

2025-26



ALBYN GROUP BUSINESS PLAN 2022 - 2027 YEAR 4 UPDATE



**Kirsty Morrison
Group CEO**

2025/26

Vision, values and objectives

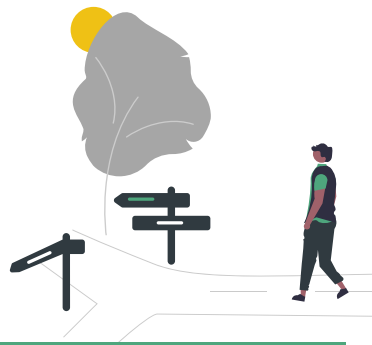
Vision

Maintain and build quality homes, providing excellent customer service, and giving opportunities for people and communities to flourish.

Values:



Being Caring



Being Adaptable



Being Professional

Strategic Objectives

Our strategic objectives remain the same as we focus on the key areas of our core business:

- Our Homes
- Our Customers
- Our People
- Our Finances and Digital Services
- Our Partnerships



Strategic Objective	How we will achieve this
Our Homes	<p>We will implement the approved development programme from 2025/26 to deliver 600 homes including 396 homes for social rent, 164 for Mid-Market Rental through Highland Residential and 40 for sale as new supply shared equity homes.</p> <p>Work with partners developing innovative solutions to embed future sustainability and affordability into existing and new homes to improve the customer experience.</p>
Our Customers	<p>Our long-term goal is to support the welfare of all our customers by providing proactive energy advice, and practical assistance in maintaining a tenancy and to ease cost pressures associated with starting a tenancy thus promoting long-term housing stability.</p> <p>Through targeted support and advocacy, we will help ensure our customers can maintain and enjoy their homes while promoting energy efficiency and long-term customer satisfaction on the services we provide.</p>
Our People	<p>We will develop and improve recruitment, retention and succession plans. Staff development will be framed around staff and organisational ambition.</p> <p>We will continue to focus on staff engagement, communication and organisational culture to be an 'employer of choice' and demonstrate our values.</p>
Our Finances and Digital Services	<p>We will implement measures to manage the Society's finances to meet regulatory obligations for affordable rents whilst ensuring that there are sufficient financial resources to meet our day-to-day commitments, business plan objectives and future capital investment needs.</p> <p>We will successfully implement identified actions to strengthen and enhance our ICT network and data management arrangements and will continue the implementation and exploitation of the CX Housing and asset management software to provide improved digital services and efficient and effective processes.</p>
Our Partnerships	<p>We will continue to work with academic partners on the research and development opportunities of our FIT Homes and FIT sense platform, beyond that of social care but also in meeting net zero aspirations. Deliver 10 FIT sense homes through the criminal justice partnership pilot.</p> <p>The exploration of a new constitutional partnership opportunity.</p>

External drivers

Green Freeport and Highland Housing Challenge

The Highlands are verging on the most exciting economic opportunities for a region. With work beginning on the Green Freeport, and an estimated 15,000 jobs coming to the region over the next 10 years, the need for more housing, of a range of tenures is even more acute. Latest estimates set out that from the original Housing Needs and Demand Assessment in 2023, the revised assessment, which takes account of the requirements from the Green Freeport now estimates that 24,000 new homes are required. Doubling previous estimates. At the Board Strategy Day in November 2024, Albyn Group Board set out a statement of intent – that Albyn would increase its development plan in order to meet not only the Green Freeport needs, but also the Highland Housing Challenge. Whilst the Scottish Government declared a Housing Emergency nationally in May 2024, the Highland Council announced in June 2024 that the region faced a housing challenge – but within that challenge, opportunities could be sought.

In January 2025, the Albyn Board agreed that the agreed rolling development programme of 500 units over 5 years would be increased to 600 – caveated by the requirement for there to be available land and grant subsidy available in order to develop these units.

Albyn's Chair made this comment:

As the largest RSL in the Highlands, with almost 4000 homes in over 80 communities, both urban and rural, Albyn is ready to play its part in responding to this challenge.

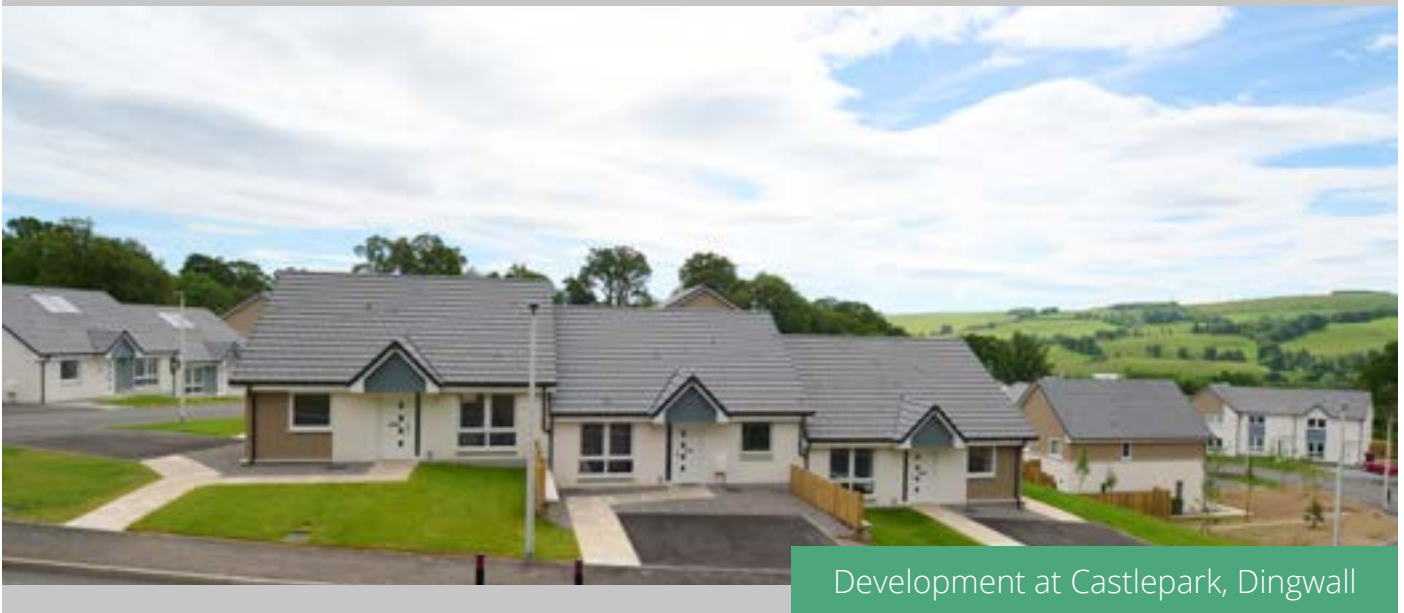


SSEN

SSEN Transmission is actively addressing the housing challenge in the Highlands as they have pledged to deliver over 400 new homes in the region as part of their £20 billion investment to upgrade the transmission network. These homes will initially accommodate workers involved in upgrading the local energy infrastructure, but they are designed to support local housing needs once the projects are completed.

SSEN is collaborating with councils, registered social landlords, and other housing organisations to ensure these homes meet community needs.. This initiative is part of a broader effort to create a lasting positive impact and leave a community legacy in the Highlands, with a total of over 1000 new homes planned across the north of Scotland.

Albyn is actively working with SSEN on a number of sites of interest across the region.



Housing Bill

Scotland's new Housing Bill, introduced in March 2024, aims to address several key issues in the housing sector. Some of the main provisions include:

1. **Rent Controls:** The Bill proposes capping rent increases at the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1%, up to a maximum of 6% in areas where rent controls apply. This measure is intended to stabilise rents and support tenants while balancing the interests of landlords.
2. **Tenant Protections:** The Bill includes stronger protections against eviction and new rights for tenants, such as the ability to keep pets and decorate their rented homes..
3. **Homelessness Prevention:** There are provisions aimed at preventing homelessness, including measures to support those at risk of losing their homes.
4. **Fuel Poverty:** The Bill addresses fuel poverty by including measures to ensure homes are energy-efficient and affordable to heat.
5. **Long-Term Housing Strategy:** The Bill is part of the Scottish Government's broader strategy, "Housing to 2040," which aims to create a fairer and more sustainable housing system.
6. **Awaab's Law:** the potential to implement Awaab's Law regarding the management of damp and mould issues in England, to Scotland.

These reforms are designed to ensure that people in Scotland have access to safe, secure, and affordable housing.

The new Housing (Scotland) Bill is currently at Stage 2.. During this stage, Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) can propose amendments to the Bill. These amendments are then reviewed and voted on by the relevant committees. The Stage 2 proceedings are expected to be completed by May 29, 2025.

The new Housing (Scotland) Bill introduces several changes that Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) will need to implement:

1. **Homelessness Prevention:** RSLs will be required to have policies in place to support tenants at risk of homelessness, including those affected by domestic abuse.
2. **Rent Controls:** In areas designated as 'rent control areas,' RSLs will need to comply with new rent cap regulations, which limit rent increases to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1%, up to a maximum of 6%. This applied to Mid Market Rent properties, which Albyn manages through HRIL. The SFHA have been lobbying the Scottish Government since the introduction of rent control through the temporary Cost of Living legislation introduced in 2022, to exempt RSL's from these controls, as MMR are publicly funded through the Scottish Government and whilst a commercial trading activity, the parent body as an RSL are a charity.
3. **Energy Efficiency:** RSLs will need to ensure that their properties meet new energy efficiency standards to help address fuel poverty.
4. **Tenant Rights:** RSLs will need to adapt to new tenant rights, such as allowing tenants to keep pets and make reasonable modifications to their homes.



Macro Environment

Several macro-environment factors may impact Albyn in 2025:

1. **Economic Conditions:** Rising inflation and interest rates can increase the cost of borrowing and construction, affecting the financial stability of housing associations.
2. **Government Policies:** Changes in housing policies, such as the new Housing (Scotland) Bill, will require housing associations to adapt to new regulations, including rent controls and energy efficiency standards.
3. **Demographic Shifts:** An aging population and changing household compositions will influence the demand for different types of housing and services.
4. **Technological Advancements:** The adoption of new technologies for building and managing properties can improve efficiency but may require significant investment.
5. **Environmental Concerns:** Increasing focus on sustainability and reducing carbon footprints will drive housing associations to invest in greener technologies and practices.

Internal drivers

IT Governance and Infrastructure

A new ICT strategy requires to be developed, supported by a 3-year roadmap to improve Albyn's ICT infrastructure and governance.

Whilst this will focus on network improvements, vendor management and modernising practices, the remaining elements of Civica CX require to be implemented, including both the customer and contractor portals and the move from Asprey asset management system to CX. The contractor portal had been delayed by the reactive repair contract procurement completed in 2024/25.

Innovation

FitHome Innovation

Our Board ambitions focus on our need to continuously improve our business. This refers to our overall strategy and our day to day activities. Being seen as the partner of choice necessitates that we lead in our field both in terms of customer satisfaction and in the day to day running of our business. And that in turns means that we have to continuously improve our performance and be cognisant of the changing world technology is creating. Done correctly, change will provide better outcomes for our tenants and enable us to focus more on the challenging (and often more satisfying) work of housing associations, supporting our tenants in times of limited resources and developing and implementing new ways of enabling this.

Our Innovation to date has focused very much on our FitHomes offering and this is still a significant element of our focus. The coming year will see us focus the technology on the following:-

- The delivery of FitHomes specifically to replace care facilities in Ullapool with the focus on returning local people to be nearer their original homes and community. This is a new area of development.
- Trialing the new Homelessness Drug and Alcohol pilot designed and led by Albyn with our partners in the public and third sector. This has enabled multi-agency work with SPS, Highland Council, NHS Highland, Drug and Alcohol Partnership, Police Scotland and Third Sector Support Agencies. This pilot proposes a change to the way homelessness is delivered and is a first in Scotland.
- Building on the award-winning work with Glasgow University on how we can monitor and understand dampness and the causes of dampness in tenants' homes.
- Increase the test bed in Highland significantly to meet both local requirements for care and support at home and also to enable a significant increase in our data capture to fast track research on preventative health interventions for our tenants.
- Enabling dampness monitors as standard within the new sensor being deployed.

Departmental Innovation

Watch Terri, explain the impact of living in a Flt Home

The pace of change in technology and house building is significant. Within our day to day activity plan, we will focus on 2 specific areas to drive our innovation priorities. These are:-

- Ensuring that our tenants directly benefit from new forms of build and maintenance, be that new build or retrofit.
- Look to where we can automate day to day activities with the aim of freeing up staff time to work on the more complicated work that cannot be done by technology.

A supplementary operational plan has been developed to develop, deliver, manage and implement innovation across the Business. This will be managed via the Extended Leadership Team. This plan supports our efforts to modernise Albyn, and ensure we are efficient and effective as a business providing value for money for our customers.

We also want to continue our position and reputation as thought leaders in innovation, especially in the use of technology to allow customers to live at home as independently as possible, no matter their vulnerabilities.

Succession Planning – Staff and Board

A key strategic risk to the organisation is recruitment, retention and succession planning. Scottish Housing Associations face several recruitment and retention challenges:

1. **Skills Shortages:** There is a significant skills deficit in the sector, with a high demand for talent at all levels, from entry positions to senior leadership roles. This shortage is exacerbated by fewer people entering the sector and an aging workforce.
2. **Budget Constraints:** Tight budgets make it difficult to offer competitive salaries and invest in recruitment processes¹. This financial pressure can lead to higher turnover rates as employees seek better-paying opportunities elsewhere.
3. **Complex Roles:** The increasing complexity of roles within housing associations requires a broad

range of expertise, making it challenging to find suitable candidates.

4. **Employer Branding:** Many housing associations struggle to effectively 'sell' their brand and the sector, which can make it harder to attract and retain talent.
5. **Technological Adaptation:** The need to adopt new technologies for efficient property management and service delivery requires ongoing training and investment, which can be a barrier for some associations.

To address these challenges, initiatives like promoting apprenticeships and investing in young talent are being emphasised. These efforts aim to build a pipeline of skilled professionals who can support the sector's future needs.

The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) recently updated its succession planning guidance for senior staff. This includes:

1. **Integration with Business Planning:** Succession planning is now closely tied to the overall business planning process. This ensures that housing associations are prepared for leadership changes and can continue to meet their objectives effectively.
2. **Risk Management:** The guidance emphasises the importance of succession planning as a critical component of risk management. It helps organisations mitigate the risks associated with unexpected leadership changes.
3. **Skills and Development:** There is a strong focus on identifying and developing the skills, knowledge, and experience needed within the senior staff team. This includes ongoing training and development to ensure readiness for future leadership roles.
4. **Regulatory Compliance:** The guidance aligns with the Scottish Housing Regulator's standards, ensuring that housing associations comply with governance and financial management requirements.
5. **Support for Governing Bodies:** The guidance provides tools and strategies to support governing bodies in managing succession planning effectively, including decision-making processes and interim management arrangements.

These updates aim to help housing associations maintain stability and continuity in their leadership, ensuring they can continue to deliver high-quality services to their communities. This will be a clear focus for the organisation for 2025/26.

Board Succession Planning

It is likely that Albyn will have a few vacancies at its AGM in 2025. A skills assessment highlights that the skills needed for the Board following its collective survey, self-assessment and individual appraisals include:

- Finance (accountant or auditor skills necessary for the Audit and Risk Committee)
- Social Housing experience – general
- Social Housing experience – development, or
- Commercial Development experience.

This requirement forms part of the delivery plan for 2025/26.

The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) emphasises several key points in their guidance on Board succession planning and recruitment:

1. **Skills and Diversity:** SFHA highlights the importance of ensuring that Boards have a diverse range of skills, experiences, and backgrounds. This diversity helps Boards to make well-rounded decisions and better represent the communities they serve.
2. **Ongoing Development:** The guidance stresses the need for continuous development and training for Board members. This ensures that they remain effective in their roles and are up-to-date with the latest regulatory and sector developments.
3. **Structured Recruitment:** SFHA recommends a structured approach to recruiting new Board members. This includes clear role descriptions, transparent recruitment processes, and thorough inductions to help new members integrate smoothly.
4. **Succession Planning:** Effective succession planning is crucial for maintaining stability and continuity. SFHA advises that Boards should regularly review their composition and plan for future changes to ensure they have the right mix of skills and experience.
5. **Governance and Compliance:** The guidance aligns with regulatory requirements, ensuring that Boards comply with governance standards and best practices.

These points aim to help housing associations maintain strong, effective governance and leadership.

Office Options Appraisal

Albyn operates from 2 offices, the head office being in Invergordon with a smaller office space in Inverness. Neither of these offices are fit for purpose and do not reflect Albyn's desire to be a modern, effective and efficient organisation. One of the values is to be professional and our facilities do not match this value.

An options appraisal for a new office involves a structured process to evaluate different options and determine the best choice. In undertaking an options appraisal, a Board and staff Working Group will be established, with a remit to:

1. **Define Objectives:** Clearly outline the goals and requirements for the new office space. This includes factors like location, size, budget, and specific needs of the organisation.
2. **Develop Criteria:** Establish criteria to evaluate each option. Common criteria include cost, location, accessibility, facilities, and potential for future expansion.
3. **Identify Options:** Create a list of potential office spaces that meet the initial requirements. This can include both existing properties and new developments.
4. **Evaluate Options:** Assess each option against the established criteria. This involves both qualitative and quantitative analysis to compare the benefits and drawbacks of each option.
5. **Financial Analysis:** Conduct a detailed financial analysis to understand the costs associated with each option, including purchase or lease costs, fit-out costs, and ongoing operational expenses.
6. **Risk Assessment:** Identify and evaluate the risks associated with each option, such as market conditions, regulatory changes, and potential disruptions.
7. **Staff and Stakeholder Engagement:** Involve key stakeholders in the decision-making process to ensure their needs and concerns are addressed.
8. **Recommendation:** Based on the evaluation, recommend the best option that meets the objectives and criteria. This recommendation should be supported by a comprehensive report detailing the analysis and rationale.
9. **Implementation Plan:** Develop a plan for implementing the chosen option, including timelines, responsibilities, and any necessary approvals.

This structured approach helps ensure that the decision is well-informed and aligns with the Albyn's strategic goals and will be taken forward in 2025/26.

Staff Engagement

Albyn prides itself on the volume and quality of its communication and engagement with staff. Over the past few years, we have carried out at least 4 all staff face to face sessions annually, focussing on areas of strategic importance including the annual business plan update, and health and wellbeing – investing in our staff. These have been very successful and are supplemented by bi-monthly teams' briefings with all staff, led by the Leadership Team. In 2025/26 we aim to replicate a previous successful board and staff session in person, learning from each other and our respective roles, as well as introducing new staff to the Board.

We also aim to keep making use of the excellent new intranet as a single point of truth for all communications and engagement, and to continue to implement the actions that arose from the staff survey at the end of 2023.

As well as the successful quarterly CEO and new start lunches which were implemented in 2024, this will be expanded out to all of the Leadership Team to give the opportunity to new staff to engage with the team in an informal setting.

Performance

In light of the change in indicators in the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC), a revised set of performance indicators and targets will be submitted to Board when the Quarter 1 Performance Report is presented.



Albyn Group staff at the latest AllStaff Face to Face session

Board Ambitions

The Board ambitions for Albyn remain unchanged from 2024/25 and are that the group aims for:

- Continuous improvement
- Position ourselves as a partner of choice
- Ensure consistency of service delivery
- Be an employer of choice
- Translate strategic objectives into operational goals, and embed re-design (good practice/performance)

Strategic Objectives

Our Homes

Deliver 600 site starts and complete 600 new homes across the next five-year period with 206 starts in 2025/26 and 43 completions across all tenures including social, mid-market and new supply shared equity.

Invest £1.190million in planned and cyclical maintenance works and a further £2.5million in component replacements in our homes.

Across the five-year planning period, invest a total of £7.1million in planned and cyclical works to focus on preventative maintenance impacting the requirements and pressures on day-to-day reactive maintenance.

Invest a total of £17.5million in the replacement of housing components to deliver energy efficiency and quality improvements to existing tenant's homes.

Set out a clear strategic approach to implementing long term environmental and financial sustainability measures in the design of our new homes and the approach to retrofit of existing properties.

Continue to play a key role in the local housing partnership, working with partners including the Highland Council, Scottish Government and other social housing providers to maximise investment in Social Housing for the Highlands and being responsive to the wider needs of our communities.

Our Customers

Objective: Enhancing Quality and Learnings from Tenant Complaints

The objective of this is to implement a structured and efficient approach to improving the quality of tenant complaint handling and extracting actionable insights to enhance service delivery. This will be achieved by focusing on robust quality control measures, systematic analysis of complaint trends, and developing a feedback loop for continuous improvement.

Quarterly reports will be provided to customers via website and social media. Satisfaction surveys will be implemented to ensure continuous improvement.

By embedding quality control mechanisms and a lessons-learned approach into the complaint management process, this objective aims to not only resolve tenant issues more effectively but also prevent recurrence and improve overall tenant satisfaction. This objective will support the Society's commitment to maintaining high service standards and fostering positive tenant relationships.

Objective: Adopting Early Intervention Measures to Sustain Tenancies for Vulnerable Individuals and Those at Risk of Homelessness

The objective of this is to implement proactive early intervention strategies to support vulnerable

tenants and individuals at risk of homelessness. By identifying challenges early and providing tailored support, this initiative aims to sustain tenancies, reduce the risk of eviction, and foster stability for at-risk tenants. This approach will be underpinned by collaborative partnerships, personalised support plans, and robust monitoring systems across all customer service teams. By adopting early intervention measures, this objective seeks to provide timely, targeted support to vulnerable tenants, helping them overcome challenges, maintain their housing stability, and avoid homelessness. This objective aligns with the Society's commitment to develop tenancy sustainment services across the Highlands.

Objective: Launching a Pilot Project: “Making a House a Home”

The objective of this is to introduce a pilot project aimed at providing targeted support to homeless individuals starting a new tenancy with limited or no means to furnish their property. The initiative will address the immediate need for essential furniture, appliances, and homeware, helping tenants create a safe, comfortable, and sustainable living environment. By reducing barriers to successful tenancy establishment, this project will contribute to long-term housing stability and tenant well-being.

By addressing the practical challenges of starting a new tenancy, the “Making a House a Home” pilot project aims to empower homeless individuals to transition into stable housing successfully. This initiative will provide not only material support but also emotional reassurance, helping tenants feel valued, secure, and ready to build a better future. Through careful management and evaluation, this pilot has the potential to serve as a scalable model for reducing homelessness and fostering long-term housing success.

Objective: Expanding Energy Advice Services to Combat Fuel Poverty

The objective of this is to expand an energy advice service for tenants, focusing on supporting those at risk of or experiencing fuel poverty. This service will provide tailored advice on system usage and efficiency, will explore options to access to grant funding, and practical solutions to minimise financial strain and ensure tenants can adequately heat their homes. The initiative will also address the risks of possible property damage caused by underheating, promoting both tenant well-being and asset protection.

By expanding the energy advice service, this initiative aims to reduce the financial and physical risks of fuel poverty for tenants while protecting the long-term integrity of housing stock. Through proactive advice, grant access, and tenant engagement, this service will promote warmer, healthier homes, greater tenant resilience, and more sustainable energy use. Regular monitoring and reporting will ensure the programme delivers measurable benefits and can be scaled effectively in the future.

Objective: Delivering a Housing Options Service in Alignment with the New Scottish Housing Bill

The objective of is to develop and deliver a comprehensive housing options service to align with the new provisions of the Scottish Housing Bill. This service will provide tailored advice and support to individuals and families, empowering them to make informed decisions about their housing needs specifically to meet the Highland Housing Challenge. It will ensure compliance with legislative changes, enhance tenant engagement, and promote sustainable housing outcomes across diverse housing routes and opportunities.

By delivering a housing options service that incorporates the provisions of the new Scottish Housing Bill, this objective will empower tenants, promote housing stability, and ensure compliance with evolving legislative requirements. Proactive management, stakeholder collaboration, and regular reporting will ensure the service delivers measurable outcomes and remains responsive to tenant needs.

Objective: Conducting End-to-End Reviews of the Customer Journey to Enhance Customer Experience

By conducting over the next two years, comprehensive end-to-end reviews of our customer journey to identify opportunities for improving ways of working and enhancing the overall customer experience. By gathering actionable insights from tenants, leveraging industry best practices, and refining systems and processes, this initiative will deliver a more efficient, responsive, and customer-focused service. The end-to-end reviews of the customer journey will directly contribute to improved customer satisfaction by addressing the root causes of dissatisfaction and creating a more seamless, tenant-centred experience.

By undertaking these end-to-end reviews, this objective will ensure that tenant voices are at the heart of service delivery improvements. Through a combination of proactive feedback collection, industry benchmarking, and system refinement, the project will enhance customer experience, build trust with tenants, and position the Society as a leader in customer-focused housing services.

Objective: Ensuring Value for Money in the Repairs Service and Improving Tenant Satisfaction

The objective is to deliver a repairs service that provides value for money while meeting tenant expectations and maintaining high satisfaction levels. This will involve optimising resources, streamlining processes, and embedding a culture of efficiency and quality in repairs delivery. A well-run, cost-effective repairs service directly impacts tenant satisfaction by ensuring homes are safe, comfortable, and well-maintained.

By focusing on delivering value for money and maintaining high standards in the repairs service, this objective aims to balance cost-efficiency with tenant satisfaction, ensuring tenants feel safe, valued, and supported in their homes.

Objective: Expanding the Remit of Tenant and Community Engagement to Meet Geographical Challenges and Ensure Inclusive Participation

This objective is to deliver on broadening tenant and community engagement to address the challenges posed by a dispersed geography. By adopting innovative approaches, leveraging digital tools, and enhancing outreach efforts, the Society will ensure that all tenants have as many opportunities to participate, regardless of location, physical barriers, or other limitations.

By expanding tenant and community engagement through innovative approaches and inclusive strategies, this objective aims to overcome geographical challenges, ensure every tenant can participate, and to improve the overall relationship and service delivery between tenants and the organisation.

Our Finances and Digital Services

Resources

Throughout the business planning period we will continue to ensure that the Society's finances are sufficiently robust to meet the needs of our stakeholders, meeting obligations to our lenders and providing affordable rents to tenants.

We will set budgets that are adequately resourced to implement the business plan objectives on a year-to-year basis, with budget holders provided support to ensure that they are able to manage allocated budgets in line with organisational requirements.

Systems

We will develop a specification for tender of a new financial system to support new technologies which will deliver more streamlined and efficient business processes and provide greater business intelligence to allow decision to be made quicker and with impact.

Compliance

We will continue to plan our financial commitments, and resource needs to comply with all lender's covenants and regulatory requirements, meeting targets and submission dates.

We will plan and commission regular external assurance to support the Board and management team in fulfilling obligations through Internal audit processes and delivery of other external audit and review.

ICT and Business Services

In this year of the business plan, we will be developing a new IT Strategy and road map aligned to our future business plan objectives. This plan will continue to deliver improvements in both our IT infrastructure, core systems and digital services to support our staff and customers by creating operational efficiencies through the use of automation and improved integration of systems.

This year will have a particular focus on building a strong IT foundation and improving our security posture. This focus follows an external IT audit carried out last year to assess areas of improvements, we will implement the audit recommendations to strengthen our IT security and infrastructure.

In parallel to the above we will be implementing further enhancements to our cores system to deliver improvements to our repairs and asset management services. This will have a primary focus on our Asset Management Solution and Contractor Management.

A further key deliverable this year is to roll out new digital services for our customers. We have been developing our customer portal over the last year to allow our customers to access to their account and be able to access a number of services online. We will be in a position to start piloting the solution with a small group of customers in the first half of this year.

Our People

To meet the business plan's strategic objectives, the following goals will be critical for 'Our People':

Recruitment, Retention & Succession Planning

Objective: Strengthen recruitment and retention strategies to address sector-wide staffing challenges and ensure long-term stability in the workforce.

- Develop targeted recruitment campaigns to attract talent and address skills shortages,
- Further improve employer branding to position Albyn as an employer of choice within the housing sector.
- Further develop corporate and departmental induction programmes to improve engagement, effectiveness and retention of new and promoted staff
- Develop retention strategies to reduce turnover and retain skilled staff.
- Develop and implement a structured succession planning framework and integrate it with business planning to mitigate risk
- Procure and install a HR system that meets business need, and improves efficiency

Staff Development and Skills Enhancement

Objective: Build a resilient and capable workforce by investing in learning and professional development.

- Use personal development plans to design a learning and development framework focussed on the necessary skills, knowledge, and experience to offer the best services to our customers and to develop staff to meet their aspirations and support the opportunities open to Albyn

Group

- Further develop the extended leadership team to aid succession planning and prepare internal candidates for senior roles, using tools such as 3600 feedback
- Encourage cross-learning, work-shadowing, and knowledge-sharing to enhance adaptability, break down silo working and improve job satisfaction.
- Provide staff with ongoing training on digital systems to improve efficiency and reduce frustration with manual systems.

Board Recruitment, Succession and Skills Enhancement

Objective: Ensure effective governance and continuity through strategic Board recruitment and development.

- Conduct skills assessments to identify needs and actively recruit Board members with skills in finance, social housing (general and development), and risk management.
- Implement a structured onboarding and development program for new Board members.
- Promote diversity in Board appointments to reflect the community served by Albyn.

Staff Engagement and Communication

Objective: Strengthen staff morale, alignment, and engagement through consistent and transparent communication.

- Continue regular staff briefings and all-staff meetings to share and inform strategic direction
- Creating further opportunities for employee voice through staff working groups.
- Use the intranet as a central communication tool for all staff updates to ensure staff are well-informed and engaged, and to welcome new staff to Albyn
- Continue to implement actions arising from last staff survey to address staff feedback and improve engagement and culture and prepare for the next.

Organisational Culture

Objective: Foster a caring, professional, and adaptable organisational culture.

- Promote a culture of continuous improvement through feedback and performance reviews.
- Continue to embed Albyn's values (Being Caring, Being Adaptable, Being Professional) into management, staff and customer interactions.

By implementing these strategic staff-related objectives, Albyn will address recruitment and retention challenges, build internal capacity, and enhance service delivery, supporting the achievement of its broader business goals.

Our Partnerships

We will continue to develop our FIT Homes project by piloting 10 retro fitted homes through the Community Justice Partnership and Multi Agency Group. We will also use this project to support our partnership with Napier University and the 3 year PhD to evaluate the use of retrofitted technology to support people leaving prison. We will also continue to develop the hub and sensor models with a view to establishing a social business to commercialise the potential of the technology. We will also continue our partnership with academia to test the role of our hub and sensors in tackling damp and mould issues and supporting our ambition to meet net zero ambitions for our housing stock.

Appendices

1. Delivery Plan 2025/26 - Appended separately

2. SWOT Analysis - carried out at Board Strategy Day, 27 November 2024

STRENGTHS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience • Caring • Adaptable to sector pressure • Reputation (external) • Customer service (but still room to improve, specialisation/structure) • Approach to customer welfare • Property maintenance compliance • Stable ELT structure • Tenant engagement • Regulatory status • Financial management & planning • Diverse Board 	WEAKNESSES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of financial/funding certainty • Staffing levels – recruitment • Communication – internal & external • Systems & facilities • Geographical location – recruitment • Access to services, extra costs, overheads • Contractor availability, connectivity • Reliance on 3rd parties: transport links, Highland Council, NHS, ScotGov • Fragile local economics – depopulation, ageing population
OPPORTUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSEN, Greenport, HHC: collaboration with other agencies • Sourcing new finance – and alternative finance • Matching resource with skill need • Training budget allow us to increase • Build on our current & increasingly positive reputation – DataLab & other higher education opportunities • Create an efficient working environment; IT Drivers, culture, space • Other funding bids – matching work already with grants available • Chance to get message re who we are, who our tenants are out to partners, business leaders • Being aware of and linking with future potential projects • Senior partner in our relationship with smaller RSLs in highland • Does Rural RSL need to exist? • Improve/develop relationships with NHS & social services • CHT: support them in their developments to access funding & expertise • Hybrid working 	THREATS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of money • Lack of planning around delivery of money • Recruitment & retention • Lost relationships with other stakeholders • Existing structures of government don't work • Caught in crossfire • Financial instability • Another pandemic • Localised inflation • Minority government

3 – Risk Register - Appended as a separate document

4 – Board and Leadership Team

AHS Board

As at 1st April 2025, the Board consists of:



Lesley McInnes
Chair



Clea Warner
Vice Chair



Carl Patching
Board Member



Ian Fosbrooke
Company Secretary



Fiona Mustarde
Board Member



Lynne Holburn
Board Member



Niall Owen
Board Member



Scott Macleod
Board Member



Jackie Bugden
Board Member



Craig Levy
Board Member



Craig Russell
Board Member

HRIL Board



Craig Russell
Chair



Carl Patching
Board Member



Craig Levy
Board Member



Maggie Morrison
Board Member

Leadership Team



Kirsty Morrison
Group CEO



Maureen Knight
Deputy CEO, and Executive
Director of Operations



Andrew Martin, Executive
Director of Group Services



Robert Buchanan, Director
of IT and Business Services



Laurie MacLeod
Head of Human Resources
and Organisational
Development