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**To: Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board**

**On: 19 January 2021**

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**Report by: Director of Communities and Housing Services**

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**Heading: Technology Enabled Care (TEC) in Housing Charter**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board of the Technology Enabled Care (TEC) in Housing Charter ( [TEC in Housing Charter](#) ) and to seek authorisation for the Director of Communities, Housing and Planning Services to sign up to the Charter and the Pledges contained within it.
  - 1.2 The (TEC) in Housing Charter is part of the Scottish Government's Technology Enabled Care (TEC) Ready Programme, hosted by the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) which supports the positive contribution the housing sector and its partners are making to the use of technology in housing.
  - 1.3 Housing organisations across Scotland have been asked to show their support for the TEC in Housing Charter. A number of Scottish local authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) have signed up to the Charter with two local RSL partners already committed to it.
  - 1.4 The Coronavirus pandemic environment has accelerated the adoption of digital technology. Some of the activities which have been put in place to extend digital connectivity to support the health and well-being of older and vulnerable tenants are outlined in section 4 of this report. This activity underpins the requirements in meeting some of the TEC in Housing Charter Pledges.
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## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 It is recommended that the Policy Board:

- (i) authorises the Director of Communities and Housing to sign up to the Technology Enabled Care (TEC) in Housing Charter on behalf of Renfrewshire Council as detailed in section 3 and section 4 of this report.

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## **3. Background**

3.1 Technology Enabled Care (TEC) Ready is a national programme funded by the Scottish Government's Technology Enabled Care (TEC) Programme and is hosted by the SFHA.

3.2 Over the last four years, the TEC Ready Programme has worked with housing organisations to promote and support work to develop the use of technology enabled care in housing.

3.3 The TEC Ready Programme has focussed on various activities including:

- increasing awareness of TEC across the housing sector
- website production with online materials and case studies
- supporting "the best of" technology as part of specialist housing developments and
- development of the TEC in Housing Charter

3.4 The TEC in Housing Charter was launched in 2019 to support the use of technology in delivering housing solutions. A number of councils, RSLs and partner organisations have already signed up to it, including two local partner RSLs.

3.5 The TEC in Housing Charter contains seven Pledges which are:

1. Opportunity and Solution Focussed
2. Engaging with the Customer
3. Working in Partnership
4. Preventative Analytics
5. Service Redesign
6. Supporting the Workforce
7. Getting the Infrastructure Right

3.6 Organisations must commit to signing up to a minimum of three Pledges and work towards fulfilling the others. It is recognised within the Charter guidance that it may not be practical or meaningful to sign up to all Pledges, so they recommend only signing up to those which have already been achieved or are currently being worked on.

3.7 Partnership activity relating to the delivery of technology enabled care in housing is already taking place in Renfrewshire and aligns well with the following three Pledges:

- Engaging with the Customer (Pledge 2)
- Working in Partnership (Pledge 3)
- Getting the Infrastructure Right (Pledge 7)

It is proposed that the initial focus should be on these areas with action taken at a future stage to work towards fulfilling the other Charter Pledges.

#### **4. Current Position on Technology Enabled Care Solutions in Housing in Renfrewshire**

##### **Engaging with the Customer - Charter Pledge 2**

- 4.1 It has become even more apparent in the current Covid19 environment that digital technology is important in helping to keep people socially connected and is a key factor in contributing to the prevention of loneliness and isolation.
- 4.2 All Council sheltered housing tenants were contacted during the pandemic with advice on support available from the Digital Participation Officer. Digital support includes 'over the phone support' and video calls where possible. Sheltered housing tenants have been able to access organised online recreational activities and information posts about useful websites.
- 4.3 Around 36 Tablet devices were provided to Council sheltered housing tenants (14 with internet connection) provided by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) Connecting Scotland Project to help older people or those shielding to stay digitally connected to family and friends.
- 4.4 The Council's Sheltered Housing Services Team together with ICT have produced a costed model to install Broadband in all ten sheltered housing communal lounge areas. While the communal lounges are currently closed, this initiative will present future opportunities for sheltered tenants with new IT devices to receive one to one digital training and support. This will reduce the expense of broadband connection installation for older tenants, go towards increased social interaction and help prevent social isolation.
- 4.5 Over the two years prior to the pandemic:
  - 348 digital training sessions were carried out for sheltered housing tenants in 2019/20 (a 48% increase from the previous year)
  - a COSLA Bronze award was achieved in 2019 in the category of "Tackling Inequalities and Improving Health" for the Renfrewshire Tenants Online Project supporting tenants to access the internet .The project was shortlisted for the Chartered Institute in Housing Award for "Excellence in Health and Wellbeing" and in 2018 for the Holyrood ICT Citizens Connect Award.

- 4.6 A pilot project is ongoing where tenant representatives have been provided with SIM enabled laptops where they have had limited access to a device and /or broadband. This has assisted online meetings to take place with Council Officers where feedback and information on Council services can be exchanged.
- 4.7 Overall, this range of activity shows that there is an existing framework in place which can be further developed to jointly co-design TEC in Housing solutions with tenants and meeting the Engagement with Customers Charter Pledge.

### **Charter Pledge 3 – Partnership Working**

- 4.8 Close partnership working arrangements are embedded between Council services and the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), which contribute to supporting older and vulnerable people to live independently and safely at home.
- 4.9 The HSCP's Technology Enabled Care Service plays a major role in managing risk and supports approximately 3,600 service users across Renfrewshire by means of a community alarm dispersed unit or a sheltered complex warden call system, following a needs assessment. Services delivered can range from the provision of a basic alarm unit to sensors placed in a service user's home to monitor personal risks such as falls, smoke, flood and fire. Other services include, pressure mats, inactivity sensors, automatic pill dispensers and property exit sensors linked to the internet which allows family/carers to check that a family member is safe at home.
- 4.10 Discussions have taken place with the HSCP to explore initiatives for technology enabled solutions to support older people remain safe for longer in their own home.
- 4.11 With two local partner RSLs already signed up to the TEC in Housing Charter, there are positive opportunities to exchange and promote good practice with the HSCP and other health professionals.
- 4.12 These existing close working arrangements provide a sound basis for the further development of partnership working to achieve Pledge 3.

### **Charter Pledge 6 – Getting the Infrastructure Right**

- 4.13 Assistive technology features have been incorporated into the design of the Council's new build amenity properties in Bishopton.
- 4.14 Amenity homes are provided with a fibre optic phone and broadband connection ready for tenants' use. Communal satellite dishes are fitted to buildings and cabled to receive satellite TV services with tenants able to choose to use these at their own cost. Smoke alarms are hard wired and carbon dioxide monitors are installed so that residents can see if levels become too high.

- 4.15 Varied colour schemes are in place in the amenity blocks to indicate different floor levels to help people with dementia identify their home more easily. Where possible, and building on the amenity housing model in Bishopton, assistive technology will be factored into future Council new build and retrofit projects which will be taken forward as part of the Council's planned 10-year housing-led regeneration and renewal programme.
- 4.16 Preparatory work is underway to progress the transition from Analogue to Digital Telecare Services as the current system is no longer fit for purpose. It is anticipated that the switchover will be completed by 2023 and will offer a number of benefits to sheltered housing tenants and people with support needs across the wider community.
- 4.17 The Council was awarded grant funding in 2019 from a Scottish Enterprise challenge fund for an innovative project to utilise sensor technology and data analytics to measure internal environmental conditions within Council houses. The project uses the sensor technology to seek to reduce future maintenance costs and help identify tenants who may require energy advice and will cover around 1,000 properties over a two-year period. The data gathered can be used to highlight the need for intervention to prevent conditions such as condensation and mould growth developing where poor ventilation and irregular heating is identified and can assist in identifying tenants at risk of fuel poverty who may require assistance to ensure their home is heated and ventilated properly.
- 4.18 Changes to the infrastructure will provide opportunities for innovative approaches for the delivery of TEC in Housing solutions and contribute to meeting Pledge 6.

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## Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – None.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None.
3. **Community/Council Planning** –
  - *Our Renfrewshire is well* – Actions that will be taken forward to meet the Pledges of the TECH Charter will help support older and vulnerable residents to live healthier, for longer, in their own homes.
  - *Building strong, safe and resilient communities* – In working towards meeting Pledge 6 “Getting the Infrastructure Right”, older and vulnerable people will have increased opportunities to stay safe in their local communities
4. **Legal** – None.
5. **Property/Assets** – None.
6. **Information Technology** – None.

7. **Equality & Human Rights -**

- (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. **Health & Safety** – None.

9. **Procurement** – None.

10. **Risk** – None.

11. **Privacy Impact** – None.

12. **COSLA Policy Position** – not applicable.

13. **Climate Risk** – not applicable

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**List of Background Papers**

(a) None.

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