

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Action Taken Under Delegated Powers

40 & 42 Westbury Avenue – Conversion from 3 bedroom to 2 bedroom dwellings and demolish existing bathroom extensions

1 Summary Statement

- 1.1 *There are two structurally unstable single storey bathroom extensions to the rear of 40 & 42 Westbury Avenue, Wednesbury. Both properties are currently three bedroom properties. It is proposed to convert the third bedroom of each property into a bathroom thereby reducing the properties to two bedrooms. The single storey extensions can then be demolished and not rebuilt.*
- 1.2 *The cost to demolish and rebuild the two existing extensions to current building regulations is estimated to be at least £60,000. The cost to install a bathroom in the third bedroom and demolish the existing extension at each property is approximately £12,000, resulting in a saving of at least £48,000. The difference in weekly rent between a 3 bedroom and 2 bedroom house in the Wednesbury area is only £7.83.*
- 1.3 *The alternative option considered is to demolish the existing structurally unstable single storey bathroom extensions and rebuild them to current building regulations.*
- 1.4 *The proposal has been developed in consultation with the lettings team who have identified a shortage of 2 bedroom properties.*

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is proposed to convert the third bedroom of each property at 40 & 42 Westbury Avenue into a bathroom, and to demolish the structurally unstable single storey bathroom extensions, thereby changing the archetype of the properties from three bedrooms to two bedrooms.

In accordance with the authority delegated to Chief Officers to act on matters within the authority delegated to them under Part 3 of the Council's Constitution, I intend to take the action(s) recommended above.

~~I do~~/do not have an interest to declare in this matter

Ajman Ali 
Interim Director of Neighbourhoods

Date: 1 - 7 - 2017

If the Constitution requires the decision to be taken in consultation with another chief officer, the following signature box should also be included

I confirm that I have been consulted on the above proposals and have no objection to their proceeding.

NOT APPLICABLE

Date:

If the Constitution requires the decision to be taken in consultation with a Cabinet Member, the following signature box should also be included

I confirm that I have been consulted on the above proposals and have no objection to their proceeding.

NOT APPLICABLE

Date:

Contact Officer

Mr Steve Greenhouse – Service Manager

3. Background Details

- 3.1 40 and 42 Westbury Avenue, Wednesbury are traditionally constructed inter-war dwellings with single storey bathroom extensions added to the rear in around 1980.
- 3.2 The rear single storey extensions are both exhibiting signs of settlement and rotation.
- 3.3 There appears to be very little, if any, physical connection between the extensions and the main building.
- 3.4 The defect to the rear extensions does not appear to have affected the main building.
- 3.5 The Structural Engineer's recommendation is to demolish the existing extensions and rebuild them to current Building Regulations; the cost of this is estimated to be at least £60,000.
- 3.6 An alternative solution would be to demolish the single storey extensions and convert the third bedroom of each property into a bathroom. Thereby changing the archetype of the properties from three bedrooms to two bedrooms.
- 3.7 The cost to demolish the single storey extensions and convert the third bedroom of each property into a bathroom is approximately £12,000. This offers a saving of at least

£48,000 over the cost of re-building.

- 3.8 The difference in rental income between a two bedroom and three bedroom house in the Wednesbury area is only £7.83 per week so the reduction in rental income would be negligible.
- 3.9 Two bedroom houses are in very short supply and in the event that we have a vacancy there is always huge interest in these properties with high numbers of bids.
- 3.10 In accordance with the Housing Allocations Policy smaller families with children (i.e. one child) can only be considered for two bedroom houses, therefore the waiting time for these can be a number of years (e.g. a household with no additional preference are currently waiting in excess of 6 years).
- 3.11 The under-occupation criteria for housing benefit has contributed significantly to this issue in that some of our smaller households, who may otherwise qualify for a three bedroom house, cannot no longer afford them.
- 3.12 In view of the huge demand for two bedroom houses, which out-weighs the supply, it would be advantageous to convert the two houses in Westbury Avenue to two bedroom properties.
- 3.13 It is therefore proposed to convert the third bedroom of each property at 40 & 42 Westbury Avenue into a bathroom, and to demolish the structurally unstable single storey bathroom extensions, thereby changing the archetype of the properties from three bedrooms to two bedrooms.

Source Documents

NA

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]