

Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Meeting held 6 July 2017

PRESENT: Councillors Chris Peace (Chair), Sue Auckland, Penny Baker (Deputy Chair), Richard Crowther, Keith Davis, Terry Fox, Dianne Hurst, Mark Jones, George Lindars-Hammond, Magid Magid, Karen McGowan, Zahira Naz, Joe Otten and Zoe Sykes

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Michelle Cook (with Councillor Dianne Hurst attending as Councillor Cook's substitute), and Councillor Dawn Dale.

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 MEETINGS

4.1 The minutes of meetings of the Committee held on 6th April and 17th May 2017, were approved as correct records.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 Alan Kewley questioned whether, in the light of the fact that details of the Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership Board, including agendas and minutes, had not been published on the Sheffield First Partnership's website for over six months, that full details of the Board were published on the City Council's website as soon as possible.

5.2 The Chair requested that the Policy and Improvement Officer contacts the Housing and Neighbourhoods Team to look into this request, at the earliest possible opportunity.

5.3 Further public questions were received, which related to Item 7 – Fire Safety on Council High Rise Residential Blocks, and were reported as part of that item.

6. RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK GROUP ON HATE CRIME

6.1 The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Place, providing

information on the Council's response to the recommendations of this Committee's Cross-Party Task Group on Hate Crime.

- 6.2 In attendance for this item were Maxine Stavrianakos (Head of Neighbourhood Intervention and Tenant Support) and Chief Inspector Ian Proffitt (South Yorkshire Police).
- 6.3 Maxine Stavrianakos took the Committee through the report, highlighting the various challenges identified by the Task Group and focusing on the recommendations made by the Group.
- 6.4 Ian Proffitt, who had held the post of Temporary Chief Inspector of the Support Hub (City Lead for Hate Crime) and who had contributed to the work of the Task Group, referred to the 'Hate Hurts. Report It' campaign, which had been launched in February 2017, to raise awareness of hate crime in South Yorkshire. In conjunction with the campaign, the police have also been working with partner organisations to encourage reporting. The South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTTE) and bus companies were also supporting the campaign by displaying posters on buses and trams, and at Travel South Yorkshire interchanges across the county. The police were also in contact with the Council's Licensing Service, with the aim of having the campaign details on a small card to be available in Hackney Carriage taxis and possibly Uber taxis. The posters had also been widely distributed to pubs, nightclubs and cinemas in the region. As part of the campaign, there had also been a review of third-party reporting centres, with the aim of simplifying the process to make it easier for people to report incidents of hate crime. This had included the launch of several new reporting centres, together with the development of a training package for use by police officers in schools. Chief Inspector Proffitt stated that although there had been an increase in reports of hate crime, from April to June 2017, in Sheffield, to 250, the police were not too concerned, as they took some assurance that, as a result of the recent campaign, and other publicity in this regard, more people were now reporting incidents.
- 6.5 Councillor Magid Magid reported on the work of the Equalities Hub Network in connection with hate crime, which included working with the Task Group, specifically arranging two joint sessions to exchange/share information.
- 6.6 Members of the Committee raised questions and the following responses were provided:-
- Funding in respect of future work in connection with hate crime was obtained through the Community Safety Partnership.
 - Training on all aspects of hate crime was viewed as a very important part of the overall process, and such training had extended to the City Centre Ambassadors.
 - The Performance Planning and Resources Group (PPRG) was responsible for overseeing performance on hate crime, on behalf of the Community Safety Partnership and, as part of the work carried out by the Scrutiny

Group, it had been identified that the City Centre Ambassadors were likely to witness incidents of hate crime. A briefing for the Ambassadors, together with a reporting mechanism, had been set up, and all incidents reported would be monitored, alongside other data on hate crime, by the PPRG.

- Housing and Neighbourhood Services had rolled out the Housing+ approach from 1st October, 2016, where all Council tenants were able to have a dedicated Housing+ officer, and it was also believed that this contributed to better information on, and reporting of, hate crimes.
- It was considered that the design of the Campaign posters/stickers made it very clear for people to understand its aims and objectives. There had been issues in terms of some organisations agreeing to have posters/stickers in their windows, and there was an element of reliance on such organisations to support the campaign in this way. Literature on the Campaign was available in a number of different languages.
- The Hate Crime Scrutiny Panel was chaired independently by Stop Hate UK, and the police had not taken any steps to increasing the numbers of representatives on this Panel as it was not responsible for managing the Panel. It was accepted that there was a need to get more people involved in the work of the Panel, and consideration had been given to working with the Equalities Hub Network in this regard.
- The police were currently liaising with the Council's Licensing Service in connection with arranging for calling cards to be placed in all Hackney Carriage taxis, and Uber had also expressed an interest in its drivers having such cards in their vehicles.
- The police accepted that there was a fine line between freedom of speech and hate speech and, in terms of what action it would take, would assess each case on its own merits. There were a number of court cases that referenced the differences, which the police used, but it was still a very challenging job in terms of making a judgement. If the police found someone preaching from scriptures, they would record the incident and determine whether it was a hate crime or a criminal offence in terms of further action to be taken.
- The Hate Crime Co-ordinator would be a police officer, whose post would be funded by the Local Authority, and who would be based in Local Authority offices.
- It was intended that the statistics regarding the independent hate crime reporting telephone line, delivered by Stop Hate UK, would be reported on a regular basis.
- The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety (Councillor Jayne Dunn) had written to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) requesting changes to the South Yorkshire Police recording systems to enable better interrogation of the data and improve understanding of who is

affected by hate crime in South Yorkshire. Councillor Dunn and Maxine Stavrianakos had then met with the PCC and Assistant Chief Constable, Tim Forbes, on 28th June, 2017, who had agreed to look into what changes could be made and feed back.

- In terms of how South Yorkshire Police and Stop Hate UK complimented each other, Stop Hate UK ran the independent Hate Crime Scrutiny Panel, and provided an independent reporting line, from which they could pass on crimes to the police. This provided an alternative route to report crimes, in the same way that Crime Stoppers does.
- The minutes of the meetings of the Sheffield Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership could be circulated to members of this Committee.
- A Sheffield Hate Crime Action Plan had been produced. Further work would be undertaken on the actions in this Plan once the joint post of Hate Crime Co-ordinator had been recruited to. The Plan would contain actions for the Local Authority, the police and partners.
- Details of all hate crimes reported were logged, with the information then being broken down in terms of the precise nature of the incident.
- Police representatives had met with First Mainline to discuss the possibility of staff of that Company receiving specific training regarding hate crime. Although nothing had been formalised at this stage, there was a willingness on the part of First Mainline to work with the police on this issue, and it was planned that police officers would pursue this over the next 12 months. Reference was also made to police on-line training for its staff, and there would also be a training package for other organisations, which would include the Council's City Centre Ambassadors.
- Although the police had not been made aware of specific incidents in terms of hate crime within shops and supermarkets, they would be happy to look into this.
- The staff working on the hate crime reporting telephone line, being delivered by Stop Hate UK, would be able to speak a number of different languages, and in those cases where a specific language was not spoken, the callers would be directed to relevant websites.
- In terms of follow-up actions following far-right demonstrations, it was envisaged that the Neighbourhood Community Policing Teams, which were to be re-introduced in September 2017, would get involved, by providing help, assistance and guidance to any members of the public affected by such actions.
- Work was continually taking place to look at how to make it easier for people to report hate crime, including looking at identifying further organisations who could become third party reporting centres. It was also hoped that, following the re-introduction of the Neighbourhood Community Policing Teams, this

would offer a further opportunity for people to report crimes. Members of the public could also report such crimes to Crimestoppers.

- Approximately £10,000 from the Council's Community Safety Partnership budget was allocated towards dealing with hate crime. In addition to this, the Sheffield Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership, with a contribution from the Local Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner, had funded the post of Hate Crime Co-ordinator. A number of other partner organisations, including Health, the Probation Service and the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service contributed in other ways.
- The majority of hate-related incidents were reported to the police. They were then referred to the Sheffield Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership, who would look into the details in respect of each incident, in order to determine how to address the issues.
- Details of where incidents had taken place would be logged as part of the reporting process, therefore resources, such as additional training, could be targeted to those areas where there was a high number of incidents.
- Whilst there were no details in terms of action and planned events for the Hate Crime Awareness Week, which would run from 14th to 21st October 2017, discussions would commence shortly in terms of such plans.
- All hate-related incidents were referred to Victim Support as a matter of routine.

6.7 RESOLVED: That this Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the information now reported by the partner agencies;
- (b) (i) thanks Maxine Stavrianakos, Councillor Magid Magid and Temporary Detective Chief Inspector Ian Proffitt for attending the meeting and reporting on the work undertaken by their respective organisations in connection with prevention of hate crime and (ii) requests that they attend a future meeting of the Committee to report on progress on the Sheffield Hate Crime Action Plan; and
- (c) requests Detective Chief Inspector Ian Proffitt to provide a future meeting of the Committee with an update on the work of the Hate Crime Scrutiny Panel.

7. FIRE SAFETY ON COUNCIL HIGH RISE RESIDENTIAL BLOCKS

7.1 The Committee received a report of the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services containing an update in terms of the action being taken in connection with providing assurances to residents living in high rise accommodation in Sheffield with regard to their safety, following the recent fire at the Grenfell Tower in London, on 14th June 2017.

- 7.2 In attendance for this item were Councillor Jayne Dunn (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety), Janet Sharpe (Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services) and Jill Hurst (Head of Housing Investment and Repairs).
- 7.3 The Committee received two questions from members of the public on this issue, as follows:-
- 7.3.1 John Cawthorne, member of the Hanover Tenants' and Residents' Association, read out a detailed statement on behalf of the Association and tenants of the Hanover tower block, highlighting a number of issues following the Grenfell tower disaster, and the consequent action taken by the Council in terms of the assessment of the cladding material and the work undertaken to reassure tenants that they were safe in their homes, and that they were fully supported.
- 7.3.2 Andrew Woodhead questioned whether the Committee could urge the Council to recognise that stripping the cladding off the Hanover tower block was only half the work, and that preparation needed to be started now to put fire safe cladding back on to the block. This work needed to be undertaken as soon as possible if more expense was not to be incurred.
- 7.4 The report set out details of results of the assessment of all blocks over six stories, as required by the Department for Communities and Local Government, in order to establish if the cladding material contained an Asbestos Composite Material (ACM). The report also contained details of the Council's 'Stay Put' policy, the use of sprinklers, tower block management and inspection, communications, details of tower block fire safety information meetings, and Housing Association, University and private sector housing tower blocks.
- 7.5 Specific reference was made to Hanover tower block, following receipt of information from the Building Research Establishment (BRE) on 25th June 2017, that one element of the external cladding on the tower block had failed the new fire tests. Councillor Jayne Dunn and Janet Sharpe commented further on the work which had already been undertaken, and would continue to be undertaken, in connection with the removal of the external cladding element from the block, the additional security measures which had been put in place in order to reassure residents and meetings held with residents to provide reassurance and respond to any concerns they had.
- 7.6 Councillor Jayne Dunn and Janet Sharpe provided a brief update on the current position, following the presentation made by the Chief Executive at the Council meeting on 5th July 2017.
- 7.7 Members of the Committee raised questions and the following responses were provided:-
- The Council was very comfortable in terms of the policies and procedures put in place following the Grenfell tower disaster and in some cases, the steps taken had been over and above what had been required. The Council

already undertook a considerable amount of work in terms of fire safety regarding its tower blocks. As part of the assessment process, a number of issues with regard to quality of repairs had been identified, and would be addressed. Reference was also made to plans to amend the Council's tenancy conditions. It was hoped that any additional works, following the assessment process, would be funded by the Government, and the Council continued to lobby the Government in this respect.

- Whilst the precise details in terms of the decision to use the ACM were not known, it was known that such panels had been given the same safety rating as aluminium.
- The reason for the testing of the aluminium, even though it was accepted that there were no fire risks involved with this material, was simply to comply with the request of residents, and thus provide additional reassurance to them.
- Whilst there was a lack of clarity in terms of how Camden Council managed their tower blocks, officers understood the reasoning behind that Council's decision to establish a post of Head of Residents Safety, following the Grenfell Tower Block disaster. The primary role for Sheffield was to ensure that the Council complied with all the relevant regulations.
- The Council worked very closely with the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (SYFRS) in connection with rough sleepers lighting fires in stairwells in high rise tower blocks, and was planning to extend this work to low-rise blocks also. Whilst the Council planned to continue with this work, there was an expectation that the Government would introduce new building regulations following the Grenfell Tower Block inquiry. It was accepted that there was a need for a consistent approach in terms of all Council tower blocks.
- The Department for Communities and Local Government (DfCLG) had provided specific guidance, as part of its announcement on 18th June 2017, in terms of the samples to be taken, and submitted to the BRE, as part of the assessment process. The Council had been requested to provide samples where the cladding material appeared to be different, and also samples above and below 18 metres.
- The Council had communicated extensively with residents of the Hanover tower block, using members of the Tenants' and Residents' Association, as well as the National Translation Line in connection with any issues regarding the translation of publicity material.
- As at 6th July 2017, the Council had received 15 requests from residents of the Hanover tower block to be relocated, with the majority of these people already having made plans to move out anyway. Officers were liaising with those families who wished to move out, but be relocated within the surrounding area, in terms of school places for their children and any other issues or concerns they had. Officers were also dealing with a number of requests for families to be relocated during the six-week period when the cladding was to be removed.

7.8 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the comments now made and the responses to the questions raised;
- (b) requests:-
 - (i) the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services to (A) submit a report on the progress of the assessment and cladding works to a future meeting and (B) continue working closely with the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service in connection with the risks caused by rough sleepers lighting fires in the stairwells in Council tower blocks;
 - (ii) that, as suggested by Birmingham City Council, a joint letter, to be signed by the Leaders of all the Core Cities, be sent to the Government, requesting that it helps pay for the fire suppression measures in all local authority residential tower blocks; and
 - (iii) that representatives of the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, the Ambulance Service and the Health and Safety Executive be invited to attend a future meeting of this Committee; and
- (c) expresses its thanks and appreciation to Councillor Jayne Dunn (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety), the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services and all other members of staff involved, for the excellent work undertaken by them in response to the Government announcement on 18th June 2017, following the Grenfell Tower Block disaster.

8. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

- 8.1 The Committee received a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer (Alice Nicholson), attaching the Committee's draft Work Programme for 2017/18.
- 8.2 Councillor Terry Fox suggested that the Joint Chairs of the Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership Board attend a future meeting of the Committee to inform Members of the role of the Board.
- 8.3 Councillor Steve Ayris suggested that the Committee receive a report on a review of Housing+, possibly as a briefing paper.
- 8.4 Councillor Magid Magid suggested that the Committee receive a report on progress in respect of gun/knife crime in the City, possibly as part of the item on Neighbourhood Policing, to be considered at the meeting on 12th October 2017.
- 8.5 RESOLVED: That, subject to the amendments and suggestions now reported, approval be given to the Committee's draft Work Programme for 2017/18.

9. FINANCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGY

- 9.1 The Committee received a report of the Director of Policy, Performance and Communications, on the Council's Financial Inclusion Strategy and the Financial Inclusion Action Plan, which had been approved by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 15th February 2017. Also appended to the report was a document 'Fairer Sheffield – A User-Friendly Guide to Support and Services'.
- 9.2 The Committee noted the contents of the report now submitted.

10. WRITTEN RESPONSES TO PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- 10.1 The Committee received and noted a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer (Alice Nicholson) setting out the written responses to the public questions raised at its meeting held on 6th April 2017.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 11.1 It was noted that (a) the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Thursday, 14th September 2017, at 4.00 pm, in the Town Hall, and (b) all future scheduled meetings of the Committee would now commence at 4.00 pm, and not 5.00 pm.

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