



**REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON 7
DECEMBER 2021**

**SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT (HOUSING AND PROPERTY
SERVICES) – PERIOD TO SEPTEMBER 2021**

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the performance of the service for the period to 30 September 2021.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Council in terms of Section III (A) (4) of the Council's Scheme of Administration to monitor performance of the services within the Committee's remit in accordance with the Council's performance management framework.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) Scrutinise and note performance in the areas of Service Planning, Service Performance and other related data to the end of September 2021; and**
- (ii) Notes the actions being taken to improve performance where required.**
- (iii) Notes compliance with the Scottish Social Housing Charter with inclusion of the Annual Assurance statement and publication of the Scottish Landlords Annual Performance Report.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 7 August 2019, the Moray Council, approved a revised Performance Management Framework for services (para 5 of the minute refers).

4. SERVICE PLANNING

- 4.1 Each service plan sets out the planned strategic and service level priorities and outcomes it intends to deliver in the coming year aligning closely with financial planning, corporate and community planning partnership strategic

priorities. This report provides an interim update on progress on the service plan, key outcomes and performance indicators. Committee is invited to review progress to secure assurance that is satisfactory and to provide scrutiny and further direction where performance requires attention.

- 4.2 The narrative included is by exception, however links to backing tables for all Housing and Property Services [Service Plan Actions](#) and [Service Plan Performance Indicators](#) are provided.

SERVICE PLAN PRIORITIES		RAG
STRATEGIC LEVEL	Assess and respond to the housing needs of older people in partnership with IJB	80%
	Prepare a Climate Change Strategy	100%
	Investigate and better understand the reasons for poor satisfaction rates as identified in Best Value Audit	30%
SERVICE LEVEL	Ten actions – 1 complete, 7 overdue	62%
RECOVERY & RENEWAL	Work to progress provision of employment land and industrial units in Forres and expansion or development of industrial units in Speyside / east of Moray	31%
OVERALL PLAN PROGRESS		54%
Comment Progress is measured over the 3-year plan period. Annual progress is measured by milestone achievements. At the half way point there is evidence of slippage in some areas.		

SERVICE PLAN PIS

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

Strategic Outcomes – Successes

- 4.3 The Strategic Housing Investment Plan makes a commitment to deliver 30% of new build affordable housing as specialist housing, accessible to households with medical needs and/or impaired mobility. During 2021/22, 37 projected completions will be delivered as specialist housing, 36% of the total programme. (**ACTIONS** HPS20-22.S4.1.1, S5.01.1.2)

Strategic Outcomes – Challenges and Actions to Support

- 4.4 Nothing to report as the remaining strategic outcome progresses within target due date.

Service Level Outcomes - Successes

- 4.5 The service is on programme to deliver 79 new council houses during 2021/22, exceeding the delivery target of 50 houses. The forward programme will be determined by the ongoing HRA Business Plan review. (**ACTION** HPS20-22.S5.01)
- 4.6 The stock condition survey, undertaken to assess that the condition of Council houses meets required standards, is complete. The investment plan for 2022/23 onwards is being considered and together these will inform the review of the HRA Business Plan. (**ACTION** HPS20-22.S5.08)

Service Level Outcomes – Challenges and Actions to Support

- 4.7 The impact of Covid-19 restrictions is reflected in spend against Scottish Government funding, although rising to £3.2m at end of Quarter 2, it remains

at around one-third of the allocated £9.633m. Details of the programme are contained within the Moray Affordable Housing Programme report. (**ACTION** HPS20-22.S5.01.1.3)

- 4.8 The appointment of three Housing Support Workers required for tenancy sustainment to 30 households is progressing out with the original due date. One senior post and two support workers should be recruited by the end of January 2022 with the Housing First project expected to begin in March 2022. (**ACTION** HPS20-22.S5.02.1.3)
- 4.9 As at September 2021, expenditure of £885k against £2.1m Scottish Government funding to reduce fuel poverty in Moray has been achieved. Delivery of energy efficiency measures were severely constrained by Covid-19 restrictions as well as shortages of materials and trades. The contract for delivery of the Area Based Scheme funding allocation has been awarded to Changeworks Resources for Life. (**ACTION** HPS20-22.S5.03.1.1)
- 4.10 The most recent council house stock survey reports 56% compliance in meeting Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) standards, below the target of 63% to be achieved by June 2021. Following suspension of works during restrictions, the heating replacement programmes resumed in line with Scottish Government guidance. Going forward, underspends in the 2021/2022 investment programme will be utilised and reallocated to target an additional 170 properties requiring central heating replacements in an attempt to increase the number of properties meeting ESSH in 2021/2022 (**ACTION** HPS20-22.S5.04.1.1 **INDICATOR** H2.2b).
- 4.11 Meeting void council house targets continues to be challenging, an increase in void numbers following resumption of allocations, knock-on effect of new-build handovers as restrictions eased, supply chain delays and ongoing social distancing restrictions have all been contributory factors to below target performance. As at September 2021, the average time taken to re-let empty properties was 61 days and 1.34% of rent was lost due to voids, significantly above targets of 32 days and 0.63% respectively. Reactive repairs completed within timescales improved slightly to 32% but also remains well below target (98%). The voids working group continues to meet, explore and implement improvement actions to reduce overall re-let timescales. Nationally, the average re let timescale is 55 days for the same period, suggesting others face similar challenges (**ACTIONS** HPS20-22.S5.05.1.1-2 **INDICATORS** H2.10e, H5.4, H5.6)
- 4.12 In Quarter 2, 3,612 (92%) repairs were completed within target timescale, falling just short of target (98%). Similarly, 91.4% of reactive emergency repairs within 4 hours and 84.8% of ordinary repairs within 20 days fell short of target. Improving performance of response repairs has been challenging over a period of years. The Housing Management Team having reviewed repair target timescales will consult with tenants and tenant representatives on revisions. It is anticipated that a report on the proposals and tenant feedback will be presented to this Committee early in 2022 with changes, subject to approval, implemented from 1 April 2022. (**ACTION** HPS20-22.S5.06.1.1 **INDICATORS** H2.9b, H2.10a, H2.10d).
- 4.13 The Best Value review of the Housing Maintenance Partnership has been delayed due to competing priorities but is scheduled to commence in early

2022. In advance, work with external consultants around long term investment planning that will be essential in the review of the Partnership, is ongoing.

- 4.14 The Property Asset Management Appraisal continues; an update was presented to Full Council on 30 June 2021. The Depot Review completion has been extended to allow the collection of information on electrical charging points for vehicles and the Stores Review is on hold pending the return of the Records Manager from maternity leave (**ACTION** HPS20-22.S5.10.1.1).

Renewal and Recovery Successes

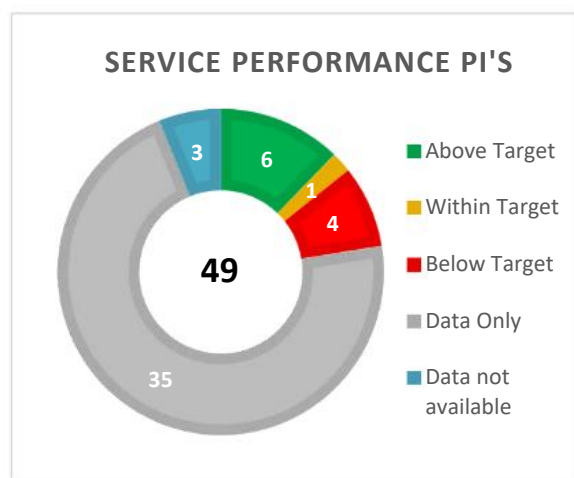
- 4.15 Indicative designs and a Business Case for land at Forres Business Park are being progressed and will be presented to Asset Management Working Group on completion. As the opportunity to purchase only became apparent in March 2021, original timescales will not be met. (**ACTION** HPS20-22.S6.01.1).

Recovery and Renewal - challenges and actions to support

- 4.16 Nothing to report as the remaining actions progress within target due dates.

5. SERVICE PERFORMANCE

- 5.1 In line with the Performance Management Framework, operational performance is reviewed quarterly by departmental management. Areas performing well and/or areas subject to a decreasing trend or where benchmarking results show performance significantly below comparators will be reported to this committee for member scrutiny.
- 5.2 Report is by exception. However, a link to the backing tables for all Housing and Property Services [Service Performance Indicators](#) is provided.



Operational Indicators - Successes

- 5.3 In Quarter 2, 35.4% of housing allocations were taken from the waiting list, an improvement on last quarter (26.1%) and above target (32.0%). (**INDICATOR** H4.18b)

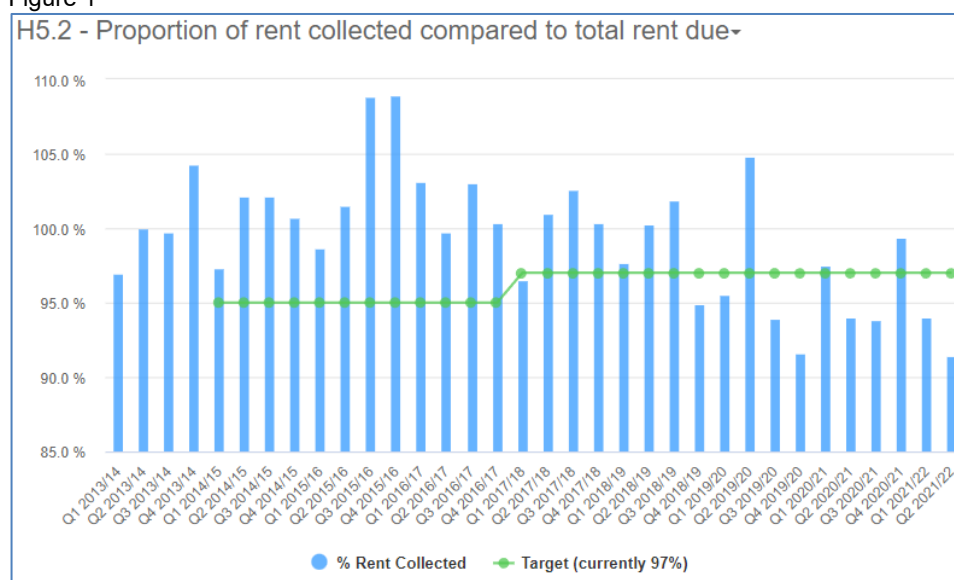
5.4 In the year to date, there were 12 new unauthorised encampments, all were visited within target timescales (**INDICATORS** H6.1a, H6.2).

Operational Indicators - Challenges and Actions to Support

5.5 In terms of access to housing and support, there has been a significant increase in the average length of time spent in temporary accommodation when compared to the last quarter and the same period last year. This is attributable to a reduced turnover in social housing constraining the number of available permanent lets and also the impact of restrictions on void turnaround times. Those housed in temporary accommodation spent on average 161 days in housing associations, registered social landlords (RSL) type accommodation, 215 days in council owned hostel or 95 days RSL owned hostel. In addition, just 16% of housing applications were admitted to list within the 10 day target timescale, a drop in performance from quarter 1 due to the introduction of a new housing application system. Existing applicants have had to re-apply meaning a substantial but temporary increase in workload (**INDICATORS** H4.6k, H4.6l, H4.6m, H4.15)

5.6 In Quarter 2, 91.4% of total rent due had been collected, below the target of 97% (Figure 1). With the exception of three quarters, collection has been below target since quarter 3 2018/19. In the same period gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due has risen from 2.6% to 4.1%, equating to a financial value of £840k. As a comparison, the National Report on the Scottish Social Housing Charter Headline Findings 2020-21 was published in August 2021 and reported a national average of 8.2% arrears for local authorities as a percentage of rent due. (**INDICATORS** 5.2, 5.3)

Figure 1



5.7 Current tenants' arrears as a percentage of net rent due has also risen, particularly over the last 18 months to 4.6% in Quarter 2. Most tenants in arrears owed £500 or less (Table 1). The total amount owing each quarter in the £0-£100 band fluctuates quarter to quarter but remains broadly similar over time at around £25,000. Similarly, the amount owed by former tenants' remains around £122,000.

Table 1

Arrears Band	Total Owed	Number of Tenants
£0-£100	£26,765	527
£100-£250	£72,058	420
£250-£500	£117,887	337
£500-£750	£97,292	160
£750-£1,000	£70,719	81
£1,000+	£304,889	172
Former tenants	£122,635	N/A

- 5.8 There has been a gradual, but steady, increase over time in tenants owing over £100 for the bands up to £1,000, more notable is the increase in the band owing more than £1,000 in which the total owed has trebled since April 2019. The number of tenants in this category has risen from 75 to 172 over the same period. This is largely attributable to the suspension of court actions from March 2020 and officers are continuing to engage with tenants to assist with maximising welfare benefit assistance and make sustainable repayment arrangements.
- 5.9 Although the level of current arrears increased from 1.8% in 2019/20 to 2.4% in 2020/21, the Council's performance in this area remains significantly high compared with other authorities, the average for which increased from 4.6% to 5.4% over the same period.

6. OTHER PERFORMANCE RELATED DATA

Complaints & MP/MSP Enquiries

- 6.1 In line with the Performance Management Framework, complaints are reviewed quarterly by departmental management in terms of time taken to respond, outcome and learning points. Links to backing tables for all [Service Complaints](#) is provided.
- 6.2 In the half year to September 2021, 81 complaints were closed by Housing and Property Services, of which 57 (70%) were frontline stage, 18 (22%) were investigative stage and 6 (7%) were escalated. This compares to 44 closed in the same period last year, 57% at frontline stage, 39% at investigative stage and 5% at escalated.
- 6.3 Of those closed at frontline stage, 26 (46%) were either upheld or part upheld. 70% of frontline complaints were completed within the target of 5 working days; on average taking 4.5 days to complete.
- 6.3 Of those closed at investigative and escalated, 14 (58%) were either upheld or part upheld. 67% of investigative and escalated complaints were completed with the target of 20 working days; on average taking 26 days to complete.
- 6.4 The majority of upheld or part-upheld complaints relate to repairs, capital, planned maintenance, with corrective actions put in place for each.
- 6.5 Ninety-two MP/MSP enquiries were dealt with in the first half of 2021-22; during the same period last year 59 such enquiries were dealt with.

Other Performance (not included within Service Plan)

Annual Assurance Statement

- 6.6 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. Using a range of performance indicators, the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) monitors, and assesses landlords' performance against the Charter.
- 6.7 Each year, social landlords must submit an Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) to the SHR. On 9 June 2021, this Committee was informed that the Council's ARC was submitted in May 2021. The SHR requires social landlords to submit an Assurance Statement by 31 October each year. The Annual Assurance Statement assures the SHR and our tenants and other service users that we comply with our regulatory and statutory obligations. In preparation for this submission, officers delivered a briefing on the performance indicators included in the ARC to the Chair and Vice-chair of this committee, who confirmed that they had considered appropriate evidence on 2020/21 performance and associated improvement plans. The Annual Assurance Statement was submitted to the SHR on 27 October 2021 and is available at http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_101335.html

Social Landlords Annual Performance Report

- 6.8 The SHR requires social landlords to produce an annual report on their performance against the Charter and make it available to tenants and other customers by no later than 31 October.
- 6.9 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 Council's report has been developed in discussion with the Moray Tenants' Forum. The report mirrors the key themes of the Charter.
- 6.10 The Annual Performance Report has been promoted through the Council's social media and is available at:
http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_101335.html

Case Studies

- 6.11 To improve and enhance service provision to our tenants and applicants during ongoing restrictions, the Housing service has implemented a new safe and secure video appointment system called Near Me, a system originally developed for the NHS. Following completion of an initial pilot in October, the system is being rolled out across housing. All tenants using the system reported it was easy to use, saved work, travel time and money in not having to attend a face to face appointment. Feedback also concluded that appointments took less time overall, provided a more convenient alternative and helped keep people safe. The Scottish Government has funded the use

of Near Me for all public services until March 2022 with a possible extension to March 2023.

Consultation and Engagement

- 6.12 During August to November 2021, the Council carried out a 3-yearly, large scale, Tenants Survey. This is a requirement of the Scottish Housing Regulator and the results will be reported in the ARC 2021/22. The survey involved telephone interviews with a random sample of around 30% of Council tenants. The final results are expected in November/December 2021 and will inform the future investment priorities and service delivery plans for tenants over the next 3 year.

7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

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

(b) Policy and Legal

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

(c) Financial implications

None.

(d) Risk Implications

None.

(e) Staffing Implications

None.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

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

(h) Consultations

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

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 As at the end of September 2021, the overall plan is 54% complete.

8.2 Many of the activities and functions undertaken by the Housing and Property Services were disrupted, or put on hold, due to the restrictions

introduced to control the spread of COVID-19, and these disruptions have impacted the Services' capacity to complete improvement work around energy efficiency of the Council's housing stock, management of void council houses and infrastructure development within original target timescales. However, the Services have made progress in some important areas, such as delivering the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. New affordable homes are being built as planned and the Council is on track to meet its annual build targets to meet the demand for affordable housing.

8.3 The report provides the Housing and Community Safety Committee with an update on the Council's compliance with the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

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Background Papers: Held by Author
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