

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Housing and Communities Committee

29 January 2020

Rechargeable Repairs Policy – Review and Update

Report by Head of Housing (Report No. 20/32)

This report seeks committee approval for the revised Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 The importance of keeping the Council's 7636 houses well maintained and in a good state of repair is a key priority for the Housing Service. The housing repairs team undertake approximately 29,000 works orders every year, ensuring that tenants are provided with safe, warm, modernised, secure housing that meets the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. This supports our tenants and residents to remain in their homes longer, contributing to sustainable tenancies and communities.
- 1.2 The service is committed to providing excellent customer service, and this is evidenced by our current customer satisfaction rate of 97.9%. We continue to focus on performance for completion of emergency and non-emergency repairs and reduce our void timescales. Our performance has also been recognised by the Service User Review and Evaluation (SURE) Team who graded the service's 2018/19 performance as a 'Dark Green', indicating that they considered a very good service level standard was achieved.
- 1.3 The Rechargeable Repairs policy was introduced and approved at Housing & Health Committee on 3 November 2010 (Report No. 10/554 refers). The policy was subsequently revised and updated, in line with operational needs, and approved at committee on 14 March 2012 (Report No. 12/120 refers) and 28 May 2014 (Report No. 14/228 refers).
- 1.4 The Rechargeable Repairs Policy underpins the principles of our [Responsive Repairs Policy](#), and aims to ensure that there is a clear and consistent approach to recharging tenants for repairs that they are responsible for, during their tenancy. It is one of three policies that provide information to customers and staff about repairs service delivery. This also includes the Common Repairs Policy.

- 1.5 Tenants are currently recharged for the cost of repair work arising from their misuse or negligence in order to:-
- consistently meet the conditions of the Scottish Secure Tenancy
 - deter misuse and negligence of Council property
 - ensure that the Housing Revenue Account does not subsidise repairs that it is not responsible for
 - maintain an affordable repairs service that provides value for money to our tenants
- 1.6 Tenants are responsible for repairing any damage that they, their family or visitors may cause, other than through fair wear and tear. Tenants are able to repair the damage themselves or use their own contractors to do this work. However, if the Repairs Service are asked to repair damage, tenants are responsible for paying a recharge cost in advance. To support customers who are unable to afford to pay the recharge all at once, alternative arrangements can be made, depending on their circumstances.
- 1.7 When a tenant lets us know that they are ending their tenancy, we remind them that they are responsible for leaving the property clean and clear from their belongings, and for making good any damage they may have caused. Whenever possible, we inspect the property before the tenant hands in their keys, and discuss what repairs they need to undertake before they leave. If any of the repair work identified has not been completed to the required standard, then remedial work is undertaken during the void period by the repairs team. The cost of this work is then recharged to the previous tenant.
- 1.8 **A summary of recharges issued during 2018/2019 is detailed below:-**

Description	Value
Void Properties*	£132,431
Tenanted Properties**	£36,704
Total Value	£169,135

** Recharges to previous tenants for costs involved in reinstating the property to lettable standard*

***Recharges to current tenants for repairs that they are responsible for*

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 During the summer of 2019, a Working Group of staff and tenants completed a planned review of the Rechargeable Repairs Policy, to ensure that it continues to meet our business needs.

- 2.2 Overall, the group felt that the policy remains fit for purpose. As such, minimal changes were made that affect the context of the policy. However, the policy has been redesigned to be customer focused and no longer contains operational or procedural information. A summary of the changes proposed are detailed in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The new version of the policy is detailed in Appendix 2.
- 2.4 The approved Policy will be easily accessible to all our tenants and available on the Council's website. A user friendly, easy read version of the policy will also be produced and included in our lettings packs for all new tenants. We will work with colleagues, to create British Sign Language (BSL) videos for key areas of the service.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 This report presents a revised rechargeable repairs policy which aims to ensure the Council:
- consistently meets the conditions of the Scottish Secure Tenancy
 - deters misuse and negligence of Council property
 - ensures that the Housing Revenue Account does not subsidise repairs that it is not responsible for
 - maintains an affordable repairs service that provides value for money to our tenants
- 3.2 It is recommended that Committee:
- i) notes the contents of this report
 - ii) approves the amendments to the Rechargeable Repairs Policy as attached in Appendix 2.

Author

Name	Designation	Contact Details
June McColl	Service Manager	01738 475000 HECommitteeReports@pkc.gov.uk

Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Barbara Renton	Executive Director (Housing & Environment)	17 January 2020

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion, only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000.

You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.

1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	None
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	None
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	Yes
Legal and Governance	Yes
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	None

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 The Perth and Kinross Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2023 and Perth and Kinross Council Corporate plan have five concurrent outcomes which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resources allocation. The following are relevant to this report:

- Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy.
- Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives.
- Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 Proposals contained in this report address the following Corporate Plan Priorities:

- Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
- Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives;and
- Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 There are no direct financial implications regarding this report.

Workforce

- 2.2 There are no direct workforce implications regarding this report.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 There are no asset management implications regarding this report.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 The proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:
- (i) Assessed as **relevant** and actions taken to reduce or remove the following negative impacts:
- Policy to be made available in other languages and available on website or physical copy made available if requested

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals. However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matter presented in this report. The matters presented in this report were considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

Sustainability

- 3.4 These proposals meet the following sustainability criteria;
- Efficient use of resources now and in the future in the built environment and service provision (e.g. energy efficiency, land, water resources, flood defence, waste minimisation)

Legal and Governance

- 3.5 Head of Legal and Governance has been consulted and there are no direct legal implications of this report.

Risk

- 3.6 The Housing and Environment Senior Management Team regularly review performance frameworks that highlight overall performance and improvement actions and risks.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The Equalities Strategic Forum have been consulted on this report.

External

- 4.3 Through the Short Life Working Group, customers have been consulted on the Policy.
- 4.4 The Tenant Committee Report Panel were consulted on this strategy. They advised “This policy reads very clear and succinct, it is a well put together document. A great piece of work from the working group.”

5. Communication

- 5.1 There are no direct communication issues with regard to this report.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 2.1 No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

3. APPENDICES

- 3.1 Appendix 1 to this report is the table of amendments.
- 3.2 Appendix 2 to this report is the Rechargeable Repairs Policy (2019).