

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

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**Thursday 29 January 2015 at 2.00 pm**

**To be held at the Town Hall, Pinstone  
Street, Sheffield, S1 2HH**

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

## **Membership**

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Councillors Chris Weldon (Chair), Steve Ayris (Deputy Chair), David Barker, Simon Clement-Jones, Sheila Constance, Richard Crowther, George Lindars-Hammond, Roy Munn, Josie Paszek, Sioned-Mair Richards, Lynn Rooney, Richard Shaw and Sarah Jane Smalley

## **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 Matthew Borland, Policy and Improvement Officer, on 0114 2735065 or email [matthew.borland@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.borland@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  
29 JANUARY 2015**

**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 27 November 2014
- 6. Public Questions and Petitions**  
To receive any questions or petitions from members of the public
- 7. Private Sector Landlords**  
Michelle Slater, Service Manager, Communities, to present
- 8. Social Housing Repairs and Maintenance Contract**  
Report of the Interim Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods Service
- 9. Police and Crime Panel Update**  
Councillor Roy Munn to report
- 10. Work Programme 2014/15**  
Report of the Policy and Improvement Officer
- 11. Right to Buy Update**  
Briefing Note for Information
- 12. Welfare Reform - January 2015 Update**  
Briefing Note for Information
- 13. Land Management Arrangements Within the Housing Revenue Account**  
Briefing Note for Information
- 14. Written Responses to Public Questions**  
Briefing Note for Information

**15. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Thursday 12 February 2015 at 2.00pm in the Town Hall

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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 Standards Committee in relation to a request for dispensation.

Further advice can be obtained from Gillian Duckworth, Interim 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 27 November 2014**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Chris Weldon (Chair), Steve Ayriss (Deputy Chair), David Barker, Simon Clement-Jones, Sheila Constance, Richard Crowther, George Lindars-Hammond, Roy Munn, Josie Paszek, Lynn Rooney, Richard Shaw and Sarah Jane Smalley

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**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Sioned-Mair Richards.

**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 25<sup>th</sup> September 2014, were approved as a correct record and, arising from their consideration, it was requested that a briefing note on the newly introduced anti-social behaviour legislation be prepared and circulated to Committee Members.

**5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

5.1 Responses to questions from the Sheffield for Democracy representatives were provided as follows:-

Local Area Partnerships

The Chair, Councillor Chris Weldon, indicated that Members would be able to comment on the operation of the Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) when agenda item 11 was considered. He added that a review of their operating arrangements was taking place and that the Committee would receive a report on the outcome of this when it had concluded. It was emphasised that the Committee had always taken an interest in community engagement and had received reports on this where appropriate. At the present time, it was important for the Committee to ensure that communications were taking place and that best practice was supported.

Public Questions

The Chair apologised for the lateness of the response provided to the public questions received at the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2014, which he considered to be unacceptable. He understood that the Council guidelines for responding to public questions was 10 working days and these would be followed in so far as it was possible. The Policy and Improvement Officer was asked to explore the possibility of having the written responses to public questions published for the public record.

5.2 In conclusion, the Chair informed the questioners that they would receive a full written response to these questions within the guideline response time.

## **6. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE 2015/16**

6.1 The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Communities, which provided an overview of some of the recent developments affecting the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and some of the considerations for the Business Plan Update 2015/16. The report was presented by Liam Duggan, HRA Business Plan Team Manager. Tenant representatives, Mick Daniels and Tony Watson were also present for this item.

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

- Following feedback from tenants about the Going Local proposals, the allocation of Going Local funding was now being described at a City-wide level. In 2012/13, some of this funding had been transferred to heating budgets, as there was a heating backlog. There was a large Going Local budget of £800,000 and tenants felt that this was the right thing to do. It was emphasised that money had not been taken away from tenants.
- It would be necessary to review the consultative budget as the guidance was old and it was administered differently in different housing areas.
- In relation to the Government relaxing its expectations on local authorities with regard to charging a social rent for high earners, part of the problem was that the Council had no data on tenants' income and the administrative burden of charging a market rate was not felt to be worth any potential benefits. It was also felt that this could lead to disincentivising mixed communities.
- Officers were not aware of any proposals for the Council to be empowered by Government to suspend Right to Buy policy locally.
- The final Business Plan Report would include reference to vacancy management, with there being a slight deterioration in performance last year due to issues such as the bedroom tax and changes to temporary accommodation, but with measures in place on some estates, the position was improving this year.
- There was a shortage of 4-bed Council properties, with less than 1% of

Council housing being of that type. However, it was not generally affordable for the Council to purchase these larger properties and then charge a social rent. Affordable rent might have to be considered in such situations. In addition, the benefit cap was more of an issue for large families.

- A strategy had been developed for buying properties on the open market and the policy was to charge a social rent where possible. Consideration was also being given to buying former Right to Buy properties.
- The model for photovoltaics was to install the panels as part of the roofing contract on new roofs. This avoided having to use further scaffolding and was of benefit to the householder in terms of the free energy. The feed-in tariff from the energy companies was money which the HRA would seek to recover. There were sensitivities around issues such as the amount of sunlight and maintenance, but the Council would be looking to recover the cost over a 25 year period.
- Officers were aware of the success of the use of photovoltaics in Kirklees and some had visited authorities which had installed them to assess how schemes operated.
- It was emphasised that the submitted report was part of pulling together the Business Plan and that the issue of vacant properties was not on the frontline of issues to be covered. At the consultation meetings, it was suggested that residents could identify such properties for officers' consideration but nothing had been heard further on this.
- There was a team in place which was leading on the issue of photovoltaics and building up a network of contacts, with updates being obtained from other authorities. In relation to the process for decision making, there had been consultation and discussion with tenants and Members, following which recommendations would be made by Cabinet, which would ultimately be considered by Council.
- The setting of the Going Local budget and principles would be covered as part of the Business Plan process, with the Housing and Neighbourhoods Service then drafting more detailed guidelines once the budgets and principles had been approved.
- Consultation feedback from tenants had included advice that external works needed attention in the communal areas in Gleadless Valley. The Business Plan contained a commitment to carry out work on entry doors, stair wells, safety and general repairs. In addition, consideration needed to be given in future to wider issues, such as linking the Streets Ahead programme with the external environment.
- There had been positive feedback from the Education and Enforcement pilot on the Lansdowne estate and permanent posts were being looked at in this regard.

- The purpose of the report was to pick out the big headings involved. It was in this format as the Committee had asked to see it at this stage, so that Members could comment prior to seeing the finished article.
- From a Business Plan perspective, it was important to look at financial performance and procurement savings in relation to repairs and ensure that this came through, but there was not so much on quality and performance in relation to the customer experience in this respect.
- In relation to the installation of photovoltaic panels, issues such as the economic situation, changes to feed-in tariffs and economies of scale would need to be seriously considered.

6.3 In conclusion, the tenant representatives commented on the new charging structure for Sheltered Accommodation, the Going Local budget, the residual levy, vacant properties, Bring Out Your Rubbish Days and the new Kier repairs contract.

6.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) thanks Liam Duggan, Mick Daniels and Tony Watson for their contribution to the meeting;
- (b) notes the contents of the report and responses to questions; and
- (c) requests that:-
  - (i) further work be undertaken with tenant representatives to ensure that the final Business Plan proposals reflect tenants' views and that steps be taken to ensure that tenants' questions were answered and that they were kept informed of developments;
  - (ii) officers provide statistics for vacant properties at local meetings; and
  - (iii) further consideration be given to the Sheltered Housing Service Charge to see if anything more could be done to soften the impact on tenants who would lose their transitional protection and, if nothing could be done, that an explanation of this be included in the Cabinet report; and
- (d) welcomes the proposals regarding photovoltaics, but recognises the affordability issues involved and seeks reassurance that this would not be detrimental to the Business Plan in future.

## **7. CHALLENGE FOR CHANGE: GRASS CUTTING**

7.1 The Committee received a report of the Interim Head of Housing Investment and Repairs which provided an update on progress on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Challenge for Change Grass Cutting report.

The report was presented by Jayne Foulds, Manager, Estates and Environmental Services Team. Also present for this item were Councillor Jayne Dunn, Cabinet Member for Environment, Recycling and Streetscene, David Hargate, Head of Parks and Public Realm, and tenant representatives, Mick Daniels and Tony Watson.

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

- It was not necessary for the tenant inspectors to be technically qualified and an information booklet was available to provide guidance on what was an acceptable grass cutting standard.
- The rate of charge for grass cutting was based on the best endeavours to keep the grass at a certain height, it was not based on terrain or the type of machine used.
- Operatives selected which grass cutting machine to use for a particular job, and endeavoured to use one machine for each piece of work, where possible, to maximise efficiency. This could be looked at if it was causing problems.
- The removal of grass clippings from the cut areas presented very significant operational and environmental challenges and was expensive.
- Litter picking was arranged between the Parks and Public Realm Service and Housing Services, in advance of cutting.
- As part of the North East pilot, Housing Estate staff had worked jointly alongside staff from the Parks Service to undertake improvement work on Housing land, such as small scale grass cutting, hedge cutting and managing shrubs. The pilot had revealed that efficiencies were possible if service operational constraints could be overcome. It had now finished, but it should be noted that some practices had continued across the boundaries between the Northern and North East areas of the City. As a result of open service delivery, the grounds maintenance service aimed to achieve the same standard for all of the City as from April 2015.
- The Parks Service held the information as to which Council service maintained which piece of grass and it had been the case that some Housing staff had worked as part of the Parks Team on grass cutting. There was no one person in Housing who could be contacted to find out who maintained which piece of grass, but it was pointed out that Amey was responsible for the grass verges.
- With effect from April 2015, responsibility for grass cutting would be with either the Parks Service or Amey.
- Officers worked closely with the Amey Client Team in relation to grass cutting, with problems caused by their equipment being left on grassed areas being

identified as an issue. At present, flytipping was being prioritised but was being linked with grass cutting. It was hoped to meet with representatives of Amey to discuss their regime.

- The grassed areas on estates should, in future, be maintained to their present level as specified by the Service Level Agreement.
- A work plan was in place so that the asset mapping system could be updated as information was reported in.
- The Council had data on who managed what piece of land, but it had not been possible to provide this in a paper format without the need to print large size maps that would be needed to provide the required level of detail.
- The recycling of grass cuttings was undertaken as much as possible, but there were transportation issues if cuttings were to be collected. This would be economical on a small scale, but charges would have to be made if all cuttings were collected.
- The issue of litter picking prior to grass being cut would be addressed.

7.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- (a) thanks Jayne Foulds, David Hargate, Mick Daniels and Tony Watson for their contribution to the meeting;
- (b) notes the contents of the report and responses to questions; and
- (c) requests that:-
  - (i) consideration be given to the provision of training for the Tenant Inspectors so it could be reassured that they were properly prepared for their duties; and
  - (ii) Councillors Harry Harpham, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods, and Isobel Bowler, Cabinet Member for Culture, Sport and Leisure, be asked to consider:-
    - (A) the way in which the Service Level Agreement operates, particularly in relation to charges and value for money; and
    - (B) the different specifications for grass cutting so that, where possible, some uniformity could be provided.

**8. POLICE AND CRIME PANEL UPDATE**

- 8.1 Councillor Roy Munn, who was a member of the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel, provided the Committee with an update on recent events, particularly his attendance at the national conference for Police and Crime Panels,

the appointment locally of a Chief Finance and Commissioning Officer in the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Police and Crime Panel meeting which was held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2014. At that meeting, the new Police and Crime Commissioner, Alan Billings, outlined his priorities and identified Orgreave, Hillsborough and Child Sexual Exploitation as critical issues. Councillor Munn additionally reported that the Panel was to meet more frequently and that the Home Affairs Select Committee was considering ways in which Police and Crime Commissioners could be recalled.

- 8.2 In response to a Member's question, Councillor Munn indicated that the Panel was concerned about the performance of South Yorkshire Police in relation to events at Orgreave and Hillsborough and in connection with Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham, and that there was a need to get to the bottom of these issues. Councillor Munn also indicated that the Panel would like more operational information, but its remit was quite narrow, and that the Panel's Task and Finish Group on Domestic Abuse was off the agenda for the moment due to priority being given to the three aforementioned issues.
- 8.3 In conclusion, the Chair, Councillor Chris Weldon, commented that the Sheffield First Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership Board did receive some operational information and that Members of this Committee, Councillors Steve Ayris and Sioned-Mair Richards, were Members of that Board.
- 8.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee thanks Councillor Roy Munn for his contribution and notes the information reported.

## **9. WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15**

- 9.1 The Committee received a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer which provided details of the Committee's Work Programme for the 2014/15 Municipal Year.
- 9.2 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-
- (a) approves the Work Programme 2014/15 as detailed in the report; and
  - (b) notes that:-
    - (i) the proposed date for the special meeting on Community Safety Issues was Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2015, and Members would be informed when this had been confirmed;
    - (ii) items on domestic abuse and the correlation between economic sanctions and food banks had been requested for consideration at future meetings; and
    - (iii) the Policy and Improvement Officer would circulate details to Members regarding the Task and Finish Group on House Building which had been set up by the Economic and Environmental Wellbeing

Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee.

**10. LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

10.1 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the Local Area Partnerships and Community Engagement report; and
- (b) requests that when the review into this subject is completed, a report be presented to the Committee, with the Cabinet Member and Lead Officer being invited to attend the meeting.

**11. REVIEW OF THE PARTNER RESOURCE ALLOCATION MEETING (PRAM)**

11.1 That the Committee notes the contents of the Review of the Partner Resource Allocation Meeting (PRAM) report.

**12. RIGHT TO BUY UPDATE NOVEMBER 2014**

12.1 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the content of the Right to Buy November 2014 Update report; and
- (b) requests that future reports be set out in an appropriate table, which includes comparative figures, so that trends could be identified.

**13. WELFARE REFORM - NOVEMBER 2014 UPDATE**

13.1 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes:-
  - (i) the contents of the Welfare Reform November 2014 Update report; and
  - (ii) that the Policy and Improvement Officer would check on the provision of answers to requests for information previously made by the Committee; and
- (b) requests that future reports be set out to include comparative figures, so that trends could be identified.

**14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

14.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee will be held on Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2015, at 2.00 pm, in the Town Hall.



## **Report to Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee 29th January 2015**

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**Report of:** Interim Director of Housing & Neighbourhoods  
Services – Communities Portfolio

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**Subject:** Social Housing Repairs and Maintenance Contract

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**Author of Report:** Iain Allott (Strategic Lead for Repairs Service: Housing  
& Neighbourhoods Service – Communities Portfolio.  
(Christelle Hovine: 0114 2736495)

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### **Summary:**

The Council agreed a contract for Repairs and Maintenance services to tenants' homes with Kier Services Ltd (Kier) which commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 for a period of 3 years (with the option to extend by a further 2 years)

The contract sets out the Council's ambitions for re- structuring the service to provide a service fit to be integrated with the Council housing service at the end of the contract period should that remain the Council's ambition.

The contract contains service standards and targets for service delivery which build on the previous contract and acknowledge that improvements are required in certain parts of the service.

A strong partnership between Kier as provider, tenants and leaseholders and Sheffield City Council to achieve the efficiencies, benefits and continuous improvements envisaged for the service.

The information presented has been requested by the Committee to enable scrutiny to consider the progress made on implementing the requirements of the contract.

**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	<b>x</b>
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	
Other	

**Background Papers:**

Report to Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee 26<sup>th</sup> March 2014: Social Housing Repairs and Maintenance Contract

Cabinet Report 14<sup>th</sup> January 2015: Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan: HRA Budget and Rent Increase 2015/16.

**Category of Report:**  OPEN / CLOSED (please specify)

## **1. Background**

1.1 The Social Housing Repairs and Maintenance contract commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 following a competitive procurement.

1.2 The Council's preference would be to consider an in-sourcing option at the end of the contract period. However, to achieve this will require significant progress to be made as part of the new contract.

1.3 The contract contains service standards to which the Repairs and Maintenance contractor must deliver or incur financial deductions through a Performance Deduction Mechanism.

1.4 Under the arrangements for providing the service from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 the Housing Repairs Call centre it was agreed that this would transfer into the Corporate Contact Centre as a dedicated Housing Repairs Service.

1.5 A report will be presented to Cabinet on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015 on the options for the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Service after the end on the current contract.

1.3 This report was requested by the Committee to inform on the progress made on delivering the contract objectives following its report to this Committee in March 2014.

## **2 Progress Update**

### **Efficiency savings**

The budget for the first year of the contract was set at £37m in the 2014/15 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan update. This year's budget proposals won't be finalised until the meeting of the City Council at the start of February.

In order that the required savings of £665k/ per year are realised over the 3 years of the contract, the total revenue repairs budgets for 2015/16 and 2016/17 are proposed to be capped at a total of £63m.

Based on current progress this objective will be met.

### **Performance against service standards**

The contract has Performance Indicators (PI) which requires Kier to perform to agreed service standards or potentially incur penalties across a range of activities.

### **Kier Services - commitment schedule audit**

The contract allows for Sheffield City Council to carry out a periodic audit of progress against the commitments made by Kier in their method statements. Failure to achieve a score of 2.5 (out of a maximum of 5) results in a financial penalty for Kier. The first audit was carried out in November / December 2014. Generally each bid commitment achieved a score of 2.5 or more, however

some areas around mobilisation of the contract, subcontractor management, complaint management and progress with the modernisation of the workforce achieved a score of less than 2.5. A detailed Action Plan is now in place having been developed with Kier Services to improve this.

### **Integration with the Housing Service**

The intention was to work as part of an integrated team with the Housing Service as part of its 'Hub' model, significant progress has been made and 3 hubs are currently in place across the city serving the 6 Housing Areas:

- North Hub- Moonshine Lane Housing Office
- South Hub - Lowedges Housing Office
- Central Hub- Manor lane

To improve the customer service new initiatives are being trialled in the North hub around call handling with a dedicated resource now in place to take calls. Call monitoring software will be put in place from January 2015. This software will enable SCC to monitor Kiers call handling performance at the Hub and the data will be used to improve enquiry management and communication with the SCC Corporate Contact Centre.

A trial is also being undertaken in the North Hub where customers who have 55 day planned repairs will be contacted within a maximum of 15 days for an appointment time for repairs to be carried out.

### **The Handyperson Service**

This has been implemented in all Housing Areas. There are six handyperson(s) providing assistance to vulnerable customers by completing small jobs in the home that they cannot carry out themselves. This includes for example decorating, hanging curtains and fitting shelves. The service is very popular and achieves consistently high levels of customer satisfaction.

The Handypersons also assist with the resolution of low level customer complaints and problems, allowing for a more customer focused reactive approach to complaint management.

### **Information and Communication Technology (ICT)**

The rollout of tablet devices to Kier staff continues across the repairs, voids and gas activities and opportunities are being explored to fully integrate these with other software to improve the delivery of the service.

### **Salary based reward scheme**

As part of the bid commitments Kier Services set out as part of their bid submission their plans to review their pay and reward scheme during the first 2 years. This is progressing and the overall plan is for all operatives to be on a salary scheme by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016.

## **Complaints Process Review**

The complaints / customer interface has been process mapped and Kier have put in place a dedicated team based at Manor Lane who will manage Sheffield City Council Corporate Contact Centre enquiries and the customer complaints process. This has resulted in quicker resolutions for customers.

The handyperson service will be used wherever possible to respond to complaints quickly and resolve to the customers satisfaction.

## **Gas Servicing / Heating Mechanical & Electrical Service**

Gas Servicing is within the target set in the contract.

The electrical teams are now split between the 3 Hubs. This change to the way the service is delivered has brought about some challenges to complete repairs within the time scale in the contract and performance continues to be reviewed to ensure electrical repairs are carried out on time.

## **Voids**

The contract contains targets for bringing void properties to the let able standard with penalties for missing targets. Kier have made considerable changes to the way they deliver the service to address this challenge. The roles of voids inspector and work supervisor have been combined and mobile technology introduced. This has increased the time spent on site with a reduced turnaround time.

The improved mobile technology includes photographs providing comprehensive visual information about the property which is assisting with any recharges for damage and recording the condition of the property.

Performance indicators have been developed for this contract and do not make a like for like comparison with the previous contract however there is evidence to show that the time taken to carry out a repair is around 18% faster than the average in the final year of the previous contract.

## **Performance**

Performance remains on or above the targets in the contract with a few exceptions which are being addressed.

## **Sheffield City Council Corporate Contact Centre:**

The Repairs contact centre has been provided by SCC since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. Before this it was provided by the LLP. The Kier LLP contract arrangements (sub-contracted to Liberata). Whilst not part of the contract delivered by Kier it is an important aspect of the service interfacing with both customers, Kier and the Housing Service for the delivery of the service. The Contact Centre has agreed service standards and targets against which performance is measured.

Performance since April 2014 has been below target for calls answered on time. This has been reflected in negative feedback from customers. However, the Council and Kier have been working together to improve performance and have agreed the first of a series of process changes. A change in the way that calls and information is transferred between teams in the Council's service centre is due to go live on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> January. This will reduce the handling time on calls where referrals to Kier are required.

Changes have been made to the telephony structure for repairs calls meaning that tenants will be able to select an appropriate option depending on the nature of their call ensuring they get through to the correct person to deal with their call in the first instance. Part of the review process has been developing and multi-skilling current call advisors to give the Contact Centre increased flexibility and efficiency.

### **3. What does this mean for the Tenants of Sheffield?**

3.1 The service standards and targets in the contract will bring about a repair service that:

- Will provide a customer focused service through improved call handling, a right first time approach and improved complaint management.
- Provides a value for money service that supports the HRA Business Plan.
- Further benefits from the use of Mobile Technology.
- Will allow for a more integrated service with the Housing and other Council Services at the end of the contract period should that remain the Council's ambition.

### **4. Recommendation**

4.1 The Committee is asked to note the report and provide views and comments on the progress to date.



# Agenda Item 10

## Report to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee 29<sup>th</sup> January 2015

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**Report of:** Matthew Borland, Policy and Improvement Officer  
Tel: 2735065  
Email: matthew.borland@sheffield.gov.uk

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**Subject:** Work Programme 2014/15

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**Summary:**

This report provides the Work Programme for the Committee for the 2014/15 municipal year.

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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	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	
Other	X

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

1. Comment on the work programme
  2. Agree the work programme
- 

**Background Papers:** None

**Category of Report:** OPEN

## **Work Programme 2014/15**

- 1.1 This report sets out the Committee's 2014/15 Work Programme. The work programme is a live document and based on the Committee's discussion at previous meetings and discussions with the Chair of the Committee.
- 1.2 The Work Programme as it currently stands is below:

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reasons for selecting topic</b>
<b>Meeting: 12th February 2014</b>	
Community Safety Partnership	The Council has a legal responsibility under the sections 19 and 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 to annually scrutinise the Community Safety Partnership. At the July 2014 meeting the Committee agreed that this item could also pick up the impact of reduced resources for the Police which has been requested by a Committee member.
Anti-social behaviour	The Committee added Anti-Social Behaviour to its list of topics for the 2014/15 work programme at its March 2014 meeting. At the July 2014 meeting the Committee agreed that this item could look at Sheffield's response to ASB legislation expected to become law in October 2014
Partner Resource Allocation Meeting (PRAM)	At its September 2013 meeting the Committee requested "an annual presentation on the Partner Resource Allocation Meeting be given to the Committee, with up to two additional partners to attend." Committee also requested "efforts be made to improve relations between the Partner Resource Allocation Meeting and the Neighbourhood Action Groups."
Domestic Abuse	Added at July 2014 meeting following suggestion by two Committee members as an issue the Committee could look at, following discussion at the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel. - July 2014 Committee added: "the report on Domestic Violence to be considered at the Committee's November 2014 meeting includes an ethnic group breakdown"
Police and Crime Panel Update	A verbal update on the work of the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel from Cllr Roy Munn
Work Programme	The Committee's Work Programme for the remainder of the 2014/15 year

<b>Meeting: 26th March 2015</b>	
Welfare Reform	<p>July 2014 Committee requested:            "A further report on the Impact of Welfare Reform on Sheffield's Residents, be presented to the Committee in six months' time."            "Officers continue to look at best practice and highlight this in any future reports to it"            Additional request from Committee Members that the Welfare Reform report has a breakdown of the data to ward level where ever this is possible.</p>
Challenge for Change - Community Engagement	<p>September 2014 Committee requested: "a further report, focusing on progress made in relation to the twelve issues identified in the report, be presented to the Committee in six months' time, with the appropriate officers and tenants' representatives being invited to attend the meeting."</p>
Implementation of the Allocations Policy	<p>At its March 2014 meeting the Committee requested "(i) an update report on the Implementation of the Allocations Policy be presented to the Committee in 6 months' time, to include examples of how the associated risks had been managed; and (ii) local tenant representatives, who had been involved in the consultation process, be invited to the Committee meeting at which the above update report was to be presented."</p>
Police and Crime Panel Update	<p>A verbal update on the work of the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel from Cllr Roy Munn</p>
<b>Written Briefings</b>	
(Circulated with meeting papers but officers do NOT attend the meeting)	
Partner Resource Allocation Meeting	<p>September 2013 Committee requested "a quarterly written report on actions relating to the development of the Partner Resource Allocation Meeting in other parts of the City be provided to the Committee."</p>
Right to Buy Update	<p>- The Committee have received a bi-monthly update on Right to Buy since November 2013.            - November 2014 Committee requested "that future reports be set out in an appropriate table, which includes comparative figures, so that trends could be identified"</p>
<b>To Schedule</b>	
Local Area Partnerships	<p>November 2014 Committee requested "that when the review into this subject is completed, a report be presented to the Committee, with the Cabinet Member and Lead Officer being invited to attend the meeting"</p>

<b>Written briefings (Circulated with meeting papers but officers do not need to attend the meeting)</b>	
Anti-social behaviour	November 2014 Committee requested "that a briefing note on the newly introduced anti-social behaviour legislation be prepared and circulated to Committee Members"

<b>Other Committee activity</b>	
Housing Plus - Walkabout	25th September 2014 Committee requested "that arrangements be made for the Committee to visit the South East of the City, that being the area operating the 'test phase' of the model, no later than March 2015, to meet tenants and assess the implementation of the Housing+ model."

## **2. Recommendation**

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

1. Comment on the work programme
2. Agree the work programme



## Report to Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

29<sup>th</sup> January 2015

**Report of:** Janet Sharpe – Interim Director of Housing Services

**Subject:** Right to buy update report

**Author of Report:** Andrew Routley – Home Ownership Team Leader (2736338)

### Summary:

The attached report is the bi-monthly update of the position right to buy position including the total sales, average selling price and previous years information.

**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	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	X
Other	

### The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

The Committee is asked to note the update.

### Background Papers: Not applicable

**Category of Report:** OPEN

# Right to buy update report

## 1. Introduction

1.1 The following report is an update of the current position of right to buy. There are four main statistical tables showing the following information

Table 1 – Number of applications in the current year and previous 3 years comparison.

Table 2 – Number of sales in current year, the forecast for the year and the variance from the forecast. It also provides the previous 3 years sales information for comparison

Table 3 – The sales receipt generated. It also provides the previous 3 years information for comparison

Table 4 - Average sale price in current year. It also provides the previous 3 years information

1.2 The second part of the report is an update of any planned changes to right to buy legislation or issues that may affect the right to buy.

## 2.0 Right to buy statistical information

**Table 1 Applications**

Applications	2014/15	2014/15 total	2013/14 cumulative	2012/13 cumulative	2011/12 cumulative
April	51	51	56	52	30
May	39	90	106	115	56
June	63	153	147	151	96
July	47	200	191	191	125
August	58	258	249	235	149
September	53	311	294	290	186
October	47	358	348	339	212
November	39	397	395	389	240
December	29	426	421	423	247
January			475	456	273
February			540	515	299
March			605	572	337
<b>total</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>337</b>
<b>Average per month</b>	<b>47.3</b>		<b>50.4</b>	<b>47.7</b>	<b>28.1</b>

The number RTB applications over the last 3 years have remained fairly constant at around the 600 level. This followed a 70% increase of in 2012/13 from the previous year. This was the result of the government bringing in more generous discounts to make RTB more attractive (i.e. the maximum discount level increase from £24,000 to £75,000 in April 2012)

**Table 2 - Sales**

Sales total	2014/15	2014/15 cumulative	2014 /15 cumulative forecast	Variance	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
April	20	20	24	-4	27	6	12
May	12	32	48	-16	32	15	21
June	29	61	72	-11	49	19	30
July	22	83	96	-13	79	31	32
August	19	102	120	-18	94	36	39
September	33	135	144	-9	124	49	46
October	30	165	168	-3	142	58	60
November	23	188	192	-4	163	75	67
December	29	217	216	1	181	87	73
January			240		205	101	81
February			264		225	134	92
March			288		255	149	104
<b>Total</b>	<b>217</b>		<b>288</b>		<b>255</b>	<b>1493</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>Average per month</b>	<b>24.1</b>		<b>24</b>		<b>21.3</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>8.7</b>

Despite the fairly constant level of application over the last 3 years the number of sales have increased steadily. This is because 1) the sale usually occurs around 5 months after the application so there is a time lag 2) The dropout rate has reduced significantly and a much higher proportion of applicants now go on to complete the sale than before. Again the more generous discounts making homeownership more affordable for tenants has been a significant factor here.

**Table 3 Sales receipt**

Sales receipt	Actual	2014/15 cumulative	2013/14 cumulative	2012/13 cumulative	2011/12 cumulative
April	£837,390	£837,390	£1,040,765	£229,860	£474,700
May	£523,067	£1,360,457	£1,201,265	£491,415	£868,675
June	£1,090,931	£2,451,388	£1,808,954	£641,140	£1,299,675
July	£708,349	£3,159,737	£2,937,732	£1,032,500	£1,466,875
August	£633,926	£3,793,663	£3,550,397	£1,290,420	£1,830,275
September	£1,317,606	£5,111,269	£4,709,689	£1,759,220	£2,103,825
October	£1,094,666	£6,205,935	£5,458,059	£2,144,180	£2,639,760
November	£957,542	£7,163,477	£6,259,377	£2,867,820	£2,940,380
December	£1,002,832	£8,166,309	£7,062,964	£3,283,680	£3,151,020
January			£7,974,774	£3,800,580	£3,535,145
February			£8,759,209	£4,980,355	£3,988,560
March			£10,035,935	£5,617,952	£4,480,210
<b>Total</b>		<b>£10,921,536</b>	<b>£10,035,935</b>	<b>£5,617,952</b>	<b>£4,480,210</b>

Figure in red is forecast year end position based on current average sale price

The total right to buy receipt is subject to pooling and does not represent cash retained by Sheffield City Council

**Table 4 - Sale price**

Average sale price	actual	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
April	£41,900	£38,500	£38,300	£39,600
May	£43,600	£32,100	£29,100	£43,800
June	£37,600	£35,700	£37,400	£47,900
July	£32,200	£37,600	£32,600	£55,700
August	£33,400	£40,800	£51,600	£51,900
September	£39,900	£38,600	£36,100	£39,100
October	£36,500	£41,600	£42,800	£41,200
November	£41,600	£38,200	£42,600	£42,900
December	£34,600	£44,600	£34,700	£35,100
January		£38,000	£36,941	£48,000
February		£39,200	£35,743	£41,200
March		£42,600	£42,507	£41,000
<b>Average for year</b>	<b>£37,922</b>	<b>£38,958</b>	<b>£38,366</b>	<b>£43,950</b>

Average selling prices fell in 2012/13 by £5584 (around 13%) reflecting the more the introduction of more generous discounts in April 2012. There was a modest increase in 2013/14 reflecting the gradual improvement in the Housing Market. However following another uplift of maximum discounts in April 2014 bringing it to £77,000 there has been a small drop in average selling prices of just over £1,000. As at month 9 (2014/15) the actual average selling price was £37,922.

## 2.2 – Possible changes to the right to buy

The Government has started to do some initial fact findings with Local Authorities to gauge reaction to a possible cash incentive scheme to run alongside the right to buy.

The intention of the scheme is to help Council tenants who wish to buy properties on the open market rather than the property they are living in. The scheme would be targeted for;

- 1) older tenants – perhaps wishing to move closer to family
- (2) people in high demand property – e.g. larger properties
- (3) people who are unable to get a mortgage on their current property due to non-standard construction or high rise flats.

If this scheme was introduced tenants would be given a cash incentive in the form of a deposit to purchase a property on the open market The Government are still working on the detail of the scheme however it is envisaged the amount of the deposit will be either a fixed sum or an amount dependent on the number of years spent as a council tenant.

If introduced the scheme is unlikely to be compulsory. It is understood that it will be a Government funded scheme and local authorities will have to bid for funding to implement the scheme.

### **3. Recommendation**

3.1 The Committee is asked to note the update.

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## Report to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

**29 January 2015**

**Report of:** Director of Policy, Performance and Communications

**Subject:** Welfare Reform – January 2015 Update

**Author of Report:** Nicola Rees, Policy and Improvement Officer  
0114 27 34529  
[nicola.rees@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:nicola.rees@sheffield.gov.uk)

**Summary:**

At the meeting of the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee in July 2013, members requested that an update on welfare reform issues be provided to Committee Members bi-monthly. This update report for January 2015 presents the most recent data relating to Under-occupancy (Bedroom Tax), Council Tax Support, Benefit Cap and hardship schemes/discretionary payments.

**Type of item:**

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	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	
Other	<b>X</b>

**The Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee is asked to note the contents of the update report.**

**Category of Report:** OPEN

# Welfare Reform in Numbers – January 2015

**3903**

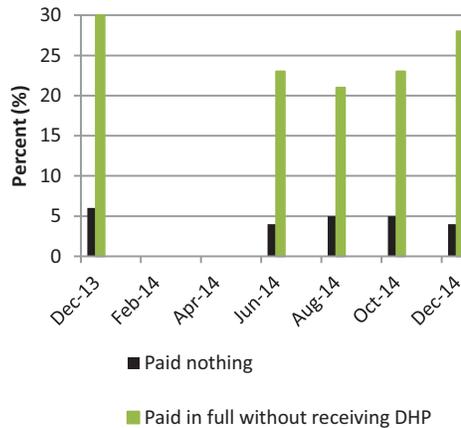
Sheffield council tenants are affected by under-occupancy rules ('bedroom tax') of a total of 39,878 council tenants

**94 less** than two months ago

**28%**

have paid in full the shortfall in their benefit resulting from under-occupancy without receiving a DHP\* payment

up from 23% two months ago



**4%**

have paid nothing towards the shortfall in their benefit resulting from under-occupancy

down from 5% two months ago

**31,552**

working age tax payers in Sheffield receive council tax support



all of whom must now pay at least 23% of their Council Tax

compared to around 33,000 working age CTS customers this time last year

**14,295**

summonses have been issued to Council Tax Support customers since April 2014 for non payment of Council Tax



compared to 17,518 summonses issued to CTS customers during the financial year 2013/14 at end December 2013

**£4.1m**

= value of summonsed debt for Council Tax Support customers during 2014/2015

average amount of debt = £287\*\*



compared to £4.6m summonsed debt for CTS customers during the financial year 2013/14 at end December 2013

**£929,917**

= value of Discretionary Housing Payment awards made since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014



**£493,697**

= value of Council Tax Hardship Scheme awards made since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014

All figures are to 31 December 2014

\*DHP = Discretionary housing payment

\*\* At this stage the full annual outstanding debt is summonsed, not the unpaid debt to that date

## Welfare Reform: Further data updates

- At the end of December 2014, 151 households in Sheffield were subject to the Benefit Cap, the number of children within these households was 780.

*This compares to 148 households subject to the Benefit Cap at the end of October 2014 (736 children).*

- At the end of December 2014, 1153 LAS grants had been awarded since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.

*This is an increase from 981 at the end of October 2014.*

- At the end of December 2014, 485 LAS loans had been awarded since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.

*This is an increase from 406 at the end of October 2014.*

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## Report to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

**Report of:** Janet Sharpe and Paul Billington

**Subject:** LAND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN HRA

**Author of Report:**

### Summary

This report provides an update on the project to review green space land management arrangements presented to this committee in November 2013. The report was requested by the committee.

**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	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other	

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

- Note the progress made on this project to date
- Note the delay to the completion of this project.

**Background Papers:**

Management of HRA Land report to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee, Thursday 28 November 2013

**Category of Report:**  OPEN  CLOSED (please specify)

## **Report of:**

Interim Director of Council Housing Services and Neighbourhoods  
Director of Culture and Environment

## **Land management arrangements within the HRA**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report has been requested by the committee to update on progress on the land management arrangements within the HRA.

### **2. Main body of report**

- 2.1 An initial study identified green space land both within the HRA and General Fund managed respectively by Council Housing Services and Parks and Public Realm Service. A desktop analysis of around 500 sites has been carried out reviewing proximity to council house properties.
- 2.2 Further investigation has identified that there are potential discrepancies between ownership of the land and the management responsibility. The original study assumed that identification of future land management responsibility would be relatively straightforward once information on current responsibility and proximity to council housing data had been analysed; this has proved not to be the case and each site will require a far more in depth analysis carried out.
- 2.3 This project is also directly linked to the integration of grounds maintenance project approved by Cabinet in November 2014. The creation of a single provider of grounds maintenance on Council Housing Land will provide savings to both the Housing Revenue account. Over the past 8 months, officers have focussed their attention on carrying out the review of maintenance and work on land ownership and management has been delayed.
- 2.4 The project also has links to a number of other projects reviewing management and maintenance of council owned land and asserting land so that new housing can be provided in the city. Membership of the project group requires review in order to ensure that the objectives of other projects are also considered as part of the review.
- 2.5 The maintenance project is now approaching completion, with the integration of Estate staff and Parks and Public Realm staff due to be completed on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015. The principle focus of Officers working on both projects can then switch back to the work on land management responsibility.
- 2.6 It is anticipated that the project will be completed by the end of 2015/16

### **3 What does this mean for the people of Sheffield?**

- 3.1 This section should summarise how the issue/subject/proposals covered in the report are important to the people of Sheffield.
- 3.2 Will ensure that land ownership sits within the correct portfolio and provides the opportunity to assemble land to make it easier to build new homes.

#### **4. Recommendation**

4.1 The committee is asked to:

- Note the progress made on this project to date

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## Report to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee 29<sup>th</sup> January 2015

**Report of:** Policy and Improvement Officer

**Subject:** Written responses to public questions

**Author of Report:** Matthew Borland, Policy and Improvement Officer  
[matthew.borland@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.borland@sheffield.gov.uk)  
 0114 273 5065

**Summary:**

This report provides the Committee with copies of written responses to public questions asked at the Committee’s meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

The written responses are included as part of the Committee’s meeting papers as the way of placing the responses on the public record.

**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	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	
Other	<b>X</b>

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

Note the report

**Background Papers:** None

**Category of Report:** OPEN

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**Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development  
Committee 27<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

**Written response to public questions from Mr Alan Kewley**

**Question 1 a**

**Public Questions were submitted to this Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> September, and brief verbal responses were provided as minuted in 5.1 A full written response was promised by the Chair – When can we expect to receive this?**

A response was provided on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2014. At the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2014 Cllr Chris Weldon, the Chair of Committee stated that the timescale for the response was unacceptable.

**Question 1 b**

**Council guidelines include response time to public questions. Please confirm what these are?**

The Council Procedure rules state in relation to meetings of the Council that where a submitted question cannot be answered because time does not allow, or where a Cabinet Member undertakes to provide a written answer, the written answer will be provided within ten working days of the Council meeting.

The Constitution does not state a response time for a written answer to questions asked at Scrutiny Committees.

At the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2014 the Chair of the Committee stated that he would expect written responses to questions raised at that Committee to be provided within 10 days, in line with the timescale for Council meetings.

**Question 1 c**

**Why were these written Questions not minuted for the public record?**

The minutes of Committee meetings reflect the proceedings of the meeting and therefore record the response provided at the meeting to public questions.

The Chair of the Committee has asked Matthew Borland, the Policy and Improvement Officer to look at the most appropriate way of making sure that future public questions and the written responses to questions are put on the public record.

**Question 2 a)**

**Item 11 on today's agenda contains a management report on Community Engagement since a new Locality Management model was introduced over a year ago, and refers to a Review over the next few months. Please confirm how and when local communities will be consulted to provide a more balanced assessment of its effectiveness?**

As part of a 18 month review we will be seeking the views of Councillors, selected council services, partners, VCF organisations and local residents.

However, given the limited resources at our disposal this will have to be proportionate in terms of budget and officer time.

**Question 2 b)**

**A key part of this new model was a detailed Ward Plan, to be updated annually following local public consultation. This report doesn't mention these, but rumours suggest they've been abandoned in favour of a brief summary of Ward Priorities. Original Ward Plans haven't been updated since Sept 2013 - Please confirm their present status ?**

At the initial launch of this new model in September 2013, we did suggest that each ward would have an action plan with a series of priorities and actions needed to address these. Over the last 12 months councillors, officers and partners have felt that the ward priorities identified were best tackled at an Area wide level as it allowed service deliverers from the VCF, public and private sector to respond more effectively and efficiently, and avoided duplication. Therefore, the focus has been on the development of deliverable Action Plans tackling area wide priorities with tangible outputs and outcomes through the Local Area Partnerships. Each area is currently working on 2 or 3 key priorities. Details of these priorities are on the website and blogs, or can be provided on request. However, Councillors still felt it was important to illustrate and promote the local ward priorities as it indicates what ward councillors are focusing on over the next 12 months, through a variety of channels. These have recently been refreshed and promoted via the website, blogs and public meetings. etc.

**Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development  
Committee 27<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

**Written response to public question from Mr Nigel Slack**

**Q1 Sheffield for Democracy was invited, by Cllr Iqbal, to attend the Local Area Partnership Chairs Meeting on 4th November. We had hoped to discuss with them the shortcomings of the new arrangements and be able to consider ways forward. This didn't happen but it seems that the best that can be said of the working of these new engagement arrangements is that it's a very mixed picture. From what we've heard, via some councillors, there is no consensus about its validity across the political spectrum and that leaves many wards and communities with reduced opportunities for effective public engagement and the report to tomorrow's Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny panel confirms this.**

**We have undertaken to commit to writing our concerns and suggestions for Cllr Iqbal and the Chairs Meeting and will do so shortly.**

**We are, however, having attended a previous meeting and in light of one Councillor's comments at that meeting, concerned about the potential for the excess of work for the aforementioned Safer & Stronger Communities panel.**

**There is a significant amount of work expected of the Lead Ward Councillors and LAPs and, to be fair, very low levels of support. Considering this, we would like to ask whether this matter could be considered by this scrutiny management panel, with thought being given to a separate line of scrutiny for these arrangements?**

The report to the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee's 27<sup>th</sup> November meeting informed the Committee that a review of the locality based working model is planned. The report states:  
"A review of the model will be taking place over the next few months and presented to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health at the end of the financial year."

The full report is available on the Council's website.<sup>1</sup>

At its meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> November the Committee agreed to ask the Cabinet Member and the Lead Officers to report to the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee following the completion of the review.

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<sup>1</sup> The link to the report is:

<http://sheffielddemocracy.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s16169/Community%20Engagement%20LAPs.pdf>

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