



Lincolnshire
Housing
Partnership

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

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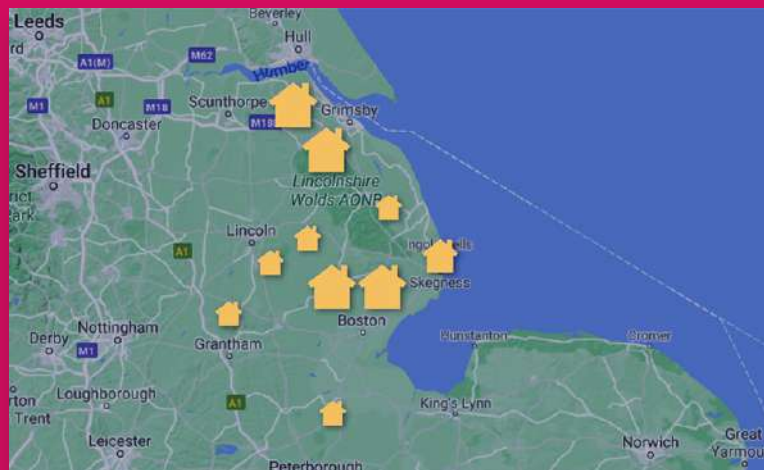
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A little bit about us:

We are a registered provider of social housing and our purpose is to provide affordable homes for people in the greatest need in Lincolnshire. Our homes are located across the east coast of Lincolnshire, with over 75% near Boston and Grimsby.





Anthony Read
Chair of the Board

Chair's Welcome

2021 was unprecedented for us all. I am proud of the way that communities have come together during the Covid-19 pandemic and how LHP colleagues and partners responded to the challenges it has brought.

Our priority is to provide great housing in strong communities and this year has shown why that is so important.

Despite the pandemic, we remained focused on our job, putting you at the heart of what we do. Our commitment to customer service won us accreditation for our new complaint handling process. And our focus on value for money means we are in a strong financial position, with a good finance and governance rating from our regulator.

We really value the feedback you give us, and as always we're looking forward to working with you on our plans to build back to a stronger and fairer future after the pandemic.



**Murray
Macdonald**
CEO

Introduction from our CEO

It's been a year that has brought us all together in new ways.

Our priority has been keeping you – our customers - safe during the Covid-19 pandemic, and I am truly grateful to all our colleagues and partners for their hard work and commitment that has meant we've been able to carry on delivering services.

Our IT systems have meant we've been able to make the switch to working from home and allowed us to continue to offer high levels of customer support during extraordinary times.

Despite the circumstances, we made progress on reducing empty properties, getting repairs done and working with customers to reduce debt.

All of this is important as it gives us the ability to reinvest in quality services.

We've listened to your feedback and will soon roll out new housing management and telephone systems, which will allow us to address customer enquiries through more channels and provide an even better service.

This has certainly been a year where customers, employees and business partners have had to work together. It's proved we're about far more than bricks and mortar. Thank you to everyone.

Meet the Board



Paul Casey
Board member



John Crowther
Board member



Carl Dewey
Board member



Rob Jones
Board member



Jiggy Lloyd
Board member



Kate Lindley
Co-Opted Board member



Yvonne Lowe
Board member



Sally Marshall-Mills
Co-Opted Board member



Simon Parkes
Board member

Meet the Executive Team



Alex Dixon
Executive Director of Property



Bridget Lloyd
Executive Director of Customers



Kathryn Price
Executive Director of Finance



Suzanne Wicks
Executive Director of Strategy, Digital and Culture

Our values and priorities

Our values



Customer first

We will put customers at the heart of our decision-making process and develop services that are built around their needs.

This emphasis will be felt by customers in every interaction with us, driving up our customer satisfaction and ensuring we invest our money where it has the greatest impact.



Listen, act and learn

We will create a structured opportunity for stakeholders, staff and customers to provide feedback.

We will value this time and insight and use it to act and learn from it. Before investing in new and existing projects, we will seek the views of those set to benefit.



Together

We will proactively seek out new partnerships and work to build on the many successful joint working projects already underway.

We can achieve more by working together with our key stakeholders and by working together as one team.

Our Strategic Priorities

The feedback received from customers and colleagues gave us the opportunity to decide upon six strategic priorities, allowing us to focus our teams' energy and efforts, as well as our resources in the right directions. We will continue to focus on these priorities to improve our services and build our business.



Deliver quality services



Listen to and empower tenants



Invest in existing homes and estates



Ensure strong governance and finance



Support and develop colleagues



Build new and regenerate homes

Our year at a glance



Focused on customer care during Covid-19



Won accreditation for our complaint handling



Achieved 94% customer satisfaction with repairs



Reduced the number of empty properties



Retained good credit rating of A+



Achieved G1 V2 rating from the Regulator of Social Housing



Achieved our savings target of £990,000



Invested in training and apprenticeships

Delivering quality services

Our covid response

Like most organisations, the pandemic has defined our year.

In the weeks before the first national lockdown we wanted to keep you updated on our services, and let people know what the latest guidance was from the government, the NHS, and Public Health England.

We kept people informed through various communications channels, including email and social media, and provided printed information for those customers without internet access. We also created an area of our website dedicated to coronavirus updates.

As the year went on it was clear that the pressures of lockdown were causing a spike in mental health issues.

We provided staff with specialist mental health training to identify people living in LHP communities in need of some extra help.

Officers made around 150 proactive welfare checks each week to offer support to people in difficulties.

We also provided activity packs, plus access to online exercise classes, and worked with Age UK Lincoln and South Lincolnshire to supply mobile tablets to keep vulnerable people connected.



Mobile phones and tablets sent to tenants so they could keep connected



Our social media posts reached over 768,500 people



Staff made up to 150 calls each week to tenants to check on their mental health



Provided customers with activity packs, plus access to online exercise classes

Delivering quality services

Contact Centre and Telecare

86% of calls received at reception were answered – that's a total of 106,000 calls.
(this compares to 124,975 calls in 2019/20)



On average, it took us 79 seconds to answer calls to our reception (this compares to 75 seconds the year before)



97.5% of calls to our lifeline service were answered within 60 seconds (this was an improvement on the previous year where performance stood at 96.6%)

Top quality rating for telecare service

During the year Lincolnshire Telecare Service, which is run by LHP and helps people to live independently at home, was awarded the Standards Framework accreditation for the second time from industry body TEC Quality.

The service underwent a detailed audit which measured it against 10 quality standards covering safety, customer experience, business performance and continual improvement.

Lincolnshire Telecare Service offers vital support to hundreds of people, with personal alarms, home monitoring systems and a highly skilled support team providing essential welfare checks.

Mark Coupland, Head of Commercial and Support Services, said that the auditor had recognised the team's pride for helping customers access local services, and also that they had developed plans to continue the service during the pandemic. He said:

"This demonstrates our commitment to putting our customers first. By working together, we are able to deliver positive outcomes which enable our customers to live independently and as safely as possible in their own homes."

Delivering quality services

Making homes available

We have more people living in our homes than last year! It has been vital to keep making properties available during the lockdown periods.

Just 1.2% of our stock was vacant at the end of the year. This compares to 3% at the end of the previous year and places LHP in the top 50% best performing housing providers.

Average re-let times on standard void properties were impacted by Covid-19 restrictions. That meant that properties stayed vacant for longer, rising to 61 days last year compared to 49 days in the previous year.

97% of new tenants told us they were satisfied with our lettings process while 83% of new tenants told us they were satisfied with their new home.

We identified some dissatisfaction on properties that had been vacant for longer periods where customers felt they were not as clean as they would expect. We will work to address this in the coming year.

"You came along and changed our lives"

For five years, 62-year-old Terry and his wife paid more than they could afford to live in a privately rented home that was riddled with rot, damp and mould. The conditions were not only affecting their mental wellbeing, but their physical health too.

"We were desperate," said Terry. "I felt suicidal. Then you came along, gave us a palace and changed our lives. You were kind."

In October 2020, Terry and his wife moved into a bungalow owned by Lincolnshire Housing Partnership. He has nothing but praise for the new home, the support they have received and especially for Helen Bell, our Lettings Officer.

"When I say it felt like winning the pools, it is an under-statement," said Terry. "I cannot put into words what you have done. You change lives".

Not only are their weekly rent payments substantially lower, their home is dry, safe and warm; repairs are carried out when they are needed; the annual boiler service is taken care of and their utility bills have more than halved.

Julie Hunt, Lettings Manager, said:

"We would like to thank Terry for his kind words, especially about the support he received from Helen. We wish him and his wife many happy years in their home".

Delivering quality services

Action against anti-social behaviour



474 ASB cases were reported in the year - the same number as the year before. That's despite a national spike in ASB cases during lockdown. Cases were largely related to noise, verbal abuse and drug related issues



74% of customers were satisfied with how their ASB case was handled. This compared to a sector average of 79%



68% of customers were satisfied with the outcome of their ASB case. This compared to a sector average of 78%

Housemark (an independent organisation that benchmarks services against industry standards) completed a health check on our Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) service. It was a great opportunity to take stock of where we are and to identify areas for improvement. We developed an action plan from the recommendations made, with actions that are realistic and reflect best practice. We are now looking to achieve full accreditation next year.

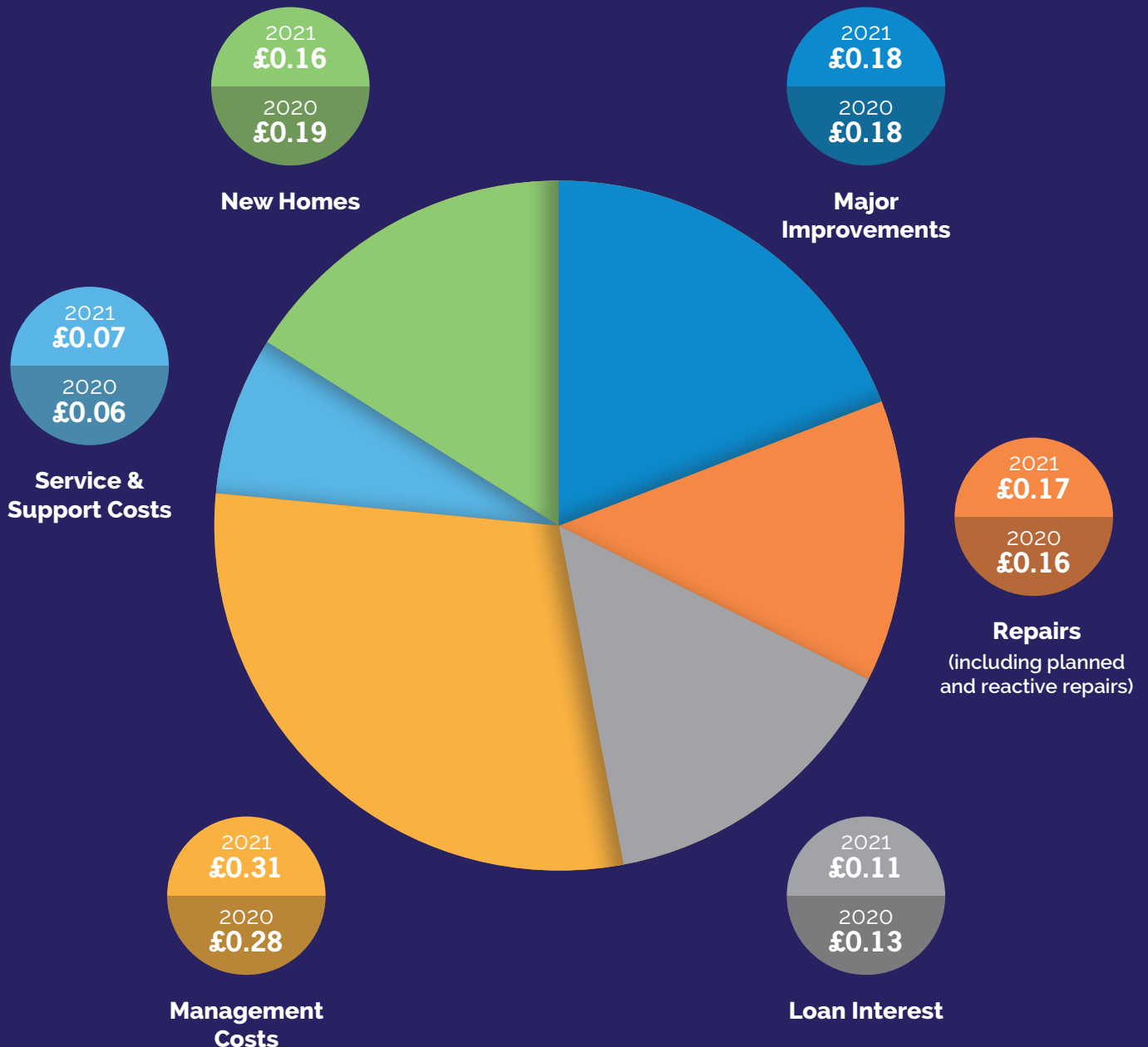
Delivering quality services

Where's your rent money spent?

The chart below shows how every £1 spent by LHP is broken down. Like everything, this year's figures have been impacted by the pandemic.

We've spent less on new homes because our new build plans have slowed, while we're spending more on repairs and improvements to your homes compared to last year.

Spending on management costs has also risen as we've had to adapt new services and adopt new ways of working during lockdown.



Delivering quality services

Money Support Service transforming lives

Our Money Support Service, which is part of the Income Team, received some brilliant praise from a customer for turning their life around.

The customer was referred to our Lettings Team from shared accommodation, having previously been homeless and with ill health meaning they are unable to work. This meant that they relied on benefits for income and had little to furnish a new flat.

This is where our Money Support Team stepped in. After completing a benefit check, the customer's Universal Credit claim was rectified to add in housing costs, meaning rent would be paid.

The service also reached out to local food banks for food parcels and made several grant applications for essential goods for the customer's new flat.

Good news was received when some of the grant applications were successful, meaning our team was able to assist with the purchase of white goods, a double bed and bedding, wardrobe and drawers and other kitchen accessories. The customer was naturally delighted with our help.

They said: "I would not have known what to do without help from LHP.

"It has made me feel at home in my new flat, which means so much to me having been homeless and then moving to shared accommodation where I had nothing to my name.

"My experience with LHP means I would definitely recommend them as a landlord."

Our Money Support Service has secured a total of £365,891 for our customers during the COVID pandemic.

Thank you!

We have said goodbye and thank to two of our longest-serving customer volunteers. Phyllis Scotney, 91, was involved with us for 22 years, including as a Director with our predecessors Boston Mayflower. Phyllis said:

"I have been a tenant at the same address since my house was built in 1954 and I have enjoyed being able to pass on my housing knowledge."



Phyllis Scotney



Mary Veasey

Mary Veasey retired from her role as Chair of our Customer Scrutiny Panel. She told us about how important the position has been to her:

"It is an experience that really enriches you and stretches your brain – panel members are the eyes and ears of the customer and represent them in the company."

Mary encourages anyone with an interest in LHP's services to get involved:

"Everyone's voice counts".

Listening to your views

Every complaint is an opportunity

During the year we introduced a new programme called Listen, Act and Learn to make sure your views shape how we do business. As a result, we won an accreditation for our complaint handling from Housemark (one of the UK's largest housing membership groups).

We worked for over a year with tenants and staff to introduce a new approach to the way we view customer complaints. Our tenant scrutiny panel inspected the service and we involved every employee in looking at how customer complaints can be turned into opportunities for positive action

We appointed our Customer-First Learning Specialist, Hollie Storr, who provides guidance and support for staff and customers. Hollie explained:

"It is not about being worried about complaints coming in, it is quite the opposite,

"Every complaint is an opportunity to learn and improve. If there is a problem, we want to know about it and we want to put it right."

We also introduced Customer-First Champions – volunteers from every service area who support complaint investigations, help with solutions, offer expert knowledge and encourage collaboration across the business.



Listen Act and Learn

Compliance with the complaint handling code

April 2020 - March 2021

Number of complaints stage Early Resolution Cases	185
Number of complaints stage 1 complaints	84
Number of complaints stage 2 complaints	3
% of complaints (Formal) upheld	60%
% of complaints (Formal) not upheld	40%
% of complaints (Formal) resolved	100%
Number escalated to the Ombudsman	0
Learning outcomes identified	25
Learning outcomes implemented	23

Listening to your views

How we've performed

84

formal complaints received in year (compared to 59 the year before)

99%

of all complaints were responded to within 10 days. This places LHP among the best performing 25% housing providers in the country

25

lessons identified from our listen act and learn approach, of which 23 were implemented by the end of the year

1089

compliments received (majority relating to our repairs service)

69%

of customers were satisfied with how their complaint was handled (up from 32% the previous year) This performance puts us in the top 75% of landlords

65%

of customers were satisfied with the outcome of their complaint case (up from 30% the previous year)

Sheltered housing satisfaction

In 2020 we surveyed the residents in our sheltered schemes to find out what they thought of our warden service:



89%

were satisfied with the service provided



85%

were satisfied that the warden was quick to respond to their needs



95%

were satisfied that the warden was polite and well mannered

Some of **you** are **carers** supporting your relatives living with **dementia**

And you are **struggling** with the **restrictions** Covid has brought.



At LHP we Listen, Act & Learn

How we acted

Working with our groups, we want to offer virtual sessions for arts and crafts and support carers specifically. External funders want to support this.

What we learnt

We recognise the impact lockdown has had on carers and those living with dementia. We want to maintain contact and expand what we do to offer a lifeline for you when you need it.



How we acted

We inspected the garden and highlighted the customer needed support. A gardening service through our partners, Age UK completed the work to an excellent standard and demonstrated value for money

What we learnt

It is important to explore all options when resolving an issue and ensuring good value for money for our customers. It is positive to support our partner agencies where we can.

You told us that a garden to a tenanted LHP property was **overgrown** and **unsightly**.

This was **negatively** affecting neighbouring homes in the **community**.

You told us you were experiencing **damp** at your home.

This was impacting on **family life**.

How we acted

Root causes were identified on a survey and working group of key staff co-ordinated a plan of work and resolution that would be best for the customer. This included working with Engie and a family support worker to offer multiple options.

What we learnt

Working together to put the customers needs first is essential. Offering options where possible means customers feel empowered about the decisions that affect their homes.



Residents in some schemes said they kept fire safety doors propped open as they **struggled to** get through them with their walkers



At LHP we Listen, Act & Learn

How we acted

We consulted with our Health & Safety Team and agreed that a door stopper could be placed on the doors, as this meant the doors could be propped open but would automatically close in the event of the fire alarm in the building being sounded.

What we learnt

It's important for us to understand that customers should be able to enjoy all aspects of their home.



At LHP we Listen, Act & Learn

How we acted

A multi-service team was put in place to support the customer in a move to a more suitable property.

What we learnt

Working with partner agencies can be crucial to the wellbeing of our customers.

A customer made us aware of their difficult living arrangements and the negative relationship they had with their neighbour

A customer made us aware of **faulty solar panels** at their home



At LHP we Listen, Act & Learn

How we acted

An engineer was able to find the fault and rectify this for the customer. LHP reimbursed the customer for the extra time it took to address the issue.

What we learnt

Engineers need to be proactive in seeking the appropriate assistance from the manufacturer's technical support, as this will enable them to resolve issues more swiftly.



Investing in homes and estates

Responsive Repairs Stats



41,600

41,600 repairs were completed this year, compared to 44,000 the previous year. The reduction was largely due to the impact of Covid

96%

96% of repair jobs were completed on first visit. This was the same as the previous year and among the 25% best performing housing providers in the country.

87%

87% of repairs were completed on time compared to 99% the previous year, again, this was primarily a consequence of the lockdown restrictions

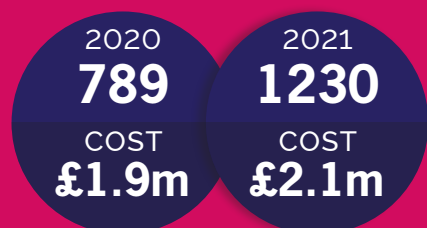
94%

94% of customers told us they were satisfied with how we dealt with their last repair. – this was slightly better than the previous year where the figure was 93.6%

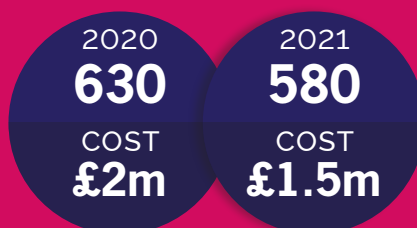
Investing in homes and estates

Planned Repairs

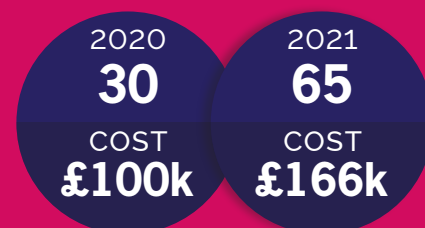
Here's how we compared to last year in some key areas of planned repairs:



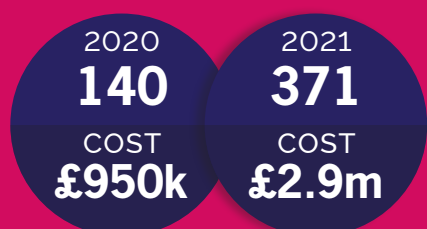
Windows & Doors replacements



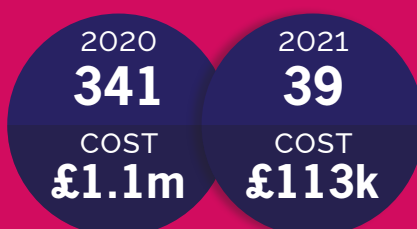
Central heating and boiler installations



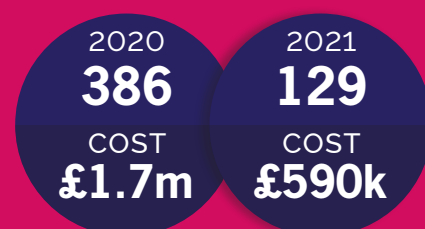
Rewiring



Roof Installations



Bathroom installations



Kitchens installations

We spent £9.61m this year on repairs to your homes. This was 2% less than originally planned, which is largely because lockdown restrictions meant we had to re-think the kind of work we could do and when we could do it.













We spent more than £2m replacing doors and windows. This was slightly less than expected as some customers didn't want the work carried out while Covid-19 restrictions were in place.

There was a larger than expected demand for new heating systems. We spent a total of £1.5m installing new systems, that's around £83,000 more than we planned.

We accelerated our external works programmes, such as windows and doors replacements and roof installations because the COVID pandemic restricted our ability to do internal work like bathrooms and kitchens. The focus in 2021/22 will be to catch-up on the internal work that was unable to take place because of the pandemic.

Communal heating systems were also upgraded at Ronald Farmer Court, Witham Court and The Orchards at a cost of: £500,000 for the three schemes

Building homes

Our housing stock	2020	2021
Rented – general needs	 10,025	 10,029
Older and supported persons homes	 1,791	 1,751
Leaseholders	 364	 367
Shared ownership	 290	 311
Other properties	 19	 3
Total	 12,489	 12,461

During the year we added 22 social rented homes, 24 shared ownership homes and 43 other social housing properties to our stock.

These numbers are slightly down on last year as the pandemic impacted our delivery plans. We're looking forward to starting on site with more new homes during 2021/22.

Ensuring strong governance and finance

Governance update



Credit rating of A+



Governance and Viability rating of G1 V2 from the Regulator of Social Housing



Customer Service Excellence Standard achieved



"Ones to Watch" rating from Best Companies

Environmental, social and governance sustainability

We believe that we can and should contribute to a more sustainable future. In doing so, we can create positive environmental and social impacts, and outcomes that benefit our customers, communities, employees, and other stakeholders.

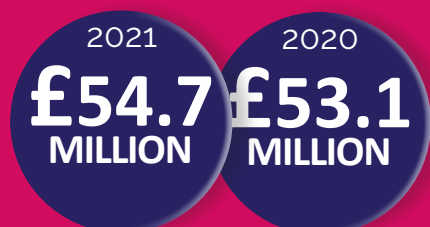
In 2021 we announced our commitment to Environmental, Social and Governance Sustainability (ESG). All three elements must be sustainable for lasting positive change to be achieved in a responsible way.

You can read more about the steps we have already taken and the journey we are on to achieve this by reading our ESG Strategy.

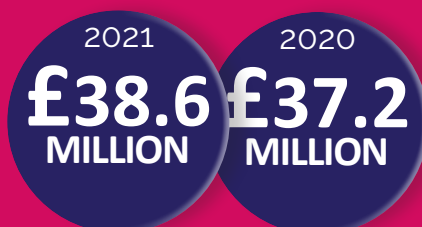
Ensuring strong governance and finance

Financial Performance Overview

We continue to perform well financially.



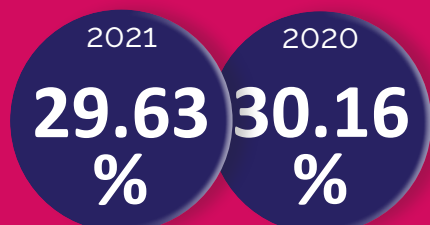
Turnover



Operating expenditure



Operating profit



Operating margin



Interest & financing costs



Surplus (deficit) for the year

* This was a result of the Group incurring £18.4 million of loan breakage costs as part of a treasury restructuring process.

New low-cost funding secured

We successfully secured investment with the sale of a low-interest bond in June 2020. Despite operational constraints following the outbreak of COVID-19, we were able to negotiate for the funding quickly. This was due in part to our strong credit rating, which was affirmed at A+ with a stable outlook by S&P Global in April 2020. The bond matures in 2059.

The new bond will help support our aim to provide more social rented homes across Lincolnshire, together with refinancing current borrowing at a much-reduced rate. Any remaining funds will be invested, to eventually fund regeneration and investment in some of our current homes.

Kathryn Price, Executive Director of Finance said:

"This is a great outcome. Without doubt our credit rating success was key to the bid we secured and provided a solid platform for us to act swiftly to take advantage of current market opportunities for low risk, long-term investments. This capital will allow us to extend the growth commitments of our Strategic Plan, which includes 240 additional homes across Lincolnshire by 2023."

Ensuring strong governance and finance

Value for money

**We made savings of £990,000
exceeding last year's figure of £626,000**

**We reduced the number of empty properties
from 205 to 56**

**Our financial advice services kept tenant arrears
stable at 1.84% (compared to 1.8% last year)**



IT equipment helps schools

As part of our new suggestions scheme, our Area Housing Manager and Involvement Manager Marianne Upton suggested that we donate IT equipment to schools in our local communities, to help families who were struggling with home schooling. This was something we were eager to support and we contacted schools in our communities around Lincolnshire.

Marianne said:

"The lockdown meant that a lot of customers needed to home school their children at an important time in their education and development. A lot of our customers simply don't have access to the equipment that is so vital."

One of the schools to benefit was Woodlands Academy, on the Nunsthorpe Estate in Grimsby. Assistant Head James Elliott said:

"We are delighted with the extra support for our children during remote learning."

Supporting and developing colleagues

Our drive to be a top employer

We know that valued, supported and motivated people deliver excellent services and come up with the best ideas. We also know that great workplaces attract and retain the best talent. As part of our drive to improve what we do, we have committed to the Investors in People programme, a global accreditation for people management. This measures how well we are doing at leading and supporting employees, compared to similar sized companies in our industry. It also examines things like how people feel about the leadership team, how we recognise and reward high performance and how well we handle change.



It has been over a year since we were awarded the Investors in People standard and each year the team checks back to see what action we have taken and what we have planned. Our latest assessment showed that actions we've taken to invest in our workforce over the past 12 months have had a positive impact on our workforce. Action to improve communications and break down barriers between teams are all starting to have a positive impact.

Apprenticeship opportunities

We supported apprenticeships in the housing sector by committing to recruit 50 new apprenticeship positions over the next three years.

Each year, we will provide apprenticeships across different disciplines, starting with marketing, administration, environment, HR and trade roles (plumbing, electrical, general maintenance).

The successful candidates will be given the experience they need to learn their chosen field doing vital work to help us continue providing services to our customers. This will see us actively support apprentices in the first steps of their career or a new career path.



What's next?



Corporate plan update

As part of our commitment to Listen, Act and Learn, we reached out to customers in March to help form our future services through our 2022-2027 Corporate Plan.

We commissioned an independent research company, NA Global Research Ltd., to conduct this confidential survey.

The answers will help us provide a better overall Customer First approach by providing services that are important to you.

Research continued into the new financial year. The next steps will see us collate the feedback as part of our new Corporate Plan, which will be made available to customers in early 2022

Our Digital Journey continues

Our commitment to improving our services to you continues with our focus on our digital offering. In 2020, we were working behind the scenes to bring you a new customer portal and smartphone app.

The portal and app launched in August 2021 and give you more control than ever over your LHP account, including:

- Being able to pay your rent
- Being able to raise a repair and track its progress
- Request contact from a member of our teams

Moving forward, we will be providing more digital and interactive services that aim to connect our customers and colleagues across our service delivery area.





ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Lincolnshire Housing Partnership Limited registered as a charitable Community Benefit Society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 with registered number: 7748.

Data Protection registration number: ZA345449

Registered Office: Westgate Park, Charlton Street, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire, DN31 1SQ