

HOUSING MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD - 16TH JANUARY 2019

Report of the Head of Landlord Services

ITEM 6

VOID PROPERTIES

1. Purpose of report

To provide an update to the Housing Management Advisory Board (HMAB) on the current voids performance.

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that members of the HMAB note the contents of the report.

3. Background

Works are undertaken to void properties to enable them to be re-let. The Void Lettable Standard can be found at Appendix 1.

4. Void categories

The void repair works can broadly be split in to two categories; major and standard.

The Council use HouseMark to benchmark performance across the service and use their definitions to define the difference between major and standard works.

The definitions for major works include those that have prevented the re-letting of the property because of their scale and extent.

In summary, major repair works include¹:

- Structural repairs
- Site works around the dwelling
- Services installations
- Consequential and other works
- Any works that significantly improve the dwellings (i.e. capitalised repairs)
- Asbestos removal - Notifiable asbestos works should be counted as major works. Non-notifiable asbestos works should be counted as standard void works.

¹ Available at: https://members.housemark.co.uk/data/benchmarking/Pages/Performance_measures_2017.aspx
Accessed: 04/09/2017

5. Delivery of Voids Works

Void works are undertaken by the Council's directly employed in-house Voids team or by the Council's capital works contractor, Fortem. Works are outsourced to Fortem where there is insufficient capacity available in-house.

The directly employed Council Voids Team consists of the following officers:

Voids Repairs Team Leader x 1
Charge Hand / Joiner x 1
Joiner x 5 (4 currently employed, 1 post currently advertised).
Electrician x 4
Gas Fitter x 2
Plasterer x 1
Driver / Labourer x 1

6. Budget

The void budgets for the three year period to 2018/19 are detailed below.

	2016/17 outturn	2017/18 outturn	2018/19 current available budget for the entire year
Spend (capital and revenue)	£1,341,790	£1,438,911	£1,376,300

7. Performance

Number of Voids by Year

In 2017/18 506 properties went through the void process.

At the end of Q3 in 2018/19 364 properties had been through the void process, almost the same as the 336 for the same period in 2017/18. .

Current Voids

At 03/01/2019 the Council had 172 void properties, broken down by property type as follows:

Property Type	Total
Bedsit	82
Bungalow	7
Flat	52
House	31
Grand Total	172

The majority of void properties that are hard to let are in sheltered accommodation. Bedsits do not meet the aspirations of many prospective tenants. A review of sheltered accommodation is underway with a view to reducing long-term voids.

Current Voids in Works

At 03/01/2019 47 void properties were being worked on, of which 24 were major voids. 19 of the major voids are being worked on by the in-house voids team, whilst 5 were outsourced to Fortem.

Average Re-Let Time (all re-lets, including time spent in works)

This indicator measures the average end-to-end time (in calendar days) to re-let all properties including those that undergo major works during the void period. This indicator includes both the time spent in works and other time e.g. time associated with the advertising and letting process. The target (which is challenging) is 27 days.

At the end of October 2018 the re-let time was 24 days performing positively against the target of 27 days.

At the end of November 2018 the re-let time was 64 days. This increase in the month is due to a number of sheltered units being let, which had been vacant for a long time.

Standard Void Time in Works

At the end of November 2018 the average number of days to complete re-let works at 274 standard voids was 12.2 days performing positively against the target of 14 days.

Major Void Time in Works

At the end of November 2018 the average number of days to complete re-let works at 38 major voids was 79 days.

The in-house team completed 34 major voids in an average of 67 days.

Fortem completed 4 major voids in an average of 182 days.

Future delivery options for major void works are currently being considered, with a view to improving time in works.

8. Improving voids performance

The Voids Working Groups continue to meet regularly to discuss and improve processes and individual cases. In addition to this the Senior Allocations and Lettings Officer meets with the Void Repairs Team Leader to discuss the weekly voids.

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