

The Management of Empty Properties Progress August 2008

Weaknesses Identified

- *No Client for building works to void properties and no overall operational Client for the Voids process overall*
- *No comprehensive voids procedure or monitoring process linking all activities across the organisation, defining roles and targets.*
- *That the void works periods were not categorised by scope, to aid target setting, monitoring and cost control.*
- *The contractual arrangements for carrying out work were in need of review.*

Changes Implemented 1

- *Void works are the responsibility of the DLO but they were hampered in their role by the lack of a works Client whose role should include dealing with any failure by the DLO or a sub-contractor to meet standards in terms of time, cost or quality. An interim appointment was made to carry out this role.*
- *An exercise was carried out with HH staff and the Decent Homes contractor, appointed to undertake works on the pilot project, to clarify the standards and the technical brief and ensure that the scope of works and technical solutions are soundly based and embedded across both organisations.*

Changes Implemented 2

- *The new approach to carrying out Void works was piloted with Connaught PLC, using the Basket Rate approach employed on the Decent homes Programme, to improve administration, cost control, Value for Money and works quality.*
- *The DLO and their existing sub-contractors have continued to carry out void works.*
- *An analysis of the cost, quality and timeliness of the pilot compared to works ordered by the original arrangements is in hand.*

Changes Implemented 3

- A comprehensive end- to- end procedure for the whole of the voids process has been produced in consultation with HM partners and LBH. Training has been provided to partners and TMOs.
- The Saffron system has been developed to provide a complete and comprehensive end-to-end monitoring system for void properties, which is available to all users. Training has been provided to partners and to TMOs with access to Saffron.
- Clarification within the Basket rate of servicing costs, as distinct from opportunistic works costs, enables better to comparison to the benchmarking costs of others.



Ongoing Activities

- Amendments to Saffron system to improve cost data.
- Complete review of Pilot and compare costs & benefits.
- Agree Basket Rate approach with newly appointed responsive repairs contractors
- Develop and implement similar measures in respect of Major Voids

