

CRHA ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25



MyCRHA —

#makingadifference #peoplebusiness

Making a difference to rural communities across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

### **CONTENTS**

Page Title

- 3 Chair of the Board Statement
- 4 Chief Executive's Strategic Report

Page Title

6 Our business at a glance

7 .....About us

8 ......Performance

8 ......Financial Performance

13 ......Value for Money

15 ......Risk Management

Page Title

**18** Governance

19 ......Board Members

19 ......Committees

19 ......Code of Governance ......and Regulatory Standards



# Homes to make life better

To support and sustain rural communities in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly by providing quality affordable homes.





#### **Customer First**

Our customers are at the heart of what we do.



#### Inspire

to be a great example to everyone that we engage with.



#### Commitment

to provide safe, affordable, quality homes.



#### Integrity

having strong principles in what we do, being respectful.



#### **People Focus**

investing in our people so that they can be the best that they can be.

### **CHAIR'S REPORT**

#### Introduction

During the year we have continued to deliver the priorities set out in our Business Strategy under the themes of Our Homes, Our Customers and Our Business along with continuing to implement our vision for the association Homes to make life better.

As we reflect on the past year, we are proud to share some of our achievements providing a place to call home for over a thousand people living in our rural communities and off-shore. This year has been marked by growth, customer service and reinforcing our commitment to building strong and sustainable rural communities across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

#### Delivering New Social Rent Homes

Providing affordable homes across our rural communities remains at the heart of what we do and we have made good progress over the past year in expanding the availability of more social rent homes.

Over the past year we have delivered thirteen new homes at Goldfinch Close, North Cornwall, ensuring that more individuals and families have access to safe, affordable, energy efficient and well-maintained homes. In addition to these new homes we have also been delighted to welcome the residents of Hanover Court on the Isles of Scilly who became our customers this year after a transfer of homes from Anchor Hanover to CRHA

#### **Finance**

CRHA has always placed a high priority on prudent financial management and so we are pleased to report another successful year financially. The accounts show an operating surplus of £X with revenue reserves of £Y.

Every year we have independent, external auditors examining our accounts and different aspects of our financial arrangements to provide us with independent assurance on the business. CRHA takes these reviews very seriously and it is reassuring for the Board that this independent scrutiny has confirmed yet again the sound operation of the organisation.

Rent arrears for the year as a percentage of the annual rent debt was Z%.

Another pivotal moment for the Finance team this year was saying goodbye to our long serving Head of Finance, Marie Merryfield who decided to retire to spend some well-deserved time with her family as well as pursue leisure interests. At the same time we welcomed our new Head of Finance, Dee Hooper to the business.

Continued overleaf



#### **Customer First**

Providing quality services to our customers has remained a key priority for us over the year maintaining and building on the very positive feedback from our customers through the tenant satisfaction measures (TSM's) process.

We have strengthened repairs and property services leading to our highest levels of repairs performance, we have continued to invest in customers homes replacing major components such as kitchens, bathrooms and heating systems and we have continued our programme of stock condition surveys.

All home safety checks have been completed during the year, on time achieving 100% performance levels.

Our Digital & Doorstep approach continues to be well received, providing customers with easy access to the team for any queries, to raise any issues with us or just to see a friendly face.

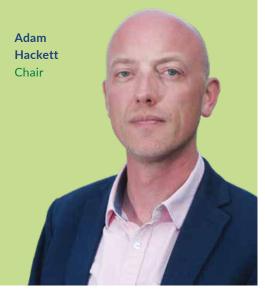
#### Governance

We also said goodbye to Board Members, Regina Farrell and Ella McLachlan during the year, both have provided great contributions to the Board and CRHA and we wish them the very best for the future.

#### Conclusion

I'd like as ever to thank our Board Members, Chief Executive, Leadership team and everyone at CRHA who has contributed to another successful year.

Your dedication and support has been instrumental in providing homes to make life better and we look forward to another year of making a difference.



# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S STRATEGIC REPORT

Welcome to our 2024/25 annual report which I do hope that you find both interesting and informative.

As we reflect on the past year, we are proud of the progress made in providing homes to make life better for our rural communities across Cornwall and off-shore on the Isles of Scilly.

We were delighted during the year to take handover of thirteen new social rent homes at Goldfinch Close, Wainhouse Corner, these homes which have all been designed and built to high standards are now providing a place to call home for local families and individuals.

We also welcomed the residents of Hanover Court on the Isles of Scilly to the CRHA family during the year after a transfer of their homes from Anchor Hanover. We have also seen improvements in completion times for repairs, with streamlined processes, training and an investment in resources leading to a more efficient repairs service for our customers.

Over the past year we also continued to invest in existing homes, enhancing living conditions for customers and ensuring that their homes are modern, well-maintained, future-proofed and that customers are proud of where they live.



Customer safety remains paramount, and we have continued to place a huge focus on ensuring that homes are safe through programmes of safety checks and testing – as always we would like to thank our customers for their co-operation and support in allowing CRHA's specialist contractors access to undertake safety checks and tests.

As a **#peoplebusiness**, supporting and developing our people remains at the heart of the business. Our people are the backbone of our success, and we do what we can to provide an environment for individuals and teams to flourish as well as continuing to invest in training and development. Over the year we said a sad goodbye to Marie Merryfield our long standing Head of Finance who took retirement after a remarkable 4 decades with CRHA! At the same time we gave a warm welcome to Dee Hooper who joined us as our new Head of Finance.

Partnership working remains instrumental in achieving our outcomes and we recognise the importance of collaborative working with partners such as Cornwall Council, Council for the Isles of Scilly, Local Parish Councils and Homes England.

Effective Governance and oversight continues to play a key and crucial role in the running of CRHA and during the

Board and Committee members which provided an opportunity for Board and Committee members alongside members of the Leadership Team to review CRHA's Business Plan, Treasury Strategy and progress with the delivery of our Strategic Priorities as well as receiving sector and policy updates from the National Housing Federation who also attended.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our achievements over the past year, not least to all of my colleagues at CRHA including our Board and Committee members who voluntarily give up their time so readily to steer us with our vision to provide homes to make life better for local rural communities.



OUR HOMES
OUR CUSTOMERS
OUR BUSINESS

GREAT SERVICE & GREAT HOMES



### ABOUT US

Cornwall Rural Housing
Association Limited (CRHA) is
a not-for-profit organisation
registered with the Financial
Conduct Authority as a
Registered Society and with
the Regulator of Social Housing
as a Registered Provider.

CRHA provides affordable homes across Cornwall and on the Isles of Scilly to rent for single people, couples and families as well as homes for sale to shared owners.

We help to sustain rural communities throughout Cornwall and on the Isles of Scilly by providing good quality homes to meet local housing needs and to manage and maintain those homes to a high standard.

One of our ambitions is to work with partners, other registered providers, landowners, the Council and Government development and regeneration agency Homes England to provide more new affordable rural homes across the County.







#makingadifference #peoplebusiness

### Homes to make life better

To support and sustain rural communities in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly by providing quality affordable homes.

PERFORMANCE CRHA aims to deliver the best quality homes and services we can through the resources available.



#### **Financial Returns**

CRHA's assets are its stock of 341 homes for rent and the shares retained in the 19 shared ownership homes, All of our homes (with the exception of two homes begueathed to us) have been constructed since 1988.

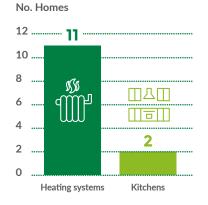
The financial return on these assets is generated primarily from rental income less the cost of managing and maintaining the property and the interest costs from the loans used to develop the homes.

Any surplus generated by CRHA is re-invested to maintain existing stock and to generate new returns through providing new homes.

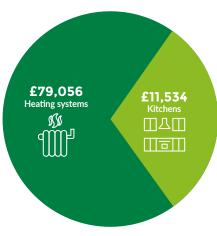
CRHA has been seeking to increase its financial returns in the following ways:

- Increasing the number of homes in management The development or acquisition of new homes can make better use of existing fixed cost overheads. This year three properties have been purchased from a private developer.
- Improving the quality of our homes CRHA aims to provide value for its customers by investing in our homes to make them more comfortable and affordable

#### Improvements to homes



#### Amount spent on improvements



Work carried out this year at a cost of £90,590 includes;







#### **Social Returns**

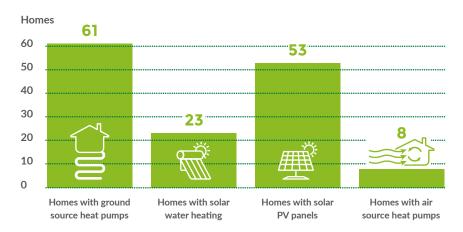
Our activities not only generate financial returns, but also generate social and environmental returns.

- Social value from providing housing for the year ended 31 March 2024 we were
  providing homes to nearly one thousand local people, made up of affordable and social
  rent, shared ownership and discounted sale.
  - These homes provide a stable, safe and affordable environment for individuals which contribute positively to education, employment, health outcomes and financial stability, particularly at the time of a housing crisis.
  - The provision of homes also provides work for those involved in the property maintenance and construction.
  - New homes can help sustain or revitalise an area, local businesses benefit from increased custom and local schools can benefit from an increase in pupil numbers.

CRHA is committed to utilising renewable energy within its homes, to bring down costs for its residents

 Environmental Returns – CRHA has installed renewable technologies in its homes in order to reduce its impact on the environment, tackle fuel poverty and reduce home running costs for its customers.

#### Number of homes with environmental installations



• During the year CRHA received income of £31,171 from the photovoltaic panels installed. The export tariff of £2,465 was passed onto the residents of those properties who also benefited from reduced energy costs.

#### **Our Performance**

CRHA collects performance data which is reported quarterly to the Board and on an annual basis to our customers.

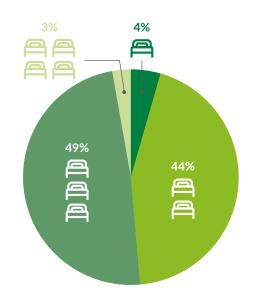
CRHA also benchmarks the cost of providing our services with 15 other housing associations in the South West of England – The South West Benchmarking Group (SWBM). We also benchmark our performance with smaller associations across England (ABM) and House Mark, a national performance benchmarking service for larger housing providers across England.



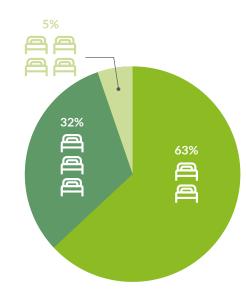
#### **Our homes**

Number of homes in Cornwall and Isles of Scilly

Homes for rent	2024
1 bedroom 🚝	15
2 bedrooms 🖰 🦰	149
3 bedrooms AAA	167
4 bedrooms AAAA	10
Total	341



Shared ownership homes	2024
2 bedrooms AAA 3 bedrooms AAA 4 bedrooms AAAA	12 6 1
Total	19



The rents we charge on these properties pays for all the services that CRHA provides and are set at a level to provide affordable local housing to our current and future customers.

Our average rents by property size are as follows:

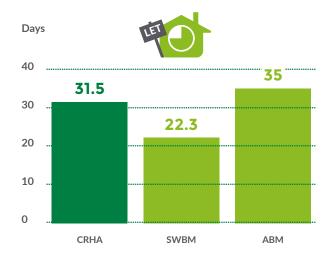
#### Rents (all properties):

Average weekly rents on 2023/2024		2022/2023		
assured tenancies	No.	Average Weekly Rent	No.	Average Weekly Rent
1 bedroom 🛱	15	£107.00	15	£100.46
2 bedroom 🕮	149	£112.73	149	£105.52
3 bedroom □□□	167	£127.33	164	£119.18
4 bedroom AAAA	10	£144.98	10	£135.49
Average change in assured rents		6.88%		4.07%

#### Comparison of average weekly rents

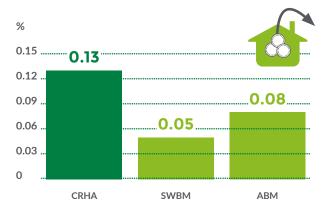


#### Average re-let time



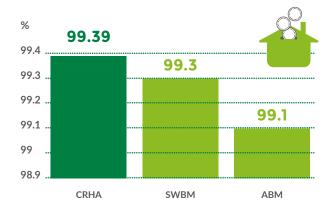
### Percentage of rent lost through dwellings being vacant

The percentage of rent lost through homes being vacant was £2,093, this equated to 0.13% of rental income.



#### Percentage of rent collected

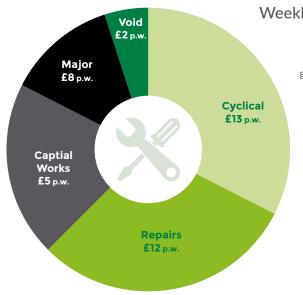
Our rent collection <u>decreased</u> slightly last year from **99.78%** to **99.39%**, however CRHA always aims to continue to reduce the overall level of rent arrears owed.



#### Current tenant rent arrears as % of annual debit (incl. HB & UC owed)

Current customers arrears as a percentage of annual debit have <u>increased</u> slightly on last year and remain in line with others in SWBM group.





### Weekly repairs and maintenance spend per property

Rental income finances loan repayment, general overheads, housing management, repairs and improvements to properties.

Last year we spent the following on each of our properties per week.

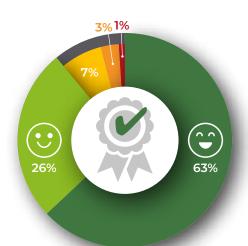


Cyclical



11

### **CUSTOMER REPORT**



89%

### of CRHA customers are Satisfied with our services

Source: Response rate was 74% (268 people) of those questioned

#### Repairs in the last 12 months

Response rate was 71% (191 people) of those questioned



**82**% of customers said they were satisfied with the repairs completed.



were satisfied with the time taken to complete the repair.

71%













**Landlord Satisfaction:** 

handling complaints Source: Response rate was 16% (43 people) of those questioned

Landlord's approach to

Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained

Source: Response rate was 16% (43 people) of those questioned



Satisfaction with Landlords approach to handling antisocial behaviour



Satisfaction that the Landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods



Agreement that the Landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect



Satisfaction that the Landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them



Satisfaction that the Landlord listens to tenants views and acts upon them



**1** 92%

Satisfaction that their home is safe



Satisfaction that their home is well maintained

### VALUE FOR MONEY STATEMENT

Achieving value for money is integral to what we do at CRHA, even more so given our size and scale to make the CRHA pound go as far as possible. This can be difficult particularly when we work across dispersed rural communities in Cornwall and off shore on the Isles of Scilly.

Our Value for Money Strategy can be summarised as follows:

- Being clear about what we do our purpose, objectives and the value we deliver.
- Recognising how the needs and aspirations of our stakeholders influences what we do.
- Recognising how the local and national context influences what we do.
- Doing the right things, with a business plan which focuses resources on the right activities by making informed choices to achieve the aims of our business.
- Doing things right, to ensure efficient and effective delivery.
- Ensuring that we have the right balance of assets at the right cost.
- · Checking that we have delivered the right outcomes.
- Making a surplus for reinvestment in our social aims.

The need to maximise value for money has long been central to CRHA's operations and remains a key focus for us.

CRHA is able to benchmark and compare our performance with similar organisations across the South West of England, and identify ways we can improve the way we deliver our services.

The table below, which was published in CRHA's Financial Statement 2024/2025, allows stakeholders to assess how CRHA is achieving value for money, in accordance with the Regulator of Social Housing's Value for Money Standard.

VFM Metric	Description of Metric	CRHA 2025	CRHA 2024	RSHG 2024*
Reinvestment	Sets out the investment in properties (existing stock as well as new supply) as a percentage of the value of total properties held.	9.41%	2.33%	6.7%
New supply delivered - social housing	Sets out the number of new social housing units that have been acquired or developed in the year as a proportion of total social housing units owned at period end.	0.83%	0.56%	1.3%
Gearing	How much of the adjusted assets are made up of debt and the degree of dependence on debt finance.	31.5%	29.2%	45.3%
EBITDA MRI (Interest Cover)	A key indicator for liquidity and investment capacity. Measures level of surplus generated against interest payments.	175%	140%	128%
Headline social housing cost per unit	The unit cost metric assesses the headline social housing cost per unit as defined by the regulators.	£3,937	£4,796	£4,586
Operating margin social housing lettings	The Operating Margin demonstrates the profitability of operating assets before exceptional expenses are taken into account, split into operating margin for social housing	29%	30.1%	19.8%
Operating margin Overall	lettings only and operating margin overall.	35.9%	22%	18.2%
Return on Capital Employed (ROCE)	Compares operating surplus to total assets less current liabilities and is a common measure in the commercial sector to assess the efficient investment of capital resources.	3.14%	1.84%	2.8%

The following table compares CRHA's performance with the South West Benchmarking Group and smaller housing associations operating throughout England.

	SWBM Median	ABM Median	CRHA
Operating margin (overall)	24.3	13.6	35.9
Operating margin (social housing lettings)	22.4	13	29
EBITDA MRI (as a percentage of interest)	147	177	175
Gearing (RSH & Scorecard measure)	29.3	13.8	31.5
New supply delivered (Social housing units)	0.37	0	0.83
Reinvestment %	3.75	4	9.41
Return on Capital Employed (ROCE) %	1.83	2	3.14
Headline social housing cost per unit	4,331	5,495	3,937

<sup>\*</sup>SWBM - South West Benchmarking Group

#### Financial Information 2024/2025

Income & Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2025	2025 £	2024 £
Income: Less repairs & operating costs:	2,872,225 (2,036,714)	2,560,296 (1,711,203)
Add Surplus on shared-owner staircasing		38,415
Gives an operating surplus of:	1,032,302	561,997
Plus interest we received: Less interest & similar charges payable:	26,242 (494,539)	6,821 (404,037)
Gives a surplus (deficit) on ordinary activities of:	564,005	164,781
Actuarial gain/(loss) in respect of pension schemes	(58,000)	(37,000)
Total comprehensive income for the year	506,005	127,781
Statement of Changes in Reser for the year ended 31 March 20	Revenue reserve £	
At 1 April 2024 Surplus for the year Actuarial gain/(loss) in respect of pension schemes		3,832,135 564,005 (58,000)
As at 31 March 2025		4,338,140
At 1 April 2023 Surplus for the year Actuarial gain/(loss) in respect of po	ension schemes	3,704,354 164,781 (37,000)
As at 31 March 2024		3,832,135

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2025	2025 £	2024 £
What we own		
Cost of our investment in houses Investment in other property & equipment	32,704,879 235,704	30,130,774 243,278
_	32,940,583	30,374,052
Cash we have and money we are owed less bills not paid	(16,837)	123,320
Total assets less current liabilities	32,923,736	30,497,372
How we fund it		
Long term borrowing & other liabilities	(28,324,561)	(26,408,200)
Defined pension liability	(261,000)	(257,000)
Net assets	4,338,175	3,832,172
Called up share capital	35	37
Revenue reserve	4,338,140	3,832,135
Total reserves	4,338,175	3,832,172

The above financial information represents an extract from the audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025. Copies of the full Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025 are available on written request to the Secretary at the Registered Office of the Association.

<sup>\*</sup> ABM - Smaller housing associations throughout England

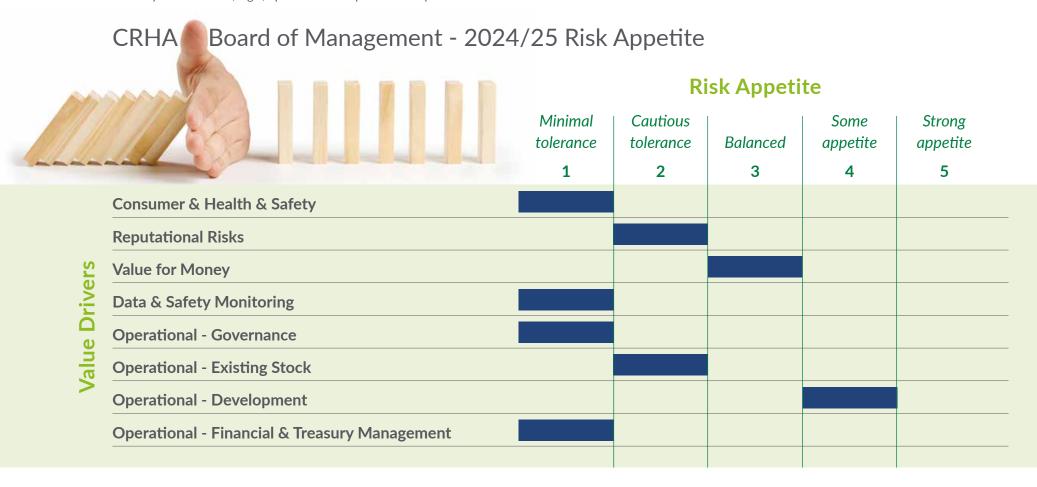
<sup>\*</sup> Regulator of Social Housing Global Accounts

### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

The success of our business is dependent on effective risk management and as with any business risks and uncertainties are inherent in our activities.

These risks may have financial, legal, operational or reputational impact.

The Board is accountable for effective risk management, agreeing the principal risks facing our business and ensuring that these are managed effectively. The Board also has responsibility for defining our risk appetite (i.e. the amount of risk we are willing to take in pursuit of achieving our strategic priorities).



### Internal controls assurance

The Board has agreed a system of internal controls appropriate to the size of CRHA and the scale of its operations. The system of internal control encompasses a number of elements that together facilitate an effective and efficient operation, enabling CRHA to respond to a variety of operational, financial, and commercial risks in an appropriate manner. These elements include:

#### Policies & procedures

A series of policies that underpin how we operate and enshrine the internal control process by recognising and managing related risks. The policies are set by the Board and implemented by the CE and Leadership Team. The report reads The policies are set by the Leadership Team and implemented by the CE and team.

The formal policies and procedures include the documentation of key systems and rules relating to the delegation of authorities which allow the monitoring of controls and restrict the unauthorised use of the Association's assets.

Experienced and suitably qualified colleagues take responsibility for important functions.

#### Reporting

Comprehensive reporting is designed to monitor key risks and a newly introduced reporting format includes a specific risk section. Decisions to rectify problems are made at regular meetings between relevant colleagues and the Board as appropriate.

Regular management accounts are prepared promptly, providing relevant and up to date financial and other information. Any significant variances from budgets are investigated as appropriate.

#### **Risk Management Strategy**

CRHA manages risk in a manner that is appropriate to its size, the scale of its operation and available resources. The risk management framework helps to facilitate the identification, assessment and ongoing monitoring of risks significant to the Association. CRHA has broadly aligned its risk register with the Sector Risk Profile published annually by the Regulator of Social Housing. The risk strategy and risk register are reviewed annually by the Risk Committee and the Board with any emerging risks being added as required, and any improvement actions monitored regularly by management and the Board.

### Financial risk management objectives & policies

CRHA's activities expose it to a number of financial risks including credit risk, cash flow risk and liquidity risk. CRHA does not use derivative financial instruments for speculative purposes.

#### Cash flow risk

CRHA's activities expose it primarily to the financial risks of changes in interest rates. Interest bearing liabilities are a mix of variable and fixed rates to ensure some certainty of cash flows while minimising interest costs.

Credit risk

CRHA's principal financial assets are bank balances and cash, rent arrears and other receivables, and investments. CRHA's credit risk is primarily attributable to its rent arrears. The amounts presented in the Statement of Financial Position are net of allowances for bad debts.

#### Liquidity risk

CRHA uses a mixture of long-term and short-term debt finance in order to maintain liquidity to ensure that sufficient funds are available for ongoing operations and future developments. Further details regarding liquidity risk can be found in the statement of accounting policies in the financial statements.

#### **Audit Committee**

CRHA's size means that the Board has considered that a separately established Audit Committee is not appropriate. The requirement for a separate Audit Committee is reviewed each year. The Board takes full responsibility for internal controls and oversees internal audit, external audit and management. A Risk Committee meets to review the risk strategy, risk register and any associated risks.

#### Internal audit

The Board views internal audit as an important element of the internal control process, our internal auditors tiaa examine and report on the effectiveness of the internal control systems operating within CRHA.

#### tiaa

In addition, the Board has considered the following points in so far as they are appropriate for an organisation of the Association's size:

- Key internal controls have been identified
- Management reports providing information on the Association's performance of its key functions are considered at quarterly meetings of the Board.

#### **External audit**

External audit provides feedback to the Board on the operation of the internal financial controls reviewed as part of the annual audit. The Annual Management letter stated that there were no significant recommendations arising from the 2024/25 audit.



#### Regulation

The Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) is responsible for regulating the sector. The RSH has continued the practice of previous regulators in adopting a risk-based approach to regulation which means that it has a "lighter touch" for organisations owning less than 1.000 homes.

CRHA recognises the importance of complying with the formal requirements of the Regulator and always submits any documentation or information in time and as requested. This year we submitted our first complaints handling self-assessment to the Housing Ombudsman in line with new requirements.

CRHA is registered as an Investment Partner with Homes England.



Regulator of

Social Housing

#### Third party reports

From time to time, the use of external specialist consultants will be necessary in areas such as health and safety, asset management, governance, and finance. The use of other specialist third parties for consulting and reporting can also increase the reliability of the internal control system.





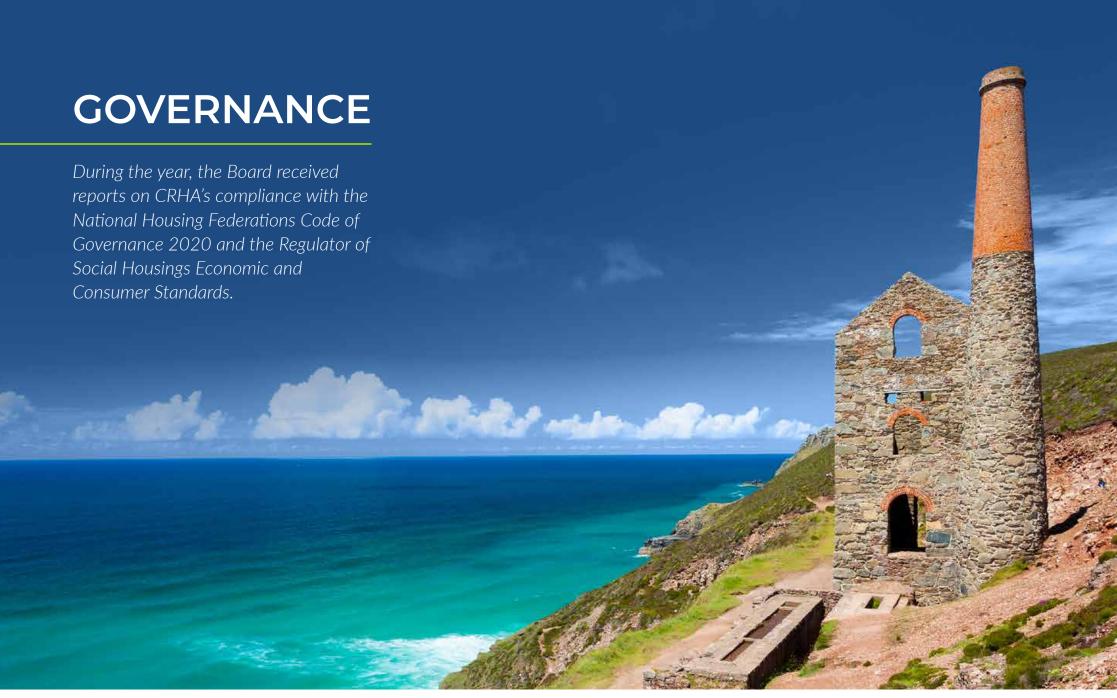
#### Fraud

CRHA complies with the regulatory requirements on fraud. In particular, we have a clear policy that has been approved by the Board and distributed to all colleagues. The policy requires a register to be maintained of all actual and attempted fraud. All such cases are reported to the Board. All cases in excess of £1,000 must be reported to the Regulator of Social Housing.

There have been no reported cases of fraud during the year.

The Board has used the management information at its disposal to review the effectiveness of the system of internal control, including the sources of assurance agreed by the Board as being appropriate for that purpose.

The Board takes the view that there is sufficient evidence to confirm that adequate systems of internal control existed and operated throughout the year ended 31 March 2025 and that those systems were aligned to an ongoing process for the management of the significant risks facing the Association. No weaknesses were identified which would have resulted in material misstatement or loss and which would have required disclosure in the financial statements.



### GOVERNANCE BOARD MEMBERS AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The present Board members and Chief Executive of the Association are set out below:

#### **Board of Management**

The Board members are drawn from a wide background bringing together professional, commercial, specialist and local lived experience. Four members of the Board are also customers.



Adam Hackett Chair



**Gary Lucas** Vice Chair

- Shelly Brown
- Alex Deller
- Paul Heminslev
- Sophie Hughes
- Keith Meredith
- Trudy Polkinghorn

#### **Chief Executive & Company Secretary**



David W Bolton Chief Executive

The Chief Executive served throughout the vear. The Chief Executive holds no interest in CRHA's shares, is not a member of the Board of Management and acts as an executive within the authority delegated by the Board.

#### **Risk Committee**

- Keith Meredith ...... Chair
- Gary Lucas
- Alex Deller

#### Remuneration and **People Committee**

- Gary Lucas ...... Chair
- Adam Hackett
- Sophie Hughes

#### Disclosure of information to the auditor

Each of the Board members at the date of approval of this report has confirmed that:

- As far as the Board members are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which CRHA's auditor is unaware: and
- The Board members have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as Board members in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that CRHA's auditor is aware of that information.

#### **Annual General Meeting**

The annual general meeting will be held on 17th September 2024.

#### **Auditor**

A resolution proposing the appointment of Bishop Fleming as auditor will be put to the members at the annual general meeting.

The Report of the Board was approved on 16th July 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

David W Bolton - Chief Executive & Company Secretary

During the year the Board received reports on CRHA's compliance with the National Housing Federations Code of Governance 2020 as well as receiving specific reports on CRHA's compliance with the Regulator of Social Housings economic and consumer standards.

## **CRHA**



Cornwall Rural Housing Association, 19 Callywith Gate, Launceston Road, Bodmin, Cornwall. PL31 2RQ

Tel: 01208 892000 E-mail: info@crha.org.uk Website: www.crha.org.uk

Twitter:

@CornwallRuralHA

Facebo

@CornwallRuralHA

IWILLEI.

#makingadifference #peoplebusiness

