

# Housing Matters

News from your Council

**Investing** in your homes



**Gas and electrical safety checks**

New homes for Kensington

**Your Home Visits**

How does Housing Management fit within the Council Plan?

**Have your say on our Housing Strategy**



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

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## Welcome by Kim



In March this year we launched our Council Plan. This important document was finalised and published after consultation with over 2,000 people. It sets out our priorities as a Council over the next four years. With that in mind we have started the process of

developing our Housing Strategy. On 23 July, we took a draft to our Leadership Team meeting to kickstart a consultation process that will be open for all of August and September. It will define our housing policy for the next three years and therefore it is vital that residents have their say, so please find details of how to contribute on **page 6**.

I would also like to thank the Lancaster West Residents' Association for their support in achieving a £9.9m boost in funding for the estate from central Government, and the repairs task and finish group for supporting us to pull together a repairs policy. Reports on both went to our Leadership Team meeting on 23 July.

Following on from the homes survey we carried out last year, we have finalised a seven-year plan investing £268m into your homes. We also have exciting plans to build 600 brand new homes in the borough with at least 300 of them being for social rent.

This year we have planned to visit every Council home in the borough so that we can be sure that they meet health, safety and welfare standards, as well as ensuring that we have the most up to date details about who is living in the property. We'll be carrying out the regular gas and electrical checks, which is quite rightly our responsibility, to make sure you are safe. Find out on page 8 how you can help carry out these checks quickly and efficiently and be in with a chance to enter our prize draw.

I'm really looking forward to our first Residents' conference since housing management responsibilities transferred to the Council. Our plans are starting to take shape but do let us know if there is anything you'd like to see included, and remember to save the date – 12 October.

And, finally, we will soon again be expecting hundreds of thousands of visitors to our borough to enjoy the Notting Hill Carnival. In preparation, leaflets will be sent to all homes affected by the Carnival route to notify you about expected travel disruption, road closures, helpline numbers and relevant information. I very much hope you enjoy the event and may see you there.

Cllr Kim Taylor-Smith  
Deputy Leader

# How does **Housing Management** fit within the **Council Plan**?



In March this year we launched our Council Plan which sets out our priorities as a Council for the next four years. We talked to over 2,000 people, heard over 5,000 comments and used what you told us to directly shape the Plan. The housing service has a major role to play in delivering it.

**K**ensington and Chelsea has the smallest population of any London borough at 160,000 but the third highest population density in London. High density brings challenges around traffic congestion, air pollution and noise nuisance, and we have heard how important these issues are to our communities.

It's the most expensive place to buy a house in the country and social and affordable housing is in short supply.

Residents have told us that we should provide more social and affordable housing and improve and repair Council homes.

We've started consultation with residents over plans to build new affordable homes (see p11) and over the next three years, the Council will be investing £180million into the homes it rents and leases to families.

## **We will make sure that:**

- all of these homes meet current health, safety and welfare standards
- lifts work
- gas and electrical installations are serviced regularly
- we have a programme of planned cyclical repairs and external decorations.

## **The Repairs service is now managed by the Council. We have:**

- reviewed working hours to make them more convenient for residents

- organised training for our customer service staff
- new uniforms and vehicles
- consulted with residents on a new repairs policy and are working on a new repairs handbook.

We have started to build a high quality repairs team and improve resident satisfaction, though we know there is still work to do.

The Council Plan recognises how important getting a job and the right skills are, especially for young people, so we'll be working with our contractors to target the employment of local people. We'll also ensure that our contractors pay the London Living Wage.

You made it clear to us that tackling antisocial behaviour is a priority. We are committed to being tougher on those who are guilty and our new policy sets out how we will deal with this.

We will strive to provide residents with a high quality Housing Management Service that will rebuild trust and satisfaction with housing services. To achieve this we need residents to understand and commit to their responsibilities. Our residents' charter, published in *Housing Matters*, Spring 2019, sets out how you can help us to help you.

And, we will focus on improving the way we communicate with you and involve you. We will listen to you and be guided by your views on changes to your neighbourhoods.

This is just some of the work we have underway. We'll keep you updated through *Housing Matters*.

For more information or to read the full Council Plan visit [www.rbkc.gov.uk/council-plan](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/council-plan)

# Investing in your homes to make them safer



We've developed a seven-year plan for investment in the buildings you live in. To be able to deliver our plan we're making big changes to how we work. During year one of our programme (2019–20) we'll be expanding our major works team and investing in new computer software to help manage major construction projects. And, we've been working with residents as part of a procurement panel to make sure that there are enough contractors and technical consultants in place to get the work done.

**O**ur priority is to clear a back-log of work that needs to be done straight away and continue with work already started on lifts. From year two onwards we will be able to focus on building exteriors such as roofs, windows, external doors, walls, balconies (often known as the building envelope) and urgent communal and hot water issues.

We're drawing on the results of our 2018 homes survey to help us with our planning. This looked at external and communal areas of all our housing, such as roofs and windows and around 20 per cent of the interior of our tenants' homes.

## Priorities for year one (2019-20)

In year one, our focus is on health and safety, which must be our priority. We will start:

- work carried over from the 2018–19 programme
- work to the four tower blocks on Silchester Estate, where concrete and masonry have fallen and where there has been an immediate health and safety risk
- work to Adair and Hazlewood towers, which both had exterior insulation render that although compliant with regulations when it was put in during the 1990s, would not be compliant if it was built now. This has already been removed
- installing fire doors where current doors do not meet up to date regulations
- work that needs to be done as a result of fire risk assessments
- replacing some of the worst lifts (the average age of lifts in our housing is 27 years)
- work to failing communal heating and hot water systems that affect whole blocks



## Priorities for year two onwards (2020–26)

In each of these years, we estimate carrying out around £50 million worth of work. We expect to clear the bulk of the backlog in years' two to four of the programme as well as carrying out new work.

We want to make sure your homes are secure, warm and weather tight. Maintaining roofs and exterior walls can also help to prevent further deterioration of buildings.

All work will be planned carefully to minimise disruption and costs, for example if we have to put up scaffolding to carry out major roof repairs, we will try to do other work at the same time.

It's worth remembering that unforeseen things do happen and new information comes to light. If planned programmes of work are held up for any reason, or not delivered according to the plan, they can also affect the schedule and before work starts on any particular estate or block, we need to carry out a more detailed survey. We will consult locally with residents and provide more detailed information before work begins on any home.

The current draft programme of work is available on our website  
[www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing-management](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing-management).

## Getting ready for Carnival

For the past six decades, our borough has had the honour of hosting the biggest community-led street celebration in the world – the Notting Hill Carnival.

**T**his August bank holiday weekend we're expecting hundreds of thousands of visitors to our borough to enjoy the astounding sights, sounds and atmosphere of this spectacular Carnival parade.

Inevitably any event of this scale will cause some disruption, but we have plans in place to keep inconvenience to a minimum for our residents.

Leaflets will be sent to all homes affected by the Carnival route to notify residents about expected travel disruption, road closures, helpline numbers and information to help you enjoy the event.

A meeting hosted by the Carnival organisers on 15 July was an opportunity for residents to learn about the plans for this year and have their questions answered.

For more information visit  
[www.rbkc.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/events/notting-hill-carnival](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/events/notting-hill-carnival)



# Have your say on our Housing Strategy

The Council has published a draft Housing Strategy, which sets out our vision and key priorities for housing in Kensington and Chelsea.

The strategy covers our housing management services, our work with residents in housing need and our plans for the delivery of new homes. We want to hear your views before agreeing a final strategy.

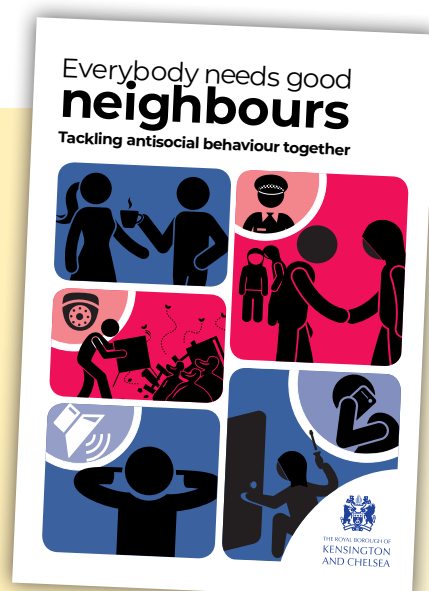
You can read the draft strategy and have your say until the end of September 2019 at [www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing-strategy](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing-strategy)

## Everybody needs good neighbours – getting tough on antisocial behaviour

We want everyone who lives in our borough to enjoy living in their home, but we know this isn't always the case. We know that sometimes residents spoil the quality of life for those living nearby.

**A**ntisocial behaviour can take many forms, it could be anything from allowing a dog to bark for long periods, to irresponsible rubbish disposal, excessive noise or aggressive behaviour.

You made it clear to us that getting tough on this type of behaviour is a priority for you. With your input we have published a new antisocial behaviour policy on our website that sets out the strong action we will take against those who are guilty. We've trained our staff so that they are clear on what is acceptable and are prepared to take action when necessary.



We've also produced a leaflet for residents to remind you of your responsibilities to your neighbours, what to do if you are experiencing problems with your neighbours and what you can expect of us.

You'll find a copy of the leaflet, *Everybody needs good neighbours*, delivered through your door along with this issue of *Housing Matters*. You can also request one from our Customer Services team. If you have any questions about antisocial behaviour or need to report it, please speak to your neighbourhood officer. Call **0800 3617 111** or **020 3617 7080**.



# Getting the grounds maintenance **you want**

Our current grounds maintenance contracts are due to expire at the end of March 2020, and the new contracts begin on 1 April. We'd really like you to be involved in developing the new contracts so that you can have the service that you want over the next five years.

**T**he contracts cover work such as keeping the grass looking in tip top condition, controlling weeds, planting flowers, looking after shrubs and trimming hedges.

You can get involved by joining our Grounds Maintenance Procurement Group (GMPG).

## **The Group will consider things such as:**

- how the contracts can be improved
- what residents want from a grounds maintenance service
- how residents would like to be involved in the management and maintenance of their estate gardens and grounds; and
- what the Council and the successful contractors can offer residents to improve their local environment.

Ten residents came to our first meeting at the start of July and we had some really interesting discussions. You told us that you wanted:

- the new contracts to be more flexible to suit the needs of each estate
- a more sustainable and ecological approach to the management of estate gardens
- contractors to offer training and apprenticeships and more local employment opportunities
- contractors to provide qualified horticultural supervisors to manage gardening staff; and
- more effective penalties for poor performance by contractors.

Once we are ready to advertise for contractors, we will ask representatives from the Group to take part in evaluating the tenders we receive and choosing the next grounds maintenance contractors. You've also suggested that a resident-led management group should meet regularly throughout the duration of the contract.

If you'd like to be involved, find out more, or have any comments and suggestions, please email **HM-EnvironmentalServices@rbkc.gov.uk** or call Customer Services and ask to speak to Environmental Services. Meetings are held in the evenings at Kensington Town Hall.

# Gas and electrical safety checks

The Council has a legal responsibility to check the gas appliance and gas pipework in tenanted homes each year.

**K**&T Heating, the domestic gas contractor that carries out the maintenance and servicing on our behalf, will let you know when the next safety check is required.

Even if you don't have a gas-fired boiler or gas appliances, you may have a gas supply to your home and we'll need to make sure it is safe.

We also have a legal duty to carry out electrical safety checks within tenanted homes every five years to ensure your continued safety and to comply with current electrical regulations.

One of our electrical contractors will check that all electrical circuits and accessories are safe. They will identify and resolve any electrical safety issues as quickly as possible, to reduce safety risks such as electrical shocks or fire hazards.

Making these checks will help to keep you, your family and your neighbours safe. It's part of your tenancy agreement to allow reasonable access to your home.

When your Gas Service/Electrical Safety test is due, our contractor will write to you with an appointed time to visit. If the appointment is not convenient, please respond as quickly as possible to rearrange.

## Help us to help you by:

- being at home at the agreed date and time of the appointment and letting the engineer into your home
- making sure all appliances are clear and accessible. For example, removing items from your airing cupboard if the boiler is located there; and



- making sure that you are topped up and in credit, if you have a pre-payment meter.

**Useful tip** – Turn your heating on a couple of times over the summer to make sure that it stays in working order ready for the winter. If you do have any problems, call our Customer Services team on **0800 137 111**.

## Leaseholders

### – stay gas safe

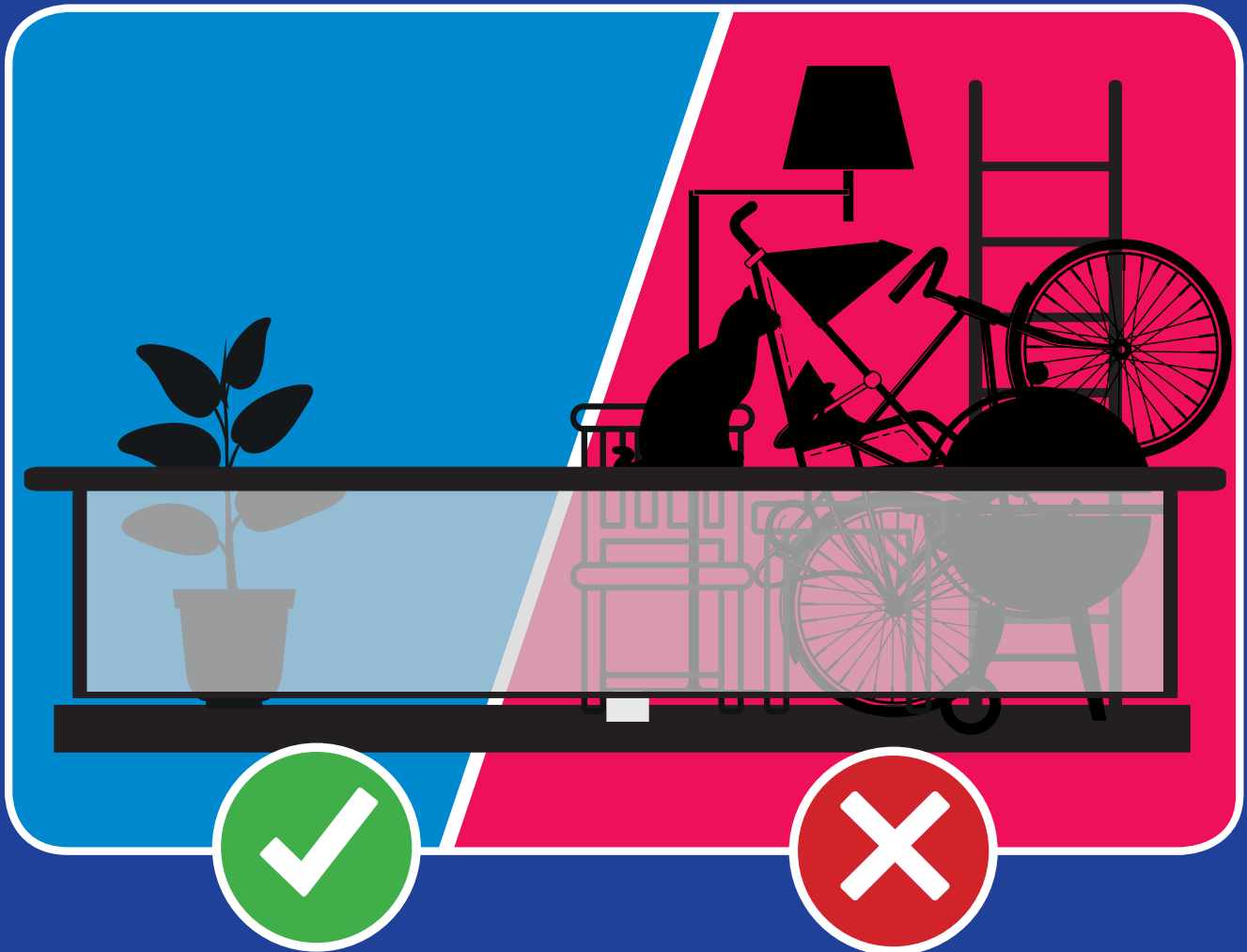
If you are a leaseholder, we strongly advise you to have your gas boiler service/appliance safety check carried out annually by a Gas Safe-registered engineer to make sure your home is safe.

If you sub-let your property, as a landlord, you are required by law to arrange for an evidenced annual gas boiler service/gas safety check, by a Gas Safe-registered engineer.

**Help us to complete our gas safety checks quickly and efficiently by allowing access to our gas engineers on the first attempt and we'll enter you into our quarterly £250 prize draw.**



Everybody needs good neighbours



Please don't clutter  
**your balcony**

It could be a potential fire risk



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# Homeowners information event



**T**hank you to all the leaseholders and freeholders who attended the homeowner information event on 1 July. We welcomed around 100 homeowners at the Town Hall and answered a wide variety of queries. The purpose of the event was to provide an understanding of the services that the Council delivers and also to introduce some external companies who may be of interest to those paying service charges.

We had lots of positive feedback on the variety of stalls available and for the teams representing climate change, repairs, fibre optics, neighbourhoods, insurance and home ownership services, who were there to answer all your questions. LEASE, the independent lease advisory service was also on hand providing advice on general lease queries.

We hope to build on this positive feedback and make this an annual event.

For more information on leaseholder issues contact Home Ownership on **020 7605 6464** or email **HM-homeownership@rbkc.gov.uk**.

## Changes to your water payments



**F**rom 30 September, the way you are charged for your water and wastewater will change. The Council will stop charging you for this and Thames Water will send you a separate bill. You should have received a letter from Thames Water with more information and a form to complete to make sure your account is right for you.

We will write to you in September to confirm your weekly charge to the Council with the water element removed. If you pay by direct debit, we will automatically reduce the amount you pay.

If you don't think you received this letter, please call Thames Water on **0800 009 4238**.

In the meantime, if you have any questions please call our Customer Service Centre on **0800 137 111** or **020 3617 7080** or email **HM-CustomerServices@rbkc.gov.uk** You can also visit **www.thameswater.co.uk/yourthames** for more information.

From 30 September, it will be your responsibility to pay directly for your water and wastewater services. If you struggle to pay your bills, you may qualify for the WaterSure Plus scheme. Contact Thames Water for more information.



Artists' impressions of new homes at Acklam Road.

## New homes for Kensington

In our last issue, we told you about our plans to build more than 600 new homes in the borough. These new homes will be built on land that we already own, without the loss of any existing homes. At least 300 of them will be for social rent, with the remainder a mix of homes for open market rent or sale.

**W**e have funding from the Greater London Authority to help to pay for the new social rent council homes. The potential for delivering affordable rent homes, which could include some homes for key workers (for example, public sector workers) and homes for intermediate rent (rent that is above social rent but lower than the local private rented market) is also being explored alongside finalisation of the design proposals for each site.

Over the last few months, we have been consulting local residents about the first sites in North Kensington at Kensal Road, Acklam Road, Barlby Road and Hewer Street. Thank you to everyone who gave us their views. You told us about the things that are important to you in any new homes, such as adequate storage space and outdoor areas. You would also like to see buildings that are in keeping with the surrounding area and complement existing buildings. Your comments will help us shape our proposals as we move forward through the planning process.

There will be further consultation events following the schools' summer break, and we intend to make the first planning applications before the end of the year, with a target to start construction in mid-2020. If you live close to any of the sites, we will make sure you have plenty of notice before major work starts and that you are kept up to date with what is happening.

Visit our webpage [www.rbkc.gov.uk/new-homes](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/new-homes) for more information.

# Your Home Visits

As part of our commitment to provide a high quality Housing Management service, we'll be visiting all our tenants at home this year. This is so that we can make sure your home meets current health, safety and welfare standards and that we have the most up to date details about who is living in the property.

**H**aving up to date details about all our residents means that we will be able to plan, deliver and tailor services that are best suited to you. And, it will help us to identify residents who may need extra support.

When our Visiting Officers call, they will survey your home, discuss and make a note of any issues you may have and provide you with timescales to fix them if there are any.

The visit will also be a chance for you to hear about the services we can offer you.

This could include:

- advice on a tenancy matter
- help to report a repair or maintenance issue
- explaining how you can get involved in the management of your home
- information about health and safety in your home



- telling you about any planned work taking place in your area.

If you are not at home when the Visiting Officers call, they will leave a card letting you know how you can contact us to arrange a convenient time to visit you.

We may ask you to provide proof of identity during the visit so that we can be sure you are the correct tenant for the property.

Home visits take no longer than an hour to complete.

For more information, call **0800 137 111**.

## Increased funding for Lancaster West Estate

Funding for the development of the Lancaster West Estate has almost doubled to £57.9m. An additional £27.9m - £18m from the Council and £9.9m made possible by a Government grant, increases the original funding from both the Council and Government.

The Lancaster West Residents' Association played an important role in securing the extra funds, which will allow us to invest in the fabric of the estate, including replacing windows with modern double-glazing and updating the heating systems to be more efficient. Investing in the future of the estate is also about

creating real opportunities for local people, which has already begun with 12 jobs, one apprenticeship and 16 training courses in the local area. We initially aim to generate £1m in additional income for the estate by securing jobs, training and community grants.

Cllr Kim Taylor-Smith, Deputy Leader, Kensington and Chelsea Council, said:

“The refurbishment of the Lancaster West estate continues to be a huge priority for us. The work is guided by the priorities of residents, improvements have been collaboratively co-designed with them and residents will continue to be involved at every step. I'm proud this funding will help us to create a truly great place to live.”



## Working with residents to **develop our workforce**

Residents have been involved in helping the Council to develop its workforce to meet the challenges ahead. A Task and Finish group of Tenants' Consultative Committee (TCC) representatives was set up to look at areas such as recruitment, induction of new staff, professional training and staff development.

**M**embers of the group have attended induction sessions for new staff, to share their experiences, and give a personal insight into some of our residents' concerns.

Residents have also been involved in the recruitment process, helping to prepare a pool of interview questions, conducting interviews alongside Council staff and agreeing which candidates to employ.

North Kensington resident Leearna Ollife, was involved in the recruitment process earlier this year for three new members of staff who will be involved in our home visits programme. She said:

"I think it is exceptionally important for North Kensington Council tenants in particular, to help shape the intake of new employees of the Council, ensuring that they are people with the right experience and attitude, who have empathy, patience, understanding and knowledge of the area and its diverse history, and the ability to support change for the better".

"Having a resident on the panel was a great experience", adds Daniel Lewis, Neighbourhood Business Support Manager. "It was an opportunity to personally understand the views within the community. Knowing we made the decision together was important as the roles we recruited to are vital in helping us to build trust with local residents".

For more information email [housingconsult@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:housingconsult@rbkc.gov.uk)

## Residents' conference **12 October – save the date!**

**P**lanning is now underway for the 2019 Residents' Conference. This will take place on Saturday 12 October at the Great Hall in Kensington Town Hall.

This will be an opportunity for you to see how the housing management service is shaping up and a time to have some fun.

Our Tenants' Consultative Committee meets monthly and we are hoping that members will feed back to you on the work they have been involved with. We also have lots of new staff

that have joined us and it will be a chance for you to get to know them and hear about what they do.

Please let us know what you would like to see at the conference.

Email [housingconsult@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:housingconsult@rbkc.gov.uk) and look out for more information about the conference via your residents' association, posters on estate noticeboards and on our website.

# Activities for young people



Our regular programme of activities will be starting again in September.

## **Chelsea After-School Club (Term-time only)**

Every Wednesday  
2.45pm to 5.15pm  
Chelsea Youth Club  
Blantyre Street  
SW10 0DS

## **St Luke's Football (Term-time only)**

Every Friday  
6pm to 8pm  
Sydney Street  
London  
SW3 6NH

## **Westway Saturday Football (Term-time only)**

Every Saturday  
Age 10 to 13 - 5pm to 6.30pm  
Age 14 to 23 - 6.30pm to 8pm  
Westway Sports & Fitness Centre  
1 Crowthorne Road  
London  
W10 6RP

## **Cricket & Football (Term-time only)**

Every Tuesday  
5pm to 7pm  
Hazlewood Football Pitch  
Adair Road  
London  
W10 5DY

## **Insight Youth Club (13 to 19 years)**

Every Wednesday  
5pm to 8pm  
Kensal Resource Centre  
Appleford Road  
London  
W10 5EQ

For more information on any of the youth activities above call Clive on **07850 751314**.

# School's out for summer

**B**ut there's no excuse for young people to be bored. There's a huge range of activities taking place in the borough, with something for all ages and interests. From arts and crafts to sports and games, music and drama to baking and woodwork. Many of them are free.

Visit [www.rbkc.gov.uk/kcsummer](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/kcsummer) for more information.



# Take your skills up a league

If you are over the age of 19, unemployed and want to improve your chances of finding work, our partners at the Chelsea Football Club Foundation have just the course to give your job prospects a kick start.

In association with the Open College Network (OCN), the Chelsea Works programme courses can earn you a level one certificate in employability and a level one award in digital skills.

It will give you the skills and confidence you'll need to use technology in a modern workplace, there'll be the potential for job interviews, work placements and opportunities to develop your personal skills in a professional environment.

If, on the other hand, you want to develop your skills as an entrepreneur, don't miss this opportunity to take on the Chelsea Football



Club Entrepreneur Programme. Take this course and earn yourself an OCN London level 2 certificate in first steps to enterprise and a level one award in digital skills.

You'll grow your business skills and knowledge, learn basic finance and forecasting, how to build trust and storytelling for sales and how to build an online reputation using social media. You'll also get personal and professional development planning training and improve your presentation and networking skills. Both courses run throughout the year and what's more – they're absolutely free!

Email: [foundation.education@chelseafc.com](mailto:foundation.education@chelseafc.com)

## Disability Forum

The Disability Forum meets regularly to make sure that our services meet the needs of our disabled residents. The next meeting is at 6.30pm on Tuesday 24 September at Kensington Town Hall.

If you would like to attend email [housingconsult@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:housingconsult@rbkc.gov.uk)

## Homes meeting

Homes meetings are for residents who live in street properties or have no formal attachment to a residents' association.

They are a way for you to discuss important issues with other residents and Housing Management staff. Meetings take place at Kensington Town Hall. The next meeting is on Monday 16 September at 6.30pm.

If you are interested in attending, email [housingconsult@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:housingconsult@rbkc.gov.uk)

# How we're doing

## Improving our better performing areas

### Satisfaction with repairs

Since taking back responsibility for managing the repairs service, in March 2018, resident satisfaction has risen from 72 per cent last year to 83 per cent this year.

We have recruited a new management team headed by Martin Greenway. This service now controls the process from the initial call to signing off the work.

We know we have more to do especially with more complex work and plumbing but with the launch of a new Repairs Policy we are optimistic this improvement will continue.

Since last summer, satisfaction surveys have been carried out by Kwest, an independent organisation rather than us.

### Grounds maintenance

Performance remains strong and above target throughout the year. Almost 99 per cent of grounds maintenance inspections passed the required standards.

Kwest carried out more than 600 resident satisfaction surveys earlier this year.

Satisfaction for grounds maintenance was 87 per cent, with some differences between estates and parts of the service. We will use the information gathered to work out why so we can make improvements.

### Customer complaints

In the first quarter of 2018-19, the percentage of stage one complaints responded to within the 15 working days target was only 31.19 per cent.

A focus on complaints handling throughout the year and into 2019-20 shows improvement, with 87.5 per cent of stage one complaints answered within target. Our aim is to make this 100 per cent.

Service improvements elsewhere in Housing Management, notably repairs, have led to a drop in the number of complaints received; from 561 in 2017-18 to 371 in 2018-19.

## Areas still needing improvement

### Voids and lettings

Managing our empty homes has been problematic. At the end of March 2019, there were 120, at the end of June 2019, 118. This partly relates to the suspension of general lettings between June 2017 and March 2018, but also slow progress in reletting the backlog of empty homes.

Recruiting a lettings manager and administrative support has improved things. The majority of homes currently empty are ready to let, being advertised and viewed. The level of empty homes peaked at 138 during last year but at the time of writing stands at 111.

### Lifts

Repairing lifts quickly remains a priority. Only 63 per cent of lift callouts were attended to within the four-hour target during 2018-19. While there have been some improvements since, performance remains well below our targets.

Contractors find it difficult to employ engineers experienced with the older design and technology of our lifts. This is having a negative impact on service levels.

The programme of replacing lifts identified in 2018-19 has begun. Six lifts have recently been replaced and work on a seventh started in June.

### Rent collection

Tenant rent arrears have increased from £1,566m in March 2018, to £1,654m to date. This coincides with the roll out of Universal Credit for all new claims and changes in circumstances from December 2018.

### We've rethought our strategy, which includes:

- more home visits by our Rent Income Team to carry out income and expenditure assessments
- training for our staff to help them to identify residents struggling with debt
- increased links between our employment service and those in debt
- streamlining the process to recover arrears. Sadly, on occasions we do need to take legal action to recover the debt owed.



# Council meetings

## August to October 2019

There's a range of committee meetings and forums where local people can get involved in the Council's decision-making. You are most welcome to attend any of the meetings below and will only be asked to leave the room if private or confidential matters are under discussion. You will find the published agenda for each of these meetings on the Council's website one full week before each meeting.

Though the dates below are provisional, they are unlikely to change. The Council's scrutiny arrangements are currently under review so no Scrutiny Committee dates are included here. However, at the 24 July Council Meeting a full schedule of meetings to August 2020, including the dates below, will be confirmed.



Please have a look at the Council website [www.rbkc.gov.uk/councilanddemocracy](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/councilanddemocracy) for further information, or call **020 7361 2477/2265** to speak to a member of the Governance Services Team.

Meetings start at 6.30pm and take place at Kensington Town Hall unless otherwise indicated.

| Date         | Meeting(s)  |
|--------------|---|
| 13 August    | Planning Applications Committee                     |
| 3 September  | Planning Applications Committee                     |
| 11 September | Leadership Team                                     |
| 12 September | Audit and Transparency Sub-Committee                |
| 17 September | Planning Applications Committee                     |
| 18 September | Administration Committee                            |
| 26 September | Health and Wellbeing Board (4pm) Planning Committee |
| 8 October    | Planning Applications Committee                     |
| 9 October    | Leadership Team                                     |
| 16 October   | Council   |
| 22 October   | Planning Applications Committee                     |
| 30 October   | Planning Committee                                  |

# Take steps to get out of debt



**S**ometimes life throws up the unexpected and you find yourself with a financial struggle you weren't expecting.

Whether through an unforeseen life event, through redundancy or ill health, the situation can be overwhelming and you don't know where to turn. On top of that, if you don't claim the benefits you are entitled to you can end up in a spiral of debt and further worry.

Debt can contribute to physical and mental health issues, family breakdown, homelessness and lost employment and productivity. If you have built up debt and need some help to get back on track, we have teamed up with debt charity StepChange to provide you with a wide range of practical debt solutions to suit your situation.

You can ask for advice over the phone, online or via a live web chat and the support you receive will be completely confidential. The

help will be tailored to you and you can start, pause and re-start as you need. A good idea is to prepare by downloading an income and expenditure form from the StepChange website, but don't worry if you can't, you will be guided through the process.

Contact StepChange online and download a form at [www.stepchange.org](http://www.stepchange.org)

You can also get debt and money advice from Citizens Advice Kensington and Chelsea. There are offices in Acklam Road W10 and Kings Road SW3 where you can speak to an adviser face-to-face or you can call **0300 330 1174** or visit the website [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

## Universal Credit

**U**niversal Credit is a single monthly payment which has replaced the payments listed below for claimants whose circumstances have changed and for people making a new claim.

- Income Support
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Employment Support Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Working Tax Credit
- Tax Credit
- Parts of Social Fund

### Universal Credit for mixed aged couples

**T**here is an important benefit change for 'mixed aged couples' which came into effect from 15 May 2019. Couples where one partner is aged above the Pension Credit age and the other is under the Pension Credit age, will no longer be able to make a new claim for Pension Credit. Instead you will need to claim Universal Credit.

Mixed aged couples on Pension Credit can continue to remain on Pension Credit as long as they continue to satisfy the other qualifying conditions for Pension Credit.

If you are struggling to make a claim or need some support, our Welfare Reform Officers are available to help you. For more information, contact the Welfare Reform Officer on **020 8964 6095** (The Hub) or **0208 964 6098** (Blantyre Office).

# Managing your homes - had your say?

You should have received a letter earlier this month inviting you to take part in our consultation on the future management of your homes.

At the series of engagement activities last year, organised by independent organisation, Traverse, a significant majority of residents wanted the Council to continue to manage their homes.

If you haven't responded to the consultation yet, please let us have your views. We'd like to hear from you, even if you took part in last year's resident engagement events.

You can give us your views by:

- submitting them in writing to Future housing management consultation, Housing Management, Kensington Town Hall, Hornton Street, London W8 7NX OR
- emailing them to **housingconsult@rbkc.gov.uk**, OR
- submitting them online at **www.rbkc.gov.uk/my-home-my-view**.

Please make sure we receive your views by **Friday 16 August** and include your name and address. Only the views of those residents whose homes we manage will be considered as part of this consultation before we make a final decision.

## We've got a show on the road

Residents took the opportunity to meet the teams who provide their Housing Management services at the first in a series of roadshows taking place across the borough. The event at the Kensal Resource Centre in June attracted visitors to a wide range of information stalls where they received housing, employment and financial advice, information on how to get involved in managing your estate, health, wellbeing and much more. We kept the youngsters entertained with fun games and face painting. We've got more roadshows in the planning and we'll let you know when we'll be in your neighbourhood.



## Improving Housing Matters

We'd love to hear your ideas for improving *Housing Matters*, your stories and your feedback.

Email us at **Housing.Matters@rbkc.gov.uk**

TCC representatives on the editorial panel: Keith Benton (Chair), Tony Auguste, Cynthia Dize, Iain Smith and Nick Wimborne.

# Housing Matters



## CONTACT US



0800 137 111 or 020 3617 7080  
For all enquiries



Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea  
292a Kensal Road, London W10 5BE



HM-CustomerServices@rbkc.gov.uk



[www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing-management](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing-management)



Finished reading me? Recycle me!

## YOUR LOCAL HOUSING OFFICES

### Network Hub

292a Kensal Road  
London W10 5BE  
Open weekdays 9am to 5pm

### Blantyre Office

Blantyre Street  
London SW10 0DS  
Open weekdays 9am to 5pm

### Lancaster West Estate Office

Unit 7, Baseline Studios  
Whitchurch Road  
London W11 4AT  
Open weekdays 9am to 5.30pm  
Email: [LancasterWestoffice@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:LancasterWestoffice@rbkc.gov.uk)

### Arabic

يمكن توفير المعلومات التي وردت في هذا المستند بصيغ بديلة ولغات أخرى. إذا كنت في حاجة إلى مزيد من المساعدة، الرجاء استخدام بيانات الاتصال الواردة أدناه.

### Farsi

اطلاعات حاوی در این مدارک به صورتهای دیگر و به زبانهای مختلف در دسترس می باشد. در صورت نیاز به کمک بیشتر لطفاً از جزئیات تماس ذکر شده در ذیل استفاده کنید.

### French

Les informations présentées dans ce document peuvent vous être fournies dans d'autres formats et d'autres langues. Si vous avez besoin d'une aide complémentaire, veuillez utiliser les coordonnées ci-dessous.

### Portuguese

A informação presente neste documento pode ser disponibilizada em formatos alternativos e em línguas diferentes. Se desejar mais assistência, use por favor os contactos fornecidos abaixo.

### Somali

Macluumaadka dokumentigan waxaa lagu heli karaa qaabab kale iyo luuqado kala duwan. Haddii aad u baahan tahay caawinaad intaas dhaafsiisan fadlan isticmaal xiriirka faahfaahinta hoose.

### Spanish

La información en este documento puede facilitarse en formatos alternativos y en diferentes idiomas. Si necesita más ayuda por favor utilice la siguiente información de contacto.

Information from this document can be made available in alternative formats and in different languages. If you require further assistance please call us on 0800 137 111 or 020 3617 7080.