

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

29 September 2020

SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER RETURN: RESULTS

1. BACKGROUND

The Scottish 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 helps us to compare our performance and make improvements within our own services by adopting good practice of other landlords. Please note that the Scottish average figures are based on results from 26 local authorities which was all that was available at the time of report preparation.

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 five 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.

The five HITs are:

1. Income Management
2. Maintaining & Improving Homes
3. Housing Options
4. Homes & Communities
5. Tenant Participation

These HITs correspond with the Charter outcomes and the indicators which form the ARC. The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) reviewed the Charter indicators last year, resulting in the removal of some indicators and other new indicators being added from 2019/20 onwards. An important section of the Charter includes satisfaction indicators which show how 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. 1,009 face to face interviews were carried out between January and March 2019, which represents approximately 15% of all tenants.

2. DETAIL

**Income Management**

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

	2018/19		2019/20		Trend
	Angus	Scottish Average	Angus	Scottish Average	
All Arrears as a % of Gross Rent	9.23%	6.90%	8.88%	7.01%	↑
% Rent Loss due to Empty Properties	0.86%	0.90%	2.32%	1.25%	↓
% Rent Collected in the Year	98.52%	98.70%	100.15%	99.14%	↑

Average Time (Days) Taken to Re-let all Properties	30.10 days	33.80 days	47.15 days	35.30 days	↓
% of Tenants Satisfied that our Rent Represents Value for Money	80.67%	81.30%	80.67%	82.77%	→

The service redesign and new escalation policy have now been in place for three years. The gross rent arrears have successfully been reduced in 2019/20.

Unfortunately, there has been a spike in the average days taken to re-let properties, and the rent lost due to empty properties has significantly deteriorated this year as a result. This has been caused by a number of things: in the early part of the year there was an impact of one contractor going into liquidation, which meant additional workload was placed on remaining contractors, causing longer turnaround times; There has also been a rise in properties where more extensive works have been required at change of tenancy; Some of the properties transferred from the ACCCT to the HRA during the course of the year had been void for long periods, and as these were let successfully, the long void times were included in the statistics (this also reflects the low demand that has been experienced for some of the sheltered type stock already owned by the Council); and at the end of the year, the early impacts of the COVID 19 shutdown have impacted on the figures to some extent.

Tenant satisfaction that their rent represents value for money has remained consistent.

### Maintaining & Improving Homes

The Maintaining & Improving Homes HIT ensures that properties are well-maintained, that any repairs are completed to a high standard, and that tenants are kept informed about when repairs will be carried out.

	2018/19		2019/20		Trend
	Angus	Scottish Average	Angus	Scottish Average	
% of Repairs Completed First Time	89.32%	92.90%	84.44%	92.38%	↓
Total % of Stock Meeting SHQS	93.87%	94.80%	93.94%	95.36%	→
% Satisfaction with the Repair Service	76.05%	90.89%	85.47%	91.14%	↑

Over the last few years there have been significant improvements in the repair indicators, although the percentage of repairs completed First Time have dropped. The stock meeting SHQS has improved slightly, and satisfaction with the repair service has also improved.

### Housing Options

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.

	2018/19		2019/20		Trend
	Angus	Scottish Average	Angus	Scottish Average	
% of Tenancies Sustained more than 1 year	84.84%	89%	88.58%	89.30%	↑

Tenancy sustained for more than a year has increased this year after a reduction last years. Not all tenancies are ended for negative reasons.

Several of the Housing Options indicators which monitored prevention of homelessness and temporary accommodation have been removed from the ARC, however these are monitored

through other returns submitted to Scottish Government as well as through the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan which is also reported annually to Committee.

## Homes & Communities

The Homes & Communities HIT encompasses tenancy management, estate management, gypsy travellers and anti-social behaviour (ASB). 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. The wording for the satisfaction with the management of home indicator was changed, which means that the survey results from 2019 cannot be used.

	2018/19		2019/20		Trend
	Angus	Scottish Average	Angus	Scottish Average	
% of Anti-Social Behaviour cases reported in the last year which were resolved	98.22%	86.40%	100%	94.10%	↑

We have successfully improved our resolution of ASB cases this year. The Council resolves ASB in a number of ways, and follows a well-structured set of guidelines, and we will continue to develop methods of dealing with cases.

## Tenant Participation

The main indicators for the Tenant Participation HIT include the satisfaction with opportunities to participate, and with being kept informed. There is no requirement to carry out an annual survey of tenant satisfaction so survey results from 2019 has been used for this years ARC. A new customer satisfaction survey is currently under way, so we will have updated satisfaction scores in this and other indicators to submit in the 2020/21 ARC.

	2018/19		2019/20	
	Angus	Scottish Average	Angus	Scottish Average
% Satisfaction with overall service provided by their landlord	80.77%	85.70%	80.77%	85.65%
% Satisfaction with being Kept Informed about services and decisions	78.69%	85.50%	78.69%	85.91%
% Satisfaction with Opportunities to Participate	59.27%	80.20%	59.27%	80.76%

We will continue to develop our communication methods which will ensure tenants are well-informed and equipped to participate, influence housing policies and make informed choices. There has been development of an e-panel to increase the potential for online participation, and it is hoped that this will improve satisfaction with participation amongst younger tenants.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

This year there have been both positive and negative changes in the performance levels. There has been significant work to maintain and improve performance in a number of areas however it is recognised that some of these changes will take more than a year to show sustained improvement. That said, it is likely that the impact of Covid-19 will affect a number of performance areas, meaning that further improvement in 2020/21 is unlikely.

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