

IN TOUCH



Housing Annual Report 2020/21



Message from the InTouch Editorial Panel

The editorial panel is a group of involved residents working in partnership with the Resident Involvement Team to keep you informed on issues that affect tenants and leaseholders of North West Leicestershire District Council. If you would like to make any comments or contribute to the magazine, please contact the Resident Involvement Team on 01530 454605 or resident.involvement@nwleicestershire.gov.uk

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In memory of George Potter



George Potter sadly passed away earlier in the year. George was actively involved with the housing service for many years; he attended the Performance and Finance Working group and the

Landlord Services Working Group, and he was never afraid to challenge senior management. His passion for NWLDC and the housing service was always visible for everyone to see. George was also actively involved in his local Tenant Association. Our deepest condolences go out to his family and friends. He will be missed.

Tell us what you think!

The satisfaction of our tenants and residents is extremely important to us. Every two years, a number of tenants are contacted at random and asked to complete a survey called STAR, which stands for Survey of Tenants and Residents.

On this occasion we would like to offer anyone who hasn't already had the opportunity, the chance to complete the survey. Your views are extremely important to the Housing Service at North West Leicestershire District Council and will help to shape the future service we offer.

The survey can be accessed by visiting www.nwleics.gov.uk/STAR

Alternatively please send an email to housing@nwleicestershire.gov.uk and we'll email the link back to you.

We will provide a summary of the feedback and resulting actions in a future edition of InTouch.



We are also currently consulting on our housing strategy please see below.



Does your home need to change so you don't need to move?

Tell us about any housing difficulties you have www.nwleics.gov.uk/housingstrategy



Housing Annual Report 2020/21

Resident Involvement

2020/21 has been a challenging year for all of us, but local restrictions and social distancing has made it particularly difficult for us to continue to engage with our tenants as we have in previous years. Our Tenant Associations have also been impacted by the pandemic, with many grinding to a halt.

However, we embraced technology and supported our tenants to engage with us and we are pleased to report that even during a global pandemic we kept on going.



Tenants and Leaseholders Consultation Forum (TLCF)

Following lockdown in March 2020 all of our resident meetings and activities including the TLCF were suspended. The Resident Involvement Team was redeployed to work on the Community Hub that was set up to support the most vulnerable in our communities.

However in the summer of 2020 the Resident Involvement Team was tasked with recovering the TLCF. The first post lock down virtual meeting was set up and it continued to operate on a virtual basis.

We had six virtual TLCF meetings in 2020/21, which we are very proud of.

We discussed housing recovery, Tenant Association recovery, rent arrears, business planning, dealing with anti-social behaviour and the 2021/22 housing budget.

We are looking forward to meeting with the TLCF face to face when restrictions allow.

Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP)

Our TSP also suspended its operations in March 2020, but like the TLCF, we resumed virtual meetings in the summer. During this time the TSP completed its first virtual inspection. This looked at how the Housing service leases garages and garage sites and made recommendations to help clarify and streamline the leasing process.

The TSP is now looking at how we do Resident Involvement and we are very excited about what the TSP will find and recommend for improvement.

Tenant Associations

We work with nine active Tenant Associations across the district and, not surprisingly, almost all activities stopped in March 2020.

But our Tenant Associations are very resilient and here are just a few highlights from 2020. All these activities were conducted in a Covid secure way:

- Willesley Tenant Association set up a tuck shop for local children during the summer
- Greenhill Tenant association secured £8,000 from Bardon Quarry to develop a 'Community Grow your Own' garden and plans are well underway for this exciting development in the Greenhill area
- Central Ashby Tenant Association delivered Christmas hampers to their most vulnerable residents
- Fairfield Tenant Association used their garden space to make sure isolated residents had at least some social interaction.

We are looking forward to working with all our Tenant Associations in 2021 to get them all back up and running at full capacity.

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Housing Performance

Rental incomes



Total arrears owed at end of year:

£444,039.14

pre Covid target was 2%.

2.46%

Rent loss

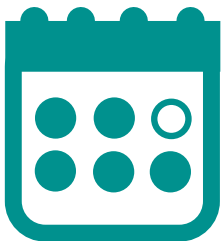


Loss of rent due to empty properties was

£170.416.40



Letting homes



The average re-let time was

35 days

against a target of 22 days.

This increase is due to several factors including a 72 hour no access period when a tenant left the property, increased flexibility to enable tenants to move due to restrictions and not being able to have friends / family help with the move.

2019 / 20 performance was 21 days.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

Two hundred and fifty two cases were recorded on Sentinel (265 cases were closed during the year). The number of cases being managed by our single ASB Officer significantly increased during 2020/21 so this will be an area to review during 2021/22. It may be a one off year as more people were at home, including children, during school closures, adding to an increase in noise compared with residents' normal experience.

Housing Support



100%

(99 of 99) of support plans for new tenants have been completed within six weeks of the tenant moving in.



99.8%

(524 of 525) of support plans have been reviewed within three days of the review date.

Assistive technology

154

new customers to the service and 126 left the service, mainly due to customers passing away or moving to residential care. A net increase of 28.

We decided to undertake the annual satisfaction survey of the support officer service as the offer had changed and we were delighted with a

44.9%

response rate (101 of 225) and even more delighted with

100%

satisfaction with 74% very satisfied and 26% satisfied.

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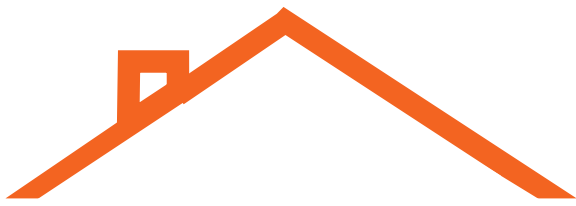
Repairs and Improvements

In 2020/21 we repaired or replaced:

Total number
of repairs
completed

5805

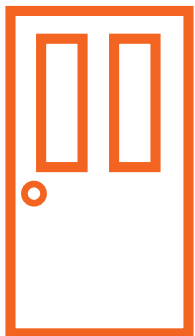
40 gas boilers



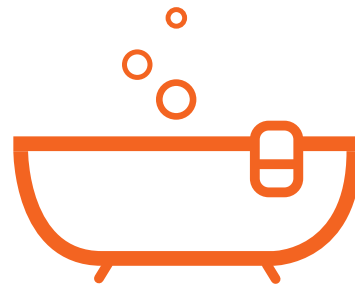
66 roofs



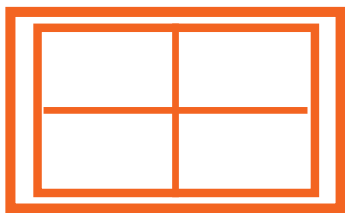
28
kitchens



73
external doors

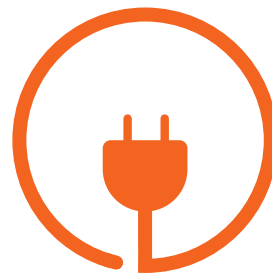


20
bathrooms



36

windows (whole house not
just 36 individual windows!)



24
rewires /
consumer
units



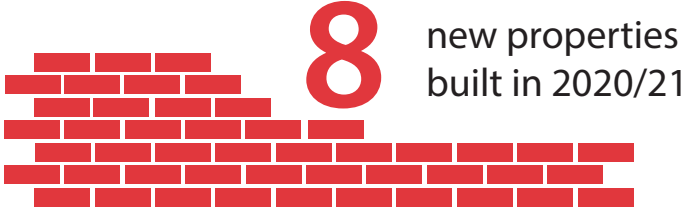
6
full central
heating
systems

We also did

135 adaptations – **39**
major adaptations,
such as extensions /
level access showers
- and **96** minor
adaptations, such as
handrails.

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Strategic Housing



We supported a further **100** households who were homeless to secure alternative accommodation.

We supported **72** households threatened with homelessness to secure alternative accommodation in the last year and a further **four** to remain in their existing homes.

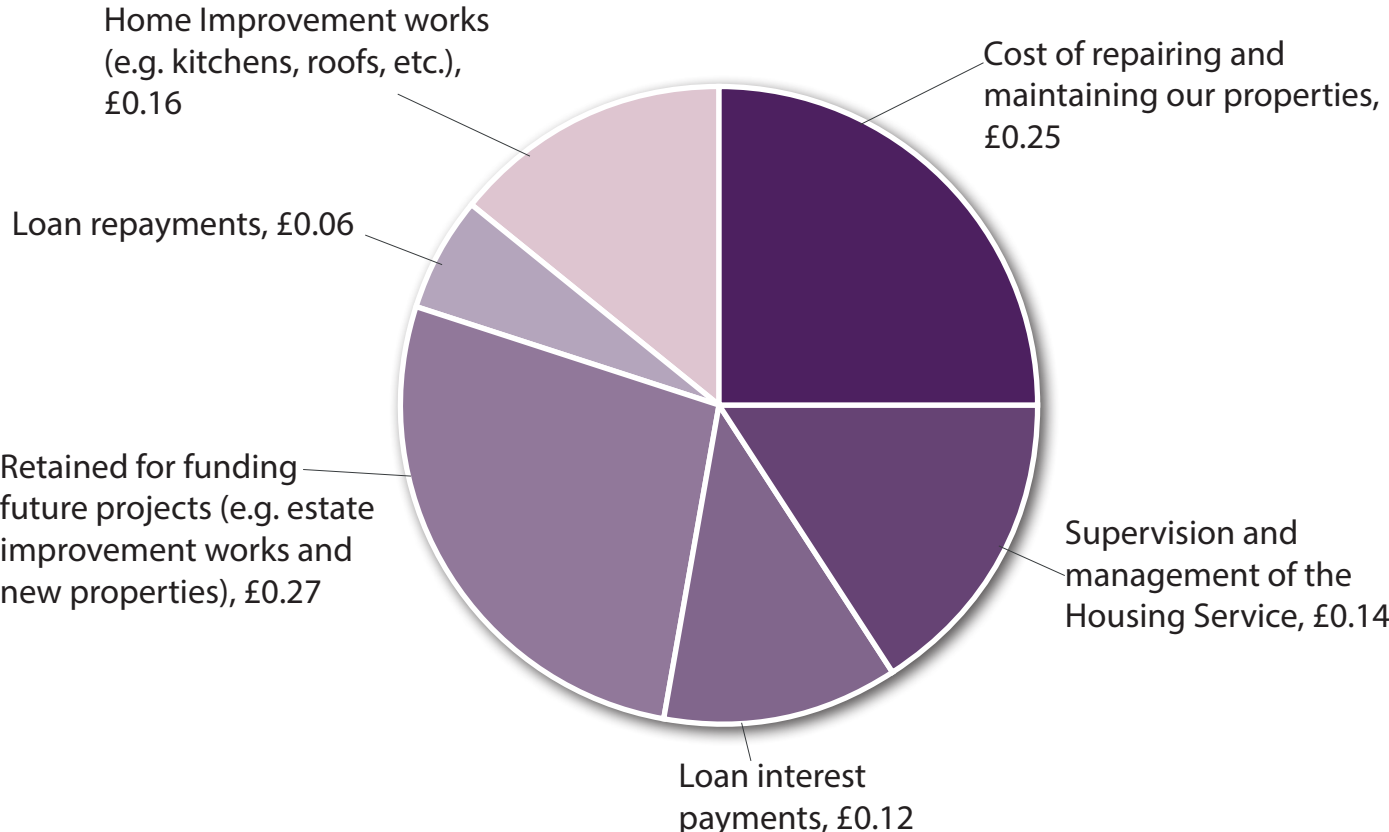
Number of people housed into NWLDC and Housing Association properties: **366** through Choice Based Lettings and **30** direct matched.



At 1 April 2021 there were **1133** applicants on the housing register.

Finance

How we spend every £1 of your rent in 2020 / 21



NWLDC - My Account

Save time – do it online

Our lives have changed as a result of the pandemic. The lockdown meant our priorities changed and our social interactions altered. Now that restrictions start to be lifted, we all want to experience life as we knew it before and demands on our time will increase.

That's why we are currently promoting the council's **My Account** service and encouraging people to register.

Having an account means you are able to access council services at a time and place that suits you. A huge variety of things whilst on the go. To find out more and set up an account visit www.nwleics.gov.uk/myaccount

We are constantly making changes to make the customer experience quick and easy. We've made several changes to our online forms following customer comments:

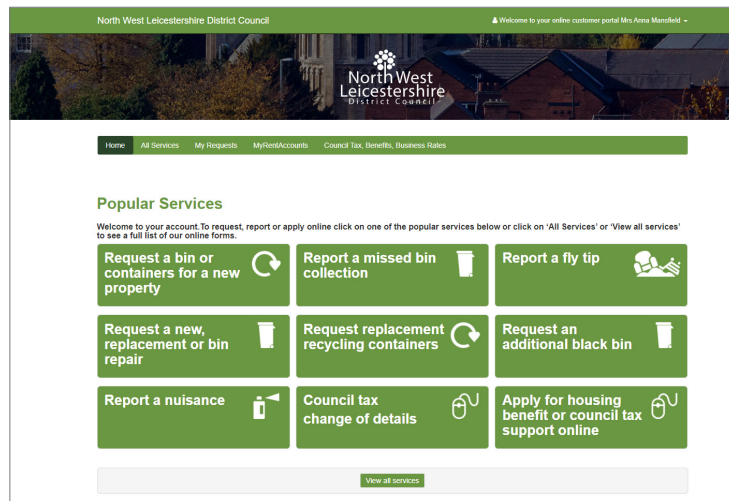
- **Customers told us** 'We can't select a street to report a fly tip' - We added a street record for every street in North West Leicestershire.
- **Customers said** 'Some wording by the pictures of the recycling containers when ordering them would save confusion' – We added a description to the pictures.
- **Customers said** 'The missed bin chart layout is hard to read on a phone' – We made the chart smaller and removed a column so that it appears on a phone correctly.

This a true reflection of how valuable your feedback can be. Thank you.

Please add any comments to your star rating the next time you use an online form. We read all comments and it helps us to improve for you.

We will soon be releasing a Customer Online Feedback Questionnaire where you can tell us about your experience of our website, Twitter and Facebook messages, online forms and our online account.

Look out for a link on Facebook and Twitter - by taking part you can also be entered in to our prize draw.



Working from home?

In March 2020 many people, including those who worked in the Council Offices, were advised to work from home if they could, and it looks like many business will incorporate working from home all or some of the time as the 'new normal' from now on.

Recently, some council tenants have asked if they can work from home and the simple answer is yes.

This should not be confused with running a business from home, which will require permission from us as your landlord and, depending on the nature of the business, it may also need planning permission. Speak to your Housing Officer if you have any queries.

Remember home safety too. Try to avoid multiple extension leads and leaving items switched on or blocking means of escape. You may also want to make sure you have home contents insurance which can be paid for along with your rent. To find out more go to

www.nwleics.gov.uk/council_housing_home_insurance or contact our Rent Accounting Team on 01530 454798.

New housing IT system goes live in September 2021

Housing services have been working to bring a modern, single system to its administration for a while and we are delighted to share that go live will be September 2021.

The system will replace the multiple systems used by staff to allow a single version of the truth. This benefits customers by allowing repairs staff, housing officers, support staff and anyone who needs it, to see the same data across the different departments.

An example of how this will affect you:

If you change your phone number, you'll only have to do this once - all housing staff will see the change.

The system also gives us a greater level of security and confidentiality for accounts, so there is no need to share sensitive data that relates to you as an individual or household with departments that don't need that information.

Other benefits for customers will include:

- Self service website for your tenancy
- A unified choice-based lettings system
- Document management for staff to access records outside of 'paper copies'

At the time of reading this, we will be halfway through our testing phase and will be looking to start staff training in August ready for a September go live.

We will try not to impact on the service any more than we need to, but please bear in mind that a change this big may bring some teething problems. Your patience would be welcome as ever.

Any further information on the project, timings or general questions, please contact Andrew Wallace on andrew.wallace@nwleicestershire.gov.uk

New repairs handbook for tenants

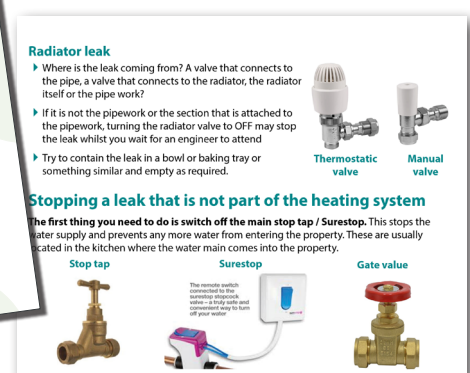
The repairs department is launching a new online repairs handbook as a guide to your repairs service. It is full of useful information from reporting a repair to finding out how to ask permission to make alternations and improvement to your home.

Part one details information about the service and highlights what is your responsibly as a tenant and what the council's responsibility is a landlord.

This section details the new repair priorities and the repairs that are considered to be high priority. It also provides details on what type of repairs can be reported to our out of hours service.

Part two is all about looking after your home and has useful information on what to do in an emergency and what we may need to know to diagnose your repair effectively and dispatch the right person to fix the problem.

There are lots of diagrams to help you identify the parts that may need repairing and what to



check before you call. For all serious emergencies you should contact the helpline as soon as possible or ring the emergency services. The new handbook can be found at www.nwleics.gov.uk/repairshandbook Click on the contents page links to take you straight to the section you are looking for. If you do not have access to the internet you can request a paper version by calling 01530 454545 and hold for the 'everything else' option.