

West of Scotland Housing Association Group

Value For Money Strategy

Progress update 2024/25



West of
Scotland
Housing
Association

Introduction

As a social landlord, our main aims are always to provide quality homes and excellent customer service to all our customers. Constantly working to achieve best value for money helps us to realise these aims by ensuring we make the most efficient use of our income and keep our business processes as streamlined as possible.

What is Value for Money?

VFM is generally defined as the relationship between economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

- Economy – the price paid for what goes into providing a service. It is also about minimising the cost of resources of an activity
- Efficiency – a measure of productivity i.e. how much you get out in relation to what is put in
- Effectiveness – a measure of the impact achieved, both quantitative and qualitative or a measure of outcomes

The Scottish Housing Regulator identifies value for money as “obtaining the maximum benefit with resources available”.

The following report identifies the efficiencies WSHA have made in the last financial year (2024/25) and details the impact of these efficiencies on the organisation, our customers and our communities.

You can read the full 2023-26 Value For Money Strategy here:
(https://westscot.co.uk/upload/download_document/b4080534-e993-11ed-b9f9-005056a3/file.pdf)



Value For Money - Progress made in 2024/25

WSHA's Value for Money Strategy contains seven major objectives. Below you can find a brief summary of our progress made against these in the year 2023/24.

Objective	Progress made
Ensure customer needs and views are central to our VFM Approach	We regularly survey and consult with our tenants regarding their thoughts on the value for money represented by our activities. Some consultations include: annually in our Tenant Satisfaction Survey our during our Rent Consultation process; and regularly in our meetings with the Tenant Advisory Group. In 2024/25, 92% of our tenants rated their rent as good value for money. .
Review and improve operational efficiency and internal processes to achieve value for money and obtain efficiencies	A 2025/26 key business objective is to identify and review areas of inefficiency across the organisation and develop an improvement plan. One part of this plan involves identifying artificial Intelligence solutions to inefficient work processes. In 2025, we have identified and implemented a number of AI based solutions that have been shown to significantly improve efficiency.
Optimise the use of assets including new build to achieve VFM for our customers and the Association	We are actively working to improve data and data reporting around our housing stock to better inform our investment decisions and ensure greatest value for money. Our stock condition surveys are underway and we aim to have 50% complete by the end of this year. We have also used automated reporting via Power BI to improve reporting on our stock data.

Objective	Progress made
Ensure that we procure goods, services and works in the most sustainable economic way possible	Scotland Excel carried out our Procurement Capacity Assessment in June 2024 and we scored 90%.
Maximise the value and capacity of our staff	We have encouraged staff to identify repetitive and time-consuming areas of their workflow that can be made more efficient using AI and a number of solutions have already been implemented, increasing job satisfaction.
Deliver social and environmental value	We have implemented our Sustainability Strategy Action Plan and will be undertaking a review of our Sustainability Strategy this year. Sustainable Transport and Office Energy Plans have been implemented and have led to a reduction in costs as well as carbon emissions. We will be monitoring the cost/benefit of Passivhaus to determine the most costeffective energy standards. We will also produce an energy strategy for each new project to achieve high energy standards that are affordable for tenants to run.
Create a framework to measure, assess the impact and communicate our approach to VFM	We have developed a VFM Impact Assessment have been using this for key system and process changes. There is further detail on this in the section below

Value For Money – Impact Assessments

As detailed above, we have developed a value for money impact assessment to assess the impact of any significant changes in processes or new systems that will achieve value for money and/or make efficiencies. You can find a table outlining where we have assessed the impact and the outcome in Appendix I of this summary. .

Value for Money – Focus for the next year

There are some key areas that we will focus on over the next year to further obtain value for money and achieve efficiencies:

- Implement our Key Business Objective to identify and put a plan in place to address inefficient work practices.
- Improve our data, data analysis and reporting
- A Finance review is currently underway looking at all financial processes with a view to significantly improving efficiencies.
- Implement an action plan following the recent review of Community Services
- Assess the energy efficiency baseline of our stock through our stock condition surveys
- Further develop AI and automated processes through our AI Working Group



Appendix 1:

Value For Money – Impact Assessments

As mentioned above, we have developed a Value for Money impact assessment to assess the impact of any significant changes in processes or new systems that will achieve value for money and/or make efficiencies.

Activity	Outcome
Collection of tenants email addresses – we currently have email addresses for 60% of our tenants	• Costs in terms of postage have reduced from £32k in 23/24 to £19k through February of 24/25. This is despite increased correspondence being sent out as a result of more stock, estate management processes, and other tasks. • Our customer satisfaction levels have remained at a high level throughout this change in approach. We do provide the option for customers who would prefer to receive hard copies of correspondence or newsletters. Using email to correspond with customers particularly in relation to estate and block inspections has led to improved engagement and feedback about issues across these areas. • It is difficult to assess how much time has been saved by utilising email addresses for correspondence the view from staff is that it reduces time spent. This is particularly the case when sending bulk mailings to customers which are now done electronically. • Our most recent customer survey showed increased satisfaction to 96% (from 93%) in terms of customers being kept informed. This increase will not wholly be explained by increased use of emails but it will form a part of the continued high satisfaction.



Activity	Outcome
Electronic Sign Up Packs for new Tenants (in place - will assess impact in April 2025)	Reduction on the amount of paper being used to print sign up packs as all paperwork is now electronic. Staff no longer have to spend time printing off packs and then scanning them when they return to the office. This gives housing officers more time to work out in their patches and carry out other duties to support tenants in their homes. It has saved printing costs and environmental costs with less paper being used. Tenants now receive their tenancy agreement by email and they can then file this as they see fit, they do not have to store paper copies of the documents. Staff now spend less time on the admin role of printing, scanning and filing allowing them to use their time better and provide a better service to the tenants. It has allowed them to be more visual on the estates. The Housing Officers can improve on their relet times, block inspections and estate visits as they have less admin work to carry out when signing up a new tenant.
Audit Pro – Development Snagging	This has saved significant staff time and has also reduced print costs and paper usage. Recording snagging electronically with pictures of the defective area has meant that contractor can easily locate the defective area and rectify. This has resulted in fewer minor snags at handover and avoids new tenants having to give the contractor access after the move in. Housing have advised that feedback from residents on the quality of their new homes has been extremely positive. This was demonstrated in the new tenant satisfaction survey feedback.

Activity	Outcome
Inventory Hive for Estate Inspections (in place - will assess impact in September 2024)	It has reduced the resource required to complete block inspections. The impact has been to reduce the time taken to complete block inspections by 75%. It has enhanced the condition internally of our communal blocks. One year ago, it was standard for officers to find items left in communal areas with completely clear blocks being the exception. This has flipped with very few tenants now storing items in communal areas. This helps improve health and safety for residents and has also ensured we are picking up maintenance issues more efficiently. As noted above, it now takes one quarter of the time to complete block inspections. We also used the application to complete MMR inventory checks. We had no MMR properties in management last year so do not have a baseline to measure against. However, the individual inspections for the inventories can be completed in 15 minutes, compared to 1-2 hours using a manual process. It is also completed online so there is no paper required and signatures etc can be completed electronically. It has improved performance in terms of time saving and management of communal spaces within blocks. However, performance against the target of 100% completion of block inspections has not reached 100% as hoped but we are continuing to improve performance in this area.

Activity	Outcome
SOR Seeker (Schedule of Rates)	The use of the AI bot has led to a reduction in staff time spent manually searching for SOR codes, lowering overall operational costs. The number of staff required for SOR code management has been reduced due to the bot's automation capabilities. Accuracy in locating the correct SOR codes has improved, and this has been achieved without additional costs. Jobs are now processed faster, allowing contractors to begin work quicker, leading to better service delivery to tenants. The time spent finding SOR codes has been significantly reduced, allowing contractors to be more productive. The overall performance of the system has improved, with less downtime, fewer errors, and faster job processing times. Since implementing the AI bot, tenants will have faster response times for repairs and maintenance work. The improved efficiency has also enabled better communication and resolution of tenant issues, thereby positively impacting our relationship with the community. This will also contribute to right first time. Since implementing the SOR bot, tenants have experienced faster response times for repairs and maintenance, which will lead to better tenant satisfaction. The enhanced efficiency has improved communication and resolution of tenant issues, positively impacting our relationship with the community and contributing to more "right first time" outcomes. The automation of SOR code selection has significantly expedited service delivery, resulting in quicker response times for customer queries and requests. The bot's ability to accurately select the appropriate SOR codes has reduced errors, ensuring customers receive correct and reliable information, often enabling job completion in just one visit. The bot has consistently provided a high level of service, unaffected by human error. With routine tasks now automated, staff have been able to focus on more complex customer issues, leading to better resolutions. Additionally, during M3 system downtimes, the bot has maintained service continuity, preventing disruptions to customer operations.

Value for Money – Upcoming Impact Assessments

We also have a number of activities underway where we have not yet been able to assess the outcome yet but have considered what the potential impact will be. These are detailed below:

Activity	Potential Impact
Rent Sense – Implementation of new analytics software	It will not reduce the amount of resource we currently have in house. However, Mobyssoft provide an analysis of this as part of their reporting and it estimates that WSHA save £188,300 in capacity creation per annum (Rent Sense Case Load vs Housing Management System Caseload multiplied by average officer salary). Based on the information available, a more practical estimate is that it saves us employing the equivalent of one IMA and two IMOs. Additional functionality will be added to the software for use by WSHA for each year of the new agreement at no extra cost for year 1 (and then £8k pa for yr 2 and 3 for the write back facility – which would have been required regardless of which package we chose. There are increases of RPI each year but before the new agreement, it would have been RPI+ increases if we had remained with the same agreement as before the new deal. With both the additional functionality and write back facility, it will provide additional time for staff to spend more time with tenants. 12 mins per case x 15 cases per day x 260 working days x 6 officers = 280,800 minutes. It will help to reduce arrears to at least the target level for 2025/26 (4.7%) or below.
Contractors Portal	• Reduction of staff time • Reduction in administrative costs • Improved accuracy in reporting • Reduction of manual processes – reduction in errors

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