

Executive Decision Report

Responsive Housing Repairs Improvement Proposals :feedback from consultation

Executive Final Decision: 11th December 2014

Lead director: Ann Branson

Lead Assistant Mayor: Councillor Connelly



City Mayor

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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- Report version number: v 4

1. Summary

- 1.1 Year One of the Housing Responsive Repairs Improvement programme delivered a number of improvements (see 3.1). This report sets out further proposals for service changes. These proposals will address a number of issues that tenants and ward members had with the repairs service. They will bring the following improvements:
- Shorter waiting at home times - appointments in one hour slots
 - Better communication between the housing service and the tenant
 - Reduced wasted visits
 - Increased numbers of responsive repair jobs done on first visit
 - Increased satisfaction and reduced complaints.
- 1.2 There are also proposals to increase the range of small repair jobs that are the tenant responsibilities.
- 1.3 The proposals will contribute to housing revenue account savings which will create potential for investment elsewhere. At this stage it is estimated that the proposals will realise full year savings of £160k.
- 1.4 Tenants & Leaseholders and Housing Scrutiny Commission feedback was positive (Appendix 6 and 7) and the proposals considered by the Executive are therefore not amended.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the following service proposals are approved:
- **Proposals for improvements to communications with tenants (see 3.2)**
 - **Increasing the range of small repair jobs that are the tenants responsibility (see 3.3),** except where tenants receive an adult social care package and tenants advice to undertake small DIY items.
 - **To provide the normal repairs service between Monday and Friday 8am to 4pm (see 3.4).**
 - **Reclassifying repairs and their timescales (see 3.5)** and to give clear information to tenants about what we will do and when.

3. Supporting information including options considered:

3.1 Phase 1 improvements:

- 3.1.1 Phase 1 of the Repairs Improvement Programme has already delivered benefits to tenants.
- 3.1.2 The longest wait for repairs from Neighbourhoods Teams was 13 months and it is now 5 months and this is still reducing.
- 3.1.3 Work with the Customer Service Centre, who answer the day time repair reporting line, has resulted in tenants being given much better information about the repair and when they can expect repairs to be completed. This has helped reduce the number of complaints being received about repairs.
- 3.1.4 The introduction of a much more efficient, effective and accessible out of hours repairs reporting service has given excellent accessibility rates and low call wait times and good customer service .
- 3.1.5 The number of jobs done in-day rather than in unsociable hours, has increased and 'failed visits' to tenants homes at night reduced.
- 3.1.6 Overtime costs to the service have greatly reduced.
- 3.1.7 These have all contributed to the £890k savings in the Repairs Service that were reported to the Council in February as part of the HRA 2014/15 budget setting and allowed growth in other areas of HRA spending.
- 3.1.8 The Responsive Repairs Improvement Team have been working closely with staff in the division & across the Council, with consultants in the wider Technical Services review and with tenants and residents. They have also considered good practice & alternative models and visited and spoken to good practice organisations and local organisations including:
- Wakefield & District Housing who were named landlord of the year 2013 at the UK Housing Awards and the first UK housing association to reach the European Business Excellence finals
 - Stockport Homes (an Arms Length Management Company (ALMO)) who have made The Sunday Times 100 Best Not-For-Profit Organisation To Work For list for the last four years running
 - Northampton Borough Council (currently in the process of setting-up an ALMO)
 - Midland Heart (Housing Association) shortlisted for large housing association of the year at the CIH UK Housing Awards in 2012
 - Leicester Housing Association ASRA Group (Housing Association)
 - Foundation Housing Association

3.2 Further proposals: Improved Communications

- 3.2.1 Opportunities exist to improve communications with tenants as a result of the current work being undertaken to replace the existing IT system. It is planned to introduce an online reporting and appointment system for repairs using pictures to support this, enabling 24 hour reporting of repairs by tenants and allowing the

tenant to choose appointment times.

- 3.2.2 Enhanced and appropriate use of e-mail and texting will ensure timely information passes between the business and the tenant.
- 3.2.3 It is proposed to increase the direct communication, contact and liaison between craft operatives and tenants. These staff will own, and be responsible for, seeing the completion of the jobs they start.

3.3 Further proposals: Increased repairs responsibilities for tenants

- 3.3.1 Detailed investigation into repairs and maintenance service levels offered by other housing providers has shown that Leicester City Council currently undertake a higher proportion of minor repairs and maintenance items than many other providers. Benchmarking undertaken with other housing providers is shown in Appendix 1.
- 3.3.2 Consultation with our tenants, via a tenant's survey (sent to a random sample of 20% of our tenants with a response rate of 18%) and discussion at the tenants & leaseholder forum, on what is the Council's responsibilities and tenant's responsibilities on repairs and maintenance has culminated in a proposal that a number of minor repairs and replacement items should be removed from the existing repairs service offer.
- 3.3.3 The full list of items proposed to become the responsibility of tenants is shown in Appendix 2.
- 3.3.4 Currently if tenants are pensioners or are disabled the repairs service will undertake the repairs work that is their responsibility. It is proposed that in the future the council will undertake this work only for tenants in receipt of an adult social care package.
- 3.3.5 When the Customer Services Centre get requests from other vulnerable tenants (elderly, disabled, single parent or low income tenants' not in receipt of an adult social care package) they will signpost them to other services, for example LCC Handy Person Service or the AgeUK Handyman Scheme. A charge is made for the work undertaken. All customers are required to pay the full cost of any materials used and then the labour costs are adjusted according to the customer's ability to pay.
- 3.3.6 The Customer Services Centre will also advise tenants' of local DIY stockists that can supply materials and fitting instructions will be on the LCC website. The Advice Information and Guidance project being led by Adult Social Care will enhance the information available.
- 3.3.7 A low cost contents insurance scheme is being explored on behalf of tenants. A scheme of this kind could insure tenants against accidental damage and vandalism to some building elements. This means that tenants that take out this insurance would be able to make an insurance claim to cover the cost of repairs. Where there is concern of third party vandalism to a property, alternative provision of service may be considered to support tenant.
- 3.3.8 The Tenants & Leaseholders Forum have been consulted and support these

proposals.

3.3.9 It is proposed to introduce this service change by November 2014.

3.4 Further proposals: Making appointments to do repairs

3.4.1 The Housing Repairs Service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This will continue. The current service offer for routine repair appointments is 8.00am to 8.00pm weekdays and 8.00am to 1.00pm Saturdays. Outside these hours the emergency repairs service operates 8pm through to 8am, plus weekends and bank holidays.

3.4.2 Tenants are given a choice of having a morning (between 8.00am – 12.00pm), afternoon (between 12.30pm – 4.00pm) or evening (between 4.00pm – 8.00pm) appointment slots for repairs.

3.4.3 In 2013/14 92% of appointments for repairs were made between 8.00am to 4.00pm with just 1% of appointments made on Saturday mornings and 7% on weekday evenings.

3.4.4 We propose to offer a core in-day repairs service of 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday with the flexibility to offer an extended service between 7.30am to 6.30pm.

3.4.5 Rather than tenants being given a morning or afternoon slot, a date and time will be agreed directly with the tenant. This will mean they no longer have to wait, potentially for up to 4 hours, for a repairs operative to attend.

3.4.6 There will be increased emphasis on in day management of responsive repairs, to meet tenant repairs appointment commitments and ensure job queries and issues are resolved in day as far as is possible.

3.4.7 The existing quality assurance processes currently involve the quality sampling of a percentage of jobs post completion. This is to be re-focused to create more robust challenge while the job is live and ongoing. This will ensure intervention is more timely and aid the improvement of effective performance management of staff.

3.4.8 A percentage of quality monitoring following completion of repair jobs will continue as will the use of complaints information to manage and address individual quality issues and wider service issues.

3.4.9 Satisfaction Monitoring of completed repairs currently takes place by written letter and is sent to 20% of completed jobs. To make best use of technology going forward 100% tenants are to be asked to satisfaction rate the job they have had completed using the handheld devices on the day the job is completed. This information will pass in real time on the day to those managing the service to enable them to respond immediately to any negative feedback or issues reported and proactively contact the tenant to resolve.

3.4.10 Information and data obtained from all of the sources listed in 3.4.6.1 to 3.4.6.4 is used and will continue to be used by managers in the ongoing supervision of

individual craft operatives to maintain quality standards and address any individual performance issues.

3.4.11 This service change can be introduced by March 2015

3.5 Further proposals: Repairs categorisation

3.5.1 The existing system and processes are driven by category timescales. These are the current repair categories:

Category	Description	Timescale
Priority 1	Emergency work	Dealt with within 24 hours
Priority 2	Urgent work	Dealt with within an average of 5 working days
Priority 3	General repair work	Completed within an average of 5 working weeks
	Other repairs	Completed within 12 months

3.5.2 Planned programmes of works give better value for money than responsive repairs as they can be carried out in bulk and overheads involved in supporting operatives can be better controlled.

3.5.3 We have therefore reviewed all the types of work that are currently done as responsive repairs. We propose that all repairs are categorised as **priority** repairs (appendix 3), **routine** repairs (appendix 4) or **batched** repairs (appendix 5).

3.5.4 The aim will be to complete all **routine repairs** within 10 working days of the tenant requesting a repair (instead of the current 5 day or 5 week timescale). There is currently a backlog of priority 2 and priority 3 repairs (excluding fencing). The backlog as at 29th July was 2,319 and will be 0 by February 2015. (Backlog refers to out-of-time repairs). The proposed 10 day target for routine repairs will allow flexibility in agreeing appointment times with tenants and will reduce complaints from tenants about delays. It is envisaged that there will be an ongoing shortening of time taken to complete routine repairs following the implementation of the new operating model, with the 10 working days target being achieved within 12 months of the new operating model being introduced. (The target time will be within 25 days during the transition.)

3.5.5 Requests for repairs that are listed in Appendix 4 will be dealt with as **batched repairs**. An appointment will be made for someone to assess the work (within 10 working days of the tenant contacting us). After the assessment tenants will be advised of what work is required and when this will be completed. Timescales for completion of batched repairs will vary from 8 weeks (or quicker) to 12 months depending on the nature of the work.

For example, a tenant may report a slipped roof tile however there may be a number of different outcomes following assessment:

Identified by assessment	Repair category
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Slipped tile(s) causing a leak	Priority
Slipped tile(s) no leak	Batched
Whole roof needs replacing	Priority repair then include in the capital programme

3.5.6 It is proposed to introduce the new system of repairs categorisation by December 2014, with the proposed timescale for routine repairs being achieved by December 2015.

3.6 Programme Benefits

3.6.1 The Responsive Repairs Improvement programme will deliver benefits for tenants & leaseholders. This will be measured by the following key indicators and the targets set reflect the improvements planned.

Performance measure	2013/14 Outturn	Target March 2015
% of day-to-day repairs carried out within target time	70.8%	95.0%
Number of repairs which are outstanding and out of category	6,959	0
% of repairs completed on first visit	73.8%	90%
% of repairs which lead to a complaint	1.29%	1.0%

3.6.2 The improvements delivered by the programme will have an impact upon sustainability (economic, social and environmental) by delivering:

- Reduced carbon impact (reducing the fleet, using less fuel),
- Reduction in material usage,
- Improvement in repair life-spans (by making appropriate repair or replace decisions and improved repair diagnosis),
- Economic benefit (by improving the value for money of services provided),
- Improvement for local tenants (by reducing repair waiting times and making fewer visits to complete a repair).

3.6.3 At this stage the proposal in the report will realise full year savings of £160k per year to the housing revenue account.

3.6.4 As a result of initial work to implement these service proposals, ahead of any operational changes, there will be a reduction of 5 craft staff. However we expect that any reductions could be achieved through the management of vacancies. Before any final decisions are proposed Legal Services and HR will be further consulted to ensure that the Council meets its legal obligations and its agreements with staff on reviews.

4. Details of Scrutiny

- 4.1 The programme of change for responsive repairs was born out of the challenge from tenants, staff and Councillors linked to frustrations within the current operating model. A significant amount of work was undertaken to explore with tenants and staff in depth these issues and the resultant decision was that a programme of change was needed. Following this initial scrutiny the responsive repairs improvement programme was created.
- 4.2 The responsive repairs improvement programme has been a standing six monthly item at the Housing Scrutiny Commission, at which scrutiny members have been provided with updates on the programme work plan and associated service changes and improvements. Service performance updates have also been provided and scrutinised.
- 4.3 The Tenants & Leaseholders Forum have played a fundamental part in the programme with two tenant representatives forming part of the programme board for the management of the programme. The wider elected tenant representatives covering the City have played an active part in the development of proposals for change within the existing service and within the proposal presented in this report. Feedback from tenants following consultation of these proposals is shown at Appendix 6.
- 4.4 Internally the council's corporate Organisational Development and Improvement Team have worked with the programme team for the last 12 months to investigate and challenge existing practices and make recommendations around specific repair functions and areas.
- 4.5 Operational staff have worked as part of project teams to challenge and input in to proposals and the wider Housing staff base has also scrutinised aspects of this proposal through a series of workshops.
- 4.6 Housing Scrutiny Commission were consulted on these service proposals at the meeting held 27th August 2014. They welcomed the report and praised the improvements to the service made to date. Feedback from the Chair is shown at Appendix 7.

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications (Peter Coles – Principal Accountant)

- 5.1.1 As part of the corporate spending reviewing programme the HRA has been given a planning guideline to identify savings of £10m by 2016-17. The responsive repairs service accounts for £7m of the £85m housing revenue account budget.
- 5.1.2 The estimated savings arising from the proposals in this report are £160k, split between staff and materials. Full year material savings are estimated to be £65k and will begin to be realised from November 2014 onwards. Full year staff

savings are estimated to be £155k, equivalent to 5 FTE, and will be achieved through vacancy management. The current workforce plan anticipates the 5 FTE reduction will be achieved from April 2015 onwards. The profile of savings is shown in the table below.

Proposal	Full Year	14-15	15-16	16-17	Materials	Staff	
	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	FTE
Repairs service offer reduction	160	27	160	160	65	155	5.0

- 5.1.2 **Reduced service offer** – it is estimated that transferring responsibility to tenants for certain repairs will achieve savings of £160k a year. This assumes tenants will undertake the work themselves, however some tenants will choose not to do so and this will eventually result in a cost at some point to the HRA, mostly likely when the property becomes void. An allowance will need to be made for potential future pressures in the voids budget. At this point it is not possible to make a reliable estimate of the additional cost to voids.
- 5.1.3 **Changes to normal repairs service hours and repairs categorisation** – these proposals do not have a direct cost or saving associated with them. There will be no impact of the number of repairs undertaken or number of operatives needed to complete the work.

5.2 Legal implications

Housing service implications - Jeremy Rainbow – Supervisory Legal Executive

- 5.2.1 The council's repairing obligations arise both contractually and by statute. The contractual obligations are those contained in the Conditions of Tenancy and the statutory obligations are primarily found in section 11 of the Landlord & Tenant Act 1985.
- 5.2.2 The principle statutory obligations are:
- (a) To keep in repair the structure and exterior of the dwelling-house (including drains, gutters and external pipes).
 - (b) To keep in repair and proper working order the installations in the dwelling-house for the supply of water, gas and electricity and for sanitation (including basins, sinks, baths and sanitary conveniences, but not other fixtures, fittings and appliances for making use of the supply of water, gas or electricity), and;
 - (c) To keep in repair and proper working order the installations in the dwelling-house for space heating and heating water.
- 5.2.3 These statutory obligations are also to be found within conditions (8) and (9) of the council's Conditions of Tenancy, along with additional obligations we have

contracted to provide, such as repairs to fences. The statutory repairing obligations must be fulfilled.

- 5.2.4 The proposed reduction in responsive repairs, as detailed in Appendix 1, does not detract from the Council's contractual obligations as detailed in the current Conditions of Tenancy.

Employee legal implications – Hayley McDade - Solicitor

5.2.5 There are proposals contained within this report which have a direct impact on the staff currently delivering this service including the potential for redundancies. In considering this report it is advised that the Council is mindful of its legal obligations in respect of redundancies and changes to terms and conditions, including the duty to inform and consult with its recognised trade unions. It is therefore recommended that before any final decisions are proposed Legal Services and HR are consulted to ensure that the Council meets its legal obligations and to minimise the risk of litigation and financial risk to the Council

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

- 5.3.1 The proposed operational changes will reduce the Council's carbon footprint. In particular, the fleet review and resulting initiatives should result in reduced fuel use and carbon emissions.

Mark Jeffcote, Environment Team (372251)

5.4 Equalities Implications (Irene Kszyk – Corporate Equalities Lead)

5.4.1 Equality Implications

- 5.4.1.1 The broadened scope of repairs/maintenance for tenant responsibility as presented in the report will affect all protected characteristics. As many of these repairs were previously carried out by the council at no cost to the tenant, the proposals have a negative impact on tenants in that they will be required to carry out the repairs themselves, or pay for having them carried out.
- 5.4.1.2 The main equality issue is whether the tenants affected will be able to undertake these repairs/maintenance themselves, and if they are not able to do so, whether they can afford to pay someone to do the repairs/maintenance on their behalf where required. A range of proposed mitigating actions are presented: for those who are able to carry out the repair, fitting instructions will be posted on the LCC website and they will be signposted by the Customer Contact Centre to local DIY stockists where materials required for the repair can be purchased; for those unable to carry out repairs, they will be signposted by the Customer Contact Centre to handy person schemes operating in the city that they will need to pay for.

5.4.1.3 The schemes are means tested (based on benefits being received) so will assist those with limited incomes. Some particularly vulnerable tenants (elderly or disabled) in receipt of care services may be unable to take action/make arrangements for repairs should the need arise. For those in receipt of care packages, the council will continue its current practice of carrying out these repairs on their behalf at no cost to them. Where tenants have been the victims of crime, such as being harassed because of their protected characteristic, the council will continue its practice of providing security packages and repairs incurred because of personal attacks, free of charge.

Irene Kszyk, Corporate Equalities Lead, ext 374147

6. Background information and other papers:

- Executive report 13th November 2012 (Annual Homes Check and Repair).
- Housing Scrutiny Commission Report 10th December 2013 (Housing Repairs Improvement Programme Progress Report).
- Equality Impact Assessment for repairs service offer reduction and change in service hours.

7. Summary of appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Tenant Responsibility Benchmarking Exercise
- Appendix 2 - Proposed repairs responsibilities for tenants
- Appendices 3-5 Types of repairs by proposed category
- Appendix 6 – Feedback from tenants & leaseholders
- Appendix 7 – Feedback from Housing Scrutiny Commission

8. Is this a “key decision”?

Yes

9. If a key decision please explain reason

Affect 21,000 tenants across all wards

Appendix 1 Tenant Responsibility Benchmarking Exercise

Repair	Leicester City Council	ASRA	Foundation Housing	Midland Heart	Wakefield District Housing	Camden Council	Berneslai Homes
Light bulbs, florescent tubes and starters	Landlord & Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant (except lighting with closed cover)	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant (except lighting with closed cover & florescent tubes)
Re-setting trip switches	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant
Unblocking toilets, sinks, baths and showers	Landlord & Tenant	Landlord & Tenant	Landlord & Tenant	Tenant	Landlord & Tenant	Tenant	Landlord
Replacing shower head and hose	Landlord	Tenant	Landlord	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Landlord
Replacing shower curtain	Landlord	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant
Replacing sink, bath and basin plug & chain	Landlord	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant
Leaking or dripping taps	Landlord	Tenant	Landlord	Tenant (re-washer taps)	Landlord	Tenant (re-washer taps)	Landlord
Cleaning gullies and minor drain blockages	Landlord & Tenant	Tenant	Landlord & Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Landlord & Tenant	Tenant
WC seat	Landlord	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant
Bleeding radiators and operating central heating	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant
Bath panels	Landlord	Landlord	Landlord	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Landlord

Tightening up screws & adjusting kitchen unit hinges, handles and drawers	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant including kitchen unit repairs/ replacement	Tenant	Tenant including kitchen unit repairs/ replacement	Landlord
Installing & clothes line post, cleat or pulley	Landlord	Tenant	Landlord	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant washing line	Tenant
Minor repairs to plasterwork	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant
All internal painting and decorating	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant
Internal doors including all ironmongery	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant except kitchen door
Gaining entry if locked out	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant
Door bells	Landlord	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant
Draft excluders	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant
Spy hole, door chain or letter plate	Landlord & Tenant	Tenant	Landlord & Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant
Fencing	Landlord all fencing	Resident fencing between properties	Landlord all fencing	Tenant for fencing and gates which separate neighbours' gardens	Tenant for dividing fences & gates	Landlord if onto communal area	Landlord adjacent to public highway, tenant between properties
Shed	Landlord	Tenant	Landlord	Tenant	Landlord	n/a	n/a
Paths around and to back of property	Landlord	Landlord	Tenant	Tenant	Landlord for main access front & rear paths	Landlord	Landlord
Floor covering/tiles	Landlord	Landlord in kitchen and bathroom	Landlord	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant

Appendix 2 Proposed Repairs Responsibilities for Tenants

Type of repair that will become the tenants' responsibility	Average number of repairs completed per annum
Repair or replace WC seat	705
Repair or replace plug and chain	51
Repair or replace letter plate	305
Replace spy hole	72
Replace door numbers	5
Replace internal door threshold strip	28
Replace line cleat and pulley	30
Replace hat and coat hooks	17
Replace line post or rotary line	108
Replace cylinder jacket	8
Repair/replace door bell	42
Replace gully grids	65
Repair/replace shower rail or hose	464
Replace shower curtain	315
Repair/replace radiator shelf	23
Replacing light bulbs and florescent tubes	4405
Repair/replace floor tiles (except kitchens and bathrooms)	605
Total	7,225

Appendix 3 Proposed Priority Responsive Repairs (to be attended between 4 hours and 24 hours)

Fault

Total loss of electric power

Partial loss of electric power

Unsafe power or lighting socket, or electrical fitting

Total loss of water supply

Partial loss of water supply

Total or partial loss of gas supply

Blocked flue to open fire or boiler

Total or partial loss of space or water heating

Blocked or leaking foul drain, soil stack, or toilet pan (where there is no other working toilet in the dwelling-house)

Toilet not flushing (where there is no other working toilet in the dwelling-house)

Blocked sink, bath or basin

Tap which cannot be turned

Leaking from water or heating pipe, tank or cistern

Leaking roof

Insecure external window, door or lock

Loose or detached bannister or hand rail

Rotten timber flooring or stair tread

Door entry not working

Total average number per annum = 11,668

Appendix 4 Proposed Routine Responsive Repairs (to be attended within 10 working days of tenants reporting the issue)

Window repairs (which are not priority repairs)
External door and door frame repairs (which are not priority repairs)
Internal wall repairs including brick work, stud work
Ceiling repairs
Plaster repairs (over 150mm square)
Floor repairs (timber and concrete)
Floor covering repairs in bathroom and kitchen
Kitchen unit repairs (including sink and worktops)
Fire place and fire repairs (which are not priority repairs)
Central heating repairs (which are not priority repairs) including boiler and radiators
Staircase repairs including bannisters, newel posts and handrails (which are not priority repairs)
Repairs to panels, boxing's, fitted cupboards and shelving
Wall tile repairs
Bath, shower, WC and wash hand basin repairs (including taps) (which are not priority repairs)
Repairs to pipework (which are not priority repairs)
Repairs to drainage (which are not priority repairs)
Electrical repairs, e.g. switches, sockets, extractor fans (which are not priority repairs)
Total average number per annum = 51,654

Appendix 5 Proposed Batched Responsive Repairs

After a visit to assess the reported issue any proposed repair will be included in a "batch" of repairs of the same type or in the same area. Tenants will be told the timescale to expect. This could be very quickly or up to 12 months depending on the nature of the work and capacity in the batches.

External brickwork

External rendering

Repairs to rainwater goods

Repairs to external drainage e.g. gullies, inspection chambers and soil & vent pipes

Repairs to paths and hard standing areas

Repairs to gates

Repairs to steps

Roof repairs (which are not priority repairs)

Soffit, fascia and barge board repairs

Chimney repairs

DPC and timber treatment

Condensation related work

Repairs in communal areas (which are not priority repairs)

Total average number per annum = 16,483

Appendix 6 Feedback from Tenants & Leaseholders

Tenants & Leaseholders on the Responsive Repairs Reference Group were asked to provide feedback for the Housing Scrutiny Commission.

Feedback received centred on the proposal to increase repairs responsibilities for tenants. Some tenants in the group were not in favour of tenants being responsible for changing sealed light fittings.

One tenant thought the council should retain the responsibility for changing sealed light fittings for elderly tenants.

One tenant raised concern about elderly / disabled / single parents or those on low incomes (and not receiving an adult social care package) having to pay for repairs. With the potential that this could mean repairs are not undertaken and there is cost to the council in undertaking these repairs when the property becomes empty.

Questions raised:

Question	Response
Should tenants be responsible for bleeding radiators?	This was a tenants responsibility however it is proposed that the Council will undertake this work for the vast majority of our tenants with Combi Boilers
What are the costs of the handyperson service?	<p>The Council's handyperson service is available for those who are 60+, disabled, single parents or low income families.</p> <p>Pricing per hour (including VAT) is: £15 if tenant is in receipt of one of the main means tested benefits £18 if tenant is in receipt of working tax credits £30 for all other eligible customers</p> <p>There is a minimum 1 hour charge. This is not a charge per 'job' so if there are other eligible repairs / maintenance that are required the handyperson can complete a number of jobs within an hour.</p> <p>The Handyperson service can arrange materials (these will be charged to the tenant at the cost price) or the tenant can supply their own materials.</p>
What are the costs of the insurance scheme?	A low cost insurance scheme is currently being explored and therefore only estimated costs are available. The basic cost of insurance will depend on the value of possession and in some cases post code. For tenants over 60 the minimum cost could be as low as £1.50 per fortnight for cover up to £6,000.
Will tenants receive rebate on their rent if tenants have further responsibilities to undertake repairs?	Rents and spending priorities will be discussed with tenants as part of the rent setting process.

Appendix 7 Feedback from Housing Scrutiny Commission 27/08/2014

1. Firstly, let me endorse the praise given to Chris Burgin, who presented the report, and to the senior management team responsible for this work. This praise came not just from members, who appreciated the depth and detail of the report and Chris's presentation of the relevant information, and also from those most affected by the service, namely tenant and leaseholder representatives.
2. The tenants' support for the aims and objectives of the service revisions, and the means by which they are being achieved, were a significant feature of the meeting. It is also clear that they agree with your statement that service improvement, rather than budget reductions, is the driving force behind the proposals.
3. Members thought it would be helpful if minutes (or notes/action points) from tenant representative meetings discussing the programme formed part of future reports on this issue to this Commission.
4. The Commission was pleased about the co-operation with (and by) Wakefield Council as an example of working with other local authorities to improve performance and efficiency.
5. It welcomed the reduction in failed out-of-hours visits from 50% to 20%, and recognised that it is in the interests of the service, including in particular front-line staff, for the numbers of out-of-hours visits to be reduced, as well as the rate of failed visits - at any time.
6. It is hoped improved communications between the repairs team and tenants will help further reduce the numbers of failed visits. However, the example raised at the meeting of materials being delivered, then having to be collected again (and re-delivered), perhaps because of a lack of co-ordination between departmental teams, showed internal communications may also need to be improved.
7. Members expressed concern about the potential loss of five craft jobs and the impact on the service and on those affected. They recognised that the planned reduction in jobs dealt with by the repairs service would lead to reduced staffing requirements.
8. They questioned how quickly other agencies (Age UK; the council's handyperson service) might be able to do minor repair jobs, and also asked that a range of materials/goods providers be made available for tenants wishing to replace broken or defective household items. At the same time health and safety might be an issue for residents who do their own repairs. This is an area of risk which does need to be carefully assessed.
9. Other points raised included concern that not enough priority was being given to the replacement of heating systems and other electrical repairs.

10. The general improvement in satisfaction levels was praised, but one comment suggested it would be better to ask tenants for their views on a repair or other job some time after the event; immediate surveys can be very positive – but might be taken before significant or important defects or other problems develop relating to the completed job. However members were also aware of and welcomed a reduction in complaints from tenants about repairs issues.
11. The move to improve interaction between craft workers and tenants was also considered a very positive step.
12. The Commission was happy to welcome the report, and will look forward to further updates as the programme develops further. It would be helpful if points raised in this report, where appropriate, are referenced in future reports to the Commission.

Cllr Paul Newcombe

Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Commission