



DfC

Department
for Communities

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Regulatory Framework

Clanmil - Regulatory Judgement

Report 2017/18

Introduction

The Department for Communities (DfC) is the Regulatory Authority for Registered Housing Associations (RHAs) in Northern Ireland. The Housing Regulation Branch within DfC undertakes this Regulation activity on behalf of the Department and we seek to protect the interests of tenants, homeless people and others who use the services provided by RHA's. To ensure this is achieved, RHAs must provide us with the necessary information on a regular basis to demonstrate how the Regulatory Framework Standards are being achieved.

RHA Background

Clanmil was first registered as a Housing Association in 1969. On 2 October 1996, the Association was re-registered as a non-profit making Industrial and Provident Society as Clanmil Housing Association Limited (to be known as Clanmil Housing). The Association currently employs around 260 staff. It has in excess of 4,000 units of social housing comprising:

- Family homes
- Independent living for older people
- Supported housing for people with dementia

Regulatory Approach

Through our risk-based and proportionate approach to regulating RHAs, we focus our attention on the important risks and key aspects of the RHA's performance. This includes having different levels of engagement depending on the RHA's risk and performance profile.

When we refer to risk, we are talking about the risk to the interests of tenants and other service users. This may not always be the same as an RHA own detailed assessment of the operational risks it faces. This judgement is completed in accordance with the risk based approach to Regulation introduced in April 2017.

Overall Opinion

Regulatory Judgement:

Clanmil Housing Association

1 – Meets the requirements

Based on a review of the evidence submitted, Housing Regulation Branch has determined that Clanmil has demonstrated that they meet the Regulatory Standards.

Assessment Findings

Outcome of Governance Standard - MET

Governance Standard 1:

“Social housing providers shall ensure effective governance arrangements that deliver their aims, objectives and intended outcomes for tenants and potential tenants in an effective, transparent and accountable”

Findings:

- Clanmil’s governance arrangements establish and maintain clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for their Board, Chair and Chief Executive to ensure that appropriate probity arrangements are in place. The Board of Management assesses the effectiveness of their governance arrangements on a regular basis.
- The staff of Clanmil provides relevant induction, training and ongoing support to its Board members. They ensure the Board of Management receives good quality information and advice from staff, and where necessary, from expert independent advisers, that is timely and appropriate.

Evaluation:

Clanmil demonstrated it has effective governance arrangements in place that deliver their aims, objectives and intended outcomes for tenants and potential tenants in an effective, transparent and accountable manner. In particular:-

- There are comprehensive Board guidelines which complement Clanmil's Code of Governance and Model Rules; and
- Standing Orders are outlined during the Board induction process, learning and development provisions, and performance review procedure (carried out every 2 years).

Governance Standard 2:

“Social housing providers shall adopt a robust approach to the assessment and management of risk and demonstrate informed and transparent decision-making processes”

Findings:

- Clanmil ensure it has appropriate systems of internal controls in place that inform strategic decision-making, ongoing board scrutiny and financial management; and it has appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the independence of the internal and external audit functions.

Evaluation:

Clanmil has demonstrated that they have a robust approach for assessing and managing their risks. In addition, they demonstrated that they have an effective decision-making process in place allowing informed and transparent decisions to be made. In particular Housing Regulation Branch would like to highlight that;

- It was reassuring to note that information days on Governance and Risk are provided to Board members; and

- Clanmil operates 'Covalent', which is a performance management system which tracks and reports risks, thus making the task less labour intensive.

Overall Governance Standard comments:

- Clanmil has demonstrated that they have effective governance arrangements in place that deliver their aims, objectives and intended outcomes for tenants and potential tenants in an effective, transparent and accountable manner.
- Clanmil has demonstrated that they have an effective decision-making process in place allowing informed and transparent decisions to be made.

Outcome of Finance Standard - MET

Finance Standard 1:

“Social housing providers shall manage their resources effectively to ensure financial viability is maintained in the short, medium and longer term”

Findings:

- Sufficient evidence provided to demonstrate that Clanmil has effective controls and procedures in place to ensure security of assets and the proper use of funds;
- There is appropriate financial reporting to management and the Board in place;
- The Board is provided with sufficient information to monitor and report on the delivery of objectives;
- The risks to delivery of financial plans are identified and effectively managed with; regular reviews of long term forecasts; stress testing of forecasts and financial covenants; maintenance of a risk register and action plan to mitigate risks; and a treasury management policy with short term cash forecasting to ensure liquidity; and

- All financial reporting requirements are met, ensuring legislation is complied with and all relevant accounting standards are adhered to.

Evaluation:

Clanmil has demonstrated that they manage their resources effectively to ensure financial viability is maintained in the short, medium and longer term.

Finance Standard 2:

“Social housing providers shall articulate and deliver a comprehensive and strategic approach to achieving value for money in meeting their organisation’s objectives”

Findings

- Clanmil has undertaken a robust assessment of all their assets and resources. Performance management and scrutiny functions are effective at driving and delivering improved value for money performance; and
- A self-assessment of the organisation’s value for money performance has been completed in a transparent and accessible format.

Evaluation

The Value for Money statement contains key elements of a thorough value for money assessment, namely; specific value for money priorities; assessment of 2017/18 performance; encompasses functions across the entire business; and considers social value as well as financial performance.

Overall Finance Standard Comments:

Clanmil has demonstrated the effective management of resources to ensure financial viability is maintained in the short, medium and longer term. Clanmil has also articulated and delivered a comprehensive and strategic approach to achieving value for money in meeting the organisation’s objectives.

Outcome of Consumer Standard - MET

Consumer Standard 1:

“Social housing providers manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord’s decisions at a level they feel comfortable with”

Findings

- Clanmil provides its tenants, service users and other partners with appropriate information on the organisation, its services and performances; they provide opportunities for tenants to scrutinise the services they receive and the decisions that impact them; and
- Clanmil offers its tenants a menu of participation activities so that they can participate as individuals, within formal or informal group structures; and they provide the appropriate training and support to its tenants and employees to encourage, promote and provide the skills required to make participation an integral part of the organisation.

Evaluation

Clanmil has demonstrated that they manage their business so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their decisions at a level they feel comfortable with. Housing Regulation would like to highlight the followings areas of good practice;

- Clanmil Communique (now known as Connect) and Chronicle magazine / newsletter published twice yearly; they have a Neighbourhood Tenant Forum which met 3 times during the reporting year and an older People’s Forum which met 3 times in the reporting year;
- During 17/18, 102 tenants were involved in Tenant Association Committee meetings; and they have 12 active Tenant Associations / Social Committee’s;

Consumer Standard 2

“Social housing providers shall provide ‘Decent Homes’ standard accommodation with good service quality choices appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants”

Findings:

- Clanmil has an effective complaints process which is published in its tenant’s handbook, annual report and website;
- They provide their vulnerable and marginalised residents with appropriate and responsive housing services; and
- They ensure that their residents have support and care arrangements in place, where appropriate.

Evaluation:

Clanmil demonstrated that they provide ‘Decent Homes’ standard accommodation with good service quality choices appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants. In particular;

- Clanmil’s planned maintenance spend was tracked as a Key Performance Indicator; and
- There was good evidence provided of the Board of Management and Senior Management Team being advised of any slippages to the maintenance budgets, and kept up to date through quarterly variance reports.

Consumer Standard 3:

“Social housing providers shall concentrate their efforts to support vibrant communities that encourages tenant opportunities and promotes well-being”

Findings:

- Clanmil has provided evidence of actual community engagement and the outcome of such engagement and the impact this has had on tenants’ satisfaction; and

- Clanmil has demonstrated how they develop relationships, and engagement opportunities for tenants, and others within the community or those whose role has an impact on tenants e.g. other government departments or housing providers.

Evaluation

Clanmil has clearly illustrated how they contribute to supporting vibrant communities, encouraging tenant opportunities and promoting well-being. This was evident from the thorough information provided (see highlights to Consumer Standards 1 & 2) and Clanmil's Community Development Framework. This provided assurance, that Clanmil has a strategic and pro-active approach towards tenant engagement.

Overall Consumer Standard Comments:

Clanmil has demonstrated that they manage their business so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate and influence decisions at a level they feel comfortable with. Clanmil has demonstrated that they provide 'Decent Homes' standard accommodation with good service quality choices appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants. They have illustrated how they contribute to supporting vibrant communities, encouraging tenant opportunities and promoting well-being.

Overall Comments

Clanmil has demonstrated that they meet the Regulatory Standards therefore no further level of engagement is required.

Anticipated Level of Engagement for 2018/19:

Level 1 – Where following submission of the Regulatory Standards Annual Return (RSAR) and required financial information, we are content there is sufficient assurance and little additional contact is required unless other matters arise.