

Report to: Portfolio Holder for Housing

Decision Date: 20 October 2025

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Lee Brazier

Director Lead: Suzanne Shead, Director - Housing, Health & Wellbeing

Lead Officer: Jordan Hempenstall, Responsive Repairs and Voids Manager

<b>Report Summary</b>	
<b>Type of Report</b>	Open report / Non key decision
<b>Report Title</b>	Empty Homes Lettable Standard - Revision
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	This report outlines the minor revisions to the Empty Homes Standard, enhancing safety, hygiene, and operational consistency. Approval is sought to adopt the updated standard and apply across all the Council's social housing.
<b>Recommendations</b>	That the Portfolio Holder: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) approves the Empty Homes Lettable Standard at Appendix 1 to the report; and</li> <li>b) notes a simplified version of the standard will be produced with tenants.</li> </ul>
<b>Alternative Options Considered</b>	None
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	All empty homes managed by Newark & Sherwood District Council must meet a consistent lettable standard prior to re-letting. This includes ensuring safety, cleanliness, and decency of the home and garden. The standard ensures homes are safe, secure and ready for occupation, supporting excellent tenant satisfaction and regulatory compliance.
<b>Decision Taken</b>	As per recommendations.

## **1.0 Background**

1.1 The Empty Homes Lettable Standard sets out the condition a tenant can expect to receive a property from us at time of letting. It ensures homes are safe, clean, functional, and compliant with regulatory and service expectations.

### **1.2 Tenant Consultation**

In February 2025, tenants were consulted through a dedicated meeting and follow-up online engagement. Tenants responded positively to the content of the standard, confirming it covered all necessary areas. They also highlighted that the document lacked clarity, flow, and was difficult to understand. This feedback was documented and reviewed as part of the policy update process. The revised standard reflects a cultural shift towards co-production, ensuring tenant experience informs both policy and practice.

- 1.3 The standard has also been reviewed ahead of the introduction of Awaab’s Law from 27<sup>th</sup> October to ensure that any issues of damp or mould are addressed when empty, with appropriate ventilation and heating in prevent damp and mould when occupied.
- 1.4 To address accessibility concerns, the team committed to producing an ‘easy read’ version of the standard to support tenants with varying literacy levels or cognitive needs and to align with the Council’s Landlord Strategy.
- 1.5 The attached revised standard was approved by Tenant Engagement Board on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2025.
- 1.6 **Ongoing Tenant Involvement**  
Tenants continue to play an active role in service accountability through undertaking monthly property inspections, promoting transparency and measuring the team’s performance and compliance with the agreed standard.
- 1.7 **Implementation of Further Suggestions**  
Some tenant suggestions could not be implemented immediately and will be considered within the next twelve months.

## **2.0 Proposal/Options Considered and Reasons for Recommendation**

- 2.1 The standard has been discussed and supported at Tenant Engagement Board on 16<sup>th</sup> October and is a firm basis for tenants to know what to expect from their new home and how to hold us to account if it doesn’t. Beneath this standard, is the technical specification for our Empty Homes supervisor to follow that encompasses all other checks and works that need to be completed whilst the property is empty.
- 2.2 The recommendation is for the Portfolio Holder to approve the Empty Homes Standard attached as Appendix 1 and to note that a simplified version of the standard will be produced with tenants.

## **3.0 Implications**

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

### **Tenant Implications**

- 3.1 As reflected in the body of the report, tenants were actively consulted on the Lettable Standard, with feedback was carefully documented and reviewed reflecting a positive shift towards co-design, where tenants are involved in shaping service delivery and influencing policy decisions. Monthly property inspections carried out by tenants further reinforce this accountability and partnership approach.

### Financial Implications (FIN25-26/5239)

- 3.2 This standard has no direct financial implications outside of existing budgets for compliance and safety measures in Council owned homes.
- 3.3 This standard does not introduce any new financial burdens and will be delivered within existing budget allocations for compliance and safety in Council-owned properties.

### Equalities Implications

- 3.4 Whilst the Lettable Standard is an internal document, an easy read version will be created to enable tenants to quickly assess a property meeting the standard without the need for technical expertise.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.