

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 27 SEPTEMBER 2022

INFORMATION REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 2021/22
SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER RETURN: RESULTS

REPORT BY ALISON SMITH, DIRECTOR OF VIBRANT COMMUNITIES AND SUSTAINABLE
GROWTH

1. ABSTRACT

This report provides information to members with regard to services in the Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth Directorate, albeit that a decision is not required in terms of the current Scheme of Delegation to Officers and the Order of Reference of Committees.

2. BACKGROUND

The Scottish Social Housing Charter came into force in April 2012, and since then our performance has been reported 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.

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 Council 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 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. An important section of the Charter includes satisfaction indicators which show how housing service customers view the services provided to them.

To produce the number of returns desired to give a good indication of customer views, an external service provider was contracted – Research Resource. 1,003 telephone interviews were carried out in the summer of 2020, which represented approximately 15% of all tenants. The results from the survey can be used for up to three years for Charter submissions, and therefore the survey results from 2020 have been used again for 2021/22 data.

3. DETAIL

Income Management

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

	Angus 2020/21	Scottish Average 2020/21	Angus 2021/22	Scottish Average 2021/22
All Arrears as a % of Gross Rent	8.49%	7.76%	9.68%	8.21%
% Rent Loss due to Empty Properties	4.43%	1.30%	3.74%	1.51%
% Rent Collected in the Year	106.76%	98.68%	102.36%	98.67%
Average Time (Days) Taken to Re-let all Properties	51.46 days	57.11 days	53.49 days	55.52 days
% of Tenants Satisfied that our Rent Represents Value for Money	86.04%	81.76%	86.04%	81.18%

Unfortunately, gross rent arrears have increased, and are slightly higher than the LA average. Void rent loss has been successfully reduced, although this is still higher than the LA average. The average time to re-let properties has increased, although performance is better than the LA average.

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.

	Angus 2020/21	Scottish Average 2020/21	Angus 2021/22	Scottish Average 2021/22
% of Repairs Completed First Time	70.56%	95.79%	28.97%	89.06%
Total % of Stock Meeting SHQS	94.24%	86.71%	70.67%	72.05%
Total % of Stock Meeting EESSH	78.95%	87.63%	81.07%	84.73%
% Satisfaction with the Repair Service	81.71%	88.80%	89.71%	87.21%

Repairs completed first time have dropped significantly. This is due to some issues with one of the contractors not completing information properly on the system. This should improve with the replacement contractor now in place. Stock meeting SHQS has declined due to a shortfall in properties receiving an electrical test during and after the pandemic. EESSH has improved. Satisfaction with the repairs service has improved and is higher than the LA average.

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.

	Angus 2020/21	Scottish Average 2020/21	Angus 2021/22	Scottish Average 2021/22
% of Tenancies Sustained more than 1 year	88.49%	91.13%	88.23%	91.14%

Tenancy Sustainment has been maintained this year, however sometimes the ending of a tenancy is not for negative reasons.

Several of the Housing Options indicators in the ARC which monitored prevention of homelessness and temporary accommodation have been removed, however these are monitored through the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and other returns submitted to Scottish Government.

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.

	Angus 2020/21	Scottish Average 2020/21	Angus 2021/22	Scottish Average 2021/22
% of Anti-Social Behaviour cases reported in the last year which were resolved	100%	93.96%	100%	94.31%
% Satisfaction with landlord's contribution to management of neighbourhood	91.72%	83.34%	91.72%	81.51%

We have successfully maintained 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.

	Angus 2020/21	Scottish Average 2020/21	Angus 2021/22	Scottish Average 2021/22
% Satisfaction with overall service provided by their landlord	88.04%	84.29%	88.04%	82.69%
% Satisfaction with being Kept Informed about services and decisions	94.02%	85.68%	94.02%	85.43%
% Satisfaction with Opportunities to Participate	93.02%	79.49%	93.02%	80.45%

There have been improvements across all of the above satisfaction indicators compared to the results from the previous survey, and these indicators are now performing better than the Scottish average.

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.

4. 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 under the extenuating circumstances of the pandemic and HIT action plans will be updated accordingly.

5. REPORT AUTHOR

This report has been compiled by Alison Smith, Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth who can be contacted by emailing Communities@angus.gov.uk.