

Housing Services Annual Report

2023–24



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**The changes
have made a big
difference in our
community!**

Gwyn, Resident



Foreword

Cllr Liza Begum

Welcome to Westminster City Council's Annual Report 2023-2024, showing the performance of the Housing Services department over the past year. We are committed to our Fairer Housing pledge to provide excellent housing services. While we haven't always been where we want to be, we are determined to deliver the best possible service to residents.

Our focus is on improving our residents' experiences by actively listening to you. Together we have achieved significant milestones, from completing the 300 Harrow Road development to provide much needed homes for social rent, to establishing three new housing service centres where residents can get support from our housing teams face to face.

Despite these accomplishments, much remains to be done to fully achieve our ambitions. Over the past year, we have restructured our leadership and made changes based on your feedback. We are prioritising improvements in repairs, complaints and our customer service contact centre.

We have learned some big lessons from listening to residents and reviewing where our services have let people down. As a result, we are making significant changes to our repairs and complaints processes, including additional staff training, improved record keeping, and new teams to better support vulnerable residents.

As well as opening new Housing Service Centres, we are making our services more accessible by increasing the number of housing officers and introducing new local teams to manage communal repairs on your estates. We are committed to listening to residents and involving you in decisions about your housing service. We continued to work closely with our Resident Panel, who provide scrutiny and monitoring of the housing service performance. This year, we launched a monthly Resident Forum, which is open to all residents to attend, to hear updates and discuss different parts of the housing service. We have also involved residents in helping to redesign our repairs service, and our recruitment and contracting processes.

This year, we are on track to deliver 227 additional affordable homes – helping go some way towards alleviating the profound housing crises that people in Westminster, and across London are experiencing. Alongside this, we are reviewing how we allocate social housing, launching a new homelessness and rough sleeping strategy, and bringing parts of our housing advice and homelessness service in-house, working with residents and users to improve how we meet people's needs.

We are proud of our progress and the steps we are taking to improve Housing Services. We are not yet where we want to be but are determined to get there by continuing to listen to our residents, work together, and strive to improve every day.

For the first time, the Social Housing Regulator will publish performance measures called Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), which are applied to all social landlords. We have highlighted these figures in the report to show our performance.



Cllr Begum
Cabinet Member for
Housing Services



Equality, diversity and inclusion

The Council owns and manages over 21,000 homes of which 57% are tenanted and 43% are leasehold, with all tenants and leaseholders able to participate in the Council's participation structures.

Leaseholders are not required to provide their personal information but we collect demographic and equalities information on our tenants. This is captured when a tenant signs

up for their tenancy and includes the household's ethnicity, gender, age and disability.

We are actively updating this information to ensure we have accurate records on our tenants and their families. This includes details of any vulnerabilities and the adjustments we need to make when delivering services in response to those needs.



Westminster is a very diverse borough and this is reflected in our tenant profile:



Of those who have provided their ethnic background

60%

of our tenants are from a global majority background and

40%

are from a white background.



We have a large population of older tenants with

45%

aged over 60



59%

of our tenants are female

Bringing our vision and values to life

Our vision is to deliver a high quality, caring housing service that is centred on the needs of our residents and communities.

We are striving to make this vision a reality for our residents. We have introduced new training for staff, to equip them with the skills they need to better understand residents' needs that will spot problems earlier, and handle cases more efficiently and compassionately.

Excellence

we strive to deliver excellent services.

Empathy

we listen, seek to understand others' perspectives and act with care and compassion.

Openness

we are open, honest and trusted to keep our promises.

Accountability

we take responsibility for our actions and decisions, accept our mistakes and learn from them.

Respect

we are courteous and considerate, treat everyone fairly and value diversity.



Our vision is to deliver a high-quality, caring housing service that is centred on the needs of our residents and communities.

How are we performing?

How are we performing

How are we performing

TSMs.



The Regulator of Social Housing has introduced a new set of indicators to measure the performance of all social housing landlords. The indicators are known as the Tenant Satisfaction Measures or TSMs and cover issues of importance to tenants such as satisfaction with services, performance on repairs, safety and complaints.

The TSMs help us understand our performance and where we need

to improve. We've worked with Housemark, a specialist housing performance organisation, who help us understand and measure our performance relative to other landlords. Housemark collected TSM data from 25 London Councils and ranked it from best to worst.

We have compared our performance with the mid-point or 'median' for London councils. Here are the TSMs and our performance against them:

Satisfaction survey TSMs	Westminster Year end 2023/24	Housemark London median benchmark
Overall service from the landlord	65.7%	59.0%
Landlord listens to tenants' views and acts on them	61.5%	51.3%
Landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them	83.1%	66.0%
Landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect	77.9%	69.0%
Their home is well maintained	65.2%	60.9%
Overall repairs service over the last 12 months	65.7%	63.3%
Time taken to complete their most recent repair	63.7%	60.0%
Their home is safe	69.6%	66.5%
Landlord makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood	76.0%	62%
Landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained	79.2%	61.5%
Landlord's approach to ASB case handling	63.6%	57.7%
Landlord's approach to handling complaints	26.7%	25.6%



Management information TSMs

	Westminster Year end 2023/24	Housemark London median benchmark
% stage 1 complaints responded to in target time	46.2%	73.9%
% stage 2 complaints responded to in target time	25.8%	67.2%
Number of stage 1 complaints per 1000 homes	89	73.5
Number of stage 2 complaints per 1000 homes	20	14.7
Number of ASB cases opened per 1000 homes	25	32.1
Number of ASB cases that involved hate incidents opened per 1000 homes	2	0.5
Non-emergency repairs completed in target time	70.9%	77.5%
Emergency repairs completed in target time	90.5%	90.6%
Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	2.40%	9.1%
Fire risk assessments	97.3%	99.9%
Gas safety checks	99.3%	99.8%
Lift safety checks	100%	98.3%
Water safety checks	100%	99.47%
Asbestos safety checks	88.0%	100%

The year at a glance

What have we delivered in the last 12 months?



We secured external funding; just over

£20,000

to help launch a youth club on the Grosvenor estate.



£30,000

to support the delivery of children and families food growing projects on three estates in South Westminster.



£22,000

from Westminster Community Homes was used to deliver homework and breakfast clubs, sports and youth provision around the city.

3

new housing service centres in Bayswater, Pimlico and Queens Park.



112

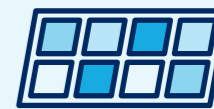
new sustainable and affordable homes at

300 Harrow Road

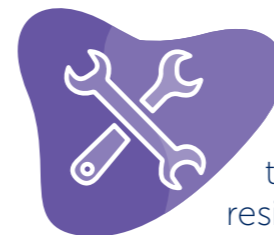


246

retrofits of our least energy-efficient homes, with savings estimated to be over



£50,000 and almost **200 tonnes** of carbon a year.



Consulted on a **new repairs** policy to improve the service residents receive.

Completed over

100,000 repairs.



Trialled a new **in-house** team for communal repairs.



Established our first **'task and finish group'** – which saw a group scrutinise our repairs process.



Introduced a new approach to identifying and supporting **vulnerable residents**, including two new customer-facing teams.

Supported

2,261



tenants who were struggling to pay their rent, through our **£1million** rent support fund.



200,368

calls received to our contact centre, and **88%** resident satisfaction with call handling.

Secured

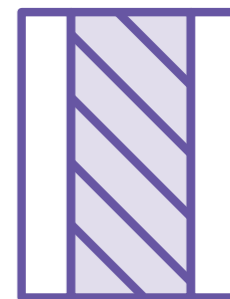
£3.4m

from Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to retrofit **350** properties from EPC rating E and F to **EPC rating C**.

Secured

£4.9m

from Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund for 24/25 to improve a further **550** homes.



Engagement & Communications

Transparency, influence and accountability

Transparency, influence and accountability

Listening to residents and working with you to improve our services is what drives our Housing Improvement Programme.

You've told us that face-to-face contact with officers is key, so we've been opening more local offices and trialling new local teams. Many of you say you feel informed about the things that matter, and we are constantly working to improve how we communicate with you.

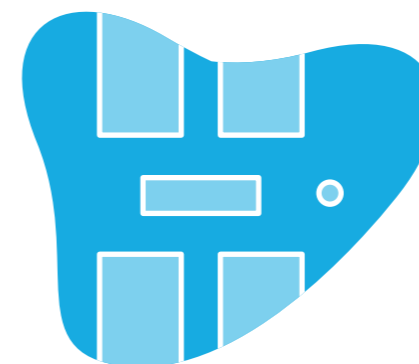
We have introduced callbacks on repairs, redesigned our corporate newsletters, and have been working to communicate with you in more varied ways, from knocking on doors to holding events in your community.

We have introduced new ways for residents to influence the housing service. No matter how much time you can spare, we have an opportunity for you in a way that suits you. This includes our monthly Resident Forum, resident working groups, and resident advisors on areas from repairs to recruitment.

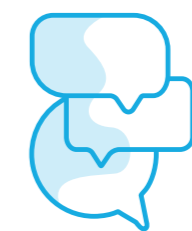
How residents contact us:

	2023/24	2022/23
Number of calls to the contact centre	200,368	216,241
Number of emails to our contact centre	38,659	32,629
Number of multimedia contacts (webchats, SMS, MyWestminster portal etc)	8206	8971

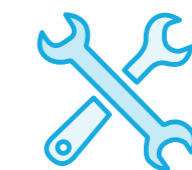
We have been developing a new approach to consultation, reaching out to residents beyond our usual channels to reach a greater diversity of residents and ensure we hear from more voices.



Housing Officers spoke to over **3,700 households** via door knocking.



We received over **400** responses to our compensation policy consultation, over



1,400 responses to our repairs consultation and over

800 responses to our allocations scheme consultation.

In the last 12 months, we have:

- ✔ Opened 3 new housing offices and increased our number of housing officers by a third – making it easier to contact our housing teams face-to-face.
- ✔ Continued to work closely with our Resident Panel, who provide scrutiny and monitoring of the housing service performance.
- ✔ Opened our community centres to all groups.
- ✔ Started a call back service on all repairs.
- ✔ Rolled out a customer service programme for all frontline housing staff.
- ✔ Introduced new ways for residents to get involved and share their views. This includes monthly resident forums and task and finish groups on key issues, like repairs.
- ✔ Collaborated with residents to create new policies on compensation, allocation of social housing, repairs, and damp and mould.
- ✔ Piloted a new approach for Resident Associations to apply for grants. This makes accessing funds easier and rewards those groups who are going the extra mile to represent their communities.

In the next 12 months, we will:

- ➔ Publish our Resident Engagement Strategy outlining our priorities and how we will share information, exchange ideas, and improve services. This strategy will help residents to hold us to account.
- ➔ Launch a new set of service standards, co-designed with members of our Resident Forum.
- ➔ Be offering more training opportunities for residents who run residents' associations, in areas where they have told us they need support.
- ➔ Create a communications group allowing residents to scrutinize and help improve the way we engage and communicate.
- ➔ Set up more task and finish groups, where residents and officers work together to co-design solutions to issues identified by residents.
- ➔ Further involve residents in our senior officer recruitment and contractor procurement processes.
- ➔ We hope to achieve TPAS accreditation, this is a nationally recognised standard that offers an independent assessment of our resident participation and involvement structure.





CASE STUDY.

Working with residents to improve repairs

We have just completed our first task and finish group on transparency and communications in repairs.

A group of residents, contractors, and our staff met weekly for 8 weeks to identify issues and solutions. They observed the contact centre and met with planners and staff from Morgan Sindall, GEM, and Oakray. This collaboration led to key improvement areas and solutions, described by a resident participant as “certainly a collaboration between staff and residents”. We are now working through these recommendations.



The council leaders actually listened to what we had to say in our Future of Westminster report. They’ve promised to:

- 1** Make a new plan for better housing services and getting residents more involved.
- 2** Create a ‘Westminster Housing Standard’ so all council homes are good quality, and letting us residents help decide what that means.
- 3** Fix up the repairs service to make it easier to book appointments and keep residents in the loop.
- 4** Spend money on making council homes more energy efficient and eco-friendly.
- 5** Give more support to residents who need extra help, working with local groups. Being involved in the work to make lives better for Westminster residents is something to be really proud of. I’m feeling hopeful that the council will keep listening to us and that our voices will lead to positive changes for people living in Westminster.
- 6** I’m really excited that the council is taking our ideas seriously and making changes based on what we said. It shows that when the council and residents work together, with empathy and honesty, we can make Westminster a better place to live for everyone.



Damian,
Resident Panel member

YOUR VOICE COUNTS

There are a lot of ways you can help shape our housing service, no matter how much time you can spare, we have an opportunity for you in a way that suits your needs.

Apply to join the Resident Panel

This small group of residents provide formal scrutiny of the housing service to help drive improvements. The group reflect the diversity of Westminster residents, and there is rolling recruitment to include new voices.

Attend the resident forum

The Resident Forum meets monthly. Attend to meet with senior leaders, challenge decisions and create meaningful change in the housing service.

Shape your neighbourhood

Find out how to join a Resident Association or get help to set one up. As a member of a Resident Association, you can help to build community spirit and give residents a collective voice to shape and improve local services.

Have your say on specific issues

Work with our housing teams to influence an issue you're interested in – such as, choosing contractors, recruiting staff, or improving communication.

Join our online engagement group

Have your say quickly and easily on a variety of issues. We'll send short surveys by email, and use your feedback to help improve the way we do things.

We can come to you!

Do you want to talk to us in a location that's convenient to you? We can come to your estate, community group or event to talk about our housing services.

Find out about these opportunities and more at westminster.gov.uk/your-voice-counts

TSMs. Transparency, influence & accountability

	WCC year end
Tenant satisfaction that views are listened to and acted upon	61.5%
Tenant satisfaction that they are kept informed about things that matter to them	83.1%
Tenant agreement that they are treated fairly and with respect	77.9%



Responding to your complaints

When we embarked on our housing improvement programme last year, we knew we needed to improve our complaints processes.

While residents will not see improvement overnight, we are taking real strides to overhaul the system.

In the last 12 months, we have:

- ✔ Reviewed the end-to-end complaints process to identify further opportunities to help us improve how we respond to and learn from complaints
- ✔ Increased the size of the complaints team to manage, respond to and learn from the increase in complaints.
- ✔ Consulted on and launched a new Housing Compensation Policy to ensure that our approach to paying compensation is transparent and our awards are fair and consistent.
- ✔ Introduced a dedicated Repairs Complaints Team to improve our engagement and communication with residents in relation to repair issues and trial case managing these through to completion
- ✔ Introduced a new system to improve how we manage and monitor complaints
- ✔ Started a programme of complaint handling training to ensure staff have the right skills, knowledge and support to better address resident concerns.

In the next 12 months, we will:

- ➔ Improve our systems and processes to make it easier for residents to log a complaint and receive a timely response.
- ➔ Continue delivering complaint handling training to further improve how we respond.
- ➔ Create a resident led task and finish group on complaints to explore how we improve residents' experience of interacting with the council, particularly when things have gone wrong.
- ➔ Trial a new after care approach to make sure we consistently do what we say we will do, and keep residents updated if things go wrong or get delayed.



TSMs.★ Complaints

	WCC year end
% stage 1 complaints responded to in target (tenants only)	46.3%
% stage 2 complaints responded to in target (tenants only)	25.8%
Number of stage 1 complaints received per 1000 homes	89
Number of stage 2 complaints received per 1000 homes	20

Advocating for Young Residents

Around 40% of our residents are children and young people, so supporting and listening to younger voices is vital. The Youth Advocacy team is a small team that do exactly what their name suggests – advocate for our younger residents.

The team works across the council and with voluntary and community organisations to create opportunities for young residents. This includes supporting and funding youth clubs, which play a crucial role in the lives of young people. Two of the five largest youth service hubs in Westminster are located on our estates. We also provide a mentoring programme at Avenues Youth Club, supporting 24 young people every year. The programme has made a significant difference to young people who have taken part, helping them to make positive changes in their lives, improving their social skills and raising their aspirations.

Many young people tell us that sport and keeping active is important to them, so we try to make sure there is good local sports provision for every young person living in a Westminster

home. We have 17 multi-use games areas across our estates and many hundreds of young people make use of our sports pitches each week, which offer free sessions for local young people.

Giving young people the opportunity and confidence to have a voice in the places they live is a priority for us. This year, we have run a programme on Lisson Green and in South Westminster to encourage greater intergenerational engagement, working closely with youth clubs. Recently a group of young residents ran an estate inspection with housing staff, pointing out the areas that they are concerned about and want to see improvements. We are involving children and families in food growing and greening activities, encouraging sustainability and climate awareness.

We will continue to put young people at the heart of our housing service. We believe that growing up in social housing should never be something to hold a child back, it should be the place they can flourish.

WESTMINSTER



Improving your homes and estates

We are very lucky in Westminster to have an incredible range of properties, including high rise tower blocks, Grade II listed estates and individual street properties. This complexity comes with its challenges, and maintaining and improving the council's 20,000 plus homes for the long term is a significant and important area of work.

The Decent Homes Standard is the minimum level of safety and quality that social homes must meet. Over 95% of our homes meet this standard and we are working to increase this to a higher level.

We deliver a rolling programme of capital works all over the city. These are planned, large-scale works that include things like roofs, windows, communal lighting, lifts and heating. In 2023/24 we spent just over £50 million on our capital works programme.

We are currently renewing our Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) to reflect changes in legislation, technology and the economy and increasing engagement with residents.

We are also working to improve energy performance in our homes and provide improvements - such as insulation and window glazing - to help tenants in the least energy efficient homes save money and live more comfortably.

Capital works are vital to keep your homes and buildings in good condition, but the rising cost of materials and labour are having a significant impact on our leasehold residents. We are reviewing how we manage these costs to make sure we offer the best value to leaseholders while delivering much needed work.

In the last 12 months, we have:

- ✔ Completed one of the largest solar PV projects in the UK on our Warwick Estate. We now generate over 650,000 KWH of clean electricity every year - enough electricity for over 32million cups of tea per year.
- ✔ Completed a large-scale programme of work on Vale Royal in China Town, replacing all the windows, front doors, redecorating the inside of the buildings and replacing and upgrading the electricity supply.
- ✔ Increased the number of stock condition surveys across the city, to improve our knowledge of the homes we manage and spot more problems before they occur.
- ✔ Completed another large scale programme of work on Millbank Estate, in the south of the city.
- ✔ Carried out 12x lift refurbishments in Gaydon House, Brinklow House, Princethorpe House, Wilmcote House, Oversley House, and Polesworth House.

In the next 12 months, we will:

- ➔ Continue to survey the condition of our homes, so that we can proactively make improvements.
- ➔ Continue to deliver our capital works at Mozart Estate, Hallfield Estate and Scottish Towers in the north of the city. We are currently consulting with residents about these programmes and how the works will be completed to make sure they cause minimal disruption to residents.
- ➔ Renew our Strategic Asset Management Plan, to improve the way we prioritise and manage capital works.
- ➔ Complete refurbishments at Hardy House, St Lukes Court, Admiral, Warren and Fitzrovia Court.

TSMs. Safety and Quality

WCC year end

Proportion of homes that do not meet the decent home standard	2.4%
Tenant satisfaction that their home is well maintained	65.2%

Improving our repairs service

Improving the repairs service is a top priority for us. We know that residents do not feel we have always listened to their concerns about the delivery of the service.

We worked with a group of residents through a Task & Finish Group over a period of 8 weeks to analyse what we do well, what residents want to see, and where we can bring about changes. Through our housing improvement programme, we have

made significant changes to address these problems. This includes developing a new repairs policy, informed by a resident consultation, to set out clear accountability standards. We've introduced specialised teams for complex repairs and repairs for vulnerable residents, improved record keeping, implemented better staff and contractor training, and are trialling an in-house team for communal repairs.

In the last 12 months, we have:

- ✔ Consulted on a new Repairs Policy that outlines the process and quality residents should expect.
- ✔ Improved call handling technology to improve our service to you when you report a repair, allowing us to better track your job.
- ✔ Increased the number of repairs staff to focus on specialist areas such as damp and mould, leak detection and complaints.
- ✔ Increased the number of appointments that can be booked by our contact centre and introduced text message updates to confirm.
- ✔ Conducted new stock condition surveys to make sure we have better, more up-to-date knowledge of every home.
- ✔ Created closer partnership working with our contractors to improve performance on repairs and major works, appointments and track repairs.
- ✔ Created a residents 'task and finish group' on repairs to understand where improvements are needed.
- ✔ Introduced property MOTs for our sheltered housing schemes.
- ✔ Piloted a new communal repairs team with residents signing off quality of completed repairs.
- ✔ Introduced new safeguarding and empathy training for repairs staff and contractors.

TSMs. Safety and Quality

	WCC year end
Tenant satisfaction with repair service over the last 12 months	65.7%
Tenant satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair	63.7%
Non-emergency repairs completed in target	70.09%
Emergency repairs completed in target	90.6%

In the next 12 months, we will:

- ➔ Implement the Resident Repairs Task & Finish group recommendations.
- ➔ Continue to provide greater transparency of repairs including publishing estate specific dashboards to show performance in your local area.
- ➔ Improve the way we, and our contractors, communicate with residents about their repair.
- ➔ Evaluate the impact of our 'in-house' communal repairs team pilot, and consider extending it to more estates.
- ➔ Add more contractors to our local area repairs service to increase capacity, with more specialised contractor provision.
- ➔ Work with residents to formulate our long-term commissioning strategy for new repairs contracts, commencing from 2027.



CASE STUDY.

Improving energy performance in our homes

Since April 2023, we've assisted over 246 households, lowering their energy bills through home energy-saving measures.

On average these improvements have saved each home around £200 annually. These changes are helping to ease cost of living pressures and improve living conditions, by keeping homes warmer in winter and cooler in summer.

Our focus is and continues to be on the borough's least energy-efficient homes. We've provided efficiency upgrades like insulation and improved window glazing at no cost to residents.

During the next 12 months we plan to use the government's Social Housing Decarbonising Fund to extend these upgrades. This initiative will cover a broader range of properties, including street properties and estates, further enhancing energy efficiency for our residents.

“

I cannot thank the council and Morgan Sindall enough for the work they have provided. There is a noticeable difference since the work was done to insulate my walls and windows. My home is certainly warmer. I would recommend anyone who has the opportunity to get the work done, because it didn't cost me anything and my family and I could not be happier.

”

Mr Ratkoceri on Retrofit

Tackling damp and mould

This year, we introduced a new dedicated team for damp and mould.

The team inspects and manages all reports of damp and mould to ensure residents get the work they need in a timely manner, and makes sure that the causes of damp and mould are monitored through our repairs teams. Our repairs contractor also has a dedicated team to carry out the work needed on damp and mould, including

mould washes, specialist ventilation or follow on decorations.

Our dedicated damp and mould team have dealt with approximately 1530 cases of damp and mould, with reports coming to us from tenants, surveys and inspections, our housing officers, and online referrals as well as from local GPs. The teams prioritise swift resolution of the issues and monitoring of problems so that they do not return.

1

Within 24 hours of receiving a report of damp or mould, the team will contact the resident and arrange an inspection.

2

Within 3 working days of the team contacting the resident, a surveyor will carry out an inspection (dependent on resident availability).

3

Within the following 7 working days a mould wash will be completed on affected areas. (also dependent on resident availability).

They also track any associated repairs works and ensure any required redecoration is carried out.

As part of a London-wide project on damp and mould, we are trialling sensors in people's homes to measure

temperature and humidity, the factors which lead to mould. These sensors help to highlight early signs of dampness and mould growth so we can address the issue before it escalates.



Keeping you safe

The safety of your homes is our top priority. In recent years, there have been legislative changes around activities landlords need to undertake to ensure you remain safe in your homes.

This includes implementing the Building Safety Act and Fire Safety Act with a particular focus on high rise buildings and fire safety across all types of property. We comply with all regulatory requirements and meet the highest standards of inspection and associated works.

We want to involve our residents in why and how we do things. We have launched a new Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy. This strategy outlines how we will inform residents about safety procedures, involve them in decision making, and make it easy to share concerns with us.

We want to ensure that you have all the information you need to feel safe and secure in your home, and we're now working with residents to create customised building safety information packs for all our high-rise buildings.

In the last 12 months, we have:

- ✔ Created a dedicated building safety team to support, design and deliver building safety across Westminster's housing portfolio.
- ✔ Implemented a strong governance framework to monitor our performance and that of our contractors.
- ✔ Adapted our processes for completing work identified in risk assessments and health and safety checks.
- ✔ Sought feedback from residents via our high-rise building safety questionnaire.
- ✔ Created a Resident Engagement Strategy to improve the way we work with residents on building safety.
- ✔ Registered all of our high-rise building with the Building Safety Regulator.

TSMs. Safety and Quality

	WCC year end
% of fire risk assessments in target	97.3%
% of properties with valid gas safety certificates	99.3%
Water tank testing	100%
Lift testing	100%
Asbestos survey compliance	88%

In the next 12 months, we will:

- ➔ Work with residents to develop tailored building safety information packs for all our high-rise buildings.
- ➔ Develop and consult on safety management plans.
- ➔ Improve our communication on our landlord health and safety obligations and how we work with you to ensure your home is safe.
- ➔ Deliver our ongoing fire safety risk assessment programme to keep tenants safe.
- ➔ Create a dedicated Building Safety Resident panel.
- ➔ Continue to deliver on our landlord health and safety requirements and publish our performance (TSMs).



Improving your communal and green spaces

We collaborate closely with residents and other organisations to ensure our estates and neighbourhoods are safe and appealing places to live.

We conduct regular walkabouts with residents on estates, make sure communal spaces are kept clean and tidy, problems fixed, and play equipment safe for families.

We are especially proud of our award-winning green spaces. Despite Westminster's location at the heart of London, the city boasts diverse wildlife and a wealth of open spaces, and the green spaces on our housing estates play an important part in this. We consistently work to improve green spaces on our estates, increase biodiversity and create places that residents can use and enjoy.

TSMs. Neighbourhood and Community

WCC year end

Tenant satisfaction that landlord makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood **76.0%**

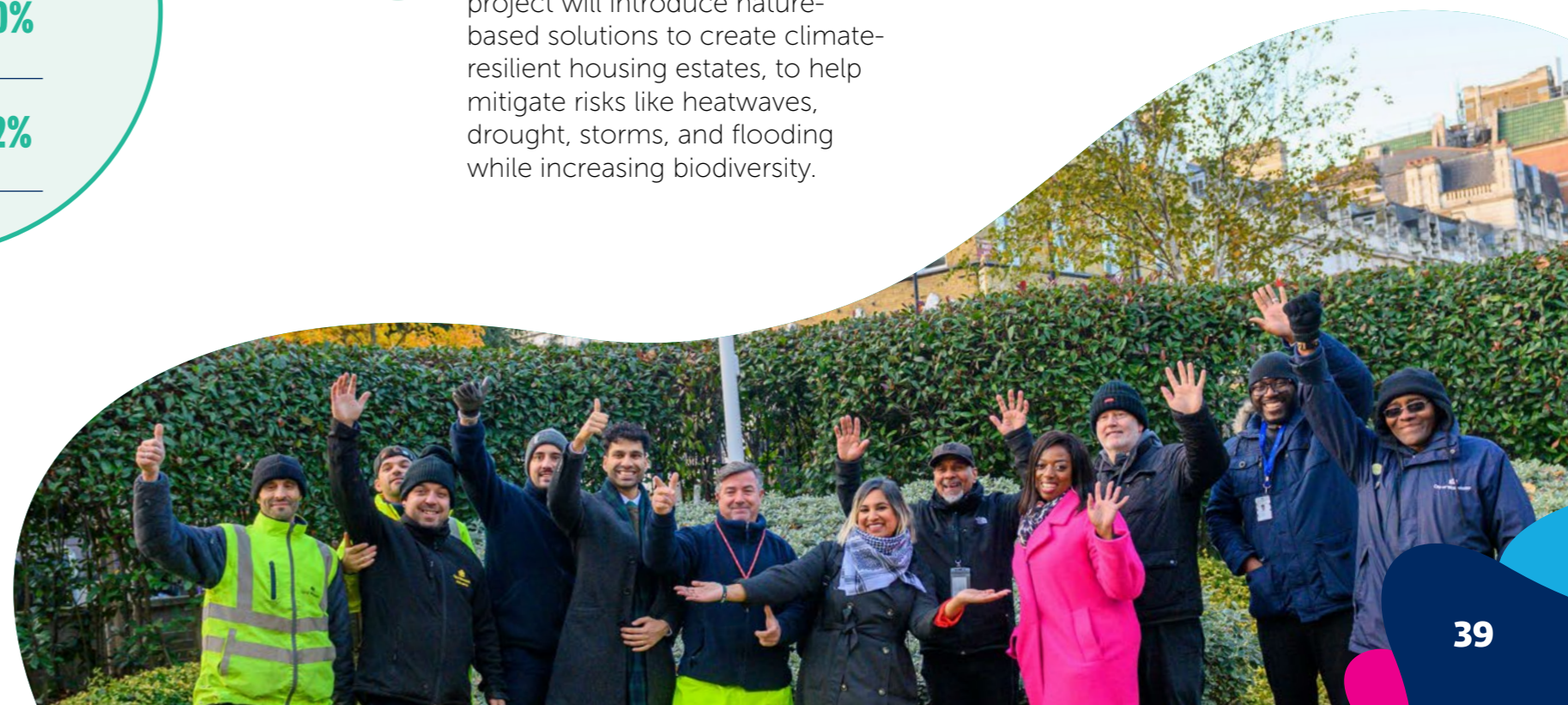
Tenant satisfaction that communal areas are kept clean and well-maintained **79.2%**

In the last 12 months, we have:

- ✔ Introduced new food growing spaces in Churchill Gardens and Grosvenor estate.
- ✔ Funded two new youth clubs for young people living in Westminster housing.
- ✔ Introduced a new sensory garden for children with special educational needs on Lillington and Longmore estate.
- ✔ Secured two new green flag awards for Hallfield Estate and Brunel Estate.

In the next 12 months, we will:

- ➔ Provide new online services for parking and booking community halls.
- ➔ Regenerate all allotment sites across housing land, provide new and improved services and encourage more residents to grow their own produce. On the Lisson Green Estate we will create additional allotments, making use of unused land.
- ➔ Increase resident involvement in community gardens and greening initiatives on estates, encourage more residents to take direct action, including a volunteer gardening program to assist vulnerable residents in maintaining their gardens.
- ➔ The North Paddington Greening project will introduce nature-based solutions to create climate-resilient housing estates, to help mitigate risks like heatwaves, drought, storms, and flooding while increasing biodiversity.



CASE STUDY.**Green Flag Awards**

Westminster is now the only borough to have been awarded Green Heritage Accreditation for a housing estate in the UK.

Hallfield Estate received the prestigious Green Flag earlier this year. It joins Lillington & Longmoore, Churchill Gardens, and Lisson Green as our fourth estate to be awarded a Green Flag for outstanding green space management.

This new achievement highlights our dedication to keeping our green spaces beautiful and preserving their rich history.

A resident of Hallfield estate for 65 years, Rose Clearly, said:



The green spaces around here are priceless. We're lucky to have so much of it in central London, and it's just for us. It's nice to be credited for having a lovely estate.



Rose, Bayswater Resident

CASE STUDY.**No Mow May**

For the past two years, we have taken part in the No Mow May campaign, allowing some of our parks, greenspaces and housing estates to not be mowed for an entire month, providing a space for nature to thrive in Spring.



I just wanted to give some feedback about No Mow May. I live in Simpson House next to Lisson Green open space NW8 and I think No Mow May is great. The park has attracted so much more wildlife. I have seen a Jay bird and this morning a Pied Wagtail bird, let alone different insects and other plants. The initiative should continue.



Resident Feedback



Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

We understand that anti-social behaviour (ASB) can severely affect residents' quality of life and sense of safety in their communities.

That's why we collaborate closely with the police and other key services, both within and outside the council, to address residents' concerns promptly.

We will take enforcement action and work to support vulnerable residents in addressing the underlying causes of ASB when necessary. Information on how to report ASB can be found on our website. If you are a Westminster Housing tenant or leaseholder, you can report ASB online at westminster.gov.uk/form/report-anti-social-behaviour or by calling 0800 358 3783.

In the last 12 months, we have:

- ✔ Made it easier for residents to understand and report anti-social behaviour.
- ✔ Introduced a new CCTV network in priority areas to help tackle ASB.
- ✔ Successfully dealt with 420 cases of anti-social behaviour.
- ✔ Worked closely with our residents to review all our fact sheets and information on ASB, to make it simpler and easier to understand.
- ✔ Introduced a new Estate Security Patrol, involving overnight antisocial behaviour checks across the city.

In the next 12 months, we will:

- ➔ Carry out consultation with Resident Associations to assess the impact and effectiveness of the Estate Security Patrol.
- ➔ Upgrade the ASB content on our housing webpage on the council's website to include a new CCTV factsheet and an ASB factsheet for residents.
- ➔ Deliver community events and activities in partnership with the police as part of ASB awareness week running 18- 24 November.
- ➔ Run our yearly Autumn Nights campaign, working with partners to prevent disorder relating to Halloween and Bonfire Night.

TSMs. Neighbourhood and Community

WCC year end

Tenant satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour	63.6%
Number of anti-social behaviour cases opened per 1000 homes	25
Number of anti-social behaviour cases that involve hate incidents opened per 1000 homes	2





CASE STUDY.

Autumn nights

Our Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) teams work hard with partners like the Met Police and London Fire Brigade to keep Westminster safe between Halloween and Bonfire Night.

This time of year usually sees high numbers of anti-social behaviour reports. In 2023, the Met Police received 43% fewer calls about firework related issues, and our Housing Service received no direct reports. This followed a successful Autumn Nights campaign, which included speaking to families of people who had come to our attention the previous year, sharing fireworks safety advice and working with our Trading Standards team to ensure there were no illegal fireworks sales in the area.

“

I've noticed a huge improvement in dealing with anti-social behaviour around Lillington and Longmoore. There's now more visible policing and regular security walkarounds, which makes me feel much safer. They've also installed cameras in 'hot spots' and enhanced the lighting in the area. These changes have made a significant difference in our community, and I'm really grateful for the effort put into making the estate safer.

”

Benjamin, Resident Panel member

Supporting our tenants

Our housing services are here to support our tenants, help people to maintain their tenancies and live comfortably and safely in their homes. We set out to treat everyone with respect and fairness and make sure our services are easy to access and meet people's needs.

We know that people's circumstances are different, and we have been working hard to improve the way we support vulnerable people. We have introduced two new teams in our housing contact centre to work directly with vulnerable residents. This

includes contacting all our tenants to make sure we understand their support needs and have reasonable adjustments in place to meet them, as well as a new team to manage repairs for vulnerable residents.

We are working in partnership with Shelter to help residents sustain their tenancies and provide crucial support to residents facing the risk of homelessness. Through our Rent Support Fund, we are providing financial support to help tenants with the cost of rent payments during the cost-of-living crisis.

Over the past 12 months, we have:

- ✔ Helped 2,261 households through our Rent Support Fund, providing a total of £967,162.20.
- ✔ In partnership with Shelter, we have helped to sustain 20 tenancies clearing £100,174.37 in rent arrears. through the Homeless Prevention Fund.
- ✔ Through the Getting to Know You Campaign we have started contacting all our tenants to make sure we have up to date information on residents who are vulnerable, understand their support needs, and arrange additional support to meet these needs.
- ✔ We supported 244 people through the floating support Single Homeless Project (SHP).
- ✔ Introduced a new customer advocacy team in our contact centre to support vulnerable residents when they request a service and manage their repairs process.

In the next 12 months, we will:

- ➔ Continue to ensure our information on vulnerable tenants is up to date. Carry out household support reviews for all residents identified as vulnerable to ensure we have the right support in place to meet their needs.
- ➔ Provide safeguarding training to staff, providers and delivery partners.
- ➔ Invest another £1 million into our Rent Support Fund to help more residents who are struggling financially.

We recently helped an 84-year-old resident with the Rent Support Fund.

His household expenses had increased due to higher rent, heating, and hot water charges. This funding provided financial support and improved his well-being, as he was no longer worried about covering these costs.

Supporting our leaseholders

Our dedicated Leasehold Operations Team provides advice and support to leaseholders, making sure they are informed of any changes to their buildings, understand the support available to them, and can get involved in decisions about their buildings.

We offer a range of financial support options for leaseholders struggling with their service charges or major

works bills, and work with people individually to find a repayment plan that works for them.

Leasehold Operations is now based in all our housing service centres for those who would like to speak to us face-to-face. We also offer 20-minute online appointments throughout the week for leaseholders to ask questions or get advice on a range of issues.

Over the past 12 months, we have:

- ✔ Introduced a new voluntary service charge loan for leaseholders who receive bills over £20,000 and are facing financial hardship. This allows leaseholders to secure the loan against their property.
- ✔ Introduced a 3-month payment holiday for leaseholders who are struggling to pay their service charges.
- ✔ Reviewed our major works payment plans and introduced new terms to offer more support to leaseholders. A range of payment options are available on our website.

- ✔ Introduced a new voluntary service charge loan for leaseholders who receive bills over £20,000 and are facing financial hardship. This allows leaseholders to secure the loan against their property.
- ✔ Refreshed and improved our short-let process, we have reviewed our correspondence and designed a new poster campaign which has been displayed in affected blocks.

In the next 12 months, we will:

- ➔ Consult on and launch a new Leasehold Charter – setting out the services leaseholders should expect from the council, and what we ask of leaseholders in return.
- ➔ Host our fifth annual leasehold conference, which will be supported from officers from across housing and our contracting partners GEM, Morgan Sindall, Axis, and United Living. We will also be joined by The Leasehold Advisory Service, Citizens Advice Westminster and Green Doctors.
- ➔ Work in partnership with our Key Leaseholders, across the city to allow residents to scrutinise elements of service charges before they are invoiced. The scheme operates to allow transparency of information and affords our residents a real opportunity to participate in the calculation process before invoices are raised.
- ➔ Host our annual lease extension surgeries across our service centres, to provide information and assistance to our leaseholders who are interested in extending their lease.



Providing homes for people who need them

In Westminster, there is a high demand for council homes and we are seeing increasing numbers of people apply for social housing. Demand for social housing continues to outstrip supply with over 5000 households on the waiting list. Families can wait many years for housing, particularly for larger homes, and nearly 4000 households are waiting for a property with 2 or more bedrooms.

We do everything we can to meet as many people's needs as possible. This year we have this year added more than 300 social homes to our

housebuilding programme and are committed to building more social and truly affordable homes.

We are currently reviewing the way we allocate social housing, to make sure it is as fair and equitable as possible and reflects current needs and demands. We are also taking action against people who rent their homes illegally, looking for ways to bring empty properties back into use and helping residents downsize where appropriate to help free up much needed family sized homes.

Over the past 12 months, we have:

- ✔ Completed 246 new homes of which 197 affordable tenure homes, this includes 112 in Harrow Road.
- ✔ Worked with residents and service users to review our social housing allocations policy.

- ✔ Helped free up 45 much needed family-sized homes through our incentive scheme.

In the next 12 months, we will:

- ➔ Implement the new Housing Allocations Policy and review our tenancy policy and strategy.
- ➔ Implement the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- ➔ Implement a Housing Compact (launched in 2024) - a partnership between the council and its Registered Providers (RPs) to deliver a step change in the quality of social housing services in Westminster.
- ➔ Continue to expand Westminster's temporary accommodation (TA) portfolio, securing more high-quality TA.



Next year at a glance

Working with you our residents we have made a great deal of progress over the last year however we have more to do as we strive for excellence in the delivery of our services.

We are sharing our plan for the next 12 months which you have helped us to shape, so that you can see what to expect and have the opportunity to hold us to account. Over the next 12 months our plan is to improve:



Engagement and Communication

- We will publish our Resident Engagement Strategy outlining our priorities and how we will share information, exchange ideas, and improve services. This strategy will help residents to hold us to account.
- We will launch a new set of service standards, codesigned with members of our Resident Forum.
- We will be offering more training opportunities for residents who run residents' associations, in areas where they have told us they need support.
- Create a communications group allowing residents to scrutinise and help improve the way we engage and communicate.
- Set up more task and finish groups, where residents and officers work together to co-design solutions to issues identified by residents.
- Further involve residents in our senior officer recruitment and contractor procurement processes.
- We hope to achieve TPAS accreditation, this is a nationally recognised standard that offers an independent assessment of our resident participation and involvement structure.



Complaints

- Improve our systems and processes to make it easier for residents to log a complaint and receive a timely response.
- Continue delivering complaint handling training particularly on how we put things right, including improving how we respond to complaints.
- Create a resident led task and finish group on complaints to explore how we improve residents' experience of interacting with the council, particularly when things have gone wrong.
- Trial a new after care approach to make sure we consistently do what we say we will do, and keep residents updated if things go wrong or get delayed.



Improving your homes and estates

- Continue to survey the condition of our homes, so that we can proactively make improvements
- Renew our Strategic Asset Management Plan, to improve the way we prioritise and manage capital works.
- Continue to deliver our capital works at Mozart Estate, Hallfield Estate and Scottish Towers in the north of the city. We are currently consulting with residents about these programmes and how the works will be completed to make sure they cause minimal disruption to residents.



Improving our repairs service

- Implement the Resident Repairs Task & Finish group recommendations
- Improve the way we, and our contractors, communicate with residents about their repairs
- Add more contractors to our local area. repairs service to increase capacity, with more specialised contractor provision.
- Work with residents to formulate our long-term commissioning strategy for new repairs contracts, commencing from 2027.
- Continue to provide greater transparency of repairs including publishing estate-specific dashboards to show performance in your local area.
- Evaluate the impact of our 'in-house' communal repairs team pilot, and consider extending it to more estates



Keeping you safe

- Continue to deliver on our landlord health and safety requirements and publish our performance (TSMs)
- Improve our communication on our landlord health and safety obligations and how we work with you to ensure your home is safe
- Deliver our ongoing fire safety risk assessment programme to keep tenants safe
- Work with residents to develop tailored building safety information packs for all our high-rise buildings.
- Develop and consult on safety management plans.
- Create a dedicated Building Safety Resident panel.



Improving your communal and green spaces

- Provide new online services for parking and booking community halls.
- We will be regenerating all allotment sites across housing land, providing new and improved services and encouraging more residents to grow their own produce. On the Lisson Green state we will be creating additional allotments, making use of unused land.
- We aim to increase resident involvement in community gardens and greening initiatives on estates, encourage more residents to take direct action, including a volunteer gardening program to assist vulnerable residents in maintaining their gardens.
- The North Paddington Greening project will introduce nature-based solutions to create climate-resilient housing estates, to help mitigate risks like heatwaves, drought, storms, and flooding while increasing biodiversity.



Anti-Social Behaviour

- Carrying out consultation with Resident Associations to assess the impact and effectiveness of the Estate Security Patrol.
- Upgrade the ASB content on our housing webpage on the council's website to include a new CCTV factsheet and an ASB factsheet for residents.
- Deliver community events and activities in partnership with the police as part of ASB awareness week running 18- 24 November. This includes our yearly Autumn Nights campaign, where the ASB team work with partners to prevent disorder relating to Halloween and Bonfire Night.



Supporting our tenants

- Continue to ensure our information on vulnerable tenants is up to date. Carry out household support reviews for all residents identified as vulnerable to ensure we have the right support in place to meet their needs.
- Provide safeguarding training to staff, providers and delivery partners.
- Invest another £1 million into our Rent Support Fund to help more residents who are struggling financially.



Supporting our Leaseholders

- Host our 5th annual leasehold conference, which will be supported from officers from across housing and our contracting partners GEM, Morgan Sindall, Axis, and United Living. We will also be joined by The Leasehold Advisory Service, Citizens Advice Westminster and Green Doctors.
- Work in partnership with our Key Leaseholders across the city to allow residents to scrutinise elements of service charges before they are invoiced. The scheme operates to allow transparency of information and affords our residents a real opportunity to participate in the calculation process before invoices are raised.
- Host our annual lease extension surgeries across our service centres, to provide information and assistance to our leaseholders who are interested in extending their lease.
- Consult on and launch a new Leasehold Charter – setting out the services leaseholders should expect from the council, and what we ask of leaseholders in return.



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- Implement the new Housing Allocations Policy and review our tenancy policy and strategy.
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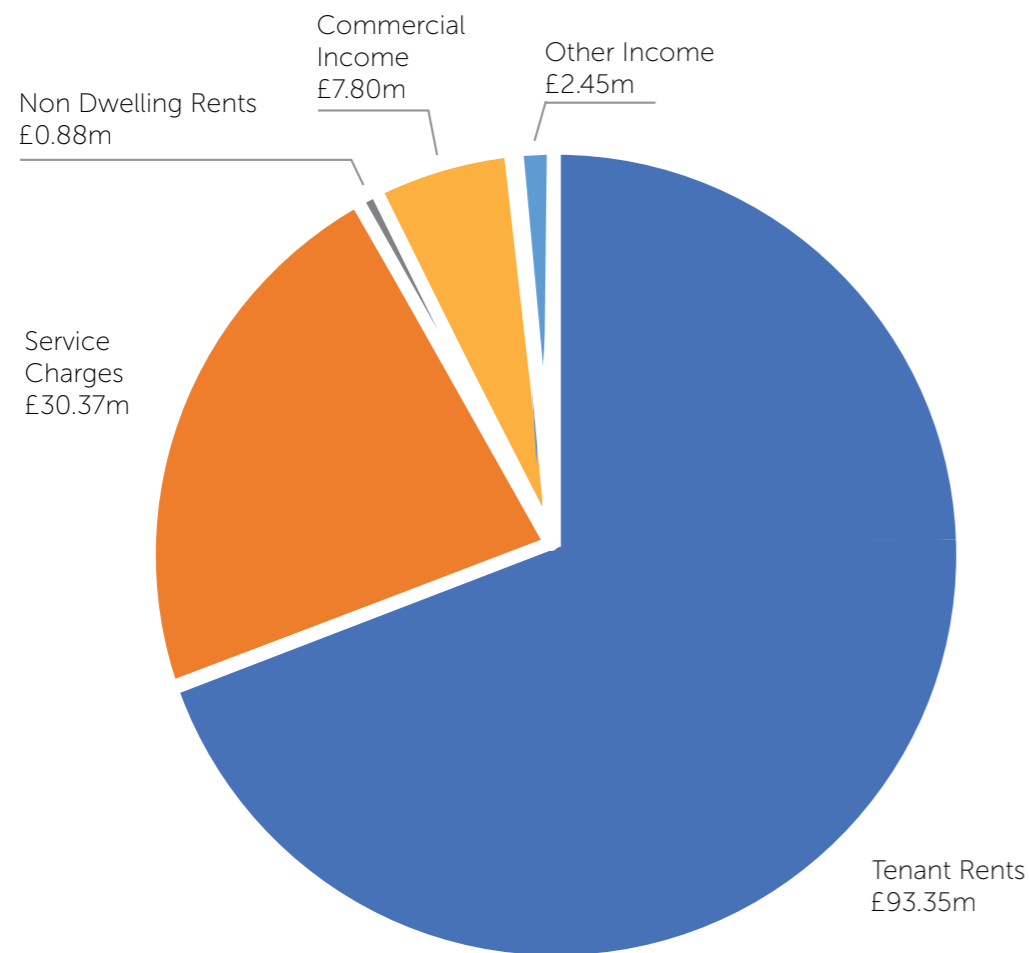
How we spend your rent and service charges

The Council keeps a separate account of income and expenditure for managing the housing stock and providing housing management services. This is known as the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

The main sources of income are rents and service charges from tenants and leaseholders.

The main items of expenditure are management and maintenance costs, major repairs, loan charges, and depreciation costs

Where our money comes from: **HRA Income (£m)**



How we spend our money: **HRA Expenditure (£m)**

