

Housing Annual Report

www.wandsworth.gov.uk/housing

2018-2019



Welcome to the Housing Annual Report 2018-2019 which sets out how well the council's Housing and Regeneration Department has performed over the last year.

We have continued to work hard to meet our service standards and provide you with value for money.

This report is an opportunity for you to see how we've done over the year and assess our performance.

Following the government's publication of the Social Housing Green Paper we started working with a group of residents to review the council's participation structures. This includes how we report performance, how we consult with residents and how you can get involved with the work of the department. The Residents' Working Group has provided invaluable input to ensure our structures provide a range of participation opportunities.

In 2018-2019 the department refreshed and consulted on its Housing and Homelessness Strategy and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy. These key documents set out the department's approach to matters that affect your housing including how we tackle ASB and our housing priorities for the next five years, setting ourselves clear goals to deliver change and improvement.

We have invested £26.9m in council housing, £6m more than in the previous year ensuring all council properties continue to meet the Decent Homes

Standard. We have also successfully rolled out broadband to more than 21,000 homes, with a target to connect 30,000 by the end of 2019.

A group of residents have helped us design a new contract for the cleaning of communal areas in your blocks and estates. Residents provided insight into what a new cleaning contract should look like so that we can ensure a high standard of service. We have also continued to take significant steps to ensure our buildings comply with the highest fire safety standards completing over 2,000 fire safety inspections in council properties of 10 storeys or more and progressing the re-cladding of Castlemaine and Sudbury House.

Our council led development programme is on track to deliver over 1,000 new homes over the next five to seven years, of which 475 homes are either completed, under construction, with planning or due to obtain planning consent this year.

This Annual Report was produced in partnership with a residents' focus group. I'd like to thank all the residents who have participated throughout the year and we hope to see many more of you getting involved in the future.

To find out more about how you can get involved with matters affecting your housing or join your residents' association, visit www.wandsworth.gov.uk/getinvolvedhousing.

Brian Reilly
Director of Housing and Regeneration

Priorities for 2018-2019 were:

Progress the **replacement of cladding** at Sudbury House and Castlemaine.

Continue to carry out **individual fire safety inspections** to properties in blocks of 10 storeys and over.

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

Review and refresh the Wandsworth Housing and Homelessness Strategy.

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

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

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 relieve homelessness under the **Homelessness Reduction Act 2017**.

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

Review and update the council's **Tenancy Strategy and Policy**.

Develop a **new CCTV and emergency control facility** and begin implementation.

Implement a **new housing IT system** including customer portal.

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

- **Tenancy**
- **Home**
- **Resident involvement**
- **Neighbourhood and Community**
- **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



work required to meet the standard

*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 2017-18 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?

- Reviewed and updated the Wandsworth Housing Strategy and incorporated the Homelessness Strategy objectives available on the councils website.
- **Housed 886 (905)** households in 2018/19. This is lower than the forecast target of **1,000**.
- **3,145 (2,639) online housing applications completed** this year, which equates to **95%** of all applications received (**92%**).
- It took an average of **25.1 days to relet a property**, this is an improvement on last year (**27.2**). Performance is closely monitored to continue to improve turnaround times.
- Completed a targeted under occupation survey of five plus bedroom council homes to identify households who could be assisted to downsize. As a result of the survey **47 occupancy checks** have been carried out, of which **five households** are being assisted to downsize. Of the remaining **42 households**, 19 have been identified as under-occupying and are in contact with the council.
- **Moved 53 (50)** under occupying households to smaller more suitable accommodation in the borough.
- The number of households in **temporary accommodation rose to 2,076 (1,884)** which was slightly higher than the forecast of **1,934**.
- **6% (9%) of households** in temporary accommodation are in Bed and Breakfast. This is better than the council forecast of **10%**.
- The council led **development programme** is on track to deliver **over 1,000 new homes** in the next five to seven years. Priority for these homes will be given to local people who live or work in the borough. **14** new homes were completed in 2018/19, a further **174** homes are under construction, of which **64** are due to be completed in 2019/20. **46** have secured planning consent, and a further **241** have had planning applications submitted or are due to have planning applications submitted in 2019/20. **475 new homes** are therefore either already completed, under construction, with planning or due to obtain planning consent this year.

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 **£3.56m (£3.12m)**. This equates to **2.84% (2.48%)** of the total rent collected.
- **5.33%** of tenants have more than seven weeks **arrears (4.33%)**.
- For those tenants who need assistance, the Financial Inclusion Team provide **free benefit advice, debt management intervention and help with budgeting**. They **assisted 661 (712)** tenants to reduce their rent arrears and maintain their tenancies during 2018/19. The team also run a monthly drop in advice surgery in Roehampton and **helped around 100 residents** during the year.

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?

- Reviewed and updated the council's Tenancy Strategy and Policy in consultation with residents to provide longer tenancies for new social housing tenants.
- All tenants received a **written tenancy agreement** which is explained to them.
- **2,498 (2,699)** occupancy checks were carried out.
- **228 (206) tenants** were helped by the tenancy support team during 2018/19, the team work with and support tenants who are in danger of losing their tenancies.

Home

We will

- Provide value for money, timely and a good quality repairs and maintenance service for residents, 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 £26.9m (£20.9m)** to maintain the council's housing stock.
- We undertook further **environmental improvements** to our estates at a cost of **£650,000 (£216,000)**. This included improved lighting, pathways, additional parking and new outdoor fitness equipment on estates.
- **Started 43 (46) major works** projects including roof renewals, window renewals and external decoration schemes.
- Continued to post-inspect a set number of individual **property repairs** to ensure our properties are **maintained to a good standard**. The number of repairs inspected is dependent each year on the scale and cost of repair works.

*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.



Re-cladding of Sudbury House, Wandsworth

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?

- **£23.9m (£22.3m)** spent on planned and responsive repairs.
- **88.1% (91.6%)** of repairs were completed within target time.¹ Additional monitoring of repairs performance has been put in place and the re-tendering of contracts is expected to improve performance over the coming year.
- **90% (94%)** tenant satisfaction with completed repairs.
- **99% of emergency repairs** are being responded to within target timescales.
- Carried out annual **gas servicing in 99.9% (99.8%) of tenanted properties** that have gas appliances.
- Established a working group with residents to review the cleaning specification and contract in advance of re-tendering the service.
- **Carried out scheduled quarterly health and safety checks** to all of our blocks and estates, these are supported by regular checks completed by Estate Services Officers when attending to daily duties.
- Carried out **2,258 (1,970) fire safety inspections** to council properties of 10 storeys or more in 2018/19. 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 (FRA).
- **External cladding at Sudbury House** has been replaced from the 14th-24th floors (at the time of writing) works are due to be completed in May 2020. At **Castlemaine cladding has been replaced** from the 15th-20th floors and works are due to be completed in April 2020.
- As an additional safety measure, the council is progressing plans to **install sprinkler systems** to all Sheltered and Hostel accommodation.

¹ repairs are awarded a priority (emergency, urgent and non-urgent) target timescales are dependent on the priority.

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 local facilities and the 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 2019, the **Family Recovery Project** was working with **34 (27)** 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 2018/19, they supported **50 (61)** families.
- The department continue to support the **Childrens Services Initial Point of Contact (IPOC)** 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. **79 staff undertook training in 2018/19.**
- 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 **388 (295) Kicks sessions** throughout the year with an average of **16 (19) participants** per session.
- The Regeneration team worked with **Work Match** to provide local training and **employment opportunities.**

* e.g. Police, Social Services, Local Stakeholders



Chelsea Kicks Project



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?

- The council aims to prevent ASB and in 2018/19 we served **24 (49)** Notices of Seeking Possession for ASB and carried out **7 (11)** evictions for ASB.
- **Evicted 2 (0) households** using the absolute ground for possession as a consequence of committing serious offences.
- **Offered shorter tenancies** to those with a history of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in order to monitor their behaviour.
- **Publicised action taken against serious offenders** in Homelife and through press releases.
- Consulted with residents to review the ASB policy statement.
- Department has started to work towards Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation.
- The area housing teams **closed 198 (234) cases** of ASB last year which is **60%** of all cases opened during the rolling year.
- **94% (92%)** of noise complaints were responded to **within the 5 day target.**
- Continued to attend regular meetings with local Police's neighbourhood safety teams and took action in areas of concern where required.



Community event at Doddington and Rollo Estate

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 (WEC) receive **over 3000 telephone calls per week. During the year 37,244 (39,869)** of these required further action.
- **99% (99%)** of emergency calls* to WEC were **responded to within 30 minutes.**
- Commissioned a **new CCTV and emergency control facility** to go live in summer 2020.
- **Allocated £293,672 (£300,000)** to the small improvement budget for residents' associations (RAs) to fund community projects. This year these have included:
 - Supplying and fitting a six space lockable bicycle hanger
 - Creating an outside clothes drying area
 - Undertaking garden improvements, including new benches and signage.

- Removed **23,411msq (19,561msq)** of graffiti at a cost of **£160,144 (£129,543).**
- **98.1% (96.4%)** of graffiti was removed within target time.
- Identified and explored opportunities for future improvements and new homes through consultation with residents.
- The **installation of high-speed broadband** has advanced. More than three quarters of council properties in Wandsworth now have full fibre-optic broadband available to them. This equates to **21,400 properties** with a target to connect **30,000** by the end of 2019.
- The **regeneration schemes** on the Alton Estate (Roehampton) and the Winstanley and York Road Estates (Latchmere) continue to progress. The Winstanley and York Road Joint Venture submitted a planning application for over 2,500 new homes in January 2019, with the first 46 new replacement council homes due to be delivered in September 2020. Redrow Homes submitted an application for over 1,100 new homes in June 2019, with the first new replacement council homes to be delivered in 2021. All secure council tenants who live on these estates will be offered a home in the redevelopment on a secure tenancy, and for the same rent as their current property for a new home of the same size.
- The animal welfare team responded to **524 (506) dog related incidents** in the year, **27 (7) prosecutions** with **100% success rate, 197 verbal warnings** issued to dog owners who broke by-laws, and **six community protection notices issued.**

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



New Development at Rowditch Lane, Battersea

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

98% of graffiti was removed within target time at a cost of **£160,144**

installation of **high-speed** broadband in **21,400** properties

99% of emergency calls to **WEC** were responded to within **30 minutes**

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

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?

- 17 unannounced estate inspections were carried out with residents and councillors as part of a pilot scheme which has been running since November 2017.
- Supported 54 (56) accredited Resident Associations in the borough, representing over 1,000 properties.
- There are 21 (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, a competition to design new signage and a community mural.
- Social inclusion schemes have been delivered across the borough, including the Community Development Older People's Choir – 'An A-Choired Taste' which has gone from strength to strength, performing at the 60+ Café and the Lantern Festival in Roehampton.
- Launched Get Active Roehampton community day providing residents with the opportunity to see the latest proposals for the Alton Estate regeneration, the day included live music, sports activities and interactive games.
- Set-up a resident working group to consult on and review council participation structures and approaches. This is to ensure we are providing residents with the opportunity to participate at different levels of their choice. For more information on getting involved visit www.wandsworth.gov.uk/getinvolvedhousing
- Overall satisfaction with services has decreased. Tenant satisfaction is 68% (76%) and 52% (60%) for leaseholders. As a response to this the council is undertaking a survey to explore reasons for this in further detail. The council has also set up a resident working group of both leaseholders and tenants to improve how we interact and communicate with residents.

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 309 (265) complaints (about housing service and contractors).
- 54% (64%) of complaints were responded to within the target time of 10 working days.
- 65% (69%) of complaints were successfully dealt with at stage one of the complaints procedure.





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?

- Met the demand for disabled adaptations for council and private residents, delivering **351 (187)** adaptations to enable people to remain independent in their home. During the year, we implemented a Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant Policy which allows the council to provide adaptations for a greater number of residents.
- **16 (22)** people requiring adapted housing were allocated accessible homes.
- **2,419 (2,389)** residents use the **WATCH Lifeline service** which helps older residents and those with disabilities to remain independent in their homes. **226 (220)** new users signed up to the service in 2018/19.
- There were **209 Telecare Users** at the end of 2018/19, an increase on last year (**192**). Telecare provides a range of sophisticated sensors and alarms to help residents remain independent.
- The number of **'Stay Put Stay Safe' (SPSS)** applicants assisted during the year was **57 (39)** which reflects the rise in SPSS referrals to **75 (66)**.
- 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*, 620 Wandsworth tenants have already registered.
- Progressed plans with housing associations to **build 95 more extra care homes** in the borough for frail and elderly people. Planning permissions have been obtained for all **95** homes, with **41** having started on site in January 2019, with the remaining **54** due to start on site late summer 2019.
- 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**. The council also completes Equality Impact Need Assessment's (EINAs) for all policy statements to ensure we are serving all members of the community fairly. For equalities data, visit www.wandsworth.gov.uk/housing/about-the-housing-department/housing-and-equalities

*www.houseexchange.org.uk



Community Development Choir, 'An-A Choired Taste'



Orchard planting, Ashburton Estate



Un-veiling of the new mural at Carey Gardens

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.



How have we met the standard?

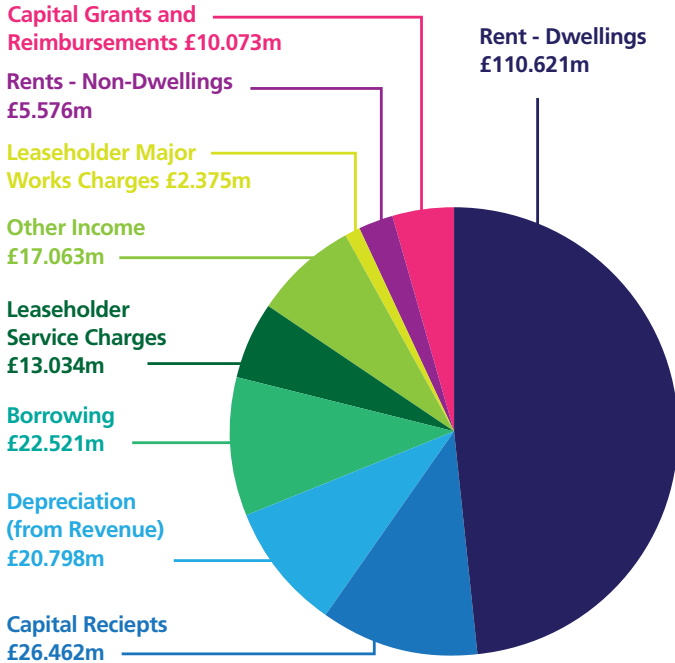
- Continued to effectively manage the **Housing Revenue Account** (HRA), demonstrated by an increased reserve level of **£343m** up from **£333m** at the end of 2017/18. The 30 year business plan remains viable with balances available to deal with risks and emergencies.
- The council consulted on all major works and external redecoration schemes, we served:
 - **1,784 (2,011)** Notices of Intention*; and
 - **2,417 (1,566)** Section 20 Notices* on leaseholders.
- In addition to notices for major works the council consulted on the renewal of long-term service agreements** for lift maintenance and cleaning:
 - **19,000** Notices of Intention, and
 - **6,400** Section 20 Notices on leaseholders.
- The average weekly management cost during the year was **£18.94 (£18.90)**.
- The average weekly maintenance cost reduced to **£27.67 (£30.74)**.
- Average weekly rent was **£126.17** compared to **£127.20** last year.
- **51 (31) illegally occupied council properties** were recovered by the council in partnership with the South West London Fraud Partnership.



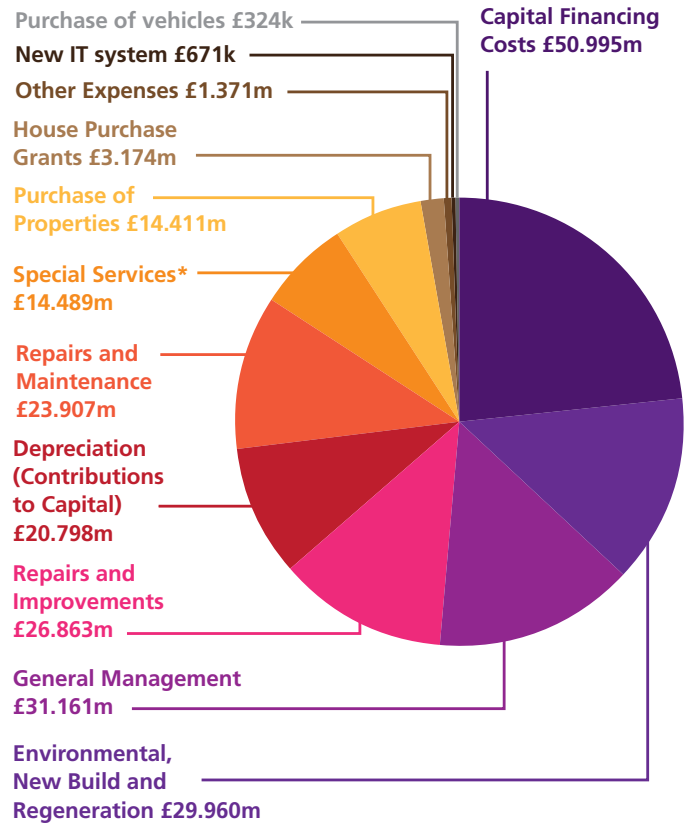
* These are a statutory requirement to consult leaseholders on schemes of major works costing more than £250 per leaseholder.
** Long term service agreements are anything over 12 months.



Housing revenue account 2018/19 Income total £228.523m



Housing revenue account 2018/19 Expenditure total £218.124m



Priorities for 2019-2020

Progress the replacement of cladding at Sudbury House and Castlemaine and the programme to retro-fit sprinklers in sheltered and hostel accommodation.

Continue to carry out individual fire safety inspections to properties in blocks of 10 storeys and over.

Carry out communal electrical testing and inspections, prioritising blocks of 10 storeys and over.

Create a Compliance Team to ensure a renewed focus on fire safety and issues of housing compliance and health and safety.

Continue to progress plans to deliver 1,000 new homes over the next five to seven years through the council's development programme.

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

Work with Adult Social Services to review the demand for supported housing to provide homes for those needing it.

Continue to invest in the Environmental Estate Improvement Programme and target areas where improvements are needed most.

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

Further roll out high speed broadband in council-owned residential properties taking the total number of properties to 30,000.

Progress the development of the new CCTV and emergency control facility to be fully functioning by Summer 2020.

Continue work to implement a new housing IT system including customer portal this year.

Respond to findings in the Social Housing Green Paper by reviewing resident participation structures and developing a Resident Participation and Consultation Strategy to empower residents to get involved.

Gain the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation which recognises best practice in dealing with domestic abuse.

Work with partner agencies and utilise government funding effectively to assist entrenched rough sleepers and minimise rough sleeping in the borough.