

**Homes and Neighbourhoods
Islington Council
222 Upper Street N1 1XR**

**Report of: Corporate Director, Ian Swift, Director of Housing Operations
and Deputy Corporate Director**

Date: 3rd April 2024

**February 2024 Housing Scrutiny Achievements during the 2023/2024
financial year**

Homes and Neighbourhoods Overarching

- Positive Housing Ombudsman report to provide direction for further service improvements.
- Obtained the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation.
- First council in central London to pilot the Regulator of Social Housing new inspection framework.
- First council in London to organise the Meet the Housing Ombudsman with the Chief Executive of the Housing Ombudsman service and residents.
- New Housing Association Partnership Agreement launched.
- Private Rented Sector Tenants Charter launched.
- Received positive feedback from the Pilot Inspection from the Regulator of Social Housing.
- Received the largest allocation of capital and revenue funding from central Government in England in England for single homeless people
- Received the largest allocation of capital and revenue funding from central Government in England in England to purchase Ex Right to Buy properties.
- We have purchased 349 Ex Right to Buy properties in Islington.
- Obtained the Stonewall Housing HouseProud accreditation for our LGBTQ+ work.

Housing Operations

Housing Management

- Conducted 80 Community Drop-in sessions for all 36,000 tenants and leaseholders of Islington Council
- Increased tenant satisfaction from 60% in 2022 to 64% in 2023
- Mystery Shopping report showed excellent customer service provision.
- Reduced void car parking bays and garage voids by 55% during 2023.
- New neighbourhood policy produced.
- New ASB procedure updated.
- New mutual exchange procedure updated.
- New succession procedure updated.
- New major works procedure updated.
- Tenant audit process and procedure piloted and will be adopted in the new restructure.
- New property services and housing liaison meetings set up to tackle complex repair and housing issues, plus improved and develop service improvement and new ways of working.
- New Adult Social Care, Housing Needs and housing tenancy management monthly meetings set up to improve operationally complex ASB cases from escalating and increase satisfaction and support for residents.
- New tree procedure and policy task and finish group set up to improve satisfaction surrounding tree management and how trees affect residents.
- New tenant handbook developed to improve sustainability for resident who newly move in
- New tenant moving out guide produced to insure we get back voids in a timely and effect way.
- DAHA accreditation received for both tenancy management and housing need jointly.
- New collaborative working process developed with community safety and housing tenancy management to better manage complex ASB that affects both residents and estates.
- 5 fun days to improve tenancy management and resident engagement delivered and was well received.

Housing Needs

- New Housing Allocations scheme approved by the Executive following Housing Scrutiny Committee assessment.
- Strategic Review completed by the Housing Scrutiny Committee relating to Overcrowding with recommendations made.
- New Temporary Accommodation policies and procedures adopted to promote Islington Council's ambitious approach towards our residents.
- £1 out of every £5 spent in London relating to Rough Sleeping and prevention of single homelessness has been allocated to Islington Council (£11 million)

- £1 out of every £5 spent in England relating to the provision of accommodation for people from Ukraine and Afghanistan and homeless people has been allocated to Islington Council (£102 million to buy 410 ex right to buy homes)
- Lowest numbers of people identified sleeping rough in central London with Islington Council reducing the numbers of people sleeping rough by 6% in Islington compared to a 32% increase in London.
- New IT system installed to improve the services for our homeless households.
- Despite the reduction in of available social housing properties, the team have managed to assist 69 downsizing tenants to move to smaller homes and bringing back 53 homes back to allocate for our overcrowded residents on our housing list.
- Matched 16 under occupiers with overcrowded Islington Council tenants through our Smart move Scheme.
- Becoming one of the first communities for Built for Zero in the UK, along with Brent Council, using real time data to make rough sleeping rare and brief, working collaboratively with partners to remove system barriers, where these occur.
- Providing our residents with a personalised and front face housing service at all times
- Rapid action to support over 200 refugees evicted from hotels (as of September 2023) with little notice, ensuring we have provided a package of support that included a combination of housing and financial support.

Estate Services

- Continued with the excellent concierge, cleaning and caretaking services which are highly valued by the residents.
- **Estate Services South Team** – Over 31 estate-based improvements made across 25 estates. See appendix one for details of these improvements.
- **Estate Services North Team** – Over 51 estate-based improvements made across 35 estates. See appendix one for details of these improvements.
- **Estate Services East Team** – Achieved caretaking inspection target for the year despite having 3 vacancies.
 - Our apprentice secured a full time Quality Assurance Officer position in the East team.
 - Praised by TRAs for the work done.
 - The team attended evening TRA meetings for all TRAs in the East, ensuring engagement with our resident representatives.
 - Worked alongside the Capital works team to start the process of replacing the lifts on Harvist Estate
 - Various Thriving Neighbourhood schemes happening, new play equipment agreed and being installed on Holiday House, new storage sheds on Hawthorne Close and new security door/locks in the Finsbury Ward to prevent rough sleeping/drug taking in intake cupboards.

- Walkabout with the Social Housing regulators on the Andover Estate that received positive feedback and thanks from Jed Young
- **Estate Services West Team** –Resident Satisfaction Surveys (RSS) issued to more than 40% of our residents with invites for joint estate inspections. We now have regular joint inspections with interested residents across our estates. Acknowledgement and individual responses to residents who requested feedback to RSS.
 - Nailour Estate Community Garden- Worked with residents to revive arguably Islington’s largest communal garden for food growing and plants, by rebuilding and issuing plots, improving safety, building local relationships and handing over to residents for their management.
 - Working in partnership to improve security to Pollards Close via specified access keys thereby, preventing authorised access into the blocks and enhancing resident safety and comfort.
 - Working in partnership to deliver 42 Thriving Neighbourhood projects to our estates.
 - Joint visits to 30 estates/blocks with Waste/Recycling and Grounds Maintenance staff to identify and resolve relevant estate and resident concerns.
- **Service Delivery Team:**
 - Moved to 8x8 phone system and now meeting the SLA of 95% answered calls, we are in fact to date answering over 97% of calls.
- Housing Community Gardening Team making good progress in developing and maintaining our communal garden areas, working with communities. Examples of work include:
 - Gardening club established at Andover community garden with several residents attending every week.
 - Completed works on Albert Mansions for front and back gardens, ongoing maintenance of grass cutting, leaf removal and weeding.
 - Installed new benches at Barnes Court.

Estate Maintenance Team

- **Communal Repairs** - completed over 7,500 repairs to publicly accessible areas (including reactive daily emergencies)
- **Fire Actions** - Closed over 650 requests to communal Housing stock/assets.
- **Homeshelter**– In collaboration with Local Police & Housing Options Team have completed over 40 HIGH priority enhanced security measures to properties keeping victims of domestic abuse safe.
- **Assisted Decorations** – Completed over 70 internal refurb upgrades to those who are elderly, vulnerable and/or disabled to improve their well-being and living space.
- **Bike Hangar Maintenance** – Over 200 inspection/maintenance visits to borough wide locations of newly installed bike hangers to ensure facilities are in good working order for usage continuity.
- **Thriving Neighbourhoods** – In house team project managed and completed 60 schemes on behalf of approved requests from colleagues, Cllrs and local residents.

Housing Transport

- Implemented over 100 estate Traffic Management Orders to maintain safe access for residents and services.
- Ongoing program of re-purposing parking spaces to promote cycling and recycling as a transport modal shift.
- Provided over 50 more secure cycle storage facilities, in a variety of design solutions tailored to local needs and environmental context, offering over 350 more spaces for estate residents to store bikes securely and conveniently.

Thriving Neighbourhoods

- Successfully Launched Thriving Neighbourhoods programme – a cross council, collaborative, improvement programme
- Developed landing page and online form.
- Developed Power Bi reporting dashboard for staff and members.
- Successful engagement with residents across the borough
- Over 1000 suggestions for improvements received from residents, staff and members.
- Approx 6 million funding allocated to improve our housing estates.
- Highest % of projects completed to date in the north of borough (Hillrise/Tufnell)
- **215** projects agreed for programme 1 (18months)
- **120** Completed to date
- **12** projects awaiting start date.
- **23** consultations underway
- **9** projects on site
- **12** start dates confirmed.

Complete projects by Improvement Type	
Improvement Type	Number of projects
Cycle Storage	30
Landscape Improvement	14
Other (benches)	17
Security	16
Existing Play Area	7
Accessibility	12
Recycling	3
Community Centre	6
Estate Storage	5
Lighting	5
Multi Use game area	2
Resurfacing	3
Mobility scooter storage	0
New play area	0

Outdoor Gym	0
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Appendix one

Estate Area Team	Estate	Improvement/Achievement
South	Finsbury Estate	Upgrade to the playground
		Re-establishing the gardening club
		Installation of a memorial bench for a resident in the communal garden
		New cycle facilities
		Bird control measures
South	Coltash Court	New communal garden planting
		Additional grounds maintenance works to remove overgrown ivy and shrubs from roof of plant rooms
		New recycling bin enclosures
		New communal garden planting
South	Theseus Walk	New lumber point
South	Claremont Close	New lumber point
South	Whitbread Estate	Removal of old broken planters and re-planting with residents, new benches on 1st floor podium for residents
South	Baring Court	Resurfacing of car park & New cycle facility
South	St Lukes Estate	New rose garden planting
South	Cyrus House	Upgrade to benches in communal courtyard & communal pram shed usage for all residents set up.
South	Earlstone Estate	Upgrade planting to 1st floor podium

South	Crayle House	New fencing to support with ASB issues & new recycling enclosures.
South	Pleydell Estate	New fencing for MUGA to support with ASB issues.
South	Holford House	Upgrade to disability ramp to support with access issues.
South	Arbon Court	New cycle facility
South	Maldon Close	New lumber point
South	Providence Court	New recycling enclosures
South	Greenwood House	New cycle facility
South	Prideaux House	Declutter in the garden & new recycling bins.
South	Brookfield House	New ramp for accessibility to bin area
South	Yardley Street	Removal of overgrown ivy
South	Grimthorpe House	New recycling enclosures
South	Kestrel House`	Upgrade to playground, resurfacing, new landscaping, new lumber point, recycling enclosures & new cycle storage.
South	Hedingham Close	New recycling bin enclosures
South	Chadworth House	New recycling bin enclosures
South	Kings Square	Upgrade to the MUGA
South	Partridge Court	Resurfacing of garage area/Car park

North	Gainsborough House	Gating of Gainsborough House to address ASB issue (TN scheme)
North	Wedmore Estate	New Build and related communal improvement works
		Install Slide Munts to Barbecue (in collaboration with the TRA)
		Upgrade Buggy Store to Accommodate 5Buggy's (in collaboration with the TRA & New Build)
		Upgrade Lodge works for Nikiru Amadi (Female caretaker)
North	Holly Park	Upgrading 2 children play areas (TN programme)
		Accessibility work (TN programme)
North	Hornsey Rise Estate	Upgrading Children play area on Hornsey Rise Estate (TN programme)
		canopy upgrade (TN scheme)
		bike hangar (TN scheme)
North	Holly Park Estate	Clearance of abandoned food growing allotment space
		Cycle storage (TN scheme)
North	Calvert Court	Installing water heater for the caretaker
North	Camden Estate	Form Ramps in Caretakers Storage Room
		Formation of New Lumber Point
North	Pangbourne House	Form Ramp in Bin Chamber
North	Tufnell Park Road	Security Works to Main Door
North	Girdlestone Estate	Upgrade Welfare Facility to WC Cubicle
North	Wedmore Estate	Adaptions work to Locking Posts to the Courtyard

North	Palmerstone House	Installed 3 Number Drop Posts to control unauthorised parking/access
North	Tansley Close	Upgrade Caretakers Lodge
North	Salisbury Walk	Installation of Bicycle shelter
North	Saltdene House	Installation of Security Cover to Cage to address rough sleeper sleeping in the boiler room
North	Beachcroft Way	Installation of Lumber Point
North	Albermarle Mansions	Clearance of historic combustible items from the roof space
North	Fairdene Court	Installation of New Drying Lines
North	New Orleans Walk	Clearance of Roof canopies
North	Lower Hilldrop Estate	Clearance of Roof canopies
North	New Orleans Walk	Industrial jet washing off's the communal stairs
North	Penderyn Way	Road resurfacing and associated garden works (TN/TMO scheme)
North	Hood Court	Sheds and Ground upgrade works (TN scheme)
North	Wilfred Fienburgh	Providing mulch for the garden group
North	Crouch Hall Court	Roof net done for the 3G pitch.
North	Daren Court	Accessibility Improvements (TN scheme)
North	Hillrise Mansions	MUGA upgrade works (TN scheme)
North	Girdlestone Estate	Community Centre entrance revamp (TN scheme)
		green barrier planters (TN scheme)

		Cycle storage (TN scheme)
North	Tansley Close	Removed disused barrier gate (TN scheme)
North	Moelwyn Hughes Court	Upgrading of Existing play area (TN scheme)
		Cycle storage (TN scheme)
North	Hornsey Lane Estate Community Centre	Entrance cover (TN scheme)
		outdoor safety play surface (TN scheme)
		Bifold doors (TN scheme)
North	Tremlett Grove	Security gate removal (TN scheme)
North	Hargrave Hall Community Centre	Rear Garden fence (TN scheme)
North	Grovedale Estate	Landscape improvement (TN scheme)
North	Camden Estate, Rowstock Gardens	Recycling area upgrade (TN scheme)
		Landscape improvement (Replacing rotten wooden raised planters in community garden) (TN scheme)

Leaseholder services

- Increased leaseholder satisfaction from 33% in 2022 to 40% in 2023
- Maintaining good service charge collection rates (collected 99.31% of available annual service charge income during the billing period Oct 22 to Sep 23) despite the difficult economic climate.
- Introducing a service charge disputes procedure.
- Improving major works payment options to ensure they are still affordable for leaseholders despite the rising cost of living.
- Reviewing the leasebacks procedure and guidance for freeholders (following the self-assessment exercise against the Housing Ombudsman's Managing Agents and Private Freeholders Spotlight Report).
- Working with Digital Services to launch housing online modules for service charges and Right to Buy.

Rent Income services.

- Rent Income is one of the best in London for performance as is in the top quartile of performance.
- We have been working to implement the restructure agreed in 2023 for the Income Service. We have been recruiting to the new posts in the restructure and hope to have all the positions fully staffed to go live in April 2024.
- We aim to shift the focus of the Income Recovery team from carrying out transactional, process driven enforcement to one of support and intervention, working with residents to implement long-term strategies to promote sustainable tenancies, greater security and tackle socio-economic disadvantage.
- 47,704 calls were made to tenants who were in arrears and 1,271 home visits were carried out.
- As at the 3/12/2024 we had collected 99.48% of the rent due to date for 2023/24. The collection rate including the previous year's arrears stood at 95.32%.
- 2 x TMO's /Co-op's returned the management of rents to Income management (Elthorne and Holbrooke) – closed co-op accounts, transferred balances, set up new accounts for residents.

No Recourse to Public Fund services

- Islington has become the 4th London Borough to obtain City of Sanctuary accreditation, and 13th nationally.
- To mark this wonderful achievement and launch our 'Islington Welcome' refugee and migrant strategy we will be hosting an event for residents, partners, council staff and councillors on 5th February 2024 at Islington Assembly Hall.
- NRPF Connect database user-base raised to 83 local authorities nationally, 349 people trained on system in 2023, digital immigration status enabled, all 15,000 status checks in the year completed by the Home Office team within agreed SLA.
- Over 78 training sessions completed in 2023 for over 1000 LA staff on LA 'safety net' duties achieving income of £140k.
- Revised policy recommendations made by the NRPF Network made considering 2022-2023 data report and collective LA spend of £74 million on 'safety net' support for people with NRPF (this is being released January 2024)
- Islington is the leading borough for refugee resettlement, with 40 families and 192 people now settled – more than any other London Borough.
- DLUHC LAHF funding obtained and used to purchase up to 310 ex -right to buy properties for continued participation in refugee resettlement schemes.
- Excellent partnerships build with Adult Community Learning afforded delivery of intensive English bespoke classes for 20 Afghans at entry level with government funded childcare and outdoor activities. Joint working with iWork

and employment support organisations led to 15 Afghan, Ukrainian and NRPF service users securing employment in retail, hospitality, council, social care, and charity sectors. 2 of the Afghan clients have been successful gaining apprenticeship positions within the council.

- Excellent partnership with Health Prom, KMEWO, Union Chapel, All Change, Refugee and Migrant Forum enabled the delivery of weekly women groups, focus groups, art, and peer support groups for Afghan, Ukrainian, residents with NRPF and people seeking asylum resident at 2 contingency hotels.
- During 2023, the service delivered Afghan New Year (Nowruz), Refugee Job Fair, Refugee Week, Ukraine Independence Day, Afghan Picnic, International Women's Day, and Christmas social events.
- Contracts with the Traumatic Stress Clinic and the Brandon Centre facilitated assessments and appropriate mental health therapy for Afghan adults, young people, and children from 37 households.
- At least 1,108 asylum seekers passed through asylum contingency hotels in Islington during 2023, including at least 374 individuals who arrived in 2023. Currently there are 676 asylum seekers in the two asylum contingency hotels.
- Of the 435 newly granted refugees evicted since August (297 for known reasons; 138 left for unknown reasons), 82 people have been supported into accommodation in London, Swindon and Birmingham by Housing.
- Innovative steps taken to engage with the people we support – NRPF forum, COS workshops – leading to – strategic recommendations for change, an increase in the winter clothing grant paid to NRPF service users at Christmas.
- Excellent partnership with Cloudesley led to the service taking over the administration of the Adult Welfare grant to Islington residents with NRPF in severe financial hardship. Applications to the grant (max £500) will open in February.
- Utilising grant funding innovatively, issuing 285 development grants to Ukraine refugees, 87 development grants to Afghan refugees, and 249 grants to asylum seekers granted refugee status but at risk of homelessness.

Housing Investigations team

- Recovered 34 properties to date that had been subject to fraud and misuse.
- The value of the fraud recovered is more than £1.2m, in temporary accommodation costs.
- There are 12 more properties waiting on eviction dates due to Housing Fraud.
- 31 additional cases currently with Legal service for action.
- Recovered £12,000 in Unlawful profits with 3 further cases worth a total £150k.
- Prevented the permanent loss of a property and £127k discount through a fraudulent Right to Buy.
- Introduced the use of High Court Enforcement Officers as an alternative to the County Court Bailiffs to reduce the lengthy and costly delays in eviction dates.

- Have been chosen to be part of a national pilot with the NFI to match Airbnb data across our housing stock to identify any illegal subletting.
- Working more effectively with our HA partners and are taking on tenancy fraud referrals in return for nomination rights rather than fee. There has already been an increase in referrals from our partners and we have assisted in the recovery of 1 HA property and secured the nomination rights.

Business Improvement, strategy, asset management and policy development

- Supported the delivery of the Social Housing Regulator Pilot for the new Regulatory Regime – co-ordinated the inspection visit, numerous document submissions and learning from the experience.
- Lead the Investment and Planning multi-disciplinary workstream of the Building Safety Board to complete a comprehensive surveying package for all 87 tall blocks to identify required works to those blocks and priority for that work.
- Provided high quality Programme Management resources to the Building Safety Programme, which was recognised as good practice during the SHR pilot inspection.
- Established departmental arrangements for delivery of inspection readiness through the Service Improvement Board, procurement of a critical friend and provision of support to work stream leads.
- Lead on the Governance, Infrastructure and Data workstream of Service Improvement Board to put in place key items of the regulatory requirements and inspection regime.
- Support of core improvement work throughout the department including key areas of Housing Ombudsman Investigation, Damp and Mould response work & self-assessment against Housing Ombudsman Spotlight Reports, improvement action plan development, consultation responses on the new regulatory regime, delivery of a HCLIC compliant computer system, implementation of the changes to the Housing Allocations policy.
- Developed a Resident Engagement Strategy, carried out a tenant and leaseholder TSM compliant satisfaction survey, completed an initial self-assessment against the TPAS engagement standards, put in place arrangements and begun recruitment for a new Resident Service Improvement Group.
- Development of a public facing HRA business plan, in partnerships with finance.
- Refresh of the 30-year Housing Investment Plan, assessing the required resources for maintaining homes to a suitable standard.
- Commissioning of the 24/25 new starts programme, following condition reviews with the Capital Delivery Team.
- Delivery of property acquisitions programme, increasing the supply of suitable and affordable temporary accommodation and humanitarian response.
- Supporting and enabling the roll out of fibre broadband across our housing estates through wayleave agreements with providers to support the safe roll out of this key utility to council residents.

- Supporting TMOs to understand and prepare for the changes and challenges presented by the new regulatory regime and changes in fire safety requirements (especially for tall building).
- Project management of the successful delivery of the hand back of the rent function for two housing co-ops to the council – affecting 130 tenants.
- Aligned all complaints handling within the department, into a single consistent approach, moving towards significantly improved performance by Q3.
- Supported the delivery of the new complaint's module by the corporate complaints team and Islington Digital Services – which will improve our ability to identify trends and learn from complaints.
- Working with Partners to drive improvement in their services and ensure they are ready for regulatory changes through a joint improvement board. Setting up reporting arrangements through the council's governance structures to demonstrate service delivery and regulatory compliance. Gaining improved oversight of their resident engagement and feedback arrangements through this process.
- Using existing clienting arrangements and improvement arrangements to ensure Partners are also focused on the improvement priorities of the council and the finding of the Ombudsman investigations and ensuring they are involved in the development and shaping of these improvements as a key delivery partner.

Housing Property Services 23/24 Achievements

Building Safety Compliance

Preparations for compliance with the new building safety regimes continue and are now at an advanced stage. Islington's building safety IT platform Twinnedit is developing well and will soon be accessible to any resident living in one of the Council's Higher Risk Buildings (or HRB, those of 18m or 7 storeys in height). Residents will be able to use the Twinnedit platform to view key safety information and messages, evacuation videos, as well as reporting building safety concerns to the building safety teams. The Twinnedit system will also help the Council comply with the new Safety Case requirements for HRB from April 2024, allowing direct access by the new Building Safety Regulator (BSR) to assess compliance and safety of the Council's tallest buildings.

The Council has also recently launched its resident engagement strategy to over 5500 residents in Higher Risk Buildings (HRB). The consultation seeks view on how residents wish to be engaged on building safety matters in the future, including involvement in our decision-making processes, building safety policy and performance. The first block level engagement meeting took place at Peregrine House on 31st January, providing an opportunity for residents to see what we are

doing in respect of building safety, to ask questions and inform what we do in the future. This session also provided an opportunity for residents to share details of any vulnerabilities they or household members may have, which may put them at greater risk in the event of a fire or other building emergency. Where consent is provided, the Council will share this information the Fire and Rescue Service, to help keep residents safe. These sessions will be rolled out to all HRB over the course of 2024 and beyond.

All 87 Council Higher Risk Buildings (HRB) registered with Building Safety Regulator (BSR) and all HRB registered on London Fire Brigade (LFB) High Rise portal, with block/flat layout drawings uploaded as well as external wall data. Provision of Key Building Information (KBI) to the BSR completed in September 2023. Resident engagement strategy for building safety in HRB has been consulted on, sign-off imminent prior to sharing with HRB residents.

Safety case report (SCR) for compliance with the Building Safety Act signed off in December, SCR report can now be generated at the push of a virtual button. Secure Information Boxes (SIB) installed in all HRB, complete with layout drawings.

Fire Door inspection team created, first full year of annual flat front entrance door and quarterly communal fire door inspection programme (blocks 11m+) successfully completed checking the safety of over 17,000 doors.

Expansion of external wall investigations on blocks 11m-18m or 5/6 storey properties. The service is currently considering a program to look at medium rise stock.

Implementation of new resident/building safety structure. With additional posts to ensure compliance and safety of residents.

The service maintained an average compliance for domestic gas >99.5%, despite changes to Court process.

OneServe dashboards were further developed to improve management of contracts and performance and compliance.

Effective roll out of the Broadband programme ensuring contractors on site are working safely.

Improved compliance monitoring for accurate reporting on Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) relating to building safety.

Apprenticeships with new IT provider

The providers of the Twinnedit safety system, DEEO, has worked collaboratively with Islington in supporting their social value commitment to provide apprenticeships for residents. DEEO has taken on two apprentices as well as a permanent member of Staff that live within Islington. They provided a training course over four weeks for twelve unemployed Islington residents.

Using Government Grant to Improve our Homes.

Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) wave one works have been completed, in which several street properties have been upgraded based on their low SAP rating. The team secured a grant and match funding to undertake internal wall insulation, heating upgrades and improvements to properties with a low SAP rating reducing the cost of heating these homes and their carbon output.

Work has commenced on delivering SHDF wave two improvements to homes this a much larger project with over three million pounds in grant.

The Team secured Heat Network Funding to retrofit Bevin Court. The procurement, planning and funding is now complete, and we have issued an order to a contractor to start works on Bevin Court, a heating retrofit project that will see the installation of a net zero carbon heating solution to an architecturally important social housing block.

Investing in Homes

For the third year running the service has hit its target spend for the capital budget of over £50 million, which is significantly up from the previous years' budgets of £15 million and £38 million. This money is used to improve homes safety, heating, and facilities across the borough.

Works are on site at Andover Estate undertaking £15million of works to reduce damp and mould. The service is working with University College London to find other estates that would benefit from investment to prevent fuel poverty and damp.

The Heating Team obtained Heat Network Efficiency Scheme funding for boiler house optimisation schemes. Improving the efficiency and reliability of the systems. They also Installed BMS (automatic control and monitoring) systems to the majority of our sixty-one communal heating plantrooms (only ones outstanding linked to Bunhill). These have significantly improved performance this winter.

Summer improvement works, tighter contract management and BMS install have Improved reliability of communal heating systems education in complaints over 23/24 winter.

Works have commenced on Harvist and St Lukes lift replacement. The service has also tendered contracts for a five-year lift investment program targeting worst performing lifts using repairs data.

Internal Architects Team commissioned by New Build and Community Wealth Building on a range of projects.

Repairs Delivery

The Service have managed a significant increase in repairs delivering over 110, 000 repairs throughout the year.

Despite the increase in work load the service has maintained first time fix at 86%. The repairs Call Centre HD have answered over 200,000 calls (95% in-time)

We have seen an increase in customer satisfaction over the year Customer satisfaction is at 86%. (Two percent improvement from 22-23)

This year the Repairs Service delivered over nine hundred Voids properties with improved turnaround times. The service has also been reservicing purchased temporary accommodation units getting them ready for their tenants.

Damp and Mould

Damp and Mould Cases remain high as the service continues to encourage residents to report any issues and revisited three years of prior cases. The team dealt with over 5500 damp and mould cases.

All surveyors have been trained in correct diagnosis, managers and directors have trained over three hundred partners (social workers, health visitors, TMO managers etc) to recognise and report damp. The team have also set up special referral forms for GP practices.

The service has installed over one hundred remote sensors related to damp and mould to help residents and alert the council to any issues. These systems have been offered to over one thousand residents and are looking at how we can improve uptake.

Repairs Improvement

LOCALZ or Where's My Operative has been mobilised to all repair's teams. This is the application that allows residents to track their repair and feedback on satisfaction immediately. Update and satisfaction have been positive, and the service will roll this out to contractors in the next few months.

Back stop team & an expanded leaks teams have been set up. This team is to assist in service delivery to ensure a better customer journey, reduce health and safety concerns, protect the budget, and increase productivity. The service has learned from feedback that some repairs can be complex, and these teams are there to support tenants in these cases.

New Improved Repairs Dashboards are in final testing ahead of roll out in coming weeks.

The team have reviewed and rewritten the Repairs Policy including consultation with residents. This policy is now in the final stages of approval and sign off.

Following feedback from residents and complaints we have revised and improved our Damp and Mould procedure and No Access procedure. These changes are in place.

To reduce peak demand on gas repairs service we introduced the "Flick test" encouraging residents to try their boiler before the weather got cold. This program was delivered in September and resulted in far fewer delays in gas repairs.

The Repairs Service also undertook Winter preparedness program where twenty-two boilers renewed based on repeat repairs issues.

After being on hold due to budget constraints for two years the Roofing and Gutter cleaning program was reinstated in October undertaking preventive maintenance work at targeted sites based on repairs data.

Resident led review of staff training.

HPS organised a focus day for residents at the Training Centre as part of the service improvement plan. The purpose of the day was to involve residents in how we conduct and review staff training, which included a tour of the Training Centre and a DIY session. The residents fed back that there was a noticeable improvement to the quality of service from our operatives, stating that they are more approachable, engaging and providing a better service. The Service Director attended answer residents questions on service delivery pre- and post-covid, contractors, staff development, and net carbon zero. Overall, it was a positive resident engagement session and residents stated, “really interesting and reassuring to know LBI take training so seriously.”

Improving our Response to Legal Disrepair Claims

The service is closing more cases than we are opening, leading to a downward trend in Legal Disrepair. Having legal case managers that are driving the completion of repairs alongside teams ensuring repairs are conducted as quickly possible has also had a positive effect on this. A reduction in Legal Disrepair is contrary to the trends experienced by other London boroughs, many having over a thousand cases.

Reducing Agency Costs

After undertaking a permanent recruitment drive, the repairs team now have twenty-four new staff members here on a permanent basis, reducing agency costs significantly. Further reductions are planned over the next few months.

Women Apprentices moving to Permanent Roles and Undertaking Outreach

Charlotte Lazarus completed her AM2 exam with a distinction. This is the first time one of the repairs apprentices has passed first time and achieved a distinction. Charlotte is now a permanent operative graduated from apprentice and is playing a key role with our outreach work, encouraging women into construction.