

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability****Housing and Communities Committee: 6 November 2019**

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 appendices and recognises the continued improvements across Housing and Homelessness Services in West Dunbartonshire;
- (ii) approves our Annual Assurance Statement and for this to be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator as per the new regulatory requirement;
- (iii) notes the Council's approach in involving tenants and service users has again been cited for excellence through winning the TPAS (Scotland) National Good Practice Awards for the third successive year, and
- (iv) notes that a full annual progress report on the Scottish Social Housing Charter will be submitted to the August 2020 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 effect 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 are 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).

4. Main Issues

4.1 The key areas of focus in relation to the Scottish Social Housing Charter highlighted in this report are as follows:













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







































Assessment of progress achieving the Charter Outcomes



- 4.2** The SHR uses 37 Charter Performance Indicators to monitor the performance of all social landlords against the Charter outcomes and standards.
- 4.3** West Dunbartonshire Council successfully submitted the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) to the SHR within target timescales and was not subject to any validation exercise.
- 4.4** An annual report based on 2018/19 performance was reported to Committee in August 2019. This report included key data from the ARC and compared our performance with that of the previous year. The report outlined the on-going journey of continued improvement across housing services in West Dunbartonshire.

Benchmarking of key performance indicators

- 4.5** Both our ARC submission and our annual submission of performance information to Scotland's Housing Network (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".
- 4.6** On 31 August 2019, the SHR published a Landlord Report on their website for every social landlord in Scotland. This report contained key data from the ARC and compared our performance with a Scottish average figure.
- 4.7** On 31 October 2019, SHN provided a report and feedback session for the Convenor of the Housing and Communities Committee, key housing staff, members of the WDTR and members of the West Dunbartonshire Scrutiny Panel.
- 4.8** The key findings are outlined below:

Status Key							
				Peer group compared to is all other local authority landlords, as well as Glasgow Housing Association			
Top quartile	2 nd quartile	3 rd quartile	4 th quartile	No updated values for 2018/19 as no further comprehensive tenant survey required to be carried out until 2019/20			
Customer Satisfaction				2017/18 Value	2018/19 Value	2017/18 Rank	2018/19 Rank
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service				84.1%	84.1%		
Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed				84.5%	84.5%		
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to participate				79.1%	79.1%		
Percentage of existing tenants satisfied with the quality of their home				86.3%	86.3%		

Quality of Housing	2017/18 Value	2018/19 Value	2017/18 Rank	2018/19 Rank
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in	94.9%	87.4%		
Percentage of properties meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)	90.2%	91.9%		
Percentage of properties meeting the Energy Efficiency Standards for Social Housing (ESSH)	55.9%	77.6%		
Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements	2017/18 Value	2018/19 Value	2017/18 Rank	2018/19 Rank
Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs	3.67 hours	3.41 Hours		
Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	7.08 days	5.7 days		
Percentage of reactive repairs carried out completed right first time	88.1%	90.5%		
Percentage of repairs appointments kept	86%	86.1%		
Percentage of properties that had a gas safety check completed by the anniversary date.	99.13%	100%		
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service	92.3%	88.5%		
Neighbourhood and Community	2017/18 Value	2018/19 Value	2017/18 Rank	2018/19 Rank
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in	80.3%	80.3%		
Percentage of anti-social behaviour cases resolved within locally agreed target times	81.4%	80.4%		
The average time to complete applications for medical adaptations	90.3 days	68 days		
Homeless People	2017/18 value	2018/19 Value	2017/18 Rank	2018/19 Rank
Percentage of households requiring temporary accommodation to whom an offer was made	100%	100%		
Percentage satisfied with the quality of temporary or emergency accommodation	83%	76.3%		
Percentage of temporary accommodation offers refused	2.7%	1.9%		
Value for Money	2017/18 value	2018/19 Value	2017/18 Rank	2018/19 Rank
Average time to re-let properties	35.6 days	23.3 days		
Rent loss due to voids expressed as a percentage of the total amount of rent due	0.9%	0.73%		
Rent collected as a percentage of total rent due	98.63%	98.61%		
Gross rent arrears as a percentage of total rent due	8.83%	9.71%		

Factored Owners	2017/18 value	2018/19 Value	2017/18 Rank	2018/19 Rank
Percentage of factored owners satisfied with the factoring service they receive	33%	33%		

- 4.8** Over the past 12 months the Housing Improvement Board (HIB) has monitored closely key work-streams aimed at improving areas of weakness around rent arrears, gas safety, the time taken to carry out medical adaptations and the satisfaction of factored owners.
- 4.9** A comprehensive assessment of 2018/19 performance against the Charter has been carried out and has informed a Charter Improvement Plan which was approved by the HIB in July 2019. This is being implemented across all areas of the housing and homelessness service with the objective of continuing to improve services for our tenants and customers.
- 4.10** There have been sustained improvements in relation to gas safety checks being carried out within statutory timescales, progress in terms of reducing the time taken to carry out medical adaptations and actions taken to improve services to factored owners. EESSH compliance has also risen from 55.9% to 77.3% as we approach full compliance by December 2020.
- 4.11** Universal Credit was rolled out across West Dunbartonshire during 2018/19 and the level of rent arrears remains a concern. In addition, our Engagement Plan published by the SHR in April 2019 highlighted services to homeless people and compliance with gypsy/traveller site standards as areas where the SHR are seeking further assurance. However, we have had positive discussions with the Scottish Housing Regulator regarding these key issues; including advising the SHR we are now fully compliant with minimum gypsy/travellers site start.
- 4.12** The HIB is therefore currently monitoring on a monthly basis key work-streams aimed at driving improvements in the following areas:
- rent collection;
 - medical adaptations;
 - compliance with gypsy/traveller site standards; and
 - services for homeless people.
- 4.13** 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, Stirling and River Clyde Homes operating in Inverclyde).

Indicator	West Dunbartonshire Council	East Dunbartonshire Council	Renfrewshire Council	Stirling Council	River Clyde Homes
HOMES AND RENT					
Total Number of Homes					
	10,397	3,549	12,002	5,686	5,838
Average weekly rent					
2 APT	£75.10	£70.23	£68.88	£62.40	£82.39

3 APT	£77.37	£75.23	£77.81	£64.61	£86.76
4 APT	£82.21	£79.16	£86.97	£67.21	£93.20
5 APT	£88.12	£84.01	£93.62	£68.95	£99.11
Indicator	West Dunbartonshire Council	East Dunbartonshire Council	Renfrewshire Council	Stirling Council	River Clyde Homes
TENANT SATISFACTION					
% of overall satisfaction with the service					
	84.1%	81.0%	88.0%	93.2%	89.3%
QUALITY AND MAINTENANCE OF HOMES					
% of homes meeting the SHQS					
	91.9%	97.8%	94.5%	99.6%	93.9%
Average Number of hours – Emergency Repairs					
	3.4 hours	4.3 hours	5.1 hours	7.8 hours	2.9 hours
Average Number of Days – Non Emergency Repairs					
	5.7 days	16.4 days	6.9 days	4.6 days	3.3 days
Repairs – Right First Time					
	90.5%	77.5%	88.1%	86.6%	97.8%
% of tenants who have had repairs carried out on the last 12 months who were satisfied with repairs and maintenance service					
	88.5%	79.6%	92.5%	90.8%	89.2%
HOUSING MANAGEMENT					
Cases of anti-social behaviour, per 100 homes, reported in the last year					
	3.2	2.5	3.6	7.7	4.8
% of anti-social behaviour cases resolved within locally agreed targets in the last year					
	80.4%	91.0%	96.0%	46.3%	88.9%
VALUE FOR MONEY					
Rent collected as % of rent due					
	98.6%	98.8%	100.0%	98.6%	98.7%
% of Rent due not collected through homes being empty					
	0.7%	1.0%	1.4%	1.0%	1.5%
Average length of time in days taken to re-let homes in the last year					
	23.3 days	48.9 days	38.5 days	58.6 days	67.5 days















- 4.14** As part of the requirements of the SSHC all performance information is publicly accessible via the SHR's website.

Mid-year progress against Scottish Social Housing Charter Indicators

- 4.15** Of the 32 Charter Indicators, 21 are reported on an annual basis and 11 on a six monthly basis to the Housing and Communities Committee.
- 4.16** Performance improvement targets for 2019/20 for all the Charter Indicators have been agreed based on robust benchmarking information and previous

performance and challenge the housing service to meet our ambition to be one of Scotland's top performing landlord organisations.

- 4.17** A summary of performance for the period April 2019 – September 2019 for those indicators reported on a 6 monthly basis is outlined in the table below:

Status Key			Scottish Social Housing Charter Mid-year Performance Report (Apr 2019 – Sep 2019)		
 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			88%	84.3%	
Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements			Mid-year Target	Mid-year Value	Status
Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs			3.4 hours	3.75 hours	
Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs			5.7 days	7.1 days	
Percentage of reactive repairs carried out completed right first time			91%	87.5%	
Percentage of properties which had a gas check completed by the anniversary date			100%	100%	
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service			90.9%	66.6%	
Homeless People			Mid-year Target	Mid-year Value	Status
% of repeat homelessness presentations*			4.8%	4.4%	
Percentage of households requiring temporary accommodation, to whom an offer was made			100%	100%	
Vale for Money			Mid-year Target	Mid-year Value	Status
Average time to re-let properties			25 days	23.6 days	
Percentage of rent due lost through homes being empty during the last year			0.88%	0.83%	
Gross rent arrears as a percentage of total rent due			9%	9.3%	

Annual Assurance Statement (AAS)

- 4.18** 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.
- 4.19** 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.
- 4.20** Our first AAS is attached as Appendix 1 and, as outlined in the SHR guidance published in February 2019, it is a short, succinct document, in a simple format.

- 4.21** 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.
- 4.22** 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.
- 4.23** Prior to the submission of our first AAS a session was held in October 2019 for members of the Committee, to provide an overview of the new Regulatory Framework, highlighting the new obligations it introduced and specifically focused on the new AAS.
- 4.24** This provided members with detail around how they can be assured that we have properly assessed and can evidence compliance with our regulatory and statutory obligations. A toolkit specifically developed for this purpose is attached as Appendix 2 of this report.
- 4.25** Subject to approval, the AAS will be signed by the Convenor of the Housing and Communities 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.

Charter Performance Report

- 4.26** 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.
- 4.27** 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.
- 4.28** 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.
- 4.29** A number of changes to the report have subsequently been made; including which indicators have been included, how performance is communicated, including which symbols and comparisons are used and the best style and format to ensure that the report is user friendly and easy to understand. The full extent of this consultation with tenants and the subsequent changes made to the report are outlined in Appendix 3.
- 4.30** The report is attached as Appendix 4 and has been 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.

Tenant Scrutiny Arrangements

- 4.31** 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.
- 4.32** 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.
- 4.33** The Panel has carried out four scrutiny activities and provided four 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.
- 4.34** Based on our 2018/19 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.
- 4.35** The WDTR0 continue to be heavily involved in the scrutiny of the Housing and Homelessness Services 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 Scottish Social Housing Charter is managed from within existing staffing resources within the Housing Development and Homelessness Team.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** There are no direct 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 and the West Dunbartonshire Scrutiny Panel.
- 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 regulatory framework introduced by the SHR.
- 9.4** During 2019 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. This has been further strengthened as our approach has won TPAS (Scotland) National Good Practice Awards in each of the last 3 years.

10. Strategic Assessment

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

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Date: 22 October 2019

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Appendices:

1. West Dunbartonshire Council Housing and Homelessness Services Annual Assurance Statement (AAS)
2. AAS Assessment of compliance toolkit
3. Consultation Toolkit, Review of Charter Performance Report
4. West Dunbartonshire Council Annual Charter Performance Report for Tenants and Customers 2018/19

Background Papers:

Scottish Housing Regulator West Dunbartonshire Council Landlord Report, Scottish Housing Regulator, August 2019

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

West Dunbartonshire Council Scottish Social Housing Charter Self-Assessment Improvement Plan

West Dunbartonshire Tenant Participation Strategy 2017-2020
“Involving You”

Scottish Social Housing Charter Annual Update Report, Report by Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration, Housing and Communities Committee, 14 August 2019

Wards Affected:

All

