

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 14 June 2023  
**Report of:** Executive Director (Communities and People)  
**Title of Report:** Replacement of resident front doors in high rise buildings with compliant certificated fire doors

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To seek Cabinet approval and delegation to award works contract(s) to replace all applicable resident front doors in Evenlode, Windrush and Hockmore Towers, Oxford with certificated compliant fire doors (FD30's)
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Deliver More Affordable Housing
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028

<b>Recommendations:</b> That Cabinet resolves to:	
1.	<b>Grant project approval</b> to allocate the approved budget of £2.6m agreed by full Council in 2021/22 to enable progression of the replacement of all resident front doors at Plowman, Evenlode, Windrush and Hockmore Towers, Oxford, with certificated compliant FD30 fire doors; and
2.	<b>Delegate authority</b> to the Executive Director (Communities and People) or the Head of Housing to award the fire door replacement programme contract(s) to ODS, or others as required, following the procurement process outlined in the Constitution.

<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1	Risk Register

## **Introduction and background**

1. The focus for Fire Doors in high rise blocks has changed dramatically since the Grenfell tragedy, with a greater emphasis on doors meeting modern standards. As well as this, the newly introduced Building Safety Act 2022 has made significant changes to the way fire safety is regulated in Higher Risk Buildings, introducing a new Building Safety Regulator (BSR) in England to oversee a new, more stringent safety management regime for these buildings and to drive improvements in building safety and performance standards in all applicable buildings. The provision of compliant fire doors is a significant part of this regime in providing assurance to residents that their building is safe from a fire perspective.
2. The Building Safety Act takes forward further changes to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the Fire Safety Order or FSO), building on the Fire Safety Act 2021. The Act also creates an ongoing duty on the Accountable Person (The Council) to assess the safety risks relating to their building, to take all reasonable steps to prevent a risks materialising and to limit the severity of any incident resulting from such a risk. The Accountable Person will need to demonstrate how we are meeting this ongoing duty via our safety case and Safety Case Reports, (which we must produce and submit to the BSR) and by building electronic Golden Threads of Information to show safety compliance in our higher risk buildings.
3. Oxford City Council have annually undertaken Fire Risk Assessments for all our high risk buildings, and are taking further action to collate historical and recent building information/safety checks to comply with the BSA 2022. These checks have identified that, as we have no certification that resident front doors meet modern standards then they can only be classified as 'nominal fire doors'.
4. The term 'nominal fire door' is used where an existing fire door's fire separation performance cannot be proven but it is assumed that the door will be of a suitable build to act as a fire door.
5. The Council has taken additional steps to reduce fire spread within all our tower blocks by installing sprinkler systems within each of the flats which will help prevent fire and smoke spreading. However, we still need to guarantee that the flat entrance fire doors would prevent fire and smoke spreading into common areas of the building. Having this extra mitigation in place is essential for fire safety in our higher risk buildings. The Act also brings forward measures to protect leaseholders from the costs associated with the remediation of historical building safety defects in medium- and high-rise buildings. The Act protects qualifying leaseholders (those living in their own homes or with up to three UK properties in total) from all costs associated with the remediation of unsafe cladding, and provides additional protections from non-cladding costs. The Act means that building owners and landlords are now liable to pay to fix historical fire safety defects if they are (or are linked to) the developer of a building with fire safety defects.
6. We have a budget of available £2.6m in 2023/24. Foresters Tower has been completed and Plowman Tower is in process via a general delegated officer decision. This report addresses the works required at the remaining towers to ensure that due authority is in place.

## **Options**

7. Option 1 (recommended): Grant approval to spend the current allocated budget of £2.6m as approved by full Council in 2021/22 to enable progression with the

installation of certificated flat of entrance doors at Evenlode, Windrush and Hockmore Towers and then to move onto replacement of all uncertificated flat entrance doors in Housing for Older people blocks followed by the 11 identified four story blocks where there is a shared escape route for fire safety purposes.

8. Option 2: Do nothing - Not installing certified flat entrance fire doors to tower blocks and low rise blocks could expose Oxford City Council and its tenants to unacceptable risk, as such, we have made progress on this and have completed a door replacement programme at Foresters Tower in March with authorisation from the Executive Director for Homes and Communities. This included all tenants and leaseholder dwellings.
9. This report is seeking authorisation/permission to continue this programme following completion of Plowman Tower. Once the proposed programme is completed we would like to move on to the surplus three and two storey blocks where there is a shared escape route for fire safety purposes. The request for funds to complete this further programme will be included in future budget requests in coming years.

### Financial implications

10. The HRA business plan includes a budgetary provision of £2.4m as well as an approx. £200,000 carry over from 2022/23. The estimated contract value is circa £1.2m The estimates are based on the following blocks:

Repair Works Summary	Property	Estimated Cost
Replace all resident front doors with certificated compliant fire doors (FD30's)	Plowman Tower	£309,000.00
	Evenlode Tower	£149,574.50
	Windrush Tower	£156,005.00
	Hockmore Tower	£149,574.50
	10 Housing for older people blocks (approx. 200 doors)	£500,000.00
	11 four storey blocks (approx. 100 doors)	£250,000.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,514,154.00</b>
<b>Low rise blocks (based on current data)</b>		
	Approx. 293 three story blocks (approx. 1558 doors)	Future budget request to be confirmed.
	Approx. 201 two storey blocks (approx.. 804 doors)	Future budget request to be confirmed.

11. In line with the Council's Constitution, works will be offered to ODS as they are a certified fire door installer and have capacity. Work has been awarded to ODS for Foresters tower in line with the rules in the constitution. However, we will be carrying out a Quantity Surveying exercise to ensure value for money is achieved on the material costs.
12. The approved HRA capital programme includes approx. £2.6m for fire doors. This report seeks Cabinet approval to use this budget for the completion of the fire door replacement programme at Plowman, Evenlode, Windrush and Hockmore Towers at an estimated cost of £764,154.00 and replacement of flat front doors and cross corridor doors at Housing for Older People sites and all relevant four storey blocks at a further estimated cost of approx. £750,000.

### **Legal issues**

13. There is a health and safety risk as we have a statutory duty to provide residents relevant information about fire doors, particularly residents' flat entrance doors, as these play an important part in containing any fire within the flat in which it starts. We cannot currently do this as we have no certification for existing doors.
14. Criminal sanctions for failure to comply with requirements and prohibitions imposed by the Fire Safety Order and any regulations made under it may apply. The most serious offences are subject to a maximum penalty of a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum in a magistrates' court (currently £5,000) or on conviction on indictment to an unlimited fine and/or a term not exceeding two years.

### **Level of risk**

15. The level of risk, should this request not be granted is significant, as we would not be fulfilling our statutory duties as stated previously. The safety of our Resident's would be put at greater risk.

### **Equalities impact**

16. There are no known equalities impacts regarding the works or proposed delegation. Due regard will be given to equalities impacts within the procurement process.

### **Carbon and Environmental Considerations**

17. The programme of fire door replacement is not expected to have any impact on Oxford City Council's policies and commitments relating to carbon reduction and safeguarding the environment.
18. The existing 'composite' doors are being replaced with timber doors which are responsibly sourced from FSC and PESC certified suppliers. This means the trees are harvested responsibly so there is no net loss of forest over time.
19. As much of the waste material produced by these works as is possible will be recycled by Oxford Direct Services via their depot facility at Marsh Road, Oxford.

### **Conclusion**

20. Cabinet is recommended to approve the delegated authority to allocate the approved budget of £2.6m as agreed by full Council in 2021/22 to enable

progression of the replacement of all resident front doors at Plowman, Evenlode, Windrush and Hockmore Towers, Oxford, as well as the doors at 10 Housing for Older People blocks and 11 four storey blocks with certificated compliant FD30s fire doors.

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<b>Background Papers:</b> None
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