



Cymdeithas Tai
AELWYD
Housing Association

**AELWYD HOUSING ASSOCIATION
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

2018

1. AELWYD'S STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Aelwyd is a charitable housing association, which is formed for the benefit of the communities it serves, and aims to:

- Provide high quality, well maintained, affordable accommodation for our tenants.
- With the help of our tenants, ensure a continually improving tenant-orientated service.
- Consider opportunities to develop the business, whilst maintaining long-term viability as a registered social landlord.
- Maintain and develop Aelwyd's Christian identity.
- Ensure Aelwyd is well managed by continuing to review and develop its governance, financial and operational structures.
- Ensure that wherever possible, any money spent by the Association has a positive economic impact within the local community.
- Foster a working environment that ensures each and every member of staff has a keen sense of ownership of these objectives.

"Demonstrating Christian care by addressing housing needs in communities throughout Wales", is Aelwyd's mission statement.

2. WHAT IS CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT?

All housing associations have a duty to secure continuous improvement and learning through reviewing the whole of their organisation's activities on a rolling basis, and identifying the best ways in which its business practices and the services it provides can be improved. In this context, Aelwyd aims to:-

- Promote continuous improvement in its business processes and service delivery.
- Encourage, develop and ensure the influence of tenants on the delivery of services.
- Deliver efficient and effective services that provide Value for Money.

The Association's commitment to Continuous Improvement is driven by the Board of Management and is perhaps best evidenced by Aelwyd's 'Organisational Action Plan' (OAP). The Organisational Action Plan amalgamates all 'recommendations for action', arising from various business processes (as outlined in Section 3) and assists in the review and management of service delivery and business practices.

This Plan provides a summary of performance over the previous year whilst identifying a number of proposals that we feel will help to deliver improvements (See Sections 4 & 5). 'The Continuous Improvement Statement', (which incorporates sections 4, 5 & 6 of this Plan), is issued in conjunction with the Annual Report and made available to all tenants and members of the Association. This Continuous Improvement Plan is also available to other interested parties, such as contractors and local authorities, upon request.

3. HOW DOES AELWYD ADDRESS CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT?

Previously, detailed 'service reviews', (that covered most aspects of the Association's business), were undertaken on a cyclical basis. Carrying out such reviews proved to be impractical for an organisation of Aelwyd's size and limited resources, often resulting in a limited return for the time invested. It was therefore decided that, whilst close scrutiny of specific aspects of service delivery and/or business processes would occasionally be necessary, it would also be useful to explore alternative methods for ensuring, and measuring, continuous improvement.

It was recognised that the Association already employed a number of different practices that, directly or indirectly, inherently addressed matters of 'Continuous Improvement'. Any practice that reviews or evaluates a process or service, for whatever reason, must ultimately aspire to improving that process or service.

Therefore, rather than rely solely on 'Service Reviews' the Board of Management concluded it was in accordance with the key principles of best value to utilise, and harness, existing current practices that might support the continual improvement process. Provided below is a summary of the key practices that Aelwyd draws upon for this purpose:-

- **Internal Assurance Services**

Aelwyd employs an external consultant to add value and improve the organisation's operations. The assurance provider is engaged by the Board of Management to ensure that the Association's activities are conducted in an efficient and effective manner. In practice this is done by the assurance provider assessing the way the Association carries out its key business processes and delivers its services. They have a duty to ensure appropriate controls and procedures are in place and to alert the Board of Management as to any concerns or shortcomings in policy implementation. Inevitably this process incorporates comparison with good practice utilised by other Associations or defined within published guidance.

On completion of a 'Topic Audit', a report is issued by the consultant to the Board of Management (following initial scrutiny by the Finance and Audit Committee). Within the report, if considered necessary, recommendations are made as to how the Association might improve its performance and/or ensure compliance with prevailing regulations, policy and good practice. By addressing these recommendations it naturally follows that the Association is endeavouring to improve its business processes and/or service delivery. Progress in addressing any recommendations is monitored by the Association's Finance and Audit Committee via the Internal Assurance Action Plan.

- **Strategic Planning Committee**

The Strategic Planning Committee was specifically set up by the Board of Management to carry out an ongoing strategic overview of all matters relevant to Aelwyd's future direction in relation to its defined mission. The Committee is made up of Board members and members of the management team. The Committee monitors progress against strategic objectives, via an 'Action Plan', and also identifies and reviews specific issues of concern that have the potential to prevent those objectives being met. Over time the Committee's role has evolved and today it also focuses on Continuous Improvement related matters and ensuring that any recommendations arising from reviews are properly implemented. It oversees the Equality & Diversity and Good Governance action plans.

- **Self-Assessment**

Whilst until recently, (due to its size), Aelwyd has not been obliged to formally undertake 'Self-Assessment' it has not shied away from assessing and challenging its performance and identifying potential weaknesses.

- **Tenant Consultation & Participation**

The Association regularly consults and seeks feedback from residents on the quality of its core service delivery - e.g. management and maintenance. This 'feedback' can take many forms including surveys and questionnaires, staff/tenant scheme meetings and perhaps more importantly, the continuing dialogue held with tenants during regular scheme visits by staff. Feedback received is either reported via the relevant Key Performance Indicators or referred to a suitable forum for further consideration. Over the years the Association has worked closely with Tenant Participation Advisory Services (TPAS)

Cymru to develop other participation opportunities which culminated in the establishment of Regional Tenant Groups and the 'Home Readers Group'. The Associations' Tenant Participation Strategy was reviewed in 2017/2018.

- **Risk Register**

The Association has established a comprehensive register to ensure that any key risks associated with the business of the Association, and the sector in general, are categorised and evaluated. The *Risk Register* is periodically reviewed at both Management Team and Finance & Audit Committee meetings. Such meetings provide an opportunity for an on-going assessment of existing and potential risks and the identification of any action necessary to ensure the risk in question is mitigated. The format of the Risk Register is expected to be reviewed during 2018/2019.

- **Departmental /Board / Staff meetings**

All internal meetings held by the Association provide an opportunity for review, training, discussion and debate - all with the aim of improving, where possible, business processes and service delivery. Any recommendations arising from Board of Management meetings, staff meetings and departmental meetings can feed into the Organisational Action Plan.

- **Working Parties and Task Groups**

From time to time the Board of Management will constitute a group made up from Board Members and staff to consider specific topics. In 2017 this included a group to review Fire Safety and in 2018/19 it is anticipated that this group will adopt a wider H&S related brief.

- **Value for Money Reviews**

The Association has completed five 'Value for Money' reviews, as part of the development of the Association's Value for Money Strategy. The Association is committed to targeting specific topic areas where improvements in service and efficiency are perceived to be most beneficial. The findings and action points arising from such reviews further evidence the Associations commitment to continuous improvement. It is anticipated that further 'Value for Money' reviews will be undertaken during 2018/2019.

- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

These are statistical indicators that help Aelwyd measure progress against defined goals and are regularly reported to the Board of Management. These indicators can identify 'trends' in performance and act as an 'early warning system' should indicators show a decline. Any concerns identified as a consequence will be considered by Board and remedial action proposed. The extent of KPI's currently presented to the Board of Management is expected to increase during 2018/2019 as the Board looks to develop an appropriate 'Assurance Framework'.

4. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS SINCE PREVIOUS REPORT – CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT STATEMENT 2018

Ensuring a high standard of service delivery, financial viability and good governance are all key to Aelwyd's future as a Registered Social Landlord. Listed below are some examples of action taken and practices introduced, or developed, since the publication of the last Continuous Improvement Plan, that have helped ensure we continue to maintain or improve standards. The Welsh Government operates a set of 'Performance Standards' that Associations are expected to aspire to; example 'Performance Standards' we consider we have, or will have, met when an 'Action Point' is implemented are included within the table below; (in many instances more than one 'Performance Standard' will have been met). The list is by no means exhaustive and minor changes and improvements to working practice continue to be made on an on-going basis:

<i>Action Taken</i>	<i>Resulting achievements, changes & difference made.</i>	<i>Example Performance Standard Met</i>
<i>In consultation with tenants the continued review of Service Charges levied at all our properties.</i>	<i>More targeted service provision, greater scrutiny and improved Value for Money for our tenants. Ensuring that the way in which service charges are set is wholly transparent and achieved via through consultation.</i>	<i>Demonstrates how tenants are effectively involved in strategic decision making and shaping services in ways appropriate for tenants and the organisation.</i>
<i>Planned Works with a value in excess of £175,000 undertaken during 2017/2018.</i>	<i>Replacement bathrooms, kitchens and heating systems installed resulting, respectively, in safer environments within which to bathe and prepare meals as well as more efficient heating systems.</i>	<i>Ensures that all homes meet required standards of design and quality.</i>
<i>Revised Waiting List, Lettings and Allocations policies and procedures were introduced.</i>	<i>Greater transparency in decision making. Improved efficiency in the letting of vacant properties.</i>	<i>Demonstrates how lettings make the best use of available housing, compatible with the core purpose of the Registered Social Landlord.</i>
<i>Engaged external consultants to scrutinise and report independently on the Association's key areas of business.</i>	<i>Evidence that the Association exercises proper control over the range of its activities, and acts in the best interest of the organisation and its tenants. Identifies areas of improvement enabling the Association to target resources more effectively.</i>	<i>Demonstrate how the Board assures itself of current performance and drives 'Continuous Improvement'.</i>
<i>Completion of a comprehensive review of compliance with Community Housing Cymru's 'Code of Governance' for Housing Associations.</i>	<i>Ensures that the Board of Management is fully aware of its responsibilities and obligations and is able to discharge those responsibilities, and meet those obligations, appropriately.</i>	<i>Effective Board and executive management with a clear and ambitious vision for the Registered Social Landlord. Complies with governing documents including adopting, and complying with, an appropriate code of governance.</i>
<i>In consultation with tenants, the Tenant Participation Strategy was reviewed</i>	<i>Ensuring we remain accountable to our tenants and service users and involve them in shaping our services, reviewing our performance and developing our plans for the future.</i>	<i>Effective and appropriate tenant involvement and high quality and improving services.</i>

<i>Continued to implement recommendations arising from the review of the Association's Equality and Diversity Strategy (as outlined within the associated Action Plan).</i>	<i>Ensuring our activities and services reflect the diversity of the communities where we operate and to be free from discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.</i>	<i>Compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements and guidance.</i>
<i>An ad-hoc Fire Safety committee was established to review the Association's policy and procedure and ensure that the Health and Safety of residents remains appropriately protected.</i>	<i>Board of Management received assurance that policy and practice is appropriate. Recommendations for improvement identified.</i>	<i>Meets all applicable statutory requirements providing for the health and safety of the occupants in the home.</i>
<i>Local scheme environments were enhanced by encouraging, involving and supporting tenants in the development and enhancement of communal areas within particular housing schemes.</i>	<i>Improved communal areas in accordance with the aspirations and wishes of residents moving towards ensuring that all dwellings are located in an environment to which residents can relate and in which they can be proud to live.</i>	<i>Effective and appropriate tenant involvement and high quality and improving services.</i>
<i>Revised Anti-Social Behaviour policy and procedures were introduced.</i>	<i>Improved case management through early intervention, and clearer procedures.</i>	<i>Compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements and guidance.</i>
<i>Monitoring of Responsive Maintenance Feedback – During 2017/18 an average 99.7% of residents consider the service received in respect of responsive maintenance to be either "Very Good" or "Good". (Approx. split 90% 'V Good' 10% 'Good').</i>	<i>High level of satisfaction improved/maintained but recognition that the service must continue to be reviewed and assessed with a view to making further improvements where appropriate to do so.</i>	<i>Demonstrates how the board assures itself of current service performance, including tenant satisfaction, and drives continuous improvement.</i>

5. WHAT DO WE INTEND TO DO TO CONTINUE TO IMPROVE THINGS OVER THE COMING YEAR.

<i>Action Proposed</i>	<i>Aims.</i>	<i>Example Performance Standard Met</i>
<i>To undertake a comprehensive Tenant Survey.</i>	<i>To ensure the Association continues to meet its objectives and to identify areas for improvement</i>	<i>Effective and appropriate tenant involvement and high quality and improving services.</i>
<i>To carry out and further refine the 'Well-being visits' undertaken annually for all our tenants.</i>	<i>To ensure the properties we provide are suitable for our tenants and to be responsive to the views and needs of the people who use our services.</i>	<i>Effective and appropriate tenant involvement and high quality and improving services.</i>
<i>To review the implementation success of recently revised key Housing Management Policies relating to Anti-Social Behaviour and Rent Arrears.</i>	<i>To ensure the rights of tenants remain properly protected and the Association remains suitably responsive to good practice.</i>	<i>Demonstrate how the Board assures itself of current performance and drives 'Continuous Improvement'.</i>
<i>To continue to engage external consultants to scrutinise and report independently on the Association's key areas of business.</i>	<i>To ensure Aelwyd is transparent in its decision-making and exercises proper control over the range of Association activities, and acts in the best interest of the organisation and its tenants.</i>	<i>Demonstrate how the Board assures itself of current performance and drives 'Continuous Improvement'.</i>
<i>To continue to implement those recommendations arising from the review of compliance with Community Housing Cymru's 'Code of Governance' for Housing Associations.</i>	<i>To ensure the Board of Management is fully aware of its responsibilities and obligations and continues to act in the best interest of the organisation and its tenants.</i>	<i>Effective Board and executive management with a clear and ambitious vision for the Registered Social Landlord.</i> <i>Complies with governing documents including adopting, and complying with, an appropriate code of governance.</i>
<i>To prepare for the implementation of the Renting Homes Act (Wales) and ensure tenants are kept fully informed of the implications.</i>	<i>To ensure the Association complies with all relevant legislation and that the rights of tenants are properly protected.</i>	<i>Adheres to all relevant law.</i>
<i>To ensure the Association meets the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations</i>	<i>To ensure the Association complies with all relevant legislation and that the rights of tenants, staff and others remain properly protected.</i>	<i>Adheres to all relevant law.</i>
<i>To extend the role of the recently established Fire Safety ad-hoc Committee to oversee policy review of all Landlord H&S matters.</i>	<i>To provide greater assurance to the Board of Management and to ensure that policy and practice remains appropriate to protect the interest of tenants, staff and contractors.</i>	<i>Meets all applicable statutory requirements providing for the health and safety of the occupants in the home.</i>

<i>Action Proposed</i>	<i>Aims.</i>	<i>Example Performance Standard Met</i>
<i>To continue to enhance the local scheme environment by encouraging, involving and supporting tenants in the development of communal areas within our housing schemes in an attractive manner in accordance with their aspirations and wishes.</i>	<i>To ensure that all dwellings are located in an environment to which residents can relate and in which they can be proud to live.</i>	<i>Effective and appropriate tenant involvement and high quality and improving services.</i>
<i>To review the Association's Staffing structure.</i>	<i>To ensure Aewlyd remains adequately resourced and able to meet its stated objectives.</i>	<i>Effective Board and executive management with a clear and ambitious vision for the Registered Social Landlord.</i>
<i>To establish a Succession Planning Strategy for Board Members.</i>	<i>To ensure that the Board of Management collectively retains the necessary skills and experience to meet the Association's objectives. To ensure that the Board remains suitably diverse with an appropriate mix of new members and experience that ensures consistency.</i>	<i>Effective Board and executive management with a clear and ambitious vision for the Registered Social Landlord.</i>

6. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

Whilst making statistical performance comparisons with other Welsh housing associations might be useful, due caution should be exercised as such comparisons can, on occasion, be either disproportionately favourable or disproportionately adverse for a variety of reasons including size and the different types of tenancies provided. Such information is not currently available but is expected to be available in the near future.

In the absence of such information we have included below a summary of Aelwyd's performance in relation to these particular indicators over the last 6 years:-

Performance indicator	Aelwyd 2012/13	Aelwyd 2013/14	Aelwyd 2014/15	Aelwyd 2015/16	Aelwyd 2016/17	Aelwyd 2017/18	Trend Indicator
Vacant Units							
Rent loss during the year as a result of vacant units	£9,988	£7710	£22,372	£17,077	17,995	11,340	
Rent loss during the year as a percentage of rent due.	0.93%	0.69%	1.99%	1.48%	1.70%	0.98%	
Rents							
Rent collected as a percentage of total rent collectable during the year.	97.77%	96.82%	97.02%	96.45%	96.98%	97.66%	
*Rent arrears owed by current tenants for the year to 31 March as a percentage of total rent collectable during the year.	0.42% (£4,483)	0.58% (£6,381)	0.31% (£3570)	0.51% (£5890)	0.43% (£4,900)	0.46% (£5,370)	
Rent arrears owed by former tenants as percentage of rent collectable. (Excluding write-offs)	0.15% (£1,626)	0.14% (£1,502)	0.44% (£4879)	0.32% (£3670)	0.17% (£1939)	0.15% (£1,731)	
Repairs							
Average number of calendar days to complete emergency repairs.	0.5 days	0.6 days	0.6 days	0.7 days	0.6 days	0.6 days	
Average number of calendar days to complete Urgent repairs.	2.5 days	3.1 days	3.3 days	2.7 days	3.7 days	3.7 days	
Average number of calendar days to complete Non-urgent repairs.	12.8 days	12 days	13.83 days	13.34 days	13.89 days	13.4 days	
Housing Management							
**Average number of calendar days taken to let lettable units.	40 days	28 Days	34 Days	48 Days	37 Days	46 Days	

* This figure excludes 'technical' arrears created as a consequence of the timing of payment cycles from Local Authorities and tenants.

** Given the relatively low turn-over of vacant properties this 'average' figure can be distorted if one property remains vacant for an extended period.