



# Tandridge District Council Annual Review 2023/2024

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# Introduction

Welcome to Tandridge District Council's first annual review of social housing. The last year has been one of change for the social housing sector and the Council, following the introduction of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) standards which came into effect in April 2024.

These standards set out and recognise a clear ambition which is shared by everyone at the Council to make social housing the best it can be for residents. We are determined to fulfil not just the written words of these standards for the benefit of all our residents, but importantly their spirit as well.

A key requirement of these new standards is to publish our performance on Tenant Satisfaction Measures. You can read the headline results from this survey and more about how we are responding to issues raised in this review, along with highlights from the last 12 months across services we have provided to residents.

From speaking with residents and after reviewing the Tenant Satisfaction Survey feedback from 2023, I know the two main issues for our residents right now are improving grounds maintenance and cleaning services. This is our biggest priority.

As a result, a new in-house grounds maintenance service is being put together and will include resourcing, new efficient machinery and improved reporting. This will be underpinned by a service level agreement enabling the housing service and residents to hold the delivery team to account.

We are currently procuring a new cleaning contract and expect a new contract to start early in 2025. Again, like the grounds maintenance service, this contract will be underpinned by strict contract management, key performance measures and regular site visits by housing staff.

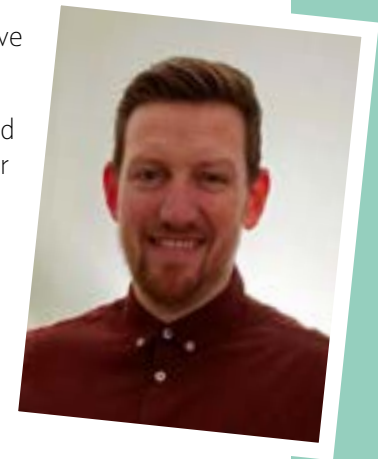
For me, the key to success is for us to work in a collaborative and understanding way with residents across Tandridge, making residents the priority and putting them at the heart of what we do, while we work hard to hold service providers to account. By taking this approach we will ensure the services our residents rely on are provided correctly - every time.

Our [2024-2028 Corporate Plan](#), underpins this way of working, particularly putting residents at the heart of what we do and being responsive to their needs.

You will read more in this review about how we are taking our housing services forward in line with our corporate plan and I hope you find this a helpful and interesting read. Finally, we would welcome your feedback on this, our first annual review of social housing across our district.



James Devonshire  
**Head of Housing**



## 2023 Tenant Satisfaction Measures

In 2023, new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) were introduced in line with legislation set out by the Regulator for Social Housing. As part of these measures, we have developed our own resident engagement strategy aiming to build on and improve engagement with our residents.

An early step saw the introduction of an annual TSM survey, which seeks tenants' opinions on their homes and the key housing services we provide. It is important for us to know the areas where you feel we are reaching your expectations and what we can change to help us improve.

The survey was delivered in several ways including by e-mail, post or by calling tenants. This meant as many tenants as possible could participate. We published [the results](#), as scrutiny and accountability are an important part of our resident engagement strategy.

We issued 2,594 invitations to participate in this first survey and received 721 responses. We would like to improve on these numbers for this year's survey, which is currently underway.

Your feedback is vital and helps drive real improvement in housing services, as well as informing future corporate decisions and agendas and bolstering transparency within the housing sector.

### 2023 Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey results

The headlines are:

- 72% of tenants are satisfied with the service provided by Tandridge District Council Housing Services.
- 71% of tenants are satisfied they are provided with a home which is well maintained.
- 48% of tenants with communal areas are satisfied they are kept clean and well maintained.
- 73% of tenants are satisfied the Council provides them with a home that is safe.
- 79% of tenants who had raised a repair over the last 12 months have been satisfied with the service provided.
- 75% of tenants are satisfied with the time it took to complete their most recently reported repair.
- 54% of tenants are satisfied the Council makes a positive contribution to their neighbourhood.
- 47% of tenants are satisfied with the Council's handling of anti-social behaviour.
- 58% of tenants are satisfied the Council listens to their views and acts upon them.
- 62% of tenants are satisfied they are kept informed about things that matter to them.
- 26% of tenants said they complained to the Council in the last 12 months, of these 27% are satisfied with the Council's approach to complaint handling.
- 70% of tenants agree the Council treats them fairly and with respect.



The responses we received highlighted a clear and generally high level of satisfaction with the services provided and an overall feeling that residents are valued and treated with respect. However, it is clear there is room for improvement, such as:

- Cleaning and maintenance of communal areas.
- Making a positive contribution to neighbourhoods.
- The Council's approach to handling anti-social behaviour.
- Listening to the views of tenants and acting on them.
- A clear and transparent complaints process.

### **Tenants spoke, we listened**

As a result of this first tenant satisfaction survey, we are taking a closer look at communal area cleaning and whether the current arrangements meet residents' needs. With our current cleaning contract due to expire in 2025, the Council is carefully considering the new contract, including the scope of works currently in place.

We are also looking at how we organise grounds maintenance across the district and in 2025 we will be trialling a reorganised team structure.

Making a positive contribution to the neighbourhood is an area we aim to tackle in a variety of ways. From changing the way we approach anti-social behaviour to being proactive in how we respond to the concerns of our residents, for example:

- We have appointed a dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour Officer to assist the police, social services and environmental health with the multi-agency approach required to tackle this problem.
- We actively encourage residents to request estate walkabouts with a council officer to address any issues they have noticed.



# Social housing within our Corporate Plan

Across Tandridge we support and manage social housing, putting residents at the heart of what we do and by being responsive to their needs. We do this through our core priorities.

## Our core priorities:

- Protecting and enhancing our environment.
- Delivering affordable housing for local people.
- Financial prudence and sustainability.
- Putting residents at the heart of what we do.
- A safe, healthy and caring community supporting those most in need.
- A thriving economy.



# Protecting and enhancing our environment

94% of the land in the Tandridge district is classified as Green Belt, which is the highest percentage for a district council in the country. This means we feel a real responsibility to protect our locality and feel privileged to do so.

Throughout the last year, several projects and initiatives have begun supporting our efforts in this area.

## The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF)

Lowering the everyday impact on the environment by our society is a nationwide agenda and the Council was delighted to be granted funding from the SHDF, which is managed by the government's Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. This funding helps us make changes and improvements lowering energy consumption in our homes.

The funding enables us to retrofit properties with materials and changes designed to improve the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating. Measures could include improving the insulation of a property, upgrading the heating systems and improving the ventilation. These improvements reduce the energy needed to create a comfortable home environment for tenants, while helping to reduce energy bills too. These works across our social housing properties will continue into 2025. If your property has been identified as possibly needing improvements in this area, you will be contacted to arrange a simple survey as the first step in this process.

The importance of our work in this area supports the national shift to greener homes and cannot be underestimated. The positive impact this has on sustainability and the health of our communities and planet for future generations is of critical value.

## Other ways we are protecting our local environment

It is important for all our residents to enjoy living in beautiful and sustainable surroundings. This means we need to take our responsibilities for our local environment seriously.

Across the district, there are 19 conservation areas, eight sites of Special Scientific Interest, seven Local Nature Reserves and nearly 40% of the area is designated

as being an Area of Natural Outstanding Beauty or of Great Landscape Value. Sustaining and supporting these exceptionally beautiful surroundings has always been a priority to the Council and over the past year we have been working hard to:

- Work with Surrey Wildlife Trust to provide biodiversity training for officers and councillors.
- Improve and reduce our mowing practices on public land and the use of pesticides.
- Increase wildflower, grassland, wetland and pollinator planting on district council land and parks.
- Sow seeds in wildflower areas to encourage pollinating insects.
- Collaborate with partners including Surrey Wildlife Trust, Surrey Hills, High Weald National Landscapes (formerly known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty AONB), Surrey Climate Commission and Surrey Air Alliance to build sustainability strategies.
- Eliminate the use of single use plastic (SUP) for council use at meetings or events and third party events.
- Reduce the number of car journeys by offering staff the opportunity of hybrid working.
- Promote and support local reuse and repair schemes which divert waste, for example [Freegle](#), [Freecycle](#) and repair cafes.
- Continue to locate clothes and textile banks in strategic locations across the district prioritising the re-use of the items collected.
- Investigate greener fuel options for fleet vehicles by trialling an electric refuse and food collection vehicle.

# Delivering affordable housing for local people

More than three quarters of Tandridge residents own their own property and 11% rent from the Council or a housing association.

We have around 2,580 council properties and just over 600 leaseholders. There are also a growing number of households in temporary accommodation across the district due to the cost of living crisis.

A lack of affordable housing and the cost of private rented accommodation in the district also presents a significant challenge for families needing affordable housing options. Because of this, we only build homes to rent and not for home ownership.

We supplement our council house building with a programme of buying back ex-Right to Buy properties.

We have received funding from the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) to buy homes for Afghan and Ukraine families. This fund was established as part of the UK's humanitarian duties for Ukrainian and Afghan families.

We secure funds for current and ongoing development of affordable homes from a range of sources including:

- The Local Authority Housing Fund.
- Right to Buy receipts.
- Homes England Grants.

We also work with housing associations, developers and landowners to build affordable homes which include rented and shared ownership homes.

## Developing our social housing

In the 2023/2024 financial year, we successfully added 77 new affordable homes to our social housing stock. This comprised of six new build properties and acquiring 11 additional properties on the open market. We were pleased to see the completion of Lawrence House in Caterham by [Clarion Housing](#), which delivered 48 affordable homes and the completion of Oldencraig Mews in Lingfield with four affordable homes and Broadleaf Place in Caterham, adding a further eight affordable homes.

So far in the 2024/2025 financial year, we have created a further 15 new affordable homes. This is made up of 12 completed new builds, including our first net zero carbon homes at Orrick Court, Caterham and we purchased three more properties on the open market. These properties have now been let to people on our housing register at affordable rent.

We also expect our scheme at Bronzeoak House in Caterham to be completed by early next year providing 26 new homes and the final 13 flats at Uplands in Warlingham are nearing completion.

Works are underway by [Cala Homes](#) to deliver 40 affordable homes in Warlingham.

This progress means we are continually adding new social housing properties to the homes we already provide to people requiring rented social housing in the district.

## Coming up

In 2023, following the Council's acquisition of the former Sea Cadets site in Caterham from the Ministry of Defence, we will deliver up to 16 new affordable homes. The Methodist Church site in Hurst Green will be developed to provide up to 13 one and two bedroom flats for affordable rent, while the former care home on Foxon Lane in Caterham will be developed to provide up to 20 new homes for affordable rent.

## Managing and improving our homes

With around 2,580 Council owned properties, we are committed to providing good quality homes for all our tenants and effective housing services.

One of our main priorities is the delivery of good quality housing services for all tenants, ensuring our properties are safe and comfortable places to live. This means resolving resident enquiries and dealing with any repairs or concerns raised about their homes as soon as we can.

In the last year, we have managed thousands of enquiries spanning a wide range of services from repairs and pest control to taking action on anti-social behaviour.



## Repairing tenants' homes

Our dedicated repairs team has worked hard over the past year to respond to requests for repairs raised by tenants as quickly as possible. Over the last year, our officers and contractors have responded to over 5,500 requests for repairs. Over half of these were resolved by our inhouse team.

## Providing aids and adaptations

An important part of the work we do is ensuring homes are safe and accessible for residents who may require adaptations to their homes to help them live as independently as possible.

These can be minor adaptations such as the installation of key safes, grab rails, small ramps, lever taps, shower seats and over bath showers, or major adaptations such as the installation of stairlifts, level access showers, wash/dry WCs, large ramps, level threshold doors, galvanised rails and major structural works.

In the last year, we have made numerous adaptations and fitted many aids for tenants with around half of those requiring major works.

These adaptations, whether minor or major works have a hugely positive impact on the lives of residents whose homes they are installed in. This is reflected in much of the feedback we have received around the high quality of our service.

## Upgrades provided by our major works programmes

These work programmes make improvements to residents' homes by upgrading elements that may no longer be suitable for repair or are no longer practical. During 2023/2024, through our major works programme, we provided hundreds of upgrades and improvements to tenants' homes, including:

- 154 boiler replacements.
- 43 bathroom upgrades.
- 40 kitchen upgrades.
- 101 electrical rewires.
- 246 new window units.

## Taking action to combat damp and condensation

Damp and condensation can be harmful to the homes, belongings and health of residents. To manage this the Council aims to respond to and remedy reports of damp and mould expediently, so we can quickly remove the causes of damp in residents' homes.

In the past year, together with our specialised damp and condensation surveyors we have responded to 238 reports of damp and condensation. These have resulted in us providing advice and arranging treatments or works as necessary.



## Financial prudence and sustainability

It is important we take an efficient and cost-effective approach to delivering our services, whether they are delivered directly by us, or by organisations who provide services on our behalf.

Across social housing, we focus our efforts on being as financially self sustaining as possible. We achieve this by:

- Investing in new properties and development opportunities in our district which will provide a reliable income stream such as those described earlier in this review.
- Managing the income we receive through our existing property assets.
- Continuing to keep all our services under review to identify further efficiencies.

### Improving IT infrastructure

By improving our IT infrastructure, we can work more smoothly and reliably. We have introduced a new digital [MyTandridge account](#) for residents and businesses.

MyTandridge is a simple, secure way for residents to easily access their council services online. This makes it quicker and easier to manage your council tax, benefits and claims, business rates, recycling and waste collections. In the new year, we will add housing and planning services to the account.



## Putting residents at the heart of what we do

Fostering a strong two-way dialogue between residents and local authority is vital to our work. The Council's Resident Engagement Officer is an extra point of contact helping to strengthen the work we do with our tenants. A great way we can hear from our tenants is through our residents' forum.

The [residents' forum](#) is a monthly meeting where tenants and leaseholders can meet with the Council to discuss a wide range of topics, from housing policies and government initiatives and are given a platform to discuss issues affecting their local area. We routinely take the views of our residents' forum into account and you can see more information on how to join on our [website](#).

### Customer service

Customer service underpins our work at Tandridge and it is important for us to provide a fair, inclusive and accessible service to all residents and stakeholders. We have been developing our digital services to accommodate the general shift towards preferences for this method of contact and continue to recognise the importance of providing services for those who prefer, or find it easier, to engage with us in other ways.

Our dedicated front line Customer Services Team work hard to provide support to our residents and customers in many ways. In the last few months alone, they have:

- Answered around 24,000 phone calls.
- Processed over 17,000 e-mail enquiries.
- Assisted over 1,000 in-person enquiries at reception at our council offices.

This is in addition to the considerable increase in customers choosing to use our improved digital services to engage with us. We have redeveloped our website to provide improved functionality after the last year saw:

- Over 15,000 online forms submitted.
- Around 20,000 online payments made.
- Almost 10,000 Report it forms submitted.



# Creating a safe, healthy and caring community supporting those most in need

Fostering a strong sense of community benefits everyone who lives, visits or works in Tandridge and helps us take pride in our surroundings and our people.

In recent years, we have seen increasingly high levels of uncertainty, challenge and conflict around the world. It remains critical communities help their most vulnerable, providing relief and sanctuary and support to those who need it the most.

In the Tandridge district, encouraging and supporting this community for our residents takes many forms, including over the last year:

## Working in partnership

Working in partnership with other agencies in the district presents the opportunity for a multi-pronged approach to safeguarding our residents and their wellbeing. We work closely with agencies across the district to share information, join and host working groups and organise events centred around our goal to provide a safe, healthy and caring community to support those in need. Some of the agencies we have collaborated with over the last year include:

- [East Surrey Domestic Abuse Service \(ESDAS\)](#)
- [Surrey Police](#)
- Targeted Youth Support
- [Citizens Advice Bureau](#)
- Wellbeing Prescription Service
- [Crimestoppers](#)
- [Surrey Fire and Rescue](#)
- [Family Support Programme](#)
- [Office of the Police Crime Commissioner](#)
- [Mediation Surrey](#)
- Housing associations
- [YMCA East Surrey](#)
- [Trading Standards](#)
- [Tandridge Voluntary Action](#)
- [Caterham Foodbank](#)

Together, we will continue to raise awareness on a range of topics, such as domestic abuse, safeguarding, serious violence, modern day slavery, frauds and scams, violence against women and girls (VAWG), child exploitation, prevent, anti-social behaviour and more.

Our Communities and Partnerships Team also organised in person events over the last year, such as the Frauds and scams awareness raising event hosted at Oxted Library.

## Helping those in need

We have contributed towards the government's Homes for Ukraine initiative.

An award from government has enabled us to house, provide furniture and continue to support refugees in the following ways, in partnership with charity [Raspberry Pi foundation](#):

- Distributing resources to enable Ukrainian children to continue with their schooling.
- Writing newsletters in both English and Ukrainian, sharing the latest government, health, social and educational updates.
- Promoting cultural events aimed at the Ukrainian community in the district.
- Held a help session, where our officers were able to meet and offer advice to Ukrainian families in the district.
- Having officers present at social events for Ukrainian families to provide continuous support and advice.

## Play for Ukraine

In July 2023, teams from Oxted and Reigate took part in the pilot Play4Ukraine football match in Bletchingley, supporting President Zelensky's personal charity United24 and Game4Ukraine.

This work will continue into 2025 and beyond aiming to rebuild vital infrastructure in Ukraine including schools, so children can return to education.



## Tandridge Together Community Fund

Each year, local charities and voluntary groups who work hard to improve the health and wellbeing of residents can apply for a grant of up to £2,000 from the [Tandridge Together Community Fund](#) to help them continue their work. The proceeds for the grant come from people playing the [Tandridge Together Lottery](#).

The grant allocations for 2024 will go a long way to aid local organisations fund many projects and deserving causes in our community, such as:

- Workshops for students, adults and young adults with learning disabilities, disabilities, and/or mental health challenges.
- Projects encouraging residents to get more active and prevent social isolation.
- Providing shoes for children from low-income families.
- Providing a specialist counsellor for those who breastfeed and a referral co-ordinator at a baby bank.
- Funding for a benefits advisor to help vision and hearing-impaired residents.



## A thriving economy

The district is home to over 5,000 local businesses. Our aim is to continue developing our thriving economy in a number of ways, set out in our [Corporate Plan 2024-2028](#).

We work closely with the two Business Improvement Districts, in Oxted and Caterham. These organisations aim to promote, support and connect businesses in their areas to work better together, while promoting their towns and what they can offer shoppers and other Tandridge businesses.

In terms of housing, a thriving local economy benefits residents who live in the district for multiple reasons, by:

- Encouraging and supporting local business growth and the health of the high street ensures residents don't have to travel to larger economic towns to have access to the things they need.
- Enabling us to work with local employers to support the employment of local workers, impacting employment statistics. We are pleased to report unemployment in the district is lower than the UK average.
- Promoting the Tandridge district as a great place to do business encourages continuous regeneration in the area, contributing to making it a great place to live.

### And finally

We hope you have enjoyed reading about how we've been working for everyone in the district over the past year, how this has been led by our core priorities and centred around our ongoing aims for our district.

We look forward to a future working in partnership with tenants, residents and other stakeholders to continue to build and maintain a community we can all be proud of.

To find out more about our work, please visit [our website](#).

