

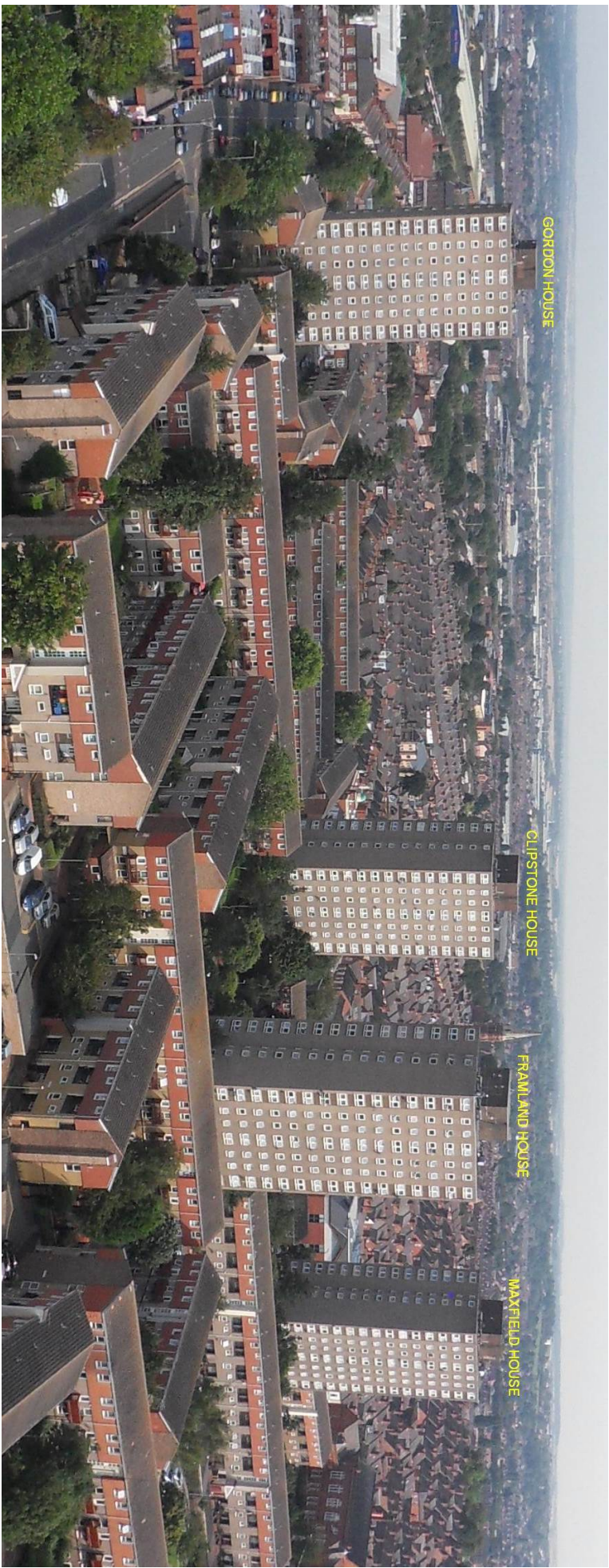
Housing Scrutiny Commission

Tower Block Refurbishment Update

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Councillor Andy Connelly

Lead director: Chris Burgin

Date: 22nd August 2016



Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: Castle
- Report author: Simon Nicholls
- Author contact details: simon.nicholls@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: V.2

1. Summary

- 1.1 Refurbishing all four tower blocks on St Peters estates using existing staffing resources was always going to be ambitious and challenging. To date we have successfully refurbished two blocks and a third is in progress.
- 1.2 The refurbishments have been extensive, covering all aspects of the block from the rewiring, heating, hot/cold water and the lifts as well as items not easily noticed such as upgrading the fire safety of the building. The only remaining items to refurbish are the communal floors and decorating which we will do at the very end of the programme.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the content of the report

3. Supporting information including options considered:

Scope of the project.

- 3.1 The four tower blocks on St Peters Estate, Gordon, Framland, Clipston and Maxfield House were constructed in the early 1970's and form an integral part of St Peters Estate. All four blocks have the same basic layout and have 85 one bed roomed flats, Clipstone and Gordon also have a two bed roomed flat on the ground floor, see appendix B for standard layout.
- 3.2 The refurbishment was specified by officers in Housing and incorporated several technical aspects, the same officers are also project managing the refurbishments which also covers all aspects of health and safety and statutory notifications and approvals.
- 3.3 The lift refurbishment have been managed by colleagues in Estates and Property Services
- 3.4 The project does not include Goscote House, We have appointed consultants who are currently preparing a report on its condition and options for its future. A separate report will be brought to the Assistant Mayor for Housing for consideration.

Why the need to refurbish

- 3.5 The existing heating and hot water risers to all four blocks were in poor condition and had been repaired several times; there were regular pipe bursts and loss of heating and hot water to tenants. An independent report was commissioned which recommended the pipework be replaced and consideration be given to delivering heating and hot water in a more domestic scale to help future maintenance.(this was incorporated in the specification)
- 3.6 The Fire Service had also contacted us because a recent audit had raised concerns about all four blocks and their current level of fire protection. The Fire Service did not want to serve us with a statutory notice but sought assurance that we would act on their recommendations. The main areas for concern related to the condition of the communal fire doors, the flat front doors, a suitable fire alarm system was fitted to the block and a fire policy that was communicate to tenants so that they knew what to do in the event of an emergency. We gave an undertaking that these issues would be addressed by April 2017.
- 3.7 The cupboards in the flats that contained the water tanks and cylinders also had asbestos in them; this had become friable over time and posed a danger to operatives that may have to work in these areas. The removal of this asbestos would have to be notified to the HSE and would mean that the tenants would need to be moved out to enable a 3 stage enclosure to be erected.

Progress so far:

Framland House:

- 3.8 This was the first block that we refurbished and was completed in two halves. We refurbished the top eight floors first, moved the tenants back in and then refurbished the lower floors. We did this in the hope that it would make for a speedier refurbishment but in reality this did not happen because of the logistics of moving so many tenants in and out of the block had been underestimated and any economies of scale we hoped for were lost.
- 3.9 The refurbishment was well received by the tenants who appreciated their newly fully refurbished homes.
- 3.10 The refurbishment of the lifts then followed, which resulted in one lift being out of action for several months, meaning that at times you would have to either walk up or down a flight of stairs to access your flat. For example if you lived on the 15th. floor you would could get the lift to either the 17th. or 13th. floor and walk up or down.

Clipstone House

- 3.11 As a result of the difficulties we faced at Framland with the moves in and out of the block and the fact that it didn't save anytime and the obvious issues with having contractors working in the same block that tenants were living in it was decide that the whole block would be emptied, refurbished and re occupied. This worked well and enabled us to programme the contractors work more efficiently.

It also meant that more work could be done whilst all of the tenants were out such as the installation of the lifts and the complete replacement of all the fire doors. (one of the issues at Framland was that we had to maintain fire safety standards because tenants were still living in the block)

- 3.12 Again the reoccupation of the block took some time, dealing with 85 people moving back into the block was a big task that was carried out in conjunction with the emptying of Gordon House. It did help in one way because it meant that some tenants moving from Gordon House could be offered permanent moves to flats in Clipstone House, there is always a reasonably high percentage churn of tenancies in 1 bedroom accommodation and this still happened during the refurbishment process.

Gordon House.

- 3.13 Is now vacant and currently being worked on. New front doors and communal fire doors had been completed in advance of the main refurbishment and one lift replaced to try and ensure that the block is refurbished as quickly as possible. The works to install the new heating riser has also already begun. The site was formally handed over to the main contractor on the 1st August where the programmed list of individual works that forms the total refurbishment will begin. (Appendix A).

Maxfield House.

- 3.14 Work has started to replace the lifts and new front doors have been fitted to the flats as well as the renewal of the communal fire doors. The process of moving out the tenants will begin as soon as Gordon House is complete.

Cost of the works:

- 3.15 Each tower block will cost in excess of £2m each to refurbish, up to £1m of this is to replace the heating and hot water systems and replacing two lifts in each block will cost up to £250k.

4. Details of Scrutiny

Report prepared at the request of the Housing Scrutiny Commission

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

- 5.1.1 Total budget for the Tower Block Refurbishment scheme is £9.543m which consists of £5.387m to Project C301089 to cover Structural Surveys, Enabling Works, Asbestos Removal, Installation of new lifts plus miscellaneous costs e.g. removal and disturbance allowances. The remaining £4.156m is to be funded from existing other capital schemes i.e. Bathrooms & Kitchens, Rewiring, Fire

Risks & Door Replacement.

5.1.2 The refurbishment programme commenced in 2012-13 and was planned to be completed in 2016-17. To date £3,6m has been spent against the £5.387 budget in C301089 and £2.1m from the other capital programmes. It is currently envisaged the scheme will be completed in 2017-18 due to reprogramming the installation of the new lifts plus it taking longer to move tenants from and back decant tenants from their flats prior/after work has been carried out. However, it is currently forecasted that the overall scheme will be completed within the existing budget.

Geoffrey Bates (Accountant Housing)

5.2 Legal implications

None sought

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

None sought

5.4 Equalities Implications

None sought

5.5 Tenancy Management implications

5.5.1 Temporarily, re-housing elderly and vulnerable tenants to enable the refurbishments to happen has been a challenging experience. In some instances they are moving to Goscote House, albeit on a temporary basis, which is unpopular, when they have lived in their flats for a number of years and this is difficult for them to understand. Many have language difficulties and sorting out all the utilities and removals and mail etc. has proved very time consuming.

5.5.2 Once the refurbishments have been completed they have been very well received and the returning tenants have been pleased with their refurbished homes.

Jay Rughani.
Tower Block Team Leader

6. Background information and other papers:

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix A- list of works

Appendix B- layout plan

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

No

9. Is this a “key decision”?

No

Work inside each flat:

Asbestos removal to service cupboards and spray decorative coating to flat ceilings

Bathroom refurbishment

Kitchen refurbishment

New extractor system

Fire stopping (to prevent a fire spreading between flats)

New front doors

New heating system, including radiators and controls/programmer

Decorating

All flat Internal doors

Fire and smoke detectors

Fire doors to all rooms where necessary

Jack lock to windows (for security)

Re wiring, to include increasing the number of socket outlets.

New floor covering to all rooms

Replacing all internal walls complete

All new hot and cold water services to each flat

All required window repairs, seals and latched etc.

All new timberwork skirting boards, window sills and architraves etc.

Removal of all redundant old services such as redifusion TV etc.

Installation of new digital TV, BT and internet cabling

Communal areas

New lifts

New communal fire doors

New LED corridor lighting

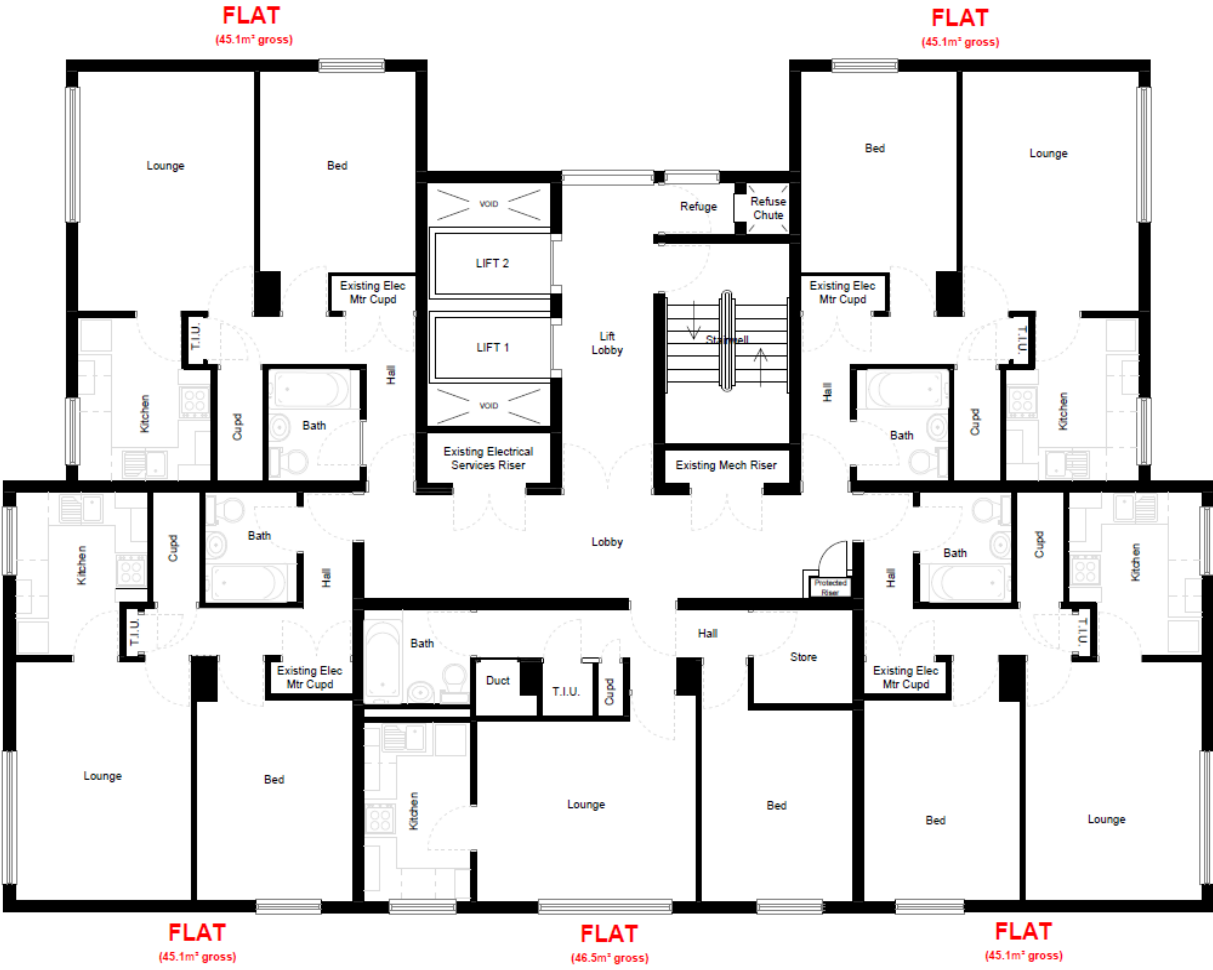
New fire alarm

Upgraded fire stopping between floors

New heating distribution pipework to all flats

Decoration, including the rear escape stairs

New floor coverings



TYPICAL LAYOUT PLAN FLOORS 1-17

Not to Scale