



Our review of the year 2015-16

Building for the future

Welcome to our review of the last year at Metropolitan.

From building new homes for rent and sale and supporting customers into paid work, to upping our game on repairs and investing substantially in modernising more homes than ever – this report gives a flavour of what we've been up to, along with some facts and figures which I hope you find informative.

One of our greatest priorities is to support our customers towards greater independence – from getting into work, to moving to less intensive support within one of our care and support services. This year we supported customers to achieve 7,282 steps towards greater independence and we look forward to building on this achievement this year.

Some of the biggest changes have been in our repairs service. We have established new contracts in London, with our partner Willmott Dixon; and in East Anglia, with our partner Morgan Sindall. We have also launched an innovative new service that we deliver directly – Networks – in the East Midlands. Early indications are really positive and we are looking forward to rolling out the service to customers in London in the future.

With a chronic shortage of affordable homes we are determined to play our part in building more. In the last year we built 371 new homes and are on track to build 1,000 a year by 2017/18.

To do this we have to be financially strong and in autumn 2015 we secured £250 million of new investment.

We have also worked hard to reduce rent arrears to make sure that we can make the most of all of our income. This year the figure has gone down by £1.2m.

Our customers are at the heart of what we do and we want everyone to get involved, either nationally through our National Customer Group and Service Audit Committee, or closer to home on a residents' association to tackle issues of local concern. Our inaugural Customer Summit in October saw residents come together to give their views on a host of issues. This year we're building on the success of that event to reach even more people.

I am very proud of the progress we have made in the last year. There are areas where we can, and will, do better and I look forward to us meeting this challenge in the year ahead.



Brian Johnson, Chief Executive



About us

We own and manage 37,831 homes in London, the East Midlands and the East of England, providing homes to over 71,000 customers. Our care and support services include community-based services and support in customers' own homes.

We also provide supported housing to people with a wide range of needs including older people, people with mental health issues and people with a learning disability.

This year our priorities were to:

- 1** Build more new homes
We completed **371**, and are on track to be building 1,000 a year within the next two years
- 2** Reduce the number of empty properties, ensuring as many as possible are available and ready for people to rent
At the end of the year just **148** rented homes were empty, that's 0.7% of our homes, against a target of 0.9%
- 3** Reduce rent arrears
At the end of the year arrears were down to **4.66%** of total income owed. This is the lowest level for many years with just over £774,400 still owing
- 4** Increase the number of repairs that we get right first time
We achieved **86%** against a target of 83%
- 5** Facilitate greater independence – for example by supporting residents into paid work or buying a larger share of their home. For care and support customers it could be a move to less intensive support or developing social networks
We supported customers to achieve **7,282** independence steps

Investing in homes

We completed **371** new properties, providing homes for more than **1,200** new customers, and are on track to build **1,000** a year by 2017/18.

We completed **87,625** repairs. **86%** of routine repairs were completed within our target of 28 days.

Overall we invested a record **£58 million** in maintaining and improving homes. As well as dealing with day-to-day repairs, we:

Replaced **2,008**  sets of windows and doors

Installed **1,653**  new kitchens and bathrooms

Replaced **1,438**  boilers

Repaired **106**  roofs

For our care and support customers we adapted and improved **226** supported homes to provide the best possible physical environment, including installing 37 adapted bathrooms and 205 new kitchens.

Safety? It's a gas

We continued to maintain **100%** compliance on our annual testing of gas appliances and pipe work. To put that into context, we went into **23,214** homes to carry out checks on the 24,390 appliances that we maintain, keeping you safe and warm.

Our customers

This year over **5,000** new customers have made a Metropolitan property their home: customers including Hardeep, Rachael and her children:

Hardeep bought a 50% share in her one-bedroom flat at Apple Grove, a new development in Harrow.

“Before I started exploring shared ownership, buying by myself felt out of reach. It's a massive step to have my own place and I feel a lot more independent.”

Rachael moved with her two young children into a new three-bedroom house in Cotgrave, Nottinghamshire after her previous private landlord's decision to sell up had left her with few options locally.

“It's a big relief to be settled here now. I'm really pleased with the place – it's nice and big and has a beautiful back garden that my kids love.”

At your service

Staff in our contact centre dealt with **59,091** emails and answered **364,325** phone calls; down 12% on last year as more of you deal with tenancy issues, such as making a payment or reporting repairs, online.

We changed our out of hours emergency repairs service and now deliver this directly. We take calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week – resulting in more effective, direct relationships with customers.

Tackling anti-social behaviour

We all have the right to live in a safe, pleasant environment; that's why we remain committed to dealing quickly and effectively with anti-social behaviour. This year we referred 22 cases for legal action, issued 34 notices with a view to getting possession, obtained possession in 18 cases, secured 10 evictions and issued 23 injunctions, prohibiting people from behaviour such as playing loud music or verbal abuse.

Care and support

We provided care and support to over **6,200** people and 928 new customers moved into our supported homes. We won a number of support contracts to provide new community-based services including our Connect service in Nottingham. Connect provides tailored support for people who might be struggling at home because of illness, anxiety or loneliness by linking them up with the right local services for them. We also provide services which reduce pressure on hospital beds by helping people to get home from hospital as soon as possible.

Mr S, a Connect customer, was supported to obtain a much-needed Blue Badge:

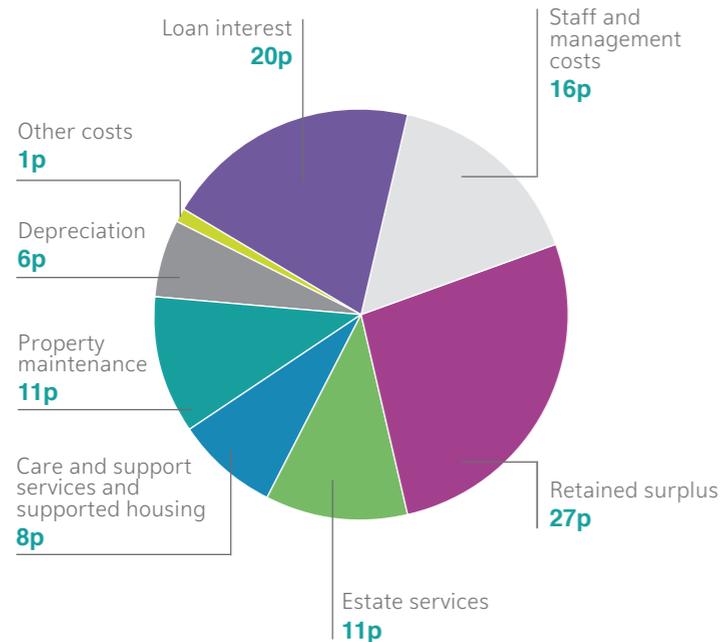
“I received my Badge today. There is no way this could have happened without your help and support, even though I am in desperate need of it. It will make a big, big difference to our lives.”



Financial focus

We have continued to build our financial strength, meaning we can invest more in the services that matter most to you. Our surplus at the end of 2015/16 was **£77m**, up from £60m at the end of last year. We re-invest every penny into building new homes and providing services.

Here's how we spend every pound:



Putting things right

Despite our best intentions, we don't always get things right. We welcome feedback, good and bad – this helps us learn when things go wrong and make sure we get things right the next time.

We handled **3,740** complaints this year, 25% fewer than last year. The vast majority (99.3%) were resolved at stage 1 of our complaints process, with just two cases referred to the Housing Ombudsman.

On the job to get you into work

We supported:

428 customers into paid work, including 70 care and support customers; up from 372 last year

383 customers to gain a qualification, including 113 care and support customers

444 customers into volunteering

Looking ahead

In the coming year we will build on our achievements, for example by building even more new homes, letting empty homes more quickly and supporting more customers into home ownership.

We will also be looking more closely at how well we deliver services, and aim to achieve a customer satisfaction rate of 65%.

Some of the improvements we aim to deliver:

-  Achieving the Customer Service Excellence Accreditation standard in our contact centre
-  Giving you greater flexibility to contact us and access useful and relevant information through our improved website
-  Short, easy-to-follow film clips demonstrating how to fix simple repair jobs that you're responsible for
-  Supporting 500 customers into paid employment, a further 500 into volunteering and 310 into training
-  Investing £20 million in modernising our existing homes, including improvements to more of our care and support schemes
-  Helping cut customers' fuel costs with more energy efficient gas powered central heating

-  Fixing 83% of repairs at the first visit
-  Increasing investment at Clapham Park, our flagship regeneration project in Lambeth, with the next phase of construction on-site
-  Extending contact with tenant groups at our Customer Summit and throughout the year
-  Supporting customers to achieve 7,500 steps towards greater independence
-  Increasing our range of services for older people, so they can maintain their independence at home for longer
-  More community outreach services for customers with lower level mental health issues or a learning disability
-  Providing an effective service responding to ASB and taking legal action where needed

We will report back to you next year so you can see how we have done. In the meantime, you can keep up to date through our website, Facebook page or Twitter feed.

If you need this report in a different language or an alternative format (e.g. large print or audio), please contact us on 020 3535 3535 and we will take reasonable steps to arrange this for you.

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