



## VOID LETTABLE STANDARD DRAFT

Document Status: Draft

Originator: Tina Mustafa

Updated:

Owner: Robert Barnes

Version: 1

Date: 25.01.18

**Approved by Corporate Management Team / Cabinet**

Document Status: Draft

Originator: Tina Mustafa

### **Revision History**

**Revision Date Version Control Summary of changes**

02.11.17 Draft

30.11.17 Material Changes following initial draft report 021117

01.12.17 Discussions RB;AB;JM;TMM and JoMu – Amended

25.01.18 Draft Lettable standard (Appendix to Repairs Policy) for consultation

TAMWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL  
VOID PROPERTIES – DRAFT LETTABLE STANDARD  
25<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2018

1. Aims & purpose. 2
2. General. 2
3. Decoration. 3
4. Floors. 3
5. Walls and Ceilings. 4
6. Windows and External Entrance Doors. 4
7. Internal Joinery Fixtures and Fittings. 5
8. Kitchen Units. 5
9. Bathroom and W/C's. 6
10. Tiling and Splashbacks. 6
11. Plumbing and Heating Systems. 6

## 1. Aims & Purpose.

### 1.1. This guide is intended to set out the Councils service offer for its empty properties and aims to

- Provide a consistent and clear service standard for its empty homes
- Achieve the Decent Homes standard , reletting homes that are fit for purpose and provide modern facilities
- Set out what tenants' can expect when they move in

### 1.2. A guide to the terms used in this lettable standard are set out below:-

- Void - A home which is empty following a tenancy transfer or as a result of the previous tenant(s) leaving
- Void Period – the time between lettings; from when the previous tenant(s) hands the keys in to when the new tenant receives the keys
- Lettable standard – minimum standard that a void should be re-let with

### 1.3. The following regulatory & legal requirements affect and determine standards within lettable standard

- The Gas Safety (installation and Use) Regulations 1998 & 2004
- The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- The Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations 2007
- The HOME standard as detailed in the Landlords Regulatory Code by the Homes Communities Agency 2012
- A DECENT Home; Definitions and Guidance by the DCLG 2006 as amended
- Electrical Installations BS7671;2008 Wiring Regulations

## 2. **General Aims of the lettable standard.**

### 2.1. All the Councils homes will be re-let and will:-

- Meet or Exceeds the Governments Decent Homes Standard
- Comply with all relevant H&S policies and regulations
- Have adequate facilities
- Have modern and suitable kitchen and bathroom facilities
- Have a reasonable level of thermal insulation

- Have satisfied an empty property inspection to ensure it is free from repair and the incoming tenant is aware of their repairing rights and obligations
- 2.1. All properties will have a full installation inspection undertaken in accordance with the NICEIC periodic inspection procedure. Any work, which is required to reach a "satisfactory" rating, will be carried out. Smoke detection equipment will be tested and repaired/replaced as necessary.
  - 2.2. Gas installation will be fully tested and repaired/capped off as necessary.
  - 2.3. External paving will be rectified to ensure safe ingress and egress of dwelling through recognised routes; otherwise required work will be identified and ordered as routine maintenance.
  - 2.4. Repairs to roofing, guttering or the like where water ingress compromises the integrity of the property will be carried out. Otherwise required work will be identified and ordered as routine maintenance.
  - 2.5. All general rubbish left in the property, loft, stores, etc will be removed from the property. General rubbish outside the property will also be removed.
  - 2.6. Alterations, fixtures and fittings by previous tenants will be left in-situ if they are safe and conform to current regulations. All items shall be identified on the fit for letting form. Where previous tenant's alterations remain in the property they will in future only be repaired to the standard repairs specification should a repair be needed. If in doubt remove.
  - 2.7. Gas or electrical appliances installed as an enhancement by previous tenants will be removed unless they appear to be high standard and tests show the appliance to be safe and up to current regulations. The appliance will be noted on the fit for letting form and the tenant informed that repairs would not be carried out by Tamworth Borough Council but removal can be undertaken.
  - 2.8. All properties will be thoroughly cleaned and the toilet sealed following cleaning with a sterile wrap.
  - 2.9. Where animal fleas are present, Environmental Health will be contacted and the property will be fumigated and checked to ensure infestation has been eradicated.

2.10. Where structural or other major defects are identified, the property will be taken out of the void system and fully inspected by the Housing Investment Officer/Asset Management Unit.

2.11. Major works will be undertaken where necessary and timescales agreed with the asset management and repairs teams to minimise applicants waiting time

### **3. Decoration.**

3.1. Decoration will be inspected and :-

For Sheltered and adapted properties an assessment will be undertaken to determine if it requires re-decoration – full decorating works will be undertaken dependant on condition of the property and vulnerability of incoming tenant(s)

&/or

For all other General Needs re-lettings a decoration voucher scheme is in operation. The voucher (currently £50 per room) will be issued based on condition and dependant on agreement with incoming tenants'

3.2. Artex on walls will be removed where it is deemed dangerous. If it is of a high standard the artex may be retained but must be identified on the fit for letting form. Please note that procedures relating to the control of asbestos may apply.

### **4. Floors.**

4.1. Solid floors should be sound and cleanable. Loose debris should be removed and any missing or broken floor tiles replaced and matched with existing as far as possible.

4.2. Timber and chipboard floors should be sound, even and cleanable.

4.3. Missing boards will be replaced. Loose and/or creaking floorboards shall, where practicable, be re-secured to joists.

4.4. Flooring that is stained or contaminated through human or animal misuse shall

be cleaned and where necessary painted and/or sealed with floor paint  
If the staining is so extensive as to make this impractical, it shall be renewed.

- 4.5. Sound and whole carpet grippers will be left in place for new tenant.
- 4.6. Under normal circumstances all carpets will be removed. However, if the carpet is of a particularly high standard it may be left in situ and recorded on the fit for letting form and gifted to the incoming tenant(s) without maintenance liability by the Council.

## **5. Walls and Ceilings.**

- 5.1. Loose or defective boarding to walls or ceilings shall be removed, replaced and the walls/ceiling skimmed to match if possible. A decoration allowance may be required.
- 5.2. Defective plasterwork to wall or ceilings will be hacked off, removed and re-plastered to match existing. Drill holes and minor cracks will be filled as part of the decoration order.
- 5.3. Polystyrene tiles will be removed from kitchen ceilings (and walls).
- 5.4. Where artex on ceilings exists but requires the procedure for the control of asbestos will be invoked subject to positive survey results. If a negative result is found the ceiling can be repaired or renewed as normal.

## **6. Windows and External Entrance Doors.**

- 6.1. Windows shall be checked for operation and security, repaired as necessary. Broken or cracked glass will be replaced in accordance with repairs policy timescales.
- 6.2. Windows requiring replacement will be made safe and secure until they are replaced.
- 6.3. When properties have windows that have been boarded over either prior to the property becoming void or during the void period, the re-glazing will not be undertaken until the property is fit for letting and the boarding removed on occupation. Such instances will be recorded on the fit for letting form.
- 6.4. External doors will be sound, operational and secure with at least two keys provided per lock. A lock change is required for all doors and the full set be returned to the Void & Allocation team when the works have been completed and property is fit for re-letting .
- 6.5. Windows/doors require special fittings but delivery times prevent them from being fitted during the void time-scale, alternative arrangements shall be made to ensure that the window/door is operative and secure.

The proposed replacement of the fixtures and fittings will be noted on the fit for letting form.

- 6.6. All fire doors shall be checked for operation, shall close securely into rebates not less than 12mm and shall be fitted with a functioning self-closing device e.g.: Perko, rising butts, etc.

## **7. Internal Joinery Fixtures and Fittings.**

- 7.1. All doors shall be fully operational and may be eased or re-hung as appropriate. Damaged or missing handles and other fittings shall be replaced as necessary. Bolts and locks on internal doors shall be removed. Small holes in doors shall be filled or repaired, large holes will require a replacement door. Doors shall include adjustment to clear carpet. This work may be carried out under routine maintenance.
- 7.2. Skirting boards, door linings, architraves and mouldings that are missing, loose or damaged will be re-fixed, repaired or replaced as necessary. This work may be carried out under routine maintenance.
- 7.3. Stairs handrails, banisters and balustrades shall be sound and safe. Missing balusters or handrails will be replaced. Split or badly damaged treads, nosings or handrails will be repaired or replaced as necessary. Broken, cracked or missing nosings will be replaced.

## **8. Kitchen Units.**

- 8.1. Work surfaces shall be sound and cleanable. Surfaces that are damaged, badly scratched or scored and which could be prejudicial to health in the preparation of food will be replaced.
- 8.2. Unit drawers and doors shall be fully operational. Missing or damaged catches, handles or runners will be replaced. This work may be identified at the void property and carried out under routine maintenance.
- 8.3. Internal surfaces of units/drawers shall be sound and cleanable. If damaged or staining is excessive they shall be re-coated or replaced.
- 8.4. Where generally speaking the kitchen units and cupboards are not sound and cleanable they will be replaced. However, if the kitchen can be reasonably cleaned and is serviceable for a limited period, it shall be cleaned and identified to be replaced on the kitchen refurbishment programme, this will be identified on the fit for letting form. If the new kitchen units are required the standard of replacement shall be to the kitchen refurbishment standard. A common sense approach should be exercised.

## **9. Bathroom and W/C's.**

- 9.1. Sanitary ware shall be sound, cleanable and sealed to adjacent surfaces.
- 9.2. Heavily stained w/c pans, seats and washbasins will be replaced.
- 9.3. Heavily stained or badly chipped/cracked baths that cannot be cleansed to the normal standards will be replaced.
- 9.4. Missing plugs and/or chains will be replaced.
- 9.5. W.C. seats shall be replaced and left with wrappers on

## **10. Tiling and Splashbacks.**

- 10.1. All damaged and missing tiles will be replaced and associated plaster/wall finishes reinstated.
- 10.2. A minimum of one course of tiles shall be fitted above all worktops, sink units, baths and basins. This work will be identified and carried out under routine maintenance.

## **11. Plumbing and Heating Systems.**

- 11.1. All internal leaks will be repaired. Leaking overflows affecting the structure of the property will be rectified.
- 11.2. All taps shall be tested to ensure they function correctly. Dripping taps will have new washers replaced. Faulty taps will be repaired or replaced as necessary.
- 11.3. Cisterns will be tested for operation and repaired if required.
- 11.4. Loose pipe-work shall be re-clipped if in vulnerable position, but will be carried out under routine maintenance.
- 11.5. Existing washing machine taps and wastes will be repaired or replaced as necessary. Where washing machine taps and waste are not in situ, they an outlet will be provided.
- 11.6. Where there is a risk of frost damage, all systems will be drained down and only reinstalled once the property is fit for letting. This shall be recorded on the fit for letting form and refilling arranged with new tenant on the collection of the keys.

## **12. Key and Revised Void Procedure**

- 12.1. The incentive of £50 will be paid to the outgoing tenant if the keys are returned, the property satisfies an inspection and is free from rubbish.



Key recipient must ensure key receipt is completed and that two front and rear door are handed in. If all keys are not present, tenant must be advised that they will be charged for the changing of locks. This will not be applicable in the case of the tenancy terminating because the tenant is deceased.

- 12.2. The person handing the keys in should confirm if they are aware of any items left in the premises and again be advised that a charge will be levied for the disposal of these goods.

#### **14. Monitoring and Review**

- 14.1. The lettable standard will be reviewed and scrutinised by the Councils Tenant Consultative Group (TCG) or as delegated to its sub-groups on an annual basis and formally reviewed every 3 years or as regulatory or legislation requires.
- 14.2. Performance will be monitored through regular satisfaction monitoring as part of the approach detailed by the Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team
- 14.3. Performance will also be featured in the Councils landlord/tenants' annual report
- 14.4. The void lettable standard will be produced as an 'easy read' guide and provided at tenancy offer as well as sign up.
- 14.5. Tenant Inspectors will randomly and regularly audit a % of voids against the lettable standard and findings will be reported in the satisfaction reports