

Karen Greenhalgh – Questions from Full Council Meeting on 3 October, 2012

No.	Question	Response
1	<p>There is a plethora of information about British Board of Agreement and ETA accredited systems with regard to insulated solid wall installation. The scheme on Hanover/Lansdowne is a hybrid of BBA accredited products allegedly installed by Inc. accredited sub-contractors. Can the council provide the certificate of accreditation for the project?</p>	<p>BBA does not give accreditation to schemes or projects, only to products/systems. ETAs are a European alternative to national agrément certificates and are a technical assessment of the fitness of a product for an intended use. They are designed to reduce technical barriers in the construction products sector throughout Europe, but like BBA certificates, are applied to products not to schemes.</p> <p>The external wall insulation system has BBA approval, which tested the system on a solid masonry substrate. The manufacturer has a supplementary specification sheet for use of the system on a panel background and fully endorses the detailed design employed at Lansdowne and Hanover.</p> <p>In addition the detailed design has Building Regulations Approval.</p>
2	<p>All systems are accredited to be put on a masonry wall NOT class3-high fire risk Smartply, as the wall. Is it acceptable to increase the fire risk?</p>	<p>The wall panel has always been a timber framed construction and the addition of more timber (Smartply) to brace and strengthen it does not increase the fire risk.</p>
3	<p>I note Smartply is now being called a 'bracing' product when in fact it is being used as the wall. Would you please ensure the technical specification is sent to me?</p>	<p>My understanding is that this has been provided.</p> <p>The wall is the combination of all the components from which it is constructed, not just the plywood. The essential element of the wall is the (original) timber framing to which everything else is fixed.</p> <p>Within the wall panels the following is an outline of the specified works: Existing timber studs are repaired or replaced as required Strengthening steelwork is fitted Plywood bracing layer is screwed to studs Insulation board is applied Weber-therm XM render system is applied At upper levels vertical werzalit cladding is used instead of render but the underlying materials are the same.</p>

4	<p>It appears that building control played a large role to engineer the scheme being delivered in this manner. Why was I never told who to ask when I began questioning about this overpriced scheme?</p>	<p>As part of the Planning Approval a separate Building regulation approval has to be gained to check how the project is to be executed on site, materials, safety etc. Leaseholders are invited to inspect the planning application and this would have included this information. Chris Lake (Sheffield Homes Assistant Manager in the Asset Management Team) wrote to all leaseholders to let them know that the Planning Application had been submitted, planning also undertook their statutory method of consultation which includes having all plans and applications available either online or at Howden House for inspection. The date of the planning meeting was confirmed by both parties and this is a public meeting where members of the public can attend.</p>
5	<p>In light of Sir Richard Branson successfully challenging a £15 million per bidder procurement process successfully, what remedial action is this council going to take with their outdated procurement process which has delivered:</p> <p>Inefficient management i.e. a scheme begun on an estate eligible for only 50% CESP funding in preference to the 100% funded estate. ps. We have it in writing 2 contractors could work on the estate simultaneously.</p>	<p>I do not accept that the Council or Sheffield Homes has mismanaged this project. This is a complex refurbishment project that has taken many years, to plan, design and for the Council to fund from its Housing Investment Programme. The project has the full support of the Planning Authority in terms of its design and quality of materials used. This project has been tendered to provide best value for the Council and gain the lowest prices for this work which has been achieved as part of the Council's Procurement Strategy for this project. The project still remains on programme and within the budget set for this project. Customer satisfaction remains high across the estate for this project.</p> <p>It was important that the project was not held up any further whilst the details of the CESP Programme were understood. We also could not have allowed Apollo to start on site due to H&S reasons until Hanover tower block improvements were completed and they did not complete until June 2012. This was a position that was agreed on safety grounds with Apollo, Lovell's, Sheffield Homes and Sheffield City Council due to the density of the Hanover site area and the risk to contractors, tenants & residents.</p> <p>Given this we could not have done any more work on site within the time available. Hanover tower block is also eligible for CESP. If we had prioritised Hanover first we could have delayed Lansdowne works & lost out on Lansdowne CESP income. The Cabinet member at that time was keen that we sequenced the improvement works as agreed with tenants & leaseholders at start of project, the Planning Authority as part of the Planning Application that was approved by the Council on 4th October 2010 and, the Council's Procurement Strategy.</p>

6	<p>The cabinet minister for housing appears to think being in the bottom 5% for the entire country is Not poor enough and redistributed CESP funding to the 'more needy.'</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. I appreciate your concern however, many areas of the city suffer from similar deprivation and this is why it is important that the Council considers all areas when prioritising services & investment in the city.</p>
7	<p>The 'Green Deal' officially began October 1st 2012. Many leaseholders qualify for ECO i.e. funding from the energy companies for expensive solid wall insulation, grants to low income households. What is the council going to do to ensure this is accessed for this Hanover/Lansdowne project?</p>	<p>Sheffield City Council has established a Project Board and is working closely with the Government, Funders and other Partnerships to understand the new Green Deal/Eco scheme rules and any opportunities to lever in additional income will be taken. Detailed discussions are taking place but as yet no additional income has been secured.</p>
8	<p>Does the council still think it is still acceptable to do nothing to assist 78 'working poor' to access vital funding?</p>	<p>The Cabinet member has explained in his letter the reasons why no income is to be used to reduce bills.</p> <p>The Council has not recharged all of the costs for the L&H project to leaseholders and not all leaseholders would benefit in any case so instead the Council chose to limit the cost of the works so that the Council helps keep all leaseholder bills as low as possible which is fairer approach. The Council is not obliged to pass on any of its income to Leaseholders.</p> <p>This question and my reasons for this decision have been communicated on many occasions.</p>

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