

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2018/2019 REPORT NO.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

PORTFOLIO DECISION OF:

Cllr Dino Lemonides –
Cabinet Member for Housing

REPORT OF:

Executive Director
Place

Agenda – Part:1

KD Num: KD 4774

Subject: Fire Safety Pilot

Wards: Chase & Lower Edmonton

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 We are developing a new standard for High Rise Blocks which will include safety, maintenance, management, feasibility to install sprinklers and emergency standards which will then set the budget for safety works.
- 1.2 We propose to develop this new standard through a pilot on the following blocks: Bliss House, Purcell House, Walbrook House and the sheltered housing block Brittany House.
- 1.3 Next steps are to procure contractors to deliver the works and to engage with residents on a comprehensive approach to the maintenance and management of their block in the pilot.
- 1.4 In February 2018 Cabinet approved the Rent Setting report KD4586 which outlined the 18/19 Capital Programme. This report is requesting authority to spend part of the budget on fire safety works.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Approve the development of a pilot to create a comprehensive Enfield High Rise Block Standard as outlined in 3.4 on blocks Brittany, Bliss, Purcell and Walbrook.
- 2.2 Approve the expenditure from the existing major works capital programme of £2.5m to implement the works to the blocks included in the pilot.
- 2.3 Approve the appointment of a contractor from an existing framework to implement the works within the pilot.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The tragic events at Grenfell Tower placed a new emphasis on fire safety for social landlords, particularly those such as Enfield with high numbers of tower blocks.
- 3.2 We have responded as a landlord by strengthening our fire safety regime. Our programme for fire safety measures will be presented to a future Cabinet meeting for approval.
- 3.2 Council Housing carried out a review of fire safety in our high-rise blocks to identify measures that are required to move beyond legislative compliance and deliver best practice in fire safety. The review considered both passive and active fire safety systems alternative innovative suppression systems, improved fire and smoke alarm systems and other measures to protect our residents
- 3.3 The emerging fire safety strategy will consider all protective measures with the potential to include sprinklers if the infrastructure is suitable and sufficient to support the installation.
- 3.4 We want to take a comprehensive approach to the development of safety in our High-Rise Blocks and wish to develop and pilot a standard in consultation with residents which is consistent with the regime for fire safety in tower blocks in the initial review carried out after Grenfell. The standard would include safety, maintenance, management and emergency incident arrangements. It is timely to consider this given the Social Housing Green Paper and its question around the potential review of the “Decent Homes Standard”.
- 3.5 This report proposes piloting a number of fire and healthy safety improvements to support the review and to help develop a standard. We propose to pilot the improvements at Bliss, Purcell and Wallbrook, as well as Brittany House (sheltered housing).
- 3.6 Cladding at the three blocks Bliss, Purcell and Walbrook are in progress of being removed and Enfield is working on a solution for a replacement system, with a view to installing next year. Works to the blocks will include passive fire safety works including fire doors/fire stopping walls in the communal areas and internally within flats. As part of the pilot an installation of an integrated alarm system within the flats of Walbrook House will be considered.
- 3.7 We will be undertaking a feasibility study to install sprinklers in the sheltered housing block at Brittany House.
- 3.8 At feasibility stage we are working closely with the fire brigade on these proposals and will engage residents early in the process.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Not approving works

It is considered a high risk to our residents if we do not address fire safety across all our blocks. The new standard will ensure we deliver the same approach across all our high-rise stock.

5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Will ensure we undertake high priority fire safety work and Hackett report recommendations on high rise blocks will improve fire safety
- 5.2 Standards to protect residents to the highest standards achievable and reasonably practicable in high rise blocks initially followed by all blocks to be proposed as part of the future capital programme.
- 5.3 These recommendations ensure that high priority work to improve fire safety proceeds as quickly as possible, whilst minimising the risk of carrying out additional work that does not comply with the findings of the review of fire safety and building regulations under review at present and providing opportunity for further engagement of residents and reviewing expenditure in the light of the HRA Business Plan.

6. COMMENTS FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS

6.1 Financial Implications

- 6.1.1 The costs for the fire stopping works in the blocks are estimated to be £2.5m. These costs include passive fire safety works and service pipe repairs or replacement within flats. It also includes the pilot installation of an integrated alarm system and installation of the sprinkler system.
- 6.1.2 These costs, which will be funded from the existing capital HRA budget, will be included in the HRA 30-year business plan and monitored through the capital quarterly monitoring process.

6.2 Legal Implications

- 6.2.1 The Council has power under s.111 Local Government Act 1972 to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions.
- 6.2.2 Additionally, the Council is empowered to enter into contracts for the discharge of its legal powers (s.1 Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997). The Council moreover has a general power of competence under section 1(1) of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything that individuals generally may do, provided it is not prohibited by legislation and subject to Public Law principles.

- 6.2.3 The Council has the power to alter, repair or improve its housing stock in accordance with s.9 Housing Act 1985. Further, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies to the common or shared parts of multi occupied residential buildings. It places a duty on landlords, owners or managing agents to carry out a fire risk assessment of the common parts and implement and maintain appropriate and adequate fire safety measures to manage the risk that lives could be lost in a fire under the framework of which the fire works are initiated. Appropriate management and maintenance systems must be put in place to ensure any fire safety equipment or equipment which may represent a fire hazard, is maintained in good working order, and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- 6.2.4 The use of a compliant framework agreement is permitted under the Council's Contract Procedure Rules ('CPR's'). The Council must comply with all requirements of its constitution and CPRs. Throughout the engagement of a contractor, the Council must comply with its obligations of obtaining best value, under the Local Government (Best Value Principles) Act 1999. The Council must keep a clear audit trail of its decision to procure and award the contract to the successful contractor to demonstrate that best value has been and will continue to be obtained for the Council.
- 6.2.5 All legal agreements arising from the matters described in this Report must be approved by the Assistant Director of Legal & Governance Services in advance of contract commencement.

6.3 Property Implications

Property Services have been engaged and consulted about this report and the Property implications are covered in the body of this report.

7. KEY RISKS

Several risks around non-delivery of the works due to contractor performance and cost overrun have been included into the Housing Revenue Account risk register which is monitored monthly as part of Governance Board.

8. IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES – CREATING A LIFETIME OF OPPORTUNITIES IN ENFIELD

8.1 Good homes in well-connected neighbourhoods

These works will make a strong contribution to the Council's priorities by providing better quality accommodation with emphasis of fire safety at the forefront but also addressing much need associated improvement works

8.2 Sustain strong and healthy communities

The project will see investment into the borough to provide much needed improvement to the housing stock to not only Fire safety element but also to minimise future works with the much need service improvement works.

8.3 Build our local economy to create a thriving place

This project will contribute to the apprenticeship programme

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

The HRA 30-Year Business Plan supports the delivery of high quality services that promote equality and values diversity.

10. PERFORMANCE AND DATA IMPLICATIONS

Fire Safety works will improve the overall satisfaction of our residents.

11. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

The proposed comprehensive pilot project is supported as a means of tackling various fire safety concerns that have been raised in Fire Risk Assessments completed on the blocks in recent years.

Compartmentation defects that became evident following intrusive investigations into the cladding systems will be addressed whilst at the same time allowing service pipe repairs to be made and passive fire safety works to be completed that will reduce the fire risk profile of the blocks going forward. The safety benefits and learning experiences from the project will be valuable and shared with the London Fire Brigade to continue our good working relationship.

12. HR IMPLICATIONS

None

13. PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Raising standards of fire safety associated improvement works within high rise will improve living standards which improve life expediency.

Background Papers:

None