

# North Lanarkshire Council Report

## Housing and Regeneration Committee

approval  noting

**Ref** SL/LS

**Date** 25/11/20

## Scottish Housing Regulator: 2019/20 Annual Assurance Statement

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### Executive Summary

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

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### Recommendations

- (i) Note and approve the content of this report.

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### 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 SHR was empowered by the Housing Scotland Act 2010, and has since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 possessed statutory powers to monitor, assess, report and intervene (as appropriate) based on the performance of any Social Landlords in Scotland.
- 1.2 On 22 May 2019, committee noted the changes to the way in which the SHR will regulate Social Landlords in Scotland from 1 April 2019. The main change being that every landlord has a statutory annual obligation by 31 October each year to produce an Annual Assurance Statement relating to the previous financial year. North Lanarkshire Council has adopted a process whereby the statement requires to be presented to the committee and is signed by the Convener of Housing and Regeneration prior to submission to the Regulator. These statements are published for every landlord, as well as each landlord making them readily available to their tenants.
- 1.3 The Annual Assurance Statement is required to be submitted to the SHR by 31 October each year, however due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the timescale for submitting this year's Annual Assurance Statement has been extended until 30 November 2020 for this year only. Timescales were also extended for the submission of the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) from 31 May to 31 July, however North Lanarkshire Council were one of only 4 who submitted their return within the original timescales.
- 1.4 From the information submitted on our ARC, the SHR publishes a landlord's report. Further to this a separate report is submitted to committee, however the SHR have advised that they will not publish this until October (no date given as yet) in line with the other extended deadlines resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. A separate report on this will be provided to committee in due course.
- 1.5 It is also worth noting that the SHR has also extended the dates for landlords to report to their tenants and service users via an 'Annual Performance Report' on their performance on the Scottish Social Housing Charter from October to December 2020.

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## **2. Report**

- 2.1 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 approval of this year's Annual Assurance Statement. These processes and actions continue to be maintained, monitored, reviewed and updated if required on a regular and ongoing basis.
- 2.2 Within Business Development and Support, the team monitor and manage a comprehensive portfolio of relevant information where it is deemed there are adequate and effective controls, checks and review mechanisms in place. An evidence base is also held by the team 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.
- 2.3 Examples of some of the key measures in place are detailed below:

- Submission of the ARC to the SHR.
- Annual ARC action plan including senior management review meetings.
- Review, action and response to any issued SHR risk assessments.
- Production of an Annual Performance Report 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 Strategic Improvement Group meetings for individual areas of business across Housing Solutions and Housing Property and Projects.
- 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 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 SHR also place a responsibility onto social landlord's stating that we must: "notify them during the year of any material changes to the assurance in our Annual Assurance Statement". We are pleased to report there were no reportable material changes or failures identified by the Head of Housing Solutions to the SHR and committee for the reporting period of 2019/20.

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### **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.

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### **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 Annual Assurance Statement are statutory requirements and failure to submit on time is a risk and as such these are incorporated into the services overall Risk Management Register.

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**5. Measures of success**

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

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**6. Supporting documents**

- 6.1 Appendix 1 2020 Annual Assurance Statement  
Appendix 2 Chapter 3 of the SHR Framework



**Stephen Llewellyn**  
**Head of Housing Solutions**



## North Lanarkshire Council Annual Assurance Statement 2020

We can advise that;

- ✓ We comply with all of the regulatory requirements set out in section 3 of the Regulatory Framework
- ✓ We 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.
- ✓ We 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 Housing and Regeneration Committee on 25 November 2020.

I sign this statement on behalf of the committee.

Heather Brannan-McVey  
**Convener of Housing and Regeneration**

**Date:**

# 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.