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MEETING:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Thriving & Vibrant Economy Workstream
DATE:	Tuesday, 1 October 2019
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Reception Room - Barnsley Town Hall

AGENDA

Thriving & Vibrant Economy Workstream

Councillors Clarke, Ennis, Gollick, Green, Hand-Davis, Hunt, Lofts, Noble, Pickering, Richardson, Smith, and Sumner

Administrative and Governance Issues for the Committee

1 Apologies for Absence - Parent Governor Representatives

To receive apologies for absence in accordance with Regulation 7 (6) of the Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001.

2 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest

To invite Members of the Committee to make any declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest in connection with the items on this agenda.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting *(Pages 3 - 8)*

To note the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 10th September, 2019 (Item 3 attached).

Overview and Scrutiny Issues for the Committee

4 Void Council Properties *(Pages 9 - 96)*

To consider a report of the Executive Director Core Services and the Executive Director Place (Item 4a attached) in respect of Berneslai Homes Void Standard (Item 4b attached), Construction Services Empty Property Spot Check Report (Item 4c attached) and Kier Empty Property Spot Check Report (Item 4d attached).

Enquiries to Anna Marshall, Scrutiny Officer

Email scrutiny@barnsley.gov.uk

To: Chair and Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee:-

Councillors Ennis OBE (Chair), Bowler, Carr, T. Cave, Clarke, Felton, Fielding, Frost, Gollick, Green, Daniel Griffin, Hand-Davis, Hayward, Higginbottom, Hunt, W. Johnson, Leech, Lodge, Lofts, Makinson, McCarthy, Mitchell, Newing, Noble, Phillips, Pickering, Richardson, Smith, Stowe, Sumner, Tattersall, Williams, Wilson and Wraith MBE together with co-opted Members and Statutory Co-opted Member Ms K. Morritt (Parent Governor Representative)

Electronic Copies Circulated for Information

Sarah Norman, Chief Executive

Andrew Frostdick, Executive Director Core Services

Rob Winter, Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management

Michael Potter, Service Director, Business Improvement and Communications

Martin McCarthy, Service Director, Governance, Members and Business Support
Press

Witnesses

Item 4 (2:00pm)

David Shepherd, Service Director – Economic Regeneration, Place Directorate, BMBC

Sarah Cartwright, Group Leader, Housing Growth, Place Directorate, BMBC

Steve Davis, Director of Assets, Regeneration & Construction, Berneslai Homes

Tony Griffiths, Housing Management Group Manager (East), Berneslai Homes

Cllr Tim Cheetham, Cabinet Member, Place (Regeneration & Culture), BMBC

MEETING:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Full Meeting
DATE:	Tuesday, 10 September 2019
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Council Chamber, Barnsley Town Hall

MINUTES

Present

Councillors Ennis OBE (Chair), Bowler, Carr, T. Cave, Felton, Fielding, Frost, Gollick, Green, Daniel Griffin, Higginbottom, W. Johnson, Lodge, Lofts, Makinson, McCarthy, Newing, Phillips, Pickering, Richardson, Smith, Tattersall, Williams and Wraith MBE

4 Apologies for Absence - Parent Governor Representatives

Apologies for absence were received from Ms K Morritt in accordance with Regulation 7(6) of the Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001.

5 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest

Councillors Makinson, Williams, Tattersall and Carr declared non-pecuniary interests in Minute Nos 9 and 11 due to their membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel; Councillor Tattersall also declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No 7 due to her role as Cabinet Support Member (Environment and Transportation) Councillor Newing declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute Nos 8. 9 and 11 as she is employed by the National Health Service (NHS) and Councillor Lodge declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute Nos 9 and 11 due to his involvement with care leavers.

6 Minutes

The minutes of the Full Committee (held on 30th April, 2019); the Thriving and Vibrant Economy Workstream (held on 4th June 2019); the People Achieving Their Potential Workstream (held on 18th June 2019); the Strong & Resilient Communities Workstream (held on 16th July 2019) and the Special meeting to consider the call in of a Cabinet decision (held on 24th July, 2019) were approved as a true and accurate record.

7 Air Quality Monitoring and Modelling in Barnsley

Members were provided with a briefing report from Regulatory Services within the Public Health Directorate in response to actions from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 16th July 2019 on Energy Efficiency and Pollution Reduction.

RESOLVED that Members note the report.

8 Barnsley Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) Annual Report 2018-19

The following witnesses were welcomed to the meeting:

- Bob Dyson, Independent Chair, BSAB
- Lennie Sahota, Service Director, Adult Social Care & Health, BMBC
- Stephanie Evans, Interim Head of Service, Safeguarding & Quality Assurance, BMBC
- Adrian Hobson, Senior Contracts & Compliance Manager, BMBC
- Cath Erine, Barnsley Safeguarding Adults Board Manager, BMBC
- Cllr Nicola Sumner, Cabinet Support Member – Adults & Communities
- Deborah Longmore, Safeguarding Adults Lead, Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (BHNFT)
- Emma Cox, Assistant Director of Nursing, Quality & Professions, South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SWYPFT)
- Jo Harrison, Nurse Quality Manager-Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS), Barnsley CCG
- Detective (DCI) Chief Inspector Paul Murphy, South Yorkshire Police (SYP)
- Representative from the Safeguarding Adults Forum by Experience (SAFE) Customer Group

Bob Dyson introduced the report, outlining the work of the Board and its local and regional partners over the last 12 months, emphasising the strong commitment to Safeguarding from all agencies as evidenced within the report.

In the ensuing discussion, and in response to detailed questioning and challenge the following matters were highlighted:

The Board now has a sub-committee that leads on 'Learning and Development' with a close oversight of the training and development opportunities available to staff and volunteers along with identifying, and filling, gaps in provision. It is important to recognise that some agencies have their own in-house trainers as well as engaging with multi-agency training. ELearning packages are also available free of charge to everyone, including members of the public.

Although the number of financial abuse cases appears to have fallen significantly, this may be due to under-reporting coupled with a reluctance to report possible abuse by family members. There is an on-going need to raise the profile of this unseen abuse.

There is also a need to make sure all partners are aware of the risk of fire and make referrals to South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFR), who have attended a sub-group meeting to deliver a mini training session. The majority of partners are now signed up to the scheme and are making referrals.

The new Barnsley Adult Care Provision Quality Board (BACPQB) will work with privately owned homes with a view to putting measures in place to work alongside partners to drive up quality. Contract officers will be visiting homes on a regular basis to make sure the quality of service is in line with the agreed specification and offering support to bridge any gaps, with regular reports to the Board whilst being

mindful that negative reports can impact on businesses and residents within care homes.

A number of vulnerable adult case studies were outlined which were resolved by agencies working together effectively. Types of issues addressed included physical abuse, fraud, criminal activity and 'cuckooing', whereby vulnerable adults are targeted and befriended by another and involved in organised crime.

Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw are currently developing an integrated care system and are looking at collaborative working in some areas and functions. Although this is a time of change, Members were reassured that this is *not* a merger between Barnsley and Sheffield CCGs and there would be no adverse effect on vulnerable people in Barnsley as resources would not be concentrated on Sheffield at the detriment of Barnsley.

Members expressed concern that the number of nursing beds in care homes was diminishing and that patients discharged from hospital may not be adequately monitored – for example, monitoring of bed sores. It was stated that monitoring of skin integrity and other nursing care needs are taken account of when assessing clients. Individuals are free to choose the care home they wish to live in, but there must be a nurse on site for nursing care. All placements are reviewed within 6 weeks and at least annually thereafter to ensure needs are being met appropriately. There are no incidences of 'bed blocking' in Barnsley despite the reduction in beds.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the registration and inspection authority which oversees the quality of provision. Recruitment and retention of staff is a key challenge within the care sector with providers often competing with the retail sector for staff due to the low wages paid. It is not possible to dictate to providers what they should be paying staff, or the terms and conditions etc.

In the past, care homes have tended to over-report safeguarding cases but following new guidance and training are now only referring when necessary as some issues can be dealt with internally and are not appropriate for a safeguarding referral. It should also be remembered that vulnerable people living in their own homes may be subject to abuse, particularly financial and 'cuckooing'. Support to victims of this type of abuse depends on their willingness to engage and whether or not they have mental capacity. The SAFE group is working hard to raise awareness of abuse and is a very important forum for this work.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) Members note the update and
- (ii) Witnesses be thanked for their attendance and contribution

9 Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) Annual Report 2018-19

The following witnesses were welcomed to the meeting in addition to those who were in attendance for the previous item:

- Nigel Leeder, Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board Manager, BMBC
- Cllr Margaret Bruff, Cabinet Spokesperson – Children’s Services (formerly People - Safeguarding)
- Mel John-Ross, Service Director, Children’s Social Care and Safeguarding, BMBC
- Angela Fawcett, Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children and Looked After Children, Barnsley CCG

Bob Dyson, Independent Chair, Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB), introduced this item and explained that this is the last annual report which will be produced in its current form, as the Government has changed the way safeguarding is organised. The new partnership arrangements mean that the group is now known as the Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP), retaining the strengths of the BSCB whilst looking for opportunities to improve. It was highlighted that Barnsley’s journey has progressed from ‘inadequate’ to ‘requires improvement’ to ‘good’ via Ofsted inspections. This provides independent verification that Barnsley has moved a long way, with a continuous service improvement plan and ambition to improve.

In the ensuing discussion, and in response to detailed questioning and challenge, the following issues were highlighted:

The BSCP has a partnership protocol to ensure that the work of the partnership is effectively shared across agencies, which is particularly relevant in the case of cross cutting issues. It is also important that there is no duplication across sub-groups and any gaps which are identified are addressed. Some work is escalated to other boards/partnerships as appropriate. Regular meetings take place with other bodies such as Cabinet, TEG etc. It was noted that Berneslai Homes is represented on both the Adults’ and Children Boards and in respective sub-groups.

Concern was expressed that staff may not have the time and skills to be curious and persistent with children who are ‘hard to reach’. Members were reassured that a structured multi-agency audit programme is in place to enable staff to do what they should, with systems and processes to ensure staff are curious. Social Workers meet with managers regularly and have the tools to deal with issues – e.g. the Neglect Toolkit. Child Protection conferences have also improved. It isn’t possible to know about every child across the Borough, there will always be hidden and vulnerable children, but once they are known about, staff across all agencies are persistent.

A strong Early Help offer is in place, with a targeted youth service and good partnerships in place. All schools have a designated safeguarding lead who deals with safeguarding, drug abuse, vaping and cyber bullying in schools, with any referrals going through MASH. Such issues are addressed through a borough-wide approach, with Safeguarding lead officers attending training. All agencies monitor workloads, skills and experience of staff and ensure they are supported in their jobs. More resources are always useful but the best use is made of existing resources.

The remit of the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) sub-group has been widened to incorporate issues such as County Lines and Contextual Safeguarding and it is now known as the Child Exploitation (CE) Sub Committee. The remit of the group also

includes cyber bullying and social media, online safety and awareness raising through schools. However, it must be acknowledged that the latter is resource intensive because of the rapidly changing nature of the apps used by young people. The Child Exploitation and Online Protection command (CEOP) raise awareness and offer advice to parents, carers and other organisations and signpost to other agencies.

On behalf of the BSCB the Barnsley Safeguarding Children Multi Agency Training Programme represents one of the most comprehensive safeguarding training offers in the country with over 100 training courses, conferences and seminars available. Training is provided to volunteers and voluntary organisations at nil cost.

The Neglect sub-group was established in 2017 and continues to develop. Neglect is now the most likely reason for a child to come in to care.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) Members note the update and
- (ii) Witnesses be thanked for their attendance and contribution

10 Exclusion of the Public and Press

RESOLVED that the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item because of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined b Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

11 Children's Social Care Performance

Mel John-Ross, Service Director, Children's Social Care and Safeguarding, introduced this item and provided Members with the monthly children's social care report, which contained an overview of the major performance indicators for children's safeguarding and social care for Quarter 1 (2019/20); a management performance analysis; a summary of performance, using RAG (Red, Amber, Green) ratings; the direction of travel for most indicators together with Barnsley's historical performance and comparisons with other local authorities. Areas of performance considered good and areas where improvement is required were also highlighted.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) Members note the update and
- (ii) Witnesses be thanked for their attendance and contribution

Chair

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Item 4a

Report of the Executive Director Core Services and the Executive Director Place to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 1 October 2019

Void Council Properties

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with context and some detailed insight about the voids management and letting processes, delivered by Berneslai Homes and our partner contractors, which are used to manage Barnsley Council social rented properties.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In 2010, the Council met the Decent Homes Standard across all its housing stock. The Decent Homes Standard was a government defined standard based on ensuring a property meets the following criteria:-

- is in a reasonable state of repair
- has reasonably modern facilities and services with individual elements judged on perceived condition and age
- provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

- 2.2 After the completion of the Decent Homes Standard programme, the Council introduced the Barnsley Homes Standard, an annual programme, which continues to maintain the decency standard in all its properties, including void properties.

- 2.3 Void properties are an inevitable part of the provision and management of rented accommodation. Properties are classed as void when there is no current tenancy in place and the 'void period' is the time between one tenancy ending and a new tenancy commencing. Whilst a property is void, no rental income is being received and costs like Council Tax can be incurred. There is also considerable pressure on the Council Housing waiting list. All of these factors mean that it is very important that void properties are turned around as quickly as possible and a new tenant receives the home they need.

- 2.4 The 'Void Standard' (Item 4b - attached) is a document which clearly sets out the minimum lettable standard that all void properties have to meet once work has been fully completed by our construction partners. This standard aims to ensure a consistent approach is applied to all void properties.

- 2.5 The Void Standard has the core principles of safety, security, cleanliness and repair. It is set very much in the context that the housing stock already meets the Decent Homes Standard and it is not therefore an improvement standard. The void standard is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it is compliant with regulations and any changes required in process or procedures.

- 2.6 All void properties fall into one of two categories and are classed as either a Routine Void (most voids) or Non-Routine Void (sometimes referred to as Major Works Voids):-

- **Routine Voids** – A works survey is carried out by our construction partners and essential void works are carried out as deemed necessary in accordance with the Void Standard. Once work is completed, usually in less than nine calendar days, our construction partners will hand the keys back to the relevant Housing Management Team for them to continue with the process of identifying a new tenant and letting the property.
- **Non-routine Voids** – Some properties are returned from tenancy in poor condition. These are properties that require significant work to meet the void standard. Often these properties will have had improvement works refused in the past by the tenant or have been subject to robust

use. Our construction partners have a maximum of ten weeks within which to complete this work, the performance of which is monitored robustly by the Housing Management Team.

- 2.7 At 1 April 2019, there were 113 properties empty, which equates to 0.61% of the total stock (18,427). Of these 77 were classed as routine. At the end of July 2019, 0.56% (102 properties) of stock (18,401 properties) was empty, of which 77 were classed as routine.
- 2.8 Berneslai Homes manages void properties on behalf of the Council. The actual work carried out on void properties is done through the Property Repairs and Improvement Partnership (PRIP) contract. The contract is currently delivered by Berneslai Homes Construction Services in two thirds of the borough and by Kier in one third of the borough - both have defined geographic boundaries.
- 2.9 All completed voids are checked to ensure they meet the void standard and a number of cross cutting teams monitor performance and process. A separate independent review process is also carried out by a panel of tenants. They inspect a random selection of properties prior to letting and against the void standard.
- 2.10 A small number of properties can be more difficult to let than others, usually due to property type (e.g. studio flats). To be classified as 'hard to let' a property has to meet set criteria:-
1. more than three refusals (refusal reasons will be analysed in every case)
 2. not let after multiple viewings
 3. void for six or more weeks
 4. minimal interest shown in advertisement
- If the criteria is met, incentives may be offered in order for the property to be re-let.
- 2.11 In 2018/19, a total of nine properties were re-let using incentives for properties considered 'hard to let', with a total spend of £14,123.75. Incentives used include decoration, white goods and carpets. Total rent loss prior to incentives being ordered was £8,412.19, with the rent loss totalling £1,092.98 after incentives were completed. This relatively small budget has improved performance in this area.
- 2.12 Since January 2011, the Barnsley Homes Standard programme has seen approximately 1,000 properties per annum refurbished to ensure the decency standard is maintained across the social housing stock. This programme has been supported by elemental schemes of work (mainly heating replacements) to address emerging issues in the housing stock. The housing stock is therefore generally in good condition.

3.0 Governance & Monitoring

- 3.1 Void properties are monitored robustly and Berneslai Homes has a strong governance structure in place to do this. Generally, the governance structure comprises of three operational group meetings which are held regularly to discuss void process and procedure. These are:
- **Hard to Let Group Meeting** – chaired by the Housing Management Team, this meeting is held quarterly and teams discuss specific void properties that meet the 'hard to let' criteria, and are proving difficult to let for one reason or another. Any issues will usually be passed on to the Client Operational Group for further resolution if needed
 - **Client Operational Meeting** – chaired by the Asset Management Team, this meeting is held monthly and involves all teams - Asset Management, Housing Management and construction partners. The aim of this group is to discuss the overall voids process in terms of performance management and procedural issues as well as dealing with any concerns about the overall void standard
 - **Locality Meeting** – chaired by the Housing Management Team, this meeting is held fortnightly and deals with the day to day issues arising out of void management. Again any issues will usually be passed on to the Client Operational Group for further resolution if needed.

- 3.2 All groups feed into the 'Void Blitz' meeting which is held on a quarterly basis and has the responsibility for the overall scrutiny of these three groups. Ultimate scrutiny of the whole process is via Berneslai Homes Board, the Berneslai Homes Customer Services Committee and through regular Council / Berneslai Homes liaison and performance meetings.
- 3.3 The diagram below shows the governance structure attached to voids:-



- 3.4 There are different categories of empty properties which allow each service area to take responsibility for the ones that they are accountable for, although ultimately the Berneslai Homes Housing Management Teams are accountable for the entire void process.

4.0 Current Position – Performance

- 4.1 The ethos with void performance is to ensure properties are re-let at the earliest opportunity whilst meeting the agreed void specification. This ensures applicants from the housing waiting list are housed at the earliest opportunity, in line with the Council's Lettings Policy, as well as minimising any lost rental income.
- 4.2 Management information is extracted from the Northgate IT system that measures the entire process, which allows the service to focus in on any part of the process to ensure that performance is maximised. This includes each different part of the process as follows:-
- when a notice is received
 - when a pre-void inspection is carried out
 - when we advertise properties and allocate properties to individuals
 - when properties are offered and when keys are received
 - when 'void standard' works orders are raised

- when keys are picked up & returned by partners
- when properties are ready to let
- when accompanied viewings take place
- when they are signed up
- when the new tenancy commences

4.3 The aim is to ensure there is robust and comprehensive management information so that properties go through the process as effectively as possible with properties re-let at the earliest opportunity.

4.4 The two primary indicators relating to void properties are:-

- the average number of calendar days taken to re-let properties (based on the methodology for the previous national best value indicator for voids)
- the percentage of rent lost via the void process

4.5 The table below shows performance against the two key performance indicators from 2001 up to 31 July 2019. Although no specific target is set for the percentage rent loss, it is assumed that performance will be around 1.05%.

	Average Void Time – Calendar Days			Percentage Rent Loss	
Year	BMBC Target	BMBC Actual	HouseMark – Upper Quartile	BMBC Actual	HouseMark – Upper Quartile
2001/2	n/a	62	n/a	n/a	n/a
2005/6	n/a	33	n/a	2.18	2.18
2010/11	n/a	28	n/a	n/a	1.08
2015/16	22.5	19.4	n/a	0.71	n/a
2016/17	22.5	22.59	23.00	0.77	0.75
2017/18	22.5	24.89	24.42	0.75	0.84
2018/19	24	20.28	n/a	0.61	n/a
2019/20 at Qtr 1	23	21.95	n/a	0.61	n/a
2019/20 at 31.7.19	23	22.51	n/a	0.57	n/a

4.6 The latest benchmarking information shows that the average void times for our nearest neighbours are Sheffield – 49 days; Leeds – 35 days; Rotherham – 34 days. Benchmarking is done via HouseMark's benchmarking service which provides a breakdown of the costs and resources involved in managing the housing management and maintenance functions in the context of performance indicators. The information is designed to enable self-assessment of the organisation's efficiency and to determine whether the services are of good quality and value for money.

4.7 As well as regular performance monitoring, Berneslai Homes carry out 'empty property spot checks' as part of the Service Excellence Assessment Programme (SEAP). This has been a structured and comprehensive method of obtaining and using customer feedback to improve service delivery since 2007. The two main elements of SEAP are reality checking (mystery shopping, spot checks and customer special interest panels) and satisfaction.

4.8 Tenants are trained as Service Excellence Assessors and accompany Berneslai Homes officers on visits to a random sample of properties which are considered as being ready to let. An assessment on the condition of the property is carried out against the Void Standard and a report on their findings is circulated to all officers and partner contractors concerned. Item 4c – Empty Property Spot Checks Report – August 2019 (attached) shows the latest report from Construction Services and Item 4d – Empty Property Spot Checks Report – August 2019 (attached) shows the latest report from Kier.

- 4.9 Whilst it is felt that performance on voids management on the whole is excellent, this is no reason for Berneslai Homes or the Council to be complacent. Officers continually look for ways in which to improve the timescales for turning void properties around quickly but this has to be balanced by ensuring that any works carried out are appropriate, safe and cost effective.

5.0 Future Plans & Challenges

- 5.1 The Property Repairs & Improvement Partnership (PRIP) contract is in the process of re-procurement with a new contract being in place by April 2020. It is not envisaged that the outcome of this re-procurement will affect service delivery to customers or the standards set for void property.
- 5.2 There are no immediate plans to change the voids standard or process significantly but regular review will continue to pick up any changes required by statute, customer feedback or changing circumstances.
- 5.3 One of the five key themes of the recent social housing consultation is 'empowering residents and strengthening the regulator'. The Government want residents to be able to compare performance more easily. To this end they are proposing that landlords' performance against a number of agreed and meaningful performance indicators is made publically available in a way that enables easy comparison. This is likely to involve a role for the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH). We will keep a watching brief on the impact of any changes via the HouseMark benchmarking club.
- 5.4 There are currently several pressure points on the council's housing waiting list:-
- 5.5 *Insufficient two and three bed houses and two bed bungalows to meet demand* - this applies to most locations across the borough. The table below shows the highest demand homes advertised in April/May 2019.

Address	Property type	Bids received
Birdwell	2 bed houses	150 average no. of bids received
Birdwell	3 bed houses	150 average no. of bids received
Kendray	2 bed house	198
Wombwell	2 bed house	119
Honeywell	2 bed house	106
Athersley South	3 bed house	140
Wombwell	2 bed house	123
Goldthorpe	3 bed house	104
Wombwell	3 bed house	115
Worsbrough Common	3 bed house	101
Athersley North	3 bed house	167
Athersley North	2 bed house	140
Dodworth	2 bed house	155
Worsbrough Common	2 bed house	128
Gawber	3 bed house	172
Honeywell	3 bed house	194

- 5.6 *Shortage of larger homes (four+ bedrooms) for general needs and medical cases* - although not significant in terms of overall numbers, we are seeing an increase in the number of larger families, both with or without medical needs, seeking accommodation. There are currently 275 families on the waiting list needing four bedrooms or more. The council own a stock of 197 homes with four or five bedrooms (193 four bedroom and 4 five bedroom homes). During 2018/19 a total of 10 four bedroom homes were re-let (0 five bed homes). This gives a turnover of 5.1% compared to the overall stock turnover of 7.3%.

- 5.7 *Low stock of four+ bedroom homes* - increasingly, because of this we are encouraging applicants to apply for three bed homes that have a ground floor kitchen, lounge and dining room where one of the rooms can legitimately be utilised as a bedroom.
- 5.8 *People in priority bands (1,2,3) having to wait longer before being rehoused* – this has a knock on effect of applicants ‘priority chasing’ by providing additional information to further their application in an attempt to increase their priority. This affects workloads for the assessment team, increases appeals and leads to an increase in MP enquiries. The table below shows the current average waiting time from entering the priority band to being rehoused compared to the 2016/17 waiting time:-

Priority Band	Current Average Waiting Time (No. of days)	2016/17 Average Waiting Time (No. of Days)
1	121	83
2	195	163
3	220	178
4	407	525

- 5.9 *Mental Health issues being cited as reasons for rehousing* - increasing numbers of cases are being presented where mental health issues are being cited as the reason for rehousing. This can be because of breakdown in relationships, leaving hospital, leaving supported accommodation, poor relationships with neighbours, being targeted for harassment in community etc. Quite often we have difficulties managing the rehousing of these cases with the needs of the individual and the community having to be balanced. Demand in this category is predominantly for two or three bed properties.
- 5.10 *Domestic violence* - as with people presenting mental health issues we are seeing an increasing number of cases presenting domestic violence/domestic abuse issues as the reason for rehousing. This is seen in the increasing number of cases being received via the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) procedures, although we receive many more domestic violence cases than ever get to MARAC. Again demand is predominantly for two or three bed properties.
- 5.11 *Homelessness issues* - an increasing number of cases are being awarded Band 2 priority in particular but also Bands 1 & 3, in accordance with the revised Lettings Policy and the council's new duties under The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Because of the increasing numbers, and a reduction in the availability of vacancies, quite often Band 2 prevention cases are not being rehoused in the 56 days that the council has to prevent homelessness. These cases then go into Band 3 (Relief) where the chances of rehousing are less. Four properties have been identified to accommodate two families and two single people in order to prevent the use of temporary out of the borough B & B accommodation.
- 5.12 *Lack of suitable accommodation for customers presenting multiple problems* - increasingly we are being asked to, and do, rehouse customers presenting multiple needs/chaotic lifestyles that in an ideal world with more options would be better placed in accommodation with specialist support. The limited number of suitable options means that the council waiting list and general needs housing are the last and only option. This is an issue that is regularly discussed at Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) when chaotic clients with multiple needs and a rehousing need are discussed.
- 5.13 Pressures are quite often placed on staff to accept applicants who clearly need specialist and not general needs accommodation. There is a growing pressure and problem of where to house people who have excluded themselves from existing specialist provision.
- 5.14 BMBC Communities Directorate currently commission specialist provision. Under 25s are provided for by Centrepont at two separate locations. Over 25s provision is by Humankind, and replaces facilities previously based at Holden House.

- 5.15 Humankind have 10 units with assessment beds, and plan for a further 18 dispersed units with support (two available to date). Referrals to both Centrepont and Humankind are undertaken by BMBC Housing Options team.
- 5.16 *Reducing Stock* – Despite a council house new build programme, and investment in acquisitions and conversions, there is still an ongoing net loss to the council house stock as a result of Right to Buy sales.

6.0 Implications for Local People

- 6.1 Having access to a home that is warm, safe and in good repair, improves wellbeing, health and is often seen as a basic human need. Council housing in Barnsley continues to play an important role in housing provision alongside housing association properties, home ownership and private rented accommodation across the borough. Over the last four decades the number of Council homes has halved, mainly through Right To Buy sales. Demand for Council housing expressed through the Council housing waiting list remains strong. Housing Associations have provided some additional social rented property but private rented accommodation has of late been a significant market provider for those who cannot afford to buy.

7.0 Invited Witnesses

- 7.1 The following witnesses have been invited to today's meeting:-

- David Shepherd, Service Director – Economic Regeneration, Place Directorate, BMBC
- Sarah Cartwright, Group Leader, Housing Growth, Place Directorate, BMBC
- Steve Davis, Director of Assets, Regeneration & Construction, Berneslai Homes
- Tony Griffiths, Housing Management Group Manager (East), Berneslai Homes
- Cllr Tim Cheetham, Cabinet Member, Place (Regeneration & Culture), BMBC

8.0 Possible Areas for Investigation

- 8.1 Members may wish to ask questions around the following areas:-

- What are the repercussions for the service if a home is found not to meet standards during spot checks?
- What are the complexities around converting accommodation for those who require special adaptations within the home and does this limit the number of properties they are able to apply for?
- Who determines which properties are visited and why is only a small sample done?
- Can you give examples of where good practice/performance in one area has been utilised to improve practice/performance in another area of work?
- What is given greatest priority in terms of performance – timescales, maximising income or quality?
- In order to help alleviate tenant poverty and protect the environment, are there any measures that you already take or could take in the future when refurbishing properties, for example recycling carpets?
- In your opinion, does the system do enough to support those at risk of losing their homes and what are the barriers to doing more?
- Which of your key performance indicators relate to quality?

- How do you negotiate/mediate if a tenant is offered a property but does not agree that the standard is acceptable?
- How do you ensure that the incentives for 'hard to let' properties do not encourage tenants to take properties that don't really meet their needs?
- In terms of void and lettings management, what achievement are you most proud of?
- Do you think that the Barnsley Homes Standard is demanding enough and delivers the right standards for social housing in Barnsley given that the Decent Homes Standard it was based on is over 10 years old?
- How do you make tenants aware of the process for reporting safety issues and their right to complain after a property has been occupied?
- What can members do to support the work of Berneslai Homes in relation to void properties and housing management?

9.0 Background Papers and Useful Links

9.1 Background papers and documents included with this report are as follows:-

- Item 4b (attached) - Berneslai Homes Void Standard (January 2019 Revision)
- Item 4c (attached) - Empty Property Spot Checks Report: Construction Services–August 2019
- Item 4d (attached) - Empty Property Spot Checks Report: Kier–August 2019
- GOV.UK – A Decent Home: Definition & Guidance
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-decent-home-definition-and-guidance>
- Berneslai Homes - Barnsley Homes Standard Programme -
<https://www.berneslaihomes.co.uk/repair-your-home/improvement-programmes-and-eligibility/barnsley-homes-standard-programme/>
- BMBC Housing Website:-
<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/housing/>
- BMBC Lettings Policy –
<https://www.berneslaihomes.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/LETTINGS-POLICY-2018-FINAL-COPY-20181026.pdf>
- National Housing Federation – Homelessness Reduction Act Briefing Summary
<https://www.housing.org.uk/resource-library/browse/homeless-reduction-act-briefing/>
- Centrepont Barnsley Website:-
<https://centrepont.org.uk/barnsley/>
- Humankind Website:-
<https://humankindcharity.org.uk/service/thrive-barnsley-complex-needs-service>

10.0 Glossary

BMBC	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MAPP	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
OSC	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
PRIP	Property Repairs Improvement Partnership
RSH	Regulator for Social Housing
SEAP	Service Excellence Assessment Programme

11.0 Officer Contact

Anna Marshall, Scrutiny Officer
23 September 2019



Void Standard

Revised Version – January 2019

Introduction

The purpose of the Void Standard is to ensure a consistent approach is applied to all void properties and should be read in conjunction with the Void Properties Procedure Note (Voids Protocol).

The standard has been set in relation to the budget available. This equates to an average sum of approximately £1000 per void. All those involved in the void process have a responsibility to ensure that the cost of works carried out in a void is in line with the budget.

The void standard is a minimum standard required to let a dwelling and has the core principles of safety, security, cleanliness and repair. It is **not** a modernisation or improvement standard and individual items of replacement should only be considered where repair is not viable.

Where dwellings are likely to cost substantially more than the average cost; i.e. where they are likely to cost more than £5,000, then a dialogue with Berneslai Homes Asset Management Team needs to be established prior to the commencement of major works. See Void Properties Procedure Note (Voids Protocol).

For those voids which are 'hard to let' and need works exceeding the standard, in order to be attractive to prospective tenants, then such works can only go ahead where additional funding has been identified and approved. Similarly where prospective tenants have specific requirements in order to occupy a dwelling additional funding sources need to be identified and the works approved.

Quality Void Standard: Core Principals

The core principles of the void standard are that each void dwelling when offered should be:-

- Safe
- Secure
- Clean
- All Core Services in Working Order

As part of the voids process, the relevant Service Provider will need to complete the relevant voids checklist – see Checklists A, B & C.

Note: Any 'follow-on' / additional works identified must be agreed with the Asset Management Voids Team and set out clearly on the Void Information / Follow-On / Additional Works sheet – See Appendix 'A'.

The Dwelling Should Be Safe

- The complete electrical installation should be tested and certified to say that it is safe; this is to include any smoke or fire alarm fitted. Items that require upgrading to fully comply with the latest IEE Regulations should be noted on the certificate for action at the next rewire. These items should not be changed as part of the void standard unless they are considered to be un-safe
Note: If the property has a Solar PV system installed, it should be confirmed that this system is turned on and that the electricity mains supply is also left turned on and not isolated. This will allow the PV system to generate whilst the property is void.
- The gas installation, including any fixed appliances should be tested, and certified working safe in compliance with current regulations. Where there is an overdue gas service or the annual gas service is due within the 60 day period, the appliance/s will also be serviced as part of the overall voids work.
- Solid Fuel appliances should be fully serviced, checked and certified working safe and a smoke test of flues undertaken. A Carbon Monoxide Alarm is to be fitted in any domestic room containing a solid fuel appliance (if none exists) and new or existing carbon monoxide alarms are to be tested and checked to ensure that they are in date.
- In properties that have a cellar, a suitable dust resistant smoke alarm shall be installed.
- On normal routine voids, a full management asbestos survey is to be carried out as a minimum where no other survey information is available on the asbestos register contained in PIMSS. Partners must procure surveys in accordance with the "asbestos protocol" (refer also to Procedure Note 'A' and associated Flow Chart) prior to carrying out any void works. All findings are to be reported back to the Berneslai Homes Asbestos Control Officer.
- On non-routine (Major Works) voids where there is no other survey information available, a full refurbishment/demolition (R & D) asbestos survey must be carried out prior to work commencement. All findings are to be reported back to the Berneslai Homes Asbestos Control Officer.
- On all newly acquired properties where there is no other survey information available, a full refurbishment/demolition (R & D) asbestos survey must be carried out prior to work commencement. All findings are to be reported back to the Berneslai Homes Asbestos Control Officer.
- Where an asbestos survey has identified Asbestos Insulation Board (AIB) within a void property, please refer to the Asbestos Control Officer for a decision to be made regarding any remedial actions.
- The dwelling should be checked for damp. If minor damp is detected then this will be treated as part of the voids work. Any major damp issues should be

referred to the Asset Management Team on the VAL sheet. This damp check should also include checking ground floors and cellars where applicable.

- Any fire doors and fire prevention mechanisms are checked and if necessary repaired. Where the Service Provider has obvious concerns in relation to fire doors then they should refer these through to the Fire Safety Officer within the Asset Management Team.
- Any glazed internal doors should be assessed for risk to the occupants. The service provider needs to establish if the glazing is safety glass. If it is not and the risk is high e.g. large glass area, low level in family accommodation and or at the bottom of a stair, the door should be changed or the glazing replaced with safety glass. Safety glass should be marked accordingly.
- Footpaths/Ramps/Steps to the property should be free of tripping hazards.
- Stair treads, banisters and any handrails both inside and outside the dwelling should be checked for security. If the property does not have a handrail to any stair between the ground and upper storeys, then one is to be provided.
- Floorboards and any fixed floor coverings should be secure and free from any tripping hazards.
- Timber floors are to be inspected for beetle infestation and signs of rot and appropriate remedy carried out where needed
- Where found, any polystyrene ceiling tiles which have been fixed to the kitchen ceiling are to be removed and the ceiling made good if required.
- Mains operated hard-wired smoke alarms will be installed where no hard-wired or battery operated smoke alarm currently exists. If it is not possible to do this owing to the presence of asbestos or other reasons (i.e. concrete ceilings) then the fitting of a battery operated smoke alarm with a 10 year battery life should be used instead. In all cases a minimum of one alarm per storey will be installed.
- Where a property is void between the first day in December and the last day in February then the mains water supply to the dwelling will be turned off at the stop tap and all taps (hot and cold) opened up to minimise risk of burst damage whilst empty. The central heating system will also be drained down.
Note: Where there is either an Air Source or Ground Source heating system installed or the void property is part of a District Heating Scheme, this should **not** be drained down.
- Improvements made to properties by tenants that are safe, in good condition and are in full working order are to be left subject to prior discussion with the Asset Management Team.
- Built-in oven and hobs as well as integral appliances that are safe, in good condition and are in full working order are to be left subject to prior discussion with the Asset Management Team (please see Procedure Note – B).

- Toilet seats are to be intact and safely fitted.
- WC pans are to be replaced if they are found to be cracked
- Out buildings are to be checked to ensure they are not hazardous or dangerous.
- Where Kitchen door openings have been modified by the previous tenant as in cases where they have formed an archway through to the kitchen, these should be re-instated and the tenant recharged accordingly.

The Dwelling Should Be Secure

- All doors and windows will be checked for ease of operation and security.
- External door locks will be changed and replaced with re-cycled locks from other void properties wherever possible.
- Service provider to ensure that keys are available for all outside stores where applicable
- All windows must close and be able to either be latched or locked shut. Where windows benefit from existing window locks, these will be checked and keys provided where possible.
- Door entry systems (where applicable) will be tested for correct operation.
- Any cracked or broken glass will be replaced.
- Any existing burglar alarms installed by previous tenants will be tested and if in working order will be offered to the new tenant with their written agreement on accepting responsibility for future maintenance. If the tenant does not wish to operate the alarm or the alarm is not operational, the alarm is to be disabled and left in-situ and the new tenant informed by the Housing Management Team.
- Where there are missing external meter box cover (i.e. both gas and / or electricity) these should be passed through to the Asset Management Team for inclusion on a future Planned Maintenance scheme.

The Dwelling Should Be Clean

All dwellings are to be brought up to the same good standard of cleanliness and are to be certified as clean by the completion of Appendix B – Void Valeting Checklist Certificate - Internal

Thorough cleaning of the dwelling should be the last act of work prior to handover for final letting or occupation. However it is important that persons carrying out work activities prior to the final clean also clean up following completion of the job.

Standard of Internal Cleanliness

1. Internal Clearance of a Void

- Internal clearance applies to all rooms, circulation spaces, storage cupboards, external stores that form part of the original design of the building irrespective as to whether or not they are attached to the building, the roof space, the loft space, cellars (where applicable), external WC's and internal link garages.
- All furniture, rubbish, remaining goods, personal effects, loose electrical equipment and clothes. All laminate flooring and loose floor coverings (carpets and the like) are to be retained unless they are in a really poor or unsafe condition. The property is to be free from all discarded drugs or sharps and needles. All waste material is to be removed from the property and taken on the day of removal to a licensed disposal or storage site as appropriate.
- The Service Provider will arrange for fumigation or other appropriate treatment of a void to take place if evidence of vermin or insect infestation is found.

2. Internal Cleaning of a Void.

- Cleaning is to be done using appropriate cleaning equipment and safe cleaning materials.
- All floors and stairs are to be swept and wet mopped. Bathroom floors are to be disinfected. Any excess moisture / water to be fully removed as part of cleaning process.
- Remove all scuffs and paint splashes (where possible)
- Where fitted any Wet Room Safety Floor Covering that is found to be in really poor condition and/or very badly stained these are to be initially steam cleaned. If the Service Provider is still unable to clean the floor satisfactorily then this will need to be referred back to the Asset Management Voids Team. Photos must be provided ASAP so that the Asset Management Voids Team can decide if this work is to be carried out as part of the Routine Void or on a future Planned scheme.
- Any offensive graffiti is to be removed.

- Any areas of 'Black Mould' are to be washed down with an appropriate anti-fungicide in accordance with the mould specification. If mould is visible on or beneath the wallpaper, the wallpaper shall be removed and mould treatment works carried out accordingly. Treat or replace any mould affected grouting or sealant.
- Loose wall coverings only are to be removed.
- Clean down all doors, doorframes, architraves, including both sides of any external doors, skirting boards, internal windows, window frames, cills, radiators (including behind the radiator) and pipe work
- Remove all drawing pins, nails, screws, picture hooks, carpet grippers, fixings and the like from all surfaces.
- All electrical sockets, light fittings and switches are to be thoroughly clean. If electrical fittings are badly stained (i.e. badly ingrained staining which cannot easily be cleaning off) then these should be replaced.
- Ensure cobwebs are removed from all areas.
- Kitchen units, including all work surfaces, cupboards, drawers, boiler casings, cooker hobs, ovens, extractor fans / cooker extractor units, sinks, baths, showers, WHB's, tile splash backs, taps, WC pans, WC seats, cisterns and pipe-work are to be cleaned and sanitised.
- If extensive cleaning is required then this needs to be discussed with the Asset Management Team beforehand.
- All extractor fans are to be cleaned
- All rooms are to be deodorised.

3. External Clearance and Maintenance of Void Gardens and Surrounds

An order is placed by Housing Management Team for Neighbourhood Pride to carry out any necessary garden clearance. Neighbourhood Pride will carry our work in accordance with the schedule below and certify that the works are done by completing Appendix D – Berneslai Homes – Quality Standard Checklist for Outside Clearance of Empty Properties.

Whilst it is accepted that this work is to be carried out by Neighbourhood Pride, the Service Provider will primarily take photographs of any gardens / external structures which are left in a condition that is deemed to be rechargeable. These photographs must show the existing condition of the garden / structure with a view to assisting with any recharges. These photographs will then be submitted to the relevant HMO for enforcement action as necessary.

- All rubbish left in gardens, garage and sheds to be removed as soon as possible after handover to a partner contractor. Special care shall be taken to remove broken glass and sharps

- Vegetation is to be strimmed to 150mm in the gardens where specifically required within an agreed target deadline.
- Grass is to be cut to a minimum height of 25mm or 100mm where this is not possible within an agreed target deadline. Occasionally a second cut may be required where specifically ordered.
- Hedges to front, side and rear garden areas to be trimmed to a tidy height not exceeding 1.8m within the agreed target deadline.
- Bushes and trees are to be trimmed where specifically required and within an agreed target deadline.
- Any growth impeding paths to front, rear doors, garages and sheds to be cut down/removed within an agreed target deadline.
- All moss to be removed from paths.
- Improvements made to the garden by the previous tenant should be removed only if they are in a dangerous condition. This is to include sheds, patios, paths, greenhouses ponds and water features etc. (this list is not exhaustive and may need to be subject to further discussion with the Housing Management Team). If ponds are considered not to be in a dangerous condition then as a minimum any fish should be relocated and the pond drained prior to the property being let. Consideration here should be given to future maintenance/liability costs and the cost of removal in making the decision to remove. Any asbestos issues for example tenant erected asbestos garage, should be referred to Berneslai Homes Asbestos Control Officer within the Asset Management Team, by the relevant Housing Management Officer responsible for the void. If any issues (asbestos, large cost items) are identified by clearance teams for e.g. Neighbourhood Services, they are to be raised with Housing Management Team for agreement on actions required before work proceeds.
- All waste material is to be removed from the property and taken on the day of removal to a licensed disposal or storage site as appropriate.
- On clearing rubbish, debris and overgrowth from gardens, Neighbourhood Pride will bring to the attention of the Housing Management Team areas of concern such as covers missing from inspection chambers or other similar dangerous hazards found in the garden.

4. Void Decoration

Void decoration is not carried out as part of this standard.

All Services in Working Order

- Sources of heating are covered earlier in this document.
- Existing immersion heaters will be in working order.
- Existing showers will be in working order.
- Where accessible a general check of the property will be carried out and minor items of repair remedied
- Where accessible a general check of the plumbing system will be undertaken for any signs of leakage and stop taps will be clearly labelled.
- All heating system controls (Boiler controls, Programmers, TRV's and the like) will be checked to ensure they are working correctly and will be fully explained to the new tenant/s and manuals/instruction leaflets provided at all times. This will be done when the gas to the property is un-capped. In cases where solid fuel central heating is installed, then a separate order would be raised by Berneslai Homes at the tenants request
- Where the heating system is an 'Air Source' heating system, the Service Provider will arrange to instruct the new tenant on its correct operation and use upon the start of their new tenancy.
- Where the heating system is either 'Ground Source' heating or Switch 2 as in the case of District Heating Schemes or a property has 'Photo Voltaic' panels installed on the roof, instruction on correct usage will be carried out by the Housing Management Team
- Each bath/sink/wash hand basin in the dwelling should have a plug and each new tenant should be provided with one external meter cabinet key (where relevant).
- In accommodation where an obsolete SURFACE MOUNTED intercom box is mounted, the box should be removed and the wall plaster made good. Recessed boxes are to be left in-situ.
- Letter boxes should be in working order and in a satisfactory condition otherwise they should be replaced. This should be recharged to the out-going tenant where it is economical to do so and is not as a result of fair wear and tear.

Procedure Note – A

PROCEDURE NOTE FOR DEALING WITH ‘ARTEX’, SIMILAR TEXTURED COATINGS AND OTHER SUSPECT MATERIAL IN VOID DWELLINGS.

Purpose of Procedure

To provide guidance to staff of Berneslai Homes and its repairs and maintenance partners.

Background

Artex, similar coatings and some other materials may contain low levels of Chrysotile asbestos fibres. It must therefore be assumed that such decorative coatings on walls and ceilings have asbestos content, unless proven otherwise by sampling.

Policy

Artex and similar coatings or other suspect materials are **not** to be removed from voids before re-let unless one of the following applies.

- In the interest of making the property more attractive to re-let, Berneslai Homes may wish to remove the decorative coating or encapsulate
- The coating is damaged or deteriorating.
- Substantial other works are required to the void, which would have a serious adverse effect on the condition of the coating.

All voids containing Artex, similar textured coatings or other suspect materials will be sampled for asbestos, for record and information purposes. The new occupier will be informed of the location of any materials that contains asbestos via the ‘new tenant information pack’ together with a guidance leaflet on asbestos available to all tenants and also part of the pack.

Procedure.

1. The partnering contractor must check the ‘asbestos register contained within PIMSS for the location and type of asbestos in the property.
2. Where the property does not have sufficient asbestos information, then a full ‘Management Survey’ must be procured as a minimum asbestos survey – see Flow Chart
3. Major works voids should have a full refurbishment/demolition (R & D) asbestos survey carried out prior to works commencing where no such survey exists.
4. All asbestos surveys must be returned to the Asbestos Control Officer to enable the asbestos register to be updated. The asbestos register and all survey documents for each property is accessible via the PIMSS database via the Contractor Portal
5. Where the textured coating is to be removed, this must be done in accordance with the current asbestos regulations.
6. The new tenant needs to be informed of findings from the asbestos survey.

Procedure Note – B

PROCEDURE NOTE FOR INTEGRAL APPLIANCES AND / OR BUILT-IN OVEN AND HOB UNITS.

Where partners come across Integral Appliances and/or Built-in Oven and Hob units in a voids property the following procedure shall be adopted:

Built-in Gas Oven's and/or Gas Hobs (referred to as Gas Cooking Appliance - GCA)

1. Any Gas Cooking Appliance – GCA's shall have a visual check carried out as part of the voids process.
2. If the GCA is found to be defective / badly damaged or is generally in a poor condition the GCA is to be carefully removed and disposed of and the gas supply capped off as normal. Note the existing carcass housing is to be retained and both Asset Management & Housing Management advised accordingly so that the new tenant can be informed.
3. If the GCA is deemed to be in good condition the appliance is to be disconnected from the main supply pipe and capped off behind the appliance. Again as per normal procedure.
4. All appliances are to be warning labelled to advise tenants that the appliance has been disconnected and should only be re-connected by a competent 'Gas Safe' engineer
5. Upon the un-cap & commission of the void property, the GCA shall be re-connected to the gas supply and a gas safety check and if necessary an electrical safety check (PAT) of the GCA is to be carried out.
6. If the GCA passes the safety checks the tenant will be advised that the appliance is 'gifted' to the new tenant and it will be their responsibility to repair and maintain in future.
7. Provided the new tenant is in agreement with this then the GCA shall remain connected to the gas supply.
8. If the new tenant does not agree to this then the GCA is to be carefully removed, the gas supply point behind the GCA capped off and the carcass retained in situ. The tenant will also need to be advised that they shall have to purchase their own appliance and arrange for it to be installed by a qualified 'Gas Safe' engineer.
9. If the GCA fails the safety checks then the GCA is to be disconnected from the gas supply and the gas supply capped off behind the GCA. The new tenant will be given the choice as to whether:
 - a. We leave the GCA in place for the tenant to arrange for the appliance to be repaired by their own engineer or
 - b. We remove the GCA and leave the carcass intact for the new tenant to purchase their own new integral appliance
10. Under no circumstances will Berneslai Homes remove and / or alter existing kitchen units to accommodate a tenants own appliances. Any alterations to the kitchen layout will need to be arranged by and paid for by the new tenant.

Built-in Electric Oven's and Hobs and integral appliances (referred to as Other Electrical Integral Appliance - OEiA)

1. All Other Electrical Integral Appliances – OEiA's shall have a visual check carried out as part of the voids process.
2. If the OEiA is found to be defective / badly damaged or is generally in a poor condition the OEiA is to be carefully removed and disposed of. Note the existing carcass housing is to be retained and both Asset Management & Housing Management advised accordingly so that the new tenant can be informed.
3. If the OEiA is deemed to be in good condition the appliance is to be disconnected from the main electrical supply and retained in situ.
4. All appliances are to be warning labelled to advise tenants that the appliance has been disconnected and should only re-connected by a competent and appropriately qualified electrical engineer
5. Upon the un-cap & commission of the void property, the OEiA shall be switched on and an electrical safety check (PAT) of the appliance is to be carried out
6. If the OEiA passes the safety checks the tenant will be advised that the appliance is 'gifted' to the new tenant and it will be their responsibility to repair and maintain in future.
7. Provided the new tenant is in agreement with this then the OEiA shall remain connected to the electrical supply.
8. If the new tenant does not agree to this then the OEiA is to be carefully removed from the property and disposed of. The tenant will also need to be advised that they shall have to purchase their own appliance and arrange for it to be installed by a suitably qualified person.
9. If the OEiA fails the PAT checks then the OEiA is to be disconnected and made safe. The new tenant will be given the choice as to whether:
 - a. We leave the OEiA in place for the tenant to arrange for the appliance to be repaired by their own engineer or
 - b. We remove the OEiA and leave the carcass intact for the new tenant to purchase their own new integral appliance
10. Under no circumstances will Berneslai Homes remove and / or alter existing kitchen units to accommodate a tenants own appliances. Any alterations to the kitchen layout will need to be arranged by and paid for by the new tenant.

Notes for Housing Management Team:

Where properties have integral appliances and/or built-in oven & hob units as detailed above it will be necessary for you to advise the new tenant that these appliances have been 'gifted' to them and that they will be fully responsible for the future servicing and maintenance. Whilst Berneslai Homes shall carry out an initial safety check it will NOT be responsible for any future maintenance or repairs to appliances / built-in ovens and hobs that have been left in the property.

New tenants WILL need to sign a disclaimer on signing the tenancy agreement stating that they are prepared to take ownership and liability for the repair, maintenance and servicing of Built-in Gas cookers and/or hobs before we are allowed to un-cap the appliances!

If the tenant chooses to have these appliances removed then they will also be responsible for any alterations to existing cupboards /appliance housings that may need altering in order to accommodate their new appliance.

Properties are NOT to be advertised as having built-in appliances as this is likely to cause problems further down the line.

Checklist – A

Void Valeting Checklist Certificate – For House File

Address of Property: **Date of Clean:**

Name of Officer undertaking checklist:

All rooms including cellars, loft-spaces, external WC's & Internal Garages have been cleared ☐

All floors and stairs have been swept and wet mopped ----- ☐

Bathroom floors have been disinfected ----- ☐

All scuffs and paint splashes to floors have been removed (where possible) ----- ☐

Wet Room Safety Floor Covering (where fitted) cleaned ----- ☐

Wet Room Safety Floor Covering (where fitted) referred to Asset Mgt ----- ☐

Walls and ceilings have been checked for graffiti and it removed ----- ☐

Areas of 'Black Mould' have been washed down with anti-fungicide ----- ☐

Loose wall coverings have to been removed ----- ☐

Clean down of all doors, doorframes, architraves, including both sides of any external doors, skirting boards, internal windows, window frames, cills, radiators and pipe work ☐

All drawing pins, picture hooks, screws, carpet grippers and the like have been removed from walls. ☐

All electrical sockets, light fittings and switches have been thoroughly clean. ☐

Cobwebs have been removed from all areas ----- ☐

Kitchen Units, including all work surfaces, cupboards, drawers, sinks, baths, showers, WHB's, tile splash backs, taps, WC pans, WC seats, cisterns and pipe work has been cleaned and sanitised. ☐

All extractor fans have been cleaned ----- ☐

All rooms have been deodorised ----- ☐

Certified by partners Senior Officer/Manager:

Date:

See also overleaf for additional notes

Notes:

Signed:

Date:

Checklist – B

Checklist certificate for Void Standard for empty properties – For House File

Address:.....	Date:.....
Name of Officer undertaking Void Standard works:	
Category: Routine/ Acquisition / Major Works Handover Certificate included: YES/NO	
Recharges identified: YES/NO	Emailed to client: YES/NO

1. Safety

Item	Yes (initial)
The complete electrical installation has been tested and certified to comply with current IEE Regulations.	
Solar PV system (where installed). IMPORTANT - Mains Electricity supply has been left <u>Switched On</u>.	
The Gas installation to the property has been capped off. (Note: Safety Check to be carried out as part of un-cap & re-commission procedure).	
The Gas installation to the property & any fixed appliances have been serviced, tested and certified as working safe in compliance with current regulations. (Note: Only for properties where the annual service is either due within 60 days or is overdue).	
Solid fuel appliance (where fitted) has been serviced, checked and certified as working safe and a smoke test of the flue carried out	
Asbestos checks are to be carried out on suspect material	
The dwelling has been checked for rising or penetrating damp including ground floors and cellars where applicable	
Any fire doors and fire prevention mechanisms have been checked and if necessary repaired.	
Internal glazed doors have been checked to ensure safety glass has been fitted and that they are safe.	
Footpaths, Ramps & Steps to the property have been checked and are free from tripping hazards.	
Stair treads, banisters and any handrails both inside and outside the dwelling have been checked and are secure.	
The property has a handrail between the ground floor and upper storeys.	
Floorboards and any fixed floor coverings are secure and free from any tripping hazards.	
Timber floors have been checked for beetle infestation and signs of rot and repairs carried out where necessary.	
Battery operated smoke alarms (one alarm per storey) are present or the	

dwelling has an existing hard wired smoke alarm system. If no smoke alarm system is present then a hard-wired system is to be installed where possible.	
<u>Between the 1st December and the last day of February only:</u> The mains water supply to the dwelling has been turned off at the stop tap and all taps (hot and cold) opened up. The central heating system has been drained down. (Note: Air Source and/or Ground Source heating systems are not to be drained down).	
Improvements made to property by the previous tenant have been checked to ensure that they are safe, in good condition and in full working order (Please discuss with Asset Management).	
Built-in appliances have been checked to ensure that they are safe, in good condition and in full working order (Please discuss with Asset Management).	
Toilet seats are intact and safely fitted.	
WC pans have been checked to ensure that they are not cracked and replaced accordingly.	
Out buildings have been checked to ensure they are not dangerous.	
Kitchen door opening has been checked to ensure conformity.	

2 Security

Item	Yes (initial)
All doors and windows have been checked for ease of operation and security.	
External door locks have been changed and replaced with re-cycled locks where possible.	
Outside store (where applicable) keys made available	
All windows open and close and can be latched or locked shut. Where Windows benefit from existing window locks, these will be checked and keys provided where possible.	
Door entry systems (where fitted) have been tested and operate correctly.	
Any cracked or broken glass has been replaced.	
If there is a burglar alarm it has been tested and is in working order. If not or the new tenant (where known) does not want to accept maintenance of the alarm, it has been disconnected and left in situ.	
External meter box doors checked and if missing reported back to Asset Management Team	

3 Services in Working Order

Item	Yes (initial)
The immersion heater is in working order (if fitted)	
Any existing shower is in working order.	
Where accessible a general check of the property has been carried out and minor items of repair remedied.	
Where accessible a general check of the plumbing system has been undertaken for any signs of leakage and stop taps are clearly labelled.	
Central heating system controls (including Air Source heating systems) have been explained to the new tenant where requested and manuals/instruction leaflets provided where available. (Note: Properties with Ground Source heating, Switch 2 and Photo Voltaic panels Tenants will be instructed upon their correct usage by the Housing Management Team).	
Each bath/sink/wash hand basin in the dwelling has a plug.	
The new tenant (where known) has been provided with one external meter cabinet key (where relevant)	
Obsolete, surface mounted intercom box (where fitted) has been removed and the wall made good	
Letter box in satisfactory condition and in working order.	

Comments

List here any comments you need to make about the property or any referrals you need to make to your manager.

Void Standard **visually** checked by Partners Senior Officer / Manager:

Signed: Date:.....

Void Standard paper work checked by Partners Senior Officer / Manager:

Signed: Date:.....

Checklist – C

Berneslai Homes - Quality Standard for empty properties

Checklist certificate – Outside clearing of empty properties

Address:

All the rubbish has been removed from the gardens, garages, outbuildings & sheds. ☐

All vegetation has been strimmed to 150mm in the gardens where specifically agreed. ☐

Grass cut to a minimum height of 25mm or 100mm where this is not possible. Where a second cut has been specifically ordered, this has been done. ☐

Hedges to front, side and rear garden areas have been trimmed to a tidy height not exceeding 1.8m ☐

Bushes and trees have been trimmed where specifically requested. ☐

Any growth impeding paths to front, rear doors, garages, outbuildings & sheds has been cut down / removed. ☐

All moss removed from paths ☐

Improvements made in the garden by the previous tenant have been checked to ensure that they not in a dangerous condition. If ponds are considered not to be in a dangerous condition then as a minimum any fish should be relocated and the pond drained prior to the property being let. ☐

All waste material has been taken on the day of removal to a licensed disposal or storage site. ☐

Certified by

Name of operative

Date completed

Note of hazards raised for the attention of Housing Management Officer:

Appendix A



Void Information/Follow on/additional works

Address: _____

Officer:- _____

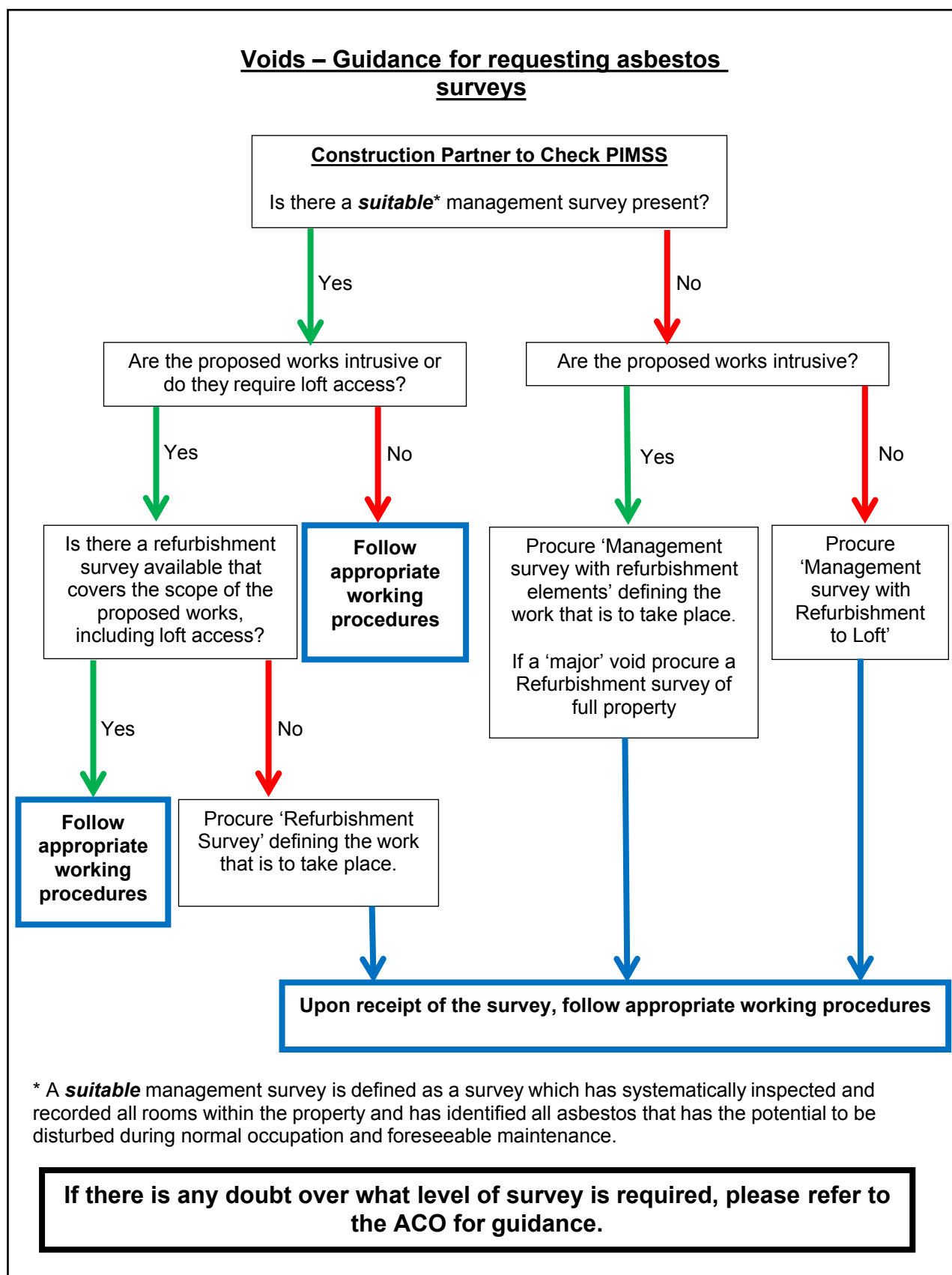
Date Final Inspection by Partner:- _____

	Date	Work Required/Recommended/Follow on Work		Priority
Follow on work requested (Partner)		Internal work	External work	
Follow on work agreed, ordered and email sent to all* (BHMT)		Internal work	External work	
Additional Comments i.e decoration				
Garden works referred to HMO				

*Performance Business and Development Team, relevant HMO, relevant HMT, Partner.

Appendix B

Asbestos Survey Flow Chart



Berneslai Homes Empty Property Spot Check Report

Construction Services
August 2019



A fresh approach to people, homes and communities

INTRODUCTION

Empty Property spot checks take place four times a year. Customers accompany Berneslai Homes officers on visits to a random sample of properties which are ready to let. An assessment on the condition of the property is carried out against the Empty Property Standard.

On 6 August 2019, two customers accompanied a Berneslai Homes officer and viewed the following 4 properties within the Constuction area:

- Kingstone
- Carlton
- Cudworth (Property 1)
- Cudworth (Property 2)

It should be noted that whilst the aim of these spot checks is to assess against the empty property standard only, some general comments were given on repairs and maintenance issues.

The assessors were asked to make comments after inspecting the properties and if the property had three or more minor fails then this would result in a full fail of the standard. However, if the cleanliness of the bathroom and or kitchen was unacceptable then this would result in an immediate fail. As a result the assessors felt that **two properties** met the empty property standard. A full breakdown of comments can be found on the following pages.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Below is detailed information on the properties visited. This information was checked 27 August 2019.

Page 41

Tenancy End Date	Address	Number of refusals	New tenancy start date	Customer Satisfaction rating with the void standard upon sign up	Number of additional repairs ordered since void	Number of additional repairs ordered by new tenant	Number of repairs/actions identified on spot checks (covered within void)	Empty property standard met
9 June 2019	Kingstone	Three refusals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No longer wants this property type / number of beds. Internal layout / facilities Wrong area 	12 August 2019	Fairly satisfied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repair hanging tiles to front of property Bricklayer to remedy broken flag on footpath to gable end of above property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vo earth bond to meter 	Overgrown bush obstructing path	Yes
1 August 2019	Carlton	None	13 August 2019	Very satisfied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove rubbish & cut back gardens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easeway – drain overflowing flooding garden leaking overflow (reported 27.08.19) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kitchen radiator needed cleaning at the side. Downstairs bathroom taps not clean. Overflow pipe leaking 	No
7 July 2019	Cudworth (Property 1)	Two refusals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtained alternative accommodation Personal reasons 	Not let yet	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fit smoke alarm to cellar Renew two worktops and KSU Cut down overgrown lawns to rear Remove built in cupboard Remove and repipe kitchen 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cobwebs in corner of room. Kitchen needs cleaning near the back door. Hole in path leading up to front of property. 	No

14 July 2019	Cudworth (Property 2)	None	13 August 2019	Fairly satisfied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinstall doors to living room – recharge • Remove all items from outbuilding – Recharge • Renew missing electric fire – recharge • Planned make good brickwork to front of outhouse. New lintel required to 1st door. 	Carry out work to void garden standard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove items from garden. • Overgrown garden at the back, needs cutting. • Crack on third step up 	Yes
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FEEDBACK FROM SPOT CHECKS

Kingstone	
General observations	<div>Lounge</div> <div></div>

Bathroom





Bedroom



***Covered in
the empty
property
standard***

None

<p>Covered in void standard but orders already placed</p>	<p>Job raised 18.7.19 (25 day) - Bricklayer to remedy broken flag on footpath to gable end of above property.</p> 
<p>Not covered in the empty property standard</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Additional comments</p>	<p>Overgrown back garden, needs tending – this belongs to the neighbouring property.</p> 

Overgrown bush obstructing path between both main flat doors - belongs to neighbouring property.



Property smells a little even though air fresheners were located in every room. Didn't feel that the air fresheners was as effective as the ones that we use to have (the ones that was in shape of a house on a piece of string).

Overall, did the property meet the empty property standard?

Yes

Void Paperwork checked

OK – all signed

**General
observations**

Front of property



Front garden



Side of property



Back garden



Back of property



Lounge



Kitchen



Bedroom



walk in storage/closet room (from bedroom above)



Bedroom



Top of stairs



***Covered in
the empty
property
standard***

Kitchen radiator needed cleaning at the side



Downstairs bathroom taps not clean



Needs cleaning at the back of the toilet.



Overflow pipe leaking



**Covered in
void standard
but orders
already
placed**

N/A

***Not covered
in the empty
property
standard***

N/A

Additional Comments	N/A
Overall, did the property meet the empty property standard?	No - failed due to cleanliness of bathroom
Paperwork checked	No paperwork on file

Cudworth (Property 1)

General observations

Front of property



Living room



Stairs leading to first floor



Kitchen



Kitchen cupboards



Back garden



Bedroom



Bedroom



Bathroom



Attic





***Covered in
the empty
property
standard***

Cobwebs in corner of room




Kitchen needs cleaning near the back door.



Minor hole in path leading up to property.



	<p>Mould in back bedroom wall.</p> 
Covered in void standard but orders already placed	N/A
<i>Not covered in the empty property standard</i>	N/A
<i>Additional Comments</i>	Will need a lot of time and money spending on the décor.
Overall, did the property meet the empty property standard?	No – failed on 3 or more minors.
Paperwork checked	No paperwork on file

Cudworth (Property 2)

General observations

Front of property



Living room



landing



Toilet



Bath



Bedroom



Bedroom



Bedroom



	<p>Dinning area</p> 
<p>Covered in the empty property standard</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Covered in void standard but orders already placed</p>	<p>Rubbish needs removing – there was an order placed 15 July to remove all items from outbuilding of void property, and another order placed 12 August to carry out work to void garden standard, but did not specify to remove items.</p> 



Overgrown garden at the back, needs cutting.




Old doors left in outhouse



Outhouse needs clearing out.



<p>Not covered in the empty property standard</p>	<p>Crack on third step up – not a trip hazard, just dipped a little when stepping on it.</p> 
<p>Additional Comments</p>	<p>None made</p>
<p>Overall, did the property meet the empty property standard?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Paperwork checked</p>	<p>Checked and all ok</p>

ACTIONS ARISING

A feedback meeting was held with managers, officers and SEAP assessors to discuss the findings from the spot checks and agree any actions or recommendations.

Findings	Action if required
Kingstone Overgrown bush obstructing path. Also back garden overgrown.	This belongs to a neighbouring property which will be dealt with by the Housing Management Officer.
Carlton Kitchen (radiator) and bathroom (taps and back of toilet) need cleaning.	This should have been picked up as part of void standard. Reminder to be given to the cleaning team.
Carlton Overflow pipe leaking	This has recently been reported by the new tenant.
Carlton & Cudworth (Property 1) No paperwork on file	Not saved in Sharepoint as yet so unable to check.
Cudworth (Property 1) Cobwebs in corner of room	This should have been picked up as part of void standard. Reminder to be given to the cleaning team.
Cudworth (Property 1) Kitchen needs cleaning near the back door.	Feels this may have been dust and muck accumulated from when the back door was open. Unsure if this has happened prior or after the cleaning was carried out.
Cudworth (Property 1) Hole in path leading up to property.	An order has been raised on 7 days to rectify.
Cudworth (Property 1) Mould in back bedroom.	This should have been picked up as part of void standard. Construction Services to return and treat.
Cudworth (Property 1) Will need a lot of time and money spending on the décor.	Decoration will be carried out as part of difficult to let budget and will be discussed with new tenant.
Cudworth (Property 2) Rubbish/items need removing from garden. An order was placed on 15 July to remove all items from outbuilding of void property, and another order placed 12 August to carry out work to void garden standard, both orders don't state to clear items from garden.	Housing Management Team Leaders to remind Housing Management teams that when raising garden works to specify and be clear on orders that items need removing.
Cudworth (Property 2) Crack on third step (internal stairs) just dipped a little when stepping on it.	No action required not a trip hazard.

Berneslai Homes Empty Property Spot Check Report

Kier
August 2019



A fresh approach to people, homes and communities

INTRODUCTION

Empty Property spot checks take place four times a year. Customers accompany Berneslai Homes officers on visits to a random sample of properties which are ready to let. An assessment on the condition of the property is carried out against the Empty Property Standard.

On 2nd August 2019, two customers accompanied a Berneslai Homes officer and viewed the following 3 properties within the Kier area:

- Hoyland
- Thurnscoe (Property 1)
- Thurnscoe (Property 2)

It should be noted that whilst the aim of these spot checks is to assess against the empty property standard only, some general comments were given on repairs and maintenance issues.



The assessors were asked to make comments after inspecting the properties and if the property had three or more minor fails then this would result in a full fail of the standard. However, if the cleanliness of the bathroom and or kitchen was unacceptable then this would result in an immediate fail. As a result the assessors felt that **ALL three properties** met the empty property standard. A full breakdown of comments can be found on the following pages.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Below is detailed information on the properties visited. This information was checked 27 August 2019.

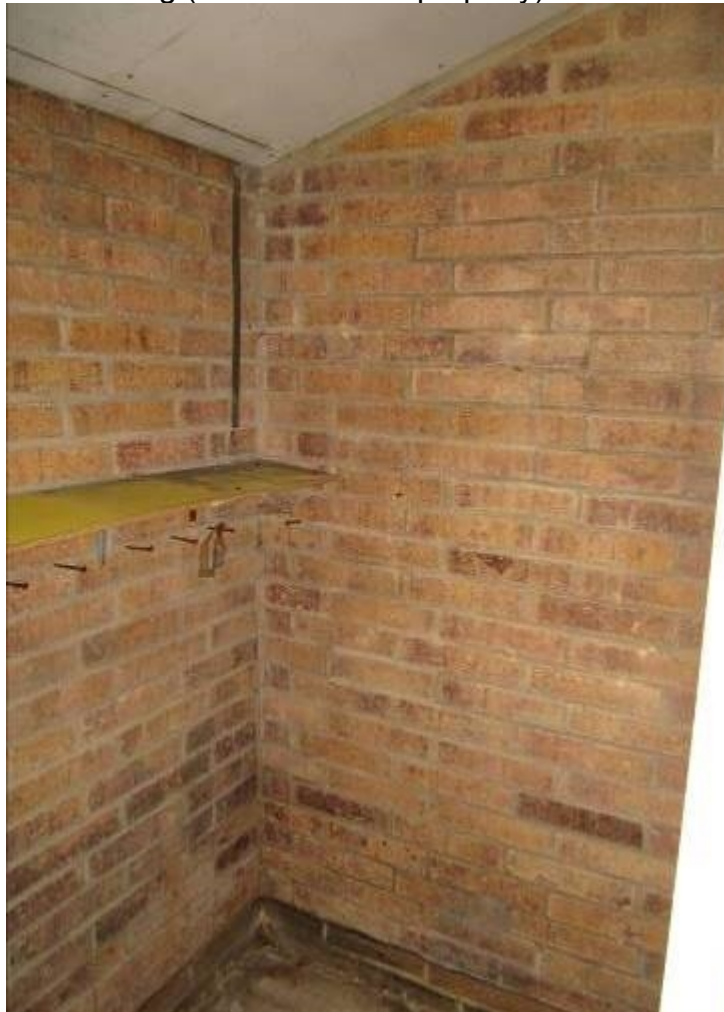
Tenancy End Date	Address	Number of refusals	Tenancy commencement date	Customer Satisfaction rating with the void standard upon sign up	Number of additional repairs ordered since void	Number of additional repairs ordered by new tenant	Number of repairs/actions identified on spot checks (covered within void)	Empty property standard met
14.07.19	Hoyland	One refusal: • Personal reasons	05.08.19	Not specified	• Replacement kitchen (to be discussed with prospective tenant)	• Metal handrail to front of property rusted and sharp	• Living room window catches very difficult to open.	Yes
14.07.19	Thurnscoe (Property 1)	One refusal: • Health reasons/hospital/deceased	15.08.19	Not specified	• Void garden work	None	None	Yes
15.07.19	Thurnscoe (Property 2)	One refusal: • Personal reasons	12.08.19	Fairly satisfied	• Repair and repoint ridge tiles • Void garden work	None	Cobwebs located in most rooms upstairs and in tank cupboard. Back door flthy.	Yes

FEEDBACK FROM SPOT CHECKS

Hoyland	
General observations	Front of property
	
	Back of property
	



Out building (attached to the property)



Living room



Kitchen (down on planned for a new kitchen)




Bathroom



Bedroom



<i>Covered in the empty property standard</i>	None
Covered in void standard but orders already placed	None
<i>Not covered in the empty property standard</i>	None
<i>Additional comments</i>	<p>Front door handle was also difficult to open at first when entering the property but tested this a few times after and worked ok – maybe down to lack of use and previous tenant using the back door as main entry.</p> <p>Also living room window catches very difficult to open but this was down to the old style catches.</p> 
Overall, did the property meet the empty property standard?	Yes
Void Paperwork checked	No paperwork on file, unable to check.

Thurnscoe (Property 1)

General observations

Front of property



Side of property



Back garden – shared communal



Living room





Kitchen





Bathroom



Bedroom




***Covered in
the empty
property
standard***

N/A

**Covered in
void standard
but orders
already
placed**

N/A

<i>Not covered in the empty property standard</i>	Bracket coming away from wall. 
<i>Additional Comments</i>	None made
<i>Overall, did the property meet the empty property standard?</i>	Yes
<i>Paperwork checked</i>	No paperwork on file, unable to check.

Thurnscoe (Property 2)

General observations

Front of property



Kitchen





Living room





Bathroom



Bedroom



Bedroom





***Covered in
the empty
property
standard***

Cobwebs located in most rooms upstairs



Cupboard where tank was located was not clean.



Back door filthy



Covered in void standard but orders already placed

Rubbish in gardens both front and back



Not covered in the empty property standard

N/A

Additional Comments

Property smells even though air freshners were located in every room.

Overall, did the property meet the

Yes

empty property standard?	
Paperwork checked	No paperwork on file, unable to check.

ACTIONS ARISING

A feedback meeting was held with managers, officers and SEAP assessors to discuss the findings from the spot checks and agree any actions or recommendations.

Findings	Action if required
Thurnscoe (Property 1) Bracket coming away from wall.	Kier have returned and rectified.
Thurnscoe (Property 2) Cobwebs located in most rooms upstairs and cupboard not clean. Also back door filthy.	This should have been picked up as part of void standard. Reminder to be given to the cleaning contractor.
ALL three properties No void paperwork on file.	Not saved in Sharepoint as yet so unable to check.

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