

ANGUS COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE – 13 MARCH 2025

HOUSING SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT

REPORT BY INTERIM SERVICE LEADER (HOUSING)

1. ABSTRACT

This report provides an update to members on the progress made in delivering the Housing Service Improvement Plan 2024/25, which aims to address critical challenges within the housing service.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

2.1 Caring for our people

- Reduce inequalities in all our communities.
- Provide the best start in life for children.
- Create more opportunities for people to live well and achieve their personal goals.
- Improve physical, mental health and wellbeing.

2.2 Caring for our place

- Protect and enhance our natural and built environment
- Enable inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe communities across Angus

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and the commitment to:

- (i) Complete the ongoing service review to refocus resources and align staffing with the areas most in need, ensuring improvements in voids, repairs, rent collection, and communication;
- (ii) Address the resource gaps identified in the housing service structure, particularly in relation to income management, void management, and repairs, by ensuring that the service review leads to better resource allocation and clearer accountability;
- (iii) Enhance communication strategies within the service to improve tenant satisfaction, reduce complaints, and ensure more effective engagement with tenants;
- (iv) Strengthen training and development for staff in key areas such as performance reporting, data analysis, and customer service to ensure a more skilled and responsive service;
- (v) Fully implement and monitor the Performance Management Framework to ensure that progress against key performance indicators (KPIs) is consistently reviewed, and action plans are implemented to address any areas of underperformance; and
- (vi) Increase focus on digital solutions to streamline work processes, improve efficiency, and enhance data accuracy across the housing service.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The Housing Service Improvement Plan 2024/25 was launched in April 2024 to address long-standing challenges within the housing service. The plan is structured around three priority areas: Customer Excellence; Housing Quality and Place; and Prevention and Homelessness. We aim to improve service delivery; improve efficiency and performance; and ensure regulatory and legislative compliance.

- 4.2 Despite progress in several areas, the service faces ongoing challenges in key operational functions such as void management, repairs, rent collection, and communication. These challenges are exacerbated by an outdated service structure. The ongoing service review is intended to address these issues and ensure resources are aligned with the most pressing needs.

5. CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 Since the launch of the Housing Service Improvement Plan, progress has been made with the implementation of a Tenant Participation Strategy, the launch of a Customer Charter, and improvements in meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS). Further improvement is required with regard communication, void management, repairs and rent collection. Key performance indicators show performance needs to improve, particularly in relation to stage one complaints, rent arrears, void rent loss, and the time taken to relet properties.
- 5.2 The ongoing review of the current housing service structure will help ensure that staff resource is more effectively aligned to progress the improvement priorities in the housing improvement plan. This review has provided valuable insights that will guide future improvements and support the successful implementation of the improvement plan.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Any financial implications arising from the Improvement Plan will be met by existing resources.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Risk and risk mitigation forms part of each priority of the Improvement Plan. Failing to deliver the improvement plan could result in long-term negative consequences for tenant satisfaction, financial stability, service quality, regulatory and legal compliance and the reputation of the housing service. Continued operational inefficiencies could also place additional strain on staff leading to further challenges in service delivery.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

- 9.1 A screening assessment has been undertaken and a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required for the following reasons:
- The report is reflective on the previous period's performance and progress against the Service Improvement Plan.
 - An Equality Impact Assessment has already been carried out and published with the Housing Service Improvement Plan.

10. CHILDRENS RIGHTS AND WELLBEING IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 A Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment has been carried out within the EIA completed as part of the Service Improvement Plan.

11. CONSULTATION

- 11.1 The Director of Finance and the Acting Director of Legal, Governance and Change have been consulted on the contents of this Report.

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are: (list them below)

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List of Appendices: Appendix 1: Housing Service Improvement Plan Progress Report