Housing

Service Improvement Plan
2024 - 2025

Angus Council
Comhairle Aonghais

Introduction

This document sets out the Housing Service's plans to deliver high-quality and customer focussed services to our tenants and other service users, supporting the mission of the service to 'create places that people are proud to call home' and the vision within the [Angus Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2023 – 2027](#) that 'everyone in Angus has a good quality, safe, secure and warm home that they can afford'.

Housing Service improvement priorities have been identified through our Annual Return of the Charter and subsequent Annual Engagement Plan with the Scottish Housing Regulator as well as customer feedback from our 2023 Tenant Satisfaction Survey and an evaluation of customer complaints. The Improvement Plan sets out how we will make improvements against these priorities and how we will measure and report progress to ensure we can deliver against our mission and provide a consistently high-quality service to our customers.

Many of the challenges being faced by the Service are part of a wider set of issues being experienced across the housing sector, particularly those related to homelessness, availability of housing supply, rent arrears and voids. These strategic and systemic issues are coupled with some unique challenges for Angus resulting from multiple service reviews (Community Housing Teams and Homelessness) which have impacted on the Service's resilience, serious contract failures and changes to the allocation policy. The severe flooding from Storm Babet in October 2023 impacted a significant number of households, homes and infrastructure, leading to the Service implementing an emergency response and refocussing activities on the delivery of a recovery strategy. This means that while the overall trends in relation to performance reductions are consistent with what is being experienced right across the country, Angus has started from a lower base and the implementation of improvement activities was paused to focus on the recovery efforts.

The Improvement Plan is therefore ambitious and recognises the need to undertake several key programmes of work concurrently due to the interdependencies of the actions required to refocus and improve service delivery, improve efficiency and performance and ensure regulatory and legislative compliance.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles of the Housing Service Improvement Plan are:

- Services built and led around people.

- Consistency in service delivery.

- Effective leadership.

- Improvement driven by incremental change.

- Evidence – based decision making.

- Team working.

- Sustainable service delivery.

This will be done by:

- Understanding our customers' needs, involving people in decisions and listening and learning from customer, elected member, staff and stakeholders' experience of housing services.

- Ensuring customers receive the same high level of service across all interactions with the service and receive the same level of quality each time they reach out for assistance.

- Encouraging staff to participate and empowering staff to take ownership and engage in implementation of changes.

- Setting realistic, short-term goals, aligned to the strategic vision of the Council and Service.

- Focusing on making gradual and small changes rather than making big changes all at once.

- Measuring impact of changes and continuing to make any necessary changes to achieve desired results to ensure changes are driven by data and are evidence based.

- Working collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders to identify and deliver improvements to housing services.

- Designing and providing services in a way that fosters economic, social, and environmental well-being.

| Housing Service Improvement Plan on a Page | Creating Places People are Proud to Call Home |

Our Vision

Everyone in Angus has a good quality, safe, secure and warm home that they can afford

Our Values

- Collaboration
- Fairness
- Focus on People
- Integrity
- Respect

Guiding Principles

- Services are built and led around people
- Drive incremental change
- Consistency in service delivery
- Evidence based decision making
- Team working
- Effective leadership
- Sustainable service delivery

Service improvement priorities

Customer Excellence	Housing Quality and Place	Prevention and Homelessness
• Improve customer satisfaction and reduce complaints. • Reduce incidents of serious rent arrears.	• Ensure compliance with SHQS • Develop our approach to asset management to inform future investment decisions. • Deliver the contracts for voids and unplanned repairs. • Improve the quality of our neighbourhoods.	• Deliver statutory duties in relation to homelessness and ensure the service contributes to the aims of ending homelessness together. • Ensure the housing service is meeting the needs of vulnerable groups.

Enablers

Delivery of the Local Housing Strategy

A programme of continuous improvement is embedded within the Housing Service

- Develop and implement a performance management framework.
- Develop a communication plan for the service
- Develop 3 – 5 year service improvement plan.
- Agree approach to reviewing the business plan in line with improvement and asset management plans.

Development of a Digital Strategy

- Develop a digital strategy and implementation plan for the service.
- Oversee the Operational Level Agreement for the delivery of supportive housing applications.

Identifying the Priorities for Improvement

The Annual Return on the Charter

Each year, we are required to report our performance against the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) to the Scottish Housing Regulator and our customers. The purpose of the ARC is to demonstrate we are meeting our statutory obligations in relation to housing and to monitor performance against a range of indicators to ensure quality and value for money for tenants and customers for the services they receive. Performance against the ARC Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is outlined from page 15.

Following the ARC, the Scottish Housing Regulator publishes an annual engagement plan which outlines why they are working with each landlord, what the landlord needs to do and what it needs to provide. This year, the Regulator are engaging with Angus on the following:

- **Services for People who are Homeless**

  - the ongoing impact of Storm Babet on the delivery of homelessness services and, in particular, on the implementation of the transfer of the services to the Angus Health and Social Care Partnership

  - the provision of temporary accommodation to people who are homeless; and

  - outcomes for people who are homeless.

- **Service Quality**

  - Complaints handling

  - Void management; and

  - Rent arrears recovery.

- **Stock Quality and Resident and Tenant Safety**

  - Managing associated risks from reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC)

  - Compliance with electrical safety and fire detection requirements of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS); and

  - Quality of asset management data.

We are providing regular updates to the Regulator on how we are addressing these concerns. The engagement plan is published here.

Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2023

All social housing providers are required to collect and report on a number of satisfaction measures at part of the ARC, covering; overall satisfaction, value for money, keeping tenants informed, opportunities to participate, quality of homes, and management of the neighbourhood.

We commissioned The Knowledge Partnership to undertake our 2023 Tenant Satisfaction Survey. The Knowledge Partnership interviewed 1000 customers by phone between September 2023 and November 2023. The aim of the survey was to seek tenants' views on the services that Angus Council provides as a landlord, how well we perform these services and to help identify areas where the service can be improved.

Overall, we saw a fair set of results, with overall satisfaction at 71.2% which is close to the Council sector average where phone surveys have been used. However, overall satisfaction rates have reduced by 16.8% from the previous survey completed in 2020 - which saw the highest ever tenant satisfaction levels recorded for Angus. Three key improvement themes were identified from the results: contact, communication and engagement; maintenance and upgrades; and management of the neighbourhood, including housing officer visibility, landscaping, improving communal areas and fly tipping and handling anti-social behaviour.

The findings from the survey have informed the priorities and actions within the Improvement Plan.

Learning from Complaints

An analysis of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints received by the Housing Service was undertaken in April 2024. Although the number of Stage 1 complaints has reduced from 227 in 2022/23 to 189 in 2023/24, the number of Stage 2 complaints have increased from 6 to 13 in the same period. Consistent with the Tenant Satisfaction Survey findings, the most common themes for complaints in 2023/24 are repairs and maintenance (39%) and communication (also 39% of complaints received). Other common themes for complaints include allocations (9%) and anti-social behaviour (8% of complaints received).

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Our Plan for Improvement

Continuous Improvement

Goal	Milestones	Timescale for delivery	What does success look like?
An ongoing programme of continuous improvement is embedded in the Housing Service.	Develop and implement governance and reporting arrangements for delivery of Service Improvement Plan.	30 April 2024	Delivery of our 1-year service improvement plan complete.

A programme of data validation checks is underway.

Our performance management framework fully embedded.

Our 3–5-year service improvement plan will be agreed.

A PID and project plan for reviewing the business plan |
| | Review and implement revised performance management framework. | 30 June 2024 | |
| | Develop approach to ensure data integrity and implement programme of data validation checks. | 30 June 2024 | |
| | Develop a Communication Plan for the service:
-Complete transition to Sharepoint.
-Review use of communication tools to enhance sharing of information and engagement with customers, staff and elected members. | 30 September 2024 | |
	Undertake a service wide training needs analysis and develop a training plan.	30 September 2024	
	Develop 3-5 year Service Improvement Plan.	31 December 2024.	
	Agree approach to reviewing the business plan in line with improvement and asset management plans.	31 December 2024	
	Undertake full service review.	31 March 2025.	

			will be agreed.

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Our Plan for Improvement

Customer Excellence

Goal	Milestones	Timescale for delivery	What does success look like?
Improve customer satisfaction and reduce complaints	Review tenant satisfaction survey results and engage with staff to identify areas for improvement.	30 April 2024	Increase in percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord.

Increase in percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services |
	Undertake thematic analysis of complaints to identify priorities for improvement.	30 April 2024	
	Implement coastal / landward CHT delivery model for testing – introduce buddy system, review patch areas, increase admin support, introduce peripatetic Housing Officers	30 June 2024	
	Develop and implement a Customer Charter and Service Standards	30 June 2024	
	Map and review the internal complaints handling process (involving stakeholders) and identify areas for improvement, ensuring stage one complaints are resolved at the front line where possible and lessons learned are captured and shared.	30 June 2024	

	Map elected member enquiry process and identify areas for improvement.	30 June 2024	and decisions.

Increase in percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision-making processes.

Reduction in number of complaints – stage 1 and stage 2.

Increase in % of complaints responded to – stage 1 and stage 2.

Reduction in average time in working days to respond to complaints – stage 1 and stage 2. |
	Review support available for customers applying for housing – promote support available.	30 June 2024	
	Implement a consistent approach to recording customer contacts, to enable us to monitor whether the service standards are being met.	30 September 2024	
	Implement revised Common Allocations Policy.	31 October 2024	
	Develop and implement revised Tenant Participation Strategy and delivery plan.	31 December 2024	
	Develop and implement approach to capture customer feedback in an ongoing way.	31 December 2024	
	Review, develop and implement policies, processes and procedures by:

- Creating a register of policies, processes and procedures
- Identify gaps and opportunities for improvement by:
- Learning from good practice;
- Undertaking customer journey mapping;
- Learning from complaints;
- Learning from tenant satisfaction survey. | Ongoing | |
| | Review learning from evaluation of eviction cases to identify areas for improvement. | 30 June 2024 | Increase in rent collected as |

Reduce incidences of serious rent arrears – review rent arrears recovery approaches to ensure a preventative approach is taken	Undertake mapping of customer journeys, involving key stakeholders, to understand what is working well, what is challenging and areas for improvement. Develop improvement plan.	30 September 2024	percentage of total rent.
	Review and implement revised year end write off process.	31 December 2024	Reduction in gross rent arrears (all tenants) as a percentage of rent due.
	Review and implement revised sequestration write off process.	31 December 2024	Reduction in amount and percentage of former tenant rent arrears written off at the year end.
	Review Service Level Agreement with Welfare Rights.	31 March 2025	

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Our Plan for Improvement
Housing Quality and Place

Goal	Milestones	Timescale for delivery	What does success look like?
Ensure Compliance with SHQS	Delivery of existing contracts to achieve full compliance with Electrical Installations and Smoke and Heat Alarms requirements.	30 September 2024	Increase in percentage of homes meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard
	Procurement of new contracts to ensure ongoing compliance with Electrical Installations and Smoke and Heat Alarms requirements.	30 September 2024	

			(SHQS).
Develop our approach to asset management to ensure we have a comprehensive understanding of our assets as well as the needs and aspirations of our tenants to inform future investment decisions.	Implement approach to management of adaptations data so that stock can be allocated or matched to make the best use of existing stock.	30 June 2024	Reduction in percentage of rent due lost through homes being empty. Average time to re-let properties in the last year. Increase in percentage of existing tenants satisfied with the quality of their home. Percentage of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money.
	Review and implement capital and planned maintenance programmes (including governance and monitoring arrangements).	30 June 2024	
	Implement roof inspection programme for properties affected by Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC).	30 June 2024	
	Complete an options appraisal for properties affected by RAAC.	31 March 2025	
	Complete an options appraisal for flood damaged housing stock in Brechin.	30 September 2024	
	Review the void processes to ensure a more efficient turnaround of voids, ensuring that properties are occupied, and void rent loss is reduced.	30 September 2024	
	Asset Management System under development and implementation plan in place.	31 March 2025	
	Review and implement new governance arrangements for repairs contract monitoring and performance monitoring (Repairs & Voids Board).	30 June 2024	Reduction in average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs.
	Review lessons learned from the current and previous contracts including in relation to contractor performance.	30 June 2024	

Successful delivery of contracts for voids and unplanned repairs.	Review existing contract administration processes and implement quick wins: -Training delivered to CHT staff on contract administration processes -Review and implement processes to reduce variations -Implement new timeframes for voids that require complex work -Introduce simplified schedule of rates for kitchen and bathroom replacements	30 June 2024	Reduction in average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs. Increase in percentage of reactive repairs carried out that were completed right first time. Percentage of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in last 12 months satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service.
	Retender Forfar/ Kirriemuir voids and repairs contract: -test separate contracts for voids and unplanned repairs (different contractors) -test delivery of void works through Housing Asset team, instead of CHT.	30 September 2024	
	Complete options appraisal to agree delivery method for future voids and unplanned repairs contract (commencing April 2026).	31 December 2024	
	Procurement authority obtained for future voids and unplanned repairs contracts (commencing April 2026).	31 March 2025	
Improve customer satisfaction in the quality of our neighbourhoods.	Implement calendar of estate walkabouts to identify environmental improvements, involving other community partners and Assets.	30 June 2024	Increase in percentage of tenants satisfied with the landlord's contribution to the management of the neighbourhood they live in.
	Review service level agreements with Parks, Waste and Environmental Health to ensure value for money and achieving smart achievable outcomes.	30 September 2024	

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Prevention and Homelessness			
Goal	**Milestones**	**Timescale for delivery**	**What does success look like?**
Deliver statutory duties in relation to homelessness and ensure services contribute to the aims of ending homelessness together	Relaunch multi agency Section 11 case management group to consider different approaches to prevent homelessness for tenants and home-owners subject to repossession action.	30 June 2024	Reduction in the number of breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order. Reduction in number of homeless applications. Reduction in percentage of PREVENT approaches where outcome is 'made a homeless application'. Percentage of new tenancies to
	Review and implement revised Rent Deposit Scheme.	30 June 2024	
	Review and implement revised Housing Options for Care Leavers Protocol.	30 June 2024	
	Implementation of additional housing resource to support Whole Family Wellbeing project.	30 September 2024	
	Complete analysis of supply and demand to ensure adequate supply of temporary homeless accommodation.	30 September 2024	
	Review and implement revised SHORE (prison) protocol.	30 September 2024	
	Undertake 1 year evaluation of implementation of homeless service within AHSCP and identify areas for improvement.	31 December 2024	

Goal	Milestones	Timescale for delivery	What does success look like?
	Finalise development and implement youth homelessness strategy.	31 December 2024	existing tenants sustained for more than a year.
	Implement revised Domestic Abuse Policy.	31 December 2024	
	Implement Harassment Policy.	31 December 2024	
Ensure the housing service is meeting the needs of vulnerable groups	Develop and implement an assurance framework to ensure ongoing compliance with recommendations from Significant Case Reviews.	30 June 2024	Recommendations from SCRs embedded into practice.
	Review and implement revised process for assessing rehousing needs for people with a physical or mental health need, which is impacted by their housing.	30 September 2024	Trauma informed approach embedded into practice.
	Develop and implement a service wide approach to trauma informed practice.	30 September 2024	

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Our Plan for Improvement

Digital			
Goal	**Milestones**	**Timescale for delivery**	**What does success look like?**
	Agree the Operational Level Agreement with Digital Enablement &	30 April 2024	Application

			availability and access targets.
Delivery of the Operational Level Agreement with Digital Enablement and IT for supportive housing applications.	IT for 2024/25.		
	Implementation of ASB case management system. Capture learning for future development of customer service module and task manager.	31 May 2024	Response times to incidents.
	Phase 1 launch of housing online (rents and repairs).	30 June 2024	Response times to requests.
	Phase 2 launch of housing online (Choice Based Lettings).	30 September 2024	
	Development of Dashboards.	31 December 2024	
	Implementation of ADAX (Paperless Direct Debits)	31 December 2024	
	Implementation of GDPR module on NEC	31 March 2025	
	Implementation of landlord registration case management system	31 March 2025	
Develop a digital strategy and implementation plan for the service.	Review opportunities for digital solutions within NEC including those which can streamline work processes, task management and record keeping, i.e. customer contacts, equipment needs.	30 September 2024	Digital strategy in place.
	Agree priorities for the future development of NEC in line with service requirements and resources.	31 December 2024	
	Develop strategy and implementation plan.	31 March 2025	

Monitoring our Performance

Performance reporting for 2023/24 is ongoing and the data provided may be subject to change following validation from Scotland's Housing Network. Performance targets for 2024/25 will be set by the Housing Delivery Groups when the data for 2023/24 is confirmed and national data is published for benchmarking, anticipated late June 2024.

*The satisfaction measures are reported from the results of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey which was undertaken in 2023 having previously been completed with tenants in 2020.

Customer Excellence		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Performance	2023/24 Scottish LA Average
Improve customer satisfaction and reduce complaints	*Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord.	88.04%	88.04%	88.04%	71.20%	Declined	80.28%
	*Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions.	94.02%	94.02%	94.02%	64.70%	Declined	82.31%
	*Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes.	93.02%	93.02%	93.02%	41.40%	Declined	80.40%
	*Percentage of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money.	86.04%	86.04%	86.04%	72.40%	Declined	79.10%

	Number of complaints (stage 1) received in the reporting year.	103	89	198	157	Improved	Unavailable
	Number of complaints (stage 2) received in the reporting year.	5	11	12	12	Maintained	Unavailable
	Average Time taken in working days to provide a response for stage 1 complaints.	5.16	1.32	8.57	5.93	Improved	7.06
	Average Time taken in working days to provide a response for stage 2 complaints.	16.25	4.78	20.6	25.7	Declined	18.90
	Percentage of Stage 1 complaints closed as resolved.	Not available	Not available	Not available	11.6%	N/A – new indicator	Not available
Reduce incidences of serious rent arrears – review rent arrears recovery approaches to ensure a preventative approach is taken	Rent collected as a percentage of total rent.	106.76%	102.36%	99.51%	97.35%	Declined	99.26%
	Gross rent arrears (all tenants) as at 31 March each year as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year.	8.49%	9.68%	11.55%	10.9%	Improved	9.49%
	Percentage of former tenant rent arrears written off at the year end.	57.59%	70.34%	32.94%	59.96%	Declined	22.36%

Housing Quality and Place		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Performance	2023/24 Scottish LA Average
Ensure compliance with SHQS	Percentage of stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.	94.24%	70.67%	56.66%	72.31%	Improved	77.95%
Develop our approach to asset management	*Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home.	86.04%	86.04%	86.04%	74.70%	Declined	78.65%
	Percentage of rent due lost through properties being empty during the last year.	4.43%	3.74%	2.02%	1.65%	Improved	1.79%
	Average number of days to re-let properties in the last year.	51.46	53.49	76.21	62.4	Improved	72.56
Successful delivery of the contracts for voids and	Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs.	12.85 hours	14.52 hours	9.32 hours	5.98 hours	Improved	4.29 hours
	Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs.	13.83 days	14.16 days	9.34 days	8 days	Improved	10.03 days

unplanned repairs.	Percentage of reactive repairs carried out in the last year completed right first time.	70.56%	28.97%	80.17%	99.99%	Improved	88.76%
	*Percentage of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in last 12 months satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service.	81.71%	89.71%	99.76%	73.29%	Declined	87.24%
Improve customer satisfaction in the quality of our neighbourhoods	*Percentage of tenants satisfied with the landlord's contribution to the management of the neighbourhood they live in.	91.72%	91.72%	91.72%	64.40%	Declined	78.92%
	The number of cases of anti-social behaviour reported in the reporting year	1324	897	736	649	Improved	Not available
	The number of anti-social behaviour cases resolved in the reporting year	1324	897	692	579	Declined	Not available
	Percentage of anti-social behaviour cases reported in the last year which were resolved	100%	100%	94%	89%	Declined	90.86%

Prevention and Homelessness		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Performance	2023/24 Scottish LA Average
Deliver statutory duties in relation to homelessness and ensure services contribute to the aims of ending homelessness together	Percentage of new tenancies to existing tenants sustained for more than a year.	93.55%	85.11%	87.80%	92.96%	Improved	94.59%
	Number of homeless applications.	506	545	649	547	Improved	Not yet available
	Number of breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order.	0	3	5	27	Declined	Not yet available
	Percentage of Prevention approaches where outcome is 'made a homeless application'.	28.48%	16.43%	23.59%	29.31%	Declined	Not yet available
	Average Case Duration (weeks) - Unintentionally Homeless Households in Priority Need	33.51	25.45	26.54	29.44	Declined	Not yet available
	Average length of time (days) per placement in temporary accommodation by type (All)	185	141.3	155	139.5	Improved	Not yet available

Governance and Reporting Arrangements

The service improvement priority areas have formed the basis of new governance arrangements for the Housing Service. Six Housing Delivery groups have been established to manage the delivery of the respective improvement activities and performance management framework. The Delivery groups will report progress to the Housing Management Team who will ensure that changes and improvements are being delivered operationally. The Housing Leadership team will have overall responsibility for the success and direction of the improvement plan and will have visibility of performance and progress against the milestones agreed.

The Service currently provides an annual update to the Communities Committee in September or October each year on the Council's performance in relation to housing services and provides information to support members to agree the annual assurance statement required by the Scottish Housing Regulator. Additional quarterly reports outlining progress against the Improvement Plan will be provided to Committee.

Structure & Governance

Direction

Housing Leadership Team

Provides strategic direction for the service and overall responsibility for the success and direction of the business and improvement plans. Has overall responsibility, oversight and visibility of performance and progress against service priorities and goals. Makes decisions on escalated issues. Approve business cases, project charter/ PIDs (not included within scope of agreed improvement plan/ business plan). Makes decisions on requests for additional resources.

Management

Housing Management Team

Ensure the business and improvement plans are delivered, ensure risks are being tracked and managed effectively, monitor performance to ensure statutory requirements are being met and improvements are delivered, monitor and communicate changes and lessons learned to respective teams, provide assurance that changes and improvements are being delivered (e.g. through training). Authority to identify and allocate existing resources to support delivery of improvements.

Delivery

Housing Delivery Groups

Manage delivery of respective improvement plans, ensure dependencies and lessons learned are realised and risks and issues discussed and mitigated. Approve business cases, project charters/ PIDs (within scope of improvement plan, business plan or existing resources). Implement a performance management framework than ensures statutory requirements are being met and improvements are being delivered. Maintain change register. Report monthly (or by exception) to HMT.

| Continuous Improvement | Customer Excellence | Quality of Housing and Place | Prevention and Homelessness | Digital | LHS |

Subgroups

Delivery of allocated activities from Housing Delivery Groups / identify improvement activities.