

## **Clydebank Housing Association Ltd**

**To:** Management Committee

**From:** Sinéad Farrell, Communications Officer

**Subject:** Customer Consultation/Communication Update – December 2019

**Meeting:** 17 December 2019

**Date:** 13 December 2019

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### **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of the report is to provide an update to the Management Committee on much of the Association's communication and tenant participation activities towards meeting:

- the Customer/Landlord Relationship outcomes of the Scottish Social Housing Charter
- our customer expectations in regards to Tenant Satisfaction

### **Potential impact on tenants and service users/Tenant Consultation requirements**

There is no adverse impact on tenants and other service users as a result of information (and decisions when required) in this report. Tenant Consultation is required on some elements of these reports.

### **Value for Money**

**CHA considers Value for Money in all aspect of its business including: -**

- Managing our resources to provide quality services and homes to meet the needs of customers and the local community.
- Delivering the right service at the right time at the right cost.
- Planning for and delivering year on year improvements on our services based on customer priorities.
- Getting the most out of our assets and staff by operating efficiently and effectively.

### **Risk**

There are no identified risks in relation to the information contained in this report.

### **Legal/constitutional Implications (Reference to Model Rules)**

Tenant participation obligations of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, Part 2, Sections 23, 53, 54 and 106 (the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 (refocussed but did not supersede the Tenant Participation obligations of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001)).

### **Relevant CHA Objectives:**

- To provide quality, affordable housing that meets the changing needs of our customers and to ensure fair access to housing within our area.
- To manage the houses provided, in a professional and cost effective manner, for the benefit of our local community and the environment.
- To work in partnership with others, supporting our tenants and other customers, to maximise opportunities for physical and socio-economic regeneration in Clydebank.

- To ensure local decision making and community control, we will encourage our tenants and other customers to influence our policy and participate in decisions, which may affect them.
- To ensure that our resources are adequate to deliver our objectives by investing in our people, demonstrating value for money and through robust procurement practices.
- To promote social inclusion by applying principles of equality and diversity to everything we do.

#### **Relevant Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes:**

- Equalities - Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.
- Communication - Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.
- Participation - Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.
- *Additionally on this occasion*, Housing quality and maintenance 4. Quality of housing: Social landlords manage their businesses so that: tenants' homes... meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) by December 2020.

#### **Relevant SHR Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management:**

- The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.
- The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.
- The governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.
- The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity.

#### **Equalities**

No protected group is adversely affected by the proposals, recommendations or updates within this report. Our commitment to equal opportunities and fairness applies irrespective of factors such as race, sex, disability, age, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

My report this month will focus on 2 items – our Tenant Panel’s report to the Management Committee and the approval of registration of a tenants association.

## **1. Tenant Panel Report on the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH)**

### **Background**

Our Tenant Panel remits were agreed by the Management Committee in 2015. In March 2016 a Tenant Panel was then set up to discuss and review the effectiveness of various aspects of our service/processes and advise us where they think improvements could be made – “a critical friend”. The Panel can decide what they want to look at and how they wish to do this. They have full access to our services and may carry out tests on data and information published by us.

Each of the 7 panel members had training on Housing Associations in general covering everything from our structure to legislation, to provide a basic understanding of how we work, and then many participated in Stepping Up to Scrutiny training. A new member was welcomed during the year also.

The previous subjects the Panel scrutinised and reported to the Committee were the ‘provision of services in closes and common areas’ and ‘voids and allocations processes’.

The Panel helps us to meet our Scottish Social Housing Charter outcome 3 – Participation, that we manage our business so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence our decisions including supporting tenants to scrutinise our services.

### **EESH**

From March 2019, the Panel has been reviewing our recording and reporting of EESH data. Their final meeting on the topic was on Thursday 12 December and a copy of their final report is enclosed.

It is part of our Action Plan for improvement from the self-assurance process that the Management Committee publish a formal response to tenant scrutiny activity (CH2.9). This can be discussed at the meeting.

Their next scrutiny topic moving forward will be Landlord Responsibilities in Health and Safety, commencing in January 2020.

## **2. New Tenants Group**

Delighted to report a successful meeting was held with 5 residents of Graham Avenue on 11 December regarding the group wishing to register as Registered Tenants Organisation (RTO). As such, a constitution was discussed and agreed and 3 Office Bearers appointed.

The group submitted an application to register ‘La Scala Tenants Association’ as a RTO on 11 December 2019. I can confirm that all paperwork is in order and recommend to the Management Committee that they accept the registration of La Scala Tenants Association as a RTO under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

It has been a great number of years since the Association has had 2 tenants' organisations (Linnvale TRA disbanded in 2007).

If accepted:

- our RTO register at reception, required to be publically available, will be updated
- our RTO section on the intranet and the RTO section of website will be updated
- the requirement to consult with this group per the Act will be promoted to all staff
- Start Up Grant will be issued in due course once a bank account has been set up
- the Tenant Participation team of the Scottish Government will be informed we now have 2 active RTOs
- The Business Plan can be updated to reflect increased coverage of tenants/residents groups throughout our stock (44 no. additional tenants covered)

## Report to Clydebank Housing Association Management Committee

**From the Tenant Panel** –Carole Sweeney, Gavin Lang, Patricia Betty (Central Clydebank), Sandra Queen, Jessie McCormick, Elma Stewart, Jim Stewart (Radnor Park)

**Apologies** – David Sweeney (Central Clydebank)

**12 December 2019**

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We took the task of reviewing the Association's recording and reporting of **Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH)** seriously. We chose the topic on 06 November 2018 after being provided with various areas of Association performance which may be of interest (Appendix 1). We felt energy efficiency was a very topical subject. We commenced in March 2019 and concluded in October 2019. We are pleased to say that **overall we felt satisfied with the Association's recording and reporting of Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH)**.

### **Aim**

We set out with the aim that any improvements identified could help:

- Improve procedures, policies and processes, where possible
- Improve performance
- Identify improvements in value for money
- Assist in meeting Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes on housing quality and maintenance particularly point 4. regarding meeting the EESH by December 2020
- Provide time for analysing and reflecting on the recording and reporting of the EESH

### **Scrutiny Activity**

To gather information and inform our report we:

1) Met on 12 March for our first EESH performance scrutiny exercise session, the aim of which was to provide an overview. The Head of Housing Services, Housing Services Manager, Maintenance Officer and Communications Officer were in attendance. The Panel went through an in-depth presentation and discussion including:

- SHQS and EESH background and standards to be met and why
- SAP ratings & evolving standards
- Reviewing EPCs for a variety of stock
- Improvements made over the last few years
- Cloning mechanisms
- Abeyances and difficulties
- Viewing EPC recording live on Kypera
- Reviewing ARC submission on the EESH and progress to date

After discussion, we wished to meet after the Scottish Housing Network audit planned for 29/30 April. We decided the content of the next meeting was to include the Association's processes of recording and reporting and progress towards completing the Association's EESH return to the Scottish Housing Regulator (due at the end of May).

2) Met on 14 May to discuss the audit results, review our processes of recording and reporting EESH information and progress towards completing the ARC EESH return. The Head of Housing Services, Housing Services Manager, Maintenance Officer and Communications Officer were in attendance.

We all received a copy of the Scottish Housing Network audit report and the Maintenance Officer spoke over each area in turn and it could be seen that improvements in the approach toward the ESSH had been noted but there were a few matters outstanding.

An improvement was highlighted where pivot tables were used to more easily show data and gives tenants/auditors etc. confidence in data presented without being labour intensive. One improvement that could be put in place was staff updating the energy efficiency data after major repair contracts. Recommendations were discussed and testing is in place for each.

Each table in the ARC report draft was talked over in turn and the following was noted:

- 24/25 properties with no data at present require to be put through as failures
- Only 8 no. properties where compliance is unknown
- 85 no. don't meet the standard at present
- Possibility of putting gas into properties at Dumbarton Road as CHP Plant at Queens Quay
- The availability of components/parts/spare parts for boilers

3) Met on 18 June with the Head of Housing Services, Housing Services Manager and Maintenance Officer where Association recording of performance and reporting was discussed in detail and demonstrated and tested live on the housing system via the presentation screen.

4) Met on 22 October to draft this report and on 12 December to finalise the report.

5) Separately, we also fully participated in the Association's Business Plan review 2019/2024 and target review 2019/20 in a session with the Head of Housing Services.

## **Observations/Recommendations**

### **What works well?**

- **Skilled staff** – it was clear that Jack Devlin, Maintenance Officer, who attended and Alison Macfarlane, Housing Services Manager, have a great deal of experience in the topic and attend forums etc. to further their knowledge. Jack and George, also a Maintenance Officer, are trained EPC assessors and this has provided them with a wealth of knowledge on energy efficiency. It was acknowledged that although there is in-house EPC expertise it is not an effective use of resources for the Maintenance Officers to carry out EPCs
- **Energy Efficiency advice** – The Association putting the importance of Energy Efficiency advice in all projects at the forefront (many Centre81 projects)
- **Programme of works** – the ongoing work by the Association to improve ratings through external wall insulation, internal wall insulation and cavity wall insulation
- **HEEPS Loan** – the Association apply for and being successful in getting an interest free loan of £496k over 10 year to carry out energy efficiency improvement works as mentioned
- **Beanbag** – the Association embracing technology which could assist in the future
- **Reporting** – quarterly reporting to your management committee on progress
- **Carbon Management Strategy** – the Association's strategy which was launched in 2018 in partnership with Keep Scotland Beautiful

### **What can be done better?**

- **Extracting data** – it was clear that in the process of extracting data from the housing system for performance monitoring/auditing purposes was complex, requiring sub-sheets and sub-

sheets and that running reports was extremely time consuming. If a more convenient system for recording and reporting was available it could provide value for money

- **Access to properties** – the lack of access to a number of properties was noted but it is appreciated that the issue can only be forced if it is for essential work, not necessarily EPCs. Also breach of tenancy could not be issued but that improved link up working could be carried out so that EPCs are carried out during major repairs, statutory checks etc. and that this could be flagged on the housing system
- **EPC/Rent Arrears** – it was of interest whether there was any correlation between those in rent arrears and those who have lower EPCs and thought this could be explored

Any feedback from the Management Committee is of course welcome on the process we followed and the points raised/conclusion.

**Clydebank Housing Association Limited**  
**06.11.18 Scrutiny Themes for Discussion**

Please find below some of the areas of our ongoing work which may help with the selection of your next scrutiny topic.

<b>Governance</b>
Scottish Housing Regulator & Regulatory Framework
Model Rules, Standing Orders, Remits, Delegated Authority
Entitlement, Payments and Benefits/Declaration of Interest
Code of Conduct and Code of Management Practice
Risk Management
<b>Housing Management</b>
Rents, Welfare Reform and legal issues
Allocations, Sub-letting and lodgers, Voids and Abandonments and legal implications
Estate Management, Anti-social behaviour and legal issues
Tenancy Sustainment
Housing Management Policies
<b>Maintenance</b>
Categories of Repair (Routine, Cyclical, Major Repairs) inc. Right to Repair, Compensation for Improvements & Life Cycle Costings
Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH)
Health & Safety Responsibilities inc. asbestos, legionella, gas servicing, etc.
Procurement of contractors and consultants, Partnering and framework agreements
Voids inc. lettable standard & Tenancy Agreement Rights & Responsibilities
Maintenance Policies inc. Social Work Adaptations
<b>Development, Wider Role, Regeneration</b>
Wider Role/Regeneration Programmes and funding
Development inc. WDC Local Housing Strategy (LHS) & Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP)
Finance
Budgets, Rent Setting and Management Accounting
Business Planning – short, medium, long term projections
Interpreting Annual Accounts
Treasury Management – Borrowing & investment of funds
SHR and other financial reporting requirements
<b>General</b>
Information Technology - Internet/CHA Intranet/Email, etc.
Tenant Participation & consultation including SSHC (ARC)
Complaints Handling
Equality and Diversity (Services and Employment)
Factoring
Recruitment and Selection & Employment contracts
Management Committee Appraisals
Succession/Office Bearer Responsibilities