



# Management Committee Update

Issue 49

May 2024

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 29 May 2024

- Fiona Lettice
- Philip Cook
- Kate Hayes
- Bruce Pilkington
- John White
- Mervyn Sandison

## Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2023-24

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.

- 223 Repair satisfaction surveys were received and satisfaction increased from 89.84% to 90.13%.
- Non-emergency repairs decreased from 1870 to 1854 but the average time taken to complete repairs increased by 2.14% due to staffing issues and poor weather.
- Complaints decreased significantly from 280 to 60, mainly due to issues relating to garden & grounds maintenance contracts which have been resolved.
- The continued, proactive approach to rent arrears and debt management saw zero evictions and gross rent arrears fall from 3.3% to 3.16%.

## Cost of Living Update

This 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 was comfortably under the KPI of

5%. They were pleased to hear that funding from the Social Housing Fuel Support Fund (£150,000) had been distributed directly to tenants to assist with energy costs (£150 per tenancy).

A more targeted approach was taken to this year's tenant support calls to offer support to those most in need, with the majority benefitting from additional energy advice.

## 5 Year Financial Projections

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

The projections are used by the Scottish Government to assess the Association's medium-term financial viability. Members receive a detailed report to scrutinise and approve before submitting to the SHR.

## Approval of Loan Portfolio

Also as part of Financial Scrutiny, an annual return of our loan facilities is submitted to the SHR. 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 (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 Polices, additions to the Evidence Bank in respect of Regulatory Requirements and Standards, and noted that the revised SHR Framework is now in place.

### 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 undertaken in order to give assurance to Management Committee.

### Policy Reviews

Members noted outstanding Policy work and approved 3 revised policies:

- 1) *Staff Code of Conduct;*
- 2) *Management Committee Code of Conduct, Breach Protocol & accompanying Guidance;*
- 3) *Dignity at Work Policy .*

### Health & Safety Working Report

This report gave updates on the current position, with revisions to the Health & Safety Control Manual, and updates to the Landlord Safety Manual with 2 Policies adopted by members.

### MC Engagement Event

Members discussed and agreed on a Summer event to take place in August, involving committee, staff and members of the residents panel.

### Business Plan & Risk Management Report

Members received a report providing assurance of effective management of organisational performance and risks during 2023/24 and noted 13 out of 20 actions in the Operational Plan had been completed, 5 partially completed and 2 have been carried forward.

### Customer Charter

Following consultation on a draft Charter, feedback from our tenants was taken into account and the Charter updated and approved by members. The Charter will form part of our revised Tenant Handbook.

### Annual Reports

Annual Governance Report: This report detailed the attendance of our voluntary committee members which sat at 84% for the year ending March 2024. Members averaged 21.3 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.

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.

### Compliments & Complaints Report

We were pleased to receive 184 unsolicited compliments and expressions of appreciation for services provided this past year.

The number of complaints received in 2023/24 decreased significantly from the previous year (67 down from 285). 94% (last year 96%) were responded to within Scottish Public Services Ombudsman timescales. 30% (20) were about housing applications, 50% of which were upheld/resolved. The majority of complaints involved communications, which we are committed to improving.

### 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.