

Item No. 19.	Classification: Open	Date: 19 September 2017	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Appointment of Keepmoat for Emergency Works at Ledbury Estate	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Stephanie Cryan, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing	

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR STEPHANIE CRYAN, DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING

In June the council became aware of thermal movement of the large concrete panels that make up the construction of the Ledbury Estate Tower blocks after the problem was raised by residents. This has caused widespread cracking which has led to the breakdown of compartmentation of fire safety.

In August we also took the decision to terminate the gas supply to the four tower blocks following concerns that the blocks would not be able to withstand a gas explosion. The council have asked Arup to undertake a full structural report on the tower blocks but until this has been completed we do need to undertake interim emergency works on the buildings.

This report asks cabinet to note that the council have appointed Keepmoat to undertake these works which include the upgrading of the landlords electrical supplies to facilitate the installation of immersion heaters to flats, and the installation of a district heating system to ensure that all residents have access to heating and hot water following the gas disconnection.

I would like to thank the residents in the tower blocks, The Ledbury Estate Tenants and Residents Association and the Ledbury Action Group for their patience and input during this difficult and distressing time and to reassure them that we are committed to resolving the problems with the structure of the buildings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That cabinet notes the appointment of Keepmoat for emergency works at the Ledbury Estate tower blocks.
2. That cabinet notes that a further report will come to cabinet later in the year, following the final structural report from Arup, detailing options for the towers going forward.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. Cabinet will be aware that thermal movement of the large concrete panels has led to cracking in the tower blocks on Ledbury Estate, which has meant the breakdown of the required compartmentation for fire safety. The council has been, and continues to be, very proactive in dealing with these issues and has undertaken a temporary filling solution to this problem.

4. The blocks have also had their gas supplies terminated as a precautionary measure due to recently identified potential structural issues should there be a gas explosion in the blocks.
5. In seeking an alternative heating and cooking solution, and to bring a sense of normality to residents' lives, officers considered a switch to full electric heating, hot water and cooking.
6. However, upon further investigation it was found that the local network and the block's electrical infrastructures do not have the capacity to quickly progress this solution.
7. Officers have now designed a district (communal) heating and hot water solution that can be installed and in operation by mid-October. This will mean that the blocks will have a temporary large boiler sited outside the block on the ground floor. Pipework will be run from these boilers to the blocks and then internally up the blocks and connected to the existing radiator and hot water circuit within each flat.

Current status

8. Keepmoat, as the area major works partnering contractor, has been engaged to undertake two critical pieces of work.
9. Firstly, they are upgrading the electrical rising mains in each block to enable the installation of immersion heaters to provide limited hot water now. This will also enable the quick purchase and distribution of electric standalone cookers. Residents have been offered a choice of three cookers, while those with built in electric ovens and gas hobs will be offered an electric hob only.
10. Secondly, they will be installing an officer designed district heating system to each of the four blocks, with the target of completion and in operation by mid-October.
11. Engineering colleagues are working with UKPN to upgrade, where possible, the local supply network.
12. Arup have delivered their first report, which confirms what they advised by letter on 10th August - that they consider the blocks unsuitable for a piped gas supply. They also advise that the blocks are unsuitable for other gas, i.e. bottled.
13. Arup will continue with their investigations throughout the blocks, and will submit a further report at the end of November which will detail the level of strengthening during and post construction, any further strengthening required, costing and building life expectancy information.
14. Officers will present a further detailed report to cabinet following the next Arup report, setting out options for future work on the estate.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Stephanie Cryan, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing	
Lead Officer	Gerri Scott, Strategic Director of Housing and Modernisation	
Report Author	David Markham, Director of Asset Management	
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CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
Head of Procurement	No	No
Director of Law and Democracy	No	No
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		6 September 2017