

FOR INFORMATION	AGENDA ITEM: 6.4
Meeting:	Residents' Services Committee
Date of Meeting:	24th June 2015
Title:	RESIDENTS' SCRUTINY PANEL
Purpose of the report:	To inform the Residents' Services Committee of the specific recommendations made by the May Scrutiny Panel about improving the Voids service and the procedure for setting up a rent accounts.
Specific Recommendations:	To discuss the recommendations of the Panel about voids and rent accounts
Previously reported to:	Not applicable
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Panel has been established since 2011. It is a group of residents who meet to discuss the performance of specific areas of Newlon's activities. The Panel's original remit was to scrutinise the responsive repairs contracts but has now started widening this to consider other areas of Newlon's activities. Their remit also includes reporting recommendations to RSC and the Residents' Forum for agreement.

2. VOIDS AND SETTING UP A RENT ACCOUNT

- 2.1 The Panel met on 19th May to scrutinise the Voids service and the procedure for setting up a rent accounts. They had been chosen after the Panel considered the Performance Report up to and including December at its last meeting. That report set out the following performance:
- **VOIDS** – for general needs, year to date performance was 41.3 days against a target of 35 days to turn around and let a void. The trend was going down and the KPI had a red alert status. When the Panel met in May, the performance for the whole of 2014/15 was 39.5 days. It had improved but this KPI still had a red alert status.
 - **VOIDS** – for intermediate rent, year to date performance was 29.3 days against a target of 28 days to turn around and let a void. The trend was going upwards for December.

- **Setting up a new rent account-** year to date performance for the average number of days to set up rent account was 8.5 against a target of 7.5days. The trend was going down. The KPI had a red alert status. When the Panel met in May, the performance for the whole of 2014/15 was 8.3 days. It had improved slightly, but this KPI still had a red alert status.
- 2.2 The Panel met with Duncan Lee, Head of Repairs and Maintenance, and Peter Morina, Head of Housing - who gave a joint presentation. Annette Morrison, Quality Manager and Karen Orr, Senior Resident Involvement Officer were also in attendance.

3. **INFORMATION CONSIDERED BY THE PANEL**

3.1 The Panel considered the following information during their scrutiny:

- The year end Performance Report for 2014/15
- The joint presentation from Duncan and Peter about “Our Voids and How we Tackle Them”
- Our Internal Audit Report about voids by Mazars who we commissioned to provide assurances that we had adequate controls in place and were effectively managing key risks.
- Anonymised data about tenancy sign ups and how long it takes from the tenancy start date to complete the corresponding sign up survey. The time varied between 24 days and – 7days
- A summary of the procedure for setting up rent accounts
- Example of a new tenant sign up survey (which captures all the required information about them that we need, including diversity).

4. **PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 The Panel made two specific recommendations and set out their reasons for them. They requested feedback from Residents’ Services Committee.

The Panel recommended

4.1.1 **RECOMMENDATION 1:** That Newlon consider using its own surveyors/staff to inspect and specify the works required for all empty homes (voids) prior to contractors attending.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION: The Scrutiny Panel have recommended this to improve the turn around time for empty homes and assist in meeting the performance targets for this. Also for better VFM (Value for Money), to ensure that any works ordered to Newlon and the cost of these are fair and accurate.

4.1.2 **RECOMMENDATION 2:** That Newlon considers ways to improve its performance on the average number of working days to set up a Rent Account and report back on these to the Panel.

