

Scottish Borders Council Annual Assurance Statement 2021/2022 to the Scottish Housing Regulator (draft)

The Assurance Statement on Internal Control and Governance 2021/22 by the Director Social Work & Practice to the Chief Executive includes assurances in respect of landlord services provided by the Council, as detailed below. This informs the Annual Governance Statement 2021/22 by the Chief Executive which will be considered for approval by the Council's Audit and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 27 June 2022.

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.

The overall arrangements in respect of the Council's legal obligations associated with housing and homelessness services, equality and human rights, and tenant and resident safety, appear to be operating satisfactorily and to be materially compliant with the revised Regulatory Framework:

- Gypsy/Traveller site – The Council's designated site for Gypsy/Travellers within Scottish Borders at Tweedside Caravan Park, Innerleithen now meets the Scottish Government's minimum standards for Gypsy/Traveller sites. This follows the Council and Tweedside Caravan Park reaching agreement during 2021/2022 on the form of a new occupancy agreement for use on the site.
- Homelessness Services – The Council's Internal Audit conducted an audit of homelessness services during 2021/2012, including examination and evaluation of progress with the self-assessment of the service with the associated Service Improvement Action Plan. Internal Audit were able to provide substantial assurance, finding that largely satisfactory risk, control, and governance systems are in place, and that management improvement actions are underway. A further audit on Homelessness will be included within the Internal Audit plan for 2022/23 as an opportunity to continue to review progress with these service developments.

Signed _____
Stuart Easingwood, Director – Social Work & Practice

Signed _____
Councillor Elaine Thornton-Nicol, Chair of Audit and Scrutiny Committee