

To: Cabinet
Date: 11 September 2024
Report of: Executive Director (Communities and People)
Title of Report: Replacement of front entrance doors to flats in higher risk buildings with compliant certificated fire doors

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To seek Cabinet approval and delegated authority to award contracts to enable replacement of entrance doors to flats with compliant certificated fire doors for relevant properties in the portfolio as identified in Fire Risk Assessments
Key decision:	Yes
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
Corporate Priority:	Deliver More Affordable Housing and Support Thriving Communities
Policy Framework:	Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28

Recommendations: That Cabinet resolves to:	
1.	Grant project approval for the replacement of front entrance doors to flats in higher risk buildings with compliant certificated fire doors as described in the report; and
2.	Delegate authority to the Executive Director (Communities and People) in consultation with the Head of Financial Services, the Head of Law and Governance and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities to enter into a contract with ODS (subject to agreeing an appropriate price in line with previous similar works) or an alternative contractor in order to deliver the installation of certified fire doors across the housing portfolio.

Appendices	
None.	

Introduction and background

1. Landlords are required under various pieces of legislation to install fire resistant doors which will contain fire and smoke within the compartmented area for up to thirty minutes. The industry recognised door type for best assurance and compliance is a solid timber FD30S door type.
 - **The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO):** This legislation places a duty on the landlords to ensure the safety of occupants by carrying out risk assessments and implementing appropriate fire safety measures, including the installation of fire-resistant doors such as FD30S fire doors.
 - **Building Regulations 2010 (as amended), Approved Document B (Fire Safety):** Part B of the Building Regulations provides detailed guidance on fire safety measures required in buildings. Specifically, it mandates the use of FD30S fire doors in certain locations within residential buildings, including entrance doors to flats and doors leading to communal areas, to provide at least 30 minutes of fire resistance.
 - **Housing Act 2004:** Under this Act, the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) assesses residential properties for potential hazards, including fire risks. Local authorities can enforce the installation of fire safety measures, such as FD30S fire doors, to mitigate identified hazards and ensure the safety of occupants.
 - **The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018:** This Act requires landlords to ensure their properties are fit for human habitation, which includes complying with fire safety standards. The installation of FD30S fire doors forms part of the necessary measures to meet these standards.
 - **Fire Safety Act 2021:** An amendment to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, this Act clarifies that the responsible person must manage and reduce the risk of fire in multi-occupancy residential buildings, including ensuring that fire doors between domestic premises and communal areas meet appropriate fire resistance standards, such as FD30S.
2. The provision of compliant, fire resisting flat entrance doors is a significant consideration when assessing a property's ability to contain a fire within the compartment of origin, thus allowing sufficient time for tenants and fire services to react as required, in fire events.
3. This requirement applies specifically to flats, where the entrance door to the property opens onto an escape route, or into a lobby where smoke and fire could cause fire to spread to other areas, or smoke to obstruct safe evacuation.
4. Due to changes in requirements, many of the doors on relevant Council housing properties are no longer compliant with current legislation. Where there is no evidence that the doors conform to current safety standards and the door's capability to withstand fire cannot be proved, and the conditions as set out in the Regulations apply, these doors will need to be replaced.

5. Oxford City Council has annually undertaken Fire Risk Assessments for all its buildings and is taking further action to collate historical and recent building information/safety checks to comply with the BSA 2022.
6. These assessments produce actions as identified, and there is currently an ongoing program to identify issues such as fire door installations and to deal with those through the 5-year capital program.
7. This report looks to address higher risk buildings that cannot wait for programs to be implemented and are specifically aimed at the 2024-25 budget item.
8. Authority is sought to undertake this work as it becomes identified, and to spend the approved associated budgets in doing so.
9. The Council's high-rise blocks have previously been completed by Oxford Direct Services as a priority, and all entrance doors to flats were replaced over a two-year period. We are now looking to move to the next priority risk blocks, namely: temporary accommodation, housing for older people blocks, and Pound House.
10. Provision for funding this work was made in the 2024-2025 Budget agreed by Council in February 2024. The current budget amount available is £3.5m.

Options

11. Option 1 (recommended): Grant approval to award a contract to ODS (subject to agreeing an appropriate price in line with previous works) or an alternative contractor if required, to enable progress with the replacement of all uncertificated flat entrance doors in temporary accommodation, housing for older people blocks, and Pound House, where there is a shared escape route for fire safety purposes.
12. Option 2: Do nothing - Not installing certified flat entrance fire doors could expose Oxford City Council and its tenants to unacceptable risk including legal ramifications and potentially criminal convictions.

Financial implications

13. The HRA business plan includes a budgetary provision of £3.5m. There is currently c.£2.515m of works identified, with more to follow.

Property	Budget Estimate	Approximate number of Fire door sets/ panels (excluding those already complete)
Alice Smith House, Alice Smith Square, Oxford OX4 4NG	£39,978.52	17
Atkyns Court, 12-76 Atkyns Rd, Oxford OX3 8RA	£220,627.48	68
Birch Court, 44-73 Colemans Hill, Oxford, OX3 8AP	£239,111.82	64
Bradlands, Mill Lane, Marston, Oxford, OX3 0FQ	£249,727.38	88
Cardinal House, Cardinal Close Oxford, OX4 3UF	£372,155.10	127
Eastern House, Eastern Ave, Oxford OX4 4QT	£44,828.22	18
George Moore House, George Moore Close, Oxford, OX4 4DA	£209,867.99	63
Headley House, Headley Way, Oxford, OX3 7TG	£133,791.30	41
Knights House, Harold White Close, Oxford, OX3 8EH	£218,780.29	61
Northbrook House, Knights Road, Oxford OX4 6DH	£240,516.28	55
Windale House, Field Avenue, Oxford, OX4 6JF	£246,023.37	57
Total Budget Estimate (Excluding VAT)	£2,215,407.75	659

14. Costs for Pound House are still in development, although it is anticipated that this will be in the region of £300,000.00. Recent events have necessitated a re-design of previous proposals, and some more work is currently being investigated which would be required to facilitate any door installations.

Legal issues

15. Following changes in the fire regulations there is a statutory duty to provide residents with 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.
16. Failure to do the works could lead to criminal sanctions for failure to comply with requirements and prohibitions imposed by the Fire Safety Order and any

regulations made under it may apply.

17. Part 4.5 (10) of the Constitution requires Cabinet to give project approval for projects of £500,000 or over (£1,000,000 for contract awards).
18. Part 19.11(e) of the Constitution requires the following when ODS is commissioned for one off capital schemes and the value of the contract is over £1,000,000: a detailed specification; use of benchmarking (where it exists); mandatory use of external QS services; and a formal tender evaluation process which should be followed up with a Cabinet report to support the decision to award the contract.
19. In accordance with 19.11(e), should tendering and procurement of an alternative contractor need to be considered for any capital scheme, for whatever reason, including capacity or capability, this will need the approval of the Executive Director of Development or their delegate.

Level of risk

20. 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

21. 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

22. The program 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.
23. 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.
24. 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

25. Cabinet is recommended to approve the replacement of entrance doors to flats with compliant certificated fire doors for relevant properties in the portfolio as identified in Fire Risk Assessments, and delegate authority to the Executive Director (Communities and People) in consultation with the Head of Financial Services, the Head of Law and Governance and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities to enter into contracts with ODS, or others if required, in order to deliver the installation of certified fire doors across the housing portfolio.

Report author	James Viljoen
Job title	Technical Engineering Manager
Service area or department	Corporate Property Services
Telephone	07725253134
e-mail	jviljoen@oxford.gov.uk

Background Papers: None