



Osprey Housing Limited
Assurance Statement: 2022

Introduction

Following the successful Transfer of Engagements (ToE) of Osprey Housing Moray into Osprey Housing with effect from 1 April 2021, and the subsequent ToE of Aberdeen Soroptimist Housing Society to also form part of Osprey Housing from 1st October 2021, this statement is for the now single entity Osprey Housing Limited.

In accordance with the requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), I the undersigned provide the following statement in respect of assurance and compliance for Osprey Housing:

The Board of Directors of Osprey Housing confirm that based on review and assessment of a comprehensive assurance framework, evidence available to us and scrutinised throughout the year we are assured Osprey Housing complies with all relevant standards and outcomes in the Charter; all relevant legislative duties; and the Standards of Governance and Financial Management.

This Assurance Statement is provided on behalf of the Board of Osprey Housing. The sources and level of assurance in relation to compliance is clear to the Board and, members are directly involved in the ongoing development, monitoring and scrutiny of the evidence base.

We recognise that we are required to notify the SHR of any changes in our compliance during the course of the year and are assured that we have effective arrangements in place to enable us to do so.

Post Pandemic: Opportunity for improvement

Since the beginning of the pandemic Osprey have remained agile, compliant and proactive in dealing with risks and the impacts that continue throughout 2022. The UK and Scottish Governments' guidance measures throughout the pandemic have been duly observed and adhered to ensuring we positively manage the impact for both tenants and our staff team.

We have viewed the post pandemic environment as an opportunity to improve how we deliver our services following the lessons learned and embedding good practise to remain adaptable, flexible, compassionate and responsive as we look forward and plan for the next 3-5 years. This was also well timed on conclusion of the transfer of engagements, allowing us to fully align how we maximise the financial efficiencies and resilience of operating as a single entity. Sustaining effective service delivery, continuing our Development Programme, accelerating our Digital Strategy whilst progressing our Organisational Development all remain key to how we successfully embrace our future. We have committed long term to a hybrid working approach which has become firmly embedded in our operations providing consistent performance whilst staff and tenant satisfaction have improved.



The successful completion of the ToE processes is a significant milestone for accelerating our ambition of continual improvement both in organisational strength in addition to improving tenant services. Our focus now is on preparing intensively for the short to medium term with the clear knowledge we are doing so in the context of being a single entity Registered Social Landlord (RSL) as we plan for the challenges ahead.

Strategic Review/Change in Organisational Leadership

Following the announcement of the former CEO's intention to retire at the end of 2021 the Board undertook an options appraisal in April 2021. The outcome of this was a comprehensive recruitment process, supported by external consultants, to appoint a new CEO. This process was concluded in September 2021, with Stacy Angus being appointed and taking up the post from 1st December 2021. Stacy has been part of the Osprey Housing team since 2006, and a member of the Senior Leadership Team since 2011, already a key part of the positive organisational improvement journey during this time. The Board felt her appointment gave the balance of new energy and focus for the organisation whilst providing consistency and stability to the already established culture that has been carefully developed.

A refreshed Strategic Plan has been developed and agreed by the Board in May 2022. The four key Strategic ambitions remain the same, however the Plan now reflects the changing external environment and delivery actions, incorporating:

- Updated economic context - post pandemic and post Brexit
- Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) commitment. This has been aligned with the overall function and purpose of the organisation promoting our social purpose, strong governance and environmental sustainability intentions.
- Rewritten 'Guiding Principles' which underpin and embed the organisational culture and how we deliver services
- Focus on affordability and value for money
- Commitment to future growth of our stock profile, sustaining a focus on high quality homes and supporting rural communities in particular.
- A strong ethos of organisational and personal development for both staff and Board members.

Our tenant first approach to service delivery is reemphasised in the Plan, with a clear commitment to tenancy support and sustainment embedded, reflecting this in our organisational structure.

The Board is assured we have identified and reviewed the range of new risks that have/will impact short and longer term for both the organisation and its tenants/customers.

Our current actions and priorities:

- Digital – A new housing management software system which will enhance internal efficiency and effectiveness whilst improving the tenants digital service options.
- Cyber Security – we have undertaken extensive staff training and awareness in relation to cyber security. We are accredited to Cyber Essentials and working towards the enhanced 'Plus' certificate



- Compliance – with a particular emphasis on completing our framework for Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) certification and fire safety legislative changes. Our programme is almost complete with the exception of a minimal number of no access properties following impact of pandemic, we continue to work proactively with these particular tenants to reach completion within the financial year.
- Financial Business Planning – we were pleased to have provided our tenants with 0% rent increase for April 2022 reflecting the financial efficiencies of one organisation and the benefit that we can share with our tenants. Forward planning in the current financial climate is already underway – both stress testing the Business Plan and appraising budgetary options for 2023 with a full review of potential efficiencies considering options both short and medium term.
- Organisational training – a comprehensive programme including cyber security, carbon literacy, Insights personal development and coaching, team effectiveness, wellbeing and equalities.
- Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) commitment - Embedding an ESG framework via adoption of the Social Rented Standard (SRS) with the intention of publishing our first ESG report in 2023
- Equalities – In reviewing our compliance with the Regulatory Framework, we are assured that we have appropriate systems in place for the collection of equalities data. Data collection is now under way with staff and board members being appropriately trained. We are assured that we are working towards using this data to take account of equality and human rights issues in our decisions, policy-making and day-to-day service delivery

Overall Assurance

Continuing our established effective overall approach to assurance, sources have been mapped against regulatory requirements and standards. Our existing approach and framework were reviewed against the updated SFHA Self-Assessment Guidance and toolkit.

Evidence of those sources of assurance include:

- Performance monitoring reports on key business areas such as finance, asset management, housing management, service delivery, development and risk management
- Detailed reports and updates from the Chief Executive and Senior Leadership team
- Internal audit framework and reporting process
- External Audit
- Reports and analysis from external auditors, appointed advisers and specialist consultant advisers all of whom provide external independent evaluation, feedback and validation
- Benchmarking
- Independent resilience evaluation including continued scenario stress testing
- Outcomes from comprehensive Board Appraisal process, skills matrix and training plan outcomes
- Consultation with Osprey Tenants and Residents Association (OTRA) and outcomes of scrutiny project undertaken by the Association's Scrutiny Panel.



In reviewing evidence and assessing compliance we have taken account of good practice advice. Our level of compliance remains subject to constant review and scrutiny with a focus on continuous improvement.

As Chair, I was authorised by the Board at a meeting held on 24th August 2022 to sign and submit this Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator and, I confirm that it is being published on our website on the same date that it is submitted.

Signed:

Mike Scott
Chair