

Manchester City Council Report for Resolution

Report to: Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee - 7 November 2018
Executive – 14 November 2018
Council - 28 November 2018

Subject: Sprinkler and fire safety works update

Report of: Strategic Director (Development)

Recommendations

1. Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee is invited to comment on the content of this report.

2. Executive

- Is requested to **note** the progress made since December 2017.
- Is requested to **note** that the consultation undertaken demonstrated significant support for sprinklers but also that a minority of residents are strongly opposed.
- Is requested to **note** the support for sprinklers from Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service and National Fire Chiefs Council. The Prime Minister has also recently endorsed retrospective fitting of sprinklers to publicly-owned tower blocks.
- Is **recommended** to continue to proceed with fitting sprinklers, but give residents the ability to decline having sprinklers installed in their flat as long as they have first been given the opportunity to understand the benefits and risks as outlined in paragraph 3.8.
- Is requested to **note** that the overall budget for sprinkler installation across 35 tower blocks (Whitebeck Court extra care scheme already has a sprinkler system) remains, as estimated, £10.5m approved by Executive in December 2017 and that these systems will have a 30-year life. These costs are being met within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) through the rephrasing of the Public Sector Capital Programme.
- Is recommended to **approve** that the initial installation of sprinklers is offered to leaseholders free of charge at an estimated cost of £240k (to include Miles Platting and Brunswick PFI leaseholders) from the Council's General Fund Housing Private Sector Capital Programme as detailed in paragraph 4.4. This is in addition to the £10.5m sprinkler budget identified above, and will require an increase of £240k to the Private Sector Housing capital budget. However,

leaseholders will be required to meet the estimated £167 annual repair and maintenance costs.

- Is requested to **note** that the fire safety works recommended by the fire risk assessor, Savills, are mandatory and is asked to **recommend** to Council that the budget for these fire safety works should be increased from £4.0m to £5.2m as the budget request to Executive in February 2018 did not include the tower blocks managed by PFI contractors in Miles Platting and Brunswick and Woodward Court. This will require an increase of £1.2m to the Public Sector Capital Programme from revenue contributions from the HRA.
- Is requested to **note** that the contracts for sprinklers and fire safety works (plus the other works included in those contracts) include contingency but otherwise place cost risk on the Council, with Northwards Housing managing these contracts on the Council's behalf to mitigate against further costs. Further costs are, however, possible as the sample surveys undertaken may not have identified the full extent of works.
- Is recommended to **approve** the revenue costs associated with maintaining sprinkler systems as outlined in the revenue consequences section of this report and in paragraph 4.3. Negotiations will be held with Northwards and the PFI providers with regard to the additional revenue funding required, and any subsequent increase in the budget will be met from the Housing Revenue Account.
- Is requested, where access is denied by tenants or leaseholders to implement fire safety works, to **delegate authority** to take legal action, where required, to the City Solicitor in discussion with the City Treasurer, Director of Housing and Residential Growth, Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration and Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources.

3. Council

- is asked to **approve** a capital budget increase for these fire safety works of £1.2m (from £4.0m to £5.2m) to include the tower blocks managed by PFI contractors in Miles Platting and Brunswick and Woodward Court in the capital programme. This will require an increase of £1.2m to the Public Sector Housing Capital Programme funded from revenue contributions from the HRA.