

EXETER CITY COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – COMMUNITY
8 NOVEMBER 2011

**HOUSING RECHARGEABLE REPAIRS POLICIES FOR TENANTED
AND VOID PROPERTIES**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Members' agreement to implement amended policies for rechargeable repairs for both tenanted and void Council properties. There are two distinct policies that deal with rechargeable repairs in tenanted and void properties but as they are so closely connected this report will deal with them together. The drafts are available in the Members' room and on the website.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council has a legal duty to undertake repairs to its properties and fully accepts that as time passes normal wear and tear will occur. However where a repair is required because of either neglect or damage caused by a tenant, their friends or family the Council reserves the right not to undertake those repairs or to carry them out but to recharge the tenants who caused the damage.
- 2.2 A review of the policies was carried out by the Council's Resident Auditor Team which came up with a number of recommendations. The revisions to the policies are the result of those recommendations.
- 2.3 The policies have the following main objectives:
- define staff responsibilities.
 - define what repairs can be recharged.
 - set how the charges will be calculated.
 - define what evidence is required.
 - to provide guidance on when discretion can be used.
 - provide guidance on how 'significant damage' will be dealt with.

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 Some of the more common types of rechargeable repair are:
- Gaining entry and renewing of locks, where keys are lost
 - Replacing glass where the damage is caused by the tenant
 - Replacing damaged fixtures and fittings where the damage is malicious or through neglect
 - Putting right poor DIY projects
 - Replacing floor tiles where carpets are removed.

Where possible tenants pay for damage before the repair is carried out but if this is not practical then a liability form is signed indicating the acceptance of the charge by the tenant. In the cases of void property every attempt is made to visit the property prior to vacation to let tenants know of any rechargeable items.

3.2 The policy on tenanted repairs also deals with significant damage that is caused by accident, this normally refers to property fires where a large amount of damage is caused to the property but it may not be malicious. In these cases the policy indicates that some discretion can be used if the cost of the damage is to be recharged.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 It is intended that the policies once adopted will provide a lot more guidance on how rechargeable repairs are calculated, the evidence required and the different responsibilities which will maximise the collection of such debts.

5. RECOMMENDED:

- 1) That Scrutiny Committee – Community supports the adoption of the amended policy documents, *Rechargeable Repairs to tenanted properties* and *Rechargeable Repairs to void properties*.

ACTING HEAD OF HOUSING

S:PA/LP/ Committee/1111SCC2
20.10.11

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

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