

**HOMES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP
NOVEMBER 2019**

REVIEW OF IMPROVEMENTS TO COUNCIL PROPERTIES POLICY

Cabinet Member: Cllr Simon Clist, Cabinet Member for Housing

Responsible Officer: Mark Baglow, Group Manager for Building Services

Reason for Report: To advise members of the revised Improvements to Council Properties Policy.

RECOMMENDATION(S): That Cabinet adopts the revised Improvements to Council Properties Policy.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: The Improvements to Council Properties Policy will be key to maintaining the councils stock within the parameters of the Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Compensation for Improvements) Regulations 1994. Consideration of such requests involves working with local communities to encourage them to support themselves, as well as promoting health and wellbeing. In relation to 'Homes' priorities, it allows us to manage our Council homes effectively.

Financial Implications: The financial implications will be contained within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Any decisions made in relation to tenants improvements will ensure that the value of the property is not reduced.

Legal Implications: It will be necessary to ensure that the Improvements to Council Properties Policy addresses all the legal obligations the Council has as a Landlord under within the parameters of the Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Compensation for Improvements) Regulations 1994.

Equality Impact Assessment: The housing repairs service recognises that there are some circumstances whereby a tenant's disability, language or cultural background may make it more difficult for them to understand or exercise their rights as set out in this policy and associated regulations. We tailor our service to support such tenants.

In relation to the implementation of this policy, the housing and repairs service will support tenants as necessary to exercise their rights under this policy and associated regulations. We will tailor our communication as appropriate to ensure that our tenants understand their rights. This policy and any other related publications of the MDDC Housing Service can be provided on request in other formats (e.g. in braille, on tape, in large print)

The housing service is committed to supporting council tenants with disabilities, religious or cultural needs. In relation to improvements to council properties, the council has a duty to ensure that tenants have access to washing, sleeping and cooking facilities. Where these needs are compromised, the council will work with tenants to explore a range of solutions, which may include tenant improvements to council properties, council disabled adaptations works or re-housing

Risk Assessment: The management of circa 3000 homes for some of our most vulnerable tenants contains many risks. These risks are managed at a service level.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The current policy, last reviewed in 2015 is fit for purpose and very few changes have been made to the policy. There is no new significant legislation suggesting that more major changes should be made. This policy has been brought in line with the most recent Tenant Compensation Policy.

2.0 Proposed Changes to the Policy

2.1 If accepted, the proposal is for some minor changes to the previous policy to be published for officer use and tenant reference.

2.2 This policy has been aligned with the latest Tenancy Agreements and also the recent tenant compensation policy.

2.3 We have taken into consideration tenant feedback, comments, and complaints received since this policy was last reviewed, and provided greater clarity to tenants wishing to make improvements to council properties.

2.4 The term of the policy has been extended to 10 years.

3.0 Tenant Consultation

3.1 The Housing 'Tenants Together' group have been consulted on this policy and their comments taken into consideration.

4.0 Implementation of the Improvements to Council Properties Policy

4.1 There is little change to the policy content, only a clarification of existing policy details. The points of clarification are intended to benefit tenants as much as it is the council.

4.2 Implementation of this policy will be supported by action from both the Building Services and Housing teams.

5.0 Financial Context

5.1 Maintaining the Councils housing stock is the largest ongoing element of the Councils capital programme.

5.2 Clarification of this policy and strict adherence to it should reduce levels of rechargeable works.

5.3 There are no additional resource implications as a direct result of this policy.

Contact for more Information:

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Circulation of the Report:

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