

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	21st June 2022
<b>Subject:</b>	Response to the Housing & Social Care Scrutiny Panel review of the Procedures and Performance of Portsmouth City Council and Housing Associations in Relation to Response Repairs and Maintenance.
<b>Report by:</b>	James Hill - Director for Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services
<b>Report Authors:</b>	Steve Groves, Head of Building Maintenance and Meredydd Hughes, Assistant Director, Building Services
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Full Council decision:</b>	No

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## 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to set out the response of officers to the Housing & Social Care Scrutiny Panel's recommendations arising from a review of procedures and performance of Portsmouth City Council (PCC) and Housing Associations in relation to response repairs and maintenance.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the Panel is thanked for its work in undertaking the review
- 2.2. That the Cabinet notes and supports the recommendations of the review, which are listed in section 4 of the report and the response of officers.

## 3. Background

- 3.1. The Housing & Social Care Scrutiny Panel reviewed the experiences of residents regarding the procedures and performance of PCC and Housing Associations in relation to response repairs and maintenance.
- 3.2. The review was undertaken between December 2021 and March 2022 and included receiving evidence from
  - 3.2.1. Portsmouth City Council (PCC) and local Housing Association Resident Survey Respondents

- 3.2.2. PCC Residents Consortium Group
- 3.2.3. Housing Association Tenants living in Portsmouth
- 3.2.4. Relevant PCC Officers in Housing, Neighbourhood and Buildings
- 3.2.5. Housing Association Representatives from Abri, Guinness Partnership and Sanctuary.

3.3. The scrutiny panel's full report can be viewed in Appendix 1

#### **4. Scrutiny Panel's Recommendations and Officer Response**

4.1. The scrutiny panel made seven recommendations as follows:

4.1.1. Recommendation 1. To request the Leader and the Chief Executive to thank Kevin Beagley, Paul Fielding, Steve Groves, James Hill and Meredydd Hughes, all other Housing, Neighbourhood & Building Services officers involved in the review and the officers that attended from the housing associations.

Response. Agreed (on behalf of all officers involved in the project). On reflection it was agreed by the panel that it was more appropriate for Councillor Corkery to thank officers directly himself. A letter of thanks is to be sent to officers who worked on the project.

4.1.2. Recommendation 2. To collaborate with other local housing providers to upskill the local workforce, including in green technologies, and promote career paths in housing to address problems with recruitment and retention.

Response. Agreed. Officers have held an initial discussion with local Housing Associations as part of their quarterly liaison meetings on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022. Further meetings will be diarised with a purpose of establishing a PCC/RSL building sub-group to the main liaison meeting.

4.1.3. Recommendation 3. To meet collectively with other local housing providers to set Portsmouth levels around pay and green issues (such as retrofitting) amongst others, and to share knowledge.

Response. A liaison forum (action 4.1.2) can include agenda items covering a wide range of common and shared interest items for PCC housing building services and housing associations. Though the recommendation is agreed it is important to note that PCC is not able to directly determine the pay and condition housing associations use for their service delivery.

4.1.4. Recommendation 4. To ensure there are instructions for appliances in individual properties and communal areas.

Response. Agreed. PCC have introduced a Do It Yourself leaflet for all new residents, and we are in the process of reviewing options for further similar leaflets to be provided to residents, such as for heating, the operation of windows. Further information articles helping residents understand how their homes work will be included in future editions of the quarterly 'Housetalk'

magazine delivered to all PCC council house residents. The new council housing development at Doyle Avenue will also experiment with different ways of supporting residents moving into the properties to use the new technologies in that scheme for example we are installing solar panels on the roof, solar batteries for storage, Air Sourced Heat Pumps (ASHPs), Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) and Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points for the wheelchair accessible homes.

4.1.5. Recommendation 5. To consider feedback mechanisms where residents are not under immediate pressure to give feedback.

Response. Agreed. This is an ongoing work in progress and updates on progress will be given at future Resident Consortium meetings.

4.1.6. Recommendation 6. To continue to provide residents with opportunities to give feedback and engage with housing services.

Response. At the meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022, it was decided to change Recommendation 6 in the review from "To resume the residents' meetings for council tenants that used to be held before Covid" to "To continue to provide residents with opportunities to give feedback and engage with housing services" because the earlier version is incorrect. Residents Consortium meetings are already in place and scheduled in the calendar. This amendment has been reflected and updated in item 4.1.6 recommendation 6 above.

4.1.7. Recommendation 7. The panel noted that the council's repairs and maintenance contractors had continued to deliver as close to a normal repairs and maintenance service as safely possible throughout the pandemic. Whilst the housing associations participating conceded they were now dealing with backlogs the council's position was different and the panel requests that the Leader and Chief Executive place on record a note of thanks for the council's repairs and maintenance contractors and the Building Services team for their efforts throughout the pandemic.

Response. Agreed, the Director of Housing Neighbourhood and Building Services will arrange for the letter to be sent from the Chief Executive.

## **5. Integrated impact assessment**

5.1. No specific changes arise from this report. However, an IIA would be produced for each specific scheme or policy change which would arise from this work.

## **6. Legal implications**

6.1. Paragraph 11 of the Scrutiny and Review Panels (Overview and Scrutiny) Procedure Rules set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution requires that once a final scrutiny review report has been agreed, the Cabinet or the relevant Cabinet Member will consider and respond to the report within 8 weeks.

**7. Director of Finance's comments**

- 7.1. There are no direct financial implications as a result of the recommendations within section 2 of this report.
- 7.2. The cost of the recommendations within section 4 of this report will be met from existing budgets within the Housing Revenue Account or Cash Limited budgets within the General Fund.

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 Signed by: **James Hill**  
**Director for Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services**

Appendix 1 - HOUSING AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY PANEL - REVIEW OF THE PROCEDURES AND PERFORMANCE OF PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL AND HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS IN RELATION TO RESPOSE REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE.

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by ..... on .....

.....  
Signed by: