

Difficult to let Homes Policy

Responsible Officer	Director Pre –tenancy and Property Services
This policy is applicable to	Karbon Homes Group
Approved by	KMT (Karbon Management Team)
Date approved	August 2022
Frequency of review	Every 3 years
Date of next review	August 2025
Implementation date	08 April 2019
Key related documents (policy, procedure, customer literature)	Void Management Policy. Lettable Standard. Allocations and Lettings documents.
Sources of best practice or guidance used in developing this policy	CIH guide – ‘how to increase demand for Difficult to let properties.

Version control			
Version number	1	Author of Policy	Allison Carrahar
Equality Impact Analysis	Initial/Full	Equality Analysis Date	March 2019

Document change history		
Version	Date	Changed sections
2	08 August 2022	3.1 additional bullet point in relation to Section 106 Agreements 5.1 change of person responsible for monitoring and review

Consultation	
Consultation Group (if applicable)	Date of Consultation (if applicable)
Staff	November 2018
Union(s)	Not applicable
Customers	Not applicable
Human Resources / Organisation Development	Not applicable
Health and Safety Working Group	Not applicable
Data Protection	Not applicable
Other stakeholder (please state)	Not applicable

Policy statement

There are a number of reasons why an empty home becomes difficult to let, such as the size, property type, location or individual social issues affecting a particular area. Difficult to let empty homes have a negative impact on Karbon through lost rental income, poor performance, community safety issues and reputational damage. This policy:

- Supports Karbon to make the best use of its housing stock and provide affordable homes and associated services for people in need.
- Will support Karbon to identify difficult to let empty homes and develop strategies to mitigate their impact on the business

Risk policy is designed to control

To ensure that Karbon optimises the use of its stock. In addition to empty homes affecting the sustainability of an area, properties that become difficult to let pose a financial challenge; we rely on rental income to fund the maintenance of our homes, building new homes and investing in new and existing services; an empty home means that no income is being generated by that property.

Key performance measures

Number of homes identified as 'Difficult to let'.

1.0 Purpose of policy

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to clearly define when Karbon Homes will consider an empty home difficult to let. This will enable us to quickly identify the risks to the business in terms of performance reduced income, and reputational damage. Identifying an empty home that is difficult to let will enable Karbon to adopt multiple approaches to mitigate any risks to the business.

2.0 Objectives

- 2.1 We aim to achieve the efficient use of homes through:
- Minimising the number and impact of difficult to let homes.
 - Understanding and recognising triggers that may signify the potential emergence of an empty home becoming difficult to let
 - Putting in place timely and appropriate solutions to minimise the impact of difficult to let homes
 - Creating sustainable neighbourhoods
 - Working with strategic partners to minimise the impact of empty homes on our communities

2.2 The aims will be achieved through the following objectives:

- Regular monitoring and review of relevant performance indicators to ensure that difficult to let homes are quickly identified and action plans developed.
- Identification, analysis and exploration of factors causing difficult to let homes.

3.0 Policy detail

What is a Difficult to let home?

3.1 A home can be considered 'difficult to let' in the following circumstances:

- The empty home not been let following one advertising cycle via CBL (Choice Based Lettings). This means that there were no bids from customers, or the shortlist of customers has been exhausted without the empty home being let.
- There is a particularly high rate of tenancy turnover of a particular property type in a particular area within the last 12 months.
- It has a red indicator on Karbon's sustainability matrix.
- Where a nomination agreement or other nomination arrangement in a Section 106 Agreement or a grant funding agreement exists Karbon has asked the nominating authority for a second shortlist of nominees (or, where applicable, has followed the necessary procedure for satisfying the allocation terms).

4.0 Managing difficult to let homes

4.1 We will be proactive and use performance data to identify emerging trends. This will enable Karbon to identify why an empty home or area has become difficult to let.

4.2 Where an empty home has been identified as difficult to let a partnership approach will be adopted, with colleagues in Karbon Property Services, Asset Management, Housing and Communications and Marketing where required working together to consider the options available to ensure the impact of the empty home on the business and our community as minimised. The Homes Team will lead on developing an action plan.

4.3 The action plan will identify various options available, options which include the re designation of property type, remodelling, additional investment in the area, intensive housing management and raising the profile of difficult to let homes through the implementation of effective marketing strategies. The action plan will identify resources required and timescales for implementation of the preferred option. Where re designation of property type or remodelling or stock rationalisation are considered the most appropriate option a report will be submitted to DAMP (Development & Asset Management Panel) with recommendations for decision.

4.4 Other options we may consider on a neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood basis are stock rationalisation such as refurbish and lease, repair and sell, and homesteading. These options would only be considered when other options have been tried without success, following a complete options appraisal and approval from Karbon Homes' Board.

- 4.5 This policy links to the Asset Management/Investment Strategy, Void Management Policy, Karbon's Lettings Policy and Karbon's Sustainability Matrix.
- 4.6 This policy will be supported by a difficult to let property procedure.

6.0 Customer Vulnerabilities

- 6.1 This policy is applied in line with Our Approach To Vulnerability Policy. Everyone matters. We want people to be treated fairly, have equality of opportunities, freedom, respect, and access to our services. We will offer support, reasonable adjustments, and adaptations to remove barriers. We will discuss with our customers what is reasonable and appropriate. In delivering this service we may need to escalate a particular case – if we do then customer vulnerabilities will be considered as part of the decision-making process.
- 6.2 We will support people with vulnerabilities to deliver this service. We will work alongside external agencies such as social services, the police and fire services and other appropriate agencies to help and support people with vulnerabilities in the delivery of our services but also to ensure we meet our statutory and regulatory requirements as a social landlord. Details are provided in the appropriate areas in this policy. All our customer policies are available on the website.

7.0 Monitoring and Review

- 7.1 The Director of Pre-tenancy and Property Services is responsible for delegating the operational implementation of this policy.
- 7.2 This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years (or earlier if there are changes to legislation/regulation/good practice). Review will be coordinated by the Strategic Planning and Insight Team.

8.0 Equality and Diversity

- 8.1 This policy is implemented in line with the Group's Equality and Diversity Policy and associated legislation. Consideration will be given to all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.
- 8.2 This policy and associated documents are available in different languages and alternative formats where necessary.

9.0 Data Protection and Privacy

- 9.1 We have a clear policy on data protection and sharing data with other partners/third parties under the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation. This is clearly set out in the Data Protection Policy for the Karbon Homes Group which in association with the Data Protection Procedures must be followed throughout the operation of this policy.