

Item No. 19a.	Classification: Open	Date: 29 October 2019	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Ledbury Towers Arup Structural Survey Report	
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

We have now received an important report on the work required to give the Ledbury Estate tower blocks a fifty plus year life. This update for cabinet sets out the findings of that report, the steps we have already taken to share the findings with residents and the next steps we will take to work with residents to secure the future of the estate.

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 to confirm the work needed to give the towers a further 50 plus years of life.

Arup's report was received on Thursday 24 October 2019 and was shared with residents and homeowners on the same day and I attended a public meeting on the estate at which Arup were present to present their findings and respond to questions raised by residents.

As the works identified by Arup are more extensive than those previously proposed, it is recommended that the work required is costed and that the results are used to reopen the options appraisal process in full consultation with both current residents of the estate and former residents of the towers who have the right to return to them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That cabinet note the latest position with the Ledbury Towers.
2. That cabinet note that as agreed at their meeting on 16 July 2019 the final report due from Arup on the investigations was published upon receipt.
3. That cabinet agree that the options appraisal process on the future of the

Ledbury Towers be reopened and receives a further report setting out the outcome of the resident consultation on the options appraisal process.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. Cabinet received reports on the response to the emergency situation on the Ledbury Estate on 19 September 2017, 12 December 2017, 6 February 2018 and 16 July 2019.
5. 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.
6. 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 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; subject to further investigations into the strengthening solutions.
7. Of the 190 council tenanted homes, 165 are now empty homes as a sizeable number have taken the option to be re-housed. 13 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 – All the properties are now vacant
 - Peterchurch House – eight properties remain occupied as we have 48 voids
 - Sarnsfield House – 19 properties remain occupied as we have 37 voids. Three properties are occupied by residents temporarily moved from Bromyard House
 - Skenfrith House – 19 properties remain occupied as we have 37 voids. Three properties are occupied by residents temporarily moved from Bromyard House.
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. Bromyard House was chosen for these pilot works as it was the block with most empty properties. Seven households have been moved temporarily from Bromyard House to allow this work to take place.
9. 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. Similar works have taken place in the communal areas of Bromyard House. In addition to these works, Arup have also undertaken checks to the foundations of Bromyard House. Additional reports into the drainage, sound insulation and location of services has been undertaken.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

10. The Arup report on the works required to strengthen the blocks to give them at least a 50 year life was received on Thursday 24 October 2019 and is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
11. The recommendations in the Arup report include:
 - A new frame for the block from the 8th to 13th floor, held together by a new structure on the roof. The frame will be made up of steel columns and beams built inside the flats, and this would mean that rooms would be smaller when residents return to their homes after the refurbishment works are completed.
 - The floors of each flat are strengthened, which will reduce the ceiling height in each property.
 - A new foundation is cast over the existing foundation to the block.
 - The external panels have their outer leaves replaced with a lighter version and at the same time replacing the polystyrene insulation with a different form of insulation.
 - The non loading bearing partitions (for example the walls between the kitchens and living rooms) will need to be replaced with lighter partitions.
 - The stair and lift tower will need to be demolished and replaced.
12. These recommendations for extensive works have been made to give the blocks a further 50 year life. The blocks currently remain safe for residents due to the mitigations that have been put in place, which include the removal of gas, the presence of the 24 hour waking watch, and the physical protection around the block.
13. The recommendations from Arup will have to be costed and it is clear that this will have a negative effect on the current estimated costs of around £8 million per block.
14. It is therefore recommended that the options appraisal process is reopened for the Ledbury Towers with the options informed by the revised costings of the recommendations from the Arup Report.

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 council's 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 modelling 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 councillors 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 was held with the Ledbury Resident Project Group; a newsletter has been issued to all residents of the Estate and those tenants who have moved and have the right to return; a visit took place on 25 October 2019 to all the vulnerable residents in the blocks to explain the recommendations from the report; the report has been published on the Ledbury webpage; printed copies of the report are available in the Ledbury Team for residents who do not have access to IT; and a public meeting was held on 24 October 2019.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Democracy

23. The reopening of the options appraisal will engage the council's consultation duties in section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 in respect of its secure tenants likely to be substantially affected by a matter of housing management and, under general administrative legal requirements, in respect of others likely to be affected by the outcome.
24. To meet legal requirements consultation must be undertaken when proposals are still at a formative stage. The consultation must include sufficient reasons for the proposals to allow interested parties the opportunity to consider the proposals and formulate a response; it must allow adequate time for interested parties to consider proposals and formulate their response and the outcome of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is taken on the proposals. The consultation plan should be reviewed at key stages of development of the proposals.
25. The cabinet's attention is drawn to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 which requires the council when carrying out its functions and when making decisions to have regard 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, or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The duty also applies to marriage and civil partnership but only in relation to (a). The cabinet is referred to the community impact statement in this report setting out the consideration that has been given to equality issues which should be considered when approving the recommendations in this report.
26. Officers will need to keep the PSED in mind during the consultation process, during development of plans on the future of the Ledbury and when formulating recommendations to cabinet for final decision making. Members must have due regard to the duty when the matter is referred back to cabinet following consultation.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance

27. The strategic director of finance and governance notes the contents of this report. The recommendations proposed do not give rise to any financial implications as this stage, pending completion of the options appraisal process on the future of the Ledbury Towers. All costs associated with the Ledbury Estate continue to be met from the Housing Revenue Account.

REASONS FOR URGENCY

28. The report from Arup, the structural engineers working on the recommendations to strengthen the Ledbury Towers was received on Thursday 24 October 2019.
29. The cabinet had made a previous commitment to residents of the Ledbury Towers that all such reports will be shared with residents on receiving them. The report was shared with residents on 24 October 2019 and residents would want to know what action the council will now be taking following its receipt.
30. The recommendations from Arup have significantly changed since their November 2017 report and this will require the options appraisal to be reopened. Delaying the reopening of the options appraisal process until after the next cabinet meeting, will in turn delay the opportunity for residents to be consulted about the future of their homes.

REASONS FOR LATENESS

31. It has not been possible to circulate this report five clear days in advance of the meeting because the report from Arup was only received on Thursday 24 October 2019, and this was the first opportunity.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Cabinet reports: Appointment of Keepmoat for emergency works at Ledbury Estate. 19 September 2017	Constitutional Team, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Paula Thornton 020 7525 4395
Web link: http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ielistDocuments.aspx?CId=302&MId=5751&Ver=4 (Item 19)		
Ledbury Estate – next steps update. 6 February 2018	Constitutional Team, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Paula Thornton 020 7525 4395
Web link: http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ielistDocuments.aspx?CId=302&MId=5755&Ver=4 (Item 8)		
Ledbury Estate – Arup structural survey report. 12 December 2017	Constitutional Team, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Paula Thornton 020 7525 4395

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Web link: http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s72761/Report%20Southwark%20Councils%20Buy-Back%20Offer%20for%20Ledbury%20Towers%20Leaseholders.pdf		
The way forward: Ledbury Estate high rise blocks. 30 October 2018	Constitutional Team, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Paula Thornton 020 7525 4395
Web link: http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ielistdocuments.aspx?CId=302&MId=6085&Ver=4 (Item 14)		
Ledbury Towers Update. 16 July 2019	Constitutional Team, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Paula Thornton 020 7525 4395
Link (please copy and paste into your browser): http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s83830/Report%20Ledbury%20Towers%20Update.pdf		
Overview and Scrutiny reports – Ledbury Estate update. 15 November 2017.	Overview and Scrutiny Team. 160 Tooley Street	Shelley Burke 020 7525 7344
Web link: http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ielistdocuments.aspx?CId=308&MId=5794&Ver=4 (Item 6)		
Ledbury Estate – Management Responses to recommendations of the Independent Review of the Ledbury. 23 July 2018	Overview and Scrutiny Team. 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Shelley Burke 020 7525 7344
Web link: http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ielistdocuments.aspx?CId=308&MId=6162&Ver=4 (Item 4)		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	London Borough of Southwark – Ledbury Estate Tower Blocks. Pilot Investigation and Strengthening Study

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Kieron Williams, Housing Management and Modernisation		
Lead Officer	Michael Scorer, Strategic Director of Housing and Modernisation		
Report Author	Mike Tyrrell, Director for Ledbury Estate		
Version	Final		
Dated	24 October 2019		
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
	List other officers here		
	Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
	Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		24 October 2019