

Annual Report to Tenants & Leaseholders



South
Cambridgeshire
District Council

2022 to 2023

Introduction

Welcome to your annual report for 2022 to 2023.

We hope you find it interesting and informative. In Housing our focus has been on the Social Housing Regulation Act and the Tenant Satisfaction Measures that will put tenants at the heart of our housing services. We are already doing great work to involve tenants in as much as we can and will continue to do this in line with the new measures. You can read more about it in this report.

Our new repairs contract with Mears has been bringing improvements to the service such as online repairs reporting and regular meetings with involved tenants to discuss its progress. We are excited to be bringing tenants a new app to make reporting repairs even easier.

The introduction of a mental health support worker into our Housing Enforcement team has seen us working with tenants who have complex needs and we have recently received a Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation for our work with residents experiencing domestic abuse.

Our new build team are doing some great work in Northstowe with not only affordable homes but also providing a community building and sports pavilion.

We hope you enjoy reading more in this report about the work the housing team do.



Head of Housing
Peter Campbell

Lead Cabinet
Member for Housing
Cllr John Batchelor



Contents

Your rent

3

Your repairs

5

Maintenance

7

Tenant Involvement

9

Moving home

11

Neighbourhood issues

13

Landscaping

15

Complaints

17

Building new homes

19

Useful numbers

21

Your rent

% rent arrears



2.04%

↓ Last year 2.05%

Average weekly social rent



£113

↑ Last year £107

Average weekly affordable rent

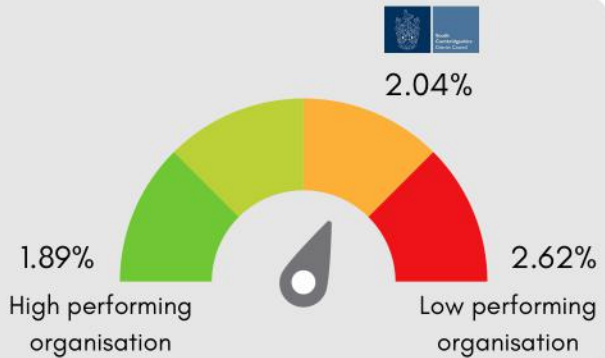


£152

↑ Last year £145

Percent of rent arrears

This gauge shows the Councils' results when compared with other housing associations within the council's peer group (based on size and location).



Tenants have reviewed the rent letters we send out to make sure they are easy to understand and have all the information you need.

*What is Other? ☹️

Other covers many different things, the biggest being costs from other council services such as democratic services, treasury management, & communications. It also covers things like insurance, land registry, and business rates, among other things.



Social Rent - set by a government formula.

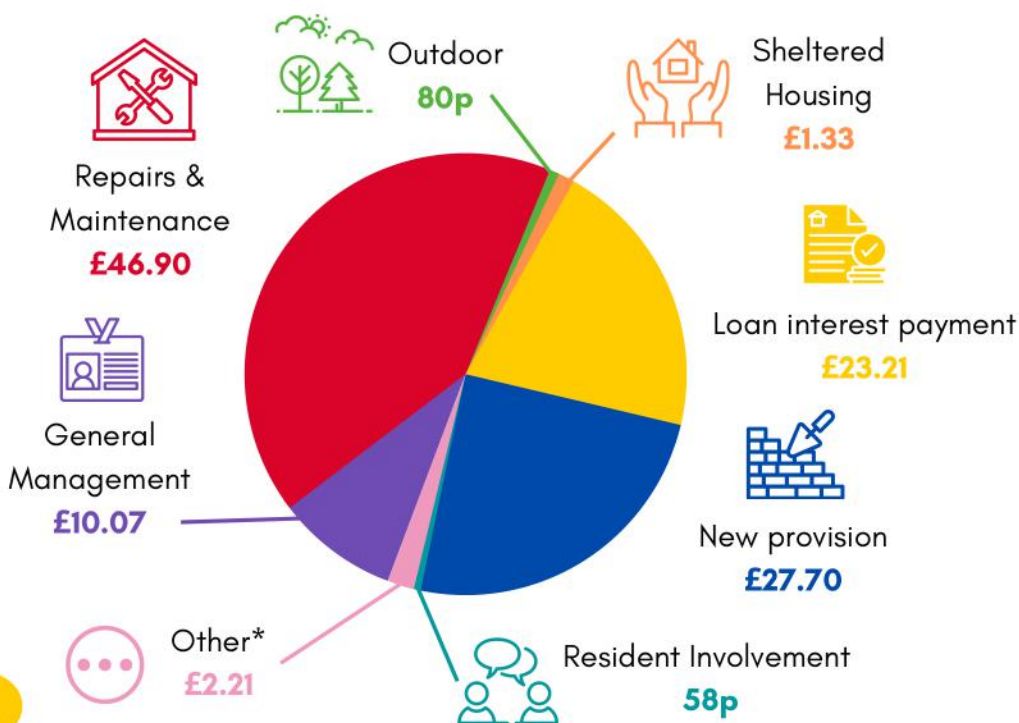


Affordable Rent - up to 80% of market rent.

Actual spend for 2022 to 2023

General Management	£3,120,068	Repairs & Maintenance	£14,531,545
Outdoor	£246,524	Sheltered Housing	£412,990
Resident Involvement	£178,175	New provision	£8,583,004
Loan interest payment	£7,192,805	Other	£684,135

How a weekly social rent of £112.80 is spent:



Your repairs

Repairs appointments kept



91%

↓ Last year 95%

Emergency repairs attended within 24 hours



99%

↑ Last year 97%

Repairs fixed first time

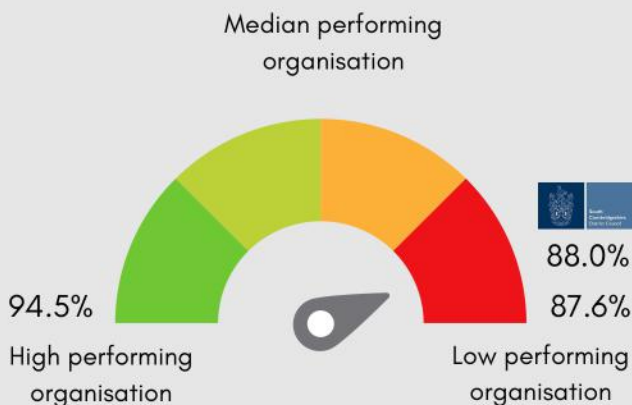


91%

↓ Last year 92%

Satisfaction with repairs

This gauge shows the Councils' results when benchmarked against other housing associations within the council's peer group (based on size and location).



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

0800 085 1313



A new app is on it's way...



M & Me is the new app from Mears that allows you to book your repairs appointments, keep track of the progress, and cancel or amend them.

A letter will be arriving soon with details of how to get started, along with a personalised code to register with the app. This code is specific to you so keep it safe until you are ready to download the app.

Some features of the app:

- 'How to' videos show how to solve some easier issues yourself at home.
- Access to documents about your home, such as gas safety certificates.
- Ask questions relating to your repair and send videos or photo's.



If your repair is an emergency, or you are unable to access the app, you can still report your repairs in the usual way by phone

0800 085 1313



Involved tenants regularly review the performance of our repairs service. Want to get involved? Contact us at resident.involvement@scambs.gov.uk

Maintenance

Boiler replacements



248

↑ Last year 197

Installation of renewable technologies



97

↓ Last year 141

Window replacements



269

↑ Last year 70

This gauge shows the Councils' results when compared with other housing associations within the council's peer group (based on size and location).

Proportion of homes with a valid gas safety certificate



www.scamb.s.gov.uk/report-your-repair
0800 085 1313

The chart shows how the maintenance budget is spent on upkeeping homes in 2022 to 2023



Damp and Mould

When water condenses on surfaces in your home, it can lead to damp spots and mould, and make your home an unhealthy place to live. Ventilation is an important part of keeping damp and mould at bay. We understand that people are concerned about heating their homes, especially with the cost of fuel, but some draughts are needed to help with ventilation. Keeping vents open and unblocked helps keep air circulating around your home. Using extractor fans will also help keep damp at bay. Make sure you are regularly cleaning them to keep them working at their best.

If you have a persistent issue with damp or mould in your home, get in touch as soon as possible at
DAMPANDMOULD@scambs.gov.uk

or call 01954 713 000

Tenant Involvement

Housing Engagement Board

The role of the Housing Engagement Board 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. We have two representatives for each area of the district:

North

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

Margaret Wilson | repwilson37@gmail.com

West

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

Bob Buss | bussb1@icloud.com

East

Jim Watson | jimwatson54@outlook.com

Oana Sutherland | oanasutherland@gmail.com



The board is also made up of the Head of Housing and three district Councillors. They meet every quarter and the minutes of their meetings can be found on our website at www.scambs.gov.uk/heb

Housing Performance Panel

Our Housing Performance Panel reviews the performance of key areas of our service and identifies areas where performance could be improved and suggests improvements that could come out of this. Other working groups may be set up to look at specific projects that need input from our tenants.



Estate Inspections

Between the months of April and October Housing and estate officers, together with tenant volunteers, carry out formal estate inspections. They look at a range of issues, including: landscaping, pathways, communal areas in buildings, fly-tipping and signs of infestations.

We are always looking for tenant volunteers to join us on our estate inspections. If you have some free time and are interested in joining us, please email: resident.involvement@scambs.gov.uk

Other projects



We have started to make it easy to identify where tenants have been involved in work by issuing this stamp on anything tenants have reviewed or been involved in making decisions for (including on the front of this report). You will see it throughout this report to highlight the work tenants have been doing to influence their housing service.

Some of the work tenants have been involved in this year includes:



Reviewed policies such as for Mutual Exchanges and Aids and Adaptations



Attended national conferences



Sat on interview panels for key jobs in Housing



Reviewed letters and correspondence

Want to get involved? Get in touch:

resident.involvement@scambs.gov.uk

Moving Home

If you are thinking of moving home, get in touch with us so we can offer advice and make sure there are no hidden surprises. We ask you to give us at least four weeks notice before moving out and rent will be charged for the four weeks following your notice so it is important to factor this in to your moving plans.

What are re-charges?

We also ask that your home is returned to us in a good condition. Once you have given us notice that you will be moving out, your housing officer will arrange a visit to check your home and outline any work that you will need to complete before handing the keys back over to us. Anything that is requested, but isn't done, may result in an invoice being sent to you for the costs incurred in South Cambridgeshire District Council having to complete the work. These charges are what we call re-charges.

Number of council homes let



349

↓ Last year 523

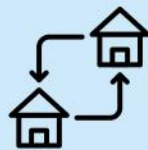
Average time to re-let a home



28 days

↓ Last year 41

Mutual exchanges carried out



19

↓ Last year 40

What is a Mutual Exchange?

Most social housing tenants on a secure, flexible or assured tenancy have the ability to swap their home with another council or housing association tenant. This can be really helpful if you are looking to move to be closer to family, work, amenities, if you are looking to downsize or if you are just looking for a more suitable property for you and your family.

Sign up to HomeSwapper

Registering on Homeswapper is free for South Cambridgeshire District Council tenants and enables you to advertise your own property and find a potential mutual exchange partner both locally and nationally.



Visit www.homeswapper.co.uk and register for free.



Tenants have been involved in reviewing our Mutual Exchange policy and, along with officers, have made some changes to the policy. Some of the main changes that have been made to Mutual Exchanges are:

- You can now subscribe to HomeSwapper for free to help find someone to swap homes with.
- If you are downsizing your home (moving to a smaller home) through a mutual exchange, for every bedroom released, £1,000 will be payable upon successful exchange.
- There is more flexibility on being able to under occupy (swap to a home bigger than you need) by one bedroom.

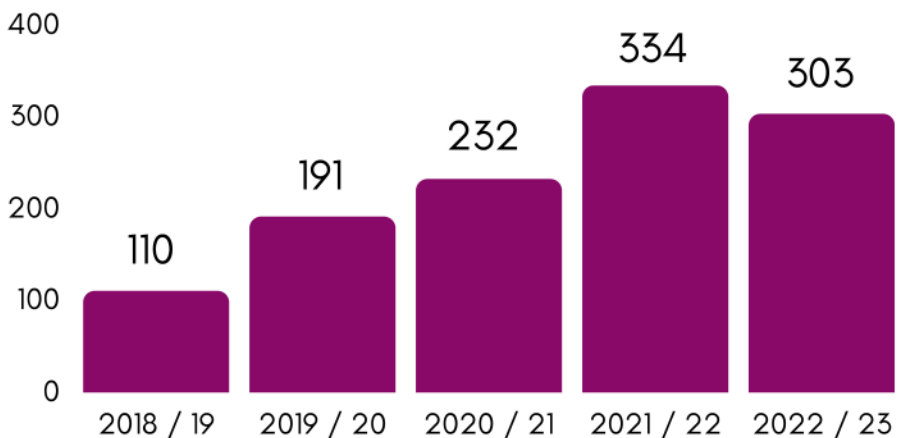
Neighbourhood issues

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.

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. As you can see from the chart below, cases have been steadily rising over the last five years.

Number of Anti-social behaviour cases over the last 5 years



Below is one of the many ways we have dealt with Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).

Working together to deal with Anti-Social Behaviour

A group of youths targeted a sheltered housing scheme in one of our villages. Many of the residents were not reporting issues to Police. Door to door visits were made by Housing Enforcement staff, Sheltered Housing staff, as well as the Police to speak to, and reassure, residents.

What we, along with partner organisations, did:

- ASB signs were erected in the local area by Housing Enforcement staff.
- Engagement with local youths was carried out by Housing Enforcement staff, after hours.
- Contact was made with the local youth club, District Councillors, and Parish Council to assist with sharing ASB communications with the rest of the community.

A few weeks later, the Community Safety Partnership conducted a follow up visit and door knocked the residents to assess the progress. The feedback was very positive with people telling us that the area had improved considerably. We were advised that, not only had things quietened down, but some of the young people (having been made aware of the impact of not just their own behaviour, but also their friends' behaviour) were beginning to engage with the residents with friendly conversation.

You can report anti-social behaviour on our website at:

www.scamb.gov.uk/ASB or call us on 01954 713 000

Landscaping

As a rural district, we have a lot of green spaces to upkeep. We do this with regular planned grounds maintenance each year as well as reacting to any issues that may come up in between.

At each estate we carry out each year:



12
grass cuts
per year



4
rough cuts
per year



1
weed spray
per year



1
hedge trim
per year

Reactive work is anything that might come up outside of these regular works such as a tree that may be dangerous and needs attention or hedges that have overgrown and are blocking a pathway.

You can report any of these issues online at www.scams.gov.uk or call us on 01954 713 000

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



Parking

Parking considerately (including visitors to your home) by avoiding parking on grassed areas or in a manner that gets in the way or blocks grounds maintenance teams. Not only is this against the tenancy agreement, it also damages your neighbourhood and uses up resources that could be used for other grounds maintenance work.



Your responsibilities

You hold responsibility for your own garden, including cutting the grass and maintenance of any trees or bushes. Please keep it tidy, well maintained, and free from rubbish.

You are also responsible for your own sheds and patios as well as any fences (unless they form an external boundary onto a road or footpath).



Tree or hedge planting

If you are considering planting a tree or hedges in your garden, consider whether you will be able to look after it, as it will be your responsibility to maintain. How fast do they grow? How easy will it be to maintain into the future? Will it block a neighbour's window when it grows bigger?

Do let us know, however, if a tree in your garden is causing damage or could be dangerous.

Complaints

Complaints



136

↓ Last year 164

Response to complaint sent within timescale



87%

↑ Last year 84%

Compliments



34

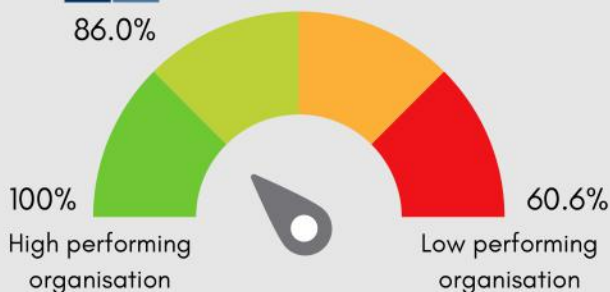
↓ Last year 40

This gauge shows the Councils' results when compared with other housing associations within the council's peer group (based on size and location).

Percentage of complaints resolved within timescale



86.0%



How do I report a complaint?

We try our best to deliver a great service at all times but we recognise that we can make mistakes and may not always 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
- You are unhappy with how an officer has treated you
- You are unhappy with our standard of service

How to complain?

Please include as much detail as you feel is necessary and complete our online complaints form.

You can also complain by:

- Writing an email to feedback@scambs.gov.uk
- Calling the contact centre on 01954 713 000
- Writing a letter to South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge, CB23 6EA

We would also love to hear from you if you have a compliment for us.

Thank you and your team for the help that you gave me and children when we needed support.

We have come a long way since then and that's mainly down to you.

Building new homes

Affordable rented homes built



58



Last year 65

Shared Ownership homes built



33



Last year 17

Total new homes built



91



Last year 89

South Cambs' New Build Team have been remarkably busy over the last few years delivering much-needed new affordable homes. There is a huge demand for homes in our District, which means the need for affordable homes is also growing. In order to meet this increasing demand, and responding to modern building practices, our new Council homes have had a twenty-first century facelift.

- Our homes are warm
- Our homes are affordable
- Our homes are green
- Our homes are modern
- Our homes have great access to outdoor space



*New affordable homes
built in Gamlingay*



*Affordable homes being built in
Orwell*



*Affordable homes being built
in Cottenham*

As well as building affordable homes our new build team have been involved in providing community buildings at Northstowe. A temporary community building opened in the summer and we have submitted an application for a permanent community centre. We have also recently completed work on a sports pavilion. If you are interested in one of our Affordable Rent homes, you will need to register with Home-Link at www.home-link.org.uk. If you would like to know more about our Shared Ownership properties, please email our agents, William H Brown, at scdc@williamhbrown.co.uk

Useful numbers

Contact the Council

01954 713 000

Report your repair

0800 080 1313

Automated payment
line

01954 713 000
(option 1)

Out of Hours after 5pm

Dangerous structures

0300 303 8389

Homelessness

01253 501 117

Environmental Health
emergency

08456 095 437

Local Energy Advice Partnership	0800 060 7567
Adult Social Services	03450 045 5202
Age UK	0800 678 1602
Highways England	0300 1235 000
National Domestic abuse Helpline	0808 2000 247
Cambridge Women's Aid	01223 361 214
Citizens Advice	0808 278 7808
Samaritans	116 123
National Debt Helpline	0808 808 4000



South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambs
CB23 6EA
01954 713 000
www.scambs.gov.uk