

REPORT TO COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 18 FEBRUARY 2021

HOUSING ACTION PLAN

1 Reason for Report / Summary

- 1.1 To update Committee on the key areas for improvement for the Housing Service arising from the Annual Return on Charter.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

2.1 Discuss and approve the Housing Action Plan; and

2.2 Agree to receive six monthly updates on the progress of the Action Plan.

3 Purpose and Decision Making Route

- 3.1 Committee must retain sight of the key areas of focus for the Housing Service. This report clarifies areas for improvement.
- 3.2 The Housing Action Plan is brought before Communities Committee at six monthly intervals and updated following receipt of benchmarking data. The Housing Service work on improvements continuously, with a clear action plan being a key part of retaining focus on specific areas for improvement.

4 Discussion

- 4.1 The Housing Service report to the Scottish Housing Regulator annually by way of the Annual Return on Charter (ARC). The ARC documents how well the Housing Service is performing against the Scottish Housing Regulator's Indicators.
- 4.2 The Housing Service provides data to two benchmarking organisations throughout the year. The two organisations are Scottish Housing Network and Housemark. Both organisations provide in-depth analysis of the Housing Service.
- 4.3 An Action Plan showing the areas for improvement is attached to this report at Appendix 1.
- 4.4 The Action Plan ties in with the Local Housing Strategy adopted by Aberdeenshire Council in December 2017.

5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

5.1 This report helps deliver against all six of the Strategic Priorities in the Council Plan 2020-2022 and specifically the following Council Priorities:

- Everyone having access to appropriate accommodation and housing support where required
- Income is maximised through reducing costs alongside commercialisation
- Appropriate support is provided for those who are facing homelessness
- Tenancies are sustained/community capacity building Communities feel empowered and enabled
- Develop existing partnerships and build new ones with our key stakeholders

5.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		x	
Staffing		x	
Equalities			x
Fairer Scotland Duty			x
Town Centre First			x
Sustainability		x	
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing		x	

5.3 An equality impact assessment is not required because the recommendations do not have a deferential impact on any of the protected characteristics.

5.4 This report is intended to look at performance and actions and should not impact on risks at a corporate or strategic level.

6 Scheme of Governance

6.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and had no comments to make and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

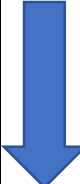
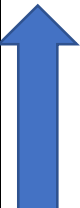
6.2 The Committee is able to consider this item in terms of Section D.7.1 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as this matter relates to a decision on policy and resource matters.




Alan Wood, Director Infrastructure Services


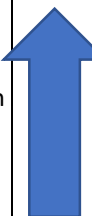
Report prepared by Rob Simpson, Head of Housing and Building Standards
Date 20 January 2021



List of Appendices – Appendix 1 – Actions from Annual Benchmarking

Appendix 1 Actions from Annual Benchmarking

No	Issue Arising from Benchmarking	Action	Responsible Service Area	Lead Officer	Deadline	Comments	Status	Outcomes Expected	Trend	
1	Major Works Costs second highest in peer group.	Continually assess value for money, comparison undertaken with other authorities, specification and lifecycle being examined with Rent member officers working group.	Asset Management	Housing Manager, Asset Management & Repairs	Autumn 2021	Considerable work undertaken to catch up with delayed contracts and EESSH works through HIP. Expenditure has increased from £24m in 18/19 to £45m in 19/20 which has led to a steady increase. As work programmes catch up this will reduce.	Green	Reduced average actual costs		17/18 = £2,299 per property 18/19 = £2384 19/20 = £3307
2	EESHS (Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing) – compliance below peer group	Assess current position. Put in place plan for EESSH 2 once requirements are announced. Report to Communities Committee on future requirements at appropriate time.	Asset Management	Housing Manager, Asset Management & Repairs	EESHS2 2025 and 2032	Progress limited due to non-traditional housing, stone-built houses, and off gas areas, are expensive to treat and impact on ability to deliver. Also national grid constraints limit upgrades to electric heating and prevent Photovoltaic installations. Anticipated 60% compliance as at Dec 2020 progress slower than planned due to contractor performance, stoppages and social distancing requirements due to the pandemic. At end of HIP year 3 compliance is expected to be 77%. EESSH 2 details to be factored in once known. Team are reviewing the stock condition database in light of anticipated EESSH2 targets and the feedback from the HIP.	Amber	Production of a plan for EESSH2 compliance.		EESHS Compliance 17/18 = 44.5 18/19 = 47.8 19/20 = 54.7

No	Issue Arising from Benchmarking	Action	Responsible Service Area	Lead Officer	Deadline	Comments	Status	Outcomes Expected	Trend	
3	Responsive repairs – costs higher than peer group	Monitor progress and undertake tender for Housing Repairs subcontractors.	Asset Management	Housing Manager, Asset Management & Repairs	Summer 2022	New system being introduced to enhance efficiency of workforce and new procurement method in place for supplies which will produce savings. Subcontractor tenders have commenced, electrical tender ready to be awarded.	Green	Lower costs		17/18 = £1,042 18/19 = £1080 19/20 = £963
4	Tenant Satisfaction		All Housing Services	Housing Manager, Tenancy Services	Continuous drive to improve	The Communities Committee considered an update on the Tenant Participation Strategy 2019 to 2029 in November 2020. Steps have been taken to progress Actions although some of these have been curtailed by Covid 19 restrictions towards the end of 2019/20. The Housing Service have progressed the Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2021 which will be completed prior to May 2021.	Green	Enhanced level of meaningful tenant engagement, scrutiny, and involvement		17/18 = 79.7% satisfied 18/19 79.7% (not measured in the last year) 19/20 Not measured
5	Emergency Repairs taking longer than they did in previous years	Recording issue continue to be monitored and working closely with subcontractors.	Asset Management	Housing Manager, Asset Management & Repairs	Autumn 2021	This area continues to demonstrate significant improvement.	Green	Accurate use of system.		17/18 = 8.3 hours 18/19 = 5.3 19/20 = 4.5
No		Action	Responsible Service Area	Lead Officer	Deadline	Comments	Status	Outcomes Expected	Trend	

	Issue Arising from Benchmarking									
6	Lengthening average re-let time	Review of void process to be arranged together with a deep dive into examples with relevant team members to fully understand issues and possible solutions.	Asset Management, Tenancy services, Options & Homelessness	Housing Manager, Asset Management & Repairs	Autumn 2021	Following a thorough review new systems have been introduced, a streamlined voids process adopted, and a new Lettable Standard was approved by Communities Committee (Sept 2020) which has now been implemented across Aberdeenshire. Progress has been hampered by the pandemic; however improvement is being made.	Green	Reduction in re-let time. Streamlined voids process.		17/18 = 48 days 18/19 = 55 19/20 = 56
7	Time taken to undertake medical adaptations both in local authority and private sector.	Create a complex cases forum to review and accelerate delivery, implement housing solutions training to ensure housing issues and solutions are identified at an early stage, improve, and streamline minor adaptations process, improve recording of need, timelines, and outcomes.	Tenancy Services, Strategy, Asset Management	Housing Manager, Strategy	March 2022	All actions identified in 2018/19 have been completed. The average time taken to deliver a medical adaptation in the local authority stock has increased from 33 days to 45 days. This reflects a 50% increase in the number of major adaptations delivered during 2019/20. The long-term progress nevertheless remains positive as a result of improvement activity to streamline processes and more accurate data recording. Covid 19 has inevitably had a significant impact on service delivery in the 2020/21 year with all but emergency adaptations deferred for the majority of the year.	Green	Reduction in time taken to undertake medical adaptations on a tenure neutral basis.		Local Authority all adaptations (major and minor) 17/18 = 100 18/19 = 33 19/20 = 45 Private Sector Major Adaptations 16/17 = 162 18/19 = 137 19/20 = 119

		To continue the progress in 2021/22: re-establish the Adaptations Working Group across partners to review and implement the Partnership Joint Protocol for adaptations promoted iHub (Scotland's health and social care improvement hub).				In the private sector the figure is higher as it relates to major adaptations only and does not include minor adaptations. There has been a year on year reduction in the time taken to complete adaptations. 2019/20 saw a further reduction of 11% (18 days) taking the average to 119 days to complete a disabled adaptation. This reduction is welcomed and reflects the work the team have invested to become more digital and regularly meeting partners to overcome problems that can arise with complex cases.				
8	Value for Money	Continue to monitor value for money	Tenancy Services	Housing Manager, Tenancy Services	March 2021	Rent rises have been agreed by tenants based on priorities of upgrades and new build. The ongoing sustainability of rent rises must be measured against lost rents and tenant satisfaction. Housing will be progressing with a Tenant Satisfaction Survey in 2021 with results due prior to end May.	Green	No significant drop in tenant satisfaction with value for money.		17/18 = 74.6 of tenants felt rent represented good value for money. 18/19 = not measured 19/20 = not measured
9	Arrears	Continue to monitor arrears	Tenancy Services	Housing Manager, Tenancy Services	March 2021	Although rents for the 19/20 and 20/21 years were subject to increase in line with the approved Rent Strategy, the Covid 19 pandemic has resulted in a re-examination of rent affordability. The pandemic has resulted in an increase in rent arrears throughout 20/21 but this has been proactively managed by the team.	Green	No significant change in arrears levels		17/18 = 2.8% of rent due 18/19 = 2.9% 19/20 = 2.9%



= Performance improving



= Performance stable



= Performance getting worse