

REPORT TO: HOUSING COMMITTEE – 19TH FEBRUARY 2001

REPORT ON: REPAIRS SERVICE REVIEW

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

REPORT NO. 129-2001

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1. To propose a comprehensive review of the provision of the Repairs and Maintenance service for Council housing stock and outline a review methodology and timescales.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. It is recommended that Housing Committee agrees the formation of a Repairs Service Review Working Group and the proposed remit outlined in Appendix 1.

3. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None.

4. **LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

None.

5. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

None.

6. **BACKGROUND**

- 6.1. At present the Repairs and Maintenance service is the responsibility of the Housing Department and repairs are delivered via the Direct Labour Organisation, Dundee Contract Services.

The demise of CCT allows for a softening/removal of this fairly rigid client/contractor relationship. At the same time the culture of continuous improvement and Best Value has been embraced and has led to the generation of a range of areas where it is desirable to review and seek improvement.

- 6.2. Concerns have been raised by various parties about specific aspects of the current R & M service and progress has been made on issues such as the development of an appointments scheme for repairs through discussions between Housing/DCS/DFTA.

An assessment of the “customer journey” when a repair request is made highlights a degree of duplication between Housing and DCS which comes at a cost which ultimately leads to less resources going into service delivery.

The continued development and availability of alternatives to face-to-face repairs reporting, such as call centres, allows for improvements in the quality of service provision in an area that affects all Council tenants.

- 6.3. It is proposed that a comprehensive review is undertaken into the delivery of repairs and maintenance services.
- 6.4. The review will include strategic issues such as organisational functions, where budgetary control responsibilities sit and the future shape of the service.

Operational issues will also be subject to review, e.g. work instruction methods, use of relevant technology, an appointments scheme, job priorities and timescales, etc.

- 6.5. Given the critical importance of this review it is proposed to establish a cross party Working Group chaired by Councillor George Regan, Convener of Finance, with representatives from all relevant Council Departments, Trades Unions, and Dundee Federation of Tenants Associations.

A remit for the Working Group is attached as Appendix 1.

- 6.6. If approved, it is proposed that the first meeting of the Review Working Group would take place in March 2001.

Further timescale issues to be determined at first meeting of Working Group.

7. **CONSULTATION**

- 7.1. The Chief Executive and Director of Dundee Contract Services have been consulted on this report.

8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

Elaine Zwirlein
DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

Signed _____

Date _____

APPENDIX 1

REPAIRS SERVICE WORKING GROUP

Purpose

To review current provision of the responsive repairs service for Council housing taking into account the needs of users, both internal and external, and technological advances allowing for an improved service delivery.

Format

The Working Group will comprise elected members, reps of Housing and Dundee Contract Services Departments, Trade Unions, Corporate Planning, IT, Finance and DFTA, and will be chaired by Councillor George Regan.

Given the nature of the repairs service, a review is required of a range of issues both strategic and operational. It is proposed to progress this via a Sub Group working as follows:

Stage 1

To carry out an option appraisal of the various organisational means of providing an efficient, effective and economic responsive repairs service.

The Group will research the various structures and mechanisms including the use of call centres, Schedule of Rates, IT systems and Internet employed by other local authorities and housing providers with a view to reporting back to the Working Group on the following options:

- Status Quo i.e., Housing client/DLO contractor split etc.
- Decentralised Repairs Service based around Area Housing Offices.
- Centralised Repairs Service.

and any other option available.

Stage 2

Regardless of the chosen strategic route progress can be made, in parallel, on operational improvements with regard to responsive repairs service delivery focusing on work instruction methods including, but not limited to, the increased use of standard jobs, a review of job priorities, options for an appointment scheme for repairs, diagnostic systems and appropriate software packages.

Timescale

Agenda Note to Housing Committee February 2001 seeking approval for establishment of Working Group and Sub Groups, agreeing membership and timetable for meetings and remit of Group.