

Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Meeting held 12 July 2018

PRESENT: Councillors Ben Curran (Chair), Penny Baker (Deputy Chair), Michelle Cook, Keith Davis, Terry Fox, Anne Murphy, Zahira Naz, Joe Otten, Kaltum Rivers and Richard Shaw

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sue Auckland, Dawn Dale, Mark Jones, George Lindars-Hammond and Karen McGowan.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

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

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 Councillor Michelle Cook declared a personal interest in Item 7 (Fire Safety in Tower Blocks) as the Hanover Flats are located within her Ward.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 The minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 8th March and 16th May, 2018, were approved as correct records.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 Two public questions were received, which related to Item 7 – Fire Safety on Tower Blocks, and were asked as part of that item.

6. STREET CULTURE REPORT - CABINET RESPONSE

6.1 The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Place, which provided an interim response by Cabinet to recommendations made by a Task Group of the Scrutiny Committee, set up to gather information from a range of partners and service providers to better understand Street Culture in Sheffield.

6.2 Also in attendance for this item was Councillor Jim Steinke (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety).

6.3 The report was introduced by Maxine Stavrianakos, Head of Neighbourhood Intervention and Tenant Support, who briefly outlined the responses to each of the recommendations made by the Task Group, some of which were agreed, some were still being considered.

6.4 Members made various comments and asked a number of questions to which responses were provided as follows:-

- The Sheffield DACT stated that donations to beggars by well-meaning people can often have adverse effects in that begging can cause homelessness, as those who lived on the streets sometimes choose this option rather than having to struggle with day-to-day living costs or seek support.
- Engagement with rough sleepers was always an issue as not everyone wanted to talk about their experiences. Often, rough sleepers have very complex needs, which can be due to traumatic childhood incidents. Signs of success would be a reduction in the numbers of rough sleepers, homeless and those with complex health needs. The Cabinet Member suggested that the ultimate measure of success would be an increase in the number of sustainable tenancies being achieved.
- With regard to the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO), consultations had been held with South Yorkshire Police and the Head of the City Centre Ambassadors, following which South Yorkshire Police had agreed to make resources available, initially for three months and then review it.
- The PSPO area map extends out of the city centre, up towards Ecclesall Road and Broomhill. Having access to health services, particularly mental health services, was essential and a Mental Health Worker had started in the Neighbourhood Intervention and Tenant Support Service this week.
- It had been found that there were gaps in the Licensing Service and the delegated powers given to it. There were changes being made within the Portfolio that the Service comes under and once these changes had been completed, the Environmental Protection Service would be given more delegated powers to deal with matters arising along with the Licensing Service.
- During last winter, the City Council provided shelter for 197 people who would have slept rough otherwise. However, two people died, one the result of an accident. Some people who do have accommodation, resort to sleeping rough because it doesn't solve all their issues, for example the costs of staying in the accommodation or being intimidated. One of the deaths was in such circumstances. Therefore, there was a need to address these issues..
- Multi-agencies were working closely together to help the public better understand street culture. Agencies are heavily reliant on volunteers to support rough sleepers.
- There would be a stall on the Christmas Market again this year to run a communications event.

6.5 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) thanks Councillor Jim Steinke (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety) and Maxine Stavrianakos for their contribution to the meeting;
- (b) notes the contents of the report and responses to questions; and
- (c) requests that further updates be received at future meetings on the following:
 - Rough Sleeping Initiative funding;
 - The role of public health in this issue; and
 - Progress of the PSPO.

7. FIRE SAFETY ON TOWER BLOCKS

- 7.1 The Committee received a presentation on Fire Safety on Tower Blocks, which was given by Janet Sharpe, Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods Services, with additional comments from Councillor Jim Steinke (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety).
- 7.2 The Committee received two questions from members of the public on this issue, as follows:-
 - 7.2.1 Mick Watts queried when the Scrutiny Committee was expected to receive a report explaining why combustible cladding was affixed to the Hanover Tower Block, and if such a report was not published before re-cladding was to commence, would the Committee consider alternatives, such as a partial report. He was informed that 95% of it was complete, and that it was now with the contractors for them to check accuracy. The completed report, or a summary of the key issues in the report, would be available at the next meeting of the Committee, if not finalised.
 - 7.2.2 Michael Mullin queried whether, moving forward, and for the reassurance of all the tenants of Hanover, the Council accepted that the alucobond cladding the Council previously installed on Hanover had a Euro class fire rating "D", and would not have complied with building regulations past or present? Janet Sharpe responded by stating that there had been a query over the building regulations, but the Hanover Tower Block was in line with the regulations at that time, and this had building regulation approval prior to installation.
- 7.3 Janet Sharpe took the Committee through the presentation which set out a summary of early interpretations of findings of the Hackitt review. This covered where the City was at with regard to fire safety on tower blocks (all tenures). The presentation set out the Building Regulations and Fire Safety Review, the key elements of the new Regulatory Framework, the 10 key themes and key elements of the new Regulatory Review, before occupation of new High Rise Residential Buildings (HRRBs) and after buildings were occupied, and the Government response to the recommendations. The presentation also set out what the next steps were for Sheffield, the general progress on fire safety work within the Housing Service and for the City, and an update on the Hanover Tower Block.

7.4 The update aimed to provide assurance to tenants, not only those in the Hanover block, but city-wide. She stated that a team of experts, as well as a Fire Risk Expert, had been engaged and that she held meetings every two weeks regarding fire safety. The City Council were pushing on to implement any changes that would improve tenant safety without waiting for changes to legislation.

7.5 Members made various comments and asked a number of questions, to which responses were provided as follows:-

- Tenants had a voice through Tenants and Residents Associations (TARAs) but it was recognised that this didn't engage all tenants.
- Following feedback from the tenants of Hanover Tower Block, it had been recognised that they had become frustrated that the replacement of the cladding had taken a long time, but on the whole, were generally satisfied, by the length of time taken to start the cladding works. The Council were now keen to start work and would hold discussions with tenants and leaseholders on the options available to them with regard to the colour of the cladding and the installation process.
- The Council had sought Government funding, however in the interim, the works were being funded through the Housing Revenue Account. If the bid for funding was unsuccessful, the Council would have to pay for the works.
- It was confirmed that leaseholders who had originally paid for additional cladding to the Hanover block, would not be charged for the new cladding.
- With regard to retrospective funding of sprinklers, this would only apply if the Fire Service confirmed that it was the only way to make the building safe. In all other circumstances, the costs would be the responsibility of the building owner. The Hackitt review hasn't made this mandatory, therefore the Council will be following this up with the Government.

7.6 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) thanks Councillor Jim Steinke (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety) and Janet Sharpe for their contribution to the meeting;
- (b) notes the contents of the presentation and the responses to questions;
- (c) requests an update on the funding of sprinklers be submitted to a future meeting; and
- (d) agrees that the outcome of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry be added to the Work Programme for 2018/19.

8. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

8.1 The Committee received a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer (Alice

Nicholson), attaching the Committee's draft Work Programme for 2018/19.

8.2 The following changes/additions were discussed:

- Receive the Grenfell Tower Inquiry report early in the New Year.
- Gun and Knife Crime to be removed from the agenda for the next meeting and a full day summit be arranged in place of a future meeting.
- Report on cladding to high rise blocks to be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

8.3 RESOLVED: That, subject to the amendments and suggestions now reported, approval be given to the Committee's draft Work Programme for 2018/19.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Thursday, 13th September, 2018 at 5.00 p.m.

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