



Repairs Meeting
Held on Tuesday 10th September 2013
Allan Water House 10.30am

1. Present: Alex Lamb, Moira Robertson, Dolly Gemmell, Cathy Traynor, Anna Johnston, Philomena McClung, Brian Telfer, John MacMillan [Service Manager Technical Services] Sheree Morrison SC

Apologies: Michael Griffiths, Meg Amasi, Alex Wallace, Emma Meldrum [STP] Alexa Brown [SC]

2 Possible savings for the Service

2.1 The Housing Revenue Account [HRA] is not included in the proposed £24m budget cut that Stirling Council is looking to achieve this year. HRA is money that is collected from tenants and must be spent on tenants and amounts to about £18.8m.

2.2 John handed round a copy of the HRA Summary for 2013/14 as at 31st July 2013.

2.3 Employee costs are everything outside of Technical Services.

2.4 Repairs and Maintenance £5134k, Capital Financing Charges [interest charges on borrowing for investment] £3100k and Transfer to Investment Programme £5564, which totals £13.7k

2.5 SC could go to tenants with several options:-

- No rent rise because employee costs have not risen and repair costs have decreased.
- A 1% rise; last year the increase of RPI +1% raised £500k which was used to pay off borrowing costs.
- Pensions etc will increase costs by £½ m and to raise this SC could reduce the CFCR [Transfer to Investment] which in the long run could cost more in interest.

3. Saving Options are:-

3.1 At present SC lose 80% of Tenant to Pay Repairs; the tenants agree to pay when requesting the repair, but don't pay. SC used to pay the Sheriff Officer to collect the money owing but now SC makes the collections themselves and the collection rate is 20%. SC can now take instant cash over the phone, so collect payment up front. What if the tenant has no bank account?

3.2 Tenant responsibility payments; e.g. husband puts fist through door, at the moment many don't pay, but in future SC could ask for payment up front or significant deposit. £200,000 year is the payment due.

3.3 SC could ask owner/occupiers if they wanted improvements done at the same time as tenants are getting capital programme work done e.g. new bathrooms, doors etc. This could create income with the O/O paying 50% up front and the rest after they are satisfied.

3.4 For non-genuine emergency repairs e.g. weekly cycle of getting drunk and forgetting/losing keys and SC has to open the door. SC could say that if the tenant has received the service once and did not pay, then SC will not come out until in the future until the first bill is paid. This could need a change in policy because it is a statutory obligation to keep the properties wind and water tight, e.g. if some-one kicks the door in, then SC has to repair the door.

3.5 Charge for non-access cards, e.g. the tenant makes an appointment, especially for an emergency repair and nobody is at home because they are still in the pub. There is a high cost involved.

3.6 All houses will meet the SHQS by 2015; by then every single house has had the option or had a new kitchen. In the houses where the tenant refused the improvement, only safety elements were installed, but the tenants will get another option next year. In the first round of kitchen replacement SC maximised floor space, put screen on the floor, installed floor covering and tiled above units. Should SC say that from now on we only replace units, meaning no redesign, no screen on floor, no tiles, no rewiring, so savings could be made?

3.7 Decoration allowance is something that SC currently still provides but very few other LA do. New tenants can receive between £180 and £360, other tenants receive it for responsive repairs and capital investment and it costs up to £350,000/year. SC could say that we no longer provide or review it, but if we cancel it, what will we do when the property needs a lot of work done, especially for new tenants.

3.8 Cyclic maintenance programme is carried out over 5 years at a cost of £1m/year; about 1000 houses a year. If we changed this to a 10 year programme it would have very little impact. Next year SC is due to start again at phase 1, but, for example, external painting should last 10 years and responsive repairs will still be carried out as required. Pro-active maintenance would have to wait up to 10 years, [e.g. wooden fascia being replaced with plastic; it would just be painted if there was not enough money available in that year].

3.9 Disabled properties with adaptations; at present a new tenant can ask for adaptations to be replaced e.g. a bath instead of wet floor shower, but the number of adaptations has increased especially with new bathrooms and for DLA or elderly and infirm tenants. At present SC is replacing 2 wet floor showers a week for new tenants. The new bungalows all have wet floor showers and no baths unless OT says they are necessary. A wet floor shower costs £4,500 to install. This proposal would need a policy change and thus would need to go through HAG.

The consensus was that decoration allowance is kept, but for John to firm up the rest of the proposals to go before HAG.

4. Priorities for the Repairs Group

4.1 The purpose of the Repairs Group is to be a workshop for proposed policy changes that go to HAG and then to Council and for the group to bring any problems/comments with the Repair Service to the notice of Technical Services.

5 Future Presentation of the Satisfaction Survey Results

5.1 The results will be presented to HAG on 1st November.

5.2 The Survey was done in conjunction with Forth HA and RSHA; it was carried out by external consultants by door chapping etc. For SC there were 903 people listed which is 20% of SC housing stock.

5.3 Various people answered but not everyone answered all the questions which were about housing, repairs, environment, dog fouling etc.

5.4 Only satisfied or dissatisfied answers could be counted; neither satisfied or dissatisfied needed to be included in the questionnaires, but could not be included in the results, which reduced the number of participants listed as answering certain questions.

5.5 John gave us a flavour of the results:-

Q5, Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall service provided by the Council?

Very Satisfied [VS] or Fairly Satisfied [FS] 82.8%

Fairly Dissatisfied [FD] or Very Dissatisfied [VD] 11.4%

Q7 Of the following, which three should your landlord give most priority to?

Repairs and Maintenance came out top with 56.5%

Keeping tenants informed was second at 35.4%

Dealing with ASB was third at 32.4%

Making improvements to the existing stock of housing was a close fourth at 32.3%

Q9 How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with opportunities given to you to participate in the Council's decision making processes?

VS or FS 75.1%

FD or VD 12.3%

Q17 Has the overall condition of your home improved, stayed the same or got worse over the past 12 months?

Improved 32.1%

Stayed the same 53.9%

Got worse 10.9%

Q49 Being told when workers would call?

VS or FS 92.5%

FD or VD 4.8%

Q50 The time taken to complete the work?

VS or FS 87.7%

FD or VD 9%

Q51 The attitude of the workers?

VS or FS 90%

FD or VD 3.3%

Q52 The overall quality of the work?

VS or FS 87.3%

FD or VD 9.3%

Q56 The major investment works overall?

VS or FS 87.1%

FD or VD 8.1%

Q62 How long would you expect your kitchen to last from new before being replaced by the Council?

5 years 15.3%

10 years 48.5%

15 years 19.2%

20 years 7.5%
More than 20 years 2.3%

Q 83 To what extent is dog fouling/dog mess a problem in your neighbourhood?
Major 25.3%
Minor 17.2%
Not a problem 57.15

6 Public Sector Improvement Framework [PSIF] Report on Technical Services

6.1 PSIF is not an exact science and scores should be used as a guide only, giving service managers an idea of where a service currently sits on the excellence continuum.

6.2 Technical Services were independently assessed over the last 6 months.

6.3 Bandings are as follows:-

Red – potential area of concern; significant area for improvement

Bronze – moving in the right direction: compares well in some areas.

Silver – good progress: likely to compare well in many areas.

Gold – Excellent progress: likely to be a top performer nationally in most areas.

Platinum: likely to be a top performer internationally.

6.4 Criterion and Banding for SC.

Leadership – Silver

Service Planning – Silver

People Resources – Silver

Partnerships & other Resources – Silver

Service Processes – Gold

Customer Results – Gold

People Results – Red

Community results – Bronze

Key Performance Results – Silver

Overall – Silver.

6.5 An action plan is being put in place to address the issues highlighted.

7 AOCB

7.1 Cathy was given an insurance claim form because during kitchen refurbishment, her freezer was accidentally turned off.

7.2 SC was reminded to provide large print for Alec Lamb; photocopies can be done in large print, Alec was asked to mention this to staff as required.

7.3 The new members were asked their thoughts on the meeting and thought it was constructive and because the meetings are on-going, it will give a chance to see how changes pan out.

7.4 The current procedure of having to return to your car to display a car parking ticket is very inconvenient especially for people with disabilities. SC will see if a ticket can be sent out with the agenda by Emma. **Action Alexa and Emma.**

8. The next meeting is Tuesday 10th December in Allan Waters House.