

Dumfries & Galloway Annual Assurance Statement 2021/2022 to Scottish Housing Regulator

Housing Options and Homeless Service

Dumfries & Galloway Council's Neighbourhood Services are responsible for the provision of Housing Options and Homeless services to customers throughout Dumfries & Galloway. As a stock transfer authority Dumfries and Galloway Council has developed close working relationships with Registered Social Landlords across the region to ensure we are able to discharge our statutory duty to provide permanent accommodation which is sustainable and affordable. A person-centred approach is at the heart of our working practices to ensure that we meet our legislative requirements set out in Chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework. We ensure compliance with the relevant standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. Monthly and quarterly returns are provided to the Scottish Government and a yearly Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) return is provided to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The Council agreed a 5 year Homeless Strategy in June 2018 which incorporates actions to address areas of performance and also drive improvements. This was supplemented by the 5 year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan in June 2019. The oversight for this improvement work and the strategy is provided by the Council's Communities Committee.

The Covid-19 pandemic has continued to impact on the service and has resulted in the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan being revised to reflect the changes in demand;

- As a stock transfer authority we worked closely with our Registered Social Landlord (RSL) providers to provide additional temporary accommodation to met the ongoing high demands on the service.
- In order to comply with the Smoke Alarm and Carbon Moxide Legislation we audited and updated all of our Temporary Accommodation to ensure prior to the Legislation being introduced in February 2022.
- We flipped 8 tenancies into permanent accommodation
- We set up allocation working groups with RSL's to ensure that all suitable permanent accommodation within D&G was being offered to Section 5 referrals as a priority
- As part of homelessness prevention, multi-agency working groups were set up with RSL's to identify and work with customers who were in financial difficulties and at serious risk of losing their home.
- We implemented a Housing First Project in Dumfries and Galloway on 1st August 2021. By the end of March 2022 8 customers had been referred to Housing First. 4 Customers have their own secure tenancy, 3 are currently in temporary accommodation awaiting an offer of a Housing First tenancy and one customer is temporarily housed elsewhere whilst awaiting a tenancy.

We continue to revise our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan in response to the ongoing pressures as a result of the pandemic and the wider impact of the Cost of Living crisis on Homelessness and across the Local Authority.

We continue to collate and evaluate equality data and feedback to ensure that this informs policy decisions taken by Dumfries & Galloway Council.

Gypsy Travellers

Dumfries and Galloways Governance and Assurance team are responsible for the provision of the Gypsy Travellers sites at Glenluce and Collin. The majority of the work at Glenluce to meet the Scottish Governments Minimum Site Standards was completed in May 2021. Commissioning and snagging works are ongoing, site provision at this location is now above the minimum standard.

A Short Life Working Group continues to address the challenge of meeting the Scottish Government's Minimum Standards at the Collin site. The review of minimum site standards

including the Interim Gypsy/Traveller site Design Guide, the COVID-19 Framework and negotiated stopping proposals are a material change in circumstances which are being given due consideration.

It is intended that the Options Appraisal report will be presented to Communities Committee by December 2022 for members consideration.

The Scottish Government's £2million improvement fund has been set aside for improvement works at Collin. Including the installation of smart meters, additional CCTV, fencing upgrades and décor/flooring. This is in addition to the funding of works at Glenluce including additional fencing and kitchen units.

Dumfries and Galloway Council will continue to engage with The Scottish Housing Regulator regarding it's management of the Council's Gypsy/Traveller sites and its approach to achieving the minimum site standards in addition to following the joint action plan by the Scottish Government and COSLA Improving the lives of Gypsy/Travellers: 2019-2021.

Approved by Communities Committee 25 August 2022

Signature:

Archie Dryburgh – Chair of Communities Committee