

# Annual Report 2013-2014



*"Welcome to the Annual Report, which is my first one since taking up the role of director of housing and community services."*

Our commitment is to provide good quality housing services that meet your needs and are good value for money.

This report has been produced in partnership with the residents' focus group. I'd like to thank them for their assistance."

**Brian Reilly**  
Director of Housing and Community Services

The Annual Report on performance tells you how well we have done in five key areas;

- Tenancy
- Neighbourhood and community
- Tenant involvement and empowerment
- Home
- Value for money

Council residents means council tenants, council leaseholders and people living in properties managed by a Resident Management Organisation.



Langham Square

## Annual report

A traffic light system is used to assess how well we have performed.



a lot of work to do to meet the quality standard

some work to do to meet the quality standard

standard met

Comparison figures in brackets represent performance in 2012/13.



Housing into Work



Community Champions



Housing into Work



# Tenancy

## We will;

- Make sure that we 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?

- We housed **1,117** (1,344) households.
- We reduced the amount of time it takes to relet an empty property from 23.5 days in 2012/13 to **22.04 days** in 2013/14.
- We moved **113** (84) under occupying households to smaller more suitable accommodation against a target of 193.
- Despite difficult circumstances, we managed to keep the number of households in temporary accommodation to **774** (590) and have reduced the average number of weeks a household stays in bed and breakfast to **11 weeks** (13.65).

## Tenure



Provide either introductory, flexible fixed term or secure tenancies.

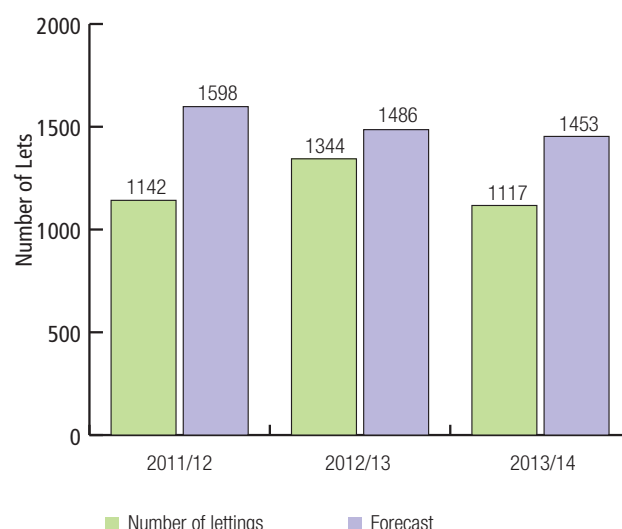
Give new residents a copy of their tenant or lease agreements and information on what the content means.

Check our homes are occupied legally and take action where they are not.

### How have we met the standard?

- **2,341** (2,463) residents use the WATCH Lifeline service which helps older residents and those with disabilities to remain independent.
- **217** (174) tenants were helped by the tenancy support team during 2013/14. This team works with tenants to help them better manage their tenancies.
- **75%** of new tenants were satisfied with the services provided by the department.
- **1,900** occupancy checks were carried out.

Number of Lettings -Actual and forecast



## Rents



To 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?

- There has been a small decrease in the total arrears at year end with **£3.71m** (£3.96m). This equates to **2.91%** of the total rent collected against a target of 6.0%. This is a significant achievement when considered against the backdrop of welfare reform.
- Reduced the number of tenants with more than seven weeks of arrears from 6.44% to **6.04%**.
- During 2013/14 callers using self-serve increased by **35,029** with additional lines of self-service being introduced which resulted in over **77,000** calls not having to be answered by an officer.
- The recruitment of the financial inclusion team, in January 2013, has enabled tenants to access emergency debt intervention and financial budgeting advice.

# 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
- Provide affordable housing in the borough to meet the needs of residents

## 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.

Generally, work to achieve wider borough objectives including improving employment opportunities and prospects.

## How have we met the standard?

- The council's Housing Into Work scheme for young people saw nine people helped into work with four tenancies being allocated. Further work is needed to meet the council's target of 20 tenancies allocated through this scheme.
- The Family Recovery Project now works with **48** (30) families in the borough with complex needs to improve their future for those families
- Over **200** frontline housing staff have received in-house safeguarding children and adults refresher training.

## 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?

- Prevented and taken effective action to deal with ASB (see table below)

	2012/13	2013/14
Number of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts signed	5	11
Number of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders served	0	0
Number of Notices Seeking Possession for ASB	50	49
Number of evictions for ASB	7	5

- Dealt with **653** new cases of ASB during 2013/14 (759).
- The department continues to support the Kicks project through the provision of sites at Ashburton and Henry Prince estates and also contributed £20,750.
- Continued to attend regular meetings with local Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

## Neighbourhood management



Make sure estates are maintained to a good standard and improved where possible.

Respond to emergencies in a timely manner.

Work with other services and the police to keep your communities and estates clean and safe.

## How have we met the standard?

- **41,090** (42,925) emergency calls were handled.
- Continued reductions in the level of graffiti by 19,756m<sup>2</sup> to **16,216m<sup>2</sup>**
- Plans to regenerate three estates in Wandsworth; Alton (Roehampton), Winstanley and York Road (Latchmere) are now well underway. Residents have been closely involved in the creation and evolution of plans in both areas and have expressed a strong desire for significant change.



# Tenant involvement and empowerment

## We will;

- Involve residents in decision-making processes that affect them
- Support the development of accredited residents' associations
- Provide residents with a variety of methods to tell the department what they think of services
- Learn from complaints and make use of them to improve services

## 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?

- Dealt with **1,253** (1,225) complaints (both departmental and contractor) of which 713 were parking appeals accounting for 56.9% of all the department's complaints.
- **95%** of complaints were responded to within the target time of 10 working days, the same as last year.
- **90.8%** of complaints were successfully dealt with at step one of the complaints procedure, confirming that the majority are dealt with effectively.
- Four independent surveys were carried out; the new tenants survey, anti-social behaviour, communications and the recruitment of a new Housing Link Panel along with a status lite survey. These help us to find out residents' satisfaction with different services.
- Overall satisfaction with services is **65%** (77%) for all residents.

## Involvement and empowerment



Encourage resident involvement.

Inform residents about services and give them the opportunity to check and challenge how well the department is doing.

### How have we met the standard?

- **58** (73) estate inspections have been carried out with residents and councillors.
- Worked with the **68** (67) accredited residents' associations in the borough to ensure residents can make their views known.
- **£253,000** (£322,013) spent on community projects that residents told us were a priority.
- Worked with residents who are dog owners, by providing a free dog neutering scheme which has helped **168** (60) residents.
- **7** new Housing Community Champions (HCCs) created. HCCs are residents who have been involved in a range of community projects but are not necessarily part of a residents' association (see page 7).

## 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?

- The department's service standards provide clear and concise information to residents about the department's commitments to equal opportunities and service delivery. These were updated in 2013/14.
- Delivered **191** (233) disabled adaptations for council and private residents.
- The council has signed up to 'Homefinder UK' which enables social housing tenants to move around the country [www.homefinderuk.org](http://www.homefinderuk.org).
- **18** (25) people requiring adapted housing allocated accessible homes.

# Home

## We will;

- Provide cost effective, 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\*
- Undertake decent homes plus work to improve blocks and estates where funding is available
- Monitor and report our performance for emergency, urgent and routine repairs against target times
- Inspect a percentage of all repair orders after they've been completed to ensure value for money

## Quality of accommodation



Meet the decent homes standard and where possible the decent homes plus standard.

### How have we met the standard?

- Continued to meet the decent homes standard and invested **£22.2m** (£22.4m) into the council's housing stock.
- Started over **33** major works projects including; roof renewals, window renewals and external decoration schemes.
- **253** (237) private sector dwellings were improved to meet decent homes standards.
- **40** (62) private sector dwellings received energy efficiency improvements.
- Exceeded our target for the number of repairs post-inspected.



Arndale estate

## 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/inspections.

### How have we met the standard?

- **£27.11m** (£24.0m) spent on repairs
- **95.7%** (94%) of repairs were completed within target time
- Over **£22,000** spent on the council's Resident Reward Scheme in its first year
- Carried out annual gas servicing in **99.95%** (99.64%) of tenanted properties that have gas appliances.
- **7,048** health and safety inspections were carried out in council owned blocks.



Resident reward scheme recipients

\* 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 [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) (search decent homes).

# 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 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 instance, contracts have come to an end.

Each year look at our thirty year business plan to check it remains financially viable.

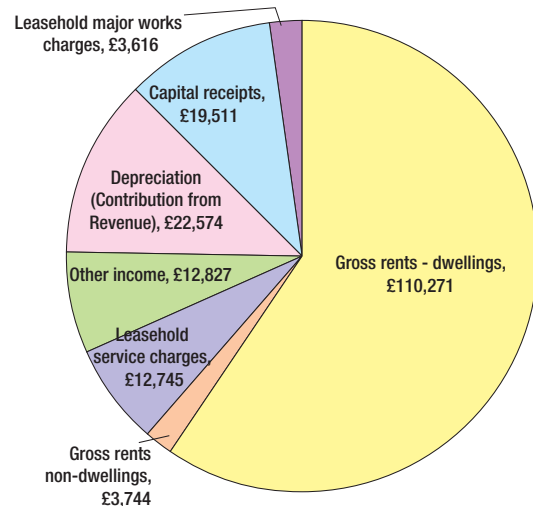
### How have we met the standard?

- Continued to effectively manage the Housing Revenue Account, demonstrated by the healthy reserve of **£234.5m** (£210.5m).
- Re-tendered **14** contracts resulting in savings for the HRA.
- The average weekly management cost is **£18.73** (£18.77)
- The average weekly maintenance cost is **£32.12** (£29.76)
- Average weekly rent was **£123.55** (£120.85)
- **48** (44) illegally occupied properties were recovered by the council.

### Priorities 2014/15

- Further develop and improve the way ASB cases are processed and how residents are informed about what we are doing.
- Review resident satisfaction results and identify any actions required to address inconsistent lower levels of satisfaction with areas of service delivery.
- Review the Resident Reward Plan, its effectiveness and whether the scheme can be expanded.
- Review the Housing into Work project and consider whether the scheme can be expanded.
- Review the Housing and Homelessness Strategy.
- Deal with the increased demand of households presenting as homeless.
- Key issues identified by resident focus group.
- Identify new Housing Community Champions and consider opportunities to expand the project to increase resident involvement.

Housing revenue account\* income 2013/14 (£000s)



\* The Housing Revenue Account covers the income and spend relating to the management and maintenance of the council's housing stock.

Housing revenue account expenditure 2013/14 (£000s)

