

Decision Pathway – Report



PURPOSE: Key decision

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 06 December 2022

TITLE	Additional resources for fire safety measures	
Ward(s)	Citywide	
Author: Craig Cook	Job title: Head of Repairs and Maintenance	
Cabinet lead: Tom Renhard, Cabinet Member Housing Delivery and Homes	Executive Director lead: Stephen Peacock, Executive Director Growth and Regeneration	
Proposal origin: BCC Staff		
Decision maker: Cabinet Member Decision forum: Cabinet		
Purpose of Report:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To authorise a procurement process to commission a waking watch provision to tower blocks owned and managed by the authority. 2. To authorise the funding and procurement process to install fire alarm systems in tower blocks where waking watch provision implemented to negate the need for a waking watch 		
Evidence Base:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bristol City Council is responsible for fire safety at 62 high-rise blocks. Since the Grenfell tragedy in 2017, We have carried out checks and reviews of our blocks to ensure they do not have the same cladding and were assessed as safe. We have installed fire breaks, improved compartmentation and replaced fire doors in many blocks. However there has been development of new knowledge within industry as a result of extensive testing of insulation types, risk aversion and legislation is changing, shifting focus to other materials other than Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding. 2. This year the Council has commissioned PAS9980 inspection reports. These have indicated that despite EPS cladding systems being installed to building regulations at the time and in accordance to manufacturer's instructions interim measures are required whilst remediation works are undertaken. It is recommended precautionary measures of a waking watch on other blocks where there may be a risk are implemented while remedial works are carried out. 3. Our information on four council blocks in Barton Hill (Longlands, Ashmead, Harwood and Barton) led us to introduce a waking watch in May 2022. 4. Following two recent major fire incidents in Council high-rise blocks (one caused by lithium batteries exploding at Twinnell House and the other by arson at Eccleston House), meetings have taken place with Avon and Somerset Chief Fire Officer and Service with the Mayor, Chief Executive, Service Director and Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery and Homes. 5. As a result of the inspection reports, and the conversations with Avon and Somerset Fire and Rescue, we have commenced a programme of interim measures across all 38 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) high rise blocks with Expanded Polystyrene (EPS), or EPS like, cladding. This includes waking watch. This is a decision supported by Avon and Somerset Chief Fire Officer and Service. 		

6. Cabinet is asked to note that an urgent key decision was taken on 22 November 2022, in accordance with the requirements of the Finance Scheme of Delegations, to put in place emergency waking watch at relevant blocks in the city at a cost of up to £2m until 20 January 2023.
7. The introduction of Waking Watch as interim measures will help ensure the safety of residents remains paramount and secure. The Council must commission this service as a precautionary measure to protect the health and welfare of residents of high-rise blocks where EPS is present. The anticipated start date for the service is 21 January 2023 following on from the emergency key decision already taken. It will remain in place at each block until suitable alternative measures are implemented or issues remediated.
8. This report therefore also seeks authority to procure and award a contract(s) for the implementation of fire alarms in the tower blocks which will then negate the need for a waking watch provision.
9. To complete PAS9980 assessments the approximate cost is £1m and is being sourced from HRA reserves as approved at Cabinet 04 October 2022. Costs of additional fire safety measures will be captured within the Housing revenue account business plan, which will be reviewed and reprofiled to account for the additional financial pressures caused as a result. A contract to carry out a waking watch service will have significant financial demands for the HRA in the immediate and medium terms. The Council spends on average £2.5m per annum on safety measures and is developing a programme of works worth £48m in place to carry out the removal of EPS cladding. Cabinet will be updated as part of the HRA business planning process.

Estimated costs for Waking Watch provision are:

Fire Marshall total		77
Cost per warden per week	£	2,604.00
WW Sub total per week	£	200,508.00
Key decision approved until 6th Dec	£	701,778.00
Key decision approved 6th -20th Jan 23	£	1,303,302.00
Cabinet approval request to cover 21st Jan -31st March	£	2,005,080.00
Cabinet approval request to cover WW Budget 23/24	£	10,426,416.00
WW total	£	14,436,576.00
Cabinet approval request to cover Wireless Alarm Budget	£	9,900,000.00

Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations:

That cabinet:

1. Authorise the Executive Director Growth and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery and Homes to take all steps required to procure and award the contract(s) (including individual contracts over £500k) necessary for the implementation of a waking watch at a cost of up to £2m from 21 January 2023 to 31 March 2023 and £10.4m from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.
2. Authorise the Executive Director Growth and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery and Homes to take all steps required to procure and award the contract(s) (including individual contracts over £500k) necessary for the implementation of fire alarms in tower blocks which will negate the need for a waking watch at a cost of up to £9.9m.
3. Authorises the Executive Director Growth and Regeneration to invoke any subsequent extensions/variatio ns specifically defined in the contract(s) being awarded, up to the maximum budget envelope outlined in this report.

4. Note the emergency key decision taken on 22 November 2022 authorising spend of up to £2m for emergency waking watch at various blocks in the city up to 20 January 2023.

Corporate Strategy alignment: This report aligns priorities within the corporate strategy by ensuring a decent safe standard for the council owned social housing within our homes and communities' priorities (HC1)

City Benefits:

Although a precautionary measure, this proposal improves resident safety in the event of an emergency. A secondary consequence of having 24hr patrols at site may result in less anti-social behaviour within blocks and around estates.

Consultation Details:

This issue has been discussed with the Mayor, the Chief Executive and Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery and Homes, as well as in consultation with the local fire authority. Public consultation with local MP's, the LGA, core cities and the department for and levelling up.

Background Documents:

[HRA Budget and Business Plan 2022.pdf \(bristol.gov.uk\)](#)
[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Cabinet, 04/10/2022 16:00 \(bristol.gov.uk\)](#)

Revenue Cost	<p>1. £2m 21st Jan – 31st March 2023</p> <p>2. £10.4m April 23 – March 2024</p> <p>Sub Total £12.4m</p> <p>3. Alarms - £9.9m</p> <p>Total £22.3m</p>	Source of Revenue Funding	HRA
Capital Cost	£	Source of Capital Funding	
One off cost <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing cost <input type="checkbox"/>		Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/> Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	

Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:

1. Finance Advice: This report seeks approval for Bristol City Council (BCC) to enter a contract for up to £2 million to secure the provision of a Waking Watch warden service at the Council's high-rise blocks for 2023.

In June 2022, Cabinet approved a drawdown of £1 million from the HRA general reserve to cover expenditure already made for Waking Watch at Barton Hill (4 blocks) and PAS9980 inspections. Also, an emergency key decision was taken on 22 November 2022, further authorising a spend of up to £2 million for emergency Waking Watch at various blocks in the city until the end of the financial year 2023.

This additional £4 million (not including the June Cabinet approval) expenditure will be funded from the HRA general reserve and at the current run rate will result in a yearend outturn of £4 million deficit.

The report further seeks authorisation to spend an additional £10.4 million to extend the service to the end of the 2023-24 financial year. Given that this expenditure is revenue in nature and has been capped at £14.4 million (excluding the initial £1.m approved in June) the impact will be modelled and monitored through the 2023-24 HRA business planning and budget. Although this is yet to be modelled in the 30-year business plan, with rental income, announced in the autumn statement capped at 7% and given current Inflationary pressures, incurring this cost will impact the council's ability to deliver other services.

Approval for a further £9.9 million expenditure is also required to install wireless fire alarms in the HRA dwellings (33 blocks) where Waking Watch is being organised and have been outlined in the 2023-24 Housing Investment Programme (HIP) report. It is likely most of these costs could be capitalised and the impact of this will be modelled in 2023-24 HRA business plan and budget.

Finance Business Partner: Archa Campbell, Interim Finance Manager – Housing and Landlord Services, 23 November 2022

2. Legal Advice: The procurement process must be conducted in line with the 2015 Procurement Regulations and the Councils own procurement rules. Legal services will advise and assist officers with regard to the conduct of the procurement process and the resulting contractual arrangements.

Legal Team Leader: Husinara Jones, Team Manager/Solicitor 14 November 2022

3. Implications on IT: I can see no implications on IT in regard to this activity

IT Team Leader: Alex Simpson, Senior solution architect

4. HR Advice: The report seeks approval to procure an external provider for a waking watch service. There are no internal HR implications evident in this report

HR Partner: Celia Williams, HR Business Partner – Growth and Regeneration, 22 November 2022

EDM Sign-off	Stephen Peacock Executive Director Growth and Regeneration	23 November 2022
Cabinet Member sign-off	Cllr Tom Renhard, Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery and Homes	23 November 2022
For Key Decisions - Mayor's Office sign-off	Mayor's Office	7 November 2022

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal	NO
Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	NO
Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny	NO
Appendix D – Risk assessment	NO
Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal	NO
Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal	NO
Appendix G – Financial Advice	NO
Appendix H – Legal Advice	NO
Appendix I – Exempt Information	NO
Appendix J – HR advice	NO
Appendix K – ICT	NO
Appendix L – Procurement	NO