



Report to Cabinet

Subject: Public Realm Works

Date: 3 September 2009

Author: Head of Strategy and Performance

1. Purpose of the Report

- To inform Cabinet of progress towards the identification of a programme of capital works in the Borough to be funded through the Public Realm Works programme agreed as part of the transfer of housing stock to Gedling Homes
- To outline proposed arrangements for confirmation of the programme for 2009/10.

2. Background

As part of the agreement for the transfer of the Council's housing stock to Gedling Homes, provision was made for a programme of capital works worth £2.75 million over the five years from 2009-2014, funded through VAT savings, to be known as the Public Realm Works programme.

The transfer agreement sets out that these works should be split equally for each of the following five years, forming a programme worth £550,000 p.a from 2009 – 2014.

The transfer agreement sets out that the funding can be used for: -

“environmental improvements, including, but not exclusively, lighting, footpaths, hardstanding, security fencing, all types of gates, including metal security, play areas, improvement and provision of boundary walls, the provision of parking areas and facilities and/or any other works that are agreed between the parties”

Provision is also to be made for remediation work to a specified set of properties where works to address dry rot problems had been identified.

The final decision on the programme rests with the Borough Council (subject to the agreement of the Company (Gedling Homes), not to be unreasonably withheld or delayed), though the aim is to agree a programme consensually between the Borough Council and Gedling Homes. Works will be commissioned and/or delivered by Gedling Homes, who hold the funding. Schemes for inclusion may be proposed by either Gedling Homes or by Gedling Borough Council, but all must be consistent with Gedling Homes' charitable objectives and status.

3. Proposal

Discussions have been held with Gedling Homes on the issue during the summer. Remediation work on the so-called "dry rot properties" had been agreed to be the priority in the first year of the programme – the transfer agreement allows for the first £200,000 of such costs to be funded from the Public Realm programme, with the next £200,000 to be borne fully by Gedling Homes, with any amount over £400,000 to be shared equally between Gedling Homes and the Public Realm fund. The issue of dry rot property costs therefore needed to be resolved first to establish the level of funds available for the remainder of the programme for the current year.

Gedling Homes have recently confirmed that a minimum of £200,000 is likely to be needed for works to dry rot properties in 2009/10, but that the total cost of those works is unlikely to exceed £400,000. This means that £350,000 is available for the remainder of the Public Realm Works programme for 2009/10.

In the meantime, suggested initiatives to be funded through the Programme have been requested from within the Council and from Gedling Homes, each in liaison with partner organisations where appropriate.

Discussions have been held with Gedling Homes regarding criteria against which proposals to be funded from the Programme might be evaluated, for the current year and for the future. For the current year, the key criteria are that schemes should be: -

- A priority for customers / supported by residents
- Designed to reduce ongoing maintenance liabilities, either for the Council or for Gedling Homes
- Integrated with Gedling Homes' (and other partners) improvement programme
- Targeted at priority neighbourhoods (i.e. those with higher levels of deprivation and need)

A further consideration is for schemes proposed to be deliverable in the current year – this will be important every year but is seen to be particularly so for the current year, given the delay in developing a programme caused by the need to first resolve the situation regarding dry rot properties. (Though funding can be carried forward from one year to the next, expectations are that funding allocated

for each year should be spent within that year). The need for deliverability may therefore override more strategic considerations in this first year.

On this basis, a draft outline programme was compiled and discussed initially with Senior Management Team, with Gedling Homes representatives and with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning. These discussions led to a range of further questions about details of the proposed works, their funding and their deliverability in the current year.

A draft programme is attached at Appendix A for members' information, which has been considered by SMT, but it should be noted that discussions are ongoing with Gedling Homes, particularly around points 5 and 11.

It is proposed that the final decision on the programme should be made by the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning. Details of agreed schemes will be communicated separately to ward members in the areas affected for their information.

For future years, a more iterative process is likely to be developed, with proposed schemes evaluated against criteria being developed by the Council in partnership with Gedling Homes. Those criteria will need to link closely to the Council's budget process, in particular to its capital programme development, to avoid overlaps and ensure co-ordination between the two processes. There will also be opportunity for elected members to suggest schemes for inclusion.

The transfer agreement proposes that agreement should be reached on a programme for the following year between November and January of the preceding year – the 20010/11 programme will therefore need to be agreed by 31 January 2010.

4. Resource Implications

As outlined above, funding for the Public Realm Works programme is held by Gedling Homes. The programme has the potential to provide significant benefit for the Borough.

5. Recommendation

Cabinet is **recommended** to: -

- Note the report and any further information updating on progress to be tabled at the meeting
- Agree that the final decision on the 2009/10 Public Realm Works programme be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning.

Appendix A

Area	Proposed by	Description of works – For completion by 2009/10	Anticipated Costs	Ward
1. Wollaton Avenue Community Centre	GBC - Leisure	To support the move of the play group to the Methodist Church – request for an external play area with safety surfacing and fencing. NB see 23	£5k	Phoenix
2. Appletree Lane, Gedling	GBC – Direct Services	Resurfacing and kerbing to bring area up to maintainable standard (urgent on safety grounds)	£30k	Phoenix
3. Jackie Bells Field	GBC – Neighbourhoods & Crime	Provision of a ‘teen shelter’. Consultation has already been completed for this	£25k	Netherfield
4 St Michael's Avenue	GBC – Planning & Environment	Rectification of footpaths, retaining walls and steps etc, including improvements to the infra structure	£30k	Phoenix
5 Housing areas, unadopted footway and surfaced access ways	GBC – Direct Services	Repairs/resurfacing and upgrading of disabled access to provide safe maintainable access for residents	£13k per annum	Generic list to be agreed between GBC and GH
6 Private access road rear of 8 to 46 Cavendish Road, Carlton	GBC – Direct Services	Re-grade and resurface to bring area up to safe a maintainable condition and maintain access for residents	£15k	Valley
7 Hanworth Gardens, Arnold	Gedling Homes	Provision of play facilities for teenagers	£20k	Daybrook
8 Bourne Mews, Netherfield	Gedling Homes	Landscaping to include all new grassed areas and borders	£35k	Netherfield
9 Valley Road, Carlton	Gedling Homes	Valley Road curledge reparations (parking)	£60k	Carlton Hill
10 Tavill Field, Killisick, Arnold	Gedling Homes	New communal seating with raised flower beds, also providing a pleasant aspect for 1 st floor tenants	£7k	Killisick

Area	Proposed by	Description of works – For completion by 2009/10	Anticipated Costs	Ward
11 Colwick Play Area replacement	GBC - Leisure	Area requires replacement and upgrading	£100k	Netherfield / Colwick Parish
12. Netherfield – Dunstan Street	GBC - Leisure	Following the upgrading of Jackie Bell's play area, this site could be closed and disposed of, or turned into residents parking	£10k – to level the site, costs of installing car parking to follow	Netherfield
		Total	£350	