

## SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Report of:** Re-Letting of Void Properties Task Group

**To:** Cabinet Tuesday, 25 July 2017

**(Author:** Emily Spicer, Environmental Services Manager )

**Subject** Final Report of the Re-Letting of Void Properties Task Group

**Purpose:** To present the Final Report of the Re-Letting of Void Properties Task Group

### **Recommendation:**

**That the recommendations detailed within the Final Report of the Re-Letting of Void Properties Task Group be considered.**

## **1.0 BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 Introduction**

1.1.1. The Task Group was established to review the Council's performance of re-letting void properties, and to make recommendations to help improve. It commenced its work on 3 October 2016, and concluded on 30 March 2017.

1.1.2. The scope of the Task Group was:

- To consider performance, in relation to the time a property is void;
- To make recommendations on how to improve this performance.

1.1.3. The membership of the Task Group consisted of Councillors G R Aley (Chairman), M D Booth, C J T H Brewis and T A Carter. The Lead Officer was Emily Spicer.

### **1.2 Review Process**

1.2.1 The Task Group met on a number of occasions between 3 October 2016 and 30 March 2017, to consider the processes in respect of the void property processes.

1.2.2 The following witnesses were interviewed by the Task Group:

- Martin Cregg – Interim Housing Landlord Services Manager
- Ken Bell – Housing Operational Manager
- Joanne Craik – Sheltered Housing Supervisor
- Nigel Claridge – CSU Voids Supervisor
- Katie Potter – Technical Officer
- Charlotte Paine – Business Intelligence Officer
- Hannah Hooks – Housing Support Team Leader (Breckland District Council)
- Gerry McKeivitt – Property Services Manager

## 2.0 **OPTIONS**

2.1 The Cabinet may:

- Approve the Task Group's Final Report and recommendations;
- Not approve the Task Group's Final Report and/or suggest that some or all of the recommendations be amended; or
- Do nothing

## 3.0 **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

3.1 The review was conducted as a result of worsening performance data received by Members of the Performance Monitoring Panel for the re-letting of void properties.

3.2 The recommendations, as outlined in the Task Group report (appendix A), will ensure that the voids process is efficiently and effectively managed that provides high quality houses to meet the needs of our tenants.

## 4.0 **EXPECTED BENEFITS**

4.1 The following benefits are expected, following the adoption of the recommendations within the Task Group report (appendix A):

- Improved performance of voids process.
- Improved efficiencies of the allocations of properties to those in need.
- Increased revenue.
- Improved customer experience.

## 5.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

### 5.1 **Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues**

5.1.1 Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the void property process will reduce the need for unnecessary journeys by Housing Officers, customers and Construction Services Officers.

5.1.2 Increasing the number of digital processes involved in the 'giving notice' and allocations of properties will reduce reliance on paper corresponded and improve customer experience i.e. quick and easy online processes.

### 5.2 **Constitutional & Legal**

5.2.1 There are no constitutional or legal implications associated with this report.

### 5.3 **Contracts**

5.3.1 As part of the recommendations within the Task Group report, Members suggest an investigation into the contracts integral to the voids process. This is with a view to refine the number of days that certain activities are performed such as Energy Performance

Certificates and asbestos surveys.

#### 5.4 **Corporate Priorities**

5.4.1 The recommendations within the Task Group report fall within the following Corporate Priorities,

- 'To provide the right services, at the right time and in the right way' and
- 'Delivering quality and value for money'.

#### 5.5 **Crime and Disorder**

5.5.1 There are no crime and disorder implications associated with this report.

#### 5.6 **Equality and Diversity / Human Rights**

5.6.1 There are no equality and diversity / human rights implications associated with this report.

#### 5.7 **Financial**

5.7.1 There are no direct financial implications of this report however the recommendations provide an opportunity to increase budget efficiency of the voids process and decrease the non-rent receiving period.

#### 5.8 **Health & Wellbeing**

5.8.1 Reducing the number of days taken to complete the voids process will improve the health and wellbeing of customers. For example, access to a housing in a shorter timeframe.

#### 5.9 **Reputation**

5.9.1 Increasing efficiency and effectiveness of the voids process will strengthen the reputation of the Council.

#### 5.10 **Risk Management**

5.10.1 All current risks associated with the voids process are managed as part of the standard Council procedures. It is the opinion of the report writer that the management of these risks will not significantly change as a consequence of the Task Group recommendations.

#### 5.11 **Safeguarding**

5.11.1 There are no safeguarding implications associated with this report.

#### 5.12 **Staffing**

5.12.1 There are no direct staffing issues associated with this report however the recommendations of the report provide an opportunity to increase staff efficiency and effectiveness.

### 5.13 Stakeholders / Constitution / Timescales

5.13.1 There are no stakeholder or constitutional issues associated with this report.

5.13.2 Members of the Task Group would request that an update is given at the Performance Monitoring Panel on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017 on progress against the recommendations within the report.

### 5.14 Transformation Programme

5.14.1 A number of the recommendations put forward by the Task Group fit into the Digitalisation work stream of the Moving Forward programme.

### 6.0 WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED

6.1 All wards may be affected as a consequence of improving the voids process of the Council's general needs and sheltered housing stock.

### 7.0 ACRONYMS

7.1 CSU – Construction Services Unit

### Lead Contact Officer

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**Key Decision:** No

**Exempt Decision:** No

**This report refers to a Mandatory Service**

### Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix A Task Group Final Report