

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023



Having experienced a very difficult couple of years, service delivery has returned to pre-pandemic levels. We have focused on the wellbeing of our residents while striving to meet our service standards and provide you with value for money.

Record breaking inflation levels and difficult market conditions are however creating tough challenges for our service delivery.

However, we are confident our processes and strategies are robust to ensure we continue to meet our commitments.

All reception and frontline services have been open and delivered in-person, and staff have remained flexible by offering virtual services if a resident prefers. Community events have been re-established, and the department is proud to have held an event to celebrate 50 years of resident engagement attended by the Mayor of Wandsworth which was followed by the Resident' Conference.

We have remained committed to tackling rough sleeping in the borough and are in the process of establishing a rough sleeping hub that will bring together council services and other partner agencies to provide a single point of access. The Homes for Wandsworth programme that aims to deliver 1,000 new council rent homes by 2027 is progressing well, and social housing tenants have moved into new homes such as Sphere Walk and Mckinney House.

The Social Housing Regulation Act will place new responsibilities on all social housing providers, and in preparation for these reforms our service standards have been reviewed. In addition, we have introduced a mould removal team and a building safety inspection team, whose primary focus is to provide a safe, reliable and responsive service.

Fire safety remains one of our top priorities, and during 2022-23 we have been preparing our teams to meet the obligations as set out in the Fire Safety and Building Safety Act.

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:

www.wandsworth.gov.uk/getinvolvedhousing

Brian Reilly
Director of Housing and Regeneration

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

- Home
- Neighbourhood and Community
- Tenancy
- Resident Involvement
- Value for Money

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

Priorities for 2022-2023 were:

- Conclude the **stock condition survey**.
- Use available funding to **improve the energy efficiency of the council's housing**. Install cavity wall insulation using ECO 3 funding and explore ECO 4 funding and other funds. Continue the move to LED lighting across estates.
- By March 2026 there will be **1,000 new council homes** - guaranteed for local people and their sons and daughters
- Produce an **energy strategy** for each new housing development to **assess the benefits and viability of green technologies**.
- Through a series of **resident working groups** and in consultation with the Area Housing Panels, review the housing service standards.
- **Review service charge and major works bills** Including considering offering extended repayment periods for high bills.
- Conduct a full review of the monitoring of our **repair and cleaning contracts** and implement any necessary improvements.
- **Review our approach to consultation and engagement** for regeneration projects, ensuring that the voice of local residents is central to decisions made.
- Reduce the number of households in **temporary accommodation**. Recruit to 23 additional posts within Housing Services to tackle this.
- Continue to **expand services to tackle rough sleeping**, using government funding secured.
- To **implement the changes** required within the new Building Safety Act and Fire Safety Regulations.

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

**Where available figures for the previous year 2021-22 are shown in brackets.

Home

We will

- Provide value for money, timely and a good quality repairs and maintenance service for residents, and always ensure that necessary health and safety checks are undertaken
- Maintain all homes to the Decent Homes Standard* as a minimum
- Undertake a programme of Decent Homes Plus** work to improve blocks 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 undertake a programme of Decent Homes Plus works.

How have we met the standard?

- Continued to meet the **Decent Homes Standard** and **invested £35.33m (£17.992m)** to maintain the council's housing stock, which is a significant increase compared to last year. Works included:
 - window renewals across the entire Latchmere estate
 - continuation of the kitchens and bathrooms renewal programme
 - installation of new heating systems
 - upgrading of fire alarm systems for our sheltered residents.
- We undertook further **environmental improvements** to our estates at a cost of **£185,348 (£116,000)**. This included:
 - finishing the refurbishment works on Doddington Square
 - improvements to local playgrounds
 - landscaping and additional planting at Chelverton Court
 - creating new outdoor gym equipment, benches and fencing.
- **Started 50 (53) major works projects** including roof renewals, window renewals and external decoration schemes.
- **Green Homes Grant funding** has been used to complete energy efficiency works to properties across the borough.
- Following the October 2022 **review of our communal heating systems**, an efficiency improvement study was carried out on the Arndale communal heating system, and **further improvement studies are planned** to help plan for net zero.

*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 (search Decent Homes).

**Decent Homes Plus Standard is Wandsworth Council's own higher standard based on Government guidelines.



Recycling Week

- A new **energy management officer** has been recruited to investigate and advise on emerging green technologies.
- To further **improve the energy efficiency** of our homes, we began **piloting a range of low carbon technologies and energy efficiency** products to determine if these can be rolled out to the rest of the council's stock.
- To promote the purchase and use of **electrical vehicles (EV)**, a pilot was completed to install 10 EV charging points on the Fitzhugh Estate. The pilot will be reviewed and scrutinised by residents which will help inform future strategy. Three other charger sites at Sphere Walk, Gideon Road, and Bessborough Road have been installed and will be activated in 2023-24.
- During 2022-23, we have started to **install solar electricity panels** on roof renewal schemes, where feasible.
- **170 properties** were made more energy efficient via cavity wall insulation through ECO3 funding.



Repairs and maintenance

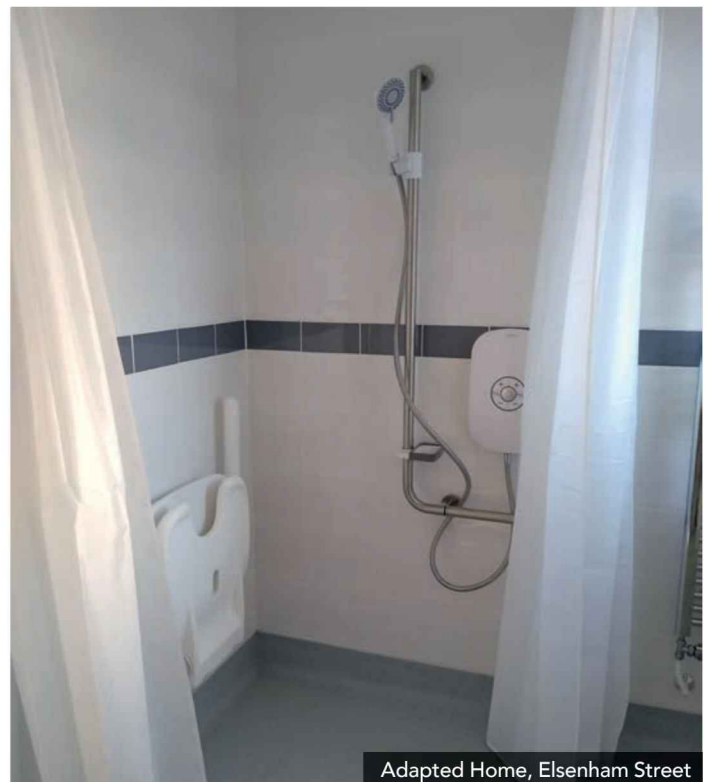
- Provide an efficient and cost effective repairs service, which gets the job done right the first time.
- Carry out health and safety checks.

How have we met the standard?

- **£37.2m (£29.3m)** spent on planned and responsive repairs.
- **72% (74%) of repairs** were **completed within target time**. Repairs performance has been impacted by supply chain and labour issues because of the rising rates of inflation and the aftermath of the pandemic.
- Carried out **annual gas servicing in 99.38% (99.2%)** of tenanted properties that have gas appliances.
- A **new mould removal team** has been established so that residents can have their mould reports fast tracked.
- A **cleaning contract** is in place inline with the HouseMark Caretaking cleaning standards. Performance is measured through inspections by 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 2022-23 **94.8% (97.3%)** of inspections were graded B or above.
- Following the **Fire Safety Act**, we have implemented new requirements such as the **installation of wayfinding signage** and property information boxes holding key information about the block.
- **New fire risk assessment (FRAs)** for all blocks and hostel accommodation were completed
- A **new building safety inspection team** has been established. They are responsible for health and safety inspections, such as fire safety, asbestos and water sampling. They will also be managing the actions arising from the FRAs and the inspections of communal and front entrance doors.



Mould Removal Team



Adapted Home, Elsenham Street

- **Retrofitting sprinklers** in the council's sheltered housing schemes is progressing well. In total, **14** blocks have been fully fitted with sprinkler systems.
- A **stock condition survey** has been completed. The results will allow us to identify potential opportunities for energy efficiency improvements and to ensure we meet the Decent Homes standard.
- A **new building safety lead** has been appointed.



Building Safety Inspection Team

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



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?

- A review of the [council's ASB policy statement](#) was completed and scrutinised via a public consultation. The final statement was published in January 2023.
- Served 10 (5) [Notices of Seeking Possession](#) (NOSP) for ASB.
- There have been 2 (2) [evictions](#) due to ASB during 2022-23.
- 0 (3) [possession orders](#) were granted to the council during 2022-23.
- Improvements have been made to the way noise complaints are recorded and monitored, and performance has begun to improve, with [90.2% \(83%\) of noise complaints](#) being followed up within five days following the initial report.
- Continued to [attend regular meetings with local Safer Neighbourhood Teams](#) and took action where required.



Autumn Bulb Planting



Grow Roehampton on Street Band Procession

62 stray dogs handled

40 micro chips implanted

876 Dog related incidents were responded to by the animal welfare team

198 micro-chipping enforcement notices issued

33 prosecutions 100% success rate

175 complying **23** prosecuted

226 verbal warnings to dog owners who broke byelaws



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.
- Work to achieve wider borough objectives including improving employment opportunities and prospects.

How have we met the standard?

- After successfully gaining the **Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance** (DAHA) accreditation in 2021, the department will be preparing for re-accreditation in 2024. This Chartermark recognises that we have a **comprehensive and robust response to domestic abuse** that puts clients' safety at the heart of our decision making.
- To support the Children's Services **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub** (MASH), a Housing MASH Officer was recruited to. This has strengthened our joint working to **improve the safety of children** in the borough.
- Our **safeguarding procedures continue to be reviewed** annually and we carry out an annual audit of working arrangements to ensure staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- 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 has **21 (21) Domestic Abuse Champions** across all teams. They ensure that an excellent service is given to those fleeing or seeking assistance for domestic abuse.



Work Match

- The **£393,000 programme** on Doddington Square to **improve the garden** for residents and create an area where people can be proud to live and work is in the final stages of completion.
- As part of the **Alton Community Engagement strategy**, residents completed a survey on the type of activities they would like to participate in, which included bulb planting and craft activities that were undertaken during the school holidays.
- Following two years of consultation, **outdoor play areas have been improved** in the Patmore Estate, Savona Estate and Yvonne Carr Centre, which includes new equipment and landscaping.
- In total there are **2,964 LED lights** in different locations across the borough.
- Thinking Works, a non-profit organisation, is working with us to deliver the **WRAP Plus service**. This targets council tenants who or at risk of experiencing fuel poverty. The programme aims to ensure tenants are provided with support and advice on reducing energy bills and consumption, and in the first four months of the programme **181** households were contacted.
- We continue to work with **Wandsworth Workmatch** to provide training and employability support. In total, **276 (235)** residents secured employment via Workmatch **27 (38)** of whom were from the Winstanley and York Road estate. Workmatch have engaged with **720 (482)** residents, providing training to **670 (306)**.



Mama G Story Time during School Holidays

Neighbourhood management



- Ensure estates are maintained to a good standard and improved where possible.
- Respond to emergencies in target times.
- Work with other services and the police to keep your communities and estates clean and safe.

How have we met the standard?

- There were **53,615 (45,755) calls to the Joint Control Centre (JCC)** which required further action during 2022-23.
- **99.92% (99.7%)** of emergency calls* to the JCC were responded to within 30 minutes.
- Removed **30,831 msq (30,688 msq) of graffiti** at a cost of **£208,169 (£220,033)**.
- **99% (100%)** of graffiti was removed within target time.
- We continue to support the **Safer Neighbourhood Team**, Met Police Officers and Police Community Support officers in crime prevention measures.
- Spent **£211,221 (£247,500)** from the small improvement budget for residents' associations (RAs) to fund community projects. These have included:
 - Smithford & Weydown – motorcycle barrier
 - Ethelburga – selection of planters
 - Aboyne Estate – new hard-standing and recycling bin enclosures
 - Hershams Close RA – a secure cycle hanger
- The development at Fontley Way is progressing well and will deliver **14 new council homes**.
- A site on Gideon Road has been made into a **new residential development for 18 new council tenants**, with two properties being wheelchair accessible.
- **New and improved outside spaces** at Chelverton Court have been completed.
- The installation of **high-speed broadband** has advanced; CFL have now upgraded **29,106 (27,491)** council owned properties, with **81% (77%)** of the council stock now having access to full fibre broadband.
- Additional staffing in the areas teams has been agreed to reduce patch sizes and improve staff visibility on estates.

Winstanley and York Road Estate updates

- The **construction of Block 5**, a block of **126** council owned homes has progressed and is due for completion in Spring 2024.
- Of the **71 residential homes** now complete at Sphere Walk, **65** have been let to social housing tenants.



Gideon Road

- The **new playground**, catering for all ages, on the Winstanley and York Road estate opened in Summer 2022.

Alton Estate updates

- The **new Alton Community Engagement Strategy** was approved to involve residents on future regeneration plans, resulting in surveys, drop-in sessions, round table events and public meetings. More than **500 responses** have been received from residents.



- Inner Circle Consulting are working with us to complete an options appraisal with residents to review the priorities and objectives for **improvements to the estate**.

- An **early Improvement Plan** is being developed to bring forward a number of improvements, which includes delivery of "Block A" (replacement library, youth facilities, community hall, GP surgeries and **40** council homes).

- The development of McKinney House is complete and in full occupancy, consisting of **8 social housing homes and 2 shared equity units**.

Homes for Wandsworth programme

18 new homes completed in 2022-23

300 homes are under construction
49 are due to be completed in 2023-24

a further **293** have had or are due to have **planning applications** submitted for 2023-24

13 have secured **planning consent**

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

Tenancy

We will

- **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?

- **Housed 928 (845)** households in 2022-23 against a target of **1,471 (1,097)**.
- Received **1,805 (2,117) online housing applications** this year, which equates to **81.8% (77.4%)** of all applications received.
- **188 (304) vulnerable families** had their homelessness prevented by our teams.
- It took an average of **36.43 (25.32) days to re-let a property.**
- **Moved 25 (39) under-occupying households** to smaller more suitable accommodation.
- The **tenancy policy was updated** to re-introduce secure (lifetime) tenancies for new tenants; this will provide greater security for tenants and removes the stress of a tenancy review.
- **A new team dedicated to identifying under-occupiers** has been established to help and encourage residents via generous cash incentives to move to suitable properties to free up larger properties for households in need.
- Following the **review of the disposal policy**, high value street properties will no longer be sold to help retain much needed larger homes.
- The number of households in **temporary accommodation (TA)** rose to **3,590 (3,196)** which is slightly higher than the forecast of **3,472 (3,163)**.
- **2.8% (2.7%) of households in TA** are in Bed & Breakfast, which is lower than the council forecast of **6%**.
- We continued to focus on **supporting rough sleepers** off the streets by accommodating **99 (207)**, with **88 (148)** currently in TA and **293 (245)** now rehoused.
- Plans to **build a rough sleeper hub** to provide a safe place for rough sleepers to receive bespoke advice and support has progressed.
- **134 (186)** tenants were helped by the tenancy support team during 2022-23; this included support to reduce arrears by **£37,444.16 (£76,995)**.

Rents

- **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?

- At the end of the year, **total rent arrears** were **£9.16m (£7.47m)**. This equates to **7.13% (5.89%)** of the total rent collected. This increase is largely due to the financial hardship caused by the pandemic and the more recent cost-of-living crisis. We are assisting tenants where possible to clear debts and manage finances.
- **12.30% (10.64%)** of tenants are in more than seven weeks worth of arrears.
- The financial inclusion team provide **free benefit advice, debt management intervention and help with budgeting**, assisting **576 (519)** tenants during 2022-23. **51 (183)** tenants also attended virtual Tenancy Support advice sessions and there were **298** notifications of households entering Breathing Space, a national debt respite scheme

Tenure

- **Provide either introductory, flexible fixed term or secure tenancies.**
- **Give new residents a copy of their tenancy or lease agreements and explain the content.**
- **Check our homes are occupied legally and take action where they are not.**

How have we met the standard?

- All tenants received a **written tenancy agreement** which is explained to them at the time of signing.
- The visibility of estate managers and officers has improved and occupancy checks have returned to pre-pandemic levels, with **487 (76) occupancy checks** completed in 2022-23.
- **24 (28) illegally occupied properties** were recovered by the council in partnership with the South West London Fraud Partnership.
- A review of the **council's tenancy conditions** was completed.

Resident involvement

We will

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

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?

- We recognise that the last few years have been difficult and community activities have been less frequent. Throughout this year, council officers and residents have been working hard to re-establish a **diverse number of activities and events by re-opening clubrooms** and increasing the number of community events.
- The department has worked with the **cost-of-living hub** to identify warm spaces for residents.
- Following consultations with residents, it was agreed that **interactive TVs** will be installed in some of the sheltered schemes to decrease the impact of isolation.
- **706 (818)** residents use **WATCH Lifeline service** which helps older residents and those with disabilities to remain independent in their homes. **167 (307)** new users signed up to the service.
- There were **420 (371) Telecare users** at the end of 2022-23. Telecare provides a range of sophisticated sensors and alarms to help residents remain independent.
- The number of **'Stay Put Stay Safe'** (SPSS) applicants assisted during the year was **41 (70)**.
- The **R.O.S.E Community Clubroom** ran community events and group activities including gardening, crafts and light exercise for local residents.
- The council works in partnership with **House Exchange**,

a website which helps council residents across the UK find someone to swap homes with. Tenants can register for free with House Exchange*.

- We continue our partnership with **Chelsea Football Club** via the Chelsea Kicks programme, contributing £20,000 a year. This year physical sessions were back in full swing, with **10** sessions across our sites every week. In total, **239** young residents aged 8 to 18 signed up to participate during the year.
- **Women of Wandsworth (WoW)** have been supporting vulnerable residents via community based activities. Their dedication to the community resulted in two WoW volunteers being awarded a Member of the British Empire (MBE) and a British Empire Medal (BEM).
- **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 Needs Assessments (EINAs)** for all policy statements to ensure we are serving all members of the community fairly.



Arts and craft session at the R.O.S.E Community Clubroom

34
new fully accessible homes are currently being built

21 people requiring adapted housing were allocated accessible homes

8 new supported housing units are now underway at Colson Way

10 fully accessible new build council homes became available for occupation

255 disability adaptations were completed to enable people to remain independent in their home

*www.houseexchange.org.uk

Involvement

- Encourage resident involvement.
- Inform residents about services and give them the opportunity to check and challenge how well the housing service is doing.

How have we met the standard?

- Supported **28 (37)** accredited **Resident Associations** in the Borough; our RPOs continue to work with **9 (18) associate RAs** who hope to gain accredited status soon.
- Residents and council staff **celebrated 50 years of resident engagement** with an event in the Town Hall hosted by the Mayor of Wandsworth.
- A **Residents' Conference was held** at the Civic Suite in October 2022, attended by residents involved in our participation structures. Professional training was provided and local community groups were there to provide advice and information.
- A **gardening competition** was launched for council residents.
- There are **12 (18) Housing Community Champions**. These are resident volunteers who have been recognised for the community work they do on their estates.
- **Social inclusion schemes** continue to be delivered across the borough, and the council has been supporting resident associations in developing communal green spaces, such as the Fitzhugh Grove community garden .
- **2 (3) residents focus groups** were held this year, with one being a series to review our service standards.
- For the first time since the pandemic, the home ownership team held their annual **affordable housing open day** in person.
- The team on the Alton estate are continuing to organise activities to reduce the risk of isolation to elderly residents, such as Roehampton's Community Development choir known as "An-A-Choir-ed Taste", showcasing the value of communal singing.



50 Years of Resident Participation Celebration

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?

- We have kept residents up to date through letters, webpage updates, social media feeds and the **Homelife newsletter**.
- A **new two stage complaints system** was introduced during 2022-23 to make the process fairer and faster.
- **91 (277)** complaints were received, with **70.10% (70.07%)** of complaints dealt with at stage one
- Complaint response times have improved with **76.98% (64.23%)** of all complaints responded to within target time.
- We have completed a **full review of our service standards** which included a series of five focus groups with residents.
- We continue to work with our co-ops to amend their **management agreements** and support them with the new complaints process.



Chelsea Kicks at the Residents' Conference

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 they are 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 example, contracts have come to an end.
- Each year look at our 30 year business plan to check it remains financially viable.



How have we met the standard?

- Continued to effectively manage the **Housing Revenue Account** (HRA) to ensure the 30-year business plan remains viable. Within this plan there are balances available to deal with emergencies.
- Balances have reduced by **£27.022m** to **£255.810m**. This is expected as we have a significant programme of site development and estate regeneration underway.
- The council consulted on all major works and external redecoration schemes, we served:
 - **2,354 (1,164)** Notices of Intention*; and
 - **2,458 (2,117)** Section 20 Notices* on leaseholders.
- To **support leaseholders** resident leaseholders now have an interest free extension of up to four years to pay major works bills.
- Average weekly rent was **£130.12** compared to **£129.75** last year.

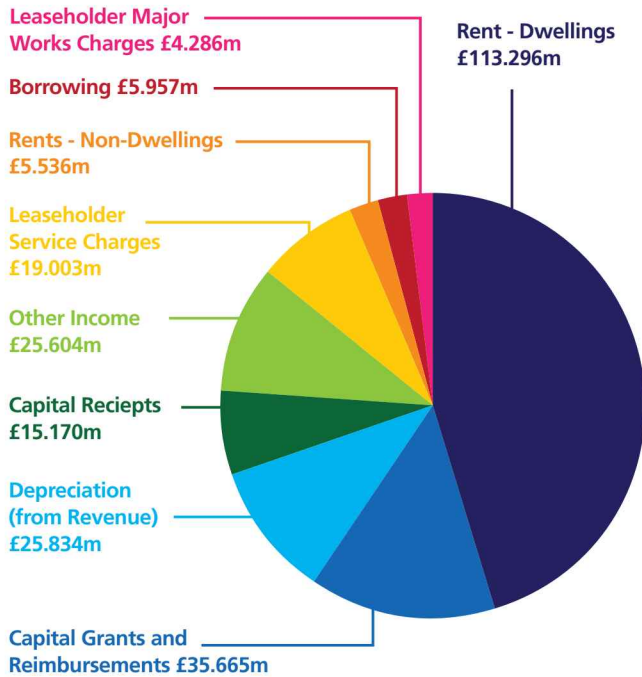
* These are a statutory requirement to consult leaseholders on schemes of major works costing more than £250 per leaseholder.



* Specialist Services include cleaning, electricity, heating and hot water.

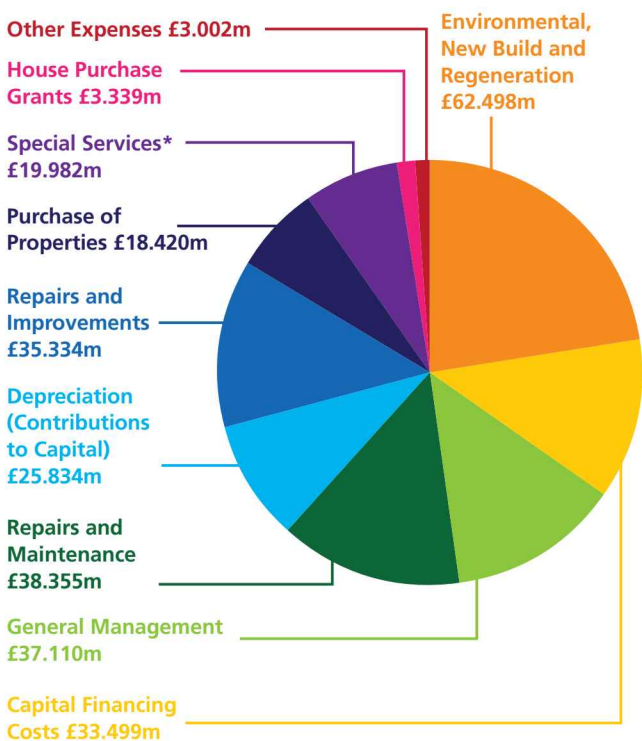
Housing revenue account 2022/23

Income total £250.351m (£12.496m)



Housing revenue account 2022/23

Expenditure total £277.373m (£228.511m)



Priorities for 2023-2024

- Continue to hold **repairs contractors** to account including consideration of a resident repair panel to review poor performance.
- 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 July 2024.
- **Invest £33.5 million** into our housing stock to continue to achieve the decent homes standard.
- 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.
- Develop a shortlist of viable options for the **Alton Estate**.

