



## Housing Services

### Consultation Recording Sheet

Housing Service ...Housing Development & Homelessness

Person responsible: Janice Rainey and Jane Mack

Consultation Start date: 14/11/18 End Date 22/1/19

1.	The name of consultation / participation exercise?	Rent setting consultation 2019/20
2.	Its aims and objectives?	Discuss and get agreement from tenants on HRA Budget estimates and vote on subsequent rent increase options for 2019/20.
3.	Who did you invite/include? (e.g. all tenants, tenant from the interested tenants register, RTOs, staff)	<p>Public meeting arranged for 27/11/18 and advertised through the WDC website.</p> <p>Specific invites were also sent to,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TRA members</li> <li>• Register of Interested tenants</li> <li>• Scrutiny Panel members</li> <li>• Sheltered Housing Forum</li> </ul> <p>Aim of public meeting was to agree options for wider consultation. All tenants then had the opportunity to vote through freepost voting cards included with the Winter Housing News which is delivered to all WDC tenants. Voting could also be done via online survey.</p>
4.	What methods did you use to promote/invite stakeholders to get involved? (e.g. letters, posters, website)	<p>The consultation process included a public meeting( 27/11) and a public survey. Specific invites to all members of the above groups inviting them to the public meeting were sent. The Council's website and social media was also used to advertise the public meeting.</p> <p>The winter edition of the Housing News was used to advise tenants of the outcome of discussions with the Joint Rent Group and the rent increase options they could vote on – the edition included a front page article, an A3 insert which outlined details of the rent increase options and a freepost voting card.</p> <p>The survey was also promoted through The Council's webpages and social media as well as on our Tenant</p>

	<p>Participation Facebook account.</p> <p>The survey could be completed online or by returning the postage pre-paid voting card .</p> <p>Housing officers and One Stop Shop staff were also utilised to promote the survey and encourage the tenants they engaged with to use their vote.</p> <p>Reminders about the survey were also emailed to staff in January 2019 and supply of voting cards provided to both housing offices and One Stop Shops.</p>
5.	<p>Who actually took part? (Number of individuals and or number of tenant organisations represented)</p> <p>16 tenants attended the public meeting on 27/11/18 which included representatives from 4 TRA's as well as 6 individual tenants.</p> <p>257 tenants voted for their preferred option in the survey – 171 using the pre-paid voting card and 76 online votes.</p>
6.	<p>What method(s) did you use to obtain their views? (e.g. focus/working group, newsletter, survey) Why did you choose this method(s)?</p> <p>A presentation was given at the public meeting which outlined performance of Housing Services and a breakdown of proposed spending for 2019/20. The HRA estimates were presented using the good practice model developed by the Scottish Housing Network and our own Joint Rent Group.</p> <p>A survey was developed to collect views on the 3 proposed options that the Council's Business Plan could afford and from the discussion at the public meeting.</p> <p>These methods were chosen to gather the views of as many tenants as possible in a clear and most accessible way as possible. The survey also ensured that tenant's views are taken into account as part of the Council committee decision -making process.</p> <p>The information provided was presented in as clear and understandable way as possible and made available online for any tenant to refer to.</p> <p>Using staff to promote the survey also allowed for dialogue with tenants about wider issues or to explain more the options being considered.</p>
7.	<p>What good practice or minimum standards can you evidence as part of your consultation?</p> <p>An 8 week consultation period was used to collect views.</p> <p>Paper voting cards were made available to all tenants through the Housing News as well as the on line option.</p> <p>The Public meeting was arranged for 6pm to</p>

	<p>accommodate as many people as possible. Meeting room had loop system and in an accessible building. Transport was also arranged for any tenant that required it to assist them getting to the meeting and this was all emphasized in the invite.</p> <p>All financial information (meeting notes and HRA budget estimates) were made as clear and understandable as possible as well as being available on-line for public scrutiny.</p>
8.	<p>What was the outcome of the consultation?</p> <p>The tenant views expressed at the public meeting were used to finalise the rent options that all tenant could vote on. The survey results were put forward as the proposed rent increase going for Council approval.</p>
9.	<p>How did you feedback to participants the outcome?</p> <p>Survey report to be sent to all respondents, results made available on Council webpages and in the Spring Housing News.</p> <p>All rent increases must be notified to tenants in writing with 28 days notice so all tenants will be advised of the rent increase and how much the increase means for their own weekly and annual rent charge.</p>
10.	<p>How did tenant involvement influence your consultation?</p> <p>We have continued to increase tenants understanding and opportunity to scrutinise the the HRA through our Joint Rent Group which includes tenant volunteer members. Our Joint Rent Group also reviewed the financial information being presented to try to make it as clear and understandable as possible.</p> <p>The West Dunbartonshire Tenants &amp; Residents Organistaion also used their regular column in the Housing News to encourage tenants to use their voice and vote for their preferred option.</p>
11.	<p>Are you able to demonstrate this? YES</p>
12.	<p>How have you demonstrated to tenants that involvement made a difference?</p> <p>The preferred option for a 2% rent increase from the public survey is being put forward as the rent proposal to be considered by Councillors.</p>
13.	<p>Did you check with</p> <p>The WDTRO and tenant volunteers on the Joint Rent</p>

<p>participants that they were happy with the opportunities given to make their views known and that they felt that we listened and acted upon them?</p>	<p>Group have stated that they were happy with the continuing improvements being made to the rent setting process. Tenant understanding of the HRA has continued to increase through the Joint Rent Group and the discussion at the public meeting was very informed and constructive.</p>
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**What worked well, what didn't work well – or any other comments you have.**

**Comments:** We had a small increase in the number of attendees at the public meeting – last year 14, this year 16 and more individual tenants attended. The survey responses decreased from 303 responses last year to 257 this year which was disappointing as it had been hoped that voting numbers would increase year on year as tenants see that they can influence the outcome.

The continuing work of the Joint Rent Group has increased transparency and discussion around how the HRA is spent but response rate indicates that more needs to be done to inform a wider audience of tenants.

The timing of the rent setting process also needs to be prioritised earlier in the year so that tenant discussions start earlier . The Housing News is a valuable vehicle to reach all tenants but the timing of the winter edition was a week later than last year which meant most tenants received their copy on 21/22 of December which is too near Christmas for many people to engage or respond. Facebook reminders about the survey got far greater reaches later in January than for the survey launch so the timing does have a critical effect.