

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE (via Committees Briefing)		
DATE:	9 th MARCH 2023	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	HOUSING UPDATE & PROGRAMME OF WORKS TO COUNCIL HOMES 2023/2024		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR ELLIE EMBERSON	PORTFOLIO:	HOUSING
SERVICE:	HOUSING	WARDS:	ALL
LEAD OFFICER:	ZELDA WOLFLE	TEL:	0118 937 2285
JOB TITLE:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HOUSING & COMMUNITIES	E-MAIL:	Zelda.wolfle@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council’s 5 year Housing Strategy was adopted by Policy Committee in September 2020. The vision for the strategy is “For all our residents to have the opportunity to live in a good quality sustainable home they can afford within a thriving neighbourhood.” Key to this is the supply of accommodation, the quality of accommodation and neighbourhoods and support to residents.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on Housing Service performance and key achievements delivered.
- 1.3 In addition, the report sets out the maintenance work programme for Council homes for the next financial year. The Council’s programme continues to have a key focus on low carbon initiatives.
- 1.4 Appendix 1 - Works to Housing Stock 23/24 Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
Appendix 2 - Works to Housing Stock 23/24 General Fund
Appendix 3 - Works to Housing Stock By Ward 23/24

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee note the Housing Service performance and key achievements delivered in the past financial year as outlined in paragraphs 3 & 4 of this report
- 2.2 That Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee note the planned maintenance work programme for Council homes for 2023/24 as detailed in Appendices 1 to 3 of this report
- 2.3 That Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Housing & Communities in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing to: (a) procure; and (b) award and (c) enter into all necessary contracts relating to the individual schemes for the 23/24 work programme as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 of this report subject to sufficient funding being available in the approved Budget to meet the cost of the relevant schemes.

3. HOUSING PERFORMANCE - COMPLAINTS

- 3.1 In March 2022, as part of the enactment of the Social Housing White Paper, the Housing Ombudsman published an updated Complaints Handling Code (CHC) for all Social Landlords, which came into effect on the 1st October 2022. A replacement Housing Ombudsman Scheme was also implemented on the same day, and compliance with the CHC is a mandatory requirement for membership to the scheme
- 3.2 It is now required that a landlord's performance in relation to complaints will be reported to a 'Governing Body' on an annual basis. Complaints performance is already reported quarterly to the Lead Member for Housing and will now also be included in the Annual Housing Update and Works Programme report, to Housing Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee each March.
- 3.3 In 2022 the Housing Service (including the repairs service located within the Environmental and Commercial Services portfolio) responded to 98 complaints at stage 0, and 177 complaints at Stage1, which is 275 in total (representing 5% of tenants).
- 3.4 These complaints can be broken down into the following areas:

Area	Number	Percentage
Community Partnerships	12	4.4%
Housing Needs	52	18.9%
Property Development	0	0
Property Services	22	8%
Sheltered Housing	0	0
Strategic Housing	0	0
Tenant Services	91	33.1%
Repairs	98	35.6%
Total	275	-

- 3.5 Of the 275 complaints the outcomes are listed in the table below:

Outcome	Number	Percentage ¹
Upheld	139	51%
Partially Upheld	30	11%
Not upheld	71	26%
Multiple Outcomes	24	9%
No Outcome ²	11	4%

3.6 59% of complaints were responded to within the required timescale.

3.7 The most common themes for the complaints are listed below:

- Quality of Service Received
- Communication
- Time Taken to Resolve Issue/ Delays
- Failure to Resolve Issue
- Lack of Support
- Policy Issue

3.8 Improving performance in this area is a key focus for the service and new systems to track, manage and embed learning from complaints are to be implemented over the next 2 months.

4. HOUSING PERFORMANCE -TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY

4.1 In Autumn 2022 Reading Borough Council Housing Service commissioned NWA Social and Market Research to undertake a satisfaction survey with a random sample of tenants. The survey consisted largely of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's) which will be required by the Housing Regulator from April 2023. A total of 560 tenants completed the questionnaire, 71 online and 489 over the telephone. The overall data therefore has a confidence interval of +/-4%.

4.2 The results from the Survey were largely positive with the Council's Housing Service's performance either improving or staying the same in comparison to the 2020 survey. As outlined above complaints performance is an area requiring improvement. The results of the survey are outlined in the table below:

	Top-Line Findings – Reading Borough Council Housing Services November 2022 Tranches 1, 2 and 3: Based on 561 Responses Overall (2020, 625 responses overall)	2022	2020	Change ('22 - '20)
Q1	Overall satisfaction with RBC Housing Services	82%	81%	
Q2b	Satisfaction with overall repairs service over the last 12 months (2020: Satisfaction with repairs or maintenance work in last 12 months)	77%	74%	
Q3	Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair	73%	NA	

¹ Adds to 101% due to rounding

² Not enough evidence to decide

Q4	Satisfaction that RBC Housing Services provide a home that is well maintained	84%	NA	
Q5	Satisfaction that RBC Housing Services provide a home that is safe (2020: RBCHS provides a home that is safe and secure)	88%	86%	
Q6	Satisfaction that RBC Housing Services listen to your views and act upon them	79%	69%	
Q7	Satisfaction that RBC Housing Services keep you informed about things that matter to you (2020: How good/poor do you feel RBCHS is at keeping you informed)	87%	82%	
Q8	Agree that 'My landlord treats me fairly and with respect' (2020: Satisfaction that RBCHS treats tenants fairly)	91%	81%	
Q9b	Satisfaction with RBC Housing Services' approach to complaints handling (2020: Satisfaction with how RBCHS deals with complaints)	29%	18%	
Q10b	Satisfaction that RBC Housing Services keep communal areas clean and well maintained	70%	NA	
Q11	Satisfaction that RBC Housing Services make a positive contribution to your neighbourhood	85%	NA	
Q12	Satisfaction with RBC Housing Services' approach to handling ASB	67%	NA	
Q13a	Satisfaction that RBC Housing Services give you the opportunity to make your views known	84%	64%	
Q14	Staff at RBC Housing Services pleasant and polite? (Yes)	94%	95%	
Q15	Likelihood of recommending to family and friends – promoters or passive	82%	80%	
Q16	RBC Housing Services has stayed the same or got better in the past year	83%	87%	

4.3 Further interrogation of the data will be completed to understand any age, demographic or geographical difference in satisfaction levels and resulting actions as necessary. Linked with the data set out in section 3 of this report, key actions will also be put in place to improve tenant satisfaction with how the Council handles complaints.

4. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2023/24

4.1 The Service has achieved a great deal this year against a backdrop of recruitment difficulties in key areas including Housing Repairs, Housing Property Services and Tenant Services and in the face of a cost of living crisis affecting our tenants. A few of the key achievements are listed below:

- Low carbon improvements in a further 18 properties in Kentwood ward to reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency. The properties benefitted from the installation of new external wall insulation and render, triple glazed windows and mechanical ventilation. This brings the total number of properties with low carbon improvements on the estate to 43
- A further 40 Air Source heat pumps were installed in Granville Road High-Rise flats to reduce carbon outputs and improve energy efficiency. The remaining High-Rise flats at Granville Road are on this coming years programme.
- Continued support and debt advice to our tenants ensured that we maintained top quartile rent collection levels of over 99 % despite the increasing financial pressure on our residents as a result of the pandemic. Additional support was put in place for residents with the continued refresh of the 'Money Matters'³ webpages providing advice, information and assistance to people facing the cost of living crisis
- The Council's Local Authority New Build programme continues to deliver new homes with 15 key worker flats at the old Arthur Hill swimming pool site and 37 homes in North Street due to be handed over in the Spring of this year. Planning applications are shortly due to be submitted for two mixed general needs housing and adult social care provision at the old Central Pool site and a site on Hexham Road expected to deliver a further 103 properties
- Despite levels of increasing homelessness and rising private sector rents the Housing Needs Service maintained the position of not placing homeless families in shared B&B accommodation
- Maintaining high tenant satisfaction levels as detailed in the survey results
- Successful bid to DLUHC for £2.8 million to maintain and increase rough sleeping services
- The Council was shortlisted as finalists for the best social housing initiative for the modular pods in the MJ Awards, APSE Awards and LGC Awards

5.0 PROGRAMME OF WORKS 2023/24

5.1 Housing Property Services manages the planned maintenance, cyclical repairs and void works to approximately 5,662 Council homes.

5.2 The Service has a responsibility to ensure that the housing stock is well maintained in accordance with the Decent Homes Standard and that Council homes are safe and healthy places to live.

³ <https://www.reading.gov.uk/housing/money-matters/>

- 5.3 The Service continues to have a strong focus on improving the thermal efficiency of homes in line with the Council's Climate Change ambitions ensuring homes can be heated efficiently and cost effectively, thus reducing their carbon footprint and reducing fuel poverty. The Council is investing £26.1m between 2023/24 and 2025/26 in moving towards zero carbon options in terms of retrofitting existing housing stock in line with the Council's Climate Change ambitions. The existing housing stock benefits from past initiatives which have ensured that most properties are above EPC level C. As such the Council is currently not benefitting from any extra Government funding towards zero carbon initiatives which are predominantly targeted at EPC level D and below. The Council is therefore reliant on the Housing Revenue Account to continue to pursue zero carbon options.
- 5.4 Beyond bricks and mortar the service also works to improve the wider environment on housing estates to meet the needs and aspirations of both the Council and our tenants.
- 5.5 Tackling issues around mould and damp has been a focus for the service this year encouraging tenants to report any concerns. The service received just under 200 reports and on investigation the majority of the issues related to condensation as the cause as a result of inadequate ventilating and heating of properties. The service has provided guidance on an individual basis to ensure that tenants understand how to operate their heating systems effectively and also to what assistance they may be entitled to when they have struggled to afford heating their homes.
- 5.5 Repairs and maintenance of the stock are delivered predominantly by an in-house workforce. Some works are sub-contracted using measured term contracts to allow for fluctuations in volumes, specialist work or where it is more cost effective to do so.
- 5.6 Appendix 1 provides details of the programmes of work and associated budgets for the Council's HRA Housing Stock 2023/2024. Appendix 2 provides details of the works to the General Fund Housing Stock 2023/2024. Appendix 3 gives a breakdown of the programmes of work by Ward.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 6.1 The programme of works to Council Homes contributes to:
- **A Healthy Environment** by retrofitting existing homes with low carbon initiatives to improve thermal efficiency and ultimately contribute to Reading becoming a carbon neutral town by 2030
 - **Thriving Communities** by introducing thermal efficiency measures to reduce fuel poverty and enable those living in Council homes to have an equal chance to thrive
 - **Inclusive Economy** by seeking to let contracts for major projects to contractors who provide a level of social value to the town including opportunities for education, skills and training
- 6.2 Full details of the Council's [Corporate Plan](#) are available on the website and include information on the projects which will deliver these priorities.
- 6.3 In line with TEAM Reading values the programme of works to Council homes makes a difference to our residents by:
- Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable; and
 - Providing homes for those in most need.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 On the 26th of February 2019 the Council declared a Climate Emergency and resolved to act to accelerate a carbon neutral Reading to 2030. Reading Climate Change Partnership's Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25 and the new RBC corporate Carbon Plan 2020-25 were adopted in November 2020.
- 7.2 The programme of works to Council homes looks to improve the energy efficiency and the insulation of properties wherever possible including:
- Improving window replacements from double to triple glazing.
 - Investigating and trialling of low carbon and alternative heating systems, the results of which will help to shape the approach to retrofitting homes to reduce carbon emissions
 - Replacing external fabric of buildings including external wall insulation
 - Installing mechanical ventilation with heat recovery systems
- 7.3 The average SAP rating, measure of energy efficiency, of the Council's housing stock is currently 74.14 placing Reading in the top quartile when compared to our peer group.
- 7.4 Our local authority new build programmes play a key role in achieving net zero carbon. The application of the fabric first approach of Passivhaus reduces greenhouse gas emissions and will deliver significant long-term energy savings to the tenants. The low running costs and higher quality building mean that costs are significantly reduced over the life of the building for the occupiers.
- 7.5 The use of sustainable material plays an important role in the design. This combined with the high quality of building physics achieved through insulation, thermal bridge-free design and airtightness ensures that the sustainable benefits of Passivhaus principles will last.

8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 8.1 The Housing Service has an engagement approach that enables consultation with tenants on a range of issues and through different means including, surveys, focus groups, a tenant scrutiny panel and formal consultation, the results of which drive service improvement. Tenant involvement and feedback has driven changes to specifications on kitchens, bathrooms, and flooring.
- 8.2 With all repairs and maintenance, we look to provide an efficient value for money service and recognise this can only be achieved by engaging with tenants, this is crucial when it comes to getting it right first time. Wherever possible tenants are given choices in the use of materials and colours.
- 8.3 When upgrading kitchens there is a design process, the customer is involved to ensure the layout and space allows for white goods. Within the range of kitchen units, worktops and tiles the tenant is offered choice of colour.
- 8.4 When upgrading our Crosswall properties we will consult with residents regarding the elevational treatment of the structure.
- 8.5 On our larger refurbishment schemes tenants are invited to evaluate the tender submissions.

9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 There is no requirement for an Equality Impact Assessment for the purposes of this report

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The 2006 Decent Homes Standard is a government-set standard for council housing. The standard describes a Decent Home as one that is fit to live in, in a reasonable state of repair, having reasonably modern facilities and services, and being insulated to a reasonable standard and weatherproof. The standard was updated in 2006 to include the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).
- 10.2 Within the legal framework affecting housing, programmes are aimed at ensuring the quality of accommodation, maintaining the 2006 Decent Homes Standard (or standards of design and quality that applied when the home was built if higher than the Decent Homes Standard) and providing a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service that meets applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes.
- 10.3 Works contracts worth £5,336,937 (Works Threshold) or more must be advertised in the UK's e-notification service Find a Tender and then tendered or be procured via a framework agreement which itself has already been advertised in OJEU or Find a Tender (as applicable) and undergone a tender process. The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 does not require a Find a Tender advertised tendering process in the case of below Works Threshold contracts. Such contracts must be awarded in line with the Council's Standing Orders.
- 10.4 It will be necessary to enter into contracts with all successful contractors.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The budget for the works programme 2023-24 is £28.969m (plus £0.258m General fund) and is funded through the Housing Revenue Account. The budget is set as part of the Council's annual budget setting programme and agreed by full Council in February 2023.
- 11.2 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) deals with council housing finance. The main income is housing rent, and all expenditure related to council housing is charged to this account. The Housing Revenue Account is 'ring-fenced' (separate) from other Council activity (this is accounted for through the 'General Fund' account).
- 11.3 The Council regularly updates and revises assumptions in a 30-year business plan for the HRA. This includes a comprehensive 30-year programme for replacing major components of homes (roofs, windows/doors, kitchens, bathrooms etc.) and maintaining them to Decent Homes standards.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None applicable.

Appendix1 WORKS TO HOUSING STOCK 2023-2024 (HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT)

Item	Work Description	£'000
1	Responsive Repairs	2,750
2	Voids (Minor Works)	890
Planned Programmes		
3	Estate Maintenance	100
4	Gas Servicing and CO Detectors	308
5	Heating Non-Gas Servicing	20
6	MVHR Servicing	15
7	Smoke detector non-gas annual checks	25
8	Essential Cyclical	325
9	Asbestos Surveys	150
10	Electrical Checks	400
11	Sprinkler System Servicing	85
12	Fire Stopping/Disrepair	370
13	Fire Protection (Fire Safety)	100
14	Legionella Testing	100
15	External Repairs and Decorations	1,000
16	Common Areas & Pensioner- decs	250
Major Capital Works		
17	Voids (Major Works)	723
18	Special adaptations	600
19	Roofs/Structural works	300
20	Rewiring/ smoke detectors/upgrades	407
21	Windows	1,745
22	Doors (Fire)	100
23	Central Heating and Boilers	900
24	Granville Rd Heat Pumps	1,325
25	Kitchens & Bathrooms	2,100
26	Door Entry Systems	291
27	Asbestos	150
28	Compliance	150
29	Decent Neighbourhoods Works	150
30	Kentwood Improvements	750
31	Crosswall Blocks	4,230
32	Coley High Rise, External Fabric/Windows and Roof	7,000
33	Ian Mikardo Way	1,000
34	Major Repairs	160
TOTAL		28,969
£'000		

RESPONSIVE REPAIRS

1. Responsive Repairs £2,750,000

The Repairs service is responsive and a customer driven service. Spend in recent years has been increasing. Repairs are delivered predominantly by an in-house workforce. Factors that influence service costs include:

- Standardisation of parts. We benefit from the legacy of earlier generations who standardised components from the 1940's onwards and have continued this process
- A range of competitively priced and recently tendered planned programmes
- Batched gutter cleaning works to reduce use of scaffolding costs
- New types of scaffold and harnessing
- Improved Health and safety provision fuelled by legislation change and by an enhanced risk awareness following the Grenfell fire.
- Repairs analysis and understanding costs broken down by trade job type, material and property type
- Improved specification and more building items to maintain (such as more showers or more alarms and heat recovery ventilation)
- Feedback from surveys driving improvements
- Extended guarantees on boilers.

Benchmarking our costs against other social providers (with similar size and stock), repair costs have been kept comparatively low, allowing us to focus on planned works and improvements. Investing sensibly in planned and replacement programmes over many years has enabled us to continue to keep costs low however the cost of labour and materials has started to rise in the last year.

Responsive repairs are undertaken in all wards across the Borough as required.

2. Voids (Minor and Major Works) £1,613,000

The cost between tenancies to repair homes to an approved standard and then re-let these homes is met from this budget. Our aim is to keep a good balance between expenditure, re-let times and the re-let standards.

Works to Void dwellings are undertaken in all wards across the Borough as and when they become void.

PLANNED PROGRAMMES

3. Estate Maintenance £100,000

A housing management-controlled budget to attend to day-to-day estate management issues and repair needs on our estates. This is typically used to improve parking, manage trees, provide dog bins, manage landscaping and paths that do not form part of the Highway.

Estate Management covers all wards across the Borough as required.

4. Gas Servicing £308,000

A landlord is legally required to make every reasonable effort to carry out gas checks every 12 months and at change of tenancy to all landlord owned gas appliances/ properties with gas meters. The number of gas services required each year increases with new builds added to the stock.

Gas servicing is undertaken in all dwellings that have a gas supply, there are in the region of 5,000 dwellings across the Borough, works will be undertaken in all wards.

5. Heating Non-Gas Servicing £20,000

We have as part of our carbon reduction works replaced some heating systems with air source heat pumps. The second Block at Granville Road has been completed. The servicing costs of heat pumps is considerably more than that of a gas central heating system, we anticipate this will decrease in time as they become the norm rather than the exception.

This is a budget that will increase in the future with more heat pumps being installed as part of our carbon reduction works, however, it will be offset in part as we reduce the number of gas systems within dwellings.

In the main this relates to the servicing of the air source heat pumps, part of our Carbon reduction plan and is in the Southcote ward.

6. MVHR Servicing £15,000

With the introduction of heat pumps there comes the need to better control the ventilation within dwellings, Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) ventilates but also recovers heat, this will help to keep tenants fuel bills down. Better ventilation helps reduce levels of condensation and subsequent mould growth, however, MVHR is only effective if the units are serviced, and filters cleaned or replaced annually.

7. Smoke detector non-gas annual checks £25,000

Our aim is to check all smoke detectors within our stock on an annual basis, to ensure they are functioning and in date.

The majority of these checks are undertaken as part of our Gas Servicing, this budget is for those dwelling that don't have gas.

8. Essential Cyclical Inspections £325,000

This budget is in line with previous years and relates to work in the following areas:

- Basic Lift maintenance and safety certification
- Warden Call system maintenance
- Fire alarms, Dry risers
- Fire extinguisher maintenance
- Checks and modest repairs to door entry systems
- Burglar alarms
- Communal lights maintenance
- Communal TV Aerials maintenance

- CCTV

Essential Cyclical Inspections are undertaken in all wards across the Borough as required.

9. Asbestos Surveys £150,000

This is for the removal of asbestos where required to facilitate improvement works or where the asbestos survey recommends removal of the asbestos rather than its management.

This work is reactive and dependant on other programmes of work it will cover all wards across the Borough.

10. Periodic Electrical Checks £400,000

Electric checks are done either as planned checks or checks at change of tenancy. We are increasing our annual number of inspections, moving from every 10 years to every 5 years in line with best practice. Although the numbers of inspections will increase the resulting repairs should decrease as the period between inspections is reduced, going forward the budget should therefore remain at a similar level.

We use the data collected from the electrical checks to determine the rewiring programme and use the data to set programmes to upgrade and renew smoke detectors.

Periodic Electrical Checks are undertaken in all wards across the Borough as required.

11. Sprinkler System Servicing £85,000

The design of our new build flats incorporate Sprinkler Systems as part of the fire safety measures. We have also fitted Sprinkler Systems within our Wates Flats and the High-Rise Flats at Coley to improve fire safety. To ensure the systems remain operational these systems require an annual service.

Works are at Coley High Rise, Minster ward, and the new build in the Tilehurst ward. The Sprinkler systems in our Wates dwelling are in several wards across the Borough.

12. Fire Stopping/Disrepair £370,000

This provision is to address any need of Fire Stopping as identified in the Fire Risk Assessments undertaken.

In the main this work relates to areas where services and cables pass through the compartmentation of buildings, this is to ensure our buildings are fully compliant with current fire safety legislation.

13. Fire Protection (Fire Safety) £100,000

Depending on the risk associated with the building type Fire Risk Assessments are required to ensure the buildings meet the current standards. High risk buildings are inspected annually, these are the High-Rise Blocks at Coley and Granville Road. Buildings identified as having a lower risk require an assessment every 3 years.

Work will be undertaken in all wards across the Borough.

14. Legionella Testing **£100,000**

We have a legal responsibility to undertake Legionella testing, this budget is for the testing, inspection and treatment to prevent legionella where required.

15. External Repairs and Decoration **£1,000,000**

Typically, this includes a repair package, looking at the outside fabric of the homes and carrying out suitable improvements or repairs to:

- Roofs, Down pipes and gutters and vent pipes
- Brickwork
- Windows and doors
- Porches, Sheds
- Repairs to kitchens

An external painting programme follows the repair works. Painting is subject to weather conditions and stops during the winter period.

Work is carried out on a rolling 7-year cycle.

This year's work will be primarily in Caversham, Katesgrove, Peppard, and Thames wards.

16. Common Area & Pensioner **£250,000**

A seven-year cyclical common area programme is set, whilst maintaining additional budget for highly trafficked or vandalised areas in exceptional cases.

This year's work is £160,000 at Tilehurst, Norcot, Katesgrove and Whitley wards in the main.

The Pensioner decs is currently a three year cyclical programme. The town is divided into three geographic areas, and the budget is usually around £90,000 each year.

To be eligible, customers must be of pensionable age or receive a disability benefit and have no resource to an able-bodied person who can do the work for them. The service is only provided where the condition of the existing decoration is poor. Tenants receive a pre-work visit to ensure eligibility and discuss choices in colour and finishes.

This year, the areas of the town covered by this programme of works are in the main in Church, Katesgrove and Whitley wards, with a few streets in Redlands and Tilehurst wards. Work is carried out by outside contractors.

MAJOR / CAPITAL REPAIRS

17. Major Voids

See Item 2 above

18. Special Adaptations £600,000

The purpose of this budget is to provide adaptations to properties in order to improve living conditions for customers with a disability or mobility needs. The majority of the budget is spent on adapting bathrooms.

Policies and specification changes we have adopted in relation to general council stock, offering showers above baths and standard showers, mean standard bathroom costs will increase, such is demand, special adaptation costs are unlikely to reduce.

This area of work is very reactive and will therefore be across all wards within the Borough.

19. Roofs/Structural works £300,000

£170,000 of the budget is primarily for the roof renewal at Block 33-41b Caversham Road. This work was in last year's programme but unfortunately delayed due to resourcing issues.

The remainder of the budget is used to address one-off structural issues arising through the year where works are required over and above that of responsive repairs; generally, these are isolated cases of failed DPC, underpinning of the structure and fire damaged properties.

The roof renewal at Block 33-41b Caversham Road is in the Abbey ward of the Borough.

20. Rewiring/ smoke detectors/upgrades £407,000

Condition rather than age is setting the rewiring budget. The need for full rewires has decreased. The focus has switched to upgrading systems. Rewires tend to be partial, focusing on circuit board replacement and socket upgrades. Selection for these upgrades is on the recommendation of the electric's team (following electrical checks) rather than from general building surveys.

This area of work is very reactive and will therefore be across all wards within the Borough.

21. Windows £1,745,000

Most windows were replaced from 1986 onwards, replacing comparatively few before 1991 but then the numbers increased. In 1992 we started replacing windows in houses rather than flats. Windows are a key element in the Decent Homes Standard with a lifecycle of 30 years; going forward this budget will increase to reflect the growing need for window renewal.

Generally, our dwellings have double glazed units, although this year we started renewing existing windows with triple glazed units to increase the energy efficiency of the properties thereby reducing carbon.

This year's window renewal is in Peppard, Minster, Redlands, Whitley and Southcote wards.

22. Doors £100,000

This budget has previously been used for the replacement of dwelling entrance doors, going forward it will be used for the renewal of Fire Doors where required. Changes in legislation require the door and frame to be completely renewed where a repair is not achievable.

23. Central Heating and Boilers £900,000

High investment in past years has made a considerable saving in repair costs and improvement in energy efficiency. We have negotiated extended parts and labour guarantees of 10 years on new boilers.

The replacement of boilers is fixed on a 15-year plan and full systems every 30 to 40 years.

The Council is committed to zero carbon with a target of 2030, in order to achieve this there is a need to look at alternative heating for our dwellings, we need to phase out our gas boilers over time and look to provide alternatives such as air/ground source heating.

The alternatives to gas heating are considerably more expensive, however, we will continue to undertake fuel swap going forward where practicable within this budget.

In some instances, we will need to replace systems with an electric heating system, Quantum heaters or similar, although more expensive to provide initially there are no annual servicing costs.

This is based on a 15-year lifecycle and will be across all wards within the Borough

24. Granville Road Heat Pumps £1,325,000

The installation of air source heat pumps at the first two High-Rise Blocks at Granville Road is nearing completion. This coming year we will be starting work on the remaining two Blocks. If affordable one of the Blocks will be a Ground Source Heat Pump. This would give us a useful comparison, air source to ground source regarding the heating efficiency, servicing cost and future maintenance costs, this would better inform our carbon reduction strategy. If Ground Source proves to be too costly, we will replace the existing heating with air source.

The changes to the heating systems at the High-Rise Blocks in Granville Road is contributing to our carbon reduction.

The last Block will be Quantum heaters.

The heat pump and Quantum heater installations will be in Southcote ward.

25. Kitchens and Bathrooms £2,100,000

Kitchens and bathrooms will be replaced across all areas of the borough based strictly on the condition of existing facilities.

New kitchens take account of the size and range of tenant's 'white goods' and are individually designed to accommodate these (space permitting). The kitchen specification uses thicker carcasses, hinges those open doors 180 degrees, metal draw runners and are designed to last using a modern look that we hope will stay in vogue whilst offering good tenant choice. All taps for kitchens and bathrooms are lever taps, these permit easier use for tenants who suffer with hand mobility. Some improvements in the specification result in increased responsive repair costs. We aim to strike a responsible balance between modernisation and cost.

A revised specification introduced last year includes the full decoration of all Kitchen and Bathroom upgrades.

This budget provision is based on a 20-year lifecycle for kitchens and 30 years for bathrooms, on a worst first basis and will be across all wards within the Borough

26. Door Entry Systems **£291,000**

This budget is generally split between upgrades or replacement of older door entry systems and new installations where a door entry system would be advantageous. Addresses are not pre decided.

The programme responds to systems that become inoperable and a repair to the system isn't an option. The programme will cover all wards across the Borough.

27. Asbestos **£150,000**

Asbestos surveys are required before many programmes of work can take place. We survey the whole property not just the area of the work and the intention is to have data for every property and not be reliant on cloned information.

As a landlord we are required to manage the asbestos within our Stock. We manage asbestos by periodic inspection based on risk, the risk is determined by the type of asbestos, it's condition and the likely disturbance. Periodic inspections are ongoing and apply to all dwelling constructed prior to the year 2000, properties constructed after this date will not have included any asbestos containing materials within the specification.

28. Compliance **£100,000**

Changes in legislation as a result of the tragedy at Grenfell Tower have created an increased need to inspect all escape routes, common areas and stairs of our High-Risk dwellings, including an inspection of all fire doors on an annual basis, this will include dwelling entrance doors.

Work will be undertaken in all wards across the Borough.

29. Decent Neighbourhood Works **£150,000**

We continue to develop our knowledge for all blocks and communal areas through surveys. We pick up on the stock needs of drying areas and paths, lighting and landscape and boundaries. Within communal areas, we look at entry doors, door closers, matt wells, stairs and balustrades, finishes, stores security and refuse disposal.

Tenants' choice funding has been amalgamated with this fund into one programme of work with the aim of improving the built environment of Council estates.

Works will cover all wards across the Borough.

30. Kentwood Improvements £750,000

The improvement works at homes in Kentwood are continuing this year. The works include structural repairs, improved external insulation, and render together with triple glazing. Where required the heating will be replaced with air source heat pumps and Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) systems.

All the measures in this scheme contribute to our carbon reduction strategy and are based on a fabric first approach.

31. Crosswall Blocks £4,230,000

The Crosswall construction consists of load bearing party walls and a lightweight infill construction to the front and rear elevations. Constructed in the late 1960's these properties are amongst the poorest of all our stock in terms of energy efficiency, in many cases the external walls are tile hung with no additional insulation.

The works proposed are the modernisation of the external walls to our low rise Crosswall properties. Initially selecting two blocks, the works will consist of a reconstruction of the infill front and rear elevations that will incorporate replacement triple glazed windows. These properties will not only be insulated to a high standard the opportunity exists to refresh the tired appearance of the properties with new look low maintenance materials.

The scheme will include alternative heating, the proposal for the initial blocks at Bamburgh Close were to include Ground Source Heat Pumps, however this will now be Air Source as this is currently more affordable.

In total we have in the region of 70 two and three storey Crosswall blocks. In the main the three-story blocks were insulated about 12 years ago, the windows of these blocks need replacement going forward, however, the two-story blocks are predominantly as built and will need significantly more work.

All the measures in this scheme contribute to our carbon reduction strategy and are based on a fabric first approach.

This year's Crosswall blocks to benefit from these major improvements are in the Redlands ward.

32. Wensley Road Estate Flats, External Fabric/Windows and Roofing £7,000,000

The proposals for the three blocks of flats at Wensley Road estate include a number of measures in line with the Council's Zero Carbon Strategy, the major elements included within the scheme are the replacement of the external insulation together with triple glazed windows and a new waste management system.

A more efficient insulation and triple glazed windows will significantly improve the thermal efficiency of the dwellings. The works to the three blocks has an estimated overall cost of £15,000,000 and are tied in with the wider improvements and development of new build homes on the estate.

The scheme has slipped due to changes in the specification and a delay in the first phase of the new build homes on the estate, however, the works to the High-Rise Blocks is to be phased over two years rather than three years.

The Coley High Rise blocks are in the Minster ward of the Borough.

33. Ian Mikardo Way **£1,000,000**

A number of dwellings have been identified as having Tentest ceiling boards. Although there have been no issues with this type of ceiling it doesn't give the same level of fire protection as plasterboard. This budget is for the replacement of the identified ceilings with plasterboard.

This work is primarily in the Caversham ward of the Borough.

34. Major Repairs **£160,000**

Major repairs are batched together for increased efficiencies. Work includes a variety of projects such as replacing fencing, flooring, damp treatments etc.

Works tend to be reactive in nature and will cover all wards across the Borough.

Appendix 2

£258,000 WORKS TO HOUSING STOCK 2022-2023 (GENERAL FUND) (Programmes of work funded from the General Fund)

£'000

1	Garage Repairs	50
2	Garage Planned maintenance	40
3	Temporary Accommodation	168

1. Responsive Garage Repairs **£50,000**

This budget is for the provision of day-to-day repairs to the 1060 garages.

2. Planned Maintenance to Garages **£40,000**

Garage maintenance is done on a seven-year cycle of planned maintenance to reasonably maintained sites to ensure garages are kept up to standard

The business case for this budget is to keep garage sites in a lettable condition to maintain the revenue stream whilst maintaining our asset and the appearance of estates. Over the last decade investment in garages has much improved the appearance of estates and removed areas of neglect

Numbers of garages have fallen in recent years as sites are redeveloped or land included in regeneration projects (such as at Dee Park). Where a site is designated for redevelopment within the next five years, we do not carry out planned maintenance.

3. Temporary Accommodation **£168,000**

A budget is used for the repair and maintenance of temporary accommodation properties. In recent years we have decreased the budget as repair costs have fallen following the refurbishment of Jimmy Green Court and 2 Wensley Road flats in recent years.

Appendix 3

**WORKS TO HOUSING STOCK BY WARD
2023-2024**

	Work Items	Planned/ Demand led	Ward(s)
1	Responsive Repairs	Demand led	All Wards
2	Voids (Minor Works)	Demand led	Various
Planned Programmes			
3	Estate Maintenance	Demand led	Various
4	Gas Servicing and CO Detectors	Planned	All Wards
5	Heating Non-Gas Servicing	Planned	Southcote ward and Tilehurst
6	MVHR Servicing	Planned	Various
7	Smoke detector non-gas annual checks	Planned	Various
8	Essential Cyclical	Planned	Various
9	Asbestos Surveys	Demand led	Various
10	Electrical Checks	Planned	All Wards
11	Sprinkler System Servicing	Planned	Coley, Tilehurst, and the Wates Flats in various wards across the Borough
12	Fire stopping/Disrepair	Planned	Various
13	Fire Protection (Fire Safety)	Planned	All Wards
14	Legionella	Planned	All Wards
15	External Repairs and Decorations	Planned	Caversham, Katesgrove, Peppard, and Thames
16	Common Areas Pensioner Decs	Planned	Tilehurst, Norcot, Katesgrove and Whitley Church, Katesgrove, Whitley, Redlands and Tilehurst
17	Voids (Major Works)	Demand led	Various
18	Special adaptations	Demand led	Various
19	Roofs/Structural works	Planned/Demand led	Abbey (Roofs)/Various
20	Rewiring/ smoke detectors/upgrades	Demand led	Various
21	Windows	Planned	Peppard, Coley, Redlands, Southcote and Whitley
22	Doors (Fire)	Planned/Demand led	All Wards
23	Central Heating and Boilers	Planned	Various
24	Granville Rd Heat Pumps	Planned	Southcote Ward

25	Kitchens & Bathrooms	Demand led	Various
26	Door Entry Systems	Demand led	Various
27	Asbestos	Demand led	Various
28	Compliance	Planned	All Wards
29	Decent Neighbourhoods Works	Planned	All Wards
30	Kentwood Improvements	Planned	Kentwood
31	Crosswall Blocks	Planned	Redlands
32	Coley High Rise, External Fabric/Windows and Roof	Planned	Coley
33	Ian Mikardo Way	Planned	Caversham
34	Major Repairs	Planned	Various