

Cabinet – 21 July 2022

Questions from the Public

1 Sally Jones to Councillor Simon Carter (Portfolio Holder for Housing):

At the Cabinet meeting on March 24, I asked Councillor Simon Carter 'where is the condition survey for the roof, windows and cladding as we have not received this yet'.

I was informed these would follow in his verbal response but no mention of these in the written response.

To date we have still not seen a condition survey report for the cladding or the roofs but have now been informed that only the flat roofs were surveyed and none of the pitched roofs.

No response regarding the cladding - which is not acceptable as the cladding is not the same on each block on Five Acres, I suggest the one block (7 to 17) that still has timber cladding is the only to be repaired or replaced.

Apparently our window will now be individually surveyed by the contractor.

My question is - if the roofs have not been surveyed how do you know they are in need of replacement? One can not make an assumption this is a requirement, repairs may be sufficient and there are older properties in Harlow that have not been forced to have such works.

Reply from Councillor Simon Carter (Portfolio Holder for Housing):

Thank you for your question. I do understand your concerns and we continue to welcome questions. There is a statutory process we must follow for these works and following the questions at the previous Cabinet meeting we undertook an extensive review of the process. I continue to commit to providing you with the relevant information to understand the works to be undertaken to the blocks.

Through the normal consultation processes, I understand, you have been provided with:

- a "Notice of Intention" for the works dated 09 July 2021,
- a Notice of Estimate" dated 20 January 2022,
- a copy of the intended works specification sent on 24 March 2022, and
- a breakdown of the works dated 19 May 2022.

An evening meeting was held on the 20 June 2022, and a copy of the presentation, question and answers was sent to all leaseholders on 8 July 2022. If you require copies of this information, please do not hesitate to contact the Homeownership section.

Harlow Council will continue to talk through with leaseholders the background information to the above and its intentions for further information. It will formulate these together with conclusions being drawn on the condition of the block and the need for the works being planned as more information becomes available.

It is intended for the pitched roofs to be included in the scope for replacement due to a general assessment of their age and ongoing maintenance costs as the blocks are more than 55 years old. We intend, once the scaffolding is erected to ensure safe access, that further condition surveys will be undertaken and an assessment of next steps. This will be talked through with leaseholders.

The communal windows had condition surveys completed and surveys of the windows in individual flats are currently being completed. Any windows or roofs that do not require replacement will be omitted from the contract, and this will be discussed with leaseholders.

The planning application in respect of the cladding to block 45 – 49 Five Acres will be resubmitted in August.

As landlord we have a responsibility to ensure the buildings are safe and secure. These works will reduce routine repairs and maintenance and make them more thermally efficient. It will also incorporate the latest fire safety standards, which is a key priority for this administration. Residents will have better quality accommodation and lower heating bills.

The formal consultation processes and information provided are aimed to ensure that only works that are appropriate and necessary are carried out.