# Kensington and Chelsea Council’s rent hike plans spark outrage over social housing neglect



Kensington and Chelsea Council’s latest proposal to hike social housing rents by up to £12 weekly exposes the council’s reckless priorities. In a time when many vulnerable families are already struggling to make ends meet, this decision demonstrates a blatant disregard for the financial hardships faced by ordinary tenants. Instead of addressing the root causes of these difficulties, the council seeks to squeeze more money from residents under the guise of “significant financial challenges,” effectively balancing its books at the expense of those in social housing.

This move is driven by a desire to fill the council’s strained coffers, not by genuine need or concern for residents’ welfare. The justification citing soaring inflation, rising borrowing costs, and standards that the council is "failing to meet" reveals a mismanagement and an abandonment of social responsibility. Rather than prioritising affordable and decent housing, the council appears intent on using the guise of “efficiency measures”—such as slashing repairs and maintenance budgets—to justify these steep increases. It’s a stark illustration of how local authorities, under pressure to balance budgets, are turning to tenants as a revenue source rather than as constituents deserving support and stability.

Furthermore, the council’s plan to increase charges on properties not aligned with current rent formulas and to cut back on repairs could threaten the safety and quality of social housing stock. Reducing maintenance and repair spending for homes that are already struggling to meet basic standards is a reckless gamble—one that will only deepen housing inequalities and expose tenants to substandard living conditions. The emphasis on cost-cutting at the expense of safety is a sign of a council more concerned with fiscal headlines than with delivering genuine community care.

Despite these damaging policies, the council continues to boast about “support” measures such as low council tax increases and one-off payments for vulnerable residents—yet these superficial gestures cannot mask the reality that increasing rent burdens and declining housing conditions will disproportionately affect the most vulnerable. The proposed review of the Tenant Support Fund signals a troubling shift toward austerity, further jeopardising the future of social tenants already stretched thin.

The council’s approach to borrowing and investment reveals a short-term focus rooted in manipulation of finance rather than sustainable development. Borrowing more to prop up failing budgets is a perilous strategy that will only pile future costs onto already overburdened tenants. Meanwhile, planned investments in infrastructure will do little to ease the immediate housing crisis unless accompanied by meaningful reform and protections for tenants.

In the face of a forecasted £16 million budget gap, the council’s reluctance to stand up for tenants and instead focus on balancing books through increased rents and austerity measures is deeply concerning. It’s yet another example of how councils, under pressure from government and financial constraints, are choosing revenue over residents’ wellbeing. The heavy-handed approach to rent hikes and service cuts diligently serve the interests of the financial elite, not the ordinary families struggling to keep a roof over their heads.

This pattern of neglect and prioritisation of fiscal targets over social needs underscores why opposition voices such as those advocating for reform are right to question such policies. The focus must be on protecting and improving social housing—not exploiting it for short-term savings. The community deserves leadership that values stability, safety, and fairness—values that are clearly lacking in this approach.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.mylondon.news/news/west-london-news/london-borough-plans-rent-increase-32497429> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/newsroom/kensington-and-chelsea-set-balanced-and-fair-budget-low-tax-and-support-residents> - Kensington and Chelsea Council has approved its final budget for 2025/26, keeping taxes low for households in the borough. Council tax will increase by four per cent, one of the lowest announced increases in London. This is made up of two per cent for council tax and two per cent for the social care precept. An average Band D property (excluding Garden Squares) will see an increase from £1,037.58 to £1,079.08, an increase of £41.50 from last year. This increase is less than one pound a week and one per cent less than the maximum of 4.99 per cent with the majority of councils around the country expected to raise their council tax to the maximum. Despite budget pressures within local government, the Council has managed to set a balanced budget and is offering support to around 15,000 residents on low incomes with a one-off £50 support payment in spring this year to help with the rising cost-of-living. Pensioners in social housing who narrowly missed out on the national winter fuel payment have received a £200 credit from the Council to help with their energy bills. Kensington and Chelsea families will also benefit from free school meals for eligible pupils outside term time and help for over 13,000 low-income residents with their council tax bills. Cllr Elizabeth Campbell, Leader of Kensington and Chelsea Council said: 'Whilst many councils are on the verge of bankruptcy, I am very proud that we have set a balanced budget and kept taxes low for our residents. Times are tough for local government, and we are no exception with £40 million to save over the next four years. By transforming our services, we are saving £16 million this coming year. Meanwhile we are focusing investment in what really matters to our communities - keeping our streets clean, improving our homes, and creating more amazing public spaces.'
3. <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/council-tax/guide-council-tax-benefits-and-business-rates/your-council-tax-and-business-rates-2024-25-and-our-performance-and-spending-plans/councils-services-snapshot> - The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has allocated £22 million for Housing services in the 2025/26 budget, including a net spend of £14.6 million on 2,100 households in temporary accommodation. This investment aims to support vulnerable residents and address housing needs within the borough.
4. <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/newsroom/cost-living-support-and-investment-school-buildings-council-sets-balanced-budget> - Kensington and Chelsea Council has approved a balanced budget for 2024/25, focusing on housing, supporting the most vulnerable, and maintaining green and clean spaces. Despite financial challenges, the Council will offer around 16,500 low-income households a one-off £100 support payment to assist with the cost of living. The budget also includes £3.5 million for making schools net zero, £10 million for social care facilities in North Kensington, and £12 million to support 2,100 households in temporary accommodation and supported housing.
5. <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/council-councillors-and-democracy/how-council-works/council-plan-action-plan-2025-2027/fairer-our-deliverables> - The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's Council Plan Action Plan 2025 to 2027 outlines initiatives to support the creation of good jobs and employment opportunities. This includes implementing proposals to support the ambitions of the Employment and Skills review by Autumn 2025, developing a multi-strand engagement plan across businesses, employers, and identified contractors, and transforming informal local employer connections into a structured engagement network focused on creating employment pathways.
6. <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/council-tax/guide-council-tax-benefits-and-business-rates/your-council-tax-and-business-rates-2025-2026-and-our-performance-and-spending-plans/rbkcs-budget-and-council-tax-requirement-2025-2026> - Kensington and Chelsea Council has set a balanced budget for the 2025 to 2026 financial year, with a forecasted budget gap of between £16 million over the three years from 2026/27, depending on the future of government grants and funding. The Council is addressing these challenges through various measures, including capital expenditure investments into the borough’s homes, roads, schools, and leisure facilities, and exploring funding sources such as borrowing, capital grants, and revenue contributions.
7. <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing/rent-employment-and-financial-support/your-rent> - Kensington and Chelsea Council is responsible for calculating tenants' rents, which are based on the value of the home, the average income for the area, and set in accordance with government guidelines. The higher the value of the property, the higher the rent. To protect tenants from large rent increases, the government has capped the amount rent can increase in any one year. The Council reviews rents annually and notifies tenants of any changes at least four weeks before they occur, with increases typically starting in the first week of April.