

## **Agenda Item 9 - Housing Revenue Account (HRA) - Rents and Charges 2020/21 – additional information**

Outcome of consultation regarding proposed rent increase for 2020/21

The Housing Participation team liaised with the Communications team to inform housing tenants on the proposal to increase their rents for 2020/21 by 2.7%. This rent increase followed the previous four years of a 1% rent reduction as mandated by H.M. Government.

We took the finance report and added a simple survey question:

“Do you agree with Swindon Borough Council’s proposed decision to increase rent by 2.7% for 2020/21? This would mean an increase on the average 52 week rent this year from £78.60 to £80.72 in 2020/21.” There was also a free text box for tenants to leave comments on the proposal. These have been collated.

The survey generated 65 electronic responses and 24 paper; 89 in total:- 38 agreed with the proposed increase and 51 did not agree.

We carried out the following activities to speak to SBC housing tenants:

Press release to the Swindon Advertiser

Rent report and link to survey on SBC news page on website

Rent report in Tenant Focus (tenant newsletter). This newsletter is sent to 2980 users (as at 04/02/20).

Rent report and survey template emailed to housing staff, including Sheltered Housing Officers, Neighbourhood Wardens and Neighbourhood Housing Officers

Rent report pinned to tenant Facebook pages

Staff present at community cafes in Penhill, Railway Village, Toothill and Meadowcroft - we gave tenants the opportunity to discuss the proposed rent increase, complete the online survey, or, where there was no Wi-Fi, complete a paper survey. All were kept anonymous.

3 rent presentations at the Civic Offices – 1 to sheltered housing and 2 for general purpose tenants.

We will provide an update to tenants on the responses that were received and on the outcome of the Cabinet meeting, through the next tenant newsletter and with information on the web pages.