

Harvist Estate resident drop-in consultation meeting session 1

12 October 2022 4.30-6.30 pm held at Hind House Community Rooms

Presentations were made for:

1. Proposed lift renewal programme
2. Feasibility study with options for replacing the heating and hot water systems
3. Building envelope renewal
4. Other works

Followed by a Question and Answer session.

Questions and Answers

I would like to ask about using Solar Panels. Our previous Councillor said that solar panels had been successfully installed on a high rise building on City Road. What do they have? As you say there is not an option to install something like that here?

I have spoken to several suppliers and installers of panels and they do not recommend installing PV panels on blocks over 30m in height.

What heating and hot water option of those presented would you recommend?

I would not recommend solar panels . Air source heat pumps are possible, but we would need to carefully consider noise . Another option would be use of the space between Hind House and Citizen House as an energy centre or for heat pumps.(It was noted that this space is temporarily being used for facilities for the new build contractor and was previously green space for the residents.)

The Ground Source Heat Pump System uses boreholes that could be 60m deep to meet an underground water source (an aquifer). It is a really simple system that provides heat extracted from the ground or water to your homes through pipework

So what is the investment for this?

We don't know yet. The most economic, but short-term option, would be to replace the storage heaters with electric radiators, but that would not provide zero carbon energy. We are currently evaluating the options.

It has taken more than 3 years to remove the old heating system in my kitchen, due to the cost of removal of the asbestos it has not happened and the system remains. What will you do about that?

We will arrange a surveyor to view the system and set up you have, I did not realise so many flats still have the old warm air system installed . Because this is a renewal programme it is coming from the capital investment budget rather than from the repairs department. We can look to include this in the works, however it will be very intrusive and ideally needs all residents affected to agree.

I have a question about the tall blocks. Firstly I agree that it is not suitable to fit solar panels as these building move slightly with the wind at high level.Are you going to give us guarantees that the new cladding will be safe and the guarantees will be available for residents ?

As far as we can, we will be looking to install the most sustainable, compliant non- combustible materials we can. We will also address any concerns about compartmentation so that in the event of a fire, for example the smoke does not spread.

That's good. I wanted to know because it is an emerging subject, but I have felt safe in the building

You will have seen surveyors inspecting the buildings and they are assessing the current building fabric and compartmentation and will be providing us with the information gathered? relating to the safety of all the buildings.

We have very poor water pressure to the shower, if the hot water is changed will the pressure change?

I am not sure why you have low pressure on the lower floors, as normally Thames Water have to provide a certain pressure and the blocks are also supplied with pumped water from a large booster tank at ground level. We will look at how the current system is set up and come back to you. (Additional attendees noted poor water pressure including on the ground floor of Talbot House)

Post meeting note: We are further investigating how the cold a water is supplied, the use of showers and the system for hot water pressure across the blocks. We will update at the next resident meeting.

I understand the main reason for not using solar panels on the high rise is because of health and safety concerns, however have you looked at using solar panels on the low rise blocks which will be a benefit to residents.

We will be investigating this use of panels as an option for the low rise roof, however this is not a main driver for heating and hot water at the moment because the low rise blocks have individual gas fired boilers that are usable. We are considering options still because the use of gas boilers is being phased out from 2030.

So can you estimate the cost of solar panels on the low rise buildings and provide us with an estimate of the system most appropriate for the high rise?

We are not able to provide those costs at the moment, we will be looking at them over the next few months.

It would be beneficial for us to have costs so we can collectively agree as residents. We are aware there is some funding for this improvement so an estimate would be helpful.

We will provide updates on options including costings for the initial works and running costs in due course.

I would like to ask about programme, because I repeatedly read things will be in two or three years and we need to know what is realistic . We have been told no work can start until the New Build site is complete.

At the moment the programmes we have are fluid, because as we develop the proposals there are additional areas to consider. But we are reaching a clearer assessment to be able to address this. We are aware that the new build programme has changed and so we will have to work around that and if necessary manage two contractors on site . The lift works are being pushed forward but it will take time for the work to be tendered and a contractor chosen. We may have a lift contractor on board early next summer. There will then be a necessary time to prepare and order parts before the works start. I understand we need to manage your expectations. Formation of new landing openings, if viable may commence during the lead-in period.

You do need to manage our expectations. We need to know key steppingstones to be able to influence choice, but currently this feels 'pie in the sky'. We only now know that the works going ahead will not be dependent on the new build works being completed.

Part of these meetings is about talking with you, as residents, about ideas and preferences, explaining the options and their constraints so you understand the process, For example why the option for heating using boreholes will take much longer but will be economic to run.

How the works progress will need to be carefully managed if there are two contractors on the site.

Please confirm you will consider access to the estate, so the small roads are not blocked.

We will have to manage access and logistics carefully particularly if the New Build contractors are still on site when the works to the tall blocks commence.

The Capital Works Team have put on hold the proposed works to the landscape and walkways of the estate as the works we are doing may involve vehicles on the site that could cause some damage to paving.

There seems to be a lot of work still to do, will it be 2 or 3 years before you start?

Hopefully not that long. Please note the work is not just about the tall blocks. We are also considering works to the low-rise blocks including works to the communal areas and lighting.

We are looking at the thermal efficiency before we consider any new heating systems. We will be assessing options as gas boilers are due to be phased out within 7 years.

If you are going to implement solar panels we want to know when.

We understand that you as residents, may want to be involved and have some influence on the decisions .In terms of solar panel installation there are some restrictions in how this is supplied and the energy managed and it may be that the council is not able to directly sell the energy back to you . I will find out further details and provide an update.

What are the priority works?

First the lifts. Then the cladding, windows and thermal efficiency with the heating renewal or replacement being done at the similar time. There will be some unavoidable disruption.

I would rather have it all done at once. Will the building fabric be done by the same contractor?

The plan is for the lifts to be a priority by a specialist lift contractor and then the building envelope, heating and hot water plus ventilation systems will be carried out by one main contractor.

Note the existing mechanical ventilations system will be insufficient so we will propose a more energy efficient heat recovery system but we will need to calculate requirements through monitoring of a sample of flats throughout the estate.

Please can I remind you about the tree that needs trimming ?

What flat do you live in? No xx on floor level xx Talbot House.

Note there has been some concerns about people visiting the estate and asking about mould. If you are not comfortable, please do not let them in. We are checking if they really are council officers. You can ask for an appointment to be made and confirmed by letter.

Please can something be done about people smoking in the refuse chute cupboard or on the staircase in Talbot House. I have reported it to the concierge, but nothing has been done.

The Estate Champions team will follow this up

My wife was stuck in the lift when it broke down and the concierge told me to call the fire brigade and it took 2 hours . Please can something be done about this problem.

If someone presses the emergency button it goes through to the concierge office. There are procedures to follow but I am not sure why they asked you to call the fire brigade. We will try and follow this up.

Meeting end

Harvist Estate resident drop-in consultation meeting session 2

Meeting held 13 October 2022, 6.30 - 7.30 pm via Zoom

Presentations were made for:

1. Proposed lift renewal programme
2. Feasibility study with options for replacing the heating and hot water systems
3. Building envelope renewal
4. Other works

Followed by a Question and Answer session.

Questions and Answers

Lifts are a priority given the ongoing repairs of all lifts and recent events and experiences of residents including people being trapped. Are there any options or will there be any arrangements in place for the 'House-trapped'? Please can this be addressed and options considered including assistance available throughout the buildings or even temporary rehousing during installation?

We will look at what options are possible and work with all residents to manage this and communicate with residents in advance of the works taking place. We are very aware that at least one lift needs to be in operation.

How can the costs for leaseholders be kept down given that there is a large amount of work proposed

The major works are being competitively tendered, in the case of the Lift programme this tender process is via a framework. In addition, we intend to apply for Government funding and grants that might be available for specific works. For example, part funding that supports improvements to insulation and energy efficiency and reducing carbon output. The Home Ownership Team are considering special payment terms that may defer or extend payment periods. Note this is being considered it is not yet confirmed

There are many lift options so how will the decision be made to go with one option?

It will be a consideration of both overall cost for council and leaseholders, the viability of adapting doorways so that both lifts stop at all floors and the timescale for all buildings to have new lifts.

How will the decision be made to go with a type of heating system ?

We will assess Capital Costs against long-term running costs. For example, the simplest and cheapest solution is to replace the existing night storage heaters with new electric radiators.

This is the most economic for the council but is not economic for residents in the long term unless we have made the building very energy efficient through insulation and replacement of windows. The proposal to install ground source heat pumps will be an expensive capital cost for the council initially, but will lower on-going running costs for residents . There are grants available which may make this a good option and will future proof the building for residents. It was noted that this was an exciting option but more intrusive with works within residents' homes

I have an existing hot water tank and cold water tank in a bedroom. What will be the difference with the ground source heat pump option?

This proposes an individual HIU (Heat Interface Unit) to each flat, that will be wall mounted and the size of a small boiler, it gives localised control of both the heating and hot water. It would enable removal of the tanks to free up some space.

Meeting end