

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability

Housing and Communities Committee: 4 November 2020

Subject: Scottish Social Housing Charter/Regulation of Social Housing in Scotland Progress Report

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide members with benchmarking information relating to how the Council has performed against the Scottish Social Housing Charter indicators and to provide an update into how we are meeting the requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Housing and Communities Committee:

- (i) notes the contents of this report and recognises the continued improvements across Housing and Homelessness Services in West Dunbartonshire;
- (ii) notes that a Charter Improvement Plan has been developed based on a comprehensive assessment of performance and has informed the production and publication of our annual Charter Performance Report; and
- (iii) approves our Annual Assurance Statement and for this to be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator as per the regulatory requirement; and
- (iv) notes that a full annual progress report on the Scottish Social Housing Charter will be submitted to the August 2021 meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee.

3. Background

- 3.1** The Scottish Government's Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) came into force in April 2012 and was reviewed during 2016. A revised Charter was subsequently approved by the Scottish Parliament and came into affect in April 2017.

- 3.2** The purpose of the Charter is to help improve the quality and value of the services that social landlords provide by:

- stating clearly what tenants and other customers can expect from social landlords and helping them to hold landlords to account;
- focusing the efforts of social landlords on achieving outcomes that matter to their customers; and
- providing the basis for the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) to assess and report on how well landlords are performing.

3.3 A revised Regulatory Framework and reporting timetable for the SSHC came into effect on 1st April 2019 is shown below:

When	Who	What
Throughout year	Housing Development /Tenants	Assess performance against the Charter Outcomes
May each year	Housing Development	Submission of Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) to Scottish Housing Regulator
August each year	Scottish Housing Regulator	Publishes a report about each social landlord with key data from its ARC on their website
October each year	Convenor of Housing and Communities Committee	Submission of Annual Assurance Statement (AAS) to the Scottish Housing Regulator
October each year	Housing Development	Publication of annual Charter Performance Report for tenants and other customers
by April each year	Scottish Housing Regulator	Publishes an Engagement Plan for each landlord, based on performance against Charter Indicators and outcomes
by April each year	Scottish Housing Regulator	SHR will publish a report on the analysis of the sector's performance in achieving the Charter

3.4 The main changes introduced as part of this revised framework was the introduction of the Annual Assurance Statement (AAS) which needs to be submitted to the Regulator by the end of October each year and also the introduction of an Engagement Plan published by the Regulator each year and based on performance against the Charter indicators and outcomes.

3.5 On the 6 August 2014, Members of the Housing and Communities Committee agreed that twice yearly reports be provided as follows:

- August Committee - Scottish Social Housing Charter Annual Update Report; and
- November Committee - Scottish Social Housing Charter Annual Benchmarking Report and Mid-Year Progress Report – (April-September).

3.6 In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and following a consultation period, the SHR has made the following temporary adjustments to its regulatory approach, designed to support landlords to plan and manage the impact of the pandemic for one year only:

- Annual Assurance Statement – extended the deadline from October to November 2020;
- Charter Performance Report – extended the deadline from October to December 2020; and
- Engagement Plan – due the Covid-19 updated Engagement Plans were not published by the Regulator in April 2020. They will now begin publishing updated Engagement Plans at the end of March 2021.

4. Main Issues

4.1 The key areas of focus in relation to the SSHC highlighted in this report are as follows:





- an assessment of our progress in relation to achieving the Charter Outcomes;
- the production and publication of our annual Charter Performance Report for tenants and other customers;
- the submission of our Annual Assurance Statement to the SHR; and
- the continued development of effective tenant scrutiny arrangements in conjunction with tenants and other customers.




































Assessment of progress achieving the Charter Outcomes

- 4.2** The SHR now uses 32 Charter Performance Indicators to monitor the performance of all social landlords against the Charter outcomes and standards.
- 4.3** West Dunbartonshire Council successfully submitted our ARC to the SHR within the timescale outlined in the Regulatory Framework (extended this year by 2 months due to the Covid-19 pandemic). This process included both internal and external validation processes. The Housing and Homelessness Service engaged with the Scottish Housing Network (SHN) in terms of a robust external validation of our data.
- 4.4** An annual report based on 2019/20 performance was reported to Committee in September 2020. This report included key data from the ARC and other indicators that tenants have said are important to them and compared our performance with that of the previous year and against annual targets set.
- 4.5** The report outlined an on-going journey of continued improvement across housing services in West Dunbartonshire, with 89% of the indicators either meeting or almost achieving target.

Benchmarking of key performance indicators

- 4.6** Both our ARC submission and our annual submission of performance information to SHN provide opportunities to compare our performance against other landlords (all Scottish local authorities and, where appropriate, Glasgow Housing Association) and to identify areas for improvement. This process is known as “benchmarking”.
- 4.7** The SHR is due to publish a Landlord Report for every social landlord in Scotland on their website by 30 October 2020. This report contains key data from the ARC (18 key indicators) and compares our performance with a Scottish average figure.
- 4.8** On 29 September 2020, SHN provided a report and feedback session for the Housing Improvement Board outlining key benchmarking data and the key findings are outlined below:

Status Key				
Peer group compared to is all other local authority landlords, as well as Glasgow Housing Association				
New Charter Indicator and previous benchmark data not available	Top quartile	2 nd quartile	3 rd quartile	4 th quartile

Communication	2017/18 Value	2018/19 Value	2019/20 Value	2017/18 Rank	2018/19 Rank	2019/20 Rank
Average time in working days to respond to a Stage 1 complaint	4 days	4 days	11.4 days			
Average time in working days to respond to a Stage 2 complaint	16 days	17 days	24.9 days			
Customer Satisfaction	2017/18 Value	2018/19 Value	2019/20 Value	2017/18 Rank	2018/19 Rank	2019/20 Rank
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service	84.1%	84.1%	78.5%			
Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed	84.5%	84.5%	85.7%			
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to participate	79.1%	79.1%	83.9%			
Percentage of existing tenants satisfied with the quality of their home	86.3%	86.3%	76.5%			
Quality of Housing	2017/18 Value	2018/19 Value	2019/20 Value	2017/18 Rank	2018/19 Rank	2019/20 Rank
Percentage of properties meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)	90.2%	91.9%	95.6%			
Percentage of properties meeting the Energy Efficiency Standards for Social Housing (ESSH)	55.9%	77.6%	79.7%			
Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements	2017/18 Value	2018/19 Value	2019/20 Value	2017/18 Rank	2018/19 Rank	2019/20 Rank
Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs	3.67 hours	3.41 Hours	4.56 Hours			
Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	7.08 days	5.7 days	5.25 days			
Percentage of reactive repairs carried out completed right first time	88.1%	90.5%	92.9%			
Percentage of properties that had a gas safety check completed by the anniversary date.	99.13%	100%	100%			
% of tenants satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service	92.3%	88.5%	68.3%			

Neighbourhood and Community	2017/18 Value	2018/19 Value	2019/20 Value	2017/18 Rank	2018/19 Rank	2019/20 Rank
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in	80.3%	80.3%	78.5%			
Percentage of tenancy offers refused	55.9%	54.6%	45.6%			
Percentage of anti-social behaviour cases resolved within locally agreed target times	81.4%	80.4%	94.4%			
Percentage housed who maintained their tenancy for at least 12 months	88.5%	87.1%	89.8%			
The average time to complete applications for medical adaptations	90.3 days	67.5 days	67.7 days			
Homeless People	2017/18 value	2018/19 Value	2019/20 Value	2017/18 Rank	2018/19 Rank	2019/20 Rank
Percentage of households requiring temporary accommodation to whom an offer was made	100%	100%	100%			
Percentage of homeless cases with decision within 28 days of presentation	99.7%	99.1%	98.2%			
Percentage of all homeless cases re-assessed within 12 months (repeat homeless)	5.1%	4.9%	4.3%			
Percentage satisfied with the quality of temporary or emergency accommodation	83%	76.3%	81.0%			
Percentage of temporary accommodation offers refused	2.7%	1.9%	1.79%			
Percentage of homeless households referred to RSLs under section 5 referral routes (new)			34%			
Value for Money	2017/18 value	2018/19 Value	2019/20 Value	2017/18 Rank	2018/19 Rank	2019/20 Rank
Average time to re-let properties	35.6 days	23.3 days	26.6 days			
Rent loss due to voids expressed as a percentage of the total amount of rent due	0.9%	0.73%	0.85%			
Rent collected as a percentage of total rent due	98.63%	98.61%	98.11%			
Gross rent arrears as a percentage of total rent due	8.83%	9.71%	10.08%			

4.9 A comprehensive assessment of 2019/20 performance against the Charter has been carried out. This has included the performance information reported to Committee in September 2020, as well as the benchmarking data now available.

- 4.10** This exercise has informed a Charter Improvement Plan which was agreed by the Housing Challenges Group on 1 October 2020. This is being implemented across all areas of the housing service with the objective of continuing to improve services for our tenants and customers.
- 4.11** Based on this exercise the HIB will monitor on a monthly basis key work-streams aimed at driving improvements in the following areas:
- rent collection;
 - satisfaction with repairs and time taken to complete emergency repairs;
 - time taken to carry out medical adaptations; and
 - complaints handling.
- 4.12** The table outlined below provides a more local analysis comparing West Dunbartonshire Council's performance against comparable neighbouring housing organisations (3 neighbouring local authorities Renfrewshire, East Dunbartonshire and Stirling - data for River Clyde Homes operating in Inverclyde is not currently available).








Indicator	West Dunbartonshire Council	East Dunbartonshire Council	Renfrewshire Council	Stirling Council	River Clyde Homes
HOMES AND RENT					
Total Number of Homes					
	10,062	3,588	11,979	5,739	
TENANT SATISFACTION					
% of overall satisfaction with the service					
	78.5%	82.0%	88.8%	87.1%	
QUALITY AND MAINTENANCE OF HOMES					
% of homes meeting the SHQS					
	95.6%	95.1%	94.6%	96.5%	
Average Number of hours – Emergency Repairs					
	4.56 hours	4.19 hours	5.48 hours	6.22 hours	
Average Number of Days – Non Emergency Repairs					
	5.25 days	14.25 days	7.76 days	3.67 days	
Repairs – Right First Time					
	92.9%	78.6%	82.5%	88.0%	
% of tenants who have had repairs carried out on the last 12 months who were satisfied with repairs and maintenance service					
	68.3%	91.0%	90.8%	79.7%	









Indicator	West Dunbartonshire Council	East Dunbartonshire Council	Renfrewshire Council	Stirling Council	River Clyde Homes
HOUSING MANAGEMENT					
Cases of anti-social behaviour, per 100 homes, reported in the last year					
	6.0	1.2	4.0	4.8	
% of anti-social behaviour cases resolved within locally agreed targets in the last year					
	94.7%	83.3%	99.4%	68.9%	
VALUE FOR MONEY					
Rent collected as % of rent due					
	98.11%	98.6%	99.52%	98.7%	
% of Rent due not collected through homes being empty					
	0.85%	1.03%	1.52%	0.73%	
Average length of time in days taken to re-let homes in the last year					
	26.85 days	57.24 days	45.38 days	51.97 days	

- 4.13** As part of the requirements of the SSHC all performance information is made publicly available via the SHR's website.

Mid-year progress against Scottish Social Housing Charter Indicators

- 4.14** Performance improvement targets for 2020/21 for all the Charter Indicators have been agreed based on robust benchmarking information, previous performance and the expected impacts of the Covid-19 on activity. These targets challenge the housing service to meet our ambition to be one of Scotland's top performing landlord organisations.
- 4.15** Of the 32 Charter Indicators, 10 are reported on a six monthly basis to the Housing and Communities Committee, alongside 2 indicators relating to homelessness (which are not part of the Charter return).
- 4.16** A summary of performance for the period April 2020 – September 2020 for these indicators is outlined in the table below. It should be noted that a number of indicators have been significantly impacted as a result of the pandemic:

Status Key			Scottish Social Housing Charter Mid-year Performance Report (Apr 2020 – Sep 2020)		
 Target Met or exceeded	 Target narrowly missed (within agreed range)	 Target missed			
Estate Management, Anti Social Behaviour, Neighbour Nuisance and Tenancy Disputes			Mid-year Target	Mid-year Value	Status
Percentage of anti-social behaviour cases resolved within locally agreed target times			95%	86.2%	
Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements			Mid-year Target	Mid-year Value	Status
Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs			4 hours	5.06 hours	
Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs			13 days	5.94 days	
Percentage of reactive repairs carried out completed right first time			95%	88.7%	

How many times in the reporting period did you not complete a gas safety check within 12 months	0	184	
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service	85%	76.5%	
Vale for Money	Mid-year Target	Mid-year Value	Status
Average time to re-let properties	25 days	71.8 days	
Percentage of rent due lost through homes being empty during the last year	0.88%	1.3%	
Gross rent arrears as a percentage of total rent due	9.7%	9.98%	
Tenancy Sustainability	Mid-year Target	Mid-year Value	Status
Percentage of new tenants who maintained their tenancy for at least 12 months	90%	92.9%	
Homeless People	Mid-year Target	Mid-year Value	Status
% of all homeless cases who received a decision within 28 day target	95%	100%	
Percentage of households requiring temporary accommodation, to whom an offer was made	100%	100%	

Charter Performance Report

- 4.17** The SHR requires all social landlords to produce an Annual Charter Performance Report for their tenants and other customers no later than 31 October each year (extended to 31 December this year, due to the impact of Covid-19).
- 4.18** The statutory regulatory framework states that that this report should include:
- an assessment of performance in delivering the Charter Outcomes;
 - relevant comparisons – with previous years, other landlords and national performance; and
 - how and when the landlord intends to address areas for improvement.
- 4.19** Following discussions with tenants how they wished to be involved, a working group of tenants and officers was established and met in August and September 2019 in order to review and update this report in terms of content, style and format.
- 4.20** A number of changes to the report were subsequently made, including the key indicators that are included, how performance is communicated, what comparisons are used and the best style and format to ensure that the report is user friendly and easy to understand.
- 4.21** This years' report will be published online within the required timescale. Hard copies of the report will be circulated to all members, sent to all tenants groups, interested tenants, and members of the WDTR0, members of the Scrutiny Panel and also partner organisations and the Scottish Housing Regulator. In addition, a summary of the report will be sent to every tenant

with the winter edition of the Housing News (December), and further hard copies will be available from the Housing Development Team on request.

Annual Assurance Statement (AAS)

- 4.22** A new aspect of the Regulatory Framework which came into effect in April 2019 is the requirement for all social landlords to prepare an AAS and for this to be submitted to the SHR by the relevant Council committee.
- 4.23** The AAS requires landlords to state they are meeting regulatory requirements and that they are compliant with the relevant regulatory standards, legal requirements and statutory guidance relevant to the sector. Any areas of non-compliance should be highlighted, alongside actions being taken to address this.
- 4.24** Guidance published by the SHR on 31 August 2020 recognised that social landlords are facing unprecedented challenges as a consequence of Covid-19 and are prioritising the management of operations in a way that is intended to mitigate and minimise the impact of the pandemic upon tenants, people who are homeless and other service users while protecting the health and safety of staff, contractors and governing body members.
- 4.25** The guidance acknowledged the potential impacts of Covid-19 and highlighted the need for landlords to understand the extent to which their ability to deliver services and to comply with regulatory requirements has been affected by the pandemic.
- 4.26** The report to Committee in September 2020 outlined that a review and update of our AAS was being carried out. This has now been completed and the risks posed by, and impacts of, Covid19 taken account of.
- 4.27** Our AAS is attached as Appendix 1 and as outlined in the SHR guidance, it is a short, succinct document, in a simple format. It outlines areas of non-compliance and actions being taken to address these.
- 4.28** The central aspect of the AAS is that the Committee has been provided with the necessary assurance in terms of information and evidence where required, to support the content of the AAS.
- 4.29** A wide range of arrangements are in place to ensure that we meet our regulatory and statutory obligations and to provide members of the Committee with the assurance required.
- 4.30** An information session was held in October 2020 for the Housing and Communities Convener, to provide an overview of the Regulatory Framework, with detail around how they can be assured that we have properly assessed and can evidence compliance with our regulatory and statutory obligations and to highlight the areas of non-compliance being reported.
- 4.31** Following Committee approval, the AAS will be signed by the Convenor of the Committee and submitted to the SHR as per the regulatory requirement. As per

the SHR guidance, the AAS will then be published to ensure that it is accessible to tenants and other customers.

Tenant Scrutiny Arrangements

- 4.32** There is a statutory requirement that tenants are involved in scrutinising landlords' performance against the Charter and requires that:
- the form of involvement has been agreed with tenants;
 - involvement is effective and meaningful and that tenants have a real say in assessment of performance;
 - the approach is publicised to tenants; and
 - landlords can demonstrate the agreed approach was actually implemented.
- 4.33** Developing effective tenant scrutiny is therefore a challenging process, however, following support from the Scottish Government's "Stepping Up to Scrutiny" training programme, in which elected members took part, these requirements were successfully met and in November 2014 the Housing and Communities Committee approved the establishment of our Tenant Scrutiny Panel with clear terms of reference.
- 4.34** The Panel has carried out five scrutiny activities and provided five reports with a series of recommendations aimed at improving services. All the recommendations have been adopted by the HIB and the implementation of these actions is monitored closely. A copy of their most recent report looking at medical adaptations is attached as Appendix 2.
- 4.35** Based on our 2019/20 ARC submission and the outcomes of our Charter self-assessment exercise, the Scrutiny Panel are currently agreeing the focus of their activities for the next year.
- 4.36** The WDTR0 continue to be heavily involved in the scrutiny of the Housing Service and the continuing work of the Joint Rent Group comprising tenants, Council officers and the Convener of the Housing and Communities Committee, looking at the rent setting process and the guidance in relation to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is important in ensuring Housing and Homelessness Services provide best value for current and future tenants.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** Delivery on the requirements of the SSHC is managed from within existing staffing resources within the Housing Development Team.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** There are no financial or procurement implications in relation to this report.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** There is a significant risk that failure to respond appropriately to the requirements of the SSHC would attract an adverse reaction from the SHR and may have wider consequences for the Council in the context of Best Value.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** Equalities legislation requires that new or significantly changing policies or services and financial decisions should be subject to an assessment of their impact on the wellbeing of certain groups of people. The recommendations within this report do not alter any existing policy or pattern of service delivery and so is not considered to require an equalities impact assessment.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** The Council has in place a well-established and proactive tenants and residents organisational structure. The WDTRO meet with the Council (chaired by the Convener of the Housing and Communities Committee) on a bi-monthly basis to discuss all issues relating to the Housing Service.
- 9.2** There remains a strong appetite among tenants and customers to continue to participate actively to improve housing services in West Dunbartonshire. This is reflected in the successful partnership approach adopted to develop the Charter Performance Report and the on-going activities of the WDTRO, the Joint Rent Group and the West Dunbartonshire Scrutiny Panel all of which have resumed following a period of inactivity due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 9.3** The Council is committed to ensure effective consultation continues and will support arrangements to increase tenant scrutiny activities and assess our performance in line with the statutory requirements under the SSHC and the SHR's regulatory framework.
- 9.4** Our approach has been commended via an external validation exercise by TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) Scotland which awarded West Dunbartonshire Council, a gold accreditation for excellence in tenant participation in 2019.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** Having considered the Council's strategic priorities, this report contributes significantly to all strategic priorities.

Peter Barry
Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability
Date: 22 October 2020

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Appendices:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annual Assurance Statement 2020 2. Scrutiny Panel Report 2020 – Medical Adaptations
Background Papers:	<p>Annual Charter Performance Report for Tenants and other Customers 2018/19, West Dunbartonshire Council, October 2019</p> <p>Scottish Housing Regulator West Dunbartonshire Council Landlord Report, Scottish Housing Regulator, August 2019</p> <p>The Scottish Social Housing Charter: Indicators and Context Information, Scottish Housing Regulator http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Charter%20Indicators%20Document%20-%20Final%20Draft%20-%2027%20September_0.pdf</p> <p>West Dunbartonshire Council Scottish Social Housing Charter Self-Assessment Improvement Plan</p> <p>West Dunbartonshire Scrutiny Panel, Report to the Housing Improvement Board October 2020, Scrutiny Exercise:</p> <p>West Dunbartonshire Tenant Participation Strategy 2017-2020 “Involving You”</p> <p>Scottish Social Housing Charter Annual Update Report, Report by Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration, Housing and Communities Committee, 2 September 2020</p> <p>AAS Assessment of compliance toolkit 2020, West Dunbartonshire Council, October 2020</p>
Wards Affected:	All