

# **Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee**

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**Thursday 7 January 2021 at 5.00 pm**

**To be held as a remote video conference**

**The Press and Public are Welcome to Attend**

## **Membership**

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Councillors Ben Curran (Chair), Tim Huggan (Deputy Chair), Sue Auckland, Penny Baker, Dawn Dale, Adam Hurst, Karen McGowan, Anne Murphy, Peter Price, Kaltum Rivers, Andrew Sangar, Richard Shaw, Vacancy and Vacancy

## **Substitute Members**

In accordance with the Constitution, Substitute Members may be provided for the above Committee Members as and when required.

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## **PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE MEETING**

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The Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee exercises an overview and scrutiny function in respect of the planning, development and monitoring of performance and delivery of services which aim to make Sheffield a safer, stronger and more sustainable city for all of its residents.

A copy of the agenda and reports is available on the Council's website at [www.sheffield.gov.uk](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk). You can also see the reports to be discussed at the meeting if you call at the First Point Reception, Town Hall, Pinstone Street entrance. The Reception is open between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm, Monday to Thursday and between 9.00 am and 4.45 pm. on Friday. 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 Scrutiny Committee meetings and recording is allowed under the direction of the Chair. Please see the website 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.

Scrutiny 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. If you would like to attend the meeting please report to the First Point Reception desk where you will be directed to the meeting room.

If you require any further information about this Scrutiny Committee, please contact Deborah Glen, Policy and Improvement Officer, on 0114 2735065 or email [deborah.glen@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:deborah.glen@sheffield.gov.uk)

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## **FACILITIES**

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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.

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**SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY AND POLICY  
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA  
7 JANUARY 2021**

**Order of Business**

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- 1. Welcome and Housekeeping Arrangements**
- 2. Apologies for Absence**
- 3. Exclusion of Public and Press**  
To identify items where resolutions may be moved to exclude the press and public
- 4. Declarations of Interest**  
Members to declare any interests they have in the business to be considered at the meeting
- 5. Minutes of Previous Meeting**  
To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2020.
- 6. Public Questions and Petitions**  
To receive any questions or petitions from members of the public
- 7. Housing Repairs Service**  
Report of the Head of Repairs Service, Sheffield City Council.
- 8. Work Programme**  
Report of the Policy and Improvement Officer.
- 9. Answers to Written Questions submitted to the meeting held on 26th November 2020**  
To note answers to written questions received from the public on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2020.
- 10. Date of Next Meeting**  
The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2021, at 5.00 p.m.

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## ADVICE TO MEMBERS ON DECLARING INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

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If you are present at a meeting of the Council, of its executive or any committee of the executive, 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 Audit and Standards Committee in relation to a request for dispensation.

Further advice can be obtained from Gillian Duckworth, Director of Legal and Governance on 0114 2734018 or email [gillian.duckworth@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:gillian.duckworth@sheffield.gov.uk).

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### Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

#### Meeting held 26 November 2020

(NOTE: This meeting was held as a remote meeting in accordance with the provisions of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020).

**PRESENT:** Councillors Ben Curran (Chair), Tim Huggan (Deputy Chair), Sue Auckland, Penny Baker, Dawn Dale, Karen McGowan, Anne Murphy, Peter Price, Kaltum Rivers, Andrew Sangar, Richard Shaw and Alan Law (Substitute Member)

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#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- 1.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Peter Rippon. Councillor Alan Law attended as his substitute.

#### **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 There were no declarations of interest.

#### **4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

- 4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2020, were approved as a correct record.

#### **5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

- 5.1 The Chair stated that he had received written questions from a member of the public who did not wish to attend to ask the questions at the meeting, and therefore, he would arrange for written answers to be provided to him and published on the Council's website.

#### **6. HANOVER TOWER BLOCK**

- 6.1 The Committee received a report regarding the investigation carried out by the City Council as to why defective cladding was installed in the Hanover Tower Block in Broomhall.
- 6.2 Present for this item were Janet Sharpe (Director of Housing), Jill Hurst (Head of Housing Investment and Repairs), David Hollis (Assistant Director of Legal and Governance) and Councillor Paul Wood (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods)

and Community Safety).

- 6.3 The Chair stated that the purpose of the report was for the Scrutiny Committee to consider what had been agreed at a meeting of full Council held on 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2017 which asked the reasons why the Hanover Tower Block came to fail fire safety tests, the cause of the failures and the implications for other work carried out under the Decent Homes improvement scheme and for any other buildings in Sheffield.
- 6.4 Janet Sharpe introduced the report and stated that following the Grenfell Tower Block tragedy, the City Council acted swiftly to determine the type of cladding used on all its tower blocks. She said that as soon as it became apparent that the cladding on the Hanover Tower Block was found to be unsafe, that it had no flame retardant properties, work was commenced to remove and replace the cladding. She said that work had commenced in June 2017 and completed by November, 2019. Janet Sharpe stated that the priority for the Council had been to ensure that buildings were safe and reassure residents living in the tower blocks that they can do so safely. Residents of the Hanover Tower Block raised questions and the Council agreed, alongside elected Members, to deliver a factual account of why that building had cladding which was not suitable for buildings.
- 6.5 The Chair invited a resident of the Hanover Tower Block to speak to the Committee, to give the tenants and residents perspective on the matter.
- 6.6 John Cawthorne, a tenant of the Hanover Tower Block and member of the Hanover Tenants and Residents Association (TARA), stated that he and all the residents of Hanover had endured three years of stress, fear, heartache and worry whilst the works were being carried out. He said that several tenants had left their homes and moved into the private sector because of this. Mr. Cawthorne said there was ongoing anger towards the City Council at what was considered to be inadequate actions by the Council in allowing panels to be added to the outside of the building. He felt that the Council should be ashamed that they allowed the contractors to add the cladding, even after tenants had expressed their concerns saying it was a bad idea, that the material should not be used, but they were ignored. He said that eight years previously, the Council were told that the material was not fire retardant. Mr. Cawthorne felt that there was a complete lack of communication between the Council, the contractors at the time, and the residents. He said the fence that had surrounded the tower block had only just been removed. At a meeting of the Association held with Council officers, they had told the Council that the proposal to open up a bin store at the side of the children's playground was a bad idea, they didn't feel it was appropriate, there was a machine outside digging holes to build the bin room. He has since been informed that there has been a change of plan but two large holes are still there.
- 6.7 In response, Janet Sharpe said that meetings were held with residents when it had been found that the cladding was unsafe. She said she understood the concerns of the tenants and leaseholders and that the Council has a duty to make sure they are working closely with residents and make sure they feel safe in their homes and if there are issues to make sure those issues are dealt with as quickly

as possible. She said that lessons have been learned from this.

- 6.8 Jill Hurst stated that a request was made by the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety at that time, to carry out an investigation into the circumstances behind the installation of the cladding at the tower block. She said that in the autumn of 2017, she started to collate information as to why the cladding on the Hanover block was different to all the other blocks in the city, who had authorised the installation of the cladding, what, if any, steps had been taken to ensure the fire safety of the materials used and why the Council's Building Control Department had not carried out inspections to the building. Jill Hurst said that this had been a lengthy process and it became apparent that there were gaps in the information obtained. The investigation was conducted by reviewing written documents held by the Council both in paper and electronic format held in files, in the Council's archives and various systems it used. Documents from external third parties were obtained, and interviews were held with officers still employed by the Council. She said the Council had tried to be transparent in its findings, whilst acknowledging that there were gaps in the report. Also, a legal request was made to Lovell who were the contractors who had carried out the works, to obtain any information they held.
- 6.9 She said the stairwell had not formed part of the investigation report because the issue regarding the material on the staircase only came about when the cladding had been removed. They were not aware that there had been concerns but arranged for a panel to be removed and checked and to find out where it came from and discovered that it was not what the Council had specified that they wanted on the staircase. The type of material had been discovered after the removal of the cladding, the residents had drawn the Council's attention to it, stating that it was questionable. It has since been replaced on a metal framework and Lovell accepted responsibility for the cladding and has compensated the Council.
- 6.10 Councillor Paul Wood questioned why so much information was missing; the biggest lesson learned from this was that robust secure systems need to be put in place to ensure that any major decisions taken by the Council are fully recorded so that the Council can look back at those decisions and look at who, when and where those decisions were made. Councillor Wood said that when the decent homes initiative was carried out, the tower blocks were under the remit of Sheffield Homes and when that folded, much of the paperwork was lost. He said he was extremely disappointed that this had happened, that there should have been a robust paper trail to follow, but he believed the officers carrying out the investigation had done everything they possibly could to gather the information.
- 6.11 Members asked a number of questions, to which responses were provided as follows:-
- Sheffield wasn't unique in using the type of material on its buildings, it was widely used throughout the country. There was some confusion around the regulations at the time about what was deemed to be suitable material to be used. Important lessons have been learned and more robust testing and checking of materials that go into any home in the country is now

carried out. The Council accepted and acknowledged the inconvenience caused to its residents for more than two years. Now that the cladding has been replaced, the Council is looking at additional measures both internally and externally to ensure the safety of its tenants.

- The priority now was for all tower blocks to have a repair service in place, whereby quarterly checks are carried out floor by floor to ensure that every issue with the building was carried out promptly to make sure the buildings are 100% safe.
- Although proof of the original decision to use the type of cladding on the Hanover block couldn't be found, a later email revealed that it was used due to the profile of the building, which was different to the other tower blocks around the city.
- It was acknowledged that the investigation and report back to the Council had taken far too long and that in future, if reports are asked for, they should be time limited. Once the investigation was underway, it became apparent that expert opinions were necessary, which added delays to the production of the report and the Council have tried to communicate and meet with residents.
- The Council has tried to meet with and keep residents informed as much as possible and acknowledged that more could have been done, however lessons have been learned from this. It was fortunate that, although there had been small fires in the tower block, there hadn't been a spread of the fire in the building. A Project Group has been set up to work closely with the TARA and residents to ensure the correct cladding was used and this was working well.
- Following guidance from the Government and the Fire and Rescue Service, the Council has ensured that the replacement cladding used was a better product and far safer than previously used.
- There are six tower blocks within the city that have defective cladding, but these are privately-owned and the Council is constantly in communication with the Government for assistance in dealing with this. The Fire and Rescue Service carry out regular risk assessments on these buildings, and if a problem was found if a building was unsafe, the building would be closed. The Council was speaking to the owners of these blocks and the Cabinet Member receives monthly reports on the safety of these blocks.
- The Council and the Fire and Rescue Service use collective powers to ensure those living in private sector housing blocks are safe. Fire risk assessments are in place and where any serious hazard to the cladding is found, the Council takes steps to ensure that such cladding is removed. The Council and the owners of the private buildings have been working together to remove risks. The Council has been working directly with the Government on the development of future regulations, and one of the issues to be raised was leaseholders who were facing significant bills to

see what assistance could be provided to them. The Council was also ensuring that private building owners were aware that Government funding was available to them to help fund and replace the cladding on their buildings. There are around 100 high rise buildings in the city and there had been very few serious issues in those buildings. The Council works closely with lettings agencies and management agencies and puts in place risk management systems.

- There is a Building Safety Bill White Paper being produced to alter building regulations, to review the building inspectorate regime to change building controls on buildings, but this was in its early stages and will take time to go through the legislative process.
- The report had taken much longer to write than it should have done but it became clear during the investigation that an external assessment of the material collected was necessary to consider if there were any grounds for taking legal action against any party. External solicitors were appointed in February 2019 and their findings were known in February 2020. In order to preserve the Council's legal position in relation to any potential claims against third parties, the report could not be published. Further information was received from Lovell that needed to be considered. Considering this material and finalising the report would have been completed earlier but was delayed due to the Council's response to Covid-19.
- The funding the Council received from Homes England to replace the cladding, was contingent upon the Council not having a claim against another party and the Council had to obtain evidence to satisfy Homes England that it was entitled to the funding.
- Following the Grenfell tragedy, Members, the Fire Service and Council officers visited residents of tower blocks offering reassurance. The Council then arranged to have the cladding tested immediately and provided every household in those blocks with as much information as possible so that they knew what was on their building. The results were that Hanover and three brick blocks had been found to have had defective cladding fitted.
- As part of the housing investment, regulations are being tightened up. The Council is commencing consultations on the installation of sprinklers, replacing fire doors, looking at additional fire precaution measures, and looking at how to engage with residents to let them know what is planned for their buildings. The Project Group meetings are important for this. The Council will get out and meet as many residents as possible and find different ways of engagement so that residents have a say and make sure that they know that any recharges are reasonable.
- The Council is going to establish a High Rise Tenant and Leaseholder Forum and will be inviting tenants to participate in that, which will be wide ranging looking at fire safety, managing waste, etc., to make high rise living the best it can be. The Council is also starting work on resident engagement strategies and will have a dedicated team to get the right

information to residents informing them what and why things are done within their blocks.

- The Council is trying to promote different ways of working. For example, when operatives go into buildings to carry out repairs, the Council will be asking them to look around them and check if there are any other jobs that need carrying out which might not have been reported and to carry out other small repairs.
- The Council is going to establish a High Rise Tenant and Leaseholder Forum and will be inviting tenants to participate in that, which will be wide ranging looking at fire safety, managing waste, etc., to make high rise living the best it can be. The Council is also starting work on resident engagement strategies and will have a dedicated team to get the right information to residents informing them what and why things are done within their blocks.

**6.11 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-**

- (a) thanks Janet Sharpe, Jill Hurst, David Hollis and Councillor Wood for their contribution to the meeting;
- (b) notes the contents of the report and the responses to the questions; and
- (c) felt that there should be time limitation for reports to be submitted; if there are delays, officers should be invited to attend a meeting of full Council to explain the reason behind such delays and ensure that information is communicated in different languages.

**7. WORK PROGRAMME**

7.1 The Committee received a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer (Deborah Glen), attaching the Committee's Work Programme for 2020/21. She stated that there were a number of items to be considered but only four meetings were scheduled for the remainder of the municipal year. She asked Members for their views and any items they considered should be prioritised.

7.2 RESOLVED: That the Committee approves the Work Programme as detailed in the report and agrees that the Fire Integrated Risk Management Plan be considered at the next meeting and asked that the following items be prioritised:

- Social Housing
- Homelessness
- Housing Repair Service during Covid

**8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

8.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2020 at 5.00 p.m., in the Town Hall.



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## **Repairs and Maintenance Service**

### **Report to Scrutiny Committee 7<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

#### **Impact of COVID Pandemic**

#### **Summary**

The Repairs and Maintenance Service employ 640 staff to maintain the 38912 Sheffield City Councils Housing Stock.

The COVID Pandemic has significantly impacted the Repairs Service throughout 2020 and is likely to continue to have a significant impact into 2021 in the following areas:

- Plans to improve performance on existing levels of live work in progress and overdue Repairs, specifically a backlog of planned work and working at height roofing work have been disrupted.
- Plans to diversify into and deliver planned Heating work, Acquisitions and Capital Design Service projects in the City Centre have not fully been delivered to programme.
- Plans to implement a new Target Operating Model with the aim of modernising the Service for Tenants has been challenging but with some success.
- Impact on Gas Servicing performance due to no access has resulted in more properties passed into the Legal process.
- Throughout the first and second lockdown the Service saw 40,000 repairs logged compared to 64,000 repairs historically over the same period. Therefore, there is a future potential demand of 24,000 repairs that could be outstanding.

#### **Background**

The Repairs and Maintenance Service employ 640 staff to maintain the 38912 Sheffield City Councils Housing Stock.

The Service was insourced from Kier in 2017 and is in the process of implementing a new Target Operating Model following a review of its operations.

The objectives of the new Target Operating model are to modernise and improve the Repairs Service for the Tenants and there are several initiatives under way to achieve this.

The improvements include:

- Restructuring the Service to remove Client Contractor roles and reduce operating overheads. A new senior management team has been recruited and is in place.

- Shifting the balance of reactive repairs to more planned and cyclical maintenance.
- Improving Customer focus and collaboration with key stakeholders. Including working with the Corporate Contact Centre to improve the customer offer through self-service, improved script and priority status for vulnerable tenants, diagnostics of repairs and text confirmation of appointments.
- Modernising Service delivery through the investment in ICT. A new Repairs system has been successfully procured and implementation is underway with the aim of being operational by August 2021.
- Developing an organisational development strategy that empowers our staff with the skills to deliver a first-class repairs service.
- Developing a workforce plan that aims to bring more direct self-delivery and less reliance on subcontractors. This includes the recruitment of up to 45 Apprentices due to start in January 2021 bringing the overall number of Apprentices to 95 within the Service.
- Improving performance management, reporting and productivity.
- Improving Financial awareness and management.
- Improving Procurement and Supply Chain Management. A procurement strategy has been completed with the emphasis on the use of Local Sheffield contractors and merchants. The Procurement process is set to commence in April 2021.

## **Operating Safely During COVID**

Since the awareness of COVID mid-March, the Repairs and Maintenance Service has put a significant emphasis on Health and Safety of both staff and our customers. In doing so there have been several changes.

The offices have been made COVID secure in line with National Guidelines. This includes stickering on desks to identify which can be used. 2m floor stickers are in place. Capacity has been calculated working with our Facilities Management Colleagues.

PPE – Guidance of the 5 categories identified by IMG has been introduced. Specifically, categories 1 and 2 which apply to the Repairs teams and category 4 which takes extra precautions to protect vulnerable tenants.

Risk Assessments – These have been completed for the relevant workplace areas. Additionally, there is a Risk Assessment in place to allow front line staff to enter properties safely and clear guidance required to work safely.

Home Working – In line with Government and corporate guidance, the service has reduced staff working in the workplace as much as possible.

### **First COVID Lockdown**

Prior to the first COVID Lockdown the Service had 11000 jobs at work in progress stage (live). This comprised of 8000 jobs normal through put with an average of 2000 job per week including all categories of work and a backlog (overdue) of 3000 jobs largely planned work and working at height roofing work.

We had 260 live Voids with the Repairs Service.

Properties with a current Gas Certificate was 89%.

Throughout the COVID Pandemic the Repairs Service followed and continue to follow the instructions and guidance of the Councils Incident Management Group (IMG) and operated a reduced Service responding to critical activities only which included Housing Emergency Repairs, Compliance related activities such as Gas Servicing and Void Property work to continue to provide much needed housing.

Throughout the first COVID lockdown the Service was delivered with a reduced number of staff. 190 staff having been vulnerable and shielding and the remainder on rotas to cover critical activities as per the Government and IMG guidance.

Surveys, planned work, Routine Repairs and non-urgent works were not carried out.

Carrying out Emergency and Urgent repairs significantly reduced the normal repairs demand from 2000 per week to 600 per week.

Throughout the first Lockdown we experienced problems with gaining access for Gas Servicing which impacted the number of properties with a current Gas Certificate and increased the number falling into the Legal process.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> July the Councils Incident Management Group gave approval to reinstate the Service and following staff undertaking risk assessments, inductions and essential training we returned to full-Service delivery.

At the end of the first Lockdown we had a work in progress of circa 9500 Repairs, 200, voids and a gas compliance of around 88%.

In total the service had been reduced to non-essential activity for 20 weeks including the re-introduction of staff.

## **Second COVID Lockdown**

Prior to the Second lockdown the Service had circa 9,000 repairs at work in progress stage. The repairs service did see an increase in repairs, but this was not significant, and tenants appeared to be apprehensive about wanting operatives in their home which enabled the service to remain on top of the workload.

We had 220 live Voids with the Repairs Service which has risen due to a large influx of voids after choice-based lettings were reinstated.

Properties with a current Gas Certificate was 90%.

Throughout the second lockdown the Repairs Service again followed and continue to follow the instructions and guidance of the Councils Incident Management Group (IMG) and operated a reduced Service responding to critical activities only which included Housing Emergency Repairs, Compliance related activities such as Gas Servicing and Void Property work to continue to provide much needed housing.

However due to the seasonal change external work to roofs, damp and water escapes were classed as urgent work and carried out to reduce the impact of water damage to tenants' properties.

Throughout the second COVID lockdown the Service was delivered with all staff working on critical activities with only 16 classed as extremely clinically vulnerable shielding or working from home as per IMG instruction.

Surveys, planned work, Routine Repairs and non-urgent works were not carried out.

Carrying out Emergency and Urgent repairs only significantly reduced the normal repairs demand from 2000 per week to 800 per week. This was an increase on the first lockdown due to the re classification of roofing and damp work.

Throughout the second Lockdown we continued to experience problems with gaining access for Gas Servicing which impacted the number of properties with a current Gas Certificate and increased the number falling into the Legal process.

Concerned about the level of no access and the numbers falling into the Legal process a team was set up to attempt to gain access over and above the normal number of attempts we would make given the exceptional circumstances to reduce the number going into the legal process.

At the end of the Second Lockdown we had

a WIP of 8,000 Repairs, 230 voids and a gas compliance of 90.5%.

## Summary Performance

Throughout both Lockdowns the Repairs Service have successfully responded to Emergency and Urgent Repairs and reduced the overall repairs work in progress, improved performance on Void Properties and Gas Servicing and made progress with implementing the new Target Operating Model through recruiting a new management team, Procurement of IT System and consulting with Trade Unions on plans for the future modernisation of the Service.

	Prior to first Lockdown	Post first Lockdown	Prior Second Lockdown	Post Second Lockdown
Repairs Work in Progress	11,000	9,500	9,000	8,000
Void Properties with Repairs	260	200	220	230
Properties with a current Gas Certificate	89%	88%	90%	90.5%

## Operational Response

In Response to the impact of the COVID pandemic and subsequent lockdowns the Repairs Service have:

- Planned and organised resources to have the ability to respond to critical activities in the first instance which included Emergency Repairs, Gas Servicing and Void properties.
- Developed a tracker to compare actuals to projected volumes to understand financial and resource implications.
- Batched work up such as High Value Fire damaged properties, Acquisitions, Roofing, Windows and Doors, Plastering, and worked with Housing

- investment colleagues to deliver some of this work using their framework contractors.
- Increased the volume of work delivered by our framework subcontractors.
  - Recruited agency's workers to supplement our teams with additional resources.
  - Encouraged our teams to work flexibly and overtime to gain additional capacity.
  - Improved communications with stakeholder and established a dedicated phone line and email address for Councillor's enquiries.

## **General Impact**

Historically the Repairs and Maintenance Service complete 2,000 repairs per week. 104,000 Repairs per annum.

Prior to the first COVID Lockdown the Service had 11000 jobs at work in progress stage. This comprised of 8000 jobs normal through put with an average of 2000 job per week including all categories of work and a backlog of 3000 jobs largely planned work and working at height roofing work.

Throughout the first and second lockdown the Service saw 40,000 repairs logged compared to 64,000 historically repairs over the same period. Therefore, there is a future potential demand of 24,000 repairs that could be outstanding.

The combination of the Work in progress prior to lockdown and the potential future demand for repairs and the no access for Gas Servicing will be a significant challenge for the Repairs Service both in terms of impact on budget and resources to achieve normal levels of performance with a reasonable timescale.

Work is currently under way to assess the potential impact in more detail and to develop plans to respond to this challenge.

## **Latest Update**

Following the Prime Ministers announcement on the 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 putting the Country into a third lockdown the Repairs Service are working with the Councils Incident Management Group (IMG) and implement our business continuity plan which will at the very least prioritise the safety of our Staff and the General Public, respond to critical activities including Emergency and Urgent Repairs, Gas Servicing and work in Void Properties.

Mark Freeth

Head of Repairs

Sheffield City Council.

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## Report to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2021

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**Report of:** Policy and Improvement Officer

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**Subject:** Work Programme 2020/21: Safer & Stronger Communities  
Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

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**Author of Report:** Deborah Glen, Policy and Improvement Officer  
[deborah.glen@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:deborah.glen@sheffield.gov.uk)

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The draft work programme for 2020/21 is attached at Appendix 1 for the Committee's consideration and discussion. The work programme includes 6 meetings as requested, and lists the topics discussed and agreed at the last meeting. These are yet to be scheduled to the dates.

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**Type of item:** The report author should tick the appropriate box

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	
Other	X

**The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:**

- Discuss and agree the work programme

**Background Papers:** [Sheffield Council Constitution](#)

**Category of Report:** OPEN

## **Current Work Programme 2020/21: Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee - Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

### **1.0 What is the role of Scrutiny?**

1.1 Scrutiny Committees exist to hold decision makers to account, investigate issues of local concern, and make recommendations for improvement. The Centre for Public Scrutiny has identified that effective scrutiny:

- Provides 'Critical Friend' challenge to executive policy makers and decision makers
- Enables the voice and concern of the public and its communities
- Is carried out by independent minded governors who lead and own the scrutiny process
- Drives improvement in public services and finds efficiencies and new ways of delivering services

1.2 Scrutiny Committees can operate in a number of ways – through formal meetings with several agenda items, single item 'select committee' style meetings, task and finish groups, and informal visits and meetings to gather evidence to inform scrutiny work. Committees can hear from Council Officers, Cabinet Members, partner organisations, expert witnesses, members of the public. Scrutiny Committees are not decision making bodies, but can make recommendations to decision makers.

### **2.0 Legislative Powers relevant to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee**

2.1 Under the Police and Justice Act 2006, every local authority is required to have a Crime and Disorder Committee with the power to scrutinise the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership or Community Safety Partnership as they are now referred. In Sheffield the Crime and Disorder Committee is the Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee and the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) is the Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership.

2.2 The requirements of the 2006 Act were enacted by the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009 which came into force for local authorities in England on 30 April 2009. Under the Act the Crime and Disorder Committee (in Sheffield the Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee) can:

- Scrutinise decisions made and actions taken in connection by the responsible authorities that make up the CDRP / Community Safety Partnership
- Request information from the responsible authorities
- Require attendance of officer or employees or responsible authorities to answer questions or to provide information.

- 2.3 The Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership is made up of all the public services in the city, with representatives from the private and voluntary sectors. The Partnership considers issues across the breadth of community safety, such as: crime, anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse, community cohesion, preventing offending and reoffending, and protecting vulnerable people.
- 2.4 The bodies represented on the Partnership have a statutory duty to work together to prevent crime and disorder in their area. The Partnership is also required by statutory regulation to produce an annual assessment of the levels and patterns of crime, disorder and substance misuse, and agree an annual partnership plan. This is referred to as the Joint Strategic Intelligence Assessment. The Committee usually considers an annual reporting item from the partnership, and would expect this January/March 2020. The work programme could incorporate a more present through the year scrutiny of Sheffield's community safety partnership (The Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership).
- 2.5 The Police and Crime Panel was established with the statutory function to scrutinise and hold to account the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Yorkshire. The Committee have at times received an update on the work of the Police and Crime Panel.

### **3.0 Determining the work programme**

- 3.1 Attached to this report at Appendix 1 is a draft work programme 2020/21. This reflects the decision by OSMC to develop a programme which focuses each of the Committee's efforts scrutinising the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic.
- 3.2 It is important the work programme reflects the principles of effective scrutiny, outlined above at 1.1, and so the Committee has a vital role in ensuring that the work programme is looking at issues that concern local people, and looking at issues where scrutiny can influence decision makers. The work programme remains a live document, and there will be an opportunity for the Committee to discuss it at every Committee meeting.
- 3.3 Members of the Committee can also raise any issues for the work programme via the Chair or Policy and Improvement Officer at any time.

### **4.0 Recommendations**

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:
- Discuss and agree the work programme



# Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

## DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

Last updated: 23/12/20

Please note: the work programme is a live document and so is subject to change.

Safer & Stronger Communities		Thursday 5-7pm	
Topic	Reasons for selecting topic	Lead Officer/s	Agenda Item/ Briefing paper
<b>Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> Oct 2020</b>			
Domestic Abuse and the impact of Covid 19	Members wished to investigate the impact that the lockdown associated with Covid 19 had on incidence of Domestic Abuse and the support services available		<b>Agenda Item</b>
Work Programme 2020/21	Consideration of a draft work programme for Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee 2020/21	Policy and Improvement Officer	<b>Standing Item</b>
<b>Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November 5-7pm</b>			

Hanover Tower Block	Requested by members following the publication of a full investigation report by the Council	Janet Sharpe, Director	Agenda item
Work programme 2019/20		Policy and Improvement Officer	Standing Item
<b>Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December 5-7pm</b>			
Fire Authority consultation briefing	Requested by Members to allow input to the consultation – to include an invite to wider membership.	Chris Kirby, Stuart Booth	Agenda item
Work programme 2020/21		Policy and Improvement Officer	Standing Item
<b>Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January 5-7 pm</b>			
<b>Housing Repairs Service</b>	Prioritised for the Covid 19 work programme	Nathan Rodgers	<b>Agenda Item</b>
Work programme 2020/21		Policy and Improvement Officer	Standing Item

Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup> February 5-7pm			
Annual Review of Sheffield Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership	Statutory duty.	Maxine Stavrianakos Mark Seston	Agenda item
Work programme 2020/21		Policy and Improvement Officer	Standing Item
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> March 5-7 pm			
Homelessness	Prioritised as part of Covid 19 work programme	Janet Sharpe	
Scrutiny Annual Report 2019/20 Draft Content & Work Programme 2020/21	This report provides the Committee with a summary of its activities over the municipal year for inclusion in the Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21; and a list of topics which it is recommended be put forward for consideration as part of the 2021/22 Work Programme for this committee.	Policy and Improvement Officer	
Items to be scheduled 2020/21			
Social Housing			Priority

Violent crime and Anti-Social Behaviour			<b>TBC</b>
Youth Strategy/Youth Services	Potential review with CYPF Committee		<b>deferred</b>
Selective Licensing			<b>TBC</b>



## Answers to Written Questions submitted to the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee – 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2020

Q.1	On page 23 of the cladding report the council say they took action to Hanover 'after the Lakanal house tragedy' that took place in 2009. However It was revealed in 2019 that internal cladding (trespa) panels were used on Hanover tower block's stair well all the way up the building . Sadly these were installed after the Lakanal house fire and were unsafe and Hanover has only 1 stair well. Does this council accept that the material they used on Hanover's stair well in 2011/12 was chemically identical to a material that was the main cause of the 'Lakanal house tragedy' in 2009 in London that killed 6 people?
A.1	<b>The Council specified that a fire retardant product should be fitted on the staircase that was not the same as the material installed at Lakanal. The contractor did not fit what the council had specified, it fitted an alternative product that did not have fire retardant properties we had asked for. The council investigated this issue when it was raised with us and has held the contractor responsible and SCC been compensated for this. The material has been replaced.</b>
Q.2	On page 23 of the cladding report it is claimed 'the fire breaks 'give one hour protection from smoke and fire this confidence is illustrated by photographs of Hanover as the cladding was being removed (in 2017) showing that the fire breaks were in place'. In reference to this, the supporting Building Regulation review by Joseph Kavanagh into the external cladding, refer on page 9 to the BR135 test that measures the full cladding system. He says Hanover failed this test. Correct. In my research the cladding system would spread up a 3-floor wall in time of '314' seconds. By then the test was terminated 'as flame severely metres beyond the top of the rig'. The government website shows this. Does the council still believe that these original fire breaks gave 1 hour protection to the residents of Hanover?
A.2	<b>The fire breaks observed when the defective cladding was removed were installed as expected. The government tests look at the whole cladding system and the council does not dispute the outcome of the cladding system test.</b>
Q.3	On page 9 of the cladding report it says that 'the investigation was led by Jill Hurst head of housing investment and repairs', therefore this question is not discriminatory. Back in 2017 they claimed 'this investigation is being carried out by officers who were not involve in the original project' With analysis the supporting documentation on the council website clearly reveals that Jill Hurst had far more involvement in the original Hanover project than they claimed previously. In leading this investigation, does this person genuinely believe they have remained impartial?

A.3	<p>Jill Hurst was undertaking a different role during the time that the refurbishment of the block was carried out. Jill was a service manager responsible for Housing's Asset Management Strategy for Council Housing stock and not direct delivery of projects. This included financial reporting of the whole of the Council Housing Investment Programme, investment planning, performance reporting etc. Jill was not directly involved in the execution of the works to the Hanover Block, this was managed by a dedicated Housing Project Manager (for the internal works mainly). The cladding works were directly managed by the Council's Capital Delivery Service (then known as Sheffield Design and Project Management) given its specialist nature and they worked closely with the contractors and the Council's Housing Team. We were therefore satisfied that Jill was independent to the how the works were delivered at that time and the best choice for leading on the investigation.</p>