
ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT 2022/23 TO THE SCOTTISH HOUSING REGULATOR

Report by Director Social Work & Practice

AUDIT COMMITTEE

27 June 2023

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report proposes that the Audit Committee considers and approves the Annual Assurance Statement 2022/23 in respect of landlord services provided by the Council.**
- 1.2 Part of the Audit Committee's remit (Audit functions) is to assess the effectiveness of internal controls, risk management, and governance arrangements.
- 1.3 In 2019, the Scottish Housing Regulator ("the Regulator") revised its Regulatory Framework. This placed a new requirement on all social landlords to submit an Annual Assurance Statement to the Regulator by the end of October each year. The Annual Assurance Statement 2022/23 in respect of landlord services provided by the Council (Appendix 1), is designed to meet this requirement of the Scottish Housing Regulator, supported by the further self-assessment information (Appendix 2).

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **I recommend that the Audit Committee:**
 - a) Considers the details of the Annual Assurance Statement 2022/23 to the Scottish Housing Regulator in respect of landlord services provided by the Council (Appendix 1), and the further self-assessment information (Appendix 2), and acknowledges the actions by Management to improve arrangements; and**
 - b) Approves that the Annual Assurance Statement 2022/23 to the Scottish Housing Regulator in respect of landlord services provided by the Council (Appendix 1) be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator along with the Summary Statement of Self-Assessment of Compliance against Regulatory Framework (Appendix 2).**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Scottish Borders Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.
- 3.2 In 2019, the Scottish Housing Regulator (“the Regulator”) revised its Regulatory Framework. This placed a new requirement on all social landlords to submit an Annual Assurance Statement to the Regulator by the end of October each year. This statement must either confirm that the Governing Body or appropriate Committee is assured that the landlord is complying with all relevant regulatory requirements and standards, or highlight any material areas of non-compliance and how the landlord will address these.
- 3.3 As Scottish Borders Council is a housing stock transfer local authority, it is subject to submitting a Statement that is considerably less involved than an asset-owning authority. However, the Council is responsible for Homelessness Services provision in the Scottish Borders and must give assurance in this area.
- 3.4 Part of the Audit Committee’s remit (Audit functions) is to assess the effectiveness of internal controls, risk management, and governance arrangements in place.

4 ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT 2022/23 IN RESPECT OF LANDLORD SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE COUNCIL

- 4.1 A draft version of the Annual Assurance Statement for submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator is attached as Appendix 1 ‘Scottish Borders Council Annual Assurance Statement 2022/23 to the Scottish Housing Regulator’, is designed to meet this requirement of the Scottish Housing Regulator. It confirms the Council’s level of compliance with all of the relevant requirements set out at Chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework, to include:
- 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.
- 4.2 The Annual Assurance Statement 2022/23 in respect of landlord services provided by the Council is informed by the self-assessment of compliance against the Regulatory Framework by the Homelessness Services Manager, and the work of Audit and Inspection bodies. More information is contained in Appendix 2 ‘Summary Statement of Self-Assessment of Compliance against Regulatory Framework’.
- 4.3 The self-assessment demonstrates good progress with the previously identified improvement actions, arising from the significant amount of work undertaken by Council officers and others in a collaborative effort over the year. This supports the conclusion that the Council now meets the outstanding material requirement for the Gypsy/Traveller site at Tweedside Caravan Park, and is now materially compliant with the Scottish Housing Regulator’s revised Regulatory Framework.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

The supporting document 'Summary Statement of Self-Assessment of Compliance against Regulatory Framework' (Appendix 2) details areas where additional work has further enhanced the Council's compliance with the Regulatory Framework of the Scottish Housing Regulator.

5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

This is a routine good governance report for assurance purposes, required under regulatory framework of the Scottish Housing Regulator.

5.4 Sustainable Development Goals

The recommendations in this report will not directly impact any of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

5.5 Climate Change

This report does not relate to any proposal, plan or project and as a result the checklist on Climate Change is not an applicable consideration.

5.6 Rural Proofing

This report does not relate to new or amended policy or strategy and as a result rural proofing is not an applicable consideration.

5.7 Data Protection Impact Statement

There are no personal data implications arising from content of this report.

5.8 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

No changes are required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the content in this report.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Director Finance & Corporate Governance, Chief Legal Officer (and Monitoring Officer), Director People, Performance & Change, Clerk to the Council, and Communications team will be consulted on this report and any comments received have been incorporated.

Approved by

Director Social Work & Practice

Signature

Author(s)

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Background Papers: The Regulatory Framework of the Scottish Housing Regulator

Previous Minute Reference: Audit and Scrutiny Committee 27 June 2022

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by using the contact details below. Information on other language translations can also be given as well as provision of additional copies.

Contact us at Internal Audit intaudit@scotborders.gov.uk