



East Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir an Ear

CONSULTATION

on rent charges for East Ayrshire Council properties in 2024-2025

Dear Tenant,

I am writing to ask you to take part in this year's rent consultation.

East Ayrshire Council consults annually with tenants, tenants and residents groups and the East Ayrshire Federation of Tenants and Residents (EAF) on our proposals relating to rent setting.



This year, the rent setting consultation period will run from 11 December 2023 to 19 January 2024 inclusive. ALL tenants who submit a response will be entered into a draw to win a £100 East Ayrshire Giftcard.

We will use the feedback to prepare a report for a meeting of the Council's Cabinet Committee in February 2024 at which Elected Members will decide the level of rent increase for Council tenants in the year 2024/25.

We will then write to inform you what your new rent charge will be for 2024/25 at least four weeks in advance of any change that may occur.

'Putting people at the heart of everything we do'

Ensuring that we strike the best balance in terms of the sustainability of our assets, address poorly performing stock, work to meet our energy efficiency ambitions and understand the impact of the cost of living crisis has never been more challenging.

Paying rent is the most important part of a tenancy agreement and must be paid on time and in full, even if you are in receipt of benefits.

Find out more at: <https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/Housing/CouncilHousing/Paying-your-rent/Payingyourrent.aspx>

If you are experiencing financial difficulties or having problems making a claim online, then we can help.

Call us on 01563 503280 for more information.

Remember, you may be entitled to Housing Benefit/Universal Credit (UC). To find out more, please call 01563 554400 or email benefits@east-ayrshire.gov.uk or contact your local Housing Office. If you are claiming UC, you may be entitled to help with your rent payment. To make a claim, go to www.gov.uk/universal-credit

You may be entitled to help if you're struggling with your energy bills. Energy companies run grant schemes and there is help available such as the *Warm Home Discount Scheme*. Call the Universal Credit Support Team on 01563 503280, or email universalcredit@east-ayrshire.gov.uk for advice.

Lemon Aid offer help to Ayrshire residents with fuel bills, you can call them on 0800 221 8085.

Citizens Advice Scotland have lots of information too, just go to www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy

I would like to personally thank you for taking the time to take part in this consultation. Your views are important to us.

Yours sincerely

Blair Millar, Head of Housing & Communities

To take part in the consultation, select one of the following options:

- **Text: Proposal 1 or Proposal 2 to 07786661223**
Text responses will close at the end of the consultation period, 19 January 2024
- **Smart Survey Consultation:**
<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/RENT24-25/>
- **Email: Proposal 1 or Proposal 2 to**
customerliaisonteam@east-ayrshire.gov.uk
Email responses will close at the end of the consultation period, 19 January 2024
- **Complete the consultation and tear off strip and send FREEPOST to - Customer Liaison Team, FREEPOST RSEY-XHST-JHGL, Civic Centre North, John Dickie Street, KILMARNOCK, KA1 1HW. (Please note, no stamp is required)**
- **Scan the QR code:**



OUR BUDGET HEADLINES



● Bad debt provision	£0.02
● Other Expenditure <i>(Aids & Adaptations, Council Tax Voids, SP Protected Tenants Con, Council Helpline)</i>	£0.03
● Rent loss due to empty properties	£0.04
● Debt Repayment, interest and expenses	£0.21
● Contribution to Housing Improvement Programme	£0.06
● Supervision & Management	£0.25
● Repairs and Maintenance	£0.39

Our current spending commitment for the period 2023-2024 is as follows:

Housing Capital Investment Programme (£million)	
Housing Investment Programme <i>(New kitchens, bathrooms, windows and doors, new heating systems, external envelope enhancement etc.)</i>	£20,610m
Strategic Housing Investment Plan <i>(New Housing)</i>	£9,959m
Housing Asset Management Framework <i>(Demolitions and Disposal)</i>	£0.500m
Total	£31.069m

If you want to be involved in Rent Setting discussions or other Housing and Communities service provision you can simply contact the East Ayrshire Federation of Tenants and Residents for more information, Email: secretary@eafederation.com or call 01563 613000. You can also access their web page at www.eafederation.com



We received the highest number of responses during our last rent consultation and 82.6% of tenants said they preferred Option 1, to increase rents by 4%. 85.4% of tenants were happy with the level of consultation and information that the Council provided over proposed rent increases.

You will see from the chart on the right how rent levels in East Ayrshire fair well when compared against other local authorities in Scotland.

*(Source: 2023/24, Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers, *estimated average weekly rent levels - based on a typical weekly rent (52 weeks average for all stock).*

Average weekly rent levels for 2023/24 (£)

Edinburgh	105.17	3%
Aberdeen City	92.57	4%
Dundee	88.93	3%
Midlothian	88.44	4.8%
East Renfrewshire	88.26	5%
Orkney	87.98	3%
Renfrewshire	86.71	5.5%
East Dunbartonshire	86.02	4.2%
West Dunbartonshire	84.27	5%
North Ayrshire	83.49	6.4%
Scotland	82.66	4.3%
Fife	82.41	5%
North Lanarkshire	81.05	5%
West Lothian	80.70	3.5%
South Ayrshire	80.52	1.5%
Clackmannanshire	80.24	3%
Highland	79.84	4%
East Ayrshire	79.51	4%
South Lanarkshire	79.27	3.5%
Angus	76.60	4.1%
East Lothian	76.24	5%
Perth & Kinross	75.23	2.5%
Falkirk	74.35	2%
Stirling	73.99	2.9%
Moray	66.36	3.5%

RENT PROPOSALS

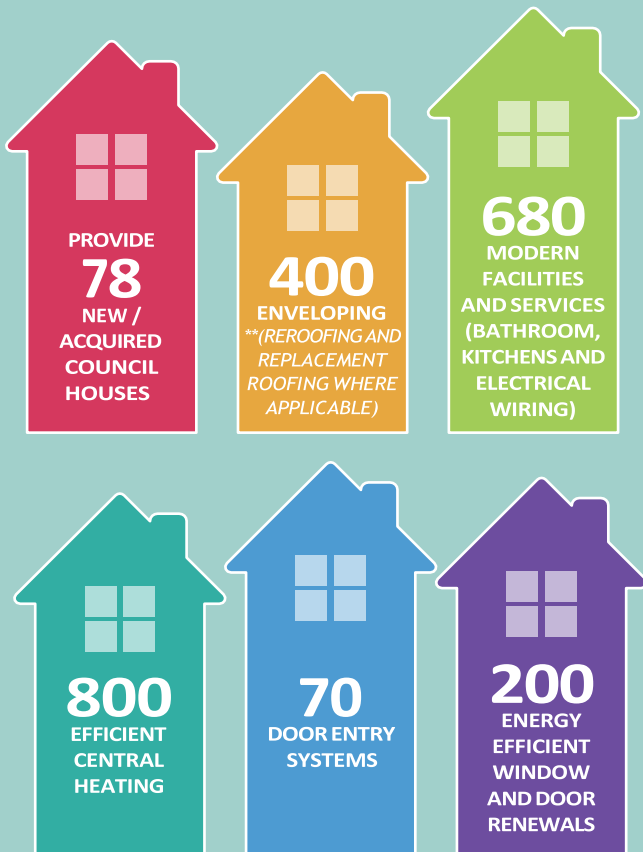
The options to be considered when inflationary factors have been included are:

Proposal 1 (2024/25)

A rent increase of 6.5%

An average increase of £5.18 per week

This would cover the costs of all the proposals outlined in the Housing Asset Management Framework, Housing Investment Programme and Strategic Housing Investment Plan. It should be noted that this option will not allow delivery of the developments at Mason Avenue and Castle Street, New Cumnock, despite being previously approved by Cabinet in 2022.



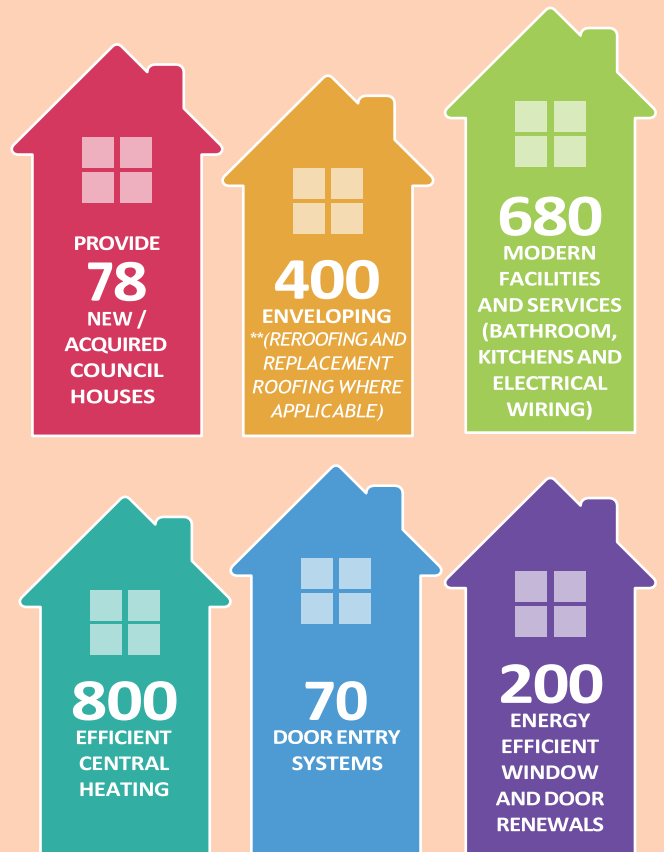
Proposal 2 (2024/25)

A rent increase of 7.5%

An average increase of £5.97 per week

This would cover the costs of all the proposals outlined in PROPOSAL 1, plus:

The additional rent income (£0.497m) would be utilised to revise the proposed SHIP paper and deliver the previously approved developments at New Cumnock subject to all statutory planning processes, which will include engagement with SEPA.



Budget headlines

To pay for the significant housing investment required, based on our plan to improve existing Council houses and provide more new homes, we must borrow money and make repayments over a number of years. Part of the money you pay goes towards servicing these loan charges so we can deliver the modernisation and new build programme. The Housing Capital Investment Programme sets out how much money the Council plans to spend on improving existing Council houses and providing new ones.

HAVE YOUR SAY

Our plans and how we spend the HRA budget will have an impact on your home and your community. We want to hear what you think. Please tick your preferred option.

Proposal 1 (2024/25) A rent increase of 6.5%

An average increase of £5.18 per week

This would cover the costs of all the proposals outlined in the Housing Asset Management Framework, Housing Investment Programme and Strategic Housing Investment Plan.

Proposal 2 (2024/25) A rent increase of 7.5%

An average increase of £5.97 per week

This would cover the costs of all the proposals outlined in PROPOSAL 1.

Plus the additional rent income (£0.497m) would be utilised to revise the proposed SHIP paper and deliver the previously approved developments at New Cumnock subject to all statutory planning processes, which will include engagement with SEPA.

Do you have any comments on the options?

2. Do you think that the rent you pay is good value for money?

Yes No

Comments

3. Are you happy with the level of consultation and information provided by Housing Service in relation to proposed rent increases?

Yes No

Comments

4. Which of the following would you would like the Council to spend future rent increases on?

Housing Improvement New Council Houses Environmental Improvements Other

If you chose other please tell us what

5. We offer opportunities to be involved through tenant participation and scrutiny.

If you want more information, please tick box and complete the contact details below.

6. Contact Details - complete to enter the prize draw

Name

Address

Email

Telephone

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Please return this form to the freepost address below:

FREEPOST RSEY-XHST-JHGL Customer Liaison Team, Civic Centre North, John Dickie Street, Kilmarnock, KA1 1HW

Data protection information: The personal information we have requested from you is in order for us to contact you. Your information will be used for this purpose only and processed and held securely in terms of Data Protection Legislation. For further information on our legal basis for processing your information and your rights in terms of Data Protection Legislation, please visit our privacy statement.