

North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 14th May 2012

ITEM 6 (g)
Title: Response to Overview and Scrutiny Studies into (1) Lift Failures in Sheltered Accommodation and (2) the Joint Venture Agreement

Portfolio(s): Housing

Cabinet Member(s): Councillor Paul Mason

Report from Directorate: Community Services

Report Author: Ian Conway, Head of North Tyneside Homes **Tel:** (0191) (643 7500)

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Purpose:

The report sets out for Cabinet's consideration and agreement, the proposed responses/actions to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to Overview and Scrutiny studies into Lift Failures in Sheltered Accommodation and study into the Joint Venture Agreement, considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 12th March 2012.

Under section 122 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 Cabinet is required to respond to Overview and Scrutiny indicating what (if any) action it proposes to take within two months from the date it received the recommendations

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1) Agree Cabinet's response to the Study into the Joint Venture Agreement as set out in Appendix 1; and
- 2) Agree Cabinet's response to the Study into Lift Failures in Sheltered Accommodation as set out at Appendix 2.

1.3 Forward Plan:

This report was not included in the Forward Plan. The Overview and Scrutiny reports were received by Cabinet on 12th March 2012 and the report relates to Cabinet's response to those reports.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

The Overview and Scrutiny role is central to the Council's Constitution and has the power to review or scrutinise the decisions made or other actions taken in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the Cabinet.

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Background

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee established study groups to undertake studies into:

- the Council's Joint Venture Agreement, and
- Lift Failures in Sheltered Accommodation.

Both study groups reported their findings and recommendations to Cabinet at its meeting on 12th March 2012 for Cabinet's consideration. Both reports were formally accepted at the Cabinet meeting and the Study Groups were thanked for their work in undertaking the studies and preparing their reports.

Under section 122 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 Cabinet is required to respond to Overview and Scrutiny indicating what (if any) action it proposes to take within two months from the date it received the recommendations.

1.5.2 Study into the Joint Venture Agreement

The Joint Venture Working Group was established by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to examine the effectiveness of the Council's joint venture agreement with Kier North Tyneside.

This report sets out in detail the working group's findings on how well the joint venture agreement is delivering what the Council intended and makes recommendations for Cabinet's consideration aimed at strengthening the joint venture arrangements, improving the quality of the service provided and enhancing value for money.

The Study Group ran for almost a year and, naturally, many of the recommendations arrived at reflect work which was already underway and commissioned by Cabinet.

The recommendations of the Joint Venture Study Group and Cabinet's proposed response to those recommendations are set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

1.5.3 Study into lift failures in sheltered accommodation

The Lifts Task Group was established by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee following a request by Council in November 2011 after

a motion had been agreed to investigate issues around the failures of lifts in sheltered accommodation.

The Task Group found that lifts in a small number of sheltered accommodation schemes were suffering from repeated and in some cases long term breakdown. The Task Group found that whilst Officers had put in place a programme of remedial support the substantive proposals for lift refurbishment and replacement, which formed part of the Private Finance Initiative associated with the Council's Quality Homes for Older People project, were not due to begin until at least November 2012.

Since the Task Group began its work, £300k of planned investment has been undertaken into the lifts within the sheltered housing portfolio. In addition proposals have been developed to bring forward lift refurbishment and replacement out with the Private Finance Initiative. The proposals were costed, included within the Housing Revenue Account Budget and Capital Plan and approved by Council on 15 February 2012.

In addition to this, a corporate risk relating to the management and maintenance of lifts has been raised; and an Internal Audit Review originally scheduled for 2012/13 has been brought forward and is nearing its conclusion.

The Task Group have also explored the proposed review of Warden Services for 2012/13 and have expressed their wish that Members are appropriately involved and kept informed as that review progresses. They were pleased to see the work that is proposed through a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with the University of Northumbria at Newcastle.

The recommendations of the Lift Task Group and Cabinet's proposed response to those recommendations are set out in Appendix 2 to this report.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet, in respect of each of the two reports referred to:

- (1) Accept all of the recommendations.
- (2) Agree to accept only some or none of the recommendations.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is the preferred option in relation to Lifts in Sheltered Accommodation (Appendix 2). Option 2 is the preferred option in relation to the Joint Venture Agreement (Appendix 1), as after due consideration some of the recommendations cannot be accepted for the reasons identified in Appendix 1..

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1: Proposed response to recommendations of the Study into the Joint Venture Agreement

Appendix 2: Proposed response to recommendations of the Study into Lift Failures in Sheltered Accommodation.

1.9 Contact officers:

Ian Conway, Head of North Tyneside Homes, tel (0191) 643 7501

Roy Marston, Senior Manager Quality Homes for Older People, North Tyneside Homes, tel. (0191) 643 7580

David Foster, Property Services Manager North Tyneside Homes, tel. (0191) 643 7801

Alison Campbell, Financial Business Manager, tel. (0191) 643 7038

Andrew Gate, Senior Manager: Strategic Projects, tel (0191) 643 6450

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

- (1) Overview and Scrutiny Committee Study into the Joint Venture Agreement
- (2) Overview and Scrutiny Committee Study into Lift Failures in Sheltered Accommodation.

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

In relation to the Council's Joint Venture Arrangement, there are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Any financial implications that arise as a result of any of the reviews will be reported back to Cabinet.

Proposals have been developed to bring forward lift refurbishment and replacement out with the Private Finance Initiative. The proposals were costed, included within the Housing Revenue Account Budget and Capital Plan and approved at Council on 15 February 2012. There are no other financial implications arising from this report. Any financial implications that arise as a result of the working group will be reported back to Cabinet.

2.2 Legal

Under Section 122 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 Cabinet is required to respond to Overview and Scrutiny indicating what (if any) action it proposes to take within two months from the date it received the relevant recommendations.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

A number of internal and external organisations and individuals were consulted by the Study Groups in the preparation of their reports.

2.4 Human rights

There are no significant human rights implications arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no significant equalities and diversity implications arising from this report.

2.6 Risk management

A corporate risk relating to the management and maintenance of lifts has been raised.

The management of the joint venture arrangement with Kier is included on the Council's risk register.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no significant crime and disorder issues arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no significant environmental sustainability implications arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Strategic Director(s)
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Strategic Manager,
Policy & Partnerships