

Council set up new body to deal with Property repairs



Owners of shared properties looking to organise repairs will be able to get help from a new Council service from Tuesday 2 April 2013, set up to replace the Property Conservation Department.

The Shared Repairs Service will provide advice and information to owners through the process of organising repairs from finding a contractor to arranging payment. It will also signpost owners to other repair support services such as property factoring, property management agencies and mediation, and the use of legislative powers like the Tenement Management Scheme.

The Council will retain its statutory notice powers, which are unique to the city, and will maintain the current 24/7 emergency service for urgent repairs.

An extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders last year identified that there is still demand for the Council to provide a project management service for more significant shared repairs. Options for this will be explored over the coming months, with a report expected to Council in about three months time.

Councillor Alasdair Rankin, Finance and Budget Convener,

said:- “Maintaining the safety of Edinburgh’s properties is a concern for us all. Our aim is to find the right balance, based on the outcomes of the consultation exercise, with the Council taking a lead role in emergencies and providing support for non-urgent cases.”

From April advice and information will be available through [the Council’s website](#), neighbourhood offices and libraries, getting in touch with the Council’s contact centre and by meeting with officers. The topics covered will include building inspections, working with neighbours, mediation, finding a contractor and arranging payment.

Councillor Rankin added: “This new service will be focused on our customers. Staff are receiving comprehensive training so that they can ensure property owners get the information and advice they need. We also know that there is demand from the public for the Council to have a bigger role in this area and we will be looking at potential options.”

The Property Conservation Service, which used statutory notices for emergency and non-emergency repairs, will cease operating from April 2013. However, work will continue to resolve outstanding complaints and to settle outstanding bills.

The new service was considered at a recent Council meeting, with councillors agreeing to a further report in the summer on options to expand the service.

[The BBC](#) reported last month that the council has paid for £27m of work which it has yet to bill to private property owners

under the statutory notice scheme, but the Deloitte reports which have apparently shown this have not yet been published by the council, although the BBC has extracts of them on their website.