

MINUTE EXTRACT of a meeting of the COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on WEDNESDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2020

Present: Councillor D Harrison (Chairman)

Councillors K Merrie MBE, C C Benfield, T Eynon, B Harrison-Rushton, G Hoult, M B Wyatt and M D Hay (Substitute for Councillor J Geary)

In Attendance: Councillors R Canny, J Legrys and A C Saffell

Portfolio Holders: Councillors R Ashman and R D Bayliss

Officers: Mr J Arnold, Mrs T Bingham, Mr T Delaney, Mr C Elston, Mr C Lambert, N Picksley and Mrs R Wallace

29. REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE POLICY

The Head of Housing and Property highlighted key points of the report and introduced the Repairs and Maintenance Manager, who provided further details on the proposed changes to the policy.

Councillor R D Bayliss, Housing and Customer Services Portfolio Holder, was invited to address the Committee by the Chairman and spoke in support of the policy.

Councillor M B Wyatt commented that in the past, some tenants had been told that issues with the quality of repair work was the fault of the contractor not the Council. He asked if going forward contractors would be chased and penalised. The Head of Housing and Property reported that contractors were now used infrequently as repairs were completed by council employed staff in the majority cases. On the occasion that contractors were used and complaints were received, the appropriate investigation and action would always take place.

In response to a question from Councillor M B Wyatt, the Head of Housing and Property explained that there would be flexibility in the policy for tenants that could not physically carry out the maintenance they were responsible for and this would be assessed on an individual basis.

Following some confusion on the expectations of tenants to carry out monthly tests for smoke and CO detectors, the Head of Housing and Property explained that the test consisted of pressing the button on the alarms to ensure they were working. Any problems should then be reported so that replacements could be made. He added that it was not practical for repair operatives to test all the alarms for every property each month, however an annual test was undertaken as part of the heating servicing contract.

In response to a question from Councillor M Hay, the Repairs and Maintenance Manager stated that there was still a set timescale for undertaking a repair, however there was now more flexibility with operatives and tenants availability taken into account. Overall the new policy has reduced the target times from 28 days to 20 days for tenant choice repairs and from 90 days to 60 days for other jobs, so work would be done quicker.

Councillor T Eynon commented on the importance of ensuring that staff were clear on the instances when a tenant could request support with repairs that should be their responsibility. She also asked that it be made clear in the tenants' handbook too.

In response to a question from Councillor C Benfield, the Repairs and Maintenance Manager explained that smoke and CO alarms were not always attached to a property's electric mains in the first instance but any faulty battery operated alarms were replaced to electric mains alarms. There were no current plans to complete a programme of mains powered replacements for all properties.

Councillor C Benfield raised concerns for vulnerable tenants who could not test the fire alarms and the risk of a death due to a fire because of an untested faulty alarm. The Head of Housing and Property explained that Support Officers did visit our most vulnerable tenants periodically and previous procedure was to carry out tests to alarms. He would however check that this was still common practice as it was important.

It was moved by Councillor G Hoult, seconded by Councillor T Eynon and

RESOLVED THAT:

The report be noted.

Councillor B Harrison - Rushton left the meeting at 7.38pm

Councillor M B Wyatt left the meeting at 7.53pm

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.08 pm

Chairman's initials