

Title of meeting: Cabinet Meeting

Date of meeting: 8th October 2019

Subject: Leamington House and Horatia House - Update and Engagement Next Steps

Report by: Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services & Director of Regeneration

Wards affected: St Thomas Ward

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. To provide Cabinet with an update against the key strands of work associated with the decommissioning and demolition feasibility of Leamington House and Horatia House.
- 1.2. To report to Cabinet the results of the engagement exercise with the local community, businesses, stakeholders, key partner organisations, harder to engage groups and city wide residents
- 1.3. To seek approval to move into a master planning phase and architectural design brief for the Leamington House and Horatia House sites and wider area improvements that reflect the engagement feedback and the key themes/principles.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the Cabinet:
 - 2.1.1 Notes the progress of the decommissioning and securing of the blocks.
 - 2.1.2 Notes the appointment of Ridge & Partners LLP consultants and the progress to provide a detailed options appraisal for the demolition method, costs and timescales to demolish the two tower blocks
 - 2.1.3 Notes all the engagement feedback results
 - 2.1.4 Notes the communication plan to release and publish the engagement feedback results
 - 2.1.5 Agrees to use all the engagement feedback results as the basis of the design brief for the master planning work and adopts the following seven key principles emerging from the feedback,

1. Build appropriate homes.
2. Make better use of green space and space for children.
3. No more student accommodation.
4. Consider wider area improvements.
5. Better parking options.
6. No tower blocks.
7. Re-provide the social housing lost when the tower blocks go

2.1.6 Delegates to Director of Regeneration in consultation with the Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services to procure from a multi-disciplinary team the first stage specialists required to prepare the master planning options studies

2.1.7 Notes the positive discussions with Homes England

3. Background

3.1 Cabinet Decision 26th February 2019

3.1.1 Cabinet agreed on the 26th February 2019 that it is financially unviable to undertake the works to strengthen, clad and install sprinklers into Leamington House and Horatia House, and as a result agreed that on completion of the permanent rehousing of all households from Leamington House and Horatia House, the two blocks will be removed from charge, decommissioned and secured.

3.1.2 Cabinet further agreed to give delegated approval to the Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services authority to incur costs to carry out decommissioning works of Leamington House and Horatia House and secure both blocks.

3.1.3 Cabinet agreed that there is an opportunity for the sites to be redeveloped to create affordable/social housing and regeneration in this area of the City and requests the Regeneration Directorate working with the Housing Directorate to provide a report to Cabinet with an options appraisal for the demolition of Leamington House and Horatia House and redevelopment of the sites in consultation with the local and wider Somers town community and stakeholders.

3.1.4 Cabinet noted the loss social housing units to the Housing Revenue Account and requests that the options appraisal for the development of the Leamington House and Horatia House sites includes the re-provision of a minimum of 272 social housing units to be held in the HRA.

4. Update on the Key Work Strands of the Project

4.1 Decommissioning and Securing the Blocks

4.1.1 On the 9th August 2019 the last household was permanently rehoused from tower blocks. The 24 hour 7 day a week security/concierge presence ended on the 12th August 2019. Both blocks are now physically secured with metal screening of all windows up to the third floor, secure gates at each entrance door and have had intruder alarms installed. The blocks are regularly inspected every week whilst they are empty. Access to the blocks is

supervised through the Repairs Support team based at the Somerstown Area Housing Office.

4.1.2 The external car park and green space / play park will remain open and in use for as long as practical.

4.1.3 Decommissioning works have been undertaken as households were rehoused from the blocks. Fixtures and fittings that could be reused elsewhere have been taken from the empty flats and more significant items of mechanical and electrical equipment have been removed for reuse.

4.2 Options Appraisal Demolition Works

4.2.1 Ridge & Partners LLP were appointed on the 17th July 2019 as principal consultant to provide a detailed options appraisal for the demolition of both blocks. The Strategic Projects team in the Regeneration Directorate are leading this work with support from Building Services, in the HNB directorate.

4.2.2 Using information Building Services hold about the blocks, preparatory intrusive surveys are underway in the blocks. These will inform the appraisal to enable the Council to procure a specialist contractor to undertake the demolition of the blocks.

4.2.3 The options appraisal for the demolition of both blocks will be completed by December 2019, it will include the method of demolition, costs and estimated timescales. The surveys and information gathered will be used to inform the Employers Requirements for the subsequent procurement exercise to select an appropriate demolition contractor. The procurement (subject to cabinet approval) will commence in January 2020 and it is anticipated that the contract will be awarded to a successful demolition contractor to mobilise and commence demolition during the summer of 2020.

4.2.4 Ridge & Partners LLP have provided early indications to confirm that the method of demolition to be used will be a form of deconstructing the blocks panel by panel. This method will provide the safest means of demolishing the blocks and is the least intrusive to the community situated immediately adjacent to the sites. Early indications are that the deconstruction would take approximately 12 - 18 months, depending on the exact method used and phasing of the demolition of the blocks.

4.2.5 Officers are working to the following high level project plan:

- Block surveys and demolition feasibility report - June 2019 to December 2019
- Cabinet will receive a report in January 2020 to recommend how the blocks will be demolished together with the estimated budget costs and seek the appropriate delegations with the authority to seek tenders for the demolition works.
- Demolition contract procurement - January 2020 to Summer 2020

- Demolition works - Summer 2020 to Winter 2021

5. Resident Engagement

5.1 Background & Method of Engagement

5.1.1 The method and engagement process are shown in the 'Somerstown Making Sure People Are Heard' presentation (Appendix 1)

5.1.2 The engagement was undertaken by officers from the Regeneration Directorate Strategic Projects team and the HNB Directorates Housing Service team. During the course of the engagement the method of engagement was adjusted to undertake more face to face contact.

5.1.3 The engagement focussed on asking open questions to seek the views on the replacement of homes on the Leamington & Horatia House sites as well as inviting views on the wider area.

'Please tell us how you would like us to improve the area around Horatia and Leamington Houses after the tower blocks are taken down.'

'We will replace the 272 flats contained in the blocks with a minimum of the same number of homes at social rents. This can be done in a number of different ways.'

'We would like to hear your views on the area around the two tower blocks and whether there are improvements that can be made.'

5.2 Who was engaged?

5.2.1 Feedback was sought from:

- ✓ Next door neighbours (residents and businesses within 150 metres of the blocks)
- ✓ Somerstown (residents and businesses within 500 metres of the blocks)
- ✓ Partner organisations
- ✓ Voluntary sector (key focus on 'harder to reach groups')
- ✓ Portsmouth residents (city wide)
- ✓ Former Leamington House and Horatia House residents (those re-housed from the blocks)
- ✓ Local businesses
- ✓ Residents Groups in the Somerstown area

5.2.2 In summary the team;

- Contacted more than 6,000 residents and stakeholders using nine distinct communication channels.
- A total of 655 responses were received which includes individuals, groups, organisations etc.
- Transcribed in-depth conversations with 74% of the next door neighbours.

- Knocked the doors of everybody living within 500m of the blocks.
- Attended drug addiction self-help groups, foodbanks, domestic violence refuges, cross cultural women's groups, adult education facilities and many more harder-to-engage groups.
- Transcribed and analysed lengthy, narrative feedback from all key partner organisations including: police, fire, schools, the university and homelessness charities.
- Wrote to, emailed and door knocked all 233 former residents of the blocks and spoke face-to-face with 42 of them.
- Facilitated school projects to allow children to share their views on the future of their neighbourhood.
- Translated everything into the four most commonly spoken languages in the area as well as Braille and two other languages requested by residents.
- Collected a record number of feedback comments on a dedicated web page.
- Knocked the doors of all 37 business within a mile of the site.
- Posted more than 3,500 letters and feedback forms.
- Hosted stalls at school fairs and enterprise days and dedicated public open drop-in sessions.

5.3 H& L Engagement Report?

5.3.1 The 'H&L Engagement Report' (Appendix 2) breaks down the feedback into categories of responder, the method of engagement for each, the responses received and the consolidated feedback representing 'everybody' that responded.

5.3.2 The feedback report has been compiled and designed to be used digitally with navigation throughout that allows the user to focus on particular parts of the report with ease.

5.3.3 The report presents the feedback from each of the categories of responder. The report consolidates all the feedback into a section representing 'Everybody' that responded and there are also some summary slides which seek to note the key elements of feedback. These are shown below.

5.4 Key findings

5.4.1 'Everybody'

All responders are represented in the following slides taken from the engagement report.



5.4.3 Everybody Else

The last summary slide for 'everybody else' not included in the local community slide and shows the two highest points of feedback.



5.5 Key themes / principles

5.5.1 There are key themes that emerge from the feedback and these could form the key principles to be incorporated into the design brief for the tower blocks sites and to explore the wider area improvements.

5.5.2 Seven key themes emerge

1. Build appropriate homes.
2. Make better use of green space and space for children.
3. No more student accommodation.
4. Consider wider area improvements.
5. Better parking options.
6. No tower blocks.
7. Re-provide the social housing lost when the tower blocks go

5.5.3 It is clear that residents have strong views on what to replace the towers blocks with and there are clear results that support wider area improvements.

5.5.4 The engagement feedback as a whole and the seven key themes/principles can form the basis to develop a master planning and architectural design brief which will cover the options for the Leamington and Horatia House sites and wider area improvements.

Section 7 outlines the next steps.

6. **Communicating the engagement feedback results**

6.1 To fulfil the commitment to all who responded to the initial engagement exercise the following steps have been taken and are planned following the Cabinet meeting.

DATE	ACTION
Friday 27 September, 2019	Press release to local media and face-to-face briefing for the News
Fri 27 Sept - Mon 30 Sept	Cabinet papers published (including the H & L Engagement Report)
Mon 30 Sept to Tues 8 Oct	A4 flyer to be hand delivered to the 1,100+ households and businesses within 500m of the blocks (the groups called 'next door neighbours' and 'Somersetown residents'). The flyer thanks all for their feedback, highlights the seven key themes and references the Cabinet meeting
Tues 8 Oct	Cabinet meeting
Tues 8 Oct to Mon 14 Oct	'Road show' the interactive, digital document to include the PCC Residents Consortium and all of the other community groups, residents associations, key partner organisations, harder to engage groups etc. who fed into the original process.
Thurs 10 Oct	Set up public open drop-in session at the Somersetown hub with screens for people to use the interactive document with officers present to support and answer questions.

6.2 The communication plan will evolve as the feedback is released and additional opportunities are identified and requested. The key aim will be to promote the engagement feedback to all that participated.

6.3 This Cabinet report and attachments will be available via the PCC websites democratic pages (<https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView>)

6.4 This Cabinet report and the documents forming the appendix will also be placed on the PCC websites dedicated pages for the Leamington House and Horatia House project (www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/housing/council-tenants-and-leaseholders/leamington-house-and-horatia-house)

7. Appointment of design team

7.1 The engagement feedback as a whole and the seven key themes/principles can form the basis to develop a master planning and architectural design brief which will cover the options for the Leamington and Horatia House sites and wider area improvements.

7.2 The architect will be procured using a framework like the Homes England Direct Procurement Panel which offers a multi-disciplinary consultant panels that would potentially be ideally suited to this work.

7.3 The stages of this initial appointment are likely to be as below with potential breaks at completion of each stage dependant on the emerging strategy. This allows a continuous appointment to be made where appropriate. The initial master planning section will be commissioned first to develop the engagement feedback.

- Master planning (inc RIBA Stage 0 - Strategic Definition)
- RIBA Stage 1 Preparation & Brief
- RIBA Stage 2 Concept Design
- RIBA stage 3 Developed Design (inc planning)
- Sites taken to D&B contractor market or other delivery route.

7.5 Following an initial outline design process a range of options will be identified that can be taken back to the residents, stakeholders etc. to indicate the built environment that could be delivered according to the initial engagement.

7.3 The masterplan will define land use as well as building mass, height, and potential numbers. It will additionally provide some development strategies as well as standards of sustainability and an architectural pallet of materials ensuring quality of product and environment. A financial appraisal will be developed in conjunction with the masterplan to advise the various funding routes and options.

7.6 Regeneration Directorate Strategic Projects team together with HNB Directorate will develop a delivery methodology from the masterplan covering phasing, any decant requirements and considering all the options available - direct development, partnership and disposal would be typical.

7.7 The delivery methodology will be directed by a careful consideration of the corporate priorities balanced against the potential risks and rewards applicable to the various development plots and the resources (both physical and financial) available.

7.8 A report to cabinet would come forward at the end of stage one.

8. Homes England

8.1 Initial meetings with Homes England has suggested that the project could satisfy the funding criteria of the Small Sites Fund. This fund has been set up to address the viability gap on projects preventing them being bought forward, for example investment in infrastructure land remediation and the like. The fund could support the costs of the Horatia and Leamington blocks deconstruction if a future scheme maximises additional housing numbers.

8.2 At this stage we have been informed monies granted from the Small Sites Fund have to be spent by March 2022.

9. Project Governance

9.1 The project to date and associated boards has been led by the HNB Directorate with support from the Regeneration Directorate.

9.2 The projects progress to date was reported through to Governance Audit and Standards Committee and from May 2019 to the cross party Major Projects Board. The reporting to the Major Projects Board will continue.

9.3 As the project moves into the demolition / redevelopment stage the Regeneration Directorate will take over the lead for the project with the HNB Directorate supporting as a key stakeholder.

10 Reasons for recommendations

10.1 This is an appropriate time to update the Cabinet on progress towards the demolition and re-development of the blocks. All residents from Leamington House and Horatia House have been rehoused, very preliminary feedback is available from the demolition consultants and the results are available from an extensive engagement exercise.

10.2 Timescales are now known for a specific report to go to Cabinet with an options appraisal for the demolition of Leamington House and Horatia House.

10.3 The engagement feedback provides clear indication of a preference to consider wider area improvements rather than just the Leamington House and Horatia House sites, with a design based on the key principles listed in paragraph 5.5, which should be fed back to all stakeholders.

10.4 To enable further engagement, presenting proposals that incorporate the key principles for re-development of the area, an appropriate design team should be engaged to deliver a master plan and architectural design brief.

10.5 The Homes England discussion should be pursued to explore funding opportunities to support the development of the Leamington House and Horatia House sites and the wider area improvements.

11 Equality impact assessment

11.1 The Preliminary Equality Impact Assessment is contained in Appendices 3. A full impact assessment is not required for this report.

12 Legal implications

- 12.1 The report outlines the current level of engagement and consultation thereby minimalising the potentiality of legal challenge. The report addresses the relevant issues around functional risk associated with demolition. Additionally there has been sufficient consultation to enable the Authority to manage within expectation the tenancy terminations and the re- housing of the occupants of the two towers. The level of claims presented to the Authority have been minimal.

13 Director of Finance's comments

- 13.1 As mentioned in the main body of the report the Council continue to develop a plan to fulfil the commitments made in the February 2019 Cabinet report to re-provide at least 272 socially rented homes.
- 13.2 In order to redevelop the site where the two towers stand the Council needs to demolish the existing structures. Given their proximity to other buildings the Council needs to employ specialist contractors to provide safe options for completing this work.
- 13.3 The master planning appointment will form the first of a number of potential design stages with breaks at the completion of each stage. This will allow a flexible approach to each development plot whilst ensuring continuity of engagement. The budget for this first stage is estimated to be up to £250,000.
- 13.4 Up to January 2020 the Council will have needed to spend in the region of £700,000 in total including consultation, optioneering and design works.
- 13.4 This costs will be initially met using Housing Revenue Account borrowing and Right to buy receipts. As the main body of the report suggest the Council have entered into preliminary discussion with Homes England who are keen to help support the Council in developing the site. The Council should be able to provide further details about what that support may look like in the January 2020 report.
- 13.5 Once the costs and extent of any development on that site are clearer the Council will be in a position to start compiling the Commercial and Financial business case for how the development will be delivered and will have more clarity on what the Funding profile may look like.

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Signed by:
Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Somerstown Making Sure People Are Heard (presentation)
- Appendix 2 - H & L Engagement Report
- Appendix 3 - Preliminary EIA

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

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by

..... on

.....
Signed by:
Leader of the Council