

# **WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **EXECUTIVE**

**2 NOVEMBER 2021**

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**Title:**

### **VIREMENT REQUEST FOR RIVERSIDE COURT FIRE SAFETY WORKS**

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**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Anne-Marie Rosoman, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety

**Head of Service:** Hugh Wagstaff, Head of Housing Operations

**Key decision:** Yes

**Access:** Public

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#### **1. Purpose and summary**

- 1.1 To update members regarding required fire safety works in one of the Senior Living schemes and gain budgetary approval to undertake works.

#### **2. Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Executive agree:  
a £520,000 Riverside Court fire safety works budget is vired from the approved Kitchen and Bathroom replacement programme capital budget.

#### **3. Reason for the recommendation**

3.1 Officers requested Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) attend Riverside Court to review Waverley's findings following the completion of a Type 4 Fire Risk Assessment in June 2021. The internal review resulted in a list of priority actions to be undertaken in relation to fire safety.

3.2 A fire safety visit with SFRS followed in July 2021. SFRS issued an Improvement Enforcement Notice on the building to ensure that immediate fire safety works were completed to approved standards. Actions including the immediate cessation of the 'stay put' fire policy, the removal of a timber ceiling (considered to be a fire load) and completion of fire stopping compartmentalisation works.

3.3 This recommendation is sought to secure funding to complete the works required to meet Enforcement Notice.

## **4. Background**

4.1 Waverley Borough Council holds and manages, within its Housing Revenue Account (HRA), nine Senior Living schemes. Senior living apartments are designated for tenants who are aged 60 years or over (or 50 years and over with a recognised disability) and who can live independently with some support.

4.2 The Council has a responsibility to ensure the safety of residents living within those schemes and have a regular fire risk assessment programme.

4.3 Following a programmed Type 4 Fire Risk Assessment in June 2021 Officers requested Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) attend Riverside Court to review Waverley's findings. The internal review resulted in a list of priority actions to be undertaken in relation to fire safety

4.4 Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) visited the Riverside site on 7 July 2021. Following the site visit SFRS issued an Enforcement Notice on 9 July 2021 and subsequently reissued the notice on 15 July 2021 to ensure the Council Duty Holder was appropriately reflected.

4.5 The Enforcement Notice focused on two main areas for mitigation of perceived fire safety hazards:

- the immediate introduction of Simultaneous Evacuation Plan supported by Fire Wardens on a 24/7 basis to support the resident's evacuation.
- remedial works to Riverside Court to remove wooden panelling ceiling (found in common parts throughout all floors of the building) to ensure that all compartmentalisation throughout the building both in residents' homes and in the common parts meets required regulations

4.6 The costs associated for the Simultaneous Evacuation Plan are being met from the HRA contingency budget (expected to be in the region of £140k)

4.7 A budget to complete the works has been identified from capital budgets. The £1m kitchen and bathroom budget has a forecast spend of £280,000 in the 2021/22 financial year. This budget has not been utilised due to the termination of the contract following escalating market costs and resourcing issues failed to deliver the original programmed works.

4.8 The kitchen and bathroom replacement works will be reprogrammed for 2022/23 to maintain the quality and condition of homes and to meet tenant expectations.

## **5. Relationship to the Corporate Strategy and Service Plan**

The report supports the Council's Corporate commitment to promote "Good quality housing for all income levels and age groups".

## **6. Implications of decision**

## **6.1 Resource (Finance, procurement, staffing, IT)**

The estimated cost for the required works is £520,000. There is no current budget identified for the works. It is requested that £520k is vired from the current £1m approved budget for planned Kitchen and Bathroom replacements in the HRA capital programme.

The kitchen and bathroom budget has forecast spend of £280,000 in the 2021/22 financial year. This budget has not been utilised due to the termination of the contract following escalating market costs and resourcing issues failed to deliver the original programmed works for this year.

The difference between forecast expenditure and budget provides sufficient headroom to deliver the Riverside works. The proposed split is for £310k from the Kitchen programme and £210k from the Bathrooms programme. Approval from Executive for this virement is required as per the Scheme of Virement in Waverley's Financial regulations.

## **6.2 Risk management**

Failure to act would jeopardise the safety of the residents, staff and visitors to Riverside Court. The Council would also be in breach the Enforcement Notice issued by SFRS and regulations if fail to complete the works.

## **6.3 Legal**

Failure to comply with an enforcement notice issued by the Fire and Rescue Service is an offence, and so the required works need to be carried out by the Council. Nevertheless the Council has worked with SFRS to clarify the requirements of the notice in order to avoid such an outcome, and to avoid the need for the Council to commence an appeal. The Legal Services team is satisfied that the terms of the notice are reasonable in the circumstances and that the Council should now move ahead with works in order to achieve compliance.

## **6.4 Equality, diversity and inclusion**

This project supports Waverley's commitment to ensuring that those living in Council housing stock are provided with accommodation that suits their diverse needs.

Equality impact assessments are carried out across the council to ensure service delivery meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.

## **6.5 Climate emergency declaration**

No positive benefit for climate change from these works.

## **7. Consultation and engagement**

n/a

## **8. Other options considered**

To do nothing is not an option. The Finance Team have supported the housing team in identifying the most appropriate budgets to request a virement from.

**9. Governance journey**

Executive committee is the final step in the governance journey for this item.

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**Background Papers**

There are no background papers, as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972).

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Agreed and signed off by:

Legal Services: 19 October 2021  
Head of Finance: date  
Strategic Director: 20 October 2021  
Portfolio Holder: 20 October 2021