

# Report to Communities Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting: 16/01/2024**

**Portfolio:**

Housing and Strategic Health Partnerships (Cllr Holly Whitbread)

**Subject:** Condensation, Damp and Mould Policy

**Officer contact for further information:**

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**Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

To consider and comment on the draft Cabinet paper and the proposed Condensation, Damp and Mould policy.

**Report:**

1. Cabinet will be asked to approve the proposed Condensation, Damp and Mould policy. This policy, together with the draft covering Cabinet paper, are attached.
2. The Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider and comment on the draft paper and policy ahead of presentation to Cabinet.

**Reason for decision:**

To agree any amendments to the draft Cabinet paper and condensation, damp and mould policy prior to presentation to Cabinet.

**Options considered and rejected:**

Not applicable.

**Consultation undertaken:**

The Tenant's and Leaseholders' Panel reviewed the proposed policy on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024. Comments included:

- Section 8.2 – The Panel noted that more complex cases will need Housing Officers, Surveyors or Specialists to inspect to correctly diagnose the problem and specify the solution. This is incorporated in the latest version of the policy (attached).
- Fuel poverty - The Panel asked whether there is anything more we could do about fuel poverty. The proposed policy covers our energy efficiency retrofit programme and working with tenants to help them access income they are entitled. They discussed the possibility of establishing a hardship fund (e.g. from income generated from exporting excess energy generated from solar panels). This may be considered for a subsequent version of the policy.

- Overcrowding – The Panel asked if overcrowded households would be prioritised for rehousing.
- Preventative maintenance – The Panel emphasised the point in section 8.1 concerning the importance of planned works to prevent water ingress.
- Communications – The Panel asked officers to ensure messages about preventing condensation and mould also targeted leaseholders and sub-tenants. As well as including leaflets with rent statements, they should go with service charge statements and be displayed on noticeboards.
- Progress reporting – The Panel asked to be updated on progress in tackling condensation, damp and mould every six months.

### **Resource implications:**

There are no additional resource requirements to comply with this policy.

### **Legal and Governance Implications, Relevant Statutory Powers:**

Adherence to the recommended policy will provide assurance that EFDC are compliant with our statutory obligations under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, the Housing Act 2004 and the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.

Implementation of this policy will reduce the potential liability of EFDC from claims of legal disrepair brought by tenants of EFDC.

### **Corporate Plan Implications:**

The Condensation, Damp and Mould policy supports the following key objectives of the Corporate Plan:

- Stronger place - We will protect and enhance our green spaces for future generations while providing decent, safe homes to meet all our needs.
- Stronger communities - We will work with our partners to achieve wellbeing and health equity for all our residents.

### **Background Papers:**

The draft Cabinet paper and the proposed condensation, damp and mould policy.

### **Risk Management:**

The biggest risk is that the policy is not embedded in working practices. This risk is mitigated by implementing a robust condensation, damp and mould tracker. This will enable us to see that we are actively identifying cases of condensation, damp and mould and dealing with them effectively. We will also run regular campaigns on managing humidity in the home and encouraging tenants to report instances of condensation, damp and mould.

### **Equality:**

An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out and there was no adverse impact on any protected characteristic group.

**Key Decision:** (if required):