



Wandsworth Borough Council

Housing Asset Management Strategy

2024 - 2029



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List of documents informing this strategy

The Housing Asset Management Strategy has been informed by different Council strategies, policies and reports previously used and agreed by Wandsworth Borough Council.

These include:

[The Wandsworth Corporate Plan \(2022 – 2026\)](#)

[Wandsworth Housing and Homelessness Strategy \(2023-2028\)](#)

[Wandsworth Environment and Sustainability Strategy](#)

[Wandsworth Local Plan \(2023 – 2038\)](#)

[Resident Engagement and Participation Strategy \(2024 – 2028\)](#)

1. Introduction

The Housing Asset Management Strategy (2024 – 2029) is focused on the effective and efficient management of resources and assets to meet housing need.

It is informed by a series of existing council policies and strategies, all of which are listed in the previous page. It is the first Housing Asset Management Strategy that the Council has published and reflects how such assets will be used to meet local housing needs over the next five years.

The strategy outlines the type of housing and resident profile and includes five core sections which provide an overview of works in place and proposed. These are general repairs and maintenance; major works; sustainable council homes; building safety; and growing the stock to meet the housing challenge.

Section one identifies how recent challenges are being met to provide a robust and reliable repairs service to nearly 33,000 homes in buildings owned by the Council. This section provides a breakdown of different types of repairs, areas of responsibility and how residents are kept informed of progress.

The programme of capital works and requisite investment is included in section two. This outlines the types of work in scope, how asset-based information is used to inform future works and how stock decency is measured. Sustainability and energy efficient projects and commitments are featured in section three of the report. This details the work the Council plans to undertake to meet the climate challenge and help Wandsworth become a net zero borough by 2043.

This strategy also re-states the Council's commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of residents, particularly those in high-rise buildings. It states how the Council manages and monitors the safety and compliance of its stock in accordance with different regulations.

Finally, section five focuses on the Council's commitment to grow its asset base to meet the local housing challenge. This includes information on the Homes for Wandsworth development programme and Estate Regeneration schemes on Winstanley-York Road (Battersea) and Alton Estate in Roehampton. In addition, it reaffirms the policy to make strategic acquisitions whilst highlighting the exceptional circumstances in which a disposal can be made.

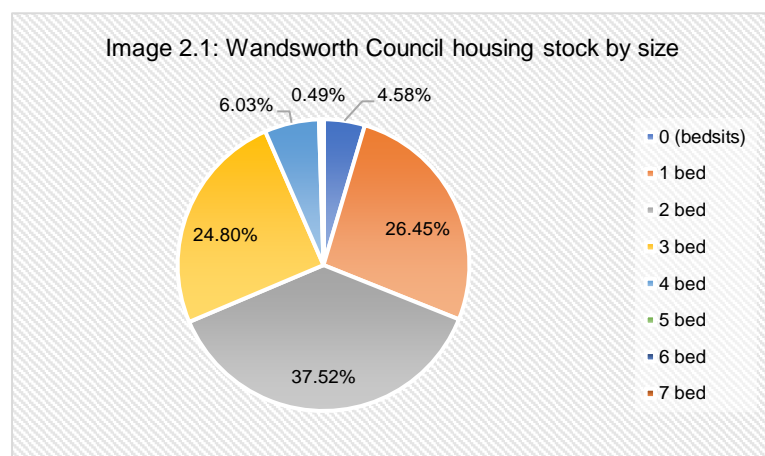
The strategy has a five-year coverage and will be reviewed periodically.

2. Stock and Resident Profile

Wandsworth is an inner-city borough with many green spaces. As at April 1st 2024, the Council owns and manages 32,321 properties: 53% are tenanted and 47% leasehold (of which 50% are sub-let). Of the tenanted stock, approximately 89% of homes are let as general needs and 6% as sheltered homes for residents aged 55 years or older. The Council currently utilises approximately 5% of its homes to accommodate households who are homeless and in need of temporary accommodation; this provides a cost-effective way for housing services to cope with the growing homelessness demand while helping ensure households remain in the Borough.

Property size and archetype

In common with other inner-London boroughs, most of the Borough's homes are one and two-bedroom flats: 90% of council tenants and leaseholders living in purpose-built flats or maisonettes. 80% of the total housing stock was built between 1940 and 1980, with only 5% built since 2001. The Borough has 148 high-rise blocks flats, consisting of seven storeys or more (18 metres or higher) in its portfolio - one of the highest figures in England - within these are 8,621 properties (tenant and leasehold).

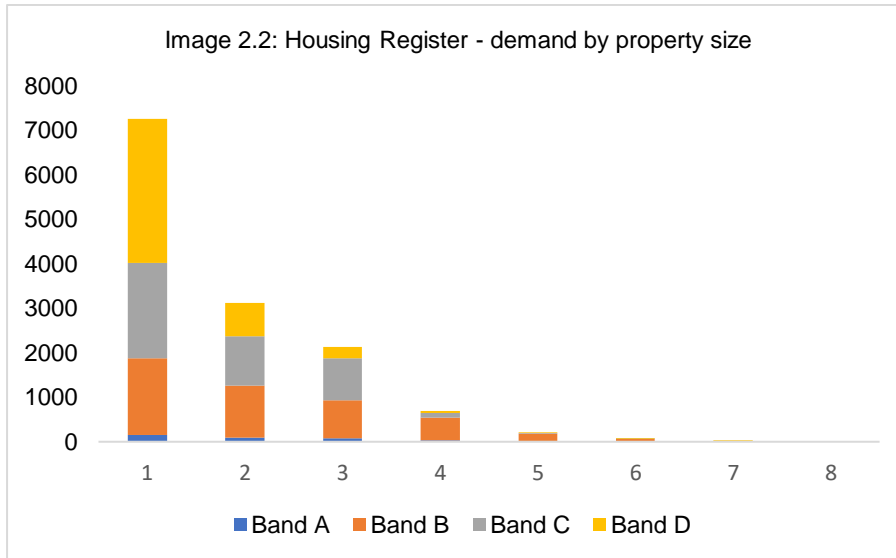


Wandsworth Council tenants and housing need

The Borough has a population of nearly 330,000 - making it one of London's most populous boroughs – and experienced a growth of 6.7% between 2011 and 2021. The Wandsworth Local Plan states that the population will continue to rise to approximately 353,000 by 2030. Further information on the Borough's resident profile can be found in the Council's [Housing and Homeless Strategy](#).

Demand for housing

In accordance with the growing population, the demand for social housing has been increasing steadily. Between 2023 and 2024 there has been a 16% increase in the number of people on the Council's Housing Register and at March 2024, over 13,000 people were waiting for a council home. The greatest demand is for one and two-bed flats across all applicants, particularly those in urgent housing need. In addition, in March 2024 there were over 3,800 households living in temporary accommodation.

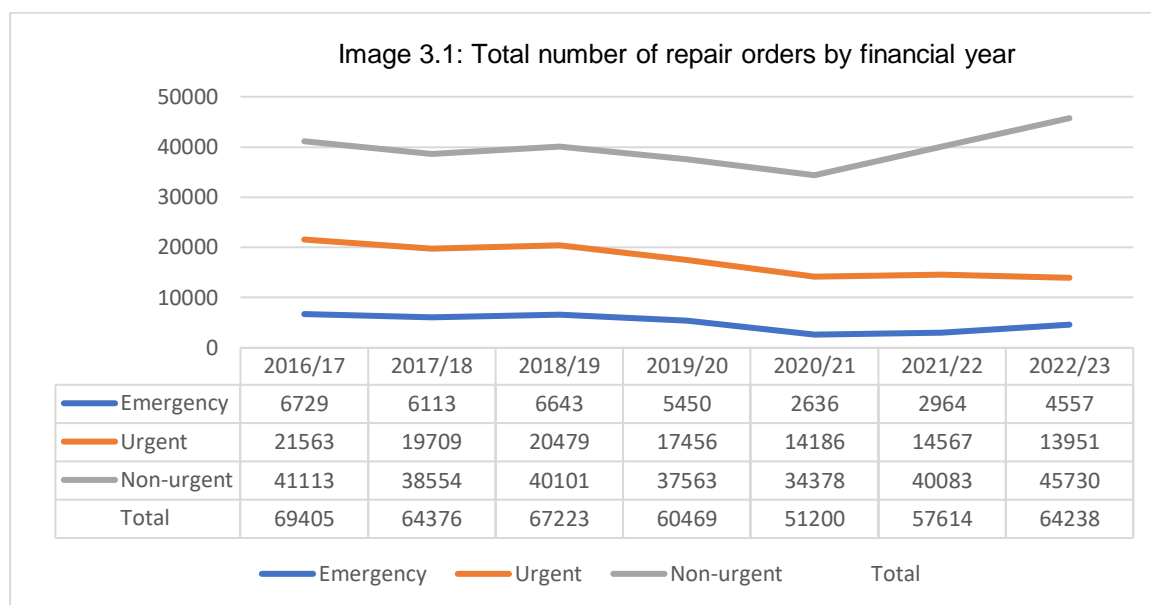


3. General repairs and maintenance

The Council is responsible for ensuring that effective repairs to tenanted properties and communal areas, including blocks and estates are completed on time. There is an annual budget of approximately £43 million for general repairs to tenanted properties and communal areas, and nearly £12 million to progress repairs to vacant properties to prepare them for re-letting.

Demand on the service

The level of demand on the Council’s repairs service is significant. More than 60,000 repair requests are made to the Council each year and between 2016 and 2023, 8% were classed as emergency repairs, 28% urgent, and 64% non-urgent. Emergency and non-urgent repairs increased year on year from 2020/21 to 2022/23 as set out in the graph below.



Managing repairs responses

Responsibility for day-to-day repairs to tenanted homes rests primarily with the area housing teams, of which there are four, managing homes in different parts of the Borough¹. Specialist mechanical and electrical repairs are carried out by Support Services teams, this includes repairs to lifts, door entry systems, individual heating (for tenants), communal heating and communal electricity.

For emergency repairs the repair will be made safe within the time allocated, if more work is then needed a subsequent repair order will be raised. Responding to repairs within agreed timeframes is monitored and reported on a quarterly basis. The Council has consistently surpassed the 98% target when responding to emergency

¹ Central - Wandsworth, Southfields; Southern - Tooting, Balham, Earlsfield; Eastern - Battersea, Clapham Junction; Western - Roehampton, Putney

repairs. Similarly, for all repairs responses the Council was able to meet these timescales for 87% of repairs reported (2023-24).

Repair contracts

The Council uses Area Repair Contracts (ARCs) to fulfil its legal repair and maintenance responsibilities to its managed stock. There are four contract types overall, including works to vacant properties (when a council-owned home becomes 'void' at the end of a tenancy); works within tenanted units; works to communal areas and term contracts for communal plumbing, tank chlorination and specialist metalwork. The Council has developed its own Schedule of Rates so that contractors are better placed to meet the needs of Wandsworth tenants and leaseholders.

Each contract has a primary and secondary contractor who are allocated a proportion of the work. Primary contractors are allocated 60% with secondary contractors allocated the remainder. The existence of a secondary contractor, in this case the Council's Direct Labour Organisation – *Environment and Community Services* – enables swift and effective provision of repair services in circumstances where a contractor either ceases to trade, is removed over performance issues, or their contract is terminated by mutual agreement.

Additional repair and maintenance contracts are in place for 'out of hours' repairs, domestic and communal heating, lifts, asbestos, and door entry systems. When procuring and opening tendering processes for contractors, compliance, eligibility, economic/financial standing, technical and professional capacity and ability are all considered.

Challenges

High numbers of leaseholder properties

Approximately 48% of the Council's housing stock is occupied by leaseholders: one of the highest in London. Whilst there are some blocks solely occupied by leaseholders, the majority consist of both tenants and leaseholders. Leaseholders will contribute a proportion of costs when works to a block or an estate are to take place however if the cost of the works is more than £250 per leaseholder then statutory Section 20 leasehold consultation will apply which may impact on the speed with which a repair can be made.

The vast majority of leases include clauses that cover the recovery of costs for repairs and maintenance work. The terms of the lease allow the Council to recover costs for major works from leaseholders and allows access into leasehold properties to carry out these works. Where sustainability works are considered as part of the Council's green targets these will be considered improvements and therefore are not rechargeable under the terms of the lease. This is problematic for the Council with a high number of leaseholders and cannot be funded from the HRA. Given this the Council is reliant on external funding pots which are often difficult to bid for and do not cover full costs.

Economic pressures

The increased demand for repairs services has been compounded by external factors such as high inflation (which has contributed to increased costs of materials) and labour shortages. These challenges are widespread across the sector, being felt by contractors and landlords alike, and the Council has had to take a flexible approach to supporting its contractors in keeping to repairs target times. For instance, financial uplifts are considered to support ARCs and this has led to improved repair performance and quality since it has enabled contractors to have the resources to recruit more operatives and subsequently complete more orders within target.

Temporary use of stock

As with other local authorities, there has been an increase in the number of council-owned dwellings being used as temporary accommodation units for homeless households. This is a sensible and cost-effective approach that ensures homeless residents have safe and local accommodation while the Council fulfils its homeless duties. Additionally, properties can be used to temporarily re-house those affected by regeneration or redevelopment. In both cases, placements are typically short-term, however further minor works and associated costs may occur when the property becomes vacant again. The Council is likely to continue to utilise its housing stock in this way, although this is being reviewed on an annual basis and is also dependent on whether the number of households in temporary accommodation increases or decreases.²

Repairs Governance

Robust monitoring is in place to ensure good quality of repairs and target times are met. Live, real-time data on repair performance is broken down by ARC contractors. In addition, performance reports are submitted to the Council's Housing Committee twice a year and areas of under or worsening performance can be scrutinised by Elected Members. Council officers review repairs performance through a retrospective quarterly performance report that lists corporate key performance indicators. Monthly meetings with contractors are held by the Council to review orders, quality/standard of works, complaints and any other issues that have been highlighted.

Resident views and scrutiny

Residents can scrutinise repairs performance at the quarterly Area Housing Panels. A short satisfaction survey is also sent to tenants via a text message when a repair is completed within the home and an annual satisfaction survey is carried out with over 1,500 tenants and leaseholders. This helps the Council to understand what is working well / levels of satisfaction with repair services and helps identify areas that require improvement. The [Resident Participation and Engagement Strategy](#), published in 2024, outlines the Council's commitment to increasing opportunities for

² Number of temporary accommodation council-owned units by year: 2022/23 – 1089, 21/22 – 851, 20/21 - 699

thematic, panels, focus groups or Resident Working Groups. This will enable residents to share feedback on repairs and maintenance and make suggestions for improvements.

Small Improvement Budget

Residents can also apply for a Small Improvement Budget (SIB). This is a grant that issued by the Council for residents to make improvements to their estate or block which will benefit the community. These are considered and approved at the Area Housing Panels and Co-op Forum. SIB bids can include projects such as: community gardens or landscaping, railings, bike stores, bin enclosures or tables and benches for clubrooms/gardens.

Responding to repair requests

Tenants and leaseholders can raise repair orders by contacting their Estate Manager or Area Team directly. Area Teams ensure that the tenant/leaseholder is kept up to date on the progress of a repair order. A significant percentage of repairs are 'post-inspected' (after the repair has been undertaken) to ensure that they have been satisfactorily completed. Post-inspections are undertaken on 10% of orders where repairs cost up to £100, 20% of orders between £100 - £400, 33% of orders between £400 and £1,500, and 100% of orders over £1,500. In addition, all damp and mould orders and communal fire safety works are post-inspected.

Damp and mould

There has been a continuous increase in reports of damp and mould in tenanted homes since 2021. In response, in 2023, the Council established a dedicated mould removal team. The team responds to all damp and mould reports by visiting the property and completing a mould wash. It will then raise a request for the cause of the mould to be investigated by a trained officer to determine what repairs are required to minimise the risk of damp and mould returning.

Minimising the harmful impact that damp and mould has on residents is a high priority and the Council will do everything in its power to support tenants who are experiencing such problems in their homes. To ensure a robust, prompt and effective response, it is essential that the stock profile is understood, including the types of dwellings that are prone to damp and mould and ensuring internal processes provide immediate and effective action to remove mould growth by remedying the root cause.

Non-residential

The majority of general parking areas on Wandsworth's estates are subject to Traffic Management Orders. Furthermore, the Council manages 2,968 garages, 42 motorcycle units, 8,214 storerooms and 108 parking spaces on its estates that are rented out to residents (for example, in underground car parks). Quarterly visual checks of the garages and storerooms are undertaken with any obvious defects reported back to a dedicated maintenance team. Repairs to garages, motorbike units, storerooms and parking spaces are generally carried out on a responsive

basis, with some major works projects being carried out where necessary. Unauthorised use of such areas is dealt with by the Non-Residential Team and enforcement action taken where necessary. The Council is also responsible for the condition of the roads and pavements on its estates and in 2024 commissioned a survey to ascertain the quality and inform a programme of improvement works.

There are 31 council-owned community facilities based on estates across the Borough. Management of these varies; some are managed by volunteers on the estates whilst others are directly managed by the Council. The clubrooms are community assets and their primary purpose is to serve the local community and enable good quality engagement with residents. Whilst the Council intends to retain these spaces, a review is taking place in 2024 which will identify how well the spaces serve their communities, if and how they can generate revenues and the management arrangements.

4. Investing in council homes: Major works

As a landlord to nearly 33,000 homes, the Council has an obligation to both tenants and leaseholders to ensure that homes are safe, secure and in good condition. A proactive approach is taken, informed by stock condition surveys, making best use of different sources of data on individual properties and blocks and a programme of works is scheduled for all council homes.

Works can be either capital or revenue. Capital Works are those that add value to the stock. These include the costs the organisation incurs in purchasing, improving and replacing long-term assets, for example, by installing a new kitchen or bathroom. Revenue expenditure meanwhile concerns the ongoing operating expenses that do not add material value to the stock. This could include decorative works such as the repainting of communal areas.

In total, £172 million will be invested in existing council homes between 2024 and 2028. This will fund repairs improvements such as window, roof and heating system replacements. This programme of 'retrofitting' will make council-owned homes more sustainable and cheaper to keep warm, reducing the number of people at risk of fuel poverty.

Overview of the Major Works Programme

The purpose of the Major Works Programme is to maintain the housing stock to a desired standard, including complying with the Homes fit for Human Habitation Act (2018) and maintaining the Decent Homes Standard by being proactive in identifying hazards in council-owned homes using the housing health and safety rating system (Housing Act 2004).

Capital works are a long-term, capital-intensive investment to build upon, add to, improve or repair an asset. The Council's capital works fall into two separate categories: repairs and improvements (with a budget of £35 million as of April 2024) and environmental and estate improvements (the budget as of April 2024 is £2.4 million)

Table. 4.1: Breakdown of repairs and improvements included within the Capital Works Programme

Category	Description
Major refurbishment of estates	This includes window, roof, bathroom and kitchen renewals, cladding replacement, fire safety works
Re-lifting	Renewal and repairs of lifts
Rewiring	Block electrical upgrades
Heating improvements	Renewal of individual heating

Heating repairs	Renewal and repairs of communal heating systems
Special repairs	Extensions, conversions, works to acquired properties and unforeseen major works
Sheltered housing	Encompasses all works such as electrical, communal and roof repairs only to sheltered housing
Adaptions for people with disabilities	Works carried out to occupied and void properties to future proof them
Entrycall and CCTV	Renewal and repair of entry call systems and CCTV

Assessing stock condition

In 2022/23 the Council completed a stock condition survey of a representative sample of tenanted properties and blocks. Stock condition is assessed by qualified surveyors working on behalf of the Council. In 2024, it was agreed that 100% of all blocks would be surveyed over a five-year period. This survey includes assessments of all communal and external areas such as roofs, wall finishes, shared walkways and windows. In addition to stock condition surveys, reviews of housing stock are also undertaken as part of day-to-day tasks such as void inspections, gas safety checks, call out to / follow-up to repairs, tenancy checks and damp and mould inspections.

Decent Homes

In 2022 the Government consulted on proposed changes to the Decent Homes Standard. The original standard, launched in 2006, will be replaced to reflect emerging challenges and newer legislation. The new standard is expected to be announced in 2024 and changes to the standard could render an increased number of stock as non-decent. The Council will undertake a review of its management information and identify how many homes are impacted by the change in standard. The level of decency of properties owned by the Council on 1 April 2024 (using the 2006 standard) was 95%.

Funding major works

Whilst some capital works may be funded by grants, the majority are funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). For repairs and improvement, the HRA 30-year Business Plan includes future funding for assumed levels of capital spend based on a statistical survey of the Council's housing stock. The plan helps ensure that low, medium and high priority projects and works can be completed to realistic

timescales. The Council's Housing Committee approves the capital spend required over a four-year period. The approved spend for 2022 – 2026 is listed in table 4.2. below. The plan is reviewed by Committee annually to ensure that it remains financially viable and that sufficient balances to respond to emergencies are allocated. Both the HRA Business Plan and this strategy are aligned to inform the strategic medium- and long-term approaches to managing the Council's assets.

Table 4.2: Approved Capital Programme (2022 – 2026)

Housing Revenue Account - Approved Capital Programme & Virements

	<u>2022/23</u>	<u>2023/24</u>	<u>2024/25</u>	<u>2025/26</u>
	<u>£ '000</u>	<u>£ '000</u>	<u>£ '000</u>	<u>£ '000</u>
MAJOR REFURBISHMENT OF ESTATES	19,295	56,759	41,732	3,227
RE-LIFTING	4,151	6,979	3,481	10
RE-WIRING	644	2,558	3,705	1,196
HEATING IMPROVEMENTS	1,315	492	-	-
HEATING REPAIRS	4,139	5,348	2,800	-
SPECIAL REPAIRS	3,510	2,865	-	-
SHELTERED HOUSING	1,748	2,710	35	-
ADAPTATIONS FOR DISABLED	1,550	1,550	-	-
ENTRYCALL & CCTV	676	571	594	125
TOTAL REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS	37,028	79,832	52,347	4,558
ENVIRONMENTAL & ESTATE IMPROVEMENTS	841	1,159	449	73

Breakdown of capital works by tenure

For tenanted properties, the Council is responsible for all repairs and maintenance within the home. However, for leasehold properties, which account for just less than half of Wandsworth's total stock, the Council is only obliged to undertake maintenance and repair works to the structure of the property. When these works are undertaken it is a legal requirement to consult with leaseholders before any major works commence³.

Works specified under the lease agreement are chargeable. These typically include the replacement of building elements that are at the end of their lifecycle and are

³ The Council is legally required to consult with Leaseholders if costs are greater than £250.

beyond use. Non-chargeable works are generally those that will add to or improve the property and are beyond the usual repair and maintenance duties (for example, installing secure bicycle storage).

In addition, the Council carries out adaptations to properties via its Home Improvement Agency (HIA) to assist residents of all tenures. For tenants with disabilities, this offer includes undertaking any necessary adaptations or repairs to a property on a case-by-case basis.

Asset Management Data

Asset data is important for the Council's planning, investments and understanding the condition of its housing stock so action can be taken to achieve 100% stock decency while moving forward with improvements. Data on stock condition, capital works and trackable data on building and fire safety is held within Council databases and analysed regularly. Digital platforms also enable teams to log repairs communications with tenants and leaseholders.

5. Sustainable council homes

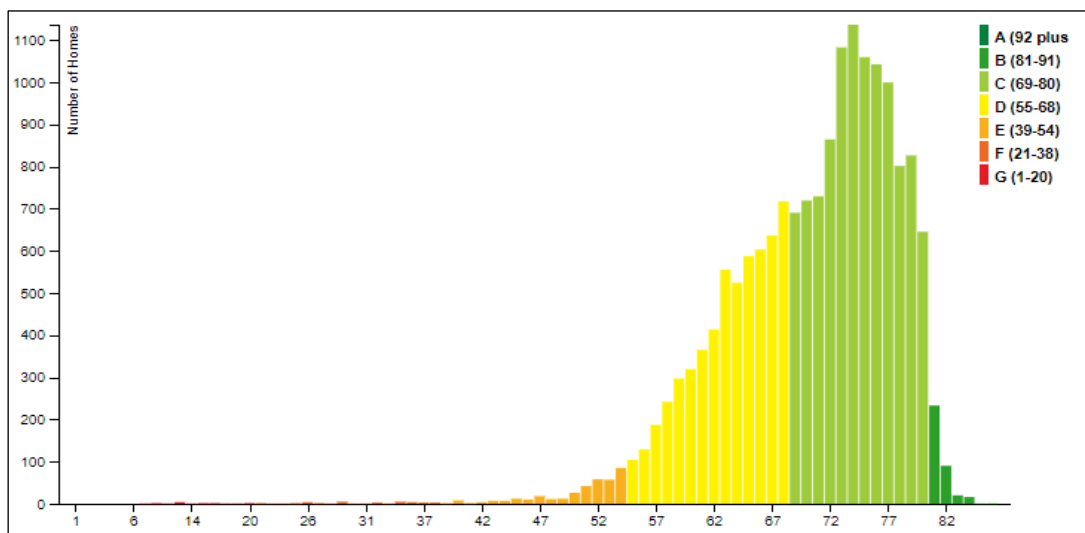
In July 2019, the Council declared a climate emergency and its ambition to be inner-London’s greenest borough by 2030. Housing plays a fundamental role in meeting this challenge, both in terms of maintenance of existing stock and developing new, sustainable homes (nationally, residential dwellings contribute to 17% of UK greenhouse gas emissions⁴). Subsequently, the Council made a successful bid to the Technical Assistance Pilot (TAP) programme⁵ in October 2020. The programme provided the Council with access to specialist consultancy services delivered by Parity Projects and Turner & Townsend environmental consultants. This included a desk-based assessment and options appraisal to inform a proposed approach and estimated costs for achieving net zero carbon across Wandsworth’s housing stock by 2050.

Current stock efficiency

EPC and SAP rating

As at April 2024, over 10,500 council homes (64%) have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band C or higher while just less than 6,000⁶ homes have an EPC band D or worse. The SAP rating for Wandsworth homes – the independently assessed rating from 1-100 that indicates energy efficiency of a home – was 70.47 (March 2024). This is higher than the average SAP for London (69) and the rest of the United Kingdom (68.4).

Image 5.1: EPC rating by household



	Wandsworth	London	UK
SAP rating (March 2024)	70.47	69	68.4

⁴ [2022 UK greenhouse gas emissions: provisional figures - statistical release \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/2022-uk-greenhouse-gas-emissions-provisional-figures)

⁵ TAP is an initiative delivered by the Greater South East Energy Hub (GSEEH) on behalf of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

⁶ The majority of the Council's least efficient properties are in EPC band D (5,678 homes).

Emissions

Where the condition of stock is poor or older fabric has been used to build or insulate homes, the higher the likelihood of heating being used. Emissions from council-owned homes account for a significant amount of the total CO₂ emissions in the Borough. Whilst most of the Council's tenanted stock use individual energy systems⁷, the remainder use communal heating systems. These have lower than average levels of efficiency and there are currently 52 such systems in existing blocks (comprising over 3,500 homes).

In Wandsworth's housing stock, the mean carbon emissions per home are 2.25tCO₂/yr, slightly less than the figure for the United Kingdom (2.7tCO₂/yr).

Financial cost of improving efficiency

The TAP found that to achieve net zero carbon in all council-owned homes would cost over £291 million and to achieve an Energy Performance Certificate C-rating would cost £58 million. These figures⁸ have been revised and improved for 2024 and the following representative costs have been identified:

	Net zero	EPC C or higher
Retrofit cost (total)	£473,980,000	£25,181,285
Retrofit cost (per property affected)	£27,800	£2,300
Annual carbon reduction achieved (tonnes)	30,587	4,000
Total annual carbon emissions (tonnes)	4,956	29,000
Average SAP score	83	75
Mean fuel bill improvement (per household)	-£179.00	-£81.00

Source: Parity Projects Portfolio for housing stock analysis

Funding the delivery of energy efficiency

Given the cost and the scale of the climate challenge, the Council will continue to seek additional sources of funding including external grants to deliver its decarbonisation commitments. Successful bids for various sources of funding, including the Heat Network Optimisation Opportunities (HNOO), Heat Network Efficiency Scheme (HNES) and Energy Company Obligation (ECO3) schemes have previously been made.

Feasibility studies on the eight worst performing communal heating systems have been entirely funded by the HNOO scheme and completed at no cost to the Council.

⁷ 13,532 properties on individual energy systems as at 1 April 2024

⁸ Figures are derived from Parity Projects *Portfolio* software which includes a live dashboard containing costings for delivery of net zero. The figures reflect the costs for April 2024.

In 2023, the first of these was completed on the Doddington Estate, which serves the most homes of any heat network operated by the Council.

At Holmleigh Court, a sheltered housing block in Clapham Junction, the existing communal boiler system will be replaced with an air source heat pump (ASHP). To reduce the financial burden of replacing the system, over £340,000 of funding was sought through the HNES (which offers up to 49.5 per cent funding for projects which reduce the CO2 output of communal heating systems). The works to Holmleigh Court will continue to inform the Council's strategic approach to the delivery of communal boiler systems using low carbon alternatives.

ECO funding allows the Council to access partial funding to complete fabric upgrade works to properties which have an EPC rating of E or lower. For example, ECO3 funding enabled cavity wall installation, where this had not already been installed, to 22 blocks and three houses (170 tenanted and leasehold properties in total). ECO3 has subsequently been replaced by ECO4 (and will run until March 2026) and work will continue with energy companies to consider how best to utilise this funding.

New technologies

An alternative heating technology which uses far infra-red emissions to directly heat the objects and occupants of a room has been installed in two electric-only properties. Monitoring points have been installed to gather data on the performance of this technology over a six-month period. If the data proves the technology to be an effective replacement for a traditional heating system, the Council can evaluate its suitability for further installations. In total there are 186 council-owned properties which have no gas supply and use a combination of storage and immersion heaters to meet heating and hot water demand respectively. Technologies to replace these systems with more efficient alternatives will be explored.

Solar PV Installation

To better understand the performance of solar PV installations throughout the housing stock, an audit of all installations was completed by a specialist consultant. This programme involved a technical evaluation of each installation by engineers, as well as a desktop exercise to examine the performance of the systems. The goal of the project was to identify areas where the performance of the installations could be improved, what supporting actions need to be taken to better monitor and optimise the performance of the systems and identify any processes or practices which should be employed on future installations.

Previous estate energy efficiency improvements

EV charging points

Installation of electronic vehicle (EV) charging points plays an important role in encouraging structural change; from vehicles powered by petrol or diesel to more sustainable options. Ten charging points were installed on Fitzhugh Estate and made available for public use in 2020 receiving positive feedback. The Council is also seeking to take advantage of the Government's Local Electric Vehicle

Infrastructure (LEVI) scheme which grants up to £30,000 or 75% of the cost of infrastructure works to support EV charger installations on more of its estates.

LED lighting

Improvements have also included the installation of LED lighting in the communal areas of council buildings and lamp columns across estates. LED lights are more efficient and can potentially outlast halogen lights by up to 25 years. The programme to replace column lights started in 2021 and will result in nearly 4,000 LED lights in Wandsworth's estates.

Photovoltaic panels (PV)

Photovoltaic panels (PV) generate solar energy when installed on buildings. They are considered for all major works programmes where practical, for example, when scheduled roof replacements are completed. Council-owned housing stock had 33 installations of various sizes: with communal electricity supplied for blocks and providing the majority of electricity demand for smaller installations on houses.

New, energy efficient homes

New housing delivered through the regeneration of Alton and Winstanley-York Road estates and the Homes for WandsworthECO4 (HfW) programmes will be designed to exceed energy efficiency standards. For HfW new builds, the Council is working towards 35% carbon savings and on many schemes, is surpassing this. Using energy efficient building technologies including photo-voltaic arrays, high levels of air-tightness and communal heating systems powered by heat pumps, the development of new homes will help the Council meet the housing commitments set out in the [Wandsworth Environment and Sustainability Strategy \(WESS\)](#).

6. Building safety

There has been a greater awareness of building safety across the Housing sector following the tragic events of the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017 and residents' safety is at the heart of the Council's work.

In response to Grenfell, the Government introduced a number of legislative changes with the aim of ensuring better management of buildings by landlords and providing the industry with a clear, proportionate framework to deliver more, and better, high-quality homes. These include:

- Building Safety Act 2022
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023

Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) Programme

All local authorities are required to conduct Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) across their housing stock. FRAs are conducted by third party certified contractors on behalf of the Council. The FRAs are prioritised for completion based on the Fire Safety Act prioritisation guidance, which provides a framework for identifying the potential risk profile of a building. Actions arising from FRAs are categorised and prioritised for completion using a risk-based approach with works assigned to the relevant council service. There are regular meetings with services to ensure compliance and quality control as well as monitoring completion.

In line with the Fire Safety Regulations 2022, the Council conducts monthly, quarterly and annual checks of firefighting equipment, including firefighting lifts, dry risers, automatic opening vents (AOVs), fire detection systems and sprinkler systems. Faulty or damaged firefighting equipment have repair orders raised to the appropriate contractor, and where these cannot be repaired within 24 hours, faults are reported to the fire service.

External Wall Assessments

The Regulatory Reform Order 2005 (Fire Safety) requires the external walls of multi-occupied residential buildings containing two or more dwellings to be assessed as part of the FRA for the block. The assessor will examine the external wall construction and advise if a further, more intrusive inspection is required. If the materials are not known or there is doubt about the fire resistance of cladding panels, then the Council will arrange for an external wall survey to be conducted by a third-party certified fire engineer.

Building Safety Regime for High-Rise Residential Buildings (18 metres or 7 storeys and over)

In accordance with the Building Safety Act 2022, the Council is required to prepare and update a Building Safety Case report for all High-Rise Residential Buildings

(HRRBs) it owns. For Wandsworth this involves preparing reports for 148 buildings (as of 2024). The case report identifies the building's safety risks – such as the risk of the spread of fire or structural failure – and explains how they are being managed. All case reports are ultimately signed-off by the Building Safety Regulator, which is part of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Reports will be prepared for all Wandsworth's high-rise buildings, commencing with those over 50 metres in height.

Other safety checks

Comprehensive procedures and testing programmes are in place to manage legionella, asbestos, gas safety, electrical safety and lift safety. All of which are subject to legislation and the Council is required to submit annual returns to the Regulator of Social Housing outlining its performance in these areas.

7. Growing the stock to meet the housing challenge

The building and acquisition of homes in the Borough is essential if the Council is to meet the housing needs of a growing population. In 2022, the Council took the decision to refresh its Disposals Policy to ensure much needed council homes were retained for re-letting. This change of approach was complemented by a repositioning of what was formerly known as the 1,000 homes programme, to “Homes for Wandsworth”, a development programme which will see delivery of new council rental properties in the Borough.

Homes for Wandsworth

The Council's Home for Wandsworth (HfW) programme will deliver 1,000 new homes at council rent levels on in-fill sites. The programme will deliver much needed housing at low-cost rent (council rent levels) with secure tenancies.

As at March 2024 the programme has delivered 214 homes due to increase to approximately 500 by March 2025. The 1,000 homes target is currently on target to be achieved in full by 2028/29.

Whilst worsening economic conditions since 2020 have led to considerable increases in building costs these have, in part, been mitigated by increased GLA grant rates. In addition, the Council has sound programme and budget management arrangements in place to ensure the programme can be delivered within the confines of the HRA 30-year business plan and reports this to Housing Committee annually.

Allocation of new homes

Homes built as part of HfW and both estate regeneration programmes will be allocated to tenants affected by development proposals or others in the area who are either under-occupying council homes or living in overcrowded conditions. This will improve living conditions for Wandsworth tenants and ensure the Council maximises use of its existing housing stock.

Estate regeneration projects

The Council also delivers new homes via two major estate regeneration projects: the Alton Estate in Roehampton and the Winstanley and York Road estates in Battersea. Each regeneration team works closely with residents from the estates and the wider community to ensure their needs are met.

The regeneration projects could deliver more than 3,000 mixed tenure homes including additional and replacement council homes. Regular monitoring of delivery is in place: annual reports are presented to members at Housing Committee meetings. Both regeneration projects whilst housing-led are mixed use schemes and include proposals for new libraries, children's centres and nurseries and a range of other facilities for community and commercial use.

Progress of both HfW and estate regeneration schemes is reported annually to Housing Committee. The [HfW Development Dashboard](#) is also hosted online

meaning that members of the public can easily track progress of specific developments in different parts of the Borough.

Adaptations

Council-owned stock must be readily able to meet the changing circumstances of tenants throughout their lifetime, meeting the different needs of existing and future tenants. The Council will make adaptations to properties to meet the needs of the household, particularly those with disabilities, funding these through the HRA. The Housing Strategy (2023 – 2028) outlines the commitment to helping residents maintain their independence and if and where new, specialist housing schemes should be developed by the Council or its partners. In rare cases, adaptations may be considered to ease overcrowding.

Acquiring stock

By acquiring housing stock, the Council is better positioned to fulfil multiple housing policy objectives, such as increasing the number of suitable and quality homes, supporting regeneration plans and rehousing affected residents. Properties purchased are generally inside the Borough, but out of borough purchases may be considered in exceptional circumstances.

There are numerous reasons to consider acquisition. For regeneration, properties may be used for temporary accommodation whilst residents await demolition of their home. In addition, acquired properties may be offered to existing tenants whose current property is affected by a regeneration scheme within the Borough. The Council can also use acquired homes to settle refugee families (and has done so for those fleeing conflict in Ukraine and Afghanistan).

In rare events when permission has been given to dispose/sell a property they may be sold at auction and more suitable units are then purchased to re-provide for those sold, which are known as 'auction replacements'. In addition, the Council may 'buy back' former council properties (that were purchased by a leaseholder or freeholder).

Disposals

The Council has committed to retaining all its housing and will only sell properties under exceptional circumstances. The Council's Disposals Policy⁹ sets out clearly exceptional circumstances and the assessment undertaken if a property is referred for sale. This policy is reviewed periodically, and any amendments agreed via Committee.

⁹ [Wandsworth BC Housing Committee: Housing Disposals pp. 195-218 \(16/11/2022\)](https://democracy.wandsworth.gov.uk/documents/g8940/Public%20reports%20pack%2016th-Nov-2022%2019.30%20Housing%20Committee.pdf?T=10)
<https://democracy.wandsworth.gov.uk/documents/g8940/Public%20reports%20pack%2016th-Nov-2022%2019.30%20Housing%20Committee.pdf?T=10>