

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE – 26 JANUARY 2005

IMPROVING HOUSING REPAIRS SERVICES IN EAST AYRSHIRE

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek approval to establish a joint working group comprising representation from Housing and Building and Works and the Tenant Participation Steering Group to identify and recommend to members, improvements to the Council house repairs service.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The housing repairs service is both a significant and critical part of the Housing Service provided to tenants by the Council. Over recent years a number of changes have been made to strengthen the repairs service with some success but, based on the results of the 2004 Tenants Survey, many tenants feel that more could still be done to improve service quality, efficiency and effectiveness.

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 Over recent months, there have been discussions with the Tenant Participation Steering Group and the Tenant Information Service, on how these issues might be progressed. These discussions have recognised that in overall terms the repairs service remains structured essentially to meet the needs of the previous CCT regime and that the introduction of Best Value arrangements, together with the opportunities presented by new IT, offers the chance to re-examine the existing service and bring about the necessary changes to make it the best it can be. These opportunities will also be reflected in the revised Building and Works Business Plan which is due for submission to members at the next meeting. Members of the Tenant Participation Steering Group have volunteered to assist the Council in this project to ensure that tenants concerns and views are fully taken into account in determining the outcomes and any recommendations for future action.
- 3.2 It is proposed that a joint working group be set up to take matters forward. Membership would comprise four officers representing Housing and Building and Works including both Heads of Service or their nominees and four representatives from the Tenant Participation Steering Group, supported by external independent advisors.
- 3.3 The remit of the joint working group would be to examine existing arrangements and make recommendations for consideration by the Housing Committee on repairs reporting, ordering and prioritisation; the carrying out of

repairs; pricing and budget control; and arrangements for measuring performance and promoting quality, good customer care and communication.

- 3.4 If agreed, the joint working group would be asked to begin its work without further delay with a view to submitting its recommendations for action no later than October 2005 and sooner if possible.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The proposal demonstrates the Council's commitment to improve and deliver Best Value Services to tenants and to develop better partnership working with tenants and other key stakeholders. The proposal also supports the Council's aims and objectives set out in the Tenant Participation Strategy and Local Housing Strategy and the East Ayrshire Community Plan.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The project will help deliver improvements in the cost, efficiency and effectiveness of the Housing repairs service.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The Committee is asked to:

- (i) approve the establishment of a joint working group and the remit and membership of the group as set out in Paragraph 3;
- (ii) note that the group's recommendations will be submitted to members for consideration by October 2005 at the latest; and
- (iii) otherwise note the term of the report.

William Stafford
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

7 January 2005

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

For further information, please contact Chris McAleavey, Head of Housing on 01563 554878.

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