

# ANNUAL REPORT

## TO TENANTS 2014/15

This report sets out how we are using your rent payments to manage and maintain homes and neighbourhoods across the borough.

In 2014/15 we:

- Introduced new six-week financial assessments for our new tenants, 61 of which were completed between November 2014 and March 2015.
- Started new tenant welcome meetings giving you the opportunity to come along and meet our team and learn about what it means to be a tenant.
- Helped 5 LifePlan customers enter employment.
- Supported 162 tenants to maintain their tenancies.
- Helped 24 tenants downsize to more suitable accommodation.
- Helped the NHS save over £150,000 since 2012 through our Stepping Stones project.
- Started our flagship Homes for the Future project in Addison Road, Desborough.
- Installed external wall insulation to 23 homes.





## MANAGING YOUR HOMES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

In 2014/15 there were:

- 313 new tenancies
- 124 visits to tenants ending their tenancy
- 497 introductory tenancy visits
- 10 abandoned properties identified and brought back into use
- 32 untidy gardens identified with 22 resolved through early intervention
- 8 notices seeking possession served for breaches of tenancies which included drug offences and subletting
- 3177 customer enquiries received and dealt with



## ESTATE WALKABOUTS

Carrying out quarterly estate walkabouts is an important part of your Neighbourhood Manager's role. These walkabouts enable your Neighbourhood Manager to:

- Provide a more visible and proactive presence on our estates
- Promote a greater neighbourhood focus
- Ensure that our areas continue to provide a pleasant and safe environment for you and your family

Your Tenant Representatives are an important part of our programme of estate walkabouts and give up their free time to accompany the Neighbourhood Managers on their walkabouts. Some examples of issues raised on these walkabouts are:



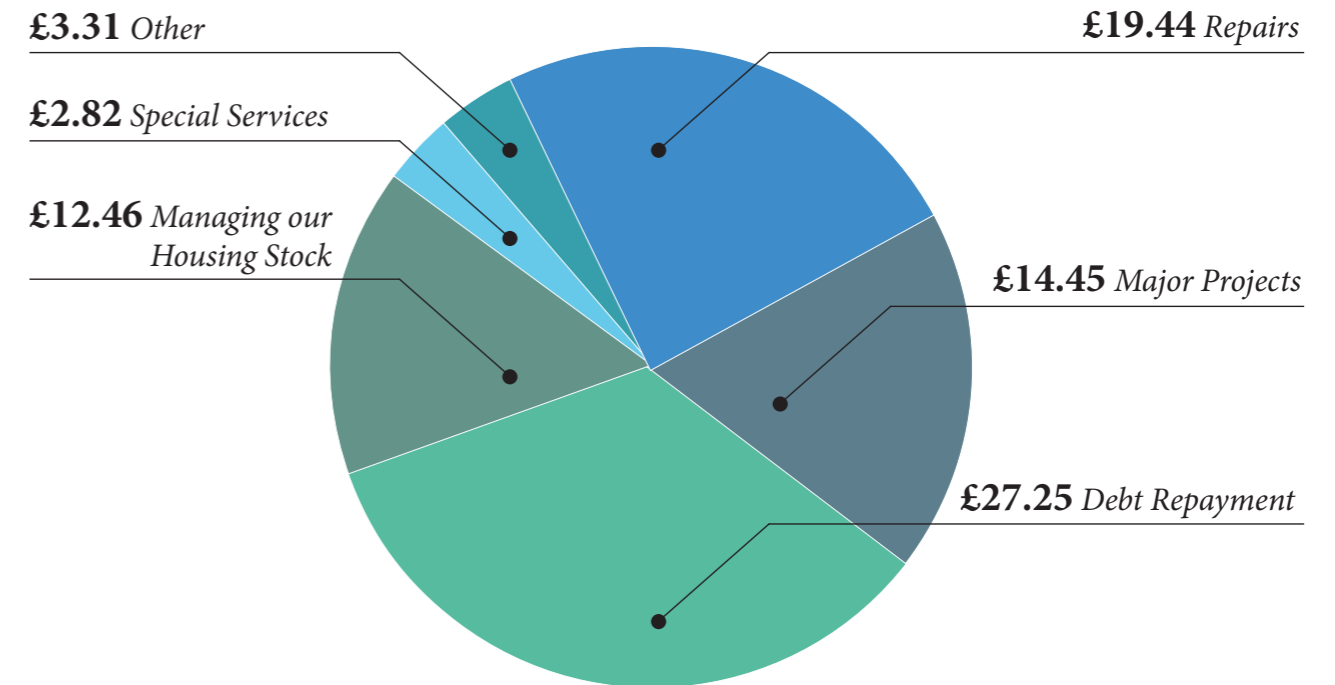
Area	Proposal
Top Dysons, Cranford	Removal of the concrete base of the communal garage site which was previously demolished to encourage the area to grow back into the surrounding woodland. This has been approved for work to commence in 2015/16.
Northumberland Close, Kettering	Extension of existing communal parking area submitted as a potential environmental scheme and approved for work to commence in 2015/16.
Highfield Crescent, Kettering	New signage identifying numbering at blocks 53-59 and 65-71.
Gaultney Close, Desborough	New signage for The Gaultney.
Jasmine Court, Kettering	Install an additional lighting column to enhance the safety and security of residents. Approved for work to commence in 2015/16.
Centre Parade, Kettering	Garden wall made safe and rebuilt for health and safety reasons.
7 properties in Cherry Road, Almond Road, Rosewood Place, Kettering	Rubbish build up in the front gardens. We wrote to all tenants and are progressing to a satisfactory conclusion.
Weekley Glebe Road, Kettering	Tenants queried as to when the external doors would be replaced. These doors have now been replaced.

## RENT AND HOW WE SPEND YOUR MONEY

The Housing Income Team work hard to ensure that we engage with tenants in rent arrears at the earliest opportunity. We offer advice and support and promote tenancy sustainment. However, we will and do take enforcement action when this is required.

The majority of our income comes from the rent and service charges you pay.

**In 2014/15. our average weekly rent was £79.73**  
**This is how we spent that money**



**£15.2m**

Rent and service charge payments collected

**98.65%**

Rent collection rate

**5.1%**

Average rent increase

**17**

Tenants evicted for rent arrears

Rent arrears increased by 5.5% between 2013/14 and 2014/15. The total rent arrears as at 31st March 2015 was £207,535.

In 2014/15 two additional Housing Income Officers joined us to work with those tenants affected by changes to welfare benefits.

### DON'T FORGET

It is a condition of your tenancy that you pay your rent. If you are worried about paying your rent or feel that you would like some help managing your finances then please contact us.

We offer you a variety of ways in which to pay your rent, they include:

- Direct Debit
- Standing Order
- Local Paypoint Outlet
- Post Office
- Telephone by debit or credit card
- Internet by debit or credit card
- Cheque

**UC Universal Credit**



Contact us on **01536 410 333** for more information.



# KEEPING YOUR HOME IN GOOD REPAIR

## Major works programme

In 2014/15, we spent **£3.4m** on our planned maintenance and major works programmes. We spent this on:

<b>23</b> external wall insulations	<b>65</b> roofing works	<b>51</b> door entry systems	<b>324</b> glass reinforced plastic doors
<b>17</b> lift renewals	<b>31</b> kitchens	<b>3</b> bathrooms	<b>157</b> boiler/central heating systems
<b>105</b> electrical upgrades	<b>122</b> adaptations for people with disabilities	<b>18</b> environmental improvements	<b>84</b> major voids
<b>13</b> oil tanks	<b>5</b> car park enhancements	<b>6</b> home for the future	<b>7</b> empty homes refurbishment

## REPAIRS

In 2014/15:

- 22,431 repairs were completed, costing a total of £1.5m
- 97.48% of priority one (urgent) repairs were completed in 24 hours
- The average number of responsive repairs per property was 6
- The average cost of a responsive repair is £70.07
- 91% of repairs are completed at the first stage



## EXTERNAL WALL INSULATION

In 2014/15 we undertook external wall insulation to **23** properties.

### What is external wall insulation?

External wall insulation is a type of insulation that not only insulates, but also protects the exterior of your home.

### What are the benefits?

Solid walls let twice as much heat escape as cavity walls, so this type of insulation will make your home warmer and could potentially save you hundreds of pounds on your heating bills.

### Are there any plans to roll this out to more properties across the borough?

A further 650 properties are scheduled for completion over the next ten years.



## HOMES FOR THE FUTURE

### What is Homes for the Future?

The Homes for the Future project focuses on re-modelling and refurbishing council housing stock built before 1945, so that it provides safe, secure and comfortable homes over the coming decades.

### What works are undertaken as part of this project?

The works include a new kitchen and bathroom; a new efficient gas central heating system; replastering throughout; full electrical rewire; external wall insulation; landscaping.

### What options are available to tenants while these works are being carried out?

Tenants are given the option to either move out of their home on a temporary basis; a permanent basis; or to stay with family/friends.

### What support do the tenants receive?

Our team aim to make the process as smooth and stress-free as possible. We provide boxes, tape and bubble wrap; arrange removal and/or storage of belongings. We also provide practical support and guidance throughout the process.

### How long do the works take?

We work on two properties at a time, which take approximately eight weeks.

### Were the tenants happy that these works would be taking place to their homes?

Initially some tenants were apprehensive about the process of moving out of their homes while these works were carried out, however once the process was explained and they were fully aware of the works being undertaken, they have been happy.

### What has the feedback been from tenants returning to their homes?

Very positive. Tenants have been extremely impressed with the look of their refurbished homes and are starting to find that their homes are warmer and cheaper to run.

### How many properties have been completed?

To date 15 properties have been refurbished on Addison Road and Alexandra Road, Desborough.



# HELPING AND SUPPORTING YOU

## HomeMove

If you are looking to downsize to a smaller property our HomeMove Advisor is available to provide one-to-one support throughout the moving process.

If you're eligible you will also receive a grant to help you move. Our HomeMove Advisor will work with you to tailor a package of support to meet your needs.

In 2014/15:

- **24** tenants were helped to downsize to more suitable accommodation through HomeMove.
- A further **13** tenants moved through our Enhanced HomeMove service (a scheme which assists you if you require major adaptations to your home and would like to move to more suitable accommodation).



**HomeMove**

If you are interested in downsizing, please call **01536 535 643** or email **homemove@kettering.gov.uk**

## Life Plan

LifePlan is a free and friendly service for our housing customers which offers one to one support, guidance and opportunities in relation to training, education, employment and volunteering opportunities.

In 2014/15 we worked with **88** LifePlan customers. We helped:



To access LifePlan please call **01536 534 319** or email **leonereed@kettering.gov.uk**

## TENANCY SUPPORT SERVICES

The Tenancy Support Service offers free and confidential short term support to our tenants who require help to successfully maintain their tenancy. This includes advice about paying your rent, budgeting and welfare benefits, helping with getting back into work and education, developing life skills and support accessing healthcare. Our service is adapted as necessary to meet our customers' individual needs.

During 2014/15 our tenancy support workers supported 162 tenants to maintain their tenancies. The majority of tenants required help for rent arrears, debt management and claiming benefits.

*One customer told us that "any problems I had, I knew I could always speak with someone. Everything was always explained to me in a way to make sure I understood, so now if I struggle, I have the confidence to carry on and do it myself."*



**Tenancy Support Service**  
Supporting Independence

If you would like to speak to our Tenancy Support Workers please call **01536 543 336/535 672** or email **tenancysupport@kettering.gov.uk**

## SILVER SERVICE

Our Silver Service is the intensive housing management and support service which we provide to our sheltered housing and Lifeline customers.

Our services are designed to meet the needs of our customers who wish to remain in the community and live independently but would benefit from additional support.

Our dedicated team of Scheme Managers and Support Workers offer a personalised support service tailored to our customer's specific needs across our ten sheltered housing schemes and for over 70 Lifeline customers within the community.

Our team work alongside our very active customer Silver Service Forum. During 2014/15 the forum was involved in:

- Monitoring our alarm monitoring and out of hours call centre service
- Editing the Silver Service Matters (quarterly sheltered housing newsletter)
- Reviewing and updating our procedures for the benefit of all our customers



For advice on accessing our supported housing, call **01536 710 036/535 655** or email **silverservice@kettering.gov.uk**

# ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

In Kettering Borough we are fully committed to working together to tackle crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour, misuse of drugs and any other behaviour which affects the local environment. The Community Safety Partnership, which tackles these issues, is made up of the following organisations:

- Kettering Borough Council
- Northamptonshire County Council
- Police
- Fire Authority
- NHS Nene Clinical Commissioning Group
- Probation Service

The Partnership works with other local agencies, organisations and the local community to put in place an action plan to make Kettering Borough a safe place to live, work and visit.

In 2014/15 we dealt with **55** complaints about anti-social behaviour concerning our tenants:

- **32** were resolved with early intervention by housing management staff
- **8** tenants were given a formal warning about conduct of the tenancy compared to 21 in 2013/14
- **2** tenants were evicted and one received a Suspended Possession Order on condition that there was no further anti-social behaviour

Our service standards which set out how the Council and other agencies will respond to complaints of anti-social behaviour can be found on our website [www.kettering.gov.uk](http://www.kettering.gov.uk)



## KEYWAYS

Kettering Borough Council operate a housing register in partnership with Wellingborough and Corby Borough Councils. Applicants interested in living in social housing in any of the three council areas are now registered on the Keyways housing register.

For more information visit [www.kettering.gov.uk/keyways](http://www.kettering.gov.uk/keyways)



To report anti-social behaviour to us please call  
**01536 410 333**

### In 2014/15:

We re-let

**349**

council  
properties

A further

**27**

tenants completed  
mutual exchanges