

Performance Matters - SHR

June 2014



Introduction

Welcome to the latest in a series of regular briefings prepared by the Housing Strategy team on the big issues concerning housing. These briefings will be shared with staff, tenants and elected members and keep everyone up to date with regards the ever changing policy context that we are operating within.

The Housing Strategy section is responsible for:-

- Supporting the development of a culture of continuous improvement in Housing services and to facilitate opportunities to excel;
- Developing and implementing effective strategies for Housing and Community Safety Services within West Dunbartonshire;
- Developing the Council's housing strategy to ensure that it supports the delivery of our strategic priorities;
- Performance management within Housing and Community Safety services; and
- Promoting effective management and the involvement of tenants across all aspects of Housing Services.
- Providing the Strategic Housing Authority Role within West Dunbartonshire and delivering the Affordable Housing Supply Programme throughout the area.

For further information on Housing Strategy please telephone 01389 737889 or e-mail: housing.strategy@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Briefing Note

Performance Matters - SHR

Background:

The Scottish Housing Regulator is the independent regulator of social landlords in Scotland and was set up by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010. They regulate around 180 registered social landlords (RSLs) and the housing activities of Scotland's 32 local authorities.

The regulator has consistently highlighted the following two issues;

- Governance, and
- Performance.

Following on from a series of publications relating to “Governance Matters”, the Regulator has now published the first edition of a new series of reports entitled [“Performance Matters”](#).

These reports will focus on service performance issues and will share positive practice and action points that social landlords should consider in terms of improving their own performance.

Key Points:

This first “Performance Matters” report focuses on;

- how landlords have prepared in relation to gathering accurate information about their performance, and
- How landlords have involved their tenants in scrutinising their performance.

The report indicates that overall the landlords involved have prepared well for the introduction of the Charter and made preparations well in advance of the first reporting year beginning on 1st April 2013.

The report outlines a number of examples of positive practice landlords have employed in response to the challenges posed preparing for the ARC.

These challenges included;

- updating IT systems to make sure that data can be gathered accurately and extracted as needed,
- allocating adequate staff resources to prepare for the ARC,
- the difficulties posed by a small number of new indicators and the additional resources required to collate and report robust data

The report is designed to help other landlords learn from these examples and the contact details of key staff from the landlords involved have been included.

The report comments that all landlords visited had reviewed their IT systems to make sure that they could record, monitor and report the performance information required.

All landlords had also either reported progress to elected members or were preparing reports to do so.

The Regulator will continue to engage with social landlords to discuss progress in gathering and monitoring Charter data, and in involving tenants to scrutinise performance.

They will use the data submitted as part of the ARC to assess risk and decide what our regulatory engagement will be.

What it means for West Dunbartonshire:

We need to ensure that we can respond positively to the following key action points highlighted in [Performance Matters](#);

- ***What steps have been taken to ensure that staff are familiar with the requirements of the technical guidance?***

Briefing Notes and Awareness Sessions, The requirements of the Charter should also be discussed at team meetings and one to ones.

- ***What has been done to ensure that accurate data is reported and used to identify and drive improvements in services?***

Action Plan and the development of date dictionaries, The ARC return process includes a series of internal and external verification elements. Once performance date is known it will be used to inform new targets and an action plan will be developed to drive improvements and be reported through the Tenants Performance Report which will be published in October.

- ***How can the effective use of benchmarking be demonstrated to drive improvements?***

We have a strong track record of using benchmarking information to drive forward improvements through our involvement with SHBVN and Housemark. This has included the development of a Benchmarking Improvement Plan to drive fore

- ***Can it be demonstrated that elected members are aware of performance?***

Housing and Community Safety Services have refreshed the Performance Management Framework to be consistent with the Charter requirements; this

includes 6 monthly performance reports to committee to ensure members are aware of performance.

- **How is Charter performance embedded day to day business?**

Housing Strategy and Development have ensured that the outcomes of the Scottish Social Housing Charter are reflected in strategic and operational outcomes of the housing service within West Dunbartonshire. These outcomes along with the performance information will continue to be rigorously tested to ensure housing services in West Dunbartonshire are not only fit for purpose but can be seen as an exemplar organisation in terms of housing.

- **How is Charter data used to understand how well services to tenants and others are being delivered?**

As indicated, the data collected as part of the ARC has been embedded in the performance management of housing services in West Dunbartonshire. Performance is analysed and assessed against comparators with the key objective of ensuring continuous improvement.

- **What is being done to consult with and involve tenants, and others who use housing services? Is this being done this in a range of ways?**

The tenant participation strategy has introduced many new ways for tenants and customers to become involved in the scrutiny of our services. Information provision has also greatly increased over the last 18 months through effective public performance reporting. In addition, West Dunbartonshire Council is participating in the 'Stepping up to Scrutiny' national programme.

For further information contact:

Stefan Kristmanns, Housing Performance and Improvement Officer

01389 737 545

stefan.kristmanns@west-dunbarton.gov.uk