

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE Housing and Environment DATE 11 January 2010

DIRECTOR Pete Leonard

TITLE OF REPORT Housing Capital Programme, Review of
Outcomes - Update

REPORT NUMBER: H&E / 09 /127

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide elected members with an update on the review of the outcomes for the 2009/10 Housing Capital Programme. The report details the scope of the review, programme and interim findings. In addition the report details and reviews the performance of the existing framework contracts. Finally the report makes recommendations on the installation of showers in the Housing Programme

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee

- a. Consider and note the information contained within the report.
- b. Instruct the Head of Service Housing Asset Management to provide a further report on this matter on 13 April 2010.
- c. Instructs officers to cease forthwith the installation of a shower cubicle for mainstream housing but install overhead showers.
- d. Instructs officers to install level access wet floor shower provision to all Extra Care Housing.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The monies required to fund the housing capital programme is provided through external borrowing, capital receipts, capital grants and a revenue contribution. Whilst there are adequate resources available to finance the projected capital spend in 2009/10, as required by the Prudential Code, it is worthwhile to continue to review the model to ensure spend is commensurate with Business Plan objectives.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

The City Council will operate within overall financial constraints taking into account recommended accounting practice and policies.

The programme aims to treat every tenant equally on the basis that replacement programmes are determined by the life cycle costing and prioritising on the basis of stock condition and sustainability of the estates.

Specifically within the Single Outcome Agreement there is a need to enhance the quality of housing and environment for individuals and the community. Furthermore within the Council's Vibrant Dynamic and Forward Looking policy document there is a commitment to increase the speed of the modernisation programme and adherence to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The Housing Capital Programme provides the catalyst to deliver many of the objectives in the Housing Business Plan. Failure to adequately maintain and improve the Council's housing stock may lead to the Council breaching Health & Safety regulations, poorer housing conditions in Aberdeen, and resulting in lower demand. Failure to deliver an effective programme will lead to tenant dissatisfaction.

6. REPORT

6.1 **Background**

The Housing Capital programme for this financial year amounts to £59.5 Million and is managed within the regulations set out in Part 7 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. This allows Councils to set their own borrowing limits, provided they comply with the Prudential Code. In general terms the programme is delivered by mainly private sector contractors through procurement exercises and administered by mainly in house construction professionals (Architects, Engineers, Quantity Surveyors, Inspectors and Liaison Officers).

6.2 **Current programme**

The current programme for 2009/10 is detailed below in abbreviated form. Fuller details are provided at Appendix 1.

The programme for the current financial year (2009/10), as approved by the Resources Management Committee on 10 March 2009, provides for £59.5m of expenditure. The main areas of expenditure are as follows:

1.	Below Tolerable Standard	£ 0.6 m
2.	Free from serious disrepair	£ 7.9 m
3.	Energy Efficient	£ 5.4 m
4.	Modernisation Programme (Kitchens/Bathrooms)	£ 21.6 m
5.	Health, Safety & Secure	£ 4.6 m
6.	Non Scottish Housing Quality Standard	£ 12.1 m
7.	Service Development	£ 0.5 m
8.	Service Expenditure (Fees)	£ 6.8 m

£ 59.5m

As part of the preparation for the 2010/11 the review of the programme is currently being undertaken is identifying how spend links to the Housing Business Plan, the New Build Programme; Regeneration; outstanding works to comply with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and how the costs are benchmarked with other Local Authorities on different areas of expenditure across the various elements of the programme eg spend on kitchens, bathrooms, windows and the like. This exercise will also benchmark the total amount of expenditure.

In addition there is a requirement to demonstrate clarity with regard to long term planned and cyclical maintenance and how this links to areas of both capital and revenue spend. The interim realignment of services has freed up resources to undertake this task.

- 6.3 The review has commenced and a programme and list of tasks being undertaken is appended to this report.

The review is being undertaken by the Framework Quantity Surveying Consultants, Robinson Low Francis under the direction of the Head of Service Housing Asset Management.

- 6.4 There has been continuing dialogue with the three framework contractors that currently carry out the framework contracts, mainly kitchen and bathroom upgrades. The review has concentrated around costs of service delivery, quality of the work, tenants satisfaction and contract programmes. The outcome of these findings will be reported along with the wider Housing Capital Programme review in October 2010.

6.5 **Provision of showers under the Housing Capital Framework Modernisation Programme**

On 30th September 2008 the Resources Management committee approved recommendations made in a report by the Head of Resources Development and Delivery entitled “Bathroom Choices in the Council’s Housing Modernisation Programme”.

The recommendations included the amendment of choices available under this programme to include the installation of over bath showers or the replacement of baths with shower cubicles. Level access showers would still only be installed if deemed necessary by the Occupational Therapy service.

The following table shows:

- a) the cost for each bathing option as reported on 30 September 2008
- b) the current cost for these options in standard property types
- c) the current cost for installing showers in multi storey flats

Options	Cost at 30/9/08	Current Cost	Multi Storey Cost
Bath with over bath shower	£1250	£890	£2260
Shower and cubicle	£2300	£2020	£3390
Level access shower	£2900	£2530	£3900

The increase in costs for the installation of all shower types in multi storey flats has risen since 30th September 2008 due to the requirement to fit existing hot water cylinders in flats with combination cylinders which allow us to overcome the problems of poor water pressure in these blocks which was outlined in the original report. These cylinders require to be fitted if we wish to continue to offer multi storey tenants any form of shower installation

6.6 Installation of shower cubicles

Adding shower cubicles to the bathing choices was proposed following consultation with tenants. However, since their introduction only **536** households from the 3500 properties modernised under the framework agreements have selected a shower cubicle.

The reasons for this may be:

Time taken for installation – It takes five days to fit a fully operational shower and cubicle against one day to fit a bath with over bath shower.

Use of waste pumps – Where the waste opening in an existing soil stack is at high level a waste pump is fitted to assist drainage. These pumps have been the cause of a number of complaints to date as tenants find them noisy.

Pump failures have also been caused as tenants are unfamiliar with their operation, though this could possibly be resolved through the provision of better instruction.

There is no requirement to fit these pumps where a tenant selects a bath with over bath shower.

Given all of the above it is proposed that shower cubicles should no longer be offered as a choice under the Housing modernisation programme and that tenants in general need housing should only be offered a bath with over bath shower.

6.7 Shower choices in sheltered housing accommodation

In addition to the above, it is proposed that consideration should be given to only installing level access showers in sheltered accommodation.

Since the inclusion of shower cubicles as an option for bathing facilities tenants in sheltered housing blocks have either selected a cubicle or been assessed by the Occupational therapist service as requiring level access showers. Only small numbers of tenants have opted for a bath with over bath shower. This is not surprising given the frailty of many tenants in sheltered housing properties.

It should be noted, however, that where bathrooms have concrete floors, this occurs mostly in multi storey blocks, it is necessary to install a small ramp at the entrance to the shower. Level access showers also require the installation of a waste pump.

Consultation on this proposal has been undertaken with both the Occupational Therapy service and the Extra Care Network recently and both groups have agreed that as that only fitting level access showers in sheltered housing accommodation would be beneficial.

Furthermore, this would greatly limit the need for Occupational Therapists to assess sheltered tenants through the modernization programme as we have already introduced the fitting of lever taps as standard in all types of accommodation.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Housing Capital Programme, Review of Outcomes – Housing and Environment 6 October 2009