

Audit Findings & Management Action Plan - Month & Calendar Year

Finding	Actions																								
<p><u>The use of exclusions is increasing and now represents a third of orders placed</u></p> <p>The Council has over 4,000 Council owned houses within its portfolio of properties. In April 2021 the Council entered into a housing repairs contract, on a price per property (PPP) basis. A total amount is paid each year, based on the number of properties in the portfolio, to cover the cost of repairs. Any repairs not included in the contract are conducted as exclusions and are charged according to the schedule of rates or on a quotation basis.</p> <p>Our analysis has identified that the percentage of repairs carried out as exclusions, has increased in 24/25 from 30% to 36%. This has a significant negative impact on the budget. For information, we have included a summary of our data analysis findings as an appendix to this report (see Appendix 1).</p> <p>In 2023 the Council commissioned Echelon to review of the Price Per Property (PPP) contract with a focus on exclusions. A report of findings and recommendations for improvement was produced and several of the recommendations were relevant to improving the exclusion process. This included staff training to provide better understanding of the Price Per Property (PPP) contract, as well as improved job descriptions and review of categorisation of some works. However, the report’s recommendations have not yet been implemented. In relation to training, we have been advised by officers that training was identified and ready to action, however, the contractor and the Council have had some recent staff changes and are waiting for these to settle in first.</p>	<p>Echelon report to be reviewed and recommendations implemented as part of the wider review of the PPP and PPV. Training to be given to all staff after the review of the PPP/PPV has taken place. The variation order process will also be reviewed in this time.</p> <table><tr><td>Priority</td><td>1</td><td>SWAP Reference</td><td>AP#6090</td></tr><tr><td>Responsible Officer</td><td colspan="3">Mark Dale</td></tr><tr><td>Timescale</td><td colspan="3">30 September 2025</td></tr></table> <p>Reports monitoring exclusions to be created and reviewed regularly by the housing repairs management team</p> <table><tr><td>Priority</td><td>1</td><td>SWAP Reference</td><td>AP#6313</td></tr><tr><td>Responsible Officer</td><td colspan="3">Mark Dale</td></tr><tr><td>Timescale</td><td colspan="3">30 June 2025</td></tr></table>	Priority	1	SWAP Reference	AP#6090	Responsible Officer	Mark Dale			Timescale	30 September 2025			Priority	1	SWAP Reference	AP#6313	Responsible Officer	Mark Dale			Timescale	30 June 2025		
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<p><u>Assessment of original order value is not accurate</u></p> <p>The sample testing has identified that the original works order value raised, is often inaccurate. Our analysis found that as of November 2024, 3,427 exclusion repair jobs had been recorded and of those, 1,893 (55%) had exceeded the original order value, with a difference in value of £571,093. This indicates a weakness in identifying all of the works needed at the initial assessment stage. Of the 134 cases with additional work added, 16 had a logged value equalling £121.23, a further 44 cases had a logged value of less than £200, but all cases exceeded a final value of £1,500. This indicates that the original assessment of works required was not accurate. We have been advised by officers that this issue has been identified and is often caused by lack of training within the contractor’s triage team.</p>	<p>Processes will be implemented to improve triage of repairs, this will include an initial client inspection on some works. If further works are needed, the job will be closed and raised appropriately as minor works, if necessary. This will improve work in progress & the management of the variation process. This action will be incorporated in the PPP review.</p> <table><tr><td>Priority</td><td>1</td><td>SWAP Reference</td><td>AP#5852</td></tr><tr><td>Responsible Officer</td><td colspan="3">Mark Dale</td></tr><tr><td>Timescale</td><td colspan="3">30 June 2025</td></tr></table> <p>Responsive Repairs Limit to be reduced to £1000. This will provide greater control of authorising works & budgetary control. Monthly reports to be implemented and reviewed as above.</p> <table><tr><td>Priority</td><td>1</td><td>SWAP Reference</td><td>AP#6315</td></tr><tr><td>Responsible Officer</td><td colspan="3">Mark Dale</td></tr><tr><td>Timescale</td><td colspan="3">30 September 2025</td></tr></table>	Priority	1	SWAP Reference	AP#5852	Responsible Officer	Mark Dale			Timescale	30 June 2025			Priority	1	SWAP Reference	AP#6315	Responsible Officer	Mark Dale			Timescale	30 September 2025		
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<p><u>Evidence to support quotation works not saved on the Open Housing system</u></p> <p>Within the sample testing of exclusions, we identified eight quotation repairs. Of those eight cases, we only found one case where a supporting quote had been saved on the Open Housing system. Without this information it is not possible to ascertain the details of the works, and it is unclear how this can be authorised without this information. We were advised by officers that a lot of the information is retained in surveyors email inboxes rather than on the Open Housing system.</p>	<p>Evidence supporting quotation works to be saved directly onto the Open Housing system. Work has already commenced to get quotes to auto save to EDRM from MCM.</p> <p>A documented process for authorisation to be drafted & saved on the intranet. Process to be shared with all staff.</p>			
	Priority	2	SWAP Reference	AP#5853
	Responsible Officer		Mark Dale	
	Timescale		30 June 2025	

Finding	Action			
<u>Common items charged as SOR that could be included in PPP contract</u> There are common items charged as SOR that we would expect to have been included in PPP contract e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Skirting board repairs/replacement· Tiling· Painting and decorating· Paving· Ducting	Common SORs to be evaluated as part of the PPP/PPV review and consideration given to the inclusion of these to the PPP/PPV within the core group. Preambles to be reviewed for SORS to establish what is and isn't covered within those regular SORS.			
	Priority	3	SWAP Reference	AP#5490
	Responsible Officer		Mark Dale	
	Timescale		30 June 2025	