

## Information Bulletin – Voids Performance

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### Introduction

This report has been produced to provide Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on voids performance.

Babergh has 3,548 properties and Mid Suffolk has 3,297 properties. In 2018/19, Babergh re-let 6% of its housing stock and Mid Suffolk re-let 7% of its housing stock through the Voids process.

### Current Performance

Performance for Standard Void Re-let Time in Days

	Babergh	Mid Suffolk
April 2018 – March 2019 (Full Year)	21	25
April 2019 – June 2019 (Quarter 1)	13	18

At the end of Quarter 1, the cumulative voids figure for all standard voids was an average of 13 days at Babergh and 18 days at Mid Suffolk. This is a further improvement on the success achieved in the last financial year.

### Voids Project – An Update

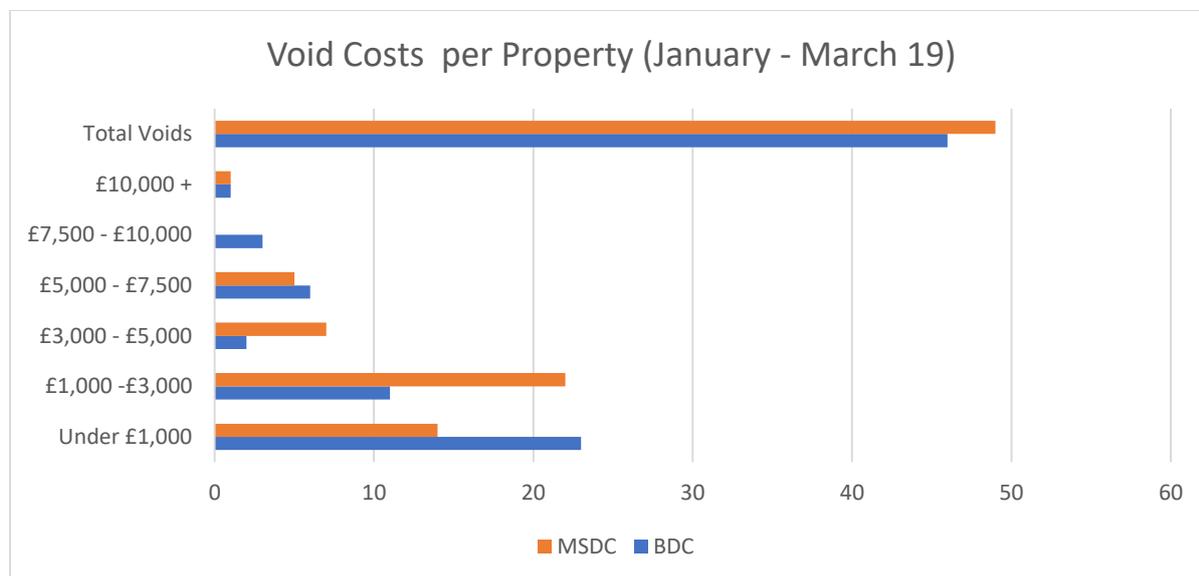
- As the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee are aware, a longer-term void improvement plan is now in place.
- The Voids Project group continue to meet regularly to monitor the plan and ensure we are meeting the milestones to enable us to continue to build on the success to date.
- We are still working towards achieving a consistent standard void re-let time of 15 days by March 2020. This will further reduce lost income and ensure those in need of housing are housed as quickly as possible.
- In order to try and improve the condition of properties being returned to the Council, we will be commencing a 'pilot' scheme in November to carry out 'referencing visits' to all tenants who apply for rehousing.
- We will be carrying out retrospective visits for everyone already on the register. There are currently 300 tenants awaiting rehousing.
- Building Services are now operating using a locality model which will support more efficient use of the workforce
- A large-scale audit of the Voids process (from end to end) will commence in September, with the findings in October

### Voids Costs

Members have requested information on the cost of voids. Due to time it takes to receive invoices and process the relevant payments, it has not been possible to extract

all 19/20 - Quarter 1 costings at this stage. Therefore, for the purposes of this report, voids completed during Quarter 4 of 2018/19 have been used.

The total cost for voids in Q4 of 2018/19 was £113,206 at Babergh and £114,193 at Mid Suffolk.



	Under £1,000	£1,000 - £3,000	£3,000 - £5,000	£5,000 - £7,500	£7,500 - £10,000	£10,000 +	Total Voids
<b>BDC</b>	23	11	2	6	3	1	46
<b>MSDC</b>	14	22	7	5	0	1	49

The table above shows that 74% of Voids at Babergh and 73% at Mid Suffolk cost less than £3,000 to bring back into use.

Unfortunately, there are some properties that are returned in an extremely poor state of repair and these cost a higher level of investment to get them ready to let.

However, at the end of last year, a Housing Asset Review Group was created. This group is made up of Senior Officers across a number of disciplines within the Council.

All properties, which are highlighted as requiring significant investment or which are classified as 'red' on the viability model, meaning they will cost significantly higher than other properties over a 30-year period and referred to the group for consideration.

The group considers both the current and predicted future levels of investment required to the property. It also considers the development potential of the site and the demand; by type of property, location and whether or not it is cost effective to repair.

Consideration is made as to whether or not its best value for money to dispose of the property and use the receipts towards purchasing another property of a higher standard and lower long-term capital maintenance costs.

This group has already had success in disposing of some long-term void properties, which had been empty for an extended period of time, whilst awaiting a decision.

**Next Steps**

Members of Overview and Scrutiny can see that performance continues to improve and are on average now lower than our long-term goal. Whilst significant work streams continue to develop associated processes to further support efficiencies and exceptional customer serviced throughout the voids journey.

With this is mind, can Overview and Scrutiny consider the necessity of ongoing Information Bulletins on a quarterly basis. Could agreement be reached that Voids performance only returns to Overview and Scrutiny if performance was declined beyond an agreed target for example 21 days? Which can be monitored through the Corporate quarterly performance reports.

**End of Bulletin**

Next Bulletin – November 2019