

For Decision

Agenda Item: 10
Date of Meeting: 22/01/2025

To: The Management Committee
From: The Director
Subject: Proposed Rent Increase 2025/26 – Outcome of Tenant Consultation

1. Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1 Committee considered the proposed rent increase at its meeting on 27th November. As part of this, Committee considered whether it was feasible and appropriate to offer tenants more than one rent increase option. Committee concluded that it was not feasible to do so and decided that the proposed rent increase to be put out for tenant consultation was 4%. Committee also approved the draft rent increase consultation document, subject to changes to reflect whether one or more rent increase options were to be offered and the level of any rent increase(s).
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to present Committee with the outcome of the tenant consultation, which ended on 13th January 2025. Committee is asked to consider the feedback received before making its final decision on this year's rent increase.

2. Outcome of Tenant Consultation

- 2.1 The consultation leaflet was issued via a link, text or emailed to the majority of our tenants, along with a link to the survey, with the remaining tenants (approximately 30%) receiving paper copies in December. Tenants were given a choice of ways of providing their feedback including:
 - completing the survey (online or paper copy);
 - emailing or phoning us;
 - the option of attending one of three drop-in sessions held on 10th and 17th December and 7th January.
- 2.2 In addition our Housing Services Manager attended 2 breakfast club sessions held at The Hall on Peat Road on 3rd and 17th December and the Housing Officer from the Income Team attended the breakfast session on 7th January. We carried out a phone round of tenants during

week beginning 6th January. Attempts were made to speak to approximately 100 tenants. Only tenants who pay full rent or partial rent (pay at least 50% of the rent) were included in the phone round.

Feedback Received

- 2.3 Microsoft Forms was used for the online survey (also able to produce a paper version for tenants) which proved reasonably successful, as 21 online responses were received within the first few hours the survey was shared. A total of 27 online responses have been received, with a further 8 paper surveys received.
- 2.4 No tenant took the opportunity to attend one of the three drop-in sessions held at our office in December and January.
- 2.5 Feedback was obtained from some tenants who were at the breakfast club sessions.
- 2.7 We received a total of 117 responses from the various methods used. The table below shows the number of responses by source of feedback.

Table 1 – Responses by source

Survey (online and paper responses)	Breakfast Club Sessions	Phone Survey	Total
35	4	78	117

- 2.8 From the total responses received the majority of tenants did not object to the increase as shown below:

Source of feedback	Accepted or understood need for increase	Unhappy or didn't understand why rent had to increase
Survey (online and paper)	24	11
Feedback from breakfast club sessions	4	0
Phone Survey	73	5

2.9 Below are examples of some of the comments received from the various consultation methods. However, a list of all the feedback received is attached at Appendix 1.

It's too much, if we can proceed this year without increase we should.
Don't agree with it feel the rent is high enough for what we get.
Everything is going up and it has to be done
I understand the need for the increase.
The rent increase is really reasonable and as always I back the Management Committee fully, and the tenants on the Committee, You guys do a great job as always, long may it continue.
Moderate compared with other landlords
I know everything must go up unfortunately
Rosehill's rents have always been reasonable and less expensive than other landlords. The rents need to be increased to meet business needs, thus ensuring that improvement/maintenance programmes can continue. Yes, there will be a financial impact on me, which means I will need to budget for this however, it is worth it.
I expected the rent to increase as it does every year. This years proposed increase is less than previous years which I am pleased about.
With the increased rent and council tax it will be a bit of a struggle. Wages aren't increasing by 4%.
Rosehill are good to their tenants.
I appreciate the services provided by Rosehill. They continue to look after their tenants as well as their properties therefore I'm happy to accept the 4% increase.
I accept the proposal. Rosehill provide a number of fantastic services to their tenants. Everything is increasing so why wouldn't the rent?
Increase not as much as previous years which I am happy about.
It will have very little impact on me at this time. I am more concerned about the increase in gas and electricity.
My rent is paid for me for I don't need to worry about increases
Rent increase doesn't affect me as I'm on benefits
Too high an increase. Already pay £415 per month. Only had a kitchen and back door replaced in 23 years. Windows need replaced. There is only one income in household so things would be a bit tighter.
I'm really struggling financially and can't even afford my weekly shopping.

2.10 Whilst the majority of tenants that responded understood the reasons for the proposed increase, some tenants continued to express concern about the rent increase due to how this will affect them financially. Out of the 78 tenants who took part in the phone consultation, 8 advised that they agreed with the proposed increase but had no specific comments to make.

2.11 As part of the survey (online and paper), I included the question “What do you think about the level of information we provide?” The responses were as follows:

Too Much	Too Little	Just Right	Total
2	4	29	35

2.12 The comments from the respondents who either answered too much or too little are below:

Too Much – linked with previous comment about their view on the rent increase which was “No point in giving view because the increase will go ahead despite what tenants think.”
Too Much - I know majority of time our rent increase is less than other local tenants but just with everything else going up will more people end up in rent arrears*
Too Little - We should be given more info on what our rent is to be used on. After all, in spring meeting we were told there was £1,000,000 in the bank
Too Little – too much reliance on internet for providing information
Too Little – no comments provided
Too Little - The document doesn’t really explain a lot. It’s mentioned proposed work but a lot of the time these never happen.

*The comment does not directly relate to the “too much” response about level of information we provide but rather relates to the tenant’s view on the proposed rent increase.

2.13 Out of the 35 survey responses received (online and paper) 17 respondents provided their names and contact details. Their names will be entered into the prize draw (a chance to win one of three £20 gift cards) along with those who provided feedback at the breakfast club sessions and those who took part in the phone survey.

2.14 Anyone who provided negative feedback about our services, repairs and maintenance of their homes, etc and provided their names will be contacted by relevant staff to discuss further.

3. Risk

3.1 We have considered the approach to the rent increase proposal and the tenant consultation and have considered the main risks under the following main categories:

Risk Category	Mitigating Measure
Financial: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting rents too low could result in Rosehill not having 	We prepare financial projections that show the impact of the proposed rent increase in the short, medium and long term which take

<p>the funds available to maintain its properties in future years, meet its business needs and deliver its business plan objectives;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rents become unaffordable, resulting in an increase in rent arrears. 	<p>account of our costs and commitments and our current and future plans e.g. our planned maintenance programme, provision for net zero measures.</p> <p>Committee strive to strike the balance between affordability of rents and ensuring we are meeting our business needs.</p> <p>Affordability of our rents are assessed which resulted in all of our rents being deemed affordable i.e. account for less than 25% of the moderate income.</p> <p>Our average weekly rents across all apartment sizes are lower than other neighbouring landlords and are amongst the lowest in Scotland.</p>
<p>Technology and Knowledge Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited consultation methods offered, resulting in low response rate. 	<p>We offer a range of methods:</p> <p>Online survey (and paper copies for those who prefer that method); Phoning or emailing us; Face-to-face – via drop-in sessions at our office and our attendance at breakfast club sessions in local hall. Phone Survey (target approximately 10% of our tenants (who pay full or partial rent, at least 50%))</p> <p>Offered an incentive of a prize draw to encourage participation in consultation process.</p>
<p>Reputation/Relationship Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant dissatisfaction over rent increase 	<p>Offer a range of ways to provide feedback;</p> <p>In survey (online and paper) we asked whether the level of information was too much, too little or just right. The majority of respondents replied it was “just right”.</p> <p>Outcome of consultation was majority of tenants didn’t object to increase. Committee take into account all feedback received.</p>

4. Delivery of our Strategic Objectives

Area	Related Strategic Objective(s)
Consulting tenants on proposed rent increase	2) Engage effectively with our tenants and service users 7) Achieve the highest standards in all that we do

5. Application of our Core Values

Area	Related Core Value(s)
Consulting tenants on proposed rent increase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged and Responsive • Accountable and Compliant • Fair and Approachable

6. Compliance and Assurance

- 6.1 We are required to consult with our tenants over any proposals to change the rent and have regard to their views before making any decisions to increase the rent, in accordance with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.
- 6.2 The approach we have taken in terms of the basis for our rent increase proposal and consulting with our tenants has been done in accordance with the following:

Compliance Source	Details
Scottish Social Housing Charter (Nov 2022)	<p>1. Equalities (outcome)</p> <p>Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they support the right to adequate housing; ▪ Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services. <p>2. Communication (outcome)</p> <p>Social landlords manage their businesses so that:</p>

- Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.

3. Participation (outcome)

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

- Tenants and other customers are offered a range of opportunities that make it easy for them to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

13. Value for Money

Social landlords manage all aspects of their businesses so that:

- Tenants', owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.

14/15 Rents and Service Charges

Social landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and other customers so that:

- a balance is struck between the level of services provided, the cost of the services, and how far current and prospective tenants and service users can afford them
- tenants' get clear information on how rent and other money is spent, including details of any individual items of expenditure above thresholds agreed between landlords and tenants.

<p>Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management</p>	<p>Standard 2 - The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.</p> <p>Guidance 2.4- The RSL seeks out the needs, priorities, views and aspirations of tenants, service users and stakeholders. The governing body listens to its tenants and service users and takes account of this information in its strategies, plans and decisions.</p> <p>Standard 3 - The RSL manages its resources to ensure its financial well-being, while maintaining rents at a level that tenants can afford to pay.</p> <p>Guidance 3.4 - The governing body ensures financial forecasts are based on appropriate and reasonable assumptions and information, including information about what tenants can afford to pay and feedback from consultation with tenants on rent increases.</p>
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6.3 Evidence Bank

Evidence	Assurance Exercise Location
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report for 22/01/25 meeting and consultation pack issued to tenants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Scottish Social Housing Standard: 1 – Equalities, 2 – Communication, 3 – Participation, 13 – Value for Money, 14/15 – Rents and Service Charges Regulatory Standard 2 – Guidance 2.4 Regulatory Standard 3 – Guidance 3.4

6.3.1 Committee is reminded that our Assurance Exercises are available in the Committee Log-in Area of our website, which Committee can access at any time.

7. Summary and Decision Sought

- 7.1 At its meeting on 27th November, Committee approved a rent increase proposal of 4% for tenant consultation, which began in early December.
- 7.2 The consultation leaflet was distributed to all tenants in December via text/email links or post, along with a survey. The consultation ran until 13th January 2025 by the end of which we had received feedback from 117 tenants: 35 through the survey (online and paper); 4 via the breakfast club sessions, and 78 through the phone consultation we carried out in January. No tenants took the opportunity to attend the drop-in events arranged for December and January. Of the 117 responses received, 86% (101) did not object to the proposed rent increase.
- 7.3 Risk has been considered at Section 3.
- 7.4 Section 4 shows how the matter of consulting our tenants over the proposed rent increase links to the delivery of our strategic objectives.
- 7.5 Section 5 shows how the matter of consulting our tenants over the proposed rent increase links to the application of our core values.
- 7.6 Committee is asked to consider this report and the feedback from our tenants (contained in the report and the attached appendix) and then make its final decision on the proposed rent increase of 4%.

Appendix 1

Feedback by Survey (online and paper) (29 comments)
Has to increase as everything is going up
Everything is going up. Nothing we can do about it
The rent increase is really reasonable and as always I back the Management Committee fully, and the tenants on the Committee, You guys do a great job as always, long may it continue.
Moderate compared with other landlords
Understandable
Because there is indoor repairs needing done. There is ???? With new tenants, bossing and making demand, on previous tenants, especially in 4/blk. I believe it is too high because working tenants (with exception of u.credit and social payments) are not made of money
Not sure why there is a price increase but I am used to a price increase on everything now a days.
I think more than £400 for a two bedroom is more than enough. I don't think it should happen.
A bit high 3% would be better
It's expensive enough but can't argue with service you provide
Everything is going up and it has to be done
No point in giving view because the increase will go ahead despite what tenants think
I understand you want to constantly upgrade, however in this current climate , adding more misery to already stretched clients should be avoided if possible. It's too much, if we can proceed this year without increase we should.
Feel the rent is high enough especially with the cost of living being so high, I'm sure you could miss an increase for one year as people are struggling, when repairs are done nobody comes out to check resulting in shoddy workmanship causing them to return to fix repair, so this is adding to costs, you should have a Clark of works checking on all work done to keep costs down. Don't agree with it feel the rent is high enough for what we get.
I appreciate that to assist in maintaining my property, and with prices in many sectors rising, rent must increase.

Just worrying with everything else going up If we will be able to afford it
I understand the need for the increase. I think it's a lot to increase by. As you have mentioned everyone is struggling at the moment, but the work being done to the houses isn't happening fast enough or at all. So we are paying increased rent but for what? A lot of the properties need fixed up, inside & out. They are slowly getting worse as time passes.
i work full time pay full rent and council tax i have never over the last 5 years had a 4% pay rise so i no things are bad but i think 4% is a bit much with the cost of living and all other bills i would probably be better not weorking
Realise everything is more expensive and all bills go up .
I think 4% is a fair increase with the cost of goods materials workmen etc everything has gone up in price m and I'm sure at Rosehill sending out contractors to carry out work this cost has spiralled
I know everything must go up unfortunately
Acceptable amount
Unfair, and it's not as though we see anything for the extra mobeu
Sad. As the cost of living already makes things difficult.
I feel like it takes a while to get through to rosehill to fix any issues. I feel like all rent for each house should be reviewed. After speaking to neighbours our rent is round about the same price when they have bigger houses/garden access that I don't have.
Has to be done to keep Rosehill functioning and providing the high class service we expect.
I think it is a big inflammation on the current rent especially for families that are struggling already.
Too much
I understand costs are rising across the board, including for Rosehill and an increase is necessary to continue delivering services.
Feedback through Breakfast Club mornings (4 comments)
My rent is paid for me for I don't need to worry about increases
Rent increase doesn't affect me as I'm on benefits
My rent is covered by UC
I get full housing benefit so don't pay rent

Feedback from phone consultation (70 comments, 8 did not provide any comments but agreed to proposed rent increase)

I agree with the 4% increase but If I had it my it wouldn't be going up at all but what can you do. The general condition of the streets around the house is getting worse and people don't seem to care about the area.

Everything is going up so I will have to tighten the purse strings.

Unsure how the increase will affect me as I don't know what's in front of me.

Rosehill's rents have always been reasonable and less expensive than other landlords. The rents need to be increased to meet business needs, thus ensuring that improvement/maintenance programmes can continue. Yes, there will be a financial impact on me, which means I will need to budget for this however, it is worth it.

Financially the increase will make things a bit tighter.

I am now retired and living off pension and savings this is another increase in the household bills.

I expected the rent to increase as it does every year. This years proposed increase is less than previous years which I am pleased about.

I'm not too happy with it but realise that it will go up no matter what I think therefore I agree with the proposed increase.

I am working also getting some UC, so it will have impact on me with more money going out of my wages, but I do agree with the proposed increase.

I pay full rent and not on benefits so it will have impact on me.

I am working and was expecting the increase.

Wont impact my financial position.

Working said not a lot they can do about the increase.

I am working but on the sick just now and husband is working. With the reduction in wages the rent increase will have impact

I am Self-employed so the increase will have slight impact nothing major.

I agree with the increase – it's still lot cheaper than most associations.

The increase will have no impact on me.

I reluctantly agree with the proposed 4% increase. All other bills etc are increasing however, income not increasing at the same rate. This will impact negatively on my financial position.

With the increased rent and council tax it will be a bit of a struggle. Wages aren't increasing by 4%.

Good value.

Everything is increasing. At present a 4% increase will not have any negative impact on me financially.

Rosehill are good to their tenants.

Won't have a huge impact on me.

The increase won't have any impact on me.

I pay by direct debit because I am working full time. The increase won't have any impact on me.

I appreciate the services provided by Rosehill. They continue to look after their tenants as well as their properties therefore I'm happy to accept the 4% increase.
Obviously, I would prefer that the rents don't increase however, I understand why they do.
Rosehill need to run an effective business whilst also meeting the needs of tenants.
Need to remember to budget for the increase.
The increase won't impact me much this year however, I worry about increase levels in future years and whether I will be able to continue to afford to pay my rent.
I accept the proposal. Rosehill provide a number of fantastic services to their tenants. Everything is increasing so why wouldn't the rent?
I don't expect it to have any significant impact on me financially.
I reluctantly agree with the increase however I think it is scandalous the rents continue to go up every year: I would like to see a year where there is no increase.
Would rather there was no increase but would agree with 4% increase.
Will need to alter budget to pay the increase.
Increase not as much as previous years which I am happy about.
It just needs to be paid, but its not as much as the last two years.
I know you have to increase it and I recognise its less than the last two years
Not a lot I can do about the increase.
I would like more money to be spent on older stock.
Cost of everything has gone up.
It will have very little impact on me at this time. I am more concerned about the increase in gas and electricity.
Too high an increase. Already pay £415 per month. Only had a kitchen and back door replaced in 23 years. Windows need replaced. There is only one income in household so things would be a bit tighter.
I receive some help via UC so hopefully the increase won't affect me too much.
Everything going up and just have to tighten up.
I know a lot of people through work who are renting from other landlords and they rent they pay is a lot higher, so I see the value compared to them and what they're getting.
I think 4% is fair and I think it's been higher in previous years. We pay a bit extra towards out rent every month anyway so it wouldn't make much difference.
It's just one of those things. There's not much else we can do.
Happy with increase as rents are still low compared to some other Landlords.
No one really likes a rent increase so if I were to decide it would be lower but I'm definitely glad it's not any higher.
It isn't much in the grand scheme of things – 4% isn't much what's an extra 12 pound or so. I'm really happy with my new doors and windows they're

great. What a difference to my heating, they look really nice too all the houses in the street. So I'm quite happy it's a great wee house.
No impact directly and bills are spilt.
Happy that its not higher than previous year.
Fair amount compared to other increased costs.
Reasonable increase.
I'll have less disposable income.
I do think the increase is a bit much as I'm only working part time, but I do accept the proposed increase.
I'm really struggling financially and can't even afford my weekly shopping.
Think this is a fair amount due to raising costs.
Can afford however with everything increasing, this is causing pressure.
I work full time, it won't affect me financially.
Right now the increase will have no financial impact however in a couple years this could be a big impact.
No issues with the increase.
Reasonable at the moment.
Too much as working part time. Will have less money to spend.
Think this is a fair amount.
It's a bit much due to being on the high increase last year. Even worse off now.
We will manage.
Rent is a priority, so it must be paid.
I'm not working now so it makes things more difficult financially. Have to start using my savings.