

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Thursday 19 September 2024 by the Housing Policy Committee.

Item No

8. HOUSING POLICY COMMITTEE – 2024/25 THE YEAR AHEAD

8.1 Members considered a report of the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services outlining a forward agenda for the Housing Policy Committee for the 2024/25 year, setting out the key steps this Committee needs to take to build on the progress made last year and to deliver the Council Plan. This includes the need to prioritise resources on Council Plan outcomes and become a community and customer focused organisation to deliver high quality services for the people of Sheffield and address the financial pressure facing the Council.

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

1. Notes the progress made in 2023/24, recognising the work of Elected Members, officers and partners to deliver against our objectives and support strong strategic foundations for the organisation.
2. Considered the key issues identified in section 3 of the report as part of our forward agenda for 2024/25.
3. Agrees to work across Policy Committees to ensure the opportunities and issues identified in section 3 are taken forward as part of the Council Plan in 2024/25.

8.3 Reasons for Decision

8.3.1 The recommendations support the continued strategic development of the organisation and will enable the delivery of our Council Plan by agreeing the key issues that this Committee needs to address in the 2024/25 year.

8.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

8.4.1 Not to set out a forward agenda for 2024/25 – this was rejected because having agreed a new Council Plan, we need to set out for citizens the things we want to achieve in 2024/25.

9. 2024/25 Q1 BUDGET MONITORING

9.1 The Finance Manager presented a report that brought the Committee up to date with the Council's General Fund revenue outturn position for 2024/25 as at quarter 1.

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

1. Notes the updated information on the 2024/25 Revenue Budget Outturn as described in this report including the detailed committee budget monitoring information and management actions provided.

2. Agrees that the Chair write to the Government's Minister for Housing to request that Housing Benefit payments made to residents cover the cost of providing them with Housing.

9.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 9.3.1 To record formally changes to the Revenue Budget.

9.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 9.4.1 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.

10. **2024/25 Q1 PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

- 10.1 The committee considered a report of the Executive Director Neighbourhood Services providing an overview of housing and repairs performance for a range of services within its remit. The report covered the period up to quarter 1 2024/25 (April – June 2024). A detailed appendix report was included with comparative data against other landlords where available and regulatory performance. The report enabled 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 quarter 1 2024/25 (April – June 2024)
2. Formally notes its thanks to all members of staff who have contributed to the improvements in performance across the service.

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. **CONTRACT PROCUREMENT – SECURITY SHUTTERING AND CLEAN &**

CLEAR

11.1 Members considered a report of the Executive Director, Neighbourhood Services seeking approval to commission a contract with an external provider for Security Shuttering and Clean & Clearance Services of vacant properties for the Council.

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

1. Approve the commissioning of Security Shuttering Services and Clean & Clearance services to vacant properties for a period of 4 years with an estimated value of up to £4,150,000, as set out in this report.
2. Notes the impact of the proposal set out in this report on the 2025/2026 business plan and future years, as set out in paragraph 7.2. This will need to be mitigated or included in future business planning.

11.3 **Reasons for Decision**

11.3.1 Preferred option – to commission the appropriate contract in the manner described in section 1 of this report. This will help enable the Council to continue to provide this key service. The commission of the contract will ensure the Council is operating in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and achieving best value in its procurement of the services.

11.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

11.4.1 Alternative Option 1: Do nothing - This is not an option as the Council has the ongoing requirement for shuttering and clean & clearance services and public procurement regulations dictate that we procure a compliant contract for the delivery of these services.

11.4.2 Alternative Option 2: Self-Deliver - this is not an option; the service has neither the capacity or expertise to deliver these goods and services without the assistance of an external service provider

11.4.3 Alternative Option 3: Further extend existing contract – this is not an option as all available contract extensions have been utilised. As ever, Council must adhere to the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (PCR) thus further variations (value and duration) are not deemed easily reconcilable with the provisions set out within PCR.

12. HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND ROUGH SLEEPING ACTION PLAN

12.1 Members considered a report of the Interim Director of Housing updating the Housing Policy Committee on the delivery and progress of the Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan which underpins the Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleepers Strategy, 2023 – 2028. The Strategy and Action Plan is now in the second year of delivery. The report provides an overview of the delivery thus far, seeks endorsement of continued delivery, and approval of the 12 new actions identified and deletion of 1 action.

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

1. Continues endorsement of the delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan.
2. Approves 12 new actions and the deletion of 1 action as set out in the report.

12.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 12.3.1 Homelessness continues to be a key challenge in Sheffield, with consistently high number of Homeless Presentations to the Council. This impacts the use of TA, provision and subsequently increases financial pressures to the Council. In addition, the impact of Homelessness of the person is significant, and in some cases can have long lasting effects, resulting in reduced opportunities.
- 12.3.2 Although improvement is being made in preventing Homelessness, with good progression on the delivery of the Homeless Prevention Strategy, it is essential we continue to deliver the existing and new actions to further advance prevention of Homelessness.

12.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 12.4.1 Alternative Option 1: Not making amendments to the current action plan.
Not making amendments to the current action plan, would result in not responding appropriately to ongoing and evolving Homelessness challenges and pressures. This would potentially increase risk and impact on the financial pressures associated with Homelessness, the Council's ability to meet statutory duties and responsibilities and reputational impact with partners, by not responding to feedback, consultation and emerging challenges.

13. **RESPONSE TO REGULATOR OF SOCIAL HOUSING REGULATORY JUDGEMENT OF SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL**

- 13.1.1 In July 2024 Sheffield City Council (the Council) received a regulatory judgement from the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) confirming a consumer grading of C3 indicating serious failings in the landlord. The Regulator found that Sheffield City Council was not delivering the required outcomes of the Safety and Quality Consumer Standard.
- 13.1.2 Members considered a report of the Executive Director Neighbourhood Services provide reassurance to the Committee that our programme of improvement activity will help us to meet the Regulator's Safety and Quality Consumer Standard.

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

1. Notes the Council's response to the Regulatory Judgement issued on 9th July 2024
2. Requests that progress in meeting the requirements of the Consumer Standards is reported to this Committee through the routine quarterly performance reports.
3. Formally records its thanks to Peter Brown for his long service with the Council, his diligent work with the committee and for improving the lives of tenants in Sheffield.

13.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 13.3.1 To acknowledge the programme of improvement activity that will help the Council

to meet the Regulator's Safety and Quality Consumer Standard and address the concerns raised by the Regulator in their regulatory notice and subsequent judgement.

13.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

13.4.1 It is a regulatory requirement for the Council to engage with the RSH in response to a Regulatory Judgement, so on this occasion, no alternative options were considered.

14. **OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR HOUSING FIRE SAFETY RESPONSIVE REPAIRS**

14.1.1 Changes to Regulations and inspection regimes has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of fire safety responsive repairs being identified and remedial works required.

14.1.2 Sheffield City Council's internal Repairs and Maintenance Service currently do not have the capacity to deliver the large number of fire related responsive repairs and there is a significant risk of repairs not being closed within defined timescales. This could put residents and visitors at risk.

14.1.3 Members considered a report of the Interim Housing Director recommending that the Council procure and commission a competent contractor to deliver fire safety remedial works on behalf of Sheffield City Council Repairs and Maintenance service managed by the Housing Fire Safety Team to effectively manage the repairs.

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

1. Agrees the proposal for the operational arrangements for managing responsive Housing fire safety remedial works
2. Gives approval to procure and commission a competent third-party fire safety contractor to undertake responsive repairs related to fire safety. Moving from an in-house model to an external solution to allow SCC to discharge its duties.

14.3 **Reasons for Decision**

14.3.1 The decision to utilise the already approved Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funding to commission a competent third-party Fire Safety Contractor for responsive fire safety repairs is essential to ensure compliance with regulatory standards and to mitigate significant risks to residents and visitors.

14.3.2 The internal Repairs and Maintenance Service currently lacks the capacity to manage the volume of fire safety repairs, posing a serious risk of non-compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's requirements. Without timely action, the number of overdue fire safety repairs is likely to increase, jeopardizing the Council's ability to meet its statutory obligations as a landlord.

14.3.3 Moving to an external partner solution rather than an in-house model will allow SCC to discharge its duties. By commissioning an external contractor, the Council can effectively address the current capacity shortfall, maintain compliance with regulatory requirements, and fulfil its duty to provide safe and decent housing for

its tenants.

14.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

14.4.1 Alternative Option 1:

Do nothing – Not an option

The Council must be able to discharge its duties. Do nothing is not a viable option and not only puts the council at risk of financial penalties but could put residents at unnecessary risk and in some case could pose a significant threat to life if repairs are not completed in a timely manner.

14.4.2 Alternative Option 2:

Increase Repairs and Maintenance Resource – Not an Option

Our internal Repairs and Maintenance Service currently do not have the capacity to deliver the large number of fire related responsive repairs and there is a significant risk of jobs not being closed within defined timescales. The Service explored increasing the resource however the time taken to recruit and train operative to the required standard will further increase the backlog of repairs.