

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Housing Committee

Does this report require to be approved? Yes No

Ref: SL/CB Date 06/11/24

Transforming Places - Tower Strategy Update

From Stephen Llewellyn, Chief Officer (Housing)

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to update Housing Committee on current progress with the outcomes in the Tower Strategy, which sits within the Transforming Places Programme of Work, and key achievements in the last reporting period.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Housing Committee:

- (1) Acknowledge the progress of the tower demolition programme (Ambition)
- (2) Acknowledge the progress of the sprinkler installation & fire safety programme
- (3) Acknowledge the progress of major refurbishment projects
- (4) Acknowledge the actions of the Deputy Chief Executive to award a Negotiated Tender for specialist demolition engineer services to Perses Ltd.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities
Ambition statement	(1) Ensure a housing mix that supports social inclusion and economic growth
Programme of Work	Transforming Places

1. Background

- 1.1 Committee will be aware that in 2017 as part of the HRA budget motion, the council announced its intention to commence consultation with stakeholders regarding the potential re-provisioning of its tower estate over the next 25 years, with phase 1 of the re-provisioning programme granted committee approval in May 2018. Subsequently approval was given at May 2023 Housing Committee to commence the Phase 2 re-provisioning consultation. Significant progress has been made to date on Phase 1 of the programme with several high/low-rise blocks now demolished.

- 1.2 Committee will also recall that in February 2018, the council approved proposals to develop and deliver a programme to introduce enhanced fire safety measures within high-rise towers that included retrofitting of sprinkler systems, improved fire compartmentation, emergency lighting and installation of fire doors to properties.
- 1.3 Following committee approval in 2016 to undertake condition surveys including external cladding assessment, internal fabric condition and structural integrity, the findings were assessed with a strategic approach to remedial action in line with government legislation developed.

2. Report

Demolition/Ambition

- 2.1 The programme is progressing on schedule with only 23 tenants identified in phase 1 still to be rehoused. All have been offered housing but have advised they wish to remain within the blocks until we make a decision regarding re-housing the Ukrainian families. Committee will be aware these are the blocks of flats that were re-purposed to support the Ukraine resettlement programme. Detailed breakdown of the phase one programme as of October 2024 is provided in table 1:

Table 1

Tower	Vacant Properties	Status
Northburn Low-Rise, Airdrie	27 (100%)	Complete
Holehills, Airdrie	138 (100%)	Complete
Burnside Court, Coatbridge	44 (100%)	Complete
Gowkthrapple Low-Rise	303 (99%)	On Site
Shawhead Low-Rise	176 (100%)	On Site
Coursington, Allen, Draffen High-Rise	351 (100%)	On Site
Jackson High-Rise	192 (100%)	On Site
Allershaw High-rise	70 (100%)	Design Phase
Dunbeth High-rise	192 (100%)	Re-programmed
High Coats	Ukraine Resettlement	Re-programmed
Birkshaw High-rise	Ukraine Resettlement	Re-programmed

Gowkthrapple Low Rise Demolition

- 2.2 The contract to demolish the 19 low-rise blocks at Gowkthrapple, Wishaw was awarded in February 2023 and the contractor took possession in March 2023. Works are now progressing well, despite delays associated with service disconnections and bird nesting season. It is estimated that the demolition works will be completed by end April 2025, with the exception of 2 blocks at Stanhope Place which have been excluded from the current contract due to a remaining owner occupier. While efforts are continuing to purchase the property on a voluntary basis this has not proved possible to date. The Planning Committee on 17 October therefore re-confirmed its approval to seek to purchase the property through use of a Compulsory Purchase Order and preparations are being made to serve the appropriate notice as soon as possible.

Shawhead Low Rise Demolition

- 2.3 The contract to demolish 11 low-rise blocks at Shawhead, Coatbridge has recommenced following the termination of the previous contract due to contractor performance. On 25th January 2024 the council terminated the contract with the incumbent main contractor and has subsequently engaged a new main contractor to complete the project. The newly appointed contractor took possession of the site on 25th January 2024 and are working towards completing the project by November 2024.

Coursington, Allen, Draffen Towers Demolition

- 2.4 Demolition of the three high-rise tower blocks at Coursington, Motherwell is underway with demolition of 12-14 Draffen street being completed first along with the surrounding structures. Careful deconstruction of the first tower superstructure was in progress until March 2024 when a routine review of archive drawings was being undertaken for another purpose, a drawing referenced that a post tensioning system may have been used as part of the original construction methodology. Previous structural assessments and surveys had not identified this system was in place. The use of vertical post-tensioning in residential tower blocks is not common practice and is more often seen in civil engineering projects. The council's consultant engineers, and the contractor has found limited examples of this system in residential construction, and it was an unexpected discovery. To enable the drawings to be fully assessed, the contractor was instructed to cease works on site while further investigations were undertaken. A requirement for structural assessments and surveys to be undertaken by the contractor was included as part of the demolition specification but it is questionable if this could have been identified during such an exercise due to the location and concealed nature of the system. Following assessment by the contractor's structural engineer it was confirmed that the post tensioning system was present and formed part of the original construction.
- 2.5 The discovery of the post tensioning system being used resulted in a cessation of the works on site whilst an alternative method of demolition and quote to complete the works was provided. Following a review of the newly proposed method of demolition and costs provided by the incumbent contractor a decision was reached that it was not legally viable to proceed with the contract to complete the works on the basis that the acceptance of the new solution and additional price increases would amount to substantial modification which legally the council cannot accept such a variation to the contract provided as if it did it would be in breach of The Procurement (Scotland) Regulations 2015 Regulation 72. The council are currently reviewing options to terminate the current contract and enable a new contractor to take possession and complete the project.
- 2.6 Once the newly appointed contractor takes possession of the site a series of further structural surveys at Coursington Tower will be carried out to confirm the most appropriate demolition method. Whilst the surveys are being conducted the cladding will be stripped from Allen and Draffen Towers. It is anticipated that the findings of the surveys will be reported to the council in January 2025 for the new demolition methodology to be finalised, agreed and progressed.

Jackson Court Demolition

- 2.7 The contract to demolish Jackson Court, Coatbridge is underway and was progressing well until May 2024 when the main contractor highlighted the discovery of high levels of unrecorded structural asbestos enclosed within the joint between party walls and external walls of the block across all floors within the tower. The specific construction method utilised in the block made it extremely difficult to detect through standard surveying techniques. The issue was only identified during further structural

investigations prompted by the discovery of the post-tensioning issue at the Coursington Towers demolition site, despite earlier surveys conducted by both the council and the contractor. The result of identifying this means that the overall demolition methodology needs to be altered.

- 2.8 The contractor has reviewed the effect of the discovery of the asbestos on the contract and has presented an updated quote and timeframe to complete the works on site.
- 2.9 Following a review of the updated quote it has been confirmed that it is not legally viable to proceed with the contract to complete the works on the basis that the acceptance of the new solution and additional price increases would amount to substantial modification legally the council cannot accept such a variation to the contract provided as if it did it would be in breach of The Procurement (Scotland) Regulations 2015 Regulation 72. The council are currently reviewing options to terminate the current contract and enable a new contractor to take possession and complete the project.
- 2.10 Once the newly appointed contractor takes possession of the site a series of enabling works will be carried out prior to the physical demolition recommencing. Whilst the enabling works are being completed the tower will be assessed and a recommendation on the most appropriate method of demolition provided to the council. It is anticipated that the findings of the surveys will be reported to the council in January 2025 for the new demolition methodology to be finalised, agreed and progressed.

Negotiated Tender Procedure (NTP) for Demolition Engineer Services

- 2.11 Following the discovery of the post tensioning system at Coursington Tower and the additional structural asbestos at Jackson Court, it became clear the council required immediate assistance from specialist demolition engineers. A NPT process was utilised for reasons of extreme urgency as these towers are partially deconstructed therefore increasing the risk profile of these towers.
A contract was awarded to Perses Ltd who will provide a range of specialist demolition engineering services including urgent advice regarding the partially demolished structures, advice on demolition methodologies, Principal Designer role and monitoring of the demolition process.
The consultant will also be involved in the remainder of the phase one demolition programme with an upper limit of the contract being £1,000,000.
The council intend to undertake a future procurement exercise to assist with the phase two programme.

Allershaw Tower Demolition

- 2.12 A tender package for the demolition of Allershaw Tower, Wishaw continues to be developed. The last remaining tenants have vacated the block, and work is now underway to carry out refurbishment and demolition (R&D) surveys for inclusion in the tender which will be procured in 2025/26.

Phase 2 Reprovisioning Programme

- 2.13 With the consultation for the second phase of the demolition programme being complete and the identified blocks being put forward for reprovisioning, a programme has been developed to deliver these works. The programme contains a mixture of low-rise and tower blocks spanning several years. A report on the findings of the consultation exercise was approved at the Housing Committee in August 2023. The

vacating of the properties in this phase of the works has already begun and updates on the progress will be reported to a future committee.

Sprinkler / Fire Safety Programme

- 2.14 Phase 2 of the sprinkler installation programme comprising of towers at Glassford, Woodside, Glen, Coltswood & Redbridge is complete.
- 2.15 Phase 3 of the sprinkler installation programme to install sprinkler systems in Elvan and Calder Towers is currently being developed and will commence in 2025/26

Major Refurbishment Projects

- 2.16 Specialist consultants have been appointed to provide design services in relation to the recladding and internal refurbishment of Whifflet and Calder towers, Coatbridge. Detailed surveys are underway to feed into the overall design proposals. The preparations for a resident's consultation meeting are underway. Upon completion of the survey and consultation events the design team will proceed to develop the tender package and commence procurement of the contract.

3. Measures of success

- 3.1 The plans contained within this report will help to improve housing conditions and housing choice for our residents which contributes to addressing inequality.

4. Supporting Documentation

There are no supporting documents with this report.



Stephen Llewellyn
Chief Officer (Housing)

5. Impacts

<p>5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5.2 Financial impact Does the report contain any financial impacts? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>Any financial impact of the measures implemented will be contained within the HRA Capital Investment budget and will be drawn down via borrowing/CFCR as required and reported to committee.</p>
<p>5.3 HR policy impact Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.4 Legal impact Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>Statutory compliance with Building Standards and recent fire safety legislation.</p>
<p>5.5 Data protection impact Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk</p>

	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.6 Technology / Digital impact	Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi?	
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?	
	Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?	
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.7 Environmental / Carbon impact	Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?	
	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?	
	Upgrading of external building fabric to current energy standards.	
5.8 Communications impact	Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?	
	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?	
	Reprovisioning of towers and low-rise blocks must be included in regular corporate communications.	
5.9 Risk impact	Is there a risk impact?	
	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?	
	Risks are considered, frequently reviewed and recorded on project-specific risk registers. Risks with an inherently high score are escalated to project board/service level.	
5.10 Armed Forces Covenant Duty	Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?	
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.	
5.11 Children's rights and wellbeing impact	Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?	

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?

Yes No