



North Warwickshire
Borough Council

LANDLORD SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

April 2022 - March 2023



Working together to deliver quality services
with good customer care at their heart.

Every year the Council publishes performance information about the Landlord services it provides for its tenants. This report informs you about the performance of the Housing Division from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

The housing stock is an important asset to the Council and its Tenants. The services the Housing Division delivers are funded from income from your rent payments.

Locally the Resources Board oversees the Council's Landlord services and makes decisions about policies and budgets. Nationally decisions about rent levels are directed by national Government. Service standards are provided by the Regulator for Social Housing. The Housing Ombudsman Service helps tenants resolve complaints about their landlord.

The Housing Division publishes 2 newsletters every year to keep tenants informed about our services and what tenants have been doing. This report focusses on performance and spending.

We hope you find this information useful. This is your service, so we want to hear from you. Tell us about your experience. Tell us what is important to you. Tell us about the condition of your home. Tell us what information you would like. Tell us about your home or estate.

You can tell us by phoning, by letter, by e-mail, talking to your local Councillor, going to a local meeting or Borough Wide Tenant Forum. Whatever your preference we would like to hear from you.

If you have a concern or complaint, please tell us so that we can resolve it. You can phone or write to us or send an e-mail to complaintsandcompliments@northwarks.gov.uk

The report is published on the Council's website. If you would like a paper copy, please contact us.

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

We understand how important our repairs and maintenance service is for tenants. We have agreed standards for response times. Our in house, Housing Direct Works Team, respond to tenant's request for a repair promptly. Some work is planned and is prioritised in accordance with the resources we have available. Some of you will know that we have had difficulties with appointing suitable contractors to do our planned works programmes and this has caused delays. We are sorry about this and continue to work to appoint suitable contracts.

The Council must maintain its stock to the Government's Decent Homes Standard. We plan work to meet this standard and ensure properties do not fall into disrepair. Our funding is limited so we consider what to prioritise. As well as meeting the Decent Homes Standard building safety is a priority. Building safety includes arrangements for electrical and gas installations as well as addressing risks from fire, from asbestos materials and Legionella.

Over recent years we have prioritised regenerating and refurbishing blocks of flats and nearby garage sites. This has been significant expenditure, but the improvements were necessary. To meet our legal duties, we have also prioritised electrical installation safety works and improved the energy efficiency of homes by installing new heating systems, new roofs, replacing windows and providing external wall insulation.

Major works programmes are complete at our blocks at Alder and Heather Court and Alexandra Court in Atherstone, Monument View in Polesworth, St Leonards View, Dordon and Oldbury View

and Drayton Court in Hartshill.

The last major works scheme that we are planning for blocks of flats is at Abbey Green Court, Polesworth.

Over the year we completed our regeneration schemes in Atherstone providing 4 new town houses on Long Street and 6 two-bedroom flats on Coleshill Road.

From April 2022 to March 2023:

- We installed 242 new heating systems - including 11 Air Source Heat Pumps
- Completed 249 rewires.
- Installed new windows in 79 properties.
- Provided external wall insulation for 101 homes.
- Did monthly checks in premises at risk from Legionella.
- Did weekly checks to prevent fire risks in blocks of flats.
- Did 2650 gas safety checks.

We need tenants to report repairs. We want to know about concerns with damp and mould. If it is caused by a leak or a disrepair defect, we can act quickly. We can also improve installations that help with ventilation. We have around 250 reports every year about damp and mould. They are mostly resolved in a short time, but the Council's stock is ageing so sometimes we have to do extensive work to resolve the cause of the damp. This can be stripping plaster off to replace the Damp Proof Course or replacing the floor to provide for a damp proof membrane.

NICE PLACE TO LIVE

The Tenancy Services and Neighbourhoods Team act to ensure that tenancy conditions are maintained, and estates are nice places to live. Tenancy Services Officers manage tenancies and site visits are completed by Neighbourhood Wardens regularly.

The Neighbourhood Team focus on our blocks of flats to ensure they are clean and tidy and safe for residents. During visits we aim to talk and listen to tenants to find out what issues are affecting them and to identify any works that needs to be done locally.

The Council does not experience extensive anti-social behaviour on its estates but when it is reported the team acts promptly. During the year we had an average of 8.83 anti-social behaviour cases for each 1000 properties we manage, and it took an average of 44.26 days to resolve the nuisance brought to our attention.



OUR PROPERTIES

At the 31st March 2023 the Council owned 2584 properties. 15 properties were sold during the year as part of the Right to Buy. The Council's stock is spread over a rural area with a significant amount of its properties in



HOW THE FUNDING WORKS

The Housing Revenue Account is a specific account for income from rent payments. It is separate from other Council budget accounts and the income is only used to pay for services for tenants.

All expenditure incurred in maintaining and managing the housing stock is paid for from rent income.

A payment is made annually to central Government. This is just under £3.5 million. The remaining income is spent on priorities for our stock. The debt paid to Government was demanded from all Local Housing Authorities to enable them to leave the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system.

Most of the Council's income is from rent paid for dwellings, garages and shops. This is £12.5 million. We

receive income for specific services for cleaning and window cleaning as well as from charges to leaseholders. In 2022-2023 this was £124,000.

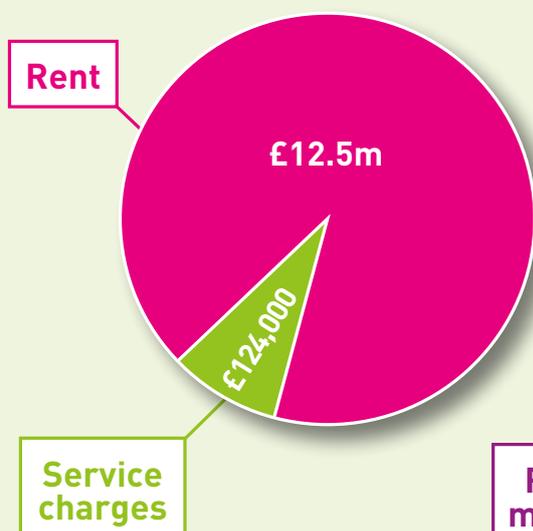
The repair and maintenance of properties is our biggest spending revenue budget at just over £3.4 million.

We spend just over £2 million on managing tenancies – including collecting the rent due, delivering neighbourhood services, and dealing with anti-social behaviour.

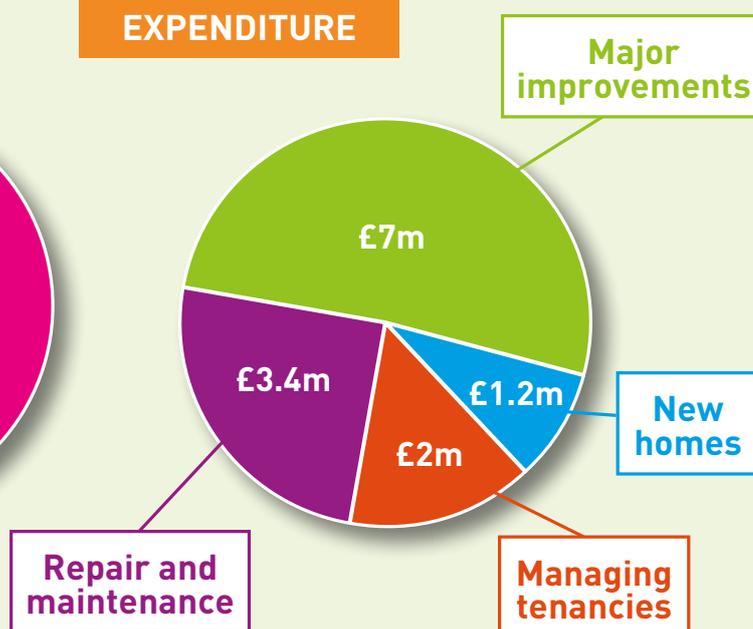
During the year a budget of over £7 million was made available for major improvement works.

The Council also aims to build new properties to provide additional Council homes. Each year £1.2 million is budgeted for the development of new homes.

INCOME



EXPENDITURE



PERFORMANCE

The Council is expected to provide services which are value for money. Councillors on the Resources Board act to ensure that this is the case.

Tenants monitor service delivery and performance as part of the work of the Borough Wide Tenants Forum. If you want to know about how to get involved, please see our Tenant Partnership Agreement.

The following shows the Housing Division's performance for the year ending in March 2023.

We dealt with 8558 repair requests during the year. Our average time for dealing with a responsive repair that our front-line tradesmen can correct was 8.47 days. Some jobs take longer because they have to be planned. Sometimes health and safety have to be arranged such as using scaffolding to work at heights.

We were able to complete a repair right first time on 95.37% of occasions. Most delays are caused by needing materials which we are not able to keep in stock. Sometimes we have to arrange for more than one tradesman to visit to complete the work.



We had 1 outstanding annual gas safety heating check at the end of March. We have a legal duty to complete these checks within 12 months of the last service. We need all tenants to co-operate to give the Engineers access.



All services are paid for from the rent we collect. At the end of March 2023 there was 1.21% of the collectable rent still owing due to tenant's debts. Every pound not collected means less funding for the services we provide.



We make contact with a tenant as soon as their account goes into arrears to prevent the debt owed increasing. Unfortunately, some tenants do owe the Council large sums of rent. At the end of last year 1.84% of tenants had more than 7 weeks arrears on their rent account.

The team had cause to serve 62 legal warning notices to seek possession on tenants in arrears. The County Court granted 2 injunctions to prevent tenants causing anti-social behaviour to their neighbours.



We completed 89 adaptations to help tenants with a disability. The average waiting time to complete an adaptation was 2.67 months. These adaptations help to keep tenants independent at home and we arrange for them to be completed as quickly as we can.

Complaints

We don't want any of our tenants to experience a failure of our service. If it does happen, we want to hear from you so that we can understand your concern and resolve it. Complaints are also an opportunity for us to learn about our customer's view of our service.

We did so 78 times last year however 9 customers asked for their complaint to be considered at Stage One of our procedure and 3 at Stage Two.

Of the complaints:
68 were about the maintenance service.
3 were about anti-social behaviour.
7 were about a housing application.
13 were about tenancy management.

We let 167 vacancies during the year. We act to minimise rent loss by keeping vacancy times short. It took an average of 48.17 days to let our properties last year. Some properties need a lot of repairs and extensive work before they can be let. We are working to improve turnaround times however this will depend on the condition of the vacancies. On average it took 25.81 working days to bring properties back to a lettable standard if they did not need extensive works.



Our complaints procedure has three stages. The first is for quick resolution. The second stage is when we have not been able to resolve the problem and a senior officer needs to consider what went wrong and provide a more formal response to resolve the complaint. The third stage allows for a review of a complaint if it has not been resolved to the customer's satisfaction. If a customer is not satisfied with the Council's actions, they can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service to seek a resolution.

During 2022-2023 the Housing Division responded to 91 complaints. We received 98 compliments. We are able to resolve most complaints promptly.

At Stage One 5 were about the Lettings Service, 3 about the Repairs Service and one about Housing Management.

At Stage Two 2 were about the Lettings Service and 1 was about the Housing Management service.

Of the compliments
76 were for housing management services.
22 were for the repairs service.

We are aware that tenants value the repairs and maintenance service they receive. The Resources Board will be reviewing the operation of this service over the next 6 months in order to seek improvements in turnaround times and to deliver improvement programmes.