



## CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 5TH SEPTEMBER 2013

**SUBJECT: EMPTY PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 In response to a request from the Caerphilly Homes Task Group, this is an information report providing an overview of void property performance management and the empty property management process.

### **2. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 2.1 **National Housing Strategy:** The Welsh Assembly Government's National Housing Strategy 'Better Homes for People in Wales' (2001) has key themes of quality and choice. The WAG vision for housing "*wants everyone in Wales to have the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing*".
- 2.2 **Community Strategy:** Living Environment Objective A: "*Encourage the development and maintenance of high quality, well designed and efficient, sustainable homes and residential environments that can meet all needs*" which promotes the vision of good quality housing.
- 2.3 **Local Housing Strategy 2008-2013:** Property Theme: "*Providing the opportunity for everyone to live in affordable, sustainable, good quality housing, regardless of tenure.*" And links specifically to Strategic Aim 6: Housing Management, "*To provide good quality, well-managed homes in communities where people want to live, and offer people housing choices which meet their needs and aspirations.*"

### **3. EMPTY PROPERTY MANAGEMENT PROCESS**

- 3.1 The empty property management process was reported on to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group on 21st February 2013 (see Appendix 1). The related documents referred to within the report are available on the Staff Intranet and the council website. As a result the Repairs & Improvement Group are reviewing the Lettings Standard and this work is currently ongoing. The Empty Property Management Group continues to meet quarterly to focus on void performance and management issues arising.

### **4. GENERAL PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS 2012/13**

- 4.1 The figures within this report have been compared with the performance from the year before and a trend table provided (see Appendix 2). The data identifies the number of new vacancies, the number of re-lets, the number of transfers, and also the average vacancy period.

- 4.2 Pending voids are monitored to allow for an early indication of new voids expected.
- 4.3 The reporting technology has allowed us to produce a variety of regular reports, which enables us to identify under-performance on individual voids and provides targets for each stage of the void process.
- 4.4 At the year-end 2012/13 a total of 941 voids were recorded. The stock turnover for CCBC as a whole equated to 8.6% a slight decrease compared with 2011/12 when the stock turnover was recorded as 8.8%.
- 4.5 Current housing stock totals 10,912 properties. The figure of 941 vacant properties to stock ratio of 1% falls within the 2% vacant property stock ratio, recommended by the Audit Commission.
- 4.6 With the Area and Neighbourhood Housing Offices combined, including long term voids and low demand properties, the overall average vacancy period for 2012/13 recorded an improvement in performance. A total of 5.18 weeks average vacancy period was confirmed for the year, which is a decrease from the previous year when 6.41 weeks were recorded.
- 4.7 The relets for the year totalled 910, an increase of 14 compared with 2011/12.
- 4.8 Readily available homes (previously known as 'hard to let') are properties recorded on the IT system as low demand and appear on an automated report to advertise them as 'Properties for Rent'. The list is circulated as widely as possible to promote early re-let and sent to applicants with various pieces of correspondence. For CCBC as a whole, 69 properties were categorised and re-let as low demand during 2012/13, which is an increase of 3 compared with 2011/12 and equates to 7.58% of the re-lets for the year.
- 4.9 Of the 3 Area Housing Offices, for the 4th year running, the Eastern Valleys Area Housing Office re-let the highest number of low demand properties totalling 49, which represented 15.41% of their total lettings. The Upper Rhymney Valley Area Housing Office, including the Gilfach Bargoed Estate recorded the second highest number at 16. The Lower Rhymney Valley Area Housing Office relet 4 low demand properties which was the lowest number of relets of low demand properties for this year for an Area Housing Office. The Lansbury Park and Graig Y Rhacca Neighbourhood Housing offices did not record any low demand relets.
- 4.10 This year saw a slight increase in transfers with a total of 159 transfers recorded compared with 144 for 2011/12. This equates to 17% of the relets for the year. Of the Area Housing Offices, the highest number of transfers was recorded in the Eastern Valleys Area Housing Office area (61). Of the Neighbourhood Housing Offices, Lansbury Park recorded the highest number of transfers (16).

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications. This report is for information purposes only.

## **6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 This report is for information purposes, so the Council's Eqla process does not need to be applied.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no financial implications. This report is for information purposes only.

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no personnel implications. This report is for information purposes only.

## **9. CONSULTATIONS**

9.1 The views of consultees listed below are incorporated within the report.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 The contents this report be noted.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.

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Mandy Betts, Community Participation Officer  
Rhys Lewis, Systems & Performance Manager  
Trudi Widdison, Systems & Performance Analyst  
Cllr Gerald Jones, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing

### **Background Papers:**

Empty Property Management Procedures (available on the Caerphilly County Borough Council Intranet)

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 Report to CHTG 21st February 2013  
Appendix 2 10-Year Trend Table