



Putting People 1st

GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS' GUIDE

Acknowledgement

SFHA has published the model Guide as the result of a suggestion from the Federation of Local Housing Associations in Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire (FLAIR) who have contributed to its content.

Notes

This SFHA document is intended as a model Guide that can be customised to suit individual RSLs. Throughout the guide has been customised as required in terms of language (e.g. Committee / Management Committee) and specific Pineview HA information has been inserted. The Guide will require annual updating to ensure that references to levels of regulatory engagement, performance etc. remain up to date.

Introduction

This Guide provides information to help you in your role as a member of our Governing Body. It forms part of the Induction Pack for new Committee members and it's also a useful reference for more experienced members. There is a list of additional sources of information at the end. You can also access information about us by visiting our website – and by asking your fellow Committee members and senior staff. Being a Committee member is a big responsibility and it takes a while to feel confident, so please don't be reluctant to ask for an explanation or more information.

Pineview Housing Association Ltd

Pineview Housing Association was established in 1991 as Pineview Housing Co-operative following a stock transfer of properties in the Pinewood area from the then Glasgow District Council. Since that time the Association has completed seven phases of improvement and new build housing in the Pinewood area, a shared ownership project in the Stonedyke Area, a new build project in the Broadholm area and six projects in the Waverley area.

Within our area of operation, the Association owns and manages 532 self-contained properties and 1 care unit with 4 bedrooms. We also part own 23 shared ownership properties and provide services to a further 29 owner occupiers.

The Association has a sound financial footing, having prudently managed the Association's resources since its inception. The Association has paid off several loans, and works to ensure that the business has the best financial opportunities through effective treasury management and adherence to loan covenant requirements.

The Association works in an ever changing environment and requires to work efficiently and effectively to protect the achievements of the business and to protect the interests of the business and our stakeholders moving forward. The Association recognises its achievements but will strive to continually improve on these and adapt to the environment in which we work.

Our mission statement, values and objectives are:

Mission Statement

“Pineview Housing Association aims to provide quality affordable homes, and deliver excellent service through listening and engaging with our customers”

Values

The following values and behaviours were agreed as being intrinsic to everything we do:

In everything we do, we will be;

- Honest & transparent
- Fair & adaptable
- Polite & approachable
- Positive & considerate
- Knowledgeable and listening

Objectives

1. To provide good quality affordable housing for rent and home ownership and maintain quality through appropriate long term investment.
2. To assist tenants and where appropriate owners and sharing owners to sustain their tenancies/ownership through the provision of adaptations, advice and support, housing options service and any other initiatives which the Association can reasonably enter into.
3. To provide efficient, responsive and cost effective housing services for customers.
4. To ensure that the work of the Association is supported by effective governance, financial and administration systems and that staff and Committee are accountable for the work of the Association.
5. To ensure that the Association is an employer of choice.
6. To consolidate our business within our existing neighbourhoods and take advantage of development opportunities should they be financially viable and appropriate to undertake.
7. To support wider role activities that help to support the investment and regeneration that has already taken place and which introduce measures to help sustain our business and develop our community.

What do RSLs do?

Housing associations have been active in Scotland for many years and collectively own and manage over 290,000 houses¹. Their formal title is 'Registered Social Landlord' (RSL).

The sector is very varied – some housing associations own less than 100 houses whilst others are responsible for many more (the biggest Scottish RSL owns and manages almost 40,000 houses). All housing associations are independent organisations that are responsible for their own activities, funding and performance. Some are part of a group structure – this means that they have a legal connection with other organisations that might also be landlords or which might provide related services such as repairs and maintenance or training or advice and support.

Housing associations provide housing, mainly for rent, for people across Scotland. We let our houses on **Scottish Secure Tenancies** (SST) and our housing stock is

¹ SHR 2017/18 AFS data set - <https://directory.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/Pages/Datasets-and-Reports.aspx>

expected to meet the **Scottish Housing Quality Standard** (SHQS)

<https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20141129031833/http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/16342/shqs>

and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH)

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/home-energy-and-fuel-poverty/energy-efficiency-in-social-housing/>

Housing associations are part of the social rented sector (along with councils) and provide homes for people who are in housing need; they are committed to supporting sustainable communities that people want to live in. Some housing associations are active in a specific geographical area (e.g. part of a city or town or a rural area) whilst others specialise in providing housing for particular groups of people (such as older people or people with particular needs). Although the majority concentrate on providing good quality rented housing, many also provide low cost housing for sale and shared equity. Some combine their housing services with the provision of support, either by themselves or in partnership with other organisations. Housing associations do more than just let and maintain houses: they are active in the communities that their tenants live in, providing and supporting a wide range of other activities. Some provide services direct or in partnership and through signposting, in activities such as:

- Welfare advice – helping people make sure they are accessing all the financial support they are entitled to; promoting financial inclusion through accessible banking and offering advice and support on dealing with debt;
- Energy advice – providing help and assistance to reduce energy costs for tenants
- Employment and training initiatives – for example, offering apprenticeships and training in partnership with construction and maintenance companies
- Care and Repair – helping older and disabled people to remain independent in their own homes by providing schemes that help with repairs, maintenance and adaptations
- Factoring – providing maintenance and repairs services to owners who live in flats in areas where the housing association is active
- Green Initiatives – supporting sustainability and re-cycling initiatives within communities, such as community growing projects and allotments; renewable energy initiatives and furniture recycling projects

Effective partnerships are critical to the success of housing associations – key partners include Local Authorities, Scottish Government, banks, regulators, other landlords and, of course, our tenants and the communities in which we are active.

RSLs are 'registered' with the **Scottish Housing Regulator** (SHR) which was established by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010. Its objective is to safeguard and

promote the interests of current and future tenants, homeless people and other people who use services provided by social landlords. We are required to meet the SHR's regulatory requirements for governance and financial management.

Housing associations do not trade for profit and all of the income that they generate is used to meet their running costs and invest in their current and future activities. Most housing associations are registered societies, although some are companies limited by guarantee; many are also Scottish Charities and those that provide support or care are registered with the Care Inspectorate. Housing associations that provide debt advice are registered with the Financial Conduct Authority. So our sector is very heavily regulated and we must demonstrate compliance with the requirements of all of our regulators as well as our funders.

Pineview HA is a Registered Society under the Co-operative and Community Benefits Societies Act 2014 (2375R(S)); a Registered Scottish Charity SC038237; registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) HAC231; and a Registered Property Factor PF000151.

Our primary source of income is from tenants' rents. We aim to provide the highest possible standards of service whilst keeping rents affordable: this means that we are committed to delivering value for money across all of our business activities – keeping costs low through effective procurement and careful performance management and paying staff competitive salaries that attract and retain skilled and experienced people.

We report our activities to our members and tenants in **regular newsletters**, via our **website** and through our **annual performance report** that is published in October. We are required to report our performance in meeting the Scottish Social Housing Charter to the SHR annually in May.

What The Governing Body Does

We refer to our governing body as the Management Committee. Committee members are not paid for their contribution, although out of pocket expenses are reimbursed.

The Committee operates at a strategic level and delegates responsibility for the day to day management and running of the organisation to staff, through the Director. The Committee has agreed a Committee Structure, Standing Orders and Delegated Authorities Policy that sets out the responsibilities that it retains and those that are delegated either to staff or to sub-committees. The policy also makes provision for emergency arrangements and establishes a procedure for decision-taking between Committee meetings.

Governance is the term used to describe the arrangements that a housing association has to lead the organisation, provide strategic direction and effective control. Good governance ensures that the association's objectives and standards are clear; that the organisation is well-run and that performance is good and monitored effectively; it also means that a sensible approach to risk is adopted and that high ethical standards are applied. Good governance depends on a constructive relationship between the Committee and senior staff: each have their own distinct responsibilities that complement the other and the Committee is responsible for ensuring that there is an effective relationship in place – the Chair is specifically responsible for maintaining an effective relationship with the Director. The Committee is the employer of our staff.

The Committee's main responsibilities are to:

- Lead the association
- Promote and uphold our values
- Set our strategy and direction
- Agree the annual budget and ensure financial viability
- Take account of tenants' views in respect of rents and services
- Monitor performance
- Manage risk
- Ensure legal, constitutional and regulatory compliance
- Promoting and demonstrating good governance

The Committee is also responsible for ensuring that we maintain effective relationships with our partners, although day to day responsibility is delegated to staff. The Committee is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of our **Codes of Conduct** for Committee members and for staff are upheld. The Committee must also ensure that it has the necessary range of skills, knowledge and experience to fulfil its role and that our staff have the skills, qualifications and expertise to deliver what is required of them. From time to time the Committee will require external independent and/or professional advice e.g. from accountants, lawyers, surveyors etc.

Staff support the Committee by providing professional advice and expertise: they are responsible for providing the Committee with high quality information and advice to make decisions and for implementing the Committee's decisions effectively. Staff are responsible for the day to day management and operation of the association – for implementing policies, making decisions, managing our relationship with tenants and service users, dealing with complaints and queries, liaison with partners, funders and regulators. Staff are also responsible for consulting with tenants through our Resident and Customer Forum, consultation register and by direct communication.

Our **Rules** set out the requirements of the Committee and the duties of the Chair and Secretary. Our Committee should not have less than 7 members and not more than 15. We review the range of skills, knowledge and experience that the Committee requires on an annual basis to ensure that we have access to the necessary expertise and experience to meet our objectives. Where gaps are identified, we try to address them through training and/or recruitment. We publicise the particular **skills** we need in advance of the AGM.

Our Management Committee meets ten times a year – the meetings calendar is agreed and issued after each AGM. Papers are issued the week before the meeting and you are encouraged to raise any queries you might have in advance of the meeting with the relevant officer to ensure that any additional information is available. New Committee members have the opportunity to discuss the papers with their mentor in advance of the meeting.

In order to ensure that the Committee operates as efficiently as possible, we have 1 sub-committee. This is the **Health & Safety and Staffing Sub-Committee** which can consider these issues in more detail than Management Committee meetings. The **remit** for the sub-committee describes the role and responsibilities and sets out any powers to make decisions and commit expenditure. Any sub-committee can only act in accordance with the responsibilities that are delegated by the Management Committee. Sub-committee decisions must be reported to the next Management Committee meeting. The Committee may also establish working or task groups to progress specific issues such as new initiatives or a review of service delivery.

The Role of a Committee Member

Committee members are usually appointed for a three year term following elections at the AGM. Committee members appointed in this way must be **members** of the association. Members of the association are people who are interested in and support our activities; they may, but will not always, be tenants or residents in our communities. Members have to apply for membership and pay their £1 fee, before being considered by the Management Committee for membership.

Up to one third of the Committee can be co-opted (up to the maximum of 12/15): co-opted Committee members do not need to be members of the association and can only serve until the next AGM; then they must stand down but may, if they are a member, stand for election.

As a member of the Committee you must always act in the best interests of Pineview Housing Association and you must not be influenced by any personal, business, financial or other interests. You are required to declare any such interests and manage them appropriately. In order to be a member of the Committee, you must sign and agree to uphold our **Code of Conduct**. You must also accept **collective**

responsibility for decisions that the Committee has taken (provided the decision has been taken properly and is in accordance with our rules, policies and procedures).

All Committee members are expected to use their skills, knowledge and experience for the benefit of the association. Some members will offer life experience whilst others will bring professional expertise: it is essential that Committee has an appropriate range of skills, knowledge and experience.

Every Committee member shares the same level of responsibility regardless of their background: a Committee member who is a lawyer or accountant, for example, has the same level of responsibility as someone who has no professional qualifications or who is not in employment. These responsibilities are set out in the **Role Description for Governing Body Members and Office Bearers**.

Committee members are expected to:

- Attend and be well prepared for meetings
- Contribute effectively to discussions and decision making
- Contribute to annual reviews of our performance, activities and progress
- Take part in training and other learning opportunities
- Take part in an annual review of the effectiveness of our governance
- Participate in an annual review / appraisal of your individual contribution to our governance
- Maintain and develop your knowledge of relevant issues and the wider housing sector
- Represent Pineview Housing Association positively and effectively
- Respect and maintain confidentiality of information
- Treat colleagues with respect and foster effective working relationships within the Committee and between the Committee and staff
- Be aware of and comply with the restrictions on entitlements, payments and benefits
- Register any relevant interests as soon as they arise and comply with our policy on **managing conflicts of interest**

To support you in your role, new Committee members are expected to take part in an Induction Programme which offers opportunities to meet staff and find out more about what we do as well as identifying an experienced member of the Committee who will act as your mentor for the first six months / year.

All Committee members are expected to participate in training to keep their knowledge up to date: this might take the form of:

- Briefings provided by staff
- Attending Drumcog training
- Attending other external training
- In-house training from an external source
- Attendance at conferences and events
- Reading publications and journals
- On-line research

Members of the Committee elect the Chair of the association (who must be an elected Committee member). The Chair has additional responsibilities which are described in the Chair's role description section **of the Role Description for Governing Body Members and Office Bearers** and which include:

- Leading the Committee and sub-committees constructively, providing direction and managing meetings effectively
- Developing and maintaining a constructive and positive working relationship between the Chair and Director and between sub-committee convenors and senior staff
- Upholding the Code of Conduct and promoting good governance; ensuring that any breaches are investigated appropriately
- Ensuring that Pineview HA's business is conducted effectively between meetings and that emergency decisions are taken appropriately when required
- Ensuring that the Committee has access to the range of skills, knowledge and experience necessary for the achievement of Pineview HA's aims and objectives and for the fulfilment of the Committee's responsibilities
- Ensuring that the Committee has access to the necessary advice, information and support to fulfil its responsibilities and that, where appropriate, external and/or specialist advice is sought
- Providing support to new and experienced Committee members by promoting access to relevant induction, training and development opportunities

All Committee members are expected to contribute positively to our governance by being well prepared for meetings, willing to contribute their views and opinions and ensuring that the Association does, and is seen to, operate to the highest standards of governance, integrity and probity.

Each year, every Committee member is expected to take part in a review / appraisal of your individual contribution to our governance. This is carried out annually and is

used to inform the development of annual training and development programmes for the Committee generally and its members individually. Our rules and Code of Conduct require Committee members to participate in this process, which is also a regulatory requirement. We also use this process to help us plan for the future by identifying the skills, knowledge and experience that the Committee has and those areas that we might want to strengthen, for example because experienced Committee members are planning to end their involvement with us.

The Responsibilities of Being a Committee Member

Being a Committee member is a voluntary role which carries legal responsibilities that are the same as those of a company director. These include:

- Using your skills, experience and judgement to help make the business successful
- Following the company's rules and ensuring it meets its legal obligations
- Making decisions for the benefit of the company, not yourself
- Declaring any personal interests
- Ensuring that the company keeps accurate records
- Making sure the accounts present and 'true and fair view' of the company's finances
- Complying with the law (e.g. health and safety; employer responsibilities)

These responsibilities are reflected in the **Role Description for Governing Body Members and Office Bearers** and in the **Code of Conduct** that each committee member must sign annually.

We are also a Scottish Charity: this means that Committee members are **Charity Trustees** with legal responsibilities which include:

- Acting in the charity's best interests at all times
- Ensuring that the charity's activities comply with its aims and objectives
- Acting with care and diligence
- Complying with all relevant legislation
- Ensuring that the charity fulfils its reporting obligations to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), including the submission of an annual return and accounts

Our **Code of Conduct** is the framework that reflects these duties. It contains seven principles:

Selflessness: You must act in our best interests at all times and must take decisions that support and promote our strategic plan, aims and objectives. Members of the governing body should not promote the interests of a particular group or body of opinion to the exclusion of others

Openness: You must be transparent in all of your actions; you must declare and record all relevant personal and business interests and must be able to explain your actions

Honesty: You must ensure that you always act in the best interests of the organisation and that all activities are transparent and accountable

Objectivity: You must consider all matters on their merits; you must base your decisions on the information and advice available and reach your decision independently

Integrity: You must actively support and promote our values; you must not be influenced by personal interest in exercising your role and responsibilities

Accountability: You must take responsibility for and be able to explain your actions, and demonstrate that your contribution to our governance is effective

Leadership: you must uphold our principles and commitment to delivering good outcomes for tenants and other service users and lead the organisation by example

It is a condition of being a Committee member that you sign and uphold the terms of the **Code of Conduct**. You must be able to demonstrate that you receive no benefit or preferential treatment because of your involvement with us; this applies to our staff too.

This restriction does not mean that you should be unfairly disadvantaged, however we apply specific procedures to any decision or transaction that a reasonable and objective person might think you have a personal interest in, but to which you are entitled. So, if you or someone you are close to has applied for one of our houses and you/they meet our allocations criteria, you/they will not be prevented from accepting a tenancy, as long as the allocations policy and procedures have been followed and you have played no part in any of the consideration. You should be aware, however, that we cannot offer employment to anyone who is closely associated with a current or recent Committee member.

If you, or someone you are close to, have any personal, financial or business interests that are relevant to our activities, you must declare them and record them in our Register of Interests. If you or someone you are close to have any such interests that conflict with ours, you will be required to manage them appropriately – in some circumstances, this may mean that you cannot continue to be a Committee member.

You must declare any interests as soon as you are aware of them and you should keep your register entries up to date at all times.

The following table describes the people who are or might be considered to be closely associated with you:

Group	Required Response
<p>1. Members of your household</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone who normally lives as part of your household (whether related to you or otherwise) • Those who are part of your household but work or study away from home 	<p>We expect you to be aware of and declare any relevant actions of all people in your household. You must take steps to identify, declare and manage these.</p>
<p>2. Partner, Relatives and friends</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your partner (if not part of household) • Your relatives and their partners • Your partner's close relatives (i.e. parent, child, brother or sister) • Your close friends • Anyone you are dependent upon or who is dependent upon you • Acquaintances (such as neighbours, someone you know socially or business contacts/associates) 	<p>Where you have a close connection and are in regular contact with anyone within this group, we expect you to be aware of and declare any relevant actions. Under these circumstances, you must take steps to identify, declare and manage these actions.</p> <p>Where you do not have a close connection and regular contact with someone in this group, we do not expect you to be aware of or to go to unreasonable lengths to identify any relevant actions. However, if you happen to become aware of relevant actions by such individuals, then these should be declared and managed as soon as possible.</p>

If you become aware of any action or interest involving any of the people in the table above that are relevant to our activities, we expect you to declare and manage it appropriately as soon as possible.

In the event of a matter being discussed by the Committee in which you have declared an interest, you must leave the meeting whilst the discussion is taking place and you must not play any part – or seek to play any part – in making the decision.

We have a policy that describes how you should respond to any offers of **gifts or hospitality**: you should decline any hospitality or gifts that exceed the value permitted in our policy and you should record all offers – whether accepted or not – in the appropriate register. Examples of hospitality that is permitted include attending events associated with our business activities, conferences and training events, events hosted by our partners that are relevant to our business. Examples of hospitality that should be declined include invitations to sporting events or social occasions that have no relevance to our business. Where we receive gifts from suppliers or other partners (e.g. at Christmas) we place them in raffles that we hold at public events such as our AGM. For the avoidance of doubt, we do permit the acceptance of small gifts as gestures of thanks or appreciation provided these are recorded in the register; we normally expect these to be shared with colleagues.

The below table gives an estimate of the annual time commitment that is expected from committee members (that of office bearers is likely to be more):

Activity	Time - Hrs
Attendance at up to 10 regular meetings of the Governing Body	20
Reading and preparation for meetings of the governing body	20 - 30
Attendance at up to 2 - 4 sub-committee meetings	4
Reading and preparation for sub-committee meetings	4
Attendance at annual planning and review events (including individual review meeting)	10
Attendance at events such as estate tours, tenant / customer conferences, openings and site visits	2
Attendance at internal briefing and training events	6
External Training and conference attendance (may include overnight stay or weekend)	15
Total	81 - 91

Engaging with Tenants and Other Customers

The Regulatory Framework requires the Committee to lead and direct the housing association to achieve good outcomes for tenants and other service users and to seek out and take account of the needs, aspirations, views and priorities of tenants and other customers in reaching decisions and agreeing strategy. We are required to make information widely available about our services, performance and plans.

Our performance in respect of complying with these requirements is measured, in part by our performance in meeting the expectations of the **Scottish Social Housing Charter**. The Scottish Social Housing Charter is a statement by Scottish Ministers of the standards that tenants and other service users can expect from their social landlords. It is used by the SHR to assess and report on social landlords' performance in providing housing services.

All RSLs are required to meet the requirements of the Charter, which was introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010. Landlords have been required to monitor and report on their performance against the Charter since April 2013. All RSLs must submit an Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) to the SHR by 31 May each year. The ARC contains statistical and performance information about the standards and outcomes that the charter contains. These fall into seven categories:

- **Equalities:** making sure that all customers' needs are met and that people are treated fairly
- **Customer and Landlord Relationship:** ensuring that customers find it easy to communicate with us and to participate in decisions about services
- **Housing Quality and Maintenance:** our compliance with the Scottish housing Quality standard (SHQS) and other standards, ensuring that are houses are in good condition when allocated and that repairs are carried out well at times that suit customers
- **Neighbourhood and Community:** ensuring that neighbourhoods are well maintained and tenants feel safe living in them
- **Access to Housing and Support:** the availability of information about housing options, allocations and progress of applications; the ease of applying for a house and the availability of information and support to sustain tenancies; the role of councils in meeting the needs of homeless people
- **Getting Good Value from Rent and Service Charges:** providing services that customers believe deliver continually improving value for money; affordability and the provision of information about how rent is spent
- **Services to Other Customers** (this applies mainly to local authorities and their services to gypsy travellers)

The SHR publishes information on individual landlords' performance against the Charter in August/September each year; landlords are required to publish reports for tenants that show their performance by October. We consult with tenants on the

format of our **annual report** on the Charter and take account of their views in developing its style and content (which must meet regulatory requirements too).

A key expectation of the Charter is that landlords compare their performance with that of other landlords: consequently, many housing associations carry out benchmarking either by being members of a formal benchmarking club or through less formal groups of similar organisations which share information. All RSLs are expected to carry out **regular tenant satisfaction surveys** which include specific questions relating to the landlord's performance against the Charter. These surveys are carried out every three years.

We seek feedback from tenants about their experience of the range of services that we provide, including repairs and maintenance services – their satisfaction with the process for reporting a repair and the availability of information about what would happen as well as satisfaction with the quality of work carried out and the courtesy of tradespeople. Performance information is reported to the Committee quarterly.

We have a **Customer and Resident Forum** which is made up of a cross-section of our customers. Their role is to monitor our service performance and to influence service development and delivery. From time to time, we consult the Forum about specific proposals. The Committee receives an update following each meeting of the Forum and Committee members may be invited to attend meetings.

We maintain a **website** which we promote as a point of contact with anyone who wants to find out about us or the services we offer.

We publish a tenants' newsletter 4 times per year which is available to download from the website and is also delivered to every tenant. Feedback from our customers has told us that this is their preferred way of communicating with us. We use the newsletters to tell customers how their views have influenced our services and how we provide them.

Anyone who is dissatisfied about any aspect of our service can make a complaint – our **complaints policy** meets the requirements of the model produced by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. The Committee receives reports about complaints and their outcomes quarterly.

Funding

The Committee is responsible for ensuring that the housing association is financially viable and that our financial affairs are conducted in accordance with the law and regulatory requirements. To carry out this responsibility, the Committee receives regular reports to allow them to oversee and monitor our financial affairs. Amongst other responsibilities, the committee reviews the auditors' reports, monitors internal financial controls and risk assessment, and oversees the internal audit programme.

The main source of income for housing associations is the rent paid by tenants. The remainder comes from factoring services that we provide to owners and from grants that we receive for specific projects and initiatives.

We review our rents annually and are required to consult with tenants on the proposed increase. The SHR emphasises the importance of ensuring that rents are affordable to our tenants and has indicated that it may seek to take regulatory action if rents increase beyond a level that is regarded as affordable. Through our 2016 survey, 94% of tenant advised that they thought their rent represented value for money – this compares well with the 2016/17 Scottish average of 82%.

At 31/03/19 52% of our tenants received housing benefit to help with their rent payments (37% full HB and 15% part HB). This housing benefit is paid directly to us by the council. Additional tenants may be claiming benefit but having it paid directly to them. A number of tenants will now also be having benefits processed under Universal Credit arrangements.

Recent changes to the welfare benefit system mean that the proportion of our tenants having to pay some of their rent themselves has increased. In order to prepare for this change and for the move to universal credit we have extended the range of advice services that we offer to our tenants to ensure that they have access to comprehensive information and support to enable them to make their claims.

We anticipate that the move to universal credit and, perhaps more significantly, the ending of direct payments from the council to landlords, may adversely affect our income stream and increase the work that we have to do to ensure that we collect all the rent that is payable. We aim to support tenants by providing information and advice as well as practical assistance in an effort to make sure that paying rent is regarded as a priority. We make information available to tenants about the impact that rising arrears caused by non-payment could have on our ability to maintain services at their current level.

We provide factoring services to 29 owner occupiers and 23 sharing owners who live in neighbourhoods where we are landlords. We generate income to cover the costs of providing this service which contributes to maintaining neighbourhoods as places where our tenants and owners feel safe and want to live.

As well as funding our annual programme of repairs, cyclical maintenance and planned renewals, we have to repay loans that we took out to fund the building and improvement of our housing stock. We have a loan portfolio which identifies our total borrowings and we report to the Committee on our compliance with the terms of these loans on a quarterly basis. We are required to make an annual loan portfolio return to the SHR. It is essential that we meet the terms of these loans to avoid any penalties or breaches that could have a serious impact on our financial strength.

These conditions are known as 'loan covenants' and our compliance is monitored on an ongoing basis and reported quarterly to the Committee and to our funders.

Regulatory Requirements

We are required to comply with the SHR's Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management, contained with the Regulatory Framework². There are seven regulatory standards:

- The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.
- The RSL is open and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.
- The RSL manages its resources to ensure its financial well-being, while maintaining rents at a level that tenants can afford to pay.
- The governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.
- The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity.
- The governing body and senior officers have the skills and knowledge they need to be effective.
- The RSL ensures that any organisational changes or disposals it makes safeguard the interests of, and benefit, current and future tenants.

In addition to these standards of governance and financial management, the SHR has established constitutional standards: these set out what must be included in our rules. Amongst other things, they describe the duties of the Chair and eligibility for membership; establish requirements to have a Code of Conduct in place and specify that Committee members must participate in annual reviews of their individual effectiveness. Additionally, the SHR's standards require that any Committee member who is seeking to continue as a member having already been a Committee member for nine years or more must have their nomination for re-election approved by the Committee. Our Chair cannot hold office for more than five years continuously. All of these requirements are reflected in our **Rules**.

The SHR uses the statistical and performance information that all RSLs are required to submit annually to determine the level of engagement that it has with each individual organisation. Where it determines that active engagement is appropriate, the SHR publishes this in the RSL's Engagement Plan which sets out the reasons for their active engagement, describes any issues that they are specifically interested in

² SHR Regulation of Social Housing in Scotland – Our Framework (February 2019)
<https://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/for-landlords/regulatory-framework>

or concerned about and identifies the additional reporting requirements on the landlord. Escalations in the level of regulatory engagement can constitute a breach of a RSL loan covenant.

As a result of the publication of an Engagement Plan, some landlords may be required to produce and implement an action plan and the SHR will monitor their progress in achieving its outcomes and targets. All Engagement Plans can be accessed on the SHR website.

Pineview has no current active engagement and no additional requirements.

All RSLs are required to notify the SHR about specific events. These **notifiable events** are serious events that may:

- seriously affect the interests and safety of tenants, people who are homeless or other service users
- threaten the stability, efficient running or viability of service delivery arrangements
- put at risk the good governance and financial health of the organisation
- bring the RSL into disrepute, or raise public or stakeholder concern about the RSL or the social housing sector.

The SHR provide regulatory guidance on notifiable events which provides examples of notifiable events. This guidance is included in committee members induction packs and is also available from the SHR website.

The SHR requires to be notified at the earliest opportunity of any notifiable events; those involving governance or organisational issues must be notified by the Chair; those relating to performance and service delivery issues or financial and funding issues should be reported by the Director. All notifiable events must be reported to the Committee.

The SHR can take action in the event of a RSL failing to meet required standards or where it believes there is a threat or risk to the interests of tenants and service users. Intervention can take several forms, including:

- Increased regulatory engagement
- Requirement to prepare and implement an agreed Action Plan
- Formal Improvement Notice
- Requirement to co-opt Committee members with the approval of the SHR
- Requirement to appoint a Special Manager with the approval of the SHR
- Suspension or removal of Committee Members or agents
- Restrictions on the activities of a RSL pending or following Inquiries
- Inquiries
- Direction to transfer of assets to another RSL

Policies

As a member of the Committee, you are responsible for approving the policies that we work to. Some of these policies are specifically important to our governance, including our:

- Rules
- Business Plan
- Risk Management Policy
- Treasury Management Policy
- Committee Structure, Standing Orders and Delegated Authorities Policy
- Formal statements of the roles and responsibilities of Committee members and office bearers
- Code(s) of Conduct for Committee and Staff
- Policy on entitlements, payments and benefits
- Committee Recruitment Policy
- Governing Body Performance Review Policy
- Formal process for the appraisal of the Director
- Complaints policy and process
- Whistleblowing policy

These policies, along with others, can be found in your induction packs and further copies can be provided on request. When policies are reviewed, updated copies will be provided to committee members to update their file.

More Information

If there is anything that you want to know more about, please just ask:
Joyce Orr, Director & Company Secretary.

Appendix:

Additional sources of information, included in Induction Pack:

- Stock details
- Tenant Satisfaction levels
- Staff & Committee details
- PHA Rules
- OSCR Charity & Trustee Guidance
- Role Description for Governing Body Members (Committee members) and Office Bearers AND Governing Body Members Guide
- Code of Conduct
- Regulatory Standards of Governance & Financial Management AND Notifiable Events
- Scottish Social Housing Charter & EESSH
- Internal Management Business Plan
- Finance –annual budget, management accounts, year-end accounts, FYFP, treasury management
- Internal Audit
- Training Sources
- Programme of Meetings

- **Policies**
- Standing Orders
- Data Protection Policy & Transparency Statement
- Model Entitlements, Payments & Benefits Policy
- Finance – Financial Regulations and Procedures
- Expenses Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Fraud & Bribery policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Committee Performance Review Policy, Latest Report & SFHA Guide
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Behaviours Framework

- **Declarations**
- *Code itself – sign P.11 – Committee member and PHA retain copy each*
- *Register of Interest Form – PHA retain*
- *Joint Summary Declaration – PHA retain*
- *Criminal Convictions Declaration – PHA retain*
- *Data Protection Declaration – PHA retain*
- *Committee Eligibility Declaration – PHA retain*
- *H&S Responsibilities declaration – PHA retain*
- *Photo consent form– PHA retain*
- *Equalities Monitoring Form – PHA retain*

The Induction pack is kept under regular review and the above details may change.

This policy document can be produced in various formats, for instance, in larger print or audio-format; and it can also be translated into other languages, as appropriate.

Our equality and diversity policy statement describes our key equality commitments that we use to develop all organisational services; this includes employment services and services to tenants and other customers.

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The Scottish Housing Regulator Reg. No: HAC231; Registered Scottish Charity No: SC038237;
FCA Reg. No: 2375R(S); Property Factor Reg. No: PF000151

