Item: 5

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 5 February 2025.

Housing Services – Performance Monitoring.

Report by Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.

1. Overview

1.1.   Performance of Housing Services for the reporting period of 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 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.   Scrutinise 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, in order to obtain assurance with regard to the performance of the Housing Service.

3. Background

3.1.   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.

3.2.   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.

3.3.   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.

3.4.   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.

3.5. Membership of the peer group is detailed at section 6.2 below. Western Isles Council, being an authority which has transferred its housing stock, is part of a separate peer group.

3.6. The service areas covered include void management, stock turnover, rent arrears, homelessness, repairs, Scottish Housing Quality Standard and Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing.

3.7. 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.

3.8. In December 2024, representatives from Scotland's Housing Network presented a report to the Council's Housing and Homelessness Service, by Microsoft Teams, on its performance relative to other councils during 2023/24 and gave their analysis of the findings.

3.9. 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.

4. Scottish Social Housing Charter

4.1. 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.

4.2. Councils are required to publish an Annual Report against the Charter, and this was done in October 2022. The Annual Report is available on the OIC website.

4.3. Information on the Scottish Social Housing Charter is available here.

5. Annual Assurance Statement

5.1. 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.

5.2.   The Annual Assurance Statement for Orkney was recommended for approval by the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee on 11 September 2024 and subsequently approved by Council on 8 October 2024.

5.3.   The Annual Assurance Statement for Orkney is available from the [OIC website](#)**.**

6. Orkney's Performance by Comparison

6.1.   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.

6.2.   The peer group includes:

- Angus Council.
- Clackmannanshire Council.
- East Dunbartonshire Council.
- East Lothian Council.
- East Renfrewshire Council.
- Midlothian Council.
- Perth and Kinross Council.
- Shetland Islands Council.
- South Ayrshire Council.
- Stirling Council.
- The Moray Council.
- Hebridean Housing Partnership.
- Orkney Housing Association Limited.

6.3.   As well as looking at comparison in performance between Orkney and other members of the peer group, as detailed in section 6.2 above, 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.

6.4.   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.

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%.	86.49%.	81.65%.
Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions (indicator 2).	76.95%.	90.46%.	84.80%.
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision-making processes (indicator 5).	70.87%.	87.67%.	79.61%.
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home (indicator 7).	67.16%.	84.01%.	81.61%.
Percentage of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in the last 12 months satisfied with repairs and maintenance service (indicator 12).	88.64%.	87.31%.	87.41%.
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in (indicator 13).	59.04%.	84.68%.	82.00%.

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 29).	64.42%.	81.59%.	81.50%.

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.

1.4.

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

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer group.
2023/24.	4.52.	6.56.	4.06.
2022/23.	4.69.	6.14.	4.27.
2021/22.	2.94.	5.45.	3.25.

1.5.

The average time to respond to a stage 1 complaint was 6.9 days in 2023/24 a slight increase from 6.64 days in 2022/23. The SHN average was 5.15 days and the Peer Group 6.99 days.

1.6.

The average time to respond to a Stage 2, which is a more complex complaint, was 23.78 days a decrease from 44.93 days in 2022/23. The SHN average was 17.65 days and the Peer Group 23.72 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.
2023/24.	8.9.	3.9.	4.1.
2022/23.	9.1.	4.2.	4.5.
2021/22.	10.1.	4.2.	5.

2.3.

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

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2023/24.	17.2.	8.9.	10.7.
2022/23.	15.2.	8.7.	8.9.
2021/22.	15.3.	8.9.	8.8.

2.4.

All reactive repairs completed Right First Time were:

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2023/24.	74.5%	88.4%.	92.3%
2022/23.	80.2%.	87.8%.	92%.
2021/22.	77.7%.	88.27%.	86.10%.

2.5.

The time taken to deliver non-emergency repairs has declined 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 improved 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 344 emergency repairs, 33 (9.59%) were out with the 24 hour period, 23 of these were completed between 24 and 29 hours. Reasons for some repairs being out of time included inaccurate reporting by contractors in relation to dates/times of completion or failing to raise second orders / stopping the clock once an emergency has been addressed but further parts are required / additional works are needed to address the issue. An additional complexity involved mainland contractors undertaking works on the isles and the above issues being exacerbated with weather and travel disruption. 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 an improvement in the average time to complete a medical adaptation particularly when there were 28 adaptations completed in 2023/24 as opposed to 40 adaptations in 2022/23.

2.9.

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

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2023/24.	30.09.	44.77.	53.50.
2022/23.	35.39.	46.83.	49.55.
2021/22.	46.47.	54.35.	51.44.

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 decline in the stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. In December 2022, an issue was identified around electrical installation condition reports (EICR) and the process of evidencing compliance. Accordingly, a specific piece of work was undertaken to return the Council to a position of being able to evidence compliance with electrical safety requirements. In addition, the Council had identified an issue with the data around interlinked smoke alarms in autumn 2022, and a programme of works was

developed and taken forward. 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 2024/25.

2.11.

The Council must also ensure that its properties meet and maintain the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing from December 2020. The second target, with additional challenging energy efficiency targets, is 2032 however the Scottish Government is currently undertaking a review of the target, and a consultation has been undertaken. The outcome is anticipated in due course. Committee has received an annual update report at the June cycle of meetings, regarding progress towards the existing standards.

2.12.

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

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2023/24.	80.38%.	84.36%.	74.00%
2022/23.	52.82%.	78.98%.	61.45%.
2021/22.	81.99%.	72.87%.	61.34%.

2.13.

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.
2023/24.	64.56%.	32.91%.	2.53%.	0%.
2022/23.	51.25%	41.25%	7.50%	0%.
2021/22.	58.40%.	31.20%.	8.80%.	0%.

3.2.

For 2023/24 lets to homeless households were 44.2% across Scotland's Housing Network and 51.9% 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.
2023/24.	8.70%	7.18%	6.72%
2022/23.	9.06%.	7.42%.	6.91%.
2021/22.	7.95%.	7.76%	7.00%.

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.
2023/24.	12.09%.	30.48%.	30.80%.
2022/23.	29.92%.	30.87%.	34.90%.
2021/22.	32.64%.	32.93%.	35.22%.

3.6.

The percentage of offers refused has improved in performance since last year where it had been 29.9%.

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 continues to reduce the number of refusals received.

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 2025. 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.
2023/24.	0.66%.	0.47%	0.47%.
2022/23.	0.44%	0.50%.	0.52%
2021/22.	0.33%.	0.45%.	0.33%.

3.11.

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

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2023/24.	90.00%.	91.24%.	91.96%.
2022/23.	93.44%.	91.23%.	91.17%.
2021/22.	89.53%.	90.74%.	90.86%.

3.12.

The reasons for some tenancies not being sustained included reasons such as death, leaving Orkney or abandonments etc. 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.
2023/24.	95.12%.	90.31%.	91.51%.
2022/23.	94.44%.	90.33%.	89.98%.
2021/22.	91.18%.	90.21%.	90.50%.

3.14.

Tenancies not being sustained for longer than a year, where the tenant was previously homeless, are affected by individual household circumstances. During 2023/24 this applied to eight households, one abandoned, two passed away, one mutual exchange, two purchased privately and the other two renounced their tenancy. For 2022/23, this applied to four households, one abandoned, one passed away, one left Orkney and the other renounced their tenancy. For 2021/22 three households did not sustain their tenancies – one moved within Orkney, one with no forwarding address and the other rented privately.

3.15.

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

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2023/24.	0.11%.	0.16%.	0.14%.
2022/23.	0.11%.	0.10%.	0.10%.
2021/22.	0.00%.	0.06%.	0.03%.

3.16.

Overall, for the category for Access to Housing and Support, the level of evictions and abandonments remain very low. Tenancy sustainment has improved in respect of new homeless tenancies and remains high for all new tenancies more generally, the level of refusal of offers has improved. 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.
2023/24.	144.
2022/23.	142.
2021/22.	132.

4.3.

As a national comparator, the national average for homeless presentations per 1,000 people is 7.47 cases. In Orkney there are 6.4 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. The COVID-19 impact has resulted in a rise in homelessness presentations, and this has had an ongoing impact on the Service due to the numbers currently in temporary accommodation.

4.5.

From 1 April 2024 to 3 January 2025, homeless presentations totalled 90. If it continues at that level until 31 March 2025, a total of 120 presentations could be expected which could be less than for 2023/24. 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.
2023/24.	33.29.	39.71.
2022/23.	31.86.	38.14.
2021/22.	28.29.	37.29.

4.7.

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

Outcome.	Orkney.		Scotland's Housing Network.	
	2022/23.	2023/24.	2022/23.	2023/24.
Housed by Council.	66.7%.	66.67%.	60.2%.	60.18%.
Housing by Housing Association.	33.3%.	26.67%.	18.5%.	17.93%.
Private Rented Sector.	0%.	0%.	3.19%.	3.02%.
Returned to friends etc.	0%.	0%.	3.93%.	3.42%.
Hostel.	0%.	0%.	0.05%	0.12%.
Returned to previous accommodation.	0%.	6.67%.	4.58%.	4.83%.
Other outcomes.	0%.	0%.	7%.	7.29%.

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.
2023/24.	205.	226.
2022/23.	199.	225.
2021/22	202.	213.

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 slightly.

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.
2023/24.	1.43.	7.51.	6.01.
2022/23.	2.07.	7.37.	5.80.
2021/22.	1.09.	8.26.	6.12.

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.
2023/24.	£88.25.	£91.81.	£79.90.
2022/23.	£85.62.	£87.59.	£76.60.
2021/22.	£81.15.	£85.39.	£75.58.

6.2.

For 2023/24 the annual rental increase at 6.7% is above the Scotland's Housing Network average of 6.05% and peer group average of 5.98%.

6.3.

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

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2023/24.	102.47%.	99.40%.	98.93%.
2022/23.	99.33%.	99.03%.	99.38%.
2021/22.	99.50%.	99.28%.	100.10%.

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.
2023/24.	12.58%.	6.74%.	8.67%.
2022/23.	12.65%.	6.86%.	8.52%.
2021/22.	14.35%.	6.34%.	8.17%.

6.6.

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

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.	Peer Group.
2023/24.	7.11%.	4.43%.	5.33%.
2022/23.	8.44%.	4.70%.	5.28%.
2021/22.	8.5%.	4.38%.	5.21%

6.7.

Arrears have remained challenging because of the COVID-19 impact and 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 increased to 102.47% for financial year 2023/24 from 99.33% for 2022/23. This is a positive indication that the strong focus on reducing rent arrears is starting to net results.

6.9.

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

Date.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.
31 March 2024.	36.43%.	32.89%.
31 March 2023.	37.8%.	32.9%.
31 March 2022.	31.1%.	34.4%

6.10.

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

Year.	Orkney.	Scotland's Housing Network.
2023/24.	63.29%.	44.76%
2022/23.	48.19%.	44.60%.
2021/22.	59.4%.	40.7%.

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.
2023/24.	5.47%.	2.31%.	3.34%.
2022/23.	4.21%.	2.16%	3.24%
2021/22.	5.83%.	1.96%.	2.95%.

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 2023/24 totalled £42,007, or 18.26% 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.
2023/24.	18.26%.	26.01%.	21.54%.
2022/23.	33.72%.	27.06%.	16.82%.
2021/22.	6.99%.	27.57%.	19.41%.

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.
2023/24.	1.49%.	1.39%.	1.12%.
2022/23.	1.32%.	1.37%.	1.25%.
2021/22.	1.42%.	1.43%.	1.47%.

7.2.

There has been a slight increase 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.
2023/24.	71.43.	56.79.	53.07.
2022/23.	57.94.	55.61.	59.26.
2021/22	52.10.	51.58.	55.15.

7.4.

As regards the increase in the average time to re-let properties shown above, a total of 79 properties were re-let during 2023/24. 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 2023/24 there was 1 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. This compares to properties with a long re-let period in 2022/23, with three properties with 273, 203 and 203 days void. In 2021/22 there were two properties with 252 and 287 days void and three properties during 2020/21 with 392, 210 and 182 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 2023/24 includes:

- Time to complete 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 anti-social behaviour.
- Increase in level of rent collected as a percentage of rent.
- 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.
- Decrease in the percentage of tenants in arrears annually at 31 March.

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 non-emergency repairs.
- Right First Time repairs.

- Tenancy sustainment.
- Average time from homeless presentation to completion of duty.
- Length of stay in temporary accommodation.
- Percentage of tenants in arrears at point their tenancy ended.
- Average of days for re-let of properties.