



REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 18 NOVEMBER 2014

SUBJECT: HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTERS 1 AND 2 OF 2014/15

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report to the Communities Committee outlines the performance of the Housing Service for the period 1 April 2014 to 30 September 2014.
- 1.2 The report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III H (14) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to performance management for housing functions.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Communities Committee:-

- (i) scrutinises performance outlined in this report;**
- (ii) welcomes the good performance achieved; and**
- (iii) considers and agrees the actions being taken to improve performances where required.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 23 April 2013, the Communities Committee approved a revised Performance Management Framework following the corporate review of performance management and following changes to performance reporting required by the Scottish Housing Regulator (paragraph 19 of the Minute refers).
- 3.2 On 22 May 2013, at a meeting of the Full Council, it was agreed that information relating to Performance Indicators be reported on a 6 monthly basis and that information be included in performance reports showing the direction of travel (whether performance is improving or deteriorating) (paragraph 8 of the Minute refers).

- 3.3 **APPENDIX I** provides information on the performance achieved by the Service in Quarters 1 and 2 of 2014/15.
- 3.4 It should be noted that some of the new indicators are qualitative and require customer feedback through surveys. It is intended to undertake a 3 yearly postal survey of Council tenants during 2015/16 and continue to carry out satisfaction surveys of new tenants, people who use homelessness services and customers who have received services relating to repairs, neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour.
- 3.5 Performance relating to all Housing Service performance indicators in Quarters 1 and 2 is included in section 2 of the 2014/15, Quarters 1 and 2 Performance Monitoring Statement, issued to Members separately.

4. **SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE**

- 4.1 The table below sets out the Council's performance on 46 indicators across 7 separate service activities. Performance against target is reported to Committee on a Quarterly basis in respect of 25 of the indicators. The remaining 21 indicators are either reported against target on an annual basis or are included for data purposes only.

Outcomes/Standards	No. of Indicators	Green Performing Well	Amber Close monitoring	Red Action Required	Data Or Annual Only
Customer/Landlord Relationship	7	1	0	0	6
Housing Quality and Maintenance	12	2	1	4	5
Neighbourhood & Community	4	1	1	0	2
Access to Housing & Support	11	4	0	2	5
Getting Good Value from Rents & Service Charges	7	1	3	2	1
Gypsy/Travellers	2	1	0	0	1
Building Services	3	1	0	1	1
Total	46 (100%)	11 (24%)	5 (11%)	9 (20%)	21 (46%)

4.2 PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS – AREAS OF GOOD PERFORMANCE

- 4.2.1 Performance in Quarters 1 and 2 of 2014/15 in relation to targets agreed for 2014/15 is good in a number of aspects of the service across each of the 7 activity areas.

The Customer/Landlord Relationship

- 4.2.2 The Housing & Property Service continues to perform well in resolving 1st stage complaints within the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) timescales (*indicators 1.5a*), with 100% of 1st stage complaints being resolved within 5 days.

Housing Quality & Maintenance

- 4.2.3 Good performance has been sustained in relation to the average length of time taken to complete response repairs. The average length of time to complete emergency repairs is calculated in hours with the target being 4 hours (*indicator 2.7*). During Quarters 1 and 2, the time taken to complete emergency repairs exceeded target at 2:36 hours and 2:23 hours respectively. The average length of time to complete non-emergency repairs also exceeded target at 5.9 working days in Quarter 1 and 7.2 working days in Quarter 2 (*indicator 2.8*).
- 4.2.4 Good performance has been sustained on gas safety management with 99.3% of gas safety checks being completed within 12 months of the previous check in both Quarters (*indicator 2.13*). Despite this, the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has written to the majority of Scottish social landlords (Moray included) to emphasise that they expect all landlords to achieve the statutory requirement of 100%. The SHR did acknowledge that the Council's compliance figure is close and that they expect to see further improvement in 2014/15. The letter from the SHR was received in October 2014. The main problem in achieving the 100% target continues to be tenants providing "no access".

Neighbourhood and Community

- 4.2.5 The Council has made steady improvement towards achieving the annual target of no more than 26% of tenancy offers being refused (*indicator 3.2*). Performance was close to target in Quarter 1 at 28% and exceeded target in Quarter 2 at 22%.
- 4.2.6 Improvement has also been made towards meeting the target for the percentage of neighbour dispute and anti-social behaviour cases resolved within 20 days (*indicator 3.4*). In Quarter 2, 93% of cases were resolved within the 20 day target, which is the highest recorded performance since the introduction of the 20 day target in April 2013.
- 4.2.7 Three key factors have contributed to this change in performance:

- improvements to the ICT system for recording disputes and anti-social behaviour;
- additional training of staff to ensure compliance with the current neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour policy; and
- a comprehensive review of how the Council has been dealing with neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour.

4.2.8 The review of neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour has identified some weaknesses in the recording of cases. The service has taken steps to address this in Quarters 1 and 2 of 2014/15. As a result, the number of neighbour disputes/anti-social behaviour cases recorded during the period has increased significantly to 256. This compares with an annual total of 200 cases recorded in 2013/14. The majority of these cases continue to fall into the less serious categories (C and D). Further measures will be implemented in Q 3 to improve the recording of case outcomes.

Access to Housing and Support

4.2.9 The average number of days taken to complete medical adaptations (*indicator 4.4*) was better than target in both Quarters 1 (82 days) and 2 (71 days).

4.2.10 The percentage of households requiring temporary or emergency accommodation to whom an offer was made (*indicator 4.7*), continued to meet the 100% target throughout Quarters 1 and 2 of 2014/15.

4.2.11 Although the number of surveys returned was low, 100% of those who provided feedback about their stay in temporary accommodation indicated that they were either very or fairly satisfied with the quality of accommodation provided to them (*indicator 4.9*).

4.2.12 The Council operates three lists for housing (housing waiting, homelessness and transfer). In 2014/15, the quotas are set at 40% to the housing waiting and homelessness lists and 20% to transfers. Each list operates a 5 +/- variation on the agreed quota targets. In Quarter 1, 41% of lets went to those on the housing waiting list, 42% to the homelessness list and 17% to housing transfers (*indicator 4.18*). In Quarter 2, 36% of lets went to those on the housing waiting list, 38% to the homelessness list and 26% to housing transfers.

Getting Good Value from Rents and Service Charges

4.2.13 Rent collected as a percentage of total rent due (*indicator 5.2*) measures the total amount of rent collected from both current and former tenants over the reporting period as a proportion of the total amount of rent due. Performance in this area exceeded target in both Quarters 1 and 2, during which 97% and 102% of total rent due was collected. This can be largely attributed to the Council's rent arrears policy and detailed rent arrears action plan, which seek to reduce arrears and avoid eviction.

- 4.2.14 While not yet meeting target, the Council's performance in relation to gross rent arrears in Quarters 1 and 2 (*indicator 5.3*) compares favourably with performance at the same time in 2013/14. Gross arrears in Quarter 1 were 2.8% of all rent due compared to 3.4% in 2013/14, and 2.9% at the end of Quarter 2 compared to 3.5% in 2013/14.
- 4.2.15 The level of current rent arrears as a percentage of net rent due at the end of Quarters 1 and 2 (*indicator 5.5*) also compares favourably with the same periods last year and have been close to target at 3.7% and 3.8% respectively.
- 4.2.16 The value of arrears owed by former tenants that was either written off or collected up to the end of Quarter 2 was £57,050 (*indicator 5.12*). This is made up of £45,354 written off and £11,696 collected. This has reduced the former tenant arrears to £93,824 (*indicator 5.10*). The write-offs are due to a number of factors including sequestrations of tenants but primarily sums identified as non-recoverable by Sheriff Officers. There is budget provision within the Housing Revenue Account to deal with this.
- 4.2.17 The percentage of rent due lost to voids (*indicator 5.4*) was better than target at the end of Quarter 1 (0.61%) and close to target at the end of Quarter 2 (0.66%).

Gypsy/Travellers

- 4.2.18 During Quarters 1 and 2, the Council had 34 new unauthorised encampments with 100% being visited within the target timescale of 1 working day or 2 working days if the encampment is in a rural location (*indicator 6.2*).

Building Services

- 4.2.19 The rate of overtime expenditure (*indicator 7.1*) has been consistently lower than target throughout Quarters 1 and 2, out-turning at 8.7% in Quarter 1 and 8.9% in Quarter 2 compared to the target of 10.5%. The introduction of new shift rotas has had a positive impact on maximising labour productivity and reducing overtime.

4.3 PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS – AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR IMPROVEMENT

The Customer/Landlord Relationship

- 4.3.1 The number of complaints received during Quarters 1 and 2 of 2014/15 (87) has increased since the same period last year (50). The majority of these continue to relate to repairs, capital and planned maintenance (49%) and complaints about staff (14%). Complaints are systematically monitored by managers to ensure that improvements are made in this area of service activity.
- 4.3.2 The percentage of 2nd stage complaints resolved within SPSO timescales and the percentage of MSP enquiries resolved within target timescales both failed to meet target. This is due to operational pressures within the service which resulted in 7 2nd stage complaints and 7 MSP responses not being answered

within the target timescale. This is an area identified for improvement in Quarters 3 and 4 of 2014/15.

Housing Quality & Maintenance

- 4.3.3 The percentage of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home moving in (*indicator 2.3*) failed to meet target in both Quarters 1 and 2. The main reasons given by tenants who were dissatisfied related to cleanliness, internal decoration and repairs not completed. Procedures are in place so that dissatisfaction feedback received from new tenants is distributed to the relevant housing service manager when received. Any issues are investigated by the relevant manager and resolved where appropriate.
- 4.3.4 The percentage of repairs completed within target timescales were not met in both Quarters 1 and 2 (*indicator 2.9*). In Quarter 2, this can be attributed to the flooding incident in August which generated an increase of nearly 30% in emergency repairs being reported. Due to the high volume of calls, it was not always possible to meet the 4 hour target period. A number of non-emergency repairs also had to be re-scheduled outside of usual target timescales to enable Building Services (DLO) to prioritise the most pressing needs first.
- 4.3.5 A repair is completed right first time (*indicator 2.11*) if it is completed within target timescale, to the tenant's satisfaction and without the need to return at a later date because the problem was not fully resolved. Performance against this indicator also fell below target in both Quarters 1 and 2, primarily as a result of the failures to meet target timescales outlined in paragraph 4.4.4.
- 4.3.6 The Housing & Property Service continues to closely monitor response repairs performance and make improvements where possible. During 2014/15, each repair which is not completed within target is being looked at by Building Services in order to identify the reasons for this and where possible, make procedural changes to improve future performance.
- 4.3.7 The percentage of non-emergency repair appointments kept (*indicator 2.12*) also fell below target in both Quarters 1 and 2 (92.7% and 90.8% respectively). Performance and the accuracy of recording in this area is currently being reviewed, therefore these figures should be treated as provisional at this stage. The outcome of the review will be reported to Committee in a future performance report.

Access to Housing and Support

- 4.3.8 The overall percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than a year (*indicator 4.1*) has dropped slightly in Quarters 1 and 2 this year compared to performance in the same Quarters last year (from 94.5% to 92.4% in Quarter 1 and 93.5% to 88.6% in Quarter 2). Despite the reduction, the Council continues to perform well in terms of this indicator.
- 4.3.9 The percentage of approved applications for medical adaptations completed within Quarters 1 and 2 fell below the 95% target (*indicator 4.3*). This primarily

relates to the longer timescales required to complete major adaptations. The processes involved in completing major adaptations are currently being reviewed jointly by Housing and Property Services and Community Care to identify ways that they can be completed within shorter timescales. The Housing and Property Service Plan, which was agreed by Communities Committee on 29 April 2014 (paragraph 11 of the Minute refers), identified that this review will be complete by March 2015.

4.3.10 The percentage of temporary or emergency accommodation offers refused in Quarters 1 and 2 out-turned higher than target in both Quarters 1 and 2 (*indicator 4.8*). The majority of these refusals relate to offers of hostel accommodation which is less popular than dispersed accommodation.

4.3.11 The number of evictions during 2014/15 for Quarters 1 and 2 has risen to 8, 7 of which were for rent arrears and 1 for illegal use and occupation. It is proposed that managers look at the reasons for this increase and prepare a report on the Council's approach to evictions to this Committee in February 2015.

Getting Good Value from Rents and Service Charges

4.3.12 Performance on void management has not met target during Quarters 1 and 2 of 2014/15. The average length of time to re-let properties was 36 days in Quarter 1 and 34 days in Quarter 2, both higher than the 28 day target (*indicator 5.6*). This is also reflected in poor performance in meeting targets for the percentage of properties re-let within specific time bands (*indicator 5.7*). The percentage of properties re-let within 0-2 weeks was significantly lower than the 30% target (10.5% in Q1 and 8.5% in Q2), while the percentages re-let within 5-8 weeks and 9-16 weeks were significantly higher than target. A number of factors have caused this including the time taken to remove former asbestos insulated tanks and associated debris from void houses.

4.3.13 Performance on voids continues to be monitored by the Voids Working Group which involves key Officers from the different teams who are involved in the management of voids. Further measures to reduce and control void expenditure have been implemented in Quarter 1. The specification of void works has been tightened and initial indications show a reduction in spend across a number of key areas, particularly the use of sub-contractors and decoration of voids.

Building Services

4.3.14 The percentage of absence (craft & manual staff) missed target during Quarters 1 and 2, with 3.1% and 5.3% absence respectively (*indicator 7.2*). This was due to a number of long-term absences, all of which have recently returned to work.

5. BENCHMARKING

5.1 National reporting for housing performance changed as a result of the introduction of the comprehensive suite of indicators by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) to measure landlords' performance in delivering the Scottish

Social Housing Charter (the Charter). The revised, statutory performance indicators endeavour to be more realistic and aim to ensure that benchmarks are measured in the same way across all councils. A separate report on this Committee agenda provides a comparison of the Moray Council's performance under the Charter in 2013/14 with average performance by all Scottish social landlords.

- 5.2 The Council continues to be a member of the Scottish Housing Best Value Network (SHBVN) which involves 31 Scottish local authorities. This provides a range of further benchmarking comparisons in relation to key service areas and activities. The Council is also a member of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) which is the professional association of Senior Officers and Heads of Services in local authorities in Scotland. The group enables Council's to develop and promote best practice and innovation across housing and specialist sub-groups are established to examine particular areas when required.

6. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Moray 2023 A Plan for the Future/Service Plan

The monitoring and management of performance assists the Council to continue to improve its housing services. It also helps to manage its assets more effectively to provide the best outcomes for tenants and other customers and promotes safer communities and adults living healthier, sustainable independent lives safeguarded from harm which meets the key objectives of the Moray 2023 plan.

(b) Policy and Legal

Reporting performance under the 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 requirements/implications arising directly from this report.

(g) Equalities

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required as the report is to inform the Committee on performance. There are no equalities implications arising directly from this report.

(h) Consultations

Consultation on this report has been carried out with the Head of Housing and Property and managers within Housing and Property, whose comments have been incorporated in this report.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This report provides a comprehensive picture of performance in Housing Services for Quarters 1 and 2 of 2014/15. The Housing Service continues to perform well against agreed targets in a number of areas but a number of areas for improvement have also been identified.**

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Background Papers: Held by the authors

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