

Housing

Annual Report

www.wandsworth.gov.uk/housingaqr

2017-2018



Welcome to the Annual Report, which sets out how well Wandsworth's housing services have performed over the last year, from April 2017 to March 2018.

We are committed to providing quality services to you, our residents. Throughout the year we have worked

hard to ensure that we meet our service standards and provide value for money. I am pleased to say that overall this year we have again achieved this goal. Nonetheless, we remain committed to listening to your views and finding out how we can improve.

Ensuring you are safe in your home is our top priority. Following the tragic events at Grenfell Tower in June 2017, we have taken significant steps to review our fire safety measures and follow the latest advice from the London Fire Brigade. We will continue to ensure that our buildings comply with the highest fire safety standards and reassure you at every step of the way. Work to replace the cladding on two council blocks - Castlemaine and Sudbury House - is well underway. We have also begun plans to install sprinkler systems to all high-rise council blocks in the borough, and have completed works to fit sprinklers in our homeless hostel at Nightingale Square.

In 2017-18, local authorities across London saw a continued and significant demand from households seeking help with their housing and people rough sleeping. Wandsworth successfully managed this demand over the year and fully prepared itself for new duties to prevent homelessness which came into effect in April 2018, including the recruitment of 28 new housing advice staff to meet these challenges.

During 2017-2018, the department began to develop a new housing IT system. Work to implement the new system is progressing well and it is on track to go live in May 2019. The system will not only improve the way we deliver services, but also the way we communicate with you. The system will feature a brand new customer portal which will make it easier for you to get in touch with us and find out information about your housing.

2017-2018 saw many challenges for local authority housing departments, but Wandsworth has met these effectively and continues to deliver high quality services as set out in this report. This report has been produced in partnership with the residents' focus group and I'd like to thank them for their invaluable assistance.

Brian Reilly
Director of Housing and Regeneration

The Annual Report tells you how well we have done in five key areas:

- **Tenancy**
- **Home**
- **Neighbourhood and community**
- **Resident involvement**
- **Value for money**

A traffic light system is used within the Annual Report to assess how well we have performed.



standard met



standard partially met, some work to do



standard not met, work required to meet the standard

Priorities for 2017-2018 were

Review fire safety measures across council managed properties and progress a **programme of sprinkler installations** in our high rise properties.

To **review and update** the housing delivery strategy, 'Wandsworth Housing Offer.'

Progress plans to **deliver at least 300 homes** over the next three to five years through the Council's development programme.

Progress plans to deliver **45 more properties for Extra Care housing** for frail, older residents between 2015-2021.

Begin to **deliver the regeneration plans** for Winstanley/York Road and Alton estates.

Ensure that implications arising from the **Homelessness Reduction Act 2017** were addressed.

Review and update the **council's Tenancy Strategy and Policy** to ensure the requirements and guidance contained in the Housing and Planning Act 2016 were met.

Continue to **review the housing webpages** to improve them for our residents.

Procure a **new CCTV and emergency control** facility to incorporate Wandsworth Emergency Control and the WATCH alarm service.

Procure and develop a **new housing IT system** and begin implementation.

*Council residents mean council tenants, council leaseholders and people living in properties managed by a Resident Management Organisation (RMO).

**Where available figures for the previous year 2016-17 are shown in brackets.

Tenancy

We will

Make the best use of the available housing stock

Be clear with residents about how properties are allocated

Provide support to residents to enable them to maintain their tenancy

Allocations

Provide information on how we allocate properties and how to apply for housing.

Make sure we are making the best use of the housing available to meet a range of housing needs.

How have we met the standard?

- Housed **905 (895)** households in 2017/18. This is slightly lower than the forecast of **992**.
- Received **5,049 (4,858) online housing applications** this year, which equates to **92% (88%)** of all applications received.
- It took an average of **27.2 days to relet a property (22.1)**. Performance is closely monitored and additional resources have been allocated to improve turnaround time.
- Moved **50 (95) under occupying households** to smaller more suitable accommodation.
- The number of **households in temporary accommodation** rose to **1,884 (1,571)** which was slightly higher than the forecast of **1,821**.
- only **9% of households in Temporary Accommodation** were in Bed and Breakfast at the end of the year. This is better than the council forecast of **12%**.
- The council's **development programme** has been progressing well. **4** new homes completed in 2017/18, **71** new homes are under construction, **125** have secured planning consent and **24** have had planning applications submitted. The programme is on track to deliver our target of **300** homes in three-five years. During the year, the council also announced a significant expansion of the programme which is now due to deliver some **1,000** homes in total over the next eight years.

Rents

To provide an efficient, effective and responsive rent collection service.

Review rents and service charges each year and provide information on how we calculate them.

How have we met the standard?

- At the end of the year, **total rent arrears** were **£3.12m (£2.43m)**. This equates to **2.48% (1.98%)** of the total rent collected. Last year, a one-off adjustment of water rates meant that accounts were credited and rent arrears were lower. Therefore, whilst total arrears have increased this year, they are still below the target of **2.66%**.
- **4.33%** of tenants have more than seven weeks **arrears (3.81%)**.
- The financial inclusion team has helped more tenants access **free benefit advice**, and help with debt management. They **assisted 712 (382) tenants** to reduce their rent arrears and maintain their tenancy during 2017/18.
- The financial inclusion team also held **drop in sessions** offering free, confidential and impartial advice, which over **400 residents attended**.

Tenure

Provide either introductory, flexible fixed term or secure tenancies.

Give new residents a copy of their tenancy or lease agreements and explain the content.

Check our homes are occupied legally and take action where they are not.

How have we met the standard?

- All tenants received a **written tenancy agreement** which is explained to them.
- **2,699 (2,285)** occupancy checks were carried out.
- **206 (124) tenants** were helped by the **tenancy support team** during 2017/18. The team work with tenants who are in danger of losing their tenancies. They helped reduce the overall arrears of all of those engaged with the service by **40%**, an improvement on last year (**34%**).



New council homes in Limpsfield Avenue

Home

We will

Provide a value for money, timely and good quality repairs and at all times ensure that necessary health and safety checks are undertaken

Maintain all homes to the decent homes standard* as a minimum

Undertake a programme of decent homes plus** work to improve blocks and estates

Monitor and report our performance for emergency, urgent and routine repairs and take action where contractors do not meet standards set



Quality of accommodation

Meet the decent homes standard and undertake a programme of decent homes plus works.

How have we met the standard?

- Continued to meet the **Decent Homes Standard** and **invested £20.9m (£24.4m)** to maintain the council's housing stock.
- We undertook further **environmental improvements** to our estates at a cost of **£216,000 (£319,000)**. This included improved lighting, pathways, additional parking and new outdoor fitness equipment on estates.
- **Started 46 (49) major works** projects including roof renewals, window renewals and external decoration schemes.
- Continued to **exceed our target** for the number of **repairs** post-inspected to ensure our properties are **maintained to a good standard** and our contractors are performing well.
- We are building **50 new self-contained units** of temporary accommodation in Tooting. These are now due to complete by the end of 2018.



Henry Prince estate



Repairs and maintenance

Provide an efficient and cost effective repairs service, which gets the job done right the first time.

Carry out health and safety checks.

How have we met the standard?

- **£22.3m (£23.3m)** spent on planned and responsive repairs.
- **91.6% (93.6%)** of repairs were completed within target time.
- Satisfaction with completed repairs has increased from **92% to 94%**.
- Carried out annual **gas servicing in 99.8% (99.9%) of tenanted properties** that have gas appliances.
- **Carry out inspections** to all of our blocks every year including health and safety checks.
- Carried out **1,970 fire safety inspections** to homes in council blocks of 10 storeys or more to date. We check that doors are fire compliant, smoke alarms are fitted and other safety measures are in place, as well as inspecting communal areas of blocks and reviewing Fire Risk Assessments.
- Works began to **remove and replace cladding** on two council blocks (Sudbury House and Castlemaine). Works are due to complete on both buildings by July 2019.
- As an **additional safety measure**, the council is developing plans to **install sprinkler systems to all council blocks of ten storeys or more**. The council has applied to the First Tier Property Tribunal for confirmation that we have the legal authority to require sprinklers to be fitted in all properties in these blocks.

*The decent homes standard is set by the Government and outlines specific criteria that social housing must meet to be considered decent. For more information www.gov.uk (search Decent Homes)

**Decent Homes Plus standard is Wandsworth Council's own higher standard based on Government guidelines.

Neighbourhood and community

We will

Work with partners to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour

Work with residents to improve local facilities and the environment

Respond to emergencies in a timely manner and work to keep our estates clean and safe



Local area co-operation

Work with residents to improve the local environment.

Work with other agencies and residents to protect them from risk and prevent harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Work to achieve wider borough objectives including improving employment opportunities and prospects.

How have we met the standard?

- On the 31 March 2018, the **Family Recovery Project** was working with **27 (35)** families in the borough with complex needs to improve their future prospects. For example, they helped families out of rent arrears and **into secure accommodation**. Over the course of 2017/18, they supported **61 (60)** families.
- The department continues to support the **Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub** to ensure effective joint working to **improve safety of children** in the borough.
- **Our safeguarding procedures** continue to be **reviewed annually** and we carry out an annual audit of working arrangements to **ensure staff understand** their safeguarding responsibilities.
- **All Housing and Regeneration staff** undertake safeguarding training when they join the council and every three years thereafter. **200 staff undertook training in 2017.**
- The department worked in partnership with the **Chelsea Football Club Kicks** project to deliver football sessions for young people on estates across the borough. There were **395 Kicks sessions** throughout the year with an average of **19 participants** per session. We continue to work with Chelsea Football Club to deliver more sessions including a new project for older residents.



Tackling anti-social behaviour and crime

Work with other services and the police to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Take action against offenders and tell residents about outcomes.

How have we met the standard?

- We served **49 (34)** Notices of Seeking Possession for ASB and carried out **11 (5)** evictions for ASB.
- **Publicised action taken against serious offenders** in Homelife and through press releases.
- The area housing teams **closed 439 (224)** cases of ASB which is **93% (68%)** of all cases opened during the rolling year.
- **92% (92%)** of noise complaints were responded to **within 5 days.**
- The department continued to attend regular meetings with local Police's neighbourhood safety teams and took action in areas of concern where required.



Housing in Wandsworth

Neighbourhood management



Ensure estates are maintained to a good standard and improved where possible.

Respond to emergencies in target times.

Work with other services and the police to keep your communities and estates clean and safe.

How have we met the standard?

- On average Wandsworth Emergency Control receive **over 3000 telephone calls per week. 39,869 (49,379)** of these required further action during 2017/18 for example a repair or visit from an estates services officer.
- **99.9% (95.5%)** of emergency calls* to Wandsworth Emergency Control (WEC) were **responded to within 30 minutes.**
- **96.4% (98.3%)** of graffiti was removed within target time.

- Removed **19,561msq (16,174msq)** of graffiti at a cost of **£129,543 (£110,374).**
- **Allocated £300,000 (£246,430)** from the small improvement budget for residents' associations (RAs) to fund community projects. These included:
 - The conversion of overgrown land into a lawn and parking spaces
 - Garden refurbishments such as new flower beds, patios and tables/chairs
- Consulted with residents to **identify opportunities** for new homes and estate improvements.
- Advanced the installation of high speed broadband. More than a third of **Council properties (11,358)** in Wandsworth now have **full fibre-optic broadband** available to them.
- Plans to regenerate the **Alton Estate (Roehampton)** and the **Winstanley and York Road Estates (Latchmere)** progressed. The council held **engagement events** with residents throughout the year. All secure council tenants who live on these estates will be offered a home in the area, with a tenancy on a **like-for-like** basis and resident leaseholders will be given the opportunity to move into a new home in the area.



506 Dog related incidents were responded to by the animal welfare **team**

7 prosecutions were undertaken with **100%** being successful

19 roadshows were held to educate residents about **dog welfare** and **responsible ownership**

109 verbal **warnings** were issued to dog owners who broke the bye-laws

*Emergency calls include lift trappings, fire related incidents and dangerous structures.

Resident involvement

We will

Involve residents in decision-making processes that affect them

Support the development of accredited residents' associations

Provide residents with a variety of methods to tell us what they think of the services

Learn from complaints and make use of them to improve services



Understanding more and responding to diverse needs

Treat residents with fairness and respect.

Make sure services meet a range of needs and are easily accessible to all residents.

How have we met the standard?

- **Carried out 187 (189)** disabled adaptations to council and private homes to enable people to remain independent in their home, a **10% increase on our target**.
- **22 (15)** people who required adapted housing were allocated accessible homes.
- **2,389 (2,355)** residents use the WATCH Lifeline service which helps older residents and those with disabilities to remain independent in their homes. **220 (338)** new users signed up to the service.
- There were **192 Telecare Users** at the end of 2017/18, an increase on last year (**184**). Telecare offers a range of buttons and sensors to help manage risks surrounding falls, fire and gas.
- The number of **'Stay Put Stay Safe'** (SPSS) applicants assisted during the year was **39 (30)** which reflects the rise in SPSS referrals to **66 (57)**.
- The council work in partnership with **House Exchange**, a website which helps council residents across the UK find someone to swap homes with. Tenants can register for free with House Exchange*.
- Progressed plans with housing associations to **build 95 more extra care homes** in the borough for frail, older people. (Planning consent has been granted for 54 of these and an application for 41 has been submitted.)
- Worked in partnership with Chelsea Football Club to extend the **Chelsea Kicks programme** to older residents living in sheltered accommodation. Regular **fitness sessions** are held at the Lennox Sheltered Scheme and we are working to roll this out to other schemes.
- **Reviewed and updated** housing webpages on the council's website.
- Equalities data is analysed and published on the council's website to ensure services are **accessible to all residents**.

*www.houseexchange.org.uk



Customer service, choice and complaints

Give residents good quality, up to date information.

Make sure residents know how to complain.

Learn from comments and complaints.

How have we met the standard?

- Dealt with **265 (300)** complaints (about both the department and contractors).
- **64% (76%)** of complaints were responded to within the target time of 10 working days.
- **69% (79%)** of complaints were successfully dealt with at stage one of the complaints procedure.





Easter party at Battersea Fields



Cllr Ravi Govindia meets residents on the Alton estate



Deputy Mayor Cllr Jane Cooper officially names "HMS Battersea Men's Shed" at the boat launch in Barn Elms

Involvement

Encourage resident involvement.
Inform residents about services and give them the opportunity to check and challenge how well the housing service is doing.

How have we met the standard?

- **31 (32)** unannounced estate inspections were carried out with residents and councillors. .
- Supported **56 (63)** accredited RAs in the borough.
- There are **17 housing community champions**. These are resident volunteers who have been recognised for the community work they do on their estates. We support them to continue their work and provide funding. This year, projects have included **community gardens, planting an orchard and a local film festival**.
- **Social inclusion schemes** have been delivered across the borough, including the popular **Battersea Men's Shed** at Dimson Lodge, which allows older men and women to come together to enjoy carpentry and crafts. This year the group built a boat which was launched on the Thames.
- A **leaseholder satisfaction survey** was carried out and a Housing Management STAR Lite satisfaction survey is underway.
- Overall satisfaction with services has increased. Tenant satisfaction is **76% (75%)** and **60% (53%)** for leaseholders.

Value for money

We will

Provide frontline services in the most cost effective manner

Take action to prevent fraudulent use of council owned and managed properties

Monitor the use of services to ensure they are fully utilised and they are providing value for money



Value for money

Consult residents on major works projects and inform them of smaller works, which do not require statutory consultation.

Aim to achieve value for money by tendering services where, for example, contracts have come to an end.

Each year look at our 30 year business plan to check it remains financially viable.



Housing Customer Centre at 90 Putney Bridge Road



Building works underway

How have we met the standard?

- Continued to effectively manage the **Housing Revenue Account (HRA)**, and increased the reserve level to **£333m up from £321.9m** The Department has a financially viable business plan in place for the next 30 years. This allows the council to fund its **regeneration and new build** plans which are being delivered now.
- The council consulted on all major works and external redecoration schemes, we served:
 - **2,011 (1,857)** Notices of Intention*; and
 - **1,566 (1,215)** Section 20 Notices* on leaseholders.
- The average weekly management cost during the year was **£18.94 (£18.90)**.
- The average weekly maintenance cost decreased from **£30.74 to £27.67**.
- Average weekly rent was **£127.20** compared to **£128.14** last year.

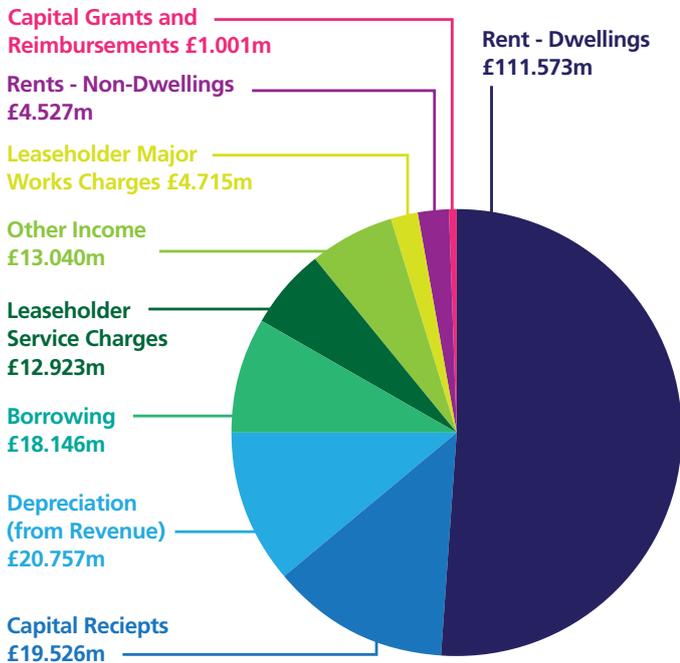


Sutherland Grove in spring

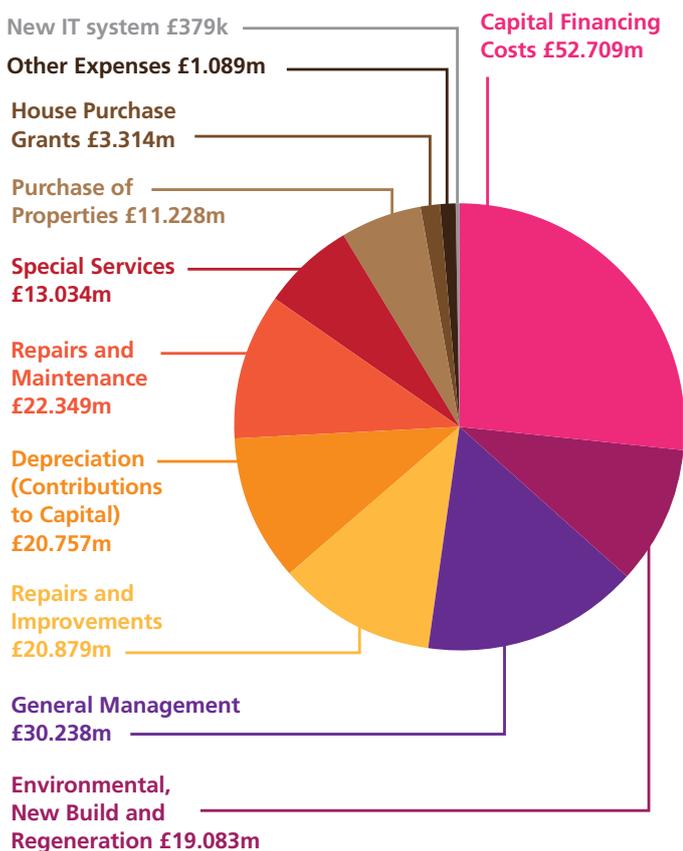
*These are a statutory requirement to consult leaseholders on schemes of major works costing more than £250 per leaseholder.

Priorities for 2018-2019

Housing revenue account 2017/18 Income total £206.208m



Housing revenue account 2016/17 Expenditure total £195.059m



To progress the replacement of cladding at Sudbury House and Castlemaine and put in place a programme to install sprinkler systems in our high rise properties.

To continue to carry out fire safety inspections to homes in blocks of 10 storeys and over.

To establish a residents' working group to review the cleaning specification and contract ahead of re-tendering the service.

To review and update the Wandsworth Housing Strategy.

Continue to progress plans to deliver 1,000 homes over the next three to five years through the Council's development programme. Recruit a 'Homes Champion' to identify sites and deliver major housebuilding programmes.

Progress plans to deliver 95 more extra care homes for frail, older residents by 2021.

Progress plans to deliver three supported housing schemes across the Borough.

Progress the delivery of the regeneration plans for Winstanley/York Road and Alton estates.

Successfully implement new duties to prevent and reduce homelessness under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Further roll out high speed broadband in Council-owned residential properties taking the total number of properties to 20,000.

Review the ASB Policy Statement and consult with residents on this.

Review and update the Council's Tenancy Strategy and Policy.

Procure and develop a new CCTV and emergency control facility and begin implementation.

Implement a new housing IT system including Customer Portal.