



Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

HOUSING SERVICES

End of year performance report
1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022



Digital
Annual
Report to
residents



Welcome and introduction

CLlr Emily Davey, Portfolio Holder for Housing



Welcome to our second annual review and report to Housing Residents, where we are able to set out our performance over the last year from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

We are very pleased that post-pandemic we have been able to resume face to face services with residents and we have redesigned the housing management service to better serve our community.

We know that circumstances are still difficult for residents and the current cost of living issues have been exerting additional financial pressures, so we are especially thankful to our residents to be able to report rent arrears of just 2.4% for the year - an historical low. At the same time we have increased overall customer satisfaction on repairs to 88% up from 84% last year March of 2021.

We know there is more to do, for example in optimising the re-letting of vacated properties and managing the transition needed with the regeneration of the Cambridge Road Estate, but we remain committed to providing excellent service and affordable, sustainable homes in the right places to meet the needs of our communities into the future.

**Best regards
Councillor Emily Davey**



Alarm Response Service Report

Alarm Response Service – Housing for Older People

The Alarm Response Service answers when an older person activates their pull cord to request assistance.

Historically, this service has been operated by Milton Keynes Council to a high level. However, to ensure value for money, we are putting this out to tender.

We wanted to encourage residents to have a real stake and greater influence in the future of the services they receive. So, in March 2022 we held drop-in sessions for our residents living in sheltered accommodation to discuss the renewal of the Alarm Response contract, working with us to draw up the specification and give their input to the design of the service. The feedback received will help improve service provision in the future.

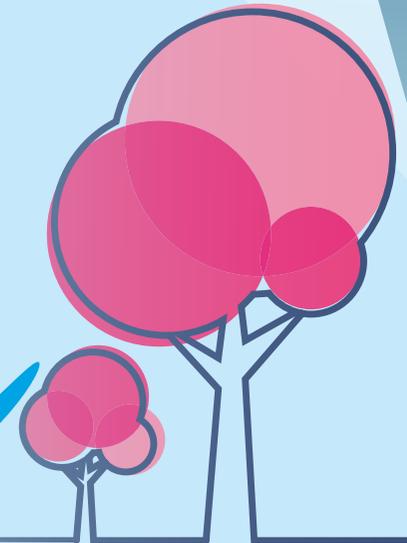
**Paula Wray Lead Officer
Housing for older people**



If you are interested in joining the older peoples group, to discuss and monitor service delivery please contact us on involvedinhousing@kingston.gov.uk



Lesley Turnbull is one of the residents taking part and told us: *“I was very happy to take part in the process of drawing up the specification for the Alarm Response contract. The drop-in sessions to which all residents were invited were also appreciated. I felt part of the process instead of it being dictated to me”*



Rent collection



Arrears for the year were just 2.4% of total rent charged throughout the year.

This is a record low figure for the borough and we thank our residents for helping us achieve this.

The Council offers help with rent and benefits through our Financial Inclusion and Welfare Reform Teams. You can contact FIT on **020 8547 5591** or email: [**financialinclusion@kingston.gov.uk**](mailto:financialinclusion@kingston.gov.uk)

Financial Inclusion Team (FIT)

Total income generated by FIT for the period April 2021 - March 2022

£388,834

Details

Housing support fund applications completed

£68,645

Income maximisation successful benefit applications

£122,508

Housing Benefit and Universal Credit housing element successful applications

£197,681



Lettings and Housing Register

The number of all social housing lettings in 2021/22 was 207. (140 Council and 67 Registered Provider). Of these 142 were in general purpose accommodation and 65 sheltered housing for elderly.



As at 31 March 2022 there were 3711 live applications on the Housing Register

The average number of days it has taken to re-let homes up to 31 March 2022

General needs



Homes for older people



The Council has undertaken a full review of the suitability of existing sheltered housing and has further plans to address the issue of time taken to re-let properties.

Empty homes

We are working hard to get vacant properties back into use. The numbers for empty homes does include those properties vacated as part of the Cambridge Road Estate regeneration and these are shown as non-lettable.

Number of empty homes

| | Empty but available for letting | Empty but not available for letting | Total Empty |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| 0 - 6 weeks | 11 | 11 | 22 |
| Between 6 weeks and 6 months | 23 | 27 | 50 |
| Over 6 months | 36 | 122 | 158 |
| Total | 70 | 160 | 230 |

Right to Buy Applications 2021-22

The Council received 71 applications last year, the highest number we've received since 2016-17.



Losing your home (Eviction)



We have carried out 7 evictions for rent arrears, 2 for anti-social behaviour and 1 for property abandonment.

It is the council's focus to deal with anti-social behaviour quickly and effectively. Eviction is a last resort as we try to resolve cases through other measures such as Community Protection Warnings and ASB Contracts/injunctions.

Number of evictions:



Resident Engagement

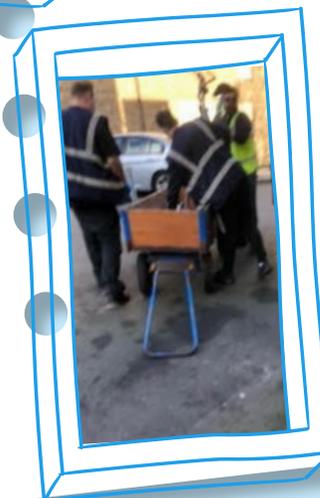
Alpha Road fly tipping clearance day



Many residents share our concerns about fly tipping and some have taken the lead to work with us on new initiatives to tackle the problem.

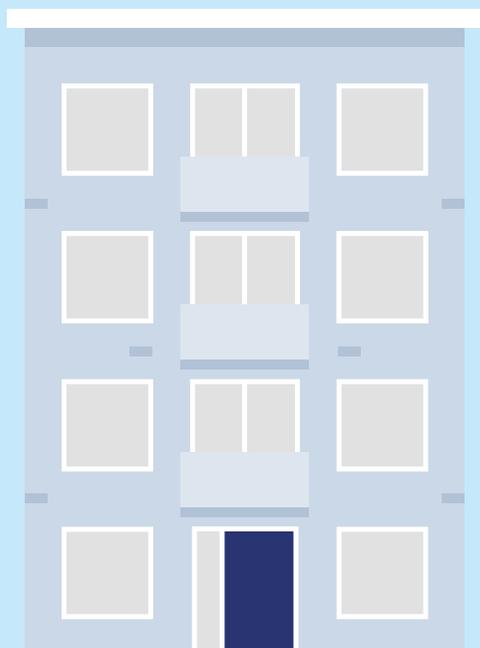
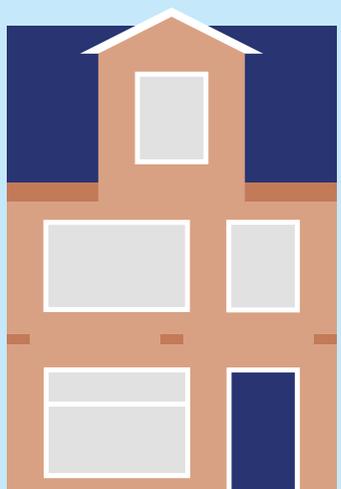
On Saturday 26 February 2022, Alpha Road Estate Residents' Association held its' first Bulk Clearance Day.

Our Estates Services Team placed its tipper truck in two locations, allowing residents to bring bulky items for disposal/recycling.



Residents' Association member Mary Parmar said: 'We were very pleased with the positive feedback from both residents and local councillors and we hope that we can arrange this again.'

The council will be looking to carry out similar events for other estates in the future.



Customer satisfaction with responsive repairs



Kingston received 79 formal complaints in the last 12 months.

The volume of complaints regarding repairs remains small compared to the total number of repairs ordered.

From 1 July 2021 Axis took over the call centre for repairs. This has reduced the call answer times for residents, enabling Axis to follow up on and focus on urgent repairs.



Complaints Analysis

Stage 1 Complaints

| | |
|--|----|
| Block estate or communal repairs | 6 |
| General service issues or complex complaints | 7 |
| Managing Anti-Social Behaviour | 3 |
| Repairs and servicing of your home | 28 |
| Staff attitude, conduct or behaviour | 9 |
| Wish to move home | 2 |
| Formal complaints | 79 |

Stage 2 Complaints

| | |
|--|---|
| Block estate or communal repairs | 3 |
| General service issues or complex complaints | 6 |
| Repairs and servicing of your home | 9 |
| Staff attitude, conduct or behaviour | 3 |
| Other complaints | 3 |

The Council had one stage 3 complaint to the Ombudsman and a determination was made against the Council.

As a result, we have carried out a number of measures to improve our handling of Anti-Social Behaviour complaints and these include:

- Implementing ASB (ECINS) monitoring system in all cases
- 3-monthly reviews on all open ASB cases
- Training for all Housing Officers on ASB cases
- Review of template letters used in ASB cases
- Staff training on hate crime and managing cases of harassment



Business Assurance and Compliance

Business assurance is designed to detail what legislation we must adhere to. This includes guidance and processes to ensure we meet these requirements as a landlord.

Health & Safety inspections

Carrying out Housing health and safety checks



100%

Gas Safety

Properties with a valid gas certificate



99.95%

Electricity Safety

Carrying out Housing Electrical inspections



93.92%

Fire Safety Inspection

Properties with a valid fire risk assessment



100%

Please allow access to your property for inspections to take place.

Other areas of compliance:

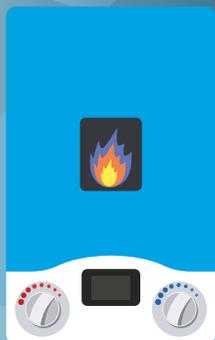
- ✓ Fire Safety Equipment servicing
- ✓ Emergency lighting programme
- ✓ Lightning Conductor Testing
- ✓ PAT tests
- ✓ Lift servicing
- ✓ Asbestos surveys and management programme
- ✓ Water Monitoring

100%

Complete



Home improvements



Homes benefitted from new energy efficient boiler installations



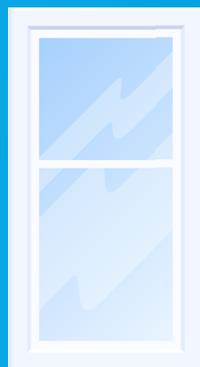
Homes benefitted from having a new kitchen installed



Homes benefitted from having a new bathroom installed



49 homes benefitted from our window replacement programme which is still ongoing



Adaptations

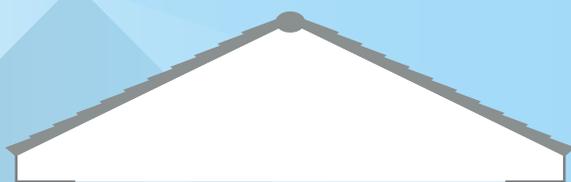
There were a total of 64 home adaptations completed for council housing using the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funding in 2021-22



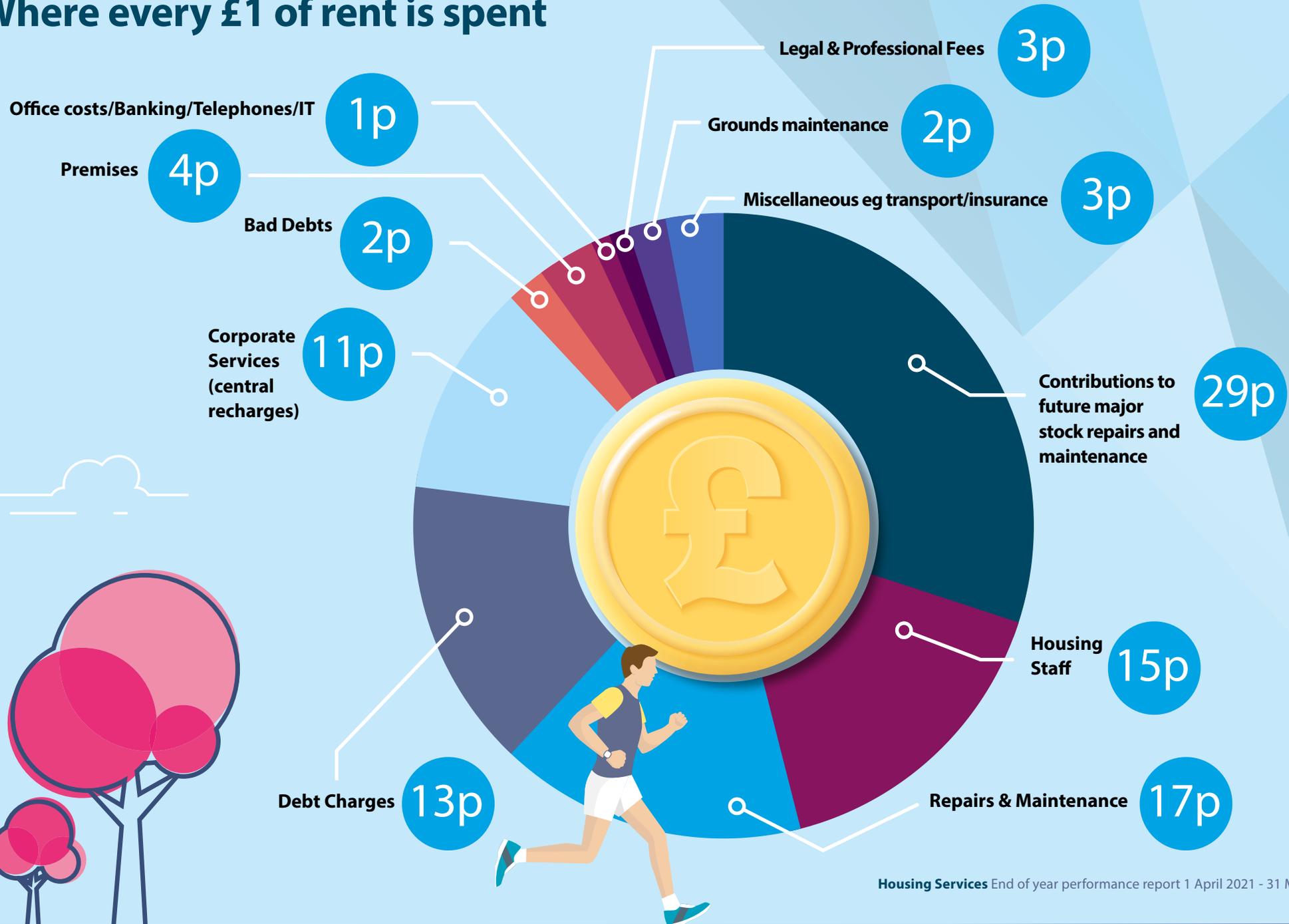
communal part installations



Homes benefitted from new modern roofs with improved insulation



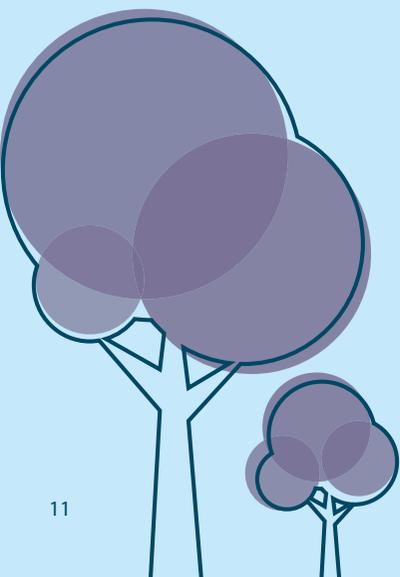
Where every £1 of rent is spent



Resident engagement

Kingston council is committed to working with residents to improve service delivery, so give us your feedback or even better, get involved and tell us what you want.

If you have feedback on housing services or want to find out more about our complaints process, please go to our website www.kingston.gov.uk/council-democracy/feedback-complaints-complements

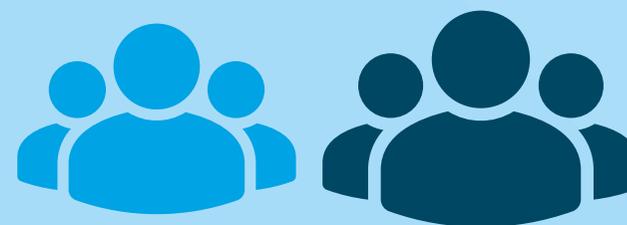


Are you interested in joining one of our engagement groups?

Please get in touch with the Communication and Engagement specialist lead, by emailing: **involvedinhousing@kingston.gov.uk** and ensure you write 'engagement groups' in the subject title.

The groups are:

- The Repairs Group
- The ASB (Anti-social behaviour) Group
- The Housing for Older People Group.
- The Homeownership Group
- The Scrutiny Group





Thanks for reading!

For further details on housing visit our website:
www.kingston.gov.uk/housing-regeneration

