

Dear Tenant

Consultation Letter – service charges

As you may be aware, Thurrock Council as your landlord is considering some changes to the service charges currently paid by its tenants.

Your tenancy agreement states (clauses 2.1.2 and 2.2.4) that where services are provided as part of your rent you will pay a service charge, and that we can make changes to the service charges included in the rent, including charging for services for the first time.

The Council provides a range of services to Thurrock Council tenants living in our properties. .

Services include:

- Lift maintenance and repair
- Electricity for heating and lighting in communal areas
- Secure door entry
- Grounds maintenance of the communal gardens/ other grass areas around our properties.

You are currently receiving one or more of these services. Many Councils charge their tenants for these services but Thurrock Council has not done so up to now. The cost of providing these services is considerable and the Council considers it is reasonable to charge for them in future. The Council is proposing to introduce a service charge to all its tenants who receive one or more of these four services. You will only be charged for the services you use.

It is estimated that a charge of approximately £8.00 per week will be made to tenants receiving all four of the above services. Those not receiving all the services will pay less.

If you are currently in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, the proposed additional service charges can be included in your rent for benefit purposes. If you are not entitled to these benefits at present, and the charges are introduced, you may want to contact the Housing Benefit department for a reassessment of your income to see if you are entitled to financial support towards any additional charges introduced.

Have your say

The Council is consulting you on these changes.

I enclose a document with more information, as well as the answers to some 'frequently asked questions' (FAQ's) that I trust will help you understand this process. You are invited to make any comments on the proposed changes no later than **Monday March 20th** .

You can respond by completing our online survey.

To give your views please click on the link below – you will need to enter this reference number;

REFERENCE NUMBER FOR CONSULTATION; XXXXXXXXXXXXX (*Rent account no.*)

<http:.....>

Next steps

The Council will consider all the responses we receive before making a decision on whether to introduce the charges.

If the decision is to proceed you will receive a formal Notice of Variation (under Section 103 of the Housing Act 1985) later this year. This will include full details of the new service charges, and will inform you of the date on which the changes will become effective.

Yours sincerely

John Knight
Head of Housing
