

# REPORT TO RESOURCES P.D.G.

**REPORT OF:** Paul Stokes – Head of Community Assets  
Liz Bishop – Asst. Service Manager – Property Services

**REPORT NO:** RIM.0388

**DATE:** 27.7.14

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>RECHARGEABLE REPAIRS POLICY</b>	
<b>KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:</b>	<b>NON KEY DECISION</b>	
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER: NAME AND DESIGNATION:</b>	<b>CLLR TERL BRYANT – PORTFOLIO HOLDER – SUPPORT GOOD HOUSING FOR ALL</b>	
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Liz Bishop, Asst. Service Manager – Property Services 01467 406080 ext 6416 <a href="mailto:l.bishop@southkesteven.gov.uk">l.bishop@southkesteven.gov.uk</a>	
<b>INITIAL IMPACT ANALYSIS:</b>	Carried out and Referred to in paragraph (7) below	Full impact assessment Required:
<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	Equality Assessment attached at Appendix 12.2	<b>N/A</b>
<b>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT:</b>	This report is publicly available via the Your Council and Democracy link on the Council’s website: <a href="http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk">www.southkesteven.gov.uk</a>	
<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	N/A	

## **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 That Resources PDG considers the revised draft Rechargeable Repairs Policy and offers comment prior to implementation.

## **2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 2.1 There are some repairs for which the local authority landlord can legitimately re-charge tenants. Current arrangements in SKDC have resulted in such repairs being undertaken but with poor performance on related income recovery. Consequently, the policy has been reviewed and updated with a view to maximising income recovery. The overall objective is to ensure that tenants accept responsibility for paying for those repairs for which they are financially responsible, irrespective of their economic status.

## **3. DETAILS OF REPORT**

- 3.1 Features of the revised policy include greater clarity with respect to the situations where tenants will be expected to pay for repairs and to when tenants will have the opportunity to undertake or arrange the repairs themselves (subject to completion to required standards).
- 3.2 The presumption will be that rechargeable repairs will be paid for in advance; exceptions being made where the repair needs to be carried out on health and safety grounds or where the required work amounts to an emergency repair. In these circumstances, payment arrangements will be agreed with the tenant.
- 3.3 In 2013/14 152 recharges were raised to a value of £21,453.88, of which £12,481.31(30 properties) were to former tenants and £8,972.57 (122 properties) to current tenants. The outstanding balances are currently £12,381.44 due from 26 former tenants and £7,418.23 from current tenants.

## **4. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 N/A

## **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The introduction of the revised policy will be supported by defined procedures which should lead to improved income collection.

## **6. RISK AND MITIGATION**

Risk has been considered as part of this report and any specific high risks are included in the table below:

<b>Category Risk</b>	<b>Action / Controls</b>
No high risks identified	

## **7. ISSUES ARISING FROM IMPACT ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 Repairs required by tenants where the cause of the repair required could be linked to the illness/disability of the tenant or his/her family or visitors will be undertaken and no recharge will be made.
- 7.2 The final draft document will be discussed with the Home & Tenant Involvement Service Review Group.
- 7.3 If the repair is required by a looked after person and if the cause of the repair required could be linked to the illness/disability of the looked after person then the repair will be undertaken and no recharge will be required.
- 7.4 Where the tenant is on a means tested benefit options will be provided for payment by instalments.
- 7.5 Where an emergency repair is required due to health and safety grounds then the repair will be undertaken and the recharge recovered after completion of the repair.
- 7.6 In future we will monitor tenants requiring rechargeable repairs to identify those who are on means tested benefits and those with relevant disability/illnesses. This will enable us to identify any changes required to the policy and procedures.

## **8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The introduction of the revised policy will support the Council in ensuring that tenants comply with the terms of their tenancy agreement and are held responsible for any deliberate damage to their property.

## **9. COMMENTS OF FINANCIAL SERVICES**

- 9.1 Debts of this type currently require extensive recovery action in order for the Authority to be reimbursed for the expenditure it has incurred. The proposals detailed in the report will help reduce the level of time and resource the Council is incurring. This will assist in reducing the level of bad debt which will ultimately improve the financial standing of the Housing Revenue Account.

## **10. COMMENTS OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

- 10.1 The legal power to recharge comes from those clauses set out in the existing Tenancy Agreement and the Tenants Handbooks. This policy draws together those various existing arrangements already identified in the Tenancy Agreement and Tenants Handbooks. This policy will assist in providing clarity around when a tenant may be recharged for a repair undertaken by the Council.

## **11. COMMENTS OF OTHER RELEVANT SERVICES**

- 11.1 The Housing & Neighbourhoods service has been actively involved in the policy and procedural review and supports the proposed changes which seek to place the emphasis on the accountability of tenants in paying for those repairs which

should properly be re-charged whilst recognising the exceptional circumstances in which payment by instalment after the completion of the repair or waiving of recharges would be appropriate.

**12. APPENDICES:**

12.1 Draft Rechargeable Repairs Policy

12.2 Equality Assessment