

REPORT TO:	HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 6
DATE OF MEETING:	19th AUGUST 2021	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR - SERVICE DELIVERY	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	PAUL WHITTINGHAM Paul.whittingham@southderbyshire.gov.uk	DOC:
SUBJECT:	REVISED HOUSING REPAIRS POLICY	
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: HCS01/HCS03

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the draft Housing Repairs Policy at (Appendix A) is approved by the Committee.
- 1.2 That the responses to the Consultation exercise are noted with regard to the development and delivery of service and communication improvements for tenants.

2.0 Purpose of the Report

- 2.1 This report provides the details of the consultation carried out with Council tenants and the general public with regard to the draft Housing Repairs Policy which was presented to the Housing and Community Services Committee on 20 April 2021. The results of the consultation are attached at Appendix B.

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 A draft Housing Repairs Policy was approved for consultation by the Housing and Community Services Committee on 20 April 2021..
- 3.2 The results of the consultation show that the majority of responses to the Policy are positive and Committee is now asked to approve the final Policy.
- 3.3 Additional comments received during the consultation period do, however, indicate that there are areas for improvement in the delivery of the services covered by this policy. In the light of these, the Head of Housing will ensure that these improvement areas are taken forward.

4.0 Detail

- 4.1 On 20 April 2021, the Housing and Community Services Committee approved a Housing Repairs Policy as a draft for consultation. This consultation, has now been

completed and where necessary the Policy has been amended to reflect the comments received.

4.2 Due to the restrictions on meetings and face to face contact imposed during the Covid Pandemic, the consultation was initiated through text messages sent to 2230 Council tenants. This message prompted tenants to view the draft policy document, answer a short five question survey and provide any additional comments.

4.3 Two hundred and sixteen responses were received to the consultation. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed with the major points of the Policy. The responses are summarised in the following table and also at Appendix B.

4.4

Question	Response %		
	Yes	No	Partly
Q1. Do you think that Housing Services' Repairs and Maintenance Policy is easy to understand and covers the key obligations of the Council as landlord to our tenants?	91 (196)	6 (13)	3 (7)
Q2. Do you agree with the strategic aims in the Repairs and Maintenance Policy?	90 (195)	6 (13)	4 (8)
Q3. Do you agree with the proposed timescales for carrying out emergency, urgent and routine repairs?	85 (184)	13 (28)	2 (4)
Q4. There is a clear commitment to provide more planned repairs rather than relying on responding to reports from tenants to carry out non-emergency repairs. Do you think this will allow us to improve our services to tenants?	91 (196)	4 (8)	6 (12)

4.5 The final question on the survey asked respondents "If you have suggestions for specific actions that should be included in the revised policy or any further comments, please provide details."

4.6 These comments are also provided in full within Appendix B and summarised here.

- Satisfied (5)
- Improved communication needed (17)
- Quicker emergency repair response time (2)
- Dissatisfaction with contractor (2)
- General comments (8)

Whilst respondents were generally in support of the Repairs Policy, there is some work to be done in terms of how this service communicates with tenants regarding the delivery of the service on the ground.

The Council has already agreed to invest in both the staffing and Information systems to deliver these changes. A dedicated post within the Customer Service Team has been created to assist in handling the estimated 14000 telephone calls per year received regarding repairs' issues. New Repairs, Asset and Improvement Manager posts have been created through the recent restructure of the Housing Service, along with an Asset and Compliance Officer role to manage the data and information regarding the overall condition of the Housing stock. This role will also support the move towards more proactive rather than responsive services.

4.7 As part of the Councils Transformation Programme, upgrades to the existing Housing Management software have been agreed and are in the process of being

implemented. These changes will see the re-implementation of diagnostic repairs software to assist in the better identification of repairs at the first point of contact and also the speedier placing of repair orders within the system itself.

- 4.8 The stock condition and data system is also being redeveloped in order to manage data and information regarding the housing stock and the likely lifecycle/timescales for the replacement of key property elements such as roofs, windows and heating systems. This in turn will support the management of data being collected as part of the project to assess the energy efficiency and carbon footprint of the Council's housing stock.
- 4.9 Of more immediate significance for the day to day/responsive Repairs Service is the development of an "in house" interim method for the replacement of printed paper job tickets with an electronic method of communication. This will provide a more efficient method of working for office-based staff along with the trades operatives. It will also provide a useful exercise in the preparation for the procurement of a more comprehensive system which will allow for repair orders and appointments to be made at the first point of contact and transmitted immediately to trades operative's electronic works calendars.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications contained within this report. Future changes to proposed planned and responsive repairs budgets will be reported to the Finance and Management Committee.

6.0 Corporate Implications

Employment Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct employment implications contained within this report.

Legal Implications

- 6.2 There is a re no direct legal implications contained within this report.

Corporate Plan Implications

- 6.3 This report contributes directly to achieving the Council's Corporate Objectives: "Supporting and safeguarding the most vulnerable. With partners encourage independent living and keep residents healthy and happy in their homes. Promote health and wellbeing across the District. Improve the condition of housing stock and public buildings."

Risk Impact

- 6.4 The contents of this report have a direct impact on mitigating the risk SD 3 Safety Standards identified in the Service Delivery Risk Matrix.

7.0 Community Impact

Consultation

- 7.1 The attached Policy has been subject to consultation with tenants and the general public.

Equality and Diversity Impact

- 7.2 A preliminary Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) of this Policy has been completed and is attached at Appendix C. This assessment confirmed that a full EIA is not required.

Social Value Impact

- 7.3 The proposed Policy contributes directly to achieving the aims of the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy to develop:
Healthier communities
Safer and stronger Communities

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.4 The Repairs Policy will assist the Council in providing services which help to deliver more sustainable repair and maintenance services by providing a more efficient and proactive service.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 From the responses to the consultation, the majority of respondents are in favour of this new Policy being introduced and support the Council's actions to deliver improvements in the Service through the necessary investments in staff and transformational technology..

9.0 Background Papers

Housing Repairs Draft Policy Report to Housing and Community Services Committee on 20 April 2021.