

BRENT HOUSING PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Meeting: Board Meeting	Date: 24 th February 2011
Report Author: Sue DeSouza New Homes Projects Manager	Title: Voids, Letting Standard and Environmental Policies
Contact Officer: Sue DeSouza	Classification: For Decision
Contains Private and Confidential Information	No

1. Matters for Consideration

- 1.1 Board members agreed at the away day in September 2009 to establish a working group of Board members to review policy drafts in advance of their consideration for approval by the BHP Board.
- 1.2 This report presents for approval the draft policies for:
1. Voids (Appendix A)
 2. Letting Standard (Appendix B)
 3. Environmental – including summary statement (Appendices C and D)
- These policy drafts were reviewed by the Policy Working Group on 9th December 2010. The draft policies were also included on the agendas of the December cycle of Area Housing Boards for consultation with resident representatives.
- 1.3 The current version of the letting standard is included in the Pre-Tenancy Guide which is provided to new tenants as part of the letting procedure. This document is used for letting the homes owned by the Council. As part of BHP's role as a landlord, we also need to develop policies for the homes we own directly, which provides the opportunity to update existing policies in line with good practice. These policies are intended to apply to both BHP New Homes and the homes managed on behalf of the Council.
- 1.4 The draft Voids policy sets out the arrangements for processing empty homes to get them ready to let. The Letting Standard describes the condition that a new tenant can expect to find when a property is ready to let. A key aspect of the void letting standard is the means used to communicate it to residents, and consideration is being given to developing a pictorial guide to illustrate the standards for new tenants.
- 1.5 The draft Environmental policy details the aims and objectives that BHP will seek to achieve to contain the environmental impact that may stem from the way we manage our business, including the provision of our directly owned homes. It sets the framework for the production of a plan to link the objectives with specific

actions. Resident feedback supported the aims in the Environmental policy, and welcomed the opportunity for involvement in the development of the action plan.

2. Financial and/or Legal Implications

- 2.1 BHP is required as part of the provisions in grant agreements to operate policies and procedures which meet the requirements and standards of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), and the regulatory requirements of the Tenant Services Authority (TSA). The regulatory role of the TSA is due to transfer to the HCA.
- 2.2 There is no legal requirement to have an environmental policy, although some of the objectives contained in it link with the delivery of related legal or regulatory obligations.
- 2.3 The Voids policy includes arrangements to recharge the costs of any damage caused by outgoing tenants that is not due to fair wear and tear.
- 2.4 BHP is required, in accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and good practice, to assess the equality impact of its policies and procedures, and identify issues which may cause disadvantage with regard to: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexuality. The Government is currently consulting on the reporting requirements under the Public Sector Equality Duty including the arrangements for equality impact assessments, and the outcome is expected in March 2011.

3. Recommendations

Board members consider and approve the policies for:

- 1. Voids policy
- 2. Letting standard
- 3. Environmental policy and summary statement

For decision

4. Access to Information

- 4.1 No restrictions apply