

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Tenant Services Management Board – 23 January 2012

### Council Housing Voids – Information Report

#### Report of the Housing Estates Manager – Paul Hadley

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Jean Adkins)

#### 1.0 Executive Summary

This report provides the members of the TSMB with information on void property performance in relation to council owned housing stock. This is an information report only.

#### 2.0 Background

This report provides details of voids management and performance following the advice and assistance visit conducted by the Audit Commission in 2009. The commission identified a number of strengths and areas for improvement during their audit. The report was a main driver for the review of internal TDBC operational processes which was conducted in March 2011.

Following the review a number of changes were implemented as part of a pilot to improve void performance.

The Housing Estates Team was restructured. It remains organised in two teams but is now structured so that one team consists of a manager and eight estates officers who are responsible for managing a particular geographic patch of properties. The second team consists of a manager, the two estates officers who focus on anti social behaviour, four estates assistants, one void assistant and the two void officers.

A surveying team of four officers was set up in early 2011 within the Property Services Team. The team conducts a physical inspection of each void property, prepare a works schedule and instruct contractors, and oversee the void works until satisfactory completion. The property is then re-let by the estates team.

#### 3.0 Performance Data

Housing Services have been conducting benchmarking of void and re-let performance against other providers in our region using the Housemark benchmarking club, since late 2010. The tables below show a comparison of performance between Quarter 1 to Quarter 3 of 2011/12 and indicates progress made in the specific areas of performance. Additionally they provide information on the number of re-lets completed during same period.

### Quarter 1 2011/12 (Apr – Jun 2011)

Description	Performance	Rating
Average re-let time (calendar days)	31.76	3 <sup>rd</sup> quartile
Percentage of properties accepted on the first offer	70.18%	Top quartile
Total number of re-lets in quarter	122	

### Quarter 2 2011/12 (Jul – Sep 2011)

Description	Performance	Rating
Average re-let time (calendar days)	25.76	2 <sup>nd</sup> quartile
Percentage of properties accepted on the first offer	69.59%	2 <sup>nd</sup> quartile
Total number of re-lets in quarter	134	

### Quarter 3 2011/12 (Oct – Dec 2011)

Description	Performance	Rating
Average re-let time (calendar days)	28.24	** quartile
Percentage of properties accepted on the first offer	75.00%	** quartile
Total number of re-lets in quarter	136	

Note: \*\* Figures are unavailable at time of preparing report

The reduction in performance for average re-lets times in Quarter 3 compared to Quarter 2 is associated with the re-let of two specific properties. One proved hard to re-let (Void on 17/10/11 – re-let 19/12/11 on 7<sup>th</sup> formal offer) and the second was a property that had been recovered from squatters.

The continued improvement in properties being accepted on first offer means that properties are being let more quickly and rental loss to the council is being reduced as fewer properties are having to be offered to more than one applicant.

Total number of re-lets in year to end of quarter 3 (31/12/2011) is 392 this represents an increase of 115 re-lets when compared to the same period in the previous year. This figure confirms that the period has been both challenging and very busy for the small voids team and other officers working on re-letting the council's social housing stock.

#### 4.0 Finance Comments

Expenditure on the preparation of void properties for re-let is controlled by the property services and monitored and controlled by Tim Haynes – Property Services Manager.

#### 5.0 Legal Comments

There are no legal issues arising from this report.

#### 6.0 Links to Corporate Aims

Good voids management performance can contribute positively to the following council aims: Tackling Deprivation and Sustainable Community Development; Regeneration; and Affordable Housing and Climate Change.

## **7.0 Environmental and Community Safety Implications**

Void properties that are left empty for a long period of time can negatively affect the local environment. Void properties can be a magnet for attracting crime and anti-social behaviour and so need to be effectively managed.

## **8.0 Equalities Impact**

There are no specific equalities impacts from this report.

## **9.0 Risk Management**

Risk assessments will be completed for any significant operational changes that are implemented from any review of operational processes.

## **10.0 Partnership Implications**

There are no specific implications for partners in relation to this report.

## **11.0 Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Tenant Services Management Board:

- Note this information report.

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