



Item: 5

**ORKNEY
ISLANDS COUNCIL**

Education, Communities and Housing Committee: 4 February 2026.

Housing Services – Performance Monitoring.

Report by Director of Education, Communities and Housing.

1. Overview

- 1.1. The Council is a member of Scotland's Housing Network, previously known as Scottish Housing Best Value Network, having joined a number of years ago.
- 1.2. Scotland's Housing Network is an organisation that offers a benchmarking service to councils who wish to be members. It also offers other related services including sub-groups to discuss good practice.
- 1.3. Membership is optional, as is attendance at sub-groups. However, in order to benefit from the service, each council must provide detailed data on its performance in relation to a range of service areas.
- 1.4. Scotland's Housing Network undertakes a benchmarking service amongst all member councils. This is useful as it allows a comparison and identification of each council's weaker areas and also allows identification of top performers which can be beneficial when seeking to improve service areas. Most members are happy to share information and provide guidance in areas where their performance is good.
- 1.5. Membership of the peer group is detailed at section 5.2 below. Western Isles Council, being an authority which has transferred its housing stock, is part of a separate peer group.
- 1.6. The service areas covered include void management, stock turnover, rent arrears, homelessness, repairs, Scottish Housing Quality Standard and Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing.
- 1.7. Members were previously advised of offers made to the Council in relation to making the best use of membership of Scotland's Housing Network, including training opportunities.

- 1.8. In January 2026, representatives from Scotland's Housing Network presented a report to the Council's Housing Service on its performance relative to other councils during 2024/25 and gave their analysis of the findings.
- 1.9. Scotland's Housing Network also offers discussion forums online and has developed a self-assessment website to assist member authorities to make progress in relation to adopting a greater emphasis on performance management and improve services accordingly.
- 1.10. Performance of Housing Services for the reporting period of 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 is detailed in Appendix 1 to this report. Where available, data is displayed for a three-year period to allow comparison.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Committee:
 - i. Note the Housing Service's benchmarked performance in relation to other councils and Housing Associations within its peer group, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

3. Scottish Social Housing Charter

- 3.1. Housing organisations are required to report against the Scottish Social Housing Charter which was introduced in 2012 and has been reviewed twice since then in 2017 and 2021. The revised Charter was launched on 1 November 2022.
- 3.2. Councils are required to publish an Annual Report against the Charter, and this was done in October 2025. The Annual Report is available on the [OIC website](#).
- 3.3. Information on the Scottish Social Housing Charter is available [here](#).

4. Annual Assurance Statement

- 4.1. The Scottish Housing Regulator introduced the requirement for an annual assurance statement to be submitted from October 2019. This is a process whereby the Scottish Housing Regulator looks for assurances from local authorities that Elected Members have been informed of performance across the Housing Service and are satisfied that the governance process is sufficiently robust to allow them to sign off the certificate of assurance.

- 4.2. The Annual Assurance Statement for Orkney was recommended for approval by the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee on 10 September 2025 and subsequently approved by Council on 7 October 2025.
- 4.3. The Annual Assurance Statement for Orkney is available from the [OIC website](#).

5. Orkney's Performance by Comparison

- 5.1. Scotland's Housing Network has implemented a system of peer groups in order to compare performance with other relevant Councils. Orkney's peer group includes "all small councils" which is deemed to be those which hold housing stock of less than 10,000.
- 5.2. The peer group includes:
 - Angus Council.
 - Clackmannanshire Council.
 - East Dunbartonshire Council.
 - East Lothian Council.
 - East Renfrewshire Council.
 - Midlothian Council.
 - Moray Council.
 - Perth and Kinross Council.
 - Shetland Islands Council.
 - South Ayrshire Council.
 - Stirling Council.
 - Hebridean Housing Partnership.
 - Hjaltland Housing Association.
 - Orkney Housing Association Limited.
- 5.3. As well as looking at comparison in performance between Orkney and other members of the peer group, it is important to assess performance for various other reasons, including:
 - To ensure that 'the direction of travel' is towards improvement.
 - To critically assess and analyse where further improvements could be made.
 - Where another Council has performed better, to consider whether any of their practices would assist in this area.
 - To ensure that, in Orkney, the Council continues to look at the areas where performance can be assessed and a determination made as to whether there are other areas that could be included.

- To ensure that assessment is continual, but equally to ensure that this information is used for valid purposes, being to consistently improve the services offered.

5.4. The following areas have been covered:

- Customer Satisfaction.
- Housing Quality and Maintenance.
- Access to Housing and Support.
- Homelessness.
- Neighbourhood and Community.
- Getting Good Value from Rents.
- Re-lets and Voids.

For Further Information please contact:

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Implications of Report

1. **Financial:** No financial implications arising directly from the report.
2. **Legal** - None directly related to the recommendations in this report.
3. **Corporate Governance:** Not Applicable.
4. **Human Resources** - None directly related to the recommendations in this report.
5. **Equalities** - An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for performance monitoring.
6. **Island Communities Impact** - An Island Communities Impact Assessment is not required for performance monitoring.
7. **Links to Council Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:
 - Growing our economy.
 - Strengthening our communities.
 - Developing our infrastructure.
 - Transforming our council.
8. **Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities:
 - Cost of Living.
 - Sustainable Development.
 - Local Equality.

- Improving Population Health.
- 9. **Environmental and Climate Risk** - None directly related to the recommendations in this report.
- 10. **Risk** - None directly related to the recommendations in this report.
- 11. **Procurement** - None directly related to the recommendations in this report.
- 12. **Health and Safety** - None directly related to the recommendations in this report.
- 13. **Property and Assets** - None directly related to the recommendations in this report.
- 14. **Information Technology** - None directly related to the recommendations in this report.
- 15. **Cost of Living** - None directly related to the recommendations in this report.

Background Papers

Scotland's Housing Network Performance Presentation.

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Performance Information.

Appendix 1: Performance Information

1. Customer Satisfaction

1.1.

Members were previously advised of the outcome of the wholescale tenant satisfaction survey that the Council is required to do every three years. The Council has undertaken to do this every two years, in order to ensure the data is more current. Previously the survey was undertaken by sending out a paper survey to every household. A different approach was taken this time with most households taking part in a telephone survey with follow up by post/online.

1.2.

The table below shows the level of tenant satisfaction relating to key charter outcomes in comparison to Scotland's Housing Network and peer group averages:

Indicator from the Scottish Social Housing Charter at time of Survey.	Orkney level.	Scotland's Housing Network average.	Peer Group Average.
Overall service provided by landlord (indicator 1).	73.59%.	86.85%.	81.44%.
Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions (indicator 2).	76.95%.	89.98%.	83.87%.
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision-making processes (indicator 5).	70.87%.	86.34%.	77.96%.
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home (indicator 7).	67.16%.	84.72%.	81.31%.
Percentage of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in the last 12 months satisfied with repairs and maintenance service (indicator 12).	85.94%.	86.75%.	85.88%.
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in (indicator 13).	59.04%.	84.23%.	80.73%.

Indicator from the Scottish Social Housing Charter at time of Survey.	Orkney level.	Scotland's Housing Network average.	Peer Group Average.
Percentage of tenants who feel the rent for their property represents good value for money (indicator 25).	64.42%.	81.68%.	80.68%.

1.3.

The above satisfaction figures relate to the wholescale tenant satisfaction survey of 2024 and are therefore current. Consideration needs to be given to updating tenant satisfaction information between major surveys which some councils have done. In Orkney, while information is collected in various forms, response rates are generally low which may result in statistical distortions. The wholescale tenant satisfaction survey requires a 40% response rate. A wholescale tenant satisfaction survey was undertaken in Spring 2024 with revised figures being available for submission as part of the Annual Return on the Charter to the Scottish Housing Regulator in May 2024. The outcome of the survey was reported to Education, Leisure and Housing Committee in September 2024. A new wholescale tenant satisfaction survey will take place in Spring 2026.

1.4.

As regards complaints per 100 homes, this is as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer group.
2024/25.	4.61.	6.40.	6.40.
2023/24.	4.52.	6.56.	4.06.
2022/23.	4.69.	6.14.	4.27.

1.5.

The average time to respond to a stage 1 complaint was 3.8 days in 2024/25, a decrease from 6.90 days in 2023/24. The SHN average was 4.95 days and the Peer Group 5.09 days.

1.6.

The average time to respond to a Stage 2, which is a more complex complaint, was 17.40 days, a decrease from 23.78 days in 2023/24. The SHN average was 19.06 days and the Peer Group 27.48 days.

2. Housing Quality

2.1.

The area of repairs is one where context is particularly relevant with some councils setting very challenging timescales for completion well ahead of the legislative requirement. Orkney's geography presents some challenges in that respect.

2.2.

The average time taken to complete emergency repairs in hours is as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2024/25.	9.72.	3.89.	3.47.
2023/24.	8.98.	3.95.	4.14.
2022/23.	9.12.	4.17.	4.45.

2.3.

The average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs in days is as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2024/25.	15.62.	9.13.	13.93.
2023/24.	17.23.	8.96.	10.77.
2022/23.	15.16.	8.69.	8.91.

2.4.

All reactive repairs completed Right First Time were:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2024/25.	72.84%.	88.02%.	89.18%.
2023/24.	74.50%	88.45%.	92.38%
2022/23.	80.16%.	87.80%.	92.01%.

2.5.

The time taken to deliver non-emergency repairs has improved slightly from the previous year. Figures have not yet returned to those seen pre-COVID-19 and this is due to continued supply issues and contractors experiencing workforce shortages.

2.6.

The time taken to deliver emergency repairs has declined slightly. New processes were implemented where the Council's in-house technical staff undertake some of the emergency repairs themselves where they are able to do so. Of the 346 emergency repairs, 29 (8.38%) were out with the 24 hour period, 7 of these were completed in 30 hours plus. These delays were primarily due to contractor errors in raising follow-on orders, difficulties in sourcing specialist parts, access issues and third-party dependencies such as utility providers. Several isles jobs were also affected by weather related disruption and contractor availability. The Council continues to work closely with contractors to ensure accurate reporting.

2.7.

While the contractor operates an appointments system for repairs, this is not within the control of the Council and consequently the Council states that it does not offer a repairs appointments system. Ideally the Council should be fully involved in this process. Many landlords do offer an appointments system and report against this accordingly. Consideration is being given regarding how to further develop this process.

2.8.

There has been a slight decline in the average time to complete a medical adaptation however there were 63 adaptations completed in 2024/25 as opposed to 28 adaptations in 2023/24.

2.9.

The average time to complete a medical adaptation in days is as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2024/25.	38.78.	44.37.	40.97.
2023/24.	30.09.	44.77.	53.50.
2022/23.	35.39.	46.83.	49.55.

2.10.

The Council was required to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by March 2015 and maintain the standard thereafter. There has been a marked increase in the stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. This has followed intensive work in this area and only a small number of properties remain non-compliant. Of this a total of 38 properties fail on a single SHQS criterion. Of these, 34 relate to Energy Performance Certificates (EPC), 3 relate to LD2 smoke and heat alarm compliance, and 1 relates to secure common front door entry. A further 8 properties fail on two or more SHQS criteria. These include combinations such as EICR (electrical installation condition reports), LD2 alarms, bathroom standard, lead-free pipework, and common or public lighting. In addition, 12 properties are recorded as being in abeyance, and 5 are recorded as exempt. The exemptions consist of four

former schoolhouses for which formal Committee approval has been given for disposal, and one property where legal constraints prevent the necessary compliance works from being undertaken. Local contractors have assisted the Council and significant work has gone into ensuring properties meet the required standards. The Council continues to work with the Scottish Housing Regulator to evidence compliance and it is expected that performance around the Scottish Housing Quality Standard will continue to improve for financial year 2025/26.

2.11.

The Council must also ensure that its properties meet and maintain the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing from December 2020. The Scottish Government had previously introduced a second phase of the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH2), which aimed for all social housing to achieve a higher energy efficiency rating by 2032, with a midpoint target set for 2025. The Scottish Government is currently reviewing the second Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH2). Delivery of the standard is temporarily on hold pending this review.

2.12.

The review is expected to result in the replacement of EESSH2 with a new Social Housing Net Zero Standard (SHNZS). A Scottish Government consultation on the SHNZS closed in March 2024, with final guidance anticipated to be published later in 2025. This revised standard is intended to guide future investment in the energy performance of social rented homes and support Scotland's national target to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2045. Committee has received an annual update report at the June cycle of meetings, regarding progress towards the existing standards.

2.13.

The level of stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard is as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2024/25.	93.85%.	87.32%.	80.01%
2023/24.	80.38%.	84.36%.	74.00%
2022/23.	52.82%.	78.98%.	61.45%.

2.14.

Overall, for the category of housing quality, the Council is showing an improvement in performance towards meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. Delivery of the repairs service generally is broadly average with some repairs taking longer than the average across Scotland.

3. Access to Housing and Support

3.1.

Lets to households by type are shown in the table below:

Year.	Homeless Households.	Waiting List Applicants.	Transfer Applicants.	Other.
2024/25.	50.55%.	38.46%.	10.99%.	0%.
2023/24.	64.56%.	32.91%.	2.53%.	0%.
2022/23.	51.25%	41.25%	7.50%	0%.

3.2.

For 2024/25 lets to homeless households were 46.34% across Scotland's Housing Network and 54.10% in respect of the peer group average.

3.3.

The turnover of properties is shown in the table below:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2024/25.	7.72%.	7.13%.	6.76%.
2023/24.	8.70%	7.18%	6.72%
2022/23.	9.06%.	7.42%.	6.91%.

3.4.

Tenancy turnover impacts on void rental loss, former tenant arrears and tenancy sustainment.

3.5.

The percentage of tenancy offers refused is as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2024/25.	17.65%.	32.43%.	32.39%.
2023/24.	12.09%.	30.48%.	30.80%.
2022/23.	29.92%.	30.87%.	34.90%.

3.6.

The percentage of offers refused has declined in performance since last year where it had been 12.09%.

3.7.

Operational procedures were enhanced previously to keep refusals to a minimum. While applicants are given four area choices, in practice they may not take an offer if it is not in the area of first choice. Therefore, additional steps have been introduced to contact the prospective tenant, prior to offer, (where possible) to ensure their circumstances have not changed and that they would be interested in the potential offer etc. This process has continued however not all applicants have been contactable prior to offer.

3.8.

A revised lettings policy was scheduled to be implemented from 1 April 2021. The COVID-19 situation had delayed implementation, as has resultant issues with the computer system which requires to be updated. It is anticipated the policy will be implemented by 1 April 2026. The new policy will include increasing the level of choice in Council housing allocations.

3.9.

Tenancy offers may be refused for various reasons. For example, their circumstances may have changed, and they no longer wish to live in that area.

3.10.

Abandonments as a percentage of housing stock is as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2024/25.	0.43%.	0.45%.	0.46%.
2023/24.	0.66%.	0.47%	0.47%.
2022/23.	0.44%	0.50%.	0.52%

3.11.

The percentage of all new tenancies sustained from the previous year was as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2024/25.	87.34%.	91.62%.	92.04%.
2023/24.	90.00%.	91.24%.	91.96%.
2022/23.	93.44%.	91.23%.	91.17%.

3.12.

The reasons for some tenancies not being sustained included reasons such as death, hospitalisation, leaving Orkney and moving into other housing sectors. This indicator is about the personal circumstances of the households concerned and not necessarily within the control of the Council.

3.13.

As regards the level of sustainment of new homeless tenancies, this was as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2024/25.	94.12%.	90.98%.	91.15%.
2023/24.	95.12%.	90.31%.	91.51%.
2022/23.	94.44%.	90.33%.	89.98%.

3.14.

Tenancies not being sustained for longer than a year, where the tenant was previously homeless, are affected by individual household circumstances. During 2024/25 this applied to three households, two abandoned and one passed away. For 2023/24, this applied to two households, one purchased privately and one renounced their tenancy. For 2022/23 four households did not sustain their tenancies – one abandoned, one passed away, one left Orkney and the other renounced their tenancy.

3.15.

The level of evictions as a percentage of housing stock was as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2024/25.	0.11%.	0.20%.	0.14%.
2023/24.	0.11%.	0.16%.	0.14%.
2022/23.	0.11%.	0.10%.	0.10%.

3.16.

Overall, for the category for Access to Housing and Support, the level of evictions and abandonments remain very low. Tenancy sustainment has declined slightly in respect of new homeless tenancies and for all new tenancies more generally, the level of refusal of offers has declined. No areas show cause for concern.

4. Homelessness

4.1.

The Committee receives an update report on the level of homelessness in Orkney annually at the June cycle. That report contains significant levels of performance information. Consequently, only key indicators are covered below.

4.2.

The number of homeless presentations was as follows:

Year.	Number of homelessness presentations.
2024/25.	113.
2023/24.	144.
2022/23.	142.

4.3.

As a national comparator, the national average for homeless presentations per 1,000 people is 7.34 cases. In Orkney there are 5.18 cases per 1,000 people.

4.4.

Locally the number of homelessness presentations peaked at 208 in 2004/05, and annual figures have been lower since then. It is unlikely this trend will continue when legislative changes affecting people's entitlements are factored in. Under normal circumstances utilising a housing options approach and implementation of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan may assist in the reduction of cases. Whilst the number of households presenting have reduced this year the COVID-19 impact has resulted in a rise in homelessness presentations overall, and this has had an ongoing impact on the Service due to the numbers currently in temporary accommodation awaiting permanent housing.

4.5.

From 1 April 2025 to 3 January 2026, homeless presentations totalled 124. If it continues at that level until 31 March 2026, homeless presentations could be in excess of 150. It is important to remember that homelessness may not happen at a continuous pace throughout the year, instead there can be periods with higher or lower presentations so this calculation may or may not be accurate.

4.6.

The average time from homeless presentations to completion of duty in weeks was as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.
2024/25.	43.86.	40.00
2023/24.	33.29.	39.71.
2022/23.	31.86.	38.14.

4.7.

The assessment outcomes for those assessed as unintentionally homeless were as follows (excludes lost contacts):

Outcome.	Orkney.		Scotland's Housing Network.	
	2023/24.	2024/25.	2023/24.	2024/25.
Housed by Council.	66.67%.	78.57%.	60.18%.	45.49%.
Housing by Housing Association.	26.67%.	14.29%.	17.93%.	31.49%.
Private Rented Sector.	0%.	0%.	3.02%.	3.02%.
Returned to friends etc.	0%.	0%.	3.42%.	3.34%.
Hostel.	0%.	0%.	0.12%.	0.11%.
Returned to previous accommodation.	6.67%.	0%.	4.83%.	4.34%.
Other outcomes.	0%.	0%.	7.29%.	7.77%.

4.8.

The length of stay (in days) in the Council's furnished temporary accommodation is as detailed below:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.
2024/25.	305.	238.
2023/24.	205.	226.
2022/23.	199.	225.

4.9.

Overall, for the category of Homelessness, the Council is good at tenancy outcomes, however the average time to close a case and time in temporary accommodation have increased.

5. Neighbourhood and Community

5.1.

The prevalence of anti-social behaviour is determined by the number of complaints per 100 tenancies, as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer group.
2024/25.	2.25.	7.13.	6.36.
2023/24.	1.43.	7.51.	6.01.
2022/23.	2.07.	7.37.	5.80.

5.2.

Orkney generally has a low level of anti-social behaviour with few cases of serious anti-social behaviour. Issues generally constitute complaints of noise including parties, disposal of waste or failure to dispose of waste appropriately and disputes regarding parking and shared gardens.

6. Getting Good Value from Rents

6.1.

The average weekly rent is as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer group.
2024/25.	£94.87.	£97.59.	£84.03.
2023/24.	£88.25.	£91.80.	£79.90.
2022/23.	£85.62.	£87.59.	£76.60.

6.2.

For 2024/25 the annual rental increase at 4% is below the Scotland's Housing Network average of 4.68% and peer group average of 5.84%.

6.3.

The level of rent collected as a percentage of rent due is as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2024/25.	98.84%.	100.17%.	100.01%.
2023/24.	102.47%.	99.40%.	98.93%.
2022/23.	99.33%.	99.03%.	99.38%.

6.4.

The information outlined above represents the total amount of rent collected over the year from both current and former tenants for the current and previous years as a percentage of rent due in the reporting year.

6.5.

The gross rent arrears (including both current and former tenants) as a percentage of rent due is as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2024/25.	9.43%.	6.16%.	7.48%.
2023/24.	12.58%.	6.77%.	8.67%.
2022/23.	12.65%.	6.86%.	8.52%.

6.6.

Current rent arrears as a percentage of annual gross rent due is as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2024/25.	3.98%.	3.85%.	4.57%.
2023/24.	7.11%.	4.46%.	5.33%.
2022/23.	8.44%.	4.70%.	5.28%.

6.7.

Arrears have remained challenging because of the COVID-19 impact and continuing rollout of Universal Credit Housing costs; because of this a strong focus is placed on the recovery of arrears. This has included working with tenants to ensure that those who needed assistance to claim Universal Credit Housing Costs / Housing Benefit, were assisted to do so. There has been close joint working with Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau in relation to income maximisation and money advice / debt assistance. Every attempt has been made, and continues to be made, to recover outstanding arrears where this is possible. This has included senior management prioritising the pursuit of arrears and significant levels of staffing resource being focused on this aspect.

6.8.

Although the overall level of arrears remains high, the rent collected as a percentage of rent due in the year was 98.84% for financial year 2024/25 a slight reduction from 102.47% for 2023/24.

6.9.

The table below shows the percentage of tenants in arrears annually at 31 March:

Date.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.
31 March 2025.	41.76%.	28.13%.
31 March 2024.	36.43%.	32.89%.
31 March 2023.	37.8%.	32.9%.

6.10.

The percentage of tenants who had arrears at the point their tenancy ended was as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.
2024/25.	23.61%.	42.47%.
2023/24.	63.29%.	44.76%
2022/23.	48.19%.	44.60%.

6.11.

The level of former tenant arrears as a percentage of rent due was as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2024/25.	5.45%.	2.31%.	2.91%.
2023/24.	5.47%.	2.31%.	3.34%.
2022/23.	4.21%.	2.16%	3.24%

6.12.

Nationally there are high levels of former tenant arrears written-off. The Council previously actively and prudently pursued former tenant arrears rather than writing these off, however this had a detrimental impact on overall rent arrears performance. Statistics, benchmarking and information provided by other Councils indicated that more commonly the practice is to progress higher levels of write-off of former tenant debt in order to ensure limited resources are appropriately targeted at current arrears. In addition, the Scottish Housing Regulator has encouraged a more robust process of writing off former tenant arrears, where it is unlikely this debt can be recovered inside existing levels of staffing resource. Accordingly, the Council's approach has been reconsidered to ensure an appropriate balance to target resources at recovering current arrears while ensuring that former tenant arrears are recovered where possible but equally where this is unlikely to have a positive outcome, former tenant arrears will be written off in order to streamline processes and ensure statistics are reflective of the actual position. This will take time to affect the statistics, however. Write-offs for financial year 2024/25 totalled £202.00, or

0.08% of the former tenant arrears outstanding. The process is currently being reviewed which has impacted on write offs this year. The figures are as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2024/25.	0.08%.	34.20%.	24.10%.
2023/24.	18.26%.	26.01%.	21.54%.
2022/23.	33.72%.	27.06%.	16.82%.

6.13.

It remains important to ensure that former tenant arrears are continually reviewed and former tenant arrears are analysed on a 6 monthly basis to ensure that the most appropriate action continues to be taken to recover the debts outstanding. These are difficult types of debt to recover and in some instances may take many years to clear.

7. Re-Lets and Voids

7.1.

Void rental loss percentages are shown in the table below:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2024/25.	1.47%.	1.27%.	1.33%.
2023/24.	1.49%.	1.39%.	1.12%.
2022/23.	1.32%.	1.37%.	1.25%.

7.2.

There has been a slight decrease in void rental loss outlined above.

7.3.

Overall, the average time in days for re-let of properties was as follows:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2024/25.	60.65.	60.59.	56.17.
2023/24.	71.43.	56.79.	53.07.
2022/23.	57.94.	55.61.	59.26.

7.4.

As regards the increase in the average time to re-let properties shown above, a total of 71 properties were re-let during 2024/25. This figure is affected by a small number of properties which are subject to low demand and consequently were vacant for an extended period of time. During 2024/25 there was one supported accommodation unit, one sheltered and one very sheltered property which together took 539 days. A further two island properties categorised as low demand took 413 days in total. This compares to properties with a long re-let period in 2023/24 where there was one property that was void for over 200 days, taking 1,050 days, without this property the average would have been reduced to 58.8 days. In 2022/23, there were three properties with 273, 203 and 203 days void respectively.

7.5.

As regards the category of Value for Money, the Council can evidence positive performance in respect of rent collection and a reduction in gross current arrears. The percentage of tenants who had arrears at the point at which their tenancy ended has increased again. A consistent focus on arrears is being maintained to try and improve the position surrounding rent collection.

7.6.

As regards the situation with re-lets and voids however, it is important to remember that these can be affected by a small sample size being disproportionately affected by a differential in respect of longer-term vacancies in low demand and sheltered stock. A small differential in respect of sample size can lead to potentially large percentage increases in this figure.

8. Direction of Travel

8.1.

Scotland's Housing Network provides a summary outlining good performance and areas where improvement could be made.

8.2.

Positive performance for Orkney for 2024/25 includes:

- Time to complete non- emergency repairs.
- Time to complete medical adaptations.
- Level of stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.
- Low levels of tenancy offers refused.
- High levels of tenancy sustainment of new homeless tenancies.
- Low levels of abandonments.
- Low levels of evictions.
- Low levels of anti-social behaviour.
- Decrease in gross rent arrears (includes both current and former) as a percentage of rent due.
- Decrease of current arrears as a percentage of annual gross rent due.

- Percentage of tenants in arrears at point their tenancy ended.
- Decrease in void rental loss.
- Decrease in the average time in days to re-let properties.

8.3.

Areas where performance could potentially be improved or continue to be improved for Orkney are as follows:

- Customer Satisfaction.
- Average time to complete emergency repairs.
- Right First Time repairs.
- Tenancy sustainment.
- Average time from homeless presentation to completion of duty.
- Length of stay in temporary accommodation.
- Decrease in level of rent collected as a percentage of rent.
- Increase in the percentage of tenants in arrears annually at 31 March.