



Environmental, Social and
Governance Report

2021



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.

Almost 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 the association by building homes for the private market to generate a profit. This is used by the association to provide more homes and services to vulnerable people as well as providing development services to Orwell Housing Association.

We enjoy the highest rating of both a GI (Governance) and a VI (Viability) rating from 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. Orwell Residents' Group and customer task and finish groups provide a level of scrutiny of the association's services and we are working to expand their remit and influence.

Our Vision

To make a positive difference to the quality of life and future opportunities of our customers, our employees and our communities.

Our Mission

To provide a sector leading, customer centric housing, support and care service, which puts the ethos of 'together we make a difference' at our core.

Our values



People-focused

People are at the heart of our business. 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 business 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 business performance in three areas: environment, social and corporate governance. It is also known as sustainability reporting.

The structure of this report is in line with the Sustainability Reporting Standard (SRS) for Social Housing. We recognise that adopting a uniform approach will contribute to our progress in these areas 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



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 safe and efficient.

C1. Our rent rates

Rent	Percentage
% of PRS rent (e.g. 80%)	56.1%
% of LHA rent (e.g. 90%)	67.9%

C2. An overview of our homes by type completed before the 2020/2021 financial year

This is a breakdown of our existing properties (completed before 2021):

Property Type	Units	Percentage
General Needs units	1857	48.4%
Intermediate Rent units	18	0.6%
Affordable Rent units	924	24.1%
Supported Housing units	374	9.8%
Older People units	428	11.2%
Low-cost Home Ownership units	138	3.6%
Care Home units	28	0.7%
Private Rented Sector units	0	0.0%
Other units	68	1.8%

C3. Our homes completed during the 2020/2021 financial year, by type

This is a breakdown of our new properties (completed Jan - Dec 2021).

Property Type	Units	Percentage
General Needs units	7	4.2%
Intermediate Rent units	0	0.0%
Affordable Rent units	20	12.1%
Supported Housing units	3	1.8%
Older People units	0	0.0%
Low-cost Home Ownership units	8	4.8%
Care Home units	0	0.7%
Private Rented Sector units	0	0.0%
Other units	127	77.0%

C4. Working to reduce fuel poverty

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

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

Orwell has information and guidance on the main website signposting customers to advise on tariffs, financial guidance, and information on multiple agencies that can provide additional support. In addition to the online support, we have two full-time Tenancy Sustainment Officers. These Tenancy Sustainment Officers support tenants through grants obtained from local authorities; Local Welfare Assistance Scheme (LWAS) (Fuel support and Household support Funds); from the Rope Trust and Orwell's own budget where they provide support from sourcing fuel and food vouchers; arranging for carpet installations; to using their expertise to support tenants with budgeting advice; liaising with utility providers regarding their bills and helping tenants to access the numerous grants the government have announced recently.

Orwell also work closely with four other housing associations in a partnership called Independent East, collaborating on some keys initiatives such as promoting and funding workshops for tenants around tenancy sustainment including preventing rent arrears in a cost of living crisis, and the launch of the Affordable Warmth Task and Finish Group. This group will use all the tenancy sustainment resources across the five housing associations to look at potential short term solutions to increased energy prices affecting our tenants in the coming months.

The staff at Orwell are passionate about fundraising to help their customers and through the 'Making A Difference' fund have allocated £2,000 to be ringfenced for an emergency utility bill fund for tenants. This will be broken down into 80 payments of £25 each 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 (or longer).

Building safety and quality

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

C6. Ensuring our homes have gas safe appliances

99.8% percent of our homes have an up-to-date gas safety check.

C7. A commitment to fire safety through robust risk assessment

100 percent of our homes have an up-to-date and compliant fire risk assessment.

C8. Delivering properties that meet the Decent Homes Standard

100 percent of our homes meet 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. Through their monitoring, they will pick at least three services annually where they do a comprehensive service review or scrutiny exercise, and the key recommendations from these reviews will be implemented wherever possible to ensure continuous service improvement.

The ORG provide vital feedback on customer-related policies, strategies or proposed service changes and question and 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 our 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 prides itself on having clear, robust procedures when it comes to customer feedback, with a comprehensive complaints section on our website which has simple step-by-step guides to follow covering all eventualities. We are continually looking at ways to improve the way we respond to customer complaints, using satisfaction surveys each time a customer uses the process to inform any changes required.

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 embedding a new team who will focus purely 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.

Every three years we aim to carry out a wide-ranging customer satisfaction survey which includes perception-based questions to gain insight and levels of customer satisfaction with areas such as the overall service provided by Orwell, repairs and maintenance, care and support, estate services, anti-social behaviour handling, complaints handling and customer engagement. The last survey of this type was delayed by the pandemic and took place in 2021. The results have been compared to previous surveys to identify trends, and have been shared with all colleagues, the Board, ORG and our customers more widely through our e-newsletter and will form part of the annual report to tenants.

C11. Striving to achieve best practice in complaints handling

In the last 12 months, 0 complaints have been upheld by the 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 being updated to ensure our customers know what to do raise a complaint with Orwell and to make this as easy as possible for customers.

Complaint handling information will be reported on a quarterly basis to the new 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.

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

We ensure with the support of our Orwell Residents' Group that we undertake a self-review of our regulatory standards throughout the year.

Customer support

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

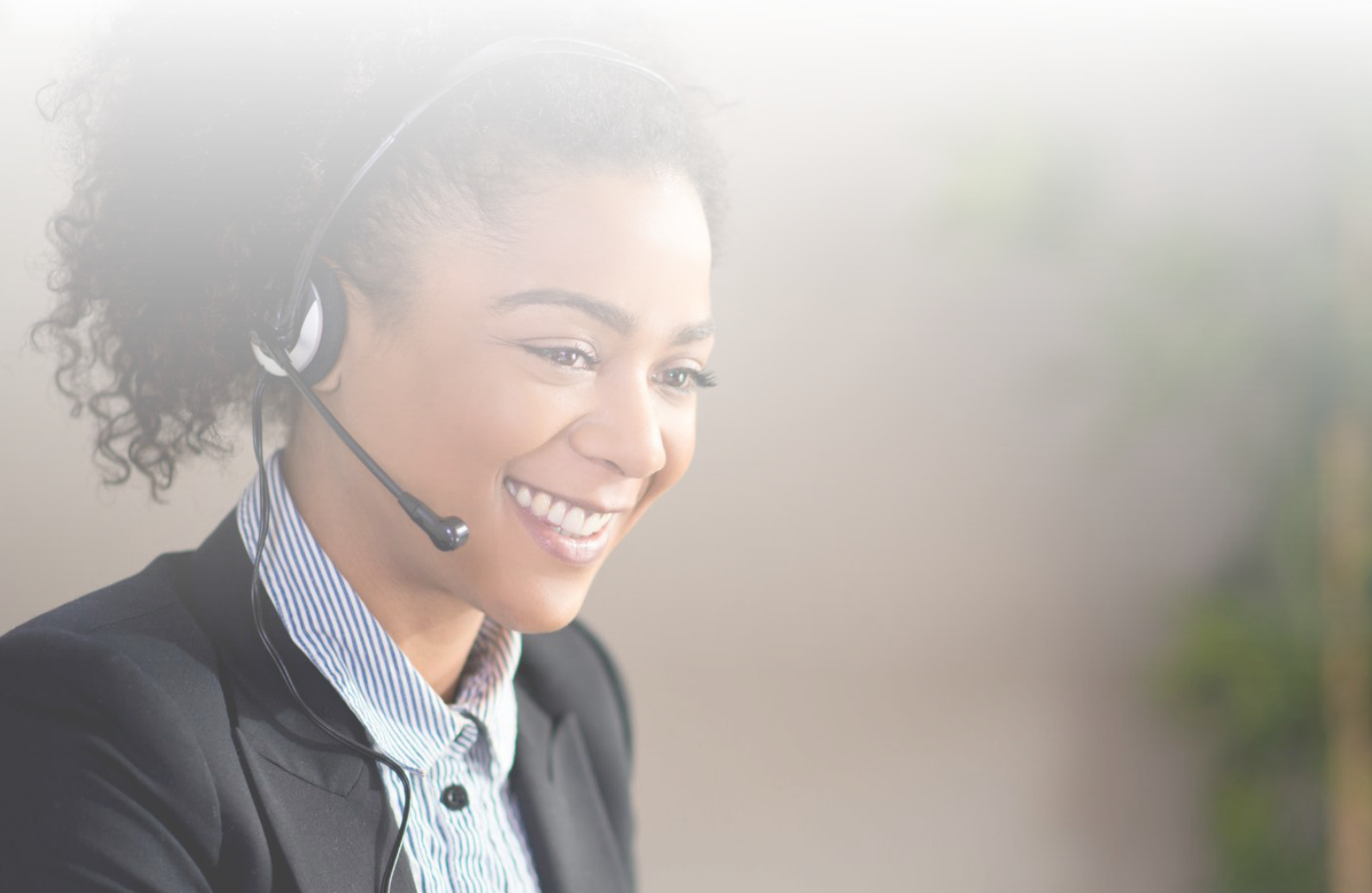
C12. Offering support and advice that leads to better outcomes for our customers

Orwell provides care and support services to diverse customer groups, including people with a learning disability, people fleeing domestic abuse, people who are 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, developing and maintaining practical life skills, through to simply making choices. Outcomes will also include improved health, wellbeing, confidence, and esteem.

In our temporary and supported living properties, we have supported people to access planned moves on to more permanent accommodation (104 of a total of 145 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 43 safeguarding concerns raised in 2021, Orwell reduced or removed risk of harm in 84% of cases.

Orwell also has its own bespoke Tenancy Sustainment Team. In 2021 our Tenancy Sustainment Officers received 93 referrals to help support our customers and they were able to help support and sustain 75 of those tenancies (80%) 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 2021, Orwell completed a fifth phase of an affordable housing development in the rural Suffolk village of Cockfield. Working with the local community, the Parish Council, District Council and County Council over a period of more than 10 years, we have provided 38 much-needed affordable homes for local people on various sites in this dispersed village community.

The development has also delivered some market sale homes, providing downsizing opportunities and, in partnership with the County Council, self-build plots and amenity provision such as additional public open space and transport improvements have been achieved. This placeshaping work has helped to contribute to the continued sustainability and vibrancy of a rural village community. Our work on brownfield sites and refurbishment projects plays an important role in placeshaping in more urban 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.



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 word "Environmental" is centered in the middle of the page in a white, sans-serif font.

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 net carbon 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 2021)

Rating	Percentage
EPC rating A	0.0%
EPC rating B	21.0%
EPC rating C	28.1%
EPC rating D	17.4%
EPC rating E or below	4.7%
Homes without EPC ratings	28.7%

C15. Distribution of EPC ratings of new homes (completed Jan - Dec 2021)

Rating	Percentage
EPC rating A	0.0%
EPC rating B	100.0%
EPC rating C	0.0%
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

The measure we have used to quantify our emissions is metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e). The breakdown is set out here:

Greenhouse Gas Emission	tCO ₂ e
Scope 1 emissions	734.65
Scope 2 emissions	0.15
Scope 3 emissions	0.28
Total scope emissions	735.23

C17. A proactive approach to energy efficiency

We have introduced low-energy lighting and as lighting reaches end of life we replace with low energy solutions. We have also introduced battery drills and 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 Net Zero Carbon 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, will also be provided.

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 has a suite of documents giving guidance on ventilation and heating homes. Information on local authority recycling and waste collection is provided for newly-constructed homes.



Orwell has more than 5,000 trees growing across all its communal areas and, in the last 12 months, we replaced 85 trees and planted 65 new trees.

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

Orwell's Estate Services Team now recycle and reuse 95% of their green waste; this is achieved by turning all of our green waste into mulch which is used on our shrub and flower beds. The team also recycle 100% of the leaf-waste, generated from our 5,000 communal trees; this is stored and turned regularly making it into a compost and soil improver.

Orwell has more than 5,000 trees growing across all its communal areas and, in the last 12 months, we replaced 85 trees and planted 65 new trees. Over the past 5 years, we have replaced and replanted 350 trees and will continue to do so.

With new homes, we require designers to improve the landscape, ecology and biodiversity of sites, wherever possible, and designers should protect high-quality landscape and existing valuable ecologies, which support plants, mammals, birds and insects through considerate design.

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.

Actively managing and reducing pollutants will be included in our Environmental and Sustainability Policy when it is reviewed in 2022, and we have already taken positive steps to reduce pollutants. Orwell's Estate Services Team has switched to using battery-powered tools on all of the caretaking sites and mobile gardeners. We have seen a saving of £18,000 in fuel, with the equivalent of £1,000 in electricity being used to charge the batteries.

The mobile gardening team have switched to an environmentally friendly fuel. When compared to cars, small engines such as strimmers and lawnmowers emit a relatively large amount of unburnt fuel. These unburnt parts of regular petrol contain substances harmful to the environment. The new fuel has virtually no pollutants. For example, you can mow for 100 hours with the new fuel before reaching the same level of toxic benzene emissions as one hour of mowing with regular petrol.

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, meaning that in specifying materials, designers should follow the Green Guide to Specification Housing, aiming for materials which have an 'A' rating.

Further, Orwell's Environmental and Sustainability Policy will be reviewed to 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 (KPI) 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's Environmental and Sustainability Policy will be reviewed to include a commitment to robust waste management processes. We have started to take action to address this area by auditing waste management in four categories:

1. Mixed Recycling
2. Non-Recyclable
3. Mixed Glass
4. Green Waste

In conjunction with this audit, we have a waste flowchart to manage waste. We are currently reviewing the responsive repairs delivery team's waste management activities, and anticipate rolling out the above approach across all areas of the Property Service.

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 2022 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 CQC.

C26. Achieving regulatory excellence in viability and governance

Following the most recent regulatory review of our services, we achieved a governance and viability grading of G1/V1.

C27. Working to a recognised Code of Governance

In 2021, we adopted the NHF 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 HSE 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	61.5%
% of board that are BAME	0.0%
% of board that have a disability	0.0%
% of board that are LGBTQ+	8.0%
Average age of board members (years)	54
Average board tenure (years)	3

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 2021, we had an 8% Board member turnover and a 29% management team turnover. The Board turnover was due to tenure requirements and the management team turnover was mostly due to a transformation and 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

Three members of the Audit Committee have recent and relevant financial experience, including investment analysis and management of UK equity pension funds and portfolios, responsibility for financial communications with shareholders and the investment community and collaborative working with a national financial education charity.

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.

Another member is a qualified accountant (FCCA) working at senior management and Executive Director roles in 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 exists on the Board.

C38. Experienced external financial oversight

Our current external auditor has been responsible for auditing the annual accounts of Orwell for 2 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.

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 requirement to declare interests actual or potential as required by Orwell's rules, and policies including Probity 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 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. We currently pay at least 30p an hour above the National Living Wage.

C43. Dedicated to reducing the gender pay gap

Our 2020/2021 mean gender pay gap is 0.5% 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 6.99.

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 comms regarding wellbeing: special interest days and awareness raising events
- Wellbeing Tokens
- Performance Management including regular One to ones
- 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 2021 was 10.9, 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.

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.'



