



Assurance Statement: 2023

Introduction

In accordance with the requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), I the undersigned provide the following statement in respect of assurance and compliance for Osprey Housing Limited.

The Board of Directors of Osprey Housing confirm that based on review and assessment of a comprehensive assurance framework, evidence available to us and scrutinised throughout the year we are assured Osprey Housing complies with all relevant standards and outcomes in the Charter; all relevant legislative duties; and the Standards of Governance and Financial Management.

This Assurance Statement is provided on behalf of the Board of Osprey Housing. The sources and level of assurance in relation to compliance is clear to the Board and, members are directly involved in the ongoing development, monitoring and scrutiny of the evidence base.

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

Continual improvement focus

Osprey remain an agile organisation post pandemic and throughout the challenges of the cost of living crisis. We are proactive in identifying and dealing with risks and their potential impacts particularly in our financial resilience throughout an economically challenging period over the last year. The Board are assured we have identified and reviewed the range of new risks that have/will impact short and longer term for both the organisation and its tenants/customers.

As always, our culture is to use opportunities to improve how we deliver our services embedding good practise to remain adaptable, flexible, compassionate and responsive as we look forward and plan ahead. Following the completion of transfer of engagements within the Group during 2021 we have continued to be able to maximise the financial efficiencies and resilience of operating as a single entity. This has allowed Osprey to sustain our Development Programme whilst delivering key changes in our service delivery through digitalisation.

Organisational Development and investing in our people, both staff and Board remain a priority to ensure our team are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to deliver high levels of performance, strategically and operationally. This includes a comprehensive training programme delivering CIH and other sector qualifications, cyber security, equalities, carbon literacy, Insights personal development and team effectiveness and a specific programme to support mental health, motivation and overall wellbeing.

Our culture embeds striving for high performance and outcomes identifying actions during continual review and improvement planning, we remain satisfied that all are intended to deliver effective improvement and that none are material to our current compliance with the Framework.

Strategic Planning and delivering our Vision

A refreshed Strategic Plan was developed and agreed by the Board in May 2022. The four key Strategic ambitions remain the same, however the Plan now reflects the changing external environment and delivery actions. Our tenant first approach to service delivery is reemphasised in the Plan, with a clear commitment to tenancy support and sustainment embedded, reflecting this in our organisational structure.



Our current deliverable activities and actions throughout the year;

- **Financial Business Planning** – during a very challenging year in relation to inflation impacting both the organisation and tenants, we fully reviewed our organisation financial efficiencies and commitments. We were able to offer our tenants a significantly below inflation rent increase of 4% from April 2023 whilst making no service or investment cutbacks. Forward planning in the current financial climate is already underway – both stress testing the Business Plan and appraising budgetary options for 2024 to ensure our rent strategy aligns with our commitment to affordability for our tenants.
- **Cyber Security** – we have undertaken extensive staff training and awareness in relation to cyber security. We are accredited to Cyber Essentials Plus certification.
- **Digital** – implemented a new housing management software system which will enhance internal efficiency and effectiveness whilst improving the tenants digital service and engagement options.
- **Compliance** – we have reviewed our compliance data as part of the implementation of the new housing management database via a module specifically designed for compliance providing us with a more robust reporting and recording framework to continually develop. This year we have had a particular emphasis on tenant and resident safety putting in place additional mechanisms to report and respond to relevant tenant facing issues including damp and mould. We are compliant in our framework for Gas safety, electrical safety, asbestos and fire safety legislation.
- **Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) commitment** - Embedding an ESG framework via formal adoption of the Social Rented Standard (SRS) with our first ESG report due to be published in October 2023.
- **Equalities and Human Rights** – we have appropriate systems in place for the collection of equalities data. Data collection is now under way with staff, board member and tenants information being collected. We are assured that we are working towards using this data to take account of equality and human rights issues in our decisions, policy-making and day-to-day service delivery.

Overall Assurance

Continuing our established effective overall approach to assurance, sources have been mapped against regulatory requirements and standards. Our existing approach and framework were reviewed against the updated SFHA Self-Assessment Guidance and toolkit.

Evidence of those sources of assurance include:

- Informed decision making process through Board report template cross referencing strategic risk, strategic ambition, financial impact, regulatory, legislative, tenant and equality direct impacts for each decision and report presented.
- External and Internal audit frameworks and reporting process.
- Performance monitoring reports aligned with on going Charter outcomes across the key business areas such as finance, asset management, housing management, health and safety, governance, tenant satisfaction and service delivery.
- Detailed reports and updates from the Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team.
- Comprehensive strategy and policy framework.
- Reports and analysis from external auditors, appointed advisers and specialist consultant advisers all of whom provide external independent evaluation, feedback and validation.



- Independent resilience evaluation of the Osprey financial Business Plan including scenario stress testing supported by external consultant.
- Comprehensive Board Appraisal process with subsequent skills matrix and training plan outcomes
- Effective sector engagement and benchmarking
- Consultation and engagement with Osprey Tenants and Residents Association (OTRA) and wider tenant base on relevant subjects and scrutiny projects undertaken.

In reviewing evidence and assessing compliance we have taken account of good practice advice. Our level of compliance remains subject to constant review and scrutiny with a focus on continuous improvement.

As Chair, I was authorised by the Board at a meeting held on 13th September 2023 to sign and submit this Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator and, I confirm that it is being published on our website on the same date that it is submitted.

Mike Scott
Chair