



Investment in Council Housing

Update on Hospital Close

For consideration by: Housing Scrutiny Commission

Date: 29 November 2021

Lead Director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: potentially all
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- Report version number: V.1

1. Summary

The Housing Division are responsible for circa 20,000 council houses and need to make sure that they continue to meet the Decency Standard, conform to all legislative health and safety requirements and meet the expectations of our tenants. To do this we have an extensive capital programme that ensures our homes are always being invested in and upgraded as well as a programme of planned maintenance work to ensure all elements of our homes continue to work and be safe.

In addition we also carry out one off projects that arise as a result of legislative changes and we are always looking at ways to replenish our lost stock as a result of tenants exercising their right to buy whether that be building new homes or buying homes off the open market.

2. Recommended actions/decision

none

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

This report has been prepared to update Housing Scrutiny Members on the ongoing investment in council housing and specific one off projects, to seek their comments and views

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

none

5. Detailed report

Investment in council housing falls into 4 distinct areas: planned programmes of works, ongoing maintenance contracts, one off projects and investment in new stock. Alongside this we have policies that influence how we deliver services, such as The Fire Safety Policy and the Asbestos Management Policy.

Planned Programmes:

The table below shows the major work areas that form our planned maintenance programmes.

Description	20/21 budget
Kitchen and bathroom refurbishments	4,500
Rewiring and electrical upgrades	2,200
Boiler replacements	4,780
Roofing	900
Soffits/facias and cladding	350
Disabled adaptations	1,200
New doors and windows	150
General Safety works	290
Door Entry	280
Way lighting	150
Concrete path repairs	100
Balcony works	600
District Heating	908
Fire Safety	1,615
Totals	18,023

Major work areas in more detail. Generally.

At the start of the pandemic in March 2020 Technical Services, like all other teams in the council, could only carry out essential works. They worked with their staff and contractors to try and maintain certain work areas to ensure our houses remained compliant, this was particularly difficult in the earlier days, but they managed it. Priority was given to disabled adaptations, urgent boiler renewals and urgently required void properties, where we could assist the inhouse repairs service.

As time progressed the work areas started to come back online, the Phase 1 new builds first and then other external works, like roofing and cladding. Internal works started again, rewires for example but at a slower rate as tenants were not comfortable having operatives in their homes for an extended period of time.

Technical Services, their contractors and the inhouse teams have worked very hard against the backdrop of the pandemic and have continued to deliver a massive investment programme which has kept the tenants and leaseholders safe.

We now find ourselves in a improving situation and the volume of work we are able to carry out is increasing month on month but it is still challenging, there are nationally recognised labour shortages and supply chain issues that are having an impact on certain work streams, however despite this we have been able to complete some work areas a ahead of schedule and continue to look for ways to bring other work areas up to full capacity. We expect the situation to continue to improve into 2022.

Kitchens & Bathrooms

The number of refurbishments has reduced this year due to uncertainty due to COVID, some tenants have not wanted to have the work carried out and our contractors have experienced capacity issues. During 21/22 up to 600 kitchens and bathrooms will have been installed.

Boiler Replacements

Boilers are replaced when it come to the end of its economical life, and assessment is made by our inhouse gas servicing team. We have now started to fit boilers ourselves as well as with contractors. A total of 650 boilers will have been replaced in 21/22.

Re-Wiring

This is an ongoing programme, we have experience delays due to COVID but we are now getting to pre pandemic levels.

Roofing

We have continued to replace roofs and will have re roofed throughout and have completed more than expected.

Soffits and facias and cladding

We have been renewing the cladding to houses and blocks of flat in Beaumont Leys, this is going particularly well and we expect to complete the scheme ahead of schedule, which will mean we can move onto our next location sooner.

Way lighting

We have been upgrading all communal lighting with new energy efficient LED fittings, this has proved extremely popular and has had a positive effect on energy consumption, the residents have noticed a general improvement. The emergency lighting is also upgraded as part of this work and has impacted positively on fire safety.

Concrete path repairs

We have a long tern programme to renew the concrete footpaths to the rear of all bungalows, this year we have renewed the ones at Compass Road and Ocean Road.

District heating

We want to make the system more robust and less susceptible to unplanned outages. We have been renewing all the block entry pipework as historically this has proved to be an issue. This has had a positive effect and the number of unplanned outages has reduced significantly, this work is ongoing.

Fire safety

The Building Safety Bill is coming next year and all our high risk building will need to be registered with the new building safety regulator. We are currently working to ensure that we have all the documentation in place that means we can do this. We still have to manage the fire safety in all our blocks and we continue to carry out fire risk assessments, regular inspections and planned maintenance work to ensure our building are safe. One of our biggest areas of expenditure is ensuring that all front entrance doors are fire doors. We also do other smaller projects such as making sure all loft hatches in specialist houses are complaint, bin stores meet requirements, smoke ventilation is good etc. We have circa 1000 communal space we are responsible for, this is an ongoing area of work.

Disabled Adaptations

We have continued to carry out adaptation throughout however there has been limited capacity to make referrals for adaptations to properties to enable occupation by people on the housing register who are waiting for a suitable council property to become available. Slipping £300k of this budget will enable this work to be carried out in 2022/23.

How we decide what we do:

Component for Replacement	Leicester's Replacement Condition Criteria	Decent Homes Standard Minimum Age
Bathroom	All properties to have a bathroom for life by 2030	40 years / 30 years
Central Heating Boiler	Based on assessed condition (from annual service)	15 years (future life span of new boilers is expected to be on average 12 years)
Chimney	Based on assessed condition (from Stock Condition Survey/ HHSRS)	50 years
Windows & Doors	Based on assessed condition (from Stock Condition Survey/HHSRS)	40 years
Electrics	Every 30 years	30 years
Kitchen	All properties to have an upgraded kitchen by 2036	30 years / 20 years
Roof	Based on assessed condition (from Stock Condition Survey/HHSRS)	50 years (20 years for flat roofs)
Wall finish (external)	Based on assessed condition (from Stock Condition Survey/HHSRS)	80 years
Wall structure	Based on assessed condition (from Stock Condition Survey/HHSRS)	60 years

We also carry out condition survey to make sure we are only replacing items that we need to and properties are not added to the programme based on date only.

Maintenance programmes:

We spend £2.5m every year ensuring that all existing facilities that deliver essential service are maintained, the follow is a list of those work areas.

Description	What we spend
Electrical work - miscellaneous	102,500

Door entry system repair and maintenance	76,900
Alarm systems repair and maintenance	117,900
Fire extinguishers repair and maintenance	15,400
Roofing repairs	35,900
Harassment – security packages	15,400
Water Hygiene management	256,300
District Heating maintenance	665,800
Lifts – communal areas	153,800
Lifts- disabled adaptations	76,900
Leicester energy company	8,200
Washing machine – repair and maintenance	25,900
Water main supplies	76,900
Communal TV aerials	76,900
Targeting rent cookers	5,100
Lightening conductors	20,500
External painting	76,900
Warden call systems	25,600
Structural works	156,300
Fall arrest systems	10,300
Asbestos Management	535,000
Total	2,534,400

These work areas are mainly concerned with pre planned cyclical maintenance but also include a provision for 'call outs' and to support the inhouse repairs service.

One off projects

- Demolition of Goscote House
- Refurbishment of The Leys
- Installation of Sprinklers
- Bungalow Conversion Project

Demolition of Goscote House:

An update report was bought to the HSC on the 12th. April 2021 since then and a demolition contractor has been appointed, DSM, and the building handed over to them to deconstruct the building.



The current situation:

- Soft internal strip complete
- Scaffolding being erected
- Site compound set up
- Piled foundations for crane complete

Next steps.

- Erect tower crane
- Complete scaffold – December 21
- Deconstruction starts January 22
- Deconstruction completes December 22

General:

The demolition is currently on target to complete on time and to programme. We are currently looking at options for the site, we are having initial discussion with Planning to help inform the decision-making process, however it is hoped that the site will be used to deliver new affordable housing but no decision has been made yet.

The Leys

Was bought as part of our ongoing acquisition programme, an 8-storey block of flats in Beaumont Leys that needs fully refurbishing.



What's happening now:

To try and bring the building back into use as quickly as possible it was decided to split the work into two specific work streams, the strip out and the refurbishment. The procurement exercise for the first work stream has been completed and the contractor is currently on site doing the strip out work. We are currently trying to work out the best way to procure a contractor to carry out the refurbishment, there is currently a lack of engagement with contractors to carry out work of this value so we are working with colleagues in

Procurement to establish the best and quickest way to do this. The number of flats will be increased from 31 to 33 by utilising former office space on the ground floor.

Next steps:

A procurement exercise needs to be carried out to appoint a contractor to deliver the refurbishment, once this has been resolved a contractor will be appointed, the expected completion date is late summer 2022.

Sprinkler installation

A full update was brought to the HSC on the 12th April 2021 since then the procurement exercise has finished and we are currently concluding the final part of the Section 20 process, this is where we have to consult with all leaseholders before the contract can be awarded to make sure they are fully aware what is happening and that they will have to pay a contribution. There is a legal process we have to follow, which has prescribed timelines. As soon as this is completed a programme of works will be agreed. By the end of 21/22, sprinkler systems will have been installed in 3 of the 5 high storey tower blocks, with the remaining 2 blocks scheduled in.

Bungalow conversion project

This forms part of the underoccupancy/overcrowding project that the Housing Division is running. These bungalows have a constrained layout and are unpopular due to the size of the kitchen. This project completely changes the internal layout to provide a bungalow with more balanced internal layout. They have proved popular and have all been let to tenants that have moved down from 2/3 bedroomed houses so that these can be let to people of the housing register waiting for larger homes.

Investment in New Stock

- Hospital Close – see below
- One off Acquisitions
- Acquisition of large portfolio.

Supporting policies

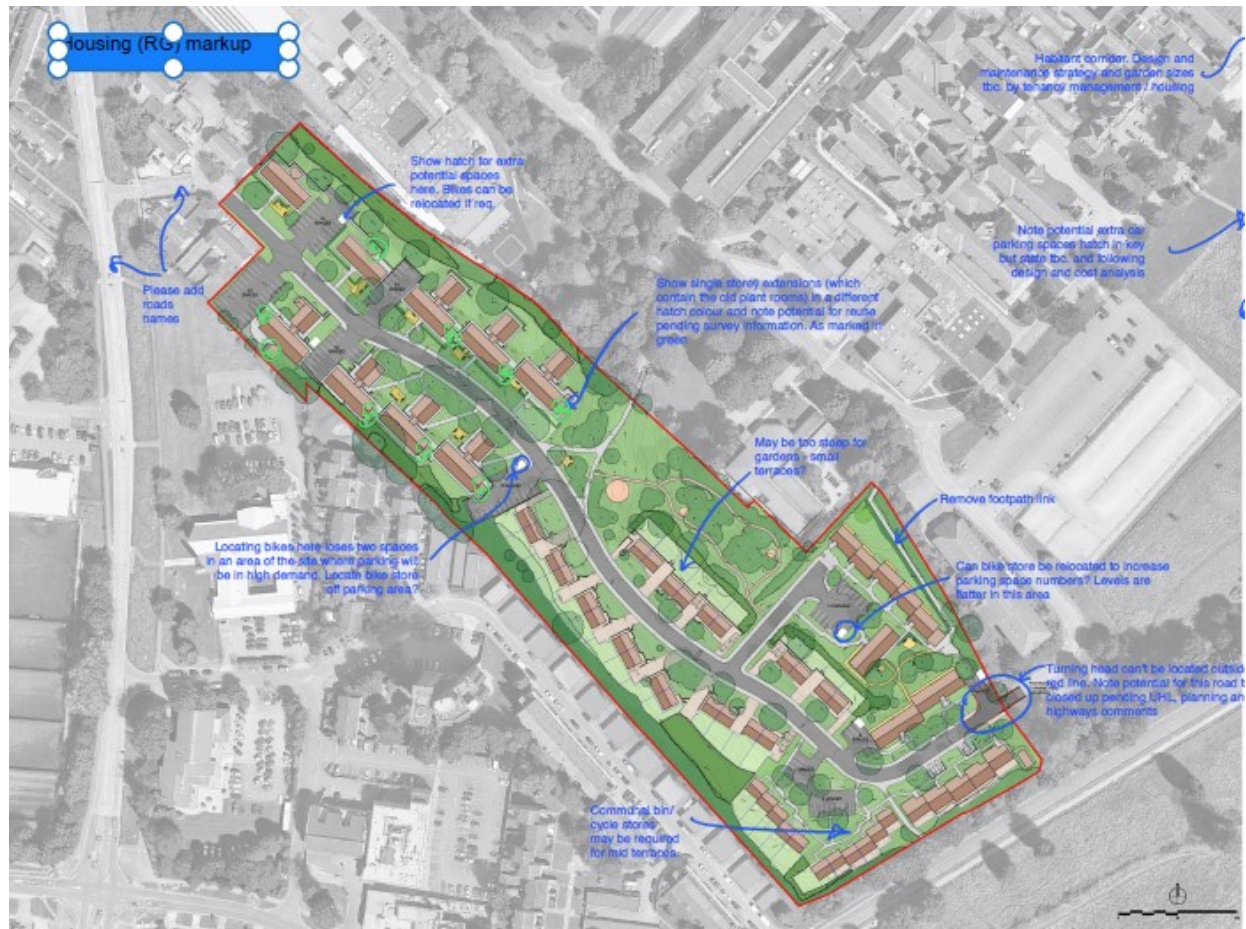
- Asbestos Management Policy
- Fire Safety Strategy
- Water Hygiene

Upcoming areas of work

- Building Safety Bill

Hospital Close update:

The purchase of Hospital Close completed on 1st. April 2021 and consisted of 174 unit of accommodation ranging from 3 storey blocks of former nurses' accommodation to more traditional 3 bedroomed semidetached houses:



A topographical survey has been carried out and the site plan above shows the proposed sit layout, including defined garden areas for the houses, pathways, landscaping and car parking provision.

What has happened so far:

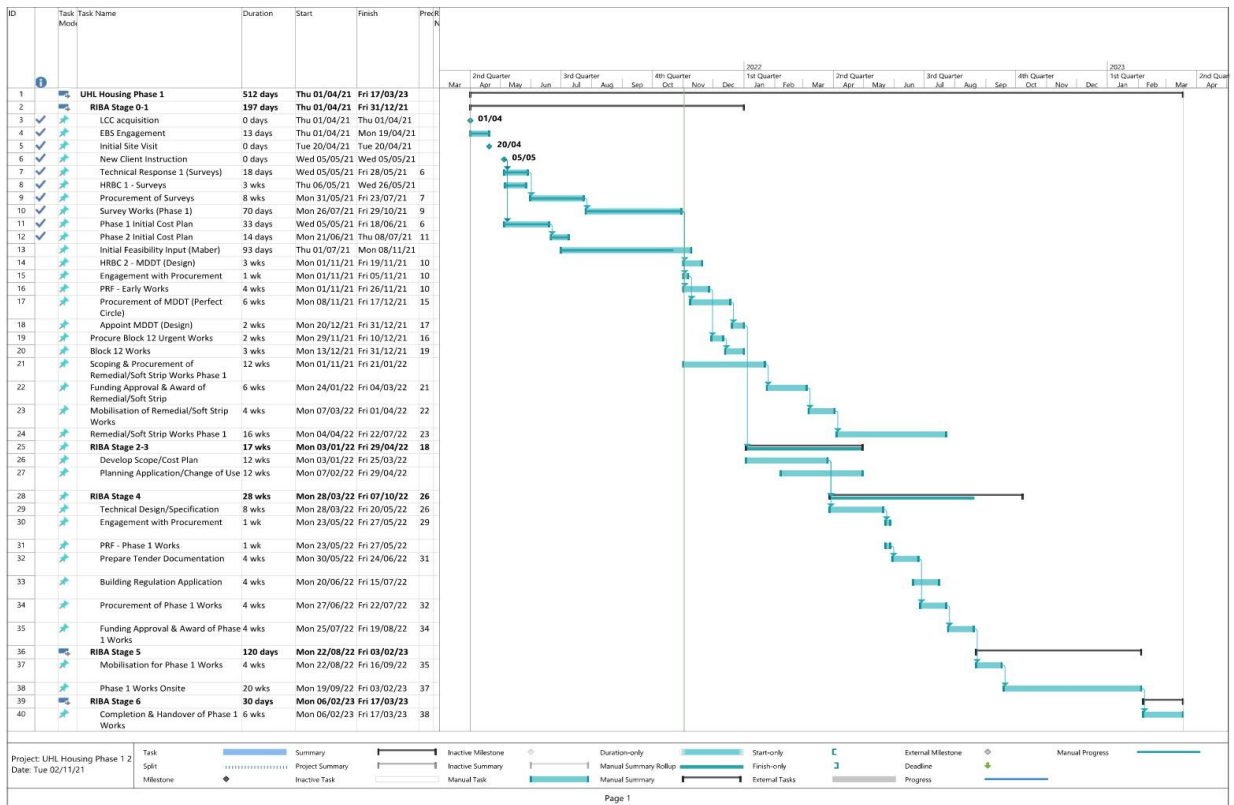
- All the properties have been cleared
- All graffiti has been removed
- All fly tipping removed, this is ongoing
- 24 hour site security is in place, this has been very positive
- A responsive repair team has been created to respond to urgent requests
- We have carried out asbestos surveys to all blocks
- Bat surveys have been carried out
- Tree surveys
- Topographical surveys
- Measured building surveys have been carried out.
- M&E condition surveys
- Structural surveys
- Drainage surveys

- The grounds cleared and a maintenance schedule is being drawn up.

What happens next:

We need to get the properties refurbished and back into use as soon as we can and to do this as quickly as we can the project will be phased. Phase 1 will consist of the 38 houses and Phase 2 will include all the blocks that are currently shared accommodation, both phases will run in tandem but phase 1 will start first.

The programme for phase 1 has been agreed, phase 2 is currently being finalised:



Photographs of the site:







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

6.1 Financial implications

No comments sought, for information only

6.2 Legal implications

No comments sought, for information only

6.3 Equalities implications

No comments sought, for information only

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

No comments sought, for information only

6.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

No comments sought, for information only

7. Background information and other papers:

8. Summary of appendices:

9. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

10. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?