

COUNCIL HOUSING VOID MANAGEMENT

Purpose of Report

1. For Members of this Scrutiny Committee to receive an update on performance in relation to Council Housing Void Management, as scrutinised by the CASSC Performance Panel in 2015/16.
2. Members will receive a presentation giving an update on performance.

Background

3. 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.
4. 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

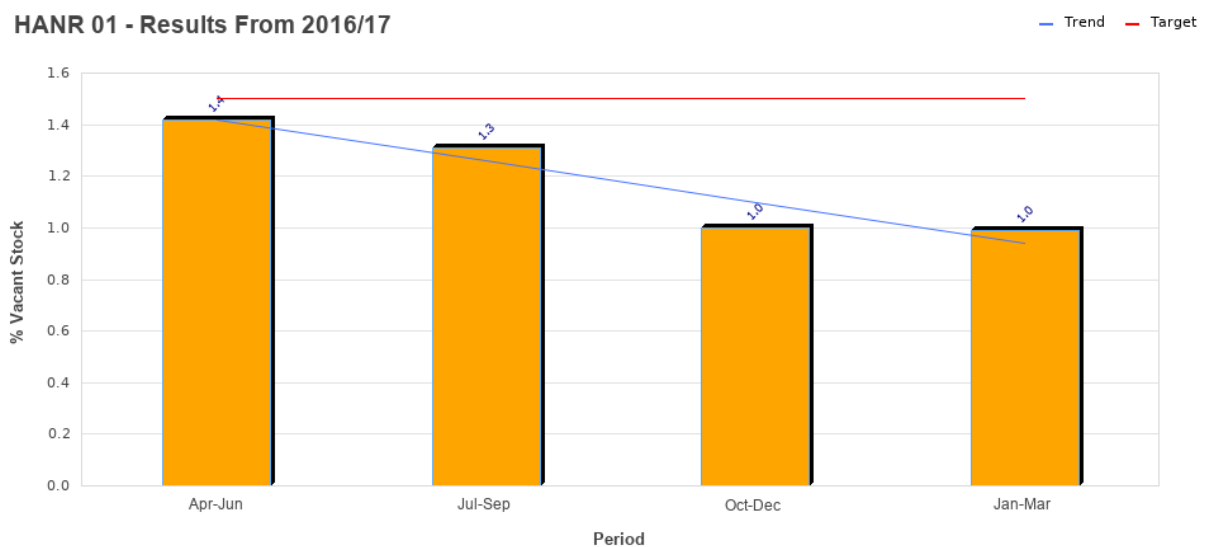
5. The Performance Panel produced a report, arising from the deep dive, which contained sixteen recommendations, all of which were accepted, a summary of which is attached as **Appendix A**.

6. Following the deep dive, Members were keen to understand the impact of the recommendations being implemented, and in a previous update on this issue, Members were very pleased to note a demonstrable commitment by officers to drive improvements in this area, improved performance in re-let times and consequent improvements in rent loss and the percentage of stock that is void¹.

Current Performance

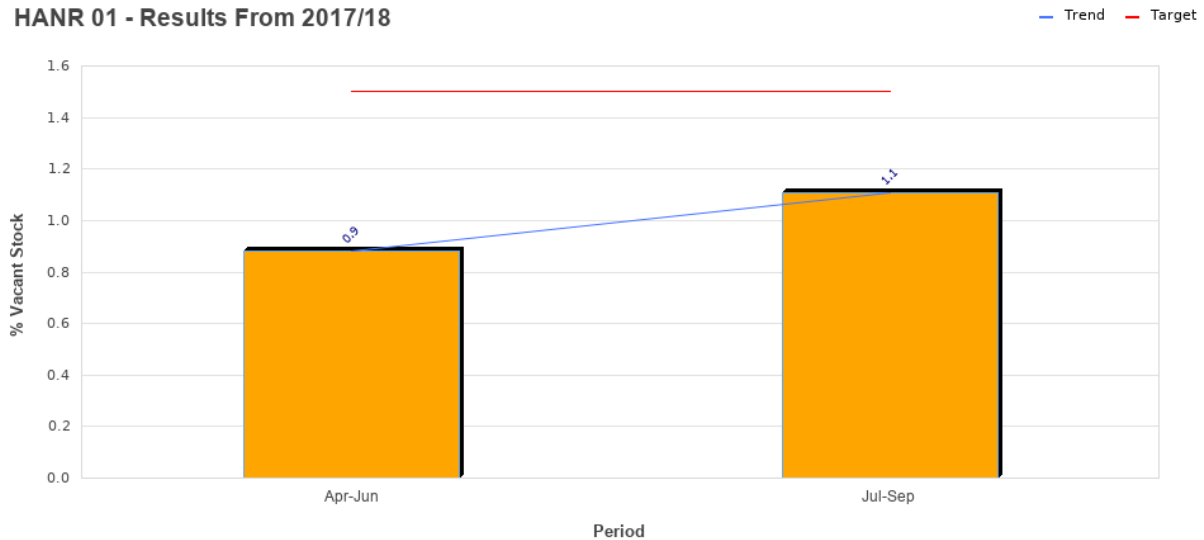
7. The Council continues to monitor performance in relation to voids, via Indicator HANR 01. The results for both 2016/17 and 2017-18 are set out graphically below.

HANR 01 - Vacant Local Authority stock as percentage of overall stock



¹ CASSC Annual Report 2016/17 – May 2017

HANR 01 - Results From 2017/18



8. The results above show that, in 2016/17 and into the first quarter of 2017/18, the percentage of void properties to overall housing stock reduced, and was well within target. The number of void properties increased slightly in Quarter 2 of 2017/18 due to the volume of incoming voids increasing in this period. However, the result is still below the target of 1.5%. Officers will provide further performance data during their presentation at Committee.

Way Forward

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

Officers will make a presentation to Committee.

10. 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

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 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

12. 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

29 November 2017