



Environmental, Social
and Governance Report

2022



About us

We are, and always have been, a business committed to making a difference to local people. For many years we described ourselves as a housing association that diversified into care, however, when we consider what makes Orwell unique, what makes us value our independence, we are far from just a housing organisation. Caring for and supporting people as well as providing them with a comfortable home has become central to what we do. This is a key differentiator and has made us the biggest provider of care and support in Suffolk.

60 years on from our foundation we still value the ethos of why we were created but we now aspire to do more. We will become an organisation that provides the quality and type of housing which meets the needs of all generations at different stages in their life, along with providing the support to enable people to have control over their future.

We are a key local employer, employing over 760 people across Suffolk, Norfolk, North Essex, and Cambridge and are committed to being a great place to work. We were among Housing's 25 Best Associations to work for and in the East of England's 75 Best Companies to Work For List in 2021 and retained our Investors in People Silver accreditation in 2022. We now have around 4,000 homes in management across Suffolk, south Norfolk and north Essex and we provide care and support to around 1,100 people across our region. Our operations mean that in total more than 8,000 people have a safe home at a price they can afford giving them the opportunity to improve their life chances from a secure base.

Our development company Orwell Homes supports the work of Orwell Housing by building homes for the private market to generate a profit. This is used by Orwell Housing to provide more homes and services to vulnerable people as well as providing development services to Orwell Housing.

We are rated G1 (Governance) and V2 (Viability) by the Regulator for Social Housing. We have a strong and well-established governance structure which includes independent Board members with a wide range of skills from the public, private and voluntary sector. The Board devolves some of its work to its committees which cover audit, customer insight and remuneration and nominations. Orwell Residents' Group and customer task and finish groups provide a level of scrutiny over Orwell's services and we are working to expand their remit and influence.

Our Vision

That everyone has a safe place to call home with the care and support they need to live their best life.

Our Mission

That together we make a difference by providing housing, care and support services with the customers at our heart.

Our values



People-focused

People are at the heart of our organisation. By recognising people's diverse needs and strengths and treating everyone fairly we can both serve our customers better and support our teams to run a brilliant organisation and improve services.

Ambitious

We are ambitious to grow the organisation so that it can do more and realise the full potential of Orwell, our employees, and those we support and house.

Collaborative

We will work in partnership and search out best practice. We will collaborate with tenants, customers, colleagues and like-minded organisations to develop solutions together.

Effective

We will be economic and embed efficiency across our services, ensuring we lead the way with our knowledge and expertise. We will ensure that our teams are committed and competent to be the best at what they do, in order that they can provide the highest possible standards of service.



About Environmental, Social and Governance reporting

Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting refers to the disclosure of data relating to organisational performance in three areas: environment, social and corporate governance. It is also known as sustainability reporting.

Orwell adopted the Sustainability Reporting Standard (SRS) for Social Housing in 2022 and this report is structured to comply with that standard. We recognise that adopting a uniform approach will contribute to our progress in these areas and as a sector.

The SRS was created by an independent body made up of members from across the housing and financial sectors. The reporting themes and criteria were developed as a result of extensive consultation and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders including customers.

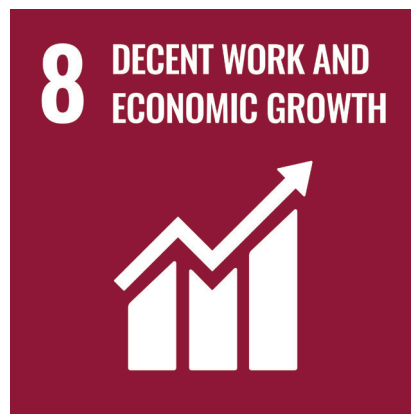
To remain transparent and accountable to our stakeholders, we will report annually on our environmental, social and governance performance. Within each theme we will report against individual criteria.



ESG area	Criteria (C)	Definition
Social	C1 – C5	Measures the affordability of the homes we provide to those on low incomes. It also seeks to assess how contractually secure our customers are.
	C6 – C8	Measures our legal compliance in protecting our customers and keeping their homes safe and secure.
	C9 – C11	Measures how we are listening to our customers and ensuring we hear what they are saying.
	C12	Measures what support we are providing our customers to improve their quality of life.
	C13	Measures how effectively we undertake whole organisation place making activities to improve our communities as a whole.
Environmental	C14 – C19	Measures our impact on the environment as well as how effectively we are planning for carbon net zero and sustainable homes.
	C20 – C21	Measures how effectively we are nurturing biodiversity and promoting green spaces within our communities.
	C22 – C24	Measures how effectively we are managing waste, pollutants and water in our supply chains and development programmes.
Governance	C25 – C30	Measures how effectively we are governed and structured.
	C31 – C41	Measures our board performance.
	C42 – C46	Measures how effectively we look after our employees' physical and mental health.
	C47 – C48	Measures how we manage our supply chain to maximise social value and minimise negative environmental impacts.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals are a call for action by all countries – poor, rich and middle-income – to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognise that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection. More important than ever, the goals provide a critical framework for COVID-19 recovery.





SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



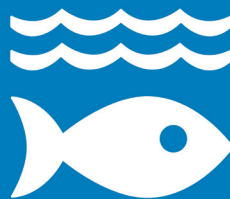
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



13 CLIMATE ACTION



14 LIFE BELOW WATER



15 LIFE ON LAND



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



Social

Affordability and security

We are committed to ensuring our homes are affordable and provide the highest possible levels of financial and physical security. Our rents are below Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, and we are committed to providing secure tenancies through fair agreements with our customers.

We recognise that fuel poverty is an issue that affects our customers. We are committed to improving this by raising awareness and ensuring our homes are warm and efficient.

C1. Our rent rates

Rent	Percentage
% of PRS rent (e.g. 80%)	56.3%
% of LHA rent (e.g. 90%)	68.2%

C2. An overview of our homes by type completed before the 2022 financial year

This is a breakdown of our existing properties (completed before 2022):

Property Type	Units	Percentage
General Needs units	1875	48.1%
Intermediate Rent units	18	0.5%
Affordable Rent units	941	24.1%
Supported Housing units	375	9.6%
Older People units	440	11.3%
Low-cost Home Ownership units	146	3.7%
Care Home units	24	0.6%
Private Rented Sector units	0	0.0%
Other units	80	2.1%

C3. Our homes completed during the 2022 financial year, by type

This is a breakdown of our new properties (completed Jan - Dec 2022).

Property Type	Units	Percentage
General Needs units	18	10.0%
Intermediate Rent units	0	0.0%
Affordable Rent units	18	10.0%
Supported Housing units	15	8.3%
Older People units	0	0.0%
Low-cost Home Ownership units	7	3.9%
Care Home units	0	0.0%
Private Rented Sector units	0	0.0%
Other units	122	67.8%

C4. Working to reduce fuel poverty

Orwell has introduced a carbon net zero project supported by the Board and identified within budget streams, which will start with the fabric of our homes, with the aim of reducing the amount of energy required to heat them, therefore reducing energy bills for our customers. As part of this project, consideration will also be given to alternative types of heating and PV solar panel provision.

Insulation projects have also been carried out in recent years and storage heaters are programmed for replacement with Dimplex Quantum heaters, alongside windows and doors being programmed for periodic replacement and upgraded with thermally efficient replacements.

Orwell has information and guidance on our website signposting customers to advice on tariffs, financial guidance, and information on agencies that can provide additional support. In addition to the online support, we have two full-time Tenancy Sustainment Officers. These Officers support tenants through grants obtained from various sources including local authorities, Local Welfare Assistance Scheme (LWAS), fuel support and household support funds, the Rope Trust and Orwell's own budget. Support can be provided in fuel and food vouchers, arrange carpet installations, provide budgeting advice, liaise with utility providers regarding bills and help customers access numerous grants and maximise income.

Orwell also works closely with four other housing associations in a partnership called Independent East, collaborating on some key initiatives, including having recently bid as a collective for decarbonisation funding. The outcome of this bid will inform our next steps as regards our work towards reaching carbon net zero.

Colleagues at Orwell are passionate about fundraising to help our customers and, through the 'Making A Difference' fund, have allocated £2,000 to be ringfenced for an emergency utility bill fund for customers. This will be used to help in emergency situations.

C5. Providing long-term security through fixed term tenancy agreements

87% of our rented homes are let on at least a 3 year fixed term tenancy basis.

Building safety and quality

We are committed to achieving the highest possible standards in building safety and quality. We continually strive to ensure that all of our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard, and keeping our customers safe is an integral part of the services we provide.

As at 31 December 2022:

C6. Ensuring our homes have gas safe appliances

99.6% of our homes had an up-to-date gas safety check.

C7. A commitment to fire safety through robust risk assessment

100% of our homes had an up-to-date and compliant fire risk assessment where one was registered.

C8. Delivering properties that meet the Decent Homes Standard

99.9% of our homes met the Decent Homes Standard.



Customer voice

C9. A transparent and customer-focused approach to providing services

Orwell has a diverse number of initiatives in place to ensure customers can have their say when it comes to our services. The most prominent, and indeed most utilised, is our Orwell Residents' Group (ORG) consisting of up to 10 customers.

These customers are so important as they identify areas to monitor and scrutinise and look at our Key Performance Indicators, customer satisfaction surveys and provide feedback on how we respond to customer feedback. They will often be the sounding-board for new initiatives and pilots for future services. They select at least three services each year for a comprehensive service review or scrutiny exercise, and the key recommendations from these reviews are implemented wherever possible to ensure continuous service improvement.

ORG provides vital feedback on customer-related policies, strategies or proposed service changes. They question, challenge and offer suggestions where they feel appropriate and keep us accountable to do what the organisation says it will do. We ensure, with the support of Orwell Residents' Group, that we undertake a self-review of our regulatory standards throughout the year. These reviews are then presented to the Customer Insight Committee, a sub-committee of our Board, who in turn will hold Orwell accountable for any improvements required. Having the voice of the customer at the heart of our governance processes ensures transparency and accountability to customers at the highest level.

Orwell was delighted to be part of a new residents' voice project, working together with an organisation called Creative Bridge and our Independent East partners. The initiative encouraged 10 customers from each housing association to come together and share their views, best practice and indeed areas where we could best improve services and learn from other residents and associations. A customer steering group has since been created from an initial 50 volunteers which scrutinises topics that matter to our customers and provide suggestions and practical solutions to the customer engagement teams from each association.

Orwell publishes and adheres to strict service standards, with clear, concise expectations for all our teams from tenancy management and our repairs services right through to our supported housing and care services; these can all be found on our website. We ensure that we are inclusive to all by offering a range of communication channels including digital and more traditional options, and additional methods like Easyread; a pictorial communication system.

To further cement Orwell's commitment to understanding our customers and ensuring their voices are truly heard, we are delighted to confirm we are currently expanding our Customer Insight and Engagement Team, who focus on how we engage with our customers and gather vital insight to shape our services and communications going forward. This team will work closely with all our services and schemes to ensure we are offering a more tailored and inclusive approach to meaningful engagement with all our customers.

C10. Clear customer satisfaction benchmarking to drive better engagement

Customer surveys are regularly carried out, both transactional, which are triggered by an interaction with Orwell, and census-style surveys which go out to all customers.

Transactional survey results are monitored on a monthly basis and feedback is shared with relevant colleagues. Any trends identified are acted upon appropriately.

We are currently preparing for the new Tenant Satisfaction Measure standard which is being introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in 2023, and we will start to gather data on customer satisfaction using a Tenant Perception Survey in 2023, with the first results being reported to the RSH and published in 2024. This survey will give us valuable insight into our customers' views and will enable improved benchmarking against comparable organisations, which we hope will drive better engagement with our customers.

C11. Striving to achieve best practice in complaints handling

In the last 12 months, 0 complaints have been upheld by the Housing Ombudsman.

Orwell complies with the Housing Ombudsman's revised complaint handling code, and we publish a self-assessment of our compliance with this code annually. This is also reported to Board to ensure transparency and accountability. Furthermore, Orwell has a comprehensive Complaints, Compliments and Compensation Policy which is publicly available on our website alongside comprehensive guides which are simple to follow. These guides are continuously updated to ensure our customers know how to raise a complaint with Orwell and to make this as easy as possible for customers.

A quarterly complaints report is presented to the Customer Insight Committee and on an annual basis to Board. Feedback from complaints is used to drive improvements in processes to improve the customer experience. The Chair of Orwell's newly formed Customer Insight Committee and a member of Orwell's Board has been nominated and appointed as Orwell's Complaints Champion.

Additional refresher training for colleagues is being put in place following customer feedback, which will be instrumental to ensuring that staff have the knowledge and awareness to offer the standard of service expected.

Our complaint guides are continuously being updated to ensure our customers know how to raise a complaint with Orwell.

Customer support

Our commitment to helping our customers build successful and fulfilling lives extends far beyond a landlord relationship.

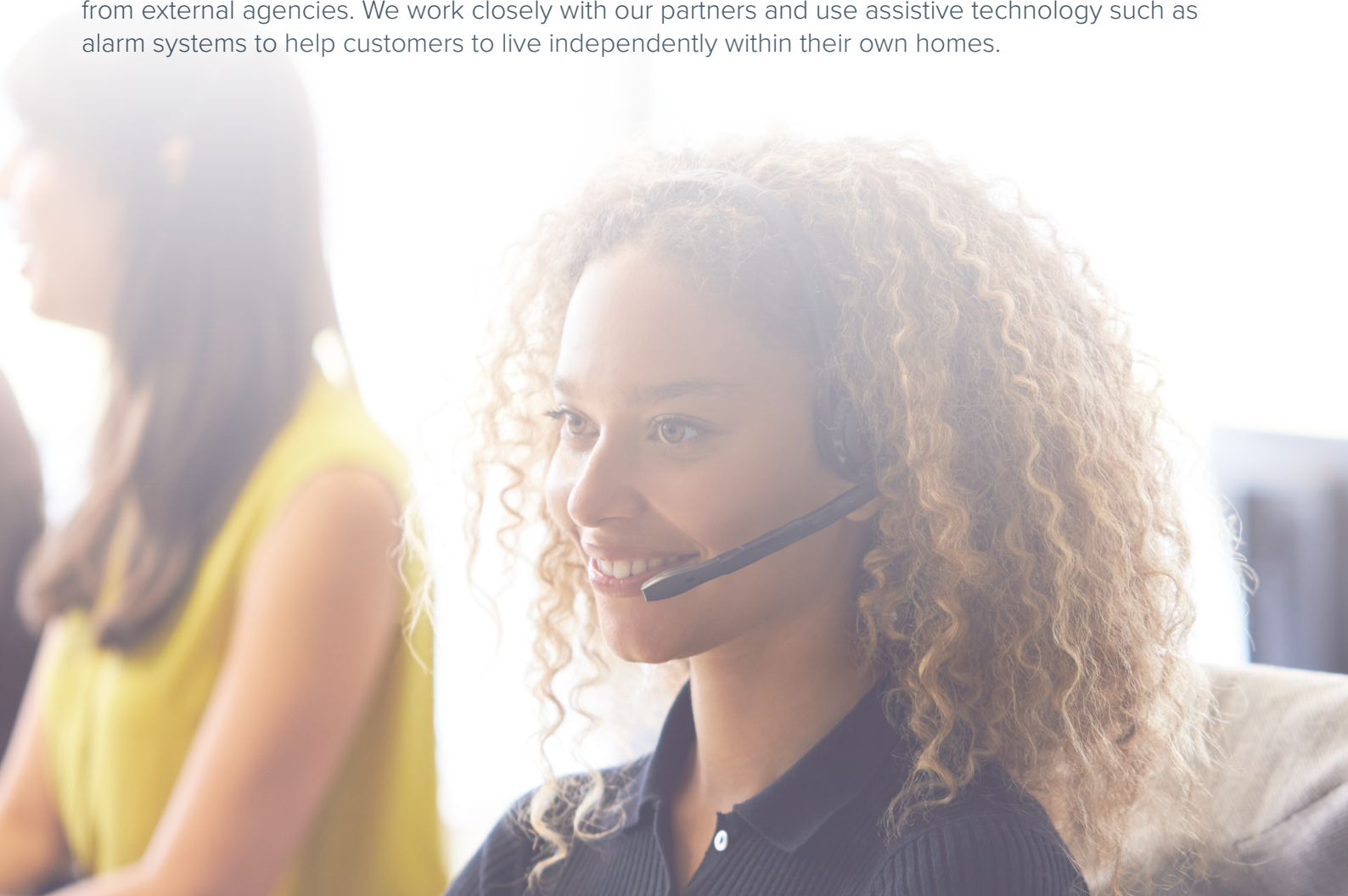
C12. Offering support and advice that leads to better outcomes for our customers

Orwell provides care and support services to diverse customer groups, including people with a learning disability, people escaping domestic abuse, people who are, or have been homeless and older people. Some of these services are regulated by the Care Quality Commission. The support provided is person-centred and intended to improve quality of life through a variety of strategies and outcomes; these will range from supporting people to gain employment and developing and maintaining practical life skills, through to simply making choices. Outcomes include improved health, wellbeing, confidence and esteem.

In our temporary and supported living properties, we have supported people to access planned moves to more permanent accommodation (96 out of 149 total moves). We have supported people to be safe and free from harm using our safeguarding procedures and ensuring all employees are trained and able to manage concerns. Of the 78 safeguarding concerns raised in 2022, Orwell reduced or removed risk of harm in 97% of cases.

Orwell also has its own bespoke Tenancy Sustainment Team. In 2022 our Tenancy Sustainment Officers received 149 referrals to help support our customers and they were able to help support and sustain 134 of those tenancies (89%) where customers engaged with the team.

Within our sheltered accommodation, our Sheltered Housing Support Officers are on hand to assist customers and complete annual support needs reviews. Some customers also access supported from external agencies. We work closely with our partners and use assistive technology such as alarm systems to help customers to live independently within their own homes.



Placemaking

We are committed to creating communities that are great places for people to live and call home.

C13. Transforming spaces to build better communities

In 2022, Orwell completed the refurbishment of the former police station in Leiston, transforming a redundant yet prominent building in a residential area into six flats, and enabling the provision of a further seven new homes in the grounds.

We are also currently constructing 31 new affordable flats on a redundant former commercial site in the centre of Lowestoft, ensuring that a derelict site delivers community benefits. This has included working with East Suffolk Council, our supported housing colleagues, and housing management team to make best use of the homes and to meet local housing needs.

Being very close to the centre of the town, the regeneration of the site to a residential use will provide quality accommodation within walking distance of many amenities and services, which also supports the local economy.



The background is a solid teal color with several overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes in a slightly lighter shade of teal. These shapes are primarily triangles and quadrilaterals, creating a layered, architectural effect. The shapes are positioned in the upper and lower portions of the frame, leaving a clear space in the center for the text.

Environmental

Climate change

We believe we have a fundamental role to play in safeguarding the world we live in for our customers both now and in the future. We need to establish the right data from our homes to ensure we can deliver EPC C by 2030 and carbon net zero by 2050. We are committed to being open to innovation and working in partnership with others in order to achieve our ambitious goals.

C14. Distribution of EPC ratings of our existing homes (completed before 2022)

Rating		Percentage	No of Assets
EPC rating A	92+	0%	0
EPC rating B	81 - 91	2%	62
EPC rating C	69 - 80	63%	2217
EPC rating D	55 - 68	31%	1108
EPC rating E	39 - 54	4%	132
EPC rating F	21 - 38	0%	12
EPC rating G	0 - 21	0%	0

C15. Distribution of EPC ratings of new homes (completed Jan to Dec 2022)

Rating	Percentage
EPC rating A	0.0%
EPC rating B	83.0%
EPC rating C	17.0%
EPC rating D	0.0%
EPC rating E or below	0.0%
Homes without EPC ratings	0.0%

C16. Scope one, two and three greenhouse gas emissions

Orwell is currently not able to accurately measure the greenhouse gas emissions covering all three specified scopes within the sustainability reporting. In 2023 Orwell will publish an environmental strategy including a net zero strategy and evaluate total energy consumption across the organisation.

C17. A proactive approach to energy efficiency

As lighting reaches end of life we replace with low energy solutions. We have also introduced battery drills, working machinery and an electric car charge point. We have commissioned a consultant review of our new home design which sets out how we can achieve carbon net zero in the delivery of our new homes. The first stage of this journey is to continue with a fabric-first approach, making homes as energy efficient as possible and we have also committed to no longer using gas as the default energy source for new homes. New homes will have efficient air source heat pumps and car charging points, or the infrastructure to install them at a later date.

We have a budgeted property improvement plan to help us move towards carbon net zero. In 2022, we upgraded the windows and doors of 84 properties, upgraded 176 storage heaters, replaced heating boilers in 114 properties and fitted 7 air source heat pumps in our properties.

C18. Working to mitigate and reduce climate risks now and in the future

We mitigate flood risk by creating emergency action plans and building protection, and fully assessing flood risk at the point of site identification for new homes.

C19. Helping our customers to become stakeholders in their environmental future

Orwell housing provides heating information and guidance related to heating and ventilating using internal communications and our website. This information is also contained within every tenancy sign up pack.

Information on local authority recycling and waste collection is provided for newly-constructed homes.

Ecology

We believe we have a responsibility to ensure that our homes and communities play a proactive role in the preservation and safeguarding of local ecology. We promote biodiversity in our new and existing communities.

C20. Building sustainable communities that champion biodiversity and open spaces

Deben View is an Extra Care service set in Woodbridge, housing 32 people with care needs. It is set in lovely, but traditionally managed communal grounds comprising trees and some shrubs, but to the greater extent laid to lawn.

The customers really love their garden and use it throughout the year for gardening projects, socialising and for the access it gives them to nature.

As a result of very dry summers, customers noticed the loss of quite a bit of hedging around the garden and realised their regular hedgehog visitors had disappeared due to new fencing. Deben View's gardens continued to envy lots of bird life largely due to the customers' birdfeeders, however, the lawned areas were dull and lifeless.

This is when the idea of re-wilding the grounds first 'took root.' The service initially contacted Suffolk Wildlife Trust and Transition Woodbridge and sought some re-wilding ideas. Transition Woodbridge and SOS- Swifts, held a meeting with customers to talk through the many possibilities.

The customers and staff at Deben View decided they wanted to create a beautiful nature-friendly garden; pleasing on the eye but equally enticing to local wildlife. The ethos central to the project would be to make, recycle and salvage resources wherever possible. Their vision was to plant a mini orchard on the central lawn surrounded by a simple wild flower meadow.

The customers have taken part in workshops using salvaged materials to make swift boxes, bird feeders and hedgehog homes and there is a nature board where tenants and staff can record the wildlife they have spotted over the different seasons, alongside binoculars and a library donated to the scheme.

Orwell's gardening team has been busy creating habitats for insects and small animals by building bug hotels and leaf piles, and during 2023, the Development Team plan to volunteer some of their time to plant the mini orchard.

Other projects in the pipeline include building a bird hide from a recycled shed and making a water feature from a salvaged sink.

It is hoped that Deben View's re-wilding project will provide the garden with a dynamic natural beauty, supporting a richer habitat for local wildlife, resulting in more insects, more bees, more butterflies, more birds, more bats, more mammals. In short, more of everything, for the enjoyment of the people who live and work at Deben View.

C21. Working in partnership to eliminate pollution from building new homes

Orwell's Development Design Guide includes a commitment to only using materials in our construction which are not harmful to the environment.

Contractors are required to have a site waste management plan and to report the discovery of any contaminating materials or substances.



Resource management

We are committed to ensuring our existing homes and future developments meet ethical targets and standards relating to responsibly sourced materials.

C22. A commitment to developing responsible resource management processes through measurable targets

Orwell's Development Design Guide includes a commitment to only using materials in our construction which are not harmful to the environment. This means that, in specifying materials, designers should follow the Green Guide to Specification Housing, aiming for materials which have an 'A' rating.

Furthermore, Orwell's Environmental and Sustainability Policy will be reviewed and will include a commitment to increase the use of responsibly sourced materials.

Currently we tender building materials through Procurement For Housing, with the tendered contract including key performance indicators (KPIs) relating to sourcing materials.

C23. A commitment to putting robust waste management processes at the heart of our building strategy

Our Development Design Guide sets out that developments should make the best use of reused and recycled parts and materials. For example, using reclaimed bricks instead of new bricks, using demolition material instead of new materials to build up roads, footpaths or underground floors or using aggregate for ground slabs, foundations or concrete pavements. It also sets an expectation that buildings should be designed and built so that materials can be easily reused or recycled when buildings are demolished.

When designing a scheme, architects and designers will be expected to detail how they have considered the disposal of waste from the site both from an aesthetic and a practical point of view.

Orwell has a flowchart to manage waste. We are currently reviewing our responsive repairs waste management activities, and anticipate rolling out a consistent approach across all areas of Property Services.

At both of our repairs depots, we have removed the general waste skips and replaced them with individual skips to enable operatives to sort their waste into general waste, dry mixed recyclables, paint, plasterboard, hardcore, metal and wood. As a result of this, we are able to reduce our carbon footprint and quantify how much the repairs division of our organisation is able to recycle.

During 2022, our Estate Services Team recycled 95% of their green waste and recycled 100% of their leaf waste. They replaced 70 trees and replanted a further 105. 95% of our aged and damaged wooden outdoor furniture has been replaced with recycled plastic furniture which will last longer and require less maintenance.

C24. Working to reduce water waste and ensure efficient water management

Water management is a primary consideration in all new developments. Our Environmental and Sustainability Policy will be reviewed in 2023 and updated to extend this into our programmed works operations.

Governance

Structure and governance

We are dedicated to robust governance effectively underpinning our organisation to support the delivery of our strategic objectives.

C25. Our services are registered and regulated

We are registered with the Regulator of Social Housing and some of our care services are regulated by the Care Quality Commission.

C26. Achieving regulatory excellence in viability and governance

Following Orwell's annual stability check from the Regulator of Social Housing published on 14 December 2022, we have achieved a governance and viability grading of G1/V2.

C27. Working to a recognised Code of Governance

In 2021, we adopted the National Housing Federation Code of Governance 2020.

C28. Providing a not-for-profit service

We operate as a not-for-profit business. Surplus from operations is reinvested in our current properties and services, as well as providing funds to develop more homes.

C29. Continuous organisational risk management to ensure better outcomes for everyone

Our strategic risks and major operational risks are considered at every Board meeting and reviewed quarterly by the Executive Directors and Operational Management Team and annually by the Audit Committee. The effectiveness of this system is kept under review and the ability to bring weaknesses and improvements required to the attention of Board is principally delegated to the Audit Committee.

Orwell also has in place an Assurance Map to monitor and confirm assurance activities across the business. The Assurance Map is regularly reviewed at Board as part of a wide-reaching Performance Report and by Audit Committee. The Board recognises it has overall responsibility for establishing and maintaining the whole system of internal control and for reviewing its effectiveness.

C30. Maintaining the highest possible ethical and legal standards

We have not had any adverse regulatory findings relating to data protection breaches, bribery, money laundering or Health and Safety Executive breaches in the last 12 months.

Board

We are committed to ensuring the Board reflects the diversity of the areas in which we work, adding value through a diverse outlook and experience to help us deliver on our objectives to make Orwell and our communities great places to be.

C31. A commitment to creating a diverse, skills-led, knowledge-rich Board

The demographics of our Board are set out here:

Measure	Data
% of Board that are women	64.0%
% of Board that are BAME	0.0%
% of Board that have a disability	9.0%
% of Board that are LGBTQ+	18.0%
Average age of Board members (years)	54.4
Average Board tenure (years)	4

This information is collected via an annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion survey. (At present we are not able to accurately compare these figures to the demographics of our customers, however a customer insight programme is in development which we anticipate will enable meaningful comparison in the future.)

C32. Creating stable leadership for the future

During the two years ended 2022, we had a 14% Board member turnover and a 36% management team turnover. The Board turnover was due to tenure requirements and the management team turnover was in part due to a transformation and a restructure process.

C33. Ensuring we benefit through new thinking, new learning, and new ideas

The maximum tenure for a Board member is 6 years, ensuring there is opportunity to keep the Board's opinions fresh with new experiences and knowledge.

C34. Creating the right blend within the senior leadership team

100% of the Board are non-executive directors.

C35. Financial leadership rooted in relevant skills, experience, and knowledge

Senior positions have been held by Audit Committee members in investor relations, corporate strategy and corporate communications, capital raisings, Initial Public Offerings, corporate transformations and acquisitions. One of our Board members is currently specialising in stakeholder engagement, regulated companies, debt and capital markets intelligence, Environmental Social and Governance, and corporate governance.

Senior positions have been held by one Board member in a variety of sectors including banking, mobile communications and the Financial Ombudsman Service, prior to joining a large housing provider as interim Chief Operating Officer and shortly thereafter Chief Executive Officer for four years, and now along with their Board position at Orwell they are the current Chair of another housing association.

Another member is a qualified accountant (FCCA) working at senior management and Executive Director roles in the social housing and care sector with a background in establishing and running a multi award-winning business.

C36. Number of executives on the Remuneration Committee

There are no current executives on the remuneration committee.

C37. A commitment to the future through succession planning

We have created a succession plan within the last year which has been provided to Board. Board succession planning is reviewed annually along with Board member recruitment to ensure the right blend of skills and experience.

C38. Experienced external financial oversight

Our current external auditor has been responsible for auditing the annual accounts of Orwell for three years.

C39. A commitment to independent benchmarking of senior leadership

An independent review of Board effectiveness was completed in November 2021.

C40. Our Chair and CEO roles are independent of one another

The roles of CEO and Chair are held by two different people, with clearly defined role profiles and responsibilities.

C41. Rigorous processes to eliminate conflict of interest issues

Declarations of interest are requested from Board members in writing annually and reported to Board on an annual basis. Each Board and Committee meeting has a formal agenda item for declarations of interest to be noted. Board member agreement for services stipulates a requirement to declare interests actual or potential as required by Orwell's rules, and policies including the Probit Policy, Subsidiary Governance Policy and Board Disputes, Complaints and Grievances Policy. Where a conflict is identified, that particular Board member would not take part in a discussion or vote on the matter.

Orwell has adopted the NHF Model Rules 2015 and conflicts will be dealt with as per these rules and/or the Board Disputes, Complaints and Grievances Policy as appropriate.

Employee wellbeing

C42. A commitment to the Real Living Wage

Whilst Orwell is not currently a Real Living Wage employer, we have a commitment to benchmark pay on an ongoing cycle to ensure that pay keeps pace with the market for all roles.

C43. Dedicated to reducing the gender pay gap

Our 2021/2022 mean gender pay gap was 8.1% and we remain committed to improving this in the future.

C44. Valuing every member of our team

The CEO to median-worker pay ratio is currently 6.7.

C45. Ensuring our policies and processes support the physical and mental health of our people

We support our colleagues by implementing the following initiatives:

- Wellbeing group and Employee Voice group (employee forum)
- Wellbeing champions
- Mental health first aiders
- Health checks
- Occupational health access
- Employee Assistance Programme with lifestyle support, financial wellbeing and counselling
- Dedicated communications regarding wellbeing, special interest days and awareness raising events
- Wellbeing tokens
- Performance management including regular support and supervision sessions
- Wellbeing strategy and wellbeing at Work Policy
- #flourish campaign
- Health assessments
- Bike to work scheme
- Flexible working policy and agile working strategy

C46. Creating a healthy environment for work

The average number of sick days taken per employee during 2022 was 11.4 and we are committed to reducing this.

Supply chain

C47. A commitment to creating social value

Orwell's Procurement Strategy contains the following objective:

'Demonstration of social value and environmental sustainability is included within all new specifications and positive outcomes generated.' Orwell aims to use local supply chains in procurement and works with customer groups to co-create tender specifications and service standards.

We produce an annual social value report, telling the stories of the positive difference we make.

C48. Reducing the environmental impact of our supply chains through best practice procurement policies

Orwell's Procurement Strategy contains the following objective:

'Demonstration of social value and environmental sustainability is included within all new specifications and positive outcomes generated.'





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or call 0345 60 100 30**

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