

Title of meeting: Cabinet Member for Housing

Date of meeting: 12 MARCH 2013

Subject: GERARD AND LORING HOUSE EXTERNAL
REFURBISHMENT

Report by: OWEN BUCKWELL – HEAD OF HOUSING & PROPERTY

Wards affected: Hilsea

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 1-20 Gerard House, 1-20 Loring House and garage block 1-22 Conan Road.
- 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 January 2014.

2. Recommendations

- i That approval be given to tender the works based on a total budget estimate of £333,400 including a £30,000 allowance for contingencies / unforeseen works and £36,000 of fees.**
- 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 Services.**
- iii The financial appraisal is approved.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The blocks 1-20 Gerard House and 1-20 Loring House together with a garage block are located within the Hilsea Ward are of traditional construction, built in 1964.

- 3.2 There are 20 no. properties in each of the blocks with 8no.leaseholders to Loring House and 11 no. leaseholders to Gerard House.
- 3.3 The external decoration to the blocks has deteriorated to the point where they now require remedial works. Both blocks suffer from similar issues concerning poor external decoration, failing render to external walkway walls and spalling areas of concrete.
- 3.4 The main areas of work will include over cladding of external walkways, external decoration to property doors, balcony railings and previously decorated concrete/render finishes, asphalt renewal, concrete repairs, installation of emergency lighting, replacement fencing and 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 Portsmouth City Council.
- 4.2 The project will improve the visual appearance of the blocks, helping to improve the external environment for both residents and neighbouring properties.

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 Reform Fire Safety Order 2005.
- 5.2 An option considered and rejected was to re-render the external walkways and then decorate these areas. This option was rejected as the bond between the existing render and balcony wall has broken down to the point where all the render needs replacing.
- 5.3 Re-rendering the balcony would be cheaper in the short term however there would be an on-going demand for periodic decoration that when combined with the high cost of scaffold access in the long term would offset the initial saving.
- 5.4 Other associated works are considered to come under general repair works where standard products and practices are used therefore it is not considered that options need be evaluated for these items.
- 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 Face to face consultation has taken place with all leaseholders of the blocks with a notice of intent being issued to them in August 2012. When tenders are returned section 20 notices will be sent to all leaseholders outlining their required contributions.
- 6.2 Planning permission was granted on 7 January 2013, which involved a statutory obligation to consult residents within the local area regarding the proposed scheme.
- 6.3 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 disruption.
- 6.4 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 and as such 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 this 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. City Solicitor's comments

- 10.1 The legal risks referred to at paragraph 7.5 above will be addressed through a detailed procurement process in compliance with the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules and managed under the terms of the resulting construction works contract.
- 10.2 Under Part 2, Section 3 of the City Council's Constitution (responsibilities of the Cabinet) and further in accordance with the Scheme of Delegations at Appendix A to the Executive Procedure Rules in Part 3 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Member for Housing has the authority to approve the recommendations set out in this report.

11. Head of Finance's comments

- 11.1 This scheme forms part of line 17, Major Repairs Dwellings, within the Housing Investment Programme which was formally approved by Full Council on 12 February 2013.
- 11.2 The scheme, which is funded by Housing Revenue Account Contributions and Leaseholder Contributions, will ensure the ongoing structural integrity of the blocks and help protect against future deterioration, reduce ongoing cleaning and maintenance costs and maintain their letability for the next 30 years.

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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 12th March 2013

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Signed by:
Councillor Steven Wylie