

**BUILDING MAINTENANCE FRAMEWORK – VOIDS MANAGEMENT  
ISSUES**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. To provide Members with an overview of scrutiny to date on voids management issues. A briefing note on the issues is attached at **Appendix A**.

**Background**

2. In 2015/16, the CASSC Performance Panel undertook a “deep dive” into council housing voids management, following poor performance over several years on the average time taken to re-let council housing voids.
3. The Performance Panel met four times to undertake the deep dive, examining:  
good practice;
  - available void performance indicator information;
  - benchmarking information;
  - key lessons from tenant-led scrutinies in England;
  - relevant Cardiff Council procedures and processes; and visiting a number of void properties to see the conditions in which properties are handed back to the Council and the standard that is reached before properties are re-let
4. The Performance Panel produced a report, arising from the deep dive, which contained sixteen recommendations, all of which were accepted.

5. Following the deep dive, Members were keen to understand the impact of the recommendations being implemented, and received a number of updates, the last one being in December 2017. At this time, Members were informed of the new arrangements which were being implemented from January 2018. At that stage, Members stated that they supported the new contractual arrangements going forward, but confirmed that they would wish to continue monitoring performance.
6. On developing the Committee's work programme for the current year, Members requested a Brief on Voids, which was duly provided and attached as **Appendix A**. Members agreed that, having studied the content of the brief, this issue be brought to Committee for further consideration at the earliest possibility.
7. The Brief attached at **Appendix A** sets out the following issues:
  - Backlog of voids left by previous contractor;
  - Difficulties experienced by new contractors in delivering void works within given timescales;
  - Withdrawal of R&M Williams Contractor (Cardiff West)
  - Contingency Arrangements in light of the above;
  - Next Steps
  - Voids Performance to July 2018

## **Way Forward**

8. At this meeting, the following witnesses will be in attendance:
  - Councillor Lynda Thorne (Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities)
  - Jane Thomas (Assistant Director, Housing and Communities)
  - Ellen Curtis (Operational Manager, Landlord Services)

Officers will make a presentation to Committee.

9. Members may decide any comments, observations or recommendations they wish to pass to the Cabinet for their consideration following the presentation at this meeting.

### **Legal Implications**

10. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

### **Financial Implications**

11. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- i. Consider the information provided in this report, **Appendix A** and the presentation made at Committee; and
- ii. Decide the way forward with regard to any further scrutiny of this issue.

**DAVINA FIORE**

**Director of Governance and Legal Services**

**4 October 2018**