

Void Workshop Aug 2023 questions and responses

Question	Response
Can we have a quarterly report on the progress of voids?	That can be agreed through the Chair as a recurring item at Housing O&S, void turnaround shall be reported as a KPI in standard council performance reporting.
What are the main reasons for voids?	The main reason for a tenancy to end is death of the tenant
If issues are around repair can SKDC employ apprentices to help them train and in the meantime SKDC gets more voids upgraded?	We are actively seeking to employ apprentices, but obviously with apprentices comes the need for training and supervision and the ability to learn from an established tradesperson, this is the area that we are currently finding it difficult to recruit to.
If a property is habitable and would be empty for more than 3 months waiting upgrade repairs would it not make sense to allow someone to move in and then upgrade the property rather than leave them inadequately housed, or, give the choice to the tenant – take it as it is or wait as long as it takes to get repaired/upgraded?	Where we have for example a kitchen that is nearing the end of its life and is useable and does not present as a hazard this is something that we already look to do. We do not give the tenant the choice but we make those decisions.
Can an additional void session be held for those members unable to attend the original meeting	To be discussed at Housing O&S in September
Is our voids standard too high?	The void standard is in line with best practice and has resulted in eradicating complaints with regard to property condition at sign up.
Are our heating/EPC ratings options too ambitious?	Our ambition is to move all properties to at least an EPC 'C' rating which is the minimum requirement in future years to enable the letting of properties.
What proportion of the budget is spent on voids?	To be confirmed
How is the contractors time on repairs/ improvements divided?	The Council has specific contractors dealing solely with Void properties.
What improvements in contractual obligations have been made?	We have split the District North and South to aid contractor resource planning and reduce travel time, all voids are completed to our void quality standard.
When residents are relocated for significant works to take place, why are the timescales given so often awry?	We have recently had some very complex cases, for instance the replacement of a roof and associated timbers the extent of work is not always known until the work commences, some of our older/listed stock requires bespoke creation of roof trusses etc which adds further timelines to the project.
Lack of timescale for a void despite the increased need.	This is in the process of being addressed, we meet weekly to discuss voids and the timelines for their completion and return. There are some properties that we hold due to knowledge that they will be hard to let or may be possible properties for future disposal due to the extent of work required.