Rent Matters
Each year the Council looks at the rent and other charges that we need to collect so that we can continue to deliver the services that you have told us you want and ensure that we have enough funds to meet the costs of repair and maintenance, property and estates improvements, day-to-day management and loan repayments.

We are now in the second year of a 30-year plan for the housing service which aims to improve and increase the Council housing stock across Oxford. We collect rent and other charges to fund the work programmes set out in the plan. We aim to get the balance right between affordable rents and high-quality services, meeting tenant expectations and getting good value for money.

How we set the level of rent each year
Up until April 2012, the Council had to use a formula, set by the Government, to determine the annual rent you pay. The formula stated that in a given year, the weekly rent would not be increased by more than the September Retail Price Index (RPI) each year plus 0.5% plus £2.00. Since April 2012, the Council has had the ability to increase rents by more than the formula but has chosen not to do so.

Service Charges
Service charges generally only apply to those tenants living in flats. These charges cover the cost of communal services in flats such as cleaning, lighting in stairwells, door entry systems and grounds maintenance.

For a number of years, we have been subsidising these charges from the rent we collect but from last April, we started the process of phasing out this subsidy. We will continue to phase out the subsidy each year so that everybody is paying a fair share towards the cost of the services they use.

Rent and Service Charge increase for 2014-15
We have looked at our budgets from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 and are proposing to use the Government formula for next year’s rent rise, which is 3.2% (RPI) plus 0.5% plus £2.00. This works out as an average weekly rent rise of 5.42% or £5.25.
We are proposing to increase service charges in line with the Government’s recommendation of RPI at 3.2% plus 0.5% which totals 3.7%.

We are also proposing to reduce the weekly service charge subsidy by a further £1.00 from April 2014.

**What we are planning to spend your rent money on in the next few years?**

- The Tower Block refurbishments - £16.9 million
- The Great Estates Programme and other environmental improvements - £1 million per year.
- Keeping your homes safe and tackling fuel poverty through a programme of work including insulation, central heating installation, replacement windows and rewiring - £10.9 million
- Continuing to modernise kitchens and bathrooms - £11.9 million
- Increased funding to investigate housing fraud
- A dedicated Welfare Reform Team to help tenants affected
- Additional funds to help tenants who are downsizing
- Improving day-to-day repairs, maintenance and management services.
- Improved on-line reporting of repairs
- 354 new Council homes in 2020 in Barton Park - £40 million
- Interest payments on loans - £7.7 million