

Annual Assurance Statement

Using available guidance and taking account of the guidance entitled 'Collecting Equality Information: National Guidance for Scottish Social Landlords' (revised June 2022) and the Self Assurance Toolkit (updated June 2024), each of the regulatory requirements have been considered.

It has been determined that the Council is complying with the regulatory requirements and outcomes relating to:-

- Assurance and Notification
- Scottish Social Housing Charter Performance
- Listening and responding to tenants and service users
- Whistleblowing

However, work is ongoing by the Council to meet all regulatory requirements and outcomes relating to equalities and human rights and tenant and resident safety (Electrical Safety – Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR's).

- ***Equalities and Human Rights*** - processes continue to be in place to implement an effective approach to the collection of equalities information and to consider how a human rights approach can be adopted. Elements of equalities data are gathered and there are established processes and demonstrable good practice in place to support the Council's current approach to equalities and human rights. Equality Impact Assessments are considered and included where required as part of any reports to Council. Opportunities to extend the collection of equalities data in relation to protected characteristics is being included in the introduction of 'Housing Online' within our NEC Housing software system. This online functionality will allow housing applicants, homeless people, tenants, and other customers to register for a self-service account and they will be able to update equalities data. The scope of data collection, the most effective ways to gather this information and the controls needed have been considered and will be introduced as part of the implementation of 'Housing Online' module, which is scheduled to be completed by March 2025, taking account of required upgrades needed to the NEC Housing system. The approach will take account of all relevant advice and support from Information Governance and Housing Policy & Strategy.

In terms of the Council's continued approach to Human Rights, work already takes place and this is embedded across a range of activities including:- ensuring that accommodation is provided to homeless households when needed, joint work takes place with Health and Social Care to ensure that care experienced young people are appropriately accommodated and supported, participation in national resettlement schemes to provide accommodation and support to displaced households, standards of council owned accommodation are maintained and the Council is working to the standards outlined in the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, housing support services are provided to homeless households and council tenants to help sustain tenancies,

there is a dedicated travelling persons site to meet the needs of Gypsy/Travellers in the council area and the Council delivers adaptations to properties and considers bespoke design requirements as part of new build housing developments, to make properties more accessible for households with disabilities. In addition, the Council has established a Trauma Informed Approach and work continues to raise awareness across services.

Work will continue over the next year to further develop the processes and systems to collect equalities information and to further embed the Council's approach in relation to human rights.

- **Tenant and Resident Safety – Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR's)** – The Council has a strong track record in the managing and maintaining standards to meet tenant and resident safety, however, due to difficulties gaining access to tenants homes full compliance is not being achieved.

In 2023/24, the Council reported an improved position in relation to successfully completing EICR compliance works. As at 31 March 2024, EICR requirements were met for 8087 (99.5%) of the overall 8126 council owned properties, this was an improvement on the 99.2% reported in 2022/23. In 2024/25, the Council continues to make excellent progress in this area, an agreed programme of work is established with Property Maintenance and tenants are contacted by the Council to agree arrangements and access for safety checks to be undertaken. As at 30 June 2024, of the Council's lettable housing stock of 8140 properties, 8103 (99.5%) of properties have a valid EICR in place and are compliant with the standard. Of the 37 remaining properties, 14 are vacant and EICR's will be in place before the properties relet, 20 are 'hard no access or cases where social issues have prevented the EICR being undertaken, and 3 properties were awaiting work to be undertaken by a third party i.e. the Utility Provider, before the EICR can be completed. Established procedures and processes are in place to track and manage instances of no access and Officers are continuing to work with households to achieve access. This is an ongoing rolling activity and where required consideration will be given to using the provisions of the tenancy agreement to gain entry to properties to complete this essential work.

The Cabinet of 25 September 2024 has seen and considered the appropriate evidence to support the level of assurance against each of the requirements.

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Portfolio Holder for Buildings, Housing and Environment

25 September 2024