

QUESTION FROM A MEMBER OF PUBLIC

UNDERSTANDING ORDER NO.19

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY – 16 JUNE 2015

QUESTION FROM JOHN MURPHY

Exeter City Council's repair project for damp council flats

1. Did the council meet its target of awarding a contract to repair the damp homes by 6 April? If not why not?

The letters of intent were sent on 25 March 2015, with a contract start date of 1 April 2015.

2. How has the council prioritised the work? Did you consult the tenants? How long will the work take to complete? Will it be done by 6 October? Can you guarantee tenants affected by damp for the past three winters will be spared the problem this coming winter?

All works are planned to be completed within a 6 months period and before the coming winter. The council is prioritising the works based on;

- Health & Safety Issues regarding the Tenants or property (Doctors supporting letter)*
- Follow on works from any emergency repairs*
- Degree of water Ingress damage to the property*
- Tenant Profile/ Age / Children/ Vulnerability*
- Exeter City Council Surveyors Report*

3. How many council homes are being repaired under this contract? *304 properties*

What proportion of all damp council homes in Exeter will be covered? *All properties that have been reported to us as having damp are included in this contract.*

Are all council homes in Exeter being repaired this summer? *Yes*

Will any damp council homes need to be repaired in summer 2016? *No*

4. How many families with young children are living in damp homes? *We do not have this information to hand.*

Are all these being repaired in summer 2015? *Yes*

Have you consulted medical advice about allowing young families to remain in damp accommodation? *We have received a few medical letters from tenants that are concerned about their health, these properties have been prioritised and/or had emergency works carried out.*

5. How many vulnerable people live in damp council homes in Exeter? *We do not have this information to hand.*

Are all of these being repaired in summer 2015? *Yes*

6. What is the longest wait for repairs to be carried out by families or individuals in damp council housing? *The first properties were reported to us in late Jan 2014.*

How many complaints have you received from families waiting for repairs? *As far as we are aware we have had no formal complaints.*

Will you publish these complaints on the council website? *n/a*

7. How many families are being reimbursed for extra costs incurred because they live in damp homes, including running electrical equipment such as dehumidifiers and electric fires? *To date we have not had any requests for reimbursement. However, an enquiry for reimbursement would be investigated and based on the individuals circumstances.*

8. How much has the council spent under emergency arrangements to remedy unreasonable conditions and how many families were affected? *£167k to 49 properties*

9. What steps have you taken to communicate with council tenants who live in damp flats to tell them of your plans and advise them when they will be helped? *The latest letter was sent to all properties on the list on 30 March 2015, providing the following information; the name and contact details of the consultancy firm supervising the works and their nominated contractor with the overall timescale for all works to be completed.*

10. Will the city council convene a review into the slow progress dealing with the damp problem in the city, compared with other areas around the country? Will it call evidence from residents and public? Will it publish the results immediately the review is completed?

‘No. The Council does not accept there has been slow progress. This is a major piece of work, with significant budgetary implications, that has had to be properly planned and procured in accordance with the law.’