

Scottish Housing Regulator - Assurance Statement

Report by Morag Barrow, Joint Director Health and Social Care

1 Purpose of Report

To seek approval for the submission of the first Annual Assurance Statement as requested by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Scottish Housing Regulator is the independent regulator of social landlords in Scotland and regulates 192 social landlords including the 32 Scottish local authorities. It was established in 2011 as an independent body directly accountable to the Scottish Government to regulate registered social landlords (RSL's) and local authority housing and homelessness services. The Regulator does this by assessing and reporting on social landlord's delivery of services, RSL's financial well-being and standards of governance and where necessary, the Regulator will intervene to secure improvements. In February 2019 the Scottish Housing Regulator published a revised Regulatory Framework to assist local authorities and RSLs in understanding what they need to do in order to comply with Regulatory requirements.
- 2.2 One of the additional requirements is that from 2019 all registered social landlords must submit an Assurance Statement which details the level of compliance with the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework.
- 2.3 The Annual Assurance Statement, or self-assurance process undertaken, is not intended to demonstrate that a social landlord's performance is outstanding in all areas. Instead, the aim is that landlords can demonstrate confidence that appropriate systems, evidence, relationships and engagement with stakeholders are in place. Producing the Annual Assurance Statement will ensure elected members, tenants and other service users are as well informed as they can be about how the performance of the Council as a landlord, and if a significant problem were to arise it would be identified and addressed.
- 2.4 Subject to Council approval, a form of wording has been set out in Appendix 1 which has been signed by Councillor Stephen Curran, Housing Portfolio Holder and submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator. Appendix 2 provides a summary of the key evidence base for demonstrating that Midlothian Council is compliant with the

regulatory requirements that is set out in Chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework published by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

There are no resource implications relating to this Report.

3.2 Risk

Not providing an Assurance Statement would mean that Midlothian Council are not complying with the requirements set out by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report are:

- ☒ Community safety
- ☒ Adult health, care and housing
- ☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☒ Sustainable growth
- ☒ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

3.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

Midlothian Council and its Community Planning Partners have made a commitment to treat the following areas as key priorities under the Single Midlothian Plan:

- Reducing inequalities in the health of our population
- Reducing inequalities in the outcomes of learning in our population
- Reducing inequalities in the economic circumstances of our population

The themes addressed in this report impact on the delivery of the Single Midlothian Plan outcome particularly in terms of priorities in relation to the delivery of affordable housing, homelessness and health and social care outcomes.

3.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

Undertaking the process of developing an Assurance Statement ensures that Midlothian Council continues to meet outcomes in terms of housing and homeless services and services to gypsy/travellers.

3.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

By submitting a statement demonstrating compliance with the requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator this reduces the risk of the need for intervention or further inspection activity.

3.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

Stakeholders including tenants, tenants groups, housing applicants and other service users are provided with various opportunities to

consult and scrutinise a wide range of policy and performance information relating to Midlothian Councils performance as a landlord. Members of Midlothian Tenant Panel have been consulted regarding this report.

3.8 Ensuring Equalities

An Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken in regard to the Assurance Statement, however the evidence section in Appendix 2 does acknowledge that key policies and procedures are subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

3.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

Not applicable.

3.10 IT Issues

None.

4 Recommendations

It is recommended that Council agree to the submission of the Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator and the publication of this Statement.

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Report Contact:

Name Stephen Clark

Tel No 0131 271 3506

stephen.clark@midlothian.gov.uk