



## Appendix 1

### Housing Services Consultation Recording Sheet

Housing Service ...Housing Development & Homelessness team

Person responsible: Janice Rainey and Jane Mack

Consultation Start date: 8/12/22 End Date 19/1/23

<b>Consultation criteria</b>	<b>Steps taken</b>
1. The name of consultation / participation exercise	Rent setting consultation 2023-24
2. Its aims and objectives	<p>To gather tenant views on 2 proposed rent options for 2023/24.</p> <p><b>Option1: 4% Increase (average weekly rent increase of £3.38)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining all current services that tenants receive including direct support budgets,</li> <li>• Improving performance around voids to maximize tenant experience and HRA income,</li> <li>• Delivering our Capital programme of housing investment,</li> <li>• Retaining a Tenant Priority Budget of £800,000 for tenants to direct spend to improve buildings and wider environment and</li> <li>• Continuing our New Build housing programme</li> </ul> <p><b>Option 2: 5% Increase (average weekly rent increase of £4.22)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining all current services that tenants receive including direct support budgets</li> <li>• Improving performance around voids to maximize HRA income,</li> <li>• Delivering our Capital programme of housing investment,</li> <li>• Retaining a Tenant Priority Budget of £800,000 for tenants to direct spend to improve buildings and wider environment</li> <li>• Continuing our New Build housing programme and</li> </ul>

<b>Consultation criteria</b>	<b>Steps taken</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering an additional £50m of capital investment in our existing homes over the next 5 years based on tenant priorities – the preferred programme/s that tenants could choose from for this option were,</li> <li>• Programme A – Energy Efficiency Measures including new heating systems</li> <li>• Programme B – Kitchen and Bathroom Renewals</li> <li>• Programme C – Window/Door Renewal Programmes</li> <li>• Programme D – Environmental Works</li> <li>• Programme E - All Options Above</li> </ul>
<p>3. Who did you invite/include? (e.g. all tenants, tenant from the interested tenants register, RTOs, staff)</p>	<p>The consultation was open to all tenants and those residing in homeless temporary accommodation.</p> <p>The consultation was launched at a meeting of the Joint Rent Group on 8/12/22. Copy of the presentation as well as information on the options was also posted on the Council's website so that it was freely available.</p>
<p>4. What methods did you use to promote/invite stakeholders to get involved? (e.g. letters, posters, website)</p>	<p>Information on the rent options were sent out in a specific mailing to all tenants with information detailing the rationale behind the options and details on each option. This included a free-post voting card that could be used to vote as well as details of how to vote online, by phone, by text or email.</p> <p>An article was included in the winter edition of the Housing News. Although it wasn't able to specify the rent options at time of production and printing, it did alert tenants to the consultation process, that they would receive specific information by post and that a range of ways to vote would be available to make voting as easy as possible.</p> <p>The survey was also promoted regularly through the Council's webpages and social media as well as on our Tenant Participation Facebook account. Email and text reminders were also sent to tenants where possible.</p> <p>WDC intranet was also used to reach WDC staff who are also tenants to encourage them to vote.</p> <p>Housing officers and Homeless support officers were also sent a briefing and asked to encourage their tenants to vote.</p>

<b>Consultation criteria</b>	<b>Steps taken</b>
<p>5. Who actually took part? (Number of individuals and or number of tenant organisations represented)</p>	<p>1173 tenants voted for their preferred option in the survey giving a response rate of 12.3%.</p>
<p>6. What method(s) did you use to obtain their views? (e.g. focus/working group, newsletter, survey)  Why did you choose this method(s)?</p>	<p>A quick and easy survey was used to gather tenants' views. All tenants were encouraged to vote for their preferred rent option with a direct mailing to them and a range of voting methods offered to make it as easy as possible – free-post voting card, online survey, texting and email options.</p> <p>These methods were chosen to gather the views of as many tenants as possible in a clear and most accessible way possible. The survey results will be taken into account as part of the Council committee decision -making process when setting rents for 2023/24.</p> <p>The information provided was presented in as clear and understandable way as possible and made available online for any tenant to refer to and paper copies made available on request.</p> <p>We also used staff to promote the survey and to encourage dialogue with tenants and to explain the options being considered. The Tenant Participation Officer's contact details were also provided for tenants to ask any questions and a number of tenants got in touch.</p>
<p>7. What good practice or minimum standards can you evidence as part of your consultation?</p>	<p>A six week consultation period was used to collect views. This was shorter<sup>[PB1]</sup> than normal due to the later start of the consultation.</p> <p>Freepost voting cards, phoning, texting and email options were made available to all tenants as well as the online survey so that tenants could use a method they were most comfortable with and at no cost.</p> <p>All financial information was presented as clearly and understandable as possible as well as being available on-line for public scrutiny.</p>

<b>Consultation criteria</b>	<b>Steps taken</b>									
8. What was the outcome of the consultation?	<p>1173 tenants gave their views in the survey and Option 1 (4% rent increase), was the preferred option getting 52.94% of the votes.</p> <p>The results were close with,</p> <table data-bbox="699 495 1136 604"> <tr> <td>Option 1</td> <td>52.94%</td> <td>621</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Option 2</td> <td>47.13%</td> <td>552</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td></td> <td>1173</td> </tr> </table> <p>9533 tenants were contacted so the response rate equals 12.3%.</p> <p>The survey results will be put forward as the proposed rent increase going for Council approval.</p>	Option 1	52.94%	621	Option 2	47.13%	552	Total		1173
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9. How did you feedback to participants the outcome?	<p>Once March Council meeting has concluded, the survey results and final rent setting decision will be reported in the Spring Housing News, on the Council webpages and through the TP Facebook account.</p> <p>All rent increases must be notified to tenants in writing with 28 days' notice so all tenants will be advised of the rent increase and how much the increase means for their own weekly and annual rent charge.</p>									
10. How did tenant involvement influence your consultation?	<p>The impact of the mini Budget in September and then the reversal of many of the plans was that interest rates fluctuated and so was very difficult to estimate costs and set budgets. This delayed the consultation and meant that there was insufficient time for discussion and pre consultation tenant involvement as has been the case in recent years.</p> <p>This was a unique situation and both the Chief Officer Housing and Employability and the Housing Convener have given assurances to the WDTR0 that this will not set a precedent.</p> <p>We have continued to increase tenants' understanding and opportunity to scrutinise the HRA through our Joint Rent Group which includes tenant volunteers. Our Joint Rent Group have also helped make the financial information being presented as clear and understandable as possible and their input continues.</p>									

<b>Consultation criteria</b>	<b>Steps taken</b>
11. Are you able to demonstrate this?	Yes - meeting notes and information on webpages
12. How have you demonstrated to tenants that involvement made a difference?	The preferred option from the consultation survey was for 4% rent increase and that is being put forward as the rent proposal to be considered by Councilors.
13. Did you check with participants that they were happy with the opportunities given to make their views known and that they felt that we listened and acted upon them?	<p>The results of the consultation survey have been shared with the tenant volunteers on the Joint Rent Group. There was a slight increase in responses, 1173 up from 1089 last year, but not as high as pre covid figure of 1344 in 2020. The response rate still equates to 12.3% of tenants responding which is a significant number and gives a credible insight into their preference.</p> <p>Tenant understanding of the HRA has continued to increase through the Joint Rent Group and the Housing News will be used to share this information with all tenants to help encourage more involvement and reiterate the influence they can have on this important issue.</p>
14. What worked well, what didn't work well – or any other comments you have.	<p>Despite us starting nearer Christmas and the consultation period being shorter than normal, the response rate was still credible and when more face to face and community engagement is possible it is hoped that numbers would increase again.</p> <p>We were also able to use text and email reminders via the QL housing system and more tenants responded after these were issued so was an effective way of engaging tenants. Facebook reminders about the survey were also used and got good reaches. 395 freepost voting cards were also returned so this is still a preferred way to vote for a third of tenants.</p> <p>The majority of the negative comments received about the consultation were in relation to affordability of any rent increase and outstanding repair issues and reflects that tenant satisfaction with services affect tenants views on rent setting and their willingness to get involved.</p>