

Residents' Annual Report 2022-23



LONDON BOROUGH OF
HARROW

Introduction

Cllr Mina Parmar – Portfolio Holder for Housing



Welcome to the Housing Annual Report for residents. We are providing performance information with new indicators that measure how we are doing and we benchmark against other social housing providers.

We are delighted with the fire safety improvements (Homesafe programme), investment plans to achieve net zero carbon and building more homes.

You can read about how your rental income is spent, such as re-roofing projects, changing block entrance doors and dealing with mould and damp disrepair.

I am happy to hear about the community integration work we are doing such as partnering with MyYard charity to deliver surplus food and activities on Grange Farm estate. Regarding the regeneration of Grange Farm estate we will be submitting the planning application in 2024, alongside site preparation works on the ground, which are likely to include the demolition of the existing homes on the phase 2 land.

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act, 2023, sets out four consumer standards that we must work towards. These are:

- The Safety and Quality Standard
- The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard
- The Neighbourhood and Community Standard and
- The Tenancy Standard.

We are delighted our vision to Put Residents First is our first priority, and to listen to tenants and leaseholders, so we can provide a better experience.

Getting ready for regulation

- 1 A Tenant and Leasehold Satisfaction Survey was carried out in March 2023 to provide us with baseline information on how residents rate housing services, with the next tenant survey carried out in January 2024.
- 2 We commissioned an assessment of Housing Services by Housemark which produced a number of recommendations which we are working on through our Housing Improvement Board.
- 3 We participate in a benchmarking club facilitated by Housemark, which is the leading data and insight company for the UK housing sector and you can see our comparative performance in this report.

Looking forward

- 1 Launch of our new housing portal, spring 2024
- 2 Our new repairs contractor, July 2024
- 3 Continue to resource damp and mould disrepair
- 4 In 2024 we start phase 2 of the Grange Farm regeneration
- 5 Deliver the first part of the 3-year capital programme
- 6 Our decarbonisation programme

Introduction

Erica Fontaine – Interim Chair, Residents’ Board



Hello everyone,

As the new Chair of the Residents Board, I would like to thank the residents who have taken time to support their neighbourhoods, including helping with the Estate Services review, producing the new Resident Engagement Strategy, contributing to the Housing Matters webinar, Asset Management Strategy, Complaints Panel and Homing In magazine, to name just a few. I would also like to thank all Board members across the borough for their time and dedication, without your hard work and perseverance, the necessary improvements to our neighbourhoods and community would not be possible.

I am also part of the Grange Farm Steering Group and am pleased that Phase 1 has been completed with the delivery of 89 new homes.

The Residents’ Board will be keen to see how lessons learned will be applied to Phases 2 and 3 as it develops, to deliver much needed new homes in the borough, particularly in light of all the families that are living in temporary accommodation. We fully support the London wide initiative called “Project 123”, which aims to tackle the issue of 1 in every 23 children in London living in temporary accommodation.

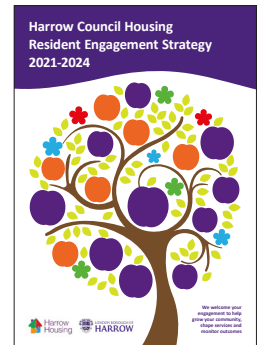
The passing of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act is an important moment for everyone living in social housing. It is a major reset of power between tenants and landlords. Residents have more powers and this Residents’ Board will use these standards to see that the Council improve service, accountability and transparency. This is a cultural shift enabling tenants and leaseholders to be at the centre of decision-making.

Through the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and from April 2024 you will be able to see how our landlord performs against the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

We are developing a coalition where residents and the Council can work together to achieve the best outcome for its residents. These can include key issues including building safety, complaints, climate change and more. The new future is co-production between tenants and landlords.

The new housing act referred to above requires landlords to involve tenants at all levels from the Residents’ Board to all tenant participation groups.

Finally, as this year comes to an end, we cannot ignore the ‘cost of living’ crisis. The Residents’ Board will be looking at how residents can benefit from social value contributions that suppliers and contractors are duty bound to make (through offering training and employment opportunities and supporting community initiatives) as part of their work with Harrow Council.



London Borough of Harrow in numbers

Between the last two censuses (held in 2011 and 2021), the population of Harrow increased by 9.3%, from just under 239,100 in 2011 to around 261,200 in 2021.



58.8% own their own home outright or with a mortgage/loan in the London Borough of Harrow and we saw an increase to 29.6% of private rent households vs only 10.4% living in social housing (source: 2021 Census)



In 2021, 5.9% of Harrow residents were identified as being 'disabled and limited a lot'. This figure has decreased from 8.2% in 2011.



In 2021, 15.9% of Harrow residents described themselves as Muslim and 33.9% described themselves as Christian while 25.8% described themselves as Hindu.



Council housing 2022-23

Source: Published accounts 2022/23

Number of council properties including sheltered: **4,777**
(40% of which are houses/17 sheltered housing schemes)



Number of leasehold properties: **1,189**



We have two high-rise council housing blocks in Harrow. In October 2023 we opened a block on Grange Farm estate (7-storey), which is a mix of social housing and shared ownership.



Ethnicities of council tenants in the London Borough of Harrow

Harrow has relatively few Eastern Europeans living in its council properties compared to the population of Harrow.

White

Council homes in London Borough of Harrow	45%
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Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh

Council homes in London Borough of Harrow	25.7%
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Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African

Council homes in London Borough of Harrow	22.7%
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Other

Council homes in London Borough of Harrow	6.6%
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LBH council properties, as at 1 April 2023

Source: published accounts 2022/23

4 or more bedrooms	Houses 102	Flats 2	Bungalows 2	Total 106
3 bedrooms	Houses 1,243	Flats 104	Bungalows 1	Total 1,348
2 bedrooms	Houses 544	Flats 842	Bungalows 26	Total 1,412
1 bedroom	Houses 4	Flats 1,773	Bungalows 134	Total 1,911
All council properties	Houses 1,893	Flats 2,721	Bungalows 163	*Total 4,777

* Total includes 42 AdHoc managed properties

William Allen House Sheltered Scheme enjoying a surplus food delivery from MyYard charity



David McNulty, Director of Housing, at William Allen House sheltered scheme

Customer service

Tenant Satisfaction Survey results (March 2023)

Three-fifths of tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided (60%)

60% 

Around four out of ten tenants are satisfied with how their views are listened to and acted upon (42%)

42% 

Over half of tenants are satisfied that they are kept informed about things that matter to them (53%)

53% 

Three-fifths of tenants agree that London Borough of Harrow treats them fairly and with respect (61%)

61% 

Three out of ten tenants are satisfied with how complaints are handled (29%)

29% 

Half of tenants are satisfied that Harrow Council is easy to deal with (49%)

49% 

How residents contact Housing Services 2022-23

No. of contacts

Phone calls	58%	65,344
Emails	16%	17,700
Website e-forms	5%	6,166
Website visits	21%	24,331
Total contacts		113,541

- Just over half of all resident contact is via the phone which is largely via our call centre
- The top reasons for calling us were:
 - To report a repair
 - To chase up progress on a repair
 - Tenancy issue such as rent enquiry

It is much more efficient to report your repairs using the online Repairs Form than sending us an email. This speeds up the repairs process as all information relating to the repair is captured on the form. And this releases staff for the customer service phone line. The online repairs form is found here: www.harrow.gov.uk/repairs.

DID YOU KNOW?

65% of tenants read and value Homing In

Areas for Improvement

By analysing resident contacts from January to March 2023 we can see that about 1/3 of phone contacts were to chase up earlier communication – so this is an area that we need to understand better and improve our performance. We are also in the process of producing a Customer Access Strategy which identifies how residents with differing needs can contact and communicate with the council.

Value for money

The best value for money contact and most efficient way to get queries answered is by using e-forms on the Council website. This is more efficient as the eform requests all relevant information; it goes to the right team and is logged and you get a reference number.

Internet usage

From the 2023 Tenant Survey we know that 58% of tenants are internet users, but 26% don't use the internet at all – so it is important to improve our digital offering going forward in order to free up the phones for those who need them the most.

Complaint handling

There are 2 stages to the Council's complaints process, Stage 1 and Stage 2. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, the resident has the option to seek further advice and assistance from the Housing Ombudsman or the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Total complaints performance (tenants, leaseholders, applicants, non-secure tenants etc) over the last 3 years

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Stage 1 received	220	273	358
Stage 2 received	44	53	73
Stage 1&2 % completed on time	82.3%	86.2%	89.8%
Upheld	15	23	22
Partially upheld	30	53	28
Not upheld	105	32	51
Outcome not provided	116	111	332

- We reached our target of 90% completion of complaints on time for 2022/23
- We have seen an increase in the number of Stage 1 complaints of 1/3 compared to a year ago (31%). We assume this is in part driven by the government campaign to encourage residents to use the complaints procedure and to report mould and damp disrepair
- 1/5 of all Stage 1 complaints are escalated by the complainant to Stage 2 (20%)
- A significant number of complaints are 'upheld' each year, meaning the Council is at fault and in some cases compensation is paid to the complainant. In these cases we review our policies and look at staff training.

Member (MPs plus Cllrs) Enquiries Received

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year End	Volume
2021-22	86	96	173	136	491	
2022-23	129	14	17	17	627	28% increase

- Member enquires increased by 28% compared to 2021-22.

Benchmarking against other London Boroughs

Source: Housemark annual report 2022-23

Satisfaction with the overall service provided by the landlord (2022-23)

60.0% Peer median: 59.0%



Satisfaction that the landlord listens to views and acts upon them (2022-23)

42.0% Peer median: 42.9%



Stage 1 complaints received per 1,000 properties (2022-23)

74.9 Peer median: 93.3



Percentage of tenants complaints responded to within target time (2022-23)

91.1% Peer median: 73.6%



Number of calls answered per property in 2022-23: 8.7

▲ up by 3.09 on 2021-22 Peer median: 5.7

Achievements, actions and looking ahead

New housing portal

We are hoping the biggest impact to the customer journey will be from customer interaction and transactions on the new housing portal which is due to be launched in spring 2024. Residents will be able to report and track repairs online, see their latest rent transactions and identify their housing officer. See www.harrow.gov.uk/housing

Customer care standards

The London Borough of Harrow reviewed its customer care standards in 2023. We no longer have a time commitment for picking up calls. Instead, the focus is on resolving the issue at first point of contact if possible. This means callers might be waiting longer on the phone. Phone wait times can be unacceptably long, so more resource was put into this area early in 2024, prior to launch of the housing portal. The standard for response time to emails and web forms is 5 days and in most cases there should be an immediate acknowledgement.

Complaints Panel

We launched a Complaints Panel in February 2023 and residents are reviewing the complaints process, complaints letters and will start looking at individual cases.

Housing Matters webinars

We held 6 open meetings online in 2022/23 and the average attendance was about 30 residents. Apart from presentations on topics that are requested, residents can ask questions via the 'chat' function and email us general service questions. Dates are advertised in the Homing In magazine.

Drop ins

In 2022/23 we held 4 drop-ins sessions open to all residents at two locations. For 2023 a monthly programme of drop-ins has been planned.

Your Home

In January 2023 we published our new Asset Management Strategy which is on the website. Our aim is to bring all council homes up to Decent Homes standards, which is the minimum standard that social homes are required to meet. Currently we have achieved 87.9% (592 dwellings are not-Decent Homes standard).

In addition, over time our aim is to spend more pro rata on capital improvements and less on day-to-day repairs. We also have ambitious decarbonisation plans, this means improving the envelope of flats and houses to make them better insulated, moving EPC ratings from E to D and D to C over the next few years.

In 2022-23 we invested £1.59 million in making homes safer as part of the Homesafe 3 programme, fitting fire safety flat doors to 3 and 4 storey flats, new block entrance doors and video entry, smoke alarms and emergency lighting.

Tenant Satisfaction Survey results (March 2023)

57% of tenants are satisfied with the overall repairs and maintenance service, with more satisfied with the service in the last 12 months (68%)



Three-fifths are satisfied with the time taken to complete their most recent repair (64%).



Just under six out of ten tenants (58%) are satisfied that their home is well maintained, although 29% are dissatisfied. Sheltered tenants are far more satisfied (82% compared with 55% dissatisfied).



Three-fifths of tenants are satisfied that their home is safe (64%).



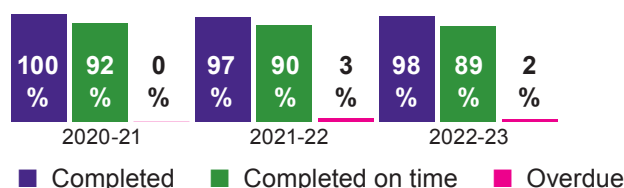
DID YOU KNOW?

87.9% of our council homes meet the Decent Homes Standard

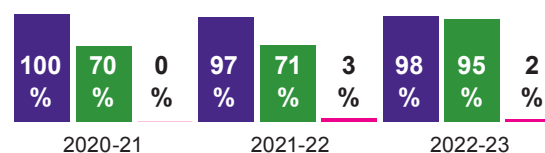
Tenants not satisfied with the repairs service were asked to explain why and what could be done to improve this, and 445 tenants made comments. This relates mostly to the time taken to complete work and outstanding repairs.

The two charts below show that the overall number of repair requests in 2022/23 remains fairly consistent with over 15000 jobs raised, with 89% completion-on-time rate for all non-emergency jobs raised. Performance improves to 95% completed on time for emergency repairs.

Repairs requested

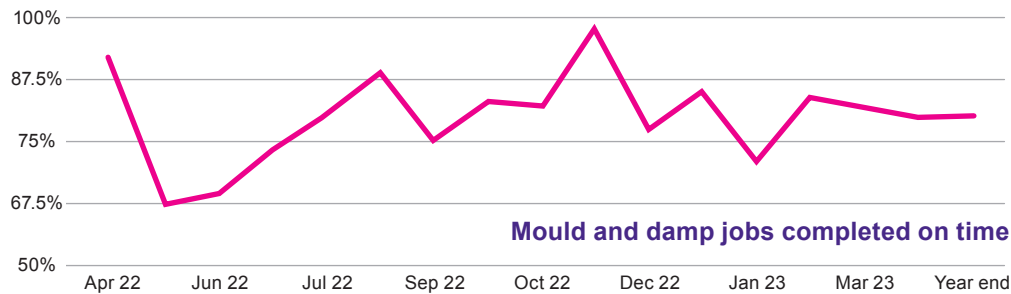


Emergency repairs



Mould and damp disrepair

In 2022/23 we dealt with 568 mould and damp cases with 80% completed on time. We are still getting a large number of mould and damp enquiries and this takes up a significant part of the repairs budget. Examples of works include damp and mould washes and renewing ventilation fans.



Aids and Adaptations

London Borough of Harrow provides adaptations to residents following an Occupational Therapy Assessment that determines, based on ones disability, whether one requires adaptations or not.

Major adaptations are available to assist a disabled person in gaining access to and from, and in and around their dwelling. For council tenants they are not subject to a financial means test as they are funded through the rents received from tenants. The cost of council major adaptations is not expected to exceed the thresholds set for private sector grant funding (current maximum of £30,000 per household).

In 2022/23 we completed aids and adaptations in 48 council homes and 58 in 2021-22.

Benchmarking against other London Boroughs

Source: Housemark annual report 2022-23

Satisfaction with the repairs service over the last 12 months (perception)

2022-23: 68.0% Peer median: 59.0%



Satisfaction with the time taken to complete your most recent repair

2022-23: 64% Peer median: 59%



Satisfaction that your home is well maintained

2022-23: 58% Peer median: 58%



Satisfaction that your home is safe

2022-23: 64% Peer median: 64%



Percentage of non-emergency repairs completed within target timescale

2022-23: 88.70% Peer median: 82.00%



Achievements, actions and looking ahead

We are procuring a new repairs, maintenance and voids contractor as our existing contracts are ending. The new contractors will start in July 2024. The Repairs Charter will be revised as part of this process, with assistance from the new residents' Asset Management Panel.

The Asset Management Strategy 2022-26 and 3-year capital programme have been approved by Cabinet. Highlights are below:

£6 million investment in warmer Council homes

226 of our worst performing council homes will receive major improvements worth £6million over the next two years. The London Borough of Harrow is delivering wave 2.1 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) programme following award of the highest grant relative to stock size in London.

- Improvements include re-roofing, new insulation for internal and external, replacement of windows and heating upgrades.
- We have secured a delivery partner for these works and will be commencing in February 2024.

3-year capital investment programme

We have published the next two-year programme in Homing In magazine for 2023 - 2025 as outlined in the tables below:

- Kitchens and bathrooms
- Window and door replacements
- Homesafe 3 programme

Estate improvements – work is due to start on site in spring 2024

In addition, the plan for future estate renovations will see money spent on measures including re-roofing and insulation, guttering renewal, window replacements, upgrades to emergency lighting, rewiring, redecoration, replacement of flooring, paving and fence repairs. The estates due for improvements in 2024 include:

- Amy Johnson
- Beatty Road
- Mountside
- Stonegrove Gardens
- Park Gates Tregenna and Arundel
- Emergency lighting upgrades to 15 blocks across the borough

In addition, we are installing ground source heat pumps at Alma Court and Meadfield Sheltered Schemes as part of a pilot.

Window and door programme (including Decarbonization Fund programme)

	2023-24	2024-25	2-year programme total	Option to extend 2025-26
Units	190	250	440	250

Kitchen and bathrooms programme

	2023-24	2024-25	2-year programme total	Option to extend 2025-26
Kitchens	56	103	159	132
Bathrooms	59	53	112	51
Separate WCs	31	70	101	31
Total units	146	226	372	214

Homesafe 3 fire safety works (2-year programme)

2023-24	2024-25
434 flats	65 blocks

Homes: Safety First

To ensure all council homes remain safe we carry out 'cyclical' works. These are a series of 1-5 year programmes which aim to ensure checks for all compliance areas are properly carried out including actions coming out of the checks and our aim is 100%. However, in April 2023 we received a Notice from our regulator about not completing EICR's. Since then we have contracted a company to complete these as quickly as possible and our commitment is to achieve 100% by March 2025.

In 2022/23 we spent £854,000 on compliance checks and this increased in 2023/24 as we caught up with the backlog of electrical safety certificates. In 2023/24 for example, we have spent £500,000 on electrical safety checks.

DID YOU KNOW?

72.0% of properties UK-wide were rated energy performance certificate (EPC) C or higher in 2022/23. The percentage for Harrow council homes is 36.1%.

Source: Organisations monitored by Housemark

Compliance for council buildings

(most recent data provided December 2023)

Properties with a valid gas safety record

Properties requiring a gas certificate: 3798

Number of properties outstanding: 5

99.87% 

Electrical installation condition reports within five years

Housing stock: 4785

53% 

Fire risk assessments completed within agreed timescales

Total number of properties requiring a FRA: 434

Total number of FRAs completed: 434

100% 

Passenger lifts serviced within timescale

Number of outstanding lifts requiring inspection: 0

100% 

Asbestos containing materials re-inspected within timescales

100% 

Water risk assessments carried out within a two-year period

All sites complete

100% 

Your tenancy

Tenant Satisfaction Survey results (March 2023)

Just under half of tenants (48%) are satisfied with the way anti-social behaviour is handled

48%

Tenancy audits

Housing Officers carried out 267 face to face tenancy audits in 2022/23 as part of the rolling programme. Main purpose of the audits is to:

- Ensure the correct person is living in the property (the tenant).
- Identify sub-letting or other breaches of tenancy conditions
- Ensure contact details are up-to-date and that we understand how to tailor
- Signpost other relevant services
- Identify if you may need to be rehoused by showing up any overcrowding or under occupation
- Allow residents to raise any concerns or request information about services.

Housing Officers carry out sign ups for new tenancies as and when a council property becomes vacant. They carried out a total of 190 lettings in 2022/23.

Enabling moving on

We provide all residents access to HomeSwapper which enabled 11 mutual exchanges to be carried out in 2022/23. This assisted tenants in finding suitable accommodation in areas in which they needed to reside for family/support reasons or due to employment opportunities.

Sustaining tenancies

We work closely with our tenants and offer Money Advice referrals at every level of rent recovery. In 2022-23 we made 161 referrals-to-help with the financial inclusion support team at Citizens Advice Harrow.

- We carried out 105 vulnerable tenant checks in 2022/23. These visits allow us to identify support needs for tenants and to ensure services are in place to assist tenants in receiving the care and support they require to maintain their tenancies.
- We work with the council's Xcite team and they attend our resident drop in sessions to offer employment advice.
- In Autumn 2022, we were given funding from central government which we used to help tenants, including pensioners, households with children and care leavers. In March 2023, Resident Services received some more funding from central government, and we were pleased to use this to help a different group of tenants. In total we have helped over 62% of tenants with an additional payment to their rent account.
- We work with EACH Counselling and Support and the adult safeguarding team to ensure vulnerable tenants can sustain their tenancies.

Fighting fraud

We work closely with the London Borough of Harrow Corporate Anti-Fraud Team (CAFT) to identify possible fraud or sub-letting cases. During 2022-23 the Council successfully recovered 5 properties and 6 right to buy applications were rejected following evidence gathered by the CAFT and possession action undertaken by Housing in some of the cases. This work prevented fraud losses to the Council in excess of £1 million.



Case study

Supporting residents

Client was referred by the London Borough of Harrow Rent Officer team under the Money Advice Project. He was a single person with health problems. He had a secure tenancy and was receiving Employment and Support Allowance. He had previously 'downsized' his previous property but still had rent arrears. The client didn't engage fully initially and was reluctant to provide paperwork. He had no digital knowledge to submit documents electronically.

The Adviser noted that the client had no payment towards his housing costs. It was established that the client had failed to notify a change of address to Housing Benefit (HB) and his HB had been stopped over a year ago. The Client's Housing Officer advised him to apply for Universal Credit which the client refused to do because he did not trust the new benefit system. The Adviser obtained the client's permission to work with the Housing Officer and Housing Benefit to gather information about his rent arrears that the client couldn't provide. The Adviser was able to appeal the closure of the HB claim based on the client's vulnerability. HB reinstated and backdated the award from the previous year. This cleared the full rent arrears amount. The Adviser also assisted with other debts. The Client felt motivated and applied for Personal Independence payment (PIP) on our advice. He started receiving PIP. He fed back that he appreciated both the Adviser's help and our service.

Benchmarking against other London Boroughs

Source: Housemark annual report 2022-23

Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour

2022-23 **48%** Peer median: 55.5%



Number of new anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases reported per 1,000 properties

2022-23 **15.1** Peer median: 43.9



Collection of current tenant arrears was 2.76% in 2022/23

Peer median: 4.50%



Rent loss due to voids was 1.33% in 2022/23

Peer median: 2.07%



Achievements, actions and looking ahead

- At the start of new financial year in 2023 we rolled out new service charges that fully reflected the cost of delivering services for tenants – the average weekly service charge was £9.61. You can ask for a breakdown of your service charges.
- We increased our general rents by 7% in April 2023.
- Partnering with MyYard charity, Sheltered scheme co-ordinators have worked with the surplus food charity who provide monthly food deliveries to some of the sheltered schemes. We would love to extend this in the future, but this is subject to getting grant funding.
- Using social value donated by Breyer Group who re-roofed Pinner Grove estate, we have been able to pay for MyYard charity to deliver a weekly surplus food market for a year on the estate and to help build a stronger community through a regular Warm Hub
- In December 2023, London Borough of Harrow awarded a Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) grant to MyYard to run a Saturday warm hub on Grange Farm estate for one year

Case study

Alleged noise nuisance

Mr Joe Blog (alias) moved into one of our properties immediately after the pandemic. The nuisance started almost immediately following Joe moving into the block of 10 flats in West Harrow. Some of the residents witnessed Joe's behaviour and felt that he was trying to bully or intimidate other residents in the flats below him.

Complaints related to loud noise, music, television and hammering from inside the property at all times of the day and night, and this continued for 10 months.

Despite verbal warnings and letters from us, Joe continued. We carried out an in-depth investigation and found out that Joe is hard of hearing.

When we were aware that Joe was not perpetrating the alleged ASB deliberately, we arranged to get all the residents together to talk about the problems and how the situation was affecting their quality of life.

Everyone agreed that the situation had been going on for too long and Joe Blog agreed to change his behaviour and mode of occupation by always wearing his hearing aid. They also agreed to talk to each other about any issues in the future, admitting that this is what they had wanted from the beginning. The meeting ended with the neighbours' shaking hands and a positive feeling for the future.

The lesson from this is that matters don't always need to go to court. Most cases are resolved through a mix of mediation, face-to-face meetings, and written warnings.



Case study

Building communities

Regenerating an estate – Grange Farm

Harrow Council started the regeneration of Grange Farm estate with planning consent granted in March 2019.

In October 2023 residents started moving into the new phase 1 buildings which comprise 89 homes, of which 69 are social housing and 20 are shared ownership.

A Resident Steering Group was formed in 2014 and later an Independent Tenant's Advisor was appointed to support them. They have been meeting twice a month for the last 4 years. One of the things the Group pushed for was to have a larger number of flats with a separate kitchen.

To help create community integration on the estate, the council started working in partnership with MyYard Charity, Roxeth Christchurch, Higgins (Phase 1 developer) and an Independent Tenant's Advisor.

The main focus is to:

- help young people via the Changemaker programme and weekly Kids Club
- strengthen and integrate the community – the Whatsapp group has really helped
- and assist with the cost of living via regular surplus food markets.

The council also works closely with the Neighbourhood Police on safety issues, ward Councillors and Gareth Thomas, MP.



Erica, a volunteer on Grange Farm said,
 “The experience of helping run warm hubs for six months was awesome, I was able to give back to the community and I loved running the upcycling sessions”

Cllr Mina Parmar talking to the Neighbourhood Police team on the estate



Residents, officers and councillors enjoying Ranjan's poetry unveiling on the estate



Your neighbourhood

Tenant Satisfaction Survey results (March 2023)

Six out of ten tenants (59%) stated they live in a building with communal areas that Harrow Council is responsible for maintaining. Around two-thirds of these tenants are satisfied that Harrow Council keeps their communal areas clean and well maintained (64%)

64%



Half the tenants (52%) are satisfied with the positive contribution made by the London Borough of Harrow to their neighbourhood

52%



Tenants not satisfied with their homes or communal areas, were asked to explain why and what could be done to improve this, and 488 tenants responded. The quality of the communal areas cleaning service attracted the most comments (18%), with a further 10% mentioning its frequency.

An estate review was carried out in spring 2022 and one outcome was the new Estate Service Standards, as well as other recommendations. Seven residents contributed to the service assessment and the estate standards were launched to residents via Homing In magazine in November 2022 and can be found on the Council website.

Quick wins included:

- 1 New phone number and email for caretakers to report repairs
- 2 Set up and supporting monthly Estate Steering Group
- 3 Water supply now available on most estates with an outside water connection
- 4 63 lockable block notice boards were purchased and located inside blocks
- 5 Triaging priority tree work based on field tree survey
- 6 Proactive treatment by instigating a rolling programme for worst affected pests on estates. Since September 2023, this service is now managed directly by Estate Services enabling us to be more responsive.

Benchmarking against other London Boroughs

Source: Housemark annual report 2022-23

Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods

2022-23: **52.0%** Peer median: 52.0%



Achievements, actions and looking ahead

We carried out a tree audit of all trees on council housing land in 2022 and this identified the types and conditions of trees, including responsibility for maintenance. We started a cyclical programme of tree pruning to avoid trees becoming overgrown, blocking light or causing a nuisance and this is managed by Estate Services.

Estate improvements planned for 2023/24

- Mobile CCTV
- External window cleaning of communal areas twice a year
- Wet clean of communal areas twice a year
- Publish an Estate Strategy
- Roll out Resident Estate Champions

Value for money

Costs for responsive repairs + empty council properties to bring them up to specification + compliance

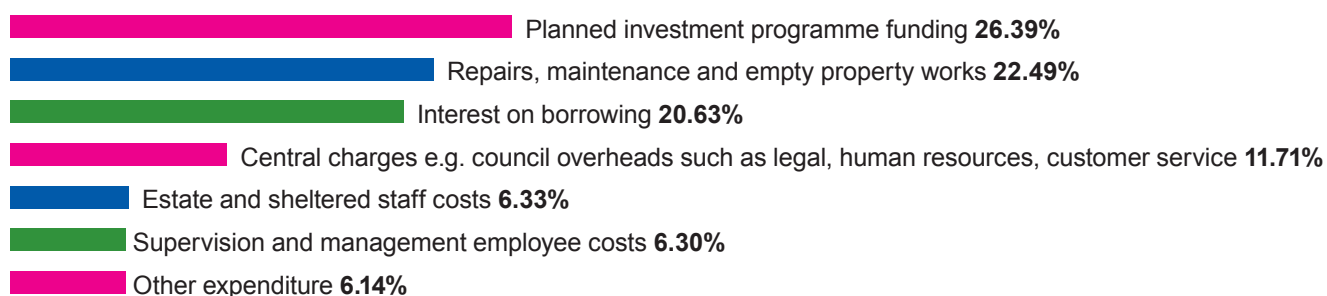
We spent a similar amount over the last two years - £7million per annum - on responsive repairs (day to day)/ getting properties ready to re-let and compliance (safety checks). If we break this down, we can see that reductions in void and responsive costs of £754,000 in 2022/23 were offset by increases in disrepair costs £387,000; plus dealing with damp and mould requests £103,000; plus staff costs £201,000 and other increases £63,000.

Our spend per property is in line with other London Boroughs.

Spend over 2 years on repairs, voids and compliance (£ millions)

	2021/22	2022/23
Repairs – cyclical/compliance works (including employee costs)	£1.68	£2.44
Repairs – spend on empty properties (voids) (including employee costs)	£1.12	£0.81
Repairs – responsive (including employee costs)	£4.21	£3.77
Repairs expenditure	£7.01	£7.02

Average rent per week (£122.87) – how it is spent (%)



Housing maintenance cost per property (direct cost)

Harrow Council spend on major works and cyclical maintenance

Per council property: **£2,261**

Peer median: £2,399



Harrow Council spend on responsive repairs and void works

Per council property: **£1,177**

Peer median: £1,261



Leasehold information

Leasehold satisfaction survey results (March 2023)

The survey shows that 29% of leaseholders are satisfied with the overall service provided by the council's Housing Service. Here is a breakdown of the remaining satisfaction criteria.

We are working hard to try and improve leaseholders experience with our service and we have plans to improve this. An example is the forthcoming launch of Civica Cx and the Housing Portal. Through the Housing Portal, leaseholders will be able to request communal repairs and report anti-social behaviour.



Goddard Court Sheltered scheme tea party

We welcome your suggestions and ideas for the next Annual Report for 2023/24 and if you would like to join a sub-group working on it, or if you do not understand something, you are welcome to contact:

✉ anthea.watkins@harrow.gov.uk

If you are interested in influencing decision making for Housing Services, please contact:

✉ rinvolve@harrow.gov.uk

Milton Road is a 100% affordable housing project. The project creates 39 new apartments and townhouses; 12 of these are available for council rent and 27 are part of the shared ownership scheme.

Milton Road is the first project of the Harrow Strategic Development Partnership between Wates Residential and Harrow Council.



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