

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 January 2024

- Fiona Lettice
- Philip Cook
- Kate Hayes
- Brian Kynoch
- Suzanne Lawrence
- Bruce Pilkington
- Mervyn Sandison
- John White
- Roella Wilson



Our Management Committee

Clockwise, top left: Fiona Lettice, Brian Kynoch, John White, Roella Wilson, John Rodwell, Mary Ann Lewis, Mervyn Sandison, Kate Hayes, Bruce Pilkington, Suzanne Lawrence and Philip Cook



New Member

We were pleased to welcome Suzanne Lawrence to her first full meeting following her co-option at November's meeting.

Walliwall Phase 9 Development

Members were presented with a paper seeking authority to proceed with the Walliwall 9 development. Finance had been secured for the 9 rented properties and this would see Orkney Builders (Contractors) Ltd undertake the Design & Build project as part of their ongoing Walliwall development.

The housing mix will comprise: 3 x 1 bedroom bungalows; 4 x 2 bedroom bungalows; and 2 x 4 bedroom two-storey properties.

Development Update

Members noted that the Association was on target to complete 62 new units for the duration of its current Business Plan 2022-25.

- ⇒ **Walliwall Phase 8, Kirkwall:** works continue on site which will see the completion of 8 NSSE properties.
- ⇒ **Yorston Drive, Stromness:** 3 properties remain vacant but will be re-advertised for sale.

GOVERNANCE MATTERS

Self Assessment Update

This standing item at each meeting evidences how we are complying with the Scottish Housing Regulator's (SHR) Framework. Members agreed that no material changes were required to be made to the Annual Assurance Statement, noted no notifiable events have been made, noted an update to the list of Governance Related Policies, additions to the Evidence Bank in respect of Regulatory Requirements and Standards, and noted findings are to come from the SHR's consultation on the future of regulating social housing in Scotland.

Health & Safety Working Party (H&SWP) Report

This report provided details of progress on actions following an audit report, routine health & safety checks in the office and workshop had raised no concerns, staff training on health & safety topics continues to be provided, and no accidents or near misses have occurred. A Damp and Mould Policy is to be presented at the next H&SWP meeting in March 2024.

Policy Reviews

Members approved amendments to the Scheme of Delegations and noted outstanding Policy work.

Addition to Approved List of Maintenance Contractors

Members approved the addition of *Beattie's Garden Services* to the Approved List of Maintenance Contractors.

Cost of Living Report

This report highlighted the continued impact the cost-of-living crisis is having on tenants. OHAL staff continue to engage, both 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 were comfortably under our Key Performance Indicator of 5%, though this has been rising slowly due to the Housing Benefit payment cycle.

OHAL's Tenancy Sustainment Fund has helped 21 tenants who have required assistance. A successful bid to the Social Housing Fuel Support Fund enabled each tenancy to receive £150 to help with energy and fuel costs. However, it is unlikely this Fund will continue in 2024/25.

As has been done in previous years, staff have been undertaking Support Calls and contacting tenants to offer bespoke help and advice.

Annual Lease Update

Members received an annual report on current leased properties.

They noted there were no issues with any of the leases. Two leases are due for expiry in the next calendar year and discussions with the leaseholders will be held around extending their leases.

Rent Consultation

Following a full consultation with tenants and sharing owners, members were presented with the results of the survey. Three options had been posed during the consultation, in which 91% of respondents were in favour of a below-inflation increase for 2024/25. Therefore the Management Committee Recommended Option will proceed as follows:

7.5% increase

No planned maintenance works will be postponed for 2024/25 onwards

We will continue planning to build 20 new build properties per year

In addition to questions on rent and occupancy charges, tenants in selected areas were asked whether they would opt in or out of the trial grass maintenance service which had run successfully last year. The vast majority responded that they were satisfied with the choice they made last year so the trial will be extended for the final year of the grass maintenance contracts.