

To: Housing Panel

Date: 9th March 2016

Report of: Head of Housing and Property services

Title of Report: Great Estates Update

Summary

Purpose of report: To update the Panel on progress with the Great Estates Programme

Key decision: No

Executive lead member: Councillor Mike Rowley

Report author: Martin Shaw

Policy Framework: Meeting Housing Need

Appendices to report – A presentation will accompany this report which will be available on request

1.0 Introduction

The Scrutiny Panel have asked for an update on the great estates programme. This paper sets out the aims of the programme and work achieved to date along with our future approach to the Great Estate projects.

2.0 Background

The aim of the great Estates initiative is to introduce a co-ordinated approach to environmental works on Oxford City Councils housing estates. Identifying the most pressing issues of each block or estate applying bespoke solutions tailored to suit the issues that are the most crucial to each estate.

The previous approach was piecemeal and undertaken by a number of different departments within the council, along with various budgets. This project unifies our approach to estate improvements and utilises resources to a greater effect.

All relevant budgets have now been brought together and works are overseen by the Property Services Department as part of the housing asset strategy. Consultation undertaken when developing the housing asset strategy identified the external environment on our estates as a concern for residents; members have also raised their concerns on estates particularly around parking, security, and waste management.

1.1 Project aims

- Improved security to individual blocks and estates.
- Additional residential car parking
- Improvements to landscapes and borders and enhanced estate environment
- Co-ordinate the work of individual departments in one master plan for each estate.
- Encourage sharing of information between departments
- Involvement of external agencies
- Involvement of residents in key decisions affecting their environment

1.2 Complimentary works programmes

- Cyclical painting and repairs
- Day to day communal repairs
- Garages maintenance
- Potential development sites

1.3 Leading to:

- Increased resident satisfaction
- Reduction in anti-social behaviour
- Making the best use of available budgets
- A holistic approach to the management and maintenance of estates

2.0 Approach

We created the post of Great Estates Surveyor in December 2014 to develop a survey methodology that captures the issues on our estates and provides a means of prioritising these. This approach was piloted on the Barton Estate as this had been specifically identified for investment of £3.7m over four years in line with the development of the adjacent Barton Park.

An officer group was formed including representatives from Property Services, Communities, Housing Management, Direct Services, ASB team, and Resident Involvement. This group pooled its knowledge of the estate and reviewed and prioritised recommended interventions.

Consultation with residents took place where they were asked to comment on a range of issues affecting the estate, the results of this consultation has been published under the title "Big Barton Chat". Community groups have also been consulted including the Barton Community Association and BICEP.

A set of recommendations was drawn up taking into account inputs from all of the above and a four year programme was subsequently approved to include:

1. Improvement of the immediate area around blocks
2. Improvements to the Neighbourhood centre
3. Improved signage
4. Provision of communal satellite / aerial systems
5. Redevelopment Underhill Circus and the neighbourhood shops
6. Improvements to front gardens

The identified improvements are specific to Barton. We intend to carry out a similar exercise on other estates to draw up a similar programme for each area

3.0 Programme for 2015/16

During the current financial year the following projects have been undertaken:

3.1 Parking Schemes

Each location we consider for a parking scheme has to be able to produce a worthwhile outcome that addresses issues such health and safety, parking pressure on the area and the aesthetic look of the locale. It must also meet the needs of the majority of local residents.

In some locations/schemes, planning approval and land ownership issues often produce delays to the programme of works. 2015/16 has been a particularly challenging year in that respect however we continue to work ever more closely with our colleagues in planning to produce schemes that enhance and improve the look of our estates.

Kestrel Crescent was chosen as there were safety and access issues on the bend as the practice in the evening was to park cars half on/half off the pavements on both sides of the road.

At Carpenter Close cars were always parking on the grassed area. One key thing there was that the design of the scheme took into account the trees particularly the very impressive Beech tree which now is the central feature.

The need for verge protection in Marston and Rose Hill are evident from the photos in the presentation.

Below is a list of schemes completed during 2015/16

Blackbird Leys	Kestrel Crescent
Littlemore	Carpenter Close
Rose Hill	Continuation of verge Ashhurst Way (grass grid)
Marston	Continuation of verge Mortimer Drive/Raymond Rd (grass grid)
Blackbird Leys	Blackbird Leys Road
Northway	Stockleys Road
Blackbird Leys	Jasmine Road
Littlemore	Oxford Road

Examples are given on the power point presentation accompanying this report

3.2 Security and environmental works

1. External works to rear gardens, fencing bin stores planting at 112 to 134 Blackbird Leys Road.
2. Improved security at Preachers lane and Friars Wharf
3. Improved security and environmental works at Colmans Hill.

Schemes 2 and 3 above are about to start on site in March 2016. The budget is being carried forward to 16/17 for these works

Due to the uncertainty of funding following the government announcements in October, work ceased on this programme pending a review of the HRA budget. It has now been confirmed that the budgets remain in place, however this has led to a delay in works starting on site.

3.3 Wood farm Shops

This project improved the disabled access to the shops and along with the external environment.

The project was undertaken in consultation with local ward members who selected the paving and the councillors and the leaseholders of the shops in order to minimise disruption to trading

4.0 Tower Blocks

As part of the refurbishment of the tower blocks there are proposals to improve the external environment on completion of the works

At Evenlode and Windrush Towers in Blackbird Leys, a new entrance foyers are being created to each Tower to provide internal cycle racks, enhanced waste and recycling facilities and of course, an improved entrance. Parking and pedestrian paths are being redesigned to allow for the entrance extension however additional parking facilities are not being provided at these towers as the designs conflicted with the BBL regeneration project proposals.

At Foresters and Plowman Towers, both are receiving new foyers in the same way to Evenlode and Windrush with the added improvement to parking; external garages in proximity to the Towers are being demolished to form resident parking.

Hockmore Tower is a severely restricted site and only the entrance on to Banjo road is being changed.

5.0 Future Funding

- A budget of £3.7m over 4 years for investment in Barton
- A budget of £1.2m per annum has been set for the next four years 2016/17 to 2019/20.
- We would also seek to maximise the use of any Section 106 monies available

6.0 Future planned work

- Extend survey methodology to other estates
- Identification of improvement priorities and resident consultation extended to other estates
- Continued improved parking provision
- Condition survey and assessment of all garage sites
- Identification of potential future development sites
- Develop a four year estates improvement programme

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