

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 29 NOVEMBER 2012
title: THE FLAT ABOVE THE OVER 60s CLUB, TOWNELEY ROAD, LONGRIDGE
submitted by: JOHN HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To outline the condition of the flat above the Over 60s Club, Towneley Road, Longridge.
- 1.2 To seek approval from the Committee to improve the property and to bring it up to the decent homes standard.
- 1.3 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:
 - **Council Ambitions** - To provide good quality housing.
 - **Community Objectives** - To maintain and enhance the historic environment in and around the Longridge conservation area. To meet the needs of residents and improve the quality of life for all.
 - **Corporate Priorities** - To promote affordable and decent housing.
To help make peoples lives safer and healthier.
 - **Other Considerations** - None

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The property is a first floor flat, comprising of a kitchen, bathroom, hallway and two bedrooms, located in the centre of Longridge.
- 2.2 The property forms part of the wider Towneley Buildings, which includes the Youth club and the Over 60s club.
- 2.3 While the freehold title is owned by Ribble Valley Borough Council, Ribble Valley Homes manage the day to day running of the property, and collect the rent which is divided between the two parties.
- 2.4 It is noted that the flat was not transferred to Ribble Valley Homes as part of the housing stock transfer in 2007.
- 2.5 Under the housing act 2004, the decent homes standard was introduced to promote measureable improvements to housing as well as a health and safety system. This was developed from the UK's housing green paper 'quality and choice, a decent home for all'.
- 2.6 Although there was some discussion about the potential re-development of the wider site in 2009, the renewal of the Youth Club lease in 2010 has restricted the flexibility of the Council in relation to a potential change of use.

3 ISSUES

- 3.1 The condition of the property was assessed in September 2012, and the findings were reported to the Asset Management Group.
- 3.2 Overall the accommodation is in need of improvement, particularly the kitchen and the bathroom. In both cases it was noted that the fixtures and fittings in both are over 20 years old and therefore are understood not to meet the decent homes standard. It was therefore recommended that these are replaced.
- 3.3 In addition it is proposed that the front door is replaced to increase security, and that a window is widened in order to increase the amount of natural light that can enter the kitchen. Due to the location of the property within a conservation area, it is likely that approval for these will be required.
- 3.4 In terms of fire precautions, it is advised the smoke detection and alarm systems are improved along with a secondary means of escape from the first floor level.
- 3.5 The estimated cost of the renewal of the kitchen, bathroom and associated improvements are between £12,000 and £14,500.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- **Resources** – There is currently no budget provision for the renewal of kitchens, bathrooms etc. in the Council's remaining residential properties. This could be resourced from either the Emergency Repairs and Maintenance earmarked reserve or the VAT shelter earmarked reserve.
- **Technical, Environmental and Legal** – The council have a legal duty to manage their properties, and in particular to meet the decent homes standard in relation to residential properties to ensure that they do meet the standard.
- **Political** – None.
- **Reputation** – Local authorities have a statutory duty to implement the decent homes standard. In the event that this minimum standard is not met in its own properties, the Council may leave itself open to criticism, particularly if in parallel it is using its enforcement powers on landlords.
- **Equality and Diversity** – None.

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

Supports the decision of the Asset Management Group by recommending to Policy and Finance Committee the approval of the replacement of the kitchen, bathroom, and to the associated improvement works.

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