

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE DECISION RECORD

The following decision was taken on Thursday 5 December 2024 by the Housing Policy Committee.

Item No

8 2024/25 QUARTER 2 BUDGET MONITORING

8.1 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 2.

8.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Housing Policy Committee: -
1. Note 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.

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 2024/25 QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

9.1 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 2 2024/25 (July – September 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.

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

1. Notes the performance report update provided for quarter 2 2024/25 (July - September 2024)
2. Notes any issues of concern that they wish to receive focussed analysis on in future performance reports.

9.3 Reasons for Decision

9.3.1 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 in

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.

9.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

9.4.1 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.

10 **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN**

10.1 The committee considered a report of the Executive Director Neighbourhood Services providing an update on the current national and local housing context, regulatory requirements, the priorities for Committee to action alongside capital and revenue spending plans for 2025/26.

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

1. Notes that the HRA Business Plan report for 2025/26, the HRA Business Plan priorities for 2025/26 and HRA Revenue Budget 2025/26 as set out in the Financial Appendices included in Appendix A to this Report, will go to the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee at its meeting in January 2025, 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 the Housing Policy Committee
3. Notes the recommendation for increasing Council rents 2025/26 in line with the Regulator of Social Housing's Rent Standard

10.3 **Reasons for Decision**

10.3.1 This 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 2025/26 and for the overall 30-year viability.

10.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

10.4.1 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.

11 **TENANTS AND RESIDENTS DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY FOR HOUSING**

11.1 Members considered a report of the Executive Director, Neighbourhood Services seeking approval of a Domestic Abuse Policy for the Housing service. The Policy includes clear standards that set out our response to domestic abuse. It sets clear expectations and provides clarity for partners agencies, tenants and residents of the city. Approval of the Policy is essential to continuing work with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) and is of benefit to our tenants.

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

1. Approves the Housing Domestic Abuse Policy in the form attached at Appendix A.
2. Notes that approval of the Housing Domestic Abuse Policy is essential to continuing work with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA).

11.3 **Reasons for Decision**

11.3.1 The recommendation is for the Housing Policy Committee to approve the Policy for use.

11.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

11.4.1 Alternative Option 1: Continue to use the Domestic Abuse procedure only. The Housing Service currently has a Domestic Abuse procedure in place.

Limitations/why this option was rejected: This would not satisfy the requirement of the Regular of Social Housing, who detail that registered providers must have a Policy for how they recognise and effectively respond to cases of domestic abuse. Furthermore, by producing and publishing a Policy, the Council is committing itself to openness and transparency regarding the Housing Service's commitment and response to Domestic Abuse.

12 REVIEW OF THE ALLOCATIONS POLICY

12.1 Members considered a report of the Executive Director, Neighbourhood Services seeking approval from the Housing Policy Committee to review the Council's Allocations Policy. The report summarises the challenges faced by the Council with how the current policy operates and highlights key areas where change should be considered to improve outcomes for some of the most vulnerable residents of Sheffield. It was recommended that Committee approve a review of the current Allocations Policy and agree the approach which should be taken.

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

1. Approves the proposal to commence a review of the Council's Allocations Policy.
2. Approves the approach to consultation as set out in Section 2.3 of this report.

12.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 12.3.1 The Allocations Policy has not been fully reviewed since it was agreed in 2013. Reviewing the Allocations Policy will ensure the Council is making best use of its, and Registered Providers social housing stock and reflect the current demand for social housing. It will ensure that rehousing outcomes are improved for those with a recognised housing need and owed legal duties by the Council.
- 12.3.2 The Allocations Policy does not reflect the implementation of Introductory Tenancies, or the likely introduction of Flexible Tenancies, it also requires review to ensure it is legally compliant.
- 12.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**
- 12.4.1 Alternative Option 1: Do nothing. The Council could choose to not review the Allocations Policy. However, not reviewing the policy would mean that the policy remains no longer fit for purpose and not legally compliant.
- 12.4.2 Partial review; only amend the Allocations Policy so that it is lawful. Whilst this would resolve the issues of legal challenge the broader issues highlighted in this report would remain. Residents of Sheffield in a Reasonable Preference category would see the waiting time to be made an offer continue to increase, adapted properties would not be let to those with the most need for those adaptations and more households would be placed into emergency accommodation.