

Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee

10th Meeting, 2022 (Session 6)

Tuesday 22 March 2022

Scottish Housing Regulator Annual Report 2020-21

Introduction

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide information for the Committee's evidence session with the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) on its Annual Report for 2020-21, published on 19 November 2021.
2. The Committee will take evidence on the SHR's Annual Report from—
 - George Watson, Chair; and
 - Michael Cameron, Chief Executive
3. The Annual Report and Accounts for 2020-21 can be accessed via the following link—
 - [Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21](#)
4. The SHR has also provided a short summary of some of the work that it has undertaken since the period covered by the Annual Report. This update is attached as an annexe.

Background

5. The SHR is an independent Non-Ministerial Department, established on 1 April 2011 under the [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).
6. Its statutory objective is to safeguard and promote the interests of—
 - around 600,000 tenants who live in homes provided by social landlords
 - over 120,000 owners who received services from social landlords
 - around 40,000 people and their families who experience homelessness and seek help from local authorities

- around 2,000 Gypsy/Travellers who can use official sites provided by social landlords.

7. The main functions of the SHR are to—

- keep a publicly available register of social landlords;
- monitor, assess and regularly report on all social landlords' performance of housing activities and on registered social landlords' financial well-being and standards of governance;
- take action, where necessary, to protect the interests of tenants and other service users.

8. The SHR regulates 158 registered social landlords (RSLs) and the housing activities of Scotland's 32 local authorities. The Act requires that the SHR carries out its functions in a proportionate, accountable and transparent way. The SHR is led by a Board of non-executive members, appointed by Scottish Ministers following an open public appointments process.

9. The previous Local Government and Communities Committee last met with the SHR in November 2020 to discuss its Annual Performance Report and Accounts for 2019/20. The Official Report of that session can be accessed via the following link—

- [Local Government and Communities Committee Official Report, 25 October 2020](#)

Conclusion

10. The Committee is invited to consider the above in its evidence session with the SHR.

Clerks

Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee

ANNEXE

Scottish Housing Regulator Submission to the Local Government, Housing & Planning Committee, 15 March 2022

SHR will meet with the Committee on 22 March 2022 to scrutinise the 2020/21 Annual Report and Accounts. As a significant amount of time has passed since March 2021, we have set out below a summary of some of the work that SHR has done since then.

We have:

- continued to work with colleagues in the Social Housing Resilience Group, publishing quarterly dashboards on the impact of Covid-19 on social landlords;
- continued to update our guidance for Registered Social Landlord (RSL) governing body members during Covid-19;
- published research of Covid's impact on landlords' services and tenant quality of life gathered via our National Panel of Tenants and Service Users;
- welcomed two new Board members Maireke Dwarshuis and Lindsay Paterson, appointed by Scottish Ministers;
- ended intervention at Thistle and Fairfield Housing Associations – we have no live statutory intervention cases;
- published information on how we use our statutory powers and accounts of our previous intervention at Wishaw & District, Arklet, Ruchazie and Thistle Housing Associations. Our account on the outcome of intervention in Fairfield Housing Association will follow;
- carried out significant recruitment, including appointed seven staff new to SHR and as well as a number of internal promotions of existing colleagues. Recruitment included appointing a new Director of Regulation – Helen Shaw, following Ian Brennan's retirement last month. The impact of the pandemic, and a range of challenges in the overall Scottish Government recruitment process, resulted in delays in making these appointments, which impacted our work plans.

We also:

- reported on our analysis of RSL Loan portfolio and RSL finances;
- gathered and published Annual Assurance Statements for all social landlords;
- kept our engagement plans updated including the regulatory status for RSLs during the year;
- worked with SFHA, GWSF and ALACHO on a new guide to support social landlords with equality data collection;
- published our annual national report on the Charter and updated companion products including our comparison tool and individual landlord reports;
- wrote to landlords to highlight the importance of gas safety;
- deregistered a number of RSLs after they transferred their homes to other RSLs;
- published the risks we are focusing on in our ongoing risk assessment, which will report at the end of March 2022;
- started to recruit a new cohort of volunteer Tenant Advisors to inform our work;
- surveyed social landlords on tenant health and safety;
- published de-registration guidance for RSLs;
- spoke to all local authorities about their homelessness services; and
- continued to support our staff to work at home and – more recently – facilitated a gradual return to working from our office.