

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – COMMUNITY 8 NOVEMBER 2011

REPAIRS POLICY FOR COUNCIL HOUSING

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Members' agreement to implement the amended Repair Policy for Council housing which sets out how the repairs service will be provided. A copy of the revised policy and procedures is available in the Members' room and on the website.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The repairs and maintenance service is absolutely crucial to the Council in its role as a landlord and is the benchmark that tenants use to rate the overall Housing Service. The repairs and maintenance service is the area where tenants have most interactions with the Council and because of this the relationship we have with our customers often depends on the quality of service we provide.
- 2.2 The last review of the repairs policy was undertaken some time ago and it was considered that it no longer reflected the services being provided. The draft policy was considered by the Repairs Partnership Board in July 2011.
- 2.3 The policy has the following main objectives:
- define staff responsibilities.
 - establish service standards.
 - define whether tenants or landlords are responsible for certain repairs.
 - detail how repairs can be reported.
 - provide definitions on timescales and repair response categories.
 - provide a definition of the service.
 - detail how the service will be adapted to meet the needs of vulnerable groups.
 - provide a statement of how Equality and Diversity will be promoted.
 - explain how tenants will be involved in service delivery and monitoring.
- 2.4 The new definition for the repairs service draws in all the different aspects of house maintenance, responsive repairs, major programmed works and cyclical maintenance and the policy establishes the framework in which each one of these will be provided.

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 In consultation with stakeholders and to reflect the diverse needs of our tenants discretion will be exercised for certain types of repairs and the way the service is provided to our more vulnerable customers. This will allow officers to authorise repairs that would normally be the tenant's responsibility or to change response periods if the need so dictates.

3.2 A couple of minor alterations to responsibilities for repairs have been made within the new policy:

- tenants will now become responsible for replacing their toilet seats. A brand new one will be provided at the start of every new occupation but after that point it will be down to tenants to replace them if required.
- at present tenants are responsible for interior door furniture, in the future this will now become the Council's responsibility.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The repairs service has approved budgets for the financial year 2011/12 of 2.7m for responsive repairs, £714,000 for cyclical maintenance and 5.2m for capital works. It is not anticipated that the revised policy will have any detrimental impact on these budgets.

5. RECOMMENDED:

- 1) That Scrutiny Committee – Community supports the adoption of the amended policy document, *Repairs Policy for Council Housing*

ACTING HEAD OF HOUSING SERVICES

S:PA/LP/ Committee/1111SCC3
20.10.11

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report: