

**SUBJECT:               REPAIRS POLICY UPDATE**

**DIRECTORATE:       HOUSING AND INVESTMENT**

**REPORT AUTHOR:   AMY LARDER – MAINTENANCE MANAGER**

## **1.     Purpose of Report**

- 1.1    This report details the changes and updates made to the Repairs Policy since its previous review in 2017.

## **2.     Executive Summary**

- 2.1    The Repairs Policy was previously updated in 2017, Since the last edition of the policy there have been several changes around service delivery predominantly, around the implementation of scheduled repairs.
- 2.2    The policy has been reviewed and updated by the Housing Repair Service (HRS), the Investment Team, and in consultation with the Lincoln Tenant's Panel.
- 2.3    The policy now refers to scheduled repairs where appropriate, and the repair responsibilities for both the City of Lincoln Council and Tenants have been updated.
- 2.4    The key areas for clarification are on fencing, specifically our guidance on replacements and the tenant responsibility for maintaining installed fencing. Other key alterations include responsibility to include maintain ventilation to the property and cleaning/clearing of air vents by our tenants.

## **3.     Background**

- 3.1    The Repairs policy aims to identify within the provision of the Housing Act 1985 (amended) the tenants right to repair and identify the repairs that the City of Lincoln Council are responsible for, and those which tenants are responsible for within the terms and conditions of their tenancy agreement.
- 3.2    The policy also looks to provide key information on service delivery, information on services provided by City of Lincoln Council, and how to report a repair.
- 3.3    Service delivery has seen several changes since 2017 with a key area being the introduction of scheduled repairs since February 2022 and the Repairs Policy required updating to reflect this.
- 3.4    The Policy has been reviewed and updated by HRS, The Investment Team, and in consultation with Lincoln Tenants Panel.

## **4. Details**

- 4.1 The repair policy was identified as requiring a review due to it being last updated in 2017. During the review, several areas within the document have been amended to refer to scheduled repairs rather than responsive repairs.

As well as providing clarity on the service delivery for repairs and responsibility's, the document also now provides information and guidance for customers and City of Lincoln Council Staff on the following areas.

- Regulatory requirements
- Scheduled repairs
- Health and safety
- Resident consultation
- Performance management
- Leaseholders
- Access arrangements
- Rechargeable repairs
- Vulnerable tenants
- Adaptations
- Alterations
- Right to buy
- Complaints

## **4.2 Key Updates Within the Policy**

- 4.3 The service delivery area of the policy shows the hours our repairs service is available and identifies the repair priorities currently in use and the service delivery expected for each priority type.

- Priority repairs to be completed within 24 hours.
- Urgent repairs within 3 days
- Complete all other repair requests within 12 weeks, in line with the scheduled repairs programmed schedule.

It also details how to report a repair, and this section has been updated to include a link to our website, QR code and the online repair reporting site. There is now an overview included of scheduled repairs and how these repairs are identified and the timescales for carrying these out.

- 4.4 The policy reinforces that the City of Lincoln Council are responsible for the structure, exterior, services, fixtures and fittings to the property and any communal areas of the building excluding communal gardens.
- 4.5 Within our responsibilities, we have included clearer guidance on the replacement of fencing, fencing sizes and maintenance. The policy highlights that fencing may be replaced by hedging.
- 4.6 We have identified several repairs being carried out that should be tenants' responsibility in line with their tenancy agreement. These are now clearly outlined

in the policy. It also outlines repairs within the property that tenants are responsible for, including renewing or replacing items following normal wear and tear.

4.7 Items added to this policy within the tenants' responsibilities include.

- Maintaining all hedges to prevent obstruction to neighbouring properties, public highways, and footpaths. Hedges must not be removed without written permission from City of Lincoln Council (CoLC)
- Painting any existing timber fencing
- To keep the home properly heated and ventilated to prevent condensation or the build-up of carbon monoxide and mould
- To keep air vents clear and the cleaning of extractor fan vents

#### **4.8 Next Steps**

4.9 To deliver briefings and issue the repair policy to all staff within Customer services, Tenancy services, the Housing Repair Service, and the Investment team to provide clear guidance and knowledge of service requirements and responsibilities.

### **5. Strategic Priorities**

#### **5.1 Let's reduce all kinds of inequality.**

The policy outlines a service level expected for all customers. The policy sets out our duty for vulnerable tenants and how we could adjust the policy in relation to recharges to account for individual circumstances.

#### **5.2 Let's deliver quality housing.**

The repair policy will provide a clear service delivery expectation increasing effective repairs and planned maintenance across the housing stock.

#### **5.3 Let's address the challenge of climate change.**

Within the policy we have included the reinstating of hedging to denote boundary lines where possible and suitable. This is more environmentally friendly than replacing with fencing panels.

### **6. Organisational Impacts**

#### **6.1 Finance**

N/A.

#### **6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules**

The Repairs policy aims to identify within the provision of the Housing Act 1985.

### **6.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights**

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

This policy review has considered its equality duty and ensures that the service delivery is accessible to all tenants and leaseholders and the wider community where applicable.

### **6.4 Human Resources**

N/A.

### **6.5 Land, Property and Accommodation**

N/A

### **6.6 Significant Community Impact &/or Environmental Impact**

N/A.

### **6.7 Corporate Health and Safety Implications**

The policy highlights the responsibility of all managers responsible for the employees they manage to make sure that all working practices are in line with the appropriate health and safety legislation and good practice in order to ensure that employees, tenants and buildings and stakeholders are safe.

All employees must also adhere to procedures and method statements in place to protect themselves and others that they may have contact with.

## **7. Risk Implications**

### **7.1 (i) Options Explored**

It is not considered that there are any risks associated with the updates within the repairs policy.

### **7.2 (ii) Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach**

It is not considered that there are any risks associated with the updates within the repairs policy.

## **8. Recommendation**

8.1 Executive is asked to approve the policy, and, to ensure understanding and consistent application, briefing sessions for customer services and housing staff be undertaken.

8.2 To update the website with access to the policy for our customers.

**Is this a key decision?** No

**Do the exempt information categories apply?** No

**Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?** No

**How many appendices does the report contain?** 2

**List of Background Papers:** None

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