

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Communities and Housing Committee

approval noting

Ref SL/DWS

Date 11/09/19

Scottish Housing Regulator: 2019 Assurance Statement

From Stephen Llewellyn, Head of Housing Solutions

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek committee approval on the sign off relating to the first annual Assurance Statement as detailed at Appendix 1, prescribed by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

Recommendations

Committee note the contents of the report and ratify the signing of the first Scottish Housing Regulator annual Assurance Statement.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities

Ambition statement (1) Ensure a housing mix that supports social inclusion and economic growth

1. Background

- 1.1 The Scottish Housing Regulator was empowered and created by the Housing Scotland Act 2010, and has since 1st April 2013 possessed statutory powers to monitor, assess, report and intervene (as appropriate) based on the performance of any Social Landlords in Scotland since that time.
- 1.2 The Regulator has advised that by 31st October 2019 all landlords must now submit a Self-Assurance Statement signed off by the relevant Council Committee relating to their most recent Annual Return of the Charter (ARC) return. They have advised that they will publish these statements for every Scottish landlord and have also stated that each individual landlords must make these readily available to all their tenants.

2. Report

- 2.1 A previous report was submitted to committee in May 2019 which advised that a formal sign off to the first Assurance Statement would be presented to this committee cycle.
- 2.2 The Chief Executive of the Scottish Housing Regulator recently stated:

“In April we introduced a new requirement for all social landlords to make an annual assurance statement. They will make their first statement by the end of October, declaring that they are assured they comply with regulatory requirements and standards, or disclosing where they need to improve.

Assurance should be at the heart of governance in every organisation. This is about those responsible for governing the organisation obtaining accurate and current information about the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations and the status of its compliance with regulatory and statutory obligations.

In many ways, the annual assurance statement flips the position from the previous regulatory framework, from landlords having to tell us only when they weren't complying with regulatory requirements to every landlord making a regular, transparent and proactive statement on their compliance.”

- 2.3 The service requires to comply with the regulatory requirements set out in Chapter 3 of the Scottish Housing Regulator Framework (Appendix 2). In order to ensure that compliance is met the Service has appropriate and effective mechanisms in place to support the signing off of this first self-assurance statement. These processes and actions continue to be maintained, monitored, reviewed and updated if required on a regular and ongoing basis.

There is a comprehensive portfolio of where it is deemed there are adequate and effective controls checks and review mechanisms in place. In addition an evidence base is held including items such as minutes of internal and external meetings held, base and formulated performance data, including full worked examples of performance measures, full procedural guides and process maps, completed audit reports and copies of reports submitted to this and other Council Committees.

Examples of some of the key measures in place are detailed below:

- Submission of the Annual Return of the Charter (ARC) by 31st May each year to the Scottish Housing Regulator.
- Annual ARC action plan including Senior Management review meetings.
- Review, action and response to any issued Housing Regulator risk assessments.
- Production of an Annual Performance Report by 31st October based on the ARC return in conjunction with the Tenants Federation.
- Statutory and non-statutory benchmarking exercises with both Scottish Housing Network and Scottish Government.
- Monthly performance monitoring meetings chaired and minuted by Head of Housing Solutions to review all Key Performance Indicators.
- Internal target setting and monitoring of performance outcomes.
- Complaints monitoring and handling system.
- Regular Service Improvement Group meetings for individual areas of business.
- Four weekly financial monitoring and budgetary control reporting of capital and revenue expenditure aligning with the Council's Financial Regulations.
- Adherence with the Councils Contract Standing Orders.
- Service led audit reviews and inspections.
- Care Inspectorate reviews and reporting.
- Management of public protection matters through the MAPPA process.
- Detailed procedural guides and process mapping within all parts of the Service.
- Formalised committee reporting cycles and submission of relevant reports.
- Council Ambition reporting.
- Whistleblowing arrangements / policy
- Equality and Human Rights
- Audit Scotland 2019 Best Value Audit report outcomes.
- Production of our Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2019/20 – 2022/23.
- The Plan for North Lanarkshire / Monitored Strategic Performance Framework.
- Regular contractor review meetings.
- Update and review of new / all items in Service and Corporate Risk Registers.
- Data Protection/GDPR reporting and monitoring framework in place.
- Tenant Participation Strategy, including Tenant scrutiny and performance review.
- Internal and External Audit reviews.

2.4 The Housing Regulator has also intimated that legally we must: “notify them during the year of any material changes to the assurance in our Assurance Statement”.

If there are any material changes identified the Head of Housing Solutions will notify both the Scottish Housing Regulator and Committee as soon as any reportable change is identified.

3. Equality and Diversity

3.1 There is no specific impacts on Fairer Scotland.

3.2 There are no specific equality impact assessments to note.

4. Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications.

- 4.2 There no HR/Policy/ Legislative implications.
- 4.3 There are no environmental implications.
- 4.4 The completion of both the annual ARC return and Self-Assurance statement are statutory requirements and failure to submit on time is a risk and as such these are incorporated in to the Services overall Risk Management Register.

5. Measures of success

- 5.1 Submission and maintenance on an annual basis of an approved Self Assurance statement within the required timescales will be classed as a measure of success.

6. Supporting documents

- 6.1 Appendix 1 2019 Housing Regulator Assurance Statement
Appendix 2 Chapter 3



Stephen Llewellyn
Head of Housing Solutions



North Lanarkshire Council Annual Assurance Statement 2019

We can advise that;

We comply with the regulatory requirements:

- ✓ achieve all of the standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter for tenants, people who are homeless and others who use our services.
- ✓ comply with our legal obligations relating to housing and homelessness, equality and human rights, and tenant and resident safety

We confirm that we have seen and considered sufficient evidence to give us this assurance.

We approved our Annual Assurance Statement at the meeting of our Communities and Housing Committee on 11 September 2019.

I sign this statement on behalf of the Committee.

Heather McVey
Convener of Housing and Communities Committee

Date: 11th September 2019

REQUIREMENTS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND RSLs

EACH LANDLORD MUST:

ASSURANCE & NOTIFICATION

- ✓ Prepare an Annual Assurance Statement in accordance with our [published guidance](#), submit it to us between April and the end of October each year, and make it available to tenants and other service users.
- ✓ Notify us during the year of any material changes to the assurance in its Assurance Statement.
- ✓ Have assurance and evidence that it is meeting all of its legal obligations associated with housing and homelessness services, equality and human rights, and tenant and resident safety.
- ✓ Notify us of any tenant and resident safety matters which have been reported to, or are being investigated by the Health and Safety Executive, or reports from regulatory or statutory authorities, or insurance providers, relating to safety concerns.
- ✓ Make its Engagement Plan easily available and accessible to its tenants and service users, including online.

SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER PERFORMANCE

- ✓ Submit an Annual Return on the Charter to us each year in accordance with our [published guidance](#).
- ✓ Involve tenants, and where relevant other service users, in the preparation and scrutiny of performance information. It must:
 - agree its approach with tenants
 - ensure that it is effective and meaningful – that the chosen approach gives tenants a real and demonstrable say in the assessment of performance
 - publicise the approach to tenants
 - ensure that it can be verified and be able to show that the agreed approach to involving tenants has happened
 - involve other service users in an appropriate way, having asked and had regard to their needs and wishes.
- ✓ Report its performance in achieving or progressing towards the Charter outcomes and standards to its tenants and other service users (no later than October each year). It must agree the format of performance reporting with tenants, ensuring that it is accessible for tenants and other service users, with plain and jargon-free language.