



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 3RD JULY 2014

SUBJECT: RE-LET STANDARD

REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information regarding the Re-let Standard for all council properties that has recently been reviewed.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Re-let Standard aims to ensure that all council properties are let to a good quality and consistent standard.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 **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*".
- 3.2 **The Single Integrated Plan 2013-2017** has a priority to: "Improve standards of housing and communities giving appropriate access to services across the county borough".
- 3.3 **Local Housing Strategy:** 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.*"

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The Re-let standard was last reviewed in January 2010. It resulted in a checklist being provided to all new tenants which set the property condition standard applied to all empty properties across the County Borough. This was developed in consultation with the then Tenants and Residents Forum.
- 4.2 The standard aims to set specified requirements that are to be applied consistently but it is accepted that due to the variety of property attributes and layouts it is not always possible to fully comply with the standard. In these cases the tenants are provided with reasons for this at the time of sign up.
- 4.3 As a result of the agreed improvement standard adopted for WHQS improvement works it was decided this was the right time for a further review of the re-let standard.

- 4.4 This latest revised standard was agreed with Tenants Representatives in March 2014 following a series of Repairs and Improvement meetings and including site visits to view some of our voids before and following any works of improvement.
- 4.5 The new standard now incorporates a number of changes that were proposed by Tenant Representatives and Officers. The main changes are to give an improved description of the works that will be undertaken when a property is void, but there are a few additions as below: See Appendix 1.
- Due to the improved external door specification checks are required on the additional fixtures i.e. letterbox cowl, safety chain, spy hole
 - All windows must be lockable with an appropriate key at the time of sign-up
 - When replacing internal doors if more than 50% per floor in the property all doors on that floor should be replaced to the new specification
 - Fit door stops where appropriate
 - Where kitchen units require replacement the units will be replaced on a like for like basis (no odd units should be installed)
 - Renew WC seat
 - Replace existing solid fuel appliance or gas back boiler with new combination condensing boiler and replace radiators where appropriate if gas supply available and block up fireplace.
 - Previous tenants alterations and/or fixtures and fittings can be left providing the new tenant take on maintenance responsibility.
- 4.6 All prospective tenants are offered a viewing of the property at the offer stage and are advised of what work has been planned before the property will be ready for letting. On accepting the property the new tenants are provided with a Relet Check List to confirm the standard has been met.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is not needed because the issues covered are for information purposes only, therefore the Council's full EIA process does not need to be applied.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There is likely to be an increase in the overall cost of repairs undertaken to void properties but it should not be significant. Normally expenditure on voids goes up and down either with volume or the numbers classed as major voids rather than normal voids.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct personnel implications other than officer time in undertaking end of tenancy inspections.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The Relet Standard has been reviewed in consultation with the Repairs and Improvements Working Group which comprises Tenant Representatives and Officers.
- 8.2 All views and comments received as part of the consultation process have been incorporated within the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The attached re-let standard incorporates minor changes and the views of the Task Group are invited prior to a decision being taken under officer delegated powers to adopt the updated standard.
- 9.2 The standard will be reviewed bi-annually or sooner if circumstances require, and further reports will be submitted to the Caerphilly Homes Task Group when necessary.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To ensure the Task Group has the opportunity to comment on the re-let standard.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Housing Acts 1985, 1996 and 2004.

Author: Debbie Bishop - Area Housing Manager, bishod@caerphilly.gov.uk)
Consultees: Shaun Couzens – Chief Housing Officer
Graham North - Public Sector Housing Manager
Paul Smythe – Housing Repairs Operations Manager
Phil Davy – Head of Programmes
Councillor Gerald Jones - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member (Housing)
Lesley Allen – Principal Accountant
Area/Neighbourhood Managers
Mandy Betts - Tenancy and Community Involvement Manager
Repairs and Improvement Group Tenant Representatives

Appendices:
Appendix 1 of 1 Re-let Standard