

SUMMARY OF HRA VARIANCES (QUARTER 4, 2009/2010), RESPONSIVE REPAIRS.

1. The Quarter 4 PRT Variance Report for the Housing Revenue Account identified an adverse variance of £218.20 on responsive repairs with a predicted year end variance of £92,200. The reason quoted for the overspend was wholly attributed to an increase in void repairs.

2. Traditionally, there have been around 300 voids a year. However, in recent years, the number of voids has been increasing year on year, with a significant increase in 2009/2010.

Year	No. of Voids	Expenditure on Voids	Average Spend Per Property
2007/2008	345	£533,764.58	£1,547.15
2008/2009	352	£653,832.70	£1,857.48
2009/2010	423	£865,214.08	£2,045.42

3. Whilst the increase in voids does provide a welcome opportunity to help a greater number of families in housing need, inevitably, it does result in an increasing pressure on the responsive repairs budget. The repairs budget is increased annually to reflect inflation, however, expenditure on void repairs has increased by 62% in just two years as a consequence of the higher turnover. Expenditure on voids now accounts for 42% of the total responsive repairs budget.

3. Repairs to vacant properties can't be deferred for a number of legitimate reasons:

- the properties represent a major council asset and failure to undertake repairs would result in a rapid deterioration in their condition and also would bring into question the long term sustainability of estates.
- If the properties are not repaired and relet quickly, they are likely to be vandalised and would then cost significantly more to bring back into use.
- the council has an approved "Lettable Standard" which has been endorsed by the District Wide Tenants Forum. This requires all repairs to be completed before a vacant property is relet.
- unless properties are relet quickly, the Housing Revenue Account would face a shortfall in its budgeted rental income.

- The average time taken to relet vacant properties is one of the council's key performance indicators.

4. The increase in voids is not just occurring locally, it is a national trend. Consideration will therefore need to be given to increasing future responsive repairs budgets in order to reflect the additional spending requirements that voids are generating. Less money is now available for undertaking essential repairs to tenanted properties (for which we have a statutory obligation) because of the problem.