



Housing and Community Safety Committee

Tuesday, 19 October 2021

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Meeting of the **Housing and Community Safety Committee** is to be held at **various locations via video-conference**, on **Tuesday, 19 October 2021 at 14:00**.

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 9 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. Written Questions **

5. Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2022-23 to 2026-27 5 - 10

Report by Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance)

6. Local Lettings Plan 2022-27 11 - 24

Report by Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance)

7. Housing and Property Services Budget Monitoring - 31 August 2021 25 - 32

Report by Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance)

8. Question Time ***

Consider any oral question on matters delegated to the Committee in terms of the Council's Scheme of Administration.

Item(s) which the Committee may wish to consider with the Press and Public excluded

9. Building Services Trading Operation Budget 2021-22 - Budget Monitoring

- Information on proposed terms and/or expenditure to be incurred by the Authority;

Moray Council Committee meetings are currently being held virtually due to Covid-19. If you wish to watch the webcast of the meeting please go to:

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_43661.html

to watch the meeting live.

* **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.

THE MORAY COUNCIL

Housing and Community Safety Committee

SEDERUNT

Councillor Louise Nicol (Chair)
Councillor Paula Coy (Depute Chair)

Councillor George Alexander (Member)
Councillor James Allan (Member)
Councillor Theresa Coull (Member)
Councillor Lorna Creswell (Member)
Councillor John Divers (Member)
Councillor Ryan Edwards (Member)
Councillor Donald Gatt (Member)
Councillor Marc Macrae (Member)
Councillor Aaron McLean (Member)
Councillor Maria McLean (Member)
Councillor Laura Powell (Member)
Councillor Derek Ross (Member)

Ms Anna Bamforth (Non-Voting Member)
Ms Jane Bartecki (Non-Voting Member)

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**REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON 19
OCTOBER 2021**

**SUBJECT: STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN (SHIP) 2022/2023 -
2026/2027**

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To ask the Committee to approve the Council's draft Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2022/23 - 2026/27.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III G (10) Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the preparation and implementation of strategic housing plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

- i) considers and comments on the draft SHIP;
- ii) approves the draft SHIP for submission to the Scottish Government by 29 October 2021; and
- iii) agrees that further progress reports on the SHIP are presented to this Committee as required.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council has submitted its SHIP to Scottish Government annually since 2007. The SHIP sets out the Council's priorities for investment in affordable housing to meet the housing supply targets and outcomes stated in the Local Housing Strategy (LHS). In setting local investment priorities, the SHIP is intended to guide the allocation of resources available for affordable housing in Moray. At a detailed level, the SHIP identifies the housing projects that the Council considers are priorities for inclusion in the Moray Affordable Housing Programme.

- 3.2 On 1 December 2020, the Committee approved the Council's current SHIP (2021/22-2025/26) for submission to the Scottish Government (paragraph 10 of the Minute refers).
- 3.3 SHIPs are the key documents for identifying the strategic housing projects that will contribute to the achievement of national housing supply targets. The Scottish Government provides local authorities with guidance for preparing their SHIPs, and has provided substantially increased resources to fund local affordable housing programmes to contribute to the aims and targets detailed in Housing to 2040. Details of the resources being made available for the Moray programme are provided at Paragraph 4.11 of this report.

4. THE MORAY SHIP 2022/23 – 2026/27

- 4.1 The draft SHIP submission is available on the Council's website at http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_95565.html.
- 4.2 In summary, the SHIP:
- sets out the Council's strategic investment priorities for affordable housing;
 - demonstrates how these outcomes will be delivered;
 - identifies the resources required to deliver the investment priorities;
 - enables the involvement of key local stakeholders in the development and implementation of proposals; and
 - prioritises projects for inclusion in the Moray Affordable Housing Programme (Table 1 of the SHIP).
- 4.3 Delivery of the affordable housing programme has been affected by issues affecting the construction industry at a national level, in terms of supply chain disruption, volatile pricing and workforce shortages, as well as necessary COVID-19 safe operating procedures.
- 4.4 The investment priorities set out in the SHIP have been developed to fit with the Local Housing Strategy 2019-24, which was approved by Communities Committee on 2 April 2019 (Paragraph 8 of the Minute refers).
- 4.5 In terms of geographical priorities, the SHIP seeks to allocate investment to areas where the demand for affordable housing is greatest. Accordingly, a significant level of funding has been directed to the Elgin Housing Market Area. The high priority projects for this area are Bilbohall; Findrassie; several character areas in Elgin South; the former Spynie Hospital site; Garmouth Road, Lhanbryde and Kinneddar Meadows, Lossiemouth. However, with high levels of demand across Moray, the SHIP seeks to apportion provision across all housing market areas in accordance with the number of households wherever possible i.e. in the Buckie, Forres, Keith and Speyside Housing Market Areas. The high priority projects for these areas are Banff Road, Keith; Ferrylea and Knockomie, Forres; Speyview, Aberlour.
- 4.6 A key consideration in the SHIP's approach to programme prioritisation has been the availability and deliverability of development opportunities. With most of Moray's housing land in private ownership, the programme continues

to be largely dependent on affordable housing obligations required by planning policy, currently set at 25%. This means that the phasing of much of the SHIP programme is driven by the timescales of landowners and private developers for the delivery of affordable housing obligations. Consequently, any change in the plans of private developers could impact adversely on the delivery of the SHIP programme with impacts greater for major sites with large obligations, e.g. Findrassie, Elgin South, and Kinneddar Meadows, Lossiemouth.

- 4.7 The land banking of affordable housing sites provides a valuable resource for planning affordable housing provision and helps reduce the programming uncertainties associated with developer driven opportunities. The SHIP includes provision for the advance purchase of the former Spynie Hospital site. The land for developments proposed at Banff Road, Keith and Bilbohall, Elgin, are already in the ownership of either the Council or Grampian Housing Association.
- 4.8 The LHS Affordable Housing Supply Target includes a target of approximately 12% of affordable units met as intermediate tenure. Intermediate tenure housing aims to provide an opportunity for low income households to purchase a home, or an equity share in a home, or which aims to provide affordable rented accommodation to households in lower priority need categories on Housing Lists. The proposals at Findrassie, Elgin; Ferrylea, Forres and Banff Road, Keith include intermediate tenures (mid-market rent and/or shared equity) to promote tenure diversification.
- 4.9 The LHS aims to meet the needs of households in need of specialist housing, especially older people, wheelchair users and people with learning disabilities. The SHIP makes provision for approximately 30% of units to be delivered in the form of amenity bungalows and wheelchair accessible bungalows in the vast majority of the developments listed. The SHIP makes provision for housing with specialist support for people with learning disabilities at Garmouth Road, Lhanbryde; and Bilbohall and Pinegrove, Elgin.
- 4.10 The approach to the size and type of properties that will be funded is set out in Section 3 of the draft SHIP and is unchanged from the previous year.
- 4.11 On 15 July 2021, the Scottish Government provided the Council with a Resource Planning Assumption (RPA) of £46.2m for 2021/22 to 2025/26.

Year	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Moray	£10.357m	£8.927m	£8.902m	£8.933m	£9.981m	£46.200m

In accordance with the Scottish Government's recommendations, the SHIP includes a minimum slippage factor of 25% to compensate for programme delays, or to bring projects forward should additional resources become available.

- 4.12 To help achieve LHS fuel poverty and the Council's Climate Change Strategy outcomes, the SHIP aims to ensure that all housing delivered by the Moray Affordable Housing Programme is built to "greener" standards for energy

efficiency. Therefore, the SHIP makes provision for all projects to receive the additional £2k per unit grant subsidy for meeting this standard.

- 4.13 In line with the current Council's Housing Revenue Account Business Plan assumptions, the programme set out in the SHIP will support the delivery of 50 council houses per annum. A Business Plan review has been initiated and is expected to be completed by December 2021. The Council's development programme will then be tailored to fit the revised Business Plan and the RPA, using this SHIP as a framework for prioritisation of resources. At 50 units per year, the Council's programme will not be sufficient to maximise use of available grant funding (see Para 4.11 above). The balance of the Moray programme must be delivered by Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners. However, the level of available grant and volume of opportunities has resulted in RSL partners reporting that their capacity for borrowing to invest has been maximised in this SHIP. This means that a number of projects listed in SHIP Table 1 do not have an identified RSL at this stage. In turn, this means that some developments may be delayed and the Scottish Government's delivery targets may not be met.
- 4.14 The SHIP provides details of other sources of funding that can be used to support the Moray programme (Table 5 of the SHIP), including Council Tax discount from empty homes of around £600k per annum and developer obligations required by planning policy. Whilst it is likely that funding from developer obligations will continue to remain negligible, it could be used to support project viability, particularly in rural areas where economies of scale are reduced, and development costs can be higher. The approach to seeking commuted payments is set out in Section 8 of the draft SHIP.
- 4.15 The SHIP has been developed through a collaborative process involving primarily the Scottish Government, partner RSLs and local housing developers but also other Council services, particularly Planning colleagues and Health and Social Care Moray.

5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)) identifies an increase in the supply of affordable housing as one of the key components of a growing, diverse and sustainable economy in Moray. The SHIP reflects priorities for investment in the provision of new affordable housing to meet need identified in the Local Housing Strategy.

(b) Policy and Legal

The production of the Council's SHIP helps the Council to meet statutory duties in respect of addressing housing need in Moray.

(c) Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications to the Council arising from this report. The SHIP provides details of the resources available to fund the supply of affordable housing in Moray.

(d) Risk Implications

The major risks to the delivery of the Moray affordable housing programme have been assessed as part of the development of the SHIP. The SHIP provides high level details of proposed future investment in Council house building. The financial risks of funding the Council's programme has been assessed as part of the review of the Housing Business Plan carried out in 2019. The Housing Business Plan will be reviewed during 2021.

(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

The housing needs of equalities groups are identified in the LHS. The LHS is subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment. The Moray Affordable Housing Programme seeks to deliver the housing priorities contained in the LHS.

(h) Consultations

This report has been subject to wider consultation with the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), the Head of Housing and Property Services, the Housing Strategy and Development Manager, the Head of Economic Growth and Development, Strategic Planning and Development Manager, the Head of Community Care, the Chief Officer (Health and Social Care Moray), Deborah O'Shea (Principal Accountant), the Legal Services Manager, the Housing Needs Manager, the Housing Services Manager and the Committee Services Officer.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 This report provides the Committee with details of the Council's draft SHIP 2022/23 – 2026/27. The Committee is asked consider and comment on the draft SHIP. The Committee is also asked to approve the SHIP for submission to the Scottish Government by 29 October 2021, in accordance with SHIP Guidance.

Author of Report:	Fiona Geddes, Acting Housing Strategy and Development Manager
Background Papers:	with author
Ref:	SPMAN-1285234812-911



REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON 19 OCTOBER 2021

SUBJECT: LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN 2022 – 2027

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the Committee with a Local Lettings Plan for approval prior to consultation with stakeholders.
- 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 Committee:-

- (i) considers and approves the Local Lettings Plan 2022 – 2027 as set out in Section 4 and APPENDIX I;**
- (ii) agrees that a consultation exercise on the revised Local Lettings Plan is undertaken with key stakeholders as set out in Section 5; and**
- (iii) agrees that following the consultation exercise a further report will be presented to the Housing and Community Safety Committee.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Access to social housing is governed by legislation and guidance. Although housing legislation requires landlords to give reasonable preference to certain groups when allocating their houses, they can also take other factors into account. Legislation provides landlords with the discretion to operate a separate lettings process from their Allocations Policy for different parts of their housing stock. A Local Letting Plan can be a useful way of taking specific local factors into account, including the allocation of new build housing.

- 3.2 On 25 October 2011, the Communities Committee agreed the first Lettings Plan for Council new build housing (paragraph 12 of the Minute refers). This set out specific objectives including making best use of housing stock and creating sustainable communities and clarified that the allocations quotas agreed by the Committee would not specifically apply to the properties covered within the Plan.
- 3.3 There have been several Local Lettings Plans since 2011, with each Plan revised to reflect delivery of the new build housing programme. Every Plan has upheld the common aim of making the best use of housing stock whilst creating sustainable communities in new build developments.
- 3.4 On 3 February 2015, the Communities Committee agreed the Lettings Plan 2015 – 2018 and that the duration of the Lettings Plan should be the same period as the respective Local Housing Strategy (LHS) that delivers each new build programme and it should be reviewed as part of the next LHS (paragraph 8 of the Minute refers).
- 3.5 The Local Housing Strategy 2019 – 2024 was approved by Communities Committee on 2 April 2019 (paragraph 8 of the Minute refers). The LHS Action Plan includes an action under Priority 1 to “review Moray Council’s New Build Lettings Initiative” during 2019/20. This action has been delayed until this point due to the need to prioritise COVID-19 related activity.

4. LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN 2022 – 2027

- 4.1 A Local Lettings Plan is provided as **APPENDIX I**. It operates alongside the Council’s Allocations Policy but provides an additional set of rules, which will be applied in order to achieve its outcome of creating sustainable new communities.
- 4.2 The plan will operate for the initial let of all council new build properties in Moray, expected over the period 2022 – 2027. Progress on the Moray affordable housing programme is reported regularly to Elected Members, most recently to Economic Growth, Housing and Environmental Sustainability Committee on 8 June 2021 (paragraph 17 of the Minute refers).
- 4.3 In allocating new build properties, the Council will not apply the annually agreed allocations quotas to the new build developments but will seek to allocate new build council properties in such a way that achieves the stated objectives of the Plan.
- 4.4 The Council will regard the applicants’ top three areas of preference (as stated in their housing application) as the primary factor rather than the number of points awarded under the Allocations Policy. Certain exclusions will apply where an applicant (or member of their household) is considered to pose a risk to the local lettings plan aims and objectives.
- 4.5 A Local Lettings Plan Panel will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the operation of the Local Lettings Plan. Decisions made by the

Panel will be clear, proportionate and accountable and an audit trail will be maintained.

- 4.6 The operation of the Local Lettings Plan will be reported annually to the Housing and Community Safety Committee as part of the Allocations Policy Annual Performance Report.
- 4.7 The Local Lettings Plan will be reviewed as part of the development of the Local Housing Strategy 2024 – 2029.
- 4.8 The Local Lettings Plan 2022 – 2027 will be published on the Moray Council website.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Landlords are expected to consult with tenants, applicants and other key stakeholders when developing a local lettings plan. Therefore, if the Committee agrees the Local Lettings Plan it is proposed to have a period of public consultation from 20 October 2021 to 26 November 2021. This consultation will include:

- the publication of the Local Lettings Plan along with an online survey which will be publicised via the Council website and social media;
- contacting a random sample of applicants on the housing list to request feedback;
- contacting a random sample of tenants to request feedback; and
- requesting feedback from:
 - the Moray Tenants' Forum;
 - the register of interested tenants; and
 - Community Councils and other relevant stakeholders.

6. FUTURE ACTIONS

- 6.1 A further progress report with the outcome of the consultation process, along with a final Local Lettings Plan, will be presented to this Committee on 8 February 2022.
- 6.2 Subject to the consultation feedback and Committee's approval in February 2022, supporting operational procedures will be developed and implemented to support the plan and staff.

7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

The Corporate Plan and the Moray 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan) identify the need to provide high quality affordable housing. The Local Letting Plan seeks to make the best use of the Council's housing stock and create sustainable communities.

(b) Policy and Legal

The legislative framework for the Council's Allocations Policy is contained within the Housing (Scotland) Act 197, as amended. 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.

(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

The Local Lettings Plan will be subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment which will be undertaken during the consultation period.

(h) Consultations

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

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 This report provides the Housing and Community Safety Committee with a Local Lettings Plan for approval prior to consultation with stakeholders. A further report on the consultation outcomes will be presented to this Committee in February 2022.

Author of Report:	Gillian Henly, Senior Housing Officer (Policy)
Background Papers:	With author
Ref:	SPMAN-1285234812-910



Moray Council Local Lettings Plan 2022 – 2027

Author	Housing and Property Services
Date agreed	19 October 2021 by Housing and Community Safety Committee
Date of next review	2027 (or earlier if required by changes to legislation or guidance)

Index

Section 1	Introduction
Section 2	Aims and objectives of the local lettings plan
Section 3	Legislative and regulatory requirements
Section 4	Local Lettings Plan criteria
Section 5	Creating sustainable communities
Section 6	Making best use of specialist housing
Section 7	Monitoring of the Local Lettings Plan
Section 8	Reporting and review

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council must make best use of its housing stock, which includes how these are allocated. The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended) requires that social landlords let properties in a way that gives reasonable preference to those in greatest housing need, makes best use of the available stock, maximises choice and helps to sustain communities. Legislation provides landlords with the discretion to operate a separate lettings process from their Allocations Policy for different parts of their housing stock.
- 1.2 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 need and circumstances. The plan must operate within all the relevant legislation governing the allocation of houses as detailed in the Allocations Policy.
- 1.3 The Council has been building and letting new housing since 2011 in order to help and alleviate housing need in Moray. Developments in any one location are completed on a phased basis. However, in new build developments the number of allocations of properties being carried out at any one time is far greater than would normally be expected through the normal turnover of tenancies.
- 1.4 To ensure that the Council continues to build strong and sustainable communities a local lettings plan will be used to allocate all new build properties in Moray during 2022 – 2027. This will apply only to the initial let. Any lets thereafter will be managed in line with the Allocations Policy.

2. Aims and objectives of the local lettings plan

- 2.1 The overall aim of the Local Lettings Plan is to provide an open and transparent framework which sets out any variation to the Allocations Policy needed to address local need and circumstances in the allocation of new build properties whilst establishing sustainable communities. The Lettings Plan will not be used as a means of 'screening out' households that may require greater support or involvement from staff.

2.2 The specific objectives of the Local Lettings Plan are to:

- contribute to the maintenance of a well-balanced and sustainable community;
- make the best use of housing stock and meet housing need;
- promote social inclusion, ensuring a broad range of households are represented;
- protect tenants and residents from any risk of any antisocial behaviour coming into the area;
- be responsive to applicant housing support needs and their ability to successfully sustain a tenancy; and
- assist in delivering Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan responsibilities.

3. Legislative and regulatory requirements

3.1 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.

3.2 The Plan promotes good practice and complies with guidance from the Scottish Government and the Scottish Housing Regulator, including the Scottish Government's Social Housing Allocations – A Good Practice Guide (2019) and the standards and outcomes detailed in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

3.3 Local lettings plan are used to take into account specific local factors and:

- must comply with all relevant legislation;
- should be operated alongside the main Allocations Policy and act as an additional set of circumstances that will be considered or rules that will be applied;
- should apply to a specific geographical area and be supported by evidence on why it is required;
- should have clear outcomes and be time limited; and
- must be published.

- 3.4 When developing a local lettings plan, landlords should consult with tenants, applicants and other key stakeholders and have an effective monitoring framework in place to make sure the aims of the plan are being met.

Equality and diversity

- 3.5 The Council will seek to ensure that all applications are assessed in accordance with its duties under the Equalities Act 2010. Full consideration will be given to the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) when assessing the applications. This requires public authorities to: eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. The Council will also have due regard while considering the circumstances of the case where the applicant is a part of a protected group under this legislation, and detailed below, prior to reaching any decision or outcome.
- 3.6 The Council will endeavour to ensure that no individual is discriminated against on grounds of sex or marital status, on racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or other personal attributes, including beliefs, or opinions, such as religious beliefs or political opinions.
- 3.7 To support the needs of customers whose first language is not English, the Council will provide translation and interpretation services when needed. The Council will ensure that information is accessible and available in other formats such as large print, tape and Braille, as required.

4. Local Lettings Plan criteria

- 4.1 The Council's Housing List comprises three groups of applicants – homeless list, waiting list and transfer list. In accordance with good practice, the Council sets a target annually for allocations to each of these groups.

- 4.2 The local lettings plan will provide greater flexibility in allocating new build properties by not applying these quotas. Instead, the Council will allocate properties in such a way that achieves the stated objectives of this Plan.
- 4.3 Applications will continue to be assessed against the Council's Allocations Policy. Applicants must be eligible for the specific property type to be considered for it. Eligibility criteria and household categories are set out in the Allocations Policy. Allocations will be made to applicants where it will assist in meeting meet the aims and objective of the Local Lettings Plan detailed in section 2.2.
- 4.4 Through this Plan, the Council will regard the applicants' top three areas of preference (as stated in their housing application) as the primary factor and their points' level as secondary.
- 4.5 Exclusions will apply where an applicant (or member of their household) is considered to pose a risk to the local lettings plan aims and objectives due to any of the following:
- an applicant or member of their household has been evicted for antisocial behaviour or subject to an antisocial behaviour order within the last three years;
 - where the applicant or member of their household has been evicted from a tenancy for rent arrears in the last three years;
 - where the applicant or a member of their households has a history of convictions for criminal behaviour, drug dealing or abuse; or
 - the applicant has high support needs but has previously failed to accept support or engage with support services provided.
- 4.6 Prior to making an offer of housing, tenancy checks will be completed in relation to the applicant and their household. A satisfactory tenancy check will be required before an applicant will be shortlisted for consideration of an offer of housing.

- 4.7 Where support needs are identified, prior to receiving an offer of tenancy, a support plan detailing a sufficient level of support in order for the applicant to sustain their tenancy must be in place and the applicant must demonstrate appropriate engagement with this support.

5. Creating sustainable communities

- 5.1 By prioritising applicants by their top three area preferences, the local lettings plan enables offers to be made to applicants who have specified that they want to make the letting area in which the development is located their home.
- 5.2 Whilst reasonable preference is required to be given to those with a range of vulnerabilities, in order to create and maintain a sustainable community, consideration will be given to balance the profile and needs of people living in the area. The Council will seek to avoid any over concentration of vulnerable tenants with similar needs within the new build developments. This aims to provide a balance between households that will need additional support and those that will not.
- 5.3 The Council has agreed to increase supply of accessible ground floor properties to meet the needs of people with mobility issues. These are often older people. Wherever possible, these properties are built in clusters, near to services and amenities. Through this Plan, the Council will consider the mix of households housed in these clusters, with the aim of creating supportive and sustainable micro-communities. The Council will also recognise any services and facilities near to the development.

6. Making best use of specialist housing

- 6.1 A number of the new build properties have design features intended to benefit households with disability or mobility needs. A small number of households have a housing need, which is very specialist. Often some adaptation to the design of a new build house is required, to best meet their needs. The most cost effective way to achieve this is to allocate the housing at a very early stage in construction. In all of these cases, the housing needs of the household will have been subject to detailed discussion between the household, Housing and

Property, the Housing Occupational Therapist, Social Work and other agencies (as required).

- 6.2 The Housing Occupational Therapist will assess those households on the Councils' Housing List, regardless of those households existing tenure, to ensure the best use of the accessible/adapted accommodation provided through the new build developments.
- 6.3 A property that is fully or substantially adapted for a disabled person will be offered to the applicant assessed as requiring all or most of the facilities. In certain instance, some properties may have been specially designed or adapted to meet a specific household's needs.

7. Monitoring of the Local Lettings Plan

Local Lettings Plan Panel

- 7.1 A Lettings Plan Panel will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the operation of the local lettings plan. This Panel will comprise of:
- Housing Needs Operations Manager (Chair);
 - Housing OT (where appropriate, depending on the size and type of property type being allocated);
 - Area Housing Manager (responsible for the letting area); and
 - Housing Needs Officer.
- 7.2 The Lettings Plan Panel be provided with a potential shortlist of applicants from which they will identify applicants to whom offers of housing will be made. To aid the selection process, the Panel will have access to tenancy references, support and care arrangements, antisocial behaviour records etc. The Panel will consider the extent to which this information might impact on the establishment of a sustainable community and the aims of this Plan.
- 7.3 Decisions made by the Panel will be clear and proportionate and accountable. The Chair will ensure that a robust and accountable audit trail of the decisions

made by the Panel is maintained, to ensure that no individuals or groups are being unfairly disadvantaged. Any decision to bypass an applicant for an offer must be related to the stated objectives of the Lettings Plan.

- 7.4 The Local Lettings Plan 2022 – 2027 will be published on the Moray Council website.

8. Reporting and review

- 8.1 The operation of this plan will be reported annually to the Housing and Community Safety Committee as part of the Allocations Policy Annual Performance Report.
- 8.2 The Local Lettings Plan will be reviewed as part of the development of the Local Housing Strategy 2024 – 2029 by the Housing and Community Safety Committee or any other relevant Committee.



**REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON 19
OCTOBER 2021**

**SUBJECT: HOUSING AND PROPERTY SERVICES BUDGET MONITORING –
31 AUGUST 2021**

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the budget position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Services Other Housing Budget for the period up to 31 August 2021.
- 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 the Committee considers and notes the budget monitoring report for the period to 31 August 2021.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council agreed the HRA Budget for 2021/22 at the meeting on 18 February 2021 (paragraph 7 of the Minute refers). Housing and Property budget monitoring reports are presented to each cycle of meetings.
- 3.2 The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lock down period has impacted on the budget spend as the service concentrated on responding to the immediate crisis.

4. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT TO 31 AUGUST 2021

- 4.1 **APPENDIX I** details the HRA budget position to 31 August 2021.
- 4.2 The main expenditure variances relate to:–

- 4.2.1 **Supervision and management** – there are a range of variations within this budget resulting in a net underspend of £64k. This includes underspends in staffing (£106k), arising from vacancies and the budget provision for pay award not being paid yet and was partially offset by an overspend in relation to voids (£37k) and other minor cumulative spend, mainly Council Tax on empty properties (£5k).
- 4.2.2 **Repairs and maintenance** – there was an underspend of £351k in the repairs and maintenance budget, which is attributable to the restrictions in non essential repairs at the start of the financial year. Underspends include planned maintenance (£240k) and voids (£151k), which were partially offset by an overspend in response repairs (£40k).
- 4.2.3 **Bad and doubtful debts** – there was an underspend of £15k against provision for bad & doubtful debts.
- 4.2.4 **Downsizing Incentive Scheme** – there was an underspend of £19k, with fewer transfers taking place.
- 4.2.5 **Service Developments** – there is an underspend of £33k, with £17k arising from a vacancy that has not yet been filled, £11k on consultancy allocated for the Business Plan, Housing Need and Demand Assessment and Tenant Satisfaction Survey, as well as £5k for software costs.
- 4.2.6 The income at 31 August 2021 was £43k lower than expected. This is due mainly to fewer rechargeable repairs being invoiced.

5. OTHER HOUSING BUDGET

- 5.1 **APPENDIX II** provides details of the budget position to 31 August 2021.
- 5.2 **Planning and Development** - consists of Improvement Grants and Affordable Housing budgets, including disabled adaptations. The position at 31 August 2021 shows an overspend of £34k, attributable to a shortfall in grant income against budget of £81k, partially offset by underspends in discretionary grants (£45k) and admin (£2k). This budget is administered by the Integrated Joint Board.
- 5.3 **Housing Management** - relates to the Gypsy/Traveller budget. The position at 31 August 2021 shows an underspend of £14k mainly due to staffing.
- 5.4 **Homelessness/Allocations** - comprises of Homelessness and Housing Support services. There was an overspend of £16k in this budget, comprised of £7k for Sheltered Housing, £5k for temporary accommodation and £4k in other homelessness services. This includes one-off legal costs and reflects the fluid nature of service demands.
- 5.5 **Miscellaneous General Services Housing** - comprises of House Loans, a maintenance bond from Grampian Housing Association and the complex needs development at Urquhart Place, Lhanbryde. The budget is showing an overall underspend of £8k which is attributable to an underspend of £13k in

repairs & maintenance for the property and a £5k overspend due to the maintenance bond being exhausted.

- 5.6 **The Building Services Budget** - is reported in detail separately on this Committee's agenda and any surplus achieved or deficit will return to the HRA.
- 5.7 **The Property Services Budget** - includes the budgets for the Design Team and Property Resources. There was an overall underspend of £115k to date. Within the Design Team there were underspends in Industrial Estates (£80k), partially offset by a £10k overspend in Architects due to software costs and £7k in energy efficiency due to delays in receiving renewable heat incentive payments. Property Resources underspent by £52k, of which £28k related to planned works, £8k staffing and £3k for maintenance and £13k for shared buildings.
- 5.8 The service has also incurred £2k of expenditure to date directly relating to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This relates to building alterations/recommissioning works.
- 5.9 As at 31 August 2021, the Other Housing budget shows a net underspend of £465k.

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, the Council's Local Housing Strategy, the 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 **APPENDICES 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), the Legal Services Manager, Senior Managers within Housing and Property Services and Tracey Sutherland (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 2021 and also comments on the variances on these budgets.

Author of Report:	Edward Thomas, Head of Housing and Property
Background Papers:	Held by author
Ref:	SPMAN-1285234812-923

Budget Monitoring to 31 August 2021

Service Description	Annual Budget 2021-22	Budget to 31 August 2021	Actual to 31 August 2021	Variance to 31 August 2021
Expenditure	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Supervision & Management	4,297	1,386	1,321	65
Sheltered Housing	22	7	8	(1)
Repairs and Maintenance	7,678	2,593	2,242	351
Financing Costs	3,880	0	0	0
Bad & Doubtful Debts	225	31	16	15
CFCR	4,910	0	0	0
Downsizing Incentive Scheme	72	30	11	19
Service Development	119	63	30	33
Total Gross Expenditure	21,203	4,110	3,628	482
Income	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Non-dwelling rents	229	124	126	2
House rents	20,880	8,648	8,634	(14)
IORB	4	0	0	0
Other income	90	35	4	(31)
Total Income	21,203	8,807	8,764	(43)
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	0	4,697	5,136	439
Accumulated Surplus Balance brought forward			2,401	
Estimated Surplus Balance at 31st March			2,401	

Monitoring to 31st August 2021

Service Description	Annual Budget 2021-22 £'000	Budget to 31 August 2021 £'000	Actual & Committed to 31 August 2021 £'000	Variance at 31 August 2021 £'000
Planning & Development	275	136	170	(34)
Housing Management	17	14	0	14
Homelessness / Allocations	2184	885	901	(16)
Miscellaneous General Services Housing	(20)	(9)	(17)	8
Building Services	0	259	(121)	380
Property Services	1128	289	174	115
General Services Housing & Property Savings	(289)	0	0	0
General Services Housing & Property Allocations	(161)	0	0	0
Covid 19 - GS Housing & Property	0	0	2	(2)
General Services Housing & Property Total	3134	1574	1109	465

