

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability

Housing and Communities Committee: 23 November 2022

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 recognising the continued impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on 2021/22 performance;
- (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;
- (iii) Endorse and retrospectively approve our Annual Assurance Statement which has been signed by the Housing Convener on behalf of the Housing and Communities Committee and submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator in line with our regulatory requirement; and
- (iv) Notes that a full annual progress report on the Scottish Social Housing Charter will be submitted to the September 2023 meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee.

3. Background

- 3.1** The Scottish Government's first Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) came into force in April 2012. This was reviewed during 2016 and a revised Charter was subsequently approved by the Scottish Parliament and came into effect in April 2017.
- 3.2** The purpose of the SSHC 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 outlined below:

When	Who	What
Throughout year	Housing and Homeless Services /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	Convener 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	Publish an Engagement Plan for each landlord, based on performance against Charter Indicators and outcomes
by April each year	Scottish Housing Regulator	Publish a report on the analysis of the sector's performance in achieving the Charter outcomes

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 now September 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 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 (AAS) 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. This process included both internal and external validation processes. The Housing and Homelessness Service engaged with Scotland's Housing Network (SHN) in terms of a robust external validation of our data.
- 4.4** An annual report based on 2021/22 performance was reported to the Housing and Communities Committee in August 2022. 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 that performance in 2021/22 continued to be affected by the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions that were put in place. Throughout the year this impacted on service delivery in areas such as repairs and maintenance, void management and the completion of medical adaptations and performance was significantly negatively affected. Of the 30 key indicators outlined in the report, 16 met the annual target set (the same as in 2020/21), with another 5 narrowly missing this target. Overall this translates to 70% of these key indicators either meeting or almost achieving target (up from 69% in 2020/21).

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 publishes a Landlord Report for every social landlord in Scotland on their website by the end of August each year. This report contains key data from the ARC (18 key indicators) and compares our performance with a Scottish average figure inclusive of all housing providers. Our most recent Landlord Report is provided as a background paper to this report.
- 4.8** On 29 August 2022, 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	2019/20 Value	2020/21 Value	2021/22 Value	2019/20 Rank	2020/21 Rank	2021/22 Rank
Average time in working days to respond to a Stage 1 complaint	11.4 days	10.65 days	11.86 days			
Average time in working days to respond to a Stage 2 complaint	24.9 days	35.97 days	29.95 days			
Customer Satisfaction	2019/20 Value	2020/21 Value	2021/22 Value	2019/20 Rank	2020/21 Rank	2021/22 Rank
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service*	78.5%	78.5%	78.5%			
Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services*	85.7%	85.7%	85.7%			
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to participate in decision making*	83.9%	83.9%	83.9%			
Percentage of tenants who feel that the rent represents good value for money*	77.05%	77.05%	77.05%			
Quality of Housing	2019/20 Value	2020/21 Value	2021/22 Value	2019/20 Rank	2020/21 Rank	2021/22 Rank
Percentage of properties meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)	95.6%	82.8%	18.2%			
Percentage of existing tenants satisfied with the quality of their home*	76.5%	76.5%	76.5%			
Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements	2019/20 Value	2020/21 Value	2021/22 Value	2019/20 Rank	2020/21 Rank	2021/22 Rank
Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs	4.56 hours	6.14 hours	5.81 hours			
Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	5.25 days	6.76 days	10.16 days			
Percentage of reactive repairs carried out completed right first time	92.9%	89.8%	86.49%			
How many times in the reporting year did you not meet your statutory obligation to complete a gas safety check within 12 months of a gas appliance being fitted or last checked	0	215	0			
% of tenants satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service	68.3%	80.5%	87.7%			

Neighbourhood and Community	2019/20 Value	2020/21 Value	2021/22 Value	2019/20 Rank	2020/21 Rank	2021/22 Rank
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in*	78.5%	78.5%	78.5%			
Percentage of tenancy offers refused	45.6%	46.6%	49.2%			
Percentage of anti-social behaviour cases resolved within locally agreed target times	94.7%	92.8%	98.1%			
Percentage housed who maintained their tenancy for at least 12 months	89.8%	91.55%	94.59%			
The average time to complete applications for medical adaptations	67.7 days	123.2 days	107.8 days			
Homeless People	2019/20 Value	2020/21 Value	2021/22 Value	2019/20 Rank	2020/21 Rank	2021/22 Rank
Percentage of households requiring temporary accommodation to whom an offer was made	100%	100%	100%			
Percentage of homeless cases assessed within 28 day target	98.2%	99.6%	99.6%			
Percentage of all homeless cases re-assessed within 12 months (repeat homeless)	4.3%	5.4%	5.3%			
Percentage of homeless households referred to RSLs under section 5 referral routes	34%	27%	31%			
Value for Money	2019/20 Value	2020/21 Value	2021/22 Value	2019/20 Rank	2020/21 Rank	2021/22 Rank
Average time to re-let properties	26.85 days	56.14 days	45.77 days			
Rent loss due to voids expressed as a percentage of the total amount of rent due	0.85%	1.20%	1.29%			
Rent collected as a percentage of total rent due	98.11%	98.88%	98.39%			
Gross rent arrears as a percentage of total rent due	10.08%	10.35%	9.24%			

* Values for the past 3 years are based on Tenant Satisfaction Survey carried out in 2019

- 4.9** A comprehensive assessment of 2021/22 performance against the Charter has been carried out. This has included the performance information reported to Committee in August 2022, as well as the benchmarking data now available.
- 4.10** This exercise has informed a Charter Improvement Plan which was agreed by the Housing Improvement Board and 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, subsequent performance data and the content of our most recent Engagement Plan, the HIB is monitoring on a monthly basis key work-streams aimed at driving improvements in the following areas:

- SHQS compliance;
- Void Management;
- Services for people who are homeless;
- Rent collection/arrears; and
- Complaints response times.

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 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					
	10,377	3,715	12,216	5,949	6,088
Rent increase					
	2.0%	2.5%	2.0%	1.1%	3.8%
TENANT SATISFACTION					
% of overall satisfaction with the service					
	78.5%	75.9%	82.4%	87.1%	89.3%
% of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services					
	85.7%	82.6%	91.1%	92.0%	92.2%
% of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to participate in decision making					
	83.9%	78.9%	99.0%	84.6%	86.5%
QUALITY AND MAINTENANCE OF HOMES					
% of homes meeting the SHQS					
	18.2%	13.9%	57.1%	80.9%	68.0%
Emergency Repairs - average number of hours					
	5.8 hours	3.3 hours	7.1 hours	6.4 hours	4.2 hours
Non-Emergency Repairs - average number of days					
	10.2 days	12.0 days	14.6 days	6.4 days	11.7 days
Repairs – Right First Time					
	86.5%	82.4%	85.0%	87.0%	89.8%
% of tenants who have had repairs carried out on the last 12 months who were satisfied with repairs and maintenance service					
	87.7%	88.7%	95.0%	88.1%	84.6%







Indicator	West Dunbartonshire Council	East Dunbartonshire Council	Renfrewshire Council	Stirling Council	River Clyde Homes
NEIGHBOURHOODS					
% of anti-social behaviour cases resolved within locally agreed targets in the last year					
	98.1%	91.9%	99.7%	98.6%	95.1%
VALUE FOR MONEY					
Rent collected as % of rent due					
	98.4%	98.1%	98.2%	100.1%	97.6%
% of Rent due not collected through homes being empty					
	1.3%	1.4%	2.0%	1.3%	4.5%
Average length of time in days taken to re-let homes in the last year					
	48.5 days	73.8 days	66.0 days	69.5 days	173.7 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 2022/23 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 2022 – September 2022 for these indicators is outlined in the table below:

Status Key			Scottish Social Housing Charter Mid-year Performance Report (Apr 2022 – Sep 2022)		
 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			96%	96.3%	
Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements			Mid-year Target	Mid-year Value	Status
Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs			6 hours	5.75 hours	
Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs			9 days	10.99 days	
Percentage of reactive repairs carried out completed right first time			90%	83.9%	
How many times in the reporting period did you not complete a gas safety check within 12 months			0	0	
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service			89%	82.2%	

Vale for Money	Mid-year Target	Mid-year Value	Status
Average time to re-let properties	25 days	30.7 days	
Percentage of rent due lost through homes being empty during the last year	1.0%	1.32%	
Gross rent arrears as a percentage of total rent due	10.0%	9.56%	
Tenancy Sustainability	Mid-year Target	Mid-year Value	Status
Percentage of new tenants who maintained their tenancy for at least 12 months	94%	95.4%	
Homeless People	Mid-year Target	Mid-year Value	Status
% of all homeless cases who received a decision within 28 day target	95%	98.6%	
Percentage of households requiring temporary accommodation, to whom an offer was made	100%	100%	

Tenant and resident safety

- 4.17** Issues around tenant and resident safety are monitored closely by Building Services. This includes areas such as gas safety, electrical safety, asbestos safety, fire safety and other safety standards.
- 4.18** There are currently no cases being investigated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) relating to the safety of our tenants and residents and there have been no cases reported or investigated during the past year.
- 4.19** The SHR carried out a Tenant Health and Safety Assurance Survey in January 2022 which we contributed to and no issues were raised.
- 4.20** A suite of pilot performance indicators have recently been developed by SHN and Housemark and we plan collate and report on these annually to the Housing and Communities Committee.

Equalities and Human Rights

- 4.21** In keeping with the key messages from Scottish Government's programme for Government, equality and human rights are central to our delivery of our Local Housing Strategy (LHS). The development of the strategy has been underpinned by West Dunbartonshire Council's commitment to promoting and sustaining equality and inclusion, and equality and diversity principles.
- 4.22** We have worked closely with the West Dunbartonshire HSCP in piloting a Health Inequalities Impact Assessment Tool (HIIA), with each of the five themes being separately assessed and the assessments contributing to the final version of the LHS. The main actions associated with each theme are listed in the Action Plan and progress on these will be monitored as we move forward.
- 4.23** An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) is used for any new and developing policies. During 2021/22 we reviewed and updated our approach to collection

of Equalities data based on SHR guidance. This is currently being implemented and will contribute to more informed EIA's in future.

Charter Performance Report

- 4.24** 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.
- 4.25** 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.
- 4.26** In preparation for our first report in 2014, a working group of tenants and officers was established and successfully:
- Agreed how tenants wished to be involved;
 - Agreed which indicators will feature in the report; and
 - Agreed the best style and format to ensure that the report is user friendly and easy to understand.
- 4.27** Further engagement was carried out with tenant representatives during 2019 to review and update this report, in line with the revised Charter coming into effect. This consultation influenced the style, content and format of our Annual Charter Report and also the update of the Service Standards that are in place across housing services and which are reported regularly to tenants and other service users (via the Council website and by a performance insert provided with Housing News).
- 4.28** This years' report was published online within the required timescale and is attached as Appendix 2 The narrative in the report is based on the annual self-assessment exercise of our performance and a summary of the report will be sent to every tenant with the winter edition of the Housing News. The full report will be circulated to all members, sent to all tenants groups, interested tenants, and members of the WDTRO, members of the Scrutiny Panel and also partner organisations and the Scottish Housing Regulator.

Annual Assurance Statement (AAS)

- 4.29** The AAS requires landlords to state they are meeting regulatory requirements and that they are compliant with the legal requirements and statutory guidance relevant to the sector. Any areas of material non-compliance should be highlighted, alongside actions being taken to address these.
- 4.30** Work has been taken forward by the Housing Development team and all relevant service areas to assess how well we are achieving the standards and outcomes outlined in the Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) and how we

comply with our legal obligations relating to housing and homelessness, equality and human rights and tenants and resident safety.

- 4.31** This has informed a review and update of the AAS self-assurance toolkit attached as a background paper to this report, which outlines the wide range of arrangements that are in place to ensure that the Housing and Communities Committee (HACC) have assurance and evidence that we are meeting our regulatory and statutory obligations. This includes providing relevant information and assurance to the HACC which is proportionate and not overly burdensome, as per the SHR guidance.
- 4.32** The central aspect of the AAS is that the Committee has been provided with this necessary assurance in terms of information and evidence where required, to support the content of the AAS.
- 4.33** This process informed our updated AAS which takes account of the risks posed by, and impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. A briefing was provided to the Convener of the Housing and Communities Committee in October 2022 and the AAS was subsequently signed by the Convener on behalf of the Committee and submitted to the SHR as per the regulatory requirement.
- 4.34** 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 any areas of material non-compliance and actions being taken to address these.
- 4.35** As per the SHR guidance, the AAS will be published to ensure that it is accessible to tenants and other customers.

Tenant Scrutiny Arrangements

- 4.36** 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.
- 4.37** 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.
- 4.38** The Scrutiny Panel has subsequently carried out the following scrutiny exercises:
- 2014/15 looking at our Anti-Social Behaviour Service;

- 2015/16 looking at our Repairs Service;
- 2016/17 looking at tenancy sustainment, specifically the new tenant visit process;
- 2017/18 looking at SHQS compliance, specifically the number and reasons that properties that are held in abeyance;
- 2018/19 looking at the timescales taken to complete medical adaptations; and
- 2019/20 looking at the timescales taken to respond to complaints.

4.39 All of the recommendations made in the Panel's first 6 reports were approved by the Housing Improvement Board (HIB) and progress in terms of implementing these are monitored by the HIB.

4.40 The Panel are currently carrying out two short scrutiny exercises looking at new tenant visits and reviewing how easy the Council's website is to use and at the time of writing, these exercises are expected to be completed and reports with any recommendations provided to the HIB by the end of 2022.

4.41 The Scrutiny Panel were successful in being shortlisted for a prestigious CIH excellence award in 2021 and though narrowly missing out, this was national acknowledgement of the work that they do to ensure that tenant scrutiny is a valued part of WDC's approach to performance management.

4.42 The WDTR0 also 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 There are no people implications as a result of the report. 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 direct financial or procurement implications in relation to this report. The improvement plan informed by the Charter self-assessment exercise will be delivered from within existing budgets. These are detailed in the Resources section of the Housing and Employability Delivery Plan submitted to the Housing and Communities Committee on 23rd November 2022 for approval.

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.

7.2 At the time of writing we expect our next Engagement Plan to be published in March 2023.

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.

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. Our approach was again 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 up to 2022.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 Having considered the Council's strategic priorities, this report contributes significantly to all five strategic priorities and specifically to improve local housing and environmentally sustainable infrastructure.

Peter Barry
Chief Officer, Housing and Employability
Date: 8 November 2022

Person to Contact: John Kerr – Housing Development and Homelessness Manager, Housing Development and Homelessness Team, Housing and Employability, telephone: 07793717981, email: john.kerr@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendices: 1. Annual Assurance Statement 2022

2. Annual Charter Performance Report 2021/22

Background Papers:

Annual Charter Performance Report for Tenants and other Customers 2020/21, West Dunbartonshire Council, October 2021

<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/our-performance/service-performance/housing-services-performance-information/charter-performance-report/>

Scottish Housing Regulator West Dunbartonshire Council Landlord Report, Scottish Housing Regulator, August 2022

<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/our-performance/service-performance/housing-services-performance-information/landlord-report/>

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

AAS Assessment of compliance toolkit 2022, West Dunbartonshire Council, September 2022

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

West Dunbartonshire Tenant Participation Strategy 2021-2024
“Involving You”

<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/housing/tenant-participation-strategy/>

Scottish Social Housing Charter – Regulation of Social Housing in Scotland Annual Update,
Report by Chief Officer, Housing and Employability,
Housing and Communities Committee,
24 August 2022

Wards Affected:

All