



Housing Services Consultation Recording Sheet

Appendix 1

Housing Service ...Housing Development & Homelessness team

Person responsible: Janice Rainey and Jane Mack

Consultation Start date: 11/11/21 End Date 20/1/22

Consultation criteria	Steps taken
1. The name of consultation / participation exercise	Rent setting consultation 2022-23
2. Its aims and objectives	Discuss and get agreement from tenants on HRA Budget estimates for 2022/23 and vote on subsequent rent options for 2022/23.
3. Who did you invite/include? (e.g. all tenants, tenant from the interested tenants register, RTOs, staff)	<p>Virtual public meeting arranged for 11/11/21 and advertised publicly through the WDC website and TP Facebook page.</p> <p>Due to working from home restrictions, direct invites could only be sent to those that we had an email address for -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRA members • Tenants on our Register of Interested tenants • Scrutiny Panel members <p>Aim of public meeting was to set out and discuss HRA estimates and options for the wider consultation. All tenants then had the opportunity to vote for their preferred option through freepost voting cards or online survey.</p>
4. What methods did you use to promote/invite stakeholders to get involved? (e.g. letters, posters, website)	<p>The consultation process included a virtual public meeting (11/11/21) and a public survey. Specific invites to members of the above groups inviting them to the public meeting were sent via email. The Council's website and social media was also used to advertise the public meeting.</p> <p>Information on the rent options were sent out in a specific mailing to all tenants with an A3 page detailing the rationale behind the options and details on each option. Along with a free-post voting card and details of how to vote online. Voting</p>

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	<p>could also be done by text or email to help make it as easy as possible for tenants.</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 via QL to tenants with contact details.</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>
<p>5. Who actually took part? (Number of individuals and or number of tenant organisations represented)</p>	<p>The virtual public meeting on 11/11/21 was attended by 10 tenants which included representatives from 6 TRA's as well as individual tenants, sheltered forum member and Scrutiny Panel member.</p> <p>1089 tenants voted for their preferred option in the survey giving a response rate of 11%.</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>Ahead of the formal consultation, discussions with the WDTR0 took place on 13/8/21 to establish key priorities for tenants and minimizing the rent increase as well as energy efficiency were identified as key priorities. A further meeting on 5/10 took place to explore options in relation to energy efficiency and these meetings fed into creating the minimum 2% increase option with 3 different ways of spending the Tenant Priority Budget.</p> <p>A presentation was given at the virtual public meeting which outlined current performance of Housing Services and a breakdown of proposed spending for 2022/23.</p> <p>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 2022/23.</p> <p>The information provided was presented in as clear and understandable way as possible and made available online for</p>

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	<p>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 contact details were also provided for tenants to ask any questions and a number of tenants got in touch. Due to the pandemic and working from home restrictions, face to face encouragement and engagement was not possible but all other means of contact were maximized.</p>												
<p>7. What good practice or minimum standards can you evidence as part of your consultation?</p>	<p>An 11 week consultation period was used to collect views.</p> <p>Freepost voting cards, texting and email options were made available to all tenants as well as the on line survey to make it as easy as possible to vote.</p> <p>The information provided at the virtual public meeting was made available online so that any tenant could read and refer to it.</p> <p>All financial information was presented as clearly and understandable as possible as well as being available on-line for public scrutiny.</p>												
<p>8. What was the outcome of the consultation?</p>	<p>1089 tenants gave their views in the survey and Option 2, was the preferred option with 35.7% of the votes.</p> <p>The results were close with,</p> <table data-bbox="695 1266 1133 1409"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Option 1</td> <td>31.6%</td> <td>344</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Option 2</td> <td>35.7%</td> <td>389</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Option 3</td> <td>32.7%</td> <td>356</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td></td> <td>1089</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>9850 tenants were contacted so the response rate equals 11%.</p> <p>The survey results will be put forward as the proposed rent increase going for Council approval.</p>	Option 1	31.6%	344	Option 2	35.7%	389	Option 3	32.7%	356	Total		1089
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<p>9. How did you feedback to participants the outcome?</p>	<p>The survey results have been shared with the Joint Rent Group.</p> <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>												

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	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.
10. How did tenant involvement influence your consultation?	<p>Discussions with the WDTRO helped identify that minimizing the rent increase was a clear priority for tenants so instead of offering a range of increased spending options we only offered the minimum 2% increase and explained that this was the minimum increase needed to continue current services and investment plans. The options that tenants voted on were about how they'd prefer us to spend the Tenant Priority Budget with 2 options focusing on energy efficient options.</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 had helped make the financial information being presented as clear and understandable as possible. The rent setting consultation plan was also discussed and agreed with them ahead of the consultation.</p>
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 a 2% rent increase, using £400,000 of the Tenant Priority Budget on EWI and that is being put forward as the rent proposal to be considered by Councilors.

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<p>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>	<p>The results of the consultation survey have been shared with the tenant volunteers on the Joint Rent Group. The slight reduction in responses (1089 down from 1344 last year) may be because less tenants felt they could influence the actual rent charge and/or due to the ongoing covid situation tenants are less engaged with consultation opportunities. The response rate still equates to 11% of tenants responding which is a significant number and gives a credible insight into their preferences.</p> <p>Tenant understanding of the HRA has continued to increase through the Joint Rent Group and the Housing News will be used to help share this information with all tenants to encourage more involvement.</p>
<p>14. What worked well, what didn't work well – or any other comments you have.</p>	<p>We had the same number of tenants attend the virtual public meeting as last year and it was held during the day so in future years more evening meeting opportunities will be offered to help increase engagement. The response rate was still credible but 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 used these options this year. Facebook reminders about the survey were also used and got good reaches.</p> <p>The majority of the negative comments received about the consultation were in relation to not getting value for money, delays in repairs backlog and problems contacting housing staff which will all hopefully improve as services catch up and reflects that tenant satisfaction with services affect tenants views on rent setting.</p>

2% increase (= average weekly increase of £1.65)

