

Homes for Melton

Autumn 2021



Melton
Borough
Council

For our tenants and leaseholders

Welcome

to the first Homes for Melton newsletter and annual report for 2020/2021, which forms part of Melton Tenant Platform engagement. The newsletter will be sent out quarterly, with the autumn edition to include our annual report information.

In November 2020, the Government released 'The Charter for Social Housing Residents' which sets out to raise the standard of social housing and to meet the aspirations of social housing residents, throughout the country. The main focus is on building safety, raising standards, communication with tenants and tenant satisfaction.

Your Portfolio Holder

As your new Portfolio Holder for Council Homes and Landlord Services, I recognise that engagement and collaboration with tenants and leaseholders is paramount and that it provides a foundation for us to understand your needs. Therefore, it forms a basis to be able to improve upon the services provided around your homes.

The last annual report, issued in December 2020, seems a long time ago but we have come a long way from then. Now that we are coming into the recovery phase of the COVID-19 pandemic and catching up on inspections, repairs and tenancy issues, hopefully, the following report will show you the exemplary work that the Housing Team has done since then.

As promised in the previous report, our landlord services have improved, and the new staffing structures have been put into place, to ensure effective delivery on tenancy management, assets, compliance and engagement with both tenants and leaseholders. Our aim is to ensure that, as your landlord, we listen to you and ensure that you have a good quality home to live in. When you need our help that we are there to support you where we can.



Cllr Ronan Browne
Portfolio Holder for
Council Homes and
Landlord Services

The Director for Housing and Communities



Michelle Howard
Director for Housing and
Communities

I joined Melton Borough Council at the end of July 2021, and what drew me to Melton was the genuine focus on Helping People and Shaping Places – a huge part of this is a commitment to continuously improve what we do, the way we work and the services and homes we provide. With this commitment in mind, I am pleased to be able to share this newsletter with you, to provide you with information about some of the things that have been delivered or are planned, but, I also want to assure you of our wish and commitment to have you as our tenants involved in helping us to make further changes and to shape improvements in the future.

There are a number of areas of progress that I am pleased to reflect on:

- We have improved our landlord services with a full staff team and clear roles and responsibilities for Housing Officers and Housing Asset Officers
- Our Housing Officers now have defined ‘patches’ meaning they will know their areas and tenants better and that you will have clear points of contact for tenancy matters
- Since the adoption of our new Tenancy Agreement in April 2021, the team has been able to ensure that tenancies are being conducted appropriately
- We continue to make significant improvements to our voids performance, meaning that when properties become vacant, we are working more effectively to get them ready to let, in line with our agreed lettable standard
- Our teams achieved 100% of gas servicing requirements throughout the pandemic, as well as making continued progress on our Door and Window Programme to enhance the energy efficiency of our properties

As we look to the future, there is a lot happening:

Some of you will already have met with our contractors who are carrying out stock condition surveys on our behalf across all of our housing stock. This is a critical piece of work for us to ensure we have a full and up to date understanding of the condition of our homes. The findings from this work will help us to put together a planned programme of remedial and maintenance works, to ensure all of our homes will be safe and will meet the Decent Homes Standard. We will carry out stock condition surveys on 20% of our homes every year after this initial survey of all of our stock.

We welcome the Government’s white paper, ‘The Charter for Social Housing Tenants’ and you will hear a lot more from us in the coming months about what this means for us in Melton. To bring this to life, it is important that we listen to you and understand what it is like to be a tenant of Melton Borough Council. As part of this, you will have received a Tenant Satisfaction Survey recently – thank you to those who completed this, the information gathered from the responses will help us to understand where we may need to improve and focus on in the future. Our commitment to you is that we will take seriously, any opportunities to embed improvements and learning into the way we work and deliver services and homes in Melton.

We would like to build on the work of our Tenant Engagement commitment and develop this in the context of The Charter for Social Housing Residents, through the development of a Melton Tenant and Leaseholder Choice platform. There are a number of ways you could get involved, and we would be really pleased to hear from you if you might be interested in this or would like to share any ideas with us

Finally, I would like to recognise the challenging period everybody will have faced over the last 18 months as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. If you are experiencing any challenges (for example tenancy issues, or access to support that may help you) we may be able to assist - please don’t hesitate to contact your Housing Officer for advice and support.

Tenant satisfaction survey



In partnership with Acuity

In late September and early October we will have sent you a questionnaire. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for taking the time to complete the survey.

We look forward to understanding what we do well and what we could do better.

If you have returned the survey, you will have automatically been entered into our prize draw for either a £100, £75, £50 or £25 shopping voucher.

You told us....

At the recent Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Offer Events ran at the end of June 2021, we met with 100 tenants at various venues around the borough.

A big thank you to those of you who came along.

We asked you if you would complete a general Tenant Satisfaction Survey and you told us that:

- 32% of you are very satisfied and 48% of you are satisfied with the overall housing service that Melton Borough Council provides
- 14% of you are very satisfied and 51% of you are satisfied with the housing that Melton Borough Council provides
- 25% of you are very satisfied and 53% of you are satisfied that the rent you pay provides value for money
- 10% of you are very satisfied and 48% of you are satisfied with Melton Borough Council's contribution to the management of the neighbourhood you live in
- 13% of you are very satisfied and 58% of you are satisfied with Melton Borough Council keeping you informed about things that might affect you as a tenant

We also asked you what was the one thing that you would like to see improved upon and the outcome was around repairs and maintenance. We are currently developing some Service Improvement Platforms, one of which will be repairs and maintenance. We will be inviting those of you who showed an interest in joining one of these groups, once they are launched.

A massive thank you to those tenants and leaseholders that took the time to come and share their views and opinions.

And the winner is.....

Mr Roger Perkins won our £75 Morrisons Shopping Voucher. We want to do more with our Leaseholders, so please look out for a personal invite to future events, your attendance and input is highly valued.



An update from the Housing Asset team

We have been incredibly busy, catching up with repairs and inspections that became outstanding due to the COVID-19 lockdowns.



However, we are pleased to report the following to you:

- New 'A' rated doors and windows have been installed in 104 properties, with a total spend of £326,000, in the past 18 months.
- Tenants selected anti-slip wood effect communal flooring installed into New Street flats, which replaced the old damaged asbestos floor tiles.
- Tenants were consulted on future kitchen choices and we have selected the top three designs to be used on the planned kitchen programme, providing a level of choice for tenants not previously available to them.
- We have selected a contractor to carry out passive fire works. These works have been identified to restrict the growth and spread of any fire that may happen, enabling occupants to escape safely and offering protection for firefighters. These fire works will be of a value in the region of £200k per year. The works will commence later in this financial year.
- We have selected a contractor to deliver new kitchens and bathrooms. The contract shall commence in the New Year.

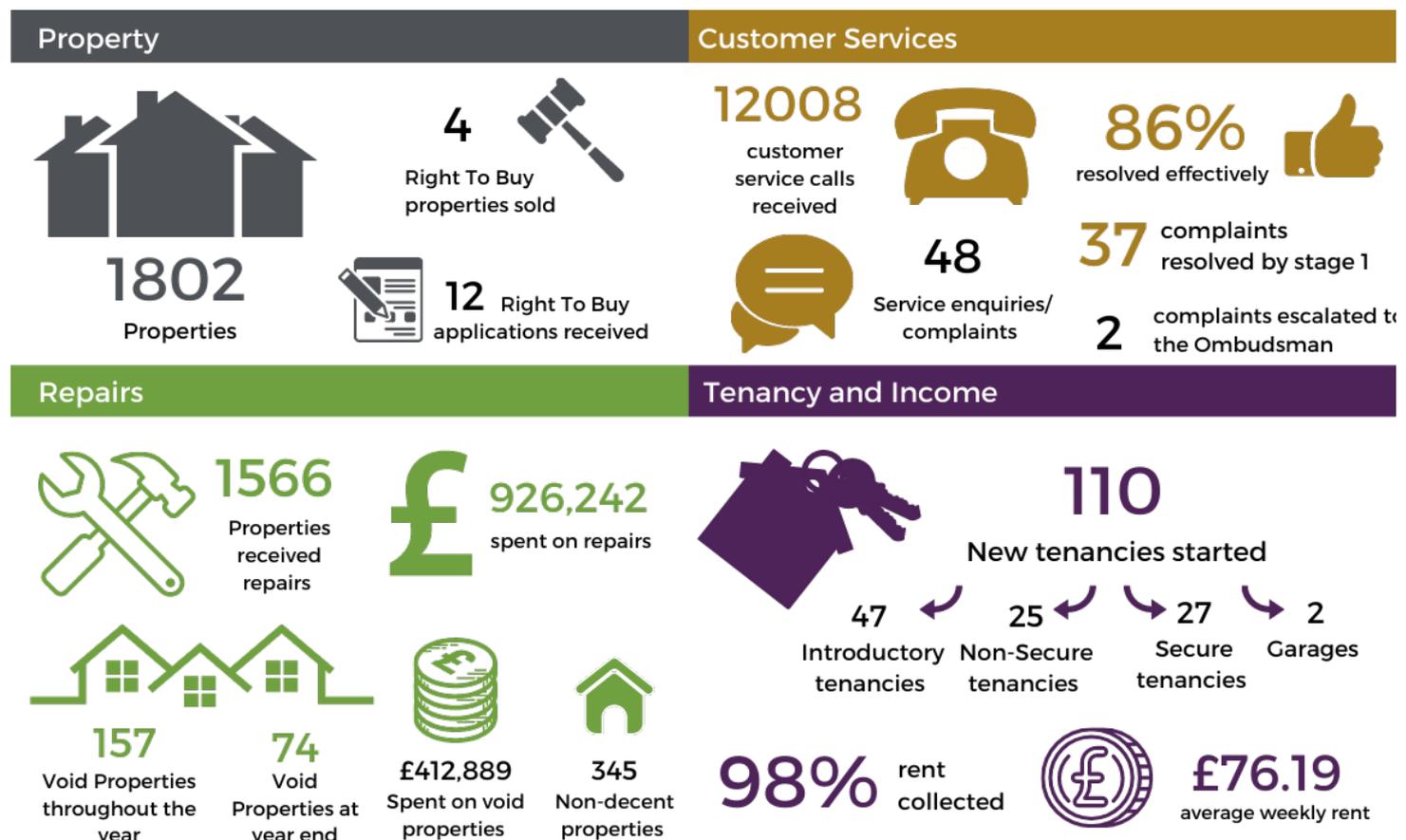
Contacting the Housing Assets team

If you need to report a repair in your home, you should fill out our online form:

www.melton.gov.uk/housing/council-tenants/report-a-repair/

If you have any concerns about a recent repair that has been carried out in your home please contact the Housing Asset Team by calling 01664 502502 or emailing Housingrepairs@melton.gov.uk.

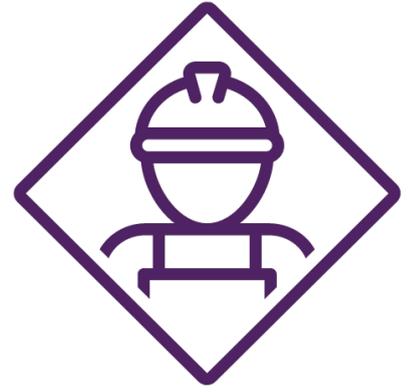
Annual Report



Taking care of your homes

Health and Safety (a.k.a Compliance)

We have been very busy ensuring that all areas of compliance servicing are up to date and we have so far been able to sustain 100% for gas servicing. Significant improvements have also been made in other areas such as, electrical certification and asbestos surveying. We aim to continue this positive progress.



Grant funded energy efficiency improvements

We are working in partnership with EON Ltd to deliver energy efficiency improvements to approximately seventy homes across the borough. These improvements shall be either Solar panels, or external insulation to the outer walls of your home.

Should you be contacted by EON, please be assured they are working with us but do ask them for identification.

Stock condition surveys

We have recently started to survey our properties to establish the condition of key elements within your homes, such as kitchens, bathrooms and external doors, to mention a few.

The surveys are being carried out on our behalf by Michael Dyson Associates. The surveys will provide information to assist with future planned maintenance and works programmes, we are anticipating completion of the surveys by the end of November.

Fire Safety works

We have recently completed a programme of works at Gretton Court, to install a new alarm system with additional lighting. This has been positively received by our partners at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS).

Twenty One other communal blocks have had new emergency lighting installed as part of our continued work on fire safety. We have also completed several other site visits with LFRS over the last 6 months that have received some really positive feedback regarding the ongoing works.

Work continues to provide new fire doors to over 100 of our flats and fire compartmentation works are due to start now that a contractor has been identified. We are working with the environmental team to provide new bin storage provision in safer locations away from the main buildings, this includes providing more waste disposal space for areas that need it and improving fire safety.

Radon

There have been Radon tests completed across areas that were identified as high risk with mitigation works being completed at 8 properties, testing continues to keep all tenants safe in these properties.



Your Housing Officers

The Tenancy Services team

The Tenancy Services Team manage your tenancy and the conditions that come with it.

The main functions of the Tenancy Services Team are:

- Tenancy management
- Rent account management
- Untidy gardens
- Anti-social behaviour
- Breaches of tenancy
- Property inspections
- Sign ups
- Safeguarding referrals
- Non-access visits
- Permission requests
- Adaptation referrals
- Mutual exchanges
- Right To Buy's

Have you received a copy of your new Tenants' Handbook?

The Tenants' Handbook goes alongside your newly adopted Tenancy Agreement, giving you more information around living in your home. If you have not received this then please contact your Housing Officer or let them know when you next see them.

Meet your Housing Officers



Leanne Hoban
Senior Housing Officer



Tracie Waldron

Asfordby and
Fairmead Estate



Emily Lang

Craven, Warwick
and Dorian wards



Michaela Cockayne

Villages and Rural
Areas



Jodie Neville

Melton Town
Centre



Vanessa Leach

Egerton and
Sysonby wards

If you need to contact your Housing Officer or any member of the Tenancy Services Team, please phone 01664 502502 or email Tenancyservices@melton.gov.uk

A note from the chair

Shout4Residents includes tenants, leaseholders, owner occupiers and private tenants.

“The Shout4Residents group like many others have found it very difficult to operate due to the coronavirus pandemic and The Edge community centre being unavailable, this made it very difficult to be able to offer help and assistance to our local community.

However, we tried to persevere and found that, for the members we have, it seemed Messenger and Facebook were the best way of communicating and ensured that we were able to continue our weekly meetings and Friday coffee mornings.

We are pleased to say it is great news that the restrictions have been lifted and we are now able to restart our weekly coffee mornings again at The Edge, where everyone is welcome to call in for a drink with a biscuit and a friendly chat.

Our monthly meetings are back on again and it's great to be able to start planning this year's events. If anyone is interested in becoming involved with a great team you can contact myself on 07773595456 for details of our next meeting so that you can join us for a taster of what we do.”

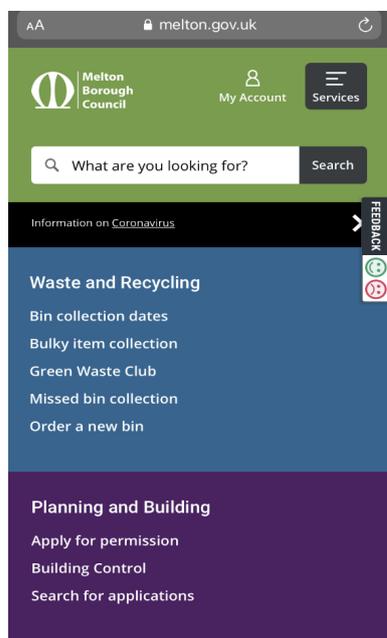
Stay safe, John Bellamy, Chair for our South Melton Residents' Group (as well as a Melton Borough Council tenant).

Service improvement platforms

As part of the engagement and service improvement work that we are doing, we believe it is important that you are given the opportunity to have a say in how we deliver your services and to share our performance with you.

If you think that you might be interested in this or would like more information about how to join, please contact us by emailing Housingconsultation@melton.gov.uk or by calling 01664 502502 and ask to speak with the Tenant Engagement and Service Improvement Lead.

My Account: Tenants and Leaseholder services

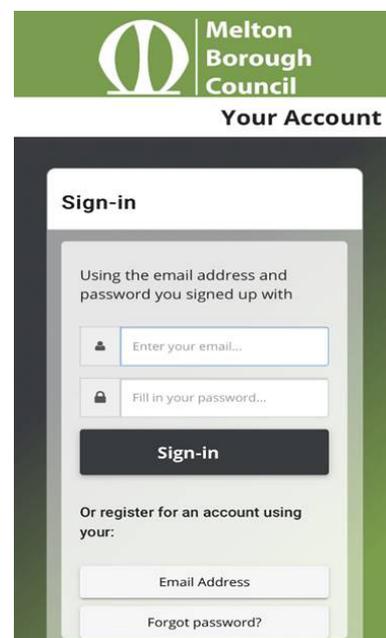


Tenants and leaseholders are now able to access a wide range of services online. This can be done through any device, at any time of day, even when our offices are closed, by signing up to My Account.

My Account allows you to:

- view information about your accounts, including Housing Rent and Council Tax
- setup or update Direct Debit payments
- check when payments are due
- apply for Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support.

To register for a My Account simply visit our website and click on 'My Account' at the top of the page.



The complaints process

Understanding the complaints process

As part of the Charter for Social Housing Residents, it emphasises the need for us to deal with your complaints promptly and fairly, with access to a strong Ombudsman who will give you swift and fair resolutions when needed.

We want to put you, the customer, at the heart of everything we do. We aim to give the best customer service possible, deal effectively with any concerns or complaints you may have about our service and if possible, put right any mistakes we may have made.

We shall implement learning from our mistakes to enhance our service offer to you providing confidence that the same problem won't occur again.

We consider a complaint to mean that you are dissatisfied about a Council service or the way it was delivered which requires a timely response from us.

You can find more information about our complaints process and policy on our website:

www.melton.gov.uk/complaint

Taking a complaint further

As a tenant or leaseholder, you also have the right to take your complaint to a designated person, if you believe that we have not been able to resolve your complaint.

A designated person could be:

- your local MP
- a local Councillor

It may be that they are unable to help, therefore they can refer your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman for you.

However, if you have decided not to contact a designated person, you may refer your complaint direct to the Housing Ombudsman, but only eight weeks after we have given you our final response.

You can find out more details about how to refer to or contact the Housing Ombudsman on their website:

www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/understand-complaints-process/.