



North Warwickshire
Borough Council

Landlord Services Annual Report

April 2020 - March 2021





Working together to deliver good quality and customer focussed housing services to provide modern homes and create nice places to live.



Every year the Council publishes performance information about the Landlord services it provides for its tenants. This report informs you about how the Housing Division performed during the financial year from April 2020 to March 2021.

During the year the Council was expected to act on Government guidance about COVID-19 regulations. This did interrupt some services. There was an impact on our teams who continued to deliver essential services throughout the year.

The housing stock is an important asset to the Council and its Tenants. The services the Housing Division delivers are funded from rent payments. The Resources Board oversees the Council's Landlord services and makes decisions about policies and budgets. Decisions about rent levels are guided by national Government.

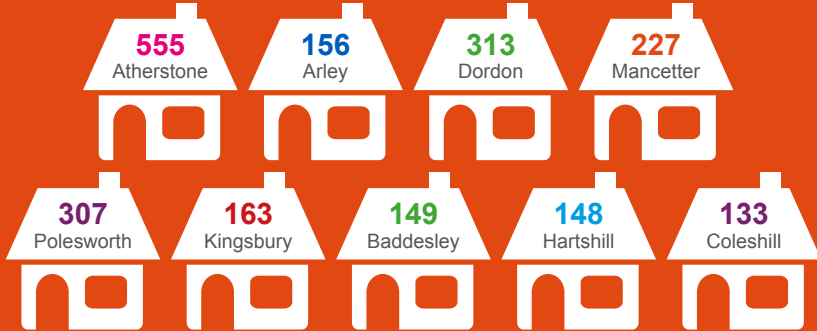
The Housing Division publishes 2 newsletters every year to keep tenants informed about our services and about tenants' activities. This report focusses on performance and budget provision.

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



Our properties

At the 31st March 2021 the Council owned 2619 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 the following:



New Homes and Improvement Schemes

The Maintenance Team delivers a programme of major works to ensure that our properties are in good repair. In the first part of 2020 (April to June) this type of work was halted due to the Government's requirements during the first COVID-19 lockdown period. From July 2020 to March 2021, we installed 47 new heating systems and provided 41 properties with new roofs. External wall insulation and new windows were provided to flats at Alder and Heather Court, Atherstone and properties at Stratford Avenue, Atherstone. We undertook improvement works to our blocks of flats at Monument View, Polesworth during the year. Where finance is available, we are also installing new door entry systems.

To ensure our premises are safe we have an extensive programme of electrical installation testing and follow up works. As part of this programme, we are also upgrading installations in communal areas of flats.



We will continue to provide programmes of work to provide more efficient heating systems, new roofs and insulation as well as new kitchens and bathrooms where they are required. We will continue with our electrical works programme.

How the funding works

The Housing Revenue Account is a special budget account for receiving income from the tenants' rent payments. All expenditure incurred in maintaining and managing the housing stock is paid for from these rent payments.

The majority of the Council's income is from rent paid for dwellings, garages and shops. This is just over £12 million. We receive income for specific services for cleaning and window cleaning as well as from charges to leaseholders. In 2020-2021 this was anticipated to be just over £106,000.

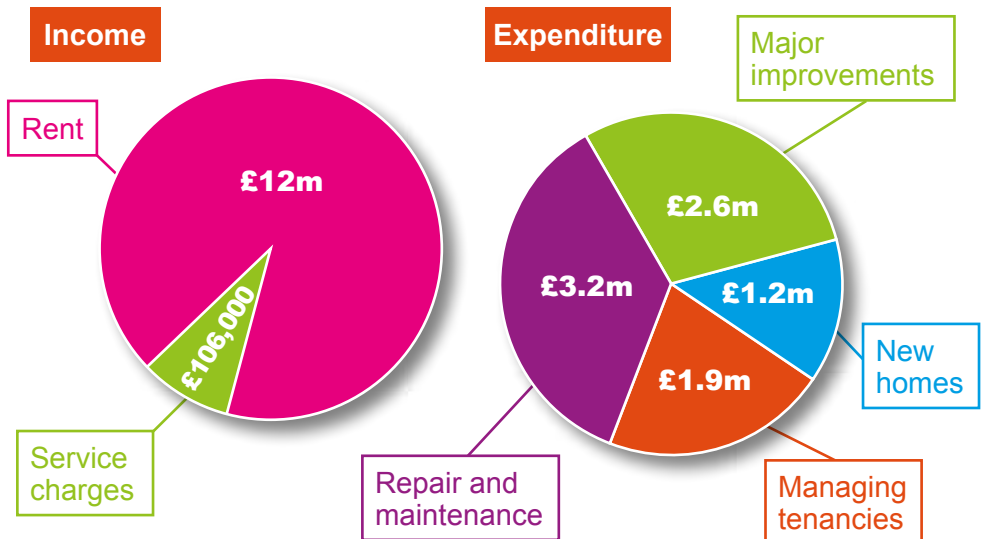
The repair and maintenance of properties is our biggest spending budget at just over £3.2 million.

During the year a budget of over £2.6 million is made available for major improvement works.

We spend just over £1.9 million on managing tenancies – including collecting the rent due.

We make a payment annually of just under £3.5 million to Government on repaying a debt which was required by all Local Housing Authorities to enable them to leave the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system.

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



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 also to identify any works that needs to be done locally. These weekly visits continued during the periods of the pandemic after June 2020.

The Council does not experience extensive anti-social behaviour on its estates but when it is reported the team acts quickly to deal with it. During the year we had an average of 8 anti-social behaviour cases for each 1000 properties we manage, and it took an average of 40 days to resolve the nuisance brought to our attention.



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. In addition, the Government Social Housing Regulator oversees our services and can take action if improvements are required.

Tenants monitor service delivery and performance as part of the work of the Borough Wide Tenants Forum. Unfortunately, Forum meetings have stopped during the pandemic lockdown periods.

The following shows the Housing Division's performance for the year ending in March 2020.

All services are paid for from the rent we collect from tenants. At the end of March 2020, we had collected 99.45% of the rent due. Every pound not collected means less funding for the services we provide.

99.45%
rent collected

Officers make contact with a tenant as soon as their account goes into arrears to ensure the debt owed does not grow. Unfortunately, some tenants do end up owing the Council large sums of rent. At the end of last year 1.48% of tenants had more than 7 weeks arrears on their rent account.

1.48%
of tenants in
arrears

During the period of the pandemic Government regulations prevented landlords evicting tenants and where notices were served, they were for longer periods than stated in the tenancy agreement. The team had cause to serve 24 legal warning notices to seek possession on tenants in arrears. The Courts granted 2 injunctions to prevent tenants causing anti-social behaviour to their neighbours.

24
notices

We dealt with 9452 repair requests during the year. Our average time for dealing with responsive repairs was 10.21 days.

We let 151 vacancies during the year. We continued to let properties during the lockdown periods, but some delays were caused by applicants having to consider safety requirements before they moved. The Housing Division acts to minimise rent loss on vacant properties by keeping vacancy times to a minimum. It took an average of 52.9 days to let our properties last year. Some properties need a lot of repairs and need extensive work before they can be let. We are working to improve on turnaround times however this will depend on the condition of the vacancies.

On average it took 20 working days to bring properties back to a lettable standard if they did not need extensive works.



We were able to complete the repair right first time on 82.48% of occasions. Most delays are caused by needing a part which we are not able to keep in stock. Improvements are being made to the efficiency of the response repairs system to improve on this.

We had 12 outstanding annual gas safety heating checks which are required on our properties at the end of the year. This is more than usual because tenants were concerned about giving us access due to the risk of COVID-19 infections. We have safe working practices in place to prevent infection and it is a legal and safety requirement, so we do need all tenants to co-operate and provide us with access to check their gas boiler.

We completed 56 adaptations to help tenants with a disability. The average waiting time to complete an adaptation was 5.05 months. The length of time was affected by the lockdown periods experienced during the first part of the year.



The Housing Division responded to 30 complaints during 2020 -2021 and received 89 compliments. Of the complaints 24 were about the repairs service, 4 about behaviour, 1 about a housing application and 1 about a tenancy matter. Of the compliments 51 were for housing management services and 38 were for the repairs service.



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