

# READING HOUSING

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023



**Reading**  
Borough Council

Working better with you

# HOUSING ANNUAL REPORT

## A warm welcome to the Housing Annual Report for 2022 – 2023

Hello and a warm welcome to the Housing Annual Report for the financial year 2022-2023, a comprehensive look back on the accomplishments and progress achieved by Reading Borough Council's Housing Service. As your lead member for Housing, it is with genuine enthusiasm that I share this report with you, providing a transparent look into our role as your landlord and how we have spent your rent as tenants.

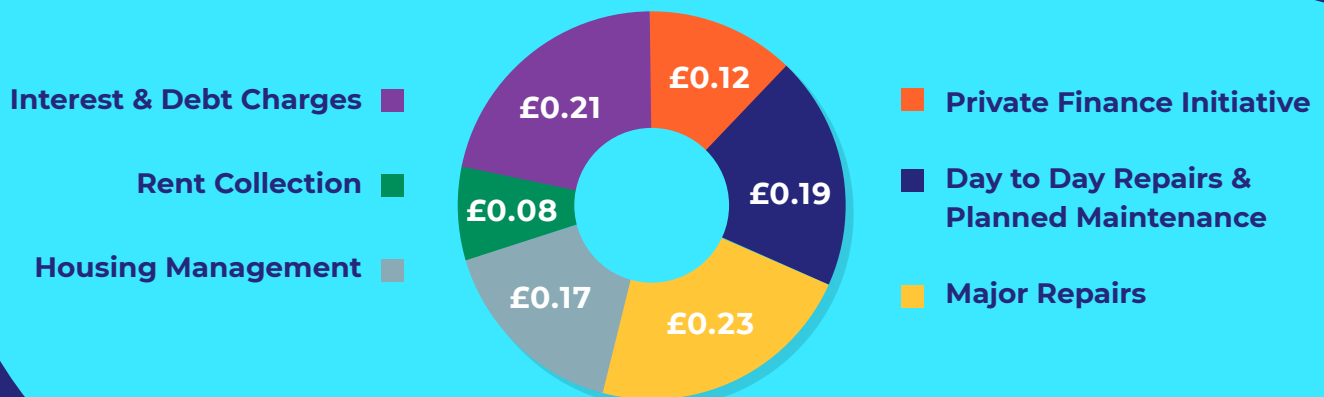
During this last year, like the previous, we have had to adapt to many challenges and an ever-changing landscape. From the ongoing fallout from the pandemic, the challenges faced sourcing contractors and materials alike, to the ever-increasing cost of living and the issues that has presented we have had to adapt to overcome a diverse range of difficulties. Through it all our Housing Service has demonstrated unwavering commitment resulting in the successes captured within this report.

This report will highlight areas in which our service has excelled, reaffirming our commitment to delivering quality services and meeting our responsibilities as your landlord. This report is not just about highlighting what we have done well, but also creating an open and honest dialogue that acknowledges areas where we could do better, and how we are working towards delivering 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 continuing support and partnership. It is through our collective efforts that we are able to turn challenge into opportunity, and forge a path for a brighter future for all residents. I encourage you to read this report and engage with it's contents as we take a look back over the year.

*Cllr Ellie Emberson*  
Lead Councillor for Housing

### How every £1 of your rent is spent?





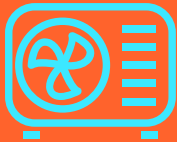
# HEADLINE ACHIEVEMENTS

for 2022 – 2023



The refurbishment of **18** a further properties in Kentwood with carbon-reducing measures, including external wall insulation, triple glazed windows, and heat recovery systems bringing total improvements to

**43**



A further **40** Air Source heat pumps installed at the Granville Road High-Rise flats as part of the Council's low carbon improvements.



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

**99%**.

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



The Local Authority **New Build Programme** delivered further new homes with key worker flats at the old Arthur Hill swimming pool site. **15**



The Council's Local Authority **New Build programme** goes from strength to strength with **37** homes in North Street due to be handed over in the Spring of this year.

Planning applications are shortly due to be submitted for two mixed general needs housing and adult social care provision at the old Central Pool site and a site on Hexham Road expected to deliver a further **103** properties.

# HEADLINE ACHIEVEMENTS

for 2022 – 2023



Beyond bricks and mortar the service also works to improve the wider environment on housing estates to meet the needs and aspirations of both the Council and our tenants.



Repairs and maintenance of the stock are delivered predominantly by an in-house workforce. Some works are sub-contracted using measured term contracts to allow for fluctuations in volumes, specialist work or where it is more cost effective to do so.



Housing Property Services manages the planned maintenance, cyclical repairs and void works to approximately **5,835** Council homes.



The service has a responsibility to ensure that the housing stock is well maintained in accordance with the Decent Homes Standard and that Council homes are safe and healthy places to live.



The service continues to have a strong focus on improving the thermal efficiency of homes in line with the Council's Climate Change ambitions ensuring homes can be heated efficiently and cost effectively, thus reducing their carbon footprint and reducing fuel poverty.

The Council is investing **£26.1m** between 2023/24 and 2025/26 in moving towards zero carbon options in terms of retrofitting existing housing stock in line with the Council's Climate Change ambitions. The existing housing stock benefits from past initiatives which have ensured that most properties are above EPC level C. As such the Council is currently not benefitting from any extra Government funding towards zero carbon initiatives which are predominantly targeted at EPC level D and below. The Council is therefore reliant on the Housing Revenue Account to continue to pursue zero carbon options.



# 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.



## Complaints performance figures 2022-23:

Below shows the council's performance on responding to complaints made to housing services and the Repairs service. The table shows the number of complaints received, the number where we upheld all or part of the complaint, meaning that we'd not quite delivered the service our tenants expect of us, the percentage of complaints we responded to within the required time frame, and finally the two most prominent themes that were within the complaints made.

	Housing Services	Housing Repairs
Number of complaints received	Stage 0: <b>99</b> Stage 1: <b>151</b>	Stage 0: <b>20</b> Stage 1: <b>96</b>
Complaints upheld / partially upheld	<b>41.8%</b>	<b>87%</b>
Complaints responded to on time	<b>65%</b>	<b>57%</b>
Biggest complaint theme for 22-23	<b>Communication</b>	<b>Failure to resolve issue</b>

In order to improve upon this performance, the Housing Service will undertake a strategic review of its complaints and process, and make the required changes identified from this review and implement the key learning opportunities that can be taken. Whilst it is inevitable that sometimes mistakes will happen, Reading Council's Housing and Communities Team will make sure that all mistakes can be learned from, and create an environment of continuous improvement and learning in order to deliver better service for our tenants.

## You said, we did:

### Tenant Improvement Fund – You said, we did **RUPERT SQUARE**

In 2022 residents at Rupert Square told us about various issues affecting the car park at their block of flats. Non-residents from the surrounding area were parking there, which prevented residents from parking their cars and made it difficult for Council staff to get access to empty the bins and to deal with fly tipping. There weren't enough disabled parking bays in the car park and they were too narrow.

We responded by using Tenant Improvement Fund money to increase the number of parking spaces by removing a dividing wall and by marking out the bays very clearly. We increased the number of disabled parking bays which are now wider and properly accessible. After asking the residents, we also introduced a parking permit scheme.



After the work was completed we asked the residents what they thought.

One resident told us:

**“The parking area looks cleaner and more open, it’s very helpful”**

and another said:

**“It’s excellent”**

Our Block and Estate Officer team has also reported the situation at the car park is much improved.

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

### Key bench marking figures:

**68.8%** 

**Calls answered**

↓ Down from 87.5%

**79%** 

**Listened to views and acted on them**

▬ same as previous year

**26.9** 

**Complaints per 1,000 properties**

↑ Up from 16.1%

**61.3%** 

**Complaints answered in time**

↑ Up from 54.6%

# 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.

## Key achievements:

The Neighbourhood and Communities team ensured Officers are fully up to date on their awareness of ASB Tools and Powers. One officer successfully completed an ASB BTEC Level 3 qualification in ASB, whilst other officers were provided with refresher training.

The Team obtained 5 Injunctions against perpetrators of anti-social behaviour, safeguarding tenants and our communities from further incidents of anti-social behaviour.



## Key bench marking figures:

**85%** 

Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods

↑ Up from 73%

**£218.26** 

Average cost per home for estate management

↑ Up from £171.27

**£67.45** 

Average cost per home from for Anti-Social Behaviour

↑ Up from £61.37



# 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:

### Tenant Improvement Fund – You said, we did **BURFORD COURT**

In 2022 residents at Burford Court told us about drug taking and other anti-social behaviour taking place in and around their block of flats. Non-residents were using the communal garden and patio area and it was having an impact on the residents' quality of life.

We responded by using Tenant Improvement Fund money to install new fencing and a security gate at the flats to stop non-residents getting in and to improve the quality of life for residents.

After the new gate and fencing were installed we asked the residents what they thought and the response was very positive. Our Block and Estate Maintenance Officer for the area has also reported that the situation at the flats has really improved.



One resident told us:

**“The security of the block has been improved, and there is no longer a problem with discarded litter and drugs paraphernalia. Our flats are tidier and safer. It’s an improvement to what was there before”.**



## Key bench marking figures:

**61.55 days**

Average relet time



↑ Up from 53 days

**99.35%**

Rent collected



↓ Down from 100.26%

**82%**

Satisfaction with service provided



= same as previous year

**5.89%**

Tenancy turnover



↑ Up from 5.43%

# 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.

## Key achievements:

In the year 22/23 we have taken delivery of the units on the infill sites. The infill sites are so called as they are pockets of unused pieces of land such as former garage sites that we have brought back into use. We are pleased to advise we have taken delivery of the following:

**Foxhays Road:** 1 x 2 bed bungalow and 2 x 2 bed semi detached houses

**Wentworth Avenue:** 2 x 2 bed semi detached houses

**Circuit Lane:** 2 x 2 bed semi detached houses

**Camelford Close:** 1 x 4 bed detached house

**Ian Mikado Way:** 1 x 3 bed detached house

Our new build programme continues with several other projects now on site and progressing well.

Since declaring a climate emergency, with every newbuild we are improving our position within the green agenda and building to passivhaus principals to provide a better, healthier living environment for our tenants. We now install air source heat pumps, triple glazed windows, improved levels of installation which provide a more efficient home which means lower utility costs for our tenants.



## Key bench marking figures:

**93.13%**

Repairs fixed first time



↓ Down from 91.13%

**100%**

Gas Safety Certs



= same as previous year

**13.34**

Average days for repairs to be completed



↑ Up from 11.02

**£163.66**

Average cost per responsive repair



↑ Up from £168.55

**£1,450.25**

Average cost per void repair



↑ Up from £1,233.49

**77%**

Overall satisfaction with repairs



= same as previous year

**88%**

Overall satisfaction with quality of your home



↑ Up from 87%

**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](http://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](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk) [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

0300 111 3000

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