EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE – 13 SEPTEMBER 2000

SINGLE GLAZING UPGRADING/SECONDARY GLAZING

Interim Report by the Director of Homes and Technical Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To advise members of interim findings in respect of the approach for upgrading existing single glazed windows.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Housing Capital Sub-Committee on 16th May 2000, agreed that a small pilot scheme be undertaken in respect of fitting secondary glazing or double glazed units at houses which are currently fitted with single glazed UPVC windows. Other Authorities and Organisations were to be consulted and the outcome of investigations was to be evaluated in terms of value for money, tenant satisfaction, and technical effectiveness.

2.2 Records of window contracts completed indicate the number of single glazed UPVC windows to be 662 in the south area and 5,510 in the north area. These are sound windows, with many years of useful life left, and their replacement cannot be justified in value for money terms. Other options to be considered are secondary glazing or conversion of single glazing to double glazing.

3. OPTIONS

3.1 SECONDARY GLAZING

No secondary glazing was used in CDVDC and where used by KLDC, it was understood to have been used for sound insulation in relation to the Kilmarnock by-pass. Contact with Councils in Falkirk, South Lanarkshire, Glasgow, North and South Ayrshire and Edinburgh has confirmed that in all cases, secondary glazing was only used where sound insulation was an issue.

In practice secondary glazing adds to the requirement for cleaning and maintenance, doubling up on glass to be cleaned and the ironmongery required.

Cleaning difficulties and problems of condensation on the inside of the outer pane led to a fall in demand and, manufacturers no longer promote secondary glazing.

The average cost per house is £2,200 which compares unfavourably with renewal of windows at £2,000 per house.

The high cost of the secondary glazing and its other drawbacks rule it out for other than addressing sound insulation problems in special cases. It should be noted that where possible, noise issues are often better dealt with by other measures, such as banking or screening.

3.2 CONVERSION FROM SINGLE GLAZING TO DOUBLE GLAZING.

The feasibility of conversion will be determined mainly by the original profile used and the availability of replacement beads. Other factors are the condition of the window itself, its ironmongery, seals, and the like. A combination of defects may in some cases make this a poor value for money option.

None of the Authorities approached in the West of Scotland had carried out any such conversions. Clackmannanshire attempted to upgrade some UPVC windows, but found it impractical due to beading difficulties with the particular profile which had been used.

The former Cumnock and Doon Valley District Council had in one contract in Rankinston carried out conversion to double glazing by the used of stepped units. However this was to relatively new timber windows and the experience is not relevant for replication.

The Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions recently issued a good practice guide under the Best Practice Programme concerning energy efficiency in which the cost benefit of fitting double glazing is given for different house types. It has been established that if existing windows are in good condition, it is not economic to renew windows for the sole purpose of upgrading to double glazed units.

The annual fuel saving, by double glazing, ranges from £10 - 15 for a flat to £15 – 20 for a mid-terraced house. If new windows are required in any case then the additional cost of double glazing a flat has a payback of 6 – 7 years and a mid-terraced house a payback of 4 years.

The extra cost of double glazing in conjunction with new windows is in the range £100 to £200 depending on house size and number of windows. The average cost per house for re-glazing of existing single glazed windows with double glazed units is £600. The higher cost is due to this being a stand-alone operation. It should also be noted that the estimated cost relates only to re-glazing and does not address any window deficiencies which may be present such as defective weatherseals and ironmongery. It also assumes that suitable replacement beads can be procured.

The payback against the higher cost of £600 is 40 years for a flat and 30 years for a mid- terrace. Most energy efficiency measures have a payback in single figures and often as low as 2 or 3 years. However there may be social or letting factors to consider and tenant's perceptions of the improvement, which may be greater than the energy savings would indicate. Clearly if the Council were to undertake a comprehensive re-glazing programme, which could cost in the order of £3.5 M, at todays prices, that would have to compete against other priorities.

3.3 OUTCOME OF PILOT SCHEME

By the time Members discuss this report it is hoped that limited pilot scheme will have been started, and the experience of that pilot scheme will be reported to Committee. At the same time Members will be aware a comprehensive House Conditions Survey has now been commissioned. It is anticipated that this will provide information upon the extent of any condensation problems being experienced by tenants, and upon their location, and that also will inform any future discussion on whether a programme of re-glazing is possible, necessary, or desirable.

Accordingly a further report will be presented to Members as soon as this information is available.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Provision has been included in the Housing Capital Programme for the pilot addresses.

5. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The further report will assist in the objective appraisal of these issues and will contribute to formulation of policy in improving the housing stock.

6. RECOMMENDATION

6.1 It is recommended that Members:

(a) note the interim report; and

(b) await a further report incorporating outcome of the pilot study and information from the House Condition Survey.

James Lavery
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(CJ/MC)

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

For further information please contact Campbell Johnston, Design Services Manager on 01563 555251.

AGENDA