

Scottish Borders Council Annual Assurance Statement 2022/2023 to the Scottish Housing Regulator Summary Statement of Self-Assessment of Compliance against Regulatory Framework

<u>Annual Assurance Statement Statutory Guidance Requirement</u>	<u>Self-Assessment of Compliance</u>
<p>Assurance & Notification</p> <p>Prepare an Annual Assurance Statement in accordance with SHR published guidance, submit it to SHR between April and the end of October each year, and make it available to tenants and other service users.</p>	<p>The Scottish Borders Council Annual Governance Statement (AGS), forms a section of the SBC Annual Report and Statement of Accounts which is considered annually by the Council’s Audit and Scrutiny Committee. The ‘Scottish Borders Council Annual Assurance Statement 2022/2023 to the Scottish Housing Regulator’ is reported under section 8 of the 2022/2023 ‘Director – Social Work & Practice Assurance Statement on Internal Control and Governance’, which informs the Annual Governance Statement 2022/2023 by the Chief Executive which is being considered by the Council’s Audit Committee at its meeting on 27th June 2023.</p> <p>This Summary Statement of Self-Assessment of Compliance against Regulatory Framework supplements the 2022/2023 ‘Director – Social Work & Practice Assurance Statement on Internal Control and Governance’.</p> <p>The ‘Annual Assurance Statement 2021/22 to the Scottish Housing Regulator’ by the Service Director Customer and Communities’ was considered and approved by Scottish Borders Council’s Audit and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 27th June 2022 and subsequently submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator as required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item No. 11 b - Appendix 2 - Summary Statement of Self-Assessment of Compliance against Regulatory (1).pdf • Item No. 11 a - Appendix 1 - draft Annual Assurance Statement 2021-22 to Scottish Housing Regulator.pdf
<p>Notify the SHR during the year of any material changes to the assurance in our Annual Assurance Statement.</p>	<p>SBC will notify the SHR during the year of any material changes as soon as possible.</p>

<p align="center"><u>Annual Assurance Statement Statutory Guidance Requirement</u></p>	<p align="center"><u>Self-Assessment of Compliance</u></p>
<p>Each landlord must have assurance and evidence that it is meeting all of its legal obligations associated with housing and homelessness services, equality and human rights, and tenant and resident safety.</p>	<p>The Council is responsible for homelessness services provision in the Scottish Borders. As at 31 March 2023, 151 properties are managed for use as temporary accommodation for homeless people this included the direct ownership and management of 18 properties, and the management of 133 properties leased from RSLs.</p> <p>In addition, the Council works together with an independent private business, Tweedside Caravan Park, to provide 9 pitches and related amenities for use by Gypsy/Travellers at Tweedside Caravan Park in Innerleithen.</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Internal Audit Annual Plan for 2023/24 includes a review of Homelessness services and their progress against the Service Improvement Action Plan. • During 2021/2022, the Council's Internal Audit examined and evaluated the progress made in the self-assessment of homelessness services, along with an associated Service Improvement Action Plan. The audit confirmed that the risk, control, and governance systems were largely satisfactory and that management improvement actions were initiated.
<p>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</p>	<p>Following a review of fire safety requirements the capacity of the designated site for Gypsy/Travellers at Tweedside Caravan Park, Innerleithen has been reduced from 10 pitches to 9 pitches. There are no other tenant or resident safety matters which have been reported to, or are being investigated by the Health and Safety Executive, or reports</p>

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Make our Engagement Plan easily available and accessible to its tenants and service users, including online.	The SHR's Engagement Plan with SBC is located on the Council's website at Charter performance Gypsy/Travellers - rights and responsibilities Scottish Borders Council (scotborders.gov.uk)
Scottish Social Housing Charter Performance	
Submit an Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) to the SHR by 31 May each year in accordance with the SHR's published guidance.	The Council submitted its ARC for 2022/2023 to the SHR on 9 th May 2023 in accordance with the SHR's Technical Guidance.
Involve tenants, and where relevant other service users, in the preparation and scrutiny of performance information. It must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree its approach with tenants. • Ensure it is effective and meaningful – that the chosen approach gives tenants a real and demonstrable say in the assessment of performance • Publicises the approach to tenants • Ensure that it can be verified and be able to show that the agreed approach to involving tenants has happened • Involve other service users in an appropriate way, having asked and had regard to their needs and wishes. 	<p>Work continues to improve the involvement of tenants and other service users in the preparation and scrutiny of performance information, and to agree the format of performance reporting with tenants and other service users, ensuring that it is accessible for them, and to give them a way to feed back their views on the style and form of the reporting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2022/2023 officers continued to utilise a new homelessness services customer feedback survey to give all homelessness service users the opportunity to give their views on their experience of the service and to make suggestions for how the service can be improved. The default survey medium is online but every service user who does not have digital access is provided with a paper version of the survey.

<p align="center"><u>Annual Assurance Statement Statutory Guidance Requirement</u></p>	<p align="center"><u>Self-Assessment of Compliance</u></p>
<p>Report its performance in achieving or progressing towards the Charter outcomes and standards to its tenants and other service users (no later than October each year. It must agree the format of performance reporting with tenants, ensuring that it is accessible for tenants and other service users, with plain and jargon free language. When reporting its performance to tenants and other service users it must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide them with an assessment of performance in delivering each of the Charter outcomes and standards which are relevant to the landlord. • Include relevant comparisons – these should include comparisons with previous years, with other landlords and with national performance. • Set out how and when the landlord 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>Work continues to improve the involvement of tenants and other service users in the preparation and scrutiny of performance information, and to agree the format of performance reporting with tenants and other service users, ensuring that it is accessible for them, and to give them a way to feed back their views on the style and form of the reporting. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment of ‘customer engagement’ has been included as a priority in the homelessness self-assessment programme within the reviewed and updated homelessness ‘Self-Assessment and Service Improvement Action Plan’.
<p>Make the SHR’s report on the landlord’s performance easily available to its tenants, including online.</p>	<p>The SHR’s information about SBC, including information about performance, can be found at Scottish Borders Council Scottish Housing Regulator</p>
<p>Tenants and Service Users Redress</p>	
<p>Make information on reporting significant performance failures, including the SHR’s leaflet, available to its tenants.</p>	<p>The SHR’s leaflet is available on the Council’s website at: Scottish Social Housing Charter & Performance Scottish Social Housing Charter Scottish Borders Council (scotborders.gov.uk)</p>

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<p>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 its service standards, in accordance with guidance from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). Ensure it has effective arrangements to learn from complaints and from other tenant and service user feedback, in accordance with SPSO guidance.</p>	<p>Information on how to make a complaint, in accordance with SPSO guidance, and complaints performance reports are available on SBC’s website at: What is a complaint Making Complaints Scottish Borders Council (scotborders.gov.uk) Supporting procedures are on SBC’s intranet at: Making a complaint Making Complaints Scottish Borders Council (scotborders.gov.uk)</p>
Whistleblowing	
<p>Have effective arrangements and a policy for whistleblowing by staff and governing body/elected members which it makes easily available and which it promotes.</p>	<p>The Council’s ‘Procedure on the Disclosure of Unlawful or Improper Actions – otherwise known as “Whistle Blowing”’ is Appendix 2 in the Council’s ‘Code of Conduct for Employees of Scottish Borders Council’ which is located at Code of Conduct revised November 22.docx.pdf (sharepoint.com)</p>
Equality and Human Rights	
<p>Have assurance and evidence that it 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>	<p>The Council’s Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) Process enables the development or review of projects, policies, strategies, functions & services that meet the demands of Equality legislation and do not discriminate. The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) Process and Supporting Guidance is located at Guidance - Integrated Impact Assessment 2021 ready for publishing.docx (sharepoint.com)</p>
<p>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 collect data on protected characteristics for these service users.</p>	<p>Relevant data on protected characteristics is collected on homelessness applications in accordance with the Scottish Government’s HL1, HL3 and Prevent1 case management database frameworks. Provision for the collection of relevant data on protected characteristics for service users who use the Gypsy/Traveller site at Tweedside Caravan Park, Innerleithen has been built into a new feedback survey form for use during 2023/2024 which is intended to give all Gypsy/Traveller households who stay on the site the opportunity to give their views on their experience of the service and to make suggestions for how the service can be improved.</p>

