

Chesterfield Borough Council

Annual Report to Tenants

2021 – 22

Welcome

Welcome to our Annual Report to Tenants 2021/22. This is our opportunity to explain how the services we provide are performing and to celebrate our achievements. We also highlight our priorities for the year ahead and the changes we are making to ensure that we continue to provide high quality homes and great services for our tenants and leaseholders.

Introduction from Cllr Chris Ludlow, Cabinet Member for Housing

I am pleased to be able to welcome you to our 2021/2022 annual report.

Although in part it has been another challenging year, there are also many positives to take away. The Covid-19 pandemic led to new ways of working to ensure we kept our tenants and our staff safe, while providing a range of additional support to those in need. I would like to express my thanks to you for your patience and understanding and to our staff for their dedication during this period. We continue to work hard to not only return services to the standards achieved before the Covid-19 pandemic, but to improve them.

Looking back at some of our key achievements during 2021/2022 there is much to celebrate. We:

- Undertook our largest new build housing scheme for 40 years at Badger Croft
- Completed the £1.2m refurbishment of the 45 flats at Pullman Close, Lowgates
- Delivered over £21m of Capital Investment into properties
- Approved additional investment to re-shape our housing management service to better support the needs of our customers

A consideration of our environmental impact is also at the heart of the way we build new homes and improve existing properties. We're proud of our commitment to creating sustainable, energy efficient homes which have a much lower environmental impact, and are also much more affordable and comfortable for local people to live in.

There are many opportunities to develop and improve our services in the year ahead including reshaping our services to improve customer satisfaction, increasing tenancy sustainment, creating an approach to tenancy management that meets individual needs and tackling anti-social behaviour with partnership working focussed on improving tenant and community engagement. These improvements will also stand us in good stead to respond to the new regulatory framework being introduced to be governed by the Regulator of Social Housing.

I hope you enjoy reading the report and are excited about how our service is going to develop over the coming years.



1.0 The Housing Service

We manage **884** properties



10 Properties sold under Right to Buy scheme



1 New properties brought into stock

63 Properties let

63 Properties let for service to tenants in five

1.1 The report discusses on recent key areas of consumer standards:

- Tenant involvement and empowerment standards
- Tenancy Standard
- Home Standard
- Neighbourhood and community standard
- Value for money standard

1.2 The annual report to tenants draws upon a range of operational performance data that the council collects as we deliver our services and from the Housemark Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) tenant satisfaction survey. The use of the STAR methodology ensures that the satisfaction survey is statistically robust and can be



consistently benchmarked over time and with other social landlords. The STAR framework includes questions for both perception and transactional surveys.

- 1.3 The latest STAR survey was carried out in autumn 2021, and the full results and detailed action plan were report to Council Cabinet in May 2022.
- 1.4 The survey results did show a reduction in tenant satisfaction with a number of our housing services, which is not unsurprising given the unprecedented response that was required to the Covid19 pandemic and the measures that we had to take to keep tenants and staff safe.
- 1.5 The detailed action plan set out a range of activities to respond to the issues raised. One of the key actions is to ensure that we can deliver service improvements and respond to the new requirements from the Regulator for Social Housing, is through the re-shape of the housing service.
- 1.6 The implementation of the housing service re-shape is being delivered in two phases. The first phase being the housing management, homelessness and statutory housing services. The benefits that we expect to deliver through the first phase include:
 - Increased numbers of front-line housing officers who will provide the frontline point of contact for tenants
 - Introduction of annual home visits to build a better relationship with our tenants and to identify any vulnerabilities that we were unaware of
 - Ensuring that tenancy support issues are identified at tenancy commencement but also in tenancy as customers' needs change, leading to an increase in wellbeing and a reduction in tenancy failure, increased tenancy length which will result in a reduction in voids, transfers and management moves
 - An increased tenancy enforcement officer resource with a comprehensive approach to community safety, joint tasking within Community Safety Team
 - Enabling staff to have the ability to more proactively address the presenting of mental health issues which impact on neighbour disputes and ASB, and provide capacity for increased partnership working with support agencies, health and social care, community safety and the Police
 - Increased resources to enable a greater focus on environmental management of the estates and open spaces leading to improved clean, safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods, early identification of environmental risks, increased visibility and reassurance to tenants
 - Relaunching a range of tenant engagement options and reviewing how we keep tenants informed
- 1.7 During 2022/23 we are seeking to embed these new ways of working into our service delivery, and also begin to focus on a further phase of re-shape linked to asset management, repairs and maintenance services.

2. Tenant involvement and empowerment standard

Tenant Involvement

- 2.1 This standard looks at how we are committed to communicating, engaging, and working with tenants as well as ensuring that you have the opportunity to play a role in shaping what we do.
- 2.2 Due to the impact of covid during much of 2021/22 opportunities to hold meetings and directly engage with customers were limited. To ensure that continued engagement with our Tenant Challenge Panel could continue meetings were arranged online using IT equipment funded by the service to ensure ongoing involvement.
- 2.3 As restrictions began to ease, the panel were also able to get back out in the community. They have been reviewing the environmental and estate improvements works that the council has been delivering at Grangewood and Barrow Hill, to ensure they meet the standards expected.
- 2.4 The tenant participation team were also able to support a community group to complete a grant application to purchase outdoor gym equipment in the Holme Hall area. The equipment gives residents the opportunity to exercise and meet their neighbours, as well as help to improve their physical and mental health after lockdown

Looking ahead to 2022/23

- 2.5 As the reshape of the service progresses, we will again begin to offer our full range of options for tenants to engage with the Housing Service:
- **Tenant Challenge Panel** – This is our tenant scrutiny group that reviews and reports on how our housing services operate
 - **Working groups** – Where tenants can join a short series of meetings (approx. one – two hours over three months) to work with housing managers and give their opinions on specific topics
 - **Communications group** – A group that gets involved in and comments on our publications such as leaflets, posters, website pages etc. before they are published
 - **Tenant inspectors** – Mystery shoppers who check our services to test how we are doing
 - **Focus groups** - Join us for one off meeting (approx. two hours) to give your opinion on specific topics
 - **Virtual panel** – Be consulted and give your feedback on our services via email or other digital methods
 - **Armchair consultee** – For tenants unable to attend other meetings and events we send surveys and other information directly for comment and feedback

Customer issues and complaints

- 2.6 The Housing Service is committed to providing a high-quality service to everyone and where customers have cause to complaint, we will make every effort to resolve



issues raised and to learn from the feedback. During 2021/22 the performance information showed:

- 268 complaints received, of which 151 (56%) were upheld.
- 74% of complaints were responded to within our target of 5 days for acknowledgment and 15 days for a full response.

2.7 During 2021/22 the top five areas for complaint were:

- Repairs issues
- Anti-Social behaviour
- Damp and mould
- Poorly maintained gardens
- Communal area maintenance

2.8 These areas of complaint are not unexpected as we know that due to Covid-19 restrictions non-essential housing management and support services were delivered remotely and the focus was placed on emergency responses and managing health and safety risks. In addition, during the pandemic there was a significant upsurge in neighbour disputes, noise complaints and reports of anti-social behaviour, including Covid 19 breeches.

Looking ahead to 2022/23

2.9 As well as generally being able to improve our service delivery post the pandemic, the Council will be implementing a new corporate complaints policy and system during 2022/23. The new policy seeks to improve the speed we deal with any complaints that are raised and maximise our ability to learn from complaints and make changes to services to tackle the issues raised.

3. Tenancy Standard

This standard covers how properties are allocated and how we manage and provide support to tenants in their homes.

Key performance information

Lettings	633
Successful nominations to housing associations	100
Mutual Exchanges	32
Households on housing register	2,558
Empty properties	285
Relet times	94.7 days
Tenancy Sustainment	271
Careline calls	65,834
Careline call outs	3,566
Older persons supported	504

Lettings and housing register

- 3.1 The number of households on our waiting list increased by 13.5% in 2021/22 to 2558. This rate of increase is consistent with national trends as pressures on social housing continue to grow.
- 3.2 We introduced the 'Home Options' choice-based lettings system and a new Allocations policy in 2019/20. The system required a full re-registration of all existing applicants on the housing register. This resulted in relatively low numbers of applicants during the first year of operation but as more households have re-registered and new applicants joined the list over the past two years the size of the register has continued to grow.
- 3.3 The move to using the online Home Options system is playing a part in the Council's low carbon initiatives – removing the need for paper applications.
- 3.4 The total number of lettings within 2021/22 was 633. This equates to around 25% of the numbers of households on the register being successful in applying for a home with Chesterfield Borough Council in the year. A further 100 households from the housing register secured a new home through a nomination to housing association property.
- 3.5 The average number of days to re-let a property was high at 94.7 days - this is a reduction of 16 days from 2020/21 but still higher than long term figures. This has been, due to the impact of a range of Covid issues, including for example delays and shortages in material supplies, giving the service challenges in the time taken to make properties ready for reletting. The number of empty properties is currently 285, however, over a quarter of these 75, are being used to support the decanting of tenants whilst we complete major refurbishment projects.

Looking ahead to 2022/23

- 3.6 It is anticipated that the numbers of households joining the housing register will continue to increase due to external pressures such as the national increases in the Cost of Living.

- 3.7 Through 2022/23 the number of vacant properties will reduce as staffing and material supply chain issues improve and the backlog is tackled and major investment projects that required the decanting of tenants for long period such as the refurbishment of Leander Court and Mallard Court begin to welcome back tenants.
- 3.8 We are aiming to build or acquire at least 40 new energy efficient homes.
- 3.9 As more properties become available for letting this will help to ensure that as many households on our housing register as possible are able to make successful bids and be offered a new home.

Tenancy sustainment

- 3.10 Our dedicated tenancy sustainment team continued to work with our most vulnerable tenants such as those with:
- Physical and mental health needs
 - Learning difficulties and disabilities
 - Women and men at risk of violence
- 3.11 The team provide support to:
- Apply for funding to prevent homelessness
 - Ensure they are claiming the correct benefits
 - Pay priority bills, budget and deal with debts
 - Access the correct support services for their needs. For example, domestic abuse, mental health, social care.
 - Ensure their accommodation is suitable for their needs, and they have any aids and adaptations they require
 - Access grants for things like furniture and carpets
- 3.12 Of the tenants engaged with by the team 91% remained in their tenancies a year after support started.

Looking ahead to 2022/23

- 3.13 As part of the reshape of housing management services we will look to continue to build supportive relationships with tenants, so that tenancy support issues can be identified at the start of the tenancy and through continued dialogue support will be maintain throughout the duration of the tenancy as the residents needs change.
- 3.14 Annual home visits will provide further opportunities for housing officers and tenants to work together and to identify and discuss any areas of support that might be required around tenancy sustainment and management.

Careline and independent living services

- 3.15 Throughout the continuing pandemic during 2021/22, Careline have continued to operate providing an essential falls service and supporting our customers. This provides much needed assistance to the emergency services enabling them to concentrate services to the most critically ill.



- 3.16 During 2021/22 the support service-maintained contact with all our customers on a regular basis switching the visiting service to a telephone contact service to help minimise risk for both customers and staff.
- 3.17 The team also made referrals to Chesterfield Borough Council's Benefit Team which resulted in over £84k of additional benefits being claimed for tenants.
- 3.18 The team also supported customers to manage debts and complete applications for budgeting loans during this time.
- 3.19 A total of 651 referrals were made by Careline for Chesterfield customer under prevention of hospital admission and prevention of declining health and mobility whilst 761 referrals and outcomes were achieved under improving quality of life which covered social interaction, preventing isolation, living and home environment/safety.

Looking ahead to 2022/23

- 3.20 The first phase of the reshape of the Housing Service included the Independent Living Service and Careline and has sought to bring these services into the overall housing management service, to deliver a sustainable and integrated approach. This will assist residents in maintaining their independence for as long as possible and retaining tenancies for longer.
- 3.21 The Careline service is continuing to invest in digital equipment as the call platform has been upgraded to receive digital calls and new customers and those requiring replacement units are provided with digital equipment. A programme to replace previously installed analogue units will be prepared.

4. Home Standard

This standard looks at how we maintain your homes.

Key performance Information - Repairs and Maintenance

Responsive repairs carried out	32,698
Av. Time for a repair to be carried out	25 days
% of repairs completed at first visit	95%
Repairs satisfaction	61.5%
Gas servicing	94.6%

Key performance information - Investment

Decent Homes Standard	99.75%
Satisfaction with homes	66.6%
Average SAP rating for CBC properties (energy performance of a property, rated A – G)	C
Decent homes spend:	
Maintenance and improvements	£15.95m
Sheltered scheme refurbishments	£3.03m
New build and acquisitions	£2.73m
Total	£21.71m
Replacement:	
Heating	161
Roofs	155
Kitchens	90
Bathrooms	155

Maintaining our homes

- 4.1 The Council has a comprehensive approach to ensuring that we maintain our existing homes to the decent home standard, which includes investing in significant programmes of planned maintenance and refurbishment works and a responsive repairs and maintenance service. We also have an ambitious new build programme to seek to maintain the numbers of council houses within the council stock.
- 4.2 In 2021/22 there was a slight reduction in maintaining the 100% decent homes standard, which we have achieved for the past seven years. This relates to specific challenges in delivering the external re-pointing programme for homes. Appropriate works are now programmed for delivery in 2022/23.
- 4.3 The result from the STAR survey, in terms of tenants' satisfaction with their homes, has been affected by the impact of Covid. The Covid 19 restrictions and our aim to mitigate against transmission of the virus for our customers and staff led to suspension of the internal capital works programme and non-urgent works, this was also impacted by the availability of materials and supplies due to the pandemic.
- 4.4 The responsive repairs service focussed resources on compliance, emergency and urgent repairs. Many tenants refused access due to Covid 19 concerns and



dynamic risk assessments prevented staff entering homes where people had covid-19 symptoms leading to backlogs. The repairs service managed to complete 93.2% of emergency repairs within 24 hours.

- 4.5 Recovery plans have been implemented but the disruptions to the programmes and non-urgent repairs is likely to have influenced tenant's views on the overall service provision during this period. Many housing organisations have seen falls in tenant satisfaction over the period of the pandemic.
- 4.6 During 2021/22 our repairs service did begin to tackle the backlog of repairs that built up during the covid lockdowns, despite there still being delays and shortages in material supplies. The number of repairs carried out increased by over 7,000 compared to 2020/21 as the service got back up and running. Tackling the backlog of repairs has meant an increase in the average time taken to do a repair but 19 out of 20 repairs are tackled in one visit.

Energy Efficiency

- 4.7 The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is the methodology used to assess and compare the energy and environmental performance of dwellings. Its purpose is to provide accurate and reliable assessments of dwelling energy performances that are needed to underpin energy and environmental policy initiatives. SAP works by assessing how much energy a dwelling will consume when delivering a defined level of comfort and service provision and enables a like-for-like comparison of dwelling performance. After assessment properties are banded A-G based on their performance – with A rated being the highest and G rated the lowest. As part of the Governments wider ambition to meet the 'net-zero-carbon' challenge by 2050, social housing providers have been set a target to attain a C rating on Energy Performance Certificates by 2035. All the Council's properties now achieve at least a Band C SAP rating and have done since 2018. As the Council has already achieved at least a Band C EPC rating on all its properties this has meant we have been unable to apply for external monies from the Governments Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. This fund was available to social landlords who have properties rated as EPC D or below.

New Build programme

- 4.8 All our new housing projects are being designed and built to standards that exceed the minimum standards as set out in Part L Conservation of Fuel and Power of the current building regulations through installation of energy efficient boilers and increased levels of insulation in the floors, walls and ceilings. During construction all materials are locally sourced from sustainable materials. Sustainable features such as cycle stores, electric car charging points and rainwater recycling through collection points in the garden, are also being introduced. Water usage is calculated and features such as perforated taps and low flow baths introduced to reduce consumption.

First new build modular homes

- 4.9 In 2021 we successfully completed an innovative development to bring additional council houses to Brampton. Ten new properties were added to the council's housing stock after the completion of the modular housing scheme at Heaton Court, the first properties of their kind in the borough. This sustainable housing, is



built off site and then transported to its location. It creates less disruption on site for local communities and the end result is a much more sustainable and environmentally sound home.

- 4.10 The new housing at Heaton Court included two four bed town houses, four three bed houses and four two bed houses – all of which were added to the council's housing stock and are now being let to local families.

Adaptations to homes

- 4.11 As well as investment in new build properties, new kitchens, bathrooms, boilers etc our Capital Programme also includes investment in making adaptations to properties to make sure properties are suitable for tenants needs. During 2021/22 the Housing Options team have worked to deliver 128 major adaptations such as stairlift and level access ramps and a further 186 properties received minor adaptations such as grabrails.

Looking ahead to 2022/23:

- 4.12 We are undertaking a programme of stock condition surveys this year to help us plan future investment into homes. This will enable us to accurately prepare our investment programmes for new kitchens, bathrooms and other capital investment projects for 2023 onwards.
- 4.13 Our other key activities in 2022/23 include:
- Completing the new build scheme of 21 new homes at Badger Croft, Loundsley Green
 - Acquiring 12 new build properties directly from developers and identifying further opportunities to buy directly from developers
 - Starting the development of new Council homes on sites across Middlecroft
 - Investing up to £22m in major improvements in our council homes including new heating systems, windows and rewiring contributing towards reduced energy usage and costs
 - Finalising the refurbishment of the older persons scheme at Mallard Court and Lander Court
 - Beginning works to refurbish Aston Court and bring back into use as general needs accommodation
 - Progressing the phase two reshape of the Housing Service, to improve the quality of the repairs and maintenance services to tenants and to managing and maintaining the quality of the overall housing stock.
- 4.14 The investment proposed in the Housing Capital Programme will make a significant contribution to ensure the Council's Housing stock is improved to increase its SAP ratings and ensure all homes are efficient and provide affordable warmth for our tenants. In delivering programmes of work for example the block refurbishment programmes specific consideration will be given to energy efficiency and the components used in window replacements, heating replacement systems will be regularly reviewed to ensure improved SAP ratings and make positive reductions on tenant's utility bills.



- 4.15 We will define our preferred environmental standard for use in our new social housing projects across the Borough.

5. Neighbourhood and Community Standard

This standard sets out how we manage communal areas and estates, and work with other partners and agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour, ASB.

Key performance information

Satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live	68.9%
Anti-social behaviour cases	281
Total Evictions of which:	4
• Rent arrears	3
• ASB	1

Anti-social Behaviour

- 5.1 During the early stages of the covid pandemic the majority of our tenants were legally required to stay at home and as a result the number of ASB incidents reported, increased due to the greater exposure to one another's lifestyles and behaviours. As our staff were not able to have a visible presence within our communities and conducted ASB investigations without the usual face-to-face contact this led to a big increase in ASB cases during 2020/21. As the covid restrictions were relaxed through 2021/22 our services were able to get out on the estates again and we have seen a reduction in the number of ASB cases reported to number seen in pre-covid years.
- 5.2 The STAR survey result was disappointing as although the number of ASB cases did drop in 2021/22, the percentage of tenants satisfied with their neighbourhood is reduced from the previous survey, pre-covid.

Looking ahead to 2022/23

- 5.3 In February 2022 we began consultation began on a draft Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy. The consultation ran until August 2022 and included surveys for tenants and members of the public to respond and give their views on ASB issues and how they are approached. The consultation also included presentations and discussions with the Chesterfield Community Safety Partnership and workshops with external partners including Derbyshire Constabulary, Derbyshire Fire Service and Chesterfield Spire Trust.
- 5.4 The aim is to have a new single ASB strategy adopted for the whole authority during 2022/23, which provides a clear approach from the strategic to operational levels. It will outline how the council will work with other key stakeholders to manage and reduce anti-social behaviour by whilst aligning to key legislative requirements of engagement with local communities, taking a preventative early intervention approach, being victim focused and using proportionate enforcement.
- 5.5 The strategy will ensure Council wide consistency and create integrated partnerships that will ensure the council can identify any emerging anti-social behaviour issues quickly and intervene earlier and more effectively.

Evictions

- 5.6 A moratorium on evictions was put in place during the covid pandemic. The moratorium on them was lifted 31st May 2022 but the numbers undertaken is very



low compared to the period prior to the moratorium. The low numbers are largely due to the Council's use of the Household Support Fund through which we managed to assist 130 households clear £191,186 of arrears to prevent eviction. This has meant that we have managed to keep evictions at a very low level to reduce pressures on homelessness services.

Creating attractive estates and environments for people to live

- 5.7 The Housing Service is committed to enhancing the borough's housing offer to ensure we meet the needs of our residents now, and in the future. We are continuing to deliver a number of modernisation and improvement projects which will help create attractive places for people to live. Our 'Residential Block Refurbishment' upgraded Pullman Close at Staveley and Ashcroft Court in Old Whittington undergoing a facelift in 2021/2022. The homes all benefitted from new doors and windows, which as well as improving the energy efficiency of the homes also helps to give the external environment a fresh and modern look.
- 5.8 Extensive internal and external improvements have been completed at Ashcroft Court, including the re-tiling of the roof and upgrading of the roof insulation to provide better thermal efficiency. Windows in flats and communal areas have also been replaced with A rated thermal efficient equivalents which give the block a modern facelift. The £8 million programme will see even more blocks of flats across the borough undergo extensive internal and external improvements over the next two years.
- 5.9 We continue to invest in our estates will ongoing investment in environmental works at Barrow Hill, and the environments around flats in Newbold Moor and Old Whittington as block refurbishment scheme were delivered.
- 5.10 Our estate improvement as well as uplifting the appears of estates also play an environmental role in tackling climate change. The estate improvements that have been carried out Barrow Hill included the planting of 196 trees (a net increase of 168), over 1500 metres of hedges and over 5000 shrubs.

Looking ahead to 2022/23

- 5.11 As part of our reshape we are increasing resources to allow a greater focus on management of our estates and open spaces, which will lead to improved clean, safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods.
- 5.12 Subject to approval of the new Corporate Anti-Social behaviour strategy and associated working practises, these will enable staff to proactively tackle anti-social behaviour and crime by working in partnership with Police, community safety teams and those within the health, social care and voluntary sectors.
- 5.13 We will begin the £6m estate and property improvement project at Newland Dale. The improvement will include new rendering, windows as well as upgrades to communal areas, car parking spaces, paths and green spaces.

6. Value for money standard

This standard looks at how we spend the money we receive as rent.

Average rents

Social rented properties

- 6.1 The social rents the Council charges are set through a national formula based on incomes and house prices. The average rents by property size are set out below for 2021/22. The national social rent policy increase of 1.75% was applied to all properties in April 2021 and applied until March 31st 2022. The increase was based on the inflation figure from September 2020.

Social Rents	Per week 2021/22	Per month 2021/22
Average rent per week (all)	£79.52	£344.59
1 bedroom	£74.00	£320.67
2 bedroom	£80.26	£347.79
3 bedroom	£84.31	£365.34
4 bedroom+	£92.63	£401.40

Income

- 6.2 The income into the Housing Service comes from several sources. The main source of income is the collection of rent from the properties we manage (95.2%), followed by garage rents. Other income comes from service charges and recharges.

Income 2021.22	£	%*
Rent of dwellings	35,680,821	95.2
Service charges	435,888	1.2
Garage rents	815,232	2.2
Other	542,978	1.4
Total	37,474,919	100%

Expenditure

- 6.3 Our expenditure is illustrated below showing how we spend every £1 we receive in income. Over three quarters of our expenditure is spent on repairs and maintenance with and just 6.9p of each £1 received covering housing management costs.



Expenditure	Per £1.00
Repairs and Maintenance (total)	78.3p
Capital works inc new build	56.1p
Cyclical maintenance	5.4p
Repairs	12.1p
Voids works	5.3p
Housing management (total)	6.9p
Rent collection	1.9p
Tackling anti-social behaviour	1.3p
Tenancy Management	2.3p
Letting homes	1.0p
Tenant participation	0.4p
Supported housing services	1.6p
Estate management	2.6p
Other costs (IT/Office etc)	10.6p
Total	£1.00

6.4 In the STAR tenant satisfaction survey 73.3% of tenants thought their rent provided value for money.

7. Further information

7.1 If you have any comments on our Annual Report to Tenants or would like to request further information or copies, please contact:
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