



Housing and Community Safety Committee

Tuesday, 07 May 2024

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, 07 May 2024** 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 11 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."

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5 **Written Questions ****

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- Annual Budget

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9. Information on terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the Authority; | |

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.

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.

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.

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 Alison Angus (Non-Voting Member)
Ms Jane Bartecki (Non-Voting Member)
Ms Elizabeth McKnockiter (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, 13 February 2024

Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX

PRESENT

Councillor James Allan, 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, Ms Elizabeth McKnockiter, Councillor Shona Morrison, Councillor Derek Ross, Councillor John Stuart

APOLOGIES

Ms Anna Bamforth, Ms Jane Bartecki, Councillor Neil Cameron

IN ATTENDANCE

Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Head of Housing and Property Services, Housing Strategy and Development Manager, Housing Needs Manager, Legal Services Manager and Mrs L Rowan, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the Committee.

1 Chair

Councillor Dunbar, being 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 the items of business detailed below, 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
11	9 - Information on terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the Authority.

4 Minute of Meeting dated 21 November 2023

The Minute of the meeting of the Housing and Community Safety Committee held on 21 November 2023 was submitted and approved.

5 Written Questions

The Committee noted that no written questions had been submitted.

6 Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2023

The Committee had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informing of the status of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment and its findings.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously agreed to note:

- (i) the “robust and credible” status of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2023, and its key findings; and
- (ii) that a consultative draft Local Housing Strategy 2024-29 will be presented to Committee in winter 2024.

7 Rent Setting Policy Review Update

The Committee had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) with the results of the Rent Setting Policy review consultation. The report further presented a revised Rent Setting Policy for approval and advised Committee that a rent campaign will be undertaken to tackle high level arrears and sought approval to utilise any remaining allocation of the Service Development Budget for 2023/24 in order to administer the Tenant Sustainment Fund and any overhead costs associated with running the rent campaign.

Following consideration, the Committee joined the Chair in commending the Service for the work undertaken in the rent setting policy review and thereafter unanimously agreed:

- (i) to note the results of the public consultation on the Rent Setting Policy as set out in Section 4 and Appendix I of the report;
- (ii) to approve the revised Rent Setting Policy as set out in Appendix II of the report;

- (iii) that the revised Rent Setting Policy will be implemented on 1 April 2024;
- (iv) to note that a rent campaign will run from 1 March 2024 until 31 March 2024 which will target high level rent arrears, as set out in Section 6 of the report;
- (v) to approve the Tenancy Sustainment Fund which will operate during March 2024, as set out in Section 7 of the report; and
- (vi) to approve that any remaining allocation from the Service Development Budget for 2023/24 is used to administer and deliver the Tenancy Sustainment Fund along with any overhead costs associated with running the rent campaign.

8 Allocations Policy Review Update

The Committee had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) providing the results of the Allocations Policy review consultation and presenting a revised Allocations Policy for approval.

The Committee joined the Chair in commending the Service for the work undertaken in the review of the Allocations Policy and thereafter unanimously agreed:

- (i) to note the results of the public consultation on the Allocations Policy as set out in Section 4 and Appendix I of the report;
- (ii) to approve the revised Allocations Policy as set out in Appendix II of the report; and
- (iii) that the revised Allocations Policy will be implemented on 1 April 2024.

9 Moray Affordable Housing Investment Programme

The Committee had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informing of progress on the Affordable Housing Investment Programme in Moray.

During her introduction, the Housing Strategy Development Manager highlighted two amendments in the report, the first at paragraph 4.5 for the site start expected during 2024/25 for Western Village, Elgin South, which should read June 2024 and not March 2025 and at paragraph 5.3 advised that there was no longer a need to seek Full Council approval to purchase the land for phase 2 at Speyview Aberlour as this would be purchased using the delegated authority of the Head of Housing and Property Services due to the purchase price of the land. This was noted.

During discussion, concern was noted that both phases of development at Speyview were being provided by Springfield Properties PLC and it was queried whether the second phase should have been made available for other developers to tender for the project.

In response, the Housing Strategy and Development Manager advised that Springfield owned the land to be developed and assured the Committee that the

Council were getting good value for money and that the decision had been taken in accordance with the Affordable Housing Programme.

Councillor Keith acknowledged the Council's Affordable Housing Strategy however noted that the Scottish Government proposed to cut the affordable housing budget by 27% which would have an impact on the Council's ability to deliver the Strategy and moved that the Committee agree an additional recommendation asking that the Chair write to the Deputy First Minister outlining the concerns being expressed by the Housing Sector at the £200 million cuts to the affordable housing budget and the impact that will have on the Council's ability to meet housing need going forward.

Councillor Gatt, having considered the further recommendation put forward by Councillor Keith, agreed with the sentiment of the motion however queried whether it would be reasonable to wait to see what the reduction in the affordable housing budget is for Moray prior to writing.

Adjournment

The Committee sought a short adjournment to consider the terms of the recommendation proposed by Councillor Keith further.

Resumption of Meeting

Following the adjournment, the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) advised that, following discussion with the Head of Housing and Property Services and the Legal Services Manager, the usual protocol when a request for a letter is made is that the draft be circulated to the Committee however as the wording of Councillor Keith's recommendation was quite clear suggested that, if the Committee are minded to agree the recommendation, the letter include that the Council acknowledge that its capital allocation has yet to be confirmed. This was agreed.

There being no-one otherwise minded, the Committee unanimously agreed:

- (i) to note progress on the Moray Affordable Housing Investment Programme;
- (ii) to note progress on the delivery of the Council's new build and acquisition programme; and
- (iii) that the Chair write to the Deputy First Minister outlining the concerns being expressed by the Housing Sector at the £200 million cuts to the affordable housing budget and the impact that will have on the Council's ability to meet housing need going forward whilst acknowledging that its capital allocation has yet to be confirmed.

10 Dampness and Condensation in Council Houses

The Committee had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) advising on the measures that the service has adopted to take a more proactive approach to deal with issues of dampness and condensation within the Council's housing stock.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously agreed:

- (i) the current range of damp control measures carried out, as highlighted in Section 4 of the report;
- (ii) the damp and mould procedure that is now in place within the service, as highlighted in Section 5 of the report;
- (iii) future damp control measures identified to deal with property types identified 'at risk', as highlighted in Section 6 of the report; and
- (iv) to note that this Committee will receive a further progress update later in 2024 to summarise the number of properties in each housing area where damp treatment work has been identified or carried out.

12 Question Time

Councillor Fernandes noted a recent news article which stated that ex-MOD houses had been reallocated to those on the affordable housing list and expressed disappointment at some of the comments on the article which inferred that affordable housing should be allocated to UK residents before refugees or those seeking asylum and sought assurance that there was no such discrimination when allocating houses.

In response, the Head of Housing and Property Services advised that the Service adhered to the Council's policies on equalities and in accordance with Council decisions to support various schemes to house those seeking asylum. The Housing Needs Manager further advised that of the 35 ex-MOD houses, 18 were allocated to those on who were homeless (8 of which were from the refugee project), 14 were on the transfer list and 3 were let to waiting list applicants. He further advised that the Council's allocation policy does not discriminate between individual's age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race/religion/belief or sexual orientation.

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

The Committee had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) presenting budget monitoring information for the period to 31 December 2023 for the Building Services Trading Operation.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously agreed to note the:

- i. financial information for the period to 31 December 2023, as detailed in section 5 and Appendix I of the report.
- ii. Building Services operating performance for the period to 31 December 2023, as set out in section 6 of the report; and
- iii. projected outturn to 31 March 2024, as detailed in section 7 and Appendix I of the report.



REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE 7 MAY 2024

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY ANNUAL REPORT 2023

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of Community Safety Annual Report 2022/23 (Appendix 1).
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (G) (12) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to Community Safety and Anti-Social behaviour (including road accidents) in partnership with other public sector partners, voluntary sector and private sectors as appropriate.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Committee:
- (i) note the findings of the annual report; and
 - (ii) approve the recommendations within the report as set out in paragraph 3.7.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Under the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004 each local authority and the chief constable shall, acting jointly, prepare a strategy for dealing with antisocial behaviour within the authority's area. For Moray this is included within the Community Safety Strategy 2022-2026 as endorsed by the Community Planning Board on the 21 September 2022.
- 3.2 The strategy sets two priorities
- Reducing harms in our communities and
 - Safeguarding our communities
 - Withing these priorities are 18 thematic outcomes.

- 3.3 This is the first performance report for the Community Safety Strategy 2022-2026 which runs from September 2022 to the end of December 2023. The reporting year will be per calendar year going forward.
- 3.4 The Community Safety Strategy is delivered via partners' existing resources, which in the case of Moray Council is through the Community Safety Team. Antisocial Behaviour complaints made to the Community Safety Team are dealt with by 2 Community Wardens and 1 Housing Liaison Officer, a reduction of one Community Warden since the last report in 2018.
- 3.5 This report has been completed in consultation and with information provided by the CSSG partners. The completion of this report will assist the CSSG in assessing progress against the targets within the Community Safety Strategy, and to identify any areas for change, inclusion and improvement.
- 3.6 The first year following the approval of the Community Safety Strategy 2022-2026 has been mixed, with some notable successes, but also some challenges, as the partners have rebuilt their networks, alliances and working methodologies, following the Covid pandemic and cuts to budgets. Good progress has been made with delivery in many areas, but there has been, and still exists, issues with the accessibility of data, for monitoring some outcomes. Some of this has come as a result of changes made in the way individuals work, and or collect data, meaning that previously accessible data is no longer easily available.
- 3.7 The recommendations from the annual report reflect on the changes to the workforce and priorities throughout the pandemic and the subsequent increase in anti social behaviour and the response of the Council within the 24/25 budget process to increase the provision of Community Wardens. The recommendations within the annual report are:-
- Improve partnership working with individual partners and strategic partnerships across the system.
 - Move to more Dynamic Reporting and timeous partner updates for Community Safety Hub cases is needed to make the Hub more effective.
 - Development of new partnership projects that meet emerging need rather than 'business as usual', particularly around ASB.
 - Review the Outcome Measures to fit with a more focussed approach to Community Safety.
 - Consider the findings of the ASB Task and Finish Group, and report to the Community Planning Partnership.
 - Set up the Mental Health Task and Finish Group and then consider the findings and report to the Community Planning Partnership.
- 3.8 The Anti Social Behaviour Task and Finish Group which was set up in September 2023 to examine the increase in Anti Social Behaviour are developing proposals for action across the partnership to address the issues and this will be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

Assists in building a better future for our children and young people in Moray. Empower and support communities to build capacity. Provide opportunities for people to be the best they can be throughout their lives with a strong and sustained focus on those individuals and groups in our society who experience the most disadvantage and discrimination.

(b) Policy and Legal

Annual report is a statutory requirement in terms of Antisocial Behaviour Etc (Scotland) Act 2004.

(c) Financial implications

None.

(d) Risk Implications

If strategy is not delivered, then there is an increased risk of increasing antisocial behaviour across all ages and tenures but particularly in youths. Increased antisocial behaviour or perceived antisocial behaviour reduces social interaction and economy which increases the risks of antisocial behaviour.

(e) Staffing Implications

None.

(f) Property

None

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

Not required as performance report

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

None identified.

(i) Consultations

Consultation on this report has taken place with the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), the Head of Economic Growth and Development, Chief Financial Officer, Georgina Anderson (Legal Services Senior Solicitor), Principal Climate Change Officer, the Equal Opportunities Officer and Lissa Rowan (Committee Services Officer) and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The Strategy was written pre-pandemic without understanding the post pandemic effects on the population or individuals.

5.2 There has been significant staff changes within the partners and methods of working.

5.3 The annual performance report 2022/23 for the Community Safety Strategy 2022 -2026 identifies areas that have improved and areas that require improvement.

Author of Report: Karen Sievewright, Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager

Background Papers:

Ref: [SPMAN-813460984-552](#)



Moray Community Safety Strategic Group

Community Safety Annual Report 2022/23 March 2024

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Introduction

This report, although entitled the Annual Report, covers the period from April 2022 to January 2024. This extended period is due to an Annual Report not being produced in 2023.

Community Safety in Moray is overseen by the Moray Community Safety Strategic Group (CSSG), which is responsible for the development and review of the Community Safety Strategy. The CSSG is accountable to the Community Planning Partnership and reports Annually to the Community Planning Officers Group and the Housing and Community Safety Committee.

The CSSG brings together a variety of statutory organisations including Moray Council, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Services and NHS Grampian (See Appendix A: Membership). Through a well-established Information Sharing Protocol and coordination process, the CSSG works collectively to address those issues relating to Community Safety with the aim of improving the wellbeing of communities across Moray. It is a statutory responsibility under the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 for every local authority, together with the relevant chief constable, to prepare, publish and review a strategy for dealing with antisocial behaviour (ASB) in their council area. Moray's Community Safety Strategy, 2022–2026, was endorsed by the Community Planning Board on the 21st of September 2022.

Community Safety covers a wide range of strategies, services and activities, from ASB through to criminal activity, and from accidental fires to the prevention of unintentional harm. The Community Safety Strategy for Moray sets out the priorities and outcomes for the period 2022 to 2026 and provides a framework for the CSSG to deliver sustainable improvements. This includes two Strategic Priorities:

- Reducing Harms in our Community; and
- Safeguarding our Community.

Encompassed within these Priorities are 18 thematic outcomes.

The Moray Community Safety Strategy meets the statutory obligation to produce an Antisocial Behaviour Strategy. Following a review of the performance of the Community Safety Strategy's first year (2022/23), the CSSG have developed a Strategic Action Plan, which sets out the Priorities and Projects for the years 2023 to 2025.

This report has been completed in consultation and with information provided by the CSSG partners. The completion of this report will assist the CSSG in assessing progress against the targets within the Community Safety Strategy, and to identify any areas for change, inclusion and improvement.

Executive Summary

This report provides the CSSG the opportunity to review its performance against the Community Safety Strategy, for the period April 2022 to January 2024. The CSSG fulfils the role of the Community Safety Partnership and oversees the creation and monitoring of the Community Safety Strategy, a requirement of the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004.

The CSSG has a role to play in preventing and safeguarding the most vulnerable in our society from being victims of unintentional harm, crime, abuse, and exploitation. In the tragic instances where this does occur, the CSSG want to ensure that victims and survivors are able to access appropriate support to cope and recover from their experiences. Our priorities are wide ranging and focus on hidden harms and exploitation, as well as tackling Anti-social Behaviour. The remit of the CSSG overlaps many other strategic groups, and where it does so the CSSG are keen to ensure that effective collaboration is at the forefront of all actions.

Our partnership working, both within the CSSG itself, and within the wider strategic and community partnerships, is vital to the success of our efforts to ensure that individuals and businesses are safeguarded and perceive their communities as being safe. The impact of the Covid pandemic has been far reaching, and has affected partnership working, both at a strategic and operational level. Poor communication and a lack of information sharing between partners and between some strategic partnerships has hampered some of our efforts in terms of delivery. This meant that one of the key focusses for 2022 and 2023 has been on rebuilding partnership working and trust, and on revising the infrastructure to enable that. Where-as some successes can be pointed out, it must be noted that in some areas there is work to be done.

The policies and procedures, including the Anti-social Behaviour Information Sharing Protocol (ISP), which all underpin partnership working, were all found to be out of date, with many being circa 2006. Most of these were revised during 2023, with the expectation that the ASB Policy will be presented to the Housing and Community Safety Committee for ratification in May 2024.

The ISP was a significant challenge for the CSSG, because referred to partner organisations that no longer exist, and did not include new partners, nor reference to 2018 GDPR legislation. The other challenge it presented was this it was only applicable to ASB and did not include all aspects of Community Safety. The final revised Community Safety version is expected to be completed and signed by all parties in April 2024.

The CSSG took a root and branch approach to the review and to partnership working. This included reconsidering how both the Multi-agency Community Safety Hub and the Antisocial Behaviour Order Panel operate. In looking at these structures we collaborated with the Police, to identify a more effective and efficient way of communicating with each other, that enables improved outcomes for the complainants, subjects and vulnerable individuals that are discussed within these forums.

In terms of our achievement against the set Outcomes, it is a mixed picture. There have been some notable successes, such as the reduction in the number of accidental dwelling fires and the increase in the number of individuals who are referred to substance use support services, but that has to be tempered against the rise in anti-social behaviour, and in particular in reports of young people involved in ASB. This was brought into sharp focus in February 2024, with the tragic death in Elgin of a Stagecoach bus driver and subsequent arrest of a 15 year old male.

Further Police and Community Safety team data shows that in 2022, Moray Council's Community Safety Team received 548 complaints for ASB, of which 410 were for unique addresses. In 2023 this rose to 1,066, an increase of 66%, for 449 unique addresses, with complaints for Elgin more than doubling in 2023. In 2023, Police Scotland received 3,236 reports of ASB incidents in Moray, of which 49% were for the Elgin area, with Buckie, Forres, Keith and Lossiemouth jointly accounting for a further 45%.

Since 2018, there has been a reduction in the number of resources focussed on ASB, both within the CST and within youth work, with the limited staff numbers focussed primarily on targeted response. Most other work outside of that has been subject to short-term project funding. In November 2023, the Scottish Government and Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN) findings on the perceptions of current approaches to ASB in Scotland, concluded "prevention is better than cure", advocating a return to prevention and early intervention for ASB. This view is replicated by the early findings of the CSSG's ASB Task and Finish Group.

The CSSG had set up an ASB Task and Finish Group in November 2023, inviting a wider range of partners to participate, to identify priority areas to focus actions on, going forward. Although not expected to report until March 2024, indications to date have identified young people and young persons' substance use as a key issue, along with locations such as Elgin (Cooper Park and surrounds), Forres and Buckie. This includes the need to work alongside GIRFEC and Education colleagues who have identified significant issues of ASB and substance use within local schools.

Key Findings

Although there are many findings within this report, those listed below are those that are considered the most important, and the ones requiring prompt action.

- Community Safety in Moray is often confused as being about ASB only, but conversely, ASB is also regarded by some partners as being better placed in GIRFEC, overlooking the fact that ASB is not just about young people.
- There is a lack of joint working and collaboration in the field of ASB, with some partners not feeling able to share information, or feeling that the aims of one partner in relation to a complainant or subject are at odds with their own goals.
- A lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities and the structure of the different partnerships has meant that there is sometimes a lack of recognition within each partnership of the role of others, leading to a lack of communication and joint working in areas of overlap.
- The Moray Locality Networks' role is seen as key in raising awareness of emerging trends and themes where children and families are involved, and the CSSG seeks work with the Networks to develop collaboration further. It is recognised that the Locality Networks' brief being wider than Community Safety.
- The Community Safety Hub has become less focussed on partner tasking over time, due to some partners not engaging frequently.
- Reports of mental health issues and the use of alcohol and drugs, have escalated, impacting on Community Safety, both in terms of harm and unintentional harm to individuals, as well as to ASB.
- Reports of ASB have grown, along with the level of severity of the ASB.
- The Outcome Measures within the Strategy need to be revised, with some data not readily available, making monitoring and evaluation ad hoc and not reliable.
- In some areas, the Strategy acknowledges areas of Community Safety as being of concern but does not have any agreed Outcome Measures or associated activities.

- There could be a perceived lack of ambition in terms of the lack of new partnership projects being developed as part of the Strategic Action Plan, as all projects currently listed are existing 'business as usual' workstreams for each partner.
- The reductions in staff and changes from proactive to reactive work hamper efforts to effectively manage Community Safety, including unintentional harm, and in particular ASB.
- The link between unintentional harm, mental health and the use of alcohol and drugs is significantly evidenced. There is a gap in strategic governance for Mental Health, by way of a topic specific strategic partnership, which has made identifying the right individuals with the knowledge and decision-making powers to sit on the CSSG's Mental Health Task and Finish Group challenging.

Recommendations

- Improve partnership working with individual partners and strategic partnerships across the system.
- Move to more Dynamic Reporting and timeous partner updates for Community Safety Hub cases is needed to make the Hub more effective.
- Development of new partnership projects that meet emerging need rather than 'business as usual', particularly around ASB.
- Review the Outcome Measures to fit with a more focussed approach to Community Safety.
- Consider the findings of the ASB Task and Finish Group, and report to the Community Planning Partnership.
- Set up the Mental Health Task and Finish Group and then consider the findings and report to the Community Planning Partnership.

Review of 2022/23

The Review was completed via desktop research, and through meetings with key partners. This included:

- examining all relevant policies, procedures, and agreements, as well as local data and national research; and
- gathering information on successes, challenges and concerns, and options for future initiatives.

Following the disruption caused by the pandemic, 2022/23 was focused on reestablishing our partnerships, networks and working methodologies, particularly as many partners had experienced a reduction in levels of resources, due to budgetary pressures. The impact of continuing hybrid and home working arrangements on the success of partnership working cannot be underestimated. Many meetings continued to take place via video calls, meaning that the pre and post meeting networking no longer happened, making it more difficult for staff to establish new relationships, where personnel had changed, and to reinstate previous working relationships.

The CSSG relooked at the governance structure and the policies and procedures that underpin the work of Community Safety, with many being updated to meet the challenges being faced. This included setting up two subgroups: the ASB Task and Finish Group; and the Mental Health Task and Finish Group. These task and finish groups have been set up with the specific purpose of reviewing existing and/or developing new Policy/Strategy/Planning recommendations.

The CSSG also looked at the Multi-agency Community Safety Hub (the Hub), which included revising the membership and its Terms of Reference. This piece of work is still ongoing, although expected to be concluded by end March 2024. The final restructuring of the Hub is expected to include Dynamic Reporting on cases, thus enabling the Hub to be more effective.

Policies, Procedures, and Information Sharing

Policies and procedures, and the agreement that enables agencies to share necessary information, are the framework on which all services and partnership working are based. The Review found that many were out of date, and in some instances referred to partners that no longer existed or did not include organisations that had joined the partnership. Most importantly this included Moray Council's ASB Policy and ASB Information Sharing Protocol (ISP). In the case of the ASB ISP, the existing version did not include reference to GDPR, and was specific to ASB and did not take account of other areas of Community Safety.

The ASB ISP is currently under review and the new Community Safety ISP is expected to be completed and a signed version to replace the ASB version in early 2024.

The reviewed and amended documents are as follows and are attached in the Appendices:

- Community Safety Strategic Group Terms of Reference – Appendix B
- Community Safety Hub Terms of Reference – Appendix C

The revised Moray Council ASB Policy will be presented to the Housing and Community Safety Committee for ratification in June 2024.

In reviewing these documents, it was necessary to look at the reality of how we work in the arena of Community Safety.

Defining Community Safety

COSLA defines Community Safety as, "Protecting people's rights to live in confidence and without fear for their own or other people's safety". Using this has enabled the CSSG to cover a broad range of subjects within its Community Safety Strategy, recognising the importance of all aspects of harm, whether intentional or accidental, and its impact on the lives of individuals and the communities within which they live and work. This has supported the CSSG in seeing the bigger picture. Having one central focus, for these areas, through the CSSG, enables partners to identify overlapping themes and trends and to therefore develop a more rounded and comprehensive response.

Throughout the review it became clear that for many the terms Community Safety and ASB are seen as interchangeable, therefore ignoring all the other aspects of Community Safety. Community Safety includes, anti-social behaviour, fire and home safety, unintentional harm, road safety, violence reduction, and mental health, alcohol and drugs as a cause of community safety issues. It interfaces with other topic specific partnerships and strategies, where there is an impact on the safety of individuals and communities, to ensure a collaborative response.

A lack of understanding of the role of Community Safety and the CSSG has at times made partnership working challenging.

Challenges

Although significant changes had already been made to Community Safety, its governance structures, and its operating models since the early 2010s, many of these challenges have been exacerbated and accelerated by the Pandemic. The Pandemic has evolved and transformed how we communicate, live and work with each other, both in society and within the workplace.

The Pandemic and lockdowns saw the individual organisations and services having to react at pace to a constantly changing landscape. Inevitably, this meant that each became more internalised, as they sought to modify their own services and responses. This led to a return to silo working, and often to a lack of willingness to share information or to work together on finding solutions. The reality of what has followed since the Pandemic is that both society and the workplace in which services operate have been reshaped.

This was particularly marked in the interaction between the different strategic partnerships and the Community Safety Strategic Group. A lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities and the structure of the different partnerships has meant that there is sometimes a lack of recognition within each partnership of the role of others, leading to a lack of communication and joint working in areas of overlap.

Additionally, reports of mental health issues and the use of alcohol and drugs, have escalated, impacting on Community Safety, both in terms of harm and unintentional harm to individuals, as well as to ASB.

Reports of ASB have grown, along with the level of severity of the ASB. There appears to be a greater lack of tolerance, with more individuals reporting neighbours for what is often determined as being 'living noise'. The reasons for this are unclear but could be rooted in the fact that more people now work from home and are therefore more aware of their neighbours' activities during the daytime.

We have also noted a decline in what could have been previously seen as social norms, with more young people not feeling able to attend school and appearing to have no concern nor understanding of the consequences of their actions. This worrying trend has seen a rise in youth ASB and substance use, leaving young people at risk of entering the criminal justice system, and more likely to experience poor life outcomes, as well as fracturing communities where ASB is prevalent.

Outcomes

The stated Outcomes within the Community Safety Strategy are directed towards ensuring that people feel safe both at home and in the community, reduce vulnerability and build resilient communities. Although progress has been made to meet these Outcomes, measuring the level of progress has been hampered by our inability to monitor all Outcomes as intended.

It became apparent that the datasets originally agreed in the Strategy were not as readily accessible as had been expected. In some cases, this was due to changes made at a national level, and in other instances due to the availability of local data.













When the Community Safety Strategy was written, the Baseline for measuring Outcomes was not set. This task has been completed retrospectively. This gave rise to an additional complication where the Baseline data for the chosen year 2021/2022, was not accessible at

the time needed. This is not to say that the data doesn't exist, just it was not readily available at the time of asking.

Another issue with the data is that in some instances, the Strategy acknowledges areas of Community Safety as being of concern, but does not mention how these will be addressed, and no Outcome Measures have been agreed. This in part could be responsible for what can be seen as a lack of ambition in terms of partnership projects being developed as part of the Strategic Action Plan, as all projects currently listed are existing 'business as usual' workstreams for each partner.

To ensure that accurate monitoring and evaluation is possible in the future, and that all areas of Community Safety are able to be monitored, the measures are being reviewed. It is intended that this will be achieved by April 2024. Where we have been able to accurately report on Outcomes, the measures are contained in Table 1: Outcome Measures.

TABLE 1: Outcome Measures

Priority	Current Measure	Source	Baseline 2019/20	Baseline 2021/22	Type of measure	2022/2023	Performance Rating
Reducing Harms in our Community	Reduce incidents of Violence (Non-sexual crimes of violence)	Police Scotland		966	No of incidents	1056	
	Reduce incidents of Domestic Abuse	Police Scotland	889	825	No of incidents	931	
	Increase those referred to substance misuse support services	Moray Alcohol and Drugs Partnership		641	Active clients	812	
	Reduce rates of Neighbour Disputes and Noise Complaints	Police Scotland	827	767	Number of complaints	811 (Up to Q3 2023)	
	Reduce Environmental Antisocial Behaviour complaints (Litter/Fly Tipping/ Dog Fouling/Graffiti)	Community Safety Team/ Environmental Health		517	Number of complaints	317	
	Reduce number of accidental dwelling fires (all types)	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service		65	No of fires	49	
	Reduce number of accidental dwelling fires involving substance misuse.	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service		12%	Percentage of fires	12%	
	Reduce number of secondary fires in the community	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service		96	Number of incidents	86	
	Rates of Domestic Abuse where children are present	Police Scotland/ VAWG	453 (50.9%)		Number of VPDs submitted per DA incident	557 (59.8%)	
Safeguarding Our Community	Reduce the number of recorded online scams/ frauds/exploitation crimes/complaints	Trading Standards Police Scotland		51 186	Number of complaints	45 241	
	Increase the number of online/digital safety initiatives/presentations	Trading Standards Police Scotland		1 27	Number of presentations	8 31	
	Increase the number of Home Fire Safety Visits	Scottish Fire and Rescue		931	Number of Visits	686	

Reduce Antisocial Behaviour in the Community

The Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004, defines ASB as “behaviour that causes or is likely to cause alarm or distress... or pursuing a course of conduct that causes or is likely to cause alarm or distress to at least one person not of the same household as the perpetrator”.

ASB is a continuous, longstanding process whereby the victims are repeatedly subjected to abusive behaviour from individuals. It includes behaviour such as noise nuisance and other environmental crime, rowdy behaviour, verbal abuse, and intimidation. Where-as crime is doing something forbidden by law and is therefore considered a more serious matter. That said, ASB is serious, because of the impact that the process, repetition, and context can have on complainants, witnesses, and communities.

Each local authority is required to produce an ASB Strategy. In Moray, the ASB Strategy has been included within the Community Safety Strategy. The legislation states that ASB Strategy must include:

- the ASB problems in the council area;
- the services already available for preventing and tackling them (including for people under 16, victims and witnesses of ASB, and people who need mediation to help solve disagreements between neighbours);
- the new services that the council and other agencies will need to put in place to fill any gaps in services; and
- how the council and the police will co-ordinate their work and exchange information.

Community Safety in Moray cannot be seen in isolation from what is happening in the rest of the country. It is essential that in examining what is happening locally, that we also take account of national and regional strategies, policies, and programmes, as well as those of other local partners from across all sectors. Only by benchmarking ourselves and by learning from others, will we be able to truly understand how best to confront our own challenges.

The National ASB Survey

In November 2023, the Scottish Government and Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN) published the detailed findings on the perceptions of current approaches to ASB in Scotland, based on discussions with key stakeholders, including victims and frontline staff (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/reviewing-scotlands-approach-antisocial-behaviour/pages/7/>). The intention of the report was to identify best practice in preventing and tackling ASB.

The survey asked three questions:

1. What changes should be made to the current approach or what further steps should be taken to help prevent antisocial behaviour?
2. What gets in the way of preventing antisocial behaviour?
3. How could we support people better to deal with antisocial behaviour?

The report concluded that “prevention is better than cure and that working collaboratively in partnership is essential to finding long term solutions to address antisocial behaviour and make all of our communities safer and more welcoming places to live”. Findings of the report included:

- Early intervention should be prioritised, in order to prevent ASB, with young people featuring highly.
- Any approach and needs to be targeted towards the right people, at the right time and right place.
- ‘Good work’ in early intervention was being eroded by the cuts.
- ASB work is mostly reactive and ‘firefighting’, rather than proactively tackling issues at an earlier stage.

- The Community Warden role, created after the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004), was set up to help build community relations and trust. It was felt enforcement contradicts the originally intended purpose.
- Enforcement is time consuming and not as effective as community work and relationship building to prevent issues.
- Mental health was felt to be the most prominent root cause linked to antisocial behaviour, both as a root cause as well as a consequence of antisocial behaviour.
- Drug and alcohol use in adults was mentioned regularly as a root cause of antisocial behaviour, with access to addiction and recovery support seen as a part of the problem, and the solution.
- Young people and underage drinking were seen as an issue, often with regards to young people congregating.
- Support within the community was considered as being of particular importance, to help tackle both addictions in adults and youth disorder.
- Poverty and generational poverty is often a root cause of ASB.
- The quality of existing housing stock was brought up most often around housing issues, such as a lack of soundproofing and suitable flooring.

ASB in Moray

The Review assessed the ambition of the Moray Community Safety Strategy to meet the needs of ASB locally and the extent of the success of activities planned, overlaying this with a view of how our findings fit with the national survey.

One of the initial issues discovered was that partners and the public do not have a clear understanding of ASB and the individual roles and responsibilities of the CST and the Police, meaning that some unrealistic expectations have been placed on both the CST and Police Scotland, hampering effective action, and often raising unwarranted criticism. One key issue identified is that when the public dial 101 to report a crime, they are often informed that it is ASB by the call handler, and to call the local authority. The problem here is that the call handlers are often based out of area in places such as Dundee. A 'one size fits all' approach is adopted, and in some instances, these do not tie in with local arrangements. For example, in Moray parking issues are not decriminalised.

Tackling ASB is not a single agency, or single service, responsibility. ASB overlaps many agendas, services and formalised partnerships, and requires a collaborative response. It is evident that improvements could be made to make our interventions more effective by way of enhanced collaborative working across multiple service areas. The lack of joint working and collaboration in the field of ASB, with some partners not feeling able to share information, or feeling that the aims of one partner in relation to a complainant or subject are at odds with their own goals, has on occasions prevented the best outcome for all parties involved.

However, since mid-2023, the concerted efforts of the CSSG to improve the response to ASB and to create or amend procedures to facilitate joint working, has seen progress in some areas of partnership working.

Additionally, a separate pilot project has been set up between the CST and the Housing and Property Services team. This project is being set up to give a more effective and efficient response to low level ASB perpetrated by and to those living within Moray Council properties. The project, due to go live April 2024, will see three Housing Officers taking the role of tackling Category C ASB, such as neighbour disputes, low level dog barking and complaints of 'living noise', which may include issues relating to insulation or floor coverings.

Undoubtedly joint working is more effective than single agency working. The impact of partnership working on the individuals concerned, and the improved ability of the services to resolve the case can clearly be seen in the Case Study below.

Case Study:

Complainant (A) contacted Moray Council CST in 2022, with a complaint of excessive noise and disturbing antisocial behaviours from their neighbour, a Moray Council tenant. This included loud music throughout the day and night, screaming and shouting, urinating in the street, drunken behaviour and littering communal areas. Complaints had also been made to the Police, and Subject (B) was known to the Police.

Engagement with B was very limited, and the issue was viewed through a prism of enforcement. An Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC), a voluntary agreement, was put in place which gave a range of behaviours that B was agreeing not to engage in. The idea being that if B didn't adhere to the agreement their tenancy would be at risk.

The ABC did not include any support for B, no other agency was engaged in the writing of the agreement, nor in giving any input into any needs that B might have. Inevitably the ABC failed, and B breached the agreement on several occasions. Numerous complaints about B's behaviour came in to Moray Council and to the Police, and it became clear that current actions were not working.

At this time, the CSSG had instigated an evaluation of the policies and procedures, resulting in the ASB and ABC Procedures being significantly amended. As part of this process all members of staff from the CST were required to undertake training in Child Protection and Adult Support and Protection, to assist them in recognising vulnerabilities in complainants and subjects.

The amended ABC Procedure makes it clear that all ABC processes must be multi-agency, any vulnerabilities considered, and support offered to meet these needs as part of the agreement. As part of the new procedures, a revised governance structure was put in place. This includes an Agency Case Task Group (ACTg), which brings together relevant professionals in a solution focussed meeting, chaired by the Lead Public Health Officer.

The ACTg met, bringing together Community Warden, Mental Health Social Work, Police and Housing professionals. At the meeting it became clear that B has significant mental health issues, and without support, B would be unlikely to sustain any behavioural change. It was agreed a new ABC would be drawn up with B, with all professionals inputting into the agreement, including detailing any support, and it was agreed that the Community Warden would act as Lead Officer.

This new approach enabled the professionals to share information and to agree on an appropriate response, including, in addition to her existing mental health support:

- weekly check in visits by the Community Warden; and
- support offered for housing and financial issues.

As the Lead Officer the Community Warden, liaised with the other professionals, keeping them informed and asking for help when needed, and communicated with A, to let them know their complaint was being dealt with, in a dynamic process.

The result of these changes to working practices, have seen a dramatic improvement in the behaviour of B, and in the wellbeing of A and A's family, evidencing the benefit of joint working and information sharing.

In Moray, ASB complaints are sent to Moray Council's small CS team of two Community Wardens and a Housing Liaison Officer (HLO), based in Environmental Health. Historically, the team was larger, with five Community Wardens, and worked as part of a partnership. Cuts in budgets in 2018 saw warden numbers reduced to the existing two.

Prior to 2018, the Community Wardens' role had included prevention and early intervention, as well as targeted response. By patrolling in local areas, they built relationships with other agencies and community groups working in the area and with residents. Most notably with young people. Their presence, alongside Youth Workers, meant that any ASB was minimised and the intelligence they passed to Police and other partners prevented an escalation to criminal behaviour for many. Public sector funded services, such as youth services also saw a reduction across Moray, meaning that currently services are operated on a targeted response, often as a crisis intervention.

The move to a targeted response saw the Wardens' role become 'address' based. In practice this means that any complaint must be linked to an individual at a specific Subject's address. In most instances this would not apply to unidentified individuals engaging in antisocial behaviour in the street or in another public space.

The roles of the Community Wardens and the HLO vary. The main differences being that the Wardens can issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) for ASB such as dog fouling, litter, and fly tipping and are able to arrange for abandoned vehicles to be removed. The Wardens' work is chiefly with complainants and subjects not living in Moray Council's housing stock; where-as the HLO has no authority to issue FPNs, and works solely with those living in Council housing, dealing with neighbour nuisance and other antisocial behaviour. There has been too much work for one HLO, and it has been necessary for the Wardens to support the HLO and work with Complainants and Subjects living in council tenancy, despite their lack of knowledge on tenancy specific legislation and regulations.

ASB is categorised into priority levels, A, B and C, with A being the highest. See Appendix D. Each category has a linked timescale for an initial response. These timescales enable Environmental Health and Housing management to benchmark Moray Council's ASB performance against other local authorities through national reporting.

- **Category A** – Contact complainant or Police within 1 working day and resolve case (if investigated by CST) within 20 working days. Most Category A complaints are for criminal activity, which is passed directly to the Police for investigation.
- **Category B** - Contact complainant by phone call/letter/visit within 2 working days to advise of assessment and resolve case within 35 working days.
- **Category C** - Investigate complaint and contact complainant by phone/letter or visit within 5 working days and resolve case within 40 working days.

In 2022, Moray Council's Community Safety Team received 548 complaints for ASB, of which 410 were for unique addresses. In 2023 this rose to 1,066, an increase of 66%, for 449 unique addresses. Complaints for Elgin more than doubled in 2023 and accounted for 43% of all ASB complaints, whilst the number of Category B complaints have more than doubled since 2018, with Category C cases returning to pre-pandemic levels.

In 2023, Police Scotland received 3,236 reports of ASB incidents in Moray, of which 49% were for the Elgin area, with Buckie, Forres, Keith and Lossiemouth jointly accounting for a further 45%. See Police Scotland ASB Incident Map Appendix E.

Our targeted approach means that resources are directed to a specific location or groups of individuals and has limitations. The system's lack of early intervention services and limited resources means that changing where services are targeted is time-consuming, as existing

resources have to be redirected to meet emerging challenges. In many cases this requires additional funding. Applying for external funding is time consuming, with most externally funded work being short-term and not sustainable. The length of time needed to develop funding bids means that the system is not able to give an immediate response and is not able to be as flexible as ASB requires.

The Education, Resources and Communities team, provide initiatives that bring families together in a partnership approach and into contact with support services, to build stronger communities. They also run specific initiatives for young people, such as the Strategic Equity funded work with New Elgin Primary School, which involves a youth worker and new youth club.

The Moray Locality Networks' have a role in raising awareness of emerging trends and themes, with individual Network meetings set up to cover West and East Moray. The Locality Networks' brief is wider than ASB, as they were set up to offer operational level professionals working with children and families, a space for sharing information and best practice, and for raising concerns. As an example, the East Locality Network raised concerns around youth ASB in Buckie. A multi-agency response was agreed, using existing resources. Over a longer period, this led to funding being agreed to support youth work provision through community led groups. The CSSG is keen to strengthen their relationship with the Networks.

Although there are pockets of excellent work happening across Moray, to date the co-ordinated response, which brings together all agencies and services to agree an Action Plan, has not happened. It was also felt that the need for services and the gaps in provision to meet need had not clearly been identified. Recognising this, in November 2023, CSSG set up an ASB Task and Finish Group, and through this group, instigated a review of activities, including the identification of 'hotspot' locations, demographic makeup of individuals engaged in ASB, underpinning issues, and gaps in service delivery. The aim of this work being to enable CSSG to develop a comprehensive and robust multi-agency Action Plan for tackling ASB, and to direct stretched partner resources.

The ASB Task and Finish Group is ongoing at the time of this report, but the findings to date have been included.

Identified location hotspots:

- Elgin – Town centre, Alexandra Road and Cooper Park in the area surrounding the public library. This is close in proximity to the bus station on Alexandra Road, a short distance to the town centre;
- Buckie, Forres, Keith and Lossiemouth – in and around the secondary schools identified as key areas of concern.
- New Elgin – areas surrounding mixed tenure estates, including Meadow Crescent and Bain Road.

Police Scotland received reports in respect of increased perceived ASB during early Summer 2022 with hotspots identified as Elgin Town Centre, Alexandra Road and Cooper Park. It was assessed this was due to improving weather along with the implementation of free travel, resulting in youths from other areas descending on Elgin and congregating.

In Spring 2023, an increase in ASB was again observed in Elgin Town Centre at locations as previously identified, with Stagecoach advising Police that staff and customers were being verbally abused, intimidated, and threatened which had resulted in staff refusing to work certain shifts, and them seeing one member of staff a week leaving the organisation.

Demographic makeup of individuals engaged in ASB (most prevalent):

- Young people – aged 12 to early 20s;
- Concern that large groups of young people are congregating in areas such as Cooper Park, but that there are often adult males present;

Although the Community Wardens and the Moray Community Safety Hub receive complaints of ASB being committed by other groups of individuals, the number and the impact of the complaints about youth ASB is proportionally high.

The adults perceived as committing ASB tend to be linked to neighbour disputes, dog barking and fouling, loud noise within the home, alcohol and drug related ASB and abandoned vehicles. The impact tends therefore to be primarily on immediate neighbours, and therefore fewer people are impacted. Where-as youth ASB tends to impact on a larger number of individuals and not be confined to residential areas. The perception of youth ASB and crime, can have a disproportionately higher impact on how safe people feel in their homes, communities, towns and workplace.

Poor mental health and substance use in adults also features highly in ASB, in terms of cause, and also in exacerbating the difficulties in responding effectively to ASB.

Types of ASB and underpinning issues identified as priority:

- Youth substance use;
- Youth using substances, fire raising and vandalism;
- Youth using substances and being in attendance at school, with one school in Keith noting an issue with higher class of substances being used;
- Young people intimidating businesses during school hours.
- Increase in reports of young people carrying knives, including within school;
- Young people from towns in and out with Moray travel to towns, particularly Elgin to congregate;
- Concerns raised over County lines and intelligence being received that young people are couriering drugs around Moray, using bus services;
- Young people's mental health and school absences.

Partner agencies have been raising concerns about the level of alcohol and substance use, and that the age of young people using substances is getting younger, and that there are significant numbers of young people not in school, or in school but not attending class. Recently there have been incidents reported where young people not at school have entered their school, or a school that they do not attend, and have engaged in disruptive and abusive behaviour.

The free travel for young people has been linked to a rise in young people congregating in the towns, and in particular Elgin. Although the majority of young people congregating come from within Moray, a trend has been noted for young people coming in from the Highlands, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen areas, with reports of a few young people coming from as far as Perth. There are some calls for free travel to be stopped, or restricted. However, most agencies in Moray agree that free travel itself is not the issue, as this ignores that the behaviour of some is the problem, and that limiting or removing free travel could unnecessarily penalise the majority of young people, who do not engage in ASB.

The picture of reductions and changes from proactive to reactive work, and the issues which are driving ASB resonate with what other Community Safety Partnerships and stakeholders are reporting nationally. The Scottish government and the SCSN recognises in their report of November 2023, that the emphasis needs to be on Prevention and Early Intervention. It concluded with a

recommendation to develop and long-term framework for addressing ASB, with a strong focus on steps that can be taken to prevent ASB, as well as considering the effectiveness of current approaches to tackling ASB.

The CSSG also recognises these challenges and will work with both local, and national stakeholders, to affect a robust plan for Moray.

ASBO Panel

Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBO) are a key tool for agencies working with ASB. An ASBO is a preventative order, issued by the court, which prohibits an individual from doing anything described in the order. A breach of an order is a criminal offence.

The Moray ASBO Panel is a multi-agency statutory group that oversees all ASBOs applied for and granted across Moray. The Panel considers any application to the court for an ASBO is robust, is appropriate, and is sufficiently evidenced. It is also responsible for reviewing any existing ASBOs and considers any amendments or revoking of existing terms.

In 2023, two ASBOs were awarded for adults by the court. Although a total of 3 breaches have been recorded, the ASBOs have been effective in reducing the offending of two prolific offenders.

Reduce incidents of Violence and Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse falls under the remit of the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Partnership. Three key priorities for domestic abuse in Moray are:

- Minimising the impact of domestic abuse on children, young people and parents, with Children and Families intervening at the earliest opportunity;
- Moray Council working through the VAWG, with Police Scotland, to identify any lessons that can be learned, in order to improve our response; and
- Liaising with Education to explore ways to support pupils who experience domestic violence.

Police data, for the number of VPDs submitted for domestic abuse incidents which involved a child rose in the year 2022/23, compared to 2019/20 (see Table 2).

TABLE 2: Domestic Abuse Incident VPDs Submitted

	Number of Domestic Abuse Concern Reports	Number involving a child concern	%age involving children
Financial Year 2019/2020	889	453	50.9%
Financial Year 2022/2023	931	557	59.8%

The Progress Report on Equality Outcomes 2023 (reported to and discussed by the Equality and Diversity Corporate Advisory Forum) identifies that although the proportion of children registered due to concerns of domestic abuse had continued to rise during quarter Q4 2023, this increase was due to a decrease in the overall numbers registered. The report states that, “In comparison to 2021/22 the proportions and numbers of children registered for this concern have reduced significantly.”

To ensure that professionals are trained in assessing risk, when children are living in environments where gender-based violence is a risk, the Safe and Together approach is being used. By the end of Q4 2023, 75 staff had been trained across the VAWG partnership.

Regarding supporting pupils who experience domestic abuse, the VAWG partnership intends to have all schools trained in the Mentoring Violence Programme (MVP) for secondary schools and

linked to a network by May 2024. Additional support across all schools is undertaken through Women's aid, and individual families/pupils are identified through the Multiagency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and Child's Planning.

Reduce risks for unintentional harm

The Community Safety Strategy defines unintentional Harm as, 'Predictable and Preventable Unintentional Physical or Psychological Harm.'

Scottish Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS) respond to fire and other emergencies, but also maintain a focus on prevention and protection. The SFRS Moray Local Fire and Rescue Plan 2021 details the priorities which are most significant within Moray and identifies potential solutions to deliver prevention services. SFRS identify a key priority for their service as being, "protecting and responding to those most vulnerable and at risk from fire and/or harm in the home". This includes the reduction of harm from accidental fires in the home and contributing to making the home a safe place to live. SFRS achieves this through collaboration with partners.

SFRS promote and deliver free Home Fire Safety visits across Moray and have a targeted approach to those most vulnerable and at risk from fire and/or harm in the home. Fires in the home are considered a major cause of unintentional harm. There was no real change in the number of accidental dwelling fires between 2016/17 and 2020/21, although the involvement of alcohol had increased. However, the proactive work of SFRS, saw a reduction of 16% in accidental dwelling fires in 2022/23, with those involving substance use remaining static. That said, the Community Safety Strategy Outcome Measure, to Increase the number of Home Fire Safety Visits, as part of the Safeguarding the Community Priority, has not been achieved. SFRS saw a reduction in Home Fire Safety Visits of 26% between 2021/22 and 2022/23.

The SFRS also attend road traffic collisions (RTC) in Moray, alongside Police and the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS). Although the Community Safety Strategy acknowledges that road safety is a key concern for communities across Moray, it was agreed that there would not be any Outcome Measures targeted at road safety, as these are covered within the Moray Road Safety Plan. However, this creates an anomaly for the CSSG, when assessing the success of the Community Safety Strategy.

The draft Moray Road Safety Plan to 2030 takes into account the Safe System Approach to Road Safety which was introduced in the Scottish Road Safety Framework to 2030 (published in 2021). The Moray Road Safety Plan states that, "whilst the overall number of reported accidents is low compared to the rest of Scotland, in Moray over 70% of casualties are injured on non-built up roads (rural roads) compared to just a third of casualties for Scotland as a whole."

Although communities across Moray raise concern about the speed of traffic through built up areas, it is the rural roads on which speed tends to be a factor. Moray Local Policing Plan13 supports the aims of the Moray Road Safety Plan through Operation CEDaR. Operation CEDaR (Challenge, Educate, Detect and Reduce) is the north road safety strategy aimed at casualty reduction and improving safety on the roads within the Police Scotland North Command area. Where appropriate, local initiatives will involve local policing teams and partner agencies to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured in the area and improve the behaviour of drivers of all ages behind the wheel.

Water safety is another area of concern for Moray. Scotland has a disproportionately high level of drownings compared to other areas of the UK. To tackle water safety and reduce the number of tragedies, the Partnership Approach to Water Safety (PAWS) has been developed nationally. This is a multi-agency approach to raising water safety awareness, with PAWS groups being set up locally. The Community Safety Strategy identifies an Outcome Measure of the Number of Outdoor/Water Safety Incidents, but to date no data has been available, to enable the CSSG to look at the impact

of this area. Given the number of water-based activities across Moray's rivers, lochs and sea, this area of work needs further development by the CSSG.

The link between unintentional harm, mental health and the use of alcohol and drugs is significantly evidence. The CSSG has identified that there needs to be a Mental Health Task and Finish Group. Due to the lack of strategic governance, by way of a topic specific strategic partnership for Mental Health, identifying the right individuals with the knowledge and decision-making powers to sit on this group has been challenging. It is hoped that the Mental Health Task and Finish Group will be in action by April 2024.

To further the CSSG's commitment to 'contribute to work that will improve mental health and wellbeing and reduce the risk of suicide', a link has been made with the Suicide Prevention Group (SPG), which has been set up to look at what actions can be employed to reduce the issues that can lead to suicide.

Although many of the actions that lead to unintentional harm, we are able to predict and plan to prevent, we have seen that having sufficient resources to be able to put those plans into action is challenging in the current climate of budgetary constraints.

Reduce the risk of online scams, frauds and exploitation

2022/23 saw a reduction in the number of recorded online scams/ frauds/exploitation crimes/complaints into Trading Standards. Trading Standards have noted that there has been a rise in the number of fraud cases that the courts have been prepared to prosecute.

Conversely, the Police have seen a rise of 23% in the number of reported incidents, between 2022 and 2023.

Online scams are a growing concern. There are many different kinds of scams aimed at private individuals and businesses. The Police and Moray Trading Standards are at the forefront of the work to ensure that our partners, the community, and the business community are aware of online harm and how to recognise it, and also to ensure that vulnerable groups are protected from cybercrime, and victims supported.

However, Scam work is not a statutory requirement for Trading Standards, and following staff vacancies and a reduction in the number of officers in 2023, Trading Standards has had to make the decision to not undertake any scam work at this time.

Both the Police and Trading Standards have increased the number of presentations they have made, or initiatives they have participated in, to raise public awareness of online and digital safety.

Conclusion

It has been a mixed year in terms of results, with some notable successes and some areas where results have not been as expected, such as the rise in violence and reports of neighbour disputes and noise complaints. The reason for these rises in negative behaviours appears to be linked to social factors, including a change in the way and where people work, as well as what appears to be a reduction in tolerance of others. Additionally, the Community Safety Strategy was developed during the Covid pandemic, at a point when none of the agencies could predict that the post-pandemic period would bring a steep rise in mental health issues, drug and alcohol use, and anti-social behaviour, leaving many more in our communities vulnerable, both in terms of the risk to themselves, as well as to the impact from others' behaviour.

At the same time, we have had to rebuild our partnership working to meet these challenges. Although there have been some successes and much improvement, there is still work to be done to ensure that we are able to tackle the current and emerging challenges.

Although there are many formal partnership groups across Moray, specialising in their areas of expertise, the CSSG brings together all aspects of community safety into one arena. Taking information from each of the partnerships as well as from each of the individual partners, to form an overall picture of community safety in Moray. This overview enables the CSSG to identify gaps and trends, and to disseminate its findings to the other partnerships to aid them in their own planning.

The CSSG's review identified many areas for improvement in its governance and its work, and has directed a programme of improvement, much of which has been completed or is underway. To this end, the CSSG is developing an Annual Community Safety Action Plan, that will identify its priorities for the coming twelve months.

APPENDIX A: CSSG MEMBERSHIP

Organisation	Post Title
Moray Council	EH & TS Manager
Moray Council	Principal EHO
Moray Council	Lead Public Health Officer
Moray Council	Research and Information Officer
Moray Council	Head of Economic Growth and Development
Moray Council	Strategic Transport Services Manager
Moray Council	Locality Network Lead Officer
Moray Council	Transportation
Moray Council	Consultancy Manager
Moray Council	Head of Service (MIJB) Social Work
Moray Council	Head of Housing & Property
Moray Council	Head of Education
Moray Council	Community Justice Co-ordinator
Moray Council	ADP Co-ordinator
H M Coastguard	Senior Operational Manager
Scottish Fire & Rescue Service	Station Commander
Scottish Fire & Rescue Service	Watch Commander (LALO for Aberdeenshire & Moray)
Scottish Fire & Rescue Service	Water Safety Scotland Chair of PAWS Group
Moray Health and Social Care Partnership	Lead for Clinical and Care Governance, Clinical Lead for Asylum Seekers, and Refugees
Police Scotland	Chief Inspector-North East Division Area Commander-Moray
Police Scotland	Chief Inspector
Police Scotland	Inspector - Partnerships, Preventions, Interventions & Events
NHS	Health Intelligence

APPENDIX B: CSSG TERMS OF REFERENCE

Community Safety Strategic Group

Terms of Reference

Purpose

To review Community Safety Strategy annual and as necessary depending on emerging issues

To monitor progress against the strategy outcomes

To oversee all the partners activities in relation to delivering identified outcomes

To ensure resources are directed towards delivering outcomes

Membership

Moray Council: Community Safety; Economic Growth and Development; Roads; Environmental And Commercial Services; Education; Social Work

Police Scotland

Scotland Fire and Rescue Service

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

NHS

Accountability

Annual report to: Community Planning Officers Group

Housing and Community Safety Committee

Review

The Community Safety Strategy to be reviewed every 3 years

Working methods

Meet quarterly to: discuss progress against outcomes

Identify any emerging issues not already covered in strategy

To create subgroups to investigate specific topics

To review output of subgroups and direct resources as required

The chair will be held for 1 year by one of the partners and rotate each year.

APPENDIX C: COMMUNITY SAFETY HUB TERMS OF REFERENCE



Moray Council
Moray Community Safety Hub
Terms of Reference

DOCUMENT REVISION HISTORY				
Date	Revision Number	Details of Revision	Procedural Notification	Revised by
01/12/2023	V2.0	Initial Draft		Chrissy Stower

Responsible Officer:	Environmental Health & Trading Standards Manager
Last Review Date:	October 2023
Reviewed By:	Chrissy Stower, Lead Public Health Officer
Next Review Date:	October 2026
SS Index Number:	ENV/XXXX

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 Moray Community Safety Hub (The Hub) is a local partnership meeting that supports the Scottish government's policy aim "*to enable everyone in Scotland to live in communities where they feel secure and are safe from harm*". The Hub uses a trauma-informed, person-centred approach that prevents, reduces and responds to risk taking behaviour and crime, and the impact of related harm, in relation to local vulnerable individuals and communities.
- 1.2 It is a forum for operational staff to consider the appropriate multi-agency response to individual complex cases to be discussed and problem solved and where appropriate, appropriate resources allocated or escalation processes invoked.
- 1.3 Under the direction of the Community Safety Strategic Group (CSSG), the Hub will undertake annual reviews of case outcomes to ensure learning.

2. GOVERNANCE

- 2.1 The Hub will report to the Moray CSSG. The governance and reporting arrangements for the CSSG sit with the Moray Community Planning Partnership (CPP) structure.

3. MEETINGS

- 3.1 The Hub meeting will be held weekly, currently Tuesday at 10am, via MS Teams.
- 3.2 An agenda for the meeting and details of cases to be discussed will be circulated no later than 1 working day before the meeting to enable each agency to research those to be discussed.
- 3.3 Attendees will be advised of the confidentiality statement at the start of each meeting and any papers circulated should be classed as confidential. Notes from the meeting and actions will be recorded during the meeting and circulated within 24 hours.
- 3.4 The reasons for adding a case for discussion and removing it from the Hub will be recorded.
- 3.5 A record of attendance will be kept and attendees will be advised of the confidentiality statement at the start of each meeting.

4. MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 Membership of the Hub shall be open to voluntary and statutory organisations active in Moray Community Safety Partnership and with an operational role to play in improving community safety and **who are signatories** to the Moray Information Sharing Protocol.

Current Statutory Members:

- Moray Council – Environmental Health
- Moray Council – Trading Standards

- Moray Council – Housing
- Moray Council – Health and Social Care
- Police Scotland
- NHS Scotland
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Others currently by invitation only for specific cases

4.2 **Role of the Chair**

The Chair shall be responsible for ensuring that meetings are run in accordance with the following standards:

- Firmly but fairly chaired, permitting everyone to contribute in a wide-ranging debate, where individuals are treated with respect and without discrimination.
- Focused on the key issues, with a summary following each discussion and clarification of allocated actions for the action plan.
- Having time to receive a presentation on an item of importance or interest.

4.3 **Roles and responsibilities of attendees**

Attendees at the Hub meetings should:-

- Attend regularly and punctually and nominate a suitably qualified replacement if unable to attend.
- Pre-read the agenda for the Hub and undertake research in respect of their agency knowledge/involvement of those to be discussed.
- Where possible, have access to live systems at the Hub meeting to give up to date, accurate information.
- Ensure that actions agreed at the Hub are completed on time and to take responsibility for completion of these actions.
- Offer constructive, professional advice on all relevant cases and if necessary challenge single agency decision making and thresholds.
- Work together to find solutions to the cases/issues raised at the Hub (albeit this could be part of the meeting similar to the daily meetings in other areas).

5. **CO-ORDINATION AND SCHEDULING**

5.1 The coordination of any activities, related to cases discussed, lies with the members of the Hub. Any tasks allocated to individuals, by the members, will be recorded in the Hub Tasking Document, which will be circulated to the members within 24 hours of the Hub meeting. All allocated tasks will be completed within an agreed timeframe.

5.2 Any professional that agrees to be tasked by the Hub with undertaking activities, will be responsible for ensuring that the task is completed within the agreed timescale. They will also be responsible for reporting back to the Hub meeting on the outcome of the tasks, unless agreed otherwise by the Chair.

6. REFERRAL PROCESS

6.1 New referrals for the meeting should be sent to CommunitySafety@moray.gov.uk no later than 2 days before the meeting and include as much information as it is possible to supply, for example, full name, address and date of birth, along with (if known) details of any children or vulnerable adults at the property.

An urgent case may be raised 'on the day' but this should be by exception.

6.2 Any cases that the Hub feels it cannot resolve should be escalated appropriately, either to individual agency management or formal risk management groups.

7. WHICH CASES (INDIVIDUALS) SHOULD BE DISCUSSED AT THE HUB

7.1 The decision to discuss a case at hub rests with the members of the hub. The primary focus though is in the following areas:

- Complex cases where there has not been a satisfactory outcome to date.
- Cases where discussion at the Hub may engage other agencies not currently involved in the case, or professionals from other backgrounds who may be able to suggest an alternative approach.
- Cases where there is significant or disproportionate harm to an individual or the wider community that does not reach a single agency threshold for positive intervention and/or where the overall risk/harm may challenge that single agency threshold decision.
- Cases where vulnerable individuals are at risk and the vulnerability faced has not been reduced.
- Cases where in the view of the professionals in attendance, it is necessary to have a multi-agency discussion to reduce risk or to agree to invoke the escalation process to a more appropriate multi-agency group.
- Coordination, scheduling and planning of significant multi-agency operations.
- Individuals whose demand on one or more agency is causing a significant and disproportionate drain on that agencies resources (repeat offenders).

7.2 A case should not be discussed at the Hub for the sole purpose of obtaining information from one of the partner agencies at the meeting.

8. INFORMATION SHARING

8.1 The requirements for sharing information are:

- All organisations shall be signatories to the Moray Information Sharing Protocol or a recognised agency under statutory information sharing protocols.
- Any information will be treated as restricted. It will be kept and ultimately disposed of in a secure manner and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (the GDPR) which came into force on 25 May 2018 and the Data Protection Act 2018 (the DPA).
- All agencies should ensure that the minutes are retained in a confidential and appropriately restricted manner. These minutes will aim to reflect that all individuals who

are discussed at these meetings should be treated fairly, with respect and without improper discrimination.

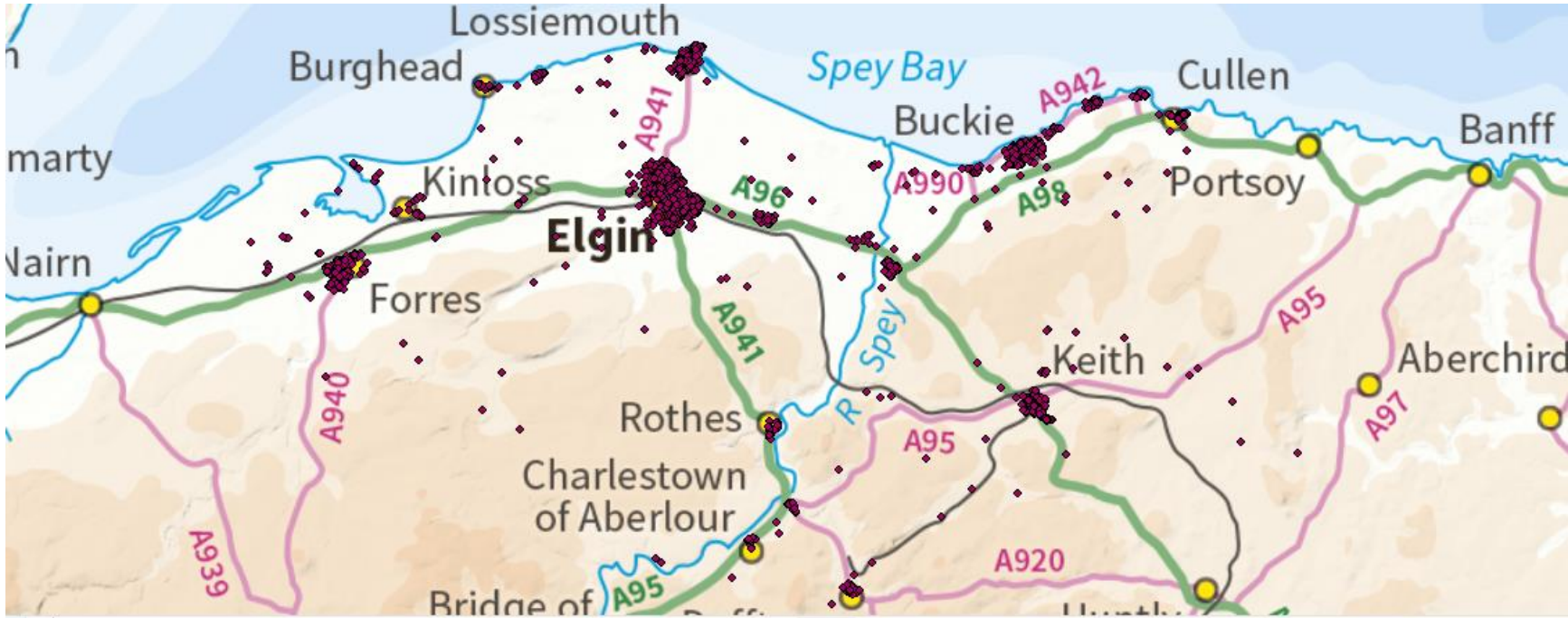
- All work undertaken at the meetings will be informed by a commitment to equal opportunities and effective practice issues in relation to race, gender, sexuality and disability.
- Staff will only share information that is proportionate, relevant and appropriate. This is a professional judgement which staff must make in line with the principles of the Moray Information Sharing Protocol. The information disclosed can assist other agencies to make appropriate decision and interventions, but may not be disclosed, copied or divulged to any other agency and that information only used in relation to the context for which it was disclosed.

APPENDIX D: ASB PRIORITY LEVELS

	Investigating Department	Categories	Timescale Acknowledgement of Complaint	Investigation Response Timescale
<p>Category A</p> <p>Severe ASB to be reported to Police Scotland for investigation.</p> <p>To CST for info only.</p>	<p>Police</p>	<p>Assault Violence towards another person.</p> <p>Drugs Drug dealing</p> <p>ASB Driving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Racing Cars ▪ Off Road Driving <p>Drinking in Public</p> <p>Underage Drinking</p> <p>Intimidation/Harassment: Causing alarm or annoyance by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Groups or individuals making threats ▪ Verbal Abuse ▪ Sending nasty/offensive letters. □ <p>Obscene/nuisance phone calls. □ Menacing gestures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Serious disturbance 	<p>Within 1 working day from the date of receipt of the complaint.</p>	<p>Where possible and appropriate, visit/interview complainant and contact Police within 2 working days.</p>

<p>Category A</p> <p>ASB will be assessed by ASB team and referred to Police Scotland where deemed necessary.</p>	<p>CST</p>	<p>Intimidation/Harassment: Threatening behaviour (severity to be assessed by ASB team). If ongoing to be referred direct to Police Scotland.</p> <p>Vandalism: Vandalism/damage to property (severity to be assessed by ASB team).</p>	<p>Within 1 working day from the date of receipt of the complaint.</p>	<p>Where possible and appropriate, visit/interview complainant and contact Police within 2 working days.</p>
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APPENDIX E: POLICE SCOTLAND ASB INCIDENT MAP, 2023





REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON 7 MAY 2024

SUBJECT: EVALUATION OF TENANCY SUSTAINMENT FUND

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the review and evaluation of the Tenancy Sustainment Fund (TSF) which operated in the course of the rent campaign during March 2024 and to seek Committee approval for its establishment on a recurring basis.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III G (1c) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to dealing with the levy, collection, payment and recovery of Council house rents.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

- (i) considers and notes the review and evaluation of the Tenancy Sustainment Fund (TSF) as detailed in Section 4;**
- (ii) notes the reduction in rent arrears achieved in March 2024 as detailed in paragraph 4.7;**
- (iii) approves the establishment of a TSF on an ongoing basis in line with the principles set out in paragraphs 4.5 and 4.9; and**
- (iv) delegates authority to the Head of Housing and Property to extend protections under the rent harmonisation approach for adversely impacted tenants and for discretion in applying a further rent free period in 'week 53', as set out in paragraph 4.10.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 13 February 2024, the Housing and Community Safety Committee approved the implementation of a revised Rent Setting Policy (Item 7 of the Minute refers). At the meeting, Committee also granted approval for a rent campaign incorporating the operation of a TSF to assist vulnerable Council tenants who are facing financial hardship due to the cost of living crisis.

- 3.2 Having made every effort to prevent arrears and escalation, there will remain instances where a tenant falls into arrears far beyond their ability to repay in any reasonable period. In such cases, there is a risk of tenancy failure and associated costs.
- 3.3 A TSF can provide limited and conditional relief to tenants who have fallen into arrears and where collection is uneconomic and the cost of collection and/or potential tenancy failure will exceed the balance being pursued.
- 3.4 The aim of the TSF was to support tenancy sustainment and remove the threat of homelessness by offering financial assistance where full repayment of arrears was uneconomic or inappropriate due to financial hardship.
- 3.5 It was agreed the TSF would initially operate from 1 March 2024 until 31 March 2024 and the associated costs being covered by monies remaining in the Service Development Budget for 2023/24. During the same period a rent campaign was to be run alongside to target high level rent arrears cases.
- 3.6 An evaluation of the TSF and the rent campaign were to be completed to establish if their objectives were met and assess if the TSF should be implemented on a recurring basis with allocated budget provision from the Housing Revenue Account.

4. Review and Evaluation

- 4.1 In the course of the rent campaign, extensive contact was made with tenants with arrears balances in order to understand how it had arisen and impediments to timely repayment. This activity was particularly targeted at those with the highest balances.
- 4.2 It is evident that the turbulent economic circumstances of recent years, notably the pandemic and subsequent cost of living crisis, has caused some households financial difficulties which they are struggling to recover from. Although the percentage of arrears for Moray Council tenants has accordingly increased over this period (from 2.39% in 2020/21 to 3.55% in 2022/23), the level of arrears for our tenants remains comparatively low in relation to our benchmarked peer group (5.28%) and local authorities as a whole (6.55%).
- 4.3 Following the enhancement of housing management capacity in the course of 2023/24, a focus on arrears has initially plateaued and subsequently reversed the trend of increasing arrears balances and the Council has also recommenced eviction proceedings in a limited number of instances following the expiry of the eviction ban which had been put in place to protect tenants over this period.
- 4.4 The TSF operated from 1 March 2024 to 31 March 2024 and was administered by the three Area Housing Management Teams (Central, East and West). Application referrals were made by Area Housing Officers, providing a narrative on the arrears background, balance outstanding, payment history, details of income, reason for hardship and the amount requested. Referrals were assessed by a panel constituted of the Area Housing Managers and the Housing Services Manager.

4.5 Each case was considered on its own merit, and it had to be clearly demonstrated that the tenant was in financial hardship and repayment was uneconomic or unrealistic. The following criteria were used to assess applications but were not exhaustive:

- Tenant was experiencing difficulty paying their rent and /or fuel costs;
- Rent account in arrears;
- Payments or repayment agreement in place;
- Tenants that previously received financial support via the Tenant Hardship Fund (Scottish Government temporary funding during the pandemic) may be considered if they have exceptional circumstances;
- Tenants made aware it was a one-off payment; and
- The tenant must meet their ongoing rent obligation and payments towards arrears following an award from the fund.

4.6 There were 150 TSF referrals received, with 116 receiving financial assistance and 34 referrals being unsuccessful. The total amount awarded came to £60,000, averaging £517.24 per application. The highest individual award was £2,500, with the lowest being £100. The unsuccessful applications were a combination of no financial hardship evidenced, arrears had been cleared/substantially reduced, lack of engagement/commitment from tenant, too risky given the high level of arrears and there was no money left in the fund.

4.7 The TSF and the rent campaign during March 2024 achieved its performance objectives by reducing overall value (£) and number of tenants in arrears and saw a reduction in the number of high value rent arrears cases (tenancies which owe in excess of £1,000).

	29 February 24	31 March 24	Change +/-
Total rent arrears	£923,569	£749,448	-£174,121
Total no. in arrears	1810	1468	-342
Accounts > £1000	259	189	-70

4.8 Early results from the TSF pilot month showed that engagement with tenants and recourse to the TSF has helped Area Housing Officers build trust and better relationships with tenants in need and is encouraging more meaningful engagement around rent arrears whilst reducing expensive legal actions and preventing homelessness.

4.9 Based on the impact of the initial scheme, it is proposed that a Tenancy Sustainment Fund is established on an ongoing basis, to be administered by officers and its activities to be periodically reported to and effectiveness monitored by Committee. Within the HRA budget for 2024/25 there is provision of £200k for Service Development, which is available to underwrite the operation of the scheme. It is proposed that an initial sum of £60k is earmarked for the remainder of the financial year, which may also be offset/augmented by the provision for bad debts which are expected to reduce as a consequence of the scheme's operation.

4.10 Following the implementation of the Council's revised rent setting policy from 1 April 2024, whilst the Council's rents remain considerably below sector and market comparators and a 'capping' provision is in place for the rent harmonisation period, it is acknowledged that a limited number of tenants may struggle with the transition. Accordingly, it is proposed that delegated authority to extend the transitional provisions to mitigate this impact is approved. This would enable Housing Officers to seek an adjustment which may include a lower cap, extended harmonisation period or deferred implementation of an increase in circumstances where adverse financial impact on the household is determined. This year also includes a '53rd rent week', which arises every six years depending on how the days/dates fall. Officers had retained the usual four 'free weeks' for 2024/25 however engagement with other authorities has identified a potential issue with benefit payments, accordingly the discretion to apply a fifth 'free week' is sought to avoid detriment.

5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

The provisions within this report closely align with the priorities identified within the Corporate Plan, particularly the objectives to have a strong and sustained focus on those individuals and groups in our society who experience the most disadvantage and discrimination and the need to switch attention to those in greatest need to prevent an issue becoming a problem.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

(c) Financial implications

Implementation of the provisions contained within the report will assign HRA Service Development budget of up to £60k to underwrite the proposed establishment of a Tenancy Sustainment Fund, noting that this may be offset against or augmented by the bad debt provision and effectiveness will be monitored at committee. Extending the rent harmonisation provisions in a limited number of instances will have a negligible effect on the wider rental income projections and will be monitored by officers. Applying a fifth rent free week will have a limited impact on income, arising from the straddling of financial years.

(d) Risk Implications

There is a risk of an increase in enforcement action if the provisions of this report are not implemented. Officers will also be vigilant that the supportive principles outlined within this report do not undermine the responsibility tenants have for contractual payment of rent.

(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

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

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

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

(i) Consultations

Consultations have taken place with the Head of Housing and Property Services, Housing Needs Manager, Georgina Anderson, Legal Services Solicitor, Chief Financial Officer, Alistair Milne, Service Accountant, 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.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The rent campaign and initial operation of a tenancy sustainment fund has contributed to a reduction in rent arrears in March 2024.

6.2 Establishing these provisions on an ongoing basis, as well as making provision to extend of transitional arrangements for rent harmonisation and discretion for 'week 53' is expected to underpin high levels of rent collection and affording tenants support where required.

6.3 Periodic reporting of service performance in these areas as well as eviction actions will be provided to Committee.

Author of Report: David Munro, Housing Services Manager

Background Papers: [Rent Setting Policy Review Update](#)
[Rent Setting Policy Review Update - Appendix I](#)
[Rent Setting Policy Review Update - Appendix II](#)

Ref: SPMAN-1285234812-1540



REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON 7 MAY 2024

SUBJECT: TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2024-2029

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the Committee with the revised draft Tenant Participation Strategy (2024-2029) for approval (**Appendix I**), following a recent consultation with tenants.
- 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) considers the feedback received during the consultation period;**
- (ii) approves the revised draft Tenant Participation Strategy 2024-2029 for implementation as set out in APPENDIX I; and**
- (iii) notes that there were no changes made to the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) at APPENDIX II following the consultation.**

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).
- 3.4 On 21 November 2023, this Committee agreed to a wider consultation on the draft Tenant Participation Strategy 2024-2029 with key stakeholders (paragraph 8 of the Minute refers).

4. CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 4.1 The consultation period ran from 22 November 2023 to 16 February 2024. Feedback was gathered through an online survey and the Moray Tenants' Forum were also consulted. Tenants with email addresses (3,845 tenants) were contacted informing them of the consultation. The online survey was publicised in the winter 2023 issue of the Tenants' Voice newsletter, which all tenants receive by post. Paper copies of the survey were available on request. The online survey was promoted on the Council's website and social media platforms. A prize draw incentive of a £75 shopping voucher was used to encourage tenants to respond.
- 4.2 The consultation survey asked key questions relating to the draft Tenant Participation Strategy 2024-2029 including:
- whether tenants supported the Strategy;
 - whether tenants found the Strategy easy to read and understand;
 - whether tenants felt any parts should be reworded;
 - whether tenants felt anything was missing;
 - whether tenants thought anything should be removed; and
 - an opportunity to provide general comments about the Strategy.

5. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 5.1 The consultation received 96 responses. An overview of the results and comments received is set out below.

Do you support the revised Tenant Participation Strategy?

- 5.2 Out of the 96 responses received, 95 (99%) supported the revised Strategy.

Do you find the Tenant Participation Strategy easy to read and understand?

- 5.3 There were 95 responses to this question, 90 (95%) of these found the revised Strategy easy to read and understand.

Is there a section that you would like to see reworded?

- 5.4 There were 95 responses received for this question and only 2 (2%) of these wanted to see a section reworded. However, their comments related to parking and repairs, areas not relevant to the Strategy. Following consideration of the responses received, no changes were made.

Is there something that we've missed that you think should be included?

5.5 There were 94 responses to this question. The majority of those responding 89 (95%) did not think anything had been missed. The remaining 5 respondents (5%) who felt something had been missed provided comments relating to:

- Repairs (3 respondents)
- Local amenities and infrastructure (1 respondent)
- Assistance for vulnerable tenants (1 respondent)

5.6 Consideration was given to the feedback received, however since these were not relevant to the Strategy no changes were made.

Is there anything you think should be removed?

5.7 There were 95 responses to this question and of these 93 (98%) did not think anything should be removed. 2 respondents (2% of those who answered this question) thought something should be removed. The comments received regarding what should be removed were unrelated to the Tenant Participation Strategy.

Do you have any other comments on our Tenant Participation Strategy?

5.8 There were 5 respondents who provided additional comments. Although these comments were taken into consideration, they did not require any changes to be made to the strategy and were in relation to:

- the Strategy being fair;
- allocation decisions;
- feeling that the Housing Service will not listen;
- tenant participation being “words and no action”; and
- repairs.

6. 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, notably the priorities to ensure that Moray offers caring and healthy communities for all of our citizens, to empower communities to build capacity by becoming more informed, involved and influential in service design and delivery and to improve our understanding of the issues in our communities based on the experience of local people in order to target resources.

(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 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.

(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 Lissa Rowan, Committee Services Officer. Their comments have been reflected within the report.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 This report provides the Housing and Community Safety Committee with the consultation results for the draft Tenant Participation Strategy 2024-2029 and presents a revised draft Strategy for approval.

Author of Report: Rebecca Irons, Customer Engagement Officer
Background Papers: [Tenant Participation Strategy 2017-2020](#)
Ref: SPMAN-1285234812-1534

Draft Tenant Participation Strategy 2024-2029





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

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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:**



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.

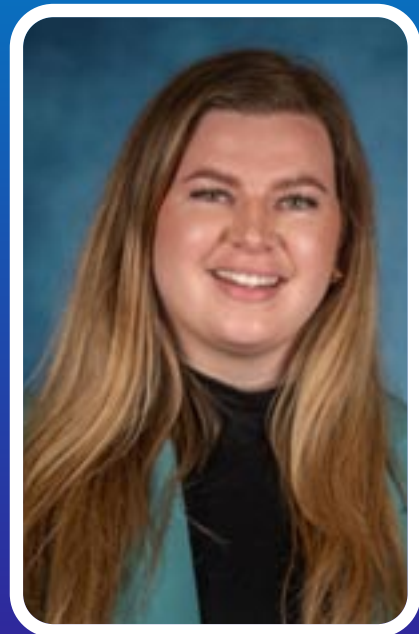
We want to continue to develop participation opportunities with a focus on increasing levels of involvement, especially from our under-represented groups. The development of this new Strategy also takes account of the changing context we are working in and the opportunities that we now have to modernise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

Tenant involvement benefits tenants, staff and their landlords. 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



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:



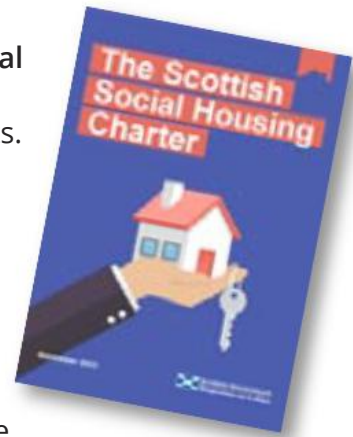
We have duties to:

- 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.

We are 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

We are 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 we have 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. Proposals for the rented sector set out how existing strengths and experiences in tenant participation will be built upon. 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.



Local Housing Strategy

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 takes 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:



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.

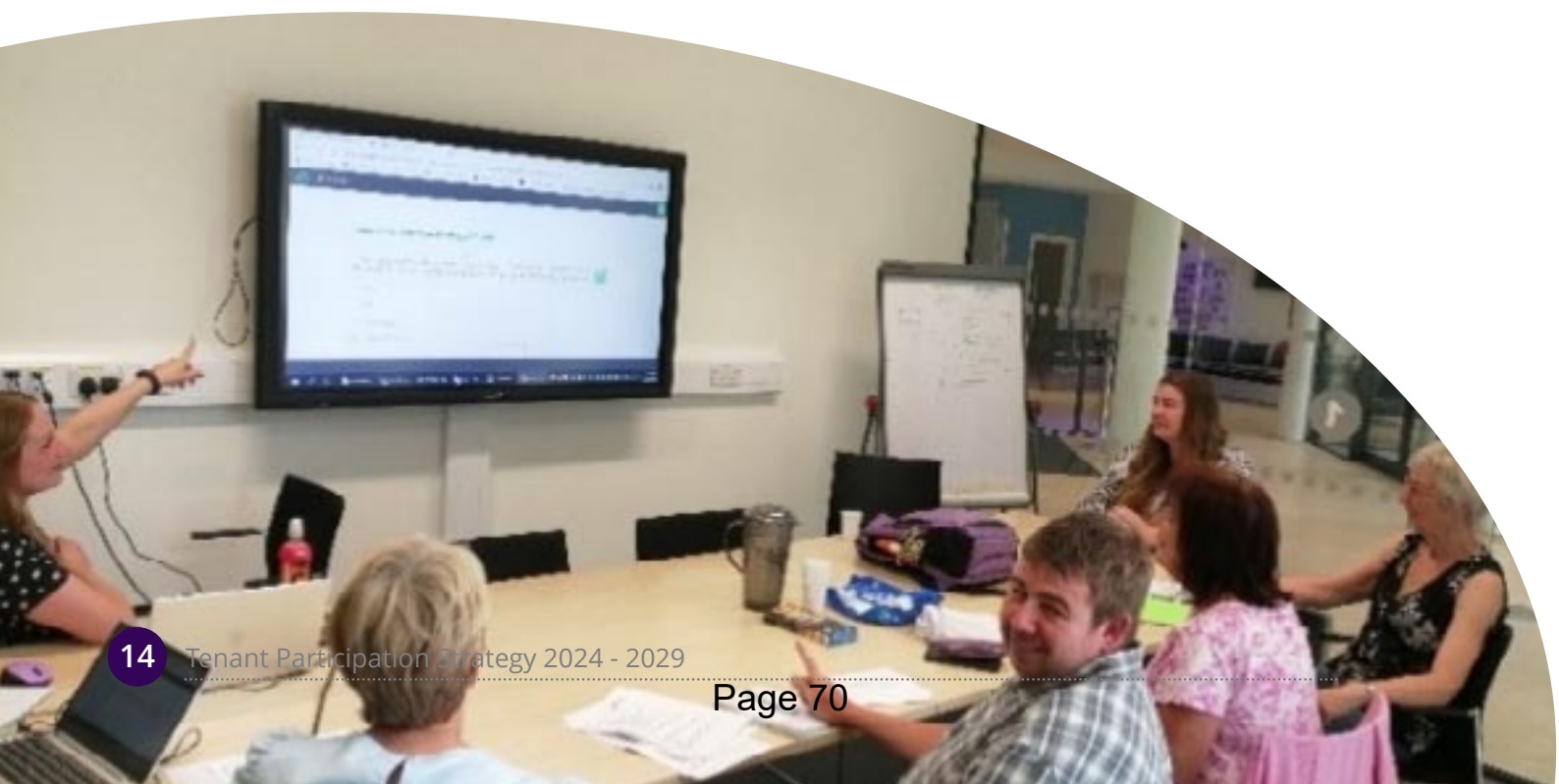
The 3 outcomes of our Tenant Participation Strategy are set out below:

Outcome 1
A strong representation of tenant's views and a wide range of engagement opportunities.

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.

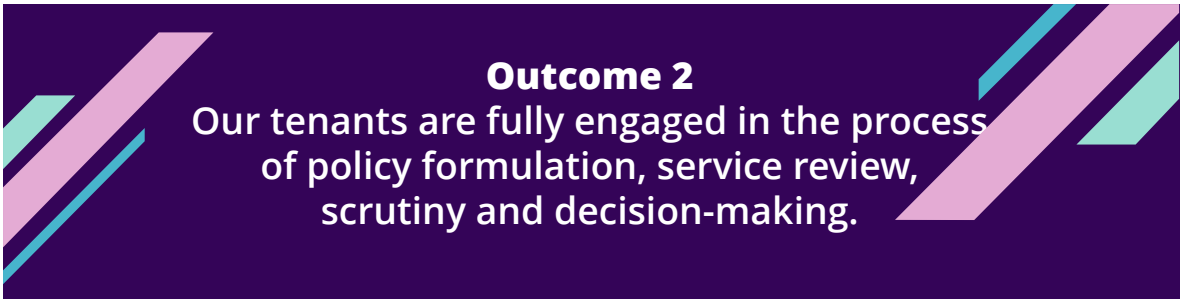
The Covid-19 pandemic significantly changed the way we work and communicate. Social media and online meeting platforms such as Microsoft Teams enabled us to continue to meet and communicate with tenants and housing networks whilst social restrictions were in place. Digital opportunities can be a convenient 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 prefer 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.
-  Make sure 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 a housing function Committee, currently the Housing and Community Safety Committee.
-  Set up short-life tenant working groups to independently review areas of 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 program 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.

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 our 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 program 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 a 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 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.

Moray Tenants Forum



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

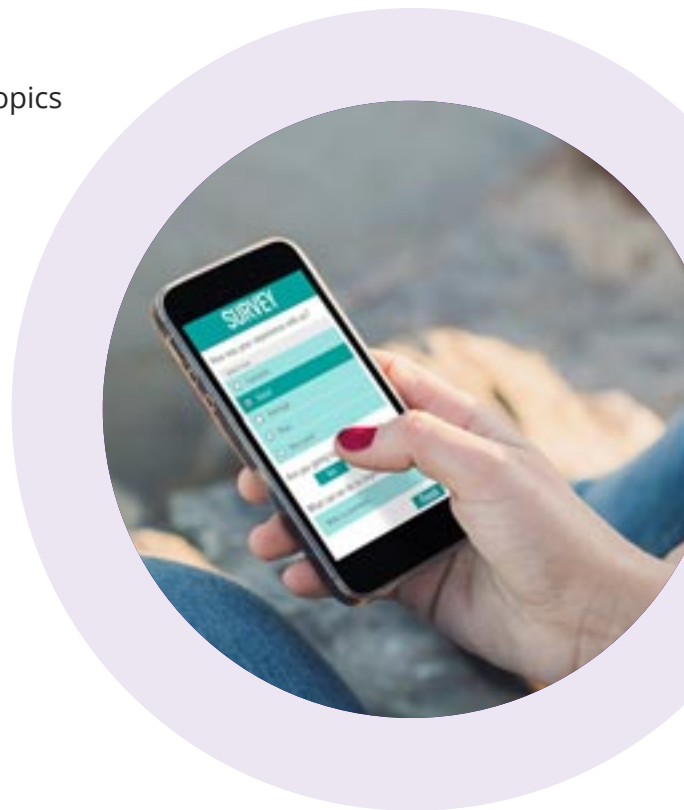
We will sometimes organise themed meetings or working groups on a particular area of interest. This gives an opportunity for smaller groups of tenants to get involved in an area that interests them the most.

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.



www.facebook.com/groups/MorayCouncilTenants
or scan the QR code.



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](https://www.moray.gov.uk/newsroom);
- information on our website at www.moray.gov.uk/housing;
- 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;**
-  **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:



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 venues.
- 🏠 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



tenantparticipation@moray.gov.uk

Action Plan

Outcome 1: A strong representation of tenants' views and a wide range of engagement opportunities.

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

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

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

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

Outcome 2: Our tenants are fully engaged in the process of policy formulation, service review, scrutiny and decision making.

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Responsibility	When we will do it	Outcomes
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.
		Make sure that enough time is provided for you to give your views.	Customer Engagement Officer / Housing Policy Team	Ongoing	Tenants can get involved in influencing housing across Moray and how their rent is spent.
		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	Tenants are aware of the impact of customer feedback on service delivery.
		Invite tenants from the Register of Interested Tenants and others to participate in short life review groups.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	Tenants influence where improvement works are carried out.
		Promote estate walkabouts and ensure they are carried out in line with the Estate Management Policy.	Housing Asset Manager	Ongoing Annually	

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Responsibility	When we will do it	Outcomes
		Promote good news stories where tenants have impacted change.	Customer Engagement Officer / All Staff	Ongoing	Tenants who feel they are kept informed about our services and decisions exceeds the local authority average.
		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.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing Annually	
2.2	Strengthen the capacity of Moray Tenant Forum.	Promote the Forum and recruit new members.	Customer Engagement Officer / All Staff	Ongoing	Increased number of Moray Tenant Forum members.
		Consider impact of timing and meeting venue on attendance.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	
		Offer a hybrid option to join Forum meetings.	Customer Engagement Officer	By December 2024	
		Work with the Forum to review their branding/ logo, constitution, and code of practice.	Customer Engagement Officer	By December 2026	

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

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Responsibility	When we will do it	Outcomes
		Promote and support regional tenant scrutiny opportunities through groups such as NETRALT and NTP.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	delivery.
2.5	Continue to report on our performance and how we compare with other social landlords.	Produce an Annual Performance Report in consultation with tenants/ tenant editing group.	Senior Housing Officer (Information) / Customer Engagement Officer	Annually, by 31 October	Tenants have access to performance information which is easy to understand.
		Provide performance information in each edition of the tenants' newsletter, Tenants' Voice.	Senior Housing Officer (Information) / Customer Engagement Officer	Annually, winter edition	Improvement in tenants reporting that they find the Annual Performance Report relevant to them.
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.

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Responsibility	When we will do it	Outcomes
3.1	Communicate effectively with tenants, council staff and elected members.	Provide good quality information that is clear, in plain language and can be accessed in a range of different formats.	Customer Engagement Officer / Housing Policy Team	Ongoing	<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>
		Provide information online and issue documents in hard copy on request.	Customer Engagement Officer / Housing Policy Team / All Staff	Ongoing	
		Create a tenant approved editing group for all publications to make sure information is clear and accessible.	Customer Engagement Officer	By December 2026	
		Maintain a register of tenants who require information in alternative formats or need specific assistance to effectively participate.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	
		Review and improve existing tenant and tenant participation information including leaflets, Council website	Customer Engagement Officer	By December 2026 and ongoing	

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Responsibility	When we will do it	Outcomes
		and other documents to make sure it is easy to understand and accessible.			
		Develop an information pack for tenants and a welcome pack for Moray Tenant Forum members.	Customer Engagement Officer	By May 2025	
		Develop a tenant guide to accessing digital engagement opportunities.	Customer Engagement Officer	By May 2025	
		Make Moray Tenant Forum documents available online including: constitution, code of conduct and meeting minutes.	Customer Engagement Officer	By December 2024	
		Use of tenant approved stamp on housing service documents.	Customer Engagement Officer / Housing Policy Team	Ongoing	
		Review the design and content of our tenant newsletter, Tenants' Voice, with tenants.	Customer Engagement Officer	By May 2026	

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Responsibility	When we will do it	Outcomes
3.2	Provide professional development and training opportunities.	Review the training needs of tenants, staff and elected members. Develop a flexible training programme to support tenant participation activities, including accredited opportunities.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing Annually	Improvement in tenants reporting that they find the newsletter useful through the three yearly tenant survey. Tenant representatives staff and Elected Members are aware of developments in TP.
		Provide training to support housing staff knowledge and understanding of Tenant Participation.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	
		Develop and deliver informal one-off learning opportunities "want to know more sessions" to develop interest in tenant participation activities.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	
		Customer Engagement Officer to undertake TPAS Certificate in Tenant Participation.	Customer Engagement Officer	By January 2024	

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Responsibility	When we will do it	Outcomes
		Enable tenant representatives, staff and elected members to attend relevant in-person and online professional activities such as the annual TPAS conference.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	
		Prepare support and training material for tenants involved in scrutiny activities.	Customer Engagement Officer	By December 2026	
		Identify good practice and innovation through continued partnership working and networking, attendance at seminars and events. Consider their development in Moray.	Customer Engagement Officer	Ongoing	

Monitoring and Evaluation

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Responsibility	When we will do it	Outcomes
4.1	Monitor and review this action plan on a regular basis.	Set up Tenant Participation Strategy Monitoring group.	Customer Engagement Officer	By May 2024	Progress is scrutinised and improvement actions agreed.
		Present an annual review of the strategy to the Housing and Community Safety Committee.	Customer Engagement Officer	May 2025, then annually	
		Publicise the results of the annual strategy review.	Customer Engagement Officer	Annually	
		Report updates to tenant participation through the Tenants' Voice and our social media channels.	Customer Engagement Officer	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

<p>Do you need additional information in order to complete the information in the previous questions?</p> <p>No.</p>
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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: 23 April 2024
Permission to publish on website - yes	
Please return this form to the Equal Opportunities Officer, Chief Executive's Office.	



REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON 7 MAY 2024

SUBJECT: HOUSING INVESTMENT 2024/25

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report informs the Committee of the planned investment work included within the Housing Investment Programme 2024/25 for which budget was approved at Council meeting on 28 February 2024 (paragraph 8 of the Minute refers).
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III G (3) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the maintenance of the Council's housing stock.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee consider and:-

- (i) notes the planned works which will improve the Council's Housing stock;**
- (ii) approves the improvement actions detailed in Appendix II; and**
- (iii) delegates authority to the Head of Housing and Property, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and Chair of this Committee, to bring forward budgetary provision from future years in line with capacity to deliver per paragraph 4.2.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council meeting of 28 February 2024 approved the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Annual Budget for 2024-25 (paragraph 8 of the Minute refers). Within this approved budget there is the Housing Investment Plan budget **APPENDIX I** shows the approved budget for 2024/25 along with indicative budgets for 2025/26 and 2026/27.
- 3.2 The Housing Investment Plan reflects the investment priorities which tenants identified within the most recent tenant survey and regulatory requirements.

The Council has also recently undertaken a stock condition survey to direct future investment in our properties, including replacement of older/inefficient heating systems as well as delivery of other home improvements (i.e. new kitchens, bathrooms, windows, etc.).

- 3.3 The HRA Business Plan provides for the level of investment required to meet Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) standards. This indicates that the level of investment activity will increase significantly in future years and a project board has been constituted to coordinate and monitor the planning and expanded capacity needed to deliver the enhanced output. Projections in this area will remain subject to economic influences and supply chain variables, however being managed as a multi-year programme, this oversight will manage fluctuations in cost and availability. This may, however, lead to single year variances within the overall programme, which is typical of a multifaceted plan of this scale and complexity.
- 3.4 In addition to the routine repairs and maintenance of the Council's housing stock, the key focus of the Housing Investment Plan remains on investing to meet the provisions of the SHQS and the ESSH.
- 3.5 Whereas the Council is generally performing well as a landlord across the range of benchmarked performance indicators, there is an identified need for improvement in relation to SHQS and ESSH.
- 3.6 As at 31 March 2023, 15% of our stock met SHQS, compared with 61% of our peer group, 71% for local authorities and 79% for all benchmarked landlords (including housing associations). Moray Council's performance had dropped from over 90% in 2020/21 following an enhancement of the standard to include both the energy efficiency provisions of ESSH and in 2022/23 further enhancements in relation to fire safety and electrical safety certification. Accordingly, the Council's attainment fell significantly against the higher standards and remedial programmes have been developed to improve this position.

4. PROGRAMME FOR DELIVERY

- 4.1 A programme of electrical inspection and certification to meet the enhanced requirements of SHQS has been undertaken in the course of 2023/24, with an improvement plan reported to this committee on 21 November 2023, projecting a milestone of 55% compliance by 31 March 2024 and completion by 30 November 2024 (paragraph 7 of the Minute refers).
- 4.2 The second key component of SHQS which requires improvement is ESSH. As at 31 March 2023, 62% of our stock met ESSH, compared with 87% of our peer group, 88% for local authorities and 91% for all benchmarked landlords. An improvement plan has been developed to accelerate delivery of energy efficiency programmes, which will significantly improve this position in 2024/25, with the aspiration of bringing performance in line with the above local authority benchmark by the end of the reporting year. Whilst the budget for 2024/25 has been set based on realistic output levels, the service is working to optimise market capacity to bring forward a high proportion of stock

improvements which otherwise would have been allocated to years 2025/26 and 2026/27, as detailed in **Appendix I**. This will be determined in the initial programming phase and accordingly it is deemed necessary for the spend profiling across the multi-year programme to be responsive to the evidenced market capacity. Doing so within the committee cycle will apply constraints in terms of procurement and engagement of contractors who have available capacity, therefore delegated authority for the Head of Housing and Property, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and Chair of this Committee, to bring forward spend profiled for investment in future years is sought. This approach will ensure that borrowing requirements remain in line with contracted expenditure and variations under delegated authority will be reported to the next scheduled meeting of the committee.

- 4.3 The Committee is invited to consider and approve the improvement action plan in **APPENDIX II** which illustrates the route to increasing investment delivery to ensure improved compliance. This is predicated on delivery of three distinct programmes in each of the housing management areas, overseen by a senior responsible officer:

Moray East (Buckie, Fochabers & Lhanbryde and Keith & Cullen) – Mike Rollo, Building Services Manager
 Moray Central (Elgin North & Elgin South) – Neil Strachan, Property Asset Manager
 Moray West (Speyside Glenlivet, Heldon & Laich and Forres) – Moray Macleod, Design & Construction Manager

- 4.4 This approach has augmented the existing service capacity by prioritisation of the housing investment programme in order to achieve the significantly higher level of activity programmed for 2024/25.

- 4.5 An initial exercise has been undertaken to determine the number of properties which are in scope for SHQS improvements across the three management areas:

Moray East	943 core programme and 420 subject to assessment
Moray Central	595 core programme and 485 subject to assessment
Moray West	697 core programme and 305 subject to assessment
Total	2,235 (core) 1,210 (to be assessed)

- 4.6 The core programme is based on an initial assessment of the stock requirements and a further number of properties will be assessed in the course of the detailed programme development to determine the extent of any works which may be required under the overall improvement programme. This approach will also enhance the development of asset management programmes in future years.

5. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

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

The maintenance of the Council's housing stock and dealing with homelessness are priorities identified within the Corporate Plan, the

Council's Local Housing Strategy, the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) and the Housing and Property Service Plan.

(b) Policy and Legal

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

(c) Financial implications

The financial implications associated within this report are detailed in paragraph 3.1 and 4.2 and also the report approved at Council on 28 February 2024. The planned level of spend in 2024/25 is expected to be greater than initially profiled within the first year allocation as set out in Appendix I, but will remain within the three year budget set out inclusive of 2025/26 and 2026/27 provision. Variances under delegated authority will be reported to committee in the course of the year and whilst accelerated spend will incur finance charges earlier than anticipated, the regulatory and performance improvements as well as direct benefits to tenants are considered to outweigh this. Under the revised rental policy the additional expenditure is considered to be affordable within the HRA Business Plan.

(d) Risk implications

Failure to expend agreed budgets have affected the Council's ability to maintain stock at the SHQS, replace life expired elements and attain the EESSH. Budget Managers are aware of responsibilities for managing budget allocations and approval for variance will be sought from Committee in line with the Financial Regulations. There is a risk of not delivering the scale of improvement sought in 2024/25, notwithstanding the additional resourcing of the accelerated programme. There is a corresponding risk of increased regulatory scrutiny if the Council does not meet the SHQS requirements.

(e) Staffing implications

There are no specific implications with this report.

(f) Property

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

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

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

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

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

(i) Consultations

Consultations have taken place with the Head of Housing and Property Services, Building Services Manager, Georgina Anderson, Legal Services 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.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The report outlines the budget provision that has been made to ensure the Council improves its housing stock to meet the regulatory requirements along with detailing the improvement plan which will ensure significant improvement in the stock is undertaken in the next 12 months.**

Author of Report: Neil Strachan, Property Asset Manager
Background Papers: [Housing Revenue Account Annual Budget 2024-25](#)
Ref: SPMAN-1285234812-1533

1. The Investment proposals for 2024/25 to 2026/27 can be summarised as shown below:-

Investment Heading	Programme	2024/25 £,000	2025/26 £,000	2026/27 £,000
Response Repairs	Response Repairs	2,610	2,688	2,769
	Heating Repairs	636	655	675
	Total Response	£3,246	£3,343	£3,444
Void Repairs	Void House Repairs	£1,513	£1,559	£1,605
Estate Works	Garage Upgrades	27	28	29
	Asbestos	372	383	395
	Estates/Forum	230	237	244
	Landscaping	90	92	95
	Total Estate Works	£719	£740	£763
Cyclical Maintenance	Gas Servicing	419	432	445
	Solid Fuel Servicing	5	5	5
	ASHP Servicing	65	67	69
	Smoke Alarm Servicing	16	16	17
	External decoration & fabric repairs	835	860	886
	General Servicing	60	62	64
	Fire Risk Assessments & associated works	155	160	164
	Total Cyclic Works	£1,555	£1,602	£1,650
Planned Maintenance & Investment Programmes	Cap – Roof Replacements	1,021	1,052	1,084
	Rainwater Goods - Gutter clearance/repairs	290	299	308
	Rainwater Goods - Roof Moss cleaning	232	239	246
	Cap - Insulation	1,641	1,691	1,741
	Plumbing Upgrades	60	62	64
	Electrical Upgrades	1,114	220	227
	Safety & Security	25	26	26
	Shower Installations	60	62	64
	Sheltered Housing	12	12	13
	Decoration Vouchers	120	124	127
	Cap - Bathroom Replacements	395	407	419
	Cap - Kitchen Replacements	1,153	1,187	1,223
	Cap - Central Heating	2,588	2,665	2,745
	Cap - EESSH	1,281	3,000	3,090
	Cap – Social Housing Net Zero Fund	5,631	0	0
	Cap - Doors	120	123	127
	Cap - Windows	2,417	2,490	2,565
	Cap - Major Works	694	0	0
	Total Planned	£18,854	£13,659	£14,069
	Other Investment	Disabled Adaptations	548	565
Enabling		50	51	53
Total Other		£598	£616	£634
Proposed Investment		£26,485	£21,519	£22,165

2. Capital expenditure proposed for 2024/25 to 2026/27 can be summarised as:-

Investment	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
Roof Replacements	1,021	1,052	1,084
Insulation	1,641	1,691	1,741
Doors and Windows	2,537	2,614	2,692
Central Heating	2,588	2,665	2,745
EESSH	1,281	3,000	3,090
Kitchen Replacements	1,153	1,187	1,223
Bathroom Replacements	395	407	419
Social Housing Net Zero Fund – Insulation & Heating	5,631	0	0
Major Works	694	0	0
Council House New Build	13,037	34,952	16,519
Open Market acquisitions	2,000	2,000	2,000
Total Capital Investment	31,978	49,568	31,513

3. For the same period, capital funding is projected at:-

Projected income	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
CFCR	2,641	3,512	4,126
Prudential Borrowing	12,862	16,993	22,446
Scottish Government Grant	15,825	28,413	4,291
Council Tax Discount on 2 nd homes	650	650	650
Total	31,978	49,568	31,513

Housing and Property

SHQS Compliance Improvement Plan

We will develop and implement an improvement plan for Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) compliance across the Council's housing stock.

Key Objectives

Define the works necessary to achieve SHQS compliance, predominantly energy efficiency measures which bring properties up to the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) and thereby also improve the energy efficiency of properties for tenants.

Key Deliverables

The outputs that will be delivering programmes of work which will achieve SHQS across the Council's residential properties:

- Maintaining full compliance with the enhanced standards for smoke detectors
- Achieving full compliance with gas certification regulations
- Achieving full compliance with electrical certification (EICRs)
- As a minimum, achieving the average level of EESH compliance for local authority landlords (88% for 2022/23)
- Achieving full compliance or appropriate exemptions for all other aspects of SHQS

Key Activities

The key activities of this work-stream are:

- Baseline the data for the respective measures which contribute to EESH/SHQS compliance
- Facilitating the works via rent setting/budgetary provision
- Programming of remedial/improvement works across the housing management areas

- Appropriate recording, verification and reporting of activity
- Identification of works which will be required in future programmes

Key Risk

That the Council's compliance with the relevant standards remain below the benchmarking averages and lead to further regulatory scrutiny

Failure to meet standards may inhibit the Council's ability to let properties and generate rental income in future

Tenant satisfaction levels may be lower and energy costs higher until standards are achieved

Reputational impact on the Council arising from underperformance against standards/benchmarking

Scale and complexity of programme impedes delivery

Market/labour capacity to deliver may be uncertain

Actions

Workstream

Baselining the data for the respective measures which contribute to EESSH/SHQS compliance

Responsible

Fiona Geddes

Deadline

Complete

Facilitating the works via rent setting/budgetary provision

Edward Thomas

Complete

Programming of remedial/improvement works across the housing management areas

Moray East (Buckie, Fochabers Lhanbryde and Keith & Cullen)

Mike Rollo

30 June 2024

Moray Central (Elgin North & Elgin South)

Neil Strachan

30 June 2024

Moray West (Speyside Glenlivet, Heldon & Laich and Forres)

Moray MacLeod

30 June 2024

Delivery

Completion of initial EICR programme (90% attainment and all addresses attended)

Mike Rollo

30 November 2024

Full completion of EICR (no access policy implemented as required)

Mike Rollo

28 February 2025

Interim target for SHQS compliance (75%)

MR/NS/MM

31 December 2024



REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON 7 MAY 2024

SUBJECT: MORAY AFFORDABLE HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of progress on the Affordable Housing Investment Programme in Moray.
- 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 preparation and implementation of strategic housing plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

- i) notes the resource planning assumption received from the Scottish Government and its implications for the development programme;**
- ii) scrutinises and notes progress on the Moray Affordable Housing Investment Programme;**
- iii) scrutinises and notes progress on delivery of housing at Bilbohall, Elgin; and**
- iv) scrutinises and notes progress on the delivery of the Council's new build and acquisition programme.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council receives an annual resource allocation from the Scottish Government to fund the supply of new affordable housing in Moray. The Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) determines how this funding will be used to plan and deliver the affordable housing priorities of the Local Housing Strategy. The investment and project priorities set out in the SHIP form the basis of an annual Strategic Local Programme Agreement

(SLP) between the Council and the Scottish Government. The SLP details the projects that will be funded during the year, the affordable housing developers who will deliver them, the targets for grant expenditure and the milestones by which progress on delivery will be measured. The Council and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) are the principal developers of affordable housing in Moray.

3.2 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

3.3 On 21 November 2023, this Committee approved the Council's SHIP (paragraph 8 of the draft Minute refers).

3.4 On 13 February 2024, this Committee was advised of the likelihood that the previously advised RPA would be reduced for 2024/25 (paragraph 9 of the draft Minute refers), and agreed a rationale for reprioritisation and reprofiling of projects anticipated to start during 2024/25/26. The agreed priorities are:

- corporate and strategically important projects, i.e. Bilbohall; Speyview, Aberlour
- supported housing for people with learning disabilities i.e. Woodview2, Lhanbryde; Western Village, Elgin South
- Growth Deal Housing Mix Project developments i.e. South Street/High Street, Elgin; Dallas Dhu, Forres
- NHS key worker housing, to be agreed following the publication of NHS Housing Need Assessment currently in development
- Open market acquisition of long term empty homes

MORAY STRATEGIC LOCAL PROGRAMME (SLP)

Outturn 2023/24

4.1 The spend achieved in 2023/24 was £7.091m against RPA of £8.902m. This underspend is a change in trend, where for many years RPA has been exceeded. The underspend is attributable to delayed site starts at Speyview, Aberlour where there were delays in securing the necessary statutory consents from Transport Scotland, and Garmouth Road, Lhanbryde (Woodview2) where unviable costs have resulted in Grampian HA retendering the project.

4.2 New build completions during 2023/24

Site	Town	No of units	Landlord	Completion date
Fyvie Green, Elgin South	Elgin	17	Moray Council	May 2023
Banff Road Phase 1	Keith	33	Moray Council	Jul 2023
Knockomie (R1)	Forres	28	Cairn HA	Oct 2023
Findrassie Ph2b	Elgin	18	Grampian HA	Mar 2024

Total	96
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Resource Planning Assumption 2024/25 (RPA)

4.3 On 28 March 2024, Moray Council received notification of the RPA for 2024/25 i.e. £6.556m. This RPA is reduced from that expected and detailed in Para 3.2 above, but is consistent with reductions in RPA across Scotland following the Scottish Government budget announcement on 19 December 2023.

4.4 The following tables illustrate the affordable housing programme where either Scottish Government funding has been secured, or where the project fits with the prioritisation described at Para 3.4 above:

Currently under construction

Site	Town	No of units	Landlord	Completion date (est)
Banff Road Phase 2	Keith	26	Moray Council	Jan 2025
Ferrylea R3 Phase 2	Forres	43	Grampian HA	May 2024
Kinneddar Meadows	Lossiemouth	10	Osprey Housing	Jul 2024
Findrassie Ph2b	Elgin	16	Grampian HA	tbc
Total		95		

Site start expected during 2024/25

Site	Town	No of units	Landlord	Site start (est)
Speyview Phase 1	Aberlour	39	Moray Council	May 2024
Western Village, Elgin South	Elgin	44	Grampian HA	Jun 2024
Bilbohall Phase 1 (R2)	Elgin	106	Moray Council	Jan 2025
	Total	189		

4.5 Officers intend to begin a programme of engagement with partners and stakeholders key to the delivery of the affordable housing programme, to discuss the implications for them of the reduced RPA and uncertainty regarding future years.

4.6 Officers will continue to maintain a substantial shadow programme of developments. Should additional grant funding become available, officers will be able to bring a project(s) forward from the shadow programme, in accordance with the priorities set out at Para 3.4 and in the SHIP.

4.7 Progress on programme delivery will be reported to this Committee on a biannual basis.

5. COUNCIL NEW BUILD PROGRAMME

Bilbohall, Elgin

- 5.1 Planning consent was granted for 194 units and associated shared infrastructure on 23 March 2021. The tender exercises completed after planning approval have not resulted in a commercially viable construction contract. Officers have appointed a multi-disciplinary Design Team who are developing and costing an alternative site design for Phase 1 with a density comparable to commercial housebuilders. **It is anticipated that a planning application will be submitted by 30 April 2024** and that, following a tender process, site start during winter 2024/25 is achievable.

Speyview, Aberlour Phases 1 and 2

- 5.2 Moray Council acquired the land for 30 units, with the support of Scottish Government funding, from Springfield Properties in March 2022. Planning consent was granted on 19 December 2023. Contractual negotiations with Springfield Properties are concluded. It is anticipated that Phase 1 (39 units) plus shared infrastructure will achieve site start before during May 2024. However, this is dependent on Transport Scotland consenting processes relating to improvements to the A95. Acquisition of Phase 2 land already has secured an allocation of Scottish Government funding, and will progress under delegated authority during summer 2024.

6. COUNCIL ACQUISITION PROGRAMME

- 6.1 The SHIP provides facility to purchase properties from the open market for provision of affordable housing, where strategic and value for money criteria have been met.
- 6.2 Open market purchases will be prioritised as follows:
1. Where the purchase will assist the Council with delivery of SHQS/ EESSH/ capital improvements.
 2. Where the purchase will assist the Council to meet housing need in pressured areas and/or where new affordable housing development is constrained.
 3. Where the purchase will assist the Council to meet specialist housing need.
 4. Where the purchase will bring an empty property back into occupation.
- 6.3 Open market acquisitions approved to proceed:

Housing Market Area (HMA)	completion 2023/24	completion 2024/25(est)
Buckie HMA		1
Elgin HMA		3
Forres HMA		
Keith HMA		
Speyside HMA	1	
Cairngorms National Park HMA		

7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

Addressing the shortage of affordable housing in Moray is a key priority of the Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan, the Council's Local Housing Strategy and Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) and the Housing and Property Service Plan. The Strategic Local Programme reflects priorities for investment in the provision of new affordable housing to meet need identified in the Local Housing Strategy.

The affordable housing programme supports the aims of the 10 Year Plan by providing new affordable housing for an increasing population and a growing and diversifying economy. The target of 50 Council house completions per annum will be delivered within the investment planning and funding framework provided by the programme.

(b) Policy and Legal

The affordable housing supply programme contributes to meeting the Council's statutory duties to address homelessness and meet housing need in Moray.

(c) Financial implications

The report provides details of the resources being made available by the Scottish Government to part-fund affordable housing in Moray. The Council has agreed that 50 new council houses will be built per annum. The current HRA Business Plan has made provision for the level of borrowing required to part-fund the Council's housebuilding programme. The Housing Service intends to complete a further review of the HRA Business Plan by Dec 2024.

(d) Risk Implications

There is a risk that slippage or reduction in the programme will result in loss of Scottish Government More Homes Division grant funding to Moray, with the funds diverted to other LAs.

The programme may be impacted by economic and market conditions and site-specific issues as developments proceed. In particular, interest rates will impact on the cost of borrowing. There are processes in place to manage these risks and mitigations considered.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

(f) Property

The report details the ongoing programme for development of additional affordable housing in Moray in response to strategic needs and specifically the Council new build programme to increase the Council's own supply of affordable housing.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

The housing needs of equalities groups are identified in the Local Housing Strategy (LHS). The Moray Affordable Housing Programme seeks to deliver the housing priorities identified in the LHS.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

The aims of the affordable housing programme 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 Services, Legal Services Senior Solicitor (Georgina Anderson), the Property Asset Manager, the Head of Economic Growth and Development, the Strategic Planning and Development Manager, the Chief Financial Officer and Lissa Rowan, Committee Services Officer.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The report provides details of an update on the current and future affordable housing investment programme, including the recently received Resource Planning Assumption for 2024/25. The report also provides an update on the Council's own new build and acquisition programme, including an update on development of Bilbohall, Elgin and Speyview, Aberlour.**

Author of Report: Fiona Geddes, Housing Strategy and Development Manager
Background Papers: with author
Ref: SPMAN-1285234812-1543