62 & 64
Wolseley Road	115 & 117
Langdale Road	6
Woodseats Road	1, 3 & 5
<u>Side roads – even numbers side:</u>	
South View Road	224 & 226
Stead Road	156 & 165
Frederick Road	4
Machon Bank	150
Glen Road	79 & 94, Nether Edge Primary School
Gatefield Road	2 & 4
Carter Knowle Road	1 & 2
London Road	101 to 661 (odds) 42 to 524 (evens)
<u>Side roads – odd numbers side:</u>	
John Street	3
Randall Place	2
Alderson Road	3 to 9 (odd no.)
Woodhead Road	1
St Barnabas Road	20
Holland Place	11
Holland Road	40A, 40C, 40D
Queens Road	586 & 647 to 655 (odd no.)
Oak Street	Heeley Arches
Artisan View	2 to 22 (even no.)
Thirlwell Road	5 to 11 (odd no.)
<u>Side roads – even numbers side:</u>	
Cecil Square	2
Sharrow Lane	6, 8
Witney Street	1
Fieldhead Road	1 to 9 (odd no.)
Broadfield Road	1
Chesterfield Road	13 to 123 (odds) 30 (evens)
<u>Side roads – odd numbers side:</u>	
Albert Road	Crown Inn
Whiting Street	31
Valley Road	Arthington Flats

Valley Road	2
Meersbrook Park Road	2
<u>Side roads – even numbers side:</u>	
Little London Road	2, 4 & 6
Windsor Road	2

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?

2.1 No decision required paper for information only.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

3.1 No consultation required, consultation undertaken prior to the implementation of the scheme as per legal requirements.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality Implications

4.1.1 EIA undertaken prior to the implementation of the scheme has been reviewed.

Data held by Sheffield City Council shows that there is a large percentage of BAME property owners and tenants in the selective licensing designation however, there are no equalities ramifications as the scheme was designed to improve the quality of properties which were in a poor condition, and did not set out to improve standards of housing for a specific demographic.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

4.2.1 The pro-active intervention work, for the selective licensing for London Road, Abbeydale Road and Chesterfield Road has been fully funded by the licence fee generated.

There are no other financial implications from this report.

4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 Sheffield City Council exercised its powers under Parts 1 and 3 of the Housing Act 2004 as well as the Housing and Planning Act 2016, in order that a selective licencing scheme could be implemented for a period of 5 years within a designated area in Sheffield.

Pursuant to s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, [“the Act”] the Council must in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected

characteristic and those who do not,

- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These duties were engaged during the scheme's implementation. The duty to have due regard to the needs set out above will continue if any future decisions are to be made in respect of the landlords and/or tenants of the properties that are the subject of this report.

The Scheme has now ended and as this report is for noting only, there are no current legal implications arising from this findings report.

4.4 Climate Implications

- 4.4.1 Remedial works undertaken at properties to address Hazards relating to damp and mould as well as excess cold, will likely have had a positive effect on the energy efficiency of the property, this will have had a positive effect on the living standards of the occupants.

4.4 Other Implications

- 4.4.1 N/A

1

5. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 N/A

6. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 No recommendation sought, the report gives an overview of the now completed selective licence designation.

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Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report: Jane Wilby

Tel: +44 114 473 5493

Report of: Janet Sharpe, Director of Housing

Report to: Housing Policy Committee

Date of Decision: 24th January 2024

Subject: Housing Benefit Subsidy Loss on Temporary and Supported Exempt Accommodation

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken? Yes No

If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? *(Insert reference number)*

Has appropriate consultation taken place? Yes No

Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-

“The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”

Purpose of Report:

The report is to set out the financial position of Housing Benefit Subsidy on Temporary and Supported Exempt Accommodation.

Recommendations:

The Committee is recommended to:

Note the information described in the paper and the impact on the 2023/24 Revenue Budget Outturn.

Background Papers:

Lead Officer to complete: -		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: Jane Wilby, <i>Head of Accounting</i>
		Legal: <i>Nadine Wynter, Service Manager, Legal Services</i>
		Equalities & Consultation: Adele Robinson , <i>Equalities and Engagement Manager, Policy, and Performance.</i>
		Climate: n/a
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>		
2	SLB member who approved submission:	<i>Philip Gregory, Director of Finance and Commercial Services</i>
3	Committee Chair consulted:	<i>Cllr Douglas Johnson, Chair of the Housing Policy Committee</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: Janet Sharpe	Job Title: <i>Director of Housing</i>
Date: 16 th January 2024		

1. PROPOSAL

1.1. This report provides further context on the subsidy loss incurred by the Council in relation to Housing Benefits for temporary and supported exempt accommodation.

1.2. Background & Summary

1.2.1. **Housing Benefit Regulations have created a budget problem for the Council** The Government does not fully subsidise all housing benefit payments made by the Council even though it sets the rules that determine the amount the Council has to pay. In 2022/23, the Council incurred a loss of £5.9m as a result of the legislation relating to temporary homelessness nightly paid and supported accommodation. The Council is essentially bridging the gap between rent and the amount we are able to recover via Housing Benefit subsidy.

The report only addresses the financial implications and the regulations. Further report will be tabled containing options for mitigating the issues.

1.2.2. **There are two areas creating a budget shortfall** There are 2 main areas of Housing Benefit expenditure where the Council is unable to recover 100% subsidy on the awards of Housing Benefit, we make on the DWP's behalf:

- Temporary accommodation, though this is sometimes referred to as emergency accommodation and is where the Council uses B&B's to fulfil the homelessness duties to provide interim accommodation to people who may be eligible, homeless and in priority need under s188 of the Housing Act 1996.
- Supported exempt accommodation (SEA) where the landlord is a registered charity or a voluntary organisation (where supported exempt accommodation is provided by a registered housing association, we receive 100% subsidy on awards of Housing Benefit we make).

1.2.3. **The Council awards Housing Benefit in line with legislation** The Council processes awards of Housing Benefit in line with the [Housing Benefit Regulations \(2006\)](#) and the [Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit \(Consequential Provisions\) Regulations \(2006\)](#), and that further to this, the rules on how much the Council receives in the form of [subsidy](#), to compensate the Council for the awards of Housing Benefit we make on behalf of the DWP are set by the DWP. We have no discretion in how we interpret these regulations, and the regulations do not allow us to treat claims for Housing Benefit differently just because they may come at a cost to the Council.

1.2.4. **The Housing Benefit claim is subject to an** The Council is satisfied that the Benefits Service is processing these awards of Housing Benefit correctly

annual external audit to ensure compliance

and does so in line with the Housing Benefit Regulations. Each year our Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim is subject to an external audit, and these audits have confirmed that the subsidy arrangements are correct. The issue is that the Government have set these rules, which mean that certain types of Housing Benefit award come at a direct cost to the Council.

1.3. Subsidy Rules

1.3.1. **Temporary Accommodation**

Temporary accommodation is defined by the Housing Benefit Regulations, and in this context, it applies to claims for HB made by individuals who the Council have placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation in pursuit of its duties to provide accommodation to homeless applicants who are eligible and may be in priority need. The Council is ultimately responsible for bearing the cost of Bed and Breakfast accommodation therefore it is crucial that HB is claimed by the individuals who are placed in it. However, the HB subsidy arrangements for temporary accommodation, which are set by the Government, limit the amount of subsidy that we can claim back from the DWP to **£98.08** per week (this is based on the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate that was in place in January 2011). This means that if the weekly award of Housing Benefit for a placement in a Bed and Breakfast is higher than £98.08 per week, the Council only receives £98.08, and the difference comes at a cost to the Council. The average placement is in excess of £500 per week.

It's worth noting that from 2024 the Government is increasing the LHA rates that have been frozen for 3 years. The 1 bed LHA rate from April 2024 will be £132.33. However, the subsidy rules for Temporary Accommodation are not being amended to reflect this increase in the LHA rates.

1.3.2. **Supported Exempt Accommodation**

Supported Exempt accommodation is defined in the Housing Benefit Regulations as being accommodation provided by a County Council, a housing association, a registered charity, or a voluntary organisation where care or support or supervision is provided by the landlord or is provided on behalf of the landlord. The Housing Benefit Regulations typically provide to restrict the amount of a claimant's rent that can be met by HB. However, the Government recognises that in some instances, the cost of providing accommodation to vulnerable claimants can come at an increased cost to the landlord. Where this accommodation meets the definition of being supported exempt accommodation, the amount of rent that can be met by Housing Benefit

		is generally higher than that for general needs tenancies.
1.3.3.	Accommodation provided by a Housing Association is eligible for 100% subsidy from Government	<p>Where exempt accommodation is provided by a housing association the subsidy rules mean that the Council receives 100% in subsidy in respect of the awards of Housing Benefit that are paid.</p> <p>But where exempt accommodation is provided by a voluntary organisation or a registered charity (but not by a housing association), the subsidy rules mean that the Council does not receive 100% in subsidy in respect of the awards of Housing Benefit that are paid. This is because the amount of rent being charged is referred to the Valuation Office Agency's Rent Officer who decides on a reasonable rent for the accommodation. HB paid above the Rent Officer's reasonable rent is not subsidised at all unless the claimant is classed as vulnerable (this is a narrow definition that is set by the DWP for subsidy purposes) in which case 60% of the difference between the Rent Officer's decision and the award of HB is subsidised.</p>
1.3.4.	The Council must award Housing Benefit according to the rules, even if it incurs a loss to the Council	Regardless of the nature of the landlord, the benefits service must assess any claim in line with regulations, it can't just refuse a claim or limit the amount of HB it pays just because the Council will incur a loss in subsidy.
1.3.5.	Non-registered providers present a challenge to the Council	We have seen a proliferation of non-registered exempt accommodation providers setting themselves up in the city and taking tenants from a number of different referral routes, outside of the services commissioned by the Council. The current legislation, and the associated case law have set a very low bar that landlords need to cross to demonstrate that they are providing support to their tenants. This has led to a number of providers expanding in the city, and they have contributed to the subsidy loss in this area. This is a national issue, and we aren't the only Council who are experiencing these losses. It is not clear why the DWP do not fully fund Council's for awards of Housing Benefit it makes on its behalf, where the landlord is not a registered provider.
1.3.6.	Officers are working to improve understanding of the sector and respond to new legislation	<p>A review is being carried out to ensure we have a sound understanding of residents in SEA and of existing relationships and pathways between providers and organisations.</p> <p>Officers are engaging with the Local Government Association in responding to the consultation on implementing the Supported Housing (Regulatory Order) Act 2023 that will apply to all supported</p>

housing. The Council will have new duties to regulate all exempt accommodation providers.

1.4. The National Context

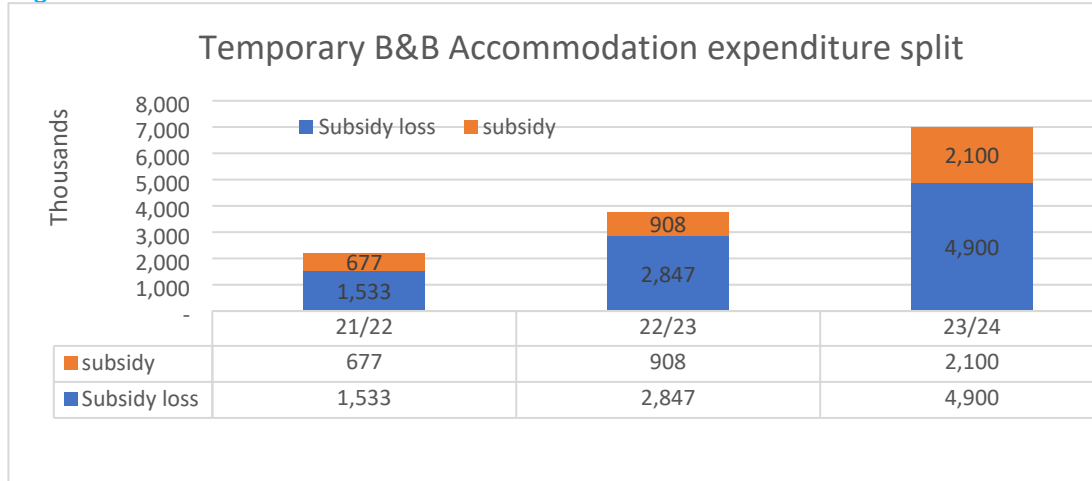
- | | | |
|--------|--|---|
| 1.4.1. | This is not a new problem to the Council and is an area of national concern. | <p>This has been an issue for the Council in previous years. The scale of the problem has escalated for 5 reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ An increased demand for temporary accommodation with increased lengths of stay,○ An increase in accommodation costs.○ A reduction in the number of commissioned supported housing schemes that receive full subsidy.○ Delays in progressing the planned programme of TA under the Stock Increase Programme due to increased construction costs.○ No uplift on subsidy caps from Government.○ An increase in the number SEA tenancies provided by non-registered Housing Providers.○ The proliferation of SEA is of such concern that the Supported Housing (Regulatory Order) Act 2023 was passed in August 2023. The government is due to launch consultation on implementation. However whilst this may improve some of the quality concerns it does not address the benefit subsidy loss. |
| 1.4.2. | The Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 has increased the financial impact on the Council | <p>The number of homelessness cases has been increasing since the Homelessness Reduction Act was implemented in 2018 and expanded the duties to prevent and relieve homelessness. This has meant more people are eligible for assistance and for longer periods.</p> |
| 1.4.3. | Over 100,000 households were in temporary accommodation by the end of 2022-23 | <p>A national shortage of suitable housing has cost Councils more than £1.7bn in temporary accommodation last year to house over 104,000 households. This is the highest number on record according to LGA analysis.</p> |
| 1.4.4. | The increase in TA costs is overwhelming Council budgets across the country | <p>Basildon Borough Council in Essex has seen spending on temporary accommodation rise from £7,000 in 2017 to £2m in 2022. Hastings Borough Council, in East Sussex, spent £750,000 in 2019 but expects to spend £5.6m by April. Hastings Council recently warned rising homelessness costs have put the authority close to issuing a Section 114 notice. Amongst Core Cities, Liverpool have announced they will spend in excess of £19m on B+B's in this year.</p> |
-

1.4.5.	The Council and partners are addressing the increase in demand	<p>Locally the Council and partner organisations are working to implement the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2023-28 which aims to improve prevention outcomes and therefore help to reduce the demand and duration of Temporary Accommodation placements. This is linked to plans to deliver more affordable social housing, develop cost effective alternative Temporary Accommodation and increase access to good quality affordable private rented homes. The work underway with The Royal Foundation – Homewards will enable innovative approaches to be tested and scaled up if effective, bring new resources and partners to support earlier prevention.</p> <p>Within the Council, Service Improvement Plans are in place to ensure that placements in TA are managed efficiently and effectively. Homelessness is regularly discussed at the Performance Delivery Board and a Task and Finish piece of focussed work has been initiated to ensure the correct resources and approach to performance management are in place to support improvement in this area.</p>
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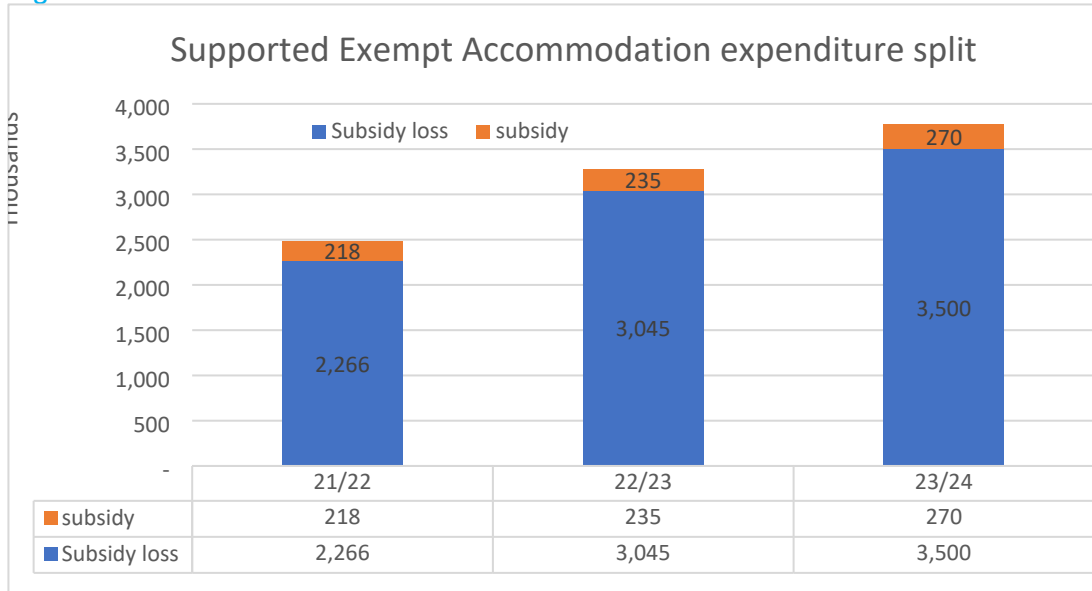
1.5. Financial Implications for Sheffield City Council

1.5.1.	In 22/23 the Council faced a loss of £5.9m as a result of the increased use of temporary and supported exempt accommodation	<p>The gap in funding or “subsidy loss” had been offset as part of the overall housing benefit reconciliation in previous years. In 21/22, the cost to the Council of the subsidy loss was £4.2m, this rose to £5.9m in 22/23. An unfunded shortfall of £1.2m was reported in the Housing General Fund outturn position upon full reconciliation of the accounts for the period. This was not the full scale of the financial gap, just the gap that could not be covered through historic provisions.</p>
1.5.2.	In 2023/24 a £8.4m loss is forecast as a result of the issue	<p>Based on current trends the loss is projected to grow to £8.4m in 2023/24. This loss is split between temporary accommodation at £4.9m and supported exempt accommodation at £3.5m. Some historic grants and provisions totalling £1.7m are forecast to be used within the period to offset the overall impact to the final outturn position this year. This is a one-off mitigation and is not an option for 2024/25.</p> <p>The loss will increase year-on-year if the current trends continue for both temporary accommodation and supported exempt accommodation.</p>
1.5.3.	<p>The following two graphs show the subsidy loss incurred by the Council for the past 2 financial years and a forecast outturn position for 2023/24 for temporary and supported exempt accommodation:</p>	

1.5.4. **Figure 1.**



1.5.5. **Figure 2.**



1.5.6. **Subsidy loss impacts just 6% of the total Housing Benefit cases.** For further context and scale within the overall Housing Benefit budgets, in 2022/23, a total of 32,423 cases were awarded £132m housing benefit. The cases that were affected by the subsidy loss totalled 1,954 so represent a small proportion or just 6% of the total budgets but carry a significant financial impact.

1.5.7. **Business planning assumptions for 2024/25 have included £7.9m to cover the costs of the shortfall within base budgets** We have a legal duty to set a balanced budget and therefore must recognise the cost of this subsidy shortfall to the Council for 2024/25. As such, the Medium-Term Financial Analysis assumes a baseline of £7.9m to cover the shortfall for next year. This contingency in our budgets will provide us cover as we work to reduce the cost to the Council and continue to lobby for additional funding through legislative changes from Government.

1.5.8. **No additional Government funding** It should be noted that whilst a provision has been made in our budgets for this cost next year, no

has been provided to cover this shortfall

additional funding has been made available from Government despite this being an area of national financial concern for most Councils. Sheffield City Council has made room for this cost by reducing budgets elsewhere as part of the business planning process with effective cuts from other services to compensate.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

- 2.1 The report is to provide further context and detail into Housing Benefit subsidy rules and the financial loss incurred by the Council as a result of the regulations.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 There has been no consultation on this report.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality Implications

- 4.1.1 There are no direct equality implications arising from this report.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 The primary purpose of this report is to provide Members with information relating to the City Council's revenue budget position for 2023/24. Financial implications are described in section 1.5 of this report.

4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

4.4 Climate Implications

- 4.4.1 There are no direct climate implications arising from this report.

4.4 Other Implications

- 4.4.1 No direct implication

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 No other alternatives were considered.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 To provide Members with information relating to the City Council's revenue budget position for 2023/24.

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Report to Policy Committee

Author of Report: Claire Lane, Neighbourhood Manager, North East, Housing and Neighbourhoods Service.

Tel: 0114 2930000

Report of: Janet Sharpe, Director of Housing, Housing and Neighbourhoods Services.

Report to: Housing Policy Committee

Date of Decision: 26 January 2024

Subject: Response to Verdon Street Petition (closed on 12.12.23)

Type of Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken	Initial <input type="checkbox"/>	Full <input type="checkbox"/>
Insert EIA reference number and attach EIA	N/A	
Has appropriate consultation/engagement taken place?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-		
<p><i>"The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."</i></p>		

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of the report is to provide the Committee with a position statement on action taken in response to a petition submitted on 27 October 2023 regarding pest infestation and reports of damp and mould from residents on Verdon Street. The petition was open until 12 December 2023 and was signed by 6 residents.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Housing Policy Committee:

- Note the progress on addressing concerns raised by residents at Verdon Street.

Background Papers: N/A

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed.	Finance: Helen Damon
		Legal: Nadine Wynter
		Equalities & Consultation: Louise Nunn
		Climate: Nathan Robinson
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	SLB member who approved submission:	Ajman Ali, Executive Director Neighbourhoods
3	Committee Chair consulted:	Cllr Douglas Johnson
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: Dean Fearon	Job Title: Head of Service, Neighbourhood Services, Housing and Neighbourhoods Services
	Date: 16 January 2024	

1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 Housing Policy Committee received a petition at their December 2023 meeting submitted on 27 October 2023 regarding pest infestation and reports of damp and mould from residents on Verdon Street. The petition was open for additional signatures until 12 December 2023 and was signed by 6 residents. The petition was discussed at the December meeting of the Housing and Policy Committee and, Members of that committee asked for an update on progress to be brought back to this Committee meeting.
- 1.2 In response to this petition the North-East Housing Team visited the block the petition relates to and, also the neighbouring 4 blocks. These visits took place in November 2023. Each of the 5 blocks contains 20 flats per block. Officers successfully spoke with most tenants and residents, leaving contact cards for those who had not been at home encouraging them to contact their local Housing office to discuss any concerns they may have. The Housing team recorded full details where tenants/residents have mice within their flat and where there were reports of damp and mould.
- 1.3 Following these visits, the Housing team met on site with officers from our Environmental Services team to establish the best treatment for the infestations. Orders had been placed to bait each block at a cost of £1,866 per block. Environmental Services were also commissioned by Housing to carry out a full external technical survey of each block and feedback any actions and recommendations to prevent any further infestations in the future. Housing are working closely with the Housing Repairs Service to ensure that any entry points identified are sealed. This work will be carried out following the completion of the infestation treatments.
- 1.4 A treatment schedule was agreed with Environmental Services, comprising of 3 visits per block over a 5-week period. The first visits were due to start from 15 January 2024, with the last taking place on 15 February 2024. In December 2023 all tenants and residents received correspondence detailing the schedule of treatment work and educational information to support with this work. These letters were all hand delivered, offering further support to residents who may have had additional questions.
- 1.5 On 15 January 2024 Housing were contacted by Environmental Services. They advised that due to operational difficulties the infestation treatment work could not start as planned. Officers from the North East team have responded quickly to this change of plan and prioritised calling residents to apologise and explain the current situation. Housing proceeded to work with Environmental Services to prioritise the rescheduling of this work. The work has been rescheduled to start 27 January 2024 and to be completed by 8 March 2024. Updated letters will be sent out to

customers.

- 1.6 The Housing Repairs Service are prioritising all reports of damp and mould. To date the service has carried out work in response to 398 reports relating to damp and mould from properties at Verdon Street. Repair work is currently ongoing at 48 properties. The service aims to attend to all damp and mould reports made within 5 working days to assess and mitigate any risk to residents, whilst also looking for more robust solutions to resolve the issues. In addition, a longer-term solution to improve ventilation, improve heat retention and explore technologies to improve the blocks on Verdon Street is being explored.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

- 2.1 Officers have worked to resolve cases identified by tenants on Verdon Street to ensure that customers see work completed and are kept updated throughout the process. This contributes to one of the new outcomes in the Council's Plan to facilitate "Great neighbourhoods that people are happy to call home" and allows for a better customer experience. Managing improvements in repair services is one of the key priorities for the Housing and Neighbourhood Service in our service plan for 2023-2025.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 Officers from the North East Housing Team visited all 5 blocks on Verdon Street. They attempted to speak with every resident and for those who were not available a contact card was left explaining the visit and how the team could be contacted. Information was gathered regarding infestation and damp/mould issues from all those who were visited. The captured information was used to plan our approach for remedial work to the blocks in partnership with our Environmental Service and Housing Repairs Service.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality Implications

- 4.1.1 There are no specific equality impacts arising from this report. The needs of our residents are considered in the delivery of our services.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 There are no specific financial or commercial impacts arising from this report. The work being undertaken is funded from our existing budgets.

4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

4.4 Climate Implications

4.4.1 There are no specific climate implications arising from this report.

4.5 Other Implications

4.5.1 There are no other implications arising from this report.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 No alternative options have been considered. We have a statutory duty to ensure the health and safety of our residents.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Members are asked to note the remedial work taking place to address the concerns raised by residents on Verdon Street from the petition considered at Housing Policy Committee in December 2023 and, the ongoing work to respond to these and any further issues at Verdon Street.

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Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report: *Janet Sharpe, Director of Housing, Housing and Neighbourhood Services*

Tel: 0114 2735493

Report of: Executive Director, Operational Services

Report to: Housing Policy Committee

Date of Decision: 26th January 2024

Subject: Safe Routes Cap Consultation

Type of Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken	Initial <input type="checkbox"/>	Full <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Insert EIA reference number and attach EIA 718		
Has appropriate consultation/engagement taken place?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-</p> <p><i>“The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”</i></p>		

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a copy of the return made to the Home Office as part of the Safe and Legal Routes Cap Consultation.

Recommendations:

The Housing Committee is recommended to:

Note the contents of the return and the authority's commitment to resettle 88 refugees in 2025.

Background Papers:

Appendix A – Safe and Legal Routes Cap return to the Home Office

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed.	Finance: <i>Helen Damon</i>
		Legal: <i>Nadine Wynter</i>
		Equalities & Consultation: <i>Louise Nunn</i>
		Climate: <i>n/a</i>
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	SLB member who approved submission:	<i>Ajman Ali</i>
3	Committee Chair consulted:	<i>Cllr Douglas Johnson</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: <i>Janet Sharpe</i>	Job Title: <i>Director of Housing, Housing and Neighbourhood Services</i>
	Date: <i>17th January 2024</i>	

1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The UK has a proud history of providing protection for those who need it through safe and legal routes. Since 2015, we have offered a safe and legal route to the UK for close to half a million people from all over the world via our global routes and our country-specific routes. This includes around 50,000 who have come to the UK on routes open to people from any country in the world, 25,000 on our country-specific routes for Afghanistan and 20,000 from Syria, over 100,000 Hong Kongers, and close to 200,000 from Ukraine.
- 1.2 The Illegal Migration Act 2023 places a duty on the Home Secretary to consult councils on the development of a cap on the number of entrants to the UK arriving on safe and legal routes for humanitarian purposes, and for the cap to be defined following consultation.
- 1.3 In October 2023 the Minister of State for Immigration officially launched the consultation on the cap on safe and legal routes which includes UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) Pathways 2 and 3 (stage 2), and Community Sponsorship.
- 1.4 The consultation was open to local authorities in England, Wales, Scotland and with the Executive Office of Northern Ireland who were asked to consult on resettlement and confirm the number of refugees they can resettle in 2025.
- 1.5 The cap seeks to ensure that the UK is able to welcome, accommodate, integrate and support those arriving via these routes. The introduction of the cap on safe and legal routes will allow us to balance our ambition to welcome those in need with the capacity of local authorities in the UK to accommodate and support those arriving on these routes.
- 1.6 The consultation, which provides the basis by which the Home Office will propose the cap that will be agreed with Parliament, was open from 20 October 2023 until 15 December 2023 extended to 9th January 2024). The responses will be reviewed and considered at a national and regional level before a total figure is recommended.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?

- 2.1 Sheffield was the first City of Sanctuary and as a city is proud to welcome asylum seekers and refugees into its neighbourhoods. Continued involvement with the UK Resettlement Scheme, Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy, Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Scheme confirms this supports and commitment that Sheffield intends to be a place of safety for those fleeing persecution.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 We have consulted with Migration Yorkshire who arranged region wide consultation meetings with Local Authorities, Heath colleagues and VCS which Sheffield attended. Within Sheffield we have consulted with the following partners who support those seeking sanctuary in Sheffield, including refugees and asylum seekers:

Sheffield City Council:
Housing and Neighbourhood Services
Education (e.g. admissions)
Community Development
Community Safety Team
Adult Social Care
Childrens Social Care
Early Years

Voluntary, Community & Faith Sector:
City of Sanctuary Sheffield
Shelter
Voluntary Action Sheffield
Refugee Council

Health:
Mulberry Practice

Each have been asked to respond, both to specific questions, where possible as well as providing wider information and/or evidence pertinent to this consultation. Their responses have been incorporated into this submission.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality Implications

- 4.1.1 An EIA is currently in place that supports the Council's activity to support all refugees arriving in the city and has already been published.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 A summary of the confirmed funding packages for all three schemes is set out below along with the recently announced funding package to support the Homes for Ukraine Scheme in the first 12 months. DLUHC are yet to announce funding for this scheme beyond 12 months:

	UKRS	ARAP	ACRS	Homes for Ukraine
Integrated support package for 12 months per person	£8,520	£10,500	£10,500	£10,500
Support package years 2 onwards	£12,000 paid over years 2 to 5	£10,020 paid over years 2 and 3	£10,020 paid over years 2 and 3	No current information or planned announcements
ESOL	£850	£850	£850	Funded from the £10,500
Education	3-4 yrs £2,250 5-18 yrs £4,500	3-5 yrs £2,250 5-18 yrs £4,500	3-6 yrs £2,250 5-18 yrs £4,500	2-4 yrs £3,000 5-11 yrs £6,580 11-18yrs £8,755 *
Health	Direct primary and secondary year 1 healthcare costs paid.	Direct primary and secondary year 1 healthcare costs paid.	Direct primary and secondary year 1 healthcare costs paid.	
Exception needs fund	Held by the Home Office. Bids made as required	Held by the Home Office. Bids made as required	Held by the Home Office. Bids made as required	

**The Education payments made on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme include an additional tariff to support children with SEND*

4.2.2 Funding on all schemes is given based on the confirmed number of refugee arrivals into the local authority. There is no requirement to bid for funding. Funding is paid in arrears.

4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 The Home Office has the power, under section 59 of the Nationality Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, to participate in a project designed to arrange or assist the settlement of migrants (whether in the United Kingdom or elsewhere), including powers to provide financial support to an organisation in the United Kingdom or another country which arranges or participates in a project of that kind and to provide or arrange for the provision of financial or other assistance to a migrant who participates in a project of that kind.

4.3.2 The Council has the power under section 99 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, as amended, to provide support in accordance with arrangements made with the Home Office. The Council will enter into grant agreements with grant recipients to ensure that any obligations it has to DLUHC are passed, as appropriate, to those recipients and the

recipients do not put the Council in breach of its obligations to DLUHC.

- 4.3.3 The majority of people assisted under the UKRS, ARAP and ACRS schemes will be accommodated in private rented housing, but it may occasionally be necessary to use social housing if individual needs cannot be met in the private sector. Where refugees are allocated Council housing or nominated to registered providers, this will be done in accordance with the Council's statutory Allocations Policy. Refugees resettling under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme will live with sponsors.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Due to the need to urgently respond to the consultation it was agreed to work with the existing city infrastructure and organisations that currently support the Council and our most vulnerable refugees. The response commits to resettle 88 refugees in 2025. The availability of accommodation and services will continue to be monitored.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Council now has over 15 years' experience of management and delivery of similar refugee resettlement programmes, the longest recent involvement of any local authority in the UK.
- 6.2 Committee is asked to note the consultation response made to the Home Office.

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Response Form – Cap on Safe and Legal Routes Consultation

About you

Full name	Janet Sharpe
Job title or capacity in which you are responding to this consultation exercise	Director of Housing
Local authority (or equivalent) represented	Sheffield City Council
Date	9 th January 2024
Postcode	S1 2HH



Responses

Ahead of responding, please familiarise yourself with the consultation paper, with particular regard to the “Instructions for completing the questionnaire” section.

Question	Response
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Q1: What organisations (including VCS organisations, and community sponsorship groups) in your area have you engaged with while compiling your response and have you included the responses received from these organisations in your local authority consolidated response?

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We have consulted with Migration Yorkshire who arranged region wide consultation meetings with Local Authorities, Heath colleagues and VCS which Sheffield attended. Within Sheffield we have consulted with the following partners who support those seeking sanctuary in Sheffield, including refugees and asylum seekers:

Sheffield City Council:

- Housing and Neighbourhood Services
- Education (e.g. admissions)
- Community Development
- Community Safety Team
- Adult Social Care
- Childrens Social Care
- Early Years

Voluntary, Community & Faith Sector:

- City of Sanctuary Sheffield
- Shelter
- Voluntary Action Sheffield
- Refugee Council

Health:

- Mulberry Practice

Each have been asked to respond, both to specific questions, where possible as well as providing wider information and/or evidence pertinent to this consultation. Their responses have been incorporated into this submission.

Sheffield City Council wishes to highlight the wider impact of migration into the city and, these responses. The questions asked as part of this consultation involve wider city pressures that we have experienced due to the number of asylum placements, positive asylum decisions, UK and Afghan Resettlement Programmes, the Homes for Ukraine Family & Re-settlement Programme and supporting immigration



from Hong Kong alongside our normal UK Resettlement Programmes and planned refugee arrivals. Sheffield City Council is facing significant pressures across all statutory services due to the significant increases in Homeless presentations, impact of a lack of suitable affordable housing and, streamlined asylum process which is also placing more pressure on our existing community infrastructure that is in place to support new arrivals into the city. There are three areas where I think we need to consider the impact of wider migration when thinking about the numbers of asylum-seeking people that Sheffield may commit to welcoming. Sheffield remains and is a welcoming city and, City of Sanctuary but there is also a capacity issue and the numbers that the city can support at any one time.

Sheffield has a large number of people moving to it from within the UK each year. Many of these are students whose numbers are known but many are people moving to work who are often not known to statutory services until they arrive and require a service. In some cases this can mean significant demand for front line services, such as school places and healthcare. For example, we are aware of ongoing movement of Roma communities between Cardiff, Luton, Peterborough and Sheffield, often driven by the promise of work which can lead to large extended families moving into the city.

When the EU Settlement Scheme first started many years ago the Home Office estimated that Sheffield had 27,000 EU citizens resident but at the last count over 43,500 people had registered under the scheme in Sheffield, an increase of over 60%. This means that the burden on services will be 60% more than predicted too.

The 2021 census statistics for Roma people has just been published. These estimate that Sheffield has 2,700 Roma people yet we know from our work registering people for EUSS that there are over 10,000 Roma people in Sheffield. This means that if census data is used to predict demand on statutory services, then those services will not be able to cope with the demands placed on them. According to the census data over 50% of Sheffield's Roma community are under 20 years old, for example, which means that we need to provide services targeted at that age group but at a much larger scale than the census suggests.



So, when considering what cap Sheffield should consider those arriving through safe & legal routes and, we need to consider the impact of wider migration as this will affect the level of support & welcome that the city is able to provide.

We have consulted with our direct Refugee resettlement partners, Education, Health and Refugee Council. All organisations are under significant pressure in the city. The number of additional asylum arrivals and asylum positive decisions and arrivals through the Hong Kong and Ukraine programmes has placed significant pressure on Health, Housing and Education. All organisations have indicated a willingness to continue refugee resettlement in the city at current levels. The Mulberry Health Clinic who provide initial health screening and support to newly arriving refugees and asylum seekers have requested further funding from the authority in order to support the current numbers.

Along with the Housing Team, Refugee Council are reporting an increased amount of expectation and support being required by more recent refugee arrivals than previous Gateway arrivals. The amount of wraparound support being required by each case has increased significantly. Both teams are however happy to continue to support the current level of refugees being resettled into the city.

It has also been highlighted how difficult it is to commit to this figure in future based on the current position especially by services impacted by asylum numbers and increased asylum decisions. All the services providing to refugees are being fully stretched by other issues and the omission of those pressures from this consultation makes any response difficult in terms of accurate and strategic planning.

Levels of crime and anti-social behaviour in Sheffield are not significantly different to those experienced by other core cities, nor by the other local authority areas in South Yorkshire. We have a very active community safety partnership which provides strategic direction for all our crime and disorder reduction related activities, as well as monitoring levels of ASB and crime. The city has a well-developed structure for dealing with organised crime and criminal exploitation, particularly insofar as the protection of vulnerable people and communities is concerned.



Q2: What is your capacity to house and support those coming through safe and legal routes under the cap in calendar year 2025?

88 individuals

This figure was originally used in the last couple of years as it represents a **fair share** of 10,000 refugee arrivals to the UK each year when comparing the Sheffield population to the national population.

This still does not recognise the significant pressures faced by Sheffield City Council in terms of identifying suitable accommodation. There is a significant shortage of suitable affordable housing in the city with a shortfall of 902 homes per year. In addition to this the city faces unprecedented demand for social housing. The City like many other major cities is struggling to identify homes, we are currently heavily dependent on B&B and Hotel Accommodation to meet our legal Housing duties which is resulting in a £5m annual pressure on our Housing General Fund as a result of Housing Benefit Subsidy Loss rules. When considering losses through use of supported Exempt accommodation this increases to £8.4m. Homelessness is increasing across the country putting more pressure on available accommodation and this is expected to increase further over the next few years.

To go beyond our 'fair share' will be difficult to achieve given the significant accommodation pressures, it also needs to be recognised even within existing numbers we will see more refugees receiving positive asylum decisions living in hotel and B&B accommodation to support their housing needs for some time rather than finding permanent homes. We are committed to support our fair share but it needs to be recognised the significant pressure this is placing on an already broken housing system.

We will continue to work with our Registered Providers (RP's) and Private Sector landlords to help free up additional accommodation where this is possible.

An example of the pressures being faced each week: We receive around 5,800 housing bids on our CBL system each week for 40 properties. This creates significant pressure for our Housing Solutions and Rehousing Teams supporting households who cannot access accommodation. The average stay for those in TA/Emergency Accommodation for families is around 5 months and, around 6 months for single people. For any household requiring a 4 bedroomed property for anywhere in the city this can lead to a wait of over 2 years. Each month we have around 450 new applications to join the Housing Register for Social Housing. Further details can be found below.



Q3: What evidence can you provide to support this (for example, number of properties that you have available or can procure)?

It is very difficult to provide evidence to support this in the current housing situation. We have unprecedented numbers of cases in emergency temporary accommodation and hotels which have risen dramatically in the last few years. The pressure from increased asylum numbers and increased positive decisions, new refugee cohorts such as Hong Kong and Ukraine, and increased homelessness have placed the city's housing and support services under immense pressure.

There is a shortage of affordable housing in Sheffield with increased pressure from:

- More households in unsuitable housing
- More overcrowding
- Fewer households can afford private rented or to buy housing on the open market
- Increased homelessness
- Projected increasing right to buy sales
- Lower turnover of social housing
- Reduced supply of new affordable homes of the right type and mix

12% (25,891) of households said their property was not adequate for their needs as part of Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2019.

House prices in Sheffield are 6.2 times the average household income, (data from ONS 2022 House price to workplace-based earnings ratio.



Homelessness

	22/23		23/24	
			Q1	Q2
Homeless Reduction Act				
Presentations	3,964		937	1,119
<i>Threatened with homelessness within 56 days, prevent duty owed</i>	991		295	362
	25%	50%	31%	32%
<i>Already homeless, relief duty owed</i>	2,829		625	733
	71%	45%	67%	66%
<i>No duty owed</i>	144		17	24
	4%	5%	2%	2%

- We have an average of 40 people attending Howden House each day to discuss homelessness. We also receive an average of 84 calls into the service each day from households in emergency housing need
- We have an average of 13 refugees presenting at Howden House each week following a positive decision due to increase due to SAP
- We have a backlog of 672 cases currently
- The average caseload for officers in Housing Solutions is 66 per officer so we cannot allocate all of the backlog to them if we did this would result in caseloads per officer to over 100. The recommendation from DLUHC is 40 per officer

Temporary Accommodation - Stats

- Currently there are 695 households in emergency accommodation
- There are 369 households in SCC Temporary Accommodation, 128 singles and 255 families
- There are 312 households in hotel provision, 254 singles and 58 families



- In October 2019 there were 114 households in emergency provision.
- The emergency housing provision provided in the city has grown by 600% in 4 years
- The average length of stay in emergency TA accommodation is 162 days

Rehousing - Stats

- Currently there are 23115 households registered. Out of these 13,738 have placed at least one bid in the last 12 months.
- The register is now growing again with a net increase of 100 households per month.
- We validate 450 new applications every month.
- There are 985 households with a priority awarded to them. Many of these are owed a duty by the council to help them secure accommodation.
- We advertise an average of 40 properties a week.
- The average number of bids per property is 130.
- The average waiting time for those in Bands A-C is now in excess of 6 months. For a 4bed it is over 2 years.
- The average number of bids per week is now 5800 We have provided for an arrival figure of over 88 individuals for many years and since the Afghan schemes and Homes for Ukraine scheme have settled on a target number of refugees of 88 which was met in 22/23 and should be met in 23/24. It is likely this target could be difficult to achieve in 2025 as the demand on our homeless services is increasing.

The Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) funding we have secured has helped to bring in £5.5m in approved funding for the acquisition of new homes. The Strategy and Resources Committee approved the receipt of this grant funding and the use of £5.5m from our Stock Improvement Programme Capital Fund allowing £11m in resources for the acquisitions of new homes to support refugees. Year 1 of the LAHF fund is nearly completed with year 2 is currently with a target completing of 30th June 2024. It is likely this funding will result in the purchase of 75 homes for authority use. More funding and initiatives like this are essential as it is impossible to keep up with the demand for emergency housing in the city by



	<p>using current social housing stock. Accessing the private rented sector is also becoming increasingly difficult as private rents increase way beyond the Local Housing Allowance rates in most areas.</p> <p>We do recognise there are other ways to address the shortage of accommodation issue and we are actively exploring new ways of securing accommodation including some of the best practice from Ukraine re-settlement, leasing and hosting arrangements alongside improving advice to applicants to help them find their own accommodation.</p>
<p>Q4: Of the above number, in 2025, how many of the following groups do you anticipate being able to accommodate, and ensure appropriate support is in place for:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Complex Cases:b. Single peoplec. Large families <p>We have always tried to help with larger families and complex cases. This has historically been completed by the Refugee Housing Team alerting the Home Office when we have secured housing for these groups and then arranging to receive a case in need or a small flat or large or adapted house. It is impossible to put a figure on this as it is a case of what accommodation we can find at the time. Relationships with the Home Office team are good and we have worked well together in meeting these needs. LA's like Sheffield need more time to plan for supporting families and individuals with complex needs as this often requires multi-agency support and this takes time to put in place.</p> <p>Sheffield will continue to liaise with Education, Health, Social Care and other agencies to support arrivals with complex needs, single people and larger families. We do feel it is essential accommodation is secured for cases with additional and specific needs before we can expand multi agency worker and commit to arrival numbers.</p>



<p>Q5: Of the above number, how many of these do you expect to come through the community sponsorship scheme in your area?</p>	<p>Over the past three years two families have arrived at two separate sponsor groups. Sponsor groups have tended to provide for one family. We have provided a figure we feel we can achieve accommodation and services for. Should that figure include a sponsor arrival we would utilise their accommodation offer but remain at the 88 target as other services have pledged to provide for 88 individuals.</p> <p>We do not anticipate that Community Sponsorship will provide additional capacity, it may relieve short term pressure on finding suitable accommodation but will not address the significant shortage of accommodation overall.</p>
<p>Q6: The Resettlement Tariff and Community Sponsorship Funding provide the local authority with access to central funding for the purpose of supporting refugee integration. What impact has this funding had on your ability to resettle refugees in your area?</p>	<p>The funding has been crucial in being able to coordinate support to help refugees resettle. The flexibility of the funding has helped the authority provide additional funding in areas and for services who have been struggling with all arrivals to the city. It is welcomed that the funding instruction is in place allowing a wider impact to refugee communities that the stringent rules previously applied to the Gateway. A continued flexible approach to allowing authorities to spend the funding as needed to benefit all resettlement is essential.</p>



Q7: There is no additional funding being introduced with the cap. How could the funding instructions be changed to maximise the existing funding, enabling innovation and increased delivery of services in your area?

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It would be helpful for the funding instructions to confirm the funding is awarded per arrival and that no clawback or time limitations are applied to the funding so the authority can have flexibility to plan support for all ongoing refugee resettlement and areas of significant pressure in the city. It would be helpful if this could be supported for previous refugee resettlement funding instructions.

It would also be helpful alongside the revenue funding that this is supplemented with longer-term capital support for the provision of new homes, acquiring homes and, entering into long-term leasing arrangements with the private sector to increase the numbers of suitable accommodation available and, especially where special needs or supported housing accommodation is required.

Further capital and grant support is needed from the government to mitigate the financial pressures the local authority is facing from housing benefit subsidy loss and wider impacts from a shortfall in available and affordable housing. The additional pressures from the number of additional asylum arrivals and asylum positive decision cases needing accommodation as well as arrivals through the Hong Kong and Ukraine programmes on top of a substantial post covid increase in homeless presentations means the authority is under significant financial pressure. The increased costs to support emergency and short term housing as a result of these factors are being met by the local authority which is in need of more financial help. Due to shortages in longer term secure accommodation there has been a six fold increase to well over 600 households in emergency and short term accommodation.



Q8: What impact do you assess the local provision of public services such as education, social care (adult and children) and healthcare has on your ability to resettle refugees in your area? Why do you assess this to be the case?

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Impact of inward migration

The ability of the city to respond to demand created through refugee pathways has to be considered in the context of all those arriving in Sheffield, whether through inward migration or otherwise. Regardless of route of entry, the impact on service demand is likely to be similar.

In this, predicting ability to manage demand is therefore challenging.

Sheffield has a large number of people moving to it from within the UK each year.

This comprises of students along with those moving for work or personal reasons. This type of migration is uncontrolled since it is self-selecting and for those with citizenship right to remain, work or study, the city has no oversight of arrivals, often until a statutory service is required.

This impacts service demand for example in school places and healthcare.

Accuracy of 'known population' data

There is inherent challenge in the use of census data to predict demand on statutory services.

The examples highlighted emphasise the inherent difficulty in predicting, with confidence the ability of the city to respond to any migrant cohort, regardless of route of entry.

Services accessed by those arriving through refugee pathways are universal. Furthermore, many services are accessible to those without settled status, such as those seeking asylum.

For example, education, health and social care are universally accessible. It is therefore difficult to disaggregate the impact of those arriving via a refugee pathway and therefore attribute a number to those arriving via this route, when people arrive to Sheffield by a variety of routes, inward and otherwise, all placing demand on the same, or many of the same services.

Without discussion about wider funding e.g. Early Years, Housing etc, the number in respect of this consultation will by necessity, be limited.



Many of those arriving via refugee pathways, are, by definition dealing with significant trauma. Written and spoken language is often a barrier. Inclusive support matters. Consequently, the impact of interpretation and translation is a significant consideration, along with provision of a trauma informed approach e.g. housing assessment and trauma informed spaces and places as well as staff to ensure appropriate provision for new arrivals is in place.

The mandatory national transfer scheme will result in a growth in numbers of around 70+ young people a year.

When planning for Caps on safe and legal routes this needs to be factored in.

Information and Analysis

Since 15/2/2022, local authorities have been mandated to accept UASC under the National Transfer Scheme, resulting in a significant growth in the number of Young Refugees looked after by Sheffield. The size of the current this population is now presenting an unprecedented and growing challenge to existing resources and organisational arrangements.

As of 12/07/2023 The Children Looked After Service and Leaving Care Service support a total of 178 unaccompanied young refugees, compared to 84 young refugees in 2020.

Approximately 150 are 16 - 25 who are eligible for Leaving Care support.

In addition, we have around **14 children** who are under 16 or have not yet been in care for 13 weeks so don't meet the leaving care criteria. (11 children).

Currently young people who become "eligible" are allocated a worker from the Leaving Care Service as a Personal Advisor. Currently over 50 young people under 18 are allocated both a social worker and a leaving care worker for support.

Current and Future Challenges



Children who are supported by Sheffield City Council as unaccompanied refugees have a range of specific and often complex needs.

The significant increase in unaccompanied asylum seekers is putting a strain on the current social work services and related children's services - there is an immediate need to respond to this strain.

Expertise and capacity needs building to respond competently and consistently to the growing demand for managing complex legal situation; age assessments, human rights assessments and decision-making regarding support for young people whose claim for asylum has failed.

The recent change to patterns of young people seeking asylum is resulting in an increasing number of young people being refused refugee status. For example, over 50% of young Albanians seeking asylum are refused. In Sheffield, we are starting to see growing evidence of young people presenting to us who have been trafficked/criminally exploited.

Pending legislation changes and national policy development add to the complexity of the work in this area and are demanding increasing specialist knowledge.

The no recourse to public funds team supports families from all over world including Europe where they are living here with children but are not able to support themselves. We therefore have to provide and pay for private rented accommodation. This is expensive and can be hard to find good quality accommodation. Some of these families are from European countries where there are no concerns about their safety etc but because of Brexit they cannot claim benefits. However for some they want to remain in the UK and we fund them because there are children. This has never been funded from central government and places a huge strain on local housing, interpreters. We do appear to be able to get school places and they are able to register with GPs.

For other families they are in an appeal process and the same pressures around housing etc exist for them as well.

Childrens Services highlighted that since 15/2/2022, local authorities have been mandated to accept UASC under the National Transfer Scheme, resulting in a significant growth in the number of Young Refugees



looked after by Sheffield. The size of the current this population is now presenting an unprecedented and growing challenge to existing resources and organisational arrangements.

The Education service are facing constant demand for school places:

Variable Factors impacting demand for school places

Place planning is a complex process, influenced by demographics, mobility, and housing yield, as well as parental preference, geography, travel, and transport. Twice yearly reviews of population data and the tracking of live school applications, as well as dialogue with neighbouring authorities, help to manage the risks associated with these variables.

The Council's Strategic Vision for the City Centre published in January 2022 sets out that, although births are falling, the Sheffield population is set to increase from 584,853 people (2019) to 648,410 people by 2043, as it attracts new residents. To help meet this growing population, there is an aspiration and Government target to deliver new homes in the city. The Council agreed its preferred spatial option for the Local Plan in February 2022 and we are expecting to deliver 2,100 homes a year. The Council is monitoring the additional pupil yield that these new housing developments are likely to produce and is planning to factor this into its forecasts for school places.

How do we forecast future pupil numbers?

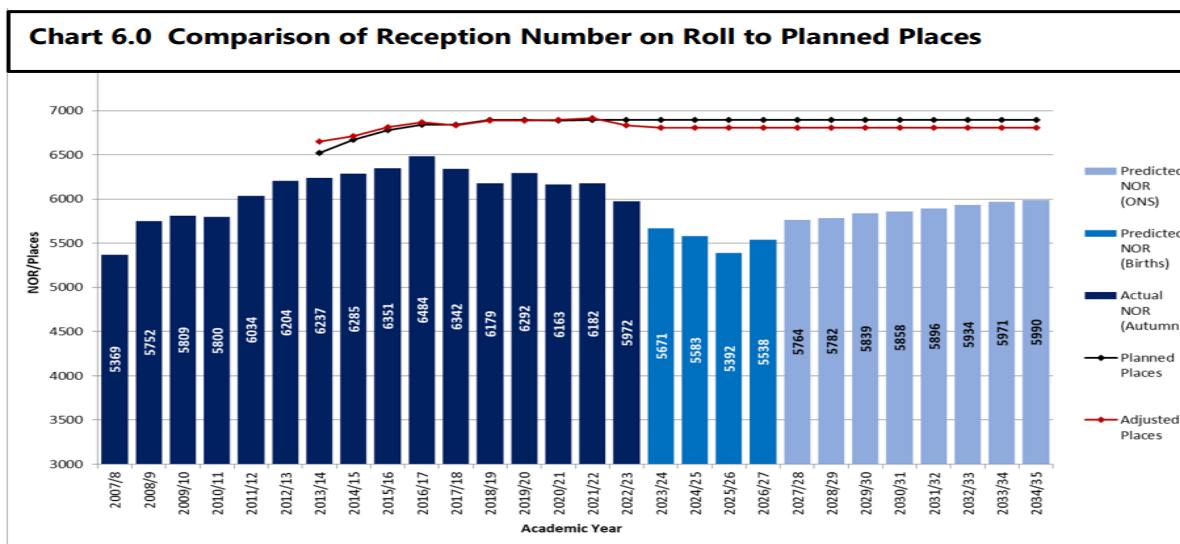
The Council plans to use the actual allocations data from 2023/24 alongside the suite of other forecasting tools to project future demand across the city and within the planning areas. More detailed forecasts are then produced for each school, adding in factors such as preferencing data and inward and outward migration data. Office for National Statistics population forecasts are used to extend the range of years forecasted, but these longer-term projections are viewed with caution and serve only as an indicator.

What is our data telling us?

Reception Places There are currently around 6,900 reception places available across Sheffield. As births in Sheffield rose by 25% between 2002 and 2012 there was a period of expansion and school places were added in the areas of pressure to meet demand as 1,000 more children per year came into



reception. Subsequently as births have fallen there has been a growing number of surplus places across the city. Chart 6.0 below shows Number On Roll forecasts for reception compared to the number of reception places available.

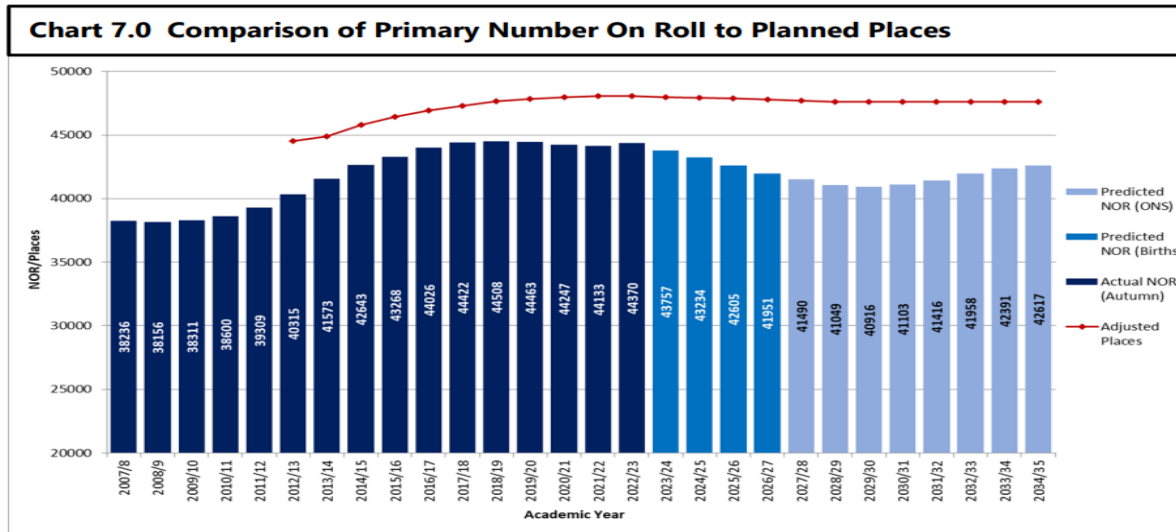


Figures from 2023/24-2026/27 are predictions based on known births. 2025/26 is expected to be the lowest reception cohort with 5392 pupils forecast to be on roll within school citywide (demand) against significantly higher number of places (supply). From 2027/28 predicted Numbers On Roll are based on birth forecasts provided by the Office of National Statistics and should be treated with caution. They suggest that births will remain low to the end of the decade. Please note, although citywide surplus places within primary schools are forecast, deficits are still forecast within specific planning areas as demand is not evenly distributed across the city.

Chart 7.0 below shows the citywide forecast for primary school pupils across all year groups reception to Year 6, compared to number of places shown by the red line. If, as Office for National Statistics forecasts



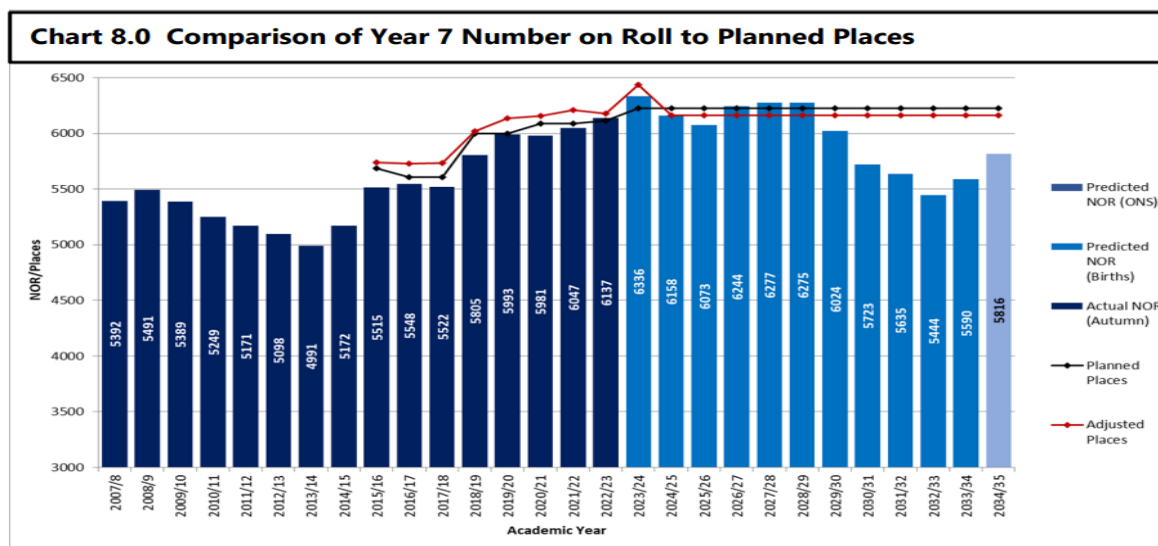
suggest, 2025/26 is the low point for reception intake and numbers grow only slightly to the end of the decade, 2029/30 will see the highest level of surplus places across the primary population



Secondary Sufficiency Chart 8.0. Below compares the demand (number of actual Year 7 pupils needing a place) against the supply (the number of planned Year 7 places available). Previous high numbers of pupils in primary schools are now being reflected in rising Year 7 secondary school intakes. The current citywide picture for secondary school places forecasts a citywide deficit of places between 2023-2028, reaching an initial peak in 2023/24 and two further peaks in 2027/28 and 2028/29. In 2025/26, demand for Y7 places is forecast to be 6073 pupils with very limited surplus supply within the system citywide. Secondary schools in Sheffield are at capacity. Demand for places is forecast to be highest in Planning Area 1 (southwest), Planning Area 5 (northeast) and Planning Area 7 (south). There is a pressure on secondary school places from local children who live within these catchment areas, and this is forecast to continue until the end of the decade. The schools in the southwest of the city are already operating at, or above, their capacities and forecast suggest that some schools in the southwest are



unable to meet the demand from their school's catchment. Demand is not distributed evenly across the city and some areas will experience falling rolls and surplus places will begin to develop.



Demand is rising for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities places and is forecast to continue to rise, driven primarily by pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder and those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. From a mainstream perspective, in order to meet this rising demand, the Council's intention is to provide better mainstream inclusion. Delivering this requires innovation, recognising the challenges, and working in partnership with our localities, schools, academy trusts and other key stakeholders.

FACES are involved in the support of adult learners who arrive in the city, both on our main courses or as a discreet group of resettlement learners.

The main challenge that exists for adult learning is capacity to offer ESOL to those who require it given the high levels of demand at present. At our termly ESOL Forum meeting next Monday we will be



discussing this challenge with key partners to try and further develop our working arrangements between providers.

Funding for ESOL learners who arrive in Sheffield through the resettlement scheme comes from the DWP rather than ESFA. As we claim funding based on the number of learners we teach we could in theory increase our supply of teaching time (through recruitment of tutors) in response to growing or changing numbers, using the increased funding they would draw down.

In summary, notwithstanding the challenges with current levels of demand, the resettlement programme and the way that ESOL provision is funded allows us some flexibility, assuming we can recruit tutors and work with partner organisations to increase teaching capacity for adult learners.

Migration Yorkshire hosted a meeting of all health leads across the Yorkshire and Humberside District. It was agreed the main health perspectives to feedback were:

- o There are challenges from a system perspective are around the workforce - people with specialist knowledge and having the relevant skill sets.
- o Being registered with a GP doesn't mean that all the health needs can be addressed.
- o Impact on people who are potentially coming through other routes. If there's no financial support for these individuals how will this be managed.
- o Concerns about the requirements of mental health provision. Needs are specific and don't fit in to mainstream mental health services.
- o Issues about health literacy and people not knowing how to navigate the health care system.
- o Being asked to consult in such a short period of time things can change rapidly. It is hard to predict how 2025 will look like and the position the NHS will be in given the situation for winter 23/24 is currently uncertain.



[Redacted]

[Redacted]

We have also included below concerns from two of our VCS partners in appendix A.

Thank you for participating in this consultation.

Please send your response by midnight on 15 December 2023 to: capconsultation@homeoffice.gov.uk – this has now been extended to 9th

January, 2024

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Appendix A

We have also included below concerns from two of our VCS partners:

A: Concerns about the structure of the safe routes cap consultation

It is the right thing for the Government to engage with local authorities on planning for future safe routes and resettlement for people coming to the UK. Local authorities are vital in supporting those who arrive in the UK under resettlement schemes. However, it is clear that there is nothing in the design of the safe routes consultation that will achieve an ambitious target for future resettlement and safe routes.

The decision to turn the consultation private between the government and local authorities has not only restricted the dialogue and opportunity for expertise in VCS to be able to feed in constructive and practical information from a policy perspective, it also has put a very high burden on local authorities who are required to individually commit to numbers of refugees to support within only eight weeks.



The time frame of eight weeks is far too short for any meaningful response by local authorities, it restricts an opportunity to consult across sectors in a meaningful way and to think innovatively about future solutions to resettling a higher number of refugees. The safe routes cap only requires a pledge on numbers for one year, this approach limits local authorities' abilities to plan long term in building expertise and capacity.

In the arrangement of this consultation, the Government has failed to include any certainty around funding for local authorities as well as any material on short- or long-term solutions to the urgent housing pressures that are faced by councils. The questions in the consultation document are restrictive and designed solely at eliciting numbers from local authorities, there is no room to hear from councils on their views of what positive resettlement should look like in terms of future durable solutions. It is worsened by the FAQ document strongly suggesting that the Home Office will expect local authorities to be able to fulfil any pledges. Given the current issues around move-on, many councils fear being ambitious with pledges. The lack of central government ambition risks many councils not engaging with the consultation or responding with very small pledges due to reputational risk on local authorities if numbers are not met.

What the safe routes consultation should look like

The consultation would be far more beneficial if it had a wider overarching ambition. It should be held over a longer period of time and be open to a larger range of stakeholders for broader engagement. This would have resulted in more joined up thinking that moves away from a restrictive place-based approach, it would have allowed for a vital policy perspective to be incorporated which would have given the opportunity to develop strategies on how to assist local authorities with opening up housing stock for refugees.

The consultation fails to recognise cumulative pressures on local services, the Government should have included proper certainty on funding to ensure councils are adequately supported.

The cap should be for five years, this would have allowed local authorities, communities and support organisations to plan ahead, to build expertise and capacity to determine how people can be distributed across country in fair and equitable way.

What resettlement should look like

National resettlement target

- The UK government needs to increase the number of refugees being resettled in the UK by creating a national comprehensive refugee resettlement programme that sets an ambitious target over 5 years.



- The new national target should work with an initial assessment made locally by UNHCR maximising the existing global UK Resettlement Scheme which should be open to all nationalities, the initial assessment should be based on a criteria of vulnerability in order to ensure the most vulnerable are resettled swiftly.
- Once a national target for resettlement has been set, this figure should be broken down to what it would mean at constituency level. There would also need to be full consultation with the Devolved Administrations, SMPs and Local Authorities.

National refugee strategy:

- A new resettlement strategy would sit under a national refugee strategy, where instead of running multiple schemes – such as asylum dispersal, the UK Resettlement Scheme, the Afghan and Ukraine schemes and Hong Kong (BNO) scheme – each with different funding structures and housing requirements, there should be one overarching strategy.
- The national refugee strategy should be supported by a national refugee support and integration strategy, with a dedicated minister in the Cabinet Office.

Housing solutions

- Housing strategies must be thought of holistically in the wider picture of integration.
- A national refugee strategy would galvanise thinking between departments to coordinate housing issues across all local authorities to understand what the needs are for all refugees of concern. This should include the Government supporting and facilitating a multi sector approach to housing solutions which would involve funding opportunities for a broad range of players including local authorities, the private sector, community sponsorship groups in order to open up more housing stock.
- The various ways that housing stock could be opened to refugees and people seeking asylum include:
 - Looking at housing issues in the round to balance refugee housing issues with wider homelessness and housing demand pressures being faced by LA's
 - Providing people with a longer time in home office accommodation after decisions to enable homelessness prevention work to be undertaken
 - Utilising local authority funding (LAF) in creative ways to take housing intended for private sale back into council housing stock dedicated for refugees. This stock becomes additional therefore is not creating pressure on wider housing.
 - Learning lessons from the LAF which should have longer timescales that will allow for more acquisition and new supply
 - Renovation of derelict buildings
 - Promote access to affordable housing: seek out partnerships with faith groups, churches, groups/individuals who hold housing stock and address the subsidy loss impact
 - Regulate the Supported Exempt Accommodation use and change the housing benefit caps that cause loss significant loss to the Council
 - Facilitating access to the private housing market by developing partnerships with the private sector providers to address the issues they see as barriers



- Review the impact on RTB on LA's that is resulting in an overall net loss of homes available for lettings for a period until homeless and housing demand numbers stabilise maybe taking into account areas in the country with significant housing demand pressures.

B:

We should not be focussing on a numerical target. Targets such as these are repeatedly shown to inadequate and inaccurate. Rather, we should focus on how society is structured to enable people arriving in the UK to rebuild their lives and become part of our society.

We seem capable of doing this for the huge number of people coming on work visas to fill roles in our NHS and other key sectors. In the year ending March 2023 work visas were up around 61% to 300,000, and that is before dependants are counted. This is a far higher number than the number of people arriving through the resettlement route or claiming asylum.

Once people gain refugee status or arrive with refugee status, they are, to all intents and purposes, in the same category as those arriving on a work visa. Perhaps they are even more rooted to the UK as they now have a right to stay that is not tied to maintaining a job. As such we must support them to access jobs, find housing and begin to become part of the fabric of society.

So, rather than focus on an arbitrary number, central government should focus on providing the conditions for someone to get on with their life in the UK. The most impactful thing that central government can do in this regard would be:

- to provide certainty on the funding local authorities will receive and to ensure it is of sufficient size to meet the need arising
- to provide well thought through and sustainable short and long term solutions to the housing crisis

I also would like to add that the arrangement and set up of the consultation is woefully inadequate and, as stated by the Refugee Council, seems to be 'designed solely at eliciting numbers from local authorities' with 'no room to hear from councils on their views of what positive resettlement should look like in terms of future sustainable solutions.' Tom Martin, Director - City of Sanctuary Sheffield.

PART A - Initial Impact Assessment

Proposal Name: Resettlement Scheme Arrangements

EIA ID: 2537

EIA Author: Jonathan South (NCC)

Proposal Outline: Confirm arrangements in place to support refugees arriving on the UK Resettlement Scheme, Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP), Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

Proposal Type: Non-Budget

Year Of Proposal: 23/24

Lead Director for proposal:

Service Area:

EIA Start Date: 17/01/2024

Lead Equality Objective: Break the cycle and improve life chances

Equality Lead Officer: Louise Nunn

Decision Type

Committees: Other Committees

Portfolio

Primary Portfolio: Neighbourhoods

EIA is cross portfolio: No

EIA is joint with another organisation: No

Overview of Impact

Overview Summary: Confirm arrangements in place to support refugees arriving on the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP), Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

•

Impacted characteristics:

- Health
- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Religion/Belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Sex
- Gender Reassignment
- Poverty & Financial Inclusion
- Cohesion

Consultation and other engagement

Cumulative Impact

Does the proposal have a cumulative impact: No

Impact areas:

Initial Sign-Off

Full impact assessment required: No

Review Date: 17/01/2024

Action Plan & Supporting Evidence

Outline of action plan: The impact of the resettlement process will be monitored and supported by the Gateway Refugee Team and the Ukraine Team. Refugees will be supported in their resettlement and the impact of that journey will be discussed with refugees in order to evaluate and support future resettlement.

Action plan evidence:

Changes made as a result of action plan:

Mitigation

Significant risk after mitigation measures: No

Outline of impact and risks:

Review Date

Review Date: 17/01/2024

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