

## Annual Report for Tenants and Leaseholders 2019/2020



### Welcome to this year's Annual Report for Tenants and Leaseholders

Let me start by saying thank you. Thank you to all residents and their families for how well you responded to the unprecedented COVID-19 situation. I understand that this has been a great strain on everyone and I am delighted to be able to highlight how you rose to this challenge; many of you volunteered to help others, to work with council officers to safeguard vulnerable people and all of you provided moral support to each other. It was great to see such wonderful community spirit.

Now as we return to a more normal environment, I am pleased to tell you that the backlog of repairs is being brought down. While this will take some time to clear, as officers need to continue to address new requests as well as the backlog, I am delighted to see our dedicated team working flat out to get all of the work done as quickly as possible for you. As Chair of the Housing Board, I would like to let you know that we wanted to ensure that quality was not compromised as the service works through everything. That is why, when we set the Key Performance Indicators for 2020/21, we maintained our commitment to works being done 'right first time'. Other areas, for example windows and doors, kitchens and

bathrooms, and resident engagement, will all be returning a more normal way of working as soon as possible. We are continuing our investment in kitchens and bathrooms and we are carrying on moving more work 'in-house' rather than it going to contractor partners.

Current circumstances aside, we still have a lot of great progress to celebrate. For example, in 2019/20 our Council House Build Programme delivered 19 new homes (14 are Southview Phase 2 and 5 right-to-buy re-purchases). Our void times (the time between a house becoming empty and being re-let) were improving so we were housing more people more quickly, sadly this took a knock in the final quarter. And we were able to run our annual Small Improvements Bids scheme (SIBs) which allows our tenants and leaseholders to bid for money to have specific local improvement work done in the area where you live.

I think we can all agree that these numbers might be different in the future. As things stand, senior council officers, your Housing Board and your scrutiny group the Challenge and Change Group, are all involved in partnership working to make things even better than they already are for residents and their families. This could include making some tough decisions in the future, as the money coming into the Housing Revenue

Account has been affected by Covid-19 and the economic challenges could continue.

I would like to thank all of you again for everything that you have done, as well as the officers that have also risen to this challenge. It is all of us working together that means we have the great housing service that we have today. If you would like to come along to a future Housing Board meeting, you would be very welcome. Your Resident Engagement Officers can let you know about future dates for the Board and they are also on our webpage ([wiltshire.gov.uk/housing-resident-involvement](http://wiltshire.gov.uk/housing-resident-involvement)).

**Richard Clewer, Wiltshire Councillor Downton and Ebbles Valley**

**Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts and Tourism, Housing, and Communities**



## What have we achieved this year?



The introduction of improved technology has helped save time and money

**876** Planned Preventative Maintenance activities carried out to ensure your home remains in good condition



We have helped our tenants claim over **£450,000**

<b>Backdated Benefits</b>	<b>£74,737</b>
<b>Grants</b>	<b>£36,342</b>
<b>Additional Income per Annum</b>	<b>£297,615</b>
<b>Bad Debts Written Off</b>	<b>£43,726</b>



**4,905** Boiler Safety checks Completed



**4,165** Rent Statements sent via email in Q4 a **19%** increase on last year

**600** POP UP Engagements with Tenants in Rural Properties

16 Resident Engagement Estate Visits Completed



Small Improvement Bid (SIB) scheme launched

43% increase in registered users of our iHousing Portal



**48** Disabled Adaptations made allowing tenants to stay in their homes

**98.9%** of repairs completed on time by our Direct Labour Operatives (DLO)



## Housing in Wiltshire

We currently manage 5,307 dwellings and 1,000 lettable garages in Wiltshire with the main concentration being in the south of the county. These dwellings are made up of various property types; flats, maisonettes, houses and bungalows.

**31** properties were disposed of as part of the government's 'Right to Buy' scheme.

We have continued to add new properties to our stock through our new build projects.

## How we look after your property

Our housing stock is looked after in patches. We provided services to these patches including: planned and cyclical maintenance, responsive repairs, void management, rent collection, rent arrears recovery, tenancy enforcement, anti-social behaviour investigation and resident engagement.

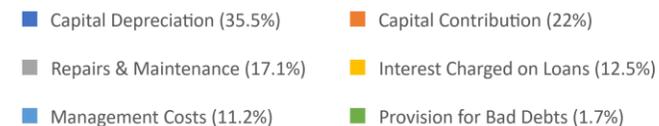
## How much we charge

The rent we receive is very important to us, as it pays for all the services we provide and for the upkeep, repair and maintenance of all our properties, including your home.

We charge rent weekly and our average social weekly rent in 2019/2020 was **£86.81**.

## How we spend your rent

What we spent your rent on	
<b>Property repairs and maintenance</b> <i>Responsive repairs, refurbishment of properties before re-letting and cyclical maintenance.</i>	<b>£4.9 Million</b>
<b>Housing management and related costs</b> <i>Includes officer and administration costs, resident involvement activities, utility bills, legal fees and IT costs.</i>	<b>£3.2 Million</b>
<b>Capital contribution</b> <i>Payments made towards the cost of major works and improvements.</i>	<b>£6.3 Million</b>
<b>Capital depreciation</b> <i>An adjustment to account for the annual change in the useful economic life of the housing stock due to factors such as wear and tear.</i>	<b>£10.2 Million</b>
<b>Interest charged on loans</b> <i>The council took a loan to buy itself out of the previous subsidy system.</i>	<b>£3.6 Million</b>
<b>Provision for bad debts</b> <i>The amount put aside to cover bad debts owed to the council and unlikely to be repaid.</i>	<b>£0.5 Million</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£28.7 Million</b>



## Income Recovery

We take money owed to us very seriously, as this money is needed to invest in our properties, your homes. Our income recovery team achieved **2.85%** recovery of bad debt against a very challenging target for arrears recovery set at **2.75%**. This figure is the amount of arrears against the maximum rent we could collect from properties that are occupied. We were on course to be under target at year end but we saw a significant impact on rent arrears in the last two weeks of the year as a result of loss of work and furloughing due to COVID-19 lockdown announced on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

## Tenancy Sustainment

Our tenancy sustainment service has continued to be a huge success, by providing ongoing support to our tenants experiencing financial difficulties. Engaging with us and using this service has helped tenants increase their income, reduce rent arrears and overall sustain their tenancies and facilitate their independence. We have enhanced this service by launching a very successful drop-in centre at Evergreen Court in Amesbury, providing tenancy support to the residents of Amesbury and the surrounding villages. We also offer a mental health support service, we are happy to tailor support to meet the needs of our tenants who don't need a formal diagnosis – we just ask that they are willing to engage and work with us.

<b>£74,737</b> of backdated benefits secured	<b>148</b> tenancy sustainment cases were completed	<b>54</b> mental health cases were completed
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## Income Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators	Achieved	Target	How did we do?
Rent arrears as percentage of rent due (Dwellings)	2.85%	2.75%	
Former tenant arrears as percentage of rent due (Dwellings)	1.08%	0.90%	
Rent arrears as percentage of rent due (Dwellings) - NON UNIVERSAL CREDIT ONLY	1.61%	1.70%	
Rent arrears as percentage of rent due (dwellings) – UNIVERSAL CREDIT	7.54%	10.00%	

## Repairs and Improvements

At the start of the year our Direct Labour Operatives (DLO) took on a number of additional works that had previously been delivered by partnering contractors. Feedback from tenants had indicated they would prefer delivery of services in house. We continue to work with supporting contractors, where specialist work is required.

The decision to move has proved very positive with the DLO completing 99.4% of works in Q4 on time and tenant satisfaction has continued to exceed the target set.

As a result of introducing improved technology we are now able to ask tenants to complete a satisfaction survey as soon as the work has been completed, providing us with increased response rate as well as time and cost savings.

We have 19 DLO operatives which is due to increase during the next year.



Our operatives cover a wide range of trades, which includes plumbing, carpentry and general maintenance. Specialist trades, including gas and electrical works continue to be undertaken by our partnering contractors.

Our DLO performance:
<b>6,063</b> repairs were carried out
The average cost per repair was <b>£144.92</b>
<b>98.9%</b> of repairs were carried out on time by our DLO
<b>93.2%</b> of Tenants satisfied with the repair service provided by our DLO

## Repairs Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators	Achieved	Target	How did we do?
Percentage of <b>ALL</b> routine repairs completed on time	95.4%	97.00%	☺
Percentage of <b>DLO</b> routine repairs completed on time	98.9%	97.00%	☺
Percentage of <b>ALL</b> repairs completed right first time	90.1%	90.00%	☺
Percentage of <b>DLO</b> repairs completed right first time	93.2%	90.00%	☺

We are working with our contractors to ensure work order levels are not overloading individual contractors, stopping them from completing repairs on time.

## Planned and Cyclical Maintenance

As your landlord, we have a duty to keep your home in good order. This includes carrying out annual gas safety inspections, electrical inspections and outside decoration.

This year we have added a sewerage treatment service to our in-house delivery service. We have built a team and infrastructure to deliver sewerage treatment and a repair service. This is expected to generate savings in the region of £70,000 per year.

We will also carry out improvements such as new kitchens, bathrooms and windows to make sure that our properties and your homes are of a good standard.

## Here's what we have done this year:

<b>199</b> Kitchens replaced	<b>84</b> Bathrooms replaced	<b>181</b> Windows replaced	<b>412</b> Doors replaced	<b>4,905</b> Boiler safety checks completed
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## Planned and Cyclical Maintenance Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicator	Achieved	Target	How did we do?
Percentage of tenants satisfied with planned maintenance	89.00%	95.00%	

Our overall satisfaction is based on our tenant experience with us and our Partnership Contractors we are actively working with our contractors to review and improve the 'Customer Experience'.

We also carry out adaptations to allow tenants to stay in their homes, this year we have completed **48** adaptations.



**The opening of a new stairlift at Tintern Court**

## Neighbourhood and Tenancy Management

Our tenancy service team manages estates, sustaining tenancies, organising environmental improvements, signing up new tenancies and

tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB). We aim to ensure that where you live is safe, clean and tidy and that issues affecting you and your neighbourhoods are quickly identified and tackled.

**90%** of new tenants received a settling in visit within the first 6 weeks of their tenancy

**78** reports of ASB were investigated



**Evergreen Court, Amesbury**

Vacant properties are an important issue to us, as empty properties result in a loss of rental income and mean that families are not being housed. We work hard to ensure properties are refurbished and ready for the next tenant as quickly as possible, this year we have managed to re-let both our general needs and sheltered properties within the challenging targets set, a superb achievement.

## Tenancy Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators	Achieved	Target	How did we do?
General Housing: Average re-let time in days (standard re-lets)	18.9	19	😊
Sheltered Housing: average re-let time in days (standard re-lets)	22.5	25	😊
Percentage of new tenants satisfied with the lettings service overall	84.5%	96%	😞

We are constantly seeking feedback from our customers to improve our service. Some customers, including homeless customers are obliged to accept a housing offer without exercising a choice and this causes a negative response to the satisfaction service, unfortunately we are not in control of all decisions. This performance indicator has been reviewed and is being replaced next year, we will be measuring 'Satisfaction following the first 6 months in a property' instead.

Steps are constantly being taken to simplify housing needs assessment processes and more information is being placed on the

Homes4Wiltshire website about turnover in the next few months to manage expectations better. Void (vacant properties) meetings take place monthly and review the void processes to ensure that customers are aware of developments in their properties.

## Resident Engagement

We are here to listen to and support our residents enabling them to make the most of their local communities and help with continual improvements to their neighbourhoods. Improvements not only in the services they receive, but in creating new opportunities to benefit all.

### Here are a few of the things we have done this year:

The team have held over **600 POP UP** engagements with tenants and have been out to our rural properties around the county as a team and with the mobile library service. Residents have been able to talk to the team about local issues, what housing services are available and how they can become more involved.



One of the many pop up venue's and the mobile library

The Resident Engagement team have helped with the delivery of the Small Improvement Bid (SIB) scheme.



Successful bids ranged from new equipment for communal areas, grounds maintenance to kerbs being dropped along a street to allow residents to install parking in their front gardens. The SIB scheme is being relaunched for 2020 with a streamlined process, building on the success from this year.

## One Successful bid - new parking at Horefield, Porton

We worked in partnership with Salisbury City Council to support the Salisbury summer roadshows.



## Residents enjoying a day out on one of our trips



Residents have enjoyed the trips we have organised for our older residents to the Clarks Village, Rosebourne Garden Centre, the Christmas market in Winchester, Weymouth and many other places. The trips allow older residents to have the chance to meet up. All the trips joined 3 or more schemes of older people as well as those in general needs housing.

If you would like to become involved or find out more about future events please contact our Resident Engagement Team.

There contact details are:

Phone: 0300 456 0117 – option 5

Email: [Tenantparticipation@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:Tenantparticipation@wiltshire.gov.uk)

## Challenge and Change Group

Your Challenge and Change Group are volunteer tenants and leaseholders who review what Housing Services do and how we do it. This is how the group scrutinises our work, as the Regulatory Standards empower them to, and they report to a sub-committee of the Housing Board. This gives us an external perspective on our services, so we can make them even better for our residents and their families.

The Aids and Adaptations project was a particular high point for the group. Normally a report goes to the Housing Board and the group engages with officers in the service, but this report went further. The Environment Select Committee were looking into the same issue across the whole county with focus on all social and affordable housing providers, whereas the scrutiny group were focusing on Wiltshire Council owned housing only (these are part of the 'Housing Revenue Account'). The Environment Select Committee received the Challenge and Change Group report as part of their evidence gathering process. We were really pleased when they endorsed the report and all of its recommendations, which just goes to show how much success we can all have if we challenge the service in a positive way, we really can make a difference. We then followed this with our project looking into the recent changes to Sheltered Housing Service Charges, we've just got one final part to add which has delayed this report a little.

Then as the end of the financial year approached and just before the 'lockdown' happened, we decided we wanted to change our group structure. We removed the role of Chair and then quickly had to pick a topic that we could do remotely. We are taking a fair and balanced look into Complaints at the moment and some interesting themes are

emerging. We will report back shortly and could use this to pick future topics. This could help us make more recommendations for how the service can make things even better than they already for residents and their families.

Thank you to a great group of people for volunteering to be part of the group and all residents who help us out by speaking to us, filling out surveys and helping us understand more about how services can be improved.

It is very satisfying to note that in the spirit of co-operation, Housing Services have taken many of our recommendations on board and are implementing them. We would like to thank Housing Services for taking on board so many of our recommendations and implementing them. This is really satisfying to see.

If you'd like to join in as a 'critical friend' of the service by taking an in-depth look at certain parts of the service and then make recommendations about how they could be even better than they already are, please get in touch with the Resident Engagement Team, you can telephone them on 0300 456 0117 (option 5) or by emailing [tenantparticipation@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@wiltshire.gov.uk) – you can get more information by visiting [www.wiltshire.gov.uk/housing-hap](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/housing-hap) and find out how the spirit of partnership working benefits us all.

Next year is already shaping up to be a busy one!

