

Service Area	Formal Procedure	Formal Procedure
Audit Recommendation	1.1	1.2
Audit Comment	Clear guidance should be provided to all the relevant members of the Housing Directorate. The policy needs to be periodically reviewed.	A system must be set up to ensure the Head of Corporate Finance is notified of any amendments to the 'rechargeable works' policy. This should be implemented via regular meetings between the Management Accountant and the housing directorate.
Status	Implemented	Implemented
Management Comment	<p>Clear guidance on recharge procedure was implemented along with the procedure in April 2013.</p> <p>Procurement & mobilisation new Repairs & Maintenance Contract</p> <p>Application of the recharge policy is supported by a suite of component policies and documents which ensure consistency across service provision, thereby improving the ability of the Council to implement tenant recharging. This include revisions to the Tenancy Agreement, proposed revisions to the Repairs Policy document, and the inclusion of recharge processing and performance management within the procurement and mobilisation of the new Repairs & Maintenance contract.</p>	<p>The meeting now forms part of the services formal governance meeting structure. Regular monthly meetings take place with minuted actions that are strictly monitored. Future policy changes will be formally circulated to Management Accountant prior to the meeting for review and implications formally discussed and recorded in the meeting. Associated risks or issues raised will form part of the service risk register.</p>

Service Area	Recharge policy standards communication and compliance	Recharge policy standards communication and compliance
Audit Recommendation	2.1	2.2
Audit Comment	All income must be presented for payment where charges can be justified. This will enable managers to maximise the amount to be recharged and offset against costs.	Rechargeable Repairs need to be passed to the appropriate Manager/Technical Officer for processing promptly. This will enable the Authority to realise the relevant income achievable in a timely manner, against the budget set for recharges. A greater portion of the costs will be met by the income collected.
Status	Implemented	Implemented
Management Comment	<p>Following the transfer of responsibilities for recharging tenants in 2013, Housing Investment & Development have undertaken to develop and embed procedures for the effective management of this area of service provision. In order to effectively undertake tenant recharging, and maximise associated income, the procedure identified necessary evidence required for successful recharge, roles and responsibilities for delivery partners, and forms and frequency of communications with residents regarding recharge. Saffron Housing Management systems provide the contractor the ability to identify tenant recharge cases.</p> <p>Using this process, Housing Investment & Development coordinate with debt</p>	<p>Changes to the procedure means that this recommendation is no longer strictly applicable. Responsibility for charging sits in a centralised team across Housing which includes technical colleagues this is supported by a cross directorate meeting which takes place at least every fortnight and this team which includes key Housing management managers have put in place appropriate procedures to allow recharge management and recovery. Using these procedures, tenant recharge debt has begun to be raised and recovered, and this will be further developed and enhanced in order to improve performance in this area.</p> <p>Procurement & mobilisation new Repairs & Maintenance Contract</p>

	<p>management services in order to manage tenant recharging. Processes developed and embedded have allowed debt management to raise and recover tenant recharges: When the last report was presented (February 2013) the Council had raised 83K worth of rechargeable works and generated an income of 4.2K (4.8%). Since then the Council has raised £116k of rechargeable works and collected £28k (24%).</p> <p>. This is in contrast to previous procedures under which debt had not been raised. Although the total income recovered to date is disproportionate to the changes outstanding, the service is in a much better position to actively recover money going forward and anticipates the rate of recovery to improve over the next 6 to 12 months.</p> <p>The process and systems established provide a basis for the further development in line with procurement of future Repairs & Maintenance contractor, as well as for future ICT systems.</p>	<p>In the course of procurement and mobilisation of the new Repairs & Maintenance contract, a revised and improved workflow management process has been developed which ensures Officers can appropriately manage tenant recharging. This includes working with the new Repairs & Maintenance contractor to refine and develop workflow management for the service provider which matches and is aligned to that of the Council. This service provider workflow management incorporates key data management and reporting which underlies the ability of the Council to performance manage the process through the Key Performance Indicator included in the contract.</p>
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Service Area	Implementing recharge policy in client-contractor interfaces	Procedure for recharge identification and processing
Audit Recommendation	2.3	2.4
Audit Comment	The policy in place to recharge tenants for the damage caused to properties needs to be refreshed and rolled out. The policy could be implemented as an integral part of the transformation review within Housing in relation to the Morrison contract. This will provide a holistic approach to works orders raised and encourage a more accurate and timely process for recharging tenants.	A refresh of the contractual process; with regards to the identification and reporting charges are required. A clear process will enable operatives to identify report and collect evidence of potential recharges that may be missed by the client.
Status	Implemented	Implemented
Management Comment	A significant amount of work has been done around the void process and transfers where the bulk of recharging is identified. The new process involves detailed assessment prior to termination or transfer of a tenancy; this includes photographic evidence of the condition of the home plus an agreement with the resident that elements of identified works would be rechargeable (as applicable). This new process is evidenced by the 83K that has been raised year to date. In addition it is important to note that the new process means that a number of rechargeable repairs are avoided as in a number of instances tenants are declined a transfer until they have undertaken remedial works where it is determined the damage is not as a result	In the course of implementing an interim contract for Repairs & Maintenance provision, assessment has been made of the systemic interfacing required for service provision, as well as the associated roles and responsibilities across delivery partners. This exercise underlies the definition of clear procedures for the provision of Repairs & Maintenance services, and the mapping of these procedures for clear guidance for staff and operatives. Procurement & mobilisation new Repairs & Maintenance Contract In line with the mobilisation of the new Repairs & Maintenance contract, a programme of workflow improvement has been undertaken within the

	<p>of wear and tear. The housing management team have ensured that all housing officers are trained on this element and have also altered transfer inspection/completion forms to ensure the considerations are implemented.</p> <p>Procurement & mobilisation new Repairs & Maintenance Contract</p> <p>Taking forward the development of the voids process as noted, formal procedures have been developed and agreed as part of the mobilisation process taking place for the new Repairs & Maintenance contract. This includes agreement of processes which reference recharge at appropriate junctures, thereby formally acknowledging the role of the service provider in initiating and substantiating recharge where appropriate. As part of the mobilisation process, the service provider and Thurrock Council are establishing ICT provision for the transfer of recharge evidence from service provider systems such that evidence is available to Council Officers as required.</p>	<p>Council. This programme provides a series of workflow management processes which clearly define roles & responsibilities both of Council Officers and the Service Provider in the implementation of tenant recharging where appropriate. Support this are a number of KPIs for the service provider, as well as internal Council performance management made possible through the workflow management improvements developed.</p>
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Service Area	Improved governance and communication across client services	Improved governance and communication across client services
Audit Recommendation	2.5	2.6
Audit Comment	Although the process for raising debts is clearly identified in the recharge policy a working group is required to enable debtors to liaise with housing staff in relation to charges. This will create a clear channel for communication between the Housing and Debtors and the income can be monitored and reported regularly.	Roles and Responsibilities must be clearly outlined and explained, in order to achieve effective service.
Status	Implemented	Implemented
Management Comment	Mapping and identifying roles and responsibilities, defining process implementation for tenant recharges, provides a basis for improved performance. Accompanying this mapping is the definition of governance, and associated frequency and scope of meetings between services involved. Consequently meetings between Housing and Debt Management Services are now part of this on- going governance. This ensures the improved process definition is supported by coordinated working between staff with tenant recharging responsibilities.	Underlying effective and improved service provision is the clear definition and communication of roles and responsibilities for delivery partners. As noted above, an exercise has been undertaken for the assessment and mapping of procedures for implementing effective tenant recharging. Similarly as noted, this process has been undertaken with regard the interim Mears contract, with learning and documentation being taken forward to the implementation of the forthcoming five-year Repairs & Maintenance contract.