

Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee

BRIEFING NOTE – No. 06/14

Date: 17 March 2014

Briefing paper to: All Members of the Business Support Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: This briefing note was as a result of discussion at the meeting of this Committee on 4 February 2014.

What is a Decent Home? - A summary of the definition

A decent home is one, which is wind and weather tight, warm and has modern facilities. It also has been updated to reflect the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS). It reflects what social landlords should spend their money on. To set a national target a common definition of decent is needed so all social landlords can work towards the same goal.

A Decent Home must meet the following criteria ;

1. It must meet the current statutory minimum standard for housing
2. It is in a reasonable state of repair
3. It has reasonably modern facilities and services
4. It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort
5. A home must have both effective insulation and efficient heating.

A home lacking two or less of the following is still classed as **decent**.

- A reasonably modern kitchen (20 years old or less);
 - A kitchen with adequate space and layout;
 - A reasonably modern bathroom (30 years old or less);
 - An appropriately located bathroom and wc;
 - Adequate insulation against external noise (where external noise is a problem);
 - Adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats.
- If a tenant does not wish for works to be undertaken they can normally sign a Decent Homes Waiver and Medway will undertake any required works when the property is next void. The property will still be classed as 'decent' if the work is subject to a waiver. Medway Council would not normally insist on major works being undertaken unless major health and safety issues were a factor. Reasonable steps are taken in order to avoid waivers and no access.

- Medway achieved the required Decent Homes standard for 100% of its homes by the December 2010 deadline and continues to do so.
- During the next 5 years approximately 500 of Medway's HRA homes will require various works to maintain the decent homes standard. This ranges from boiler installations to electrical rewires, a number of kitchen and bathroom installations and roofing upgrades.

Lead Officer Contact: Marc Blowers, Head of Housing Management, Tel 01634 334382 Email: marc.blowers@medway.gov.uk