

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET10 November 2016Report by Director of EnvironmentHOUSING SERVICES ANNUAL PERFORMANCE RETURN ON THE SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To advise Cabinet of East Renfrewshire Council's performance in the Annual Return on the Scottish Social Housing Charter (ARC) to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR).

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet note the performance for the Annual Return on the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

**BACKGROUND**

3. The Scottish Social Housing Charter (The Charter) requires each landlord to provide the SHR with details of performance against 37 performance indicators and information for 32 contextual indicators by 31<sup>st</sup> May each year. This is known as the ARC.

4. Upon receipt of this information the SHR will produce a Landlord Report for every social landlord in Scotland and publish this on their website by the end of August each year.

5. The remaining responsibility of each social landlord is to publish their performance against the Scottish Social Housing Charter by October each year to tenants and customers.

6. The SHR will use the information from the ARC and other sources to determine the key areas of risk identified in the Local Scrutiny Plan for each Local Authority.

**REPORT**

7. The ARC collects data to allow the SHR to assess all landlords' ability to meet the outcomes set in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The Scottish average refers to performance from all social landlords in Scotland including Councils and housing associations. The Scottish Council average refers to performance from Scottish Councils only. In most cases, housing associations have higher rent levels and newer stock to manage and therefore often have access to greater resources and lower maintenance costs.

8. Given that there are so many indicators it is not possible to form a view as to performance of a landlord based upon one indicator alone. However it is pleasing to note that in approximately 70% of the indicators East Renfrewshire performs above both the Scottish average and the Scottish Council average.

9. Appendix 1 demonstrates the Council's performance and progress across key indicators since the introduction of the ARC in 2013/14. The indicators have been split into the following charter areas.

- Rent Levels. The ARC information demonstrates that East Renfrewshire Council continues to have a lower than average rent charge compared to all landlords. In 2015/16 East Renfrewshire Council were 9% lower than the Scottish average for all landlords and 2% lower than the Scottish Local Authority average. It is perhaps worth noting that, if East Renfrewshire Council's rents were charged at the level of the average landlord in Scotland then there would be an additional £1m available for investment each year.
- Tenant Satisfaction. When compared to other Scottish Councils, East Renfrewshire Council performs better than the average in 8 of the 10 areas. The results also demonstrate that the Council performs better than the Scottish landlord average in 5 of the 10 areas including quality of housing, neighbourhood management and value for money.
- Quality and Maintenance of Homes. East Renfrewshire Council achieved the 2015 target for the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and is performing well above the Scottish average at 97%. The remaining 3% are exemptions and abeyances and there are no fails. The Scottish Government introduced the Energy Efficiency in Scottish Social Housing target which the Council will meet by the 2020 target.
- Housing Maintenance. Housing Services is performing substantially better than the Scottish average for these indicators. The Council is in the top 5 of all Councils for the time to complete emergency repairs. East Renfrewshire Council is the best performing Council for non-emergency repairs.
- Neighbourhoods. East Renfrewshire Council is addressing anti-social behaviour against locally set targets and is performing better than the Scottish average. Tenancy sustainment is performing at the same level as all landlords but is an area Housing Services wish to improve on. Increased tenancy sustainment will demonstrate that new tenants are allocated appropriate housing and are supported. However it also reduces pressure on the demand for housing, homeless services and reduces rental income that is lost through empty properties.
- Access to Housing Despite a high demand for housing in the authority, there is also some difficult to let housing which is impacting on our performance indicators. Whilst we have available homes, they are sometimes in areas or of a type that is not desirable to families. Approximately 65% of Council housing stock is situated in the Lovern Valley area whilst 75% of the population resides in the Eastwood area. Housing Services continue to investigate ways to increase the supply of housing through the Social Housing Investment Plan (SHIP).
- Allocations - Housing Services are currently redesigning the allocations service to ensure that customers have greater choice in housing and the income lost through void properties is reduced. Housing Services have reduced the percentage of rent lost due to empty homes from 1.3% in 2013/14 to 0.9% last year which is better than the Scottish Average. The impact of the mixed tenure scheme in improving the condition of many areas cannot be underestimated. For over a decade void rent loss has been an area of poor performance so these results are particularly welcome.

- Rent Collection & Arrears. Rent arrears have also traditionally been an area of poor performance. It is therefore pleasing to note that improvement in gross arrears levels has been reduced from 9.4% in 2013/14 to 7.3% in 15/16 and is 6.4% at the end of September 2016. However, further improvement work is underway.

10. In addition to the ARC return, the SHR also gathers information on other areas of service. The provision of temporary accommodation has been raised as a concern by the SHR, in particular the use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation.

11. Although the initial use of Bed & Breakfast in the past has been high, the average time a household spends in Bed & Breakfast has always been below the Scottish average. The Council has made significant progress to reduce the use of Bed & Breakfast.

12. The use of Bed & Breakfast reduced from 58% in 2013/14 to 34% in 2015/16. This has reduced further this financial year and was 11% as at 30th September 2016.

13. Notwithstanding these improvements bed and breakfast usage remains an area of concern and work is being undertaken to ensure a further reduction.

## **FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY**

14. The Housing Service requires to demonstrate annually through a variety of methods that the service it provides meets the needs of its customers and provides value for money. East Renfrewshire Council continues to have a lower than average rent charge compared to all landlords.

15. Efficiencies can be achieved through a variety of ways. For example in 2015/16 £60,000 of savings were achieved through the quick quote procurement process. In 2016/17 further savings of over £50,000 are set to be delivered through replacement kitchen and window contracts.

16. Housing Services are looking to deliver greater efficiencies through the modern services and digital improvements with the introduction of text messaging for repair appointments in 2016/17 and the introduction of online application forms in 2017/18.

17. The implementation of the five capabilities will ensure that the service is efficient, modern, digital and customer driven.

## **CONSULTATION**

18. Before launching the Charter, Scottish Ministers consulted the Scottish Housing Regulator; tenants in social housing and their representative bodies; social landlords; homeless people; and other stakeholders about the Charter's contents. A further consultation took place by the Scottish Housing Regulator regarding a common set of indicators to be reported in the Annual Return on the Charter.

19. In 2016 Scottish Ministers have undertaken a further review of the Charter. Consultation details can be found at <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/>

20. East Renfrewshire Council is required to produce an annual report to tenants by October each year. Housing Services consulted with tenants on the content of the report in 2013 & 2015 and will continue to consult every 2 years. A copy of the 2015/16 annual report can be found at <http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/housing-newsletters>

## **PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

21. Many of the services provided by East Renfrewshire Council's Housing Services are provided in partnership with internal and external bodies. Services will be required to work together to demonstrate that the outcomes are met. These partnerships will form a key part of the assessment of the services. Partners include:

- East Renfrewshire's Community & Health Care Partnership
- Corporate & Community Services
- East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau

## **IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS**

22. There are no implications associated with this report in terms of staffing, finance, property, legal, IT, equalities and sustainability.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

23. Performance against the Charter has been in place for 3 years and the information in Appendix 1 demonstrates that Housing Services have made significant progress and improved the service throughout.

24. In about 70% of the indicators East Renfrewshire performs above the Scottish average and above the Scottish Council average.

25. When assessing tenant satisfaction, ERC performs better than the average in 8 of the 10 areas compared to other Scottish Councils and in 5 of the 10 areas when compared to all Scottish Landlords.

26. Since the introduction of the Charter, Housing Services have delivered improvement across the service particularly for quality of housing and housing maintenance. These improvements have not only enhanced services to tenants but also delivered efficiencies that have been re-invested into the service.

27. Whilst the performance statistics show a high level of improvement in the delivery of services, work is underway to ensure continuous improvement

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

28. It is recommended that the Cabinet note the performance for the Annual Return on the Charter.

Director of Environment

Further details can be obtained from Phil Daws Head of Environment on 0141 577 3186.

Convener contact details

Councillor Danny Devlin  
(Convener for Housing and Maintenance Services)

Home: 0141 580 0288  
Office: 0141 577 3107/8

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**KEY WORDS**

Scottish Housing Regulator, Scottish Social Housing Charter, Annual Return on the Charter, Landlord Report

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Appendix 1Housing Services Annual Performance Return on the Scottish Social Housing CharterKey Results

- Rent Levels

Property Size	ERC 15/16	Scottish Average 15/16	Scottish Council Average 15/16
1 apartment	56.12	65.94	56.40
2 apartment	59.05	70.39	61.99
3 apartment	67.87	71.55	67.40
4 apartment	76.01	77.60	73.36
5 apartment	77.79	85.98	79.79
All properties	66.28	72.92	67.45

- Satisfaction Data

Indicator	ERC 13/14	ERC 15/16	Scottish Average 15/16	Scottish Council Average 15/16
Overall Satisfaction	71.2%	83.0%	89%	83%
Keeping Tenants Informed	64.5%	85.4%	90.6%	81.2%
Opportunities to Participate	56.4%	81.2%	81.3%	71.3%
Standard of Home when moving in	73.3%	90.0%	87.7%	83.7%
Quality of home	73.9%	90.2%	86.5%	83.6%
Repairs Service in last 12 months	77.4%	82.9%	89.9%	88.1%
Neighbourhood Management	73.4%	92.2%	86.0%	80.9%
Factoring Services	NA*	53.7%	65.1%	57.9%
Value for money	76.1%	80.2%	79.0%	79.0%
Quality of temporary accommodation	94.1%	98.3%	86.9%	86.9%

\*Information not collected

- Quality of Housing

Indicator	ERC 13/14	ERC 15/16	Scottish Average 15/16	Scottish Council Average 15/16
Percentage of properties meeting SHQS	92.9%	97.0%	92.8%	93.2%
Percentage of properties meeting NHER/SAP ratings (energy efficiency)	100%	99.9%	96.5%	96.6%
Percentage of properties meeting ESSH	NA	61.6%	68.6%	64.2%
Percentage of properties with a gas safety record renewed by the anniversary date	98.1%	99.96%	99.8%	93.2%

\*Information not collected

- Housing Maintenance

Indicator	ERC 13/14	ERC 15/16	Scottish Average 15/16	Scottish Council Average 15/16
Average hours to complete emergency repairs	3.9	2.6	5.1	5.5
Average working days to complete non-emergency repairs	8.5	5.2	7.5	9.5
Percentage of reactive repairs completed right first time	92.7%	93.7%	91.3%	89.3%
Percentage of reactive repair appointments kept	90.4%	97.4%	94.4%	94.1%

- Neighbourhood & Community

Indicator	ERC 13/14	ERC 15/16	Scottish Average 15/16	Scottish Council Average 15/16
Anti-social behaviour cases resolved within local target	94.5%	98.7%	86.6%	84.2%
Percentage of tenancies began in previous year remained in tenancy for more than a year	91.5%	87.3%	88.4%	88.5%



- Access to housing

Indicator	ERC 13/14	ERC 15/16	Scottish Average 15/16	Scottish Council Average 15/16
Percentage of tenancy offers refused	44%	48.6%	37.8%	41.4%
Average time to relet properties (days)	58.7	45.4	35.4	41.6
Percentage of rent due lost through properties being empty	1.3%	0.9%	1.0%	1.0%

- Rents

Indicator	ERC 13/14	ERC 15/16	Scottish Average 15/16	Scottish Council Average 15/16
Percentage collected of rent due	98.4%	98.2%	99.5%	99.3%
Percentage of gross rent arrears of rent due	9.4%	7.3%	5.3%	6.5%

- Homeless Services

	ERC 13/14	ERC 15/16	Scottish Council Average 15/16
Average days in temporary or emergency accommodation - bed and breakfast	14.5	9.9	31.9
% of homeless applicants placed in Bed & Breakfast	58%	34%	19.6%.

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