

**Local Government and Communities Committee**

**Comataidh Riaghaltas Ionadail is Coimhearsnachdan**

# **Report on the Scottish Social Housing Charter**



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# Local Government and Communities Committee

To consider and report on communities, housing, local government, planning and regeneration matters falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities.



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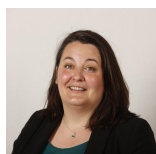
# Committee Membership



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**Bob Doris**  
Scottish National Party



**Deputy Convener**  
**Elaine Smith**  
Scottish Labour



**Ruth Maguire**  
Scottish National Party



**Kenneth Gibson**  
Scottish National Party



**Graham Simpson**  
Scottish Conservative  
and Unionist Party



**Alexander Stewart**  
Scottish Conservative  
and Unionist Party



**Andy Wightman**  
Scottish Green Party

# Overview

1. This report sets out the consideration of the Local Government and Communities Committee on the Scottish Social Housing Charter. Our key conclusion is set out below.
2. Following the evidence heard from the various stakeholders and the Minister for Local Government and Housing, the latter moved motion S5M-03695 that the Local Government and Communities Committee recommends that the revised Scottish Social Housing Charter be approved. The motion was approved without a division.

# Introduction

3. Part 3 of the [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) ('the 2010 Act') brought in a Scottish Social Housing Charter ('the Charter'). The 2010 Act requires Scottish Ministers to set out the standards and outcomes that social landlords should achieve for their tenants and other customers.
4. Specifically, the purpose of the Charter is to:
  - give tenants, homeless people and other customers a clear understanding of what they should expect from a social landlord;
  - give 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.
5. The current Charter, which has been in place since April 2012, has 16 standards and outcomes. In 2011, the Scottish Government undertook an extensive programme of work to develop the charter including the establishment of a sounding board, initial consultation and a discussion paper involving key bodies, a dedicated website and series of roadshows
6. The Scottish Housing Regulator is responsible for monitoring and reporting on landlords' performance in achieving the outcomes and standards in the Charter. Every social landlord submits an Annual Return on the Charter which details performance against a range of key performance indicators. The Scottish Housing Regulator publishes reports about each landlord's performance against the Charter and a national report on the Charter
7. The 2010 Act (s33) requires Scottish Ministers to review the Charter from time to time. The Scottish Government undertook a consultation on the charter outcomes in the summer of 2016. In addition, the Scottish Government held 12 events to seek the views of tenants and landlords across Scotland. An analysis of consultation responses reported that-
  - ” ...views on the current Charter were generally positive with the majority of respondents largely in favour of keeping the current outcomes and standards unchanged.<sup>1</sup>

8. The Scottish Government laid the [revised Charter](#) with the Parliament on 19 January 2017. Given the outcome of the consultation process, the Scottish Government chose to “fine-tune” the Charter, rather than making any more substantial changes. The changes made included:
- Highlighting all of the standards and outcomes should be reflected across the whole of a landlord’s activities;
  - Updating the brief narrative, which describes the scope of the standard or outcome, to reflect recent developments in best practice, including the impact of digital developments on the delivery of housing services;
  - Adding the new requirement that landlords should meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing by December 2020;
  - Amending the Neighbourhood and Community outcome to recognise more explicitly that meeting this outcome requires landlords to work with other agencies to achieve it;
  - Strengthening the Gypsies / Travellers outcome by adding that those local councils and registered social landlords with responsibility for managing sites meet the minimum site standards set in guidance on standards that the Scottish Government issued in May 2015.

## **Parliamentary procedure and the Committee's scrutiny**

9. Whilst not a Scottish Statutory Instrument, the Act requires that the Charter is submitted to the Scottish Parliament for consideration and approval through the affirmative procedure. It is therefore for the Local Government and Communities Committee to recommend to the Parliament whether the draft Charter should be approved
10. At its meeting on 1 February, the Committee took oral evidence from a range of stakeholders to inform its questioning of the Minister for Local Government and Housing which followed (see Annex A). The Scottish Housing Regulator and Scottish Federation of Housing Associations provided written submissions for this meeting.



## Conclusion

Following the evidence heard from the various stakeholders and the Minister for Local Government and Housing, the latter moved motion S5M-03695 that the Local Government and Communities Committee recommends that the revised Scottish Social Housing Charter be approved. The motion was approved without a division.

# Annex A

## Extracts from the Minutes of the Local Government and Communities Committee and associated written and supplementary evidence

### 4th Local Government and Communities Committee Meeting 2017

#### 2. The Scottish Social Housing Charter: The Committee took evidence from—

- Hugh McClung, Regional Network of Registered Tenants Organisations;
- Christine MacLeod, Director of Regulation, Scottish Housing Regulator;
- Alan Stokes, Policy Lead, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations;
- Gordon Campbell, Board Member, Tenant Participation Advisory Service Scotland;
- Tony Cain, Policy Manager, Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers;

and then from—

- Kevin Stewart, Minister for Local Government and Housing, Michael Boal, Social Housing Charter and Regulation Manager, and William Fleming, Head of Housing Services Policy Unit, Scottish Government.

**3. The Scottish Social Housing Charter:** Kevin Stewart (Minister for Local Government and Housing) moved S5M-03695—That the Local Government and Communities Committee recommends that the revised Scottish Social Housing Charter be approved. The motion was approved.

#### Written evidence

- [Scottish Housing Regulator \(Paper: LGC/S5/17/4/3, Annexe A\)](#)
- [Scottish Federation of Housing Associations \(Paper: LGC/S5/17/4/3, Annexe A\)](#)

- [1] Scottish Government. (2016, November). Review of the Scottish Social Housing Charter, paragraph 1.3. Retrieved from <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/11/1336/1>

