



### Hallfield Estate phase 3 – Major Works update meeting

Pickering Hall, Hallfield Estate and online via Microsoft Teams

Date: 26 June 2023 (in person), 6-7pm and 3 July 2023 (online)

### Meeting summary

#### Attendees

##### Axis Europe representatives:

Marc Jeffrey, Project Director

Dan Sams, Commercial Manager

Craig Roberts, Divisional Manager – only present for one meeting (in person)

Eric Sejat, Site Manager – only present for one meeting (in person)

##### Westminster City Council representatives:

Colleen Thomas, Senior Project Manager, Commissioning Team

Vicky Simpson, Resident Advocate

Jayne Stretton, Leasehold Billing Manager – only present for one meeting (in person)

Ayesha Begum, Resident Advocacy Team Manager – only present for one meeting (online)

Residents from 12 flats attended in person

9 residents attended online

#### Project update

The Westminster project team and Axis representatives introduced themselves.

Axis gave a short presentation covering the scope of works, process for confirming the scope and costs, timetable for carrying out the works and resident engagement approach. Westminster staff also gave an overview of the next steps, payment plan options for leaseholders and some detail on the leasehold opt-in process for front doors and extract fans.

A copy of the slides used for the presentation can be found on our website here:

[www.westminster.gov.uk/hallfield-estate-major-works-lynton-winchester-worcester-houses-project-x115/documents](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/hallfield-estate-major-works-lynton-winchester-worcester-houses-project-x115/documents)

If you do not have access to the internet and would like a copy of the slides posted to you, please contact us using the details on the cover letter.

#### Q&A from meeting on 26/06/23

##### General works questions:

**Q. Will the scope of works be the same as you did at blocks such as Taunton House in phase 2? Asphalt repairs were done there, but not mentioned on the planned scope here?**

A. Yes, the scope of works will broadly be the same as the earlier phases. Asphalt repairs will be carried out where needed as they were at Taunton. We have not listed every work item on the presentation slides, but asphalt repairs are covered under external repairs.



**Q. Why will it take so long to do the works? Why can't all blocks be done at the same time?**

A. The works need to be staggered to minimise disruption to residents and ensure labour on site is focused and not spread thinly across blocks. The scaffolding to each block also takes significant time to put up and then take down afterwards (these timings are allowed for in the timetable for each block).

\*post-meeting correction – scaffolding is expected to take 6 weeks to go up (and 4 to take down) at Winchester, and 4 weeks to go up (and 2 to take down) at the smaller blocks.

**Q. If the work will take until 2025 to complete, could the costs increase further in that time? Will the later blocks get fair value?**

A. Axis confirmed that their intention is to measure and order all the windows as early as possible in the programme so that the price is secured. There may be some fluctuations in labour costs, however contingencies have been allowed for. Axis will endeavour to lock in costs at the start of the works to prevent any cost increases.

**Q. The Residents Association were promised in the past that the new major works contractor would not sub-subcontract out any works. Any sub-contractors used, would use their own labour. Can Axis confirm this is the case?**

A. Axis confirmed that any sub-contractors they use (such as the window supplier) use their own labour to fit the windows.

**Q. Have assessments been done in regard to overheating to ensure new windows will not cause this issue? This is a particular concern for properties on Winchester which are south facing.**

A. The new double-glazed windows come with low reflective glass which help to reduce heat gain, whilst retaining internal heat. The window specification meets all necessary building control regulations. Solar protective glass can be added to windows to provide additional protection against heat gain, but this comes at a significant extra cost and would need to be uniformly applied to all windows on an elevation (you could not have some people opt to have and some not). Solar glazing also comes with a tint which would require further planning approval which is unlikely due to the listed status of the building.

**Q. Will work be done to fix the drainage from the asphalt walkways which are blocked? This has been a problem for years.**

A. Yes. The scope of works includes a CCTV drainage survey and associated repairs. Asphalt repairs to the walkways are also included.

**Q. Concerns were raised that the specification was out of date. If you were designing this project now you would include more sustainability / eco features. The windows only have a 15 year guarantee when they are going to be expected to last another 50+ years.**

A. The core purpose of the major works is to maintain the building in good repair and ensure it meets all current regulations rather than adding improvements. The new windows will bring significant energy efficiency improvements however for residents. The window guarantee is only the length of time the manufacture will cover any defects and does not reflect the overall lifespan the window is expected to have. The new double-glazed aluminium windows would expect to last a minimum of 35 years.



**Q. Is the small window above the door treated as a window, or part of the door?**

A. The fan light above the door is treated as part of the door set. Where Axis replaces the front door, the fan light will be included with that.

**Q. How can we (as residents) help to streamline the process and help Axis complete works quicker?**

A. Residents can assist by providing access when needed for surveys and installation works. Problems with access are one of the key reasons for delays in progressing works. Axis will have a dedicated Resident Liaison Officer on site full time who will work with residents to build up relationships and facilitate appointments which work for residents.

**Q. The recent gas works at Lynton House saw holes drilled into the block where the scaffold was fixed. Will the poor making good of these holes be addressed?**

A. Brickwork repairs are part of the scope of works so will be made good as needed.

**Q. Scaffolding is up at Winchester now for the gas works, can't this just stay up and be used for the major works?**

A. Unfortunately not. The scaffold design is not sufficient for the work Axis need to do. The current scaffold will come down and new scaffold will be put up.

**Q. Were there any surprises found on earlier phases resulting in significant extra work to what has been budgeted for?**

A. Only the additional tiling works at Marlow which were mentioned in the early part of the meeting. A design defect was found on the tiled elevations at Marlow House which meant water was able to penetrate behind the tiles and around the new windows. Extensive work was carried out by specialists to find a solution to this problem, and this has now been rectified at Marlow House. Winchester House has the same tiled elevations and we have already allowed for addressing this problem before it arises as part of the works at this block.

**Q. Why did Axis withdraw from the contract a few years ago?**

A. The covid pandemic prompted Axis to reconsider their partnership contract with Westminster and whether it was still suitable for them. Axis explained that it turned out to be issues with incorrect information from their own management team and when changes were made, and negotiations resumed, they withdrew their notice to terminate the contract. Both Westminster City Council and Axis are fully committed to the partnership contract going forward.

**Leasehold specific questions:**

**Q. Why are you doing more work for tenants than for leaseholders? Why do they get new doors and fans, but leaseholders do not?**

A. Leaseholders front doors are part of the leaseholder demise and therefore Westminster are not responsible for this item. Similarly with extractor fans, these are a leaseholder responsibility as they are electrical items, and we are not permitted to touch the electrics within a leasehold



property. Because we are doing this work to tenanted properties however, we will be offering both as an opt-in for leaseholders to consider as part of the works. Leaseholders will be sent the full details and costs for opting in following the initial surveys. Leaseholders are under no obligation to use Axis to do these works and we can supply the necessary specifications for you to find your own contractor to fit the approved doors or fans as needed.

**Q. Can I opt out of the works and fit windows myself?**

A. Unfortunately leaseholders cannot opt out of these works. The works cover a wide range of external and communal area repairs needed to the blocks and not just the windows. Leaseholders would also not be given permission to fit their own windows. The reason for this is because under the terms of your lease, you do not own the windows in your flat. The windows are part of the structure of the building and are treated as a block cost. When it comes to recharging the major works, leaseholders are billed their lease percentage of all work carried out to the block. A leaseholder therefore pays their lease percentage of the cost of all windows changed in the block, not just the number of windows in your flat.

**Q. Will Fensa Certificates be issued to leaseholders on completion?**

A. Because the buildings are over a certain height, Fensa certificates are not required for individual properties and instead building control sign off is required for these works.

**Q. Can we find out how much other blocks paid for these works?**

A. Unfortunately we are not able to tell you the cost of the works to the previous blocks as we don't have this information to hand. The final account for the last phase of works has also yet to be issued. During the meeting, we advised that residents could submit an FOI request to us for this information and once available this could be disclosed. Whilst this information is technically subject to FOI, given the level of interest from leaseholders at the meeting, on this occasion, we will send this out to all those present at the meeting as soon as it is ready. If any other resident would also like to be sent this information, you can request this by contacting Vicky Simpson via the details in the cover letter.

**Q. Can we have a separate meeting for leaseholders?**

A. This meeting is open to both tenants and leaseholders to ask any questions they may have. We understand leaseholders have concerns and queries around costs and repayments and we offer a range of ways leaseholders can speak to us or meet with us to discuss these on a one to one basis. Each leaseholders circumstances will be different and therefore direct conversations are more appropriate once bills have been issued.

Leaseholders can contact our leasehold team at any time for advice, or to discuss concerns using the details below:

Phone: 0800 358 3783 (ask to speak to a leasehold adviser)

Email: [housing.enquiries@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:housing.enquiries@westminster.gov.uk)

Book a 20-minute online appointment by visiting our website:

[www.westminster.gov.uk/housing/leaseholders/contact-us](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/housing/leaseholders/contact-us)

**Q. We first had a S20 notice for these works 12 years ago. How much higher will the cost be now?**



A. Due to a wide range of factors, costs for all works are unfortunately higher than they were 12 years ago. The window design and specification has changed since that time and the scope and quantities of repairs are also more substantial. Leaseholder liabilities will be confirmed in the Section 20 notices issued in July.

**Q. How much extra are WCC fees on top of Axis cost of the works?**

A. These will be confirmed when the Section 20 notices are prepared, but these are usually estimated around 15-20%. Fees are only estimated at Section 20 stage and will be actualised on completion of the works based on the amount of time staff have spent working on the project.

**Q. Who approved the current re-payment plans? Who can change these?**

A. The current repayment plans were approved by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Liza Begum, in January this year. This saw an extension of repayment plans for resident leaseholders from 5 years to 10 years. A discretionary 25-year loan option has also been added.

Full details are available on our website: [www.westminster.gov.uk/housing/leaseholders/service-charges/major-works-service-charges-payment-plans](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/housing/leaseholders/service-charges/major-works-service-charges-payment-plans)

**Q. What happens if you can't pay?**

A. Any leaseholder with concerns about how they will repay their major works bill are encouraged to speak to us as soon as possible. Our leaseholder advisors will talk through the range of options available and assist leaseholders where we can. Leaseholders can also seek independent financial advice.

**Q&A from online meeting on 3 July 2023**

**General note:**

Following a query about the programme and start dates for each of the three blocks, Axis have agreed to look again at the programme to see if it will be possible to bring the start date of the final block (Lynton) forward. If possible, Axis will try to start work to the two smaller blocks at a similar time (around March 2024).

**General works questions:**

**Q. Will all of the materials be shared via email as well as paper mail? How can residents access support services remotely?**

A. Yes, we will circulate the notes and Q&A taken from both these meeting and last week's meeting via email and post to residents. A copy of the presentation slides and the meeting notes will also be published on our website here: [www.westminster.gov.uk/hallfield-estate-major-works-lynton-winchester-worcester-houses-project-x115/documents](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/hallfield-estate-major-works-lynton-winchester-worcester-houses-project-x115/documents)

**Q. Are there options on door hardware or will this just be standard set? Any permissions needed to alter these afterwards?**



A. The proposed new door design and hardware has been agreed with the planning department and will be in stainless steel. The majority of the doors to be fitted are only required to be secure by design and not fire rated (as there are multiple means of escape). Where a door is not fire-rated, some alterations to the hardware may be possible. There are a small number of properties (where there is only one direction for escape in event of a fire) that will require fire-rated doors to be fitted. Where the door is fire-rated, any change to the hardware at a later date would invalidate the fire-integrity of the door and would not be permitted.

**Q. Are there plans to replace antique electricity fuse boxes?**

A. Not at this time, this is not part of the scope of these works.

**Q. There have been problems and complaints about the new windows in other blocks are the same windows to be installed in Winchester House? The windows have condensation and are leaking.**

A. The window design being fitted to the three blocks in this phase will be the same as that fitted in the earlier two phases. There were issues with water ingress to some properties on the tiled elevations at Marlow House in phase 2 following the installation of the new windows. This is something we investigated in detail with a specialist and agreed some adjustments to be made to rectify the problem. The additional works have recently been implemented at Marlow House and all relevant checks were carried out to confirm the problem was resolved prior to the scaffold coming down. These additional works have already been planned for at Winchester House as this block has the same tiled elevation as Marlow House. This will prevent any water ingress from occurring here.

Aside from one property in phase 2 which we are investigating, we are not aware of any other reports of condensation issues in other properties. If residents are aware of friends or neighbours in other blocks that are experiencing issues with their windows, they should contact us so we can investigate.

**Q. I've noticed that the balconies start looking bad again quite quickly - is there a plan for ongoing re-painting and a future maintenance plan?**

A. It was clarified that the balconies being referred to, were the blocks (Pembroke, Reading and Tenby) which were completed during phase 1 of the works. Following the meeting, we have checked our records and painting of these balconies was not part of Axis' scope of works on phase 1. Painting of the external balconies was part of Axis scope of works on phase 2 and will also be included in this phase of works.

Our aim is usually to carry out cyclical major works to all our housing stock roughly every 10-12 years. So going forward, we would expect to return in that time frame to carry out further re-painting works and any other external repairs which required at that time.

**Q. How far in advance can we get dates for survey and work completion? I need to make sure I am in the country.**

A. We will have a much better idea of the timetable for works at our next meeting ahead of the work starting on site. Axis will aim to start arranging surveys as soon as possible following completion of the Section 20 consultation period. Axis will aim to survey all blocks at the start so windows can go into manufacture as early as possible. In terms of actually doing the work in each



flat, this will depend on which block you are in (Winchester will be first, followed by Worcester and Lynton). Residents will be given a minimum of 2 weeks' notice for when Axis would like to attend to fit your windows, but there can be flexibility in this. Axis' resident liaison officer will work with residents to understand their availability and try and arrange works to suit circumstances wherever possible.

**Q. Do we have to be 'in' while the work is being done?**

A. Residents will need to give access to the property for the works to take place. Only one room will be worked on at a time, so residents can either stay in a different room while the work is carried out or make use of the respite area Axis will have onsite.

**Q. Could we leave you keys in lock boxes or something?**

A. This may be possible. Residents should discuss this option with the site team when work starts onsite.

**Q. How long does it take on average to do the windows?**

A. Smaller flats can often have all windows replaced in one day. Larger flats maybe done over two days. Every window that is removed, will be replaced the same day. The making good needed following the window replacement will require additional visits and may need to take place over several days (to allow for any plaster or paint to dry etc). The making good does not have to take place immediately after the window replacement as Axis will be happy to arrange access for this around residents' availability.

**Q. What exactly does the making good entail?**

A. This will vary between properties; Axis will check all internal decorations at time of the survey to ensure suitable matches can be made. Some areas around the windows will require replastering and then painting on top. Axis will agree an appropriate area around the window to make good and will match paint colours or wallpaper wherever possible. Similarly, if a room has tiling, Axis will endeavour to match tile colours wherever possible. If residents have any spare tiles or paint from when rooms were initially decorated, this will of course make the process of matching these much easier.

**Q. Are you starting from top or bottom?**

A. Axis will start to fit the new windows from the top levels and work down where possible. There may need to be some flexibility in this depending on residents' availability.

**Q. Will the bathroom windows be frosted?**

A. Yes.

**Q. In regard to extractor fans, I don't have one at the moment. Is it possible to have one fitted?**

A. All tenanted flats will have extractor fans fitted to the kitchen and bathroom of the property. As electrical items are part of a leaseholders demise, we are not able to automatically fit these to leasehold properties. We will be offering this as an additional opt-in for leaseholders (along with the new front doors). Leaseholders will be sent details of how to opt-in and the additional cost



involved once works have started on site and surveys have been carried out. The exact cost for the fitting of the fans and doors will be dependant on a survey as the level of making good will vary between flats.

**Q. Will the windows have a Fensa guarantee?**

A. Because the buildings are over a certain height, Fensa certificates are not required for individual properties and instead building control sign-off is required for these works.

**Q. Even for the ground floor?**

A. Yes. The building sign-off requirement applies to the whole building.

**Q. What length of guarantees will be in place on the works?**

A. The following key items of work will come with specific manufacturers guarantees:

Work item	Manufacturer's warranty
Decorations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crown Sandtex 365 (rendered and concrete areas with no concrete repairs) 20 years</li> <li>• Crown Sandtex Flexigloss (metal and timber areas) 10 years</li> <li>• TOR coatings (fire upgraded areas) 10 years</li> <li>• Webercote Smooth (concrete areas with repairs) 5 years</li> </ul>
Windows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 years for frame</li> <li>• 10 years for glazing</li> <li>• 1 year for materials and hardware</li> </ul>
Front entrance doors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 years</li> <li>• 10 years for ironmongery</li> </ul>
Concrete repairs	5 years
Extractor fans	2 years
Communal light fittings	5 years

All works carried out by Axis will also be covered by a 12 month defects period following completion of the works to all 3 blocks. This means that Axis will be required to return to correct any defects with their work at no additional cost.

**Q. Who does we contact if there are issues with the windows further down the line? Is it Axis, or the window manufacturer?**

A. Any issues with the works during the 12 month defects period, should be addressed to Axis in the first instances. Residents should contact Westminster's customer services team to raise any issues after the 12 month defects period has ended. It will be Westminster's responsibility to call upon any guarantees in place as needed.

**Q. What will happen to the Georgian wired glazing in the current windows?**

A. The new windows to be fitted will be double glazed with toughened glass.





**Cost related queries:**

**Q. The last estimate of costs we had was back in 2015. Can we see what other residents have had to pay recently as a guide to what we might expect?**

Unfortunately, we don't have figures immediately available as the final costs for the recent phase of work at Marlow, Newbury and Taunton is still being confirmed. As noted earlier in the meeting, we had to return to Marlow House to carry out some additional works, so the costs across the main contract and the additional works are still being finalised. As noted on page 4 we will be collating the cost details from the previous phase and will send out to those who have requested it as soon as possible.

**Q. Can we start paying as soon as we receive the S20 estimate rather than waiting until the bills are issued next March?**

This won't be possible to do, and if it were, it wouldn't be recommended. The Section 20 is merely a notice of estimate liability and not an actual bill. If you are able to, leaseholders are encouraged to start setting some money aside each month now into their own savings account. This way you can benefit from some interest building up between now and the time the bills are issued next March.

**Q. I have been told that the cost could be an issue if trying to sell?**

A. Planned major works to a building do not prevent properties from selling, and we continue to see leasehold properties change hands regardless of works planned to estates or in progress. However, any estimate costs of planned works would need to be disclosed to any prospective buyer and this may impact the sale price.

**Q. Is there any government assistance for the cost of the windows?**

A. Unfortunately there are no specific government grants available for windows and door replacements at this time. There are some government schemes designed to reduce the costs of home improvements that will significantly improve energy efficiency and lower household bills, but these generally require additional efficiency measures (such as additional wall insulation or heating upgrades) alongside any window replacement. We are not aware of any schemes which would be applicable towards these major works.

**Q. Are there any Green grants for leaseholders for defective old single glazed windows? I keep seeing adds for government funding for old/compromised windows?**

A. As noted above, there are no government grants currently available for this. Many window companies do tend to advertise savings on new windows by scrapping and recycling existing windows. These tend to be misleading as these companies prices are often higher to compensate for the saving being offered.

Axis have looked into possible savings from recycling the existing windows with their waste supplier. Unfortunately, the putties and glass would need to be removed from the window frames for them to be able to give us money for the frames. In order to remove the putties and glass on site would mean employing a couple of operatives to do so for every window and the cost of this would counter any potential saving. There is also a health and safety consideration from removing glass from frames onsite.



As an alternative, Axis will look to store the old windows in a container onsite temporarily for a scrap metal operative to take away for free and this will help reduce the number of skips needed for the project. This will not be a significant cost reduction but will bring some saving.

**A couple of questions were also raised in relation to the gas works currently taking place at Winchester House:**

**Q. Are these works related to the works that are being done to move the gas meters internally?**

A. The gas works are completely separate to the major works. The gas works are being done by a company called Cadent and are due to complete by August. The scaffolding in place for the gas works will need to come down before Axis can start their works. The scaffold design is very different, so a new scaffold will need to go up at Winchester House.

**Q. Are the plans up to date on the site e.g., showing the entry points for the gas lines?**

A. As the gas works are being done by a different contractor, we will need to check this after the meeting. Post meeting addition: Yes, the plans on Westminster planning portal are up to date.

**Q. No one has arranged access to my flat to move the gas meter. Who do residents need to speak to about this?**

Two residents queried this during the meeting and the contractor doing the gas works has been passed their details to contact them directly. If anyone else is awaiting these works to be done, they can contact Devon Shirley from Cadent to arrange an appointment:

[Devon.Shirley@cadentgas.com](mailto:Devon.Shirley@cadentgas.com)

End.