

Title: Property Services and Housing Management - repairing and letting our properties.

Information/Discussion Report: Information item

Recommendations: The DMC is asked to note the report.

Report Summary: Void Improvement Programme.

1. Overview of our empty homes in Camden

- 1.1. Camden closely monitors our empty homes to prepare them to be allocated to those on our waiting lists. The numbers change daily and the number of void properties to be re-let at the time of writing this report is 429. These are broken down in the table below.

Active voids	Total	Camden Town	Gospel Oak	Hampstead	Holborn	Kentish Town
Pre-works*	107	33	17	24	21	12
In-works*	244	33	60	80	30	41
Lettings	78	8	20	16	18	16
Total	429	74	97	120	69	69

*The number of properties in the 'pre-works' and 'in-works' stages changes every day.

- 1.2. There are a further 167 properties which are empty and not in the letting process as they are being used for particular projects as detailed below.

Reason for Property being held	Numbers
Chalcots	42
Complex Repair 6 Months +	3
Emergency Temporary Accommodation	14
Held for Conversion	8
Undergoing Options Appraisal	72
Legal Cases	9
Retrofit Programme	10
Site Offices	9
Total	167

- 1.3. There was a presentation of the data and the process in which a property has works carried out and is relet at the DMC meeting held on 29th October 2024. At that meeting there was also an explanation and discussion regarding the properties

which are detailed in the table in 1.2. The data previously shared for that meeting is listed at the end of this report.

2. Mitigations we have put in place to improve our performance

- 2.1.** Additional resources have been brought in to carry out the repairs in empty homes to prepare them for letting. We have seen a significant increase in works orders specifically in the Hampstead area where there had also been an increase in the number of empty homes in that area.
- 2.2.** We have been advertising properties for letting as soon as they have been surveyed and are confirmed as needing only minor or routine works. Last week we advertised 32 properties which is the highest weekly amount in 2024.
- 2.3.** Recruitment is underway to the new 'Lettings Teams' which is part of the wider Housing Management restructure. There will be three Lettings Teams each led by a Lettings Manager with seven Letting Officers. These teams will be responsible for allocations, shortlisting, verifying applications, shortlisting and carrying out viewings. This increase in resources will see more shortlisting and viewings taking place as soon as the advert closes for bidding.
- 2.4.** Advertising, shortlisting and viewings will be taking place during the repairs period when it is safe to visit the property. Applicants will then have some time to prepare to move while works are completed on their new home. We can then start the new tenancy without delay when the works are completed.
- 2.5.** All teams involved in the end-to-end process meet twice a week to review performance, plan workloads and to unblock any difficulties that there may be with works or in the letting process.
- 2.6.** A 'lettable standard' has been agreed so that everyone involved in the process, (contractors, lettings officers and applicants), are fully aware of what works will be carried out and to what standard.
- 2.7.** As mentioned earlier, applicants will know earlier in the process that they will be moving to a new home. If this is a council tenant moving to another council property we are rolling out visiting them before they move home. This is in order to provide moving home advice regarding utilities and packing as well as informing them that they must leave their home clear of any belongings when they return the keys to us. On these visits a surveyor also attends to carry out an inspection of works so they can be ordered as soon as a property becomes empty.
- 2.8.** Three months after moving in we carry out a 'new tenant survey'. Feedback regarding the bidding, viewing and moving process is being used to help shape our new service.
- 2.9.** We are reviewing the cost of works to homes when they are empty to bring them up to the lettable standard.

3. Breakdown of Empty Properties by DMC area

3.1. We are sharing the data by property size per DMC area as follows:

Bedroom sizes		Camden Town	Gospel Oak	Hampstead	Holborn	Kentish Town
0	42	9	9	13	10	2
1	186	35	34	57	32	29
2	110	21	27	33	21	17
3	59	8	20	13	6	14
4	16	1	6	4	0	7
5+	2	0	1	0	0	0
TOTAL	429	74	97	120	69	69

4. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Data from the joint DMC Meeting on 28th October 2024.

Active voids	Total	Camden Town	Gospel Oak	Hampstead	Holborn	Kentish Town
Pre-works*	114	36	22	32	14	11
In-works*	230	31	47	77	36	42
Lettings	71	8	18	18	10	13
Total	415	75	87	127	60	66

Reason for Property being held	Numbers
Chalcots	42
Complex Repair 6 Months +	3
Emergency Temporary Accommodation	9
Held for Conversion	8
Undergoing Options Appraisal	73
Legal Cases	10
Retrofit Programme	10
Site Offices	11
Total	166

Bedroom sizes		Camden Town	Gospel Oak	Hampstead	Holborn	Kentish Town
0	42	10	9	12	9	2
1	186	35	34	59	30	28
2	110	21	20	36	16	17
3	59	9	19	15	5	11
4	16	0	4	5	0	8
5+	2	0	1	0	0	0
TOTAL	415	75	87	127	60	66

REPORT ENDS