

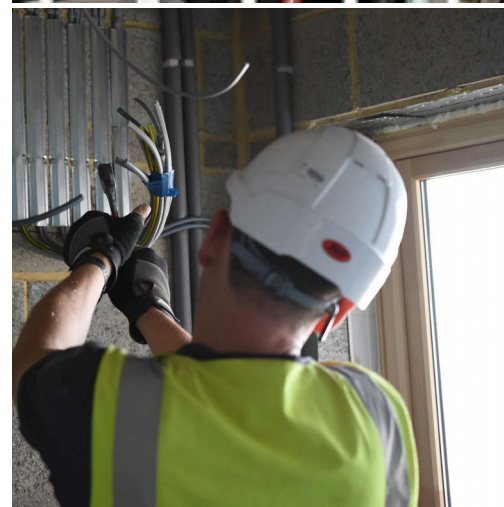
RESIDENTS ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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HOUSING RESIDENTS ANNUAL REPORT

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Foreword

Each year it is important to reflect on what we have achieved and where improvements can be made and I am delighted to introduce the Council's Residents Annual Report. We hope you find it informative and we would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to read it.

Developed following feedback from our tenants and leaseholders, from measuring our performance across a range of housing services and against local standards we believe the report gives an honest overview of our performance and plans for the year ahead.

We continue working closely with the Dartford Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum (DT&LF) as we believe that our partnership is vital in ensuring we continue to deliver housing services which are both effective and inclusive.

The pandemic led to new working practices and we continue to offer virtual or hybrid meetings, and offer adapted working practices for the safety of customers, staff and contractors. We remain committed to working with our tenants and leaseholders across a range of services in order to continue to make improvements.

Information on ways that you can get involved can be found on the back page.




Introduction

We work towards meeting the regulatory standards, overseen by the Regulator of Social Housing.

This report explains how we have been achieving over the past year and details areas where we can make improvements.

The four national standards in the regulatory framework are:

STANDARD	 MAIN AREAS
Tenant Involvement and Empowerment	Customer service, choice and complaints Involvement and empowerment Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants
Neighbourhood and Community	Neighbourhood management Local area co-operation Anti-social behaviour
Home	Quality of accommodation Repairs and maintenance
Tenancy	Allocations and mutual exchange Tenure



TENANT INVOLVEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

In 2021-2022, we:

- Established a new Housing Advisory Board to enable recommendations from tenants, leaseholders, Members and Officers to be taken forward on housing policies and other relevant housing matters.
- Carried out a Resident Engagement Survey to check how tenants and leaseholders want to be communicated with and what their priorities are.
- Met regularly both on and offline with the Dartford Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum including with contractors and staff.
- Completed our annual self-assessment in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code and published the results on our Housing Complaints webpage.
- Produced the Link newsletter to keep tenants and leaseholders updated about housing related news.
- Informed tenants and leaseholders about events and services through our website, email and text, and in writing.
- Provided performance information on services to tenants and leaseholder in an easy to read and standardised format for comments and questions.
- Consulted on changes within the service and housing policies and procedures.
- Made training and online activities available to help involved tenants and leaseholders develop their skills.
- Provided Community Grants to enhance the lives of local people, by supporting events and activities run by community groups.

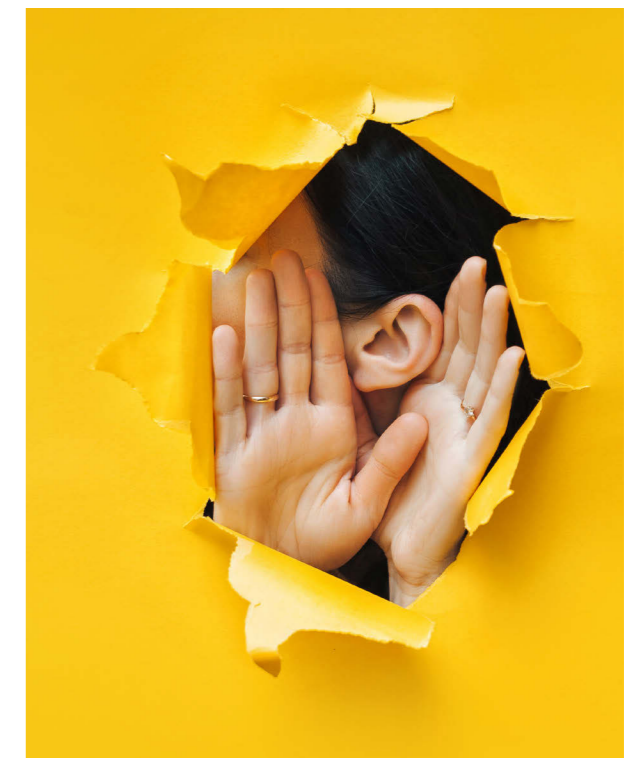
- Set up an Action Group to ensure that we are committed and ready for the implementation of the proposals contained in the Charter for Social Housing Residents (Social Housing White Paper).
- Provided support to appropriate and eligible residents groups including the Dartford Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum by way of training, transport and admin support.
- Employed a Kickstarter apprentice to help in the team and help them get on the employment ladder.
- Dealt with 48 formal complaints. 29 were dismissed, 6 upheld, 9 partially upheld, 4 outside of our jurisdiction.
- Learned from our complaints - this includes identifying where staff needed further training.
- Completed Customer Access Reviews across the housing service.



Actions for 2022-2023

We will aim to:

- Continue to meet and work in partnership with the Dartford Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum.
- Develop the work of the Housing Advisory Board.
- Complete our annual self-assessment in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code and publish the results on our website.
- Continue working towards completing our responsibilities to the new Housing Regulation including increasing customer satisfaction.
- Work with the Kent Housing Group and Kent Engagement Group to explore opportunities to work in partnership and share good practice with regards to working successfully with all communities across Kent and Medway.
- Continue to award grants to local groups who are supporting community cohesion and helping tackle issues such as loneliness and isolation in the Borough.
- Continue to work towards making changes in the way we communicate with you on things you identified in the Resident Engagement Survey.
- Produce/develop a new Resident Engagement Strategy with input and feedback from tenants and leaseholders.
- Complete a customer satisfaction survey to measure performance by an independent organisation.
- Continue to offer clear, tailored options for tenants and leaseholders to communicate with us, and get involved in shaping services.
- Make improvements to how we advertise ways to get involved or provide feedback to the Council including promotion of our complaints process and procedure.
- Ensure we are using complaints information to make improvements to the service where necessary and appropriate.
- Prepare for and implement the Government's Charter for Social Housing Residents (Social Housing White Paper) which aims to ensure that social housing residents are safe, are listened to, live in good quality homes, and put things right when things go wrong.





NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY

In 2021-2022, we:

- Recruited a new Domestic Abuse Coordinator for Dartford and Gravesham to help tackle domestic abuse across the two boroughs.
- Resumed estate inspections across the Borough.
- Invested more than £500k for communal area improvements such as decorating, improvement works and roof replacement.
- Provided an additional resource through our estate cleaning contractor to deal with dumped rubbish on our estates.
- Tackled anti-social behaviour on our estates by undertaking various actions. This included the use of 250 Community Protection Warnings with 50 progressing to Community Protection Notices to tackle and prevent anti-social behaviour in our communities.

Actions for 2022-2023

We will aim to:

- Review our Anti-social Behaviour Policy
- Invest £980k for communal areas.
- Continue with our planned estate inspections to help identify areas of improvement on our estates

HOME

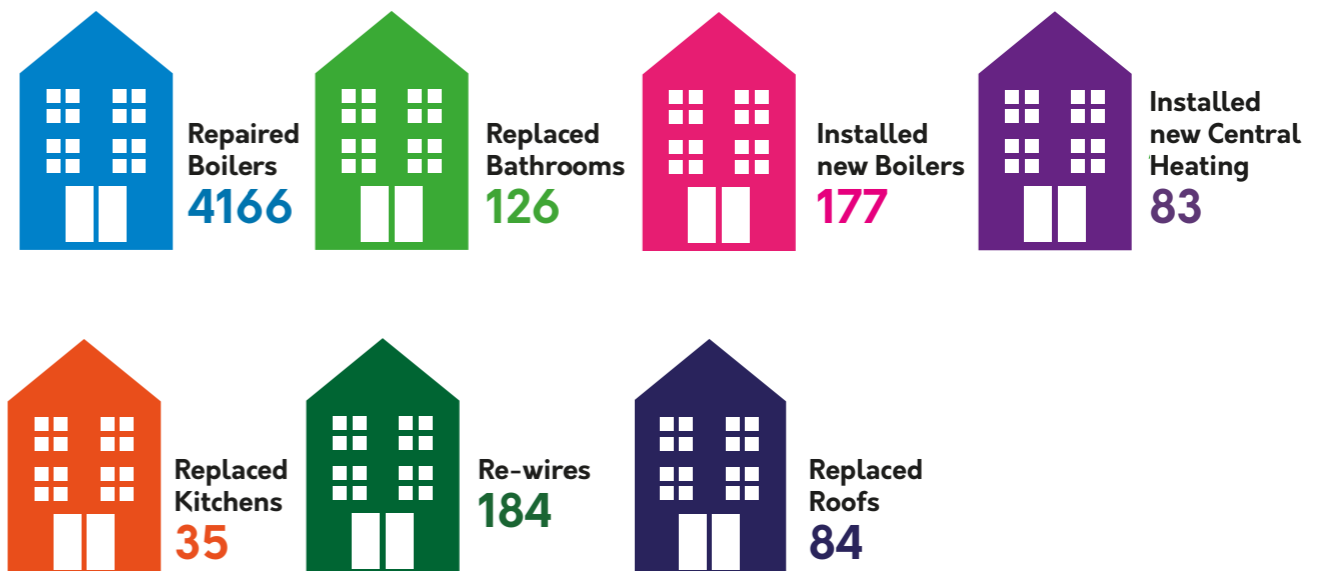
In 2021-2022, we:

- Built 13 new homes, including a mix of flats and houses for local people across two former disused garage sites in the Borough.
- Purchased/converted 3 properties to provide more or larger rented homes for local people.
- Purchased private land to develop more new homes for local people.
- Improved and re-let 249 properties.
- Invested in excess of £5million into the housing stock for capital repairs
- Delivered 11,138 repairs to residents' homes. During 2021-2022 we carried out the following
- Maintained our good performance on refurbishing and re-letting empty Council properties.
- Invited members of the Dartford Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum to attend contractor meetings to discuss performance levels and service improvements adapting our processes to conduct them virtually.

Actions for 2022-2023

We will aim to:

- Strive to build or acquire new homes to create more council homes for local people as part of an ongoing programme.
- Develop new homes for local people on newly purchased land in the Borough and continue to look for opportunities to purchase additional land or build on Council owned land.
- Invest more than £8 million into our homes for capital repairs.
- Look to utilise the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to improve the energy performance of our tenants' homes.
- Actively participate in the Kent and Medway Sustainable Energy Partnership to the benefit of our residents.
- Work with the Dartford Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum and other residents to improve maintenance services across the stock and ensure delivery is customer focussed.
- Strive to improve contract performance from the previous year in all key performance areas.





TENANCY

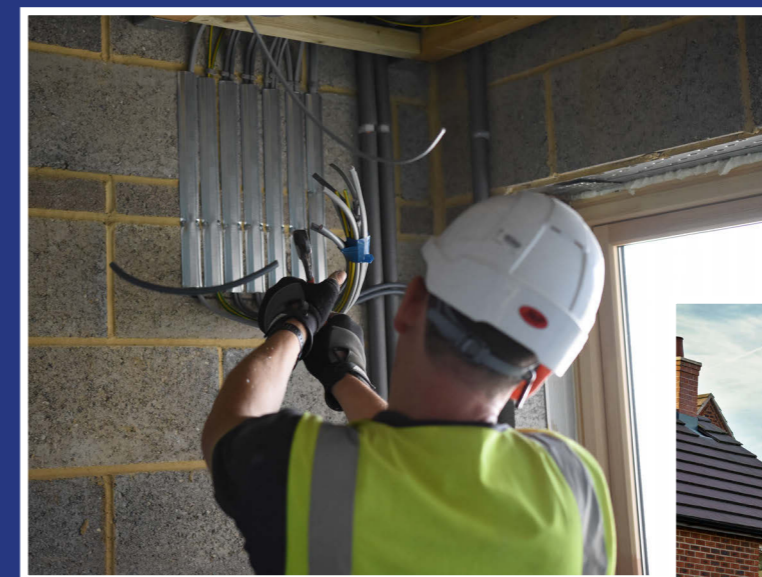
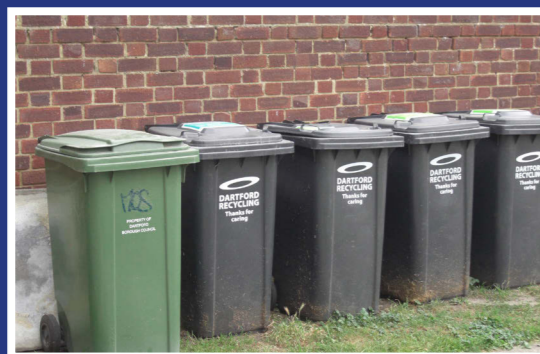
In 2021-2022, we:

- Re-let 249 properties.
- Let 61 housing scheme accommodation properties.
- Supported 37 mutual exchanges.
- Developed/reviewed a number of policies and strategies including a Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy, Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy, Vulnerable Adults' Housing Policy and Tackling Loneliness Plan, Housing Recharge Policy, Fit and Proper Persons Policy to ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents living in caravans/park homes and a Property Conversion Policy.
- Reduced our new build rents to ensure they remain affordable for our tenants.
- Recruited another full time visiting officer to provide support to tenants by helping them maximise their income including claims for Discretionary Housing Payment and help to sustain their tenancies.

Actions for 2022-2023

We will aim to:

- Develop/review new housing policies and strategies as required including a new Housing Strategy and Domestic Abuse Strategy, Temporary Strategy and a review of the Housing Allocations' Policy.
- Work with the Dartford Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum and other residents to improve services and ensure delivery is customer focussed.



VALUE FOR MONEY

In 2021-2022, we:

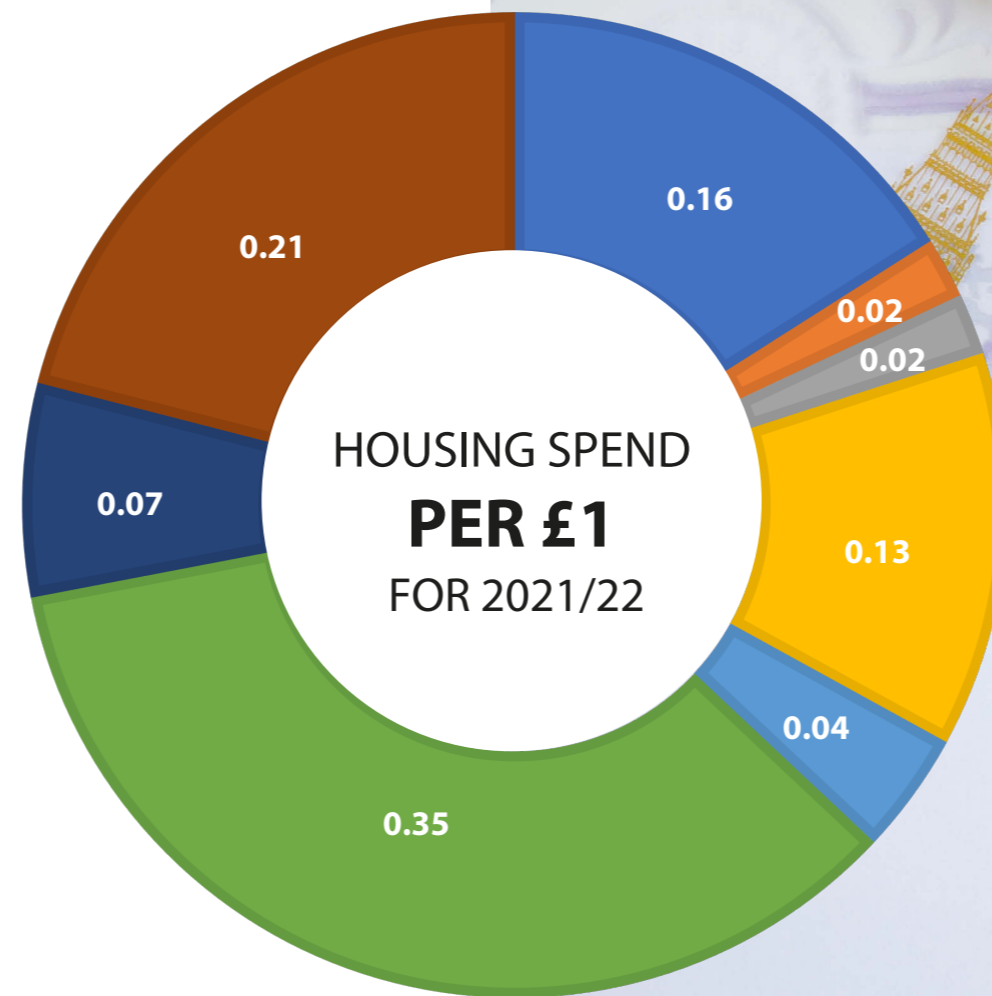
- Introduced more efficient and effective ways of running services.
- Reduced repair costs by investing in the Council's capital works programme.
- Reinvested income from our PV solar panel project back into the service.
- Ensured that the adaptations service achieved value for money.
- Created opportunities for local young people as apprentices to assist in delivering the housing service, many of whom have moved onto permanent employment.
- Maintained safe and hygienically clean communal areas in our housing schemes to better protect our more vulnerable tenants from Covid.
- Employed a specialist garage management company to take over the management of our portfolio of garages. This will allow us to invest in improvements to our garages and their sites.
- Froze existing rents at 2021-22 rates for the 2022-2023 rent year

Actions for 2022-2023

We will aim to:

- Deliver energy efficiency and other measures that save you money.
- Monitor our performance report and look to continually improve.
- Involve the Dartford Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum in our decision making processes.

	2021/2022	2020/2021
General management	0.16	0.17
Special management	0.02	0.03
Housing services for the elderly	0.02	0.03
Repairs and Maintenance	0.13	0.15
Interest on loans	0.04	0.05
Debt repayment	0.35	0.19
New Homes	0.07	0.14
Capital works to existing properties	0.21	0.23
	1.00	1.00



PERFORMANCE 2021-2022

The table shows our performance indicators across a range of services for 2021/22. It uses a symbol system that highlights if we are meeting our targets or if we need to make some improvements (see key below). Some targets are for monitoring purposes only.



Allocations

Number of households on the housing register

Target 2022	2021 - 2022 Performance	Target 2022-23
N/A	1,029	N/A

% of lettings made to households already residing within the Borough

Target 2022	2021 - 2022 Performance	Target 2022-23
97%	96.4%	97%



Homeless

No of households where homelessness prevented

Target 2022	2021 - 2022 Performance	Target 2022-23
N/A	170	N/A

No of households living in temporary accommodation

Target 2022	2021 - 2022 Performance	Target 2022-23
N/A	100	N/A



Rents

Rent Collection and Arrears Recovery - % rents collected as a proportion of rents owed

Target 2022	2021 - 2022 Performance	Target 2022-23
97.5%	97.59%	97.5%

Amount of rent arrears as a percentage of debit

Target 2022	2021 - 2022 Performance	Target 2022-23
2.5%	2.02%	2.5%



Relets

% rent lost through local authority dwellings becoming vacant (voids)

Target 2022	2021 - 2022 Performance	Target 2022-23
0.5%	0.78%	0.5%

Average time taken to re-let local authority housing voids (in calendar days)

Target 2022	2021 - 2022 Performance	Target 2022-23
20	29.61	20

Number of Voids re-serviced and re-let

Target 2022	2021 - 2022 Performance	Target 2022-23
N/A	249	N/A



Repairs

% repairs completed on time

Target 2022	2021 - 2022 Performance	Target 2022-23
98%	86.81%	98%

No of non-decent homes

Target 2022	2021 - 2022 Performance	Target 2022-23
N/A	67	N/A

Energy Efficiency of Housing Stock (SAP energy rating)

Target 2022	2021 - 2022 Performance	Target 2022-23
73	71.78	73

Number of affordable homes delivered

Target 2022	2021 - 2022 Performance	Target 2022-23
120	199	?

The housing service can be accessed in a variety of ways including email, text, visiting our website, visiting, calling or writing to us. Please see below for our contact details.

View information online www.dartford.gov.uk

Email: rio@dartford.gov.uk

Call: 01322 343434

Visiting or write to:

Civic Centre
Home Gardens
Dartford
Kent
DA1 1DR

If you would like more information on documents mentioned in this report or about the housing service, or regulatory framework, please look on our website or contact us using one of the methods above.

You can also find more information on the Regulator of Social Housing at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/regulator-of-social-housing

If you have any comments on the report, or would like to get more involved with how the housing service is delivered in Dartford, please email rio@dartford.gov.uk.

Regulator of Social Housing



Email Housing Service



Dartford Borough Council



If you or anybody you know requires this or any other council information in another language please contact us and we will do our best to provide this for you. Braille, Audio tape and large print versions of this document are available upon request.

Tel: 01322 343434

Calls are welcome via [Relay UK](#)



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