

Appendix 4

ACTION PLAN

Officers have taken the following actions to address the key areas of budget pressures in the HRA, namely voids and general (reactive) repairs:

- The current voids standard has been reviewed by the new Assistant Director of Housing to ensure it does not represent an 'over-provision' of service. His view is that the standard is reasonable.
- A dedicated voids team has been set up to reduce void times and closely monitor costs.
- The cost of every void is now being scrutinised and challenged by a senior manager.
- A new 'pre-void' inspection regime has been put in place for all transfers between Council properties.
- A review of the existing contractual arrangements for voids work has been undertaken to achieve a reduction in decorating costs (a major component of voids expenditure) and to explore the option of a 'fixed price' contract for all voids work in 2014/15.
- Some works have been moved to the programmed works budget and re-tendered, which is reducing costs.
- Work has been done to understand the factors driving the budget position for both voids and reactive repairs and this in turn has led to a fundamental reappraisal of the way our tenants and assets are being managed. This will form the basis of a major restructuring of the landlord services function.
- Budgets for 2014/15 have been reset to reflect anticipated actual demand rather than simply being increased incrementally, which should significantly reduce budget variances.
- Council staff are now proactively visiting properties where we become aware of potential maintenance issues as a by-product of other contact with the property (by contractors or others).
- The level of reactive repair requests by property is currently being analysed and visits arranged to those properties that appear to be generating a disproportionate number of maintenance requests.
- Early discussions are taking place about a far more robust approach to debt recovery where unacceptable damage has been caused to our assets, but this work needs to be done in conjunction with the 'one view of debt' team to ensure that we understand the wider implications for the Council.