



Communities Committee

Tuesday, 20 November 2018

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Meeting of the **Communities Committee** is to be held at **Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX** on **Tuesday, 20 November 2018 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 15 of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act."

4 Minute of Meeting dated 25 September 2018 **7 - 10**

5 Written Questions **

6 Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan **11 - 40**

Report by the Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure)

7 Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 Part 2 - Progress Report **41 - 44**

Report by the Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure)

- | | | |
|-----------|---|------------------|
| 8 | Allocations Policy Review 2018 | 45 - 98 |
| | Report by the Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure) | |
| 9 | Housing and Property Services Budget Monitoring - 31 August 2018 | 99 - 106 |
| | Report by the Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure) | |
| 10 | Housing Investment 2018-19 | 107 - 122 |
| | Report by the Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure) | |
| 11 | Scottish Social Housing Charter Compliance | 123 - 162 |
| | Report by the Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure) | |
| 12 | Housing Performance Report Quarters 1 and Q2 for 2018-19 | 163 - 176 |
| | Report by the Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure) | |
| 13 | Tenant Downsizing Incentive Scheme | 177 - 184 |
| | Report by the Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure) | |
| 14 | Question Time *** | |
| | Consider any oral question on matters delegated to the Committee in terms of the Council's Scheme of Administration. | |
| | Item which the Committee may wish to consider with the Press and Public excluded | |
| 15 | Building Services Trading Operation Budget 2018-19 - Budget Monitoring [Para 9] | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on proposed terms and/or expenditure to be incurred by the Authority; | |

Summary of the Communities 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.

Any person attending the meeting who requires access assistance should contact customer services on 01343 563217 in advance of the meeting.

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

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

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

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

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

Clerk Name: Caroline Howie
Clerk Telephone: 01343 563302
Clerk Email: caroline.howie@moray.gov.uk

THE MORAY COUNCIL
Communities Committee

SEDERUNT

Councillor Louise Laing (Chair)
Councillor Paula Coy (Depute Chair)
Ms Anna Bamforth (Member)
Ms Jane Bartecki (Member)
Mrs May McGarrie (Member)
Councillor Theresa Coull (Member)
Councillor Gordon Cowie (Member)
Councillor Lorna Creswell (Member)
Councillor Ryan Edwards (Member)
Councillor Donald Gatt (Member)
Councillor Aaron McLean (Member)
Councillor Maria McLean (Member)
Councillor Ray McLean (Member)
Councillor Derek Ross (Member)
Councillor Ron Shepherd (Member)
Councillor Sonya Warren (Member)

Clerk Name: Caroline Howie
Clerk Telephone: 01343 563302
Clerk Email: caroline.howie@moray.gov.uk

Minute of Meeting of the Communities Committee

Tuesday, 25 September 2018

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

PRESENT

Ms Anna Bamforth, Ms Jane Bartecki, Councillor Theresa Coull, Councillor Gordon Cowie, Councillor Paula Coy, Councillor Lorna Creswell, Councillor Donald Gatt, Councillor Louise Laing, Mrs May McGarrie, Councillor Aaron McLean, Councillor Ron Shepherd, Councillor Sonya Warren

APOLOGIES

Councillor Ryan Edwards, Councillor Maria McLean, Councillor Ray McLean, Councillor Derek Ross

IN ATTENDANCE

The Head of Housing and Property; the Head of Development Services; the Housing Strategy and Development Manager; the Building Services Manager; the Asset Manager; the Housing Needs Manager; Ms Suzanne Wilson, Research and Information Officer; and Mrs Caroline Howie, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the Meeting.

1 Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests *

In terms of Standing Order 20 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.

2 Resolution

The Chair advised the Resolution in the agenda requested that items 13 and 14 should be heard in confidence; this should have stated items 14 and 15. Thereafter the resolution was agreed.

3 Minute of Meeting dated 26 June 2018

The minute of the meeting of the Communities Committee dated 26 June 2018 was submitted and approved.

4 Written Questions **

The Committee noted that no written questions had been submitted.

5 Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

Under reference to paragraph 12 of the draft Minute of the meeting dated 26 June 2018 a report by the Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure) informed the Committee of the requirement to develop and publish a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP), and the publication of related Scottish Government guidance.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the:

- i. Scottish Government's requirement that local authorities produce a RRTP; and
- ii. Council's draft RRTP will be presented in November to this Committee for approval prior to its submission to the Scottish Government by 31 December 2018.

6 Housing and Property Services Budget Monitoring - 30 June 2018

Under reference to paragraph 13 of the Minute of the meeting of Moray Council dated 14 February 2018 a report by the Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure) presented the budget monitoring for the Housing Revenue Account and General Services Other Housing Budget for the period to 30 June 2018.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the budget monitoring report for the period to 30 June 2018.

7 Housing and Property Services - Service Improvement Plan 2018-19

A report by the Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure) advised the Committee about the Housing and Property Service Improvement Plan for 2018/19.

Following consideration the Committee agreed the Housing and Property Service Improvement Plan for 2018/19, as set out in appendix I of the report.

8 Housing Investment 2018-19

A report by the Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure) informed the Committee of the position to 30 June 2018 for the Housing Investment Programme for 2018/19.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the position as at 30 June 2018 with regards to the Housing Investment Programme for 2018/19.

9 Moray Home Energy Efficiency Programme

A report by the Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning and

Infrastructure) informed the Committee of progress on the Moray Home Energy Efficiency Programme.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i. note the progress made on the delivery of the Moray Home Energy Efficiency Programme; and
- ii. further reports on progress being presented to the Committee.

10 Council New Build Housing Progress

Under reference to paragraph 5 of the Minute of the meeting dated 17 October 2017 a report by the Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure) informed the Committee of progress on the Council's new build housing programme and also the Bilbohall masterplan.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i. note the details of the Council's Programme Agreement for 2018-19;
- ii. note the progress on the Council's new build housing programme;
- iii. note progress on the Bilbohall masterplan; and
- iv. further reports on programme progress being presented to the Committee.

11 Community Safety and Antisocial Behaviour Performance 2017-18

Under reference to paragraph 13 of the Minute of the meeting dated 23 April 2013 a report by the Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure) informed the Committee of Community Safety & Antisocial Behaviour performance in 2017/18 and provided an update on work undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership. An overview of results for the Community Safety Customer Satisfaction Survey 2017/18 was also presented.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i. welcome performance against the outcomes performing well; and
- ii. note the measures and activity being undertaken in relation to those requiring action.

12 Question Time ***

Councillor Creswell stated she had attended the initial meeting of the Violence Against Women Partnership and sought clarification on progress.

In response the Chair advised this would be on the agenda for the next Police and Fire and Rescue Services Committee on 22 November 2018.

13 Building Services Trading Operation Budget 2018-19 - Budget Monitoring [Para 9]

Under reference to paragraph 19 of the draft Minute of the meeting dated 26 June 2018 a report by the Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure) presented the budget monitoring information for the period to 30 June 2018 for the Building Services Trading Operation.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to note the:

- i. financial information for the period to 30 June 2018, as detailed in appendix I of the report; and
- ii. Building Services operating performance and the Business Plan 2017 - 2020 update as set out in sections 6 and 7 of the report.

14 Council New Build Phase 7 - Report on Tender [Paras 6 & 9]

Under reference to paragraphs 15 and 17 of the draft Minute of the meeting dated 26 June 2018 a report by the Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure) informed the Committee of the evaluation of the tender received for the Council House New Build Programme Phase 7 project at the Barhill Road in Buckie. The report made recommendations in respect of tender acceptance.

Following consideration the Committee agreed to:

- i. accept the tender received for Barhill Road, Buckie; and
- ii. note that progress on the Council's new build programme is reported to this Committee.



REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 20 NOVEMBER 2018

SUBJECT: RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN

**BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of progress on development of Moray's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.
- 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 implementation of the Council's strategic housing plan.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Communities Committee:

- i) **considers and approves the draft Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, prior to its submission to the Scottish Government by 31 December 2018; and**
- ii) **note that progress on the Plan will be reported as part of the Local Housing Strategy annual review in Autumn 2019.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) was set up by Scottish Government in October 2017 to produce short and long-term solutions to end homelessness and rough sleeping. Four suites of recommendations were made in December 2017 and in February, May and June 2018, which have been accepted in principle by the Scottish Government. HARSAG Recommendation 7 requires that "Each local authority area to develop and cost a 5-year 'Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan' by December 2018."
- 3.2 The Scottish Government requires that Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTP) aim to end rough sleeping, transform the use of temporary accommodation and end homelessness in Scotland in a 5 year period.

- 3.3 On 25 September 2018, this Committee considered a report which advised of the requirement to develop a RRTP to be submitted to the Scottish Government by 31 December 2018 (paragraph 5 of the draft Minute refers).

4. DEVELOPMENT OF THE RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN (RRTP)

- 4.1 Since September 2018, the RRTP Working Group have been developing the Plan, and have given detailed consideration to Moray's response to Scottish Government Guidance, and how the issues around rapid rehousing and Housing First might be addressed in a Moray context. The draft RRTP is available at **Appendix I**, and a draft Action Plan 2019/20 is attached at **Appendix II**.
- 4.2 The Housing Service has strong foundations that can mitigate the emerging risks associated with rapid rehousing e.g.:
- A well-established and experienced Housing Options Team;
 - Traditionally low numbers of households sleeping rough;
 - Minimal use of Bed and Breakfast as temporary accommodation;
 - No breaches of The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014;
 - Generally good quality temporary accommodation;
 - Low levels of refusals of temporary accommodation; and
 - Increasing supply of 1 bed flats, suitable for single people, through new build.
- 4.3 RRTPs are required to deliver a settled, mainstream housing outcome as quickly as possible. Moray's RRTP approach will be to maintain an almost unchanged approach to Moray Council's Allocations Policy quotas as previous experience has shown that to increase the proportion of allocations to the Homeless List would be counter-productive to the aim of reducing homeless presentations. In addition, any substantial increase in the proportion of allocations to the Homeless List would compromise opportunities to house other households groups in significant need on the Waiting and Transfer Lists for example, downsizers, overcrowded households, households with significant health and social care needs. This balance is likely to feature in the Equalities Impact Assessment associated with the Plan.
- 4.4 The RRTP's approach will be to reduce length of stays in temporary accommodation for families with children in the first instance. This approach will be kept under review as the Plan evolves over its 5 year term.
- 4.5 The Plan includes a commitment to develop a Housing First model in its first year, 2019/20. Officers believe that the numbers of households who would come within the scope of a Housing First service would be very small (approx. 10 households). Development of a successful Housing First model will require a multi-disciplinary approach with a high level of co-operation between the Council, Health and Social Care Moray (HSCM) and NHS Grampian. The approach to support, rehabilitation and health services associated with rapid rehousing and Housing First should be reflected in the forthcoming HSCM Strategic Commissioning Plan and associated Housing Contribution Statement.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Officers propose to submit this first iteration of Moray's RRTP to the Scottish Government by 31 December 2018 as required, along with an associated Equalities Impact Assessment still to be prepared.
- 5.2 Once implemented on 1 April 2019, the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) will become part of the suite of strategic documents which form the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2018-23. The Council's approach to rapid rehousing will require to be reflected not only in the forthcoming draft LHS but also in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP), and Health and Social Care Moray's Strategic Plan and Housing Contribution Statement. The Plan should be seen as an integral part of the SHIP, and will be reviewed annually as part of the SHIP development process.
- 5.3 Progress on the Plan will be reported to this Committee as part of the LHS Annual Review in Autumn 2019.

6. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

The Local Housing Strategy focuses on a set of outcomes that contribute to the achievement of the Council's wider strategic aims and priorities, in particular meeting statutory obligations to homeless households.

(b) Policy and Legal

From 31 December 2012 the priority need test for homeless households was abolished. As a result, from this date, all unintentionally homeless households are entitled to settled accommodation.

The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets out standards against which the Scottish Housing Regulator will assess local authorities as part of its inspection regime.

(c) Financial implications

There are no direct resourcing implications associated with 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 requirements/implications arising directly from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

The housing needs of equalities groups are identified in the Local Housing Strategy (LHS). An Equalities Impact Assessment for the RRTP will be developed prior to submission to the Scottish Government by 31 December 2018.

The increase in the Allocations Policy quota for Homeless List applicants is necessary in order to meet the urgent housing needs of statutorily homeless people. The increase has been set at a small level to achieve an appropriate balance between the Homeless List and Waiting/Transfer List applicants, which include older people, people with a disability, and children living in overcrowded households.

(h) Consultations

Consultation on this report has taken place with the Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure), the Head of Housing and Property, the Head of Community Care, the Housing Strategy and Development Officer, the Housing Needs Manager, the Housing Operations Manager, Deborah O'Shea (Principal Accountant), Legal Services Manager (Property and Contracts), Equal Opportunities Officer, Caroline Howie (Committee Services Officer) and senior managers within Housing and Property, and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 This report presents a draft Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) for approval, ahead of its proposed submission to the Scottish Government by 31 December 2018.

Author of Report: Fiona Geddes, Senior Housing Officer (Strategy)
Background Papers: with author
Ref:



Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
December 2018

Contents

	Section	Page
1	Introduction	1
2	Links to other Strategies and Plans	2
3	Moray's Housing Market	3
4	Homelessness context	4
5	Affordability	8
6	Housing supply target and investment	10
7	Health and Homelessness	11
8	Baseline Position of Temporary accommodation supply	12
9	Moray's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan	16
	Action 1: Maintain a Housing Options approach to homelessness prevention	16
	Action 2: Increase the number of social housing relets available to homeless households	17
	Action 3: Increase supply of social housing relets, especially 1 bed units	18
	Action 4: Improve the value for money of temporary accommodation	19
	Action 5: Develop and Implement a Housing First model in Moray	19
	Action 6: Quantify support needs	20
	Action 7: Reduce length of stay in temporary accommodation	21
10	Rapid Rehousing Resource Plan	24
	Action Plan	
	Equality Impact Assessment	

1. Introduction

The Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) was set up by Scottish Government in October 2017 to produce short and long-term solutions to end homelessness and rough sleeping. Led by best evidence, the cornerstone of recommendations is a transition to a Rapid Rehousing approach of which Housing First forms a smaller component.

Rapid rehousing is about taking a housing led approach for rehousing people that have experienced homelessness, making sure they reach a settled housing option as quickly as possible rather than staying in temporary accommodation for too long.

Where homelessness cannot be prevented, Rapid Rehousing means:

- A settled, mainstream housing outcome as quickly as possible;
- Time spent in any form of temporary accommodation reduced to a minimum, with the fewer transitions the better;
- When temporary accommodation is needed, the optimum type is mainstream, furnished and within a community.

And for people with multiple needs beyond housing:

- Housing First is the first response for people with complex needs and facing multiple disadvantages;
- Highly specialist provision within small, shared, supported and trauma informed environments if mainstream housing, including Housing First, is not possible or preferable.

This plan sets out Moray Council's **initial** approach to that 5 year transition.

2. Links to other Strategies and Plans

The graphic below illustrates the linkages between strategic approaches relating to rapid rehousing and Housing First, covering allocation policy priorities, approaches to increasing supply including new build, and care and support services.

This Plan is one of the suite of strategic documents which make up the Local Housing Strategy, and will be reviewed annually as part of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) process. This Plan will also influence Health and Social Care Moray's Strategic Commissioning Plan and associated Housing Contribution Statement.

DRAFT

3. Moray's Housing Market

There are approximately 43,000 households in Moray and this is expected to increase to 47,700 households by 2037. In common with many other parts of Scotland, Moray is projected to have an increasing proportion of smaller households over this period.

The Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) was appraised as “robust and credible” by the Centre for Housing Market Analysis on 5 April 2018. The HNDA findings were broadly consistent with those of the previous HNDA 2011, in that there is an acute shortage of affordable housing in Moray. The HNDA found that 2,120 new housing units would be required during 2018/19 to 2023/24 to meet need (424 per year), and of those **56%** should be provided as “affordable housing”.

Moray has proportionally **fewer social rented** properties (19%) and a smaller private rented sector (11%) than the Scottish average.

At 31 March 2018 there were 3,067 households registered on the Council's housing list, and on average there were 8 applicants for every vacancy, and this ratio varies widely across house sizes. The greatest pressure is on 4 bedroom properties (159:1) and on 1 bed general needs (19:1). There is considerably less pressure on 2 bed general needs properties (5:1).

At any given time, Moray Council has approximately 100-120 statutorily homeless households waiting to be permanently rehoused.

Moray Council is the biggest social landlord in Moray, with approximately 6,100 properties. Local Housing Associations own around 2,400 properties. Together this housing stock generates around 600 vacancies per year.

4. Homelessness context

Moray performs very well in achieving decisions on homeless presentations within 28 days, i.e. the benchmark set by the Code of Guidance on Homelessness 2005.

Table 3:	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
Statutory Decisions	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Under 28 days	386	91.3	419	93.1	426	96.8	419	95.9	416	96.7
Over 28 days	37	8.7	31	6.9	14	3.2	18	4.1	14	3.3
Total	423	100	450	100	440	100	437	100	430	100

Source HI1

The HNDA 2017 provides analysis of homeless presentations over 2012/13 to 2016/17 and found that during this period:

- The group most likely to become homeless are aged 18 to 49 (80%)
- The majority of applicants are single person households (53%)
- The main reason for homelessness is being “asked to leave” (41%), followed by a “non-violent dispute within the household” (12%)
- The vast majority of households presenting as homeless have a local connection to Moray. The local connection is mainly associated with residency and family association.
- Approximately 60% of presentations were found to be statutorily “homeless/potentially homeless unintentional”.
- Repeat homelessness is generally lower than the Scottish average.
- Very few rough sleepers (see Table 2 below)

HNDA data has been updated to include 2017/18 and presented in Table 1 below. This shows that **these trends have remained relatively stable over the last 5 years.**

The characteristics of homeless households have remained consistent in recent years with a **high proportion of single person households** compared to families. The higher proportion of single person households is significant in relation to demand for temporary and permanent accommodation, particularly **1 bed properties**. The age range of applicants has also remained consistent with over half aged 26-59 and **around one third aged 18-25.**

The HNDA 2017 found that “pressure on supply of temporary accommodation could be alleviated by increasing turnover”.

Table 1: Reason for Homeless application 2013 to 2018

Reason	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Asked to leave	156	27.7	194	33	218	38	237	41	208	38.7
Dispute-non violent	90	16	86	14.7	78	13.6	71	12.3	68	12.6
Dispute-violent	75	13.3	68	11.6	66	11.5	64	11.1	64	11.9
Terminate tenancy-Landlord action	52	9.2	64	10.9	60	10.5	39	6.7	41	7.6
Terminate tenancy-Mortgage arrears/default payment	50	8.9	33	5.6	42	7.3	22	3.8	33	6.1
Other reason for leaving accommodation	40	7.1	22	3.7	20	3.5	37	6.4	23	4.3
Discharge-Prison/care/Institution	20	3.5	24	4.1	24	4.2	18	3.1	29	5.4
Overcrowding	18	3.2	23	3.9	22	3.8	19	3.3	14	2.6
Loss of Service/Tied accommodation	16	2.8	13	2.2	5	0.9	13	2.2	6	1.1
Forced Division/Sale of matrimonial home	14	2.5	15	2.6	7	1.2	11	1.9	5	0.9
Harassment	12	2.1	13	2.2	9	1.6	14	2.4	15	2.8
Applicant terminated secure accommodation	7	1.2	10	1.7	12	2.1	10	1.7	7	1.3
Emergency-Fire/flood etc.	7	1.2	13	2.2	2	0.3	11	1.9	18	3.3
Other reason for loss of accommodation	5	0.9	3	0.5	1	0.2	6	1	0	0
Fleeing non-domestic violence	2	0.4	6	1	8	1.4	6	1	7	1.3
Total	564	100	587	100	574	100	578	100	538	100

The table below shows the shows the number and proportion of rough sleepers over the last 5 years.

Table 2: Homeless Decision	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
a. Homeless/ Potentially Homeless Priority	293		294		292		293		274	
Slept rough night before	14	4.7%	16	5.4%	15	5.1%	17	5.8%	14	5.1%
Slept rough in last 3 months	32	10.9%	31	10.5%	41	14.0%	38	12.9%	35	12.7%

Source: HL1

Scottish Government data (HL1) shows that prevalence of rough sleeping in Moray is similar to comparator authorities e.g. Highland and Argyle and Bute authorities and considerably less than Glasgow City Council. Homeless applicants self-certify their rough sleeping status. Officers do not observe rough sleepers on Moray's streets in a manner similar to rough sleepers visible on the streets of Scotland's large cities i.e. Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen.

Housing Options/ Homelessness Prevention

In October 2010, the Council introduced a Housing Options team with the aim of preventing homelessness where it was possible to do so. For those who do become homeless, the Council aims to offer good quality temporary accommodation where necessary, and assistance to find a suitable permanent home.

The Housing Options team can demonstrate success in that, consistently, approximately half of households using the service choose not to make a Homeless Application to the Council, and are assisted to find a housing solution short of presenting as homeless. Housing Options outcomes are presented in the table below:

Table 4: Outcomes	2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Made Homeless application to LA	450	44.2	493	44	469	42.8	449	42.4
Remained in current accommodation	209	20.6	248	22.1	238	21.7	245	23.1
Friends relatives	76	7.5	104	9.3	121	1.1	100	9.4
Lost contact with applicant	99	9.7	99	8.8	77	7	84	7.9
Private rent-short assured	66	6.5	65	5.8	97	8.8	82	7.7
LA tenancy	34	3.3	48	4.3	30	2.7	27	2.5
Housing Association tenancy	13	1.3	4	0.4	13	1.2	19	1.8
Not known	35	3.4	20	1.8	17	1.5	17	1.6
Other (known)	12	1.2	13	1.2	10	0.9	15	1.4
Lodger	8	0.8	16	1.4	4	0.4	8	0.8
Bought own home-other means	3	0.3	3	0.3	5	0.5	4	0.4
Sheltered accommodation	1	0.1	3	0.3	3	0.3	3	0.3
Shared property-Local authority	0	0	0	0	2	0.2	2	0.2
Shared property-Private rented	0	0	1	0.1	2	0.2	2	0.2
Supported Housing/ accommodation	0	0	1	0.1	1	0.1	1	0.1
Prison	0	0	0	0	2	0.2	1	0.1
Private rent-assured	10	1	3	0.3	2	0.2	0	0
Voluntary organisation tenancy	1	0.1	0	0	1	0.1	0	0
Women's refuge	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Shared ownership	0	0	0	0	1	0.1	0	0
Hospital	0	0	0	0	1	0.1	0	0
Total	1,017	100	1,121	100	1,097	100	1,059	100

Source: PREVENT1 Data 2014-2018 Annual report for Moray.

5. Affordability

The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) represents the maximum amount of rent that can be paid through Housing Benefit/ Universal Credit, and is determined by the household size. In Moray there are significant differences between the LHA and average market rents. LHA rates are based on rents and are limited by legislation. In Moray LHA rates have been reduced over time.

The table below compares average local private sector rents with LHA rates and shows there is a significant shortfall between the two. Where rent is higher than the LHA payable, the tenant must make up the difference from their income. The shortfall is greatest in the 1 bed shared rate applicable to households aged under 35, usually single person households.

Table 5: Private Sector Rent/ LHA comparison 2016					
Property size	Median Rents Highlands and Islands 2016		LHA 2015-2020	Difference	
	per month	per week	per week	%	£
1 bed shared rate (applicable to <35s)	£306.40	£70.71	£59.04	19.8%	£11.67
1 bedroom	£470.00	£108.46	£91.81	18.1%	£16.65
2 bedrooms	£550.00	£126.92	£110.72	14.6%	£16.20
3 bedrooms	£650.00	£150.00	£126.92	18.2%	£23.08
4 bedrooms	£812.50	£187.50	£160.38	16.9%	£27.12

Source: HNDA 2017 Table 2.17

Moray's incomes are the lowest amongst comparators at the 10th decile and lower quartile (25%), and differences are more apparent at lower income. In Moray, a Minimum Wage earner has to reach the age of 21 before earning lower quartile earnings (£13,600 per annum), and only then if they are in full time employment. In addition, many local employers only offer part time, seasonal, or insecure employment.

The HNDA 2017 found that:

- only 45% of households can afford lower quartile house purchase.
- lower quartile income households could afford to buy properties priced at no more than £54,520.
- only 50% of households can afford to rent from the open market
- lower quartile income households could afford rents of not more than £65.53 per week/ £283.96 per calendar month.
- the reducing LHA 1 bed shared rate, and **differences between average market rents and the LHA** are making the private rented sector less affordable in general; to households under 35 in particular; and **may be contributing to the predominance of younger, single persons amongst Moray's homeless households.**

Moray Council Charging Policy for Temporary Accommodation

This policy aims to ensure that the rent charged for temporary accommodation is affordable to all, whilst ensuring that it does not act as a disincentive to work and that rent is recovered to its maximum potential.

The specific objectives are to:

- to use a cost effective and fair rent setting process,
- to ensure temporary accommodation is an affordable option to all; and
- to use recovery practices which take into account a household's income whilst, ensuring that those with the means to pay do pay.

The Policy states "When setting the rent level for temporary accommodation, the Council will charge every household the same level of rent, regardless of income. However, in order to ensure that temporary accommodation is an affordable option to all, the Council will only seek to recover those costs that it can reasonably be expected to collect.

The level of rent charged for temporary accommodation will be set in accordance with the Local Housing Allowance, plus a £45 management fee. The management fee seeks to recover the cost of decoration, voids, electric/gas checks, deliberate damage, furnishings and floor-coverings".

The rent level charged by property size will be as follows:

Table 7: Temporary accommodation rents		
Property size	2018/19 Rent charged (including management fee) on full Housing Benefit	2018/19 Rent payable by tenant (average council rent +10% towards management fee) on partial Housing Benefit/Not entitled to Housing Benefit
Single room rate for under 35 years/ Bedsit	£104.04 per week	£44.97 per week
1 bedroom	£136.81 per week	£60.47 per week
2 bedroom	£155.72 per week	£71.06 per week
3 bedroom	£171.92 per week	£82.05 per week
4 bedroom	£205.38 per week	£101.21 per week

The Council reviews rents annually as part of the budget process. Annual increases in rents will be influenced by the property size, occupancy rates by household type and the capping levels imposed through Local Housing Allowance and welfare reform.

6. Housing Supply Target and investment

The HNDA 2017 found that 1,179 affordable homes would be needed over 2018-2023, and that there is a significant shortfall in availability of affordable housing. The high proportion of single person homeless households has resulted in significant pressure on 1 bed social rented housing, both from temporary accommodation use and as an affordable permanent housing option.

The Local Development Plan affordable housing policy (H8) requires 25% of new housing developments to be “affordable” and that in the majority of cases this affordable housing is provided within the site. The affordable housing mix must be agreed with Housing as part of the planning process. The definition of what we regard as affordable is set out in Policy H8. Housing is routinely consulted on planning applications falling within the scope of Policy H8 and the policy is enforced equitably and usually supported by a Section 75 agreement. The vast majority of affordable housing delivered in Moray is sourced through this policy via Section 75 agreements.

The Housing Supply Target (HST) will be detailed in the forthcoming draft LHS 2018-2023 which will be subject to extensive public consultation. However, it is likely that the HST will consolidate practice over the last 3 years, i.e. to provide approximately 20-30% of affordable housing completions in the form of 1 bed flats for social rent, with the aim of increasing supply of housing under the greatest pressure from demand arising from single homeless households. The HST will be disaggregated to Housing Market Area (HMA) level and tenure e.g. social rent, intermediate tenures e.g. mid-market rent or shared equity. Approximately half of Moray’s households live in the Elgin HMA and therefore approximately half of the Housing Supply Target provision assigned to Elgin HMA.

Scottish Government funding for affordable housing is set out and prioritised in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) which is refreshed annually and published on the Council’s website. The 2018 SHIP was not yet complete at the time of writing but the projected completions of affordable housing are likely to be similar to those presented in the table below:

Table 6: Projected completions of Affordable Housing	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
No of Completions	69	462	228	281	69	1,109

Source: Draft Moray SHIP 2018

At present Moray Council is the biggest participant in the SHIP delivery programme through its own prudential borrowing. The Council’s Business Plan currently makes provision for 70 units of new build housing per year until 2020/21.

It is unlikely that the number of affordable units delivered through the SHIP will match that required by HNDA 2017, due to limited investment funding.

7. Health and Homelessness

This project was commissioned by the Scottish Government and builds upon analysis undertaken in the USA and by Fife Council and NHS Fife in 2015. This study links homelessness and health datasets for the first time at a national level, to explore the relationship between homelessness and health in Scotland.

This research combines Scottish Government homelessness data (HL1) with six health datasets from NHS National Service Scotland covering Accident and Emergency attendances (A&E2), Inpatient admissions (SMR01), Outpatient appointments (SMR00), Prescriptions (PIS), the Scottish Drugs Misuse Database (SDMD) and Mental Health admissions (SMR04), together with information about deaths from National Records of Scotland.

The project published its final report on 19 June 2018. The key findings were:

- At least **8% of the Scottish population** (as at 30 June 2015) had experienced homelessness at some point in their lives.
- Of those who had experienced homelessness at some point:
 - Over half (**51%**) **had no evidence of** health conditions relating to **drugs, alcohol or mental health**. This was much lower than in the control groups (MDC 74%, LDC 86%).
 - Around 30% had evidence of a mental health problem at some point during the study period (with no evidence of drug or alcohol-related conditions at any point). This was higher than in the control groups (MDC 21%, LDC 13%).
 - There was evidence of drug and/or alcohol-related interactions for the remaining fifth of people (19%), higher than in the control groups (MDC 5.1%, LDC 1.2%). Of these, the vast majority (94%) also had evidence of mental health issues.
 - In particular, around **6%** of people experiencing homelessness **had evidence of all three** of the following conditions – a mental health condition, a drug-related condition and an alcohol-related condition – although not necessarily at the same time. This was much higher than in the control groups (MDC 1%, LDC 0.2%). The figure was markedly higher for those experiencing repeat homelessness (11.4%).
- Increased interactions with health services preceded people becoming homeless.
- A peak in interactions with health services was seen around the time of the first homelessness assessment.

8. Baseline Position of temporary accommodation supply

As at 31 March 2017, Moray Council was using 165 units of temporary accommodation, with an average length of stay of 133 days.

Temporary accommodation in Moray is usually delivered via the reconfiguration of existing housing stock, rather than via specialist new build. Current provision includes self-contained, dispersed temporary accommodation; supported temporary accommodation units across the local authority area, and is mainly drawn from existing social rented stock (67%), rather than specialist supported housing facilities.

In September 2016, Moray Council's Communities Committee agreed that the Head of Housing and Property, in consultation with service managers, should determine the number of temporary accommodation units required to meet its statutory homelessness duties rather than set an annual target for this purpose. The fit between supply of, and demand for, temporary accommodation is subject to continuous monitoring, re-assessment and reconfiguration. This flexible approach allows the Council to **minimise the cost of** temporary accommodation, ensure stock is provided in required locations, and minimise use of bed and breakfast.

Temporary Accommodation described

Cameron Parkbrae, Elgin

This is a local authority owned, purpose built, hostel which was opened in July 1996. This is funded by the General Services account. It has 10 units of self-contained temporary furnished accommodation (3 bedsits, 5 x 1 beds and 2 x 3 beds). It also has two offices. The facility is open 24/7 and the Council's out of hours telephone answering service is currently based at this location.

Quarryhill, Keith

This is the oldest hostel which is used by the Council as temporary furnished accommodation. It is also funded by the General Services account. It has 6 bedsits and a caretaker flat within and has shared cooking and bath/shower/toilet facilities. Quarryhill is registered as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and would currently fail the Council's own standards for the provision of temporary accommodation, due to the shared facilities which operate at this location, (bathrooms, toilets, kitchens, etc.). The HMO license is due to expire on 29 November 2019.

St Andrews Square, Buckie

This is a purpose built hostel with 13 units of self-contained furnished accommodation. It is leased from Langstane Housing Association and opened in July 2009. It is currently funded from the General Services Account and has 8 x 1 bedrooms, 5 x 2 bedrooms and 1 office.

Dispersed houses

As at 5 November 2018 there were 97 units of dispersed furnished housing located across Moray which is used for temporary accommodation.

Supported Accommodation described

The Council has 30 units of supported accommodation which are all managed through 3 external housing support contracts. Two of these contracts are with SACRO who provide shared accommodation at Guildry House, Elgin and Covesea Road, Elgin. The remaining contract is with Moray Women's Aid for Marleon House, Elgin.

Guildry House, Elgin provides 10 units of shared accommodation for service users with alcohol/substance dependency. The property is leased from Langstane Housing Association. The service is currently funded by the General Services Account on a 3 year contract which is due to expire on 30 June 2019.

Covesea Road, Elgin provides 10 units of shared accommodation services for young people aged 16 to 24. The property is leased from Langstane Housing Association. The service is currently funded by the General Services Account on a 3 year contract which is due to expire on 30 June 2019.

Marleon House, Elgin provides accommodation with support to women who are at risk of, or who are, fleeing domestic abuse. This is a purpose-built hostel owned by Langstane Housing Association and leased to Moray Women's Aid (MWA). The building has 7 self-contained units (2 x bedsit, 3 x 2 bedrooms and 2 x 3 bedrooms). MWA also lease 3 dispersed properties in the community from the Council (2no. 1 bed and 1no. 2 bed). The service is currently funded by the General Services Account on a 3 year contract which is due to expire on 31 March 2020.

The Royal Hotel, Forres - The Council has an external contract in place to lease 25 units of bedsit accommodation from the private sector. The accommodation has individual rooms but all other facilities (cooking, bathroom, shower and toilets) are all shared. The Royal is a registered HMO and currently it would fail the Council's own standards for temporary accommodation due to shared facilities. The service is funded by the General Service Account on a 3 year rolling programme, commencing in 2010 and which is due to end on 31 March 2019.

These properties used as temporary accommodation, along with occupancy details for 2017/18 are illustrated in the table below.

Table 8: Overarching type of provision	List of each individual building used at 31 March 2017	Location	No. of households living in the TA at 31 March 2017	Total households who have entered accommodation between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018	Total households who have left accommodation between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018	Estimated occupancy in the year
Emergency	5.6 Bed and breakfast	-	7	31	39	38
Interim - provided under the Homeless Persons (Provision of Non-permanent Accommodation) (Scotland) Regulations 2010 – accommodation provided that meets the need of section 4 of that SSI and before the LA has discharged its duty into settled accommodation.	5.1 LA ordinary dwelling	dispersed properties + Cameron Parkbrae	76	179	272	255
	5.2 Housing association / RSL dwelling	dispersed properties	21	54	81	75
	5.3 Hostel - local authority owned	Quarryhill, Keith	6	13	16	19
	5.4 Hostel - RSL	Guildry House/ Covesea Road	20	7	60	27
	5.5 Hostel - other	Royal Hotel, Forres	25	63	101	88
	5.7 Women's refuge	Marleon House + dispersed properties	10	20	38	30
	5.8 Private sector lease	Royal Hotel, Forres	0	35	46	35
Interim Total			158	371	614	529
Temporary furnished flats - Self-contained flats based in the community used as temporary homeless accommodation.			0	0	0	0
Other	5.9 Other placed by authority		0	0	0	0
Grand Total			165	402	653	567

Source: Moray Council records

Persons with no recourse to public funds

The HNDA found that “no significant increases in temporary accommodation are anticipated to meet the housing needs of refugees and/or asylum seekers.”

Historically there have been very few occasions where the Council has provided services, including temporary accommodation, to persons without recourse to public funds. Where these cases have arisen, the Council has adopted a multi-agency approach which is flexible and which provides advice and assistance, including financial assistance where required in order to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the person and their household if applicable.

DRAFT

9. Moray's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

Our vision for the next 5 years is to continue to provide a good quality Housing Options service and to prevent homelessness as much as possible. Where this is not possible we will aim to move to a position where homeless households move through Council services as quickly as possible; where time spent in temporary accommodation is kept to a bare minimum, reshape the housing stock we use as temporary accommodation aiming to provide a range of options, of good quality, of a size/type and in a location which match demand and minimise disruption to the daily lives of those experiencing homelessness.

The actions detailed below describe what we will do over the **first year** of this longer term transition period. We will review these actions and associated targets annually throughout the transition period.

Action 1: Maintain a Housing Options approach to homelessness prevention

Our commitment to Housing Options will be continued into the forthcoming draft LHS 2018-2023 which states the focus for housing options will be to:

- Identify households with current or potential housing need and help them to plan to meet that need at an early stage;
- Identify a range of options for households in housing need including all tenures;
- Ensure appropriate housing support services are available to all who need it to prevent homelessness, and to break the cycle of repeat homelessness. The effect of this approach should ensure that fewer people require assessment under homeless legislation which in turn will reduce the numbers requiring temporary, and then permanent, accommodation. When achieved, the result will be improved sustainable housing outcomes through people moving house in a planned way, rather than in crisis

The Council participates in the Highlands and Islands Housing Options HUB and uses this opportunity to benchmark and share best practice on issues relating to homelessness.

In addition to current Housing Options practice detailed above, for households threatened with eviction, Moray Council will investigate the potential use of Short Scottish Secure Tenancies (aka technical eviction) with appropriate housing support as an alternative to actual eviction and placement in temporary accommodation. This has potential to minimise costs and reduce the trauma of homelessness experienced by the household, especially any children involved.

More than half of homelessness presentations arise due to relationship difficulties with their household. Some of this homelessness could be prevented through intervention in the family. With this in mind, during 2019/20, the Housing Service will consider the need to enhance the **specialist mediation** services it is able to offer.

Action 2: Increase the number of social housing relets available to homeless households

The Toolkit supplied alongside the Scottish Government's guidance provides a statistical analysis of the shortfall in supply required to achieve rapid rehousing within 5 years. In Moray, the toolkit has identified **a shortfall of 635 lets over 5 years (127 lets per year)** to be allocated to statutorily homeless households.

Moray Council allocates its own vacancies using 3 separate lists, Transfer, Waiting and Homeless lists with a quota applicable to each list. These quotas aim to strike an appropriate balance between all needs groups and are reassessed annually. The Waiting and Transfer list applications are prioritised using a points-based system, and Homeless List applicants are rehoused chronologically. To address the shortfall in lets to homeless households suggested by the toolkit, would represents an increase in allocations to homeless households of almost 50%, and would require Council Allocations Policy quotas to increase from 40% to 70% of general needs lets to homeless households.

Homeless households are significantly less likely to require sheltered and extra care housing. Also the turnover rate for sheltered/extra care housing is significantly higher than for general needs stock. Therefore, for the purposes of this Plan, sheltered/ extra care housing allocations have been separated, in an effort to accurately represent availability to homeless households.

As most local RSLs operate a Choice Based Lettings model of allocations, this would also require a significant increase in the number of Section 5 referrals to achieve this level of increase in allocations to homeless households.

Moray Council believe that such an increase could inadvertently result in an increase in homeless applications, as a perception could emerge amongst the general public that this is a quicker, or only, route into social housing, and that this perverse incentive would be contrary to the aims of HARSAG and the Scottish Government. This effect was evident in the period leading up to the removal of the priority need test in December 2012.

The Council will aim to increase the number of general needs social housing allocations to homeless applicants by 10%, from 273 general needs social rented allocations in 2017/18 to approximately 302 in 2019/20.

This will be achieved through a combination of the actions set out below:

- The Council sets its quote of allocations to Homeless List applicant annually. This quota has been 40% (+/-5%) since 2012/13. The Council will **increase this quota to 45% (+/-5%) in 2019/20**, in an effort meet the aims of this Plan. Past experience leads the Council to believe that to increase the quota of allocations to Homeless List applicants beyond this level could create a perception in the general public that this is the quickest and most effective route to a social housing tenancy, as so would be counter-productive. However, the Council will keep this approach under annual review as part of its wider target setting process.

- Renegotiate local RSL nomination agreements and **increase use of Section 5 referrals** with the aim of RSL allocations to homeless households continuing to at least match the Council's quota.
- Moray Council's Allocations Policy is currently under review, and proposed changes are currently out to public consultation. In part, this has been driven by implementation of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014, but also by the findings of the HNDA 2017. One of the proposed changes to Moray Council Allocations Policy aims to facilitate transfers for under-occupying social renters which will increase social housing relet rates and in turn will increase availability of permanent housing options generally. If approved, we estimate these changes, implemented from May 2019, will provide an **additional 40-50 relets in 2019/20**.
- Moray's LHS 2018 – 2023, currently in draft form, will include a review of Moray Council's **New Build Lettings Plan** during 2019/20 in its Action Plan, with a view to increasing the proportion of new lets to homeless households. A public consultation on the draft LHS will commence early in 2019.

Action 3: Increase supply of social housing relets, especially 1 bed units

LHS Housing Supply Target and Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP)

The HNDA 2017 found that approximately half of all homeless households in Moray are single person households. The HNDA also found a mismatch between the size and type of affordable housing required and what is available. Throughout the term of the LHS 2013-18 Moray Council has sought to use its new build investment funding to rebalance supply with demand. This has resulted in approximately 20-30% of new affordable housing units included in the SHIP 2017 being built in the form of 1 bed general needs flats for social rent. The vast majority of these will be Council houses.

The forthcoming LHS 2018–2023 will include continuation of this approach to social housing mix in its Housing Supply Target, with the aim of increasing supply of permanent and temporary housing options in the public sector. The public consultation on the draft LHS will commence in early 2019.

Sheltered Housing Review

Moray Council owns 149 units of sheltered housing. The built form of this stock varies considerably; from a 30+unit complex with communal spaces; to blocks of 1 bed flats; to clusters of individual bungalows in semi-rural areas. Some of this sheltered stock has been defined as low demand for many years, mainly due to issues of design and/or rural location.

There may be potential to reconsider the best use of this stock. The forthcoming draft LHS 2018-23 will include a Sheltered Housing Review as an action to be completed during 2019/20. This Review could consider some of the low demand

sheltered housing for de-registration with the Care Commission, on a sensitive and possibly incremental basis. This stock could be reused to increase supply of permanent and temporary housing options.

Action 4: Improve the value for money of temporary accommodation

The Council continually reconfigures the properties used as temporary accommodation. The Council are aware of high levels of refusals of offers of some of our temporary accommodation, and also issues of lesser quality accommodation. The Council will seek to improve the quality of temporary accommodation offered to homeless households.

Over the term of this plan the Council will aim to:

- Reduce use of B&B
- Reduce use of private sector leasing and hostel accommodation
- Reduce use of specialist supported housing
- Reduce use of RSL properties leased for use as temporary accommodation
- Increase the number of Moray Council HRA properties used as temporary accommodation in appropriate locations (additional 38 units)

Action 5: Develop and Implement a Housing First model in Moray

Housing First provides ordinary, settled housing as a first response for people with complex needs. It recognises a safe and secure home as the best base for recovery and offers personalised, open-ended, flexible support for people to end their experience of homelessness and address wider needs. The model separates the provision of housing and support, offers choice and control to tenants and works to the principles of harm reduction.

The Health and Homelessness Data Linkage study found that “around **6%** of people experiencing homelessness had evidence of all three of the following conditions – a mental health condition, a drug-related condition and an alcohol-related condition”. In Moray this estimate would be around 15 households. Officers believe there are approximately **10 households in Moray** who live chaotic lifestyles, experience repeat homelessness and are high consumers of NHS services.

The Heriot-Watt University study “Developing a profile of Severe and Multiple Disadvantage in Scotland” suggests that there are 74 households experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage in Moray, and so any **Housing First model should include contingency to expand** provision to accommodate this number of service users.

Officers already have experience of providing housing options with associated support services to these households and can use this experience as the basis to develop an effective Housing First model for Moray.

This Housing First model **will be in place by March 2020** and will require a multi-agency commitment to be successful. Key development actions will include:

- Engagement with Health and Social Care Moray and NHS Grampian. Links to this Plan are expected in the Strategic Commissioning Plan Housing Contribution Statement
- Implementation of SHORE standards
- Implementation of Moray Hospital Discharge Protocol currently under review.

As stated above, we believe the most effective housing option for our Housing First model will be Moray Council properties. Moray Council's current Voids Policy requires that outgoing tenants clear properties of all goods including floor coverings. As a consequence, it is likely that many of the Housing First service users will require help to provide themselves with furniture and household goods. Moray Council currently provides grant funding to Moray Fresh Start, for provision of a household goods service for statutorily homeless households. Moray Fresh Start do not provide furniture. The implementation of Moray Housing First would inevitably result in an increase of referrals to Moray Fresh Start, and would require development of a furniture provision service in some form.

The Housing First service will have access to predominantly smaller, self-contained general needs housing units in the social sector. However it will also have to have access to good quality **specialist supported housing** to ensure provision is available for those who do not want their own tenancy.

Action 6: Quantify support needs

In principle, **housing should be provided without the need for tenants to prove themselves “tenancy ready”**, with housing support and specialist care services provided to the tenant in-situ if necessary, and for as long as necessary to sustain the tenancy.

The transition to rapid rehousing will require a culture change which eradicates the concept of service users being assessed as “tenancy ready”.

In this first year of transition, the impact of rapid rehousing on the size and nature of support services has not yet been quantified, but this will develop in subsequent years.

However, using the evidence base of the Health and Homelessness Linkage Project, Moray Council has assumed that approximately 50% of statutorily homeless households have no or low housing support needs.

It is likely that housing support packages provided to Housing First service users would require to be at a more intense level than currently provided and would be required 7 days a week. Therefore it is highly likely that the current number of Housing Support workers would have to increase to provide sufficient coverage. This will be quantified as part of the development of Moray's Housing First model

during 2019/20, and will require the participation of Health and Social Care Moray and the NHS.

Reassurances would also be required that Housing First service users would have continuing access to specialist (drug, alcohol and mental health) support/ rehabilitation/ health services for as long as necessary for them to maintain their tenancy. If the concept of “tenancy ready” is to be eradicated, then access criteria to these specialist support services should also be reviewed.

Action 7: Reduce length of stay in temporary accommodation

Prioritise rapid rehousing for families with children in Year 1

It is well documented that there is significant damage done to the life chances of people who have experienced homelessness or insecure housing in childhood.

Traditionally we have low numbers of households with children occupying our temporary accommodation. Where we are required to house households with children we have always sought to minimise the length of stay in unsuitable accommodation and keep the number of transitions to a minimum. Most families with children in Moray’s temporary accommodation occupy self-contained, furnished accommodation, in a location which minimises disruption to the children’s education wherever possible.

We have agreed that, in the initial phase of this transition plan, families with children will be prioritised for rapid allocation of a permanent housing option, in an effort to minimise any trauma on those children arising from their insecure housing situation. This will be entirely dependent on the success of Actions 1 and 2 on increasing availability of social housing of the right size and type, and in the right location, to meet the needs of this group.

As the 5 year Transition Plan progresses, and as availability of permanent housing options increases, this prioritisation will be **kept under review** aiming to include additional household groups.

10. Rapid Rehousing Resource Plan

The success of this plan will be dependent on adequate resources, both budgetary and staffing, to complete tasks relevant to this Plan, to be included in the forthcoming LHS Action Plan.

These are:

- Development of revised RSL Nomination Agreements
- Increased use of Section 5 referrals
- Increased relet rates in Council stock and associated implications for Allocations Teams and Void budget
- Continued investment in the Council's new build programme.
- Sheltered Housing review
- Development of Housing First model by March 2020, and associated partnership and collaboration with Health and Social Care Moray and NHS Grampian on both children's' and adult service provision.

As this is a first iteration of Moray Council Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan the costings of the Plan have not been included. A fully costed Plan will be in place prior to implementation beginning on 1 April 2019.

However in general terms, in its first year, Moray Council will aim to make **cost-neutral** changes to its Homelessness services. This will include:

- Reduced expenditure on B&B
- Reduced expenditure on hostel accommodation
- Reduced expenditure on private sector leased temporary accommodation
- Increased expenditure on Moray Council owned dispersed temporary accommodation.
- Increased expenditure on Housing Support staff, associated with implementation of a Housing First model
- Increased support to Moray Fresh Start, in support of a Housing First model.

Progress and targets will be reassessed in 2019/20 along with SHIP 2019.

Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Status
1: Maintain a Housing Options approach to homelessness prevention			
Ensure appropriate housing support services are available to all who need it to prevent homelessness	Moray Council	ongoing	
Participate in the H&I Housing Options HUB	Moray Council/ RSLs	ongoing	
Investigate the potential use of Short Scottish Secure Tenancies (aka technical eviction) with appropriate housing support as an alternative to actual eviction and placement in temporary accommodation.	Moray Council/ RSLs	May 2019	
Consider provision of enhanced specialist mediation services	Moray Council	March 2020	
2: Increase the number of social housing relets available to homeless households			
Increase Moray Council Allocations Policy quota to Homeless List	Moray Council	April 2019	
Renegotiate local RSL Nomination Agreements	Moray Council/ RSLs	March 2020	
Consider the need to increase the use of Section 5 referrals to RSLs	Moray Council/ RSLs	ongoing	
Review Moray Council New Build Lettings Initiative	Moray Council	March 2020	
3: Increase supply of social housing relets, especially 1 bed units			
Maintain current emphasis on delivery of 1 bed general needs flats for social rent through SHIP	Moray Council/ RSLs	ongoing	
Complete Sheltered Housing review	Moray Council	March 2020	
4: Improve the value for money of temporary accommodation			
Minimise use of B&B	Moray Council	ongoing	
Reduce use of private sector leasing and hostel accommodation	Moray Council/ RSLs	March 2020	
Reduce use of specialist supported housing	Moray Council/ RSLs	March 2020	
Reduce use of RSL properties leased for use as temporary accommodation	Moray Council/ RSLs	March 2020	
Increase the number of Moray Council HRA properties used as temporary accommodation in appropriate locations	Moray Council	March 2019	

Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Status
5: Develop and Implement a Housing First model in Moray			
Establish a Housing First multi agency development group	Moray Council/ RSLs/ Health and Social Care Moray/ NHS Grampian	March 2019	
Implement SHORE standards	Moray Council/ RSLs/ Scottish Prison Service	ongoing	
Review furniture and household goods services	Moray Council/ RSLs	March 2020	
6: Quantify support needs			
Quantify the impact of Housing First on Housing Support services	Moray Council/ RSLs	March 2020	
Review access criteria applicable to specialist support/ rehabilitation/ health services	Health and Social Care Moray/ NHS Grampian	March 2020	
7: Reduce length of stay in temporary accommodation			
Monitor length of stay in temporary accommodation of households with children	Moray Council	ongoing	
Maintain current emphasis on delivery of 3+ bed general needs housing for social rent through SHIP	Moray Council/ RSLs	ongoing	



REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 20 NOVEMBER 2018

SUBJECT: HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2014, PART 2 – PROGRESS REPORT

BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides the Communities Committee with an update on the commencement of the provisions of Part 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 coming into force.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (G) (2), (4) and (14) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to exercising the functions of the Council as a Housing Authority, dealing with the allocation and letting of houses and homelessness and developing policies in relation to Community Safety and Antisocial Behaviour.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Communities Committee:
 - i) considers and notes the progress made in relation to preparing for the implementation of Part 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014;
 - ii) notes that all tenants have been notified of the provisions which affect their current tenancy agreements; and
 - iii) notes that a further progress report will be presented to the next Communities Committee in February 2019.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 26 June 2018, this Committee was provided with a detailed report on the coming into force of the provisions of Part 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014, herein referred to as the 2014 Act, and advised that the Committee would be given a progress report in Autumn 2018 on the Council's preparations for the implementation of the Act (paragraph 14 of the Minute refers).
- 3.2 On 24 June 2018, the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 (Commencement No. 8, Savings, Transitional and Supplemental Provisions) Order 2018, herein

referred to as the Order, came into force. The Order sets out the dates that the various provisions of the 2014 Act will come into force and the requirement that, prior to 1 November 2018, a social housing landlord must notify tenants in writing of the changes to their tenancy agreement which will arise from the commencement of Part 2 of the Act.

- 3.3 The principal policy objectives of the 2014 Act are to grant landlords greater flexibility in relation to the allocation and management of social housing while providing more tools to assist in tackling antisocial behaviour. The order aims to provide a smooth transition between the previous legislation and the revised 2014 Act. The majority of provisions laid out in Part 2 of the 2014 Act will commence on 1 May 2019 with the exception of sections 12 and 13 in relation to assignation, subletting, joint tenancies and succession which commence on 1 November 2019.

4. UPDATE TO TENANTS

- 4.1 The 2014 Act introduces some significant changes to the rights of tenants under the terms of both a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) and a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST). The changes require tenants to inform their landlords as and when their household composition changes. Future tenancy decisions relating to subletting, assignation, joint tenancies and successions will be based on whether or not the tenant and/or the person taking over the tenancy has been recorded as living at the property for a minimum of 12 months, starting from the date the landlord was informed of them living there. This ensures more flexibility for the tenant and their households if and when they need to end or transfer their tenancy agreement in relation to any of the aforementioned circumstances.
- 4.2 In line with the requirements of the Order, all existing Council tenants have been notified by letter of the changes in legislation that will come into force in 2019.
- 4.3 An online census form has been created and is available on the Council's website for tenants to submit any changes to their household details. Tenants can also inform their housing officer of the changes by writing, phoning, emailing or in person at any access point.
- 4.4 The letter to tenants included detailed information explaining the legislative changes that are being introduced as a result of the 2014 Act. Potential implications relevant to individual tenancies have also been explained. Information on the changes is available on the Council's website with a further webpage developed and dedicated to keeping tenants informed of the changes.

5. HOUSING POLICY REVIEWS

- 5.1 A separate item on the Committee agenda, the Allocation Policy Review, sets out the changes to the Council's Allocations Policy required by the provisions of the 2014 Act.
- 5.2 In addition to the allocations changes, the 2014 Act introduces several important changes to the use of short Scottish secure tenancies and provides a wider toolkit for social landlords to tackle antisocial behaviour and/or illegal

or immoral activity within council tenancies. This will require a review of the following Housing Service policies prior to the 1 May implementation date:

- Short Scottish Secure Tenancy Policy
- Antisocial Behaviour Policy
- Evictions Policy

- 5.3 The Council's Assignations Policy will be reviewed early in 2019/20 to ensure that any required changes are in place to meet the implementation date of 1 November 2019.

6. FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1 To achieve all of the implementation target dates required by the Order, the following actions will be progressed prior to 1 May 2019:

- review all three policies detailed at 5.2; and
- develop and carry out public consultation(s) on the required changes.

- 6.2 It would make sense to undertake one consultation process for the three policy reviews as there is a substantial degree of correlation between the legislative changes across the different policy areas. Officers will consider an approach that reflects a single consultation process and an update will be provided to this Committee in February 2019.

7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

Moray 2026 and the Service Plan identify the need to address the shortage of affordable housing and tackle homelessness. The Allocations Policy seeks to make the best use of the Council's housing stock and promote healthier citizens and adults living healthier, sustainable independent lives safeguarded from harm.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 received Royal Assent on 1 April 2014 and makes legislative changes in relation to social housing allocations and housing management. The Council is required to review its Allocations Policy and other housing management policies in order to comply with the legislative changes.

(c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report. The steps to notify tenants of the legislative changes have been carried out within existing budgets.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risk implications arising 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 implications arising directly from this report.

(h) Consultations

Consultation on this report has taken place with the Head of Housing and Property, Housing Needs Manager, Housing Services Manager and Officers within the Housing Service, Housing Strategy and Development Manager, the Community Safety Officer, Deborah O'Shea (Principal Accountant), the Legal Services Manager (Property and Contracts), the Equal Opportunities Officer and Caroline Howie (Committee Services Officer) and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This report provides the Communities Committee with an update on the preparatory work that is being undertaken by officers to ensure the timely implementation of the provisions of Part 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. A further progress report on the review of the Short Scottish Secure Tenancy Policy, Antisocial Behaviour Policy and Evictions Policy will be presented to this Committee in February 2019.**

Author of Report: Emma Armit, Senior Housing Officer (Policy)
Background Papers: [The Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) (1 March 2016)
[The Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2014, Part 2](#) and [Appendix I](#)
(26 June 2018)

Ref:



REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 20 NOVEMBER 2018

SUBJECT: ALLOCATIONS POLICY REVIEW 2018

**BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides Communities Committee with the results of the Allocations Policy review consultation. It proposes that a further consultation is carried out on the required changes to the current Allocations Policy and presents a revised draft Allocations Policy for approval.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (G) (4) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the allocation and letting of houses and homelessness.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Communities Committee:-

- (i) **considers and notes the results of the public consultation as set out in Section 5 of the report;**
- (ii) **considers and agrees the proposals for changes to the current Allocations Policy;**
- (iii) **agrees to consult further with tenant and other key stakeholders on the proposed changes; and**
- (iv) **agrees that this Committee will consider the consultation responses at its meeting in February 2019.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 26 June 2018, the Communities Committee was provided with an update on the commencement of the provisions of Part 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014, herein referred to as the 2014 Act, and of the requirement to review the Allocations Policy to reflect the legislative changes (paragraph 14 of the Minute refers).
- 3.2 Access to social housing is governed by legislation and guidance. Reasonable preference refers to the priority that is given to applicants. The

2014 Act makes several changes to the allocation rules for social landlords which the Council must prepare for by undertaking a review of the Allocations Policy. Not all of the legislative changes are compulsory. Certain legislative changes are optional and can be determined at local level.

- 3.3 Officers identified key issues which need to be considered as part of the review of the Allocations Policy. Changes are required:
- in order to adhere to the 2014 Act;
 - to assist and address the social housing issues identified by the Moray Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) 2017; and
 - to improve the existing allocations arrangements.
- 3.4 The 2014 Act introduces an additional requirement on social landlords to consult certain groups, before making or altering rules governing the priority of allocation of houses. This includes a requirement for consultation to be ongoing during the review process, rather than when the policy has been finalised. At its meeting on 26 June 2018, the Communities Committee agreed that a public consultation be carried out on the key issues (paragraph 14 of the Minute refers).

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The consultation was launched on 3 September 2018 and ended on 21 October 2018. The consultation involved:
- developing a survey which gave consultees an overview of the issue, what the current policy is, what the proposed change is and what the potential effect of the change might be;
 - developing an online questionnaire using question mapping, giving consultees the option either to complete the whole survey or answering the specific questions on those issues which are of interest to them; and
 - contacting the following and asking for their feedback:
 - all applicants on the housing list;
 - the Moray Tenants' Forum;
 - the register of interested tenants;
 - Community Councils;
 - Community planning area forums;
 - the Moray Equalities Forum;
 - homelessness and housing support service users; and
 - other key stakeholders including, Health and Social Care, Social Work and representatives from the Armed Forces.
- 4.2 The consultation was made available on the Council's website and was publicised using social media and the local press. Paper copies of the survey were also available on request.
- 4.3 In order to encourage participation, respondents could either answer the survey in full or opt to answer one or more questions on specific key issues. A total of 259 responses were received. 163 (62.9%) were the respondent's own views, 3 (1.6%) stated they represented the view of groups and 93 (35.9%) were not known. Of the responses received, 82 of the respondents were on the waiting list, 15 on the transfer list and 6 were on the homeless list.
- 4.4 Some of the feedback received indicated that some respondents were not aware of the legislative framework and constraints which the Council has a

duty to meet when allocating housing. For example, some respondents suggested that the age of applicants should be raised and some suggested that tenants who live in property that they under occupy should be forced to move. Legislation in Scotland states anyone can apply for housing as long as they are aged 16 or older. The Council cannot force a household to move out of housing which they are under occupying. Therefore, although the feedback is welcome, such comments will not result in any policy change.

4.5 A summary of the responses are provided in **APPENDIX I**.

5. DETAIL OF REVIEW

5.1 The consultation focused on eleven key issues. Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the key issue.

5.2 Key issue one: Increasing the level of priority we give to applicants who under occupy their homes

5.2.1 Legislation sets out who landlords must give reasonable preference to and any factors that must not be taken into account. In accordance with the 2014 Act, under occupancy will be a reasonable preference. The Allocations Policy will require to be amended to increase the priority given to applicants who under occupy their home.

5.2.2 The policy review consultation has gone beyond the legislative requirements by proposing that in order to make best use of all social housing stock, the increased priority is given to all social housing tenants who are under occupying their home. This increased priority would apply to both Council tenants and other social housing tenants.

5.2.3 The consultation asked if the policy should be changed to increase the priority given to all social housing applicants who are living in properties which are too big for their needs. Nearly 70% of respondents chose to answer the question on this key issue. Of these, 85.6% strongly agreed/agreed with the proposal, 6% neither agreed nor disagreed and 6% did not agree.

5.2.4 Based on the high levels of agreement, the Allocations Policy will be amended to increase the priority given to all social housing tenants who under occupy their home.

5.3 Key issue two: Taking property ownership into account when considering an application for housing

5.3.1 The 2014 Act gives social landlords discretion to take account of property ownership, in certain circumstances, when deciding on an applicant's priority for housing. This new ground is optional and it is for landlords to determine whether to include it in their Allocations Policy.

5.3.2 Applicants who own property can still find themselves with a need for social housing. For example, relationship breakdown, loss of employment or other income required to sustain ownership, age, infirmity or the need to be near a relative or carer. Analysis of the Housing List revealed that of the 3252 applicants, only 209 (6.43%) were owner occupiers with an assessed housing need.

5.3.3 The consultation asked if the policy should be changed to take property ownership into account. 63% of respondents chose to answer the question on this key issue. Of these, 61.35 % of the respondents strongly agreed/agreed with the proposal, 19% neither agreed or disagreed and 17.8% disagreed/strongly disagreed.

5.3.4 Based on the level of support, there is clearly an argument to take property ownership into account when assessing an application for housing. Some consultees expressed concerns that owner occupiers would be considered for social housing when they already have suitable housing. Several consultees expressed that owner occupiers should sell their home. However, this argument is diluted when evaluated against other factors:

- under the terms of the Allocations Policy, points are awarded to reflect a person's housing need. Therefore, no points are awarded if a person is adequately housed and does not have a housing need.
- many of those applicants, who own their home, are applying for council housing because their current home is not suitable due to a health issue or disability.
- analysis of the housing list identified that of those housing applicants who own their property, the majority of homes are modestly priced, mostly Council Tax Bands A, B or C. It is doubtful if the sale of these properties would release enough money to allow owners to buy another suitable property and resolve their housing situation.
- establishing property ownership can be a complex and time consuming process and there could be associated risks, including:
 - increased timescales for assessing applications for housing due to the difficulties involved in assessing ownership, property value and equity;
 - applicants with a housing need may miss out on receiving an offer of housing;
 - extending the time an older or disabled person spends living in an unsuitable home; and
 - increased administrative costs for the Council.

5.3.5 Approximately half of the owner occupiers on the Housing List are older and therefore may not be in a position to access mortgage credit. In addition they may not be able to find a design of housing suitable for their needs (often ground floor) for sale and at a price which they can afford with their current equity.

5.3.6 Based on these findings, officers would recommend that the Allocations Policy is not amended to take property ownership into account.

5.4 Key issue three: Giving short Scottish secure tenancies to homeowners in specific circumstances

5.4.1 The 2014 Act introduces an optional new ground which allows social landlords flexibility to grant homeowners a short Scottish secure tenancy (SSST) when they have a real housing need and need time to sort out their permanent housing arrangements. SSSTs are offered for temporary lets and have limited security of tenure. The tenancy will not automatically convert to a full Scottish secure tenancy. However, the tenancy will continue at the end of its initial period if neither the tenant nor the landlord takes any action to bring the tenancy to an end.

- 5.4.2 The consultation asked if the policy should be changed to grant short Scottish secure tenancies to homeowners. 47.5% of respondents chose to answer the question on this key issue. Of these 44.71% of responses strongly agreed/agreed with the proposal, 18.7% neither agreed nor disagreed and 35.8% did not agree.
- 5.4.3 Analysis of the Council's housing list identified that a high proportion of those homeowners who meet the eligibility criteria for SSSTs have a long term housing need which would not be resolved by offering a short term tenancy. For example, their current home is not suitable due to a health issue. Only 70 owner occupiers (2.15% of the Housing List) may potentially meet the eligibility criteria. However these households may have submitted an application for housing due to relationship breakdown or affordability issues which may mean that an SSST is not a suitable housing option.
- 5.4.4 Rather than amend the Allocations Policy for a small number of exceptional cases, officers will recommend that applications for housing from homeowners with a short term housing need are referred to the Housing Needs Review Group and each case will be assessed on its own merits. This can be achieved under the current Allocations Policy.
- 5.5 Key issue four: Suspending applicants from offers of housing in certain circumstances
- 5.5.1 Section 20B of the 2014 Act amends the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 to allow social landlords to impose a minimum time before an applicant is eligible for the allocation of housing, in certain circumstances. The circumstances include:
- the applicant has acted in an antisocial matter
 - the applicant has certain previous convictions
 - the applicant has had an order for recovery of possession on certain grounds made against them
 - a previous tenancy has been terminated on the grounds of abandonment or neglect of the property
 - there are, or were, certain outstanding debts relating to a previous tenancy
 - the applicant made a false statement in an application to a housing list
 - the applicant has refused one or more previous offers.
- 5.5.2 This new power is optional and landlords can choose whether or not to use it. It is important to note that this power does not apply to homeless applicants. The Council would still have a duty under the homelessness legislation to provide homeless applicants with permanent accommodation. Applicants who are suspended under Section 20B of the 2014 Act have a right to appeal to the Sheriff.
- 5.5.3 The consultation asked if the policy should be changed to include additional powers on suspending applicants from receiving an offer of housing. 58.3% of respondents chose to answer the question on this key issue. Of these, 67.55% strongly agreed/agreed with the proposal, 10.6% neither agreed nor disagreed and 18.54% did not agree.
- 5.5.4 One respondent who strongly agreed with the change stated "that anyone who flouts the law, causes damage, disrepair or neglect of their allocated housing, who causes a disturbance, etc, should be suspended from any further offers of housing". This can already be addressed by the current

Allocations Policy. Another who supported the potential change, also acknowledged that “this may not make a huge difference as there will be a duty re homelessness”.

- 5.5.5 Analysis of the feedback returned indicated that despite the level of support for including this new power, respondents may not have appreciated that:
- the current Allocations Policy includes instances when applicants may be suspended from an offer of housing;
 - the use of suspensions should be a final resort;
 - landlords should consider the purpose of suspensions and should consider if there are any alternatives that may be available to help manage individual cases; and
 - landlords should try to minimise the number of suspension they make and also minimise the period of time of any suspensions.
- 5.5.6 Currently, in line with legislation and guidance, the Council will assess each case on its own merits, taking into account personal circumstances and the extent of housing need before suspending an applicant from receiving an offer of housing. It strives to work proactively with applicants to ensure that the number of suspensions is kept to a minimum. The Council does not operate a blanket approach in the use of suspensions and will use alternative mechanisms available to it. For example, in instances of antisocial behaviour, offering housing support may assist and encourage the applicant to modify their behaviour.
- 5.5.7 Based on these findings, officers would recommend that the Allocations Policy is not amended in respect of the Section 20B of the 2014 Act. The operation of suspensions should remain as detailed in current policy and should continue to be monitored.
- 5.6 Key issue five: Giving priority to households who live in specialist housing that they no longer need
- 5.6.1 In recent years, local social landlords have been investing in new specialist housing such as wheelchair accessible bungalows and amenity and extra care housing for older people. The turnover of specialist housing stock in Moray is much slower in contrast to other stock, whilst demand continues to grow.
- 5.6.2 There can be situations where those living in the property no longer require specialist housing. However, such households may not have a sufficient priority to be rehoused.
- 5.6.3 The consultation asked if the policy should be changed to award points to those households living in specialist housing that they no longer need. 60.6% of respondents chose to answer the question on this key issue. 88.54% of responses strongly agreed/agreed with the proposal, 5.7% neither agreed nor disagreed and only 3.18% did not agree.
- 5.6.4 Based on the high levels of support, the Allocations Policy will be amended to give priority to households who live in specialist housing that they no longer need.
- 5.6.5 Applicants who are eligible for the underuse of specialist housing points may also be eligible for the Downsizing Incentive Scheme. On 7 March 2017 this

Committee agreed that the Scheme should be extended to include tenants who are living in specialist housing (of any size) which their household no longer needs (paragraph 5 of the Minute refers).

5.7 Key issue six: Giving increased priority to households living in tied accommodation, including armed forces, who will lose their home when their employment ends

- 5.7.1 Those living in tied accommodation may be required to find alternative housing once their employment ends. This includes service personnel. Despite the priority currently awarded in the Allocations Policy, those leaving tied accommodation, often do not have enough points to receive an offer of housing and are required to make a homeless application.
- 5.7.2 In order to prevent homelessness, the review considered if greater priority should be awarded to those living in tied accommodation from up to 3 months before the tenancy ends. This would significantly improve the potential of these applicants receiving an offer of permanent housing before, or when their employment and/or their right to occupy their accommodation come to an end.
- 5.7.3 The consultation asked if the policy should be changed to award higher priority to those living in tied accommodation including armed forces, when their employment ends. 55.6% of respondents chose to answer the question on this key issue. Of these, 61.11% strongly agreed/agreed with the proposal, 11.81% neither agreed nor disagreed and 26.38% disagreed/strongly disagreed.
- 5.7.4 Based on the high levels of support, the Allocations Policy will be amended to give priority to households who live in tied accommodation, including armed forces, who will lose their home when their employment ends.
- 5.7.5 Analysis of the Housing List identified that 48 households live in tied accommodation and may be eligible for these points when their employment ends. Of these, 5 are serving Armed Forces personnel.

5.8 Key issue seven: Giving increased priority to households leaving institutional/supported care, including care experienced young people

- 5.8.1 Households leaving institutional or supported care, including care experienced young people, continue to be recognised as a vulnerable group in society and are more likely to become homeless. Under the current Allocations Policy, the priority awarded to these households is often not sufficient to receive an offer of housing. This can result in the applicant choosing to make a homeless application and spending time in temporary accommodation until they receive an offer of permanent housing.
- 5.8.2 The consultation considered if those leaving institutional or supported care should receive greater priority in the Allocations Policy. It proposed that for care experienced young people the priority will be awarded until the applicant is permanently housed. Thereafter, if the applicant experiences housing difficulties and reappplies (up to the age of 26) a referral would be made to the Housing Needs Review Group to consider the application.
- 5.8.3 The consultation asked if the policy should be changed to award greater priority to households leaving institutional or supported care, including care

experienced young people. 49.42% of respondents chose to answer the question on this key issue. Of these 67.97 % of responses strongly agreed/agreed with the proposal 17.97% neither agreed nor disagreed and 13.28% disagreed/strongly disagreed.

- 5.8.4 Based on the high levels of support, the Allocations Policy will be amended to increase the priority given to households leaving institutional/supported care, including care experienced young people.

5.9 Key issue eight: Changing the rules on the size of property that we offer couples

- 5.9.1 Moray has a shortfall of one bedroom properties. In order to make best use of housing stock and meet housing need, the consultation asked if the policy should be changed to provide flexibility for the house size that couples without children may be considered for. The house size couples would be considered for would not to be restricted to one bedroom properties and couples may also be considered for two bedroom properties.

- 5.9.2 The consultation asked if the policy should be changed so that couples can be considered for both one and two bedroom properties. 57.91% of respondents chose to answer the question on this key issue. Of these 63.33% of responses strongly agreed/agreed with the proposal 7.33% neither agreed nor disagreed and 26.67% disagreed/strongly disagreed.

- 5.9.3 Based on the high levels of support, the Allocations Policy will be amended to provide flexibility to offer couples without children two bedroom properties.

5.10 Key issue nine: Placing applicants aged 70 years and over on the list for ground floor properties

- 5.10.1 Different criteria are applied when considering the suitability of households for certain types of property. For example, separate lists are maintained for sheltered housing or ground floor and specialist housing to make sure that they are allocated to applicants who need them most.

- 5.10.2 Applicants cannot be on more than one list. Currently applicants over 70 years of age are placed on the ground floor waiting list, rather than on the mainstream list, because this age group is likely to need ground floor housing. However, this is not currently detailed in our policy and may not be clear to applicants.

- 5.10.3 The consultation asked if the policy should be changed so that applicants over 70 years old would only be allocated ground floor properties. 55.6% of respondents chose to answer this question. Of these 79.17% of responses strongly agreed/agreed with the proposal 8.33% neither agreed nor disagreed and 11.81% disagreed/strongly disagreed.

- 5.10.4 Based on the high levels of support, the Allocations Policy will be amended to place applicants aged 70 years and over on the list for ground floor properties, unless the applicant states otherwise.

5.11 Key issue ten: Changing the review and complaints process

5.11.1 The review considered whether the Council's approach to the Allocations Policy appeals review and complaints arrangements is too complex, inconvenient and stressful for applicants. The review examined if the current arrangements could be streamlined and the process speeded up for applicants who are waiting for a decision.

5.11.2 The consultation asked if the policy should be changed to streamline the arrangements for reviews and complaints. 52.5% of respondents chose to answer the question on this key issue. Of these 87.5 % of responses strongly agreed/agreed with the proposal 11.03% neither agreed nor disagreed and 1.48% disagreed/strongly disagreed.

5.11.3 Based on the high levels of support, the Allocations Policy will be amended to streamline the review and complaints process. An applicant who is not satisfied with decisions made on their application for housing should submit a request for a review in writing to the Senior Housing Needs Officer. This will be considered by a senior manager not previously involved with the original decision with a target of 28 days to respond to the applicant. If an applicant remains dissatisfied, the applicant may write to the Housing Needs Manager to ask that the Housing Needs Review Group consider their case.

5.12 Key issue eleven: Publishing and making available a report on the consultation

5.12.1 The 2014 Act introduces more specific requirements for landlords to consult with and take account of the views of others in preparing their allocations policy. Once the consultation has been completed, landlords are required to publish a report on the consultation. The 2014 Act does not advise what should be in the report or how it should be published and made available.

5.12.2 As part of the consultation, it was proposed that following the initial consultation, a report would be presented to the Communities Committee, detailing the consultation outcome and what changes will be made to the Allocations Policy as a result of the consultation. Consultees were advised that this report will be available as a public document on the Council's website.

5.12.3 The consultation asked if consultees agreed with how the report on the consultation will be published and made available. 64.48% of respondents chose to answer the question on this key issue. Of these 73.05% of responses strongly agreed/agreed with the proposal 22.75% neither agreed nor disagreed and 3.6% disagreed/strongly disagreed.

6. REVISED DRAFT ALLOCATIONS POLICY

6.1 Legislation and the Scottish Housing Regulator expect social landlords to consult on any changes to housing policies. As there are a number of changes proposed in this review of the Allocations Policy, it is considered that a consultation exercise should be carried out.

6.2 Based on the feedback and recommendations provided in Section 5 of this report, a revised draft Allocations Policy is presented in **APPENDIX II** for the Communities Committee approval, prior to wider consultation.

6.3 It is suggested that consultation on the revised draft Allocations Policy is undertaken from 23 November 2018 until 11 January 2019. This would include the following actions:

- publish the draft policy on the Council website and the Apply4Homes website for feedback;
- develop an online questionnaire to seek feedback on the Council website;
- issue the draft policy to a sample of applicants on the Housing List and request feedback;
- issue the draft policy to the Moray Equalities Forum for feedback; and
- seek feedback from:
 - the Moray Tenants' Forum;
 - the register of interested tenants; and
 - relevant stakeholders.

6.4 Following analysis and consideration of comments received, it is considered that a report on the outcome of the consultation could be brought to this Committee on 5 February 2019.

7. FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 Subject to this Committee's approval of revised Allocation Policy in February 2018, an implementation plan will be developed to support a "go live" date from 1 May 2019. This plan will include aspects of system testing and staff training and developing revised procedures on the Allocations Policy.

7.2 A review of all information resources will be required to ensure all information is updated to reflect the agreed changes. This will include updating the Council's website and developing guidance for applicants on the revised process.

8. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

Moray 2026 and the Service Plan identify the need to address the shortage of affordable housing and tackle homelessness. The Allocations Policy seeks to make the best use of the Council's housing stock and promote healthier citizens and adults living healthier, sustainable independent lives safeguarded from harm.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 received Royal Assent on 1 April 2014. It amends some aspects of the law on social housing allocations and management. The Council is required to review its Allocations Policy and housing management policies in order to comply with the legislative changes. In addition, the Scottish Social Housing Charter sets out the outcomes expected in relation to access to housing.

(c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report. The costs of any consultation process can be carried out within existing budgets.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risk implications arising from this report.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the consultation process.

(h) Consultations

Consultation on this report has taken place with the Head of Housing and Property, Housing Needs Manager, Housing Services Manager and Officers within the Housing Service, Housing Strategy and Development Manager, Deborah O'Shea (Principal Accountant), Legal Services Manager (Property and Contracts), the Equal Opportunities Officer and Caroline Howie (Committee Services Officer) and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 This report provides the Communities Committee with the results of the Allocations Policy review consultation and presents a revised draft Allocations Policy. The views of the Communities Committee on the draft policy are sought to enable a consultation process to be carried out as described in the report.**

Author of Report: Gillian Henly, Senior Housing Officer (Policy)

Background Papers: [The Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2014, Part 2](#) and [Appendix I](#) (26 June 2018)
[Allocations Policy Review](#) (17 December 2013)

Ref: APR:NOV18

APPENDIX I

ALLOCATION POLICY REVIEW 2018 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Key issue one: Increasing the level of priority we give to applicants who under occupy their homes		
Consultees were asked “do you think that the policy should be changed to increase the priority given to all social housing applicants who are living in properties which are too big for their needs?”		
Response	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	82	45.30%
Agree	73	40.33%
Neither agree nor disagree	11	6.08%
Strongly disagree	2	1.10%
Disagree	9	4.97%
Don't know	4	2.22%
Grand Total	181	100

Key issue two: Taking property ownership into account when considering an application for housing		
Consultees were asked “do you think that the Allocations Policy should be amended to take property ownership into account?”		
Response	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	46	28.22%
Agree	54	33.13%
Neither agree nor disagree	31	19.02%
Strongly disagree	7	4.29%
Disagree	22	13.50%
Don't know	3	1.84%
Grand Total	163	100

Key issue three: Giving short Scottish secure tenancies to homeowners in specific circumstances		
Consultees were asked “do you think that the Allocations Policy should be changed to grant short Scottish secure tenancies to homeowners?”		
Response	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	21	17.07%
Agree	34	27.64%
Neither agree nor disagree	23	18.70%
Strongly disagree	13	10.57%
Disagree	31	25.20%
Don't know	1	0.82%
Grand Total	123	100

Key issue four:	Suspending applicants from offers of housing in certain circumstances	
Consultees were asked “do you think that the Allocations Policy should be changed to include the additional powers on suspensions?”		
Response	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	42	27.81%
Agree	60	39.74%
Neither agree nor disagree	16	10.60%
Strongly disagree	13	8.61%
Disagree	15	9.93%
Don't know	5	3.31%
Grand Total	151	100

Key issue five:	Giving priority to households who live in specialist housing that they no longer need	
Consultees were asked “do you think that the Allocations Policy should be changed to award points to those households living in specialist housing that they no longer need?”		
Response	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	80	50.96%
Agree	59	37.58%
Neither agree nor disagree	9	5.73%
Strongly disagree	3	1.91%
Disagree	2	1.27%
Don't know	4	2.55%
Grand Total	157	100

Key issue six:	Giving increased priority to households living in tied accommodation, including armed forces, who will lose their home when their employment ends	
Consultees were asked “do you think those living in tied accommodation, including Armed Forces, should get a higher priority when their employment ends?”		
Response	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	41	28.47%
Agree	47	32.64%
Neither agree nor disagree	17	11.81%
Strongly disagree	19	13.19%
Disagree	19	13.19%
Don't know	1	0.70%
Grand Total	144	100

Key issue seven:	Giving increased priority to households leaving institutional/supported care, including care experienced young people	
Consultees were asked “do you agree that households leaving institutional or supported care, including care experienced young people should receive a greater priority under the Allocations Policy?”		
Response	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	34	26.56%
Agree	53	41.41%
Neither agree nor disagree	23	17.97%
Strongly disagree	8	6.25%
Disagree	9	7.03%
Don't know	1	0.78%
Grand Total	128	100

Key issue eight:	Changing the rules on the size of property that we offer couples	
Consultees were asked “do you think that the policy should be changed so that couples can be considered for both one and two bedroom properties?”		
Response	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	41	27.33%
Agree	54	36.00%
Neither agree nor disagree	11	7.33%
Strongly disagree	18	12.00%
Disagree	22	14.67%
Don't know	4	2.67%
Grand Total	150	100

Key issue nine:	Placing applicants aged 70 years and over on the list for ground floor properties	
Consultees were asked “Do you think that the policy should be changed so that applicants over 70 years old would only be allocated ground floor properties?”		
Response	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	60	41.67%
Agree	54	37.50%
Neither agree nor disagree	12	8.33%
Strongly disagree	2	1.39%
Disagree	15	10.42%
Don't know	1	0.69%
Grand Total	144	100

Key issue ten:	Changing the review and complaints process	
Consultees were asked “do you think that the Allocations Policy should be changed to streamline our arrangements for reviews and complaints?”		
Response	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	51	37.50%
Agree	68	50.00%
Neither agree nor disagree	15	11.03%
Strongly disagree	1	0.74%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Don't know	1	0.73%
Grand Total	136	100

Key issue eleven:	Publishing and making available a report on the consultation	
Consultees were asked “Do you agree with how we will publish and make available the report on the consultation?”		
Response	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	42	25.15%
Agree	80	47.90%
Neither agree nor disagree	38	22.75%
Strongly disagree	3	1.80%
Disagree	1	0.60%
Don't know	3	1.80%
Grand Total	167	100



MORAY COUNCIL
HOUSING AND PROPERTY SERVICES
ALLOCATIONS POLICY

Appendix II

Index

1. Scope of the policy
2. Strategic context
3. Principles and objectives of the Allocations Policy
4. Law, good practice and the Scottish Housing Charter
5. Equality and diversity
6. Confidentiality and data protection
7. Information and advice
8. Eligibility criteria
9. Applications for housing out with Moray
10. The Housing List
11. Applicant choices
12. Housing types
13. How applications for housing are prioritised
14. Factors that cannot be taken into account
15. The assessment of priority for housing
16. Priorities and points
 - Homelessness
 - Under occupancy
 - Overcrowding and periodic contact
 - Functional housing need
 - Leaving institutional/supported care
 - Underuse of specialist housing
 - Poor housing conditions
 - Sharing amenities
 - Flatted/maisonette accommodation
 - Tied accommodation
 - Key workers
 - Need to reside
 - Exceptional circumstances
17. Bypassing
18. Suspensions
19. Local Lettings Plans
20. Sensitive lets
21. Application management
22. Offer of housing
23. Tenancy types
24. Refusal of an offer of housing
25. Social housing options
26. Review and complaint arrangements
27. Performance monitoring
28. Policy review and consultation arrangements

1. Scope of the policy

- 1.1 This policy details the framework for the allocation of Council housing that makes best use of housing stock whilst taking into consideration the needs, demands and aspirations of applicants.

2. Strategic context

- 2.1 The Allocations Policy will contribute to the Moray Local Housing Strategy, Moray 2026 – a Plan for the Future, the Council’s Corporate Plan and the Single Outcome Agreement and priorities from the Moray 10 Year Plan.
- 2.2 The Allocations Policy will assist the Council to fulfil its overall aim of the Local Housing Strategy, “to ensure that sufficient good quality, affordable housing is available to meet the needs of people living in or requiring housing in Moray.” In addition it will assist the Council to achieve agreed outcomes of the Local Housing Strategy to:
- address housing need and improve access to housing;
 - meet statutory obligations to homeless households;
 - assist people with particular housing needs; and
 - promote successful, safe and sustainable communities and social inclusion.

3. Principles and objectives of the Allocations Policy

Principles

- 3.1 The Council’s Allocation Policy is influenced by the following principles which will underpin the Council’s approach to the allocation of housing:
- Legality – the Council seeks to ensure that its Allocations Policy reflects the legal framework and good practice;
 - Consistency – the Council will apply the Allocations Policy in a consistent manner so that all applicants with similar characteristics are treated in a similar manner to achieve similar outcomes;
 - Openness – the Council will provide explanatory leaflets on the Policy and information on the operation of the Allocations Policy (whilst maintaining individual confidentiality);

- Responsiveness – the Council seeks to have a policy which is capable of responding to a wide range of complex individual needs and circumstances and which embodies an appeals process;
- Local co-operation – the Council seeks to work with other housing providers in the area to best meet housing needs in Moray.

Objectives

3.2 The specific aims of the Allocations policy are to:

- address housing needs in the area and where possible, to take into account applicants' housing aspirations;
- assess applications for housing in an objective, consistent and fair manner, complying with all relevant legislation and best practice;
- make best use of the available housing stock;
- sustain and promote local communities as far as is possible;
- monitor performance and respond to changing patterns of need as they may arise by reviewing the Allocations Policy of the Council on a regular basis;
- inform the Council's strategic planning processes; and
- make sure that the Allocations Policy and practice is accessible to all applicants, by producing information in plain language that is clear and understandable.

4. Law, good practice and the Scottish Housing Charter

4.1 The primary legislation governing allocations of Council housing is contained within the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. This legislation provides the Council with the discretion to develop allocation and local letting policies in line with local priorities.

4.2 Sections 19 and 20 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended by Sections 9 and 10 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and paragraph 4 of

schedule 2 to the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 set out the legal rules about social housing lists and allocations.

- 4.3 Landlords have a duty to make rules covering priority of allocation of houses, transfers and exchanges and to publish these rules (section 21 of the 1987 Act, as amended by section 155 of the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993 and the 2001 Act).
- 4.4 The Allocations Policy will adhere to housing and other relevant legislation. A list of the laws which have been taken into account are detailed in **APPENDIX I**.
- 4.5 This Policy promotes good practice and complies with guidance from the Scottish Government and the Scottish Housing Regulator. This includes the standards and outcomes detailed in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The Charter sets the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities. The standards and outcomes are:

Equalities:

Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so 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.

Housing Options

Social landlords work together to ensure that:

- people looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them;
- tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options.

Social landlords ensure that:

- people at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness.

Access to Social Housing

Social landlords will ensure that

- people looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and their prospects of being housed.

5. Equality and diversity

- 5.1 The Council is committed to preventing discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for every person who applies for housing. The Council seeks to ensure that the Policy does not discriminate between individuals on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status/civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.
- 5.2 The Council will develop information and advice in a variety of formats such as large print, tape and Braille, upon request. The Council will provide interpreting services free of charge, where these are required to assist applicants.

6. Confidentiality and data protection

- 6.1 The Council will ensure that any information given to it as part of the application process will be used in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 6.2 The Council will treat all applicants for housing with courtesy, sensitivity and in complete confidence. Applicants can request an interview with a member of staff to discuss their housing application. Applicants may request a same sex interview if they have to attend any interview. Applicants will have the right to have a relative, friend or advisor present at any interview. Interviews will be held in private interview rooms and all information will be treated in complete confidence.

7. Information and advice

- 7.1 The Council will provide applicants with information and advice about their housing application. The Council will provide advice leaflets on the Allocations Policy (using plain language) and will provide details of alternative accommodation in the area, where possible.
- 7.2 The Council will make sure that the Allocations Policy and a summary version of the policy are readily available, including at Council offices and on its website, free of charge.

8. Eligibility criteria

- 8.1 In accordance with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, Moray Council operates an 'open' housing list. Eligibility for accessing a housing list only takes into account the age of the applicant. Anyone aged 16 years and over is entitled to be admitted to the Housing List. The right to be admitted to the list is not a right to be allocated a house.
- 8.2 The rights of non-UK nationals to housing and homelessness provisions are a complex area. The Council will ensure that applications received from non-UK nationals are processed in accordance with legislation.

9. Applications for housing out with Moray

- 9.1 When an application for housing is submitted, applicants will only be considered for housing if they currently live in Moray or:
- they are approaching discharge from an institution and are considered normally resident in Moray; or
 - they are employed, have been offered employment or are seeking employment in the area; or
 - they need to move into Moray to be near a relative or carer; or
 - they have a special social or medical reason for requiring to be housed in Moray; or
 - they want to move to the area because they are fleeing harassment or at risk of domestic abuse.

10. The Housing List

10.1 Application to the Housing List is made via the web based Common Housing Register, "Apply4Homes"*. This enables applicants to apply for council and housing association properties with Apply4Homes partners across Moray and Aberdeenshire using one application process. The Apply4Homes website is an applications portal which collects information. It does not make any assessment of housing need.

* An applicant, or person seeking to be housed with an applicant, who is subject to the notification requirements of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, must contact the Council's Sex Offender Liaison Officer (SOLO) to submit an application.

10.2 The Council and its Apply4Homes partners will provide advice and assistance to applicants who do not have internet access or who may need additional support to complete the online application.

10.3 The Housing List consists of the Transfer List, the Homeless List and the Waiting List. Applicants accepted onto the Transfer List will currently be tenants of Moray Council. The Homeless List will contain those applicants who have been assessed by the Council as being unintentionally homeless. All other applicants will be placed on the Waiting List. The Council will seek to admit applicants to the Waiting/Transfer List within 10 working days of their application being received by the Council.

10.4 The ratio of allocations to be made to each List will be determined annually by the Communities Committee of the Council and will be applied at a Moray wide level (except for properties detailed in the local lettings plan. Refer to Section 19 of the policy). For 2018 – 2019 the ratio of allocations to each list is as follows:

The homeless list	40% of allocations (+/-5%)
The waiting list	40% of allocations (+/-5%)
The transfer list	20% of allocations (+/-5%)

10.5 Details of point levels etc will be provided to applicants, in writing, on acceptance of their application to the Housing List. Applicants can check detail of their points levels for council housing on the Council website or can request details of their points levels at reasonable intervals. The Council will only be able to provide points and positions for its Housing List. If an applicant has made an application to another Apply4Homes partner, the applicant must contact that landlord directly.

11. Applicant choices

11.1 Applicants will be asked to identify any preferred heating type and house type. In addition applicants will be asked to identify:

11.2 Preferred areas of choice

11.2.1 The Housing List maintained by the Council will be organised into lettings areas. Applicants can apply for as many or as few lettings areas as they want. Applicants will be considered equally for all of the letting areas that they have chosen. Applicants on the Homeless List will be considered for any available suitable property in Moray as long as it is considered reasonable in terms of homeless legislation.

11.2.2 Applicants will be asked to indicate the top three letting areas where they would prefer to live. The Council will use this information for strategic planning purposes including the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA), Local Housing Strategy (LHS), Strategic Housing Investment Programme (SHIP) and new build programmes.

11.3 Size of housing

11.3.1 Applicants will be asked to indicate their preferred house size. However, actual house size required, based on the bedroom requirement, will be taken into consideration when allocating properties. In assessing bedroom deficiency or overcrowding, rooms which are less than 6.5 square metres in area or without natural lighting will not be included.

11.3.2 When assessing the size of property needed by a household, the Council considers that separate bedrooms are required for:

- husband/wife or similar partnerships;
- each person aged 16 years or over;
- children aged 5 years or over of different sex from other children of any age;
- children of the same sex where there is an age difference of 5 years or more between the elder and the younger child; and
- no more than two people of any ages should occupy one bedroom.

11.3.3 It should be noted that the Council's size criteria differs to the criteria used by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). The size of property allocated will depend on the household composition and will generally operate as follows:

Household size	bedroom size
Single person	One
Couple	One / two
Single parent or couple with one child or pregnant	Two
Single parent or couple with two children of the same sex	
Both children are aged under 16 and there is an age gap of less than 5 years	Two
Both children are aged under 16 but there is an age gap of more than 5 years	Three
One or both of the children are aged 16 or over	Three
Single parent or couple with two children of the opposite sex	
Both children are under the age of 5	Two
One child is aged 5 or over	Three
Single parent or couple with three children of the same sex	
Two children have an age gap of less than 5 years and both are under 16 years of age	Three
There is an age gap of more than 5 years between all three children	Four

Household size	bedroom size
All children are over the age of 16	Four
Single parent or couple with three children of the opposite sex	
Two children are able to share a room (both the same sex, less than a 5 year age gap and both under 16 years of age)	Three
None of the children are able to share a room due to opposite sexes and age	Four
Single parent or couple with four children of the opposite sex	
All children are able to share a bedroom	Three
Only two of the children are able to share a bedroom	Four
None of the children are able to share a bedroom	Five

Each application will be considered on an individual basis. In order to make best use of housing stock and maximise choice there may be exceptions to this.

11.3.4 In order to make best use of housing stock and meet specific housing need, for the purposes of one and two bedroom properties only, the Council will offer flexibility for the house size that a couple may be considered for.

11.3.5 In the event that an applicant is deemed to require a one bedroom property and is eligible for either overcrowding or under occupancy points and the applicant decided to accept a two bedroom property, the award of overcrowding points or under occupancy would be adjusted accordingly. For example, a couple occupying a three bedroom Council house would receive 500 under occupancy points when being considered for a one bedroom property. The award of points, when being considered for a two bedroom property, would be adjusted to 250 under occupancy points.

11.4. Ground floor properties

11.4.1 Applicants age 70 years and over will only be considered for ground floor housing unless the applicant has expressed otherwise.

11.4.2 In order to make best use of housing stock and meet specific housing need, for the purposes of one and two bedroom ground floor properties only, the Council will offer flexibility for the house size that an applicant may be considered for.

11.4.3 The housing list for one and two bedroom ground floor properties will be combined. Applicants assessed as requiring a one bedroom ground floor property will also be considered for two bedroom ground floor properties. The applicant with the highest level of need will be allocated the property.

11.4.4 In the event that an applicant is deemed to require a one bedroom property and is eligible for under occupancy points and the applicant decided to accept a two bedroom property, the award of under occupancy points would be adjusted accordingly. For example, a single person household occupying a three bedroom Council house would receive 500 under occupancy points when being considered for a one bedroom ground floor vacancy. The award of points, when being considered for a two bedroom ground floor vacancy, would be adjusted to 250 under occupancy points.

12. Housing types

12.1 The main type of housing provided by Moray Council is general needs or “mainstream housing”. However, the following house types are also provided for particular needs groups:

12.2 Sheltered housing

12.2.1 This type of housing are groups of self-contained properties for adults of any age who have an assessed health / support need to live in a sheltered environment. There are usually communal facilities on site. Applicants must have an assessed need for sheltered housing which will be determined by the completion of a functional assessment (see Section 16).

12.3 Specialist housing

12.3.1 This type of housing includes flats or houses that meet the needs of people with a physical disability. Homes may be partially adapted, fully adapted or

suitable for future adaptations. Applicants must have housing that has been based on an assessed need, with adaptations which will be determined by the completion of a functional assessment (see Section 16). The Council may match some properties that have been specially adapted or designed to meet a person's needs.

13. How applications for housing are prioritised

13.1 In line with housing law, 'reasonable preference' must be given to certain groups. Priority must be awarded to:

- people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness through no fault of their own and have unmet housing needs;
- social housing tenants who are under occupying their home; and
- people who are living in unsatisfactory housing conditions and have unmet housing needs.

Unmet housing need

13.2 Applicants are considered to have unmet housing needs if they have a housing need which is not capable by their current housing circumstances. For example, an applicant with disabilities whose housing needs can only be met in social housing because it is not possible to make essential adaptations to their current home.

14. Factors that cannot be taken into account

14.1 There are certain factors which housing law states that the Council cannot take into account when allocating housing. These are:

- a) the length of time an applicant has lived in the area;
- b) any outstanding liability (such as rent arrears) attributable to the tenancy of a house of which the applicant was not the tenant when the liability accrued;
- c) any rent or other arrears accrued by the applicant on a previous tenancy which are no longer outstanding;
- d) any liability which is outstanding but where

- i) the extent of the liability is not more than one twelfth of the annual amount payable by the tenant to the landlord in respect of the tenancy; or
- ii) the applicant:
 - has agreed arrangements with the landlord for paying the outstanding liability;
 - has made payments in accordance with that arrangement for at least 3 months; and
 - is continuing to make such payments.
- e) any outstanding debts (including council tax arrears) of the applicant or anyone who it is proposed will reside with the applicant which do not relate to the tenancy of a house (this would include a previous tenancy) i.e. which are not rent arrears or service charges. This means that any outstanding debts which do relate to the tenancy of the house – e.g. rent, repair recharges or service charges – can be taken into account.
- f) the age of the applicant provided that the applicant is 16 years of age or over except in the allocation of
 - (i) houses which have been designed or substantially adapted for occupation by persons of a particular age group
 - (ii) houses for persons who are, or are to be, in receipt of housing support services (within the meaning of Section 91 of the Housing (Scotland) 2001) for persons of a particular age group or by persons with particular needs.
- g) the income of the applicant and his family.

15. The assessment of priority for housing

- 15.1 The Council will assess all applicants for housing on a fair and consistent basis whilst giving priority to those in the greatest housing need. All applications will be assessed and points awarded for a range of circumstances, based on an assessment of an applicant's housing needs. These categories and levels of points are detailed in Section 16.

- 15.2 The placing on the Transfer or Waiting List will be determined by the number of points awarded to an applicant, on the basis of their current circumstances. There is no maximum level of points that will be awarded to these applicants.
- 15.3 Applicants on the Homeless List will have no points awarded whilst they remain on this list. Their priority will be determined by the date of the homeless application unless there are exceptional circumstances that merit an urgent offer of accommodation.
- 15.4 Applicants are responsible for notifying the Council of any changes in their circumstances. Any change in an applicant's circumstances, may affect the points that their housing application has been awarded and their position on the Housing List.

16. Priorities and points

16.1 Homelessness

- 16.1.1 Applicants who have been assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness under the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 and who have an unmet housing need will be placed on the Homeless List. Applicants on the Homeless List will receive no points but are prioritised in accordance with the date of their homeless application.
- 16.1.2 All homeless applicants will receive the same number of offers as any other applicant is entitled to under this Policy. However in recognising the immediate need for accommodation of those placed on the Homeless List, the Council will consider offering any vacant property to an applicant who is on that list, providing that the offer can be regarded as reasonable given the particular circumstances of the applicant. This may include property in lettings areas or property types which the applicant has not selected.

16.1.3 In determining whether an offer is considered reasonable, the Council will take into account the particular circumstances, the needs of the applicant and their household and the sustainability of the accommodation.

16.2 Under occupancy

16.2.1 An applicant's current accommodation will be assessed in accordance with Section 11.3.2 of this policy and points for under occupation awarded where there is an additional bedroom which is surplus to the requirements of the household.

For applicants living in social housing , for each bedroom surplus to requirements.	250 points
For applicants living in private housing , for each bedroom surplus to requirements.	50 points

16.3 Overcrowding

16.3.1 An applicant's current accommodation will be assessed in accordance with Section 11.3.2 of this policy and points awarded where there is a bedroom deficiency. For each bedroom for which the applicant's current accommodation is deficient, **100 points** will be awarded.

16.3.2 Where an applicant believes that a bedroom is insufficient in size to allow two persons to share, an applicant may request that a visit is made to assess whether additional overcrowding points should be considered.

16.3.3 In cases where an additional bedroom need arises from pregnancy, applications will be assessed for the size of property needed by the applicant's household. Overcrowding points will not be awarded to the application until the Council has received confirmation that the baby has been born.

Periodic contact

- 16.3.4 Where an additional bedroom is required for frequent and regular overnight contact with children, a total of **50 points** will be awarded. Proof of contact arrangements must be provided from the Court or solicitor or Social Worker or the parent with whom the children usually reside.
- 16.3.5 An applicant will only be eligible for one additional bedroom irrespective of the number of children covered by the any contact agreement.
- 16.3.6 Applicants who are awarded periodic contact points and who may be affected by the removal of the spare room subsidy will be made aware of the shortfall in benefit upon assessment of their application.

16.4 Functional housing need

- 16.4.1 Applicants applying for housing because they think that their home is not suitable due to a health condition and/or a disability will complete a Housing Functional Assessment Form. A housing functional assessment is not an assessment of a person's condition or disability. It is a more holistic approach, taking into account mental health, physical and learning disability issues. It is an assessment of the need for another home that would either help to stabilise a clinical condition or disability or allow a person to function more independently.
- 16.4.2 Applicants who are leaving the armed forces due to injury or disability and require access to adapted social housing will be deemed to have a significant level of housing need. This will be addressed through a housing functional assessment.
- 16.4.3 Housing functional assessments are completed by the Housing Occupational Therapist who will award functional assessment points in accordance with the points criteria detailed below. In more complex cases or where further evidence is needed to make a decision, the Housing Occupational Therapist will request additional information from the applicant and/or any of the services/professionals included in the completed assessment form.

16.4.4 Points may be awarded as follows:

Category	Criteria	Points
A	Awarded where the illness will become life threatening if the person were to remain in their current accommodation or due to illness and dysfunction it has been clearly established by health professionals that the person is no longer able to safely remain in their current accommodation.	500
B	Awarded where the illness is likely to continue to seriously deteriorate if the person remains in their current accommodation and/or the person is long term and substantially disabled and due to this it has been established by health professionals that they are unable to access and use essential facilities in their current home.	350
C	Awarded where it has been established by a health professional that a change of property would significantly increase the person's level of safety, ability and independence when completing essential day to day activities.	150
D	Awarded where it has been established by a health professional that a change of property would moderately increase the person's level of safety, ability and independence when completing essential day to day activities.	50
E	No points will be awarded where there are no recognised barriers in place for a person to carry out their day to day activities. No points will be awarded where alternative solutions can be provided (e.g. aids and adaptations).	0

16.4.5 Applicants who are not satisfied with the outcome of their assessment will have the right to appeal. An appeals panel comprising of the Housing Needs

Operational Manager, the Senior Housing Needs Officer and the Advanced Occupational Therapist will consider appeals. At the appeal hearing, the Housing Occupational Therapist will be required to present the reasons and rationale for their original decision and the panel would decide thereafter whether the level of priority should remain or change.

16.4.6 The appeals panel will write and advise the applicant of the outcome of the review and of the reasons for the decision.

16.4.7 As an additional oversight, the appeals panel will also carry out a random sample of routine functional assessments every quarter to ensure consistency, transparency and good practice.

16.4.8 The Council will not accept another functional assessment application from the applicant's household for twelve months from the date of the original decision, unless:

- there is a significant decline in the health of those who have applied for points and there is evidence to verify this;
- a different person within the household applies for points;
- there is a change of address;
- their housing situation becomes worse; or
- the person who has been awarded the functional assessment points leaves the household.

16.5 Leaving institutional/supported care

16.5.1 Applicants will be awarded points if any of the following circumstances apply and are confirmed by a Social Worker, Care Manager, Care Provider, Housing Support Provider, Community Psychiatric Nurse, General Practitioner, Doctor or Consultant, as may be appropriate given the individual circumstances of each case.

Where residential care/hospital/specialist supported housing is no longer appropriate.	350 points
Where an applicant is leaving a care environment. For example, supported accommodation, supported lodgings or foster care.	
Where a kinship care placement is no longer appropriate.	

16.5.2 For care experienced young people, points will be awarded up to the point that they are permanently housed. Thereafter if they experience housing difficulties and reapply for council housing (up to the age of 26) a referral would be made to the Housing Needs Review Group to consider their application.

16.5.3 Although points may be awarded, unless a valid and up to date support plan is in place which confirms that the applicant will have sufficient support to assist them to sustain their tenancy, the applicant may be bypassed for an offer of housing (see Section 17).

16.6 Underuse of specialist housing

16.6.1 Specialist housing is defined as any social housing property in Moray which is either suitable for ambulant disabled households or is wheelchair accessible. Generally this applies to any bungalow with a level entry access.

16.6.2 There can be situations where the person who the property was allocated for is no longer living in there and nobody else living there has a need for specialist housing.

16.6.3 Underuse of specialist housing points may be awarded to households living in specialist housing but who no longer have a need for this type of housing and who want to move.

16.6.4 Applicants will only be eligible for underuse of specialist housing points if they are moving from specialist housing to alternative housing which is not defined as specialist housing.

250 points

16.7 Poor housing conditions

16.7.1 Applicants in the private sector (including caravans) will be awarded poor housing condition points on the following basis, following an inspection where this is required to establish condition:

16.7.2 Facilities are defined as sink, wash-hand basin, bath or shower, hot and cold water supply to facilities and an inside toilet.

Below Tolerable Standard and lacking facilities	250 points
Below Tolerable Standard with facilities	150 points
Lacking facilities but meets standard	100 points

16.8 Sharing amenities

16.8.1 Amenities considered for sharing points are kitchen, toilet and bathroom.

16.8.2 Applicants whose household share amenities with another household (points will only be awarded to applicants who are not the tenant/owner of the property).

100 points

16.9 Flatted/maisonette accommodation

16.9.1 Applicants with children under 5 years of age will not be considered for flatted/maisonette accommodation with communal access unless the applicant has expressed an interest in being housed in this property type.

16.9.2 Applicants with children under 16 years of age who are currently occupying flatted/maisonette accommodation where there is shared access within the building are awarded points as follows:

Residing in a first floor flat or above ground floor access maisonette	40 points
Residing in a second floor or over flat or maisonette where the living accommodation is on the second floor or above	75 points

16.10 Tied accommodation

16.10.1 An applicant may live in accommodation which is part of the conditions of their employment. Applicants will have no right to reside in the accommodation once their employment ends. Applicants living in tied accommodation will be awarded tied accommodation points if the applicant is retiring or their employment ends, which results in them having to leave the accommodation. In the event that the tenant has died, points for tied accommodation may be awarded to the partner or spouse of the tenant. Applicants must provide valid evidence of the loss of accommodation.

16.10.2 Applicants who are serving Armed Forces personnel and who occupy service accommodation which is due to be terminated will be awarded tied accommodation points. The points will only be awarded to serving personnel and in instances of relationship breakdown, will not be transferred to family members. Applicants will be required to provide a copy of their Certificate of Cessation of Entitlement to Occupy Service Living Accommodation which is issued six months before discharge.

16.10.3 Points for tied accommodation will be awarded up to three months before the applicant's tenancy ends.

350 points

16.11 Key workers

16.11.1 Applicants who are taking up employment in Moray who can demonstrate that they are bringing a skill that is not available locally may be eligible for award of key worker points. In establishing if an applicant may qualify for key worker points, the Council may seek the advice of the Job

Centre/Employment Agency/Local Enterprise Company on the availability of such skills locally. The Council will require the applicant's employer to provide confirmation and support for a request for key worker points.

16.11.2 Applicants will only be eligible for key worker points in cases where their current permanent accommodation is beyond a reasonable travel to work distance from their employment. For the purposes of this section of the Policy, a reasonable travel to work time is defined as a car journey of one hour or less.

16.11.3 Tenancies granted to applicants with key worker points will normally be short Scottish secure tenancies (SSST), as defined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. However, the Housing Needs Review Group may consider requests for an extension of a SSST and may consider whether a Scottish secure tenancy (SST) should be granted, taking into account the relative demand and availability of accommodation in the area. The Housing Needs Review Group will review all SSSTs created under this section of the policy after a period of 9 months has elapsed in each tenancy.

100 points

16.13 Need to reside

16.13.1 There may be instances where an applicant needs to reside in a specific lettings area. Need to reside points may be awarded where the applicant (or a member of their household) needs to remain in or move to a lettings area in order to:

- provide or receive care or support (that would not otherwise be available);
- access or maintain specialist education or specialist facilities;
- access or provide childcare arrangements to allow the applicant, or the person who they want to move closer to, to undertake employment;
- be closer to a place of employment; or
- where the applicant has a permanent residence/principal home within a lettings area.

16.13.2 Need to reside points will be awarded when the Council is satisfied that their requirement can be substantiated. The applicant must provide valid evidence. Applicants will be asked to identify a specific lettings area and up to two other bordering lettings area. Only those lettings areas identified will be eligible for the award of need to reside points.

16.14 Exceptional circumstances

16.14.1 'Exceptional circumstances' points may be awarded in cases which cannot be appropriately considered within the Allocations Policy.

16.14.2 Applicants may request that their circumstances are referred to the Housing Needs Review Group for consideration of the award of such points. Any award of 'exceptional circumstances' points may only be made by the Housing Needs Review Group.

16.14.3 Exceptional circumstances points may range from **0 to 500 points**, depending on the specific circumstances of the applicant and the availability of housing.

Summary of priorities and points level		
Priority category		points
Homelessness		0
Under occupancy	Social housing	250
	Private housing	50
Overcrowding		100
Periodic contact		50
Functional housing need		0 – 500
Leaving institutional/supported care		350
Underuse of specialist housing		250
Poor housing conditions	Below tolerable standard and lacking facilities	250
	Below tolerable standard with facilities	150
	Lacking facilities but meets standard	100
Sharing amenities		100

Summary of priorities and points level		
Flatted/maisonette accommodation	Residing in a first floor flat or above ground floor access maisonette.	40
	Residing in a second floor or over flat or maisonette where the living accommodation is on the second floor.	70
Tied accommodation		350
Key workers		100
Need to reside		50
Exceptional circumstances		0 – 500

17. Bypassing applications

17.1 The Council will endeavour to make best use of its housing stock. In making allocation decisions the Council must consider the match between the needs of the applicant and the suitability of the property. The Council will normally offer the property to the applicant with the highest number of points and who has a need for that particular size and type of house. However, there may be some situations where applicants may be bypassed for an offer of housing. Reasons for this may include:

- there is evidence that the allocation would place the community, or an individual at risk;
- enquiries into the household's circumstances provide clear evidence that a particular allocation is unsuitable or inappropriate;
- the property has special features which are not required by the applicant or the applicant's household;
- the applicant or a household member has a health condition or disability which makes the property unsuitable;
- the applicant requires support and assistance to sustain a tenancy and the support is not available or in place;
- the applicant is in supported accommodation and is not ready to move to independent living;

- the applicant does not reside in Moray and does not meet the criteria specified in Section 9 of the Policy;
- the applicant does not have a support plan; and
- the applicant's circumstances have changed and information is awaited or required to enable their application to be re-assessed.

17.2 The Council will ensure that when bypassing applicants it will:

- administer the process using a robust evidenced based approach to ensure that decisions are accountable, transparent, their use carefully monitored and an audit trail is in place;
- comply with legislation;
- manage processes in such a way so as to support individuals and communities and ensure that people are not unintentionally or unfairly disadvantaged;
- make sure that no applicants are bypassed inappropriately and that no pattern of discrimination emerges through bypassing particular groups. Sensitive lets will not be used as a means of 'screening out' households that may require greater support or involvement from staff; and
- monitor the impact on those individual applicants who are bypassed, including the number of times they are bypassed and any significant extra waiting time for an offer.

18. Suspensions

18.1 A suspension happens when someone has been assessed for and accepted on to the Housing List but is told that he or she will not be eligible for an offer of housing until:

- a specified period has elapsed;
- it is evident that the conduct has changed; or
- a change in circumstances has occurred.

In accordance with legislation, homeless applicants cannot be suspended from receiving offers of housing.

- 18.2 The Council will not automatically suspend applicants from receiving offers of housing. The Council will attempt to work proactively with applicants, to ensure that the number of suspensions is kept to a minimum. Each case will be assessed on its own merits. The Council will always take personal circumstances and the extent of housing need into account before suspending applicants from receiving offers of housing. The Council will make sure that a balanced approach is taken and that the urgency of the applicant's housing need is of paramount importance.
- 18.3 Applicants may be suspended from receiving an offer of housing in the following circumstances:
- (i) where an applicant, or any person who is proposed to reside with the applicant, has housing related debt of more than 1/12th of the annual amount payable (or which was payable) to the landlord and no repayment arrangement has been agreed or maintained. In such cases, the suspension period may continue until the applicant (or person who is proposed will reside with the applicant) has a reasonable repayment arrangement in place and maintained for a minimum period of three months. The Council will take into account the reasons why the debt has arisen;
 - (ii) where there is evidence of antisocial behaviour (through either eviction or the granting of an Antisocial Behaviour Order) which is related to the conduct of a tenancy. In such cases, the application may be suspended for a period up to 12 months. If clear evidence is provided showing that there has been a change in behaviour, for a minimum period of three months, the suspension may be lifted. Each case will be assessed on its own merit;
 - (iii) where an applicant has refused two reasonable offers of housing within one year (detailed in Section 22 of this policy). In such cases, the suspension period will be six months. During that period, no further offers of accommodation will be made. Appeals against the suspension of offers of housing will be considered in terms of the appeals process detailed in Section 26 of this policy.

- 18.4 If a social housing tenant in Moray has accrued rent arrears as a direct result of the removal of the spare room subsidy and wants to move to a smaller property, the Council may disregard the rent arrears accrued if it is satisfied that the tenant has done all he/she can practicably be expected to do to avoid falling into arrears.
- 18.5 In all cases where the applicant knowingly provides false or misleading information in order to improve their position on the Housing List, the application shall be suspended from receiving offers of housing during an investigation. If the investigation determines that false or misleading information was knowingly provided, the application will be suspended for six months. The Council may seek court action to recover any tenancy granted on the basis of false or misleading information knowingly provided.
- 18.6 Before an allocation is made to a transfer list applicant, a tenancy inspection will be carried out. If it is identified that the tenant is not adhering to the conditions of their current tenancy agreement, they may be suspended from receiving an offer of housing, until they meet the conditions of their tenancy. For example, if the tenant does not take reasonable care of their house (Scottish secure tenancy agreement 5.17). This suspension will be reviewed after a period of 3 months.
- 18.7 Deliberate worsening of circumstances**
- 18.7.1 The Council will undertake investigations where it has reason to believe that an applicant deliberately did or failed to do something which, in consequence, led to a worsening of their housing circumstances in order to improve their position on the Housing List. For example, an applicant gives up settled accommodation in order to move into less settled or overcrowded accommodation.
- 18.7.2 In order to determine if an applicant has deliberately worsened their circumstances, the Council will investigate and assess each application on its own merits, taking into account all contributory factors. This will include

ascertaining whether the applicant was aware of the consequences of their action and whether their actions were reasonable.

18.7.3 Where there is evidence to substantiate that an applicant deliberately did or failed to do something which has resulted in the worsening of their housing circumstances in order to improve their position on the Housing List, the applicant may be suspended from receiving an offer of housing for six months, unless there is a change in circumstances.

18.7.4 Following the suspension period, the application will be reinstated. The action taken by the applicant who was considered to have deliberately worsened their circumstances will no longer be taken into account and the level of points will be reviewed accordingly.

18.7.5 When the Council has decided to suspend an applicant from receiving offers, it will explain:

- why the Council is suspending the application;
- what this means in practical terms;
- how long the suspension will last;
- what action the applicant should take to have the suspension lifted; and
- the applicant's right to request a review of the decision to suspend their application.

19. Local Lettings Plans

19.1 The Council may from time to time consider the use of local lettings plans for specific lettings areas. Local lettings plans provide an open and transparent framework which set out any variation to the Allocation Policy needed to take account of and address local needs and circumstances. Local lettings plans are used to develop letting arrangements that:

- respond to local housing need and demand;
- help to suitably match applicants to properties; and
- help the Council to achieve a balance housing mix within a particular area.

The main aim of a local lettings plan is to build a strong and sustainable community.

- 19.2 A local lettings plan may have the effect of introducing additional criteria in the allocations process which may result in allocations not being determined in accordance with applicant's points levels. The Communities Committee will consider proposals for the declaration of any local lettings plan.
- 19.3 Any local lettings plan agreed by the Council must accord with the overall principles and objectives of the Allocations Policy. Where a local lettings plan is proposed, detailed evidence to support the need for such an approach and why this cannot be met by the Allocations Policy itself will be considered by the Committee.
- 19.4 Where a local lettings plan is agreed for a specific lettings area, the Council will ensure that applicants are advised of the Plan.
- 19.5 Any local lettings plan will be agreed for a specified period and will be reviewed annually by the Communities Committee.
- 19.6 The Council will promote the development of sustainable communities by allocating all "new supply" properties on the basis of local lettings plans. This ensures that new build programmes will meet the widest possible range of needs and avoid the creation of concentrations of vulnerable households in specific communities.
- 19.7 All agreed Local Lettings Plans will be published on the Moray Council website.

20. Sensitive lets

- 20.1 The Council may regard some lets as sensitive. Sensitive lets may be used in exceptional circumstances, where it is deemed necessary for the Council to deviate from the Allocations Policy. The process involves approaching the

selection of the most appropriate applicant from both a person and property perspective.

- 20.2 The Council will always consider the extent to which the allocation has the potential to create a lack of stability or imbalance in the local community or would be detrimental to the applicant's social wellbeing. The Council will ensure that the needs of the applicant and the suitability of the property match.
- 20.3 When considering a sensitive let, instead of allocating a property to the applicant at the top of the list (the person in most housing need, as defined by the Allocation Policy), the Council will consider the suitability of the applicant for the vacancy, on the basis of the information it has about the applicant and on the knowledge it has about the property, its location or neighbours.
- 20.4 The Council will ensure that all decisions regarding sensitive lets are accountable, transparent and monitored. Discretion may be applied when identifying sensitive let applicants or properties. For example, consideration will be given to the significance of the applicant's previous social conduct. Considerations may include, to what extent has the conduct affected the applicant's life and the life of others? Has there been legal involvement? Has there been a significant improvement?
- 20.5 The Council will monitor the use of sensitive lets in order to make sure that there is no pattern of bypassing particular groups.

21. Application management

Review of applications

- 21.1 All applicants for housing will be asked to renew their housing application annually, from the date that the last amendment was made to the housing application. Failure to respond to this request will result in the application being removed from the Housing List. The applicant will be informed of the removal of the application from the Housing List. Requests for re-instatement

to the Housing List after a period of three months from removal will require the applicant to complete a new housing application form.

Change in circumstances

- 21.2 Applicants are advised to notify the Council as soon as possible of any change in circumstances which may affect their housing application. Applicants are responsible for amending their online housing application, which will alert the Apply4Homes to any change. For example, a change in family circumstances, change of address and so on.

Cancelled applications

- 21.3 On notification of an applicant's death, the application will automatically be transferred to the surviving partner residing with the applicant. Where there is no surviving partner, the application may be transferred to any other person named in the application who has been resident with the applicant for a period of six months, providing that that person is aged 16 years or over. The applications will be re-assessed within 28 days of notification of the change in circumstances to the Council.

22. Offer of housing

- 22.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that offers of housing are fair and based on the knowledge of the needs, circumstances and preferences contained within the application for housing.
- 22.2 An offer will normally be considered reasonable if it is situated in a lettings area deemed acceptable by the applicant and otherwise meets the applicant's stated housing need as detailed on the application form.
- 22.3 An offer of accommodation from a RSL under the Nomination Process will count as a reasonable offer, providing that the applicant has indicated willingness to be considered for such nominations.

- 22.4 Offers of housing are made in writing to applicants. The offer of housing will give full information about the potential allocation and should be responded to within the timescale specified.

23. Tenancy types

- 23.1 Below are the types of tenancy agreements which the Council may offer housing applicants:

Scottish secure tenancy (SST)

- 23.2 In most circumstances an applicant will be offered a Scottish secure tenancy. Unless a tenant ends the tenancy, abandons the tenancy or the council obtains a court order to end the tenancy, the SST will usually continue for as long as the tenant wants.

Short Scottish secure tenancy (SSST)

- 23.3 The Council may offer a short Scottish secure tenancy in specific circumstances for a minimum term of 6 months. These circumstances will apply if:
- there is evidence that an applicant or someone in their household or a visitor to their home has been involved in antisocial behaviour in or near their home within the last three years;
 - an applicant or someone in their household has been evicted for antisocial behaviour or subject to an antisocial behaviour order within the last 3 years;
 - an applicant is moving to Moray take up employment; or
 - an applicant needs housing support to help them maintain their tenancy;
- 23.4 At the end of the term of the SSST the Council can:
- offer a full SST (some types of SSST automatically convert to SSTs after 12 months);
 - offer a further SSST; or
 - seek repossession.

23.5 In all cases the Council will serve an applicant with a notice informing the applicant that they are being offered a SSST. This notice will also state why they are being offered a SSST and the period for which the SSST is being offered.

23.6 For some types of short Scottish secure tenancies the Council must provide, or ensure the provision of, housing support services. If an applicant is unwilling to cooperate with this support, the tenancy offer may be withdrawn.

24. Refusal of an offer of housing

24.1 If an applicant refuses a reasonable offer, they will be given the opportunity to review their preferences and options and will be provided with a realistic overview of their housing options.

24.2 If an applicant refuses two reasonable offers of housing within one year, the application will be suspended for a period of six months. During that period, no further offers of accommodation will be made.

24.3 Refusal due to the removal of the spare room subsidy

24.3.1 If an applicant refuses an offer of accommodation, on the grounds of a housing benefit shortfall due to the removal of the spare room subsidy, the Council would consider this a reasonable reason for refusing an offer. This would only be permitted once. Thereafter, the size of property that an applicant will be offered will be amended.

24.3.2 For example, if in accordance with section 11.3.2, an applicant is assessed as requiring a three bedroom property but the applicant refuses it due to the removal of the spare room subsidy, this would be considered a reasonable refusal. This would only be permitted once. The applicant would then be placed on the two bedroom property list and points adjusted accordingly.

25. Social housing options

25.1 The Council will negotiate Nomination Arrangements with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). These arrangements will provide the Council with the right

to nominate applicants from the Council's Housing List for vacancies arising within the RSL's housing stock. The arrangements will not provide the Council with the right to allocate such vacancies and such allocations will be carried out in accordance with the specific RSL's Allocations Policy and Rules. The Council will inform applicants who have been nominated to an RSL of the nomination.

- 25.2 Applicants will be asked to indicate on their housing application whether they wish to be considered for a nomination to RSLs.
- 25.3 The Council has Section 5 protocols in place with RSLs in Moray. Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 provides a statutory mechanism for local authorities to refer applicants assessed as homeless to RSLs for allocation of any forthcoming empty houses. This addresses the contribution that RSLs can make to tackling homelessness in the area.
- 25.4 Existing tenants of Moray Council have the right to apply for permission to effect a mutual exchange with another public sector or Registered Social Landlord tenant. Such requests will be considered under the terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and permission to exchange will not be unreasonably withheld. Applicants can apply for a mutual exchange on the House Exchange website.
- 25.5 The Council's Downsizing Incentive Scheme operates in conjunction with the Allocations Policy. The Scheme aims to assist the Council to make best use of housing stock. It encourages:
- tenants who are under occupying council houses to move to smaller accommodation, thus releasing a larger property; and
 - tenants who are living in specialist housing (of any size) which their household no longer needs to move to alternative suitable accommodation.

This voluntary scheme offers a combination of practical and financial assistance to those council tenants who qualify.

26. Review and complaints arrangements

- 26.1 In accordance with legislation, neither any Local Member for a Lettings Area in which a vacancy is situated nor any Local Member for a Lettings Area in which an applicant currently resides will be involved in the allocation decision for that vacancy.
- 26.2 If an applicant needs help to make and follow up on a complaint, review or appeal, Council staff will provide guidance or will refer the applicant to an appropriate agency who may assist the applicant.

Request for a review of a decision

- 26.3 Separate from the Complaints Procedure, a Review Procedure exists within the Allocations Policy to deal with instances where an applicant is dissatisfied with the decisions made on any aspect of the application.
- 26.4 An applicant who is not satisfied with decisions made on their application for housing can request a review. The applicant should make the request in writing to the Senior Housing Needs Officer. The request for a review should include the grounds on which it is made.
- 26.5 The request for a review will be considered by a senior manager not previously involved with the original decision with a target of 28 days to respond to the applicant.
- 26.6 If an applicant remains dissatisfied, the applicant may write to the Housing Needs Manager to ask that the Housing Needs Review Group consider their case.
- 26.7 An applicant has the right to pursue any complaint of maladministration in relation to a housing application with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman or to seek a judicial review where this is appropriate.

Complaints

- 26.8 The Council has a Complaints Policy which details Council's complaints process which is available to any applicant who is not satisfied with the way in which the application has been dealt with. The Complaints Policy and explanatory information are available on the Council website and from any Council Office or Access Point.

27. Performance monitoring

- 27.1 The Council currently monitors its performance in relation to the time taken to relet vacant properties and the amount of rent lost as a result of vacant properties. Reports on these performance indicators are presented to the Communities Committee of the Council on a quarterly basis.

- 27.2 The Council will set performance standards in relation to its Allocations Policy and will monitor its achievement of these standards.

- 27.3 In addition to statutory performance indicators, the Council will also monitor.
Annually

- The ethnic origin of:
 - applicants on the Housing List; and
 - new tenants
- The number of people who consider themselves to have a disability

Quarterly

- The percentage of allocations by group
 - Homeless List
 - Waiting List
 - Transfer List
- The percentage of tenancy offers refused during the year.

- 27.4 The performance indicators are reported to the Communities Committee. These reports will be public documents. The confidentiality of individual applicant's circumstances will be maintained.

27.5 The Council will welcome the views of applicants on the Allocations Policy, the procedures adopted by the Council and how applications are dealt with.

27.6 The Council will review the operation of the Allocations Policy on an annual basis. A review report will be considered annually by the Communities Committee.

28. Review of the Allocations Policy and consultation arrangements

28.1 If the monitoring of performance detailed in Section 27 suggests that there are areas where the policy needs to be improved, the policy may be amended or a further review may be undertaken. If any changes to be made are substantive, the Council will consult with tenants, applicants and other key stakeholders before making these changes.

28.2 The Council will undertake a full review of this policy every three years or earlier if required by changes to legislation or guidance. In line with housing law, consultation will be ongoing during the review process and not just once the policy has been finalised.

28.3 Moray Council will consult the following groups before making or altering the Allocations Policy:

- Applicants on the Housing List;
- Council tenants;
- Registered tenant organisations; and
- Any other stakeholders considered relevant.

28.4 Moray Council will prepare and publish a report on the consultation following the consultation on the Allocations Policy.

Legislative framework

The following legislation regulates the legal framework for the Allocations Policy:

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987
- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- The Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003
- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006
- The Housing Scotland Act 2014
- The Equality Act 2010
- Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2011
- The Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981
- The Civil Partnership Act 2004
- The Family Law Act 2006
- The Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- Management of Offenders etc (Scotland) Act 2005
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003

The above list is not exhaustive.



REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 20 NOVEMBER 2018

**SUBJECT: HOUSING AND PROPERTY SERVICES BUDGET MONITORING –
31 AUGUST 2018**

**BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the budget monitoring for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Services Other Housing Budget for the period to 31 August 2018.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of section III G (1) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the management of budgets.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Communities Committee considers and notes the budget monitoring report for the period to 31 August 2018.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council agreed the HRA Budget for 2018/19 at its meeting on 14 February 2018 (paragraph 13 of the Minute refers). Housing and Property budget monitoring reports are presented to each cycle of meetings.

4. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT TO 31 AUGUST 2018

- 4.1 **APPENDIX I** details the HRA budget position to 31 August 2018.
- 4.2 The main expenditure variances relate to:–
 - 4.2.1 **Supervision and management** – there is a range of variations within this budget resulting in a net underspend of £7k. There are underspends in Staffing (£71k), Training (£5k) and ICT (£1k) which is reduced by overspends on voids (£47k), the Bilbohall Masterplan (£10k), insurance (£11k) and other minor overspends (£2k).
 - 4.2.2 **Sheltered Housing** – there is an underspend of £7k due mainly to lower energy costs. This position is likely to change over the winter months.
 - 4.2.3 **Repairs and maintenance** – there is an overspend of £216k in the repairs and maintenance budget. The main overspend is in planned works (£249k)

which is reduced by underspends in response repairs (£25k) and voids (£8k). Officers are currently identifying works which can be classed as capital expenditure and an adjustment will be made to significantly reduce the current overspend on revenue planned works.

- 4.2.4 **Bad and doubtful debts** – there has been an underspend of £9k to date due to fewer write offs than expected being approved. This position will change as the year progresses.
- 4.2.5 **Downsizing Incentive Scheme** – there is a £2k overspend to date. A report on the resources required to manage and promote the downsizing scheme is included on this Committee Agenda.
- 4.2.6 **Service Developments** – this budget includes provision for ongoing ICT improvements (£5k) and a full Tenants Survey (£18k). No spend has been committed from this budget to date.
- 4.3 The income at 31 August 2018 is £39k lower than projected. Housing rents (£25k) and lower than expected tenant rechargeable repairs (£14k) are the main reasons for the reduced income. The income from house rents will increase over the remainder of the year as new build properties come on stream.

5. OTHER HOUSING BUDGET

- 5.1 **APPENDIX II** provides details of the budget position to 31 August 2018.
- 5.2 **Planning and Development** consists of Improvement Grants and Affordable Housing budgets. There is an underspend of £1k as a result of fewer improvement grants being processed in the period.
- 5.3 **Housing Management** relates to the Gypsy/Traveller Budget. This shows a £2k underspend due to minor underspends mainly in staffing and the provision of chemical toilets.
- 5.4 **Homelessness/Allocations** comprises homelessness, Landlord Registration and housing support services. An underspend to date of £30k is due to variances across a range of budgets. Underspends in Landlord Registration (£3k), Homeless Persons (£28k) and Homelessness (£2k) is reduced by an overspend in housing support (£3k).
- 5.5 **The Building Services Budget** is reported in detail separately on this Committee's agenda and any surplus achieved will return to the HRA.
- 5.6 **The Property Services Budget** covers the cost of the Design and Property Resources sections of the service. An underspend of £112k has occurred due to variances across a range of budgets. The major variances relate to underspends in Shared Building energy costs (£21k) and Central Repairs & Maintenance (£65k), along with other minor underspends (£26k).
- 5.7 As at 31 August 2018, the Other Housing Budget shows a net underspend of £165k.

6. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

The provision of new affordable housing, the maintenance of the Council's housing stock and dealing with homelessness are priorities identified within the Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan, the Council's Local Housing Strategy and Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) and the Housing and Property Service Plan.

(b) Policy and Legal

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

(c) Financial Implications

The financial implications of this report are considered in Sections 4 and 5 of this report and detailed in **APPENDIX I and II**.

(d) Risk Implications

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

(e) Staffing implications

None.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

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

(h) Consultations

This report has been prepared in close consultation with Finance staff. Consultation on this report has been carried out with Deborah O'Shea (Principal Accountant), Legal Services Manager (Property and Contracts), Senior Managers within Housing and Property Services, and Caroline Howie (Committee Services Officer) who all agree the content of the report where it relates to their area of responsibility.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 This report sets out the budget position for the HRA and General Services Housing budgets to 31 August 2018 and also comments on the variances on these budgets.

Author of Report:	Richard Anderson, Head of Housing and Property
Background Papers:	Held by author
Ref:	CC/JS/LS – Housing Budgets –

Housing Revenue Account

APPENDIX I

Monitoring to 31st August 2018

Service Description	Annual Budget 2018- 19	Budget to 31st August 2018	Actual to 31st August 2018	Variance to 31st August 2018
Expenditure	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Supervision & Management	4,122	1,445	1,438	7
Sheltered Housing	37	19	12	7
Repairs and Maintenance	6,340	2,073	2,289	(216)
Financing Costs	3,709	0	0	0
Bad & Doubtful Debts	250	27	18	9
CFCR	4,581	0	0	0
Downsizing Incentive Scheme	72	30	32	(2)
Service Development	23	10	0	10
Total Gross Expenditure	19,134	3,604	3,789	(185)
Income	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Non-dwelling rents	214	116	116	0
House rents	18,812	8,228	8,203	(25)
IORB	11	0	0	0
Other income	97	40	26	(14)
Total Income	19,134	8,384	8,345	(39)
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	0	4,780	4,556	(224)
Accumulated Surplus Balance brought forward			1,132	
Estimated Surplus Balance at 31st March			1,132	

General Services Housing & Property

Appendix II

Monitoring to 31st August 2018

Service Description	Annual Budget 2018-19 £'000	Budget to 31st August 2018 £'000	Actual & Committed to 31st August 2018 £'000	Variance at 31st August 2018 £'000
Planning & Development	322	135	134	1
Housing Management	14	13	11	2
Homelessness / Allocations	2079	913	883	30
Miscellaneous General Services Housing	(21)	(9)	(23)	14
Building Services	(1)	344	338	6
Property Services	1186	866	754	112
General Services Housing & Property Savings	(260)	0	0	0
General Services Housing & Property Allocations	(170)	0	0	0
General Services Housing & Property Total	3149	2262	2097	165



REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 20 NOVEMBER 2018

SUBJECT: HOUSING INVESTMENT 2018/19

**BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report informs the Communities Committee of the budget position to 31 August 2018 for the Housing Investment Programme for 2018/19.
- 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 considers and notes the position as at 31 August with regards to the Housing Investment Programme for 2018/19.**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Investment Programme

APPENDIX I shows income and expenditure for 2018/19. The Appendix includes expenditure on the Council house new build programme as 'Other Capital Expenditure' however this is now the subject of a separate monitoring report and the figure is for information only. Spend of £3.223m was achieved on the Housing Investment Programme to 30 June 2018, which represents 26% of the agreed programme. Commitments are currently standing at £7.715m, which represents 61% of the programme. This commitment will increase during the year as more projects are progressed. The level of expenditure within the individual budget headings which make up the programme are shown in paragraphs 3.2 to 3.5 below. The expenditure figure represents all payments which have progressed through the finance system to 31 August 2018. The Housing Investment Programme for 2018/19 continues to reflect investment required to maintain the housing stock at the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS), attain the Moray Standard (TMS) and replace life expired elements such as kitchens, heating and windows on a lifecycle basis. It also includes capital expenditure aimed at achieving the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) by 2020.

- 3.2 **APPENDIX II** shows expenditure on Response and Void Repairs. Spend was £1.055m to 31 August 2018 and represents 31% of the agreed programme.

The issues relating to the introduction of a new charging structure and invoicing process have now been resolved. Commitment currently stands at £2.423m and represents 74% of the agreed budget.

- 3.3 **APPENDIX III** shows expenditure on Estate Works. Spend of £223k was achieved to 31 August 2018 and represents 33% of the agreed programme level. Commitment currently stands at £418k and represents 62% of the programme.
- 3.4 **APPENDIX IV** shows expenditure on Cyclic Maintenance. Spend of £467k was achieved to 31 August 2018. This represents 33% of the agreed programme level. Commitment currently stands at £767k and represents 55% of the agreed budget.
- 3.5 **APPENDIX V** shows expenditure on Planned Maintenance and Other Investments. Spend of £1.478m was achieved to 31 August 2018 and represents 20% of the agreed programme level. Commitment currently stands at £4.107m and represents 57% of the programme.
- 3.6 General Programme Updates
29 properties have had asbestos tanks, associated debris or other asbestos containing materials (ACM's) removed during the financial year to date. The presence of asbestos materials in some properties is still impacting on the Council's planned maintenance and void works however removal works are implemented in advance wherever possible in order to keep any programme delays to a minimum.
- 3.7 The project to apply External Wall Insulation (EWI) to the remaining 50 properties in Milton Drive/Brodie Avenue has commenced on site and is currently programmed for completion in December 2018. A contractor has also been appointed to install EWI to 19 other non-traditional properties mainly located in Forres and Lossiemouth where adjacent private sector properties have been improved through the Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland: Area Based Scheme (HEEPS:ABS). These improvement works will allow the Council to make progress towards meeting EESSH by 2020.
- 3.8 A start date for the Warm Homes Fund heating project being carried out in conjunction with Perth and Kinross Council, Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) and Scotia Gas Networks (SGN) is currently being discussed and it is likely that work will commence on a number of trial properties in December 2018. A contractor has also been appointed to carry out a further 102 EESSH related heating replacements with a view to work starting on site in November. Both these projects will assist with meeting EESSH through the replacement of older inefficient heating gas and electric heating systems with new energy efficient gas heating.
- 3.9 Income and Expenditure for Private Sector Housing
APPENDIX VI shows the position with regard to grant expenditure for Private Sector Housing Grants to 31 August 2018. The budget in category B is now the responsibility of the Moray Integration Joint Board (MIJB) and the information is only for noting at this Committee. The legally committed figure of £233k represents 47% of the allocated budget. Spend to 30 August 2018 was £158k which represents 32% of the allocated budget.

- 3.10 The legally committed figure of £86k in Category C represents 82% of the allocated budget. Spend to 30 August 2018 was £48k which represents 46% of the allocated budget. There has been £10k repaid to this budget which has impacted on the legally committed and spend figures.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

This proposal relates to:

Priority 1 – Creating a growing, diverse and sustainable economy and;
Priority 2 - Empowering and connecting communities.

(b) Policy and Legal

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

(c) Financial implications

The financial implications associated within this report are dealt with in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.10 above, with details of the Council house new build programme now being the subject of a separate monitoring report.

(d) Risk implications

Failure to expend agreed budgets may affect the Council's ability to maintain its stock at the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, replace life expired elements and attain the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing. Budget Managers are aware of their responsibilities for managing budget allocations and approval for variance will be sought from Committee in line with the Financial Regulations.

(e) Staffing implications

There are no staffing implications associated with this report.

(f) Property

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

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

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

(h) Consultations

Consultations have taken place with the Head of Housing and Property, Property Resources Manager, Building Services Manager, Legal Services Manager (Property and Contracts), Principal Accountant (Deborah O'Shea), Caroline Howie (Committee Services Officer) and the Home Improvement Services Manager, who agree with the sections of the report relating to their areas of responsibility.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Housing Investment for both the Council's housing stock and the private sector enables the Council to address the identified priorities to improve the quality of housing stock in Moray. More specifically, the investment in the Council's housing stock enables it to be maintained at the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, allows for replacement of life expired elements and makes progress towards the attainment of both the Moray Standard and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing.**

Author of Report:	John Macdonald, Asset Manager
Background Papers:	Held on file by the Asset Manager
Ref:	JMM/COMM20NOV/HINV

APPENDIX I

INVESTMENT PROGRAMME INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2018/19

31 August 2018
(all amounts in £'000)

HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

	Annual Budget 2018/19	Expenditure plus commitments to date	% expenditure plus commitments to date	Expenditure to date	% Budget spent to date	Budget balance
<u>Expenditure</u>						
Response & Void Repairs	3,292	2,423	74%	1,055	32%	2,237
Estate Works	675	418	62%	223	33%	452
Cyclic Maintenance	1,399	767	55%	467	33%	932
Planned Maintenance (Revenue)	1,009	800	79%	495	49%	514
Planned Maintenance (Capital)	5,898	3,034	51%	918	16%	4,980
Other Investment (Revenue)	10	0	0%	0	0%	10
Other Investment (Capital)	350	273	78%	65	19%	285
Sub Total	12,633	7,715	61%	3,223	26%	9,410
<u>Other Capital Expenditure</u>						
New Build - Capital Costs	13,532			2,918		
Total	26,165			6,141		
<u>Funded by</u>						
HRA Revenue	6,385			2,240	35%	
Government Grant	5,559			894	16%	
Use of Council Tax Discount	525			0	0%	
Prudential Borrowing	9,115			3,007	33%	
Capital Receipts	0			0	n/a	
Useable Capital Receipts	0			0	n/a	
C.F.C.R	4,581			0	0%	
Total	26,165			6,141	23%	

APPENDIX II

INVESTMENT PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE 2018/19

31 August 2018
(all amounts in £'000)

RESPONSE AND VOIDS REPAIRS

	Annual Budget 2018/19	Expenditure plus commitments to date	% expenditure plus commitments to date	Expenditure to date	% Budget spent to date	Budget balance
West Area Office	1,102	811	74%	371	34%	731
East Area Office	858	661	77%	248	29%	610
Void House Repairs	1,332	951	71%	436	33%	896
	3,292	2,423	74%	1,055	32%	2,237

APPENDIX III

INVESTMENT PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE 2018/19

31 August 2018
(all amounts in £'000)

ESTATE WORKS

	Annual Budget 2018/19	Expenditure plus commitments to date	% expenditure plus commitments to date	Expenditure to date	% Budget spent to date	Budget balance
Garage Upgrades	50	17	34%	1	2%	49
Asbestos	250	116	46%	98	39%	152
Landscape Maintenance	25	26	104%	0	0%	25
Estates/Forum Upgrades	250	153	61%	75	30%	175
Miscellaneous	100	106	106%	49	49%	51
	675	418	62%	223	33%	452

APPENDIX IV

INVESTMENT PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE 2018/19

31 August 2018
(all amounts in £'000)

CYCLIC MAINTENANCE

	Annual Budget 2018/19	Expenditure plus commitments to date	% expenditure plus commitments to date	Expenditure to date	% Budget spent to date	Budget balance
Gas Servicing	803	543	68%	325	40%	478
Solid Fuel Servicing	40	26	65%	18	45%	22
Air Source Heat Pump Servicing	80	28	35%	19	24%	61
Smoke Detector Servicing	100	7	7%	7	7%	93
PPR & External Painterwork	266	140	53%	72	27%	194
General Servicing	85	23	27%	26	31%	59
Inspections/House Surveys	25	0	0%	0	0%	25
	1,399	767	55%	467	33%	932

APPENDIX V

INVESTMENT PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE 2018/19

31 August 2018
(all amounts in £'000)

PLANNED MAINTENANCE & OTHER INVESTMENTS

	Annual Budget 2018/19	Expenditure plus commitments to date	% expenditure plus committed to date	Expenditure to date	% Budget spent to date	Budget balance
Kitchens and Bathrooms	1,400	679	49%	292	21%	1,108
Central Heating	1,850	1,254	68%	534	29%	1,316
EESSE Programme	1,860	594	32%	0	0%	1,860
Doors and Windows	788	507	64%	92	12%	696
Sub Total (Capital)	5,898	3,034	51%	918	16%	4,980
Rainwatergoods	200	39	20%	0	0%	200
Roof and Fabric Repairs	250	174	70%	49	20%	201
Plumbing Upgrades	100	349	349%	349	349%	-249
Electrical Upgrades	100	114	114%	35	35%	65
Safety & Security	25	30	120%	25	100%	0
Common Stairs	25	28	112%	0	0%	25
Insulation	200	40	20%	11	6%	189
Sheltered Housing	10	0	0%	0	0%	10
Decoration Vouchers	49	16	33%	16	33%	33
Shower Installations	50	10	20%	10	20%	40
Sub Total (Revenue)	1,009	800	79%	495	49%	514
Disabled Adaptations	350	273	78%	65	19%	285
Sub Total (Other Capital)	350	273	78%	65	19%	285
Enabling Projects	10	0	0%	0	0%	10
Sub Total (Other Revenue)	10	0	0%	0	0%	10
Total	7,267	4,107	57%	1,478	20%	5,789

APPENDIX VI

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING GRANT
SCHEME OF ASSISTANCE - 2018/1931 August 2018
(all amounts in £'000)

	Budget Allocation 2018/19	Spend to date	Balance	Legally Committed	Completed Cases
<u>CATEGORY</u>					
Independent Living					
Category A (Revenue)	8	3	5	8	0
Category B	500	158	342	233	30
Category C	105	48	57	86	13
Overall Total	613	209	404	327	43

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



REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 20 NOVEMBER 2018

SUBJECT: SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER COMPLIANCE

**BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the details of the Council's landlord report from the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), progress on the Annual Performance Report to tenants and other customers and the SHR consultation on the review of the regulatory framework for social housing landlords.
- 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 contributing to public performance reporting; and developing and monitoring the Council's Performance Management Framework for the Communities Services.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Communities Committee:

- i) **reviews the Council's performance against the Scottish Social Housing Charter in 2017/18;**
- ii) **considers and notes the Annual Performance Report to tenants and other customers; and**
- iii) **considers and approves the draft response to the Scottish Housing Regulator's consultation on the review of the regulatory framework.**

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. Using a range of performance indicators, the SHR monitors, and assesses landlords' performance against the Charter.

- 3.2 Each year, social landlords must submit an Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) to the SHR. On 26 June 2018, this Committee was informed that the Council's ARC was submitted in May 2018 and that the results for all social landlords would be published on 31 August 2018 (paragraph 10 of the Minute refers).

4. LANDLORD REPORT

- 4.1 On 31 August 2018, the SHR published the landlord reports for 2017/18. The Council's landlord report can be found in **APPENDIX I**.
- 4.2 The landlord report compares the Council's performance on the key Charter indicators with the Scottish average. 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). Where appropriate, both are included in this report to provide further context.
- 4.3 The 2017/18 performance is summarised below under 6 themes:

Overall Satisfaction

- 4.4 The 2015 tenant survey found that 80% of tenants were satisfied with the overall service. However, this percentage takes no account of improvements implemented since the 2015 survey. The Scottish average was 90.5% but the local authority average was 83.6%. The tenant survey 2018 is currently underway and the findings of this will inform the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) for 2018/19.

The Customer/Landlord Relationship

- 4.5 The 2015 tenant survey identified that 77.7% of tenants felt that the Council was good at keeping them informed about services and decisions. This is lower than the Scottish average (91.7%) and the local authority average (80.8%). Tenants are informed about services and decisions through a range of methods including a six-monthly newsletter, a comprehensive tenant handbook, an extensive range of leaflets, an annual performance report, and also through the Council's website and social media.
- 4.6 In 2017/18, the Housing Service responded to 77.8% of 1st stage complaints within the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman (SPSO) timescale of 5 working days. This is below the Scottish average of 86.3% but close to the local authority average of 79.6%. For 2nd stage complaints, 74.3% were responded to within the SPSO timescale of 20 working days. This is also below the Scottish average of 83.4% but slightly better than the local authority average of 73.1%. A lower proportion of complaints were upheld in Moray with 37.6% of 1st stage complaints and 38.6% of 2nd stage complaints upheld. The Scottish average was 54.3% and 49% respectively. There were no complaints relating to equalities issues in 2017/18.
- 4.7 The 2015 tenant survey found that 60.3% of tenants were satisfied with the options to participate in their landlord's decision making processes. However, a third of respondents were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' and therefore performance was below the Scottish average (85.9%) and the local authority average (73.5%). The Council's tenant participation strategy was reviewed in 2016/17 and the Tenants' Voice newsletter regularly contains information on

tenant participation opportunities and updates on how tenant feedback has been used to improve services.

Housing Quality and Maintenance

- 4.8 At 31 March 2018, 95.8% of properties met the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) against the Scottish average of 94.2%. The remainder were exempt (203 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).
- 4.9 All social landlords must meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) by December 2020. At 31 March 2018, 55.4% of properties met the EESH which is below the Scottish average (79.8%) and the local authority average (75.3%). A programme of works to improve the Council's EESH performance will be delivered in 2018/19 and 2019/20.
- 4.10 Tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in (78.9%) was below the Scottish average (90.2%) and the local authority average (88.3%). Out of the 90 responses received in 2017/18, just 11 tenants expressed dissatisfaction with the standard of their home when moving in.
- 4.11 The 2015 survey found that 86% of tenants were satisfied with the quality of their home. This is close to the Scottish average (87.9%) and better than the local authority average (81.8%).
- 4.12 In 2017/18, the average time to complete emergency repairs was 2.6 hours which places the Council within the upper quartile of local authorities (Scottish average 4.0 hours, local authority average 4.6 hours). Non-emergency repairs were completed within an average of 7.7 working days (Scottish average 6.4 working days, local authority average 7.5 working days).
- 4.13 The Council completed 81.2% of non-emergency repairs right first time in 2017/18 (Scottish average 92.2%, local authority average 92.4%). This indicator remains difficult to measure and officers believe that the Council's performance against this indicator is higher than what is being calculated.
- 4.14 The Council kept 93.3% of non-emergency repairs appointments. This was similar to both the Scottish average (95.5%) and the local authority average (95.2%).
- 4.15 There was an improvement in performance on gas safety management with 100% of properties requiring a gas safety record having a gas safety check completed by the anniversary date. This performance was better than the Scottish average (99.8%) and places the Council within the upper quartile.
- 4.16 Satisfaction with the repairs service (83.2%) was below the Scottish average (92.1%) and the local authority average (94.4%). A new process was introduced in November 2017 to gather customer feedback by telephone and only 21 of the 375 tenants responding expressed dissatisfaction.

Neighbourhood and Community

- 4.17 The 2015 tenant survey found that satisfaction with the management of the neighbourhood at 76% was below the Scottish average (88%) and the local authority average (81%).
- 4.18 In 2017/18, 95.1% of antisocial behaviour cases were resolved within local target timescales which was higher than the Scottish average (87.9%). There was a significant improvement in performance but this was partly due to a review of resolution target timescales, which extended the time to respond to category B (less serious or non-criminal antisocial behaviour complaints) and category C (low level neighbour disputes and minor tenancy breaches) complaints.
- 4.19 The percentage of tenancy offers refused (31.7%) was better than the Scottish average (35.9%) and placed the Council within the upper quartile of local authorities. A low refusal rate helps to minimise void periods and rent loss.

Access to Housing and Support

- 4.20 Tenancy sustainment, where tenancies lasted for more than 12 months, was significantly higher in Moray (94.3%) than the Scottish average (88.7%). The Council had the highest sustainment rate of all local authorities.
- 4.21 The turnover of properties in Moray (6.9%) was lower than the Scottish average (8.6%) and for local authorities only (8.3%). This demonstrates the acute pressures that continue to prevail in terms of the supply of affordable housing in Moray.
- 4.22 The Council approved 82.9% of medical adaptations and completed these within an average of 43.2 days. This compares nationally at 84.3% and 51.3 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.
- 4.23 The proportion of court actions resulting in eviction in Moray (14.8%) was lower than the Scottish average (16.8%) but slightly higher than the local authority average (13.7%). All court actions in 2017/18 were for rent arrears with 9 resulting in eviction. The Housing Service only uses eviction as a last resort where all efforts to engage with the tenant have been unsuccessful.
- 4.24 The average stay in temporary accommodation (90.5 days) was shorter than the national average (103.2 days). The Council made an offer of temporary accommodation to all homeless households who required it. The refusal rate for temporary accommodation (7.9%) has consistently improved in each of the past three reporting years and is better than the Scottish average (9.0%). Most refusals were for the Council's private hostel and the most common reason for refusing a property was location.
- 4.25 Although the response rates for households satisfied with the quality of their temporary accommodation remains low, 94.4% of households who were accommodated were satisfied which is better than the national average of 87.9% and within the upper quartile.

Getting Good Value from Rents and Service Charges

- 4.26 Despite the increase in rents in recent years to support investment in the new build programme, the overall average weekly rent for a Council home in Moray (£57.38) remains significantly lower than both the Scottish average (£76.23) and the local authority average (£70.36). Moray has the second lowest overall average weekly rent of all local authorities and housing associations.
- 4.27 The 2015 survey found that 84% of tenants feel their rent is good value for money which was better than the Scottish average of 83.2%.
- 4.28 The rent lost through properties being vacant in Moray was 0.7%, which is the same as the Scottish average and within the upper quartile for local authorities. The time to re-let empty properties in Moray (34.8 days) was slightly higher than the Scottish average (30.7 days) and the local authority average (34.3 days).
- 4.29 The Council collected 101.8% of the total rent due which was better than the Scottish average (99.4%) and the highest result of all local authorities. Current and former tenant arrears are included within the calculation which explains why the figure is over 100%.
- 4.30 The Council had the lowest rent arrears (2.4%) of all local authorities. The Scottish average was 5.2% and the local authority average was 6.7%.

5. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 5.1 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. The Annual Performance Report can be found in **APPENDIX II**. The report must:
- assess performance in delivering the Charter outcomes and standards relevant to the landlord;
 - include relevant comparisons with previous years, other landlords and with national performance; and
 - identify how and when the landlord intends to address areas for improvement.
- 5.2 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 and also from tenant feedback on the 2016/17 performance report. The report mirrors the key themes of the Charter which are:
- Customer satisfaction and tenant participation;
 - Housing quality, repairs, maintenance and improvements;
 - Estate management and antisocial behaviour;
 - Housing options and access to social housing;
 - Tenancy sustainment;
 - Homeless people; and
 - Value for money, rents and service charges.

- 5.3 The report is available on the Council's website. It has been promoted through social media and also within the Summer Tenants' Voice newsletter

where tenants were given the option to request a paper copy. Copies have also been issued to access points, homeless hostels and to tenant representatives.

6. CONSULTATION ON THE REGULATION OF SOCIAL HOUSING IN SCOTLAND

- 6.1 The SHR is consulting on changes to its regulatory framework and all associated statutory guidance. The Council intends to participate in this consultation which is due to end on 14 December 2018. The consultation can be found online at:

www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/what-we-do/how-we-regulate/our-regulation-social-housing-scotland-consultation-2018. The key changes proposed are the introduction of landlord assurance statements and a review of the statutory performance indicators.

Supporting landlords' self-assurance

- 6.2 The SHR is proposing that annual Assurance Statements be produced by all social landlords. The draft statutory guidance on annual Assurance Statements can be found online at:

www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/publications/annual-assurance-statement-statutory-guidance-draft-consultation-regulatory-framework. The main requirements are:

- The statement must come from the landlord's governing body or Committee;
- Landlords must notify the SHR of material changes including positive developments and areas of non-compliance; and
- The landlord must hold evidence to support the statement which could include committee reports, policy monitoring and compliance work, performance monitoring and the involvement of tenants and other customers in decision making processes.

- 6.3 The Assurance Statement will inform how the SHR engages with landlords. The SHR currently produce Engagement Plans for Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and plan to extend this to local authorities.

- 6.4 The SHR is suggesting that social landlords would submit their first Assurance Statement between April and October 2019. The Assurance Statement and the landlord's Engagement Plan must also be made available to tenants and other service users.

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC)

- 6.5 The SHR is also reviewing the statutory performance indicators included in the ARC. It is likely that changes to the performance management framework would be implemented from 1 April 2019. Some of the changes may require a review of how data is collected and in some cases changes to reports or systems. Officers are concerned about the early introduction and have highlighted this in the draft consultation response.

- 6.6 The SHR has emphasised that landlords must give proper consideration to equality and human rights in how they take decisions, set policies and deliver services. Although the SHR is proposing to stop collecting the small number of equality indicators in the ARC, they will require landlords to monitor all of

the protected characteristics. Landlords will be expected to use this data to understand their customers' needs and discharge their legal duties.

- 6.7 A draft response to the consultation has been included in **APPENDIX III** for the Committee to consider and approve. Some of the proposed changes are technical therefore part of the response queries some of the indicators that are particularly difficult to measure. A further report, detailing the changes and their implications will be presented to a future meeting of this committee.

7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

Moray 2026 and the Service Plan (Priority 4) identify the need to involve tenants in improving service quality. Good quality services for social housing tenants will help promote healthier citizens and adults living in healthier, sustainable independent lives safeguarded from harm.

(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 is a cost associated with producing and sending out the Annual Charter Performance Report. Tenant feedback indicated that paper copies of the report should only be available on request. As a result of this change in process it is expected that there will be a significant saving in the region of £5.5k.

(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 structure presents a regulatory risk along with a failure to provide a customer focussed service.

(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

Equalities issues have been considered as part of the development of the ARC and the Annual Performance Report to tenants and other customers.

(h) Consultations

Consultation on this report has taken place with the Head of Housing and Property, senior managers within Housing and Property, the Committee Services Officer (Caroline Howie), the Legal Services Manager (Property and Contracts), the Principal Accountant (Deborah

O'Shea) and the Equal Opportunities Officer. Their comments have been incorporated in this report.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The report provides the Committee with an update on the Council's compliance with the Scottish Social Housing Charter and the Scottish Housing Regulator's proposals to change the regulatory framework for social landlords.**

Author of Report: Daska Murray, Senior Housing Officer (Information)
Background Papers: With author
Ref:

Landlord report

How your landlord told us it performed in 2017/2018

Moray Council

Our role is to protect the interests of tenants and other people who use the services of social landlords. The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets out the standards and outcomes that landlords should achieve. Each year, we require your landlord to report on its performance against the Charter.

We asked tenants to tell us what matters most when it comes to their landlord's performance. Here is how your landlord performed in those areas in 2017/2018.

Homes and rents

At 31 March 2018 your landlord owned 6,052 homes. The total rent due to your landlord for the year was £17,581,279. Your landlord increased its weekly rent on average by 4.00% from the previous year.

Average weekly rents				
Size of home	Number owned	Your landlord	Scottish average	Difference
1 apartment	48	£36.54	£67.44	45.8%
2 apartment	1,706	£48.78	£73.33	33.5%
3 apartment	2,850	£57.35	£74.94	23.5%
4 apartment	1,310	£66.38	£81.37	18.4%
5 apartment	138	£83.54	£90.39	7.6%

Tenant satisfaction

Of the tenants who responded to your landlord's most recent tenant satisfaction survey:

- » **80.0%** said they were satisfied with the **overall service** it provided, compared to the Scottish average of 90.5%.
- » **77.7%** felt that your landlord was good at **keeping them informed** about its services and outcomes compared to the Scottish average of 91.7%.
- » **60.3%** of tenants were satisfied with the **opportunities to participate** in your landlord's decision making, compared to the Scottish average of 85.9%.

Quality and maintenance of homes

- » **95.8%** of your landlord's homes met the **Scottish Housing Quality Standard** compared to the Scottish average of 94.2%.
- » The average time your landlord took to complete **emergency repairs** was **2.6 hours**, compared to the Scottish average of 4.0 hours.
- » The average time your landlord took to complete **non-emergency repairs** was **7.7 days**, compared to the Scottish average of 6.4 days.
- » Your landlord completed **81.2%** of **reactive repairs** 'right first time' compared to the Scottish average of 92.2%.
- » Your landlord does operate a **repairs appointment system**. It kept **93.3%** of **appointments** compared to the Scottish average of 95.5%.
- » **83.2%** of tenants who had repairs or maintenance carried out were **satisfied with the service** they received, compared to the Scottish average of 92.1%

Neighbourhoods

- » For every 100 of your landlord's homes, **7.4 cases** of **anti-social behaviour** were reported in the last year.
- » **95.1%** of these **cases were resolved** within targets agreed locally, compared to the Scottish figure of 87.9%.

Value for money

- » The amount of money your landlord collected for current and past rent was equal to **101.8%** of the **total rent** it was due in the year, compared to the Scottish average of 99.4%.
- » It did not collect **0.7%** of rent due because **homes were empty**, compared to the Scottish average of 0.7%.
- » It took an average of **34.8 days** to **re-let homes**, compared to the Scottish average of 30.7 days.

Want to know more?

If you want to find out more about your landlord's performance, contact your landlord directly. We expect all landlords to make performance information available to tenants and others who use their services.

Our website has lots of further information about your landlord and our work. You can:

- compare your landlord's performance with other landlords;
- see all of the information your landlord reported on the Charter;
- find out more about some of the terms used in this report; and
- find out more about our role and how we work.

Visit our website at www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk

Housing and Property Annual Performance Report 2017/18



moray
council

Alternative formats

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

تغلب نوكت و ياروم سلجم لبق نم تامولعم ىلإ ةجراح يف مهنك اذا
نوكت نأ وأ وي دوأ ةناو طسأ ، ياربلا لثم فلتخم لكش ىلع وأ ةفلتخم
ب لاصتإلا ءاج زلاف ةظي لغ فورح لامعتساب ةعوبطم

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

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

Se necessitar de receber informações por parte do Concelho de Moray num formato diferente, como Braille, cassete áudio ou letras grandes, contacte:

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

پاڙيان دي گھر کسي سے کونسل مورے کو آگے راپ
آڙيو ڊري لے، ”مثلاً ٻيون درڪار معلومات ميں صورت
راپ طه کرفر ما مهرباني تو حروف، ٻڙي پاڻيپ
فرمائين

Housing and Property
Moray Council
PO Box 6760, Elgin
IV30 1BX
Phone: 0300 123 4566
Email: housing@moray.gov.uk

Contents

page 1	Introduction
page 2	Performance
page 2	The annual report
page 3	Charter Outcome 2: Communication
page 7	Charter Outcome 3: Participation
page 10	Charter Outcome 4: Quality of housing
page 12	Charter Outcome 5: Repairs, maintenance and improvements
page 14	Charter Outcome 6: Estate management, antisocial behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes
page 16	Charter Outcome 7, 8 and 9: Housing options and access to social housing
page 18	Charter Outcome 11: Tenancy sustainment
page 19	Charter Outcome 12: Homeless people
page 20	Charter Outcome 13, 14 and 15: Value for money, rents and service charges
page 21	Your feedback

Introduction

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 created an independent body called the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). The SHR looks after the interests of social housing tenants, people who become homeless and any other customers who use the housing service.

The Scottish Social Housing Charter was introduced in 2012. It sets out the standards and outcomes that social landlords should achieve with the aim of improving the quality and value of services provided. In 2016 the Scottish Government reviewed the Charter. You can view it online at www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00515058.pdf



Every year, we must send performance information to the SHR in a return. We submitted our fifth Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) in May 2018. The ARC shows how well social landlords perform against the 16 Charter outcomes and standards. Our return covers the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 and can be found online at

www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/find-and-compare-landlords/moray-council

The SHR also requires social landlords to produce an annual report on its performance and make it available to their tenants and other customers. I would like to thank the Moray Tenants Forum for their help in preparing this report for you and to tenants who took the time to return feedback forms last year. Your feedback has been invaluable in developing this year's report. I hope you find this report interesting and agree that it not only highlights our achievements but also evidences how we will continue to improve your housing services.

Councillor Louise Laing
Chair of Communities Committee



Performance

We are committed to improving our performance as a social landlord. Our performance is monitored both monthly and quarterly and is reported to our Communities Committee twice yearly.

Performance reports can be found on our website at:

www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_101335.html

There is also a webcasting facility where the Communities Committee meetings are available to view for 12 months on our website at: www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_43661.html

If you have any questions about our performance or this report:

Email housing@moray.gov.uk

Phone 0300 123 4566

Fill in the feedback form on the back page

The annual report

We have used a traffic light system to show you how we compare with other social landlords on the key Charter outcomes and standards during 2017/18.



Green means that we are the same as or better than the Scottish average



Amber means that we are within 5% of the Scottish average



Red means that we are more than 5% below the Scottish average

Our annual report has been structured around the key themes which the Moray Tenants Forum felt would be of most interest to our tenants and other customers. These can be found on the contents page.

Charter Outcome 2:

Communication







Our aim is that...

Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.

Landlord satisfaction

Every three years, we commission an independent survey to gather tenants' views on the key areas of our service. Most social landlords survey a sample of their tenants but we felt it was important to give all our tenants the opportunity to have their say and to gather data that is as accurate as possible. In late 2015 surveys were sent to all 5,890 tenants and 30% (1,738 surveys) were returned.

The main findings are shown below but our performance will soon be updated with the results from the 2018 tenant survey. This will give us a more accurate picture of current performance and could change how we compare with the Scottish average.

Performance indicators	Moray Council 2015	Scottish average 2017/18	How we compare with the Scottish average
% of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord	80%	90%	
% of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions	78%	92%	
% of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes	60%	86%	
% of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home	86%	88%	
% of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in	76%	88%	
% of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money	84%	83%	







The Scottish average includes the results for other social landlords, such as housing associations. Our results are generally comparable with the averages for local authorities only.

We are also aware that our 2015 survey is now considerably out of date and the changes we made based on your feedback will not be reflected in the results until this year's survey has been carried out.

Our next major survey takes place between September and November 2018.

This is your chance to tell us what our service priorities and improvements should be for the next few years.

We have acted on the main areas where we needed to improve customer satisfaction:

-  We prioritised our property upgrades within our Housing Investment Programme to reflect your preferred **improvements to your homes** (heating and insulation, new bathrooms, showers and window replacements);
-  We made improvements to **contact centre scripts** and considered options for **dealing with more complex enquiries** such as repairs.
-  We identified improvements in **communication and participation** through a review of our tenant participation strategy.
-  We restructured our **repairs service** and they are working to address issues you raised about scheduling, incorrect diagnosis, delays, quality and communication.
-  We reviewed our **Antisocial Behaviour Policy** to address lower levels of satisfaction in the handling of cases and carried out a review of estate audits.
-  Unfortunately some of your concerns about **the condition of roads, paths, play areas, communal grassed areas and dog fouling** are not areas that are controlled by the housing service but we shared them with the relevant Council services. These areas may be difficult to address given the unprecedented budget pressures that the Council is currently facing.

Some of the 1,383 comments from our 2015 tenant survey

Always polite and very helpful at all the times I have called

We are reasonably satisfied of services provided. Further insulation regarding saving heating in winter could help

I don't usually have many comments to make but we get leaflets/Council magazine keeping us up to date where I am invited to give my views

Could be slightly easier to get to the appropriate department

When appointments are made they should be kept

Windows need to be replaced in next few years

Listening and acting on tenants' views

We appreciate when you take time to share your opinions as this helps us to improve services. We gather customer feedback from a number of different housing related activities.

Dealing with complaints

All tenants have the right to complain if they are not satisfied with the level of service that we provide. We take complaints seriously and have a comprehensive complaints handling policy that is in line with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) model complaint handling procedure.

Complaints give us valuable information that we use to improve customer satisfaction and make changes to our service. Our complaints handling policy allows us to address the problem and may help to prevent the issue from re-occurring. You can view the policy on our website at: www.moray.gov.uk/complaints

All complaints are recorded through our corporate complaints system. To monitor complaints we divide them into:



1st stage complaints which are straight forward and need little or no investigation



2nd stage complaints which are complex or more serious and need further investigation

Customer Feedback

- Antisocial Behaviour/Neighbour Disputes
- End of Tenancy
- 3 Yearly Tenants Survey
- Temporary Accommodation
- Homelessness
- Response Repairs
- Housing Support
- New Tenant Satisfaction
- Planned Maintenance
- Housing Options
- Gas Servicing

Performance indicators	Our 2017/18 target	Moray Council 2017/18	Scottish average 2017/18	How we compare with the Scottish average
% of 1st stage complaints resolved	-	98%	98%	
% of 2nd stage complaints resolved	-	93%	94%	
% of 1st stage complaints responded to in full by the landlord within SPSO timescales	100%	78%	86%	
% of 2nd stage complaints responded to in full by the landlord within SPSO timescales	100%	74%	83%	

In 2017/18, we received 118 1st stage complaints and 78% of these were dealt with within the SPSO target timescale of 5 working days. We also received 72 2nd stage complaints and 74% of these were dealt with within the SPSO target timescale of 20 working days. During 2017/18 there was a 44% increase in the total number of complaints received compared to last year, most of these related to our repairs service (122 complaints) and 39% of those were due to heating or boiler failures. Over the next three years, we will replace a number of older heating systems which will improve homes, reduce the amount of response repairs, save money and hopefully decrease the number of complaints about our repairs service.



How we use your feedback and communicate with you

We use feedback from complaints and surveys to shape and improve your housing services. We publish a “You Said – We Did” article within the Tenants’ Voice newsletter to tell you about some of the changes we have made to the service following your suggestions, comments or complaints.

As well as our twice yearly tenant newsletter, we keep you informed through our main tenant group (the Moray Tenants Forum), social media, our website, our comprehensive tenant handbook, a wide range of leaflets and this performance report.

Our documents are written in plain language so that they are easier to read and understand. You can also ask for a copy in your preferred format for example in Braille, large print or in another language.



Charter Outcome 3:

Participation

Our aim is that...

Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

The Housing Scotland Act 2001 gives tenants the right to work with their landlord to deliver better housing services. Our Tenant Participation Strategy (2017-2020) sets out how we will "work in partnership with our tenants to design and deliver good quality housing services". You can find it online at

www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_95571.html

Photo: Communities Committee tenant representatives
(left to right) May McGarrie, Jane Bartecki and Anna Bamforth



Only **8%**
of tenants were
dissatisfied with the
opportunities to
participate in our decision
making processes

Tenant Survey 2015

Tenant groups

The Moray Tenants Forum is the main tenants' body that work with us to promote tenants' interests. They often help us to design information for tenants such as leaflets and raise important issues for the community. Forum members have represented you locally at our Communities Committee meetings and at tenant events all over Scotland. We would encourage more tenants to become involved in the work of this group.

The Service Improvement Panel reviews our services and makes recommendations on how we can improve. We have recruited new members to our panel but we are always looking for more! This is a unique opportunity for tenants to improve their knowledge of housing. Any of our tenants can join and no experience is necessary as we offer training and support.

Tenants involved in either of these groups have access to grant funding to help cover general running costs including expenses such as reasonable travel or childcare costs.



The Buckpool New Build Tenant Group aim to address estate based issues and includes both Moray Council and Langstane Housing Association tenants in its membership. This year the group were successful in applying for funding through Bucks4Buckie to buy some benches for their estate.

Buckpool New Build Tenant Group

Partnership working

We are a member of **Moray Tenants Partnership** and **North East Tenants, Residents and Landlords Together**. These groups include social landlords and their tenants in their membership. There are many benefits for both tenants and landlords from working in partnership such as sharing good practice, resources and access to training opportunities. Together we have arranged café style events to promote tenant participation and explain the advantages of getting involved.



Estate audits/walkabouts

The purpose of an estate audit is to share information and collectively agree what estate upgrades will be considered for completion in the next financial year. In 2016/17 we consulted tenants on how we carry out estate audits and manage the budget for upgrading your estates.

The first estate audits under the new programme took place during September 2017. Any projects identified from the audit are prioritised and those approved will be progressed during the next financial year. This change helps us to better plan our budget and by merging the various estate budgets, there is now a budget of £100k available for estate improvements across Moray.



Surveys, consultations and our list of interested tenants

For tenants who are unable to go to meetings, we still want to hear from you. Filling in surveys and giving feedback is useful and helps us to improve the service.

We ask tenants for their views whenever we make changes to our strategies and policies or other housing issues as they arise. We use our list of interested tenants to tell you when consultations are taking place that may be of interest. We also publicise consultations on our website, on social media and through the Moray Tenants Forum. In 2017/18 we consulted on changes to our housing support policy following the new Health and Social Care Standards.

Digital engagement

To mark Scottish Housing Day on 21 September 2017, we launched a new Facebook group. The aim of the group is to tell you when consultations are taking place, share news and keep you informed about services and decisions. Council tenants and members of their household aged over 16 can ask to join the group at www.facebook.com/groups/MorayCouncilTenants

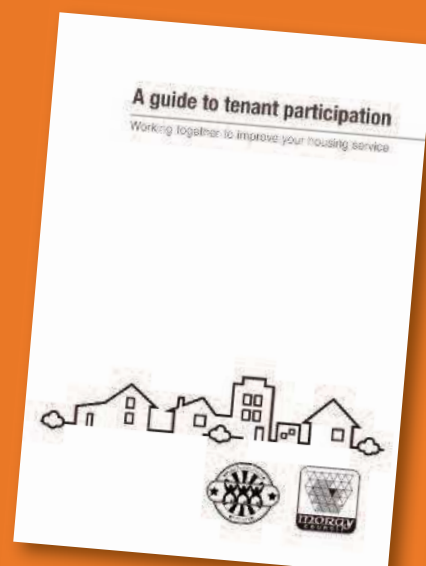
You can also sign up for email alerts through **myaccount** by selecting the option for housing updates. Myaccount allows you to use a single account to access a range of Scottish public services online. Visit www.moray.gov.uk/myaccount for more information.

Find out more about tenant participation

In our 2015 tenant survey, 60% of tenants said they were satisfied with the opportunities to participate in our decision making processes. However around a third said that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. If there are other options for giving feedback that you think we should offer, please let us know.

Our leaflet "A guide to tenant participation" explains all the ways that you can get involved. It was created in partnership with the Moray Tenants Forum.

To find out more about tenant groups, estate walkabouts, our list of interested tenants or any of our other options to get involved in our decision making processes then contact us.



Charter Outcome 4:






Quality of housing

Our aim is that...

Tenants' homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) when they are allocated; are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair; and also meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) by December 2020.

The Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)

The Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) was introduced by the Scottish Government in February 2004 to improve the quality of social housing in Scotland. To meet the standard properties must be:

-  Compliant with the tolerable standard
-  Free from serious disrepair
-  Energy efficient
-  Equipped with modern facilities and services
-  Healthy, safe and secure

Within the 5 criteria headings there are 55 separate elements that a property must meet in order to achieve the SHQS. Details about the standard can be found online at www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/1125/0115258.pdf




At 31 March 2018, 96% of our housing stock (5,799 properties) all met the SHQS with the exception of exemptions and abeyances.

Our exemptions included 3% of stock (203 properties) which include properties that are 'hard to treat' or where the cost of the work would be uneconomical such as properties located off the gas grid that do not have the cheapest fuel options available to them. Over the next three financial years, we will invest in renewable technologies such as photovoltaics (solar panels) and solar water heating, to improve the energy efficiency in these properties. We will also be fitting more efficient heating systems.

The remaining 1% (50 properties) is classed as abeyances, where work cannot be done for 'social reasons' or where the tenant has refused to have their property upgraded.

We continue to look at a range of options to reduce the number of exemptions and abeyances.



Performance indicators	Our 2017/18 target	Moray Council 2017/18	Scottish average 2017/18	How we compare with the Scottish average
% of properties meeting the SHQS	100%	96%	94%	
% of properties meeting the EESSH	100%	55%	80%	
% of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in	90%	79%	90%	

The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH)

The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) sets out the minimum energy efficiency standard for social housing. It has been developed by the Scottish Government following consultation with social landlords and tenants and will contribute towards the carbon emissions reduction targets set by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. Landlords must make sure that all social housing meets the new standard by December 2020. Details about the standard can be found at:

beta.gov.scot/publications/energy-efficiency-standard-social-housing-eesh-tenants-guide

We continue to improve the quality of our housing stock through our Housing Investment Programme. In 2018/19, we will spend around £11 million to carry out repairs, improvements and modernisation to tenants' homes. We will also spend an additional £2.7 million over and above our normal lifecycle replacement programme to carry out extra works to meet the EESH.

Satisfaction with standard when moving in

We send surveys to all new tenants to gather their views on our letting processes. When asked if they were satisfied with their home when moving in, 71 tenants (79% of those responding) told us they were satisfied with their home. This compares with 78% in the previous year. 11 tenants (12%) were dissatisfied with the main reasons being poor overall appearance, the standard of decoration, the condition of the garden and one tenant felt that their heating system and kitchen was not to the standard they had seen in other Council properties. 8 tenants (9%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the quality of their home.

All properties that we re-let must meet our letting standard so it is important that we continue to receive feedback from our new tenants. This can help us to shape our services and one example where we have taken your views into consideration is the provision of decoration packs. New tenants previously expressed concerns around the cost of moving into a new home and in recognition of this we now offer paint-packs where necessary to reduce costs to our new tenants. We have also offered support to new tenants to help them understand how to use their heating systems. Feedback on both of these initiatives has been positive.



We also aim to visit new tenants within six weeks to check that any issues identified on moving in are resolved.







Charter Outcome 5:

Repairs, maintenance and improvements

Our aim is that...

Tenants' homes are well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done.

We want to make sure that your home is well maintained and repairs are carried out within reasonable timescales. During 2017/18 we carried out 16,924 repairs to your homes. This included 6,352 emergency repairs which is slightly less than last year. We made 12,354 appointments for the 10,572 non-emergency repairs and kept 93% of these. We have recently upgraded our ICT systems and hope that this will improve our future performance.

Performance indicators	Our 2017/18 target	Moray Council 2017/18	Scottish average 2017/18	How we compare with the Scottish average
Average time taken to complete emergency repairs	4 hours	2 hrs 33 mins	3 hrs 57 mins	
Average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	10 working days	8 working days	6 working days	
% of repairs carried out right first time	90%	81%	92%	
% of repairs appointments kept	95%	93%	95%	
% of properties receiving a gas safety check by the anniversary date	100%	100%	99%	
% of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in last 12 months satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service	90%	83%	92%	



We completed 81% of our non-emergency repairs right first time but like other landlords, we have found this indicator difficult to measure. However, we continue to monitor the results to see if we can identify opportunities to make improvements.

We updated our gas safety management procedures in 2017/18 and created a single team to oversee the process. We met our 100% target to service all properties with gas appliances within their anniversary date. Our biggest challenge in achieving this level of performance is gaining access to your home. We do need your support in this area as the aim of servicing these systems is ultimately about the safety of your family, your neighbours and you. Our approach to non-access has resulted in some services being brought forward when we have been unable to gain access.

We want to make our repairs service as accessible as possible so tenants can report repairs online as well as in person or on the phone. It is easy to report a repair online using our repair finder tool on our website at housingrepairs.moray.gov.uk. In November 2017 we introduced a new process to gather feedback from tenants by phone when repairs are carried out. 83% said they were satisfied with our repairs and maintenance service, 11% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and only 6% were dissatisfied.

Photo: Moray Council Apprentices



Charter Outcome 6:

Estate management, antisocial behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes

Our aim is that...

Tenants and other customers live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.



From October 2015, our Community Safety Team has been dealing with your complaints. This team has the benefit of access to other Council services as well as the Police and Community Wardens. We feel this approach improves both the investigation of your complaints and gives better outcomes for those experiencing antisocial behaviour.

Most tenants responding to a consultation agreed that our timescales for handling complaints were unrealistic and needed review. From April 2017, we extended our resolution timescales for handling category B and C complaints but our acknowledgement timescales have not changed. The timescales are shown in the table below:

Cat	Definition	Acknowledgement timescale	Resolution timescale
A	Very serious antisocial behaviour, which normally includes criminal activity such as drug dealing, racial harassment or assault.	Visit/interview complainant and contact police within 1 working day .	20 working days from the date the initial acknowledgement letter is sent.
B	Situations where the behaviour is likely to stop short of criminal activity but could be a deliberate attempt to cause disturbance or annoyance to a neighbour. It is likely to be more than a clash of lifestyles and may involve threats/harassment, which cannot be substantiated by witnesses. It may involve disregard for others with loud music and parties or where the incidents are persistent and attempts to change behaviour has not worked.	Carry out initial investigation and assess appropriate action. Contact complainant by phone call/letter/ visit within 2 working days to advise of assessment.	35 working days from the date the initial acknowledgement letter is sent.
C	Issues solely between two neighbours and minor breach of Tenancy Agreements. This includes the use of common areas, maintenance, the use of boundaries and noise.	Investigate complaint and contact complainant by phone/letter or visit within 5 working days .	40 working days from the date the initial acknowledgement letter is sent.

During 2017/18 we received 448 complaints of antisocial behaviour which was slightly higher than the previous year. Of these, 441 cases were resolved within the reporting year with 95% (426) 'resolved' within their respective target time. This is a significant improvement and is mainly due to the changes to our resolution timescales for Category B and C complaints.

By resolved we mean cases where:

-  We have taken appropriate measures, as set out in our policy or procedures, to address the cause of the antisocial behaviour complaint and advised the complainant of the outcome; or
-  We do not have the authority or powers to resolve the case and have provided a full explanation of our position to the complainant.

Performance indicators	Our 2017/18 target	Moray Council 2017/18	Scottish average 2017/18	How we compare with the Scottish average
% of antisocial behaviour cases resolved within target	A – 20 B – 35 C – 40 working days	95%	88%	



Louise McKnight - Housing Liaison
Officer with the Community Safety Team

To report antisocial behaviour

During office hours phone our Community Safety Team on 01343 563134 or 01343 563074. If your complaint is more serious then you should call the non-emergency Police Scotland number on 101. You can also report antisocial behaviour online at online.moray.gov.uk/form/auto/asb_ext

Charter Outcome 7, 8 and 9:

Housing options and access to social housing

Our aim is that...

People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them

Tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options. Also, people at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness.

People looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and on their prospects of being housed.

We are the biggest local provider of social rented housing in Moray and our allocations policy sets out how we make the best use of our housing stock. Our policy takes into account the needs, demands and wishes of applicants when allocating available housing stock.

Our housing list is open to anyone over 16 years of age. We operate three lists for housing; waiting list, transfer list and homeless list. A quota to guide allocations is set for each list and is agreed annually by our Communities Committee.

During 2017/18, 214 lets (51%) were made to those who were assessed as homeless, 117 lets (28%) went to those on the waiting list and 87 lets (21%) were allocated to the transfer list. This reflects the pressures in terms of both responding to and dealing with homelessness.

The demand for housing in Moray remains high. As at 31 March 2018, we had 3,067 applicants on the housing list which is slightly less than the previous year (3,586). Most of the list was made up of people on the waiting list (2,434 applicants), followed by the transfer list (521 applicants) and then the homeless list (112 applicants). The number of new applications decreased slightly compared to the previous year.

In 2017/18, we let 47 new build properties for the first time as part of our new builds letting plan. To help meet demand, we will increase the amount of new homes we build each year to 70 new homes every year until 2019.

To help meet demand, tenants agreed that we should increase the amount of new homes we build each year to 70 until 2019





How to apply for housing

Tenants and other customers can apply for housing using our web-based housing application system at www.apply4homes.org.uk. You can also apply to some of the other social housing landlords in Moray and Aberdeenshire on the same application.

Stock turnover

During 2017/18, 412 (6.9%) of our properties became vacant.

Performance indicators	Our 2017/18 target	Moray Council 2017/18	Scottish average 2017/18	How we compare with the Scottish average
% of lettable houses that became vacant	-	6.9%	8.6%	-
% rent lost through properties becoming void	0.63%	0.66%	0.74%	
Average time taken to re-let properties	32 days	35 days	31 days	

On average, it took us 35 days to re-let our empty properties in 2017/18. We have experienced delays waiting for asbestos surveys to be carried out by external consultants and challenges in recruiting to key trades within our Building Services (DLO). However, at the end of the reporting year we had just 0.66% of rent loss from empty properties which compared well against the Scottish average.

We try to minimise the length of time that properties are empty to prevent rent loss. For example, in early 2018 we advertised three properties which were difficult to let on social media and on our website and found new tenants for them.

Charter Outcome 11:

Tenancy sustainment

Our aim is that...

Tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available; including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations.

We continue to offer advice, information and support to our tenants so they can stay in their homes. Housing support can also be offered to tenants and other vulnerable people to prevent them from becoming homeless. The support offered depends on a person's individual needs.

Support may simply be advice and guidance or a more detailed person centred plan covering:



accommodation

practical skills

health

social issues



emotional support

education, training or employment

finance

Our housing options service help our customers to make better informed housing choices. In 2017/18, 1,055 households contacted our housing options team for assistance. We can also refer people to specialised services such as addictions, community care, mental health, debt advice or domestic abuse.

In 2017/18, we introduced a scatter flat initiative for care experienced young people who are ready to move out of a care setting into their own home. The aim is to deliver support that prepares them for independent living so that they avoid homelessness and are more likely to sustain a tenancy.

The percentage of tenants sustaining their tenancy in 2017/18 (94%) is better than the Scottish average (89%) and similar to the previous year (93%). Below is a breakdown of the percentage of our tenancies that were sustained for more than a year.

Performance indicators	Moray Council 2017/18	Scottish average 2017/18	How we compare with the Scottish average
% of new tenancies sustained – existing tenants	98%	93%	
% of new tenancies sustained – homeless	92%	88%	
% of new tenancies sustained – housing list	97%	87%	
% of new tenancies sustained – all lists	94%	89%	

Charter Outcome 12:

Homeless people

Our aim is that...




Homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice; are provided with suitable, good quality temporary accommodation when this is needed; and are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to.

In 2017/18, we received 538 homeless applications, a slight decrease on the previous year. We carried out 537 assessments and found 314 households were unintentionally homeless and therefore entitled to permanent accommodation.

During 2017/18, 402 households moved into temporary accommodation. The average time households spent in temporary accommodation increased slightly to 90 days but is still better than the Scottish average. In the same period we made offers of temporary accommodation to all households which required it.

Our rate of refusals for temporary accommodation has improved but we did not meet our target. We will continue to reconfigure our stock of temporary accommodation to help minimise our refusal rates.

We continue to gather feedback from those leaving temporary accommodation. Of the 18 responses we received, 94% were satisfied with the accommodation we provided to them. Through our service user involvement framework we continue to work to improve response rates and gather feedback using other methods.

Performance indicators	Our 2017/18 target	Moray Council 2017/18	Scottish average 2017/18	How we compare with the Scottish average
Average number of days households spent in temporary accommodation	-	90 days	103 days	
% of households requiring temporary accommodation to whom an offer was made	100%	100%	91%	
% of temporary accommodation offers refused	7%	8%	9%	
Of those households homeless in the last 12 months, the % satisfied with the quality of temporary accommodation	90%	94%	88%	

Charter Outcome 13, 14 and 15:



Value for money, rents and service charges

Our aim is that...

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

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

The rent we collect is our main source of income. It helps us to make improvements to your home and deliver good quality services. It is important that you pay your rent on time as this is one of the conditions of your tenancy agreement.

Performance indicators	Our 2017/18 target	Moray Council 2017/18	Scottish average 2017/18	How we compare with the Scottish average
Rent collected as a % of total rent due	97%	102%	99%	
Gross rent arrears as a % of rent due	3%	2%	5%	

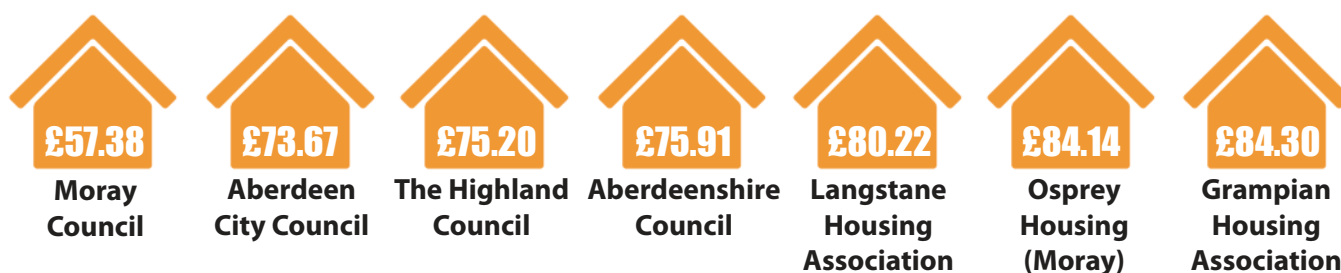
In 2017/18, we collected 102% of the gross rent that was due which is better than our target and good performance. This indicator includes the rent collection of former tenant arrears which explains why the figure is above 100%.

If you are in rent arrears and are worried about the situation, we do want to help you. Please, contact your area housing officer on 0300 123 4566 and we will look at ways in which we can help.

Our uncollected rent as a percentage of the total rent due was 2%. This is a slight improvement on the previous year and remains significantly better than the Scottish average of 5%. We perform well in this area but we remain concerned about next year's result due to the potential impact of the full roll out of Universal Credit from June 2018.

In 2017/18, we took legal action against 61 tenants which led to 9 tenants being evicted, all for rent arrears. We only use eviction as a last resort where tenants will not work with us to address their arrears.

In December 2016, we wrote to you explaining how we spend your rent and offering you a choice on the next rent increase. The majority of tenants agreed that we should increase rent levels by 4% for three years to help us build more Council houses. Despite the increase, we had the second lowest average weekly rent in 2017/18 and continue to maintain a high standard of housing. The overall average weekly rent for all apartment sizes in Moray is £57.38 compared to the local authority average of £76.23.



Your feedback

Thank you for taking the time to read our annual performance report. Please fill in and return the feedback form below to help us develop a report that gives you the information that you find useful.

If you prefer you can fill in the survey online at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/housingapr1718

Please answer all questions.

- Was the report relevant to you?** ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
- Was the report easy to understand?** ☐ Too simple ☐ Just right ☐ Too difficult
- Was the report detailed enough?** ☐ Not detailed enough ☐ Just right ☐ Too detailed
- What did you think about the design of the report?** ☐ Very good ☐ Good ☐ Average ☐ Poor ☐ Very poor

Please use this space to tell us how we could develop or improve the next annual performance report:

We contact tenants when we need to gather feedback and opinions on housing issues. Would you like to be added to our list of interested tenants? ☐ Yes (please give your details at the end of the survey) ☐ No

Would you like to find out more about joining a tenant group? ☐ Yes (please give your details at the end of the survey) ☐ No

Your details

Fill in your details to be entered into the prize draw to win £25 of shopping vouchers.

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Preferred contact method: ☐ Post ☐ Phone ☐ Email

Thank you for your feedback. You can return this form to your local access point or send it to us in the prepaid envelope. To be entered into the prize draw you must return your feedback form by no later than 31 January 2019.





Our regulation of social housing in Scotland

Consultation questions

We welcome your general feedback on our proposals as well as answers to the specific questions we have raised. You can read our consultation paper on our website at www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk. Please do not feel you have to answer every question unless you wish to do so.

Send your completed questionnaire to us by **14 December 2018**.

By email @ consultation@scottishhousingregulator.gsi.gov.uk



Or post to: Scottish Housing Regulator
Buchanan House
58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow, G4 0HF



Name/organisation name

Moray Council

Address

High Street

Elgin

Postcode IV30 1BX

Phone 0300 123 4566

Email
housingstats@moray.gov.uk

How you would like your response to be handled

To help make this a transparent process we intend to publish on our website the responses we receive, as we receive them. Please let us know how you would like us to handle your response. If you are responding as an individual, we will not publish your contact details.

Are you happy for your response to be published on our website?

Yes ☒

No ☐

If you are responding as an individual ...

Please tell us how you would like your response to be published.

Pick 1

Publish my full response, including my name



Please publish my response, but not my name



APPENDIX III

1. Is our overall approach, set out in Chapter 2 of the Framework, right? Do you have any other comments?

Yes we agree with the overall approach set out in Chapter 2 of the Framework:

- We support the introduction of annual assurance statements.
- We agree that tenant and other service user involvement has an important role in challenging landlord's performance and delivering service improvements.
- Your approach to engaging with landlords according to levels of risk and performance is reasonable.

This chapter refers to your equalities statement. The equalities statement states "...we collect annual information on equalities from social landlords through our Charter indicators" but you have also said within the equalities impact table "we will no longer require equalities data to be submitted to us". We understand that you expect landlords to continue to gather and monitor equalities data but we feel that these statements may be slightly contradictory.

2. Do the proposed regulatory requirements cover the right things, and are they framed in the right way?

Yes. The layout makes it clear which requirements apply to each type of landlord.

3. Is there anything missing? Or any other comments?

Not applicable.

We feel that the toolkit to support local authority committee members will be useful. However, it should be developed as soon as possible if the first assurance statements are required to be produced between April and October 2019.

4. Should we add to, amend, or remove anything from the proposed Standards?

Not applicable – this applies to RSLs. We feel that they are better placed to give comments on this however we are supportive of changes which improve performance within the RSL sector.

5. Is the new Standard 7 useful, and is it framed in the right way?

Not applicable – this applies to RSLs. We feel that they are better placed to give comments on this however we are supportive of changes which improve performance within the RSL sector.

6. Would you like to make any other comments about the Standards?

Not applicable – this applies to RSLs. We feel that they are better placed to give comments on this however we are supportive of changes which improve performance within the RSL sector.

7. Is the approach we have set out in Chapter 4 right? Any other comments?

Yes.

APPENDIX III

We support the reduction in the volume of data collected, particularly where this is duplicated by other organisations such as the Scottish Government.

The Scottish Social Housing Charter indicators draft statutory guidance states under section 2.3 that the first time that landlords will submit this information will be May 2020. Section 7 of the consultation document confirms that you expect landlords to produce performance data for the revised indicators for the financial year 2019-2020. We are very concerned this leaves very little time for implementing data collection processes and updating systems to ensure that we collect a full year's data from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 to form part of the May 2020 submission. Changes to systems/processes cannot be implemented until we have received the technical guidance and understand exactly what the performance monitoring requirements are. We assume that we will not receive this until you publish the result of the consultation in February 2019 – this means that we would have one month to change our systems and processes assuming you publish the charter indicator guidance at the same time.

We would like to be given the opportunity to contribute towards the development on the guidance of the new indicators to make sure that it is clear.

A 'why we need/monitor this' for each performance indicator may be useful when interpreting the guidance.

8. Are our proposals for the Annual Assurance Statement right?

Yes.

9. Is our approach to risk assessment right?

Yes.

10. Should we publish a regulatory status for each RSL as we propose?

Not applicable – this applies to RSLs. We feel that they are better placed to give comments on this however we are supportive of changes which improve performance within the RSL sector.

11. Is it right that we publish an Engagement Plan for every landlord?

Yes.

12. Would you like to make any other comments or suggestions about our approach to getting assurance?

We do have a slight concern about the practicality in terms of the timescale involved (i.e. by October 2019) which may be a challenge due to the cycle of our committee meetings but note that you plan to keep this under review to ensure that it is workable.

13. Is the approach set out in Chapter 6 right? Any other comments?

Yes.

APPENDIX III

14. Is the approach set out in Chapter 7 right? Any other comments?

Yes. We value the thematic work which recognises good practice and helps to improve services.

15. Is the approach set out in Chapter 8 right? Any other comments?

Yes.

16. Are these registration and de-registration criteria the right ones? Any other comments?

Not applicable – this applies to RSLs. We feel that they are better placed to give comments on this however we are supportive of changes which improve performance within the RSL sector.

17. Do you have any feedback on the draft Assurance Statement guidance?

The guidance clearly explains what is required.

18. Do you have any feedback on the draft notifiable events guidance?

Not applicable – this applies to RSLs. We feel that they are better placed to give comments on this however we are supportive of changes which improve performance within the RSL sector.

19. Should we add to, delete or amend anything in the list of proposed indicators? Any other comments?

We support most of the changes but would like to comment on the following indicators.

Indicator 4 – Complaints

While we aim to respond as quickly as possible, complex complaints involving multiple departments within a local authority tend to take longer. If the indicator changes to the average working days to respond then local authority performance may be less favourable against the Scottish average.

Indicator 5 – Satisfaction with opportunities to participate

The high rate of 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' responses on postal surveys suggests that tenants do not understand the wording of this question.

Indicator 13 – Satisfaction with the neighbourhood

Will the SHR allow a 3 year period from our previous tenant survey (2018) to collect this information to avoid an unnecessary expense to our tenants?

Indicator 15 – Gas safety

We will need a reasonable period after the release of the guidance to change our reports. Also, will the guidance reflect the updated gas safety regulations which allow landlords flexibility in the timing of annual checks?

Indicator 16 – Right first time

APPENDIX III

This indicator is overly complicated and in our case, quite misleading. We measure this by looking for duplicate SOR codes – however these codes may be used on completely different jobs. For example, if we replaced a socket in two different rooms of the same property then these would not be counted as right first time in our figures. While we appreciate that this is one of the indicators that tenants feel is important, there has to be consideration as to what can reasonably be expected to be gathered by a system without significant manual manipulation of data. Considering whether local target times are met in the calculation may also be unfair when comparing results between landlords because of the differences between local target timescales. We strongly feel this indicator should be simplified.

Indicator 19 – Antisocial behaviour

We support a change to this indicator because of the differences between landlords' local target timescales. However, we do not feel that the amendment proposed adds any real value. It will only give tenants an indication of how many complaints are open at the end of the year which is not a true measure of performance. We would therefore prefer to continue to report on whether local targets were achieved, but as a proportion of the total number *resolved* in the year rather than the number *reported*.

Indicator 23/24 – Adaptations

In April 2016, the lead responsibility for adaptations and associated budgets were delegated from housing to health and social care integration joint boards. As a non-housing function, performance matters in relation to adaptations should also be the responsibility of health and social care agencies and not part of the housing regulatory framework.

The cost of adaptations indicator includes minor adaptations, which would be minimal cost, and major adaptations, which would be a significant cost. Combining both would not provide a meaningful comparison as the combined cost would depend on the relative proportions of minor and majors in the calculation rather than an assessment of equivalent works. This also applies to the average days calculation.

It would be useful if you could confirm whether you will be looking for the average time to complete adaptations or applications. The change tracker suggests the wording has changed.

General

Local authority level data was lost when the ARC replaced the APSR. We feel that tenants would be more interested in local authority level data. But, more importantly, disaggregation by landlord to local authority level would provide vital intelligence for HNDA and local housing strategies.

20: Do you have any feedback on the draft group structures guidance?

Not applicable – this applies to RSLs. We feel that they are better placed to give comments on this however we are supportive of changes which improve performance within the RSL sector.

APPENDIX III

21: Do you have any feedback on this guidance?

Not applicable – this mainly applies to RSLs. We feel that they are better placed to give comments on this however we are supportive of changes which improve performance within the RSL sector.

We have no issue with the guidance that is relevant to all social landlords.

22. Would you like to give feedback on any other aspect of the proposals set out in the draft Framework and guidance?

No.

23. Would you like to give feedback on any aspect of these impact assessments? Are there other potential impacts that we should consider?

No.

Thank you for taking the time to give us your feedback!

DRAFT



REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 20 NOVEMBER 2018

SUBJECT: HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTERS 1 AND 2 FOR 2018/19

BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the Housing Service's performance for the period from 1 April 2018 to 30 September 2018.
- 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 contributing to public performance report; and developing 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 On 22 May 2013, Moray Council agreed that information relating to performance will be reported on a 6 monthly basis and will include information showing the direction of travel of performance indicators (whether performance is improving or deteriorating) (paragraph 8 of the Minute refers).
- 3.2 On 13 September 2016, this Committee approved a revised housing Performance management framework (paragraph 14 of the Minute refers). A number of local and operational indicators were omitted from the reports and these are now monitored by service managers. The performance achieved by the Housing Service in Quarters 1 and 2 of 2018/19 is presented in **APPENDIX I.**

4. SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

- 4.1 The table below sets out the Council's performance which is monitored through 72 indicators across 6 service activities. For 26 of these indicators, performance against target is reported to Committee on a six-monthly basis.

The remaining indicators are either reported against target on an annual basis or are contextual indicators included for information only.

Outcomes/standards	No. of Indicators	Green Performing Well	Amber Close Monitoring	Red Action Required	Data or Annual Only
Customer/Landlord Relationship	10	0	1	2	7
Housing Quality and Maintenance	13	3	2	1	7
Neighbourhood and Community	3	0	2	0	1
Access to Housing and Support	32	5	1	3	23
Getting Good Value from Rents and Service Charges	10	1	2	2	5
Gypsy/Travellers	4	1	0	0	3
Total	72	10	8	8	46
Reported for Q2	26 (100%)	38%	31%	31%	

5. AREAS OF GOOD PERFORMANCE

- 5.1 Performance against targets in Quarter 1 and 2 of 2018/19 is generally good across each of the 6 service activity areas.

The Customer/Landlord Relationship

- 5.2 There was an improvement in performance against the 90% target for responding to MP/MSP enquiries within 20 working days (*indicator 1.7b*) at 100% in Q1 and 86.4% in Q2.

Housing Quality and Maintenance

- 5.3 Good performance continues on response repair timescales. The target timescale of 4 hours for emergency repairs (*indicator 2.7*) was achieved in Q1 (2.4 hours) and Q2 (2.6 hours). The target timescale of 10 working days for non-emergency repairs (*indicator 2.8*) was achieved in Q1 (6.1 working days) and Q2 (7.3 working days).
- 5.4 The percentage of properties that require a gas safety record which was completed by the anniversary date (*indicator 2.13*) achieved the 100% target in both Q1 and Q2.

Neighbourhood and Community

- 5.5 The 90% target for resolving antisocial behaviour cases within local target timescales (*indicator 3.4*) was met in Q1 (92.4%) and was close to meeting target in Q2 (89.3%).

Access to Housing and Support

- 5.6 The 80 day target to complete adaptations for medical adaptations (*indicator 4.4*) was met in Q1 (20 days) and Q2 (42 days). This indicator is a composite of major and minor adaptations. There has been an improvement but performance on major adaptations remains slightly over the target in Q1 (120 days) and Q2 (177 days). The governance of adaptations is now the responsibility of the Integration Joint Board. Performance on adaptations is

considered by Moray Health and Social Care's Adaptations Governance Group. The Housing Service is represented on this group and will be working in partnership with Moray Health and Social Care to implement improvement actions in relation to major adaptations.

- 5.7 The 100% target for the percentage of households requiring temporary accommodation to which an offer was made (*indicator 4.7*) was met in Q1 and Q2.
- 5.8 The percentage of homeless households satisfied with the quality of temporary accommodation (*indicator 4.9*) was below the 90% target in Q1 (75%) but the target was achieved in Q2 (100%). There were no tenants dissatisfied in Q1 but two households were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'. Of these, only one comment was received which explained that the property was acceptable for their needs.
- 5.9 The 100% target for admitting housing applications to the list (*indicator 4.15*) was met in Q1 and Q2.
- 5.10 The Council operates three lists for housing applicants and uses quotas to guide the number of allocations made to each list (*indicator 4.18*). These targets are currently set at 40% of allocations to the homeless list, 40% to the waiting list and 20% to housing transfers. Each list has a small permitted variation of +/-5%. In Q1, 36.2% of allocations were made to the homeless list, 35.4% to the waiting list and 28.5% to the transfer list. In Q2, 50% were made to the homeless list, 27% to the waiting list and 23% to the transfer list. Performance on the waiting list was slightly below target in Q2. This can be explained by the pressures in responding to and dealing with homelessness, which reduces the need for bed and breakfast accommodation and helps to control financial costs associated with temporary accommodation during peak periods.

Getting Good Value from Rents and Service Charges

- 5.11 Taking the full roll out of Universal Credit in June 2018 into consideration, performance on the rent collection indicators was better than expected. The 97% target for rent collected as a percentage of total rent due (*indicator 5.2*) was met in Q1 (97.7%) and in Q2 (100.3%). Gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due (*indicator 5.3*) was close to the 2.8% target in Q1 (2.9%) and in Q2 (3%).

Gypsy/Travellers

- 5.12 The 100% target to visit new unauthorised encampments within 1 working day (or 2 working days for rural locations) (*indicator 6.2*) was met in both Q1 and Q2.

6. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The Customer/Landlord Relationship

- 6.1 Local authorities must follow a model complaints handling procedure developed by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). A first stage complaint is more appropriate for an immediate resolution and dealt with through a front line solution. A second stage complaint tends to be more complex and requires investigation.

- 6.2 The 100% target timescales for responding to first and second stage complaints were not achieved in both quarters. The percentage of first stage complaints responded to within 5 working days (*indicator 1.5a*) was 80% in Q1 and 72% in Q2. The percentage of second stage complaints responded to within the SPSO timescale of 20 working days (*indicator 1.5b*) was 69% in Q1 and 73% in Q2. The increase in the number of MP/MSP enquiries which requires the same timescale for response as a complaint is having a detrimental impact on this area of performance.

Housing Quality and Maintenance

- 6.3 The percentage of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in (*indicator 2.3*) is gathered from surveys sent to all new tenants. The 90% target was not met in Q1 (82.9%) and Q2 (78.6%). Of the 63 tenants responding in Q1 and Q2, 9 expressed dissatisfaction but only 5 of those provided a reason for their dissatisfaction. The main reasons were that some work was not carried out while the property was empty, being dissatisfied with the condition of the property, being dissatisfied with the cleanliness and a boiler was condemned when the tenant moved in.

Access to Housing and Support

- 6.4 The 7% target for refusing offers of temporary accommodation (*indicator 4.8*) was met in Q1 (7%) but was not achieved in Q2 (11.3%). Most refusals were for the Council's private hostel and were commonly refused due to location. The Council continues to reconfigure its supply of temporary accommodation during 2018/19.

Getting Good Value from Rents and Service Charges

- 6.5 The 0.63% target for void rent loss (*indicator 5.4*) was not met in Q1 (1.02%) and Q2 (0.92%). Similarly the 32 day target to re-let void properties (*indicator 5.6*) was not achieved in Q1 (45 days) and Q2 (47 days). Peaks in voids and the content of work in part explain this performance but it is now the most pressing area within the Housing Service that requires improvement. Recent management changes are intended to improve performance and this will now be monitored weekly by the Housing Service and Building Services (DLO) to drive up performance.

7. 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 its housing services and helps to manage assets more effectively to provide the best outcomes for tenants and other customers. 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 Head of Housing and Property, senior managers within Housing and Property, the Research and Information Officer attached to Housing, and the Committee Services Officer (Caroline Howie) whose comments where relevant to their areas of responsibility have been incorporated in this report.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This report provides an analysis of key areas of performance in relation to the Council's role as a landlord. Performance for Q1 and Q2 of 2018/19 is set out for this Committee to consider. Where performance is below target, actions for improvement have been identified.**



Author of Report:	Daska Murray, Senior Housing Officer (Information)
Background Papers:	Held by the author
Ref:	











2018/19 Housing and Property Services Performance Report Performance Indicators






1. THE CUSTOMER/LANDLORD RELATIONSHIP

Cat	PI Code & Short Name	Target	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Q2 2017/18	Q3 2017/18	Q4 2017/18	Q1 2018/19	Q2 2018/19	Latest Note	Status
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value		
Nat(b)	H1.1 % of tenants satisfied with the overall services provided by their landlord	90%	N/A	N/A		Not measured for Quarters					Survey carried out every three years.	?
Nat(b)	H1.3 % who feel landlord is good at keeping them informed about services	90%	N/A	N/A		Not measured for Quarters					Survey carried out every three years.	?
Nat(b)	H1.4a % of 1st stage complaints resolved		98.8	98.3		87.5	100	95.6	97.2	80.6		
Nat(b)	H1.4b % of 2nd stage complaints resolved		92.3	93.3		81.3	76.9	84.8	81.3	100		
Nat(b)	H1.4c % of complaints upheld		48.1	38		44.1	37.5	26.8	43.8	44.4		
Nat(b)	H1.5a % of 1st stage complaints dealt with within SPSO timescales	100	96.5	77.8		52.4	73.7	97.7	80	72	The increase in the number of MP/MSP enquiries which requires the same timescale for response as a complaint is having a detrimental impact on this area of performance.	
Nat(b)	H1.5b % 2nd stage complaints dealt with within SPSO timescales	100%	85.42%	74.29%		53.85%	60%	100%	69.23%	72.73%	See 1.5a.	
Nat(b)	H1.6 % tenants happy with opportunity to participate in decision making process	80%	N/A	N/A		Not measured for Quarters					Survey carried out every three years.	?




Cat	PI Code & Short Name	Target	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Q2 2017/18	Q3 2017/18	Q4 2017/18	Q1 2018/19	Q2 2018/19	Latest Note	Status
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value		
Local	H1.7a No of MSP enquiries received in period		78	58		20	8	5	30	43		
Local	H1.7b % of MSP enquiries responded to within target	90	89.7	67.7		60.7	80	75	100	86.4		

2. HOUSING QUALITY AND MAINTENANCE












Cat	PI Code & Short Name	Target	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Q2 2017/18	Q3 2017/18	Q4 2017/18	Q1 2018/19	Q2 2018/19	Latest Note	Status
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value		
Nat(b)	H2.1 % of stock meeting the SHQS	100%	100%	100%		Not measured for Quarters						
Nat(b)	H2.2a % of properties at or above the appropriate NHER rating	100%	100%	100%		Not measured for Quarters						
Nat(b)	H2.2b Percentage of stock meeting the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH)	67	52.7	55.4		Not measured for Quarters						
Nat(b)	H2.3 % of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in	90	78.3	78.9		73.3	77.8	75	82.9	78.6	Of the 63 tenants responding in Q1 and Q2, 9 expressed dissatisfaction but only 5 of those provided a reason for their dissatisfaction. The main reasons were that some work was not carried out while the property was empty, being dissatisfied with the condition of the property, being dissatisfied with the cleanliness and a boiler was condemned when the tenant moved in.	
Nat(b)	H2.4 % of tenant satisfied with the quality of their home	90%	N/A	N/A		Not measured for Quarters					Survey carried out every three years.	
Nat(b)	H2.7 Average length of time (hours) to complete emergency repairs	4	2.4	2.6		2.4	2.7	2.8	2.4	2.6		
Nat(b)	H2.8 Average length of time (working days) to complete non-emergency repairs	10	6.4	7.7	7.3	8.7	7.3	7.2	6.1	7.3		
Nat(b)	H2.9a Number of repairs completed within target time		16,673	14,880		3,223	3,649	3,268	3,071	3,161		














Cat	PI Code & Short Name	Target	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Q2 2017/18	Q3 2017/18	Q4 2017/18	Q1 2018/19	Q2 2018/19	Latest Note	Status
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value		
	(excl voids)											
Nat(b)	H2.11 % of repairs completed right first time	90	85.9	81.2		84	82.5	81.2	87.7	88		
Nat(b)	H2.12 % of repairs appointments kept	95%	92.4%	93.3%		95.1%	92.9%	92.2%	92.5%	92.6%		
Nat(b)	H2.13 % of properties that require a gas safety record which had a gas safety check & record completed by the anniversary date	100	99.92	100		100	100	100	100	100		
Nat(b)	H2.14 % of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in last 12 months and are satisfied with the service	90%	N/A	83.2%		Not measured for Quarters						
Local	H7.6 Percentage of planned maintenance works completed within agreed programme	98%	95.3%	88.4%		Not measured for Quarters						




3. NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY

Cat	PI Code & Short Name	Target	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Q2 2017/18	Q3 2017/18	Q4 2017/18	Q1 2018/19	Q2 2018/19	Latest Note	Status
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value		
Nat(b)	H3.1 % of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in	85%	N/A	N/A		Not measured for Quarters					Survey carried out every three years.	
Nat(b)	H3.2 % of tenancy offers refused during the year	30%	33.1%	31.7%		32.5%	33.1%	31.4%	32.2%	33.8%		
Nat(b)	H3.4 % ASB cases which were resolved within locally agreed targets	90%	77.5%	95.1%		91.3%	89.9%	91%	92.4%	89.3%		











4. ACCESS TO HOUSING AND SUPPORT

Cat	PI Code & Short Name	Target	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Q2 2017/18	Q3 2017/18	Q4 2017/18	Q1 2018/19	Q2 2018/19	Latest Note	Status
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value		
Nat(b)	H4.1a % of new tenancies sustained for more than one year by source of let: existing tenants		94.9%	98.3%		94.4%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
Nat(b)	H4.1b % of new tenancies sustained for more than one year by source of let: statutory homeless		91.0%	92.0%		96.5%	89.8%	93.5%	92.5%	97.7%		
Nat(b)	H4.1c % of new tenancies sustained for more than one year by source of let: housing list		93.3%	96.5%		100.0%	96.0%	96.4%	94.7%	90.9%		
Nat(b)	H4.1f % of new tenancies sustained for more than one year by source of let: All sources		92.7%	94.3%		97.1%	92.8%	95.4%	94.6%	96.5%		
Nat(b)	H4.2 % of lettable houses that became vacant in the last year		6.4%	6.9%		1.6%	1.8%	1.9%	2.0%	1.7%		
Nat(b)	H4.3 % of approved applications for medical adaptations completed		73.7%	83%		25.7%	43.6%	44.7%	53.9%	35.4%		
Nat(b)	H4.4 Average time to complete applications for medical adaptations (calendar days)	80	43	43		38	47	48	20	42	The governance of adaptations is now the responsibility of the Integration Joint Board. Performance on adaptations is considered by Moray Health and Social Care's Adaptations Governance	
Nat(b)	H4.4a Average time to complete applications for major medical adaptations (calendar days)		239	176		185	166	207	120	177		
Nat(b)	H4.4b Average time to complete applications for minor medical adaptations (calendar days)		16	25		14	27	28	17	11		
Nat(b)	H4.5 % of court actions initiated which resulted in eviction		11.4%	14.8%		6.3%	16.7%	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%		
Nat(b)	H4.5a No of court actions initiated		79	61	27	16	18	13	10	17		





Cat	PI Code & Short Name	Target	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Q2 2017/18	Q3 2017/18	Q4 2017/18	Q1 2018/19	Q2 2018/19	Latest Note	Status
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value		
Nat(b)	H4.5b No of repossession orders granted		21	21	12	5	4	7	5	7		
Nat(b)	H4.5c No of properties recovered for: Non-payment of rent		9	9	0	1	3	1	0	0		
Nat(b)	H4.5ci No of properties recovered for: Anti-Social Behaviour		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Nat(b)	H4.5cii No of properties recovered for: Other		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Nat(b)	H4.6a Average length of time in temp accomm by type (weeks): LA ordinary dwelling		14.8	14.8		13.2	13.1	15.5	16.2	12.2		
Nat(b)	H4.6b Average length of time in temp accomm by type (weeks): HA/RSL ordinary dwelling		14.6	14.2		9.6	15.1	23.6	18.1	10.0		
Nat(b)	H4.6c Average length of time in temp accomm by type (weeks): Hostel - LA owned		6.9	19.4		2.5	31.2	7.6	13.8	12.7		
Nat(b)	H4.6d Average length of time in temp accomm by type (weeks): Hostel - RSL		14.1	16.9		19.3	15.3	17.3	13.5	9.3		
Nat(b)	H4.6e Average length of time in temp accomm by type (weeks): Hostel - other		10.7	13.2		12.6	12.6	11.2	8.7	12.3		
Nat(b)	H4.6f Average length of time in temp accomm by type (weeks): Bed & Breakfast		1.1	0.6		0.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1		
Nat(b)	H4.6g Average length of time in temp accomm by type (weeks): Women's refuge		21.8	14.7		12.0	13.2	19.3	11.8	23.6		
Nat(b)	H4.6h Average length of time in temp accomm by type (weeks): Private Sector Lease		0.0	2.3		0.6	0.7	10.9	0.0	0.0		
Nat(b)	H4.6i Average length of time in temp accomm by type (weeks): Other		0.0	0.3		0.0	0.0	0.3	10.0	0.0		

Cat	PI Code & Short Name	Target	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Q2 2017/18	Q3 2017/18	Q4 2017/18	Q1 2018/19	Q2 2018/19	Latest Note	Status
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value		
Nat(b)	H4.7 % of households requiring temp or emergency accomm to whom an offer was made	100%	100%	100%		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%		
Nat(b)	H4.8 % of temp or emergency accomm offers refused in the last year by accommodation type	7%	11.1%	7.9%		11%	9.2%	6.9%	7%	11.3%	Most refusals were for the Council's private hostel and were commonly refused due to location. The Council continues to reconfigure its supply of temporary accommodation during 2018/19.	
Nat(b)	H4.9 % satisfied with the quality of temporary or emergency accommodation (of those households homeless in the last 12 months)	90%	89.8%	94.4%		87.5%	100%	100%	75%	100%	There were no tenants dissatisfied in Q1 but two households were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'. Of these, only one comment was received which explained that the property was acceptable for their needs.	
Local	H4.13 Percentage of homelessness assessments completed within 28 days	100%	96.2%	96.6%		99.3%	96.9%	98.4%	98.1%	99.2%		
Local	H4.15 Percentage of housing applications admitted to list within 10 days	100%	99.5%	99.6%		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%		
Local	H4.18a % allocations by group: Homeless Priority	40.0%	54.9%	51.2%		51.8%	54.6%	51.3%	36.2%	50.0%	Performance was slightly below target in Q2. This can be explained by the pressures in responding to and dealing with homelessness, which reduces the need for bed and breakfast accommodation and helps to control financial costs associated with temporary accommodation during peak periods.	
Local	H4.18b % allocations by group: Waiting List	40.0%	29.8%	28.0%		25.9%	19.4%	31.9%	35.4%	27.0%	See 4.18a.	
Local	H4.18c % allocations by group: Transfer List	20.0%	15.3%	20.8%		22.4%	25.9%	16.8%	28.5%	23.0%		

5. GETTING GOOD VALUE FROM RENTS AND SERVICE CHARGES

Cat	PI Code & Short Name	Target	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Q2 2017/18	Q3 2017/18	Q4 2017/18	Q1 2018/19	Q2 2018/19	Latest Note	Status
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value		
Nat(b)	H5.1 Percentage of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money	84%	N/A	N/A		Not measured for Quarters					Survey carried out every three years.	
Nat(b)	H5.2 Rent collected as % of total rent due	99.0 %	99.5 %	101.8 %	100.3 %	101.0 %	102.6 %	100.4 %	97.7 %	100.3 %		
Nat(b)	H5.3 Gross rent arrears as a % of rent due	2.8%	2.5%	2.4%		3.0%	2.5%	2.4%	2.9%	3.0%		
Nat(b)	H5.3a Total value of gross rent arrears (£)		£430,186.	£432,218.	£559,899.	£539,354.	£451,087.	£432,218.	£529,146.	£559,899.		
Nat(b)	H5.4 % of rent lost due to voids	0.63%	0.54%	0.66%		0.41%	0.76%	0.89%	1.02%	0.92%	Peaks in voids and the content of work in part explain this performance but it is now the most pressing area within the Housing Service that requires improvement. Recent management changes are intended to improve performance and this will now be monitored weekly by the Housing Service and Building Services (DLO) to drive up performance.	
Nat(b)	H5.5 Current tenants' arrears as a % of net rent due	3.5%	2.8%	2.7%		4%	3.1%	2.7%	3.8%	4%		
Nat(b)	H5.6 Average time taken to re-let empty properties (calendar days)	32	31	35		30	35	44	45	47	See 5.4.	
Local	H5.10 Former tenant arrears - value		£91,876	£102,623	£101,796	£108,313	£107,785	£102,623	£105,599	£101,796		
Local	H5.11 % of tenants giving up tenancy in arrears		26.6%	26.5%	23.8%	22.3%	25.7%	26.5%	21.1%	23.8%		
Local	H5.12 % of Former Tenants Arrears written off & collected		81.3%	71.4%	21%	22.3%	43.4%	71.4%	7.4%	21%		

6. GYPSY/TRAVELLERS

Cat	PI Code & Short Name	Target	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Q2 2017/18	Q3 2017/18	Q4 2017/18	Q1 2018/19	Q2 2018/19	Latest Note	Status
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value		
Local	H6.1a No of new unauthorised encampments within period		22	20		6	2	0	10	9		
Local	H6.1b No of encampments ended within period		21	21		5	3	1	11	7		
Local	H6.1c Average duration of encampments ended within period (days)		26	55		23	42	15	66	12		
Local	H6.2 % of new unauthorised encampments visited within target timescale	100%	100%	100%		100%	100%	N/A	100%	100%		



REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 20 NOVEMBER 2018

SUBJECT: TENANT DOWNSIZING INCENTIVE SCHEME

**BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides the Communities Committee with details on the resources required to manage and maintain the Council's Tenant Downsizing Incentive Scheme.
- 1.2 The report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (G) (3) and (4) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the management and maintenance of the Council's Housing Stock and to deal with the allocation and letting of houses and homelessness.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Communities Committee:

- (i) **considers the new job description for the Housing Options Advisor (HRA);**
- (ii) **agrees that the Head of Service can proceed to fill this vacancy with immediate effect; and**
- (iii) **agrees to fund the Housing Options Advisor (HRA) from the Housing Revenue Account.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 26 June 2018, the Communities Committee considered the findings from an audit of the Tenants Downsizing Incentive Scheme (paragraph 8 of the Minute refers).
- 3.2 The aim of the Scheme is to encourage tenants of 3+ bedroomed properties to downsize and release larger properties for those with a greater housing need. The Scheme also supports the transfer of tenants living in an adapted property where the disabled person is no longer in residence.
- 3.3 The main findings from the audit concluded that:

3.3.1 Resources

There were no dedicated resources available within the Housing Service to manage and monitor the Scheme.

3.3.2 Data Records

There was a need to improve the records kept relating to the Scheme and that governance also needed to improve.

3.3.3 Communication/Awareness

There was evidence found to support a view that some tenants were not fully aware of the Scheme despite the fact that it has received wide coverage on social media, the Council's website, local press and the Tenants Voice.

3.3.4 Budget Provision

The operation of the Scheme is resource intensive and without a dedicated staff resource the transfer target (25 per annum) and/or the annual budget (£72k) allocated to operate the scheme will not be fully expended.

- 3.4 On 26 June 2018, this Committee agreed to create a dedicated post to deliver the full objectives of the Scheme subject to the development of a new job description and clarification around the costs that would be incurred by the Housing Revenue Account (paragraph 8 of the Minute refers).

4. **JOB DESCRIPTION**

- 4.1 A new job description is provided in **APPENDIX I**. This provides clarity in terms of what is expected from the new post and it also seeks to address the main shortcomings that were identified from the audit.
- 4.2 To maximise the role of the Housing Options Advisor (HRA) it is proposed that they have a wider role in creating movement within the social housing rented sector. By working in a pro-active manner to match prospective tenants it is intended to increase the volume of mutual exchanges in future years. This could have a positive impact on the housing waiting list as well as delivering better outcomes for tenants. In 2017/18, 160 tenants transferred by mutual exchange.

5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Post has been evaluated by colleagues in Human Resources as Grade 5. The additional cost to the Housing Revenue Account is £27,476 per annum.

6. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

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

Meeting housing need is a key priority of the Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan, the Local Housing Strategy and the Housing and Property Service Plan. The Tenant Downsizing Incentive Scheme and the Mutual Exchange Policy seeks to make best use of the Council's housing stock and promotes healthier citizens and adults living healthier, sustainable independent lives safeguarded from harm.

(b) Policy and Legal

The legislative framework for the Council's Allocations Policy is contained within the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended.

(c) Financial implications

The additional cost of creating a dedicated post is set out in Section 5. The Post has been evaluated as Grade 5 at an annual cost of £27,476. This cost will be borne by the Housing Revenue Account and there is sufficient budget available to fund the new Post with immediate effect.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risk implications arising from this report.

(e) Staffing Implications

The staffing implications are set out in sections 4 and 5 of the report and in the Summary of Implications, section (c).

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

There are no Equalities implications arising from this report.

(h) Consultations

Consultation on this report has taken place with the Housing Needs Manager, Housing Services Manager, Housing Strategy and Development Manager, Asset Manager, Human Resources Manager, Deborah O'Shea (Principal Accountant), Legal Services Manager (Property and Contracts), Don Toonen (Equal Opportunities Officer), Caroline Howie (Committee Services Officer) and any comments received have been incorporated into the report where relevant.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This report asks the Committee to consider the new job description and agree to allow the Head of Service to proceed to fill this vacancy with immediate effect. The Committee is also asked to agree that the new Post will be funded from the Housing Revenue Account.**

Authors of Report: Richard Anderson, Head of Housing and Property

Background Papers: With author

Ref: Downsizing – June 2018 – EA

(1) JOB IDENTITY		
POST TITLE:	Housing Options	DEPARTMENT: Environmental Services
SECTION:	Housing Options Advisor (HRA only)	LOCATION: HQ Annexe, Elgin
REPORT TO:	Senior Housing Needs Officer	
GRADE:	5	POST NO:

(2) JOB PURPOSE AND WAY OF WORKING
The Housing Options Officer (HRA only) will work with and support the Area Housing Teams and tenants to ensure that the Council makes best use of its housing stock. They will promote and manage the downsizing incentive scheme and seek to pro-actively match council tenants to generate an increased number of mutual exchanges per annum.

(3) MAJOR TASKS
3.1 To promote and manage the Council's downsizing incentive scheme ensuring that the annual target of 25 transfers is achieved. The target for transfers will be reviewed on an annual basis.
3.2 To ensure that records relating to the downsizing incentive scheme are accurately kept and be in a format that allows the service to audit the operation of the scheme.
3.3 To communicate effectively with tenants and maintain appropriate levels of contact at all stages where a tenant has applied for a downsizing transfer.
3.4 To help promote and match prospective social housing tenants for mutual exchanges and ensure that they are provided with appropriate advice and guideline at all stages of the process.

(4) REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS	This job is indicated by *
<p style="text-align: center;">HOUSING NEEDS (OPERATIONS MANAGER) ↓ SENIOR HOUSING NEEDS OFFICER ↓ HOUSING OPTIONS ADVISOR (HRA) *</p>	

SIGNATURES AND ADMINISTRATION ONLY

<i>Author's Signature:</i>	<i>Validator's Signature:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Postholder's Name:</i>	<i>Signature:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Supervisor's Name:</i>	<i>Signature:</i>	<i>Date:</i>

(5) DUTIES TYPICALLY INCLUDE:

(5)	DUTIES TYPICALLY INCLUDE:
5.1	To promote and manage the Council's downsizing incentive scheme ensuring that the annual target of 25 transfers is achieved. This target will be reviewed on an annually.
5.1.1	The post-holder should use various media (Facebook, letters, leaflets, twitter, the press, etc.) to promote the downsizing incentive scheme.
5.1.2	The post-holder should monitor the progress of all transfers ensuring that the annual target is achieved and/or the £70k annual budget is fully expended.
5.1.3	The post-holder should ensure that all applicants who wish to participate in the Scheme are eligible for consideration in line with the current policy.
5.1.4	The post-holder should oversee all housing applications for those applicants accepted onto the scheme and where necessary ensure they have the appropriate level of points where appropriate to facilitate a housing transfer.
5.1.5	The post-holder should ensure that all payments relating to the downsizing scheme are calculated as per the Policy and any housing related debt (i.e. rent arrears, property damages and/or recharges are deducted prior to submitting this to the Housing Services Manager for authorisation of payment.
5.2	To ensure that records relating to the downsizing incentive scheme are accurately kept and be in a format that allows the service to audit the operation of the scheme.
5.2.1	The Post-holder will be required to maintain a separate waiting list of all applications that have been accepted onto the downsizing scheme.
5.2.2	The Post-holder must ensure that information is kept in a manner that is easy to understand and gives an accurate description of the service user, their circumstances and the status of their downsizing application.
5.2.3	The Post-holder will be required to maintain and submit comprehensive records relating to the downsizing scheme on a quarterly basis to the Housing Services Manager for audit purposes.
5.3	To communicate effectively with tenants and maintain appropriate levels of contact at all stages where a tenant has applied for a downsizing transfer.
5.3.1	The Post-holder must develop an effective communication strategy to ensure that all tenants on the downsizing scheme are kept updated in terms of their housing application and its progress.
5.3.2	Contact will vary from individual tenants and this will be something that the Post-holder will need to consider.
5.4	To help promote and match prospective social housing tenants for mutual exchanges and ensure that they are provided with appropriate advice and guideline at all stages of the process.
5.4.1	The post-holder will work with the Area Housing Teams, the Housing Needs Team and Housing Policy Team to promote and match prospective social housing tenants for mutual exchanges in line with current Policy.
5.4.2	They will interrogate various ICT systems (both internal and external) to find suitable matches and make contact with tenants to help increase their opportunity of an exchange.
5.4.3	They will ensure that all paperwork relating to mutual exchanges is maintained and recorded in accordance with existing procedures and protocol
The above is intended to provide a clear but concise statement of the present MAJOR TASKS and ACTIVITIES of the job. It is not an exhaustive list of all its detailed duties.	

**MORAY COUNCIL
PERSON SPECIFICATION**

Post: Housing Options Officer (HRA)

Department: Environmental Services

Date Specification Completed: 29 October 2018

Note: Any disabled applicant who meets the essential criteria for the post is guaranteed an interview.

ATTRIBUTES	ESSENTIAL <i>The minimum acceptable levels for safe and effective job performance</i>	DESIRABLE <i>The attributes of the ideal candidate</i>
(1) Experience	<p>Experience of working with people with multiple needs.</p> <p>Experience of assessing people.</p> <p>Experience of multi-disciplinary working.</p>	<p>Experience of working with homeless vulnerable people particularly those with addictions or mental health problems.</p> <p>Experience of mediation work.</p>
(2) Education & qualifications*	Qualification in Health, Social Work, Housing or related field.	ECDL or equivalent.
(3) Skills/abilities (general)	<p>Ability to work on own initiative and as part of a team.</p> <p>Ability to organise, plan, and monitor workloads.</p> <p>Effective communication and writing skills.</p> <p>Strong customer care skills and focus.</p> <p>Self-confident and self-motivated.</p> <p>A good understanding of ICT and experience of using Microsoft office package.</p>	
(4) Skills/abilities specific to post*	<p>The ability to gain the confidence of people vulnerable to homelessness and ability to build up a good rapport with them.</p> <p>The ability to work in a multi-disciplinary manner.</p> <p>The ability to keep accurate records relating to involvement with service users.</p> <p>You will be expected to travel</p>	

ATTRIBUTES	ESSENTIAL <i>The minimum acceptable levels for safe and effective job performance</i>	DESIRABLE <i>The attributes of the ideal candidate</i>
	<p>efficiently and effectively between various work locations within Moray to meet the operational requirements of the Service. Due to the rural nature of Moray this is normally undertaken by use of a pool car/van.</p> <p>The ability to respond to conflicting and competing demands.</p>	
(5) Inter-personal & social skills	<p>Ability to relate to people with multiple needs.</p> <p>Ability to be non-judgmental.</p> <p>Appreciation, acceptance of and an understanding of confidentiality.</p> <p>Ability to show empathy and sensitivity towards others.</p> <p>Willingness to accept direction/delegation.</p>	
(6) Working environment & physical demands	<p>Home visits to clients in own tenancies may be required.</p> <p>Ability to work flexibly in open plan office to meet the needs and demands of the service.</p> <p>Ability to work in other offices depending on the needs of the service.</p>	

* Candidates will be required to show these documents if invited for interview.

Satisfactory Disclosure Scotland check required?	YES/NO
Membership of Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme (Working with Children)?	YES/NO
Membership of Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme (Working with Adults)?	YES/NO
Satisfactory pre-employment medical screening required?	YES/NO