



December 2019

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New Developments

Earlier this year, we completed 13 flats for affordable rent at Main Street, Kyle, and 14 houses and flats at Kyleakin Feus.

We have purchased a property at Inverarish Cottages, and we are due to conclude a purchase at West Suisnish, both on Raasay, which will be leased to NHS Highland for nurses' accommodation.



Struan Road, Portree

We are currently on site at Struan Road, Portree which comprises 12 flats adjacent to West Highland College and 16 flats at Northview, Portree.

All 28 flats are for affordable rent. These are due to complete in October and June 2020 respectively.

We are also on site at the former Rapson's bus garage site behind Tigh na Sgìre, Portree with 17 flats for affordable rent, which are scheduled to complete in Summer 2020.



Rapson's Site, Portree

We are due to start on site with 6 flats for affordable rent at the former Hydro shop site in Main Street, Kyle, early in the New Year.

Plans are well advanced for 24 affordable rented properties at **Campbell's Farm, Phase 4, Broadford**, and **Kyleakin Feus Phase 2**, comprising 28 properties for affordable rent.

Other projects due to commence during 2020 (subject to planning consent and tender approval) are:-

Location	Units	Tenure
Staffin	6 houses (2 for LSHA)	Affordable rent
Raasay	2 houses	Affordable rent
Staffin Road, Portree	3 houses (2 for LSHA)	Affordable rent
Glenelg	4 houses	Affordable rent
Armadales, Sleat	16 houses (in 2 phases)	Affordable rent

Your Feedback
Every year we consult with our tenants on our Rent Setting Policy (please see page 2). We would appreciate it if you could let us know how you would like us to consult with you in future, for example, through Facebook, via our Tenants and Stakeholders page on our website, at organised public meetings or meetings of our Tenants' Voice participation group.

Phone us on 01478 612035, send an email to info@LSHA.co.uk or fill in the online contact form on our website www.LSHA.co.uk. Your feedback is very much appreciated.

Rent Setting Policy Consultation 2020/2021



The Association is required to regularly review its rents and service charges. This is your opportunity to **comment on our proposals for the charges that will apply from 1st April 2020.**

What does your rent pay for?

All rental income received by the Association is set aside to pay for the cost of the services we provide to tenants.

Included within these costs are:-

- The management of our housing stock, including items like staff costs, insurance premiums and office expenses.
- Day-to-day repairs, e.g. faulty heating systems, electrical problems, burst pipes, etc.
- Cyclical Maintenance which includes our external painting and ground maintenance programmes.
- Planned Maintenance involving installing replacement kitchens, bathrooms, doors, windows and heating systems.
- Loan charges on the money we borrow to construct our properties.

How do our rents compare to other similar landlords?

As part of our Policy, we need to ensure that our rents are comparable to the rents charged by similar social landlords in Scotland and we have consistently managed to achieve this. A comparison of our rents and those of the other main housing providers in the Highlands and Islands area is shown below.

Weekly Rents (PLEASE NOTE: These are AVERAGE figures)	1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms
Scottish Average	£76.10	£77.70	£84.44	£93.49
Albyn Housing Society	£74.94	£83.78	£91.81	£102.96
Hjaltland Housing Association	£85.67	£90.87	£94.99	£106.86
Lochaber Housing Association	£76.89	£86.47	£94.46	£101.46
Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association	£70.82	£76.97	£84.91	£90.14
Orkney Housing Association	£77.49	£82.42	£91.29	£99.28
Pentland Housing Association	£60.92	£69.92	£88.32	£100.92
Osprey Housing Moray	£72.00	£86.39	£94.06	£105.75
West Highland Housing Association	£79.26	£91.92	£100.63	£118.84

What is the proposed rent increase in 2020/2021?

The Association is proposing to increase rents from 1st April 2020 by the **Consumer Price Index** figure in September 2019 plus 1% which will result in a total increase of **2.7%**. This is the increase we calculate that we need in order to continue to provide the level of services that tenants require.

What is CPI?

Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) is the speed at which the prices of the goods and services bought by households rise or fall. CPI is estimated by using price indices - think of a very large shopping basket containing all the goods and services bought by households. CPI estimates changes to the total cost of this basket. Most price indices are published monthly; in the UK, CPI is the main measure of inflation.

Will Service Charges increase?

Yes. It is proposed that these increase in line with the change to rents.

Why the increase?

The Association's costs are subject to inflationary pressures and many of our costs are increasing by more than the rate of inflation. In addition, arrears are rising as a result of Universal Credit (UC) and Associations are having to employ extra staff to deal with UC issues. Increased fire safety and energy efficiency requirements will incur an estimated cost of £300-£400 per property. Most Associations are having to invest more to cope with increased regulation and smaller organisations are most affected.

What happens next?

We are inviting all our tenants to respond to this consultation by **31st January, 2020**. All comments and submissions will be considered by our Management Committee who will take the final decision on rent levels for 2020/2021. We will then advise tenants of their new rent figure no later than **the end of February 2020**.



Electricity Switching Update

The **Energy Advice Services team** has now completed over 500 property surveys of their current programme and hope to complete all surveys by the end of March 2020. If you have not yet made arrangements for a survey to be done in your home please call **01478 612035**.

More and more households have made arrangements to switch supplier, but many more can still do so. **if you want some switching advice** please give the Energy Advice team a call or email them at **energyadvice@lsha.co.uk**.

Electricity pricing has become more complicated in the last few years due to multiple caps on pricing being introduced by Ofgem but there are still good switch savings to be made. Some of the best options include:-

Single Tariff – big six rates are all around 17.8p per unit – best price available is significantly lower at 12.8p per unit.

Economy 10 (E10) – almost all E10 consumers can benefit from switching to a single rate meter and then choosing the cheapest single rate supplier.

Total heat total control (THTC) – the end of the prepayment cap advantage has meant that prepay and credit prices are now almost the same and many households will have noticed an increase in costs this autumn. Some households have managed to keep their THTC meters but get a good single rate tariff applied to both meters using the restricted meters remedy.

Economy 7 (E7) – all companies offer a E7 rate and the best tariff depends on the real actual balance of use in your home between night and day so once you know this you can choose a supplier with tariff rates that more closely match your use.

For information on up-to-date switching advice call **Donnie** or **Laura** from the **Energy Advice team** on **01478 612035**.

Avoid Burst Pipes

If you're going away during the winter months and you turn off your heating, remember to drain down your water to avoid burst pipes. Otherwise, leave the heating on low when you're away and get a friend or neighbour to check the property regularly if possible. Tenants who are going to be absent for a long period from their properties should contact us to let us know.

Legionella Precautions

Any water outlets – taps, showers, hosepipes, outside taps - that are not regularly used should be **flushed** for two minutes on a weekly basis to reduce the risk of Legionella bacteria building up. If a property is left vacant for some time then all outlets should be flushed prior to reoccupation for at **least five minutes** to help prevent stagnant water from contaminating the system.

You should notify us -

If the water is discoloured or contains debris.

If the hot water supply stops working properly, this could mean the water is not sufficiently heated to control Legionella bacteria.

If the cold water supply is running warm, this could mean the water is not cold enough to control Legionella bacteria.

Do not interfere with the settings on your boiler or hot water system. The hot water should be set so that the water is stored at 60°C and reaches the outlet at 50°C.

If you have a shower installed, it produces small water droplets or spray which can be considered to be a risk. If the shower is getting used regularly then the water turnover should be sufficient to control the growth of Legionella bacteria.

If used infrequently the shower should be flushed through, at the hottest setting, for at least five minutes once a week. Clean the shower head periodically, descale and disinfect it at least every three months.

As a tenant, it is likely that you will notice any problems first, so it is important to remember to:

Keep the hot water hot

Keep the cold water cold

Keep the water circulating

Grit Bins



There are grit bins from The Highland Council located throughout our housing estates in Skye and Lochalsh. The Highland Council refills the grit bins on a regular basis, but please phone 01349 886601 if a top-up is required between regular refills.

The Highland Council provide the following information regarding their Winter Road Maintenance Service:-

Primary Routes - strategic, regional, sub-regional and link roads which serve the larger communities and permit the majority of road users to travel across the region. Covered from 6 am to 9 pm Monday to Saturday, 7 am to 9 pm on Sundays and public holidays.

Secondary Routes

- roads connecting smaller communities to the primary network; link and service roads within the larger urban settlements; service and school bus routes not covered by the primary network (on bus routes, gritting will not necessarily be completed before buses start their journey). Treated between 6 am and 6 pm Monday to Saturday.

Other Routes - minor rural and local access roads and residential roads in urban settlements. These roads will be treated as resources permit.



Please remember that you should never use household salt to melt ice. Household salt damages the road and pavement surfaces.

You should only use rock salt or grit.



Management Committee Members

If you have an interest in housing and the welfare of tenants, we would like to invite you to consider becoming a Management Committee member. This is a voluntary and unpaid position, but all reasonable out of pocket expenses are paid.

An Application Pack can be obtained by phoning 01478 612035 or e-mailing info@LSHA.co.uk.



Christmas and New Year Holiday Dates

The Association will be closed on Wednesday 25th, Thursday 26th and Friday 27th December 2019 and

Wednesday 1st, Thursday 2nd and Friday 3rd January 2020

The Contact phone number for Out of Hours Emergency Repairs is 01478 612035



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 **Lochalsh
& Skye
Housing
Association**