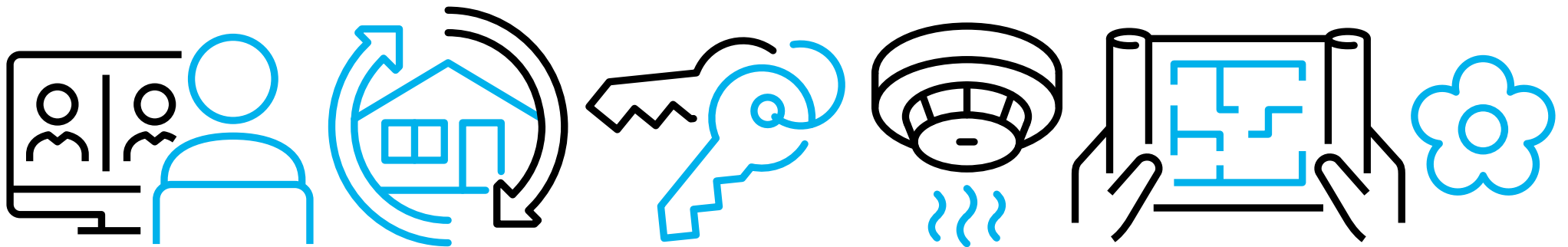


Working in partnership to  
improve services for tenants  
and leaseholders

**2021-22**

# **T** **ANNUAL REPORT TO** **Tenants**



**BE BOLD BE BIRMINGHAM**

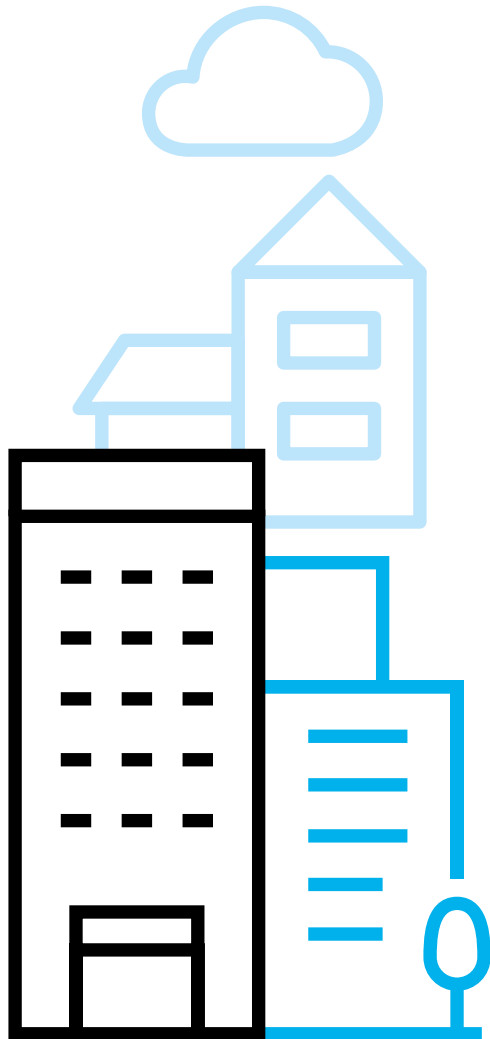
 **Birmingham**  
City Council

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# Welcome and Foreword



Welcome to our Annual Report to Tenants which sets out how Birmingham City Council has performed as your landlord during 2021-2022 against the National Housing Standards for Social Landlords.

The Annual Report to Tenants is our opportunity to explain to you how well the services we provide are performing and celebrate our achievements. We have also highlighted our priorities for the year ahead to help achieve our aim of providing great homes and the best services for all our tenants and leaseholders.

## Foreword

Welcome to the first 'Annual Report to Tenants' from the new City Housing Directorate.

It has been another impressive year for City Housing, and I am proud of how we have responded to the ongoing challenges in delivering housing services throughout the pandemic, by working together and

with our local, regional, and national partners whilst continuing to put our tenants at the heart of everything we do. We have boldly responded and adapted to the 'new normal' and are focused on improving and growing our service, embedding new processes, and pulling together in our drive to become a 'best in class' housing service.

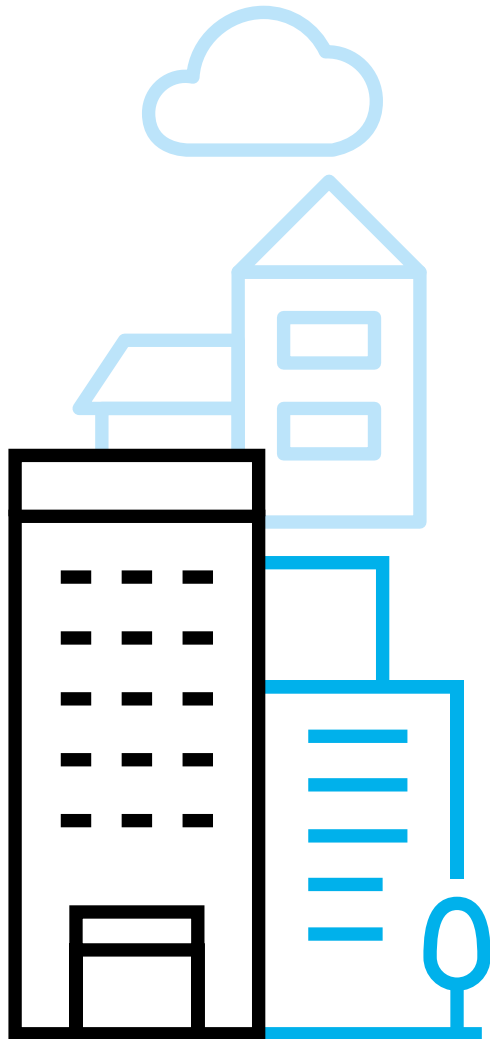
There have been many significant achievements during 2021-22 and highlights include:

- Forming a new 'Think Family' team who will support the work of the Birmingham Children's Trust 'Early Help' Partnership and will focus on help for families with young children.
- Working with our partners to

mobilise advice and support services to help people cope with the severe and unprecedented cost of living crisis which included our 'keep Brum warm campaign' and our recent 'talk money week'.

- We have completed 233,778 responsive and gas repairs and 100% of customers surveyed were satisfied with the repairs service.
- We are seeking accreditation with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance and continue to develop innovative ways to tackle all forms of Anti-social Behaviour.
- We are progressing the Oscott Gardens project to provide temporary accommodation for up to 300 homeless families from former university halls of

# Foreword (continued)...



- residence to help end the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.
- We have improved fire safety and 196 out of 199 high rise blocks now have a fully commissioned sprinkler system fitted and 30 high rise blocks had fire safety improvements to the façade of the building which brings the total so far to 107.
  - 928 households had their homelessness prevented, 1163 homeless households were moved into self-contained accommodation and 212 into family homes centres. The Domestic Abuse Sanctuary Scheme prevented 106 households from homelessness.

In 2020 the government published the Social Housing White Paper to ensure that residents in social housing are safe, are listened to, live in good quality homes, and have access to redress when things go wrong. To deliver these recommendations we

embarked on a bold and ambitious journey to develop a national 'best in class' housing service for our tenants and leaseholders. We engaged consultants to review our housing management and capital investment and repairs service, and this review will shape our future priorities to ensure we provide our customers with the boldest and best housing offer in the country. As part of this journey, we have initiated an ambitious transformation programme of over 50 improvement projects which will be prioritised based upon customer impact, statutory compliance, and risk mitigation. This programme will deliver operational excellence and contribute to wider strategic objectives.

One of our most important priorities is to refresh our approach to tenant engagement to ensure our tenants have an active role in the decisions that affect them. Consequently, we engaged TPAS (Tenant Participation

Advisory Services) to review our tenant engagement service and the way we collaborate and co-produce with tenants. Over the next 12 months we will work with TPAS to develop a Tenant Engagement Strategy and Action Plan to give all our tenants the best possible opportunities to engage and be meaningfully involved in service delivery. Work is also under way to redesign the start of tenancy processes so we can be more responsive and more proactive to prevent risks of any housing crisis occurring. We will also carry out an anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse audit to review the service offer to tenants and carry out a comprehensive building safety assessment. Crucially, we will commence a data validity project to look at the mechanisms and IT infrastructure needed for collecting data and communicating with tenants to lay the foundation



for the introduction of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

As a caring and supportive landlord, we continue to prioritise help to those struggling with social and economic hardship. Over the last 12 months there has been a huge increase in energy prices, food, and transport costs and we are fully committed to helping our tenants manage their way through the cost-of-living crisis. This objective is underpinned by the Councils Financial Inclusion Strategy, Anti-Poverty Strategy and Levelling up Strategy. Consequently, we have updated our webpages to include more information about obtaining financial advice, the availability of grants and benefits and opportunities for finding work. Over the next 12 months we will continue to work with the Fuel Poverty Alliance and promote the 'warm Brum' campaign to help residents reduce their fuel bills. The housing retrofit programme will make council properties warmer

and more energy efficient to hopefully reduce bills and increase thermal comfort. We will continue to invest in and expand the 'think family' model supporting vulnerable households to access and sustain their homes whilst our rents and benefits team will continue to help people claiming welfare benefits and universal credit and to apply for discretionary benefits. We hope these initiatives will go some way to helping the most vulnerable.

Finally, as proud host city of the Commonwealth Games 2022, it is our priority to use this opportunity to advance our ambitions and bring a legacy to the city for our tenants. To do so we will continue to build our local engagement networks to strengthen the connections between communities to make a real and lasting difference in every ward, neighbourhood, and street.

We hope you enjoying reading this report and like us you are

excited about the future direction of City Housing. The needs of our tenants remain firmly at the centre of everything we do, and we will continue to collaborate across the council and with our partners, to help and support our most vulnerable whilst working to deliver a 'best in class' housing service.

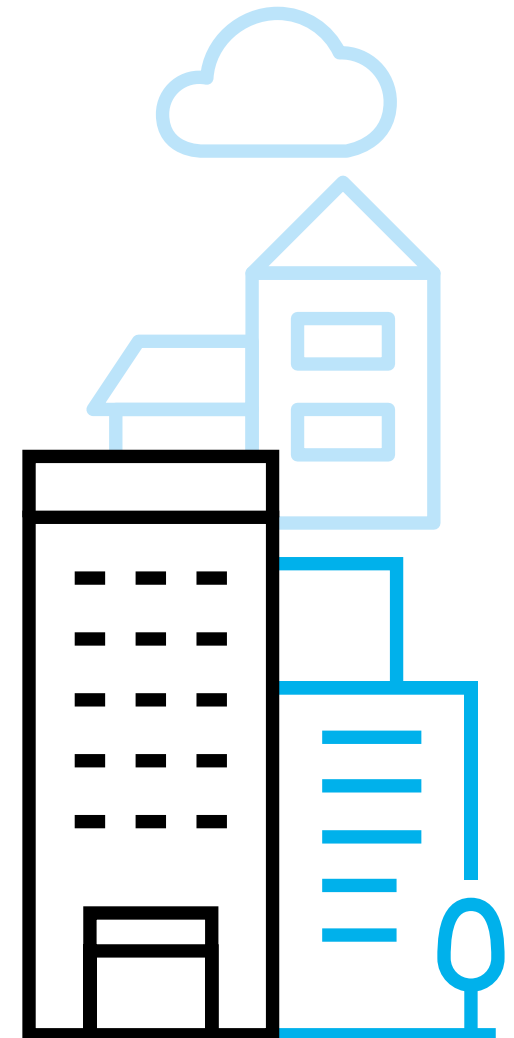
**Julie Griffin**

Strategic Director, City Housing Directorate



**Cllr Sharon Thompson**

Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods

# Tenant involvement and empowerment

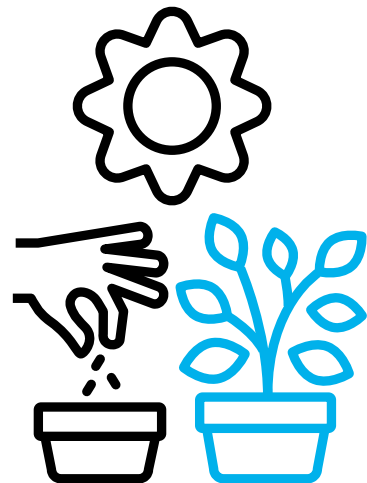
This standard sets out how we communicate and involve tenants.

Our Tenant Participation Officers (TPOs) carried out 395 city-wide projects in 2021/22. Key highlights included:



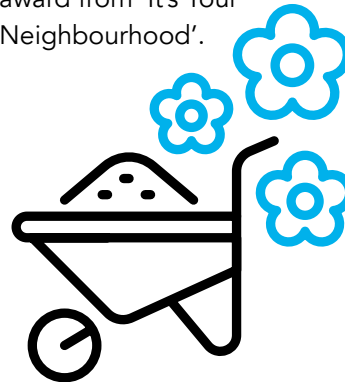
## In Selly Oak

The TPO worked closely with 'Let's Grow Together', a community-based company set up to work with schools and community groups, to develop growing spaces for the benefit of people and wildlife. In partnership with the Housing Liaison Board (HLB), residents in the Beilby Road flats developed a 'Mother Garden'.



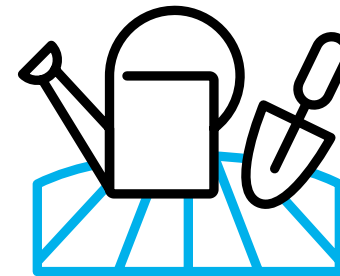
## In St Mary's

Residents at St Mary's, Yardley, took great pride in the appearance of their communal garden and in keeping it neat and tidy. To improve it, the HLB provided a new planter and selection of beautiful seasonal flowers. This support encouraged residents to enter 'It's Your Neighbourhood', 'Birmingham in Bloom' and the East Quadrant gardening competitions. St Mary's achieved an outstanding award from 'It's Your Neighbourhood'.



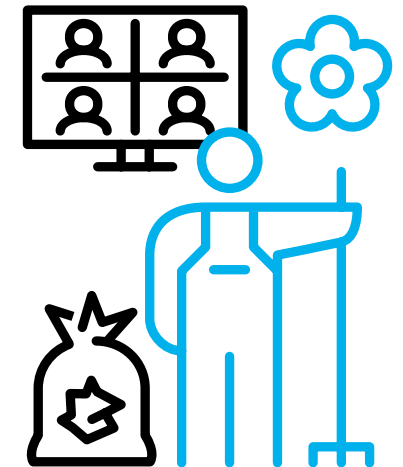
## In Hodge Hill

The TPO organised an event in Lighthouse Square to obtain local views on the best way to utilise the vacant overgrown land behind the Lighthouse Building. The event was well attended, and residents agreed they'd like the council to explore the potential for services such as a mobile library, training events and pop-up activities for children during school holidays. The TPO is now setting up a residents' association and involving other agencies to help secure funding.



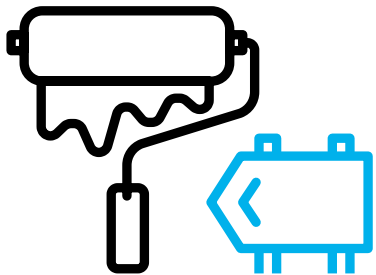
## Across the city

Community gardens continued to flourish with membership increasing across all age groups. Residents in Ladywood, Soho and Jewellery Quarter wards organised litter picks and smaller gardening projects. Resident groups continued to meet on Zoom holding community picnics and fun days for all in local parks.



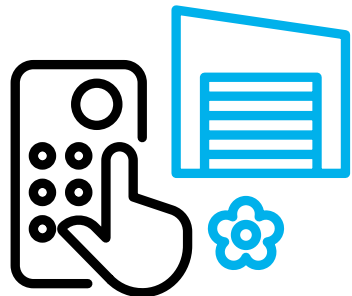
### In Yardley

The TPO worked with tenants in a low-rise block of flats on the Warwick Road by painting the fronts of the entrances to improve their appearance. Their hard work earned an advancing award from 'It's Your Neighbourhood'. In Bakeman House new directional signs were installed to help with the delivery of parcels to flats. A new bin stall was installed for the block along Berkley Road to keep the site clean and tidy, which improves the visual appearance for residents.



### In Erdington

The council-owned garage site in East Dean Close was a notorious 'hot spot' for repeated fly-tipping. Consequently, with the help of the TPO and HLB funding, there has been a major project to improve the security and use of the site with metal fences and secure digi-locks. The result is that four of the five vacant garages, have been successfully rented out with no further incidents. The council saved money on the clean-up resulting in a cleaner and safer environment for all.



### In Edgbaston

The TPO consulted with residents to secure HLB funding to install DDE doors on a block of flats in Quinton. This was to tackle ASB complaints which left residents living in fear in their own homes. The funding enabled the main communal doors to be replaced with secured doors and intercoms for each resident. This has made the tenants feel much safer and contented in their own homes.



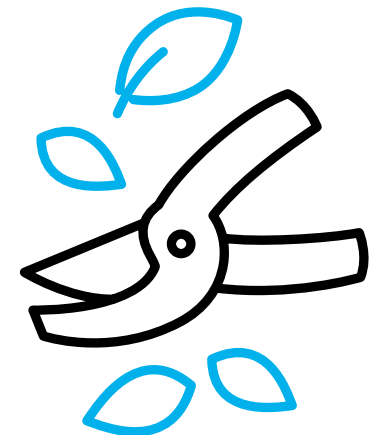
### In Northfield

The TPO secured funding to plant a selection of trees in the communal grounds at Bath Court, Weoley Park Estate. This improved the positive and mental health of residents and gave them pride in their area.



### In Finsbury Grove

Following local consultation, Erdington HLB paid to have overgrown ivy and bushes cut back on the vacant land that bordered one of the sheltered schemes in Finsbury Grove. The HLB also paid for smart new fencing. This work made a huge difference to improving the safety and appearance of the walkway and residents' enjoyment of their neighbourhood.



# Looking back...



## Tenant Involvement and Empowerment

- The Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) was appointed to independently review the operation and performance of Tenant Engagement throughout the housing service. The review was to ensure that all current practices are compliant with legislation, regulation and in line with best practice. TPAS conducted a desktop review of relevant documents and to encourage feedback hosted workshop groups with staff, tenant volunteers, councillors, and residents who are not currently involved with tenant engagement activities. The review concluded in December 2021, and the report is currently with the Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods and Senior Managers. An action plan will be prepared based upon the findings of the TPAS review.
- Produced the Annual Report to

Tenants 2020/21, which has been uploaded to the BCC website.

- Reviewed the Resident Involvement pages on the BCC website to create a new landing map and drafting new content to better communicate, inform and engage with tenants.
- Due to COVID-19's impact on HLB practices, the regular programme of Kitemark Assessments for HLBs could not be carried out. Consequently in April 2021 it was decided to award a one-year Kitemark to all HLBs expecting their Kitemark Assessment during 2020-21.
- We launched the Engagement and Empowerment Toolkit, which is a 'hands on' guide for practitioners, voluntary and community-based organisations encouraging and promoting engagement, participation and resident empowerment.
- We have continued to support

members of the City Housing Liaison Board who have received updates on important housing topics. These include the upcoming HRA rent and Service Charge changes, an introduction of new Tenant Satisfaction Measures, an update and overview of the Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust (BMHT) build programme, and the ongoing review of Tenant Engagement by TPAS and 4OC Housing Transformation reviews of the Housing service.

- At the CHLB AGM held virtually in November 2021, Eric Shipton of Sutton Coldfield HLB was elected as the new Chair and Malcolm Nicholls of Druids Heath HLB was elected Vice Chair.
- We continued to support the tenant led Performance Monitoring Group, enabling members to monitor and scrutinise the performance of housing management and our repairs contractors. Following a

successful membership drive new members were appointed to the group and elections were held to appoint a new Chair and Vice Chair.

- We continued to attend virtual Financial Inclusion Partnership Network meetings and shared relevant information with residents.
- We continued to work in partnership with residents, councillors, voluntary and community groups to deliver ward plan priorities.
- We continued to work with residents to organise community events and projects as part of the Commonwealth Games 2022 funding initiative.
- TPOs have supported 'Great British Spring Clean' activities involving local volunteers.
- We commissioned the development of a Communications Module within the Northgate housing system to allow for easier communication with tenants regarding rent notices and tenant engagement.

- We developed a template for a Tenant Engagement digital newsletter. The aim is to produce a regular quarterly newsletter to update tenants and leaseholders on housing news.

### **Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs)**

- We completed Annual Review Reports for Tenant Management Organisations meeting the requirements of the Modular Management Agreement.
- We carried out Liaison Meetings to comply with the Modular Management Agreement and Tenant Management Organisations monitoring framework.
- We ensured that the daily and monthly block inspections were carried out by the Tenant Management Organisations and evidence (inspection forms) was submitted to the TMO Support Team.
- We ensured that three TMOs

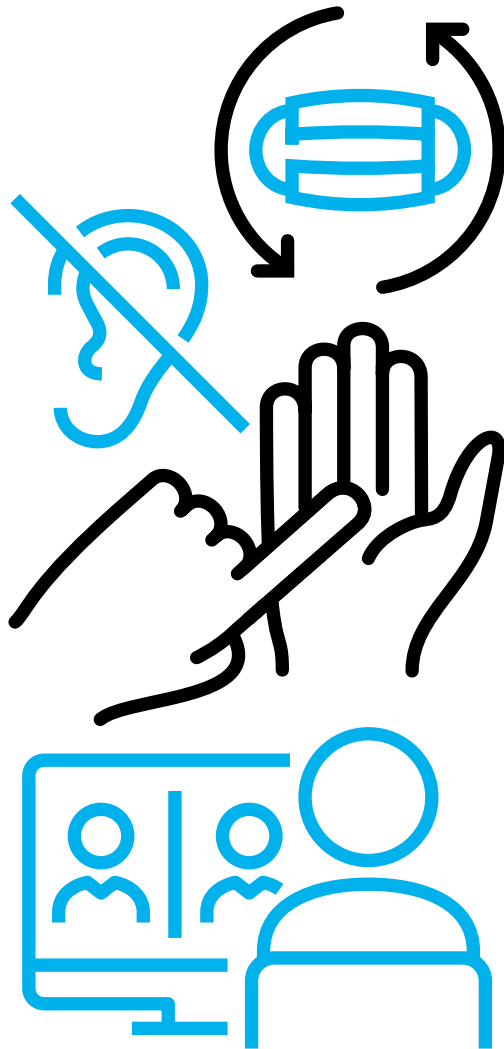
carried out their five-year continuation ballot. In every case the outcome was continuation.

- We supported the Tenant Management Organisations to carry out their Annual General Meetings.

### **Tenant Halls**

- The Tenant Hall Management Committee Group (THMCG) was established in 2021. This comprised of representatives from each Tenant Hall. The first meeting was in December 2021. The purpose of the group was to foster closer working relationships with BCC by encouraging greater networking. The THMCG will provide a forum to exchange ideas to help raise the standards of service for residents and encourage community involvement in improving neighbourhoods.
- In June 2021, the Change Management Officer working with Tenant Halls successfully





supported the Grove Tenant Hall Management Committee in their bid for the Fortem management trainee community refurbishment project. The refurbishment work was completed in September 2021.

- The Tenant Hall training programme was developed in 2021. Each management committee completed a skills audit to identify existing skills, knowledge and capabilities gained from their academic, work, or personal experience. The volunteers completed their first training course 'How to Generate Income and Fundraising' workshop at beginners' level in November 2021.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic Culmington Tenant Hall was open for educational purposes. These included sign language classes for NHS workers, and volunteers making face masks and scrubs. Manningford Tenant Hall was open for pick up/delivery of hot meals and offered a food bank service.

- The annual statutory health and safety checks were carried out by officers in the Resident Involvement Team when COVID-19 restrictions were lifted. During the pandemic each Tenants Hall received £250 to make sure their centre was COVID secure and the necessary health and safety measures were in place for the users of the centre.
- For each Tenant Hall we continued to carry out repair jobs that are the responsibility of Birmingham City Council.
- We ensured that each Tenant Hall fulfilled its responsibility to BCC for repairs standards and use of approved contractors.
- The tendering process for Greaves Tenant Hall has been completed. A new tenancy agreement will be arranged with the successful applicant.

# Looking forward...



## Tenant Involvement and Engagement

- To develop a Tenant Engagement Strategy which will implement the recommendations of the TPAS review relating to Tenant Engagement.
- To set up a new task and finish group to review and update the HLB and CHLB Constitutions. This group will be led by the Vice Chair of the CHLB and will consist of HLB Chairs and CHLB representatives. Priority will be given to obtaining representation from different areas across the city.
- We will work with the Web Team to upload new content to the Resident Involvement website, including a new landing map to improve navigation of the Tenant Engagement section.
- In 2021 the Birmingham In Bloom competition was cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Birmingham In Bloom 2022 competition will be relaunched in April 2022.

- To produce the Annual Report to Tenants 2021/22.
- As host city of the Commonwealth Games 2022 we will use this platform to advance our ambitions for the benefit of our diverse city. We will continue to strengthen connections between communities and build on local partnerships old and new to sustain and enhance tenant engagement and community involvement. To do this we will continue to work with and support our local communities and other stakeholder groups organising community events and projects to build on the legacy of the Commonwealth Games 2022.
- Due to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic there will be no formal assessment of HLB practices. However, desk

top monitoring of HLB activities will continue.

- We will aim to increase the membership of Housing Liaison Boards, Resident Associations, and Block Inspectors, by improving how we promote and communicate involvement activities to tenants and leaseholders.
- Continue to promote a cleaner and greener local environment by working with residents who have identified land for suitable improvement. For example by creating communal gardens in sheltered schemes, and organising nature walks to improve tenant's well-being and enjoyment of outdoor spaces.
- Introduce and set up a regular schedule for the quarterly digital tenant newsletter.
- Work with local communities and other stakeholders to enhance tenant engagement by organising

community litter picks, fun days, road shows, fire station open days, and events to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee.

- To increase the involvement and representation of ethnic minorities by setting up local equality groups. The aim will be to help address racial discrimination, breakdown the culture gap and consult 'hard to reach' communities.
- To hold local focus groups to improve local engagement and bring communities together to tackle neighbourhood issues that are of most concern to tenants and leaseholders.
- Look at new innovative ways to increase engagement and co-production using digital technology and social media.
- Work more closely with elderly and disabled communities, to reduce isolation and increase tenant participation in community improvement projects.

### **Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs)**

- To complete a Five-Year Review and Annual Review Reports for Tenant Management Organisations (in compliance with the requirement of the Modular Management Agreements).
- To carry out Liaison Meetings in line with the Modular Management Agreement and Tenant Management Organisations monitoring framework.
- Continue to ensure that the daily and monthly block inspections are carried out by the Tenant Management Organisations and evidence (inspection forms) is submitted to the TMO Support Team.
- To ensure that TMOs carry out their five-year continuation ballot.
- To ensure Tenant Management Organisations hold their Annual General Meetings.

### **Tenant Halls**

- Continue to support Tenant Hall Management Committees in capacity building initiatives through the Tenant Hall Training Programme.
- Ensure all Tenant Hall Management Committees carry out the annual statutory checks to comply with their Property Log book and confirm certificates are up to date. We will work with Tenant Halls to address any issues identified.
- Continue to carry out all repair jobs that are the responsibility of Birmingham City Council for each of the Tenant Halls.
- Ensure each Tenant Hall fulfils its responsibility to BCC for repairs standards and use of qualified/certified contractors.
- To set up a Tenant Hall Network event, for support and sharing of good practices.
- Develop the role of the THMCG and use meetings to support and extend the activities of Tenant Halls.
- Encourage partnership work with other tenant and resident led organisations such as Tenant Management Organisations, Resident Associations and Housing Liaison Boards.
- As part of our capacity building initiatives for our Tenant Hall Management Committees, we will be producing a 'Know How Guide' to support the volunteers in managing the Tenant Hall.

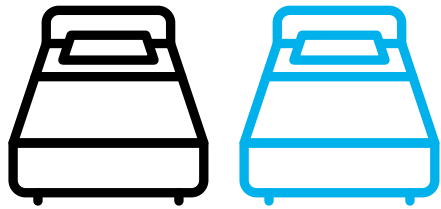


# Tenancy standard

This standard looks at how we allocate our properties and support our tenants.

## SUPPORT

**2,425** subject to the Social Sector Size Criteria (SSSC).  
**HOUSEHOLDS**



**£1.3M** to support tenants due to the SSSC.  
**DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT AWARDED**



**244** subject to the Benefit Cap.  
**HOUSEHOLDS**



**£167K** to support tenants due to the Benefit Cap.  
**DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT AWARDED**



**THE BENEFITS ADVICE TEAM HELPED SECURE £796,109 IN UNCLAIMED BENEFITS FOR VULNERABLE RESIDENTS**



£541,365 of which, was secured for tenants.

## ADMINISTRATION

**24,343 HOUSING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED**



**32,197 ASSESSED**

from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

# Looking back...

## Rents and council administered benefits and support

- To support our tenants, the 'average days to award benefit' has been 15.65 days for new claims and 5.76 days for changes of circumstances. This has been achieved despite the huge increase in demand for the services due the COVID-19 pandemic and the financial pressures faced by clients.
- We have maximised the benefit received by vulnerable residents through the work of the Benefit Advice Team.
- No rent enforcement action took place until 20 May 2021 due to COVID restrictions.
- The Rent Team has continued to work in partnership to deliver an efficient and robust service to meet our collection targets.
- We have helped people, who may never have found themselves claiming welfare benefits before, to claim Universal Credit and apply for discretionary payments.

- We continued to look for additional housing benefit entitlement and referred some of our tenants for specialist debt advice.
- We have moved to a new staffing structure which focuses more on the demographic needs of each ward whilst giving ownership to members of the team and fostering better relationships with our tenants.
- More officers have been employed to work directly with work coaches and tenants to maximise entitlement to Universal Credit.

## Lettings Suites

- We have reviewed our processes and systems to ensure a full-service including pre-letting and booking appointments which were effective and efficient for our tenants during the COVID lockdowns.
- We continued to support tenants moving on to Universal Credit.
- The lettings service is now an 'end to end' service for the whole of the city.

- We developed more effective ways of working with the 'Housing First Programme' in partnership with Cranstoun and Trident Reach.
- We continued to support our most vulnerable tenants at risk of not managing their tenancy, including Care Leavers and Housing First tenants.

## Financial Inclusion

- During 'Talk Money Week' we worked with our partners to launch a 'worrying about money' leaflet to help people better identify what their options are and where to get help. This initiative came in addition to our Warm Brum campaign to help our residents reduce their fuel bills whilst keeping warm. We worked with community radio to promote these messages. Podcasts containing useful information are now available online at: <https://audioboom.com/posts/7979460-worried-about-money-part-one> and

## <https://audioboom.com/posts/8017651-worried-about-money-part-two>

- Each year Birmingham Financial Inclusion Partnership (FIP) collaborates with Free Radio to provide Christmas gifts for children in vulnerable households. This year's focus was on vulnerable families affected by domestic abuse, homelessness and other crisis. In partnership with the following organisations, we supported vulnerable children and families, who otherwise may not have had a Christmas:
  - Bloomsbury Tenant Management Organisation
  - Children's Trust Family Support Service

Despite the additional difficulties COVID presented we were still able to provide gifts to a value of £8,000. Volunteers from City Housing, Bloomsbury EMB and the Children's Trust made this possible.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD ADVICE & INFORMATION SERVICE (NAIS)**

**£9.8M**  
IN UNCLAIMED  
**BENEFITS**  
IDENTIFIED



by NAIS for council tenants –  
over £4.4m went into payment.



**1,393**  
**TENANTS IN RENT ARREARS**  
**SUPPORTED**

NAIS also helped 4,228 tenants  
in crisis access local grants.

**THE LETTINGS SERVICE**

**3,065**  
**LETTINGS**



were undertaken for  
2021/2022. 49%  
needed additional  
support. Of these,  
90% received support,  
advice and guidance.

**96%** **INTRODUCTORY**  
**TENANCIES**  
**ACHIEVED**

contributing to  
the overall  
sustainability  
of new council  
tenancies.

**ACHIEVEMENTS**

**£893,785**

was collected from  
former tenants.



**THE OFFICIAL NUMBER OF**  
**ROUGH SLEEPERS**  
**IN NOVEMBER 2021 WAS**

**31**



One of the lowest  
figures in the UK.

**THE RENT TEAM**  
**COLLECTED**  
**98.96%**  
**OF RENT DUE**

exceeding council's target of 94.6%.



- Over the last 12 months we are seeing huge increases in energy prices, food, and transport costs. As a supportive landlord we are committed to helping our tenants manage their way through this Cost-of-Living Crisis. Consequently, we have updated our BCC webpages to include more information about obtaining financial advice, the availability of grants and benefits and opportunities for finding work. This information can be accessed at the following single online Gateway: **[birmingham.gov.uk/info/50274/cost\\_of\\_living\\_support](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50274/cost_of_living_support)**
- 140 City Housing staff received Energy Efficiency training from our partners at Agility Eco, which enables us to better support our tenants with keeping warm and managing their energy bills.
- We are continuing to work with our partners and tenants, in a first of its kind project, to understand

the impacts of gambling related harm and its impact as a cause of tenancy loss.

- We launched a book courtesy of our partners at Smartlyte, called 'Amsty Meets the Loan Shark' which warns both children and adults of the dangers of loan sharks. This was funded by the Illegal Money Lending Team through the Proceeds of Crime Act funding and launched by Councillor Francis. Copies went to all Birmingham libraries.

If you would like to read the book please follow the link at: **[stoploansharks.co.uk/storybook-warns-children-about-dangers-of-loan-sharks/](https://stoploansharks.co.uk/storybook-warns-children-about-dangers-of-loan-sharks/)**

### **Housing Solutions and Support Service**

- The Temporary Accommodation Team moved 1,163 homeless households into self-contained accommodation and 212 into

family homeless centres.

- All families in Temporary Accommodation receive information about the Early Help support services available.
- The vulnerable renters fund of £1.5million prevented 296 households from homelessness.
- The Domestic Abuse Sanctuary Scheme prevented 106 households from homelessness.
- The number of households who had their homelessness prevented is 928
- The Housing Solutions and Support Case Management Team dealt with a 12.7% increase in demand upon its services.
- The time taken to assess housing applications was substantially reduced and 86% of applications are now assessed within the target period. This is despite an increase in registrations from 391 per week in 2020 to 477 per week in 2021.
- A total of 4,928 social housing properties were advertised for

re-letting from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. A total of 400,646 bids were placed by housing applicants, averaging 81 bids per property.

- The official count of people sleeping rough in Birmingham which took place in November 2021 found 31 people sleeping on the streets, at 2.7/100,000 population. This is one of the lowest figures in the country.
- A supported housing mapping activity was undertaken, to support the development of a Supported Housing Strategy which will set out how we will support the most vulnerable members of the community.
- St Basils are a key partner in the delivery of a clear housing pathway and offer for young people. We will support the youth hub and help deliver a clear housing pathway through expansion of the live and work scheme to make properties for young people more affordable.

# Looking forward...



## Rents and council administered benefits and support

- To award benefit promptly and accurately whilst recovering the maximum amount of overpayments.
- To ensure the Benefit Service has a robust assessment regime in place whilst making efficient and accurate decisions.
- Maximise government benefit received by the council and safeguard against reductions in subsidy for local authority errors and penalties.
- Continued participation in the Verification of Earnings and Pensions (VEP) and the Housing Benefit Award Accuracy (HBAA) schemes to ensure benefit payments are accurate, whilst identifying fraud and error.
- To improve the customers journey and minimise the need for direct contact.
- The Rent Service will be improving communications with our tenants

by introducing the use of text messaging (SMS) together with WhatsApp video calling for those that choose to sign up to these services.

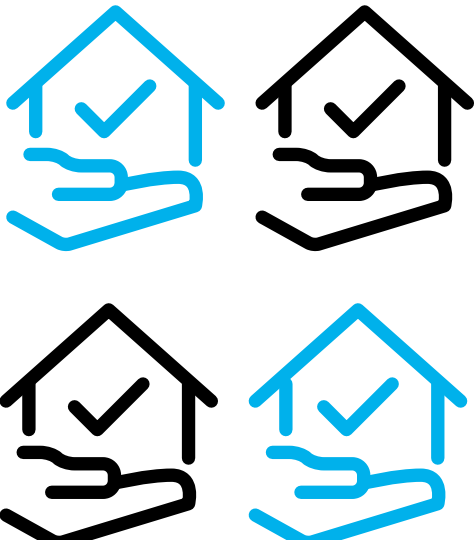
## Lettings Suites

- We will continue to review and implement changes to our processes and working arrangements to adapt to the road map out of the COVID pandemic and into new ways of working.
- We will further develop our early intervention approach to support tenancy sustainability and prevent homelessness.
- We will continue to support the most vulnerable tenants who are at risk of not managing their tenancy including Rough Sleepers and Care Leavers.
- We will continue to provide early intervention to support tenants moving in to their new homes.
- We will continue to identify

the take up of State Benefits and support tenants making applications to support sustainability by early intervention.

## Financial Inclusion

- To increase the number of tenants that are protected through affordable home contents insurance.
- Connect our residents to the opportunities presented by the Commonwealth Games 2022.
- Ensure our residents have access to information and support to combat the cost of living crisis.
- Improve our understanding and response to the effects of Gambling Related Harm in social housing.
- Ensure the voice of our residents is heard and reflected in the review of Birmingham's Financial Inclusion Strategy.
- Ensure poverty is considered in the round, with all key stakeholders as part of larger Anti-Poverty Strategy.
- Continue to embed the Fuel



Poverty Alliance, identifying innovative solutions to tackle fuel poverty in the city.

### **Housing Solutions and Support Service**

- To have no households with children in Bed and Breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks by March 2023.
- To unblock move-on out of Temporary Accommodation through the Complex Case Team for 1,000 households.
- To successfully establish and grow the Accommodation Finding Team so that by the end of the year 100 tenancies in the Private Rented Sector are being found for homeless families each month.
- To open Oscott Gardens, relieving pressure upon bed and breakfast accommodation and providing good quality accommodation and support to 300 homeless households

- To increase on-street support through the Commonwealth Games period and beyond to vulnerable people living on the streets.
- To increase the early intervention and prevention of homelessness, through the establishment of a Prevention Toolkit for Housing Solutions and Support Case Management.
- To increase the number of households in private rented sector accommodation, whose relief duty ended.
- The introduction of a new Housing Allocations Policy for Birmingham was approved at a cabinet meeting in March 2022. The new policy was prepared following extensive consultation on the changes that we proposed, and we estimate the changes will be implemented in Autumn 2022.
- Develop a temporary accommodation strategy, focusing on moving away from the reliance

on Bed & Breakfast and developing clear 'move on' pathways.

- To embed the new Housing Solutions and Support operating model to respond to increased demand and move towards a more preventive approach.
- Review the Homelessness Prevention Strategy to reflect legislative change and expand on successful initiatives, particularly in relation to rough sleeping.



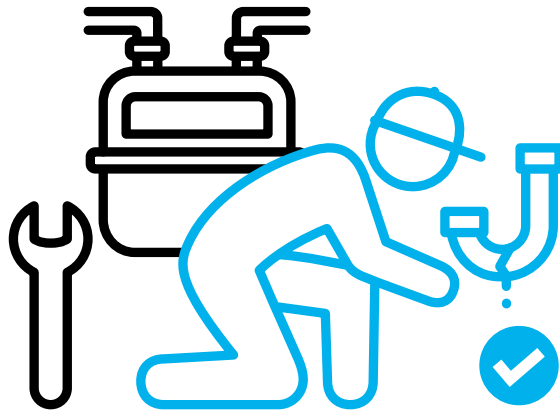
# Home standard

This standard looks at how we maintain and improve your homes.

## REPAIRS

**233,778**  
RESPONSIVE  
& GAS REPAIR  
JOBS COMPLETED

This is 2% more than the 228,609 in 2020/21.



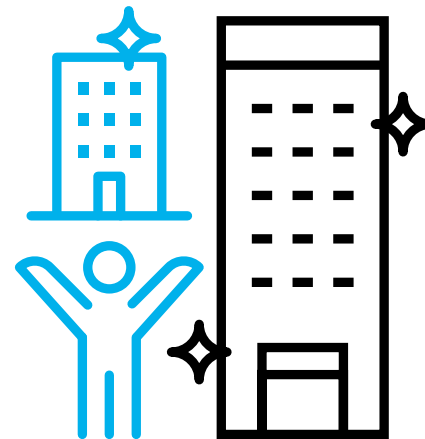
**100%**  
POSITIVE  
CUSTOMER  
SATISFACTION



from tenants who received a service by our repairs and maintenance contractors.

## FIRE SAFETY

**30** HIGH-RISE  
BLOCKS



HAD FIRE SAFETY  
IMPROVEMENTS  
TO FACADES

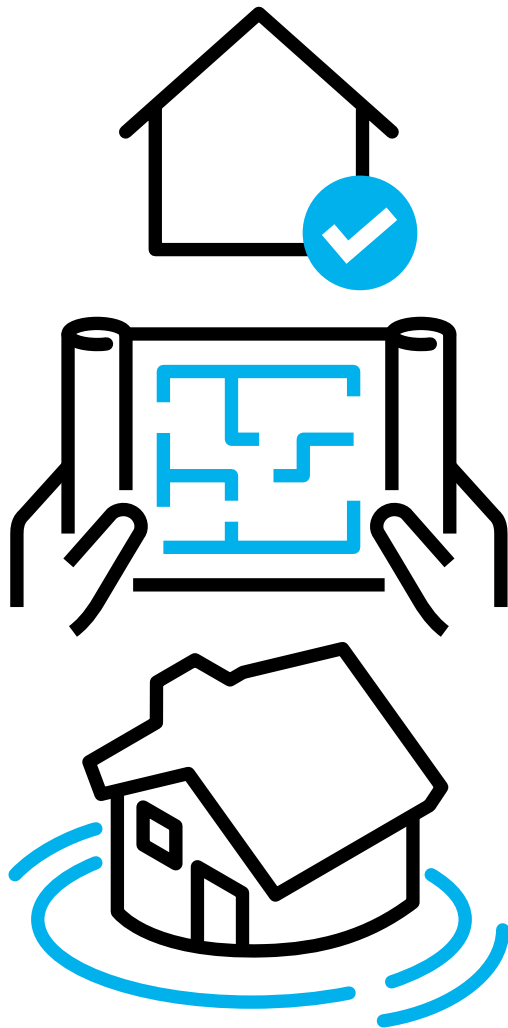
Since 2019, 107 blocks have received safety upgrades.



**196 OUT OF 199**  
HIGH-RISES  
NOW HAVE FULLY  
COMMISSIONED  
SPRINKLERS

Systems for the remaining three blocks are scheduled to be fitted this year.

# Looking back...



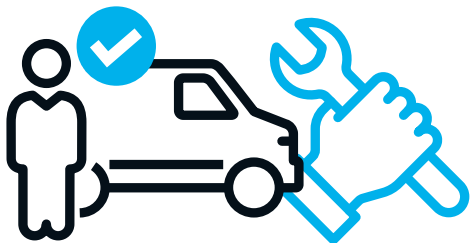
## Provision of Affordable Homes

- We have continued with flood defence work on Phase 1 of the Bromford Estate development. This will be completed by September 2022.
- Work has commenced at Monmouth Road to develop a mixed housing scheme providing 45 properties for rent and 23 for sale. The handover of the show home will take place in June 2022 with the scheme to be completed in July 2023.
- The Farnborough Road development is in progress. This is a mixed housing scheme and will deliver 40 properties for rent, 24 for sale to Pioneer Housing Group (registered provider) and 59 open market sales.
- Phase 4 of the Abbeyfields development has started which will provide 19 properties for rent. This will be completed by April 2023.
- Work has started on the Birchfield site (where 19 properties for sale will be provided) and Hollybank development, (providing five rented properties) which is due to be completed in 2022/23.
- Planning approval has been granted for 65 homes on Long Nuke Road, Northfield. However, this will be varied to remove/change the terms of the approval in order to facilitate this commencing on site earlier. In order to do this, work is proceeding with the likelihood that the Cabinet report, due September/October, will cover work needed by Leisure on sports facilities. This will then go to tender and start in 2023/24, at least a year early.



**GAS SERVICING**

**100%**  
OF GAS SAFETY  
**CHECKS**  
SUCCESSFULLY  
CARRIED OUT

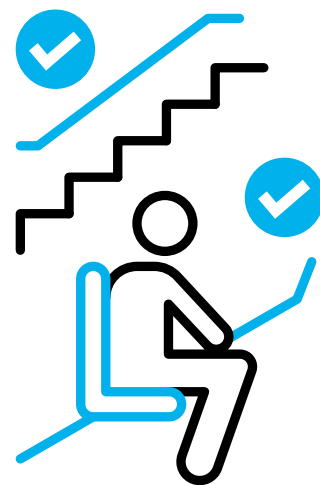
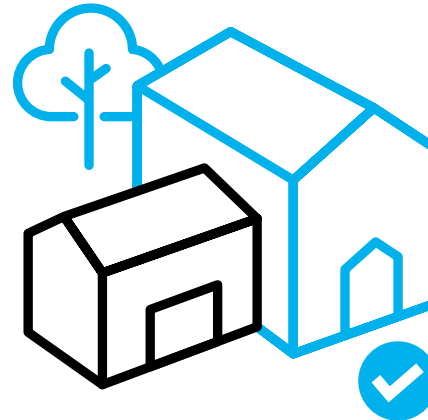


This servicing included working with customers who were self-isolating or shielding at home.

**HOUSING**

**3,420 VOID**  
REFURBISHMENTS  
MADE AVAILABLE  
FOR RE-LETTING

This is an 11% increase on 2020/21.



**242 AIDS & ADAPTIONS**  
**COMPLETED**

to help our vulnerable and elderly tenants live more independently in their homes.

**£8.5M**  
RAISED IN  
PROPERTY  
SALES

predominantly from the sale of 33 properties. A total of 45 homes were completed by Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust (BMHT) for letting at social and affordable rents.

# Looking forward...



## Repairs and Maintenance

- Continue to complete our annual contract reviews with all Contractors to review the year's performance and agree performance improvement objectives.
- Continue to work closely with West Midlands Fire Service to ensure continued fire safety measures are implemented as a result of Dame Judith Hackitt's Independent Review – Building a Safer Future 2018.
- Continue to invest in our council stock with an emphasis on green initiatives and improvements, in particular to our high-rise and low-rise stock. To improve levels of thermal efficiency with the assistance of grant funding where available and aim to ensure that all our stock meets a minimum requirement of energy efficiency D rating.
- Continue the programme to carry out full stock condition surveys to 100% of our properties to ensure

we have detailed and accurate up to date asset information which will allow work with our contractors to improve our stock information and develop planned maintenance programmes that will continue to reduce the number of responsive repairs requests over the life of the contract.

- To continue to work with our contractors to implement the added value and additional social value elements included within their contracts.
- Continue to meet our statutory inspection and testing obligations under housing legislation, including fire protection, legionella, electrical, gas servicing, heating and hot water.
- Carry out structural works to prolong the life of high-rise and low-rise properties.
- Continue to provide aids and adaptations to assist residents to live more independently at home.

- Work with colleagues to support the work being done in respect of the Homelessness Reduction Act such as the provision of additional temporary accommodation to maximise the supply of accommodation.
- Whole housing retrofit programme commitment as part of the Levelling Up Strategy 300 home pilot, funding received to deliver this over the next 12 months.

## Provision of Affordable Housing

- We aim to deliver 233 new homes for rent and 109 homes for sale.
- We will submit planning applications for the following schemes. The future phases of the Kings Norton extension – this development will provide 82 new homes; comprising of 58 for rent and 24 for outright sale; Boleyn Road, Frankley, which will provide 70 new homes; 43 for rent and

27 for outright sale; a further 181 homes on the Bromford estate development and 61 homes on Highgate Road, Kings Heath.

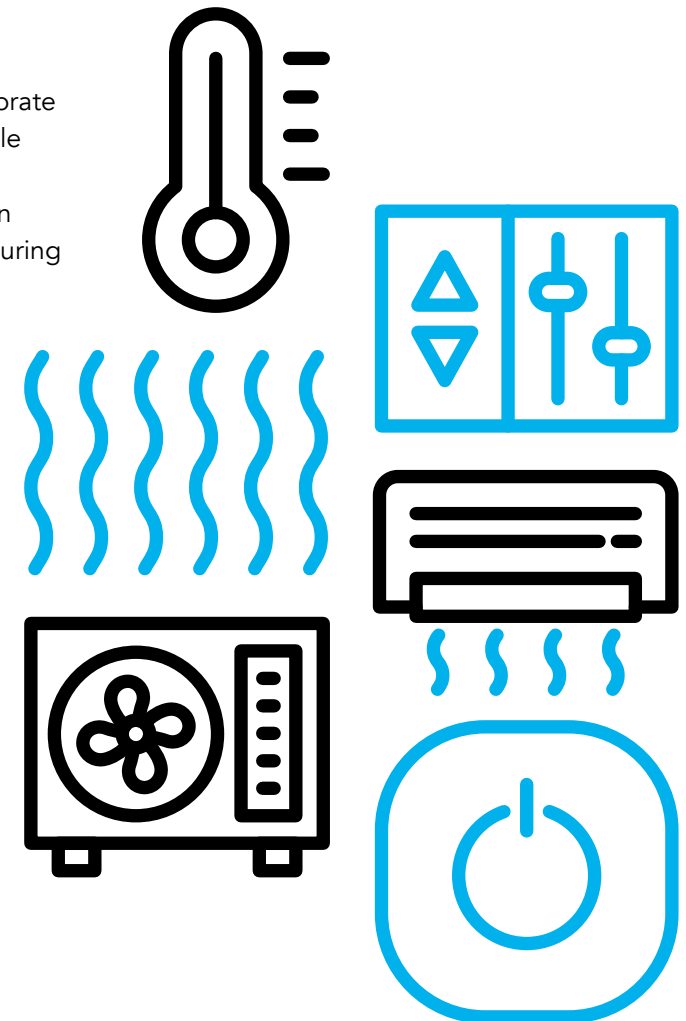
- We will continue to work with residents to develop plans for the regeneration of the Druids Heath estate.
- The sale of 24 properties to the Pioneer Group in Farnborough Road will be completed in July 2022. This is the first sale of properties at market value to a Housing Association (the registered provider). First handovers of the social housing properties will begin in August 2022.
- A pilot scheme is planned to start in May 2022 for 36 new energy saving homes for rent at Gressel Lane, Tile Cross. These will be based on new technologies for heating homes without using gas. An application for funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) has been made for £521,000 to

help fund the new technologies which include ground source heat pumps and air source heat pumps, solar panels and battery storage. The planned completion date is June 2023.

- Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust will complete a review of its 'new build' housing specifications to comply with new Building Regulations for increased thermal efficiency and is continuing to adapt this for route to zero (R20). This work contributes to meeting the council's 'Route to Zero' policy to reduce carbon emissions by 2025. It will also contribute to the government's policy intention of discontinuing energy supplied by gas in new homes from 2025.
- To strengthen our strategic partnership with RSLs and developers across Birmingham who have access to Homes England grant aiming to unlock ways in which they can support

the development of affordable housing.

- Develop a cross directorate and city-wide Affordable Housing Delivery Board, supported by an operational group, ensuring key stakeholders work collaboratively to play an active role in unlocking opportunities to develop affordable housing at scale.
- Strategic clearance and redevelopment of council estates to re-provide new homes at higher density where this will not impact negatively on social value.



# Neighbourhood and community standard

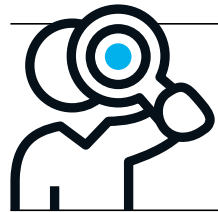
This standard sets out how we work in partnership to manage our estates and combat anti-social behaviour.

## TENANCY ESTATE MANAGEMENT

**13,390**  
**ENQUIRIES**



were made to  
Tenancy Estate  
Management.



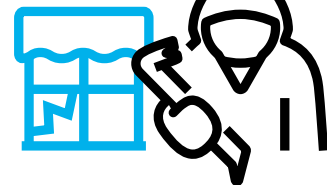
**3,083** INTO ALLEGED  
**INVESTIGATIONS** BREACHES OF  
TENANCY CONDITIONS

**694** MUTUAL EXCHANGES  
**TOOK PLACE**



**715**  
**REPORTS OF**  
**ABANDONED**  
**PROPERTIES**

**278 INVESTIGATIONS**  
**INTO UNLAWFUL**  
**OCCUPIERS**



## SECURITY

**OUR SECURITY SERVICE CONTROL ROOM**  
**ANSWERED 1.6M CALLS**



from tenants,  
their visitors,  
emergency  
services,  
and partner  
organisations.



## THINK FAMILY

**78 EARLY**  
**INTERVENTION**  
**REFERRALS**  
**TO OUR 'THINK FAMILY TEAM'**



## CARELINE

**196** HIGH-RISES  
WITH SPRINKLER  
**SYSTEMS**  
**NOW LINKED TO**  
**CARELINE**



which enables Careline operators  
to directly contact West Midlands  
Fire Service in an emergency.

# Looking back...



## Tenancy Estate Management

- The mobile patrol officers completed 25,305 patrols across service-charged blocks and continued to undertake health and safety block checks, tackle anti-social behaviour, assist rough sleepers and removal of fly-tipping and rubbish.
- The security service managed 2,444 incidents at high-rise blocks responding to fires, floods, tenancy breaches and anti-social behaviour.
- Careline has maintained accreditation to the TSA Quality Standards Framework for the 13th year running.
- Careline responded to 217,428 alarm calls for help including calls to the fire service, medical assistance from the emergency services, and other Careline service partners.
- Careline responded to 25,127 service enquiries for Careline

needs and Out of Hours Temporary Accommodation.

- To support independent living Careline installed 1,329 pieces of Technology Enabled Care equipment and made 713 repair/maintenance visits.

## Neighbourhood Services

- 97 tenants in high-rise accommodation used the BCC chargeable bulky waste collection service to dispose of large unwanted items.
- We designed and developed a traineeship programme and appointed 19 estate caretaker trainees in October 2020. Of these, 15 successfully completed their traineeship in 2021 and have gained full-time positions with BCC. Two of the trainees have since gained promotion.
- We have taken on a further 10 estate caretaker trainees in

2021. Those that successfully completed the traineeship will be employed as full-time estate caretakers with BCC Housing Management in 2022.

- 147 estate walkabouts were carried out involving officers and HLB members.
- 10 Great British Spring Clean events took place during 2021. These events involved a total of 82 participants that included HLB members, tenants, elected members, housing teams and other partners carrying out environmental clean-up days in neighbourhoods across the city. Around 7.5 tonnes of rubbish/litter was collected and disposed of.

## Anti-Social Behaviour

- We continued to attend meetings of the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership and the Local Partnership Delivery Group to raise issues and participate in community safety initiatives that support residents and local areas.
- To achieve service excellence we further developed our 'Monthly ASB Performance Reports' by area, using data and intelligence to track our service demands and responses.
- We increased the level of data available to Local Housing Managers via introduction of Power Bi. This enables interactive data visualisations from multiple data sources and allows the service to share important business insights that will drive ASB improvement.
- In order to respond to one of the highest demands on our service, City Housing invested in purchasing Noise Monitoring Hardware and Software. Staff in local areas have

received training in utilising this specialist equipment to obtain recordings of noise nuisance. To drive this technology forward, City Housing have invested in an app known as The Noise App which will be used by trained officers as an alternative to Diary Sheets. The recording will provide an accurate and real understanding of the type and frequency of complained noise in real time which enables a quicker response to the customer.

- We continued to invest significantly in our partnership with the Neighbourhood Relations Service through our referrals to this vital commissioned service.
- We continued to invest in improvements to neighbourhoods to reduce ASB by working closely with local residents via our Tenant Participation Service and their delegated HLB budgets. We also work closely with our Tenant Participation Officers to seek

resident involvement in developing our local priorities around Safe, Clean and Green issues.

- We continued our investment in improvements to our neighbourhoods to reduce ASB by working closely with Ward Members through the development of priorities to maximise the value of our Environmental Budget.
- We continued to work in partnership with the tenant led Performance Management Group to monitor and improve our ASB Performance.
- Our preventative offer at the local level with the Voluntary and Statutory Sector continues to go from strength to strength. Our partnership with Social Services, Clouds End and Local Neighbourhood Network Schemes have seen us support some of our most vulnerable customers.
- We continue to work in partnership with Remedi to assist us in our support to victims of hate crime

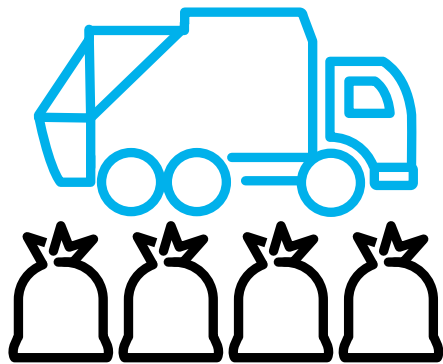
and attended a conference where we discussed hate crime pathways and Third Sector support. To further support officers training has been carried out in conjunction with Remedi Victim Support

- We continue to develop our approaches via our Citywide ASB Focus Group which is a practitioner led group set up to discuss and make suggestions on City Housing's ASB service and how it can continue to improve and strive towards excellence. Our Noise Nuisance service improvements have been progressed through this channel.

## Think Family Service

- November 2021 was the start of our Phase 1 offer to the Children's Trust Early Help Partnership. Early Help is a city-wide partnership of public and voluntary organisations which aims to support families with young children through a network of 10 community-based service

**CLEANER ENVIRONMENT**



**2,156 TONNES OF DUMPED RUBBISH COLLECTED**

and disposed of by our City Housing, Neighbourhood Services Team.



**56 RESIDENTS SIGNED-UP TO GOOD NEIGHBOUR AGREEMENTS**

to help keep neighbourhoods clean and tidy. 45 tenants signed up to Good Neighbour Agreements to maintain their gardens.



**ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

**7,003 CASES OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR RECEIVED**



- 1,487** were due to domestic noise.
- 1,352** for intimidating or aggressive behaviour.
- 1,089** were due to domestic abuse.
- 209** were due to hate crime.
- 3,371** pre-investigation checks completed.
- 1,418** action plans were completed.
- 5,359** supervisor case reviews were completed.
- 556** warnings were issued to tenants.
- 38** notices were issued to tenants.
- 2,586** intervention measures incl. referrals to partner orgs.
- 163** cases were sent to legal.
- 172** legal orders were obtained.

hubs. To support the service, we have five Think Family workers who each cover two hubs and provide weekly housing surgeries which offer advice and guidance to Early Help workers on all housing matters as well as connecting families in need with other council services. This new initiative is being very well received within the Early Help Partnership. Of the 86 who have already attended housing surgeries during Phase 1, most needed help and support to resolve issues concerning domestic abuse temporary accommodation and repairs.

### **Domestic Abuse Service**

- We have completed a full-service review of the Domestic Abuse Service and the capacity of the team has been increased in response to increasing demand and allocation areas have been reviewed to better reflect demand and stock size.

- We are key partners of the Local Partnership Strategic Board for Domestic Abuse.
- We have adopted a safe approach for contacting victims, including children, throughout the COVID lockdowns.
- We have continued to pursue enforcement action to ensure protection for victims including children.
- We have improved our working relationships with the Birmingham Children's Trust and Adults Social Services. Key partners of the DA Offer to Children's and Cross Directorate Domestic Abuse Groups.
- We have introduced a new risk marker on our systems to ensure that victims receive the most sensitive service and support from all housing staff.
- We are seeking accreditation with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance to ensure best practices

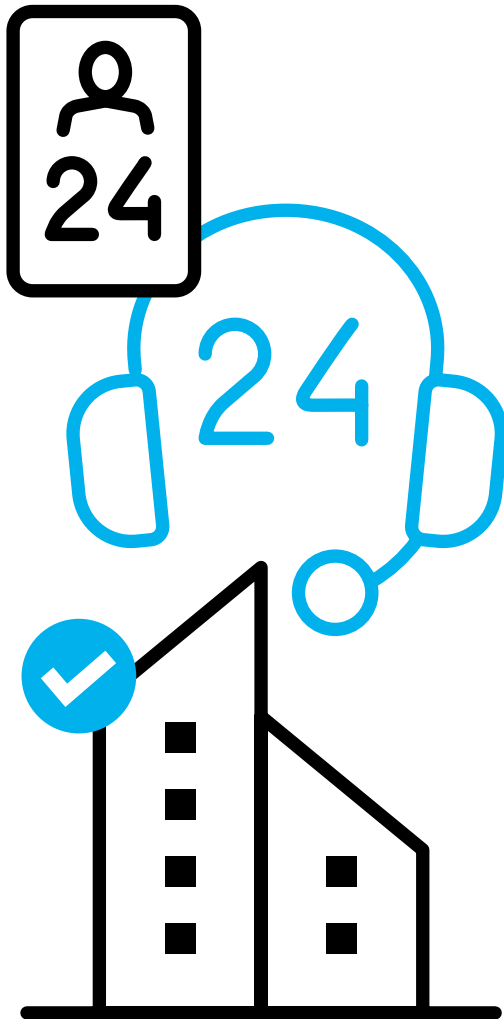
in our response to domestic abuse in Birmingham.

- Obtained more feedback from survivors of domestic abuse than ever before which has helped to tailor the service more closely to the needs of victims, especially children.
- Piloted a new 'Domestic Abuse Front Door' to ensure that all safety measures are discussed with the victim within 24 hours as part of the new 'Domestic Abuse Roadmap for Housing Management'.





# Looking forward...



## Tenancy Estate Management

- Continue to provide a technology-based care service which provides for independence and achieving positive outcomes for older and vulnerable people.
- Continue to prepare for British Telecom's shift from an analogue telephone network to a new digital IP (internet) infrastructure. In the future we will be upgrading our call handling service to a fully cloud based platform which will allow the team to receive and manage calls from any location.
- To continue to provide a full security service with the control room providing access to a 24-hour, seven days a week access to high-rise blocks.
- The mobile patrol officers will continue to provide up to three weekly patrols per block for all service charged high-rise blocks, working with all partners including

West Midlands Police and Fire Service to ensure our tenants feel safe and secure in their homes.

## Neighbourhood Services

- We will continue to support residents who responsibly dispose of their waste and take enforcement action where we can against those who dump rubbish.
- Our estate-based teams will continue to maintain the cleanliness and appearance of our neighbourhoods.
- We will be appointing a further 20 trainees who we want to successfully complete traineeships and become full time estate caretakers with BCC.
- We will join tenants and residents in walkabouts of our neighbourhoods and work together to maintain or improve outcomes for citizens.
- We will continue to encourage and support citizens who want to

help maintain the cleanliness and appearance of our neighbourhoods.

## Anti-Social Behaviour

- A key service priority is to reduce anti-social behaviour (ASB) and associated hate crime. We will therefore strive to improve our contribution to neighbourhood working by continuing to work closely with other agencies including the police, other council departments, third sector agencies, registered providers, victim support, and youth agencies, such as the Youth Offending Service (YOS) .
- We will improve the way we communicate with residents on issues affecting their neighbourhood using new technology.
- To implement the main recommendations of the housing white paper that relate to the ASB service, in particular to improve the way we measure Tenant Satisfaction

on their overall experience of the ASB Service.

- Work with Performance Monitoring Group and utilise Local Performance Data to pro-actively work in our neighbourhoods to make residents feel safer.
- Continue to support officers by investing in workforce training to ensure a professional and customer-centred approach to ASB management.

### **Think Family**

- Think Family workers to continue to work with the same two locality hubs (established in Phase 1).
- Weekly Housing surgeries to continue for the Early Help cases with lower level housing needs that are held by Early Help workers.
- Think Family worker to jointly work cases with a higher-level housing need. These cases will continue to be led by Early Help worker.
- Think Family worker to attend weekly

‘conversation meetings’ with Early Help teams to liaise with outside agencies who may be holding cases involving on housing issues.

- Referrals to Early Help to be made using the Family Connect form.
- Training to be rolled out to all Early Help workers, on Housing teams and pathways, allocation policy and homeless procedures.

### **Domestic Abuse Service**

- Implement service improvements for combatting domestic abuse. This includes new policies and procedures, service standards, aims and objectives.
- Introducing new case management system for more effective managing of domestic abuse cases.
- Explore the potential of introducing a domestic abuse focus group with survivors to support our commitment to service improvements.
- Working with Domestic Abuse

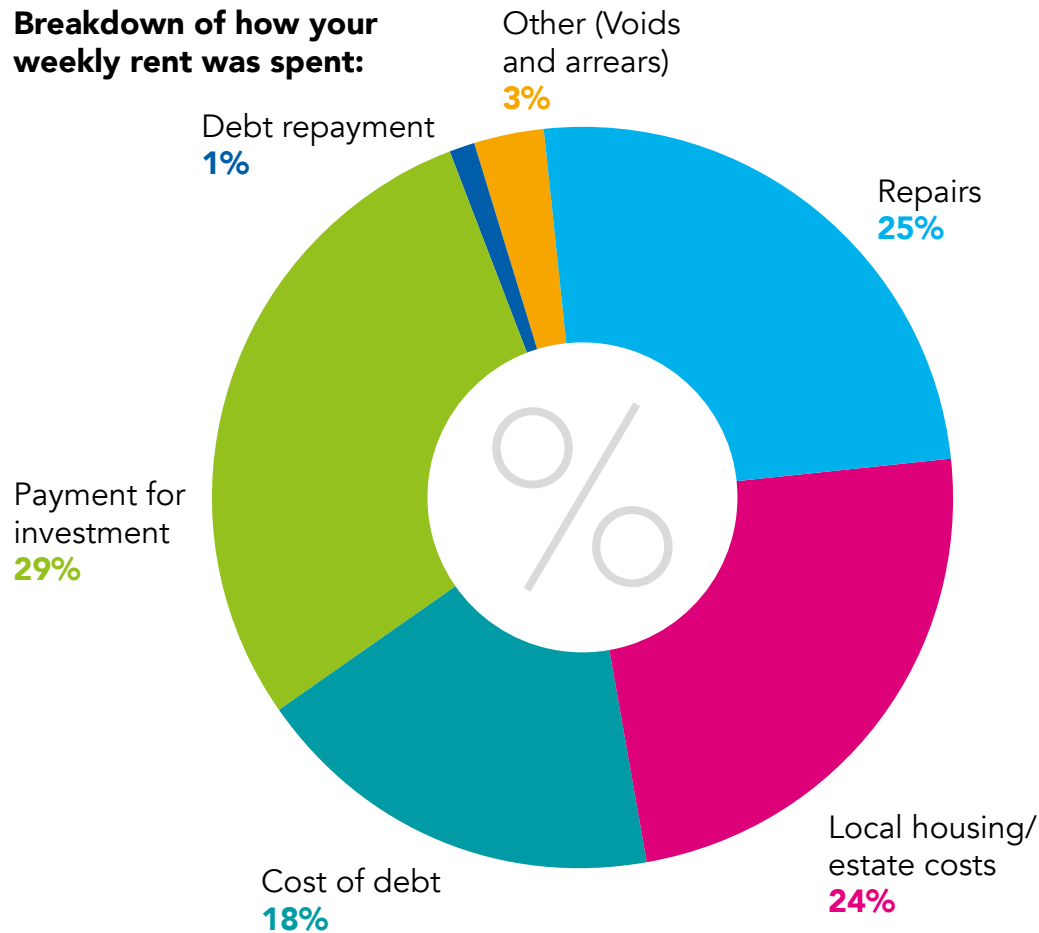
Housing Alliance (DAHA) to develop a bespoke accredited training package ‘Housing Integrated Domestic Abuse Practitioner’ (HIDAP) to be used by Housing Officers who are working with DA victims. An additional foundation training course will also be offered to a cohort of 25 City Housing staff.

- Deliver a new process for resolving issues of noise nuisance including use of new technology to enhance our ability to respond to domestic noise complaints.
- Continue to work with our tenants to ensure we are listening to their views and feedback about our service.
- Increase our connections with partner agencies to improve our prevention and early intervention offer.
- Focus on ensuring we are maintaining quality data and using this to focus on areas requiring attention at a local community level.

# Value for money

This standard looks at how we spend money collected in rent.

## Breakdown of how your weekly rent was spent:



## Breakdown of average weekly rent

	Budget 2021/22 per week	Actual 2021/22 per week	Change	% Change	Analysis of HRA Outturn 2021/22
<b>Repairs</b>	£20.34	£21.25	£0.91	4.47%	<b>25%</b>
<b>Local housing/ estate costs</b>	£22.86	£19.66	-£3.20	-14.00%	<b>24%</b>
<b>Cost of debt</b>	£16.15	£14.79	-£1.36	-8.42%	<b>18%</b>
<b>Payment for investment</b>	£19.37	£24.31	£4.94	25.50%	<b>29%</b>
<b>Debt repayment</b>	£1.13	£1.14	£0.01	0.88%	<b>1%</b>
<b>Other (Voids and arrears)</b>	£3.82	£2.55	-£1.27	-33.25%	<b>3%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£83.67</b>	<b>£83.70</b>	<b>£0.03</b>	<b>0.04%</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Feedback

## How to give us your views

We would like you to tell us what you think of our services. It's always useful for us to hear about when things have gone right – and when they've gone wrong. There are several ways in which you can give us your comments, complaints or compliments about any aspect of the housing service. Visit the website at [birmingham.gov.uk/yourviews](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/yourviews)

## Annual Report to Tenants

We would really appreciate your feedback on the Annual Report by going to [birmingham.gov.uk/info/50008/tenants\\_groups\\_associations\\_and\\_boards/2331/annual\\_report\\_to\\_tenants](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50008/tenants_groups_associations_and_boards/2331/annual_report_to_tenants) and completing the Microsoft Survey Form. Your views will be very useful to us when we are producing future reports.

