

1. CONTEXT

- 1.1 Void management is a key component of the GWhA corporate strategy. The VMS outlines the mechanisms for delivering excellence in void management for residential properties incorporating initiatives and performance indicators for continuous improvement. It acknowledges the importance of the strategic links between void management and tenancy sustainment and it will contribute to the delivery of our vision of *Shaping Thriving Communities*.
- 1.2 GWhA recognises that good management of void properties is vital in optimising rental income, providing quality services, meeting housing needs and achieving good estate management and sustainment. This 5-year strategy provides direction for recovery of previously strong performance and slippage in pilot initiatives, in the journey towards “top performer” status. It follows on from the previous 2010-2015 strategy which contained a number of initiatives designed to improve void performance, the progress against which is documented herein.

2. AIMS

- 2.1 To provide a service that meets the changing needs of tenants in a thriving and sustainable community.
- 2.2 To minimise void rental loss, void periods and void repair costs and ensure processes are efficient and effective.
- 2.3 To ensure properties are let in a good standard of cleanliness and repair with increasing levels of tenant satisfaction.
- 2.4 To be in the top quartile of all performance measures on void property after year 1 and a top performer by the end of year 3.
- 2.5 To ensure good communication with tenants, prospective tenants, partner agencies, colleagues and contractors.
- 2.6 To ensure compliance with legislation, best practice and guiding standards.
- 2.7 To minimise risk.

3. PROFILE

- 3.1 GWhA operates within a mature set of inner city neighbourhoods, in the Anderston, Burnbank Gardens, Hillhead, Kelvingrove, Hyndland and Partick communities in the west of Glasgow. The area consists mainly of high density pre-1919 tenemental stock, with few gap sites and infrequent, challenging, development opportunities.
- 3.2 From an analysis of the Housing and Internal Transfer Lists, there is evidence that the demand for GWhA accommodation far outstrips both availability and turnover. Highest levels of turnover are at Blythswood Court and St Vincent Terrace, and greatest demand, relative to stock profile is for 4/5 apartment properties.
- 3.3 Turnover, or availability of houses for let is fairly steady at 7-8% per annum (115 Voids 17/18), although this surged at the start of 18/19 mainly due to a large number of tenants terminating their tenancy (particularly at St. Vincent Terrace) to take up new build tenancies in Anderston with Sanctuary.
- 3.4 Generally, supply is insufficient to meet the demand from housing applicants, with resources rationed to those in the greatest housing need, and average “waiting” time upwards of 14/15 years, and in some cases, pushing 200 years (for properties of 5 apt in size). Although 25% of flats are categorised as “low demand” in the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC), this term is used (in line with ARC definitions) to note the lower

levels of demand for these properties (i.e. Blythwood Court, plus some basement flats/1 apt flats) relative to other GWhA housing stock.

4. DEFINITIONS

Void Property	A dwelling for which there is a rent account but no current tenancy; it is a property incurring rent loss.
Void Period	The time, in calendar days, between the termination of a previous tenancy or repossession and the start of a new tenancy.

5. REFERENCES

5.1 The VMS should be read in conjunction with the Housing Allocations Policy.

6. PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

6.1 In addition to the statistical performance/trends reported at [Appendix 3](#), a number of initiatives were successfully delivered through the previous Strategy, including:

- 6.1.1 The piloting of pre-termination of tenancy inspections to minimise void turnover time.
- 6.1.2 Revised void processes focussing on streamlined/refined procedures.
- 6.1.3 Partnering with “Our Power” to minimise utility down-periods, and to provide access for tenants to a service designed and led by social housing providers, including GWhA.
- 6.1.4 The engagement of a single contractor for void works to develop better partnership working.

6.2 Additionally, a more balanced and sustainable community delivered through the **Blythwood Court Local Lettings** with positive, anecdotal feedback from both tenants and staff.

Year	Gender balance	Housing Benefit Entitlement	Rent Arrears	Tenancy Sustainment
2015	77M/33F	76%	£17,094	66%
2018	59M/41F	56%	£12,690	93%

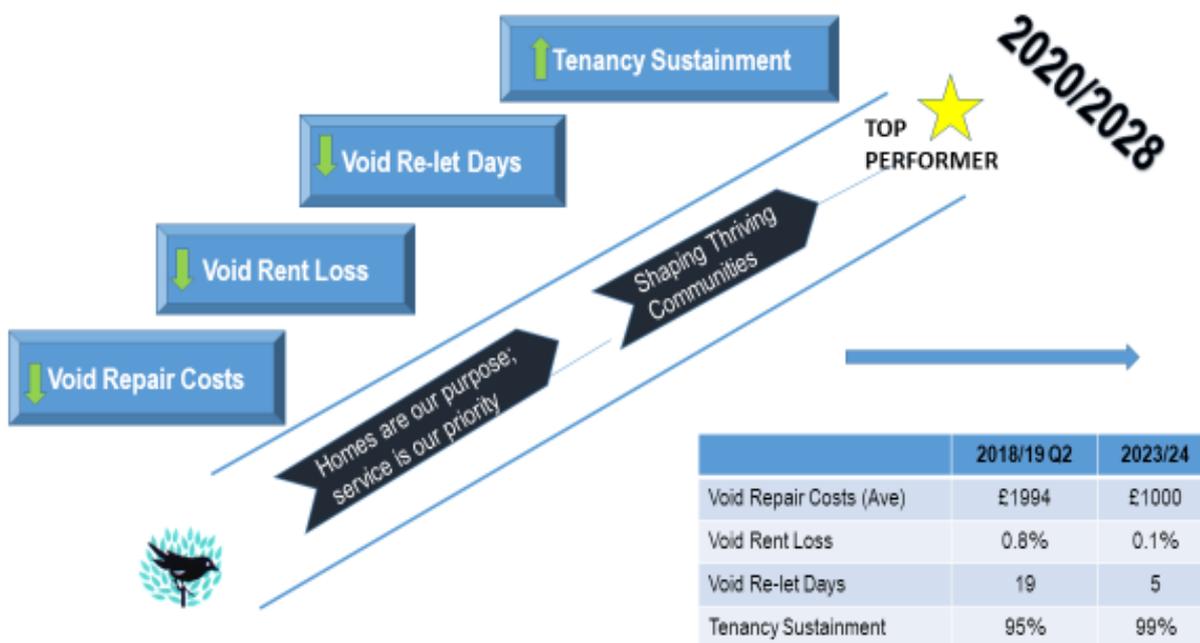
6.3 Bench-marking

Performance Measure	2017/18		2018/19 Q2
	QEF	GWhA	GWhA
Average Re-let Time (days)	17.87	13.99	19
% Void Loss	0.53	0.32	0.79

6.4 As illustrated above, GWhA’s strong and improving performance, delivered through the 2010-15 Strategy, has been significantly impacted in the last 18 months, a consequence of the overwhelming demand following the launch of the GHR, and the increase in the number of voids following the completion of the Sanctuary development; both of which impacting resources and the availability of contractors to respond timeously. Whilst performance is now recovering it is unlikely the 2018/19 targets will be achieved over Q3/Q4.

7. STRATEGY 2019-2024

7.1 Reducing rent loss and repair costs and avoiding waste in terms of unmet housing need will continue to be the theme of this strategy, with further process reviews and new initiatives focussed on regaining, and thereafter exceeding, previously strong performance levels. Offering void properties at a standard that presents the best possible opportunity for households to settle quickly and successfully into the tenancy, and optimising the opportunity for tenancy sustainment, is thus key to the success of this Strategy; with the new initiatives and anticipated outcomes focussing on addressing the challenges around meeting tenant expectations, reducing refusal rates, and demonstrating continuous improvements in performance and efficiency, without compromising on quality.



8. POLICY PRINCIPLES

- 8.1 All aspects of void management will be closely coordinated. Process maps will be routinely updated and the management of tenancy terminations, void inspections, allocations and tenancy sign-ups will be reviewed annually to ensure maximum effectiveness.
- 8.2 End of Tenancy processes and tenant responsibilities will be clearly stated in the Tenancy Agreement, Tenant Handbook and on the website, and will feature annually in the Tenant Newsletter.
- 8.3 Pre Termination inspections will take place within 2 working days of the tenancy termination notice, providing the opportunity for the tenant to rectify any repairs identified as rechargeable.
- 8.4 Tenants will be encouraged to provide access during the notice period for potential tenants to view the property.
- 8.5 The void relet standard will be reviewed on an annual basis. Non-urgent repairs will be carried out within target response times and always within 1 month of the tenancy start.
- 8.6 Where there are outstanding rent arrears or rechargeable repairs, the approval of the Tenancy Services Manager is required before a transfer/exchange is permitted.

8.7 Tenants transferring to another GWHHA property will be permitted a 1 week rent free period to move.

8.8 The void period will commence 2 weeks from the date of a tenant's death. The two week period can be extended on payment of a charge equivalent to the rent on request of the family.

9. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

9.1 Performance will be bench-marked against peer group associations with reference to ARC statistics and within the QEF bench-marking group, with a view to sharing good practice and initiatives that drive continuous improvement.

10. DELEGATED AUTHORITY

10.1 Delegated authority is granted by the Management Committee to the Services Director and staff to implement this strategy and the associated policies and procedures.