

Aberdeenshire Council Annual Report to Tenants 2020 to 2021.

Hi, I'm Rob Simpson, Head of Housing and Building Standards at Aberdeenshire Council, and I'm currently in Littlewood Court amongst lots of plants. I'm here to speak to you about our annual performance and our annual video which evidences our performance to our tenants; and it's the second time we have done it in video format and there's a host of really good information contained within this video.

We have had some really good performance over the last year and particularly I want to highlight there's been a 5.6% increase in tenant satisfaction. That's brilliant and shows that's definitely going in the right direction, and that's come down to a conscious effort from ourselves within the housing service to enable tenants to become involved and to become engaged in the process and to work with us around services, and I think that's really gone a long way. We have also been doing a huge amount of housing improvement works, which hopefully again will bring that satisfaction up. We want to continue working on that, while that increase is brilliant, we want to keep seeing it increase every year, and so next year when I'm standing doing this video again, I want to be telling you about another increase in satisfaction. Ideally, that's where we want to be. That involves tenants becoming engaged and working with us to enable services to be the best they possibly can, and there's lots of opportunities to get engaged and I'd encourage everybody to do so.

Covid over the last year has been a real challenge for us as a service, and for tenants, and we know it's been difficult for everybody. There's been some restrictions put in place which have not been comfortable, I don't think for anybody, but they have been necessary to protect lives. We have done that with a bit of a heavy heart because we know we are taking away liberty in certain instances but working together again we can find ways of coming out of the other side and we have done so over the last few months.

I think the service and our tenants have shown an agility and adaptability which has been fantastic. We really need to celebrate that, and I think it's a really good thing. While it's been tough on everyone we do appreciate that support and patience from our tenants and we want to continue to work with you to ensure when we come out the other side of this our services will be better than they've ever been.

There are real challenges as we move forward. We've been doing a housing improvement program and that's meant new kitchens, doors, windows, things like that; but also those energy efficiency works that are required for properties. We need to continue doing that as we move towards net zero, over the coming years and decades. It's a lot of work to do to get there, and lots of improvements required to our properties. We'll continue to do that, we'll continue to engage with you, and to work with you to ensure we're doing it the best way possible to ensure that we reduce and eradicate fuel poverty across Aberdeenshire and bring our properties up to a really good standard.

So, as I say, loads of opportunities to get involved in this, loads of opportunities to engage with us, and lots of good performance throughout the video, so I hope you enjoy that. Thank you.

Value for Money

Percentage of rent collected – 99.8%

Loss of rent through empty homes – 2.7%

Average number of days to re-let homes – 80.3%*

*This figure has increased due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Building New Homes

In 2022, new homes will be developed in Fraserburgh, Mintlaw, Peterhead, Ellon, Rothienorman, Banff, Huntly, and Stonehaven.

Aberdeenshire Council are redeveloping this brownfield site in Ellon for 43 social houses and extra care facilities.

Quality and Maintenance of Homes

59.9% of our homes meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. Our lower quality standard performance this year is due to a new energy efficiency requirement. Otherwise, 99.5% of our homes would meet Scottish Housing Quality Standards. Covid-19 has impacted our ability to enter homes and make improvements, but by 2023, 89% of properties will comply with standards.

With funding from the Scottish Government, our contractors are fitting solar panels to 500 Council homes. This investment in renewable energy could help tenants save up to £300 a year on their electricity bills. With the income generated from selling excess energy back to the National Grid, we plan to fit more panels to more homes.

This year we introduced a virtual inspection tool so tenants can show us their property issues in real time. This reduces the costs and fuel, and is better for the environment.

The average time to complete non-emergency repairs was 12.1 days.

Our average time to complete emergency repairs was 4.7 hours.

Housing Options

Our temporary accommodation units in Peterhead and Inverurie introduced new safety measures and continued to operate during Covid. We not only provided accommodation to those in need, but also food, toiletries, and supermarket vouchers.

This year we launched Housing Online, which includes a new housing application and choice-based lettings platform. Applicants can now see a list of available properties which can include photographs and virtual tours and register their interest in multiple properties. This gives them greater choice. Vacancies are listed for one week after which time they are allocated according to need. Support to register an interest can be provided to those who do not have internet access.

Tenancy Services

During lockdown, tenancy services teams contacted our most vulnerable tenants including those living alone to offer support and assistance. Where tenants experienced difficulties with antisocial behaviour, officers have been on hand to offer support, despite the restrictions in place. We resolved 89% of cases within timescales which is an increase of 6.4% on the previous year.

Sheltered Housing

In Sheltered Housing we have continued to follow government guidance to reduce the risk of outbreaks of Covid-19 in our sheltered housing schemes. Recent measures have been developed to support the reintroduction of social activities for tenants and we look forward to enabling tenants to use communal areas safely as we move into winter and beyond.

Tenant Participation

85.4% of tenants feel Aberdeenshire Council is good at keeping them informed. This is a rise of 9.1% on last year.

72.7% are satisfied with their opportunities to participate. This is a rise of 11.7%.

All tenants are welcome to get involved. Please come along and have your say.

Tenants are welcome to join our Facebook Group and have their say on all housing topics.

A full breakdown of our performance is available on the Scottish Housing Regulator's website.

[Housingregulator.gov.scot](https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot)