

CABINET
8 SEPTEMBER 2026

HOUSING SERVICES RENT SETTING POLICY 2026-2031

Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Matthew Roche,
Health and Housing Portfolio

Responsible Director – Elizabeth Davison,
Executive Director of Resources and Governance

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To approve the Housing Services Rent Setting Policy 2026-2031.

Summary

2. The Housing Services Rent Setting Policy 2026-2031 at **Appendix 1** sets out how rent levels and services charges for our Council homes are set within the regulatory guidelines, which:
 - (a) Are affordable and meet the needs and expectations of our tenants.
 - (b) Ensure we can meet financial and business plan commitments and objectives, thereby ensuring the financial viability of our Housing Services.
 - (c) Provide cost effective and high-quality services to our tenants.
 - (d) Are in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Tenancy Agreement, licence or lease.
3. The Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) Rent Standard sets out the framework for rent policy and applies to all registered providers of social housing, including local authorities. All registered providers of social housing must comply with the requirements and expectations of the Rent Standard and the government's rent policy statement.
4. Our Tenants Panel has been consulted on the draft policy, and they have given their full support. An equality impact assessment screening form at **Appendix 2** has been completed on the draft policy, but no adverse impacts have been identified.
5. This policy was considered by Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee on 19 August 2026, who agreed its onward submission for approval by Cabinet.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that Cabinet:-
- (a) Consider the contents of this report, and
 - (b) Approve the Housing Services Rent Setting Policy 2026-2031 at Appendix 1.

Reasons

7. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
- (a) The RSH, in its Rent Standard, sets out that all registered providers of social housing must comply with the requirements and expectations of the Rent Standard and the government's rent policy statement. This policy will ensure the Council meets the requirements of the Rent Standard.

**Elizabeth Davison,
Executive Director of Resources and Governance**

Background Papers

- (i) The RSH Rent Standard 2026

Anthony Sandys: Extension 6926

Council Plan	This report supports the Council Plan's HOMES priority to provide affordable and secure homes that meet the current and future needs of residents
Addressing inequalities	An equality impact assessment screening form has been completed on the draft policy, but no adverse impacts have been identified
Tackling Climate Change	The setting of rents enables the Council to fund a range of energy efficiency measures, which will support our Housing Services Climate Change Strategy
Efficient and effective use of resources	This policy will ensure we adhere to the RSH Rent Standard and that we can provide cost effective and high-quality services to our tenants
Health and Wellbeing	Setting rents which are affordable and meet the needs and expectations of our tenants will support their health and wellbeing
S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no issues which this report needs to address
Wards Affected	All wards with Council housing
Groups Affected	All Council tenants
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework
Key Decision	This report does not represent a key decision
Urgent Decision	This report does not represent an urgent decision
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	There are no issues which this report needs to address

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

8. The Housing Services Rent Setting Policy 2026-2031 sets out how rent levels and services charges for our Council homes are set within the regulatory guidelines, which:
 - (a) Are affordable and meet the needs and expectations of our tenants.
 - (b) Ensure we can meet financial and business plan commitments and objectives, thereby ensuring the financial viability of our Housing Services.
 - (c) Provide cost effective and high-quality services to our tenants.
 - (d) Are in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Tenancy Agreement, licence or lease.

RSH Rent Standard 2026

9. The RSH Rent Standard sets out the framework for rent policy and applies to all registered providers of social housing, including local authorities. All registered providers of social housing must comply with the requirements and expectations of the Rent Standard and the government's rent policy statement. The government has directed the RSH to set a Rent Standard that reflects the government's 10-year rent settlement.
10. The Rent Standard 2026 sets out the following:
 - (a) Social landlords will generally be allowed to increase rents for social rent and affordable rent homes by up to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) +1% each year.
 - (b) Landlords will be able to further increase the weekly rent on social rent homes that are currently below 'formula rent'. As well as the CPI +1% increase, rents for these homes can increase by up to £1 more each week from 1 April 2027. From 1 April 2028, these rents can increase by up to £2 per week, until formula rent is reached. This is known as rent convergence.
11. The Housing Services Rent Setting Policy 2026-2031 sets out how rent levels and services charges for our Council homes are set and increased within the regulatory guidelines and covers the following areas:
 - (a) The types of rent we set for our Council homes.
 - (b) How rents and service charges are set for our Council homes.
 - (c) How rent and service charge increases are decided each year.
 - (d) Rent convergence.
 - (e) Appeals and complaints.

Outcome of Consultation

12. Our Tenants Panel has been consulted on the draft policy, and they have given their full support.

Equalities considerations

13. An equality impact assessment screening form at Appendix 2 has been completed on the draft policy, but no adverse impacts have been identified.