



Housing Services report

Quarter three – October to December 2017

Our first newsletter of 2018 highlights some of the changes that you can expect to see this year.

There are big changes for our repairs service which are described in the newsletter. We are focused on reducing the cost of repairs and increasing efficiency. As we carry out around 60,000 repairs each year this is a priority for us, and we are proud of our work to transform the service. You can find out more about this on the next page.

This focus on value for money is paying off as we expect an underspend over £3.7m in this year's repairs budget that we can use for improvement work to our council homes.

This newsletter includes a new feature on our push for better homes for people in Lambeth. We are building 1,000 new homes at council level rent and have invested almost £500m in bringing homes up to the Lambeth Housing Standard. You can also see this [new map of the developments in the borough](#) where council-level rent homes are being built.

We are continuing to invest our resources in estate-based services to make it easier for you to bring your concerns or suggestions to your dedicated estate officer. From April 2018 onwards, we will be letting you know about new estate officers, who will be responsible for street properties as well as estates.

I'd like you to have a say in what we do so why not get involved with the **Lambeth 500+**. You can register to receive the new monthly newsletter by emailing lambeth500@lambeth.gov.uk.

Best wishes,

SIGNATURE

Neil Wightman
Director of Housing

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How well we are delivering our priorities

Some facts about repairs

Providing a good repairs service is one of our main priorities. We have made lots of changes to the service to provide residents with a lower cost, more efficient service.



- We deliver around 60,000 repairs every year, that's 5,000 every month, so it's important that we get it right.
- Nine in ten tenants who have recently had a repair are satisfied with the quality of the repair (87 per cent).
- Timeliness and attendance is good. Nearly all of our repairs are completed in two or fewer visits.
- The number of complaints that we have received has fallen by nearly a quarter over the past two years.

What's new?

We have extended our repairs contract to continue working with our main repairs contractor, Mears, for another three years, reducing our contract costs by £650k every year. Over the next three years, we will continue to improve the service. Some of the changes that you will see are:



From April, our repairs surveyors will use a mobile app to log and confirm repair works needed, meaning that they spend more time out doing inspections and less time in the office.



We are making it easier for the contractor to get on with the work needed by allowing them to assess and make more repairs without sign off from council officers. This will speed up the repairs process and will reduce administration, saving around £135k each year.



We will continue to deliver major improvement works to meet the Lambeth Housing Standard. These works, combined with our cyclical and planned preventative maintenance programmes, will continue to reduce the number of ad-hoc repairs needed.

Recycling on estates trials

We are running four different recycling trials between now and April to understand how effective each of the changes are at increasing recycling rates.



**Engagement
and persuasion**



**Offer free clear
plastic bags**



**Improve
signage**



**Offer free
reusable
bags**



Control

We are still collecting data to understand whether any initial improvements in recycling rate have been sustained and will report back the findings, as well as any policy changes that we are considering, in the April edition of this performance report.

We want to improve the services that we provide to our homeowners.

This section updates you on the steps that we are taking to ensure that we deliver excellent services for homeowners. We are committed to consulting with homeowners on our improvement initiatives through the Lambeth 500+.

Service charges and major works billing



We are on target to prepare the 2018/19 service charge and major works invoices for March 2018, which will give homeowners the maximum possible time to plan their finances for the coming year. We've continued to work hard to make costs as accurate as possible. We have begun a major project to look at historic major works records to clear up discrepancies on service charge accounts, and have already investigated accounts for over 100 schemes.

It'll soon be even easier to make appointments to see us



We are preparing for our move to the new Civic Centre in Brixton and will be using a new appointment booking system that will allow us to match enquiries to the relevant specialist staff.

Automated notifications will be sent to the customer by email confirming the appointment details and any documents they are required to bring with them.

We are also exploring the use of online appointments for homeowners that want to schedule their own appointments and expect to be able to offer this service before we move.

Major works and service charge collections



We continue to strive for excellent performance in both major works and service charge collections.

We collected £707k of major works income during December 2017, giving a total of £5m+ collected during the financial year to date, and are on course to exceed the target we set at the start of the year. We have collected £10m+ in day-to-day service charges during the year to date.

Both figures reflect a very substantial improvement since last year, and will help ensure that the council's housing budgets and services are protected.

Website and communications



We are continuing to work on improving the website and making as much information as possible accessible online. Use of our website continues to increase. During the third quarter, there were 7,638 unique page views. As in the previous quarter, the pages relating to pre-assignment information and on getting permission for alterations were the most popular.

Lambeth has recently invested in new technologies to develop its digital communications and allow its customers to subscribe to news updates and information, and we'll be taking full advantage of these to ensure that we're able to get information to homeowners quickly and effectively.

We have started a programme of weekly text surveys to make it easier for homeowners to rate the service they get from us. Anyone who contacts us by mobile phone will have the opportunity to submit feedback by answering a short series of questions. We'll use the responses to help improve our service.

The Lambeth 500+ is a consultative group, free to join for any resident who receives services from Lambeth Housing Management. Members are contacted by e-mail and text and are able to provide feedback on the housing management issues that they are most interested in. If you would like to become a member of the Lambeth 500+ you can e-mail lambeth500@lambeth.gov.uk.

The table below shows the topics that we have consulted on in the third quarter of this financial year.

What we have consulted on – September to December 2017		What happened?
<p>Lambeth Local Plan consultation</p> 	<p>The existing Lambeth Local Plan, adopted in 2015, contains a strong vision for the development of the borough to improve opportunities for local people. Together with the Mayor’s London Plan and our neighbourhood plans, the Lambeth Local Plan sets out the vision and robust planning policies needed to direct and guide development in the borough over the next 15 years to meet our future needs.</p> <p>The Lambeth 500+ were asked to input to a recent review of the plan.</p>	<p>Lambeth 500+ member feedback was passed onto the authors of the local plan for consideration.</p>
<p>Communal areas fire safety procedure</p> 	<p>Following the fire at Grenfell Tower in the summer of last year, we have been reviewing our policies and procedures relating to fire safety. With the help of the London Fire Brigade, we have updated our communal areas procedure.</p> <p>This was sent to Lambeth 500+ for comment.</p>	<p>Feedback was provided by Lambeth 500+ members. This was then incorporated into a final draft.</p> <p>Member feedback was positive about the changes proposed and for more of our resource to be focused on ensuring fire safety.</p>
<p>Lambeth 500+ newsletter</p> 	<p>We understand that because we consult on a wide variety of issues, our output can be a little irregular. Some Lambeth 500+ members have said that they would like more regular emails from us.</p> <p>We will now be issuing residents a monthly newsletter, apart from months where this performance report is sent.</p>	<p>The first issue was sent out in late December 2017. This included updates on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Universal Credit service • Resident engagement • Community food growing schemes in the borough.

Planned consultation activity

Our plans	What are we going to be asking the Lambeth 500+ over the next couple of months?	Delivery date
Anti-social behaviour (ASB) 	<p>A programme of work around anti-social behaviour (ASB) will be led by the area offices to review how we respond to ASB issues and complaints.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lambeth 500+ members will get to have their say on existing and developing practices around ASB A workshop will take place focusing on ASB, which will be held in the north area. We will create a Lambeth 500+ virtual panel on ASB to challenge issues and encourage better practice. 	February
Annual Lambeth 500+ survey 	<p>We will be developing a survey to find out what members think about being part of the Lambeth 500+. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask Lambeth 500+ members to complete the survey Ask members what future projects the Lambeth 500+ should do. 	February
Capital improvement works 	<p>This project aims to showcase the improvements made and request feedback and comment from members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create feedback loop for Capital Works Ask Lambeth 500+ members to rate the works on their estate, the effectiveness of communications received Ask members how they would like to be communicated with around capital works, seek improvements and come up with a communications plan to incorporate these findings. 	March

Wednesday Walkabouts

In 2015 we introduced 'Wednesday Walkabouts' to provide a more visible presence on our estates. Housing staff and contractors visit a different estate every two weeks to talk with residents about issues that are important to them. They report repairs and cleaning problems to our contractors to help us provide a better service.

Following the Grenfell Tower fire, there has been an increased focus on fire safety and until further notice, walkabouts will focus on fire safety. We will continue to collect information about other issues and get residents' feedback on the services we are providing, such as estate cleaning and grounds maintenance.

Planned walkabouts					
North area		Central area		South area	
7 February	Myatts Field South and Lawn Court	7 March	Angell Park Gardens and Wiltshire Estate	21 February	Albert Carr Gardens
21 February	Black Prince Road	11 April	St Alphonsus Estate and Park Court	28 March	Rosendale Estate
7 March	Kennings Estate and Penwith Manor				

Providing **more** and **better** homes for Lambeth residents is one of the council's key priorities. The lack of affordable housing is one of the **biggest** issues facing our residents.

To try and tackle this, we are building **1,000 new homes** at council level rent, delivering the first new council homes for a generation, with a target of ensuring that at least **40 per cent** of the homes on all housing developments are affordable.

New major works 2017/18 forward programme and LHS email address

- [North area schedule](#) and [email](#)
- [Central area schedule](#) and [email](#)
- [South area schedule](#) and [email](#)

Ambitious proposals to build more and better homes published

After extensive design work and discussions with residents, ambitious plans to build over 700 new homes across the Knight's Walk, South Lambeth and Westbury estates have been submitted for planning approval. Every current secure council tenant on these estates will be able to move into a brand new home at council rent on the rebuilt estates. The plans will also deliver dozens of genuinely affordable new homes. You can find the full applications at planning.lambeth.gov.uk

Knight's Walk



Summary of proposals:

- 15 homes retained
- 18 demolished
- Replaced by 84 new homes
- 17 of these at council-level rent and 39 affordable.

Westbury



- 270 new homes, 46 of these at council-level rent and 89 affordable.
- An additional 64 new homes at council-level rent will be built as part of the wider project on Westbury estate.

South Lambeth



- 362 new homes
- 67 of these at council-level rent and 133 affordable.

Balmoral Court benefiting from the Lambeth Housing Standard programme

Cabinet Member for Housing & Environment, Cllr Jennifer Brathwaite, and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Cllr Jackie Meldrum, visited **Balmoral Court** in West Norwood, one of the many sheltered housing schemes that have recently benefited from the **£490m Lambeth Housing Standard** (LHS) programme. Over the last two years, the scheme has benefited from new windows, kitchens and bathrooms, as well as a newly landscaped shared garden area with new, safer paving installed, hundreds of new shrubs and a new resident vegetable garden.

In 2012, Lambeth embarked on the LHS programme; investing over **£490m** in our housing stock to bring them up to, and above, the government's own **Decent Homes Standard**. As part of this scheme, and to help deliver the council's **Older People's Housing Strategy**, the council prioritised sheltered housing for investment, so that our older and vulnerable residents had warmer, drier and safer homes in which to live.



“It is beautiful. I'm really looking forward to spring when the flowers start to blossom.” said Elizabeth, a resident.

Housing Services' performance report

April – December 2017

Introduction

This quarterly performance briefing will focus on results for on our seven **key performance indicators**. The table on the right shows that we reached or exceeded our targets on four out of seven of our key performance indicators shown and are very near target on a further two indicators.

Housing Services priorities

Our priorities for 2017/18 reflect our commitment to preventing homelessness and supplying temporary accommodation where our citizens require it. We are maintaining our focus on repairs as we know that they are a priority for all residents. We are currently undertaking a number of improvement initiatives in Homeownership Services and leaseholder satisfaction remains a key indicator.

Our priorities for 2017/18:

- Preventing homelessness and managing temporary accommodation
- Developing repairs and estate services
- Improving services for homeowners
- Widening engagement with residents

Key outcomes	2017/18 quarter 3 target	Quarter 3 performance
Satisfaction		
Tenant satisfaction with Housing Services	70%	69%
Leaseholder satisfaction with Housing Services	43%	42%
Satisfaction with grounds maintenance and estate cleaning	70%	75.5%
Income collection		
Rent collection rate in-year	98.75%	99.7%
Call handling		
Calls answered within 20 seconds	80	82.7%
Housing needs		
Number of households in temporary accommodation	2,250	2,065
Number of households where homelessness was prevented	425	398

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The corporate performance measures above are supported by a much broader set of over 100 detailed performance measures which we use to monitor and help manage the effectiveness of our services. This wider set of measures report in detail on all of our services including income collection, repairs, estates management, and call centre performance.

Summary of performance

Percentage of residents satisfied with the quality of repairs

87 per cent of residents are satisfied with the quality of the repair work they have received. Satisfaction increased by 0.3 percentage points between quarter two and quarter three of this year, bringing the quarter three performance to 0.9 percentage points below the target (88 per cent).

Whilst satisfaction is just below target, all of the repairs KPIs outlined below are above target:

- Contractors were polite and helpful;
- Their home was left clean and tidy;
- Repairs carried out in two or fewer visits.



Housing Services' performance report

Leaseholder satisfaction with Housing Services

Leaseholder satisfaction for quarter three is one percentage point below target at 42 per cent.

We know that satisfaction scores might be held down as changes to the service are implemented. We saw a fall in satisfaction in the second quarter correlating to 'actual' leaseholder service charges being sent out on time in September 2017. This is earlier than in recent years.

The purpose and benefit of sending the bills as early as possible is to give leaseholders as much time as possible to plan their finances for the coming year.



Satisfaction with grounds maintenance and estate cleaning

The performance of our contractors to deliver estate cleaning and grounds maintenance continues to be good. Satisfaction with grounds maintenance and estate cleaning has been consistently above the 70 per cent target over the past year. At its highest point, there was a 77.2 per cent level of satisfaction, which was during the summer of 2016. Quarter three performance is slightly lower at 75 per cent.

Further analysis indicates that residents are highly satisfied with grounds maintenance (81 per cent) and remain reasonably satisfied with estate cleaning (70 per cent).



Calls answered within 20 seconds

Over the third quarter, our contact centre received nearly 465,000 calls, or an average of over 154,000 calls each month. Call volumes are slightly lower in the summer months but increase in the colder seasons.

Quarter three performance of 82.7 per cent is above the target 80 per cent of calls answered in less than 20 seconds. This represents an improvement over the already good performance for 2016/17, for which an average of 82.5 per cent of calls were answered on time.



Housing Services' performance report

Rent collection rate in-year

In the year to date, we have received 99.65 per cent of rent owed. This is above the profiled target of 98.75 per cent for quarter three, leaving us well placed to meet and exceed our year-end target.

It is important that tenants do not fall into rent arrears so that they can maintain their tenancies in secure council housing. The high levels of in-year rent payment are a positive indicator of the financial resilience of Lambeth's council tenants.



Number of households in temporary accommodation

Currently 2,065 households are in temporary accommodation. This is a reduction on the numbers reported at the end of quarter two (2,073), which has been achieved in part through a 20 per cent reduction in new placement demand for temporary accommodation in quarter three.

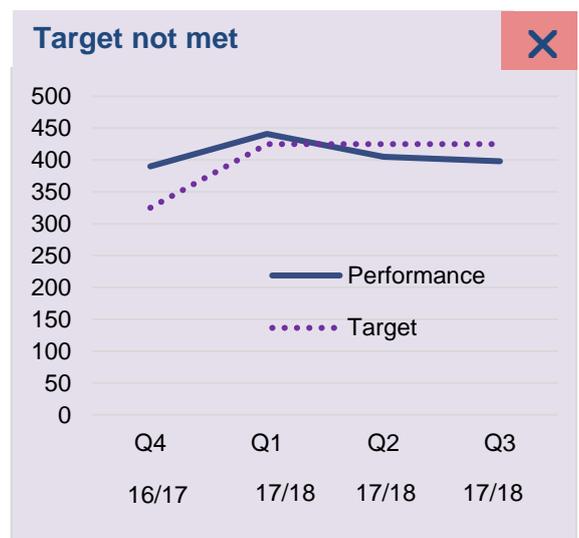
In the London context, Lambeth continues to perform well for this measure. We reported the eight lowest occupation level in Inner London at the end of quarter two (September 2017)¹. By contrast, the highest occupation levels in London at the end of quarter two were reported by Newham who had 4,668 households in temporary accommodation.



Number of households where homelessness was prevented

398 homeless prevention and relief outcomes were secured in quarter three representing a reduction of two per cent when compared to the previous quarter. Small seasonal reductions are a recurring feature of the annual cycle of prevention outcomes. Comparing the year to date (April to December 2017) with the same period in 2016 shows an overall increase of one per cent in the number of prevention actions taken.

The majority of our prevention work helps priority-need families and single vulnerable adults, who would otherwise make a homeless application and require temporary accommodation. An average of 1.98 prevention actions were taken in London per 1,000 household population in quarter two (September 2017). Lambeth reported better performance, with 2.78 preventions per 1,000 borough household population. High homeless prevention performance in Lambeth is helping to hold down temporary accommodation occupation levels and to reduce homeless acceptance levels¹.



¹ Communities and Local Government (CLG) Statistical Release, Housing, December 14 2017