

HOUSING MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD – 11TH NOVEMBER 2020

Report of the Head of Landlord Services

ITEM 6 VOIDS UPDATE

Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the position in respect of voids.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to note and comment on the update.

Background

Works are undertaken to void properties to enable them to be re-let. The new Void Lettable Standard, which is currently being implemented, can be found at Appendix 1.

Void categories

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 include:

- 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.

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 Solutions Ltd. Works are outsourced to Fortem where there is insufficient capacity available in-house.

Current Voids

At 25/10/20 the Council had 236 void properties; the category, quantity and average number of days void are set out in the table below, along with the loss of rental income associated with the period the properties have not been let.

SUMMARY - GENERAL NEEDS / SHELTERED						
	Nos	Days void	Average days void	Rent loss in previous years £	Rent loss in current year £	Cumulative rent loss £
General needs	119	15,425	130	58,086	130,611	188,696.92
Sheltered	117	166,631	1,424	£1,724,561.64	250,347.94	1,974,909.58
TOTAL	236	182,056	771	1,782,647.79	380,959	£2,163,606.50

Void rent loss is high. This is in part due to bedsits in sheltered accommodation not meeting the aspirations of many prospective tenants. Bedsits account for 95 of the 117 vacant sheltered properties. A review of sheltered accommodation is in progress.

Void Performance

Performance data can be found at Appendix 2.

- As a consequence of the national lockdown in March 20, less repairs were undertaken in tenanted properties. In-house repairs operatives were therefore moved on to void works. Initially this had the effect of increasing void times as a backlog of voids was cleared in April and May leading to more properties being returned for letting that had been void for longer.
- The voids team is currently working differently in order to comply with social distancing requirements. Officers are generally not working together in rooms / properties where reasonably practicable. Performance is therefore still behind that of last year, although is improving as the year progresses.
- Lettings performance was impacted by the freeze in activity mandated by the national lockdown earlier in the year. Along with sheltered accommodation, this is a key driver for the increase in the overall void re-let time and void loss and reflects the experience of other social landlords across the country.

Improving voids performance

The Voids Working Groups continue to meet regularly to discuss and improve processes and individual cases.

Officer to contact:

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Appendix 1 - New Void Lettable Standard

Criteria	Yes - No - N/A	Pass Criteria
Charnwood Standard		
Is the kitchen less than 20 years old, of adequate space and layout, and does it have >1 year remaining life		Y
Is the bathroom and separate WC (latter only if present) less than 30 years old and does it have >1 year remaining life		Y
Is the level access shower (if present) less than 15 years old and does it have >1 year remaining life		Y / N/A
Are the UPVC or composite doors less than 25 years old and does it have >1 year remaining life		Y
Is the boiler less than 15 years old		Y
Is the full central heating pipework, radiators and electric storage radiators less than 30 years old		Y
Does the property have a valid EPC and a minimum SAP rating of 50	Y / Not Feasible	Y / Not Feasible
Compliance		
Has an asbestos survey been carried out (N.B. There must be a survey in place before work starts)		Y
Have all medium and high risk, and damaged asbestos containing materials been removed		Y
Is a satisfactory electrical safety certificate present and available for the sign up pack		Y
Is a satisfactory Landlord Gas Safety Certificate present and available for the sign up pack		Y
Is a smoke detector fitted and has it been tested		Y
Is a heat detector fitted and has it been tested		Y
Is a CO detector fitted and has it been tested		Y
Have the shower heads been replaced		Y
If there is a header tank present, is it insulated, is there a lid on it, and is it clean and bylaw 30 compliant		Y / N/A
If the property has been empty for 5 weeks or more has it been chlorinated		Y / N/A
Have all pipework deadlegs been removed		Y / N/A
Are all necessary fire doors present, functioning, in good repair, correctly fitted, and with all strips, seals, and door closing devices fitted		Y
Health and Safety		
Is loft insulation sufficient		Y / N/A

If the property has external wall insulation, render or cladding is it in good condition		Y
Are all parts of the property integrated into the main fabric of the building		Y
Is the property free of any lead in the property that is likely to cause a hazard to health		Y
Is the property free of any threats to health from chemicals used to treat timber and mould growth		Y
Is the property free of unguarded drops		Y
Is the property free of any visible signs of structural movement or damage		Y
Are internal spaces adequate, meeting standards and fit for modern day living		Y
Is the property wind and watertight		Y
Is the property free of signs of roof leaks or leaking guttering		Y
Is the property free of signs of damp		Y
Is there adequate ventilation in each room		Y
Is the property free of pests e.g. fleas, mice, rats and other vermin		Y
Has all rubbish, items, and hazardous materials been removed from all property areas including sheds, loft spaces, and gardens.		Y
Have all sharps been removed from the property, including from behind radiators and on top of cupboards.		Y
Are rails, guards and balustrades in place, in good condition, and adequate.		Y
Finishing and Decoration		
Is the property free of redundant cables, pipework, carpet grips, shelving, nails and holes in the wall etc.		Y
Has all graffiti been removed or painted over		Y
Are all surfaces (e.g. walls and ceilings) in good condition, free of heavy tobacco stains, decorated to an acceptable standard, or ready to decorate.		Y
Is the property clean throughout		Y
Amount of decoration grant	Insert £ Value	Insert £ Value
Floors		
Are all floors safe and level and free of hazards e.g. holes, trip hazards		Y
Are all floors tiles sound, unbroken and clean		Y

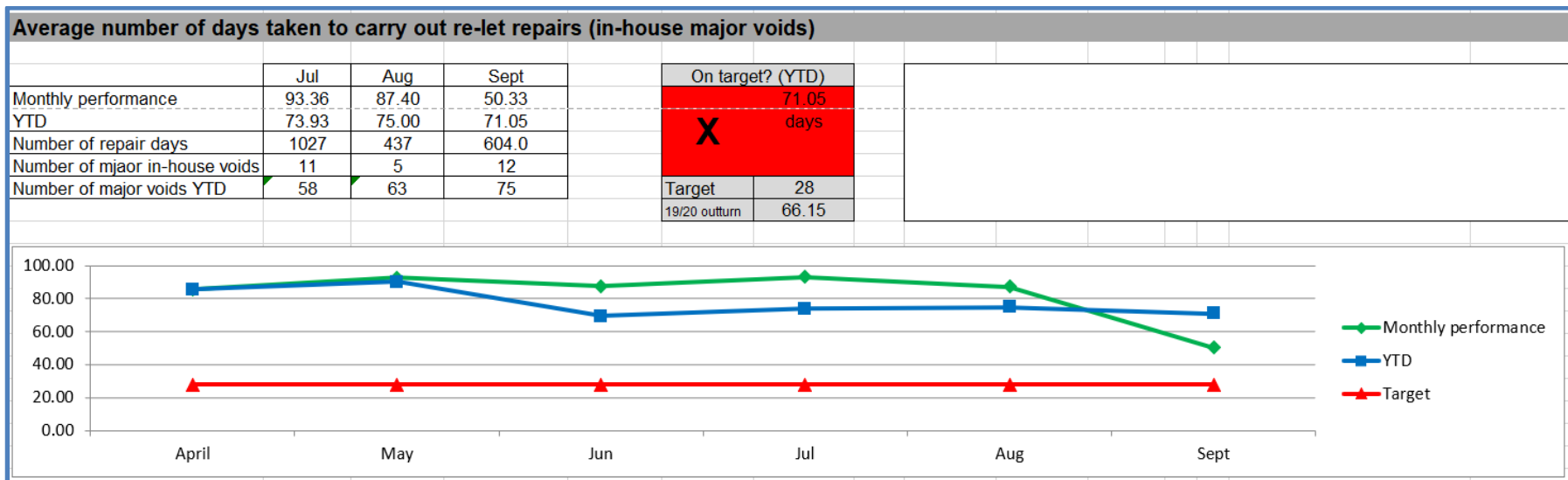
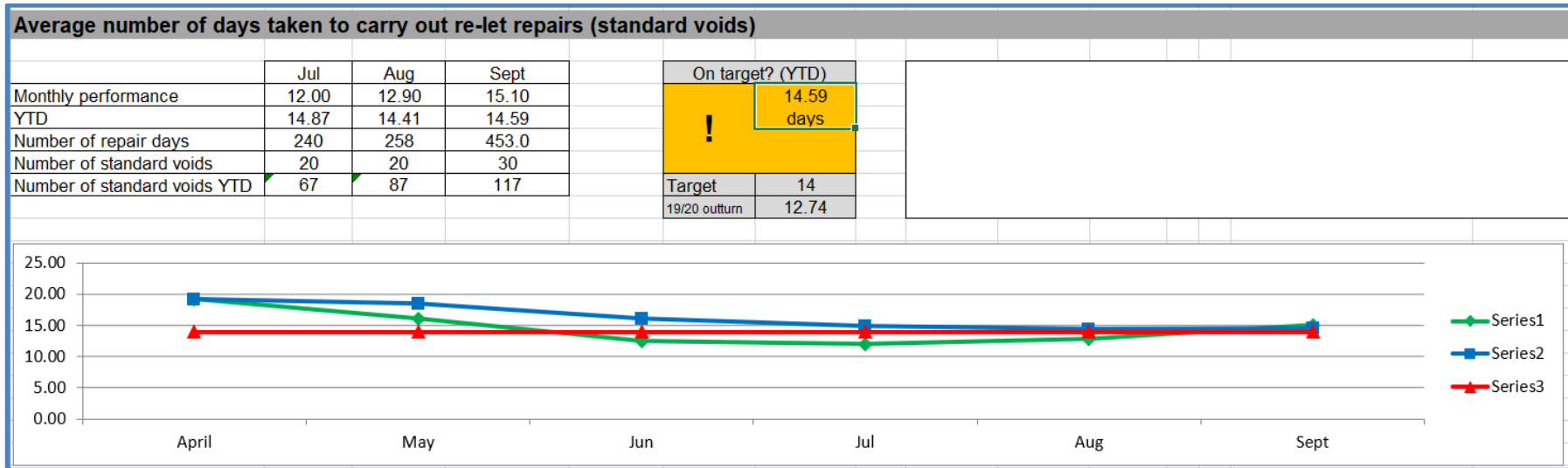
Are all timber floors sound and in a cleanable condition.		Y
Walls and Ceilings		
Are all wall and ceiling finishes (plaster) sound with no loose or flaking material.		Y
Are all the textured ceilings in sound condition		Y
Are all polystyrene tiles removed throughout and finishes made good.		Y
Has all mould growth been washed down and treated with an appropriate anti-fungicidal solution.		Y
Windows and External Entrance Doors		
Have all windows been checked, and are they operational and secure with no broken glass.		Y
Have all existing external door locks been replaced with recycled locks and a minimum of two keys available for the inbound tenant		Y
Are all exterior doors sound, operational and secure (see 24 if fire doors are needed or present)		Y
Are all glass panels safe and free from damage, with safety glass present where appropriate		Y
Internal Joinery, Fixtures and Fittings		
Are all interior doors fully operational with no damage.		Y
Are stair handrails, banisters, and balustrades sound and safe		Y
Kitchen Units		
Are all work surfaces sound and cleanable with no damage		Y
Is all sealant clean, continuous, intact and fit for purpose.		Y
Are kitchen sinks clean, leak free and complete with plug and chain.		Y
Is there adequate space for a cooker, fridge and washing machine including space for washing machine taps and waste connections, and adequate work surfaces, and is the layout appropriate		Y
Bathrooms / Water Closets		
Are WC pans, wash hand basins and baths clean		Y
Have plugs and / or chains been replaced at baths, wash hand basins and sinks.		Y
Are toilet seats new or in good clean condition.		Y

Tiling and Splashbacks		
Are all tiled surfaces clean with no broken or chipped tiles.		Y
Plumbing and Heating Systems		
Are thermostatic Radiator Valves and/or Room Thermostats all present		Y
Is there a programmable Heating system in place		Y
If electric heating was present, has it been changed to gas (where possible)		Y / N/A
Are all systems and overflow pipes leak free with no drips		Y
Have all taps been tested and are they functioning correctly and not dripping		Y
Have all Cisterns been tested for operation, and operational having been repaired and renewed as required		Y
Is all loose pipework securely clipped in place		Y
Are all stop taps closed and hot water shut off, with valves appropriately located, operating correctly, and information available for the new tenant sign up pack.		Y
Have all solid fuel appliances been removed		Y
Have all gas fires been removed		Y
Garden External Areas		
Have hedges been cut down to 6ft or below and is the grass no taller than 1ft high.		Y N/A
Is all external paving safe and level and free of hazards (e.g. trip hazards, holes, significant defects) and in place to ensure as far as reasonably practicable safe entry and exit of the dwelling through recognised routes e.g. front, rear doors and side entries etc.		Y
Roof Condition		
Does the condition of the roof indicate that it will likely need replacing in the next 5 years	Y/N	Not a pass criteria - assessment only
Adaptations		

List adaptations present

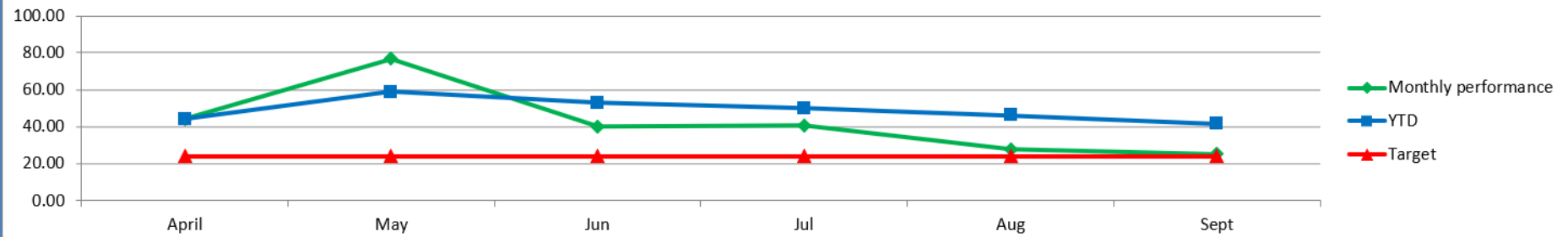
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Appendix 2 - Void Performance Data



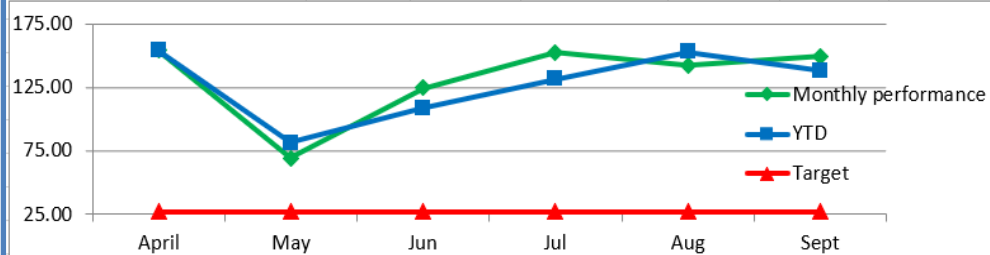
Average number of days to carryout re-let repairs - overall

	Jul	Aug	Sept	On target? (YTD)	
Monthly performance	40.87	27.80	25.17	X	41.61 days
YTD	49.90	46.22	41.61		
Number of repair days	1267.00	695.0	1057.0		
Number of voids	31	25	42		
Number of voids overall YTD	125	150	192		
				Target	24
				18/19 outturn	29.12



Standard void turnaround - termination to let

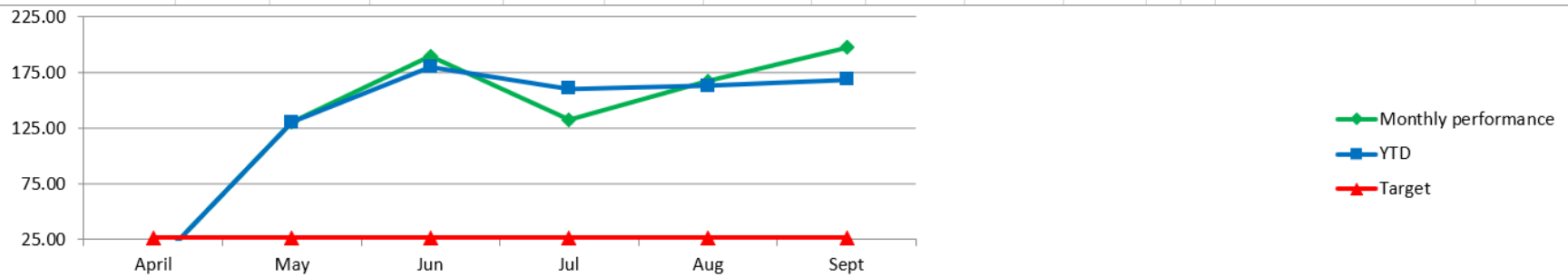
	Jul	Aug	Sept	On target? (YTD)	
Monthly performance	152.29	141.90	149.75	X	138.14 days
YTD	131.53	152.92	138.14		
Number of days	3198	2980	2396		
Number of standard voids	21	21	16		
Number of standard voids YTD	40	61	77		
				Target	27
				19/20 outturn	67.71



Major void turnaround - termination to let

	Jul	Aug	Sept
Monthly performance	132.31	167.38	197.60
YTD	160.81	163.00	168.97
Number of days	1720	2678.0	1976.0
Number of major voids	13	16	10
Number of major voids YTD	32	48	58

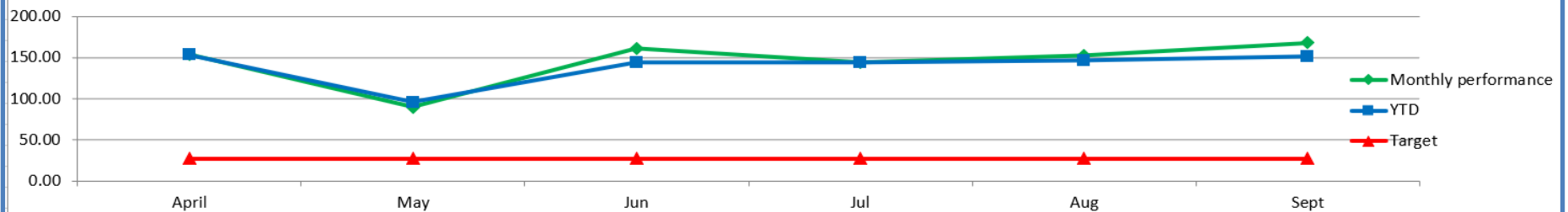
On target? (YTD)	
X 168.97 days	
Target	27
19/20outturn	134.07



All void turnaround - termination to let

	Jul	Aug	Sept
Monthly performance	144.65	152.92	168.15
YTD	144.54	147.00	151.39
Number of days	4918	5658.0	4372.0
Total Number of voids	34	37	26
Total Number of voids YTD	72	109	135

On target? (YTD)	
X 151.39 days	
Target	27
19/20outturn	87.62



Void rent loss

	Jul	Aug	Sept
Cumulative Rent roll	7,015,068	8,773,194	10,969,742.00
Rent loss due to voids	306,314	382,348	486,641.00
Void loss as a % of the rent roll	4.37%	4.36%	4.44%

