

Housing Management Board

30th May 2022

Investment Plan – additional investment proposals

Author: Alison Napper, Asset Strategy Manager

Purpose of briefing:

- To provide a proposal on how we translate the additional budgets agreed following the Big Housing Conversation consultation into deliverable services and programmes of work to deliver the changes envisaged

Introduction

The HIP was considered as part of the HRA Business Plan review within the *Big Housing Conversation: Investing in Council Homes*. The feedback has influenced the proposals to improve standards in existing council homes and the HRA BP Cabinet report proposed investment in:

- Energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions:** an additional £80m to make homes more energy efficient and to reduce carbon emissions, through further wall insulation schemes and a programme of photo-voltaic (PV) panel installations. This will ensure all homes reach a minimum EPC of C by 2030.
- Bathroom modernisation programme:** £12.5m to commence a five-year bathroom replacement programme that will deliver 5500 modern new bathrooms in council homes by 2027.
- Investing in communal areas, blocks, and estates:** add £0.5m to the 2022/23 budget, and in total £8.7m over 5-years, to improve standards in communal areas, blocks and estates. This will help address known issues with anti-social behaviour and further work will be undertaken to determine how best to utilise this.

For each of the areas, lower budgets have been agreed for Year One (22/23) to allow time to engage tenants, research, analyse data and develop strategies for larger programmes of work.

Energy Efficiency

The additional energy efficiency funds appear as follows in the HIP (Capital 5 year view)

New budget - Energy Efficiency	£0	£2,000,000	£5,000,000	£7,000,000	£10,000,000	£10,000,000	Agreed following the Big Housing Conversation. Budget to cover energy efficiency measures such as wall insulation for blocks and houses and Photo Voltaic (PV) panels. £34m for first 5 years, part of the additional £80m by 2030.
--------------------------------	----	------------	------------	------------	-------------	-------------	---

Budgets for the Retrofit project (25 Easiform homes in Brentry) are already in the investment plan for 22/23, and 23/24, The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2 grant is likely to be available for bids during summer 22/23, and the energy efficiency budget will be used as match funding for this bid. The criteria is unknown at this stage, but is likely to prioritise fabric first works, and as such supports our aspirations to insulate the walls of our uninsulated blocks. In the first year, the energy funds will be used to cover the cost of EWI on high rise blocks, where major refurbishment works are scheduled to take place.

Work is underway to develop our approach to reach EPC C in our homes, as part of the overall energy and decarbonisation strategy. We have excellent stock energy data, and tools to model scenarios to improve the energy performance so that we can appraise and cost the options – and ensure we are ready to take advantage of appropriate grant funding opportunities.

Over the coming 6 months we will be finalising the EPC C work and exploring how we can develop capacity to deliver the scale up in programmes required to reach the targets.

Investment in our Blocks and Estates

Current approach and budgets

- We refurbish all blocks every 10 years – to undertake routine, cyclical maintenance and decorate the communal areas
- Roofs with insulation and windows are replaced when at end of life (and checked at the cyclical visit)
- Estate improvements:– tenants can bid for additional security or improvements to the look of the area

Current budgets include

- Major works to high rise blocks - £17.6m
- Servicing, repairs and replacement of communal services (e.g. lifts, boilers) in blocks - £4.4m
- Estate Management Repairs - £270k
- Caretaking budgets - £41k
- Environmental and Neighbourhood Investment Budgets - £600k

The Big Housing Conversation text was as follows –

- *The look and feel of our blocks is important to our residents, increased budgets in this area could*
 - *Make improvements to the communal areas inside the blocks*
 - *Improve the external areas – landscaping and fencing, security*
 - *Respond quickly to repair problems, graffiti, fly tipping, damage,*
 - *Improve the wider estates, including play areas*

There were multiple options in this area, the responses from the budget simulator and survey selected an additional £60m per year over next 30 years. This translates into £2m per year, and given the need to develop new services and programmes, the following has been agreed –

Additional Investment in blocks	Year 1 - 2022 to 2023	Year 2 - 2023 to 2024	Year 3 - 2024 to 2025	Year 4 - 2025 to 2026	Year 5 - 2026 to 2027
		£500,000	£2,051,724	£2,051,724	£2,051,724

Proposal for Year One (22/23) = £500k to improve the look and feel of estates

Rapid Response Budget

This budget was developed to support Labour’s manifesto pledge to ‘Introduce a prompt repairs promise for council residents [tenants]’. It provides greater visibility of staff and help to improve resident satisfaction by responding to and resolving works to communal areas such as replacing broken paving, clearing and cutting back of shrubs and bushes, replacing communal guttering.

The proposal is to allocate £225k to go to top up the Rapid Response budget

- Currently £75k in the Rapid Response budget to complete 3 months of 6 month Rapid Response pilot (started in Jan 2022)
- Spend is currently below budget
- Total £300k considered adequate for one financial citywide

Assisted Gardens

- This service was last offered in 2017/18, and the budget was £85k. Proposal to reinstate this service, with a budget of £85k as part of improving the look and feel of our estates.
- The proposal is to give a one-year contract to Bristol Waste who are confident they have sufficient resources for garden clearances and so that both parties can evaluate the data to shape the service longer term to meet the needs.
- They are a BCC TECKAL company and could be directly appointed, no procurement delays.
- They are willing to work with the local community groups who offer the loan of gardening tools to help further progress this scheme within the community and develop with resident led involvement.
- The proposal is to develop a criteria for those who are eligible to access the services, and for the Estate Mgt Service Development Manager to manage

Responding to tenant and Housing Officer priorities

The estate and neighbourhood grading project will see Housing Officers score their estates and/or neighbourhoods against set criteria. To do this, HO's have subdivided their patch into mini patches and have started grading the areas. The scoring range is set with one being the best and four the worst and an overall score will be awarded for each estate and neighbourhood and the frequency of the inspections will be determined by the overall score awarded. During walkabouts, housing officers in collaboration with residents/other stakeholders will identify improvements to their estate/neighbourhood and submit bids to the Environmental Improvement and Neighbourhood Investment.

- For Year One (22/23), the proposal is to increase the budgets available for Environmental and Neighbourhood Improvement bids by £190k (so total will be £790k)
- The Specialist Projects Team are building capacity to deliver more schemes
- Schemes for 22/23 are being considered now – the proposal is to hold an additional panel later this year to consider new requests.

Proposal for Yrs 2-5

Beyond year one, we need to continue to invest in the look and feel of estates and blocks, as above, but also invest more in the buildings themselves.

Resident engagement

Summer 22/23 will be used to engage and involve residents in how we can best respond to their priorities regarding communal areas and wider estates. Asset Management, Estate Management and Tenant Participation are working together to formulate the approach, currently the following are planned:

- Housing Management Board
- Estate Management SUG – special focus group
- Housing & Leasehold Forums

We are also considering a wider survey to capture the views of residents.

Security

The proposal is to review security measures, ASB and the role that CCTV could play in improving estate security and how it can be improved so that our residents are safe and also feel safe. This will include a comprehensive review of current CCTV in and around our estates, the costs and benefits of increasing the CCTV coverage, the use of deployed CCTV and report back on findings are proposals.

Wider estates and ecological issues

More work needed to review our playgrounds and open space and how these can be improved, including looking for opportunities to tackle the city's ecological crisis.

Investment in blocks

Finally, we need to review our approach to investing in blocks over the next 6 months, including

- Reviewing the current approach of 10 yearly maintenance and improvement visits
- Consider the benefits and costs of 5 yearly visits to
 - Improve internal communal decorations
 - Remedy H&S issues
 - Review and improve window, roof, etc. replacements
- Improve our understanding of Responsive Repair pressures with blocks – identify where complaints and repair requests are in blocks, target maintenance and improvement on these areas

With a view to increasing planned investment in blocks to prevent serious issues in Response and complaints.

Bathrooms

Following the HIP consultation with different bathroom programme options, it was agreed that we would support the 15 year bathroom programme, and agree to funding for the first 5 years of this programme (income and affordability to be reviewed at the end of the 5 years as to whether remaining programme can be delivered).

The figures in the HIP proposal are

- Total budget (over 5 years) £12,500,000, total bathrooms 5500
- Yr 1 budget £500,000 bathrooms 220
- Yrs 2,3,4 & 5 budget £3,000,000 per year and bathrooms 1320 per year

The 15 year programme volumes and budgets were arrived at as follows –

Having reviewed our stock condition and completions data this is based on

- Slow start (220 in year 1) so that we can be confident in the specification. and to allow for appropriate procurement
- First 15 years programme = all props and have removed a *proportion* of those showing as having accessible shower, *proportion* of those indicated as less than 15 years old (replaced through relets e.g.) and *all* new build)
- Lifecycle assumed = 30 years
- Outcome is approx. 75% of homes to get a new bathroom over first 15 years of the plan (if financially supported beyond year 5),
- Based on £2273 unit price

There are a number of strands of work to get to a position where we are delivering the full new bathroom programme

1. Develop our internal capacity to deliver the programme (target deadline: October 22)

This will involve the creation of a mini-team, including recruitment of Project Surveyors (potentially four) to manage the contract(s), Supervisor and Technical Support Officers

2. Develop Specification (target deadline: August 22)

The proposal is to

- a. Review the specification used by Responsive Repairs when a bathroom is replaced at relet
- b. Research other housing organisations approach and specification
- c. Liaise with Accessible Homes to understand how we can make our standard bathrooms more accessible and potentially easier to adapt
- d. Work with tenants to ensure their views are incorporated
 - i. The intention is to attend Local Housing Forums, Service User Groups and Housing Management Board as above, as well as setting up a Resident Task & Finish group to help us to finalise the specification.

3. Develop and deliver the procurement strategy (contract to be procured by October 22)

This programme at the levels of bathroom installs agreed will be one of the largest property improvement programmes we have delivered. Procurement is likely to take 6-9 months, and will rely on procurement and legal resources being available to support the procurement strategy and be aware of the strict timescales and high priority of the project.

4. Develop our approach to prioritising bathrooms,

Asset Management are reviewing addresses of those showing as being needing to be replaced over the next 15 years, and developing a proposal which is likely to be based on

- Worst first
- Area basis - (to help with delivery, bring down costs, avoid the current criticism around kitchens and pepper-potted nature 'why is my neighbour getting one and I'm not', all due flats in a block replaced at same time, etc.

Residents will have the opportunity to influence the development of our bathroom replacement programme, particularly the specification and how we will manage the programme. We plan to set up a resident Task & Finish Group, and we will seek interest from members at the Planned Programmes SUG and from the involvement register, including residents who have indicated a preferred interest to get involved in this area.