Update on our housing services

An introduction from our cabinet member for housing

"I am delighted to have been appointed as the council's new cabinet member for housing and I am fully committed to delivering these essential services to the residents of Chesterfield.

"As a responsible landlord, we understand that a house is much more than just bricks and mortar. That's why we are focused on providing good quality and well managed homes that meet the needs of our residents and help improve quality of life.

"We are fully committed to helping achieve our goal of becoming a carbon neutral borough by 2050 and are already making great progress. This includes working hard to make sure that our homes are as energy efficient as possible, and we are already delivering a number of improvement programmes to help achieve this.

"Not only will these changes help us to meet our climate change targets, but it also helps to reduce your fuel bills, meaning you can continue to stay safe, well and warm in your home.

"We always put tenants at the heart of everything we do and I'm looking forward to working with you and listening to your thoughts to make sure we can provide you with excellent services. There are plenty of ways you can help shape our services – you can read more on page 16."

Councillor Jean Innes, cabinet member for housing.

Every year we publish an annual report for council tenants so you can see how we're performing. We've included some key highlights over the next few pages, but you can read the full report by visiting our website: **www.chesterfield.gov.uk/housing-annual-report**

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Helping people find new homes

As the largest landlord in the borough, one of our top priorities is to help people access affordable housing.

The number of people on the housing register has risen by 14 per cent in the last year and we're working hard to increase the number of properties available. We are both building and buying more council homes to replace those sold through the Right to Buy scheme, and to keep up with the growing demand as more people need affordable housing as a result of the current cost of living.

In late 2022, we bought 12 two-bedroom new build properties at Harehill Mews in Grangewood, and more recently we've purchased a further seven homes on New Hall Road in Brampton. These include four three-bedroom houses and three one-bedroom houses, which have now welcomed new families. This is in addition to the 21 new council homes we built at Badger Croft last year.

As well as buying and building new homes, we also have a dedicated housing team who are on hand to help prevent people from becoming homeless. Working with our partners, we offer support and help, whether you're homeless or worried about becoming homeless, and will give you confidential advice based on your own situation.

We're always looking at how we can improve our services to make sure we can help people find affordable and accessible housing. One of the areas we need to improve on is how quickly we repair an empty council property, so it is ready for the next tenants to move in.

At the end of March this year, the average number of days a property was unoccupied was around 120 days but we're taking action to improve, including streamlining our processes, working with contractors and increasing staff resource where needed.

"I just want to take this opportunity to thank you so very much for all your kind words and hard work helping me, you really have saved me. And I can't thank you enough for that."

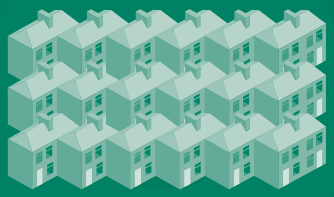
A tenant our team helped to secure accommodation

> **"Just wanted to say a big thank you. The house is amazing and I wouldn't of known where to start without your helping hand. Keep doing what you're doing as you're brilliant at your job!"**
>
> Another tenant praising the service they had received from our team

Key statistics 2022/23

8,797

We manage 8,797 properties across the borough



2,926

Number of households on the housing register

33

New homes added to our stock

90

Properties we've sold under the right to buy scheme

605

Number of new lettings

Investing in council homes

The modernisation and refurbishment of our homes continues to be a priority focus for us this year and will see us deliver further improvements to kitchens and bathrooms, carry out roof and window replacements, and make necessary adaptations to properties to help older people, and people with disabilities, to remain living independently in their homes.

99.7%
Of homes meeting the Government's Decent Homes Standard

£2,690,010
Amount spent on refurbishments to our independent living schemes

£18,873,095
Amount spent on maintenance and improvements to our existing homes

£3,290,426
Amount spent building and purchasing new homes

One tenant, who recently had their windows replaced as part of our improvements programme, said: **"I've just had my new windows put in and they are brilliant. I'm just thanking you for how the workmanship has been. I've been round the village and they've all given the team good feedback. I just want to say thank you."**

We're committed to ensuring that all our homes are energy efficient – supporting Chesterfield to become a low carbon, resilient and sustainable borough.

Creating greener homes

In line with our climate change strategy, we're already making steps to help increase the efficiency of our existing properties by strengthening environmental standards and supporting decarbonisation by improving insulation and replacing windows.

Flats at Aston Court are some of the latest properties to benefit from energy efficiency improvements, as part of a wider project to help modernise homes in the area.

Working with our main contractor, Fortem Solutions Ltd. we have removed all gas supplies from the properties, replacing them with fully electric heating and hot water units. To further help keep homes warm, we have used insulated plasterboard and increased loft insulation to help reduce the amount of energy that is needed to heat the homes.

We've also installed solar panels to provide renewable energy to each property, which will reduce the energy bills for our residents.

Other improvements include the installation of low wattage LED lighting in corridors that work with motion detection, meaning they are only used when needed.

Refurbishment works are due to be completed at the end of the year. An additional three new town houses are also being built at part of the project, with works expected to be finalised in 2024.

Going electric

It's not just houses where we're making energy efficient improvements as we'll also be updating our fleet of electric vehicles from five to 34, as we work towards decarbonising our transport by 2030. You can find out more about this on page 21.

Maintaining council homes and keeping them safe

As a responsible landlord, your safety is our top priority. To ensure you can remain safe in your property, we'll visit your home to carry our regular inspections.

100%
Annual gas services completed

37,393
Responsive repairs carried out

12.3
Average number of days for a repair to be carried out

98%
Properties with a satisfactory Electrical Installation Condition Report. The remaining 2% are in the process of being updated

96%
Tenants satisfied with routine 30 day repairs service
(from our routine customer surveys)

Improving people's quality of life

We want to make sure that as many people as possible can continue living independently in their own homes, feeling confident and safe.

To help check you are happy and well in your home, we carry out tenancy visits. This is your opportunity to have an informal chat with a member of our team in the comfort of your home and share any thoughts you may have. We also work in partnership with community safety, environmental health and police colleagues to deal with any anti-social behaviour or neighbourhood problems reported to us.

Here's how we performed last year (2022/23):

151
Major adaptations carried out

245
Minor adaptations carried out

3,422
Careline call outs

£950,853
Total spend on adaptations

To help improve the lives of our tenants, we're committed to making adaptations where we can, to make sure their home meets their needs. This could include changing their bathroom to a wet room, or simply just improving access to the home. Sometimes just a minor adaptation can make a big difference.

In some cases, it may be more suitable for a tenant to move into a more suitable home, rather than making adaptations. We will always consider each tenant's individual needs and work with them to find the best solution.

For more information on the options available, contact our housing and health team on **01246 345700.**

Listening to our customers

We are always keen to hear the views of our tenants and make sure that you can have a say on how we can improve our services to meet your needs.

In recent months our tenants have done just this – helping us to review the 'sign-up packs' that tenants receive when taking on a new tenancy.

A survey was conducted with tenants who had recently gone through the process to get their views on how we could simplify the amount of information they received.

Over 90 per cent of those surveyed said that they would like to see the information provided online and we now have a dedicated group of tenants who are advising us what information they would like to see on a new dedicated section on our website – meaning all the information you need will be in one place.

This is just one of the many ways that we continue to involve our tenants in what we do. Having the opportunity to come together and share their views is also a great way to build community spirit and help people to feel more valued. For more information on how to get involved, visit: **www.chesterfield.gov.uk/chat**

Tenant engagement is about giving you a real say in how your housing

How are we doing?

We're also encouraging our tenants to take part in a new satisfaction survey to help shape our housing services - and there's a chance of winning a £50 shopping voucher too!

As part of the new tenant satisfaction measures introduced by Government, we are required to collect and share data on how we are doing at completing repairs, keeping homes safe, and engaging with tenants – and we need your help with this!

We'll be inviting a random sample of council tenants to complete a satisfaction survey throughout the year - designed to get honest feedback and help our housing service to identify any areas for improvement. If you receive a letter asking you to complete the survey, please do take part.

Results from this survey will be used to calculate annual tenant satisfaction measures which will be published in spring 2024.