

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Housing and Communities Committee

30 October 2019

Annual Assurance Statement – Scottish Housing Regulator

Report by Executive Director (Housing & Environment) (Report No. 19/302)

This report provides Housing and Communities Committee with an overview of the new requirement for Perth and Kinross to submit an Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR).

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following consultation, the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) published its new Regulatory Framework¹ in February 2019. The Framework details the SHR's statement on performance of functions. It also sets out how they regulate Registered Social Landlords, as well as housing and homelessness services delivered by Local Authorities.
- 1.2 Within the Framework the SHR advise that they will carry out their work in the following four broad ways:
 - gathering and publishing data in ways that tenants and others can use
 - getting assurance from landlords
 - taking action where they need to
 - thematic activity, to look in depth at specific areas of work
- 1.3 Central to their revised approach is, however, landlords assuring themselves, their tenants and the SHR through landlord self-assurance.
- 1.4 Each and every Registered Social Landlord and Local Authority is responsible for delivering good outcomes and services for its tenants and service users. The SHR are clear that landlords must be self-aware, analytical, open and honest about their performance, and identify and drive improvement.
- 1.5 When considering whether or not to engage with landlords, the SHR will initially consider what they have done to assure themselves that they are meeting regulatory requirements. In line with this new requirement, all landlords must now prepare an Annual Assurance Statement, to confirm to their tenants and the SHR that they are meeting regulatory requirements.

¹ [SHR - Regulation of Social Housing in Scotland \(Our Framework\)](#)

- 1.6 Our Annual Assurance Statement has been submitted to Audit committee (paragraph 2.4 refers). However, as the main Committee with responsibility for overseeing activity related to the delivery of housing services, Committee is asked to confirm it has seen and considered appropriate evidence to support the level of assurance.

2. ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENTS

- 2.1 From April 2019, there is a requirement for all local authorities and Registered Social Landlords to submit an Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator by 31 October. This must be agreed by the relevant local authority committee.
- 2.2 Statements should confirm the landlord's level of compliance with the requirements detailed within the Framework, including:
- all relevant standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter
 - all relevant legislative duties
 - details of any areas of material non-compliance, briefly describing plans to improve and a timeframe for improvement
 - confirmation that the relevant local authority committee have seen and considered, appropriate evidence to support the level of assurance
- 2.3 A signed and unsigned version of the Annual Assurance Statement should be provided to the SHR, who will then make the unsigned version publically available. There is also a requirement for landlords to ensure the Statement is easily and readily available for tenants.

Evidence to Support Assurance 2018/19

- 2.4 To meet the SHR's requirement for an Annual Assurance Statement, a statement was included within the draft audited annual accounts 2018/19 and draft annual audit report, submitted to Audit Committee on 18 September 2019 (Report No. 19/251 refers).
- 2.5 Our management and democratic structures and processes are designed to facilitate effective decision making, as well as the proper scrutiny of decisions and their impact, in terms of performance and the achievement of outcomes.
- 2.6 This is supported by a range of planning processes, ensuring we meet the needs of customers, and that targets for quality improvements are set and monitored. Business Management & Improvement Plans set out detailed actions and outcomes for each Service and include performance indicators. This is underpinned by the statutory requirement on local authorities to produce a Local Housing Strategy and provide regular progress updates. This sets out our priorities and plans for the delivery of Scottish Housing Regulator outcomes.

- 2.7 Service performance is reported regularly to the Housing and Environment Senior Management Team, Executive Officer Team and publicly through the Council's themed committees and the Scrutiny Committee. Financial performance is publicly reported through the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee and relevant service committees.
- 2.8 The evidence required by the Scottish Housing Regulator forms part of the self-assessment process, which informs the Council's Annual Governance Statement. This is scrutinised and reviewed through the officer Policy and Governance Group, with a final Annual Governance Statement being submitted annually to Scrutiny Committee. Appendix 1 details an overview of information that supports the Annual Assurance Statement.
- 2.9 On 1 April 2019, the SHR published its plans for engagement for every social landlord across Scotland. Of the 32 Scottish Local Authorities, Perth and Kinross was one of only three Authorities where the SHR indicated there was no requirement for any engagement. This reflects the SHR's confidence in our approach and the services we deliver.

Tenant Assurance

- 2.10 The SHR have indicated that it is the responsibility of Committee to prepare the Annual Assurance Statement. There is no requirement for this to be approved by tenants. However the SHR indicate that their feedback should be considered.
- 2.11 The Annual Performance Report, and the gradings within this by the Service User Review and Evaluation (SURE) Team are key documents that support our Assurance Statement. This, together with our sector leading tenant satisfaction results, should provide Committee with the required level of assurance from the tenants who receive and experience the services we deliver.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Council's housing team continue to deliver high levels of service delivery, with strong performance across all areas, high levels of tenant satisfaction with continued low rent levels. Throughout the year, Committee has received a number of key reports providing assurance that we are delivering and exceeding the standards required by the SHR.
- 3.2 It is recommended that Housing and Communities Committee:
 - (i) notes the new Regulatory Framework and the requirement to submit an Annual Assurance Statement
 - (ii) approves the Annual Assurance Statement (Appendix 2)

Author

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Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Barbara Renton	Executive Director – (Housing & Environment)	4 October 2019

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	N/A
Workforce	N/A
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	N/A
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	N/A
Strategic Environmental Assessment	N/A
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	N/A
Legal and Governance	Yes
Risk	N/A
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan

- 1.1 This report and proposals support the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 This report and proposals support the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 The Head of Finance has been consulted on this report. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Workforce

- 2.2 There are no workforce implications arising from this report.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 There are no land or property implications arising from this report

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 The proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

Legal and Governance

- 3.4 The Head of Legal and Governance has been consulted and is supportive of the approach taken in respect of the Annual Assurance Statement.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 Heads of Service and senior managers from Housing and Environment have been consulted on the content of this report.

5. Communication

- 5.1 The Annual Assurance Statement will be made publicly available.

3. APPENDICES

- 3.1 Appendix 1 details an overview of information that supports the Annual Assurance Statement
- 3.2 Appendix 2 is the Annual Assurance Statement.