



REPORT TO: ECONOMIC GROWTH, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE ON 16 FEBRUARY 2021

SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT (HOUSING AND PROPERTY SERVICES) FOR YEAR TO DECEMBER 2020

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of performance of the service for the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee following a decision of Moray Council on 17 June 2020 to agree a simplified committee structure as a result of COVID-19 pandemic. In the case of this Committee, the combining of the delegated responsibilities of Economic Development and Infrastructure, Community Services (Housing and Property) and Finance (budge, capital and revenue monitoring) (para 9 of the Minute refers).

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Economic Growth, Housing and Environmental Sustainability Committee:**
- i) scrutinises performance of the Service Plan, Operational Performance Indicators and Complaints to the end of December 2020;**
 - ii) considers performance on key Charter indicators against benchmarking comparators; and**
 - iii) agrees to extend the current Tenant Participation Strategy for one year to 2022/23 for the reasons set out in para 6.1 and 6.2 of this report**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 7 August 2019, the Moray Council approved a revised Performance Management Framework for services (para 5 of the Minute refers). The framework introduced new arrangements for Managing, Delivering and

Reporting of Performance with the aim of increasing focus on priority areas, reducing the level of reporting on lower priority indicators and directing scrutiny towards areas of strategic importance trends. Whilst the key performance trends in operational performance will continue to be reported, the focus of committee scrutiny will be on the delivery of priorities in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP), Corporate Plan and Service Plan. This report covers progress in achieving the Housing and Property Service Plan priorities, as well the important trends in the key housing performance indicators.

- 3.2 On 27 August 2019, the Communities Committee approved the key housing performance indicators and targets (para 11 of the Minute refers). The indicators are mainly based on the Scottish Housing Regulator's (SHR) Regulatory Framework and statutory performance indicators reported through the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC).
- 3.3 The Performance Monitoring Statements document was developed to support the Performance Management Framework. The Half-yearly performance report refers to this document. The document includes tabular updates on actions, indicators relating to Service Plan priorities as well as complaints data, and can be found at:
http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_92321.html

4. SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

- 4.1 On 17 December 2019, the Communities Committee approved the Housing and Property Service Plan covering the period 2019-2022 (para 9 of the Minute refers). In line with the Performance Management Framework, the Service Plan covers two distinct levels:
- Service Outcomes – locked down against commitments in National Outcomes, the LOIP and the Corporate Plan.
 - Service Level Outcomes – reflecting service priorities not covered in higher level plans.
 - Recovery and Renewal Outcome – highlighting priorities for recovery of services in light of the pandemic.
- 4.2 A total of four Strategic actions, ten Service level actions and one Recovery and Renewal action are being used to measure progress, with the majority due to complete by March 2021 or beyond. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on delivery of services as detailed in Appendix II, with exceptions summarised in paragraphs 4.3 to 4.12. Indicatively, the Service Plan overall is 24% complete.

Action Level	No. of Actions	Completion by December 2020	Actual Completion by December 2020
Strategic Outcome	4	0	0
Service Level Outcomes	10	0	0
Recovery & Renewal Outcomes	1	0	0

Strategic Outcomes - successes

- 4.3 Contributing to the Corporate Plan priority 'to work to protect and enhance our environment', the public consultation on the Climate Change Strategy was completed and reported to the Working Group. Action Plan templates are being collected and assessed to finalise milestones and progress measures to support future monitoring. HPS20-22.S4.2.1
- 4.4 In response to concerns around poor satisfaction rates relating to Housing services highlighted in the Council's Best Value Audit, a tenant survey improvement plan has been put in place and actions relating to repairs timescales and satisfaction, stock condition surveys, tenant communication of maintenance programmes and rent consultations are progressing. Between April and September 2020, the service was reduced to emergency repairs only. The number of non-emergency repairs, for which customer satisfaction data is gathered, was therefore lower than normal, however of the 309 customers providing responses, 98.7% were satisfied with the service provided. HPS20-22.S4.3.1 & S5.06.1.2

Service Level Outcomes – successes

- 4.5 COVID-19 restrictions continue to have an impact in the delivery of the Moray Affordable Housing Supply Programme 2020/21, completion of 50 new affordable houses has been achieved to date with a further 131 on site, of which 52 completions are projected by year-end. Thirty seven units (36.2%) will be delivered as specialist housing, exceeding the programme target (30%). The next phase of affordable housing at Bilbohall Elgin, currently at the design stage, will provide specialist housing for older people and housing with support for people with learning disabilities. As at December 2020, £3.06m of the Scottish Government's allocation of £9.633m has been expended with a further £2.5m projected spend by year end. The Strategic Housing Investment Plan was submitted to Scottish Government on time in early December. HPS20-22.S5.01.1.1-5
- 4.6 The council housing stock condition survey and investment plan is completed ahead of a review of the HRA Business Plan to ensure that Scottish Housing Quality standards are met by the dates set by the Housing Regulator. The stock condition survey has been completed and a draft report from the Consultant is expected in January. HPS20-22.S5.08.1.1

Service Level Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.7 Transforming the approach to address homelessness in Moray is being taken forward through the Rapid Rehousing Transition (RRTP) Plan 2019-2024. Pandemic response required a sudden increase in temporary accommodation stock to meet demand, numbers of households have now returned to pre-COVID levels. However, it is unlikely that the target to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation by 10 in this financial year will be achieved. The appointment of three Housing Support Workers to provide additional housing support for tenancy sustainment to 30 households was deferred until the Scottish Government funding was in place. It is hoped to appoint to these posts by September 2021. Despite the challenges in the six months to September 2020, 52% of council house allocations were to the Homeless List, exceeding target (50%). HPS20-22.S5.02.1-3
- 4.8 The Scottish Government has provided a 2020/21 funding allocation of £2.1m for the Home Energy Efficiency Programme (HEEPS). The HEEPS ABS programme for 2020/21 focuses on delivery of internal wall insulation to households in fuel poverty. The deadline for draw down of this funding is September 2021. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions applicable to internal works, as at December 2020, only £8k of the projected £500k spend had been achieved. However, HEEPS ABS engagement activity completed during autumn 2020 has generated sufficient take up of the insulation offer that it will ensure delivery of works will commence as soon as restrictions are relaxed and will maximise spend prior to the grant draw down deadline. HPS20-22.S5.03.1.1.
- 4.9 The Council substantially increased its Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) programme in 2019/20 and 2020/21 with a focus on heating replacements of the older style gas fired back boilers as replacements parts are now obsolete. 794 tenants responded positively to the offer to replace sent early in 2020. All installation works were suspended when lockdown started in March and tenants are being contacted again to confirm their position given ongoing anxiety over COVID-19 restrictions. Targets to improve the energy efficiency of the Council's housing stock; that 63% of council houses will be Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) compliant by June 2021 and 100% compliant by March 2022 will not be achieved due to suspension of works as a result of pandemic restrictions. Future work programme outputs will be dependent on the current stock condition survey report and ongoing restrictions. HPS20-22.S5.04.1-2, H2.2b
- 4.10 Implementation and assessment of void improvement across all housing stock will not progress as planned. A slowdown in allocations, issues with utilities in voids and supply of materials have all been contributory factors to below target performance against all void indicators. There was a significant increase in average re-let timescales to 99 days for the quarter to September 2020, against the target of 32 days. Rent loss due to voids shows a generally increasing trend in the four quarters to September 2020, a result of 1.09% was recorded in quarter 2 against a target of 0.63%. Performance is unlikely to improve for the remainder of this financial year as the impact of the pandemic continues. HPS20-22.S5.05.1.1-2, H5.4, H5.5, H5.6

- 4.11 Comparison of local target timescales and processes with best performing authorities will inform the Housing Repairs Process and Policy Review. Data has been gathered. However, there may be a slight delay to the intended June 2021 completion date as a consequence of current resourcing pressures. HPS20-22.S5.06.1.1-2
- 4.12 A sustainable Property Portfolio that will meet service needs of Moray's community into the future and reduce the financial burden of maintaining property assets will be achieved through the implementation of the Council's Property Asset Management Appraisal Improvement Plan (PAMA). The effects of flexible working applied in the aftermath of COVID-19 may require a detailed review of the Plan to be undertaken. It is proposed to extend the target for this action to 31 March 2021 to allow a phased approach to be reported. HPS20-22.S5.10.1.1

Operational Indicators – successes

- 4.13 Housing Quality and Management indicators relating to repairs achieved target in the quarter to September 2020; emergency repairs were completed on average in 3.1 hours and non-emergency repairs were completed on average in 3.9, below the target of 4 hours and 10 hours respectively. 92.1% of repairs were completed right first time, above the target of 90%. HB2.7, HB2.8, HB2.11

Operational Indicators – challenges and actions to support

- 4.14 There was a significant fall in the percentage of housing applications admitted to list within 10 days due to lockdown restrictions. Results of 3.6% and 3.7% were recorded in quarters 1 and 2 respectively, against previous quarterly performance of over 95%. H4.15

Complaints & MP/MSP Enquiries

- 4.15 In the period to December 2020, Housing and Property Services received 111 complaints, compared to 171 in the same period last year. 109 complaints were closed with 72 being dealt with at front line stage (66%), 32 at investigative stage (29%) with 5 escalated. A total of 68 complaints (62%) were upheld or part upheld, in line with the result from the same period last year (61%). Of all closed complaints, 75 (69%) met target response timescales of 5 and 20 working days, slightly below performance from the same period last year (76%). In addition, 104 MP/MSP enquiries were received in the reporting period.

5. SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER COMPLIANCE

- 5.1 On 6 October 2020, this Committee were informed that the Council's Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) was submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) in July 2020 (para 8 of the Minute refers). On 31 October 2020, the SHR published ARC data for all landlords for 2019/20 including individual landlord reports on their website. The landlord report compares the Council's performance on key Charter indicators with the Scottish average. A summary of the Council's performance on the key ARC indicators is included

(Appendix 1). To address the lower than benchmark results from the tenant satisfaction survey an action plan has been developed to respond to the findings of the Best Value Audit Report. It should be noted that the average performance for local authorities tends to be below the Scottish average, which includes all social landlords (local authorities, housing associations and housing co-operatives).

- 5.2 On 6 October 2020, this Committee were advised that social landlords were required to publish the annual performance report for tenants and other service users by 31 December 2020 (paragraph 8 of the Minute refers). The SHR expects tenants to be involved in decisions about the content and format of the report. The final report, which was developed in partnership with tenant representatives, is available on the Council's website at: www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_101335.html. It has been publicised through the Tenants' Voice newsletter and through the Moray Council Tenants Facebook group. As has been the case in previous years, copies are sent to tenants on request.

6. TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2017-2020

- 6.1 Annual progress updates on the Tenant Participation Strategy has been delayed due to the pandemic. The current tenant participation strategy has entered its final year and the development of the next strategy would normally be underway. Some new opportunities have arisen during the pandemic such as new digital networking groups evolving both nationally and regionally. However, there have also been some significant challenges for traditional tenant participation methods. Face-to-face contact remains the preference of the majority of involved tenants and it is generally felt that it would be difficult to carry out a comprehensive and meaningful review of the strategy at this time.
- 6.2 Moray Tenants' Forum members have been consulted on the most appropriate action and have agreed that given the extraordinary circumstances, the current strategy should be extended to 2022/23. The Scottish Housing Regulator were also contacted for their view and had no concerns about this approach given the unusual circumstances and latest government advice regarding COVID-19. The review would commence at the earliest opportunity, restrictions permitting.

7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

The monitoring and management of performance assists the Council to continue to improve its housing services and helps to manage assets more effectively to provide the best outcomes for tenants and other service users. It also promotes safer communities and adults living healthier, sustainable independent lives safeguarded from harm, which meets the key objectives of the Corporate Plan and the Housing and Property Service Plan.

(b) Policy and Legal

Reporting on Scottish Social Housing Charter performance indicators is a legal requirement under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010.

(c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising directly from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

There are no equalities/socio economic impact implications arising directly from this report.

(h) Consultations

Consultation on this report has been carried out with the Acting Head of Housing and Property Services, senior managers within Housing and Property and comments, where relevant to their areas of responsibility, have been incorporated in this report.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 This report provides an analysis of performance in achieving Service Plan outcomes for the period to December 2020, recognising the significant impact of the pandemic on the delivery of Housing and Property services.

8.2 The publication of ARC Charter data provides a useful benchmark that reinforces the contribution that ongoing Service Plan activities will make to address performance gaps, specifically around ESSH, housing repairs and customer satisfaction.

8.3 An extension of the current Tenant Participation Strategy for one year presents a measured response to the difficulties in undertaking a review during pandemic restrictions.

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Background Papers: Held by author

Ref: