

Annual report 2014-15



The Deputy Mayor, Cllr Marie-Therese Rossi, with the Annual Gardens Competition awards winners

We're always conscious of the environment and reducing our paper waste where possible, so in this edition of *Link* we bring you the annual report for the year April 2014-March 2015. The report measures how we did in the previous year and is a good way for residents to monitor our performance.

The annual report covers our actions and performance in the key areas of:

1. Tenant involvement and empowerment
2. Your home
3. Your tenancy
4. Your neighbourhood and community
5. Value for money.

At 1 April 2015 the TMO was responsible for the management of 9,438 homes on behalf of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

Property type	Homes	%
General needs	6,642	70.38%
Housing for older people	73	1.83%
Temporary accommodation	62	0.66%
Homeowners	2,561	27.13%

Our five year business plan ended in 2014. The Board and the TMO reviewed all elements of the plan to set the strategic direction for the TMO going forward. The new plan will run to 2017; it has five strategic priorities needed to deliver the TMO's mission of delivering excellent services through resident-led management.

The five strategic priorities are:

1. Customers at the heart
2. Fantastic people work here
3. Invest to make great homes and communities
4. Deliver excellent, good value services
5. Grow our scale and scope.

The business plan can be found online at www.kctmo.org.uk

Tenant involvement and empowerment

During the year the TMO's Resident Engagement Team supported residents in the launch of 12 new resident associations and compacts.

We continued to support and develop the TMO Children's TMO (CTMO) and the newly launched Youth Forum. We held an open day at the Chelsea Youth Club to encourage membership in the south of the borough. 40 children and young people came along to find out how they could get involved.

KCTMO Communities Outreach seeks to engage with residents who tend not to make regular contact with us. Working jointly with MIDAYE Somali Development Network, we ran a series of surgeries. They proved to be a popular series of events, with members of the Somali and Arabic speaking communities coming along to get help and advice on a range of housing and welfare issues.

446 residents became new members of the TMO during the year. This means that they now have the opportunity to influence the success of the company. We encourage all tenants and leaseholders to become members because we believe it makes a positive difference to how we work together and ensures that residents are at the centre of housing services.

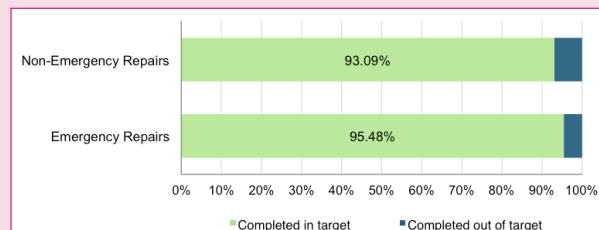
In September our annual residents' conference and AGM were held at the Royal Garden Hotel, Kensington High Street.

- A record 400 adults and 49 children attended, as well as the Mayor of Kensington and Chelsea, Cllr Robert Freeman; the Council's leader, Cllr Nick Paget-Brown; MP and Deputy Major of London, Victoria Borwick; and RBKC's Director of Housing, Laura Johnson.
- 1,089 members voted in the AGM, either in person, by post or online; the largest turnout in the TMO's history.
- 96.87% voted in favour of the TMO continuing to manage their homes.

For more on membership see pp37-39.

Your home

During the year Repairs Direct completed over 19,000 day-to-day repairs to TMO homes and estates. Of these 93.09% of emergency repairs and 95.48% of non-urgent repairs were completed within set targets.



- 93.69% residents reported satisfaction with their completed repair.
- During the year £6.285 million was spent on responsive repairs and works to empty properties.
- Repairs Direct also attended 2,312 out-of-hours repairs callouts and completed over 1,000 other works orders (including repairs to empty homes, disabled adaptations and planned electrical works).

One of our priorities is to invest in homes and communities in order to make them great. We've therefore produced a five year investment plan, called FutureFit, setting out the work we're planning to carry out to estates and inside homes. It says when we plan to replace kitchens, bathrooms, lifts, communal heating systems and more. This will enable us to meet our investment standard objectives in the long term by keeping homes in a good condition. The FutureFit schedule is published on our website.

As part of our 2014/15 programme 3,171 households benefited from improvements to their homes or estates, including:

- replacement kitchens for 419 homes
 - new bathrooms for 414 homes
 - heating upgrades to 95 homes
 - insulation works benefiting 442 homes
 - 1,228 rewires
 - works to roof coverings benefiting 474 homes
 - 208 disabled adaptations.
-
- £9.7m was spent on capital improvement works during the year and we plan to spend a further £14m during 2015-16.

Your tenancy

The Council's Allocation Scheme, introduced in February 2014, means that only people in the greatest need can register on the waiting list.

The priorities are:

- a need to move due to medical reasons, where a move would substantially improve independence
- severe overcrowding
- accommodation that is larger than needed and a move would free up accommodation for a family that needs it
- homeless households.

Some priority is also given to:

- local people with a housing need who are working
- those who are or who have been in the Armed Forces.

In 2014-15 there were only 502 properties in the borough available to let from either the TMO or other registered providers, of which 280 were studios or one bedroomed homes.

Given the pressures on lettings, the average time households are waiting to be rehoused is beginning to rise again after having fallen in the last couple of years. It is not unusual for households to have to wait many years before they are re-housed, especially if they require a larger property. The average waiting time for a three bedroomed home for homes let in 2014-15 was over seven years, a reflection of the fact that only 75 of the properties let in the year had three bedrooms or more.

Flexible tenancies are now issued for new tenancies. Following an introductory period these are generally fixed term tenancies for five years. Before reissuing a tenancy three areas are reviewed: income and savings, tenant conduct and suitability of the property.

In October we held a housing advice day with the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham about mutual exchange; this is a scheme for tenants who want to swap their property with other tenants. Mutual exchange can benefit households looking to downsize or move. 190 people went on the day to find out more about the scheme. Exchange schemes HomeSwapper and House Exchange were also on hand to give tips.

Rent collection

- For the third year running we reduced current tenant rent arrears, from £984,493 at the end of 2013-14 to £932,145
- The percentage of tenants with arrears of more than seven weeks' rent fell to 3.96%, which equates to a reduction of 28 households with high-level arrears
- 18 households were evicted for non-payment of rent.

We have various initiatives to support residents who may be affected by welfare reform.

Our Get on Board campaign entered its third year with a series of roadshows called Your Route to Success, providing information and support about training and employment opportunities as well as advice on budgeting, housing and tenancy matters. These roadshows were held jointly with other local housing providers and a range of external agencies and voluntary groups. 145 residents attended events during the year.

Our welfare reform officers Rosemary Sawyer and Audrey Giscombe continued to support those households affected by the changes. They provided support and advice on:

- moving into work or increasing hours already worked
- using the Mutual Exchange Scheme to swap their home with another council or housing association tenant
- moving to a smaller property through the council's transfer scheme
- applying for temporary financial help to pay the shortfall via the council's discretionary housing payments scheme (DHP).

Your neighbourhood and community

We received an improvement budget of £349,000 for 2014-16 from the Council's Housing Regeneration Programme (HRP) to fund small projects to improve neighbourhoods and estates; these are usually environmental improvements which can reduce anti-social behaviour with the added benefit of increasing community cohesion.

Proposals for projects are submitted by residents with support from our Environmental Services Team, which are then reviewed and agreed by our resident led Operations Committee each year for Council funding.

Projects completed in 2014-15:

- Sir Thomas More Estate: relandscaping of the central courtyard, including new planting, resurfacing and the installation of outdoor gym equipment
- The Sandhills: relandscaping of the courtyard at the rear of the building, including planters and a seating area
- Tavistock Crescent: improvements to the community garden at the rear of the block, including the installation of gates to improve safety
- Longlands Court: improvements to the undercroft, including installation of lighting and repainting of walls and ceiling to brighten the passage
- Kensal Resource Centre: improvements to the interior.

We recruited a Community Centres Officer, Sharon Baah, in 2014. Sharon has been working with resident and community groups through the year to make sure all community spaces are well used and professionally managed. Improvements are underway to booking systems, hire terms, cleaning and maintenance.

Our neighbourhood teams continued to work with residents, the Community Safety Team, the police and other agencies to identify and resolve anti-social behaviour (ASB). 197 new ASB cases were reported to the TMO during the year, a drop of 28 compared to 2013-14.

- 85.59% of residents reported satisfaction with the handling of their ASB case.

Value for money

The money that is spent on providing housing services for the residents of the TMO comes from the management fee that we receive, which itself comes from the Council's Housing Revenue Account (the rent that you pay).

Out of every pound that we spent on managing and maintaining your homes during 2014-15, we spent:

Responsive repairs	18p
Works to empty properties	3p
Planned works	25p
Environmental services, including grounds maintenance and cleaning	10p
Electricity, heating and hot water	11p
Security and car parks	1p
Customer Service Centre	2p
Neighbourhood management, including ASB	6p
Resident engagement	1p
Rent collection	2p
Central services including ICT, financial services and home ownership	9p
Overheads including accommodation, rent and rates	3p
Other costs	15p

For every £1 that we spent an additional 30p was spent on capital investment works, paid for from the Council's HRA Capital Fund.

More detailed information on our financial performance can be found on our website.

You can also find out more about the TMO's performance on p35