

Report of: Head of Oxford City Homes
To: City Executive Board
Date: 3 September 2008 **Item No:**
Title of Report: Tenants' Choice – Refurbishment Projects

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To seek Members approval for the proposed choices for tenants when refurbishment works are carried out within their homes.

Key decision: Yes

Board Member: Councillor Ed Turner.

Report Approved by:-

Legal: Jeremy King
Finance: Dave Higgins

Policy Framework: More housing, better housing for all.

Recommendation(s): The City Executive Board is asked to approve the tenants' choice proposal "c" listed in paragraph 7 of the report.

Background –

1. On 21 April 2008 the Executive Board approved a list of choices to be made available to new tenants when moving in to a previously void property. These were based on a total sum of £500 per property.
2. Tenants and officers now wish to modify and extend this scheme to cover refurbishment projects.

3. At the last Audit Commission Housing Inspection, tenants' choice was an item listed for improvement and is therefore an item within Oxford City Homes Improvement Plan.
4. Some choices are already given to tenants e.g. kitchen doors and worktops but the proposal is to extend these to give a wider choice.
5. Over two meetings the Tenants' Repairs and Improvements Topic Panel have discussed alternatives and reached an agreement on the choices to be presented to Members for approval. It should be noted that a number of tenants wished to keep the status quo as they were concerned at the cost implications.
6. The inclusion of showers as an option was particularly requested by tenants for a number of reasons, not least the environmental benefits that they bring.

Options

7. The options are:-
 - a) to offer the options currently given.
 - b) to offer an increased range of choices at no real increase in cost e.g. more kitchen door/worktop colours or wall tile colours (small additional cost but currently only white is offered.
 - c) To offer a range of choices compatible with the project e.g. offer a shower fitting if the bathroom is being refurbished but keep the cost to an average of less than £500 per property as agreed for the voids project.

Proposals

8. The proposal is to adopt item 7c above and to give tenants the choice set out in Appendix 1 attached.
9. It is further proposed to produce a tenants' choice leaflet which would clearly set out the choices and be part of the discussion that the Tenant Liaison Officer has with the tenant before refurbishment works are carried out in their home. The options will also be permanently on show at the Tenants' Resource Centre at Oxford City Homes.

Financial implications

10. With approximately 400 individual refurbishment projects per year, it is estimated that the additional cost for these proposals will be under £75,000 for this financial year and a maximum of £200,000 per year there after.
11. Current predictions are, that the additional £75,000 cost this financial year can be accommodated from within the existing kitchen

refurbishment budget as spend in this area is less than expected. This will not affect the overall aim of meeting the decent homes target. In future years' budget making process, due allowance will be made for this item, taking into account the actual costs in previous years.

Legal implications

12. There are no specific legal implications to this report as statutory repairing rights remain unaffected.

Environmental implications

13. The installation of showers will save water consumption and water heating costs but it is difficult to quantify by how much. Thought was given to the inclusion of reduced flow (Eco) taps in the list of choices but it was felt that it was more appropriate to use these taps as a standard replacement item (for basins only). It is estimated that a saving of 4% of the average water bill can be achieved by fitting reduced flow taps to the hand basin.

Recommendations

14. It is proposed that the Topic Panel's views are adopted and that an increased range of choices are given during refurbishments which will result in an additional average cost of under £500 per property.
15. There will be an annual review of the policy with tenants' representatives and the approval of any minor changes delegated to the Executive Director – City Services following consultation with the Board Member and Group Leaders.

Appendices

16. Appendix 1 - List of proposed choices.

Name and contact details of author: Chris Pyle, tel: 335411 extn. 3611
Email:cpyle@oxford.gov.uk

Background papers: Void Policy Update report

Appendix One –

ELEMENT	OXFORD CITY HOMES CURRENT CHOICES	AGREED CHOICES Agreed at R.I.P. Meeting 12 June 2008
BATHROOM		
Bath	White	White
Bath Panel	White	White
Bath taps	None - standard	Lever or standard
WC	White	White
Toilet seat	White	White
Basin	White	White
Basin taps	Standard chrome head or lever	Lever or standard
Tiling - wall	White	White, Victorian Cream PRV2, Barley PRG10, Magnolia PRG20, Harebell PRG32 - to be value of 20 points as part of extras.
Tiling - floor	Choice of four colours - to conc. floors	Beige, cream, tan + one other
KITCHEN		
Units	Choice of three doors / one handle	Two fronts - Maple & Beech + four handles (Escutcheon, Dimple bow, Taper, D handle)

Worktops	Choice of three	Four - Vernini Blue, Fawn Blush, Welsh Slate & Granite
Tiling - wall	White	As bathroom above
Tiling - floor	Choice of four	As bathroom above
Taps	Choice pillar taps, standard or lever	Pillar or mono - standard/lever
Redecoration	Selection of emulsion	Selection as existing

AGREED CHOICES (EXTRAS)

Any mix up to a value of 100 points

Points	Item
100	Shower Mixer incl. rail & curtain (Tenant responsible for maintenance of head/hose & curtain)
40	One & half bowl S.S Sink top
20	Chrome Monobloc tap (kitchen)
20	Towel Rail (bathroom)
20	Integral Waste Bin (recycling)
20	Mirror (bathroom)

100	Upgrade kitchen fronts/worktops	Premiere Kitchens Tyrone Range
20	Coloured wall tiles (kitchen or bath)	For colours - see under kitchen tiles above
50	Non-slip vinyl sheet flooring	

Notes:- Shower and bathroom associated "extras" will only be undertaken with bathroom refurbishments and cannot be added to kitchen refurbishment works. Similarly kitchen "extras" can only be included if a kitchen refurbishment is being undertaken.