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15 November 2023

To: All Members of the Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel

Dear Member,

Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel - Tuesday, 14th
November, 2023

I attach a copy of the following reports for the above-mentioned meeting which were not available at the time of collation of the agenda:

7. VOIDS (PAGES 1 - 10)

Yours sincerely

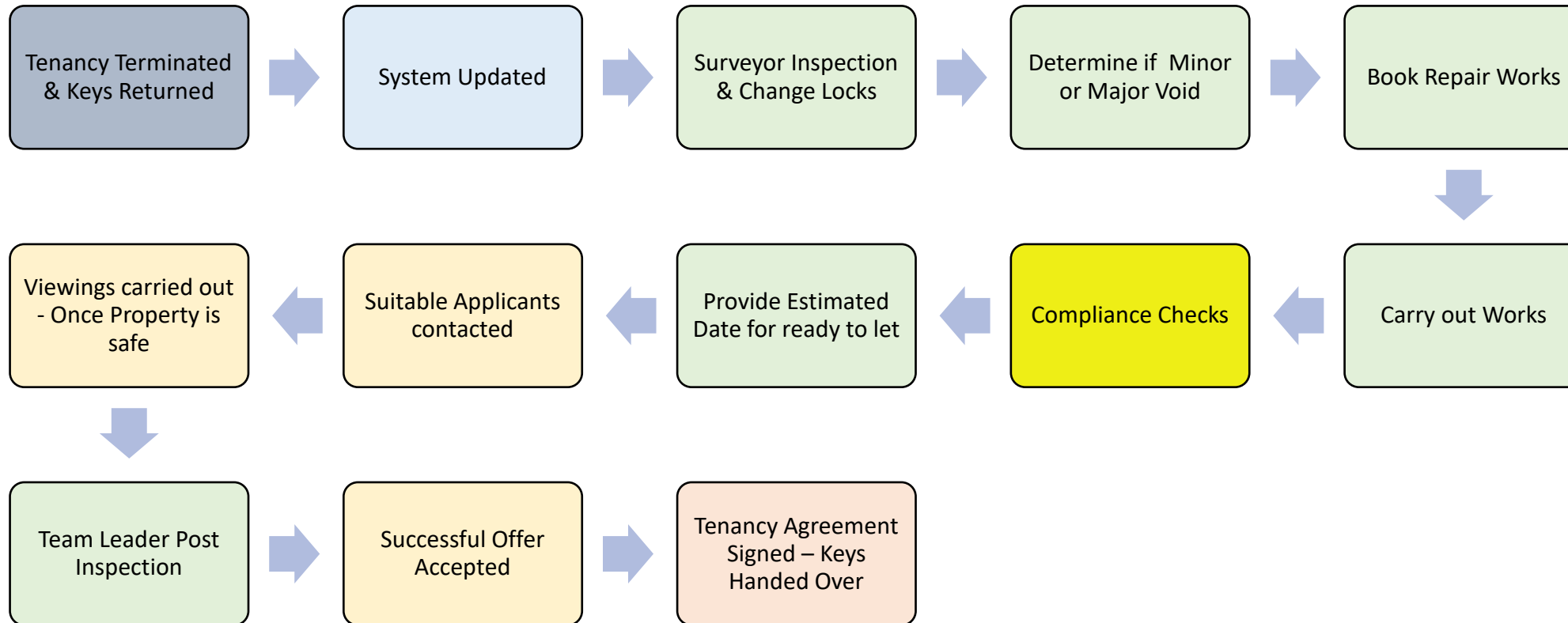
Philip Slawther

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Improving Voids Performance - Presentation for Housing, Planning & Development Scrutiny Panel

*Jahedur Rahman, Operational Director,
Housing Services & Building Safety*

Background 1 - Summary of the Voids process



Background 2 – Voids over the last 10 Years

Voids numbers over the last 10 years (snapshot as at 31 March each year)



Voids numbers over the last 10 Years (2013-2023)

Excludes RTB, Disposals and TA Acquisitions

TENURE TYPE	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Hostel	22	16	7	8	1	7	8	46	67	57
General Needs	104	74	79	70	85	82	62	80	235	272
PSL	57	28	28	46	32	27	18	29	55	39
Sheltered Housing	5	8	18	17	13	25	14	28	49	74
Community Benefits Society	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	74	73
Travellers Site	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
ALL VOIDS	188	126	132	141	131	141	102	183	481	515

Background 3- Current voids position

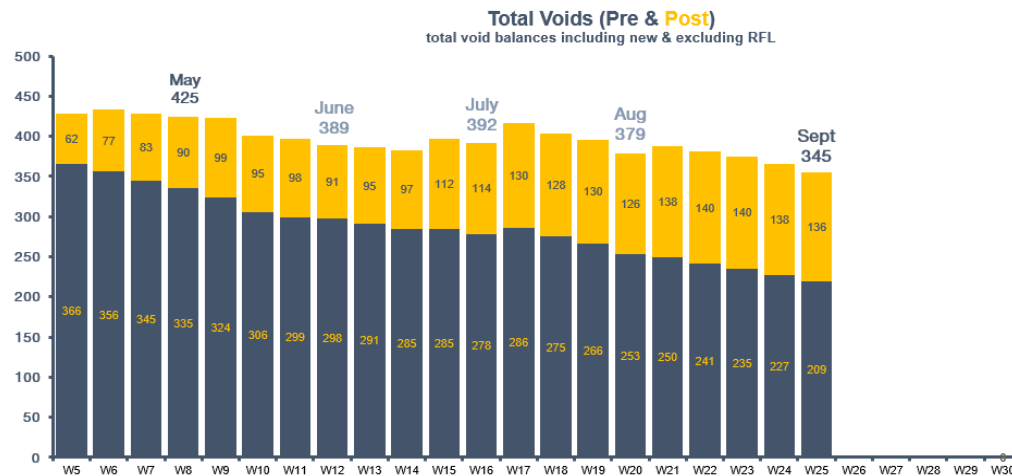
- Current voids graph – (345 at end of September 2023).

Current Voids

Lower is Better Performance



Transformation & Improvement Team
Culture, Strategy and Engagement



Better than Last Month



Target	Sept	YTD	2022/23
No Target	345	345	NEW

Monthly Metrics:	
Total No. Voids:	345

Context

Properties:

The Council has 15k council homes

Systems & processes

- Day to day voids repairs are managed through Total Mobile. The 'housing' element is through NEC/Northgate and there is an interface between the two systems
- Processes were last mapped in 2016. A new lettable standard has been launched and is being monitored
- Process maps - updates in progress to reflect changes in technology and team structures

People

- 50% of voids operatives are aged 55 and over and approaching retirement
- Succession planning is being developed including attracting apprentices

Voids backlog

This began to arise starting in 20/21 due to:

- The impacts of Covid, including staff shielding and difficulties around signing up new tenants
- Difficulties of obtaining building supplies during the pandemic

HRA business plan

The voids loss adjustment figures as per the HRA business plan are:

- 23/24 – 3%
- 24/25 – 2%
- 25/26 – 1%

Our voids improvement journey

- We are on an improving trajectory although we still have some way to go
- As at the end of 22/ 23 there were 515 void properties
- As at end of September 2023 there were 345 true voids that have been progressed by the Voids team:

Bed size	Total
Bedsit/Studio	6
1 Bed	150
2 Beds	103
3 Beds	77
4 Beds	8
5 Beds	1
Total Voids	345

- During the period April – September 2023 there were 135 new voids. During the same period 89 were made Ready for Let, of which 36 were in September alone

Challenges

- **Systems** – these have required significant improvement. A new **performance dashboard** has been implemented to improve operative and team productivity; and data cleansing has been carried out to ensure accurate, up to date information
- **Policies and procedures** – policies, procedures and process maps were very out of date. Process maps have been updated, staff training updated, and a new **lettable standard** has been developed and launched with resident involvement, to provide a consistent standard
- **Improving the culture** – work is underway to address this with staff through improved performance management, team meetings, 1- 2-1s and performance appraisals
- **Supply chain** – this is limited. Procurement of new **dedicated voids contractors** is underway to provide back-up to support contractors for the DLO to tackle the voids backlog. The contracts will run for one year and will be divided into two geographical areas, East and West

Housing Services Voids Improvement Plan

Key actions

Recruit a team of 4 additional staff as a task and finish group to deal with historic voids – COMPLETE

- Develop voids performance dashboard – COMPLETE. Dashboards have been developed and are in use
- Procure additional supply chain to clear the backlog and help deal with peaks in demand - UNDERWAY. Tender evaluation for 2 x East & West contractors completed.
- Recruit two additional teams of operatives for six months to deal with backlog and peaks in demand – UNDERWAY, 7 posts filled & recruitment for 3 remaining posts underway
- Review lettable standard and introduce optional decorations package – COMPLETE
- Introduce satisfaction surveys measuring satisfaction with property – UNDERWAY – to be included as part of sign-up process
- In-house DLO performance and productivity to be managed and monitored more effectively – ON TARGET, training sessions with HR consultants planned
- Contractor penalties to be introduced for late return of void against target (equivalent to rental loss) to incentivise good performance and quick turnaround times – ON TARGET
- Use of Total Mobile voids management system to track voids to completion; efficiency of operatives to assess productivity and identify areas for improvement or training - ON TARGET, training with Total Mobile has taken place & discussions on next steps have taken place

Questions

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