

Agenda item:

Title of meeting: Cabinet Member for Housing

Date of meeting: 14th July 2015

Subject: ADMIRAL BLOCKS SITE REFURBISHMENT

Report by: OWEN BUCKWELL – DIRECTOR OF PROPERTY AND HOUSING

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 7no blocks of flats in the Portsea area of Portsmouth.
- 1.2 The works are required to ensure the integrity of the buildings, reduce their on-going maintenance and improve the living environment for residents.
- 1.3 If approved, it is anticipated that the works could commence by January 2016.

2. Recommendations

i That approval be given to tender the works based on a budget estimate of £1.65 Million, inclusive of fees.

ii That following a full tender evaluation authority to enter into contract with the preferred bidder is delegated to the Director of Property and Housing.

3. Background

- 3.1 All the properties are located within the Charles Dickens Ward and were built between 1955 and 1958.
- 3.2 The site contains a total of 108 properties within seven blocks of flats which are a mixture of one, two and three bed flats and maisonettes.
- 3.3 There are nine leaseholders that are located within four of the seven blocks of flats. The remaining three blocks of flats are fully owned by PCC. There are 99No properties that are let to PCC residents.

- 3.4 All of the blocks have been evaluated, a full building survey has been undertaken, defects identified and relevant proposals put forward to address the defects.
- 3.5 The main area of work relates to the roof covering of the blocks. From inspection the clout nails present have corroded and there are numerous instances where tiles have slipped and require repair. The consequence is that regular roofing repairs are required to all the blocks, particularly during the winter months; it is therefore proposed to replace the existing roof covering.
- 3.6 In conjunction with the roof covering being replaced the opportunity is being taken to install Photo Voltaic (PV) panels to the roofs.
- 3.7 A Fire Risk Assessment has been undertaken to all blocks and a number of recommended planned actions have been made.

It is proposed to install LED emergency lighting to the common parts of all blocks along escape route and install new composite fire doors where necessary to relevant properties at some of the blocks.

- 3.8 In addition to the above general repairs to the external and communal areas will be undertaken along with decorations to these areas as identified from the survey.

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 The works will ensure the integrity of the building fabric, help protect against future deterioration and reduce current levels of repair expenditure.
- 4.2 In particular the replacement of the roof covering will eliminate the on-going costly repairs for this type of work as well as to remove the potential risk of damage to the resident's properties or safety risk from falling tiles.
- 4.3 The installation of Photo Voltaic (PV) panels will provide an income stream to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) that is particularly cost effective as it will be undertaken in conjunction with the roof replacement whilst the scaffold access to the roof is already available. The payback period for the investment of undertaking the PV installation will be less than 4 years.
- 4.4 The project will upgrade the aesthetic visual appearance of the blocks and together with the increased lighting levels in the stairwells will improve the communal environment.
- 4.5 The scheme will provide a better living environment for residents and maintain good quality accommodation for families in the city.

5. Options considered and rejected

- 5.1 Maintaining the existing roof coverings through day to day repairs was considered and rejected as it would lead to higher overall repair costs caused by needing to erect scaffold on a hap hazard basis to deal with leaks when they occur as a opposed to gaining economies of scale savings through procuring all of the works under one contract.

It was also rejected due to the potential health and safety risk should tile fixings fail and tiles come off the building as well as increased resident disruption through on-going leaks and the lead in time of erecting scaffold in order to undertake repairs.

- 5.2 Not including Photo Voltaic (PV) panels was considered and rejected as the PV panels will provide free communal electric during the day and an income through the feed in tariff. The cost of installing the PV panels is most cost effective when undertaken in conjunction with the roof replacement when the scaffold access is already erected, this will reduce the payback period for the PV panels.

6. Duty to involve

- 6.1 Thorough consultation will be undertaken with both residents and leaseholders of the properties.
- 6.2 An initial consultation has been undertaken with residents of ground floor properties over potential changes to the front garden and fencing present to these blocks.
- 6.3 All leaseholders will be consulted at the Notice of Intent stage and Section 20 stages in accordance with the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act legislation. The Leasehold and Commercial team will make contact with all the leaseholders individually to discuss with them the works planned, their contribution to the costs and the various payment options that are available to them.
- 6.4 Planning have been consulted and a planning application is not required as the work being undertaken is permitted development.
- 6.5 All residents and leaseholders will be informed of the works prior to their commencement via letter and in-person visits where they will have the opportunity to discuss any issues with PCC and contractor staff.
- 6.6 PCC staff will remain in contact with residents during the works onsite to address any issues that may arise, after completion of the project, customer satisfaction surveys will be undertaken by a PCC Resident Liaison Officer in order to gain feedback as to how the service could be improved.

7. Implications

- 7.1 It is considered that the works will have a positive impact by helping to maintain the properties whilst improving the visual appearance of the blocks and the surrounding area.
- 7.2 The works should have positive implications by ensuring that PCC maintains good quality housing that can easily be rented to meet demand for social housing in the area.
- 7.3 There is the potential for negative reaction from leaseholders due to the costs they will be required to pay for the works; however the Leasehold and Commercial team will work closely with the leaseholders to agree appropriate repayment plans.
- 7.4 There is potential for negative implication due to the disruption to residents during the works; however the project will be managed to minimise the impact of any disruption to residents during the project.
- 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 will all be subject to existing risk control assessments and mechanisms for such work, as such the 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.
- 8.2 Shaping the future of Portsmouth, a strategy for growth and prosperity, action No.16, to improve the housing stock including carbon emissions.
- 8.3 Shaping the future of housing, a strategic plan for Portsmouth for better housing and health. The maintenance of Portsmouth's stock of residential properties is a priority as detailed in theme 5.

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 has 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 addressed 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. Director of Finance's comments

- 11.1 This scheme forms part of line 11, Major Repairs Dwellings, within the Housing Investment Programme which was formally approved by Full Council on 10 February 2015.
- 11.2 The complete scheme, which will be 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 – Director of Property and Housing

Appendices:

Appendix A: Block List

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 14th July 2015

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Signed by:

Councillor Steve Wemyss

Appendix A: Block List

BENBOW HOUSE (1-16)
CALDER HOUSE (1-10)
COCHRANE HOUSE (1-24)
CODDRINGTON HOUSE (1-10)
CRADDOCK HOUSE (1-16)
DRAKE HOUSE (1-16)
FROBISHER HOUSE (1-16)