



Welcome to the Housing Annual Report 2023-2024 which sets out how the Council's Housing and Regeneration Department (HRD) has performed over the last year in accordance with our Housing Service Standards.

New legislation has meant this has been an even busier year for the department. The Social Housing Regulation Act (SHRA) 2023 now places new responsibilities on all social housing providers. In preparation for these changes, a full review of the Housing Service Standards was completed, and we will be publishing our response to the newly introduced Tenant Satisfaction Measures later in the autumn. The council's complaint procedure was also updated to ensure it aligns with the statutory Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code.

Earlier this year we published the Resident Participation and Consultation Strategy, which was shaped by feedback from residents through consultation and the Residents' Conference 2023. The new strategy includes more informal participation routes to encourage residents to get involved in their communities and to have their voices heard.

We continue to offer a fully flexible and in-person service and have increased staff visibility. The delivery of services has been impacted due to the costs of labour and materials caused by inflation. However, since last year repair completion times have improved and the number of major disability adaptations has risen significantly.

New services have been introduced including a dedicated mould removal team so reports can be prioritised and fast-tracked. We are committed to taking a zero-tolerance approach to how we deal with damp and mould.

A Building Safety Team was established in 2023 and has been working hard to meet the obligations as set out in the Fire Safety Regulations and Building Safety Act (2022). A Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy specifically for those living in high-rise buildings will be published later this year.

The Homes for Wandsworth programme that aims to deliver 1,000 new social rent homes by 2027 is progressing well, and social housing tenants have moved into new homes such on Colson Way.

We have remained committed to tackling rough sleeping in the Borough and are using £4.8m of government funding to establish a rough sleeping hub. The hub will bring together council services and other partner agencies to provide a single point of access for rough sleepers.

We are also partnering with a new groundbreaking provider called Proxy Address to provide more support to our rough sleepers who have no postal address.

This Annual Report was produced in partnership with a residents' focus group and I'd like to sincerely thank all the participants for their valuable contributions.

To find out more about how you can get involved with matters affecting your housing or join your local residents' association, visit: [wandsworth.gov.uk/getinvolvedhousing](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/getinvolvedhousing)

**Brian Reilly**

Executive Director of Housing and Regeneration




## Priorities for 2023-2024 were:

- Through a series of **resident focus groups** review the Wandsworth Service Standards.
- Review the Wandsworth **Housing and Homelessness Strategy**.
- Mobilise a new under occupation team to target those under occupying to **free up larger social housing properties** for homeless households.
- Hold an annual Resident **Engagement Conference**.
- Review **how we engage** with residents.
- Ensure **the Borough maintains DAHA** (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance) accreditation when being re-assessed in 2024.
- **Invest £33.5 million into our housing stock** to continue to achieve the Decent Homes Standards.
- Continue green works to move towards being **carbon neutral by 2030**.
- Continue to progress the Homes for Wandsworth Programme to **deliver 1,000 council rent homes**.

### The Annual Report tells you how well we have done in five key areas:

- Quality
- Safety
- Neighbourhood and community
- Tenancy
- Transparency, influence and accountability

### A traffic light system is used within the Annual Report to assess how well we have performed.

-  standard met
-  standard partially met, some work to do
-  work required to meet the standard

\* Council residents means council tenants, council leaseholders and people living in properties managed by a Resident Management Organisation (RMO).

\*\*Where available, figures for the previous year (2022-23) are shown in brackets.

# Quality

## We will...

- Provide a timely and good quality repairs and maintenance service for residents and ensure they can easily provide their feedback and satisfaction
- Maintain all homes to the Decent Homes Standard as a minimum and take a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould
- Deliver environmental improvements to homes and estates
- Monitor and report our performance for emergency, urgent and routine repairs and act where contractors do not meet standards set



## Quality of accommodation

- Meet the Decent Homes Standard and carry out improvement works to make homes more energy efficient.

- Started **48 (50) major works projects** including roof renewals, window renewals and external decoration schemes.
- Our partnership and investment with Thinking Works has resulted in **356 tenants being supported** on energy and fuel initiatives. This has resulted in **over £127,000 of household savings** via help accessing bill discounts, alleviation of debt, and through savings from LED lighting.
- £1m from the council budget has been prioritised for **improving the energy efficiency** of existing council properties.
- A **heat-pump system is scheduled for installation** at Holmleigh Court starting in July 2024, and further feasibility studies are being carried out on systems to reduce their CO2 output.
- **Heat metering systems** have been installed in Castlemaine Tower, which will accurately measure the amount of energy each household uses to ensure residents are only paying for what they use.
- **New and novel technologies** continue to be tested for suitability, such as the long-term test of infra-red heating panels to replace traditional electric heaters.
- Designs are underway to **install Solar Panels** on all existing blocks on the Fitzhugh Estate as part of roof renewal works.

## How have we met the standard?

- Continue to invest in our stock to maintain decency standards\* and **invested £36.82m (£35.33m)** to maintain the council's housing stock, an increase compared to last year. Works included:
  - **roofing works** at Carey Gardens, Newlands, Southmead and Felsham Road
  - continuation of the **kitchens and bathrooms renewal programme**
  - installation of **new heating systems**
  - **upgrading of fire alarm systems** for our sheltered residents.
- The results from our recent stock condition survey confirm that **95% of our stock is decent** and there are plans in place to ensure that we continue to invest in our stock.
- We undertook further environmental improvements to our estates at a cost of **£1.18m (£185,348)**. This included:
  - Improvements on **local playgrounds**
  - **landscaping, additional planting and improvements** to the paved areas at Cowick Road
  - creating **new outdoor gym equipment**, benches and fencing



West Hill open door event

\*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 gov.uk (search Decent Homes).



## Repairs and maintenance

- Provide an efficient and cost-effective repairs service.

### How have we met the standard?

- **£43.6m (£37.2m)** has been spent on planned and responsive repairs.
- **85% (72%) of repairs** were completed within target times, showing an improvement when compared to the previous year. Challenges caused by supply chain and labour issues following rising inflation continue to have an impact on repair completion times. However, the close monitoring of contractor performance has helped us respond to any problems that arise.
- Following the **introduction of the mould removal team, 364 mould washes were completed** and the team has been expanded to help manage the demand to further improve our response.
- A cleaning **contract is in place** in line with the HouseMark Caretaking cleaning standards guidelines and performance is measured via inspections from Estate Service Officers. Contractors are graded on a scale of A-D, with the expectation that 90% of inspections will receive a grade B or above. **During 2023-2024 96.3% (95%)** of inspections were graded B or above.
- **294 (255) disability adaptations** were completed to enable people to remain independent in their home.

## Repairs and maintenance

**53%** of tenants and

**47%** of leaseholders

are **satisfied** with the overall repairs they received.

**52%** of tenants and

**46%** of leaseholders

are **satisfied** with the time taken to complete a repair.

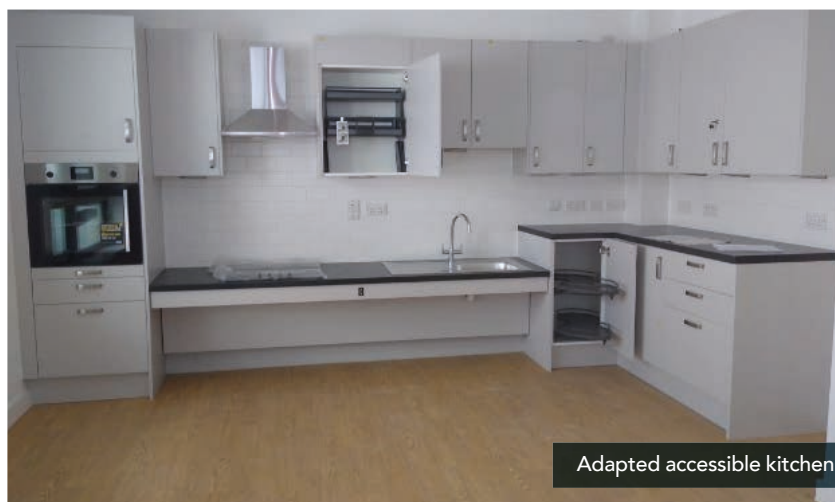
**59%** of tenants and **61%** of leaseholders are **satisfied** that homes are **well maintained**.



Adapted shower



Mould removal



Adapted accessible kitchen

# Safety

## We will...

- Meet the requirements as set out in building and fire safety legislation
- Carry out routine safety checks which includes checks on gas, fire and electrical safety
- Provide more opportunities for residents living in high-rise blocks to be involved and inform decision-making on matters involving building safety



## Keeping homes safe

- Carry out health and safety checks and routine inspections.
- Respond to all concerns or emergencies with urgency to ensure our buildings are safe.
- Ensuring staff are qualified and trained to deal with issues.

- Staff involved in **building safety** and **damp and mould removal** are **fully trained** with regular refresher training to ensure safety standards are met.
- A resident engagement strategy for Building Safety will be published later this year and a copy will be shared with all residents living in high-rise blocks.
- Residents are being engaged in the management of their blocks in relation to **Building Safety** to ensure they are kept informed of decisions that affect them.

## Building Safety Tenant Satisfaction Measures

Carried out annual gas servicing in

**99%**  
of tenanted  
properties that  
have gas appliances

**99%**

of all **fire risk assessments** for our **148 high rise blocks** and all **1,066 low rise blocks** are up to date

**98%**

of emergency repairs  
**completed within  
target time**

**76%**

of residents are  
satisfied that their  
home is safe

**84%**

of the required  
lift safety checks  
have been  
completed

## How have we met the standard?

- **Retrofitting sprinklers** in the council's sheltered housing schemes is progressing well. In total, **23 (14)** blocks have been fully fitted with sprinkler systems.
- A new **programme has been commissioned** to complete water risk assessments, all of which should be completed by the end of 2024.
- **Fire safety** and **tackling damp and mould** is included in **every Homelife** article to ensure residents are kept well informed on these vital areas.
- **Quarterly health and safety inspections** continue to be carried out by our Building Safety Team.



Building Safety Team

# Neighbourhood and community

## We will...

- Work with partners to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse
- Work with residents to improve local facilities and the environment
- Keep our estates clean and safe



## Tackling anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and crime

- Work with other services and the police to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB), domestic abuse and crime.
- Consider the full range of action to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour.



Neighbourhood Watch Community Safety

## How have we met the standard?

- After successfully gaining the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation in 2021, the department has been preparing for re-accreditation for 2024. This chartermark recognises that we have a **comprehensive and robust response to domestic abuse** that puts residents' safety at the heart of our decision making.
- **A Domestic Abuse Coordinator has been recruited** which will strengthen our response in ensuring safe and suitable accommodation is offered to domestic abuse victims.
- The department continues to have representation on the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) every four weeks to discuss the highest risk domestic abuse cases in the borough.
- All new staff continue to **receive mandatory training** in how to **recognise and respond to domestic abuse**.
- The department still has **21 (21) Domestic Abuse Champions** across all our teams who ensure that an excellent service is given to those fleeing or seeking assistance for domestic abuse.
- The number of 'Stay Put Stay Safe' (SPSS) applicants assisted during the year was **35 (41)**.
- **Served 15 (10) Notices of Seeking Possession** (NOSP) for ASB.
- **There has been 1 (2) eviction** due to ASB during 2023-2024.
- **9 (0) possession orders** due to ASB were granted to the council during 2023/2024.
- Served **24 Section 80 notices** on tenants and **7 Section 80 Notices** on leaseholders for noise nuisance.
- Improvements have been made to the way noise complaints are recorded and monitored, and performance has improved, with **90.5% (90.2%) of noise complaints being followed up** within five days following the initial report.
- We **continue to support** the Safer Neighbourhood Team, Metropolitan Police Officers and Police Community Support officers in crime prevention measures.



Visit from the Safer Neighbourhood Team



## Neighbourhood management

- Work with residents and contractors to improve local facilities and the environment.
- Respond to emergencies within target times.

- Smithford & Weydown – **motorcycle barrier**
- Cadnam Point – **garden patio and picnic table**
- Aboyne Estate – **new hard-standing and recycling bin enclosures**
- Langton House RA – **a secure cycle hangar**
- **762 (706)** residents use WATCH Lifeline service which helps older residents and those with disabilities to remain independent in their homes. 166 (167) new users signed up to the service in 2023-2024.
- There were **444 (420)** Telecare users at the end of 2023-2024. Telecare provides a range of sophisticated sensors and alarms to help residents remain independent.

## How have we met the standard?

- There were **62,996 (53,615)** calls to the Joint Control Centre (JCC) which required further action during 2023-24.
- **99.56% (99.92%)** of emergency calls\* to the JCC were responded to within 30 minutes.
- **Removed 30,688 square metres (30,831 msq)** of graffiti at a cost of **£220,033 (£208,169)**.
- **95% (99%)** of graffiti was removed within target time.
- To improve energy efficiency across the borough, we have increased the number of LED lights from **2,964 to 3,444**.
- Residents celebrated the grand re-opening of **Doddington playground** with council staff.
- Spent **£127,051 (£211,221)** from the Small Improvement Budget for residents' associations (RAs) to fund community projects. This year these have included:

\*Emergency calls include lift trappings, fire related incidents and dangerous structures.

## Animal Welfare Team

**983** dog related incidents were responded to by the **animal welfare team**

**70** stray dogs handled **9** prosecutions with **100% success**

**223** micro-chipping enforcement notices issued; 208 complying; 11 prosecuted **39** microchips implanted

**142** verbal warnings to dog owners who broke by-laws



Doddington Playground

# Tenancy

## We will...

- Make the best use of the available housing stock
- Be clear with residents about how properties are allocated
- Provide tailored support and easily accessible information to all tenants that enables them to maintain their tenancy



## Allocations and transfers

- Provide clear and accessible information on how we allocate properties and how to apply for housing.
- Ensure we are making the best use of the housing available to meet a range of needs.

## How have we met the standard?

- **Housed 1,202 (928)** households in 2023-2024 which is lower than the forecast target of 1,356 (1,471).
- **Received 2,488 (1,805)** online housing applications this year, which equates to **90% (81.8%)** of all applications received.
- **288 (188)** vulnerable families had their homelessness prevented by our teams through provision of privately rented accommodation.
- It took an average of **33.83 (36.76) days to re-let a property** which is an improvement on last year.
- A new under occupation team has been established, and has helped **69 under-occupiers** move to smaller and more suitable accommodation, which has freed up larger properties for households in need of a social housing allocation.
- Following the re-introduction of issuing secure (lifetime) periodic tenancies, **290 social housing flexible fixed term tenants** have now been issued with **new secure (lifetime) tenancies**, offering greater security and removing the stress of having a tenancy review.
- The number of households in temporary accommodation (TA) rose to **3,802 (3,590)** which is slightly higher than the forecast of **3,647 (3,472)**.
- **1.9% (2.8%)** of households in TA are in bed and breakfast, which is lower than the council forecast of 6%.
- We continued to focus on supporting rough sleepers off the streets by accommodating **80 (99)**, with **65 (88)** currently in TA as of 31st March 2024 and **344 (293)** now permanently rehoused.
- Our plan to build a rough sleeping hub has progressed, and a location has been agreed locally in the borough. **The rough sleeping hub will provide a safe place**

**for rough sleepers to reside** and receive bespoke advice and support.

- **We have partnered with** a new rough sleeping service called Proxy Address, who will support our rough sleepers by providing a correspondence address so they can access essential services such as medical care, welfare benefits or employment/training.
- **There were 26 successfully tenant applications for House Purchase Grants**, which tenants then used to buy their own home. This also freed up the properties to be allocated to other households in need of social housing.
- New social housing tenants have been issued with a **secure (periodic) tenancy** on all properties that are four bedrooms or less, which provides households with long term housing security.
- **36 (24) illegally occupied properties** were recovered by the council in partnership with the South West London Fraud Partnership.
- **34 new fully accessible homes** are currently being built.
- **8 new supported housing units** are now completed at Colson Way.
- **33 people requiring adapted housing** were allocated accessible homes.
- **1 extra care scheme** at St. John's Hill is now complete and provides **54 new homes**.
- The Alton Road extra care scheme is progressing and is due to be completed by August 2024, and **will deliver 41 new homes**.





## Services and advice

- Empower tenants by providing support and advice to ensure they can best manage their tenancies.
- Maintain contact with residents including regular occupancy checks 1,800 completed in 2023-2024, up from 487 the previous year.
- Deliver 1,000 new social homes for council rent.

## Homes for Wandsworth programme

**8** new homes completed in 2023-2024

**383** homes are under construction

**168** due to be completed in 2024-2025

**80** new homes are due to start construction during 2024-2025

**A further 155** have had or are due to have planning applications submitted for 2024-2025

**123** have secured planning consent during 2023-2024

## How have we met the standard?

- At the end of the year, total rent arrears were **£11.5m (£9.16m)**. This equates to **8.16% (7.13%)** of the total rent collected. This increase is due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and rent/heating and hot water increases in April 2023. Our financial inclusion, tenancy support and rent collection teams are assisting tenants where possible to clear debts with extended affordable payment plans amounting to £5m of the total arrears value.
- For those tenants who need assistance, the Financial Inclusion Team provides free benefit advice, debt management intervention and help with budgeting, assisting **618 (576)** tenants during 2023-2024. The team also run monthly virtual Introductory Tenancy Support advice sessions, attended by **58 (51)** tenants and responded to **310 (298)** notifications of households who entered Breathing Space, a national debt respite scheme.
- The percentage of tenants with more than seven weeks' worth of arrears has increased from **12.30%** last year to **13.74%**.
- **269 (134) tenants** were helped by the Tenancy Support Team during 2023-2024; this included support to reduce arrears by **£25,615 (£37,444)**.
- The department continues to actively work in partnership with the **Cost-of-Living hub** in encouraging residents to obtain professional advice and support if they are financially struggling.



Alton Arts hub



New social homes for supported housing at Colson Way

- **The Alton Arts hub** has been relaunched and a newly established community kitchen has opened on the Alton Estate, which offers free and nutritious meals for residents to eat in or take away.
- **7 new council social homes** via the self build supported housing scheme became available, one of which is wheel chair accessible.
- We supported housing associations in delivering **17 fully accessible social homes** for wheelchair users.
- **46 replacement new homes** for existing estate residents have been completed at Mitchell House, Grant Road and a further 126 are due to be handed over to the council in summer 2024.
- **The Battersea Baptist Church** and the Thames School moved to their new premises on Grant Road in 2023 and their old buildings in Pennethorne Square were demolished creating part of the site for the future construction of new build council homes.



# Transparency, influence and accountability

## We will...

- Provide residents with a variety of methods to become involved in decision-making processes that affect them
- Support the development of accredited residents' associations
- Deliver an effective complaints process that puts the resident first and is used to improve services
- Publish easily accessible, transparent and clear information on performance and services



## Customer service and complaints

- Deliver a clear and robust complaints service that listens.
- Provide an inclusive service that considers the needs of all residents.

- We held a successful residents' conference and have **used feedback** received to shape the next conference (October 2024).
- Through a series of **resident focus groups** we have agreed a new set of service standards.
- We continue to **work with our co-ops** to amend their management agreements and support them with the new complaints process.
- We publish details of the **Housing Ombudsman** service in each edition of Homelife.
- We have **access to comprehensive translation and interpretation services** to support residents where required.
- To ensure an inclusive service, sheltered housing residents were **consulted with on improvements** to housing services and facilities. Feedback from the group included improvements to communal areas, landscape gardens and a larger choice of social activities.
- Equalities data is analysed and published on the council's website to ensure services are accessible to all residents. **The council also completes Equality Impact Need Assessments (EINAs)** for all policy statements to ensure we are serving all members of the community fairly.

## How have we met the standard?

- We have kept residents up to date through letters, webpage updates, social media feeds and the Homelife newsletter.
- We celebrated our **100th edition of Homelife**.
- There has been an **increase** in the number of complaints: **409 (291)**.
- A new two stage system was introduced during 2023-2024 to make the process fairer and to enable us to **respond faster to complaints**.
- Complaint response times have slightly **decreased with 72.6% (76.9%)** of all complaints responded to within target time.
- **66.2% (70.1%) of complaints** were responded to at stage one of the complaints procedure.



Gardening competition ceremony at the Mayor's Chamber



## Resident involvement, fairness and respect

- Encourage and inform residents about participation opportunities.
- Respond to resident concerns in an efficient and sensitive way.
- Make sure services meet a range of needs.
- Offer accessible participation and consultation options so residents can shape our housing services.



### How have we met the standard?

- Battersea Rotary Club partnered with us to host events over the Christmas period for 350 residents who would otherwise have spent Christmas alone; the celebrations included Christmas meals, games and dancing.
- **ROSE Community Clubroom** have been very active throughout the year by organising regular coffee mornings, supporting the Happy Streets Festival, offering free social activities for families and holding community engagement meetings – open to all residents.
- We continue our **partnership with Chelsea Football Club** via the Chelsea Kicks programme. This year physical sessions were back in full swing, with 10 sessions across six days every week for young residents aged 8 to 18. **In total, 254 (239)** young residents signed up to participate.
- The popular **Roehampton Christmas market** returned, offering residents a variety of free arts and crafts activities, including a Santa's Grotto and stalls hosted by local residents selling a range of homewares, crafts, candles and clothing.
- **Women of Wandsworth (WoW)** continues to provide support to vulnerable residents with the help of volunteers from South Thames College by organising games and activities and delivering free food parcels for the residents.
- **Supported 36 (28) accredited Residents' Associations** in the Borough; our RPOs continue to work with 5 (5) associate RAs who hope to gain their accredited status soon.

- The second consecutive **Residents' Conference** was held in October 2023, attended by residents involved in our participation structures.
- The resident participation and consultation strategy underwent a full review which included a consultation at the Residents' Conference. This resulted in more informal participation routes being introduced to increase resident participation.
- **There are now 17 (12) Housing Community Champions.** These are resident volunteers who have been recognised for the community work they do on their estates. We support them to continue their work and provide funding.
- We continue to work with **Wandsworth Workmatch** to provide training and employability support. **In total, 268 (276) residents secured employment via Workmatch.** Workmatch engaged **903 (720)** residents, providing training to **725 (670)** of these.
- The Cromwell House and ROSE Community Clubroom partnered with Workmatch by setting up **monthly drop in-sessions for local residents** to receive advice and support on training and employability.
- **Aboyne community garden was established** and residents are using it to grow a range of vegetables, fruits and herbs.
- Our first **gardening competition for council residents** was successfully delivered and in celebration residents were invited to a ceremony at the Mayor's office. We have committed to running the competition every year in the summer.





Consultation at the Residents' Conference



## Performance, information and tenant satisfaction measures

- Provide clear updates on the Housing Revenue Account and how money is being used.
- Make accessible and easy to follow performance and monitoring reports available for all residents to review.

## How have we met the standard?

- **Overall tenant satisfaction** with housing services is **64% (54%)** and **64% (43%)** for leaseholders.
- We responded to the **new 22 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)** which will be published on our webpages later in the year.
- **Balances have reduced by £63.5m to £192.2m.** This reduction was expected as the significant investment in site development and estate regeneration schemes is under way.
- The council **consulted on all major works** and external redecoration schemes. We served:
  - **1,628 (2,354) Notices of Intention\***; and
  - **1,819 (2,458) Section 20 Notices\*** on leaseholders.
- **Average weekly rent was £139.23** compared to £130.12 last year.

\*These are a statutory requirement to consult leaseholders on schemes of major works costing more than £250 per leaseholder.



Affordable Housing Open Day



Residents' Conference

# Priorities for 2024-2025

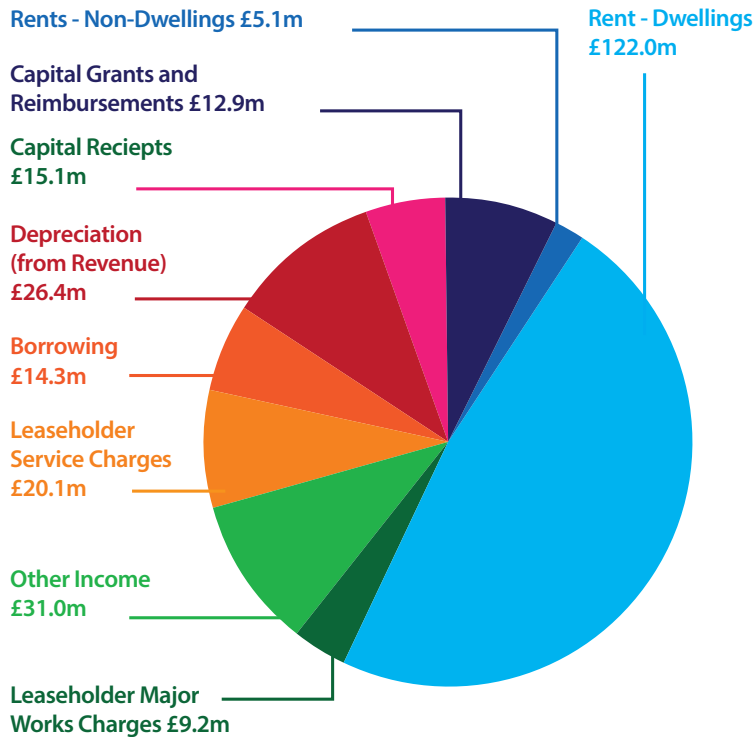
- Continue to work to **deliver 1,000 new council homes**.
- Open a new **rough sleeper hub** in 2024.
- Develop a **rolling programme** of stock condition surveys.
- **Continue to prepare** for the increased regulatory regime.
- Deliver the **Resident Participation Strategy**
- Continue to hold **repairs contractors to account**.
- **Continue to build** in house capacity to deal with incidents of damp and mould.
- **Complete an analysis** of the CCTV monitoring pilot to assess whether additional resources are required.
- Produce a new **housing asset management strategy**.
- Maximise the use of funding sources to **deliver energy efficiency works**
- Maintain **DAHA accreditation**



Resident participating in a consultation during the Residents' Conference

## Housing revenue account 2023/2024

Income total **£260.7m** (£250.3m)



## Housing revenue account 2023/2024

Expenditure total **£324.3m** (£277.3m)

