

Draft housing revenue and capital budget consultation 2025/26

This consultation relates to the draft budget for income and expenditure for the council's housing stock in 2025/26.

The situation facing the HRA is very challenging, as income from rents and service charges is insufficient to pay for all the competing priorities, such as compliance with new health and safety standards, the backlog of planned maintenance, decarbonisation of existing homes and building new council homes.

Questions that must be answered are marked with an asterisk (*)

1. **Are you responding as...?** * Please tick one box only (if more than one applies, please choose the most appropriate)

- A Canterbury City Council tenant
- A Canterbury City Council leaseholder
- A resident of the Canterbury district
- A visitor to the Canterbury district
- A city, county, parish or town councillor, please specify:
 - Canterbury City Councillor
 - Kent County Councillor
 - Parish or Town Councillor, please provide the name of the parish or town council:

- A business, organisation or community group, please provide the name:

- Other, please state: _____

Rent

Rent is the housing budget's primary source of income to pay all the running costs, including housing management and maintenance, and capital expenditure such as planned maintenance, like replacement windows or new kitchens and bathrooms.

Government rent policy provides a framework for the council to increase rents by inflation, the rate at which the cost of living is increasing, as measured by what is known as the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) + 1%.

The council must base the proposed rent increase on CPI rate for September 2024, which was 1.7%, so adding + 1% gives a total of 2.7%.

The below table estimates the effect of this on the average weekly rents for all major property designations and sizes in the council's portfolio.

What this might mean for you:

Estimated effect of 2.7% increase on average rents

Bedrooms	Affordable rent		General needs		Hostels	
	Ave. rent p.w. 24/25	Ave. increase p.w. 25/26	Ave. rent p.w. 24/25	Ave. increase p.w. 25/26	Ave. rent p.w. 24/25	Ave. increase p.w. 25/26
Studio		£0.00	£86.79	£2.34		£0.00
1	£146.46	£3.95	£97.77	£2.64	£98.29	£2.65
2	£188.31	£5.08	£114.86	£3.10	£116.55	£3.15
3	£246.68	£6.65	£130.66	£3.53		£0.00
4	£230.40	£6.22	£149.88	£4.05		£0.00
5	£310.18	£8.37	£151.90	£4.10		£0.00
Overall ave.	£202.23	£5.46	£116.91	£3.16	£99.95	£2.70

Bedrooms	Designated older persons' accommodation		Sheltered and Sheltered Plus		All properties	
	Ave. rent p.w. 24/25	Ave. increase p.w. 25/26	Ave. rent p.w. 24/25	Ave. increase p.w. 25/26	Ave. rent p.w. 24/25	Ave. increase p.w. 25/26
Studio	£101.29	£2.47	£85.15	£2.23	£90.30	£2.34
1	£102.91	£2.78	£99.52	£2.69	£99.69	£2.69
2	£118.34	£3.19	£116.13	£3.13	£116.86	£3.16
3		£0.00	£127.35	£3.44	£133.25	£3.60
4		£0.00		£0.00	£150.64	£4.07
5		£0.00		£0.00	£167.73	£4.53
Overall ave.	£106.09	£2.80	£99.77	£2.68	£115.45	£3.11

The council may agree to a lower percentage increase but this might mean that it would not be able to afford the current level of service to tenants.

Overall, 75% of our tenants receive either full or partial Housing Benefit or Universal Credit to help pay their rent, which will cushion them from the full impact of the increase.

2. What do you think about the proposal to increase council rents by CPI + 1% (2.7%)? *

Please tick one box only

Support

Object

Not sure

2a. **Please tell us why:**

Service charges

Some tenants have to pay service charges for specific things. This is usually for communal facilities in blocks of flats and includes things like heating, lighting and cleaning.

The council tries to charge tenants only what it costs to supply services based on the previous year's actual expenditure.

In blocks of general needs flats, the only costs identified separately and charged to tenants are the lighting and cleaning of communal areas. These vary between blocks according to their layout but are generally fairly modest. Service charges in sheltered housing and Sheltered Plus are more extensive because there are more communal facilities and services.

Communal lighting

It is estimated that the cost to sheltered schemes will rise by roughly 8% and approximately 20% in general needs accommodation, although the usage is so low that the increase in cash terms is likely to be minimal.

	Actual charges 2024/25			Estimated charges 2025/26			Average increase
	Lowest 24/25	Highest 24/25	Average 24/25	Lowest 25/26	Highest 25/26	Average 25/26	
General needs	£1.86	£1.86	£1.86	£2.23	£2.23	£2.23	£0.37
Hostels	£11.39	£19.77	£14.87	£13.67	£23.72	£17.84	£2.97
Designated older persons' accommodation	£1.86	£1.86	£1.86	£2.23	£2.23	£2.23	£0.37
Sheltered & Sheltered Plus	£1.53	£12.75	£5.55	£1.65	£13.77	£5.99	£0.44

Communal heating

This charge primarily affects sheltered housing and Sheltered Plus schemes, where there are extensive communal facilities and central heating to accommodation provided by a communal boiler. It is proposed to increase the service charge for heating by 2.7%.

	Actual charges 2024/25			Estimated charges 2025/26			Average increase
	Lowest 24/25	Highest 24/25	Average 24/25	Lowest 25/26	Highest 25/26	Average 25/26	
General needs	£15.15	£43.44	£34.89	£15.56	£44.61	£35.83	£0.94
Hostels	£23.53	£38.99	£31.31	£24.17	£40.04	£32.16	£0.85
Designated older persons' accommodation	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sheltered & Sheltered Plus	£0.39	£41.27	£19.19	£0.40	£42.38	£19.70	£0.51

Cleaning of communal areas

The cost of communal cleaning varies, depending on the layout of the building, and charges are based on figures provided by the contractor. It is proposed to increase the service charge for cleaning by 5% from April 2025 and spread the increase across the whole of the financial year.

	Actual charges 2024/25			Estimated charges 2025/26			Average increase
	Lowest 24/25	Highest 24/25	Average 24/25	Lowest 25/26	Highest 25/26	Average 25/26	
General needs	£0.58	£8.66	£2.52	£0.60	£8.89	£2.65	£0.13
Hostels	£7.24	£20.84	£11.17	£7.60	£21.88	£11.72	£0.55
Designated older persons' accommodation	£1.02	£4.33	£2.07	£1.07	£4.55	£2.17	£0.10
Sheltered & Sheltered Plus	£0.26	£13.79	£4.60	£0.27	£14.48	£4.83	£0.23

3. **What do you think about these proposals?** * Please tick one box only

Support

Object

Not sure

3a. **Please tell us why:**

Garage rent

The garages the council rents out are part of the housing budget.

In February 2022, the council adopted the HRA Garage Management Strategy to maximise rental income, which aims to do this by:

- adopting a commercial approach to setting garage rent level
- increasing garage rents by at least £1.50 per week from 2022/23
- benchmarking garage rents against neighbouring councils.

We recently looked at how much we charge for garage rents compared to other councils in the county. This showed that we've been charging less than neighbouring councils.

Because of this, we're proposing to raise all garage rents to £18 per week.

This will bring our charges in line with the average garage rents in nearby areas and remove the difference in prices between Crown Gardens and the other garages we rent out.

4. **What do you think about this proposal?** * Please tick one box only

Support

Object

Not sure

4a. **Please tell us why:**

5. **Do you have any other comments on our proposed housing budget for 2025/26?**

Corporate consultations

We have several corporate consultations coming up soon and we would like to hear from you.

Which of the following corporate consultations would you like to be informed about? * Please tick those that apply

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Enforcement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Licensing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure and events | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parking | <input type="checkbox"/> Transport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regeneration | <input type="checkbox"/> None |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Budgets and finance | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please state: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Governance | |

How did you find out about this consultation? * Please tick those that apply

- Email from the council
- Council Facebook post
- Council Twitter post
- Council LinkedIn post
- Council website
- Word of mouth
- Other, please state: _____

Processing your information

Canterbury City Council is the data controller.

Your personal information is processed under UK General Data Protection Regulation Article 6.1 (c) and Article 9.2 (g) for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller. Your personal data will be stored for one year.

All information you give us will be stored securely by Canterbury City Council.

Equalities Duty

The council has a legal duty to consider the needs of its diverse range of customers. As well as questions about our services we ask you questions relating to our equalities duties. Although you do not have to answer these questions, without this information the council will be limited in understanding whether views differ among different groups of people.

Your Rights

You have the rights to:

- Access your personal data
- Rectify or correct any inaccuracies in your personal data
- Restrict the processing of your data
- Object to our processing of your personal data
- Complain to the Information Commissioner's Office if you are unhappy about how we have processed your data

The appointed Data Protection Officer is Canterbury City Council's Head of Corporate Governance, who can be contacted by email at dataprotection@canterbury.gov.uk, by phone on **01227 910 662** or at the address below.

Canterbury City Council, 14 Rose Lane, Canterbury, CT1 2UR.
Phone: **01227 862 000**. Web: canterbury.gov.uk

Equality information

What age are you? Please tick one box only

- Under 18
- 18 to 25
- 26 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 to 74
- 75 to 84
- 85 and above
- Prefer not to say

What gender are you? Please tick one box only

- Male
- Female
- Prefer to self-describe (for example, non-binary, gender fluid etc)
- Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself to be disabled? Please tick one box only

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this consultation.