

**HOMES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP
15 JANUARY 2019**

REVIEW OF VOID MANAGEMENT POLICY

Cabinet Member: Cllr Ray Stanley

Responsible Officer: Mark Baglow, Group Manager for Building Services

Reason for Report: To advise members of the revised Void Management Policy.

RECOMMENDATION(S): That Cabinet adopts the revised Void Management Policy.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: The Void Management Policy will be key to maintaining the councils stock within the parameters of the Decent Homes Standard, and the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018.

Financial Implications: The financial implications will be contained within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). It is important to prioritise financial management of this account to ensure the all available funds are used to the best possible effect.

Legal Implications: It will be necessary to ensure that the Void Management Policy addresses all the legal obligations the Council has as a Landlord for the housing estate.

Risk Assessment: The management of circa 3000 homes for some of our most vulnerable tenants contains many risks. These risks are managed at a service level.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 On the 20 December 2018 a new act was passed called the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act. The purpose of this act was to amend the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 to require that residential rented accommodation is provided and maintained in a state of fitness for human habitation; to amend the Building Act 1984 to make provision about the liability for works on residential accommodation that do not comply with Building Regulations; and for connected purposes.
- 1.2 Between the 1 April and the 30 November 2018 Mid Devon District Council let 142 void properties. This was made up of 104 'standard' voids and 38 'major' voids.
- 1.3 The targets set for 2018/19 are <14 days for 'standard' voids and <40 days for 'major voids'.
- 1.4 Between the 1 April and the 30 November 2018 Mid Devon District Council spent £324,304 repairing 'major' voids. Of this figure £143,590 was deferred maintenance and used to bring homes back up to the decent homes standard.

1.5 Up to the 21 November across both void categories £26,690 was recharged back to the vacating tenant.

1.6 The average repair cost for a 'major' void as of the 30 November 2018 was £8,534.

2.0 Proposed Changes to the Policy

2.1 If accepted, the proposal is for some minor changes to the previous policy to be published for officer use and tenant reference.

2.2 This policy has been aligned with the latest Tenancy Agreements and also the recent Recharges policy.

2.3 We have taken into consideration tenant feedback, comments, and complaints received since this policy was last reviewed, and provided greater clarity to tenants vacating a property.

2.4 The term of the policy has been extended to 10 years.

3.0 Tenant Consultation

3.1 The Housing 'Tenants Together' group have been consulted on this policy and their comments taken into consideration.

4.0 Implementation of the Void Management Policy

4.1 There is little change to the policy content, only a clarification of existing policy details. The points of clarification are intended to benefit tenants as much as it is the council.

4.2 Implementation of this policy will be supported by action from both the Building Services and Housing teams.

5.0 Financial Context

5.1 Maintaining the Councils housing stock is the largest ongoing element of the Councils capital programme.

5.2 Clarification of this policy and strict adherence to it should contribute to high levels of rechargeable works which will in turn offset the cost of maintaining our void stock.

5.3 There are no additional resource implications as a direct result of this policy.

Contact for more Information:

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Circulation of the Report:

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