

Members' Library Service Request Form

Date of Document	30/08/16
Originator	Head Of Communities And Partnerships
Originator's Ref (if any)	
Document Title	Scottish Government Consultation on Social Housing Charter

Please indicate if access to the document is to be “unrestricted” or “restricted”, with regard to the terms of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

Unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------	-------------------------------------	------------	--------------------------

If the document is “restricted”, please state on what grounds (click on grey area for drop-down menu):

For Publication

Additional information:

Authorised By	Monica Patterson
Designation	Depute Chief Executive
Date	30/08/16

For Office Use Only:	
Library Reference	162/16
Date Received	31/08/16
Bulletin	Sep 16

REPORT TO: Members' Library Report

MEETING DATE:

BY: Depute Chief Executive - Partnerships and Community Services

SUBJECT: Scottish Government Consultation on the Social Housing Charter

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To advise Cabinet of the proposals being consulted on by the Scottish Government to review the current Scottish Social Housing Charter (SHC).

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to note the contents of this report and the Council's response to the proposals set out in the Consultation Paper, as detailed in the attached Appendix 1.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Scottish Social Housing Charter was introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010, which requires Ministers to set standards and outcomes that social landlords should be achieving for tenants and other customers through their housing activities. Its purpose is to:

- Give tenants, homeless people and other customers a clear understanding of what they should expect from a social landlord
- Give social landlords a clear understanding of what they should be delivering through their housing activities
- Provide the basis for the Scottish Housing Regulator to monitor, assess and report on the performance of social landlords, and if necessary to require compliance with the Charter, and through the Regulator's Reports:

- Give landlords the information they need to achieve continuous improvements in their performance and provide value for money
- Give tenants and other customers information on how their landlord is performing in relation to other landlords, so that they can better hold the landlord to account

The standards and outcomes do not add any new duties to social landlords rather they describe what a good social landlord should be achieving for its tenants and other customers.

The Charter came in to effect from 1 April 2012 and continues to apply until the Parliament approves a revised Charter. Unless stakeholders raise urgent and significant concerns about how the Charter is working in practice, it was set out that the Charter would apply for five years. In consultation with stakeholders, Scottish Ministers agreed to review its effect on the quality and value of social landlords' services, and its value to tenants and other customers, social landlords and the Scottish Housing Regulator. The review was to start within two years of the Charter coming into force, so that Scottish Ministers could take the review's findings into account in preparing a revised Charter, which will take effect from 1 April 2017.

CONSULTATION

- 3.2 The Scottish Government through the consultation wanted to hear about landlord and tenant experiences since the Charter was introduced. The consultation also sought views on the current outcomes and standards, whether anything new needs to be added to it and the impact of the current Charter.
- 3.3 In addition to the online consultation the Scottish Government also held a series of consultation events throughout Scotland. These events were aimed at complementing the formal consultation on the Charter and took place across Scotland over the summer months. The Council hosted an event for the Scottish Government in East Lothian on 30th June 2016 which was well attended by tenant representatives, staff from the Council and other social landlords in East Lothian and Edinburgh as well as other housing professionals.
- 3.4 The Council's response states that on the whole the current outcomes are good and cover almost everything that they should. However, there is little recognition of some of the challenges faced by the Council and our ability to continue to deliver meeting the outcomes with the severe pressures we face.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no policy implications arising from this report.
- 4.2 If changes are made to the outcomes and standards it is not envisaged that this would have any immediate impact.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – None.
- 6.2 Personnel – None.
- 6.3 Other – None.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Appendix 1 Attached – East Lothian Council response

AUTHOR'S NAME	Tom Shearer
DESIGNATION	Head of Communities and Partnerships
CONTACT INFO	James Coutts – Ext 7483
DATE	30 August 2016

Response ID ANON-KDN4-X9A8-U

Submitted to **Review of the Scottish Social Housing Charter - A Consultation**

Submitted on **2016-08-22 14:36:41**

Section 1 - Impact of the current Charter

1 Do you think the quality of landlord services has improved because of the Charter? Please explain your answer and provide examples.

This could include examples of improvements to a specific service such as higher quality, quicker repairs or increased opportunities for tenants to get involved.:

We think that the Charter has helped us to focus on the outcomes that we need to deliver, the importance of performance information and on being accountable to our tenants. We can also now do meaningful comparisons and benchmark with other social landlords to a greater and more robust standard. The Charter has therefore helped us to enhance our services.

In addition, we feel that the Charter has helped us to scrutinise some of our processes more and improve our housekeeping in terms of repairs in particular and this had led to an improvement in our repair times. We have also improved our approach to surveys and reviewed most of our transactional surveys as well as undertake a comprehensive satisfaction survey. Using the feedback we have received from tenants has helped improve our services.

2 Does the way the Charter is reported on help you judge whether landlords are meeting the Charter outcomes and standards? Please explain your answer.

2 - judge whether landlords are meeting outcomes/standards:

The benchmarking tool provides us with a useful tool to look at how we are performing against similar sized authorities and landlords, using indicators which are (in the main) universally applied. It doesn't tell you everything but allows for good comparisons to be made.

The standardised satisfaction questions and answer categories have helped us to make good like-for-like comparisons and have helped inform other customer satisfaction surveys.

The Landlord Report has been well received by tenants, who have helped shape and inform its development.

Section 2 - Current outcomes and standards

THE CUSTOMER/LANDLORD RELATIONSHIP

3a Would you:

Keep this outcome exactly as it is

Please explain your answer below:

3b Please provide any suggestions below on how we could improve the supporting narrative

3b supporting narrative:

THE CUSTOMER/LANDLORD RELATIONSHIP

4a Would you:

Keep this outcome exactly as it is

Please explain your answer below:

4b Please provide any suggestions below on how we could improve the supporting narrative

4b supporting narrative:

THE CUSTOMER/LANDLORD RELATIONSHIP

5a Would you:

Change the outcome

Please explain your answer below:

We would suggest that this outcome may be improved by adding the words "and in a way that suits them" (tenants and other customers)

5b Please provide any suggestions below on how we could improve the supporting narrative

5b supporting narrative:

HOUSING QUALITY AND MAINTENANCE

6a Would you:

Change this standard

Please explain your answer below:

We feel that although the SHQS still exists the focus is no longer on the 2015 target and therefore this should be removed from the text. There also needs to be reference to the EESSH requirements - although note that this has already been identified.

6b Please provide any suggestions below on how we could improve the supporting narrative

6b - supporting narrative:

HOUSING QUALITY AND MAINTENANCE

7A Would you:

Keep this outcome exactly as it is

Please explain your answer below:

7b Please provide any suggestions below on how we could improve the supporting narrative

7b - outcome 5 supporting narrative:

NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY

8a Would you:

Keep this outcome exactly as it is

Please explain your answer below:

8b Please provide any suggestions below on how we could improve the supporting narrative

8b - outcome 6 supporting narrative:

NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY

9a Would you:

Keep these outcomes exactly as they are

Please explain your answer below:

9b Please provide any suggestions below on how we could improve the supporting narrative

9b - outcomes 789 supporting narrative:

NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY

10a Would you:

Keep this outcome exactly as it is

Please explain your answer below:

10b Please provide any suggestions below on how we could improve the supporting narrative

10b - outcome 10 supporting narrative:

NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY

11a Would you:

Keep this outcome exactly as it is

Please explain your answer below:

11b Please provide any suggestions below on how we could improve the supporting narrative

11b - outcome 11 supporting narrative:

NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY

12a Would you:

Keep this outcome exactly as it is

Please explain your answer below:

12b Please provide any suggestions below on how we could improve the supporting narrative

12b - outcome 12 supporting narrative:

We would suggest that there should be some explanation that Councils need to be supported and assisted by their partners in the same way that outcome 6 cannot be achieved without assistance from partners. By way of examples, there is a need for RSLs to make a contribution in order for us to meet this outcome and the SG is also a key partner in helping subsidise new build and in providing grant and other funding for Councils, RSLs and the third sector.

GETTING GOOD VALUE FROM RENTS AND SERVICE CHARGES

13a Would you:

Keep this standard exactly as it is

Please explain your answer below:

13b Please provide any suggestions below on how we could improve the supporting narrative

13b standard 13 supporting narrative:

GETTING GOOD VALUE FROM RENTS AND SERVICE CHARGES

14a Would you:

Change these outcomes

Please explain your answer below:

We think this outcome is quite wordy and we feel that it needs to be reviewed in terms of how it is currently structured. It is not clear to us what details of individual items of expenditure and thresholds relate to, perhaps this outcome could be reworded in a way that would explain this and make it clearer for tenants.

14b Please provide any suggestions below on how we could improve the supporting narrative

14b - outcomes 14/15 supporting narrative:

OTHER CUSTOMERS

15a Would you:

Keep this outcome exactly as it is

Please explain your answer below:

15b Please provide any suggestions below on how we could improve the supporting narrative

15b - outcome 16 supporting narrative:

Section 3 - Adding anything to the Charter

16 Is there anything else you think the Charter should cover? If so please tell us what and why you think it should be included.

16 anything else:

There is no reference to scrutiny within any of the outcomes and as this is such a crucial part of the Charter and regulatory requirements we feel that it should perhaps be referenced within the Participation outcome.

There are also some wider policy context areas that will have an impact on the housing services we provide, these included:

Health & Social Care Integration
Digital Inclusion
Welfare Reform

We feel that on the whole the current outcomes are good and cover almost everything that they should. However, there is little recognition of these other challenges and our ability to continue to deliver meeting the outcomes with the severe pressures that we are facing. The ongoing economic problems,

concomitant budgetary pressures and political uncertainty will certainly have an impact on landlords and homeless services being able to deliver and maintain housing services at their current levels

Respondent Information Questions

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Organisation

What is your name or your organisation's name?

Name/orgname:

East Lothian Council

What is your email address?

Email:

dpiner@eastlothian.gov.uk

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

Publish response with name

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Yes

Evaluation

Please help us improve our consultations by answering the questions below. (Responses to the evaluation will not be published.)

Matrix 1 - How satisfied were you with this consultation?:

Very satisfied

Please enter comments here.:

Matrix 1 - How would you rate your satisfaction with using this platform (Citizen Space) to respond to this consultation?:

Very satisfied

Please enter comments here.: