

**POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –  
5TH OCTOBER 2010**

**SUBJECT: GROUP REPAIR SCHEME – 1-18 ALEXANDRA PLACE, RHYMNEY**

**REPORT BY: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 In accordance with paragraph 28.05 of Caerphilly County Borough Council Financial Regulations, to report an increase in contract final account figures of more than 10% to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

**2. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 2.1 Group Repair is a concept utilised to facilitate the strategically planned systematic repair of groups of predominantly private sector houses. The initiative is widely used within Renewal Areas and Priority Neighbourhoods which support Key Priority 1 – “The Regeneration of Declining Communities” as identified in the Caerphilly County Borough Council Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2006. This strategy forms an intrinsic part of the Authority’s overall Local Housing Strategy.

**3. THE REPORT**

3.1 Original Contract Sum:	£115,440.29
Revised Contract Figure at Final Account of:	£128,174.04
Variance (percentage increase in scheme cost)	£ 12,773.75 (11%)

Alexandra Place is located within the Rhymney Conservation Area which is governed by an Article 4 direction. This means that when undertaking refurbishment all external finishes have to reflect “period” construction commensurate with the principles of the Townscape Heritage Initiative. The effect of this is unit costs substantially higher than those applicable to traditional refurbishment.

The scheme at Alexandra Place involved the rebuilding of 18 front boundaries and forecourts. Whilst undertaking the works additional costs were incurred for the following reasons:-

- The visible part of the existing boundary walls was 225mm thick. However, on demolishing the walls a stone backing wall was found behind the brickwork. A decision was made on site to construct a new backing wall to lie behind the reconstructed front boundary to secure the long term stability of the new wall. This resulted in the need for a wider foundation than was originally designed, which subsequently increased the costs of excavation and concrete fill.
- At initial survey stage it was hoped that most of the existing terracotta pillar caps could be salvaged and reused. Regrettably, further investigation following the demolition of the existing walls resulted in more pillar caps needing replacement than first thought.

- Extra costs were incurred due to new steps being constructed using brickwork risers and paving treads where it proved impossible to salvage existing stone steps.
- A decision was made on site to replace more flank walls and copings than originally specified in an effort to produce a finished product of consistent and uniform appearance.

The final account for the scheme has been examined and agreed by Internal Audit.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Renewal Area Budget (hypothecated funds secured by bid to the Welsh Assembly Government) had sufficient funds to meet the increased cost without affecting the overall Renewal Area programme.

#### **5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no personnel implications.

#### **6. CONSULTATIONS**

- 6.1 No comments were received from consultees.

#### **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 That members note the report.

#### **8. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 To comply with Caerphilly County Borough Council Financial Regulations.

#### **9. URGENCY**

- 9.1 Not urgent.

Author:	Kenyon Williams	-	Private Sector Housing Manager
Consultees:	Cllr Lyn Ackerman	-	Cabinet Member for Environment and Housing
	Allan Elliott	-	Principal Housing Officer (Agency)
	Bob Jones	-	Team Leader – Private Sector Housing
	Stephen Jordan	-	Service Auditor
	Richard Jones	-	Senior Audit Assistant