



Housing and Community Safety Committee

Tuesday, 21 November 2023

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Meeting of the **Housing and Community Safety Committee** is to be held at **Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX** on **Tuesday, 21 November 2023** at **09:30**.

BUSINESS

1 **Sederunt**

2 **Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests ***

3 **Resolution**

Consider, and if so decide, adopt the following resolution:
"That under Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the public and media representatives be excluded from the meeting for Item 14 of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act."

4 **Minute of Meeting dated 12 September 2023** **7 - 12**

5 **Written Questions ****

6 **Scottish Social Housing Charter Compliance** **13 - 24**

Report by Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance)

7 **Tenant Participation Strategy 2024-2029** **25 - 84**

Report by Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance)

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| 8 | <p>Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024/2025 - 2028/2029 Report</p> <p>Report by Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance)</p> | 85 - 90 |
| 9. | <p>Rent Setting Policy Review</p> <p>Report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance)</p> | 91 - 126 |
| 10 | <p>Housing Investment 2023-24</p> <p>Report by Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance)</p> | 127 - 144 |
| 11 | <p>Housing and Property Services Budget Monitoring - 30 September 2023</p> <p>Report by Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance)</p> | 145 - 154 |
| 12 | <p>Performance Report (Housing and Property Services) - Period to September 2023</p> <p>Report by Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance)</p> | 155 - 160 |
| 13 | <p>Question Time ***</p> <p>Consider any oral question on matters delegated to the Committee in terms of the Council's Scheme of Administration.</p> <p>Item(s) which the Committee may wish to consider with the Press and Public excluded</p> | |
| 14 | <p>Building Services Trading Operation Budget 2023/24 - Budget Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9. Information on terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the Authority; | |

Watching the Meeting

You can watch the webcast live by going to:

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_43661.html

Webcasts are available to view for 1 year following the meeting.

You can also attend the meeting in person, if you wish to do so, please come to the High Street entrance door and a member of staff will be let into the building.

Summary of the Housing and Community Safety

Committee functions:

To deal with matters relating to Housing/HMOs, Housing Regeneration, Homelessness, Social Inclusion, Equalities, Community Safety, Anti-Social Behaviour (including road accidents) and Community Liaison.

GUIDANCE NOTES

* **Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests** - The Chair of the meeting shall seek declarations from any individual or political group at the beginning of a meeting whether any prior decision has been reached on how the individual or members of the group will vote on any item(s) of business on the Agenda, and if so on which item(s). A prior decision shall be one that the individual or the group deems to be mandatory on the individual or the group members such that the individual or the group members will be subject to sanctions should they not vote in accordance with the prior decision. Any such prior decisions will be recorded in the Minute of the meeting.

** **Written Questions** - Any Member can put one written question about any relevant and competent business within the specified remits not already on the agenda, to the Chair provided it is received by the Proper Officer or Committee Services by 12 noon two working days prior to the day of the meeting. A copy of any written answer provided by the Chair will be tabled at the start of the relevant section of the meeting. The Member who has put the question may, after the answer has been given, ask one supplementary question directly related to the subject matter, but no discussion will be allowed.

No supplementary question can be put or answered more than 10 minutes after the Council has started on the relevant item of business, except with the consent of the Chair. If a Member does not have the opportunity to put a supplementary question because no time remains, then he or she can submit it in writing to the Proper Officer who will arrange for a written answer to be provided within 7 working days.

*** **Question Time** - At each ordinary meeting of the Committee ten minutes will be allowed for Members questions when any Member of the Committee can put a question to the Chair on any business within the remit of that Section of the Committee. The Member who has put the question may, after the answer has been given, ask one supplementary question directly related to the subject matter, but no discussion will be allowed.

No supplementary question can be put or answered more than ten minutes after the Committee has started on the relevant item of business, except with the consent of the Chair. If a Member does not have the opportunity to put a supplementary question because no time remains, then he/she can submit it in writing to the proper officer who will arrange for a written answer to be provided within seven working days.

MORAY COUNCIL

Housing and Community Safety Committee

SEDERUNT

Councillor Amber Dunbar (Chair)
Councillor Donald Gatt (Depute Chair)

Councillor James Allan (Member)
Councillor Neil Cameron (Member)
Councillor John Divers (Member)
Councillor Jérémie Fernandes (Member)
Councillor David Gordon (Member)
Councillor Sandy Keith (Member)
Councillor Scott Lawrence (Member)
Councillor Marc Macrae (Member)
Councillor Paul McBain (Member)
Councillor Shona Morrison (Member)
Councillor Derek Ross (Member)
Councillor John Stuart (Member)

Ms Anna Bamforth (Non-Voting Member)
Ms Jane Bartecki (Non-Voting Member)
Mr Ronald Tolmie (Non-Voting Member)

Clerk Name:	Lissa Rowan
Clerk Telephone:	07765 741754
Clerk Email:	committee.services@moray.gov.uk

Minute of Meeting of the Housing and Community Safety Committee**Tuesday, 12 September 2023****Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX****PRESENT**

Ms Jane Bartecki, Councillor Neil Cameron, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Amber Dunbar, Councillor Jérémie Fernandes, Councillor Donald Gatt, Councillor David Gordon, Councillor Sandy Keith, Councillor Scott Lawrence, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Paul McBain, Councillor Shona Morrison, Councillor Derek Ross, Councillor John Stuart

APOLOGIES

Councillor James Allan, Ms Anna Bamforth, Mr Ronald Tolmie

IN ATTENDANCE

The Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Head of Housing and Property Services, Housing Strategy and Development Manager, Housing Needs Manager, Building Services Manager, Georgina Anderson, Senior Solicitor and Lindsey Robinson, Committee Services Officer.

1. Chair

Councillor Amber Dunbar, as Chair of the Housing and Community Safety Committee, chaired the meeting.

2. Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests *

In terms of Standing Order 21 and 23 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct, there were no declarations from Group Leaders or Spokespersons in regard to any prior decisions taken on how Members will vote on any item on the agenda or any declarations of Member's interests in respect of any item on the agenda.

3. Resolution

The Committee resolved that under Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the public and media representatives be excluded from the meeting for Items 11, 12 and 13 of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

Paragraph Number of Minute	Paragraph Number of Schedule 7a and Reason
12	6 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person(s); and 9 - Information on terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the Authority.

13	9 - Information on terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the Authority.
14	9 - Information on terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the Authority.

4. Condolences

The Committee joined the Chair in expressing their condolences to the family of the late former Tenant Representative May McGarrie who sadly died on 11 August 2023. Ms McGarrie was a tenant representative from 2018 to 2021 but she was involved in tenant participation for a long time before that. She was a much loved member of the tenants' forum which she attended religiously for the benefit of her neighbours and all Council tenants.

5. Minute of the meeting held 27 June 2023

The minute of the meeting of the Housing and Community Safety Committee held on 27 June 2023 was submitted and approved.

6. Written Questions **

The Committee noted that no written questions had been submitted.

7. Allocations Policy Review

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) advising the Housing and Community Safety Committee of the need to update and revise the Allocations Policy and seeking permission to consult with key stakeholders.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i. note the requirement to review the Allocations Policy;
- ii. approve the revised draft Allocations Policy, as set out in Appendix I and Section 4, for consultation;
- iii. a consultation on the revised draft Allocations Policy being undertaken with key stakeholders, as set out in Section 5;
- iv. note the draft Equalities Impact Assessment at Appendix II and note that it will be updated following the policy consultation; and
- v. note that an update report detailing the outcome of the consultation and providing a revised Allocations Policy for approval and an updated Equalities Impact Assessment will be presented to this Committee in February 2024.

8. Temporary Accommodation Policy Review Update

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) presenting the Housing and Community Safety Committee with a revised Temporary Accommodation Charging Policy for approval.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i. note the feedback received during the consultation period, as set out in Section 4 and Appendix I;
- ii. approve the revised Temporary Accommodation Charging Policy as set out in Appendix II and note that it will be implemented as set out in Section 5; and
- iii. note that given the financial implications, under the terms of Standing Order 84, any decision of this Committee may be further considered as part of the budget setting process.

9. Scottish Social Housing Charter Compliance

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informing the Committee of compliance with the Scottish Social Housing Charter and the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework.

During consideration Councillor Divers raised that he knew of 2 cases where mould and damp issues had been reported and they had heard nothing a few months later.

In response, the Head of Housing and Property Services advised that he would speak to Councillor Divers and review the 2 cases mentioned.

Thereafter the Committee agreed to:

- i. approve the draft assurance statement in Appendix I; and
- ii. note that a summary of performance of the key Annual Return on the Charter indicators against national/benchmarking results will be presented to the Committee on 21 November 2023.

10. Housing and Property Budget Report to 30 June 2023

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) presenting the budget position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Services Other Housing Budget for the period up to 30 June 2023.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the budget monitoring report for the period to 30 June 2023.

11. Question Time ***

Councillor Lawrence sought an update on the Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) found at Forres Academy and whether it has been found elsewhere.

The Head of Housing and Property Services consulted with the Legal adviser and advised that this was not the correct setting to discuss the education buildings but in terms of the housing stock nothing had been found. RAAC has predominantly been found in flat roofs and there are very few of these within the Council housing stock in Moray. The Asset Manager has been very proactive in his investigations. He further advised Members that they can raise concerns about specific properties with him.

12. Report on Tender - Speyview, Aberlour Phase 1 [Para 6 and 9]

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) presenting an evaluation of the tender received for the Council New Build Programme Phase 10 project at Speyview, Aberlour. The report recommends that the tender is accepted.

Following consideration the Committee agreed:

- i. to accept the tender received from Springfield Properties plc for Speyview, Aberlour Phase 1, subject to confirmation of grant funding and planning consent; and
- ii. to note that progress on the delivery of the Council's new build programme will be reported to a future meeting of the Housing and Community Safety Committee.

13. Report on Tender - Banff Road Keith Phase 2a [Para 9]

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) presenting an evaluation of the tender received for the Council New Build Programme Phase 10 project at Banff Road, Keith.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i. accept the tender received from Springfield Properties plc for Banff Road, Keith Phase 2a, subject to confirmation of grant finding; and
- ii. note that progress on the delivery of the Council's new build programme is reported to a future meeting of this Committee.

14. Building Services Trading Operation Budget 2023-24 - Budget Monitoring [Para 9]

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) presenting budget monitoring information for the period to 30 June 2023 for the Building Services Trading Operation.

Following consideration the Committee agreed:

- i. the financial information for the period to 30 June 2023, as detailed in section 5 and Appendix I and
- ii. the Building Services operating performance for the period to 30 June 2023, as set out in section 6 of the report.



**REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON
21 NOVEMBER 2023**

SUBJECT: SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER COMPLIANCE

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the details of the Council's 2022/23 performance following data published by the Scottish Housing Regulator and compliance with both the Scottish Social Housing Charter and Regulatory Framework.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (G) (13) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the Council's performance management framework.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Housing and Community Safety Committee:

- i) reviews the Council's performance against the Scottish Social Housing Charter in 2022/23;**
- ii) considers and approves the action plan in APPENDIX II relating to performance on the Scottish Housing Quality Standard for electrical testing set out in Section 4.7;**
- iii) notes the actions taken on ensuring properties are not affected by mould and dampness; and**
- iv) notes the content of the Annual Performance Report detailed in Section 5.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Scottish Social Housing Charter came into force on 1 April 2012. The aim of the Charter is to improve the quality and value of the services provided by social landlords. The Charter sets out the minimum standards and outcomes that tenants can expect from their landlord, including the quality of

and value for money of services, the standard of homes and the opportunities to participate in their landlord's decision making processes.

- 3.2 Each year, social landlords must submit an Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). Using a range of performance indicators, the SHR monitors, and assesses landlords' performance against the Charter. To meet regulatory requirements, social landlords must also produce a performance report for tenants and service users and submit an Assurance Statement by 31 October each year.
- 3.3 On 12 September 2023, this Committee approved the Assurance Statement for submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator. The Committee were also advised that a further report would be presented summarising 2022/23 performance on the key ARC indicators against national/benchmarking results along with a copy of the finalised Annual Performance Report (paragraph 9 of the draft Minute refers).

4. PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKING

- 4.1 A summary of the Council's performance on key Charter indicators can be found in **APPENDIX I** and includes data published by the SHR and Scotland's Housing Network (SHN). 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). The 2022/23 performance is summarised below under 6 themes:

Overall Satisfaction

- 4.2 The 2021 tenant survey found that 82.8% of tenants were satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord (indicator 1). The Council performs well in maintaining a positive customer/landlord delivery of services, still slightly below both the Scottish average (86.7%) and the Local Authority (83.2%) average in this aspect. A new survey will be commissioned for 2024/25.

The Customer/Landlord Relationship

- 4.3 The 2021 tenant survey identified that 91.3% of tenants felt that the Council was good at keeping them informed about services and decisions (indicator 2). This was higher than the Scottish (89.7%) and Local Authority average (81.1%) and peer group average (86.4%).
- 4.4 The Council demonstrates efficiency in responding to tenant complaints during 2022/23. In the first stage, which requires a response within 5 working days, Moray Council achieved this objective. Both the Local Authority (7 days) and Scottish Average (6 days) fail to meet this. Similarly, in the second stage, where a response is expected within 20 working days, Moray Council maintains a commendable average response time of 22 days. This performance is notably better than the Local Authority average (24 days) but falls short of the Scottish Average (19 days).

4.5 The 2021 tenant survey identified that 96.2% of tenants were satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes (indicator 5). This performance is significantly higher than both the Scottish average (85.9%) and peer group average (76.5%) and places the Council in the upper quartile for Local Authorities.

Housing Quality and Maintenance

4.6 Several changes have been made to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) in recent years. From January 2021, the energy efficiency element was updated to reflect the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH). The Scottish Government proposed a review for EESH2 in 2023 to strengthen and realign the standard with the target for net zero heat in Housing to 2040. As such EESH data was not reported this year.

4.7 After the ARC submission, in late July 2023, the SHR invited landlords to reassess their SHQS compliance in relation to electrical inspections. Following a review of the Council's position, the SHR was notified that the majority of properties fell slightly below the required electrical testing standard and therefore at 31 March 2022, 6.3% of properties met the SHQS (indicator 6). This has increased to 15.5% for 2022/23, at a rate below that desired and has been frustrated by factors such as the availability of qualified contractors. There were 4,216 properties which did not meet the SHQS and 1,144 properties which were exempt due to being 'hard to treat' or in abeyance (where work cannot be done for 'social' reasons such as the tenant refusing remedial works). The Committee are invited to consider and approve the improvement action plan in **APPENDIX II** which illustrates the route to electrical testing compliance.

4.8 The 2021 survey found that 82.7% of tenants were satisfied with the quality of their home (indicator 7). This was close to the Scottish average of (84.2%), but more in line with the local authority (81.8%) and peer group average (83.4%).

4.9 In 2022/23, the average time to complete emergency repairs (indicator 8) was 2.4 hours which was better than the Scottish average of 4.2 hours and the peer group average of 4.5 hours. Non-emergency repairs (indicator 9) were completed within an average of 6 working days which was also better than the Scottish average and peer group average which were both 9 days.

4.10 The Council completed 90.2% (2021/22 - 85.5%) of non-emergency repairs right first time (indicator 10) in 2022/23 which was above the Scottish average of 87.8% but slightly below the peer group average of 92.0%.

4.11 During 2022/23, only 4 of the Council's properties did not have a gas safety check completed by the anniversary date (indicator 11). This performance was better than the peer group average (137) which includes local authorities with less than 9,000 properties.

4.12 In December 2022, the Scottish Housing Regulator asked social landlords to consider the systems they have in place to ensure their tenant's 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. Throughout 2023, officers completed the following actions:

- Comprehensive desktop analysis of current and historic reports of damp and mould in properties, with the objective of identifying property archetypes where damp and mould is prevalent with a view to finding effective solutions.
- Robust procedures developed to record, prioritise, and schedule visits and specialist surveys, as well as record and action findings within a defined timescale.
- A leaflet developed on Help Prevent Condensation, Damp and Mould for tenants, which is issued to all tenants who report damp and mould issues, as well as published in our Tenants Voice Newsletter.
- Repairs Officers trained to identify damp and mould, and equipment used such as thermal imaging cameras to assist diagnosis.
- A pilot of AICO/Homelink monitoring devices for 27 properties at Pinegrove, Elgin which provide remotely accessible data to identify, monitor and show risks of damp and mould, as well as record draughts and heat loss.

4.13 Officers intend to assess the impact of these actions against any incidences of damp and mould which may occur during this winter, and will present a further update to Committee in Spring 2024.

Neighbourhood and Community

4.14 The 2021 tenant survey found that satisfaction with the management of the neighbourhood (indicator 13) at 89.6% was above the Scottish average of 84.3% and the peer group average of 85.0%. This performance places the Council in the upper quartile for local authorities.

4.15 Applicants refused 34.3% (2021/22 - 27.2%) of tenancy offers (indicator 14) which was more than the Scottish average of 30.9% (2021/22 - 32.9%) and below the peer group average of 34.9% (2021/22 - 35.2%). A low refusal rate helps to minimise void periods and rent loss.

4.16 In 2021/22, 76.3% (2021/22 - 74.4%) of antisocial behaviour cases were resolved within local target timescales (indicator 15) which is below the Scottish average of 94.2% (2021/22 - 94.7%) and peer group average of 91.2% (2021/22 - 90.5%).

Access to Housing and Support

4.17 Tenancy sustainment (indicator 16), where tenancies lasted for more than 12 months, was slightly higher in Moray at 92.0% (2021/22 - 91.9%) than the Scottish average of 91.2% (2021/22 - 90.8%) and peer group average of 91.2% (2021/22 - 90.9%).

- 4.18 The turnover of properties (indicator 17) in Moray Council of 7.4% (2021/22 - 7.3%) was the same as the Scottish average (2021/22 - 7.8%) and peer group average of 6.9 (2021/22 - 7.0%).
- 4.19 The proportion of court actions resulting in eviction (indicator 22) for Moray Council of 18.2% (2021/22 - 50%) was slightly higher than the Scottish average of 17.2% (2021/22 - 21.9%) and peer group average of 16.0% (2021/22 - 13.0%). In 2022/23 just 11 court actions were initiated with 2 resulting in eviction orders being granted. The Housing Service only uses eviction as a last resort where all efforts to engage with the tenant have been unsuccessful.

Getting Good Value from Rents and Service Charges

- 4.20 The 2021 survey found that 86.4% of tenants feel their rent is good value for money (indicator 25). This is above the Scottish average of 81.8% (2021/22 - 82.5%) and peer group average of 83.1% (2021/22 - 81.3%) and places the Council in the upper quartile for Local Authorities.
- 4.21 The Council collected 98.6% (2021/22 - 99%) of the total rent due (indicator 26) which is similar to the Scottish average of 99.0% (2021/22 - 99.3%) and peer group average of 99.4% (2021/22 - 100.1%). This indicator includes both current and former tenant arrears in the calculation. At 4.5% (2021/22 - 3.8%), the Council had the second lowest level of gross rent arrears (indicator 27) of all Local Authorities. South Ayrshire Council had the lowest at 4.32% and Aberdeen City had the highest with 17.41%. The Scottish average was 6.9% (2021/22 - 6.3%) and the peer group average was 8.5% (2021/22 - 8.2%).
- 4.22 The rent lost through properties being vacant (indicator 18) in Moray was 1.0% (2021/22 - 1.3%), which is better than the Scottish average of 1.4% and peer group average of 1.5%. The time to re-let empty properties reduced from 62 days in 2021/22 to 52 days in 2022/23 and is lower than the Scottish average (56 days) and peer group average (59 days). This has also been noted within the annual assurance statement under section 5.

5. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 5.1 Social landlords must produce an annual report on their performance for tenants and other service users which details how they are achieving or progressing towards the outcomes and standards of the Charter. The SHR expects the report to be developed in partnership with tenants and other customers, rather than exclusively by the Council. The format, content and design of the report has been based on discussions with tenant representatives and also from feedback forms from the previous year's report. The report mirrors the key themes of the Charter and is available on the Council's website at www.moray.gov.uk/housingperformance. The report will be publicised through the Tenants' Voice newsletter and has been publicised through our social media channels. It is also available in hard copy upon request.

6. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

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

Moray Council's Corporate Plan 2019-24 aims to empower local communities by understanding what they need and building their capacity to work with the Council and other partners to deliver and improve services and outcomes for people. This priority is reflected within 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**

Any costs associated with implementing improvements will be met from within existing budgets.

(d) **Risk Implications**

The development of the Annual Performance Report is a requirement under the Scottish Housing Regulator's regulatory framework. In addition tenants and service users must be provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the management of their homes and decision making processes. Failure to meet these requirements presents a regulatory risk.

(e) **Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications associated with this report.

(f) **Property**

There are no property implications associated with this report.

(g) **Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

There are no equalities implications directly arising from this report.

(h) **Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**

The service delivery aims of the Housing Service are closely aligned to the Council's Climate Change Strategy, and Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES).

(i) **Consultations**




Consultation on this report has been carried out with the Head of Housing and Property, senior managers within the Housing and Property service, Senior Solicitor (Georgina Anderson), Research and Information Officer (Christopher Dewhurst) and Democratic Services Manager. Their comments, where relevant to their areas of responsibility, have been incorporated in this report.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 This report provides the Committee with an update on the Council's performance and compliance with the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

Author of Report: Martin Gray, Senior Housing Officer (Information)
Background Papers: With author
Ref: SPMAN-1285234812-1422

ARC Indicator Number	Description	Moray Council 2022/23	Scottish Average 2022/23	Local Authority Average 2022/23	SHN Peer Group Average 2022/23	
OVERALL SATISFACTION						
1	Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord	82.8	86.7	83.2	83.4	
THE CUSTOMER/LANDLORD RELATIONSHIP						
2	Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions	91.3	89.7	81.1	86.4	
3&4	The average time in working days for a full response					
	1st stage (5 working days)	5	6	7	7	
	2nd stage (20 working days)	22	19	24	24	
5	Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes	96.2	85.9	76.5	80.9	
HOUSING QUALITY AND MAINTENANCE						
6	Percentage of stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)	15.5	79.0	63.6	61.5	
C10	Percentage of properties meeting the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH)	61.9				
7	Percentage of existing tenants satisfied with the quality of their home	82.7	84.2	81.8	83.4	
8	Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs (hours)	2.4	4.2	4.9	4.5	
9	Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs (working days)	6	9	9	9	
10	Percentage of reactive repairs carried out in the last year completed right first time	90.2	87.8	89.6	92.0	
11	No. of times you did not meet your statutory duty to complete a gas safety check	4	6	16	137	
12	Percentage of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in last 12 months satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service	100.0	88.0	89.4	90.4	
NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY						
13	Percentage of tenants satisfied with the landlord's contribution to the management of the neighbourhood they live in	89.6	84.3	82.5	85.0	
14	Percentage of tenancy offers refused during the year	34.3	30.9	35.4	34.9	
15	Percentage of anti-social behaviour cases reported in the last year which were resolved	76.3	94.2	88.7	86.5	
ACCESS TO HOUSING AND SUPPORT						
16	Percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than a year (all sources)	92.0	91.2	91.6	91.2	
17	Percentage of lettable houses that became vacant in the last year	7.4	7.4	6.9	6.9	
22	Percentage of court actions initiated which resulted in eviction	18.2	17.2	22.6	16.0	
24	Percentage of referrals under Section 5 and other referral routes	15.7	26.4	28.3	13.8	
GETTING GOOD VALUE FROM RENTS AND SERVICE CHARGES						
18	Percentage of rent due lost through properties being empty during the last year	1.0	1.4	1.4	1.5	
25	Percentage of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money	86.4	81.8	81.9	83.1	
26	Rent collected as percentage of total rent due in the reporting year	98.6	99.0	99.1	99.4	
27	Gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year	4.5	6.9	8.5	8.5	
30	Average length of time taken to re-let properties in the last year (calendar days)	52	56	64	59	

	same as or better than the peer group average
	within 5% of the peer group average
	more than 5% below the peer group average

**Housing and Property
Electrical Testing Compliance Improvement Plan**

Action	Responsibility	Target	Timescale	Status
Compliance by 30 November 2024				
Scottish Housing Regulator engagement	Head of Housing and Property (HHP)	28 Sep 2023	28 Sep 2023	Completed
Submit assurance statement to Scottish Housing Regulator	Head of Housing and Property	31 Oct 2023	31 Oct 2023	Completed. Committee approved 12 Sep 2023
Procurement of contractors	Design Manager (DM)	Adoption of Scotland Excel Maintenance framework	31 Oct 2023	Completed 4 Oct 2023
	Building Services Manager (BSM)	Quick Quote from Local Contractors framework/PIN QQ	30 Sep 2023	Completed 29 Sep 2023
Management of Contractors	Design Manager	3,000 EICRs procured and instructed	30 Nov 2023	In progress
		3,000 EICRs completed	30 Nov 2024	
	Building Services Manager	1,000 EICRs procured and instructed	31 Oct 2023	Completed 19 Oct 2023
		1,000 EICRs completed	30 Sep 2024	
Progress Monitoring/Recording	Head of Housing and Property	Actual 2,204 EICRs complete (35%) to 30 Sep 2023	31 Oct 2023	SHR updated 27 Oct 2023
		Target 3,500 (55%) EICRs complete	31 Mar 2024	SHR updated 27 Oct 2023
		Target 6,382 (100%) EICRs complete	30 Nov 2024	SHR updated 27 Oct 2023
		Monthly Progress Updates to SHR	Ongoing	

Action	Responsibility	Target	Timescale	Status
SHR ARC Evidence/record keeping				
Recording of all EICRs in SharePoint/ Elec Tag	Building Services Manager/ Design Manager	Within 28 days of completion of certificate	31 Oct 2023	Complete
Recording of all EICRs in Elec Tag	Building Services Manager	Within 28 days of completion of certificate	31 Dec 2023	
Provision of EICRs for recording in NEC Planned Maintenance	Building Services Manager/ Design Manager	Within 28 days of completion of certificate	31 Dec 2023	
Recording in NEC Planned Maintenance Module	Housing Asset Manager	Within 56 days of completion of certificate	30 Apr 2024	
Identify new build properties less than 5 years old (i.e. compliant)	Housing Strategy and Development Manager (HSDM)	Monthly updates to be provided to HHP/BSM/HAM	Ongoing	263 EICRs as at 31 Oct 2023
Annual Report on the Charter (ARC) evidence	Housing Strategy and Development Manager	Single, cleansed and verified dataset	30 Apr 2024 (dummy run 31 Dec 2023)	Elec Tag/NEC data entry



**REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON 21
NOVEMBER 2023**

SUBJECT: TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2024-2029

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides the Committee with an update on the development of the Council's next Tenant Participation Strategy covering the period 2024-2029 and seeks permission to consult with key stakeholders.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (G) (10) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the formulation and implementation of the Council's strategic housing plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) notes the requirement to review the Tenant Participation Strategy;**
- (ii) approves the draft Tenant Participation Strategy 2024-2029 set out in APPENDIX I and detailed in Section 4, for consultation;**
- (iii) agrees that a consultation on the draft Tenant Participation Strategy 2024-2029 is undertaken with key stakeholders, as set out in Section 4;**
- (iv) considers the draft Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) at APPENDIX II and notes that this may be updated following the consultation; and**
- (v) notes that a further report detailing the outcome of the consultation and providing a revised draft Tenant Participation Strategy and updated Integrated Impact Assessment will be presented to this Committee in May 2024.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced the first legal framework for tenant participation in Scotland. Section 53 (1) of the 2001 Act sets out the statutory requirement for the development of a tenant participation strategy. The Act also requires all social landlords to consult tenants on a range of housing issues that affect them.
- 3.2 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 introduced the Scottish Social Housing Charter which came into force on 1 April 2012. The Charter sets out the minimum standards that tenants can expect from their landlord and is monitored by the Scottish Housing Regulator. Outcome 2 (communication) and Outcome 3 (participation) of the Charter are the most relevant to the development of a tenant participation strategy.
- 3.3 On 16 February 2021, the Economic Growth, Housing and Environmental Sustainability Committee were advised that following consultation with the Moray Tenants' Forum and the Scottish Housing Regulator the review of the Tenant Participation Strategy would be delayed but would commence at the earliest opportunity (paragraph 11 of the Minute refers).

4. DEVELOPMENT OF THE DRAFT STRATEGY

- 4.1 The review of the tenant participation strategy commenced following the appointment of the Customer Engagement Officer earlier this year. The Moray Tenants' Forum and a list of interested tenants were approached to identify the key areas they felt should be incorporated within the review. Their feedback has contributed towards the draft Tenant Participation Strategy 2024-2029 set out in **APPENDIX I**. The main changes within the draft Strategy include:
- Amending references to new and updated documents;
 - Reflecting current guidance and good practice;
 - Incorporating recommendations identified as part of the Council's involvement in the Scottish Government's Next Steps programme, delivered by the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS); and
 - Widening the range of opportunities available to encourage and support participation, including offering more options to support digital participation.
- 4.2 A draft IIA in **APPENDIX II** has been produced to consider the impact of the review on equalities and human rights issues. The overall aim of the draft Tenant Participation Strategy 2024-2029 is to actively encourage tenant participation, and provide a structure for involving tenants and service users. While the Council acknowledges that hard to reach groups are often under represented, the review aims to provide further opportunities for the needs of diverse communities to be incorporated in the development of housing services.

- 4.3 It is proposed to carry out a formal consultation process with stakeholders on the draft Tenant Participation Strategy 2024-2029. With the timing of this consultation falling over the festive period it is proposed to run the consultation over a longer period of 12 weeks. The consultation will be publicised through Winter Tenants' Voice newsletter, on the Council's website and through social media. An easy read version of the draft Strategy will be developed to support this.
- 4.4 Feedback gathered from the consultation will be analysed to consider any necessary amendments to the draft Tenant Participation Strategy 2024-2029 and IIA, with the intention of presenting these to the Committee to consider for final approval in May 2024.

5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

The draft Tenant Participation Strategy is closely aligned with the objectives of the Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan. Both recognise the importance of engaging with communities and the need to coordinate engagement activities to better enable communities to influence decisions and participate in the development and delivery of services.

(b) Policy and Legal

A Tenant Participation Strategy is a legal requirement under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 introduced the Scottish Social Housing Charter which came into effect in 2012. The Charter sets out the minimum standards and outcomes that social landlords should meet and includes outcomes relevant to tenant participation. The Scottish Housing Regulator is responsible for monitoring compliance with the Charter.

(c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Costs associated with the consultation and implementation of the tenant participation strategy are accommodated within the existing Housing Revenue Account budget process.

(d) Risk Implications

The Scottish Housing Regulator requires that tenants are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the management of their homes and decision making processes. Failure to develop an appropriate tenant involvement strategy presents a regulatory risk along with a failure to deliver a customer focussed service.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report. Staffing relating to the development and implementation of the strategy is met from existing resources.

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising directly from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

As part of the review of the Strategy, an Integrated Impact Assessment (**APPENDIX II**) has been produced with no negative impacts identified. This will be reviewed following the formal consultation process with tenants.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

The tenant participation strategy links into the Local Housing Strategy which has specific outcomes and actions on fuel poverty and energy efficiency and is closely aligned to the Council's Climate Change Strategy, and Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES).

(i) Consultations

Consultation has taken place with the Head of Housing and Property, senior managers within Housing and Property, Senior Solicitor (Georgina Anderson), the Equal Opportunities Officer and the Democratic Services Manager. Their comments have been reflected within the report.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 This report presents the draft Tenant Participation Strategy 2024-2029 for consideration and seeks the Committee's agreement to proceed with a formal consultation with key stakeholders.

Author of Report: Daska Murray, Senior Housing Officer (Strategy)
Rebecca Irons, Customer Engagement Officer
Background Papers: [Performance Report \(Housing and Property Services\) for Year to December 2020](#)
[Tenant Participation Strategy 2017-2020](#)
Ref: SPMAN-1285234812-1419



**Moray Council's
Draft Tenant Participation Strategy
2024-2029**

Author	Housing and Property Services
Date agreed	TBC by Housing and Community Safety Committee
Date of next review	2029 (or earlier if required by changes to legislation or guidance)

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Foreword

Welcome to our Tenant Participation Strategy (2024-2029) which sets out how we will involve our tenants and make sure they are able to influence and review our housing services. It has been developed in partnership with tenants, staff and elected members and builds on previous strategies.



We want to continue to develop participation opportunities with a focus on increasing levels of involvement, especially from our under-represented groups. The development of this new Strategy also takes account of the changing context we are working in and the opportunities that we now have to modernise and enhance our approach through digital engagement opportunities.

Tenant involvement benefits tenants, our staff and the Council as a landlord. We offer a range of opportunities to get involved at a level that suits you. We also offer support to tenants who would like to develop their skills and confidence so that they can effectively influence decisions about housing services. If you are interested in getting involved, please phone us on 0300 123 4566 or email tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk.

We are committed to improving our homes and services in partnership with our tenants. I would like to thank the tenants who have given up their time to give us their feedback by attending meetings or events, reviewing our services or filling in surveys. Your feedback is essential in helping us to improve our performance and develop our housing services. I am confident that this Strategy will help us to make sure that tenants are at the heart of the services we deliver.

Councillor Amber Dunbar

Chair of Housing and Community Safety Committee

If you need information from Moray Council in a different language or format, such as Braille, audio tape or large print, please contact:

إذا كنتم في حاجة إلى معلومات من قبل مجلس موراي وتكون بلغة مختلفة أو على شكل مختلف مثل البراي، أسطوانة أوديو أو أن تكون مطبوعة باستعمال حروف غليظة فالرجاء الإتصال ب

Je pageidaujate tarnybos Moray tarybos teikiamą informaciją gauti kitokiu formatu, pvz., Brailio raštu, garso įrašų ar stambiu šriftu, kreipkitės:

Jeśli potrzebują Państwo informacji od Rady Okręgu Moray w innym formacie, takim jak alfabet Braille'a, kasyety audio lub druk dużą czcionką, prosimy o kontakt:

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Ja Jums vajadzīga informācija no Marejas domes (*Moray Council*) citā valodā vai formātā, piemēram, Braila rakstā, audio lentā vai lielā drukā, sazinieties ar:

اگر آپ کو مورے کونسل سے کسی دیگر زبان یا صورت میں معلومات درکار ہوں مثلاً "بریلے، آڈیو ٹیپ یا بڑے حروف، تو مہربانی فرما کر رابطہ فرمائیں:

Housing and Property
Moray Council
PO Box 6760, Elgin
IV30 1BX

Phone: 0300 123 4566
Email: tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk

Moray Council Tenants Facebook group
www.facebook.com/groups/MorayCouncilTenants or
 scan the QR code to the right:



Introduction

Tenant participation is about having a say in the decisions that affect your home and community. The National Strategy for Tenant Participation – Partners in Participation (1999) describes tenant participation as being:

“ about tenants taking part in decision making processes and influencing decisions about housing policies; housing conditions; and housing (and related) services. It is a two-way process which involves the sharing of information, ideas and power. It aims to improve the standard of housing conditions and service”.

You have a legal right to be involved in decisions about housing services. Our tenant participation strategy sets out how we will take account of your views and support you in our decision making processes.

Benefits of Tenant Participation

- **Responsive landlords**
 Effective participation helps landlords become more responsive to the views of their customers.
- **Tenant satisfaction**
 Tenants are more satisfied with their services, homes and neighbourhoods.
- **Understanding what's important**
 Landlords better understand what is important to their tenants.
- **Shaping services**
 Offers an opportunity to tenants to shape housing services to reflect their own priorities.
- **Improving services**
 Effective participation helps landlords to improve services and achieve better value for money.



Strategy background and development

This is our fifth Tenant Participation Strategy and builds on previous strategies. It was developed in line with the ‘National Standards for Community Engagement’ and the Scottish Government’s ‘[Guide to Successful Participation](#)’. More information about the standards can be read at:

www.scdc.org.uk/what/national-standards



The National Standards for **Community Engagement**

The strategy was developed in consultation with tenants, staff and elected members. The development process began in 2019 but was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This work re-started with the lifting of restrictions and the appointment of a Customer Engagement Officer in April 2023 to support tenant participation activities. Our strategic development process is set out below:

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

1 INITIAL REVIEW

In 2019, staff, elected members and tenants reviewed current tenant participation activities, policies and practice as part of the Next Steps Programme. The programme was facilitated by the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS Scotland) on behalf of the Scottish Government.



2 RESEARCH

We researched other landlords' tenant participation and customer engagement strategies to determine good practice.



3 REVIEW

We reviewed the 2017-2020 Tenant Participation Strategy and sought feedback during a pre-consultation process which included a tenant survey. Feedback received during this process informed a consultative draft strategy.



4 CONSULT

We consulted on the draft strategy between November 2023 and February 2024. Tenants, staff and elected members were invited to comment and their feedback shaped the finalised strategy and formed the basis of our Action Plan.



The legal context

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

[The Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2001](#) created a legal duty for landlords to actively develop and support tenant participation. It gave tenants and tenant groups the right

to be involved and to take part in decisions which affect them. Later legislation has strengthened tenants' rights, with further rights to information and consultation.

Tenants have the right to:

- Form independent representative groups.
- Access information about housing policies.
- Be consulted on issues that affect them.
- Participate in decisions that affect the services they receive and be given adequate time to fully consider proposals.

We have duties to:

- Produce a Tenant Participation Strategy.
- Provide resources and support for tenant participation.
- Keep tenants and tenant groups informed on proposals for housing management, standards of service and the Tenant Participation Strategy.
- Take account of the views of individual tenants or tenant groups.
- Set up and maintain a **register of tenant organisations**, in line with Scottish Government guidance.

Social Housing Charter

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 introduced the **Scottish Social Housing Charter** which sets out the standards and outcomes that landlords should be delivering to all social housing tenants. The Charter came into effect in 2012 and was last updated in 2022. Information about the Charter is available on the Scottish Government website at:

www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-social-housing-charter-november-2022



The right to adequate housing is a human right in international law. The Charter supports this right by setting the standards and outcomes that social landlords should achieve for their tenants and other customers by delivering good quality homes and services. The Charter contains a total of 16 outcomes and standards, including equalities, communication and participation.

Charter outcomes and standards



The Charter provides the basis for the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) to assess and report on how well landlords are performing.

The Charter encourages tenants to get involved and also to scrutinise their landlord's performance.

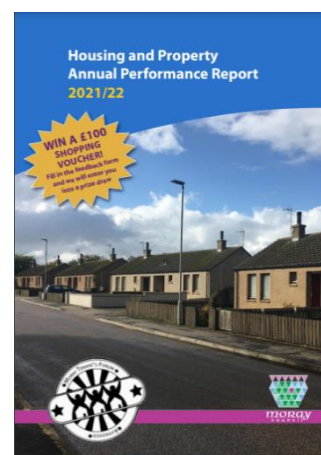
The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)

The SHR is the independent regulator of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and Local Authority housing services in Scotland. The SHR is responsible for monitoring, assessing, and reporting on how well social landlords achieve the Charter's outcomes and standards. Actively including tenants and other users of social housing services is key to the work of the SHR.

The Council is required to provide the SHR with an Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) each year providing information on our performance against the Charter. The SHR then produces an independent report on our performance which can be used to compare performance between landlords and against the national average. The report is available on the SHR's website at www.housingregulator.gov.scot

The Council is required each year to produce an Annual Performance Report to tenants to communicate the outcome of the SHR assessment and performance information. Our most recent report is available at: www.moray.gov.uk/housingperformance

The Charter and the Scottish Housing Regulator require that the Council has arrangements in place to make sure tenants can scrutinise and help improve performance and influence decisions about policies and services. Scrutiny is a way of giving tenants greater influence and ability to hold their landlord to account, examine services and standards and make recommendations for service improvements.



Housing to 2040

Housing to 2040 sets out a vision for housing in Scotland and a route map to get there. It aims to deliver the Scottish Government ambition for everyone to have a safe, good quality and affordable home that meets their needs in the place they want to be. Tenant voices are placed at the centre of shaping future policy and legislation. The Draft Rented Sector Strategy sets out how it will build on existing strengths and experience in Tenant Participation. In addition to further developing the Regional Networks to represent diversity within the sector by including people with protected characteristics, younger people and people with a wide range of backgrounds (such as those who have experienced homelessness).



Links to other local strategies and plans

Our Tenant Participation Strategy links to and complements other council policies and strategies, including:

Local Outcome Improvement Plan (version 2)

The plan's main aim and purpose is to improve life for those living and working in Moray. It sets out how it will work to raise aspirations through expanded choices, improved livelihoods and wellbeing. Community engagement is identified as key to this. Creating more resilient and self-sufficient communities with influence over the delivery of public services to their communities and capacity for joint and community based delivery.



Corporate Plan

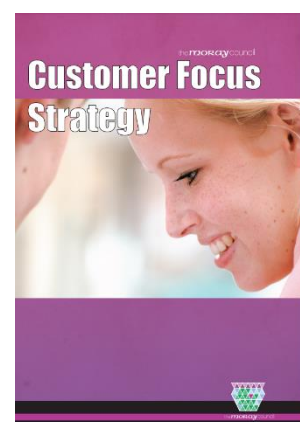
Our plan to identify what we are going to do to contribute towards the delivery of our priorities and identify any additional targets, why they are needed, and what is to be done to deliver them. It recognises the importance of empowering and supporting communities to build capacity. Our Corporate Plan is being updated at the moment and an interim review of the Tenant Participation Strategy will be undertaken when it has been finalised.

Local Housing Strategy 2019-2024

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) aims to make sure there is enough housing, of good quality, of the right size and type, and in the right places, to meet the needs of local people. The LHS covers all tenures; owner occupied and private rented housing as well as social housing. The LHS is based on a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) and forms the basis for future investment decisions in housing and related services.

Customer Focus Strategy

The Customer Focus Strategy aims to improve the customer experience for people living in Moray who access our services, putting their needs at the heart of service delivery. It provides a route map showing how the Council will listen to and learn from our customers, improving services. Our [Customer Charter](#) describes the standards which we promise to meet, depending on how you contact us.



Equalities

We are committed to preventing discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity. In accordance with the [Equality Act 2010](#), we want to make sure that our Tenant Participation Strategy does not discriminate between individuals with any of the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status/civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. In addition, we seek to promote equal opportunities irrespective of language, literacy and numeracy, social origin, employment status, and responsibility for dependents. We have a duty to assess the impact of this Strategy. We do this through an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) to minimise any barriers to participation tenants may experience.

The Moray Tenants' Forum constitution includes an equalities statement which opposes discrimination and encourages engagement with under-represented

groups. They have a code of conduct so that all members treat each other with respect. We recognise the value of all members of the community and equalities training will form part of the ongoing training for staff and tenant representatives.

We will make sure that all tenants have the opportunity to get involved and influence decisions about housing services, policies and conditions. Our documents are available in a range of different formats such as large print and braille and can be translated into other languages. Interpretation can be provided for British Sign Language users or non-English speakers on request. We also maintain a register of tenants who require information in alternative formats, such as large print. Public meetings will always be held in accessible venues and we will cover reasonable out of pocket expenses, such as transport and care costs, to support people to attend.

We value involvement that reflects the whole of our tenant population. Therefore, we will work together to promote equal opportunities and remove or minimise barriers to participation. We recognise that certain groups may be under-represented and that a special effort may be needed to encourage involvement. These groups include young people, minority ethnic communities, Gypsy/ Travellers, LGBTQ+, tenants with support needs, homeless service users and people with disabilities. Our action plan identifies how we will develop our approach to involving under-represented groups. We will promote inclusive approaches and work in ways that are appropriate to different people and differing needs within our communities. We will support informal and innovative methods of engagement that may better meet the needs of those who are less likely to participate.

Aims and objectives

The focus of our Tenant Participation Strategy has evolved over time to meet emerging challenges and tenant aspirations but there are a number of overarching principles that guide and inform all of our strategies. These principles are based on the Scottish Government's National Strategy for Participation, "Partners in Participation", and include:

- ⊞ Create a culture of mutual trust, respect and partnership between tenants, elected members and housing officers at all levels, working together towards improving housing conditions and housing services.
- ⊞ Ensure tenant participation is a continuously evolving process.
- ⊞ Enable processes of decision making that are open, clear and accountable.
- ⊞ Recognise the independence of tenant organisations.
- ⊞ Recognise that tenant' organisations require adequate resources for organisation, training and support.
- ⊞ Tailor tenant participation in remote areas to suit the particular needs of tenants in these communities.
- ⊞ Provide all tenants with an equal opportunity to contribute, removing barriers to effective participation.

Our overall strategic aim for the Tenant Participation Strategy is:



To achieve this aim, our strategy continues to be set around 3 key outcomes which are supported by a detailed action plan. Tenants gave feedback during the pre-consultation process that they agreed with the existing strategy outcomes and did not feel these needed to change. However, the development of this new strategy does take account of the changing context we are working in as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. It provides an opportunity for us to enhance our approach to tenant participation and make use of new digital technology and tools. It also provides an opportunity to engage with younger tenants. Our 2021 Tenant Satisfaction Survey showed key differences between our younger and older tenants in their preference for contact. Younger tenants were more likely to prefer electronic

communications such as text message, email alerts, and social media and were more likely to have internet access than older tenants.

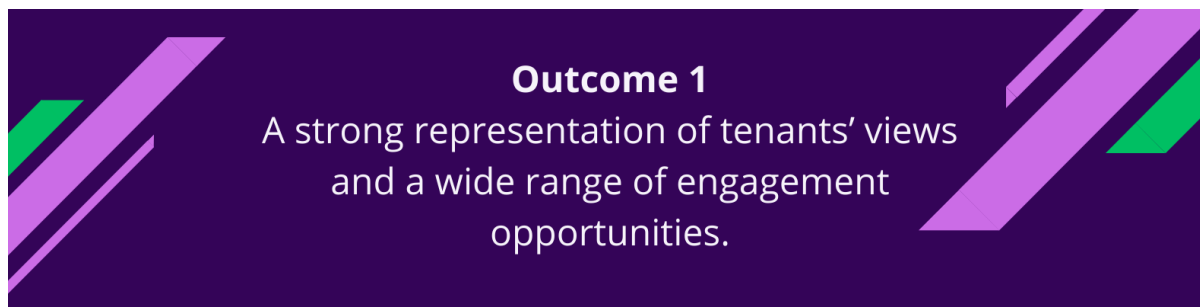
Our Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2021 showed that 96% of tenants were either very or fairly satisfied with opportunities given to them to participate in our Housing Services decision making processes. Where respondents were not satisfied with the opportunities given to participate, the main reasons given were:

- Not aware of opportunities to get involved (46%)
- Don't think the Council listen/ getting involved makes a difference (23%).

To address this we will:

- 🏠 Develop a digital engagement plan.
- 🏠 Continue to listen to tenant feedback before decisions about housing services are reached.
- 🏠 Make sure the contribution and influence of tenants is highlighted in reports to the Housing and Community Safety committee.
- 🏠 Make sure that the results of consultations are reported and kept under review.

The 3 outcomes of our Tenant Participation Strategy are set out below:



We will continue to widen the opportunities for tenants to shape and influence our housing services, making it easier for you to participate and share your views with us. We recognise that not everyone will want to get involved in the same way and to the same extent. Therefore, we will provide opportunities for tenants to take part in ways that meet their different needs. By doing so, we aim to encourage as diverse a range of tenants as possible to engage with the work of the Housing Service.

The Covid-19 pandemic significantly changed the way we work and communicate. Social media and online meeting platforms such as Microsoft Teams enabled us to continue to meet and communicate with tenants and housing networks whilst social restrictions were in place. Digital opportunities can be a convenient option for tenants who might not otherwise be able to take part in face to face activities. Whilst there are benefits to digital participation, we recognise that a significant number of people do not or cannot access the internet whether due to affordability, connectivity, lack of confidence and skills, and access to technology. Some tenants will also have a preference for non-digital participation opportunities. We will therefore continue to offer traditional in-person and non-digital opportunities alongside the development of digital engagement opportunities.

We will work alongside our partners to share good practice and promote tenant participation in Moray. This could include arranging joint events or working together to seek tenants' views.

What we'll do:

- Provide a range of tenant participation opportunities to suit different needs.
- Use a variety of digital and traditional methods to communicate with you (online and offline).
- Develop digital engagement opportunities alongside traditional methods.
- Support you to access digital resources and information where possible.
- Increase the number of tenants who participate.
- Test out different ways to involve tenants, focusing on encouraging those who do not usually get involved to do so, such as young people.
- Consult you on key housing issues including tenant satisfaction, housing management, repairs and maintenance, as well as policy development and changes to rent.
- Provide a range of ways for you to give your feedback.
- Make sure you have enough time to share your views.
- Work in partnership with other tenant organisations such as North East Tenants Residents and Landlords Together (NETRALT) and Northern Tenants Partnership (NTP) to offer joint engagement opportunities.



Outcome 2

Our tenants are fully engaged in the process of policy formulation, service review, scrutiny and decision making.

We are committed to working with and supporting our Registered Tenant Organisation (RTO) Moray Tenants Forum to influence decisions about housing services. We will support the group to widen its membership and develop its capacity and help make sure it is representative of wider tenant views and priorities.

We recognise the importance of a strong tenant voice and will continue to develop and implement tenant scrutiny opportunities. This enables us to continually review and improve our services and make sure that tenants and service users are at the heart of what we do. Therefore, we will continue to engage with our tenants to identify opportunities to monitor the performance of our housing services and the effectiveness of our housing policies and strategies.

We would like to involve more tenants in scrutiny and will engage with our tenants to identify the best opportunities and methods for scrutiny activity. We will consider how we can support short-life groups who want to address a particular issue to identify and examine areas of review. These groups will establish if there are any service gaps and make recommendations for improvements in service delivery and value for money. Where possible, we will explore joint approaches to scrutiny in partnership with North East Tenants Residents and Landlords Together (NETRALT) and the Northern Tenants Partnership (NTP).

What we'll do:

- Provide information on our performance identifying any areas for improvement
- Ensure you are able to compare our performance with similar councils
- Improve information on customer feedback and how this has impacted on service delivery
- Continue to work with and support Moray Tenants Forum
- Include tenant representatives as members of our housing function Committee, currently the Housing and Community Safety Committee.
- Set up short-life tenant working groups to independently review areas of our housing services.
- Include tenant representatives on estate walkabouts to identify projects and influence how the environmental improvement budget is spent.
- Communicate the outcomes of estate walkabouts
- Develop partnership approaches to scrutiny
- Undertake an awareness raising programme of scrutiny opportunities
- Develop appropriate learning and training opportunities to support tenant scrutiny activities



Outcome 3

Our tenants, council staff and elected members have the capacity to work together effectively.

We want our tenants to be empowered and have opportunities to build skills that support their contribution to the work of the Housing Service. We will work with our tenant representatives to make sure that appropriate learning, training and capacity-building opportunities are made available to our tenants.

Keeping up to date is essential for staff, elected members and tenants. There is value in joint training where possible, although it will also be appropriate to offer some training specifically for tenants. Training can be provided in-house by the Council's Corporate Development Training Team as well as by external providers such as the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS). We will seek opportunities to access training and share good practice and resources with partner organisations including North East Tenants Residents and Landlords Together (NETRALT) and the Northern Tenants Partnership (NTP). Training courses are offered free of charge and we will cover reasonable expenses, such as travel and childcare.

Accredited learning courses offer tenants the opportunity to build their capacity to undertake tenant representative duties. Courses also help tenants gain a better understanding of a range of housing services such as scrutiny or inspection, tenancy sustainment, performance management, repairs and finance. Courses can be accredited by agencies such as TPAS, and have helped tenants gain the knowledge and skills required to work in partnership with their landlords to improve services. The strategy will consider options for developing accredited training for tenants in Moray.

What we'll do:

- Provide a range of good quality information that is easy to read and in plain language.
- Provide information in accessible formats such as large print.
- Carry out a training needs analysis to identify training requirements for tenants and relevant staff.
- Develop a training programme for tenants, Council staff and elected members.
- Explore options for accredited training.
- Identify and develop opportunities for partnership working with other landlords and regional tenants groups.
- Continue to develop our relationship with organisations specialising in tenant participation such as the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS).
- Research good practice examples and consider their development in Moray.
- Continue to encourage tenants to participate in external/ national events.



Getting involved

Why should I get involved?

Your opinions can help us to identify your priorities, what we are doing well and where we can improve. By working together, we can find service improvements and continue to deliver good quality services which are value for money. You bring a wealth of skills and experience and can provide a unique perspective on our housing services. Depending on how you choose to be involved, you may also:

- ⊞ Provide a voice for the wider tenant community
- ⊞ Find out about what is going on in your area
- ⊞ Help improve your estate and create a better sense of community
- ⊞ Meet new people and make friends
- ⊞ Build your confidence and self-esteem
- ⊞ Develop new skills and knowledge
- ⊞ Choose to access free training opportunities or work towards a recognised qualification
- ⊞ Enhance your CV

What can I get involved in?

There are a range of ways to get involved at a level that suits you. The different options are described in more detail below.

Moray Tenants Forum

The Forum is a Moray-wide tenant-led group that represents tenants' views and aims to improve housing services and conditions. The Forum is informal and friendly and any of our tenants can join. They get together every few months and we talk to them about our plans and consult them on housing issues. Sometimes guest speakers from housing,



another department, or another organisation are invited along to discuss topics of interest to tenants. The Forum helps us develop information for tenants such as leaflets and articles for our newsletter, the Tenants' Voice. The Forum have developed a tenant approved stamp for use on housing service documents. They also represent you at events locally and nationally.



Tenant Scrutiny Groups

Tenants interested in reviewing our services closely may want to join a tenant scrutiny group. These groups independently review our housing services to ensure they are delivered to a high standard and that tenants' views are considered.

Scrutiny groups choose a topic and gather a range of information on it by:

- ⊞ looking at policy documents or performance information;
- ⊞ mystery shopping;
- ⊞ commissioning surveys;
- ⊞ interviewing staff; and
- ⊞ visiting our offices or empty properties.

We can provide training and support to assist with all activities a group is involved in. The group will then make recommendations to senior managers and elected members on how we can improve.

Housing and Community Safety Committee

The Housing and Community Safety Committee scrutinises performance information for the service and makes sure it achieves maximum value for money and best value in service delivery. Up to three tenant representatives from Moray Tenants Forum can take part in the Committee meetings where they sit alongside elected members. The tenant representatives are involved in the oversight of the Council's housing function, receiving reports on a range of service, strategy and policy issues, and contributing to the decision-making processes in these areas. There is also a webcasting facility where Committee meetings are available to view for 12 months online at: www.moray.gov.uk/webcasting

Regional Networks

There are opportunities to get involved in tenant participation at regional and national levels. The Regional Networks were established in 2008 to allow tenants and residents from across Scotland to work in partnership with the Scottish Government on issues of national policy to improve housing and well-being. There are 4 Regional Networks which cover the whole of Scotland. Each Network covers a number of local authority areas, and their membership is drawn from representatives of Registered Tenants Organisations (RTOs) and recognised landlord Scrutiny groups. Moray is part of the North of Scotland Regional Network alongside Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Argyll and Bute, Dundee City, Highland, Orkney, Perth and Kinross, Shetland, and the Western Isles. Members of Moray Tenant Forum can be nominated to represent Moray at the Regional Networks. We aim to have at least one tenant representing Moray at the Networks to give our tenants a voice at a national level.

More information about Regional Networks is available at: regionalnetworks.org



Partnership working

We are members of the Northern Tenants Partnership (NTP) and **North East Tenants Residents and Landlords** together (NETRALT). These groups include social landlords and their tenants or residents in their membership. There are many benefits from working in partnership such as sharing good practice, skills, resources and access to training opportunities. There is an option to join the meetings online so you can get involved from the comfort of your home.



Estate walkabouts



Tenants have a say on how our estate improvement budget gets spent. Each year, tenants, housing staff and councillors carry out joint inspections to identify and agree

on projects which could improve our estates. These improvements include a range of projects such as replacement fencing, upgrading of paths, parking improvements and landscaping projects.

Consultations

If we are reviewing a service or making any major changes to our policies we always ask our tenants for their feedback. We advertise consultations on our website at www.moray.gov.uk, on social media, and where possible in the **Tenants' Voice** newsletter. We will ask you to give your feedback by filling out a survey or taking part in a focus group. We will provide online and in-person opportunities for you to share your views.



List of interested tenants

We realise that some tenants do not want to join a tenant group but would still like to be involved in decisions about housing services. We can add you to our list of interested tenants and contact you when there are consultations that are relevant to you. In the past we have used the list to ask tenants with internet access to test our website or to inform tenants about consultations or events taking place that might interest them.

Tenant events and conferences

We sometimes organise or attend events to encourage tenants to find out more about tenant participation opportunities. Tenants and staff also have the opportunity to attend events together to learn from and share good practice with other housing providers. This includes national events such as the annual Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) conference and more recently online events in partnership with NETRALT and NTP.



Themed meetings or working groups

We will sometimes organise themed meetings or working groups on a particular area of interest. This gives an opportunity for smaller groups of tenants to get involved in an area that interests them the most.

Satisfaction surveys

We carry out regular surveys on a wide range of topics to gather feedback. We also carry out a larger independent survey every three years. When you fill in surveys, the results and comments are passed to service managers who use them to make improvements and prioritise spending.



Digital engagement

As well as the Council's main Facebook page, we have a closed Facebook group for our tenants. We use this group to share news and information and you can leave comments or questions, fill in polls and take part in events. Join us at www.facebook.com/groups/MorayCouncilTenants or scan the QR code below:



Sheltered housing groups

Our sheltered housing schemes have their own tenant-led groups that meet regularly. We talk to them about our plans and consult them on housing issues. Sometimes guest speakers from housing, another department, or another organisation are invited along to discuss topics of interest to tenants. Sheltered housing tenants also have the option to attend Moray Tenants Forum.



Participatory Budgeting

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a way for tenants and other customers to get involved in making decisions about their local area and decide where public money is spent. We work in partnership with the Community Support Unit to help identify and deliver projects. Recent examples of PB projects include improving play areas in Buckie (pictured) and Tomnavoulin.



Suggestions welcome!



We aim to encourage as many tenants as possible to have a voice in shaping our services and welcome suggestions from tenants about new ways of involving people.

If you'd like to get involved, have a suggestion or want to find out more please get in touch:

Phone: 0300 1234 566

Email: tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk

How will I be kept informed?

We aim to provide information in a range of ways and formats to suit different individual needs. Information can be provided in large print, Braille or translated into other languages.

The Covid-19 pandemic led to an increase in our use of social media and online meeting platforms to communicate with tenants. However, we recognise the importance of providing information on paper as well as online and will take account

of our customers preferred method of communication. We will continue to support traditional in-person involvement whilst developing our digital engagement opportunities.

We provide regular information and give feedback to tenants in a range of ways including:

- 🏠 documents, guides and information leaflets. Including a comprehensive **tenants handbook**, a **guide to tenant participation**, advice leaflets and housing policies;
- 🏠 **Tenants' Voice**, our topical tenants' newsletter which is published twice yearly;
- 🏠 direct correspondence by letter or email;
- 🏠 press releases published online at newsroom.moray.gov.uk;
- 🏠 information on our website at www.moray.gov.uk;
- 🏠 social media including our **Moray Council Tenants** Facebook group and **Tenant Participation** page to publicise relevant topical news and events and consult via online survey;
- 🏠 **an annual report for tenants and other service users which sets out our performance** against the outcomes of the Charter and compares our performance with other landlords;
- 🏠 providing information in our policies and strategies about changes we have made as a result of tenant feedback;
- 🏠 Moray Tenant Forum meetings; and
- 🏠 focus groups;



Consulting tenants and taking account of their views

There are a range of ways for tenants to give feedback and shape our housing policy and services. These include:

- 🏠 tenant satisfaction survey carried out every three years;
- 🏠 annual rent consultation;
- 🏠 consultation on changes to housing service delivery and policies;

- ⌄ estate walkabouts; and
- ⌄ feedback surveys on service delivery such as new tenants, tenants moving into new build properties, repairs and planned maintenance.

We will, where possible, allow at least four weeks for consultations. Our consultations should be meaningful and direct changes in policy or service delivery as a result. Therefore, we will provide information on how your feedback has impacted service delivery so you will know your views have been listened to and acted on. We will provide this information in a range of formats and platforms in the following ways:

- ⌄ annual performance reports;
- ⌄ articles in our tenant newsletter, Tenants' Voice; and
- ⌄ reports on the results of consultations.

We will use your feedback to:

- ⌄ develop and improve the Council's website;
- ⌄ prioritise Housing Revenue Account (HRA) spending for improvement works; and
- ⌄ identify and prioritise improvement works through estate walkabouts and the environmental improvement budget.

How we will support tenant participation

We recognise that every customer has different skills, interests and knowledge. We want to make the best use of your customer experiences by providing opportunities for you to get involved in the things you are most interested in.

We will make sure that tenants and others who want to participate are supported appropriately. This support will be delivered in different ways ranging from providing good quality information, through to direct support to tenants who want to form and run a tenant group.

Tenant Participation budget

We provide a dedicated budget for tenant participation which is reviewed annually. This covers the main costs of tenant participation including those associated with the publication of the Tenants' Voice newsletter. It also includes an annual grant to Moray Tenant Forum which they decide how to use to support their activities and to cover relevant expenses such as travel, childcare, attendance at events and meeting venue costs.

Other budgets are used from time to time to cover additional tenant participation costs. For example there is a separate budget for identified environmental improvement works, which tenant representatives are able to influence and prioritise.

To reflect its importance, tenant participation is integrated into the duties of all housing staff. This is in addition to a customer engagement officer with dedicated tenant participation duties. As a result however, time devoted by housing staff to tenant participation is not easily quantifiable.

Resources and support

We will provide the following resources to support the strategy:

- ⌄ Tenant travel and specified out of pocket expenses.
- ⌄ Funding for priorities identified for environmental improvements.
- ⌄ Staff time, expertise and advice to tenants groups and others.
- ⌄ Tenant participation training for staff.
- ⌄ Information and training to help build the capacity of tenant groups.
- ⌄ Independent advice from organisations such as the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) and the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH).
- ⌄ Provision of accessible meeting facilities.
- ⌄ An up to date, easy to use and accessible website.

Support to access equipment or use technology to take part digitally.

Our staff will also support tenant participation by:

- ⌄ Coordinating tenant consultations.

- ⊞ Working with other departments to enhance participation.
- ⊞ Attending relevant training events to keep their skills in tenant participation updated.
- ⊞ Providing advice on issues such as training for tenant representatives, funding and successfully running tenant and resident groups.
- ⊞ Attending meetings and events with tenant representatives.
- ⊞ Providing administrative support to Moray Tenants Forum, including sending out agendas and papers, taking minutes, and organising meeting venues.
- ⊞ Encouraging participation with under-represented groups.
- ⊞ Encouraging tenants to attend conferences and wider professional discussion events.
- ⊞ Providing advice and assistance to tenants on Committee reports.
- ⊞ Maintaining a register of interested tenants to draw upon to seek tenants' views.
- ⊞ Maintaining an updated tenant handbook, using tenant input during production.

Training can be provided in a range of subject matters and at various levels to suit individual tenants. Attending these courses will:

- ⊞ Help raise confidence levels;
- ⊞ Help the role of the committee member;
- ⊞ Help with work in their community;
- ⊞ Help reach their full potential; and
- ⊞ Provide an opportunity to work towards a recognised housing qualification.

We will review our resource requirements annually as part of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget preparation, to ensure effective delivery of the strategy and its actions.

How we will monitor and measure progress

The Tenant Participation Strategy and action plan are working documents subject to continuous review.

We will set up a monitoring group consisting of tenants and housing staff to review progress towards the outcomes. The group will meet at least 3 times a year and will produce an annual report to the Housing and Community Safety Committee outlining progress made.

The results of the annual review will be publicised alongside regular updates on our tenant participation activities via our website, Facebook, and tenant newsletter Tenants' Voice.

If you would like to be part of the Tenant Participation Strategy monitoring group or wish to comment on the strategy please contact 0300 123 4566 or email tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk

Action Plan

Our action plan sets out how we will meet the aims of this Strategy.

Ref	What we'll do	How we'll do it	Responsibility	When we'll do it	Outcomes
Outcome 1: A strong representation of tenants' views and a wide range of engagement opportunities.					
1.1	Promote and develop a wide range of options for tenants to get involved	<p>Promote a blended approach to tenant participation with both in-person and digital involvement opportunities.</p> <p>Continue to use social media, including our Tenant Participation Facebook page and Moray Council Tenants group to allow wider participation.</p> <p>Promote our register of interested tenants as a resource for getting tenants views on a range of housing matters. Providing opportunities</p>	<p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p>	<p>By December 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Increased number of opportunities for tenant participation.</p> <p>Increased number of tenants involved in tenant participation.</p> <p>Tenants are aware of service developments and opportunities to participate.</p> <p>Tenants satisfied with the options to participate in decision making exceeds annual local authority average.</p>

Ref	What we'll do	How we'll do it	Responsibility	When we'll do it	Outcomes
		<p>for tenants to join the register via feedback surveys, consultations, events, website, Facebook.</p> <p>Continue to produce tenant newsletter, Tenants' Voice, twice a year.</p>	Customer Engagement Officer	Annually (summer and winter)	
1.2	Develop our digital participation opportunities	<p>Develop a digital engagement plan for tenant participation.</p> <p>Develop use of virtual and hybrid meetings as an option for those unable to attend in-person meetings, events and other sessions.</p> <p>We will make use of digital platforms to maximise how we gather tenant's views.</p> <p>Provide information and support to enable tenants</p>	<p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p>	<p>By May 2025</p> <p>By July 2024</p> <p>By December 2024</p>	<p>Digital engagement is properly planned and resourced.</p> <p>Improvement in tenants reporting they are satisfied with digital opportunities to get involved through the three yearly tenant survey.</p> <p>Increased number of tenants taking part digitally annually.</p>

Ref	What we'll do	How we'll do it	Responsibility	When we'll do it	Outcomes
		to access digital opportunities.	Customer Engagement Officer	By December 2025 and ongoing	
1.3	Encourage involvement of under-represented groups such as young people	<p>Explore opportunities to link with organisations working with under-represented groups to raise awareness of participation opportunities.</p> <p>Explore the development of housing focus groups to engage with under-represented groups.</p> <p>Test the use of new methods/ digital platforms to engage with under-represented groups.</p> <p>Develop the use of social media to target the views of under-represented groups.</p>	<p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>By December 2026 and ongoing</p> <p>By December 2026 and ongoing</p>	Increased involvement of groups of people who are under-represented in tenant participation.

Ref	What we'll do	How we'll do it	Responsibility	When we'll do it	Outcomes
1.4	Increase the visibility of tenant participation and the different ways in which tenants can get involved	<p>Promote tenant participation through a variety of different methods.</p> <p>Develop tenant friendly easy read version of the Strategy.</p> <p>Attend local community events to promote tenant participation such as pop up events.</p> <p>Consider offering tenants meetings in different localities at different times.</p> <p>Work in partnership with NTP and NETRALT to promote regional tenant participation opportunities.</p>	<p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>By May 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Increased number of tenants involved in tenant participation.

Ref	What we'll do	How we'll do it	Responsibility	When we'll do it	Outcomes
Outcome 2: Our tenants are fully engaged in the process of policy formulation, service review, scrutiny and decision making.					
2.1	Make sure tenants are aware of options to shape housing services	Produce and promote a calendar of policies for review and consultation annually.	Customer Engagement Officer / Housing Policy Team	Ongoing Annually	Tenants and tenant representatives are clear about which policies they will be consulted on, how and when. Tenants can get involved in influencing housing across Moray and how their rent is spent. Tenants are aware of the impact of customer feedback on service delivery. Tenants influence where improvement works are carried out.
		Make sure that enough time is provided for you to give your views	Customer Engagement Officer / Housing Policy Team	Ongoing	
		Carry out regular consultation on rent increases and provide clear information for tenants to be able to make informed choices	Customer Engagement Officer / Housing Policy Team	Ongoing	
		Invite tenants from the Register of Interested Tenants and others to participate in short life review groups.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	
		Promote estate walkabouts and ensure	Housing Asset Manager	Ongoing Annually	

Ref	What we'll do	How we'll do it	Responsibility	When we'll do it	Outcomes
		<p>they are carried out in line with the Estate Management Policy.</p> <p>Promote good news stories where tenants have impacted change.</p> <p>Develop a report card on how tenants are involved and the outcomes of that involvement to help evidence the positive impact tenant participation can have.</p>	<p>Customer Engagement Officer / All Staff</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing Annually</p>	
2.2	Strengthen the capacity of Moray Tenant Forum	<p>Promote the Forum and recruit new members.</p> <p>Consider impact of timing and meeting venue on attendance.</p> <p>Offer a hybrid option to join Forum meetings.</p> <p>Work with the Forum to review their branding/</p>	<p>Customer Engagement Officer / All Staff</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>By December 2024</p> <p>By December 2026</p>	Increased number of tenant representatives.

Ref	What we'll do	How we'll do it	Responsibility	When we'll do it	Outcomes
		logo, constitution and code of practice.	Customer Engagement Officer		
2.3	Improve our feedback to tenants to demonstrate where our tenants and other service users have influenced or shaped the housing service.	<p>When consulting with tenants we will tell them how their views will be used and how decisions will be made</p> <p>Communicate outcomes from consultations to participants and publicise them via the Tenants' Voice, website and social media.</p>	<p>Customer Engagement Officer / Housing Policy Team</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Tenants see the impact of their involvement and are encouraged to get involved.
2.4	Develop tenant involvement in scrutiny	<p>Provide a variety of methods for tenants to scrutinise Housing Services at a level they feel comfortable with</p> <p>Promote and develop the Service Improvement Panel, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting benefits of scrutiny 	<p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing, at least one activity annually.</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Improvement in Housing Services in line with tenant priorities.</p> <p>Tenants are fully involved with staff in service performance management.</p> <p>Positive outcomes from tenants involved in participation and evidence of their</p>

Ref	What we'll do	How we'll do it	Responsibility	When we'll do it	Outcomes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of scrutiny opportunities • Attracting new members • Delivering training • Providing support to the Panel <p>Promote and support regional tenant scrutiny opportunities through groups such as NETRALT and NTP.</p>	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	contributions to service delivery.
2.5	Continue to report on our performance and how we compare with other social landlords	<p>Produce an Annual Performance Report in consultation with tenants/ tenant editing group.</p> <p>Provide performance information in each edition of the tenants' newsletter, Tenants' Voice.</p>	<p>Senior Housing Officer (Information) / Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Senior Housing Officer (Information) / Customer Engagement Officer</p>	<p>Annually, by 31 October</p> <p>Annually, winter edition</p>	Tenants have access to performance information which is easy to understand.

Ref	What we'll do	How we'll do it	Responsibility	When we'll do it	Outcomes
2.6	Continue to use tenant feedback to influence service planning and delivery	Commission next major tenant satisfaction survey and implement actions identified	Senior Housing Officer (Information) / Customer Engagement Officer	Surveys to be commissioned in 2024 and 2027	Feedback from tenants improves housing services and influences the Housing Investment Plan.
Outcome 3: Our tenants, council staff and elected members have the capacity to work together effectively.					
3.1	Communicate effectively with tenants, council staff and elected members	<p>Provide good quality information that is clear, in plain language and can be accessed in a range of different formats.</p> <p>Provide information online and issue documents in hard copy on request.</p> <p>Create a tenant approved editing group for all publications to make sure information is clear and accessible.</p>	<p>Customer Engagement Officer / Housing Policy Team</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer / Housing Policy Team / All Staff</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>By December 2026</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Housing section of the Council website is easy to use and has a comprehensive list of information for tenants including tenant participation.</p> <p>Information complies with the Council's Equalities Policy and appropriate legislation.</p> <p>There is a comprehensive and updated register of tenants who need support and this is targeted to those who need it.</p>

Ref	What we'll do	How we'll do it	Responsibility	When we'll do it	Outcomes
		<p>Maintain a register of tenants who require information in alternative formats or need specific assistance to effectively participate.</p> <p>Review and improve existing tenant and tenant participation information including leaflets, Council website and other documents to make sure it is easy to understand and accessible.</p> <p>Develop an information pack for tenants and a welcome pack for Moray Tenant Forum members.</p> <p>Develop a tenant guide to accessing digital engagement opportunities.</p>	<p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p>	<p>By December 2026 and ongoing</p> <p>By May 2025</p> <p>By May 2025</p>	

Ref	What we'll do	How we'll do it	Responsibility	When we'll do it	Outcomes
		<p>Make Moray Tenant Forum documents available online including: constitution, code of conduct and meeting minutes</p> <p>Use of tenant approved stamp on housing service documents.</p> <p>Review the design and content of our tenant newsletter, Tenant Voice, with tenants.</p>	<p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer / Housing Policy Team</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p>	<p>By December 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>By May 2026</p>	<p>Improvement in tenants reporting that they find the newsletter useful through the three yearly tenant survey.</p>
3.2	Provide professional development and training opportunities	<p>Review the training needs of tenants, staff and elected members. Develop a flexible training programme to support tenant participation activities, including accredited opportunities.</p>	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing Annually	<p>Tenant representatives, staff and Elected Members are aware of developments in TP.</p> <p>Increase in the number of training opportunities taken up by tenant representatives.</p>

Ref	What we'll do	How we'll do it	Responsibility	When we'll do it	Outcomes
		<p>Provide training to support housing staff knowledge and understanding of TP.</p> <p>Develop and deliver informal one-off learning opportunities “want to know more sessions” to develop interest in tenant participation activities.</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer to undertake TPAS Certificate in Tenant Participation</p> <p>Enable tenant representatives, staff and elected members to attend relevant in-person and online professional activities such as the annual TPAS conference.</p>	<p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>By January 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	

Ref	What we'll do	How we'll do it	Responsibility	When we'll do it	Outcomes
		<p>Prepare support and training material for tenants involved in scrutiny activities.</p> <p>Identify good practice and innovation through continued partnership working and networking, attendance at seminars and events. Consider their development in Moray.</p>	<p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p>	<p>By December 2026</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	
Monitoring and Evaluation					
4.1	Monitor and review this action plan on a regular basis	<p>Set up Tenant Participation Strategy Monitoring group.</p> <p>Develop a performance monitoring system for tenant participation.</p> <p>Present an annual review of the strategy to the Housing and Community Safety Committee.</p>	<p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p> <p>Customer Engagement Officer</p>	<p>By May 2024</p> <p>By May 2024</p> <p>May 2025, then annually</p>	Progress is scrutinised and improvement actions agreed.

Ref	What we'll do	How we'll do it	Responsibility	When we'll do it	Outcomes
		Publicise the results of the annual strategy review. Report updates to tenant participation through the Tenants' Voice and our social media channels.	Customer Engagement Officer Customer Engagement Officer	Annually Ongoing	

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT COVERING

- EQUALITIES & SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTIES
- HUMAN RIGHTS AND RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

STAGE 1 - DO I NEED AN INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT?

Name of policy or proposal: Tenant Participation Strategy 2024 - 2029	
Is this a	Mark X below
New activity, programme or policy?	
Change to an existing activity, programme or policy?	X
Budget proposal?	

Duties: tick the boxes you think apply	No	Maybe	Yes
Equalities: Will your proposal have an impact on groups with protected characteristics? <i>Consider the impact of your proposal on people and how they access your services and information without barriers.</i>			√
Socio-economic <i>Not every person/family has access to regular income or savings. Will your proposal have an adverse impact on them</i>	√		
Does your proposal impact on the human rights of people?	√		
Does your proposal impact on the rights of children and young people	√		

Reasoning

Briefly describe your reasoning for the responses given above:

The tenant participation strategy aims to provide a variety of options for tenants to get involved and influence housing services at a level and in a format that suits them.

It aims to increase the participation of under-represented group of tenants, minimising or removing barriers to participation and making opportunities accessible to people in protected groups.

It takes a blended approach, providing both digital and ‘traditional’ non-digital opportunities to get involved. Thus, enhancing the accessibility and flexibility of opportunities.

If you have answered “maybe” or “yes” to any of the Stage 1 questions above then proceed to complete the Stage 2 Integrated Impact Assessment questions below.

If you have answered “no” to the Stage 1 questions above then provide the details below and submit to [email]

Lead Officer for developing the contract	
Other people involved in the screening (this may be council staff, partners or others i.e. contractor or community)	
Date	

STAGE 2: INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Brief description of the affected service

1. Describe what the service does:

The service engages with tenants and other housing service users to make decisions about and influence housing services. The Tenant Participation Strategy sets out how we

will take account of the views of tenants and support them in our decision making processes.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 created a legal requirement for landlords to actively develop and support tenant participation. The Act introduced a requirement for landlords to have a tenant participation strategy in place.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 introduced the Scottish Social Housing Charter (The Charter) which sets out the standards and outcomes which landlords should be delivering to all social housing tenants. This includes an outcome on equalities which states that: “every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.”

2. Who are your main stakeholders?

- Moray Council tenants
- Moray households in housing need and/or homeless
- Staff
- Elected members
- External organisations including the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS), Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), and Scottish Government

3. What changes as a result of the proposals? Is the service reduced or removed?

There are no negative changes to the existing service.

The service is enhanced by widening the opportunities to participate.

4. How will this affect your customers?

The Tenant Participation Strategy aims to ensure a wide range of opportunities for involvement at a level that meets individual needs.

5. Impact on staff providing the service

No change to resources, met within existing budgets. There may be training opportunities.

6. Please indicate if these apply to any of the protected characteristics

Protected groups	Potential impacts and considerations
Race	Gypsy/travellers, refugees. Providing clear information in plain language and accessible formats. Interpretation for British Sign Language users or non-English speakers can be provided on request.

APPENDIX II

Disability	Accessible venues, digital options to join meetings and provide feedback. Digital resources and support can be provided to enable tenants to access digital opportunities. Providing clear information in plain language and accessible formats. Register of tenants who require information in alternative formats such as large print.
Carers (for elderly, disabled or minors)	Digital options to join meetings and provide feedback. Digital resources and support can be provided to enable tenants to access digital opportunities. Consider timing of meetings and caring responsibilities.
Sex	Variety of options to get involved – informal and formal, traditional and digital.
Pregnancy and maternity (including breastfeeding)	Digital options to join meetings and provide feedback, consider timing of meetings and caring responsibilities. Digital resources and support can be provided to enable tenants to access digital opportunities.
Sexual orientation	Variety of options to get involved – informal and formal, traditional and digital. Digital resources and support can be provided to enable tenants to access digital opportunities.
Age (include children, young people, midlife and older people)	Variety of options to get involved – informal and formal, traditional and digital. Digital resources and support can be provided to enable tenants to access digital opportunities.
Religion, and or belief	Consider timing of meetings.
Gender reassignment	Digital options to join meetings and provide feedback. Digital resources and support can be provided to enable tenants to access digital opportunities.
Inequalities arising from socio-economic differences	People in remote/ rural areas, lack of transport, travel times, poor weather conditions in winter. Digital options to join meetings and provide feedback, consider timing of meetings. Local in-person opportunities provided to mitigate against internet access, affordability and connectivity barriers. Digital resources and support can be provided to enable tenants to access digital

	opportunities. Relevant out of pocket expenses reimbursed such as travel to meetings.
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Human rights

List of convention rights	Describe, where applicable, if and how specific rights are engaged
Article 5: Right to liberty and security	No specific impacts identified.
Article 6: Right to a fair trial	No specific impacts identified.
Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life, correspondence and the home	Tenants can choose to get involved at a level that suits them.
<i>Article 10: Freedom of expression</i>	Tenants and other service users are consulted on and can express their views about housing services freely.
<i>Article 11: Freedom of assembly and association</i>	Tenants can form/join a Registered Tenants Organisation such as Moray Tenants Forum.
<i>Article 12: Right to marry</i>	No specific impacts identified.
<i>Article 14: Prohibition of discrimination (in relation to the convention rights)</i>	All tenants can access tenant participation opportunities.
<i>Article 1 of Protocol 1: Protection of property</i>	No specific impacts identified.
<i>Article 2 of Protocol 1: Right to education</i>	No specific impacts identified.
<i>Article 3 of Protocol 1: Right to free elections by secret ballot</i>	No specific impacts identified.

Children's Rights and Wellbeing

Relevant articles – UNCRC	Not applicable
Article 2 – Non discrimination	Not applicable
Article 12 – Respect of the views of the child	Not applicable
Article 3.1 – Best interest of the child	Not applicable

Article 6.2 – Right to survival and development	Not applicable
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7. Evidence. What information have you used to make your assessment?

Performance data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory indicators included within Annual Return on The Charter • Tenant Satisfaction Survey (3 yearly, last undertaken 2021) includes indicators such as tenant views on opportunities to participate. Our 2021 survey showed that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 96% of tenants were either very or fairly satisfied with opportunities given to them to participate in our Housing Services decision making processes. ○ Where tenants were not satisfied with opportunities to participate, the main reasons given were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not aware of opportunities to get involved ▪ Don't think the Council listen/ getting involved makes a difference ○ Younger tenants are more likely to prefer electronic communications and are more likely to have internet access than older tenants.
Internal consultation	Will take place as part of the committee process.
Consultation with affected groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-consultation exercise with register of interested tenants and via social media (124 survey responses), and engagement with Moray Tenant Forum. A formal consultation will take place once the draft strategy is presented to Housing and Community Safety Committee. • Customer feedback and complaints.
Local statistics	
National statistics	
Other	Other landlord best practice.

8. Evidence gaps

Do you need additional information in order to complete the information in the previous questions?
No

9. Mitigating action

Can the impact of the proposed policy/activity be mitigated? Please explain

No negative impacts identified. Steps taken to mitigate against barriers to participation.

10. Justification

If nothing can be done to reduce the negative impact(s) but the proposed policy/activity must go ahead, what justification is there to continue with the change?

No negative impacts identified.

SECTION 3 CONCLUDING THE IIA

Concluding the IIA

1. No potential negative impacts on any of the protected groups were found.	√
2. Some potential negative impacts have been identified. The impacts relate to:	N/A
Reducing discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010	N/A
Promoting equality of opportunity	N/A
Fostering good relations	N/A
3. The proposals interfere with human rights and/or the rights of the child	N/A
4. Negative impacts can be mitigated the proposals as outlined in question 8	N/A
5. The negative impacts cannot be fully mitigated but are justified as outlined in question 9.	N/A
6. Further consultation with affected groups is needed.	√
7. It is advised not to go ahead with the proposals.	N/A

Decision

Set out the rationale for deciding whether or not to proceed with the proposed actions:

The assessment has outlined the steps to be taken to ensure the proposals have positive impacts in relation to promoting equality of opportunity. Mitigating steps will enable a wider group of tenants to get involved in tenant participation activities.

Date of Decision: 02/10/23

Sign off and authorisation:

Service	Economy, Environment & Finance
Department	Housing and Property
Policy/activity subject to IIA	Tenant Participation Strategy
We have completed the integrated impact assessment for this policy/activity.	Name: Rebecca Irons Position: Customer Engagement Officer Date: 2/10/23
Authorisation by head of service	Name: Edward Thomas Position: Head of Service Date:
Permission to publish on website -	
Please return this form to the Equal Opportunities Officer, Chief Executive's Office.	



**REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON 21
NOVEMBER 2023**

**SUBJECT: STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN (SHIP) 2024/2025 -
2028/2029**

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To ask the Committee to approve the Council's draft Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2024/2025 - 2028/2029.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III G (10) Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the preparation and implementation of strategic housing plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

- i) considers and comments on the draft SHIP;**
- ii) approves the consultative draft SHIP submitted to the Scottish Government on 16 October 2023; and**
- iii) agrees that further progress reports on the SHIP are presented to this Committee as required.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council has submitted its SHIP to Scottish Government annually since 2007. The SHIP sets out the Council's priorities for investment in affordable housing to meet the housing supply targets and outcomes stated in the Local Housing Strategy (LHS). In setting local investment priorities, the SHIP is intended to guide the allocation of resources available for affordable housing in Moray. The SHIP identifies the housing projects that the Council considers are priorities for inclusion in the Moray Affordable Housing Programme.
- 3.2 On 15 November 2022, the Committee approved the Council's current SHIP (2023/24-2027/28) for submission to the Scottish Government (paragraph 10 of the Minute refers).

3.3 SHIPs are the key documents for identifying the strategic housing projects that will contribute to the achievement of national housing supply targets. The Scottish Government provides local authorities with guidance for preparing their SHIPs, and has provided resources to fund local affordable housing programmes to contribute to the aims and targets detailed in Housing to 2040. Details of the resources being made available for the Moray programme are provided at Paragraph 4.12 of this report.

4. THE MORAY SHIP 2024/2025 - 2028/2029

4.1 The consultative draft SHIP submission is available on the Council's website at www.moray.gov.uk/ship. In common with previous practice, this version has already been submitted to the Scottish Government to comply with their deadline of 31 October 2023. However, they will only regard the SHIP as finalised after it has the approval of this Committee.

4.2 In summary, the SHIP:

- sets out the Council's strategic investment priorities for affordable housing;
- demonstrates how these outcomes will be delivered;
- identifies the resources required to deliver the investment priorities;
- enables the involvement of key local stakeholders in the development and implementation of proposals; and
- prioritises projects for inclusion in the Moray Affordable Housing Programme (Table 1 of the SHIP).

4.3 The SHIP includes details of affordable housing completions over the last 5 years, disaggregated by location, and house size and type.

4.4 The investment priorities set out in the SHIP have been developed to fit with the Local Housing Strategy 2019-24, as approved by Communities Committee on 2 April 2019 (Paragraph 8 of the Minute refers).

Prioritisation

4.5 A key consideration in the SHIP's approach to programme prioritisation is deliverability of development opportunities. Opportunities are generally included in the SHIP, with associated allocation of Scottish Government funding, at a point where there is a realistic prospect of delivery.

4.6 With most of Moray's housing land in private ownership, the programme continues to be largely dependent on Local Development Plan affordable housing policy requirements, currently set at 25%. This means that the phasing of much of the SHIP programme is driven by the timescales of landowners and private developers for the delivery of affordable housing obligations. Consequently, any change in the plans of private developers could impact adversely on the delivery of the SHIP programme with impacts greater for major sites with large obligations, e.g. Kinneddar Meadows, Lossiemouth; Findrassie and Elgin South; R7 and R8 Buckie.

- 4.7 The land banking of affordable housing sites provides a valuable resource for planning affordable housing provision and helps reduce the programming uncertainties associated with developer led opportunities. The SHIP includes provision for the advance purchase of phase 2 at Speyview, Aberlour. The land for developments proposed at Banff Road, Keith and Bilbohall, Elgin, are already in the ownership of either the Council or Grampian Housing Association.
- 4.8 In terms of geographical distribution, the SHIP seeks to allocate investment to areas where the demand for affordable housing is greatest. Accordingly, a significant proportion of funding has been directed to the Elgin Housing Market Area. The high priority projects for this area are Bilbohall; Findrassie; several character areas in Elgin South; Garmouth Road, Lhanbryde and Kinneddar Meadows, Lossiemouth. However, with high levels of demand across Moray, the SHIP seeks to apportion provision across all housing market areas in accordance with the number of households wherever possible i.e. in the Buckie, Forres, Keith and Speyside Housing Market Areas. The high priority projects for these areas are Banff Road, Keith; Speyview, Aberlour and Muirton, Buckie.

Specialist housing

- 4.9 The LHS aims to meet the needs of households in need of specialist housing, especially older people, wheelchair users and people with learning disabilities. The SHIP makes provision for approximately 30% of units to be delivered as amenity housing and wheelchair accessible housing in the vast majority of the developments listed. The SHIP makes provision for housing with specialist support for people with learning disabilities at Garmouth Road, Lhanbryde; Bilbohall, Elgin and Western Village, Elgin South.
- 4.10 The approach to the size and type of properties that will be funded is set out in Section 4 of the draft SHIP and is unchanged from the previous year.
- 4.11 In advance of the completion of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment, but as a result of the consultation carried out with local public and private sector partners, the SHIP includes developments with the potential to deliver housing for key workers, primarily NHS clinical staff at Bilbohall and High Street, Elgin. These opportunities will require further detailed discussion with the NHS to progress.

Intermediate Tenures

- 4.12 The LHS Affordable Housing Supply Target includes a target of approximately 12% of affordable units met as intermediate tenure. Intermediate tenure housing aims to provide an opportunity for low income households to purchase a home, or an equity share in a home, or which aims to provide affordable rented accommodation to households in lower priority need categories on Housing Lists. The proposals at Findrassie, Elgin; High Street, Elgin and Caroline Street, Forres include intermediate tenures (mid-market rent and/or shared equity) to promote tenure diversification.

Resources

- 4.13 On 15 July 2021, the Scottish Government provided the Council with a Resource Planning Assumption (RPA) of £46.2m for 2021/22 to 2025/26.

Year	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Moray	£10.357m	£8.927m	£8.902m	£8.933m	£9.981m	£46.200m

In accordance with the Scottish Government's recommendations, the SHIP reflects the profile of the Resource Planning Assumption, but also includes a generous shadow programme, of more than 25%, to allow projects to be brought forward in the event of delay, slippage or should additional funding become available.

- 4.14 In line with the current Council's Housing Revenue Account Business Plan assumptions, the programme set out in the SHIP will support the delivery of 50 council houses per annum. A Business Plan review was completed in February 2023. The Council's development programme has been tailored to fit the Business Plan and the RPA, using this SHIP as a framework for prioritisation of resources. At 50 units per year, the Council's programme will not be sufficient to maximise use of available grant funding (see Para 4.11 above). Delivery of the Moray programme is dependent on delivery by RSL partners. However the level of available grant per property, and volume of opportunities has resulted in RSL partners reporting that their own capacity for borrowing to invest has been maximised in this SHIP. This means that a few projects listed in SHIP Table 1 do not have an identified RSL at this stage. In turn, this means that some developments may be delayed and the Scottish Government's delivery targets may not be met.
- 4.15 The SHIP provides details of other sources of funding that can be used to support the Moray programme, including Council Tax levy on empty homes totalling around £600k per annum, and commuted payments in lieu of affordable housing as required by planning policy. Whilst it is likely that income from commuted payments will continue to remain comparatively low, it will be used to support project viability, particularly in rural areas where economies of scale are reduced, and development costs can be higher. The approach to seeking commuted payments is set out in Section 9 of the draft SHIP.

Consultation with stakeholders

- 4.16 The SHIP has been developed through a collaborative process involving primarily the Scottish Government, partner RSLs and local housing developers but also other Council services, particularly Health and Social Care Moray and Planning colleagues.

5. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

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

Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)) identifies an increase in the supply of affordable housing as one of the key components of a growing, diverse and sustainable economy in Moray. The SHIP reflects priorities for investment in the provision of new affordable housing to meet need identified in the Local Housing Strategy.

(b) **Policy and Legal**

The production of the Council's SHIP helps the Council to meet statutory duties in respect of addressing housing need in Moray.

(c) **Financial implications**

There are no direct financial implications to the Council arising from this report. The SHIP provides details of the resources available to fund the supply of affordable housing in Moray.

(d) **Risk Implications**

The major risks to the delivery of the Moray affordable housing programme have been assessed as part of the development of the SHIP. The SHIP provides high level details of proposed future investment in Council house building. The financial risks of funding the Council's programme has been assessed as part of the review of the Housing Business Plan completed in Feb 2023, however current macro-economic factors including high inflation, higher cost of borrowing, and workforce shortages, continue to adversely impacted on the cost of development. Given the constraints on RSL and Council prudential borrowing, and the structure of Scottish Government More Homes Division funding, this pressure on costs presents a significant risk to progress on delivery.

(e) **Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

(f) **Property**

There are no property implications arising from this report.

(g) **Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

The housing needs of equalities groups are identified in the LHS. The LHS is subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment. The Moray Affordable Housing Programme seeks to deliver the housing priorities contained in the LHS.

(h) **Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**

The aims of this SHIP are closely aligned to the Council's Climate Change Strategy, and Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES).

(i) Consultations

This report has been subject to consultation with the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), the Head of Housing and Property, the Head of Economic Growth and Development, Strategic Planning and Development Manager, the Head of Community Care, the Chief Officer (Health and Social Care Moray), the Chief Financial Officer, the Principal Climate Change Strategy Officer, the Senior Solicitor (Georgina Anderson), the Housing Needs Manager, the Housing Services Manager and the Democratic Services Manager.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 This report provides the Committee with details of the Council's consultative draft SHIP 2024/2025 - 2028/2029 as submitted to the Scottish Government, in accordance with SHIP Guidance. The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the draft SHIP.

Author of Report: Fiona Geddes, Housing Strategy and Development Manager
Background Papers:
Ref: SPMAN-1285234812-1418



**REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON 21
NOVEMBER 2023**

SUBJECT: RENT SETTING POLICY REVIEW

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report informs the Committee of the need to review the methodology used to set council house rents and service charges in Moray. It presents a revised Rent Setting Policy for consideration and seeks agreement to consult with stakeholders on the revised policy. It also seeks approval to consult with tenants on rent levels to be included within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2024/25.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III G (1a) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to capital and revenue budgeting, including the setting of rent levels for Council houses.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Housing and Community Safety Committee:-**
- i) notes the current practice and the requirement to review the Rent Setting Policy, as detailed in Section 3;**
 - ii) considers and approves the revised Rent Setting Policy, as set out in Section 6 and APPENDIX II, for consultation;**
 - iii) agrees that a consultation exercise on the revised Rent Setting Policy is undertaken, as set out in Section 8;**
 - iv) considers the Integrated Impact Assessment on the Rent Setting Policy at APPENDIX III and notes that it may be updated following the policy consultation;**
 - v) notes that an update report, detailing the outcome of the consultation and providing a revised policy for approval, will be presented to this Committee in February 2024;**

- vi) **agrees that Council tenants are consulted on rent levels as part of the HRA budget setting for 2024/25, as set out in Section 9; and**
- vii) **agrees that the consultation outcome and the tenants' preferred option for the annual increase are included within the HRA Annual Budget for 2024/25, due to be presented to Council in March 2024.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Rent Setting Policy was approved by the Community Services Committee on 23 November 2005 for implementation from 3 April 2006 (Paragraph 5 of the Minute refers). The policy was further reviewed on 16 February 2010, when the Communities Committee agreed to include a premium for new Council houses and to allow a weekly charge for the installation of over bath showers, where tenants wished these installed (paragraph 10 of the Minute refers). Minor policy amendments were approved by the Communities Committee on 22 October 2013 (Paragraph 6 of the Minute refers).
- 3.2 The current structure calculates rents using a points based approach which considers specific elements relevant to each property:
- Property type
 - Bedrooms
 - National Home Energy Rating (NHER) value
 - Garden
 - Kitchen standard
 - Location
 - Council new build
- In addition there is a weekly charge for over bath showers installed at the tenant's request, which is calculated over a 12 year period.
- 3.3 In 2021, Arneil Johnston were commissioned to complete a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan review which included an assessment of rent affordability. The review concluded that "Moray Council's average rent levels are lower than all Scottish local authorities and significantly lower than locally operating RSLs. The rent affordability assessment outcome demonstrates rents are affordable across all measures including minimum household income thresholds. With such a low rent base there is clear headroom to increase rents and not breach affordability thresholds." The Business Plan Review considered the borrowing required to accommodate known stock investment requirements and reported that this "is only fundable in the short term with the 35% debt affordability limit breached from Year 8 onwards. Furthermore, there is no capacity to withstand the risk of increasing prices or a fall in projected income, nor is there capacity to invest further in the new build programme beyond current commitments." The Business Plan Review recommended that "Moray Council progress with a rent harmonisation exercise to introduce a fairer and more transparent rent structure that generates an additional income stream of at least 7% in addition to any inflationary rent increase applicable."

- 3.4 Since the completion of the Business Plan review, officers have reassessed the additional income stream required in the current economic context which includes the cost of inflation, increased interest rates, increased energy costs, wage settlements. Officers have assessed the additional income stream required at £2.4m per year.
- 3.5 In May 2022, Arneil Johnston were commissioned to complete a further review of the rent structure to support the development of a consistent, fair and transparent model for setting rent and service charges which ensures rents are affordable for tenants, can support investment, and provide financial security for the HRA Business Plan.
- 3.6 This review identified that the Council's current rent structure had 386 different rent levels with wide variations in the rent values and evidenced a lack of consistency in rent levels across property sizes and property types. This inconsistency means that the current structure lacks transparency, does not align with tenant preferences in relation to types of property and facilities, and cannot be easily understood or explained. In addition, aspects of the policy can lead to tenants refusing upgrades and / or improvements, which has a negative impact on the property standard and the overall ability to achieve required energy efficiency standards.
- 3.7 The rent restructure exercise and resulting draft Rent Setting Policy are separate to any annual rent increase which the Council may apply, subject to consultation with its tenants. In recent years, the following annual rent increases have been agreed.

Year	Annual rent increase
2019/20	0%
2020/21	3%
2021/22	3%
2022/23	1.5%
2023/24	3.5%

- 3.8 The two most recent annual rent increase consultations informed tenants that a lower increase would result in less available spending which would negatively impact on the Council's ability to achieve identified improvements and upgrades. Furthermore, tenants were advised that such an approach would risk higher increases in future years in order to ensure that the Council could achieve these objectives and meet its statutory requirements, e.g. deliver energy standards (special meeting of Moray Council on 1 March 2023, Paragraph 7 of the Minute refers).
- 3.9 Similar to all Scottish social landlords, the Housing Service is experiencing ongoing financial pressures. The Service must address the cost increases associated with maintaining existing stock, investing in stock to ensure compliance with energy efficiency standards and to achieve decarbonisation of heating, and the delivery of the new build programme. Other overheads associated with delivering the service, such as staff costs, energy costs, interest rates, inflation, insurance and so on, continue to grow.

- 3.10 Moray Council housing rents have been the lowest, or amongst the lowest Scottish local authority rents for many years.

4. RENT SETTING CONTEXT

- 4.1 There is no prescribed method for setting or increasing social housing rent in Scotland. The practice of setting rents varies between landlords. Social landlords must comply with the outcomes and standards set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. This requires that:

“Social landlords manage all aspects of their businesses so that:

- tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.”

and

“Social landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and other customers so that:

- a balance is struck between the level of services provided, the cost of the services, and how far current and prospective tenants and service users can afford them
- tenants get clear information on how rent and other money is spent, including details of any individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants.”

- 4.2 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, requires landlords to consult their tenants on any proposed rent increase and to have regard to the views expressed. Apart from the requirement to consult, legislation does not specify how social landlords should set their rent or limit possible rent increases.

5. REVIEW OF THE RENT SETTING METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 A Rent Setting Review Group was established to:

- consider and analyse the revised rental model provided by Arneil Johnston;
- consider the outcomes of the tenant consultation (see 5.4);
- assess the impact of the revised rental model and agree what aspects should be taken into account when agreeing rent levels;
- consider what changes could be made to ensure that the rent setting process is fair and transparent and affordable; and
- develop a revised Rent Setting Policy.

- 5.2 The review has been guided by the following principles:

- The system should be fair, equitable, consistently applied and supported by tenants;
- The application of the policy should be straightforward and should be easily understood by tenants and staff;
- Rents charged should reflect the benefits and/or amenities of a property;
- The process should ensure that sufficient income continues to be generated to fund the HRA and that it continues to be financially viable; and
- Rent should continue to be affordable to tenants.

- 5.3 A key element of the review, facilitated by Arneil Johnston, was to engage with Moray Council tenants to establish what tenants perceive to be a fair and consistent set of rules for rent and service charge setting, accounting for those property characteristics that should be considered when calculating rents.
- 5.4 In Summer 2023, all Moray Council tenants were contacted and invited to provide feedback, via the completion of a questionnaire, on the principles of rent restructuring and to give their opinions on the potential property characteristics which could be considered for rent setting and on the methodology for applying service charges. Tenants were also invited to attend online and in-person workshops which were intended to gather enhanced details on tenant opinions on the principles and methodologies for setting and applying rent and service charges. In addition to direct contact, the promotion of tenant engagement was widely publicised across social media platforms. The response rates were slightly lower than anticipated. However, the outcomes of the survey did provide an important measure of tenant attitudes and opinions to proposals for rent and service charge restructuring. **APPENDIX I** provides details of the response rates and a summary of the consultation outcomes.
- 5.5 The outcome of the tenant consultation exercises presented recommendations regarding the principles which should be implemented in the restructuring of the rent setting framework. These recommendations have been at the forefront of the review and have informed the policy review and development process.
- 5.6 Tenant feedback towards the revised structure was generally supportive. Those who attended focus group expressed the merit regarding the need to increase rent in order to achieve and deliver better quality housing and improvements. During the consultation tenants expressed strong support for incorporating the service charge for showers within the rent charge. In reaction to this, the revised rental structure has removed the service charge for showers installed at the tenant's request and the cost will be pooled into the rental charge. The original version of the modelling of the rent structure has been revised to better reflect the tenant opinions returned during the consultation.
- 5.7 Extensive modelling and testing of various scenarios have been undertaken in order to assess their impact on the HRA Business Plan and tenants and to develop a robust rent setting structure. Officers have completed a benchmarking exercise, comparing the modelled rents with neighbouring local authorities and with locally operating Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), and conclude that the new rent levels would remain considerably below those comparators.
- 5.8 The following table demonstrates that the proposed rents will remain below comparable rents charged by Highland and Aberdeenshire Councils and locally operating Housing Associations, and below the Local Housing Allowance (LHA), and remain affordable.

Rents per week (1/48 th) 2023/24					
Beds	1	2	3	4	Average
Apartments	2	3	4	5	
Moray Council (Current Policy)	£62.15	£72.94	£84.46	£102.89	£73.51
Highland Council*	£82.74	£91.85	£102.13	£114.17	£93.01
Aberdeenshire Council*	£94.83	£98.46	£114.48	£130.83	£100.47
Grampian HA*	£103.48	£120.15	£133.00	£151.52	£119.53
Cairn HA*	£106.64	£107.19	£125.81	£141.20	£112.28
Langstane HA*	£100.95	£115.63	£123.74	£138.41	£107.45
LHA Highlands & Isles*	£105.96	£137.13	£158.32	£199.45	n/a
LHA Aberdeen & Shire*	£105.96	£148.34	£186.98	£249.32	n/a
Moray Council (Proposed Policy)	£66.49	£73.89	£88.61	£108.11	£76.20

rents converted to 1/48th of annual rent for comparison

* published rates 2022/23 + published annual increase

- 5.9 Officers have consulted the Scottish Housing Regulator on the proposed approach to the rent setting exercise throughout its development. The Regulator has requested to be kept informed on progress but has not raised any concerns on work completed to date, nor on future proposed actions.

6. REVISED RENT SETTING STRUCTURE

- 6.1 The methodology used to calculate the weekly rent adopts a combined approach, which uses a minimum baseline rent, varied using a points based scheme, based on the attributes relevant to the property.
- 6.2 The proposed baseline rent has been developed around the rental charge for a two bedroom, semi-detached property, which is the most common property size and type in Moray Council housing stock. The points based scheme is calculated according to values awarded to the characteristics and amenities of each property, which are applied uniformly. The attributes which are taken into account are:
- Property size (number of bedrooms)
 - Property type (e.g. house or flat, mid or end terraced, detached or semi-detached, etc.)
 - Energy rating (based on the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating)
 - Parking (private or shared parking)
 - Additional toilet
 - Garden (private or shared)
 - Sheltered housing (heating charge applicable to Larch Court, Elgin only)
- The rent is charged over 48 weeks per year.
Further detail is provided in the revised Rent Setting Policy (**APPENDIX II**).
- 6.3 It is anticipated that by applying a baseline rent and thereafter adding or subtracting the values assigned to the attribute, sufficient revenue will be generated (subject to any additionally agreed annual rent increase) to secure the financial viability of the HRA Business Plan, whilst also ensuring that rents remain affordable.

- 6.4 The proposed Rent Setting Policy scoring would result in rent level changes to a variety of property types. The policy aims to deliver rent level variations which reflect the priority tenants assign to the various attributes listed at Para 6.2, and which match house price variations according to attributes in the wider housing market. For example, rent levels for flats would reduce, mid terraced properties would be almost unchanged and semi-detached properties would increase. Newer properties which provide the additional amenity of a private driveway and second toilet will attract a higher rental than an older property without these features.
- 6.5 In recognition that the energy efficiency of some properties remains below recommended standards, where the property is fuel inefficient the rent setting structure incorporates a discount. The tenant will benefit from the discount until the improvement works are available and the EPC rating improved and importantly will be removed if the tenant does not consent to improvement work being carried out. The historic policy does not afford any discount. It is anticipated that as the five year improvement plan is achieved and rents adjusted to reflect the improvements, ultimately rental income will increase.

7. HARMONISATION OF RENT SETTING PROCESS

- 7.1 The impact on individual tenants has been a key consideration throughout the review and policy development process. Therefore, in order to minimise any adverse impact, it is recommended that the policy should be subject to a period of convergence.
- 7.2 During the convergence period, tenants will be provided with transitional relief which will alleviate any financial impact and ensure that rent continues to be affordable, without posing a risk to the income required to ensure that the HRA continues to be financially viable. The modelling undertaken to assess the impact of the rent structure assumes that the maximum additional rent or reduction in rent experienced by tenant should be limited to £7.50 per week, until full convergence. This was the preferred option stated by tenants during the review consultation. It is anticipated that this approach would result in full convergence within just over five years.
- 7.3 At the time of writing this report, 2,941 council tenants (46.15% of all tenancies) were in full or partial receipt of either the Housing Element of Universal Credit or Housing Benefit. It is anticipated that, should these tenants experience an increase in rent, they would not pay anything extra, since benefits are based on a person's income and ability to pay, rather than the amount of rent. Therefore any increase in the rent would normally be matched by an increase in the benefit received, unless there are changes in the household's circumstance or other benefit restrictions apply.
- 7.4 Transitional relief applied during the convergence period would be separate to any annual rental increase which may be agreed by the Council, following consultation with tenants.
- 7.5 Any new tenancies created after 1 April 2024 would assume the full amount of rent as calculated under the new policy, without any transitional relief.

Summary

- 7.6 If the Rent Setting Policy is approved, Officers intend to implement the new Policy from 1 April 2024.
- 7.7 The revised rent modelling indicates that it could deliver an estimated additional £1.8m to the HRA Business Plan, at the end of the convergence period (excluding annual rent increases).
- 7.8 It is anticipated that the revised Rent Setting Policy will have the following impacts:
- The rent structure will be streamlined and simplified. The number of different rent levels will decrease from 386 to 28, whilst the ratio of properties to each rent level will increase from 28 to 227.6.
 - No rent will increase/decrease by more than £7.50 per week during the convergence period.
 - The overall average rent will increase from £73.25 to £76.20. However, this will remain:
 - below the affordability thresholds, referred to at para 3.3.
 - below the average weekly rent for both neighbouring local authority landlords and locally operating RSLs. It is anticipated, that the average weekly rent will continue to remain the lowest amongst social landlords in Scotland.
 - significantly below private rents in Moray and below the Local Housing Allowance rate.

8. CONSULTATION ON THE RENT SETTING POLICY

- 8.1 It is proposed that a consultation exercise on the revised Rent Setting Policy is undertaken, providing tenants, Housing List applicants and other relevant stakeholders with the opportunity to provide feedback.
- 8.2 The consultation process will involve:
- publication of the revised Rent Setting Policy, along with a comprehensive explanatory leaflet, on the Council website;
 - developing an online survey available on the Council's website and publicising it across the Council's social media platforms;
 - contacting relevant stakeholders and requesting feedback, including:
 - Moray Council tenants;
 - Applicants on the Housing List;
 - Register of Interested Tenants; and
 - Moray Tenant's Forum.
- 8.3 The consultation will commence on 22 November 2023 and close on Friday 5 January 2024. The consultation feedback will inform the policy development process.
- 8.4 It is proposed that a briefing session for Elected Members will be arranged during the consultation period, which will be delivered by Arneil Johnston.

9. ANNUAL RENT INCREASE CONSULTATION 2024/25

- 9.1 Until recently, the proposed rent increases under the HRA Business Plan would normally be above the rate of inflation, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) + 1%. This would be the equivalent of 7.7% increase to Council house rents (an average weekly increase of £5.20). In order to meet the HRA Business Plan requirements and ensure continued financial viability, it is proposed that the Council consult tenants on options which are equivalent to and above this amount. The consultation will present tenants with the following options for 2024/25:
- 7.7% increase i.e. CPI +1%
 - 11% increase i.e. Business Plan optimum
- 9.2 The information provided to tenants as part of the consultation will provide details on what rents have funded during the previous year, explain how rents are used to fund investment for key improvements to homes and will include a comparison with other local authority rents.
- 9.3 The consultation process will involve:
- publication of a comprehensive explanatory leaflet on the Council website;
 - developing an online survey available on the Council's website and publicising it across the Council's social media platforms; and
 - contacting Moray Council tenants, the Register of Interested Tenants; and Moray Tenant's Forum to seek their feedback.
- 9.4 The consultation will commence on 22 November 2023 and close on Friday 5 January 2024.

10. FUTURE ACTIONS

Rent Setting Policy

- 10.1 Following analysis and consideration of comments received during the policy consultation, any necessary amendments to the policy will be made. A further progress report with the outcome of the consultation process, along with a final Rent Setting Policy, will be presented to this Committee on 13 February 2024 for approval.
- 10.2 Subject to the consultation feedback and Committee's approval in February 2024, an implementation plan will be developed to support a "go live" date of 1 April 2024. This will include, contacting tenants to inform them of the changes and arrangements for implementing the policy, carrying out testing and making necessary changes to NEC housing system to facilitate the policy implementation, staff training and awareness of the revised policy and a review of all relevant applicant information resources.

Annual rent increase 2024/25

- 10.3 The Council will have regard to the views of tenants who respond to the annual rent increase survey. Feedback will be used to inform the annual increase recommended within the HRA Annual Budget for 2024/25, due to be presented to Council in March 2024.

11. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)) identifies an increase in the supply of affordable housing as one of the key components of a growing, diverse and sustainable economy in Moray. Assuring the long term financial stability of the Housing Revenue Account will contribute to delivery of this aim.

(b) **Policy and Legal**

The Rent Setting Policy will be subject to detailed consultation and further reporting to this committee in February 2024. In addition, Officers are providing the Scottish Housing Regulator with updates. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

(c) **Financial implications**

The HRA deals with expenditure and income for the Council's housing stock. The HRA is expected to be self-financing, that is, the budgeted income is sufficient to cover the budget expenditure. The HRA is not permitted to show a deficit at the end of the financial year.

The HRA Business Plan is agreed over a 30 year period and is reviewed on a three yearly basis in order to provide assurance that the Council can continue to fund its housing activities within the constraints for the accounting regime for housing.

The HRA Business Plan Review has identified a risk that HRA borrowing would exceed the agreed parameter of 35% within eight years, and recommends the implementation of a rent review. Officers have estimated that additional rental income of £2.4m is required in 2024/25.

The increased income is modelled as:

Scenario		estimated total rental income 2024/25*
1	Existing rent setting policy	£22.404m
2	Existing rent setting policy + 7.7% rent increase	£24.130m
3	Existing rent setting policy + 11% rent increase	£24.869m
4	Proposed rent setting policy	£23.262m
5	Proposed rent setting policy + 7.7% rent increase	£25.053m
6	Proposed rent setting policy + 11% rent increase	£25.821m

*excluding harmonisation

Scenario 5 proposes the best fit with Business Plan review recommendations re rent setting, long term financial viability, and additional rental income required.

(d) Risk Implications

The risk to the financial viability of the HRA has been assessed through the HRA Business Plan Review, completed in March 2023. These proposals aim to mitigate these risks and ensure sufficient funds are available to meet all Moray Council's statutory obligations in its role as a social landlord.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Integrated Impact Assessment (**APPENDIX III**) has been completed as part of the review of the Rent Setting Policy and no negative impacts identified. This will be reviewed following the formal consultation process with stakeholders and updated as required.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

These proposals aim to ensure sufficient funds are available to meet all Moray Council's statutory obligations in its role as a social landlord. This includes delivery of ESSH/ESSH2, net zero carbon emissions and the aims of Housing to 2040.

(i) Consultations

Consultation on this report has taken place with the Head of Housing and Property, Housing Services Manager, Housing Strategy and Development Manager, Officers within the Housing Service, the Chief Financial Officer, Alistair Milne (Accountant), Georgina Anderson (Legal Services Senior Solicitor), the Equal Opportunities Officer and Lissa Rowan (Committee Services Officer) and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 This report provides Committee with an update on the requirement to review the rent setting structure. It presents a revised Rent Setting Policy for consideration and seeks agreement to undertake a formal consultation with stakeholders. It seeks approval to consult Council tenants on proposed rent levels as part of the HRA budget setting for 2024/25.

Author of Report: Gillian Henly, Senior Housing Officer (Policy)
Fiona Geddes, Housing Strategy and Development Manager

Background Papers:

Ref: SPMAN-1285234812-1428

Summary of Tenant Consultation on the Rent and Service Charge Review (July /August 2023)

An online and postal survey was made available to Moray Council tenants from July/August 2023 across a 4-week response window via a link provided online on the Council's social media account. The survey was also advertised through the Moray Council Tenants' Voice Newsletter and tenants could request a paper survey if preferred.

497 (8%) Moray Council tenants returned survey responses (target response rates would be 10-20%). At the conclusion of the online and postal questionnaire, tenants were invited to indicate whether they would be willing to attend an engagement workshop to enable Moray Council to further examine tenant attitude and opinion in relation to rent and service charge restructuring. 16 tenants participated.

A summary of the conclusions from tenants participating in both the survey and focus groups:

- **Property Size/Type:** There is overwhelming support from both the questionnaires and tenant focus groups for the use of property size and property type in a revised rent structure. These were the two highest ranked property characteristics by tenants.
- **Location:** There was mixed opinion when asked if location should be used in a revised rent structure with 62% of tenants completing the questionnaire agreeing that location should be used. The focus groups were less supportive with 6 out of 14 (43%) participants agreeing that location should be used as factor sighting subjectivity as a reason that it should not be used.
- **Gardens:** There was also mixed opinion when asked if gardens should be used as a factor in a revised rent structure. 59% of tenants surveyed agreed that rents should vary as a result of having access to a garden in the yes/no questions, while the Focus Groups ranked this as the bottom of the rent criteria spectrum. The age and stage profile of the focus groups may well be a factor in the low rating here.
- **Energy Heating Costs:** Were ranked third highest by the Focus Groups but comments gathered during the sessions suggested that there only be a deduction for this factor in exceptional circumstances. Analysis of the any other criteria that should be used to determine rents asked as part of the tenants' questionnaire, identified the highest reason was property condition in relation to reducing energy costs and meeting energy standards.
- **Amenity:** There was a varied response between the questionnaire responses and the Focus Groups feedback when asked if rents should vary due to amenity. 51% of the survey responses agreed, while the Focus Groups' average position of the rent spectrum was second lowest and 40% agreed that amenity should be used as a factor.
- **Service Charges:** The outcome of both the tenants' survey and Focus Groups was in favour of including, where possible, service charges in the rent. More

detailed feedback from the Focus Groups on the individual service charges identified that there was unanimous support for the shower value to be included in the rent charge.

- **Implementation Approach:** If Moray Council implemented a new structure the majority of tenants from both the questionnaire responses and Focus Groups agreed that it should be implemented gradually over time, with an even higher proportion agreeing that Moray Council should consider setting a cap to restrict the value of both increases and decreases following the implementation of the new rent structure.

The following core recommendations from the outcome of the Tenant Consultation on the Review of Rents and Service Charges have been considered by the Review Group in the formulation and testing of the revised rent setting structure.

Recommendation 1: Integrate property size and property type into testing of options to rent restructure where Moray Council has clear and consistent information available to do so.

Recommendation 2: Test further options to deduct energy efficiency from rents where Moray Council has clear and consistent information of properties in exceptional circumstances.

Recommendation 3: Test options of integrating service charges with the rent value, in particular the value associated with shower value and communal area expenses.

Recommendation 4: The outcome of more detailed Focus Group work regarding the use of locations and gardens as factors for setting rent was that these were more subjective factors therefore it is recommended that Moray Council should consider carefully if this should in fact be a rent attribute.

Recommendation 5: Test options to include the amenity value of sheltered housing and supported housing into the wider rents.

Recommendation 6: Prior to the implementation of a new rent structure Moray Council should test two scenarios, gradual implementation and setting a cap.

Recommendation 7: Given the low turnout at the Focus Groups, Moray Council should undertake further tenant engagement to test tenants view on the balance of future rent and investment levels and deal with this matter as part of the annual rent consultation and not the rent harmonisation process.

The core recommendations for Moray Council to note from the outcome of the Tenant Consultation on the Review of Rents and Service Charges are detailed below.

Recommendation 1: Integrate property size and property type into testing of options to rent restructure where Moray Council has clear and consistent information available to do so.

Recommendation 2: Test further options to deduct energy efficiency from rents where Moray Council has clear and consistent information of properties in exceptional circumstances.

Recommendation 3: Test options of integrating service charges with the rent value, in particular the value associated with shower value and communal area expenses.

Recommendation 4: The outcome of more detailed Focus Group work regarding the use of locations and gardens as factors for setting rent was that these were more subjective factors therefore it is recommended that Moray Council should consider carefully if this should in fact be a rent attribute.

Recommendation 5: Test options to include the amenity value of sheltered housing and supported housing into the wider rents.

Recommendation 6: Prior to the implementation of a new rent structure Moray Council should test two scenarios, gradual implementation and setting a cap.

Recommendation 7: Given the low turnout at the Focus Groups, Moray Council should undertake further tenant engagement to test tenants view on the balance of future rent and investment levels and deal with this matter as part of the annual rent consultation and not the rent harmonisation process.

APPENDIX II



MORAY COUNCIL

RENT SETTING POLICY

Author	Housing and Property Services
Date agreed	TBC by Housing and Community Safety Committee
Date of next review	TBC (or earlier if required by changes to legislation or guidance)

Index

1. **Scope of the Rent Setting Policy**
2. **Strategic context**
3. **Aim, principles and objectives of the Rent Setting Policy**
4. **Legislative and regulatory context**
5. **Equality and diversity**
6. **Confidentiality and data protection**
7. **Rental income**
8. **Methodology for calculating rent**
9. **Changes to attributes**
10. **Review of rent levels**
11. **Consulting with tenants**
12. **Review of decisions and complaint arrangements**
13. **Performance monitoring**
14. **Policy review**

1. Scope of the Rent Setting Policy

- 1.1 The Rent Setting Policy details the framework and methodology used to calculate rent charged to Scottish secure tenants living in council housing in Moray.
- 1.2 This policy complies with and supplements the Moray Council's Financial Regulations.

2. Strategic context

- 2.1 The Rent Setting Policy will assist the Council to meet to meet the objectives of the Local Housing Strategy and the Tenant Participation Strategy.

3. Aim, principles and objectives of the Rent Setting Policy

- 3.1 The aim of the policy is to provide a framework for setting rents which is equitable, transparent and consistent, considers affordability and ensures that the service remains financially viable and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan is sustainable.
- 3.2 The specific objectives of the policy are:
 - To provide a method of calculating rent which is equitable and consistent for all properties of similar characteristics.
 - To ensure that rent charged reflects the attributes of the property.
 - To ensure that the method of calculation is transparent, easily understood and is supported by tenants.
 - Deliver a fair and equitable rent scheme that meets future and long terms needs, based on consistency, transparency, durability, financial viability and affordability.
 - To ensure that the Council sets rents at a level which is sufficient to provide efficient and quality services that offer value for money.
- 3.3 The principles underpinning the Rent Setting Policy are:
 - The Council will ensure that the policy complies with and reflects the legal framework and good practice.

- All tenants are consulted on the development and implementation of the policy.
- Communication with tenants should be in plain language and easily understood.
- The Council will implement detailed procedures and agreed practices uniformly across the service.
- Staff training is provided to ensure that staff are equipped to carry out the roles expected of them.

4. Legislative and regulatory context

- 4.1 Moray Council will ensure that the Rent Setting Policy complies with current legislation and guidance, while promoting good practice.
- 4.2 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (Section 23) sets out an obligation to provide tenants with a written agreement, stating the terms of the tenancy, including the obligation to pay rent lawfully due. The landlord must, upon request, provide information to tenants on its policy and procedure in relation to setting of rents and charges.
- 4.3 In accordance with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, the Council is required to consult with tenants and take account of their views when making decisions about proposed rent increases. Section 25 of Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 allows landlords to increase rents (or any other charge payable) under a Scottish secure tenancy, provided that they give tenants at least four weeks' notice of the increased rent due to be paid. Prior to issuing this notice, social landlords must consult with tenants affected by the proposal and take their views and opinions into account.

Scottish Social Housing Charter

- 4.4 The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets out the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve for their tenants and other customers when performing their housing activities. The relevant standards and outcomes are:

Charter Indicator 13: Value for Money

Social Landlords manage all aspects of their business so that:

- tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.

Charter Indicators 14 and 15: Rent and Service Charges

Social Landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and other customers so that:

- a balance is struck between the level of services provided, the cost of the services and how far current and prospective tenants and other customers can afford them.
- tenants get clear information on how rent and other money is spent, including details of any individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants.

4.5 These outcomes reflect the Council's legal duty to consult tenants about rent setting, the importance of landlords taking account of what their current and prospective tenants and other customers are likely to be able to afford, and the importance that many tenants place on being able to find out how their money is spent. What is crucial is that discussions take place and the decisions made reflect the views of tenants and other customers.

5. Equality and diversity

5.1 The Council will seek to ensure that it complies with its duties under the Equalities Act 2010. The Council will seek to ensure that this policy is applied in a manner that is fair to all sections of the community regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

5.2 Full consideration will be given to the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This requires public authorities to: eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

6. Confidentiality and data protection

- 6.1 Moray Council recognises the importance of data protection legislation, in protecting the rights of individuals in relation to personal information that it may handle, use and disclose about them, whether on computer or in paper format. The Council will ensure that its practices in the handling, use and disclosure of personal information as part of the processes outlined in this policy comply fully with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- 6.2 Relevant Privacy Notices will advise tenants how personal information may be collected, used, stored, shared and securely disposed of, the legal basis for doing so and what their Data Subject Rights are.

7. Rental income

- 7.1 The Rent Setting Policy takes into account affordability and the costs involved in managing and maintaining stock, including the future work required in order to ensure that housing stock meets with minimum standards.
- 7.2 The costs that have to be covered by rental income and which are shared by all tenants include:
- Housing management costs – these are associated with the provision of housing management services.
 - Voids and bad debts – these are the amounts of income lost when a property is empty or when rent arrears cannot be recovered.
 - Property maintenance costs – these are associated with the provision of the day to day repairs service and the cyclical maintenance programme.
 - Planned maintenance – these are costs associated with upgrading and improving or replacing building components.
 - Interest charges – these are associated with borrowing for previous investment, funding new building or improving the housing stock.
 - Indirect and overhead costs – these are costs related to running the service and include staff salaries, technology and so on.

8. Methodology for calculating rent

8.1 The Council will ensure that the rent setting process will be transparent and accountable and that a fair and consistent rent structure is in place. Rents will be calculated based on the most recent housing stock and financial information.

8.2 The methodology used to calculate the weekly rent is a combined approach, using a minimum baseline rent per week plus a points based scheme.

Baseline rent	+ / - attribute adjustments relevant to each property	= Weekly rent
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8.3 The baseline rent has been developed using a two bedroom, semi-detached property (the most common property size and type). The points based scheme is calculated according to the property characteristics and amenities of each property, which are applied uniformly. The attribute values which are added or deducted, relevant to each individual property are:

- Property size (number of bedrooms)
- Property type (e.g. house or flat, detached or semi-detached, bungalow etc.)
- Energy efficiency (based on the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating)
- Parking
- Additional toilet
- Garden (private or shared)
- Sheltered housing

The rent is charged over 48 weeks.

8.4 A full list of attributes and point values used in the Rent Setting Policy is detailed in [APPENDIX I](#).

8.5 Tenants will, upon request, be able to receive details of how the rents for their houses have been calculated.

8.6 Service charges which are over and above the rent, for example for warden services in sheltered housing, will be charge separately and tenants will be advised of these.

9. Changes to attributes

9.1 The Council will review the rent of a property following a change / or correction to any of the attributes used in the calculation of the rent. For example, following an improvement to a property, such as a heating upgrade, which improves the Energy Performance Certificate rating.

9.2 The Council will give tenants 28 days' written notice of any increase in rent.

9.3 When a property becomes void, the rent will be recalculated to reflect any change in attributes in accordance with Section 8 above and the incoming tenant will be advised of the rental amount in their offer letter.

10. Review of rent levels

10.1 When reviewing rents, consideration will be given to the investment programme, service delivery arrangements and any new duties or initiatives. The aim will be to set rents which represent best value and affordability to the majority of tenants.

10.2 There are no legal provisions on how often landlords should change rent or by how much it would be acceptable to increase rent charges. In accordance with Scottish secure / short Scottish secure tenancy agreements, the Council will not change the rent charged more than once per year (unless the attributes of the property change as detailed in Section 9). The Council will always consult with tenants prior to increasing rents or service charges.

11. Consulting with tenants

11.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (Sections 25 & 54) requires landlords to give each tenant no less than four weeks' notice, in writing, before increasing rents or service charges. Where a landlord proposes to increase rents generally, it must first consult those tenants who would be affected by the

proposal and then have regard to the views expressed by those consulted. This is reaffirmed in the Scottish secure tenancy agreement and the Tenant Participation Strategy which confirm that the Council will consult with tenants about proposals for changes in rent and service charges.

- 11.2 The Housing Service will carry out a thorough consultation with tenants in relation to any proposed general increase in rent. This process will include articles being placed in tenant newsletters, on the Council website and social media platforms and contacting tenants individually, outlining options for consideration and inviting feedback. Tenants will be provided with detailed information including budget information and planned investment and expenditure, to assist them to reach an informed decision. The results of this exercise will be presented to the relevant Council Committee for full consideration prior to making a final decision.

12. Review of decisions and complaint arrangements

- 12.1 There is no external appeal process for Scottish secure tenants against rents set by their landlord. The Council has therefore developed a review process for tenants who are not satisfied with the way their rent has been calculated. In the first instance a tenant can ask for an explanation from their Area Housing Officer. If the tenant is not satisfied with the explanation they should write to the Housing Services Manager requesting a review of the rent level.
- 12.2 The Council operates a Complaints Procedure that is available to any tenant who is not satisfied with the way their case has been dealt with. Details of the Complaints procedure can be obtained from any Council office or the website.

13. Performance monitoring

- 13.1 The Council will monitor rent levels and rental income generated under this policy.
- 13.2 Reports will be submitted to the Council and Housing and Community Safety Committee as part of the budget setting and monitoring process.

13.3 The Council will monitor the satisfaction of tenants of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money which is reported in the Annual Performance Report.

14. Policy review

14.1 This policy will be reviewed in 2029 or sooner if required due to legislative changes.

Working Draft

Rent mechanism: Calculation process

Baseline rent =	2 bed semi- detached rent
Add / subtract attributes as follows:	
Property size	
Bedsit	- 2
1 bedroom property	- 1
2 bedroom property	0
3 bedroom property	+ 2
4 bedroom property	+ 3
5 bedroom property	+ 4
6 bedroom property	+ 8
7 bedroom property	+ 13
Property type	
4 in a block	- 2
End terrace house	- 2
Mid terrace house	- 3
Flat	- 4
Maisonette	- 4
Semi-detached house	0
Detached house	+ 3
EPC rating	
A	+ 1
B	0
C	0
D	- 2
E	- 4
F	- 5
G	- 6
Parking	
Off street parking (includes private driveway, car port and garage)	+ 2
Garden	
Private garden	+ 2
Shared garden	+ 1
No garden	0
Additional toilet	+ 1
Sheltered housing (service charge for communal area and heating applicable only to Larch Court)	+ 4

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT COVERING

- EQUALITIES & SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTIES
- HUMAN RIGHTS AND RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

STAGE 1 - DO I NEED AN INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT?

Name of policy or proposal: Rent Setting Policy Review	
Is this a	Mark X below
New activity, programme or policy?	
Change to an existing activity, programme or policy?	X
Budget proposal?	

Duties: tick the boxes you think apply	No	Maybe	Yes
Equalities: Will your proposal have an impact on groups with protected characteristics? <i>Consider the impact of your proposal on people and how they access your services and information without barriers.</i>	✓		
Socio-economic <i>Not every person/family has access to regular income or savings. Will your proposal have an adverse impact on them</i>		✓	
Does your proposal impact on the human rights of people?	✓		
Does your proposal impact on the rights of children and young people	✓		

Reasoning

The review of the Rent Setting Policy aims to ensure that the revised rent structure offers increased consistency and is more transparent and easier to understand for all tenants and that the income generated ensures that the Housing Revenue Account remains financially viable. The revised structure will mean that some tenants will experience an increase in rent, some will have a decrease and others will have no change. To mitigate

any impact which tenants may experience and to ensure that the rent continues to be affordable, the Service will implement transitional arrangements whereby the maximum rent increase or decrease will be restricted to £7.50 per week, until such a time as the rent is equivalent the full amount.

As part of the review process, initial consultations have been undertaken with tenants. This feedback has been used to inform the process and develop the methodology used in setting council house rent. There will be further consultation on the draft policy with stakeholders, if Committee provide approval. The Service has benchmarked the proposed rents with local housing providers and benefit rates to ensure that they remain affordable. Moray Council currently has the lowest social housing rents in Scotland.

If you have answered “maybe” or “yes” to any of the Stage 1 questions above then proceed to complete the Stage 2 Integrated Impact Assessment questions below.

If you have answered “no” to the Stage 1 questions above then provide the details below and submit to [email]

Lead Officer for developing the contract	
Other people involved in the screening (this may be council staff, partners or others i.e. contractor or community)	
Date	

STAGE 2: INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Brief description of the affected service

<p>1. Describe what the service does:</p> <p>The Rent Setting Policy sets out the methodology used for setting Moray Council house rents.</p>
<p>2. Who are your main stakeholders?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moray Council tenants • Moray Council Housing Staff in delivering the policy
<p>3. What changes as a result of the proposals? Is the service reduced or removed?</p>

The change will provide a consistent, fair and transparent model of setting rent and service charges which ensures that rents continue to be affordable to tenants whilst generating income to support investment and provide financial security to the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

4. How will this affect your customers?

As a result of the policy change, some tenants may experience an increase in rent, some will experience a decrease in rent and for some there will be no change. The revised policy and methodology applied will mean that there is greater consistency amongst the rent levels that tenants are charged. The process will be easier for both tenants and staff to understand and explain.

5. Impact on staff providing the service

An implementation plan will be developed. No additional staffing resource will be required to implement the policy change. Where appropriate, training and guidance will be provided. Overall, the process will provide transparency and accountability and will make it easier for staff to understand and to explain to tenants.

6. Please indicate if these apply to any of the protected characteristics

Protected groups	Potential impacts and considerations
Race	Gypsy / Travellers and non-UK nationals. Information resources explain the policy and the structure using plain language and will be available in accessible formats. Interpretation for British Sign Language users or non-English speakers can be provided on request.
Disability	Information resources explain the policy and the structure using plain language and will be available in accessible formats. Interpretation for British Sign Language users or non-English speakers can be provided on request.
Carers (for elderly, disabled or minors)	
Sex	
Pregnancy and maternity (including breastfeeding)	
Sexual orientation	
Age (include children, young people, midlife and older people)	
Religion, and or belief	
Gender reassignment	
Inequalities arising from socio-economic differences	Transitional arrangements will be implemented to mitigate any impact. This means that the maximum rent increase or decrease would be restricted to

	£5 per week until such time as the rent convergence is implemented in full.
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Human rights

List of convention rights	Describe, where applicable, if and how specific rights are engaged
Article 5: Right to liberty and security	No specific impacts identified.
Article 6: Right to a fair trial	No specific impacts identified.
Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life, correspondence and the home	No specific impacts identified.
<i>Article 10: Freedom of expression</i>	No specific impacts identified.
<i>Article 11: Freedom of assembly and association</i>	No specific impacts identified.
<i>Article 12: Right to marry</i>	No specific impacts identified.
<i>Article 14: Prohibition of discrimination (in relation to the convention rights)</i>	No specific impacts identified.
<i>Article 1 of Protocol 1: Protection of property</i>	No specific impacts identified.
<i>Article 2 of Protocol 1: Right to education</i>	No specific impacts identified.
<i>Article 3 of Protocol 1: Right to free elections by secret ballot</i>	No specific impacts identified.

Children's Rights and Wellbeing

Relevant articles – UNCRC	
Article 2 – Non discrimination	Not applicable
Article 12 – Respect of the views of the child	Not applicable
Article 3.1 – Best interest of the child	Not applicable
Article 6.2 – Right to survival and development	Not applicable

7. Evidence. What information have you used to make your assessment?

Performance data	
Internal consultation	This will be undertaken with relevant staff as part of the Committee process.
Consultation with affected groups	Initial consultation, facilitated by independent consultants, has taken place with tenants as part of the policy review and development process. This included online survey and face to face workshops to gauge tenant opinions. If Committee approval is given, a formal consultation will take place with stakeholders. Feedback received will be considered prior to a revised policy being presented to the Housing and Community Safety Committee for approval.
Local statistics	Comparison with local landlord rent levels.
National statistics	Comparison with other landlord rent levels.
Other	Other landlord practice.

8. Evidence gaps

Do you need additional information in order to complete the information in the previous questions?

No

9. Mitigating action

Can the impact of the proposed policy/activity be mitigated? Please explain

No negative impact have been identified. The policy implementation plan has already identified measures which will address any potential mitigating impacts.

10. Justification

If nothing can be done to reduce the negative impact(s) but the proposed policy/activity must go ahead, what justification is there to continue with the change?

No negative impact have been identified.

SECTION 3 CONCLUDING THE IIA

Concluding the IIA

1. No potential negative impacts on any of the protected groups were found.	✓
2. Some potential negative impacts have been identified. The impacts relate to:	
Reducing discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010	
Promoting equality of opportunity	
Fostering good relations	
3. The proposals interfere with human rights and/or the rights of the child	
4. Negative impacts can be mitigated the proposals as outlined in question 8	
5. The negative impacts cannot be fully mitigated but are justified as outlined in question 9.	
6. Further consultation with affected groups is needed.	
7. It is advised not to go ahead with the proposals.	

Decision

Set out the rationale for deciding whether or not to proceed with the proposed actions:
The proposals set out a process for revising the rent setting structure to ensure that it is fairer, consistent and provides increased transparency and will be easier for tenants to comprehend. Any mitigating factors have been taken into account as part of the policy review and development process and arrangements are in place to counteract those identified

Date of Decision: 18.10.23

Sign off and authorisation:

Service	Economy, Environment & Finance
Department	Housing and Property
Policy/activity subject to IIA	Rent Setting Policy
We have completed the integrated impact assessment for this policy/activity.	Name: Gillian Henly Position: Senior Housing Officer (Policy) Date: 18/10/23
Authorisation by head of service	Name: Edward Thomas Position: Head of Housing and Property Date:
Permission to publish on website -	
Please return this form to the Equal Opportunities Officer, Chief Executive's Office.	



**REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON
21 NOVEMBER 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 progress of the Housing Investment Programme 2023/24 to 30 September 2023.

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 notes the Housing Investment Programme audited outturn to 30 September 2023, as detailed in Section 3 and Appendices I to VI.

3. BACKGROUND

Investment Programme

3.1 **APPENDIX I** shows income and expenditure up to 30 September 2023. The figures show that an overall spend to 30 September of £3,738k was achieved, of which represents a spend of 18% against the £21,338k annual budget. The programme is not as far advanced as we would like it to be and is attributable to internal staff resourcing delays progressing a number of work activities along with procurement issues in a number of outsourced key investment areas such as window replacements and electrical testing.

3.2 The level of expenditure within the individual budget headings that make up the programme are shown in paragraphs 3.3 to 3.15 below. The expenditure figure represents all payments which have progressed through the finance system to 30 September 2023.

3.3 **APPENDIX II** shows expenditure on Response and Void Repairs. Spend was £1,429k to 30 September 2023. This area of work is the regular repairs undertaken by the Council's DLO which are generally triggered by a tenant contacting the Council's contact centre and requesting a repair to their property including gas heating repairs.

- 3.4 Works delivered to date include 5,672 housing repairs and 157 void properties relet. It should be noted that recent changes to housing patch areas, which resulted in system delays in authorising repair payments, which led to large accruals for repairs not yet shown on the ledger, with actual expenditure at £2,523k (55% of budget) for the reporting period.
- 3.5 **APPENDIX III** shows expenditure on Estate Works. Spend of £226k was achieved to 30 September 2023. This area of work is general works to the landscaping and external areas within Council owned housing areas. Included within this area is asbestos works and surveys with significant spend required over the next few years to ensure we have accurate asbestos surveys of our properties.
- 3.6 The Housing Asset Management Team have now completed a programme of Estate Audits. Works identified during Estate Audit and subsequent walkabouts will identify the next financial year works to ensure budget spend. However, any works that can be fast tracked will be for spend within this financial year. It is noted that there has been limited spend on asbestos and garage upgrades. In relation to asbestos, a programme of asbestos removals is underway. However, for works to commence, tenants need to be temporarily decanted which is impacting on delivery of the programme. In relation to garage blocks, some blocks which are in disrepair have been identified for potential demolition with the sites then being developed potentially for future use as additional parking spaces. However, consultation on proposals with tenants is required before any works take place thus delaying this process.
- 3.7 **APPENDIX IV** shows expenditure on Cyclic Maintenance. Spend of £256k was achieved to 30 September 2023. The external painter work programme is not as advanced as we would like due to internal staff shortages within the DLO workforce and a lack of available painting contractors.
- 3.8 **APPENDIX V** shows expenditure on Planned Maintenance and Other Investments. Spend of £1,827k was achieved to 30 September 2023 and represents 12% of the agreed programme level. The delivery of the investment programme has not progressed as planned. This is largely due to delays in procuring contracts for window and door replacements, procurement of a contract to deliver insulation programmes, and procurement of a contract to deliver our roof replacement programme. Internal staff resourcing issues have led to delays in the development of some key investment programmes.
- 3.9 Steps have been taken to mitigate some of the delay by commissioning a programme of works to deliver a programme of internal wall insulation and a separate programme of air source heat pumps, solar panels and battery storage where deemed suitable. The next step is the procurement of a contractor by undertaking a mini competition from an existing framework to deliver this work. We have made an application to the Scottish Government for grant funding for 289 properties under the Social Housing Net Zero fund and should find out if our bid has been successful in the next 6 weeks. A tender has now been approved for the replacement of windows to 118 properties which is due to commence in January 2024 estimated spend projections to year end will be £500k. Due to current anticipated year end

underspend there is the opportunity to increase the number of disabled adaptations and shower installations that will be completed and overspend in these areas.

General Programme Updates

- 3.10 The programme to upgrade smoke alarms in all Council properties in accordance with statutory legislation saw 99.99% of properties completed as at 30 September 2023. 5 properties remain outstanding and we are pursuing access through the courts.
- 3.11 The kitchen replacement programme is 23% complete and has delivered 52 replacement kitchens as of 30 September 2023. The over bath shower installation contract is 62% complete and has delivered 16 shower installations as of 30 September 2023 and 26 shower installations are planned.
- 3.12 The budget for Disabled Adaptations is £360k and the spend at 30 September 2023 was £229k, resulting in 64% budget spend. To date 42 disabled adaptations have been undertaken.
- 3.13 The budget for Electrical Upgrades is £1,800k and the spend at 30 September 2023 was £1k. There has been challenges in procuring contractors to undertake a programme of Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR). We have commenced a programme of EICR using our Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) and they have completed 2,204 properties as at 30 September 2023, with £456k recently recharged to this budget that is not included in the reported spend to date. The remaining EICR work is planned to be completed by 31 December 2024 subject to the availability of contractors to support delivery of the programme.
- 3.14 The budget for Central Heating replacements is £1.622m and the spend as of 30 September 2023 was £884k with 127 replacement heating systems being completed.
- 3.15 The budget for Bathroom replacements is £360k and the spend as of 30 September 2023 was £56k with 17 replacements being completed. This work is delivered by the DLO and, due to resource issues, the DLO are struggling to meet the targeted spend for this financial year.

Income and Expenditure for Private Sector Housing

- 3.16 **APPENDIX VI** shows the position with regard to grant expenditure for Private Sector Housing Grant to 30 September 2023.
- 3.17 The legally committed figure in Category C of £77k represents 68.1% of the allocated budget. Spend to 30 September 2023 was £40k which represents 35.4% of the allocated budget. It is anticipated that this budget will fully commit and spend.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

The provision of new affordable housing, 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 dealt with in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.15 above, with details of the Council house new build programme now being the subject of a separate monitoring report.

(d) Risk implications

Failure to expend agreed budgets may affect the Council's ability to maintain stock at the Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS), replace life expired elements and attain the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH). 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 ESSH.

(i) Consultations

Consultations have taken place with the Head of Housing and Property Services, Building Services Manager, Georgina Anderson (Legal Services Senior Solicitor), Chief Financial Officer, Lissa Rowan (Committee Services Officer), and Home Improvement Services Manager, who all agree with the sections of the report relating to their areas of responsibility.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The report shows that the Council's progress in respect of Housing investment for both the Council's housing stock and the private sector has achieved an overall spend of £3,738k to 30 September 2023, which represents 10% of the agreed annual budget. A number of delays have occurred, due to contractor availability, internal staffing resource and procurement difficulties, which has adversely impacted a number of key planned investment programmes and delivery of the overall investment programme.**
- 5.2 Significant recovery of programmes over the remainder of the financial year will be essential to enable the Council to address the identified priorities to improve the quality of housing stock in Moray. More specifically, the ongoing investment in the Council's housing stock enables it to achieve the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, allows for replacement of life expired elements and makes progress towards the attainment of both the Moray Standard and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing.**

Author of Report: Paul Kendrick, Asset Manager (Housing)
Background Papers:
Ref: SPMAN-1285234812-1439

INVESTMENT PROGRAMME INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2023/24

30 September 2023
(all amounts in £'000)

HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

	Annual Budget 2023/24	Expenditure plus commitments to date	% expenditure plus committed to date	Expenditure to date	% Budget spent to date	Budget balance
<u>Expenditure</u>						
Response, Gas & Void Repairs	4,621	1,429	31%	1,429	31%	3,192
Estate Works	714	229	32%	226	32%	488
Cyclic Maintenance	1,335	256	19%	256	19%	1,079
Planned Maintenance (Revenue)	3,620	269	7%	269	7%	3,351
Planned Maintenance (Capital)	10,678	1,303	12%	1,303	12%	9,375
Other Investment	370	255	69%	255	69%	115
Sub Total	21,338	3,741	18%	3,738	18%	17,600
<u>Other Capital Expenditure</u>						
Property Acquisition	1000					
New Build - Capital Costs	7,993	439		439		
Total	30,331			4,177		
<u>Funded by</u>						
HRA Revenue	10,660			2,435	23%	
Government Grant	7,432			0	0%	
Use of Council Tax Discount	600			0	0%	
Prudential Borrowing	10,737			1,742	16%	
Other Grants	0			0	0%	
Capital Receipts	0			0	0%	
C.F.C.R	902			0	0%	
Total	30,331			4,177	14%	

INVESTMENT PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE 2023/24

30 September 2023
(all amounts in £'000)

RESPONSE AND VOIDS REPAIRS

	Annual Budget 2023/24	Expenditure plus commitments to date	% expenditure plus committed to date	Expenditure to date	% Budget spent to date	Budget balance
West Area Office	1,428	407	29%	407	29%	1,021
Central Area Office		66		66		
East Area Office	1,106	257	23%	257	23%	849
Void House Repairs & Dec Vouchers	1,469	605	41%	605	41%	864
Gas Heating Repairs	618	94	15%	94	15%	524
	4,621	1,429	31%	1,429	31%	3,258

INVESTMENT PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE 2023/24

30 September 2023
(all amounts in £'000)

ESTATE WORKS

	Annual Budget 2023/24	Expenditure plus commitments to date	% expenditure plus committed to date	Expenditure to date	% Budget spent to date	Budget balance
Garage Upgrades	26	0	0%	0	0%	25
Asbestos	370	62	17%	62	17%	308
Landscape Maintenance	88	8	9%	7	8%	80
Estates/Forum Upgrades	230	91	40%	90	39%	140
Miscellaneous	0	68	0%	67	0%	-67
	714	229	32%	226	32%	486

INVESTMENT PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE 2023/24

30 September 2023
(all amounts in £'000)

CYCLIC MAINTENANCE

	Outturn					
	Annual Budget 2023/24	Expenditure plus commitments to date	% expenditure plus commitments to date	Expenditure to date	% Budget spent to date	Budget balance
Gas Servicing	371	150	40%	150	40%	221
Solid Fuel Servicing	5	8	160%	8	160%	-3
Air Source Heat Pump Servicing	61	10	16%	10	16%	51
Smoke Detector Servicing	15	1	7%	1	7%	14
External Painterwork	678	45	7%	45	7%	633
Pre-Paintwork repairs	0	0	0%	0	0%	0
General Servicing	51	18	35%	18	35%	33
Inspections/House Surveys	0	24	0%	24	0%	-24
Fire Risk Assessment & Works	154	0	0%	0	0%	154
	1,335	256	19%	256	19%	1,079

INVESTMENT PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE 2023/24

30 September 2023
(all amounts in £'000)

PLANNED MAINTENANCE & OTHER INVESTMENTS

	Outturn					
	Annual Budget 2023/24	Expenditure plus commitments to date	% expenditure plus commitments to date	Expenditure to date	% Budget spent to date	Budget balance
Kitchens Replacements	1,030	240	23%	240	23%	790
Bathroom Replacements	360	56	16%	56	16%	304
Central Heating	1,622	844	52%	844	52%	778
Doors and Windows	1,853	84	5%	84	5%	1,769
Smoke Alarms/Co Upgrades	0	34	0%	34	0%	-34
EESHS - Insulation	2,813	0	0%	0	0%	2,813
EESHS - Warm Homes R4 c/f	0	3	0%	3	0%	-3
EESHS - Lcitr c/f	0	0	0%	0	0%	0
EESHS/EESHS 2	3,000	42	1%	42	1%	2,958
Sub Total (Capital)	10,678	1,303	12%	1,303	12%	9,375
Rainwatergoods	257	1	0%	1	0%	256
Rain water goods - Roof Moss Cleaning	206	7	3%	7	3%	199
Roof and Fabric Repairs	1,150	168	15%	168	15%	982
Plumbing Upgrades	51	1	2%	1	2%	50
Electrical Upgrades	1,800	1	0%	1	0%	1,799
Safety & Security	21	0	0%	0	0%	21
Common Stairs	0	18	0%	18	0%	-18
Energy Performance Certs (EPC)	0	0	0%	0	0%	0
Sheltered Housing	10	2	20%	2	20%	8
Decoration Vouchers	74	27	36%	27	36%	47
Shower Installations	51	44	86%	44	86%	7
Sub Total (Revenue)	3,620	269	7%	269	7%	3,351
Disabled Adaptations	360	229	64%	229	64%	131
Enabling Projects	10	26	260%	26	260%	-16
Sub Total (Other Investment)	370	255	69%	255	69%	115
Total	14,668	1,827	12%	1,827	12%	12,841

**PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING GRANT
SCHEME OF ASSISTANCE - 2023/24**

30 September 2023
(all amounts in £'000)

CATEGORY	Budget Allocation 2023/24	Spend to date	Balance	Item 10 Legally Committed	Completed Cases
Independent Living					
Category C	113	40	73	77	4
Overall Total	113	40	73	77	45

CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS	
Category A	External agency running costs
Category B	Grant Assistance to aid Independent Living - Adaptations
Category C	Grant Assistance to aid Independent Living - House Condition Works



**REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON 21
NOVEMBER 2023**

**SUBJECT: HOUSING AND PROPERTY SERVICES BUDGET MONITORING –
30 SEPTEMBER 2023**

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the budget position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Services Other Housing Budget for the period up to 30 September 2023.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III G (1) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the management of budgets.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Committee scrutinises and notes the budget monitoring report for the period to 30 September 2023.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Full Council agreed the HRA Budget for 2022/23 at the meeting on 1 March 2023 (paragraph 7 of the Minute refers). Housing and Property budget monitoring reports are presented quarterly.

4. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

- 4.1 **APPENDIX I** details the HRA budget position to 30 September 2023.
- 4.2 The main expenditure variances relate to:–
 - 4.2.1 **Supervision and management** – there are a range of variations within this budget resulting in a net underspend of £283k. This includes underspends in staffing (£250k), arising from vacancies and the budget provision for pay award, £31k for software due to invoice timing, £19k for voids due to reduced turnover and £3k for training. This was partially offset by an overspend in other minor/cumulative spend of £20k, which included £13k in postage. The service is currently reviewing opportunities to reduce postage expenditure by further increasing electronic communication.

- 4.2.2 **Sheltered Housing** – there was an underspend of £11k in the sheltered housing budget, arising from an underspend in energy costs (£12k) which is seasonal but also follows a reduction in gas prices. This was partially offset by a £1k overspend in minor/cumulative expenditure.
- 4.2.3 **Repairs and maintenance** – there was an underspend of £1,935k in the repairs and maintenance budget, which arises from reduced activity in planned/cyclical maintenance (£1,484k), response repairs (£445k) and a small underspend in voids (£6k). It should be noted that this underspend reflects the ledger position at the end of quarter and does not include accruals, with delayed posting of payments for July and August. The planned/cyclical position included main variance underspends in electrical upgrades (£749k) due to capacity and procurement challenges, roof and fabric repairs (£310k), external decoration (£237k), rain water goods (£106k), asbestos works (£92k), roof moss clearance (£78k) and fire risk assessment (£65k). A mid-year review of programmes is being undertaken to ensure optimal outturn and further detail is provided within the DLO Budget Monitoring report.
- 4.2.4 **Bad and doubtful debts** – there was an underspend of £3k against provision for bad & doubtful debts.
- 4.2.5 **Downsizing Incentive Scheme** – there was an underspend of £4k, with fewer transfers taking place. Work continues to increase the uptake, which is expected to increase spend as the year progresses.
- 4.2.6 **Service Developments** – there is an underspend of £50k, with elements of provision which had been allocated expected to progress in the latter part of the year.
- 4.2.7 The income at 30 September 2022 was £6k lower than expected. This is due mainly to the revised completion of the new development at Keith (£40k), partially offset by higher than anticipated tenant recharges (£34k).

5. **HRA PROJECTED OUTTURNS 2023/24**

5.1 **APPENDIX I** also details projected outturns for 2023/24.

Expenditure

- 5.2 **Supervision and management** - An underspend of £214k is projected. This variance arises from an underspend in staffing costs (£164k), but remains uncertain pending the final pay award and lower void costs (£50k) due to lower turnover.
- 5.3 **Sheltered Housing** – There is no variance currently projected.
- 5.4 **Repairs and Maintenance** - An underspend of £973k is projected. This is comprised of underspends of £1,545k in planned/cyclical programmes and £16k in response repairs, partially offset by overspends in voids (£274k), a deficit in the DLO of £244k against a £100k budgeted surplus and property fees of £70k.

- 5.5 **Financing costs** - An underspend of £439k is projected due to lower than estimated interest costs on borrowing. It is acknowledged that there remains uncertainty in relation to interest rates at present, therefore this position may vary prior to the year end.
- 5.6 **Bad and Doubtful debts** – There is no variance currently projected.
- 5.7 **CFCR** - The level of Capital from Current Revenue (CFCR) is projected to be £1,745k higher due to underspends elsewhere across the HRA budget, which will offset anticipated borrowing.
- 5.8 **Downsizing Incentive Scheme** – There is no variance currently projected.
- 5.9 **Service Developments** – There is no variance currently projected.
- 5.10 **Total expenditure on the HRA** - Projected to be £119k higher than budgeted.

Income

- 5.11 Total income to the HRA is projected to be £119k higher than originally budgeted for 2023/24, with £96k additional interest on revenue balances projected due to the higher interest rates and £34k in other income, partially offset by £11k lower rental income due to the delayed completion of new build properties in Keith.
- 5.12 Overall, a surplus balance of £2.465m is projected for the HRA budget in 2023/24.

6. OTHER HOUSING BUDGET

- 6.1 **APPENDIX II** provides details of the budget position to 30 September 2023.
- 6.2 **Planning and Development** - consists of Improvement Grants and Affordable Housing budgets, including disabled adaptations. The position at 30 September 2023 shows an underspend of £16k, arising from an underspend in discretionary grants.
- 6.3 **Housing Management** - relates to the Gypsy/Traveller budget. The position at 30 September 2023 shows an underspend of £1k, arising from lower site clearance costs than budgeted.
- 6.4 **Homelessness/Allocations** - comprises of Homelessness and Housing Support services. There was an underspend of £4k in this budget, comprised of underspends in Temporary Accommodation (£24k), and general homelessness (£4k), partially offset by an overspend of £24k in Housing Support. This represents a significant improvement on the longstanding deficit in temporary accommodation prior to the increase in service charges in 23/24.
- 6.5 **The Building Services Budget** - is reported in detail separately on this Committee's agenda and any surplus achieved or deficit will be returned to the HRA.

6.6 **The Property Services Budget** - includes the budgets for the Design Team and Property Resources. There is an overall overspend of £83k to date. Within the Design Team there was an overspend of £55k, predominantly arising from lower than budgeted fee income. Property Asset Management has a £28k overspend, with increased schools repairs and maintenance expenditure year to date.

6.7 As at 30 September 2023, the Other Housing budget shows a net overspend of £52k.

7. **OTHER HOUSING PROJECTED OUTTURNS 2023/24**

7.1 **APPENDIX II** also indicates the projected outturns for 2023/24.

7.2 **Planning and Development** - Projected to underspend by £13k. This is based on an anticipated underspend in discretionary grants.

7.3 **Housing Management** - Projected to underspend by £5k. This arises from end of year recharges to the Housing Revenue Account (£4k) and lower site clearance costs (£1k).

7.4 **Homelessness/Allocations** - Projects an overspend of £23k. An anticipated overspend in housing support (£23k) is projected to arise and whilst there are no other variances projected to offset this, the temporary accommodation budget has been conservatively set following increases in charges in-year and may yet offset some of the projected overspend.

7.5 **Miscellaneous General Services Housing** - Projects an underspend of £14k. The main reason for this is lower than anticipated repairs and maintenance costs relating to Urquhart Place.

7.6 **Building Services** - Projected outturn is considered in further detail in the separate report on the Committee's agenda.

7.7 **Property Services** - Projects an overspend of £332k. This is comprised of anticipated overspends of £150k in Design & Construction and £182k in Property Asset Management. The service will consider appropriate options to mitigate this position by year-end.

7.8 **Housing and Property Savings** – Staffing savings are anticipated to be £147k less than the budgeted provision, being dependent on vacancy levels.

7.9 Overall, it is now projected that the General Services Housing Budget will overspend by £470k on the agreed budget, with approaches set out above to mitigate the eventual outturn.

8. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

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

The provision of new affordable housing, 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**

There are no policy or legal implications arising from this report.

(c) **Financial Implications**

The financial implications of this report are considered in Sections 4 to 7 of this report and detailed in **APPENDICES I and II**.

(d) **Risk Implications**

Budget Managers are aware of their responsibilities for managing budget allocations and approval for variance will be sought from the Committee in line with Financial Regulations.

(e) **Staffing implications**

There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

(f) **Property**

None.

(g) **Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

There are no equalities/socio economic impacts arising from this report.

(h) **Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**

There are no climate change/biodiversity impacts arising from this report.

(i) **Consultations**

This report has been prepared in close consultation with Finance staff. Consultation on this report has been carried out with Lorraine Paisey (Chief Financial Officer), Georgina Anderson (Legal Services Senior Solicitor), Senior Managers within Housing and Property Services and Lissa Rowan (Committee Services Officer) who all agree the content of the report where it relates to their area of responsibility.

7. **CONCLUSION**

7.1 **This report sets out the budget position for the HRA and General Services Housing budgets to 30 September 2023 and also comments on the variances on these budgets.**

Author of Report: Edward Thomas, Head of Housing and Property
Background Papers: Held by author
Ref: SPMAN-1285234812-1425

Budget Monitoring to 30th September 2023

Service Description	Annual Budget 2023-24	Budget to 30 Sept 2023	Actual to 30 Sept 2023	Variance to 30 Sept 2023	Projected Outturn to 31 Mar 2024	Projected Variance to 31 Mar 2024
Expenditure	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Supervision & Management	5,521	2,226	1,943	283	5,307	214
Sheltered Housing Repairs and Maintenance	63	35	24	11	63	0
Financing Costs	10,696	4,498	2,563	1,935	9,723	973
Bad & Doubtful Debts	5,183	0	0	0	4,744	439
CFCR	225	38	35	3	225	0
Downsizing Incentive Scheme	902	0	0	0	2,647	(1,745)
Service Development	72	36	32	4	72	0
	150	75	25	50	150	0
Total Gross Expenditure	22,812	6,908	4,622	2,286	22,931	(119)
Income	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Non-dwelling rents	244	135	135	0	244	0
House rents	22,362	11,648	11,608	(40)	22,351	(11)
IORB	120	0	0	0	216	96
Other income	86	41	75	34	120	34
Total Income	22,812	11,824	11,818	(6)	22,931	119
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	0	4,916	7,196	2,280	0	0
Accumulated Surplus Balance brought forward			2,418		2,465	
Estimated Surplus Balance at 31st March			2,418		2,465	

Monitoring to 30 September 2023

Service Description	Annual Budget 2023-24 £'000	Budget to 30 Sept 2023 £'000	Actual & committed to 30 Sept 2023 £'000	Variance at 30 Sept 2023 £'000	Projected Outturn 2023-24 £'000	Projected Variance 2023-24 £'000
Planning & Development	255	64	48	16	242	13
Housing Management	20	19	18	1	15	5
Homelessness / Allocations	2076	1055	1051	4	2099	(23)
Miscellaneous General Services Housing	(20)	(10)	(22)	12	(34)	14
Building Services	0	0	2	(2)	0	0
Property Services	2394	1485	1568	(83)	2726	(332)
General Services Housing & Property Savings	(147)	0	0	0	0	(147)
General Services Housing & Property Allocations	(161)	0	0	0	(161)	0
General Services Housing & Property Total	4417	2613	2665	(52)	4887	(470)



**REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON
21 NOVEMBER 2023**

**SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT (HOUSING AND PROPERTY
SERVICES) – PERIOD TO SEPTEMBER 2023**

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the performance of the service for the period to 30 September 2023.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Council in terms of Section III (A) (4) of the Council's Scheme of Administration to monitor performance of the services within the Committee's remit in accordance with the Council's performance management framework.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) **scrutinises performance in the areas of Service Planning, Service Performance and other related data to the end of September 2023; and**
- (ii) **notes the actions being taken to improve performance where required.**

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).

4. **SERVICE PLANNING**

- 4.1 Each service plan sets out the planned strategic and service level priorities and outcomes it intends to deliver in the coming year aligning closely with financial planning, corporate and community planning partnership strategic priorities. This report provides an interim update on progress on the service plan, key outcomes and performance indicators. The Committee is invited to review progress to secure assurance that it is satisfactory and to provide scrutiny and further direction where performance requires attention.
- 4.2 The narrative included is by exception, links to Service Plan Actions and Performance Indicators can be accessed within the Backing Papers of this report.
- 4.3 Local Government Benchmarking Framework indicators are used to measure Service Plan performance, latest results are due for publication in December and will therefore be incorporated within quarter 4 reporting.

SERVICE PLAN PRIORITIES		RAG
STRATEGIC LEVEL	Revise the Housing Contribution Statement with Health & Social Care Moray	85%
SERVICE LEVEL	Implement Smarter Working Project rollout	93%
	Stores and Depots Review	53%
	Systemic Review of Housing Repairs	15%
	Review Rent Setting Policy	42%
	ERDP experience, accuracy of records - CPD, training and on the job learning	50%
	Continue to reduce the carbon impact arising from Housing & Property Services	41%
	Develop the Local Housing Strategy 2024-29	30%
OVERALL PLAN PROGRESS		65%

SERVICE PLAN PI'S

15

- Above Target
- Within Target
- Below Target
- Data Only
- Data not available

Strategic Outcomes - successes

- 4.4 The five year rolling average percentage of newly completed social dwellings that are accessible (Housing Association and Council) exceeds target (30%). The Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA) includes the definition of “accessible” as where the design and layout of the property is free from physical barriers which would make them difficult for tenants with disabilities and/or health conditions. Publication of a revised HNDA will include reassessment of the future need for accessible housing and associated targets. (**ACTION:** H24-4.1a, **INDICATOR:** H1.9c).

Strategic Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

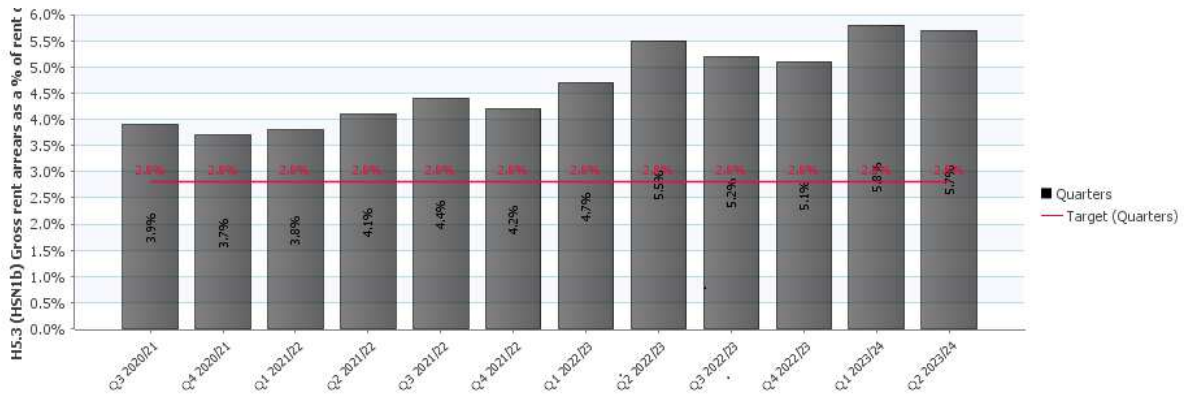
- 4.5 Nothing to report.

Service Level Outcomes – successes

- 4.6 The early adopters pilot, part of the Smarter Working rollout, has completed with practical lessons learned. There have been minor issues with apparatus in some hybrid meeting rooms and alternatives are being explored to resolve. **(ACTION: HP24-5.1c)**
- 4.7 Good progress has been made with the Stores and Depots review, five depots were identified as in-scope for rationalisation with potential savings of up to £42k a year in a report to this Committee on 20 June (para 13 of the Minute refers). The first phase of reducing depot numbers has progressed and it is anticipated that outline business cases will be presented to ED&I Committee in Spring 2024. **(ACTIONS: HP24-5.2a, 5.2b, 5.2d)**
- 4.8 The revised HNDA is nearing completion having been subject to Scottish Government feedback. Minor changes made, resubmission will follow soon, thereafter priorities and policy implications will be identified and revised Local Housing Strategy delivered by March 2024. **(ACTION: HP24-5.7a)**

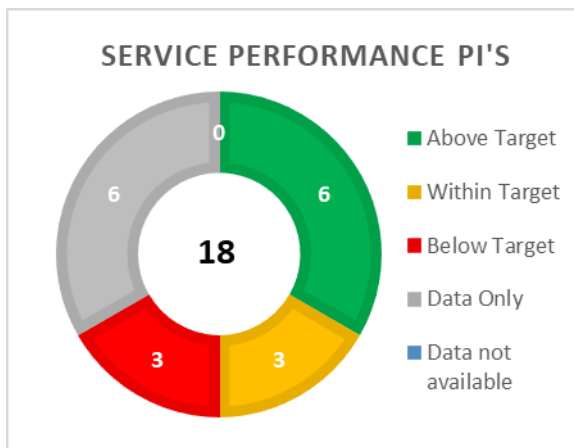
Service Level Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

- 4.9 Progress in the systemic review of the quality and customer service for housing repairs has not completed within the original due date of September 2023. Work is ongoing to further explore a significant reduction in post repair surveys that are carried out on hand held devices, the Repairs Review Group continue to meet regularly. Repairs indicators show slight slippage in the reporting quarter, 94% of repairs were completed right first time and 94% of repairs were completed within target timescales, both results just below target. Despite slippage average times to complete emergency and non-emergency repairs remained well within target. **(ACTION: HP24-5.3a, INDICATORS: H2.7, H2.8, H2.9b, H2.11, H2.12)**
- 4.10 In the quarter ended September 2023, 71% of tenants were satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in, a decrease from 83% in the previous quarter and below target (90%). Results were based on a small number of responses which can significantly impact on percentage reported. It is noted that improvements will be challenging to achieve until the revised Rent Setting Policy has been implemented. **(ACTION: HP24-5.4d, INDICATOR: H2.3)**
- 4.11 Gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due at 5.7% remains significantly above target (2.8%). The cost of living crisis has increased the financial pressures placed on households. As part of the rent setting policy, officers have been working with tenants on preventative supports such as digital learning, scam awareness, monetary support schemes as well as relevant signposting. **(ACTION: HP24-5.4, INDICATOR: H5.3)**



5. SERVICE PERFORMANCE

- 5.1 In line with the Performance Management Framework, operational performance is reviewed quarterly by departmental management. Areas performing well and/or areas subject to a decreasing trend or where benchmarking results show performance significantly below comparators will be reported to this committee for member scrutiny.
- 5.2 The narrative included in this report is by exception, links to Service Performance Indicators can be accessed within the Background Papers at the end of this report.



Operational Indicators - successes

- 5.3 In the quarter to September 2023, 29% of tenancy offers were refused, the first time the result has achieved target (30%) in the last 18 months. (INDICATOR: H3.2)

Operational Indicators - challenges and actions to support

- 5.4 Repairs are monitored by category, 91% of emergency reactive repairs and 7% of void reactive repairs were completed within timescales, falling below the target levels expected, 99.9% and 90% respectively. All other reactive repair categories achieved accepted levels of performance. After close scrutinisation of voids repairs data, it has been established that the performance information recorded has been based on the invoice date, rather

than the repair completion date, which has meant that the data recorded is not accurate. This has now been remedied and significant improvements in this indicator from Quarter 3 onwards is now anticipated. (**INDICATORS:** H2.10a, H2.10e)

- 5.5 Slippage in the percentage of new unauthorised encampments visited within target timescales has been attributed to the geographical area covered by officers based in the West Team in Forres, and it not being possible to cover all reported encampments in the same day they are reported. Target timescales may need to be reviewed to take account of where the team is now based. (**INDICATOR:** H6.2)

6. OTHER PERFORMANCE RELATED DATA

6.1 Complaints & MP/MSP Enquiries

- 6.1.1 In line with the Performance Management Framework, complaints are reviewed quarterly by departmental management in terms of time taken to respond, outcome and learning points. Links to complaints tables can be accessed within the Backing Papers of this report.
- 6.1.2 A total of 79 complaints were closed in the half year to September 2023 of which 68 (86%) were frontline stage, seven (9%) were investigative stage, and four (5%) were escalated. As a comparison, in the same period last year, 88 complaints were closed.
- 6.1.3 The majority of upheld or partially upheld complaints (62) in the two quarters related to Repairs, Capital and Planned maintenance.
- 6.1.4 In addition to complaints, a total of 66 MSP/MP complaints were received in the last two quarters out of 291 to the Council as a whole, 63 of which were resolved.

Other Performance (not included within Service Plan)

- 6.2 Nothing to report.

Case Studies

- 6.3 Nothing to report.

Consultation and Engagement

- 6.4 Nothing to report.

7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

Performance measurement is used to ensure the efficient and sustainable delivery of services to meet the Council's priorities in both the Corporate Plan and the LOIP.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Council has a statutory requirement to publish a range of information that will demonstrate that it is securing best value and assist in comparing performance both over time and between authorities where appropriate.

(c) Financial implications

None.

(d) Risk Implications

None.

(e) Staffing Implications

None.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as this report is to inform the Committee on performance.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

None.

(i) Consultations

The Head of Housing and Property Services, Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment & Finance) and Service Managers, have been consulted with any comments received incorporated into this report.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1** As at 30 September 2023 the plan overall is 65% complete, two actions or sub-actions having been completed.

Author of Report: Christopher Dewhurst, Research & Information Officer

Background Papers: [Service Plan Actions](#)
[Service Plan Performance Indicators](#)
[Service Performance Indicators](#)
[Service Complaints](#)

Ref: SPMAN-1285234812-1432