

TAMWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT TO TENANTS



APRIL
2023-
MARCH
2024

**TENANT
APPROVED**

Tamworth
Borough Council

WELCOME

FROM YOUR TENANT CONSULTATIVE GROUP



Your tenant consultative group welcomes you to Tamworth Borough Council's housing services annual report.

This report highlights the performance of our housing services throughout the year, April 2023 to March 2024. And showcases the amazing work of tenant involvement groups supported by Tamworth Borough Council's tenant regulatory and involvement team, who are passionate about helping tenants, and the wider community be actively involved in decisions about their homes.

In a time when many of us, including the council, have been under great financial pressure there have been many challenges, but also lots to be proud of. Throughout the year, as your tenant consultative group (TCG for short) we have kept a watchful eye on housing services and will continue to do so.

Last year, the tenant consultative group was involved in many areas of review, update and development. Including representation on the housing and homelessness advisory board with voting rights to support assurance on housing improvements. In addition there was active tenant involvement with the planning and delivery of a successful tenants' conference with learning from tenant feedback shaping future engagement activity and a workshop to discuss the Social Housing Regulatory Act 2023 and its impact on tenants and the council's regulatory self-assessment action plan. Involvement groups were also important in developing and reviewing key documents such as the high-rise health and safety booklet, the quarterly tenant's newsletter Open House and the 2022-2023 annual report to tenants. Groups, have also been instrumental in

introducing and setting the terms of reference for both a high-rise consultative panel and an antisocial behaviour scrutiny group and have reviewed processes, practices and key performance within specific services.

Communication is key to maintaining and improving the services provided to us and we encourage all tenants to raise the issues they face, including making complaints if issues are not resolved. The information provided by tenants reporting concerns is used by the council to improve services and dedicate resources to the areas that need them. It's also one of the ways that as a group, we can champion, to make sure problems get resolved for everyone. Over the next 12 months we will continue with good communication, providing updates on the recruitment of an independent tenant advocate to sit alongside the tenant consultative group, and other working groups, to scrutinise and shape housing services for all.

This year the new tenancy satisfaction measures by the Regulator of Social Housing were also introduced. As a consultative group we've engaged with council staff to look at the results and we will now be involved in developing the action plan. The work is never done, and services, tenant-council relationships, and our community can always be improved.

So, I encourage you to read this report, be proud of the positive things we've achieved and ask you to give feedback to the council on how you feel they are performing and what can be improved to make 2024-2025 an even better year.



**Iris Clements,
Chair, Tenant
Consultative Group**

CONTENTS

Welcome from your tenant consultative group	2	The safety and quality standard.....	12
Foreword	3	The tenancy standard	14
Who we are	4	The neighbourhood and community standard	23
The transparency influence and accountability standard ..	5	Value for money	28
Tenant Satisfaction measures action plan	8	You said, we did	30

FOREWORD



Councillor Ben Clarke, portfolio holder for housing, homelessness and planning.

I would like to welcome you to this year's tenants annual

report 2023-2024, which outlines the progress made over the past year. I would specifically like to extend my gratitude to our tenants, for your valuable feedback. I'm eager to talk to you and engage with you to learn how we can continue enhancing our housing services. Our commitment is to provide you with a high standard of service and quality homes. Your input is crucial as we strive for continuous improvement, and I look forward to listening to you in the year ahead.

We take our role as a landlord for council housing tenants very seriously and have welcomed the consumer standards introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing.

We've reviewed our performance and ways of working and found that in some areas we do not meet the standard we expect of ourselves nor the standards of the regulator. In these areas we have and are continuing to take swift and robust action to make sure our housing services improve, and we apologise to tenants that some of our services are not as they should be.

We've taken the decision to self-refer ourselves to the Regulator of Social Housing so that we can work with the regulator as we improve our services and approach.

We value your feedback, invite you to get involved, and look forward to working with you to improve services in the future.

WHO WE ARE



Area	Total
Amington	404
Belgrave	294
Bolehall	342
Borough Road	40
Coton Green	63
Dosthill	79
Fazeley	111
Gillway	218
Glascote	564
Hockley	145
Kettlebrook	202
Leyfields	446
Stonydelph	694
The Leys	58
Town Centre	393
Two Gates	21
Wilnecote	226

Total number of properties: 4,300



Type of properties available to tenants - Total: 4,300

1,280

FLAT/ MAISONETTE

- 1 bed = 721
- 2 bed = 539
- 3 bed = 20

2,420

HOUSE

- 2 bed = 561
- 3 bed = 1705
- 4+ bed = 154

235

BUNGALOW

- 1 bed = 203
- 2 bed = 32

365

SHELTERED

- 1 bed = 324
- 2 bed = 38
- 3 bed = 3

THE TRANSPARENCY

INFLUENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARD

This standard outlines the things landlords must deliver about being open with tenants and treating them with fairness and respect, so that tenants can access services, raise complaints, influence decision making and hold their landlord to account.

This standard also requires us to collect and report annually on our performance using a specific set of defined measurements. These are called the tenant satisfaction measures. The tenant satisfaction measures provide tenants with greater transparency about their landlord's performance.

Why not get involved!

There are several ways you can get involved and help improve your housing services, and we would love to hear from you. These options

are designed to suit varied needs and lifestyles, whether you can spare only five minutes completing a short survey, popping along to one of housing consultation events or even attending one of the tenant involvement bi-monthly or quarterly meetings, there is something here for everyone.



If you'd like to get involved or simply like some further information, please call our tenant regulatory and involvement team on 01827 709 709, email tenantparticipation@tamworth.gov.uk or visit the website at www.tamworth.gov.uk/council-tenants-hub/getting-involved/tenant-involvement

There are many ways for you to get involved

Tenants voice group

Members reviewed articles and edited Open House the quarterly newsletter, the sheltered housing tenants handbook and the high-rise health and safety booklet

New antisocial behaviour scrutiny group

The first meeting was held to scrutinise the service offer and discuss best practice and service improvements

Two plant a pot events

Events held at Cheattle Court and Sunset Close sheltered schemes tackled social isolation, got residents and staff outside and active and improved the communal garden areas

Annual programme of estate inspections

The annual programme was successfully carried out across Tamworth estates in 2023/24

<p>Reviewed feedback from satisfaction surveys</p> <p>141 surveys completed from customers across housing services</p>	<p>Seniors United</p> <p>Two meetings were held in 2023/24 with guest speakers from the council’s enforcement team, waste management and Equans the repairs contractor</p>
<p>Database of involvement</p> <p>The total number of tenants registered to get involved in at least one of the many involvement options was 392</p>	<p>Tenant Consultative Group</p> <p>Members invited to attend two workshops to look at the council’s self-assessment improvement plan to make sure it was in line with the social housing regulatory standards and to input into the consumer standards consultation</p>
<p>Tenant and leaseholder feedback</p> <p>Continued to monitor all feedback and performance to improve overall satisfaction with housing services</p>	<p>High-rise consultative group and antisocial behaviour scrutiny group</p> <p>Two new working groups have started, and will look at best practice and scrutinise procedures, process and practices</p>
<p>Tenant involvement and consultation strategy action plan 2025-2030</p> <p>Started to review and prepare for a tenants’ conference and borough wide consultation event</p>	

Tenant satisfaction measures

The Regulator of Social Housing has introduced a set of tenant satisfaction measures to assess how well all social housing landlords in England are doing at providing good quality homes and services to their tenants. Of the 22 new measures, 12 provide tenants with the opportunity to have their say, understand how their landlord is performing and provide an insight into where service improvements are needed. The other 10 measures are about compliance with standards including safety and repairs. As a social housing landlord, we are required to carry out a survey of tenants every year.

2024 was the first year of gathering these performance measures and we asked M·E·L Research to carry out an independent tenants’ perception survey to find out what tenants think about the housing services they receive from us at Tamworth Borough Council. The Regulator of Social Housing sets the format and questions for this survey, responses had to be submitted to the regulator in June.

The regulator will then produce a report that shows how well all social housing providers are doing, and where they may need to improve.

More information on the regulatory standards and the tenant satisfaction measures can be found at:
www.gov.uk/government/collections/regulatory-standards-for-landlords and
www.gov.uk/government/collections/transparency-influence-and-accountability-including-tenant-satisfaction-measures

Summary of the tenant satisfaction measures perception survey findings

This is the first survey, and it was carried out in January and February 2024. The findings will help us to improve the quality of services we deliver to our tenants.

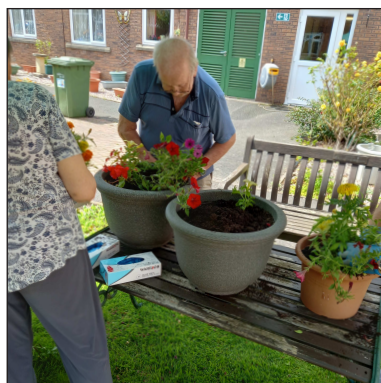
Out of the 4,242 council properties let at the time of the survey (as at 10.01.2024) 745 tenants completed a survey either by phone or post.

The results

- 58% satisfied with the overall service provided by the council
- 62% satisfied with the overall repairs service
- 62% satisfied with the time taken to complete most recent repair
- 63% satisfied that the council provides a home that is well maintained
- 69% satisfied that the council provides a home that is safe
- 51% satisfied that the council listens to their views and acts upon them
- 56% satisfied that the council keeps them informed about things that matter to them
- 69% agree that the council treats them fairly and with respect
- 23% satisfied with the council's approach to complaints handling
- 68% satisfied that the council keeps communal areas clean and well maintained
- 52% satisfied that the council makes a positive contribution to their neighbourhoods
- 54% satisfied with the council's approach to handling antisocial behaviour

A short video and easy read leaflet is available on our website, providing a summary of the survey results 2024. Please visit www.tamworth.gov.uk/tenant-satisfaction-measures-and-performance-information

We'd would like to take this opportunity to thank those tenants that shared their thoughts about Tamworth Borough Council's housing services.



The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, requires all registered providers to provide tenants with accessible information about their Directors' remuneration (salary) and housing management costs. This information will be coming soon and available on the Council's website at www.tamworth.gov.uk.

TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES

ACTION PLAN

Based on the tenant and leaseholder feedback from our tenant satisfaction measures survey

2023/24 we have developed key areas for improvement..

Customer satisfaction as a %	Action plan
Maintenance programme Provide homes that are safe: 69%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● We will continue to invest in homes including planned works and undertake the required safety compliance checks.● We will share the details of investment works programme.● We will share the details of our homes safety performance information.
Repairs service Satisfaction with repairs over the last 12 months: 62% Time taken to complete your most recent repairs after you report it: 62% Home that is well maintained: 63%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● We will analyse the survey findings about repairs in partnership with our repair's contractor and identify areas for improvement.● We will work hard to improve the time taken to complete a repair after it has been reported.● We will review our repairs performance and how we share this information with tenants.
Communication with tenants Listen to views and act upon them: 51% Keeps you informed about things that matter to you: 56% Treats me fairly with respect: 69%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● We will carry out a 'getting to know you' survey to understand the diverse needs of our tenants. We'll then develop a tenant inclusivity plan.● We will engage and co-design with tenants our new tenants involvement and consultation strategy 2025-30 making sure tenants are at the heart of decision making about their homes and have their voices heard.● We will publish and promote our housing service standards so tenants know exactly what level of service they can expect, including service response times.

Customer satisfaction as a %	Action plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will increase the opportunity for tenants to talk to us face to face, with a new reception service at Marmion House. This adds to the reception service we have at the Assembly Rooms. ● We will provide refresher customer care service training for all our staff including active listening and effective communication.
<p>Neighbourhood management</p> <p>Approach to handling antisocial behaviour: 54%</p> <p>Keeping communal areas clean and well maintained: 68%</p> <p>Makes a positive contribution to your neighbourhood: 52%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will clearly communicate what Antisocial behaviour is and how we can and can't support. Including information on response times. ● We will promote what we are doing to improve neighbourhoods. ● We will share information about the yearly estate inspection programme, including how officers will increase their visibility. ● We will communicate our housing maintenance and caretaking works programme.
<p>Handling of tenant's complaints and enquiries</p> <p>Approach to complaints handling: 23%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will publish our housing complaints data performance. ● We will listen and learn from comments, suggestions as well as compliments and complaints. ● We will communicate our complaints performance in-line with the housing ombudsman code promoting learning to tenants. ● We will carry out an annual tenant's satisfaction survey using a range of methods to assess progress.

Customer feedback and effective handling of complaints

As a council, we want to offer a service that is right first time – every time. However, we realise

that not everything always goes as planned. We value all feedback and encourage tenants to tell us about their experience, good or bad, and suggest ways to improve our service delivery.

In 2023-2024, for housing services we received 476 complaints, compliments and service requests.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Complaints	242	88	176
Compliments	33	21	29
Service requests	48	170	241
Total	323	279	476

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Number of stage 1 complaints	213	81	156
Number of stage 2 complaints	29	7	20
Number of compliments	33	21	29

Self-assessment - housing ombudsman complaint handling code 2024

We published our first self-assessment against the housing ombudsman complaint handling code in 2023. In line with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman, the self-assessment checks whether the current approach to handling complaints meets all the requirements of the 2024 complaint handling code. We identified many aspects of good practice and some areas where we didn't quite meet the standard. We've used the self-assessment findings, to put in place an action plan to support improvements in our complaint handling process and aim to achieve full compliance by 31 December 2024.

How can I make a compliment, complaint or leave a comment:

- Complete an e-form on the MyTamworth customer portal:
mytamworth.tamworth.gov.uk
- Phone us on 01827 709709.
- Email complaints@tamworth.gov.uk
- Write to us at Marmion House, Lichfield Street, Tamworth, Staffordshire, B79 7BZ.
- Ask any member of staff to help.

Key improvements in 2023 – 2024:

<p>Revised complaints policy</p> <p>Updated the comments, compliments and complaints policy to reflect the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman statutory code</p>	<p>Improved letter templates</p> <p>Letter templates have been reviewed and improved</p>
<p>Centralised complaints processing team</p> <p>By centralising the complaints processing team, work has been streamlined.</p>	<p>Improved record management</p> <p>Better record management to support performance report requirements</p>
<p>Improved customer communication</p> <p>All communication received through the central team is acknowledged within five working days. In 2023/2024, this was achieved for 95.5% of all complaints received.</p>	<p>Voided damp and mould assessment</p> <p>Incorporated a damp and mould assessment into the empty property inspection process due to an increase in damp and mould enquiries</p>
<p>Efficient process for contractor complaints</p> <p>Established a process to reduce the time repair contractors receive complaint information</p>	<p>Developed a service improvement plan</p> <p>In consultation with tenants, through the complaint review panel, identified and analysed themes so targeted improvements could be made</p> <p>Complaint performance now included in quarterly performance reports</p> <p>New reports introduced from the start of the financial year.</p>

What's in store for 2024

- Consultation with tenants on the housing revenue account business plan with updated priorities for 2024-2025.
- Recruitment of an independent tenant advocate to sit alongside the tenant consultative group to scrutinise and shape housing services.
- Tenant inclusivity and engagement roadshow, November 2024, with consultation on the draft tenant involvement and engagement strategy 2025-2030.
- Customer profiling with a 'getting to know you survey', supported by MEL Research, to better understand and tailor services in line with tenants' needs.
- Refreshed self-assessment on the housing ombudsman complaint handling code.
- Improved customer access through a new reception service at Marmion House.
- Tenant consultative group represented on the housing and homelessness advisory board, with voting rights to support assurance on housing improvements
- Annual tenant satisfaction measures survey
- Implement of a full range of housing service standards following customer consultation

THE SAFETY

AND QUALITY STANDARD

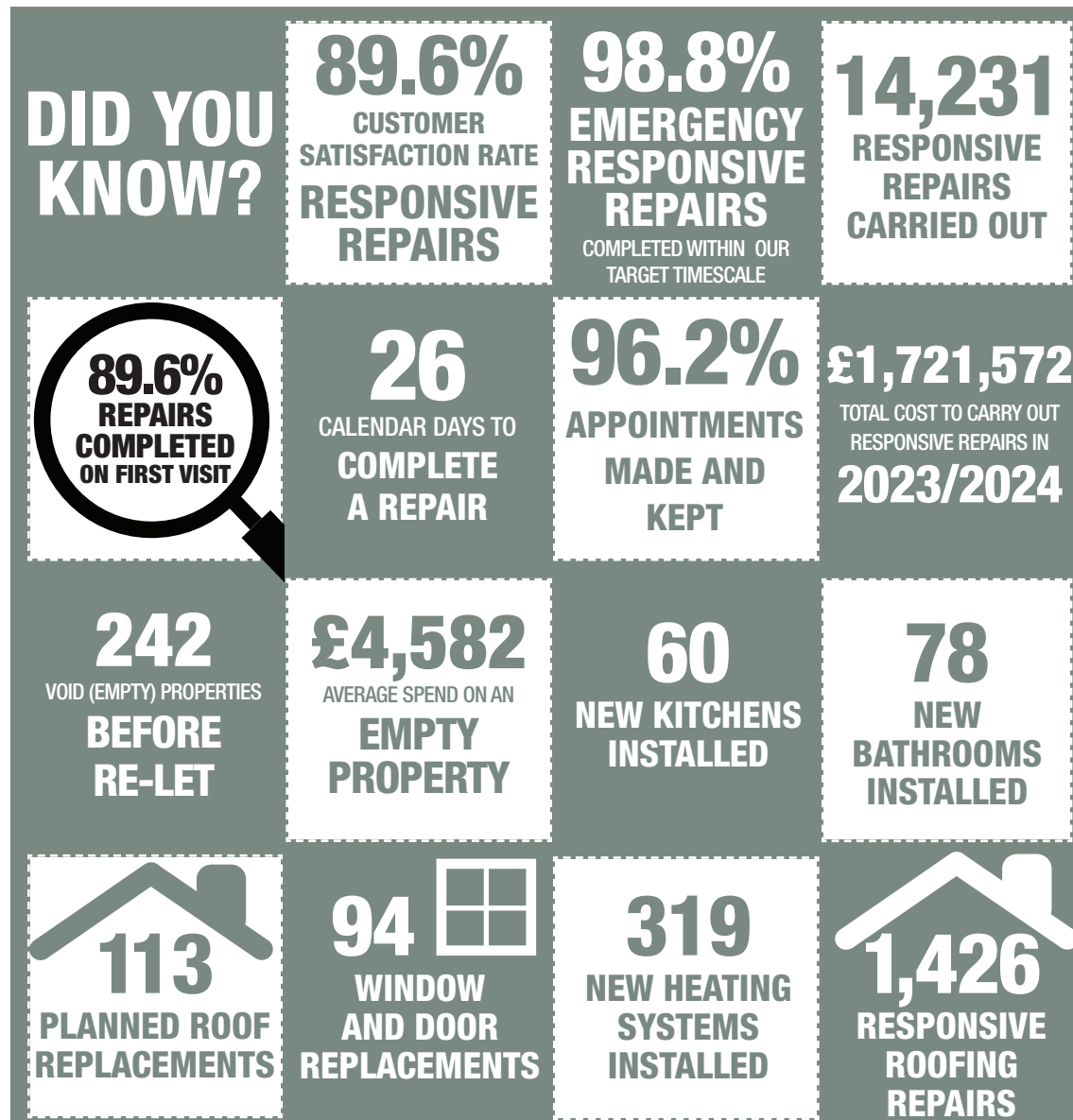


The safety and quality standard focuses on making sure landlords understand the condition of all their homes and make use of that data to provide safe, quality homes for tenants.

Tamworth Borough Council is committed to providing decent and safe council homes. Over the next 12 months, we will deliver a series of projects to continue to improve the safety of homes and the overall quality of service. Internal systems will be updated to easily stay up-to-date with ongoing work that has already begun to meet the new regulatory standards.

Keeping homes in good repair

In 2023/2024, around **£7,791,000** was spent on planned home improvements to tenant properties.



Maintaining the safety of your home

- 100% of homes with a working gas supply have had a gas safety check in the last year
A total of 4,336 gas services have been carried out
- 494 electrical installations inspections completed
- Legionella Risk Assessments carried out
28 in sheltered and communal areas

New Homes

Tamworth Borough Council purchased 22 new build, one-bedroomed flats and two, three-bedroomed new houses.



The new homes are available as council housing and are part of the refurbished former Wilnecote day centre, Hockley Road. The £4,955,000 development, led by Capstone, includes the cost of land, refurbishment and new buildings.

All properties meet the latest energy efficiency standards and includes specific bike storage for residents.

Five new homes were also built at Caledonian, Glascote Heath.

Decarbonising Hockley

Working to make Tamworth greener and more energy efficient for residents Equans, working with Tamworth Borough Council, successfully secured a £900,000 grant from the government's social housing decarbonisation fund to improve the thermal efficiency of 50 council-owned homes in Hockley. Improvements included adding new highly efficient external wall insulation - covered by a modern white render – to transform the homes' energy performance and appearance. Roofs were replaced and insulated, and new double-glazed windows and doors were also fitted to homes. As a result, energy performance certificate ratings increased from E to at least C.



“Before the work, my home could be really cold – especially in winter and I had to use draught excluders and turn the heating right up. The changes have made a huge difference, both in temperature and in the house's appearance, and I'd encourage anyone in a position to have the same work done to go ahead – it is well worth it.” Hockley resident

What's in store for 2024

- New stock condition survey to inform a tenant focused asset management plan.
- Focus on meeting standards, working to introduce a tenants and leaseholders repairs improvement group.
- Leaseholder management review with a refreshed action plan.
- Working with Equans, the repairs contractor to improve performance.
- Full impact assessment on the new disabled adaptation policy with tenant outcomes identified.

THE TENANCY

STANDARD

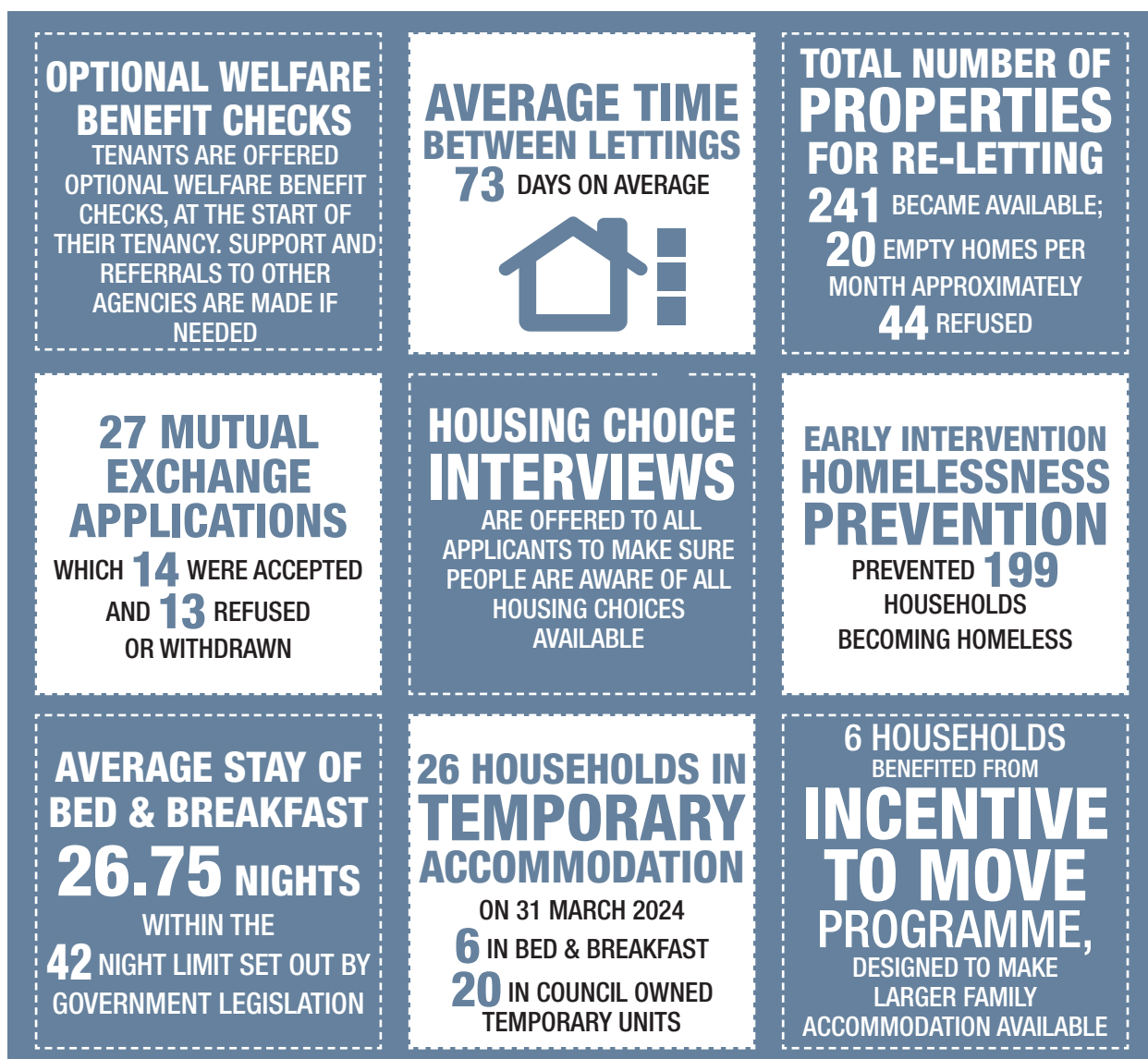


This standard is about the fair allocation and letting of homes and how tenancies are managed and ended by landlords.

Finding a Home

Band 1 68	Band 2 208
Band 3 113	Band 4 45
Total 434	

Number of active housing applicants on the housing waiting list, by band, as at 31 March 2024 was **434**.



At Tamworth Borough Council we have a choice-based letting system to give applicants as much say as possible about where they want to live and when they want to move. Due to the shortage of council homes in Tamworth, we will also help applicants explore other affordable housing options. For further information visit our website at:

<https://www.tamworth.gov.uk/housing/applying-council-housing/about-council-housing>

HOME Hub

Tamworth Borough Council, in partnership with Citizens' Advice Mid Mercia, launched a new service to better support some of the most vulnerable in Tamworth.

While we already deliver tailored, in-home services to prevent homelessness, HOME Hub aims to reach more people working with Citizens' Advice Mid Mercia and other local community and voluntary partners. This service aims to offer support across all aspects of life such as debt advice, increasing skills, support with addiction, family support, advocacy and support with mental health to name a few. This involves working collaboratively with Tamworth's active community and voluntary sector and with statutory partners such as the probation service, Department for Work and Pensions, drug and alcohol services and other health support services.

HOME Hub provides:

Holistic help to stabilise housing problems.

Outreach work in communities.

Multi-agency working with one service for all issues

Empowering and enabling people to create their own better future

The overall aim of the HOME Hub is to prevent homelessness through early intervention, advice, signposting, information, and support to those rough sleeping or at risk of homelessness.

Other benefits to HOME Hub may include:

- Reduced anxiety levels
- Managed health conditions and improved overall wellbeing
- Improved financial situation
- Peer support in the community
- Connecting to social activities, improving confidence and learning new skills

The service is for anyone who may be in danger of losing their home even if they may not yet realise it; for example, rent arrears, mental health worries, warning of breach of tenancy agreement, alcohol and substance misuse, failure to meet mortgage payments; whatever it might be, help is at hand. The service is open to everyone, whether they currently own their own home, rent privately or rent from a social landlord.

To access the service,

- Call: freephone 0808 175 4041, Monday and Wednesday 9am – 9pm, Tuesday, Thursday Friday 9am – 5pm.
- Visit us: Wednesdays 9.30am – 11.30am Three Peaks Primary School, Fossdale Road. Friday 10.30am -12.30pm Glascote Childrens Centre, Hawksworth. Friday 1.30pm – 3.30pm Leyfields Childrens Centre, Masfield Drive
- Drop into the Community Together CIC offices at Offa House
- For emergency out of hours homeless support, call 01827 709709.
- Alternatively visit the council's reception at Tamworth Assembly Rooms, and the team can signpost you to specialist support.

Supported Housing

The Supported Housing service provides high quality, short-term accommodation with a dedicated team making sure there is a visit support service in place for people who are faced with homelessness. Support is provided to help people through the crisis they face and to prepare them to successfully move on to their own independent tenancy.

“She’s made us feel so comfortable and the support we’ve received is beyond incredible. She has been absolutely amazing and so caring and is just amazing at her job”

Supported Housing Tenant

Help, guidance and advice offered consist of:

- Support in claiming welfare benefits
- Help in sorting out debt management and budgeting problems
- Support and encouragement in career choices and gaining qualifications e.g. keeping residents up to date with available courses, help with completing forms and CVs and accompanying residents to appointments
- Keeping residents motivated and involved in decision making
- Contacting other services/ agencies on resident’s behalf

Supported residents attended a range of events

in 2023/24 supported residents attended seasonal Christmas and Easter activities

The supported housing team was **successfully awarded funding to provide weekly cooking sessions for residents.** Working with Community Together CIC Tamworth, six sessions have taken place for residents to learn new skills to support their families in the future

Heating system upgrade New storage heaters installed in supported housing homes. Providing tenants with more energy efficient heating

With the support of the temporary accommodation co-ordinator, the team now has **new processes and procedures** for dealing with operational functions. Case management recording is now fully digital with a new set of performance indicators to reflect the operational work of the team.

Neighbourhood investment programme application made for new play equipment at Ellerbeck supported scheme

New customer satisfaction e-survey launched. Sent to tenants as they move in to gather valuable feedback on how to improve the service

Voids and allocations

<p>New portal system for ordering decoration vouchers. The B&Q portal has reduced the admin work and reduced postage costs as vouchers are emailed directly to new tenants</p>	<p>Successful allocation of new build homes liaising with the developer and supporting residents to make sure the process is carefully and clearly managed with residents kept informed</p>
<p>Improvements to the mutual exchange process is well underway with works continuing into 2024-2025</p>	<p>Number of hard to let properties 2 Reduced from 12 in 2022-2023. Suitable matches found to make the best use out homes bringing more residents off the housing waiting list</p>
<p>All signups now completed face to face following feedback from tenants that in person interaction is the preferred option</p>	

Housing solutions advisors have:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Responded to more than 400 emails from tenants every month. As well as managing enquires on the phone, web chat, email and from councillors.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continued to work in partnership with the Tamworth Advice Centre , referring customers for financial advice and assistance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Making the process of applying for council housing easier. Making sure applications are answered quickly and efficiently.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developed a new set of performance indicators to make sure standards are maintained. Figures for applicants on the housing register is now broken down by banding and bedroom need.

Self-contained temporary accommodation

Temporary accommodation homes are used as an alternative to bed and breakfast accommodation for both vulnerable and at-risk households such as those with young children. These properties are managed by the our temporary accommodation co-ordinator, who also supports those who are homeless to being re-housed into an alternative, secure home. Due to our pro-active hands-on approach and extra support provided for those in self-contained temporary accommodation, costs of temporary accommodation units when empty have successfully decreased.

- There are currently 26 temporary accommodation units ranging from 1 to 3 bed properties.
- The temporary accommodation co-ordinator continues to work closely with residents to make sure housing applications are completed quickly and housing benefit claims processed.
- A temporary accommodation handbook has been produced listing the key information for new residents.

Sheltered housing

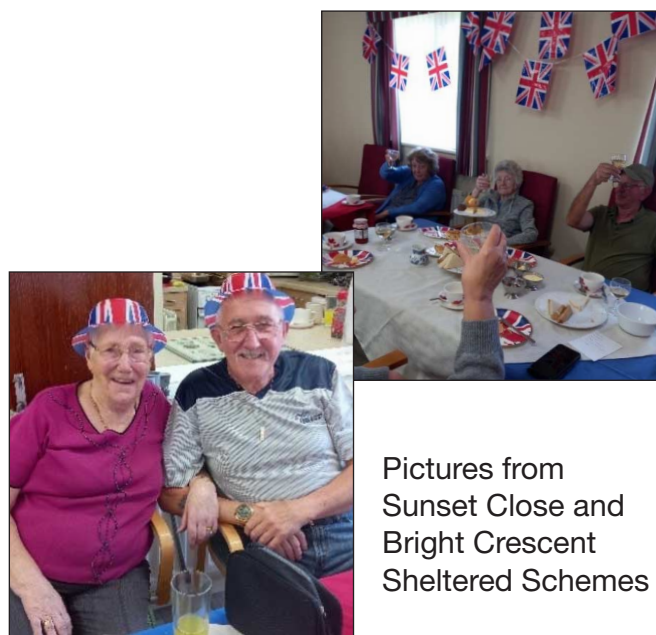
Sheltered housing provides people aged 55 and over with another housing choice in Tamworth. It enables tenants to continue to live independently and combats social isolation by creating a community within each sheltered housing scheme. Communal spaces within all schemes

give residents the opportunity to come together at one of the many organised events and activities as well as being kept updated with housing services information and news at the schemes organised bi-monthly tenant meetings.

<p>100% of Legionella monitoring sheets completed</p>	<p>Capital works projects completed As part of the capital works investment programme, the communal kitchen at Magnolia sheltered scheme was refitted and decorated, creating a bright and fresher space for residents to use for scheme events and meetings</p>
<p>100% of needs assessments carried out for potential applicants – 61 completed in total</p>	<p>98% of scheme resident meetings held bi-monthly</p>
<p>Annual health and safety inspection programme completed across all sheltered schemes</p>	<p>A full suite of new health and safety literature produced and published across sheltered housing schemes, in compliance with new fire regulation requirements</p>
<p>Lifeline pull cords answered 24/7 97.79% of alarm calls answered within 60 seconds Outside of office hours, the lifeline service answered 10,466 alarm calls.</p>	<p>Developed and successfully implemented the sheltered housing winter plan 2023, aimed to reduce the spread of winter viruses across all sheltered housing schemes</p>
<p>100% of new tenants visited within 24hrs of moving in 100% of new tenants had tenancy management plans completed with their scheme manager, within four weeks of moving in</p>	

King's Coronation - celebrations across all sheltered housing schemes

Sheltered scheme residents celebrated the coronation of his Majesty King Charles III with tea party events throughout the May Bank holiday weekend, 2023.



Pictures from Sunset Close and Bright Crescent Sheltered Schemes

Income management

Excellent end of year arrears

Compared with other social housing providers across the West Midlands, our collection of housing rent debt (arrears) remains in the upper quartile. Our income team have reduced the amount of money owed by tenants in 2023-2024 and continued to successfully support

residents in sustaining their tenancies and preventing homelessness.

We continue to deliver on the housing quality network rent accreditation improvement plan, which provides reassurance that good quality rent collection services are delivered.

<h3>Evictions</h3> <p>The number of evictions carried out was eight. Eviction is always a last resort</p>	<h3>Housing Quality Network review of our rent against government rent policy</h3> <p>We continue to work through the accreditation action plan.</p> <h3>Early intervention</h3> <p>Emphasis continues to be placed on working with people before they get too far behind with their rent.</p>
<h3>Notices of seeking possession</h3> <p>The number of notices issued for rent arrears was 692</p>	
<h3>Reviewed the rent collection, arrears prevention and recovery policy</h3> <p>Reviewed and fully implemented in March/April 2024</p>	
<h3>Arrears as a % of debit</h3> <p>was 2.22% for 2023/2024 compared to 2.60% for 2022/2023</p>	

Hardship fund at 31 March 2024

The hardship fund has continued to be used over recent years to support those struggling with the rising cost of living and associated expenses. The purpose of the scheme is:

- To help tenants suffering financial hardship
- To help alleviate poverty and stress
- To reduce the temptation for tenants to use loan sharks (illegal money lenders)
- To sustain tenancies

Total number of hardship fund applications as at 31.03.2024	Applications approved	Applications refused	Applications cancelled	Applications evidence	Applications awaiting costs
65	33	22	5	1	4
Annual hardship fund budget: £20,000					
Monies spent following a review of the hardship fund policy in 2023: £14,422					
Hardship Fund Budget available as at 31.03.2024: £5,577					

Problems paying rent

There are many ways that we can support tenants to begin resolving their financial difficulties:

- Agreeing an affordable repayment plan.
- Help and advice on maximising and managing money at the start, and during a tenancy.
- Advice on entitlement to welfare benefits including help towards housing costs and council tax.
- Help with discretionary housing payment applications (This is not a benefit, but a discretionary payment and is paid to the rent account. Applicants must be in receipt of housing benefit or Universal Credit housing costs to apply).
- Referral for food bank vouchers for those struggling to afford essential groceries,
- Referral to independent specialist advice support services to help put a budget plan together that offers debt management advice and solutions.
- Referral for advice on reducing fuel bills and energy saving tips.

Successful case study

During 2023-2024, Client A was referred to Citizens Advice Mid Mercia for a potential discretionary housing payment application, benefit check and further financial advice and assistance. During the appointment it was quickly identified as well as being behind with their rent, Client A also had other multiple debts and was unsure how to deal them due to a change in personal and financial circumstances. Client A was unable to work and could not see themselves being able to return to work for the foreseeable future.

Citizens Advice Mid Mercia supported Client A with completing the discretionary housing payment application for rent arrears, carried out a benefit check to confirm correct benefit entitlement, offered additional financial and debt management advice and Client A was entered into a breathing space whilst debt solutions were considered and appropriate measures put in place.

Client A expressed complete relief that their debt situation was being resolved which in turn improved their overall wellbeing and their family. Client A also received hygiene parcels during their appointments, due to the rising costs of living, and other advice was provided on overall support for the families circumstances.

Neighbourhood support during rising living costs

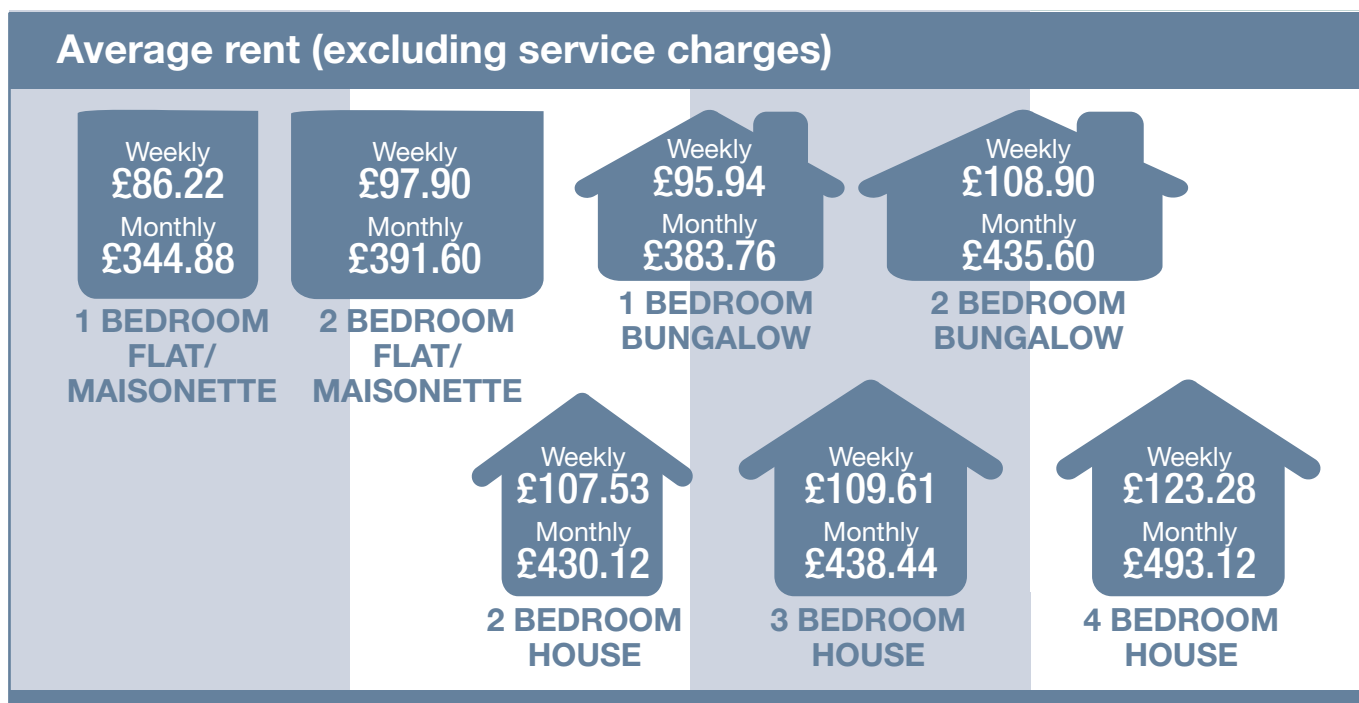
Staff have:

- Continued to assess hardship applications for vulnerable people suffering financial hardship.
- Continued to support vulnerable people through the cost-of-living crisis with a whole range of referral and support schemes available.
- Supported people with household support fund referrals. The Department for Work and Pensions announced an extension to the household support fund from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 with funding targeted at those households most in need.
- Kept the council's website up-to-date with the money help links with access to a free budget planner/calculator, the government web link 'Help for Households' and Tamworth's paying your rent guide.
- Provided information within the 2022 and 2023 winter editions of Open House, tenant's quarterly newsletter, on the warm home discount scheme, winter fuel payment and cold weather payment. The paying your rent winter leaflet was also included to provide lots of useful information on ways to pay rent, contact details for help and advice when struggling to pay rent, managing debt, universal credit information, contact details for Citizens Advice Mid Mercia and other useful information and contacts.

Early effective intervention methods that continue to be used

Early intervention, effective income management, begins from the first point of contact with every new tenant.

- Information about the importance of paying rent is shared at viewings and tenancy sign ups.
- All tenants, new and existing, are informed of who to contact about rent payments and where to get help if they fall behind with payments.
- Post-tenancy visits arranged for new tenants. We work proactively with tenants to help them with sticking to their tenancy terms and conditions and signposting for support and advice to make sure rent continues to be paid.
- Provides help to resolve any housing benefit or Universal Credit claims queries.
- Complies with the provisions of the pre-action protocol for rent arrears.
- Make realistic repayment arrangements to take account for any changes in circumstances.
- Offers a wide choice of payment methods and widely advertises these.
- Provide help and support in claiming benefits and make referrals to Citizens Advice Mid Mercia and the Job Centre.
- Our website is updated with available benefit checks and budgeting links.
- Direct referrals can be made to Citizens Advice Mid Mercia for multiple debt problems and money management.
- Information and support details are included, as standard, on all quarterly rent statements and on our website.
- The rent leaflet includes a wealth of information on debt and money management along with other support and assistance e.g. home energy, counselling and the Samaritans.



Our finances - income and 'what we spent'

Housing revenue annual costs	2022/23	2023/24
Landlord services – operational costs for running the service. This includes staffing costs.	£7.7m	£7.3m
Staffing costs to deliver landlord services – this is included in the figures above	£3.9m	£3.6m
Repairs and maintenance	£6.2m	£5.5m
Depreciation and impairment on non-current assets	£15m	£12.9m
Increase in bad debt provisions	£0.2m	£0.2m
Interest on borrowing	£2.8m	£2.9m
Income collected from rent, service charges, interest, and gain from right to buy sales	£23.9m	£24.9m
Capital programme – this money is spent on large projects to make sure our homes are up to standard	£13.9m	£11.3m

What's in store for 2024

- Updated tenancy management policy, with options detailed on future tenancy types, including considering if we should return to lifetime tenancies and decisions.
- Housing quality network re-accreditation in 2025. Providing reassurance that good quality rent collection services continue to be delivered.
- Allocations policy and housing needs survey currently underway with updated outcomes to be reported in 2024.
- Launch of new mutual exchange service, to commence 2 December 2024 and finish 6 December 2026.
- Tenant backed support for accreditation of our rent income services to make sure tenants' income is maximised and their tenancy sustained.
- Monitoring of the new lifeline contract with improved services for all sheltered accommodation residents.
- Impact assessment on the HOME Hub service with continued efforts to reduce homelessness with partners.

NEIGHBOURHOOD

AND COMMUNITY STANDARD



This standard is about engaging with other relevant parties so that tenants can live in safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods and feel safe in their homes.

Refurbishing the play area at Rainscar

Work to replace and create a new playground at Rainscar play area, Stonydelph, started on Monday 19 February 2024.

The new playground covers a larger area and includes a focus on accessible areas including a low-level hammock, double width steel slide, low level accessible podium steps and hand holds, plus a wider variety of new play equipment.

The design from Kompan has made sure that all the new products have an element of accessibility and inclusivity. Features include moulded hand holds to provide an extra layer of

stability for users as they navigate the unit, several low-level items such as the springer bowl and desks on the multi units, as well as the communication panels.

Outdoor play improves health and well-being while a safe environment encourages independence and development of children's social skills through group and imaginative play with actions such as turn taking and cooperation, whilst also building a child's physical strength, balance, coordination and agility through actions such as climbing, swinging, jumping, crawling and balancing.

Estate inspection programme

Estate inspections are carried out to assess the standards of service being delivered, identify areas for improvement and generally identify any action needed to be taken to address tenancy breaches. We are committed to inspecting all housing areas on a regular basis and inspections are jointly carried out with tenant inspectors.

The estate inspection team will aim to identify issues such as:

- Vandalism
- Abandoned vehicles / illegally parked vehicles
- Graffiti
- Litter and fly-tipping
- Dog fouling
- Problems with road maintenance and street lighting
- Health and safety issues
- Neglected homes and gardens, tenancy issues
- Hot spots for antisocial behaviour
- The condition of items such as fences, walls and paving
- The condition of items such as trees, grass, shrubs in communal areas.)



Estate inspections will:

- Provide a high-profile presence in our communities
- Make sure neighbourhoods are cleaner, more attractive and safer
- Improve the physical condition of estates through quick responses to residents' concerns and by identifying potential improvements
- Clear communal areas of fly-tipping, graffiti and rubbish
- Identify overgrown areas
- Identify any street lights which don't work and broken benches and bins
- Make sure agencies take responsibility for issues identified that they are responsible for
- Identify potholes, perishing hard surfaces and uneven and broken paving.

CCTV monitoring shared service agreement

CCTV services in Tamworth are provided in partnership with West Midlands Combined Authority to help develop a safe and secure community.

The overt (open) surveillance camera systems are owned by Tamworth Borough Council and operated in line with the relevant general data protection regulations, as well as good practice guidelines issued by the Information Commissioner's Office. This is to make sure the need for public protection can be balanced with respect for individual privacy.

As part of the shared service agreement with the West Midlands Combined Authority, Tamworth benefits from:

- CCTV monitored 24 hours a day from a state-of-the-art control centre in Birmingham
- Expertise and intelligence including ISO 27001 National Quality Assurance Accreditation
- Working across boundaries with other councils and police forces
- An upgraded fully digital HD system and superior video analytics
- Shared access to police analysts and radio links to the police
- Partnership working with people who use Tamworth's Storennet and Nightnet radio surveillance systems to proactively reduce and manage crime in the town

During the last 12 months the council has also been involved in the new Martyn's law event notification CCTV process, supporting events across Tamworth mitigating terrorist threats. Cameras have also been upgraded at Ankerside, St Editha's, the Job Centre and Castle Gate

CCTV shared service agreement with West Midlands Combined Authority 2020-2027

West Midlands Combined Authority

- Research into best practice and shared services
- Economies of scale and efficiencies with maintenance contracts
- Maximise staffing resource, deployed based on evidence
- Cross-border collaboration with train station and bus service in context of wider infrastructure network
- County lines insight and intelligence

Tamworth Borough Council

- Improved service offer with digital police analysis
- Faster upgrades to infrastructure
- Reduced costs
- Cross-border collaboration with neighbouring towns
- Shared expertise with latest codes of practice for surveillance
- Installed and modernised arrangements at the assembly rooms
- Strategic access to wider benefits

- Commenced 30 March 2020
- Entering year 5 of the 7-year term
- Shared service agreement expires 30 March 2027

Riverside high-rise flats

Completed an annual programme of **high-rise health and safety communal block inspections**.

Also completed monthly **lift alarm testing**

Attended tenant consultative group meetings to review and update existing and new high-rise literature

Weekly health and safety inspections at the high-rise Social club, including fire alarm testing

Tailored support offered to high-rise residents with the heating upgrade to include communication, consultation and 1-2-1 support **to residents struggling to programme their heating controls**. A user-friendly guide is being developed with step-by-step instructions.

Working preparations for a new **high-rise working panel** to review areas of health and safety, communications, tenancy issues and breaches and any high-rise refurbishment projects

Sprinkler activation

New sign-up sheet developed to make sure sprinklers are pointed out to all new high-rise residents, the health and safety guide updated to include further detail on how the sprinklers work.

Fire service completed visits to high rise properties to discuss fire safety and a tailored sprinkler activation letter was hand delivered to all high-rise residents.

Antisocial behaviour

Our Neighbourhood Impact Team was formed in 2023 to deal with antisocial behaviour across the borough of Tamworth. The team receive reports of antisocial behaviour which are assessed for appropriate action.

Antisocial behaviour	2023 - 2024
Number of complaints received	388 (tenant complaints only)
Number of hate crimes reported	6
Top complaints by type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Noise ● Pets/animal nuisance ● Verbal abuse/harassment/threats
Top complaints by location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stonydelph ● Glascote ● Tamworth town centre ● Amington
Percentage of reports acknowledged within 24 hours	76% (categories have now been changed to better support customers)
Early interventions taken to resolve cases (this includes warnings, visits, etc.)	365
Enforcement actions taken to resolve cases	7 notice of seeking possession 2 injunctions
Referrals made (for example victim support, mediation, hate crime, domestic abuse)	56 referrals made for support
Percentage of customers satisfied with the outcome of their antisocial behaviour complaint	75%
Successfully closed antisocial behaviour cases (resolved)	Out of the 378 cases 94% of cases was closed (resolved)
Average number of days taken to resolve cases	87 days

Antisocial behaviour awareness week



Our community safety partnership team joined forces with external partners, including local police, to share best practice and get out and about with a visible presence across the borough.

There were lots of activities on offer, including a coffee morning at Marks & Spencer where

PCSO Amber Allsop, Alec Jewkes from Harmony and Claire Turner Neighbourhood Impact Officer, talked to people about any antisocial behaviour issues. Good neighbour agreements were issued throughout the week and with the support of the local police, teams carried out extra visits to talk to residents and offer support and advice on any antisocial behaviour issues.

Antisocial behaviour awareness week was extremely successful in engaging with the local community, meeting new residents and educating people around antisocial behaviour and different ways to resolve it.

Community matters

Community Easter event 2023

Our local Wates team, along with their local supply chain, collected and donated 308 Easter eggs to Wilnecote Junior Academy. Additional support was also provided by sub-contractors: Kingsley Roofing, V-Electric, Blyth, Jeavons Roofing, MIC, Legionella.



Community Christmas event 2023

Christmas bingo at Oakendale was a huge success and welcomed by many residents. Wates rolled up their sleeves to get stuck in and host the event as well as supplying pie and peas, a small glass of something fizzy, mince pies, and bingo prizes.

Along with the bingo, Wates kindly donated a pool table to Oakendale residents which has proved a big hit providing a new activity, a good sense of competitiveness and a new social gathering occasion for all.



What's in store for 2024

- Trial and review of the neighbourhood impact surgeries pilot, in community-based locations for tackling antisocial behaviour and maximising the councils CCTV service.
- Review policies, procedures and the website to make sure information remains up to date, all in consultation with the antisocial behaviour scrutiny group.
- Review the impact of the new triage service including best practice and progress plans to achieve national accreditation through HouseMark.
- Prepare to move to a new antisocial behaviour case management system to allow officers to manage cases in real time while out and about.
- Neighbourhood impact officers will take part in nationally recognised training in antisocial behaviour case management.
- A comprehensive training plan is in place to include training on injunctions, safeguarding and other tools and powers used in tackling antisocial behaviour.
- Neighbourhood investment programme with tenant consultation on local priorities to improve outcomes.
- Review our annual estate inspection programme and feedback to tenants on the actions.
- Introduce new environmental service standards for House Maintenance officers/caretakers
- With local police and substance misuse service, support County Lines
- The antisocial behaviour scrutiny group will examine revised and new processes and report on its findings with improvements for 2024
- Attendance at store watch and pub watch meetings

* The Pub Watch and Store Watch scheme is independently run by the Partnership Against Business Crime in Staffordshire (PABCIS) to link licensed premises/stores within Tamworth, council teams and the partner agencies to review intelligence and share best practices

VALUE FOR MONEY



At Tamworth Borough Council we recognise the importance of demonstrating value for money, this is more than keeping costs low, value for money is also about:

- Comparing costs and performance with other similar housing providers. We assess value for money by using an independent organisation called HouseMark. This organisation compares our services to other councils and registered social landlords. HouseMark produces an annual report which identifies areas for improvement.
- Monitoring tenant satisfaction that rent is providing value for money. This is checked by carrying out regular tenant satisfaction surveys and 2024 saw the introduction of the tenant satisfaction measures survey which will benchmark performance across all housing providers.
- Continuing to remove old inefficient gas appliances and install new 'A' rated appliances, reducing heating and hot water energy costs for tenants across the borough.
- Regularly reviewing budgets and the highest areas of spending.
- Regularly review processes to provide more streamlined cost-effective services for customers
- Provide hands on support to residents at high risk of homelessness to help them secure their home. This has improved success in sustaining tenancies and reduced empty property costs.
- A comprehensive management performance framework exists to identify the performance levels services aim to achieve.
- Investing in council properties to maintain them at a high standard for both current and future tenants.

Did you know?

The following indicators have been agreed with tenants and are being reviewed again in 2024

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Estimated top quartile*
Overall satisfaction with landlord services	78%	78%	TSMs 2024*	86.5%
Average time between lettings	38 days	52 days	73 days	25.92 days
Estate Inspections	10	10	7**	-
Tenant satisfaction with communal cleaning	76%	76%	68%	-
Number of tenants on the database of involvement	417	407	392	-
% of repairs appointments made and kept	97%	95.1%	96.2%	-
Gas servicing CP12	98%	99.93%	100%	100%
% of repairs completed at first visit	95%	87%	89.6%	91.12%***
Customer satisfaction with responsive repairs	97%	85.6%	89.6%	93%
Arrears as a % of rent due	2.77%	2.60%	2.22%	2.04%
Number of Evictions	2	9	8	-

*See performance information on the tenant satisfaction measures (TSM). The regulator introduced these measures to assess how well social housing landlords in England are doing at providing good quality homes and services to their tenants.

** An estate inspection is an inspection of the facilities and grounds, and the exterior and communal parts of an estate comprising a mixture of flats and houses, or a block of flats built on land managed by Tamworth Borough Council. There is a 12-month plan for the inspections across all 10 wards

*** Responsive repairs completed within target timescale (%) as per HouseMark benchmarking performance report March 2024.

YOU SAID, WE DID

Here is a selection of some of the main ‘You said, We did’, headlines that the tenant consultative group have identified.

You said	We did
<p>“High-rise residents are never invited to anything and are certainly never listened to; we are always forgotten”</p>	<p>The high-rise co-ordinator has successfully set up a high-rise tenant consultative group. This group meets at least three times a year with two meetings already attended in 2024. The agenda for all meetings covers areas of health and safety, communication and newsletters, communal areas and immediate environmental issues, and any tenancy breaches. Guest speakers are invited at the group’s request.</p>
<p>“Is there anything the council can do about accidental sprinkler activations”</p>	<p>A new sign-up tick sheet is now in place to make sure sprinklers are pointed out to all new high-rise residents. The highrise health and safety guide has been updated to include further detail about how the sprinklers work. This has been shared to all residents. The fire service have completed visits to high-rise homes to talk about fire safety and a tailored sprinkler activation letter was hand delivered to all residents. In the case of an accidental activation, a tenant would need to claim on their own contents insurance for loss or damage to any personal belongings. To help with the cost, hawse have negotiated a scheme with the Royal and Sun Alliance for tenants to consider, with no excess for any claim, making the scheme extremely cost effective for customers.</p>
<p>“Can we encourage more tenants to get involved and join one of our involved working groups”</p>	<p>An ‘all call for tenants’ leaflet was produced with Tenants’ Voice (the tenant editorial panel) and posted out with the quarterly rent statement to all tenants. Getting involved is a standard item now included within Open House, the tenants’ quarterly, newsletter, an introductory letter is sent to all tenants and every year we have a recruitment campaign for new people to get involved and the successes of all tenant involvement activity is more widely advertised.</p>
<p>“I am really struggling with my heating controls since the heating at the high-rise was improved”</p>	<p>Tailored support has been offered to high-rise residents with the heating upgrade to include, 1-2-1 support for those residents struggling to programme their heating controls and a new friendly user guide is currently being developed, with tenants, with clear step-by-step instructions.</p>



**If you require this information
in another format or language,
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