

Crawley Homes Annual Report 2021-22



Councillor Sandra Buck
Cabinet member for Housing

Since becoming the Cabinet member for Housing in May this year, I've discovered what a wide and exciting portfolio I have.

Housing is an important and essential part of the council's work and I am pleased to be part of the team taking on the challenges of providing good quality, comfortable, safe and affordable homes. Emerging from the pandemic, we are finding new ways of working and the coming year presents us with new challenges with new legislation, decarbonisation targets and increasing costs adding to financial pressures.

Water neutrality is a priority to protect our water supply and we have successfully piloted a scheme to reduce water consumption in 100 of our homes, helping tenants cut water bills and save water. We are now going forward with this scheme as a major project to help with water neutrality in the town and allow us to build more homes.

Delivering as much affordable housing as possible, particularly council housing, is a priority for the council and with more new properties in Forge Wood expected, there will be more homes for families in need.

We'll continue with our decarbonisation work to reduce carbon emissions and increase the energy efficiency of our homes which in turn reduces energy bills, benefiting tenants and the environment alike.

We understand the cost-of-living crisis affects most of our tenants and we expect our Housing Officers and Financial Inclusion Team to be busy offering support and helping tenants to find ways to maximise their income and minimise outgoings. Much as we will, as we take a good look at our budgets to find ways to meet our increased costs.

Also on the horizon is a new computer system for Crawley Homes and the move to the new Town Hall. These will drive new ways of working to make us more effective and cost efficient.

At the heart of all this are our tenants and residents and I look forward to meeting some of you in the future as our tenant engagement work takes a step up.

Contact us

Repairs – [crawley.gov.uk/repairs](https://www.crawley.gov.uk/repairs)

Housing officers –
[crawley.gov.uk/housingofficers](https://www.crawley.gov.uk/housingofficers)

Any comments

If you have any comments about this Annual Report, or if you or someone you know would like to access this in a different format please contact Anne Forshaw, Housing Service Promotion Officer, on **01293 438257** or email tenantparticiaption@crawley.gov.uk

Money

Most of our money comes from your rent plus some from garage rents, Lifeline charges and recovering costs and recharges.

We spend some of the money we get from right to buy sales on new homes and we can get some grant funding for specific projects such as the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF).

In the future we will also be seeking specific grant funding, especially for our decarbonisation works.

Setting your rent

The government sets the rules for setting rents for local authority landlords and housing associations. These allow us to increase rents each year up to the value of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus one percentage point.

The CPI value used is the figure at September of the previous year and in September 2021, this was 3.1 per cent giving a 4.1 percent rent increase April 2022 for both social and affordable rent properties.

The government is being lobbied to cap rent increases for next year (April 2023) as inflation rates rise and in August 2022, they issued consultation on a change in rent setting for 2022-23.

Money for housing only

Our money is held in a specific bank account called the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Rules on how we use this mean we can only use it to pay for housing related items, we can't use it to pay for things like rubbish collection, temporary accommodation or maintaining parks; your Council Tax pays for these. Councillors are responsible for the finances of the council and make the final decisions on spending whilst following the rules.

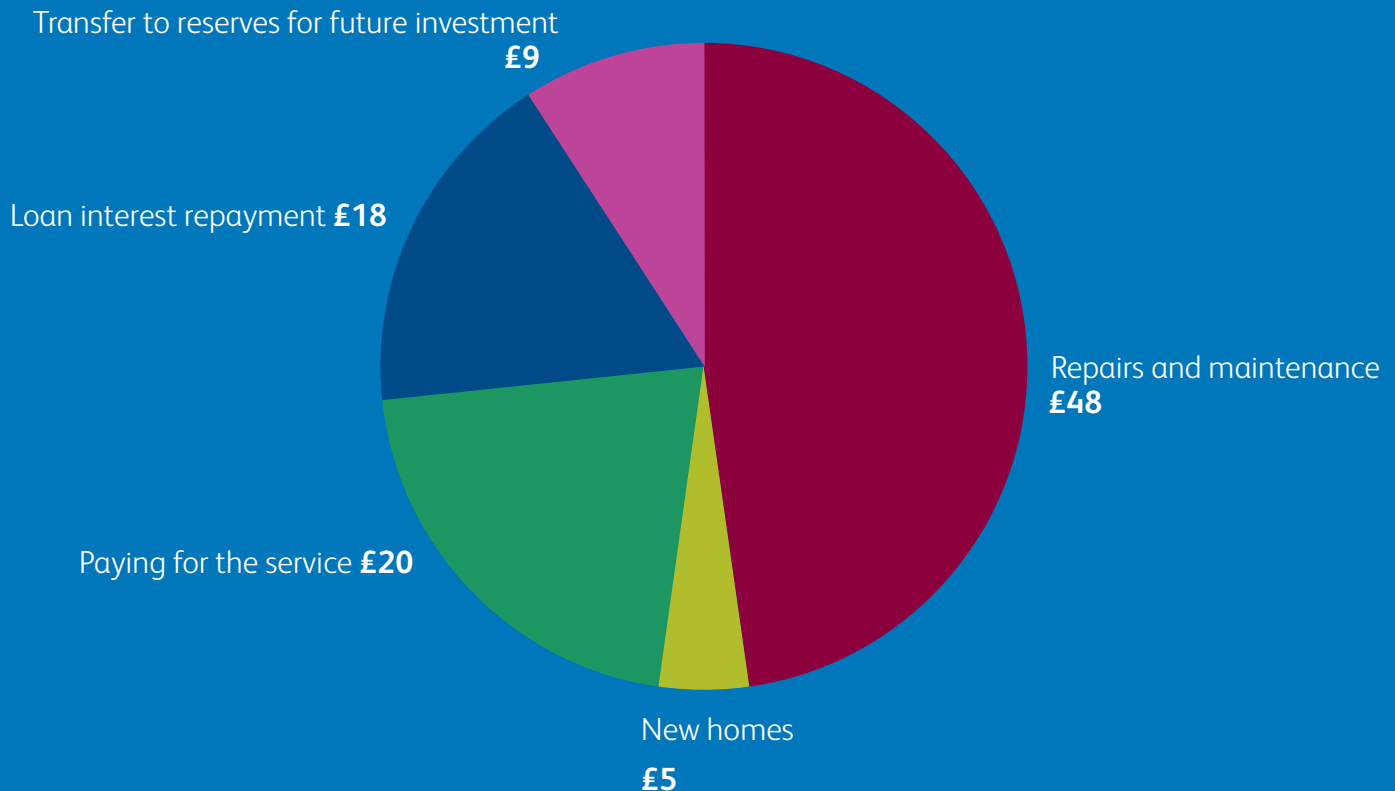
The simple balance sheet

Income		Expenditure	
Rents	£43,449,882	Repairs and maintenance	£11,210,363
Other income	£2,144,844	Planned maintenance	£10,853,517
Right to buy receipts/HIF/reserves	£1,500,593	New developments funded from rents	£2,313,985
		New developments funded from other funds and reserves	£1,500,593
		Paying for the service (includes staff, premises, running costs, etc.)	£8,996,034
		Loan interest repayment*	£8,308,925
		Transfer to reserves for future investment	£3,911,902
Total	£47,095,319	Total	£47,095,319

*The interest on a loan from the Public Works Loan Board taken out in 2012 to cover our share of the national housing debt.

What your rent paid for

In 2021-22 every £100 in rent you paid was spent in the following way:



Rent arrears

At the end of March, tenants owed to us £682,609 in unpaid rent. This is 2.5 per cent of the total rent due.

There are many reasons for tenants to be in arrears with their rent and during the year 274 referrals were made to our Money Advisors. They work with tenants to help them claim any benefits they may be entitled to and help them manage their money.

We contacted **Mrs S** to offer our help and this is her story.

A big thank you for the support

“I was like an ostrich with my head in the sand, everything had overwhelmed me, and I gave up trying to do anything to sort things out. The phone call offering me support was just what I needed. I was given information about a whole range of things that helped me sort out a lot of outstanding bits that I had no idea what to do with or where to go.

“As well as their amazing knowledge, they kept in touch to make sure I managed to be able to complete the bits I was sorting. With that I have felt much better about myself and in turn it helped my mental health. The service should be carried on for other vulnerable and overwhelmed people and I know would be very appreciated by others as much as I have appreciated it and I would like to say a massive thank you for all the support I have had.”

Money worries? Visit [crawley.gov.uk/moneyworries](https://www.crawley.gov.uk/moneyworries) to find out what help and support is available to you. Our tenants can also speak to their Housing Officer.

Average rents

These are the average rents for Crawley Homes' properties at 31 March 2022. They do not include any additional service charges you may pay.

Our tenancy policy states when we charge a social rent and when we will use affordable rents. Our new build homes are generally let at affordable rent levels, but this depends upon the finances for each development. This makes it possible to generate income to invest in more new homes.

Our tenancy policy can be found online at [crawley.gov.uk/housing/council-tenants/your-tenancy/tenancy-agreement](https://www.crawley.gov.uk/housing/council-tenants/your-tenancy/tenancy-agreement)

Rent correction

Last year we found that we had overcharged about one fifth of our tenants as their rent had been set at the wrong level. Identifying and calculating what was owed and to whom took some time, but everyone affected has now been contacted.

Rents have been reset to the correct levels and we've refunded tenants, repaid housing benefits and are still working with the Department for Work and Pensions to reimburse Universal Credit overpayments.

General needs

Property size	Social rent (£)	Affordable rent (£)
Bedsit/Studio	74.57	119.07
1 bedroom	88.07	163.38
2 bedroom	101.92	194.61
3 bedroom	115.19	217.56
4 bedroom	125.02	294.58
5 bedroom	144.14	N/A

Sheltered Housing

Property size	Social rent (£)	Affordable rent
1 bedroom	88.19	N/A
2 bedroom	98.03	N/A

Social rents are set using a government formula and affordable rents are up to 80 per cent of local market rent.

This administrative error happened in April 2014 when the council decided to remove the 'rent-free' weeks and start charging rent over a 52-week year.

Current rents at that time were correctly recalculated. However, when we relet a property we charge the target rent, a rent level calculated by a formula set by the Government. These target rents were not recalculated in April 2014 so tenancies in certain properties that started after that date were wrong. This is how tenants were overcharged.

We worked with the Regulator of Social Housing, technical experts in our Finance Department and sought legal advice to make sure that once the agreed correction formula was applied and robustly checked, the new rent levels and credit amounts were accurate.

More information on this can be found at [crawley.gov.uk/housing/council-tenants/your-tenancy/tenancy-agreement](https://www.crawley.gov.uk/housing/council-tenants/your-tenancy/tenancy-agreement)

Ms C contacted us to get some help for her mum.

"I had very little knowledge of the ways I could try and help my mum with her housing and financial situation but you provided a wide scope of options. As you were extremely helpful and friendly you made the entire process for both of us very easy. Thank you, Ms C"

"As a family going through a very challenging time, you have shown us nothing but compassion and understanding...your relentless work, tirelessly chasing, as well as dealing with us on a regular basis, has been outstanding."



Money advice success

Sometimes, it's more about the support you need as with Mrs S earlier, at other times it's help to claim what you are entitled to.

Becoming a pensioner is a big deal but not knowing what help you can get to supplement your pension means you could be missing out.

This is what happened to Mr N:

- Our Money Advisors helped him to apply and get Guarantee Pension Credit and backdate it
- They chased the Department for Work and Pensions to process his pension application and registered him for the Winter Fuel Payment
- Discussing his situation with Housing Benefit and Council Tax meant his payments were adjusted
- Contacting Southern Water set him up on their essentials tariff with a Direct Debit set up to keep on top of his bills
- They notified the electricity company of his entitlement to Guarantee Pension Credit which entitled him to the Warm Homes Discount and registered him on their priority service register
- They referred him to Crawley Food Bank for support whilst he was waiting for his pension to be paid.

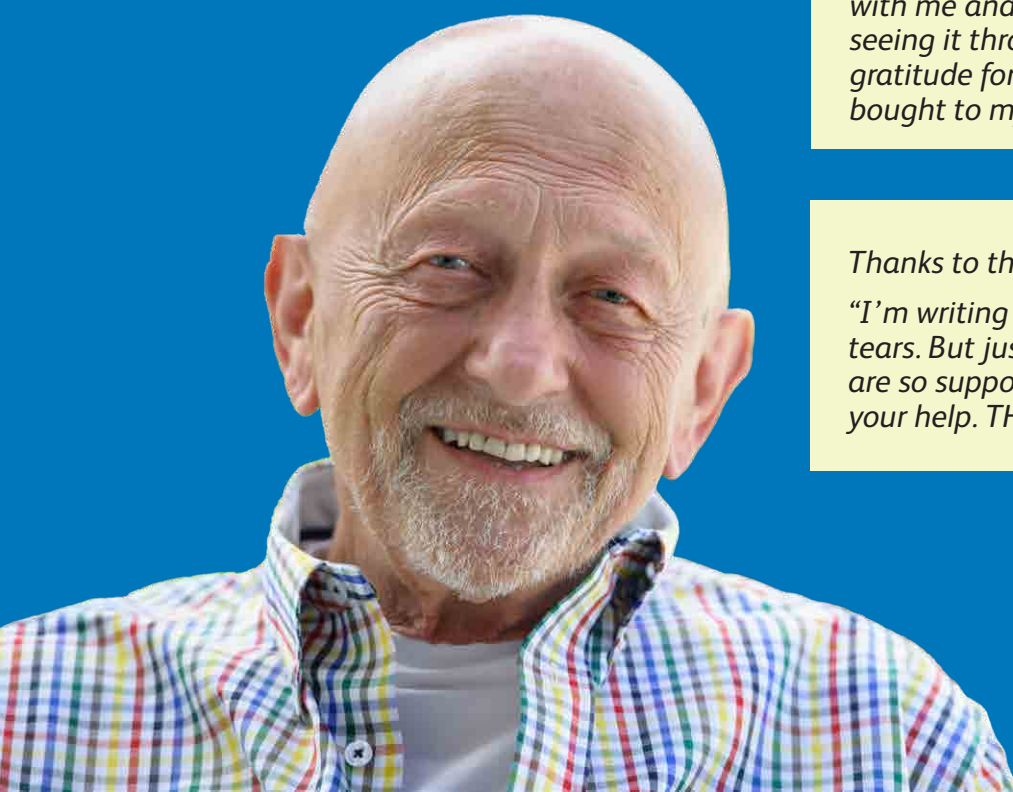
And most importantly as a recipient of Pension Credit, he gets free dental treatment on the NHS, so he could get his dentures fixed.

Thanks for her Housing Officer from Mrs J

"Just wanted to say thank you for putting up with me and all your hard work and effort in seeing it through. Words cannot express my gratitude for the peace and relief you have bought to my family."

Thanks to the Hostels team from Ms P

"I'm writing this message in tears, happy tears. But just want you both to know you are so supportive and I am so grateful for your help. THANK you, so much xx."



Our homes

Most of our homes have been built since Crawley New Town was incorporated in 1947.

However, one of our hostels dates back to the 15th Century and its grounds are a scheduled monument as the building was a moated manor house. The property is grade II listed and parts of it could go back to the 13th Century.

In contrast our newest homes are still being built in Forge Wood. A total of 283 new council homes had been built in our newest neighbourhood by the end of March 2022.



Rented homes



Leasehold flats



New homes
built



Homes sold
under the Right
to Buy



Homes we
re-let during the
year



New tenancies
in sheltered
housing



Tenants who
moved by
mutual
exchange



Evictions
(for non-
occupation)

Impact of Covid on our services

As we write this we can sit back and reflect on the two years of the Covid pandemic.

April 2021 saw the start of the relaxation of Covid restrictions, there were bumps along the way, but all Covid rules were scrapped in England in February 2022 as part of the country's plan to "live with the virus".

However, it didn't all return to the normal we had before March 2020. Covid is still with us, and infection and sickness rates amongst our staff did affect our business. The effects of lockdowns could be felt in our supply chains, creating shortages of materials, particularly for our repair teams.

Plaster, fencing, even toilets all became scarce at one time. When we experienced shortages our contractors explored different supply chains in an attempt to get stocks, to enable us to continue our service.

Our staff, operatives and engineers were not immune from Covid, and there were times when our workforce was stretched very thin.

We took precautions, PPE became a buzzword, working from home for many of us was practical, splitting the repairs call handlers into two teams meant they didn't all go down with the infection at one time and much more as we struggled to manage our services.

As Covid restrictions were removed and we went back to work, we started to experience shortages in some trades and

problems recruiting the right people with the right skills. With so many building opportunities in Crawley, this is still an ongoing problem.

For our office-based staff we are now all working in the office at least two days a week but working from home will continue. This is our new way of working for the future.

"The cleaners Dawn and Matt did an exceptional job, deep cleaning the communal lounges in some of the sheltered schemes preparing them for the return of tenants."

Resident engagement

This is not just about our tenant scrutiny panel, the Tenant and Leaseholder Action Panel (TLAP), although they do play a key role, it's about all our residents.

Not just meetings

We know meetings are not for everyone, but you play a part by just filling in a survey. Last year more than 1,000 maintenance satisfaction surveys were filled in. Three quarters of these gave us 10 out of 10 for the work, and we passed on some really positive comments to our operatives and engineers.

Social events

The community rooms in our sheltered housing schemes were closed during the Covid restrictions with no social events taking place.

It's fair to say they were eager to start meeting up again with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee taking centre stage.

Estate inspections

In 2022-23 we'll be getting out of the office to meet you on your estates. With a big Estate Day and then regular estate inspections making use of pop-up gazebos. We are looking forward to meeting you.

TLAP

Our scrutiny panel, TLAP, meets four times a year, although during Covid they met digitally via MS teams. When we could meet in groups again meetings have become hybrid meetings, with some attendees in person and some digitally, using MS Teams, a screen on the wall, a webcam, and speakers.

Topics last year included: scrutiny of Crawley Homes performance measures, rent correction information, decarbonisation and retrofit work, updates on repairs performance and a discussion on what does professionalism in housing mean to you.



The panel gets a report on complaints made and the learning from them at each meeting. In addition to this a complaints sub-group of TLAP will be created to scrutinise a selection of anonymised complaints to get a tenants' point of view about the actions and responses that were taken. TLAP will also be involved in our annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Code of Practice.

The Social Housing White Paper was discussed and the panel submitted a response to the Regulator of Social Housing on the proposed Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

TLAP are also involved in setting the content of this Tenants' Annual Report.

"Being Chair of TLAP, means I get to know about the work of Crawley Homes, meet key people, and influence the services we receive.

"I also get to meet other tenants and have a bit of a chat.

"We're looking for new members to join us, so if you are interested give Terry Hardie, Customer Engagement Officer, a call on 01293 438434.

You don't need to say yes straight away, you can come along to our next meeting to see what we do."

Darren Wise, Chair of TLAP.

If you want to know more about TLAP or you are interested in getting involved, contact Terry Hardie, Customer Engagement Officer, on **01293 438434** or email tenantparticipation@ Crawley.gov.uk

Repairs and maintenance

Responsive repairs

These are our day-to-day repairs and problems that you tell us about.

How did we do?

The table below shows some of our key performance measures for our responsive repairs. Last year we kept more appointments and completed repairs quicker, although fewer were completed on our first visit. Difficulties with getting the right materials for a long-term repair will account for most of this drop in performance.

	2020-21	2021-22
Repairs completed, including gas repairs	24,453	24,284
Customer calls to the repair line	51,031	56,602
Percentage of appointments kept	94.19%	94.45%
No access	4.78%	5.44%
Average time to complete a repair	22 days	20 days
Average satisfaction with repairs for the year	89.1%	89%
Fixed on the first visit	86.33%	76.07%

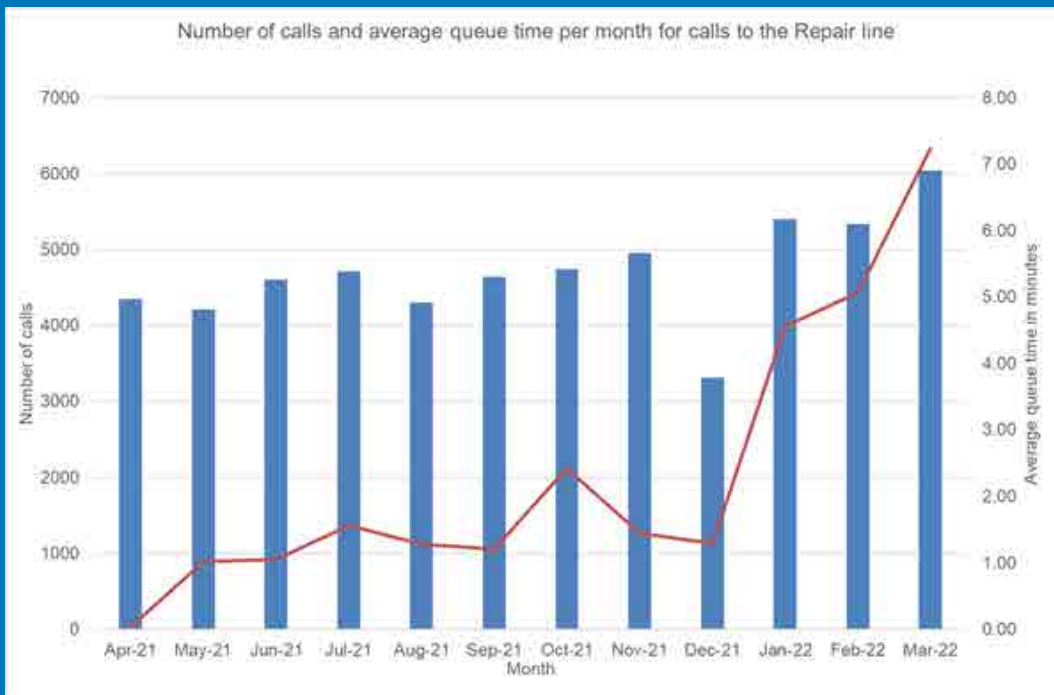
It is disheartening to see the no access figures have gone up, for every appointment a tenant misses we need to rearrange and reschedule the working day for our operatives. Each appointment a tenant misses takes up about 30 minutes of an operatives time and at over £10 each time the financial cost soon mounts up.

Please remember to tell us as soon as possible if you cannot keep an appointment.

The number of calls to the repairs line went up by over 5,000 calls on the previous year, many of these extra calls were due to tenants calling to find out what was happening to outstanding repairs as we waited to get the necessary materials needed.

When our new housing IT system is fully operational next year, you will be able to log and check the status of a repair yourself.





In this chart the blue columns show how many calls the repairs team received each month and the red line the average time people had to wait in the queue before calls were answered.

The first few months of 2022 saw the number of calls increase for various reasons, including storm Eunice in February. This, along with the challenges left by the pandemic led to increased waiting times.

The word cloud below shows the most commonly used words from the responses to our repairs satisfaction survey.



“An outstanding job done very quickly. The gentleman who did the repair took great care to keep us safe, re. Covid-19. Thanks.”

“Operative was polite, helpful and friendly. Kept me updated throughout.”

“The repairs team switchboard were friendly, empathetic and understanding.”

“A very polite man who asked permission to go upstairs, a tick from me. He worked very cleanly and wore PPE. He was also kind enough to change the battery in my clock !!! 10/10.”

Messy gardens

We have been making the most of our scrap metal by selling it. The money we have raised has allowed us to create a one-off gardening service for vulnerable council tenants who have over-grown, messy gardens.

There are strict criteria to meet and if the tenant has family or friends who could help or if the tenant is financially able to pay for a gardener, they are unlikely to qualify for the scheme.

The scheme allows for the garden to be cut back to a manageable state so the tenant can maintain it going forward, with referrals being made by our Housing Officers. In 2021-2022, 13 gardens were cut back.

“Thank you so much, there is more light coming in now and I feel safer as I can see who is outside as it is no longer blocking the path and windows.”

“I am very, very happy with the work carried out, it has made so much difference to my life and mental health.”



Asset management

This is the long-term management of our assets, drying areas and other buildings as well as your homes and is usually work we can plan as well as essential safety work.

Planned works

Last years work includes:

“This is just to say a massive thank you for the new kitchen. I’m so pleased with the results, it is absolutely beautiful. The team were so accommodating and hard working. Thank you for looking after your tenants so well.”

99 homes with **new windows**

77 homes with **insulation** fitted

1,433 electrical inspections completed



106 homes with **renewable technologies** such as heat pumps and solar panels



146 kitchens replaced



155 bathrooms replaced

12 homes rewired

104 new roofs installed



Gas safety checks to **99.48** percent of our properties



Building safety

Much of our work is safety work to keep you safe and to ensure compliance with the law. This includes:

- Gas safety checks
- Electrical inspections and testing
- Fire risk assessments and other fire prevention work including smoke and heat detectors.

Decarbonisation works

Decarbonisation of the council’s housing stock plays a key role in achieving the council’s goal to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2040.

Last year we started a pilot retrofit program of eight properties in conjunction with the NetZero Collective.

Taking a whole house approach, we collected and analysed data to get the right mix of items to make these homes warmer and more energy efficient, reducing carbon emissions and reducing energy bills.

Generally, we’ve found that for our more traditional builds we used air source heat pumps, solar photovoltaic (PV) panels, battery storage and the appropriate insulation measures for the property.

With the pilot program coming to an end, we’re calculating what the bigger picture is for taking whole house projects forward and what the costs could be.

We will need to secure additional funding for much of the works so we may scale back whole house projects and focus on areas such as insulation that improve the thermal quality of the home.

They pulled the house apart and then put it back together

This is how Mr M described his experience as the first tenant to take part in our NetZero decarbonisation pilot.

“We were keen to take part, to do something for the environment and lead the way for others to follow.

“It wasn’t easy, it was like Clapham junction, in, out, in, out. We just left them to get on with it. For a time we had no heating or hot water and we had to keep our pets out of the way. We knew we couldn’t have any gas at the end, but it became real when we had to give up the gas hob and buy an electric cooker. But it’s been worth it.”

In March 2022, a few weeks after it was finished he said “it’s doing its job and the house keeps a constant temperature. We need to wait and see what savings we’ll make. Winter running is going to be different to the summer so we’ll need to experience a whole year to find out how it all works out.”

In August as the increases in energy prices were starting to hit, he reflected that his savings would now be much more than he could have imagined when he volunteered.

In his home we fitted:

- Loft insulation – to keep more heat in
- Solar PV – to generate electricity
- Air source heat pump – to provide heating and hot water
- Upgraded radiators – to help the new heating system
- Battery storage – to make the best use of the electricity generated.



Solar PV

Air source heat pump



Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund

This is Government funding to be used to improve the energy performance of social housing.

Last year, working with our partner contractor Mears, we made a successful bid for £700,000 from this fund to complete external wall insulation on properties where the costs prevented us from funding the work in our previous program.

Insulation is key to any low-energy building, reducing heat loss and improving energy efficiency. Works will take place in 2022-23.

Water neutrality

In September 2021, Natural England issued a position statement to protect the water levels in several conservation area in Sussex.

This means all development in Crawley has to demonstrate that it will not increase pressure on water resources – in other words show that they are “water neutral”.

If we can find ways to decrease the amount of water used in our homes, we can offset this against any new demand created from our new developments.

Flow regulation

In 2022-23 we've been exploring ways to offset the new demand and have piloted the fitting of a flow-regulating device.

Electric vehicles

In keeping with our commitment to reduce carbon emissions, both of our contractors, Mears and Wates, started a trial last year, to see if using electric vehicles would be feasible. These trials will be evaluated next year and we look forward to seeing the result.

Void works

Carrying out work on our empty properties (voids) to get them ready for new tenants is another part of our maintenance work.

This area of our work is particularly affected by labour shortages as we focus on fixing repairs.

With more than 300 empty properties over the year, it was taking about 80 days in March to prepare them for new tenants.

As well as taking time to give families in need a new home it also impacts on our rents and finances, so we'll be reviewing our processes during 2023.



Complaints

We make every effort to provide you with an excellent service, but sometimes things don't go quite to plan and during 2021-22, Crawley Homes received 276 stage one complaints.

Of these 243 were resolved and 33 were progressed to stage 2.

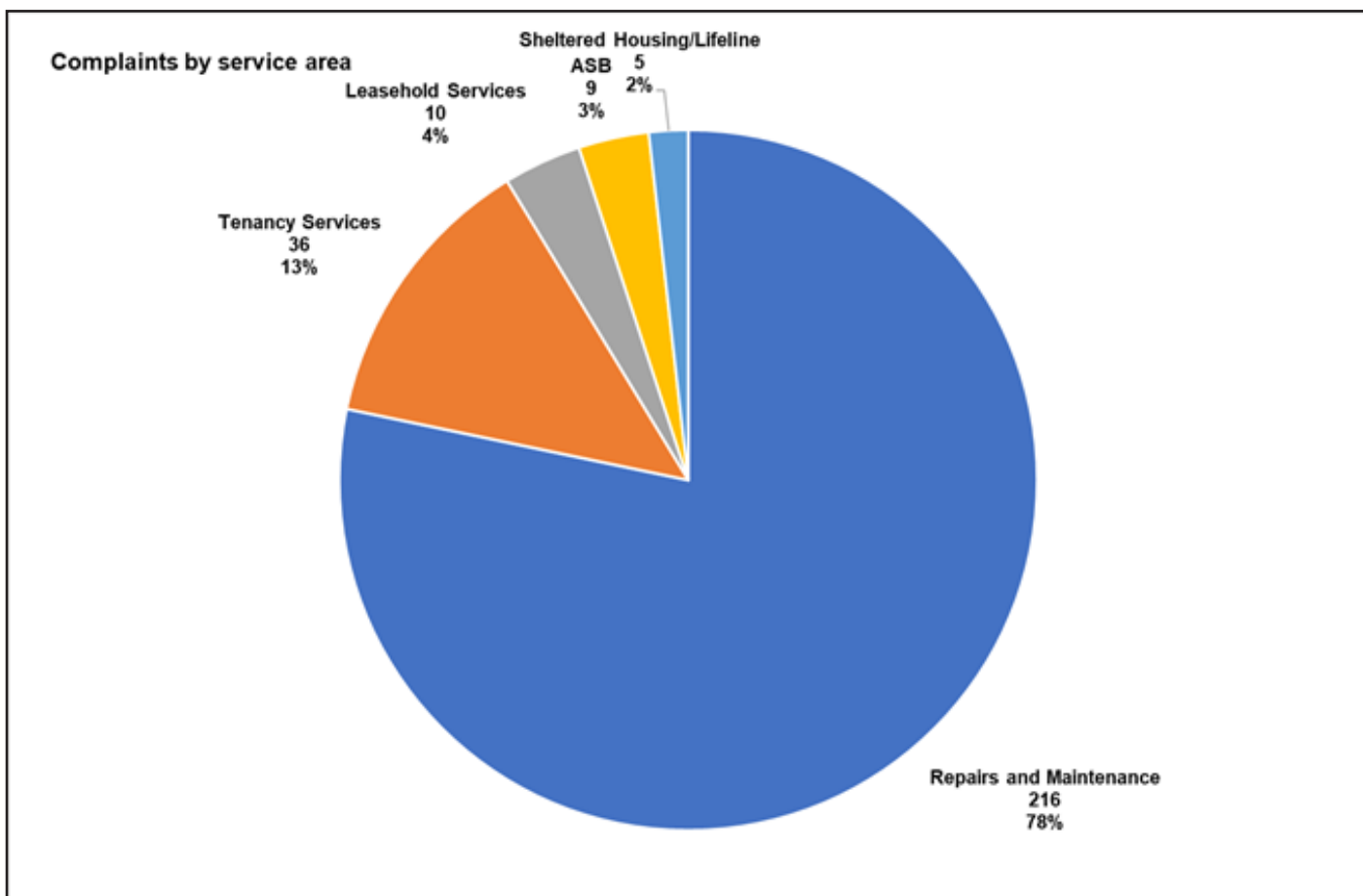
Most of these (216) were for problems with the repairs and maintenance service. As we completed 24,284 repairs last year, fewer than one per cent resulted in a complaint.

At stage one, 159 complaints were upheld to some degree. With these we put right the problem where we could and looked at where we could improve our service to ensure similar issues did not occur again.

117 stage one complaints were not upheld as they were outside of our remit or we had delivered our service at an appropriate level.

With stage 2 complaints, 26 were upheld to some degree and 7 were not upheld.

The Housing Ombudsman contacted us about eight cases, four of these had not completed our complaints process so were referred to us. Of the four complaints considered by the Ombudsman, there was no maladministration in the way we had dealt with two requests. The ombudsman was happy with the redress we had offered within our complaints process for another case. In the last case, the finding was there had been a service failure in the way we had dealt with the complaint, and we needed to pay compensation.



Learning from complaints

Complaints come about when you feel we have failed to do something.

This helps us to look at what we do and where we might have failed. For every complaint that is upheld, we have something to learn and possibly change our processes.

Poor communication featured in many of the complaints.

Missed appointments, delays to works and lack of communication between contractors and Crawley Homes all featured in the repairs complaints. Many of these were in the summer of 2021 as we came out of the series of lockdowns and found shortages and difficulties in getting certain products. We are working hard to make sure we keep you informed if there are delays.

Some complaints highlighted where staff training needed to be completed. This included:

- Improving staff knowledge about Freedom of Information requests
- Updating customer care skills, including the use of appropriate language
- The need for accurate record keeping, including keeping data about tenants' vulnerabilities up to date.

A few complaints have led to a change in our processes.

We are now holding weekly meetings to discuss repair and maintenance complaints, these meetings include contractors and allow us to fully understand issues and to see if any themes are appearing.

Holding regular case reviews with our Legal Services Team to address any problems with actions on anti-social behaviour cases.

Changes to the processes around getting quotes for repair works to reduce hand offs and delays and when getting estimates for rechargeable repairs to make sure tenants know they are estimates and may change.

The Housing Ombudsman

The Housing Ombudsman Service is set up by law to look at complaints about the housing organisations that are registered with them. The service is free, independent and impartial.

housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Complaint Handling Code

The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code sets out requirements for member landlords to allow them to respond to complaints effectively and fairly. Resolving complaints quickly and using data and learning from complaints to drive service improvements helps to create a positive complaint handling culture amongst staff and residents. Compliance with the Code forms part of the membership obligations set out in the Housing Ombudsman Scheme. An updated code came into effect from 1 April 2022.

Self assessment against the code

You can see our completed Complaints Handling Code self assessment form on the council's website at

<https://crawley.gov.uk/housing/council-tenants/resident-involvement>

"It may seem something small to others but I can't explain how much better the adaptations make my life. Previously my life was in total lockdown but now it is so much better. Thank you."

"Thank you so so much for all your help. Once again it's very much appreciated. You're an absolute star!!"



New apprentices

September 2021 saw a bumper intake of apprentices.

Liberty recruited two apprentice gas engineers, Mears recruited five apprentices – a carpenter, two electricians, a carpenter/multi-skilled worker and a plumber and Wates also recruited five apprentices – four carpenter/multi-skilled workers and a bricklayer.

We recruited a Housing Apprentice and an Apprentice Building Surveyor.



Apprentices are a great way to start a career.

Our first Housing Apprentice started in 2011 and is still working with us, whereas our first Apprentice Building Surveyor has moved on to work with one of the biggest developers.

Since 2011 we've had a total of seven Housing Apprentices and six Building Surveyor apprentices.

Of these, 10 of them still work for Crawley Homes and we look forward to recruiting more in the future.

New homes

In Forge Wood we increased the number of council homes by 55, in addition we let a brand new four-bedroom house in Langley Green and acquired one in Southgate.

Most of our homes built in Forge Wood during 2021-22 are named in honour of men from the village of Lowfield Heath who died during the First World War. They are all named on a memorial scroll from the church of St Michael and All Angels.

Dowlen Close, Eames Way, Killick Close, Sangster Close, Moore Close, Honour Way, Markey House, Horn House, Butler House, Newell House, Miller House, Croxford House, Holton House, Ellis House, Giles House, Guyatt House and Hitchcock House will all be part of the Forge Wood neighbourhood.

As well as naming roads we have also named two blocks of flats to remember those who died whilst serving in the armed forces.



Honour Way



Potter House



Hitchcock House

Scott Summers Court

Service of dedication

Scott Summers Court was built in 2020. This block of flats is named after Marine Scott Summers who died from injuries received on operations in Afghanistan in 2007.

Close to another development named after Private John Brackpool, a soldier who died serving in Afghanistan in 2009, these developments honour the memory, bravery, and sacrifice of these men.

In October 2021, the delayed service of dedication for Scott Summers Court took place. Scott's family and friends were joined by residents, Marines from 42 Commando of the Royal Marines, including Scott's commanding officer, and representatives of Crawley Borough Council for this important event.

The service included prayers, readings, the unveiling of a memorial plaque and a bugler played the last post.

Carol, Scott's mother, chose and read the poem "I Promise You" (David Lilburn – Reflections of War).



"It is such a privilege to have this block of flats named after my son Scott and the family would like to thank Crawley Council for honouring him in this way. I often drive past them and it reminds me of all the happy memories that we have. And even though it has been some years since we lost Scott, we still miss him so much. We are also grateful that 42 Commando of the Royal Marines wanted to officiate the service, making us feel that we are still part of the Marine family" Carol.



Pending legislation

2022-23 will see some important pieces of legislation come into force.

The Building Safety Act 2022

During 2021 the Building Safety Bill passed through Parliament and became law as the Building Safety Act 2022 on 28 April 2022.

The Act enhances, strengthens or amends existing legislation such as The Building Act 1984 and Fire Safety regulations.

As the implementation of sections of the act take place during the next couple of years we will rise to the challenges it may present.

The Social Housing Bill

This is legislation that is needed to bring into force sections of the Charter for Social Housing Residents. Its passage through Parliament will take place during the year. When it comes into force it will give new powers to the Social Housing Regulator. Reporting on new performance measures will be part of this along with regular satisfaction surveys to get information for these new measures.

Amanda Kendall Head of Crawley Homes



Joining Crawley Homes in December 2021 meant I missed the majority of the 2021-22 year, however I've now had time to settle in and get to know the teams and some of our key partners and stakeholders including TLAP.

I've found out it's a great place to work, all staff have shown a commitment to the council's core values and behaviours providing a great customer focused service, with tenants at the heart of our work. And we will continue with this as our focus.

I have spent time working with teams to put together our 2022-23 service plan, which included revisiting our vision and purpose. We have agreed that the primary purpose of Crawley homes is to deliver good quality, comfortable, safe and affordable homes and neighbourhoods for our residents with excellent customer service at our core and support that residents can access when they need. And our vision is to improve our services by putting our tenants at the forefront of our work through listening and involving them. We want to be out working proactively in our communities delivering excellent, transparent services. We will make sure this vision and purpose is embedded in all our work.

2021-22 saw ongoing challenges as we came out of Covid lockdowns but despite this our achievements have been excellent. They include 57 brand new homes for the people of Crawley, gas safety checks to 99.48 per cent of your homes, the retrofit trial helping us to work towards the council's decarbonisation target and giving

tenants more energy efficient homes are just some of the things we can be proud of.

It's great to look back, but 2022-23 is going to bring more challenges to meet, from tackling our increasing costs and helping tenants to tackle the cost of living crisis, to getting to grips with the new legislation.

We also need to launch and embed our new computer system as well as managing the demands of moving to our new offices. These challenges present new opportunities, new ways of working and new ways to engage with you. We are excited about the future but we need your help to get there. Report repairs to us when they are needed, enable access for repairs and the annual gas safety check, pay your rent on time but if you struggle to pay get in touch with us as early as possible as we are here to help.

Engaging with you, to get your views and opinions is important in many aspects of our work. Out in your neighbourhoods, we'll be holding estate inspections. When we are in your area, stop and talk to us. Tell us your views by completing any surveys we send, these really do help us to work out how we can improve.

The coming year is full of challenges but together I am sure we will meet them all.

With thanks to the members of the Tenant and Leaseholder Action Panel for their help in putting together the Annual Report.