

HOUSING

Annual Report
2021 – 2022



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

HOUSING ANNUAL REPORT

A warm welcome to the Housing Annual Report for 2021-2022

As your lead member for Housing, it is with genuine enthusiasm that I share this report with you, providing a transparent glimpse into our role as your landlord and how your rent as tenants is spent.

During this last year we have had to adapt to a wide range of challenges and evolving circumstances. From the ongoing impact of Covid related health concerns affecting both our dedicated staff and contractors, to the range of obstacles posed by supply shortages and escalating costs of construction materials, we have encountered and overcome a diverse range of hurdles. Through it all our Housing Service has demonstrated unwavering commitment resulting in the achievements captured throughout these pages.

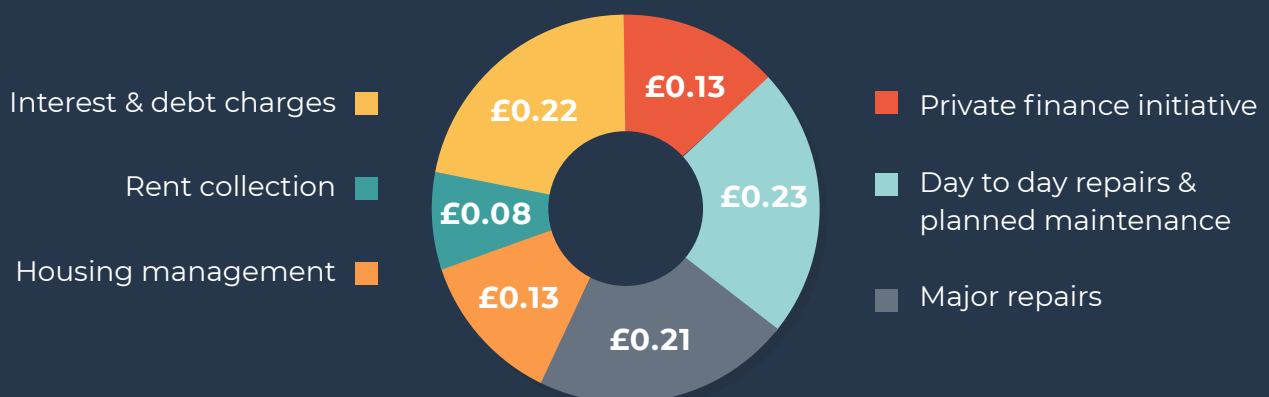
This report will illuminate highlight areas in which our service has excelled, showcasing our dedication to delivering quality services and meeting our responsibilities as your landlord. This report is not just about highlighting what we have done well, but an open dialogue that acknowledges areas where we could do better and how we are working towards improving services. We are dedicated to learning from our experiences and using these insights to inform and enhance the Housing Service for you, your family and local community.

I would like to thank our valued tenants, for your enduring support and partnership. It is through our collective efforts that we transform challenges into opportunities, and pave the way for a brighter future for all residents. I encourage you to explore this report and engage with its contents, as together, we head into the next year.

Cllr Ellie Emberson
Lead Councillor for Housing



How every £1 of your rent is spent (2021/2022)



Headline

ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2021-22

Installation of the Council's first domestic air source heat pumps

40 were installed in properties in Granville Road, Southcote



Invested over **£360k** in community activities across the borough



Despite pandemic-induced financial pressures, our top quartile rent collection surpassed

100.26%



We offered continued tenant support and debt advice, including the 'Money Matters' 2 campaign and webpages for those facing financial struggles

Provided over **500** residents with Money Advice



12 refurbished properties in Kentwood with carbon-reducing measures, including external wall insulation, triple glazed windows, and heat recovery systems



We are adopting new **Allocations Scheme** this year which prioritises Council tenants, key workers, and people with disabilities for sustainable community building



The Local Authority **New Build Programme** delivered –



4 new homes in George Street and **18** new homes and a Community Centre in Lyndhurst Road, all built to the Council's standards for low carbon homes

The Council's Local Authority **New Build programme** goes from strength to strength with the following properties currently in the pipeline to complete over the next 4 years:

Scheme Name	Ward	Number of Homes
Arthur Hill Pool Site	Park	15
North Street	Abbey	41
Wensley Road	Minster	46
Battle Street	Abbey	64
Hexham Road	Redlands	30
Amethyst Lane	Southcote	38
Dwyer Road	Southcote	30
5 small sites (ex- garage sites and scrubland)	Various	8



TENANT & EMPOWERMENT STANDARD

The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard sets expectations for registered providers of social housing in the areas of:

- Customer service, choice and how we deal with your complaints.
- How we listen and respond to your views and how we support you to get involved when Housing makes decisions on your homes and neighbourhoods.
- How we can help to deal with your individual needs.



You said, we did

In 2021 Oxford Road recreation ground was one of several parks awarded funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – a pot of money given to local communities from new housing developments. The money was to be used to fund new play facilities at the park but before beginning this work, the Tenant Participation Team in Housing consulted with the local tenants to see how the park was currently being used, what they would like to see at the park and how we could improve it to make it more welcoming.

'Looks amazing, my granddaughter has loved playing there. So glad to finally see goal posts on the field. Thank you!'

Respondents reported that anti-social behaviour and the poor state of the alleyways around the park were affecting how and when tenants used the park in addition to better facilities within the park including football posts. In order to make the park more accessible and respond to tenants' concerns, we added extra funding from the Tenant Improvement Fund (TIF) to cut back overgrown vegetation, open out the access to the park and to resurface some of the alleyways to make it easier and less intimidating for local residents to use it. The work was completed in summer of 2022 and feedback from tenants was very positive.


'I've lived on this estate for 41 years. The recreation ground now looks wonderful, the pathways are free of bushes and well lit up at night. The new equipment is nice, not a lot for over 11 year olds though. But I've seen more mums and children using it, and it's clean and tidy.'



If you have ideas for improvements that will benefit tenants living in your community contact the Tenant Participation Team on **0118 937 2730**

87.5% 
Calls answered

↓ Down from 91%

79% 
Listened to views and acted on them

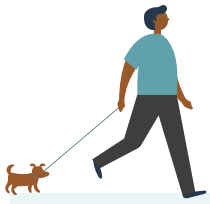
↑ Up from 69%

16.1 
Complaints per 1,000 properties

↑ Up by 2.79

54.6% 
Complaints answered in time

↑ Up by 6%



NEIGHBOURHOOD & COMMUNITY STANDARD

The Neighbourhood and Community Standard sets expectations for registered providers of social housing to keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes they own clean and safe, co-operate with relevant partners to promote the wellbeing of the local area and help prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour.

You said, we did

The Community Partnerships Service is continuing to make improvements to how Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) is dealt with, in response to the Tenant Satisfaction Survey. The ASB Team has introduced the Reportable App to help tenants report incidents quickly and without having to fill out diary sheets. This is in addition to the Noise App that was introduced several years ago.

79%

Satisfaction with their neighbourhood as a place to live 

↑ Up from 73%

£171.27

Average cost per home for estate management 

↑ Up from £163.69

£61.37

Average cost per home from for Anti-Social Behaviour 

↑ Up from £54.61

TENANCY STANDARD



The Tenancy Standard sets expectations for registered providers of social housing to let their homes to tenants in a fair, transparent, and efficient way.

You said, we did

Following consultation, the allocation scheme has been reviewed, and part of this was put into place from 1 April 2022. This included additional priority being awarded to tenants, if their application did not attract any priority, to provide an opportunity for them to move. The allocations scheme focuses on building sustainable communities and supporting local key workers to help retain those in essential roles in our communities.

53 days

Average relet time 

↓ Down from 81 days

100.26%

Rent collected 

↑ Up from 100%

82% 

Satisfaction with service provided

n/a previous year

5.43%

Tenancy turnover 

↑ Up from 5.1%



HOME STANDARD

The Home standard sets expectations for Registered providers of social housing to provide tenants with quality accommodation and cost-effective repairs and maintenance service.

You said, we did

In response to rising concerns about social exclusion, particularly among older tenants, we have initiated a pilot project at Cedar Court Extra Care Scheme. Our project aims to boost digital inclusion to over 50% by March 2022, offering regular ICT sessions, the provision of Wi-Fi in communal areas and expanding activities through digital displays. We are committed to reducing social exclusion and enhancing tenant well-being in an increasingly digital world.

The Tenant Improvement Fund has been used to great effect during this year, and below are a few of the projects completed under this scheme:

- Installed Disabled Access pathways and the remodelling of the bin stores at Briony House Flats.
- Remodelled a safer communal garden at Arthur Place, reducing ASB and improving the enjoyment of the garden for tenants.
- Installed a new security gate and fencing for the communal area and external stairwell at Burford Court.
- Renewed and improved the bin and cycle store at Lexington Grove and improving its accessibility.
- Upgrade of the bin store, communal fencing and parking prevention fencing around the communal areas of the flats on Windemere Road.

91.35%

Repairs fixed first time



↓ Down from 93.58%

100%

Gas Safety Certs



= same as previous year

11.02

Average days for repairs to be completed



↑ Up from 7.26

£168.55

Average cost per responsive repair



↑ Up from £109.07

£1,233.49

Average cost per void repair



↑ Up from £521.60

77%

Overall satisfaction with repairs



n/a previous year

87%

Overall satisfaction with quality of your home



↑ Up from 77%

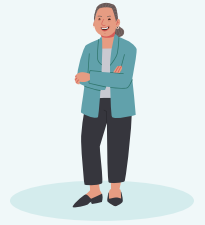
74

Average SAP rating



= same as previous year

CONTACT US



Allocations Team

0118 937 2172
allocations@reading.gov.uk

Antisocial Behaviour Team

0118 937 2161
asb.team@reading.gov.uk

Contact/Call Centre for Housing Services

0118 937 3757

Debt Advice

0118 937 2197
debt.advice@reading.gov.uk

Environmental Services (rubbish & recycling)

0118 937 3787

Housing Benefits

0118 937 3707
benefits@reading.gov.uk
www.reading.gov.uk/counciltaxsupport

Housing Officer

0118 937 2161
neighbourhoodservices@reading.gov.uk

Rent Helpline

0118 937 2784

Repairs

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

0800 318296 (freephone) or
0118 937 3757 from a mobile

www.reading.gov.uk/rbctenantrepairs

Repairs 0118 937 3737
(out of hours emergencies)

Tenant Engagement Team

0118 937 2730
tenant.participation@reading.gov.uk

Complaints

0118 937 3787
housing.complaints@reading.gov.uk

As well as contacting us, it is worth noting that you can also go direct to the Housing Ombudsman Service which resolves disputes involving tenants and leaseholders of social housing landlords like Reading Borough Council. Residents and landlords can contact it at any time for support in helping to resolve a dispute and it is free to tenants.

www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

0300 111 3000

Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ