

Title of meeting: Cabinet Member for Housing

Date of meeting: 29 JANUARY 2013

Subject: WINGFIELD STREET AND WESTMINSTER PLACE
REFURBISHMENT

Report by: OWEN BUCKWELL – HEAD OF HOUSING AND PROPERTY

Wards affected: Charles Dickens

Key decision: Yes – Over £250,000

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To seek permission to go out to tender and appoint a contractor to undertake planned maintenance works to 1-71(odds) Wingfield Street and 1-78 Westminster Place.
- 1.2 The works are required to ensure the integrity of the buildings and reduce their on-going maintenance.
- 1.3 If approved, it is anticipated that the works could commence by September 2013.

2. Recommendations

- i That approval be given to tender the works based on a budget estimate of £2,100,000 including a £200,000 allowance for contingencies and unforeseen works.**
- ii That following a full tender evaluation authority to enter into contract with the preferred bidder is delegated to the Head of Housing and Property.**
- iii The financial appraisal is approved.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The blocks 1-71(odds) Wingfield Street and 1-78 Westminster Place are located within the Charles Dickens Ward. Both blocks were built in 1973 using a 'No-Fines' concrete construction.

- 3.2 1-71(odds) Wingfield Street contains 36no. two bedroom flats whilst 1-78 Westminster Place contains 77no. two bedroom flats and 1no. PCC controlled community flat.
- 3.3 There is 1no. leaseholder to 1-78 Westminster Place and 2no. leaseholders to 1-71(odds) Wingfield Street.
- 3.4 Both blocks are suffering from similar issues including spalling areas of concrete, water penetration into the structure, external walkways and stair towers, corroded fixings to the GRP fascia trim to the building and damaged sections of Perspex / Georgian wired panelling that has a high on-going maintenance cost.
- 3.5 The proposed works consist of undertaking concrete repairs and other associated structural works across the blocks, re-asphalting to the communal walkways and private balconies, installation of new windows to the communal stair towers, external decoration, fire safety upgrades, replacement cladding to fascia's, balconies, tile hung areas and communal area railings together with other associated repairs.

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 The works will ensure the structural integrity of the blocks and help protect against future deterioration, thus maintaining a lettable asset for PCC.
- 4.2 The project will improve the visual appearance of the blocks, helping to improve the external environment for both residents and neighbouring properties.
- 4.3 Improvements to fire safety will be incorporated in the scheme that will reduce the risks to residents in the event of a fire.

5. Options considered and rejected

- 5.1 Due to the nature of the defects present to the building there are few alternative options available. The structural works are essential to ensure to the integrity of the building and fire safety measures are necessary due as a result of a fire risk assessment under The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 5.2 An option considered and rejected was to undertake repairs to the existing GRP fascia panels to the roof and to the private balconies together with repairs to the Perspex panels to the walkways and tile hung areas.
- 5.3 This option was rejected from inspection it was found that fixings to GRP fascia panels had deteriorated to the point where they need to be replaced. With regard to the Perspex panels, they represent a high on going repair cost as they are easily damaged and difficult to clean. It was also considered that the amount of 'flex' achieved from impact to the panels was unacceptable.

5.4 The option to demolish and rebuild the block was considered and rejected due to the immediate prohibitive costs and detrimental impact on the existing residents over a long period before they would have an improved living environment.

5.5 It is considered that once the proposed works are undertaken the blocks will continue to provide a good living environment for the residents.

6. Duty to involve

6.1 Residents of the blocks have been consulted via an open day held on 21 November 2012 and subsequent newsletters and face to face consultation.

6.2 Face to face consultation has taken place with all leaseholders of the blocks with a notice of intent being issued to them in November 2012. When tenders are returned section 20 notices will be sent to all leaseholders outlining their required contributions.

6.3 Planning permission approval will be required for the cladding works and there will be a statutory obligation to consult residents within the local area regarding the proposed scheme.

6.4 Prior to the commencement of works full consultation will be undertaken with the residents of both blocks. This will involve face to face consultation through door to door visits and resident meetings if deemed necessary. Letters will also be sent to all residents informing them of the works, start date and likely impact of the work.

6.5 Following completion of the works residents will be consulted in order gain to their feedback so that learning can be taken on to future projects.

7. Implications

7.1 It is considered that the works will have positive implication by helping to maintain the properties whilst improving the visual appearance of both the blocks and the surrounding area.

7.2 The works should have positive implications by ensuring that PCC maintains good quality housing that is easily lettable.

7.3 There is potential for negative implication due to the potential disruption to resident during the works such as restricted access together with noise and dust etc. Measures will be undertaken to reduce these occurrences to a minimum.

7.4 There is potential for negative reaction from leaseholders due to the high costs they will be required to pay for the works however there are mechanisms in place to help spread the cost of any works.

7.5 The work is subject to the normal legal risk relating to building work, the financial and technical competence of the chosen contractor and the disruption that the work will cause to the occupiers generally. These should all be subject to existing risk control assessment and mechanisms for such work, as such risks will be minimised before work commences.

8. Corporate Priorities

8.1 The report and the planned maintenance works will contribute to the following Corporate Priorities:

- Increase availability, affordability and quality of housing
- Improve efficiency and encourage involvement
- Regenerate the city
- Cleaner and greener city

9. Equality impact assessment (EIA)

9.1 An EIA is not needed for this project. The project will not affect any equality group unequally and there is no adverse impact on people who belong to any of the equality groups. Residents who live in the blocks affected by the project will be consulted on the work and specific needs will be address so that tenants with protected characteristics can be fully involved in the consultation. The project is expected to have positive outcomes for all current and future tenants.

10. Legal comments

This approval will enable the delivery of the scheme to be procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

Under section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, and the Service Charges (Consultation Requirements) (England) Regulation 2003, the Council as landlord has specific obligations in relation to the consultation of leaseholders to whom a charge of more than £250 or more may be made in respect of the proposed works.

The requirements include:

- a) A duty to give notice in writing to each tenant, and recognised tenants' association describing why the scheme is necessary, and inviting observations.
- b) A duty to have regard to those observations.
- c) A duty to inform tenants' within 21 days of entering into the agreement of the reasons for doing so.

11. Head of finance's comments

11.1 This scheme will both ensure the structural integrity of the blocks is maintained, protect against future deterioration and reduce the on-going maintenance cost of the blocks, as well as improve the visual appearance, helping to improve the

external environment for both residents and neighbouring properties and ensuring the blocks remain lettable in the future.

- 11.2 This scheme forms part of the Housing Investment Programme (HRA) Item 39 Dwellings, which was approved by Council on 14th February 2012, and is wholly funded from HRA and Leaseholder contributions

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Signed by:
Owen Buckwell – Head of Housing and Property

Appendices:

Appendix A Financial Appraisal

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

NIL

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by the Cabinet Member for Housing on 29 January 2013

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Signed by:
Councillor Steven Wylie