



**Every year East Lothian Council consults with tenants, tenants and residents groups, and East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel (ELTRP) on our proposals to increase rents.**

The council's existing budget plans are built around a five per cent increase over the next few years. However, taking into account the impact of the Coronavirus on household incomes, the council is proposing to limit next year's rent increase to 2% only.

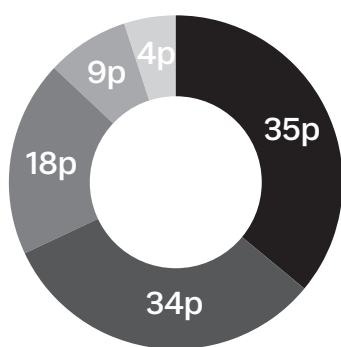
This is based on an estimate of what it will take to maintain existing services, continue with our investment in the development of new council homes, and maintain and improve our existing housing stock.

## How rent is spent

The money you pay in rent goes towards the cost of providing you with the services you receive as a council tenant. The main items of expenditure are loan charges, repairs and maintenance, operating costs and employee costs.

### How each £1 of rent money is spent and what these costs cover:

*(based on the 2019-20 average weekly rent of £68.91)*



- Voids and Bad Debts** 4p  
 Money that can't be recovered such as rent loss due to houses being vacant or chasing debt that is uneconomical to recover.
  
- Employee costs** 9p  
 Salaries and associated costs of those delivering landlord services to tenants.
  
- Operating costs** 18p  
 Information Technology systems and equipment, accommodation costs, tenant participation, and running costs of the service.
  
- Repairs and maintenance** 34p  
 All costs associated with maintaining and improving our properties.
  
- Loan Charges** 35p  
 These are payments the council makes to the Public Works Loan Board for the finance it has borrowed to deliver its capital investment plans, mainly for the modernising of existing stock and the delivery of new council houses.

## Have Your Say

We value your views. This consultation is an important opportunity for you to have a say on our proposals and plans for continued improvements in 2021–22 and we would urge you to take part.

Please spare a few minutes to complete and return the following questionnaire in the prepaid envelope provided by Friday 12th February 2021.

The questionnaire is also available online at [www.eastlothianconsultations.co.uk](http://www.eastlothianconsultations.co.uk)

## Comparing Rent Levels

Rent levels in East Lothian are low compared to other local councils. The average **weekly** rents for 2019–20, from highest to lowest, of Scottish local authorities were:

<b>Landlord</b>	<b>£</b>
City of Edinburgh Council	101.23
Aberdeenshire Council	82.34
West Dunbartonshire Council	79.93
Shetland Islands Council	79.88
East Renfrewshire Council	79.62
Renfrewshire Council	79.60
Orkney Islands Council	79.56
Aberdeen City Council	78.71
Dundee City Council	78.14
Highland Council	77.53
East Dunbartonshire Council	76.52
Midlothian Council	76.06
Fife Council	75.58
South Ayrshire Council	75.55
West Lothian Council	74.80
Clackmannanshire Council	74.03
East Ayrshire Council	73.17
North Ayrshire Council	72.23
Angus Council	70.38
South Lanarkshire Council	70.26
Falkirk Council	69.25
<b>East Lothian Council</b>	<b>68.91</b>
Perth & Kinross Council	68.72
North Lanarkshire Council	67.69
Stirling Council	67.69
Moray Council	60.01
<b>Scottish Average</b>	<b>75.44</b>

# Housing Revenue Account

The Scottish Government provides guidance on what we can spend Housing Revenue Account (HRA) money on. There is legislation in place to make sure that money from rent is used to provide services that will benefit tenants.

To pay for the significant investment required to improve existing homes and provide more new council homes, we must also borrow money and make repayments over a number of years. Part of the money you pay in rent goes towards servicing these loan charges so that we can deliver the modernisation and new build programmes.

The **Housing Capital Improvement Programme** sets out how much money the council plans to spend on improving existing council homes and providing new ones.

Our spending commitment for 2020–21 is shown below:

<b>Housing Capital Investment Programme</b>	<b>£s</b>
Modernisation (existing stock and includes extensions)	15,641,841
New Council Housing	16,403,000
Fees	1,514,000
Mortgage to Rent*	280,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,838,841</b>

*\*The mortgage to rent scheme is run by the Scottish Government.*

*The scheme aims to help people, whose homes are at risk of being repossessed, to stay in their homes.*

Further information on what the HRA is spent on is available in our Landlord Report to Tenants. Copies available on request – see below.

## Additional Information

If you would like more information or would like to talk to someone about the rent proposals, please get in touch with the Service Development Team before Friday 12th February 2021:

- Freephone **0800 413721**
- Email **tenantconsultation@eastlothian.gov.uk**
- Write to Community Housing, East Lothian Council  
Penston House, Macmerry Industrial Estate, Macmerry, EH33 1EX

At the end of this consultation we will use the results to prepare a report for a special budget meeting of the council in February 2021. At this meeting councillors will decide the level of rent and service charge change for council tenants in the year 2021–22. We will then write to tell you what your rent and service charge will be. You should receive a letter at least four weeks before Monday 5th April 2021 which is the date that your payment will be adjusted, subject to the decision at the council's budget meeting.

# Rent Level Consultation

Q.1 Are you happy with the level of consultation and information you get about the annual rent increase?

Yes  No

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

Yes  No

Q.3 Do you think the proposal to increase rents by 2% is fair?

Yes  No

Q.4 Do you agree with the council's commitment to its new build and modernisation programmes?

Yes  No

Q.5 Has your financial situation been made worse by Covid-19?

Yes  No

If yes, please tell us why:

Furloughed during the pandemic

Working reduced hours

Self-employed – unable to trade

Made redundant

Have had to claim state benefits

*(for example universal credit, council tax reduction)*

Other

If you have any further comments you would like to make please tell us about them here:

# Equalities monitoring

Please complete the following questions which will help us to make sure we are capturing the views of a wide range of tenants and to help ensure we are meeting the housing needs of our tenants.

All responses are completely confidential.

**Are you:** Male  Female  Other

**Are you:**

16-24  25-34  35-44  45-54  55-64  65-74  75+

**Do you have a health condition or disability which impacts on your day-to-day life?**

Visual impairment  Hearing impairment  Difficulties with mobility   
Mental health condition  Other

**What is your ethnic origin?** White

Mixed or multiple ethnic group

Asian, Asian Scottish, Asian British

African, Caribbean or Black

Other ethnic group

**What area do you live in?**

Dunbar

North Berwick

Haddington

Prestonpans

Musselburgh

Tranent

**Are you currently:**

In work: Part-time  Full-time  Retired  Studying  Currently out of work

**Does your household currently receive benefit to help with your housing costs?** Yes  No   
(e.g. Housing Benefit or Universal Credit)

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.  
Please return it in the prepaid envelope provided to:**

East Lothian Council, Service Development Team, Penston House, Macmerry EH33 1EX



Versions of this leaflet can be supplied in Braille, large print, audiotape or in your own language. Please phone Customer Services if you require assistance on 01620 827199