

How Your Rent is Spent



Tenant Event held in July 2018



The Council held a successful seminar on 21st July which gave tenants information about what their rent pays for, how rents are set and heard tenants views on priorities for Housing Services.

These discussions will be used in relation to the rent setting process later in the year.

Promotion of the Event:

Following receipt of comments and feedback from last year's Rent Consultation we invited 44 tenants who had expressed either interest in, or had commented on how their rent is spent. By making good use of social media platforms such as Facebook and twitter, as well as news, radio, internal and partner websites, further opportunities to attend the event were made available to tenants.

It was great to see new people attend the seminar who have not been to consultation events previously. In total 21 tenants attended on the day and played a full part in the discussions.

Format of the Event:

The Event was opened by the Head of Housing and Communities, David Simpson, and presentations were given on:

- The Housing Revenue Account Working Group (an officer and tenant working group which had been looking at how to raise awareness of the Housing Revenue Account and budget setting for Housing);
- What rents pay for;
- How rent levels are set;
- Priorities for the year ahead.

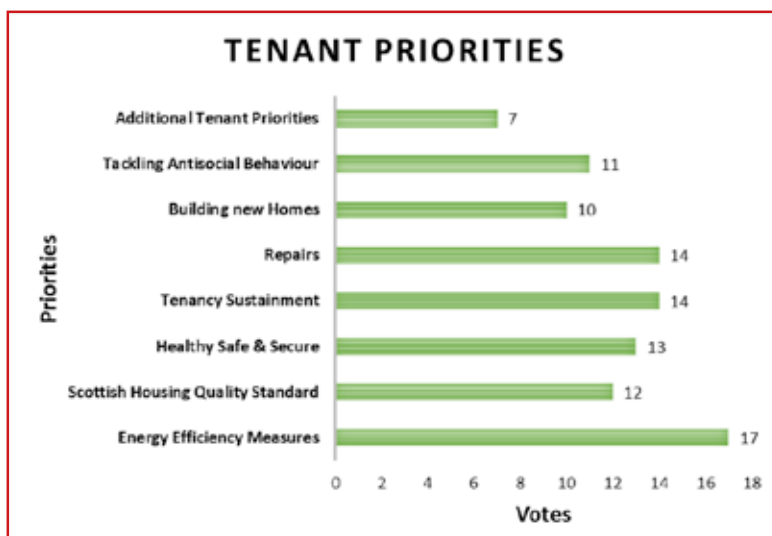
Presentations were followed by exercises and discussions to give participants better understanding of the Housing budget, to answer questions and gather viewpoints. Tenants were asked “What could the Council do differently to improve the rent consultation process?” The main points mirrored what was already included in the rent consultation, with a few further ideas which could be considered in the future:

- Publish a yearly calendar of important events/dates for your diary;
- Ensure that language is easily understandable;
- More information on services and what the options mean;
- Constantly evaluate the process moving forward.



Following the workshops and presentations, attendees were invited to make choices on a range of priorities for investment previously outlined.

The priorities identified by participants supported current Council priorities. In addition to this, adapted housing was identified as an option worth considering, though the Council already gives considerable priority to this through its adaptation programme and through the building of new houses which meet individual customer requirements. The other additional priority was sound proofing, which may partly be addressed by energy efficiency measures, such as external wall cladding.



Next Steps:

Feedback from the event will be used to inform the rent consultation in this and coming years. Particular points to note are:

- Ensuring that questions/options offered in consultations are expressed clearly;
- Giving more information on Housing Services and what the options mean for those services;
- Consider a calendar of important events/dates for your diary;
- Continue doing the things that work well in the Rent Consultation process.

In the near future an “HRA Methodology” will be published with summary information included in the rent consultation.