

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

26 September 2017

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER RETURN: RESULTS

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Scottish Government's Social Housing Charter came into force in April 2012, and since then we have reported our performance through the set of indicators in the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC). The purpose of this annual return is to monitor performance to ensure quality and value for money for tenants and customers for the services they receive. The results are published annually for all Local Authorities (LAs) and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in Scotland which allows us to compare our performance and make improvements within our own services by adopting good practice of other landlords.
- 1.2 Our Housing Improvement Teams (HITs) have been set up to identify areas for improvement and put in place plans to deliver these improvements. There are four HITs, each made up of a core group of Communities staff and subgroups where required. For each HIT the core group agrees an action plan, based on current understanding of performance in each area as well as any legislative changes and good practice guidance. Housing Improvement Teams have been set up with an aim to make improvements in service and performance through staff and customer involvement, and to tackle legislative, regulatory and audit requirements.
- 1.3 The four HITs are: Income Management; Maintaining & Improving Home; Housing Options and; Homes & Communities
- 1.4 These HITs correspond with the Charter outcomes and the indicators which form the ARC. An important section of the Charter includes satisfaction indicators, which show how housing service customers view the services provided to them. In order to produce the number of returns desired to give a good indication of customer views, it was decided to contract with an external service provider – Knowledge Partnership. 1,003 face to face interviews were carried out during January and February 2017, which represents 15% of all tenants. The full survey report is attached as **Appendix 1**.

2. DETAIL

2.1 Income Management

- 2.1.1 The remit of the Income Management HIT consists of achieving good value from rents and service charges, including arrears and voids.

	Angus 2015/16	Scottish Average 2015/16	Angus 2016/17	Scottish Average 2016/17
All Arrears as a % of Gross Rent	6.62%	6.0%	7.74%	6.10%
% Rent Loss due to Empty Properties	1.03%	1.05%	1.16%	0.90%
% Rent Collected in the Year	100.03%	99.32%	99.37%	99.4%
Average Time (Days) Taken to Re-let all Properties	39.1 days	40.7 days	42.96 days	33.8days
% of Tenants Satisfied that our Rent Represents Value for Money	80.40%	79.30%	80.26%	80.08%

- 2.1.2 Our indicators in the Income Management section have seen poorer performance this year. However, this is at the time of a service redesign and new corporate debt management procedure which are still in a period of adjustment. We hope to see significant changes in the year to come. We as a Council will need to be mindful that welfare reform, and Universal Credit in particular, continue to pose a major challenge for households affected in maintaining their rent accounts and a risk to our income stream.
- 2.1.3 There has been focus through HIT work, and advertising empty properties through the Immediate to Let section of the Council website which has been beneficial for our void loss and re-let times. This year our teams will need continue the focus on these indicators to bring performance up to that of the Scottish Average.

2.2 Maintaining & Improving Homes

- 2.2.1 The Maintaining & Improving Homes HIT ensures that properties are well-maintained, that any repairs are completed to a high standard and that the tenant is kept informed about when the repair will be carried out. This HIT includes five main indicators.

	Angus 2015/16	Scottish Average 2015/16	Angus 2016/17	Scottish Average 2016/17
% of Repairs Completed First Time	97.60%	89.90%	98.78%	92.70%
% of Repair Appointments Kept	99.96%	93.40%	99.85%	96.00%
Total % of Stock Meeting SHQS	92.10%	93.00%	93.38%	94.1%
% Satisfaction with the Repair Service	82.40%	88.00%	82.36%	88.40%
% Satisfaction with Quality of Home	87.20%	83.83%	85.74%	84.60%

- 2.2.2 Over the last couple of years, we have seen significant improvements in the repair indicators. We have carried out system work to reflect the correct technical guidance for these indicators. Closer monitoring of contracts and providing support to contractors where necessary has also led to this increase in performance. In addition, the indicators were written into the new contracts, so that contractors are obliged to complete the relevant sections about each repair.
- 2.2.3 Due to poorer satisfaction in this area we are now carrying out an independent satisfaction survey for our Repair Service on a monthly basis, which is then scrutinised by our Maintaining & Improving Homes HIT to look at ways of improving the service from the comments coming back for our tenants at a more regular interval. Results so far are as follows:

Area	Satisfaction
Reporting	96%
Appointments	58%
Activities	78%
Contractor	91%
Service	69%

- 2.2.4 Also as part of scrutiny activities, a report by tenants on the Unplanned Repairs Service was carried out over the past year. Eight tenants formed a group to identify and consider recommendations to improve our services. They have recommended 9 changes to our services and we will work with the group to agree an action plan for the Housing Division to meet all nine recommendations, with a hope, these changes will bring positive results to the satisfaction in this area.

2.3 Housing Options

- 2.3.1 The Housing Options HIT aims to ensure that there is a consistent approach in the delivery of the Housing Options Service in line with current legislation, policies and procedures. The

service provides advice to anyone who needs it to help them find, keep and maintain their home.

	Angus 2015/16	Scottish Average 2015/16	Angus 2016/17	Scottish Average 2016/17
% of Tenancies Sustained more than 1 year	89.80%	88.73%	87.10%	89.60%
Average time spent in Temporary Accommodation	105.38 days	149.36 days	152.09 days	108.67 days

2.3.2 Tenancy sustainment has reduced below the Scottish average but we will continue with activities to improve prevention of homelessness, which has resulted in some good levels of engagement in the past, and follow the Scottish Government guidance and take a consistent approach across all teams.

2.3.3 We have tried to continue to increase the stock of Council temporary accommodation where we can but this is becoming increasingly difficult and evident with the current 1-bedroom stock levels. We do not use hostels or private sector temporary accommodation, and try to use Bed & Breakfast as a last resort, but this year the average days has increased significantly compared to the Scottish average of in all types.

2.4 Homes & Communities

2.4.1 The Homes & Communities HIT encompasses tenancy management, estate management, gypsy travellers and anti-social behaviour. The main indicators for this HIT look at the level of tenant satisfaction with the management of their home, and the number of ASB cases reported and resolved.

	Angus 2015/16	Scottish Average 2015/16	Angus 2016/17	Scottish Average 2016/17
% of Tenants that were Satisfied with the Management of their Home	82.40%	81.40%	81.66%	84.30%
% of Anti-Social Behaviour cases reported in the last year which were resolved	92.40%	85.50%	96.26%	87.50%
% Satisfaction with being Kept Informed about services and decisions	77.00%	81.50%	79.70%	84.10%
% Satisfaction with Opportunities to Participate	63.50%	71.30%	62.10%	74.60%

2.4.2 We have successfully increased our resolution of ASB cases for this year and have continued to be above the Scottish average. The Council resolves ASB in a number of ways, follows a well-structured set of guidelines and we will continue to develop methods of dealing with cases.

2.4.3 Satisfaction with opportunities to participate has dropped and is significantly lower than the Scottish average. We have found younger tenants are most likely to say they are dissatisfied with participation. We will continue to develop our communication methods which will hopefully ensure tenants are well informed and equipped to participate, influence housing policies and make informed choices.

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 This year there have been some positive changes in the performance levels, and some less positive changes. However, there have also been changes in how we deal with our services, with new roles and responsibilities, and changing legislation including Welfare Reform which brings with it new ways of dealing with the services. These need time to bed in and for staff to be trained and understand fully their new roles and responsibilities in light of the changes.

3.2 We will be working to drive performance in a positive direction over the coming months, and the Scottish Housing Regulator has indicated that we are one of a very small number of landlords for whom they plan no scrutiny activity in 2017/18.

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APPENDICES:-

Appendix 1 – Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Appendix 2 – Data Charts