Luton Borough Council
Annual Report to Tenants 2013/14
Foreward

We understand how difficult the past 12 months have been for customers due to welfare reform. It’s good to see that the efforts of staff in supporting customers with debt advice, claiming benefits and discretionary housing payments has had positive results. Rent collection is now just below target. Some of the money collected in rents is being used to invest in insulating homes and installing new heating systems to reduce the real burden of increasing heating costs.

There are lots of other positive things contained in the report including the building of new homes and remodelling of existing homes which will make a real difference to people in need of affordable accommodation.

On a different note the number of annual gas services being completed within 12 months of the last service was less than required. This has been and will continue to be the highest health and safety priority for the coming year. We are currently at 99.6 per cent.

The restructure of the department to get staff more focused on you the customer is currently taking effect as is the expansion of tenant engagement. I am confident that this will continue to reap rewards in the coming year. Thanks again to all who have contributed to the report and the successes within.

Mo Harkin
Head of Housing

Housing Revenue Account Spend 2013/14
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</tr>
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<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Housing overview

We rent out 8,067 residential properties to Luton tenants. We manage and maintain the properties, help tenants to continue their tenancies and collect the rent which pays for these services.

Number and type of Council houses in Luton*

- Five Bed: 18
- Four Bed: 113
- Bedsits: 173
- Three Bed: 2990
- Two Bed: 2420
- One Bed: 2353

*April 2014

Total value of housing stock

£288 Million

Number of Council homes bought by tenants through the right-to-buy scheme

43

Number of new Council homes built in Luton

4

Number of properties bought by Luton Borough Council and added to the housing stock

35
Compliments and complaints

We received 100 complaints in 2013/14. We acknowledged 84 within the three working day target and 68 were responded to in the time frame agreed by the tenant.

Reason for complaint

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for complaint</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service standard</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff behaviour</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management decision</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were no complaints about a failure to provide a service, inadequate information or timeliness of service.

Of the 100 complaints 31 were upheld.

We received 53 compliments in 2013/14 covering all areas of the housing service.

Resident involvement

We are accountable to our tenants and leaseholders for the housing service we provide. We listen to our tenants’ and leaseholders’ views and involve them in monitoring and scrutinising the service.

Achievements

- The Tenant Scrutiny Team (TeST) completed their first scrutiny exercise looking at the standard that we let Council houses to tenants at the start of their tenancy.
- Service Area Panels (SAPs) have been receiving quarterly performance updates.
- Tenants were involved in ‘asbestos’ and ‘cornish unit’ working groups with Building and Technical Services (BTS) and the Telelink Care Services Procurement Panel with the Sheltered Housing service.
- The tenants were involved in a number of consultation events, including the Acworth Court communal area refurbishment, the Hightown area development, the conversion of the communal room in Hoylake Court to a two-room bungalow, the conversion of the Centenary Court guest room into a one bedroom flat and the Marsh Farm multi-use games area.
- We’ve also provided more training for tenants to support them in their roles.

Future plans

- Recruit more TeST and SAP members.
- Setting up of the Complaints Review Panel (CRP) has been delayed whilst the Council completes a review of the complaints process. We hope to start it soon.
- Continue to provide appropriate training to ‘involved’ tenants.
- Ensure tenants receive timely and accurate performance information.
- Investigate how the Council can benchmark their performance against other social housing providers.
- Encourage more and earlier involvement of residents in our consultations.

Annual cost of resident involvement per tenancy = £19
Home – Repairs and maintenance

We carry out housing repairs and improvement works including renewing kitchens and bathrooms and heating upgrades. You can book your appointments for repairs and improvements through our dedicated call centre.

Achievements

- Communal areas modernisation at Acworth Court.
- Building and Technical Services (BTS) growth - 28 new staff and eight new vans.
- Seven newly acquired bungalows were remodelled by BTS for families to suit their specific requirements.
- First phase of the mobile devices project for BTS operatives is now live for day-to-day repairs.

Update on last year

We said we would

“Improve the percentage of jobs completed on time and right first time.”

We have

Increased repairs completed on time from 90 per cent to 94 per cent in 2013/14. Jobs completed right first time reduced however from 90 per cent to 80 per cent in 2013/14.

“Carry out more new building work.”

Completed four new build bungalows at Hamel Court.

“Introduce Homecall - where tenants can order their repairs online.”

Received 324 repair requests through Homecall since it started in October 2013.

“Carry out energy efficiency work to help reduce tenants’ fuel bills.”

Completed £2.3million of energy efficiency works last year.
**Satisfaction**

**Satisfaction with repairs service**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95%</td>
<td>90%*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on 7,132 responses
Reduction due to IT data problems. These have now been addressed and the system is working properly.

**Repairs completed on time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>98%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>94%*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*We could not get access to 725 (2.34%) of properties to do the repair work.

**Repairs completed right first time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>80%*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Reduction due to IT data problems and teething problems with the handheld devices for Building and Technical Services (BTS) operatives.

The introduction of hand-held devices for Building and Technical Services (BTS) operatives at first affected how repair requests were interpreted. This has now been resolved.

**Gas safety checks completed on time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>96%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Home – Repairs and maintenance
## Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of day-to-day repairs</td>
<td>31,000</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of rewires</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of door replacements</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of kitchen renewals</td>
<td>31,000</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of bathroom renewals</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of window replacements</td>
<td>364</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replacement boilers</td>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insulation installation</td>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installation of renewable energy systems</td>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of energy efficiency jobs</td>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of days taken to repair an empty Council house*</td>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average cost of repairing an empty Council house</td>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Annual cost of repairs and maintenance service per tenancy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>£1,970</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In 2013/14 we repaired 459 empty Council houses to get them ready for new tenants. The 15 day average turnaround is based on 423 standard properties and doesn’t include 36 ‘long term’ void properties.

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## Future plans

- New build properties in Barnard Road and Aldenham Close
- £7m of energy efficiency works
- Second phase of mobile devices project going live in the new year of 2015 for gas servicing and inspections.
Home – Aids and adaptations

We provide adaptations to help people with a disability remain independent in their home. This includes fitting stair lifts and level access showers. In extreme cases we provide adapted extensions.

Update on last year

Last year we said: “Adaptations officers have received training to enable them to carry out assessments as ‘trusted assessors’ for simple adaptations without reference to Occupational Therapists. This will speed up delivery.”

Update:

- We carried out 52 assessments through the ‘trusted assessor’ process between July and December. Of these 21 have been completed. The remaining 31 are in progress.
- We did 29 of 78 adaptations in-house using the Council’s Building and Technical Services (BTS). This reduces the cost of adaptations and improved the quality of the completed work.

Satisfaction

- Tenants who felt the work made a positive impact on their life: 100% (25 responses)
  - 2012/13 = 90.02%
- Tenants who felt the work would allow them to live more independently: 100% (25 responses)
  - 2012/13 = 91%

Performance

- Average cost of adaptation: £6,172
  - 2012/13 = £6629
  - 2011/12 = £6619
- Cost of aids and adaptations service per tenancy: £77

Future plans

- Closer working relationship with BTS
- Extension of the trusted assessor project to more complicated cases
Home – Tenancy management

We manage tenancies in each of the 8,067 homes that we rent to our tenants. This involves tenancy inspections and audits, accompanied viewings, end of tenancy interviews and investigating breaches of tenancy.

Achievements

- Merging of the tenancy management, estate management, antisocial behaviour and temporary accommodation teams. The new housing services team retains all of the existing staff at no extra cost.
- The 19 ‘Generic Housing Officers’ in the new team are responsible for a smaller patch area.

Performance

Number of assisted transfers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>£46,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>£54,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reduced cost reflects a change in criteria that has enabled more households to qualify for assistance.

Number of accompanied viewings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tenancy audits completed within the year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>1,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>2,173</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reduction is due to the change in emphasis of visits to respond to welfare reform. The focus was on visiting under-occupying households to prepare them for benefits changes.*

Pre-exit interviews carried out

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pre-exit interviews are conducted where the household is ending its tenancy.

Suspected tenancy fraud cases investigated (subletting or abandonment) = 59

Number of ‘notices to quit’ served on tenants due to possible subletting = 3

Number of ‘notices to quit’ served due to possible abandonment = 17

Future plans

- To complete tenancy audits on all Council stock.
- To carry out on-going review to ensure the service provided is as efficient and effective as possible.

*An under-occupying household is one that has more bedrooms than it need.
Neighbourhood and community – Estate services

Our 19 Generic Housing Officers carry out regular inspections of all communal internal and external areas of Council-owned flats on Luton estates. They check on the condition of the area and the provision of housing services such as cleaning, repairs and garden maintenance.

Achievements

- Essex Close bin project significantly improved refuse disposal arrangements for residents.
- The retendering of the cleaning contract resulted in a reduction in costs of nearly £77,000 with no changes to quality and with additional areas added, e.g. more frequent cleaning of high rise stairs.
- The costs for estate services delivered by other Council departments has been kept at the same level for over two years under the existing service level agreement, which is now up for review.
- All blocks now receive fortnightly or monthly inspection visits by the Generic Housing Officer with some blocks visited weekly.

Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number and cost of fly-tipping removals</th>
<th>1,911</th>
<th>Cost = £102,973</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>1379 at the same cost</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number and cost of emergency cleans</th>
<th>43</th>
<th>Cost = £1,730. Cost reduction of 4 per cent since 2012/13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Cost = £1,730. Cost reduction of 4 per cent since 2012/13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number and total cost of high rise and low rise communal area cleans</th>
<th>23,300</th>
<th>regular cleans per year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(this stays the same each year)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost = £437,436. This is a 15 per cent cost reduction on last year (£507,324)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number and cost of bulk rubbish removal</th>
<th>739</th>
<th>Cost = £10,704</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>989 at the same cost</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number and cost of graffiti removals</th>
<th>48</th>
<th>Cost = £12,952</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>85 at the same cost</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number and cost of blocked rubbish chutes</th>
<th>62</th>
<th>Cost = £4,014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>64 at the same cost</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Future plans

- Review of the Key Customer service to ensure standards are continuously challenged.
- Review of fly-tipping hotspots on housing land to enable targeted prosecution action.
- Negotiate a competitive cost for fly-tip removal, bulk rubbish removal, and graffiti removal with our Street Services Team.
- Installation of metal gates to Bretts Mead garage site to prevent fly-tipping and antisocial behaviour.
- Install bollards to prevent unauthorised parking at Lewsey Park Court.
- Install low level fencing to grassed area in front of Spandow Court to prevent unauthorised parking.
- Install external light to block 5-27 Dumfries Street to prevent antisocial behaviour.
- Provide/replace residents only parking signs in Hightown.
- Supply/fit lockable parking posts to rear of properties in Cross Street.
- Fit concrete bollards outside 51-97 Hastings Street to prevent unauthorised parking.
Neighbourhood and community – Antisocial behaviour

We investigate hate crime, harassment and other breaches of the tenancy agreement. We can issue warnings and serve injunctions and evictions to our tenants. We work with the police and other agencies to respond to antisocial behaviour.

Achievements

- Renegotiation of our agreement with Luton Mediation to reduce our costs by half.
- We now have a dedicated housing officer dealing with antisocial behaviour in your area.

Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of high level cases of antisocial behaviour</th>
<th>Number of antisocial behaviour cases resolved and closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>256 2012/13 = 320</td>
<td>283 2012/13 = 311</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of court injunctions</th>
<th>Number of evictions due to antisocial behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An injunction is often pursued in preference to an eviction.

Future plans

- Implementation of the new antisocial behaviour legislation, including the new grounds for possession.
- Continuing partnership working with the police and other agencies on dealing with serious antisocial behaviour.
Tenancy – Allocations

We allocate empty Council and housing association properties in Luton using a ‘Choice Based Lettings’ system where applicants can bid for vacant properties. Previously, large housing providers, including ourselves, allocated throughout Bedfordshire, but this policy stopped in September 2013.

Update on last year

**Last year we said:** “We are currently working to implement a new housing allocations policy and online housing register service. We are also working to bring down the time it takes to move new tenants into empty properties. This will reduce the rental income that is lost by properties standing empty.”

**Update:**
- The average time that a Council house in Luton is empty has reduced from 45 days to 34 days.
- Rent loss due to void properties has reduced by £154,939.
- The number of lettings has increased from last year by 20 per cent because of more new developments being built by our housing association partners.
- The allocations policy has been updated and has introduced a new ‘residency criteria’ meaning the applicant must currently live or work in Luton or have a close family member living in the Borough.
- There has been a delay on the implementation of the new housing allocations policy and online housing register service due to IT problems.

Performance

**Number of new tenancies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>New Luton Borough Council tenancies</th>
<th>New housing association tenancies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Luton Borough Council allocate people to Housing Association tenancies as well as to Council housing.
**Future plans**

- Employ a dedicated Voids Officer to reduce empty Council house turnaround time.

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**Average number of people registered with the Council to find a home**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All types</td>
<td>6200</td>
<td>7538</td>
<td>9565</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Average number of Council properties let at the first offer stage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All types</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>90%*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*A number of people who refuse change their initial acceptance to refusal.

**Average number of days taken to let an empty Council property**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All types</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Needs</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheltered</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Average rent loss due to Council properties being empty**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All types</td>
<td>£309,421</td>
<td>£393,588</td>
<td>£238,649</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tenancy – Rents and service charges

We work with Council and temporary accommodation tenants to help them pay their rent and service charges and to prevent rent debt from becoming unmanageable. We also work with organisations such as Luton Rights and Money Matters credit union to help tenants.

Update on last year

**We said we would:** “Set up ‘Open Access’ online rent accounts so that tenants can view and pay their rent online.”

**Update:** Open Access went live in October 2013. Tenants are now able to browse their rent accounts, make payments and print rent statements online after registration, and send us emails. 10 per cent of our tenants are now using the online system.

**We said we would:** “Review our processes and procedures in view of Welfare Reform.”

**Update:** We carried out a review of our procedures. We made adjustments to support those who were affected by the spare room subsidy. We managed the introduction of the Social Sector Spare Room Subsidy (commonly known as the ‘bedroom tax’).

**We said we would:** “Explore using technology that will enable us to take direct debit payment over the phone.”

**Update:** We agreed to start work on purchasing the necessary software and integrate into our system during 2014/15.

**We said we would:** “Work with partner organisations to expand our budgeting course to help tenants into work.”

**Update:** We have supported various initiatives which have seen more than 100 tenants secure work.

### Performance

**Average weekly rent (52 weeks)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009/10</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bedsits</td>
<td>£46.64</td>
<td>£47.78</td>
<td>£51.38</td>
<td>£54.61</td>
<td>£59.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 bed</td>
<td>£52.61</td>
<td>£55.91</td>
<td>£58.05</td>
<td>£62.08</td>
<td>£67.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bed</td>
<td>£63.54</td>
<td>£65.54</td>
<td>£68.16</td>
<td>£72.39</td>
<td>£77.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bed</td>
<td>£74.20</td>
<td>£75.75</td>
<td>£79.57</td>
<td>£84.63</td>
<td>£89.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 bed</td>
<td>£81.81</td>
<td>£83.05</td>
<td>£87.17</td>
<td>£92.68</td>
<td>£97.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 bed</td>
<td>£87.83</td>
<td>£88.96</td>
<td>£92.85</td>
<td>£99.08</td>
<td>£103.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Future plans

- Introduce paperless direct debit computer software to reduce processing time and administration costs.
- Work with partner organisations to expand our budgeting course to help tenants into work.
- Measure the number of face to face contact visits each year.
- Introduce text messaging enabling quicker and cheaper contact.

The 2013/14 figure of £537,000 is 1.6 percent of the current tenant rent roll. *March 2014
Tenancy – Sheltered housing and Telelink Care Services

We have 922 sheltered housing properties across 22 schemes. We support 2,100 tenants in these schemes and in the wider community. Our Telelink service provides an emergency alarm, monitoring and support service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to Luton residents.

Update on last year

Last year we said: “We are looking at new ways of working that will ensure that sheltered housing tenants receive the service they need and we intend to refurbish and modernise sheltered housing communal areas.”

Update:

- Acworth Court refurbishment has been completed as part of a wider five year refurbishment programme including provision of scooter storage.
- We have identified suitable areas for mobility scooter storage across other schemes and large TVs to each main communal lounge.
- Telelink flat now available for viewing at Acworth Court.
- Transferred the Telelink call answering service to deliver a more efficient and cost effective service.
- Set up base offices for the Sheltered Housing Officers to meet and share good working practice.

Achievements

- Start of the neighbourhood floating support service which extends to residents in the community from March 2014.
- Stopsley Day Centre relocated to Colwell Court Extra Care Sheltered Housing Scheme. This now means that tenants have continuous activity provision from Monday to Friday.
- CCTV installed in some schemes with others planned.
- Recruited a dedicated Telelink Assessment and Installation Team.
Performance

Tenants receiving a response within three minutes of activating their alarm.

98%* 2012/13 = 100%

*Dated technology affected our ability to respond.

Tenants wanting daily contact

57% 2012/13 = 62%

New service users inducted into the service

97%1 2012/13 = 100%

Assessments of tenant care needs completed/reviewed’

98%/96%1 2012/13 = 100%/98%

New Support Plans/Support Plans reviewed

96%/98%1 2012/13 = 100%/97%

Pull Cord and Smoke Alarm checks completed

99%2 2012/13 = 99%

Tenancy Audits completed

98%2 2012/13 = 99%

Communal Fire Alarm tests completed

100% 2012/13 = 100%

Annual cost of Sheltered service per tenancy = £1,470

Future plans

- Dedicated Telelink Team to carry out the marketing awareness of the alarm service.
- Improve technology within the schemes.
- Continue with a refurbishment program of work.
- Promote luncheon clubs and a uniformed provision of activities across 22 sheltered housing schemes.
- Integrate with local services and partners to achieve better interests for older and vulnerable people.
- Refurbishment of Essex Court.
- Install key safes to every property in a sheltered scheme.

1 Assessments of Care Needs.
An assessment of care needs takes place prior to allocating a tenancy. It will help service users identify things that they may need assistance with. It also helps us to provide individuals with the most appropriate assistance and support to help them stay independent and look after their health. The staff can assist in co-ordinating these services and linking in with new ones.

Support Plans
The assessment of care needs will link to the support plan. It tells us what service users need help with and also helps us to provide service users with the most appropriate support for them to remain as independent as possible. Service users will receive a copy of their own support plan so they can keep up to date with actions which have been agreed.

2 Audits and checks
A small number of tenants refuse the audit or are in hospital or on holiday when the audit or checks are done. This affects our performance.
Tenancy – Temporary accommodation

Our temporary accommodation work includes finding bed and breakfast accommodation and managing temporary licences in accommodation provided by the private sector through a leasing arrangement.

Update on last year

**We said we would:** “Improve service delivery and reduce duplication by merging the Temporary Accommodation Team with other housing teams.”

**Update:** Completed this. There are now 19 housing officers each delivering services in temporary accommodation, tenancy and estate management, and anti-social behaviour.

**We said we would:** “Work with local landlords to help the Council to meet its duty to homeless households in the private rented sector.”

**Update:** This work is ongoing. We are working with landlords to secure their commitment to accepting non-working/low income households.

**We said we would:** “Ensure new temporary accommodation tenants have an early tenancy visit within two weeks of moving into their home.”

**Update:** This work is ongoing. The new team have been trained and began delivering this service from April 2014.

**We said we would:** “Introduce tenancy audits for temporary accommodation.”

**Update:** This system is now in place and we have taken action against breach of licence.
We said we would: “Work with temporary accommodation tenants to minimise the impact of welfare reform.”

Update: We have been doing and are continuing to do this work.

We said we would: “Reduce the number of bed and breakfast placements to zero.”

Update: The number of placements has reduced and an increased number of households are seeking their own accommodation within the private sector. We continue to strive for zero placements.

Performance

Number of homeless applicants in temporary accommodation at the end of March

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>696</td>
<td>814</td>
<td>923</td>
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Number of bed and breakfast placements | 86
Number of temporary tenancy placements (not B&B) | 880
Number of private rented sector placements | 763

Annual cost of temporary accommodation service per tenancy = £1,563* *Council tenants don’t pay for this cost in their rent. It is funded directly by the General Council Fund.

Future plans

- To complete a full audit on all of the licensees currently in temporary accommodation.
- To ensure that at least 10 per cent of all households in temporary accommodation are moved into long term accommodation.
- To reduce the overall number of all households in Council managed temporary accommodation by five per cent.
- New temporary accommodation tenants to have an early tenancy visit within two weeks of starting their tenancy.
- Reduce the number of bed and breakfast placements to zero by September 2015.
Leaseholders

We manage 713 former Council properties that are now owned by leaseholders. We maintain communal areas and the exterior of the property. The leaseholder pays regular service charge costs and the cost of repairs.

Update on last year

We said we would: “Set up a leaseholders webpage on the Council website.”
Update: We completed this in September 2013.

We said we would: “Set up a Leaseholders Service Area Panel to meet quarterly.”
Update: We completed this and now have a schedule of meetings in place.

We said we would: “Buy-Back of former Council properties from Council leaseholders.”
Update: We have also brought back former Council properties from Council leaseholders which has enabled more properties to be available as Council stock for re-letting.

Performance

| Number of leaseholder properties managed by the Council (end of March 2014) | 713 |
| Annual charge for leaseholder management | £180 |
| Number of properties purchased by tenants through right to buy as leaseholders | 7 |
| Number of former leasehold properties re-purchased by the Council | 3 |

Future plans

- To start ‘optional extra’ services for leaseholders, for example contents insurance and boiler servicing.
- To look into other possible ‘optional extra’ services for the future, for example bathrooms and kitchens.
- To ensure a check of 10 per cent of all our final accounts by a qualified accountant.