

# EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

## HOUSING CAPITAL SUB-COMMITTEE – 30<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2000

### FLATTED PROPERTIES AT 2-110 CASTLEVIEW, GALSTON

#### Report by the Director of Homes and Technical Services

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the options available in respect of the flatted/maisonette properties at 2-110 Castleview, Galston.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 These flatted properties consist of five blocks, five storeys high, each block having 1 and 2 bedroom flats on the ground floor and a common access stair to maisonettes accessed at the first and third floor levels.

Total accommodation comprises:

10	1 bedroom flats
5	2 bedroom flats
20	2 bedroom maisonettes
20	3 bedroom maisonettes

The walls are traditional cavity construction roughcast externally and with feature facing brick panels to gables and basecourse. Timber frame is also used in parts of the construction.

The roofs are dual low pitched with concrete tiles.

Livingrooms on upper levels have cantilevered balconies and the windows to livingrooms on gable elevations are full width.

- 2.2 There has been a history of problems at these blocks, which have up to now been addressed on an individual response basis.

The local member and tenants have raised concerns at the extent of the problems and there is clearly a need to address the issues in a co-ordinated and comprehensive manner.

- 2.3 A full and comprehensive survey of the blocks has now been carried out. Because of the height of the blocks and their elevated position, they are particularly exposed to high winds. Maintenance records have identified the first and second courses of tiles are prone to wind uplift damage particularly in southwest facing roofs. The exposure and height of the blocks has a bearing on other problems of water penetration at windows and balconies and also at the large screen to the stairwell.

Deflection of the intermediate structural floor slabs has caused joints between floor and partition to open up. Measures have been identified to deal with this and carried out in one flat at No. 52 as a pilot measure. Some areas of roughcast are boss and spalling, and in a number of cases, facing brick is cracked below the full width livingroom windows due to wind pressure and lack of restraint for the brickwork. Ducts with

internal rainwater conduits are causing problems. Water is lying in stairways and general repairs and decoration to stairwells is required.

Concrete balconies, glazed screens and railings to balconies are generally in poor condition, and a range of other issues have been identified as requiring attention including the need for the upgrade of door systems, kitchens and internal fixed electrical wiring systems.

In general a considerable body of work is required to bring these properties up to a modern standard

### **3. MEASURES REQUIRED**

**3.1** The specific works required can be considered under three headings of internal works, common areas & stairwells and external works.

#### **3.1.1 Internal Works**

- Remove concrete cills and replace defective dpc with cavity trays. If this and other structural work is being carried out it would also be necessary to replace the existing single glazed windows which were renewed in 1992, with new double glazed units.
- Re-wire all areas and upgrade heating to livingroom areas.
- Upgrade kitchens to include replacement of units and the removal of asbestos panels.
- Additionally in maisonettes, uplift floors to livingroom, kitchen and hall areas, level and re-lay including for alterations to internal partitions, renewal of all finishes i.e. skirtings, facings etc (as previously carried out at No.52)

#### **3.1.2 Common Entrance and Stairwells**

- Replace UPVC window screens with aluminium glazed screens at stairwells.
- Replace damaged external entrance doors including reconnecting door entry system.
- Fill in cracks at floors and walls with epoxy resin.
- Replace missing inserts at nosings to stairs.
- Allow for decoration to include walls, ceilings, doors etc.
- Repair loose handrails as required.

#### **3.1.3 External Works**

- Strip out windows, door and balcony at livingroom areas and take down brickwork and inner leaf of blockwork to the top of the existing concrete beam.
- Re-instate the cavity wall and make good all dpc's at window cills and lintels.
- Due to water ingress and the disturbance in carrying out these works and the number of areas where roughcast is spalling complete stripping and re-roughcasting of all elevations is required together with removal of existing cavity fill and re-filling to current specification.
- Complete re-roofing and eaves repairs.
- Upgrade footpaths around the blocks and the drying areas.

## **4. IMPLICATIONS**

### **4.1 OPTIONS**

Such measures cannot be dealt with on an individual repair basis and require major and co-ordinated measures.

These require considerable investment, which must be weighed against capital resources and the demand for these properties.

Three possible options can be considered:-

- a) Comprehensive and total refurbishment as detailed above.
- b) Wind and weathertight items as an immediate step to safeguard the property with internal refurbishment deferred.
- c) Demolition with site marketed to release capital receipts for mainstream housing investment.

### **4.2 COSTS**

Estimated costs excluding VAT and decant costs and disturbance allowances are for the five blocks:-

- a) £1.6million
- b) £0.8million
- c) £60k - 70k per block equating to a maximum allowance of £0.35million.

### **4.3 TENANT IMPLICATIONS**

Comprehensive refurbishment (Option a) would clearly require decanting of tenants and in view of the extent of the works and the Health and Safety implications, it would be desirable to vacate a minimum of one block at a time although two blocks at a time would allow for better on-site programming.

To carry out the wind and weathertight items only (Option B) would not require decanting of tenants although there would be considerable disturbance. That is particularly the case when the livingroom window and balcony work is being undertaken where the extent of opening up, and the health and safety issues would require isolation of this area.

Careful consultation with tenants and programming of the work in conjunction with the Contractor will be required for options (A) and (B).

Option C would clearly require the re-housing of all tenants.

## **5. TENANCY PROFILE AND DEMAND**

- 5.1 The local housing team confirms that there are currently eleven vacancies in the blocks with a further eight tenants having applied for transfer to other accommodation. Demand for council housing generally in many of the Irvine Valley communities has declined over the years, and with a greater choice of properties now available, it has become more difficult to attract new tenants into these flats. Unless the

general trend of lower demand for council housing is reversed, there is little evidence to suggest that specific demand for Castlevue will increase in the future, irrespective of any improvement works carried out by the council.

There is sufficient alternative accommodation in the Irvine Valley and beyond to cater for any re-housing needs arising from the options listed. Individual housing needs will be assessed and determined by local area housing staff, after consultation with each of the tenants involved.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1** The recent survey has identified the need for significant repairs and improvements within each of the block. Possible solutions to remedy these problems range from comprehensive refurbishment to selective wind and watertight repairs with other internal improvement works carried out over future years by means of other improvement programmes. The costs in each case are considerable. A third option, taking account of the cost of necessary repairs and improvements and the level of housing demand in the area, is demolition and re-housing of the tenants to alternative accommodation. The views and wishes of tenants have not yet been canvassed and it may be appropriate to carry out a consultation exercise prior to any final decision being taken on the way forward.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION**

- 7.1** There is no allowance for funding these works within the current years HRA Capital Programme which is already fully committed.

## **8. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATION**

One flat within the blocks has been sold, and this would require to be re-purchased, should a decision be taken to demolish.

## **9. RECOMMENDATION**

- 9.1** It is recommended that:
- a) Members consider the terms of the report and the options listed for future action;
  - b) authorise the Director of Homes and Technical Services to consult with the tenants of the flats in Castlevue, Galston to determine their views on the issues raised by the survey; and
  - c) the Director of Homes and Technical Services report back to members on the outcome of the tenant consultation exercise.

James Lavery  
Director of Homes and Technical Services  
(CJ/MC)

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Nil**

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

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**AGENDA**