

# Have your say!

This is your chance to give vital feedback on the proposed changes to the rent levels of North Ayrshire Council properties



Setting rents is finding the right balance between income from rent and the money needed to run and improve the service all tenants should expect.

Everyone wants affordable quality housing, but we must also ensure proper arrangements to cover maintenance and management costs as well as being able to meet future

needs and demands.

North Ayrshire Council, like all authorities, is required to meet the demands of the Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS).

The standard must be achieved by the year 2015 and be capable of being sustained thereafter.

In December 2004, the Council agreed to retain its housing stock, and a five-year

rent increase strategy was developed as part of the 30-year Business Plan.

This was required in order to meet the future investment and management requirements for the housing stock. The rent increase in 2009/10 was the final year of this strategy.

In light of this, the Council will now need to determine the level of investment required over the next five years.

## The Council needs to take into account the following factors:

- The requirements to meet the SHQS by 2015
  - The 2008 Scottish Housing Regulators Report and Improvement Plan
  - Loan servicing requirements
  - Affordability of rents for tenants
  - The projected income from house sales
  - The ongoing cost of managing and maintaining our homes
  - How our rents compare with other social landlords in the area
  - New Build Council Housing Programme
  - The views of tenants.
- North Ayrshire Council is trying to strike the right balance to make sure that the rent you pay is affordable, meets tenant's aspirations and represents good value for money.

# We are revising rents to

## Rent increase proposal

The Council intends to set an interim increase for this year of 2.6% for rents, service charges, garages and lock-ups.

We will then enter into a longer consultation process with tenants over the next year to agree rent increases for the next five years. Olga Clayton, Head of Housing and Building Services, recently started this process by addressing the last meeting of the North Ayrshire Tenant and Residents Network.

## Scottish Housing Quality Standard

The Scottish Government has agreed a new Scottish Housing Quality Standard. This is a set of quality measures that every home in Scotland must achieve by 2015.

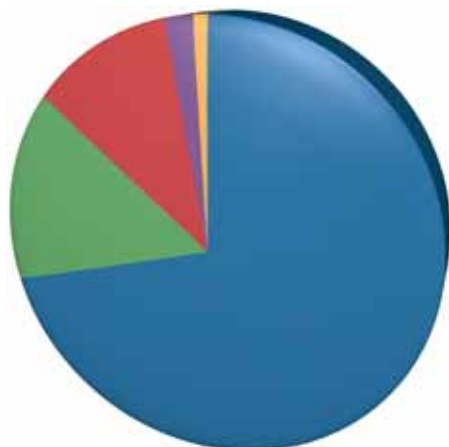
To meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, the Council is required to ensure that all properties meet the required level. This means that houses must:

- Be free from serious disrepair. This includes walls, floors, foundations, roofs, rainwater goods, damp proof courses, windows and doors
- Be energy efficient, with full central heating, insulation for lofts and pipes and have a good energy rating
- Have modern facilities in kitchens and bathrooms. This includes a WC, bath or shower and wash hand basin, kitchen fittings to meet building regulations, a safe layout and at least six electrical sockets
- Be healthy, safe and secure – with safe electrical or gas systems, smoke detectors, lead-free water supply, lighting in common and external areas, secure back and front doors, secure door entry systems, stairwells, lifts and bin stores must be in a safe condition.

To achieve this we need to ensure that we are able to continue to fund the improvements required.



## What are we spending the money on this year?



You can see from this chart that the biggest slice of every pound is spent on repairs and home improvements.

Over the last few years, this slice has been getting bigger.

The Council wishes to continue giving all tenants these home improvements and enjoy a property that has reached the Scottish Housing Quality standard by 2015.

For every  
£1 spent in  
2009/10

Repairs maintenance and improvements	£0.71
Supervision and management	£0.15
Debt, interest and expenses	£0.11
Other expenditure	£0.02
Arrears written off and rent loss due to empty properties	£0.01

## Improvements to your homes

In 2010/11, North Ayrshire Council plans to install:

- 1200 new central heating systems
- 500 new kitchens
- 500 new bathrooms
- New windows in 1270 homes
- New roofs and roughcast on 260 homes
- New roofs on 50 homes
- New roughcast on 50 homes and
- Rewiring in 600 homes.

In addition, many communities will benefit from Estate Based Projects, with more than 144 projects planned for completion.

# meet high standards



## New Council houses planned for Irvine

The Council was successful in securing Scottish Government funding to build 23 new Council houses in Castlepark, Irvine.

Fourteen Scottish Councils were successful with their bids while North Ayrshire was one of only three who were allocated the full amount.

A further bid was made on

25 September 2009 to allow for the development of 26 new houses in Kilwinning.

The Scottish Government will notify the authority of the outcome of this bid in December.



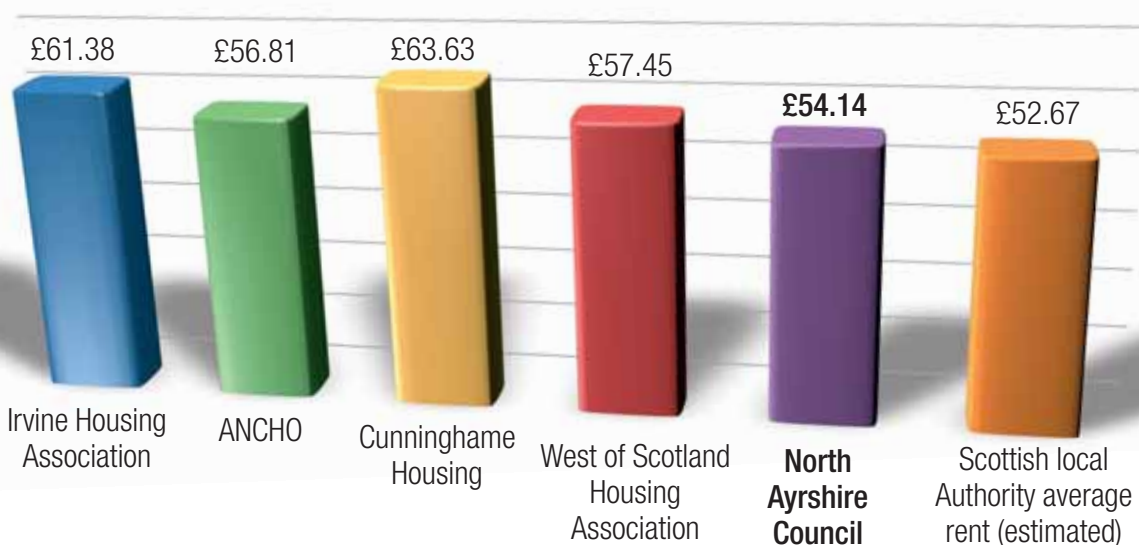
## How does North Ayrshire Council's rent compare with other housing providers?

As can be seen below, North Ayrshire Council's average weekly rent for a three-apartment house compares very well against other North Ayrshire local housing

providers. We can also compare North Ayrshire Council's average weekly rent in 2009/10 with the estimated average Scotland Local Authority weekly rent

for the same year.

With the weekly rent of £54.14 for a three-apartment house, North Ayrshire Council is ranked 17th out of 26 councils.



*Typical Weekly Rent (52 weeks average for a three-apartment house) for 2009/10*

# How well are we performing?

The efficiency of the service continues to be very important for all staff.

The Housing Service has a number of major strengths in the delivery of its service. Some of our key achievements and performance information for the year 08/09 are detailed below:

- Rent arrears have reduced from 6.7% at the end of 2007 to 4.5% at the end of March 2009.
- 72.1% of our houses were re-let in less than two weeks.
- A wide range of good arrangements for partnership

working are in place to prevent and alleviate homelessness and we have a low level of repeat homelessness. The number of people presenting themselves as homeless reduced from 1,513 in 2006/07 to 1,369 in 2008/09.

- 99% of emergency repairs were made safe within two hours and 98% of urgent repairs were responded to within seven days .
- 90% of housing applications were processed within 10 days.
- There are an excellent

range of methods to resolve antisocial behaviour.

- There are a number of options available for tenants to get involved which include a new North Ayrshire Tenant and Resident Network.
- A new common allocation policy has been adopted and the new Common Housing Register has been launched with our partners ANCHO, Cunninghame Housing Association and Irvine Housing Association.
- The second Tenant Satisfaction Survey was

completed – 94% of tenants were satisfied with the Council as a landlord, with 70% rating the Council as either excellent or good.

- Investors in People (Silver Award) achieved.
- Concierge service gained the new Customer Excellence Award.
- The Estates Based Projects, which demonstrated good practice in community empowerment, featured in the Scottish Government's Community Empowerment Action Plan.

## CUT HERE



### Consultation

In February 2010, the Council will decide on its budget for 2010/11. This is your chance to let the Council know your views on the proposals.

The rent setting consultation will close on 11 January 2010.

If you have any views on the proposed rent increase, please complete and return the comments form on the back of this leaflet to the address indicated by 11 January 2010. All comments are valued and will be considered in the rent setting process.

### Let us have your comments on the proposed rent increase

Please use this form to let us know your comments and return to:

Tenant Participation Team  
FREEPOST RRUH-BAUB-AYLJ  
North Ayrshire Council  
Housing Services  
1 Main Street  
Stevenston  
KA20 3AB

Name:

Address:

Telephone (daytime):

Telephone (evening):

Email:

My comments: