

Annual report to tenants and leaseholders



Introduction

Welcome to this year's annual report. As we have emerged from the pandemic we have been looking at improvements to our housing services.

2021 to 2022 saw us tender for a new repairs contract, which involved tenants in the process. A lot of work has gone into the new contract with Mears to make sure the service is customer focused. We hope tenants will see the benefits of this new contract over the coming months as we introduce new ways to report and make changes to repairs.

Our tenant satisfaction survey has provided us with valuable feedback from a large number of our tenants that we will be taking on board and using to develop an improvement plan, with involvement from our tenant representatives on our Housing Engagement Board and Housing Performance Panel.

Our Asset Management Strategy, published this year, sets out how we will be working on improving energy efficiency in our homes with sustainable energy measures as well as building new homes for the future with measures such as alternative heating systems, solar panels and under road cabling to parking bays, making it simple to install EV charging points in future.

We are proud of the work staff across the housing service have put in to continue improving our services to you and we hope you enjoy reading more about it in this report.

~ Peter Campbell, Head of Housing and Cllr John Batchelor, Lead Cabinet Member for Housing.

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Tenant satisfaction survey

The Council commissioned M.E.L. Research to survey tenants & leaseholders so that we could see what was going well and what not so well. All tenants and leaseholders were invited to take part. 37% (over 2,000) of you took part either online or by post. We are currently developing a plan to look at how we can make improvements to the service areas with low satisfaction. The plan is being developed with the input of housing staff and tenant representatives. You will find the results of the survey throughout this report in the yellow sections.

Benchmarking with peer groups



We compare our results from the survey with the upper, median and lower performing quartiles of organisations and gauge how our results compare. The gauge shows the councils' results when benchmarked against other organisations within the council's peer group of 11 other local authorities in the eastern region (based on size and location). You will find the results throughout this report in the orange sections.



Tenant participation



Our Housing Engagement Board is involved in reviewing and suggesting improvements to many areas of our housing service and our Housing Performance Panel reviews our performance and complaints to look for changes we can make to improve. Throughout this report we will highlight areas where tenants are involved, in many different areas of the housing service, throughout the report.

Want to get involved? email us at: resident.involvement@scambsgov.uk



Wherever you see a QR code you can use your phone's camera to scan the code to take you directly to the website.



Comparison to last year

Our target

Your Rents

% rent arrears



2.05%



Last year = 2.19%



Target = 2%

Average weekly social rent



£107



Last year = £105

Average weekly affordable rent



£145



Last year = £148



Satisfied with the value for money provided by your rent



73%

satisfied



15%

neither satisfied
nor dissatisfied



12%

dissatisfied

Satisfied that your rent provides value for money

Shows the councils' results when benchmarked against other housing providers within the council's peer group (based on size and location).

Average performing organisation
87%

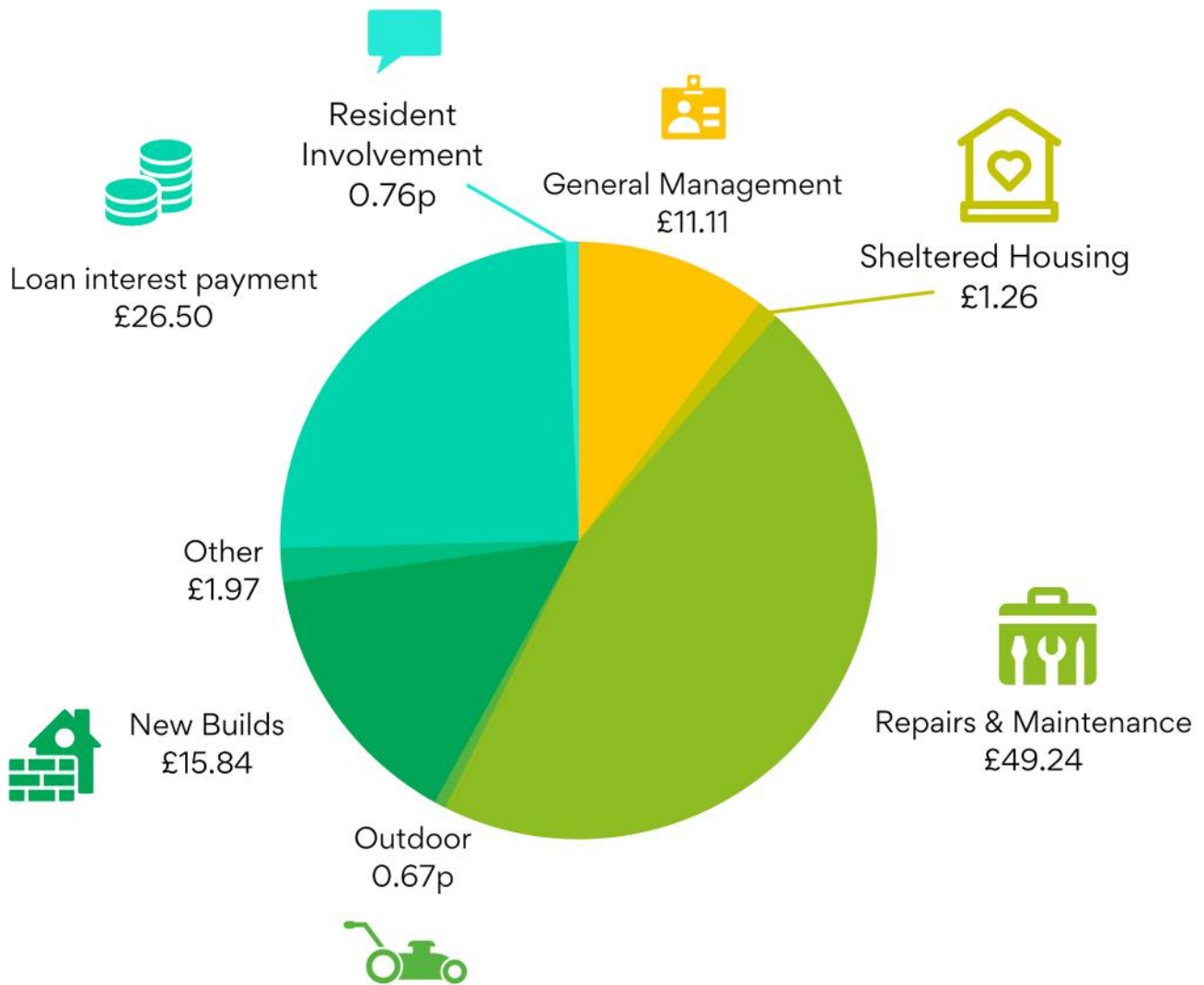
Highest performing organisations
88%



South Cambs
73%



How we spend a weekly rent of £107.35

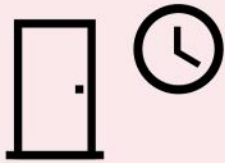


Actual spend for the year 2021 to 2022

Repairs & maintenance	£13,365,483	General Management	£3,014,725
Loan interest payment	£7,192,805	Outdoor	£183,090
New builds	£4,299,181	Sheltered housing	£341,662
Resident Involvement	£205,924	Other	£534,379

Repairs Service

Repairs appointments kept



95%



Last year = 96%



Target = 95%

Emergency repairs attended to in 24 hours



97%



Last year = 97%



Target = 98%

Repairs fixed first time



92%



Last year = Not reported



Target = 85%



Satisfied with the way South Cambs deals with repairs



68%

satisfied



13%

neither satisfied nor dissatisfied



19%

dissatisfied

Satisfied with repairs and maintenance overall

Shows the councils' results when benchmarked against other housing associations within the council's peer group (based on size and location).

Average performing organisations
76%

Highest performing organisations
82%



South Cambs
68%





Working together to care for your home



Freephone

0800 085 1313

Our new repairs contract

Following a rigorous selection process, that our tenant representatives were involved in, Mears were successfully awarded our new repairs and maintenance contract.

The new contract arrangements look and feel very different and are designed to focus on providing a great customer experience.

Our shared ambition is to provide you with a high performing repairs service. We have designed a whole new look for the repairs service that we hope you will like.

On a day-to-day basis, there are new ways of reporting your repairs as well as changes to how you can check on the progress of your repair, including automated text confirmations and updates, as well as access to a live tracking system.

You can report your repairs online at:

www.scambs.gov.uk/report-your-repair



Tenants were involved in the procurement process of renewing our repairs contract. They are also involved in the process of initiating the new contract and will be involved in reviewing their performance into the future.

Want to get involved? email us at resident.involvement@scambs.gov.uk



Maintenance of your homes

Window
replacements



70



Last year = 183

Boiler
replacements



197



Last year = 224

Heat pumps
installed



141



Last year = 71



Satisfied with the overall quality of your home



77%

satisfied



9%

neither satisfied
nor dissatisfied



14%

dissatisfied

Satisfied with the overall quality of your home

Shows the councils' results when benchmarked against other housing associations within the council's peer group (based on size and location).

Average performing
organisations
81%

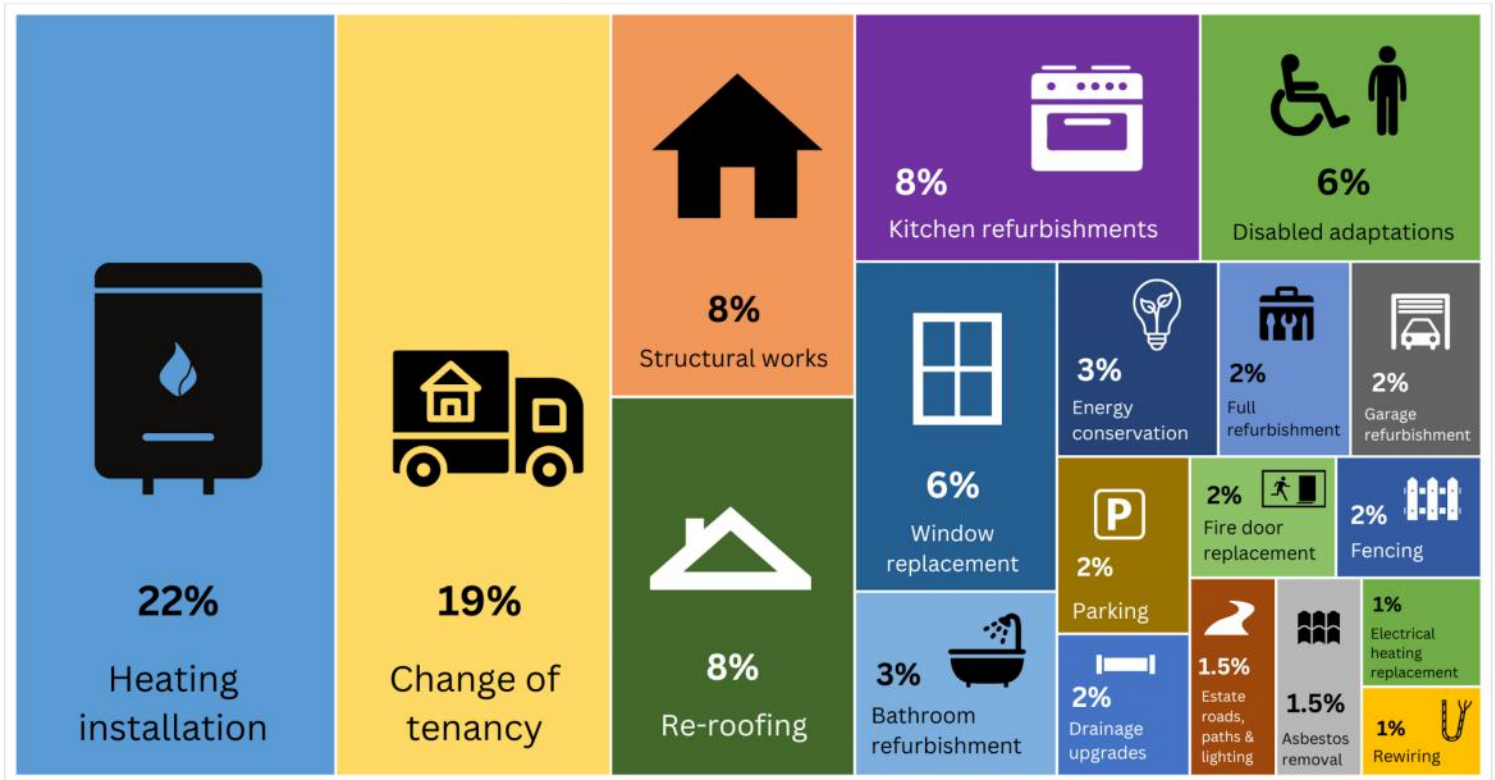
Highest
performing
organisations
84%




South Cambs
77%



Repairs and maintenance budget breakdown



Being green to our core

The Council has an ambition of being the leading green district within the country and this very much links with our vision to provide good quality, sustainable homes for our tenants. This is reflected in two of the four corporate priorities:

- Building homes that are truly affordable to live in, and
- Being green to our core.

We will be approaching this work in a three stage project:



Stage one

Reducing energy demand in dwellings by improving the level of insulation, including external walls (even those with insulated cavities of a certain age) and ground floors.

Stage two

Install alternative heating systems. The options are either air source or ground source heat pumps, both will require individual building appraisals to determine technical suitability.

Stage three

Eliminate residual carbon in order to become net zero. The Council has already installed solar panels to over 40% of its houses and bungalows. We are looking at additional renewable generation measures, such as solar panels to those dwellings currently without.

Landscaping

Planned grounds maintenance

Throughout the year we carry out two kinds of works: cyclical and reactive. Cyclical maintenance is planned and performed regularly, whilst reactive maintenance is carried out when it is reported to us. At every estate each year we carry out:

12 

grass cuts per
year

4 

rough cuts per
year

1 

weed spray per
year

1 

hedge trim per
year

Reactive work

Reactive work can be trees that need work or are dangerous, overgrown hedges that are blocking a path, ditch clearing and other work that may need attention.

Report a landscaping issue

If you have a landscaping concern you can report it online at scams.gov.uk or call us on 01954 713 000



Satisfied with grounds maintenance in your area



71%

satisfied



16%

neither satisfied
nor dissatisfied



13%

dissatisfied

Everyone plays a part in making your neighbourhood a nice place to live. You can look out for your neighbours by:

Keep areas tidy

Make sure you pick up any litter or dog fouling and if there isn't a bin close by, take it home with you.

Park considerately

Parking can be a contentious issue and can cause friction between neighbours. When you or visitors to your home park, consider whether you are potentially blocking access to grounds maintenance teams or any neighbours, especially those with mobility issues. Grassed areas should not be parked on.



Keep your garden and boundary hedges in good condition.

You hold responsibility for your own garden including cutting the grass and maintenance of any trees or bushes. Consider whether your hedge may be blocking access to the path, specifically for those using mobility scooters or prams.



Tree planting

If you are considering planting a tree, think about how big it will grow and whether you are able to maintain its growth as you will be responsible for its ongoing maintenance.

If you have a tree that you think is dangerous or causing damage, however, do let us know.



Tenant inspectors carry out estate inspections between April and October along with our housing officer to pick up any issues that need attention, such as landscaping, fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles. They will also make a note of any tenants gardens that might have an overhanging hedge or need to be maintained.

Find out more on our website www.scams.gov.uk

Want to get involved? email us at resident.involvement@scams.gov.uk



Cost of living support



If you are on a low income and struggling to meet Council Tax payments, you may be eligible for Council Tax support.

If you are already claiming certain benefits, you may be entitled to a Discretionary Housing Payment, which can provide further financial help.

Our Welfare and Money Maximisation Officer supports people in crisis or distress. You can contact them on: welfare.officer@scambsgov.gov.uk



For simple advice on Energy bills and energy efficiency visit the GOV.UK website or call 0800 444202.

The Household Support Fund (HSF) has been created to help people who are experiencing immediate financial hardship. It helps them to pay for food and household energy bills.

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/household-support-fund



Find out the location and opening times of your nearest food banks and food hubs through our dedicated foodbanks webpage.

www.scambsgov.gov.uk/community-safety-and-health/foodbanks-and-food-hubs/



Check your eligibility for free healthcare help from the NHS. They can offer help with (amongst other things) prescriptions, dental needs and glasses - www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/help-with-health-costs



Visit the Government's childcare webpage for information on tax-free childcare, Child Benefit and a one-off payment of £500 to help with maternity costs: helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs

Secondary school children who are entitled to free school meals might also qualify for help with school transport costs.

Kids eat free in Morrisons cafes all day, everyday, when an adult meal is bought for £4.99 or over.

www.scambsgov.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support

01954 713 000





LEAP is a free service, supported by the council, that is helping people keep warm and reduce their energy bills by offering:



Energy tariff comparisons,



Installing simple energy saving measures (such as LED lightbulbs and radiator reflector panels),



Giving referrals for more complex energy saving measures.

applyforleap.org.uk
0800 060 7657



Warm Hubs

Warm Hubs is a collaborative initiative designed to support residents across South Cambridgeshire this winter. In collaboration with Cambridgeshire ACRE, with funding provided by the Integrated Care System (ICS), South Cambridgeshire District Council will be setting up a series of community-led Warm Hubs this winter.

The Hubs will be run within existing community spaces, where local residents can visit a safe, warm and friendly environment to enjoy refreshments and social activity, obtain information and advice, and delight in the company of others.

Warm Hubs will be established in places such as: libraries, community centres, church halls, sports clubs, cafés and other places that promise a warm welcome to anyone struggling to heat their home.

Find out more and an up to date list of their locations on our website or call us on 01954 713 000



Tenant Involvement

A tenant representative's role is very important. They are the voice of our tenant community. Their role is to work with the head of housing and councillors to prioritise budgets, work, resources and policies to deliver a service that focuses on tenants needs. They are also an advocate for tenants and can bring issues to our attention on your behalf.

The Housing Engagement Board (HEB) has two representatives elected for each housing area:

North

Dave Kelleway | dave.scdc.tenant.rep@gmail.com

Margaret Wilson | repwilson37@gmail.com

West

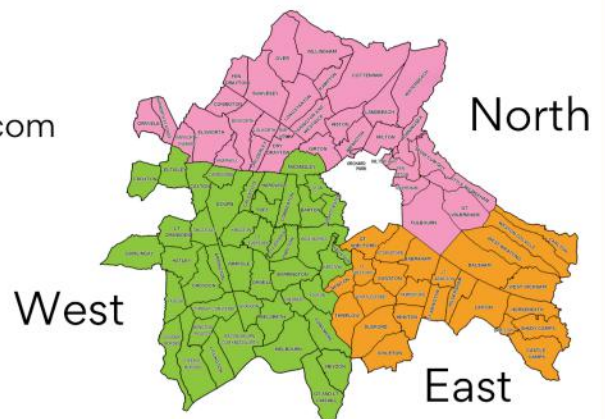
Les Rolfe | les.rolfe@hotmail.co.uk

Peter Tye | To be confirmed

East

Jim Watson | jimwatson54@outlook.com

Vacancy



The Housing Performance Panel (HPP) are involved in reviewing, assessing and challenging our performance, as well as our contractor's performance. The panel identifies areas where performance could be improved and suggests ways we can do this.

Meetings for both groups are held quarterly and you can find the minutes on our website www.scambs.gov.uk/heb

Your Tenant Representatives have been involved with:

Recruitment of key roles

Tenant Representatives have been involved in the recruitment process for our Service Manager for Housing Assets and are involved in the process of recruiting a new Resident Involvement Team Leader.

Attend conferences and training

Tenant Representatives were invited to attend a TPAS conference. TPAS are a not-for-profit organisation that champions tenant involvement and empowerment. They have attended training on looking at Council budgeting as well as on reviewing policies.

Review policies and strategies

Key policies and strategies are taken to the Housing Engagement Board to be reviewed and scrutinised by our Tenant Representatives. Previously our Asset Management Strategy, our Tenancy Policy and our Small Land Sales policy have been taken to the board for review.

Procurement of contracts

Tenant Representatives have been involved in reviewing tenders for our repairs contract and will be getting involved in procuring the contract for our stock condition survey.



Estate Inspections

Tenant Inspectors have been trained and are involved in inspections of our estates, alongside Housing Officers, to report any issues that need attention such as landscaping, fly-tipping, or abandoned vehicles. They take place between April and October. Tenants have the opportunity to report issues through an online form on our website before the inspection takes place. The calendar of inspections and comment forms can be found on our website.

Tenant Satisfaction Survey

All tenants were asked to take part in a survey asking how satisfied they were with our services. Tenant representatives were involved in reviewing the results and looking at our improvement plan for changes that need to be made in areas of low satisfaction. As part of new tenant measures we will be conducting regular satisfaction surveys so we can track whether improvements we make are raising satisfaction.

Find us on
Facebook
@InSouthCambs



Want to get involved? Email us at
Resident.Involvement@scambs.gov.uk



Satisfied with the opportunities to make views known



60%
satisfied



neither satisfied
nor dissatisfied

29%



dissatisfied

11%

Opportunities to make views known

Shows the councils' results when benchmarked against other housing associations within the council's peer group (based on size and location).

Average performing
organisations
72%

Highest
performing
organisations
73%



South Cambs
60%



Letting homes

Number of Council homes let in 2021 / 2022



523



Last year = 356

Satisfaction with condition of their new home



93%



Last year = n/a



Target = 85%

Average days to re-let a home



41 days



Last year = 52 days



Target = 17 days



Satisfied with the overall service provided by South Cambs



80%

satisfied



11%

neither satisfied
nor dissatisfied



9%

dissatisfied

Satisfied with the overall service

Shows the councils' results when benchmarked against other housing associations within the council's peer group (based on size and location).



South Cambs
80%

Highest performing organisations
88%



Lower performing organisations
76%



As a result of the challenges presented by the Covid pandemic, we have seen an increase in the length of time it has taken us to re-let a home when someone has moved. We are starting to see some significant improvements with our turn-around times of empty homes after implementing staff increases, and additional contractors to assist when extensive work is needed.

If you are thinking of moving out of your council home, you can arrange a visit from your Housing Officer so they can let you know what work is needed to be done before you hand it back to us. Anything that is requested, but isn't done, may result in an invoice being sent to you for the costs incurred in us having to complete the work.

To avoid any recharges when you leave your home, and help us re-let it quicker, we ask that you:

- Clear all rubbish from inside and outside the home, including sheds and lofts.
- Fill any holes in the walls from pictures or shelves etc.
- Any sheds, greenhouses or outhouses that you have put up yourself should be removed (unless it is agreed that it can be left).
- The decoration should be in a good condition, with no damage or discolouration from smoking etc.

To contact your Housing Officer to request a visit call 01954 713 000 or email duty.housing@scambs.gov.uk



Tenants are involved in a focus group that is looking at the way we re-let our council homes and how we can make improvements, including ways to make the process more sustainable by recycling or re-using items left behind.

Want to get involved? email us at resident.involvement@scambs.gov.uk



Neighbourhood issues

Anti-Social Behaviour & Safeguarding

Our Housing Enforcement team deal with reports of anti-social behaviour or any safeguarding concerns. They work with partner agencies and other council departments such as environmental health, police neighbourhood teams, social services and more.

We have a new role in the Housing Enforcement team of Housing Mental Health Worker supporting vulnerable residents and ensuring safeguarding is at the forefront of all case work.

During, and following on from the pandemic there has been a rise in cases of both anti-social behaviour and safeguarding issues being reported, not just locally but across the country. 334 cases were opened in 2021 to 2022 for both anti-social behaviour and safeguarding. The previous year we reported 232 and the year before was 191. This shows a steady increase in demand for the service.

Everyone should be able to enjoy living in their homes comfortably. If your neighbour is noisy or stops you feeling comfortable, try to discuss it with them if you can.

Only talk to your neighbour if you feel safe and comfortable.

Step 1

It's quicker to talk face to face - but you can write, text or call if that's easier or you can take someone with you for support.

Step 2

Tell your neighbour how their behaviour is affecting you and what would help. Listen to your neighbour and see if you can reach a compromise together.

Step 3

Consider whether they might be dealing with issues that are contributing to the noise and be sensitive to their circumstances.

Step 4

If that doesn't work you can report the issue to us and we will work to try and resolve the issue between you before taking further action.

To report an issue contact us on 01954 713 000 or report an issue online



What is anti-social behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is a range of unacceptable behaviours, from everyday incidents such as noise nuisance to serious criminal acts. It can be any aggressive or intimidating behaviour that has a negative effect on another person's quality of life - in or around their home.

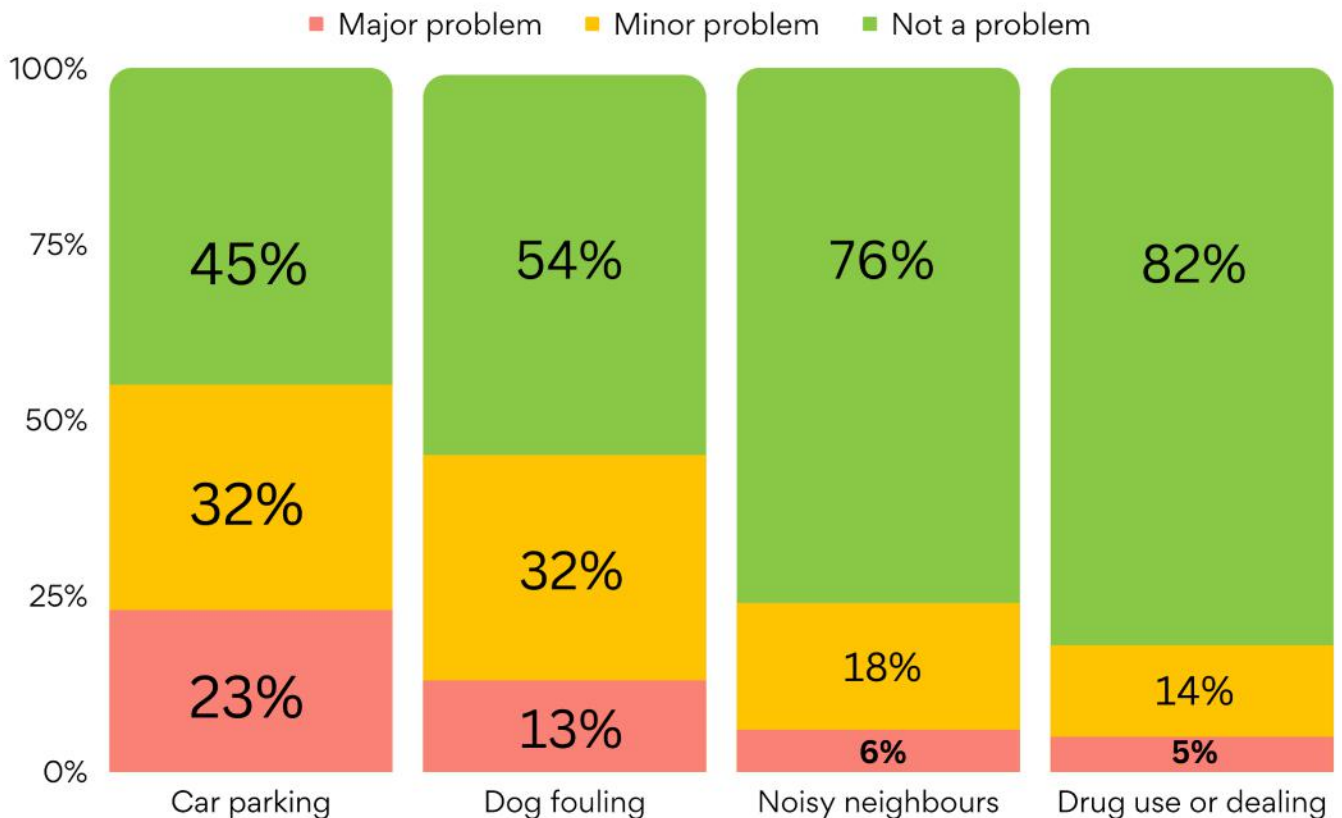


What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is for people who, because of issues such as dementia, learning disability, mental ill-health or substance abuse, have care and support needs that may make them more vulnerable to abuse or neglect. If you have a safeguarding concern you can report it on our website or call us on 01954 713 000.



Extent to which the following are a problem in the neighbourhood



Complaints & compliments

Complaints received



145



Last year = 100

Response sent within timescale



84%



Last year = 81%



Target = 80%

Compliments received



89



Last year = 80



Satisfied with the way South Cambs deals with complaints



55%

satisfied



29%

neither satisfied
nor dissatisfied



16%

dissatisfied

Being easy to deal with

Shows the councils' results when benchmarked against other housing associations within the council's peer group (based on size and location).

Average performing organisations
79%

Highest performing organisations
85%



South Cambs
75%



We have reviewed how our housing service handles complaints, in response to the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and have been working hard to make improvements to our complaints process.

We have had the introduction of a new complaints portal that mean both residents and we can track the progress of any complaints we receive.

How to report a complaint

Whilst we try our best to deliver first-class customer service at all times, we recognise that sometimes we may not perform as well as we could.

If this is the case, please let us know so we can put it right and learn from our mistakes.

You should complain if you are unhappy:

- about how your enquiry was dealt with
- with how an officer has treated you
- with our standard of service

Please include as much detail as you feel is necessary and complete our online complaints form on www.scambs.gov.uk or you can:

- Email : feedback@scambs.gov.uk
- Calling us on: 01954 713 000
- Writing to: South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge, CB23 6EA



Compliments

While we are always happy to hear about how we can improve we also love to hear when we have done well and made a difference. Below are some of the compliments we have received about members of staff:

I genuinely thank you more than you could know for the opportunity you have created for me and my kids. It is thoroughly appreciated

I feel so grateful that you have worked so hard on my behalf and have managed to achieve such a life changing result in such a short amount of time.

I just wanted to take the opportunity to say thank you to yourself because none of this would be happening if it wasn't for your brilliant work, understanding and kindness

New rented
homes built



72



Last year = 47

New shared
ownership homes
built



17



Last year = 24

Total new
homes built



89



Last year = 71



Recently completed new homes built in
Melbourn

We are continuing our commitment to building new, energy efficient, council homes. This means building well insulated homes with measures such as solar panels and air source heat pumps where possible.

We have also been working on future proofing homes by installing either external electrical sockets or ensuring parking bays have underground cabling to be able to install EV charging points when needed.

You can find out more about our new builds on our website.



Useful contacts

Repairs can be reported on freephone
0800 085 1313

Tenancy issues	duty.housing@scambs.gov.uk
Benefits	benefits@scambs.gov.uk
Wheeled bins	refuse@scambs.gov.uk
Complaints / compliments	feedback@scambs.gov.uk
Report fraud	fraud@scambs.gov.uk

For all council services you can call us on
01954 713 000

National domestic abuse helpline	08082 000 247
National debt helpline	0808 808 4000
Cambridge & district citizens advice	0808 278 7808
Samaritans	116 123



www.scambs.gov.uk

01954 713 000

South Cambridgeshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire Hall,
Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambs, CB23 6EA