

IMPROVEMENTS TO SHRUBBERIES AND ROSE BEDS ON COUNCIL ESTATES

Report of the Director of Derby Homes

SUMMARY OF REPORT

1. This report sets out the options available to Derby Homes to carry out improvements to shrubberies and rose beds on Council estates across the City.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That the Local Board considers the options set out below and makes a recommendation to the Board.

MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The issue of grounds maintenance and the quality of the service provided by the maintenance contractor is an ongoing issue for tenants and leaseholders.
- 3.2 Over the last year officers of Derby Homes, tenant and leaseholder representatives have been involved in a working group with the contractor, Commercial Services, to explore ways of improving the service. The working group has improved the communication between local offices and the contractor. This improves the contractor's responsiveness to complaints and has given the group the opportunity to review the specification.
- 3.3 It has become clear that the planting to the shrubberies and rose beds across the City is old and difficult to maintain. When these features were originally designed and planted, little thought was given to the future maintenance implications.
- 3.4 The contractor has, at his own expense, carried out a detailed survey of all shrubberies and rose beds across the City and put forward proposals to carry out capital improvements to reduce future maintenance costs and provide features that enhance the appearance of our estates. It includes the complete removal and grassing over or paving of certain beds, where the existing planting appears to be causing social problems. In other areas, re-planting with more appropriate, usually low growing shrubs.

3.5 It has been suggested by the group that the work be carried out between October 2003 and March 2004. This would help reduce an expected overspend on existing revenue budgets as the beds, in their present condition, require maintenance over and above that set out in the specification. This would also tie in with the recommended season for carrying out such work and be appropriate from the contractor's resource availability.

3.6 Overall, the work should help to reduce many of the repeated complaints and enable easier future maintenance.

The following options are available:

- i. not to carry out the improvements to shrubberies and rose beds, or
 - ii. to agree to top slice the large scale CHIP budget and carry out the work during the winter months of 2003/04. If agreed, the Board are also asked to reprioritise approximately 10% of this year's CHIP improvements into April of next year.
- 3.7 The Board are advised that they may wish to defer action into next year's CHIP programme. However, not only would this delay the improvement work by up to a year, the costs would also need to be revised and would be likely to increase.

CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS

4. Community panels, local office staff and ward members will be consulted on the work content.

FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS PLAN IMPLICATIONS

5. The total cost of the work is £120,000 and, subject to 3.6 ii, can be contained within the allocation for large scale CHIP improvements.

LEGAL AND CONFIDENTIALITY IMPLICATIONS

6. The work would be carried out under the existing contract with Commercial Services Department.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7. None.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

8. The work will improve the appearance of the environment around council houses and helps toward our objective to make our estates sustainable into the future.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9. None.

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