

Housing Capital Investment Programme 2010/11

Background Information

1. New Build

a) New Build Houses

The first phase of 248 houses and flats on four sites at Peel House Livingston, Boghall Bathgate, Wester Inch Bathgate and Dixon Terrace Whitburn should be complete by August 2010. To date 119 houses have been handed over. Eight sites have been identified and approved by the Council Executive for the second phase and this is now out to tender with construction work expected to start in August 2010 with overall completion by December 2012. The phase 2 sites are as follows:

- Dixon Terrace Whitburn;
- Eliburn Livingston;
- Inveralmond Playing Fields;
- Alderston Road in Livingston;
- Little Boghead in Bathgate;
- Ferrier Crescent in Armadale;
- Ladeside Avenue in Blackburn;
- Uphall Station Infant School.

2 Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) Related Work.

One of the main objectives of the housing capital programme is to invest in the existing housing stock and in particular achieve the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by 2015. To assist with this a comprehensive stock condition survey was undertaken, which gave an accurate assessment of the stock condition at that time and indicated types and levels of investment that would be required. The future work has been split between internal work and the more major external roofing and roughcast projects. Much of the internal work has now been done through projects such as kitchen and bathroom replacement and ongoing heating upgrading programmes. This leaves a considerable amount of external work including investment decisions on small pockets of the more problematic housing stock. Residents should be aware that this work is often to common areas such as shared roofs and walls. Where parts of these common properties have been sold under the Right to Buy legislation, the progress and sometimes the specification of work can depend on owners' decisions on taking part. Where owners do not agree to contribute to the work we will make every effort to exclude them from the work or to pursue them for their legal share where exclusion is not possible, e.g. shared roofs.

At this stage progress towards achieving the standard has been steady growing for a base of 11% complying in 2005 to 44% at September 2009

a) Internal Scottish Housing Quality Standard Work

Work is ongoing to complete the tasks listed below to those houses where this work has not yet been done.

The main elements of work included in this programme are listed below and work is only done where repair or upgrade is required.

Element

Removal of Lead in Water Supply	
Exterior Lighting to Doors	(fit to back and front doors)
Handrails	(fit to 2 or more stairs)
Dampness	(penetrating or serious)
Front Doors	(repair, security, draughtproofing)
Back Doors	(repair, security, draughtproofing)
Common Windows	(repair/renewal)
Common Doors	(repair/renewal)
Electrical Consumer Units	(upgrade)
Windows	(repair, security)
Heating Upgrades	(health and safety, efficiency)

The particular focus of projects under this heading for an identified number of houses for 2010/11 will be:

- Electrical Testing and Electrical Safety (Periodic testing), this includes electrical repairs and upgrading
- Fitting of handrails where required
- Fitting of external lights to all properties
- Replacement of kitchens and bathrooms omitted from previous programmes
- The upgrading of smoke detectors to hard wired in non gas housing

Periodic Testing

There is an obligation on the council as a landlord to electrically test each of our houses at least every ten years and additionally at the point of re-letting after a house is empty. These surveys, entitled 'Periodic Testing', carried out by the council's electricians and their partners identify any potential problems. The most important of these are earthing issues and asbestos in consumer units. The form of the inspection is defined in the Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) regulations 17th Edition.

The surveys have identified additional properties where we have consumer units containing asbestos. As previously reported our programme of full and partial rewires will continue once the consumer units have been replaced. The programme remains that within ten years we will complete the rewiring of houses due to corroded conduit. This has been found in around 170 homes in South Park Armadale and Philip Avenue in Boghall and in homes in Alderbank, Briarbank and Burnbank in Livingston. It is currently programmed that these properties will be rewired within 5 years. Other properties of the same age and type will be surveyed by council electricians to determine if they share this effect.

The consumer units are replaced with RCD protection which is a significant increase in the protection level provided to tenants and also means that a fault in a system, even a major fault, should not leave tenants without power to the whole house, maintaining essential access to lighting and power in some parts of the house. It is also expected that they should also serve to reduce the need for overnight repair, as tenants will have access to power and therefore at least mobile heating and also to lighting, which will allow inspections to wait until working hours.

Only small, routine and non risk repairs arising from the 'Periodic Testing' surveys of the electrical installation are reported back and dealt with through the responsive repairs service. Any urgent and substantial issues are addressed at the time.

External Lights

The SHQS requires every access to each house to be adequately lit and so external lights are fitted at both front and back doors.

Handrails

The SHQS requires safe access to and from properties and we fit protective handrails where there are more than 2 steps to the property to ensure that young and old, vulnerable and infirm, have safe access to their property.

Hard Wired Smoke Detectors

Current fire safety standards and the SHQS are moving landlords towards the supply of hard wired rather than battery powered smoke detectors. In 2010 the council will begin a programme to install wireless smoke detectors and will complete the non gas properties. The reason we have taken this initial focus is because battery operated smoke detectors in gas supplied houses are checked and batteries replaced, due to the processes around securing access for servicing, every 12 months at most as the gas heating is serviced and so these are considered to be safe. Once the non gas properties are completed the programme will focus on vulnerable households in supported accommodation. The hard wired detectors have sealed back-up batteries in case of power cuts and this cannot be removed. They are wirelessly linked so that if one goes off because of a fire, for instance in the kitchen, the one by the bedroom also goes off, giving a better alarm.

b) External Scottish Housing Quality Standard Work

External SHQS

The external SHQS surveys are now complete and have been assessed. Having detailed information on a house by house basis gives information on the need to address individual houses, where previously, the approach has been to carry out work on a complete street. However, concentrations of houses in need of investment do arise and, where there is a significant proportion of a street that requires investment, it is logical and economic to deal with the whole street.

Key investment areas identified by this 'SHQS survey' are roofs and roughcast. Roofs are prioritised because a failed roof inevitably leads to water penetration and rapid internal deterioration. The approach is to prioritise roofs where the SHQS survey identified a limited remaining life and identified poor repair condition. These will be replaced with new coverings.

The next priority is houses where the SHQS survey identified both a level of disrepair to both the roof and the render, and in this situation the required repairs will be carried out to both.

Following this the programme looks at the condition of render alone. Where the surveys have indicated that repair will be needed in the next ten years, but the roofs require no work or minimal work, a physical inspection would be made and a programme prepared.

The external programme for 2010/11 is to the following areas:

Work Carried Forward from Previous Years

The following projects are outstanding from last and previous years and will now be progressed as part of the 2010/11 housing capital programme.

Programme Area	Number of Houses	Content of Work
Burnlea / Glenview, Bents Phase 2	17	Complete external upgrading, convert flat roof to pitch.
Gideon Court, Bathgate	10	Roof and roughcast repairs.
Weaver Place, Bathgate	16	Roof and roughcast repairs.
North Reeves Place, Whitburn	30	Complete external upgrading, convert flat roof to pitch.
* Moorelands and Mooreland Gardens, Addiewell	152	Substantial repairs to roofs and external walls, dampness remediation.
Auldhill, Bridgend	30	Re-roof and re-roughcast works
Church Place, Longridge	6	Roof and roughcast repairs.
* Dick Gardens, Whitburn	8	Roof and roughcast repairs. Landscaping.
Environmental Painting	1109	Painting of timber and render
Environmental Garages	117	Upgrading of garages and garage sites.

Work programmed for 2010/11

The following are new projects proposed for inclusion in the 2010/11 housing capital programme;

Area of Work	Number of Houses	Outline of Work
* Blackburn Flats; Bathgate Road, Almond Road and Whitehill Road	8 Blocks, 28 Flats	Complete external upgrade of flats. Year 1 of 2 year programme
Barbauchlaw Avenue and Greig Crescent, Armadale	74	Roof and Roughcast Repairs
Falconer Rise, Livingston	52	Roof and Roughcast Repairs
Loganlea Area, Addiewell	60	Roof and Roughcast Repairs
Polbeth Area	20	Roof and External Wall Repairs. Year 1 of 3 year programme
Ladywell Flats, Livingston	48	New windows and security fire doors.
* Felt and Rosemary Tile Roofs (Year 1, Boghall)	42	Reroofing and external repairs. Year 1 of 5 year programme
Preston area, Linlithgow	23	Flat Roof upgrades

Harrysmuir, Pumpherston	22	Roof and Roughcast Repairs
Briar Cottages, Cuthill, Stoneyburn	13	Roof and Roughcast Repairs, Year 1 of 3 in Cuthill Area
Mayfield Court and South Street, Armadale	9	Screen and gas vent upgrades to deck access flats
Main Street, West Calder	3	Roof renewal; render and concrete repairs
1 & 3 Northgate, Torphichen	2	Renewal of asbestos sheet roofs. Pilot.
Planned Reactive, Doors	As assessed by inspection	High value repairs required outwith Capital Programme
Planned Reactive, Roofs	As assessed by inspection	High value repairs required outwith Capital Programme
Planned Reactive, Roughcast	As assessed by inspection	High value repairs required outwith Capital Programme
Planned Reactive – Remedial damp works etc	As assessed by inspection	High value repairs required outwith Capital Programme
Planned Reactive – Kitchens and Bathrooms	As assessed by inspection	High value repairs required outwith Capital Programme
Planned Reactive – Electrical Work	As assessed by inspection	High value repairs required outwith Capital Programme

These projects will be carried out by the Council's Building Services with the exception of those marked (*) which will be put out to competitive tender by Construction Services.

Programmed Drainage

This budget was increased in 2009 compared to previous years in recognition of the level of customer reports of drainage related issues.

It is intended to ensure that all houses are completely free of dampness from whatever external source and this budget will support those direct works. Housing will continue to liaise with Housing Strategy and Highways (Flood Management) to identify priorities.

Housing Strategy and Highways (Flood Management) will produce a new five year programme which will be prepared for Council consideration.

3. Environmental Projects

This budget supports local environmental programmes which includes external painting; fencing; gutter cleaning; improvements to bin stores; door entry systems and general environmental works. This work supports all other work in improving the local areas around capital works and in areas of poor visual impact. The programme is delivered in detailed consultation with tenants and elected members. Addresses are included for Painterwork , Rhone Cleaning and Common Stair Upgrades.

The breakdown of the 2010 budget, including carry forwards, is shown overleaf:

	Environmental Programme	Value £'000's
A	Garages and Garage Site Upgrades	200
B	New Fencing Works	650
C	Maintenance Painterwork to properties	1200
D	Small Local Environmental works	55
E	Streetscape Upgrades	150
F	Common Stair Upgrades	265
G	Rhone Cleaning and Repair	100
C	Upgrading Bin Stores	145

4. Energy Efficiency

a) Insulation and Energy Advice

The council has an ongoing partnership arrangement with Scottish and Southern Energy, which attracts grant funding based on the carbon saved by work carried out by the council. Local energy efficiency schemes will continue to be carried out, prioritising households in fuel poverty, in consultation with the local offices and the Advice Shop. A report on the current position and achievements to date will be brought forward shortly. It is intended to run a promotion this year for tenants to ensure that anyone who needs insulation but has been missed in previous programmes will receive the full package suitable for their home.

b) Central Heating

The replacement of gas heating and boilers is based on assessment by the Council's Gas Manager and gas engineers. Currently the majority of planned replacements are due to the inability to maintain boilers due to the unavailability of parts because of their age.

In common with previous years, significant expenditure is made on systems that fail in use and are uneconomic to repair or are identified as at risk or unserviceable at the time of the annual service. The Gas Manager assesses that this years programme will be made up of 485 programmed installations with an additional allowance for 60 installations arising from service or repair requests.

5 Miscellaneous

a) Deans South

In February 2010 Council Executive agreed to proceed to seek a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) ^{*1} to seek to redevelop the Deans South Estate. In the meantime a contract is in place to demolish 14 blocks of empty houses on the estate. Additional budget provision has been made on the assumption that the CPO application will be approved this financial year.

b) Aids and Adaptations

Aids and adaptations are assessed by Occupational Therapists in Social Work and are carried out on an individual requirement basis. The approach to the funding of aids and adaptations in the private sector is presently under review and the council will publish its Scheme of Assistance shortly. This budget however is for works to council properties. About half of the budget is expected to be expended on wet floor showers and other building based work carried out

by Building Services. The remainder is for specialist aids, including ramps and stair lifts, and expended directly by the Occupational Therapist service.

Historically, the Kitchen and Bathroom programme created a noticeable increase in the number of aids and adaptations requiring to be provided. The Home Safety service also helps and encourages people to stay in their own homes. In 2009/10 there was a decrease in demand under this heading and we will monitor expenditure to see if this trend continues and revise future budget provision accordingly.

c) Asbestos Removal

Guidance from the Health and Safety Executive gives clear direction on the need to address asbestos in the housing stock in its function as a workplace for the council's workmen. While asbestos in the home presents no risk to occupants unless it is damaged or disturbed, it is the fact that our workmen spend their working lives dismantling and re-fixing materials in the housing stock that the risk to them is considered material. As tenants know, and is laid out in information in Asbestos Information Leaflet, "ASBESTOS", tenants should not disturb suspect material without arranging an inspection by the local housing office. Tenants should be aware that a common way of dealing with asbestos is to seal it, which can include painting, as this binds the fibres so they cannot be released, or by containment, where a physical barrier is put in place. It is not always the correct course of action to disturb or remove asbestos.

There is an intranet database which contains all the survey results of the presence of asbestos in the legislated common areas of properties, and its condition in each location. This is managed by Property Services to ensure that all current standards and procedures are met.

The primary purpose of this budget is to allow for works to be carried out wherever the material would be likely to be disturbed in the course of other works. In recent years this was mainly supporting the Kitchen and Bathroom programme. In future the budget is likely to be used mainly in support of roofing replacements where asbestos is often found in high level soffits and barges. This will require a detailed survey by a specialist contractor before workmen can begin their works and this budget supports these survey costs as well as the removal where required.

d) Legionella Upgrades

This budget supports survey work and remedial work to installations of stored water in common areas and is nearly complete. It allows for the maintenance of a risk assessment regime of legionella in the housing stock and in work arising. This work is managed by Property Services. Surveys focus on areas of shared storage and supply and sheltered housing initially, and will identify any house types where work may be required and then design and implement any necessary improvements. This budget also allows for upgrade and prevention works.

e) Sheltered Housing

This is for planned development and upgrading work proposed to convert Norvell Lodge, Boghall to a housing with care development.

f) Feasibility Surveys

This allocation supports detailed engineering reports on structure, hydrology or geology.

g) Play Areas

The priorities for upgrading or renewal of play areas or shelters are established in consultation with environmental services and local communities.

h) Home Safety Service

This provides an upgraded package of smart technology primarily for older people in their own homes. Experience has shown that the technology can help in providing a safer and more secure long-term home environment.

i) Home Security for Pensioners

The scheme began in spring 2000. Applicants select a package of measures appropriate to their needs from a menu. Options include additional locks, external lighting, door viewer, door chain, window locks and door intercom system. Each home is surveyed to identify possible problems after which it is programmed for installation. To date approximately 5,500 homes have had free security measures installed under this scheme and approximately half these are council houses.

j) Mortgage to Let

This budget is to support the purchase of private properties under a Scottish Government subsidy scheme that bring them into the council housing stock. It is a very cost effective way of adding to our stock.