

Report for: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 15 October 2024

Subject: **MID DEVON HOUSING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE POLICY**

Cabinet Member: Cllr Simon Clist Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader

Responsible Officer: Simon Newcombe – Head of Housing and Health

Exempt: None

which are Exempt from publication under paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Wards Affected: All

Enclosures: Annex A – MDH Repairs and Maintenance Policy
Annex B – MDH Repairs and Maintenance Policy
Equality Impact Assessment

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

Under the Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) statutory Safety and Quality Standard Registered Providers must provide an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service for the homes and communal areas for which they are responsible.

Registered Providers are expected to have in place and comply with effective policies, procedures and processes in relation to repairs, maintenance and planned improvements that take into account tenants' views and diverse needs. With a clearer, updated standard in place Mid Devon Housing (MDH) have taken the opportunity to bring together a several repairs and maintenance approaches into a single, new policy

document. This aims to provide clarity for tenants, the RSH and MDH more widely as to what our repairs service will provide and how it meets the Standard requirements.

Recommendation:

That Cabinet recommends to Council that the MDH Repairs and Maintenance Policy and Equality Impact Assessment be adopted as recommended by the Home PDG.

Section 2 – Report

1 Introduction

- 1.1 MDH is committed to ensure tenants' homes are well maintained by an efficient and effective repairs and maintenance service.
- 1.2 The MDH Repairs and Maintenance Policy serves to define, in broad terms, the principles that guide the repair and maintenance activities and the service standards that shall be implemented.
- 1.3 There are a range of legislative and regulatory responsibilities guiding the delivery of the Council's repairs and maintenance service which are referenced in the policy.
- 1.4 Whilst a tenant repairs handbook exists, there is no current existing similar policy and greater clarity is required as set out in the report summary.

2 RSH Consumer Standards

- 2.1 The RSH introduced new consumer standards in April 2024. One of these standards is the Safety and Quality Standard sets out the following requirements specifically relating to repairs and maintenance:
 - a) Registered providers must provide an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service for the homes and communal areas for which they are responsible.
 - b) Registered providers must enable repairs and maintenance issues to be reported easily.
 - c) Registered providers must set timescales for the completion of repairs, maintenance and planned improvements, clearly communicate them to tenants and take appropriate steps to deliver to them.
 - d) Registered providers must keep tenants informed about repairs, maintenance and planned improvements to their homes with clear and timely communication.
 - e) Registered providers must understand and fulfil their maintenance responsibilities in respect of communal areas

f) Registered providers must ensure that the delivery of repairs, maintenance and planned improvements to homes and communal areas is informed by the needs of tenants and provides value for money.

2.2 The adoption of a formal Repairs and Maintenance Policy provides a key framework and reference point to demonstrate how we will achieve those points above.

3 Performance Monitoring

3.1 The activities covered under the Repairs and Maintenance Policy will be subject to performance monitoring on a continuous basis and discussed with contractors as part of the regular operational and core group meetings.

3.2 Key areas for monitoring will be:

- Works completed on time
- Works overdue
- Works completed first time fix
- Average repair and void time
- Quality of work completed
- Customer satisfaction
- Appointments kept
- Budgetary and expenditure control

3.3 The service quarterly performance monitoring report already provides tenants and members with key information on overarching repairs performance with the following indicators:

- Emergency repairs completed on time % (Target 100%)
- Urgent repairs completed on time % (Target 95%)
- Routine repairs completed on time % (Target 95%)
- Repairs completed first visit % (Target 95%)

3.4 Feedback from our tenants on the quality of the service they receive is important in helping us to evaluate and improve the service. Customer satisfaction surveys will be carried out following the completion of a repair, as well as larger scale periodic perception surveys. Feedback from these surveys will be used to gauge overall tenant experience and help shape future service improvements.

4 Consultation and Co-Regulation

4.1 Tenants were invited to comment on the draft policy between 01 and 31 July 2024.

4.2 Members of the Homes PDG were invited to comment on the draft policy between 01 and 31 July 2024.

4.3 No comments or concerns were raised by tenants or members.

- 4.4 Despite a lack of response to consultation, it is important that tenants are fully aware of the updated policy. To this end, should the policy be adopted, MDH will proactively signpost the policy on our webpages/Facebook pages and in the next tenant newsletter. Where relevant, particularly in relation to queries, service requests or complaints we will also ensure specific tenants or other stakeholders are also aware of the updated policy as required.
- 4.5 Under housing legislation including the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, the RSH take co-regulatory approach. In the context of a local authority registered provider such as MDH this means:
- councillors are regarded as responsible for ensuring that providers' businesses are managed effectively and that providers comply with all regulatory requirements
 - providers must support tenants to shape and scrutinise service delivery and to hold officers and councillors to account

This is important context in the determination and adoption of new policy and monitoring of policy compliance and performance.

5 Safeguarding and Vulnerable Tenants

- 5.1 MDH records details of all vulnerable tenants to enable us to support their needs. This includes making reasonable adjustments in dealing with vulnerable tenants so that they are comfortable when we interact with them.
- 5.2 When repairs or maintenance are required MDH ensures that the tenant is communicated to by their preferred channel and that they understand the importance of allowing access to their home to complete the check.
- 5.3 Whilst officers and contractors attend homes to specifically carry out repairs or maintenance they will check any tenants observed who appear vulnerable or if there are safeguarding concerns which will be reported to the Neighbourhood Officer. The Neighbourhood Officer will then contact the tenant to establish if they need additional support to be able to sustain their tenancies.

6 Policy Review

- 6.1 MDH will review this Policy every 5-years and as required to address legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational issues. However, the Head of Housing and Health is given delegated authority to make minor amendments to the Policy as required by legislative changes, formal guidance or local operational considerations.
- 6.2 Where material or significant amendments are required the policy will receive a full review and will be brought back to the Homes PDG and Cabinet for consideration. Full tenant consultation will also take place.

7 Recommendation

- 7.1 In accordance with the above, the following recommendation is made:

- That the PDG recommends to Cabinet that it recommends to Council that the MDH Repairs and Maintenance Policy and Equality Impact Assessment be adopted.

Financial Implications

This report on its own does not give rise to any financial implication but implementation of the activities set out in the policy will have cost implications.

However, these will either be met from existing resources and funding or require separate business cases and appropriate approval to progress.

The Council's HRA revenue and capital budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2023-28 supports the activities required to maintain the Council's housing stock.

Legal Implications

The Council has statutory responsibilities under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, the Decent Homes Standard, the Defective Premises Act and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) alongside the RSH Safety and Quality Standard 2024 to ensure that properties are maintained, meet the Decent Homes Standard and that, where appropriate, properties are assessed and steps taken with a view to avoiding or minimising the risk of responsive repairs.

Risk Assessment

Failure to have a Repairs and Maintenance policy in place would put the Council in breach of the regulatory framework. Failure to have adequate arrangements in place for Repairs and Maintenance could result in the Council failing to meet its statutory and contractual obligations.

Impact on Climate Change

The Policy has no direct impact on Climate Change

Equalities Impact Assessment

MDH collects data on the diversity of tenants and endeavours to tailor services to meet the needs of all tenants. Our housing estates must be accessible to those with disabilities and we have in place a regular schedule of inspections to ensure that all safety issues are identified and rectified as soon as possible. Information provided by MDH is available in alternative formats, upon request, in order to ensure that all those living on our estates understand the rights and responsibilities of the Council as a landlord, and tenants and other residents, individually.

The Equalities Impact Assessment is attached to this report in Annex B.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

Homes are a priority for the Council and in the context this policy this includes supporting the delivery of several key objectives; investing in our homes, monitoring tenant satisfaction and ensuring our tenants feel safe, secure and happy in our homes.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett
Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151
Date: 29 August 2024

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leiburne
Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 29 August 2024

Chief Officer: Simon Newcombe
Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director
Date: 16 August 2024

Performance and risk: Steve Carr
Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager
Date: 22 August 2024

Cabinet member notified: Yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Simon Newcombe – Head of Housing and Health
Email: snewcombe@middevon.gov.uk
Telephone: 01884 255255

Background papers:

[Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards – Summary Code of Practice](#)