

## **Assurance Statement (2023)**

Loreburn Housing Association's Management Committee has been actively involved in the development of our 2023/24 Annual Assurance Statement. A comprehensive evidence bank has been collated to support our assurance statement and regulatory and legal compliance is monitored on a regular and ongoing basis.

After considering the evidence, the Management Committee are confident that we are compliant with the regulatory requirements set out at section three of the Regulatory Framework; the relevant standards and outcomes of the Charter; all relevant statutory and legal requirements; and the Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management.

In collating and reviewing the evidence and assessing compliance, we have taken account of best practice advice. The evidence which supports our Assurance Statement includes:

- Reports about performance in key areas including finance, service delivery, asset management, health & safety, development, risk; and governing body and senior officer appraisals.
- Internal and External Audit reports.
- Strategies and Policies
- Advice from external and specialist advisers (including legal advisors, treasury management advisors, external auditors, health & safety specialists)
- Benchmarking information from the Scottish Housing Regulator
- Reports, advice, and information from senior staff
- Reports and Minutes from Management Committee, Sub-Committees, Task and Finish Groups

In considering our compliance with our legal and regulatory requirements, we must firstly acknowledge the challenges we are facing, namely the risks associated with managing a complex and high value development programme. As a Management Committee, we have taken the difficult decision to scale back our development programme to ensure we can continue to meet the needs of existing tenants by maintaining our current stock and complying with our legal and regulatory duties to provide safe, warm and affordable homes.

As a Management Committee, we launched our new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and have rolled out training for Management Committee and all staff on micro-aggression and unconscious bias. We have also launched our Equalities Data Collection campaign and are using this data to determine requirements for Equality Impact Assessments across the Association to strengthen our approach to deliver the best possible service and outcomes for all our customers and our staff.

As a Management Committee we receive quarterly information regarding health & safety compliance as well as access to minutes of the Health & Safety Executive Group providing assurance on matters relating to tenant safety and regulatory compliance including but not restricted to gas safety, electrical safety, water safety, fire safety, asbestos, damp and mould and lift safety. At the time of writing 100% compliance is confirmed in relation to

regulatory and legislative requirements regarding gas safety, electrical safety, water safety and asbestos management. Copies of inspection certification are available to view as part of the evidence bank compiled in the preparation of this statement. In addition, in 2023 we launched a new policy and procedure in relation to our management of damp and mould to ensure we have an efficient and tenant centred approach to inspection, risk assessment and resolution.

Since our previous submission, we have worked closely with non-executive recruitment specialists to strengthen our Management Committee and have recruited in line with an independently commissioned skills gap analysis. We are confident the Management Committee in place will continue to strengthen the governance of the organisation and remain committed to ensure sufficient succession planning is in place.

We have also worked with recruitment specialists to strengthen our Executive Management Team for the posts of CEO, Director of Property & Development and Director of Finance and have in place a framework for measuring and monitoring performance of these appointments. Our focus is to ensure stability to the organisation so that we are best placed to deliver value for money services to our tenants. We continue to work closely with our treasury advisors and auditors to regularly monitor our business plan, budget, and financial assumptions in the context of the cost-of-living crisis, increased interest costs and the uncertainty in the financial market. Our business plan, which was reviewed in line with the FYFP submission, reflects the regulatory guidance that was current at the time of its preparation, and we will take account of updated regulatory advice as we monitor and review our Business Plan going forward. We maintain an open dialogue with the Regulator regarding short- and medium-term impacts upon our development programme.

The Management Committee and the Executive Team continue to adopt an improvement focus through the progression of our Assurance Improvement Plan with a sustained focus on governance, board recruitment and training, financial planning, equality, and human rights, as well as an in-depth assessment of the subsidiary company which will be conducted by an independent third-party. The Management Committee will continue to monitor the progress of the Improvement Plan throughout 2023/24. The Management Committee are satisfied that the actions identified in the plan are intended to deliver effective improvement and that none are material to our current compliance with the Framework at the time of writing this statement.

We recognise that we are required to notify the SHR of any changes in our compliance during the year and are assured that we have effective arrangements in place to enable us to do so.

This statement was considered and approved by the Management Committee at our meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

**Russell Brown**

Loreburn H A Convener on behalf of the Management Committee