

# Wales Audit Office (WAO) Report – Inspection of the Management of Empty Council Homes – Recommendations & CCBC Action Plan Updated September 2010

<b>R1</b>	<b>Ensure all relet homes meet the targets set in the relet standard, measure compliance and regularly report performance to service users.</b>
-----------	---

	Actions/Tasks	Progress	Owner & Completion Date	Completion Date
1	Review offer procedure to evidence relet standard is provided at offer stage.	Offer procedure amended in October 2009 – Action completed. Lettings standard advice leaflet now provided to prospective tenants prior to acceptance of offer.	Debbie Bishop Area Housing Manager & Julie Reynolds Acting Area Housing Manager	Completed October 2009
2	Review sign up procedure to evidence acknowledgement to the tenant that the relet standard is met on relet, and where not, to show that the tenant has been advised why this is the case.	Sign up procedure amended in January 2010 – Action completed. Lettings standard advice leaflet now provided to new tenants on sign up & relet standard inspection form introduced for signing by ingoing tenant in acceptance and acknowledgement of the relet standard being met or otherwise.	Debbie Bishop Area Housing Manager & Julie Reynolds Acting Area Housing Manager	Completed January 2010
3	Devise proforma for tenant to sign & recording process to identify where the relet standard is not met.	Action completed as above.	Debbie Bishop Area Housing Manager & Julie Reynolds Acting Area Housing Manager	Completed January 2010
4	Amend property inspection form to include check box for confirming the relet standard has been met, or not.	Action completed. Inspection form amended to record this information.	Debbie Bishop Area Housing Manager & Julie Reynolds Acting Area Housing Manager	Completed October 2009
5	Devise checklist document for relet standard.	Action completed. Relet standard check list document introduced and included in procedures.	Debbie Bishop Area Housing Manager & Julie Reynolds Acting Area Housing Manager	Completed January 2010

6	Consider the use of Asset Management records for appropriate recording & monitoring purposes.	Action noted. Tender being prepared for the purchase of an Asset Management System.	Shaun Couzens Head of Building Maintenance, Christopher Francis Housing Strategy & Resources Manager, Rhys Lewis Housing IT and Performance Monitoring Manager	No immediate implementation proposed.
---	---	---	---	---------------------------------------

## Wales Audit Office (WAO) Report – Inspection of the Management of Empty Council Homes – Recommendations & CCBC Action Plan Updated September 2010

<b>R2</b>	<p><b>Develop a strategic plan for lettings and empty homes and introduce an effective performance management framework that includes as a minimum:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>A SMART outcome focussed action plan with milestones to enable an evaluation of progress;</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Traffic light information systems to highlight performance;</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Named officers with clear responsibilities;</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Clearly identified and available resources to support delivery of actions;</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Regular monitoring and evaluation to manage delivery; and</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Improved Performance Indicators (PIs) and measures of success to enable an evaluation of an achieved outcome to take place</b></li> </ul>	
-----------	--	--

	Actions/Tasks	Progress	Owner & Completion Date	Completion Date
1	Produce a draft lettings and empty homes strategic plan	Action partially completed. Draft lettings plan devised. Detailed statistics being produced for inclusion within the document.	Graham North Public Sector Housing Manager & Rhys Lewis IT and Performance Monitoring Manager	Work in progress - December 2010
2	Produce a performance management framework	Action completed. Framework document & structure flowchart produced.	Graham North Public Sector Housing Manager & Rhys Lewis IT and Performance Monitoring Manager	Completed June 2010

3	Review performance monitoring and measures of success	Action completed. New performance management reports and monitoring processes put in place from March 2010.	Graham North Public Sector Housing Manager & Rhys Lewis IT and Performance Monitoring Manager	Completed March 2010
4	Review operational structure and processes	Operational structure reviewed and confirmed, and processes improved with targets established for various stages.	Shaun Couzens Head of Building Maintenance & Graham North Public Sector Housing Manager	Completed March 2010

## Wales Audit Office (WAO) Report – Inspection of the Management of Empty Council Homes – Recommendations & CCBC Action Plan Updated September 2010

<b>R3</b>	<p><b>Introduce other options to improve performance including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Enforcing the notice period for properties where a tenancy is terminated without the statutory four weeks' notice being given;</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Undertaking preliminary voids work whilst the property is either still occupied or to charge the first four weeks void period to the late tenant account if the tenancy is vacated without notice or where a tenant has died;</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Pre-letting empty homes during the notice period;</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Carrying out non-essential repairs after the new tenant has moved into the dwelling;</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Introducing incentive schemes to encourage tenants to vacate properties in a timely manner and leave their home in a good condition to support quick re-letting; and</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Regularly run advertising campaigns in local press, use advertising boards in a property and consider implementing choice based lettings</b></li> </ul>	
-----------	--	--

	Actions/Tasks	Progress	Owner & Completion Date	Completion Date
1	Undertake housing and tenancy management review	Action completed. Review undertaken (e.g. new Offer Procedure document introduced).	Debbie Bishop Area Housing Manager & Julie Reynolds Acting Area Housing Manager	Completed January 2010

2	Further consultation is required for additional options	Tenants & Residents Forum (TRF) consultation undertaken in August 2010. Completion of action subject to Members at Scrutiny 7/9/10 accepting the recommendations from the TRF.	Graham North Public Sector Housing Manager, Debbie Bishop Area Housing Manager & Julie Reynolds Acting Area Housing Manager	Work in progress - October 2010
---	---	--	---	------------------------------------

# Wales Audit Office (WAO) Report – Inspection of the Management of Empty Council Homes – Recommendations & CCBC Action Plan Updated September 2010

<b>R4</b>	<p>Develop a comprehensive empty property policy and empty property procedure that covers both Housing and Building Maintenance services that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Has a clear service aim focussed on reducing the length of time properties are empty;</li> <li>◆ Removes duplication, inefficiencies and inconsistencies of current practises;</li> <li>◆ Identifies the void process path sequentially at all stages for both services;</li> <li>◆ Sets targets for each of the stages and reports performance against these;</li> <li>◆ Clarifies and sets out who is responsible for void in totality and who is responsible for each element individually;</li> <li>◆ Has performance against targets regularly reported; and</li> <li>◆ Has effective monitoring and evaluation taking place to address performance</li> </ul>	
-----------	---	--

	Actions/Tasks	Progress	Owner & Completion Date	Completion Date
1	Develop combined management, repairs and maintenance document	Action ongoing – BM and HM collaborating & a document being drafted.	Paul Smythe Building Maintenance Manager & Julie Reynolds Acting Area Housing Manager	Work in progress - December 2010
2	Review performance monitoring/recording systems	Action completed. New performance management reports and monitoring processes put in place from March 2010.	Paul Smythe Building Maintenance Manager & Julie Reynolds Acting Area Housing Manager	Completed March 2010
3	Review roles and responsibilities	Framework document and structure flow-chart produced. Roles & responsibilities confirmed.	Paul Smythe Building Maintenance Manager & Julie Reynolds Acting Area Housing Manager	Completed June 2010

## Wales Audit Office (WAO) Report – Inspection of the Management of Empty Council Homes – Recommendations & CCBC Action Plan Updated September 2010

<b>R5</b>	<p><b>Introduce service standards for contractors and regularly measure compliance.</b></p> <p><b>These should include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Standards of customer care such as keeping to appointments, keeping the site tidy, controlling noise etc;</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Vetting of financial standing, tax and VAT status;</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Promoting good health and safety practices;</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Requiring the use of warranty schemes;</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Ensuring that adequate insurance is held; and</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Requiring references</b></li> </ul>	
-----------	---	--

	Actions/Tasks	Progress	Owner & Completion Date	Completion Date
1	Review procedures and tender documentation	Action completed. Recommendation considered and confirmed appropriate measures are in place.	Shaun Couzens Head of Building Maintenance & Paul Smythe Building Maintenance Manager	Completed June 2010
2	Review contractor monitoring systems	Action completed. Recommendation considered and confirmed appropriate measures are in place.	Shaun Couzens Head of Building Maintenance & Paul Smythe Building Maintenance Manager	Completed June 2010

## Wales Audit Office (WAO) Report – Inspection of the Management of Empty Council Homes – Recommendations & CCBC Action Plan Updated September 2010

<b>R6</b>	<p><b>Develop effective systems to manage the Building Maintenance Operatives and contractors including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ <b>Monitoring the level of variations by assessing increases in cost by contractor, the number of variations per job and the reasons for variations;</b></li> <li>♦ <b>Formally recording the outcome of all post-inspections; and</b></li> <li>♦ <b>Providing formal feedback to contractors on their performance covering key issues such as client satisfaction, level &amp; acceptability of variations, right first-time work, post-inspection assessment &amp; completion within budget &amp; on time.</b></li> </ul>	
-----------	---	--

	Actions/Tasks	Progress	Owner & Completion Date	Completion Date
1	Review systems for DLO operatives and external contractors, in line with relet standards and WHQS	Action completed. Recommendation considered and confirmed appropriate systems are in place within existing practices which are also addressed under recommendation 1 above.	Shaun Couzens Head of Building Maintenance & Paul Smythe Building Maintenance Manager	Completed June 2010
2	Review for any policy changes	Action completed. Recommendation considered and confirmed appropriate systems are in place within existing practices which are also addressed under recommendation 1 above.	Shaun Couzens Head of Building Maintenance & Paul Smythe Building Maintenance Manager	Completed June 2010
3	Contractors monitoring forms in place and tenant satisfaction cards issued to each tenant	Action completed. Recommendation considered and confirmed appropriate systems are in place within existing practices which are also addressed under Recommendation 1 above.	Shaun Couzens Head of Building Maintenance & Paul Smythe Building Maintenance Manager	Completed June 2010

## Wales Audit Office (WAO) Report – Inspection of the Management of Empty Council Homes – Recommendations & CCBC Action Plan Updated September 2010

<b>R7</b>	<b>The BMS should perform a reconciliation of those asset numbers in the gas-servicing contract with the main housing database Academy to provide assurance that all assets are accounted for and the Council’s statutory obligations are being fulfilled.</b>	
-----------	--	--

	Actions/Tasks	Progress	Owner & Completion Date	Completion Date
1	Carry out reconciliation.	Action completed. Reconciliation undertaken and no changes required. Database found to be correct.	Rhys Lewis Housing IT & Performance Monitoring Manager	Completed January 2010

## Wales Audit Office (WAO) Report – Inspection of the Management of Empty Council Homes – Recommendations & CCBC Action Plan Updated September 2010

<b>R8</b>	<b>The Council should reappraise its gas servicing contract management arrangements to ensure they are less onerous for the Council such as:</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Contractors managing the first 3 unsuccessful appointments before handing back to Council</li> <li>◆ Use of electronic transmission of completed CP12s and electronic updates and</li> <li>◆ Use of evening and weekend appointments when necessary</li> </ul>	

	Actions/Tasks	Progress	Owner & Completion Date	Completion Date
1	Review procedures	Procedures reviewed but existing contract arrangements preclude changes at this time. This is not an empty homes activity but will be considered with a view to incorporating the recommendations when the new contracts are being formulated.	Mark Williams Building Consultancy Manager	Completed January 2010



**Wales Audit Office (WAO) Report – Inspection of the Management of Empty Council Homes  
– Recommendations & CCBC Action Plan Updated September 2010**

<b>R9</b>	<b>The BMS should perform routine system integrity and data validation tests to ensure all gas servicing reports are accurate</b>	
-----------	---	--

<b>C</b>	<b>Actions/Tasks</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Owner &amp; Completion Date</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1	Review procedures	Action completed. Procedure reviewed and changes made to the systems and resources to address this recommendation.	Mark Williams Building Consultancy Manager	Completed January 2010

**Wales Audit Office (WAO) Report – Inspection of the Management of Empty Council Homes  
– Recommendations & CCBC Action Plan Updated September 2010**

<b>R10</b>	<b>The BMS should conduct tenant surveys to assess the quality of service being delivered by gas servicing contractors. This will inform any assessment of value for money from the contracts and identify any quality issues.</b>	
------------	--	--

	<b>Actions/Tasks</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Owner &amp; Completion Date</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1	Introduce a survey for existing tenants	To be implemented from 01/04/10. This is not an empty homes activity.	Mark Williams Building Consultancy Manager	Completed February 2010

## Wales Audit Office (WAO) Report – Inspection of the Management of Empty Council Homes – Recommendations & CCBC Action Plan Updated September 2010

<b>R11</b>	<b>Increase public awareness of the importance of gas servicing and the level of service tenants can reasonably expect from gas servicing contractors. The Service could use existing Council media such as any tenant magazines, News Line and the Council web site.</b>	
------------	---	--

	Actions/Tasks	Progress	Owner & Completion Date	Completion Date
1	Previous publicity undertaken and continuing	Action completed. Advert requested for Newline and next available Tenants Newsletter. Adverts to be published yearly to continue to raise awareness.	Mark Williams Building Consultancy Manager	Completed February 2010

## Wales Audit Office (WAO) Report – Inspection of the Management of Empty Council Homes – Recommendations & CCBC Action Plan Updated September 2010

<b>R12</b>	<b>Attach flags/alerts to tenant records to indicate when a tenant is either vulnerable or disabled. This should be communicated to contractors since their approach to making and keeping the appointment may have to be varied.</b>	
------------	---	--

C	Actions/Tasks	Progress	Owner & Completion Date	Completion Date
1	Undertake provisional research	Action completed. Provisional research completed. Outcome was that a comprehensive tenant profile survey is required. There are resource & IT implications, which will require to be addressed. As an interim arrangement current relevant data available is provided to the in-house and external contractors where recorded & where possible.	Rhys Lewis Housing IT and Performance Monitoring Manager	Completed March 2010

2	Undertake options appraisal	Research into the advantages of tenant profiling are under consideration & to be reviewed & prioritised by the Manager.	Rhys Lewis Housing IT and Performance Monitoring Manager	No immediate implementation proposed.
---	-----------------------------	---	--	---

## Wales Audit Office (WAO) Report – Inspection of the Management of Empty Council Homes – Recommendations & CCBC Action Plan Updated September 2010

<b>R13</b>	Establish a contractor's forum to address performance issues, encourage shared learning and seek contractor feedback on options to improve delivery of void works.	
------------	--	--

	Actions/Tasks	Progress	Owner & Completion Date	Completion Date
1	Consult external contractors on the benefits of a forum	Letter to be sent to contractors in May 2010. Letters sent to contractors to establish interest in holding a forum, but responses were not in favour of this recommendation. Feedback is provided however, on a one-to-one basis.	Shaun Couzens Head of Building Maintenance	Completed May 2010

## Wales Audit Office (WAO) Report – Inspection of the Management of Empty Council Homes – Recommendations & CCBC Action Plan Updated September 2010

<b>R14</b>	Introduce an effective performance management framework that includes, as a minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Milestones to enable an evaluation of progress;</li> <li>◆ Regular monitoring and evaluation to manage delivery; and</li> <li>◆ Improved performance indicators and measures of success to enable an evaluation of an achieved outcome to take place.</li> </ul>	
------------	--	--

C	Actions/Tasks	Progress	Owner & Completion Date	Completion Date
1	Produce a framework within strategy functions	See Recommendation & action at Recommendation 2, point 2 above.	Graham North Public Sector Housing Manager	Completed June 2010

## Wales Audit Office (WAO) Report – Inspection of the Management of Empty Council Homes – Recommendations & CCBC Action Plan Updated September 2010

<b>R15</b>	<b>Improve the value for money of the service by regularly benchmarking the costs of voids with other housing organisations and identifying options to improve spend and performance.</b>	
------------	---	--

	<b>Actions/Tasks</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Owner &amp; Completion Date</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1	Continue benchmarking within 'HouseMark'	Action completed. Housemark benchmarking in place. Reviewed annually.	Rhys Lewis Housing IT & Performance Monitoring Manager	Already in place.





