

A REVIEW OF THE VOIDS LETTABLE STANDARD

Report of the Head of Repairs

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Void Lettable Standard is reviewed every 3 years to ensure it is both up to date and fit for purpose. We have recently reviewed the standard in line with the ongoing changes and demands to the service. A panel consisting of Housing Management, DACP, Tenants Panel and Voids Supervisors were present to ensure a wide range of views were considered.
- 1.2 In addition, the decoration voucher allowance (per room) was also reviewed. This was an area that had not been reviewed since 2011.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To approve the changes to the lettable standard to meet the changes in standards and demands.
- 2.2 To approve the increase in payment in decoration vouchers (per room) from £25 to £30 as recommended by the Lettable Standards Review Panel.
- 2.3 To approve improvements to voids processes to give our customers an increased level of service.

3. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The changes in the lettable standard are essential to ensure Derby Homes delivers a standard which will meet the growing demands of a diverse range of tenants. The Nott's & Derby benchmarking group lettable standards were taken into consideration to ensure all areas were considered.
- 3.2 The review of the decoration vouchers paid (per room) was looked at in some detail. Feedback from a number of benchmarking group members did show the amount which was offered by other organisations was higher than the amounts paid out to Derby Homes tenants. Following consultation with our own tenants and staff the consensus of opinion was the amount paid per room should be increased. However, it was noted that the amount given per room was only a contribution towards the total cost of decoration.

4. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 A number of other factors were taken into consideration to ensure the Voids team meets both the internal and external customer's expectations. These

considerations are highlighted below:

1. All contacts with the Voids team from internal and external customers will receive a response within 2 working days.
 2. All repairs that need to be carried out once the property has been made ready to let will be carried out within 2 weeks. (This does not include any items that are on order such as external doors and windows etc.
 3. When tenants need to be contacted to arrange a repair visit by the Voids team, the team will contact the tenant and a convenient appointment (time and date) will be made.
 4. When a repairs appointment has been arranged the operative will contact the tenant with the estimated time of arrival on the day of the appointment.
- 4.2 These improvements to the Voids team processes will bring the team in line with other parts of the Repairs Team.
- 4.3 The Voids team recently received a comprehensive audit report with three minor matters to take into consideration. The audit was carried out over a four day period by the Central Midlands Audit Partnership.
- 4.4 Two of the minor recommendations have already been implemented.
1. The Voids team will increase the number of post voids checks from a reported 8% to a figure of approximately 20%. This will give us a far better picture of the condition of void properties prior to them being made Ready to Let.
 2. There were a small number of operative check lists missing out of the sample chosen by the auditor (3 out of 20) which was noted as a minor weakness. The Voids team have now tightened up the process to ensure all check lists are returned to the relevant supervisor on the completion of a void.
- 4.5 The third recommendation was that the supervisors should check each other's work to promote / encourage the separation of duties. This suggestion was opposed by senior management team as it was agreed that checking the operatives work from start to finish is crucial in managing the operatives under their supervision.
- 4.6 During the Lettable Standard review it was noted that the amount paid per room to tenants to help with decoration costs had not been increased since 2011. Following consultation with the group and from benchmarking with other housing organisations it was agreed that the amount paid should be increased. It is estimated that if a similar amount of voids are carried out this year as last year the increased cost would equate to an extra £7,500. We are confident that the budget will be able to contain these costs.
- 4.7 The Lettable Standards review group suggested a number of enhancements and improvements to the Lettable Standard. The full Lettable Standard and improvements are included in Appendix 1.

5. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 Not applicable.

IMPLICATIONS

6. CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Voids team has consulted with Housing Managers, Heads of Service, DACP, Tenants Panel, Supervisors, and Patch Managers.

7. POLICY REVIEW IMPLICATIONS

7.1 This is a key policy of Derby Homes and is included in the Key Policy Review Schedule. In accordance with Derby Homes Board Minute 10/51 this policy will be reviewed no later than 3 years from the date of this meeting.

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report:

Legal and Confidentiality
Financial & Business
Council
Personnel
Environmental
Equalities Impact Assessment
Health & Safety
Risk

If Senior Management Team or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact:

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Background Information: None

Supporting Information: None

This report has been approved by the following officers where there are financial or legal implications:

Head of Service (Operational Board reports) Other(s)	Steve Bayliss	27.06.2018
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