

Report of the Head of Housing Services

Petition relating to the provision of double glazed windows

Summary

1. This report advises the Executive Member of the petition received relating to the provision of double glazed windows and provides an update on the current provision.

Background

2. A petition presented to Council on 3rd December 2009 with 133 signatories requests that council owned homes in the Monkton Road area be fitted with energy efficient double glazed windows.
 - 2.1 Investment in improving homes has been based on the national Decent Homes standard which covers both internal fixtures and fittings, i.e. kitchens, bathrooms etc, and external building elements such as windows and doors. For the internal elements the standard sets out what it terms 'reasonable modern facilities' and set out life expectancies for these facilities. For the external building elements the definition states that for a property to fail decent homes standard it has to have 'key building components that are old and, because of their condition, need replacing or major repair'. The key building component regarding windows is the window frame not the type of glazing. If the window frame is in a good state of repair, regardless of the type of glazing it does not fail the decent homes standard.
 - 2.2 The current housing capital programme, approved by members, is designed to ensure that 100% of the councils housing stock meets the government Decent Homes target by the end of 2010, within its own resources and thereby meeting the undertaking made to tenants when the decision was made to provide a retained housing management function. The council is on target to achieve the Decent Homes standard.
 - 2.3 The decision as to which properties have their windows replaced and which don't is based on the actual condition of the windows. This information forms part of the stock condition database and it is from this database that the capital programme is developed.

- 2.4 The windows in the homes in Monkton Road area are not the only ones that have not met the criteria for replacement. The council has approximately 8000 homes of which approximately 1900 do not have double glazing. Assuming an average cost £2,500 - £3,000¹ per home to replace the windows, the total cost to the council of double glazing all homes would be approximately £4.75m - £5.7m

Consultation

3. Consultation with customers was carried out as part of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Planning Process in 2006/7 where the priorities for investment were set out. No other consultation regarding the replacement of windows has been carried out.

Options

4. The petition is presented for the Executive Member's comments and consideration.

Analysis

5. A move away from the agreed capital programme to include the replacement of single glazed windows would, at this point in time, significantly deplete the balance on the housing revenue account and would precipitate a review of the HRA Business Plan and the council's ability to continue to directly maintain and manage the overall stock.
- 5.1 The properties in question were last painted and repaired in 2005/6 as part of the council's seven year painting programme and are due to be reassessed in 2012/13.
- 5.2 There are no particular reasons why the windows in these properties should be replaced as a one off programme compared to any other homes still with single glazing.
- 5.3 Within the petition it sets out that the provision of double glazing would result in a £130 per annum per household saving on energy bills and would reduce the level of CO2 from the heating system as a result of more fuel effective systems. These figures are roughly correct, based on a traditional family home. However, the Energy Savings Trust have stated that 'whilst double glazing does help make a household more energy efficient, the Energy Saving Trust believe there are a number of other measures that should be considered first before this. Loft and cavity wall insulation is much cheaper and provides more insulation to a home than double glazing'. The council properties in question have got cavity wall insulation and loft insulation.

¹ The 1900 homes is a combination of houses and flats, which results in a lower average cost than just replacing windows in traditional 3 bed family homes. The estimated cost per unit also assumes economies of scale as a result of tendering for works on a large contract.

- 5.4 The council will, following the outcome of the governments HRA Subsidy Review, be carrying out a review of its HRA Business plan. A key part of this review will be to assess the long term investment needs of the housing stock, including the replacement of single glazed windows. It is recommended that this issue be considered as part of that process so that an overall perspective is reached.

Corporate Priorities

- 6 The provision of warm affordable housing is set out within the council's corporate strategy under its Inclusive City & Sustainable City themes. This is further emphasised by the choice of National Indicator target 187, Reducing Fuel Poverty.

Implications

7. The implications arising from the report are:
- **Financial** - None
 - **Human Resources (HR)** - None
 - **Equalities** - None
 - **Legal** - None
 - **Crime and Disorder** - None
 - **Information Technology (IT)** - None
 - **Property** - None
 - **Other** - None

Risk Management

- 8 The risks associated with the proposals in this report are low and score less than 16. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy there are no direct risks.

Recommendations

9. That the Executive Member note the information in this report and consider the petition.

Reason: To ensure that a strategic planned approach is taken to reviewing the HRA Business Plan and stock investment decisions.

Contact Details

Author:

Steve Waddington
Head of Housing Services

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Bill Hodson
Director of Housing and Adult Social Services

Report Approved

Date 13th Jan 2010

Specialist Implications Officer(s) None

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes – None