

Reg no. IP 000394

Alpha Housing (Northern Ireland) Ltd

Report and Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

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Board of Management and Advisers

The Board

Mr J Glass	Chair
Mr K Dempsey	Vice Chair
Ms I Kingston	Secretary, Resigned 26 September 2024
Mrs R Steenson	Secretary
Mr E Sweeney	
Mr C Logan	Resigned 26 September 2024
Ms J Winters	Resigned 2 August 2024
Ms G Hobson	
Ms E McKernon	
Ms L Hagan	
Mr D Simpson	Resigned 19 June 2024
Mr S Kearney	
Mr N Carson	Co-Opted 4 December 2024
Mr B Johnston	Co-Opted 4 December 2024
Ms B Goan	Co-Opted 4 December 2024
Mr A Burke	Co-Opted 4 December 2024

Chief Executive

Mr C Watt

Registered office

Alpha House
6 Edgewater Road
Belfast
BT3 9JQ

Registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 formerly the Industrial and Provident Societies Act (Northern Ireland) 1969.

Registered number

IP 000394

Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland – NIC 105339

Alpha Housing (Northern Ireland) Ltd
Year Ended 31 March 2025

Statutory Auditors

Sumer AuditCo. NI Ltd
Glendinning House
6 Murray Street
Belfast
BT1 6DN

Bankers

Danske Bank
Donegall Square West
Belfast
BT1 6JS

Solicitors

Carson McDowell
Murray House
4 Murray Street
Belfast
BT1 6DN

Elliott Duffy Garrett
40 Linenhall Street
Belfast
BT2 8BA

Edwards Solicitors
3rd Floor, Sessia House,
61-67 Donegall Street
Belfast
BT1 2QH

Report of the Board of Management for the year ended 31 March 2025

The Board presents its report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Purpose, Vision and Values

In 2024-25, Alpha Housing adopted a new corporate strategy for 2025-30, including refreshed purpose, vision and values.

Alpha Housing's purpose is to is 'To enhance lives by providing beautiful, affordable homes and exemplary support; nurture vibrant communities; and help deliver positive social change.'

Our vision is 'To help people thrive through great homes and support.'

Alpha Housing's 'CREATE' Values are caring, respect, empowerment, authenticity, togetherness and excellence.

Status

Alpha Housing (NI) Ltd (T/A Alpha Housing) came into operation on 1 July 2009. We were registered by Companies Registry as an Industrial and Provident Society on 23 March 2009 (number IP394) and by the Department for Social Development on 29 April 2009 (number R54).

Alpha Housing has charitable status (number NIC 105339) and is regulated by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. As a registered housing association, Alpha Housing is regulated by the Department for Communities. As a Community Benefit Society, Alpha Housing is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Alpha Housing is a member of the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations.

Principal activities

Alpha Housing has a housing stock of 1,006 homes, with 1,003 currently lettable across 40 locations in Northern Ireland.

Our Strategic Priorities to 2030 are to:

- Maintain our homes to a high standard;
- Provide exemplary housing and support services;
- Build beautiful homes to meet housing need;
- Deliver social and environmental change;
- Run our business effectively; and
- Invest in our people.

Governance

Alpha is committed to the highest standards in governance.

During 2024-25, the Department for Communities issued its sixth annual formal regulatory judgements under the revised regulatory framework. This confirmed that for 2023-24, Alpha achieved the highest level of compliance (Level 1) in all areas encompassing governance, financial viability, and service standards.

Under the leadership of the Chair, John Glass, Director of Infrastructure & Projects Delivery at Translink, Alpha is effectively governed and led by an experienced and professional Board.

The Board regularly reviews its effectiveness, including through a robust annual appraisal process. A training programme is provided for Board members, which in 2024-25 encompassed induction for new members, good governance, new-build development and sector finance.

In 2024-25, our Board oversaw delivery of the final year of the 2022-25 Corporate Strategy. This included ensuring further progress in the delivery of the organisational development and IT strategies, enhancing staff performance and corporate infrastructure.

Four high-calibre recruits joined the Board: Adrian Burke; Nigel Carson; Bronagh Goan; and Brendan Johnston. New Board members have extensive senior-level experience including in housing management, treasury management, public service administration, social care and safeguarding, and public relations.

Having set a new corporate strategy for 2025-30, the refreshed Board is reforming its committee structure and ways of working to help ensure that governance is as effective as possible, focusing on strategic leadership to complement the able operational management of the senior leadership team.

Statement of Compliance with Code of Governance

During 2024-25 Alpha continued to comply with the National Housing Federation's Code of Governance (2015) and Code of Conduct (2012). These are widely used by housing associations across the UK and reflect good practice in our sector.

The Board has decided to adopt the 2022 NHF Code of Conduct with effect from 1 April 2026. It is then intended to adopt the 2020 NHF Code of Governance with effect from 1 April 2027.

Risk management

Alpha Housing continued to effectively manage and mitigate risk during 2024-25.

Corporate risk registers were systematically used by the Board, committees, and senior management to effectively identify and manage risks.

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During 2024-25, the Audit and Governance Committee continued to be chaired by Stephen Kearney, a Partner in Fitzpatrick and Kearney Chartered Accountants. During the financial year the Committee met three times to consider and advise the Senior Leadership Team and Board on key strategic risks, audit strategy and audit reports.

Five internal audits were carried out by Wbg (previous Wylie & Bisset) during the year covering Development; Management of Voids and Re-Lets; Budgetary and Financial Reporting; and Tenant Safety: Electrical, Fire Legionella Reactive Maintenance. All resulted in the highest 'Satisfactory' rating, with auditors making fewer recommendations overall to Alpha than is typical for Wbg housing association internal audits in these areas. Much good practice was recorded, and helpful recommendations were made. In their 2024-25 Annual Report, Wbg reported that Alpha has adequate and effective risk management, control and governance processes to manage the achievement of its objectives and has proper arrangements to promote and secure value for money. Overall, the internal auditor reported that a 'Satisfactory' level of assurance is in place.

The Audit & Governance Committee continues to be pleased with the performance of internal auditors Wbg, a Scottish firm with extensive social housing experience across the UK. This is helping to maximise the contribution of internal audit to ongoing business improvement.

Delivering high-quality housing and support

Alpha Housing provides exemplary homes and support. Sheltered scheme co-ordinators and cleaners consistently 'go the extra mile' for tenants. Individual support provided to sheltered tenants includes practical assistance in arranging repairs or accessing healthcare. Group activities including coffee mornings, lunch clubs and scheme outings remain popular and help tenants to stay engaged and active, reducing loneliness and isolation.

During 2024-25, the Housing Executive's Supporting People team, who fund the support service in our sheltered schemes, inspected Johnston Close in Ballymena and Northland Court in Carrickfergus. Both schemes passed with distinction, and inspectors acknowledged much positive feedback from tenants.

Over the last year, housing management performance has continued to be strong. Non-technical arrears have been very low at 0.9% of rental income due for 2024-25. Only £1,468 of past tenant arrears had to be written off during 2024-25, equating to significantly less than 0.1% of rent due.

We continue to re-let our homes in a good time with a total of 135 re-lets completed during 2024-25. This high number equates to 13% of our total stock, due to the increased rate of turnover of homes in sheltered housing. Void levels were kept at a relatively low level throughout the year to 24 homes at year-end, with associated rent losses equating to 1.9% of rent due for the year.

Tenant participation

Alpha is committed to ensuring that our tenants have a full opportunity to help shape the services they receive and hold us to account for our performance.

Annual 'Time for Tenants' meetings in our sheltered schemes remain popular and well-attended. They allow senior staff to update residents on general and scheme-specific matters, for maintenance and housing management concerns to be raised, enabling staff to gain a wider understanding of the needs of tenants.

Our Tenant Committee met on a quarterly basis during 2024-25 at various sheltered schemes across NI. The Chief Executive and other members of the Senior Leadership Team prioritise attending these meetings to present on and discuss key matters. Over the last year these meetings have confirmed ongoing improvements in response maintenance through the new Measured Term Contract (MTC). Tenants have also recognised that grounds maintenance has improved in 2025, following concerns in 2024. The Tenant Committee continues to meet periodically with the Board, to help strengthen resident input to our governance.

The wider Tenant Forum, to which all residents are invited, met twice during the year at well-attended meetings at The Europa Hotel in Belfast. Meeting topics included discussion on priorities for the 2025-30 corporate strategy, that valuably helped shape its development; the new 'Customer Promise', formalising service standards; presentation of the 2025 'STAR' survey results; and an interview with local TV personality Pamela Ballantine.

A further way in which the resident voice is heard is through the inclusion of two tenant representatives in our Customer Services Committee, to which the Board delegates oversight of day-to-day service delivery.

2025 STAR Survey Results

Independent research during 2024-25 found that Alpha Housing is one of the top-performing social landlords in the UK for tenant satisfaction. The 'STAR' survey conducted by IFF Research, one of the UK's leading social housing research firms, in February 2025 found that 91% of the 280 residents questioned were satisfied with the overall service they receive.

This is highest level of satisfaction recorded among IFF's 34 social housing clients across the UK. Alpha ranked first on 13 out of the 14 key metrics, including communication, repairs, customer service and overall trust. There has also been a big improvement since in satisfaction with repairs and maintenance, which has risen from 79% in 2023 to 87% in 2025.

Value for money

To fulfil Alpha Housing's social mission, it is vital our business is run effectively and efficiently.

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For 2024-25, a rent increase of 8.5% was applied. This was necessary given ongoing significant increases in maintenance, salary and energy costs during 2023-24. For context, sector rents are generally increased by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) measure of inflation. CPI inflation in September 2023 was 6.7%, and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) set a rent increase of 7.7% for 2024-25, as did many English housing associations.

Despite the need for another significant rent increase, NIFHA benchmarking confirms that Alpha's rents remain comparable to other sheltered housing providers in NI. Given the comparably good levels of scheme staffing, investment in planned maintenance and excellent response repairs service, Alpha's weekly charges still represent good value for money.

Alpha continues to use Housemark benchmarking to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of our business and to identify potential areas for improvement.

More detail on Alpha's work in this area will be included in the Value for Money statement which, in line with regulatory requirements, will be published alongside our Annual Regulatory Return to DfC for 2024-25.

Running our business effectively

Alpha continues to use Housemark benchmarking to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of our business and to identify potential areas for improvement.

Strong financial management includes effective long-term financial planning. As well as funding our growing newbuild programme, over the next few years significant financial resource will be required making adequate provision for planned maintenance in Alpha's sheltered housing schemes, including enhancing fire safety through the transition to 'stay put' fire strategies. Leading in the financial modelling, Alpha's Chief Operating Officer has ensured that the latest iterations of our 30-year long-term financial plan (LTFP) effectively anticipate and plan for these investment requirements.

Further strengthening leadership and management is at the heart of the new Organisational Development Strategy. During 2024-25, after extensive engagement with staff, a new 'Empower' framework has been developed to help ensure all staff receive effective support from managers, enabling them to maximize their contribution.

Good progress was also made in implementing the IT Strategy. This included the procurement of a new IT support provider and selection of a new housing and finance software package. Both should lead to increased business efficiency and strengthened cyber security.

Delivering social and environmental change

Alpha Housing is committed to helping deliver social and environmental change.

In 2024-25, Alpha made exciting progress in our work on biodiversity. Hundreds of metres of native hedges were planted, along with trees donated from a range of sources.

Excitingly, Michael Topping built our first wildlife pond at Montgomery Manor in Bangor which we hope will be the first of many. This work was extensively featured on BBC NI TV and radio.

Social enterprise Outwork have continued as our main grounds maintenance provider. In various ways, such as reduced use of herbicides and designating 'no mow' zones, Outwork are valuably contributing to Alpha's work on biodiversity. Many tenants are also supporting this through a variety of gardening projects, including growing vegetables in raised beds.

In March 2025, Alpha held our first *Greening Social Housing Conference* at Riddel Hall in Belfast. Held in partnership with Aico and NIFHA, the event was focused on helping social landlords to manage existing sites and build new homes in ways that better support nature.

Alpha has committed to reduce our carbon emissions by at least 30% by 2030. To this end we are starting to install solar photovoltaic panels at our sheltered housing schemes to help provide heat and light in common areas. In 2024-25, solar PV panels were installed at Leyland Lodge in Ballycastle and many of our newbuild projects, including in Ballymoney and Newry.

Maintaining our homes

Alpha Housing delivered an excellent response maintenance service in 2024-25 in partnership with H&A Group, Refresh, Atlas and other contractors. 5,165 response repair orders were completed during 2024-25. Expenditure increased slightly from a total of £1.05M in 2023-24 to £1.1M for 2024-25 (including repairs relating to services and support), equating to £1,087 spent on response repairs per home, and reflecting rises in construction and building costs. Response time performance was impressive: 97% of emergency repairs were completed in 24 hours; 95% of urgent repairs were completed in 4 working days; and 95% of routine repairs were completed in 20 working days, versus an Alpha target of 94% on each.

In cyclical and planned maintenance, during 2024-25 Alpha continued to invest heavily in our sheltered schemes, including through fire safety measures, kitchen replacements and cyclical redecoration. The £1.3M programme (including associated administrative costs) was equivalent to £1,324 per home. In pursuing improved fire safety across our schemes, we began the implementation of 'stay put' fire strategies at four of our sheltered housing schemes during 2024-25. These projects are scheduled to be completed during the first half of 2025-26. During 2024-25, kitchen replacements were completed at Lowry Court, Belfast and McManus Court, Newry. Lifts were replaced at our Killyleagh and McManus Court schemes. Solar photovoltaic panels were installed at Leyland Lodge, Ballycastle to help reduce tenants' service charges for communal heat and light, and in support of our corporate commitment to reduce carbon emissions by at least 30% by 2030.

Building new homes

Alpha Housing's newbuild programme accelerated during 2024-25. 'Starts on site' for 78 new homes were achieved across seven sites in Newry, Ballymoney, Belfast, Carryduff, Cullybackey, Ahoghill, Omagh, Coleraine, Whitehead and Newtownabbey. These schemes comprised a mix of general needs family homes; 'Category 1' homes for independent elderly; and wheelchair adapted bungalows. At year end, 142 homes were under construction on ten sites.

Quality design and effective placemaking is a priority. Alpha continues to champion the 'HAPPI' principles, the blueprint for high-quality housing for older people. Developments are regenerating derelict town centre sites. For example, Piper Close in Ballymoney has transformed a dilapidated brownfield site to an attractive community asset, providing homes for wheelchair users very close to the town's shops and other amenities.

Many potential development opportunities continued to be explored by Alpha's Development Director, James Wright. Notwithstanding limitations around capital grant funding constraints and the well-publicised issues with NI's wastewater infrastructure, Alpha expects our development activity to steadily grow over the next few years, with support in grant funding from the Department for Communities / Northern Ireland Housing Executive and loan finance from Danske Bank.

2024-25 Financial performance

Responsibility for Alpha's finances is reserved to the Board, which includes senior finance professionals and many others with experience of managing significant budgets.

The headline results for the year were:

Turnover	£8,075,673
Operating Costs	£6,684,516
Operating Surplus	£1,391,157
Total Comprehensive Income for the Year	£1,384,526

Turnover increased by 11.4% during 2024-25 and the operating surplus increased to £1,391,157 from £978,245. Proactive financial management and monitoring ensured that high-quality services were delivered to tenants while maintaining a robust Operating Surplus. The Board believes this was a satisfactory financial performance.

Expected performance in Year Ending 31 March 2026

Turnover is expected to grow by 7.4% to £8.3M due to new schemes and rent increases. Expenditure is budgeted to increase by 9.5% to £7.6M, due to projected increases in response and planned maintenance costs, largely driven by market conditions, property costs, salaries and increased depreciation associated with new scheme development. An

operating surplus of £597K was included in the budget for 2025-26 approved by the Board in February 2025. Alpha is planning for the risks to our financial performance from continued inflation and wider financial uncertainties. These are monitored on an ongoing basis by the Senior Leadership Team, with financial forecasts reviewed and adjusted for each month and reported formally to the Board at each meeting.

Alpha will pursue new development opportunities in 2025-26 and is ensuring that the appropriate funds are available as required. Planned and cyclical maintenance programmes will continue and expenditure on these is expected to be in the region of £3.3M.

Treasury

Responsibility for Treasury Management is reserved to the Board. The Association's Treasury Management Policy facilitates the effective management of cash flows, borrowings, investments and the risks associated with these activities. At 31 March 2025, Alpha had loans outstanding of £1.85M, this had been repaid in full and on time at the date of when the Board of Management Report was signed, and cash of £3M.

To support Alpha's growth ambitions, a bank loan facility for up to £10M is in place with Danske Bank. At 31 March 2025, Alpha had drawn down £1.85M, with £2.5M prepaid during the year, through the revolving credit facility. Alpha Housing is currently in the process of securing £30M in debt finance, which will replace the existing £10 million, thereby securing an additional £20M.

Statement of the Board of Management responsibilities

The relevant legislation requires the Board to prepare financial statements for each financial year 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 these financial statements 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 financial statement; and,
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Association will continue in business.

The Board is responsible for keeping proper accounting records which (i) disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Association and (ii) enable it to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Credit Unions and Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 and the Registered Housing Associations (Accounting Requirements) Order (Northern Ireland) 1993. It has general responsibility for taking reasonable steps to safeguard the assets of the Association and detect fraud and other irregularities.

Statement of disclosure of information to auditors

So far as each of the members of the Board at the date of approval of these financial statements is aware:

- There is no relevant audit information of which the Association's auditors are unaware; and
- They have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as members of the Board in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Association's auditors are aware of that information.

Statement on internal financial control

The Board acknowledges that it has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the Association has in place a system of controls that is appropriate for the business environment in which it operates. These controls are designed to give reasonable reassurance about:

- The reliability of any financial information that is published, or is used within the Association;
- The maintenance of proper accounting records; and,
- The protection of the Association's assets against their unauthorised use or disposition.

It is the Board's responsibility to establish and maintain systems of internal financial control. Such systems can only provide reasonable (and not absolute) assurance against material financial misstatement or loss. The key elements of these systems include ensuring that:

- There are formal policies and procedures (including the documentation of key systems and rules relating to the delegation of authorities) which allow the monitoring of controls, and which seek to prevent the unauthorised use of the Association's assets;
- Experienced staff, suitably qualified, are responsible for the key functions within the organisation;
- Forecasts and budgets are prepared so that the Board and management can monitor both key business risks and financial objectives and also the progress towards financial plans set for the year and the medium term;
- Regular management financial statements are prepared which provide relevant, reliable and up-to-date financial information; and
- Significant variances from budgets are investigated as appropriate.

All significant initiatives, major commitments and investment projects are subject to formal authorisation procedures through relevant committees which are controlled by Board members.

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The Board reviews reports (from management and from the internal auditors) in order to provide reasonable assurance that the control procedures are in place and are being followed. The work of the external auditors also provides some assurance through the year-end audit and the provision of an internal control report.

The Board has reviewed the system of internal financial control in existence in the Association for the year ended 31 March 2025. No weaknesses were found in internal financial controls which resulted in any material losses, contingencies or uncertainties which would require disclosure, in these financial statements, or in the auditor's report.

Independent Auditors

A resolution concerning the reappointment of Sumer AuditCo Ltd. will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting.

By Order of the Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Glass', with a stylized, cursive script.

John Glass

Chair
25 September 2025