

Argyll Community Housing Association

Board of Management Meeting

Thursday 4th February 2021 at 10.00am via Skype

Minute

Present:

Councillor Roddy McCuish
 Jim Milne
 Cathy Grant
 Ian McIntyre
 Bruce Marshall
 Nancy McDonald
 Councillor Donnie MacMillan
 Pat McVey
 Betty Rhodick
 Brian Tester

Not in Attendance:

In Attendance:

Alastair MacGregor, Chief Executive
 Bruce West, Director of Finance & IT
 Christine Gannon, Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services
 Kirsteen McGinn, Director of Investment & Regeneration
 Gayle Stead, Governance & Compliance Manager
 Lesley Lindsay, PA to Board of Management

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and provided a summary of the running of the meeting; the Chair will proceed through the agenda; at each item the Chair will open for questions/comments. He will then move to recommendations. Silence will indicate agreement.

The Chair asked that microphones be muted until there is a requirement to speak.

The Chair asked that each speaker introduced themselves for the purposes of minuting the meeting.

1.	<p>Apologies The meeting noted Cameron Grant would be attending the meeting later. Councillor Iain Shonny Paterson Leave of Absence for David Carmichael and Sonja Aitken.</p> <p>Post Meeting Note – Cameron Grant was not able to attend the meeting.</p>	<p>Actions to be completed by 18/03/21</p>
	<p>The Chair asked for agreement to move Items 7 and 8 to allow the AHFA Budget to be covered after the Rent Consultation item.</p>	

	The Board of Management unanimously AGREED .	
2.	<p>Minutes of Meeting – 10th December 2020 The Board of Management APPROVED the minute as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>Proposed by: Cathy Grant Seconded by: Bruce Marshall</p>	
3.	<p>Matters Arising Page 3 – Item 7 - <i>The Director of Investment & Regeneration advised an economic impact study had already been discussed to measure the impact of grant funding received. The Board of Management NOTED an update would be provided at the February 2021 meeting.</i> The Director of Investment & Regeneration advised she had previously contacted the University of Highlands & Islands and had issued a further reminder. The Director of Investment & Regeneration advised she would update the Board of Management when further information was available. She further advised it would be the preferred option to offer the piece of work locally in the first instance.</p> <p>Page 3 – Item 7 - <i>Director of Investment & Regeneration could provide some information on the funding available.</i> The Chair confirmed the Director of Investment & Regeneration had circulated the information.</p> <p>Page 3 – Item 7 - <i>Councillor Paterson also agreed he would be happy to be a conduit between ACHA and the Council in relation to partnership working to obtain funding. The Chair stated if the Director of Investment & Regeneration to provide information on what the Councillors could do to assist.</i> The Chair confirmed the Director of Investment & Regeneration had issued the information requested. He further advised the information had been very useful and it had been passed to his colleagues in Argyll and Bute Council.</p> <p>Page 7 – Item 10 – ACHA Draft Budget - <i>The Director of Finance & IT advised if any Board member wished to identify any further actions, issues or measures for consideration they should contact him.</i> The Director of Finance & IT advised he had received communication from the Vice Chair and confirmed the issue raised had been addressed and was included in the draft budget for consideration at the meeting today.</p> <p>Page 11 – Item 14 – Landlord Report - <i>The Vice Chair requested the picture of the radiator be replaced with a picture of an Air Source Heat Pump. This amendment was agreed by the Board of Management.</i> The Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services confirmed the amendment had been made.</p> <p>Page 16 – Item 25 – Zero Hours Contracts - <i>The Chief Executive suggested drafting a post for Facebook explaining the logic of the Group's use of zero hours contracts. The Board of Management AGREED that would be useful. The Chief Executive will develop a form of words and run by both the Chair of ACHA and the Chair of AHFA before posting on</i></p>	

	<p><i>Facebook.</i></p> <p>The Chief Executive advised an article had been drafted for Facebook and approved by both the ACHA and AHFA Chairs and would be posted onto Facebook as soon as a space is available. It is likely this would be at the end of the week.</p>	
4.	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>Membership Application Form</p> <p>The Chief Executive advised one membership application form had been received. The Board of Management unanimously APPROVED the application.</p> <p>The Chair advised he had received a request from Cameron Grant advising he wished to propose a rent freeze. The Chair advised Cameron had intimated he should be in attendance for that item on the agenda.</p> <p>Post Meeting Note – Cameron Grant did not attend the meeting.</p>	
5.	<p>Declaration of Interest</p> <p>None intimated.</p>	
6.	<p>Chief Executive Presentation</p> <p>The Chief Executive advised an electronic copy of his presentation had been circulated by email on Wednesday 3rd February 2021.</p> <p>The Chief Executive took the meeting through his presentation covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid 19 Update • Progress with other business • External Updates <p>The Board of Management NOTED the contents of the presentation.</p> <p>The Chair stated if he could be of any assistance in relation to the new built development in Tarbert he would be happy to be involved. The Chief Executive thanked the Chair and stated a conference call between himself, the Chair and the Director of Investment & Regeneration would be useful.</p>	<p>Alastair/ Roddy/ Kirsteen</p>
8.	<p>Consultation on Proposed Increase to Rent Charges</p> <p>The Director of Finance & IT advised there had been 70 responses received which was down slightly on the previous year. He advised that in overall terms 90% of respondents said they understood the leaflet and 88% said they found the information helpful based on responses to question 2. There were 79% of responses (55) that would prefer if ACHA had a level of longer term certainty on future rent levels. There was no clear view on the question asked regarding the importance of services. He further advised that any specific tenancy type matters had been referred to relevant staff to respond.</p> <p>The Director of Finance & IT stated the rent consultation process was in itself a complex exercise but coupled with the balancing of the budget made the process a difficult exercise for the Board of Management.</p>	

The Director of Finance & IT took the meeting through his report highlighting:

Financial Viability

ACHA should consider its financial viability when setting rent levels and the Board has a duty to ensure ACHA remains financially viable for the long term. Rental income is the main source of income to ACHA. Income from rents effectively determines how much money is available for ACHA to spend. Through sensitivity analysis as part of the review of the business plan it has been established that the business plan is very sensitive to variations in rental income.

It is important to note that ACHA's net rental income is projected to be around £23.5m for 2021/22. Each 1% variation in rents therefore equates to approx. £235k per annum. This means additional income in the case of an increase, or a requirement for cost savings if it is a reduction. Any reduction of rental income per annum has a multiplier effect through the business plan as that income is also lost from future years planned revenue.

If the rent increase is less than 3.0% then each 0.5% the rent is increase is less than 3.0% will require additional budget savings for 2021-22 of £117k, equating to £585k over 5 years and increasing longer term annual savings from £210k to £327k. A rent increase of 2.0% then would require additional budget savings for 2021-22 of £235k, equating to £1,175k over 5 years and increasing longer term annual savings from £210k to £445k.

The Director of Finance & IT took the meeting through the table on page 9 of his report which contained details on the the impact of rent increases of less than 3% in 2021/22 and how that would impact the Business Plan and the table of options.

The Director of Finance & IT drew the meetings attention to the Service Implications contained within his report stating a lower increase would require additional budget savings to be identified. The source of these would need to be identified and the implications on services considered. The range of issues which might arise would include:

- Potential risk to investment in houses and ability to improve SHQS and EESSH compliance. ACHA's compliance rate is currently 57% and 64% respectively which is significantly below the average for RSLs in Scotland.
- Potential risk to ongoing improvements in repairs and maintenance and addressing backlog of non-emergency repairs arising from covid.
- Potential risk to staff resources available maintain or improve performance on rent arrears, void rent loss or other corporate plan priorities.
- Potential risk to non-core activities of benefit to ACHA and its tenants e.g. aids an adaptations and welfare rights.

The Director of Finance & IT stated in relation to repairs and maintenance there had been significant improvement with high satisfaction levels from tenants.

The Director of Finance & IT advised that during the current pandemic

there had been an increase in rent arrears but not as high as expected due to the huge amount of hard work put in by staff.

The Director of Finance & IT stated that the void rent loss still required significant work.

The Director of Finance & IT took the meeting through the rent affordability and rent comparability sections of his report advising the average weekly rent for an ACHA house in 2020/21 was £3.31 or 3.68% below the RSL average. With a 3% increase ACHA rents would still be £0.75 below the RSL average assuming all other RSLs had a rent freeze. In comparison to the other three local RSLs the ACHA average weekly rent was £6.60 or 7.08% below the average for the other three RSLs. If ACHA rents increased by 3% for 2021-22 but the other three RSLs had a rent freeze ACHA rents would be £4.00 or 4.29% below the average of the other three RSLs. The Director of Finance & IT advised the affordability of rents was very much dependent on the financial circumstances of individual tenants. He stated that ACHA is required to consider the impact of rent increases and rent levels in terms of affordability for tenants and in this respect it was worth bearing in mind that ACHA has control over the levels of its rent but it has no influence on the level of earnings or income of tenants which is perhaps a more important issue as far as the affordability of rent goes. He stated it was also worth noting that around 60% of ACHA tenants receive some support via Universal Credit or Housing Benefit towards their rents with around 30% in receipt of benefits equivalent to the full amount of their rent. The Director of Finance & IT advised the specific financial circumstances and housing needs of individual tenants would determine the affordability of ACHAs weekly rent but looking at the summary and average information and using available data for earnings and rents of other RSLs then:

- ACHA rents equate to around 20% of income – it's a bit lower using moderate earning and a bit higher using minimum wage.
- ACHA rents are at a level that after deducting rent and the weekly minimum income standard there is surplus weekly income based on both moderate earnings, £33 per week, and the living wage, £17 per week, but a shortfall of £5 per week based on minimum wage - all after allowing for a 3% increase in rents.
- When compared to other RSLs in Argyll and Bute then even with a 3% increase ACHA rents are estimated to be more affordable than the highest rents levels by around £6 per week and less affordable than the lowest rent levels by £6 per week.

A rent increase of 3.0% would cost an additional £2.64 per week of rent. If the rent increase were 2.5% this would be an increase of £2.20 and a savings to the tenant of £0.44 per week. If the rent increase were 2.0% this would be an increase of £1.76 and a saving to the tenant of £0.88 per week. The Director of Finance & IT advised the table on Page 12 of his report provided information on the differences to an average rent based on each of the points between a 3% increase and a rent freeze.

The Chair thanked the Director of Finance & IT for his in depth explanation and report and asked for questions.

The Chair opened the questions by asking if the two budget reports could

be considered if the rent increase was not approved at 3%. The Director of Finance & IT advised the budget reports could not be considered if anything less than a 3% rent increase was approved. He stated if less than a 3% increase was approved officers would be required to carry out an assessment on where savings could be made to address the gap in the budget.

The Chair stated that on the income side £3.3million had been gained for tenants which was £1.3million more than the previous year. The Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services stated that was a client gain for tenants which would translate into Housing Benefit which would be paid to the Association and the housing benefit side of Universal Credit.

Cathy Grant stated she appreciated all the work that had been done on the budget and advised she had read the figures over and over but had reached the conclusion it would not be fair under the current circumstances to impose a 3% rent increase on tenants. She stated she was not advocating a rent freeze and suggested an increase of RPI (1.2%) would be realistic. She further stated she appreciated the work of the Welfare Rights staff but highlighted that some tenants, around 40% fall outwith the benefit level. She stated that other RSLs had opted for a rent freeze. She commented she was aware a 1.2% rent increase would impact on what the Association could do but felt a 3% rent increase was too high.

Betty Rhodick stated that if improvement works were to continue, tenants would need to accept a 3% rent increase

Councillor Donnie MacMillan stated his daughter was an ACHA tenant. He declared an interest.

Bruce Marshall stated he was not happy with a 3% rent increase but was prepared to support it on the basis of continuing with improvement works. He added the Association could not afford a lower increase if improvement works were to continue. He advised he took comfort from ACHA's rents remaining lower than most comparators even with a 3% increase. Bruce Marshall further stated he had sympathy for Cathy Grant's comments and asked if in future years it might be possible for lower rent increases unless inflation determines otherwise.

Brian Tester stated a number of ACHA houses had very extensive works carried out and stated the savings made on heating bills could offset any rent increase. He stated the Association needs to continue with the good work and as such requires to increase rents by 3%. Betty Rhodick agreed.

Cathy Grant stated the works being carried out at Kilmum, Blairmore etc. were being paid for by the Scottish Government's Warm Homes Fund. The Chief Executive advised the work was being carried out in partnership with the Scottish Government. He further advised there had been an economic impact for tenants as some tenant's fuel bills had reduced from £20 per day to £3 per day. He stated it was the most substantial initiative carried out to ensure money remained in tenants' pockets. The Chief Executive advised the biggest issues for tenants on low income was food, rent and heating. He commented that due to the direction of travel and the decisions taken by the Board of Management to get the houses where they

needed to be would and in the longer term benefit tenants. The Director of Investment & Regeneration stated ACHA were required to match fund the HEEPS/ABS programme for tenants which was a substantial cost to the Association. Cathy Grant reiterated it was her view a 3% rent increase was morally wrong.

Betty Rhodick stated that people worry about heating their homes and by improving heating systems it was benefiting tenants' physical and mental health. She stated it was her view the Association required to increase rents by 3% to allow the good work to continue.

The Vice Chair stated this was a very important debate for the Board. He stated that all RSLs were different and some had a large percentage of new properties and therefore comparison was very difficult. He stated that while his heart was in agreement with Cathy's proposal the Association needed to look at the evidence and in studying the report the Board is responsible for the financial viability of the Association now and in the future. He stated that a 3% increase would still leave ACHA's rents below national and local averages. He commented it would be interesting to determine what impact there would be year on year for the RSLs who had agreed a rent freeze for 2021/22. The Vice Chair stated the Welfare Rights staff provided an excellent service and arrears were only up 0.5% on the same period the previous year. The Vice Chair proposed a 3% rent increase for 2021/22 in order to sustain viability.

The Chair of the Audit Committee asked what impact there would be if new builds were removed from the budget. He asked if that could make a substantial saving. The Director of Finance & IT advised that while the Association were required to borrow to build new properties the cost of that borrowing was covered by the rental income from the new properties. He advised there would not be a favourable impact if the new build programme ceased.

Pat McVey quoted a sentence from the report "*Taking account of the issues set out above in relation to financial viability, service implications, rent comparability, rent affordability and the feedback from the rent consultation there is nothing to prevent the board increasing rents by 3.0%*". He asked where the evidence had come from. The Director of Finance & IT stated out of the 70 responses received only 9 queries had related to the level of rent affordability with a further two making comment on the rent increase resulting in 11 out of 70 tenants raising concerns over the rent increase which does not prevent the Association increasing rents by 3% if that is what it wishes to do. The Director of Finance & IT reiterated the point that as well as considering the impact to tenants consideration should be given to what does the rent increase mean to ACHA's ongoing viability and improvements to stock.

Pat McVey stated the December RPI was generally used to determine the rent increase but the Business Plan assumes a rent increase of 3%. Pat McVey stated there had been a drop of 46 responses to the rent increase consultation since the previous year and asked whether that could be because tenants see the consultation as a paper exercise and that ACHA would increase the rents to whatever level it wished.

	<p>The Director of Finance & IT stated he could not speak for tenants and had no answer to why there had been a lower number of responses. He stated that perhaps the Association needed to find a more engaging way to obtain tenants views. The Director of Finance & IT agreed the country was about to enter a very difficult period financially due to Covid 19 and many challenges would be thrown up as a result which meant ACHA should look at what assumptions are built into the Business Plan; lower assumption for rent increase = less money to spend then identify reductions in services to accommodate or less ambitious targets.</p> <p>The Chief Executive advised there was a legitimate debate on improving consultation but stated in his early years in housing, meetings had been well attended. He stated that perhaps one factor for the low response rate was that tenants had a degree of satisfaction on what their rent is being spent on. He stated that in his weekly postbag the highest level of enquiries relates to improvements with allocations and anti-social behavior following. He advised that very rarely did he ever receive representation over rent levels. He further advised the last substantive communication he had received in connection to rents was in relation to the rent disparity which had been resolved. He reiterated the biggest issue was the investment programme.</p> <p>The Chair stated that as Cameron Grant was not in attendance it was not possible to put forward his proposal as it would require a seconder. It was unanimously AGREED the meeting would note the proposal but move on.</p> <p>Cathy Grant stated she had listened to all comments but had not been swayed and remained her view a 3% rent increase was too high and proposed a 1.2% rent increase. Pat McVey seconded Cathy Grant's proposal.</p> <p>The Chair stated he would move the meeting to a vote:</p> <p>7 Board members in favour of a 3% rent increase 2 Board members in favour of a 1.2% rent increase 1 abstention</p> <p>Brian Tester stated that the outcome of the vote clarified there would not have been a seconder for Cameron Grant's proposal of a rent freeze.</p> <p>As a result of the vote, the Board of Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APPROVED a rent increase of 3% for 2021/22 • AGREED the Sheltered Housing Service charges would only change according to the analysis of costs incurred at each complex based on the prior year known costs • AGREED that any general needs service charges would only change according to any changes in the actual cost of the services provided, based on work undertaken by HNS to review all general needs services charges • AGREED the Property Management Fee for Factored Owners should not be subject to any increase for 2021/22. 	
7.	<p>AHFA Budget The Director of Finance & IT advised his report summarised the proposed budget for AHFA for 2021/22. The Director of Finance & IT advised the</p>	

	<p>AHFA Board on 8th December 2020 and ACHA Board on 10th December 2020 had received a report on the first draft of the AHFA budget for 2021/22. He stated the only material difference to the proposed budget related to an amendment to the vehicle lease costs which had been offset with a mix of additional income and expenditure reductions. The Board noted the situation arose following updated budget information provided by the AHFA Managing Director relating to an increase in the number of vehicles leased to 63 as a result of increased staff numbers. The Director of Finance & IT further advised that the AHFA Managing Director had also re-allocated some pay costs from management costs to operating costs as detailed in paragraph 6 of the discussion note.</p> <p>The Director of Finance & IT advised the proposed budget was based on the outcome of the negotiation of the repairs and maintenance contract between AHFA and ACHA which will commence from 1st April 2021 (when the current contract ceases at the end of March 2021) and advised a separate paper on this would be presented to the respective Board meetings in March 2021.</p> <p>The Director of Finance & IT advised the overall proposed budget for AHFA for 2021/22 was sufficient to generate a cash surplus (before tax and non-cash entries for depreciation and pensions).</p> <p>The Board of Management NOTED the AHFA budget had been approved by the Board of Directors at their meeting on 2nd February 2021.</p> <p>There were no questions and the Board of Management unanimously APPROVED the AHFA budget for 2021/22.</p>	
9.	<p>ACHA Budget</p> <p>The Director of Finance & IT advised the draft budget was very similar to the version presented to the Board of Management in December 2020.</p> <p>The Director of Finance & IT advised he would talk generally to the report highlighting key issues and advising:</p> <p>The draft budget presented to the Board in December exceeded the net cash flow covenant limit. Options agreed at that point to offset this variance were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce budget for board travel and subsistence • Transfer 50% of AHFA cash profit to ACHA • Defer major repairs programme expenditure to 2022/23 <p>Each year ACHA must submit its business plan for approval to Lloyds Banking Group. This process sets the level of the net cash covenant for the next financial year. In the event there is no approval of the revised business plan, or where approval is delayed, then ACHA must operate within the cash flow limit as last previously approved. For 2021/22 the 2020 approved business plan sets a cash flow limit of £1.817m. The budget proposals set out seek to ensure that ACHA operate within that for 2021/22.</p> <p>The Director of Finance & IT referred the meeting to paragraph 26 of his attached briefing note which stated the proposed budget was £1.852m</p>	

	<p>greater than the last approved cash flow limit in the February 2020 Business Plan. Of that £0.194m is the timing/phasing difference on new builds which will be included in the updated business plan submitted for Lloyds Banking Group to consider. A further £1.658m relates to the carry forward of unspent budget in 2020/21, again a timing/phasing difference and will be included in the updated business plan submitted for Lloyds Banking Group to consider. He stated that on the basis these are simply timing differences and not a change to the underlying business plan or financial strength of ACHA it was expected they will be approved. However, it should be noted if they are not approved ACHA would have to review its budget for 2021/22 and revert to a position which removed these values.</p> <p>The Director of Finance & IT took the meeting through additional key issues in his report covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income • Void Rent Loss • Expenditure • Management Costs • Repairs and maintenance • Responsive Repairs <p>The Vice Chair asked how the Covid restrictions were taken into account within the budget and should normality return in August would that impact the budget as currently written. The Director of Finance & IT stated there were so many variables. He stated the budget had been drafted based on the best assumptions that could be made at that stage. He stated that if the lockdown in terms of impact on the investment programme were to continue for a lengthy period in 2021/22 then the Association would spend less money on the 2021/22 improvement programme which would be moved into the 2022/23 cashflow. He stated it would not affect the total amount of spend but would delay the spend to the following year.</p> <p>The Board of Management unanimously APPROVED the ACHA Budget for 2021/22.</p>	
10.	<p>Confidential Business Plan Update and Longer Term Budget Savings The Director of Finance & IT advised there were two aspects to his report; Business plan assumptions and Longer term budget savings.</p> <p>The Board of Management unanimously: APPROVED the updated Business Plan assumptions NOTED the key issues arising from the progress so far in updating the Business Plan NOTED the current position on the longer term budget savings</p>	
11.	<p>Amended Scheme of Delegated Authority The Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services advised that following discussions at the Chairs Meeting and HNS/HRCS Liaison meeting, an additional sentence had been inserted into Section 5.2 of the Scheme of Delegated Authority to specify that Senior Management Team Members could be asked to attend Area Committee meetings as and when required, where relevant to the Scheme of Delegated Authority and not</p>	

	<p>already covered by the Regional Manager.</p> <p>The Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services took the meeting through the minor amendment; Section 5.2 to read: The Regional Manager for Housing and Neighbourhood Services for the relevant Area will be the main reporting staff member to the Area Committee. Senior Management Team members can be asked to attend Area Committee meetings, as and when required, where relevant to the Scheme of Delegated Authority and not already covered by the Regional Manager. (yellow highlight – additional to document).</p> <p>The Board of Management unanimously APPROVED the minor amendment to Section 5.2 of the Scheme of Delegated Authority.</p> <p>Cathy Grant highlighted the document states the Bute & Cowal Area Committee is suspended. She asked if that statement could also be amended. The Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services confirmed both amendments would be made to the document.</p>	<p>Colette Benham</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>Naming of Inveraray Development The Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services advised that under normal circumstances the Area Committee would be heavily involved in the consultation process to name the development but as they were not currently functioning responsibility had been passed to the Board of Management.</p> <p>The Board of Management unanimously AGREED, in the absence of the Mid Argyll & Kintyre Area Committee, ACHA consult with Inveraray Primary School in relation to the naming of the new housing development in Inveraray.</p>	
<p>13.</p>	<p>Employee of the Season Autumn <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jane Hepburn 2. Tanya McKie <p>The Board of Management unanimously AGREED that Jane Hepburn be awarded Employee of the Season Autumn. The Board of Management unanimously AGREED a special award be made to Tanya McKie.</p> </p>	
<p>14.</p>	<p>Community Action Fund Applications – Remitted from November 2020 Meeting The Chief Executive advised the sum remaining in the Community Action Fund was £14,270.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Helensburgh & Lomond Highland Games The Board of Management unanimously APPROVED the Community Action Fund application for £500. 2. Lorn Group SWI The Board of Management unanimously APPROVED the Community Action Fund application for £500. 	

	<p>3. Butefest The Board of Management unanimously APPROVED the Community Action Fund application for £500.</p>	
14a.	<p>Community Action Fund Applications</p> <p>1. KADAS The Board of Management unanimously APPROVED the Community Action Fund application for £500.</p> <p>2. Kintyre Youth Café The Board of Management unanimously APPROVED the Community Action Fund application for £500.</p> <p>3. Garelochhead Station Trust The Board of Management unanimously APPROVED the Community Action Fund application for £480. The Vice Chair clarified that the application may lead readers to believe it is for veterans only but it is for the whole community.</p> <p>4. Tiree Community Business Ltd The Board of Management unanimously APPROVED the Community Action Fund application for £500.</p>	
14b.	<p>Community Action Fund Application for Ratification - Dalmally Community Centre The Chair advised a Decision Under Urgency was made by Officer Bearers on 15th December 2020 to APPROVE a Community Action Fund application from Dalmally Community Centre for the sum of £250 as the event would be taking place prior to Christmas. The Board of Management RATIFIED the Decision Under Urgency.</p>	
15.	<p>EVH Membership Renewal Decision for Ratification The Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services advised the EVH Membership Renewal had been circulated electronically in December 2020 as the renewal date was 1st January 2021.</p> <p>The results of the on-line voting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those in favour of renewing membership – 7 votes • Those not in favour of renewing membership – 0 votes • Did not cast a vote – 4 • Leave of Absence and therefore no vote – 3 <p>The Board of Management RATIFIED the outcome of the vote taken on-line and NOTED the Association had renewed membership of EVH at a cost of £5410.</p>	
16.	<p>Estate Management Action Plans The Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services advised that as the Area Committees were not currently in operation the Board of Management were being asked to consider and approve a number of proposed EMAP projects.</p>	

	<p>The Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services advised that due to contractor authorisation issues a number of projects would require to be withdrawn and moved into the next financial year.</p> <p>The Board of Management were advised the only projects seeking approval were A, B, C, J, M, R.</p> <p>Bruce Marshall asked why there were no EMAPs for Cowal. The Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services advised there were no EMAPs for Helensburgh & Lomond either and stated it was because of staff resources during Covid 19 where some staff members had been furloughed. The Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services stated projects in both Cowal and Helensburgh and Lomond would be included in a further report.</p> <p>The Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services confirmed the Association had previously used the services of Euan Seator on a number of occasions and were satisfied with the contractor.</p> <p>The Board of Management APPROVED the proposed Estate Management Action Plans for A, B, C, J, M, R on behalf of the Area Committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) fencing at Cruachan Cottage, Oban b) fencing at Lochnell Road, Oban c) fencing at Millpark Avenue, Oban d) Remitted due to contractor authorisation issues e) Remitted due to contractor authorisation issues f) Remitted due to contractor authorisation issues g) Remitted due to contractor authorisation issues h) Remitted due to contractor authorisation issues i) Remitted due to contractor authorisation issues j) fencing at 1 Coastguard Cottages, Kintyre k) Remitted due to contractor authorisation issues l) Remitted due to contractor authorisation issues m) level off uneven ground at 7 Wallace Cottages, Kintyre n) Remitted due to contractor authorisation issues o) Remitted due to contractor authorisation issues p) Remitted due to contractor authorisation issues q) Remitted due to contractor authorisation issues r) fencing at Caledonia Walk, Bute <p>The Board of Management NOTED any underspend in the budget would be carried forward to the 2021/22 budget.</p>	
17.	<p>ACHA Risk Register Quarterly Review There were no questions and the Board of Management NOTED the Risk Register quarterly review.</p>	
18.	<p>AHFA Risk Register Quarterly Review There were no questions and the Board of Management NOTED the Risk Register quarterly review.</p>	
19.	<p>AHFA Management Accounts – 31st December 2020 There were no questions and the Board of Management NOTED the</p>	

	content of the AHFA Management Accounts to period ending 31 st December 2020.	
20.	ACHA Management Accounts – 31st December 2020 There were no questions and the Board of Management NOTED the content of the ACHA Management Accounts to 31 st December 2020.	
21.	Legionella Management and Control Action Plan Progress There were no questions and the Board of Management NOTED progress on the action points identified within the Legionella audit.	
22.	Asbestos Management and Control Action Plan Progress There were no questions and the Board of Management NOTED progress on the action points identified within the Asbestos audit.	
23.	Regeneration Update There were no questions and the Board of Management NOTED progress of the development programme against the targets for 2020/21. The Board of Management NOTED the proposals for potential future developments and further NOTED the continuing impact on the programme due to the Covid 19 pandemic.	
24.	Investment Update There were no questions and the Board of Management NOTED progress of the Investment Programme against the targets for 2020/21. The Board of Management further NOTED that all Investment Contracts had been impacted by lockdown.	
25.	Warm Homes Fund ASHP/EWI Installation Progress January 2021 There were no questions and the Board of Management NOTED progress on the installation of Air Source Heat Pumps contract across all geographic areas with install numbers, satisfaction rates and monthly projected completions.	
26.	Notifiable Events The Board of Management NOTED the Notifiable Events lodged since the last Board meeting held on 10 th December 2020.	
27.	Public Holidays 2021/22 The Board of Management NOTED the list of Public Holidays for 2021/22.	
28.	Cancelled Membership The Board of Management NOTED the cancellation of one membership. The Board of Management NOTED the current membership total at 26 th January 2021 as 250.	
29.	A.O.C.B. Confidential – Decision Under Urgency x 3 Group Position on Furlough The Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services advised the group were considering by exception, if anyone should be furloughed. She	

advised it may apply to shielding staff unable to work from home, subject to Board approval. The Board of Management noted that was currently likely to affect three staff in AHFA, and one staff member in ACHA. The Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services advised the shielding letter staff would receive from the Chief Medical Officer would act as a fit note for as long as lockdown restrictions remained in place. The letter is called a shielding notification and can be shown to employers without the need for a GP fit note.

The Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services advised that flexible furlough had been introduced from 1st July 2020 and it has been confirmed that flexible furlough remained an option for employers using the extended scheme, whereby part of staff hours could be designated as furlough. She stated that wherever possible the group would be accommodating changes in hours, and more flexible working, but by exception, if an employee had disruption to caring responsibilities resulting from coronavirus, such as, caring for children who are at home as a result of school and childcare facilities closing or, caring for a vulnerable individual in their household, they would be eligible to be furloughed.

The Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services advised the situation would be kept under review and may apply to a handful of staff in the group.

The Board of Management unanimously **APPROVED** by exception, to top up wages for any staff requiring to be furloughed due to lockdown measures. The Board of Management **NOTED** actual numbers, once known, would be reported back.

Area Committees

The Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services reminded the meeting at the Board of Management meeting held on 10th December 2020 approval was provided to:

1. Trial virtual Area Committee meetings from February 2021
2. Provide IT equipment and training, if appropriate, to Area Committee Members
3. Provide an indefinite leave of absence to members who are unable to participate virtually
4. Agree the content of Area Committee meetings by Area Committees at their first meeting.

The Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services advised a meeting had been held between the Area Committee Chairs and three Senior Managers to look at the practicalities of setting up the virtual Area Committee AGMs and subsequent meetings. With the best intentions, having reviewed the IT provision and understanding of how people would wish to participate, it was agreed by all four Area Committee Chairs that it would be sensible to retain the current status quo; with the Board of Management taking decisions at their virtual meetings, until such time as the Area Committees can meet safely in person again. The Board of Management were advised that every Area was represented on the Board, and local decisions are being made via the virtual Board meetings, and any local updates by Area can still be issued to members, to keep them

	<p>advised, until such time as they could be functional again.</p> <p>The Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services quoted a relevant paragraph from the Standing Orders:</p> <p>(8.4.8) Decisions made by the Board of Management will stand on record for at least three months and will not be discussed, questioned or put to a second vote within that period unless there are exceptional circumstances and only then with the consent of two-thirds of those present.</p> <p>The Board of Management unanimously AGREED the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow the matter to be discussed again.</p> <p>Bruce Marshall stated it was his view Area Committees may recruit more members if the meetings were to be held virtually. Cathy Grant stated out of the current Area Committee members for Bute and Cowal only 3 or 4 had the capacity to go online. Cathy stated she would be concerned if the meetings were to move to virtual as it would exclude a lot of people. The Chair stated perhaps a mix could be considered. Cathy added she took Bruce's point and there may be additional members as a result but it would exclude some of the current members.</p> <p>The Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services advised the Scottish Housing Regulator were comfortable with the further suspension of Area Committees until it was safe for them to resume. The SHR further suggested a review of activities should take place at an appropriate time.</p> <p>Brian Tester stated it was his view virtual meetings for public bodies did not engage as well as face to face meetings.</p> <p>The Chair of the Audit Committee stated he was in agreement with Bruce Marshall regarding the future of Area Committee meetings moving to virtual. He advised he supported the further suspension of Area Committees as staff assistance was required in order to run the meetings and resources did not allow for that currently.</p> <p>The Board of Management AGREED Area Committees be placed on hold again until it was permitted and safe to hold face to face meetings.</p> <p>Application to become a Board member</p> <p>The Chief Executive advised he had received a request from a tenant member, Esther Hughes to join the Board of Management.</p> <p>The Board of Management unanimously AGREED Esther Hughes would fill a casual vacancy on the Board of Management until the AGM in September.</p> <p>Brian Tester stated his name had not been included on the list of attendees for the meeting.</p>	
30.	<p>Date & Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>Thursday 18th March 2021 at 10.00am via Skype.</p>	