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Board  
28 July 2016

# Customer Panel scrutiny report on Empty Homes Management

## 1 Purpose of report

1.1 The Board is asked to note the work undertaken by the Trust Customer Panel, and their findings, in scrutinising Trust's management of empty homes, and the Panel's future plans.

## 2 Background

2.1 The Trust Customer Panel agreed in June 2015, following their involvement in a Review of Trust Services (self-assessment) that they should focus on empty homes management for their next scrutiny topic. This dove-tailed well with their previous work on Allocations.

2.2 The Panel members undertook a significant amount of work including:

- Speaking with new tenants
- Visiting empty properties
- Visiting other RSLs
- Studying policies and procedures

## 3 Findings

3.1 The Panel's detailed findings, with the staff response, are detailed in **Appendix 1** (attached).

3.2 The key themes arising from their scrutiny are the need for:

- greater simplicity in processes
- improved consistency in service delivery
- more information to new tenants
- greater accountability on tenants to maintain the standard of their property
- a new Lettable Standard.

## 4 The Way Forward

4.1 Panel members have met with senior staff and have agreed a positive way forward that will include:

- The creation of a Working Party (of staff and Panel members) to create a new Lettable Standard and ensure the Action Plan from this report is progressed.

- A review of Customer Panel processes.
- A focus on Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcome 2 - Communication as the next scrutiny topic. This was decided by the Panel following this year's Review of Trust Services.

## 5 Recommendation

5.1 The Board is asked to note the Trust Customer Panel's report and that Panel members will work with staff to develop an Action Plan, progress against which will be monitored by the Audit Committee.

Regulatory Compliance: Scottish Social Housing Charter
Risk Level: Low
Financial Implications: Contained within budgets