

Report of Director of Environment and Housing

Report to Executive Board

Date: 19 October 2016

Subject: High Rise Strategy

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

High rise housing is a substantial part of Council Housing in Leeds, with over 7500 households living in 116 blocks across the city. Housing Leeds faces a number of challenges linked to high rise flats, including investment need, energy efficiency, community safety, under-occupation, communal and grounds maintenance, day to day management issues, refuse and recycling. The citywide high rise project was established to address these issues and develop a coordinated, strategic plan to tackle them and make high rise a more attractive prospect for tenants.

Whilst the majority of people living in our multi storey blocks are satisfied, the aim of the High Rise Strategy is to recognise specific needs that are not currently being met. This paper sets out the approach Housing Leeds are taking to achieve this, including more proactive housing management, a clear investment strategy for improving the blocks and a number of initiatives being piloted across the city to help deliver a step change in tenant satisfaction across our high rise blocks.

In developing a new approach we have explored a range of housing management models for different types of block to ensure the needs of all tenants and the service as a whole are met. We have looked at the full range of accommodation on offer across the city, and developed a number of proposals for the future management of our high rise stock that are set out in this paper.

This report proposes that over and above improvements to the standard offer to the majority of blocks, the council develops and invests in three specific models for the future management of high rise blocks:

- Family Friendly blocks: proposing a number of practical steps we can take which can improve the position for families in our blocks, strengthening their choices and significantly improving conditions in blocks where there is already a high level of children present;
- Enhanced support for blocks with low levels of satisfaction, offering improved security and support;
- A retirement plus model offering targeted management and investment in a number of blocks to maximise choice to enable older tenants to live independently for as long as possible in their existing home and avoid the need for them to move.

These models and investment plan will be continually reviewed to ensure that they are meeting the needs of tenants and the service.

The report also sets out initiatives to address common sources of dissatisfaction, including the improvement of heating systems, improved cleaning and refuse collection regimes and responses to anti-social behaviour. The report sets out the Council's current investment commitments.

Recommendations

Members of Executive Board are asked to:

- Agree that Housing Leeds implements the housing management models and approaches detailed in section 3.1 - Family Friendly, Enhanced support model, Retirement/Retirement plus.
- Approve the proposed changes to the lettings framework for high rise, namely:
 - Restrict lettings to applicants with children (and access rights) in high rise blocks which are deemed unsuitable for children;
 - Restrict Lettings to high rise flats for 16 and 17 year olds;
 - Awarding families with children choosing to move to family friendly blocks priority to move, flagging them for a direct offer of accommodation and backdating their priority and direct let status to the date of their original acceptance on the housing register should they wish to move, giving them additional preference on the housing register.
- Approve the council's approach in developing a 10 year investment strategy for high rise.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To update Executive Board on progress of the High Rise project, and set out a number of proposals to the future management of high rise blocks.

2 Background information

- 2.1 A high rise project group was established to investigate the issues and to develop a strategy for high rise housing. Full time project management was put in place from April 2015 to drive this work forward. A Project Board was established to provide strategic leadership to deliver the identified outcomes.
- 2.2 The central objective of the High Rise Project is to develop a strategy for High Rise in Leeds, defining the future role and vision, and developing a clear, long term investment strategy.
- 2.3 Significant work has also been undertaken to improve high rise profiling information and each block now has a 'block on a page' profile, detailing key information as well as further detailed analysis based around clusters of blocks that share similar issues and profiles.
- 2.4 The High Rise Group (a city-wide tenant group) have been involved throughout the project to determine the best way to involve tenants at each stage. The High Rise Group commissioned a tenant survey to gauge the views of all high rise tenants to inform the overall evidence base.
- 2.5 Nearly a third of tenants (31% or 2,374 responses) responded to the survey, and a number of issues and themes were identified which have guided the proposals in this report. The survey reflects that while a number of blocks require change and improvement, on the whole, high rise tenants are satisfied and positive about their experience.

3 Main issues

3.1 Housing Management

- 3.1.1 There is a public misconception and stigma attached to high rise accommodation which does not reflect reality in the majority of our high rise flats. Leeds has invested significantly in improving high rise blocks over the last 10 years and high rise can be seen to work very successfully. High rise tenants report high levels of satisfaction on the whole, in many cases much higher than satisfaction across the rest of our stock. However, there are clearly challenges that need to be addressed and a number of blocks where issues are concentrated, and tenant satisfaction is extremely low. Blocks with the same construction type and level of investment can be seen to have stark differences in tenant satisfaction levels, highlighting the fact that we need to look at the management of these blocks alongside additional investment to meet the challenges faced.
- 3.1.2 The ultimate goal for the project is to make high rise somewhere people choose to live. To achieve this we need to have a more proactive housing management approach to ensure that management issues are dealt with quickly and efficiently.
- 3.1.3 We are proposing different housing management models in different types of block to ensure the needs of all tenants and the service as a whole are met. In exploring the range of options, consideration was given to the full range of

accommodation on offer across the city, to ensure that the proposals for high rise fit in with the wider availability of housing. These are set out below.

Housing Management Model proposals for High Rise

- 3.1.4 It is proposed that each of the 116 high rise blocks in Leeds will be supported by the most appropriate management models detailed below, which will be identified locally, and will change over time as the issues/needs in each block evolve. Housing Leeds will work with strategic tenant groups and local tenants to ensure that the management models put in place address local needs and help drive an improvement in the quality of life for tenants.

Standard housing management model for High Rise

- 3.1.5 A new standard housing management model will be developed across the city, offering a different approach in the way we manage our high rise properties above and beyond what is currently offered. This will be supported through agreed service standards for cleaning in the blocks, targeted tenant involvement, and improved partnership working with other council services to ensure we maximise the service on offer to all our customers. The standard housing management offer will include:

- Monthly block inspections undertaken by the relevant Housing Officer, to flag up any issues within external/communal areas, with tenant involvement where possible. (Currently being developed)
- Targeted training for housing officers in the management of flats/communal areas;
- Proactive repairs service to better ensure that we deal with issues before they become bigger problems;
- Number of other initiatives, subject to successful pilots, for example, the development of a virtual concierge service, waste management review, and bulky waste pilot which are all referred to later in this report.

- 3.1.6 The vast majority of the city's 116 blocks will fall into this management model, which will be periodically reviewed to ensure it is meeting the needs of tenants and the service.

- 3.1.7 Beyond the standard offer there will be a number of blocks where we target a different housing management approach, with targeted investment and a different approach to managing the blocks. There will be three management models beyond the standard model which are detailed below.

Family Friendly Management Model

- 3.1.8 There are currently 834 children of school age living in 538 high rise flats in the city. (Taken from current benefit claimant data, August 2016).
- 3.1.9 There are many reasons for families living in high rise blocks. Some tenants move in without children but go on to have them and remain in situ. Equally, however, in some parts of the city, where there are few houses available within the area, tenants may choose a flat because of family support networks, access to services or strong community links. Whilst many may choose a flat out of necessity, there is evidence that some tenants,

particularly those originating from countries where high rise living is more common, actively choose to live in this type of accommodation.

- 3.1.10 At present, the main lettings policy allows offers of high rise accommodation to be made to families with dependent children, subject to age restrictions applying through local lettings policies. In all cases, the family will have actively chosen to bid for the property. The Council does not seek to discharge its duty to accommodate by making a direct offer of a high rise flat.
- 3.1.11 In circumstances where a local lettings policy restricts children being rehoused at sign up, Housing Leeds will award priority for a family living at height where the tenant applies for a move. There is no action the Council can take to remove someone with children, in the absence of a breach of the tenancy agreement. In the case where a tenant has chosen to move into a flat where no local lettings policy applies, at present there is no priority given to allow them to move.

Demand

- 3.1.12 There are simply not enough family houses to meet the demand of families in Leeds. Of the 24,439 households currently on the Leeds Homes Register, 7743 have one or more dependent children. When you look at 2 bed needs, there are 4124 families currently registered as having a 2 bed need (of 6732 on LHR). The demand is starker when you look at particular wards.
- 3.1.13 There are children living in almost all of our high rise blocks. The highest concentration of families in multi storeys, however, is within Burmantofts and Little London. 70% of children living at height in Leeds are concentrated in these two wards. The concentration reflects the lack of realistic alternatives for those wishing to live in the area. For example, so far this year, just 44 two bedroom houses, 13 x 3 bedroom houses and no 4 bedroom houses became available to let in the Burmantofts and Richmond Hill Ward, while there are currently 527 applications for 2 bed plus needs in the Burmantofts Housing Office area, 440 of which have one or more children under 16 years old. Inevitably people opt to live in flats.

Problems for Children Living at Height

- 3.1.14 There are a number of issues relating to children at height. The safety of children, particularly where there are open balconies, is always a concern. Some of our multi storeys have poor heating systems, with knock on effects for health. Some blocks have persistent issues with anti-social behaviour and crime, which make them particularly unsuitable places to bring up children. Despite the large numbers of children in some blocks, because they have not been acknowledged as places for families, there is no play provision. The lack of sound insulation in many blocks can also be a source of conflict between families and other tenants, with noise issues cutting both ways. The proposals outlined in this paper, and the supporting investment plan are aimed at tackling these problems but there will remain some blocks that for a number of reasons will remain unsuitable for families with young children, and we will seek to ensure that families are not housed in these blocks.

Approach in other cities

3.1.15 There are very few local authorities/large housing associations that have a policy of no children at height. Other cities such as Manchester, Nottingham and Sheffield have no restrictions on children living in high rise. Of the other areas we asked only Northwards Housing, in North Manchester, and South Tyneside had restrictions in place, with Northwards Housing having no demand issues for their properties meaning these restrictions do not impact lettings to families, and South Tyneside restricting children to a maximum of four storeys.

3.1.16 As demand increases for limited housing supply, this position is increasingly becoming prevalent, with a number of housing associations/Local Authorities which previously had a no children at height policy, reversing those restrictions to enable them to meet the housing need. (Salix in Salford have recently removed restrictions from February 2016 for example.)

Way forward: Developing a family friendly approach

3.1.17 Although most would agree that it would be desirable to be able to offer suitable houses to all families in housing need, the reality is that the Council is not realistically able to do so in all parts of the city. In practice, there are many children living in our high rise but our policies and investment strategies do not reflect this. There are a number of practical steps we can take which can improve the position for families in our blocks, strengthening their choices and practically improving conditions. The proposals are set out below.

Lettings Policy

3.1.18 The council will not make a direct offer of a high rise flat to discharge its duty to accommodate a family. Furthermore, it is proposed that where families choose to move into multi storey accommodation they would be awarded priority if they wish to move, backdated to their original acceptance on the housing register. This will help ensure that families do not feel permanently disadvantaged by making a pragmatic choice to move into a high rise flat.

3.1.19 Whilst the powers of the Council to remove families from wholly unsuitable blocks against their will is limited, it is proposed that there is a wider application of restrictions to new tenants with families, beyond those currently limited by age restrictions. In particular, it is proposed that blocks which are deemed an unsuitable environment for children due to persistent issues of crime and anti-social behaviour or risk posed by other tenants, will have restrictions in place through the Lettings Policy preventing children being rehoused there.

Investment in selected blocks

3.1.20 Based on an assessment of the highest concentrations of children at present, it is proposed to develop an investment strategy for selected blocks which addresses the particular problems faced by families. The investment would be made in the following areas:

- Enclosing private balconies;
- Lockable restrictors on all windows;
- Enhanced security measures (controlled access, enhanced CCTV, secure doors);

- Affordable heating;
- Communal play facilities.

3.1.21 We would also look at properties when they become void to see how we could make them more suitable for family living, such as opening up the kitchen and living room to create a more family centred living space, as well as flooring and storage options.

3.1.22 Over and above the physical investment, it is proposed to develop a tailored management approach that better meets the needs of families. Housing Leeds would work closely with Children's Services to develop a better support model and ensure the management of the blocks meets the needs of families. An enhanced Annual Home Visit would ensure any additional support needs are identified. All AHVs now include a question around children at height so we can ensure we have accurate/up to date information.

3.1.23 ***The family friendly block management model will offer:***

- Intensive housing management approach that better meets the needs of families. Housing Leeds would work closely with Children's Services and other agencies to develop a better support model and ensure the management of the blocks meets the needs of families;
- Enhanced Annual Home Visit to identify any additional support needs;
- Clear lettings policy;
- Additional targeted investment in the blocks as detailed above.

Family Friendly block next steps

3.1.24 An assessment has been undertaken of all accommodation in each area to determine demand for this type of model and develop proposals for undertaking a pilot scheme. Subject to Executive Board approval, we are proposing to pilot the approach in the Appletons and Saville Green blocks in Burmantofts and Richmond Hill ward. These blocks already have secure perimeter fencing and traffic calming measures in place. Each have 18-20 large three bedroom properties, plenty of outside space and good access to transport, schools and other play facilities in the area. The layout of the blocks allows us to invest in a small community of blocks to see how the model works.

3.1.25 Should Executive Board agree to go ahead, investment would be targeted at:

- Enhanced security – including controlled access and CCTV;
- Enhanced play facilities within the grounds;
- Enclosing rear private balconies to the properties;
- An enhanced lettable standard, including opening up the kitchen and living room to make them more appropriate for family use, and enhanced storage.

3.1.26 Other blocks where it is proposed that this model could be adopted are Roxby Close, Grantham Towers, Lindsey Mount, Marston Mount (Burmantofts and Richmond Hill ward). A rolling programme of investment will feature in the Council HRA business plan. There are also a significant number of children living in the Lovell Parks blocks in the Hyde Park and Woodhouse ward which have their own tenancy management issues. We are looking at the best way to intensify support to these blocks to make them safer and a more suitable

environment for the families already living in those blocks.

3.1.27 **Enhanced Support management model**

3.1.28 We are proposing that in a small number of blocks with concentrated issues and low levels of tenant satisfaction, for a defined period of time, a high level of support will be required to tackle specific issues and turn the blocks around. These blocks would need a different type of investment, focusing on security, controlled entry and a more intensive housing management approach.

3.1.29 In addition to the new standard housing management model this would offer:

- More proactive management with dedicated Housing Officers, focusing on a smaller patch to enable them to better address the needs of the block;
- Enhanced security (controlled entry, CCTV etc.);
- A new approach to lettings, with a focus on pre-tenancy checks alongside good tenancy record and/or employment preference for all applicants;
- Enhanced support model, including a range of support models depending on the block and needs of tenants. (e.g. Rise High support model currently being piloted in Clydes and Wortleys in Armley). This could potentially include starter flats for young people, flatshare options for care leavers, as well as intensive programmes/schemes to support people with alcohol/substance dependency, employment schemes, and support for people with mental health issues. This will be linked in with the Enhanced Support Model and Housing Related Support contract which is currently being commissioned.
- An anti-social behaviour plan, produced in conjunction with the police.
- Housing Management will utilise a number of tools to support this model, including looking at shorter fixed term tenancies where appropriate, and good neighbour criteria.

3.1.30 A number of blocks have been identified where this approach would be suitable, based on known issues and where there are particularly low levels of tenant satisfaction.

3.1.31 The approach will build on the pilot undertaken in the Clydes and Wortleys and will build on what has worked well. In addition to the Clydes and Wortleys, the following blocks have been identified for the initial phase of this management model:

Block name	Ward area
Alderton Heights	Alwoodley
Raynville Court	Armley
Lovell Park Grange, Heights and Towers	Hyde Park and Woodhouse
Boston Towers	Burmantofts and Richmond Hill
Burnsall Grange	Armley
Gledhow Towers	Roundhay
Ramshead Heights	Killingbeck and Seacroft
Cottingley Heights and Towers	Beeston and Holbeck
Clayton Court and Grange	Kirkstall
Parkway Towers	Killingbeck and Seacroft

- 3.1.32 The necessary upgrade works are currently being programmed in through the Housing Leeds Planned Works team and progress will be reported to Housing Advisory Board on a regular basis.
- 3.1.33 Housing Leeds are currently piloting pre-tenancy training in the Clydes and Wortleys blocks. If the pilot is successful, we would look to introduce pre-tenancy training in a number of high rise blocks for applicants who are unable to demonstrate a previous good tenancy record. This will help support the transition to the new lettings and management model arrangements. Pre-tenancy training will help prepare prospective tenants for high rise living, including the effect of noise on other tenants, how to manage waste and recycling, and communal areas for example. This will better equip tenants to manage their tenancy successfully, and help build more sustainable and cohesive communities within our blocks. Existing tenant groups will be invited to deliver elements of the training and give a realistic idea of what high rise living involves.
- 3.1.34 Further work is being undertaken to explore funding options for support models, development of a virtual/mobile concierge service, and an enhanced policing resource.
- 3.1.35 Lettings to 16 and 17 year olds**
- 3.1.36 In blocks without any age restrictions, lettings are made to 16 and 17 year old applicants. Due to the large number of age restrictions in high rise blocks, there are blocks with a high concentration of younger tenants, which pose their own management issues.
- 3.1.37 Housing Leeds proposes to operate a minimum age of 18 for lettings to high rise blocks to help reduce the number of young tenants who have never held a tenancy in their own name and who require additional support. This will affect a relatively small number of 16 and 17 year old customers (21 as of December 2015) who are rehoused in high rise accommodation, who will be offered alternative low rise housing.
- 3.1.38 Controlled entry systems in East Leeds blocks**

Currently High Rise stock in the East of the City is not connected to the KMS controlled entry system. This causes issues both for tenants and housing staff and makes it more difficult to deal with issues such as tenancy fraud. It is recommended that while delivering the upgraded controlled entry system to the blocks referenced above, it would make sense to also bring forward the upgrade to the blocks in East and deliver them as one package. This would create some significant efficiencies in the programme.

Retirement / Retirement Plus / Sheltered Management Model

- 3.1.39 The High Rise project has identified some areas with a lack of suitable properties for older people, and particularly sheltered accommodation for older tenants who have support needs. At the same time, Housing Leeds is reviewing its existing sheltered accommodation to ensure that it is fit for purpose and provides sustainable accommodation for older tenants.

3.1.40 Through developing a retirement/retirement plus management model, we would retain an age related focus, primarily aimed at the 55 plus age group, and would offer a range of suitable accommodation from retirement flats, a retirement plus model (detailed below) to full sheltered accommodation. The aim would be to maximise choice to enable older tenants to live independently for as long as possible in their home and avoid the need for them to move.

3.1.41 The Retirement Plus model is currently being developed through the Housing Leeds Older People's Project, and would offer an enhanced service to older people who may develop support needs over time. The model would offer our older tenants a number of features including:

- the opportunity to live in an environment with people of a similar age;
- added security of door entry systems and CCTV to provide increased safety and peace of mind;
- Communal and social facilities– this would create a neighbourhood environment which can help dispel loneliness and isolation in retirement years.
- Changing needs are identified at the Annual Home Visit and referrals made to appropriate services;
- Activities and Tenant Groups will be supported through the Housing Officer and Tenant Involvement Officer;
- The option to apply to receive Floating Support and / or 24/7 telecare;

3.1.42 The model will be further developed to ensure that it meets the needs of older tenants and the wider communities.

3.1.43 Housing Leeds have worked in partnership with Health and Housing and Adult Social Care who are fully supportive of the proposals around the High Rise retirement plus model.

3.1.44 Having a retirement plus style option with improved investment and better facilities for older people will also help us in terms of getting the best use from our stock, as it would enable us to incentivise older people living in larger homes to move into flats, freeing up houses for families.

3.1.45 After assessing the viability of each of the potential sites we are proposing to pilot the approach in Brecon Court and Rise and Barncroft Towers. These blocks would require little investment beyond updating entry systems to make them more secure.

3.1.46 If the pilot proves successful we would look to move other blocks to the model over the next 2-5 years.

Tenant Communications and Involvement

3.1.47 The MSF Survey highlighted that communication and engagement with high rise tenants needs to be improved. This is an aspiration strongly supported by the High Rise Group (HRG), a key branch of the wider Tenant Engagement Framework.

3.1.48 As part of a wider review of tenant involvement, options have been developed to improve the offer to high rise tenants, including:

- Looking at more innovative ways to communicate with high rise tenants through online and social media channels, including the development of an email bulletin to communicate the latest news and issues effecting high rise blocks. Tenants will be involved in developing the design and content.
- A review of local housing surgeries, to ensure that we offer tenants the most convenient way to access services. These could be targeted or prioritised in blocks with the lowest satisfaction with access to services.
- A health check of the notice boards in place and ensuring up to date / quality information is included. Making better use of the tools we already have to communicate.

3.2 Recycling and Waste in High Rise

3.2.1 The MSF Survey identified a significant number of tenants who had identified rubbish as a major concern within their block.

3.2.2 A project group consisting of officers from Waste, Housing Management and Civic Enterprise Leeds (CEL) was set up to undertake a review of the Lincoln Green area to determine issues and trial potential solutions. An audit of current provision was undertaken, along with a desktop exercise looking at existing services and an assessment of capacity.

3.2.3 The main issues to emerge from the review were the need for better tenant education around waste and recycling, and more active enforcement. A number of actions have been pursued following the review, including:

- Expansion of recycling provision where appropriate;
- Module proposed as part of pre-tenancy training for relevant blocks explaining use of chutes and how/where to dispose of waste and recycling;
- Communication to remind tenants of their roles and responsibilities (combined with door-to-door discussions in particular problem blocks);
- Options on enforcement being developed with Localities teams; and
- Further reviews will be undertaken across the city to identify issues in other high rise blocks, and each area will be regularly reviewed.

3.2.4 Bulky waste is a significant problem in a large number of blocks which impacts both on the look and safety of the block, and on the time cleaners have to clean the blocks. The review of the 16 Lincoln Green blocks showed that in a one month period (November 2015) there were 54 separate call outs to the CEL team to remove bulky items that had been dumped within the blocks. This takes up a lot of resource across the city, as well as creating health and safety and fire risks within the blocks.

3.2.5 There is currently no bulky waste service offered to tenants living in any of our flats. Following discussions with Localities and CEL to look at the options available, a pilot is currently in place in two blocks in Lincoln Green to trial a doorstep collection service, where tenants are able to book an appointment to have the bulky item(s) collected. A cost/benefit analysis will be undertaken to determine if this is something Housing Leeds would look to roll out further.

3.3 Quality of cleaning in High Rise

3.3.1 The MSF Survey highlighted tenant concerns around the standard of cleaning in a number of high rise blocks.

3.3.2 The High Rise Group established a working group of tenants, housing management and cleaning staff to look at improvements to service delivery. A series of joint block inspections and workshop discussions took place to explore the issues and make a number of recommendations.

3.3.3 A number of other actions have emerged from the work, including:

- Development of an agreed set of cleaning standards based on the differing needs of blocks and linked to the housing management models;
- Training for housing officers on the management of properties with communal areas;
- Introduction of regular block inspections to flag up any issues with external/communal areas as they arise. Linked to the more proactive approach to repairs this should help deliver a marked improvement in the condition of blocks, and ensure issues are dealt with quickly and efficiently.

3.4 Investment Strategy

3.4.1 The high-rise blocks are made up of twelve different construction types and were built in the 1950's and 60's. The majority of investment over the last 15 years has been focussed on the interior of dwellings (kitchens, bathrooms, rewires etc) to achieve the Decent Homes standard. We are now focussing on improvements to heating systems, lifts, externals and communal areas. The HRA Investment Strategy currently allocates c£124m for these works over the next decade. Subject to the agreement of the Executive Board to the development of the three housing management models, a revised capital strategy will be developed as part of the new HRA business plan to be presented in the New Year. The current commitments are set out below.

3.4.2 To determine how to best direct this investment a heating and energy efficiency study was conducted by consultants, Arup. This modelled the effectiveness, in terms of reducing fuel poverty and maximising carbon reductions, of different heating and energy efficiency measures to the different block types. A number of investment scenarios were then considered in order to determine the optimum programme of heating and energy efficiency measures over the next 10 years, *and will be prioritised as part of our investment strategy for the multi storey blocks across the City*. On average, a typical household should see a saving of c£200 (around 30%) on annual fuel bills on completion.

3.4.3 While this study was ongoing the blocks also had stock condition and mechanical and electrical surveys carried out to determine when other communal components need replacing (electrical and lighting systems, entrance doors, canopies, flooring etc.). There are also ongoing lift replacement and fire safety programmes being implemented across the blocks, as well as plans to connect 30 blocks to a district heating solution powered by the Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility (RERF).

3.4.4 The information from these various sources and proposals is being used to develop a detailed investment and delivery programme that will address the investment needs of all 116 blocks. Work is ongoing to determine the best way of packaging and prioritising these works over the next ten years. There is likely to be a mixed approach to different blocks, with differing combinations of works being delivered according to numerous factors, *which will need further consideration to develop a robust delivery plan*. The final programme is likely to involve some compromises between the best way to package and carry out the works in theory and what is practically achievable given the investment strategy, disruption to tenants, *the nature of the work required* and the ten-year span of the programme.

3.4.5 All properties and blocks will meet minimum standards such as the Leeds Homes Refurbishment Standard, West Yorkshire Fire Safety Concordat, servicing and inspection regimes etc. In addition, this investment programme will consist of a number of elements:

Heating & Energy Efficiency

3.4.6 The Arup recommendations have been prioritised on a 'biggest gain' basis and therefore target interventions according to the current thermal performance of blocks and the potential fuel poverty reductions and carbon savings. They include six district heating clusters covering 26 blocks (in addition to the RERF district heating proposals), renewal of electrical heating and hot water systems in blocks where district heating is not viable, external cladding of the Reema and Townsen blocks and roof insulation where roofs require renewing.

Structural Works and Concrete Repairs

3.4.7 Structural works are required to the 'Reema' construction blocks. A pilot/reference scheme to trial proposed remedial works at the two Highways blocks in Killingbeck & Seacroft will be commenced in 2017. Other blocks require patch repairs to the concrete facades, identified from steeplejack surveys. A programme of concrete repair works has recently commenced and will run over the next four years.

Lifts

3.4.8 There is an ongoing lift replacement programme, focussed on replacing lifts at the end of their lifecycle (c25-30 years). Lifts will be serviced monthly. Broken lifts will be attended to within 1 hour if a passenger is trapped, or 3 hours if vacant, and repaired at the earliest opportunity.

Communal Areas

3.4.9 There is a wide variety of works required to communal areas of the blocks. This includes rewiring, installation of new emergency and external lighting, renewal of controlled entry systems and floor coverings and canopies where required. There is currently £23m allocated for these works over the next ten years.

3.4.10 The programme is summarised below:

Intervention	No. of Blocks	Cost	Rationale	Indicative Timescales
Safety & Security Works	28	£5m	Directed at blocks identified as in greatest need of security enhancements and with highest concentrations of families in them.	Years 1-3
Lift Replacements	40 (3-4 p.a.)	£17m	Prioritised according to age and condition.	Years 1-10
Communal Areas	113	£23m	Works will be prioritised according to need.	Years 1-10
Structural Works& Concrete Repairs	Up to 14 Reema blocks & 30 blocks for concrete repairs.	£20m	Structural works to Reema blocks and concrete repairs identified by steeplejacks.	Years 1-4
RERF District Heating	30	£15m <i>*requires £5m ERDF funding</i>	Connection of blocks in Saxton Gardens, Ebor Gardens and Lincoln Green to RERF.	Years 2-4
External Wall Insulation/ Cladding	14	£11m	For the least energy efficient Reema and Townsen blocks which are unsuitable for connection to district/community heating. ¹	Years 2-10
Roof Insulation	38	£5m	Remedies disproportionate levels of high fuel poverty/ carbon usage in top floor flats.	Years 2-10
Electric Heating Renewals	38	£10m	Greater control, more efficient systems for blocks not getting district/community heating.	Years 3-7
Hot Water Cylinder Renewals	40	£4m	More efficient, better insulated, can run on Economy 7, for blocks not getting district/community heating.	Years 3-7
Community Heating Clusters	26 (6 clusters)	£24m	Most efficient heating systems for suitable clusters of blocks.	Years 3-8
NB: Year 1 is 2016/17.	Total	£134m		

¹ These blocks will also receive replacement electric heating and hot water cylinders, apart from one which will be connected to the heat from waste/RERF scheme.

3.5 Cyclical/proactive repairs service

- 3.5.1 In May 2015, Housing Advisory Board recommended improvements to the process for delivering repairs to communal areas in high rise blocks.
- 3.5.2 Responsive repairs to communal areas in high rise blocks are reported via a number of sources including; tenant reports; daily checks by the cleaning teams; and quarterly audits by Housing Officers. Because there is no fixed postal address for communal areas, there is no confirmation slip sent when the repair is raised as there would be for a repair to an individual home. This has been commonly raised by residents as a problem as it causes uncertainty as to whether repairs have been reported.
- 3.5.3 To address this issue, Housing Leeds developed a proposal for a planned approach to carrying out communal repairs in high rise blocks with our partners. The new approach was piloted between November 2015 and March 2016 and involved:
- A small multi-skilled team of operatives visiting each block on a scheduled basis, assessing the block and aiming to complete all outstanding repairs during the visit where possible;
 - A record of completed repairs is displayed on the notice board and targeted sample post inspections will take place;
- 3.5.4 Following the pilot, an evaluation was undertaken of the effectiveness and cost sustainability of the proactive repairs programme. The evaluation identified that although the programme required some areas of adjustment in order to ensure that it offers maximum value for money, the model is sustainable over the longer term and provides a robust way of carrying out routine repairs to high rise communal areas.
- 3.5.5 Work has been undertaken based on the pilot outcome to determine frequency of visits on a block by block basis in order to optimise effectiveness and efficiency. This approach acknowledges that there are significant differences in the demand between different blocks. The initial visits have also identified several high demand blocks where further 'upgrade' work is required. This work (for example upgrading door hinges) will subsequently help reduce future repair volumes.
- 3.5.6 Feedback from the evaluation was presented to and discussed with tenants at the High Rise Group. Both providers, Mears and LBS, have now implemented adjustments into the programme and are continuing with the cyclical visits.

3.6 Enhanced community safety in high rise

- 3.6.1 Anti-social behaviour and fear of crime was highlighted as a significant issue in the 2014 tenant survey and has been raised at the High Rise Group. This has been a key theme for the high rise project and Housing Leeds are working closely with LeedsWatch, Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team (LASBT), West Yorkshire Police and other agencies to look at further ways we can provide an enhanced service for residents; including the installation of a citywide CCTV system remotely monitored via the city's 24 hour control-room, plus a pro-active use of anti-social behaviour tools.

Roll out of CCTV Network

- 3.6.2 The CCTV network which operated in the former East North East Homes area has been extended to blocks in the South and will be further extended to the West blocks throughout 2016/17, with plans to connect all cameras to City's LeedsWatch CCTV control-room.
- 3.6.3 This will enable all high rise blocks to be part of a citywide system that should significantly improve tenant safety and support more proactive housing management and enforcement where required. It would also allow us to offer an enhanced service in areas where there are particular issues, linking more effectively with LASBT and West Yorkshire Police.
- 3.6.4 The approach is being piloted as part of the Clydes and Wortleys Improvement Project, and will be extended further to the enhanced blocks detailed in section 3.1.27. It will be evaluated to look at how effective it has been in reducing ASB/crime and improving tenant satisfaction in the blocks.

Enhanced Resources to address anti-social behaviour

- 3.6.5 The Council is keen to deliver a proactive approach to managing council housing estates, in particular high rise blocks, and has agreed to fund this approach. LASBT will review the approach and remit of the officers and additional resources to focus on particular areas of need. Initially this focused on the Clydes and Wortleys pilot area and has now moved to East Leeds. In the longer term the resource will be used across the city, to target particular anti-social behaviour / crime hotspot areas.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 The High Rise Group has been involved throughout the project and has supported development of the proposals set out in the paper.
- 4.1.2 The move towards any new approach to lettings policy for high rise blocks is subject to detailed consultation on the proposals outlined in the February 2016 *Effective Housing Management and Lettings Framework* Executive Board paper. The outcome of which will be presented to Executive Board in December 2016.
- 4.1.3 Local Ward Members, partners within Area Leadership Team, Community Committees, the New Wortley Residents Association and local stakeholders have all been consulted on the Clydes and Wortleys improvement project. This has been further reinforced within consultation on a new local lettings policy for the area.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 The proposals seek to better meet the needs of children, families, people with support needs and older people.
- 4.2.2 The council will conduct an equality and diversity impact assessment to identify potential positive and negative impacts of any changes to the lettings policy, and will develop an action plan to address any negative impacts identified.

4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan

4.3.1 The actions identified will contribute towards the delivery of a number of Best Council Plan outcomes, notably for everyone in Leeds to be able 'to live in good quality affordable homes within clean and well cared for places', 'to live with dignity and stay independent for as long as possible' and to 'be safe and feel safe', thereby also contributing to the Safer Leeds Plan.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 The Council aims to ensure its housing stock is managed efficiently and best use is made of the limited resources.

4.4.2 One of the main aims of the high rise project is to determine the most efficient and effective way of using resources to develop the best offer for high rise tenants. The High Rise Strategy will ensure that all investment is determined in a consistent, fair and effective way across the city.

4.4.3 A number of the actions identified throughout this report will need significant resources to be delivered. These resources have been identified through efficiencies in better working practices to allow additional staffing resources to be engaged in this work, with additional Capital investment being identified as part of the Asset Management Strategy with Capital investment being identified as part of our High Rise Investment Strategy.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 The proposed changes to the lettings framework for high rise accommodation must comply with the Housing Act 1996 and take account of statutory guidance issued by Communities and Local Government. The lettings policy is currently under review, with a view to present recommendations to Executive Board in December 2016.

4.5.2 In assisting households with dependent children who wish to move to houses, the council must ensure that overall lettings are made to customers in the statutory reasonable preference groups, and that a full equality impact assessment is undertaken to assess the likely impact on other customer groups.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 A Risk Register is being developed to deliver the changes and manage any associated risks.

4.6.2 There are also risks associated with the implementation of the Housing and Planning Act which mean that the delivery of the investment programme for high rise may need to be reviewed/adjusted in future. This will be reviewed when guidance and regulations have been made available by DCLG.

5 Conclusions

5.1.1 Whilst the majority of people living in our multi storey blocks are satisfied, the aim of the High Rise Strategy is to recognise specific needs that are not currently being met. This paper sets out the approach Housing Leeds are taking to achieve this, including more proactive housing management, a clear investment strategy for improving the blocks and a number of initiatives being piloted across the city to help deliver a step change in tenant satisfaction

across our high rise blocks.

- 5.1.2 We are proposing different housing management models in different types of block linked to targeted investment to ensure the needs of all tenants and the service as a whole are properly addressed.

6 Recommendations

Members of Executive Board are asked to:

- Agree that Housing Leeds implements the housing management models and approaches detailed in section 3.1 - Family Friendly, Enhanced support model, Retirement/Retirement plus.
- Approve the proposed changes to the lettings framework for high rise, namely:
 - Restrict lettings to applicants with children (and access rights) in high rise blocks which are deemed unsuitable for children;
 - Restrict Lettings to high rise flats for 16 and 17 year olds;
 - Awarding families with children choosing to move to family friendly blocks priority to move, flagging them for a direct offer of accommodation and backdating their priority and direct let status to the date of their original acceptance on the housing register should they wish to move, giving them additional preference on the housing register.
- Approve the council's approach in developing a 10 year investment strategy for high rise.

7 Background documents²

None

² The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.