

# Isle of Anglesey County Council

## Scrutiny Report

<b>Committee:</b>	Corporate Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date:</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> of September 2025
<b>Subject:</b>	Recommendation from Corporate Scrutiny task and finish – Housing Services voids & allocations
<b>Scrutiny Chair:</b>	Councillor Jeff Evans

### 1. Who will be the portfolio holder presenting / leading the report?

Portfolio Holder	Role
Councillor Robin Williams	Portfolio holder for Housing
Service Officer (Supporting)	Role
Ned Michael	Head of Housing Services

### 2. Why the Scrutiny Committee is being asked to consider the matter

Update requested by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee during the February 2025 meeting.
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### 3. Role of the Scrutiny Committee and recommendations

- ☒ For assurance  
☐ For recommendation to the Executive  
☒ For information

Recommendation(s): Note the update since the last report to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on the 19 <sup>th</sup> of February 2025 on the conclusions of the Voids Task and Finish Work Group.
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### 4. How does the recommendation(s) contribute to the objectives of the Council's Plan?

<p><b>Housing – Ensuring everyone has a place to call home</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We remain committed to working with the Welsh Government and partners, such as registered housing associations, to respond to local housing challenges.</li> <li>We will work together to identify the island's housing needs so that we can provide for the recognised need and the required tenures.</li> <li>Continue to invest in our housing stock by remodelling property that is no longer suitable and work towards achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standards II.</li> </ul>
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- Reduce the requirement for emergency accommodation units by increasing the number of permanent homes developed.

Continue to bring empty homes back into use across the island

## 5. Key scrutiny themes

Key themes the Scrutiny Committee should concentrate on:

1. **Impact the matter has on individuals and communities (focus on customer / citizen)**
2. **A look at the efficiency & effectiveness of any proposed change – both financially and in terms of quality** [focus on value]
3. **A look at any risks** [focus on risk]
4. **Scrutiny taking a performance monitoring or quality assurance role** [focus on performance & quality]
5. **Looking at plans and proposals from a perspective of:**
  - Long term
  - Prevention
  - Integration
  - Collaboration
  - Involvement
[focus on wellbeing]

## 6. Key points / summary

### **General Update of the Housing Services Void Action Plan**

Since reporting to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee in February we have made some way in improving performance in our void management procedures and have seen improvements albeit these improvements are not yet reflected in our overall performance indicator.

It should be pointed out that since the Task and Finish Group undertook their review of the Void Management process during March 2024 there have been some external factors whereby the implications of compliance would not have been known at the time of the review that have increased the period it takes to prepare a property for re-letting following the end of a tenancy, namely WHQS2023 has been introduced since December 2023 and the Renting Homes Wales Act 2016 since December 2022.

It is also appropriate to note that at the time the Task and Finish Group undertook their review that the number of properties that were void and having re-let works carried out on them stood at 46 properties.

Since the review, and as a result of compliance with both WHQS2023 and RHWA2016 together with large new social housing developments been completed by our partner RSL's operating on the Island we have seen a significant increase in the number of properties void at any given time which at the end of September 2024 there were over 100 properties void.

A significant amount of work has been put into getting these homes ready to be re-let and at the 18<sup>th</sup> of August the figure stood at 57 void properties.

This has been achieved as a result of appointing to the post of Voids Supervisor and recruiting in house Painters as well as being able to utilize external contractors as a result of our new contractor framework which is in place.

On an annual basis, Housing Services relet approximately 270 properties. Tenant turnover is a significant and costly challenge within the housing sector.

Despite a void property being a challenge, it also provides an opportunity to inspect, refresh and improve the efficiency of each home longer term. It is also an opportunity to ensure that our homes meet statutory standards, including what works are required for WHQS2023 compliance.

The revised target timescales for 2025/26 for the turnover of a void property is 51 calendar days:-

37 Working Day Void/51 Calendar days	
Day 1-3	Change locks, Safety checks, desktop survey by inspector
Day 4-5	Inspector site survey, create report, input works on system
Day 6-7	Property clearance
Day 8-9	Asbestos removal
Day 10-30	Plastering work, joinery, electrical, plumbing, decoration, 1 major element (not classing as major void)
Day 31-37	Builders Clean, full carpeting and safety flooring in bathroom and kitchen, Final clean (inc. external footpaths, windows and doors), Technical handover

This classification is for any works associated with minor repairs, decoration, statutory safety checks and servicing.

The refurbishment of a property classified as a Major Void has significant resource and budgetary implications for the void process. This classification is for any works associated with major repairs, major plastering works, capital investment works such as component renewals (kitchen / bathroom /

heating etc.), safety checks and servicing. Major Voids are not included within the targeted timescale included within the Performance Indicator.

Our performance from 1<sup>st</sup> of April to the 18<sup>th</sup> of August was:-

1	Average turnover including new properties	53 properties = 71.3 days
2	Average turnover excluding DTLs (including new properties)	46 properties = 64.1 days
3	Average turnover excluding new properties	45 properties = 84 days
4	Average turnover excluding new properties and DTLs	38 properties = 77.6 days
5	Average turnover of properties void since April (excluding new properties)	20 properties = 53.9 days
6	Average turnover of properties void since April (excluding new properties and DTLs)	19 properties = 54.5 days
7	Average turnover of properties void prior to April (excluding new properties)	25 properties = 108.1 days
8	Average turnover of properties void prior to April (excluding new properties and DTLs)	19 properties = 100.6 days

The implications of RHWA2016 when Tenants have deceased has resulted in a total of 156 days void added to void period.

This is an average of 14 days on the 11 'tenant deceased voids'. The average turnover without the additional void would reduce our performance noted in figure 1 above by 2.9days days to a result of 68.4 days.

**In addition to the above, the following actions have been achieved;**

- reviewed the bi-weekly operational voids meeting and developed a new format whereby operational staff meet every week to hold in-depth property-based discussions alongside a management monitoring group
- developed a specific data-led voids monitoring document, which enables the department to view in real time on void turnaround timescales, alongside income lost per property.
- recruited an additional painter and decorator (*this role was advertised x 4 times before we appointed*)
- met with Housing Quality Network to understand of their void toolkits – a key example used during this meeting was that Inspectors of some local authorities will inspect a property during the notice period and draw up a list of all actions required. This would reduce some of the time associated with awaiting 'keys in' before the tenant departs.

**Actions going forward**

- End of tenancy inspections will occur between Housing Management and Housing Maintenance to address issues and requirements prior to tenant departure.

- Develop a tenant departure survey to understand the rationale behind notices given. Some notices will be outside of our control, including tenants passing away and tenants moving into residential homes.
- In depth property analysis as per our newly developed void monitoring spreadsheet to identify problems earlier and resolve through an increase in discussions and plans to troubleshoot issues (*for example, the new spreadsheet can inform us of when a property is becoming problematic through either resource issues such as sickness or delays in capital orders, for example a new front door*)
- Learn from other areas and the Housing Quality Network (HQN) on good practice and examples whereby void turnaround days have decreased due to various interventions, that aren't currently within our practice.

## 7. Impact assessments

### 7.1. Potential impacts on groups protected under the Equality Act 2010

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### 7.2. Potential impacts on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage (strategic decisions)

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### 7.3. Potential effects on opportunities to use Welsh and not treat the language less favourably than English

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### 7.4. Potential impact on the Council's Net Zero Carbon target

Positive / Neutral / Negative and how
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## 8. Financial implications

Financial implications is one of the key risks with the authority's void work requirements. The longer and the more properties that are on our void list, the larger the income loss will be and longer families could be placed in emergency and temporary accommodation.

## 9. Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Update on Action Plan

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## **10. Report author and background papers**

Ned Michael – Head of Housing Services
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Action No.	Action	Lead Officer	Completion Date	Update August 2025	Comments
1	Develop a void management policy that encompasses Renting Homes Wales Act, WHQS2023 and the Councils' Minimal lettable standard	Llinos Williams	April 2025	Final draft has been completed by Community Housing Service Manager. Awaiting approval by new Maintenance Manager.	Policy is approved by no later than 30.09.2025
2	Review the Sensitive Let Policy to ensure it achieves the required outcomes and has the least impact on void turnaround days as possible	Llinos Williams Dewi Parry	March 2025	Completed and operational	
3	Develop the live / real time void monitoring database for continuous monitoring	Darren Gerrard	January 2025	Completed and operational	
4	Develop the operational void monitoring group	Darren Gerrard	January 2025	Completed and operational	
5	Workshop with all staff involved in voids turnaround once policy is in place	Ned Michael Llinos Williams Dafydd Rowlands	April 2025	Once Voids policy has been approved by Maintenance Manager, an internal workshop will be held with key officers	A series of sessions for internal Housing staff will take place. Deadlines for internal

					<p>sessions will be 30/09/2025. This alongside adding the policy onto our website and requesting the tenants panel to develop an easy read document to ensure we provide an inclusive service for all abilities</p>
6	<p>Review Maintenance workforce capacity, ensuring performance is continually high. Consideration given to business cases on invest to save recruitment vs sub-contracting.</p>	Dafydd Rowlands	January 2025	<p>The maintenance workforce is nearly at full capacity after a prolonged period of difficulties attracting suitably qualified and experienced operatives. Currently, during August 2025 we still have one vacancy for a painter and decorator after several failed recruitment attempts. Our apprenticeship programme is bearing fruition with a number of</p>	



				<p>staff now employed full time following completion of trade qualifications.</p> <p>Since March of this year, we have appointed a Voids Supervisor to monitor and drive operational improvements, especially the number of days required to complete the void process.</p> <p>During the first half of 2025 we have completed the process of establishing a new approved sub-contractor framework. Contractors have been appointed, and the framework is fully operational. This new framework has increased options for sub-contracting certain work streams at times of high demand e.g. painting and decorating. We will continue to monitor whether a workforce which is at near capacity, together</p>	
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				with the new sub-contractor framework, is sufficient to improve and maintain performance.	
7	Develop operational procedures as part of the wider voids policy	Solutions and Maintenance Operational Team	June 2025 (post approval of voids policy)	Dependent on Voids Policy approval	Following approval by 30/09/2025, procedures will be developed.
8	Ongoing housing application to go live via CRM	Llinos Williams Lesley Roberts	June 2025	Testing is complete, DPIA has been undertaken and the new online Housing Application will go live during Q3	
9	Elected Member workshop on voids policy, procedures and how best they can support with reducing demands on officers (for example, persistent contact from housing applicants)	Llinos Williams Dewi Parry	Summer 2025	Will be organised when the Voids Policy has been approved	Following approval on 30/09/2025, arrangements will be made based on elected member availability.
10	Cost out WHQS2023 and decarbonisation in respect of voids for the next 10 Years	Dafydd Rowlands	March 2025	During the First half of this year work on the Whole Stock Assessment and subsequent development of Target Energy Pathways	

				(TEP's) was delayed whilst we awaited the publication of a new version of SAP, namely SAP 10. SAP 10 was officially released during July 2025. We have set a target for establishing TEP's and associated costs of delivery by 31/03/2026. This target is 12 months in advance of the statutory WHQS 2023 target.	
11	Regular Management meetings regarding properties that are becoming a concern (i.e. they are heading to be out of target) – agree on a property specific plan of action)	Dewi Meredith Darren Gerrard Dewi Parry		Fortnightly meetings commenced	
12	Commence end of tenancy inspections – inform outgoing tenants of their end of tenancy requirements and our re-charging policy	Community Housing Technical Services	April 2025	This action is an area we are gearing up to achieve, however due to staffing capacity over the last few months, it has been a challenge. By September 2025, the pre-inspection team will	When the team is up to full capacity, arrangements will be made to commence tenancy inspections.

				be up to full staffing capacity and the end of tenancy inspections will commence.	
13	Develop an end of tenancy survey in order to understand why tenants are looking to move on from their homes	Llinos Williams Dewi Parry Karen Roberts	April 2025	This has been developed and is awaiting sign off by our Tenants Monitoring Group	Chased for update by the group on 02/09/2025 & awaiting confirmation.
14	Examine current processes and timelines in the Housing Maintenance Unit to reduce the current level of unproductive time lost.	Darren Gerrard Dewi Meredith		Work in progress since new Maintenance Manager is in post	On 05/09/2025 DG & DM will be meeting with Adra staff to view how they use their tracking system to support with workforce efficiencies.
15	Review performance indicator for 2025-26 based on a costed forecast on completing a minimum of x 4 void properties per week. Task and Finish group recommends x 35 days.	Tîm Rheoli Tai	February 2025	Target days has been reviewed to 51 days with justification	