

# RENT LEVEL CONSULTATION 2019–20 QUESTIONNAIRE

have your say



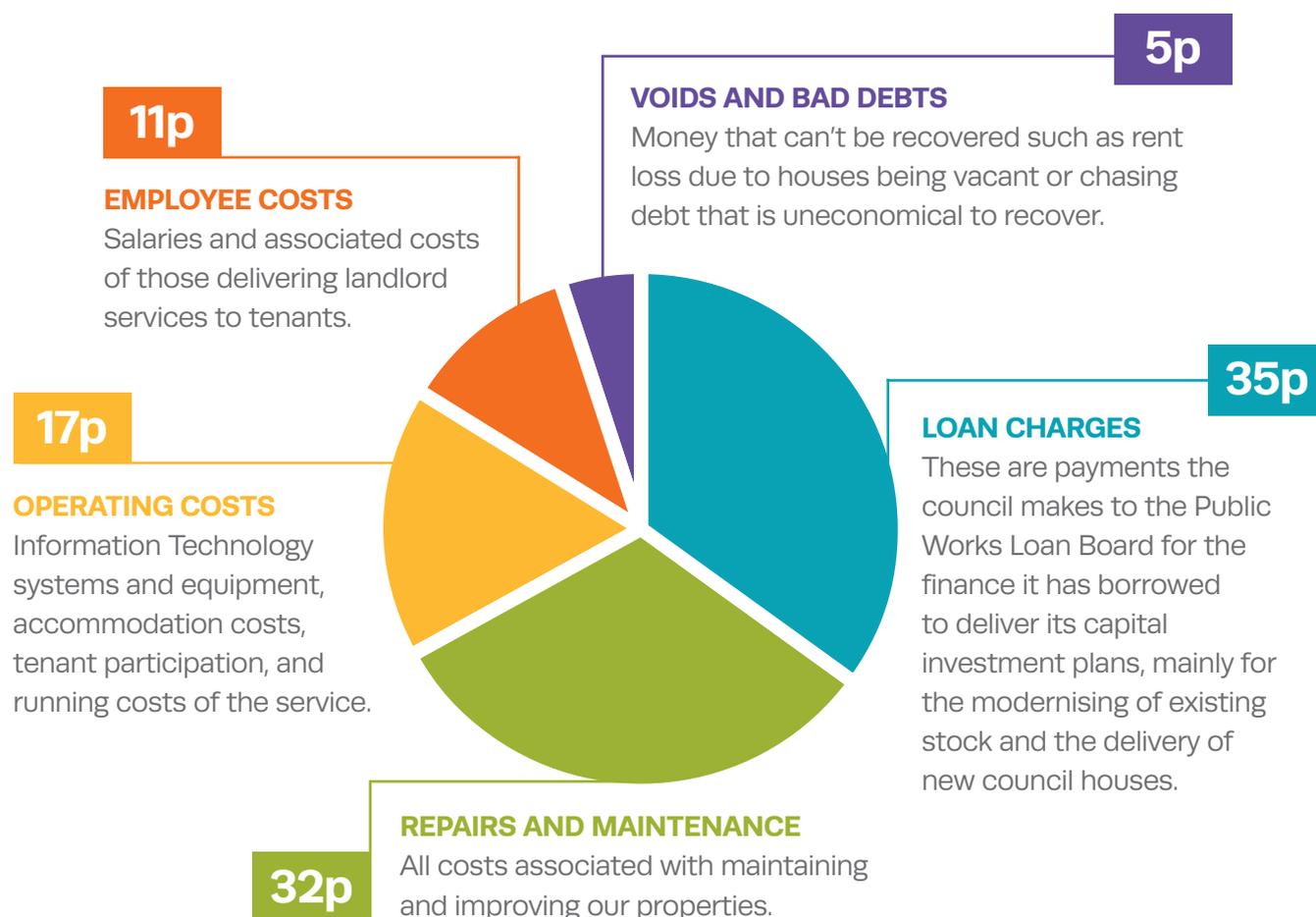
Every year East Lothian Council consults with tenants, tenants' and residents' groups, and East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel (ELTRP) on our proposals to increase rents. The council is considering a rent increase of **5%**, this is our best estimate of what it will take to maintain existing services, 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.

The chart below shows how each £1 of rent money is spent and the table explains what these costs cover (based on the 2017–18 average weekly rent of £62.47).

## HOW EACH £1 OF RENT MONEY IS SPENT



## AVERAGE WEEKLY RENT (£s) 2017-18

You may be aware that the rent levels in East Lothian are very low compared to other local councils. The table below shows how our average weekly rent compares with other local authorities in Scotland.

City of Edinburgh Council	99.10
West Dunbartonshire Council	76.82
Shetland Islands Council	76.43
Aberdeenshire Council	75.91
Renfrewshire Council	75.58
Orkney Islands Council	75.55
Highland Council	75.20
Aberdeen City Council	73.67
Dundee City Council	73.16
East Renfrewshire Council	73.01
South Ayrshire Council	72.62
East Dunbartonshire Council	72.37
Clackmannanshire Council	71.02
East Ayrshire Council	70.89
West Lothian Council	69.86
Midlothian Council	69.83
Fife Council	69.62
North Ayrshire Council	68.49
Perth & Kinross Council	66.31
South Lanarkshire Council	64.78
Angus Council	64.64
Falkirk Council	64.11
Stirling Council	64.08
East Lothian Council	62.47
North Lanarkshire Council	61.16
Moray Council	57.38
Scottish Average	76.23

## HOUSING REVENUE BUDGET

To pay for the significant investment required to improve existing council homes and provide more new homes, we must 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 gross spending commitment for 2018–19 is shown below:

<b>Housing Capital Investment Programme</b>	<b>(£)</b>
Modernisation (existing stock and includes extensions)	11,297,000
New Council Housing	11,010,000
Fees	1,288,000
Mortgage to Rent*	769,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,364,000</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).

We would really like to hear your opinion on our proposals and hope that you can spare a few minutes to complete the attached questionnaire to let us know your views. This year, the consultation will end on Friday 14 December 2018.

### HOW TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK

To provide feedback please:

- Complete and return this questionnaire, or
- Complete the same questionnaire online\* <https://eastlothianconsultations.co.uk/>

*\*If you would like to do the survey online but don't have internet access, why not book some time on a computer at your local library? You can do this by phoning your library. If you need assistance to complete the survey, please talk to the library staff when you visit. For more information visit our website at [www.eastlothian.gov.uk](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk) (if you are not a library member you will need to show proof of ID).*

*Or you can contact East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel (ELTRP) to book a computer in the Resource Room, at their offices in 47 Bridge Street, Musselburgh, EH21 6AA. Please contact ELTRP direct on 0131 665 9304 or visit [www.eltrp.co.uk](http://www.eltrp.co.uk)*

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you would like more information or would like to talk to someone about the rent proposals, please get in touch with Deborah Piner in the Service Development Team:

- Freephone 0800 413 721,
- Email [tenantconsultation@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:tenantconsultation@eastlothian.gov.uk) or
- Write to East Lothian Council, Community Housing, Penston House, Macmerry Industrial Estate, Macmerry, EH33 1EX

# RENT LEVEL CONSULTATION 2018-19 QUESTIONNAIRE

**We value your views on East Lothian Council's Rent Consultation and proposed rent increase. Please take a few minutes to fill in this form and return it to us in the prepaid envelope provided by Friday 14 December 2018.**

1. Each year, we write out to all our tenants, provide a questionnaire and ask tenants to fill in the form to let us know their views. We also hold a series of consultation events in partnership with East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel.

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

Yes  No

If no, please tell us why?

2. By increasing rent the council continues to deliver existing services, invest in our housing stock and deliver new homes. In 2017/18 the council:

- had a housing stock of 8,698 as at 31st March 2018
- had 3,600 applicants on the housing list (as at 31/3/18)
- let 493 properties
- the average re-let time was 28 days
- built 54 new council houses and bought 28 properties on the open market
- carried out 62 major adaptations.

**Do you think the rent you pay is good value for money?**

Yes  No

If no, please tell us why?



**3. Do you think that the proposal to increase rents by 5% is fair?**

Please look at the rent table included with this letter to see what your proposed increase would be.

Yes     No

If no, please tell us why?

**4. We continue to invest in new homes, delivering **54 new council houses in 2017–18** with a further **30 planned for 2018–19**. We also plan to start building a further 145 units in the financial year 2018–19.**

**Do you agree with the council's commitment to build new homes to help address the housing shortage in East Lothian?**

Yes     No

If no, please tell us why?

**5. Last year as part of our modernisation programme, we **installed 484 new kitchens, 452 new bathrooms** and **carried out 141 electrical rewires**.**

**Do you agree that the council should continue to modernise its existing housing stock?**

Yes     No

If no, please tell us why?

# RENT LEVEL CONSULTATION 2018–19 QUESTIONNAIRE

**6. Do you agree that your rent should be used to pay for delivering the housing service to tenants?**

For example, we managed 8,690 tenancies in 2017/18, carried out 18,160 day-to-day repairs and 3,256 emergency repairs (other housing services include rent collection, rent arrears, antisocial behaviour and tenancy management)

Yes     No

If no, please tell us why?

**7. Please tell us what you would like us to do more of and what we can do better?**

Please give us any other comments you may have.



To help us make sure we capture as wide a range of views as possible from tenants and comply with the council's equality monitoring requirements, please complete the following questions. All responses are completely confidential.

**Are you**

Male  Female

Gender (Male, Female) Note: *Transgender or transsexual: Please select the answer which you identify yourself as. You can select either 'male' or 'female', whichever you believe is correct, irrespective of the details recorded on your birth certificate.*

**Age category**

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

**Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**

Yes  No

**Ethnic origin**

White  Mixed or multiple ethnic group  Asian, Asian Scottish, Asian British  
 African, Caribbean or Black  Other ethnic group

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

East Lothian Council  
Community Housing  
Penston House  
Macmerry Industrial Estate  
Macmerry  
EH33 1EX

Deborah and the team will be able to deal with your enquiries up until 14 December 2018.

This is an important opportunity for you to have a say on our rent proposals and plans for continued improvements in 2019–20 and **we would urge you to take part in this rent consultation.**

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 2019. At this meeting Councillors will decide the level of rent and service charge change for council tenants in the year 2019–20. 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 1 April 2019 which is the date that your payment will be adjusted, subject to the decision at the council's budget meeting.

To make a comment, suggestion or complaint about a council service, download a feedback form online at [www.eastlothian.gov.uk](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk) or pick one up at your local office.



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



**East Lothian**  
Council

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[www.eastlothian.gov.uk](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk)  
East Lothian Council Contact Centre: **01620 827827**

