



## **Tenant Services Management Board - 29<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

### **Lettable Standard**

#### **Report of Lisa West, Rent, Recovery & Void Manager**

### **Executive Summary**

The Housing Service takes the views of its tenants seriously when delivering all services. We aim to provide the best we can with the resources available to us. We also take the interests of our staff into consideration when carrying out these tasks. We are seeking to introduce a Lettable Standard to give our tenant's satisfaction that their new home will meet an agreed standard before it is re-let and also to ensure the consistent quality of each property.

The Lettable Standard is attached as Appendix 1 of this report – please note this is a draft version, with the artwork being subject to change.

#### **1. Purpose of the report**

1.1 To seek the views and opinions of the Tenant Services Management Board on the proposed Lettable Standard.

1.2 Members to recommend the implementation of the Lettable Standard.

#### **2. Background Information**

The Rent, Recovery & Void team was created in 2005 and consists of 3 full time officers, 2 full time assistants and 1 Debt and Benefit Advisor. The team is responsible for inspecting Taunton Deane Borough Council's housing stock once it becomes vacant and to ensure they are brought to a lettable standard for the new incoming tenant.

The implementation of this standard will provide new tenants with information on the standard that will be met.

### **3. Research**

With the need to update our procedures, we looked at how we are currently carrying out our void inspections and areas where we thought we could improve. Other Local Authority and Housing Association lettable standards were researched for examples of best practice before the compilation of our own standard.

### **4. Financial**

Having compiled the standard we believe the standard can be met within our existing resources of staff and budget. However, monitoring of these budgets will be carried out throughout the year on a quarterly basis to ascertain if this remains favourable or becomes adverse.

### **5. Tenant awareness of the standard**

To ensure that incoming tenants have an awareness of our lettable standard we propose that access to the document is available on our website. Also, a copy of the standard, which will be in leaflet form, will be given to the prospective tenant once the property has been offered and accepted by them. Upon signing the Tenancy Agreement there will be a copy of the standard along with a satisfaction survey. The standard will also be publicised in tenant publications such as "Tenants Talk", with the leaflet available on request and in reception areas of Taunton Deane Borough Council offices and housing surgeries.

### **6. Outcomes**

Once implementation has been agreed, we believe that receiving feedback whether this be positive or negative will be of great benefit to ensure we are constantly improving our services. It is therefore proposed to carry out spot checks whilst the void is in progress and/or when works have been finished. This will be set initially to 2 properties per week. We will also record feedback given from the satisfaction surveys to improve services and to report findings.

## **7. Timescales**

Following the boards agreement, the proposed timescales for implementation of the standard will be;

A 4-8 week period post decision to introduce the standard, during which time the leaflets will be produced and void inspection forms will be updated to reflect the standard.

A 4-8 week period post decision to introduce the satisfaction survey, during which time the questionnaire will be compiled and a spreadsheet created to capture the information for reporting.

An 8-12 week period post decision to commence spot checks on void properties.

Finally, it would be our intention to report back to the board after a period of 9 months post decision, with a progress report and after a period of 12 months post decision, a budget report taking into account a complete years budget spend.

## **8. Recommendations**

The board to recommend the implementation of the proposed Lettable Standard after taking into consideration the content of this report.

## **9. Contact Officers:**

Lisa West  
Rent, Recovery & Void Manager  
Tel 01823 356532  
l.west@tauntondeane.gov.uk