

## ANGUS COUNCIL

Housing Committee - 26 August 2004

## RENT ARREARS PERFORMANCE - ANNUAL STATISTICS 2003/2004

REPORT by DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

**ABSTRACT**

This report brings to the Council's attention certain statistical information in relation to serious arrears during 2003/2004

**1. RECOMMENDATION**

Members are requested to note the content of this report.

**2. BACKGROUND**

The Committee regularly consider serious arrears case reports which include reference to the Housing Committee seeking approval to evict certain tenants. It may be of interest to the Committee to consider the information relating to recovery procedures undertaken by the Housing Department during 2003/2004. The Committee will find it reassuring that everything possible has been done to contain serious arrears and maintain and try to reduce the levels of rent arrears throughout Angus.

During the year, 114 cases were reported to the Housing Committee for approval to evict, a reduction from the 197 cases in 2002/2003. The department also carried out 12 evictions, although others were set but subsequently deferred or cancelled as satisfactory arrangements had been made. Tenants whose evictions were deferred have maintained progress towards reduction in their rent arrears thus rendering the ultimate sanction of eviction unnecessary at this time.

Full information of serious arrears cases in 2003/2004 are given below:

	<b>NOPs Issued</b>	<b>Court Actions Raised</b>	<b>Approval to Evict</b>	<b>Eviction Dates Set</b>	<b>Evictions Carried Out</b>
<b>Arbroath</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Brechin</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Carnoustie</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Forfar</b>	<b>681</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Kirriemuir</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Montrose</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2565</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>12</b>

### **3. CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT**

The Housing Department continues to work with its computers supplier to enhance the arrears module of the integrated housing management system to enable some of the recommendations from the recent Communities Scotland report to be taken forward. We are currently working on reviewing the policy and procedures in connection with arrears collection within the department and will be submitting a further report later in the year once consultation has been carried out with various agencies and new procedures rolled out to staff.

As recommended in the Inspection report, the department will also be writing an overall rent arrears strategy for tackling and reducing rent arrears.

### **4. PERFORMANCE INFORMATION**

Starting from the October Housing Committee, members will be furnished with a suite of arrears reports showing the arrears levels and trends for all towns within Angus. These will be reported on a quarterly basis, the first being the position as at 30 September 2004.

### **5. ARREARS RECOVERY OFFICERS**

On 1 June 2004 the department introduced three Arrears Recovery Officers throughout Angus to try and tackle, and reduce, the levels of rent arrears for both current and former tenants. Although this initiative is in the early months it is proving to be successful with us managing to make face to face contacts with debtors at a much earlier stage and being able to enter into and monitor part-payment arrangements at an earlier stage in the arrears process.

Part of the work of the Arrears Recovery Officers is also involving a partnership liaison with their colleagues in the Revenues Section on information sharing, thus enabling us to monitor arrears cases more effectively.

These posts are enabling the department to increase home visits, promote more personal and regular contact, to undertake targeted initiatives and to carry out analyses of arrears trends. It is hoped that taking these factors on board it will enable us to use a wide range of methods to maximise income, prevent rent arrears and avoid tenancies failing.

### **6. ACCOUNTS COMMISSION REPORT - SCOTTISH COMPARISON**

At the time of writing this report it is acknowledged that Angus rent arrears as at 31 March 2004 were 5.8%, a rise from 4.9% in 2002/2003. The full list of authorities' levels for 2003/2004 has not yet been published by the Audit Commission therefore a further report will be tabled showing our performance and movement in arrears values compared to other local authorities when this information is known.

### **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **8. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

All implications, particularly with regards to Article 8, The Right to Respect for Private and Family Life, have been considered in the preparation of this report.

## **9. CONSULTATION**

In preparing this report there has been consultation with the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Director of Law & Administration.

Ron Ashton  
Director of Housing

Note:- No background papers, as defined by Section 50d of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied upon to any material extent in preparing this report.