



STIRLING TENANTS ASSEMBLY
MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 25th JUNE 2013
IN CRIANLARICH VILLAGE HALL
AT 10.30AM

1. Present: Michael Griffiths, Moira Robertson, Hugh McClung, Dolly Gemmell, Meg Amasi, Philomena McClung, Richard Waddell, Delia Waddell, Anna Johnston, Thomas Brown, Cathy Brown, Peter Pelgrave, Emma Meldrum STP, Laura Calder SC

Apologies: Mary Rainey, Margaret Campbell, Alec Lamb, Cathy Traynor

Speaker Laura Calder, System Development Officer, Housing Customer Service and Quality Performance



**Measuring our performance & progress towards the
Scottish Social Housing Charter**
Laura Calder

Overview

- Purpose and context of the Charter
- The role of the Scottish Housing Regulator
- What does it mean for social landlords
- What does it mean for tenants?
- How has Stirling Council approached this?
- Progress so far
- Next steps

The purpose and context of The Charter:

- Approved by Parliament on 14th March 2012 and came into effect from April 2012
- Following consultation last summer, the final indicators were published in October 2012
- The purpose of the Charter is to improve the quality and value of services that social landlords provide and to ensure that they are accountable to the customers they provide services to.

Social Landlords started measuring in April 2013. There were a few changes made to the legislation but only in wording and definitions.

It aims to do this by:

- Stating clearly what tenants and other customers can expect from social landlords, and helping them hold landlords to account
- Focusing the efforts of social landlords on achieving outcomes that matter to their customers
- Establishing a basis for the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) to assess and report on how well landlords are performing

Other customers are owner/occupiers in shared block, mid-market rents, gypsy travellers, homeless, and the waiting list.

The Charter contains:

- Seven sections covering all areas of Housing
- This is underpinned by 16 outcomes and standards that social landlords should aim to achieve
- Supported by a framework of 37 performance indicators and 32 contextual indicators relating to rents/housing stock and financial information from Councils' housing revenue accounts
- Social landlords will complete an Annual Return on The Charter (ARC) which will detail their performance in the specified areas

The role of The Scottish Social Housing Regulator (SHR):

- Monitor, assess and report on how well social landlords, individually and collectively, are progressing towards meeting the Charter's outcomes
- Carry out verification visits to ensure accuracy of information provided
- Adopt a risk based approach to inspection, using the Charter to identify areas of weakness and follow up with thematic and on the spot inspections

The SHR will report to Social Landlords in April 2014.

Going forwards, the basis for funding will depend on how well the Social landlord does in the Charter.

What does this mean for social landlords?

- Social landlords will need to:
 - ensure they have clear performance management frameworks in place
 - monitor and report performance and progress towards the outcomes to both SHR and their customers
 - identify and create action plans for areas of improvement
 - welcome and encourage customers to become involved in shaping all aspects of their services
 - compare and publish their performance against other local social landlords through benchmarking activities

Local social landlords are not just Local Authorities, but also Housing Associations and other providers.

Laura is developing a framework for the report in October 2013 which will go first to HAG. She is about halfway through it.

The purpose is to learn from mistakes and put action plans in place.

The October 13 report should show up any weaknesses and give time to improve.

What does it mean for tenants?

- It provides an opportunity for tenants to:
 - help shape the services they receive
 - be involved in the scrutiny of their landlords performance and hold their landlord to account
 - have their views taken into account in the decision making and policy setting process
- Where their landlord fails to deliver the outcomes and standards tenants can report a **‘significant performance failure’** by their landlord to the SHR

How has Stirling Council approached this?

- Welcomed the Charter as an opportunity to review our services
- Embraced the opportunity to invite our customers to scrutinise and challenge our performance and hold us to account
- Viewing the Charter as part of our everyday approach to how we manage our services and not as a one-off end of year form filling exercise
- Creating a culture of continuous improvement and accountability

Laura was a new employee of Stirling Council so was able to see what was actually being done and whether it agreed with the policies.

Laura has to get the Charter and Reports to be seen by staff and tenants as an on-going job and not just a ‘once-a-year’ job.

Progress so far:

- Full review of current performance management framework - reviewing all current indicators in line with the Charter
- Identified gaps and developed action plans to address areas of concern
- Changes to IT reporting systems and processes currently being implemented where required
- Set up a full reporting and monitoring framework within the Covalent Performance Management System
- Currently preparing an evidence log for our self -assessment approach
- Held information sessions with customers, attending meetings with registered tenants associations and other service user groups
- Rolling out a training programme to raise staff awareness at all levels
- Identified lead officers for each outcome to ensure the Charter is embedded across the Service
- Held a partnership meeting with a group of local social landlords including other social landlords and the SHR to discuss concerns and finalise details
- Begun the process of contacting all tenants to encourage them to become involved and seek their views

The project plan is to detail every step between now and next April, to tweak the IT system and use a covalent tool, so that all details will come up at a press of a button.

It will go to HAG and to STA.

Lead Officers for each outcome have been identified.

The partnership meeting clarified what was being measured for each outcome.

Next steps:

- Ensure that the Charter is at the forefront of everything we do, so that we can meet the needs & expectations of our customers
- Continue to develop our reporting framework, testing data collection processes and sorting issues as we go
- Carry out further staff training to raise awareness, amongst tradesmen and other frontline staff
- Monitor, report and review our progress, acting upon our results throughout the year
- Work with our customers to shape services for them, including producing a ‘mock’ performance report in Oct 2013 and developing a tenant scrutiny framework

The Charter will be around for a minimum of 5 years.

Laura is trying to change the culture, so that the Charter is seen as a way to improve services and not as a threat.

Tradesmen are being made aware of the important role they have on the impact housing services makes on tenants.

The report will be going to tenants and Laura is working with tenants to find out what they would like to see in the report.

Emma passed round a draft poster asking for tenant help for us to comment on.

Laura then took questions from members.

Q. What value is measurement of service outcomes if all that is being presented is a list of outcomes with target figures and asking for comments

A. Quite correct. This is not what is being envisaged. It has to be clear from the outset that tenant input into setting/achieving outcomes will be of value.

Q. You mentioned the use of heating engineers assessing tenants’ views. They won’t have time to do this since their workload is high turnover and they must complete the task within allotted timescales.

A. They will be able to ascertain tenants’ views on services as it will only take a few minutes.

Q. Why isn’t there a scrutiny panel which can meet to discuss outcomes and targets, as it is very easy to write your own report without any reference to tenants’ views?

A. This is what we are trying to do now. We are inviting all interested persons including tenants to meetings for scrutiny hopefully starting next week (week commencing 01/07/13).

In final statement Laura added that she and her colleagues would welcome tenants’ views at any time through direct contact or through Emma.

Laura was thanked for her contribution, and the Chair closed the meeting.