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| To : <b>HOUSING AND TECHNICAL SERVICES COMMITTEE</b>      |                                | Subject :<br><b>HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2001<br/>IMPROVEMENT AND REPAIRS GRANTS</b> |
| From : <b>DIRECTOR OF HOUSING &amp; PROPERTY SERVICES</b> |                                |  |
| Date : <b>5 February 2003</b>                             | Ref :<br><b>TMcK/IMcM/AMcS</b> |  |

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise members of a delay in the implementation of Part 6 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, which affects Improvement and Repairs Grant.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 In my report dated 2 December 2002, I advised Committee that the Scottish Executive had decided that 1 April 2003 should be the date of implementation of the new system of Improvement and Repairs Grants.
- 2.2 Subsequent to that, the Executive have advised that there will require to be a delay in the start of the new system. A copy of their letter dated 24 January 2003 is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. The reason for the delay is that, due to the pressure of other business and the timescale required for consideration by Parliament of subordinate legislation, it has not proved possible for the necessary Regulations to be laid for consideration by the Scottish Parliament before the forthcoming election.
- 2.3 A new implementation date has not been set, but is likely to be in the autumn of 2003. The original timescale advised by the Executive had included an implementation date in the Autumn of 2002.
- 2.4 While many aspects of the new grants system have been welcomed, and there is a sense of disappointment and frustration caused by this further delay in implementing the new system, there was a view, shared with many other local authorities, that the lack of detailed guidance from the Executive, as at late January, would cause real difficulties in making arrangements for the new system to start on 1 April 2003. The Executive advise that they hope to be able to circulate drafts of the relevant Regulations and Guidance within the next few months. If they do so, this should allow local authorities more time to make adequate preparations, albeit these would be based on draft rather than finalised Regulations.
- 2.5 I will advise Committee in due course of any additional information in this connection, and of any necessary review of the Council's policies and administration arrangements for grants.

### 3. Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that Committee note the terms of this report.

4. **Background information**

4.1 Background information is available in the Housing & Property Services Department.



 **Thomas McKenzie**  
**Director of Housing & Property Services**

Enc.



Development Department  
Housing Division 2

Victoria Quay  
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

Chief Executives, Directors of Housing and Directors of Finance, Scottish Local Authorities  
Chief Executive, Communities Scotland  
Director, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations  
Advice and support organisations  
Other interested bodies

Telephone: 0131-244 5511  
Fax: 0131-244 0948  
Richard.Grant@scotland.gsi.gov.uk  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk>

24 January 2003

Dear Colleague

**HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2001: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IMPROVEMENT AND REPAIRS GRANT PROVISIONS**

I wrote to you on 28 October 2002 to inform you of the main changes to the Improvement and Repairs Grants system. I said in that letter that Ministers had decided the new system should be implemented from 1 April 2003, to be co-ordinated with the start of the financial year.

Regrettably, due to the pressure of other business and the timescale required for consideration by Parliament of subordinate legislation, it has not proved possible for the necessary Regulations to be laid for consideration by the Scottish Parliament before the forthcoming election. Implementation of the changes will therefore be postponed for the time being. I appreciate that this may cause some difficulties where local authorities and other organisations have begun planning for the changes. However, I have also been aware of significant concern that insufficient time was available to prepare for implementation in April.

We therefore intend to continue developing the Regulations, guidance and software for the scheme over the coming months, and these will be issued for information in final draft form. Subject to the views of Scottish Ministers after the election, we will plan to lay the Regulations before the Scottish Parliament during the summer session, for implementation in early autumn. I hope this extension will help local authorities to plan effectively and ensure that the new scheme is implemented successfully.

The postponement of changes to the grants scheme will not affect the introduction of Private Sector Housing Grant for 2003-04.

In my letter of 28 October, I said there was still work to be done on the test of resources for landlords, developers and commercial proprietors, and on transitional arrangements. These matters have now been clarified, and the attached paper outlines what Ministers have decided.

If you have any questions about changes to the Improvement and Repairs Grants system, please contact Jean Waddie on 0131 244 7951 or [Jean.Waddie@scotland.gov.uk](mailto:Jean.Waddie@scotland.gov.uk)

**RICHARD GRANT**