

ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT TO THE SCOTTISH HOUSING REGULATOR

In this Annual Assurance Statement completed in October 2024 the Board of Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association confirms it is “working towards compliance” with respect to standard 1 and is compliant in respect of standards 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. In terms of standard 1 the Board is committed to building evidence and embedding the improvements already made and will continue to review progress against the Governance Improvement Plan update that comes to each Board Meeting. This will afford the Board the opportunity to review where it is against compliance with standard 1 in February 2025 and to advise the Scottish Housing Regulator of that position. This should assist the Scottish Housing Regulator in completing the Association’s Engagement Plan for 2025 - 2026.

Following identification of non-compliance with some aspects of constitutional and governance issues, the Association commissioned an independent review of compliance with the regulatory framework. Out of that review, 52 action points were identified to be taken forward in a Governance Improvement Plan in early in 2024. Progress on the Plan is reported to the Board and the Scottish Housing Regulator on a monthly basis and is largely complete as of October 2024. The Board is dedicated to providing good leadership; to ensure momentum is maintained on delivering or building on the Governance Improvement Plan.

In terms of substantive areas of progress, the Association can confirm this year that it has correctly applied the nine-year rule with respect to qualifying Board members and new members at the AGM and the appropriate report went to the Board. The Association can also confirm that we meet our tenant safety responsibilities in terms of water, asbestos, damp and mould. Our previous non-compliance with electrical safety certificates has been rectified with all Association properties having a valid certificate as of the 18 September 2024. There is a rolling programme of certification in place for all properties over a five-year cycle.

The Scottish Housing Regulator raised a concern with the Association that their Integrated Asset Management Plan did not have an independent stock survey to support the internal SHQS surveys and consequential validation of capital expenditure for the Association’s stock for its 30-year business plan. The Association commissioned Hardies Property & Construction Consultants - a surveying company - to survey 50 of the Association’s properties that were over five years old. This work was carried out between June and October 2024 and in addition to the surveys the company will review the Association’s own internal housing stock data and our Internal Audit reports to give as full an appraisal as possible on stock condition. Updates to date from the company intimate no significant material factors to cause concern from the surveys. On the receipt of Hardies’ report in October 2024, the Association plans to feed this information into an updated Integrated Asset Management Strategy which should be completed by November 2024.

With respect to the collection and use of Equalities Data and the adoption of a Human Rights approach, the following can be confirmed. Data collection from tenants has been improved with the existing database reviewed and a mass-update exercise completed. Board member data collection has also been completed and analysed. An update report with more detailed information on equalities work, including an Equality Impact Assessment came to the Board in July 2024 and equalities staff and Board member training has started from October 2024.

Board members have been provided with an evidence bank and supplementary report to support assurance in terms of compliance with:

- All relevant regulatory requirements set out in chapter 3 of the regulatory requirements.
- All relevant standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.
- All relevant legislative duties.
- The Standards of Governance and Financial Management.

The Association also recognises that we are required to advise the Scottish Housing Regulator of any changes in our compliance status in the coming year.

The Association's Board is committed to delivering full compliance as soon as possible but believes embedding in terms of standard 1 will take until February 2025.

The Board agreed this Annual Assurance Statement on the **21 of October 2024**.

David Clapham
Vice Chair