

OPEN DOOR

Housing Services Annual Report to
Tenants and Leaseholders **2020-21**



The Annual Report demonstrates how we have performed over the last year across a range of key areas.



Welcome to your Annual Report edition of Open Door

The annual report covers the period between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021.

By Councillor Mark Crane, Leader of the Council and Lead Executive Member for Housing, Leisure, Strategic Matters, External Relations and Partnerships.

The Covid-19 pandemic presented us with significant challenges in delivering our services to you. Despite the uncertainty at times, we quickly adapted to ensure we could continue to support you. Following Government guidance, many of our staff could not carry out their normal face-to-face duties and instead switched to providing support to our most vulnerable residents through regular welfare calls. We also provided additional support and advice to tenants who were financially impacted by the pandemic.

During the pandemic, we prioritised keeping you and our staff safe. Working in line with the guidance we received from Government, we initially could only deliver emergency repairs. This resulted in a backlog of work for our Property Services team. Since the lifting of restrictions in summer, the team has worked hard to reduce the backlog of repairs by over 70%. The team has also started to undertake a programme of property surveys to help us build our investment programme.

Open Door is your magazine, and we want to make sure that it includes the information you want. We have an online form at www.selby.gov.uk/open-door-mailing-list for you to tell us what you would like to see in future Open door magazines. You can also email communications@selby.gov.uk or write to us at Selby District Council, Civic Centre, Doncaster Road, Selby, North Yorkshire, YO8 9FT.

I want to thank all our tenants and leaseholders for their patience and resilience during a year when we all had to make changes to the way we live, work, and support each other. Like many other years, we will continuously learn from our experiences and improve your housing service.

The only constant in life is change

31 March 2020 – 1 April 2021

The last year has been very challenging for everybody. Covid-19 has forced us all to make significant changes to our daily lives.

Changes to restrictions have meant that the housing service had to quickly adapt to safely deliver services to you.

Although we have changed the way we do things, some of our services were put on hold completely. For example, the Government put a stay on all possession hearings until August 2020. This resulted in anything that was due to be heard in court being suspended.

Below are some statistics from the housing service:

We have **158** leaseholders

3017 council owned homes

Types of homes

1 bed properties	744
2 bed properties	1262
3 bed properties	972
4 bed properties	37
5 bed properties	2

617 households registered and active on North Yorkshire Home Choice

466 housing applications we have registered and processed in the last year which are currently active

177 housing applicants registered with Selby District Council that have been housed

159 housing applicants registered with us and housed in council property

4 mutual exchanges have been completed through Homeswapper

114 successful home swapper applications via Homeswapper

We provided **74** homeless households with emergency accommodation

We've completed **89.4%** of emergency / urgent repairs

Number of adaptations completed this year:

- 43 Wet rooms
- 9 Ramps
- 102 Minor adaptations
- 2 Hoists
- 2 Stair-lifts

We've improved the quality of our homes by:

- Fitting **79** new kitchens
- Fitting **45** new bathrooms
- **1,718m²** of rendering
- **8,771m²** of pointing
- Fitting new doors and/or windows to **130** properties
- **1,164m** of fencing has been fitted as well as **14** new gates

We let **7** newly acquired affordable rented properties through the Empty Homes Programme

Our Customer Contact Centre has received **98,541** enquiries by phone and **15,394** by email

38 cases were dealt with by our Housing Enforcement team, of which:

- **25** successful outcomes and the tenants were supported to sustain their tenancy
- **11** properties were recovered through available enforcement sanctions
- **10** cases were for anti-social behaviour
- **2** cases have had successful court intervention

Following Government guidance and revised housing legislation there were **0** evictions for rent arrears in 2020/21

We have processed **148** housing verification costs for Universal Credit claims

We received **137** new Housing Benefit claims

11,128 Change of Circumstances applications were completed

We've granted **69** Discretionary Housing Payment claims this year

138 tenants signed up to receive online surveys for housing service improvement

We held **7** tenant group meetings this year (digital)

761 Lifeline customers

The Lifeline team attended **533** Emergency call outs

How did we spend your money?

We do our best to make sure your money is spent sensibly and that we are providing value for money.

Value for money is about getting the best possible service for you from the resources we have available.

We received **£12.010m** in housing rents last year, which is used to cover the costs of our homes and property.

Income

Dwelling rents.....	(£12,010m)
Charges for services and facilities.....	(£743k)
Non-dwelling rents	(£102k)

Expenditure

Contribution to capital projects.....	£4.205m
Interest.....	£1.915m
Provision for debt repayment.....	£1.260m
Rent, rates, taxes and other charges	£105k
Supervision and management.....	£2.236m
Repairs and maintenance.....	£2.817m
Other adjustments and financing	(£2.599m)
Movement in allowance for bad debts.....	£32k
Debt management costs	£40k
Depreciation and impairment of non-current assets.....	£2.844m

Tenant rents

Our rent collection figure last year was **97.41%**.

Rents for our properties are calculated on a national formula which aims to standardise rent between Council-owned properties and those run by housing associations across the country. During the average rents charged for different types of properties were:

Bedsits	£63.38	1 Bed Property	£73.652
Bed Property	£84.61	3 Bed Property	£94.03
4 Bed Property	£104.40	5 Bed Property	£111.27
St Wilfrids Court	£76.55	Laurie Backhouse Court	£74.49

What does your rent pay for?

The average rent paid for a council house for a 48-week period was **£85.09**, the breakdown of rent is as follows:

Housing management	£26.67
Estate management	£2.15
Grounds management	£0.71
Special management (includes pumping stations and septic tank emptying)	£0.31
Housing support and community services	£2.13
Hostels	£0.27
Footpath maintenance	£0.05
Housing repairs and property services	£20.22
Debt management costs	£0.28
Movement in allowance for bad debts	£0.23
Interest payable on self financing debt	£13.57
Provision for debt Repayment	£8.93
Funding for home improvements	£29.80
Garage rents	(£0.72)
Contributions to/from reserves	(£0.29)
Interest earned on investments	(£0.72)
Adjustments for costs charged to services but not included in rents (eg asset charges)	(£18.50)
Total 48-week weekly rent	£85.09



Response to Covid-19 Survey

In October 2021, we sent a survey to 552 of our vulnerable tenants who received welfare calls during lockdown between March and July 2020 to ask about how we delivered our services during those testing times.

Of the 552 surveys sent out, 134 were returned (25%) of which stated the following:



76% were satisfied with the service they received.



69% of people contacted us during that period with the majority doing so by telephone (**78%**).



You thought our communication during lockdown was easy to understand, reassuring and relevant.



Most people contacted us through the Customer Contact Centre, their Neighbourhood Officer or by accessing our website.



92% of tenants who received welfare calls said they appreciated the call. Some of these tenants said:

"While in shielding it was nice to hear from someone that took the time to check if I was okay and offer help if I needed it."

"The fact you took time out to contact me which made me relaxed and reassured. Thank you."

"All the information needed was given during contact. and welcomed the support."

"That someone at least looked after us. The young man who called was very helpful and pleasant like speaking to someone you've known for ages."

Our property services team also received positive feedback about the work they carried out during this period. Tenants said:

"I reported a housing repair late on a Friday afternoon and your member of staff instructed an out of hours electrician to call and the repair was carried out efficiently within approx. 1hr. The staff member was extremely helpful and is to be congratulated."

"You have managed to do our repairs promptly and keep our home up and running."

"Job to the property was done but not quite finished workmen very friendly and worked at a distance."



Tel: 01757 705101
Email: info@selby.gov.uk
Phone line opening times
Mon - Thurs: 8.30am to 5pm
Fri: 8.30am to 4.30pm

Tel: 01653 600941
The out of hours emergency number for repairs and homelessness issues.

Do it online
You can apply for, pay and tell us through our website.
www.selby.gov.uk