



Ref No: EQ377935028

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Title of report: Council Housing Rents 22/23

Report : Every year the Council considers the annual changes to Council house rents and associated charges. The purpose of the report is to ask Executive to recommend to Council an increase in 22/23 for housing rents, garage and hardstanding rents and service/utility charges for the sheltered housing schemes.

What evidence/data is being used to support this equality analysis? Please select all that apply.: Analysis of service data (e.g I-card), Government Rent Standard 2020, MHCLG Policy Statement on rents for social housing

Service area: Tenancy Services

Head of Service or Chief Operating Officer: Ian Blofield

Head of Service email: Ian.Blofield@ipswich.gov.uk

Links to supporting documents where available:

Please upload any supporting documents:

What is proposed?: The report proposes an increase to housing rents of 4.1%.for the financial year 22/23

The report proposes an increase to housing garage and hardstanding rents of 4.1% for the financial year 22/23. Whilst rentals of garages are outside the scope of the Government's rent policy, annual rent increases are generally kept in line with rises in Council housing rents

The report also seeks approval to amend the sheltered housing service and utility charges for the financial year 22/23 to ensure costs are recovered. These costs are based on a scheme by scheme basis and based on actual usage.

Why are the changes being introduced?: The Council must set rents in accordance with the Government policy on rents for social housing. The Council relies upon its rental income stream to fund all council house activity including management, maintenance and improvements. Increasing the rent in line with Government policy helps to ensure the financial stability of the Housing

Revenue Account.

What evidence is being used to support this Equality Impact Assessment, and how is it being used?: Data from the 2020 Tenant Survey

Tenant profiling data

Rent account information

Government's Rent Standard April 2020

How will this change be implemented?: This change will be implemented following approval from Council giving all tenants the required written notice

Age: Negative

Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.: All tenants will benefit from the overall investment in council housing. The Council seeks to ensure that all eligible tenants receive the welfare benefits they are entitled to in order to maximise income. This particularly benefits vulnerable groups and helps to minimise negative impacts generally, and specifically in relation to older and younger tenants. Tenants living in sheltered housing are more likely to be negatively impacted by the increase in rents and service and utility charges.

The impact can be minimised as the welfare benefit system is there to support those on a low income. 79% of Sheltered Housing tenants receive housing benefit or Universal Credit housing costs. For those tenants with full housing benefit and Universal Credit housing costs entitlement the increase will be covered. For those with partial entitlement their benefit will be recalculated and adjusted as appropriate according to their circumstances.

The Council is able to provide advice and support and refer for specialist debt, budgeting and welfare benefit advice through its Money Advice contract with Anglia Care Trust. Sheltered Housing tenants have the support of a Scheme Manager to assist them where required. The Council will continue to promote the advice and support available through conversations with all tenants and also regularly through its tenant newsletters. Processes are in place to ensure early monitoring and intervention in cases of rent arrears to support tenants and sustain tenancies.

Disability: Negative

Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.: All tenants will benefit from the overall investment in council housing. Disabled adults tend to be more likely to live in low-income households than non-disabled adults. Additionally, disabled people are more likely not to be working, and where they are working, are more likely to be earning less than non-disabled people. Therefore, any rent increase is more likely to have a negative impact on this protected characteristic.

The impact can be minimised as the welfare benefit system is there to support those on a low income. The Council seeks to ensure that all eligible tenants receive the welfare benefits they are entitled to in order to maximise income. This helps to minimise negative impacts generally, and specifically for this protected characteristic. The Council is able to provide advice and support and refer for specialist debt, budgeting and welfare benefit advice through its Money Advice contract with Anglia Care Trust. The Council is also able to signpost to the Disability Advice Bureau. The Council will continue to promote the advice and support available through conversations with all tenants and also regularly through its tenant newsletters. Processes are in place to ensure

early monitoring and intervention in cases of rent arrears to support tenants and sustain tenancies.

Marriage & Civil Partnership: No impact

Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.: All tenants will benefit from the overall investment in council housing. There is not expected to be any particular negative impact on this specific group. The Council will continue to support tenants on low incomes or experiencing financial difficulties to enable them to manage their finances and maximise their income. The Council seeks to ensure that all eligible tenants receive the welfare benefits they are entitled to in order to maximise income. This helps to minimise negative impacts generally.

Race: No impact

Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.: All tenants will benefit from the overall investment in council housing. There is not expected to be any particular negative impact on this specific group. The Council will continue to support tenants on low incomes or experiencing financial difficulties to enable them to manage their finances and maximise their income. The Council seeks to ensure that all eligible tenants receive the welfare benefits they are entitled to in order to maximise income. This helps to minimise negative impacts generally.

Pregnancy & Maternity: No impact

Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.: All tenants will benefit from the overall investment in council housing. There is not expected to be any particular negative impact on this specific group. The Council will continue to support tenants on low incomes or experiencing financial difficulties to enable them to manage their finances and maximise their income. The Council seeks to ensure that all eligible tenants receive the welfare benefits they are entitled to in order to maximise income. This particularly benefits vulnerable groups and helps to minimise negative impacts generally, and specifically in relation to this protected characteristic.

Religion or Belief: No impact

Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.: All tenants will benefit from the overall investment in council housing. There is not expected to be any particular negative impact on this specific group. The Council will continue to support tenants on low incomes or experiencing financial difficulties to enable them to manage their finances and maximise their income. The Council seeks to ensure that all eligible tenants receive the welfare benefits they are entitled to in order to maximise income. This helps to minimise negative impacts generally.

Gender Reassignment: No impact

Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.: All tenants will benefit from the overall investment in council housing. There is not expected to be any particular negative impact on this specific group. The Council will continue to support tenants on low incomes or experiencing financial difficulties to enable them to manage their finances and maximise their income. The Council seeks to ensure that all eligible tenants receive the welfare benefits they are entitled

Sex: No impact

Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.: All tenants will benefit from the overall investment in council housing. There is not expected to be any particular negative impact on this specific group. The Council will continue to support tenants on low incomes or experiencing financial difficulties to enable them to manage their finances and maximise their income. The Council seeks to ensure that all eligible tenants receive the welfare benefits they are entitled to in order to maximise income. This helps to minimise negative impacts generally.

Sexual Orientation: No impact

Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.: All tenants will benefit from the overall investment in council housing. There is not expected to be any particular negative impact on this specific group. The Council will continue to support tenants on low incomes or experiencing financial difficulties to enable them to manage their finances and maximise their income. The Council seeks to ensure that all eligible tenants receive the welfare benefits they are entitled to in order to maximise income. This helps to minimise negative impacts generally.

I can confirm the report does meet Ipswich Borough Council's equality objectives: I can confirm the report does meet Ipswich Borough Council's equality objectives

The report helps us to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment & victimisation' in the following way(s): by following the Government's policy on rent setting, applying the increase to all tenancies and providing support where required to assist tenants and sustain tenancies.

The report helps us to 'advance equality of opportunity...' in the following way(s): Tenants requiring additional support as a result of these increases will receive support from the Council to minimise any negative impacts generally. Any specific impacts identified in this assessment or through conversations with a tenant will be addressed so the impact can be minimised or removed.

The policy helps us to 'foster good relations...' in the following way(s): Ensuring rents are set consistently for all tenants according to legislation and government policy to enable the Council to provide well managed and maintained Council housing for all.

The new provisions will be reviewed in the following way(s): through regular monitoring of rent accounts and the Council rents arrears management process
