



An Gníomhaireacht
Tithíochta
The Housing Agency

The Housing Agency Annual Report 2020





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Who We Are and What We Do



The Housing Agency is a Government body whose vision is to promote the building of sustainable communities.

The Housing Agency's mission is to promote the supply of housing to meet current and future needs and demand.

We do this by being a centre of expertise on housing, supporting housing policy development and implementing effective housing programmes in collaboration with others.

We work with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (the Department), local authorities and Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) in the delivery of housing and housing services. The Agency also implements the Pyrite Remediation Scheme and is the interim regulator of the AHB sector. A Statutory Regulator was established on the 1 February

2021 – the Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority (AHBRA). The regulatory functions will transition from the voluntary structure under the Agency across to the AHBRA during 2021.

We are subject to the Code of Practice for the Governance of State-Sponsored Bodies and the Public Spending Code. We work to act in a fully accountable and transparent way.

Our Values



Our Role

The Agency supports the delivery and management of social housing by local authorities and AHBs. We work closely with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in the development and implementation of housing policy.

We were formally established in 2012 and our role has developed significantly since then. Following the publication of Rebuilding Ireland, the Government's Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness in July 2016, we took the lead in the delivery of a wide range of actions under this plan, including: the establishment of a Housing Procurement Unit and a One Stop Shop

for AHBs; the roll out of an acquisition programme to purchase 1,600 dwellings from banks and financial institutions; and work in relation to the rental sector and utilising vacant homes. In 2020, the role of the Agency in respect of Affordable Housing expanded and is detailed further under the performance report.

The Housing Agency's Strategic Plan 2019-2021 sets out five interconnecting themes upon which our work has focused on for the past two years and will continue to do so during 2021. The development of the Strategic Plan 2022-2024 will commence during 2021.

Our Themes



Our Work

The Housing Agency is a team of dedicated housing professionals working towards delivering sustainable and affordable housing for all.

Using our knowledge and expertise we lead the way in informing and delivering housing policy. We are uniquely positioned to understand the needs of the Irish housing sector through our active engagement with others.

The Housing Agency provides a range of housing-related services and manages some key projects



How We Are Managed

The Agency is governed by a Board appointed by the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The Board is responsible for shaping our priorities, providing strategic leadership, and overseeing the implementation of our functions. It has also established an Audit and Risk Committee and a Strategy Committee.

The Board established Advisory Panels to broaden engagement with stakeholders and to avail of a range of expertise. Three panels were in place and operating during 2020:

- Research and Insights
- Supply and Affordability
- Homelessness.

Our Board

On 31 December 2020, the Chairman and sitting members of the Board consisted of:



Michael Carey
Chairman, The
Housing Agency



Donal McManus
Irish Council for
Social Housing



David Duffy
Property Industry
Ireland, IBEC



Fiona Lawless
Meath County Council



Frank Curran
Wicklow County
Council



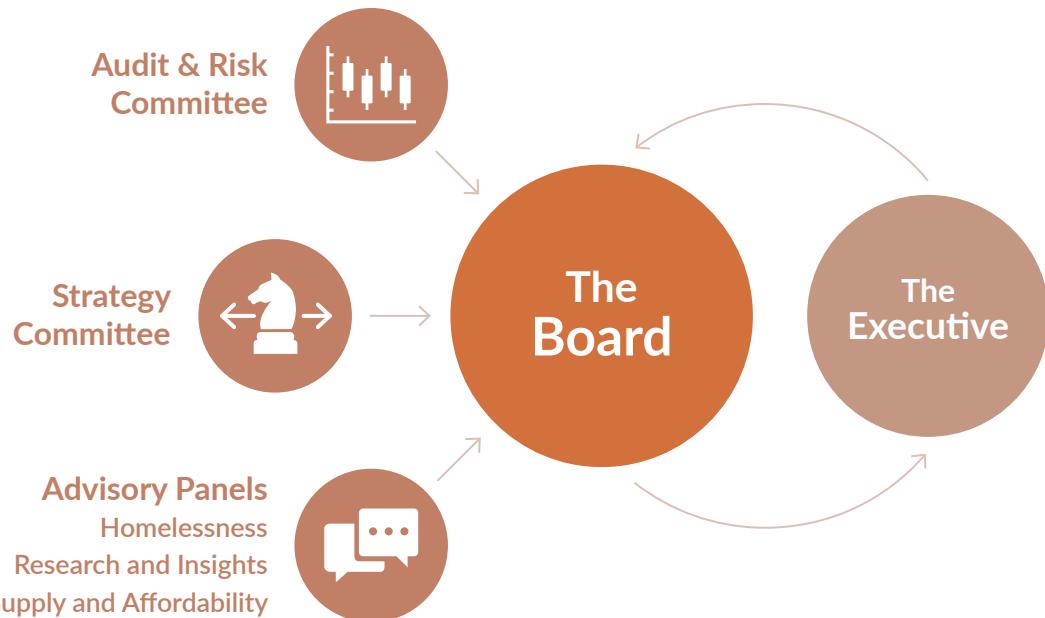
Barry Quinlan
Department of
Housing, Local
Government and
Heritage (appointed
Sept 2020)



Tony O'Brien
Management
Consultant



John O'Connor
Chief Executive
Officer, The Housing
Agency



Audit & Risk Committee

The Housing Agency's Audit & Risk Committee oversees key areas of financial and risk management within the organisation. On 31 December 2020, the committee's members were:

Tony O'Brien, Management Consultant

Alec Flood, Pyrite Resolution Board

Donal McManus, Irish Council for Social Housing

Fiona Lawless, Meath County Council

Strategy Committee

Our Strategy Committee monitors the organisation's strategic planning and implementation. On 31 December 2020, the committee's members were:

Michael Carey, Chairman, The Housing Agency

Tony O'Brien, Management Consultant

Barry Quinlan, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Donal McManus, Irish Council for Social Housing

John O'Connor, Chief Executive Officer, The Housing Agency

David Silke, Director of Operations, The Housing Agency

Ciara Galvin, Board Secretary, The Housing Agency

Advisory Panels

Our advisory panels provide a forum for the Board to engage with stakeholders. This allows the Board to consult with the panellists on housing related issues and gain their feedback. On the 31 December 2020, members of the panels were:

Homelessness

Michael Carey (Chair), The Housing Agency Board
Eileen Gleeson, Dublin Region Homeless Executive
Ivan Grimes, Waterford City and County Council
Martina Hannigan, Dublin Simon Community
Dr. Austin O'Carroll GP, Dublin Homeless COVID-19 Response Team
Anne Cronin, currently studying (formerly Novas Initiatives)

Research and Insights

Michael Carey (Chair), The Housing Agency Board
David Duffy, Property Industry Ireland and The Housing Agency Board
Joe Frey, UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence
Marian Finnegan, Sherry Fitzgerald
Professor Ken Gibb, UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence
Rosalind Carroll, Personal Injuries Assessment Board
Conall McCoille, Davy

Supply and Affordability

Michael Carey (Chair), The Housing Agency Board
Neil Durkan, Irish Home Builders Association
Margaret Geraghty, Fingal County Council
Kathryn Meghen, Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland
John McLean, Radius Housing
Rory O'Donnell, National Economic and Social Council
Larry O'Connell, National Economic and Social Council

Our Staff

The day-to-day work and provision of services are carried out by The Housing Agency's executive and staff. They carry out, manage and control the administration and business of the Agency, all subject to the supervision of the Board. It is led by our Chief Executive Officer, John O'Connor, who is responsible for the leadership and direction of all executive functions.

The Agency has responsibility for the implementation of the Pyrite Remediation Scheme. This Scheme is governed by the Pyrite Resolution Board. The Agency is also the interim regulator for the AHB sector – the activities of which are reported in a separate annual report. The Regulation Office is overseen by an interim Regulatory Board.

On 31 December 2020, the Agency had 114 staff, led by a senior management team consisting of:

John O'Connor, Chief Executive Officer
David Silke, Director of Operations
John McCartney, Director of Policy and Communications
Jim Baneham, Director of Housing Delivery
Peter Hesse, Principal Officer, Project Management and Procurement Officer

Our Key Achievements in 2020



More than 6,000 views of online training and information events hosted or supported by The Housing Agency

200 homes

remediated under the Pyrite Remediation Scheme, bringing the overall number of remediated homes for the scheme to 2,091

257

AHB applications assessed for Payment and Availability and Capital Advance Leasing Facility funding to provide over 18,600 homes across 1,010 projects

363

Mortgage to Rent cases completed, bringing overall cases completed to 1,004



631 homes delivered through enhanced and standard leasing



Over **100 AHBs** were assessed during the last assessment cycle, representing 32,601 homes

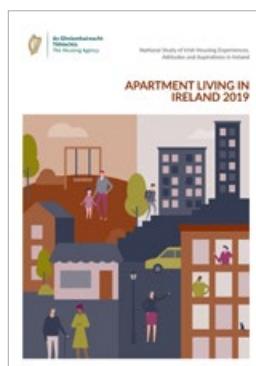
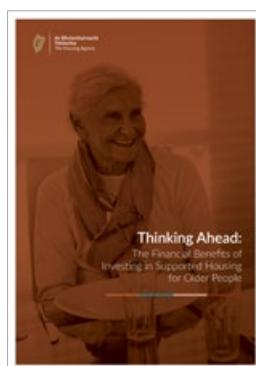
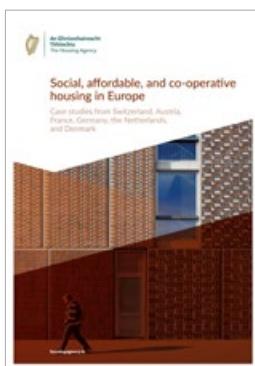


1,873 Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans processed. A total of 3,681 loan applications have been recommended for approval since the scheme was introduced in February 2018

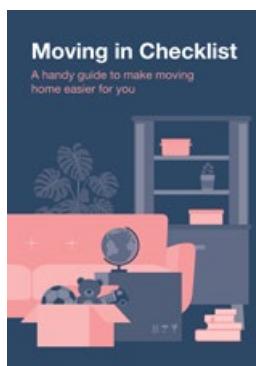
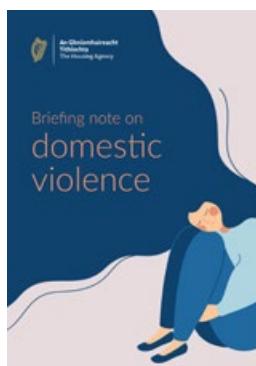
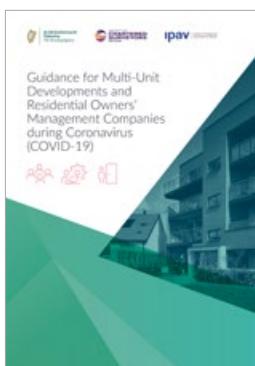
170 homes sourced for social housing under different acquisition programmes

2020 Publications

Research



Guidance & Handbooks



Statement from the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer



A year like no other, 2020 brought its own unique sets of challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how we all live and work. Here at The Housing Agency, it has really highlighted how important housing is for everyone.

During this public health emergency, families and individuals have continued to be provided with social housing support and many have moved into new homes. We are proud to have worked throughout the year with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, local authorities, AHBs and others to continue to deliver essential housing services for our communities.

The response to the pandemic is a clear example of the Agency's ability to be agile and innovative regarding housing delivery. Under the public health measures applied in March 2020, much construction work was stopped. The Housing Agency was tasked with designating certain social housing projects as essential health and related projects under the Health Act 1947 (*Section 31A Temporary Restrictions) (COVID-19) Regulations 2020. The aim of these designations was a primary emphasis on making additional social housing available to assist local authorities to respond to the housing challenges posed by COVID-19. In 2020, The Housing Agency designated 67 schemes as essential projects, representing 1,462 homes, across 18 local authorities.

The response to the pandemic is a clear example of the Agency's ability to be agile and innovative regarding housing delivery

The Housing Agency also continued the remediation of homes under the Pyrite Remediation Scheme. We undertake the remediation of properties affected by pyritic heave once they have been accepted into the scheme through the Pyrite Resolution Board. Despite the challenges faced by the pandemic, in September we marked the 2,000th home that was remediated under the scheme. That same month the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh

O'Brien TD, extended the pyrite remediation scheme to Limerick City and County Council.

The establishment of Cost Rental and Affordable Purchase schemes are central to the Government's plans as set out in the Programme for Government, under the theme Housing for All. We are pleased to report that The Housing Agency is playing an important role in the roll-out of these schemes. We provided assistance to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage with the preparation of the Affordable Housing Bill 2020 and the first Call for Proposals for the new Cost Rental Equity Loan scheme.

A central pillar of our activities is to be a centre of knowledge on housing and to this end, we support the professional development of housing practitioners and encourage the advancement of quality research into the housing sector.

In 2020 The Housing Agency hosted two rounds of our popular Research Support Programme, which aims to fund projects which respond to key topical issues in housing and have the potential to impact on housing policy and practice. The Housing Education Bursary Scheme also continued this year, supporting students and housing professionals seeking to enrol in housing studies courses offered by the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) and the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH).

Engagement and awareness raising of important housing-related issues remained to the fore of our work in 2020, despite the barriers that COVID-19 presented. Information and networking events moved online, and while this posed logistical challenges, it allowed us to reach a larger audience. Webinars on issues such as sustainable communities, apartment and multi-unit development management, and housing practitioner training proved hugely popular, attracting national and international expert speakers. In December, The Housing Agency's annual Housing

The central purpose of the Agency is to **promote the development of sustainable communities**, ones that are well planned, affordable, of high quality and support a good quality of life now and into the future

Conference drew a record audience of more than 1,100 attendees from across Ireland's housing sector.

The central purpose of The Housing Agency is to promote the development of sustainable communities, ones that are well planned, affordable, of high quality and support a good quality of life now and into the future. We worked in collaboration with our stakeholders to increase the supply of social homes, including housing and accommodation for homeless individuals and families; facilitating home finance programmes such as Mortgage to Rent and the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP).

The Housing Agency would like to thank the organisations with whom we continue to collaborate closely, which include the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, local authorities, approved housing bodies, the Irish Council for Social Housing, financial institutions and other State agencies such as the Housing Finance Agency, the Residential Tenancies Board and the Land Development Agency. We also look forward to working with the newly established Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority, as 2020/21 will be the final assessment cycle to be undertaken by us under the existing Voluntary Code.

Our appreciation to John Burke, Principal Officer, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, and Mary Hurley, Assistant Secretary, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, who stepped down as members of The Housing Agency Board during 2020. As our work continues to grow and expand, we would also like to thank all those who work with and for us to deliver progress, including our dedicated staff and Board members. We would also like to record our appreciation to John O' Connor, retired Chief Executive for his exceptional tenure as CEO of the Housing Agency. We also wish him every success as the Chair Designate of the Commission on Housing.

Our staff have shown continued dedication, flexibility, and resilience in responding to COVID-19 related challenges. We are grateful for their unflinching professionalism during the unprecedented time.

The Housing Agency looks forward to continuing a close working relationship with Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien TD, as well as the Ministers of State within that Department, Peter Burke TD and Malcolm Noonan TD, and Secretary General of the Department, Graham Doyle.



Michael Carey
Chairman



Bob Jordan
Chief Executive Officer

Performance Report





Being a Centre of Knowledge on Housing

Goal: To provide a robust and deep understanding of the dynamics of the housing sector, to inform quality policy decisions and development of effective programmes towards the provision of good housing and sustainable communities.

Progress

The Housing Agency had a very active research programme in 2020. The following is an outline of progress on research activity achieved in 2020. Where applicable the reports are available on www.housingagency.ie.

Work Completed during 2020

Social, Affordable & Co-operative Housing in Europe

Progress: The Agency undertook research into social, affordable and co-operative housing in Europe. The research features case studies from Switzerland, Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark which focus on innovations in design and construction of social, affordable and co-operative housing.

Output: Report published in October 2020.

Thinking Ahead: The Financial Benefits of Investing in Supported Housing for Older People

Progress: The report *Thinking Ahead: The Financial Benefits of Investing in Supported Housing for Older People* was conducted as part of a range of recommended actions under the policy statement 'Housing Options for Our Ageing Population', published by the Government in March 2019.

Output: Report published in October 2020.

National Housing Survey

Progress: This National Study of Irish Housing Experiences, Attitudes and Aspirations focused on national housing and neighbourhood satisfaction,

attitudes to different tenures and affordability. It is a nationally representative survey based on face-to-face interviews with 1,200 householders. A nationally representative survey of apartment dwellers in Ireland, followed by focus groups, was completed in 2020.

Output: *Apartment Living in Ireland 2019* published in September 2020.

Guidance for Multi-Unit Developments and Residential Owners' Management Companies During Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Progress: The Housing Agency, the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland and the Institute of Professional Auctioneers & Valuers produced this document which provides practical guidance for owners' management companies ("OMCs"), their property management agents, and their directors during the period of the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic. The material relates to residential OMCs only.

Output: Guide published in June 2020.

Data Hub

Progress: The Agency manages an online data hub on a continual basis. The Data Hub provides access to housing data on a range of issues to give an overview of housing in Ireland. These key indicators give an insight into the housing market as it changes over time. The data comes from a wide range of sources, including Census data, Housing Agency data and data from other government sources. The key indicators in the Data Hub come under the themes of: Supply, Affordability, Demand, Need and Prices.

Output: Available at www.housingagency.ie.

Rent Pressure Zones

Progress: The Agency undertakes ongoing analysis of local rental markets as required in the context of rent pressure zone legislation. We have a key role under the legislation in the designation and de-designation of Rent Pressure Zones. Once an area recommended by the Agency meets the criteria set out in the legislation it is designated as a Rent Pressure Zone.

Output: In 2020, there were seven newly designated Rent Pressure Zones.

Work ongoing during 2020, due for completion in 2021

Summary of Social Housing Assessments

Progress: The Summary of Social Housing Assessments 2020 brings together information provided by local authorities about households that are qualified for social housing support but whose social housing need is not currently being met. This is now carried out on an annual basis, and in 2020 the assessment was carried out in November. In 2020 the Agency provided ongoing advice on assessment regulations to local authorities and the Department and participates actively in the oversight committee. The Agency collated and assessed the data and drafted the final report.

Output: The report is due for publication in 2021.

Research Support Programme

Progress: In 2020 the Agency opened two calls for research proposals under its Research Support Programme. The programme provides varied support, from financial aid to access to data in a user-friendly format. Successful projects align with at least one of the following broad priority areas for research: the supply and efficient use of housing stock; understanding housing demand and affordability; the impact of housing on quality of life; housing and people; and housing and sustainable communities.

Output: Eight projects received funding under the programme in the areas of homelessness, high density housing, housing precarity, housing affordability, cost rental housing, tenant participation, and empty homes. The first project was completed in late 2020, with the remaining projects due for completion in 2021.

Briefing Papers for the Department

Progress: The Agency has a role to provide support and research to the Department of Housing, Local

Government and Heritage, and work commenced on a number of briefing papers in this regard with all due for completion during 2021. These were:

- Review on regional Housing First tenancy estimates
- Asset tests for social housing support: approaches to assessing means for social housing support in other jurisdictions
- Differential rents comparative paper with reference to other jurisdictions
- Income eligibility: comparative social housing income eligibility in other states.

Community-Led Housing

Progress: The Agency is part funding the project *Road-mapping a viable Community-Led Housing Sector for Ireland* and providing additional support and advice. Carried out by Self Organised Architecture (SOA), the project aims to inform the development of widely accessible cooperative and community-led affordable housing in Ireland. It involves a multi-stakeholder process examining cohousing and community-led housing.

Output: Five booklets due for publication in 2021.

Age Friendly Homes

Progress: The Agency is supporting the development, design and implementation of the website Agefriendlyhomes.ie. This is a website focused on housing options for older people. This is a collaborative project with Age Friendly Ireland, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and the Department of Health.

Output: Agefriendlyhomes.ie to be launched in 2021.

Research Partnership with Dublin City Council

Progress: The Agency provides support to Dublin City Council (DCC) in commissioning and managing research projects. One example is an evaluation of the Dublin City Council Age Friendly Housing Model in Inchicore. The overall aim of this project is to develop a new model of housing for older people where care, support and community dimensions are provided on site, integrated into the community and designed with older people at the centre. An evaluation of the first phase of this project was jointly commissioned by DCC and the Agency, completed in 2018. In 2020 the Agency was working on Phase 2 of the project.

Output: Evaluation and toolkit due in 2021.



John O'Connor, Chief Executive Officer, The Housing Agency, presents Evan Dargan Hayes, St Gerard's Senior School, Bray Co. Wicklow, with The Housing Agency Special Award at the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition 2020.

Role of Social Workers and Personnel Employed by Local Authorities Specifically to Assist Travellers

Progress: The Agency supported an *Independent Review of the Role of Social Workers and Personnel Employed by Local Authorities Specifically to Assist Travellers with their Accommodation Needs*. This research was undertaken by the School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, University College Dublin.

Output: Report due for publication in 2021.

Domestic Violence and Family Homelessness

Progress: The Agency is jointly sponsoring this research with Focus Ireland. The contract for the research was awarded to Trinity College, Dublin following an open procurement. The research examines the links between domestic violence and homelessness with a focus on service provision and co-ordination. Phase 1 of the research was completed in December 2019. During 2020 Phase 2 was initiated and field work was undertaken.

Output: Research report due in 2021.

Seven Estates Research Project

Progress: The Agency engaged the UCD School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice to provide follow-up research on seven social housing estates between 2019 and 2020 as part of a longitudinal study. The research investigates the factors that are likely to have influenced changes

in social conditions in the case study estates since the last round of research conducted in 2007-2009. Three factors will be investigated: economic growth and prosperity, state interventions in low-income neighbourhoods and social housing policy. In 2020 fieldwork for the project was undertaken.

Output: Research report due in 2021.

Analysis of Clustered and Dispersed Social Homes in Mixed Tenure Estates

Progress: The Agency is part funding an *Analysis of Clustered and Dispersed Social Homes in Mixed Tenure Estates*, a collaboration with the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH). The contract for the research was awarded to the UCD School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice.

Output: Research report due in 2021.

BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition

Progress: The Housing Agency continued its successful partnership with the annual BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition, held in January 2020 in Dublin. The award encourages engagement by young people in issues around housing and sustainable communities. Winner of The Housing Agency Special Award at the event was Evan Dargan Hayes, a student of St Gerard's Senior School in Bray, Co. Wicklow for his project *Electric Paint – how much graphite is needed to heat your home?* in the Chemical, Physical & Mathematical Sciences Intermediate Individual category.

Housing Policy Support to the Department and Local Authorities

The Housing Agency continues to assist the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and local authorities on a broad range of policy and practice matters.

Enhanced Leasing

The Agency continues to manage the Enhanced Long-Term Social Housing Leasing Scheme nationally. Potential participants are encouraged to submit proposals to the scheme and a standard form of 'agreement for lease' and lease were made available in early 2020. To-date, 331 homes have been provided through this mechanism.

In 2020 there were 10 active submissions; 'agreements for lease' and leases were signed for three of these proposals accounting for 171 homes. A further four 'agreements for lease' and leases were prepared for signing on another 263 homes. The remaining sites will be progressed in 2021. The Agency continued to meet potential proposers to explain and promote the scheme. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting restrictions had an impact on the delivery of the programme.

Standard Leasing

There was considerable interest in the scheme in 2020 with many entities involved in providing one-off properties as part of a portfolio to local authorities. There has been an increase in entities seeking to lease multiple dwellings. The Agency continued to meet

331 homes

have been provided to date through the Enhanced Long-Term Social Housing Leasing Scheme

180 standard leases

were issued by the Agency with a potential yield of 460 homes

potential participants to explain and promote the scheme. As well as the ongoing advice and support the Agency provides to local authorities, the Agency manages a legal services framework that local authorities can avail of to assist in completing leasing proposals.

Overall, 180 lease agreements were issued by the Agency with a potential yield of 460 homes.

Homelessness

The Local Authority Services Homelessness Team sourced properties for use as temporary accommodation during the initial COVID-19 restrictions. The team also provided support to the Call for Housing 2020 initiative which aimed to source additional properties for use as social housing.

Outside of property sourcing, the team also progressed work in the latter half of 2020 on the development of a Toolkit for Homeless Practitioners. A project which uses examples of international best practice to consider alternative approaches to supporting particular groups within the Irish homeless population is underway. The aim of the project is to provide alternative approaches where, to date, local authority responses to particular groups have been difficult to deploy or where the responses have had limitations. The Toolkit for Homelessness Practitioners and alternative approaches project are scheduled for completion in 2021.

Rental Accommodation Scheme

The Agency continued to support both local authorities and the Department on day-to-day RAS queries and issues, including obtaining legal advice where required.

Domestic Violence

The Agency's Local Authority Services team developed a briefing note for local authority and AHB staff to raise domestic violence awareness. The note also provided information on how to identify signs of abuse and acted as a signpost to the services available. An information session for local authority and AHB staff was organised, and this was also provided to Housing Agency staff.

Housing Practitioner Training

The Housing Agency seeks to support housing professionals, including those working in local authorities and AHBs. We provide and collaborate on training opportunities and promote housing education programmes.

In 2020 The Housing Agency:

- Awarded 49 Housing Education Bursaries to students to undertake education courses in housing studies.
- Launched The Housing Agency Essay Prize, awarded to the most original student essay submitted for assessment as part of the Institute of Public Administration's Professional Diploma in Housing Studies.
- Launched the Housing Practitioner Peer Network to provide new housing practitioners, especially those who started new roles during the COVID-19 pandemic, with opportunities to meet, network, and collaborate.
- Organised a 'Build your Career in Housing' event as part of The Housing Agency's annual Housing Conference.
- Launched a new Housing Training Network Newsletter to inform housing practitioners about upcoming training and education opportunities.
- Maintained the Housing Training Portal, and updated the portal to give greater prominence to online training and education opportunities.
- Planned and coordinated training and education activities through the Housing Training Network. Seven meetings of the Housing Training Network were held across the year.
- Undertook an interim Training Needs Analysis to identify future training and information requirements.

The Housing Agency's annual Housing Conference was delivered online, with **five themed sessions** provided across the week addressing key housing challenges such as homelessness, affordability and sustainability

- Collaborated with the Institute of Public Administration on the development and launch of the Housing Forum.
- Collaborated with the Chartered Institute of Housing on the 'Ireland Founders Programme' training and networking event, and provided bursaries to participants.
- Collaborated with the ICSH to provide a Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) workshop. The Agency presented to members of the ICSH on the CALF financial assessment process.
- Provided a guest presentation on housing policy and legislation and the impact this has on homelessness as part of the Dublin City University Certificate in homeless prevention and intervention.

Engagement with the Housing Sector

The Agency engages with its stakeholders in several ways, which include day-to-day engagements through its overall work. We are represented on a variety of housing related fora and steering committees. These include the Housing Practitioners' Forum, the Housing Analytics Group and the National Planning Framework. Further to this, we are represented at speaking events such as conferences and seminars throughout the sector. We also host key events to bring together relevant parties to ensure there is active engagement on a more formal basis.

Progress

The following events were organised by the Agency in 2020.

The Housing Agency Annual Conference

30 Nov-4 Dec 2020

The Housing Agency's annual Housing Conference was delivered online, with five themed sessions provided across the week addressing key housing challenges such as homelessness, affordability and sustainability.

The conference provided 22 expert contributors over 7.5 hours. Over 1,100 people attended the conference sessions, from across the housing sector – a significant increase in engagement compared to previous 'in-person' conferences. Analytics found that the sessions commanded a 95% average interest rating.

Conference sessions are available to view on The Housing Agency's YouTube channel.



Ian Copeman (left) and Clare Skidmore (centre) of the Housing Learning and Improvement Network spoke at The Housing Agency's event *Bringing housing, health and social care together – solutions for an ageing population: The Housing LIN Experience* in January 2020. Also pictured (Left to right): John O'Connor, Chief Executive Officer, The Housing Agency; David Silke, Director of Operations, The Housing Agency; and Isoilde Dillon, Senior Architect, The Housing Agency.

The webinars reached **more than 650 views** when broadcast live, and remain available to view on The Housing Agency's YouTube channel

Sustainability Webinars

Two series of webinars – comprising eight sessions in total – on sustainability issues in housing were provided in 2020.

In summer 2020 The Housing Agency hosted *Building Resilient & Sustainable Communities in Ireland*, a series of four webinars which considered some of the key elements of future resilient and sustainable communities. Topics included collaborative retrofitting, intergenerational housing, the importance of green spaces for neighbourhoods and nature-based housing.

In autumn 2020 The Housing Agency hosted *Building Sustainable Communities: National & International Perspectives*. These webinars focussed on topics such as financing for sustainable housing, community-led town centre regeneration, mobility in neighbourhood design and a case study in building sustainability certification from Germany.

The webinars reached more than 650 views when broadcast live, and remain available to view on The Housing Agency's YouTube channel.

Interviews with Multi-Unit Developments Advisor

14th January 2020 & 16th January 2020

David Rouse, Multi-Unit Developments Advisor with The Housing Agency, was interviewed on his work in supporting volunteer directors of Owners' Management Companies.

Bringing Housing, Health and Social Care Together – Solutions for an Ageing Population: The Housing LIN Experience

23rd January 2020

In January The Housing Agency hosted an event focussed on how best to meet the housing needs of older people. *Bringing housing, health and social care together – solutions for an ageing population: The Housing LIN experience* brought together key stakeholders in health, housing and ageing to hear about potential ways to address this issue.

Keynote speakers at the event were Clare Skidmore and Ian Copeman of the Housing Learning & Improvement Network, the “go-to” sharing network for anyone working in housing, health and social care in England,

Wales and Scotland. The organisation promotes innovative housing solutions for an ageing population. Guests included representatives from the Departments of Housing and Health.

Webinars on Multi-Unit Developments, Apartment Living and COVID-19

Throughout 2020 the Agency hosted outreach events for volunteer directors of OMCs in managed residential estates / multi-unit developments (MUDs) and a series of webinars, including:

- A webinar addressing challenges facing MUDs and OMCs in the context of the COVID-19 emergency. The webinar was hosted by The Housing Agency, in collaboration with the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland and the Law Society.
- A one-hour webinar discussing developments in law and practice for MUDs and residential owners' management companies. The event was run by The Housing Agency and the Law Society of Ireland.

- In collaboration with ICSA The Chartered Governance Institute, a webinar on key corporate governance issues for OMCs, including: company constitutions, annual company secretarial compliance, general meetings/resolutions and voting, directors' duties and the roles of the Companies Registration Office and Office of Director of Corporate Enforcement.
- A lunchtime webinar updating stakeholders about the March 2018 Apartment Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities. The webinar was co-hosted by The Housing Agency and the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI).
- *Letting and living in apartments and managed estates – what landlords and tenants should know*, a webinar on the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants in managed residential estates, such as apartment developments. The webinar was co-hosted by The Housing Agency and the Residential Tenancies Board.



With the increasing number of managed estates, multi-unit developments, and owners' management companies (OMCs) across the country, The Housing Agency hosted evening outreach events for volunteer directors of OMCs in 2019 and early 2020. Events moved online from March 2020 in line with public health guidelines. The events were led by David Rouse, MUD Advisor, The Housing Agency, pictured here at an outreach event in Cork in February 2020.

- Apartment/Condo Regulation, Management & Future Trends: International Perspectives, a webinar of international experts delivering insights into the regulation and management of apartments and MUDs.

Webinars and events hosted by The Housing Agency for volunteer directors of OMCs in 2020 reached more than 4,500 views when presented live, with recordings of each webinar available to watch on The Housing Agency's YouTube channel.

Innovative Housing for All CPD Webinar Series – 3 Session

7th, 14th and 21st May 2020

Jointly hosted with the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) with speakers covering topics including universal design approaches to renovations, lifetime housing benefits and designing for all.

Call for Housing Campaign

July/August 2020

This was a national call for property owners and developers with vacant properties to make them available for use as social housing.

Project Managers Network Conference

This was an online conference for public sector project managers on the topic of COVID-19: *The new reality for Project & Programme Management*. The Housing Agency's Principal Officer for Projects and Procurement, Peter Hesse, spoke about the Pyrite Remediation Scheme's response to COVID-19.

Building Control – 30 Years on

This was a lunchtime webinar on the Irish building control system as it applies to residential building. The Agency co-hosted the webinar with the National Building Control Office.

Affordable Housing Webinar

This event focussed on what is needed to increase the supply of affordable housing. The webinar was run by the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) as part of the Housing Forum series. The Housing Agency's Chief Executive Officer John O'Connor presented on affordable housing.

AHB Forum Meetings

17th January, 18th June and 15th October 2020

The AHB Forum normally takes place four times per calendar year, but due to COVID-19 restrictions in 2020 the Forum met three times. The Forum includes representatives from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Housing Alliance, the Irish Council for Social Housing, the County and City Management Association, the Housing Delivery Office and is chaired by The Housing Agency.

Housing Practitioners Forum

Virtual meetings and information sessions were held with Housing Practitioners to assist during the COVID-19 crisis. One physical meeting and 15 virtual meetings were held in 2020.



Optimising Supply and Utilisation of Housing

Goal: To optimise the supply and efficient use of housing stock by informing policy decisions, working collaboratively on delivery with key stakeholders and monitoring progress.

Approved Housing Body (AHB) Services Unit

The Housing Agency established the AHB Services Unit in 2017 in accordance with Rebuilding Ireland (Action 2.14). This unit currently has five staff and provides assistance to the Department, AHBs and local authorities to support AHB-led delivery.

The main funding arrangements for delivery of social housing by AHBs is by way of Payment and Availability Agreements (P&A) coupled with a secondary loan called Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF). This funding is for the purchase, construction or refurbishment of housing that will be made available for social housing purposes. The AHB Services Unit carries out the

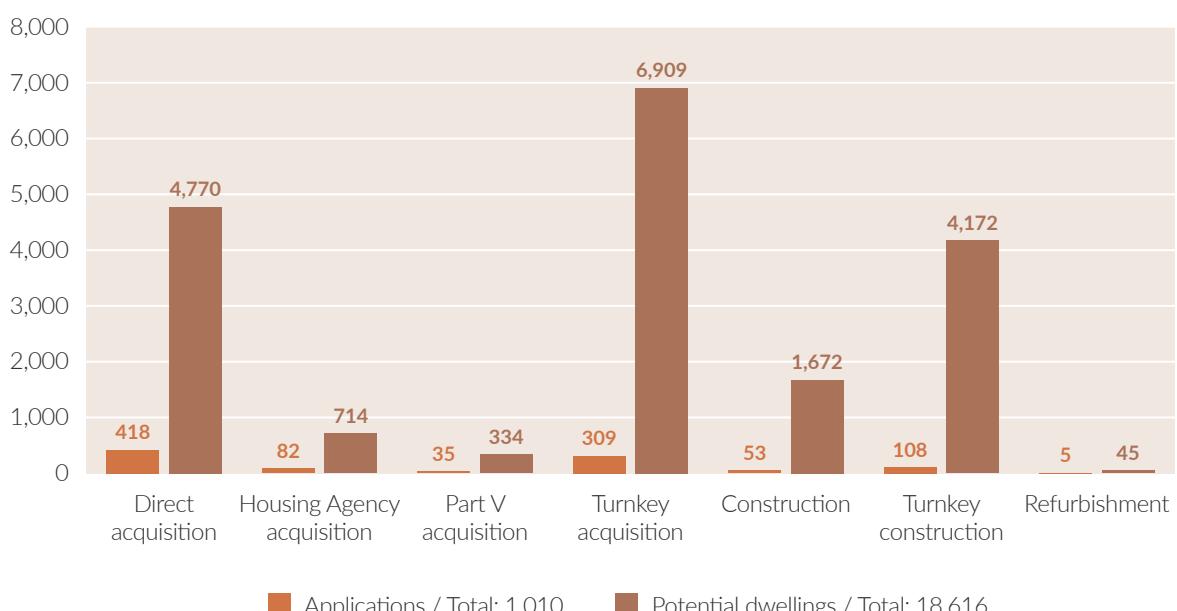
financial appraisals of applications for funding by AHBs and provides the Department with recommendations on the level of CALF and P&A required for each proposal.

Progress

Financial Assessments and Appraisal Reports were completed for 257 P&A/CALF applications during 2020, with the potential to deliver 5,908 homes. The comparable figures for 2019 were 340 appraisals amounting to 4,987 homes.

From 2016 through to December 2020 the Agency appraised a total of 1,010 projects with a potential yield of 18,616 dwellings. This is broken down by type of supply on the chart below.

CALF Appraisal Applications Processed and Project Type from 2016 to Dec 2020



The AHB Services Unit carried out a review of the operational cost validation process on behalf of the Department. Further work is expected in this area in 2021 with a view to bringing greater clarity to this area for all stakeholders.

The AHB Services Unit continued to expand its contract preparation service for local authorities and AHBs throughout 2020. Contracts were prepared for 155 separate projects that included 3,096 dwellings.

The AHB Services Unit is providing ongoing support to the Department in areas such as Cost Rental Equity Loan (CREL) funding, future funding requirements of

155 project contracts prepared by the AHB Services Unit for local authorities

existing capital funded properties and the assessment of alternative sources of funding emerging from the AHB sector. In December 2020, proposals were sought from AHBs for Cost Rental homes. Proposals were received and assessed, with Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien TD announcing the approval for 390 Cost Rental homes under this scheme in February 2021.

Housing Acquisitions and Sourcing

Under Rebuilding Ireland, the Agency was given a brief to actively engage with banks and investment companies with a view to acquiring 1,600 homes by the end of 2021. Approximately €76m in funding was provided directly to the Agency in 2016 and 2017, and this funding is to be rotated by selling purchased homes to AHBs. In addition, the Agency has continued to purchase homes directly for local authorities and source properties for social housing use from the NAMA portfolio.

In 2020 The Housing Agency led the establishment of a Multi-Supplier Framework Agreement for the provision of modular and portable homes to the value of €30 million for local authorities and approved housing bodies. In May, the Westside Modular Family Hub (pictured) opened in Galway City. This pilot project was the first of its kind in Ireland and showed a potential new approach to addressing homelessness. The Housing Agency provided project management support to Galway City Council for the delivery of temporary modular and portable homes from inception to completion on site.



170 homes

were provided for social housing under different sourcing and purchasing schemes

The table below reports progress in 2020. Overall, the Agency was actively involved in the provision of 170 homes for social housing under these different purchase and sourcing delivery methods, as set out below.

Once a home is purchased using the €70m fund, it is leased to an approved housing body under a caretaker lease, in advance of being sold to the AHB. The caretaker lease allows the AHB to carry out repairs and allocate the property to a tenant while the sale is progressing.

In 2020 the Agency sold 135 homes⁴. This includes 131 homes to AHBs, bringing the total homes sold to AHBs to-date to 572. In addition, 4 properties were sold to local authorities in 2020, bringing the total number of homes sold to local authorities to 8. By the end of 2020, the number of tenanted homes was 670.

Method	Number
Purchase	
€70m fund purchase for AHBs	81 ¹
€70m sourced properties for direct purchase by local authorities	14 ²
	95
Direct purchase for local authorities	13
Housing First Initiative purchase for local authorities (homeless)	51
	64
Property sourcing	
NAMA loan portfolio	11 ³
Total homes provided under different delivery methods	170

1 Includes 4 properties funded in 2019, but transactions completed in 2020. This brings the total purchased in respect of the revolving fund to 878 at the end of December 2020. This total (878) takes account of 1 €70m fund property transferring to Local Authority Direct Acquisition. The figure recorded in the financial statements of 78 reflects a net difference of 3 properties. The difference reflects a reconciliation of the movement of funds in respect of properties between 2019 and 2020.

2 These properties were acquired in trust by the Agency for local authorities using monies provided by the local authorities but counted with the €70m fund delivery as agreed with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. These properties are included in the 878 figure in note 1. This portfolio is now complete.

3 Bringing the overall total of homes sourced through NAMA to 2,580 to the end of December 2020.

4 In the financial statements a net addition of 8 sales have been recognised due primarily to sales completing in 2019 but for which money was only received at the beginning of 2020.



Responding to COVID-19 and Social Housing Delivery

Following national public health measures established in March 2020, and the suspension of construction works, the Agency in consultation with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the Housing Delivery Co-ordination Office implemented a mechanism to make additional social housing available to assist local authorities to respond to the housing challenges posed by COVID-19.

In 2020, the Agency designated 67 schemes as essential projects, representing 1,462 homes, across 18 local authorities and 10 approved housing bodies

The Agency's role was the designation of certain social housing projects as essential health and related projects. This was undertaken within the new Health Act 1947 (Section 31A -Temporary Restrictions) (COVID-19) Regulations 2020, as amended, made by the Minister for Health on 7 April 2020. The Regulations were respectful of the public health requirements, and as such, confirmed that the housing projects where designation was provided came within the definition of essential construction and development projects under paragraph 5 of Schedule 2 to those Regulations.

In 2020, the Agency designated 67 schemes as essential projects, representing 1,462 homes, across 18 local authorities and 10 AHBs.

Pyrite Remediation Scheme

The Agency implements the Pyrite Remediation Scheme on behalf of the Pyrite Resolution Board. The Agency currently has a programme of works extending into 2022.

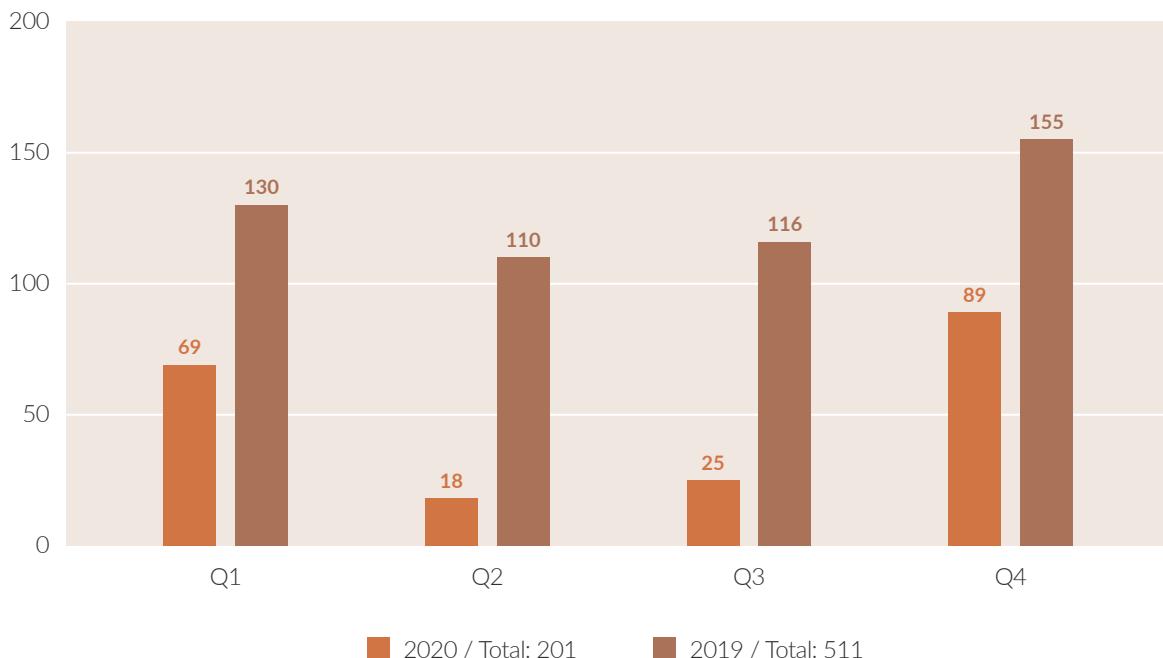
Progress

Up to the end of December 2020, 2,784 applications had been received under the Pyrite Remediation Scheme and 2,342 have been approved for inclusion.

The funding allocation for 2020 was €20m, based on a reduced number of dwellings from previous years. It should be noted that 2019 recorded the largest annual number of completed remediations since the scheme began and this resulted in reductions in the average period from application to completion and the number of properties awaiting remediation. The number of applications received in 2020 was also lower than previous years.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the delivery of remediated dwellings in 2020 and a total of 201 dwellings were remediated in the year. As a result of the impact of the programme the funding allocation was adjusted to €13m.

Pyrite Remediation Scheme – Homes Remediated



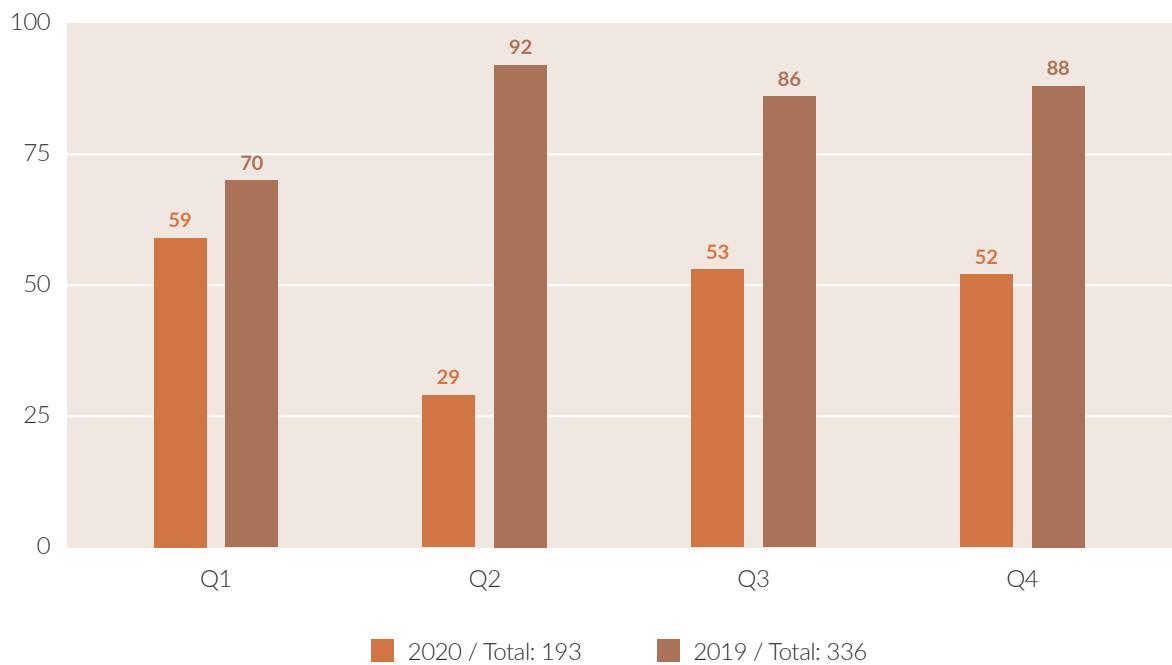
By the end of 2020, remediation had been completed in 2,091 homes.

During 2020, The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien TD extended the pyrite remediation scheme to include the administrative area of Limerick City and County Council.



In 2020 the Pyrite Remediation Scheme reached the landmark of remediating 2,000 homes that have been affected by pyritic heave. In September, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien TD, visited the 2,000th home to be remediated under the scheme in Balbriggan Co. Dublin.

Pyrite Remediation Scheme – Applications Received



Land Development and Management

At the end of December 2020, the Agency had 77 sites in its ownership situated across the country. We have a responsibility to manage these sites, but more importantly, to identify appropriate sites for the development of housing.

Progress

Eight of the Land Aggregation Scheme sites and one of the Agency sites have been fully transferred to date. Overall, 44 sites, as outlined in The Housing Agency's Strategic Development and Management Plan, are active with regard to the future provision of housing.

Disposals of Entire Sites Completed for Development

	Transfer/Disposal	Development	Due for Delivery
Duntahane Road Fermoy Co. Cork	Partial Disposal to Department of Education and Skills	New primary school	Construction completed.
	Disposal of remaining of site to Cork County Council	46 homes and community building	Construction completed Q3 2020.
Enniskerry Road Sandyford	Disposal to Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	155 homes (50 of which will be cost rental)	Construction commenced in June 2019. Homes to be delivered in 2021.
Glin Co. Limerick	Disposal to AHB	Homes for older people	Land sold to Glin Homes for the Elderly. No construction commenced
Ballylooby Co. Tipperary	Disposal of Housing Agency land to Waterford and Lismore Diocesan Trust	Ancillary school facilities	Land sold. Development status unknown.
Oakwood Macroom Co. Cork	Disposal to Cork County Council to facilitate development under NDFA PPP Bundle 2	50 social housing homes	Construction commenced in December 2019 and is scheduled to be completed in Q2 2021.
The Miles Clonakilty Co. Cork	Disposal to Cork County Council to facilitate development under NDFA PPP Bundle 2	52 social housing homes	Construction commenced in December 2019 and is scheduled to be completed in Q2 2021.

	Transfer/Disposal	Development	Due for Delivery
Meelin Co. Cork	Disposal to Meelin Amenity Project Group	Community activities particularly for children in the adjacent primary school	Disposal completed Q3 2020. Development unknown.
Baile Eoghain Gorey Co. Wexford	Disposal to Wexford County Council	9 social housing homes	Construction Completed and occupied. Disposal completed Q4 2020.
Creagh 'B' Gorey Co. Wexford	Disposal to Wexford County Council	10 social housing homes	Construction Completed and occupied Disposal completed Q4 2020.

Partial Disposals Completed for Development

	Transfer/Disposal	Development	Due for Delivery
Craddockstown Naas Co. Kildare	Partial Disposal to Kildare County Council to facilitate development under NDFA PPP Bundle 1	74 social housing homes	Construction completed.
Nancy's Lane Clane Co. Kildare	Partial Disposal to Kildare County Council to facilitate development under NDFA PPP Bundle 2	77 social housing homes	Construction commenced in November 2019 and is scheduled to be completed in Q2 2021.
Devoy Barracks Naas Co. Kildare	Partial Disposal to Kildare County Council	MERITS – 2 Storey Office building (Mid-Regional Innovation Think Space)	Construction commenced in November 2019 and is scheduled to be completed in Q4 2021.

Future Disposals Progressing

	Development	Due for Delivery
Three sites developed by local authorities. This includes sites in Co. Wexford, Co. Laois and Ballymoneen Rd, Co. Galway (Phase 1).	59 homes	Construction of homes completed and occupied.
Three sites being developed by local authorities. This includes Townparks, Kells, Co. Meath and remainder of site at Ballymoneen Rd, Co. Galway (Phase 2) and Townsend St, Skibbereen, Co. Cork.	124 homes	Homes under construction.
Two sites to be developed by local authorities at planning stage. This includes Knocklong, Co. Limerick and Abbeyleix Rd, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.	51 homes	Construction scheduled to commence in Q3 2021.
Three sites comprising 11.5ha approved for Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Funding. This includes Lissywollen, Athlone, Co. Westmeath, Gibbet Hill, Gracedieu, Co. Waterford and Mount Ave, Dundalk, Co. Louth.	Number of homes to be determined at planning stage	Commencement date and delivery to be advised.
Three sites comprising 11.5ha approved by the Dept. under the Serviced Sites Fund. – Hacketstown, Skerries (see below) – Enniskerry Road, Sandyford (see above) – St.Joseph's Road, Mallow, Co. Cork.	Number of homes to be determined	Commencement date and delivery to be advised.
Three sites due to be transferred to the Land Development Agency. – Hampton, Balbriggan – Hackettstown, Skerries – Devoy Barracks, Naas.	Number of homes to be determined. Discussions with Land Development Agency ongoing	Commencement date and delivery to be advised.

Following an Expression of Interest process in October 2018, expressions of interest were received from four AHBs for 9 sites which had been identified as Suitable for Immediate Development. Interest was also expressed by AHBs on an additional 10 secondary

sites in the Strategic Development and Management Plan. The Agency is working with the relevant AHBs and local authorities to help progress development plans.

Housing Projects and Procurement

The Agency provides technical and project management advice to local authorities and AHBs. The assistance given covers all stages of project development from feasibility study, through design, tender, construction and handover.

Procurement

Following the establishment of a procurement unit in 2016, The Agency continues to provide specialist procurement consultancy advice to the Department, local authorities, the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) and individual AHBs.

Progress

There was ongoing engagement with the Department, the ICSH and local authorities about procurement options and offering advice and services, as outlined in the table below.

The team also provided training support and presentations to the Office of Government Procurement and Public Sector Project Managers

Network and specialist procurement advisory support to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Projects

Progress

The Agency provided project management, design, and contract administration for the following construction projects:

- Commenced construction works on Phase 2C Cork North West Quarter Regeneration – 24 houses under construction
- Regeneration and refurbishment works of 80 homes and associated site development works at Mullaghmatt Phase 4, Monaghan, Co. Monaghan
- Completed design and tender for conversion. Works to 12 units at Gortakeegan, Monaghan, Co. Monaghan.

The Agency provided quantity surveying services for the following construction projects:

- Phase 2A Cork North West Quarter Regeneration – 47 homes completed
- St. Johns Well, Cork – 6 homes completed.

Type of Support and Advice	Due for Delivery
Consultant procurement of design teams for delivery of housing projects in accordance with the requirements of the Capital Works Management Framework for AHBs for 9 projects	Delivering 83 homes
Consultant procurement of design teams for delivery of housing projects in accordance with the requirements of the Capital Works Management Framework for local authority projects	Delivering 62 homes
Feasibility studies and capital appraisals delivered by The Housing Agency's design team for AHBs for 3 projects	Potential delivery of 6 homes
Procurement advisory support for AHBs for 4 projects	Potential delivery of 97 homes
Procurement advisory support in relation to the Just Transition energy retrofit programme	1 local authority
Competitive Dialogue Assessment Round 2 support to a local authority	Potential delivery of 509 homes

National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability

The National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (NHSPWD) 2011 – 2016 was reaffirmed and extended to 2020 under Rebuilding Ireland. The Agency chairs the National Housing Subgroup, is represented on the Implementation Monitoring Group and drives the execution and delivery of housing actions as set out within the NHSPWD.

The Agency **provided support to Housing and Disability Steering Groups** and other relevant stakeholders. It established and facilitated various task groups and forums for the consideration of emerging topics

The Agency provided support to Housing and Disability Steering Groups and other relevant stakeholders. It established and facilitated various task groups and forums for the consideration of emerging topics such as assistive technology, additional space, and planning for supportive living. It collected and collated data on allocations of housing support to persons with a disability. A Co-Correspondent Consent Form to help facilitate support for persons with a disability experiencing challenges in communicating with the local authority was issued in 2020. A checklist to assist persons with a disability moving into a new property was also designed and issued.





Understanding Housing Demand and Affordability

Goal: Understand and respond to housing demand trends and prioritise housing affordability by informing policy decisions and working collaboratively on measures with key stakeholders to deal with demand and affordability issues.

Mortgage to Rent

The Housing Agency is the national coordinator for the Mortgage to Rent (MTR) Scheme, a Government initiative to help homeowners who are at risk of losing their homes.

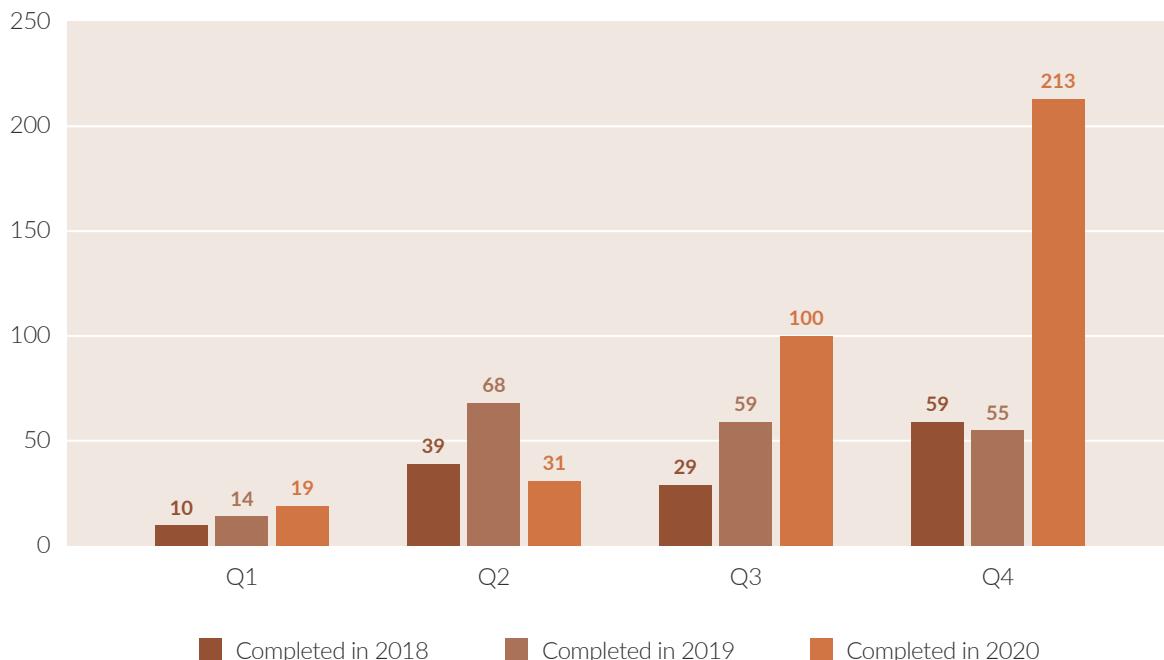
In 2020, 363 households availed of the MTR Scheme, almost twice the number completed in the previous year (196). This brings the overall total of households who have availed of the scheme to 1,004 (3,210 individuals, 1,688 adults and 1,522 children). As can be seen from the graph below, completions increased

substantially during the year, with 19 completed in the first three months compared to 213 completed in the last three months. A total of 1,212 cases were active at the end of the year.

Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process

The Agency continued to provide advice and support to local authority staff on all aspects of the Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process (MARPP), including Local Authority Mortgage to Rent (LAMTR) and the restructuring of shared ownership loans. LAMTR is an alternative solution when no arrangement can be

Mortgage to Rent



Local authorities provide house purchase loan products. The Agency provides **central loan underwriting services** to local authorities nationally for these loans

put in place under MARP and is in operation within all local authorities. We also provide advice and support to networks established on a regional basis to share experience and good practice.

The Agency carried out ad-hoc training for local authorities on MARP. Towards the end of 2020 the Agency began work with the Department to plan a new MARP training programme for local authorities to be rolled out in 2021.

Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)

HAP was introduced in late 2014 on a pilot basis and has been rolled out nationally in stages, becoming a national scheme in 2017. The payment was introduced to allow people eligible for social housing, with a long-term housing need, to live in private rental accommodation. It has replaced Rent Supplement for those with a long-term housing need. The Agency has been a key player in the implementation of this initiative nationally.

The Agency continued to assist both local authorities and the Department with the implementation of the scheme in 2020. The Agency continued to co-ordinate meetings of the National HAP Practitioners Committee and in 2020 supported the Department in setting up a National Homeless HAP Practitioners' Network. The Agency is also a member of the HAP Oversight Group, HAP Project Board, the HAP Oversight Group, the HAP Project Board, and the HAP Process Sub-Committee. The Agency is currently co-ordinating a review of the Governance arrangements for the HAP scheme. It is envisaged that a report will issue in Q1 2021.

Affordable Housing Unit and National Loan Underwriting Services

2020 saw the establishment of a new Affordable Housing Unit within the Agency. The unit provides a dedicated team to support the delivery of affordable housing, both for purchase and for rent, in accordance with objectives set out in the Programme for Government. The new unit encompasses the Agency's Loan Underwriting Services.

Local authorities provide house purchase loan products. The Agency provides central loan underwriting services to local authorities nationally for these loans. Since February 2018, these loans have been provided under the terms of the Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan, making home ownership more affordable for first-time buyers through fixed interest rates for 25 to 30 years.

Progress

Affordable Housing

The Affordable Housing Unit worked closely with the Department to assist in the preparation of the Affordable Housing Bill 2020. The Unit also played a central role in preparing and issuing the first call for proposals for the new Cost Rental Equity Loan scheme in December 2020 with the assistance of the AHB Services Unit.

Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan

In 2020, a total of 1,928 Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan applications were received for underwriting. Of the 1,913 applications deemed valid, 874 (47%) were recommended for approval and 999 (53%) were recommended for decline. 40 applications were in process at the end of 2020.

Since the introduction of the Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan, 8,470 applications have been received for underwriting. A total of 3,681 loan applications were recommended for approval and 3,770 were recommended for decline.



Realising Results Through our People

Goal: To ensure that the Agency's systems and culture support the contributions of everyone with whom we engage to achieve our targets.

In line with increased responsibilities and resourcing, The Housing Agency's staff numbers increased from 89 at end 2019 to 114 at end 2020.

During the year, The Agency undertook a number of initiatives to optimise the contribution of the people who work in and with the organisation:

- Enhancing the effectiveness of our Board continues to be a priority, and this was advanced by providing training opportunities, Board briefings from external subject experts, and continued input from the Agency's advisory panels on research/insights, affordability and homelessness.
- A HR strategy and implementation plan was prepared with external assistance. Implementation of the strategy has commenced, including the development of a People Development Policy and Plan, a skills audit, and revision of the Performance Management Development process. This work will be ongoing in 2021.
- A Workforce Plan for 2020 was prepared and agreed with the Department. The plan sets out our staffing requirements to respond to service requirements. This year also saw the implementation of a new organisational structure designed to strengthen the Agency into the future. This included two senior appointments – Director of Delivery and Director of Policy and Communications – and four Heads of Section, all following open competitions.
- In line with Government advice during COVID-19, staff have been working from home over much of this year. The Agency's Business Continuity Plan was activated, and staff have been successfully working remotely during this time. Additional supports have been put in place including ICT and other necessary equipment, mental health and wellbeing workshops, and regular communications from the Chief Executive Officer. Four COVID Worker Representatives have been appointed. Staff surveys have been undertaken to identify any issues that may arise and to help address them. Office safety protocols have been put in place and are regularly monitored.
- The Agency's commitment to training and development continued in 2020. In realising results through our people, the Agency continues to build capacity and skills through an increased range of training and development opportunities. To this end, a new eTraining Portal was launched for all staff, and continued professional development was supported.
- The Agency is committed to protecting dignity and respect across the organisation and adheres to the dignity at work policy which was developed by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in 2015. The policy aims to promote respect, dignity, safety, and equality in the workplace, and work has commenced in implementing this in the Agency with further details outlined under the Governance Statement.
- We enhanced knowledge sharing, collaboration and communications by establishing cross sectional working groups in areas of creating efficiencies, such as IT, smart working and data management.

The Agency continues to build capacity and skills through an increased **range of training and development opportunities**. To this end, a new eTraining Portal was launched for all staff





Meeting Governance and Service Commitments

Goal: To ensure we operate to the high levels of public sector governance and build strong partnerships with key stakeholders.

Legislation: Approved Housing Bodies

The Housing (Regulation of Approved Housing Bodies) Act 2019 was signed into law on 23 December 2019. The new Act allows for the establishment of the Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority to oversee the effective governance, financial management and performance of all AHBs. The Regulator will consist of a Board of between 5 and 11 members appointed by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, one of whom will be the chairperson. The new Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority was formally established on 1 February 2021 through Statutory Instruments SI 25 of 2021 and 27 of 2021, with the statutory regulatory framework operational from January 2022. The legislation will be commenced on a phased basis to allow for preparatory work to be completed.

The new Act allows for the establishment of the **Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority** to oversee the effective governance, financial management and performance of all AHBs

The key functions for the Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority will be:

- Establish and maintain a register of AHBs
- Register persons as AHBs
- Publish standards
- Monitor and assess compliance by AHBs
- Carry out investigations
- Protect tenants and AHBs and cancel registration of AHBs
- Encourage and facilitate better governance, administration, and management, including corporate governance and financial management.

Voluntary Regulation of Approved Housing Bodies

The Housing Agency's Regulation Office remained focused on its primary goal of working to protect AHB assets and safeguard the interests of current and future tenants through the Voluntary Regulatory Code. AHBs signed up to the voluntary code and continued to strengthen and enhance their governance, financial viability and performance management.

Progress

As we move towards statutory regulation, the Regulation Office's assessment process has continued to evolve. There is a greater focus on evidence and assurance by AHBs and their boards, on how they comply with the Voluntary Code and standards of governance, performance and financial viability. A total of 275 AHBs signed up to the Voluntary Regulatory Code, representing 36,992 homes, the highest number of homes under the voluntary environment since the Code began.



The Chartered Institute of Housing's annual Housing Awards took place in Belfast in February 2020. The awards celebrate and recognise the breadth of work across the sector in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, showcasing the amazing work and inspirational people seen in communities every day. The Housing Agency sponsored the 'Best Housing Development' prize, which was presented by our Chief Executive Officer John O'Connor to Clanmil Housing, winning for its housing scheme of 23 homes at Durham Street, Belfast.

A further change to the assessment approach has been the embedding of a risk-based approach. The full application of risk-based regulation will be an important factor as we move towards statutory regulation. In line with pre-determined risk factors, the Regulation Office evaluates all AHBs against these factors in order to prioritise its resources. This is a vital element in determining the strategy for the annual assessment cycle. In total 102 AHBs were assessed during the most recent assessment cycle. The assessment process covered 32,601 units or 88% of total homes.

32,601

units or 88% of total homes were assessed during the most recent assessment cycle

We are pleased to note an increasing commitment by AHBs to ensuring that the regulatory standards are being fully embedded into their organisations. The quality of information submitted to this office continues to improve year-on-year and there is increasing evidence of improvements in board oversight and monitoring of organisational activities.

The voluntary regulatory environment has now entered a transition period, with 2020/21 representing the final assessment cycle under the existing Voluntary Code. For the remainder of its term the Regulation Office will continue to ensure the sector is well-governed, well-managed, sustainable, and accountable to all stakeholders, whilst assisting the Department in the establishment of the new statutory body.

Corporate Matters

Information Communications Technology

In 2020, The Agency adopted its Information Communications Technology (ICT) Strategic Plan. It is aligned to the Public Services ICT Strategy which aims to build the information and communications technology to deliver government services into the future.

Our plan provides for the vision, purpose and values to be incorporated into the delivery of ICT structures and supports for the organisation.

Vision

Staff will have access to a secure and reliable ICT service which enables them to contribute to their maximum to achieve our shared strategic goals.

Purpose

ICT will deliver customer-centred support to staff by continuously improving the service we provide.

Values

- **Security:** To protect personal data, financial systems and ensure confidentiality and integrity.
- **Innovation:** By keeping up to date with the latest developments to help make our ICT systems the best they can be.
- **Service User Centric:** We will listen to staff and other service users to provide a timely, customer-centric service.
- **Value for Money:** We will always ensure value for money.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** We will use our ICT resources responsibility to reduce our impact on the environment.

Implementation of the strategy is overseen by the ICT Advisory Group, which met regularly throughout the year. As with all organisations, ICT functions were greatly impacted with the move to remote working. The Agency's ICT function operated and ensured the organisation could continue to deliver its business functions effectively. Increased security measures were implemented to strengthen the remote working abilities of the organisation.

Energy Efficiency

As part of the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) Public Sector Efficiency Programme, The Housing Agency is committed to increasing energy efficiency in line with Government guidelines. The graph below shows that the Agency has consistently reduced its energy consumption ahead of target. Energy usage reduced by 12.8% in 2019, and by 59.3% since 2014.

In 2020 we continued to reduce our energy consumption through the implementation of several initiatives:

- Installation of new energy saving printers and monitors
- Elimination of single use plastics.
- Establishment of a dedicated Green Team
- Encouragement and support of the Bike to Work Scheme by supplying bike repair kits, clothes drying racks, a dedicated secure bicycle parking facility and office shower facilities.

Resource Efficiency Action Plan

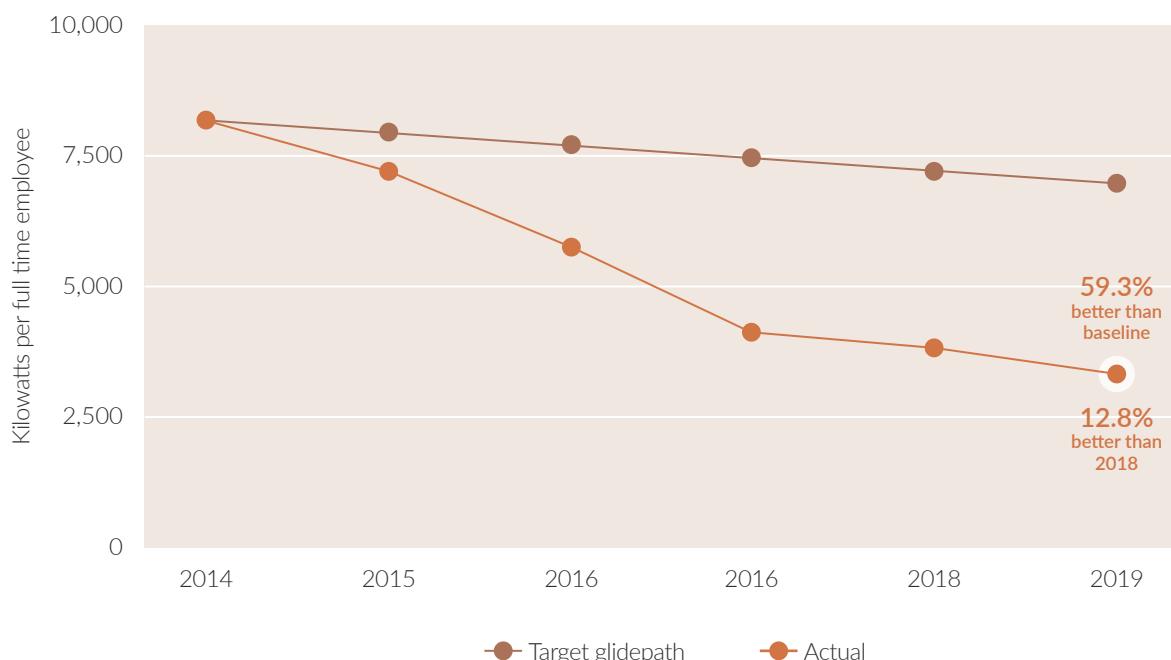
In 2019 the Green Government Initiative was introduced to encourage public bodies to adopt ecologically friendlier policies and improve their energy efficiency.

The Agency prepared a Resource Efficiency Action Plan (or REAP) to outline what measures it has put in place to meet green energy targets.

Future Plans

The Agency is working to achieve the Government's target of 70% renewable electricity by 2030. A five-year energy efficiency plan will be prepared in 2021 and the Agency's heating system will be upgraded.

Energy Performance 2014-2019



Electricity Usage 2014-2019. Source: Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland (SEAI).
(Note: 2020 figures will not be available until June 2021).

Governance Statement and Board Members' Report



The Housing Agency recognises the importance of good governance and strives to operate to best practice. This section contains the Governance Statement and Board Members' Report.

Governance

The Board of The Housing Agency was established under Establishment Order SI 264 of 2012. The functions of the Board are set out in section 5 of the Order. The Board is accountable to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage and is responsible for ensuring good governance. The Board performs this task by setting strategic objectives and targets and taking strategic decisions on all key business issues. The regular day-to-day management, control and direction of The Housing Agency are the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer and the senior management team. They must follow the broad strategic direction set by the Board and must ensure that all Board members have a clear understanding of the key activities and decisions related to the entity, and of any significant risks likely to arise. The Chief Executive Officer acts as a direct liaison between the Board and management of The Housing Agency.

Board Responsibilities

The work and responsibilities of the Board are set out in the Terms of Reference of the Board, which also contain the matters specifically reserved for Board decision. Standing items considered by the Board include:

- Declaration of interests
- Risk
- Reports from committees
- Performance reports
- Reserved matters, and
- Financial reports/management accounts.

Section 11 of the Order requires the Board of The Housing Agency to keep, in such form as may be approved by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage with consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, all proper and usual accounts of money received and expended by it.

Section 25 of the Pyrite Resolution Act 2013 requires The Housing Agency to prepare financial statements annually and to submit them to the Comptroller and Auditor General for audit.

In preparing these financial statements, the Board of The Housing Agency is required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that it will continue in operation, and
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.

The Board is responsible for ensuring that The Housing Agency keeps or causes to be kept adequate accounting records which correctly explain and record the transactions of the Agency, enable at any time the assets, liabilities, financial position and the income and expenditure of the Agency to be determined with reasonable accuracy, which enables the Board to ensure that the financial statements comply with Section 11(1) of the Establishment Order 2012 and Section 25(1) of the Pyrite Resolution Act 2013.

The maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information on The Housing Agency's website is the responsibility of the Board.

The Board is responsible for approving the annual Business Plan and budget and this was carried out in 2020. Throughout 2020, the Board reviewed the performance of The Housing Agency against the Business Plan through monthly performance reports on a number of key areas of focus, combined with the Strategy Committee's review of performance on a quarterly basis against the business plan. The Board also reviewed monthly management accounts against the annual budget.

The Board is also responsible for safeguarding its assets and hence, for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Board considers that the financial statements of The Housing Agency give a true and fair view of the financial performance and the financial position of The Housing Agency at 31 December 2020.

Board Structure

Board Member	Organisation	Appointment Term
Michael Carey	Chairman	Appointed 27 April 2018 to 26 April 2023
Donal McManus	Irish Council for Social Housing	Appointed January 2013 to 31 December 2017 Reappointed 1 January 2018 to 31 Dec 2022
Tony O' Brien	Management Consultant	Appointed July 2013 to 31 Dec 2017 Reappointed 1 January 2018 to 31 Dec 2022
John Burke	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	Appointed May 2016 to 31 Dec 2017 Reappointed 1 January 2018 to 31 Dec 2022 Resigned October 2020
Mary Hurley	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Appointed 12 October 2017 to 31 Dec 2022 Resigned September 2020
Barry Quinlan	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Appointed 1 September 2020 to 31 Dec 2022
John O' Connor	Chief Executive Officer, The Housing Agency	Appointed January 2013 to 31 Dec 2017 Reappointed 1 January 2018 to 31 Dec 2022 Resigned September 2021
Fiona Lawless	Meath County Council	Appointed January 2018 to 31 Dec 2022
David Duffy	IBEC	Appointed 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2024
Frank Curran	Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council	Appointed 9 September 2019 to 8 September 2024

Board Structure

The Board consists of a Chairman and seven members, all of whom are appointed by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The members of the Board meet monthly.

The Board self-evaluation assessment in respect of 2020 issued in January 2021. An external Board Effectiveness and Evaluation Review commenced in 2019, completing in 2020.

Sub Committees of the Board

The Board has established two committees:

- The Audit and Risk Committee, and
- The Strategy Committee.

The Audit and Risk Committee comprises of three Board members and one independent member. The role of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) is to support the Board in relation to its responsibilities for issues of risk, control and governance and associated

assurance. The ARC is independent from the financial management of the organisation.

In particular, the Committee ensures that the internal control systems, including audit activities, are monitored actively and independently. The ARC reports to the Board after each meeting, and formally in writing annually.

The members of the Audit and Risk Committee are Tony O'Brien (Chairperson), Donal McManus,

Schedule of Attendance, Fees and Expenses in 2020 – The Housing Agency Board

Board Member	Board Meetings Due (11 meetings)	Board Meetings Attended	Audit & Risk (6 meetings)	Fees 2020 €	Expenses 2020 €
Michael Carey	11	11	n/a	–	–
Donal McManus*	11	11	6	–	–
David Duffy	11	11	n/a	3,847	–
Frank Curran*	11	9	n/a	–	–
Mary Hurley* (resigned Sept 2020)	8	4	n/a	–	–
Tony O'Brien	11	11	6	–	–
John Burke* (resigned October 2020)	9	5	n/a	–	–
John O'Connor* (resigned Sept 2021)	11	11	n/a	–	–
Fiona Lawless*	11	9	5	–	–
Barry Quinlan*	3	1	n/a	–	–
Alec Flood	n/a	n/a	5	–	–

* Seven members did not receive a Board fee under the One Person One Salary (OPOS) Principle. Other Board members were not in receipt of a fee. Board meeting costs for the period amounted to €579.

Fiona Lawless, and Alec Flood. There were six meetings of the ARC in 2020. There are no fees paid to members of the Audit and Risk Committee.

The Strategy Committee was established in June 2018 and comprises of six Board members and two staff members of The Housing Agency. The Strategy Committee met three times during 2020. The members of the Strategy Committee are Michael Carey (Chairman), John O'Connor, Barry Quinlan, Donal McManus, Tony O'Brien, David Silke, and Ciara Galvin. There are no fees paid to members of the Strategy Committee.

Key Personnel Changes

Two members of the Board resigned during 2020. This occurred as their ex officio positions were changed during 2020. In accordance with the Establishment Order 2012, the Minister appointed

one new member. Barry Quinlan was appointed in September 2020 as serving member of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Disclosures Required by Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016)

The Board is responsible for ensuring that The Housing Agency has complied with the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies ("the Code"), as published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in August 2016. The following disclosures are required by the Code:

Employee Short-Term Benefits Breakdown

Employees' short-term benefits in excess of €60,000 are outlined below.

Employee Short-Term Benefits

Salary (€)	Number of Staff 2019	Number of Staff 2020
Under 60,000	57	75
60,000-70,000	12	16
70,000-80,000	8	7
80,000-90,000	8	11
90,000-100,000	1	1
100,000-110,000	2	4
110,000-120,000	0	0
120,000-130,000	1	0
130,000-140,000	0	1

Consultancy Costs

Cost	2019 €	2020 €
Business improvement	22,176	9,050
Legal advice*	37,276	219,533
Pension advice	30,233	9,607
Other	47,360	0
Total	137,045	238,190

* The Housing Agency has expended further legal costs across the organisation which is deemed business as usual and therefore not captured within consultancy costs. Details of expenditure of legal costs are provided for under notes 4c(i), 4.3, 4.4 and 7.)

Legal Costs and Settlements

The Pyrite Resolution Board (PRB) legislation provides that the PRB may recover from any party with liability, and the capacity, all or part of the costs associated with remediating a dwelling under the Scheme. The PRB is taking action, where considered appropriate, to pursue builders and/or developers for a contribution towards the costs of the works.

In 2020, a total of €2.34 million was received in settlements. This figure is net of legal costs of €224,645.

Hospitality

In the reporting period €2,464 was spent in respect of hospitality, including entertaining. A total of €3,874 was spent on canteen costs during the reporting period.

Travel and Subsistence

Travel and subsistence expenditure of staff is categorised as follows:

Cost	2019 €	2020 €
Domestic Travel	110,948	64,532
International Travel	2,922	505
Total	113,870	65,036

This is included in operational office administration costs as part of travel and other staff costs (Note 6). There was no travel or subsistence expenditure in respect of Board members.

Statement of Compliance

The Board has adopted the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016). It has put procedures in place to ensure compliance with the Code and can confirm that it is compliant.

Conflicts of Interest and Ethics in Public Office Act 1995

The Housing Agency developed a Conflict of Interests Policy in 2016, as the organisation comes within the scope of the Ethics in Public Office Act 1995. This was incorporated into the overall policy and procedure adopted to manage conflicts of interest. In line with the Ethics in Public Offices Act 1995, where required, Board members and senior management have completed statements of interest in compliance with the provisions of the Act. Procedures are in place for the ongoing disclosure of interests by Board members.

Freedom of Information Act, 2014

The Housing Agency came under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 (FOI Act 2014), on 14 April 2015. We received 22 FOI requests in 2020. Our Publication Scheme came into effect in 2016 and is available on our website. There were no requests received in 2020 under the Access to Information on the Environment (AIE) regulations.

Data Protection and GDPR

The Housing Agency is committed to complying with our obligations under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection Acts. The organisation is a registered data controller and data processor under the Data Protection Acts. It operates in accordance with a formal Data Protection Policy. Following the enforcement of the GDPR in May 2018, The Housing Agency has continued to make the protection of personal data a priority.

The journey to compliance has been based on assessing risk and prioritisation. In doing so, The Housing Agency has developed and implemented a suite of policies and procedures across business units that complement the GDPR. Other key items in place are the organisation's privacy statements available on housingagency.ie, which provide services users with an understanding of how The Housing Agency uses and protects data. The Housing Agency has in place an inventory detailing the lifecycle of personal data (record of processing). Training and communications are critical to ensuring the right culture and practices are adhered to within the organisation. The Housing

Agency continues to review and improve its practices in respect of securing the personal data it processes. During 2020, the awareness campaign increased and was tailored to support the move to remote working and supporting staff to continue to meet the principles under the Regulations.

Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

The Housing Agency is subject to the public sector equality and human rights duty. The duty requires The Housing Agency to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect human rights for staff and service users in implementing all business functions. We have committed to ensuring that equality and human rights are considered in our day-to-day operations.

We are implementing the public sector equality and human rights duty by conducting an assessment to identify key equality and human rights issues among our service users and staff, consulting with stakeholders and producing a report with an action plan covering organisational process and structures to strengthen the implementation of our equality and human rights actions. The Duty action plan is aligned with the organisation's strategic planning and annual reporting cycles. This work commenced during 2020, with an aim of completing by Q2 2021.

The Housing Agency is committed to protecting dignity and respect across the organisation and adheres to the dignity at work policy developed by the Department

The Housing Agency is subject to the public sector **equality and human rights duty.** The duty requires The Housing Agency to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect human rights for staff and service users

of Public Expenditure and Reform in 2015. The policy aims to promote respect, dignity, safety, and equality in the workplace.

Protected Disclosures Act 2014

The Protected Disclosures Act 2014 requires every public body to establish and maintain procedures for dealing with protected disclosures and to provide written information to employees regarding these procedures. The Housing Agency has these procedures in place. During 2020, no protected disclosures were made by an employee of The Housing Agency under the terms of the legislation.

Taxation

The Housing Agency confirms compliance with tax laws. Procedures are in place to ensure that the Board is compliant with its obligations under taxation laws and endeavours to ensure that all tax liabilities are paid on or before the relevant due dates.

Pyrite Resolution Board

The Pyrite Resolution Board (PRB) is the governing structure of the Pyrite Remediation Scheme and is separate to The Housing Agency Board. The PRB is appointed by the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The PRB was established following the commencement of the Pyrite Resolution Act 2013 on 10 January 2014 to make a scheme for the remediation of damage to certain dwellings caused by pyritic heave and to direct and oversee the effective implementation of a programme of remediation works for affected dwellings. The PRB is led by chairperson Jack Keyes in conjunction with the executive functions being undertaken by the General Manager, Aidan O'Connor.

The Pyrite Resolution Act 2013 prescribes The Housing Agency to carry out the remediation scheme on behalf of the PRB. The Housing Agency is also the body which provides the PRB with an executive function through the management of finances, and some resources. The Housing Agency has responsibility for the implementation of the Pyrite Remediation Scheme.

The Committee ensures that the internal control systems, including audit activities, are **monitored actively and independently**. The ARC reports to the Board after each meeting, and formally in writing annually

Under the Pyrite Resolution Act 2013, the PRB is prescribed to submit an annual report to the Minister no later than 30 June each year, outlining performance of its functions under the Act. The financial aspects of the PRB are formally contained within The Housing Agency's annual financial statements.

The PRB has in place a sub-committee of the Board, being the Audit and Risk Committee. The Audit and Risk Committee was established in October 2014 and comprises of five Board members and one independent member. The role of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) is to support the Board in relation to its responsibilities for issues of risk, control and governance and associated assurance.

In particular, the Committee ensures that the internal control systems, including audit activities, are monitored actively and independently. The ARC reports to the Board after each meeting, and formally in writing annually.

PRB Board Membership and Fees

Board Member	Fees 2020 €	Expenses 2020 €
Jack Keyes	8,978	–
Kevin McCrave	–	–
Alec Flood	2,000	–
Lyda Bunni	–	–
Derek Sinnott*	–	–

* One member did not receive a Board fee under the One Person One Salary (OPOS) Principle.

The members of the Audit and Risk Committee are Alec Flood (Chairperson), Derek Sinnott, Lydia Bunni, Kevin McCrave, Tony O'Brien, and Jack Keyes. There were five meetings of the ARC in 2020. There are no fees paid to members of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Financial Statements



Audit Certificate



Ard Reachtaire Cuntas agus Ciste Comptroller and Auditor General

Report for Presentation to the Houses of the Oireachtas

The Housing Agency Opinion on the Financial Statements

I have audited the financial statements of the Housing Agency for the year ended 31 December 2020 as required under paragraph 11 of the Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency (Establishment) Order 2012 and Section 25 of the Pyrite Resolution Act 2013. The financial statements comprise

- The statement of income and expenditure
- The statement of other comprehensive income
- The statement of financial position
- The statement of changes in capital and reserves
- The statement of cash flows, and
- The related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In my opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the Housing Agency's assets, liabilities and financial position at 31 December 2020 and of its income and expenditure for 2020 in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 – The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

Basis of Opinion

I conducted my audit of the financial statements in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) as promulgated by the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions. My responsibilities under those standards are described in the appendix to this report. I am independent of the Housing Agency and have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the standards.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Report on Information Other than the Financial Statements, and on Other Matters

The Housing Agency has presented certain other information together with the financial statements. This comprises the annual report, including the governance statement and Board members' report, and the statement on internal control. My responsibilities to report in relation to such information, and on certain other matters upon which I report by exception, are described in the appendix to this report.

I have nothing to report in that regard.

Seamus McCarthy
Comptroller and Auditor General
7 December 2021

Appendix to the Report

Responsibilities of Board Members

As detailed in the governance statement and Board members' report, the Board members are responsible for

- The preparation of financial statements in the form prescribed under paragraph 11 of the Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency (Establishment) Order 2012 and Section 25 of the Pyrite Resolution Act 2013
- Ensuring that the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance with FRS102
- Ensuring the regularity of transactions
- Assessing whether the use of the going concern basis of accounting is appropriate, and
- Such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Responsibilities of the Comptroller and Auditor General

I am required under paragraph 11 of the Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency (Establishment) Order 2012 and Section 25 of the Pyrite Resolution Act 2013 to audit the financial statements of the Agency and to report thereon to the Houses of the Oireachtas.

My objective in carrying out the audit is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement due to fraud or error. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with the ISAs, I exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. In doing so,

- I identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements whether due to fraud or error; design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks; and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate

to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- I obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal controls.
- I evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures.
- I conclude on the appropriateness of the use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, on whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Agency's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Agency to cease to continue as a going concern.
- I evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Information other than the financial statements
My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information presented with those statements, and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the financial statements, I am required under the ISAs to read the other information presented and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially

inconsistent with the financial statements or with knowledge obtained during the audit, or if it otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

Reporting on Other Matters

My audit is conducted by reference to the special considerations which attach to State bodies in relation to their management and operation. I report if I identify material matters relating to the manner in which public business has been conducted.

I seek to obtain evidence about the regularity of financial transactions in the course of audit. I report if I identify any material instance where public money has not been applied for the purposes intended or where transactions did not conform to the authorities governing them.

I also report by exception if, in my opinion,

- I have not received all the information and explanations I required for my audit, or
- The accounting records were not sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited, or
- The financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records.



Statement on Internal Control 2020

Introduction

The Statement of Internal Control is in line with a requirement provided for under Section 2 (2.7) Role of the Chairman contained within the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016). This Statement of Internal Control will be included in the Housing Agency's Annual Report for 2020.

Scope of Responsibility

On behalf of The Housing Agency, I acknowledge the Board's responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal control is maintained and operated. This responsibility takes account of the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016).

Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to identify and manage risk to a tolerable level rather than to eliminate it. The system can therefore provide reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or detected in a timely way.

The system of internal control, which accords with guidance issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, has been in place in The Housing Agency for the year ended 31 December 2020 and up to the date of approval of the financial statements.

During 2020 The Housing Agency like all other agencies and bodies faced significant challenges in maintaining business continuity and internal control systems during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Housing Agency has captured the significance of this as part of its annual review of the internal control system.

Capacity to Handle Risk

The Housing Agency has an Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) comprising three Board members and one external member, with relevant financial and audit expertise, one of whom is the Chair. The ARC met six times in 2020.

The Housing Agency has also established an internal audit function which is adequately resourced and conducts a programme of work agreed with the ARC.

The Board has adopted a Risk Management Policy that sets out its risk appetite; the risk management structures and processes that have been put in place and details the roles and responsibilities of the Executive in relation to risk. The policy is issued to all staff who are required to work within The Housing Agency's risk management policies. Regular reviews and updates are carried out to alert management on emerging risks and any needs for additional control(s). Staff assume responsibility for risks and controls within their own area of work. The Risk Management Policy is reviewed annually by the ARC.

In managing the risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, The Housing Agency responded swiftly and effectively. Most functions were able to continue to operate with the exception of the suspension of the Pyrite Remediation Scheme in March 2020 and the loan underwriting function for a number of months. This was largely due to the response from both the senior management team and the IT function. The planning in the lead up to the announcement of public health measures being implemented assisted the organisation's ability to move to remote working capability very quickly and securely.

Risk and Control Framework

The Housing Agency has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address and, to the fullest extent possible, to mitigate those risks.

A Risk Register is in place that identifies the risks facing the Agency and these are evaluated and graded according to their significance. The Register is reviewed and updated by the ARC as risks change and, at a minimum, on an annual basis. The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks are managed to an acceptable level.

The Risk Register details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and responsibility for operation of controls assigned to specific staff. I confirm that a control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- Procedures for all key business processes have been documented
- Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability
- Matters reserved for Board decision have been defined
- There is an appropriate budgeting system with an annual budget which is kept under review by senior management (and the Board)
- There are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the information and communication technology systems.

Ongoing Monitoring and Review

Formal procedures have been established for monitoring control processes and control deficiencies are communicated to those responsible for taking corrective action and to management and the Board, where relevant, in a timely way. I confirm that the following ongoing monitoring systems are in place:

- Key risks and related controls have been identified and processes have been put in place to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies
- Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned
- Regular ad-hoc reviews by internal audit to ensure compliance with procedures, and
- There are regular reviews by senior management of periodic and annual performance and financial reports which indicate performance against budgets/forecasts.

Reports conducted by internal audit in 2020 identified one significant weakness in controls which related to

the Project and Procurement Unit. An internal audit report completed in 2020 identified an issue in respect of the lack of documented policies and procedures regarding the work of the unit, which opens the Agency to the risk of the provision of inappropriate service delivery and lack of sufficient oversight, ultimately impacting of the strategic objectives of The Housing Agency.

Review of Effectiveness

I confirm that The Housing Agency has procedures to monitor the effectiveness of its risk management and control procedures. The Housing Agency's monitoring and review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of the internal and external auditors, the Audit and Risk Committee which oversees their work, and the senior management team within The Housing Agency which is responsible for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

I confirm that The Housing Agency has procedures in place to ensure compliance with current procurement rules and guidelines. Matters arising regarding controls over procurement are highlighted under internal control issues below.

I confirm that the Board conducted an annual review of the effectiveness of the internal controls for 2020. As part of the 2020 review a specific module focused on the impact of COVID-19 on the control environment.

Internal Control Issues

In respect of 2020, total expenditure of €284,049 inclusive of VAT was incurred in relation to services where public procurement procedures were not complied with. Specifically, no tender process had been carried out. Of the €284,049, €151,281 were legal costs entered into by the Pyrite Resolution Board; €55,695 related to property sourcing and assembly costs; €41,481 related to the carry-over of legal services from previous years and €35,592 was in respect of IT Licences.

The Housing Agency entered a contract for Property Portfolio Assembly and Valuation Services in 2018 following an open tender process advertised on

e-tenders. The estimated published contract value was €242,000. Following an inquiry, the Audit and Risk Committee found that the Agency had expended a total of €692,132 on the contract; €450,132 more than the published estimated value.

In respect of the Legal Services amounting to €151,281, employed by the Pyrite Resolution Board, this related to a 2014 engagement to provide legal services for a settlement case. The settlement concluded during 2020, and costs were expended via the Housing Agency. As noted under the Governance Statement, as provided for in the Pyrite Resolution Act 2013, the Housing Agency is the legal body all financial activities of the PRB are routed through. The costs of these legal cases were borne from the settlement costs, and not from the Exchequer

Further legal costs in the amount of €41,481 were incurred by the Housing Agency which relates to previous disclosures within the 2017, 2018 and 2019 Annual Reports. The history of these costs relates to an historical engagement from 2015. The Housing Agency identified a need to engage conveyancing services in mid-2015. This was required to purchase properties for use as social housing, which would be directly purchased by local authorities or by the Agency for resale to Approved Housing Bodies. The Housing Agency liaised with the OGP in respect of this, and it was confirmed that the OGP were establishing a legal services framework. The Agency confirmed that they would use this once established. However, the framework was not established when the Agency required the services and was not put in place until December 2016. As an interim measure the Agency undertook a restricted tender process that was intended to be an interim measure but was utilised pending the OGP framework being available. The Agency has since procured legal services from the OGP Framework. Contracts were entered into prior to the OGP panel becoming available and expenditure in the amount of €41,481 with one legal firm was carried over into 2020. In our Annual report for 2016, we noted that at the end of that year, the Agency had bids that had been accepted on 288 dwellings, but that just 29 of those purchases had closed. In addition, bids were outstanding at that time on an additional 106 dwellings. The carry-over of legal costs into 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 relates to the completion of these purchases and the onward disposal of properties to Approved Housing Bodies.

The fourth item with expenditure of €35,592, relates to IT licenses required within the Agency. The Agency had planned for procurement of these licenses during 2020. However, the IT function had to redirect priorities following the impact of COVID 19, and the move to remote working to ensure continued support to the organisation throughout the year. This has now been included as a priority on the 2021 procurement plan.

In respect of overall improvements to procurement within the Agency, the following steps have been undertaken to resolve these items and ensure greater compliance with procurement guidelines:

- Procurement of goods and services for The Housing Agency is now managed on a centralised basis under the Operations Division, with dedicated resources to co-ordinate and manage this function. This includes the development of annual procurement plans, and monthly progress reports to the Board and senior management team.
- The Operations Division have established procurement representatives throughout each business unit to strengthen the knowledge and understanding of procurement requirements and work with the central resources.
- The Agency is reviewing its finance systems and controls for monitoring contracts to ensure it operates to a strong level of oversight and contract management.

I would like to thank the Audit & Risk Committee and the Executive for their assistance in the preparation of this statement.



Michael Carey
Chairman

Statement of Income and Expenditure

For the Year Ended 31 December 2020

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Income			
Housing Agency Operational	3(a)	11,082,187	9,754,424
Pyrite Remediation Scheme	3(b)	15,347,712	30,354,716
Acquisitions – Revolving Fund	3(c)	29,859,421	29,531,092
Acquisitions – Local Authority Costs Recouped	3(d)/3(e)	710,075	1,960,874
Retirement Benefit Net Interest – NBA	12	(18,000)	40,000
Total Income		56,981,395	71,641,106
 Expenditure			
Housing Agency Operational	4(a)	10,610,155	9,583,152
Pyrite Remediation Scheme	4(b)	15,506,222	31,058,028
Acquisitions – Revolving Fund	4(c)	30,792,674	31,079,313
Acquisitions – Local Authority Costs Incurred	4(c)	706,505	1,856,727
Total Expenditure		57,615,556	73,577,220
Surplus / (Deficit) for the Year		(634,161)	(1,936,114)

Notes 1–18 form part of these financial statements. The financial statements were approved by the Board on 22nd June 2021 and signed on behalf of the Board by:



Michael Carey
Chairman



Bob Jordan
Chief Executive Officer

23rd November 2021

23rd November 2021

Statement of Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 31 December 2020

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Surplus / (deficit) for the Year Analysed as:			
Housing Agency Operational		472,032	171,272
Pyrite Remediation Scheme		(158,510)	(703,312)
Acquisitions – Revolving Fund		(933,253)	(1,548,221)
Acquisitions – Local Authority Costs Net		3,570	104,147
Retirement Benefit Costs – NBA		(18,000)	40,000
		(634,161)	(1,936,114)
Other Comprehensive Income			
Housing Agency Operational			
Surplus for the Year		472,032	171,272
Gain / (Loss) on Land Revaluation Reserve	8	(432,000)	(3,419,794)
Superannuation and SPS Scheme Actuarial	12.1	(1,725,000)	(2,962,000)
Gain/(Loss) on Retirement Benefits			
Liabilities			
Adjustment to Deferred Funding	12.1	1,725,000	2,962,000
HA Operational Comprehensive		40,032	(3,248,522)
Pyrite Remediation Scheme			
Comprehensive Income / (Deficit)			
		(158,510)	(703,312)
Acquisitions – Revolving Fund			
Comprehensive Income / (Deficit)			
		(933,253)	(1,548,221)

Statement of Other Comprehensive Income (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 December 2020

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Acquisitions – Local Authority Costs		3,570	104,147
Comprehensive Income / (Deficit)			
Retirement Benefits			
NBA Scheme Surplus / (Deficit)		(18,000)	40,000
NBA Scheme Change in Actuarial Assumptions	12.2	(253,000)	(377,000)
NBA Scheme Experience Gains / (Loss)	12.2	177,000	282,000
NBA Return on Plan Assets (Excluding Interest)	12.2	294,000	1,525,000
Retirement Benefits Income / (Deficit)		200,000	1,470,000
Total Comprehensive Income / (Deficit) for the Year		(848,161)	(3,925,908)

Notes 1–18 form part of these financial statements. The financial statements were approved by the Board on 22nd June 2021 and signed on behalf of the Board by:



Michael Carey
Chairman



Bob Jordan
Chief Executive Officer

23rd November 2021

23rd November 2021

Statement of Financial Position

For the Year Ended 31 December 2020

	Note		2020 €	2019 €
Non Current Assets				
Tangible Fixed Assets	8		57,389,322	57,825,192
Current Assets				
Housing Acquisitions – Deposits and Stock of Houses for Resale	4	46,059,645		55,335,448
Receivables	9	690,339		989,568
Bank and Cash	10	36,035,131		23,362,311
		82,785,115		79,687,327
Current Liabilities				
Payables	11	(9,328,854)		(5,618,775)
Net Current Assets			73,456,261	74,068,552
Total Assets less Current Liabilities before Retirement Benefits			130,845,583	131,893,744
NBA Retirement Benefit Asset	12.2	13,773,000		13,731,000
NBA Retirement Benefit Liability	12.2	(7,720,000)		(7,878,000)
Deferred Retirement Benefit Funding	12.1	17,724,000		14,655,000
Retirement Benefit Liabilities	12.1	(17,724,000)		(14,655,000)
		6,053,000		5,853,000
Net Assets			136,898,583	137,746,744

Statement of Financial Position (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 December 2020

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Capital and Reserves			
Acquisitions – Revolving Fund Reserves	SOCCR	68,459,724	69,392,977
Acquisitions – Local Authority Reserves	SOCCR	(7,241)	(10,811)
Housing Agency Operational Reserves	SOCCR	62,104,451	62,064,419
Pyrite Reserves	SOCCR	288,649	447,159
NBA Retirement Benefit Reserve	SOCCR	6,053,000	5,853,000
Total Capital and Reserves		136,898,583	137,746,744

Notes 1–18 form part of these financial statements. The financial statements were approved by the Board on 22nd June 2021 and signed on behalf of the Board by:



Michael Carey
Chairman



Bob Jordan
Chief Executive Officer

23rd November 2021

23rd November 2021

Statement of Changes in Capital & Reserves

For the Year Ended 31 December 2020

	Housing Agency Operational Reserves			
	Capital Reserve €	Revenue Reserves €	Land Revaluation Reserve €	Total €
As at 1 January 2020	6,713,542	3,701,399	51,649,478	62,064,419
Surplus / (Deficit) for the Year	–	40,032	–	40,032
Transfer to Revenue	(3,870)	3,870	–	–
Transfer to Revaluation Reserve*	–	432,000	(432,000)	–
As at 31 December 2020	6,709,672	4,177,301	51,217,478	62,104,451
As at 1 January 2019	6,849,373	3,394,296	55,069,272	65,312,941
Surplus / (Deficit) for the Year	–	(3,248,522)	–	(3,248,522)
Transfer to Revenue	(135,831)	135,831	–	–
Transfer to Revaluation Reserve*	–	3,419,794	(3,419,794)	–
As at 31 December 2019	6,713,542	3,701,399	51,649,478	62,064,419

* See note 8.2 for more detail on the land revaluation reserve.

Pyrite Reserves €	Acquisitions Revolving Fund Reserves €	Acquisitions Local Authority Reserves €	NBA Retirement Benefits Reserve €	Total €
447,159	69,392,977	(10,811)	5,853,000	137,746,744
(158,510)	(933,253)	3,570	200,000	(848,161)
–	–	–	–	–
–	–	–	–	–
288,649	68,459,724	(7,241)	6,053,000	136,898,583
1,150,471	70,941,198	(114,958)	4,383,000	141,672,652
(703,312)	(1,548,221)	104,147	1,470,000	(3,925,908)
–	–	–	–	–
–	–	–	–	–
447,159	69,392,977	(10,811)	5,853,000	137,746,744

Notes 1–18 form part of these financial statements. The financial statements were approved by the Board on 22nd June 2021 and signed on behalf of the Board by:



Michael Carey
Chairman



Bob Jordan
Chief Executive Officer

23rd November 2021

23rd November 2021

Statement of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended 31 December 2020

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Reconciliation of Net Movement for the Year to Net Cash Inflow from Operating Activities			
Total Comprehensive Income/ (Deficit) for the Year		(848,161)	(3,925,908)
Depreciation		159,057	145,692
Revaluation of Land Held		432,000	3,419,794
Transfer (from) / to NBA Retirement Benefit Reserve		(200,000)	(1,470,000)
Deposit Interest		(58)	(63)
Decrease in Stocks and Deposits		9,275,803	5,396,983
Decrease / (Increase) in Receivables		299,229	(429,555)
(Decrease) / (Increase) in Payables		3,710,079	(20,327,846)
Sales of Land		(35,000)	(9,000)
Net Cash Generated / (Absorbed) by Operating Activities		12,792,949	(17,199,903)
Cash Flows from Investing Activities			
Purchase of Tangible Fixed Assets		(155,187)	(9,861)
Sale of Land Aggregation Site		35,000	44,000
Cash Flows from Finance Activities			
Deposit Interest Received		58	63
Net Increase / (Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents		12,672,820	(17,165,701)

Statement of Cash Flows (continued)

For the Year Ended 31 December 2020

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Net Funds at 01 January 2020		23,362,311	40,528,012
Net Funds at 31 December 2020		36,035,131	23,362,311
Increase / (Decrease) in Cash		12,672,820	(17,165,701)

Notes 1–18 form part of these financial statements. The financial statements were approved by the Board on 22nd June 2021 and signed on behalf of the Board by:



Michael Carey
Chairman

23rd November 2021



Bob Jordan
Chief Executive Officer

23rd November 2021

Notes to the Financial Statements

For The Year Ended 31 December 2020

1. Accounting Policies

The basis of accounting and significant accounting policies adopted by the Agency are set out below. They have all been applied consistently throughout the year and for the preceding year.

General Information

1.1 Establishment of The Housing Agency

The Housing Agency was established on a statutory basis on 1 August 2012 under the Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency (Establishment) Order 2012. The functions of the Agency are as follows:

- Shared and central services; research, advisory, information and training services, consultancy, technical and strategic planning services, procurement, and agency services
- At the request of the Minister, the preparation, holding, management and publication of indices of residential property, including indices in relation to residential housing sales and residential property rents
- The arrangement, co-ordination, and provision of social and economic regeneration, including the development and improvement of land and infrastructure; and
- The coordination of, and contribution to, the resolution of issues relating to unfinished housing developments.

The Housing Agency operated through the Housing and Sustainable Communities Limited (HSC Ltd) pending its establishment on a statutory basis. The assets and liabilities of HSC Ltd were transferred to The Housing Agency in 2013. The assets transferred included development lands and lands held under the Land Aggregation Scheme (Note 8).

Additional Functions

The Pyrite Resolution Board: This Board was established on 10 January 2014 under the Pyrite Resolution Act 2013. The key functions of the scheme are to make a scheme for pyrite remediation and implement and oversee the scheme. Under the Act, The Housing Agency's role is to administer the scheme and make payments on behalf of the Pyrite Resolution Board. These financial statements recognise funding received from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and expenditure incurred in relation to pyrite remediation.

Regulation Office for Approved Housing Bodies: The Housing (Regulation of Approved Housing Bodies) Act 2019 was signed into law on 23 December 2019. This allows for the establishment of the Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority. The move from a Voluntary Regulatory Framework to a Statutory Framework will provide assurances to tenants, investors, the Government and to the sector itself that AHBs operate in a well-regulated and stable environment.

Assisting local authorities in purchasing housing: From July 2015, The Housing Agency also purchases houses from liquidators/receivers on behalf of local authorities. The stock held is not the property of the Agency. Closing balance of funds received is included under payables in the Statement of Financial Position.
See Note 4 and accounting policy 1.15.

National Building Agency: The National Building Agency (NBA) operated a funded defined benefit pension scheme. On the instructions of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, The Housing Agency was appointed as the principal employer of the NBA pension scheme with effect from 1 October 2018.

Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness

In 2016 the Agency was tasked with engaging with banks, investors, and other potential owners of multiple property portfolios on a national basis by way of a revolving grant of €76 million and selling these properties to approved housing bodies and local authorities. The Agency intends to make neither a profit nor a loss on these transactions. Certain costs incurred by the Agency are charged against the fund. See Note 4, accounting policy 1.7

1.2 Statement of Compliance

The financial statements of the Agency for the year ended 31 December 2020 have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC).

1.3 Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in Ireland and with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. The statements are in a form approved by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, and by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The preparation of financial statements in compliance with FRS102 requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise judgement in applying the accounting policies.

1.4 Going Concern

The financial Statements are prepared on the going concern basis.

1.5 Income Policy

Income represents Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage grants, fees, rental income and other recoupments which are used to fund The Housing Agency's activities as it provides assistance to the Department and local authorities in the implementation of housing policy. Grant Income received to fund The Housing Agency's activities is recognised on a cash receipts basis.

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage advances funds to The Housing Agency in relation to costs incurred by it in relation to the Pyrite Remediation Scheme. Income is recognised in the Financial Statements when received from the Department.

Other Income relates to fee income, recoupment of costs and NBA Retirement Benefits. Income is recognised when an invoice is issued to the relevant organisation.

1.6 Tangible Fixed Assets

Tangible Fixed Assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation. Cost includes all costs that are directly attributable to bringing the asset into working condition for its intended use.

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets, at rates calculated to write off the cost less estimated residual value, of each asset systematically over its expected useful life, as follows:

- Buildings: 2% Straight Line
- Fixtures, Fittings and Equipment: 12.5% Straight Line
- Computer Equipment: 20% Straight Line.

Development Land

Development land held by The Housing Agency was originally bought by the National Building Agency Limited (NBA) and Housing and Sustainable Communities Limited (HSC Ltd) for future development purposes. As part of the rationalisation process, these assets were transferred to The Housing Agency in 2013 at their open market value. The total value of these at the time of transfer was €1,441,247 (Note 8). The development land is accounted for at cost.

The land is currently not under development. It is envisaged, that where this land is suitable for housing, be it social housing or other housing purposes, it will be utilised for this, should there be a need in the area. Any possible use of any of these sites would be determined in consultation with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Land Held under the Land Aggregation Scheme

Under the Land Aggregation Scheme (2010-2013), local authorities transferred certain residential development land with outstanding Housing Finance Agency Loans to The Housing Agency for a nominal fee. The Department approved the transfer of 73 sites with a total area of 247 hectares to The Housing Agency. Initial recognition of the land was at a nominal value of €1 per site. A revaluation policy was adopted in 2018 and the land is now recognised at fair value. Changes in value are recognised in the Statement of Other Comprehensive Income and the revaluation reserve. At 31 December 2020, 65 of these sites continue to be held by The Housing Agency.

1.7 Action Plan for Homelessness

Purchases and Sales

Property sales are recognised on receipt of funds. Property purchases are recognised on payment of funds. Expenditure incurred on improvements to buildings is recognised when paid. Deposits paid on properties are accounted for in Current Assets. Properties purchased but not sold/transferred are accounted for in housing stock of houses for re-sale. Any surplus or deficit is absorbed by the fund. (See Note 4)

Housing Acquisition Programme Inventory

The Housing Acquisition inventory represents the cost of properties acquired, plus any capital upgrade works applied to the properties and any deposits paid for properties to be acquired.

Purchases Acquisition Programme Reserve

The Housing Acquisition reserve is the remaining funding from the Housing Acquisition programme. The Housing Acquisition programme activity is represented in Note 4.

1.8 Receivables

Receivables are recognised at fair value, less a provision for doubtful debts. The provision for doubtful debts is a specific provision and is established when there is objective evidence that the Agency will not be able to collect all amounts owed to it. All movements in the provision for doubtful debts are recognised in the Statement of Income and Expenditure.

1.9 Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash is represented by deposits with financial institutions.

1.10 Non-Cash Transactions

As part of agreements entered with third parties in connection with pyrite issues, the Agency may receive services from such parties without payment by the Agency. The Agency recognises such services when received as both income and an expense.

1.11 Payables

Short term payables are measured at the transaction price. The Agency also holds funds advanced by local authorities for the purchase of housing stock. Local authorities transfer the funds to The Housing Agency for properties they wish to acquire. The Housing Agency hold the funds until properties are purchased. These amounts are shown as payables (See Note 11).

1.12(a) Retirement Benefits

Section 7 (8) of Statutory Instrument No 264 of 2012 provided for the establishment of a superannuation scheme for the Agency. The Agency operates a defined benefit scheme (the main scheme) which is funded on a pay-as-you-go basis from monies provided by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and from contributions deducted from staff and members' salaries. The scheme is being operated on an administrative basis pending the approval of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

Retirement benefit costs reflect retirement benefits earned by employees and are shown net of staff retirement benefit contributions which are retained by the Agency. An amount corresponding to the retirement benefit charge is recognised as income to the extent that it is recoverable and offset by grants received in the year to discharge retirement benefit payments.

The Housing Agency also operates the Single Public Services Pension Scheme ("Single Scheme"), which is a defined benefit scheme for pensionable public servants appointed on or after 1 January 2013. Single scheme members' contributions are paid over to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

Actuarial gains or losses for both schemes arising on scheme liabilities are reflected in the Statement of Other Comprehensive Income, and a corresponding adjustment is recognised in the amount recoverable from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The financial statements reflect, at fair value, the assets and liabilities arising from The Housing Agency's retirement benefit obligations and any related funding and recognises the costs of providing retirement benefit benefits in the accounting periods in which they are earned by employees. Retirement benefit scheme liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method.

1.12(b) NBA Retirement Benefits

The National Building Agency (NBA) operated a funded defined benefit pension scheme. On the instructions of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, The Housing Agency was appointed as the principal employer of the NBA pension scheme with effect from 1 October 2018.

The scheme for past employees of NBA is closed to new entrants. The assumptions and estimates used in calculating the cost for the financial year, the defined benefit obligation and the fair value of the plan assets at the financial year end reflect historical experience and current trends.

The Housing Agency recognises income and retirement benefit costs for the year in the Statement of Income and Expenditure and actuarial movements are recognised in the statement of other comprehensive income. Retirement benefit payments made by The Housing Agency to members of the scheme are recouped from the pension fund. (see Note 12.2).

The NBA asset represents the fair value of the investment fund held by the trustees and the retirement liability represents the net present value of the future entitlements of the scheme members as calculated by an independent actuary. On 1 October 2018, the scheme's assets were valued at €12,784,000 and the liability was valued at €8,366,000. The Statement of Financial Position at 31 December 2020 shows the asset at €13,773,000 and the liability at €7,720,000.

1.13 Capital Reserve

The Capital Reserve represents (a) the unamortised portion of income applied for capital purposes. Fixed assets are funded from grant income and amortised in line with depreciation and (b) the transfer of the net assets from the Housing and Sustainable Communities Limited (HSC Ltd), the National Building Agency Limited (NBA) and Fingal County Council to The Housing Agency for Nil consideration in 2013. The asset values transferred are as follows:

- NBA: €741,501
- HSC Ltd: €1,202,607
- Local Authorities: €37

This was undertaken on the direction of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) now the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

1.14 Currency

The unit of currency in which the financial statements are denominated is the Euro.

1.15 Assisting Local Authorities in Purchasing Housing

The Housing Agency acts as central point for multiple organisations for purchasing properties from receivers/lenders. Suitable properties from the portfolios are identified and local authorities approved the purchase of the relevant properties. The local authorities forwarded the funds to The Housing Agency and the relevant funds then paid for the properties in the relevant portfolios.

1.16 Pyrite Settlements

Settlements made under the Pyrite Remediation Scheme are recognised as both income and expenditure in the financial statements.

1.17 Legal Costs

Legal costs arising from actions taken by Housing Agency on behalf of the Pyrite Resolution Board are netted off against any settlements received. Legal costs relating to the purchase of properties are recorded under the appropriate sub head where the expenditure was incurred. All other legal costs are recorded under the Housing Agency operational costs.

2. Critical Accounting Judgements and Estimates in Applying Accounting Policies and Key Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported for assets and liabilities as at the statement of financial position date and the amounts reported for revenues and expenses during the year. However, the nature of estimation means that actual outcomes could differ from those estimates. The following judgements have had the most significant effect on amounts recognised in the financial statements.

Useful Lives of Tangible Assets

Long-lived assets are comprised primarily of buildings, fixtures and fittings and computer equipment. The annual depreciation charge depends primarily on the estimated lives of each type of asset and, in certain circumstances, estimated residual values. The Board regularly review these useful lives and change them if necessary, to reflect current conditions. In determining these useful lives management consider technological change, patterns of consumption, physical condition and expected economic utilisation of the assets. Changes in the useful lives can have a significant impact on the depreciation charge for the financial year.

Impairment of Tangible Fixed Assets

Assets that are subject to amortisation are reviewed for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognised for the amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount. The recoverable amount is the higher of an asset's fair value less cost to sell and value in use. For the purpose of assessing impairment, assets are grouped at the lowest levels for which there are separately identifiable cash flows (cash generating units). Non-financial assets that suffered impairment are reviewed for possible reversal of the impairment at each reporting date.

Pyrite Remediation Scheme

The Pyrite Remediation Scheme commitment of €60 million is deemed to be a significant judgement and is based on a detailed five year projection for the scheme presented to The Housing Agency Board on 23 October 2018.

Retirement Benefit Obligation

The assumptions underlying the actuarial valuations for which the amounts recognised in the financial statements are determined (including discount rates, rates of increase in future compensation levels, mortality rates and healthcare cost trend rates) are updated annually based on current economic conditions, and for any relevant changes to the terms and conditions of the retirement benefit and post-retirement plans.

The assumptions can be affected by:

- i. The discount rate, changes in the rate of return on high-quality corporate bonds
- ii. Future compensation levels, future market conditions.

3. Income

(a) Housing Agency Operational

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Oireachtas Grant (Vote 34 – Subhead A.23) <i>less single public sector scheme contributions</i>	3.1	8,750,000 (150,849)	7,500,000 (93,276)
Fee Income	3.2	376,385	307,151
Recoupments from State Bodies	3.3	608,832	630,606
Deposit Interest		58	63
Rental Income	3.4	62,741	58,438
Gain on Sale of Lands	8.2	35,000	9,000
Other Income	3.5	28,270	176,442
Research Project Costs	3.6	27,750	–
Deferred Pension Funding	12	1,344,000	1,166,000
		11,082,187	9,754,424

3.1 Oireachtas Grant received from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

3.2 Fee income represents charges to clients (local authorities or other state bodies) in respect of services undertaken by The Housing Agency.

3.3 Income from state bodies represents recoupments for seconded staff and expenses incurred on behalf of state bodies. Includes the following from Vote 34:

	€
Subhead A1: Housing for People with a Disability	234,000
Subhead D12: Land Development Agency – Pay	35,312
Subhead D12: Land Development Agency – Non-Pay	41,099
Subhead A4: LA Lease	16,294
Subhead A6: Housing Assistance Payment Scheme	10,332

3.4 Rental Income comprises of rents received in relation to Development Land held by The Housing Agency.

3.5 The Housing Agency also receives income from other activities and schemes that it has undertaken during the year comprising of the following from Vote 34:

	€
Subhead A12: Traveller Accommodation	28,270

3.6 Research Project Costs comprises of a project jointly funded with the Land Development Agency.

(b) Pyrite Remediation Scheme

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Oireachtas Grant (Vote 34 – Subhead A.22)	3.1	13,000,000	30,000,000
Homebond Staff and Services	3.7	9,799	354,716
Pyrite Settlements		2,337,913	–
		15,347,712	30,354,716

3.7 Homebond is a provider of structural defect cover in new homes and has an agreement with The Housing Agency to provide staff and services to the value up to €2 million to the Agency. As part of this agreement the value of such staff and services provided was estimated in 2020 at €198,664 (2019: €354,716). In respect of errors in 2019 and 2018 a retrospective adjustment of €188,865 has been applied to the 2020 figure.

(c) Acquisitions – Revolving Fund

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Revolving Fund Sales of Properties	3.8	29,809,800	29,467,864
Revolving Fund Rental Income		49,621	63,228
Total Revolving Fund Income		29,859,421	29,531,092

3.8 Sales represent the sales of housing stock to local authorities and approved housing bodies at cost plus the cost of any capital upgrade works completed.

(d) Acquisitions – Local Authority

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Direct Acquisition Recoupments	3.9	464,543	1,556,003
Fingal Recoupments		138,522	404,871
		603,065	1,960,874

3.9 Includes the following from Vote 34:

	2020 €	2019 €
Subhead A3: Local Authority Housing	53,815	140,402

(e) Acquisitions – AHB Property Sourcing

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
AHB Cost Recovery		107,010	–
		107,010	–

4. Expenditure

(a) Housing Agency Operational

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Employment Costs	5	7,554,371	6,008,626
Office Administration Costs	6	1,506,983	1,914,008
Legal and Professional Fees	7	1,389,744	1,513,893
National Building Agency		–	933
Depreciation	8	159,057	145,692
		10,610,155	9,583,152

(b) Pyrite Remediation Scheme

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Office Administration Costs		23,135	25,408
Legal and Professional Fees		166,371	56,322
Homeowner Payments		1,390,366	2,848,765
Construction Project Managers		1,043,172	1,520,078
Work Contractors		10,535,466	26,252,739
Homebond Staff and Services	3.7	9,799	354,716
Pyrite Settlements		2,337,913	–
		15,506,222	31,058,028

The Agency administers the Pyrite Remediation Scheme which came into operation on 13 February 2014. The Housing Agency has received €136.9 million from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to administer the scheme to date. The Agency has made payments of €136.66 million and in addition has incurred wages and salary costs in respect of staff assigned to the administration of the scheme of €3.3 million to 31 December 2020. Retirement benefit costs are calculated for the Agency as a whole and are not included above.

(c) Acquisitions

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Revolving Fund Trading Expenditure			
Opening Stock		55,335,448	60,732,431
Deposits Paid & Properties Purchased		18,079,000	22,108,520
Improvements to Buildings		2,842,562	2,730,281
Consultancy Fees Recoverable from AHB		17,435	-
Refunds from Non-Proceeding Properties		(405,000)	(767,920)
Closing Stock		(46,059,645)	(55,335,448)
		29,809,800	29,467,864
Other Costs (c) (i)		982,874	1,611,449
		30,792,674	31,079,313

c) (i)

The Housing Agency has been tasked with the acquisition of vacant housing for social housing use under the Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness. The Agency's role in this regard is to engage with banks, investors, and other potential owners of multiple property portfolios to acquire properties on a national basis and to dispose of these at cost to housing bodies and local authorities.

Funding for the purchase is provided by a revolving grant of up to €76 million from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The grant is treated as long term funding and is accounted for in the Property Acquisition Reserve in the Statement of Financial Position. The figures and the stock numbers shown below are on the basis of financial transactions completed by the end of 2020. The numbers shown in the narrative of the Annual Report are based on the reporting arrangements established by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Acquisitions Revolving Fund

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Purchase, Sales and Holding Costs		466,679	759,355
Property Valuations		82,020	186,739
Insurance		109,995	255,248
Property Inspections		25,627	87,663
Local Property Tax		104,623	67,201
Professional Advice		4,790	36,782
Service Charges		221,184	213,504
Security Services		10,481	30,592
Utility and Connection Costs		543	3,891
Miscellaneous Expenses		3	4,073
AHB Fees		3,066	-
Cost Refunds		(46,201)	(33,830)
Bank Charges		64	231
		982,874	1,611,449

Trading Expenditure by Number of Homes

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Opening Stock		298	300
Purchases		78	129
Sales		(143)	(131)
Closing Stock		233	298

Administration Expenditure by Activity

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Direct Acquisitions	4.3	468,783	1,469,619
Fingal County Council	4.4	130,712	387,108
AHB Property Sourcing	4.5	107,010	-
		706,505	1,856,727

4.3 Direct Acquisition Expenditure is expenditure related to the properties acquired on behalf of local authorities, these costs are separate to and in addition to the purchase price and are recouped by The Housing Agency at a later date.

Direct Acquisitions

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Legal & Outlay		233,198	723,878
Local Property Tax		14,775	22,868
Service Charges		31,836	152,258
Valuations		157,998	354,471
Inspection Fees		27,831	81,352
Insurance		(624)	3,072
Security Costs		2,606	3,137
Professional Advice		1,224	615
Bank Fees		(61)	104
Capital Upgrade Works	4.3.1	-	127,864
Total		468,783	1,469,619

Direct Acquisition Activity

The Housing Agency engages in sourcing properties on behalf of local authorities. During the year The Housing Agency assisted in the purchase of 77 properties on behalf of local authorities. (2019: 303)

4.3.1 Capital Upgrade Works

During the prior year local authorities requested that The Housing Agency provide upgrade works to properties sourced on their behalf.

4.3.2 Assisting Local Authorities in Purchasing Housing

The Housing Agency acts as a central point for multiple organisations for purchasing properties from receivers/lenders. Suitable properties from the portfolios were identified and local authorities approved the purchase of the relevant properties. The local authorities forwarded the funds to The Housing Agency and the relevant funds were then paid for the properties in the relevant portfolios. In 2020 The Housing Agency purchased houses in bulk from lending institutions on behalf of local authorities nationwide. Such housing stock is not the property of The Housing Agency. The transactions under the programme are outlined below:

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Opening Balance of Funds		3,292,050	23,882,000
Funding Received		25,182,434	63,616,450
Purchases		(21,902,000)	(84,206,400)
Closing Balance of Funding Received	11	6,572,484	3,292,050
Float held by The Housing Agency		71,047	12,699
Direct Acquisitions Funds	10	6,643,531	3,304,749

4.4 During the year, The Housing Agency incurred costs of €130,712 (2019: €387,108) on behalf of Fingal County Council for the provision of legal services.

Fingal County Council

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Legal & Outlay		130,712	387,108

4.4.1 The Housing Agency ceased its involvement in Fingal County Council legal fees at the end of March 2020.

4.5 The Housing Agency sourced properties on behalf of a number of approved housing bodies incurring costs in the process and these costs were subsequently invoiced to the relevant approved housing bodies in 2020.

5. Housing Agency Operational Employment Costs

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Wages and Salaries – Housing Agency Staff		5,820,491	4,475,961
Wages and Salaries – Pyrite Staff		584,880	580,665
Retirement Benefit Costs – Housing Agency	12.1	1,149,000	952,000
		7,554,371	6,008,626

Number of Employees

	2020	2019
Average Number of Employees	105	82

Additional Superannuation Contribution

	2020 €	2019 €
Additional Superannuation Contribution	136,883	137,135

Board Member Emoluments

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Pyrite Resolution Board			
Caroline Gill		200	2,000
Alec Flood		2,000	–
Jack Keyes		8,978	13,876
Derek Sinnott		–	2,777
Lydia Bunni		–	–
Kevin McCrave		–	–
Housing Agency Board			
David Duffy		3,847	3,847

The above amounts are for expenses and fees incurred from the Pyrite Resolution and Housing Agency Boards.

Chief Executive Officer's Remuneration

	2020 €	2019 €
Chief Executive Officer's Remuneration	130,593	128,117

The Chief Executive Officer's salary was €128,117 and increased to €130,593 under the restoration of the temporary pay cuts introduced under the Haddington Road Agreement. The Chief Executive Officer's pension is part of The Housing Agency's model of public sector defined superannuation scheme.

Termination Benefits

No termination payments were made during the year.

Short Term Benefits

No short term benefits such as overtime or allowances were made during the year.

Key Management Personnel

	2020 €	2019 €
Salary	632,584	605,107

Key management personnel in The Housing Agency consists of the senior officers, the Chief Executive Officer, the Principal Officers, Assistant Principal Officer and Senior Executive Officers. The total value of employee benefits for key management personnel is set out above.

This does not include the value of retirement benefits earned in the period. The key management personnel are members of The Housing Agency pension scheme and their entitlements in that regard do not extend beyond the terms of the model service pension scheme.

6. Housing Agency Operational Office Administration Costs

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Rent Payable		120,000	86,154
Rates		1,278	1,384
Insurance		55,973	59,093
Light and Heat		20,764	27,862
Premises and Maintenance Costs		170,372	356,299
Information Communications Technology		297,643	344,917
Printing Postage and Stationery		77,733	124,908
Communications		83,047	151,931
Conferences, Meetings and Seminars		21,954	133,523
Bank Charges		1,277	1,047
General Expenses		–	1,106
Recoverable Costs	6.1	274,664	198,802
Training and Recruitment		286,757	287,154
Travel and Subsistence		65,037	113,870
Subscriptions		30,485	25,944
Bad Debts		–	14
		1,506,983	1,914,008

6.1 Recoverable Costs

Recoverable Costs relate to costs borne by The Housing Agency on behalf of local authorities and approved housing bodies during the year. These costs are to be recouped at a later date.

7. Housing Agency Operational Legal and Professional Fees

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Acquisitions – Professional Fees		–	26,705
Professional Fees		233,357	205,673
Regulation and Development Costs		614	76,598
Legal Fees		81,559	46,651
Research Expenditure		276,478	177,535
Accountancy		24,897	52,810
Internal Audit		89,274	59,234
Audit		37,500	40,000
Land Valuations and Legal Fees for Asset Management		93,712	134,809
Professional and Legal Services for Local Authorities		80,783	56,165
Underwriting for Housing Supply Loans		355,194	327,200
Project Consultancy Costs		45,030	190,068
Strategic Planning and Implementation		41,701	14,176
A&R Committee and Governance Review		29,645	66,420
Process Mapping and Procedures		–	335
Procurement Services		–	39,514
		1,389,744	1,513,893

8. Tangible Fixed Assets

	Development Land €	Land under Aggregation Scheme €	Buildings €	Fixtures, Fittings & Equipment €	Computer Equipment €	Total €
Cost						
Opening Balance at 1 January 2020	1,406,247	51,649,548	4,973,255	121,129	247,044	58,397,223
Additions at Cost	–	–	–	15,244	139,943	155,187
Revaluations	–	–	–	–	–	–
Disposals	–	(432,000)	–	–	–	(432,000)
Balance at 31 December 2020	1,406,247	51,217,548	4,973,255	136,373	386,987	58,120,410
 Depreciation						
Opening Balance at 1 January 2020	–	–	315,964	77,812	178,255	572,031
Depreciation for the Period	–	–	99,465	15,899	43,693	159,057
Balance at 31 December 2020	–	–	415,429	93,711	221,948	731,088
 Net Book Value						
At 31 December 2020	1,406,247	51,217,548	4,557,826	42,662	165,039	57,389,322
At 31 December 2019	1,406,247	51,649,548	4,657,291	43,317	68,789	57,825,192
 Cost						
Opening Balance at 1 January 2019	1,441,247	55,069,342	4,973,255	121,129	237,183	61,842,156
Additions at Cost	–	–	–	–	9,861	9,861
Revaluations	–	–	–	–	–	–
Disposals	(35,000)	(3,419,794)	–	–	–	(3,454,794)
Balance at 31 December 2019	1,406,247	51,649,548	4,973,255	121,129	247,044	58,397,223

	Development Land €	Land under Aggregation Scheme €	Buildings €	Fixtures, Fittings & Equipment €	Computer Equipment €	Total €
Depreciation						
Opening Balance at 1 January 2019	–	–	216,499	62,671	147,169	426,339
Depreciation for the Period	–	–	99,465	15,141	31,086	145,692
Balance at 31 December 2019	–	–	315,964	77,812	178,255	572,031
Net Book Value						
At 31 December 2019	1,406,247	51,649,548	4,657,291	43,317	68,789	57,825,192
At 31 December 2018	1,441,247	55,069,342	4,756,756	58,458	90,014	61,415,817

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Development Land – Activity			
Opening sites		12	13
(Transferred/Disposed)	8.1	–	(1)
Closing sites		12	12

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Lands Aggregation Scheme – Activity			
Opening sites		68	70
(Transferred/Disposed)	8.2	(3)	(2)
Closing sites		65	68

8.1 Development Land – Activity

During the year the Agency did not dispose of any development land.

8.2 Lands Aggregation Scheme – Activity

During the year, the Agency disposed of three sites. One held in Meelin, County Cork for €35,000 and two sites in County Wexford. The sites were transferred to Wexford County Council for nil. The sites are to be used for the construction of social housing units. These sites were valued in the prior year at €400,000.

9. Receivables

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Debtors		168,188	457,305
Prepayments		93,281	91,434
Other Debtors		183,290	323,120
Work in Progress		245,580	117,709
		690,339	989,568

10. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Acquisition Funds		22,400,079	14,057,528
Pyrite Remediation Scheme		1,698,261	1,544,274
Monies Held on Behalf of Local Authorities	4.3.2	6,643,531	3,304,749
Housing Agency Operational		5,293,260	4,455,760
		36,035,131	23,362,311

11. Payables

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Trade Payables		(18,549)	(13,692)
Other Payables		(70,857)	(75,300)
Accruals		(1,517,808)	(812,363)
RCT		–	(216)
PAYE/PRSI		(252,698)	(200,928)
Value Added Tax		(415,393)	(710,338)
Withholding Tax		(74,831)	(120,383)
Monies Held on Behalf of Local Authorities	4.3.2	(6,572,484)	(3,292,050)
Pension Contribution		(393,416)	(393,416)
Deferred Income		(12,818)	(89)
		(9,328,854)	(5,618,775)

12. Retirement Benefits

12.1 Superannuation and SPS Scheme

The Housing Agency operates unfunded defined benefit superannuation schemes for staff. The schemes are (i) Pre 1 April 2004 – Non New Entrant, (ii) Post 1 April 2004 – New Entrant, and (iii) Post 1 January 2013 – Single Pension Scheme. Each pension scheme has its own associated terms and conditions in relation to retirement age and calculation of pension and lump sum. Superannuation entitlements arising under the schemes are paid out of current income and are charged to the Statement of Income and Expenditure, net of employee superannuation contributions, in the year in which they become payable.

12.2 NBA Scheme

The Housing Agency became the principal employer of the NBA in October 2018. The NBA retirement benefits scheme transferred to The Housing Agency. The NBA Scheme is a funded pension scheme which is managed by the Agency.

Retirement Benefit Results

The results set out below are based on an actuarial valuation of the pension liabilities in respect of serving, retired and deceased staff of The Housing Agency as at 31 December 2020. This valuation was carried out by a qualified independent actuary for the purposes of the accounting standard Financial Reporting Standard – Retirement Benefits (FRS 102).

Average Life Expectancy Used to Determine Liabilities

	2020 Years	2019 Years
Male Aged 65	21	21
Female Aged 65	24	24

12.1 Superannuation and SPS Scheme

Expenditure

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Current Service Costs		1,253,000	962,000
Interest on Pension Scheme Liabilities		159,000	212,000
Employee Contributions		(263,000)	(222,000)
Total Pension Costs		1,149,000	952,000

Deferred Retirement Benefit Funding

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Opening Deferred Funding		14,655,000	10,527,000
Deferred Funding		1,344,000	1,166,000
Adjustment to Deferred Funding	12.1.1	1,725,000	2,962,000
Closing Deferred Funding		17,724,000	14,655,000
Net Deferred Funding Recognised in the Statement of Income and Expenditure			
Benefit Costs		1,412,000	1,174,000
Benefits Paid in the Period		(68,000)	(8,000)
		1,344,000	1,166,000

Retirement Benefit Liability

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Opening Scheme Liability		(14,655,000)	(10,527,000)
Current Service Cost		(1,253,000)	(962,000)
Interest Cost		(159,000)	(212,000)
Benefits Paid in the Period		68,000	8,000
Change in Actuarial Assumptions	12.1.1	–	(1,827,000)
Experience (Losses) / Gains	12.1.1	(1,725,000)	(1,135,000)
Closing Scheme Liability		(17,724,000)	(14,655,000)

12.1.1 Actuarial (Losses) / Gains

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Change in Actuarial Assumptions		–	(1,827,000)
Experience (Losses) / Gains		(1,725,000)	(1,135,000)
Actuarial (Loss) / Gain		(1,725,000)	(2,962,000)
Percentage of the Scheme Liabilities		9.73%	20.21%
Adjustment to Deferred Funding		1,725,000	2,962,000

The principle financial assumptions used were:

Valuation Method

	2020	2019
Discount Rate	0.90%	1.10%
Rate of Increase in Salaries	2.40%	2.40%
Future State Pension Increase	1.40%	1.40%
Future Pension Increases	1.90%	1.90%
Inflation	1.40%	1.40%

12.2 NBA Retirement Benefit Scheme

Retirement Benefit Cost

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Current Service Costs		–	–
Net Interest Cost		(64,000)	(90,000)
Administration Cost		82,000	50,000
Total Pension Income		18,000	(40,000)

Retirement Benefit Scheme Assets

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Opening Fair Value of Scheme Assets		13,731,000	12,312,000
Interest Income		147,000	249,000
Benefits Paid		(317,000)	(305,000)
Administration Expenses Paid from Asset		(82,000)	(50,000)
Return on Plan Assets (Excluding Interest)	12.2.1	294,000	1,525,000
Closing Fair Value of Scheme Assets	12.2.2	13,773,000	13,731,000

Retirement Benefit Liability

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Opening Scheme Liability		(7,878,000)	(7,929,000)
Current Service Cost		-	-
Interest Cost		(83,000)	(159,000)
Benefits Paid		317,000	305,000
Change in Actuarial Assumptions	12.2.1	(253,000)	(377,000)
Experience Gains / (Losses)	12.2.1	177,000	282,000
Closing Scheme Liability		(7,720,000)	(7,878,000)

Net Retirement Benefit

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Present Value of Funded Defined Benefit Obligations		(7,720,000)	(7,827,000)
Fair Value of Scheme Assets		13,773,000	15,150,000
Net Asset / (Liability)		6,053,000	7,323,000

12.2.1 Actuarial (Losses) / Gains

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Change in Actuarial Assumptions		(253,000)	(377,000)
Experience (Losses) / Gains		177,000	282,000
Return on Plan Assets (Excluding Interest)		294,000	1,525,000
Actuarial (Loss) / Gain		218,000	1,430,000
Percentage of the Scheme Liabilities		2.82%	18.27%

The principal assumptions used were:

Valuation Method

	2020	2019
Discount Rate	0.57%	1.10%
Rate of Increase in Salaries	2.20%	2.40%
Inflation	1.20%	1.40%

12.2.2 Fair Value of Plan Assets Composition

	Note	2020 €	2019 €
Cash		236,000	230,000
Equities		4,687,000	4,756,000
Bonds		8,823,000	8,704,000
Other		27,000	41,000
		13,773,000	13,731,000

12.2.3 Fair Value of Plan Assets Composition as %

	Note	2020	2019
Cash		1.71%	1.68%
Equities		34.03%	34.64%
Bonds		64.06%	63.39%
Other		0.20%	0.30%

13. Agency Board Members – Disclosure of Interests Ethics in Public Offices Act 1995 and 2001

The Agency is required to adhere to the requirements and procedures in accordance with the Ethics in Public Offices Act 1995 and 2001. The Agency has adhered to these within the period. There were no transactions during the period in relation to the Agency's activities in which the Agency Members had any beneficial interest.

14. Commitments

On behalf of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, The Housing Agency undertakes the remediation of pyritic affected homes. The Pyrite Resolution Board receives claims under the Pyrite Remediation Scheme. As part of this scheme, works contracts are entered into with engineering and building consultants and with civil engineering and building contractors. In addition, homeowners whose dwellings have been accepted into this scheme are entitled to recoup certain expenditure that they incur prior to acceptance into the scheme and during remediation works.

No provision has been made in the accounts in respect of the potential liability under the scheme as it is the Board's policy to recognise the costs of claims as they are approved. It is estimated that the future cost of the remediation scheme will amount to €60 million based on projected costs for the next 3 years and includes the contractual commitments noted below.

At 31 December 2020, The Housing Agency had the following contractual commitments and obligations in relation to the Pyrite Remediation Scheme (PRS).

Construction Consultants

	2020 €	2019 €
Construction Consultants Contracts at 31 December	7,818,697	6,532,291
Payments on Account to 31 December	(6,884,389)	(5,841,217)
Contractual Commitments to Consultants at 31 December	934,308	691,074

Work Contractors

	2020 €	2019 €
Works Contractors Contracts at 31 December	123,592,314	108,141,714
Payments on Account to 31 December	(113,922,376)	(103,386,910)
Contractual Commitments to Contractors at 31 December	9,669,938	4,754,804

The Housing Agency is not eligible to recoup VAT and therefore all amounts are inclusive of VAT.

15. Lease Commitments

The Housing Agency has commitments in respect of a lease on office accommodation at 52 Upper Mount Street, Dublin 2. This lease is for a period of 10 years which commenced in March 2019. The Housing Agency sets out in the table below its estimated commitments for annual payments over the period of the lease:

	2020 €	2019 €
Payable within One Year	120,000	120,000
Payable within Two to Five Years	480,000	480,000
Payable after Five Years	380,000	500,000
	980,000	1,100,000

Operating lease payments recognised as an expense were €120,000.

16. Related Party Disclosures

During the year there were no transactions that required to related parties. Key management personnel in The Housing Agency consist of the Chief Executive Officer and members of the Board. For a breakdown of the remuneration and benefits paid to key management personnel, please refer to Note 5. The Housing Agency adopts procedures in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform covering the personal interests of Board members.

17. Events after the Reporting Date

There are no events between the reporting date and the date of approval of these financial statements for issue that require adjustment to the financial statements.

The Board recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a significant event for the organisation. The Board is continuing to take the situation seriously and is monitoring the situation, in conjunction with management, on an ongoing basis. The business continues to operate with measures in place to protect staff and the Agency's stakeholders. Staff are working remotely and services continue to be provided. To date, the operations and most of the entity's activities are being maintained while adjusting to the different way in which the business is being delivered. While the Agency is unable to reliably predict the impact of COVID-19 on its cash flows, the performance and operations of the Agency are being monitored closely and regular cash flow forecasts are provided to the Board and to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Going concern – The Board considers that, as the entity provides a public service that is funded by monies provided by the Exchequer, via the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, it is appropriate to prepare these financial statements on a going concern basis.

18. Approval of Financial Statements

The Board of Directors approved these financial statements for issue on the 22nd June 2021.





An Gníomhaireacht
Tithíochta
The Housing Agency

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