

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
SPECIAL CABINET – 19 SEPTEMBER 2018
REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT AND
CULTURAL SERVICES)

HIGH VIEW DEVELOPMENT

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The council is working in partnership with Lovell to deliver a £45 million regeneration programme in High View, which will transform the heart of South Hatfield.
- 1.2 The proposed High View development aims to deliver an attractive local centre to bring people to live, work and visit the area. Subject to planning approval, it is set to deliver around 150 new homes (including houses and flats), new commercial units and a new local health centre.
- 1.3 The project is currently at the detailed design stage and Lovell has asked whether the council would wish to provide an additional fire protection measure to the flats by installing a sprinkler system.
- 1.4 The purpose of this report is for Members to consider the way forward, taking into account the financial implications and the relevant regulations.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 Cabinet approves the installation of a sprinkler system for the flats contained in the High View development for the reasons outlined in this report and subject to consideration by Council on the required budgetary provision.
- 2.2 Cabinet recommends to Council that an additional capital budget of £207,000 is added to the High View Development Programme to enable the installation of a sprinkler system.

3 Explanation

- 3.1 The High View neighbourhood shopping parade was originally built in the 1950s, it was faced with an increasing number of problems such as ageing buildings and public open space. Following a procurement process, Lovell was selected as the developer for delivering high-quality new shops, homes and other improvements at High View.
- 3.2 Lovell is currently working on the detailed design as part of the planning application for the regeneration scheme. In particular, the detailed layouts of the residential element is currently being worked on. They have specifically asked if the council would like Lovell to install a sprinkler system to the flats before progressing any further with the design of the layout.
- 3.3 The installation of sprinklers is not a mandatory requirement for this project in accordance with the current regulation and that Lovell is expected to design the

scheme in compliance with all the building regulations and fire safety measures that are required. However, in light of the Grenfell Tower tragedy, there has been an increase in public attention on the fire safety in residential buildings and the council would need to give due consideration in the interest of public safety.

3.4 If the council approves the decision to install sprinklers in the new flats of the High View development, subject to final design, Lovell will be expected to:

- Design the residential sprinkler systems in accordance with Approved Document B, and BS 9251:2014 “Fire sprinkler systems for domestic and residential occupancies. Code of practice”
- All ground floor flats shall be served directly from the mains, as per the incoming domestic water supply. These ground floor flats would each need their own dedicated flow switch valve set. From the sprinkler control valve set, a pipe will run through the flat to serve all relevant rooms within. Sprinkler heads will be installed within the required rooms in accordance with BS9251:2014.
- All flats on upper floors are to be served from domestic cold water by a boosted supply, served from a break tank. The proposed sprinkler system branch off from the boosted cold water pipe at each level. This will effectively be a separate sprinkler system to each floor, with a dedicated sprinkler control set. From each sprinkler control set, a pipe will be run through the corridors and branched off to the apartments. Sprinkler heads will be installed within the required rooms in accordance with BS9251:2014.

3.5 **Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety**

3.5.1 Following the Grenfell Tower tragedy, the Government commissioned an Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety, which was led by Dame Judith Hackitt. The purpose was to make recommendations that would ensure a sufficiently robust regulatory system for the future and that residents feel that the buildings they live in are safe and remain so.

3.5.2 The final report was published by Dame Hackitt in May 2018, however the new regulatory framework recommended in the report does not require the installation of sprinklers as mandatory for new buildings.

3.6 **National Fire Chief Council (NFCC)**

3.6.1 The NFCC states that sprinklers are the most effective way to ensure that fires are suppressed or even extinguished before the fire service can arrive. They save lives and reduce injuries, protect firefighters who attend incidents and reduce the amount of damage to both property and the environment from fire.

3.6.2 During 2017/18, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the National Fire Sprinkler Network (NFSN) have worked together to investigate the effectiveness and reliability of sprinkler systems. The evidence produced indicates that sprinkler systems operate on 94% of occasions demonstrating very high reliability. Furthermore, it is evident that when they do operate they extinguish or contain the fire on 99% of occasions and are thus very effective. The research also found that in both converted and purpose built flats that sprinklers are 100% effective in controlling fires.

- 3.6.3 It is believed that the NFCC was disappointed that sprinklers was not made as an explicit requirement in Dame Hackitt's report.
- 3.7 Whilst the installation of sprinklers is not a mandatory requirement, they do provide additional safeguarding and can save lives as well as protecting property in the event of a fire.
- 3.8 It should also be noted that fire sprinkler systems are expensive and difficult to retro fit into an existing building. Complications arise due to building fabric, and the building will inevitably be occupied and works would have to be carried out during evenings, weekends or closure periods.
- 3.9 Given that fire sprinkler systems have a proven track record in saving lives, and that the most cost effective way to install the system would be to incorporate this at the design stage. It is therefore recommended that they will be installed in the flats as part of the High View Development.

Implications

4 Legal Implication(s)

- 4.1 All the buildings must be built in compliance with the relevant building regulations, however there is no legal requirement to install sprinklers in the new buildings under the current regulations.

5 Financial Implication(s)

- 5.1 The cost of the installation of a sprinkler system is estimated to be £1800 per flat. The total cost for 115 flats is estimated to be £207,000 and that a new capital budget of this amount will need to be added to the High View programme.
- 5.2 Officers will be discussing the payment profile for the additional cost with Lovell and it is possible that part of the additional cost will fall into the next financial year.

6 Risk Management Implications

- 6.1 The risks related to this proposal are:
- 6.2 The government may impose further fire protection measures to new buildings. Likelihood Medium, Impact Medium. The installation of sprinklers are hoped to future proof some of the design measures.

7 Security and Terrorism Implication(s)

- 7.1 None arising directly from the recommendation in this report.

8 Procurement Implication(s)

- 8.1 Lovell was appointed by the council as the developer of High View development following an OJEU competitive dialogue process.

9 Climate Change Implication(s)

9.1 None arising directly from the recommendation in this report.

10 Human Resources Implication(s)

10.1 None arising directly from the recommendation in this report

11 Health and Wellbeing Implication(s)

11.1 The recommendation of this report seeks to add extra protection to residents in the event of a fire.

12 Communication and Engagement Implication(s)

12.1 Lovell has recently held a number of Public Exhibition events as part of the High View development, and there will be a further event prior to the submission of the planning application later this year.

13 Link to Corporate Priorities

13.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's Corporate Priorities, Our Community and Our Economy, and specifically to the achievement of safe communities and regeneration.

14 Equality and Diversity

14.1 An EqIA was not completed because this report does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies.

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