

Scottish Borders Council Annual Assurance Statement 2020/2021 to the Scottish Housing Regulator

This Annual Assurance Statement was reported under section 8 of the 2020/2021 Service Director Customer and Communities Assurance Statement on Internal Control and Governance, which informed the Annual Governance Statement 2020/2021 by the Chief Executive which was considered and approved by the Council's Audit and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 10 May 2021.

We confirm that in respect of landlord services provided by the Council we have seen and considered sufficient evidence to give us assurance that the Council complies with the regulatory requirements as laid out in Chapter 3 of the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework, including:

- all relevant standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter in respect of any tenants, homeless persons, and other person who are in receipt of housing services; and
- legal obligations associated with housing and homelessness services, equality and human rights, and tenant and resident safety.

Although there are a few areas of work to be completed for full compliance with the Scottish Housing Regulator's revised Regulatory Framework, the overall arrangements in respect of landlord services provided by the Council are operating satisfactorily.

To ensure full compliance with the Regulatory Framework further improvement actions are being implemented as follows:

- Gypsy/Traveller site – The Council's designated site for Gypsy/Travellers within Scottish Borders at Tweedside Caravan Park, Innerleithen does not yet meet the Scottish Government's minimum standards for Gypsy/Traveller sites. The Council is continuing to engage with Tweedside Caravan Park and with the Scottish Housing Regulator in order to ensure that the standards are met.
- Homelessness Services - Largely satisfactory risk, control, and governance systems are in place. There is, however, some scope for improvement as current arrangements could undermine the achievement of objectives. A 'Self-Assessment and Service Improvement Action Plan' is in place which is currently being reviewed and updated by officers in light of COVID-19 impacts.

Signed

Jenni Craig, Service Director – Customer and Communities

Signed

Councillor Stuart Bell, Chairman of Audit and Scrutiny Committee