

ITEM No ...2.....

REPORT TO: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE - 12 SEPTEMBER 2016

REPORT ON: HOUSING REACTIVE REPAIRS AND EXTERNAL CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE (ECM) POLICY

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT NO: 243-2016

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1. To seek approval of the City Council's Housing updated Reactive Repairs and External Cyclical Maintenance (ECM) Policy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. It is recommended that the Committee:

Approve the Housing Reactive Repairs and External Cyclical Maintenance Policy,

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1. There are no direct financial implications from this report.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1. Housing reactive and planned maintenance repairs services are an essential strand of the Council's Housing Asset Management Strategy. The Council's Asset Management Strategy outlines the requirement to invest in the Council's Housing assets and to maximise preventative expenditure under External Cyclical Maintenance and other planned/preventative programmes. The Reactive Maintenance service is essential to deliver the necessary non-planned day-to-day response service.

4.2. The updated policy is attached at Appendix A, this includes the Council's Service Standards for the repairs service.

4.3. The Council seeks to continually review and update service policies to ensure that we provide high quality services to our customers. The Reactive Maintenance and External Cyclical Maintenance Services are key services which we deliver to tenants and former council house owners, with on average four repairs to each council house being carried out each year. We have worked with the Dundee Federation of Tenants Associations, Registered Tenants Organisations, the Scrutiny Panel, Dundee Association of Council House Owners and interested tenants to discuss, develop and consult on this policy review. The updated policy is the result of these consultations and reflects fully the views of service users.

4.4. The Council aims to make the reactive repairs service accessible to all tenants and to be responsive to the individual needs of service users. Tenants can report a repair 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by a dedicated telephone number, on (01382) 434343. Alternatively they can report by letter, e-mail or via the Council's website. Dundee City Council will provide information about the repairs service in a number of ways; the tenant handbook; website; Annual Customer Report and leaflets.

4.5. To meet the needs identified by tenants, improve efficiency and service delivery the Council will develop and introduce a repairs by appointment service in implementing its new Integrated Housing Management IT systems.

4.6. The reactive maintenance service is provided in Partnership with the Council's Construction Division. Under this Partnership the Council aims to ensure that good quality materials are used and that high standards of work are achieved. The Council implements quality

- 4.7. assurance and has in place mechanisms for obtaining feedback from tenants on repair work carried out.
- 4.8. The Council makes every effort to match the response time to the degree of urgency of the repair. This approach allows identification of the most urgent from the large number of repair requests received each week and the ability to attend to those first. We will always be responsive to meeting particular needs where these do arise.
- 4.9. The policy introduces a new 6 hour emergency category. Emergency repairs are those necessary to prevent serious damage to the building, danger to health, risk to safety or risk of serious loss or damage to the occupier's property. We will seek to attend within 6 hours to make safe and identify what follow-up works are required.

Examples are:

- uncontainable water leaks from burst pipes;
- exposed live electrical wires.

- 4.10. Urgent repairs will continue to be completed within the target of one working day, whilst the targets for quick –fix repairs and routine repairs will remain at 5 working days and 15 working days respectively.
- 4.11. Some repairs will be re-categorised as planned repairs. These are repairs which are better carried out as planned repairs rather than as responsive repairs. This will allow for better planning and a more efficient use of resources such as access equipment, or the bulk buying of materials such as tarmac for footpath repairs, or bulk production in the joiners or blacksmiths shops for fencing. We will undertake to complete such repairs as planned repairs and complete them within 3 months of notification.

Examples are:

- rainwater goods repairs or renewals;
- footpath repairs or renewals;
- fencing repairs or renewals.

- 4.12. These changes are in line with the way many other Council's and Registered Social Landlords carry out and report their repairs performance. They also align to the definitions within the Scottish Social Housing Charter and the Annual Return on the Charter.
- 4.13. Pre-repair inspections will be carried out in more limited circumstances, as it has been established that in the main these do not add value but delay completion of the necessary repairs. This will result in a better service to tenants and repairs being carried out within appropriate response timescales. Pre-inspections will still be required where dampness and condensation or structural defects are reported. They will also be carried out where it is necessary to determine the exact nature of a repair, the extent of the work, and to obtain further information or clarification to allow a correctly diagnosed repair to be ordered. Multi-trade jobs are assessed by the Council's Construction Division Trades Supervisor to ensure the work is assessed and planned as required. They will also carry out a selection of post inspections to ensure workmanship meets the required standard.
- 4.14. In order to proactively maintain Council housing in the City the external cyclical maintenance programme (ECM) is currently carried out on an 8 year cycle. These works are carried out to maintain mutual elements such as rainwater goods, internal paintwork, external paintwork, external entrance doors, pipework and handrails. Similar work is carried out to individual properties such as cottage type housing.

Cyclical maintenance is completed following surveys to determine the extent of the works required. We will notify tenants and Registered Tenants Organisations active in the area in advance of the work starting.

5. **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of sustainability, strategic environmental assessment, anti-poverty, equality impact assessment and risk management. There are no major issues.

6. **CONSULTATION**

- 6.1. The updated Policy has been developed in full consultation with Dundee Federation of Tenants, DACHO, Registered Tenants Organisations, the Scrutiny Panel and interested tenants and the Policy contains the improvements identified by these stakeholders.
- 6.2. The policy has also been discussed by the Best Value Review Group, and was received very positively.
- 6.3. The Chief Executive, the Executive Director of Corporate Services and Head of Democratic and Legal Services, and all other Executive Directors have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1. None.

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Executive Director Neighbourhood Services

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Head of Housing & Communities

15th August 2016

**DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING REACTIVE REPAIRS AND
EXTERNAL CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE POLICY**



APPROVED BY: Date			
Date Reviewed	Frequency of Review	Next Revision Date	Pages
REVIEWED BY:			
Performance Standards			
Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcomes	<p>Indicator 7 Percentage of stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.</p> <p>Indicator 11 Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs.</p> <p>Indicator 12 Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs.</p> <p>Indicator 13 Percentage of reactive repairs carried out in the last year completed right first time.</p> <p>Indicator 14 Repairs appointment system Y/N If 'Y' percentage of repairs appointments kept.</p> <p>Indicator 15 Percentage of gas safety checks completed within 12 months.</p> <p>Indicator 16 Percentage of tenants who have had repairs and maintenance carried out in the last 12 months satisfied with the service.</p>		

The reactive and planned maintenance repairs services are an essential strand of the Council's Housing Asset Management Strategy. The Council's Asset Management Strategy outlines the requirement to invest in the Council's Housing assets and to maximise preventative expenditure under External Cyclical Maintenance and other planned/preventative programmes. The reactive maintenance service is essential to deliver the necessary non-planned day-to-day response service.

A copy of the Council's Service Standards for the repairs service is attached to this policy at Appendix 2.

The Council aims to make the reactive repairs service accessible to all tenants and to be responsive to the individual needs of service users. Tenants can report a repair 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by a dedicated telephone number, on (01382) 434343. Alternatively they can report by letter, e-mail or via the Council's website. Dundee City Council will provide information about the repairs service in a number of ways; the tenant handbook; website; Annual Customer Report and leaflets.

To improve efficiency, service delivery and meet the needs of tenants the Council will develop and introduce a repairs by appointment service in implementing its new Housing IT systems.

The reactive maintenance service is provided in Partnership with the Council's Construction Division. Under this Partnership the Council aims to ensure that good quality materials are used and that high standards of work are achieved. The Council implements quality assurance and has in place mechanisms for obtaining feedback from tenants on repair work carried out.

RESPONSE CATEGORIES

Emergency Repairs

In accordance with the Scottish Social Housing Charter definition, emergency repairs are those necessary to prevent serious damage to the building, danger to health, risk to safety or risk of serious loss or damage to the occupiers of the property.

Emergency repairs will be completed within a target of 6 hours to make safe immediately on attendance. Any follow up work required will be allocated a response category timescale that reflects the extent and nature of the work required.

Urgent Repairs

Faults and incidences that require prompt attention but which do not arise as a result of emergency circumstances shall be categorised as Urgent. This will include, but not be restricted to, faulty electrical systems and fittings, leaking pipes, partial loss of water, no heating/hot water.

We aim to complete Urgent Repairs within 24 hours.

Right to Repair

These are repairs carried out within the statutory targets detailed in the Right to Repair scheme. More details on this scheme are described below.

Quick Fix

These repairs are more minor non-urgent repairs which require attention within a shorter timeframe to minimise inconvenience to tenants.

The target to complete Quick Fix repairs will be within 5 days.

Routine

All other items of non-urgent work shall be categorised as Routine.

Routine repairs will be completed within a target of 15 days.

Planned Works

These repairs including such items as rainwater goods, paths, fencing will be planned programmed repairs to achieve best value and completed under 'mini contracts' on an area basis. Our target is to carry out planned repairs within 3 months.

A copy of the target timescales for individual repair types is attached to this policy at Appendix1. The Council reserves the right to amend the completion category and timescale for individual repair works to take account of unforeseen or other specific circumstances. These include, for example, a requirement to order parts and materials, specialist and additional works being identified when repairs are being carried out.

The Council shall review the completion timescales specified from time to time in relation to these categories to ensure it is operating in line with its peer organisations, regulatory guidance, relevant good practice and providing value for money.

Out of Hours Repairs

Out of hours emergency repairs will be completed within 6 hours, target no heating/hot water will be completed as urgent repairs within 24 hours.

New Build Defects

These are repairs within new build properties arising during the defects liability (guarantee) period.

The Council will apply the same process of categorisation of defect repairs required in new build properties. We will aim to maintain effective working relationships with contractors to ensure as far as possible that works are carried out within the relevant timescales.

Capital Programme Defects

Individual Capital Programmes are subject to a defect period of 12 months after the completion of the work when the contractor remains responsible for carrying out repairs associated with the work. These defects are reported and logged through the repairs system and sent electronically to the relevant contractor as an instruction. On completion the contractor informs the Council and the job is closed off.

Pre and Post Inspections

The Council must ensure that the Repairs Service delivers value for money. In accordance with the Scottish Social Housing Charter definition repairs response times include any pre-inspection time in the time to undertake a repair, ie from when the tenant made the initial repair request.

Pre-Inspections

In limited circumstances a pre-inspection may be necessary to determine the exact nature of a repair, the extent of the work, and to obtain further information or clarification to allow a correctly diagnosed repair to be ordered. Pre-inspections would be necessary where the following are reported:

- Reports of dampness/condensation.
- Structural defects.

Multi-trades jobs are assessed by the Council's Construction Division Trades Supervisor to ensure the work is assessed and planned as required.

Post-Inspections

A post-repair inspection may be carried out to check the quality of the work, whether the type and extent of work carried out was as instructed. Repairs Post Inspections will be completed by trades supervisors on a sample basis as will any repair following on from a complaint from a tenant.

Post repair completion satisfaction surveys will be undertaken as soon as possible after completion of the repair.

RIGHT TO REPAIR

The Scottish Secure Tenants (Right to Repair) Regulations 2002, provides tenants with legal rights for some repairs.

- Tenants will be advised of their rights when reporting a repair.
- Compensation will be paid to tenants if their repair is not completed in the statutory timescale.

Tenants have the option to appoint their own contractor to undertake a repair which qualifies under the Right to Repair Scheme. However, this choice may not be available if the repair poses a:

- Health and safety risk.
- There is a risk of further damage if left unattended.
- There is risk of injury to others.

The Council will make information about the scheme available to all tenants; and advise on an individual basis, whenever the provisions of the scheme apply.

RECHARGEABLE REPAIRS

The costs of some repairs are recoverable from a tenant. The tenant will be invoiced the full cost of a repair if there is evidence of:

- wilful damage;
- negligence;
- health & safety;
- unauthorised improvements requiring re-instatement.

Tenants will not be charged for accidental damage.

Where there is evidence of misuse or abuse of the repairs service or frequent recoverable costs occur, the tenant may be denied service at the discretion of the Head of Housing and Communities.

ANNUAL GAS SERVICING

It is a requirement of the Gas Safety Installation and Use Regulations 1998 that all gas appliances are serviced every 12 months. Therefore reasonable notice and attempts will be made to gain access to undertake a gas safety check.

The Council provides notice to tenants to obtain access for the annual gas maintenance check and makes appointments to suit the tenant where possible. The Council will make every attempt to co-operate with the tenant to facilitate access.

The annual gas maintenance check is a legal duty and therefore tenants who persistently refuse access may be subject to forced entry at 24 hours notice. A timer device will also be installed to disable the boiler if the safety check is not carried out within 12 months. Timers are also installed on all new boiler installations.

EXTERNAL CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE

The Council carries out programmes of External Cyclical Maintenance, currently on an 8 year cycle, to proactively maintain mutual elements such as rainwater goods, internal paintwork, external paintwork, external entrance doors, pipework and handrails. Also tenants entrance doors and cellar doors which are not mutual are included in this programme. Similar work is carried out to individual properties such as cottage type housing.

Cyclical maintenance is completed following surveys to determine the extent of the works required. We will notify tenants and Registered Tenants Organisations active in the area in advance of the work starting.

This work often involves access equipment (scaffolding/cherry pickers) to access high level building work such as roofs and gutters.

Where there are owners in mixed tenure blocks costs will be re-charged to owners worked out on the rateable value of the property in accordance with the Title Deeds.

IMPROVEMENTS AND ALTERATIONS

The Council's policy on tenants carrying out their own improvements and alterations states the following:

Tenants must:

- Always ask our permission in writing before they start any improvement work.
- Carry out the work to the guidelines the Council gives them and supply any certificates, permissions and approvals required.

- Allows staff access to inspect the alterations/improvements carried out.
- Contact the Council prior to moving out to agree if any improvements/alterations carried out can be left at the end of tenancy.
- Re-instate or replace the original fixtures and fittings where advised to do so.

The Council will:

- Not unreasonably refuse permission for any alterations or improvements to tenants' property.
- Advise tenants in writing of any guidelines, restrictions or rights to compensation where they are given permission for alterations or improvements to your home.
- Discuss tenant's requests and inspect to ensure the work is done to a reasonable standard.
- Give a decision within 10 days of receipt of a request to undertake an alteration and state the reasons if permission is refused.
- Ask tenants to remove or re-instate any unauthorised alterations/improvements. If a tenant fails to do this and the Council are required to carry out this work the tenant will be charged with the cost.

TENANT INVOLVEMENT AND SATISFACTION

The Council will involve tenants in developing, implementing, monitoring and improving the repairs service.

The Council will consult on reviews of the Reactive Maintenance Policy with the Dundee Federation of Tenants Associations, Registered Tenants Organisations, the Scrutiny Panel tenants and other interested groups.

The Council will use a range of techniques to gauge the satisfaction of tenants who use the Repairs Service.

Complaints and comments will be used to review the service and ensure continuous improvement.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND REPORTING

Quarterly

A Repairs Healthcheck report will be reported to the Housing Best Value Review Group.

The Healthcheck Report will contain information on, for example:

- average time to complete emergency repairs;
- average days to complete non-emergency repairs;
- percentage repairs completed on time;
- budget/expenditure;
- customer satisfaction;
- value for money.

Annually

Repairs performance indicators will be reported annually as required by the Scottish Social Housing Charter within the Annual Return on the Charter and in the Annual Customer Report.

These indicators will include:

Indicator 7	Percentage of stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard
Indicator 11	Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs
Indicator 12	Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs
Indicator 13	Percentage of reactive repairs carried out in the last year completed right first time
Indicator 14	Repairs appointment system Y/N If 'Y' percentage of repairs appointments kept
Indicator 15	Percentage of gas safety checks completed within 12 months
Indicator 16	Percentage of tenants who have had repairs and maintenance carried out in the last 12 months satisfied with the service

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Council will do its best to get things right first time. The Council has a complaints procedure which is designed to quickly and efficiently solve the problem when they don't. If a customer is not satisfied with the service they receive, the quickest way to sort things out is to contact the staff responsible for the service who will advise on how to proceed.

Complaints can be made in person at any of the Council's offices, by phone, in writing, e-mail or via the online complaints form:

www.dundee.gov.uk/complaints

Our Customer Services Team can assist in making a complaint, telephone (01382) 434800.

When complaining, tell us:

- your full name and address
- as much as you can about the complaint
- what has gone wrong
- how you want us to resolve the matter

The Complaints process has 2 stages:

- **Stage 1 – Frontline Resolution** (within 5 working days)
- **Stage 2 – Investigation** (within 20 working days)

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

Should a service user remain dissatisfied having used the internal Complaints process then they can ask the SPSO to look at their complaint.

Service users can contact the SPSO:

By post: **Freepost SPSO**
 Freephone: **0800 377 7330**
 Online: www.spsos.org.uk/contact-us

POLICY REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years. Consultation will be undertaken with tenants, factored owners and their representatives to ensure that the policy reflects the needs of the service users.

Repair Response Times

Every effort will be made to match the response time to the degree of urgency of the repair. Our approach will allow us to identify the most urgent from the large number of repair requests received each week and to attend to those first.

Emergency Repairs

Emergency repairs are those necessary to prevent serious damage to the building, danger to health, risk to safety or risk of serious loss or damage to the occupier's property. We will seek to attend within 6 hours to make safe and identify what follow-up works are required.

Examples are:

- uncontrollable water leaks from burst pipes;
- exposed live electrical wires.

Urgent Repairs

The Right to Repair Scheme specifies a number of qualifying repairs which must be carried out within one working day. We have categorised these as urgent repairs.

Examples are:

- blocked flue to open fire or boiler;
- blocked or leaking foul drains, soil stacks or toilet pans where there is no other toilet in the house;
- blocked sink, bath or drain;
- total loss of electric power;
- insecure external window, door or lock;
- unsafe access path or step;
- loss or partial loss of gas supply;
- loss or partial loss of space or water heating where no alternative heating is available;
- loss or partial loss of water supply;
- toilet not flushing when there is no other toilet in the house.

Quick-Fix Repairs

These repairs are more minor non-urgent repairs which require attention within a shorter timeframe to minimise inconvenience to tenants. We have categorised these as Quick Fix repairs and we look to complete these repairs within 5 working days.

Examples are:

- WC seat is broken;
- bath tap is leaking;
- radiator is not heating;
- storage heater is faulty;
- light pendant is broken;
- single or double socket is loose, broken or not working;
- wall extractor fan is not working.

Routine Repairs

The remaining responsive repairs are likely to require multiple trades or renewals or which will require a degree of planning or assessment. We categorise these as routine repairs and will undertake to carry them out within 15 working days.

Examples are:

- renewals of tiles or non-slip flooring;
- loose steps or slabs;
- brickwork needs re-pointing;
- flooring is loose;
- door repairs;
- kitchen units or worktops damaged beyond repair;
- window repairs;
- roof repairs;
- plasterwork repairs;
- glazing renewals.

Planned Repairs

Some repairs are better carried out as planned repairs rather than as responsive repairs. This allows for better planning and more efficient use of resources such as access equipment, or the bulk buying of materials such as tarmacadam for footpath repairs, or bulk production in the joiners or blacksmiths shops for fencing. We will undertake to complete such repairs as planned repairs and complete them within 3 months of notification.

Examples are:

- rainwater goods repairs or renewals;
- footpath repairs or renewals;
- fencing repairs or renewals.

Repairs Service Standards

The following is guidance for tenants, outlining the Council's repairs service standards and detailing what 'they' as tenants can expect from 'us' as the Council.

Reporting a Repair

We (Dundee City Council) will:

Provide an emergency repairs service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and offer a range of ways you (the tenant) can report a repair to us:

- by letter
- by phone
- online

When you Report a Repair

- you will be told what priority your repair is and given a timescale for completion of the work;
- we will offer you a morning or afternoon call;
- you will be offered a unique reference number for follow up enquiries;
- if you provide us with contact phone number we will attempt to contact you before we call except in the case of an emergency or urgent work;
- where necessary we will carry out an inspection, within 5 working days.

Carrying out a Repair

We will:

- attend to emergency repairs within 6 hours;
- complete urgent repairs within 24 hours;
- carry out quick fix repairs within 5 working days;
- carry out routine repairs within 15 working days;

We will:

- provide proof of identity before entering your home;
- treat you with courtesy and respect and behave in a proper and professional manner at all times;
- take care of your property and possessions and protect them from damage, dust, paint, etc;
- keep safe all materials and equipment used on site and avoid danger to you and your visitors;
- re-connect and test all services such as water, gas and electricity as soon as possible and wherever practical at the end of the working day;
- if required, provide a portable heater if your central heating breaks down and it cannot be repaired the same day;
- remove any repair rubbish from outside your home within one working day;
- carry out an annual safety check and service of your gas heating and hot water system, in accordance with gas safety requirements;
- send you a letter in advance of your due service, advising you access to your home will be required and arrange a suitable time with you to carry it out.

Quality

We will:

- carry out an inspection of any repair which has been reported as unsatisfactory to make sure the work gets done properly;
- carry out satisfaction surveys of samples of tenants who have recently had a repair completed.

The following is guidance for tenants on the Council's responsibilities as landlord and the tenants' repair responsibilities.

Landlord/Tenant Repairs Responsibilities

The Landlord (the Council) will carry out repairs and maintenance to the building and all fixtures and fittings supplied as part of the tenancy in accordance with its repairs policy.

Our Responsibilities

We will carry out repairs to the outside of your home, the main structure and communal areas. We also repair standard fittings such as kitchens and bathrooms that we provide within your home. We will also carry out annual servicing to gas central heating and appliances every 12 months.

Your Responsibilities

Your rent pays towards the cost of repair and maintenance work, however you will also have some responsibilities for keeping your home maintained to a good standard. This includes:

- redecoration;
- your own appliances;
- consumables such as lightbulbs;
- general wear and tear, eg lubricating hinges, tightening screws;

and, any damage caused through misuse or neglect by you, your family or visitors.