

SCRUTINY

PA residents work hard to scrutinise how we deliver services and to ensure they are fit for purpose. On the following pages we have posted the highlights of a number of reports.

Each project gets reviewed regularly by our Resident Council and Customer Forum to ensure that the agreed recommendations are actually completed. If you would like to see the full report please click [here\(?\)](#)

Report of the Resident Scrutiny Team

Voids Management

Ensuring the organisation is restoring revenue as quickly as possible and maximising new homes

1. Introduction

During June and July 2018, we undertook a Scrutiny of PA's Voids Management across the Midlands and London & South East Regions, in particular to consider to the extent that PA is restoring revenue as quickly as possible and maximising the availability of homes.

This report sets out the background to our work, the methods used, what we found, conclusions reached and recommendations we wish to make to Resident Council.

Overall, we conclude the evidence from our Scrutiny indicates that at both Bede Island and Case House, there are sound and effective arrangements for Void Property Management. This results in satisfactory performance, although there are a number of issues that require attention. Our conclusions in section 5 highlight a series of matters that we feel should be addressed. Specific recommendations are made in section 6.

2. Context of the Service

Voids Management is a crucial area of PA Housing's business as it is central to its Income Management, seeking to minimise unnecessary loss of revenue. It is also central to its social purpose, to provide as many homes as possible. There are wider aspects to Voids Management as well, such as ensuring that localities are as fully lived in as possible, so as to reduce to risk of vandalism and other forms of anti-social behaviour (ASB).

It is noteworthy that each region operate in quite different housing economies, which impacts upon the context for Void Management.

The scope of the exercise encompassed questions as to how PA manages the voids process, what impact voids have on the organisation's business model, how PA manages its contractors, what impact they have on Value for Money for this service, how PA manages abandonment, ASB, and vandalism on empty homes, the impact that incentives have and any key differences between PA East Midlands and London & South East regions.

Void management processes should be:

- ✓ reviewed regularly
- ✓ customer focused:
 - involve residents in the development of services
 - enhance opportunities to capture customer feedback
 - be responsive to changes in customer expectations, and local circumstances
 - maintain and improve levels of customer satisfaction
- ✓ financially viable:
 - minimise rental loss and void costs
 - ensure the quick and efficient turnaround of void repairs
 - deliver the best quality standard possible
 - make best use of existing stock, and resources
- ✓ responsive to communities and neighbourhoods:
 - reduce the risk of vandalism of squatters, and minimise any negative impact on the wider locality
 - create sustainable tenancies, and communities
- ✓ efficient and effective in terms of internal mechanisms:
 - be aligned to clear working procedures, which show responsibility for each stage in the process
 - have defined standards and targets for key processes, which are communicated to all relevant staff and partners
 - have effective quality control mechanisms, ensuring that all work is carried out to a high standard, in the first instance
 - have in place effective performance monitoring and progress chasing arrangements
 - facilitate open communication and flow of information between different departments, contractors.

3. Recommendations

That:

- 6.1 For future Scrutinies one person, the Lead of each Team or delegate, be responsible for the Call for Documents and their organisation
- 6.2 To reduce the amount of travel, for future Scrutinies there be one block of time at Bede Island and one at Case House with best use of Skype be ensured
- 6.3 For future Scrutinies, planning should consider the impact of the volume of activities on achievability and impact on report writing time
- 6.4 The work being undertaken, which we support, to address the differences between DLO and contractor costs, be reported to the Resident Council and Customer Service Forum
- 6.5 Case House reclaim VAT on recharges
- 6.6 The Value of Decoration Vouchers be inflation linked
- 6.7 The issue with both pre-payment meters and the role of utility companies in delaying the processing of Voids be resolved
- 6.8 To reduce refusals on voids/lettings, the location choice given be more local than at present
- 6.9 The Value for Money exercise set out in section 4 be undertaken and reported to the Resident Council and Customer Service Forum

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