

Report of the Assistant Director – Housing & Community Safety

**Investment in the redevelopment of Lincoln Court Independent Living Scheme.**

**Purpose of the report**

1. To seek Executive approval to deliver an enhanced re-development proposal for the Lincoln Court Independent Living Scheme. This report details the chronology of design work and professional advice that has informed this enhanced proposal and provides a rationale for why the scheme approved in March 2018 is no longer viable.

**Recommendations:**

2. The Executive is asked to:
  - a i) Approve Option 1, an enhanced proposal to deliver 35 high quality, future-proofed units of older persons' independent living accommodation including fifteen new build wheelchair accessible apartments and improved communal facilities. Delivery of this proposal will ensure the long term future of Lincoln Court whilst also contributing to the delivery of much needed additional older persons' accommodation in the West of the City.
  - a ii) To note that in approving Option 1 a commitment is made for alternative recreational facilities following community consultation including Sport England within Westfield Ward in mitigation for the loss of the Multi Use Games Area. The alternative facilities provided are to be agreed by Executive and will be subject to a further report and budget approval..
  - b) Request that Council approve the revised gross capital investment of £4.793m. This cost equates to £137k per unit of

accommodation which compares favourably to other older persons' accommodation schemes being delivered across the City.

c) Agree to delegate authority to the Director of Health Housing and Adult Social Care to appoint a contractor to carry out the works, subject to the project being deliverable within the available budget.

Reason: To secure the long term future of Lincoln Court and ensure that it will provide high quality accommodation for older people to help meet the increasing demand for accessible accommodation in the area.

### **Background Information**

3. York Supported Housing Strategy 2014-2019, published in 2013, sets out the Council's overarching vision to ensure the right supported housing options are available at the right time and in the right locations to support residents to live independently. This, the Council plan and the city's Health and Wellbeing Strategy drive the work of the older person's accommodation programme, to provide self contained apartment accommodation with communal facilities to enable independent living with the benefits of a close community and access to housing and care staff when needed.
4. There is evidence from reviews of Independent living and extra care schemes across the city and nationally that moving from inappropriate, multi level housing into purpose built accessible accommodation leads to increased independence and confidence and in many cases a reduction in the requirement for support from care services.
5. Lincoln Court, an independent living scheme in Westfield ward, last underwent a whole building modernisation in 1991, converting it from Aintree house which was originally built in 1966. There has been minimal investment in the scheme since its modernisation. There are a total of 26 homes: 22 one bedroom flats and 4 bedsits. Under the previous HRA planned investment programme the Lincoln Court flats were due to be modernised in the 2019-2020 year. The building has the highest current costs of similar schemes primarily because the bedsits can be difficult to let and the scheme has higher than average cost of operation as a result of aged mechanical and electrical plant. Investment is needed to address these issues.

6. There is high demand for independent living accommodation on the west of the city with many apartments receiving up to nineteen bids when they are advertised through the choice based lettings system. Applying national benchmarks to the level of provision in the city indicates that by 2030 the city is likely to have an under provision of around 800 independent living apartments.
7. On 15 March 2018 Executive agreed to invest £1.9m to deliver 8 new apartments and enhanced communal facilities for Lincoln Court in order to help to meet the need for additional older persons' accommodation in York. This was an estimated figure prior to understanding the detailed work required, this figure was also based on an incorrect square meter calculation of the scheme. One of the critical elements of the Lincoln Court scheme is the provision of a new energy efficient heating system for the apartments. This is due to the existing boiler being situated in the basement of Windsor House which will be demolished to provide a cleared site for the Centre of Excellence (CoE). Officers had previously anticipated that the new boiler plant could be connected to the existing pipe-work. However it is now clear that to ensure that the system is safe and robust, the pipe-work throughout the building will have to be replaced. Without this work the building would no longer be operational, resulting in the loss of 26 units.
8. Based on the experience of extending other schemes of older persons' accommodation officers had aimed to carry out the works in phases to avoid the need for residents to vacate the building. However following Health and Safety advice it is now clear that the demolition work at Windsor House, the refurbishment work and new apartment extension at Lincoln Court can not be carried out with the tenants remaining in the building. Support is being provided for tenants to help them move, to set up their new homes and to return (if they wish to) when the project is complete. The building will be vacated by 31 May 2019. Work is due to start on site in June 2019, and be completed in June 2020.
9. Following recent consultation with tenants and staff the decision has been taken to incorporate the modernisation of the existing flats into the main construction contract reducing the future disruption to the tenants. This will involve re-provision of the heating systems, a full rewire, and new kitchens and bathrooms.
10. A priority for the tenants at Lincoln Court was to have their windows replaced. During December approximately 60% of the apartment

windows were replaced with secure double glazed units. The remainder were to be fitted in January, however as the building is now to be vacated by the end of May 2019 tenants have chosen to defer the remainder of the work to avoid additional disruption. The remaining windows will be fitted during the redevelopment period.

11. The original scheme was designed to minimise impact on the existing tenants, with the majority of the new communal areas in the new build elements of the scheme. As the building is now going to be vacant during the works, further design work has been carried out to create a more integrated scheme. This revised design work demonstrates that learning from the Glen Lodge Extra Care scheme has been implemented. A key lesson from the Glen Lodge scheme was to recognise the importance of the integration of the existing and new wings of a building. There must be consideration of how both existing and new residents can orientate themselves within the building and how opportunities for social interaction between existing and new residents is encouraged through good design and interior layout. The revised location of the new communal lounge at Lincoln Court is an example of this learning being put into practice. A planning application for this revised scheme has been submitted.

## **Consultation**

- 14 The tenants have been consulted throughout the design stages and many of the detailed features have been developed in response to their feedback. Recent consultation has been carried out with tenants on the revised proposals to the scheme, and the design team are working on some minor amendments in response.
- 15 Officers have consulted tenants and ward councillors on the need to move out of their homes while the work is completed and will offer support and financial remuneration with this process.

## **Options**

- 16 **Option 1** -.The Executive is asked to approve the enhanced scheme design giving improved accommodation and communal facilities and revise the total budget for extending and undertaking a comprehensive refurbishment of Lincoln Court to £4.793m.

## Analysis

17 **Option 1** – The requirement for the tenants to vacate the building while the work is completed allows the opportunity to revisit the proposals and provide an improved scheme that demonstrates learning from previous projects. The new design and layout includes

- 15 new apartments.
- 20 fully refurbished existing apartments, refurbished to the standard of the new build.
- All of the new apartments have been designed to fully meet the access and living needs of wheelchair users. This is the first of the Council's independent living schemes to be developed specifically to meet the needs of wheelchair users.
- An improved location for the boiler room. This addresses tenants concerns about the previous location and reduces the pipe runs to the accommodation in the building.
- An improved location for the mobility buggy store, to support tenant's independence.
- The addition of a guest suite located on the first floor, to offer the opportunity for the family and friends of residents to stay overnight when visiting.
- Additional laundry capacity within the new extension.
- A larger, brighter and more central communal lounge area which better integrates the new and existing elements of the building.
- Photovoltaic cells on the building's roof to reduce utility costs.
- Improved security and fire safety measures throughout the building.
- Additional meeting room and consultation space to enable additional services to be provided within the building, better integrating the scheme within the local community.

- The contractor will be required to minimise disruption to local residents during the construction, have a traffic management plan and to engage with residents throughout the works.
- 18 This revised scheme has been submitted for planning and is due to be considered at Area Planning Sub Committee in March.
- 19 It is acknowledged that within this revised proposal there is an increase in the footprint of the proposed new build element which impacts on the remaining garden space. However this increase in footprint facilitates an increased number of accessible apartments in an area of high housing demand. In order to mitigate the effect of the loss of some external space the remaining hard and soft landscaping around the perimeter of Lincoln Court will be improved as part of the works in order to enable and encourage increased access to external space.
- 20 The proposed footprint of the extension will result in the loss of the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) adjacent to Lincoln Court. In order to mitigate the loss of this amenity space a commitment is made that alternative facilities will be provided at a suitable location within the Westfield Ward. Following the completion of construction works on both Lincoln Court and the Centre of Excellence the remaining land on which the MUGA is currently situated will be landscaped and returned to the community as open space. Further consultation with the ward councillors and the wider community over its future usage will be undertaken.
- 21 There is evidence from other Independent living and extra care schemes across the city that moving from inappropriate, multi level housing into purpose built accessible accommodation leads to increased independence and confidence and in many cases a reduction in the requirement for support from care services.

## 22 **Alternative Options**

The alternative options for this project have been considered and are outlined in Annex 1.

## **Council Objectives**

- 23 This approach ensures that the authority increases the number of independent living units in the city and ensures that the scheme is fit for purpose in the future.

- 24 This scheme also delivers on the Health & Wellbeing strategy theme of supporting people to *Age Well* in York. By providing affordable, purpose built properties in a community with a higher than average demand for social housing and a higher than average number of Homecare clients.

## Implications

- 25 The implications arising directly from this report are:

### Financial –

The revised budget for this project is split between modernisation & repairs & new build extension works, totalling £4.793m. Details of the financing of this scheme are shown below.

Due to the fundamental changes in the scheme, following detailed design works the scheme costs have increased from £1.922m agreed in March 2018 to £4.793m. The increase of £2.871m will need to be funded through a combination of additional use of Housing Capital Maintenance budgets and a further combination from the HRA Investment reserve. A breakdown of the costs are shown below along with the proposed financing.

	<b>Scheme Feb 2019</b>
	<b>£'m</b>
New build – additional apartments increased from 8 to 15 and enhanced communal facilities	2.295
Building refurbishment and maintenance which now includes a comprehensive refurbishment of the 20 remaining properties, this work includes for the reconfiguration of 4 bedsits into 2 one bedroom apartments	1.888
Environmental sustainable measures including photovoltaic cells for the building roof to reduce operating costs	0.06
Design, planning & project management costs	0.4

Temporary relocation costs to support tenants move out and return to Lincoln Court	0.15
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.793</b>
<b>Funded by</b>	
HRA Investment fund	2.208
RTB receipts	0.537
OPAP	0.1
One Planet York Budget	0.06
Major Repairs Reserve	1.888
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.793</b>

The increase in the modernisation works totalling £1,366k will be funded from the HRA modernisation budget; this will mean that future programmes of works may need to be re-profiled to future years to meet the budget requirement in 2019/20 for Lincoln Court.

The revised budget shortfall of £1,505k for the new units will be funded from £60k from the corporate provision for photovoltaic cells and £908k from the HRA investment reserve and £537k from 1-4-1 right to buy receipts.

The net increase of new units will generate £33k p.a in new rental income for the HRA Business Plan.

The £137k cost per unit of accommodation compares favourably with the £154k cost per unit at Glen Lodge and the estimated per unit cost at Marjorie Waite Court which is about to start on site.

The additional cost can be accommodated within the HRA Business plan.

**Human Resources** – none

**Equalities Implications** – A better decision making assessment has been completed and is attached at Annex 2. Highlights include:



- positive impacts of the scheme in providing safe warm housing for older people in the local area.
- provision of specialist accommodation to increase the independence of wheelchair users.
- environmental and cost benefits of the photovoltaic cells

Throughout the project opportunities will be taken to improve the ecological impact of the scheme and to maximise the local benefits of the scheme for the surrounding community.

**Legal Implications** – none.

## **Risk Management**

Project risks include:

Risk	Mitigations
The revised scheme fails to be granted planning approval.	Planning approval has been granted for the original scheme. This scheme offers an improved living environment taking into account lessons learnt from previous projects Tenants' views are reflected within the scheme.
The final costs from Sewell are not within the budget made available here.	Officers are continuing to work with the Contractor to ensure that the scheme meets the brief and reflects the available resources. Enabling works will start on site in the spring to ensure that the contractor will be able to start on site without delay. There is scope within the project brief for value engineering within the scheme. The budget figures quoted in this report contain contingency sums to ensure that any additional cost can be covered.
That the temporary move causes significant impact for tenants.	All tenants are being supported to identify their requirements and needs and all will be considered at monthly allocations panels. All tenants will have the opportunity to return to the new modernised Lincoln Court or to remain in their new property and therefore will not have to move twice.

### Contact Details

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	<b>Report Approved</b>	√	<b>Date</b> 7/3/19
<b>Wards Affected:</b> Westfield Ward			
For further information please contact the authors of the report			

Annex 1: Lincoln Court Re-Development Options

Annex 2: Better Decision Making Tool