

Impact of Covid-19

This has been another challenging year due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and we feel it is important that our tenants understand the continued impact of this on our business planning and rent setting process for 2022/23. The rise in unemployment due to the pandemic has unfortunately affected many of our tenants. While we have worked hard to give financial guidance to our customers, the situation has led to a sharp increase in the level of rent arrears. The pandemic has also resulted in additional operational costs and as such, the Association faces another challenging financial situation in the coming year. The key challenge for 2022/23 will be to maintain affordable rent levels, continue delivering existing levels of service wherever possible, clear backlogs of work which have accumulated due to the pandemic, accelerate some of our Corporate Plan priority projects, and continue to ensure we have a stable business over the long-term.

Your feedback

Please let us know your views by completing and returning this feedback form to us in the enclosed prepaid envelope by Monday 29 November 2021. All completed feedback will be entered into a prize draw for a chance to win £50 worth of shopping vouchers.

Feedback can also be provided via an online survey which can be found on our website at www.riversidescotland.org.uk

Alternatively, call Lyndsay McLaughlan, Customer Involvement Officer on **01294 316785** or email: lyndsay.mclaughlan@riversidescotland.org.uk

Please select which of the following options we should consider when increasing our rental charge for 2022/23.

3.5% 4%

Do you have any comments on the options?

Contact details

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:



Annual Rent Increase Consultation 2022-23



Dear customer,

We are writing to ask you to take part in this year's rent consultation. All customers pay rent, including those who receive housing benefit, so it is important that we receive feedback from as many customers as possible. Riverside Scotland consults annually with customers on our proposals relating to rent setting. This year, the rent setting consultation period will run from **Monday 1 November 2021** until **Monday 29 November 2021**. The Association's Board will consider and approve the level of rent increase for Riverside Scotland customers for 2022/23, taking account of the views expressed in this consultation. We will write to inform you of the new rent charge for 2022/23 at least four weeks in advance of any changes that may occur in April 2022.

Proposals

There are two rent options outlined in this leaflet and we are asking you to indicate your preferred proposal for 2022/23. Details of the two options can be found in this leaflet along with ways to return your feedback. Please take some time to consider the proposals and take part in the consultation.

Important points to note

The Association implemented a restructure of rent levels in April 2018. This process set new 'target' rents for all properties based on size and type. To try and minimise the impact of the rent restructure on tenants with below target rents, from 22/23 onwards the maximum weekly rent increase arising from the rent restructure process will continue to be £1.50. It is important to note that this will be in addition to the annual percentage increase proposed in this leaflet.

What did our services deliver in 2020/21?

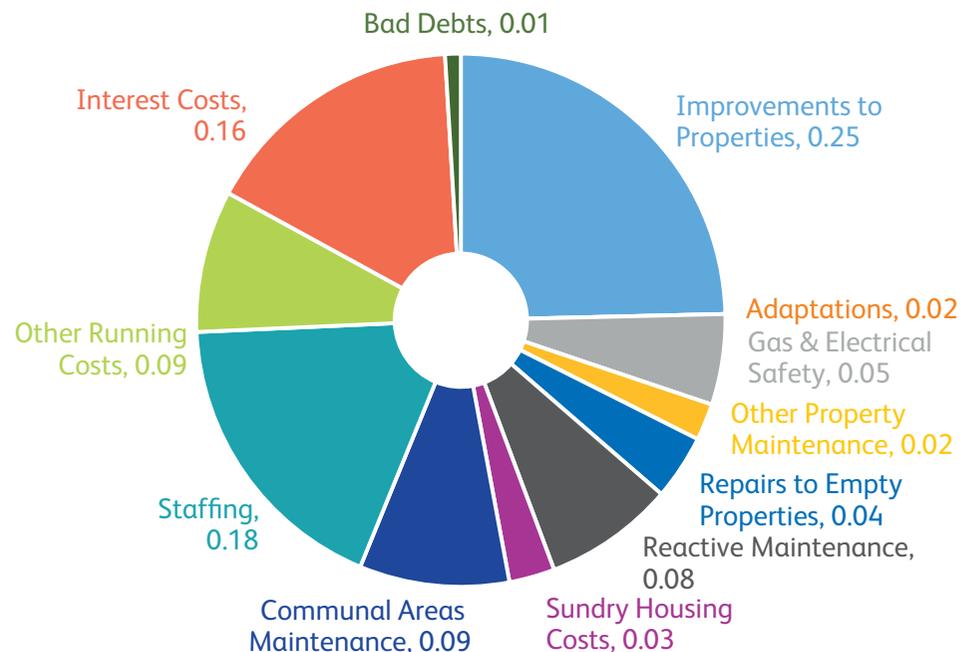
In the last year we have:

- Invested **£1.6m** in property investments to ensure all applicable properties continue to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. As at 31st March 2021 99% of our housing stock meets the SHQS.
- Increased the number of properties achieving the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing to 87%, and invested **£523,000** in environmental measures such as external wall insulation.
- Invested over **£50,000** in tenancy and housing management support and community initiatives.
- Contacted all customers during periods of lockdown to provide support and assistance.
- Continued to allocate 115 properties to those most in housing need during periods of lockdown.
- Invested **£218,000** in the delivery of 116 completed disabled adaptations.

Your views matter

We have strived to keep rent increases to an absolute minimum this year.

How every £1 of rent is being spent



The two options for rent charges for 2022/23 are:

Option One: Increase rents by 3.5%

- Current levels of service will be maintained which will include:
- £1.8m investment in planned maintenance programmes.
- Progressing planned energy efficiency programmes to work towards achievement of ESSH for all applicable properties by March 2024.
- Maintaining levels of investment in tenancy and housing management support and community initiatives.
- Implement a new repairs and maintenance service to improve quality of services to our customers.

- Estate Caretakers working across our estates in North Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway

It is important to note that the option of **3.5%** is the minimum increase needed to meet our overall objectives over the next 10 years and therefore may result in future higher than average increases to ensure sufficient income over the life of our Business Plan.

Option Two: Increase rents by 4%

- Current levels of service detailed above plus the following:
- Acceleration of our Corporate Plan regeneration and renewal projects.