



REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON 9 MAY 2023

SUBJECT: HOUSING INVESTMENT 2023/24

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report informs the Committee of the planned investment work included within the Housing Investment Plan for 2023/24 that was approved at Council on 1 March 2023 (para 7 of the minute refers).
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III G (3) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the maintenance of the Council's housing stock.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Committee consider and note the planned works which will improve the Council's Housing stock.**

3. BACKGROUND

Investment Programme

- 3.1 **APPENDIX I** shows the Housing Investment plan for financial year 2023/24 along with the proposed following two years that was approved on 1 March 2023 by Council.
- 3.2 The Housing Investment Programme is a series of individual programmes of work designed to maintain and improve the housing stock. Moray Council has to meet a number of regulatory standards, which this budget and programme aims to achieve. The individual budget headings that make up the programme are shown in paragraphs 3.3 to 3.6 below providing some detail as to what each heading will provide.

3.3 Response Repairs & Voids

3.3.1 This heading covers the repairs to properties as a result of contact from tenants and also the repairs and improvements required to properties which become vacant when a tenant moves out of a property (void). The response repairs is delivered predominantly by the Council's in house contractor and this will be supported by approved sub-contractors. The 2023/24 Response and Heating Repair Budget is £3,152,000 and will deliver around 25,000 response repairs for the financial year ahead.

3.3.2 The budget for delivering voids in 2023/24 is £1,469,000 and it is anticipated this will deliver around 400 voids for the financial year ahead.

3.3.3 On 22 March 2023 the Council completed the purchase of 35 properties from the Ministry of Defence having the week before completed the purchase of a property from a private individual. This increases the Council owned housing stock to 6,342:

Pinegrove Elgin	34
Springfield Drive Elgin	2

These properties are currently being managed under the void process and will be available for occupation once necessary repairs have been completed.

3.4 Estate Works

3.4.1 These budget lines permit the investment in the improvement and management of estates. The garage upgrades budget for 2023/24 will be prioritised for roof replacements with a plan to be developed for future years considering the long term future for garages.

3.4.2 The budget for asbestos will enable surveys and samples to be carried out for a number of projects such as tank removals, communal area, heating, kitchen and garage upgrades.

3.4.3 The Housing Asset Management Team will commence Estate Audits in April 2023 and a programme of Estate Walkabouts will follow with input from local Councillors, these will focus on items like moss clearing and pathway upgrades. In addition to this, the following projects have been approved for 2023/24:

- £20k of the Estate upgrade has been designated for play park upgrades in Tomnavoulin and Letterfourie.
- £60k of the Estate upgrade budget has also been approved for spend on an upgrade to a wall at Waterside Street in Elgin.

3.4.4 It is anticipated that the common stairs will be reviewed during Estate Audits and a programme of works determined thereafter including remedial repairs, painting, lighting improvements and flooring where required.

3.5 Cyclical Maintenance

3.5.1 To maintain the housing stock a cyclical programme of maintenance is delivered each year. With the following number of annual servicing undertaken:

- 5004 gas installation
- 101 Solid fuel
- 942 ASHP
- 1 GSHP
- 10 Oil.

3.5.2 In addition to the above, following the installation of interconnected smoke alarms as required by regulation, a programme of servicing of these has been established that will deliver smoke alarm servicing across the housing stock.

3.5.3 All communal areas have been identified and a current instruction has been issued to undertake a full Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) and highlight works required. It is anticipated that following conclusion of the FRA, the works will expend the budget.

3.5.4 As has been highlighted to members previously, an Electrical Installation Report and subsequent repair work (EICR) is required for all properties that are over 5 years old. This is required under the Scottish Housing Quality Standards. Significant budget has been set aside to permit this work to be completed during this financial year. It is anticipated that during 2023/24 that 4,000 dwellings will be completed.

3.6 Planned Maintenance

3.6.1 This main area of investment is where stock improvement work will be undertaken. It has been previously stated that there is significant work required to improve the Council's housing stock that was highlighted by the stock condition survey undertaken in 2021 and the Council's current compliance with the Scottish Government's Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH).

3.6.2 To that end, there is a target for the team to improve the energy efficiency of all F and G EPC rated properties by 1 April 2024. These works will likely include a combination of heating upgrades, insulation and window works and will be funded from various headings including Cap – ESSH and Cap – Insulation. Subject to the success of this programme, we will intend to open this out to all properties with a E rated EPC later this year and into next year's investment plan, to ensure that all properties have a EPC energy rating of D or better by 31 December 2025. This is to comply with the Scottish Government's desire to have no social housing below EPC Band D re-let from December 2025.

3.6.3 Significant other programmes have been developed, including a three year doors and windows programme, which will deliver 449 replacements within the first financial year 2023/24. A central heating programme will deliver 250 gas installations, 100 Air Source with solar PV and 25 boiler installations. A programme for external heating contracts is currently being identified, which will see current systems with back boilers being prioritised.

- 3.6.4 It is anticipated we will deliver 229 Kitchen replacements within the next financial year. This will be delivered on a programme of four per week on planned contract plus one per week of one off requests. In addition to this 118 properties have been highlighted for replacement during 2024/25.
- 3.6.5 The roof and fabric budget will include roughcasting and insulation projects for Muirfield Road and Deanshaugh Road in Elgin that have been approved for this financial year.
- 3.6.6 The work on improving the energy efficiency of the Housing stock will help our tenants with fuel poverty along with reduction in greenhouse gases. However, it has been noted during the last financial year that some properties that have benefited from a non-carbon heating upgrade in the form of an air source heat pump have experienced an increase in electricity costs. To that end within the Cap – EESSH budget line, some budget will be used to develop a pilot project for installing solar PV on our housing stock. This will initially focus on the properties that have received the air source heat pumps in the last financial year that did not include a solar PV element. If the pilot is successful it will be considered for roll out wider across the portfolio. It should be noted at this time that the expectation is that the project will be used to only generate electricity for use at the property and not for resale to the national grid.

3.7 Damp and Mould

- 3.7.1 The Scottish Housing Regulator wrote to all Social Landlords and Local Authorities in December 2022 to highlight the outcome of a coroner's report into the death of a child in England. The regulator requested all bodies to consider the systems they have in place to ensure their tenants' homes are not affected by mould and dampness and that they have appropriate, proactive systems to identify and deal with any reported cases of mould and damp timeously and effectively.
- 3.7.2 The process for responding to damp and mould issues has been reviewed and updated and is now more robust and will permit easier monitoring and reporting of cases in the future. The causes of damp and mould within a property can be due to a number of factors including disrepair, poor ventilation, poor insulation, poor heating systems and tenant behaviour. In line with our investment plan focusing on improving the energy efficiency of our housing stock we will review damp and mould cases and, where appropriate, take action to develop solutions for property types, locations or blocks.
- 3.7.3 In addition to this, the Council is looking at ways to use technology to help in monitoring and identifying issues early. As a pilot, the Council is installing temperature and moisture monitors in the recently purchased properties outlined in paragraph 3.3.3 to see what information can be gathered and establish how that will be able to help manage the properties. If the trial is successful, we will look to roll the sensors out initially to problem properties/property types.

SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

The maintenance of the Council's housing stock and dealing with homelessness are priorities identified within the Corporate Plan, the Council's Local Housing Strategy, the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) and the Housing and Property Service Plan.

(b) Policy and Legal

Maintenance and improvement works are carried out in order to meet statutory legal requirements and in accordance with current relevant policies.

(c) Financial implications

The financial implications associated within this report are noted above.

(d) Risk implications

Failure to expend agreed budgets may affect the Council's ability to ensure stock meets SHQS, replace life expired elements and attain the EESSH. Budget Managers are aware of responsibilities for managing budget allocations and approval for variance will be sought from Committee in line with the Financial Regulations.

(e) Staffing implications

There are no staffing implications associated with this report.

(f) Property

The improvement and maintenance of the housing stock will ensure that it remains sustainable in the longer term both physically and environmentally.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

There are no equalities issues associated with this report, as it is to inform the Committee on budget monitoring.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

The continued investment in the Council Owned Housing Stock identified in this report will assist the Council to achieve its climate change targets by utilising a range of energy saving measures that incorporate zero or low carbon into design, construction materials and systems that support the Council in achieving The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH).

(i) Consultations

Consultations have taken place with the Head of Housing and Property Services, Building Services Manager, Georgina Anderson (Legal Services Senior Solicitor), Deborah O'Shea (Principal Accountant), the Home Improvement Services Manager and Lindsey Robinson (Committee Services Officer), who all agree with the sections of the report relating to their areas of responsibility.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The ongoing investment in the Council's housing stock enables it to be maintained at the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, allows for replacement of life expired elements and makes progress towards the attainment of the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing.**

Author of Report:	Neil Strachan, Property Asset Manager
Background Papers:	Held on file/Sharepoint
Ref:	SPMAN-1285234812-1279