

Policy Committee Decision Report

Title of Report:	Housing Policy Committee Year Ahead 2024/25
Date of Decision:	19 th September 2024
Report To:	Housing Policy Committee
Report Of:	Ajman Ali, Executive Director, Neighbourhood Services
Report Author:	Chris Ellison, Interim Director of Housing

Executive Summary: In 2023/24, Sheffield City Council (the Council) made significant progress, working with communities and partners to agree long-term City Goals for Sheffield and a four-year Council Plan aligned to our Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Our progress was recognised by the Local Government Association (LGA) in our Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review (Dec 23) and demonstrated by the delivery of real impact for citizens; from our 'good' OFSTED rating for Children's Services to the transformation of our city centre and creating the UK's first Investment Zone. This paper outlines 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 our Council Plan. This includes the need to prioritise our resources on our 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.



Council Plan outcomes:

[Great neighbourhoods that people are happy to call home](#)

[People live in caring, engaged communities that value diversity and support wellbeing](#)

Policy Committee remit:

This report is to be considered by the Housing Policy Committee as its remit includes functions of the Council as Local Housing Authority, including:

- Public and private sector
- Homelessness
- Supported housing
- Relationships with other social housing providers
- Refugee resettlement programmes
- Gypsy and traveller sites

Within its remit the Committee:

- Takes decisions on any reserved matter;
- Is responsible for regular monitoring of data including performance and financial information and for monitoring the performance of services;
- Is responsible for working within the budget framework agreed by Council, including taking timely action to address any overspend within services;
- Is responsible for delivery against the Corporate Plan and any associated Annual Plans and reporting performance to Strategy and Resources Policy Committee;
- Must keep its work programme under review at each meeting;
- May consider any matters referred by an Area Committee.

Matters Reserved to Housing Policy Committee

Delivery of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan.

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? No

Recommendations:

The Housing Policy Committee is recommended to:

1. Note 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. Consider the key issues identified in section 3 of the report as part of our forward agenda for 2024/25.
3. Agree 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.

Financial Implications: Yes: Approved by: Paul Foster

Legal Implications: Yes: Approved by: Rebecca Lambert

Equality and Inclusion Implications: Yes: Approved by: Bashir Khan

Initial Equality Impact Assessment completed with EIA number: 2818

Climate Change Implications: No: Approved by: Peter Brown

Background Papers: None

Appendices: None

1. Background to the issue

- 1.1 This paper sets out a forward agenda for the Housing Policy Committee (HPC) for the 2024/25 municipal year. We made significant progress as an organisation and as a Committee in the last 12 months, creating positive and collaborative foundations with partners and communities upon which to build a successful, prosperous future for Sheffield.
- 1.2 With the City Goals and Council Plan now firmly in place, we have clear strategic direction for the medium-to-long term. Developing the City Goals with communities and partners and agreeing a Council Plan that was unanimously endorsed on a cross-party basis demonstrates the collective sense of shared purpose and commitment to ensure that our amazing city can achieve its potential.
- 1.3 However, we have significant steps to take if we are to deliver our Council Plan strategic outcomes for the city and contribute to the city achieving its Goals.
- 1.4 This paper sets out some of the key issues that HPC will need to consider over the coming year and beyond. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all the issues covered by this Committee or all the things that will need to be done over the coming year, but it provides a high-level overview of the progress we need to make to deliver for the Council and the city.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 A year ago, the HPC set out a work programme for the 2023/24 year which recognised the work we needed to undertake. This included the steps needed to address significant financial savings whilst delivering high quality services and implementing new projects. Much of that work has moved forward over the last twelve months and the Committee achieved significant budget savings alongside excellent service delivery.
- 2.2 Most importantly, we now have a long-term vision for housing in the city. Working alongside communities in Sheffield and partner organisations, we have agreed a shared set of City Goals. The Goals are designed to reflect the shared hopes and ambitions people have for Sheffield, articulating a set of ambitions that we can all understand so that we know and can describe the sort of city we want to be over the coming decades. The City Goals provide a long-term shared direction for the city so that partners and communities can work together with purpose to unlock opportunities, leverage funding, make the most of

our shared expertise and resources and build a more collaborative approach to decision making.

2.3 Aligned to the new City Goals, the Council have agreed a medium-term Council Plan. The Council Plan sets the high-level policy direction for the whole organisation which will be delivered through our key strategies, service plans and the huge contributions that our staff make to the city every day. Having a robust plan for the coming four years ensures that citizens, Members, our employees, partners and investors have a clear statement of who we are as a council, what we stand for and what we want to achieve. It is our set of commitments to the city and our contribution to helping Sheffield achieve our new, shared City Goals.




2.4 Our Family Hubs and “Start for Life” programme provide for the highlighted need for the earliest of help and early years support services and we have developed and empowered partnerships to work together to better achieve positive outcomes for families and communities. Importantly, we will support families to achieve outcomes for themselves and help get their children ready to start school. This, coupled with the direct support from our Community Support Worker and Prevention Worker teams will help those at risk of requiring social care or health support to remain independent and well.

2.5 The Council Plan is a strategic cornerstone for the Council’s future. The Council have agreed a new [Outcomes and Performance Framework](#) which will help us demonstrate progress, celebrate success, and enable Members and citizens to hold us to account and challenge where we need to improve.

2.6 Aligned to the new City Goals, and the new Council Plan our strategies will be delivered through our service plans and build on the successes of the last year and recognise the huge contributions that our staff make to the city every day.

2.7 In 2023/24 we demonstrated how HPC focused on delivering better outcomes for the people of Sheffield. The following sections detail the outcomes we achieved, aligned to our Council Plan policy drivers, People, Prosperity and Planet.

 People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have developed a new Engagement Strategy alongside our customers to drive openness and transparency • We have treated our tenants fairly, and with respect • We have supported the launch of a citywide ASB policy
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have developed our response to damp and mould We have supported families facing homelessness through intervention and temporary accommodation We have continued to protect tenants in the private rented sector
 <p>Prosperity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have developed more new homes for Council tenants in the city We have improved our vacant property processes to reduce relet times We have reduced rent arrears despite the challenges around cost of living We have supported families to access grants and additional benefits to help with living costs
 <p>Planet</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have continued to develop our decarbonisation route maps to deliver our net zero 2030 commitment We have created our first 'net zero in operation' Council homes in Woodseats We have retained our environmental standards accreditation demonstrating our commitment to sustainability in running our services

3. How does this decision contribute to the Council Plan?

- 3.1 The section below sets out some of the key issues and outcomes that the HPC will focus on in the year ahead. Aligned to our Council Plan outcomes, it is not intended to be an exhaustive list but sets out the most immediate issues and projects and seeks to reflect the scale and significance of the work we will undertake over the coming 12 months.
- 3.2 HPC members will see these priorities reflected in the Forward Plan for the Committee throughout the next 12 months. The regular performance report to the HPC will also allow the Committee to scrutinise the delivery of these outcomes alongside levels of satisfaction from tenants who are accessing our services.

Great neighbourhoods that people are happy to call home

	Activity / Area of Focus	Timescale
1.	Housing Strategy – consult on a new Housing Strategy to articulate our housing ambitions for new and existing homes for the coming 10yrs, including on supported housing.	Q3 2024
2.	Work together to improve council housing repairs – deliver a better repairs service for our tenants that meets their ambitions	Q1 2025
3.	Tackle damp, mould and condensation – to address a key concern for our tenants and their families	Q1 2025

	Activity / Area of Focus	Timescale
4.	Improve the management of disrepair – to ensure that our tenants' homes are safe and in good repair	Q1 2025
5.	Reduce the time homes are empty – to ensure that people who need a home can access one as quickly as possible	Q4 2024
6.	Deliver an interim Asset Management Strategy – build our knowledge of the condition of our homes to plan for the future	Q3 2024
7.	Improve Health & Safety compliance – to meet the expectations of our tenants, the legislative framework and our regulators	Q1 2025
8.	Manage fire and building safety – to ensure that Council tenants and tenants in the private sector live in a safe and protected home	Q4 2024
9.	Greener homes, less fuel poverty – develop our approach to supporting the multi-tenure net zero ambitions of the Council	Q4 2024
10.	Proactive housing management – creating sustainable tenancies with a proactive approach balancing risk, enforcement and support	Q4 2024
11.	Welcoming shared areas – provide clean, well-maintained communal areas that generate good levels of satisfaction from our tenants	Q4 2024

People live in caring, engaged communities that value diversity and support wellbeing

	Activity / Area of Focus	Timescale
1.	Demonstrate that it is possible to end homelessness in our city – mobilise focus and resources across the Council to end homelessness in our city, reduce the pressure on temporary accommodation and support delivery of our Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan 2023 – 2028.	Q2 2025
2.	Safe, attractive neighbourhoods – work with tenants across all housing tenures to tackle hazards and improve living conditions for citizens	Q4 2024
3.	Advice & support for tenants – offer a range of advice and support for all citizens in the City to promote safe and secure homes	Q4 2024
4.	A better customer experience – improve the services that we offer to all citizens in the City and develop these to meet their needs	Q4 2024
5.	Be fair and respect all our customers – ensure that all our customers receive a service that meets their individual needs	Q4 2024

6.	Improve customer satisfaction – improve the levels of customer satisfaction experienced by Council tenants	Q4 2024
7.	Increase the opportunities for tenants to get involved in shaping services – ensure that all our Council tenants can get involved in shaping and influencing our services	Q4 2024
8.	A strategic role in place shaping – work with colleagues across the Council to plan and deliver improvements to specific communities in the city across all different tenures	Q2 2025
9.	Preparing for increased regulation – work to meet the requirements of the new national regulatory frameworks for housing – both for the homes we manage and those in the private sector that we regulate	Q3 2024

4. What community or partner engagement has been undertaken and how has it informed the proposal?

- 4.1 The forward agenda is framed by the City Goals and our Council Plan which were both informed and shaped by the views of the people of Sheffield and our partners. As emphasised in our Council Plan, putting people at the heart of what we do is one of our three policy drivers and developing our approach to community engagement and our focus on customers is a critical part of our work programme for the year ahead.
- 4.2 For each of the listed project priorities, there will be a series of community engagement and consultations to help shape outcomes and inform decisions.

5. What alternative options did we consider?

- 5.1 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

6. How has equality, diversity and inclusion been actively considered?

- 6.1 The Council has legal requirements under the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty. This requires that public authorities must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- i. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is connected to protected characteristics and prohibited by or under this Act.

- ii. advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - iii. foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 6.2 An initial Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out. The plan for the year ahead is focussed on improving services for all our customers and tenants. As a strategic plan, there are no direct equality implications arising from this report. Each of the Housing Policy Committee projects set out in the report will include an Equality Impact Assessment to inform the Committee's decision making. These will fully consider any impacts on different customer groups across the City.

7. Financial and Commercial Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, there will be financial implications associated with some of the projects.
- 7.2 Regular financial monitoring reports will track spend in the Housing Service including against many of the activities listed.
- 7.3 Work is ongoing in Business Planning to identify and re-align budgets to support the activities listed in future years.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. Legal implications for the delivery of the matters outlined in this report will be addressed at the appropriate time as they progress.

9. Climate and Environmental Implications

- 9.1 There are no direct climate implications arising from this report. The report highlights the criticality of a climate change plan to our wider ambitions about creating an inclusive economy for the city.

10. Other implications

- 10.1 There are no other implications arising from this report.

11. Reasons for decision

- 11.1 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.

