

# Tenant and Leaseholder Annual Report 2023-24



## Councillor Chris Robinson, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning



As the portfolio holder for housing and planning, I am pleased to be able to present the Annual Report for Tenants and Leaseholders for 2023/2024.

We have made some incredible progress over the last 12 months including our successful D.A.M.P campaign which saw us treat 5,019 properties as part of our commitment to rid our housing stock of damp, mould and condensation.

Our efforts continue through our £117 million capital investment programme which is set to benefit around 14,500 council-owned properties between now and 2028, with the installation of new kitchens and bathrooms, central heating, insulation and external improvements.

This major investment will complement the work we have completed, and continue to carry out, through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, to upgrade properties in the north of the city

with new insulation, windows, doors, roofs and ventilation systems. We have also delivered energy efficiency upgrades to 254 private-sector homes through the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) scheme.

**“We recognise the crucial importance of affordable, safe, decent housing and the impact this has on people’s health and wellbeing, so we will continue to listen to our tenants and our local communities and will use our influence and strong partnerships to continue to address persistent and harmful problems such as damp and mould and fuel poverty.”**

We have updated and introduced a number of our housing policies for the benefit of our tenants. We’ve refreshed our Repairs and Maintenance and Void Management Policies, consulted on a new Fuel Poverty Strategy, developed and adopted a new Damp and Mould

Policy and adopted a new Older People’s Housing Strategy. We’ve also launched a new Tenants’ Charter and set of Service Standards and are progressing with the development of a Registered Provider’s Charter.

In the last 12 months, we have welcomed residents to a new 22-home estate off Newport Lane and Furlong Lane in Burslem.

At the same time, families are now living in 157 new homes on Hollington Grange, off Biddulph Road in Packmoor.

Work is also progressing on Chatterley Court – an over 55s scheme boasting 113 one and two-bed accessible apartments, and Bournes Bank, in Burslem, which is set to be a new estate for 43 homes.

The Social Housing White Paper became law in July 2023 as the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. This legislation aims to ensure residents of social housing are safe, listened to, live in good quality homes and have access to help when things go wrong. The Act gives the Regulator of Social Housing new and enhanced powers, including from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 inspecting social landlords with over 1,000 homes to verify that they are meeting the Consumer Standards. Stoke on Trent City Council is committed to being able to meet these standards and continually working with tenants to improve the service we provide.



## Perception Measures

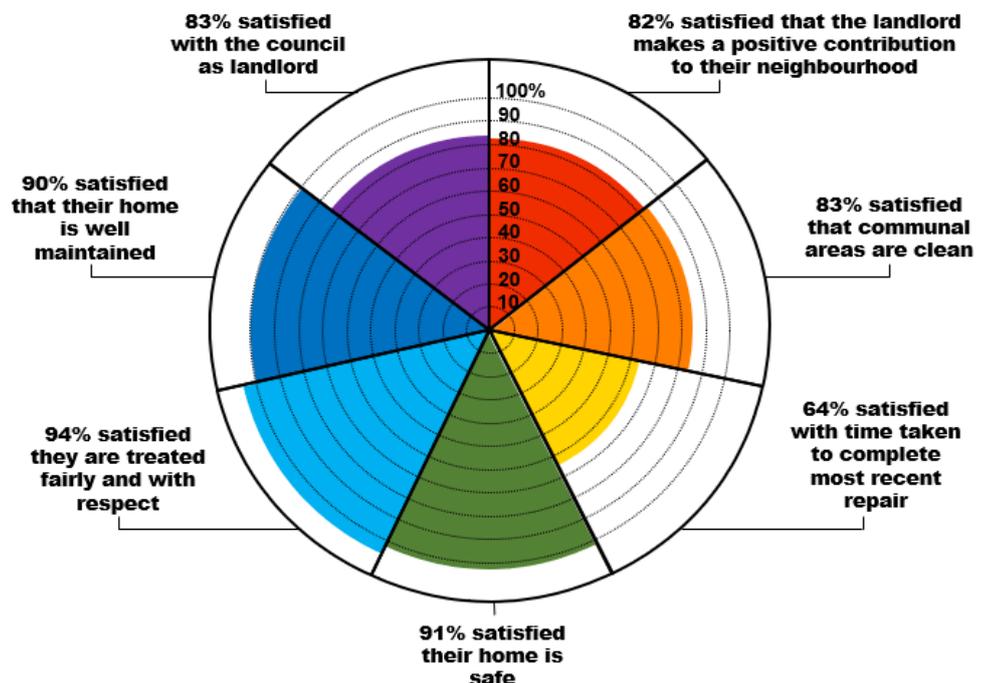
Stoke-on-Trent City Council Results 2023-2024  
 Tenant Satisfaction Measures

Tenant satisfaction surveys are crucial tools for gauging tenant perceptions and improving housing services.

At Stoke-on-Trent City Council our commitment to understanding and enhancing the experiences of our tenants drive our annual survey efforts, which aim to identify areas for improvement and allow us to continually monitor the performance of our services.

Our remaining TSM perception results were:

- 87% satisfied that we keep you informed.
- 50% satisfied with our approach to ASB.
- 37% satisfied with our approach to handling complaints.
- 73% satisfied that we listen to tenants’ views.
- 63% satisfied with repairs.



# TENANT'S CHARTER



Following on from consultation, for 2024 / 2025 we have developed the Tenants Charter and Service Standards, which focus on repairs services, tenancy sustainment, anti-social behaviour, communication and accountability; to view: [www.stoke.gov.uk/tenantscharter](http://www.stoke.gov.uk/tenantscharter).

## 1 – Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard

**This standard looks at how we communicate, engage and work with tenants, and ensure you have the opportunity to shape what we do and how we deal with complaints.**

### Tenant Engagement Team

During 2023/2024, 615 tenants and 11 leaseholders helped to review Council Housing Services by taking part in completing email surveys, mystery shopping, interviewing council officers and to improve our service delivery. The tenant and leaseholder-based review groups look at Antisocial Behaviour, flat block and fire safety, responsive repairs, planned repairs; alongside focus groups for damp managers, and joining review groups. From this, we have reviewed our policies and procedures and identified training and mould and complaints.

Our editorial panel have helped to shape the service we provide to tenants and leaseholders.

There are numerous ways for you to be involved and we welcome all input, whether it is a one – off response, completing a survey, or involvement in a scrutiny project over several weeks. The more you tell us and become involved, helps us to shape and improve your housing services.

Moving forward, in 2024/2025 we will set up the following new groups; looking at estate management, customer experience, our website, the allocations process, and a leaseholder working group.

### Did You Know?



**We made 8997 proactive calls to tenants and completed 3433 surveys to obtain their views and how they are satisfied with our service and how we operate as a landlord.**

**“It’s good now that the council are working together with tenants and leaseholders making a better future for us all!”**

Steve – Involved leaseholder

### Investing in people

The Housing, Development and Growth Directorate has continued its support of recruiting talented graduates via the Local Government Association’s, National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP). The NGDP is a two-year programme, where graduates are employed by councils and undertake a minimum of three placements. Alongside their employment, the graduates work towards a CMI Level 7 qualification in Leadership and Management.

**"It's easy to think that the council doesn't listen to tenants. As a tenant who is a member of tenant groups, whose aim is to work together with the council, to improve the services that we all use, I've been pleasantly surprised to find that we are listened to."**

Annette – Involved tenant

Over the last 12 months there have



been some great successes with the graduates working on many key projects across the Housing teams. Two graduates have passed their CMI Level 7 Qualification and one has secured a permanent post here at Stoke-on-Trent City Council within Housing.

Adrian is the current graduate working and gaining valuable experience in the Housing Directorate. Adrian says "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

## Policy reviews

During 2023 / 2024 we carried out consultations for people to provide views and opinions on a number of new strategies and policies. As a result of this engagement, the following were approved and adopted by the council:

- Fuel Poverty Strategy [Fuel Poverty Strategy | Stoke-on-Trent](#)
- Older People's Housing Strategy [Older people's housing strategy | Stoke-on-Trent](#)
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy [Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy | Stoke-on-Trent](#)
- Void Management Policy [Void Management Policy 2023 | Stoke-on-Trent](#)
- Damp and Mould Policy [Damp and Mould Policy | Stoke-on-Trent](#)

During 2024-25, we plan to ask your views on the following new and revised policies:

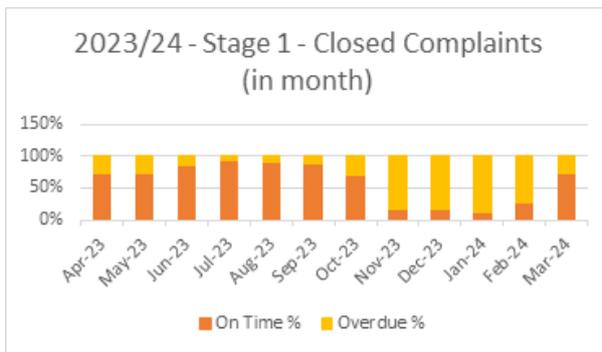
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Tenancy Management Policy
- Estate Management Policy
- Vulnerability Policy
- Tenants' Charter and Service Standards

We will let you know when these opportunities are available – please look out for any messages from our social media or e-gov emails. If any of these areas are of interest to you, please email [housing.engagement@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:housing.engagement@stoke.gov.uk).

**Did You Know?**

**Our housing management team visited 2339 properties to carry a Tenancy Audit and they 1093 New Tenancy visits.**

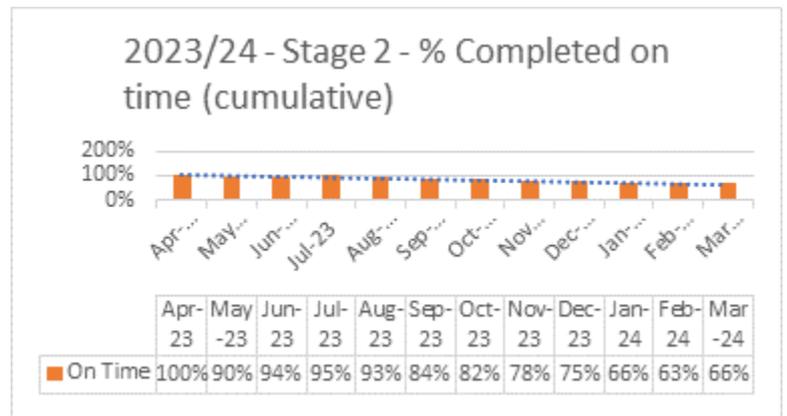
## Complaints



In 2023 /2024 the number of Stage 1 complaints responded to within timescales dropped due to the complexity and volume of complaints. In March 2024 we brought in a new management quality check process and this has seen a positive change and responses have risen from 28% to 73%.

– As at April 2024 66% of Stage 2 complaints have been responded to within the relevant timescale.

Over the last 18 months, the nature of the complaints has become increasingly more complex. Complex complaints often involve a greater depth of investigation, including research and visits to the customer’s home and these extra steps are having an impact on the ability to return responses within the required timescale.

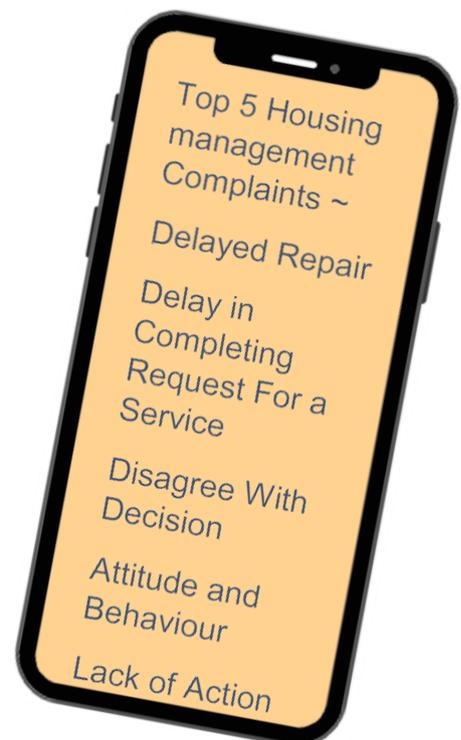


In 2023 we set up a Complaint Handling Review Panel to help us improve the way we manage complaints. This panel was made up of tenant volunteers and key officers from the Council and Unitas. To understand areas that needed improvement the Panel reviewed a random sample of complaints and the responses. The complaints covered all areas included ASB, repairs, allocations and housing management.

From this review the panel identified a number of issues including Poor quality of investigations, incomplete responses, confusing language in responses and a general lack of empathy. Following the review of the complaints the panel interviewed managers who respond to complaints. From the interviews they identified that there was willingness to provide good responses to complaints but issues such as time and input from other teams were a problem. The Panel also identified a lack of training as a significant issue.

To address this all managers have now completed four courses offered by the Housing Ombudsman on Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution. We have also developed local training focussing on using empathetic language, understanding vulnerabilities and learning from Complaints. This local training will be rolled out later in the Summer.

Tenant representatives from the Panel will be helping to deliver this to ensure that managers understand the impact of poor complaint handling on our tenants.



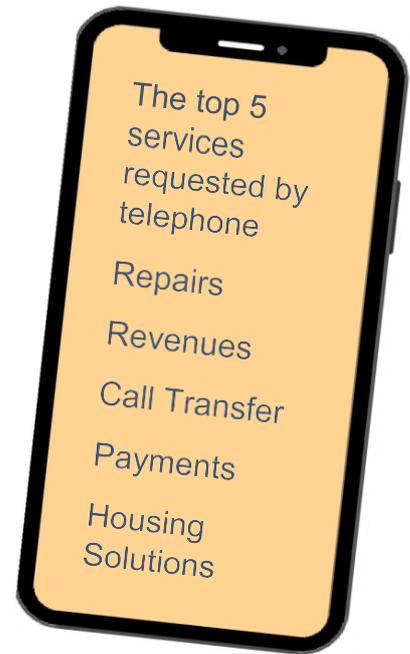
## Did You Know?



**We handled 268, 262 calls in 2023 to 2024. Of those, 24% were abandoned with an average wait time of 6 minutes, 55 seconds.**

The learning from the review has also helped to shape the new Complaint Policy which was approved in April 2024. This policy focusses more on understanding the complaint and the needs of the tenant and ensuring timely, accurate and robust responses. We are also using the learning to change the way we record complaints to ensure that we continue to improve services.

As part of ensuring that improvements are being made the Panel will continue to review random complaints and responses over the next 12 months.



**"I've enjoyed the meetings I attended you learn a lot of sessions you are always on hand to give advice."**

Bev – Involved tenant

**Get Involved Have Your Say**

Contact us

[housing.engagement@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:housing.engagement@stoke.gov.uk)



## 2 – Tenancy standard

This standard covers how we allocate our properties and how we help and support our tenants in their homes.

We carried out 1093 new tenancy visits and 2339 tenancy audits.

The Tenancy Audits are completed by the Housing Officers and are visits to review the information given to tenants such as fire safety, how to report repairs or antisocial behaviour and to offer support with a range of things like finances, care needs and moving home. They will also update the details we hold so that we have the most up to date information and contact details. These are a good opportunity to speak with your Housing Officer and get to know them.



The Income Advice Team can help tenants with one to one support if they are struggling financially and finding it difficult to pay their rent. They can ensure that a tenant is receiving the correct benefits and income.

## Did You Know?



**The income advice team helped to identify more than £1m in additional income in the last 12 months and had 1585 referrals for support**

The team can provide personal budgeting support and over the last 12 months the team have supported tenants with applications for Attendance Allowance, Personal Independence Payments (PIP), Universal Credit, Discretionary Housing Payments, Council tax reduction scheme, etc.

## Sheltered Housing

Sheltered housing, or supported accommodation is for people usually over the age of 55, who want to live independently in their own apartment or bungalow but also want to have support available to them as and when they need it. The sheltered schemes are designed to be age friendly allowing people to stay in their home safely and independently for as long as possible as they get older, supported through their changing needs.

Common features within our sheltered housing scheme include,

- housing support from a scheme manager who is on site Mon-Fri
- 24-hour emergency help through an alarm system linked to lifeline
- communal areas, such as gardens, lounges, dining areas and laundry facilities
- social activities/ events for residents
- CCTV and door entry system with progressive security within the schemes
- Intelligent fire detection systems with sprinkler systems throughout
- Wet room accessible from hallway and or bedroom
- Numerous scooter room parking and charging facilities

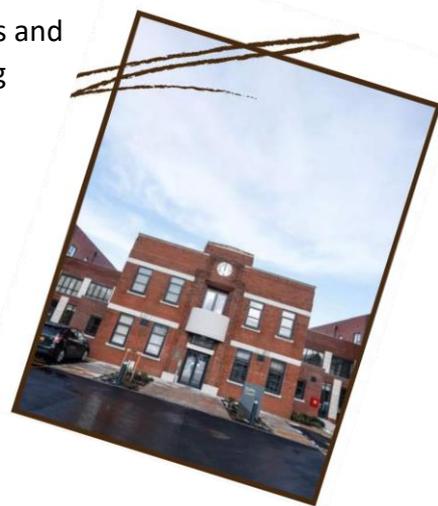


We currently have 57 apartments within QEII, 65 at Rialto Court, 27 at Wooldridge Court and 3 bungalows.



In 2023/2024 there were 20 lets overall; 5 at Woolridge Court, 9 at Rialto Court and 6 at QEII.

In 2024 / 2025 we will be opening Chatterley Court; this will have 113 apartments, 92 x1 bed and 21 x2 bed apartments. An apartment show flat will be available to view in August 2024. The complex will have a communal area, dining area, gardens and additional support features including call alarm systems, walk-in showers, underfloor gas heating, easy access bathrooms and infrastructure for specialist equipment.



For further information please contact the Sheltered Housing Team on 01782 235675 or email [Sheltered.HousingTeam@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:Sheltered.HousingTeam@stoke.gov.uk)

**“Having been involved working Alongside of Officers for some time, it’s good to know that customer voices are being listened to, questions answered and problems to a point solved...”**

Martin – Involved tenant

### 3 Home Standard

This standard shows how we repair, maintain and make improvements to our tenant's homes



All of our properties have a valid gas safety certificate, and an electrical test certificate that is less than 10 years old. We are 100% compliant for Electrical testing, with 99.49% of properties also having an electrical test certificate that is less than 5 years old. We are 100% compliant in Gas Safety.

Responsive repairs:

Repairs satisfaction for tenants is 91%

In November 2023, we launched the D.A.M.P campaign to build on our commitment to ensure all of our properties are dry and mould free. A dedicated web page has been launched to ensure all residents can easily report issues with damp and mould and get access to rapid advice. Please visit: [www.stoke.gov.uk/dmc](http://www.stoke.gov.uk/dmc)

We had 7,249 Damp and mould cases reported in 2023/2024

Planned programmed works

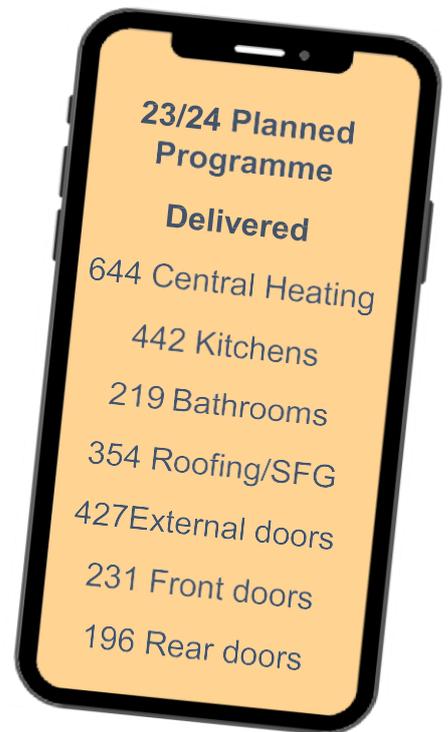
- Switchee Thermostat smart devices have been installed in selected properties which act as a monitoring and smart thermostat. The Switchee thermostat can be used from the resident's phone, ensuring residents have more control over their heating which in return helps to reduce energy costs.
- We are continuing to carry out cavity wall insulation and loft insulation as part of a Government funded programme GBIS and ECO4.
- Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund project

Repairs Reported 85,998 of which 96% were carried out within the timeslot

It took Unitas 17.2 days on average for a repair to be carried out

The average EPC rating for our homes is C

The Government has established the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to upgrade social housing currently falling below Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C up to that standard, delivering warm, energy-efficient homes, reducing carbon emissions and fuel bills, tackling fuel poverty, and supporting green jobs. Resources of up to £3.8 billion over 10 years will be made available to local authorities and housing associations that submit successful bids to improve the energy performance of social rented homes, on the pathway to Net Zero by 2050. The council submitted a bid for Wave 2.1, and the delivery of this programme has now been completed. They have also successfully won the bid for wave 2.2, which is due to commence works this financial year. This grant funding is to support the installation of external wall insulation (EWI) to a number of Crosswall type houses, selected for this application due to their very poor energy performance. The key benefits of these works are reducing energy consumption, reducing health issues due to poorly heated and damp homes and reducing carbon emissions. The council will match fund further improvement works to these properties to include other works beyond the EWI measures including, for example, loft insulation.

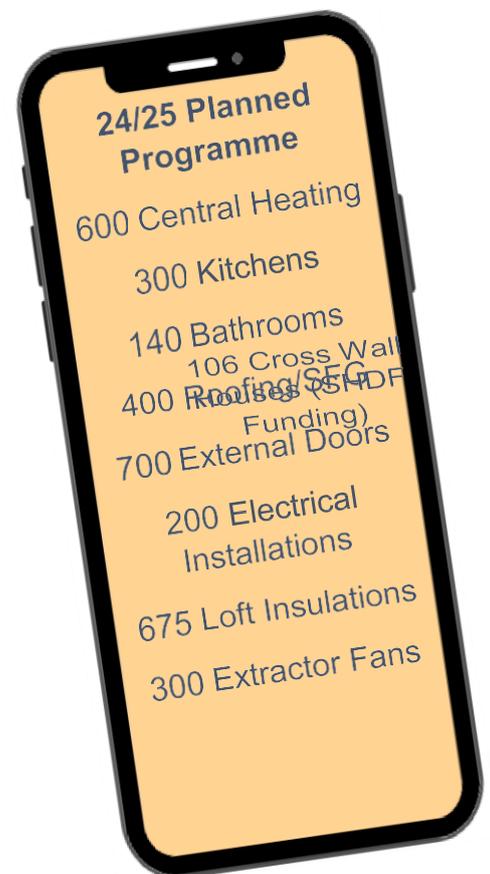


### Capital information

We acquired 10 newly refurbished 3 bed houses and 12 newly refurbished 2 bed apartments on the Stanley Pottery development in Middleport in November 2023 from Seddon with a build cost c.£2,756,220, all EPC's were B.

We also acquired a further 29 newly refurbished 3 and 4 bed houses on the Hollington Grange development off Biddulph Road throughout the year from Keepmoat.

In total we acquired 39 newly refurbished houses (10 from year 2022-23) on this development with a build cost c.£5,547,605, all EPC's were B.



## 4 Neighbourhood and Community Standard

This standard is our promise to you to say we will work with other partners and agencies to tackle antisocial behaviour and we will manage and maintain communal areas and estates.

### Antisocial Behaviour



We are committed to responding to all reports of antisocial behaviour within 5 full working days. For high risk cases, the response time is targeted as within 24 working hours.



The response time to the reports of noise nuisance were 95.15% within timescale (or 490 of 515 within timescale)

Approximately, over 100 texts are sent each month to customers who have had a case closed asking for feedback towards the ASB Team service.

223 responses have been received in total for the last financial year. Satisfaction for the ASB Team service is currently at around the 74% mark. Of those that were not satisfied, the ASB Housing team Manager will carry out case reviews.

The Antisocial Behaviour Team are working tirelessly to not only deal with the reports of antisocial behaviour, but to also ensure that customers are kept updated with progress on cases. The team agree a timescale of contact when opening a case with a complainant, which puts the responsibility on the officer to make regular contact and not the complainant contacting the officer. The team have worked closely with the Antisocial Behaviour Scrutiny Group who have devised a 10-point action plan where they see the team could further enhance their service delivery. This is an ongoing action plan which is being implemented and should help to deliver a much more robust and galvanized antisocial behaviour service. Residents have told us how important it is for them to have a dedicated point of contact for their area. We have listened and now all ASB Team members are responsible for an area of the city. This has also improved closer working arrangements with partners and members

The plans for 2024 / 2025 are to continue to work with the Antisocial Behaviour Review Group and to carry out consultation on the draft Antisocial Behaviour Policy and the results of the feedback will help to shape the way that the Antisocial behaviour Team delivers its service. The team will

**Did You Know?**

**We responded to 94.94% of high-risk cases within the timescale and 93.65% or low or medium risk**

be looking to continue to link in with ward members and other agencies when looking to deal with the reports of antisocial behaviour, but there is a drive to ensure that residents understand what the team are doing and what they can do, so communication is paramount. This is constantly being worked on and will help to enhance the perception of how well this team works.

From January 8<sup>th</sup> 2024 the maximum fines increased to £1000 and from £200 for litter or graffiti from a domestic person

Looking ahead to 2024 / 2025 after listening to tenants concerns from the tenant satisfaction measures and consumer standards, we will be looking to introduce street inspections and visit every street across the city and we are also setting up a tenant estate management group to look at how our services could be improved.

### Neighbourhood Environmental Improvement Scheme - NEIS

Every year, we have a small budget of £50, 000 to spend on environmental works around the city. Residents Associations, Councillors, partner agencies or community groups can submit a project to be



## Did You Know?



**We have issued 79 Fixed penalty notices for fly tipping and environmental issues between April 23 – March 24**



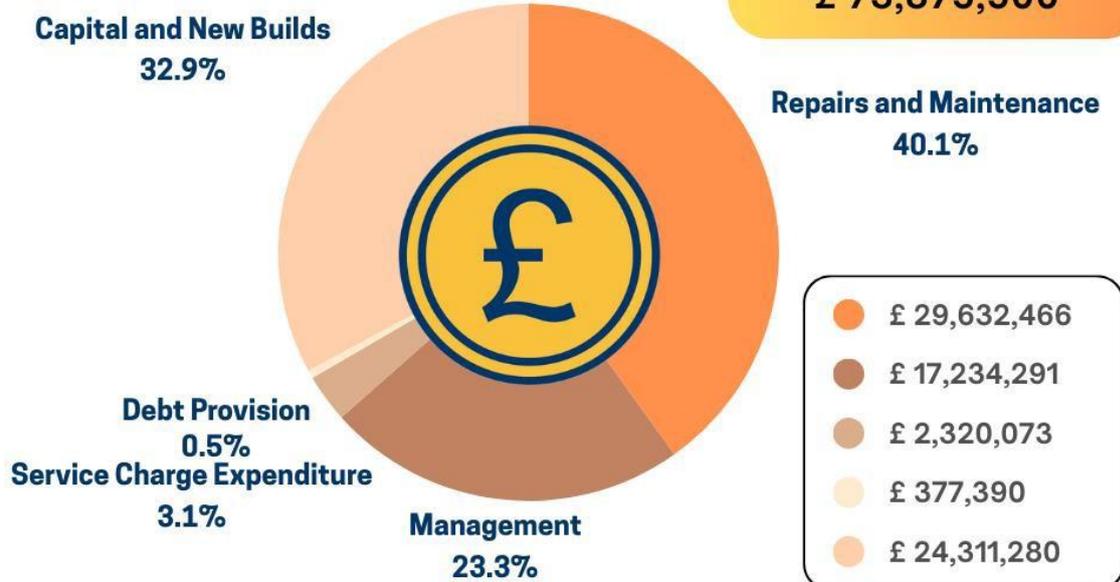
considered. The project has to be on land which is owned by the council's housing department, and has to be of benefit to more than one resident. Schemes can be used to address a variety of issues, such as paving, fencing and security, or trip rails to help prevent anti-social behaviour. If you would like to find out more or suggest a possible scheme, please email [housing.engagement@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:housing.engagement@stoke.gov.uk)

Moving into 2024/2025 we already have proposals for NEIS projects across the city including

- Installing better access gates for a bungalow complex.
- Increasing security and privacy for vulnerable residents.

## 5 Financial information and your rent

### HOW WE SPEND YOUR RENT



**Total rental income**  
£76,280,926\*  
**Total Expenditure**  
£ 73,875,500

**Repairs and Maintenance**  
40.1%

- £ 29,632,466
- £ 17,234,291
- £ 2,320,073
- £ 377,390
- £ 24,311,280

\*Any surplus is reinvested into housing stock

99.47% of rent was collected during 2023 / 2024

13% of tenants had more than 7 weeks arrears

Senior Officer salaries can be found here: [Transparency information: senior officer salaries | Stoke-on-Trent](#)

Directors' remuneration and management costs matrix: [Value for Money metrics Technical note guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

**Financial Year 2023/2024**

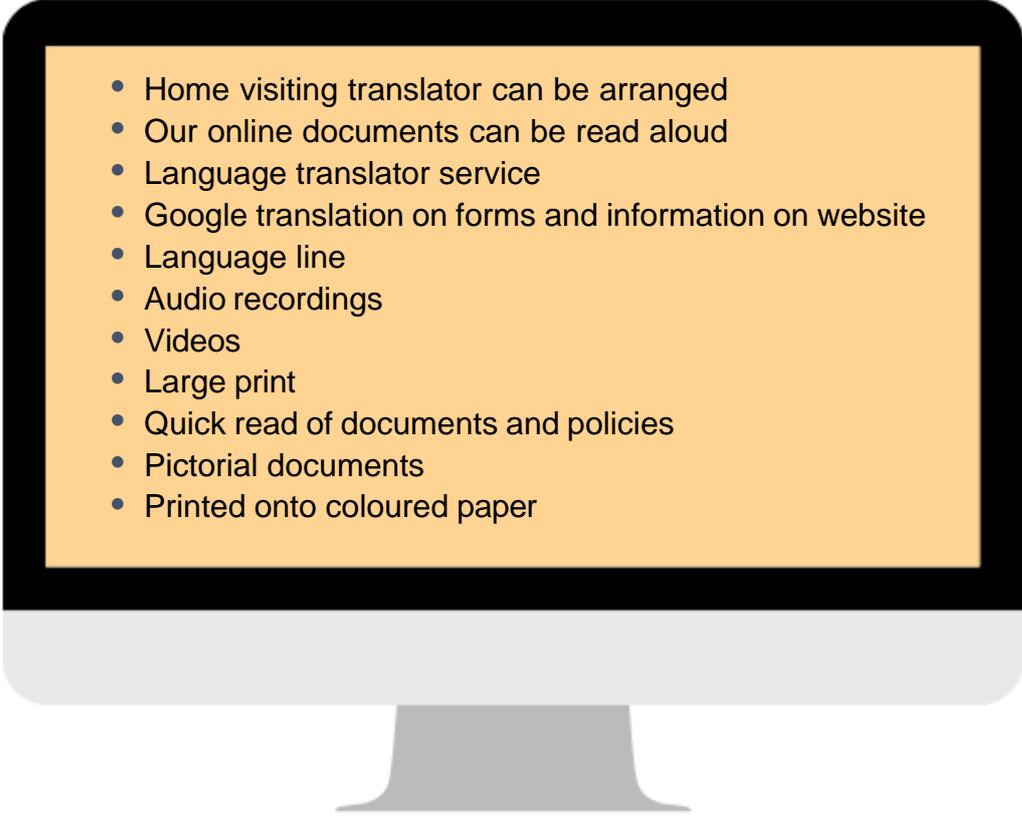
Measure 1 The remuneration payable to the highest paid Director, relative to the size of the landlord	£ 6.40
Measure 2 The aggregate amount of remuneration paid to Directors, relative to the size of the landlord	£ 13.88
Measure 3 Management Costs, relative to the size of the landlord	£ 788.39
Measure 4 Value for Money - Headline social housing cost per unit calculation (as reported in PRPs statutory accounts)	£ 5,243.31

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us via [enquiries@rsh.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsh.gov.uk) or call 0300 124 5225.

or write to:

Regulator of Social Housing  
Level 2  
7-8 Wellington Place  
Leeds LS1 4AP

From listening to our tenants, we can share our information with you in lots of different ways on request:

- 
- Home visiting translator can be arranged
  - Our online documents can be read aloud
  - Language translator service
  - Google translation on forms and information on website
  - Language line
  - Audio recordings
  - Videos
  - Large print
  - Quick read of documents and policies
  - Pictorial documents
  - Printed onto coloured paper



**“Our efforts across the anti-social behaviour, repairs, and block inspection and fire safety groups are really starting to pay off for the tenants of Stoke-on-Trent. The anti-social behaviour group has made small but impactful changes that are already making a big difference in our communities. The repairs group is now identifying key issues that, with time, should lead to a much-improved service for tenants. The block inspection and fire safety group has made significant progress, tackling issues that hadn’t been addressed before and improving living conditions across the board” Kiel – Involved tenant**

**Working with the tenant engagement team has been both enjoyable and engaging. Their commitment to improving services really shows through, particularly in their efforts to engage with tenants at every level. It's clear that they want to work with, not against, the tenants. One of the most eye-opening aspects for me has been the amount of feedback I'm now receiving— feedback I wouldn't have gotten if I weren't involved in these groups. Our collective efforts are making a strong impact, and we're all making strides in enhancing the services for everyone involved"**

Kiel – Involved tenant

