

To: Communities and Housing Policy Board

On: 16 August 2022

Report by: Director of Communities and Housing Services

Heading: Scottish Social Housing Charter - Annual Return 2021/22

1. Summary

- 1.1 Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords are required to submit an Annual Return on the Charter relating to service performance to the Scottish Housing Regulator by the end of May each year.
 - 1.2 This report provides details of the Council's Annual Return for 2021/22 and, taking account of the challenges faced during the Covid pandemic, highlights the key priorities for the housing service as part of recovery planning activity.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Policy Board:
 - (i) note the submission made by the Director of Communities and Housing Services on the Scottish Social Housing Charter for 2021/22 as summarised in appendix 1; and
 - (ii) note that this report also contains the results from this year's Tenant Satisfaction Survey.
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3. Charter Report for 2021/22 and service priorities

- 3.1. The report attached as appendix 1 gives a summary of outturn performance information for Renfrewshire Council for 2021/22.
 - Section 1 provides a summary of Renfrewshire Council's performance against the Charter indicators along with comparative information for the last four years.

- Section 2 gives details of some core contextual data submitted as part of the Charter return.
- Section 3 provides additional service and performance management information for 2021/22.

3.2. The Charter data for 2021/22 reflects the challenges faced by the Council in continuing to provide core essential housing services during the Covid pandemic. The key areas of service performance most significantly impacted by the pandemic were:

- The Percentage of stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) (Indicator 6) dropped this year to 57%. This was a direct consequence of the fact that for the first time, compliance with 5 yearly EICR checks and the new smoke and heat detector standard was included within the assessment of SHQS compliance. The Council's programme of EICR checks and smoke detector upgrades has been significantly affected by the impact of Covid on the construction industry and was not complete by March 2022 as planned. This programme is nearing completion and as such our compliance with SHQS will increase significantly in next year's return.
- The percentage of homes meeting the EESSH decreased to 78.4% from 86.6% (Indicator C10). The reduction was due to around 8% of the Council's stock's now being included in approved demolition programmes within our regeneration areas and as such being exempt from EESSH but not considered as a pass.
- Non-emergency repairs average time (Indicator 9) increased to 14.6 days. This is due to the volume of repairs post Covid and ongoing issues affecting the construction industry, including supply chain issues and fluctuating levels of resources. It should be noted that both these issues are likely to continue to have an impact over the forthcoming year.
- The number of times in the reporting year that a gas safety check was not completed within 12 months of a gas appliance being fitted or its last check (Indicator 11). In 2021/22, there were 142 occasions where this was not completed before the anniversary date. These have now all been completed.
- Expenditure on adaptations increased to over £600,000 over the past year as the easing of Covid restrictions allowed this type of work to recommence. During 2021/22 the Service completed 244 adaptations. At the end of March 2022 there were 107 households waiting for an adaptation (Indicator 19) compared to 129 in the previous year. The average time to complete adaptations (Indicator 21) also increased substantially to 142 days from 79 days in 2020/21, which reflects the lengthy period of time when adaptation works were unable to be completed due to Covid restrictions.
- The average length of time taken to re-let properties in the last year (Indicator 30). The easing of pandemic restrictions has accelerated the overall letting process, which has seen the average re let time improving to 66.0 days from 85.7 days from the previous year. However this remains an area of special focus for the Service so that a further reduction in re-let times is achieved.

3.3. Despite the challenges of the last 18 months, there were several areas of improvement or stable performance:

- Percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than a year remained stable across tenant groups, with the overall level of tenancy sustainment remaining stable at around 92%. (Indicator 16.)
- Percentage of tenants satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service improved from 92% to 95%. (Indicator 12.)
- Despite the challenges noted above there was only a slight increase in the time taken to complete emergency repairs, from 6.2 hours last year to 7.1 hours. (Indicator 8.)
- Gross rent arrears increased to 8.0% of rent due at the end of March 2022 compared with 6.4% in March 2021. This increase in arrears can in part be attributed to the impact of the initial lockdown where traditional methods of payment, such as cash payments, were not available to tenants. (Indicator 27.)

3.4 Last year's Board report set out areas for the Council's recovery plan. The number of properties re-let has returned to normal levels and the average days to re-let has improved.

3.5 Lets to people who are homeless exceeded our target but dropped from 49% to 42.9%. The actual number of lets to people who were homeless increased.

3.6 The pandemic has presented a number of specific challenges for the repairs service, which has been adversely affected with issues of supplies and restrictions to complete jobs. The Service will continue to address these challenges by utilising contractual arrangements with external contractors to assist our in-house service provider in meeting these demands, but issues with material supplies and fluctuating resource levels will continue to limit the extent of improvement which can be achieved. These issues will also have an impact on void turnover and the associated re let and rent loss to voids indicators.

3.7 Complaint performance dipped during 2021/22 and although we were able to restart the carrying out of repairs following the lifting of Covid restrictions at various points throughout 2021/22, there was still a high volume of repairs and the impact on repairs and other service issues due to the legacy of the Covid-19 pandemic which led to a higher number of complaints answered outwith the timescale of 5 days. We expect performance to improve over the course of this year as we have focused additional resources to support this.

4. **Reporting Performance to tenants and benchmarking performance**

4.1 The Scottish Housing Regulator publishes all social landlords' performance on its website in August each year. In common with other Councils and RSLs, the Council will be required to report its performance against the Charter to all tenants in October.

4.2 In accordance with guidance from the Scottish Housing Regulator and practice over previous years, tenants will be consulted with on the preferred format for the Tenants' Report. A report will be presented to a later meeting of this Policy Board which benchmarks Renfrewshire Council's performance in 2021/22 against other Social Landlords.

5. **Tenant Satisfaction Survey**

5.1. Between March and April this year, the Service commissioned a Tenants Satisfaction Survey. The Charter has a number of satisfaction indicators that all landlords must ask tenants about. Generally the survey highlighted that satisfaction levels have remained relatively stable or improved over the past two years. These indicators are referenced in appendix 1 of this report and a full copy of the report is available on request.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – None

2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None

3. **Community/Council Planning**

Building strong, safe, and resilient communities – Improving and maintaining neighbourhoods and homes.

Working together to improve outcomes – Increasing resident satisfaction with neighbourhoods and communities

4. **Legal** – None

5. **Property/Assets** – None

6. **Information Technology** – None

7. **Equality & Human Rights** –

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website

8. **Health & Safety** – None

9. **Procurement** – None

10. **Risks** – None

11. **Privacy Impact** – None
 12. **Cosla Policy Position** – N/A
 13. **Climate Change** – None
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List of Background Papers

None.

Author: Ray Walkinshaw, Housing Regeneration and Development Manager,
ray.walkinshaw@renfrewshire.gov.uk