Readers may note that some information within these documents have been omitted / redacted.

Some information has been omitted / redacted as disclosure may prejudice the commercial interests of Irvine Housing Association trading as Riverside Scotland.

We recognise that the commercial sensitivity of information may decline over time and the harm arising from disclosure may be outweighed by the public interest in openness and transparency. We commit to review the redaction of any such information from time to time.

Some information has been redacted as it contains personal data which identifies an individual. Disclosure of this information would place Irvine Housing Association t/a Riverside Scotland in breach of the Data Protection Act 2018.

260ᵗʰ Board Meeting of Irvine Housing Association Ltd:
Thursday 23 May 2024 at 5.30 p.m.
At 44-46 Bank Street, Irvine, KA12 0LP and via MS Teams

AGENDA

		Data Class
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
3.	MD Report	Internal
4.	New Riverside Deal	Confidential
5.	Board Recruitment	Internal
6	Voids Management – Scrutiny Exercise	Public
7.	Previous Minutes – Minutes of the 259ᵗʰ Board Meeting held on Thursday 21 March 2024.	
8.	Matters Arising	
9.	Substantive Business:	
9.1	Scheme of Delegation	Confidential
9.2	Riverside Scotland Communities & Livelihoods Strategy	Public
9.3	Annual Return on the Charter	Public
9.4	Five Year Financial Projections Return	Confidential
9.5	Annual Loan Portfolio Return	Confidential
9.6	Tenant & Resident Safety Update	Internal
9.7	Quarterly Performance Report	Public
9.8	Financial Performance Report	Confidential
9.9	Annual Write-Off	Confidential
10.	Minutes/Updates: a) Confirmed Group Customer Experience Committee Minutes – 29 February 2024 b) Group Board Core Brief – March 2024	Confidential Confidential
11.	Any Other Business	
12.	Date of Next Meeting - Tuesday 25 June 2024 at 5.30 p.m. – 261ˢᵗ Board Meeting at 44-46 Bank Street, Irvine, Ayrshire and via MS Teams	

DMcL / db
20/5/2024

6. Voids Management - Scrutiny Exercise

Title: Riverside Scotland Voids Management Scrutiny Exercise – Service Improvement Group Report	**Date:** 26ᵗʰ April 2024
Author: Stephen Connor (TIS) on behalf of Riverside Scotland Service Improvement Group	**Sponsor:** Diana MacLean
Action: Note	**Confidential:** No
Appendices: Appendix 1 - Service Improvement Group Report	**Reading Room: N/A**
Reg. Standard: The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.	**ORP ref:** People at our heart
Strategic Risk ref: R7 Customer Experience	
Consultation: This report is not subject to consultation	

Purpose and Action:

This paper sets out the report and recommendations of the Service Improvement Group following their review of the Voids Management Policies and Procedures. Our tenant-led Service Improvement Group have carried out a thorough review of our approach to Voids Management, including a desktop review of our policies and procedures, feedback from staff and customers, and void inspections. They have now produced this report, highlighting their recommendations on how we could improve our service when it comes to Voids Management.

The SIG have found this scrutiny exercise to be invaluable in understanding Riverside Scotland's Voids Management Policy and voids management processes. The SIG would like Riverside Scotland to consider their findings and recommendations.

Executive Summary:

Welcome to the Riverside Scotland Service Improvement Group Voids Management Scrutiny Exercise Report. Since June 2023, Service Improvement Group (SIG) members have been independently reviewing and assessing Riverside Scotland's voids management policy and processes.

The SIG was established in June to represent customers of Riverside Scotland's housing services. The SIG has a core membership of five participants, with the following aims and objectives:

▪ To operate on behalf of tenants and customers and work in partnership with Riverside Scotland to help ensure it provides customer-centric services of the highest standard.
▪ To strive, through investigation, analysis, and discussion, in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration to achieve the best service performance possible.
▪ To develop greater customer influence in decision making on services and the functions of the housing service.

Following Riverside Scotland's reducing percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home, combined with increasing re-let timescales, it was acknowledged and agreed that Riverside Scotland's voids management policy and processes provided an excellent opportunity for a SIG scrutiny exercise. The SIG, Riverside Scotland and TIS agreed that a customer-led scrutiny exercise be undertaken to allow customers to understand and experience the voids management process. This report provides an independent Tenant-Led Inspection review and evaluation on behalf of the SIG.

1. Introduction

The SIG is a group of tenant and customer representatives who meet independently to work collectively to review Riverside Scotland's services. This is known as "Scrutiny". Our overall aims are to:
▪ Learn more about Riverside Scotland's policies, procedures, and service delivery
▪ Understand how services are provided to customers
▪ Understand customers views on the services provided
▪ Consider what works well and what could be improved, and
▪ Make recommendations for changes or improvements to Riverside Scotland's Senior Management and Board. We work to a set of agreed core standards and follow a determined Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct.

We undertake our work through Tenant-Led Inspections (TLI's), interviewing and shadowing staff, reviewing information about Riverside Scotland's services and performance, gathering feedback from other customers, comparing, and benchmarking against other landlords and reviewing housing and service standards set by the Scottish Government within the Scottish Social Housing Charter (the Charter) and expectations of the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). The Tenants Information Service (TIS) provided the SIG with independent advice, training, and support to assist in our work. In addition, Riverside Scotland supported us throughout by organising meetings and providing the information we required to review services and standards.

2. Risk

The void re-let days and void expenditure were identified as areas of concern for Riverside Scotland, and an area in which we could improve. The SIG focused on this area for their first scrutiny project. The risk of us not doing this, is that as we try to deliver improvements, we wouldn't have customer input on this and could be missing out on vital insight. However, by carrying out this exercise, we can ensure that customer feedback and recommendations are taken into consideration.

The risk of us carrying out this is exercise is that by making recommendations, if and where we are unable to facilitate these, it could cause reputational damage and affect tenant's trust in the scrutiny process. However, to mitigate this, we have had a discussion with the SIG, to manage expectations. I have offered assurances that where we can, we will implement their recommendations, and where we cannot, we will provide reasoning for this (for example, due to legislative constraints, budgetary constraints etc).

3. Conclusion

This report outlines the process in which the SIG carried out their review of our Void Management policies and procedures. This included void inspections, staff discussions, a tenant survey and a desktop review of our approach to Void Management. Based on this, the SIG have made 17 recommendations relating to how we could improve our service in this area, within this report.

The SIG would like to thank all staff who assisted our members to carry out this scrutiny exercise through providing information and presentations and arranging voids inspections, staff discussions and customer feedback. This has been invaluable to the SIG, and staff are to be commended for their commitment to the process. 27 We trust our recommendations will deliver improvements in the voids management process for Riverside Scotland and its customers.

4. Next Steps

The SIG considered and agreed a draft of this report in April 2024 and the final agreed report with tenant recommendations was submitted to Riverside Scotland. Thereafter meetings will take place to allow:

- The SIG to present key findings and recommendations to the Riverside Scotland Board in May 2024.

- Riverside Scotland to meet with the SIG to discuss the Riverside Scotland response, present and agree specific actions to the recommendations at a meeting in June 2024.
- The SIG to agree the actions required to publicise their work of the scrutiny project and attract new members.

Riverside

Riverside Scotland Voids Management Scrutiny Exercise – Service Improvement Group Report

April 2024

Contents

1. Executive Summary

Welcome to the Riverside Scotland Service Improvement Group Voids Management Scrutiny Exercise Report. Since June 2023, Service Improvement Group (SIG) members have been independently reviewing and assessing Riverside Scotland's voids management policy and processes.

The SIG was established in June to represent customers of Riverside Scotland's housing services. The SIG has a core membership of five participants, with the following aims and objectives:

- To operate on behalf of tenants and customers and work in partnership with Riverside Scotland to help ensure it provides customer-centric services of the highest standard.

- To strive, through investigation, analysis, and discussion, in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration to achieve the best service performance possible.

- To develop greater customer influence in decision making on services and the functions of the housing service.

Following Riverside Scotland's reducing percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home, combined with increasing re-let timescales, it was acknowledged and agreed that Riverside Scotland's voids management policy and processes provided an excellent opportunity for a SIG scrutiny exercise.

The SIG, Riverside Scotland and TIS agreed that a customer-led scrutiny exercise be undertaken to allow customers to understand and experience the voids management process.

This report provides an independent Tenant-Led Inspection review and evaluation on behalf of the SIG.

The scope of the review included:

- To carry out an independent review of Riverside Scotland's Voids Management Policy (incl. Letting Standards) and voids management processes; and
- To identify areas of good practice and additionally make recommendations where appropriate.

The SIG followed an agreed work plan which included the following key stages:

a) **Review of information and relevant fact finding**
   - Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) context
   - Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) context
   - Scottish Social Housing Charter context

- Riverside Scotland's Voids Management Policy (incl. Letting Standards) and Repairs and Maintenance Policy, Rechargeable Repairs Policy, and Abandoned Property Procedures
- Riverside Scotland's Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) Key Performance Information and Tenant Satisfaction Reports
- Benchmarking comparisons with Almond, Barrhead; Clyde Valley; Fife; Glen Oaks; Maryhill; Thenue and West of Scotland.

b) **Understanding and reviewing Riverside Scotland's systems and processes**
- Understanding Riverside Scotland's operational approach to carrying out voids management
- Review Riverside Scotland correspondence / communications sent to tenants

c) **Reality Checking – *what's happening on the ground***
- Tenant-Led Inspections of void properties accompanying staff
- Meetings with Riverside Scotland staff to capture experiences and views to understand if what's happening at an operational level is reflected at a corporate/strategic level
- Seeking tenants' views on their recent experiences of the Riverside Scotland's letting standards.

Summary Findings and Recommendations

The SIG have found this scrutiny exercise to be invaluable in understanding the Riverside Scotland Voids Management Policy and voids management processes.

A full account of the findings and recommendations can be found within *Sections 4 and 5* of the report. Below is a summary of the key findings and recommendations.

Findings	Recommendations
Performance and Customer Satisfaction	
The percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home and the percentage of tenants who feel rent for their property represents good value for money continue to reduce year-on-year.	1. The SIG recommend that Riverside Scotland continue to monitor and review performance and satisfaction, and re-introduce the Key Performance Indicator '*tenants satisfied with the quality of their home when moving in*' to proactively seek tenants views within one month of moving in and identify areas of concern.
Although the average length of time taken to re-let properties was significantly lower than the Scottish national average, it increased 16% between 2021-22 and 2022-23.	2. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland aim to reduce the average length of time taken to re-let properties to minimise void rent loss.

The Letting Standard	
A desk top review of peer group policies suggested a requirement for the existing Voids Management Policy to be more prescriptive and robust to align with good practice comparisons.	3. The SIG recommend that Riverside Scotland review and develop their existing Voids Management Policy to align with industry standard, and highlight Almond Housing Association and West of Scotland Housing Association for consideration.
Voids Management	
The SIG acknowledged feedback raised with cleaning standards throughout TLI's, staff discussions and tenant surveys.	4. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland review and develop a transparent minimal cleaning standard to ensure each property is cleaned to a uniform standard. The standard of cleaning should be continually monitored and reviewed with action taken where appropriate to maintain standards.
Through staff discussion the SIG acknowledged the existing contract permits Bell Group to charge/bill for the agreed amount (£2,200) per void property regardless of the scale of works required.	5. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland review the existing contract and aim to get value for money for each property through an individual property assessment.
The SIG acknowledged good practice through staff discussions and tenant surveys where Riverside Scotland retain any good items/furnishings or fittings (e.g. (pre-existing floor coverings) to minimise costs for incoming tenants.	6. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland continue to proactively support incoming tenants through this positive practice.
The SIG acknowledged ongoing challenges for Riverside Scotland with rechargeable repairs/removals.	7. The SIG recommend that Riverside Scotland continue to proactively pursue previous tenants for rechargeable repairs/removals, and consider publishing a case study example to raise awareness with new and existing tenants.
Through TLI's of void properties the SIG acknowledged challenges where pre-existing "loud" paint colours/tones can require redecoration, and potentially discourage future tenants from accepting a property.	8. The SIG recommend the reintroduction of a paint package limited to neutral colours/tones to minimise the number of properties being returned with challenging decoration.
Through staff discussions the SIG acknowledged communication challenges between housing and asset	9. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland review the voids management process to support

management staff throughout the voids management process.	housing and maintenance staff to work more efficiently.
Staff discussions and the tenant survey demonstrated examples of where the existing contractor doesn't always perform to the required standards of Riverside Scotland, with properties at times being returned with outstanding defects.	10. The SIG recommend a review of the existing process to increase inspection of works and minmise repeat occurrences.
The SIG acknowledged increasing voids expenditure costs, however staff discussions highlighted opportunities for Riverside Scotland to provide floor coverings as part of the voids management process to support incoming tenants.	11. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland explore opportunities to provide floor coverings as part of the voids management process, should voids expenditure significantly reduce.
Tenants Responsibilities - *information and advice provided to tenants*	
The SIG acknowledge the challenging conditions of properties being returned to Riverside Scotland. Staff discussions and the tenant survey feedback highlighted a potential lack of understanding and/or awareness of tenants responsibilities and expectations with maintenance and repairs.	12. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland develop a communications plan to raise awareness of '*who is responsible for what*' in terms of maintenance and repairs.
The SIG acknowledge new tenants are provided with a copy of the Riverside Scotland Tenants Handbook which outlines tenants' responsibilities (*Welcome to your home – Page 9*). The SIG acknowledged good practice with Barrhead, Fife, Glen Oaks and West of Scotland as providing tenants with a full breakdown of '*who is responsible for what…*' within their Tenants Handbook as clear and concise, and good practice.	13. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland introduce a clear and concise section of '*who is responsible for what…*' into the Tenants Handbook.
The SIG highlighted that tenants responsibilities are currently not referenced or linked within Riverside Scotland's Repairs and Maintenance Policy or the Rechargeable Repairs Policy.	14. The SIG recommend that tenants responsibilities are clearly referenced and linked within Riverside Scotland's Repairs and Maintenance Policy, and separately the Rechargeable Repairs Policy.
Pre-Termination Process	
The SIG agreed Riverside Scotland's pre-termination process doesn't provide a breakdown of tenants' responsibilities	15. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland develop and implement a pre-termination tenancy exit pack

5

prior to exiting a property. The SIG identified areas of good practice when comparing with comparative peer groups' Tenancy Handbooks and website information. The SIG acknowledged Dalmuir Park Housing Association's '*A Guide to Giving Up Your Tenancy*' as good practice for consideration.	(incl. exit checklist) to outline tenants' responsibilities prior to termination of tenancy.
The SIG acknowledged good practice and personal experience of previous social landlords undertaking mandatory pre-termination and collection of keys face-to-face within properties.	16. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland implement a mandatory pre-termination (incl. collection of keys) process to take place face-to-face within the property to maximise opportunities to assess the condition of properties.
The SIG acknowledged good practice from North Ayrshire Council who include a list of common rechargeable repairs with associated costs within their standard pre-termination letters to tenants.	17. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland implement a breakdown of common rechargeable repairs and associated costs within the standardised pre-termination letters to tenants.

2. Foreword

Welcome to the Riverside Scotland Service Improvement Group (SIG) Voids Management Scrutiny Exercise Report. Since June 2023, SIG members have been independently reviewing and assessing Riverside Scotland's voids management policy and processes.

The SIG has a core membership of five individuals. Membership of the SIG is collectively competent with individual members understanding scrutiny in a strategic context whilst working together within the core standards.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank staff and customers who participated in the review, making it a positive and valuable exercise.

2.1 The Riverside Scotland Service Improvement Group

The SIG is a group of tenant and customer representatives who meet independently to work collectively to review Riverside Scotland's services. This is known as "Scrutiny". Our overall aims are to:

- Learn more about Riverside Scotland's policies, procedures, and service delivery
- Understand how services are provided to customers
- Understand customers views on the services provided
- Consider what works well and what could be improved, and
- Make recommendations for changes or improvements to Riverside Scotland's Senior Management and Board.

We work to a set of agreed core standards and follow a determined Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct.

We undertake our work through Tenant-Led Inspections (TLI's), interviewing and shadowing staff, reviewing information about Riverside Scotland's services and performance, gathering feedback from other customers, comparing, and benchmarking against other landlords and reviewing housing and service standards set by the Scottish Government within the Scottish Social Housing Charter (the Charter) and expectations of the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR).

The Tenants Information Service (TIS) provided the SIG with independent advice, training, and support to assist in our work. In addition, Riverside Scotland supported us throughout by organising meetings and providing the information we required to review services and standards.

2.1 The role of the Service Improvement Group

The role of the SIG is to:

- Take an independent view of Riverside Scotland's overall performance
- Act as a 'critical friend' of Riverside Scotland

- Agree a programme for scrutiny work and identify areas of Riverside Scotland's housing services that need to be reviewed
- Review Riverside Scotland's Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) to the SHR
- Oversee tenant-led scrutiny activities
- Independently scrutinise housing services and performance in accordance with the Charter
- Make recommendations to Riverside Scotland and highlight where performance falls below agreed standards and where performance meets or exceeds customers' expectations
- Support Riverside Scotland's contribution to national housing policy consultations and regulatory frameworks
- Report to tenants and other customers on progress being made
- Review and monitor its own performance; and
- Promote equality and diversity.

2.2 Our core standards

Our work is based on the following core standards:

- Being accountable to all tenants and customers
- Being open and honest and act with transparency
- Reflecting the needs and aspirations of tenants and customers
- Making recommendations based on robust evidence that is proportionate and reflects the context in which the Riverside Scotland operates
- Respecting the views of the SIG members
- Respecting the decision-making role of Riverside Scotland

3. The Scrutiny Process – Our Approach

3.1 Selecting a Service for Scrutiny

The SIG undertook a desk top study comparing and benchmarking Riverside Scotland's performance from the 2022-23 ARC report.

SIG members noted Riverside Scotland's reducing percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home, combined with increasing re-let timescales, and expressed interest in further investigating this area to ascertain why, using a TLI approach. It was agreed that a customer-led scrutiny exercise into voids management would naturally align with a review of the Voids Management Policy.

3.2 The Key Stages of Scrutiny

The SIG followed an agreed work plan for the *Voids Management Scrutiny Exercise*, which included the following key stages:

a) **Review of information and relevant fact finding**
- Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) context
- Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) context
- Scottish Social Housing Charter context

- Riverside Scotland Voids Management Policy (incl. Lettable Standards) and Repairs and Maintenance Policy, Rechargeable Repairs Policy, and Abandoned Property Procedures
- Riverside Scotland Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) Key Performance Information and Tenant Satisfaction Reports
- Benchmarking comparisons with Almond; Barrhead; Clyde Valley; Fife; Glen Oaks; Maryhill; Thenue and West of Scotland.

b) Understanding and reviewing Riverside Scotland's systems and processes
- Understanding Riverside Scotland's operational approach to carrying out voids management
- Review Riverside Scotland correspondence / communications sent to tenants

c) Reality Checking – *what's happening on the ground*
- Tenant-Led Inspections of void properties accompanying staff
- Meetings with Riverside Scotland staff to capture experiences and views to understand if what's happening at an operational level is reflected at a corporate/strategic level
- Seeking tenants' views on their recent experiences of the Riverside Scotland letting standards.

3.3 Three Definitive Steps

Our scrutiny review had three definitive steps for each exercise carried out.

- » Summary (outline of the methods we used and background information)
- » Findings (key findings throughout the process)
- » Positive points (good practice points)

4. Key Findings and Positive Practice

4.1 Voids Management Expenditure

In recent years Riverside Scotland's voids management expenditure has significantly increased. The total voids management expenditure has increased from £152,301 in 2020-21 to £578,098 in 2023-24.

Riverside Scotland's voids management expenditure in recent years has been reported as follows:

Year	Voids expenditure (£)	Total number of voids	Average costs per property (£)
2023-24	£578,098.00 (*as of 15/04*)	132	£4,379.53
2022-23	£368,228.38	133	£2,768.63
2021-22	£225,098.85	126	£1,786.49
2020-21	£152,301.23	101	£1,507.93

4.2   Performance and Customer Satisfaction

Chart 1: Riverside Scotland percentage of stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) – CO6
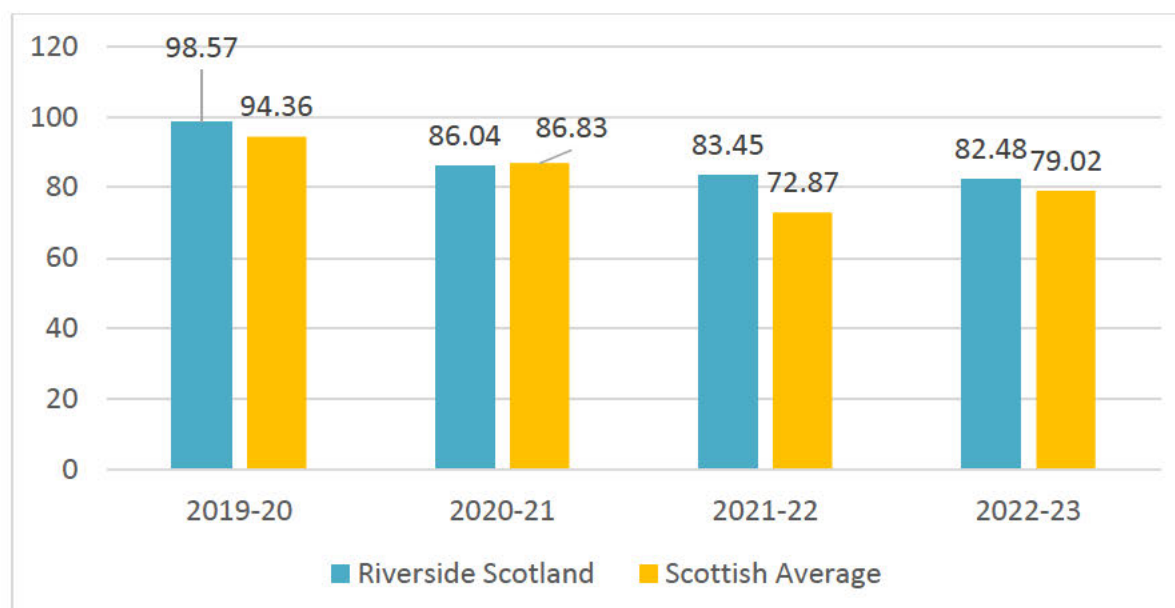
Since 2019-20 the percentage of Riverside Scotland's stock meeting the SHQS has reduced from 90.57% to 82.48%, however it has regularly remained higher than the Scottish national average.

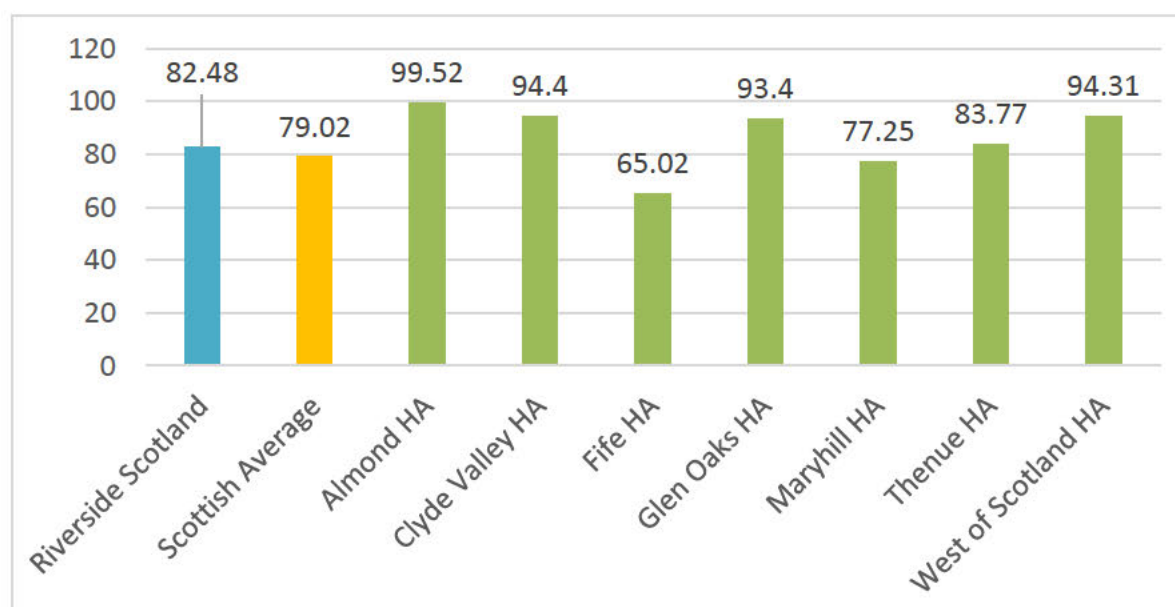**Chart 2: Peer group comparison of percentage of stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) – CO6**

Chart 2 illustrates Riverside Scotland's 2022-23 performance in meeting the SHQS compared against its comparative peer group. The SIG members highlighted Almond, Clyde Valley, Glen Oaks and West of Scotland's performance in this area.

10

Chart 3: Riverside Scotland percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home – CO7
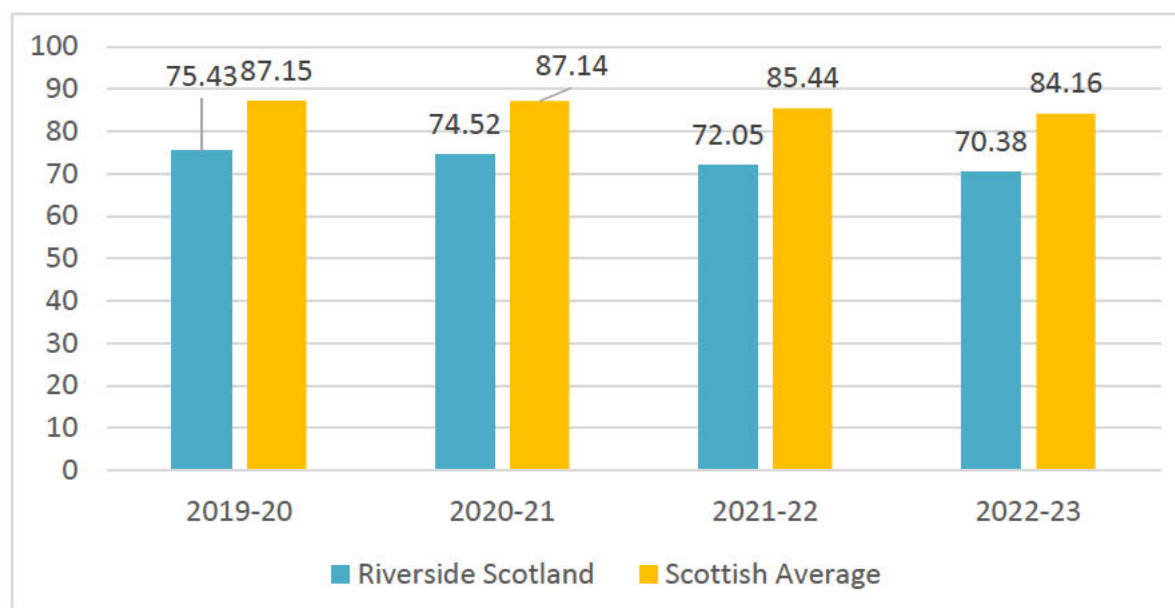
Since 2019-20, Riverside Scotland's percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home has been consistently lower than the Scottish national average and has been steadily decreasing year-on-year.

Prior to 2019-20, the ARC required social landlords to monitor and report on the percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home when moving in, however this has since been omitted from the ARC by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

Chart 4: Peer group comparison of percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home – CO7
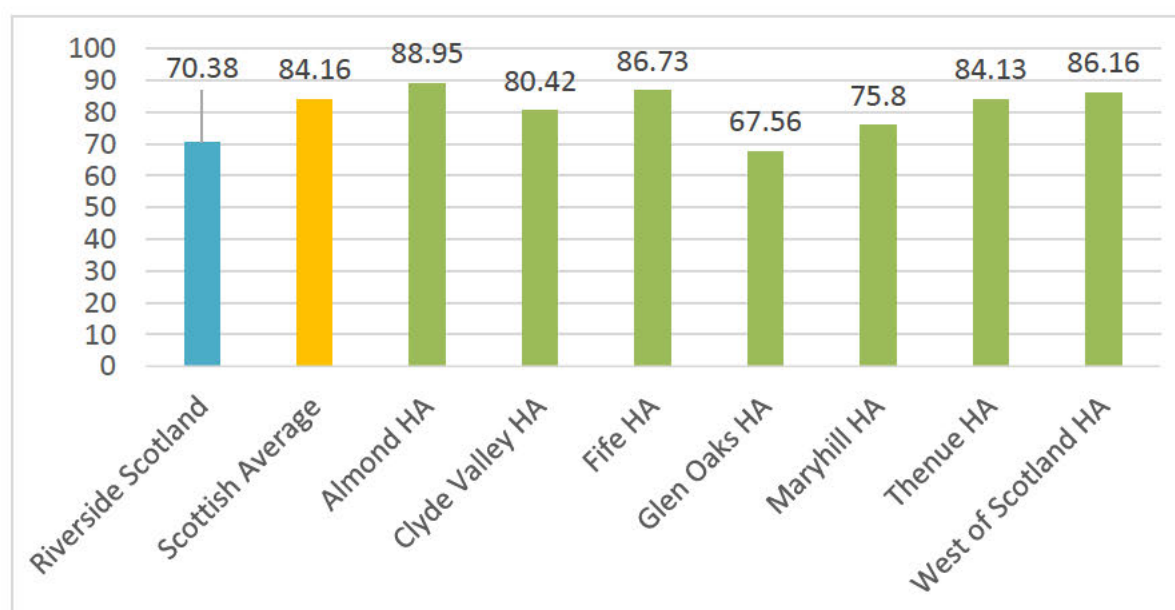
Chart 4 illustrates Riverside Scotland's 70.38% of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home as being significantly lower than the Scottish national average of 84.16%, and the second lowest amongst its comparative peer group.

Chart 5: Riverside Scotland percentage of tenancy offers refused during the year– CO14
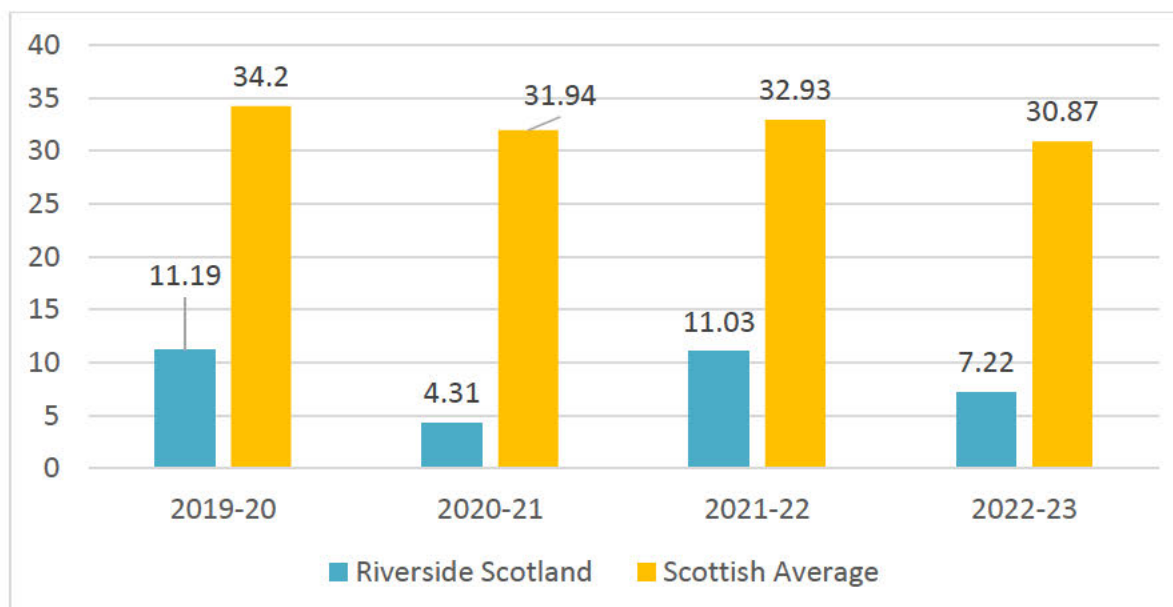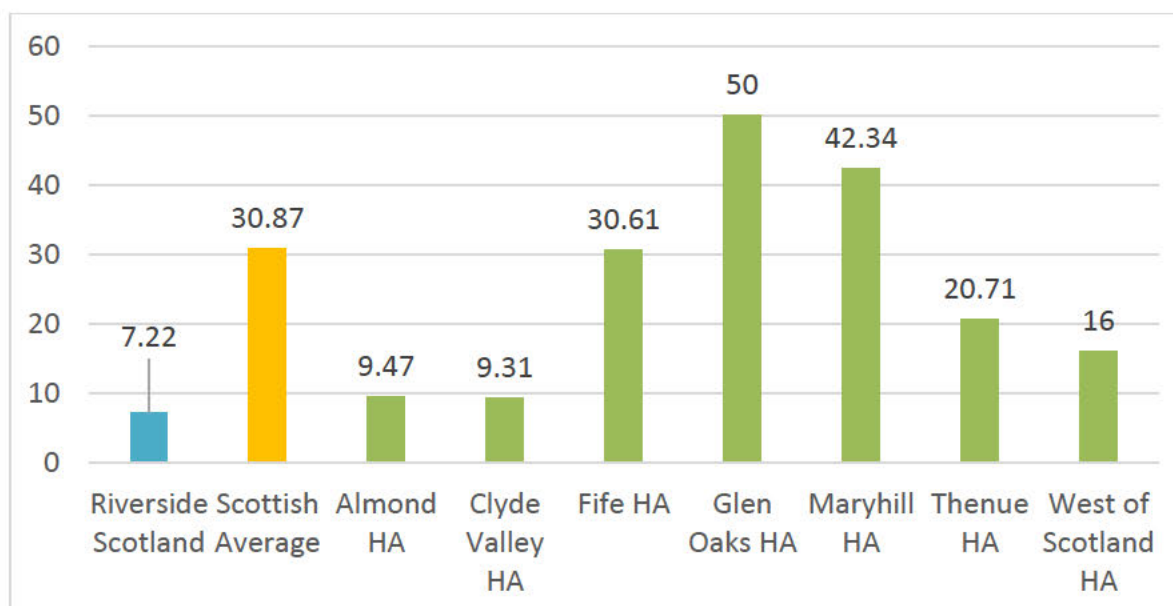

Chart 5 illustrates Riverside Scotland's consistently strong performance in the percentage of tenancy offers refused when compared to the Scottish national average.

Chart 6: Peer group comparison of percentage of tenancy offers refused during the year– CO14

12

When considered against its comparative peer group, Riverside Scotland excelled in 2022-23 in this area and had the lowest percentage of tenancy offers refused.

Chart 7: Riverside Scotland percentage of rent due lost through properties being empty during the last year – CO18
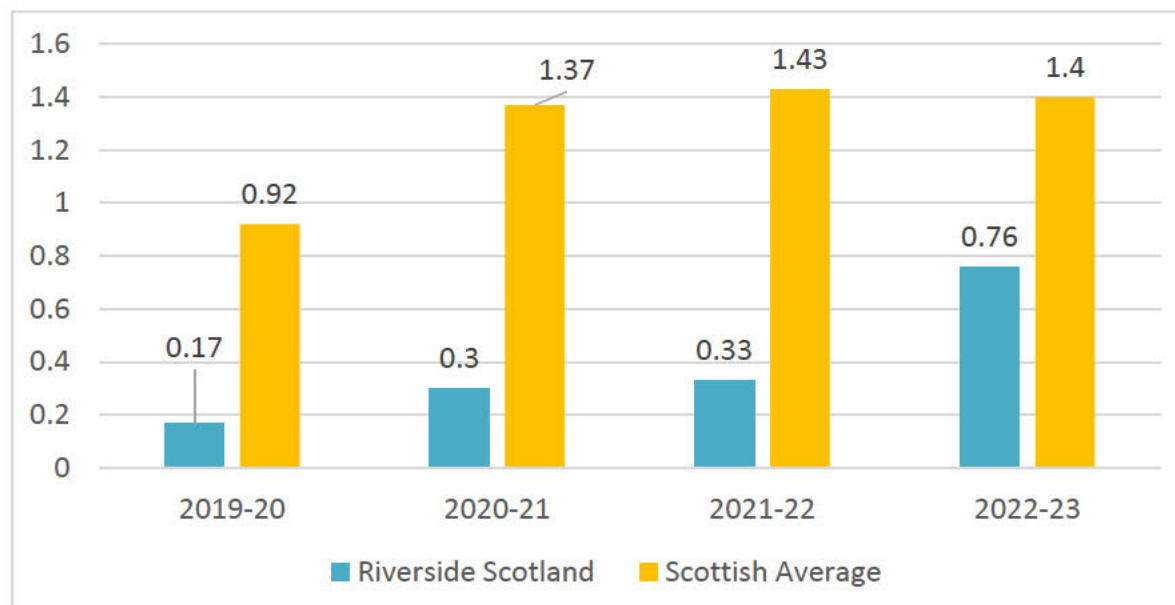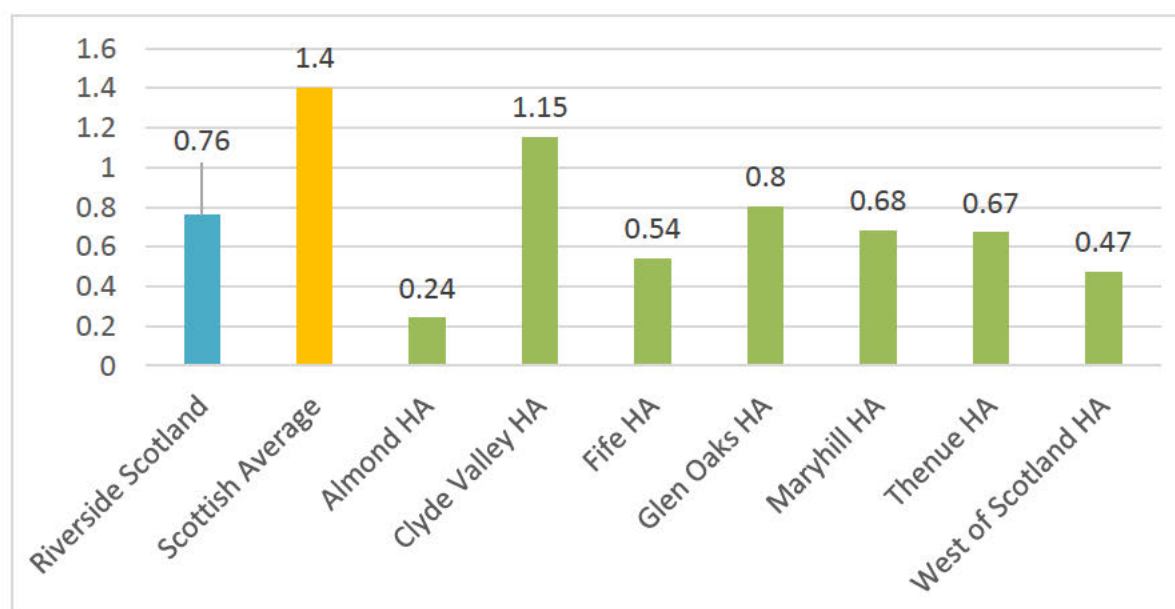

Chart 7 illustrates Riverside Scotland's strong performance in minimising rent due lost through properties being empty over the year.

Chart 8: Peer group comparison of percentage of rent due lost through properties being empty during the last year – CO18


The 0.76% (£85,684) of rent lost through properties being empty was considerably lower than the Scottish average of 1.4%. However, it was the second highest in its comparative peer group.

13

Chart 9: Riverside Scotland's percentage of tenants who feel rent for property represents good value for money– CO25
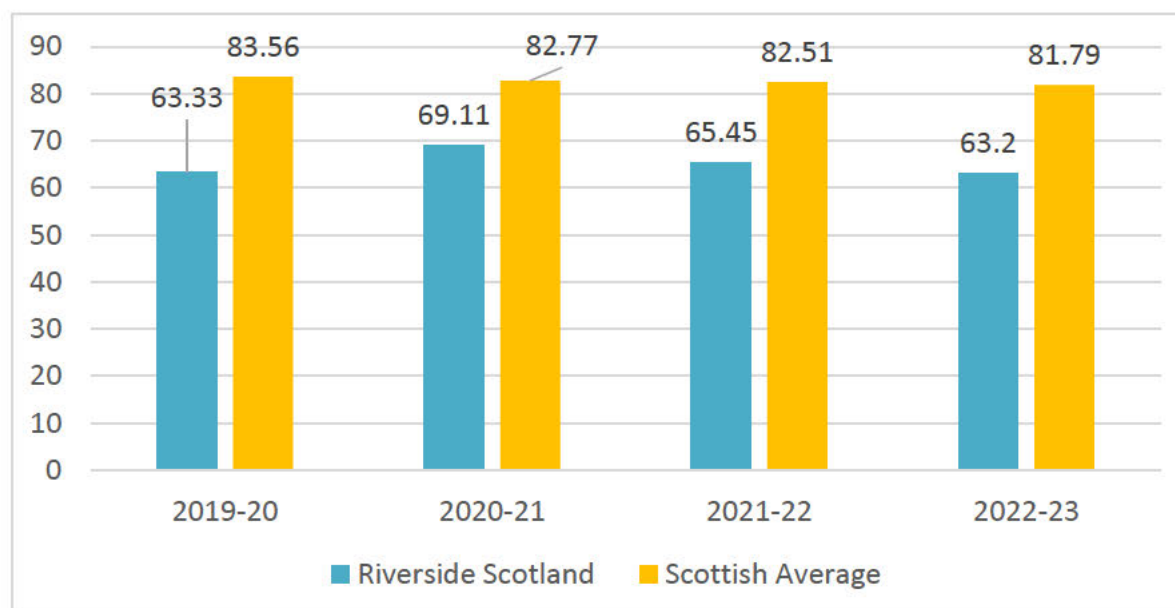

The percentage of tenants who feel rent for their property represents good value for money has been consistently significantly lower than the Scottish national average.

Chart 10: Peer group comparison of percentage of tenants who feel rent for property represents good value for money– CO25
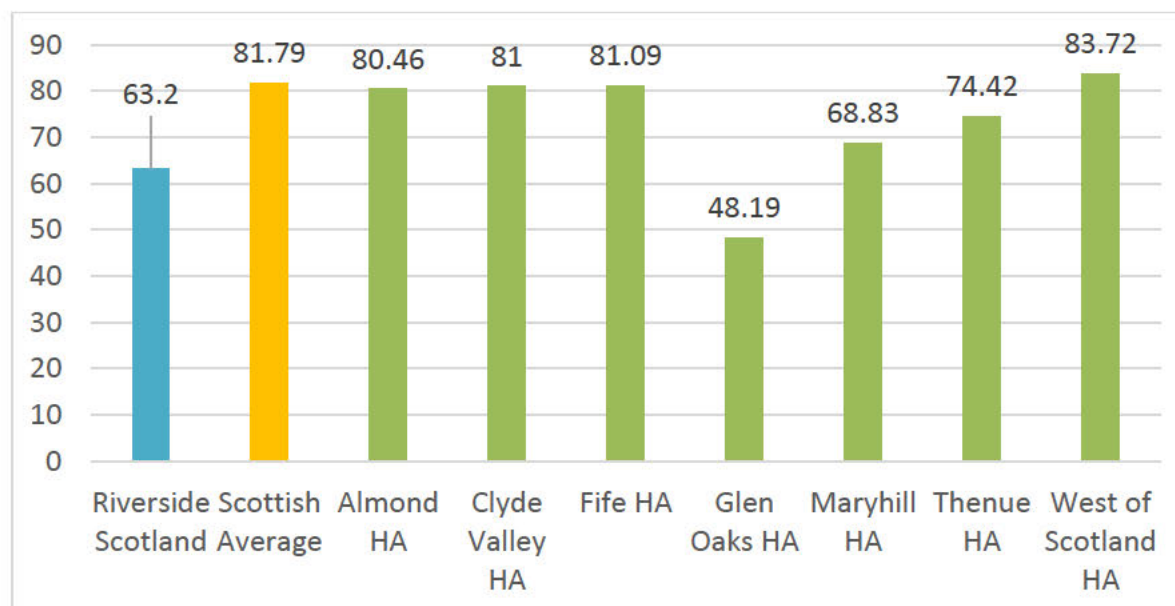

Riverside Scotland's 63.2% of tenants who feel their rent represents good value for money was second lowest in its comparative peer group for 2022-23.

14

Chart 11: Riverside Scotland's average length of time (days) taken to re-let properties in the last year – CO30
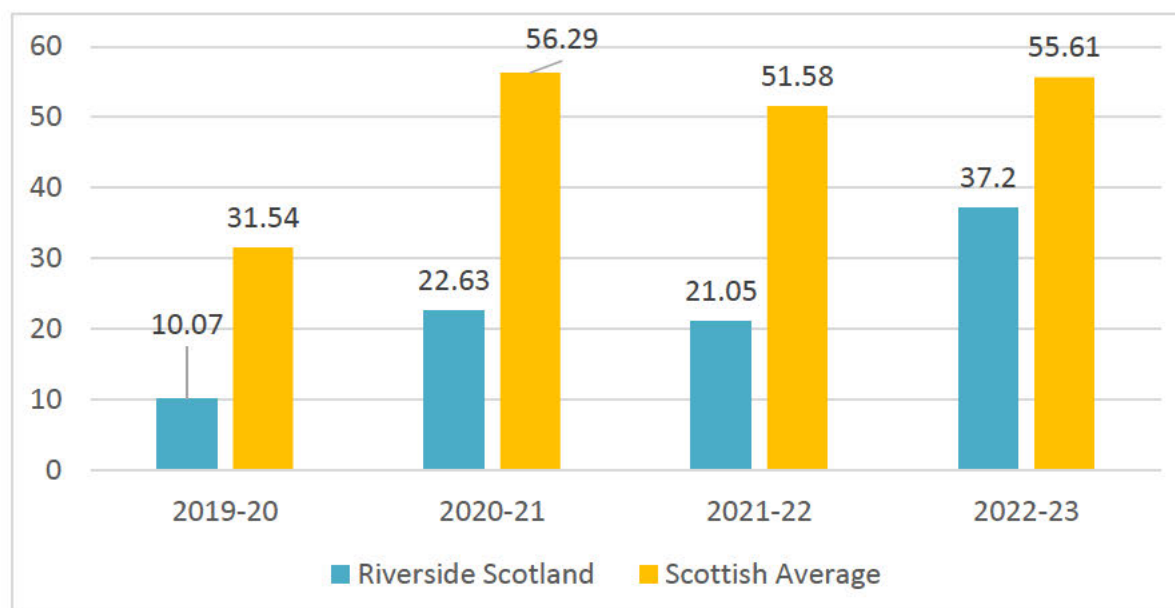

The average length of time taken (days) by Riverside Scotland to re-let their properties has increased from 10 days in 2019-20 to 37 days on 2022-23. Although, it has consistently been significantly lower than the Scottish national average.

Chart 12: Peer group comparison of average length of time (days) taken to re-let properties in the last year – CO30
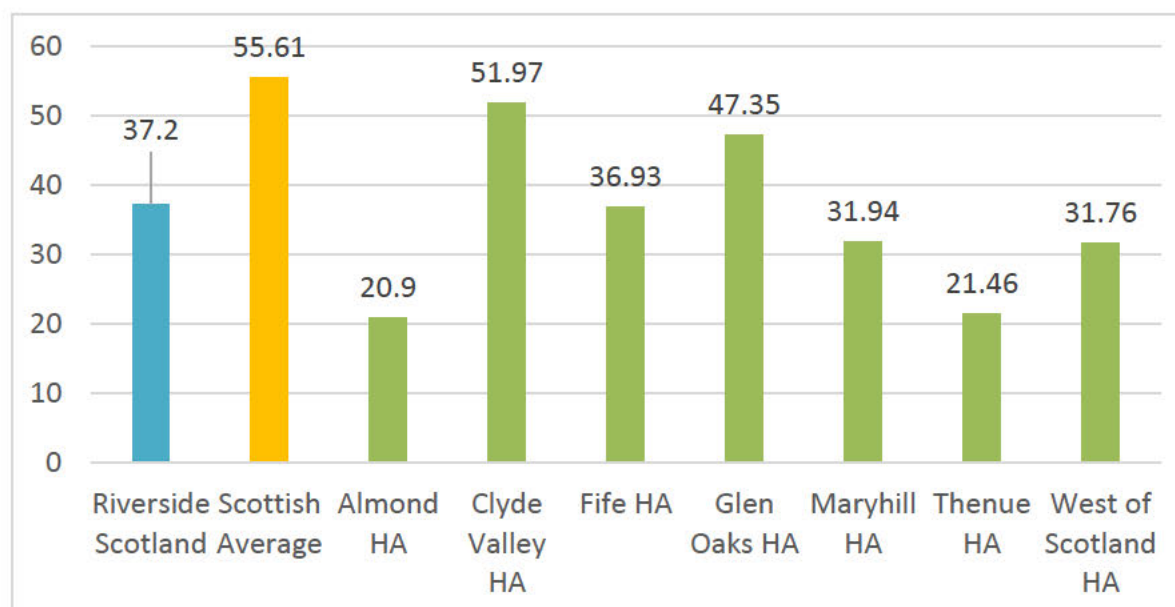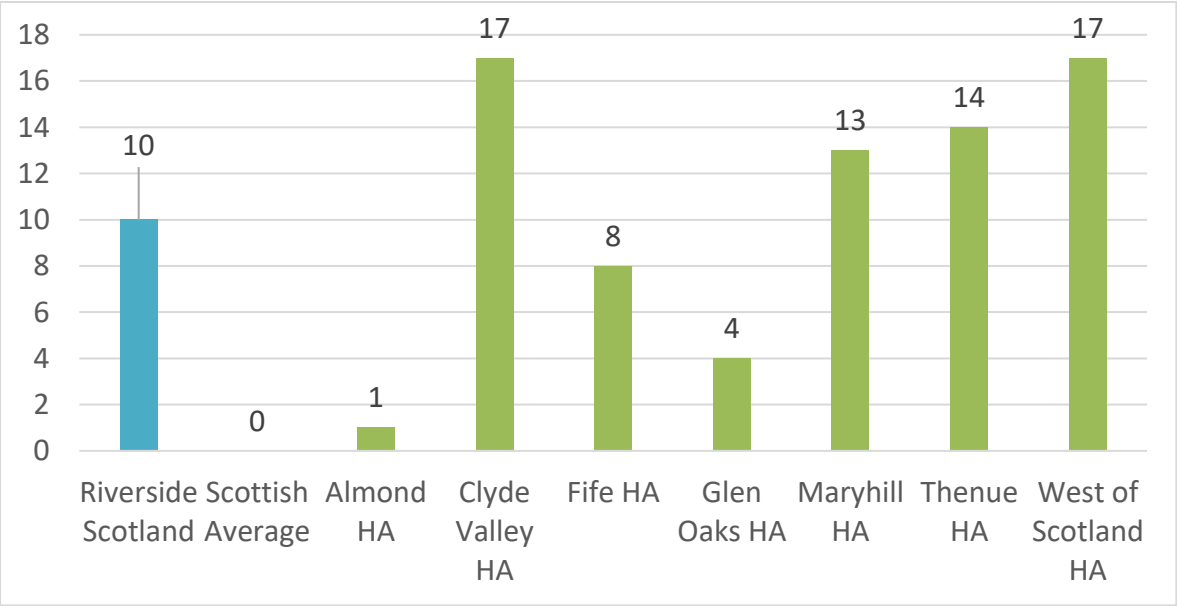

When considered against its comparative peer group, Almond, Maryhill, Thenue and West of Scotland took less time to re-let their properties over 2022-23.

15

Chart 13: Riverside Scotland number of abandoned homes – C4
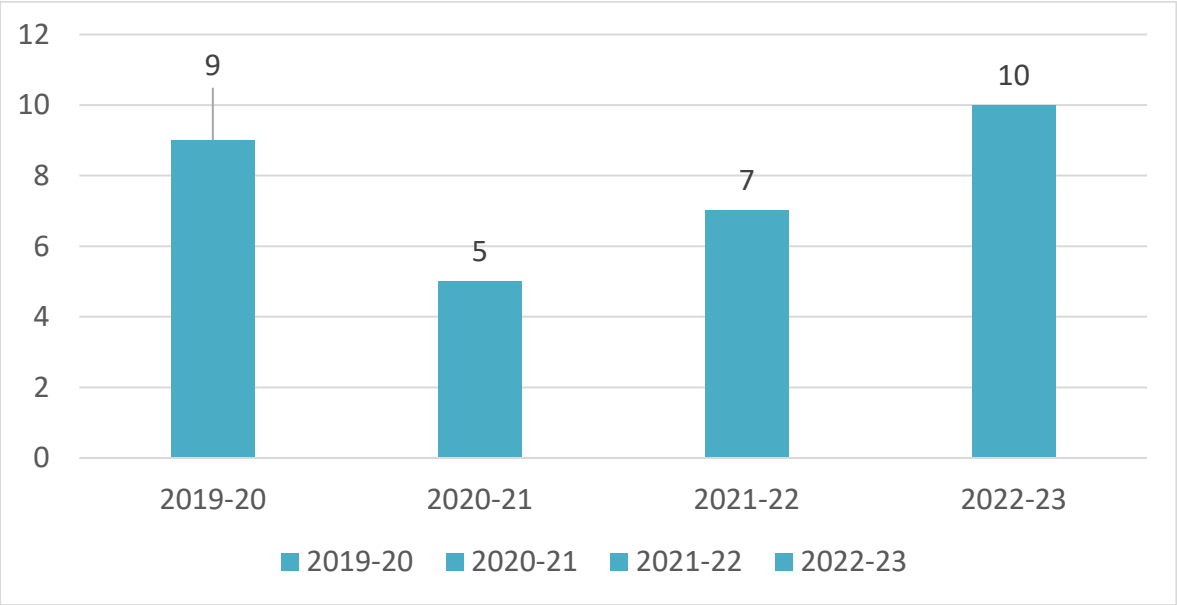
Since 2020-21 the number of abandonments has consistently increased annually.

Chart 14: Peer group comparison of number of abandoned homes – C4

The number of properties abandoned in 2022-23 (10) remains relatively average in comparison with Riverside Scotland's peer group.

16

4.3   Desk Top Study

4.3.1 Voids Management Policy

The SIG undertook a review of Riverside Scotland's Voids Management Policy (incl. letting standards) together with a desk top study and comparison of peer group landlords, such as Almond, Clyde Valley, Maryhill, Thenue, and West of Scotland.

The following points were noted for consideration:

- Riverside Scotland's current Voids Management Policy is available on the website.

- The Voids Management Policy reviewed by the SIG was developed and implemented under Irvine Housing Association in 2021.

- The SIG highlighted the use of ambiguous wording, such as '*reasonable standard*' as being subjective and open to personal interpretation, which may cause challenges in managing tenants expectations.

- When compared to other voids management policies, the existing policy lacks structure and detail, and needs to be more robust, prescriptive and transparent to align with peer group policies.

- The SIG highlighted Almond Housing Association's Voids Management Policy and West of Scotland Housing Association's Voids Management Policy as good practice examples for consideration.

4.3.2 Tenants Responsibilities – *Information and advice provide to tenants*

The SIG undertook a review of Riverside Scotland's Tenants Handbook, focusing specifically on tenants' responsibilities, together with a desk top review and comparison of peer group landlords. Almond, Barrhead, Fife and Glen Oaks.

The following points were noted for consideration:

- New tenants are provided with a copy of the Riverside Scotland's '*Welcome to your home*' tenants handbook, which includes tenants' responsibilities.

- The SIG suggested Riverside Scotland's tenants handbook could benefit from adopting similar approaches to peer group landlords in terms of communicating tenants responsibilities.

- The SIG Group highlighted Barrhead, Fife, Glen Oaks and West of Scotland tenant handbooks as being clear and concise and good practice for consideration, and in particular the '*who is responsible for what*' table section.

- The SIG highlighted that tenants responsibilities are not referenced within Riverside Scotland's Repairs and Maintenance Policy or Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

17

■ The SIG noted that there is currently no section within Riverside Scotland's website to provide straightforward and accessible guidance on tenants responsibilities.

4.4   Voids Inspections

Members of the SIG carried out Tenant-Led Inspections (TLI's) on 14th December 2023 at three properties, a mix of property size and type, across Irvine and Dumfries. The SIG used a checklist aligned with Riverside Scotland's letting standards to collate feedback.

The findings captured by the SIG were as follows:

Tenant-Led Inspection	Points for consideration
Property 1 - ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮	The property was reported to have been returned to Riverside Scotland in particularly challenging conditions. The TLI took place following the completion of the void process, and it generally complied with Riverside Scotland's existing letting standards. The property was previously left full of items by the previous tenant and they will be charged and pursued for the debt associated with removal. The property has neutral paint colours/tones throughout, although was left with challenging colours/tones in the bedrooms by the previous tenant. SIG members acknowledged the new neutral paint colour and decoration as being good practice. Gaps in the floorboards were highlighted by SIG members. The windows were highlighted as unclean in comparison to the remainder of the house. The SIG were advised that the 'Sparkle Clean' cleaning specification is under review. Staff explained that the property had taken 3 weeks to turnaround due to the significant amount of belongings left by the previous tenant and the damages to the property. The property looked generally in good condition throughout and ready for a new tenant to be moved in. This void took 35 days and the total costs for this property was £5,904.97 (*this includes a standard charge* ▮▮▮▮▮▮ *per property, plus additional work required*). There were rechargeable repairs for £219.82 for x2 internal doors.

18

Property 2 - ███████████	The property was returned to Riverside Scotland in excellent condition from a longstanding tenant. The TLI took place following the completion of the void process, and it generally complied with Riverside Scotland's existing letting standards.
	The TLI highlighted non-standard fixtures and fittings which require to be removed with originals reinstated.
	The carpets left by the previous tenant were generally in good condition and good practice highlighted where they will be retained for the future tenant.
	Similarly, the blinds left by the previous tenant will be left for the future tenant.
	In the bathroom a new splashback and bath panel were to be fitted to modernise the bathroom. However, an overbath shower would not be installed.
	The kitchen was generally in good condition, however outdated. A new kitchen will be installed prior to being handed over to the new tenant
	The property was generally in good decorative condition and wallpapered throughout. However, the wallpaper was considered "outdated".
	Staff explained that the property had been handed back in generally very good condition. The previous tenant would have been charged for the reinstatement of the downstairs internal pass doors.
	This void took 25 days and the costs for this property was £9,887.76 (*this includes a standard charge ███████ per property, plus a new kitchen and additional works required*).
	There were rechargeable repairs for £439.64 for x4 internal doors and £1288.60 for clearance of items left.
Property 3 - ███████████ ███████	Riverside Scotland presented photographs to demonstrate the extremely challenging conditions in which the property had been returned.
	The property was left full of items by the previous tenant for which they will be pursued for the rechargeable repairs (i.e. removals and repairs).
	The property was decorated with loud paint colours/tones throughout, meaning the property would require to be

	fully decorated, or the incoming tenant to be offered a paint package. This void took 103 days and the total costs for this property was £5,311.07 (*this includes a standard charge* ███████ *per property, plus additional work required*). There were rechargeable repairs for £ 549.54 for x5 internal doors and £ 799.04 for clearance of items left.

4.5   Staff Discussions

The SIG agreed a range of questions to be used to collate qualitative feedback from Riverside Scotland staff involved throughout the voids management process. Five members of staff from across housing, asset management, and senior management participated in tenant-led discussions on 22nd February 2024.

A full breakdown of responses is outlined within *Appendix 2*, however the following key points were noted:

Challenges

- The conditions of properties being returned has significantly deteriorated and void re-let timescales and funding required is increasing.
- Tenants often don't provide access and/or vacate properties prior to the pre-termination visit which restricts Riverside Scotland's ability to determine the condition of the property.
- Tenants often hand keys into the office which hinders Riverside Scotland's ability to undertake a pre-termination visit and again the ability to determine the condition of the property.
- Tenants don't always provide a forwarding address to allow us to proactively pursue rechargeable repairs.
- Riverside Scotland haven't been proactively pursuing rechargeable repairs in recent years.
- Tenants aren't proactively maintaining their properties and/or reporting repairs.
- The external contractor doesn't always perform to the standard we require and properties don't always meet the letting standards following the voids process.
- Construction costs are outstripping general inflation (i.e. CPI).
- Tenant partners and asset management staff don't work or communicate as closely as they could.

Expectations and Responsibilities

- When considering the deteriorating condition of properties being handed back, there appears to be a lack of awareness of expectations and tenants' responsibilities.
- Tenants are made aware of their responsibilities where the pre-termination interview takes place, however too often the pre-termination interview doesn't take place.

- Some tenants either can't afford or are physically unable to reinstate their properties prior to terminating their tenancy
- Tenants are provided with information/advice on their responsibilities at the beginning of a tenancy, however Riverside Scotland are otherwise reactive in providing further information/advice.

Refusal of Offers

- There's no clear link between refusal of offers and the letting standard.
- Decoration and cleanliness can be discouraging for prospective tenants. Loud paint colours or wallpaper can prevent tenants from accepting a property, however this doesn't fail the letting standard.
- The level of work required for a prospective tenant can be a factor where they are required to decorate and furnish, and community care grants can take several weeks to get in place.

Opportunities to Improve the Process

- Implement processes to ensure that pre-termination interviews take place to enable Riverside Scotland to visually inspect a property prior to being handed back.
- Introduction of a robust rechargeable repairs policy to enable Riverside Scotland to proactively pursue former tenants for outstanding debts.
- Proactively raise awareness of tenants responsibilities towards maintenance and repairs.
- Review processes to ensure external contractors are doing what is required for each individual void property.
- Review processes to support tenant partners and asset management staff to work more closely to minimise delays in re-let timescales.
- Re-introduce and refine a decoration package that is limited to neutral tones.
- Re-introduce the collection and monitoring of tenant satisfaction when moving into the property (previously an ARC requirement).
- Aim to get value for money for each individual void property through an individual property assessment.
- Support external contractors to query Riverside Scotland decision-making.
- The provision of an incentive for tenants to leave their property in good condition.
- Review the voids management budget to find a cost effective way to provide floor coverings for prospective tenants.

4.6   New Tenant Surveys

The SIG agreed a range of questions to be used to collate qualitative feedback from new tenants who have recently moved into Riverside Scotland properties. Riverside Scotland eighty-one tenants, recently allocated a property within the past 12-18 months, however received seven responses.

The following feedback was noted:

Of the seven respondents to answer the question '*what was the overall condition of your property when you moved in?*' The responses were as follows:

57% answered 'Excellent'
29% answered 'Good'
0% answered 'Fair'
14% answered 'Poor'

"*The flat was very clean and made a very good first impression.*"
"*It would have been excellent but the radiators were loose.*"
"*The garden was terrible; the front door was broken; fences were damaged; smashed glass left in the garden; and the security light doesn't work.*"

Of the seven respondents to answer the question '*what was your opinion of the cleanliness of the property?*' The responses were as follows:

72% answered 'Excellent'
0% answered 'Good'
14% answered 'Fair'
14% answered 'Poor'

"*It was in good condition.*"
"*The windows and window ledges could have been wiped down and the dust hoovered.*"
"*Every surface was spotless even though everything is white.*"

Of the seven respondents to answer the question '*are you familiar with Riverside Scotland's Letting Standards?*' The responses were as follows:

71% answered 'Yes'
29% answered 'No'
0% answered 'I don't know'

Of the seven respondents to answer '*yes*' to this question, 57% felt their property met the letting standard.

Of the seven respondents to answer the question '*are you familiar with Riverside Scotland's Tenants Handbook and specifically your responsibilities as a tenant?*' The responses were as follows:

100% answered 'Yes'

Thinking about the standard of the property when you moved in, tell us three (3) things you liked.

"*It was clean, and there were no repairs needed and in a good standard.*"
"*I liked the nice worktops.*"
"*The cleanliness....blank canvas....layout of the property.*"
"*I am delighted and thankful to the team for the home I was allocated. They were so helpful.*"

> Thinking about the standard of the property when you moved in, please tell us what could be improved.
>
> "*Loose radiators.*"
> "*Check all electrical outlets. The condition of the gardens. The front door was broken.*"

4.7   What the Service Improvement Group Liked

Throughout the *Voids Management Scrutiny Exercise*, SIG members identified good practice and information including:

✓ Riverside Scotland staff involved in the scrutiny project were helpful and informative.

✓ Riverside Scotland staff involved in the scrutiny project appeared to be committed and passionate about their jobs.

✓ Riverside Scotland provided information requested and additional information when required.

✓ The Voids Management Policy and Tenants Handbook is publicly accessible via the Riverside Scotland website.

✓ On paper the Voids Management Policy is easy to understand, written in Plain English and covers a basic level of detail.

✓ Riverside Scotland have a weekly meeting to review and monitor voids management of properties and to consider potential sensitive lets.

✓ The locks are changed after each tenancy.

✓ Where necessary, tenant partners' will challenge the condition of void properties signed-off by asset management where there may be outstanding defects.

✓ Riverside Scotland has recently started to proactively pursue costs associated with rechargeable repairs/removals, tenant damages and vandalism to properties.

✓ Riverside Scotland staff will retain any good items of furnishings and fittings for the benefit of incoming tenants where possible. However, it was noted that this practice is discretionary.

✓ Riverside Scotland are efficient in bringing properties up to the current standard. SIG members are now informed and knowledgeable regarding the challenges and barriers Riverside Scotland encounter through the voids management process.

5.   Recommendations

The SIG have found this scrutiny exercise to be invaluable in understanding Riverside Scotland's Voids Management Policy and voids management processes. The SIG would like Riverside Scotland to consider the following recommendations.

Findings	Recommendations
Performance and Customer Satisfaction	
The percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home and the percentage of tenants who feel rent for their property represents good value for money continue to reduce year-on-year.	1. The SIG recommend that Riverside Scotland continue to monitor and review performance and satisfaction, and re-introduce the Key Performance Indicator '*tenants satisfied with the quality of their home when moving in*' to proactively seek tenants views within one month of moving in and identify areas of concern.
Although the average length of time taken to re-let properties was significantly lower than the Scottish national average, it increased 16% between 2021-22 and 2022-23.	2. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland aim to reduce the average length of time taken to re-let properties to minimise void rent loss.
The Letting Standard	
A desk top review of peer group policies suggested a requirement for the existing Voids Management Policy to be more prescriptive and robust to align with good practice comparisons.	3. The SIG recommend that Riverside Scotland review and develop their existing Voids Management Policy to align with industry standard, and highlight Almond Housing Association and West of Scotland Housing Association for consideration.
Voids Management	
The SIG acknowledged feedback raised with cleaning standards throughout TLI's, staff discussions and tenant surveys.	4. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland review and develop a transparent minimal cleaning standard to ensure each property is cleaned to a uniform standard. The standard of cleaning should be continually monitored and reviewed with action taken where appropriate to maintain standards.
Through staff discussion the SIG acknowledged the existing contract permits Bell Group to charge/bill for the agreed amount ▮▮▮▮▮ per void	5. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland review the existing contract and aim to get value for money for

24

property regardless of the scale of works required.	each property through an individual property assessment.
The SIG acknowledged good practice through staff discussions and tenant surveys where Riverside Scotland retain any good items/furnishings or fittings (e.g. (pre-existing floor coverings) to minimise costs for incoming tenants.	6. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland continue to proactively support incoming tenants through this positive practice.
The SIG acknowledged ongoing challenges for Riverside Scotland with rechargeable repairs/removals.	7. The SIG recommend that Riverside Scotland continue to proactively pursue previous tenants for rechargeable repairs/removals, and consider publishing a case study example to raise awareness with new and existing tenants.
Through TLI's of void properties the SIG acknowledged challenges where pre-existing "loud" paint colours/tones can require redecoration, and potentially discourage future tenants from accepting a property.	8. The SIG recommend the reintroduction of a paint package limited to neutral colours/tones to minimise the number of properties being returned with challenging decoration.
Through staff discussions the SIG acknowledged communication challenges between housing and asset management staff throughout the voids management process.	9. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland review the voids management process to support housing and maintenance staff to work more efficiently.
Staff discussions and the tenant survey demonstrated examples of where the existing contractor doesn't always perform to the required standards of Riverside Scotland, with properties at times being returned with outstanding defects.	10. The SIG recommend a review of the existing process to increase inspection of works and minmise repeat occurrences.
The SIG acknowledged increasing voids expenditure costs, however staff discussions highlighted opportunities for Riverside Scotland to provide floor coverings as part of the voids management process to support incoming tenants.	11. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland explore opportunities to provide floor coverings as part of the voids management process, should voids expenditure significantly reduce.
Tenants Responsibilities - *information and advice provided to tenants*	
The SIG acknowledge the challenging conditions of properties being returned to Riverside Scotland. Staff discussions and the tenant survey feedback highlighted a potential lack of understanding and/or awareness of tenants responsibilities and	12. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland develop a communications plan to raise awareness of '*who is responsible for what*' in terms of maintenance and repairs.

25

expectations with maintenance and repairs.	
The SIG acknowledge new tenants are provided with a copy of the Riverside Scotland Tenants Handbook which outlines tenants' responsibilities (*Welcome to your home – Page 9*). The SIG acknowledged good practice with Barrhead, Fife, Glen Oaks and West of Scotland as providing tenants with a full breakdown of '*who is responsible for what…*' within their Tenants Handbook as clear and concise, and good practice.	13. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland introduce a clear and concise section of '*who is responsible for what…*' into the Tenants Handbook.
The SIG highlighted that tenants responsibilities are currently not referenced or linked within Riverside Scotland's Repairs and Maintenance Policy or the Rechargeable Repairs Policy.	14. The SIG recommend that tenants responsibilities are clearly referenced and linked within Riverside Scotland's Repairs and Maintenance Policy, and separately the Rechargeable Repairs Policy.
Pre-Termination Process	
The SIG agreed Riverside Scotland's pre-termination process doesn't provide a breakdown of tenants' responsibilities prior to exiting a property. The SIG identified areas of good practice when comparing with comparative peer groups' Tenancy Handbooks and website information. The SIG acknowledged Dalmuir Park Housing Association's '*A Guide to Giving Up Your Tenancy*' as good practice for consideration.	15. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland develop and implement a pre-termination tenancy exit pack (incl. exit checklist) to outline tenants' responsibilities prior to termination of tenancy.
The SIG acknowledged good practice and personal experience of previous social landlords undertaking mandatory pre-termination and collection of keys face-to-face within properties.	16. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland implement a mandatory pre-termination (incl. collection of keys) process to take place face-to-face within the property to maximise opportunities to assess the condition of properties.
The SIG acknowledged good practice from North Ayrshire Council who include a list of common rechargeable repairs with associated costs within their standard pre-termination letters to tenants.	17. The SIG recommend Riverside Scotland implement a breakdown of common rechargeable repairs and associated costs within the standardised pre-termination letters to tenants.

6. Conclusion

The SIG would like to thank all staff who assisted our members to carry out this scrutiny exercise through providing information and presentations and arranging voids inspections, staff discussions and customer feedback. This has been invaluable to the SIG, and staff are to be commended for their commitment to the process.

We trust our recommendations will deliver improvements in the voids management process for Riverside Scotland and its customers.

7. Next Steps and Timetable

The SIG considered and agreed a draft of this report in April 2024 and the final agreed report with tenant recommendations was submitted to Riverside Scotland. Thereafter meetings will take place to allow:

- » The SIG to present key findings and recommendations to the Riverside Scotland Board of Directors in May 2024.

- » Riverside Scotland to meet with the SIG to discuss the Riverside Scotland response, present and agree specific actions to the recommendations at a meeting in June 2024.

- » The SIG to agree the actions required to publicise their work of the scrutiny project and attract new members.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

It is essential that this scrutiny project is monitored and evaluated to find out if agreed objectives have been met, to recognise what works well and what may need to be adapted to meet the changing needs and priorities of Riverside Scotland and its customers.

This is about evaluating the effectiveness of the scrutiny project itself but also monitoring the implementation of the agreed action plan has been carried out.

The SIG recommend that an exercise to review the action plan takes place in May 2025.

9. Contact

To discuss anything within this report, please contact TIS on the details below:

Stephen Connor – Development Manager

██████████████████████
███████████
██████
████████████████
██████████████2

27

Appendix One – Service Improvement Group Membership

The Service Improvement Group provides the opportunity to have a core membership of **up to 15 participants**. Any Riverside Scotland tenants or customers (i.e. homelessness service user, factored owners, etc.) can become a member of the group.

Where possible, the membership of the Service Improvement Group should reflect and recognise the existence and importance of the different ages, races, genders, abilities and lifestyles within our communities to ensure that no group or individual will be disadvantaged. Support workers or carers of Service Improvement Group members are also entitled to attend meetings and take part in scrutiny activities.

- ■ ███████████████
- ■ ██████████
- ■ █████████████
- ■ ███████████████
- ■ ██████████████
- ■ ████████████

Discussion Preparation

Stephen Connor (TIS) will meet with the Service Improvement Group (SIG), prior to staff discussions, to support with preparations and understand the format, questions and outcomes.

Discussion Roles

- A nominated SIG member will welcome everyone, introduce the discussion session and set the scene.

- SIG members will ask the questions.

- SIG members should not use the discussion to identify or discuss personal circumstances

- Stephen Connor (TIS) will take the notes of the session.

- A nominated SIG member will thank staff for their participation.

Staff Session		
Housing Staff	Assets Staff	Senior Management

1. Please can you tell us about your role in the voids management process within Riverside Scotland?
I'm the void lettings coordinator. **Each week [on a Tuesday] we have a voids meeting** where we discuss progress, timescales and consideration for potential sensitive lets (e.g., potential vulnerable tenants).
My role is the **management of the asset management and housing teams**. I report performance regularly to the Board in terms of void rent loss; timescales for completion; contract management and monitoring with contractors; and number of days to re-let. My role is the operations management of asset officers; budgetary management; and performance management with contractors.
2. What are some of the challenges Riverside Scotland experience with voids management?
Properties are not always returned in good condition and we aren't always provided with forwarding addresses to pursue rechargeable repairs/removals. It can become clear that **tenants aren't always maintaining their properties** or reporting repairs.

Tenants often don't provide access to the property to allow us to carry out the pre-termination visit to ascertain the condition of the property. Tenants often hand keys into the office and thereafter we don't hear/see them again. This means we aren't aware of any issues with property conditions or repairs until the void stage.

The contractor is not up to the standard where we would want them to be. Properties are not always where we need them to be. **Tenant partners' do at times challenge the condition of properties being signed-off by asset management staff.** We pick up things that can be often missed by asset team.

The Tenant Partners and Asset Team **could work closer and improve communication**.

Since Covid-19 **the condition of properties being returned has significantly deteriorated**. Although, it has over this past 10-years worsened in terms of longer turnaround time required and increasing funding required to bring properties back up to the letting standard.

We need **more robust processes to allow us to be more proactive with pre-termination interviews** which will enable us to visually inspect properties before they are handed back.

We need to have **a robust rechargeable repairs policy**.

Construction costs are significantly higher than CPI so **the cost of void works is significantly higher** than in pervious years – *"we're getting less in return for more money."*

Tenants often hand **properties back in poor condition and full of furniture**. *"Is there is a lack of understanding of reasonable expectation to leave a property in?"*

3. Do you think tenants are aware of their responsibilities, and Riverside Scotland's expectations, when vacating a property (i.e. void property standards and tenancy end checklist obligations)?

Tenants **should be aware of their responsibilities** as they are told of them at sign-up and again during the pre-termination visit. It's **easy to forget as there is so much information provided at the beginning of a tenancy**. Maybe we aren't clear enough though because alterations usually aren't reinstated.

We need to **be more proactive in pursuing rechargeable repairs**.

Tenant partners don't have **a visual aid to support tenants to fully understand** their responsibilities towards maintenance and repairs.

Tenants **understand their responsibilities where a pre-termination interview happens**. The challenge is often we don't get to carry out pre-termination interviews.

30

Some tenants **can't afford to reinstate their property or they aren't physically able to** do the required work.

It's **unclear if tenants are aware** of expectations of the letting standard at sign-up.

4. In your experience, what are the main reasons why a tenant may refuse a property due to the letting standards (e.g. condition or cleanliness)?

Sometimes the **level of work required by tenants to decorate and furnish a home can be overwhelming**. Community Care grants can take weeks sometimes!

Properties can often look "tatty" and can be discouraging for prospective tenants.

In my opinion **cleanliness and decoration is often the main reason** why a potential tenant will refuse a property.

Loud paint colours or wallpaper can be off-putting to prospective tenants. They have to paint or decorate to their taste.

The letting standard **doesn't usually tend to be a reason for a property being refused**.

There's **no clear relation or link between refusals and the letting standards**. It tends to be more down to location or the size or layout of properties.

5. How could we improve the existing Riverside Scotland voids management process and/or letting standards?

Improving processes to **ensure that external contractors are doing what is required** for each individual property.

Tenant partners and asset management **staff need to be working closer** to minimise any challenges or snagging that arise – "*we need tighter internal processes and better communication.*"

We need to **improve how we communicate** the voids process with our prospective tenants.

We need to **bring back decoration packages**.

We need **a decoration package that is limited to neutral tones** that would potentially encourage tenants to continue with neutral tones – "*it's the tenants choice what colours they decorate the property but maybe neutral tones would encourage most to continue with neutral tones.*"

We need to start **collecting and monitoring tenants satisfaction when moving into the property**. That will give us an indication.

Delivering more independent customer-led scrutiny of housing services will support us to improve the service we deliver.

31

We need to improve internal processes to **support staff to work closer and improve communication**.

We need to **aim to be getting best value for money for each individual property through an individual property assessment**, rather than the uniform blanket approach we have been using – *"not all properties require the same standard works."*

We need to improve our working relationship with our external contractors to **encourage them to query decision-making** by our staff.

If we **reviewed our internal budgets and found a cost effective way to provide floor coverings** it would massively help prospective tenants.

We must be more **proactive in pursuing rechargeable repairs**.

We should explore **opportunities to incentivise tenants to leave the property in good condition** to meet their responsibilities – *"a small incentive may save Riverside Scotland a lot of money….."*

6. Is there anything else you would like to comment on the voids management process, policy or letting standards?
No other comments.
No other comments.

9.2. Riverside Scotland Communities & Livelihoods Strategy

Title: Riverside Scotland Communities & Livelihoods Strategy	Date: 15th April 2024
Author: Gavin Wiffen	Sponsor: Diana MacLean
Action: Decision	Confidential: No
Appendices: Appendix 1 - Communities & Livelihoods Strategy Appendix 2 - Communities & Livelihoods Strategy Consultation Results	Reading Room: N/A
Reg. Standard: Standard 2 The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.	ORP ref: People at our heart
Strategic Risk ref: R7 Customer Experience	
Consultation: We have consulted with customers on this strategy.	

Purpose and Action:

This strategy sets some of the ways in which we plan to meet our corporate plan commitments to support customers through the cost of living, develop neighbourhood plans and ensure that customers have opportunities to engage with us and shape our services. This strategy sets our ambitious aims for the next three years, focusing on seven main objectives on how to improve the lives of our customers.

The Board is asked to review the Riverside Scotland Communities and Livelihoods Strategy along with customer feedback from our recent consultation and confirm that it is assured that the objectives outlined within this strategy will enable us to deliver on our corporate plan commitments.

We have consulted with customers on this strategy and their feedback has been taken into consideration in the production of this strategy. A summary of the responses from customer feedback has been included within the appendices. Most of the feedback received didn't relate directly to the contents of the strategy. Responses were anonymous, unless a customer provided us with their details, so where a customer has expressed concerns, we were unable to contact the customer to discuss these further.

Board is recommended to consider the content of and approve the Riverside Scotland Communities and Livelihoods Strategy.

Executive Summary:

By implementing a new Riverside Scotland Communities and Livelihoods Strategy, we can outline how we plan to engage with customers, as well as the ways in which we aim to support our communities and their livelihoods. We have already done so much work to support our communities, but this strategy provides a clearer framework to guide our work over the coming years. This strategy is ambitious in it's aims and has set out seven clear objectives to support customers and go beyond the traditional housing management service that customers expect from us. The strategy also outlines our plans to engage with and support customers over the next three years, providing commitments to them, that we will regularly review and that they can hold us accountable for.

1. **Introduction**
   Following our "Big Conversation" consultation exercise in 2022, we have completely reshaped the way we deliver services. Our Tenant Partner model is now embedded and is providing

colleagues with the time and resources to support our customers and be there when customers need them. We have also changed our approach to customer engagement, focusing on tenant-led scrutiny activities that will drive improvements to our services, and by focusing on establishing task-finish groups, to tackle the issues that matter most to our customers across our estates and communities.

Our Communities and Livelihoods Strategy sets out the ways in which we will deliver services that meet the needs of our customers and go beyond the traditional housing management service. Riverside Scotland is already doing so much to support our customers and communities; however, it is envisaged that this strategy will provide a clear plan to deliver on these commitments and will steer the work of the association over the next few years.

This strategy sets out:

- our plans on how to further support our customers by encouraging customers to get involved and to provide feedback to shape our services.
- how we plan to work collaboratively with partners to deliver services that will support customers beyond the traditional housing management service.
- our plans to make a difference to the communities and livelihoods of our customers and do so in a way that is dignified and based on a trauma informed approach.

Seven key objectives have been outlined within this strategy to ensure that we have an ambitious plan to supporting communities and supporting the livelihoods of our customers. It is hoped that this will help us deliver the services customers need from us, as they continue to navigate the cost-of-living crisis, and as we strive to continuously improve and adapt the services we offer.

2. Risk

The risk of not implementing the strategy is that the organisation does not have a clear framework in place for how it aims to engage with customers and deliver on the objectives we have highlighted to support the communities and livelihoods of our customers.

The risk of implementing this strategy is not delivering on the promises we have made to customers within this strategy. This has the potential to cause reputational damage and affect customers trust in us to do what we say we will do. However, to overcome this, we will carry out annual reviews against the commitments we have made. We will provide regular updates to customers on progress through communications and an annual report to board on progress of meeting the commitments we have made. If we fail to meet any of the commitments, we will be transparent about this, and provide reasoning for not being able to meet our commitment.

3. Conclusion

This strategy sets out our ambitious plans on how we plan to engage with customers and deliver services that go beyond the traditional housing management service, to providing services advice that support our communities and their livelihoods. It sets out 7 main objectives on how we hope to achieve this and includes plans to tackle issues such as furniture poverty, digital exclusion and providing support and advice to customers to increase tenancy sustainment and customer satisfaction.

4. Next Steps

Share the finalised strategy document with customers and colleagues, along with our Year 1 commitments. Start work on how we will deliver on these commitments over the next 12 months, including looking at each role colleagues will play in the delivery of the strategy objectives.

Appendix 1

Communities & Livelihoods Strategy 2024-27

Date Effective: April 2024
Date of Review: April 2025

contents

introduction

This strategy has been developed following our 'Big Conversation' Consultation exercise in 2022 and the feedback Riverside Scotland received from customers as part of this. This strategy outlines our ambition to support our customers through the cost-of-living crisis, going beyond the traditional core housing management services to deliver social value initiatives for the benefit of our customers and local communities.

As part of The Riverside Group, we have adopted the Forward Together Corporate Plan 2023 – 2026. Included within this is a high-level objective:

We will offer a range of services that support our customers to navigate the cost-of-living crisis, as well as empowering communities to become more resilient to challenges. Within Riverside Scotland's Corporate Plan 2023-26, we have set out commitments to support customers through the cost of living, develop neighbourhood plans and ensure that customers have opportunities to engage with us and shape our services. This strategy will set out the framework for how we hope to achieve this.

As a result of our 'Big Conversation' consultation with customers, we changed the way we deliver our services, implementing our new 'Tenant Partner' model, meaning customers can now contact their Tenant Partner directly with any queries or concerns they have.

Furthermore, we increased the number of Tenant Partners working across our estates, to more than 10, meaning that they have more time to support customers and are now more visible across our estates and communities.

As well as this, we created a new Affordability Officer post, to support our customers through the Cost-of-Living Crisis, ensuring that they are making use of all the financial support available to them. We have also implemented regular drop ins surgeries across our estates, so customers can come along and speak to us face-to-face.

As well as this, we are committed to working with our partners to look at social value initiatives we can roll out together, that will benefit our customers, and to put in place evaluation processes for all projects and initiatives. It is fair to say, that we are still at the concept stage on the development of large scale 'added value' services and their impact on customers and communities and we will continue to learn through testing our approach in a variety of locations with effective evaluation and reflection over the life of this strategy.

In recognition of this, we will develop a Year 1 delivery plan which will outline our key priorities in the year ahead. We will consult customers to ensure their views and feedback help form this Year 1 delivery plan.

We will also be testing a range of output and outcome measures for the delivery of projects and initiatives to determine what 'excellent' looks like in terms of return on investment as well as understanding the relationship between primary and secondary impact measures to develop our understanding of the broader social impact that various initiatives bring to customers and communities, and by design, to the business.

To support this approach, we will be strengthening the funding application process and aligning this to other large funders such as National Lottery, to increase opportunities of external matched funding for large scale initiatives. We will also maximise bids to external funding sources to support improvement projects across neighbourhoods and communities.

We have consulted with customers on the content of this strategy and their feedback has shaped our objectives. One of the clear requirements from customers is that we develop interventions that provide dignified solutions for those who need to access help and support and we have, therefore, used language throughout this strategy that focuses on resilience and wellness to frame the products and services that we will design and deliver with customers and partners.

Many of the referrals to the services will be generated by colleagues who are working directly with customers; however, we recognise the importance of marketing these added value services more broadly across all customers and will continue to promote these through our 'Word on the Street' newsletters, as well as making use of online, social media and text messaging to ensure that news about our services reaches all customers.

strategic alignment

This strategy is one of nine corporate strategies which underpin the Group Corporate Plan 2023-26.

Our Communities and Livelihoods Strategy is aligned with the wider Riverside Group Communities and Livelihoods Strategy (2023-26) and is aimed at supporting our customers and communities through the cost-of-living challenges, building resilience and wellness, whilst exploring opportunities to build capacity and capability, we will align to the other strategies to drive out social value opportunities wherever possible.

We will aim to align and drive out maximum opportunities for volunteering, training, apprenticeships, and employment for our customers in the delivery of contracts and services whilst ensuring we capitalise on the social value incorporated into contracts for the benefit of customers and communities.

This strategy will set out our aim to develop more digital solutions to support customers and community involvement. These days, more and more activities can be done online, from accessing information and services, to online shopping and even healthcare. As digital solutions continue to develop, we want to ensure that we can take full advantage of new digital solutions and that our customers have access to these services.

A key objective of this strategy is the prevention of homelessness and the sustainability of tenancies and communities. In addition, we have included specific requirements for retirement living, young people, mental health and complex needs and a focus on tackling social isolation.

Riverside

FORWARD TOGETHER

OUR CORPORATE PLAN 2023-26

Finally, the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy will underpin our projects and initiatives, ensuring they are open to all, offering ease of access with no barriers to participation. An equality impact assessment will be completed for each project and initiative. A key strand of this strategy is to tackle social housing stigma, breaking down barriers to participation and engagement within communities, celebrating and building on the strengths in our communities and celebrating successes to promote positive outcomes.

context

The past few years have presented multiple challenges to social housing customers and the communities in which they live. The impact of the pandemic, followed by steep increases in inflation have tested the resilience of communities, and pushed many to the brink. To develop a strategic approach to supporting customers and communities through these unprecedented times, we have undertaken an analysis of the current operating context, considering the key issues.

The main factors putting pressure on household income are energy and food costs. As a result of the conflict in Ukraine, electricity costs soared by 67% and gas costs increased more significantly by 130% between March 2022 to March 2023. Since then, energy costs have fallen slightly, with a decrease of 25.2% between June and July 2023. However, costs are still much higher than they were prior to the cost-of-living crisis and are forecast to remain this way for some time.

Food inflation has also remained high in the UK throughout 2023, which was at its highest level for over 45 years at 19.2% in March 2023. Inflation has come down since reaching this peak but remains high at a reported figure of 9.2% in November 2023.

The high rate of inflation is causing a cost-of-living crisis, which is having an impact on families across the UK, but for poorer households, particularly those in social housing the impact is even more significant.

Energy and food price inflation disproportionately impacts low-income households because:

·These products take up a larger percentage of their incomes than other income groups; (the lowest 20% of equivalised income households spend 15% of their income compared to 11% for the average income household).

·They cannot reduce spending on these areas without serious impact.

·They have the lowest access to other financial options.

Many of the lowest income households are facing difficult choices as they choose whether to 'heat or eat' let alone pay rent. Riverside's evidence from a cost-of-living survey, carried out in 2023, suggests that over the past year leading up to the survey, over half of customers have worried about paying household bills and expenses all or most of the time, with a quarter saying they will not be able to cope.

The UK Government's recent unprecedented package of energy bill support, cost-of-living payments to those in receipt of certain benefits, and the inflation-linked benefits rise due to take place in April 2024 has provided reassurance to households. However previous welfare reforms - such as the "bedroom tax" and limits to the Local Housing Allowance - mean that for many, benefits still fall significantly short of the cost of housing. Also, the ability of any Government to sustain this level of household support is questionable.

The Scottish Government has also heavily invested in supporting households through the cost-of-living crisis. They have focused on providing support to those on a low income through initiatives such as the Winter Heating Payment and The Cost-of-Living Award, which offers those on a qualifying benefits additional funds to help support them through the cost-of-living crisis – on top of other support they may be eligible for from the UK government. As well as this, the Scottish Government also increased the recently introduced Scottish Child Payment to £25 per week, per child for households who qualify and made a commitment in their recent budget to increase Social Security Scotland benefits in line with inflation.

There has been a focus on local communities and investment in neighbourhoods from the Scottish Government too, who provided funding of £27 million through their Investing in Communities Fund, to tackle disadvantage within communities from 2023-26. The fund was open for applications from local community projects, with a focus on tackling poverty and disadvantage in their area.

There is an increasing focus on the importance of local communities and investment in neighbourhoods. In 2021, a consultation on the Charter Outcomes, carried out by the Scottish Social Housing Charter was held. The Scottish Social Housing Charter reviews it's outcomes every five years and in 2021, carried out a consultation with Tenants, Tenants and Resident Groups, RSLs, Local Authorities, Councillors, Governing Body Members and anyone with an interest in the Charter.

Within the analysis of the responses to this consultation was a focus on landlords offering services that take account of individual needs. One respondent asked for a greater focus on the benefits of involving customers in partnerships and using public and community resources to build community wellbeing and resilience. Some participants also felt that improved housing support is required to ensure all customers are integrated into the community and to improve harmony amongst customers. Other key themes included a need for the recognition of the role social landlords, other organisations and tenants in contributing to future placemaking and community wealth building initiatives.

Whilst our customers and communities are facing multiple challenges, there are also several opportunities to be embraced which could create new opportunities and increase the resilience of our communities. We believe that this Strategy will be key in supporting this activity.

objectives

The high-level objectives for Communities & Livelihoods included within the Corporate Plan are:

Over the next three years we will:

• Prevent evictions and homelessness by proactively working with customers to sustain their tenancies.

• Provide advice and support to tenants to increase tenancy sustainment.

• Support the livelihoods of our customers through projects that provide advice and support and build capacity for people to improve their own lives - going beyond the traditional landlord service.

• Explore options to establish a customer health and wellbeing offer.

• Support customers into training and employment opportunities.

• Promote community resilience and empowerment, by supporting new and existing voluntary groups who are trying to make life better in our neighbourhoods.

• Increase customer engagement with customers through a variety of methods to inform continuous improvement.

objective 1

Prevent evictions and homelessness - Proactively engage with customers who are in, or at risk of falling into arrears, wider debt and fuel poverty.

• Advice and support to work proactively with existing and new customers to tackle money, debt, and fuel poverty, leading to a measurable increase in household incomes, lower bills and a reduction in evictions.

• Recruitment of an Affordability Officer, to support customers amidst the Cost-of-Living Crisis. The Affordability Officer will carry out benefit checks for new tenants to ensure that all benefits are correct, and the tenancy can be maintained, as well as supporting existing customers applying for benefits. The Affordability Officer will also ensure that payment arrangements for rent arrears are affordable and manageable for customers.

• Recruitment of an Energy Advisor – as part of a joint funding bid to SFHA Fuel Support Fund with Atrium Homes, Ayrshire Housing and Shire Housing, Riverside Scotland customers have access to a new Energy Advisor. They will be able to offer advice to customers on energy efficiency and support available to them with rising energy costs and will be based at the Citrus Energy Office in Ardrossan.

• Ensure that we are being proactive in applying for any available external funding which can be used to help alleviate fuel poverty, rent arrears, debt and increase financial resilience for our customers.

• Maximise access to Riverside Group 'Helping Hands' welfare fund to ensure maximum benefit for our customers and communities and provide much needed support.

• Utilise customer drop ins to hold financial advice sessions, to be delivered by Riverside Scotland, in partnership with other local organisations to offer advice and support as our customers navigate the cost-of-living crisis.

The cost-of-living crisis

The cost-of-living crisis is having a profound impact on our customers as outlined in the context section of the strategy and we have been working actively with our customers for several years to provide money and benefits advice with the demand for these services increasing substantially over the last 12 months and unlikely to reduce during the life of this strategy.

In the recent cost of living survey, just under half of customers reported low levels of confidence managing money, significantly higher than the national average. Customers who have struggled over the last 12 months reported taking various actions to pay everyday bills. Over two thirds have cut back on household spending and over half have turned off the heating. A quarter of customers state that they will not be able to cope with the rising cost of living.

ONS data shows that households with the lowest incomes are experiencing a higher-than-average inflation rate, whilst higher income households experienced a lower-than-average inflation. The UK government introduced measures to help alleviate the pressure on low-income households. This included measures such as the additional Cost-of-living payments, totalling £900, additional payment of £300 to support pensioners through the cost-of-living and a payment of £150 to support those on non-means tested disability benefits. However, many households couldn't meet the eligibility for this support, and instead have had to make difficult choices to manage their finances.

However, despite this additional support, MPs from the Work and Pensions Committee have identified several shortcomings of the current system. They highlighted that during the Covid-19 pandemic, the government increased Universal Credit by £20 per week, but has failed to do something similar in relation to the cost-of-living crisis. Many claimants were also excluded from this temporary uplift due to being on legacy benefits such as Jobs Seekers Allowance and Income Support – something that does seem to have been resolved with the government's one-off cost of living support payments.

Putting money back in your pocket

Case study

Earlier this year our affordability officer, Cath received a referral from the income collection team for John, a customer who was in high rent arrears, and for whom the next step would be court action.

When Cath visited John, she discovered that sadly John had lost his child a few years back and had struggled with his mental health ever since. John was suffering in silence and not dealing with daily life, including his bills. Cath listened and understood his situation and instantly got to work looking at how we could assist and support John.

Cath suggested that John apply for Scottish Adult Disability Payment (ADP) as his mental health was so impaired that he couldn't go about his normal daily functions. Scottish ADP can take a long time to process, but Cath kept in regular contact with John to make sure he was doing okay and managing with his rent and other household bills. We were able to help John with £100 funding from the Scottish Government's Fuel Insecurity Fund.

John finally got his award from Scottish ADP in October, and he was awarded both rates of ADP which increased his weekly income by £156.90 per week. This was backdated and he received a lump sum of £3957.43 - a brilliant result for both John and Cath.

Now that John is getting the benefits he is entitled to, he has been able to get back on track with his rent and is now able to afford payments towards the rent arrears he had built up.

John is now coping better and has regular contact with his tenant partner.

If you are struggling with your rent, please get in touch.

For more information and to book an appointment call our Affordability Officer on 07974 751 084

The committee also raised concerns with the benefit cap, that has been in place since 2016 – which saw limits being applied to the amount of benefits households could claim. This hadn't been increased until last year, where the government announced that it would rise by 10.1%. This support will be very welcome for claimants, and for the Committee who had concerns that the benefit cap only saved 0.1% of the overall welfare budget but was inflicting increasing hardship for claimants. The Child Poverty Action Group said that "almost all capped households with children are already in deep poverty".

Taking all this information into account, our Affordability Officer will be targeted towards customers struggling to pay household bills, offering support and advice around benefit entitlement, and working with customers who have fallen into rent arrears, to find an affordable solution to resolve this, with sustainability of their tenancy being the focus.

The Affordability Officer will identify households who will receive SHFA Fuel Support funding , which will provide more vital support to customers who are struggling to heat their homes, especially over the winter months.

As we work to support our customers who are experiencing damp, mould and condensation, inevitably, fuel consumption for heating and ventilating the home will be a primary requirement. As well as the SHFA Fuel Support Funding, we will ensure that customers can access affordable warmth and energy advice, through our new joint energy advice service with other local housing associations.

Riverside Scotland will also continue to maximise funding from the Riverside Helping Hands Fund to develop and introduce support for customers. We will also look at utilising the regular customer drop ins, to provide advice sessions to customers around finances, benefits and support available to them.

objective 2

Provide advice and support to customers to increase tenancy sustainment.

• A Housing First for Families Service that provides wrap around support for households with children who are at risk of homelessness, with a focus on supporting households to sustain their tenancy.

• As part of our new Tenant Partner model, tenancy sustainment is the primary objective for all front-line staff which will be based on trauma-informed practice to help build trusting relationships with customers and increase tenancy sustainment.

Housing First for Families

Our 'Housing First for Families' support service provides direct support to our tenant households with children, who are struggling to maintain their tenancy, or who have previously been through the homeless system.

Housing First is an approach that offers permanent, affordable housing as quickly as possible for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, and then provides the supportive services and connections to the community-based supports people need to keep their housing and avoid returning to homelessness.

We allocate around 35% of our lets to homeless households and, as part of the Riverside Group, have a strong commitment to tackling homelessness. This dedicated resource will help homeless people not only settle into their tenancies but support them in building a stable future going forward and prevent them from ending up in a cycle of homelessness.

The service will help customers in a range of ways including providing financial and employment advice and assistance, liaising with other agencies to coordinate and manage support provision, facilitate access to required health and social care services as needed, and provide a single point of contact for the household.

We have two full time Housing First for Families Officers, Emma Ward and Amanda Robinson, who are currently providing support to 31 families, who without this support, would be at further risk of homelessness. Overall, they have provided intensive support to 48 families, including 108 children. The service has been well received and demonstrates our commitment to supporting customers and alleviating homelessness.

Our new Tenant Partner model

Following our Big Conversation consultation last year, we implemented a restructure across the organisation, with a renewed focus on tenancy sustainment, proactively supporting our customers and for staff to be visible and accessible across our estates and communities.

Following this, we now have more Tenant Partners on hand to look after customers and their tenancies. We have over ten Tenant Partners, managing smaller patch sizes, giving them more time to focus on supporting customers with any challenges they face in sustaining their tenancy.

Our new approach is based on demonstrating a trauma-informed approach to how we engage with customers, which will help us build productive relationships as we work with customers to support them in their tenancy.

Furthermore, we have also introduced regular customer drop ins across our estates and communities, allowing customers a chance to come and speak with their Tenant Partner face-to-face on a regular basis. We have been trialling these across all estates and communities and will continue to review how we can best utilise these, based on the needs of customers.

Riverside Scotland

Local drop-ins

objective 3

Support the livelihoods of our customers - Develop a coherent approach to poverty alleviation.

• Maximising Riverside Foundation and external funding to reduce food and fuel poverty and reduce digital exclusion.
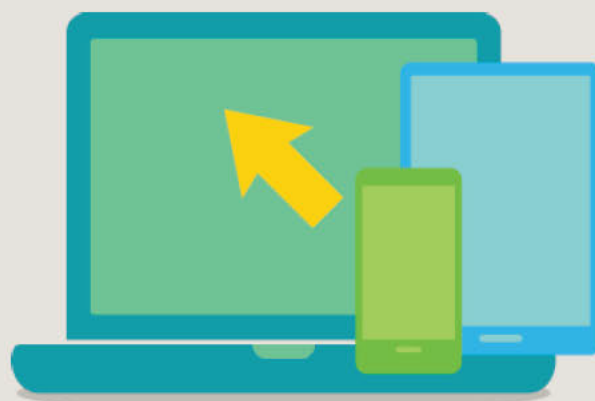
Nutritional Wellness

Riverside Scotland will develop partnerships with local organisations that seek to increase access to affordable, healthy food and alleviate food poverty. This will include local foodbanks and community pantries who operate across our estates and communities. These partnerships will seek to ensure that support is available for our customers, as well as looking at how Riverside Scotland can sustain these crucial services. We will conduct a full review of the services on offer across our estates and communities and produce a directory of support for our customers, that will signpost them to local organisations and groups that can offer support with food insecurity.

Furniture Solutions

Furniture is one of the most expensive items people on low incomes are likely to purchase and while there is extensive support for food and fuel costs, there has been less focus on supporting furniture poverty.

Furniture poverty occurs when people cannot access the basic items that make a home liveable, including white goods, beds, tables and chairs. Living without essential furniture items can have a devastating impact on physical and mental health, and financial and social wellbeing. Social housing tenants are more likely to be affected by furniture poverty.

People can get into unmanageable debt trying to buy items, leaving them unable to buy food or pay their rent. It can lead to isolation as they may be less likely to invite family, or a support worker, into their home if they do not have a sofa for them to sit on.

While there is widespread access to second hand furniture items via charity shops and freecycle type options, local affordable furniture projects are few and far between. In addition, the fire safety risks of second-hand products need to be considered.

Customers who are taking on a tenancy for the first time will be starting with very little, if anything, and will be more likely to incur loans or debts in the purchase of furniture to enable them to move into their new home. This will be more acute for those customers who were homeless. Riverside Scotland will work in partnership with our suppliers and contractors to ensure that we are maximising their commitments to Social Value.

Riverside Scotland, in partnership with our contractors, will launch a 'Bed Poverty' Campaign, focussed on alleviating the rising cases of adults and children who do not have a bed to sleep on and are instead, sleeping on mattresses on floors, sleeping on sofas or sharing beds. Riverside Scotland will work with partners to come up with new, innovative ways in which we can offer support to our tenants, who are struggling without beds, as well as other essential household items. N.B. our poverty alleviation activities will not be limited to combating food and furniture poverty. Our Support Directories also signpost customers to other support such as essential baby items, and we will support projects to reduce costs for items.

every household deserves
a good night's sleep

tackling bed poverty in partnership with: bell JAMES FREW

Digital Inclusion

Many industries and services have increased their online presence, and the need for digital connection is increasing as more organisations and services utilise the internet, particularly using smartphones.

Within Riverside, we are also facilitating and accommodating more services online through the portal and Apps, to create a more linear customer service and to record feedback. Whilst it is important that these online services are an addition to existing services, it is self-evident that online services provide greater efficiencies, not only for the organisation, but also for the consumer that chooses to use them.

We seek to enable more people to embrace digital technologies and become more digitally included and ensure the benefits of the internet and digital technologies are available to everyone. As part of this strategy, we will commit to supporting customers to make the most of digital services, and will trial webinars, offering digital training and advice to customers. As well as this, we will trial online and hybrid meetings, allowing customers to get involved with us in a way that suits them and their lifestyle, whilst also maximising digital inclusion.
Digital exclusion can come in two broad forms, and we seek to address digital exclusion due to:

·A lack of skills, confidence and motivation around technology and making the best use of it

·Limited or no access to equipment and connectivity

These two elements individually and together can create additional layers of social exclusion and exacerbate social and economic inequality amongst those that need support to be able to improve their quality of life and increase their life chances particularly when it comes to employability.

Getting online and becoming more confident with IT can be life-enhancing and, through this proposal, we want to ensure that our residents are not missing out.

Riverside Scotland has recently been successful in its bid for Connecting Scotland Funding, in which we were awarded 20 devices (iPads, tablets and laptops) as well as 20 mobile internet devices. This will be used to establish a Device Lending Scheme, which will seek to provide device and internet access to customers who would otherwise be digitally excluded.

Tenant Partners will refer customers who would benefit from this service, or customers will be able to refer themselves. They will be able to loan a device for up to 6 months, and it is hoped this will allow them to have better access to services, information and have further social and economic benefits.

objective 4

Explore options to establish a customer health and wellbeing offer.

• Develop projects to support improved customer health and wellbeing in partnership with local authorities, Health & Social Care Partnerships and community groups.

Loneliness and isolation

Loneliness and isolation are common amongst older customers and lack of socialisation and interaction can have a profound impact on their health and wellbeing.

We will work to implement a programme of health and wellbeing activities to our customers in retirement living complexes. This will be focused on improving socialisation amongst customers and the wider community, as well as ensuring that they have access to advice and support to help with their health and wellbeing.

Our aim is to set up local hubs at our retirement living complexes focusing on health and wellbeing activities to enable older customers to live independently for as long as possible.

Tackling loneliness is not just about older people. The Jo Cox commission on loneliness and the Minister of Loneliness, Baroness Barran, explain that everyone is at risk, and risks increase with factors such as age, disability, poor mental health, care needs and homelessness. Loneliness manifests itself as a sense of disconnection with the community, lack of opportunity to meet and socialise and a lack of access to dedicated space to socialise.

Positive action on social isolation must include:

· Tackling the stigma of loneliness
· Create opportunities for learning
· Create volunteering opportunities to increase social interactions and build community networks
· Provide good quality physical spaces and compelling reasons to meet up and socialise
· Support tenants to organise and deliver sessions themselves - co-produced or fully tenant led activities are likely to be more relevant, more popular, more sustainable and have greater longevity than organisation led activity.
· Cross community group engagement, e.g., Scouts cooking for older people in a community kitchen

Placemaking

Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share - placemaking refers to, 'a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. '

Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning design and management of neighbourhoods. Placemaking capitalises on local community assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating neighbourhoods that improve urban vitality and promote people's health, happiness, well-being, and aspiration.

Placemaking is both a process and a philosophy that makes use of government and local authority led initiatives, such as the 20-minute city principles or community driven at grassroots in improving local spaces and provision of essential services.

We will develop a plan for each neighbourhood, in partnership with residents, which will set out priority actions to address local issues and be innovative in our ways to address these.

We will test and evaluate several initiatives across various neighbourhoods to determine impact, outputs and outcomes to build our evidence base for longer-term recommendations.

objective 5

Support customers into employment and training opportunities.

• Build relationships with local authority partners and employability and skills organisations across the areas in which we operate, to create a referral pathway for support for our customers.

• Employment and apprenticeship opportunities maximised through social value opportunities with contractors.
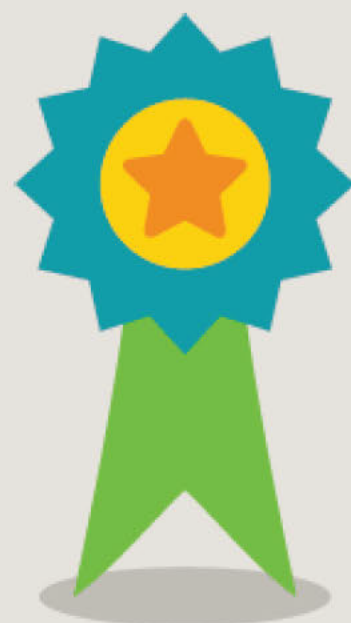
Employment & Training

Riverside Scotland is committed to supporting customers to maximise their income by supporting customers into employment and training and is taking a proactive approach to this across its geography.

Riverside Scotland will work with key employers and pursue growth opportunities within our communities to support aspiration and growing community wealth via opportunities in key growth employment sectors including development, retrofit, the green economy and sustainability sectors.

As an employer, Riverside Scotland promotes its own vacancies to customers and aims to maximise the social value from contracts. Riverside will develop a 'Fit for the Future' support programme securing opportunities for customers from retrofit works.

We will work to build relationships with local authorities and employability and skills organisations to establish referral processes in which we can refer any customers in need of support to get into employment, onto the relevant agencies.

objective 6

Building Community Capacity

•·A new Participatory Budgeting Fund to be established – establishing a way in which customers can have a say on how money is spent within their community.

·Community empowerment training programme developed with a focus on fundraising and project delivery, supporting people to establish and run a wide range of local initiatives.

·Community directories established, signposting customers to organisations that can offer support and help.

Communities coming together

Riverside Scotland work with a diverse range of customers and communities across the Southwest of Scotland. To harness the diversity and voice of those communities, we need to work with our customers to develop their capacity and provide a foundation from which to improve lives, communities and places; harnessing greater influence and control to shape local services. We will work towards creating strong, diverse communities that can attract and grow businesses and support the growth of community wealth.

We recognise the importance of Communities coming together to work towards common goals within their neighbourhood, ensuring we have places where our customers are proud to call home. By providing more targeted investment and support, we can help to strengthen communities through upskilling customers and supporting local groups to develop, ensuring they have access to the resources and/or support agencies that will empower and enable them to deliver the improvements they want to see.

The need to tackle inequalities, increase opportunities and promote wellbeing has never been greater. By recognising, celebrating, and building on the strengths in our communities we can help challenge and tackle stigma. We will encourage groups to be representative of the communities where they live and seek opportunities to develop multi-generational and inclusive projects.

The support programmes provided by community groups and through organisations' added value have become essential to local people through the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. Through this strategy, we intend to support these groups and continue to act as an 'anchor organisation' to provide needed services.

.

Where possible, Riverside Scotland will hold meetings at local community spaces, such as local community centres. By holding meetings in this way, we can ensure that we are giving back to local communities and in turn, supporting voluntary organisations and services that will support our customers.

It takes effective partnerships and working together with key strategic partners, local organisations, community groups and residents of all tenures to truly transform and empower communities. These partnerships will vary and be diverse based on the community we are working with but, in all cases, will share the same aligned vision and objectives, aiming to grow self-reliance, self-determination and participation.

objective 7

Increasing customer engagement to support improved service delivery.

• Riverside Scotland is committed to listening to our customers and we are keen to hear how we could improve services. We encourage customers to get involved in decision making and welcome feedback on how we could do things better. As part of this, we are committed to ensuring that we have a range of options available to customers to get involved.

Sounding Board

We will review our Customer Panel – a panel of customers who have expressed an interest in providing feedback to Riverside Scotland. We will look to update this to reflect what our customers want from us and will establish a new "Sounding Board".

Our new Sounding Board will offer customers the chance to provide feedback on decisions we make, any new policies we wish to implement and to provide feedback on our services and procedures.

We will offer customers flexibility in how they engage with us by seeking feedback through a range of methods – such as online surveys, text messaging, newsletters and postal surveys.

Riverside Scotland is also committed to working with customers across our communities and estates to tackle local issues and deliver on local priorities. We will seek to establish task-finish groups across priority areas, which will allow customers to tell us what their concerns are within their community, and work with Riverside Scotland to come up with a plan to address these issues. We will work with local community organisations, Tenants and Residents Associations and our local authority partners to come up with solutions, with a commitment to being flexible and innovative in the way we do this.

An example of this would be our Big Pennyburn Clean Up Event that took place in Autumn 2023. Riverside Scotland listened to the feedback of customers in Pennyburn regarding ongoing issues with fly-tipping, incorrect waste disposal and untidy gardens. We funded a two-day event focused on tackling these issues, with skips being made available to customers to correctly and safely dispose of any household items, as well as working with our contractors and local authority partners to act on untidy gardens and provide advice and support to customers.

Whilst this was a one-off event, it demonstrates how we can be proactive and innovative in the way we support customers to tackle local issues. By working collaboratively with customers, our contractors and the local authority, we were able to offer effective solutions. This could be seen as an example of best practice and this collaborative style of addressing local issues, should be mirrored as we work to drive improvements across our estates and communities.

THE BIG Pennyburn CLEAN UP

Thank You

WELL DONE TO ALL INVOLVED IN THE BIG PENNYBURN CLEAN UP!

Scrutiny

Our newly formed Scrutiny Group is another example of how Riverside Scotland is including customers in improving services. The Scrutiny Group is a group of tenants, from across our estates and communities, who are committed to working with Riverside Scotland to identify ways in which we could improve our service. T

he Scrutiny Group will focus on one project at a time, which will focus on one aspect of our service. The first project focused on our Voids and Lettings Policy, with the aim of identifying improvements we could make to ensure that customers receive the best service possible, whilst also ensuring value for money.

Once the group have carried out a full and thorough review of an area of service, they will provide a report to Riverside Scotland, detailing improvements that could be made. Riverside Scotland has made a commitment to action their recommendations, wherever possible and where we cannot action a recommendation, provide an explanation for this.

Riverside Scotland will seek to be flexible in the opportunities it offers customers to get involved and will make getting involved as accessible as possible for our customers – allowing every customer the chance to engage with us, no matter their background, circumstances or prior knowledge. We will also carry out ongoing analysis of customer feedback and carry out learning exercises from any complaints we receive, to ensure that we are constantly improving our service.

Scrutiny group logo or pic

key enablers

Our primary enabler is the Riverside Foundation who will be well-supported, directed and governed to play its role to invest the funding granted to it by Riverside, while maximising opportunities for external match funding.

Our second primary enabler is our robust data sources, and we will maximise the use of data and evidence to inform decision making as well monitoring project delivery against clearly defined outcomes with robust evaluation to identify best practice.

The Riverside Sustainability Index (RSI) along with the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data that we have modelled against all our neighbourhoods, provides us with a very detailed analysis of the issues impacting a particular community and the potential interventions that could be developed to deliver solutions.

Many of the activities delivered by the Communities and Livelihood strategy would benefit from targeted marketing campaigns which would enable Riverside Scotland to actively promote projects and initiatives, particularly employment and training opportunities, to customers. Riverside Scotland does not currently capture and hold data on consent to market non-essential services and a data strategy taking this into account would enable targeted marketing campaigns to those that give their consent and want to hear from us.
.

Other key enablers to the delivery of this strategy include:

·Existing strategic and operational partnerships with local authority partners and community groups. We will build on these partnerships to maximise opportunities to increase the products and services available to our customers.

·External grant funding secured for several projects which we will learn from and determine how we can maximise our grant funding income streams to deliver more outputs for customers. We will investigate the opportunities to tap into Corporate Social Responsibility funding through our contractors to help us in our aim to supporting customers and communities.

·Ongoing Communications and Marketing to ensure that our message reaches customers and that customers are kept fully informed of the work we are doing. Developing the new Word on the Street newsletters and further utilising the use of online, social media and text messaging marketing campaigns.

·Word of mouth is a powerful tool to get customer engagement in projects and initiatives and we will develop customer testimonials from successfully delivered projects to promote the benefits of these to their peers.

·Customer/Resident Involvement & Engagement will be a priority for the business over the next 3 years and as we build the engagement frameworks with local customers, in local neighbourhoods, it will present opportunities to create community resilience and empowerment initiatives.

communities and livelihoods action plan

Year 1 commitments:

·Within the first year of this strategy, Riverside Scotland, in partnership with the Scrutiny Group, will deliver at least one more scrutiny project with a report outlining recommendations in how we could improve our service in a particular area of the organisation.

·We will implement customer consultations as we embark on new programmes of planned maintenance works in 2024/25 – allowing customers to get involved and have a say on bathroom and kitchen replacement programmes and choose which style of fixtures and fittings they would like to see us use.

·Riverside Scotland will continue to engage with customers across our estates and neighbourhoods, to identify and address local issues.

·Riverside Scotland will develop a new Handyperson Service, that will be available to customers to help them maintain their home. This will focus on carrying out small jobs around the home, that customers may not be able to do themselves, with a focus on vulnerable customers.

·We will establish a rolling programme of Health and Wellbeing activities within our Retirement Living Complexes, working in partnership with the local authority, health organisations and other local groups to help tackle social isolation and improve health and wellbeing of our elderly customers.

·Roll out a Device Lending Scheme to customers, through funding from Connecting Scotland, to offer customers the chance to access IT devices and internet connectivity, ensuring that we are doing all we can to combat digital exclusion.

·Establish working relationships with local employability and skills agencies – creating a referral pathway for Riverside Scotland into these services so customers can be supported into work or education.

·Produce a Directory of Support – providing details of support services and local organisations that may be of assistance to our customers as they continue to navigate the cost-of-living crisis, with a focus on alleviating poverty, food insecurity and isolation.

Riverside
Scotland

Appendix 1

Communities and Livelihoods Strategy 2024-27 Consultation Results

Total no. customers consulted: Open to all customers (survey emailed to 13 involved customers as well as posted on website)
Total no. completed surveys: 24
Opened Tuesday 5th March 2024 – Closed Tuesday 4th April 2024

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our Corporate Plan Commitments, that underpin our Communities and Livelihoods Strategy?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly Agree		20.83%	5
2	Agree		29.17%	7
3	Neither Agree or Disagree		45.83%	11
4	Disagree		0.00%	0
5	Strongly Disagree		4.17%	1
			answered	24
			skipped	0

2. To what extent would you agree or disagree that our objectives are clear?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly Agree		29.17%	7
2	Agree		29.17%	7
3	Neither Agree or Disagree		25.00%	6
4	Disagree		4.17%	1
5	Strongly Disagree		12.50%	3
			answered	24
			skipped	0

3. Do you think we have included the right objectives? If not, please provide further information in the comments field at the end of the survey.

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		41.67%	10
2	No		33.33%	8
3	Unsure		25.00%	6
			answered	24
			skipped	0

Appendix 1

4. Are there any priorities that you feel haven't been addressed within this Strategy? If so, please provide further information in the comments field at the end of the survey.

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		45.83%	11
2	No		25.00%	6
3	Unsure		29.17%	7
			answered	24
			skipped	0

5. Are there any groups that you feel we should be working with to achieve our aim of maximising opportunities to increase the products and services available to our customers? If so, please provide further information in the comments field at the end of the survey.

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		25.00%	6
2	No		25.00%	6
3	Unsure		50.00%	12
			answered	24
			skipped	0

6. Strategy Content Do you feel that the Communities and Livelihoods Strategy addresses the most important issues that our customers and communities will face over the next 3 years?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		45.83%	11
2	No		29.17%	7
3	Unsure		25.00%	6
			answered	24
			skipped	0

7. Overall, did you find the strategy clear and easy to understand?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		58.33%	14
2	No		20.83%	5
3	Unsure		20.83%	5
			answered	24
			skipped	0

Appendix 1

8. Finally, do you have any other comments to make on Riverside Scotland's Communities and Livelihoods Strategy?	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Open-Ended Question	100.00%	15

1	Include homeowners and private let tenants on the Pennyburn estate in things that are happening through letters rather than social media as not everyone has this means of access. Make it easier to contact a LOCAL Riverside representative. Drop-in sessions are great but maybe have evening ones as people at work cannot attend if they have problems.
2	Take anti-social behaviour with more effectiveness.
3	You know who the dealers are... you have been told by people why aren't you doing anything!!
4	The objective is to really listen to your tenants and follow through on promises.
5	Continuous poor response times & lack of communication increases stress on livelihoods & transparency.
6	FIX THE DAMAGES IN HOMES AND TRAIN YOUR WORKERS ON SENDING OUT THE RIGHT TEAM FOR REPAIRS!
7	Priorities should be about improving tenant's standard of living and providing best possible service. This seems more of a box ticking exercise and as such is totally meaningless. Personally myself and my wife have been on the housing waiting list for over 12 years for a suitable house. For those 12 years we have been totally ignored and overlooked. So please don't patronise us by claiming that you care about us Good luck ticking boxes.
8	Not really, although I feel there must be more done to deal with anti-social tenants.
9	If a tenant has a problem or some kind of issue, there should be more help available.
10	Yes, you have never helped me or the area with anything except for the area to go downhill. Mess everywhere livelihoods I take it is having bungalows especially for people in and out of jail not for people that have paid rent .the house are all identified the dearest rents so what is this great thing you are talking about for the communities never had. People should not be evicted in this day and age, but drug users jail birds should be all put into homeless accommodation not put into streets as it doesn't work. Communities are going downhill fast. Thanks to riverside
11	No details of ""projects"" are mentioned. No details on time expectations with details of where and when. No details of what agencies you are working with. No details and specifics. Sounds good but no strategy of implementation.
12	More things for kids to do
13	Meet your current basic commitments to tenants before expanding your remit
14	More needs to be done to support people who have to put up with constant pet issues animal dirt in gardens constant barking and cats in gardens I thought you had to have permission for pets? Dirt in the streets is ridiculous especially paths where you have no lighting (thanks to yourselves) so you stand on dirt whether they are in bags or not someone is going to have an accident and get ill. Number of pigeons in the gardens/roofs are a joke bird poo everywhere last year I counted over 30 birds on 3 roofs this is a health hazard, just today I found a headless pigeon at the bottom of the path!! Disgusting
15	Houses in Drongan area should have new window , doors and all over improvements as per surveyor who inspected house for you Overall they are not efficient and get any improvements in my house we have put kitchens in ourselves, interior doors and the rest outside new wooden fence as old one unsafe

Appendix 1

8. Finally, do you have any other comments to make on Riverside Scotland's Communities and Livelihoods Strategy?		
	Response Percent	Response Total
I think we deserve improvements as the Irvine housing homes look dirty and poor estate as it is not well maintained		
16 To get smaller street groups to provide feedback in their area. Maybe need to review each year to make sure performance is good.		
	answered	16
	skipped	8

9.3. Annual Return on the Charter

Title: Annual Return on the Charter	Date: 3rd May 2024
Author: Jonathan Hulme ███████████████	Sponsor: Diana MacLean
Action: Review	Confidential: No
Appendices: Appendix 1 – Draft ARC Return Appendix 2 – ARC Performance Comparison Report Appendix 3 – Global Validation Report	Reading Room:
Reg. Standard: Standard 4 The governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose	ORP ref:
Strategic Risk ref: R6 Governance and Regulation	
Consultation: This report is not subject to consultation	

Purpose and Action:

The Board is asked:

- To review the content of the ARC
- To approve the ARC for submission to the SHR
- To authorise the Managing Director to approve and submit the return on behalf of Riverside Scotland

Executive Summary:

All registered social landlords are required to complete the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) and return it to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) by the 31st May. Before the ARC is submitted, the Regulator requires the full governing body to review and approve the information contained within the ARC.

Officers use the regulator's technical guidance to complete the questions. We rely on a combination of automated reports and manual records to complete the return. Internal checks are carried out on the figures provided to minimise the risk of any errors.

---

1. Introduction

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 required Scottish Ministers to set standards and outcomes which social landlords should aim to achieve and publish in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

The Scottish Social Housing Charter was first published in 2012 and updated in 2017 when only minor amendments were made to the Charter. However, as detailed to the Board in the 2019/20 return, a full consultation was undertaken during 2019 which resulted in several changes being made to the information we are required to return relating to the submission of EESSH (Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing) compliance information. In 2022/23 the SHR advised that they were reviewing the information requested to reflect tenant and resident safety, and EESSH standards, and that for the 2022/23 Return, information relating to these areas will be captured via the Association's Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) data and associated commentary. There have been no changes to the technical guidance for this year's ARC Return and so all of the previous changes mentioned above remain in place.

2. Discussion

Implications/Risks

The ARC provides the Regulator with a full set of information from all social landlords which can be used to benchmark between organisations and highlight areas of strong performance, as well as areas that need improvement.

Local and centrally generated data sets are gathered within Riverside Scotland throughout the year to provide an accurate return. All electronic back-up reports are stored in one, central file for ease of access.

Several staff assist with the completion of indicators within the ARC, taking responsibility for their own area of expertise with support from the Planning Team where needed. Full validation of the indicator answers against the associated data sets is undertaken by the Planning Team who then input the validated data into the Regulator's portal for Riverside Scotland. The portal automatically cross-checks many of the figures and highlights any validation errors which can then be corrected.

After validation, the Planning Team undertakes a sense-check to confirm any fluctuations in the figures against previous years and to ensure that the technical guidance has been followed. Any out of kilter indicators receive full comments, to reduce the likelihood of the Regulator needing to ask any questions or request evidence.

Indicators – Performance

There are several areas where performance has improved or remained steady:

- Satisfaction – We have seen a significant improvement in satisfaction this year. All areas have seen improvement except for the factoring service which fell to 39.5%. Last year there was a noticeable decline in satisfaction and we had introduced significant changes to understand and address the decline in our customer satisfaction levels during 2022. A new improvement action plan was developed and a new operational structure put in place to support improved service delivery.
- EICR - We implemented an intensive programme of electrical safety checks throughout 2023/24. This saw us move from 89% at the end of 2022/23 to 99.43% compliance in domestic electrical safety checks. In all cases outstanding, this was due to tenancy issues which our Tenant Partners are working with our customers to support them and obtain access.
- Expired Gas Safety Inspections - After a positive reduction in expired LGSRs last year, we have managed to maintain this performance with 0 expired LGSRs in 2023/24. We have a robust gas safety check and management process in place which has smoothly transitioned to our new Business Support Team as part of our operational restructure.
- Rent Arrears – 2023/24 has seen improvement in rent arrears as we have been able to decrease the percentage of rent due from 5.99% last year to 4.88% this year.
- Complaints – The percentage of complaints responded to in full and the average length of time taken to respond has remained relatively

steady. There has been a slight improvement in time taken to respond to complaints both in Stage 1 and 2 but the percentage responded to in full has seen a very marginal decline.

- Repairs – The average length of time to complete both emergency and non-emergency repairs has remained steady. The time to complete emergency repairs has increased from 4.65 hours to 4.74 hours meanwhile non-emergency repairs have increased from 13.02 days to 13.08 days.

3. Next Steps

The Board is asked to review the contents of the ARC and the Global Validation Report.

Scottish Housing Regulator

Landlord name: Irvine Housing Association Ltd

RSL Reg. No.: 280

Report generated date: 20/05/2024 16:32:05

Approval

A1.1	Date approved	
A1.2	Approver	
A1.3	Approver job title	
A1.4	Comments (Approval)	

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Comments (Submission)

Page 2 of 51

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Scottish Housing Regulator

Social landlord contextual information

Staff

Staff information, staff turnover and sickness rates (Indicator C1)

C1.1	the name of Chief Executive	Mrs. Diana MacLean
C1.2.1	C1.2 Staff employed by the RSL: the number of senior staff	3.00
C1.2.2	the number of office based staff	32.81
C1.2.3	the number of care / support staff	0.00
C1.2.4	the number of concierge staff	0.00
C1.2.5	the number of direct labour staff	0.00
C1.2.6	the total number of staff	
C1.3.1	Staff turnover and sickness absence: the percentage of senior staff turnover in the year to the end of the reporting year	0.00%
C1.3.2	the percentage of total staff turnover in the year to the end of the reporting year	12.84%
C1.3.3	the percentage of days lost through staff sickness absence in the reporting year	8.74%

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Social landlord contextual information

Lets

Number of lets during the reporting year, split between 'general needs' and 'supported housing' (Indicator C3)

C3.1	The number of 'general needs' lets during the reporting year	149
C3.2	The number of 'supported housing' lets during the reporting year	32

	Indicator C3	181

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Scottish Housing Regulator

	The number of lets during the reporting year by source of let (Indicator C2)	

C2.1	The number of lets to existing tenants	12
C2.2	The number of lets to housing list applicants	87
C2.3	The number of mutual exchanges	31
C2.4	The number of lets from other sources	18
C2.5.1	C2.5 The number of applicants who have been assessed as statutorily homeless by the local authority as: section 5 referrals	64
C2.5.2	nominations from the local authority	0
C2.5.3	other	0
C2.6	the number of other nominations from local authorities	0
C2.7	Total number of lets excluding exchanges	181

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Comments for any notable improvements or deterioration in performance regarding the figures supplied in the "Social landlord contextual information" section.

The level of sickness absence has been impacted by cases of long term absences.

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Scottish Housing Regulator

Overall satisfaction

All outcomes

Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord (Indicator 1)		

1.1.1	1.1 In relation to the overall tenant satisfaction survey carried out, please state: the number of tenants who were surveyed	2,404
1.1.2	the fieldwork dates of the survey	03/2024
1.1.3	The method(s) of administering the survey: Post	☐
1.1.4	Telephone	☒
1.1.5	Face-to-face	☐
1.1.6	Online	☒
1.2.1	1.2 In relation to the tenant satisfaction question on overall services, please state the number of tenants who responded: very satisfied	161
1.2.2	fairly satisfied	168
1.2.3	neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	45
1.2.4	fairly dissatisfied	56
1.2.5	very dissatisfied	51
1.2.6	no opinion	0
1.2.7	Total	481

	Indicator 1	68.40%

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Comments for any notable improvements or deterioration in performance regarding the figures supplied in the "Overall satisfaction" section.

N/A

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Scottish Housing Regulator

The customer / landlord relationship

Communication

Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions (Indicator 2)

2.1	How many tenants answered the question "How good or poor do you feel your landlord is at keeping you informed about their services and decisions?"	486
2.2.1	2.2 Of the tenants who answered, how many said that their landlord was: very good at keeping them informed	212
2.2.2	fairly good at keeping them informed	148
2.2.3	neither good nor poor at keeping them informed	64
2.2.4	fairly poor at keeping them informed	23
2.2.5	very poor at keeping them informed	39
2.2.6	Total	486

	Indicator 2	74.07%

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Scottish Housing Regulator

Participation

Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes (Indicator 5)

5.1	How many tenants answered the question "How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with opportunities given to you to participate in your landlord's decision making processes?"	486
5.2.1	5.2 Of the tenants who answered, how many said that they were: very satisfied	161
5.2.2	fairly satisfied	153
5.2.3	neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	128
5.2.4	fairly dissatisfied	24
5.2.5	very dissatisfied	20
5.2.6	Total	486

Indicator 5	64.61%

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Comments for any notable improvements or deterioration in performance regarding the figures supplied in the "The customer / landlord relationship" section.

Following extensive work to understand the needs of our customers we have implemented improvements across our services which are leading to improvements across all tenant satisfaction indicators.

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Scottish Housing Regulator

Housing quality and maintenance

Quality of housing

Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) – Stock condition survey information (Indicator C8)

C8.1	The date your organisation's stock was last surveyed or assessed for compliance with the SHQS	03/2023
C8.2	What percentage of stock did your organisation fully assess for compliance in the last five years?	20.00
C8.3	The date of your next scheduled stock condition survey or assessment	03/2026
C8.4	What percentage of your organisation's stock will be fully assessed in the next survey for SHQS compliance	20.00
C8.5	Comments on method of assessing SHQS compliance.	

Stock condition and SHQS survey last completed by Savills in March 2023. Over the last 12 months we have been working to analyse the data from the recent stock condition survey. We are in the process of procuring a new contract which will see us complete 20% stock condition surveys per year over the coming 3 years to further build on our SHQS data.

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Scottish Housing Regulator

Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) – Stock summary (Indicator C9)

		End of the reporting year	End of the next reporting year
C9.1	Total self-contained stock	2,498	2,498
C9.2	Self-contained stock exempt from SHQS	0	0
C9.3	Self-contained stock in abeyance from SHQS	0	0
C9.4.1	Self-contained stock failing SHQS for one criterion	267	154
C9.4.2	Self-contained stock failing SHQS for two or more criteria	0	0
C9.4.3	Total self-contained stock failing SHQS	267	154
C9.5	Stock meeting the SHQS	2,231	2,344

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

C9.6	Total self-contained stock meeting the SHQS by local authority

	End of the reporting year	End of the next reporting year
Aberdeen City	0	0
Aberdeenshire	0	0
Angus	0	0
Argyll & Bute	0	0
City of Edinburgh	0	0
Clackmannanshire	0	0
Dumfries & Galloway	359	361
Dundee City	0	0
East Ayrshire	177	177
East Dunbartonshire	0	0
East Lothian	0	0
East Renfrewshire	0	0
Eilean Siar	0	0
Falkirk	0	0
Fife	0	0
Glasgow City	0	0
Highland	0	0
Inverclyde	0	0
Midlothian	0	0
Moray	0	0
North Ayrshire	1,582	1,693

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

North Lanarkshire	0	0
Orkney Islands	0	0
Perth & Kinross	0	0
Renfrewshire	0	0
Scottish Borders	0	0
Shetland Islands	0	0
South Ayrshire	113	113
South Lanarkshire	0	0
Stirling	0	0
West Dunbartonshire	0	0
West Lothian	0	0
Totals	2,231	2,344

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Scottish Housing Regulator

	Percentage of stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) (Indicator 6)

6.1.1	The total number of properties within scope of the SHQS: at the end of the reporting year	2,498
6.1.2	projected to the end of the next reporting year	2,498
6.2.1	The number of properties meeting the SHQS: at the end of the reporting year	2,231
6.2.2	projected to the end of the next reporting year	2,344

Indicator 6 - Percentage of stock meeting the SHQS at the end of the reporting year	89.31%
Indicator 6 - Percentage of stock meeting the SHQS projected to the end of the next reporting year	93.84%

Page 16 of 51

	Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home (Indicator 7)	

7.1	How many tenants answered the question "Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of your home?"	486
7.2.1	7.2 Of the tenants who answered, how many said that they were: very satisfied	219
7.2.2	fairly satisfied	167
7.2.3	neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	38
7.2.4	fairly dissatisfied	35
7.2.5	very dissatisfied	27
7.3	Total	486

Indicator 7	79.42%

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Scottish Housing
Regulator

Repairs, maintenance & improvements

Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs (Indicator 8)

8.1	The number of emergency repairs completed in the reporting year	2,213
8.2	The total number of hours taken to complete emergency repairs	10,497

	Indicator 8	4.74

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs (Indicator 9)

9.1	The total number of non-emergency repairs completed in the reporting year	6,136
9.2	The total number of working days taken to complete non-emergency repairs	80,242

	Indicator 9	13.08

Percentage of reactive repairs carried out in the last year completed right first time (Indicator 10)

10.1	The number of reactive repairs completed right first time during the reporting year	5,110
10.2	The total number of reactive repairs completed during the reporting year	6,136

Indicator 10	83.28%

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

How many times in the reporting year did not meet your statutory duty to complete a gas safety check (Indicator 11).

11.1	The number of times you did not meet your statutory duty to complete a gas safety check.	0
11.2	if you did not meet your statutory duty to complete a gas safety check add a note in the comments field	

N/A

Indicator 11	0

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Scottish Housing Regulator

	Percentage of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in last 12 months satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service (Indicator 12)	

12.1	Of the tenants who had repairs carried out in the last year, how many answered the question "Thinking about the LAST time you had repairs carried out, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the repairs service provided by your landlord?"	651
	12.2 Of the tenants who answered, how many said that they were:	428
12.2.1	very satisfied	
12.2.2	fairly satisfied	60
12.2.3	neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	30
12.2.4	fairly dissatisfied	18
12.2.5	very dissatisfied	115
12.2.6	Total	651

	Indicator 12	74.96%

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Comments for any notable improvements or deterioration in performance, or compliance with tenant and resident safety requirements regarding the figures supplied in the "Housing quality and maintenance" section, including non-compliance with electrical, gas and fire safety requirements and plans to address these issues.

Since the implementation of our new contractor management framework, we have worked closely with our contractors to manage performance and customer satisfaction. We have rolled out internal training on trauma informed practise with our contractors. Over the last 12 months we have seen satisfaction with repairs and maintenance service rise and dip throughout the year. Overall there has been a 0.86% decrease. We have implemented a repairs improvement plan and internal processes to drive this forward over the next 12 months. We have seen our average length of time taken to complete an emergency repair remain steady throughout the year at 4.71 hours. Percentage of repairs right first time has seen a steady increase throughout the year up to 84.50%. We have completed internal audits on all areas of compliance this year and will be taking forward agreed actions to ensure compliance. We carried out a large project to complete electrical safety checks in all of our properties which saw our overall compliance rise to 99.43% at the end of March 2024. All other areas of compliance have remained at 100% compliance at the end of the reporting year. We have implemented a one point of contact role for all complaints and have seen that complaints satisfaction has risen and dipped throughout the year but overall remained steady. Over the course of the next 12 months we will be carrying out a programme of stock condition data validation in addition to carrying out 20% stock condition surveys annually.

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Scottish Housing Regulator

Neighbourhood & community

Estate management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes

Percentage of all complaints responded to in full at Stage 1 and percentage of all complaints responded to in full at Stage 2. (Indicators 3 & 4)

	1st stage	2nd stage
Complaints received in the reporting year	218	40
Complaints carried forward from previous reporting year	11	2
All complaints received and carried forward	229	42
Number of complaints responded to in full by the landlord in the reporting year	217	40
Time taken in working days to provide a full response	1,872	529

Indicators 3 & 4 - The percentage of all complaints responded to in full at Stage 1	94.76%
Indicators 3 & 4 - The percentage of all complaints responded to in full at Stage 2	95.24%
Indicators 3 & 4 - The average time in working days for a full response at Stage 1	8.63
Indicators 3 & 4 - The average time in working days for a full response at Stage 2	13.22

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Scottish Housing Regulator

	Percentage of tenants satisfied with the landlord's contribution to the management of the neighbourhood they live in (Indicator 13)	

13.1	How many tenants answered the question "'Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your landlord's contribution to the management of the neighbourhood you live in?'"	486
13.2.1	13.2 Of the tenants who answered, how many said that they were: very satisfied	155
13.2.2	fairly satisfied	140
13.2.3	neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	99
13.2.4	fairly dissatisfied	48
13.2.5	very dissatisfied	44
13.2.6	Total	486

	Indicator 13	60.70%

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Percentage of tenancy offers refused during the year (Indicator 14)

14.1	The number of tenancy offers made during the reporting year	189
14.2	The number of tenancy offers that were refused	8

	Indicator 14	4.23%

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Percentage of anti-social behaviour cases reported in the last year which were resolved (Indicator 15)

15.1	The number of cases of anti-social behaviour reported in the last year	168
15.2	Of those at 15.1, the number of cases resolved in the last year	145

	Indicator 15	86.31%

Scottish Housing Regulator

Abandoned homes (Indicator C4)

C4.1	The number of properties abandoned during the reporting year	5

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

	Percentage of the court actions initiated which resulted in eviction and the reasons for eviction (Indicator 22)

22.1	The total number of court actions initiated during the reporting year	11
22.2.1	22.2 The number of properties recovered: because rent had not been paid	4
22.2.2	because of anti-social behaviour	0
22.2.3	for other reasons	0

Indicator 22 - Percentage of the court actions initiated which resulted in eviction because rent had not been paid	36.36%
Indicator 22 - Percentage of the court actions initiated which resulted in eviction because of anti-social behaviour	0.00%
Indicator 22 - Percentage of the court actions initiated which resulted in eviction for other reasons	0.00%
Indicator 22 - Percentage of the court actions initiated which resulted in eviction	36.36%

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Comments for any notable improvements or deterioration in performance regarding the figures supplied in the "Neighbourhood & community" section.

Figures for days taken to respond to stage 1 complaints show higher due to internal process, staff were retaining the complaint as open until work carried out. However, throughout the year this was updated to ensure that stage 1 complaints were closed once resolution was agreed. Staff will now close a complaint once resolution is agreed.

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Scottish Housing Regulator

Access to housing and support

Housing options and access to social housing

Percentage of lettable houses that became vacant in the last year (Indicator 17)

17.1	The total number of lettable self-contained stock	2,498
17.2	The number of empty dwellings that arose during the reporting year in self-contained lettable stock	132

	Indicator 17	5.28%

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Scottish Housing Regulator

Number of households currently waiting for adaptations to their home (Indicator 19)

19.1	The total number of approved applications on the list for adaptations as at the start of the reporting year, plus any new approved applications during the reporting year.	59
19.2	The number of approved applications completed between the start and end of the reporting year	23
19.3	The total number of households waiting for applications to be completed at the end of the reporting year.	36
19.4	if 19(iii) does not equal 19(i) minus 19(ii) add a note in the comments field.	
		N/A

	Indicator 19	36

Page 32 of 51

Total cost of adaptations completed in the year by source of funding (£) (Indicator 20)

20.1	The cost(£) that was landlord funded;	£42,717
20.2	The cost(£) that was grant funded	£75,000
20.3	The cost(£) that was funded by other sources.	£0

	Indicator 20	£117,717

The average time to complete adaptations (Indicator 21)

21.1	The total number of working days taken to complete all adaptations.	832
21.2	The total number of adaptations completed during the reporting year.	23

Indicator 21	36.17

	Homelessness – the percentage of referrals under Section 5, and other referrals for homeless households made by the local authority, that result in an offer, and the percentage of those offers that result in a let (Indicator 23)	

23.1	The total number of individual homeless households referrals received under section 5.	167
23.2	The total number of individual homeless households referrals received under other referral routes.	0
23.3	The total number of individual homeless households referrals received under section 5 and other referral routes.	167
23.4	The total number of individual homeless households referrals received under section 5 that result in an offer of a permanent home.	65
23.5	The total number of individual homeless households referrals received under other referral routes that result in an offer of a permanent home.	0
23.6	The total number of individual homeless households referrals received under section 5 and other referral routes that result in an offer of a permanent home.	65
23.7	The total number of accepted offers.	64

Indicator 23 - The percentage of referrals under section 5, and other referrals for homeless households made by a local authority, that result in an offer	38.92%
Indicator 23 - The percentage of those offers that result in a let	98.46%

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Average length of time to re-let properties in the last year (Indicator 30)

30.1	The total number of properties re-let in the reporting year	128
30.2	The total number of calendar days properties were empty	4,134

	Indicator 30	32.30

Scottish Housing Regulator

Tenancy sustainment

Percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than a year, by source of let (Indicator 16)

16.1.1	The number of tenancies which began in the previous reporting year by: existing tenants	23
16.1.2	applicants who were assessed as statutory homeless by the local authority	56
16.1.3	applicants from your organisation's housing list	143
16.1.4	nominations from local authority	0
16.1.5	other	25
16.2.1	The number of tenants at 16.1 who remained in their tenancy for more than a year by: existing tenants	21
16.2.2	applicants who were assessed as statutory homeless by the local authority	48
16.2.3	applicants from your organisation's housing list	133
16.2.4	nominations from local authority	0
16.2.5	other	21

Indicator 16 - Percentage of new tenancies to existing tenants sustained for more than a year	91.30%
Indicator 16 - Percentage of new tenancies to applicants who were assessed as statutory homeless by the local authority sustained for more than a year	85.71%
Indicator 16 - Percentage of new tenancies to applicants from the landlord's housing list sustained for more than a year	93.01%
Indicator 16 - Percentage of new tenancies through nominations from local authority sustained for more than a year	N/A
Indicator 16 - Percentage of new tenancies to others sustained for more than a year	84.00%

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Comments for any notable improvements or deterioration in performance regarding the figures supplied in the "Access to housing and support" section.

This year our scrutiny panel carried out a report on our voids process and we will be working over the coming year to improve our days taken to complete a void property.

Getting good value from rents and service charges

Rents and service charges

Rent collected as percentage of total rent due in the reporting year (Indicator 26)

26.1	The total amount of rent collected in the reporting year	£12,269,500
26.2	The total amount of rent due to be collected in the reporting year (annual rent debit)	£12,304,387

	Indicator 26	99.72%

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Scottish Housing Regulator

	Gross rent arrears (all tenants) as at 31 March each year as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year (Indicator 27)

27.1	The total value (£) of gross rent arrears as at the end of the reporting year	£603,603
27.2	The total rent due for the reporting year	£12,381,471

	Indicator 27	4.88%

Average annual management fee per factored property (Indicator 28)

28.1	The number of residential properties factored	1,041
28.2	The total value of management fees invoiced to factored owners in the reporting year	£9,956

	Indicator 28	£9.56

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Scottish Housing Regulator

	Percentage of rent due lost through properties being empty during the last year (Indicator 18)	

18.1	The total amount of rent due for the reporting year	
18.2	The total amount of rent lost through properties being empty during the reporting year	£77,084

	Indicator 18	0.62%

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Rent increase (Indicator C5)

C5.1	The percentage average weekly rent increase to be applied in the next reporting year	6.70%

	The number of households for which landlords are paid housing costs directly and the total value of payments received in the reporting year (Indicator C6)

C6.1	The number of households the landlord received housing costs directly for during the reporting year	1,730
C6.2	The value of direct housing cost payments received during the reporting year	£7,022,647

Amount and percentage of former tenant rent arrears written off at the year end (Indicator C7)

C7.1	The total value of former tenant arrears at year end	£223,539
C7.2	The total value of former tenant arrears written off at year end	£30,809

	Indicator C7	13.78%

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Scottish Housing
Regulator

Value for money

	Percentage of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money (Indicator 25)

25.1	How many tenants answered the question "Taking into account the accommodation and the services your landlord provides, do you think the rent for your property represents good or poor value for money?"	486
25.2.1	25.2 Of the tenants who answered, how many said that their rent represented: very good value for money	139
25.2.2	fairly good value for money	180
25.2.3	neither good nor poor value for money	78
25.2.4	fairly poor value for money	56
25.2.5	very poor value for money	33
25.3	Total	486

	Indicator 25	65.64%

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Scottish Housing Regulator

	Percentage of factored owners satisfied with the factoring service they receive (Indicator 29)	

29.1	How many factored owners answered the question "Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the factoring services provided by your landlord?"	76
29.2.1	29.2 Of the factored owners who answered, how many said that they were: very satisfied	3
29.2.2	fairly satisfied	27
29.2.3	neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	12
29.2.4	fairly dissatisfied	16
29.2.5	very dissatisfied	18
29.3	Total	76

	Indicator 29	39.47%

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Comments for any notable improvements or deterioration in performance regarding the figures supplied in the "Getting good value from rents and service charges" section.

The Association continues to aim to keep rent increases to a minimum and to keep rents affordable for our tenants. This has been increasingly challenging in recent years due to the cost-of-living crisis and the inflationary increases associated with delivering our services. The number of customers struggling to pay their rent has increased and this has had a particularly significant impact on tenants in low paid employment. We continue to offer the support of our Affordability Officer which we have extended this year who works alongside our Income Collection service and Tenant Partners to work with new tenants, and those at high risk of homelessness to maximise their income and manage their household expenditure.

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Other customers

Gypsies / Travellers

For those who provide Gypsies/Travellers sites - Average weekly rent per pitch (Indicator 31)

31.1	The total number of pitches	0
31.2	The total amount of rent set for all pitches during the reporting year	N/A

	Indicator 31	N/A

For those who provide sites – percentage of Gypsy/Travellers satisfied with the landlord's management of the site (Indicator 32)

32.1	How many Gypsies/Travellers answered the question "How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your landlord's management of your site?"	
32.2.1	32.2 Of the Gypsies/Travellers who answered, how many said that they were: very satisfied	
32.2.2	fairly satisfied	
32.2.3	neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	
32.2.4	fairly dissatisfied	
32.2.5	very dissatisfied	
32.2.6	Total	

	Indicator 32	

Page 50 of 51

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-2024

Comments for any notable improvements or deterioration in performance regarding the figures supplied in the "Other customers" section.

N/A

Area	Sub Area	Indicator Ref	Indicator Description	Result Year on Year				
				19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Contextual Information	Organisational	Org	Stock split by region, age, size and type	2306	2306	2326	2443	2498
	Lets	C2	The number of lets during the reporting year by source of let.	238	116	131	246	181
		C3	Number of lets during the reporting year, split between 'general needs' and 'supported housing' (but scale back to new build and not new build)	199/39	100/16	106/25	205/41	149/32
	People	C1	Staff information, staff turnover and sickness rates.(RSLs only)	4.5/3.70	0.0/1.2	5.71/3.18	32.22/4.00	12.84/8.74
Overall Satisfaction	Satisfaction	1	Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord.	73.53	78.57	74.48	66.19	68.4
The Customer Landlord Relationship	Communication	2	Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions	71.83	78.19	75.69	73.25	74.07
	Participation	5	Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes	59.36	66.8	64.58	60.5	64.61
Housing Quality and Maintenance	EESSH	C10	Percentage of properties meeting the EESSH	79.6	86.3	92.3	N/A	N/A
		C11	Anticipated exemptions from the EESSH	277	317	180	N/A	N/A
		C12	Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) - REMOVED by SHR 2021/22	57.5	61.7	N/A	N/A	N/A
		C13	Investment in the EESSH - REMOVED BY SHR 2021/22	£410k	£522.7K	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Quality of Housing	C8	Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) – Stock condition survey information.	20	20	20	20	20
		C9	Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) – Stock summary.	2273/2277	2278/2305	2141/2347	2015/2423	2231/2344
		6	Percentage of homes meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) at the reporting year end.	98.57 / 98.74	98.79/98.80	92.05/94.87	82.48/99.18	89.31/93.84
		7	Percentage of existing tenants satisfied with the quality of their home.	75.43	74.52	72.05	70.38	79.42
	Repairs, Maintenance and Improvement	8	Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs.	3 hours	3.77 hrs	6.39 hrs	4.65 hrs	4.74 hrs
		9	Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	8.37 days	7.19 days	9.05 days	13.02 days	13.08 days
		10	Percentage of reactive repairs carried out in the last year completed right first time.	97.26	95.55	95.13	78.92	83.28
		11	The number of times in the reporting year that you did not meet your statutory obligation to complete a gas safety check within 12 months of a gas appliance being fitted or its last check	5	78	22	2	0
		12	Percentage of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in last 12 months satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service.	84.83	82.4	74.37	74.1	74.96
Neighbourhood and Community	Estate Management and ASB	C4	Abandoned Properties	9	5	7	10	5
		3&4	The % of all complaints responded to in full at Stage 1 and the % of all complaints responded to in full at Stage 2. The average time in working days for a full response at Stage 1 and the average time in working days for a full response at Stage 2.	100/100 1.74/21 days	97.7/100 7.05/18 days	97.19/100 7.02/4.75 days	96.73/100 10.85/17.37 days	94.76/95.24 8.63/13.22 days
		13	Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of neighbourhood they live in	61.44	67.57	64.76	59.78	60.7
		14	Percentage of tenancy offers refused during the year.	11.19	4.31	11.03	7.22	4.23
		15	Percentage of anti-social behaviour cases reported in the last year which were resolved.	81.43	82.43	81.9	90.9	86.31
		22	Percentage of the court actions initiated which resulted in eviction and the reasons for eviction.	15.79	0	20	24	11
Access to Housing and Support	Housing Options	17	Percentage of lettable houses that became vacant in the last year.	6.07	4.99	5.07	5.81	5.28
		19	Number of households currently waiting for adaptations to home.	4	19	14	52	36
		20	Total cost of adaptations completed in the year (£) by source of funding	£304,203	£218,487	£234,842	£202,989	£117,717
		21	The average time to complete adaptations.	41.98	44.31	37.87	57.2	36.17
		23	Homelessness (RSLs only) – the percentage of referrals under Section 5 that result in an offer, and the percentage of those offers that result in a let	18.18/96.3	22.48/100	18.33/100	36.99/100	38.92/98.46
		30	Average length of time taken to re-let properties in the last year	10.07	22.63	21.05	37.2	32.3
	Tenancy Sustainment	16	Percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than a year, by source of let.	exist 44.44 Hmless 87.8 Wlist 93.81	exist 85.71 Hmless 86.54 Wlist 97.58	Ex 12 (100) s5 53(91.38) List 41 (100) Other 3 (60)	Ex 12 (87.50) s5 (88.89) List (89.71) Other(79.17)	Ex 12 (91.30) s5 (85.71) List (93.01) Other(84)
Getting Good Value from Rents and Service Charges	Rents & Service Charges	C5	Rent Increase.	2	1.5	3.1	5	6.7
		C6	The number of households for which landlords are paid housing costs directly and the total value of payments received in the reporting year.	1539	1541	1577	1641	1730
		C7	Amount and percentage of former tenant rent arrears written off at the year end.	2.07	36.5	1.87	33.43	13.78
		18	Percentage of rent due lost through properties being empty during the last year	0.17	0.3	0.33	0.76	0.62
		26	Rent collected as percentage of total rent due in the reporting year.	99.68	97.86	98.82	98.49	99.72
		27	Gross rent arrears (all tenants) as at 31 March each year as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year.	3.46	3.68	5.09	5.99	4.88
		28	Average annual management fee per factored property	£6.31	£6.14	£6.25	£7.91	£9.56
	Value for Money	25	Percentage of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money	63.33	69.11	65.45	63.2	65.64
		29	Percentage of factored owners satisfied with the factoring service they receive.	46.55	50	50	50	39.47

KEY:	
	Major decline (over 5% or relative measure)
	Minimal decline (within 5% or relative measure)
	Represents Improvement

Irvine Housing Association Ltd - Charter - 2023/24

Introduction

Save | PDF | Close

Quick Navigation

⊘ No Validation Errors ↻

- ◉ Introduction
- ◉ Social landlord contextual information
- ◉ Overall satisfaction
- ◉ The customer / landlord relationship
- ◉ Housing quality and maintenance
- ◉ Neighbourhood & community
- ◉ Access to housing and support
- ◉ Getting good value from rents and service charges
- ◉ Other customers
- ◉ Approval

F1.2 Financial year	2023/2024
F1.3 Landlord name	Irvine Housing Association Ltd
F1.4 RSL Registration Number	280

Welcome

From April 2013 all social landlords must collect key information to show us how they are achieving the outcomes and standards in the Charter. By the end of August each year we will publish each landlord's ARC on our website so that tenants and other service users can see what progress the landlord is making. The ARC will also inform our regulatory assessments.

You must complete your ARC by 31 May each year. Please make sure that the senior officer in your organisation signs the ARC off.

We will publish a report for each landlord using key information from its ARC. We will do this by the end of August each year and will make the report available for tenants and other service users through our website. You must also make the report available to all of your tenants. It is up to you how you do this – it could be through a newsletter or an article on your website for instance – but all of your tenants should be able to access it.

About the online ARC

The online ARC has eleven sections:

9.7. Quarterly Performance Report

Title: Quarterly Performance Report – Q4 2023	**Date: 25/04/2024**
Author: Jonathan Hulme ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇	**Sponsor:** Diana MacLean
Action: Note	**Confidential:** No
Appendices: Appendix 1: Riverside Scotland Board KPIS Q4 2023/24	**Reading Room:**
Reg. Standard: Standard 4.2 The governing body challenges and holds the senior officer to account for their performance in achieving the RSL's purpose and objectives	**ORP ref:** Our Riverside Way: Value - Managing our resources effectively, so that we can build more homes and deliver better services
Strategic Risk ref: R6 Governance and Regulation	
Consultation: This report is not subject to consultation	

Purpose and Action:

The purpose of this report is to provide Board with an opportunity to review the Association's operational key performance indicators (KPIs) covering quarter four of 2023/24. The data is set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

Executive Summary:

The Board reviews the operational KPIs on a quarterly basis to ensure that performance is being managed effectively. The attached report at Appendix one covers performance for the period 1st January to March 31st 2024. It is recommended that Board discuss and note the contents of the Quarterly Performance Report.

---

1. **Introduction**

   Progress against our operational key performance indicators (KPIs) is reported to Board on a quarterly basis. Appendix 1 to this report sets out our performance position against each of our KPIs including distance from target, and direction of travel as at the end of March 2023. With no Board meeting scheduled for April, we have included a snapshot of the operational performance dashboards for Customer Satisfaction and Asset Services as at the end of April to provide an update on our current position.

2. **Key Points**

   The key points to note from the performance analysis are:

   - The majority of our Satisfaction Indicators saw an increase this quarter. Overall Satisfaction (Ind 1) hit 72% in Quarter 4, 2% above our target. Other notable areas include Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed (Ind 2) which saw an increase of 12.2% from 71.1% in Q3 to 83.3% in Q4. Satisfaction with quality of home (Ind 7) also hit 83.3% this quarter which is up 4% from Q3. It is worth mentioning that the majority of our Satisfaction Indicators have seen an increase compared to this time last year. For example, our overall satisfaction at this point last year was 63.4%.

   - Our Finance Indicators have done well this quarter. The total amount of rent collected (Ind 26) has exceeded 100% for the third quarter in succession (101.2%). The gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due (Ind 27) reached a low of 5.42% and exceeding the target of 5.7%. Comparatively to this time last year, we have improved performance as Q4 last year saw gross rent arrears sitting at 6.26%.

- We got the result of the three yearly factored owners satisfaction survey. Three years ago, we got a result of 50% with the target for this year set at 60%. The survey result revealed that factored owners satisfaction only reached 39.5%.

Further points to note:

- For Indicator 3+4 we have made a slight change to the Stage 2 figures. We have converted all Stage 2 complaints responded to in full to 100%. When looking back at previous quarters, we wanted to query why the responses at Stage 2 were sitting as low as 11% in Q2 and 6% in Q3. These numbers represented the percentage of Stage 2 complaints we received that quarter but in each case the response in full was 100%.

- There was also clarification needed surrounding the overdue Fire Risk Assessment Actions (Local Indicator). This was data that was missing in Q3 due to issues with the Tableau Dashboard but we can now report that there were 0 overdue actions in Q3 and again in Q4.

- We have also re done all quarterly statistics for Indicators 8,9,10 and the Local Indicator (Percentage of repairs appointments kept). We had encountered some issues with the accuracy of the contractor data pulling through which ended up taking some time to fix. A combined interactive dashboard for our contractor data has been put together for more accurate data reporting in these areas. In doing so, we have discovered that monthly data can subsequently pulled through. Therefore, when looking at the data retrospectively, we have found further changes in the data. The results are as follows:

  Emergency repairs (Ind 8) – remained roughly the same as first reported.

  Non-emergency repairs (Ind 9) – the average time has increased which fits more accordingly with our target.

  Reactive repairs completed right first time (Ind 10) – there is a noticeable increase each quarter. For example, in the last report for Q3 we reported 68.6% but that figure is 87% for Q3 and we are sitting at 84.2% for Q4.

  Percentage of repairs appointments kept (Local) – this indicator also had an increase in numbers each quarter.

The Management team have implemented the following actions to drive forward improvements:

- Developed a communication strategy to prioritise the publication of good news stories both internally and externally.
- Developed and implemented a repairs improvement plan.
- Agreed a suite of KPIs to monitor contractor performance closely at weekly and monthly meetings.

- Appointed a permanent Complaints Officer post to ensure we can provide customers with one point of contact for complaints handling.
- Developed and implemented a procedure for follow on works to ensure customers are kept informed at all stages of their repairs.
- Closer contract monitoring with all contractors across planned and reactive works.
- Commenced customer consultation on planned works.
- Worked with contractors to provide training for staff team, to support partnership working and improved relationships.
- Closer analysis of dissatisfied customers comments
- Working closely with CSC to ensure actions are taken to improve customer journey.

Over the next quarter and continuing throughout the year, the Management team will continue to ensure the above actions are progressed.

With regards to our Finance Performance, the following has been noted

- The Income Collection team have been actively pursuing rent in advance during conversations with customers explaining that at points during the month they have arrears and by building into 1 months credit this will prevent an arrears balance and put the rent account in a good position should they have a change of circumstance e.g. benefit changes, starting work etc. The Tenant Partners have been supporting this by having these conversations with customers and there has been an increase in the IC team sending through rent visits for static balances and early intervention.

3. Next Steps

Board is asked to note the content the of operational performance position as at Q4 2023.

	Major difference/decline (over 5% or relative measure)
	Minimal difference/decline (within 5% or relative measure)
	Represents better performance/improvement

Sub Area	Board	Audit & Risk	SMT	Leadership Team	Indicator Ref	Indicator Description	Owner	2022/23 Result	2023/24 Target	Frequency	Quarter Performance Q1 2023/24	Quarter Performance Q2 2023/24	Quarter Performance Q3 2023/24	Quarter Performance Q4 2023/24	Measured Against Last Quarter (RAG see key above)	Measured Against Same Quarter from Last Year	Target ON TRACK NEARING (10%) OFF (<10%)
Organisational	x				Org	Stock numbers	Managing Director	2443	2496	Quarterly	2496	2497	2498	2498			2496
People	x		x		C1	Staff numbers (FTE) Staff turnover	Head Of Finance & Business Support Services	Staff Number = 33.11 Turnover = 6.04%	No target	Quarterly	Staff Number = 36.3 Turnover = 0.00%	Staff Number = 38.4 Turnover = 0.00%	Staff Number = 37.4 Turnover = 5.35%	Staff Number = 37.4 Turnover = 5.35%			
Satisfaction	x		x	x	1	Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord.	Head Of Service Delivery	66.8%	70%	Quarterly	64.4%	73.9%	65%	72%			70%
Communication	x		x	x	2	Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions	Head Of Service Delivery	73.6%	70%	Quarterly	65.1%	80.9%	71.10%	83.30%			70%
Participation	x		x	x	5	Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes	Head Of Service Delivery	60.6%	70%	Quarterly	58.9%	72.8%	61.20%	66.70%			70%
Quality of Housing	x		x	x	7	Percentage of existing tenants satisfied with the quality of their home.	Head Of Service Delivery	73.4%	73%	Quarterly	69.9%	87.50%	79.30%	83.30%			73%
Repairs, Maintenance and Improvement	x		x	x	8	Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs.	Asset And Compliance Manager	4.65 hours	4 hours (H&S) 12 hours emergency	Quarterly	3.92 Hours	5:14 Hours	4.88 Hours	4.84 Hours			4 hours (H&S) 12 hours emergency
	x		x	x	9	Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	Asset And Compliance Manager	13.02 days	Urgent 5 days Routine 15 days	Quarterly	16.91 Days	11.51 Days	10.27 Days	13.94 Days			Urgent 5 days Routine 15 days
	x		x	x	Local	% of repairs appointments kept	Asset And Compliance Manager	78.0%	80%	Quarterly	66.58%	65.64%	68.14%	60.77%			80%
	x		x	x	10	Percentage of reactive repairs carried out in the last year completed right first time.	Asset And Compliance Manager	80.2%	80%	Quarterly	76.11%	85.21%	87.07%	84.22%			80%
	x		x	x	11	The number of times in the reporting year that you did not meet your statutory obligation to complete a gas safety check within 12 months of a gas appliance being fitted or its last check	Asset And Compliance Manager	99.9%	0 (100%)	Quarterly	99.79%	100%	100%	100%			0 (100%)
	x		x	x	Local	Safe Electrical Systems - Percentage of properties with valid EICR (Electrical Installation Condition Report) certificates	Asset And Compliance Manager	89.5%	100%	Quarterly	88.74%	94.35%	99.11%	99.43%			100%
	x				Local	The percentage of Fire Risk Assessments in communal areas that are in place	Asset And Compliance Manager	100.0%	100%	Quarterly	100.00%	100%	100%	100%			100%
	x				Local	The number of overdue Fire Risk Assessment Actions	Asset And Compliance Manager	0	0	Quarterly	23	15	0	0			0
	x				Local	The percentage of up to date communal asbestos surveys	Asset And Compliance Manager	100%	100%	Quarterly	100%	100%	100%	100%			100%
	x				Local	The percentage of up to date Legionella Risk Assessments in place	Asset And Compliance Manager	100%	100%	Quarterly	Stats unavailable	Stats unavailable	Stats unavailable	100%			100%
	x		x	x	12	Percentage of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in last 12 months satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service.	Asset And Compliance Manager	64.4%	80%	Quarterly	55.5%	74.3%	67.80%	67.90%			80%
Estate Management and ASB	x		x	x	3 & 4	The % of all complaints responded to in full at Stage 1 and the % of all complaints responded to in full at Stage 2. The average time in working days for a full response at Stage 1 and the average time in working days for a full response at Stage 2.	Head Of Service Delivery	96% at Stage 1 4% at Stage 2 14 days at Stage 1 20 days at Stage 2	100% at Stage 1 100% at Stage 2 5 days at Stage 1 20 days at Stage 2	Quarterly	97% at Stage 1 100% at Stage 2 7 days at Stage 1 11 days at Stage 2	89% at Stage 1 100% at Stage 2 10 days at Stage 1 9 days at Stage 2	94% at Stage 1 100% at Stage 2 9 days at Stage 1 10 days at Stage 2	84% at Stage 1 100% at Stage 2 7 days at Stage 1 18 days at Stage 2			100% at each stage; 5 days for Stage 1 20 days for Stage 2
	x		x	x	13	Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of neighbourhood they live in	Head Of Service Delivery	74.8%	75%	Quarterly	52.1%	69.90%	59.50%	63.10%			75%
Housing Options	x		x	x	19	Number of households currently waiting for adaptations to home.	Asset And Compliance Manager	52	No target	Annual							

	Description
🟥 Red	Major difference/decline (over 5% or relative measure)
🟧 Amber	Minimal difference/decline (within 5% or relative measure)
🟩 Green	Represents better performance/improvement

Sub Area	Board	Audit & Risk	SMT	Leadership Team	Indicator Ref	Indicator Description	Owner	2022/23 Result	2023/24 Target	Frequency	Quarter Performance Q1 2023/24	Quarter Performance Q2 2023/24	Quarter Performance Q3 2023/24	Quarter Performance Q4 2023/24	Measured Against Last Quarter (RAG see key above)	Measured Against Same Quarter from Last Year	Target ON TRACK NEARING (10%) OFF (<10%)
	x		x	x	20	Total cost of adaptations completed in the year (£) by source of funding	Asset And Compliance Manager	£202,989	No target	Annual							
	x		x	x	21	The average time to complete adaptations.	Asset And Compliance Manager	57.2 days	91 days	Annual							
	x		x	x	23	Homelessness (RSLs only) – the percentage of referrals under Section 5 that result in an offer, and the percentage of those offers that result in a let	Housing Services Manager	36.99% 100%	No target	Quarterly	50% 100%	54.5% 100%	29.16% 100%	29.54% 84.61%	🟥		
	x		x	x	30	Average length of time taken to re-let properties in the last year	Asset And Compliance Manager / Housing Services Manager / Voids & Lettings Co-ordinator	37.2 days	25 days	Quarterly	31.9 Days	32.6 Days	30.7 Days	32.3 Days	🟧	🟩	25 Days 🟥
Tenancy Sustainment	x		x	x	16	Percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than a year (by source of let measured annually)	Housing Services Manager	87.5%	90%	Quarterly	90.0%	90.7%	89.91%	90.91%	🟩		90% 🟩
Rents & Service Charges	x		x	x	C5	Rent Increase.	Managing Director	5%	No target	Annual							
	x		x	x	C7	Amount and percentage of former tenant rent arrears written off at the year end.	Head Of Service Delivery	33.43%	No target	Annual							
	x	x	x	x	18	Percentage of rent due lost through properties being empty during the quarter	Head Of Service Delivery	0.76%	0.70%	Quarterly	0.81%	0.61%	0.66%	0.60%	🟩		0.70% 🟩
	x		x	x	26	The total amount of rent collected in the reporting year to date as a percentage of the total amount of rent due to be collected in the reporting year to date (1st April 2023 to date)	Head Of Service Delivery	98.49%	No target	Quarterly	99.50%	100.4% Prev reported as 110.7% but this was due to error in dashboard	100.50%	101.20%	🟩		
	x		x	x	27	Gross rent arrears (all tenants) as a percentage of rent due in the last year (12 month rolling)	Head Of Service Delivery	5.99%	5.70%	Quarterly	5.90%	7.73% Prev reported as 6.38% but this was due to error in dashboard	6.71%	5.42%	🟩		5.70%
Value For Money	x	x	x	x	25	Percentage of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money	Head Of Service Delivery	63.2%	75%	Quarterly	55.5%	75.00%	65.30%	69%	🟩		75% 🟧
	x		x	x	29	Percentage of factored owners satisfied with the factoring service they receive.	Head Of Service Delivery	50.0%	60% at next survey	Three Yearly	*Survey last undertaken 2020/21 - Satisfaction 50%	*Survey last undertaken 2020/21 - Satisfaction 50% Next survey will commence December 2023	Results should be available in March	39.50%			60% at next survey 🟥
Health & Safety	x	x	x	x	Local	RIDDOR incidents (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences)	Asset And Compliance Manager	0	No target	Quarterly	0	0	0	0	🟩	🟩	

12. Date of Next Meeting - Tuesday 25 June 2024 at 5.30 pm - 261st Board Meeting at 44-46 Bank Street, Irvine and via MS Teams