

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

**REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING AND FACILITIES
TO LEADERSHIP PANEL OF 31ST OCTOBER 2017**

Subject: Riverside High Flats, Ayr

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to seek Leadership Panel agreement to improvement works at the Riverside High Flats, Ayr.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Leadership Panel agrees:

- 2.1.1 To the appointment of a design team by 30th November 2017 to carry out improvement works to the Riverside High Flats, Ayr; and**
- 2.1.2 To a programme of upgrade work to the High Flats as detailed in Appendix 1, funded from the uncommitted surplus within the Housing Revenue Account.**

3. Background

- 3.1** The 3 high rise flat blocks at Riverside Place, Ayr were constructed in 1969 and provide a home for 234 tenants. Each flat has been classed as amenity housing and is subsequently let as ground level type accommodation for those with mobility difficulties due to the availability of a lift to each floor. In 1992 external cladding was fitted to the blocks to improve the insulation properties of the building and to address water ingress problems. In 2002 and 2003, properties were modernised internally with the fitting of new kitchens and bathrooms and installation of a sprinkler system.
- 3.2** A Fire Risk and Health and Safety assessment is carried out annually by the Council's Corporate Risk and Insurance team and the July 2016 report indicated the following protective measures were in place:

- Sound alarm and detection system installed, tested, maintained and serviced;
- Sprinkler system installed in all domestic dwellings and communal areas;
- Fire routes and fire exits visually inspected on a daily basis;
- Provision and maintenance of appropriate fire-fighting equipment throughout premises;
- Emergency lighting;
- Local Fire & Rescue service provision and guidance;
- CCTV cameras;
- Dry risers, regularly serviced; and
- Fire precaution signage throughout premises;

- 3.3 Following the Grenfell Tower fire, landlords across the UK have been taking steps to assess the construction methods and fire safety measures within their high rise housing stock.
- 3.4 Building upon a structural survey carried out on our high rise flats in January 2017, Council officers acted quickly following the Grenfell incident to commission additional tests to provide fire safety assurances to our tenants. Details of this testing as well as the protective measures in place were set out in a letter to all 234 high-rise tenants on 16 June 2017 to provide reassurance about what was in place as well as our response to Grenfell.
- 3.5 Over the past 5 months, we have been working closely with Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, LMA Architects and the Council's Risk and Insurance Team to ensure that a robust analysis of our blocks has been undertaken.
- 3.6 In June 2017, the Scottish Government formed a working group to obtain information on the building characteristics of high rise blocks across Scotland. This group has since taken on the remit to consider a national response to building regulations relating to high flats, with a planned consultation on this imminent. It is expected that this will lead to amendments to the building regulations through legislation.
- 3.7 LMA Architects' survey findings indicate that the high rise blocks and subsequent improvements are in line with the methodology outlined in the relevant Building Warrants in place at the time of the various construction works. The building regulations have, however, changed since 1992 and the architect outlines a number of measures that could be undertaken to further reduce the risk of fire in the blocks. As the cladding is now 25 years old and other elements of the building date from the original construction, there is a requirement to consider full refurbishment of the blocks to provide a modern environment. These matters however, should be considered in light of the potential alteration to building regulations following the Scottish Government's working group findings.
- 3.8 Since June 2017, we have experienced 2 house fires within the high rise flats. On both occasions, and in line with design features in place, the

sprinkler system activated and contained the fire within the individual flat where the fire originated.

- 3.9 Following the most recent fire, a formal debrief session has been planned with relevant partner agencies to give detailed consideration to the partial evacuation undertaken, identify any lessons learned and also recognise what worked well. Any improvements to processes identified from this session will be shared with tenants to provide them with further assurances regarding their safety.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 Based on the recommendations detailed by LMA Architects following the tragic circumstances in London, it is proposed that a programme of upgrade work be progressed in the short term to the 3 high rise blocks. A full list of the recommended proposed short term works is detailed in Appendix 1. A summarised version of the key matters is outlined below:

- The fire detection system within each block and individual flats alerts the Council's Emergency Response Team in the event of the sprinkler system activating. The study recommends that the smoke alarm and fire detection system be upgraded and linked to detect smoke or heat within individual properties;
- There is a requirement to infill any holes around doors or pipes with intumescent materials to reduce the potential of fire to spread;
- Existing doors to individual flats and in common areas should be assessed and replaced if necessary to meet current building regulations of 60 minute fire ratings (it was previously 30 minutes);
- Some reconfiguration works are required to the ground floor to reduce recessed areas and to create areas for mobility scooter (not wheelchair) storage;
- Replacement of lighting and emergency lighting in communal areas;
- Works to reduce the risk from fires external to the envelope of the building; and
- Testing and inspection of the building frame to advise future investment decisions.

- 4.2 Should this report be agreed, immediate steps will be taken to appoint a design team through existing procurement frameworks to progress the necessary design work and to satisfy any regulatory requirements. Thereafter, works would be co-ordinated in partnership with tenants to minimise the disruption during the works phase.

- 4.3 The estimated cost of the works outlined in Appendix 1 is £[REDACTED]. It is proposed that these works be funded from the uncommitted surplus within the Housing Revenue Account. If approved, progress with this project would be reported to members via the quarterly Housing Capital Programme report to Leadership Panel.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 Procurement input will be required for the proposed construction works and this has been considered as part of the Procurement Team's workplan.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 It is proposed that the costs for the works be met from the uncommitted surplus within the Housing Revenue Account, which has a balance of £8.781m at 30th June 2017.

7. Human Resources Implications

- 7.1 There are no human resource implications as a result of this report.

8. Risk

8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations*

- New risk(s) have been identified and assessed in line with the Council's risk management process as follows: Risks relate to changing demand for our accommodation, longer term investment may not be viable without Scottish Government intervention and delays with progressing this work are likely to increase costs as other landlords progress similar works. These will be managed within existing operational activities and reference to the status of mitigations will be available through the Housing and Facilities SIP Risk Register.

8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations*

- Rejecting the recommendations could impact on the reputation of the Council and potentially endanger tenants.

9. Equalities

- 9.1 The proposals in this report have been assessed through the Equality Impact Assessment Scoping process. There are no significant potential positive or negative equality impacts of agreeing the recommendations and therefore an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required. A copy of the Equalities Scoping Assessment is attached as Appendix 2.

10. Sustainable Development Implications

- 10.1 **Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

- 11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

- 12.1 The proposals contained within this report link to the Council Plan strategic priority to “Working in partnership to maximise the potential for our Environment” and the related objective of ‘people live in warm, well maintained, energy efficient homes’.

13. Results of Consultation

- 13.1 (1) Consultation has taken place with Councillor Philip Saxton, Portfolio Carrier for Housing and Customer Services and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.
- (2) Consultation has taken place with Councillor Peter Henderson, Portfolio Carrier for Resources and Performance and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.
- (3) Consultation has taken place with the 234 tenants of the Riverside high flats through letters, visits by housing officers and discussion at meetings of the Riverside Flats Tenants Association. Tenants are supportive of any measures the Council undertakes to improve fire safety within their blocks.
- (4) Consultation has taken place with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service regarding the proposed actions and they are supportive of this work progressing.

14. Next Steps for Decision Tracking Purposes

14.1 If the recommendations above are approved by Members, the Head of Housing and Facilities will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to ensure full implementation of the decision within the following timescales, with the completion status reported to the Leadership Panel in the 'Council and Leadership Panel Decision Log' at each of its meetings until such time as the decision is fully implemented:

<i>Implementation</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Managed by</i>
Appointment of Design Team to oversee design and workplan for property upgrades	30 th November 2017	David Burns, Head of Housing & Facilities
Include details of work in the Housing Capital Programme	30 th November 2017	David Burns, Head of Housing & Facilities

Background Papers None

Person to Contact **David Burns, Head of Housing and Facilities**
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Date: 13th October 2017

Appendix 1 – Planned short term works to Riverside High Flats, Ayr

ITEM	DESCRIPTION OF IMMEDIATE REMEDIATION WORKS
<i>EXTERNAL ENVELOPE WORKS</i>	
1	Removing all existing external timber louvered double doors and replace with steel fire rated doors.
2	Removing existing entrance doors/screens and forming new entrance doors/screens with enclosed canopy over to main external façade of building.
<i>INTERNAL WORKS COMMUNAL AREAS</i>	
1	Forming 2Nr mobility scooter storage/charging areas within each block within existing external store; forming access from new entrance areas with key fob automatic entrance door.
2	Existing timber partition and replacing with block wall
3	Allowance to replace front doors to achieve 60 minute fire rating.
4	Allowance to replace stairwell doors to achieve 60 minute fire rating and lift lobby doors and screens at each floor to achieve 30 minutes.
<i>ELECTRICAL SERVICES</i>	
1	Allowance to investigate and fire stop all MEP services penetrations through all fire compartment walls and floors
2	Allowance to blank off ventilation grilles to residential apartments from blocked common ventilation system if deemed safe to do so.
3	Allowance to survey sprinkler heads throughout and replace any defective units.
4	Allowance for sprinkler system full servicing/certification works including allowance for any immediate remedial works to gain certification.
5	Allowance for dry riser pressure test and full servicing including allowance for any immediate remedial works to gain certification
6	Replacement of fire detection and alarm system to engineers requirements.
7	Replacement & upgrading of apartment fire alarm systems (allowing 2Nr Multi-sensors + 1Nr Heat Detector)
8	Replacement of LED lighting and wiring (utilise existing conduit)
9	Installation of illuminated Exit route signage
10	Installation of emergency break glass units to controlled access doors
11	Testing & commissioning
<i>BUILDERS WORK IN CONNECTION WITH SERVICES</i>	
1	Allowance for fire stopping existing services penetrations (full survey required)

Appendix 2 – Equalities Impact Assessment Scoping



South Ayrshire Council

Equality Impact Assessment Scoping

1. Proposal details

Riverside High Flats, Ayr	David Burns
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2. Which communities, groups of people, employees or thematic groups do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this proposal? Please indicate whether these would be positive or negative impacts

Community, Groups of People or Themes	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
The whole community of South Ayrshire		
People from different racial groups, ethnic or national origin.		
Women and/or men (boys and girls)		
People with disabilities		Positive
People from particular age groups for example Older people, children and young people		Positive
Lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual people		
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process to change sex		
Pregnant women and new mothers		
People who are married or in a civil partnership		
People who share a particular religion or belief		
Thematic Groups: Health, Human Rights, Rurality and Deprivation.		Positive

3. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that the proposal will support the Council to:

General Duty and other Equality Themes	Level of Negative and/or Positive Impact (high, medium or low)
Eliminate discrimination and harassment faced by particular communities or groups	Low positive
Promote equality of opportunity between particular communities or groups	Low positive
Foster good relations between particular communities or groups	
Promote positive attitudes towards different communities or groups	
Increase participation of particular communities or groups in public life	Low positive
Improve the health and wellbeing of particular communities or groups	Low positive
Promote the human rights of particular communities or groups	Low positive
Tackle deprivation faced by particular communities or groups	Low positive

4. Summary Assessment

Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required? (A full EIA must be carried out on all high and medium impact proposals)		YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rationale for decision: The proposed works will ensure that the Riverside High Flats are as safe for tenants as possible, by putting in place short term actions to minimise the risk of fire spread through these blocks. These interim works will be progressed ahead of the Scottish Government's forthcoming review of Building Standards, which will inform further major investment in the blocks. These blocks provide amenity housing to 234 households comprised of older people and people with disabilities. Improvement works will have a positive impact on these households against a variety of measures. The continued use of these flats ensures appropriate accommodation is available for people with mobility issues locally, while the central location of these homes also contributes towards positive health and wellbeing for tenants and supports social inclusion. While the works will ensure the continued safe use of the blocks, this will only impact on current and future tenants of these blocks. While the proposed works will improve the safety of the blocks by helping achieve modern standards, a full upgrade and modernisation of the blocks will be required to ensure the long-term viability of the blocks. Taking these factors into consideration, these works have been assessed to have a 'low' impact in terms of the above equalities issues.			
Signed :David Burns.....		Head of Service	
Date: 13 th October 2017		Copy to equalities@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	