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| Report to: | Housing and Technical Resources Committee |
| Date of Meeting: | 23 May 2018 |
| Report by: | Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) |

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| Subject: | Housing Repairs Policy Review |
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ request approval for the revised Housing Repairs Policy

2 Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the revised Housing Repairs Policy, attached as Appendix 1, be approved; and
- (2) that the new policy be implemented from 2 July 2018.

3. Background

3.1. The Council has a statutory duty to provide a repairs service to maintain its housing stock and related assets to an acceptable standard.

3.2. The current Housing Repairs Policy was introduced by Housing and Technical Resources on 1 October 2010 to assist in the delivery of the statutory duty and requires to be regularly reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

3.3. Over the course of the last 12 months, a significant pre-consultation process has been undertaken by Housing and Technical Resources and tenant representatives from the Tenant Participation Co-ordination Repairs Sub Group, supported by the South Lanarkshire Tenant Development Support Project (SLTDSP).

3.4. Officers worked closely with tenants to review the existing Housing Repairs Policy and agree the scope and timeline for the review. This co-production process informed the development of the consultative draft document which was issued for formal consultation between 29 January and 16 April 2018.

4. Draft Housing Repairs Policy

4.1. The draft policy comprises of the following key sections:-

- ◆ policy objectives
- ◆ access to the service
- ◆ repair responsibilities
- ◆ service standards
- ◆ comments, compliments and complaints
- ◆ monitoring and review

4.2. The overall aim of the Housing Repairs Policy is to provide customers with a high quality, efficient and comprehensive housing repairs service. The Policy covers the responsive and planned repairs service the Council provides for its housing stock and related assets, including:-

- ◆ repairs reported directly by customers
- ◆ repairs identified through routine management of estates
- ◆ planned programmes of maintenance

5. Consultation

5.1. During the consultation, a particular emphasis was placed upon seeking views from the broad range of customers who currently use or who may use the repairs service in the future.

5.2. To assist customers in providing feedback on the Policy, a survey was developed comprising 6 questions relating to the key sections of the Policy. The survey was made available online, as a paper copy and was also used to inform group discussions. In addition to providing responses to the survey questions, customers also had the opportunity to provide any additional views or comments.

5.3. The draft policy and associated consultation was publicised through a variety of formats including Housing News, on the Council's website and on social media. SMS texts, emails and letters were also sent to a contact panel consisting of tenants and residents who had previously expressed an interest in being consulted on housing matters.

5.4. The draft policy was also distributed to a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties including elected members, Council employees, tenant representatives, tenant and resident groups and other local authorities.

5.5. Specific consultation events included:-

- ◆ presentation and discussion with the Tenant Participation Co-ordination Repairs Sub-group
- ◆ presentation and discussion at 8 local Housing Forums
- ◆ presentation and discussion at 9 Neighbourhood Management Boards
- ◆ presentation to East Kilbride Sheltered Housing Forum and discussions held between staff and tenants at sheltered housing complexes across South Lanarkshire
- ◆ discussion with both the Disability Housing Partnership Sub-group and the Older Peoples' Assembly
- ◆ discussion with the Housing Services Management Team and staff through a Service Development Session
- ◆ 2 focus groups with service users at both Gypsy/Traveller sites in South Lanarkshire
- ◆ 2 focus groups for homelessness service users who have experience of the repairs service

6. Consultation Results

6.1. During the specific consultation events noted at 5.5 and also through the online survey, 230 repairs service customers and future customers were consulted on the draft policy.

6.2. Based on responses to the survey questions, the following general feedback on the policy was received:-

- ◆ 95% of respondents agreed the aim of the Policy was clear
- ◆ 77% of respondents agreed the Policy objectives were appropriate
- ◆ 94% of respondents agreed with the service standards

6.3. Views and comments collated through the consultation process have been considered and a number of actions taken to revise the document accordingly. A number of common themes were highlighted during the consultation and these have been outlined in the table below along with the response/action taken in respect of each.

| Comment | Response/action |
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| Reduce jargon and technical language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The document has been reviewed to ensure it is written in plain English with changes made to simplify the language used. • A glossary of terms and abbreviations used within the document has been included at Section 9. |
| Divisional fencing should be included within the Council's responsibilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During pre-consultation, this issue was considered and discussed by the Tenant Participation Co-ordination Repairs Sub-group and the repairs service. The costs and resources associated with providing divisional fencing would have a negative impact on the ability of the repairs service to carry out its wider responsibilities. It was, therefore, agreed that divisional fencing should not be included within the council's responsibilities. • The Resource will monitor and review this decision to ensure all tenants continue to receive the appropriate services. |
| Responsibilities in relation to flooring requires to be clarified | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wording relating to customer responsibilities on floor coverings has been amended in Section 4 of the Policy to highlight that the Council remains responsible for floorboards and concrete flooring within properties. |
| Additional support should be offered to sheltered housing tenants who are unable to complete their own repair responsibilities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Policy has been amended in Section 4 to reflect that additional support may be available to customers who require assistance to carry out repairs they are responsible for. |

7. Next Steps

7.1. Subject to Committee approval, it is proposed that the revised Policy be implemented from 2 July 2018.

7.2. As part of the implementation process, the revised Policy and service standards will be publicised in Housing News and on the Council's website.

- 7.3. The Tenant Participation Co-ordination Repairs Sub-group will continue to meet to monitor the repairs service and will develop a monitoring framework to ensure that effective progress is being made.
- 7.4. In accordance with the policy review schedule, the next review of the Housing Repairs Policy is scheduled to take place during 2023/2024.
- 8. Financial Implications**
- 8.1. None.
- 9. Employee Implications**
- 9.1. None.
- 10. Other Implications**
- 10.1. There are no implications in terms risk and sustainability contained within this report.
- 11. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**
- 11.1. An equality impact assessment has been carried out on the recommendations contained in this report and, where issues were identified, remedial action has been taken. The assessment is that the proposals do not have any adverse impact on any part of the community covered by equalities legislation, or on community relations, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council website.

Daniel Lowe
Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

27 April 2018

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Improve the availability, quality and access of housing
- ◆ Work with communities and partners to promote high quality, thriving and sustainable communities

Previous References

- ◆ Housing and Technical Resources Committee report on Housing and Maintenance Repairs Policy, 1 June 2010

List of Background Papers

- ◆ None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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