



Management Committee Update

Issue 43

May 2023

Orkney Housing Association is governed by a voluntary Management Committee elected at our AGM. The Committee's role is to set strategy and monitor our performance.

Day to day operational management is carried out by the Leadership Team and services delivered by our excellent staff team.

Some of the Committee's main functions include: approving budgets, reviewing policies, diligent financial management, major decision making, and organisational direction and good governance to ensure statutory and regulatory requirements are met.

We send out an update like this after each formal Management Committee meeting (normally 6 per year).

Members present 31 May 2023

- Philip Cook
- Brian Kynoch
- Fiona Lettice
- Bruce Pilkington
- John Rodwell
- Mervyn Sandison
- John White
- Roella Wilson

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2022-23

The "Annual Return on the Charter" is submitted each year to the Scottish Housing Regulator to monitor our and other landlords performance across the whole of Scotland. The Regulator publishes this information to allow tenants and anyone else who is interested an easy way to compare landlord performance.

- Non-emergency repairs rose from 1799 to 1870 but the average time taken to complete repairs dropped from 13.01 to 12.54 days.
- Repair satisfaction surveys increased from 289 to 305 though satisfaction dropped from 99.31% to 89.84% which could be attributed to an increase in tenants selecting neutral options.
- The continued, proactive approach to rent arrears and debt management saw zero evictions and gross rent arrears fall from 3.61% to 3.31%.
- Only 10 properties (last year 308) failed the Scottish Quality Housing Standards in 2022/23.

Cost of Living Report

The report highlighted the continued impact the cost-of-living crisis is having on tenants. OHAL staff continue to engage, locally and nationally, with support organisations which augments the support offered by our staff and allows access into funding streams.

Members noted that rent arrears had decreased significantly during the last quarter of 2022/23. They were pleased to hear that funding from the Social Housing Fuel Support Fund (£123,600) had been distributed directly to tenants to assist with energy costs (£125 per tenancy). Winter Support Calls resulted in 22% of contacted tenants receiving bespoke support.

Staffing / Recruitment

Members noted the successful recruitment of a Repairs & Customer Services Assistant.

Interviews are currently taking place for other vacancies and we look forward to welcoming new members of staff shortly.

Members also noted progress with staff professional training and development qualifications.

5 Year Financial Projections

As part of its Financial Security regime, the Association submits 5 year financial projections annually to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The projections are used by the Scottish Government to assess the Association's medium-term financial viability. Members received a detailed report for scrutiny and approved the Return.

Approval of Loan Portfolio

Also as part of Financial Scrutiny, an annual return of our loan facilities are submitted to the Regulator. This report was also approved by Committee.

GOVERNANCE MATTERS

Self Assessment Update

This standing item at each meeting evidences how we are complying with the Scottish Housing Regulator's Framework. Members agreed that no material changes were required to be made to the Annual Assurance Statement, noted no Notifiable Events have been reported to the SHR and noted additions to the Evidence Bank in respect of Regulatory Requirements and Standards.

Sub Committee Reports

Reports were presented by the Chairs from the last Audit & Risk Management Sub-Committee and Performance & Resources Sub-Committee setting out the work they had undertaken in order to give assurance to Management Committee.

Policy Reviews

Members were updated on the progress with policies due for review, with several being deferred. The *Anti Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Policy* and *Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy* were approved by members.

Annual Reports

- **Annual Governance Report:** This report details the attendance of our voluntary committee members which sat at 83% for the year ending March 2023. Members averaged 19.8 hours of training for the year which far exceeds the target of 12 hours. The committee member expenses budget was underspent but increased in-person meetings, a Committee recruitment session and summer engagement event are taking place this year.

In accordance with the Entitlements, Payments & Benefits Policy and Procedures, Register of Interest Forms were completed and returned by all members.

The report also contained Data Protection, Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) statistics which are required to be reported annually.

- **Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23:** Members noted that *Business Continuity Management* and *Creditor Payments* had both been awarded 'substantial assurance' with *Rent Arrears* being awarded 'reasonable assurance'. The report detailed the recommendations for each audit, some of which have been complete and the outstanding ones progressing to new target dates.
- **Audit & Risk Management Sub-Committee:** This report summarised the work of the Sub-Committee during the year and provided assurances to Management Committee that the systems of internal controls at OHAL were effective and supported good governance.
- **Performance & Resources Sub-Committee:** This summary report highlighted the work of the Sub-Committee over the year and informed members that OHAL was in a sound financial position.

Business Plan & Risk Management Report

Members received a report providing assurance of effective management of organisational performance and risks during 2022/23 and noted 5 out of 19 actions in the Operational Plan had been completed, 9 partially completed and five have been carried forward.

Compliments & Complaints Report

We were pleased to report a significant increase in compliments received this past year, 264 (last year 192) unsolicited compliments and expressions of appreciation for services provided.

The number of complaints received in 2022/23 also increases from the previous year (72 to 285) almost entirely due to issues with the previous garden and grounds service. 96% (last year 94.4%) were responded to within Scottish Public Services Ombudsman timescales. 82% (234) were about garden & grounds maintenance, 76% of which were upheld/resolved.

Summer Engagement Event

Members were pleased that an in-person joint event with the Residents Panel is planned, following three years without an event due to COVID restrictions.

An itinerary for the event was agreed, with the date yet to be finalised.

Development Update

⇒ **Walliwall Phases 6 and 7, Kirkwall:** 6 rented units were handed over on 15 May, with the remaining NSSE properties due in early June.

⇒ **Walliwall Phase 8, Kirkwall:** 8 NSSE houses are planned for this site with an anticipated handover in April 2024.

Contractors & Consultants Annual Review

Members noted annual performance figures for OHAL's Maintenance Contractors and approved lists of maintenance contractors and development contractors and consultants.