



## Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy

### Report Author

Alison Hall-Wright, Director of Housing and Projects

✉ A.Hall-Wright@southkesteven.gov.uk

### Purpose of Report

To seek approval from Cabinet for the adoption of the updated Repairs and Maintenance Policy, which was recommended by the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of 14 November 2024.

### Recommendations

#### That Cabinet:

- 1. Approve the adoption of the updated Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy**
- 2. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive to make minor alterations and amendments to the Policy post adoption as required by changes to regulations and expectations by the Regulator for Social Housing.**

### Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision?	No
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Housing
Which wards are impacted?	All

## **1. Implications**

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

### ***Finance and Procurement***

- 1.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report but there are budgets in place with the Housing Revenue Accounts budgets to deal with housing repairs and maintenance.

*Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance (s151 officer)*

### ***Legal and Governance***

- 1.2 There are no legal or governance implications that are not already outlined within the body of the report.

*Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer*

### ***Health and Safety***

- 1.3 The requirement to provide timely repairs and maintenance on statutory and safety related matters as outlined by Housing standards and the Housing Act are clear. The outlined Policy will support this and aligns with the Total Housing Compliance Policy to provide assurance that works are completed.

*Completed by: Phil Swinton Health, Safety and Compliance Manager*

## **2. Background to the Report**

- 2.1. The Council has a clear commitment in its Corporate Plan 2024-2027 to ensure that all residents can access housing which is safe, good quality, sustainable and suitable for their needs and future generations, which will be supported by the updated Damp and Mould Policy should it be approved by Cabinet.
- 2.2. The current Repairs and Maintenance Policy has been reviewed and updated to reflect the recommendations made by BDO (the Council's internal auditors) following an internal audit of the Repairs Service in 2023/24.

- 2.3. The document has been streamlined to make it more customer friendly and clarify the approach to delivering the repairs and maintenance service.
- 2.4. The updated Policy includes the proposal endorsed by the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 19 September 2024 that whilst there are outstanding requests for access to properties to complete essential inspections/surveys then the Council will refuse to undertake non-emergency reactive repairs.
- 2.5. The updated Policy also addresses the requirement from the regulator to set out clear timeframes for carrying out reactive repairs.

### **3. Key Considerations**

- 3.1. The Regulator of Social Housing regulates local authorities and housing associations, including setting Consumer Standards which housing providers must follow. Within the Consumer Standards is the Safety and Quality Standard which became effective from April 2024.
- 3.2. The Safety and Quality Standard requires that registered providers have the following in place:
  - An accurate, up to date and evidenced understanding of the condition of their homes that informs their provision of good quality, well maintained and safe homes for their tenants.
  - Tenant's homes must meet the standard set out in the governments decent homes guidance and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard.
  - Take all reasonable steps to ensure that the health and safety of tenants in their homes and associated communal areas.
  - Provide an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service for homes and communal areas.
  - Assist tenant seeking housing adaptations to access appropriate services.

### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1 To not update the Repairs and Maintenance Policy. This option was discounted for the reasons given in paragraph 2.1 above.

### **5. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 5.1. To ensure an updated Repairs and Maintenance Policy which meets regulatory requirements and our internal auditors' expectations.

- 5.2. To ensure the most efficient and timely repairs service for the Council's customers.

## **6. Consultation**

- 6.1. The draft Repairs and Maintenance Policy was presented to the Housing Scrutiny and Overview Committee on 14 November 2024.
- 6.2. An online consultation was sent directly to tenants who had responded to the repair element of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey and to tenants who had provided repairs feedback via the Rant and Rave system. Residents were also able to respond to the consultation via the Council's website.
- 6.3. Tenants were supportive that the Repairs and Maintenance Policy:
- Was clear and easy to understand
  - Clearly sets out what the Council is responsible for
  - Clearly sets out what the tenant is responsible for
  - The timelines for each type of repairs are clear and easy to understand
  - Were supportive of the Council refusing non-urgent reactive repairs where tenants had refused access for essential Health and Safety works.
- 6.4. The consultation also allowed tenants to add comments regarding the service which highlighted some general themes regarding the length of time it takes for repairs to be completed, communication and the quality of works. These will be addressed as part of the improvement plan for the service area.

## **7. Appendices**

- 7.1. Appendix 1 – Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy