

Midlothian rents to increase by 4.8%

Council rent in Midlothian will increase by 4.8 per cent from next month – raising the average weekly rent by £3.54.

A meeting of Midlothian councillors on Tuesday approved the new rent rates for its tenants after they failed to reach a consensus during a public consultation.

Council house residents were asked whether they wanted rent to go up by seven different amounts between 4.1 per cent and six per cent, but a report to councillors said while 28 per cent of tenants wanted the lowest rent, 25 per cent wanted the highest so the decision was taken to go down the middle.

In each case tenants were told how many new houses the local authority would be able to build with the increased rent income with no homes built at the lowest rise and 1,000 houses built with the highest increase.

There are currently 7,161 Midlothian council tenants, of whom 4,553 are in receipt of housing benefit and/or Universal Credit.

An increase of 4.8 per cent will allow an additional 300 homes to be built and keep the increase below the affordability limits set by council governing body COSLA of £5 a week.

Cllr Stuart McKenzie, SNP, told the meeting all tenants were aware of the pressures caused by inflation on the local authority.

He said: "We have tried to keep the rise under a fiver a week and we still think the council housing stock offers cracking good value for the people of Midlothian."

By Marie Sharp *Local Democracy Reporter*.

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Midlothian House