

REPORT TO: COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 30 MARCH 2005

SUBJECT: GUTTER CLEANING PROGRAMME

BY: CHIEF HOUSING OFFICER

1. Reason for Report

- 1.1 This report provides information on, and seeks approval for, the identification of gutter cleaning projects to be funded through the Housing Revenue Account Planned Maintenance Programme for 2005/2006.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section G (3) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to the maintenance of the Council's Housing Stock.

2. Background

- 2.1 At a special Community Services Committee on 10 February 2005, Members asked for details of gutter cleaning programmes for council housing stock.
- 2.2 Properties with cast iron guttering which are to be painted during the cyclic external paintwork contracts in each financial year normally have their gutters cleaned out prior to painting works commencing. The amount of properties with cast iron guttering included in external paintwork contracts varies each financial year.
- 2.3 In previous financial years, several projects to clean moss from roofs, combined with associated gutter cleaning works have taken place under various budget heads, including Area Forum, and Roof & Fabric Repairs. The cost of these works averaged over £250 per property, mainly due to Health & Safety restrictions due to working at heights.
- 2.4 At present the Council does not have a regular programme of gutter cleaning for non cast iron gutters, and Area Housing teams normally deal with urgent requests for all types of gutters through response repairs.
- 2.5 Within the Partnership Agreement there are rates for gutter cleaning on a 'one-off' basis to individual houses, however this rate is only applicable to properties up to 2 storeys. Any properties above that height have implications from a Health & Safety point of view.
- 2.6 In the current financial year, up to the end of January 2005, in the region of £27,000 has been expended by Area Housing Teams on cleaning gutters to individual properties where tenant requests have been received, and this has been funded from the appropriate management area Response Repairs budget.
- 2.7 The Scottish Housing Quality Standard contains criteria relating to the condition of rainwatergoods as a secondary repair element. The indications from the SHQS survey are that the Council will require to substantially increase the rainwatergoods replacement budget over the next few years in order to meet this requirement of the standard.

- 2.8 At present the budget for rainwatergoods replacement is £0.050m annually, and this is normally fully expended on replacement of rainwatergoods, plus repairs to other associated elements.
- 2.9 The Scottish Housing Quality Standard does not contain any specific criteria relating to gutter cleanliness, however blocked guttering could indirectly be the cause of damage to the roof fabric or external wall fabric and finishes.
- 2.10 Addresses identified for proposed gutter cleaning projects have been identified by the Area Housing Teams. The Capital Programmes Team has collated these into an overall list.

3. The Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed that a cyclic programme is developed, to initially deal with those locations where blocked gutters have currently been identified, and to subsequently ensure that all gutters are cleaned out on a regular basis.
- 3.2 Properties on the list compiled by the Capital Programmes Team will be inspected, cross referenced against the external paintwork programme, and prioritised. The highest priority locations will then be packaged into initial gutter cleaning contracts to be carried out under the Partnership Agreement for Planned and Cyclic Works during 2005/06 financial year. The contracts will initially be funded from the Housing Revenue Account Planned Maintenance, Rainwater Goods budget, with a maximum expenditure of £25,000 for 2005/06. Funding at this level will allow approximately 325 houses to be included in an initial gutter cleaning programme for financial year 2005/06.
- 3.3 The remaining addresses will form the basis of an ongoing cyclic programme, with further requests for larger scale gutter cleaning contracts being appraised, cross checked with external paintwork contracts and added to a master list to allow the programme to be developed over time.
- 3.4 Area Housing Teams will continue to deal with urgent 'one-off' requests through response repairs.
- 3.5 As part of the SHQS delivery plan, a programme for replacement of guttering which fails the standard will also be developed, and in conjunction with the gutter cleaning programme and external paintwork programme will ensure that gutters are cleaned out on a regular basis.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 These works can be funded from the 2005/2006 Housing Revenue Planned Maintenance Programme, and budgetary allowance made in subsequent financial years for carrying out these works on an cyclic basis.

5. Staffing Implications

5.1 There are no staffing implications associated with this report.

6. Environmental Implications

6.1 The improvement and maintenance of the housing stock will impact positively on the environment in Moray.

7. Sustainable Development Implications

7.1 The improvement and maintenance of the housing stock will ensure that it remains sustainable in the longer term, both physically and environmentally.

8. Consultations

8.1 Consultations have taken place with the Chief Housing Officer, Housing Programmes Manager, DLO General Manager, and the Property Manager, who agree with the contents of this report.

9. Corporate Plan

9.1 The aims of this report comply with the Social Programme within the Corporate Plan.

10. Recommendations

10.1 It is recommended that Community Services Committee:-

- (i) approves the proposed procedure for the selection of gutter cleaning projects to be carried out under the Housing Revenue Planned Maintenance budget for 2005/2006; and**
- (ii) agrees the mechanism for dealing with further requests.**

Author of Report: John Macdonald, Capital Programmes Manager
Background Papers: Held on file by Capital Programmes Manager
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