

Date: 03 December 2025

Item: Tenancy Agreement Consultation Outcome



1. Background

1.1 STAR Housing undertook a tenant consultation on behalf of Shropshire Council over the period 6th October 2025 – 9th November 2025 (allowing an additional week either side with postal entries received up to 17th November included) on two key changes: adopting a 52-week rent charging model and reviewing the structure of service charges (fixed), in addition to a general update of the existing tenancy agreement.

1.2 In total, 3,771 tenants were consulted, and the following responses were received:

	Number of Responses	Supported Proposals	Neutral/ Unspecified to Proposals	Rejected Proposals
Responses Received	538 (14%)	313	89	136
No Response received (treating as accepting all changes as per consultation documentation)	3,233 (86%)	3,233	-	-
Total	3,771 (100%)	3,546 (94%)	89 (2%)	136 (4%)

1.3 Attached is a copy of the questionnaire sent to tenants.

1.4 Key findings based on the 538 responses received can be summarised as follows:

- Awareness of 4 rent-clear weeks: 79% yes (427)
- Understand no increase in annual rent: 83% yes (444)
- Preference: 94% would prefer to pay over 52 weeks, with 4% preferring to keep 48 weeks with 4 rent clear weeks. NB: no response received is treated as accepting all changes as per the consultation documentation.
- Impact of switching to 52 weeks: 60% report little or no material impact; 3% a lot of impact
- 19% of respondents plan major expenses around rent clear weeks including Christmas and Easter, highlighting budgeting importance.
- Support to adapt: 7% request support (mainly budgeting, Universal Credit changes, and Direct Debit setup)
- Concerns about other tenancy changes: 7% of respondents raised concerns (service charges, repairs responsibilities, parking, pets, succession)

- 1.5 Where provided the following is a summary of the age, disability and employment status of respondents:
- Age: (488 responses) The most common age group among respondents was 65-74 years (26%), 75-84 years (23%), 55-64 years (16%) with two thirds of respondents aged 65 or above.
 - Long standing illness/disability: (506 responses) Yes 53%, No 35%, Prefer not to say 6% including mobility, breathing and mental health issues
 - Employment status: (498 responses) Retired 53% relying mostly on pensions or benefits, emphasising the need for predictable rent payments, Working full time 11%, and unemployed 8%.
- 1.6 Full responses received are included in Appendix 2. Please note responses are recorded exactly as they are received, including spelling mistakes.
- 1.7 Clear guidance and support will be essential to help tenants adjust to the new payment schedules.

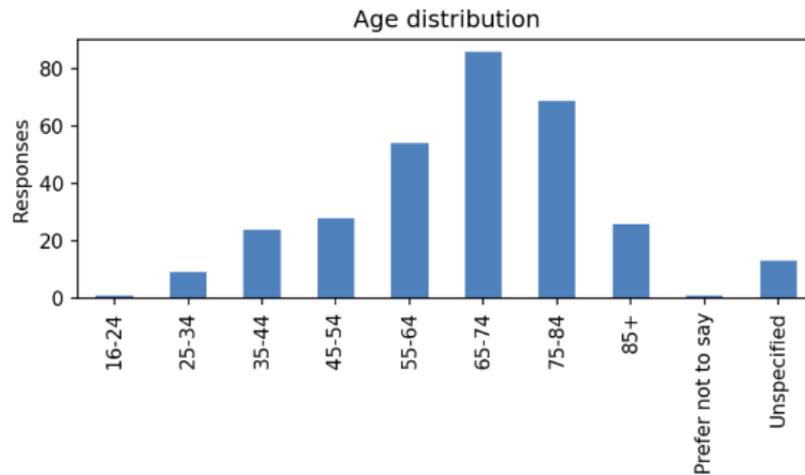
2. Report Detail

2.1 During the consultation period STAR Housing promoted the consultation with staff briefed ready to answer questions, in the first instance, referring tenants to their consultation pack or the website for full details. For those tenants where the pack or online resources were not suitable tenants could email a dedicated inbox for support or contact the incomes team via telephone. Consultation reminders were posted on STAR social media on a weekly basis and an article included in the STAR tenant newsletter which was distributed during the consultation period.

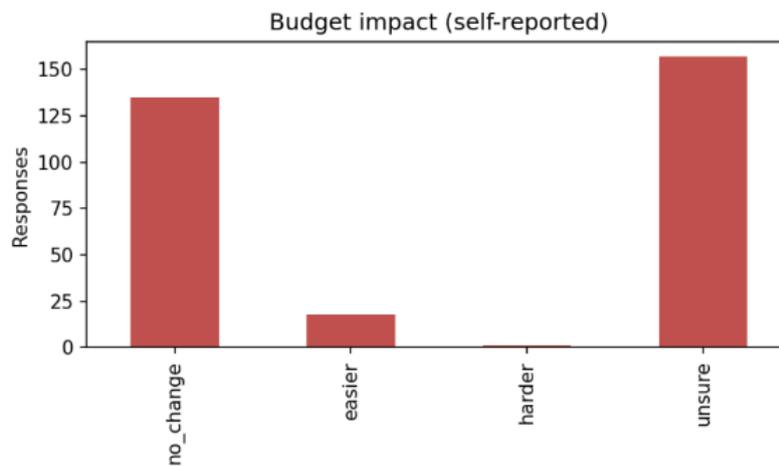
2.2 For those tenants preferring in person communication, drop-in sessions were held on 23rd October at Llywn Fields and Jubilee Community Room (Aspen Grange), on 30th October at Beech Road and Sheldon Court and an additional session at The Severn Centre in Highley was held at the request of the local clerk to Highley and Tasley Parish Council on 24th October.

2.3 14 tenants contacted the Consultation inbox with queries. The income team were responsible for providing a response. 17 tenants attended the various drop-in sessions. Telephone calls were also made directly to the income team. Not all queries received were related to the proposed changes to the tenancy agreement. All queries were discussed at length and where follow up support was required, this was provided. Queries received via email, telephone or in person were not included in the consultation response numbers, however all tenants who contacted STAR Housing were encouraged to submit their consultation questionnaire, with support provided to those who requested.

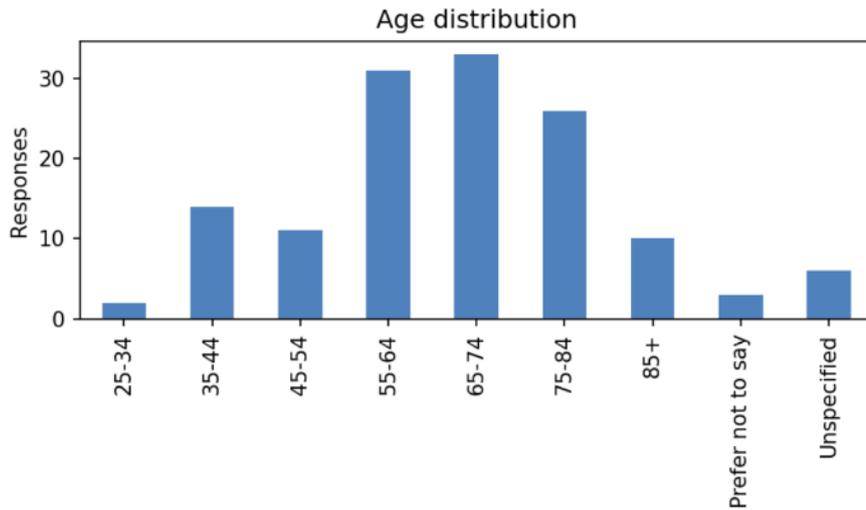
2.4 313 respondents supported the proposed changes. This cohort showed a good awareness of the current 4 rent clear weeks (264 – 85%) and that this would not increase the overall rent payable (281 – 90%). Only 23 (7%) currently planned around the rent clear weeks. 10 respondents (3%) said that they would need support to adapt and 160 (51%) reported a long-standing illness/disability. The age profile of this group is as follows:



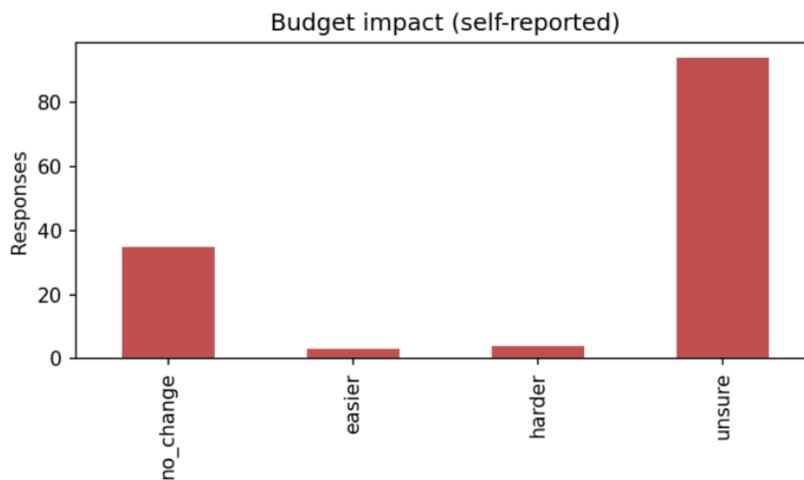
2.5 The self-reported budget impact of the proposed changes to this cohort was as follows:



2.6 The 136 respondents who did not support the proposed changes showed a good awareness of the current 4 rent clear weeks (115 – 85%) and that this proposal would not increase the overall rent payable (113 – 83%), however the understanding of this group was slightly less than those who supported the proposals. 75 (55%) of these respondents planned around the rent clear weeks with a slightly higher proportion 15% (20 respondents) than those in favour of the proposals, reporting that they would need support to adapt to the changes. 75 (55%) reported a long-standing illness/disability. The age profile of this group was as follows:



2.7 Despite 75 (55%) respondents reporting that they currently plan around the rent clear weeks, only a small number of respondents self-reported that the budget impact would be harder:



2.8 Service charges were specifically referenced as part of the consultation to make it clear to all parties that service charges would continue to be calculated on a 'Fixed' basis. Internally, changes are being made to the processes involved in calculating the current service charges to allow for an in-depth annual review. Charges will be calculated annually based on actual cost of the previous year and known changes for the preceding year, rather than the current historical charges just inflated annually by CPI etc. The revised tenancy agreement provides clarity around service charges and will be supported by the implementation of a new service charges module in Housing One. Full details of the proposed changes to service charges for 2026-27 are included in the paper 10b Rent Setting Approval for FAR's consideration and will also be discussed separately at Customer Services Sub-committee.

2.9 In response to question '6a Do you have any concerns in relation to the other proposed changes to your tenancy agreement?' we received 38 legible responses where details were provided, they can be summarised as follows:

No of Responses	Concern Raised	Action Required
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8	Concerns about the repairs which are proposed to fall under tenant responsibilities. Concerns included age, disability and the cost of doing this.	Relates to section 3.4 Repairs, Maintenance and Alterations see Appendix 3 for details of proposed amendments in response
8	Concerns around the clarification and breakdown of service charges including whether they are payable over 48/52 weeks	Publication of FAQs when consultation responses are publicised. Concerns will be alleviated by the introduction of Housing One Service Charge module.
2	Concerns about wanting to opt out of service charges	Service charges are a property based charged and if applicable to the property, need to be levied/paid.
2	Concerns about how service charges are calculated for Grounds Maintenance	Grounds Maintenance service charges have been reviewed during 2025-26 to ensure accuracy. To be implemented from 2026-27.
2	Concerns about grounds maintenance standards	Include Grounds Maintenance specifications as part of publicised FAQs to support tenants to understand what their service charges cover.
1	Concerns around pest control	Repairs team have investigated this specific query and will continue to deal with pest control when it is reported.
4	Concerns around parking, and in particular the parking of cars which have failed their MOTs.	Inclusion of questions around this topic in the publicised FAQs. Enforcement of this issue would only be in the case of abandoned vehicles, as STAR Housing will not be checking the MOT status of cars which are parked correctly.
1	General concern on cost	Any concerns on affordability will be picked up and supported by the income team. Inclusion in FAQs when consultation responses are publicised.
1	Wanted tenancy agreement succession to pass onto spouse regardless of whether it had been passed on before	Income team to contact individual to discuss situation.
1	Concerned with the removal of employees and contractors' responsibility to not threaten or intimidate tenants.	Employees and contractors are subject to service standards and any breach of this would result in disciplinary procedures.
1	Concerned that the restriction on breeding animals will not be adhered to.	Any concerns by tenants would be investigated and dealt with appropriately.
3	Do not like change e.g. change causing anxiety	Any tenants requiring support will be supported by Housing Team
1	Query on what would be payable in a 53-week year	Information was provided on this in the consultation pack; however, we will include in FAQs when consultation responses are publicised.

1	Concerned about DWP preventing rent being paid.	There should be no issues with the DWP as rent payable over 52 weeks is normal. Any queries from tenants will be supported by the income team. Inclusion in FAQ's when consultation responses are publicised.
1	Concerned about being allowed pets	Domestic pets which are not classed as a dangerous breed and do not cause a nuisance, damage etc are allowed by tenants with written consent. Inclusion in FAQs when consultation responses are publicised.
1	Concerned that rent will increase at other times of the year, in addition to April.	Whilst this is possible with the new tenancy agreement, in practice this is unlikely to occur.

2.10 We would propose that a slight change is made to section '3.4 Repairs, Maintenance and Alterations' based on the feedback received from tenants. The changes remove repairing responsibility of tenants for locks, gates, lagging and other insulation materials, broken or cracked glass in internal doors or windows, sealant, tap washers and starters in fluorescent lights. These changes will have a minimal financial impact to the STAR Housing/HRA as these elements are currently undertaken by STAR.

2.11 Included at appendix 5 is a table detailing the changes to the tenancy agreement as shared with tenants as part of the consultation pack.

2.12 Based on the overall support for the proposed changes with >94% of tenants falling into acceptance of the proposals, we would recommend that the new tenancy agreement is put to Shropshire Council for approval with STAR Housing planning mitigation for a small group of tenants including:

- Proactively contacting the 35 who requested help; offering budgeting support, DD setup, a Universal Credit/Housing Benefit update guide and sharing of the produced FAQs document.
- Acknowledgement that Christmas/March can be a pressure time for tenants financially with 102 planning around rent free weeks and offer support to enable them to overpay on their account and continue to take these rent clear weeks should their account be in credit.

2.13 The next step is to produce a report for Shropshire Council Full Council requesting the approval of the new tenancy agreement included in Appendix 4. This process fulfils the Preliminary Stage 1B requirements, where the Council is required to consider all comments made. The tenancy agreement is a Shropshire Council legal document, and they may make changes if they consider them to be valid. Whilst the report is submitted for approval, work will commence on the production of the draft website page detailing the consultation results including the publication of the FAQs document with targeted communications on service charges transparency, repairs responsibilities, parking and pets etc. The website will also include a copy of the final tenancy agreement.

2.14 Support will be made available by the income team for the tenants requesting budgeting help including Housing Benefit, Universal Credit, Alternative Payment Arrangements adjustments and Direct Debit and payment set up.

2.15 Providing the report is approved by Council, the adoption of the new tenancy agreement and implementation of a 52-week rent charging model can commence from April 2026. To implement this a 28-day notice of variation is served on all existing tenants. This is Stage 2 (and the final stage) of the statutory

consultation. It is proposed that this be included in the annual rent uplift letter which is also required 28 days before the new rent year. This will reduce the volume of information being sent to tenants and reduce postage costs.