



## Report to:

Northwards Housing Board

9 September 2008

## Item No:

# 13c

|  |   |                   |                      |
|--|---|-------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Title:</b>  | Retirement Housing Schemes – Proposed Improvements  |                   |                      |
| <b>Date:</b>   | 14 July 2008  |                   |                      |
| <b>Author:</b>   | David Heys/Claire Hopkins   | <b>Tel No:</b>    | 0161 227 3248        |
| <b>E mail:</b>   | <a href="mailto:d.heys@northwardshousing.co.uk">d.heys@northwardshousing.co.uk</a><br><a href="mailto:c.hopkins@northwardshousing.co.uk">c.hopkins@northwardshousing.co.uk</a>                    |                   |                      |
| <b>Confidential:</b>   | No  |                   |                      |
| <b>For:<br/>(Please tick<br/>action required)</b>  | <b>NOTING</b>   | <b>DISCUSSION</b> | <b>APPROVAL</b><br>√ |
| <b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>   |   |                   |                      |
| To seek approval to carry out improvement works to the retirement housing schemes, additional to that contained within the original home improvements programme. |   |                   |                      |
| <b>RECOMMENDATION</b>  |   |                   |                      |
| That the Board approve the proposal as recommended by the Procurement and Property Sub Committee.  |   |                   |                      |
| <b>IMPLICATIONS</b>  |   |                   |                      |
| <b>Equality &amp; Diversity:</b>   | The home improvements programme is delivered in full regard to Northwards' Equality and Diversity policy and, as such, benefits all sectors of the community.                                     |                   |                      |
| <b>Financial:</b>  | The cost of this additional work as detailed in this report can be contained within the approved Investment Plan.   |                   |                      |
| <b>Staffing:</b>   | There are no direct staffing implications associated with this report.  |                   |                      |
| <b>Decency Target:</b>   | Whilst the proposed additional improvement work will enhance the lives of residents living in these blocks, it does not directly contribute to achieving the Government's decency target by 2010. |                   |                      |
| <b>Governance:</b>   | There are no direct governance implications associated with this report.  |                   |                      |
| <b>Risk Assessment:</b>  | There are no risks directly associated with this report.  |                   |                      |

**Equality & Diversity Implications** (Please tick where relevant):

|            |                          |                                  |                          |
|------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| BME        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gender     | <input type="checkbox"/> | Single Parents                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Age        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Domestic Violence                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> | Alcohol / Drug Mis-users         | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**1.0 Introduction**

1.1 Northwards Housing manages 9 retirement housing schemes, 6 of which (listed below) are programmed for kitchen or bathroom replacement between 2008 and 2010 and are the subject of this report. Each of these schemes comprises a number of self contained flats with one bedroom, a lounge area, small kitchen and a bathroom.

| <b>Name of Block</b>    | <b>Area Panel</b> | <b>Nr. of Units</b> |
|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Annie Darby Court       | Riverways         | 31                  |
| Apprentice Court        | Riverways         | 30                  |
| Edward Grant Court      | Riverways         | 31                  |
| Harry Piggott Court     | Wilton            | 30                  |
| Joseph Dean Court       | Fourways          | 30                  |
| Sir Robert Thomas Court | Riverways         | 31                  |

1.2 The other 3 retirement housing schemes are Duncan Edwards Court, George Halstead Court and Victoria Square. Duncan Edwards and George Halstead Courts are smaller blocks of a different design and consequently, do not require these additional works. Victoria Square is subject to a separate £2.8m improvement programme due to start imminently.

1.3 The approved investment plan based on the original 2001 Stock Condition Survey includes for the following improvements:

- Modern Kitchen or bathroom subject to tenant choice
- Replacement PVCu windows (already installed or in progress)
- Full rewire or upgrading of existing electrical wiring
- Redecoration of communal areas

1.4 This report seeks approval to carry out further improvement works as detailed below in order to enhance the lives of those residents living in these flats.

**2.0 Feasibility Study**

2.1 A detailed feasibility study was carried out by the home improvements team in February 2008, which focussed specifically on Harry Piggott Court in Blackley. However, whilst a few of the issues relate specifically to Harry Piggott Court, most of them apply in varying degrees to all the other 5 schemes.

2.2 The study covers the following areas which are common to all 6 schemes:

- Heating and hot water systems and general energy efficiency
- Internal layout of the flats
- Additional works to communal areas
- Roofs

## 2.3 Heating and Hot Water Systems

2.3.1 Residents have regularly complained about the heating systems, in that the flats get too hot and there is no effective means of turning it down. Our heating engineers have investigated this issue and concluded that, despite the recent fitting of thermostatic radiator valves, this lack of control is due to an outdated combined system which can not provide hot water to the flats without the heating being on. It should also be noted that the existing systems are very poor in terms of energy efficiency.

2.3.2 It is proposed, therefore, to install a new heating and domestic hot water system which retains the relatively new communal boilers but will require the removal of the hot water cylinders from each flat and the installation of new pipe work. This will provide the following benefits:

- Independent and more effective control of the heating and domestic hot water systems
- Additional space in the kitchens following the removal of the hot water cylinder
- A significant contribution to the overall energy efficiency of the building

2.3.3 It is also proposed to further improve the energy efficiency of these buildings by:

- Installing solar panels on the roofs, linked to the domestic hot water system. This would attract a 50% grant from the Government's Low Carbon Building Programme.
- Fitting "sun pipes" to the first floor corridors and some of the bathrooms. (see also 2.6 below).

## 2.4 Internal Layout of the Flats and Complete Redecoration

2.4.1 At present, space in the kitchen is very limited due to a large cupboard which houses the domestic hot water cylinder. However, in light of the proposed improvements to the heating and hot water systems detailed above, the removal of the hot water cylinder now provides the opportunity to increase the size of the kitchen by removing the cylinder cupboard also.

2.4.2 It is acknowledged, however, that not all residents may want this cupboard removing as many see this as valuable and useful storage space. Consequently, it is proposed to offer each resident the choice of either retaining the cupboard for general storage or having it removed completely and having a bigger kitchen.

2.4.3 These flats were designed with 2 doors from the bedroom and, in order to maximise the limited space in each flat, it is proposed to block up one of these doors, subject to tenant choice.

2.4.4 Given the relatively small size and nature of these flats, it is proposed to redecorate all rooms affected by the improvement works. It should be noted that we have also adopted this approach at Victoria Square.

## 2.5 Additional Works to Communal Areas

- 2.5.1 The corridors have painted blockwork walls and sheet flooring which give a very cold and utilitarian feel to these areas. It is already planned to upgrade these areas by plastering and painting the walls, and it is now proposed to also lay a reasonably priced, hard wearing carpet, both of which would provide a much more “homely” feel to these areas.
- 2.5.2 Following consultation with Manchester Equipment and Adaptations Partnerships (MEAPs), it is proposed to provide the facility for the safe storage and recharging of mobility scooters in the two ground floor stairwells and an area at the end of the first floor corridor, each area accommodating up to 2 scooters.

## 2.6 Roofs

- 2.6.1 Recently, there have been several reported problems with the roofs to these blocks. The 2001 stock condition survey did not identify these defects and, as such, they have not been included for in the approved investment plan. However, the 2007 stock condition survey has identified the flat roof areas as “non decent” and in need of replacement.
- 2.6.2 Further defects have also been identified recently during the window replacement works where the removal of sections of roof boards has uncovered some rotten roof timbers. This has been caused by a combination of:
- The low roof pitch
  - Poor ventilation to the roof space
  - Inadequate overlap between adjacent roof tiles
- 2.6.3 In order to rectify these defects, it is necessary to completely remove and re-lay the existing pitched roof which will also allow the following work to be done:
- Replace defective roof timbers
  - Re-lay the roof tiles to the correct “lap”
  - Provide adequate ventilation to the roof space
  - Provide roof insulation to meet current standards
  - Re-cover the flat roof areas and provide an effective waterproof joint between these and the pitched roof areas
  - Installation of solar panels
  - Installation of sun pipes to the first floor corridors and some of the first floor bathrooms

## 3.0 **Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The estimated cost to do the above work is approximately £150,000 per scheme over and above what is already included in the investment plan.
- 3.2 The Board have already approved work to Apprentice and Sir Robert Thomas Courts to start this year, and are requested to approve this additional expenditure, to be funded from expected savings on final accounts this year.
- 3.3 The work to the remaining 4 blocks is programmed to be carried out between May 2009 and October 2010 and, again, it is anticipated that the cost of the additional

work will be funded from future savings on final accounts. This will be confirmed when the future programme is presented to the Board later this year.

#### **4.0 Recommendation**

- 4.1 That the Board approve the proposal as recommended by the Procurement and Property Sub Committee.