

SUBJECT:	VOIDS AND SHELTERED COMMUNAL AREAS UPDATE
DIRECTORATE:	HOUSING AND INVESTMENT
REPORT AUTHORS:	KEELEY JOHNSON -VOIDS CLIVE THOMASSON – SHELTERED COMMUNAL AREARS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Members with a current update of voids and communal arears in sheltered schemes.

2. VOIDS

The current void performance is monitored both weekly and monthly by the Assistant Director of Housing

As at the end of quarter 3, the current rent lost through vacant dwellings stood at 1.37% against the target of 0.9%, an increase of 0.07% compared to last quarter. The current void turn-around time for void requiring minor works is 51.94 days against the target of 32 days. The current void turnaround time for all properties is 59.98 days against the target of 38 days.

The Voids Team have experienced significant pressure throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. With restrictions on the number of staff able to work within properties at any one time, shortages in labour and materials and limitations on completing pretermination inspections.

In (month), the void subcontractor went into administration leaving significant pressure on the DLO. The high, national demand for labour, has meant a difficulty in recruiting the necessary staff needed to turnaround empty properties in line with target. We have now appointed five additional contractors to carry out void works and have allocated additional staff from the DLO. Subsequently, we are seeing an increase in the properties being completed and relet and are on track to bring performance more in line with target next quarter.

It is worth noting that the main impact on the increase of resources available will be in the number of the voids in the process, in the short term. Re-let times may increase initially as some of the long-standing voids are returned. Once these legacy voids have all been returned, we will see the reduction in rent loss and relet times, especially with an increased number of contractors in place.

There have also been additional pressures on tenants when trying to move home, resulting in delays throughout the void process. Tenants have often struggling to source removals or have had to self-isolate and unable to sign for properties as quickly as

required. Properties becoming void due to tenants passing away has also increased, meaning pretermination inspections have not been possible.

With the additional contractors that are now in place and the increase in available materials, performance should be more in-line with target for the end of the financial year.

3. Sheltered Scheme Communal Areas

The communal halls were reopened in September 2021.

They were initially opened for coffee mornings to get the tenants back together and were closely monitored by Independent Living staff. Signs were put up to continue to wear masks when moving around the halls, to remain socially distanced, and to use the hand sanitiser, windows are also opened for air flow. As things improved more activities have taken place in the units.

Notices are updated when guidance changes i.e., to inform tenants and visitors to the units / halls that we still recommended the wearing of masks, the hand sanitisers are still checked and refilled regularly.

If at any time there is a covid outbreak within a specific unit, notices are put up to inform tenants that communal halls will be closed for the recommended time, minimum now seven days to try to prevent spread and an outbreak in the units amongst our vulnerable tenants.

The halls in St Botolph's Court and Derek Miller Court are cleaned daily Monday to Friday and sanitised. The 5 group schemes are cleaned once a week minimum by contract cleaners and sanitised.

Staff are doing LFT twice weekly and are provided with the correct PPE (masks, gloves, and aprons)

The Independent Living Team have been advising tenants to complete an LFT or take a PCR if they are showing covid symptoms, to self-isolate until they know the outcome.

The team have assisted with providing and advising on how to use the tests to the tenants if no family member is available to help.

Is this a key decision?

Yes/No

Do the exempt information categories apply?

No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?

YES/No

How many appendices does the report contain?

None

List of Background Papers:

None

Lead Officer:

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