

FEEDBACK FROM LOCAL HOUSING FORUM MEETINGS

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1. Local Housing Forum – Voting Summary

Forum	Voting	Rent	Tenant Service Charges	Sheltered Service Charges	Garage Charges	District Heating Charges
North West LHF	For	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Against	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Abstention	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Central West LHF	For	0	0	0	0	0
	Against	4	4	4	6	3
	Abstention	1	1	1	1	2
Central East LHF	For	Noted	Noted	Noted	Noted	Noted
	Against	Noted	Noted	Noted	Noted	Noted
	Abstention	Noted	Noted	Noted	Noted	Noted
North East LHF	For	7	6	7	7	1
	Against	5	6	1	3	2
	Abstention	0	0	3	0	9
South LHF	For	0	0	0	0	0
	Against	5	5	5	5	5
	Abstention	0	0	0	0	0

2. Local Housing Forum - Region: North West

Date: Monday 11 December 2023

Venue: Room G01A, 160 Tooley Street, SE1 2QH.

Residents: 2 (including the Chair)

Only two residents were in attendance for the forum. It was decided that the meeting would be declared closed if no other residents arrived after 30 minutes. The meeting was declared closed at 7pm. Before the meeting was closed the Chair stated that on behalf of the Forum they opposed the 7.7% rent increase.

2. (cont.) Local Housing Forum - Region: Central West

Date: Thursday 14 December 2023

Venue: Jack Hobbs Club, Maddock Way, SE17 3NH.

Residents: 5 (including the Chair)

Rent Setting

The Housing Revenue Account Rent and Charges Report 2024-25 was presented and handouts were provided to residents. Residents were advised on which areas tenants could vote on and which areas leaseholders could vote on.

Comments

- It was highlighted that with 5 residents (3 being tenants) it would not be an accurate representation of the wider estates.
- The consultation for the HRA rent setting needs to be better communicated to wider residents.
- Multiple residents said the increase would greatly impact residents who already struggled with the cost of living.

Voting

Recommendations	For	Against	Abstention
Rent	0	4	1
Tenant service charges	0	4	1
Sheltered service charges	0	4	1
Garage charges	0	6	1
District Heating charges	0	3	2

2. (cont.) Local Housing Forum - Region: Central East

Date: Monday 18 December 2023

Venue: Dene Community Centre, 95b Meeting House Lane, SE15 2TU.

Residents: 6 (including the Chair)

Rent Setting

The Housing Revenue Account Rent and Charges Report 2024-25 was presented and handouts were provided to residents. Residents were advised on which areas tenants could vote on and which areas leaseholders could vote on.

Comments

- It was highlighted by multiple residents that the service charge is going up but the actual service is going down. An example was given of the reduced cleaning service that residents are still continuing to pay, for poor service.
- It was stated that 6 residents would not be an accurate representation of the wider estate and should not be considered as a consultation.
- Residents highlighted the increase would greatly impact residents who already struggled with cost of living.
- The consultation for HRA rent setting needs to be better communicated to wider residents.
- The way the consultation was carried out this year - residents are dissatisfied with the process and there was a low turnout because they were not properly consulted.
- The consultation should be formally done next year even if there is no statutory requirement to do so.
- No vote was taken, but the Chair proposed that the recommendations be noted, but were against the 7.7% rent increase.

No vote taken – Recommendations Noted

Recommendations	For	Against	Abstention
Rent	Noted	Noted	Noted
Tenant service charges	Noted	Noted	Noted
Sheltered service charges	Noted	Noted	Noted
Garage charges	Noted	Noted	Noted
District Heating charges	Noted	Noted	Noted

2. (cont.) Local Housing Forum - Region: North East

Date: Tuesday 9 January 2024

Venue: Canada Estate TRA Hall, Moodkee Street, Rotherhithe, SE16 7BG.

Residents: 12 (including the Chair)

Rent Setting

The Housing Revenue Account Rent and Charges Report 2024-25 was presented and handouts were provided to residents. Residents were advised on which areas tenants could vote on and which areas leaseholders could vote on.

Comments

- It was highlighted by multiple residents that the service charge is going up but the actual service is going down. An example was given of residents receiving reduced cleaning service but still continuing to pay current charges for poor service.
- Residents highlighted the increase would greatly impact the residents who already struggled with cost of living.
- It was highlighted by one resident that the rent increase should not apply proportionately to properties where they haven't had any investment.

Voting

Recommendations	For	Against	Abstention
Rent	7	5	0
Tenant service charges	6	6	0
Sheltered service charges	7	1	3
Garage charges	7	3	0
District Heating charges	1	2	9

2. (cont.) Local Housing Forum - Region: South

Date: Wednesday 10 January 2024

Venue: Kingswood Community Centre, Kingswood House, Seeley Drive, SE21 8QN.

Residents: 5 (including the Chair)

Rent Setting

The Housing Revenue Account Rent and Charges Report 2024-25 was presented and handouts were provided to residents. Residents were advised on which areas tenants could vote on and which areas leaseholders could vote on.

Comments

- It was highlighted by multiple residents that the service charge is going up but the actual service is going down.
- Similar statements were made around the deterioration of service and residents covering the cost for services they do not receive.
- It was noted by residents that the biggest price increase was from estate cleaning. An example was given of residents receiving reduced cleaning services but still continuing to pay current charges for a poor service.
- Residents highlighted the increase would greatly impact the residents who are already struggling with cost of living:
 - All prices are going up and they are going up at the same time
 - The financial and emotional pain will be really felt by residents
- Resident highlighted that the impact from the increases would have a knock on effect in various areas, i.e. mental health of residents, increase in crime in neighbourhoods and anti-social behaviour.
- Residents stated the Cabinet should also look into reducing cost to see what can be done to help residents.
- The Cabinet should look at a reasonable reduction and instead of charging 7.7%, to charge 6.5%.
- The previous year the rent was capped at 7%.
- Residents are against all proposals.

Voting

Recommendations	For	Against	Abstention
Rents	0	5	0
Tenant service charges	0	5	0
Sheltered service charges	0	5	0
Garage charges	0	5	0
District Heating charges	0	5	0

3. SGTO Generic Email Opposing the Rent and Service Charge Increases

Representations made from the following T&RA's and individual residents:

- Brandon Estate
- Brunswick Park
- Cossall Walk
- Fountain Green Square
- Neckinger Estate
- Howbury Road
- Astbury Road
- Jarman House
- Brydale House
- John Kennedy House
- Canute Gardens
- Goshen Estate

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Dear Southwark Council's Cabinet,

Subject: Our TRA's opposition to the proposed increase in rents and service charges from 1st April 2024.

We at _____ TRA are aware that you are due to make a decision on whether to increase the rent and service charges by 7.7% on Wednesday 17th September. We urge you to keep the interests of Southwark's tenants and residents at heart and vote against this proposition.

This rent and charge increase would add even more financial pressure onto the residents, who are already struggling with stagnating wages, inflation, and the cost-of-living crisis. Meanwhile, fuel and energy corporations are walking away with record profits. In spite of Southwark Council's 'historically low rents' and caps it is using to justify this increase, poverty rates are still highest for those in social rented housing (49%). 37% of the people that use foodbanks are social housing tenants.

Transferring this additional financial burden onto the residents of Southwark, without adequately exploring alternative funding sources, will do little in the way of improving these living conditions and be fundamentally at odds with the Council's commitment to providing homes that are affordable to a people on a range of incomes, as in your 'Housing Strategy to 2043' document (page 6).

The repairs and maintenance services on our estate has not been suitable enough to justify the price of the service as they currently stand, let alone to justify an increase. We stand in solidarity with Tabard Gardens Estate, who have not seen any major works for the last 9 years, despite the Council's promise to complete major works at least once every 5 years. Furthermore, we have continued reports from our residents on our estate that their personal repairs are being left incomplete and unactioned. How can an increase in charges be justified when the service we are already receiving is not suitable for requirements, especially during a cost-of-living crisis?

Tenants and residents want to feel that these increases offer value for money, and for a long time we have not felt this way. We therefore object to these rent and service charge increases for the above reasons. We hope our views will be reflected by the Cabinet who decide to vote on this plan.

Yours Sincerely,

Tenants & Residents Association