

REPORT TITLE: TRUSSELL CRESCENT, WEEKE – ESTATE IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS

CABINET (HOUSING) COMMITTEE

23 NOVEMBER 2016

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr Caroline Horrill – Portfolio Holder for Housing

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (CHIEF HOUSING OFFICER)

Contact Officer: Richard Botham Tel No: 01962 848421 Email
rbotham@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ST BARNABAS

PURPOSE

This report proposes a number of improvements to the area around Trussell crescent in Weeke, including parking, fencing, gardens, lighting and decoration. Provision for £150,000 of improvement works to the Crescent has been included in the Estate Improvement Capital programme for 2016/17. The proposals have been well received by tenants but representations have been received from nearby residents raising concerns with the additional parking.

A formal petition has also been received and this report considers the issues raised in the petition.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the proposals for lighting, gardens and fencing improvements to Trussell Crescent as set out in 8.2 c) and d) be approved up to the value of £110,000 in accordance with the approved Estate Improvement Programme
2. That the Committee determine whether the existing parking proposal (at a cost of £40,000 in accordance with the approved Estate Improvement Programme) is approved or whether to defer a decision on parking improvements to allow a more detailed review of options and an evaluation of

the impact of parking restrictions recently implemented in the area

3. That the Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) writes to all signatories to the Petition received, responding specifically to the key points raised and confirming the outcome from this meeting.

IMPLICATIONS:1 COMMUNITY STRATEGY OUTCOME

- 1.1 The Council's Estates Improvements programme is a key priority which contributes to the High Quality Environment theme of the Community Strategy.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 £150,000 has been included in the 2016/17 Estate Improvement Capital programme to fund works at Trussell Crescent. This is considered to be sufficient to address all proposals set out in the report. This includes provision of £40,000 for parking works.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Any works undertaken as part of these proposals would be procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The proposals in this paper would result in improvements to Council assets and provide additional parking on Council land.

6 CONSULTATION AND EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 As set out in section 8 below

7 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
<i>Property</i>		
<i>Community Support – Whilst there is good support from residents, some neighbours have raised concerns and challenged the scheme</i>	Ongoing consultation with all residents of Trussell Crescent and Trussell Close	
<i>Financial / VfM – Risk of tenders being higher than predicted</i>	Professional external advice commissioned to design/cost works.	
<i>Reputation – Risk of the perception that the Council is not listening to public concerns</i>	As above	

8 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

8.1 Background

Trussell Crescent includes a communal block of over 80 Council owned flats. For some years, residents, officers and local members have raised concerns regarding the general condition of the land surrounding the flats. Many gardens are poorly maintained as is the garden fencing. Parking is very limited and cars are frequently parked on grass verges. Visitors to nearby allotments add to this problem.

Improvements were made to waste collection arrangements in recent years and this has helped to address issues with litter/fly tipping although some problems remain. The nearby garages require maintenance as do communal areas and walkways through the area. In general, the area requires improvement, additional parking, landscaping and redecoration.

8.2 Proposals

The proposed capital improvement scheme includes:

- a) Parking – 17 additional spaces along the access road behind Trussell Crescent (additional parking to the front of the building was investigated but not feasible due to the cost of moving utility services near the surface of the area in question). It is also proposed to include the area in the planned parking enforcement zone for Weeke.
- b) Improvements to the soft landscaping of all verges around the crescent, including those where additional spaces are planned
- c) Improvements to the lighting to the area under the archways to supplement existing lighting
- d) Improvements to gardens, including fencing – Many gardens are poorly maintained and unsightly and many are very visible from the surrounding areas. Many tenants do not have tools/equipment to maintain the area and it is proposed to improve all gardens, offering hard landscaping or grass and providing improved fencing. All tenants will be required to sign acceptance and agree to keep gardens maintained in accordance with tenancy conditions.
- e) Improvements to the internal communal areas, communal entrance doors and repairs and redecoration of garages (these works are already underway and being funded through the general maintenance programme).

8.3 Consultation

- 8.4 Tenants have all been consulted and in general support the proposals. The consultation has included site meetings, a street meeting where all residents were invited and encouraged to share their views and formal letters with plans and details of works proposed.
- 8.5 Residents of the nearby Trussell Close were not specifically consulted as part of the initial consultation (which was aimed more at identifying tenants' requirements). As with all estate improvement schemes, residents who live nearby are always consulted prior to works being commissioned, although this has yet to be completed.
- 8.6 However, representation has been received by one resident living near to land affected by the improvement proposals. The Council has also received a petition signed by 42 residents (29 households) stating:

“Those that have signed the petition call upon the Council to;

- (i) *Reject the eight parking bays on either side of Trussell Close*
- (ii) *Provide additional parking to the front of Trussell Crescent where the residents want it*
- (iii) *Provide landscape planting to mitigate the impact of additional traffic to any other proposed parking bays located behind the Trussell Crescent flats*
- (iv) *Fully consult with the residents of Trussell Close about these and any future proposals”*

- 8.7 In line with Council policy, depending on the number of valid signatures, petitions received should be formally considered by the relevant body which has authority to determine a response, which in this case is a Committee.

8.8 Responding to the Petition

- 8.9 The 3rd and 4th points raised in the petition can be responded to positively. Soft landscaping is an important element of the improvement proposals. Trussell Close residents have been consulted and this is ongoing. .

- 8.10 Residents did express a preference for parking at the front of the Crescent. However, it would cost at least £63,000 to move existing services and this would make any parking unaffordable (estimated at £10,000 per space compared to £2,500 per space as proposed). The spaces to the rear of the blocks are considered to be a reasonable compromise. They are sited on Council land and the plans maintain a reasonable distance between the parking bays and nearby properties. As stated above, appropriate landscaping would be provided. Not providing these 8 spaces would not

compromise the overall proposals but would significantly reduce the overall impact of the improvements.

- 8.11 An alternative option that hasn't been evaluated so far could include a more comprehensive parking solution within the very large garage area behind the Crescent. A similar scheme had a very significant impact on parking issues at the Winnall flats two years ago. Whilst this would be more expensive overall, it may be possible to achieve significantly more spaces at similar unit costs to the existing proposal. This would require additional funding and would impact on the programme for 2017/18.
- 8.12 It is worth noting that parking restrictions have recently been implemented throughout the area surrounding Trussell Crescent and this will also help to address the parking problems residents currently experience.
- 8.13 Whilst 17 spaces as proposed would improve facilities for residents, members may wish to defer a decision on this and review options in detail in June 2017 once the parking restrictions have been in place for 6 months and their impact on the Crescent and the surrounding area can be evaluated.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 9.1 The Council has considered a number of options for the improvements. The provision of parking to the front of the flats was investigated with test holes dug which revealed a range of services very shallow to the surface of the highway. A range of options have been discussed with tenants regarding the gardens and fencing.
- 9.2 Some years ago, the Council also considered a potential regeneration/redevelopment scheme for the whole Trussell Crescent area. Such a scheme would be costly and is unlikely to provide additional housing. It is not proposed to include such a scheme in the Council's development programme in the short to medium term.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

None

Other Background Documents:-

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 - Plan of Trussell Crescent Parking Proposals