



Housing Revenue Account budget consultation 2024/25

Consultation responses

1. Introduction

Consultation on Canterbury City Council's (CCC) proposals for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget took place between Monday 13 November 2023 and Monday 8 January 2024.

The HRA is paid for from the rent and service charges we collect from more than 5,000 homes we own and manage.

This account is ring-fenced and separate from the council's main day-to-day spending budget which is known as the General Fund.

HRA money can only be spent on services for council tenants and leaseholders.

The respondents were asked if they supported or objected to proposed increases in council rent, service charges and garage rent.

A total of 6 responses were received.

2. Executive summary

- The responses to the consultation were mixed with some support and objection.
- There were a limited number of responses so recurring themes did not emerge.
- Some stated that the rent increases were in line with their inflation, were necessary for keeping the properties in good order and that the service charges were reasonable.
- Others said the rent increases were too high given the size of their accommodation and the quality of both cleaning and maintenance.

3. Consultation methodology

Consultation took place between Monday 13 November 2023 and Monday 8 January 2024. The following methods were used to seek views:

- an online questionnaire, which received 6 responses
- a paper version of the questionnaire, of which none were returned
- written representations were also welcomed and none were received.

The consultation was promoted in the following ways:

- an article on the council's newsroom site
- posts on the council's social media channels.

Additionally, the following stakeholders were emailed directly to encourage them to respond to the consultation:

- Parish councils
- CCC councillors
- Relevant KCC councillors
- Residents' associations
- Local 'Friends of' groups
- Canterbury Connected Business Improvement District (BID)
- Canterbury Archaeological Trust
- Canterbury Green Party
- Canterbury Inter Faith Association
- Canterbury Society
- Canterbury Society
- Canterbury Action for Sustainable transport
- Canterbury College
- Cathedral Court Residents Association
- C4B
- CPRE Kent
- CPRE Kent
- East Cliff Neighbourhood Panel
- English Rural Housing Association
- Ethnic Minority Independent Council (EMIC)
- Ethnic Minority Independent Council
- Herne Bay and District Chamber of Commerce
- Hi Kent
- Hilltop Community
- Home Builders Federation
- Chamber of Commerce
- Invicta Chamber of Commerce
- Local Democracy Forum
- Moat Housing
- Mono Consultants Limited
- SPOKES East Kent Cycle Campaign
- St Mildreds Area Conservation Society SMACS
- The Crab & Winkle Line Trust
- The Canterbury Academy Trust
- The Gardens Trust
- The Georgian Group
- The Ickham, Littlebourne and Wickhambreaux Society
- The Open Spaces Society
- The Society of Sturry Village
- The Talk of Tankerton
- The Twentieth Century Society
- Theatres Trust
- Whitstable Improvement Trust
- Visit Kent

- Canterbury Climate Action Partnership
- Canterbury Christchurch Student Union
- University of Kent Student Union
- UCA Student Union
- Age UK Canterbury
- Canterbury Inter-Faith Association (CANDIFA)
- Disability Advisory Panel (DAP)
- Ethnic Minority Independent Council (EMIC)
- HiKent
- Nigerian Community Association
- Polish Educational Club in Kent (PECK)
- Karibu Community Action Kent
- Kwan Ngei Chinese Association
- Canterbury and District Jewish Community
- Canterbury Muslim Cultural Centre
- Kent County Council - Highways
- Stagecoach
- Whitefriars
- Marlowe Society
- English Heritage
- World Heritage Committee
- Pride
- Visit Kent
- Canterbury Cathedral
- Canterbury Festival
- Continental Drifts
- Kent Cultural Transformation Board
- Canterbury Tales of England
- Canterbury Archaeological Trust

4. Findings

NB: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest decimal point

4.1. Questionnaire responses

A total of 6 completed online questionnaires were submitted.

4.1.1. Respondent profile

100% of respondents are residents of the Canterbury district.

Respondent type	Percentage
A resident of the Canterbury district	100% (6)
A visitor to the Canterbury district	-
A worker in the Canterbury district	-
A business, organisation or community group	-
A city, county, parish or town councillor	-
An MP	-

The majority of people responding were aged 45 to 54.

Age	Percentage
Under 18	-
18 to 25	-
26 to 34	-
35 to 44	16.7% (1)
45 to 54	50.0% (3)
55 to 64	16.7% (1)
65 to 74	16.7% (1)
75 to 84	-
85 and above	-

More females responded than males.

Gender	Percentage
Male	33.3% (2)
Female	50.0% (3)
Prefer to self-describe (for example, non-binary, gender fluid etc)	-

NB: 1 (16.7%) respondent did not give their gender

4.1.2. Increase in council rents

What do you think about the proposal to increase council rents by CPI + 1% (7.7%)?

Estimated average weekly rents 2024/25		
Property designation	Average rent 2023/24 per week	Average rent 2024/25 per week
General needs	£108.23	£116.56
Hostel	£92.41	£99.52
Non-sheltered older persons' accommodation	£98.35	£105.92
Sheltered	£92.29	£99.40
Average for all designations	£105.41	£113.53

The majority of respondents supported this proposal.

Those that supported understood the need to raise rates in order to keep properties in good order.

Some objected stating that an increase was not justified given the condition of their property.

Level of support	Percentage
Support	66.7% (4)
Object	33.3% (2)
Neither	-

The following themes were identified in the comments:

- Charges are line with inflation: 1 comment
- Necessary for property upkeep: 1 comment
- Necessary for support of residents: 1 comment

4.1.3. Increased service charges

What do you think about these proposals?

Estimated average weekly service charges 2024/25						
Property designation	Communal lighting 23/24	Communal lighting 24/25	Communal cleaning 23/24	Communal cleaning 24/25	Heating 23/24	Heating 24/25
General needs	£1.04	£1.56	£2.30	£2.45	£0 (1 exception at £3.83)	£0 (1 exception at £19.52)
Hostel	£7.28	£12.18	£10.81	£11.31	£10.93	£18.60
Non-sheltered older persons' accommodation	£1.04	£1.56	£2.30	£2.45	£0 (4 exceptions at £3.83)	£0 (4 exceptions at £19.52)
Sheltered	£4.62	£4.78	£4.64	£4.61	£8.66	£13.15

Two thirds of respondents supported this proposal. Those that supported stated that the charges were reasonable.

Level of support	Percentage
Support	66.7% (4)
Object	16.7% (1)
Neither	16.7% (1)

The following themes were identified in the comments:

- The price is reasonable: 1 comment
- Necessary for provision of services: 1 comment

4.1.4. Increased garage rent

What do you think about these proposals?

In February 2022, the council adopted the HRA Garage Management Strategy which involves the following:

- 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.

A half of respondents supported this proposal. Those that supported understood that it is reasonable to match the charges made for garages by other councils.

Level of support	Percentage
Support	50.0% (3)
Object	16.7% (1)
Neither	33.3% (2)

The following themes were identified in the comments:

- More garages needed: 1 comment
- Proposed charges are similar to other areas: 1 comment
- Increase charges further so they match other councils: 1 comment

4.1.5. Any other comments

Respondents were asked if they had any other comments on the proposed Housing Revenue Account budget for 2023/24.

Of the two comments received, one requested the construction of more garages and the other stated that charges should be higher than proposed as they are a luxury, not an essential facility.

4.2. Written representations

No written representations were received.

5. Conclusions

The responses to the consultation were mixed with some support and objection.

Given the limited number of responses, only a few themes could be identified from the analysis.

Some stated that the rent increases were in line with inflation while others said that the rent increases were too high. Their justification for objections involved the poor quality of services such as cleaning and maintenance. Others cited the size of their accommodation as a reason for not increasing rents.

Some respondents requested larger garages because of the limited size of their accommodation, others thought charges should be higher given garages are a luxury.

While there were a limited number of responses, some suggestions emerged including the construction of more garages.