

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



Welcome to the Housing Annual Report 2019-2020 which sets out how well the council's Housing and Regeneration Department (HRD) has performed over the last year.

We have continued to work hard to meet our service standards and provide you with value for money. Whilst much of the first half of 2020 has been focused on the

COVID-19 response, prior to this the HRD achieved plenty to be proud of in 2019/20 (financial year April 2019 - April 2020).

The department has continued to focus on fire safety, gaining approval to recruit a compliance team. You may have seen the re-cladding at Sudbury House and Castlemaine, which is now close to completion. Sudbury House was a particular challenge as it involved erecting scaffolding above the Southside shopping centre. We are now part of the Early Adopters group to trial recommendations from the Hackitt review into building regulations and fire safety.

We continue to work towards our targets, including building 1,000 new homes by 2026 and to become a carbon neutral organisation by 2030, following Wandsworth's declaration of a Climate Emergency.

The council embarked on a full-scale review of its participation structures in partnership with a Residents Working Group (RWG). The RWG's work fed into our new Resident Participation and Consultation Strategy which includes an action plan of how we will improve resident engagement. I would like to once again thank all the participants for their efforts.

We continue working towards the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation. We are committed to finding ways to improve our response to domestic abuse.

This Annual Report was produced in partnership with a residents' focus group which took place on a virtual platform due to social distancing. I'd like to thank all the participants for their flexibility and patience.

Lastly, it would be remiss of me not to mention COVID-19. In the next financial year we will be in the shadow of this pandemic, focusing on a return to some semblance of normality. Ultimately, protecting our communities is of the utmost importance.

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

Brian Reilly
Director of Housing and Regeneration

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

Priorities for 2019-2020 were:

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 and Strategic Technical Advice Team** to ensure a renewed focus on fire safety and issues of housing compliance.

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

Champion and **enable development** on private and publicly owned sites.

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

Work with **Adult Social Services** to review the need for supported housing to provide homes for those who need it most.

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

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

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 by Summer 2019.

Respond to findings in the **Social Housing Green Paper** by reviewing resident participation structures and developing a Resident Participation 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.

*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 2018-19 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 **879 (886)** households in 2019/20. This is lower than the forecast target of **1,241 (1,000)**.
- Received **2,080 (3,145) online housing applications** this year, which equates to **87.5% (95%)** of all applications received. Bedding in issues with the new online system led to a decrease in online applications, however this is expected to rise again in 2020/21.
- It took an average of **36.8 (25.1) days to re-let a property**, this is an increase on last year. This figure has been impacted, in part, due to re-let delays with 3 properties having more than 4 offers before being accepted which has impacted on the overall turnaround time.
- Helped **46 (55)** under occupying households to move to smaller more suitable accommodation therefore freeing up larger properties for families in the borough.
- The number of households in **temporary accommodation (TA)** rose to **2,414 (2,076)** which was higher than the forecast of **2,032 (1,934)**.
- **6% (6%) of households** in TA are in Bed and Breakfast. This is better than the council forecast of **10%**; the department have been working hard to provide self-contained accommodation, and only use B&Bs in emergencies where self contained is not available.
- The council-led **development programme continues** towards the target to deliver **over 1,000 homes by 2026**. At least **600 of these 1,000 homes** will be for low cost rent and shared ownership, also prioritised for Wandsworth residents and workers.
- The council's affordable housing has been progressing well:
 - **31(14) new homes** completed in 2019/20
 - **194 (174) further homes** are under construction, of which **70 (64)** are due to be completed in 2020/21
 - **46** have secured planning consent
 - **A further 210 (241)** have had **planning applications submitted** or are due to have planning applications submitted for 2020/21

Rents

- 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 **£6.21m (£3.56m)**. This equates to **4.7% (2.84%)** of the total rent collected. This increase is, in part, due to the implementation of Universal Credit, we hope that moving forward this figure will decrease as the system beds in.
- **10.48% (5.33%)** of tenants have more than **seven weeks arrears**. Housing continue to be part of a multi-agency meeting that discusses actions to assist the most vulnerable and those in significant rent arrears.
- The Financial Inclusion Team have given **free benefit advice, debt management intervention and help with budgeting to 659 (661)** tenants during 2019/20. The team also run a monthly drop in advice surgery in Roehampton and helped **95 (100) residents**.
- **221 (228) tenants were helped** by the Tenancy Support Team, the team work with tenants who are in danger of losing their tenancies.

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?

- From July 2019 we adopted the new **Tenancy Strategy and Policy** which gave new tenants 10 years as opposed to five years with the normal exceptional circumstances still applying.
- All tenants received a **written tenancy agreement** which is explained to them.
- **2,747 (2,498)** occupancy checks were carried out, which is an increase on the previous year.
- **32 (51)** illegally occupied properties were recovered by the council in partnership with the South West London Fraud Partnership.
- **185 flexible fixed term reviews** were carried out in 2019/20.

Home

We will

- Provide a value for money, timely and 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 £31.6m (£26.9m)** to maintain the council's housing stock.
- We undertook further **environmental improvements** to our estates at a cost of **£592,000 (£650,000)**. This included:
 - improvements to communal spaces
 - additional planting
 - resurfacing and ramped access provision of play areas
 - improved security and lighting
 - increased cycle parking
 - providing screens for the recycling bins
- **Started 40 (43) major works projects** including roof renewals, window renewals and external decoration schemes.
- In **April 2019** we employed a **Specialist Housing Occupational Therapist** to identify the housing needs of disabled and older residents as part of the Alton and Winstanley and York Road regeneration programmes.



Alexander Court

*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 please visit www.gov.uk (search Decent Homes).

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

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?

- **£28.1m (£23.9m)** spent on planned and responsive repairs.
- **86.6% (88.1%) of repairs** were **completed within target time**. Repairs is an area of particular focus for improvement and tendering of contracts is expected to improve the performance.
- Worked to **create a text-based repairs satisfaction survey** to replace the old paper system.
- Carried out **annual gas servicing in 98.5% (99.9%)** of tenanted properties that have gas appliances.
- Concluded the resident working party to design the **new cleaning contract**, which started in April 2020.
- **Block and estate health and safety checks** are carried out on a quarterly basis. In addition, Estate Service Officers (ESOs) carry out ad-hoc inspections.
- Continued to **check that all front doors** in council properties 10 storeys or more are fire compliant and we will take enforcement action where appropriate.
- **All non-compliant cladding has now been removed** from Sudbury House and Castlemaine; works to both blocks are due to be completed in August 2020. Thank you once again to the residents of these blocks for their patience throughout.
- The council made an **application to the First Tier Property Tribunal** to seek an in-principle decision that **sprinklers should be fitted to all homes** in blocks of 10 storeys or more. The Tribunal made a ruling that the council could not seek this decision but should instead consider each block in turn.
- As an additional safety measure, the council is progressing plans to **install sprinkler systems to all Sheltered and Hostel accommodation**.
- The **design phase** continues for improving lighting across housing estates by moving to more environmentally friendly LED lighting, work is due to start in 2020/21.

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?

- The department continues to support the **Children's Services Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** to ensure effective joint working to **improve safety of children** in the borough.
- We also continue to attend the **Community Multi Agency Risk Assessment Panel (CMARAP)** to safeguard vulnerable adults.
- Our **safeguarding procedures** continue to be **reviewed annually** and we carry out an annual audit of working arrangements to **ensure staff are meeting** their safeguarding responsibilities.
- **All Housing and Regeneration staff** are required to undertake safeguarding training when they join the council and every three years thereafter. **62 (79) staff undertook training** in 2019/20.
- The department continues to work with the **Chelsea Football Club Kicks** project to deliver football sessions for young people on estates across the Borough. There were **268 (388) Kicks sessions** throughout the year with over **400 registrations** for the sessions.
- We continue to work with Wandsworth **Work Match** which held its fifth annual jobs fair in May 2019, giving residents the opportunity to meet local employers and training providers.
- The department and **Work Match undertook a training programme** in early 2020 to deliver training in practical skills to residents.
- With the cooperation of **London Fire Brigade** and **Adult Social Services** we have **created a new hoarding procedure** to better assist and **protect vulnerable adults**, and their neighbours.

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



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?

- Through a dedicated steering group, the department is continuing its work toward achieving the **Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation** to ensure its response to domestic abuse is the best it can be and ensure clients' safety is at the heart of our decision making.
- **Served 27 (24) Notices of Seeking Possession** for ASB and carried out **1 (7) eviction** for ASB.
- **Publicised action** taken against serious offenders in Homelife and through press releases e.g. one resident being **fined £800** for fly-tipping in Battersea.
- **90% (94%) of noise complaints** were responded to within five days. This is a decrease on last year and closer monitoring has now been put in place.
- Continued to **attend regular meetings** with local police's **safer neighbourhood teams** and took action in areas of concern where required.



Work Match's annual job fair

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?

- The department has implemented a **new housing management system** which will improve our responses, and reporting abilities; the system was launched in August 2019.
- Wandsworth Emergency Control (WEC) received **135,650 calls** per year equating to **2,608 per week. 37,244 (34,019)** of these required further action during 2019/20.
- **99.5% (99%)** of emergency calls* to WEC were **responded to within the target time of 30 minutes.**
- Commissioned a **new CCTV and emergency control facility in September 2019**; due to the pandemic there have been delays which have pushed back the go-live date from 2020 to 2021.
- Removed **18,353 msq (23,411msq)** of graffiti at a cost of **£128,230 (£160,144).**
- **99.3% (98.1%)** of graffiti was removed within target time.
- Allocated **£193,541 (£293,672)** to the **small improvement budget** for residents' associations (RAs) to fund community projects. This year these have included:
 - Updating the Aboyne Community Clubroom with a buggy shelter
 - New fencing and gate for Carminia Road and Elmfield Road
 - Planter renewals for Colbrook Court
 - As well as bike stores, bin enclosures, notice boards and mobility scooter enclosures
- Plans for **163 homes** at Randall Close and Patmore Centre were submitted for planning in March 2020. We continue to explore opportunities for development across many of our existing plots of land.

565 Dog related incidents were responded to by the animal welfare team

62 stray dogs handled

19 prosecutions | **95** verbal warnings | **100%** success rate

37 educational visits

2 community protection notices issued | **16** microchips implanted

- The installation of **high-speed broadband** has advanced; Community Fibre Limited are working on another 2,000 properties which on completion will mean that **25,168 (21,400)** of the council managed stock has access to full fibre broadband.
- The council received **special recognition** for dealing with animal welfare issues at the RSPCA annual awards for the second year running. The RSPCA PawPrints Awards highlight **outstanding contributions** to animal welfare; we have consistently achieved the gold standard.
- The regeneration schemes on the **Alton Estate** (Roehampton) and **the Winstanley and York Road Estates** (Latchmere) continue to progress.

Alton Regeneration

A planning application was submitted for over **1,100 new homes** in June 2019. Following comments received from local residents, the GLA and TFL a revised application was submitted in March 2020. Consultation on these revisions commenced in May 2020 (delayed due to COVID-19) and is due to run until July 2020.

In September 2019 work commenced on a development in Bessborough Road on the Alton estate, which will deliver **10 new** council homes.

Winstanley and York Road

In January 2020 Wandsworth council's planning committee approved the Winstanley and York Road Regeneration scheme. The first phase of the scheme includes the new community hub incorporating the new leisure centre with swimming pools, the improved library and children's and community centres as well as **502 homes** of which **35% are affordable**. They also started on site with **phase 0** which will provide **46 replacement and homes**.



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

Resident involvement

We will

- Involve residents in decision-making processes over issues 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?

- Supported **54 (56)** accredited **Resident Associations (RAs)** in the borough.
- The council embarked on a full-scale review of its participation structures. This was in partnership with a **Residents Working Group (RWG)**.
- The RWG's work fed into our new **Resident Participation and Consultation Strategy** which was approved in January 2020, and sets out actions for how we will improve our methods of resident engagement. The consultation was publicised to residents through social media, work with RAs and poster displays on estates.
- **Social inclusion schemes** have continued to be delivered across the borough, including the Community Development Older People's Choir – "An A-Chaired Taste".

- **11 (17)** unannounced **estate inspections** were carried out with residents and councillors.
- There are **19 (21) 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.
- In September 2019 **Roehampton Festival** was held, including music and performance from local artists.
- In December a **winter event** was held involving a number of craft workshops with children from Heathmere School, culminating in an afternoon of singing, refreshments and entertainment for all ages.
- The Winstanley and York Road regeneration held its **annual summer festival, winter carol celebrations** and set up a new **community engagement programme** including micro carpentry programme called "Assemble and Join".
- **Tenant satisfaction is 66% (68%) and 51% (52%) for leaseholders**. The council will always strive to provide the best service to our residents. We welcome your views and comments with how we can improve and this has recently included a residents group to review the cleaning contracts.
- We also carried out a **perceptions survey** in 2019 which found that **82%** of tenants and **83%** of leaseholders are satisfied with their neighbourhoods as a place to live.



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?

- We have had a reduction in the number of complaints, dealing with **227 (309) complaints** (both housing service and contractor).
- **69% (54%)** of complaints were **responded to within the target time** of 10 working days, we will endeavour to continue this upward trend.
- **67.40% (65%)** of complaints were dealt with at **stage one** of the complaints procedure.
- We continue to **analyse complaints** to identify themes.
- **Regular performance reports** are presented to Area Housing Panels and the Annual Report published in Homelife.





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?

- Fully met the demand for disabled adaptations for council and private residents, delivering **369 (351) adaptations** to enable people to **remain independent in their home.**
- During the year, the council implemented a **Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant Policy** which, amongst other things, means that we can complete adaptations without a means test where the client is unable to undertake the assessment e.g. with dementia.
- **We invested in staff training** – to allow officers to complete more minor adaptations such as grab rails and stairlifts. It means these cases do not have to be placed on the occupational therapist waiting list and have a quicker turn around.
- **17 (16) people** requiring **adapted housing** were allocated accessible homes.
- **2,167 (2,419) residents** use **WATCH Lifeline service** which helps older residents and those with disabilities to remain independent in their homes. **249 (220) new users** signed up to the service in 2019/20.



- There were **203 (209) Telecare Users** at the end of 2019/20. Telecare provides a range of sophisticated sensors and alarms to help vulnerable residents remain independent.
- The number of **'Stay Put Stay Safe' (SPSS)*** applicants assisted during the year was **48 (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**.
- **Two extra care homes** (95 units) in the borough for frail and elderly people are progressing well with both now on site and under construction.
- We continue our partnership with **Chelsea Football Club** with the **Chelsea Kicks programme.** The programme conducts projects across our estates not only to young residents but providing fitness sessions for older residents at the Lennox.
- 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.


*SPSS is a scheme whereby residents who feel at risk in their homes can have safety features fitted free of charge.

**www.houseexchange.org.uk

received
2,080
online housing applications




£28.1m
spent on planned and responsive repairs



90% of noise complaints were responded to within five days

The council's **affordable housing**
31 new homes completed in 2019/20
194 further homes are under construction
46 have secured planning permission



86.6% were completed within target time

The **Financial Inclusion Team** gave free advice, debt intervention and budgeting help to **659** tenants



99.3% of graffiti was removed within target time at a cost of **£128,230**

99.5% of emergency calls to **WEC** were responded to within **30 minutes**

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.



Last piece of cladding removed from Castlemaine in Nov 2019



Edward Foster Court

How have we met the standard?

- Continued to effectively manage the **Housing Revenue Account** (HRA), this means that the 30-year business plan remains viable. Within this plan there are balances available to deal with emergencies e.g. the plan for sprinklers.
- Balances have reduced by **£33,509 to £309,912m**. This is expected as we have a significant programme of site development and estate regeneration underway
- The council consulted on all major works and external redecoration schemes, we served:
 - **1,530 (1,784)** Notices of Intention*; and
 - **851 (2,417)** 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:
 - **14,272 (6,400)** Section 20 Notices were served on leaseholders.
- The average weekly management cost during the year was **£19.01 (£18.94)**.
- The average weekly maintenance cost was **£32.46 (£30.74)**.
- Average weekly rent was **£125.50** compared to **£126.17** last year.

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



Cllr Kim Caddy gives a resident the keys to her new home

Priorities for 2020-2021

Conclude **re-cladding works** to Sudbury House and Castlemaine and progress plans to retro-fit sprinklers in sheltered and hostel accommodation.

Re-procure **fire risk assessments** to meet the requirements of new fire safety legislation.

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

Progress the development of the **new CCTV and emergency control facility** to be fully functioning by early 2021.

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

To continue work to gain **Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance** accreditation which recognises best practice in dealing with domestic abuse

Put forward proposals to review the council **Tenancy Conditions**.

Develop a **performance monitoring framework** for the new cleaning contract.

Work with our partner housing associations to complete delivery of **95 extra care homes units** for frail, older residents by 2021.

Continue to progress plans to **deliver 1,000 new homes** over the next 5 to 7 years through the council's development programme.

Commission a survey to provide accurate data on stock condition and identify opportunities for **energy efficiency improvements** to help tackle fuel poverty.

Explore options to install **new technologies** to improve **energy efficiency** in council owned housing blocks including moving to LED lighting.

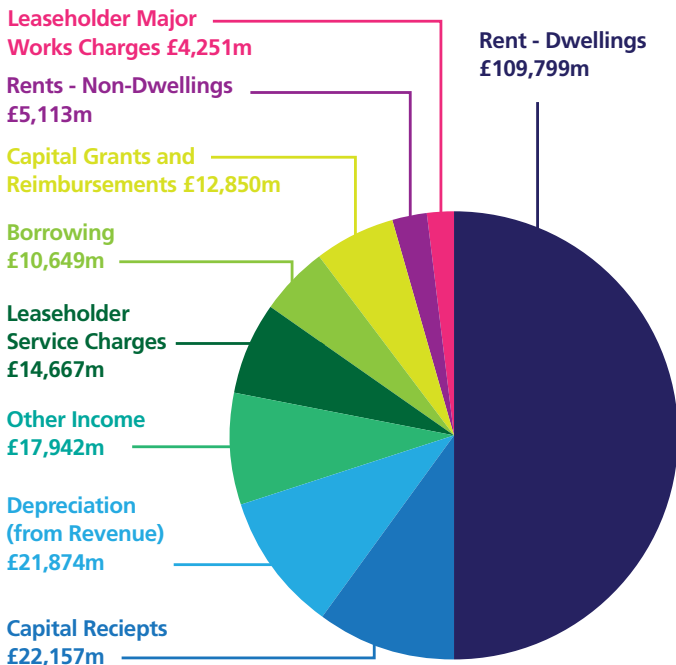
Work with partners to deliver the **Rough Sleeper Exit plan** to help re-house rough sleepers temporarily housed during the COVID-19 outbreak and to minimise rough sleeping in the borough.

Produce an easy read version of the **Resident Participation and Consultation Strategy** and review the resident engagement webpages.

* Specialist Services include cleaning, electricity, heating and hot water.

Housing revenue account 2019/20

Income total **£219,302m** (£228,523m)



Housing revenue account 2019/20

Expenditure total **£252,811m** (£218,124m)

