

Our Annual Assurance Statement

We comply with the regulatory requirements set out in Chapter 3 of the Scottish Housing Regulator's (SHR) Framework, with the exception of those areas we set out below.

We:

- **Achieve all but the following standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter for tenants, people who are homeless and others who use our services:**

- ◆ **4. Quality of Housing**

As of 31 March 2023, 78.22% of Aberdeenshire Council housing stock met the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) which was higher than projected at the start of 2022/23 and represents continuing improvement from 2021/22. At present 1827 properties (13.9% of housing stock) are classed as 'exempt' or 'in abeyance' in terms of Scottish Government Guidance however this leaves 1,027 properties not currently meeting the SHQS. Work is ongoing in relation to these properties and further progress in the region of 460 additional properties brought to SHQS is currently forecast by the end of 2023/24. However, at this stage the non-exempt properties which do not meet SHQS mean that Aberdeenshire Council does not fully meet the requirements of this outcome.

EESHS non-compliance is the major reason for properties not meeting the SHQS. For the small number of properties (less than 0.5%) that do not meet the standard independent of EESHS, there are mitigating factors such as tenants refusing to provide access to complete required works. We review properties where there are tenant refusals annually, and work is carried out at change of tenancy to ensure the property is brought up to the standard.

Aberdeenshire Council currently anticipates that around 2000 properties will require an exemption from the EESHS standard (mainly on technical grounds), which accounts for around 15% of our housing stock. This means that upon completion of the current Housing Improvement Plan and EESHS plan, approximately 85% of our stock will fully comply with EESHS, and therefore with the SHQS. The Scottish Government are currently reviewing requirements for the next phase of energy efficiency works (EESHS2). During this pause, Aberdeenshire Council is currently considering its approach to compliance with EESHS2 by both the interim 2025 and 2032 deadlines. Present assessments are that we are performing well in terms of EESHS2 and we are undertaking detailed research to determine how best to meet Net Zero by 2045.



◆ **13. Value for Money**

Aberdeenshire Council is currently performing below expectations with regard to void turnover times and rent loss, although it meets the other requirements of this outcome. Significant progress has been made in the past year in relation to improving both void rent loss and relet times. However, performance still remains below overall targets, particularly in relation to Sheltered Housing properties. Void performance remains a priority and continues to show improvement but has not yet reached the stage we can state full compliance with this standard.

- **Comply with our legal obligations relating to housing and homelessness, equality and human rights, and tenant and resident safety, with the exception of the areas set out below:**

◆ **Electrical Safety Testing**

As at 29th September 2023 we did not hold a valid Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) certificate for 4 properties. Of these, legal entry had been made at 2 properties to carry out the required checks but there was no electricity supply, and 2 properties were outstanding due to complex tenant circumstances.

Actions are in place to address all current overdue cases. Improved internal recording and reporting has been implemented to monitor and drive compliance and the contractor responsible for carrying out inspections has also amended their scheduling system to work 2 months ahead of expiry dates. This allows additional time to deal with delays due to issues such as house condition and tenant mental health, and where necessary as a last resort for legal entry to be compelled. These changes have already improved performance in relation to compliance and it is anticipated that full compliance will be achieved during 2023/24.

◆ **Legionella Risk Assessment**

Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service does not currently meet its duty with respect to fully implementing Legionella control measures identified by our risk assessment process. As at 29th September 2023 2 yearly Legionella assessment inspections were in date for all Sheltered Housing schemes, however annual disinfections were still overdue for 8 schemes. There was a previous backlog of disinfections following Covid-19 restrictions and a subsequent revised subcontractor risk assessment that meant walkways and lighting had to be upgraded before works could take place. There has been progress in addressing this, with all outstanding 2 yearly assessments having been completed and the number of overdue disinfections having fallen but work continues to address the outstanding cases.

Plans are in place to complete all necessary works. Our Asset Management Planned Maintenance team continues to closely monitor this issue and we are currently forecasting that all outstanding issues will be resolved by no later than March 2024.



We confirm that we have seen and considered sufficient evidence to give us this assurance.

We confirm that our Annual Assurance Statement was approved at the meeting of Communities Committee on the 2nd of November 2023.

I sign this statement on behalf of the Committee.

Chair's Signature:

Date: