

RECHARGEABLE REPAIRS POLICY

Report of the Head of Housing Operations (Housing Management & Housing Options)

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The rechargeable repairs policy sets out how Derby Homes will manage its repairs policy in relation to day to day, void and planned improvement repairs and services that are required due to fair wear and tear, neglect or deliberate damage. This policy will set out how Derby Homes and its officers will deal with tenant requests for repairs and any other repairs or works required in a Derby Homes managed home.

This policy is intended to give guidance to all responsible officers of their role and remit throughout the process. This policy will also set out what is defined as a tenant's responsibility, what is Derby Homes' responsibility and how we will charge for these repairs and services.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To approve the Rechargeable Repairs Policy, appended to this report.

3. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Derby Homes is required to provide a cost effective repairs and maintenance service.

4. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 This time we have taken a Customer First approach to the review of the Rechargeable Repairs Policy/Procedure, asking customers how accessible our information is on rechargeable repairs, the language we use, and the effort we put in to ensuring that customers know about the charges and payment methods.
- 4.2 We have included a policy commitment to more widely promote to both new and existing tenants, landlord and tenant repairs obligations and the rechargeable repairs policy. We have committed to producing literature that can be held on our website, used through social media channels, published in Derby Homes News, accessed through leaflets given out both at sign up and on tenancy termination which helps identify which repairs are rechargeable, and likely charges for the most frequent rechargeable repairs. Through our online consultation, the majority of respondents thought this was a positive thing to do.

- 4.3 In addition, we have included a minimum £100 total charge value, for rechargeable repairs to tenants. Rechargeable repairs under this value will be carried out by Derby Homes, without passing the costs onto the tenant. This commitment was made in a previous City Board approval in 2010 but does not appear to remain in practice operationally. The Policy re-applies this minimum charge value and makes economic sense due to the costs of administration and low levels of bad debt recovery for rechargeable repairs.
- 4.4 We have retained internal discretion not to apply charges in certain circumstances, such as where a tenant cannot be held responsible for criminal damage, or where a tenant cannot be held responsible due to their vulnerabilities for their behaviour that led to a rechargeable repair.
- 4.5 We will develop internal staff procedures, to support the operational delivery of this policy.

5. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 None.

IMPLICATIONS

6. CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 A series of 5 consultation questions were sent to tenants as part of our Operational Board report pilot consultation process. 326 tenants responded to the consultation which is the higher number of respondents to an online consultation of this kind so far. 59% of the respondents were female, with the biggest age category of responses coming from those aged 45-54 (25%).
- 6.2 Whilst four of the five questions resulted in useable feedback, there was significant confusion from respondents on a question that we posed about introducing the £100 minimum cap for charging tenants for rechargeable repairs. This was interpreted by many respondents as us imposing a minimum charge for all repairs of £100, which many rightly felt was too much for minor jobs and raised concerns regarding how they would pay for these. We are piloting our online approach to customer feedback and this learning will be taken into account when we write consultation questions, perhaps sense checking them first with the Customer Voice group, to ensure questions are clear and easy to understand.

7. FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 In 2018/19 there has been just over £60,000 of rechargeable repairs charged to tenants rent accounts on Open Housing to the end of September 2018 (just over £100,000 at the end of November 2018). This excludes those rechargeable repairs that are currently written off and hence (to date) not entered onto the tenants rent account in Open Housing. At the end of September 2018 £2,500 income has been collected in 2018/19.

We will continue to monitor both rechargeable repair costs and collection rates.

8. POLICY REVIEW IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This is a key policy of Derby Homes and will be included in the Key Policy Review Schedule. In accordance with Derby Homes Board Minute 10/51 this policy will be reviewed no later than 3 years from the date of this meeting.

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report:

Legal and Confidentiality
Council
Personnel
Environmental
Equalities Impact Assessment
Health & Safety
Risk
Policy Review

If Board Members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact:

Clare Mehrbani / Head of Operations / 01332 888596 / clare.mehrbani@derbyhomes.org

Background Information: None

Supporting Information: None

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Head of Service Managing Director	Clare Mehrbani Maria Murphy	19/11/2018
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