# Our Homes

A newsletter for Chesterfield Borough Council tenants and leaseholders

## Housing annual report 2017/18

The annual report is a summary for tenants to view the performance of the housing service as their landlord. We monitor how we are doing in all our service areas to make sure we are efficient, effective and we meet your needs. This report is designed to show the key areas of our performance under the different standards set out by our regulator 'Homes England'. The report sets out some of what we have done and what we are going to do to make services better in the year ahead.

To find out more about the regulatory standards please visit www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards

## Welcome to our annual report to tenants

It's been another busy year, in which we have made real progress in our commitment to provide you with high quality housing services.

This report highlights what we have achieved as your landlord in the year to 31 March 2018. Our results, and your satisfaction with what we do, remains high and we are very proud of this.

We are always looking at ways to improve your homes, ensure that they are safe, warm and secure and find new ways of building more homes to meet your needs.

For example, work is now well underway on our refurbishment of housing schemes for older people, the £5 million regeneration scheme at Barrow Hill and new build family housing at Boythorpe, Brimington and Brampton.

We promise to work hard to try to improve our housing service even further. If you have any comments, good or bad, we would really like to hear from you.

Councillor Helen Bagley
Cabinet member for homes and customers

Alison Craig
Assistant director - housing

CHESTERFIELD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Autumn **2018**

# Tenant involvement and empowerment

**This standard sets out how we should communicate and involve tenants**

We're committed to engaging and working with tenants to improve their quality of life and ensure they can play an active role in shaping what we do and the way we do it.

**During the year we:**

- **Took our tenant participation van out to 70 events across the borough**
- **Worked with tenants to deliver Community Garden schemes**
- **Spent environmental improvement budgets on projects co-devised with local residents**
- **Installed new fencing and gates to improve security for local residents**
- **Planted bulbs to brighten up areas identified by tenants**
- **Worked with other agencies on health and wellbeing initiatives to improve the lives of residents**

## In focus: Co-designing the business plan

Our business plan sets out our future priorities and how we are going to pay for them.

### In 2017-18 the plan needed revising to:

- Tackle the challenges posed by the introduction of Universal Credit
- Plan the building of new council houses
- Plan major estate environmental improvement works

### To achieve this we made changes to:

- Tenant repair obligations
- Rent collection methods
- The tenancy agreement
- The management of voids, lettings and the marketing of empty properties

We took a collaborative approach that involved tenants, local councillors and housing officers working through each issue to come up with an agreed set of proposals that had the buy-in of everyone concerned.

We put these proposals out to consultation in autumn 2017, which saw 243 residents attend our roadshows and 1,079 respond to the questionnaire. The changes were agreed by the council's cabinet in January 2018 and implemented from April 2018.

**We will continue our engagement with tenants in 2018-19 on issues including business planning, a tenancy policy and an anti-social behaviour policy. If you want to work with us on these issues then contact Kim Walsh or Maria Slack on (01246) 345430 or 345431.**

# Tenancy standard

**This standard looks at how we allocate our properties and support our tenants**

**1,006**
properties re-let

**54%**
reduction in the number of empty properties

**1,293**
people on housing register

For several years the number of our one bedroom flats that were standing empty was increasing as demand for them fell. In order to increase interest and ensure that the properties did not remain empty we:

- Advertised properties on Rightmove so they were seen by a wider market
- Redecorated hard to let properties so they appealed to potential tenants

As a result we reduced our empty properties from 290 in April 2017 to 157 in April 2018. The number of long term empty flats (six months plus) also fell from 69 to 36 - and this figure has fallen further since April. As the number of long term empty properties falls, our void property turnaround time will improve from the 70.6 days on average it takes at present.

*Redecorated kitchen and sitting room with new carpet*

**91,537**
calls to our Careline service. 95% were answered in 60 seconds

**3,651**
emergency Careline calls attended

**2,700**
people supported through Careline

**764** people supported through tenancy sustainment

# Home standard

**This standard looks at how we maintain your homes**

Carried out
**37,959**
responsive repairs - an average of 4.2 repairs per property

Average number of days to complete a responsive repair
**5 days**

8,861 properties required a gas service
**100%**
completed

Overall repair satisfaction
**79.8%**

## Amount of spending to maintain Decent Homes Standard

£12.1m on property

£700,000 on new build homes and preparation

£1.3m on estates and environmental improvements

**Total £14.1m**

**Number of properties with replacement:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Heating systems | 216 |
| Roofs | 237 |
| Kitchens | 124 |
| Bathrooms | 45 |
| External wall insulation | 1,273 |
| Major adaptations | 143 |
| Smoke and CO detectors | 533 / 60 |

All our housing stock is of Decent Homes Standard

# Neighbourhood and community standard

**This standard sets out how we should work with other agencies to manage estates and tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB)**

**Number of:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Closure orders | 1 |
| ASB evictions | 5 |
| Injunctions | 2 |
| Notice to quit | 19 |
| Rent arrears evictions | 35 |

## Improvements carried out to estates included:

- Replacement benches at Pevensey Court, Newbold and Everett Close, Brimington

- New path from Everett Close to the bus stop

- Bulb planting at estates in New Whittington, Staveley and Grangewood
- A programme of tarmacking garage forecourts

- Work with Holme Hall Unite to develop a community garden *(shown above and a close-up shown below)*

- Our neighbourhood rangers working with the Racecourse Rubbish Rangers *(shown above)* who organise a monthly litter pick of Racecourse park.
- We held fire safety awareness sessions with tenants on our estates following the Grenfell Tower fire to make sure they know what to do in the event of a fire.

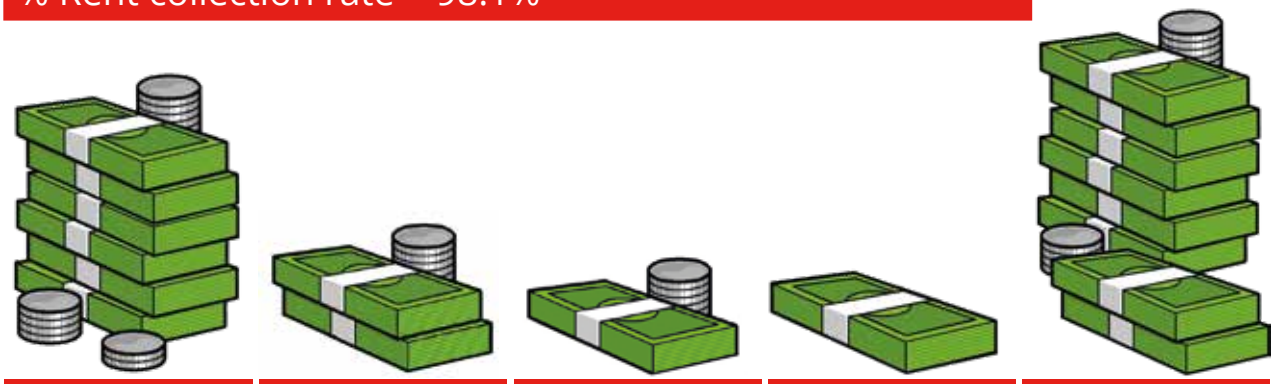
From 2018 onwards we are carrying out larger environmental improvement projects starting with transformative work at Barrow Hill, Heath Court and Grangewood.

# Value for money

**This standard looks at how we spend your rent money**

Average weekly rent - £77.22

% Rent collection rate - 98.1%



| **Rent** £36.4m (95.5%) | Garage rents £0.8m (2.1%) | Grants £0.5m (1.3%) | Other £0.4m (1.1%) | **Total £38.1m** |
|---|---|---|---|---|

# How much we spend

| Area of expenditure | Average cost per property | For every £ in rent |
|---|---|---|
| **Maintaining properties (total cost) of which:** | **£3,051** | **85p** |
| Major works | £2,193 | 61p |
| Cyclical works | £218 | 6p |
| Day-to-day repairs | £403 | 11p |
| Void works | £237 | 7p |
| **Housing management (total cost) of which:** | **£233** | **6.5p** |
| Rent collection | £87 | 2.4p |
| Letting homes | £47 | 1.3p |
| Tenant participation | £14 | 0.4p |
| Tackling anti-social behaviour | £38 | 1.1p |
| Tenancy management | £47 | 1.3p |
| Maintaining estates | £129 | 3.5p |
| Supported housing for elderly tenants | £130 | 3.5p |
| Other costs (IT, offices, HR, finance) | £56 | 1.5p |
| **Total cost per property** | **£3,599** | **£1** |

# Priorities for 2018/19

We are committed to working together with our residents and partners to create fair access to high quality, sustainable, decent and affordable homes and communities.

**Our priorities are based on consultation with tenants and through our contribution to the Council Plan.**

## Increase the supply of high quality sustainable homes

### New build programme

After building new properties at Rufford Close we will build 46 new homes on three sites across the borough in 2018/19 - Manor Drive at Brimington, former Heaton Court at Brampton and former Brockwell Court at Loundsley Green.

## Making better use of our existing housing stock

### Refurbishment of older persons' accommodation

Following the successful refurbishment of Brocklehurst Court last year we will begin works to refurbish two further older persons schemes – Catherine Court and Glebe Court. Improving the quality of the schemes will increase housing options for older people across the borough.

## Deliver quality housing and housing support services

### Allocations policy

We will consult on, and introduce, a new fairer allocations policy in autumn 2018. The changes to the policy will simplify the allocation system through:

- Removing the requirement for a potential tenant to have been resident in the borough for over 12 months.
- Introducing risk assessments to check if the potential new tenants can afford the rent
- Limiting the ability for existing tenants to re-register unless there are changes in their personal circumstances
- Allowing pregnant applicants to request a separate bedroom for an as-yet unborn child
- Taking into account property or assets owned by applicants

### Anti-social behaviour policy

We will update our policies on anti-social behaviour to ensure we are using all the powers available to us and working effectively with local partners such as the Derbyshire Constabulary, and Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service.

# Contact us for council house repairs

## Council tenants are being advised that you should continue to call Chesterfield Borough Council to get housing repairs carried out in your home.

The number of calls we receive from you for housing repairs has fallen since April when small changes were made to the list of which repairs you can report.

Some small DIY jobs are now your responsibility, such as changing lightbulbs or using a plunger or sink unblocker liquid to unblock a sink where water is running slowly.

But the vast majority of housing repairs are completely unaffected by the changes and you should still contact us to report any issues you have.

We don't want people to struggle with repairs themselves or pay tradespeople to do the repairs when this continues to be a service offered as part of the rent you pay.

When the changes were introduced measures were also put in place to ensure that vulnerable people will continue to receive help with even minor housing repairs.

We have put details on our website of the housing repairs we carry out and those which are your responsibility as tenants, but if you are unsure the advice is to report the repair issue on the free housing repairs hotline. You will then be advised on what can be done.

## Video guides to help you on your way

To help you carry out the minor DIY tasks that are now your responsibility we have produced a series of videos to guide you.

Our qualified and trained staff give you advice and tips on the best way to carry out each task.

We've started off by producing videos to show how to handle the most common tasks but, over time, we intend to build up the library.

Although primarily intended for council tenants the videos may also prove useful to private home owners in the Chesterfield borough.

The videos can be seen at:
www.chesterfield.gov.uk/2736

## How to report a housing repair

**Residents can report housing repairs online at:**
**www.chesterfield.gov.uk/2736**

**Or you can ring the free repairs hotline on 0800 587 5659 during office hours or email:**
**repair.requests@chesterfield.gov.uk**