

## **ITEM No ...3.....**

**REPORT TO:** NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE – 24 AUGUST 2020

**REPORT ON:** MULTI STOREY DEVELOPMENT – PLANNED MAINTENANCE WORKS

**REPORT BY:** EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

**REPORT NO:** 18-2020

### **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To advise Committee of planned maintenance, additional fire safety works and Waste Strategy extension proposed for the Council's Multi-Storey Developments(MSD's).

### **2 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Committee agrees to seek tenders on the workstreams proposed in this report and agrees to closure of the bin chutes, as detailed within.
- 2.2 A further tender report will be brought to Committee for review and consideration of tenders submitted by contractors for each aspect of the project.

### **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the approval of this report. Provision for these works has been included within the Housing HRA element of the Capital Plan 2020 - 2025 and Housing (HRA) Revenue Budget. As noted above, a further tender report will be brought to Committee in due course outlining the cost of these works and detailing how they will be funded.

### **4 MAIN TEXT**

- 4.1 The Council continues to place the highest priority on tenant safety in Council housing.
- 4.2 Following the Grenfell Tower Fire the Scottish Government asked all local authorities to review their Housing stock in order to provide assurances to tenants on fire safety and also to identify any works that were required in this respect. The cladding systems on Multi-Storey blocks were reviewed and found to meet Building Standards for High Rise properties, with appropriate fire stopping and non-combustible insulation at all locations. Each flat is also compartmentalised so that any fire will be contained in individual dwellings and will not spread.
- 4.3 An MSD fire safety group was established which coordinated this review and put in place a strategy to provide public reassurance including a series of joint surgeries with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) at MSD locations, the offer of Home Fire Safety visits to MSD tenants, and detailed information and guidance to Council staff who would be answering queries from the public and other stakeholders.
- 4.4 The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service continues to carry out safety checks to high rise properties to ensure effective housekeeping and tenant safety and to identify any remedial actions requiring action. Joint inspections are also carried out in conjunction with Dundee City Council technical officers and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and again any areas for action are addressed.
- 4.5 Legislation now requires upgraded smoke and fire detection systems in all domestic dwellings in Scotland. The Council has now completed the installation of smoke, heat, and carbon monoxide detectors in all our Multi-Storey dwellings. This ensures that this stock complies with

the amended tolerable standard that comes into force on 1 February 2021, thereby providing further reassurance to our tenants in this regard.

4.6 In addition to these actions and following advice from fire specialists, the following works are proposed as a combination of additional fire safety measures and planned maintenance:

- New door sets for individual flats incorporating door closers on individual flats. This will include the door and doorframe and meets the latest standard; 2019 Domestic Technical Handbook section 2: Fire.
- New fire doors in communal areas where required including electric cupboards and landing cellar doors.
- Replacement floor coverings in communal areas including landing and foyer areas as part of Planned Maintenance programme.
- Landing and common area repainting to the current External Cyclical Maintenance specification. The current eight year cycle for these works will be adjusted to take account of this.

## **5 WASTE DISPOSAL**

5.1 Currently all 11 of the Council's multi storey blocks have an internal bin chute for the disposal of household waste. Each chute empties into a bin room containing multiple bins that staff on site have to rotate on a daily basis so that they do not overflow. Bins are emptied by Waste Management two or three times a week.

5.2 All household waste is disposed of down the same chute and there are no recycling facilities within the blocks to separate the waste. Some recycling facilities are available externally to the buildings at some locations.

5.3 Each bin room has a sprinkler system installed as a fire suppression measure.

5.4 Chutes are cleaned by a contractor on 3 monthly basis.

5.5 A contractor is in place to unblock chutes where that occurs.

### **5.6 CURRENT ISSUES**

5.7 The existing chutes were not designed to meet the needs of modern household refuse disposal and the chutes are blocking on a regular basis due to the bulky nature of bin bags and items deposited. Blockages create the most risk. Fire suppression sprinklers are currently fitted in the bin rooms at each location but there is no means of suppressing a fire within the chute itself.

5.8 The age of the chutes is now raising maintenance issues with chutes at some locations having to be closed off for a period of time while repairs were considered. At one location a section of bin chutes covering approx. 8 floors has been closed due to significant internal damage at this time and is unrepairable. The temporary closure of the chute within any of the locations where this has been necessary has not evidenced any increase in unauthorised dumping of household waste/items.

5.9 The current chute openings on landings do not meet current recommendations for fire safety standards and are incompatible with modern day demands for refuse disposal both in terms of the volume of today's household rubbish and the lack of any recycling opportunities within the Multi Storey Blocks.

### **5.10 COSTS**

5.11 The cost of repairs and maintenance of the chutes including repairs to chutes and fixings, cleaning, unblocking, maintaining sprinklers is approximately £60,000 per annum.

**5.12 PROPOSAL**

- 5.13 After taking into account the issues highlighted it is proposed that the most effective and viable option going forward is the complete closure of the existing bin chutes and replacement with alternative waste disposal provision in line with the Waste Management Strategy for the City.
- 5.14 This will involve fully decommissioning the chutes and closing them at each MSD location and providing alternative waste disposal facilities external to the building.
- 5.15 To secure the existing chute rooms after closure, the doorway to each chute room on the landings will be secured with a lockable steel door and internal fire stopping measures would be installed at each floor opening.
- 5.16 The ground level bin rooms will be emptied and doors secured.
- 5.17 External waste disposal facilities will be installed at each block and tenants will be required to take their rubbish down to these facilities.
- 5.18 Checks will be carried out by onsite staff and SARC out of hours on a regular basis to ensure waste is not left on landings or in lifts. These checks will be very similar to the stairs and landing checks that already undertaken by Caretaking and SARC staff.
- 5.19 Closing the chutes will improve safety across the multi storeys and installing external waste disposal facilities will allow recycling opportunities to be significantly expanded in line with the current Waste Management Strategy. In addition, if approved, this will provide an ongoing cost saving by reducing maintenance costs related to the bin chutes.
- 5.20 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service fully support the closure of the bin chutes based on the analysis outlined above. SFRS will continue to carry out regular inspections of high rise premises and offer supporting fire safety advice to support Dundee City Council's strategy on improving residents safety.

**6 INFORMATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

- 6.1 In relation to the improvement works proposed, extensive tenant information and assistance will be required prior to and during the above works. Prior to Covid-19 we would normally undertake a combination of information days/surgeries held with individual visits to tenants where required. However, in line with current social distancing guidance we will engage with tenants via telephone, email, written correspondence and socially distanced home visits. We have revised risk assessments for undertaking any visits which require access to tenants' homes and will ensure that residents have contact information for staff available at Construction Services and Housing Asset Management Unit to make appointments and deal with any tenant concerns that may arise.
- 6.2 We will implement a thorough engagement strategy with tenants and other stakeholders on the closure of the bin chutes. This will ensure the views of tenants and other stakeholders are taken into account and allows the Council the opportunity to provide the level of information required for stakeholders to be fully informed.
- 6.3 A variety of engagement methods will be utilised including information being delivered to homes, postal and online questionnaires and individual socially distanced visits where required. A Frequently Asked Questions leaflet will also be produced in support of the engagement strategy and in line with the Council's current Recycling and Waste Disposal Strategy.
- 6.4 In partnership with Waste Management we have concluded that the closure of the bin chutes is a viable option given that external areas are available for installing bin pods and this provides the opportunity to extend recycling facilities to the residents of all Council multi-storey blocks.

- 6.5 Tenant safety remains of paramount importance to the Council and we will continue to review our systems and processes to ensure that the Multi Storey Developments remain safe places to live for our tenants. Scottish Fire and Rescue Services, as key partners, are supportive of the measures to further enhance tenant safety in our MSD's, as outlined in this report.

## **6.6 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.7 This report has been subject to an assessment of any impacts on Equality and Diversity, Fairness and Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. A copy of the Impact Assessment is available on the Council's website at [www.dundee.gov.uk/ia](http://www.dundee.gov.uk/ia).

## **7 CONSULTATIONS**

- 7.1 The Council Management Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report and are in agreement with its content.

## **8 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1 None.

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4 August 2020