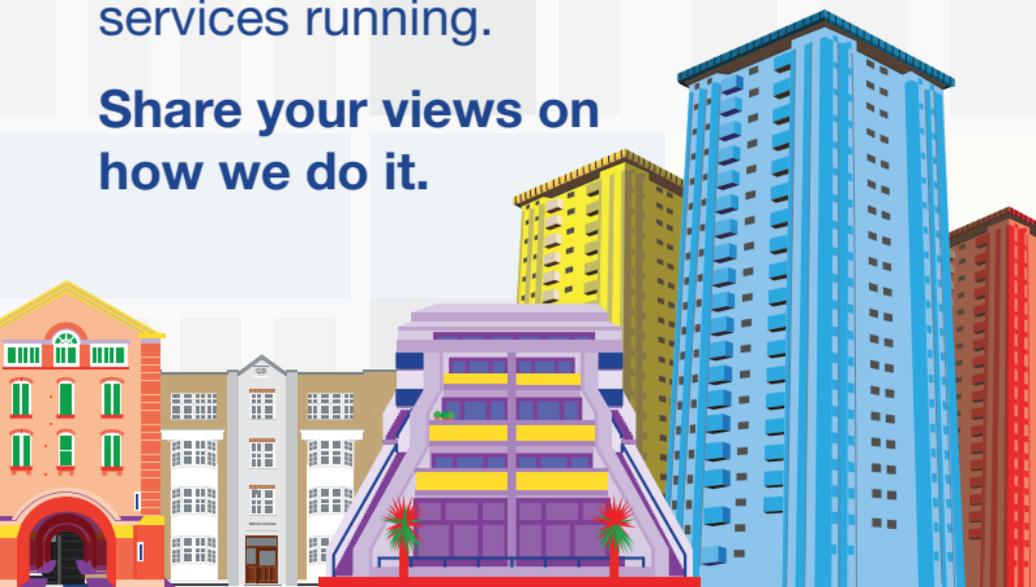


Funding your housing services

Covid-19 has had a huge impact on the Council's finances and your housing services, and we need to make savings to keep your services running.

**Share your views on
how we do it.**



Covid-19 and lost rental income have put pressure on your housing services



keeping your home safe and in good repair



supporting vulnerable tenants



building new council homes



fire safety



benefits and debt advice



dealing with crime and antisocial behaviour

(Services available to all tenants)



caretaking



communal heating



CCTV



looking after green spaces

(You might receive these services if you pay a service charge with your rent)

To keep them running as they are...

...we need to increase rents and charges from April 2021

Rent: We propose* increasing your rents from April 2021 – by an average of £1.74 a week for a two bed flat (or 1.5%).

If you receive universal credit or housing benefit your benefits will be adjusted to pay for any increase in rent.

Service charge: If you receive extra services like caretaking, or have CCTV, communal heating or green spaces that need looking after, you pay a service charge with your rent. We are proposing increasing this by up to a maximum of 24p a week.

Total: This means that for a two bedroom flat the average increase will be a maximum of £1.98 a week.

We are here to help

There is help available for any tenants who need it, including housing benefits, the council tax reduction scheme and help from our welfare rights team who can make sure you're getting all the income you're entitled to – they have helped Camden tenants to become more than **£1,120,000** better off since April this year.

If you are worried about how you will pay an increase in rent, talk to your neighbourhood housing officer so that we can help.

Until April this year we hadn't increased rent in a long time – in fact until then it had decreased every year for four years. This left a big hole in our funding while costs have increased by inflation.

*the Council proposes that we increase rents to keep your housing services running but no decision has been made yet. Camden's Cabinet will consider the proposal and decide whether to increase rents when it meets in January.

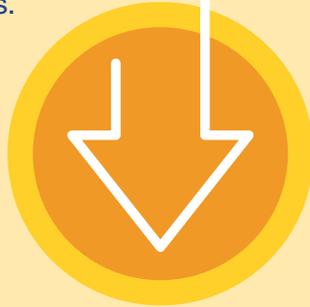
Why do we need to increase rents and make savings?

Because for the last few years our income has gone down...

We used to be able to increase rent slightly (by inflation plus 1%). This was to cover:

- inflation
- running your housing services
- extra funds for emergencies.

But for the last four years, (until April this year) the government told us that not only could we not increase your rent to meet inflation, but we also had to reduce your rent by 1% every year.



This meant that over four years we lost the ability to raise **£69 million** in rental income.



...and our costs have gone up...



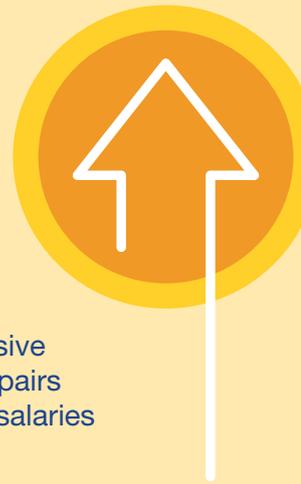
In recent years **inflation** has continued to rise, making it more expensive to buy materials for repairs and to pay our staff's salaries



We have had to spend a lot more on **fire safety** works to keep you safe



Because of **Covid-19**, some tenants, leaseholders and tenants of other properties (like shops, offices and some community centres) are struggling to pay rent and service charges. We may need to dip into our reserves to pay for an estimated £5 million in lost rent and charges this year.



...and we can only pay for your housing services using money from rents and charges



We don't get any government funding to pay for housing

We can't use any of the Council's general funding to pay for housing

Next year, to keep your services running as they are, we estimate we need an extra **£4.9 million**

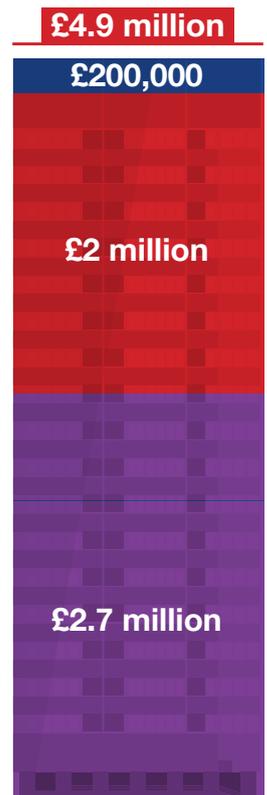
This will pay for inflation and the rental income we expect to lose because of Covid-19. We have already found £2.7 million in efficiency savings for next year and a proposed average rent increase of £1.74 a week can bring in another £2 million which we urgently need.

So we are proposing to the Council's Cabinet that we increase rents and service charges next year. Cabinet will consider this and make a decision in January. If they agree, we have enough money for this year and next year, but the following years are going to be tough financially too.

We will need to continue to make savings – for example we will be changing how we deliver repairs to prioritise the most urgent jobs first – and to bring in more income – for example filling empty homes more quickly to bring in more rent.

- Increasing service charge
- Increasing rent
- Efficiency savings

But what do you think – is there anywhere else we could make more savings in the future?



Share your views

If you have any comments about our proposals or ideas about where we can make savings, please tell us at [camden.gov.uk/housing-funding](https://www.camden.gov.uk/housing-funding) by Monday 4 January 2021.

While this isn't a formal consultation, they are your housing services and we want to know what you think. What you tell us will feed into a report that we will take to Cabinet in January as part of the budget setting process for 2021/22.

Thank you in advance for your help and for sharing your views.

