

Russell House Major Works (project T168b) Questions and Answers

These questions were raised during a residents meeting in August 2022.

In attendance

James Long, Housing Client Surveyor and Ian Merriman, Resident Advocate Team Manager.

Questions and Answers

When will the works take place?

Based on the current timescales, the work is planned to start in November 2023. There are several stages still to go through and these will need to be scrutinised and/or signed off by various teams in the council, so it could take longer. We will make sure that we keep you updated as we make progress and tell you about any delays.

Will the window replacement contractor be reputable?

United Living, the major works contractor will employ a sub-contractor to do the work. Before they start work the sub-contractor must meet certain agreed criteria/standards. Both United Living and the council will monitor the sub-contractor's work to ensure the work meets an acceptable standard.

How long will it take to replace all the windows in my home in one day and will we be left with a hole at any point?

The amount of time that it takes to replace the windows in your home will vary depending on the number your home has. We should be able to tell you how long as we mobilise for the work and have a more detailed programme.

That said, each window being replaced is normally taken out and the new one put in during the same day. We may come back later to do any finishing work but at no point will residents be left with no window in place.

What kind of windows are you looking to fit?

We would like to replace the timber windows with double glazed windows. We have fitted UPVC and aluminium windows to other properties that the council manages, however the rising cost of aluminium means that we are likely to focus on UPVC.

Can you give us a breakdown of the costs that you have so far? For example, of the £3m allocated to the project, windows would be 40% and scaffolding is expected to cost around £285k or 9.5%.

While we have an estimated budget, it is not until United Living develop the Service Provider Proposal will we know the breakdown of costs.

Are works to the pram sheds rechargeable?

No. These works are not recharged to leaseholders.

Can many of the elements in the scope of works be carried out by the general repairs contractor, thereby spreading the cost of the works over a longer period?

We will investigate this and have an answer in the new year.

Are asphalt repairs to the walkways included in the scope of works? Could this element be carried out by the repairs contractor?

This will be considered, and we will contact you with an answer in the new year.

Is there a limit to what profit the contractor can make from the works?

Yes, this is set out in the contract that we have with them. In addition to this we operate an 'open book' system with them, so we can see actual costs that the contractor has incurred. Our quantity surveyors also monitor the spend of the project.

Will the scaffolding be alarmed?

Yes, we will ask the contractor to do this.

Can the scaffolding be erected in phases? To help with security and allowing in more light.

Our initial inspections suggest that this should be possible, and we will include this in the feedback we provide to United Living for them to consider as part of their more detailed investigations.

Do we need scaffolding to the roof level?

It is likely that we will need to scaffold to the roof level so that we can use hoists to lift materials and other items.

Why are we planning to fit additional fire doors to Russell House?

These proposals come from the recommendations in a fire risk assessment that we carry out on the buildings we manage.

Fitting the additional doors to the common parts between the first and third floors should improve the safety of Russell House further by stopping the spread of fire and/or smoke through the building.

The Fire Risk Assessment has been uploaded onto the dedicated major works webpage for Russell House, which can be found here <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/russell-house-major-works-project-t168b>.

How will the quality of the works be controlled?

The contractor's site manager is responsible for the day-to-day management of the works to ensure that the standards are clear and being met. The council will supplement this process with support from a 'quality manager' and project manager.

In addition to this there will be a resident liaison officer who you will be able to contact with any concerns or queries that you may have, and if necessary escalated to the council's resident advocate.

Are we planning any energy saving works as part of the major works? For example, lighting, PDHU boiler system, solar panels and roof insulations work.

Improvements to the lighting are already in the scope of works and will form part of the works. The contractor has been asked to comment on the viability of installing new roof insulation and solar panels. Any work to 'de-carbonise' the PDHU system will fall outside of the scope of these works.

The Guide to Major Works Projects can be found here

<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/housing/major-works>.

If you have any questions about the works, you can contact me by:

- Calling Westminster City Council Housing on **0800 358 3783** - ask to speak to me in the Resident Advocacy Team.
- Emailing ljenkins1@westminster.gov.uk, please quote reference project Russell House T168b.