

Item No. 8.	Classification: Open	Date: 16 July 2019	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Ledbury Towers Update	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		Old Kent Road	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Kieron Williams, Housing Management and Modernisation	

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR KIERON WILLIAMS CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND MODERNISATION

In June 2017 the council became aware of cracks appearing in homes in the Ledbury Estate tower blocks caused by the thermal movement of the large concrete panels that make up the construction of the blocks. This widespread cracking had led to the breakdown of compartmentation of fire safety. Concerns were also raised about the structural integrity of the tower blocks.

Since then the council has worked closely with tenants and homeowners to ensure residents are safe and to secure the future of the estate. On 30 October 2018, following detailed consultation on possible options, Cabinet agreed proposals for the four high rise blocks to be refurbished and for new homes to be built on the land immediately adjacent to those blocks.

Before proceeding with this refurbishment the council engaged the structural engineers Arup to carry out intrusive investigations into the structure of Bromyard House in order to confirm the work needed to make the blocks safe. Arup are due to complete this survey in the next few weeks.

This report updates on progress with that survey and sets out the council's commitment to both full transparency in publishing the final survey report as soon as it is completed and to immediately meeting residents and homeowners to discuss the detailed findings of the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for the Cabinet

1. That Cabinet note the latest position with the Ledbury towers.
2. That Cabinet agree that the final report due from Arup on the investigations be published upon receipt.

Recommendation for The Leader of the Council

3. That any actions required by Southwark Council in response to the Arup report be delegated to the cabinet member for housing management and modernisation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. Cabinet received reports on the response to the emergency situation on the Ledbury Estate on 19 September 2017, 12 December 2017 and 6 February 2018.
5. On 30 October 2018, Cabinet received a report on the outcome of the option appraisal process to develop new build options to be considered alongside refurbishment options. At that meeting, the cabinet agreed:
 - 5.1 To note the results of the options appraisal carried out for the Ledbury Estate high rise blocks.
 - 5.2 That the four high rise blocks should be refurbished and that land immediately adjacent to those blocks be used to build new homes in accordance with the council plan which guarantees development on council housing land have at least 50% council rented homes and ensure a right to return for council tenants and resident leaseholders so local people can stay in the borough they call home.
 - 5.3 That the refurbishment of Bromyard proceed using the existing partnering contract with Engie. The rest of the project proceed using existing frameworks or the partnering contract, the new contractor framework if in place, or a traditional procurement route, all activities to be run concurrently to ensure all homes can be provided as soon as possible.
6. The blocks are large panel system construction, built by Taylor Woodrow between 1968 and 1970 and are former GLC properties which transferred to Southwark Council in 1982. There are four 14-storey towers (Bromyard, Peterchurch, Skenfrith and Sarnsfield) comprising of 56 homes each on the Ledbury Estate. There are 224 properties in total, 76 one-bedroom, 72 two-bedroom and 76 three-bedroom.
7. Of the 190 council tenanted homes, 164 are now empty homes as a sizeable number have taken the option to be re-housed. 12 of the 34 leasehold properties are also empty, as the council has bought them back from the leaseholders concerned. The split between blocks is as follows:
 - Bromyard House – 55 empty
 - Peterchurch House – 47 empty
 - Sarnsfield House – 37 empty
 - Skenfrith House – 37 empty

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

8. Before proceeding with the refurbishment options, Arup, the structural engineers were engaged by Southwark Council to carry out intrusive investigations into the structure of Bromyard House in order to confirm the design for the strengthening works.
9. Bromyard House was chosen for these pilot works as it was the block with most empty properties. Five households have been moved temporarily from Bromyard House to the other Towers to allow this work to take place.
10. Internal works to the flats at Bromyard has required them to be stripped of

asbestos, and then all the fixtures and fittings. Further work has then taken place to remove the floor screed and plasterwork to expose the original panels and the existing joints.

11. Similar works are taking place in the communal areas of Bromyard House although this has been delayed due to the legal complications of moving out the last remaining leaseholder at Bromyard House. Officers understand that the move is imminent.
12. In addition to these works, Arup have also undertaken checks to the foundations of Bromyard House. Two trial pits have been dug at Bromyard House in three separate locations to allow the investigations to be carried out. These were found to be inconclusive and as a result five internal checks of the foundations have had to be commissioned. These checks began in the week commencing 17 June 2019 and the outcome will be included in Arup's final report.
13. Additional reports into the drainage, sound insulation and location of services has been undertaken. The CCTV survey on the drainage is now available and identifies where the pipes need to be cleaned through and where work is necessary to repair cracks or displaced joints. The Sound Insulation Report is available and shows that the sound insulation is poor. Therefore the works to the blocks need to include sound insulation to bring them up to modern standards and some of this was already included in the options appraisal report undertaken by CalfordSeadon last year.

Policy implications

14. The recommendations proposed confirm Southwark's commitment to openness and transparency with residents of the Ledbury Towers by sharing with them the findings of the Arup report on the works required to strengthen the Towers.

Community impact statement

15. The refurbishment and redevelopment of the Ledbury Estate High Rise Blocks will have an overall positive impact on the local community and will have beneficial impacts for those with Protected Characteristics in the local area including:
 - Providing new (much needed) residential units for social rent and private sale, in a borough which has a substantial housing need. While income is not a Protected Characteristic, it is often a characteristic that is shared by multiple groups with Protected Characteristics, and so the opportunity that the development provides to secure new, high quality, social rented homes to existing residents is of benefit. Most notably, BAME groups and older people often live in low-income households.
 - The quality of the new and refurbished homes provided will have a range of positive impacts on equality; including disabled accessibility and adaptability of the new homes.
 - The new homes will also be better insulated, supporting a higher standard of living.

- The provision of new homes will help to ease problems of overcrowding in the local area which can cause particular issues for those who are pregnant or have young children and who are likely to come from BAME groups where larger family sizes are more common.
 - The newly developed homes will also be more sustainable and energy efficient. The benefit of this will be a potential reduction in the level of residents' energy bills.
 - The commitment to right to return for all residents gives the opportunity for the community to stay together if they so wish.
16. Our council's vision is to create a fairer future for all in Southwark and procurement of works and services will give an opportunity to deliver value for money and high quality services. Any contractor selected for the works will be expected to sign up to the councils Fairer Future Procurement Strategy.
17. All works options will create significant opportunities for apprenticeships and jobs for local people. Any contractor selected for the works will have to ensure all workers are paid at least London Living Wage (LLW) and they will have to as a minimum provide a one year apprenticeship opportunity or equivalent for each £1m contract spend. Contracts will also be required to operate only with the safest haulage companies, which conform to the London Cycling Campaign's Safer Lorries conditions.

Resource implications

18. An indicative sum of £35m has been utilised for the purposes of financial modeling a capital programme for works at Ledbury Estate. Any funding allocations would be subject to normal council protocols.

Consultation

19. A dedicated webpage www.southwark.gov.uk/ledburytowers has been set up where all information has been posted, including all letters to residents and the weekly newsletters that commenced in September 2017. Copies of all the reports from Arup and copies of Fire Risk Assessments are available on this website. Ward councilors are also receiving weekly updates.
20. There has been extensive consultation provided to residents in the high rise blocks. Residents on the estate have been receiving a weekly newsletter.
21. A Ledbury Resident's Project Group has been set up comprising a mixture of residents and former residents of the Towers, and residents from the low-rise blocks on the Estate meets monthly, to allow detailed input in to the design and consultation processes, including input in to the selection process of Hunters to carry out the options appraisal. The residents' project group includes residents active in the Ledbury Tenants and Residents Association (TRA). The Resident Project Group have an independent residents advisor, Open Communities, who have acted as independent and expert support for residents since the start of the decanting and options appraisal process.
22. Upon receipt of the Arup report a meeting will be convened for the Ledbury Resident Project Group; newsletters will be issued to all residents of the Estate

and those tenants who have moved and have the right to return; the report will be published on the Ledbury webpage; printed copies of the report will be available in the Ledbury Team for residents who do not have access to IT; and a public meeting will also be convened.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Democracy

23. In continuing to develop the plans for Ledbury Towers, the council should consult all relevant parties on options before reaching decisions. Consultation undertaken by the council must meet a minimum standard of fairness if it is to be considered lawful. In order to ensure any consultation is fair, the law requires that consultation should happen when the proposals are still at a formative stage; sufficient information should be given to enable the proposal to be intelligently considered; adequate time for responses should be given; and decision makers must conscientiously take into account responses to consultation when the ultimate decision is taken. These principles should be applied at all stages of the consultation process.
24. The cabinet must continue to take into account the public sector equality duty (PSED) general duty under the Equality Act 2010 when making decisions in relation to the Ledbury, and specifically to have regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct, (b) to advance equality of opportunity and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. The relevant characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Where any disproportionate effects are anticipated, the council should seek to mitigate where possible. The PSED general duty is a continuing duty and the impact of plans for the Ledbury should be considered as they progress. Cabinet is referred to the community impact statement in the report, which sets out the consideration that has been given to equalities issues to date.
25. As to recommendation 3, pursuant to Part B of the council's constitution, the Leader is able to delegate decision making to an individual cabinet member

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance (Ref: H&M 19/029)

26. The strategic director of finance and governance notes the contents of the report. There are no specific financial implications arising at this juncture, pending the outcome of the intrusive investigation being undertaken by Arup on Bromyard House, which will better inform the process going forward. All costs associated with the Ledbury Estate continue to be met from the Housing Revenue Account.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Cabinet report: Appointment of Keepmoat for emergency works at Ledbury Estate 19 September 2017 (Item 19)	Constitutional Team, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Everton Roberts 020 7525 7221
Link: http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=302&MId=5751&Ver=4		
Cabinet report: Ledbury Estate – Arup structural survey report. 12 December 2017 (item 17)	Constitutional Team, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Everton Roberts 020 7525 7221
Link: http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=302&MId=5753&Ver=4		
Cabinet report: Ledbury Estate – next steps update. 6 February 2018 (item 8)	Constitutional Team, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Everton Roberts 020 7525 7221
Link: http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=302&MId=5755&Ver=4		
Cabinet report: The way forward: Ledbury Estate high rise blocks 30 October 2018 (item 14)	Constitutional Team, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Everton Roberts 020 7525 7221
Link: http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=302&MId=6085&Ver=4		
Overview and Scrutiny report: Ledbury Estate update. 15 November 2017 (item 6)	Overview and Scrutiny Team 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Shelley Burke 020 7525 7344
Link: http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=308&MId=5794&Ver=4		
Overview and Scrutiny report: Ledbury Estate – Management Responses to recommendations of the Independent Review of the Ledbury 23 July 2018 (Item 4)	Overview and Scrutiny Team 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Shelley Burke 020 7525 7344
Link: http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=308&MId=6162&Ver=4		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Kieron Williams, Housing and Modernisation	
Lead Officer	Michael Scorer, Strategic Director of Housing and Modernisation	
Report Author	Mike Tyrrell, Director for Ledbury Estate	
Version	Final	
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Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		5 July 2019