

REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE & INVESTMENT POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Erimus Housing will provide a fast, efficient and cost effective responsive and planned repairs service in order to provide residents with homes that are safe and well maintained in sustainable neighbourhoods.
- 1.2 We will take a strategic approach to ensure that investment in our stock relates to current maintenance needs and enhances the sustainability as identified through our Asset Management Strategy and stock Investment Plan to meet the Decent Homes target.
- 1.4 We will ensure resident involvement in setting standards, monitoring and reviewing the responsive repairs, maintenance or investment work, using both traditional and innovative mechanisms to encourage participation and enable engagement.
- 1.5 We will investigate alternative forms of contract and procurement in order to develop efficient and focussed relationships and adopt a partnership and open book approach with contractors and partners
- 1.6 We will work to minimise the proportion of responsive repairs spending, through the adoption of best practice in response times, monitoring of performance, and awareness training for staff and customers.
- 1.7 We will provide clear information for residents on access to the repairs and investment programme with the development of a dedicated Freephone service, and the adoption of appointments for appropriate categories of work.
- 1.8 When undertaking all repairs to tenants homes, Erimus Housing will attempt first time resolution through multi-skilling.
- 1.9 Erimus Housing's staff, board members and contractors will be expected to adhere to the principles laid down in this policy, with an individual and collective responsibility to ensure that this policy is applied and practiced.

2 REFERENCES

- 2.1 Erimus Housing's Repairs, Maintenance and Investment Policy will comply with best practice and guidance and meet the following statutory requirements:
 - The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985;
 - The Housing Act 1985;
 - The Housing Act 1988;
 - Section 121 of the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993;

- Secure Tenants (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994 ;
- Health & Safety at Work Act;
- The Defective Premises Act 1972;
- I.E.E Regs to the 16th Edition;
- Construction, Design and Management (CDM) Regulations 1994 ;
- The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations (as amended);
- Housing Association Act 1985, Section 15(1);
- Environmental Protection Act 1990;
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984;
- Data Protection Act 1984;
- Race Relations Act 1976;
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995;
- Audit Commission – Housing Repairs and Maintenance (Learning from Inspection).

3 DEFINITIONS

- ‘Tenant’ – means a tenant or leaseholder of Erimus Housing;
- ‘CORGI’ – Council of Registered Gas Installers;
- ‘Cyclical maintenance’ – work done on a predetermined timescale e.g. the periodic servicing of gas appliances and the external painting of dwellings;
- DCLG – Department of Communities and Local Government;
- Programmed/Investment Works – Work undertaken to achieve the Decent Homes Standard in Erimus properties;
- Major repair work – The legal definition of what is a repair or a major improvement is not always straight forward. (For example, work to eradicate damp could be a repair, whereas replacing or installing a damp proof course, where there previously wasn't one, will be an improvement;
- Decoration allowance – an allowance to assist tenants to undertake redecoration of their property:
 - following planned investment work
 - following one off major repair work
 - In certain circumstances, new tenants moving into their new home

4 POLICY CONTENT

4.1 Responsive Maintenance

4.1.1 Erimus Housing currently provides a responsive repairs service based on three main categories:

- Emergency – attended to within two hours and completed within 24 hours;
- Urgent – completed within 3 – 7 days;
- Routine – completed within 15 working days.

4.1.2 All other repairs fall into the planned maintenance category and are carried out as part of a cyclical or investment programme and are detailed at section 4.9 below.

4.1.3 Erimus Housing will endeavour to achieve continuous improvement in the delivery of the responsive maintenance service and provide a repairs service, which completes a repair correctly, first time, every time.

4.1.4 In order to achieve this, the service will include:

- A range of convenient methods for tenants to make it easy to report a repair:
 - A FREEPHONE telephone number (08000 461600)
 - Through the Erimus Housing website at www.erimushousing.co.uk
 - At any Erimus Housing reception
- Procedures to accurately identify the nature of the repair when it is reported, and to arrange a convenient appointment.
- Procedures to prioritise the urgency of repairs.
- Measures to ensure that appointments are made and kept both by the tenant and Erimus Housing.
- Measures to ensure that tenants are informed as to the likely outcome of a request for assistance.

4.1.5 A handbook will be issued to tenants on how to deal with emergencies, how and when to report a repair, and further supplementary advice. The tenant handbook will also confirm the duty of tenants to keep appointments for repairs, to avoid abortive and/or multiple visits by staff.

4.1.6 Erimus Housing will operate the Right to Repair Scheme, explained in the tenant's handbook.

4.2 Repair Categories

4.2.1 Repairs will be sorted into priority categories, briefly described below. Details of types of defect and work in each category are detailed in the tenant's handbook.

a) **Emergency**

- Erimus Housing will operate a 24-hour emergency service 365 days per year.
- Response to an emergency will be **within 2 hours with full completion within 24 hours**
- The emergency category is restricted to circumstances where there is a danger to life, a safety hazard, or the potential for more extensive damage to property.

b) **Urgent**

- Urgent repairs will be completed within **3 or 7 working days depending on their status**

c) Routine

- In line with best practice guidelines, routine repairs will be completed within **15 working days**.
- Routine repairs being general repairs, which will enhance the life of a product or component part.
- Where practicable, smaller non-emergency and non-urgent work packages will be bundled together and completed as one planned programme of work. Examples for this approach being work to fencing, gates, outhouses, paths etc.

d) Planned Works

- Where practicable, smaller non emergency and non-urgent work may be batched together and completed as part of a planned scheme such as the investment plan other organised planned schemes. Examples for this approach being work to fencing, gates, outhouses, paths and some minor internal work (carried out by investment plan only) **Planned work will be completed in 60 days**.

4.3 Right to Repair

4.3.1 Under the Right to Repair legislation, tenants have the legal right to arrange for emergency repairs to be executed by their own contractor as detailed in the tenant's handbook.

4.4 Performance Targets for Responsive Repairs

4.4.1 Reports will be issued to the Operations Committee on a quarterly basis regarding performance. These will be reviewed annually.

4.4.2 The targets for the work categories are currently:

- Emergency – 98.5% completed within timescale
- Urgent - 98% completed within timescale
- Routine – 97.5% completed within timescale

4.4.3 Erimus will inspect a minimum of 10% of repairs after completion to ascertain quality standards.

4.4.4 Company performance figures for responsive repairs, will be compared with local RSL "best practice".

4.5 Access to Tenant's Homes

4.5.1 All repairs requiring access to a property will only be undertaken by appointment, acceptable to both parties if at all possible.

- 4.5.2 Repairs can only be completed within the response times provided in Section 4, if the tenant is able to allow access to the operatives and contractors.
- 4.5.3 For security of all parties, trade operatives and contractors will carry identification that is produced as a matter of routine, before entering a tenant's home.
- 4.5.4 Any contractors working for Erimus Housing will be required to operate to our Code of Conduct.
- 4.5.5 Where access to carry out repairs is not achieved, a card will be left to confirm our visit and to advise that contact should be made with Erimus Housing within 3 working days. During this time Erimus Building Services will attempt to make contact. If no contact has been achieved within 3 working days, the existing repair request will be cancelled.
- 4.5.6 Where a tenant refuses to allow access to carry out repairs, Erimus Building Service will contact the tenant in writing giving 3 working days to contact Erimus and arrange another appointment. If access is still refused, Erimus Building Services will cancel the repair request and inform the relevant area office, who will commence with the relevant legal process to enable Erimus Housing to meet its legal obligations and to protect its assets.
- 4.6 Responsibility for Repairs
- 4.6.1 Erimus Housing is responsible for carrying out certain repairs while others are the responsibility of the tenant. A description of each is included in the tenant's handbook
- 4.7 Rechargeable Repairs and Wilful Damage
- 4.7.1 Erimus Housing will endeavour to recover the cost of rechargeable repairs and those due to wilful damage. Details are contained in the tenant's handbook.
- 4.8 Pre Inspection Criteria
- 4.8.1 Repairs where the diagnosis is unclear from the tenant's description, where there is likely to be of a significant cost, or where there are health and Safety implications, will be pre-inspected to determine an accurate description and cost of the work by appointment.
- 4.9 Planned Maintenance (including Cyclical Maintenance and Catch-up Repairs)
- 4.9.1 Erimus Housing place maximum emphasis on executing routine maintenance work (including catch up repairs) on a pre-planned basis because:
- It is more cost effective and represents value for money;
 - Tenants can be notified in advance to ensure minimum disruption;
 - Tenant groups can be informed and involved in forward planning for such works;
 - Pre-planned maintenance, includes gas checks, painting, decorating, and landscape gardening;
 - It makes good business planning sense.

4.10 Gas Appliance Servicing and Maintenance

4.10.1 The inspection of all gas appliances will be carried out on a ten monthly cycle in order to meet the company's legal obligations. The Gas Appliance Servicing Policy details Erimus Housing's commitment in comply with the relevant legislation.

4.11 Performance in completing Planned Maintenance

4.11.1 Reports will be presented quarterly to the relevant committee, the Board and tenant groups, detailing company performance against the Investment Plan and the Asset Management Strategy.

4.12 Investment Work

4.12.1 Investment work is carried out to increase life expectancy of the key component parts of dwellings, maintain them to a high standard of specification and ensure that Erimus properties meet the national Decent Homes Standard

4.12.2 Erimus Housing are undertaking a comprehensive programme of improvements based on the Investment / Planning Strategy and the categorisation of properties depending on the age of key components and the resources available throughout the life of its Business Plan.

4.12.3 Priorities identified by tenants during the transfer consultation process have been incorporated into the programme of works, and supplement priorities identified in the Stock Condition Survey.

4.12.4 The investment programme has required further guidance on the replacement of specific elements to ensure that Decent Homes and the Business Plan are achieved. Consequently, in the first five years of the Investment Plan the replacement life-cycle for a kitchen will be 15 years, and following renewal, shall revert to a 25 year life-cycle.

4.12.5 Erimus Housing will consult fully with all tenants to be affected, before improvement work commences, and will consult with tenants over a choice of materials and finishes to meet individual preferences and requirements.

4.12.6 Wherever possible investment plan work will be undertaken with the tenant remaining in their home in order to minimise the disruption and disturbance. Where this will not be possible, tenants will be provided with respite areas, situated within their local community.

4.12.7 In a small number of cases, tenants may need to be decanted to alternative accommodation for the duration of the works. In these circumstances the company will meet the reasonable cost of relocation including removals, telephone reconnections etc.

4.13 Performance on Capital Works Programme

4.13.1 All capital works schemes will be planned on a five year rolling programme with scheduled consultation periods for tenant consultation. The capital works programme will be updated annually.

4.13.2 Performance against the five year programme in terms of resident satisfaction, contractor performance against targets and financial expenditure against budget will be monitored at each stage and regular progress reports will be issued to the appropriate committees and the Board of Erimus.

4.14 Voids

4.14.1 A separate policy – ‘Management of Empty properties (Voids) covers void practice in further detail.

4.15 Adaptations

4.15.1 Erimus Housing will discuss the needs of tenants requiring adaptations to their home, to enable them to remain in it. This will involve Occupational Therapists in determining the most appropriate adaptations, and will aim to meet the agreed needs as fully as possible.

4.15.2 Adequate financial provision for adaptations will be made annually in the company’s Business Plan.

4.16 Customer Satisfaction Monitoring

4.16.1 The company have adopted a pro-active approach to customer feedback for responsive repairs, planned maintenance and investment work.

4.17 Training

4.17.1 Erimus Housing will support craft training to develop its own (and local) sustainable workforce.

4.17.2 Craft training will use the modern apprenticeship scheme, working in conjunction with the Construction Industries Training Board, local technical colleges and other recognised training providers.

4.17.3 The company will fully encourage its contractors to fully support this initiative.

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

5.1 This policy has been developed in accordance with Erimus Housing’s Equality and Diversity strategy to ensure equality of treatment for all tenants without discrimination or prejudice based on a persons’ gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, age, disability or illness.

5.2 The Association may however look at individual cases where it may be prudent to exercise positive action to ensure that certain groups are provided with the appropriate repairs and improvements (i.e. tenants with appropriate medical needs).

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Erimus Housing will consult the Residents Panel, Area Forums, Residents' Associations, other recognised residents groups, and local voluntary and statutory agencies, on a regular basis, to continually develop good practice in this policy area. The company will give due regard to Good Practice Guidance issued by the Housing Corporation, National Housing Federation and the Chartered Institute of Housing.
- 6.2 Staff groups involved in service delivery will also be consulted regularly to identify areas where services could be improved.
- 6.3 Erimus Housing will consult with tenants on its planned maintenance/capital works programme annually as stated in the tenants compact.

7 MONITORING AND REVIEW

7.1 Monitoring

- 7.1.1 This policy will be monitored following its introduction in April 2008 to assess the impact of the scheme on tenants. The impact of the policy will also be monitored to ensure appropriate and consistent application on a scheme by scheme basis, and to ensure consistency with the payment of decoration allowances to tenants moving into void properties where redecoration is required.

7.2 Review

- 7.2.1 Erimus Housing will undertake a review of this policy on a three yearly basis to ensure that payments made are in line with any good practice guidance available.
- 7.2.2 The Chief Executive will be responsible for ensuring that reviews of this policy are carried out.
- 7.2.3 Tenant representative groups will be involved and consulted in any review of this policy in line with Erimus Housing's policy on tenant participation and consultation.

8. RESPONSIBILITY

- 8.1 It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive and senior officers to ensure that:
- All staff are aware of Erimus Housing's policies;
 - All staff are trained on the policies;
 - Monitoring records are maintained in accordance with Erimus Housing's corporate and legal responsibilities
 - Customers are adequately informed of the policies;
 - Appropriate action is taken against employees whose actions are inconsistent with this policy.