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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Housing and Community Services Committee</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b> 14
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> June 2004</b>	<b>CATEGORY:</b> <b>Delegated</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>Director of Community Services</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>Bob Ledger (ext 5775)</b>	<b>DOC:</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Repair Policy</b>	<b>REF:</b>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE: HCS01</b>

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1. **Recommendations**

1.1 To approve the draft repair policy as attached at appendix 1 following a consultation process that included detailed presentations to TACT and 8 Area Tenant Meetings and a lengthy article in the Spring edition of Tenants Extra, our regular newsletter. Housing staff have also been consulted.

2. **Purpose of Report**

2.1 To seek a mandate from members for changes to enable us to continue to deliver a programme of service improvement in the repairs and maintenance part of the service. The proposed policy sets out for the first time in one place, a policy covering all aspects of non-programmed works on Housing property.

3. **Background**

3.1 The Council currently undertakes work on its homes through planned works and responsive repairs. It is accepted good practice that the more works that can be planned the better, as they generally provide greater value for money. The Audit Commission as a general guide propose that at least 70% of all work should be planned with the balance as responsive work. This year the Council's overall expenditure on works will be in the order of £3.95m of which £1.19m or 30% will be responsive.

3.2 This report is centred on the 30% of work that is carried out as a result of the direct requests for repairs made to us by tenants, as well as the works relating to void repairs. It also covers a proposed rechargeable repair policy and procedure, a proposed mutual repair policy and incorporates the decoration policy previously agreed by the Committee.

3.3 Current satisfaction levels indicate that whilst tenants are happy with the quality of the work we carry out and they get on well with both our tradesmen and repair inspectors/project officers we need to improve on the time it takes us to carry out repairs. Although, perhaps inevitably, most people want their repair carried out quickly we also need to explain to tenants how repairs are prioritised and that also inevitably some repairs are more urgent than others.

- 3.4 In addition we also need to clearly outline issues that tenants are responsible for and clearly set down a rechargeable repair policy that details the circumstances in which tenants will be expected to carry out their own work.
- 3.5 The Committee agreed the attached policy in principle, subject to consultation, at its 20<sup>th</sup> November 2003 meeting.

#### **4. Repair Policy**

- 4.1 A new repair policy is proposed which sets out;
- The responsibilities of both the tenant and Council in relation to maintenance issues within the home.
  - The standard timescales for works delivered by the repairs and maintenance service
  - Those repairs which if carried out by the Council are rechargeable to the tenant
  - Re-let repair priorities
  - The Decoration Allowance scheme (this part of the policy is already adopted by Committee)
  - Mutual repairs e.g. where a flat has been purchased there are usually shared responsibilities for repairs
  - Performance management issues
- 4.2 The main body of the policy, relating to the repair responsibilities of both tenant and landlord, has been based upon existing practice although there are several items where we are clarifying the responsibility for the first time.

#### **5. Consultation process**

- 5.1 The consultation process with tenants has entailed three main stages:
- a detailed presentation to TACT in early February 2004
  - a detailed presentation to the round of 8 area tenant meetings held mid February to early April 2004
  - a detailed article in the Tenant's Extra newsletter sent to all tenants mid April 2004.
- 5.2 The repair policy appears to have been well received. The comments received related to:
- Changing the notation in the "responsibility table" on pages 4 to 7, removing the notation of responsibility from an 'X' to a '✓'. This has been adopted on the version of the document attached to this report.
  - Strong support for the proposed structured and firm stance on rechargeable items i.e. primarily this was about making sure we charge current and outgoing tenants for damage they cause to property.
  - A concern that though that the rechargeable section as originally written was perhaps too strong where there is property damage as a result of burglary. As a consequence an amendment to the policy is proposed as detailed on page 10 on the attached policy.
  - Strong support for setting a property standard on new lettings.
- 5.3 Changes to the policy made since the Committee approved it in principle are in italics for ease of reference.

#### **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There is the potential for additional income arising out of a more structured and consistent approach being taken on rechargeable items where damage is caused to the Council's property. This needs to be weighed against potentially higher expenditure on void properties arising from setting a repair standard although this is as much about the organisation of work as it is additional work. It is proposed at present that the adoption of a void property standard be contained within the existing budget.

**7. Corporate Implications**

- 7.1 The proposed Repairs Policy clearly sets out the responsibilities of both the Council as landlord and tenants and therefore should reduce confusion and lead to a more efficient service.

**8. Community Implications**

- 8.1 The delivery of a good, value for money repairs service is fundamental to the overall impact that Housing as a service makes on the quality of life of its tenants.

