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Glasgow City Council Annual Assurance Statement

Glasgow City Council welcomes the opportunity to report to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) on compliance with the Regulatory Framework. This requires Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to submit an Annual Assurance Statement.

Despite significant progress in addressing homelessness within Glasgow, the Council continues to face significant challenges in relation to the extent and nature of homelessness within the city. Between the 1st of April and the 27th of October 2023, the Council has received 4041 applications for homelessness assistance. This is an increase of 13% on compared with the same period in 2022.

Despite the continued challenges within the housing system, the Council continues to make strong progress for homeless households in relation to joint working with the City's Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). The support from RSLs has led to a settled let outturn figure for 2022/23 of 2904 lets. This is a reduction of 407 lets on 2021/22, which can be largely attributed to the overall reduction in letting activity during the period. From 1st April to 30th September 2023 the Council has secured 1598 permanent lets to resettle homeless households. This accounts for 48% of all permanent social housing lets. This represents around a 9% increase on the same period during 2022/23. However, due to a continued reduction in overall letting activity on the part of RSLs, this remains below the anticipated outturn figure for the period.

The Council will continue to work positively with the city's RSLs to secure an adequate supply of permanent lets for the resettlement of homeless households. Reassuringly the supply of lets continues to show an upwards trajectory.

On 1st October 2021, the Unsuitable Accommodation Order was extended to preclude the use of bed and breakfast type accommodation to all statutory homeless households beyond seven days. The Council faces considerable challenges in complying with the order. On the 27th of October 2023, there were 683 households resident in homelessness accommodation that breached the order.

The modification of the Local Connection provisions on November 29th 2022 has increased the pressures on the Council in relation to this additional demand for emergency and settled accommodation. Since the introduction of the modifications the Council has responded to an additional 143 homelessness applications whom it would not have had a previous duty towards finding settled accommodation. We continue to highlight the pressures on the Council with the Scottish Government.

The War in Ukraine and the extension of humanitarian assistance by the Scottish Government led to a significant mobilisation of resources in order that the city could meet the needs of those seeking shelter in Glasgow. During 2023/24, the Council has continued to work with the Scottish Government and Local Authorities across Scotland to implement the national dispersal scheme. Considerable collective efforts to support dispersal demonstrate that there are now 219 displaced Ukrainian people that remain accommodated within two Welcome Hotels with a further 136 remaining in Community hosting arrangements.

The Council is facing unprecedented challenges in relation to the demand for emergency accommodation from households who have received leave to remain in the UK following a positive asylum decision. This pressure is a direct result of the UK Government's decision to introduce a streamlined asylum process to address the significant backlog of asylum decisions and reduce the numbers of asylum applicants in contingency and dispersed accommodation.

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It is estimated that there is likely to be an additional 2,500 asylum decisions made, with 1,800 of these decisions likely to be positive decisions. Based on current data, approximately 77% of households who receive a positive decision in Glasgow go on to make a homelessness application with the local authority. Should this remain likely this would translate to an additional 1,386 homelessness applications being made to Glasgow HSCP by the end of December 2023. This will likely mean that the Council will be required to source an additional 1000 units of emergency accommodation to meet this demand. It is unclear how the Council will be able to meet this demand within its existing resources.

The Council continues to engage with the UK and Scottish Governments and the Home Office to raise concerns regarding the implementation of the accelerated asylum decision making process and the associated resource implications. As a consequence of the Home Office approach, Glasgow HSCP has also highlighted the likely threat of an increase in rough sleeping.

The current pressures on household incomes resulting from the cost-of-living crisis and volatility within the City's housing markets is highly likely to lead to an increase in requests for homelessness assistance. The Glasgow HSCP is currently working with a range of stakeholders to support vulnerable households to mitigate the impacts of the financial pressures and help people sustain their tenancies. The economic climate and impact on households may continue to impact on the delivery of the RRTP and Temporary Accommodation Strategy objectives.

The Temporary Accommodation Strategy sets out how Glasgow HSCP will reform the use of temporary accommodation over a five-year period with a key element of the strategy focussing on the elimination of the use of bed and breakfast type accommodation through the first three years of the strategy. Glasgow HSCP will continue to monitor the relationship between homelessness demand and the supply of emergency accommodation as we seek to implement the Temporary Accommodation Strategy.

On an ongoing basis, the Integrated Joint Board and Council Committee structures will consider the performance of the Homelessness Service to ensure appropriate oversight and routine governance is maintained.

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