

Annual Assurance Statement: Inverclyde Council - October 2019

The purpose of this Assurance Statement is to reassure the Scottish Housing Regulator and our tenants and other service users that Inverclyde Council complies, in the main, with our regulatory and statutory obligations as set out in section 3 of the regulatory requirements. In areas where there is no (or part) material compliance we have indicated below how we are planning to improve in those areas and the timeframe for improvement.

As a local authority we can confirm that we meet our statutory duties to prevent and alleviate homelessness, together with our duties regarding our legal obligations associated with housing and homelessness, equality and human rights and tenant and resident safety. As the council only has a limited housing stock, most of which are on secure tenancies, with our tenants having a direct relationship with officers, its customer/landlord relationship must be considered within that context.

We can confirm that Inverclyde Council 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.

1. On two occasions this calendar year (2019), our authority has breached the Unsuitable Accommodation Order. Inverclyde Council utilises Bed and Breakfast accommodation only after any opportunity for all other suitable temporary accommodation is exhausted and where no other accommodation is immediately available, to prevent rough sleeping and ensure that families can stay together. This allows our authority time to find homeless households more suitable longer term temporary or permanent accommodation.

2. There are significant pressures on our homelessness accommodation service and on occasion we have been unable to meet our statutory duty to provide Temporary Accommodation. In these instances, we have sought to find alternative accommodation, including liaison with family members and friends, who have been able, on all occasions, to accommodate people whilst we actively seek to secure suitable temporary accommodation in the short term. As above, we are fully committed to a reform of our plans to utilise Temporary Accommodation and in order to ensure that we work to meet our statutory duties we have increased the number of temporary flats by 7; working to turn void properties around as quickly as possible; working with local RSL's to secure appropriate tenancies; and are currently developing a portfolio of all alternative accommodation across the west of Scotland where our service users can be accommodated at short notice

The council has submitted a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan to the Scottish Government which sets out the five-year transition to securing settled housing for all homeless households as quickly as possible. Through the development and implementation of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, and successful implementation of Housing First, it is anticipated that the requirement for

temporary housing will decrease and we will meet our statutory responsibilities.

3. All our housing stock currently meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) however, there are 4 houses which do not meet the requirements of the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH). These houses require external wall insulation. An action plan regarding rectifying this issue is currently being implemented. All houses also require having an Energy Performance Assessment carried out.

4. A report to Committee on the outcome of the Annual Return on Charter was not completed this year (2019) however, it is recognised that this must be completed every year and this report must be made available to our tenants together with the Engagement Plan and the Annual Assurance Statement.

We confirm that we have utilised and considered appropriate evidence to give us this assurance. We approved our Assurance Statement at the Council's Environment and Regeneration Committee on the 31st October.