

# Housing Investment

Making great homes  
and communities



Version C November 2021

**Housing**  
Management



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

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# Part 1

## The Housing Investment Standard

Kensington and Chelsea Council is committed to investing in making great homes and communities, to ensure that our residents have access to high quality homes to support them in leading a high quality of life.

The Council's corporate plan, **Our Council Plan (2019 – 2023)** has several key priorities including “to maintain our borough as a great place to live, work and learn, by providing decent, well-maintained housing”.

This booklet sets out our aims, how we plan to deliver these together with an indication of what our residents can expect from future planned investment, subject to available funding.



## Kensington and Chelsea Council's Housing Investment Standard

The Council has committed to a standard for all its homes, this means that they will all:



**Be safe** – homes will comply with statutory Health and Safety requirements; this includes safe electrical and gas installations and fire safety.



**Be in a good state of repair** – the Council is committed to resident safety and has a duty, as a landlord, to repair and maintain its properties, providing safe, sound and comfortable homes and is responsible for carrying out the majority, (but not all), repairs to tenanted properties. \*Further information is also available in the Tenants Handbook.



**Be sufficiently warm and dry** – each home will receive heating and hot water systems to maintain a comfortable temperature within the home. The Council will ensure that roofs, windows and the external building fabric is maintained and repaired, to keep homes weatherproof and waterproof.



**Be accessible** – homes will be accessible for all who live there. Aids and adaptations are available on a needs basis. The Council understands that these access needs may change over time and will make every effort to accommodate these changes.



**Have properly functioning facilities** – with kitchen and bathroom facilities that are fit for purpose and function well.



**Be sustainable** – making efficient use of resources and energy with minimal impact on the environment. Minimising waste, encouraging re-use and recycling together with lower lifecycle environmental impacts and cost, improved reliability, less maintenance, and greater user satisfaction.

Where homes are accessed via communal areas or are based on estates, we will invest to keep those areas safe and in a good state of repair.

Further details on the **Council's Housing Investment Standard** may be found at [www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing-investment-standard](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing-investment-standard)

# Part 2

## Information gathering, planning and programming works

The Council has committed £374 million (as at January 2021) to a seven-year works programme to ensure that homes are modern, safe and warm.

For a breakdown of the current proposed seven-year investment plan for the whole stock, (excluding Lancaster West estate, and affordable warmth/zero carbon costs), please see the latest HRA Business Plan. The plan will be subject to on-going review taking account of changes in available funding and the reprioritisation of work programmes.

This includes work inside tenants' homes and work to buildings and estates. The programme determines which work is needed and in which year it will be done and enables the Council to meet its investment standard by keeping homes, buildings and estates in a good condition.

There are three stages – gathering data, the planning stage and the programming stage. These are explained below:

### 1) Gathering Data

#### Stock Condition Database

The Council has a stock condition database which holds information on all its housing stock. This information includes the individual main building components contained within the building. This information shows:

- The estimated remaining life of a component or piece of equipment

- The likely cost of repair or replacement of a component or piece of equipment

The remaining life of a component is an estimation of when, in the future, the component is likely to need replacement. However, this is an estimate and not an exact science.

The estimated cost figure for the repair or replacement is taken from a central list of costs for various items, to achieve a consistent approach in applying costs.

### **Surveys**

A stock condition survey, which is a detailed inspection of homes internally and externally was undertaken in 2010. This was followed up in 2018 with a new stock condition survey which looked at:

- 100% of communal areas
- 25% sample survey of the inside of tenants' homes. These homes were selected to provide a representative sample across the Council's housing stock
- homes with known missing or old data

### **Data checking/accuracy.**

The stock information has been checked to ensure accuracy which includes checking the present condition and an inspection of previously completed work.

In some cases, data is known to be incomplete and requires assumptions to be made.

## **2) The planning stage**

### **Using the information**

The information is used to run a forecast on how much the Council would need to spend on maintaining its stock over the next 30 years. We use this period as it coincides with the planning period the Council must use for accounting purposes.

From the 30-year forecast, a seven-year investment plan is created. This period is used as many leases state that communal decorations will be undertaken every seven years.

### **3) The programming stage and the seven year programme**

We have undertaken the following to compile a programme.

#### **Deciding where the work will be done.**

A stock condition database is sufficient for long term financial planning but is not detailed enough to plan specific programmes of work. Components of homes may or may not last as long as the estimated life.

Starting initially with the stock condition data, more detailed surveys and checks are carried out. This may include input from residents affected who may have information about historic works and current issues which will be considered when planning a specific programme of work. Projected programmes of work and associated expenditure may need readjusting dependant on the actual condition found.

Before works commence, there will be a final check undertaken approximately one year before works are planned to start. This is to see whether components thought to be reaching the end of their life still need to be renewed and whether other issues, not previously identified or known, need to be considered. These validation surveys may cause readjustments to the programme.

#### **Deciding when the work will be done**

The Council will -

- Group work together to achieve efficiencies, i.e. external building envelope works brought together to make best use of scaffolding, keeping costs and disruption to residents to a minimum. Grouping works may mean some elements of work are brought forward or pushed back in the programme.

- Aim to plan the work sequence in a logical order so that completed works are not affected by follow-on works i.e. communal rewiring completed prior to redecoration works.
- Have a consistent amount of work over a number of years and allow Service Providers (subject to them meeting the Council's strict procurement quality and cost standards), some certainty to resource the work (including their labour, subcontractors and supply chain).

### **On-going programme review**

The Council, over the course of the seven-year capital works programme, will carry out an on-going review to ensure that the programme remains current, relevant and applicable. This means that works planned for blocks or estates could be brought forward or pushed back as new information becomes available.

The investment plan is based upon the best information available at the time. If there are any changes to the level of available funding over the seven-year programme, this will likely affect the programme and would need to be reviewed to reflect the changes.

### **The seven-year capital works programme**

The priority for the seven-year capital works programme is to understand the size of the backlog of work that needs to be done urgently. The annual estimated expenditure over the seven-year plan (as at January 2021) is between £17m and £92m per annum.

## How to find out what investment is planned for your home/estate and when?

If you would like more information about plans for your home or estate, please visit [www.rbkc-development.co.uk/dwelling.php](http://www.rbkc-development.co.uk/dwelling.php). This will show you which buildings and estates will be benefitting from programmed works.

Please note, this information is subject to revision as new survey results come in and funding/budget allocation may be revised.

Every February, the budget is confirmed for the coming financial year. This enables the Council's Capital Investment Team to confirm which homes will be included in that year's investment programme.

If your home/block/estate is included, you will receive formal confirmation in good time to advise you of the proposed works. You will be made aware of resident engagement arrangements, who the Project Manager is, who the Resident Liaison Officer is and the nominated contractor (if known).

You will be invited to comment on the proposed works, and feedback is welcomed from all residents.

# Part 3

## Delivering the Standard

The type of work carried out will depend on the condition of your property.

The Council manages a variety of homes with many built at different times, with different styles, methods of construction and layouts. Despite these variations, it is important that all residents have access to the same standard of work.

To help you understand this, the Council has set standards for each aspect of the work. Each service has a booklet which introduces the individual service standard for all of the planned investment work. The standards have been put into easy-to-understand booklets which are sent out before any work begins, these are:

- ✓ The electrical standard
- ✓ The kitchen standard
- ✓ The bathroom standard
- ✓ The central heating standard
- ✓ The window standard
- ✓ The door standard
- ✓ The roofing standard
- ✓ The external and communal decorations standard
- ✓ Service installations
- ✓ Resident safety standard

The booklets outline what to expect and how to prepare for the work, so that you are ready when contractors arrive.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Q** What choices, if any, will be available when work is carried out?

**A** There will be choices available wherever possible, for example:  
**Front Entrance Door replacement** - choice of door type as well as colour.  
**Kitchens and Bathrooms** - floor/tile colour, unit doors and handles.

Consultation with residents will commence as early as possible and as part of the consultation process, a list of options will be available to choose from and then confirm.

There will also be an opportunity for you to identify any special requirements that you may have and although there is no guarantee that every request can be met, every effort will be made.

## **Q** Do I have to pay for planned maintenance work?

**A** If you are a tenant, planned maintenance work costs are covered in your rent payments.

If you are a leaseholder, you will be recharged according to the terms in your lease. You will be fully consulted before any works are undertaken.

## **Q** How will I be consulted?

**A** The Council will engage with all residents as early as possible on the proposed scope of works and provide feedback. Prior to the commencement of formal leaseholder consultation, initial resident engagement will take place via Residents Associations/Compacts, on the proposed works and proposed approach in communicating this to residents. Following this and the feedback received, correspondence will then be sent to all residents, seeking views on the scope of works and resident engagement going forward.

If you are a leaseholder, only planned investment work to the outside of your home i.e. communal services, lifts, windows, roofing and decorating are carried out. Works of this nature are only undertaken if there is clear evidence of need and value for money.

In accordance with the terms of leases, full consultation will take place before undertaking any major work, using the Section 20 Landlord and Tenant Act 1974 as amended. There is a consultation period of 35 days.

The service standard booklets provide information for both leaseholders and tenants about specific work.

### **Q Who will carry out the work?**

**A** The Council follows a strict, rigorous and detailed vetting process. A range of competent contractors will be appointed who are selected via this process.

There will be opportunities for residents to meet the contractor to discuss the works prior to works commencement.

All contractors will carry identification badges, which will always be clearly displayed. If there is any doubt whether a contractor is employed by the Council, please check, contractors on legitimate business will be happy to wait outside your home while you check their details.

The Council has a strict contractor code of conduct which will be followed when work is being undertaken.

### **Q Who will manage the delivery of the programme?**

**A** The Capital Investment Team co-ordinates and manages the investment programme on behalf of the Council.

One of the team's Project Managers will take overall responsibility for the work and ensure that the work undertaken is completed to a good standard and in a timely manner.

Every contract will have a Resident Liaison Officer (RLO) from the Capital Investment Team and on larger contracts, the contractor may also employ a Resident Liaison Officer.

Your RLO will be the best person to contact if you have any questions regarding the work. They will confirm when the work will take place and advise in advance if there is to be any disruption to services such as television, water supply or lifts.

**Q How will the works be in keeping with the Council's commitment to tackle climate change and sustainability?**

**A** The Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to reach net zero carbon from its buildings and operations by 2030 and the whole Borough by 2040.

To effectively tackle our housing portfolio, we have identified nine key strategic themes for future works; energy and fuel poverty, responding and adapting to climate change, air quality, transport, waste management, water management, green neighbourhoods and communities, ecology and increasing biodiversity and housing operations.

**Q Working Together – what the Council needs from you and what will be delivered in return**

**A** To make sure the work goes as smoothly as possible, it is important to work closely with all residents.

**You can help by:**

- **Providing access** – to your home on the dates and times agreed.
- **Always asking** – to see personal identification before letting anyone into your home
- **Keeping your pets** – in another room, away from the work
- **Keeping children away** – from the work and not leaving them in the house on their own (unless they are 18 years or over)
- **Clearing away** – all valuables and personal belongings from the areas where the work will be taking place
- **Clearing out cupboards** – (when access is required), move furniture and all appliances. Where laminate flooring has been laid, permission will be sought to remove it. Please advise if you cannot move heavy furniture, or if you need packing boxes for your belongings, as the contractor may be able to help

- **Not smoking** – while Council representatives/contractors are in your home. This is because your home becomes a temporary workplace. Smoking in the workplace was banned under the Health Act in 2006
- **Letting us know** – if you have any medical or other special needs or requirements well in advance of the works so that the contractor may be advised in good time and take all appropriate measures
- **Letting us know** – if you require any aids or adaptations. There may be some minor adaptations that can be made to your home while the work is taking place, e.g. fitting handrails in the bathroom / WC
- **Completing a short satisfaction survey** after the planned maintenance work is complete. This informs and helps improve our services. Your feedback is also welcomed whilst the works are being carried out.

The Council can provide details of contents insurance cover at competitive rates. For details please contact the Customer Service Centre Freephone number on **0800 137 111** or **visit the Council's website**.

### **In return, the Council will:**

- **Keep in touch** with you from start to finish, to ensure you are fully informed and up to date
- **Provide you** with a dedicated Project Manager and a Resident Liaison Officer, who will oversee the work carried out to your home
- **Give you contact details** of all relevant members of staff, including the contractors
- **Give you the opportunity to decide on** the best solution where you can choose the design or colour of an item
- **Show you samples** of the materials to be used, where these are available

- **Let you know** when the work is due to start and finish and keep you updated on programme progress
- **Inspect the completed** work to make sure they are finished to a good standard. There will be an opportunity for residents to be involved in the client sign off/acceptance of works
- **Respond to any questions** you may have during the work
- **Make sure our contractors** follow the Council's Contractor code of conduct
- **Seek your comment and feedback** on delivery of the work to guide the service and help with future work projects.

# Resident engagement and involvement

Engaging with residents forms a key and vital stage within the development and delivery process of major works programmes.

## Resident consultation plan

The establishment of a resident consultation plan is essential to ensure that there is an effective and transparent framework to engage with residents/residents associations (RAs)/resident compacts/stakeholders at the very earliest stage of planned works. The plan aims to ensure:

- That timely resident involvement and engagement takes place;
- That consultation is complementary to the project brief and supports the project's key objectives;
- Is fully inclusive and accessible to all affected residents (including consultation with local stakeholders if affected by the works);
- Undertaken comprehensively and with sensitivity and empathy;
- Adequately resourced in terms of staffing and the budget costs

## Those involved in the engagement process will be:

- Resident association and resident compact representatives (where there are no available formal resident representatives, then the Resident Engagement and Partnerships team will be called upon to assist in actively recruiting resident representatives).
- The Council's Neighbourhood Management team
- Resident Liaison Officers
- Resident Engagement and Partnerships team representative.

Leaseholder consultation will be followed in accordance with Section 20 (Leaseholder & Tenant Act 1985 as amended).

## Resident engagement (scoping of works)

Once an initial draft scope of works has been provided to us, a scoping consultation will take place with careful consideration given to ensure that every resident will have the opportunity to comment/feedback on the proposed scope of works, set out in non-technical terms and linked to specific investment objectives/outcomes.

Consideration of how the contract(s) can generate wider benefits to the community beyond just those specified within the scope of works and/or service provided will take place including seeking the views/input from residents.

The identification of Social Value requirements will form part of the scoping stage and once agreed, will be carried forward, forming part of the procurement process. Following evaluation and contractor appointment, the Social Value element will then form part of the contract.

There will be various ways available to allow all residents to inform the project team of their views and make or influence the required decisions/outcomes.

This may include:

**Newsletters, individual letters/leaflets, email/texts, leaseholder consultation, individual household visits, meetings, drop-in sessions, information stands, focus groups, notices/posters, the Council's website/dedicated webpage, social media, community events, displays/exhibitions.**

The response from residents will be carefully considered and taken into account when finalising and agreeing the work specification. A summary of the outcome will be shared with all residents.

## Procurement process

Residents are encouraged to actively participate in the tender evaluation process in non-technical areas, for example Social Value.

## Resident engagement (prior to project commencement)

This will include the provision of all information relevant to residents who are affected by the works including the work programme, scope, any choices available, service standards, any anticipated disruptive effect of the works, any actions required of residents prior to work commencement and with all the Council's relevant officer/contractor contact/access details. The identification and addressing of any resident special needs/requirements take place at this stage.

There is the opportunity to meet the contractor and raise any concerns prior to works commencing.

Consideration will be given to the production of a basic project information sheet, confirming the what/when/RLO contact details, to be issued to all residents affected before works commence.

Residents will also be issued with the relevant Service Standard Booklet (Part 3, Delivering the Standard), which outlines the service standard to be delivered under the project and in turn, what is required from the resident, in order to successfully deliver the works.

## Resident engagement (during the works)

Stakeholders will be kept informed and updated of all project progress via regular letters and engagement by the RBKC Resident Liaison Officer (and Contractor RLO if applicable), available throughout the duration of the project with the aim to develop and maintain residents' confidence that works are being well managed.

There will be resident working groups/bodies established whilst consideration will be given to establishing a single point of contact on the client management side for residents to contact to raise any urgent concerns and for the single point of contact to have authority to deal direct with the contractor.

Throughout the project queries will be recorded and any complaints in relation to the project responded to and where appropriate, used to inform the service delivery. There will also be an option to undertake a sample telephone survey whilst the works are on site.

## Resident engagement (project end)

Invitations will be extended for resident involvement in snagging walkarounds and the sign off /acceptance of works as part of the client sign-off process.

At the end of the project, a customer satisfaction survey will be sent, asking for comments/feedback on how well the project was managed and delivered. All feedback that is returned will be analysed with "lessons learnt" taken on board for future schemes. A letter will be sent to the residents confirming "We asked, you said, we listened, this is what we have done in response".

There will be follow-up visits planned at six and twelve-month intervals after project completion.

## Programme monitoring board

A group of residents and Property Services team members will come together to establish a Programme Monitoring Board. The Programme Monitoring Board will work together to monitor the overall programme of works with a special emphasis on quality.

We will work with residents to identify any requirements for our material to be translated into different languages or produced in any accessible format that may be required.





