

## Standing Order 42

### Consultation with Appropriate Chair and Vice-Chair for Urgent Action to be Taken Under Standing Order 42

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>To (Chair &amp; Vice Chair):</b> | Housing   |
| <b>Relevant Committee:</b>          | Housing   |
| <b>Date:</b>                        | 31 January 2024   |
| <b>Report Author:</b>               | Maggie Ward   |
| <b>Report Title:</b>                | <u>Request for additional temporary resources in Housing Technical Services</u> |
| <b>SO42 Proforma Number:</b>        | 1030  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>1. Synopsis of report</b>  | Request to employ a one-year additional Housing Maintenance Inspector to deal with Damp and Mould cases and a one-year upgrade for one Housing Maintenance Inspector from grade 9 to 10 to assist with contract monitoring on the MCP Repairs and Void Contract. This is onerous due to contractor failing to meet the terms of the contract and being served with an Improvement Notice.   |
| <b>2. Reasons why this matter cannot wait for a Committee Decision.</b> | Both these resources need to be deployed as soon as possible to meet our legal responsibilities and provide effective financial and quality management of the contracted repairs service.   |
| <b>3. Recommendation(s)</b>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Approval for the creation of a one-year Damp and Mould Inspector position utilising savings from vacant posts to meet statutory responsibilities</li> <li>II. Approval of a one-year secondment of a Housing Maintenance Inspector to a Senior Housing Maintenance Inspector utilising saving from vacant posts</li> </ol>  |
| <b>4. Context of report</b>   | The increased demands currently being placed upon the Technical Services section are beyond the capacity of existing resources. The combination of additional focus on social housing and poor performance of our contractor means that in order to provide the correct level of service to residents and effective contract management additional resources need to be deployed for a year to stabilise the Council's position   |
| <b>5. Report</b>  | <p><b>Request to employ additional temporary resources within Housing Technical Services utilising the savings from vacant posts.</b></p> <p>The Interim Corporate Head of Housing reviewed performance on Damp and Mould, and we are not able to provide the response level required without adversely affecting other service delivery. This is an area of specific scrutiny by the Regulator but without this it would be an urgent priority in all cases to respond quickly and effectively.</p> <p>The Housing Department does have disrepair cases which are costly, not the levels of compensation we are paying but their legal fees.</p> <p>We do not have a major issue with damp and mould in our stock in terms of properties with system and/or structure failings however like all social landlords we are receiving increased reports for a number of reasons:</p> |

- Solicitors widely advertising and canvassing social housing tenants
- Surrey Towers Ring Beam
- Age of windows and doors, not always a negative as actually provide ventilation but cause heat loss. (contract in place)
- Age of boilers – inefficient (a program is in place)
- Cost of heating
- Change in expectation of heating by residents and no ventilation
- Overcrowding of homes (not just people but furniture and general possessions) lack of air circulation

The initial diagnosis and specification need to be completed by someone who will then oversee the works and monitor the property to ensure it is remedied, working with the tenant to understand the causes and seek solutions to the person-centred causes in tandem with works. We can have two identical properties side by side and one has a problem, so it is not simply a structural issue.

The reactive repairs team has one vacancy which has now been filled but the recruit will require induction and with the contract issues with MCP causing significant additional work the Repairs Manager does not have adequate resources to deploy and therefore we are at risk of a damp and mould case not being properly addressed and potentially other issues.

Technical Services management are responsible for performance on this but unless they have additional and specific resources it is going to be difficult to hold them accountable and to set and meet appropriate response targets.

In addition to this post a one-year temporary increase to a Housing Inspector to a senior role from grade 9 to 10 (to be ringfenced to the two grade 9 officers in post) so that they can undertake some of the contract checking which the Repairs Manager is spending the majority of his time on. This work will partly involve checking the works ordered by the contractor for correct coding which invariable leads to reduction in invoices. There is a backlog of this work as the interface between the new contractor and RBC was not in place at the start of the contract.

#### Financing the post

Savings on Corporate Head salary for minimum of 6 months = £55,960  
 Additional D&M Inspector on grade 9, £1,997 to £35,508 = £44,740 (+ 26% on costs)  
 Temporary uplift for one Inspector on grade 9 to 10 difference of £4,934

£44,740  
4,934

Cost of £49, 674 for additional post / grade so no actual growth in this.

This is a significant area of compliance; new legislation is likely to impose short response times and we have a responsibility to ensure tenants are not living with damp and mould. These additional resources are essential in order to embed a satisfactory approach at a time when the small team is already overstretched.

#### **6. Policy framework implications**

The Council has an approved Damp and Mould policy which commits to timescales we will be unable to achieve without additional resources

7. **Financial and Resource implications (where practicable)**

Resource implications of suggested course of action: - Figures from Accountancy

**Proposed**

| Post No. | Post                            | Hours    | Salary<br>£   | Comments         |
|----------|---------------------------------|----------|---------------|------------------|
|          | Inspector Temp uplift           | 10       | 37            | 37,466 mid grade |
|          | Additional D&M Temp - 12 months | 9        | 37            | 33,753 mid grade |
|          |                                 |          | 71,219        |                  |
|          |                                 | On-costs | 20,297        |                  |
|          |                                 |          | <u>91,516</u> |                  |

|                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Summary</b>  | <b>£</b>      |
| Current costs   | 91,498        |
| Proposed costs  | <u>91,516</u> |
| Additional Cost | - 17          |

8. **Legal implications**

No implications for recruiting additional resources but potential implications of failing to meet our landlord duties

9. **Equality implications**

None identified

10. **Other implications (Environmental/Biodiversity/Sustainability must be addressed)**

Addressing Damp and Mould in properties will bring a number of benefits including improved heat management and reduced carbon emissions.

11. **Background papers**

None

12. **Chief Officer(s) Decision**

Note: Signatories may authorise this decision via their Council email. Where this occurs, please note that authorisation has been provided via email below. Democratic Services will retain a copy of the email authorisation with this document.

Signature of authorised officer



I have been consulted and am in agreement with the above

Signature(s) and position(s) of  
other relevant Chief Officer, Corporate Heads or their authorised representatives

.....Assistant Chief Executive (Place) P Turner emailed 05/02/24.....

13. **Assistant Chief Executive – Section 151 Officer (if not applicable, please state)**

Note: Signatories may authorise this decision via their Council email. Where this occurs, please note that authorisation has been provided via email below. Democratic Services will retain a copy of the email authorisation with this document.

I have been consulted and am in agreement with the above

Signature(s) and position(s) of  
Assistant Chief Executive – Section 151 Officer or their authorised representative



**NB:** this must include the Assistant Chief Executive Section 151 Officer or their authorised representative where the decision involves expenditure, loss of income, or future implications for budget or financial forecast

**In this case authorisation has been provided via email and then physically signed 14.02.2024**

14. **Chief Executive's Decision**

Note: Signatories may authorise this decision via their Council email. Where this occurs, please note that authorisation has been provided via email below. Democratic Services will retain a copy of the email authorisation with this document.

Signature of Chief Executive .....

I have been consulted and am in agreement with the above

**In this case authorisation has been provided via email dated 01/02/24**

15. **Chair and Vice-Chair Comments**

Note: Signatories may authorise this decision via their Council email. Where this occurs, please note that authorisation has been provided via email below. Democratic Services will retain a copy of the email authorisation with this document.

In this case authorisation has been provided via email – Chair (Councillor M Nuti) 16/02/2024

In this case authorisation has been provided via email - Vice-Chair (Councillor J Hulley) 14/02/2024

I concur in the Chief Officer's decision

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I have the following further comments:

The completed copy is to be returned by the Councillors to the Corporate Head of Law and Governance (Democratic Services) who will send a copy to the Chief Officer and report to the relevant Committee for information.