

SERVICE UPDATE

<u>Name of Cluster:</u>	Housing
<u>Date:</u>	17 October 2025
<u>Title of Update:</u>	Housing Allocation Benchmarking
<u>Author:</u>	Rachel Harrison/Martin Nicol
<u>Chief Officer:</u>	Jacqui Mckenzie
<u>Author email address:</u>	Raharrison@aberdeencity.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Service Update

- 1.1 At the Audit Risk and Scrutiny Committee meeting on [28 July 2025](#) the Executive Director was asked to work with officers outside the meeting to review information for future reports about waiting lists, property applications, and national benchmarking. Officers agreed to provide a service update if this information was not already routinely reported upon.
- 1.2 Alongside this request the question was posed on how prevalent the issues raised in the audit were in terms of the wider situation as opposed to the sample data.
- 1.3 This service update fulfils the request for additional data to be shared with Members recognising that existing reports do not routinely contain benchmarking comparisons, whilst offering assurance to Members that our system of allocation is operating efficiently as evidenced through the performance of the local position throughput of our allocation processes. Furthermore additional assurance is provided through the measures that have been introduced in response to the issues identified through the audit process.

2. Background

- 2.1 As highlighted through the Housing Allocations and Choice Based Lettings internal audit report, completed in May 2025 Aberdeen City Council has around 23,500 properties of various sizes and types, including cottages, flats, multi storey blocks and sheltered complexes with around 350 applications processed each month. As of the 31 December there were 6,654 households on the Councils lists. Of the 6,654 on Council housing lists, 2,307 (35%) are currently living in a Council property of which 63% have an identified housing need, 1023 (15%) are currently private tenants of which 38% have an identified housing need, 704 (11%) are living in an RSL property of which 50% have an identified housing need and 644 (10%) are owner occupiers of which 77% have an identified housing need. Those with a housing need would therefore be prioritised for Council housing according to our allocations policies. Having a housing need suggests a change in circumstances that is triggering a need to move home (including a change in the size of family to be housed or change in health needs for example.)
- 2.2 In the year 2024/25, 5,775 offers of accommodation were generated and 2,536 households moved into a home. Since our online bidding platform (Choice Base Letting) was introduced in June 2023 over 291,630 eligible bids have been

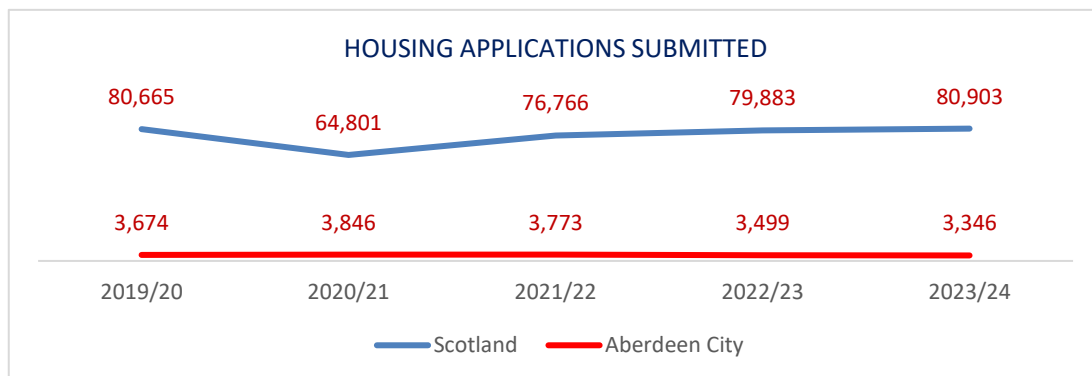
registered across the properties advertised. 88.4% of offers were to those with a housing need. Anybody over 16 with a right to housing can apply for council housing irrespective of need. While the council prioritises applicants with housing needs, there may be occasions when no priority applicants are shortlisted or matched to a vacant property. In such cases, and in line with making best use of available housing stock, the property may be offered to an applicant without an identified housing need, as was the case in 11.6% of offers over 2024/25.

- 2.3 Officers have carried out a benchmarking exercise on the data that is available regarding waiting lists and applications. Based on the latest data available up to 31 March 2024, which can be accessed via this [link](#), the following presents an overview of Aberdeen City Council's position relative to the national context.
- 2.4 Analysis is based on the 26 stock owning local authorities and not the entire 32. Argyll & Bute, Dumfries & Galloway, Eilean an Siar, Glasgow, Inverclyde, and Scottish Borders are therefore not included as they are not non-stock owning authorities. It is important to note however, that there are differences across the stock owning local authorities. Based on the available data, 6 operate a choice based letting system and 16 operate a Combined Housing Register (CHR) which included households applying for Registered Social Landlord accommodation.
- 2.5 Housing register/waiting list data is for mainstream applicants only and excludes homeless households. Households in need can apply for housing with any local authority, meaning that not all applicants on authority's waiting list will necessarily reside within that authority's area. Having reviewed our current lists, 15% of applicants do not live within Aberdeen City, and there is some evidence that these external applicants may have submitted applications to multiple authorities.

3. Benchmarking

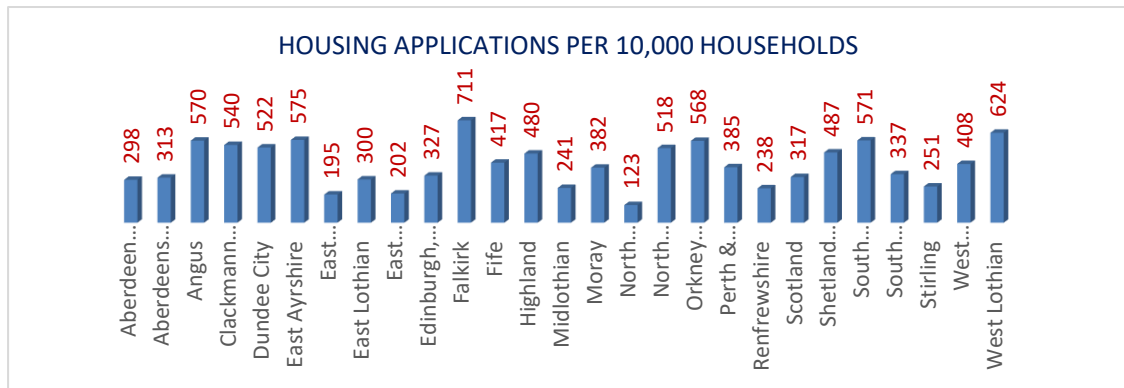
3.1 Demand - applications received

The latest housing statistics, updated on 13 May 2025, show that after a sharp decline in 2020/21, the number of households applying for local authority housing across Scotland has risen by 25% over the past three years, bringing demand back in line with pre-COVID levels. In contrast, the number applying in Aberdeen City fell by 9%.



In 2023/24, a total of 80,903 applications for local authority housing were submitted nationally, equating to approximately 317 households per 10,000. The

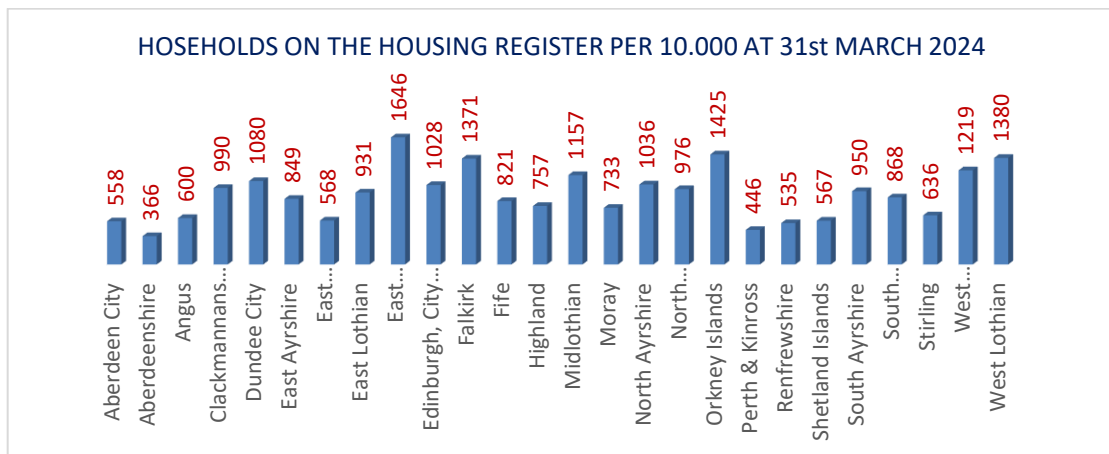
rate of submission in Aberdeen City was slightly lower at 298, the 7th lowest of all authorities.



3.2 Demand Applications on the Housing Register

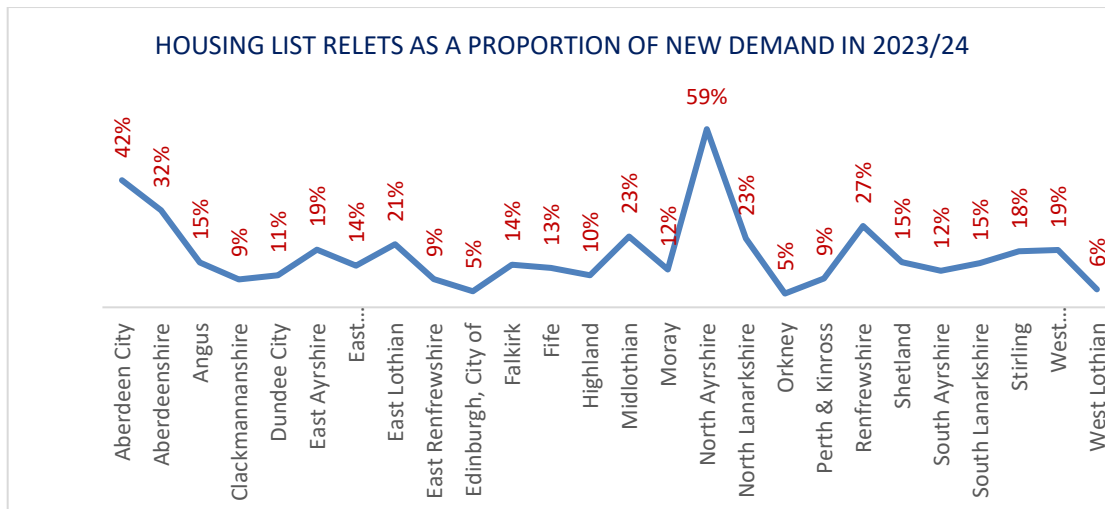
While more households nationally have secured outcomes and been removed from housing registers during this period, the rate of increase has not kept pace with the rising number of applications with a 15% net differential recorded nationally in 2023/24. This imbalance has resulted in a 7.8% increase (+12,934) nationally since 2019/20, with 177,880 households still awaiting an outcome as of 31 March 2024.

Although Aberdeen City followed a similar trend, the gap between applications and outcomes in 2023/24 was lower at just 3.1%, well below the national average of 7.8%. At a rate of 558 per 10,000 households the number actively seeking local authority housing is below the national rate of 697 and the 4th lowest of all authorities.



3.3 Available stock to meet demand

Excluding homeless applicants, in 2023/24, the proportion of applicants on the housing list who were housed by Aberdeen City was equivalent to 42% of new demand, the 2nd highest rate behind North Ayrshire at 59%. Performance across Aberdeen City Council is significantly better than the 16% national rate.



4 Quality Assurance approach

- 4.1 The internal audit on Housing Allocations and Choice Based lettings contained several recommendations to reduce the likelihood of errors being made in the allocations process. Officers have not found evidence that the risks have led to incorrect allocations, and at the same time recognise that the potential risks require to be addressed through more robust quality assurance of established procedures. Implementation of a new process in relation to the processing of applications, which includes an application checklist to support consistent processing across all Officers who undertake this activity, is well underway.
- 4.2 Further to this a reporting structure has been created which ensures quality assurance checks can be completed on the activity of processing applications, alongside review of applicants who have been shortlisted, bypassed and housed. This will allow for Officers to identify any future noncompliance and effectively respond at the point of identification.
- 4.3 The review of resourcing and introduction of a new Team Leader post to have greater oversight of this operational area is also in progress to support continued improvements.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 The benchmarking analysis highlights Aberdeen City's relatively strong position in managing housing demand compared to other Scottish local authorities. Despite a national increase in housing applications and a widening gap between demand and supply, Aberdeen has maintained a lower rate of unmet demand, supported by a higher turnover of lettable stock.
- 5.2 Additionally, Aberdeen's relatively more affordable private rental and housing market may contribute to reduced reliance on council housing. These factors combine to position Aberdeen City favourably within the national housing landscape.