REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 3 MARCH 2020

SUBJECT: SCOTLAND'S HOUSING NETWORK 2018/19 PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKING

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To inform the Committee of the Council's performance in 2018/19 in comparison with benchmarking peer groups.

1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Sections III (A) (4) and III (G) (15) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to public performance reporting and monitoring the Council's Performance Management Framework for the Communities Services.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Communities Committee scrutinises and notes performance outlined in this report.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Each year, social landlords must submit an Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) to the Scottish Housing Regulator. The Council's ARC was submitted in May 2019 and the results for all social landlords were published on 31 August 2019. On 17 December 2019, this Committee were informed of the Council's performance in 2018/19 and a comparison with national and local authority averages (paragraph 7 of the draft Minute refers). Actions to address performance issues are reported to this Committee as part of the Housing Performance Report. The Housing Performance Report for 2018/19 was considered by this Committee on 27 August 2019 (paragraph 11 of the Minute refers).

3.2 The Housing Service is a member of Scotland's Housing Network (SHN), an organisation which produces benchmarking data for social housing landlords across Scotland. In November 2019, the SHN presented their findings on the 2018/19 ARC performance at a briefing for officers and tenant representatives. In addition to the national and local authority averages, the SHN produce peer group averages which compare the landlord's performance

against social landlords of a similar size. Moray is within Peer Group 8 (small local authority) which includes the following landlords; Angus, Clackmannanshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, East Lothian, Midlothian, Perth and Kinross, Stirling, South Ayrshire, Orkney and Shetland. The benchmarking results indicated that the Council's performance during 2018/19 was generally comparable with the peer group.

3.3   A summary of the Council's performance on the key ARC indicators and the peer group average can be found in **APPENDIX I.** The national average and local authority averages have previously been considered by this Committee but have been included for additional context. In future, peer group averages will be incorporated within the annual report relating to the Scottish Social Housing Charter Compliance.

4.   **PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

4.1   The 2018/19 performance is summarised below under 6 themes:

Overall Satisfaction
4.2   The 2018 tenant survey found that 79.6% of tenants were satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord (*indicator 1*). This was slightly below the peer group average (85.7%). Improvement actions relating to the 2018 survey were reported to this Committee on 27 August 2019 (paragraph 12 of the Minute refers).

The Customer/Landlord Relationship
4.3   The 2018 tenant survey identified that 76.3% of tenants felt that the Council was good at keeping them informed about services and decisions (*indicator 3*). This was below the peer group average (87.0%).

4.4   In 2018/19, 58.8% of 1st stage complaints and 42.2% of 2nd stage complaints were upheld (*indicator 4*). This was close to the peer group averages of 55.6% and 45.6% respectively. The Housing Service responded to 78.7% of 1st stage complaints within the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman (SPSO) timescale of 5 working days (*indicator 5*). For 2nd stage complaints, 64.4% were responded to within the SPSO timescale of 20 working days. This is comparable with the peer group averages of 80% for 1st stage complaints and 65.9% for 2nd stage complaints.

4.5   The 2018 tenant survey identified that 68.8% of tenants were satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes (*indicator 6*) however just over a quarter of respondents were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' and therefore performance was lower than the peer group average (81%).

Housing Quality and Maintenance
4.6   At 31 March 2019, 92.5% of properties met the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) (*indicator 7*) which is below the peer group average of 96.4%. There were 241 properties which did not meet the SHQS but the remainder were exempt (220 properties) because they were either 'hard to treat' or classed as an abeyance (where work cannot be done for 'social' reasons such as the tenant refusing remedial works). It is intended to reduce

the non-compliant properties to 141 during 2019/20 with the aim of completing the remainder during the following year.

4.7   All social landlords must meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH) (*indicator C33*) by December 2020. At 31 March 2019, 57.4% of properties met the EESSH which is below the peer group average (77.1%). The Council has an ongoing investment programme of EESSH compliance works to its housing stock. It is anticipated that planned works will produce significant improvements on this indicator in the period leading up to December 2020.

4.8   Tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in (80.7%) (*indicator 9*) was slightly below the peer group average (84.6%). However, out of the 109 responses received in 2018/19, just 14 tenants expressed dissatisfaction with the standard of their home when moving in.

4.9   The 2018 survey found that 73.9% of tenants were satisfied with the quality of their home (*indicator 10*). This is below the peer group average (84.6%).

4.10   In 2018/19, the average time to complete emergency repairs (*indicator 11*) was 2.6 hours which was better than the peer group average of 4.2 hours. Non-emergency repairs (*indicator 12*) were completed within an average of 7.5 working days which was also better than the peer group average of 8.9 days.

4.11   The Council completed 82.7% of non-emergency repairs right first time (*indicator 13*) in 2018/19 which was below the peer group average of 89.8%.

4.12   The Council kept 93% of non-emergency repairs appointments (*indicator 14*). This was similar to the peer group average (94.1%).

4.13   At 31 March 2019, 100% of the Council's properties which required a gas safety record had a gas safety check completed by the anniversary date (*indicator 15*). This performance was slightly better than the peer group average (99.9%).

4.14   The 2018 Tenant Survey found that 78.6% of tenants were satisfied with the repairs service (*indicator 16*). This was below the peer group average of 87.6%.

Neighbourhood and Community

4.15   The 2018 tenant survey found that satisfaction with the management of the neighbourhood (*indicator 17*) at 80.3% was below the peer group average of 84.9%.

4.16   The percentage of tenancy offers refused (32.2%) (*indicator 18*) was better than the peer group average (39.2%). A low refusal rate helps to minimise void periods and rent loss.

4.17   In 2018/19, 87.1% of antisocial behaviour cases were resolved within local target timescales (*indicator 19*) which is better than the peer group average (84.3%).

Access to Housing and Support

4.18 Tenancy sustainment (*indicator 20*), where tenancies lasted for more than 12 months, was higher in Moray (93.5%) than the peer group average (89.5%).

4.19 The turnover of properties (*indicator 21*) in Moray (6.9%) was lower than the peer group average (8.1%). Low turnover can reduce opportunities for housing list applicants to be rehoused.

4.20 The Council approved 69.2% of medical adaptations and completed these within an average of 45.4 days (*indicators 22 and 23*). By comparison the peer group average was 82% and 41.7 days respectively. The governance arrangements for adaptations have now transferred to the Integration Joint Board which has established a governance group to drive improvements in the delivery of adaptations. The Housing service is represented in this group.

4.21 The proportion of court actions resulting in eviction (*indicator 24*) in Moray (17.2%) was similar to the peer group average (16.4%). All court actions in 2018/19 were for rent arrears with 10 resulting in eviction. The Housing Service only uses eviction as a last resort where all efforts to engage with the tenant have been unsuccessful.

4.22 The average stay in temporary accommodation (85 days) (*indicator 25*) was shorter than the peer group average (132 days). The Council made an offer of temporary accommodation to all homeless households who required it (*indicator 26*). The refusal rate for temporary accommodation (7.6%) (*indicator 27*) is better than the peer group average (12.2%). Most refusals were for a private sector hostel used by the Council but it is expected that performance will improve since the contract ended on 31 March 2019. The most common reason for refusing a property was location.

4.23 Although temporary accommodation survey response rates remains low, 85.5% of households accommodated were satisfied with the quality of their temporary accommodation (*indicator 28*) which is similar to the peer group average (87.3%).

Getting Good Value from Rents and Service Charges

4.24 The overall average weekly rent (*indicator C17*) for a Council home in Moray (£59.88) is significantly lower than the peer group average (£69.53). Moray has the lowest overall average weekly rent of all local authorities and housing associations.

4.25 The 2018 survey found that 83% of tenants feel their rent is good value for money (*indicator 29*) which was similar to the peer group average (82.9%).

4.26 The Council collected 99.2% of the total rent due (*indicator 31*) which is similar to the peer group average 98.9%.

4.27 The Council had the lowest rent arrears (2.4%) (*indicator 32*) of all local authorities. The peer group average was 7.6%.

4.28 The rent lost through properties being vacant (*indicator 34*) in Moray was 0.9%, which is similar to the peer group average of 1%. The time to re-let

empty properties in Moray (47.5 days) was higher than the peer group average (38.7 days).

5.   **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a)   **Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**
The monitoring and management of performance assists the Council to continue to improve housing services and helps to manage assets more effectively to provide the best outcomes for tenants and other service users. It also promotes safer communities and adults living healthier, sustainable independent lives safeguarded from harm, which meets the key objectives of the Corporate Plan and the Housing and Property Service Plan.

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

(c)   **Financial implications**
There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

(d)   **Risk Implications**
There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.

(e)   **Staffing Implications**
There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

(f)   **Property**
There are no property implications arising directly from this report.

(g)   **Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**
There are no equalities/socio economic impact implications arising directly from this report.

(h)   **Consultations**
Consultation on this report has been carried out with the Acting Head of Housing and Property, senior managers within Housing and Property and the Committee Services Officer (Caroline Howie) and comments, where relevant to their areas of responsibility, have been incorporated in this report.

6.   **CONCLUSION**

6.1   **The report provides the Committee with an update on the Council's performance on the Scottish Social Housing Charter and comparison with peer group averages.**

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Background Papers: With author
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