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COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday, 26 September 2017

Time: 6.00 pm,

Location: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Contact: Lisa Jerome

Tel: 01438 242203

Members: Councillors: S Mead (Chair), M Notley (Vice-Chair), D Bainbridge, J Brown, E Connolly, L Harrington, J Mead, A Mitchell CC, C Saunders and G Snell

AGENDA

PART 1

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES - 13 JULY 2017

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Community Select Committee held on 13 July 2017.

Minutes attached

3. HOUSING ALLOCATIONS REVIEW

The Committee will receive a presentation from officers which will provide information that Members have previously requested. The Committee will interview Housing officers regarding the review into Housing Allocations. The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Older People and a recently housed tenant have also been invited to the meeting as witnesses.

Report and Appendices attached

4. REVISED ALLOCATIONS REVIEW SCOPING DOCUMENT

To note the revised scoping document following Members comments from the meeting held on 13 July 2017.

Report attached

5. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

To consider any Part 1 business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

6. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider the following motions –

1. That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

2. That Members consider the reasons for the following reports being in Part II and determine whether or not maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

7. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

To consider any Part II business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

Agenda Published **18 September 2017**

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Thursday 13 July 2017

Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Councillors: D Bainbridge, E Connolly, M Notley (Vice-Chair in the Chair), L Harrington, J Mead, A Mitchell CC and G Snell.

Councillor Jeanette Thomas was in attendance.
Start/End Time: Start Time: 6:00 pm
End Time: 7:40 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jim Brown, Sarah Mead (Chair) and Chris Saunders.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES – 20 JUNE 2017

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Community Select Committee held on 20 June 2017 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. FIRE SAFETY – PRESENTATION

The Committee received a presentation regarding fire safety in high rise buildings. The Head of Asset Management, Neil Wilson-Prior, provided the Committee with the presentation which outlined the measures that the Council had taken since the Grenfell Fire tragedy. The review addressed the fire safety measures in high rise residential tower blocks (over 18 metres high) including construction design and materials, fire doors, smoke detectors and dry-riser water appliances.

The Head of Asset Management reported that there would be a feasibility study carried out into sprinkler systems looking at the various systems available and their merits, suitability and potential costs. The feasibility study would report back on its findings when it is completed.

The presentation also addressed the Stay Put policy for tower blocks. In blocks that have not been clad with ACM materials it was still considered the safest advice to residents.

Staying compliant with the local Fire Safety Officer's advice was vital to

keeping residents in our high rise buildings safe, this includes maintaining a regular inspection regime, keeping communal areas clear, maintaining the integrity of the building, including keeping any repair holes filled.

Weekly Fire Safety meetings will continue to take place for the foreseeable future. Officers were voluntarily sending samples of the materials used in a portion of high rise window frames to the Building Research Establishment (BRE) for testing as well as the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and will act on any findings. These panels were not the same as those which the DCLG were now testing on a national basis. However whilst officers were aware of the panels technical specifications for absolute assurance they had submitted them for testing.

Home visits had been carried out to all high rise residential towers where the Council was the Landlord. These visits had helped to assure residents of the safety of the blocks and were a good opportunity to pass on fire safety messages to all residents.

In response to a Member's question, the Head of Asset Management confirmed that officers would be setting up a safety group for tenants / leaseholders.

The Head of Asset Management also responded to questions on fire safety in Houses of Multiple Occupancy, and converted office blocks to residential dwellings.

It was **RESOLVED** that the presentation is noted.

4. APPLICATION OF THE HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

The Committee received a presentation from the Housing & Homeless Manager and the Assistant Director Housing & Investment on aspects of Housing Allocations that could be potential areas for the scrutiny review. In preparation for the meeting Officers had met with the Executive Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Older People who was also in attendance at the meeting.

The presentation outlined the following issues for possible scrutiny:

- Sheltered Criteria
- Under-occupiers
- Local Connection
- Local Residency – Private Rented Sector

Sheltered Criteria

Officers provided Members with information on the statistical performance of voids for Sheltered Accommodation since the new Housing Allocations policy of excluding homeowners from the register was implemented in January 2015. The issue that Members could scrutinise would be looking

at using the hard to let sheltered accommodation and using this to alleviate pressure on SBC stock as temporary or emergency housing for homeless households.

Under Occupiers

Officers stated that currently under-occupiers are effectively unable to bid under the current scheme, and they would recommend considering a priority banding for under occupiers to incentivise them to bid for smaller properties more suited to their needs. There were currently 155 Band F applicants seeking to downsize who could benefit from a change to the banding as well as a further 70 applicants in other bands who are also wishing to downsize. There are 270 SBC tenants in overcrowded conditions.

Local Connection & Local Residency Rules

Another area that needs looking at is the local connection rule. Currently the criteria state that applicants require a residency qualification of 5 years. There are situations where applicants take up a Private Rented Sector let just outside of the Borough as there is no suitable accommodation in the Borough but they are then penalised by being taken off the register even if they are outside of the area for just a few months.

Reconnection Worker

Officers provided the Committee with an update on the work of the Reconnection Worker since the post holder has been employed by the Council. In the six months since the post was established it has helped 103 households that would have been potentially homeless due to parental evictions.

Following the presentation Members agreed on the issues that the review should focus on and in addition the Committee received a submission from the Chair outlining the issues that she wished the Committee to consider as part of the review.

It was **RESOLVED** that

(1) The Housing Allocations presentation is noted; and
(2) The scope of the review as outlined in the scoping document is agreed with the following amendments:

(i) The review should focus on Sheltered Criteria & Under-Occupiers.

(ii) The objective of the scrutiny:

That the committee be satisfied that the allocations policy is being implemented effectively and serving the people on the waiting list according to the expectations of the council.

Aims:

- To establish whether the allocations policy is effective in housing residents according to the premise that members of each band/group are being given the opportunity of housing
- Whether the letting process is dealing accordingly with housing needs – evidence should be presented to the committee to show where the process is effective and where it is not. Should data need protecting this should be done leaving the case study details for analysis
- Whether the housing offered is fit for habitation/meets the needs of the resident (including sheltered housing)
- Identify any problems with allocations in order to inform changes needed to the policy

Evidence requested:

- Analysis of housing allocations for 2016 – 17 groups/bands/property/ waiting times
- Stage 1 to 3 complaints relating to allocations & lettings

Witnesses:

- A lettings officer
- Jaine Cresser
- Jeanette Thomas
- Ideally, recently housed tenants

(iii) The Scrutiny Officer agreed to redraft and circulate the scoping document to reflect the above amendments.

5. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

None

6. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Not required

7. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR



Allocations Review 2017

Data Analyses
September 2017

Priority Bandings Housed

Q 1 & Q 2 2017/18 (see hand-out for banding explanations)

Band	Priority	Quota % of Lettings	Actual %
Band A	Urgent priority	0.50%	0.48%
Band B	Very High priority	34%	41.43%
Band C	High priority	22%	16.19%
Band D	Medium priority	29%	13.33%
Band E	Low priority	0.50%	0.95%
Band F	No priority	0%	5.71%
Total		86%	78.09%
Factor			
Transfers no preference/direct lets		10%	4.76%
Temporary accommodation (non-secure) Inc. Wellfield		4%	17.14%

Waiting times

all bandings 2016/17 (properties let via Locata only)

Type / Size	Shortest wait	Longest wait	Average wait
Sheltered accomm.	4 weeks	17 years	25 months
Studio general needs	14 days	19 years	4 years
1-bed general needs	15 days	18 years	4 years
2-bed flat or maisonette	7 weeks	10 years	17 months
2-bed house	7 weeks	5 years	11 months
3-bed flat or maisonette	15 months	17 months	16 months
3-bed house	4 weeks	9 years	10 months
4-bed	3 months	9 years	3 years
5-bed	10 months	10 months	10 months

Applicants on Housing Register

Removal of applicants not meeting criteria

- Following implementation of policy Jan 2014, 2,536 applications were cancelled
- Number of live applications reduced to 2176
- By April 2015 number rose to 2422
- Total has remained around the 2500 mark (new applications and cancellations)
- Recent ongoing review has reduced list to 2317 (August 2017)

Sheltered Suitability

- Number of assessment: 153 between Jan 2016 – July 2017
- 138 Accepted, 15 Declined
- Of those declined 13 either had needs too great or did not require sheltered
- If placement did not attract support loss of income would be £17.70 per week
- Since the buyback policy was implemented 4 owner-occupiers have moved into SBC properties

Under-occupiers/Over-crowding

	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Total
Overcrowded needing 1 bed extra	2	15	38	106	6	32	199
Overcrowded needing 2 beds extra	0	4	21	0	0	6	31
Overcrowded needing 3 beds extra	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Overcrowded needing 4 beds extra	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Underoccupying needing 1 bed less	0	8	11	13	0	42	74
Underoccupying needing 2 beds less	0	7	17	16	0	64	104
Underoccupying needing 3 beds less	0	0	1	3	0	7	11
Underoccupying needing 4 beds less	0	0	0	0	0	2	2

Void expenditure

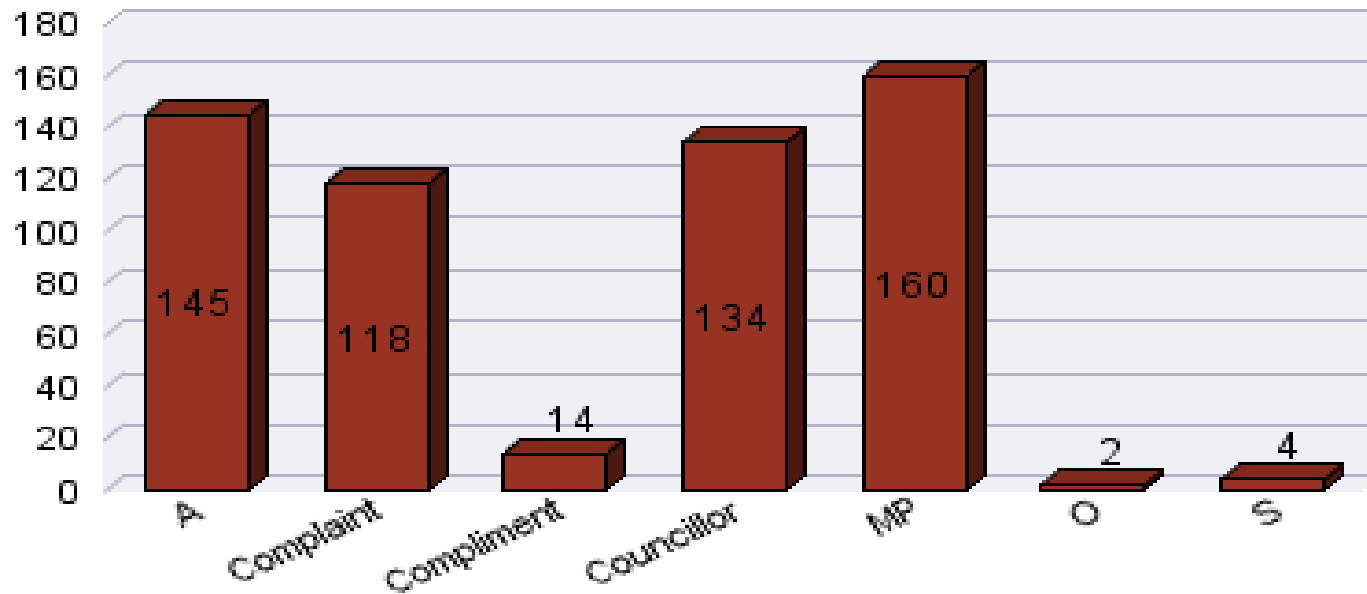
Standard of Voids

- 2016/17 an average of £2,000 was spent on voids repair costs
- A further £36,684 was spent on voids, which was recharged to tenants
- A further £227,238 was spent on void Decent Homes work, towards improving our stock

Feedback Analyses

Feedback report for Lettings 01 August 2015 to 31 July 2107

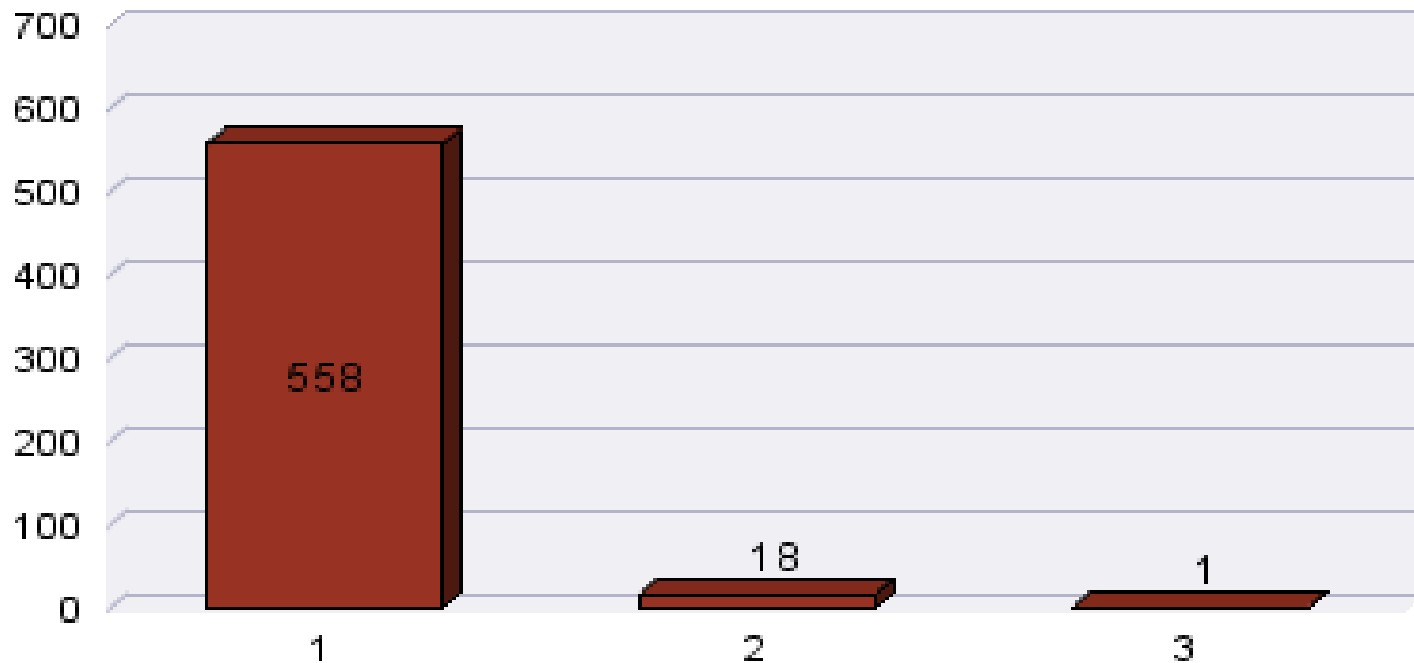
Received Cases - Type



Feedback Analyses

Feedback report for Lettings 01 August 2015 to 31 July 2017

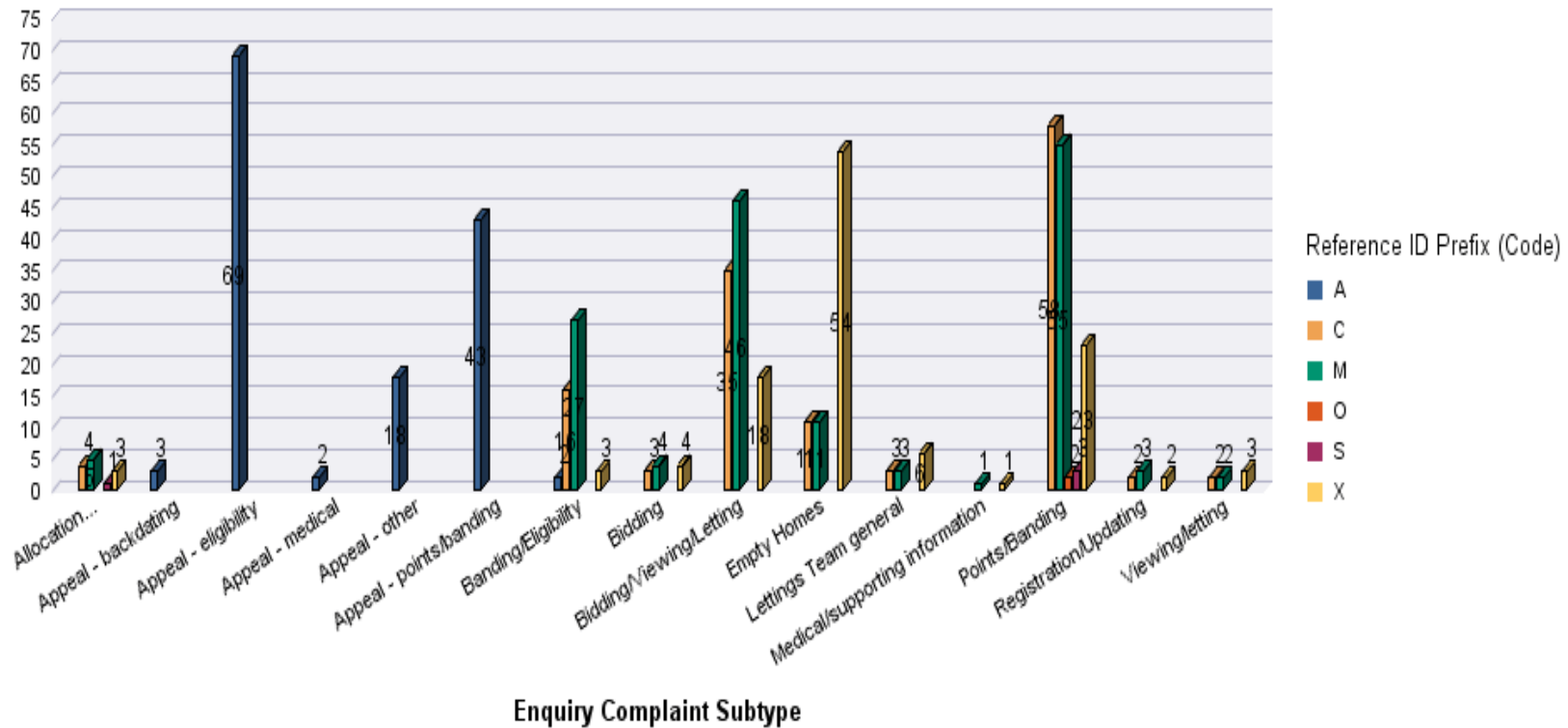
Received Cases - Stage



Feedback Analyses

Feedback report for Lettings 01 August 2015 to 31 July 2017

Closed Cases - Sub Type (Excluding Compliments)

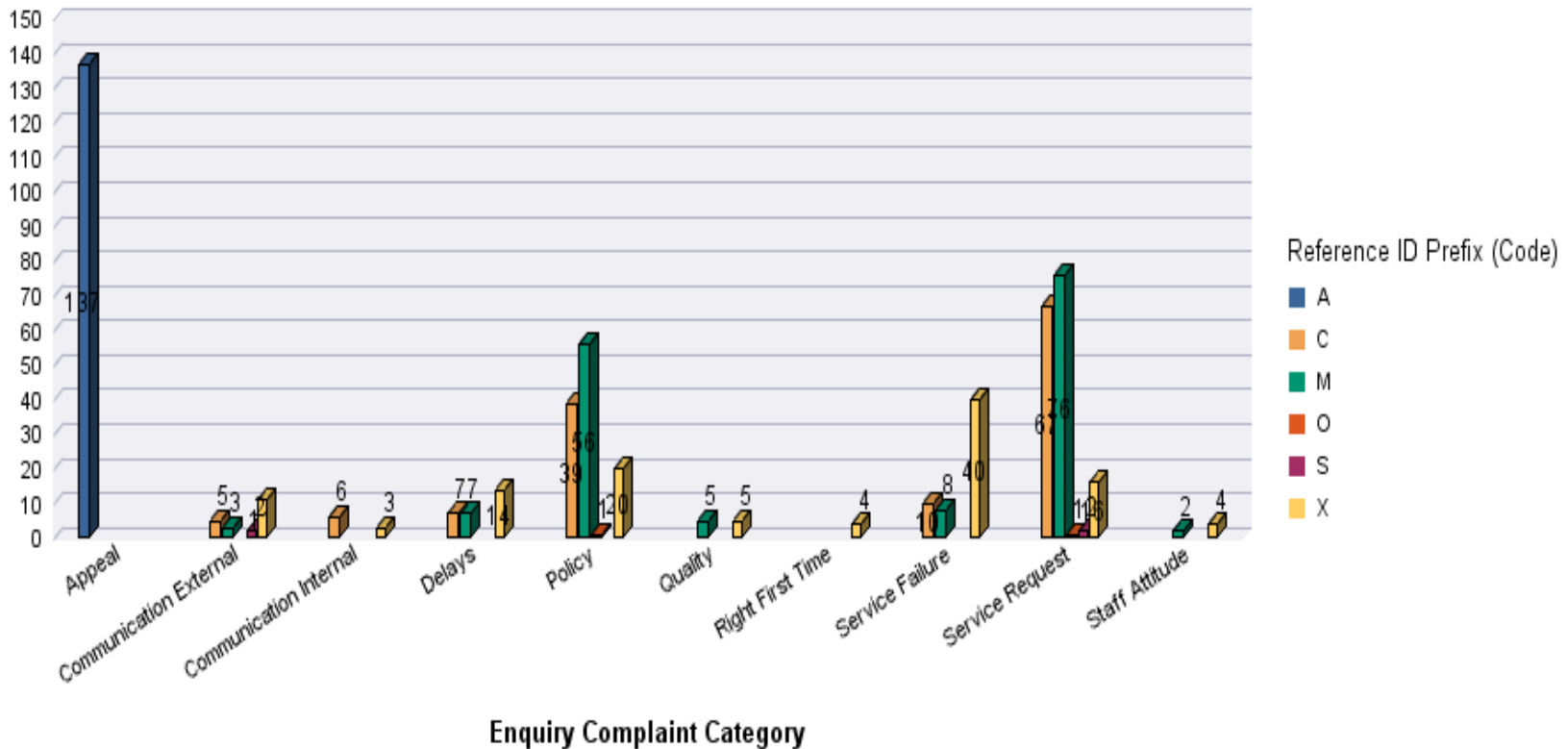


Feedback Analyses

Feedback report for Lettings 01 August 2015 to 31 July 2017

Closed Cases - Category (Excluding Compliments)

Page 17



Feedback Analyses

Feedback report for Lettings 01 August 2015 to 31 July 2017

Count	N/A	Not upheld	Partially upheld	Upheld	
Enquiry Outcome	297	169	33	51	1

Priority Bandings

<i>Band A Urgent Priority</i>	<i>Criteria</i>
Urgent medical factors (time-limited bidding)	The council's medical adviser has confirmed in writing that the applicant (or a member of their household) is suffering from a medical condition that will not improve and is so severe that it makes it impossible or near impossible for them to continue to occupy the current property. Continuing to occupy the current property will result in an intolerably low quality of life for the patient and the medical adviser has recommended urgent re-housing.
<i>Band B Very High Priority</i>	<i>Criteria</i>
Existing band C or D applicant <i>and</i> significant medical factors	The applicant has been placed in band C or D and has also been assessed by the council's medical adviser as having significant medical factors.
Very severe overcrowding (three bedrooms or more)	The applicant has dependant child/ren as permanent members of their household and is overcrowded by three or more bedrooms.
Severe overcrowding (two bedrooms) <i>and</i> sharing accommodation	The applicant has dependant child/ren as permanent members of their household, is overcrowded by two bedrooms; and is sharing accommodation with another household.
Succession to a tenancy (time-limited bidding)	The applicant is a statutory <u>or</u> discretionary successor to a tenancy and is required to move to a smaller property.
Senior officer housing needs panel award (time-limited bidding)	The applicant has been awarded greater priority by the senior officer housing needs panel. More information about the senior officer housing needs panel can be found at paragraph 35.
Un-adaptable property	The applicant is a council or registered provider tenant living in a home where an occupational therapist has recommended major adaptations but the landlord considers the property to be un-adaptable. This applies only to council and registered provider tenants living in Stevenage. Decisions will be made in line with the council's adaptations policy.
Category 1 HHSRS hazards – prohibition order	The applicant is a tenant of a private rented sector property where the council's environmental health section has confirmed the presence of a Category 1 hazard relating to disrepair (as defined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System) that is so serious that the council is considering the service of a closing or prohibition order.,

Special needs/ Care leavers/ 16/17 year olds (time-limited bidding) See paragraph 25	The applicant has a valid local connection and is: A care leaver who meets the criteria; A priority need 16/17 year old who meets the criteria; A person ready to move on from supported accommodation who meets the criteria
Statutory homelessness	The council has accepted a homelessness duty under section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and has placed the applicant in temporary accommodation.
Homeless prevention	The applicant has made active efforts to prevent their homelessness. A full housing needs appraisal has been carried out and established that the council would otherwise owe the full homelessness duty to the applicant and the council has negotiated for the applicant to remain in the existing accommodation in the short term to prevent homelessness. Homelessness prevention decisions are discretionary and can only be made by the Head of Housing Management.
Armed forces personnel with urgent housing needs (time-limited bidding) See paragraph 10	The applicant is a member or former member of the armed forces, with urgent housing needs as a result of serious injury, illness or disability and owed additional preference.
Re-housing guarantee (time-limited bidding) See paragraph 34	The applicant has re-applied for housing under a re-housing guarantee.
<i>Band C High Priority</i>	<i>Criteria</i>
Significant medical factors	The council's medical adviser has confirmed in writing that the applicant (or a member of their household) is suffering from a medical condition that means that it is difficult but not impossible for them to continue to occupy the current property. The medical adviser has recommended that early re-housing is required.
Existing band D applicant <i>and</i> moderate medical factors	The applicant has been placed in band D and has also been assessed by the council's medical adviser as having moderate medical factors.
High hardship, welfare or social grounds	The applicant needs to move in order to give or receive care or support or to access specialist medical treatment or specialist schooling; or to alleviate physical or social isolation by moving to sheltered housing.
Severe overcrowding (two bedrooms)	The applicant has dependant child/ren as permanent members of their household and is overcrowded by two bedrooms.
Overcrowding (one bedroom) <i>and</i> sharing accommodation	Applicant has dependant child/ren as permanent members of their household, is overcrowded by one bedroom; and is sharing accommodation with another household.
Opposite sex children	The applicant has two children of opposite sexes, at least

sharing a bedroom	one of whom is aged 11 or over, as permanent members of their household and having to share a bedroom.
Armed forces or former armed forces personnel with a local connection See paragraph 13.2	The applicant is a member or former member of the armed forces who has applied to join the housing register within five years of leaving the service AND had been resident in Stevenage continuously for at least five years prior to joining the services.
Band D Medium Priority	Criteria
Moderate medical factors	The council's medical adviser has confirmed in writing that the applicant (or a member of their household) is suffering from a medical condition that means that it is difficult but not impossible for them to continue to occupy the current property. The medical adviser has recommended that eventual re-housing is desirable.
Single people and couples with no dependant children as part of their household	The applicant is a single person or an eligible couple (with no dependant children living with them permanently) living with family or in any other shared accommodation including hostels and sofa-surfing, or are of no fixed address.
Overcrowding (one bedroom) or sharing accommodation	The applicant has dependant child/ren as permanent members of their household and is overcrowded by one bedroom; or is sharing accommodation with another household
Same sex children sharing a bedroom (11 year+ age gap)	The applicant has two dependant children of the same sex, with an age gap of 11 years or more, as permanent members of their household and having to share a bedroom
Single person living in a social housing studio flat for over four years or partner joined household	The applicant is the tenant of the council or a registered provider living in Stevenage and has: a) been the tenant of the studio flat for four years; or b) their eligible partner has joined the household as a permanent resident and a joint tenancy has been granted.
Single applicant or couple aged 60 or over housed in the private or social rented sector and with no other priority.	The applicant/s is aged 60 or over, housed in the social or private rented sector with no other priority, wishes to move to sheltered housing and has been assessed as suitable for sheltered housing.
Category 1 HHSRS hazards	The applicant is a tenant of a private rented sector property where the council's environmental health section have confirmed the existence of a category 1 hazard relating to disrepair as defined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, that is not so serious that the council is considering serving a closure or prohibition notice.
Band E Low Priority	Criteria

Moderate hardship, welfare or social needs	The applicant needs to move because the medical condition of a member of their household (not included in their application) is having a detrimental effect on the applicant or their household.
Armed forces or former armed forces personnel <i>without</i> a local connection. See paragraph 13.2	The applicant is a member or former member of the armed forces who has applied to join the housing register within five years of leaving the service BUT who was not resident in Stevenage continuously for at least five years prior to joining the services.
Family in flat – no overcrowding	The applicant has at least one dependant child aged 10 or under as a permanent member of their household, is living in a flat, but is not overcrowded.
Adequately housed in the private rented sector	The applicant is an assured shorthold tenant in the private rented sector, is adequately housed and has no other housing need.
Worsening housing circumstances	The applicant would otherwise be placed in a higher band because they have acted, or failed to act, in such a way as to worsen their housing circumstances.
Single person living in a social housing studio flat for under four years	The applicant is the tenant of the council or a registered provider studio flat in Stevenage for less than four years and is the sole occupant.
<i>Band F</i> <i>No Priority</i> Band F applicants are not entitled to be made an offer of accommodation under the terms of this allocations scheme and will be unable to bid under choice based lettings.	<i>Criteria</i>
Special needs/care leavers/16/17 year olds not ready for independent living	The applicant may meet the criteria for band B but has not yet been assessed as ready for independent living.
Existing tenant exercising their Right to Buy or Right to Acquire	The applicant is a council or registered provider tenant who has commenced the Right to Buy or Right to Acquire process to purchase their existing home.
Unresolved interest in a property	The applicant has an unresolved interest in a joint council or registered provider tenancy; or is the spouse or civil partner of a homeowner awaiting divorce or judicial separation and a property settlement; or has rights to a property under the Matrimonial Homes Act; Family Law Act; or the Children Act, including an unresolved joint tenancy (until they no longer have a

	legal entitlement to reside at that property).
Capital/Equity above the limit See paragraph 14	The applicant has capital/equity from previous home ownership that is over the current DWP limit.
In education or training outside Stevenage	The applicant is in further education or training and living outside Stevenage, but they have a valid local connection and for the duration of the course the address they return to out of term time is in Stevenage.
On remand or in custody	The applicant is held on remand or is completing a custodial sentence, but otherwise has a valid local connection.
Joint applicants cohabiting for less than six months	The applicants are a cohabiting couple who have made a joint application but have not lived together for at least six months, or who have no child of the relationship.
Existing tenant in breach of tenancy conditions	The applicant is in breach of the terms and condition of their council or registered provider tenancy because of the condition of their existing property.
Housing related debt (see paragraph 26)	The applicant has an outstanding housing related debt.
Two successful CBL bids but failed to attend viewing or offer of allocation refused (see paragraph 39.8)	The applicant has successfully bid through choice based lettings on two properties but has failed to attend a viewing or refused an allocation on both occasions. The applicant will remain in band F for a period of six months before being re-assessed and placed in the appropriate band with a new effective date.
Failure to bid (see paragraph 39.7)	The applicant has failed to bid under CBL for a period of two years or more. The application will remain in band F for a period of six months.
Pending contact following withdrawal of an offer under CBL	The applicant has had an offer made under CBL withdrawn for one on the reasons shown in paragraph 39.9.
Re-housing guarantee	The applicant has re-housing guarantee but has not yet applied for re-housing.
Other applicants	The applicant does not otherwise meet the criteria for bands A – E

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CORE LETTABLE (Void Technical) STANDARD

Contents

- 1 General requirements
- 2 Information gathering and recording
- 3 Security
- 4 Clearance and removal of assets
- 5 Gas hot water and heating installation
- 6 Electrical installation
- 7 Internal decorations
- 8 Internal walls
- 9 Internal doors
- 10 Floors and staircases
- 11 Kitchens
- 12 Bathrooms and toilets
- 13 Roof voids
- 14 Disabled adaptations
- 15 External areas
- 16 Asbestos
- 17 Cleaning

1. General requirements

All properties are to be offered for handover:

- Clean, secure and in a reasonable state of general repair and decoration as described herein
- Wind and weather-tight
- Free of infestation with pests

Any non Health and Safety/Statutory works or any other works not completed that would not cause a significant discomfort or risk to the tenant or their household which cannot be completed within the void period or would cause an excessive delay in the letting of the property may be completed with the tenant in situ.

And with

- A hot and cold water supply
- A working form of heating
- A safe and operational electrical system
- A useable kitchen with sink
- A useable W.C.
- A useable bathroom with a wash basin and bath or shower
- A valid Landlords Gas Safety Certificate
- An electrical safety certificate.

2. Information gathering and recording

- Gas, electrical and water meter readings are to be taken at the first opportunity and then re-taken at Handover, by completing the agreed Void Survey Form. If solar panels are in place, this needs to be passed on to the Empty Homes Co-ordinator who will arrange for the feed in tariff to be paid to Stevenage BC.
- Any residual debt left on meters is to be cleared and the Empty Home Co-ordinator advised of any missing or damaged items.
- A note if these are card/key meters and if credit is available is to be made.
- The position of the stop tap and utility meters should be noted on the Void Survey Form.
- Any serious defects e.g. structural cracking, subsidence, damp etc. shall be reported to the Empty Home Co-ordinator immediately
- Any major aids and adaptations shall be referred to the Empty Home Co-ordinator for a decision on removal and replacement
- Check that the property has an EPC and make arrangements for one to be prepared if not.
- Check the asbestos register for the property and take measures to ensure that all operatives are aware of the content.
- Take photographs in line with the process map but in any event any extraordinary conditions such as excessive rubbish or damage shall be photographed and provided to the Empty Home Co-ordinator and rechargeable items.
- Provide details and a condition schedule of any aids and adaptations.

3. Security

- For the duration of the void period a suited lock or key safe system shall be provided and net curtains installed as soon as possible for security purposes.
- If required, and agreed with the Contract Administrator, security screens shall be installed.
- All external doors must be sound and the door furniture must be in working order.
- External door locks must be changed on the day of handover to a new insurance approved lock, minimum of 2 keys for each lock. Where the door leads into enclosed internal areas, the new lock must retain the same level fire protection.
- Windows must be capable of being opened and operable for ventilation
- Opening windows on the 2nd Floor or above or where an opening window is less than 800 mm from the floor level and where the fall is greater than 600 mm are to be fitted with restrictors that comply with current regulations relating to fire escape and opening restriction.
- Window catches and locking handles must be serviceable.

- Windows at ground floor or accessible from a balcony must be lockable from the inside.
- Window keys must be provided where key operated locks are fitted.
- Any defective glazing must be replaced. All glazing within 900mm of floor level to be 6mm toughened or 6.4mm laminated safety glass, or thicker. In any case the glazing must meet with the current regulatory requirements
- Any fire breaks to be checked in flats and confirmed that they comply with current regulatory requirements.
- Fire doors are to be checked and confirmed that they comply with the current regulatory requirements.

4. Clearance and removal of assets

- The property must be cleared of all rubbish and any non-standard fittings removed. The previous resident's cooker, fridge, washing machine etc. must be disconnected and removed from the property. Where appliances have been provided and maintained by Stevenage BC because of the nature of the scheme, they should be left at the property, cleaned and tested. Where hobs are removed the worktop shall be made good.
- Remove all gas fires other than in lounge, see below.
- All loose cabling should be clipped/tied up or removed if no longer in use/needed
- Where the property is let as furnished (e.g. foyer scheme) no removal or repairs will be required to any furniture or fixtures and fittings unless damaged.
- All rubbish must be cleared from the bins, gardens, garages, sheds and outhouses
- The garden should be checked for Japanese Knot Weed and dealt with accordingly

5. Hot water and heating installation (including Gas)

- At the start of the void period, the heating and hot water system is to be checked and repaired to be left in good working order with all necessary repairs being carried out.
- All back boilers are to be removed and replaced
- The gas installation is to be decommissioned following the above checks and the main gas supply capped off including the gas cooker and gas fire supply, if present. Within 24hrs
- If the carcass or boiler is beyond their useful life the Empty Home Co-ordinator shall be advised and asked for a decision to repair or replace
- On occupation, at the request of the resident, or the Empty Home Co-ordinator, the gas installation shall be re-commissioned and have a safety check undertaken by a GAS SAFE registered engineer and a LGSR (CP12) provided.
- Cap off supply to gas cooker, if present.
- Central heating and hot water installations must be drained down when the property is void and refilled just prior to re-letting if the temperature is expected to be below 0C.
- All insulation to pipe work and cylinders to be checked and insulated as necessary.
- Any gas fires situated in the lounge are to be left if operable and safe. If found to be unsafe gas fires in the lounge are to be removed and made good.

6. Electrical installation

- An electrical test must be completed by a qualified electrician and defective fittings identified and replaced, NICEIC certificate to be provided on completion of works. An Electrical Installation Condition Report and completion certificate must be supplied.
- All Code 1 and 2 defects identified by the electrical test must be rectified and a new "satisfactory" certificate fitted.
- All smoke\heat\carbon monoxide detectors must be tested and left in full working order,
- Where hard wired detectors are not fitted, they shall be fitted, tested and left working; 1 per floor.
- Test all installed emergency call facilities or complete visual inspection.

- At least one main light fitting to be fitted with a light bulb
- Leave extractor fans in good working order.
- A visual safety check of storage heaters to be undertaken along with a NICEIC test
- Any electrical appliances that are left in the property must be PAT tested.
- Any fixed non-standard electrical appliance found to be safe and good working order that provide an enhancement to remain and be gifted to tenant. All other electrical appliances to be removed

7. Internal Decorations

If the internal decoration is clean and sound then no decorating work should be undertaken unless stated below:

- If graffiti is present this should be removed/decorated over.
- All surfaces must be able to receive paint/decoration.
- Where we have contractual obligations, such as some sheltered housing schemes.
- Any previous tenant decorative enhancements that pose a risk are to be removed
- Polystyrene tiles present in kitchens or main means of escape are to be removed

Property to be prepared and ready for decoration. Any other decoration applied only to make property lettable.

8. Internal walls

- Any damaged wall or ceiling plaster must be made good.
- Missing or damaged skirting boards should be replaced.
- If rising damp, dry rot or timber infestation is suspected, refer to Empty Homes Co-ordinator.
- Wall tiles that are damaged or missing to be replaced to match existing where possible, if not match using standard white tiles.
- All mould to be treated with an anti-fungal solution and a coat of sealant applied
- Any previous water penetration marks to be treated with a coat of sealant

9. Internal doors

- All internal doors and frames must be sound and door furniture must be in working order.
- Doors are to be replaced if damaged beyond repair or fitted if missing.
- Where property is a flat or has only 1 means of exit the kitchen door must be checked/upgraded/replaced to give 30 minutes fire protection (FD30), with intumescent strips if fire detection exists in the kitchen. Where fire detection does not exist in kitchen a fire door rated for 30 mins (FD30) omitting the intumescent strips.
- Fire doors/ intumescent strip and closers must be in working order.
- Any non-standard glazed doors to be removed.

10. Floors and staircases

- All timber floorboards to be secure, sound and with a minimum of squeaks. Remedial work for woodworm or dry rot should be completed.
- If rising damp, dry rot or timber infestation is suspected, specialist opinion shall be sought as to the cause and a quotation for any remedial work sought and provided to the Empty Homes Co-ordinator.
- The external sub-floor ventilation must not be blocked; the DPC must not be bridged.
- All laminate flooring and carpets should be left unless of poor condition. Where laminate is present in first floor flats or above these will be removed unless in kitchen or bathroom
- All broken or damaged vinyl flooring/tiles to be replaced or made level.
- All unnecessary gripper rods, thresholds, stair fixings are to be removed and surfaces to be made good.
- Banisters, handrails and staircases are to be sound and secure.

11. Kitchens

- Plumbing\waste for washing machine to be provided if suitable space provided and blanked/plugged
- Valves and waste connections for washing machines should left ready for use
- Sinks, taps and wastes should be left in proper working order; sink plugs and chains to be replaced if missing.
- The rising main stop tap is to be tested, labelled and left accessible.
Unit drawers and doors shall be left in good working order, where a replacement is required and an exact match not possible a best match should be obtained.
- All kitchen wall units and worktops should be hygienic, have tiled splash backs, be sound and sealed.
- Sinks and worktops must be replaced if damaged so as to breach the integrity of the protective fabric.
- If the floor covering requires replacement Polysafe Standard PUR shall be used.
- At least 2 double sockets should be available above the kitchen worktop.

12. Bathrooms & toilets

- All sanitary fittings must be clean and in working order, with tiled splash backs, to bath and basin being sound and sealed.
- Sinks, taps, cisterns and wastes should be left in proper working order.
- Sink plugs and chains to be replaced if missing.
- Toilet and shower seats should be replaced only if soiled or stained.
- Power showers are to be removed and the plumbing reinstated if fitted by previous tenant and of poor or unserviceable standard.
- All over bath electric showers to be removed. Do not replace.
- Clean non-slip flooring shall be provided. Polysafe Standard PUR shall be used.
- Shower cubicles shall be fully tiled. Tiling shall be sound and sealed.
- Over bath shower area to be tiled..

13. Roof voids

- The roof space should be free of rubbish.
- All pipe work and tanks must be clean, lagged and free flowing
- Water storage tanks and cisterns shall be insulated and have close fitting lids.
- Ventilation to loft spaces shall be clear.

14. Disabled adaptations

- Minor grab rails and the like are not to be removed and are to be left in good working order and safe to use.
- Unless instructed otherwise by the Stevenage BC Empty Homes Co-ordinator aids and adaptations shall be left in place and left in full working order and ready to use.

15. External areas (within curtilage of property)

- All non-standard dangerous and dilapidated structures should be demolished and removed
- Garden buildings, which are sound, should be left and noted on the void inspection form to be gifted to tenant unless obtrusive
- Boundary walls should be repaired as necessary and left safe.
- Fencing and gates to be repaired or replaced if unsafe.
- Gates & latches shall operate effectively.
- The external sub-floor ventilation must not be blocked; the DPC must not be bridged.
- Leaking, blocked or damaged rainwater goods should be cleared, repaired or replaced and left free flowing.
- The roof must be watertight with any missing or damaged slates or tiles replaced. Any missing or damaged flashing to be replaced.
- Locks to associated outhouses and garages must be left working and keys left in property.

- Drains shall run clear and free and have sound and secure inspection chamber covers.
- Garden ponds are to be removed / filled in.
- Any tree surgery shall be agreed with the Empty Home Co-ordinator.
- Balcony to be watertight and in sound condition.
- Any satellite dishes should be noted to be gifted to the incoming tenant or removed if damaged or damage risk to property.
- Replace fencing when the existing is in poor condition and in a poor state of repair. Where none existed previously and where necessary to define boundary or when property fronts main road fencing to be provided.
- Replace gate if in poor condition or provide if property fronts main road
- Where fencing is not a safety issue i.e. boundary to a road, all fencing works to be carried out with tenant in situ

16. Asbestos survey and removal

- The asbestos register shall be checked for the property by the Stevenage BC Empty Homes Co-ordinator and a survey commissioned if required.
- A survey shall be commissioned if any intrusive works are identified
- If the property is safe by age or is confirmed no ACM's present no further action is required.
- If, during the course of the works, the presence of asbestos is suspected the Stevenage BC Empty Home Co-ordinator shall be informed and any work that may disturb the material suspended.
- In all cases reference must be made to SBC asbestos policy

17. Cleaning

- All grease, lime scale, dust, grime and other marks should be removed from all surfaces and sanitary fittings.
- All windows must be left clean.
- All floors must be swept and free of dust and dirt.
- All contaminated waste, needles, or soiled matter should be removed (by specialist contractors where necessary) and disposed of in accordance with the appropriate regulations.
- The property must be left free of any infestation by pests and/or vermin.

September 2015

Void Management Guide

Guidance Statement

The purpose of this guide is to set out the way in which Stevenage Borough Council's Housing Services will control and manage empty (void) properties within its stock.

As the Housing Services Revenue Account's (HRA's) primary source of income is derived from rents, the Void Management Guide must ensure that procedures are in place that reduce the length of time that a property is empty, therefore minimising the amount of rental income lost.

This guide will ensure a forward looking and strategic approach to void management that will: -

- Minimise rent loss through reducing the length of the void period and void repair costs;
- Set out Stevenage Borough Council's Void and Lettable Standard ensuring that all staff, contractors and tenants are aware of exactly what condition the council expects of its empty properties;
- Set in place systems for monitoring the standards of void properties and customer satisfaction with their new home.

The guide, together with Stevenage Borough Council's Tenancy Management and Repair policies will guide staff in ensuring that tenants maintain the property to the required standard, are aware of their repair responsibilities and end of tenancy obligations.

It should be used in conjunction with the SBC's allocations policy to ensure that the stock is well used in a way that meets local demand in a fair and equitable way.

It should also be used in conjunction with the most recent process work flows and service standards (see appendix 4)

Stevenage Borough Council will review this guide regularly to ensure that its contents reflect current legislation and the latest examples of best practice in the field.

Contents Page

1 Ending Tenancies – the start of the void process

2 Right to Improve

3 Repairs to Void Properties

4 Inspection of the property

5 Repairs ordering

6 Works to void properties

7 Additional works to hard to let properties

8 Void Standard

9 Creating New Tenancies

10 Equality and Diversity

11 Monitoring and Customer involvement

Appendices

Pre-Tenancy Termination / Transfer Application visit form Appendix 1

Stevenage Borough Lettable Standard Appendix 2

Void Inspection Sheet Appendix 3

Letting and Void process work flows Appendix 4

1 Ending tenancies – the start of the void process

Full details of the termination of a tenancy process can be found in Stevenage Borough Council's Tenancy Management Policies and Procedures.

All tenants are required to give written notice that they intend to terminate their tenancy. The **standard notice period is four full weeks (28 days)** commencing from the Monday after the termination notice is received. The last day of the tenancy will always be a Sunday. Keys must be returned to Stevenage Borough Council by 10.00 am on the Monday after the tenancy end date.

Failure to do so will incur a charge of one full week's rent. Where the keys are not returned, the cost of changing locks will be recharged to the outgoing tenant.

In the case of an internal transfer, the notice period will be agreed with the tenant.

Void and Letting property procedures will be implemented immediately on receipt of the keys to enable the property to be re-let as soon as possible.

In exceptional circumstances, Stevenage Borough Council's Tenancy Services may accept a shorter notice period. In such cases the notice period will be agreed with the Empty Homes Manager. This will be considered on a case by case basis.

Stevenage Borough Council tenants are obligated to leave the property, garage and garden areas in a clean and tidy condition as laid out in the tenancy agreement. When a valid notice is received, all outgoing tenants will be reminded of their rights and responsibilities in relation to ending the tenancy. Stevenage Borough Council's will then arrange an inspection of the property by a Project Officer before the tenant moves out: [Link to template appointment letters](#) . This will enable the Empty Homes Team to:-

- agree any improvements which are eligible for compensation;
- identify any rechargeable repairs;
- identify and notify the Building and Maintenance Operation (BMO) and any maintenance contractors of expected volumes of work to assist with forecasting and capacity planning;
- Order works so that component improvements (re-wiring, kitchen etc.) can commence on the void date
- Where intrusive works are expected or where no valid asbestos report is available, book an asbestos survey before the tenant moves out so that any asbestos removal works can commence on the void date
- Undertake an electrical inspection
- Identify any factors which will be considered as part of offering the property for re-let, such as special adaptations.

The outgoing tenant will be responsible for the full costs for clearing out the Property in line with the tenancy agreements terms and conditions and any other rechargeable repairs as laid out in the Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

Any rechargeable repairs will be identified by the Project Officer during the pre-void inspection and the tenant made aware of their responsibilities regarding these. The outgoing tenant will be asked to sign the list of rechargeable (pre-void inspection sheet) repairs and this will be used as a checklist to ensure that their responsibilities have been met. [Pre-void inspection form](#)

The tenant will also be informed by their Income Advisor about the status of their rent account and any sundry accounts and encouraged to make payments to clear any outstanding debt before the end of the tenancy. If the tenant is in arrears but is unable to clear them in full before the end of the tenancy, they will be asked to make an affordable payment agreement with Stevenage Borough Council's Tenancy Services to clear the debt over a period of time. Failure to do so will mean that the tenant will be pursued for any monies owing as laid out in Stevenage Borough Council's Housing Income and Former Tenant Debt arrears procedure.

The Tenancy Advisor will make attempts to obtain a forwarding address from the outgoing tenant.

Where Stevenage Borough Council's Tenancy Services suspects a property to be abandoned the statutory procedures will be followed as detailed in the tenancy management procedures.

During the void period, the property will be offered to a potential new tenant with minimal delay in accordance with Stevenage Borough Council Allocations policy. The Lettings team will be notified as soon as it is safe to conduct a viewing, so that a sign-up can take place immediately after the property is available for letting.

Stevenage Borough Council's Tenancy Services policies relating to the ending of a tenancy due to abandonment, squatters or death and those relating to storage of personal property are contained on the P-drive under Stevenage Homes 'Tenancy Management'. [Link to SBC's Tenancy Services Policies](#)

2 Right to Improve

Secure Tenants have the right to improve their home and to claim compensation from the council for the cost of the improvement when they leave their home. The Compensation Policy covers this matter in detail and a summary are provided here:-

- only some improvements qualify for compensation and they must have been completed after 1st April 1994;
- the tenant must claim the compensation within 14 days of giving up their tenancy;
- the council taking into account the cost of the improvements works out the amount of compensation due based on the value it has added to the property and the remaining life of the improvement.

Providing that any improvements found in void properties were properly inspected and approved at the time of their installation, or in retrospect and

they pass any current health and safety inspections required, they can remain in the property.

3 Repairs to Void Properties

Stevenage Borough Council aims to identify and complete all necessary repairs to enable a property to be re-let as soon as possible. All repairs will be completed to the Stevenage Borough void standard (appendix 2), whilst ensuring void costs are kept to a minimum. All properties will be issued with electrical and gas safety certificates in compliance with legal requirements.

4 Inspection of the property

The Project Officer will attempt to identify as many repairs as possible during the pre-void inspection. Where there are severe concerns over repairs the Project Officer will request an inspection by the relevant officer from the BMO repairs team. Any repairs identified will be marked on the void inspection sheet (Appendix 3), one copy of which will be passed to the Empty Homes Co-ordinator for the necessary vacant property repairs order to be raised. The tenant will be asked to sign a list of rechargeable repairs they are responsible for so that they are aware of any repairs that are their responsibility. A further inspection will take place by the Project Officer once the tenant has vacated the property. If the outgoing tenant disputes the rechargeable repairs that have been applied to the property then this should be put in writing to the Service Manager for Tenancy Services explaining why the recharge should not apply. The Project Officer will prepare a detailed breakdown of the charges together with photographic evidence. The Tenancy Manager will make a decision on whether the charges should apply. The decision will be communicated in writing where practical to do so.

This will enable the Tenancy Advisor to check whether the former tenant has:-

- complied with their end of tenancy obligations;

It will also enable the Project Officer to:-

- Identify any repairs that may have been missed or hidden by furniture etc. during the pre-void inspection;
- Left the property in a clean and tidy state;
- Check that all keys are present and that the property can be made secure. If any keys are missing the Tenancy Advisor will immediately order replacements, including security door fobs in the case of flatted properties;
- Note and order all repairs necessary to bring the property up to Stevenage Borough Council's Void Standard;
- Ensure that final meter readings are taken;
- Note any adaptations to the property, such as a flush-floor shower, wheelchair height kitchen cupboards and handrails etc. This information will be made available to the Lettings team, so that they are able to offer the property to a prospective tenant that may

require such adaptations.

Timelines and duties are outline in the following documents:

[Link to work flows](#) See Voids & Allocations and Lettings workflows

[Link to process timelines](#) See timelines and functions for type of void notification

5 Repairs Ordering

To speed re-let times, repairs will be classified into two categories:-

- Essential repairs that must be completed while the property is empty (including safety checks); and/or
- Non-essential or minor repairs that could be completed once the new tenant has moved into the property or prior to the outgoing tenant moving out. Any further damage to the property would be recharged back to the outgoing tenant.

The Project Officer will agree the priority of the works identified with the voids Charge-hand.

If a void property falls into an area where Decent Homes or planned works is being undertaken, such as boiler or window replacements, the void property will be moved to the top of the list for these works to be completed.

Major and Health and Safety works that would cause a high level of disruption to tenants or put their safety at risk, such as removal of asbestos, damp and rot treatments will be completed prior to the start of the new tenancy. Every attempt will be made to complete all repairs prior to the new tenant taking up their tenancy, however in some circumstances minor, non-essential repairs will be undertaken once the tenancy has commenced. These repairs and the timescales for their completion will be agreed with the new tenant and detailed in the tenant's sign-off sheet. [Tenant sign-off form](#)

Works will be charged to either the voids budget, decent homes budget or the recharge budget.

All works undertaken in the property will be completed to the Stevenage Borough Void Standard (Appendix 2) and to the Decent Homes Standard as laid out by the Government.

6 Works to void properties

Works raised on void properties will be carried out in accordance with the Stevenage Borough void standard. Costs for each job raised will comply with the schedule of rates (cost per job). [Link to Schedule of Rates](#)

The Project Officer will ensure that void properties are checked against the planned works programme to make the most cost effective use of resources. Void properties in an area undergoing a planned works programme will be given priority.

The voids Charge-hand will need to complete all works specified on the void sheet before the property will be accepted as ready to let and signed off. There may be occasions when not all works will be completed prior to the new tenant taking up residency of the property. In these cases a timescale for the works to be completed and the tenant notified.

All void properties must have had a gas and electrical check and have the necessary certificates in place before they can be deemed as ready to let. Copies of these are given to the new tenant as part of the sign up process.

7 Additional works to hard to let properties

An individual property will be defined as hard to let when it has been offered and refused 2 times or when it has been advertised 2 times and no expressions of interest have been made.

Analysis will be undertaken in cases where a property meets this definition to identify the contributory factors and to assess reasons for refusal by applicants. A series of measures will be agreed and implemented for individual properties in this category which may include:-

- additional internal works above and beyond the minimum Lettable Standard to enhance the property;
- internal decoration as opposed to vouchers being offered;
- improved security;
- fencing and landscape improvement;
- incentives to incoming tenants such as assistance with removal costs, white goods and/or carpets
- more extensive marketing.

8 Lettable (Void) Standard

Tenancy Services aims to create high quality, sustainable tenancies and achieve a high level of customer satisfaction. All properties let will consistently meet the Governments' Decent Homes standard and our own minimum Lettable Standard. The Lettable Void Standards are contained in Appendix 2 to this document.

The council's minimum Lettable Standard is developed in consultation with customers and is communicated to prospective tenants at viewing. [Link to Lettable Standard](#) A copy is available prior to viewing if requested. Tenants are requested to sign off the property as per the advertised standard at sign-up. [Link to Tenant Sign-off Sheet](#)

Where the decorative condition is poor, Stevenage Borough Council's Empty Homes Team will consider the provision of decoration vouchers to the new tenant. The value of the voucher offered will reflect the extent of the decoration required to bring the property to a decent standard throughout up to a maximum limit.

Stevenage Borough Council's Empty Homes Team may also undertake internal decoration in sheltered Tenancy blocks. We may also undertake decoration where an incoming tenant is vulnerable or elderly and the current standard is poor.

9 Creating New Tenancies

All prospective tenants are provided with information about the property attributes, and local neighbourhood facilities prior to viewing, as part of the Choice Based Lettings system.

When a prospective tenant has indicated their acceptance of a vacant property, the tenancy will commence as soon as possible after all essential repairs are completed. All tenancies start on a Monday. Any tenancy signed up on a Tuesday or later will commence from the following Monday immediately after the sign up date unless there are extenuating circumstances. These are to be agreed with the Empty Homes Manager

All new tenants are given opportunity to feed back their satisfaction with the void management process and standard of the property when let. New tenants will be visited within the first 4 weeks of their tenancy commencing.

In summary the purpose of this visit will be:-

- to welcome the tenant and give an opportunity for them to ask any questions, raise any concerns, follow up on any outstanding issues etc;
- to establish if they need any extra help setting up their home and Identify any support needs the tenant may have;
- to offer any advice about benefit that the tenant may be entitled to;
- to discuss rent payment options or delays with outstanding HB or supporting people grant claims;
- to reinforce the terms of the tenancy agreement and the tenants' rights and responsibilities.
- Report any non-void work repairs to the Repairs Team

The sign up process and settling in visit has a significant impact on the sustainability of tenancies. Tenancy Advisors will ensure a range of supportive procedures and services are in place to ensure effective delivery.

A further visit 8 months into the tenancy will be carried out by the Tenancy Officer to check on the condition of the property and to carryout ID checks.

10 Equality and Diversity

Tenancy Services is committed to providing a fair and equitable service to its

tenants and leaseholders. Through the management of our empty properties the council aims to treat all customers fairly, and with respect and professionalism regardless of their gender, race, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation and marital status.

To help demonstrate our approach to managing empty properties is fully in keeping with the council's equality and diversity aims and objectives, the council collects equalities information on satisfaction with the void management process, the re-let standard, and the quality of advice provided to prospective and existing tenants, to feed into monitoring and review processes. The council will carry out disability and racial equality impact assessments on all new and reviewed policies.

Monitoring and Customer Involvement

Satisfaction with the services provided will be monitored through settling in Visits, surveys and repairs satisfaction cards. Feedback received from these will be used to inform amendments to the policy and thus improve the services provided.

We will monitor this policy by:-

- void turnaround time against the annual performance target;
- the number of new tenants visited within 4 weeks of moving in;
- the value of decorating vouchers issued;
- no of refusals and reasons for refusal;
- no of properties let to homeless households;
- void rent loss;
- number of properties vacant as a percentage of the stock;
- percentage of voids let to internal transfers;
- percentage of voids let to under occupation scheme transfers.

This list is not exhaustive and will be amended in line with changing business needs.

Appendix 1

PRE-TENANCY TERMINATION/ TRANSFER APPLICATION VISIT

The aims of the visit are to:

1. Advise on the obligation to pay rent until the tenancy ends, to highlight any arrears/credit on the rent account/sub accounts and take appropriate action.
2. Ensure that the outgoing tenant is aware of the repairing obligations of the Tenancy Agreement.
3. Carry out an internal and external property inspection, identify and agree remedial work by the tenant before the tenancy ends to prevent a recharge at the void stage.
4. Identify and agree any rechargeable repairs and explain the procedure for invoicing and payment.
5. Identify whether the tenant has made any improvements that would qualify under the tenants' right to compensation.
6. Remind the tenant of the action required on vacating a property, including rubbish clearance and clearance of the loft, all of which is rechargeable, return of keys (including window and shed keys), notifying statutory authorities (e.g. Tenancy Benefit, DHSS) fuel suppliers, doctors, and redirection on post etc., taking meter readings.
7. Agreeing any items to be left in situ – e.g. clean good quality carpets.
8. Identify and record any special features of the property, which may affect allocation – e.g. disabled adaptations, access to property and pass any information to Lettings Team team.
9. If the tenant needs to carry out work prior to the end of the tenancy in order to Transfer and agree a completion date
10. Advise the tenant that it is their responsibility to contact the Empty Homes Co-ordinator when the obligations have been fulfilled in order to arrange a follow-up visit.

The Letting Advisors should be advised to place any transfer application on hold. Once the required works have been completed and signed off by the Project Officer, the Lettings Advisors are to be advised in order to reactivate the transfer application.

Repairs to look for – missing or damaged internal doors, holes in walls, non-standard light fittings, electrical fittings, poor decoration etc.

Appendix 2

[Link to Void Standard](#)

Appendix 3

[Link to Void Inspection Form](#)

Appendix 4

[Link to work flows](#)

[Link to process timelines](#)

[Link to all Empty Homes Documents](#)

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Revised Template Scoping Document following Members comments 13 07 17 meeting

Community Select Committee	
Scrutiny Review Title:	Application of the Housing Allocations Policy (linked to Lettings)
Background issues to review – rationale for scrutinising this issue:	Members raised the issue of reviewing the application of the Council’s Allocations Policy when the committee agreed items for the work programme in March 2017. Members were keen to link any work on allocations with allocations into sheltered housing schemes and the flexi care schemes to see how these schemes were working in practise. It was also commented that regarding Lettings, Members could comment on the work of the newly appointed Reconnection Key Worker at the end of the six month pilot.
Is this issue covered by the Future Town Future Council Programme?	(i) Housing Development - Excellent Council Homes for Life - Increase the number of social & affordable homes in Stevenage & (ii) The provision of high quality, efficient and effective Housing services for our tenants and leaseholders (develop a better Housing Service to our older people)
Is this issue one that raises interest with the public via complaints or Members’ surgeries or with Officers?:	This issue is of interest to local people who are on the Housing register. This issue is raised by residents in Members’ Surgeries.
Focus of the review: (State what the review focus will be)	<p><i>Following the meeting on 13 July 2017 to consider and agree the content of the Scoping Document the following issues were agreed as the focus of the review by the Committee:</i></p> <p><u>Sheltered Criteria & Under-Occupiers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are allocations into sheltered housing schemes and the flexi care schemes working in practise? • Introduce priority categories for under-occupiers, with an options paper outlining the relevant choices for tenants

	<p>Aims:</p> <p>That the committee be satisfied that the allocations policy is being implemented effectively and serving the people on the waiting list according to the expectations of the council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish whether the allocations policy is effective in housing residents according to the premise that members of each band/group are being given the opportunity of housing • Whether the letting process is dealing accordingly with housing needs? – evidence should be presented to the committee to show where the process is effective and where it is not. Should data need protecting this should be done leaving the case study details for analysis. Is it all priority need? In 2014/15 the Council promised the residents, if they remained on the list, that every section of the list should expect to be housed and anyone who wasn't going to be housed was taken off of the list. Members want to test if this has happened? • Whether the housing offered is fit for habitation/meets the needs of the resident (including sheltered housing) Members want to look at the suitability of people who are being housed in sheltered housing – is it appropriate? • For owner occupiers Members have asked for any available data on where owners have moved into council housing through the scheme which allows people to do so. • Identify any problems with allocations in order to inform changes needed to the policy • Through looking at the evidence Members will be able to see what needs to be reviewed so that we can strive to be open and realistic in meeting housing needs
<p>Timing issues: Are there any timing constraints to when the review can be carried out?</p>	<p>Officers will advise at the meeting if there are any timing issues to consider. The review will have to fit in with the timing of the other Select Committee review work programme items.</p>
<p>The Committee will meet on (provide dates if known):</p>	<p>Dates: Day/Month/Time/Venue From June 2017 – Discuss scoping with lead officers for Housing Allocations review 13 July 2017 – agree draft scope & receive presentation from officers</p>

	<p>Interview witnesses - 26 September 2017 first date and further dates (likely to be quarter 2 and quarter 3, July 2017 – Dec 2017)</p> <p>Agree recommendations & final report - Date to be agreed</p>
<p>SBC Leads (list the Executive Portfolio Holders and SD's Heads of Service who should appear as witnesses):</p>	<p><i>Officers have suggested the following people:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Executive Portfolio Holder(s) for Housing, Health and Older People, Cllr Jeannette Thomas</i> • <i>Strategic Director Community, Matt Partridge</i> • <i>Assistant Director Housing & Investment, Jaine Cresser</i> • <i>(Draw from other officers as necessary – including Lettings Advisor, Elayne Crisp. Other Housing officers – Service Manager Supported Housing, Janet Hagger, Housing Operations Manager, Peta Caine, Empty Homes Consultant, Walter Oglina, Housing & Homeless Manager, Theo Addae, and officers from Reconnections Key Worker, Sheltered Housing and Flexicare Scheme)</i>
<p>Any other witnesses (external persons/critical friend)?:</p>	<p>To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting. <i>Possible options identified by officers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Critical Friend – Would it be appropriate for this review to invite an officer from another local authority or social housing provider to speak as a “critical friend”.</i> • <i>Members of the public who are on the waiting list (officers to advise suitability) and if possible recently housed tenants</i>
<p>Allocation of lead Members on specific individual issues/questions:</p>	<p>To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting.</p> <p>Members will ask questions on the following areas (list the issues to address during the interviews):</p>

Any other Questions Members wish to cover:	<u>Equalities & Diversity Issues</u> – Are there any E&D issues to consider in this review? – The effect of damp and mould on E&D characteristic groups compared with other community groups?
<u>Site visits and evidence gathering in the Community</u>	It is not considered that this review would lend itself to a site visit.
<u>Equalities and Diversity issues:</u> The review will consider what the relevant equalities and diversity issues are regarding the Scrutiny subject that is being scrutinised	<i>To be identified by the lead Member – Cllr</i>
<u>Constraints</u> (Issues that have been highlighted at the scoping stage but are too broad/detailed to be covered by the review):	<p><i>To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting 13 July 2017 (These issues can be captured and dealt with via other means – Briefings/email/officer action etc)</i></p> <p>Any other matters that are not directly linked to the review into allocations should be directed to officers.</p> <p>The following issue was identified by the Executive Portfolio Holder and officers as a potential issue that could be considered in a review and will be picked up by officers in their wider review of the allocations policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to the local connection rules - People on the allocations list who currently lose 'local residency' points if they take a Private Rented Sector accommodation let outside of the Borough. Could look at introducing a change like a 'five in seven year rule', so residents who had lived for between 5 out of 7 years would still keep their points if they came back to the area in the allotted time period
<u>Background Documents/data</u> that can be provided to the review	<p><i>As identified by the Committee at the draft scoping meeting 13 July 2017:</i></p> <p>Evidence requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of housing allocations for 2016 – 17 groups/bands/property/ waiting times – Evidence to show how the allocations policy has worked, e.g. the number from each stage of the people on the waiting list who have been housed? – Is it all priority need? • For owner occupiers Members have asked for any available data on where owners have

	<p>moved into council housing through the scheme, which allows people to do so</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1 to 3 complaints relating to allocations & lettings
<p><u>Agreed Milestones and review sign off</u> -To be agreed by Members and officers</p>	<p><i>Formal response from Executive Portfolio Holder (Executives have a Statutory requirement to respond to Scrutiny review recommendations two months after receiving a final report and recommendations of a review: Date Executive Portfolio responses are expected (dependent on the final report & executive portfolio response template publishing date): DD MM YY</i></p> <p>Date for monitoring implementation of recommendations – final sign off (typically one year from completion of the review): DD MM YY (Close to this date the Select Committee will receive a report at a Committee meeting to agree the final sign off of the review recommendations)</p>

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