

Agenda item:

Title of meeting: Cabinet Member for Housing

Date of meeting: 4th November 2014

Subject: REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE POLICIES, SCOPE OF SERVICE & ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Report by: OWEN BUCKWELL – HEAD OF HOUSING & PROPERTY SERVICES

Wards affected: All Wards

Key decision: Policy & Decision

Full Council decision: Yes/No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To seek approval to implement updated and new repairs and maintenance policies (appendix A) that defines the rules for managing the repairs and maintenance service.
- 1.2 To seek approval to implement the scope of service (appendix B) which outlines the purpose, value steps and principles of work for the repairs and maintenance service.
- 1.3 To seek approval to adopt the revised and updated asset management strategy 2014 (appendix C) that provides a framework for managing the housing stock.
- 1.4 If approved a plan will be prepared to implement the repairs and maintenance policies, scope of service and asset management plan 2014.

2. Recommendations

- i. That approval is given to adopt the repairs and maintenance policies, scope of service and asset management strategy 2014.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The repairs and maintenance policies have periodically been approved or updated over the past 20 years. However, when the repairs and maintenance system was reviewed in 2006 the current policies were not updated. They now no longer reflect how the repairs and maintenance service is currently provided or how decisions are made.

3.2 The following existing repairs and maintenance policies will become redundant and will be incorporated within the new policies, if approved

Existing Policy	Date Approved/ last updated	New Policy
Decoration allowances	March 1996	Repairs & maintenance allowance
Special decorations	March 1996	Special decorations
Dilapidations charges	November 1996	Charging for repairs
Right to repair	May 1998	Right to repair
Tenant improvements & alterations	May 1998	Tenant or leaseholder improvement & alterations
Compensation for improvements	July 2001	Tenant or leaseholder improvement & alterations
Compensation	July 2004	Tenant or leaseholder improvement & alterations
Charge for repairs	July 2004	Charging for repairs
Aerial & satellite dish	January 2007	Tenant or leaseholder improvement & alterations
Water metering	June 2007	Tenant or leaseholder improvement & alterations
Management of asbestos	December 2011	Asbestos
Disabled adaptations	Unknown	Disabled adaptations

3.3 The following are new policies that it is proposed to implement where no existing policies that have been approved previously.

New Policy	Fire safety
New Policy	Requests to improve our properties
New Policy	Electrical certificates

3.4 The policies will no longer provide detailed procedural guidance. Separate guidance documents will be prepared and managed that will be updated as appropriate.

3.5 The repairs and maintenance service undertook a systems thinking intervention in 2006. The scope of service outlines and defines the purpose and value steps for each of the repairs and maintenance services that were redesigned. The document also summarises the principles of work, definitions of waste, how decisions are made using PLAN and defines the type of measures used to measure performance.

3.6 The asset management strategy was approved by the Cabinet Member for Housing in September 2012. The asset management strategy 2014 has been updated with minor revisions to reflect changes to the structure of the Housing & Property Services teams.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 The repairs and maintenance policies and scope of service will support front line staff and service providers. It will enable them to make informed decisions and respond as appropriate to any demand received for the service. This will assist in ensuring that the repairs and maintenance service received by residents is fair and consistent.

4.2 The repairs and maintenance policies and scope of service will assist residents and other stakeholders by informing them of the service that they can expect to receive with regard to repairs and maintenance.

4.3 The existing repairs and maintenance policies incorporated detailed guidance notes, even if updated the guidance would quickly become out of date as working practices and systems change. Operational guidance documents will be issued separately for each policy and these will be kept up to date by appropriate managers of the service to reflect current working practices. This will enable the policies to remain more relevant for a longer period.

4.4 The asset management strategy whilst not fundamentally changing does require updating to reflect changes to the Housing & Property Service staff structure and ensure that the document accurately reflects the current objectives for the service.

5. Options considered and rejected

5.1 The option to simply retain the existing policies was rejected as the policies do not reflect the service that is delivered and contradicts the way work is now managed using the systems thinking methodology.

5.2 The option to update the existing policies and retain the existing structure was rejected. The existing policies were developed independently by different authors and they are not structured consistently, resulting in duplication and a crossover of topic areas. The new policies will have a consistent structure and guidance will be provided within separate documents.

6. Duty to involve

- 6.1 Consultation has been undertaken with all PCC management teams and stakeholders as appropriate. Meetings have been undertaken and draft versions of the policy documents have been issued. Minor feedback has been incorporated into the latest version of the documents as appropriate.
- 6.2 The Resident Consortium Link Group (CLG) were consulted at a meeting on 1st September 2014 and issued with draft documents. Residents provided feedback and observations through the resident participation team, which were agreed at a meeting on 6th October 2014; amendments have been incorporated into the latest version as appropriate.
- 6.3 Once the repairs and maintenance policies, together with the scope of service have been approved, they will be publicised to all residents and leaseholders using appropriate media formats including the PCC website and Housetalk magazine.
- 6.4 A plan will be prepared to implement the repairs and maintenance policies together with the scope of service with PCC staff and service providers.

Guidance documents will be issued to accompany each individual policy to launch its implementation; the policies will not necessarily be implemented on the same date if approved as implementing some of the policies require training of staff and amendments to processes. Meetings will be arranged to ensure all management teams have been informed as necessary. The repairs and maintenance policies will be made accessible to all staff on the PCC Policy Hub.

7. Implications

- 7.1 The policies should have a positive impact on residents and front line staff including service providers, as it will clarify the scope of repairs and maintenance service that is provided and support provision of a fair and consistent repairs and maintenance service.

8. Corporate Priorities

- 8.1 The asset management strategy, policies and scope of service will contribute to the following corporate priorities.
- 8.2 Shaping the future of Portsmouth, a strategy for growth and prosperity, action 16, to improve the housing stock, including carbon emissions.
- 8.3 Shaping the future of housing, a strategic plan for Portsmouth for better housing and better health. The maintenance of Portsmouth's stock of residential properties is a priority as detailed in theme 5.

9. Equality impact assessment (EIA)

9.1 A preliminary Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken and a full repairs and maintenance service EIA will be undertaken this financial year.

10. City Solicitor's comments

10.1 The Council has a range of general and specific statutory duties in connection with the provision, maintenance and management of housing assets. In broad terms it has a duty to maintain its housing stock in safe and habitable condition and also to ensure that the value of the stock is maintained.

10.2 Together, the proposed Repairs and Maintenance Policies, Scope of Service and Asset Management Strategy provide a framework through which the Council can meet these general duties and which will help to ensure that it complies in a fair and proportionate way with its specific legal obligations towards, in particular, its tenants and leaseholders.

10.3 Under Part 2, Section 3 of the City Council's Constitution (responsibilities of the Cabinet) and further in accordance with the Scheme of Delegations at Appendix A to the Executive Procedure Rules in Part 3 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Member for Housing has the authority to approve the recommendations set out in this report.

11. Head of finance's comments

11.1 The recommendations within this report do not have any adverse impact on the Council's budget position, as they merely seek approval to adopt updated repairs and maintenance policies, scope of service and asset management strategy, to reflect current practice.

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Signed by:

Owen Buckwell – Head of Housing and Property Services

Appendices:

Appendix A - Repairs & Maintenance Policies
Appendix B - Repairs & Maintenance Scope of Service
Appendix C - Asset Management Strategy 2014

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

NIL

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/
rejected by the Cabinet Member for Housing on 4th November 2014.

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Signed by:
Councillor Steve Weymss