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East Dunbartonshire Council

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COUNCIL THURSDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2023

REFERENCE: EDC/008/23/CM

LEAD OFFICER: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CONTACT OFFICER: CLAIRE MCNEIL, STRATEGY AND
PERFORMANCE ADVISER,

SUBJECT TITLE: SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER -
ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT 2023

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1** The purpose of this Report is to update the Council committee on the Scottish Housing Regulator's revised Framework (published in February 2019), that requires the Council to produce and submit an Annual Assurance Statement and evidence that the Housing and Property Maintenance services are compliant with their regulatory statutory obligations.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council:

- 2.1** considers the content of the Report and the supporting evidence;
- 2.2** agrees a position regarding Members assurance; and
- 2.3** authorises signature of the Annual Assurance Statement set out as Appendix 1 to this Report.

ANN DAVIE
DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

3.0 BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 3.1** The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 (“the 2010 Act”) introduced the Scottish Social Housing Charter (‘the Charter’) alongside a range of other legislative changes to the regulation of housing in Scotland. The Charter requires landlords to report on performance against key indicators for service areas. Landlord Reports are published annually on the Scottish Housing Regulator’s (‘the Regulator’) website and made available to tenants and other service users to allow comparison with other providers of social housing.

Annual Assurance Statement

- 3.2** In February 2019, the Regulator published its new Framework, available from <https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/for-landlords/regulatory-framework#> that takes performance reporting a step further, by placing a new requirement on landlords to present an Annual Assurance Statement (‘the Statement’) to the Board, or in the case of local authorities to a relevant Committee – in this case the Council Committee.
- 3.3** The Regulator requires the Council to undertake an annual self-assessment exercise following publication of the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) and to present credible evidence regarding the status of its regulatory and statutory obligations, relevant to the provision and management of social housing. The status of individual landlords will be published on the Regulator’s website during October 2023, to allow tenants and other customers of the Council to compare the status of assurance given by the Council with other landlords.
- 3.4** The Statement is a way of giving assurance to tenants and other customers of the Council and is an important function of governance. The Statement is required to set out whether the Council is compliant, partially compliant, or non-compliant in key service areas and must outline an Improvement Plan to resolve areas of partial or non-compliance. The Regulator has left it open to Scottish social housing providers to determine how best to assess their own compliance against the Framework.
- 3.5** To assess the Council’s compliance, officers have utilised a framework of assessment set out by Scotland’s Housing Network (SHN) in order to assist housing providers in structuring a response to the requirements of the Statement. The Housing Management team and the Property Maintenance Manager examined the Housing service in relation to each of the following categories:
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
 - Customer focus
 - Operational matters
 - Leadership function
- 3.6** Within the categories outlined above, each Manager/Team Leader (‘TL’) examined service areas to determine what performance, procedures or policies might evidence the work undertaken by the Council to meet regulatory requirements and statutory duties. The ‘Annual Assurance Statement Evidence and Action Plan’ is available via Smartsheet for consideration and is accessed by copying and pasting the web address below into either Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/publish?EQBCT=0a6b58846ba14169b10688c1cf5a99c3>

3.7 The Action Plan gives comprehensive details of the level of compliance that the Council is considered to achieve at present. Table 1 gives an overview of each area, its assessed status and the timeframe towards achieving full compliance:

Key service area	Responsible	Status	Timeframe
Equalities	TL – Housing Strategy and Development	Compliant	March 2021
Communication	TL – Housing Strategy and Development	Compliant	March 2021
Customer engagement	TL – Housing Strategy and Development	Compliant	March 2021
Repairs	Property Maintenance Manager	Partially compliant	September 2024
Estate management	TL – Estates	Compliant	March 2021
Housing Options	TL - Homelessness	Compliant	March 2021
Access to housing	TL – Estates	Partially compliant	August 2025
Housing Support	TL - Homelessness	Compliant	October 2019
Homelessness Temp	TL - Homelessness	Compliant	March 2021
Homelessness Assessment & Investigation	TL - Homelessness	Compliant	March 2020
Income management	TL – Housing Operations	Partially compliant	August 2025
Void management	TL – Estates	Compliant	March 2021
HRA	Executive Officer – Housing	Partially Compliant	October 2025
Performance	TL – Housing Strategy and Development	Compliant	March 2021

- 3.8** Following examination of the above service areas, officers now consider that the Council is compliant with the regulatory requirements, set out in Chapter 3 of the Regulator's Framework and that all of the key areas that remain partially compliant, will meet these standards and outcomes when the Council has implemented its Integrated Housing Management System ("IHMS").

4.0 IMPLICATIONS

The implications for the Council are as undernoted.

- 4.1** Frontline Service to Customers – tenants and other customers of the Council benefit from continually improving services and are assured that Housing and Property maintenance services are compliant, or working towards compliance, with regulatory and statutory obligations.
- 4.2** Workforce (including any significant resource implications) – none.
- 4.3** Legal Implications – Risk of intervention by the Regulator should the Council identify areas of non-compliance without adequate actions being in place to address compliance.
- 4.4** Financial Implications – none.
- 4.5** Procurement – none.
- 4.6** ICT – none.
- 4.7** Corporate Assets – none.
- 4.8** Equalities Implications – All tenants and customers of the Council are treated fairly and are regularly kept up to date with information on service performance.
- 4.9** Corporate Parenting – none.
- 4.10** Sustainability – none.
- 4.11** Other – none.

5.0 MANAGEMENT OF RISK

The risks and control measures relating to this Report are as follows:-

- 5.1** Housing and Property Maintenance services continue to work on improving systems that capture statistical data that will stand up to scrutiny from Members and Regulatory bodies. The Housing Team is working to introduce a new IHMS to deliver efficiencies in this area.
- 5.2** The Housing Service continues to oversee the production of the ARC and since 2019, the Statement.

Should the Regulator seek further confirmation of the information submitted in one, or both, of these documents, the Council could become subject to thematic study of a particular area, such as homelessness, repairs or, under circumstances that would be more serious, the regulator could intervene directly by installing a manager, to oversee change.

6.0 IMPACT

6.1 ECONOMIC GROWTH & RECOVERY – none.

6.2 EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS – none.

6.3 CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE – none.

6.4 SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES – LOIP Outcome 4 ‘East Dunbartonshire is a safe place in which to live, work and visit’.

6.5 ADULT HEALTH & WELLBEING – none.

6.6 OLDER ADULTS, VULNERABLE PEOPLE & CARERS – none.

6.7 CLIMATE CHANGE – none.

6.8 STATUTORY DUTY – The 2010 Act requires landlords to submit an ARC demonstrating its performance in Housing related areas. The Regulator’s new Framework takes this a step further, requiring publication of the Statement regarding compliance with regulatory requirements.

7.0 POLICY CHECKLIST

7.1 This Report has been assessed against the Policy Development Checklist and has been classified as being an operational report and not a new policy or change to an existing policy document.

8.0 APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1 – Annual Assurance Statement 2023 (unsigned).