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Hamper

# Investing in your homes & community

## RENT CHOICES FOR 2021/22

We deliver services to over 380 tenants and 570 owner occupiers in the Larkfield area. We want to continue to invest in your homes and community and provide you with affordable and excellent housing services.

We start planning, at this time of the year, for our next financial budget which begins on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. Decisions about our budget will be taken by Larkfield's Management Committee at its meeting in January 2021 and before that we need to talk to our tenants about our rent review for 2021. We are living in exceptional times this year and we know that due to the ongoing Coronavirus-19 pandemic you may be facing financial uncertainty. It is important you have the opportunity to give your views on the decision about the annual rent review as it will affect your family budget.

Please read this information and complete the questionnaire. If you have any questions, please contact us.

**Rent is our main source of income.** We have a 30 year business plan which considers how much money will be needed to ensure we are able to provide you with quality homes at an affordable cost, and over the longer term, as our costs rise every year in line with inflation.

### How to have your say:

Our rent consultation survey is open until **Friday 18th December 2020** and to take part you can:

- Complete the questionnaire enclosed with this leaflet and return it to us in the enclosed stamped address envelope
- Speak to one of the housing staff by calling 01475 630930
- Complete the survey online via our website at [www.larkfieldha.org.uk](http://www.larkfieldha.org.uk)

**This year we are considering an increase of 2.0% or 1.5%**

## WHAT WE DELIVERED IN 2019-20...

### Improvements to your Homes and your Community

We invested over £345,000 in gas central heating and bathroom upgrades, external decoration works, adaptations and safety compliance work.



We also spent **£76,200** on gas servicing, communal landscaping, and additional planned maintenance works and **£215,000** on reactive repairs.

We carried out **825 reactive repairs** during the year and achieved **97% customer satisfaction**, compared with the **Scottish average of 94.4%**.



Working with **Inverclyde Centre for Independent Living** we completed **13 housing adaptations** to ensure your homes continue to meet your needs.

### STRIVING TO DELIVER AFFORDABLE AND EXCELLENT HOUSING SERVICES



We implemented our new **“MyLarkfield” app** so you can access information about your tenancy and request services using a phone or tablet.

- Our “Advice for All” project provides one to one advice and supported 62 Larkfield tenants last year. The project is delivered by Financial Fitness and secured over £69,000 in benefits for Larkfield tenants last year.
- Our Tenancy Support Service delivered by the Simon Community assisted 11 Larkfield households during the year.
- Starterpacks Inverclyde supported new Larkfield tenants with essential household items.
- Our Energy Activators project– helped tenants reduce their energy bills and energy usage.



We continued to supported tenants to afford their rent payments. **Our rent arrears are 4.9% compared to the Scottish average of 5.7%.**

We funded and supported tenant activities and local voluntary groups during the year. Our most recent charter report card shows that we continued to perform well during 2019/20. We recorded high levels of tenancy sustainment and low levels of empty properties.

## How we spend your rent

For every £1 of rent the diagram below shows the percentage of how this money is spent. Our main cost is repairs, maintenance and investment programme.

**Investment and maintenance** include repairs and planned replacements for example, gas central heating systems, external decoration works, external lighting, fire detection upgrades and other planned investment upgrades and safety compliance works. It also includes the reduction in value over the lifetime of properties (also called *depreciation*).

Costs for materials, repairs, staffing, and fuel increase each year and economic uncertainty relating to Brexit and Covid-19 are all likely to mean rising costs of goods and services.

Staff provide a range of **housing services** to manage your neighbourhood and support tenants to maintain and afford their home.

**Loan repayments** include interest costs of borrowing and debts related to homes being empty between tenancies and unpaid rent arrears.

## How Rent and Service Charges were Invested in 2019/2020...



## OUR PLAN FOR NEXT YEAR 2021/22

We want to sustain this level of investment in our properties and continue to provide you with quality housing services and to do this we need to increase our rent.

Tenants told us last year their top priorities are rent affordability, quality of repairs service and getting home improvements when they are needed.

We have included further questions on affordability in the questionnaire.

**Our rent increases have been below the Scottish average for the previous six years**

## We are proposing 2 options for your rent from April next year

We have considered what we need to keep rents affordable, costs of services and delivering tenants priorities.

### Option 1: Increase Rent by 1.5%

If we were to increase your rent by 1.5%, this would allow us to continue to invest in your home, deliver the things you have said are important to you and keep up with rising costs.

### Option 2: Increase Rent by 2.0%

An increase of 2% will allow us to carry out more major/planned investment to your home over a shorter period.

### What would this mean for your rent?

The below table shows how much extra you would have to pay each week with each rent proposal. This is the average for all property types. If you would like to know exactly what each increase would mean for you, please contact us.

Options for rent increase	2 apt	3 apt	4 apt	5 apt
2.0% means an extra each week of	£1.22	£1.69	£1.96	£2.21
1.5% means an extra each week of	£0.91	£1.27	£1.47	£1.66

### What happens next?

We will collect your views and the Larkfield Management Committee will use these to help them inform the rent setting review for next year. We will also take into account wider considerations such as rent affordability and inflation.

For more information, or if you require support to take part please contact us 01475 630930 or [info@larkfieldha.org.uk](mailto:info@larkfieldha.org.uk)

If you have entered your contact details and return your completed questionnaire by **Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020**, you will be automatically entered into the draw for the Christmas Hamper worth £50.