



Appendix 1

Sustainability Reporting Standard

for the financial year ended March 31 2023

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Summary of Sustainability/ESG Approach

Structure of the Report

This report has been prepared in alignment with the specific themes outlined in the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing. An index of criteria we have reported under each theme is provided at the end of this document, which also includes the matching UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Social

T1 - Affordability and Security

C1. Report against one or more Affordability Metric

To help provide housing to households who cannot afford to rent or buy in the open market, provision of affordable housing is a core purpose of regulated housing providers.

We measure our rental affordability in the context of the Local Housing Allowance and the Private Rented Sector Median as displayed below.

Rent compared to Private Rented Sector (PRS):

Unit size (no. of bedrooms)	Weekly Private Market Rent (£)	Orbit's Ave. Weekly Rent (£)	Orbit rent as a % of PRS
Room with shared facilities	116.35	75.50	64.9%
1	168.78	103.32	61.2%
2	211.34	124.29	58.8%
3	261.43	137.39	52.6%
4 and above	375.66	161.96	43.1%
All Categories	1133.56	602.46	53.1%

Rent compared to Local Housing Allowance (LHA):

Unit size (no. of bedrooms)	Weekly LHA (£)	ORBIT's Ave. Weekly Rent (£)	Orbit rent as a % of LHA
Room with shared facilities	81.87	75.50	92.2%
1	139.98	103.32	73.8%
2	170.94	124.29	72.7%
3	205.80	137.39	66.8%
4 and above	269.05	161.96	60.2%
All Categories	867.65	602.46	69.4%

C2. Allocation (share, number) of existing homes

To better understand the scale and composition of tenure type in housing, a breakdown is provided to demonstrate the extent to which we provide accommodation. During the financial year 22/23 we invested £88.8 million in our existing homes.

Existing Homes:

Units (existing homes)	Number	Percentage	Comparative to previous year
General Needs (social rent)	24,037	54.1%	+34
Intermediate Rent	220	0.5%	+26
Affordable Rent	6,310	14.2%	+304
Supported Housing	636	1.4%	-9
Housing for older people	2,894	6.5%	+44
Low-cost home ownership	6,228	14%	+145

Care homes	14	0%	0
Private Rented Sector	194	0.4%	0
Other Category	3,909	8.8%	+109
Total Homes Managed / Owned	44,442	100.00	+643

C3. Allocation (share, number) of new homes

Orbit's growth plans include targeting the number of affordable homes we build to 2025, this has formed one of our commitments in our Sustainability Strategy. During the financial year 22/23 we invested £211 million in new homes We secured a further £104 million grant funding under the government's 2021-2026 Affordable Homes Programme. The new homes completed during the financial year 22-23 are detailed in the table below:

Units (NEW homes)	Number	Percentage	Comparative to last year
General Needs (social rent)	129	10.2%	+77
Intermediate Rent	26	2%	-40
Affordable Rent	296	23.3%	+37
Supported Housing	0	0%	0
Housing for older people	0	0%	-51
Low-cost home ownership	445	35%	+147
Care homes	0	0%	0
Private Rented Sector	0	0%	-3

Other Category	374	29.5%	+140
Total Homes Managed / Owned	1,270	100%	+310

C4. Measures to reduce the effect of fuel poverty on its residents

Alongside our work to improve the energy efficiency of our existing homes (more details in C17) in November, we launched an Energy Advice Service in partnership with National Energy Action (NEA). The project provided

- 635 vulnerable customers with telephone energy support, distributed
- 698 support packs (containing items to help keep customers warm and well), and offered 36 face-to-face energy advice events in the community delivered alongside our regional Place teams.
- Generated an estimated average energy saving of £382 per customer supported via our partnership with National Energy Action
- Saved customers a collective total of £242,642 via our Energy Advice Service and Winter Warmth packs
- Alongside this, we have upskilled a number of Orbit staff who have completed a Level 3 Energy Awareness qualification offered by NEA, to help deliver effective advice and support to customers with maximum impact and sustainability.

C5. Percent of rental homes with fixed tenancy agreement

Launching lifetime tenancies

We want our customers to feel safe and secure in their home so that they can put down roots in their local area, become a part of the community and be able to plan for the future,

without worrying that they may have to move out of their home at the end of their tenancy agreement (usually five years for fixed term tenancies).

For these reasons, we have made a commitment to move away from fixed term tenancies and offer customers lifetime tenancies, so that they can be secure in the knowledge that, providing they are up to date with their rent payments and have not breached the terms of their tenancy, they will be able to remain in their home for as long as they wish.

The majority of new customers are now automatically given a lifetime tenancy when they sign up with us and customers who currently hold fixed term tenancies are being converted to a lifetime as their fixed term comes to an end. 98.4% of our tenancies are three years or over.

T2 - Building Safety and Quality

C6. % of homes with in-date, accredited gas safety check

In the interest of resident safety, this information is included to ensure that homes are fitted with adequate and safe fittings and appliances. As of 31 March 23, 100 % of our homes have an in-date, accredited gas safety check.

C7. % of buildings with fire risk assessment

Housing Providers are expected to take a more proactive role in dealing with issues relating to resident safety.

As of 31 March 23, 100% of our homes have an in-date and compliant Fire Risk Assessment.

In addition to the gas and fire safety we also carry out asbestos checks, legionella risk assessments and lift insurance inspections these are all at 100% compliant

C8. Percent of homes that meet the national housing quality standard

The Decent Homes Standard is a government agreed technical definition on the statutory minimum requirement for a home to be classed as 'decent'. This is a standard national criterion that provides insight into the condition of a housing providers stock.

As of 31st March 2023 99.97% of our managed homes met the Decent Homes Standard

To be a decent home, a dwelling should be free of Category 1 hazards, and the existence of such hazards should be a trigger for remedial action unless practical steps cannot be taken without disproportionate expense or disruption.

T3 - Resident Voice

C9. Arrangements in place to hold management to account for provision of services

We have continued to adopt the National Housing Federation's 'Together With Tenants' programme, to further strengthen our relationship with our customers and drive customer improvement.

Over the last year we have adopted a hybrid approach, which includes digital and face-to-face options, to enable customers to engage with us at a time and in a way that suits them.

We have also founded our 'Customer Engagement Strategic Committee' to enhance our governance and ensure the voice of our customers is truly embedded in our decisions and actions going forward. Each committee member acts as an ambassador for Customer Engagement within their local community, throughout our portfolio and across the wider housing sector, to champion all areas of the customer journey.

To ensure we are capturing underrepresented voices, we have introduced several diversity groups such as LGBTQ+, disability and future voices. Customers work with us to feedback on the services they receive, complete equality assessments and help to prioritise our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion programme.

This year we have delivered a scrutiny hackathon focused on improving our rent arrears letters. Working with customers we have rewritten the letters to bring them in line with our tone of voice and to provide increased support to customers.

C10. Resident Satisfaction

We measure customer satisfaction using both perception and transactional surveys.

Perception is measured using the UKCSI (UK Customer Satisfaction Index), which provides an objective, independent perspective of national customer satisfaction, and is conducted by the ICS, the independent professional membership body for customer service.

Our most recent survey, conducted in February/March 2023, gave us an index score of 55.4 out of 100 which came from customers who rent our properties and those who have purchased from us. This compares with a score of 55 from our previous survey carried out in April/May 2022.

We measure transactional satisfaction through a real-time feedback approach where customers are invited to complete short surveys based on an interaction or upon completion of a service. These surveys are targeted at transaction and day-to-day operational services. Surveys are based on a 1-5 scoring scale, supported by a verbatim comment from the customer. In 2020-21 we moved from converting the score to a percentage to simply reporting the average score. Over the past 12 months, our real time feedback satisfaction has stayed largely constant at 4.29 out of 5 (4.33: 2021-22).

Orbit Homes recently secured a Gold Award for Customer Satisfaction by independent market research specialist, In-House Research, for the ninth consecutive year, after receiving an overall customer satisfaction score of 95%.

C11. Complaints that have been upheld by the Ombudsman in the last 12 months

We received 10 complaints which were upheld by the Ombudsman a reduction from 14 in the previous year. We have continued to work with the Housing Ombudsman to strengthen our complaint handling process and welcomed the streamlined procedures it provided to customers in October 2022 via its new complaint handling code.

Ahead of the code coming into place, we:

- Appointed a designated complaints lead for our governing body
- Amended policies and procedures to ensure compliance with key code changes
- Introduced a new complaint handling system
- Improved root-cause insights to address service failure
- Introduced a customer satisfaction survey to drive continuous improvement
- Worked with customers to complete a self-assessment of compliance against the new code

The introduction of the code, in particular the removal of the informal stage and democratic filter, did lead to increased service resolution waiting times for customers.

As we have familiarised ourselves with the practical operation of the code and reflecting upon the findings of an internal audit report we completed a review of our complaints service and implemented changes to ensure we resolved service requests as quickly and efficiently as possible, including the embedding of a new more effective triage system.

We are confident that the changes we have made, along with a longer-term programme of works currently being delivered, will further improve how we acknowledge and address customer concerns regarding the quality of their homes and services in a timely and satisfactory manner.

T4 - Resident Support

C12. Support Services offered to residents

Thriving Communities

Our Better Days programme, which offers free universal services to every customer, designed to support financial inclusion, mental wellbeing, employment and skills and digital support, provided 5,059 Customer Support Interventions, of which 87% of customers received a positive outcome. These outcomes included:

- £51,106 uptake in fuel and food vouchers
- 501 Orbit customers supported by our new Welfare Benefits Advice Service with average annual financial gains of £2,712 per customer
- 635 customers supported via our Better Days Partnership with National Energy Action through our programme of Winter Warmth engagement events, with an average saving of £382 per customer on energy bills
- 676 customers supported with debt advice from PayPlan, helping customers to manage a total debt of £1,493,745

Tenancy Sustainment

Our Triage Team, work with customers to identify financial, wellbeing, digital and employment concerns. Once established, customers are either signposted for support from Better Days, an external provision, or supported by a Tenancy Sustainment Job Coach who offers coaching sessions to help customers truly identify, resolve and overcome barriers, and help empower them to provide themselves a better future and improve the chances of managing and sustaining their tenancy.

- 9,502 customers referred to Tenancy Sustainment
- 3,111 coaching sessions delivered to customers
- 312 customers supported into employment or volunteering by our Tenancy Sustainment Job coaches
- Customers were on average £606 better off each month when going into employment
- 1,027 customers supported into training by our Tenancy Sustainment Job coaches or attended employment related training with our Employment Skills trainer
- 99% of Housing With Support customers who engaged with the service sustained their tenancies for the first 12 months

Independent living & Supported Housing

We are embarking on a new and ambitious 10-year strategy to transform our independent living services including investing £4 million in the refurbishment of 50 existing independent living schemes – starting with a pilot scheme at Melville Court in Stratford where residents are helping to shape the new and improved look and feel of their communal living areas.

But it's not just about specialist independent living schemes. We are also looking at new approaches that support the health and wellbeing of all older residents including general needs customers via the introduction of new technology, improving digital inclusion and offering a greater range of preventative health services to improve the wellbeing of customers so that they can continue to live independent lives for as long as possible.

- 182,070 'How Are You?' wellbeing contacts to independent living customers
- 715 subscriptions to our emergency lifeline service
- 2,637 customer reviews
- 8,700 customers attending activities in independent living schemes where we have activity coordinators
- 436 living needs assessments

T5 - Placemaking

C13. Examples or case studies of engagement in placemaking or placeshaping activities

Our Urban Design and Placemaking approach ensures a consistent standard and product for our customers, whilst delivering value for money.

Architecture and urban character play key roles in placemaking; we aim to deliver locally distinctive places which reflect an area's heritage, landscape, and identity.

We aim for a healthy distribution of tenure on our developments, subject to planning policy, with schemes designed so that site layouts result in high quality living spaces

alongside safe and comfortable streets and spaces, where ecology and biodiversity are successfully integrated.

Connection to the wider community is a key consideration in site selection, ensuring access to public transport, shops and services, health and education and centres of employment.

Case Study

Micklewell Park is an exciting new development consisting of one and two-bedroom apartments and two, three, four and five-bedroom houses. The first phase was completed in March 2023 and includes eight acres of newly planted woodland, 20 allotment spaces, electric car charging points, two bus stops, and land allocated for a brand-new primary school. Two further phases of the development will commence thereafter.

The scheme will create 450 new homes which will be a mixture of rented, Shared Ownership and market sale properties. The Government-backed Help to Buy: Equity Loan scheme is also available on market sale apartments and houses.

Environmental

T6 - Climate Change

C14. Distribution of EPC ratings (existing homes)

To provide insight into the overall energy efficiency of our current stock, we are disclosing the distribution of our Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating across our existing portfolio.

EPC Rating (Existing Homes)	Percentage	Comparative to last year
A	0.4%	0.0%
B	22.5%	1.0%

C	60.5%	0.4%
D	15.2%	-1.2%
E	1.4%	-0.2%
Total	100%	100%

C15. Distribution of EPC ratings (new homes)

To ensure that our future stock of housing is more energy efficient than our older units , we are disclosing the distribution of our EPC rating for newly constructed homes in our portfolio.

EPC Rating (NEW Homes)	Percentage	Comparative to last year
A	0%	-0.74%
B	96.6%	-2.17%
C	2%	+1.51%
D*	1%	+1%
E or worse*	0.4%	+0.4%
Total	100%	100%

*Our EPC D & E properties in this list are conversions rather than new builds

C16. Green House Gas(GHG) Emissions

Description of Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions

Our Scope 1 Carbon Footprint is now 4542 tCO₂e, our scope 2 Carbon footprint is now 3 tCO₂e

In 2022-23, Orbit's total carbon footprint was 4,545 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e), which captures our total scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions from our offices, fleet, landlord supply and new build voids, as well as our construction activities. In the past year we have reduced our carbon footprint by 14%, with a 38.5% reduction on our 2018/19 baseline year. Due to the transition to a new IT system (Microsoft Dynamics 365) we are not able to report an updated supply chain carbon footprint for 2022-23. This process has taken longer than anticipated but we anticipate being able to report our Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions in the next financial year.

The reduction in scope 1 & 2 in the last financial year has been driven primarily by the transition from red diesel to hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) in our direct build operations and minor energy efficiency improvements in our communal areas. This builds upon the reduction generated by agile working, procurement of REGO-certified (Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin) electricity and colleague engagement through our Orbit Earth environmental programme since the 2018-19 baseline.

We are implementing a range of projects to further improve energy efficiency for our customers including LED lighting replacements and solar PV (Photovoltaics) installations at several of our extra care and sheltered schemes, and a programme of energy awareness seminars.

Case Study

We recently upgraded all the communal lighting at our Ladywell Court Independent Living scheme, which has 36 units. The previous lighting lacked controls, was illuminated 24 hours a day, and used inefficient fluorescent lighting. The new lighting utilises more efficient LED technology and has integrated sensors that detect occupancy and natural daylight. As a

result, the electricity use for communal lighting has been reduced by 85% and we are able to further support the cost-of-living for these customers via a reduction in their service charge.

C17. Energy efficiency actions

We continue to invest in the energy efficiency of our homes and have committed that 100% of our existing homes will be EPC band C or above by 2030. We have already made good progress against this target with 83.54% of our homes rated EPC C or above. This year we completed work on a £3.6 million pilot decarbonisation project to upgrade the energy efficiency of 69 homes in and around Stratford-upon-Avon which had an EPC rating of D or below, via a whole house retrofit approach.

The scheme was part of the government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Demonstrator project and received £1.45 million in government funding, which was combined with a further £2.2 million investment from Orbit.

Each of the homes was retrofitted to a high standard, making homes more comfortable, warmer and affordable for customers, in addition to generating carbon savings. The Demonstrator project has also enabled us to develop a clear understanding of both the high level and practical challenges of whole house retrofit decarbonisation projects and the costs of achieving net zero carbon.

Following the success of the Demonstrator we have begun work on a further £6m project to upgrade the Energy Performance of 136 properties across the West Midlands after securing funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 1. Working in partnership with the West Midlands Combined Authority and Stratford-on-Avon District Council, we are utilising £1.4m of Wave 1 funding, along with our own further investment of £4.6m, to deliver warmer homes for tenants, reduce fuel bills and significantly lower carbon emissions.

We have also secured funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 2.1, which will enable us to improve the energy performance of an additional 212 properties. We are committed to continuing to monitor performance to inform our future works and ensure customers remain happy with the works that have been completed.

C18. Housing Provider's consideration of climate risks

Overheating:

- We are reducing the risk of overheating as part of an ambitious decarbonisation retrofit programme. The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund pilot in Stratford-upon-Avon is being completed in compliance with PAS 2035 and provides a framework for not only making homes more energy efficient, but also provision for ventilation, heating efficiency and cooling in the summer. The results from the pilot will feed into our standards and specifications for future retrofit projects.

Flood risk:

- Our portfolio is not deemed a high flood risk. However, we are reviewing flood risk as it evolves from solely being an issue driven by main water courses, to one that can also be caused by surface water run-off. Our insurers annually carry out flood risk mapping of our existing portfolio to assess overall risk profile and any changes with time, and we have proactive clearance and management regimes for drainage systems across our built environment to further reduce flood risk. Our new developments are also assessed for flood risk at the planning and design stages. Consideration is given to the existing flood risk of a proposed site and the impacts the development would have on the water catchment, particularly downstream.

We incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) to reduce run-off wherever possible. Other common measures taken might include minimisation of permeable pavement, gullies and ponds, and inclusion of other greenspaces.

C19. Information about correct ventilation, heating, recycling etc.

To demonstrate our commitment to improve the sustainability of our portfolio, we are providing information to our residents on various sustainability matters including ventilation, heating, and recycling.

To demonstrate our commitment to improve the sustainability of our portfolio, we are providing information to our residents on various sustainability matters including ventilation, heating, and recycling. We provide information and downloadable leaflets on how customers can look after their homes with regards to ventilation and mold on our customer website <https://www.orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/help-support/myhome/>. The customer website has several accessibility tools to ensure those hard of sight or reading ability/language are able to access the information available to them. These are also available through our dedicated Property Management team. We have produced a post works brochure that explains the energy efficiency measures fitted in customers' homes as well as tips and links to energy saving advice.

Where we implement improvements to our greenspaces, we engage with our customers before work is undertaken via letter and other communication media as appropriate in each case. Improved areas are then signposted with what has been done, why and any care requirements i.e., areas of wildflower meadow and new trees.

T7 - Ecology

C20. Increasing Green Space and promoting Biodiversity

Our environmental sustainability programme works to actively enhance our environment by creating and improving places for our communities to thrive.

In support of this goal, we have published our Biodiversity Approach which sets out our commitment to manage 30% of our outdoor green spaces for nature by 2030 and has been developed with the support of the Wildlife Trusts to align with their vision to protect at least 30% of our land and sea to allow for nature's recovery by 2030 – making more space for

wildlife to recover and thrive again. These improved green spaces will provide enhanced opportunities for our customers to have access to nature and enjoy areas for play and recreation.

The improvements we are making include simple initiatives like planting hedgerows, shrubs, and wildflowers to benefit wildlife whilst provide seating and other means of allowing customers to use green spaces. Our approach is scientific and practical, and we make sure customers are engaged throughout our biodiversity journey.

To date, we have improved eight estates with plans to continue scaling up the programme moving forward. Currently 18.5% of our outdoor green spaces meet the supporting nature's recovery criteria

Case Study

We are proud to be a co-founder of the Green Spaces Advisory Board, a pioneering cross-industry collaboration of seven housing associations and a leading grounds maintenance provider, aiming to unlock the potential of green spaces through actions, thought leadership, and stimulating collaboration. Under this we have conducted workshops and other engagements that have reached hundreds of practitioners across the built environment, sharing learnings from our approach and best practice around its focus on nature, people and scale.

Homes for all the community at Mill View

Our new Orbit Homes development, Mill View in Dereham, has homes for all people and wildlife too, with hedgehog friendly fencing and 'Hedgehog Highways', bat tubes and bird boxes, as well as two log piles underneath hedgerows to provide hedgehogs with day nests and potential hibernation opportunities for reptiles and amphibians. In addition, we are undertaking nearly a mile of improvement works to the footpath along the public right of way behind the site, so that the route can be used by the wider community to enjoy the surrounding trees and natural grassland.

Green Plaque

We were also delighted that our Orbit Homes Melbourne Avenue development in Ramsgate became the first new build homes development to be awarded the national 'Green Plaque' environmental accreditation in partnership with WW Martin a property developer. The accolade was presented in recognition of the homes' demanding sustainability standards that demonstrate environmental and sustainability best practice within the construction industry.

C21. Strategy to actively manage and reduce all pollutants

Orbit operates an environmental management system (EMS) to reduce negative environmental impacts including those associated with pollution. This EMS has been certified to ISO14001:2015 by the British Standards Institute. The EMS incorporates procedures, communications, training, audit and management review to achieve these outcomes.

T8 - Resource Management

C22. Strategy to use or increase the use of responsibly sourced materials

While we currently do not have a strategy in place to increase the use of responsibly sourced materials in our building works, we recognize that having such a strategy is also an important mechanism to ensure our commitment to minimise the impact that our activities have on the planet. Within our construction business material specification includes sustainability considerations such as, responsible sourcing, circular economy, material reuse and embodied carbon, and we consider the life-time costs of materials, with high-quality, long-lasting materials favoured to ensure quality and longevity. In the past year 17% of new homes were built using modern methods of construction helping to reduce waste and ensure responsible resourced materials.

C23. Strategy for waste management

As part of our Sustainability Strategy, Orbit has committed to zero avoidable waste by 2030. This is underpinned by core objectives including:

- Transition to a circular economy where resources are sourced, produced, used, and disposed of sustainably
- Adopt a life cycle approach where efficiency is optimised, and waste avoided

This will unlock value for Orbit and our customers whilst reducing our exposure to future resource insecurity.

Our approach will vary according to where waste originates across our organisation.

Construction & Maintenance

We have created a Zero Waste Group that has developed and begun implementation of a range of waste management initiatives that will support our reduction target of 15% per direct build plot by 2030. These include working with suppliers to reduce packaging, promotion of offcut storage areas, increased segregation and our work with partners such as Community Wood Recycling. The ongoing exploration of MMC products will further facilitate reductions of waste onsite as materials are used far more efficiently in factory settings than on a construction site.

In our existing homes, we are continuously reviewing the products we use to extend lifespan and thus reduce waste and disruption to our customers.

Offices

We are working with our Facilities Champions to implement a 5% reduction target by 2030. This is focused on raising colleague awareness of how to reduce waste, continuing to promote reduced printing and exploring options to donate electronic equipment to reduce environmental impact and unlock social value.

Grounds Maintenance

We are targeting a 30% reduction in our green waste generated by our direct delivery grounds maintenance by 2030. This will be driven by reductions in the requirement for regular grass cutting as we implement our 30by30 enhancement of outdoor spaces. We are also increasing local composting so that green waste can provide value to our customers and reduce costs at the same time.

Supply Chain

Whilst supply chain waste is outside the scope of our quantitative targets, we will work with our top suppliers to ensure that waste data is captured, and targets set.

Where changes in design and purchasing decisions can be made that will help deliver a circular economy, these will be discussed in contractor meetings and taken forward where possible.

C24. Strategy for good water management

One of our goals within our Sustainability Strategy is the enhancement of outdoor spaces to improve the quality of natural resources including biodiversity, land, water and air. To deliver upon this we have a commitment to ensure 30% of our outdoor green spaces are enabling nature's recovery by 2030. This programme will also have a positive impact on water drainage and reduced flood risk on our estates.

The specification of our new build properties aims to reduce water usage such as the introduction of flow restrictors and water butts. Our Orbit Earth programme is also focused on broader natural resources, including water conservation and air quality. We are focused on expanding our efforts in these areas for future versions of this strategy. Over the coming years, Orbit will work with its peers to develop a Green Space Model, biodiversity metric and certification programme, and resources for the wider sector to utilise.

Governance

T9 - Structure and Governance

C25. Registration with a regulator of social housing

We are registered with the Regulator of Social Housing

C26. Most recent viability and governance regulatory grading

The following information provides our Governance and Financial Viability assessment, which signifies our capacity to meet governance requirements in our capacity to effectively mitigate financial exposures.

G1 V2

C27. Code of Governance

We have adopted a Code of Governance, based on clear requirements and commitments which enable the board to demonstrate best-practice compliance as it applies to the housing sector.

National Housing Federation Code of Governance 2020.

C28. Is the housing provider Not-For-Profit?

Yes.

C29. Board management of organizational risks

Our governance structure and arrangements make it clear that the responsibility for risk management and the Risk Management Strategy lies with the Group Board.

There are systems in place to ensure the Board and the Executive team can analyse, understand, manage and mitigate key strategic and business critical risks.

Our overall approach to risk management is based on good practice and our internal control environment to manage risk is continually reviewed and monitored by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) on behalf of the Board. All subsidiaries are required to implement our risk management framework and provide reports to their respective boards.

Our framework includes an analysis of the operating environment, an assessment of risks supported by early warning indicators (EWI), which are monitored by senior management and the board alongside our key performance targets. These EWIs cover both financial and non-financial risks. These are used to create risk scorecards for all subsidiaries and trading divisions, which are consolidated into Business-Critical Risks for the Executive team, ARAC and the Board to review.

C30. Adverse regulatory findings within the past 12 months

The housing provider has not been subject to any adverse regulatory findings in the last 12 months that resulted in enforcement or other equivalent action (e.g. data protection breaches, bribery, money laundering, HSE breaches or notices).

T10 - Board and Trustees

C31. Demographics of the board compared to demographics of the housing providers residents

Our group Board comprises of seven board members, six of whom are independent, and one executive board member.

Demographics of the board	
What % of the board are women?	33.3%
What % of the board are BAME?	0%

What % of the board have a disability? *	
Average age of the board	59 years
Average tenure of the board	4 years

*, the board has executed their right to not disclose this information

C32. % Turn over of the board and management team

We've had a 16.7% turnover of the board and 33.3% turnover of the executive management team in the past year. This covers two members of the Executive team out of 6 and one Non-Executive Director out of 6.

C33. Maximum tenure for a board member

Term limits for board members are generally agreed to serve the purpose of ensuring that boards do not end up with static membership, which can potentially discourage innovative thinking and the Board losing touch with what the organisation requires.

Board members are appointed for an initial term of three years and subject to satisfactory performance, they are eligible for a second three-year term. The NHF (national Housing Federation) Code of Governance allows for extensions to terms of office up to nine years 'if it is in the best interest of the organisation'.

C34. % of non-executive board members

Non-executive directors play an important role in an organisation in bringing an impartial view to governance and management decisions.

86% of the board members are non-executive directors.

C35. Audit committee members with relevant financial experience

Our Audit Committee has five members. Three of the Audit Committee members have recent and relevant financial experience.

C36. Executives on the Remuneration Committee

There are no executives in the Remuneration Committee. We believe that a current executive sitting on the remuneration committee might cause a significant conflict of interest.

C37. Board succession plan

A succession plan is in place and regularly updated by the Group Company Secretary. This is also used to identify skills and experience gaps which in turn informs recruitment, which is overseen by the Governance and Remuneration Committee.

C38. External audit partner tenure

KPMG has been our external audit partner responsible for auditing our accounts for seven years and was reappointed in 2022.

C39. Board-effectiveness review

An independent review of the Board and Board governance arrangements was undertaken by Campbell Tickell on 17th May 2020. As recommended by The UK Corporate Governance Code best practice, the Board undertakes externally facilitated board-effectiveness reviews every three years. There is a board effectiveness review planned for the next financial year

C40. Separate CEO and chair

The CEO and chairman positions are held by two distinct individuals.

We believe that having a separate CEO and Chair aids accountability and corporate responsibility, distinguishing from board authority. Moreover, this also eliminates potential conflicts of interest.

C41. Conflicts of interest

It is vital for us to have an appropriate way of handling conflicts of interest when they arise. Board members are asked to declare any relevant interests on appointment and any new

declarations of interest are captured (either at board meetings or separately notified) and their schedule updated by the Governance team. Where there is an item on the agenda that a Board member has a personal interest, they must declare this at the start of the meeting and take no part in the discussion or decision. In certain circumstances, the board member concerned may be asked by the Board to leave the room or call while the matter is discussed.

T11 - Staff Wellbeing

C42. Real Living Wage

We ensure that all our employees are paid the Real Living Wage on a voluntary basis

C43. Gender Pay Gap

	Median Pay Gap	Previous years Pay gap
Gender	19.4%	21%
Ethnicity*	9.6%	10.1%

*As part of our drive towards equality, we would also like to share our Ethnicity Pay Gap as part of this report. These figures are representative of 84% of our workforce, with 16% of colleagues undeclared.

C44. CEO-worker pay ratio

The CEO-worker pay ratio demonstrates the pay dispersion between the CEO and the organisation's median earner. As at 31/03/2023, our CEO-worker pay ratio is 7.3:1. This has reduced from 8.3:1 in the last financial year due to an increase in the organisations median earner.

C45. Physical and mental health support

The health and wellbeing of our colleagues continues to sit at the core of our business. Our #ThisIsMe wellbeing programme has continued to go from strength to strength, providing access to a range of multimedia resources and support tools, as well as our Healthy Mind First Aiders and Employee Assistance Programme. Our #ThisIsMe series of talks and webinars saw us partner with organisations including Henpicked, Mind and Aviva to discuss, raise awareness and provide support on subjects such as Menopause, mental health, and the challenges presented by the cost-of-living crisis.

We have also taken specific steps to support our colleagues through the cost-of-living crisis by implementing:

- Introduced a scaled pay review in April 2022
- Gave colleagues a £100 Christmas gift card
- Launched a colleague communications campaign to offer support including financial wellbeing webinars
- Increased business mileage rates to ensure we are aligned to HMRC recommended rates and changes to our business travel policy to address the increased cost of fuel
- Retail discounts available through Stars in Orbit.

Additionally, all colleagues are eligible for our private medical cover and we are also offering a free, private, online GP service accessible any time. We know planning in life is extremely important and to offer piece of mind, should the worst happen, our colleagues are all eligible for a life assurance benefit as well.

C46. Average number of sick days

The average number of sick days taken per employee was 7.1 days.

T12 - Supply Chain Management

C47. Consideration of social value creation when procuring goods and services

We are committed to delivering social value and driving social change through our procurement policies and processes. The Procurement team continue to keep social value at the heart of all Procurement activities and support the business to include sustainability for all requirements, along with understanding potential suppliers agreed commitments. We continue to include a social value requirement in all centrally administered tender exercises and the Procurement team support the existing social value framework. We provide a list of examples to offer practical solutions to suppliers who are either not sure what to offer or how to offer it.

We have continued to manage the first focused VCSE Dynamic purchasing system (DPS) in the UK, specifically designed to lower the barriers to entry for VCSEs and sheltered workshops to deliver goods and services to us and other public sector providers. We continue to pursue our ambitious target of year-on-year increases in the number and value of contracts being delivered by purpose driven enterprises. Orbit continues to work closely with our suppliers to combat modern slavery across our supply chain ensuring modern slavery audits are completed.

C48. Environmental impact in procurement

We are committed to ensuring that we consider our environmental impact through our procurement policies and processes.

As part of our procurement activity, we request a copy of any potential suppliers' environmental policy and review this as part of our process to ensure our supply base have considered their impact on the environment. Over the next year we will be developing environmental standards which will form part of our Sustainable Supplier Charter to ensure consistency of our approach and understand the positive impact our suppliers are having on the environment. Our Procurement team continues to play a part in the Orbit Earth Steering Group and Carbon Forum to help develop a plan of continuous sustainability improvement and to reduce our impact on our environment.

SRS/UN SDG Index

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			10	Reduce Inequality
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Governance	T11	Staff Wellbeing	8	Decent Work and Economic Growth
	T12	Supply Chain Management	12	Responsible Consumption and Production



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