

RIVERMEAD HOUSE COMMUNAL LAUNDRY

Report of the Head of Housing Management and Housing Options

1. SUMMARY

This report outlines the outcome of a review of the usage of the communal laundry at Rivermead House and suggests ways in which the service can be improved.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Operations Board consider the three options within this report, and the outcome of consultation with residents. The options are:

- Remove the laundry facility and install plumbing in the remaining flats – whilst this is the preferred option for Derby Homes, a majority of residents who still use the laundry do not want it removed
- Install a token machine in the laundry room
- Leave the situation as it is.

2.2 If the decision is that in spite of the outcome of initial consultation with residents to remove the laundry, then authorise the Head of Housing Management and Housing Options to carry out consultation with affected residents, including leaseholders to implement that.

2.3 If a decision is taken to install a token meter, authorise the Head of Housing Management and Housing Options to decide whether to purchase or lease the equipment.

3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 Rivermead House is a 12 storey block of flats close to the city centre and is managed by the Brook Street Local Housing Office. The complex has the benefits of a concierge service on a Monday to Friday, 8am to 10am and on a Tuesday to Saturday, 8pm to midnight.

3.2 Residents of the block also have the benefit of a communal laundry located on the ground floor. The laundry has one washing machine and one tumble dryer. The machines are operated through the usage of tokens which are purchased from the concierge office. The tokens currently cost 40p for a wash token, and £1.00 for a dryer token.

- 3.3 At one time all of the residents used the communal laundry facilities, but over the years most residents have arranged for plumbing and installed their own washing machines in their flats. The laundry is now only used by 15 residents on a regular basis three of which are leaseholders. This is not a cost effective arrangement so we have investigated two alternatives, in addition to leaving the situation as it is. They are
- Install a token machine in the laundry room
 - Remove the laundry facility and install plumbing in the remaining flats
 - Leave the situation as it is.
- 3.4 As tokens can currently only be purchased from the concierge office during opening hours a token machine could be installed in the laundry which will dispense tokens to residents 24 hours a day. A quote for fitting a dispensing machine has been obtained. A machine can be purchased for £1,178.00, or they can be leased at a cost of £12.50 a week for a 2 year lease, £8.69 for a 3 year lease and £5.81 for a 5 year lease.
- 3.5 The second option is to remove the laundry altogether and install plumbing for a washing machine into the individual flats. The total cost of this would be around £3,500 for the 15 flats. This includes the water service and valves, the waste pipe and additional electric socket if required. Residents would then need to purchase their own washing machine but if they are unable to do this we would look at putting in furniture pack white goods or helping the resident to apply for a grant.
- 3.6 The final option is to leave the service as it is. The problems with this option are
- It is not cost effective having staff based at the location issuing tokens, collecting and accounting for money and arranging for it to be paid in
 - Although sums of money are small, there is an unnecessary risk attached to staff having money in the Concierge Office, particularly as these are lone workers
 - There is a continuing repairing and replacement responsibility for expensive washing and drying machines
 - Tokens can only be dispensed during Concierge working hours.

4. CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The 15 residents that currently use the laundry were consulted on whether they would like Derby Homes to remove the facility and install plumbing for their own washing machines. Of the 15 residents consulted, 10 replied to say they do not want to see the laundry facility removed.
- 4.2 Should Operational Board decide that Derby Homes should go ahead with removing the facility and installing plumbing, then this would involve further consultation with residents and in particular specific consultation with leaseholders around varying the terms of the lease.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The use of the laundry room is stipulated in the lease. If Derby Homes wishes to remove the laundry room facility, consultation will have to be carried out with leaseholders to vary the terms of the lease. There will be some relatively minor legal costs associated with this which can be contained within existing budgets.

6. FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 If either option one or two are chosen, the cost can be contained within existing budgets.

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report:

Legal and Confidentiality
Council
Personnel
Environmental
Equalities Impact Assessment
Health & Safety
Risk
Policy Review

If Board Members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact:

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Background Information: None

Supporting Information: None