

A close-up photograph of a woman with her hair styled in red and white braids. She is wearing a black headset with a microphone and a blue denim jacket over a floral patterned top. She is looking slightly to the right with a thoughtful expression.

**“Supporting you
through tough times”**

**Annual Report
2021/2022**

Supporting you through tough times

Eastlight is now just two years old and as we look back over that period it is extraordinary to consider what a turbulent and challenging period this has been for us all.

This last year began with the country still facing significant restrictions on daily life due to the global pandemic. It ends with the most significant cost-of-living crisis for a generation.

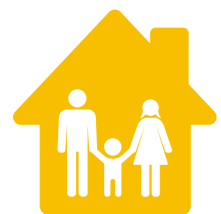
During these last 12 months we have worked extremely hard to support you, our customers, especially the most vulnerable, and to maintain and enhance our overall service. You will find details of how we have done this in this report.

We have pressed on with our commitment to engage and empower you to play an active part in your communities and to have a greater say in how we operate.

Our purpose at Eastlight is working together with our communities, creating affordable homes and great neighbourhoods. During 2021/22 we undertook extensive research with our customers which included visiting estates to understand your

experience through lockdown and the economic uncertainty. We also researched your concerns, your priorities and your aspirations for Eastlight and your communities. The feedback has confirmed the strength of feeling towards safe, vibrant and cohesive communities and has informed the priorities for our community empowerment programme.

“All In” is a unique and genuinely trailblazing initiative and we believe it has the potential to make a real and lasting difference to our communities. The engagement that we have already seen through our community conversations and the interest in joining our community incubator programme is very encouraging. Our teams of community entrepreneurs will work together over this year to turn these ideas into viable long-term outcomes for everyone.



12,721

TOTAL NO OF SOCIAL HOUSING HOMES EASTLIGHT PROVIDES TO LOCAL PEOPLE (UP FROM 12,415 IN 2020/21)



298

NEW HOMES - 85 FOR SHARED OWNERSHIP

Eastlight Community Homes is a community-led housing association, the largest in England, and we remain absolutely committed to increasing the role customers play in our organisation. During the year we have welcomed new resident members to the Board and to our Customer Influence Committee. We are also excited about the launch of our Community Academy and the training and development opportunities that this will provide to enable more of you to get involved.

We are in a position of financial strength to face the challenges of the coming year. In the last year the Regulator has conducted the first in-depth assessment of our organisation since the merger two years ago. They have awarded us the highest regulatory grading available - G1/V1.

We must now ensure that we match that confidence and continue to support our customers during what will continue to be a difficult and challenging time.



Hattie Llewelyn-Davies, Chair

H. Llewelyn-Davies.



Emma Palmer, Chief Executive

E. Palmer

Keeping you and your home safe

The risks associated with going into people’s homes during the pandemic caused a significant backlog of outstanding maintenance and repair cases. Towards Christmas, as lockdown restrictions eased, we began to develop a repairs recovery programme to tackle the backlog, and during the New Year staff began tackling the list of jobs with extra support drafted in to help.

Further difficulties were created when storms struck early in 2022, but the financial year ended with repair cases largely back to normal levels and 85% of all repairs and maintenance work being completed at the first visit.

Despite the challenges, we continued to respond to all emergency cases during the year, to carry out safety checks and deliver our new MOT service on homes and ensured all our homes had a valid gas certificate. We also opened our new Stores Facility at Marks Tey to support our Home Solutions Team from a larger and more central operating base.

Throughout we worked hard to support and protect people, for example in developing a new anti-social behaviour policy, and continuing to provide advice and financial help where it was most needed.

Sadly, reports of domestic abuse and violence increased during lockdown. In response, we provided comprehensive awareness and training across the business to develop a strong culture towards addressing and tackling this, and this has

seen satisfaction with the support we provide to victims rise to 94%. We were pleased that Eastlight received the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) national accreditation for the services we deliver supporting both customers and staff who may experience Domestic Abuse in their lives.

Recognising the importance of strong multi-agency working we have opened a community hub within Eastlight House, providing a common space for more than ten of our key agency partners including police, adult social care, floating support and other community providers to meet and work together. Early feedback is that this provides a more joined-up response and an ability to react more quickly to situations and find effective solutions.

Compliance

100% COMPLIANCE WITH DECENT HOMES STANDARD

VALUE FOR MONEY STANDARDS MET

100% GAS SAFETY COMPLIANCE



Safety

FULL BUILDING ASSESSMENT CHECKS COMPLETED – PLANS IN PLACE TO REMOVE CLADDING FROM TWO SCHEMES.

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT COMPLETED AND PLANS TO REPLACE ALL INTERNAL FIRE DOORS THIS YEAR.

CLICK HERE
TO SEE ESG REPORT
ON OUR WEBSITE,
OR CONTACT US
FOR A COPY

customer.services@eastlighthomes.co.uk

AVERAGE RENTS
55%
BELOW PRIVATE MARKET RENT

G1/V1
REGULATORY GRADING – THE HIGHEST RATING AVAILABLE

62%
OF EXISTING HOMES EPC C OR HIGHER

Social impact

£ **£1,050,704**
SECURED FOR 319 RESIDENTS FOLLOWING BENEFITS ADVICE

380
RESIDENTS RECEIVED MONEY OR EMPLOYMENT ADVICE

1,215
NO OF REPORTS OF ASB RESOLVED

104
PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC ABUSE RECEIVED SPECIALIST HELP

55
CHRISTMAS HAMPERS TO HOUSEHOLDS IN FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

£ **£38,575**
GIVEN TO 85 RESIDENTS IN FINANCIAL HARDSHIP. IN THE COMING YEAR WE ARE INCREASING THIS FUND TO £100,000.

£76,417 SPENT ON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS

Environmental, Social and Governance



20
WINDOWS



300
EXTERNAL DOORS



597
FIRE DOORS



97
NEW KITCHENS



183
NEW BATHROOMS



39
NEW ROOFS TO HOUSES, BUNGALOWS AND BLOCKS



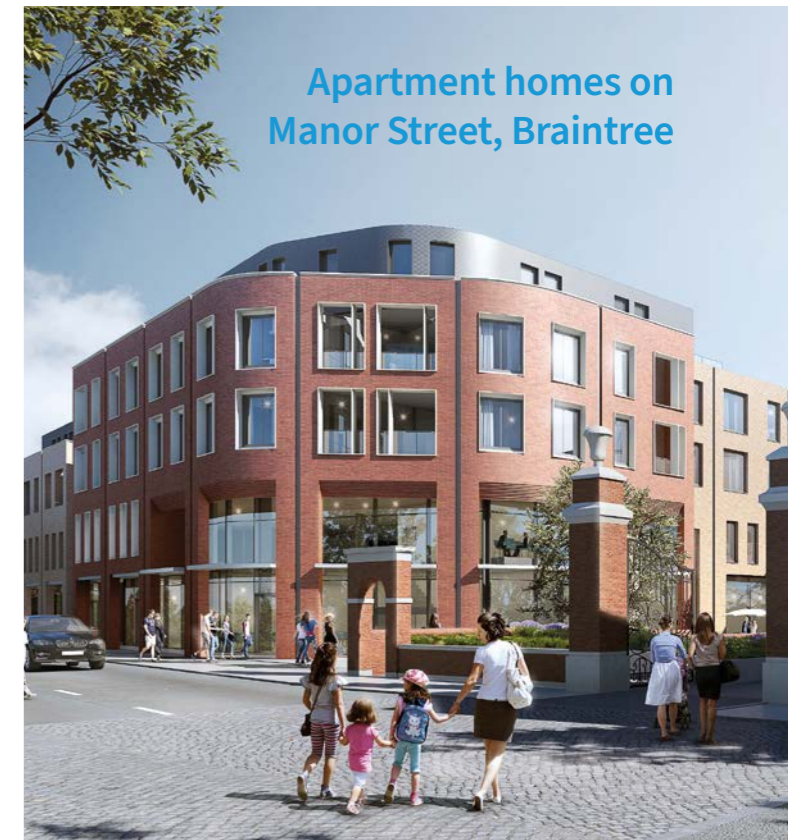
473
BOILERS AND 22 OTHER HEATING DEVICES

Building new homes

During the year we built 213 new homes for rent, (191 affordable rent and 22 for social rent) and a further 85 for shared ownership, providing people with an opportunity to get on the property ladder. By the end of the year we were in contract for 1,305 new homes and had another 602 in the pipeline. Of these, 30% are expected to be delivered via Eastlight-led projects, reflecting our ambition to rebalance our future programme so that reliance on developer-led delivery is reduced and Eastlight directly delivers new homes.

We completed the ambitious scheme at Manor Street in Braintree, providing 12 social rent and 23 shared ownership homes, and began work on the Mount Hill, Halstead, scheme which will offer a mixture of social rent, affordable rent and shared-ownership homes.

Our New Homes Strategy aims to deliver 3,800 homes. We expect this will take us until 2027/28. We are prioritising the delivery of safe and decent homes which are affordable to run, energy-efficient and are close to amenities. The strategy looks to embed the move to decarbonisation and the journey to net zero by using modern methods of working, whilst improving the fabric of our existing homes to provide sustainable and economic homes for our residents. Our plans include minimising energy consumptions and emissions, as well as reducing waste.



Supporting you to tackle the big issues

During 2021/2022 we developed All In, a ground-breaking initiative to help you tackle the big issues affecting your community.

As England's largest community-led housing association, we believe local people living in our communities understand them better than anyone – and are best placed to introduce the changes they need.

During the year we recruited teams who will create ideas that tackle the big social issues affecting our

communities – including the cost-of-living crisis. We also launched alliances for anyone wanting to make a difference in their community. We have continued to provide essential funding for local groups and charities that do amazing work.

ALL IN Community Teams

In January 2022, we asked a simple question: do you want to get paid to create a bold solution that tackles a major social issue in your community – and then make it happen?

The answer was a resounding yes - we received an astounding 185 applications!

Following a unique recruitment process, our four teams of five Community Entrepreneurs, including several Eastlight residents, have begun work focusing on four major themes:

- mental health
- cost of living
- opportunities for young people; and
- social isolation

ALL IN Community Alliances

We have also set up All In Community Alliances to help you make a difference in Braintree, Colchester, Halstead and Witham.

Our quarterly meet-ups are an opportunity to meet like-minded people, discover inspiring examples of communities in action and agree how you can make your neighbourhood an even better place to call home.



Supporting community groups

The Braintree District and Eastlight Community Fund – which has donated more than £1 million to local causes since 2015 – continued to support local people during 2021/22, including parents who have struggled with loneliness, children anxious about returning to school and older people who have not been able to enjoy fun activities.

Additionally, 11 local groups and charities received a share of more than £140,000 during the year to

help communities battle back from the impact of the pandemic.

Our Eastlight Residents Groups provided a further £60,000 for schemes ranging from a transformed outdoor learning area at John Ray Infants School in Braintree to a campaign of spring clean events across our estates.

Financial Strength

Our business proved to be financially and operationally resilient despite the impact of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis and the conflict in Ukraine.

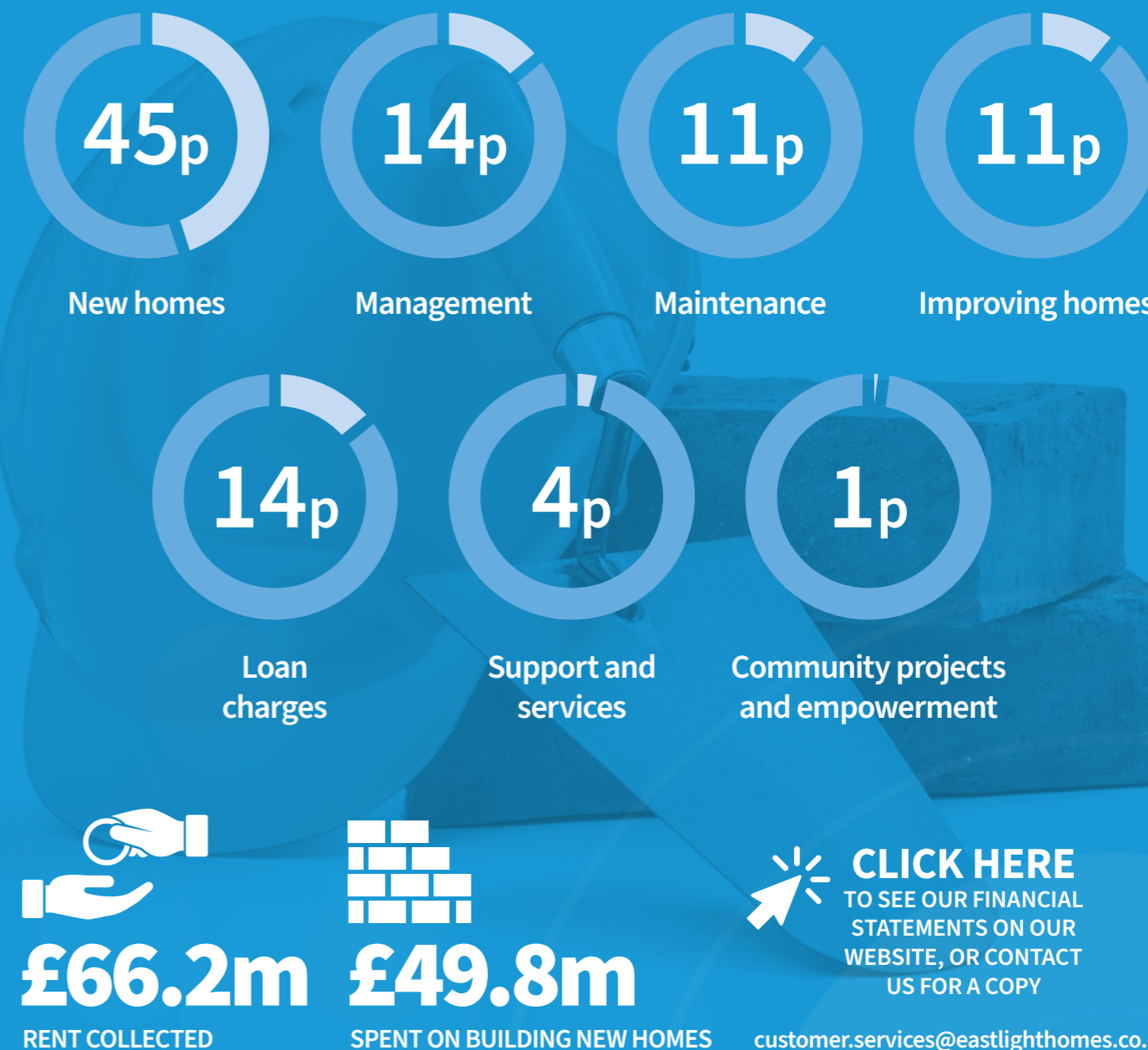
Turnover was up by nearly £3 million for the year, and we will continue to spend money on developing more efficient services for residents and communities, while we build many more affordable homes for local people.

We ended the year with an overall surplus of £8.1 million, down from the 2021 figure of £14.0 million. This is because we spent more money dealing with the repairs backlog and restructuring our finances to better position us for the future. We reinvest all of our surplus in improving our stock, building new homes and providing great services.

Financial performance summary

	2020/21 (millions)	2021/22 (millions)
Turnover	£75.8	£78.6
Income from lettings	£65.7	£68.5
Operating surplus	£24.2	£22.6
Surplus for the year	£14.0	£8.2
Housing properties at cost	£716.9	£762.4
Net current liabilities	£4.2	£5.1
Indebtedness	£302.7	£353.0
Total reserves	£258.4	£275.4

How we spend each £1



Improving our services to you

Despite such a challenging year for us all, more than 7 out of 10 of our customers are fairly or very satisfied with our overall service, according to our Moment in Time survey conducted in April 2022 and based on 1,402 responses.

That's really encouraging, but we know we have more to do.

So during the year we have taken active steps to improve our overall services, not least by appointing more residents onto our Customer Influence Committee and to our Board.

We have also introduced a new Complaints and Resolution policy which we hope will enable us to put things right more quickly when we get things wrong, and to learn from those mistakes so they are not repeated.

In the coming year we will be expanding our Customer Insight activity to learn more about how we can better support you. And our new Customer Engagement Plan will focus on additional ways to get residents involved in shaping our services and decision-making.



75%

OF TENANTS FEEL SATISFIED ABOUT BEING INFORMED OF THINGS THAT MATTER TO THEM



119,863

INBOUND CALLS FROM CUSTOMERS



62%

OF TENANTS ARE SATISFIED WITH OPPORTUNITIES GIVEN TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR DECISION-MAKING PROCESS



Our People

During the year we have completed our business integration following the merger two years ago and have strengthened our team of hard-working staff to deliver against a number of ambitious plans and projects.

We have continued to invest in our staff to ensure we have a happy, confident, empowered workforce, with our core values at the heart of what we do, and how we do it.

During the year this programme of development has included:

- Embedding our approach towards Engagement, Diversity, and Inclusion throughout all our processes and procedures
- The appointment of a dedicated Health & Safety (H&S) Advisor working alongside a specialist organisation to ensure we meet our obligations to keep our workforce and customers safe
- The introduction of a comprehensive total reward package that supports physical and mental wellbeing.

And we also introduced our 'Succeed at Eastlight' apprenticeship scheme which provides opportunities for those in our communities to gain valuable skills and experience on a living wage working for us.



435
EMPLOYEES



4
APPRENTICES



Eastlight Community Homes Limited is incorporated as a Registered Society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. Registered no. 30124R.

Eastlight is also registered with the Regulator of Social Housing in England (RSH), in accordance with the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. Registered no. L4499.

This summary report covers the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Visit us



www.eastlighthomes.co.uk



www.facebook.com/eastlighthomes



www.instagram.com/eastlighthomes



www.twitter.com/eastlighthomes



www.linkedin.com/company/eastlight-community-homes/

Get in touch

Call us 0330 1280330

Text us 07860 024511

Email enquiries@eastlighthomes.co.uk

Write Eastlight House, Charter Way,
Braintree CM77 8FG