

George Walker
Chair
Scottish Housing Regulator
Buchanan House
58 Port Dundas Road
Glasgow
G4 0HF

14 August 2020

Dear George,

Thank you for your letter of 17 July 2020 regarding the consultation on the Scottish Housing Regulator's future regulatory approach in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Accounts Commission welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation.

The Commission recognises the significant pressures under which local government finds itself as a result of the current Covid-19 emergency. The Commission is of the firm view that the principles of sound financial management, good governance, public accountability and transparency are vital in this emergency situation, although how these are delivered and achieved are likely to be different.

In this context we welcome the modest and temporary adjustments the Scottish Housing Regulator is proposing to its regulatory approach to reflect the current circumstances.

We agree that the small number of temporary changes to the Regulatory Framework relating to submission of Annual Assurance Statements; publication of Scottish Social Housing Charter performance reports by landlords; and publication of Engagement Plans and Regulatory Status are right and acceptable given the unprecedented operating context of Covid-19.

The Commission appreciates this proportionate response to the Covid-19 pandemic from the Scottish Housing Regulator. It represents a pragmatic and flexible approach whilst also maintaining a clear focus on good governance and public performance reporting.

In conclusion, I would also advise that the Commission would be keen to engage with you further through the work of the Strategic Scrutiny Group to consider how we may fulfil our respective responsibilities in a way that best reflects the significantly changed local government environment brought about by the Covid-19 emergency. I look forward to those discussions.

We look forward to seeing the overall outcome of the consultation beyond August.

Yours sincerely



Elma Murray
Interim Chair
Accounts Commission