Community Counts
Milnbank
Housing Association
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TO:	Stonework Working Group
PREPARED BY:	Paul Martin (CEO)
SUBJECT:	STONEWORK STRATEGY
DATE OF MEETING:	26 July 2026
APPROVED BY:	Paul Martin (CEO)

STONEWORK STRATEGY

MS/JULY.2027/REF. S19

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report presents the proposed strategic approach for managing and improving pre-1919 sandstone tenement stock across Milnbank Housing Association (MHA) and Milnbank Property Services (MPS).

1.2 The programme has been developed in response to a number of stonework failures dating back to 2024, particularly incidents involving loose material from sandstone buildings. These events have highlighted the need for a structured, evidence-led and risk-based approach to managing building condition and ensuring resident safety.

1.3 MHA/MPS has responsibility for **173 pre-1919 sandstone tenement blocks**, comprising 6 fully owned blocks, 105 mixed tenure blocks and 62 fully factored blocks.

1.4 While significant progress has been made in addressing immediate repair requirements, the programme is now transitioning from a reactive approach to a longer-term strategic framework. This strategy aims to define the scope, cost and delivery model required to bring all relevant stock up to an acceptable condition standard.

1.5 Key risks relate to delays in grant funding approvals, additional technical requirements, owner consultation processes and the potential for owners in fully factored blocks to oppose essential works. These risks are being actively managed through enhanced inspection regimes, consultant support, resident engagement and ongoing monitoring.

1.6 Immediate repairs are targeted for completion by **March 2027**, with short-term repairs targeted for completion by **June 2027**.

2. Recommendations

The Management Board is asked to:

- approve the strategic objective of bringing pre-1919 sandstone stock to an acceptable condition standard;
- agree the proposed definition of tolerable standard;
- support continued owner engagement and grant funding facilitation;
- Review progression of future phases of works, including Cardross Street Phase 2;
- Review the escalation principles where owners refuse essential works;

- Note that a fully costed long-term investment programme is being developed and a draft should be available for the next meeting

3. Strategic Context

3.1 MHA/MPS manages a significant number of pre-1919 sandstone tenements, which, due to their age and construction, require ongoing inspection and periodic capital investment.

3.2 Recent stonework failures have demonstrated that a reactive maintenance approach is insufficient to manage long-term risk. A consistent and structured strategy is required to:

- identify and prioritise defects;
- manage health and safety risks;
- support funding and owner engagement;
- inform long-term investment planning

Definition of Tolerable Standard

For this strategy, a "**tolerable standard"** is intended to provide a clear, proportionate and evidence-based benchmark for managing pre-1919 sandstone tenements. It recognises that these buildings are historic assets which will continue to require cyclical inspection, specialist maintenance and phased investment, rather than one-off full restoration. The standard is therefore focused on ensuring that each block is safe, structurally stable, actively monitored and supported by a clear programme of prioritised works, taking account of tenure arrangements, funding routes and the responsibilities of owners, factors and MHA/MPS.

A pre-1919 sandstone tenement will be considered to meet a tolerable standard:

- all external stonework has been professionally inspected;
- no loose or unstable material presents a foreseeable safety risk;
- immediate repairs have been completed or formally programmed;
- short- and medium-term repairs are identified and prioritised;
- works are specified and delivered by competent professionals;
- deterioration is being actively managed;
- a clear inspection and monitoring regime is in place;
- ownership, funding and factoring responsibilities are understood;
- appropriate records of condition and works are maintained.

4. Current Position

4.1 MHA/MPS is responsible for 173 pre-1919 sandstone tenement blocks:

Summary of Responsibility towards Pre-1919 Tenement Blocks	
Tenure	**No. Pre-1919 Tenement Blocks**
MHA - Fully tenanted	**6**
MPS – Mixed Tenure	**105** - 55 No. MHA majority - 39 No. Owners majority - 11 No. 50/50 split
MPS – Fully Factored	**62**

4.2 Strong progress has been made in completing immediate repairs across fully owned and mixed tenure stock, with remaining works subject to funding and approval processes. The delivery plan will be used as the main tool for tracking progress, identifying any delays and confirming the next steps required for each block. Regular progress updates will be provided to the Stonework Working Group, including changes to target dates, funding approvals, owner engagement activity and any emerging risks. These updates will also be available to the Management Board on a monthly basis, providing ongoing assurance that the programme is being monitored and that any issues affecting delivery, cost or risk are being escalated where required.

5. Key Risks

5.1 The principal risks associated with the programme arise from the age and construction of the stock, the scale of the required works and the complexity of delivering repairs across fully owned, mixed tenure and fully factored blocks. These risks have implications for resident safety, statutory and factoring responsibilities, programme delivery, funding availability, owner consent and MHA/MPS's wider governance and liability position.

5.2 The risk profile is therefore being considered not only in terms of immediate building condition, but also the potential impact of delay, non-participation by owners, increasing costs and the need to maintain clear evidence that risks are being identified, prioritised and actively managed. The principal risks associated with the programme are:

- **Funding Risk:** delays in Glasgow City Council grant approvals;
- **Technical Risk:** additional requirements for consultant reports and tender documentation;
- **Delivery Risk:** delays in procurement and contractor mobilisation;
- **Ownership Risk:** requirement for owner approval in mixed tenure and fully factored blocks;
- **Strategic Risk:** refusal of works in fully factored blocks;
- **Health & Safety Risk:** further deterioration where repairs are delayed;
- **Liability Risk:** increased exposure for MPS where essential works are not progressed.

6. Mitigating Actions

6.1 The actions below set out how MHA/MPS will manage the main risks linked to the stonework programme. The focus is on keeping residents safe, making sure buildings continue to be monitored, supporting owners through the process, and keeping the Board informed where issues may affect cost, timescales or delivery.

6.2 This approach is based on regular inspections, clear prioritisation of works, early engagement with owners, and close monitoring of funding and contractor progress. Where works are delayed or owner agreement is difficult to secure, MHA/MPS will continue to assess the level of risk and escalate matters where required.

Risk Area	Mitigating Action
Deterioration of outstanding repairs	Additional inspections confirm no significant deterioration; weekly monitoring in place
Grant funding delays	Building consultants appointed to meet GCC technical requirements
Owner approval risk	Structured engagement, meetings and grant support for owners
Delivery delays	Phased procurement and prioritisation of high-risk blocks
Resident safety	Ongoing inspections, communication and reporting mechanisms
Programme oversight	Live risk register, drone surveys and regular Board reporting

7. Delivery Approach

7.1 The delivery approach is phased, risk-based and evidence-led. This means that works will not be progressed as a single blanket programme, but will be planned around the condition of each block, the level of risk identified, the availability of funding and the practical steps needed to secure owner agreement where required. The approach allows MHA/MPS to deal first with the most urgent health and safety issues, while building a clearer picture of the wider investment required across the full pre-1919 sandstone tenement stock. It also gives the Board assurance that decisions are being based on survey information, professional advice and live monitoring, rather than reacting only when individual defects become urgent:

- Immediate repairs prioritised to address health and safety risks;
- Short-term repairs programmed following survey and tender completion;
- Long-term investment planning informed by survey and cost data;
- Different approaches applied for fully owned, mixed tenure and fully factored stock;
- Interim control measures maintained until all risks are mitigated.

8. Owner Engagement and Funding

8.1 Delivery of works in mixed tenure and fully factored blocks is dependent on more than the technical condition of the building. In many cases, progress will also rely on securing owner agreement, explaining the nature and urgency of the works, confirming grant funding availability and ensuring owners understand their share of costs and responsibilities. Glasgow City Council funding remains a key enabler but introduces programme dependencies and timescale risks.

8.2 This is particularly important where MHA/MPS does not have full ownership control, as delays or refusal by owners can affect the timing of essential repairs and increase the level of risk that requires to be managed. For this reason, owner engagement and funding support will remain a key part of the delivery approach and will include:

- effective owner consultation;
- support with grant funding applications;
- provision of clear technical and cost information.

8.3 A communication strategy for owners will be established between the MHA Asset team and MPS factoring services. The purpose of this Communication Plan is to make sure owners are kept abreast of the condition of their building as well as setting out the below.

- Any improvements required to their building;
- Costs for improvement works where applicable;
- Identify any consultancy services required for buildings and associated costs;
- Timescales for Improvement Works;
- Eligibility for Grant Funding and associated application process;
- Dates for Owners meetings to review works and vote on a decision as to whether or not they should proceed;
- Explain MPS position should works not proceed.

9. Governance and Reporting

9.1 The programme will continue to be governed through a clear reporting and oversight structure, so that progress, risks, costs and key decisions are visible at the right level. Given the scale of the stock, the involvement of owners and the reliance on grant funding and specialist advice, it is important that the Board has regular assurance that the programme is moving forward and that any issues affecting safety, delivery or liability are identified early. Governance arrangements will also help ensure that decisions are properly recorded, risks are tracked consistently and escalation takes place where works are delayed, owner agreement cannot be secured or the level of risk changes. The programme will continue to be governed through:

- Stonework Working Group oversight;
- regular Management Board reporting;
- live risk register monitoring;
- escalation of high-risk issues where required.

10. Financial Implications

10.1 While significant investment has already been made, the full cost of bringing all pre-1919 sandstone tenements to an acceptable standard is not yet fully quantified. This is because the overall programme cost will depend on the outcome of detailed surveys, the extent of works required at each block, consultant advice, tender returns, grant funding decisions and the level of owner participation in mixed tenure and fully factored properties. Costs may also change as further defects are identified, specifications are refined or works are phased to reflect health and safety priorities and available funding. A clearer financial position will therefore be developed as survey information,

risk ratings and programme assumptions are brought together into a long-term investment plan.

10.2 Further work is required to:

- establish a full costed programme;
- assess funding requirements;
- understand long-term financial implications for MHA and private owners.

11. Conclusion

11.1 Significant progress has been made in addressing the most immediate stonework risks, particularly where defects have presented a potential health and safety concern. However, the age, scale and mixed ownership profile of the stock means this cannot be treated as a short-term repair exercise only. A structured and longer-term approach is required to ensure risks continue to be monitored, works are properly prioritised, owners are engaged at the right stage, and future investment decisions are based on reliable survey, cost and condition information.

11.2 This strategy provides a clear framework for moving from individual repair responses to a more planned and coordinated programme of work. It brings together the key elements needed to manage the stock properly, including inspection findings, risk assessment, owner engagement, funding considerations, professional advice and Board oversight. This will help ensure that decisions are consistent, properly evidenced and focused on the blocks where action is most needed. In summary, the strategy provides a framework to:

- manage risk;
- define acceptable standards;
- guide delivery;
- support future investment planning.

11.3 The next phase will focus on translating this strategy into a fully costed and deliverable long-term programme. This will include bringing together survey information, risk ratings, estimated costs, grant funding assumptions and owner contribution requirements into a clear programme of works. It will also help identify which blocks should be prioritised first, what funding or approval barriers need to be resolved, and how the programme can be phased in a way that is realistic, affordable and focused on managing risk. Further updates will be brought back to the Board as the detailed programme is developed.