



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT IN RESPECT OF HOUSING SERVICES

24 September 2024

The Sustainable Development Committee confirms that in respect of housing services provided by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, we comply with the regulatory requirements as laid out in Chapter 3 of the Scottish Housing Regulator's 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
- our legal obligations associated with housing and homelessness services, equalities and human rights, and tenant and resident safety.

We confirm that we have seen and considered sufficient evidence to give us this assurance for housing and homelessness, equalities and human rights.

We have 14 homeless properties, 1 hostel type property with 24 rooms (the Acres), and 1 former education property which are subject to a programme of maintenance to ensure statutory compliance against tenant and resident safety, where applicable, against the following:

- Gas safety
- Electrical safety
- Water safety
- Fire safety
- Asbestos
- Damp and Mould
- Lift Safety (n/a)

The Comhairle was subject to a criminal cyberattack in November 2023 and all base information was lost, though planned maintenance has continued throughout the year. Currently, all testing is up-to-date, though FIT and PAT testing in the Acres is thought to have lapsed by a couple of months. The works are out to tender and will be closed out on site by the end of October 2024. The Regulator will be informed once complete.

We also confirm that following a systematic inspection of the Comhairle's estate, no RAAC has been found to date.

This Annual Assurance Statement was approved at the sitting of the Committee on 24 September 2024 and is signed by Councillor Donald Crichton, Chair of the Sustainable Development Committee, on behalf of the Committee.

Signature of Chair: _____

Date: _____

ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT		
Ref	SHR Regulatory Requirement / Standard	Evidence
AN1	Prepare an Annual Assurance Statement in accordance with SHR published guidance, submit it to us (SHR) between April and the end of October each year, and make it available to tenants and other service users.	Annual Assurance Statement 2023 will be reported to Comhairle on 24 September 2024.
AN2	Notify us (SHR) during the year of any material changes to the assurance in its Annual Assurance Statement.	The SHR will be notified of any material changes as soon as possible.
AN3	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>The Comhairle complies with all relevant legal obligations relating to Homelessness. Policies relating to Homelessness are reviewed on a regular basis.</p> <p>Performance against Homelessness targets/obligations are reported to the Sustainable Development Committee annually, reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator as part of the Council's ARC, reported to the Care Commission as part of an annual return and a self-assessment exercise, and the Scottish Government are updated on Homelessness statistics on a quarterly basis.</p>
AN3	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>In relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gas safety • Electrical safety • Water safety • Fire safety • Asbestos • Damp and Mould • Lift Safety n/a <p>Fixed Installation Testing (FIT) & Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) testing in the Acres is out to tender and works will be completed by the end of October 2024.</p> <p>Calorifier testing is out to tender and works will be completed by the end of October 2024. Current certificates are valid.</p> <p>Thermostatic Mixing Valve (TMV) testing in place for all applicable units, as required.</p> <p>Gas Boiler Service/Maintenance – complete in all units with gas boiler.</p> <p>Emergency Lights – complete in all applicable units.</p>

ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT		
Ref	SHR Regulatory Requirement / Standard	Evidence
		<p>Fire Appliances – complete in all applicable units.</p> <p>Legionella RA – complete.</p> <p>Fire Alarm – certificate in place in all applicable units. Interlinked smoke/heat alarms in place in all units, and carbon monoxide detector where applicable.</p> <p>RAAC – none found in the Comhairle’s estate to date.</p>
AN4	Notify us (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 or statutory authorities, or insurance providers, relating to safety concerns.	The SHR will be notified should any issues arise.
AN5	Each landlord must make its Engagement Plan easily available and accessible to its tenants and service users, including online.	<p>The 2024/25 SHR Engagement Plan is available online at:</p> <p>Engagement plan 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 Scottish Housing Regulator</p>
CH1	Submit an Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) to us (SHR) each year in accordance with our published guidance.	The Comhairle’s ARC return was submitted to the SHR on 28 May 2024.
CH5	Each landlord must make the SHR report on its performance easily available to its tenants, including online.	<p>SHR Information on the Comhairle is available at:</p> <p>Comhairle nan Eilean Siar - Western Isles Council Scottish Housing Regulator</p>
TS3	Each landlord must ensure it has effective arrangements to learn from complaints and from other tenant and service user feedback, in accordance with SPSO guidance	<p>Comhairle Complaints procedure in place.</p> <p>Complaints – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (cne-siar.gov.uk)</p>
EH1	Each landlord must 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>Homeless and Housing Services falls under the wider Comhairle policies on equalities and human rights. The Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2021-25 may be found here:</p> <p>Equality Outcomes 2021-2025; (cne-siar.gov.uk)</p> <p>The Equality Outcomes Progress Report is reported every two years and the latest version (2023) may be found here:</p> <p>Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Progress Report 2023 (cne-siar.gov.uk)</p>

ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT		
Ref	SHR Regulatory Requirement / Standard	Evidence
EH2	<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 collected on Homeless applications.</p>