

City Housing Voids Project

Update for Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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16th March 2023



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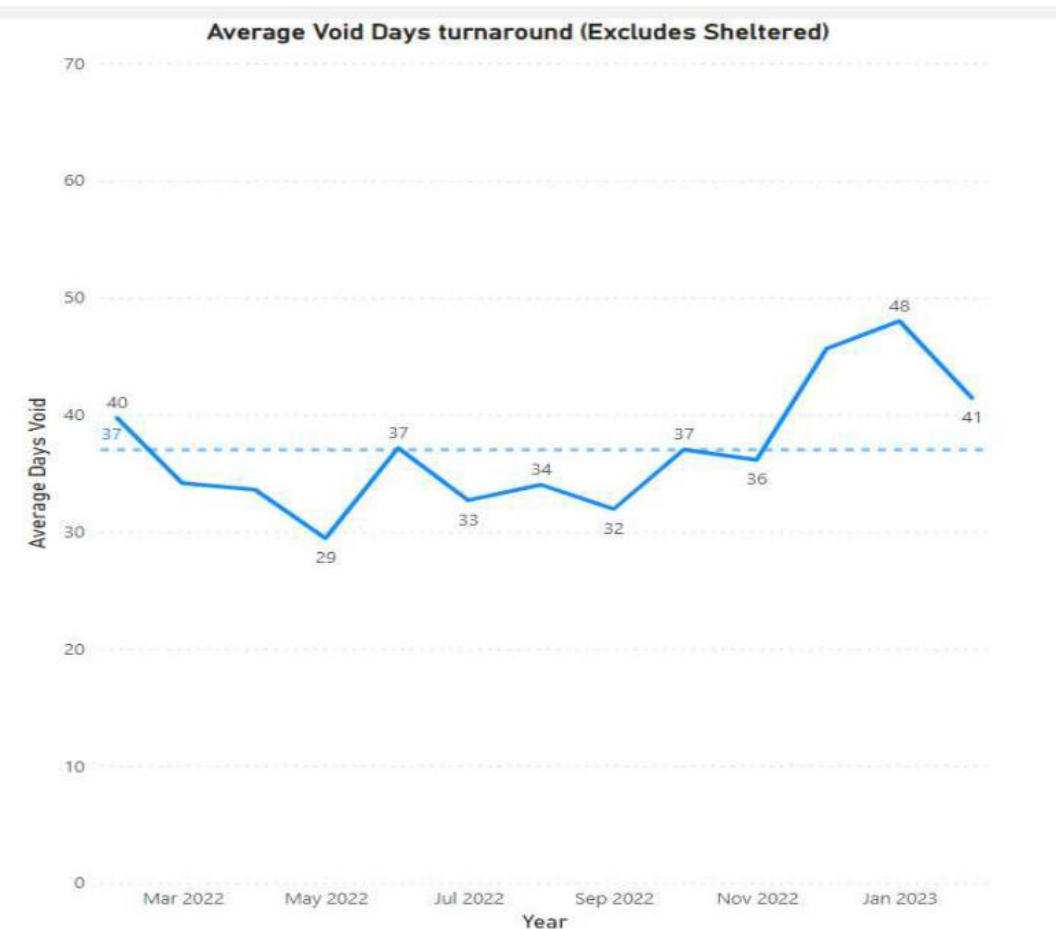
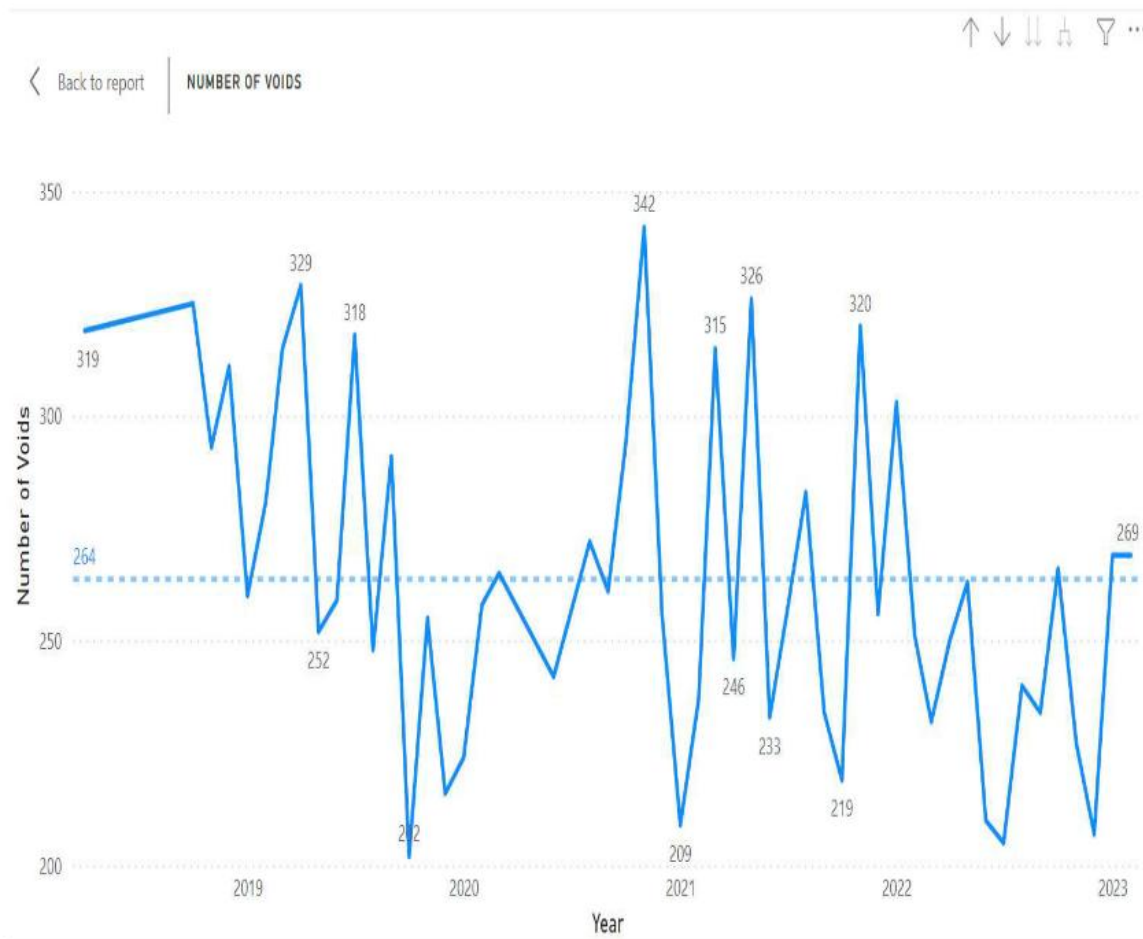
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1. Voids performance overview



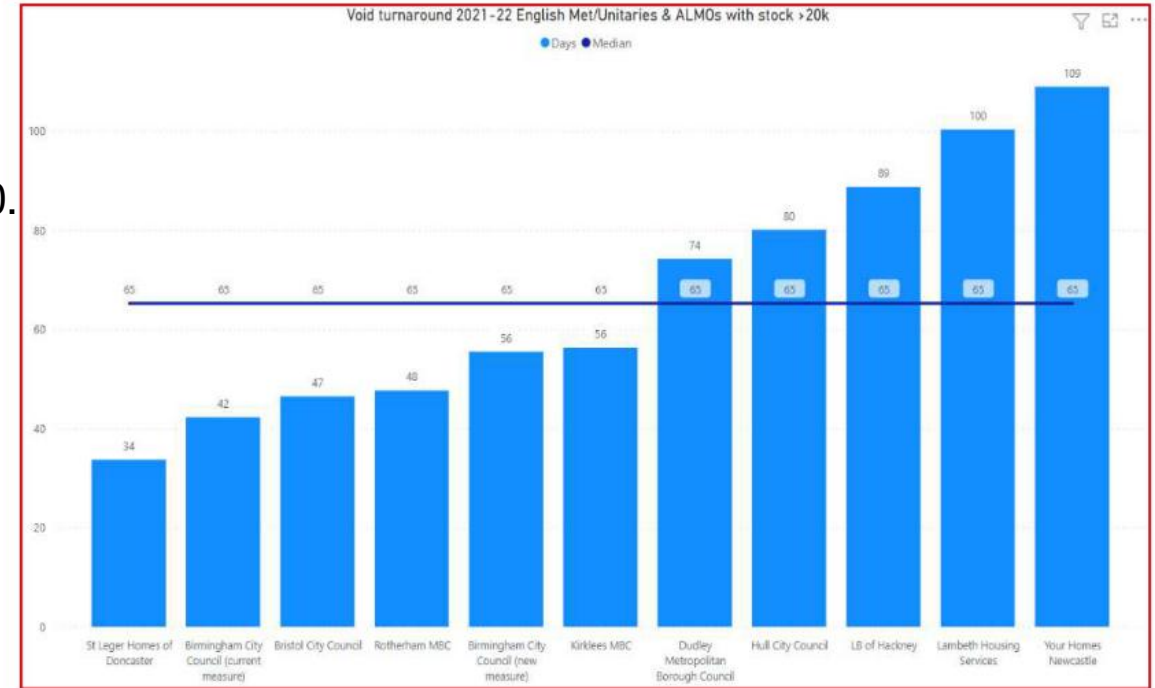
Void turnaround



Current voids performance

Voids turnaround, 2021-22

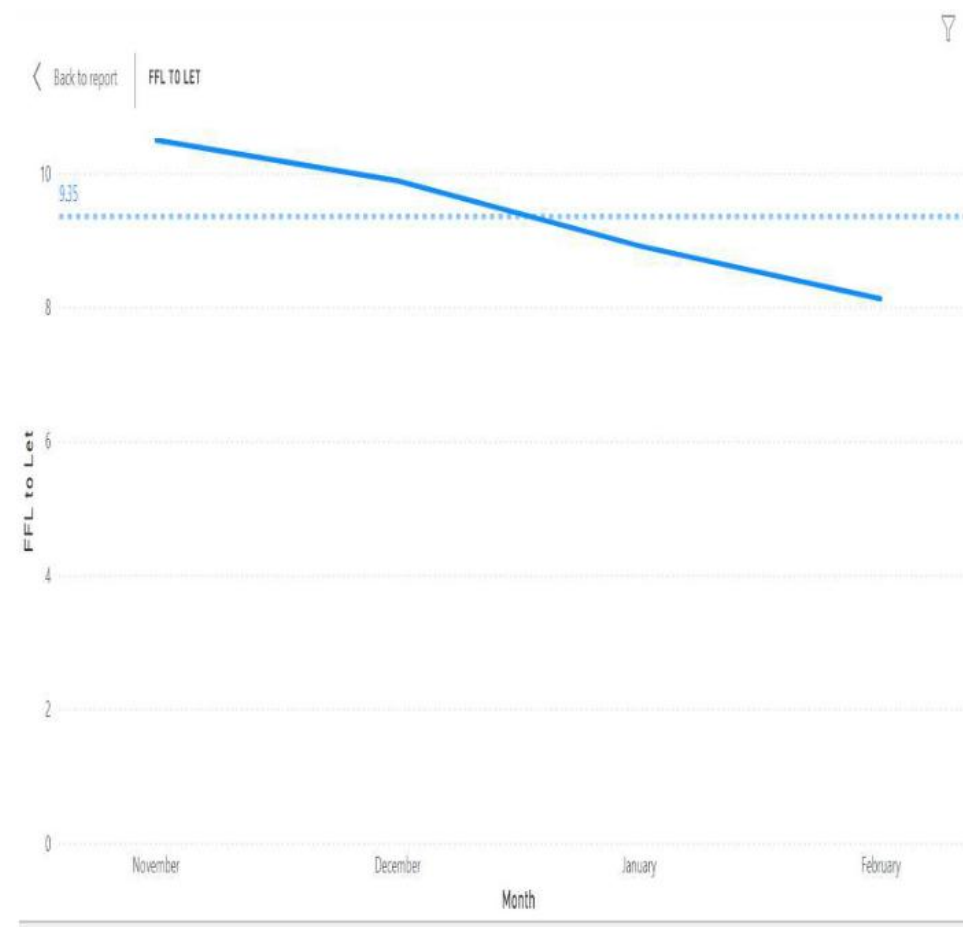
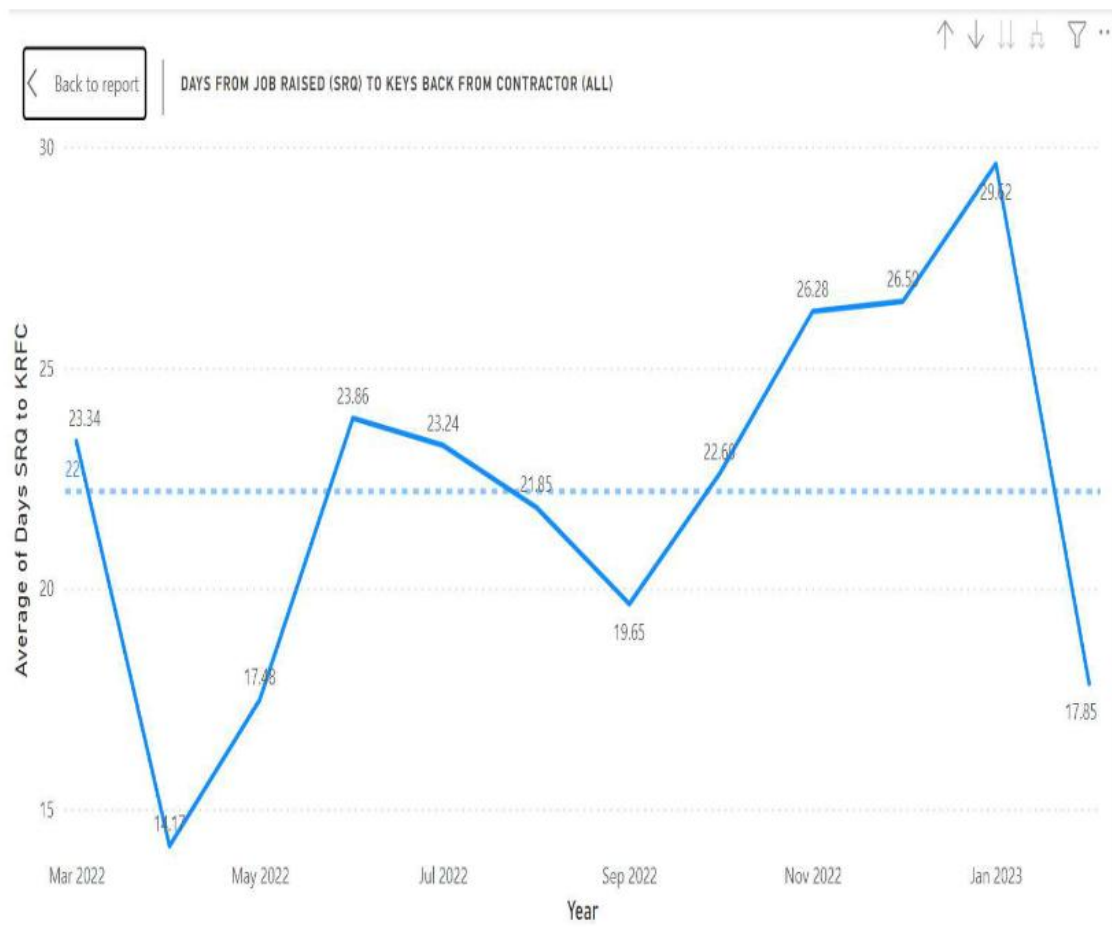
- The figure on the right shows Housemark benchmarking data for 2021-22 for peers with housing stock over 20,000.
- BCC returned a turnaround time of 42.3 days in line with how we currently measure void turnaround.
- A review of the Housemark definition is currently taking place to embed within future reports.
- Housemark definition below
- “Major repairs are works which could not reasonably be carried out with a tenant in occupation, and which need to be carried out in a property while it is vacant. They involve remedial works that are necessary for the property to remain habitable; they would include structural repairs, site works and service installations. If a tenant has been permanently decanted in order for works to be carried out, then these are major repairs for the purposes of CORE”



Contractor performance

- BCC has had issues with performance in some areas which is due to:
 - High staff turnover rate.
 - Skills shortage.
 - Supply chain issues, post-Brexit and post-Covid pandemic, experienced nationwide.
- Solutions to improve performance and quality:
 - Collaborative working (workshop) with contractors to understand our standard and quality requirements.
 - 100% inspection rate.
 - Supply chain training.
 - Integrated working internally to improve communications, delivery and outcomes for customers.

Days with Contractor, and days to let (ALL across City)



Void Standard



Birmingham Empty Property Standard

CURRENT

Last revised 2012 to include BMHT
ensure the consistent quality of properties
clean and habitable standard
minimum acceptable standard defined as fit for
re-letting
applies to all properties to be relet on a
permanent basis.
Plans to bring properties up to Decent HOMES
Standard on a programmed basis.
Not current policy to undertake decent homes
work whilst properties are void

ASPIRATIONAL

Feedback from Customers
Housing Management / Colleagues

Include TA changes / TA cleaning

Streamlined / Less Handoffs

Basic Standard
Decent Homes Standard
EPC B and C Aspirational Standard

Fit for Let Definition (Approved policy to repair rather than renew defective items)

Fit to live in, Structurally sound and weatherproof , Free from disrepair
Free from rising or penetrating damp prejudicial to the health of the occupants
Safe and secure, Clean, with sanitised kitchen and bathroom

Electricity / Gas Supplies

Adequate provision for heating, lighting and ventilation
Satisfactory facilities for food preparation and cooking, including a supply of hot and cold water
Adequate storage space in the kitchen
Washable floor coverings to the kitchen, bathroom and toilet areas.
Appropriate washing and bathing facilities with hot and cold running water.
Effective drainage, Secure doors and windows



2. Voids management project overview



Project aim, purpose and anticipated benefits

Aim

The overall aim of the project is to improve quality and standards and to identify areas of efficiencies and enhanced ways of working for customers, Voids Management staff and other related stakeholders.

Purpose

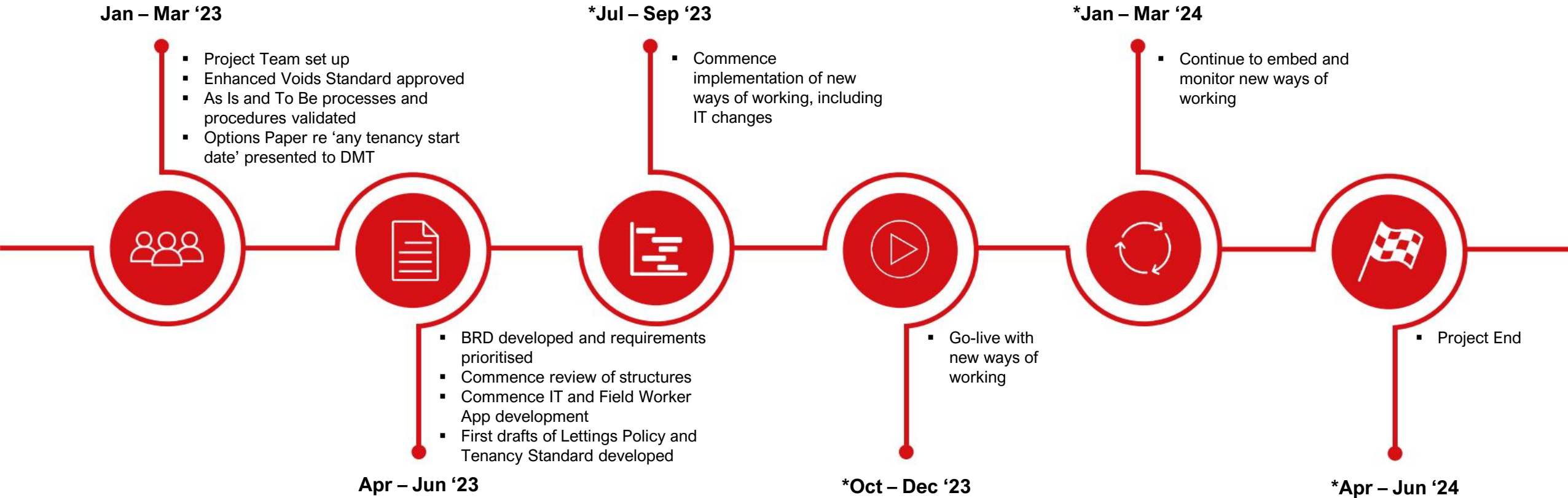
- To review processes which have not been reviewed for a number of years.
- Identify the opportunity to reduce void loss and ensure an integrated offer.
- Analysing trends to identify gaps.
- Developing the agile offer
- Increase HRA revenue by improving turnaround times.
- Include recommendations from the Root and Branch Service Review and Customer Service Programme to improve the customer journey.
- To ensure alignment with Corporate strategy and priorities.

Project aim, purpose and anticipated benefits

Anticipated benefits

- Improve the customer journey / experience, delivering the right information at the right time.
- Reduce void turnaround time.
- Set and manage realistic customer expectations.
- Capture data to analyse trends and contribute to service change.
- Create efficiencies within the process, optimising effective communication across all services.
- Improve void standard
- Ensure Value for money

High-level project roadmap



* These are **indicative dates only** as they will be influenced primarily by resource availability and IT development timeframes.

The Service Offer- What does it mean?

Current

- Split across three teams
- Pre-vacation visits not integrated
- Lack of digital/agile solutions
- Inability for self-service
- Limited pro-active management throughout the life of the tenancy
- Customer satisfaction not captured
- Information for customers on expectations not clear



Aspired

One consistent void team across all functions

Agile IT solutions

Increased online capability

- Robust Housing Management offer- New Model
- Satisfaction to be captured and data utilised for improvements
- 28-day notice period utilised- pre-vacation expanded
- Improved customer information to be available
- New improved void standard




Project workstreams

Six project workstreams:




1. Operational Voids Process Improvement.
2. Voids Digital Development.
3. Voids functionality on Field Worker App.
4. Voids Standard.
5. Lettings Policy and Tenancy Standard.
6. Tenant Start and End Recommendations ('Any Tenancy Start Date').

An overview of each workstream is provided on the following slides.

Project workstreams

Workstream	Summary	Key Activities
 Operational Voids Process Improvement	To review and update operational processes and procedures, implementing improvements across all functional areas impacting voids management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A review of the end-to-end voids process and procedures to identify current process and system failings, inefficiencies and pain points for customers and staff. ▪ Designing new voids management processes and supporting documentation. ▪ Creating improved working standards and practices. ▪ Reducing the large number of manual processes and converting these to more efficient and mostly digitised ways of working. ▪ Developing new voids management KPIs (benchmarked against external organisations). ▪ Recommendations on structure and roles (where not addressed by Target Operating Model proposals).
 Voids Digital Development	To automate voids processes and procedures, where possible, in order to enhance and make more efficient the customer experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gathering IT requirements and producing a prioritised requirements log. ▪ Creating a Business Requirements Document (BRD) to identify IT system changes and improvements. ▪ Developing automated forms and documentation to support new voids processes (subject to IT&D BRD sign-off). ▪ Developing self-service capability and enabling customer visibility via online access.
 Voids functionality on Field Worker App	To build functionality within the Field Worker App to support the voids management process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing automated forms and documentation on a handheld device to be used in the field to enable agile working.

Project workstreams

Workstream	Summary	Key Activities
	Voids Standard	<p>To conduct a review and make recommendations on the voids standard based on customer requirements, feedback and benchmarking against other comparable social landlords.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the current standard appropriate and how does it compare to others? What would be the benefits of improving the voids standard? What would be the impact of raising the voids standard? The timing of making a change to the voids standard (impact on existing contracts). Production of a fully costed Voids Standard with recommendations for change.
	Lettings Policy and Tenancy Standard	<p>To create a Lettings Policy and Tenancy Standard.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research with other local authorities to find examples of 'good' Lettings policies. Creating a Lettings Policy. Creating a new Tenancy Standard.
	Tenant Start and End Recommendations ('Any Tenancy Start Date')	<p>To consider and make recommendations on service improvements for tenant start and end.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a Recommendations Paper, including a project scope for implementation.

Progress to date

Area	Progress
Performance Reports (Power BI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ New reports have been developed and to be embedded within the service – these factor in true key to key figures and key milestones and highlight void times based on property type.▪ Voids broken down into routine and major.
Data Cleanse (Voids over 12 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ HM team has undertaken a data cleanse on voids over 12 months that were being charged with debit.▪ This has led to a 70% drop in voids over 12 months.▪ New process in place for debit related to voids pending demolition.
Decant Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ New decant process implemented in November 2022 to ensure void teams work closer with asset management.▪ This has resulted in an overall reduction of decants and there is now a report and focus on managing timescales and delays.
RAPS / Sheltered (Longstanding voids)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ At the start of April 2022 there were 55 hard to let voids in sheltered. A working group was set up with TA and voids team to ensure utilisation of RAPS.▪ This has resulted in 0 hard lets.

Progress to date

Area	Progress
Translations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Issue with translation service translator which resulted in a 3-day impact.▪ New service offer for translation has been developed utilising language line
Pre-Vacation Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Conversations with contractors to view the void and plan works in the notice period –developing this approach and ascertaining what work can be done on occupation, with a key focus on inspecting electrics and boilers▪ The team are developing a pilot to ensure that when a tenant applies for a transfer they are visited to ensure the property is not neglected or damaged. Any neglect, willful damage will result in the inability to move unless rectifications completed.
Audits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 100% of voids are audited.▪ Improving turnaround on audits through internal process improvement.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ There has been a review of budgets and an additional manager has been created.▪ An additional housing officer and moving out team have also been agreed in recruitment phase.

Progress to date

Area	Progress
Key Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The moving out team now collect keys and this has had a positive impact on the notice period.▪ This will be extended across all areas and support performance.
Lettings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Pre-tenancy workshops have been relaunched and we also conduct pre-lets with people ensuring benefits and payments are all in place – we monitor housing benefit and universal credit within the first 12 weeks to measure the success of this. 12 days HB, UC 44 days.▪ Feedback from those who have attended pre-tenancy workshops has been positive and they have found the information useful.
Voids Standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Improved Standard has been included as part of tender documents for contract 2024 (published 16th January 2023).
Housing Management (Proactive Visits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Housing have increased their visits to properties, and this is highlighting issues earlier than the moving out phase.

Future activities

Area	Progress
IT / Online Processes / Customer Journey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ A review is underway on all process.▪ This will result in online notices, customer updates, automated workflow and an agile solution.
TOM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Tom has identified the need to develop a locality housing model, focusing on a robust Housing Management offer that will be ensuring a focus from move in to move out and will enable an enhanced pro active service.

Risks

- Resource constraints – capacity and capability.
- IT&D team capacity constraints.
- Competing demands across the business – high level of change activity underway.
- Financial implications – ie, increased investment vs potential increase void time

Mitigation

- Robust governance and process prioritisation
- Aligned and visibility to corporate priorities and programmes

Thank you for your time

END OF PRESENTATION

