

OAK TREE HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

REPORT TO: MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**REPORT FROM: JULIE MCEWAN, DIRECTOR OF HOUSING
ELLIE BUTCHER, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICER**

SUBJECT: CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT REPORT 2024/25 QUARTER 4

DATE: 19th MAY 2025

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to update Committee on wider action activities in the 4th Quarter 2025/26. Appendix 1 details all active projects.

Potential Risks

Financial Implications	The majority of costs incurred in all projects are grant aided with any balance being contained in the 2025/26 budget.
Risk Considerations	Risks are mitigated by OTHA having partnered with established national and local projects to deliver the outcomes detailed within our projects.
Legal Implications	There are no legal risks emanating from the delivery of these projects.
Health & Safety	Health and Safety risks are mitigated by utilising existing established projects to deliver the majority of these projects. Projects managed wholly in-house are over seen by appropriately experienced and qualified staff.
Equalities Assessment	There are no adverse equalities impacts envisaged resulting from our wider action activities.
Workload Resources	Workload demands of managing these projects are covered within existing staff resources and via external support as required from Community Links.

Issues to Note/Consider

Appendix 1 details current wider action activities and any bids.

Community Engagement Officer Update

Throughout Q4, various tenant and community events were carried out:

Ravenscraig Tenants & Residents Association

Alongside Link Housing Association and Larkfield Housing Association, we held an Inaugural General Meeting (IGM) in February 2025 to formally create the Ravenscraig Tenants and Residents Association. This group is made up of residents from both Oak Tree HA and Larkfield HA who reside in the Bunston Grove area. Prior to the IGM, we held a steering group meeting in January 2025 with several residents who assisted in creating the constitution of the residents group. Following the IGM, the first meeting of the group was carried out in March 2025 with local councillors also in attendance. The group are focussed on tackling any issues that may arise within the estate and are currently being supported by Oak Tree HA, Link HA and Larkfield HA staff.

Warm Hands of Friendship – Winter Warmer Cafes

We carried out 6 'Winter Warmer Cafés' throughout January – March 2025. These cafes took place at Branchton Community Centre and Broomhill Gardens and Community Hub. The cafés provided members of the community with a warm space twice monthly, with hot rolls, soup and refreshments available. We also provided winter warmer items such as gloves, hats and blankets for individuals to take away either for themselves or for friends and family that could benefit from these. The aim of this was to get as many warm items into the community as possible.

The project was very well received by both tenants of Oak Tree Housing Association and other members of the community. It provided many individuals with a warm space, hot food and items to support them, all of which were greatly appreciated by those in attendance. Financial Fitness also attended one of our cafés and assisted those who attended with any financial questions they may have had. This was a very worthwhile collaboration as many individuals who attended this particular café benefited from this service.

The events were funded by Inverclyde Council's Warm Hands of Friendship Fund. The Association were awarded £2,000 and the cafes welcomed 96 attendees in total.

Conversation Café - Rent Consultation

Alongside our rent consultation survey, we held two rent consultation events in January to invite tenants along to express their views on the proposed rent increase. The events were held during the day and in the evening and there was the option to attend virtually, to allow us to accommodate as many customers as possible.

Management Committee Roadshow Events

We held our Management Committee Roadshow Events in March 2025 to give our customers the opportunity to meet members of our Management Committee, ask any questions they may have and provide information on how to become a member of the Management Committee and what it entails. Although there was a small turnout to these events, it was beneficial to provide the opportunity to our community and beneficial insights were received from those that did attend. Thank you to our Management Committee members who attended these events and helped make them possible.

Community Benefits

Using our Community Benefits funding from our reactive maintenance contractors, we were able to support various local organisations throughout Inverclyde. £500 was donated to 7 local sporting clubs who support young people, helping them build confidence, encourage teamwork and boost wellbeing. The £500 donations were awarded to Ardgowan Thistle FC, Inverclyde Athletics, Morton in the Community, St Andrews BC, Clyde Netball, East End Utd and Port Glasgow Juniors. Alongside this, we delivered a selection of easter eggs to local charities who support children and families within our community. Easter eggs were donated to Mind Mosaic Child and Family Therapies, Inverclyde Women's Aid, Starter Packs Inverclyde, Inverclyde Contact Centre & Children in Poverty Inverclyde.

Using our Community Benefits funding from our Planned and Cyclical contractors, we carried out some work at a local church on Prospecthill St. Work was carried out to rebuild one wall within the church, alongside decorating throughout (minus the main hall). The church is used widely throughout the community by various groups.

Wider Connections

Throughout Q4, we had various meetings with new local partners to continue to discuss collaborative working, create new connections and expand our knowledge. Meetings were held with Right Way Credit Union, Ramblers Scotland, Barrhead Housing Association, Your

Voice Inverclyde and the Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum. We also continued to liaise with our current connections to grow these partnerships further.

Donations

As approved by Management Committee, donations were made to various charities within Inverclyde:

- £120 to The Anchor
- £125 to Home Start Renfrewshire and Inverclyde
- £100 to Inverclyde Women's Aid
- £100 to Ardgowan Hospice
- £125 to Starter Packs Inverclyde
- £125 to Children in Poverty Inverclyde

Partnership work with Financial Fitness and financial gains achieved for tenants

Financial Fitness Information from April 2024-March 2025

- Total Clients Supported - **223**
- Total Benefits/Financial Gains Secured - **£370,920**

Breakdown:

BSG Pregnancy and Baby Payment	£754.65
Adult Disability Payment - Daily Living Enhanced Rate	£13,218.40
Adult Disability Payment - Daily Living Standard Rate	£52,731.75
Adult Disability Payment - Mobility Enhanced Rate	£11,817.00
Adult Disability Payment - Mobility Standard Rate	£5,969.60
Attendance Allowance High Rate	£28,223.00
Bereavement Support Payment Standard Rate Lump Sum	£2,500.00
Bereavement Support Payment Standard Rate Monthly Payment	£1,200.00
Child Benefit 1st Child	£1,331.20
Child Disability Payment - Care High Rate	£13,073.45
Council Tax Reduction	£9,826.59
DHP	£828.60
DLA Care Component High Rate	£3,692.00
Funeral Support Payment	£1,800.00
Housing Benefit	£23,456.44
Pension Credit	£11,154.85
Pensions	£33,670.00
Retirement Pension	£47,065.77
Scottish Child Payment	£5,739.60
Universal Credit	£102,867.38

- **Additional funding**
- Secured funding of £300,000 through Acquisition funding albeit this funding was not fully spent.

- The Association have had access to the Vicar Reliefs fund from November 2024, this fund provides new tenants who are being rehoused with a homeless priority pass or Section 5 Referral to apply for their first months rent in advance. As at 31st March we received have £5,970.00
- We secured funding from the Warm Hands of Friendship fund of £2,000 to host a series of Winter Warmer Cafes. These took place in January – March 2025
- National Lottery Community Fund (Energy Advisor) – Cost of Living Application outcomes Project aims to support 250 households over a 12-month period. Households are engaged through home-based visits, telephone advocacy and drop-in sessions

Tenancy Support Services (TSS)

OTHA and Larkfield HA collaborated to jointly source a service from Link Living one of Link HA's subsidiaries. OTHA access the service 2 days per week. For 2024-25 Housing Services made 22 referrals to this service with 13 of those are now closed as the tenants require no further support and continued to sustain their tenancy.

Key Recommendations

It is recommended Committee note the activities undertaken in the 4th quarter of the year.