

Epping Forest District Council

Annual Report to Tenants 2021

This Annual Report to Tenants provides information about how Epping Forest District Council Housing Services performed from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

Our performance 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

The year presented many challenges; as residents, staff and elected Members of the Council responded and adapted to the impact of Covid19.

The ongoing pandemic brought the need for suitable affordable housing into sharp focus to help protect everyone's health and wellbeing, both locally and nationally.

We had to reprioritise the delivery of housing services often on a day-to-day basis to take account of rapidly changing needs and circumstances of all residents and staff across the District.

Covid19 significantly affected services that typically require home visits, such as housing related support for those tenants who require it, repairs and maintenance, refurbishments, new developments and letting empty properties.

Face to face appointments whether at home or in the office had to be largely replaced with online or telephone correspondence and sought to maintain regular contact with our most vulnerable residents to provide practical support and to help combat isolation.

We also quickly responded to the Government's initiatives to ensure everyone had a roof over their head during the height of the pandemic, even those people who may not usually qualify for this level of assistance from the Council.

Our stock

As of 31 March 2021, our stock included:

- 6,384 Council homes
- 1,079 leasehold properties
- 1 hostel (54 rooms)
- 2 houses in multiple occupation (7 rooms)
- 2,191 garages

Collectively we have:

- provided 12 new affordable homes for people on our housing register as part of our Council house-building programme
- increased our housing stock by purchasing 18 properties from the open market.
- managed a housing register of 1,355 applicants.
- rehoused 449 households including 69 mutual exchanges
- achieved a 73% reduction in the use of Bed and Breakfast temporary accommodation

Tenant Satisfaction survey 2020

The findings of the 2020 survey:

- recorded that overall, 87% of our tenants were satisfied with the Housing services we provide
- established that 87% of tenants were satisfied with their neighbourhoods a place to live
- identified that 91% of tenants were satisfied with their last completed repair
- acknowledged that 81% of tenants were satisfied that the Housing service keeps them informed about things that may affect them
- found that the most common suggestions for improvements related to the repairs service.

Our Performance

Our performance is closely monitored by staff, managers and elected councillors. Some of our performance indicators are also monitored by our tenant and leaseholders' panel. The table below shows the tenant selected measures and our performance over the last two financial years.

Indicator	EFDC Target	Performance 2019-20	Performance 2020-21	Performance against target 2020-21
Amount of rent collected as a proportion of rents owed	100%	100.22%*	100.88%*	Exceeded target
Former tenant rent arrears collected	£60,000	£110,771	£99,589	Exceeded target
Number of households occupying temporary accommodation at the end of the year	100	124	110	Missed target
Average number of calendar days it took to re-let a council property	30 days	56 days	58 days	Missed target
Average overall number of working days it took to complete a responsive repair	7 days	6.96 days	7 days	Achieved target
Tenant satisfaction with the general standard of the repairs service	98%	96.08%	90%	Missed target
Number of stage-one complaints received for the repairs service	No target	25	12	No target (six months data)
Average number of working days it took to complete major void works with a total value of more than £1,500	22 days	18.4 days	23 days	Missed target
Percentage of properties that did not meet the Decent Home Standard at the end of the year	0%	0%	0%	Achieved target
Number of annual gas safety certificates lapsed over 12 months	0	0	0	Achieved target

*This figure is over 100% as it includes recovery of rent arrears owed from previous years

What we spent on repairs and maintenance

Capital expenditure is the money we spend on planned maintenance. The chart below shows how much we spent on different types of works last year and what we are planning to spend this year.

Works	Expenditure 2020-2021	Planned Expenditure 2021-2022
Gas and electric heating	£831,700	£1,260,000
Electric rewiring and upgrades	£775,300	£1,200,000
Windows doors & front entrance doors	£217,700	£1,404,000
Tiled and flat roofing	£196,900	£1,409,000
Water tank replacements	£1,800	£204,000
Kitchen replacements	£241,400	£750,000
Bathroom replacements	£147,400	£625,000
Disabled adaptations	£405,600	£650,000

In the last year we also spent £2.30 million on other capital projects including: estate environmental works, energy efficiency work, structural work, asbestos removal, and door entry security systems.

Adaptations

We can adapt Council properties to make them more adaptable for tenants with disabilities. Here is a breakdown of disabled adaption works we undertook in 2020-2021.

Adaptation	Number completed in 2020-2021	Total cost
Graded floor showers	42	£217,662
Over bath showers	5	£20,438
Bathrooms	0	0
Dropped kerbs/hard standings	6	£44,010
Ramps	0	0
Stair lifts	8	£53,829
Property extensions	0	0
Clos-o-mat toilets	2	£6,168
Other adaptations	32	£63,500
Total	95	£405,604

Our plans for April 2021 to March 2022

Planning for the year ahead combines the direction of travel set out in the EFDC corporate plan and housing related statutory and regulatory changes with listening and responding flexibly to the needs and wishes of residents.

Health and Wellbeing

We plan to bring housing, health and community services even closer together and continue to invest in improving tenants' health and wellbeing and the built environment.

We shall continue to respond flexibly to the challenges of the pandemic, reprioritising services as circumstances change, with a focus on supporting our most vulnerable tenants. We will make welfare calls and visits, undertake doorstep consultations, provide self-help packs and plan activities to combat isolation as social distancing rules are eased or removed.

More than Bricks and Mortar

We will launch a new four-year project, the More than Bricks and Mortar Estate Improvement Scheme. Under the scheme, residents can suggest improvements aimed at enhancing the look, feel and lived experience of our Council and mixed tenure housing estates.

Following a feasibility and costing exercise, a group of residents who sit on the Tenants and Leaseholder Panel will decide which projects are to be developed by the Council in conjunction with local residents, for the benefit of the wider community.

The Scheme will support our vision to create great places where people want to live. Enhancements with a safer, cleaner, greener theme will be encouraged. Other themes could include lighting projects, improved signage, health & wellbeing, and public art.

Resident Involvement Strategy

We will develop a new strategy for resident involvement, which sets out our approach to resident involvement and how resident involvement services will be delivered.

Taking into account the requirements of the Charter for Social Housing Residents, the strategy will provide a new framework for resident involvement, which places our tenants and leaseholders at the centre of everything that we do, where residents are listened to and treated with respect, and where their views inform decision-making and shape our services.

The strategy shall ensure that resident involvement activity is embedded within all functions of the Property & Housing Service and that we are accountable to our residents. We propose to include a wide range of engagement opportunities for residents to get involved as much or as little as they wish, based on their interests, time available and preferred communication channels.

Review of Housing Strategies and Policies

We will consult residents on a review of four main housing policies and strategies for 2022 - 2027:

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will identify our plans to prevent and relieve homelessness, the Allocations Policy will set out our rules for allocating social housing, the Tenancy Policy will explain the types of tenancy we will issue, and the Housing Strategy will provide an overview of our approach to managing the demand for all types of affordable housing in the District and the current and future supply of suitable accommodation.

For further information, or to receive this report in an accessible format please contact
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