

## **Report of the Board of Management for the year ended 31 March 2024**

### **Strategic Report**

The Board presents its strategic report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 of Woven Housing Association Limited (the "Association").

### **Principal Activities**

The Association is a registered non-profit making housing association providing housing accommodation for those in need.

### **Company Profile**

Woven Housing Association (formerly known as Habinteg Housing Association (Ulster) Ltd) was founded in 1976 and is a registered housing association in Northern Ireland. Woven plans, develops and manages 'integrated' housing schemes in both urban and rural areas throughout the region and works with a number of partner organisations in providing supported housing projects. The Association currently has over 2,400 properties at more than 100 locations and 16 partnership schemes.

Woven's Vision - 'Homes, Lives and Communities Woven as One' encapsulates the Association's central aim of providing housing which combines a range of dwelling types - family houses, apartments and bungalows - in order to appropriately meet the needs of the widest range of users, including older persons and persons with a disability. Quality, sustainable developments include large and medium sized suburban housing developments, inner city apartments, individual rural cottages and specialised housing schemes. Partnership projects include sensitively designed housing with care schemes, temporary accommodation for people who are homeless, and housing initiatives for people with additional support needs.

The standard and quality of these developments has been recognised at local and national level with an impressive list of high-profile awards, including the UK Housing Award for Outstanding Achievement in Social Housing in Northern Ireland, the RICS Award for the Northern Ireland region and a succession of NIHE Housing Council Awards for Best Scheme in Northern Ireland.

Woven is a Customer Service Excellence organisation still retaining the Standard. We are a Gold standard Investor In People Organisation. We continue to hold the following international Standards:

- ISO9001 Quality Management Systems.
- ISO14001 Environmental Management.
- ISO45001 Occupational Health and Safety.

## **Results and Performance**

The surplus on ordinary activities for the year was £564,934 compared with a surplus of £541,107 for the previous year. The total Comprehensive income for the year is £415,934 against a figure from 2022/23 of £4,925,107.

For the 2023/24 Business year we continued to deliver our core services, maintaining our focus on our tenants, other customers and employees' needs. We responded to legislative changes, made funding decisions in a timely manner, and progressed our digital journey amid relocating all of our Holywood based staff and business to our new headquarters in Belfast.

Using our annual Business Operational Plan and Dashboard we outlined 26 external and internal KPIs and targets and monitored and reported on our performance on a quarterly basis to our Senior Management Team and Board. We have achieved significant success with these targets over the last 12 months.

## **Value for Money**

The Association is a member of Housemark which provides benchmarking information to enable us to continue to measure our performance against our peers in Northern Ireland and throughout the United Kingdom. We will continue to challenge ourselves to make best use of the resources we have available when meeting customer needs.

## **Risks**

The Board have reviewed the strategic and key risk register on a quarterly basis throughout the year. This covers inherent and residual risks for the key strategic areas within the organisation as well as further actions that the Association has put in place to minimise any potential impact. This will continue to be reviewed and amended by the Association.

## **Treasury Management Policy**

The Association's aim is to keep cash balances to a minimum of £2,000,000 where possible and therefore keep loan interest charges to a minimum. This is achieved without compromising the Association's ability to meet its financial obligations as they fall due. During the period new loans of the value of £12,000,000 were drawn down. It is noted that the cash balances currently held will be utilised on new developments and to fund our planned maintenance programme.

All surpluses generated by the Association have been reinvested in order to maintain existing homes in good condition, develop new homes at rent levels as low as possible and to reduce borrowing requirements. The reserves that the Association has built up have largely been reinvested into its properties and are not, therefore, represented by cash balances.

### **Future Development**

The Association's strategy is to increase the number of homes in management each year through a combination of house purchases and new developments on site. There are 146 new starts expected during 2024/25. We anticipate to hand over 278 new homes to new tenants throughout the year.

### **Corporate Governance**

In the opinion of the Board, the Association is in compliance with the Best Practice Code of Governance issued by the NHF and has complied with all DfC Regulatory Standards during the year.

### **The Board**

The Board meets regularly throughout the year. There are various sub-committees who meet regularly throughout the year with specific responsibilities for development, housing management and maintenance, finance and corporate services, as well as audit and risk.

There were five Board meetings during the course of the year and the attendance was as follows:

Mr N McIvor	5	N Loughran	5
Mr G McCabe	5	Mr G Gilpin	3
Mr G Davidson	4	Ms M Alcorn	4
Ms L Allen	3	Ms E Martin	3
Mr D McCavery	2	Mr M Stevenson	1

Michael Stevenson retired in May 2023, and Elizabeth Martin retired in March 2024.

Ms N Loughran, Mr G McCabe and Mr G Davidson retire by rotation and are seeking re-election.

### **Audit and Risk Committee**

The Association has an Audit and Risk Committee with clearly defined terms of reference. The committee comprises 2 members and meets at least 4 times a year. Any member is entitled to attend a committee meeting. The Audit and Risk Committee monitors financial reporting and accounting policies along with the adequacy of the Association's internal financial controls and provides a forum through which the Association's external and internal auditors report to the Board. The Board believes it has an objective and professional relationship with its auditors.

### **Going Concern**

After making enquiries, the Board has a reasonable expectation that the Association had adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

### **Internal Financial Control**

The Board is responsible for the Association's systems of internal financial control and along with senior management, is responsible for establishing and operating detailed control and report procedures. The systems of internal financial control can provide only reasonable, and not absolute, assurance against material misstatement and loss.

The Board has reviewed the effectiveness of the Association's system of internal financial control. The review included consideration of the business risks facing the association and of the existing internal financial control procedures. The key elements of the control system in operation are:

- the Board has adopted a formal schedule of matters reserved for its approval ensuring it maintains responsibility for overall strategy, approval of all property transactions and other major capital expenditure projects;
- there is an organisation structure with clearly defined lines of responsibility and delegation of authority;
- detailed budgets are prepared covering the Association's businesses which are reviewed and approved by the Board. Actual results are compared against budget and appropriate action identified and initiated; and
- the Audit and Risk Committee reviews matters relating to internal control and receives reports on a regular basis from the external and internal auditors and from senior management.

### **Compliance with Code of Best Practice**

The auditors have confirmed that in their opinion, with respect to the Board's statements on internal financial control and going concern above, the members have provided the disclosures required by the Code and such statements are not inconsistent with the information of which they are aware from their audit work on the financial statements, and that the Board's statement on pages 3 to 7 appropriately reflects the Association's compliance with the other paragraphs of the Code. They have carried out their review in accordance with the relevant Bulletin issued by the Auditing Practices Board, which does not require them to perform any additional work necessary to express a separate opinion on the effectiveness of either the Association's system of internal financial control or corporate governance procedures, or on the ability of the Association to continue in operational existence.

### **Disclosure exemption**

The company is currently involved in a number of disputes where it is not possible to determine the financial impact at this time. The information usually required in relation to Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets is not disclosed on the grounds it could prejudice the outcome of these disputes.



### **Statement of the Board**

The Board is required to prepare accounts for each financial period which give a true and fair view of the state of the Association's affairs and of its surplus or deficit for that period. In preparing those accounts the Board is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts; and
- prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Association will continue to operate.

The Board is responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Association. It is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Association and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.

### **Auditor**

The Audit and Risk Committee recommended to the Board that Ross Boyd Chartered Accountants be re-appointed as the Association's external auditors and Ross Boyd Chartered Accountants have indicated a willingness to continue in office. A resolution concerning their reappointment will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting.

On behalf of the board



Neil McIvor  
Chairman  
11<sup>th</sup> September 2024