

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET
SUBJECT:	HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - VARIOUS SCHEME APPROVAL, CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2012/13/14 - FUTURE DECENT NEIGHBOURHOODS.
DATE OF DECISION:	18 DECEMBER 2012
REPORT OF:	CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND LEISURE SERVICES
STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY	
Not applicable	

BRIEF SUMMARY

This report seeks formal approval, in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules, for expenditure on various housing projects. These projects will contribute to the Council's strategic housing objectives through improving the facilities of our estates, the wellbeing and the satisfaction of our residents in areas where they live.

The proposals are consistent with the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and Capital Programme, under the HRA self-financing regime, as agreed at Council in February 2012.

The proposed works cover elements under the heading of Well Maintained Communal Facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) To approve a series of virements, totalling £2,289,000 from the uncommitted provision for Future Decent Neighbourhoods Schemes, within the HRA Capital Programme and Business Plan, to provide budgets for specific schemes, as detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1

	£000
Decent Neighbourhoods - Shirley	1,267
Decent Neighbourhoods - Shirley Transport	100
Decent Neighbourhoods - Holyrood	397
Decent Neighbourhoods - Leaside Way	225
Decent Neighbourhoods - Estate Improvement Programme	200
Decent Neighbourhoods - Beechfield Court	50
Decent Neighbourhoods - Wyndham Court	50
Total Well Maintained Communal Facilities	<u>2,289</u>

- (ii) To note that there is an existing uncommitted budget of £574,000 for Roads, Paths and Hardstandings, within the Well Maintained Communal Facilities section of the HRA Capital Programme
- (iii) To approve, in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules, capital spending of £2,863,000 on Decent Neighbourhoods schemes, phased £1,794,000 in 2013/14, £737,000 in 2014/15 and £332,000 in 2015/16 as detailed in the Appendix to this report.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Financial Procedure Rules state that all schemes already in the Capital Programme up to the value of £125,000 require approval by the relevant Chief Officer, following consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member and Chief Finance Officer. Schemes over £125,000 but less than £250,000 will require approval by the Cabinet Member. Schemes between £250,000 and £2 million will require Cabinet approval. The schemes in this report fall into all three categories but are presented in one report to Cabinet for completeness.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

2. There have been various consultation meetings with tenant groups and leaseholders during the last nine months with regard to the proposed programme of capital expenditure associated with the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the new self-financing regime.
3. These works form part of the approved 4 year plan (formally approved in November 2011).
4. The alternative option of not undertaking the works identified would leave the Council's homes and surrounding areas in their present condition and would not accord with the view expressed during the consultation process or with the Council's policies of providing homes that comply with the four new headings:-
 - Safe, Wind and Weather Tight
 - Warm and Energy Efficient
 - Modern Facilities
 - Well Maintained Communal Facilities

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

5. This report seeks permission to proceed with the development, procurement and implementation of capital projects which form part of the HRA Capital Programme approved by Council in February 2012.
6. The programme outlined in this report is consistent with the Housing Strategy and HRA Business Plan 2011-2041 approved by Cabinet and Council in July 2011.
7. A key role in the development of the Capital Programme has been the involvement of the Tenant Resource Group, Block Wardens, tenant representatives, leaseholders and staff. Tenants and leaseholders have also been closely involved in the production of our long term business plan for future investment.

Well Maintained Communal Facilities

Decent Neighbourhoods – Shirley (£1,267,000)

8. The original scheme was approved by Cabinet in April 2011. The project scope and design has evolved through an extensive consultation process into a more ambitious scheme to meet the aspirations of residents. Over 600 homes will benefit from the high quality remodelled public amenity space within a 500m radius of Shirley Towers.

9. The proposals include:- improved footpaths, key routes, focal points, planting, car parks, signage, artwork, lighting, play, recycling, new community gardens and creation of semi private areas so that residents can enjoy the space outside of their flats. These measures will improve the appearance and feel of the neighbourhood making it a more pleasant, welcoming and safer place for residents and visitors.
10. The scheme will be procured via the new Landscape Framework and the 45 week contract is programmed to start in August 2013. The stage C report is available as backing documentation and provides more detailed information on what is proposed.
11. The completed scheme will provide a much needed boost to this community and make a significant contribution to raising local pride in Shirley.

Decent Neighbourhoods - Shirley Transport (£100,000)

12. An opportunity to coordinate and integrate Decent Neighbourhood improvements with other departments where possible is always explored.
13. An opportunity has been identified to attract a significant transport improvement scheme to Shirley. Following the Wordsworth / St James traffic study commissioned in response to the issues raised by the popularity of the park scheme in St James Road a number of transport issues have emerged that need resolving. These include:
 - On-street parking controls /residents parking schemes.
 - Parking/ access review at junctions.
 - Church Lane reconfiguration.
 - New pedestrian crossings.
 - St James/ Winchester Road junction reconfiguration.
 - Overall speed limit review and area-wide 20 Zone.
 - Traffic calming – physical/ psychological, including landscaping.
 - Home Zone-type treatments (eg. Wordsworth Rd)
 - HGV routing/ weight restrictions.
 - New cycle routes, bypasses and signage.
 - Pedestrian fingerpost signs.
 - School and organisational Travel Plans.

The Shirley East Transport Plan working group has been set up and had its first meeting in November 2012 to consider these issues and develop the plan.

14. Although the project is at an embryonic stage it is envisaged that subject to the main funding being in place, work will commence in the summer 2014 with completion in 2015.
15. This scheme will be procured through the Highways Partnership and the Strategic Services Partnership.
16. The approval of this part match funding will deliver these additional and complimentary improvements for the further benefit of residents.

Decent Neighbourhoods – Holyrood (£397,000)

17. The high quality, remodelled public amenity space bounded by Queens Way, Lime St, Threefield Lane and Bernard St will benefit 500 homes. The stage C report is available as backing documentation and provides more detailed information on what is proposed.
18. The proposals include: - improved footpaths, soft landscaping, hard landscaping, entrances, Kings House Bin store and Court Yard, key routes, focal points, planting, car parking, signage, site furniture, artwork, lighting, play, recycling, Lime St frontage, resident designed Green Wall and new City gardens.
19. The scheme has been procured via the Landscape Framework. It is envisaged that the 35 week contract will start 7 January 2013.
20. These works compliment the new play area that the residents' association (HERTA) have provided via Community Spaces funding.
21. These measures will improve the appearance and feel of the neighbourhood making it a more pleasant, welcoming and safer place for residents and visitors.

Decent Neighbourhoods - Leaside Way (£225,000)

22. This approved scheme is centred on the two large blocks at Ventnor Court but will also benefit the 50 supported housing properties in Leaside Way and the wider neighbourhood.
23. There is little sense of privacy around Ventnor Court due to increasing levels of inconsiderate foot and cycle traffic using this route as a short cut to Bassett Green Road. A semi private area will be created so residents can enjoy the space outside of their flats.
24. This approved scheme has evolved into a high quality improvement project that meets the aspirations of residents.
25. The scheme has attracted £13,500 of Section 106 funding via Play Services that will part fund the complete refurbishment of the play area in Leaside Way.
26. The estate will be a more welcoming place for residents and visitors. The improved privacy, natural and resident led growing both in the community garden and on window sills will promote improved social cohesion and resident health/wellbeing.
27. It is envisaged that the work will start Spring 2013 and be completed in the Autumn 2013.

Decent Neighbourhoods - Estate Improvement Programme 13/14 (£200,000)

28. This programme provides immediate solutions to a wide range of issues that blight our estates and irritate residents and is driven by the Local Housing team's patch plans in consultation with residents.
29. The work is carried out by Open Spaces, Housing Operations and small local suppliers.

30. The programme promotes a sense of local pride and resident wellbeing and continues this approach to improving the lives of our residents. Work starts in April 2013 with completion in March 2014.

Decent Neighbourhoods - Beechfield Court (£50,000)

31. This scheme approval seeks to enhance the quality of the soft landscaping, together with improvements to the access footpaths/road, providing a safe, attractive and welcoming experience for residents and visitors of Beechfield and Graylings Court.
32. The landscaped area viewed on the approach from Regents Park Road is tired and dated. The existing planting will be cut back/thinned/crown lifted and a new landscape design will be implemented to provide colour throughout the year.
33. The work will be procured via the Strategic Services Partnership and completed in the Autumn 2013.

Decent Neighbourhoods - Roads, Paths and Hard standings (£574,000)

34. There is currently no approved budget to keep Housing owned roads, paths and hard standings in a good state of repair.
35. This scheme approval deals with this issue and will enable Housing owned roads, paths and hard standings to benefit from the established experience and expertise that exists for maintaining the City's public footpaths and roads.
36. It is envisaged that the current system will be able to provide residents and local teams with up to date information on what has happened to the repair that they have reported.
37. The implementation of this scheme provides a robust defence to public liability claims and minimises the risk of reputational damage.
38. The scheme will consist of:-
- Inspection of 100% of housing owned roads, paths and hard standings that will produce a priority list for action.
 - A reactive maintenance service.
 - A programme of planned maintenance.
39. The scheme will be procured through the Highways Services Partnership.
40. Getting Started – the Strategy is provided as backing documentation and provides more detail of what is planned.
41. This programme of works will run over three years starting April 2013 and finishing in March 2016.

Decent Neighbourhoods - Wyndham Court (£50,000)

42. The ambitious externally funded North of the Station Quarter improvements is advancing rapidly and Wyndham Court (Grade 2 listed) occupies a central position within the designated improvement area.
43. This approval seeks to ensure that the best complimentary design options for Wyndham Court are explored and fed into the master plan.

- 44. The designs will ensure that the Wyndham Court avoids being conspicuous by its absence from this scheme and residents' aspirations influence the final designs.
- 45. The design work will be procured via the Strategic Services Partnership and completed in January 2013.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

- 46. The most recent version of the 30 Year HRA Business Plan, as used to inform the HRA budget approved by Council on 15th February 2012, indicates that there is provision for the works seeking scheme approval. This report recommends a virement that creates seven new schemes and seeks approval, in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules, for these schemes and the existing scheme for Roads, Paths and Hardstandings. The Appendix to this report shows the budgets in the HRA Capital Programme, approved by Council in September 2012, and the revised programme following the agreement of the recommendations in this report.

Property/Other

- 47. The HRA Capital Programme is fully reflected in the Corporate Property Strategy.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

- 48. There are no specific legal implications in connection with this report. The power to carry out the proposals is contained within Part 2 of the Housing Act 1985.

Other Legal Implications:

- 49. None.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

- 50. The proposed schemes in this report contribute positively to the Council's objectives set out in the Housing Strategy and HRA Business Plan to maintain and improve the condition of the City's housing stock.

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KEY DECISION? Yes

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All wards
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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1.	Proposed Changes to Decent Neighbourhoods Capital Programme
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Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	Stage C Report – Decent Neighbourhoods - Shirley
2.	Stage C Report - Decent Neighbourhoods – Holyrood

Equality Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out.	Yes
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Other Background Documents

Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:

Title of Background Paper(s)

Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)

1.	None.	
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