

In Our House



Dundee Area Scutiny Panel

Annual Report

2017-18



*Councillor Kevin Cordell,
Convenor of Housing*

A Warm Welcome to Dundee City Council's Annual Report on Housing Services for 2017-18.

All Scottish Landlords must aim to achieve outcomes that are set by the Scottish Housing Regulator and published in the Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) for the houses they manage. This year's report shows how the Council is performing against these indicators, as well as in comparison with other Local Authorities across the country.

It is certainly encouraging to see Dundee City Council improving in many areas through the involvement of tenant groups such as the Dundee Area Scrutiny Panel. This is reflected rather well in the Survey of Tenants And Resident (STAR) results detailed in this report.

We certainly hope you find this report informative and that it continues to show how our Council works to meet the housing needs in the city.



Shining a Spotlight on Housing Performance

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Foreword



It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Dundee Area Scrutiny Panels Annual Customer Report.

As well as summarising our performance in key areas this report clearly demonstrates the broad range of activities undertaken by The Dundee Area Scrutiny Panel.

While we may have some areas where we can improve I think we are very proud of the comprehensive and person centred services that we provide to a great many citizens in the City.

It is my strong view that we will continue to go from strength to strength by working together, not just in association with independent groups such as the DASP, but between Housing and Communities with other colleagues in Neighbourhood Services and the wider Council to provide a level of service beyond the meeting of performance targets.

I hope you find the report informative and interesting.

David Simpson
Head of Housing and Communities
October 2018



In Our House Annual Customer Report 2016-17.
Available online @ www.dundee.gov.uk

Dundee Area Scutiny Panel (DASP)

The Dundee Area Scrutiny Panel are a group of volunteers who use housing services and, through partnership working, decide on the areas of service they wish to take a closer look at, or scrutinise.

The Scrutiny panel don't work alone - they are helped by Tenant Inspectors and Mystery Shoppers who conduct investigations on instruction from the Panel. The Council would like to express its thanks to them and the rest of the Scrutiny Panel for their continued support, dedication and hard work.

Below is an overview of this year's achievements and what's next on the agenda for the Scrutiny Panel in 2019:

Outcomes

In the last year the Scrutiny Panel has:

- Completed a Tenant Led Inspection of Tenant Participation & Antisocial Communication
- Received briefings on Housing Allocations
- Completed a Mystery Shop of Customer Service Standards
- Reviewed new tenants packs
- Represented the DASP at the Tenants Information Service annual conference and awards

Next Steps

During 2018/19 in addition to reviewing its work priorities the Scrutiny Panel hopes to:

- Oversee implementation of recommendations following Mystery Shop of Customer Services in Housing
- Oversee implementation of recommendations following Tenant Led Inspection of Communications from Antisocial Behaviour Services
- Review guidance and forms for housing applications
- Review value for money and affordability of housing rents

Quotes

"I would like to thank all the volunteers involved in Scrutiny for making a difference in Dundee. Without their dedication we couldn't scrutinise the council to ensure customers not only get value for money in the services they receive, but are treated honestly and fairly. If you are interested in making a difference, please Get Involved & Have Your Say".

Jim Cochrane, DASP Chair.

Tenant Led Inspections & Mystery Shopping

We Will:-

- be open and honest and explain our decisions
- deal with your enquiry promptly and explain reasons for any delay
- give you the information you need about our services
- listen to what you have to say
- treat you with respect and courtesy
- aim to get things right first time
- apologise to you when we get things wrong and then put things right



Local authorities provide a range of customer services, however (unlike private sector suppliers) residents are not normally in the position of being able to choose an alternative provider. TLI's and Mystery Shopping exercises are an important tool used by the Council as they provide valuable customer views about what the Council are not only doing well, but where improvements can be made.

This can be monitored, scrutinised and addressed using such tools as a Tenant Led Inspection (TLI). This is where a group of between 3 and 8 tenants get together to look at a specific part of the housing service, find out the strengths and weaknesses in that service and make recommendations for improvements.

Purpose of a TLI inspection is to find out:

- Is the service working as it should
- Does practice relate to policy and procedures
- Where parts of the service could be improved



Mystery Shopping is different from Tenant Led Inspections in that it explores the actual customer experience as a snapshot in time and records specific details of that particular experience. As such, it can be a very powerful tool for service managers and help to highlight clear action points for improving service delivery, whilst also identifying good practice.

Mystery Shopping is generally made up of the same amount of participants as Tenant Led Inspections, however mystery shoppers are given a prepared set of scenarios to test Housing services using the following methods;

- Face to face
- Over the phone
- By email/letter
- Website/webform
- provide choices around how you access our services

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Dundee City Council are about to publish their first HRA Methodology, which aims to show tenants how their rent is spent in terms that are transparent and easy to understand. This certainly sounds like a daunting task and one which has taken quite a few meetings with DASP, DFTA and Council Management to get the content and language correct.

Most of the income in the HRA comes from tenants rent, whether it is paid in cash or through housing benefit. All of this money goes into the HRA. Collecting rent is one of the most important functions, as it is money raised through rents that pays for the services that tenants receive.



How Your Rent Is Spent

The Council held a successful seminar on 21st July, informing tenants about what services their rent pays for, how rent levels are set, and giving tenant's opportunity to communicate their views on priorities for Housing Services. These discussions will be used in relation to the rent setting process later in the year.

Following receipt of comments and feedback from last year's Rent Consultation we invited people who had responded to our last rent consultation and advertised the event widely on social media and through our and the DFTA's websites as well as a poster campaign. By making good use of social media platforms such as Facebook and twitter, as well as news, radio, internal and partner websites, further opportunities to attend the event were made available to tenants.



Everyone who attended thought the event was good and that it clearly explained what rents pay for and how rents are set. The seminar gave tenants an opportunity to give their views on priorities for council housing and these discussions will be used to inform the rent setting process which will start again later in the year.

New Affordable Rented Housing



The Council and its partners continue to make good progress in delivering high quality, energy efficient new build social rented housing for Dundee. Scottish Government plans investment of £61 million from 2017 to 2021 for affordable housing in the City.

Dundee City Council will develop a number of new council houses, with 33 units on site at Alexander Street and 83 units to be built on the site of the Derby Street multi storey flats which started in November 2017. In addition to the building at Alexander Street and Derby Street it is also planned to develop 30 new houses every year in 2019/20 and 2020/21.

In 2016/17 138 social rented houses were completed by our partner housing associations and approximately 400 more are on site or scheduled to start in the next two years. Dundee City Council also adapts existing houses and installs equipment to help people with medical conditions.

Quotes



"Providing a good service goes beyond meeting performance targets. This year we are highlighting services provided by our Housing Options Team and meeting needs by building new homes."

Cllr Kevin Cordell, Convenor of Housing.

Every year the Council highlight the ways they've listened to customers and used this feedback to improve services. Here's just a handful of examples from a report that went to committee:

- Data sharing between Employability, DWP and partners which reduces the need for service users to give the same information
- Launch of a new website, optimised for mobile use, and the MyDundee portal giving easy online access to more services
- Greater use of social media and video in our communications
- Crisis and roofless services for homeless people now available at the Lily Walker Centre as well as East Office
- Design of new schools influenced by Parent Council representatives
- Application for National Entitlement Cards simplified
- Procedures for Educational Maintenance and Free School Meals improved to increase take-up
- Parents' concerns addressed on 'cost of the school day' (eg trips, dress down/up days)

These are just a few highlights, but more great evidence of Dundee City Council's commitment to continuous improvement.

Rent Consultation



Every year, between November and December, Dundee City Council embarks upon an ambitious Rent Consultation. Our aim is to involve as many tenants as possible in the decision making process of setting the level of rent increase for the coming year. In the past we have used a wide range of methods for tenants to give their feedback including face to face, letter, newsletters, online survey, social media, e-mail, QR code (mobile scanning app), text and public meetings.

Rent options are also displayed on posters throughout the city along with community and council office notice boards, libraries, homeless units, sheltered lounges and on postcards which can be filled out and posted in the ballot boxes provided in around 30 locations across the city.

Last year we made the most of the new Housing & Communities structure to collaborate on a strategy and achieve our best ever response to the Rent Consultation. Collaboration and teamwork from Community and Housing staff enabled us to carry out a comprehensive door canvassing exercise of tenanted properties, leading to the highest return in recent years of 2137 responses. This equates to a little over 17% of our tenanted homes that gave their opinion, which is one of the highest in Scotland.

Outcomes

Constantly reviewing our strategy allows us to:

- consider the best ways to engage with tenants about proposed rent increases
- give tenants easy-to-understand information to help express informed views
- give tenants genuine options for proposed rent increases and spell out what they mean for levels of investment in homes and the level of services offered
- discuss face to face with tenants the level of service they want
- talk to current and prospective tenants about what level of rent is affordable
- aim to provide the highest possible standard of service

Quotes

"This exercise is critically important to our tenants as it determines the level of rents to be charged in the coming year. As such we need to ensure that we canvas the views of tenants as widely as possible. In this context the creation of Housing and Communities has allowed for the expertise of Communities staff to be deployed, side by side with Housing staff to ensure that a broad range of tools and methods are adopted in the consultation process. The exercise has delivered the highest ever level of response from tenants and has also served to bring staff together, thereby demonstrating the benefits of the creation of the Housing & Communities service and the importance that we attach to consulting with our tenants."

David Simpson, Head of Housing & Communities.



Housing in Numbers

The next couple of pages describe how the Council performed against the main indicators set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. For more detail on the Council's performance and comparison with other social landlords, please visit the Scottish Housing Regulators website: www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/find-andcompare-landlords

Repairs

4.1 days

was the average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 6.4 days.

85.8%

of reactive repairs were completed 'right first time', compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 92.2%.



8.9 hours

was the average time taken to complete emergency repairs, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 4.0 hours.

Medical Adaptations

358

Medical adaptations were completed to assist tenants in their homes.



45.75 days

was the time taken to complete applications for medical adaptations, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 51.28 days.

Quality & Maintenance

Since 1st April 2015 all social housing should meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS). Some owners do not allow permission to complete works such as door entry systems and these properties are given what is called an "abeyance". Excluding these abeyances 100% of council houses meet the SHQS.

94.7%

of properties met the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 94.2%.

Housing in Numbers

Tenancy Sustainment

88.61%



of new tenancies to applicants from the Council's waiting list were sustained for more than one year, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 87.48%.

Gas Safety

99.42% 

of Dundee City Council housing stock had their Gas Safety Record renewed by the anniversary date, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 99.81%.

Complaints

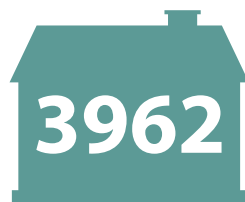
110 complaints received

76.7% of 1st stage complaints were responded to in full within the timescales set out by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 94.31%.

House Allocations



number of houses let in



new applicants were added to the list



of applicants on the waiting list at the end of March 2018

Factoring

The percentage of homeowners satisfied with the factoring services for general maintenance of common areas such as stair cleaning, we provide was

49.62%



compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 66.23%.

Shining a Spotlight on Housing Performance

This page highlights the Councils performance. The information was gathered from conducting a Survey of Tenants And Residents (STAR) in 2018.

Figures from the STAR survey 2017



90%

said they were satisfied with the overall housing service the Council provided, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 83%



76%

of tenants were satisfied with the opportunities to participate in Dundee City Council's decision making processes, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 74%



89%

of tenants who had repairs or maintenance carried out were satisfied with the service they received, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 92%



87%

of tenants feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 81%



93%

of new tenants were happy with the standard of their home when moving in, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 88%



85%

of tenants are satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 82%



91%

of tenants are satisfied with the quality of their home, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 83%



86%

felt that Dundee City Council was good at keeping them informed about its housing services and outcomes, compared to the Scottish Local Authority average of 81%

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