

---

# **An update on the demolition of Goscote House and the installation of sprinklers in the tower blocks**

Housing Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: 12<sup>th</sup>.April 2021

Lead director/officer: Chris Burgin

---

## **Useful information**

- Ward(s) affected:
- Report author: Simon Nicholls
- Author contact details: [simon.nicholls@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:simon.nicholls@leicester.gov.uk)
- Report version number: v.1

### **1. Summary**

The demolition of Goscote House and the installation of sprinkler systems in our tower blocks are both significant projects that the division are currently delivering, both challenging but both will deliver significant and positive outcomes for the existing tenants and those that follow.

Whilst both projects have been delayed, Goscote House because the initial decision was reconsidered due to the potential increased costs of the demolition and the desire to be doubly sure the block had no future in its current form.

And the Sprinkler Installation Project because a strategic decision was made to briefly delay the procurement of the project due to the pandemic to ensure that the procurement exercise would be successful in securing an installation contractor when it happened.

### **2. Recommended actions/decision**

That members of the Housing Scrutiny commission note the contents of this report.

### **3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement**

Report prepared to update Housing Scrutiny members on the progress of the demolition of Goscote House and the Sprinkler Installation Project.

### **4. Background and options with supporting evidence**

n/a, for information only.

### **5. Detailed report**

#### **The demolition of Goscote House.**

Background/context.

The St Peters tower block refurbishment project was started primarily because the heating and hot water risers were in poor condition causing leaks and outages and they needed to be renewed. To do this meant that the residents would need to be moved out of their flats, this gave an opportunity to carry out a comprehensive refurbishment of the entire block, including the upgrading of the fire compartmentation and passive fire protection measures.

The project started with Framland House, followed by Clipstone, Gordon and then Maxfield. The project was logistically complicated having to relocate 85 tenants from each block for the duration of the works, but the project was fully delivered, and the blocks have been fully occupied since and remain popular. Flats in Goscote House were used as temporary accommodation for tenants returning to their original flat after the refurbishment had taken place. Decisions about Goscote House had been deferred until the refurbishment of the first four blocks had been completed.

Goscote House, the 5<sup>th</sup>. Block on St. Peters was constructed differently to the others, is taller and consisted of a large number of bedsits and cluster flats. For some time Goscote House had been unpopular and difficult to let unlike the other 4 blocks which were popular with tenants. It was clear that any refurbishment had to do more at Goscote House and would require the layout to be looked at to try and reduce the numbers of bedsit accommodation. Before we committed to refurbishing and reconfiguring the block, we decided to engage consultants to tell us if what we wanted to do was actually possible and if there were any other considerations we needed to take into account. We were very aware that this block was constructed in the same way as the infamous block, Ronan Point, which, many years ago, suffered a partial collapse after a gas explosion. There is no gas in Goscote House.

The report concluded that we could make the structural alterations required to reconfigure the block from bedsits to flats but it was cautious on the expected life expectancy of the block. It was felt that the expenditure required to refurbish and reconfigure the block would require a guaranteed life expectancy in excess of 30 years and the report concluded that this would have to be reviewed every five years with no guarantees. The decision was taken that the block should be demolished, and a low-level block built as a replacement.

At this time the block was still occupied because it had been used to temporarily house tenants from Maxfield House whilst it was being refurbished as well as having several established tenants still living there. The local neighbourhood Housing Office worked with the tenants to find them housing solution elsewhere and the block was finally emptied.

The demolition of Goscote was never going to be easy due to the close proximity of the neighbouring buildings, so it could not be blown up. Consultants were brought in to help with the procurement of a demolition contractor and it was agreed that we would follow a similar process that was used successfully for the demolition of New Walk Centre.

The project team was established, and the process was started.

As part of this process additional specialist surveys were required so it could be established how the external structure would actually be deconstructed, it was during this time that it became clear the original budget of £3.0m may not be enough to complete the project and it was paused so that the decision could be reviewed to confirm that demolition was still the best option.

A thorough review of what had happened previously, the new estimated costs, alternative housing options and looking into whether Goscote House had a future with an alternative housing supplier were all considered, however the review confirmed that the original decision to demolish Goscote House, even at greater cost, was still the correct course of action. The City Mayor signed a revised decision notice on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March and the work continues.

## Timeline for the demolition of Goscote House and key stages

Task	Completion Dates
<p><b>Detailed Design</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mechanical, electrical &amp; plumbing surveys</li> <li>• Intrusive structural investigations</li> <li>• Land acquisition activities for of site compound</li> <li>• Develop communications &amp; stakeholder engagement plan</li> <li>• Initial stakeholder engagement</li> <li>• Planning consultation</li> <li>• Highways consultation</li> <li>• Party wall appointment and notifications</li> </ul>	Nov 2019 - May 2020
<p><b>Stage One Procurement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and Agree Procurement Strategy with LCC Procurement and Housing Client</li> <li>• Preparation Stage 1 Tender Documents</li> <li>• Issue Open Tender Stage 1</li> <li>• tender Evaluation</li> </ul>	Mar -July 2020
<p><b>Stage Two Procurement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production of MEP, Struct &amp; Civils Demolition Spec/Requirements</li> <li>• Amalgamation of specialist demolition requirements</li> <li>• Preparation of Stage 2 Tender Docs</li> <li>• Issue Tender Stage 2</li> <li>• Tender evaluations and interviews</li> <li>• Prepare Draft Contract</li> <li>• Contract Awarded</li> <li>• Contract Signed</li> </ul>	Sept 2020 - June 2021
<p><b>Demolition Contractor - Enabling Works</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site establishment</li> <li>• Neighbouring stakeholder temporary works</li> <li>• Erect scaffolding</li> <li>• Erect hoist</li> <li>• Erect tower crane</li> <li>• Soft Strip</li> <li>• Asbestos removal</li> <li>• Services isolation/disconnection</li> </ul>	July - Dec 2021
<p><b>Demolition Contractor - Deconstructions Works</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top down deconstruction</li> <li>• Foundation removal and back fill</li> <li>• Project completion</li> </ul>	Jan 2022 – Nov 2022

## Photograph of Goscote House



### **Sprinkler update:**

In response to the tragedy at Grenfell Tower the City Mayor made the decision that we would retro fit sprinklers in all our 4 remaining tower blocks at St Peters Estate and at St Leonards Court.

At the time of the fire at Grenfell the refurbishment of Maxfield House was nearing completion and the decision was taken that we would delay the reoccupation and install sprinklers whilst the block was still empty. The sprinklers were fitted, and the block reoccupied. To date we have not had an activation, which is good news.

The fitting of sprinklers in occupied buildings poses greater challenges and officers have had to think of how we can achieve this safely and without causing too much inconvenience to the tenants, this has now been agreed, in effect all the components will be fabricated off site and fitted to each flat in one day, they will not be connected until they have all been installed and at the same time the risers in the communal landings will be installed, and then they will be commissioned all at the same time. It is worth noting that the drilling through the concrete walls will be a messy job and we will be working with the tenants to try and reduce the impact of this activity on them.

At the start of the pandemic the Strategic Director of CDN made the pragmatic decision to review the procurement timetable of all of our projects and as a result this exercise was paused. If we had continued to procure this contract it was very likely that we would not

be able to engage with suppliers fully and risked it being a fruitless exercise, and if we had been successful it would be unlikely that tenants would be happy to let us into their homes to carry out this type of work, or the contractors prepared to.

It should also be noted that the installation of sprinklers is in addition to the passive fire protection measures already in the blocks, the tower blocks already conform to the required standards without them so at no time have the tenants been at risk due to the pause.

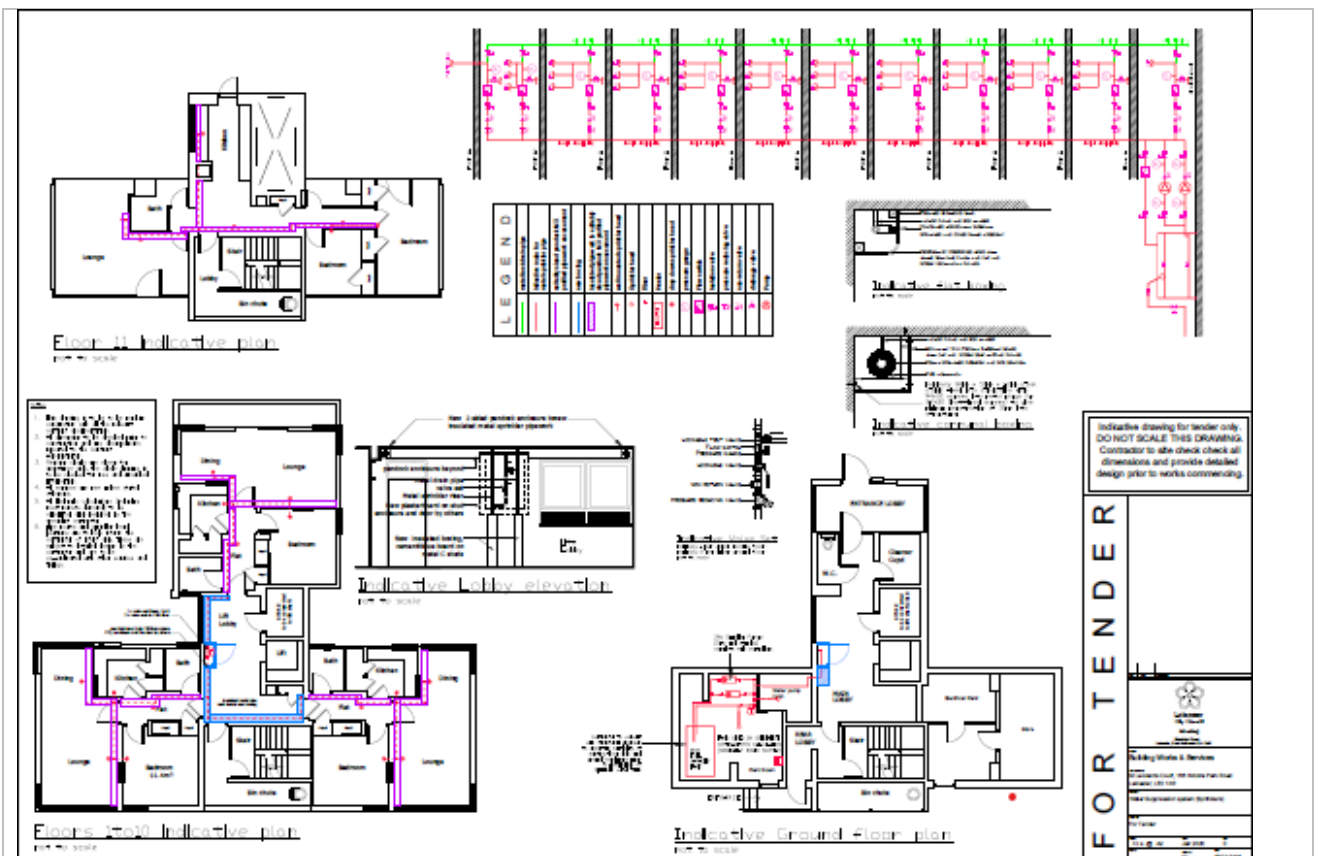
What's happening now:

- Agreed a revised timetable with procurement and legal services to reflect the current workloads in each of the departments
- Stage 1 section 20 leaseholder consultation began on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021. This is a process we have to carry out by law to ensure that the leaseholders in the blocks are fully consulted on the proposals because they have to pay a share of the installation costs
- The contractors with the necessary competencies and qualifications have been identified via the industry Loss Prevention Certification Board (LPCB), these companies will be invited to bid for the works.
- Aim to advertise the opportunity on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021 with the contract awarded to the successful contractor in September 2021

What order and what's the timeline:

Once we have made the award to the successful contractor, we will expect them to be on site from November 2021, the blocks will be completed in the following order:

St Leonards Court  
Framland House  
Clipstone House  
Gordon House.



The above picture shows the vertical and horizontal pipe runs for the installation at St Leonards Court.

Below is a picture of what the installation will look like in a tenants home, this is a flat in Maxfield House.



## 6. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

### 6.1 Financial implications

Goscote House demolition and the Installation of Sprinklers are both included within the current HRA capital programme. A total budget for the works across all years of £4.952m has been approved for Goscote House with a further £1.8m for for sprinklers.

Stuart McAvoy – Principal Accountant

6.2 Legal implications

None sought this is for information only

6.3 Equalities implications

None sought this is for information only

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

None sought this is for information only