

Environmental Regeneration – McNeill Terrace, Loanhead

Report by Eibhlin McHugh, Joint Director, Health and Social Care

1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with an overview of the proposed programme of environmental improvement and refurbishment works for McNeill Terrace, Loanhead and to seek agreement to use funding from the Housing Revenue Account to undertake these works during 2014/15.

2 Background

- 2.1 In May 2013 a Report to Cabinet detailed a range of issues which were affecting the quality of the environment in McNeill Terrace, Loanhead. Issues that had been identified included dog fouling, fly tipping, and vandalism and the negative impact this was having on the long term sustainability of demand from housing applicants to live in these properties. To consider how to address these issues, Cabinet agreed that Council Officers would engage with the residents of McNeill Terrace and determine collectively how best to address these issues.
- 2.2 Residents were engaged with through a variety of methods during 2013. An initial door step survey was conducted with residents to obtain their views on their neighbourhood and also to gauge their interest in participating in ways to improve these issues. A series of meetings and drop-in events were held during the year at a vacant flat in McNeill Terrace, as a convenient and relevant location in which to engage the community, and foster the development of an Estate Action Group to plan the priorities for investment.
- 2.3 Following several engagement sessions, residents were found to be particularly supportive of improvements to common areas throughout the development, including to common stairwells and door entry systems. It was also recognised that the removal of shared garden areas to be replaced with fenced off private garden areas would substantially reduce the incidence of fly tipping on the estate. Also proposals for reharling the properties and replacement door canopies would significantly enhance the attractiveness of the flats. Appendix 1 provides an illustration of the agreed works from the range of options that were being proposed and in consideration of the resources available for the project.
- 2.4 Consequently, the listed improvement works are now proposed for McNeill Terrace following community consultation:

Building Fabric Works

- 1) Reharling
- 2) Replacement of external doors
- 3) Refurbishment of door entry system
- 4) Canopies to front entrances
- 5) Alterations to concrete platforms at entrances
- 6) Replacement of staircase windows
- 7) External lighting to front and back entrances
- 8) Removal of organic growth from roof and gutters

Internal Works to Staircases

- 1) Deep clean of floor areas and steps
- 2) New resin flooring to ground floor area
- 3) Complete redecoration
- 4) Replacement of existing lighting covers
- 5) Replacement encasements to electrical meters

External Works

- 1) Fencing, both new and replacement
- 2) Resurfacing/realignment of footpaths
- 3) New communal bin areas
- 4) Signage to bin areas, gates
- 5) Landscaping of new individual garden areas
- 6) Landscaping of planting to common areas and gardens
- 7) Replacement of footpath light luminaires
- 8) Replacement of street light luminaires

2.5 Of the 36 properties in McNeill Terrace, there are 3 privately owned properties that were purchased from the Council. It is intended to include these properties as part of the works, although this will include redesignating the garden areas for these properties and consent will have to be granted by owners in order to do this for title deed transfers required.

2.6 The Report to Cabinet in May 2013 noted that a further option was to consider the use of one block of 6 flats at McNeill Terrace to be used as homeless accommodation. This option was investigated and residents were also consulted on. Whilst there were some queries about using the properties for this purpose the option was not strongly opposed. However, an alternative to providing temporary accommodation in Midlothian has since been reported to Cabinet and the provision of additional temporary accommodation at McNeill Terrace is no longer being recommended in this proposal.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

3.1.1 The Housing Revenue Account Capital Plan has allocated a budget of £417,000 in the current financial year to provide for environmental improvements at McNeill Terrace. The proposed works are able to be delivered within this budget. In addition, some elements of the works, are able to be funded by a separate budget allocation as these are

required in order that the properties meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.

3.2 Risk

If improvements to McNeill Terrace are not carried out, the Council risks a further deterioration in the neighbourhood and increases the likelihood of properties being in low demand and increasing turnover and void rent loss in this street.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☒ Community safety
- ☒ Adult health, care and housing
- ☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☒ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

3.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The proposals will support the Council's Local Housing Strategy 2013 - 2017 Outcome "The condition of housing across all tenures is improved."

3.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach

By improving the attractiveness and the amenity of the estate, this development will be able to meet the housing need of existing and potential tenants in the long term in Midlothian.

3.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

As noted in this Report, Council Officers provided opportunities for all tenants and residents living in McNeill Terrace to engage in the consultation.

To ensure that funds are being prioritised to address local residents concerns extensive consultation has taken place prior to a programme of works being agreed and costed for. In addition, to ensure that an improvement in the neighbourhood can be sustained following the works being undertaken, it is proposed that the McNeill Terrace Estate Action Group continues to meet following the completion of works in order to monitor the Street and common areas through tenant led inspection and address issues timeously.

3.7 Ensuring Equalities

An EQIA was carried out for the Council's Local Housing Strategy 2013 – 2017, and one of the key outcomes related to improving housing quality and effective estate management. It also recognised the need to ensure that the needs of equality strands have been assessed to ensure that there are no discriminatory practices undertaken.

3.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

Investing to improve the quality of council housing and the neighbourhood will ensure the well-being, and provide a better quality of life for people living in Midlothian, and will also ensure that Midlothian remains an attractive place of choice for living and working.

3.9 IT Issues

None

4 Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (a) Notes the contents of the Report, and
- (b) Agrees to the improvement works identified by Council Officers working with the McNeill Terrace Estate Action Group.

Date: 6 May 2014

Report Contact:

Name: Kevin Anderson, Head of Customer and Housing Services

Tel No: 0131 271 3225

E-mail: kevin.anderson@midlothian.gov.uk

Appendix 1



