
To: Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board

On: 27 October 2020

Report by: Director of Communities, Housing and Planning

Heading: Regulation of Social Housing: Assurance Statement 2020

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Council is required to submit its Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator by the end of November 2020 on compliance with the regulatory requirements for local authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).
 - 1.2 Appendix 1 lists the requirements as set out in Chapter 3 of the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework and provides evidence to demonstrate Renfrewshire Council's compliance.
 - 1.3 As Members are aware, regular reports are presented to the Policy Board on housing services performance and benchmarking. These reports demonstrate continuing strong performance across most areas of the housing service in 2019/20 but also highlight some areas for improvement. Section 3 of this reports notes these areas for improvement. Section 3 also refers to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on housing services since March 2020 and highlights several areas where it has not been possible to achieve full compliance as a result of the pandemic
 - 1.4 The proposed Annual Assurance Statement 2020 for Renfrewshire Council is attached at Appendix 2 for approval by the Policy Board.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Policy Board:
 - (i) notes the Regulatory Requirements and evidence of Renfrewshire Council's compliance as set out in Appendix 1; and

- (iii) approves Renfrewshire Council's Annual Assurance Statement 2020 for submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator as attached in Appendix 2
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3. Background

- 3.1 All social landlords are required to prepare and submit an Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator by the end year. The first Annual Assurance Statement from Renfrewshire Council was approved by the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board and submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator in October 2019.
- 3.2 The regulatory requirements for all social landlords include:
- Meeting all duties, obligations and responsibilities placed on landlords by legislation and through statutory guidance
 - Achieving the standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter
 - Duties to help people who are homeless, including a statutory duty to prevent and alleviate homelessness
 - Duties relating to the safety of tenants' homes and promoting equality and human rights
 - Meeting the requirements and adhering to relevant guidance from other regulatory bodies
 - Adhering to statutory guidance from the Scottish Housing Regulator and taking account of regulatory advice
- 3.3 The Scottish Housing Regulator lists the regulatory requirements for local authorities under five heading in its Regulatory Framework. Appendix 1, which is attached to this report, shows how Renfrewshire Council meets each of these requirements and gives details of evidence which demonstrates compliance.
1. Assurance and notification
 2. Scottish Social Housing Charter performance
 3. Tenants and service users redress
 4. Whistleblowing
 5. Equality and Human Rights
- 3.4 Arrangements are in place to report regularly to the Policy Board on a range of matters relevant to the above requirements. This includes tenant and resident engagement, service improvement planning, service performance and financial and risk management. Where appropriate, these reports address areas for improvement as well as highlighting areas where the service is performing well. The normal annual cycle of reports is detailed in the table below, but Members will note that there have been some changes to the schedule of meetings in 2020 due to Coronavirus restrictions.

Table 1. Annual Cycle of Reports

Subject	Month
Housing Revenue Account Budget and Rent Levels (report to Council)	February/ March
Private Sector Grant Investment Programme	February/ March
3-year Service Improvement Plan	March
Service Improvement Plan (overview of performance in the previous year)	Normally May (October 2020)
Annual Return on the Charter (and management information on allocations, repairs, homelessness and rent collection)	August
Service Improvement Plan Mid-Year Monitoring	October
Charter Half Year Update (and management information on allocations, repairs, homelessness and rent collection)	October
Annual Housing Performance Benchmarking	October
Annual Customer Engagement report	October
Budget reports (including Housing Revenue Account)	Each cycle

- 3.5 As part of the preparation for the first Annual Assurance Statement in 2019, a full self-assessment exercise was carried out to see if the Council is achieving the 5 outcomes and standards in the Social Housing Charter. This was updated in 2020, with a refresh exercise carried out for the Housing Options and Value for Money sections of the Charter. The Tenant Scrutiny Panel was involved in assessing compliance on the Value for Money standard.
- 3.6 While strong and improving performance has been reported to the Policy Board across the range of housing services for 2019/20, several areas for improvement have been identified as noted below.
- **Repairs, Maintenance and improvements:** The 2020 Tenant Satisfaction Survey reported slightly lower levels of satisfaction compared to the previous survey (90.8% and 92.5% respectively). It took slightly longer to complete emergency repairs and non-emergency repairs in 2019/20 than in 2018/19 and a lower proportion of repairs

- were completed 'right first time' (83% compared to 88% in 2019/20 and 2018/19 respectively). Further analysis will be carried out to identify any underlying issues alongside a focus on action to minimise the need for multiple visits and ensure that repairs are completed to tenants' satisfaction on the first visit. The use of portable devices should support improved efficiency and greater accuracy in recording completion timescales.

The 2019/20 Charter Return noted that there were 17 times during the year when gas safety checks were not completed within 12 months of an appliance being fitted or the last safety check. 11 of these cases were directly related to the Coronavirus pandemic. The other 6 cases were reviewed, and improvement action identified.

- **Value for money** The time taken to re-let empty properties increased in 2019/20 (up from 38 to 45 days) and work is in progress to learn from good practice elsewhere, identify opportunities to reduce timescales in Renfrewshire and improve service efficiency which will also impact positively on the proportion of rent lost through properties being empty.
- **Tenancy Sustainment** While the overall rate of tenancy sustainment has remained stable for the last three years and is similar to the average for local authorities in Scotland, there has been a slight reduction in rate of sustainment for people who were previously homeless. Work is being taken forward through Renfrewshire's Homelessness Partnership as detailed in the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan to address this.
- **Participation:** The Council has well-established arrangements for tenant participation, customer engagement and tenant scrutiny. The 2020 Tenant Satisfaction Survey demonstrated very high levels of satisfaction among tenants, with 94% of tenants saying they are satisfied with opportunities to participate in decision-making processes.

However, the customer engagement strategy requires to be reviewed and updated. Work has started on this and initial discussions have taken place with tenant representatives on how current arrangements could be improved, making use of new technologies and developing an inclusive approach to maximise opportunities for engagement.

- 3.7 The Scottish Housing Regulator wrote to all social landlords at the end of October 2019 regarding tenant and resident safety, emphasising the importance of obtaining appropriate assurance that they are meeting all duties on tenant and resident safety.

- 3.8 Since March 2020, the Coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on housing services, and it has been necessary to make major changes to service delivery arrangements in response to restrictions and in keeping with government guidance. Information on changes to services was publicised on the Council's website and outlined in a booklet which was posted to all Council tenants in April. The booklet also included contact details for a range of services providing support and assistance. The Director of Communities, Housing and Planning Services wrote to the Scottish Housing Regulator at the end of March 2020 detailing changes implemented by the Council in response to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. These changes to service provision were reported to the Emergencies Board in the period following lockdown, with an update report to the Communities, Housing and Planning Services Policy Board on 18 August 2020. A further service update is also provided in a separate report to the meeting of the Communities, Housing and Planning Services Policy Board on 27 October 2020.
- 3.9 Social landlords are required to advise the Scottish Housing Regulator of any material changes to Council's Annual Assurance Statement during the year. In addition to the letter in March referred to above, the Director of Communities, Housing and Planning Services also wrote to the Scottish Housing Regulator in September 2020 regarding gas safety. The letter explained that, as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, it had not been possible to carry out a significant number of gas safety checks by the 12-months due date. (Access may not have been possible because tenants were self-isolating or shielding or did not want a gas engineer in the house and the decision was taken during lockdown not to physically force access but instead focus on making contact with tenants and rearranging visits where possible. A separate report to the Policy Board on 27 October 2020 (Social Housing Charter Performance: 2020/21 Half Year Update) shows that, of the 4,906 safety checks due in the first six months of the year, 3,995 were carried out within the 12-month period. When restrictions eased, processes were adapted and arrangements put in place to deal with the backlog and minimise the number of future checks not completed by the due date, although it should be noted that this will still take some time fully address.
- 3.10 The pandemic has led to some delay over the last 6 months with the Council's programme of electrical safety inspections which are required to be carried out every five years. Delays to planned capital improvement works will also have an impact on the Council's ability to meet the interim target for the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) by the end of December 2020 and the new fire and smoke alarm standards by February 2021. These issues are understood to be common to all social landlords as a result of the pandemic and were acknowledged in a letter to all local authorities and RSLs from Kevin Stewart, Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning in July 2020.
- 3.11 As noted above, the pandemic has had a significant impact on housing services. Figures contained in a separate report to the Policy Board (Social Housing Charter Performance: 2020/21 Half Year Update) shows the impact on repairs, letting activity, homelessness and rent arrears in the period April to September 2020.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – None.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None.
3. **Community/Council Planning** –
 - *Our Renfrewshire is thriving* – Providing housing and homelessness services which meet regulatory standards.
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** – n/a

List of Background Papers

Report to Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board on 15 January 2019, 'Regulation of Social Housing- Response to Consultation by The Scottish Housing Regulator'.

Report to Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board on 29 October 2019, Regulation of Social Housing: Assurance Statement 2019

Report to Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board on 18 August 2020,
Scottish Social Housing Charter: Annual Return 2019/20.

Report to Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board on 27 October 2020,
Scottish Social Housing Charter Half yearly report 2020/21.

The foregoing background papers will be retained within Communities, Housing and Planning Services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting.

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Attachment(s): Appendix 1: Renfrewshire Council Assurance Statement 2020
Appendix 2: Regulation of Social Housing Assurance Statement

APPENDIX 1 – ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT 2020

REFERENCE INDEX

REFERENCE	REFERENCE DESCRIPTION
AHS	Access to Housing and Support
AICV	Additional Information Covid-19
AIG	Additional Information General
CLR	Customer Landlord Relationship
CPSP	Corporate Plans Strategies & Procedures
GVRSC	Getting Good Value from Rents & Service Charges
HQM	Housing Quality and Maintenance
HSP	Housing Strategies & Policy
NC	Neighbourhood and Community

Checklist of Regulatory Requirements/Standards

1. Assurance and Notification

Ref	Requirement	Evidence	Evidence	Compliance
AN1	Prepare an Annual Assurance Statement in accordance with SHR published guidance, submit it to the SHR between April and the end of October each year, and make it available to tenants and other service users.	<p>Annual Assurance Statement Presentation to members of the Policy Board on 6 October 2020</p> <p>CHAPS Board Report 29 October 2019 – Regulation of Social Housing Assurance Statement</p> <p>CHAPS Board Report 15 January 2019 – Response to Consultation by SHR on ARC Return.</p> <p>Annual Assurance Statement 2019 Feedback Letter from the Scottish Housing Regulator, March 2020</p> <p>People's News and Council Website</p> <p>Joint Tenant Meeting, August 2020</p>	<p>AIG11</p> <p>CLR24</p> <p>CLR27</p> <p>CLR24a</p> <p>CLR 25</p> <p>CLR12a</p>	<p>A briefing session and presentation on the Annual Assurance Statement 2020 was provided to members of the Policy Board prior to the meeting of the Policy Board.</p> <p>The Policy Board has been advised in previous reports of the changes to the Regulatory Framework implemented in 2019.</p> <p>Officers have undertaken an extensive self-assessment and information gathering exercise to ensure sufficient evidence is available to provide assurance on compliance with the regulatory requirements.</p> <p>Account has been taken of the SHR's updated guidance on Annual Assurance Statements in preparing this report.</p> <p>Some areas for improvement have been identified and these are detailed within this report and in other reports to the Policy Board.</p> <p>The first Annual Assurance Statement was approved by the Policy Board on 29 October 2019 and was submitted to the SHR thereafter, with the SHR</p>

Ref	Requirement	Evidence	Evidence	Compliance
				<p>providing feedback in their letter of 10 March 2020.</p> <p>The 2020 Annual Assurance Statement was discussed with the Tenants Scrutiny Panel at the joint tenant meeting held in August 2020.</p> <p>Following Board approval, the Annual Assurance Statement 2020 will be available to tenants and other service users on the Council's website.</p>
AN2	Notify the SHR during the year of any material changes to the assurance in the Council's Assurance Statement.	<p>CHAPS Board Report 27 October 2020 – Regulation of Social Housing: Assurance Statement 2020</p> <p>Letter to Scottish Housing Regulator regarding service changes due to Coronavirus Pandemic, March 2020</p> <p>Emergencies Board Report, 15 May 2020.</p> <p>Covid-19 Monthly Reports</p> <p>Covid-19 Service Update Report, CHAPS 18/08/20</p> <p>Covid-19 Service Update Report, CHAPS 27/10/20</p>	<p>CLR24</p> <p>CLR37</p> <p>AICV13</p> <p>AICV09</p> <p>AICV07</p> <p>AICV07</p>	<p>Since March 2020, the Coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on housing services, and it has been necessary to make major changes to service delivery arrangements in response to restrictions and in keeping with government guidance.</p> <p>Information on changes to services was publicised on the Council's website and outlined in a booklet which was posted to all Council tenants in April. The booklet also included contact details for a range of services providing support and assistance.</p> <p>The Director of Communities, Housing and Planning Services wrote to the Scottish Housing Regulator at the end of March 2020 detailing changes implemented by the Council in response to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic.</p> <p>These changes to service provision were reported to the Emergencies Board in the period following lockdown, with an update report to the Communities,</p>

Ref	Requirement	Evidence	Evidence	Compliance
		Letter to Scottish Housing Regulator regarding gas safety certification, September 2020	CLR34	<p>Housing and Planning Services Policy Board on 18 August 2020. A further service update report was also provided to the Communities, Housing and Planning Services Policy Board on 27 October 2020.</p> <p>The Director of Communities, Housing and Planning Services wrote again to the Scottish Housing Regulator on 4 September 2020 regarding the impact of the pandemic on annual gas safety checks in 2020/21.</p> <p>Procedures are in place to monitor ongoing compliance and any further material changes will be reported to the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board and to the Scottish Housing Regulator.</p>
AN3	Have assurance and evidence that the Council is meeting all its legal obligations associated with housing and homelessness services, equality and human rights, and tenant and resident safety.	<p>Council and Housing Strategies, Plans, Policies and Procedures.</p> <p>Renfrewshire Anti-social behaviour Strategy</p> <p>Self-Assessment exercise on charter outcomes 7-12 Access to Housing Support and 13 -15 Getting Good Value from Rents and Service Charges</p> <p>Performance and Benchmarking Reports.</p>	<p>NC2</p> <p>CLR28</p> <p>CLR16 CLR17 CLR18</p>	<p>Following an extensive self-assessment exercise in 2019, further self-assessment activity took place in 2020 on 'Access to Housing Support' and 'Getting Good Value from Rents and Service Charges'. Self-assessment activity will be undertaken each year on a rolling-programme basis across different service areas.</p> <p>We continue to collect and analyse data on new and existing tenants to provide a better understanding of the needs and requirements for all equality groups.</p> <p>The service monitors performance on an ongoing basis, with regular monthly and quarterly reports prepared for internal review. Performance reports are presented to the Communities, Housing and</p>

Ref	Requirement	Evidence	Evidence	Compliance
		Leadership Board Report 1 May 2019 - Progress Report on Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Equality 2019	CLR8	Planning Policy Board on a six-monthly basis which contain a wide range of management information relating to housing and homelessness services. These reports are publicly available on the Council's website.
		Housing Information & Advice for People with Disabilities	CLR9	Performance across the range of housing services is regularly monitored and reported to the Policy Board, including benchmarking over time and with other social landlords. As part of this regular monitoring, areas for improvement are identified and action implemented as appropriate.
		Tenants Satisfaction Surveys.	CLR13	
		Consultation on Policy changes and rent setting.	GVRSC4	
		Other Regulatory body reports		A tenant satisfaction survey is carried out every two years by independent consultants. Feedback from the 2020 Tenant Satisfaction Survey was used to identify areas for improvement, including the repairs service.
		People's News – Annual Return on the Charter Tenant Supplement.	CLR25	
		Tenant Newsletters and Information.	AICV05	When new policies or procedures are being developed, officers seek advice from the Council's Legal Services team to ensure any legal issues are identified and given appropriate consideration. Any relevant issues are highlighted for Elected Members in reports to the Policy Board.
		Corporate Health and Safety Policies and Procedures.		
		Internal Audit Statement of Compliance.	CLR26	The Scottish Housing Regulator wrote to all social landlords at the end of October 2019 regarding tenant and resident safety, emphasising the importance of obtaining appropriate assurance that they are meeting all duties on tenant and resident
		Compliance Certificates – e.g. Gas Safety		

Ref	Requirement	Evidence	Evidence	Compliance
		Renfrewshire Common Housing Allocation Policy	AHS1a	safety. In response to this, additional work has been undertaken to review arrangements, with actions identified to make more robust the framework for data recording and reporting with respect to safety matters.
		Allocations Procedures		
		Housing Options Advice – Housing Options Form	AHS3	The housing allocation process is monitored, and targets and outcomes are reported to the Policy Board annually. This year, due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, the Policy Board was advised that allocation targets would be carried over from 2019, with a continuing focus on meeting homelessness and the highest levels of housing needs and in keeping with the needs-based framework set out in the housing allocation policy.
		Secure Tenancy Agreement	AHS7	
		Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan	HSP4	
		Covid-19 Service Update, CHAPS Board Report, 18 August 2020	AICV07	
		Covid-19 Service Update Report, CHAPS 27/10/20	AICV07	Additional properties have been made available for use as temporary accommodation as required over the last six months. Given the level of demand and the lack of availability of suitable accommodation, Bed and Breakfast accommodation has been used during this time. In some instances, the use of B&B accommodation has been for more than 7 days (the time specified in the Unsuitable Accommodation Order) where other temporary accommodation was not immediately available, but all such cases were directly related to the situation caused by the pandemic.
		Link on Council Website to Covid-19 Information Booklet for Tenants on service changes	AICV12	
		Housing Repairs Policy	HQM3	
		Housing Adaptations within Council Stock Policy	HQM10	
		Repairs Handbook for tenants	HQM5	Following the closure of Council Offices due to the Coronavirus pandemic, all Council tenants received a

Ref	Requirement	Evidence	Evidence	Compliance
		<p>Housing Energy Efficiency & Carbon Reduction Programme</p> <p>Letter to Scottish Housing Regulator regarding gas safety certification, September 2020</p>	<p>HQM9</p> <p>CLR34</p>	<p>booklet advising them of the changes to services and how they could continue to get in touch with officers for advice and assistance.</p> <p>As noted above, the Director of Communities, Housing and Planning Services wrote to the Scottish Housing Regulator on 4 September 2020 regarding the impact of the pandemic on annual gas safety checks in 2020/21.</p> <p>While the vast majority of annual gas safety checks have been carried out prior to the 12-month due date, there are a significant number of cases where this has not been possible. This is a direct result of the pandemic. Remedial measures are in place to deal with the backlog and minimise the number of checks not completed by the 12-month due date going forward.</p> <p>The pandemic has also led to some delay over the last 6 months with the Council's programme of electrical safety inspections which are required to be carried out every five years.</p>
AN4	Notify the SHR of any tenant and resident safety matters which have been reported to or are being investigated by the Health and Safety Executive, or reports from regulatory or statutory authorities, or	Corporate Health and Safety Policies and Procedures		<p>Any reportable HSE incidents are logged in the Health & Safety Database and investigated in accordance with the Council's Corporate Health & Safety Policies and Procedures.</p> <p>During the year, three incidents were reported to the HSE.</p>

Ref	Requirement	Evidence	Evidence	Compliance
	insurance providers, relating to safety concerns.			Outcomes of investigations are notified directly to the Council by the HSE and copied to the Director and Head of Service. There have been no inspections by regulatory authorities this year.
AN5	Make the Council's Engagement Plan easily available and accessible to tenants and service users, including online.	Council website which includes link to Regulator website People's News CHAPS Board Report 27 October 2020 – Regulation of Social Housing Assurance Statement	CLR25 CLR24	The Council's current Engagement Plan is published on the Council's website and any subsequent plans will be made available online for tenants and service users. The Engagement plan is also promoted to tenants in the People's News.

2. Scottish Social Housing Charter Performance

Ref	Requirement	Evidence		Compliance
CH1	Submit an Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) to the SHR each year in accordance with published guidance.	Scottish Social Housing Charter: Annual Return 2019/20 CHAPS Board Report, 18/08/20 CHAPS Board report, 27/10/20, Annual Housing Benchmarking Performance Report 2019/20	CLR18 CLR16	The Annual Return on the Charter was submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator in July 2020. A robust framework is in place for internal data checking prior to submission and a sample data check is independently verified by the Scottish Housing Network. Charter performance is reported bi-annually to the Communities, Housing and Planning Services policy Board along with an annual report on performance benchmarking.

Ref	Requirement	Evidence		Compliance
		CHAPS Board report, 27/10/20, Scottish Social Housing Charter Half yearly report 2020/21	CLR17	
CH2	<p>Involve tenants, and where relevant other service users, in the preparation and scrutiny of performance information. This must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreeing the approach with tenants • Ensuring that it is effective and meaningful – that the chosen approach gives tenants a real and demonstrable say in the assessment of performance • Publicising the approach to tenants • Ensuring that it can be verified and be able to show that the agreed approach to involving 	<p>Agenda, Presentation and Minutes of Joint Tenant Representative Group Meetings</p> <p>CHAPS Board report, 27/10/20, Housing Customer Engagement Annual Report 2019/20</p> <p>CHAPS Board report, August 2010, Housing Customer Engagement Strategy</p> <p>Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2020</p> <p>Tenant Scrutiny Panel Reports</p> <p>Sheltered Housing and Multi Storey Quality Circle Inspections</p>	<p>CLR12a CLR12b CLR12c CLR12d</p> <p>CLR1a</p> <p>CLR1</p> <p>CLR13</p> <p>CLR19</p> <p>CLR20</p>	<p>Tenants are consulted on how performance information is presented, what indicators should be highlighted and how performance is benchmarked. This information is contained within the Charter supplement of the October edition of the Peoples news and is distributed to all Council tenants and made publicly available on the Councils website.</p> <p>As part of our Customer Engagement Strategy, performance is discussed with representative tenant groups on a regular basis. This year, adjustments have been made to the normal arrangements for meeting with tenant representatives, with more online communication being developed while it is not possible hold face to face meetings.</p> <p>Due to Coronavirus restrictions on gatherings, officers and tenant representatives participated in an online meeting to discuss the Council's Annual Charter Return and the Council's performance in comparison to other social housing providers. At the meeting which took place in August 2020, the style and layout of the 2020 tenant report on the charter was discussed. This will be issued to all tenants and made available on the Council's website.</p>

Ref	Requirement	Evidence		Compliance
	<p>tenants has happened</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve other service users in an appropriate way, having asked and had regard to their needs and wishes. 	<p>Neighbourhood Forum budget monitoring</p> <p>2020/2021 Rent Consultation and CHAPS Board report on rent increase, 9 March 2020.</p> <p>Service Improvement Plan 2020-2023</p> <p>Council Wide Forums</p> <p>Tenant & Resident Association Meetings</p> <p>Tenant Scrutiny Panel, Letting Standard Report, March 2014</p> <p>Repairs Development Group</p>	<p>CLR22</p> <p>GVRSC1</p> <p>HSP6</p> <p>CLR21</p> <p>CLR32</p> <p>HQM2e</p> <p>HQM14</p>	<p>The current Customer Engagement Strategy was developed in 2010 and is currently being revised to take account of good practice, tenants' views and make full use of new technology in a rapidly changing environment to enhance the opportunities for greater tenant participation. The draft strategy will be presented to a future meeting of the Communities Housing and Planning Policy Board for approval prior to implementation.</p> <p>The 2020 Tenants' Satisfaction Survey noted that 93.7% of Council tenants said they were satisfied with the opportunities to participate in decision-making processes.</p> <p>The Council has a range of opportunities for both individuals and groups to participate and monitor performance, such as: surveys, meetings with Tenants and Residents Associations, the Council Wide Forum, Neighbourhood Forums, Quality Circles, the Repairs Development Group and the Tenant Scrutiny Panel. The service will continue to work with these groups to review customer feedback and inform future improvements.</p> <p>Annual updates are provided to the Policy Board on the Customer Engagement Strategy. This includes reporting to tenants on service performance.</p>

Ref	Requirement	Evidence		Compliance
CH3	Report performance in achieving or progressing towards the Charter outcomes and standards to its tenants and other service users (no later than October each year). The format of performance reporting must be agreed with tenants, ensuring that it is accessible for tenants and other service users, with plain and jargon-free language.	Agenda, Presentation and Minutes of Joint Tenant Representative Group Meetings People's News – Annual Return on the Charter Tenant Supplement Council website	CLR12a CLR12b CLR12c CLR12d CLR25	Each year tenant representatives are consulted on how performance information should be presented, what indicators should be highlighted and how performance is benchmarked. The annual Report to Tenants is delivered to all Council tenants as a supplement to the Peoples News each year and is published on the Council's website. In normal circumstances the report would also be available from Council offices and public libraries. However, due to the Coronavirus pandemic these locations are currently closed and digital methods of promoting the report to tenants will be used.
CH4	When reporting performance to tenants and other service users, this must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include providing them with an assessment of performance in delivering each of the Charter outcomes and standards which are relevant to the Council • Include relevant comparisons – these should include comparisons with 	Scottish Social Housing Charter: Annual Return 2019/20 CHAPS Board Report, 18/08/2020 Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2020 Self-Assessment exercise on charter outcomes 7-12 Access to Housing Support and 13 -15 Getting Good Value from Rents and Service Charges	CLR18 CLR13 CLR28	Tenant feedback is used to develop the annual Report to Tenants which includes current performance against previous years and benchmarking against Scottish averages. The Report to Tenants provides a balanced appraisal of performance and highlights areas that will be focussed on for improvement. A self-assessment exercise was undertaken with the tenant scrutiny panel as part of the preparation for the 2020 Annual Assurance Statement on charter outcomes 7-12 Access to Housing Support and 13 - 15 Getting Good Value from Rents and Service Charges.

Ref	Requirement	Evidence		Compliance
	<p>previous years, with other landlords and with national performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set out how and when the Council intends to address areas for improvement Give tenants and other service users a way to feed back their views on the style and form of the reporting 	<p>Service Improvement Plan 2020 – 2023</p> <p>People's News – Annual Return on the Charter Tenant Supplement.</p> <p>CHAPS Board report, 27/10/20, Annual Housing Benchmarking Performance Report 2019/20</p> <p>CHAPS Board report, 27/10/20, Scottish Social Housing Charter Half yearly report 2020/21</p> <p>Agenda, Presentation and Minutes of Joint Tenant Representative Group Meetings</p> <p>Council website</p>	<p>HSP6</p> <p>CLR25</p> <p>CLR16</p> <p>CLR17</p> <p>CLR12a CLR12b CLR12c CLR12d</p>	<p>Charter information presented to tenant groups includes performance information, comparisons with previous years' data and other social landlords.</p> <p>The annual report to the Policy Board on the Charter Return includes areas for improvement that have been identified with actions this year including a focus on repairs satisfaction, Right First Time, average days to re-let properties and further reduction in the rate of offers of housing that are refused in the year.</p> <p>The three-year Service Improvement Plan provides details of service review and development across housing and homelessness services.</p> <p>The Peoples News provides opportunities for tenants to "Tell us what you think" inviting comments on the format and content of the newsletter. The content and design of the newsletter is also discussed regularly with tenant groups.</p>
CH5	Make the report on performance easily available to tenants, including online.	<p>People's News – Annual Return on the Charter Tenant Supplement</p> <p>Council website</p>	CLR25	<p>The annual Report to Tenants is published in the Peoples News and distributed to all Council tenants. The report is also published on the Council's website and, in normal circumstances would also be available from Council offices and public libraries, however, due to the Coronavirus pandemic these locations are currently closed.</p>

3. Tenants and Service Users Redress

Ref	Requirement	Evidence		Compliance
TS1	Make information on reporting significant performance failures, including the SHR's leaflet, available to tenants.	<p>Council website includes a link to the Scottish Housing Regulator's website</p> <p>SHR Significant Failures Leaflet</p>	CLR10	<p>Information for tenants on reporting significant performance failures, including the SHR's leaflet is available from the Council website.</p> <p>A link to the SHR's website is also publicised on the Council's website.</p>
TS2	Provide tenants and other service users with the information they need to exercise their right to complain and seek redress and respond to tenants within the timescales outlined in the Council's service standards, in accordance with guidance from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).	<p>Complaints Handling Procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Guide • Complaints Form <p>People's News</p> <p>Council website</p> <p>Scottish Social Housing Charter: Annual Return 2019/20 CHAPS Board Report, 18/08/20</p> <p>CHAPS Board report, 27/10/20, Annual Housing Benchmarking Performance Report 2019/20</p>	<p>CLR3 CLR4</p> <p>CLR25</p> <p>CLR18</p> <p>CLR16</p>	<p>Information on how to complain is publicised widely, including online and in tenant newsletters.</p> <p>The Council adheres to the SPSO guidance in relation to complaint timescales.</p> <p>The Council monitors complaints handling, and this is reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator through the Annual Return on the Charter.</p> <p>Complaints performance information is covered in the annual Report to Tenants within the October issue of the Peoples News.</p>

Ref	Requirement	Evidence		Compliance
TS3	Ensure the Council has effective arrangements to learn from complaints and from other tenant and service user feedback, in accordance with SPSO guidance.	<p>Corporate Complaints Handling Procedures</p> <p>Complaints Management System</p> <p>SPSO – Link on Council website</p> <p>Sheltered Housing Newsletters</p> <p>Service Improvement Plan 2020 -2023, CHAPS 10 March 2020.</p> <p>2020 Tenant Satisfaction Survey</p>	<p>AIG12</p> <p>CLR11</p> <p>HSP6</p> <p>CLR13</p>	<p>Complaints are analysed to identify any themes that require addressing. Quarterly officer meetings to gain insight into complaints have been arranged.</p> <p>As part of the 2020 Tenant Satisfaction Survey, tenants were asked about the main reason for complaints and their experience of making a complaint. Around 7% of respondents said they had complained in the last year, with the main reasons related to repairs or anti-social behaviour. Three quarters of those who complained said they found it easy to do so.</p> <p>The Sheltered Housing Service newsletter includes a “you said we did” section which highlights to customers the action that has been taken following feedback received.</p>

4. Whistleblowing

Ref	Requirement	Evidence		Compliance
WB1	Have effective arrangements and a policy for whistleblowing by staff and elected members which the Council makes easily available and which it promotes.	<p>Staff Code of Conduct</p> <p>Councillor Code of Conduct</p> <p>Council Intranet site</p>	<p>CPSP8</p> <p>CPSP18</p>	<p>The Council’s Staff Code of Conduct includes information on Whistleblowing. This is available for staff and elected members on the Councils intranet site.</p> <p>Elected members must comply with the Councillors Code of Conduct which is available on the Standards Commission website.</p>

5. Equality and Human Rights

Ref	Requirement	Evidence		Compliance
EH1	Have assurance and evidence that the Council considers equality and human rights issues properly when making all of its decisions, in the design and review of internal and external policies, and in its day-to-day service delivery.	<p>Council Guide for Assessing Equality and Human Rights Impacts</p> <p>Leadership Board Report 1 May 2019 - Progress Report on Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Equality 2019</p> <p>Housing Information & Advice for People with Disabilities</p> <p>Digital Support for Council Tenants</p> <p>Link to Language Line translation service & Alternative formats are available on request.</p> <p>Wheelchair accessible customer service centre with Loop hearing systems in place.</p> <p>Renfrewshire Common Housing Allocation Policy</p> <p>Housing Options, mobility,</p>	<p>CLR8</p> <p>CLR9</p> <p>CLR15</p> <p>AIG8</p> <p>AHS1 AHS1a</p> <p>AHS3</p>	<p>All matters being reported to Board are reviewed for any equality and/or human rights implications.</p> <p>The Council monitors equality outcomes corporately with all policy changes subject to Equality Impact Assessments and approved by the relevant Board. e.g. Renfrewshire Common Housing Allocation Policy.</p> <p>Performance in promoting equalities is reported to the Leadership Board. There is also a statement in the Service Improvement Plan annually on performance relating to equalities.</p> <p>The Tenant Satisfaction Survey results highlight high satisfaction rates for access to services and for participation opportunities, with respondents noting that they find it easy to participate.</p> <p>As part of the annual update on the Strategic Housing Investment Plan, a consultation exercise takes place to provide individuals and groups an opportunity to provide comments on the proposals.</p> <p>The Renfrewshire Council Newbuild Specification document has been designed to ensure properties meet housing for varying needs standards and a mix of property types and sizes</p>

Ref	Requirement	Evidence		Compliance
		<p>Sheltered and HSPC housing application process.</p> <p>Annual Re-registration process for housing applicants</p> <p>Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan</p> <p>Renfrewshire Homeless Partnership multi-agency approach</p> <p>Renfrewshire Common Housing Allocation Policy Equalities Impact Assessment.</p> <p>Service Improvement Plan 2020 – 2023, CHAPS 18 August 2020.</p> <p>Tenants Satisfaction Survey 2020.</p> <p>Draft Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2021/22-2025/26, CHAPS 18 August 2020</p> <p>Draft Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2021/22-</p>	<p>AHS3a AHS3b AHS3c AIG9</p> <p>HSP4</p> <p>AHS17</p> <p>CLR5b</p> <p>HSP6</p> <p>CLR13</p> <p>HSP2</p> <p>HSP2a</p>	<p>are delivered to meet current and future needs, including an element of wheelchair accessible homes in suitable locations.</p>

Ref	Requirement	Evidence		Compliance
		2025/26 Consultation exercise, September 2020. Renfrewshire Council Newbuild Specification		
EH2	To comply with these duties, landlords must collect data relating to each of the protected characteristics for their existing tenants, new tenants, people on waiting lists, governing body members and staff. Local authorities must also collect data on protected characteristics for people who apply to them as homeless. Landlords who provide Gypsy/ Traveller sites must also collect data on protected characteristics for these service users.	Scottish Social Housing Charter: Annual Return 2019/20 CHAPS Board Report, 18/08/20 Service Improvement Plan 2019-2020 – 2023-2024 Final ARC Submission 19/20 – July 2020 Unauthorised Encampments Procedures (Gypsy/ Travellers)	CLR18 HSP6 CLR23	As part of the Housing Options process we ask all housing applicants for information in relation to protected characteristics. The Council collects protected characteristic information from existing tenants, waiting list applicants and new tenants (where they have chosen to provide this information). Data from each protected characteristic has previously been reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator as part of the Annual Return on the Charter submission. The Service Improvement Plan outlines how the Service links in with Strategic Outcome 3, tackling inequality, opportunities for all. There are currently no Gypsy/Traveller sites in Renfrewshire.



Renfrewshire Council Assurance Statement 2020

Renfrewshire Council complies with the regulatory requirements set out in Chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework.

We achieve the standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter for tenants, people who are homeless and others who use our services.

However, since March 2020, the Coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on housing services, and it has been necessary to make major changes to service delivery arrangements in response to restrictions and in keeping with government guidance.

We would note that it has not been possible to achieve full compliance with the requirements on annual gas safety checks and electrical testing during 2020/21 as a result of the pandemic. Delays to planned capital improvement works will also have an impact on the Council's ability to meet the interim target for the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) by the end of December 2020 and the new fire and smoke alarm standards by February 2021.

The Council's Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board regularly receives reports which provide information and evidence to support assurance.

The Annual Assurance Statement 2020 was considered and approved by the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board on 27 October 2020.

Signed

Councillor Marie McGurk
Convener of the Communities Housing and Planning Policy Board

Date: _____