

# SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

## Housing Policy Committee

### Meeting held 8 June 2023

**PRESENT:** Councillors Douglas Johnson (Chair), Penny Baker (Deputy Chair), Nabeela Mowlana (Group Spokesperson), Barbara Masters, Alison Norris, Paul Turpin, Paul Wood, Mike Chaplin (Substitute Member) and Robert Reiss (Substitute Member)

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

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bryan Lodge and Councillor Alan Woodcock.

#### **2. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

2.1 There were no items on the agenda to which the press and public should be excluded.

#### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

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

4.1 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 May 2023 were approved as a correct record.

#### **5. APPOINTMENT TO URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE**

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

(a) agrees to appoint Cllr Alison Norris to serve on the Housing Urgency Sub-Committee.

(b) as respects the appointment of Members to serve on the Urgency Sub-Committee or other Sub-Committees of the Housing Policy Committee, where vacancies exist or in cases of urgency to ensure quoracy or representation, the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the relevant political group whip, be authorised to appoint Members to serve on such Sub-Committees, as necessary, on the understanding that details of such appointments will be reported to the next or subsequent meetings of the Policy Committee.

#### **6. HOUSING STRATEGY TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

6.1 The Chair introduced the report which sought approval to reconstitute and reappoint the Task and Finish Group overseeing work to develop a new Housing Strategy. Membership will be drawn from the Housing Policy Committee. The

Terms of Reference of the Group was appended to the report.

It was agreed unanimously that the Task and Finish Group would comprise of Cllrs Barbars Masters, Douglas Johnson, Penny Baker, Paul Turpin, Nabeela Mowlana and Alison Norris.

6.2 **RESOLVED:** That the **Housing** Policy Committee:-

1. Reconstitute and reappoint a Task and Finish Group to oversee work to develop a new Housing Strategy and report on progress against the work programme.

6.3 **Reasons for Decision**

6.3.1 The Task and Finish Group will bring together a small, focused group of members to examine key housing policy issues and provide clear advice to officers developing the strategy. Cross party representation will mean that political agreement is reached at an early stage of the process allowing the strategy to progress. This has been a significant barrier to the Strategy's development in the past. The group will feedback advice given, and progress on the work programme to the Housing Policy Committee, so the Committee can make informed decisions on the Housing Strategy.

6.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

6.4.1 An alternative would be to deliver a series of knowledge briefings for the Housing Policy Committee. This was rejected as it would not enable constructive debate and advice to be provided to officers.

## 7. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

7.1 A petition was received from Mahara Haque regarding the change of a property to flats as opposed to a 19 bedroom HMO.

The Chair explained that as it was a live planning application that the Housing Committee could not express a view and that comments should be logged through the planning portal. It was advised to formally refer the petition onto the Planning Committee.

7.2 Two questions were received from Derek Martin:

In 2019 Sheffield City Council declared a Climate Emergency working towards Sheffield becoming a zero-carbon City by the start of the next decade. It's now 2023 ,4 years latter, ample time for departments to aline their investment programmes with this declared objective.

The City Council will have recently approved the Housing Capital Programme and 30 year business plan for Council owned homes,

It is great that Sheffield City Council is committed to building much needed new social rented homes. Any homes being built now will need to last at least 100 years ,at a minimum , considerably longer at the present rate of renewal. So these homes will have a minimum 95% of their life whilst Sheffield is planning to be zero

carbon.

The 30 year Business Plan for Housing also contains the Councils Investment programme for Council homes in the City. Again this investment plan will mainly be in the period when Sheffield is planning to be zero carbon 80%.

The planet is facing a real emergency now and actions need to be taken now, a we can't afford it or going part of the way, approach is simply not acceptable anymore , the planet can't afford us not to take actions now.

Putting off actions, talk of retro fitting the new homes , will only make them considerably more expensive in the future , a stitch in time saves nine, as the saying goes

So

Q1. of the new build Council homes programme how many will be zero carbon.

Q2. how many council homes are programmed to be zero carbon at the end of the 30 year business plan.

The Chair responded with:

A1. Currently, no directly delivered new build council houses have been built to net zero operational carbon output.

Before the June 2022 update to the Building Regulations, all new housing units have been delivered to standards above the minimum requirements in terms of thermal performance and air permeability, leading to a carbon emissions reduction of 6% and reduction in energy use of 21% against Building Regulations requirements. To upgrade the specification of these units to make them net-zero would have significantly exceeded the available budget.

The new Building Regulations in June 2022 have improved the thermal efficiency requirements of new builds, reduced CO2 emissions and improved ventilation. This upgrade to the Building Regulations, along with the proposed further Future Homes Standard Building Regulations upgrade in 2025, will ensure new build properties are "net-zero ready" post-2025 – i.e., the properties will achieve net-zero operational carbon when the electricity grid decarbonises.

Sheffield also requires all new builds to achieve net-zero by 2030. In line with all of these requirements, the SCC new build specification will be upgraded accordingly, culminating in net-zero by 2030. Unfortunately, SCC has not so far identified the budget to meet these requirements on an earlier trajectory than is required by these requirements.

Nevertheless, in winter 2023, it is proposed to deliver 6 council new-build units of Move-on Accommodation that will be net-zero operational carbon as a feature inherent in the type of modular unit being used to deliver this project. This is not a system that is relevant for all types of development under the building programme.

All proposed properties to be delivered after 2025 will be "net-zero ready" and further specification upgrades will be made to deliver net-zero properties by 2030.

At the moment, the current Stock Increase Programme (incorporating the SCC new build projects) is only approved to deliver up to 2028/29 and so it is unlikely that any further new-build properties within the current programme will reach total net-zero unless delivered as an inherent feature of a system used or if any net-zero properties are purchased under the new build acquisition element of the Stock Increase Programme. The future delivery of the programme is also subject to the recently approved HRA Business Plan amendments. The impact of the amendments on the programme is still being analysed, including the delivery rate and timescales of future projects. Therefore, it is not possible at this moment to estimate how many units will be delivered by SCC at net-zero ready standard after 2025. Once the revised future new build programme has been established and approved, these estimates will become available.

A2. The Council's current plans include bringing the estimated 6,900 homes that are below EPC level C up to a minimum of EPC level C by 2030. The Net Zero Carbon Road Map is currently being finalized and this will inform the council of the investment options and solutions available to, together with an estimate of the likely costs. The implications of the roadmap will feed into the Council's Climate Change 10-point Plan. Sheffield is going beyond the government guidance on this, which states that all social housing must meet this standard by 2035.

Within the approved 5-year capital programme, the council is targeting properties that are below EPC level C. Over the next 18 months, the council will have improved over 377 properties to EPC C or better.

Sheffield City Council has sought to maximise all government grant funding available in the realm of housing energy efficiency improvements & the pursuit of carbon neutrality. To date we have secured over £5m contributing toward the cost of these works to Council homes and will continue to seek out all other future funding opportunities. For this reason, it is not possible to say what the position will be by 2030.

## **8. INTRODUCTION TO THE REMIT OF THE HPC**

- 8.1 The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services introduced the item and alluded to the presentation that was published in the agenda pack.

Members gave comments and asked questions. Responses were provided around empty properties, repair challenges, improvement plans, steering group focus, improvements, turnaround rate, improvement notices, civil penalties, disrepair, selective licensing scheme, damp and mould task force, triaging of vulnerable individuals, prioritisation, strategy for tackling issues, level of resources and impact to the renter/s was also discussed.

## **9. HNS AND REPAIRS PERFORMANCE REPORTS**

- 9.1 The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services introduced the item which provided the Committee with an overview of housing performance for a range of

services within the remit of the Committee. The report covered the period up to quarter 4 (January – March) of 2022/2023. The first part of the report provided an analysis of the performance, setting this within both the national and local context in which services are delivered. More detailed appendices were included with comparative data against other landlords and regulatory performance. The report allows the Committee to understand and comment on the performance delivery of housing services to both tenants and citizens. A presentation was also shown on screen and referred to.

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

1. Notes the Performance Report update provided for up to quarter 4 of 2022/2023
2. Highlights any issues of concern that they may wish to discuss 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 services to ensure that:

- The service is delivering for tenants, and that tenant satisfaction is 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 No other options were considered. 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. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - MONTH 12**

10.1 The Head of Accounting introduced the report which brought the Committee up to date with the Council's final outturn position for 2022/23 including General Fund revenue position and Housing Revenue Account.

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

1. Note the updated information and management actions provided by this report on the 2022/23 Revenue Budget Outturn.

10.3 **Reasons for Decision**

10.3.1 To record formally changes to the Revenue Budget.

**10.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

10.4.1 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.

**11. NET-ZERO VERBAL UPDATE**

11.1 The Service Manager for Housing Decarbonisation gave a presentation which updated the committee on Housing Decarbonisation and included information of achievements

**12. WORK PROGRAMME**

12.1 The Principal Democratic Services Officer presented the Work Programme.

12.2 There was some discussion around the work programme items and it was suggested and agreed to bring Homelessness as an item to the November 2023 meeting and Selective Licensing to the December 2023 meeting.

12.3 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** that:-

1. The Committee's work programme, as set out in Appendix 1 be agreed, including any additions and amendments identified in Part 1;
2. Consideration be given to the further additions or adjustments to the work programme presented at Part 2 of Appendix 1;
3. Members give consideration to any further issues to be explored by officers for inclusion in Part 2 of Appendix 1 of the next work programme report, for potential addition to the work programme