



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

SUBJECT: SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER COMPLIANCE

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

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

2. RECOMMENDATION

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

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

3. BACKGROUND

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

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

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

4. PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKING

- 4.1 A summary of the Council's performance on key Charter indicators can be found in **APPENDIX I** and includes data published by the SHR and Scotland's Housing Network (SHN). It should be noted that the average performance for local authorities tends to be below the Scottish average, which includes all social landlords (local authorities, housing associations and housing co-operatives). The 2022/23 performance is summarised below under 6 themes:

Overall Satisfaction

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

The Customer/Landlord Relationship

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

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

Housing Quality and Maintenance

- 4.6 Several changes have been made to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) in recent years. From January 2021, the energy efficiency element was updated to reflect the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH). The Scottish Government proposed a review for EESH2 in 2023 to strengthen and realign the standard with the target for net zero heat in Housing to 2040. As such EESH data was not reported this year.
- 4.7 After the ARC submission, in late July 2023, the SHR invited landlords to reassess their SHQS compliance in relation to electrical inspections. Following a review of the Council's position, the SHR was notified that the majority of properties fell slightly below the required electrical testing standard and therefore at 31 March 2022, 6.3% of properties met the SHQS (indicator 6). This has increased to 15.5% for 2022/23, at a rate below that desired and has been frustrated by factors such as the availability of qualified contractors. There were 4,216 properties which did not meet the SHQS and 1,144 properties which were exempt due to being 'hard to treat' or in abeyance (where work cannot be done for 'social' reasons such as the tenant refusing remedial works). The Committee are invited to consider and approve the improvement action plan in **APPENDIX II** which illustrates the route to electrical testing compliance.
- 4.8 The 2021 survey found that 82.7% of tenants were satisfied with the quality of their home (indicator 7). This was close to the Scottish average of (84.2%), but more in line with the local authority (81.8%) and peer group average (83.4%).
- 4.9 In 2022/23, the average time to complete emergency repairs (indicator 8) was 2.4 hours which was better than the Scottish average of 4.2 hours and the peer group average of 4.5 hours. Non-emergency repairs (indicator 9) were completed within an average of 6 working days which was also better than the Scottish average and peer group average which were both 9 days.
- 4.10 The Council completed 90.2% (2021/22 - 85.5%) of non-emergency repairs right first time (indicator 10) in 2022/23 which was above the Scottish average of 87.8% but slightly below the peer group average of 92.0%.
- 4.11 During 2022/23, only 4 of the Council's properties did not have a gas safety check completed by the anniversary date (indicator 11). This performance was better than the peer group average (137) which includes local authorities with less than 9,000 properties.

4.12 In December 2022, the Scottish Housing Regulator asked social landlords to consider the systems they have in place to ensure their tenant's homes are not affected by mould and dampness and that they have appropriate, proactive systems to identify and deal with any reported cases of mould and damp timeously and effectively. Throughout 2023, officers completed the following actions:

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

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

Neighbourhood and Community

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

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

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

Access to Housing and Support

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

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

Getting Good Value from Rents and Service Charges

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

5. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

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

6. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

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

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

(b) Policy and Legal

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

(c) Financial implications

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

(d) Risk Implications

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

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications associated with this report.

(f) Property

There are no property implications associated with this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

There are no equalities implications directly arising from this report.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

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

(i) Consultations

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

7. CONCLUSION

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

Author of Report: Martin Gray, Senior Housing Officer (Information)
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