

# Annual Report for Residents

## 2022 - 2023



# Welcome from our Chief Executive

Welcome to our Customer Annual Report for the period between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023. Thank you to our Voice of the Resident Panel for reviewing drafts of this report and helping us to improve the content and format.

Our focus during the past year has been on getting the basics right - being Basically Brilliant. We want to ensure that great customer satisfaction can be achieved with minimal effort from you as residents. Throughout this report we talk through the parts of being Basically Brilliant and ways we use the feedback we receive to improve the services we provide.

Highlights during the year have been increased investment in homes. We delivered £14 million of investment last year, increased from £8 million and £4 million during the previous two years. We used this to provide things like new bathrooms and windows in homes. We expect to spend around another £14 million again this year. We have plans in place to continue significant investment in homes over the coming years, and we hope that many residents are starting to see the benefits of this.

One of our priorities as a landlord is to provide additional support - where that help is needed, to make sure we understand each resident's circumstances and provide help tailored to the individual. I am pleased to see that colleagues have continued that support during the past year - working directly with residents or connecting tenants with partners able to provide specialist help.

We continue to make sure we listen to feedback from residents, that we learn from what we are hearing and make improvements. Through things like our Big Door

Knock, now in its fifth year, and the early surveys we've started against the Tenant Satisfaction Measures. Also the feedback we receive through complaints - these are an important part of how we learn; we will always put things right as quickly as we can.

One of the areas we are particularly focussing on is repairs - we know that residents want us to provide quality repairs in a timely way. We are working to provide routine repairs more quickly and improve communication, particularly where we aren't able to complete the repair on the first visit to a property.

I am really pleased that we have recently improved the way we work in response to feedback from residents. Our principle is we want to be there for all residents when you need us enabling us to deliver our commitments to support all tenants to live safely and comfortably in your homes.



*Gavin Cansfield, settle Chief Executive during the Big Door Knock in Royston, 2023*

# Repairs

You have told us that repairs is the most important service we provide, and that you want us to provide these to a good quality, in a timely way.

## 2022/23 summary

**29 days**

average to complete a repair.

Target 15 days.

(2021/22 – 24 days; 2020/21 – 18 days;  
2019/20 – 18 days)

**99%**

emergency repairs completed to  
deadline.

(2021/22 – 99%; 2020/21 – 99%;  
2019/20 – 99.4%)

## Repairs service

We met our target last year for completing 99% of emergency repairs in 24 hours however our target was to complete routine repairs within an average of 15 days – we didn't achieve this with the average being 29 days. We do see good levels of satisfaction when our repairs team colleagues get to residents' homes to complete repairs. Satisfaction last year was 95.5%.

Why didn't we achieve our target? The increase in requests for support around damp, mould and condensation in settle homes during the winter of 2022/23 had the biggest impact. These jobs are more complicated taking up more resources and affecting our ability to complete repairs.

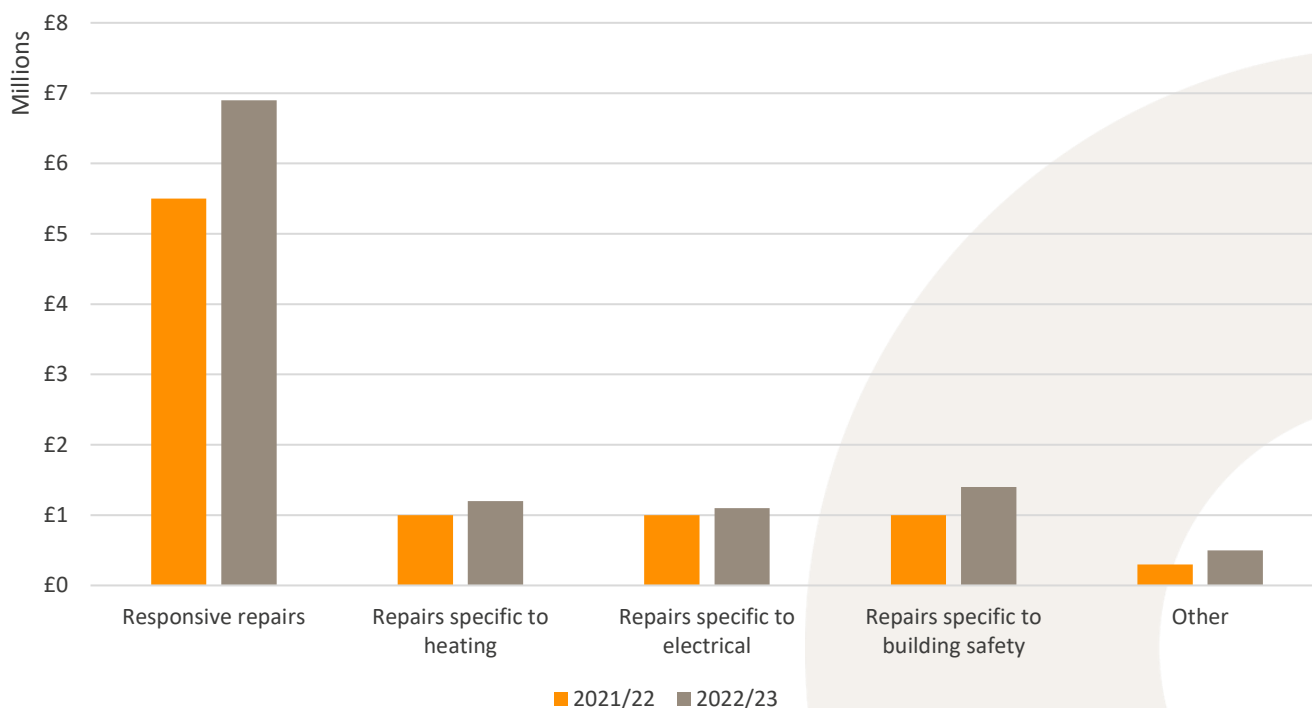
### Repairs recovery plan

Our target this year is to complete 90% of routine repairs within 28 days. We aren't currently meeting that target.

- We have a plan in place to reduce the waiting time for repairs during this year and make better use of systems and technology to book work more efficiently.
- We expect to meet the target by June 2024.
- We will publish monthly updates on our website until we are meeting our targets.

Our targets for providing repairs are a priority for our Voice of the Resident panel. Our performance in this area is reviewed regularly by the Panel. As we move forwards, we will also involve the Panel in the targets we set, so that they have assurance that we are setting appropriate measures and that they can be reassured on behalf of all residents that we are doing all we can to meet these.

### Amount spent on repairs



## Condensation, damp and mould

We saw requests for support around damp, mould and condensation rise rapidly in the winter of 2022/23. This followed tragic events that were widely reported in the media, where two-year-old Awaab Ishak died from a respiratory condition caused by prolonged exposure to mould in a property owned by Rochdale Boroughwide Housing in the north of England.

We have always taken any report of condensation, damp or mould in a settle property extremely seriously, and remain committed to making sure no settle resident lives with ongoing damp or mould in your home. After the tragic news about Awaab, we again proactively encouraged settle residents to report any instances of damp or mould to us. We saw an increase in repairs of this type raised with us and have prioritised and responded to requests for support during the year.

Our Board have made sure that this year we have extra resource and the right processes in place to resolve any issues of damp and mould in homes. We have a plan in place to tackle any increase in these cases during winter 2023/24. This includes more settle colleagues available to work on these cases, and more contractors on hand if we need additional resource in this area.

Report a repair or request support with condensation, damp or mould in your home

Report this online at [www.settlegroup.org.uk](http://www.settlegroup.org.uk), follow the link to the blue 'my account' button or call us on **0330 343 0016**

You can also report condensation, damp or mould online now using our web form at [www.settlegroup.org.uk/damp-mould-and-condensation](http://www.settlegroup.org.uk/damp-mould-and-condensation)

# Your home

## Safety during 2022/23 - summary

**100%**

gas certificates in place

**100%**

fire safety assessments completed

**98%**

electrical safety certificates in place [due every 5 years]

As your landlord we will always keep you safe in your home. **As part of this, we rely on residents to give us access to properties to complete vital safety checks. Thank you to all residents who have supported this.**

- There is a score of 98% for electrical safety checks.
- This relates to 209 homes which had an out-of-date electrical certificate at the end of March 2023. 90% of those homes had already been visited once with the aim of carrying out checks, but we were not able to access the property.
- These are such crucial safety checks that we have to take legal action where we are prevented from getting them done.
- At the time of writing this report, we are now at 99% of all electrical safety checks being in place.

### Fire alarms

On 1 October 2022, it became a legal requirement for social landlords like settle to ensure we have working fire alarms in all our properties and carbon monoxide alarms where required. We've been working with our teams and partners to make sure each home has a smoke alarm on every habitable floor and a carbon-monoxide alarm in any room with a fuel-burning appliance such as a gas or oil boiler. We completed these checks in during a programme that finished in June 2023.

We will always provide support to residents if you would like to check that your home has the right alarms. **If you think your home is not protected with a working smoke or carbon-monoxide alarm, please let us know as soon as possible by calling 0330 343 0016 so we can fit the required alarms as a priority.**

### Fire doors

In January 2023 new legislation came into force requiring landlords like settle to check fire doors. We need to check communal fire doors quarterly and the front doors to flats in buildings over 11 metres yearly. We have four buildings that are over 11 metres – at Bittern Way, Ivel Court and Middlefield Court in Letchworth, and Kingfisher House in Hitchin.

In January 2023 we also shared fire door safety information with residents.

## Fire safety

We will do all we can to reduce the risk of fire in your home by:

- Carrying out regular Fire Risk Assessments to our blocks of flats and sheltered accommodation.
- Making sure suitable fire detection and alarm systems are fitted in communal areas of your block and inside your home.

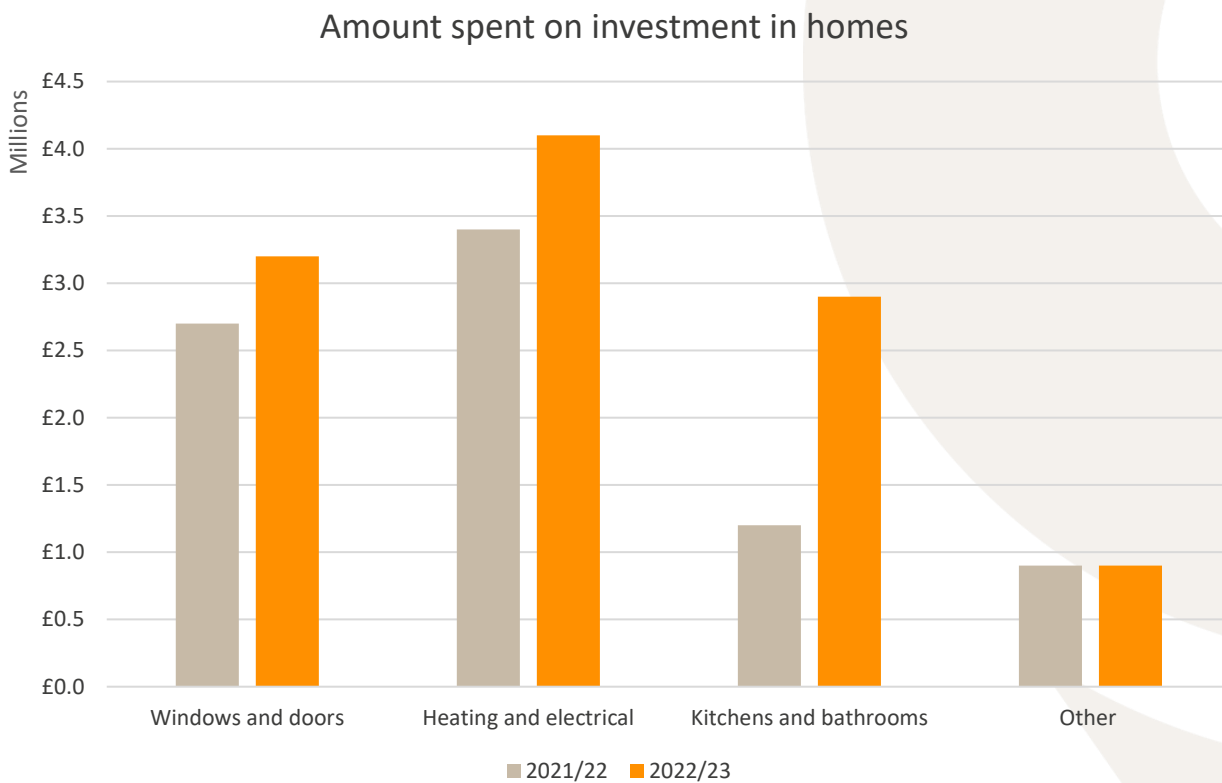
- Carrying out regular communal area inspections to remove any items that could be a fire hazard or block an escape.
- Making sure escape routes are free from trip hazards, are adequately lit, are signposted and lead everyone to a place of safety.
- Carrying out checks to gas, electrical and fire safety systems within your home.

### Safe and well visits

Local fire services can visit homes to give advice on staying safe and well, including to settle residents. Residents don't need landlord permission for these visits. For more information on how to arrange them, contact your local fire service.

## Investment in homes

£14million spent on investment in homes last year



We expect to spend another £14million on this investment in homes this year, for this to provide around 121 new bathrooms, 245 new kitchens, 530 new heating systems, 743 new windows/doors and 52 new roofs.

### Ongoing investment

We plan to continue increasing investment in homes. The table on the following page summarises our plan for the next five years.

## Ongoing investment in homes

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total
Amount to be spent on replacement items [such as new kitchens, bathrooms, windows]	£13.7m	£14.6m	£14.6m	£10.8m	£11.7m	£11.7m	£77.1m
Amount to be spent on projects	£2.1m	£2.1m	£2.1m	£2.1m	£2.1m	£2.1m	£12.6m
Amount to be spent on sustainability	£3.3m	£3.2m	£3.2m	£3.2m	£2.9m	£2.9m	£18.7m
<b>Total</b>	<b>£19.1m</b>	<b>£19.9m</b>	<b>£19.9m</b>	<b>£16.1m</b>	<b>£16.7m</b>	<b>£16.7m</b>	<b>£108.4m</b>

### Decent homes

In our customer annual report last year we included our commitment to ensuring 100% homes meet what the government calls the Decent Homes Standard by the end of March 2023. We reached this target and will ensure all homes continue to meet the Decent Homes Standard this year.

### Helping you live comfortably in your home

We know it can be challenging when your or your family's needs change. To help you with this, and support residents to continue living independently, we can make minor changes like installing hand/grab rails and over bath showers. We will follow recommendations made in reports from Occupational Therapists about items to install. When you need a major adaptation, like installing a wet room or an extension, normally this is the responsibility of the local authority. If you need work like this in your home we can help you with the relevant local authority contact information. The amount we spent on this last year and in the previous two years:

2022/23 – £665,724; 2021/22 - £495,462; 2020/21 - £350,000

### Funding secured to make 677 settle homes warmer

At the end of March 2023 we were delighted to hear confirmation that our Greener Herts partnership with two other housing associations, B3Living and Watford Community Housing, along with the local authority, Dacorum Borough Council, had secured £14million of funding through the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. This money will enable energy-efficiency improvements to homes owned by all four organisations, to help bring these properties to an EPC Band C. £5million of this funding has been awarded to settle, and we will use this to make improvements to 677 settle homes through a two-year programme of work.

# Listening to you

We remain committed to hearing the voice of residents throughout our work. We will always work to understand what is working well, what we can do better and do our best to act on this to make sure we are providing services that you value, based on what we learn through data and engagement.

We gather feedback in lots of different ways:

- The Big Door Knock
- Surveys including the Tenant Satisfaction Measures
- Voice of the Resident Panel
- settle voice
- settle connect

## Big Door Knock

We continue to carry out our Big Door Knock, now in its fifth year, where colleagues from teams across settle, including our Board and Executive Team, contact residents in different locations every few months to ask for feedback on how we're doing. During 2022/23, settle colleagues spoke to 939 residents with a focus on how people are coping with the cost-of-living crisis.

## Tenant Satisfaction Measures

As the Tenant Satisfaction Measures are a regulatory requirement, we made the decision to begin reporting against them earlier than we needed to. We published the first set of results gathered from settle residents on our website in November 2022, with ongoing updates available at [www.settlegroup.org.uk/tenant-satisfaction-measures](http://www.settlegroup.org.uk/tenant-satisfaction-measures).

## Voice of the Resident panel

From recruitment during the year through to the first full meeting in March 2023, we are really pleased that the Voice of the Resident panel is now in place. The panel, made up of nine residents who bring with them a diverse range of experiences and a great deal of enthusiasm for representing all tenants, has decided that they want to work closely with settle colleagues, meeting regularly to discuss, shape and improve our services.

## settle voice

settle voice is our online community of over 300 residents. This gives members a flexible and convenient way to get involved in engagement activities depending on the time they have to give and their areas of interest. Members can act as a sounding board, test ideas, review changes and influence policy. In fact, settle voice members were instrumental in shaping 11 policy reviews during the year, including those for complaints, damp and mould and vulnerable customers, along with our Sustainability Plan 2020-2025.

We value the collaboration and feedback from the settle voice community.

## settle connect

During the past year we have also been developing an exciting new digital engagement platform, settle connect, as another way to gather feedback and keep residents updated on the actions we are taking. This is now available to all residents at [connect.settlegroup.org.uk](http://connect.settlegroup.org.uk).



# Complaints

## Top three areas we received complaints about:

- Repairs.
- Damp and mould.
- Issues within the neighbourhood.

## Top three themes of complaints:

- Wait times.
- Lack of response.
- Quality of work completed.

Complaints received			
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Total
Q1	167	25	192
Q2	174	34	208
Q3	122	28	150
Q4	150	22	172

Complaint outcomes			
	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld
Stage 1	433	91	99
Stage 2	53	19	28
Total	486	110	127

## The Housing Ombudsman

We always really encourage any resident to speak to us directly in the first instance if you have a complaint. We want to work with you to resolve any issues as quickly as possible. However, you can also contact the independent Housing Ombudsman for help and advice at any time.

The Housing Ombudsman is an independent watchdog that exists to resolve complaints between social housing tenants and landlords. If you've exhausted our complaints process and remain unhappy with the outcome, you can refer your complaint to the Ombudsman and they will consider investigating it for you.

Between April 2022 and March 2023, of cases reviewed by the Ombudsman linked to settle residents, we had 5 determinations. One of these five was noted by the Ombudsman to be outside of its jurisdiction.

## Housing Ombudsman – determination outcomes

2 cases	No action required of settle	
2 cases	Decisions were given, both with a decision of maladministration and service failure	<p>One case - related to our estate management processes involving an unused piece of land backing on to settle properties.</p> <p>One case related to a new build property, where we didn't deal with defects in a timely way.</p>

We have captured learnings from both of the cases where decisions were given, made sure they are shared with colleagues across settle and that we have improved our ways of working. We continue to take learnings from the Housing Ombudsman, through reports and feedback shared across the housing sector, and feedback specifically to settle.

## Learning from complaints

<p><b>Repairs, including wait times</b> What have we heard?</p> <p>That it is taking too long for us to book in repairs, and complete follow on works where we haven't been able to complete a repair on our first visit to a property. Our target last year was to complete all routine repairs in an average of 15 days; we completed them within an average of 29 days.</p> <p>We received the highest number of complaints in this area – 297 of 722 complaints. Whilst this links to only 1% of the overall number of repairs jobs we completed last year, we know that repairs are one of the most important services we provide, and this is an area we take extremely seriously.</p>	<p>What are we doing?</p> <p>The repairs we were asked to complete during the year were larger in scope and required more resource to complete, mainly because they were linked to damp, mould and condensation. During the year we made changes to the property team management and staff resources to ensure we can better respond to requests for support in this area. At the time of writing this report, we have a repairs recovery plan in place to ensure we reduce the waiting time for repairs during this year and make better use of systems and technology to book work more efficiently.</p>
<p><b>Condensation, damp and mould</b> What have we heard?</p> <p>Throughout the year we proactively encouraged residents to report any instances of damp or mould to us. We saw a significant increase in requests for support in this area, and also a corresponding increase in the number of complaints.</p>	<p>What are we doing?</p> <p>We saw demand for support around damp, mould and condensation rising rapidly in the winter of 2022/23 following widely reported tragic events, where two-year-old Awaab Ishak died from a respiratory condition caused by prolonged exposure to mould in a property owned by Rochdale Boroughwide Housing.</p>

	<p>We are committed to making sure no resident lives with damp or mould in your home. We prioritised and responded to requests for support during the year.</p> <p>We introduced a new damp and mould policy, to be clear to all residents on how we will respond to these cases. This was reviewed by the settle voice community and published in July 2022. We have increased the level of resource available to work on cases of damp and mould – both settle colleagues and having contractors available as needed.</p>
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<p><b>Property condition</b> What have we heard?</p> <p>Some of the complaints we received around repairs, damp and mould and the processes we follow around these types of contacts to us, will also be influenced by the age and condition of the homes and how comfortable they are to live in.</p>	<p>What are we doing?</p> <p>We have significantly increased the investment we make in homes. We spent as planned £14million updating homes in 2022/23, increased from £8.3million in 2021/22 and £4million in 2020/21. We expect to maintain the same higher levels of expenditure this year. This is invested in things like replacement windows, roofs, kitchens, bathrooms and boilers. At the end of March 2023 we also secured additional funding to invest in energy efficiency improvements to homes, which we will deliver through a two-year programme involving 677 homes. The combination of improvements delivered through these programmes will make homes more comfortable for residents to live in.</p>
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<p><b>Issues within the neighbourhood</b> What have we heard?</p> <p>We saw some complaints linked to areas such as the quality of our estate management, cleaning of communal areas, and wider issues in the neighbourhood such as how we deal with Anti-Social Behaviour.</p>	<p>What are we doing?</p> <p>We launched our customer offer in September 2022 and began work to develop the more detailed settle standards, which we have since published in September 2023. These documents are all important to set out our aims for the services we provide, so that we are clear to residents on the standards we will work to and you can use these to hold us to account.</p>
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<p><b>Lack of response – communications</b> What have we heard?</p> <p>The importance of keeping residents updated in a timely way about work we are due to carry out in your home. We know it is really frustrating when we don't do this.</p>	<p>What are we doing?</p> <p>We highlight regularly to all colleagues the importance of keeping residents updated on what we are doing and when. As part of this, we share examples at our monthly team brief, where updates are given to all colleagues working across the organisation, and make sure these are available at any time from our Intranet. During the year we launched an internal process called</p>
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	<p>'Raise, chase, escalate' – to proactively monitor when updates are due to residents and make sure these are provided in a timely way. We also developed new online forms to help residents provide information to us online, if this is the format you would like to use for sharing that information. This included forms to help you tell us which engagement activities you'd like to be involved in; to allow residents struggling with the cost of living to share information with us so we can better support them; and to allow residents to request permission for large or small alterations and improvements to their home.</p>
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<p><b>Quality of work completed</b></p> <p>What are we hearing?</p> <p>We received some complaints during the year about the quality of work completed, mainly linked to repairs, estate management and our planned investment programmes. Whilst these are a small percentage of the total work completed, for example satisfaction with repairs jobs was at over 95%, we do still take this very seriously.</p>	<p>What are we doing?</p> <p>The customer offer we launched during the year and settle standards we have published since then mean that we are clearer on the quality of work we will deliver and support you to hold us to account to meet these standards. As part of our regular sharing of case studies through our monthly colleague briefing and Intranet, we share examples of where we can do better and what we can improve, so that we can all learn from this. Where quality issues are linked to an external contractor, we will follow up on this through our procurement process, by making sure any issues are fed back into contracts and improvements are made.</p>
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# Additional support

## 2022/23 summary

- £2.9m social value delivered for residents and neighbourhoods.
- £198,500 committed to partnerships supporting residents.
- 1,365 hours of 'Giving Back' time.

Social purpose is at the heart of settle and means that the support we provide goes beyond being a landlord.

## Investing in partnerships to support residents

In 2021/22, we committed £198,500 to charities, voluntary groups and social partnerships to enable support for settle residents. This included support for Citizens Advice and Foundations 4 Work.

## settle plus

We have always been focused on providing extra support to residents and have most recently called this settle plus. This support is delivered particularly through our tenancy support team at settle. We will provide additional support to residents who may be vulnerable or experiencing reduced resilience, to help them sustain their tenancies. Colleagues will either provide support directly or work in partnership with other organisations and agencies better placed to help residents.

## Giving Something Back Days

Our colleagues at settle are supported to volunteer their time through 'Giving something back' days, helping residents and communities in extra ways beyond their day-to-day work. During 2022/23, colleagues delivered over 1,365 hours of 'Giving Back' time, volunteering their time across a range of activities.

## Working with local suppliers

We work with many local suppliers and large national organisations. We have a requirement that 0.5% of the contract value is returned to us to extend our social purpose activity, with the intention that the funds are used to support residents in our communities. During 2022/23 we received just under £40,000 this way, which was again used to fund a community mental health worker able to support settle residents and colleagues.

## Social value

We calculate the impact of all the additional social purpose support we provide using a method developed by the independent body, HACT. The methodology is widely used across the housing sector to measure the impact of activities from employment through to health. By placing monetary values on the benefits to the individual and impact on wider services we can quantify the value of our work.

The equivalent social value we generated in 2022/23 through activities that support residents' wellbeing, employment, health and education was £2.9 million, slightly higher than the £2.5 million equivalent we delivered during the previous year.

# Contacting us

We're driven by ensuring we get the basics right, being Basically Brilliant, and one of the ways we do this is by making it as easy as possible for you to get in touch with us.

During the year we invested in a new technology platform to help us better manage calls and emails.

We used resident feedback to shape improvements to delivery of our housing support and customer service centre functions, merging these into a new 'service hub', which went live in December 2022. The hub is better able to deliver a first-time fix, faster response times to calls and emails and increased functionality of digital services.

We do know that it has still been frustrating to get through to us at some points during the past year. It took us longer to answer calls and respond to emails than we would want during the first few months of the year. We saw high demand, partly caused by an increase in calls from residents due to the cold weather at the beginning of the year and technical problems which were beyond our control.

We are confident that the hub will improve the services residents get at the first point of contact.

At the time of writing this report, the team in the hub are now on target to reach our aim of 85% of calls being answered across the year. We have also just launched call-back - if you call us during a very busy time, you may be offered the option of a call-back and choose whether to continue to wait and speak to one of our team or request a call-back. You won't lose your place in the queue and our phone system will automatically call you back when we've answered the calls ahead of you in the queue.

## Report it online

During the year we have also invested in our online services, especially functionality to report a routine repair online. Throughout the year it has been possible to check your account balance, make a payment, report support needed for damp and mould or make a complaint. We are pleased to confirm that it is now also possible to report any type of repair online. Just click on the blue 'my account' button on our website [www.settlegroup.org.uk](http://www.settlegroup.org.uk)

## How to make a complaint to settle

We will always work to provide the best services that we can, but we know that things will go wrong sometimes and that residents may want to make a complaint. We want to make it as easy as possible to do this. You can:

- Complete a form on our website - [www.settlegroup.org.uk/contact-us/make-a-complaint](http://www.settlegroup.org.uk/contact-us/make-a-complaint)
- Call us on 0330 343 0016
- Email [customer.service@settlegroup.org.uk](mailto:customer.service@settlegroup.org.uk) or
- Write to us at settle, Blackhorse Road, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 1HA

### The Housing Ombudsman Service

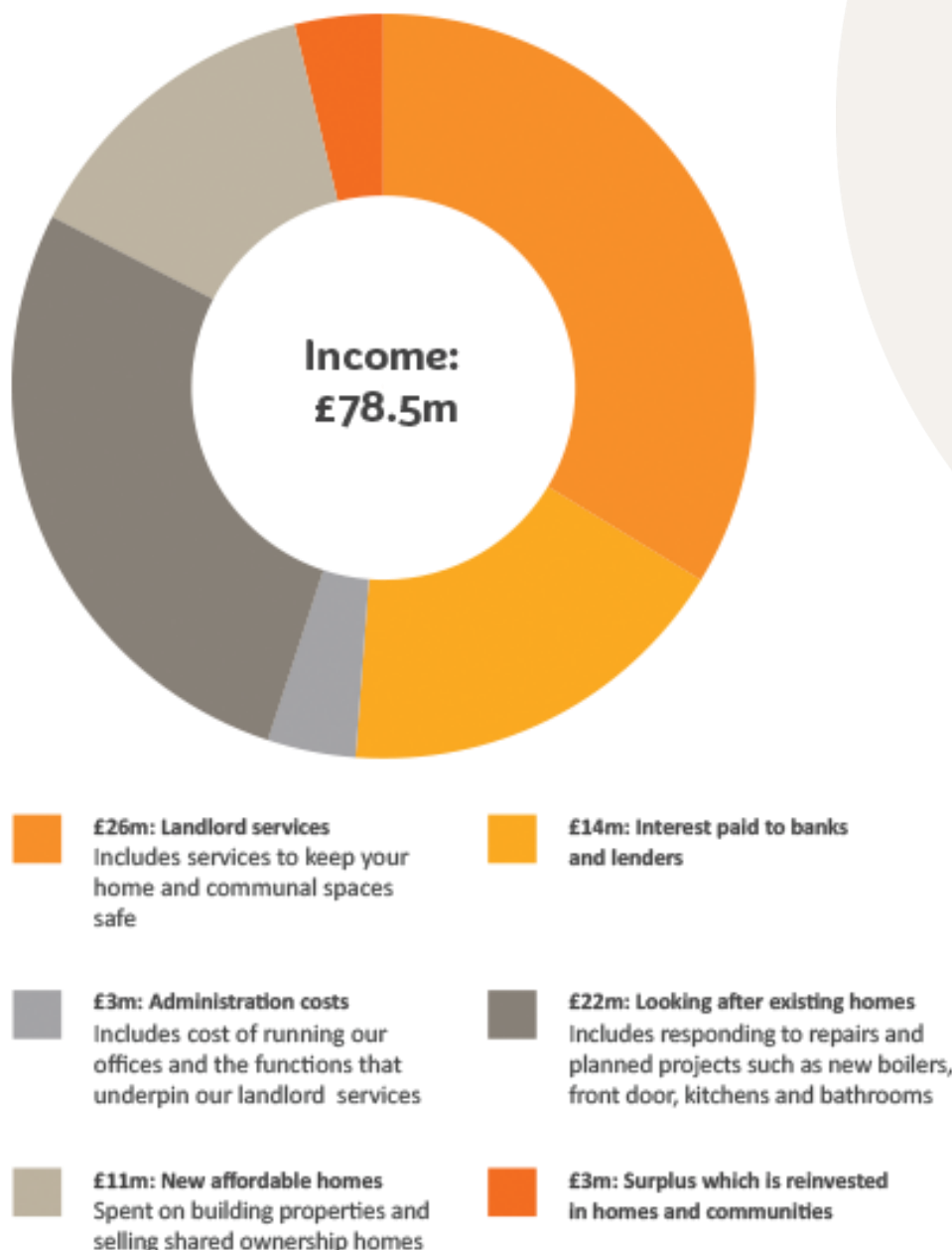
The best way to get your complaint resolved is by talking directly to us. However, you can also contact the Housing Ombudsman for help and advice at any time. Their service is free, independent and impartial. You can contact the Ombudsman directly on:

- Tel - 0300 111 3000
- Email - [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)
- Address - Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ
- Website - [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

# How we spend your rent

Our main source of income is from rent payments. In 2022/23 our total income was £78.5million and the chart below shows how we spent the money. We reinvest any remaining surplus back into improving our existing homes, building new homes and contributing to the services that support our communities. You can read our latest financial report on our website.

One of our targets for being Basically Brilliant is to make sure we secure this income through rent payments. Our income team exceeded their target last year and continue to do so this year. They have managed to do this by working in close partnership with residents, providing support where this might be needed to help tenants keep up with rent payments and sustain their tenancies. We would always really urge any residents who are worried about bills like rent, food and heating your home to get in touch with us as soon as possible and we will always do all we can to support you.



# Investing in neighbourhoods

Alongside providing homes that are safe and comfortable, we are also committed to investing in neighbourhoods that are good places to live in.

## Neighbourhood plans

In our customer annual report last year we explained that in our bigger neighbourhoods in Hitchin and Letchworth, we had begun developing neighbourhood plans, working alongside residents and local partners to identify key issues in the neighbourhood and discuss how we can work together to make a difference to residents' lives and create better places to live in.

<b>Westmill</b>	We launched our neighbourhood plan for Westmill in June 2022.
<b>Grange</b>	We launched our neighbourhood plan for the Grange Estate in October 2022.
<b>Jackmans</b>	We began preparations for this neighbourhood plan, which we launched in May 2023.

The structure of our housing and neighbourhood teams is now set up to support this focus on neighbourhoods. Colleagues work in teams across three geographic areas, each focussing also on one of our three largest neighbourhoods.

When we have carried out engagement events for our neighbourhood plans, we have heard feedback about things that are important to residents in each area, for example parking, highways and safety linked to street lighting. These areas are the responsibility of other partners, including local authorities, not settle. We will work in partnership with these organisations to influence outcomes where we can for each neighbourhood.

## Neighbourhood action days

During the past year, we began a programme of neighbourhood action days. This involved half of our colleagues completing 1,365 hours of work and took place in areas including our three largest neighbourhoods – the Grange and Jackmans in Letchworth and on Westmill in Hitchin. We continue to arrange action days in neighbourhoods where we can see satisfaction is lowest, particularly through feedback we are receiving as part of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures surveys.

Neighbourhood action days involve colleagues from teams across settle getting out into neighbourhoods to complete tasks that might include things like litter picking, tidying or painting in communal areas or perhaps planting new garden areas. Our colleagues will also be available if residents want to stop by for a chat about any issues in their home or neighbourhood. We are delighted to be joined by residents and local partners at many of these action days.

## Regeneration projects

Our regeneration projects involve proposals for significant investment in existing homes.

Any proposals we submit for new homes and investment in the neighbourhood will be based on extensive resident feedback. Each project will have a Resident Steering Group to help shape and inform plans for that area. We will also



appoint Independent Tenant Advisors and put in place Residents' Charters, which set out our service standards and what residents should expect from us during and after each regeneration project.

### **Westmill estate, Hitchin**

During the past year we completed the first phase of our redevelopment of John Barker Place, started work on the second phase building and progressed proposals for three additional phases of development.

### **Campfield Way, Highover Road and Icknield Way, Letchworth**

In our customer annual report for last year we explained that we expected to submit a planning application by Spring 2023, to provide 190 affordable homes on this site. During the year, we continued discussions with residents and partners to shape these investment plans.

The fifth public consultation meeting has just taken place in November 2023 and we expect to submit our planning application in early 2024. The final proposals provide 157 new affordable homes with a variety of between 1 and 5-bedroom properties. The scheme also provides fully wheelchair accessible flats, houses and bungalows.

### **Grange estate, Letchworth**

We began engagement with residents in November 2021 for investment to homes around Pelican Way, including Middlefield Court, Langleigh and Reynolds Retirement Living Schemes. In our customer annual report last year we noted that we expected to submit a planning application by mid-2023, to provide approximately 170 new affordable homes in this area.

We also shared proposals with residents in January 2023 to invest in homes around Western Way and Orchard Way.

In August this year, we updated residents that whilst we still intend to invest in the homes around Pelican Way, Western Way and Orchard Way it is going to take us longer than we first thought. This is so that we can make sure we join up with other development plans in the area.

At the time of writing this report, engagement events are being held by partners in the area to secure feedback on their proposed developments. This will then help us provide more details on the plans we will progress. We expect to share more details with residents in 2024.

## **Repairs and support for homes involved in regeneration proposals**

We will continue carrying out repairs to all properties, communal spaces and commercial spaces that we are responsible for until buildings are updated. We urge residents and tenants to let us know at any time if there is a repair or work needed to your home.

settle residents in the area can report a repair to us, or any specific concerns about your home by calling 0330 343 0016. Repairs can also be reported to us through our website at [www.settlegroup.org.uk](http://www.settlegroup.org.uk) by clicking the blue 'my account' button. We can also provide extra support to help residents and leaseholders. More details are on our website at [www.settlegroup.org.uk/support-from-settle](http://www.settlegroup.org.uk/support-from-settle) including links to an online cost of living form to access additional help from settle.