

Annual Report to Tenants

Keeping you up to
date



Welcome

Welcome to the Annual Report to Tenants for 2012-13

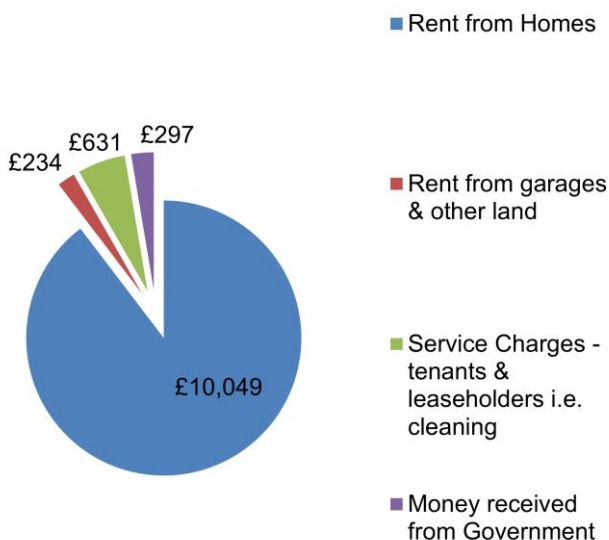
The Council produces the report every year so that we can keep you up to date on our how well we are doing and let you know how we have improved your homes. The report also tells you what we have spent money on in 2012-13. You will find an update about the new sheltered housing scheme on the site of Collingwood House, as well as how to get involved and make sure we are offering the best possible service to you.

The report also gives you a list of names and numbers so that you can easily get in contact with us.

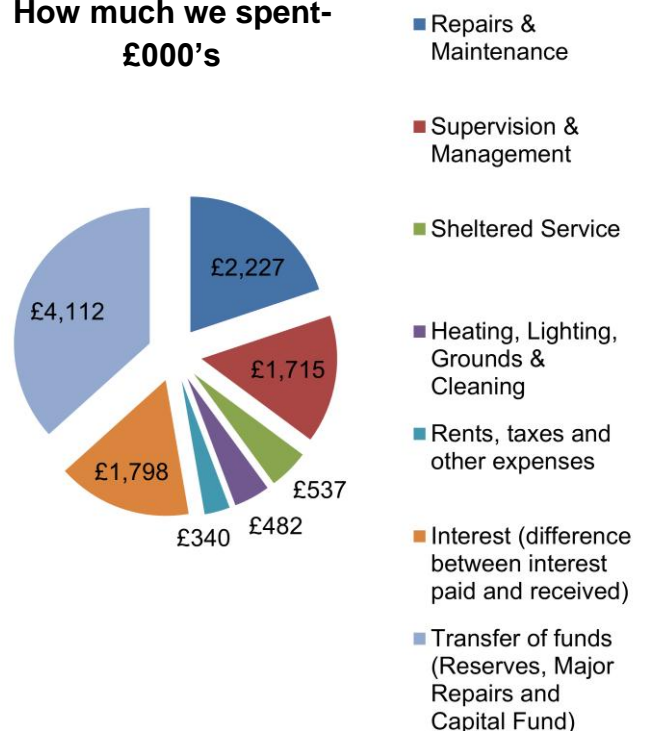


How much did we receive and spend in 2012-13?

Money received - £000's



How much we spent- £000's



How did we do in 2012/13?

Repairs and Maintenance Service

We have long term contracts with companies for repairs, gas servicing and kitchen/bathroom modernisation. This has helped reduce some of our costs whilst making sure you still get a good service.

Improving Homes

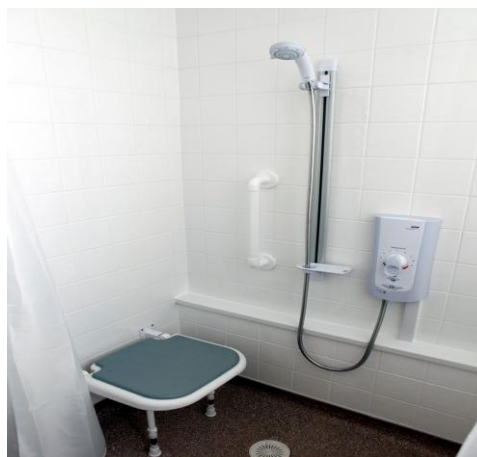
- 99% of Council homes meet the Decent Homes Standard meaning your home is safe, has modern facilities/services and is comfortable.
- In 2012/13, 145 kitchen and 152 bathroom modernisations were carried out at a cost of £748,683.



- We are replacing old inefficient boilers with more environmentally friendly condensing boilers.
In 2012/13, 134 boilers were replaced.
- Electrical upgrading work was carried out on 116 homes.

On Housing Repairs & Improvements

- In 2012/13 over 8,400 repair orders were raised. Feedback showed that 99% of tenants were happy with the service.
- 99.9% of gas boilers in Council homes were serviced in 2012/13. Access difficulties to a number of homes proved difficult. In these cases the Council is considering legal action against the tenant.



- In 2012/13, £210,088 was spent on adapting 75 homes to meet the needs of a disabled occupant.
- Outside decorations were carried out to 465 homes.
- £28,933 was spent on major re-roofing projects.

How did we do in 2012/13?

Housing Rents & Arrears

At the end of March 2013, the total amount of rent that was owed by tenants was £305,501. This was an increase on last year.

There were 27 possession hearings in the county court for rent owed and anti-social behaviour.

In 2012/13 the Council carried out 2 evictions. One because of non payment of rent, the other for to anti-social behaviour.



Housing Rent Payment Cards

In March 2013, the Council issued over 1000 new housing payment swipe cards to tenants who pay their rent at post offices.

The new payment cards can also be used at a number of pay point outlets available in a number of convenience stores.

Managing Anti-Social Behaviour

Housing officers dealt with 46 reported incidents of anti-social behaviour.

In a small number of cases tenants agreed to an Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC) or risk losing their home. ABC's initially last for 6 months and the tenant's behaviour is closely watched. If the terms of the ABC are broken tenants can be evicted. In the two cases that ended up in Court, both tenants were evicted (one in 2012/13 the other in 2013/14).

In managing anti-social behaviour housing officers work closely with the Council's community safety team and the police.

Empty Council Homes

- A total of 130 Council homes were re-let.
- The average time taken to re-let empty homes in 2012/13 was 26.25 days; this was a slight improvement on last year.
- A total of £71,369 rent was lost in 2012/13 as a result of empty Council homes; this was an improvement on last year.

Tenants making a difference

Tenants have a really important role in making sure that we offer the best service we can. You can tell us what we do well and what we could improve.

If you get involved you will help to improve your homes and local community.



How do tenants make a difference?

Tenant Representatives

Throughout the year tenant representatives have:

- Helped to analyse housing budgets.
- Monitored housing work programmes such as kitchen & bathroom improvements.
- Looked at how well contractors do housing repairs, gas servicing, kitchen and bathroom modernisations, block cleaning and grounds maintenance.



Tenant Forums

There are two tenant forums where housing services of interest and concern are discussed. Dates of meetings are printed in newsletters, available in our reception area and on our website.

The General Tenants' Forum is open to all tenants and meets 5-6 times a year.

The Sheltered Tenants' Forum is open to all sheltered tenants and meets 4 times a year.

Housing Tenancy Board

There are a number of tenant representatives on the Council's Tenancy Board. The Board looks at how well the Housing Service is doing to see if it is up to standard.

Have your say

Ways to have your say

There are a number ways you can help to improve homes, these include:

- **Block Captains / Estate Monitors**
(Provide feedback on Estate services such as cleaning & grounds maintenance)
- **Contract Performance Groups**
(Monitor the performance of our contractors and provide direct feedback to the contractor regarding cleaning, grounds maintenance, housing repairs, kitchen/bathroom modernisation & gas servicing)
- **Editorial Panel**
(Helping to put together the tenants' newsletter 'Tenants' Voice')

Training & Support

Fareham Borough Council and other neighbouring councils and housing associations provide two training events each year. These provide an opportunity for up to 20 tenants to receive training and gain knowledge about such things as Housing Law and how to improve services.

The Council pays tenants' travel expenses for attending meetings. We will also pay for room hire and refreshments and organise agendas/minutes.

Estate Inspections & Estate Improvements

Area Housing Estates Officers carry out regular estate inspections and tenants are invited to take part. This is a good opportunity to tell us about housing issues around your home and to work on solutions together.

The Council has some money to fund small scale improvements to housing sites and tenants can make suggestions about possible works.



How can people get involved?

Tenants can find out more about the above groups by contacting the Tenant Involvement Officer, Jennie Larkin on 01329 824463 or e mail jlarkin@fareham.gov.uk.

You can also look at Tenant Involvement on our website www.fareham.gov.uk.

An update on changes

Collingwood House Redevelopment

Work on the new sheltered housing scheme is to start in autumn 2013. This will provide 40 units of accommodation with a mixture of one and two bed flats.

The existing scheme is shown below:



Tenancy Strategy

A new Tenancy Strategy and Policy has been approved by the Council. This is a plan about how the Council will manage its houses and tenancies in the years ahead. New tenants allocated family sized accommodation (2 bed and larger) will be granted a 'Flexible Tenancy' for a period of 5 years.

Housing Allocations

A new Housing Allocations Policy has also been approved by the Council. Housing applicants previously on the Waiting List were required to complete a new application which will be assessed against the new policy criteria.



An image of what the new Collingwood House will look like

Welfare Reforms

Since April 2013 tenants of working age who receive housing benefit and are under-occupying their home by one or more bedrooms has seen their benefit cut. Because of this we have seen more tenants registering on HomeSwapper (www.homeswapper.co.uk) for an exchange to a smaller home.

From October 2013 Universal Credit is scheduled to be introduced for newly unemployed claimants, this will include housing costs. It will be paid direct to tenants monthly rather than to the Council. It will then be tenant's responsibility to pay their rent from this.

Contact us

Contact Us

Building Services

Free phone Repairs Number - ☎ 0800 1412194

Responsive Repairs Team - ☎ 0800 1412194 or responsiverepairs@fareham.gov.uk

Planned Maintenance Team - ☎ 01329 236100 or buildingprojects@fareham.gov.uk

Tenancy Services

Tenant Involvement Officer - ☎ 01329 824463 or jlarkin@fareham.gov.uk

Area Housing Estate Officers:

Fareham North & North West

Jon Johnson - ☎ 01329 824458 or jjohnson@fareham.gov.uk

Portchester & Fareham SW

Sian Jeffery/Keith Nevitt - ☎ 01329 824484 or sjeffery@fareham.gov.uk or knevitt@fareham.gov.uk

Fareham SE & Stubbington

Matt Elsbury - ☎ 01329 824492 melsbury@fareham.gov.uk

Western Wards

Helen Ayers/Tania Meskouri - ☎ 01329 824464 or hayers@fareham.gov.uk or tmeskouri@fareham.gov.uk

Housing Options

Housing Options Team - ☎ 01329 236100 ext 4493

Housing Allocations Officer - ☎ 01329 236100 ext 2471

ALTERNATIVE FORMAT

To obtain a copy of this report in large print, in audio version or have it translated please contact the Council's Customer Service Centre on 01329 236100.

If you would like further information or to comment on the content or format of this report then please contact either Jon Shore, Tenancy Services Manager on 01329 236100 ext 4540 or by e-mail to jshore@fareham.gov.uk or Jennie Larkin, Tenant Involvement Officer on 01329 824463 or by e-mail to jlarkin@fareham.gov.uk

www.fareham.gov.uk

