

Working in Partnership to Improve  
Services for Tenants and Leaseholders

# **ANNUAL REPORT TO** **Tenants** **2018/19**



**A great city** to live in

 **Birmingham**  
City Council

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# Foreword

Housing is one of the council's top priorities and offering a range of good quality housing is a key part of our commitment to meeting the diverse housing needs of all residents in Birmingham. We are therefore delighted to report that looking back at some of our key achievements in 2018/19 there is much to celebrate.



The council's house building programme continues to go from strength to strength. Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust has built 215 homes for rent and 91 homes for outright sale in this year and continues to be the largest house builder in the city, delivering much needed new affordable homes. In July 2018 we celebrated the successful completion of the 3,000th BMHT home on the Kings Norton estate and our priority for 2019/20 is to secure a new 10-year development programme which will seek to deliver a further 3,000 new homes. We are also pleased to announce that we have obtained approval for our first modular BMHT home which will be completed in Summer 2019. Embracing new approaches to delivering council homes as well as using innovative practices culminated in BMHT being awarded 'Social Housing Developer of the Year' at the West Midlands Regional Property awards for a fourth year running. This is a fantastic achievement and well-deserved recognition for our officers who work hard year after year, to create better homes and better lives for the residents of Birmingham.

Fire safety in our high-rise blocks remains our top priority with the installation of sprinklers in all 213 blocks well underway. We have also carried out enhanced fire safety work to upgrade all our high-rise blocks to meet the latest government guidelines. With a continuing focus on your safety we are also working to connect all high rise blocks new installation fire and sprinkler panel alarms through to the careline control room. This will give our tenants an even greater peace of mind as well as provide a better, joined up service. As a landlord we value listening and involving residents in an issue as important as this, so looking ahead to 2019 we will relaunch our block champion initiative to get more tenants living in our high- and low-rise blocks involved in monitoring our cleaning and safety standards.

It has also been another busy year for our repairs contractors who have carried out 4,684 council home improvements, including replacing over 2,000 boilers, 400 windows and 1000 doors. They have also modernised over 600 kitchens and 500 bathrooms, which is excellent.

Tenant engagement is at the heart of everything we do at Birmingham City Council and we have a long-standing tenant involvement movement which we are proud to work in partnership with to deliver our housing priorities. We would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate Joan Goodwin, Chair of City Housing Liaison Board and the Performance Monitoring Group on receiving an MBE from the Queen.

Joan has worked tirelessly as a tenant volunteer in Birmingham for over 25 years and it was with great appreciation for her services to her community that she has been recognised for this hard work on the national stage. This is a much well-deserved achievement for which we are all so proud.

Finally, looking to the future we will be celebrating 100 years of council housing in Birmingham in July 2019. This will give us a fantastic opportunity to reflect on how far we have come as a council and the wonderful progress we have made to delivering good quality housing to those most in need. We look forward to sharing this with you in next year's Annual Report to Tenants.

We hope you enjoy reading this report and we appreciate any feedback you may have. Please go to **[www.birmingham.gov.uk/residentinvolvement](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/residentinvolvement)** and fill out the online form as your views will help inform future reports.



**Cllr Sharon Thompson**  
**Cabinet Member for Homes**  
**and Neighbourhoods**



**Robert James**  
**Acting Corporate Director – Place**



# Annual Report 2018/19

**All figures used in this report are current as of 31 March 2019.**

## Dear tenants and leaseholders

Welcome to our Annual Report to Tenants which sets out how Birmingham City Council has performed as your landlord during 2018/19 against the National Housing Standards for social landlords, which are set out below:

1. Working Together
2. Your Home
3. Your Tenancy
4. Your Neighbourhood and Community
5. Value for Money

The Annual Report to Tenants is our opportunity to explain to you how well the services we provide are performing and celebrate our achievements for 2018/19. We have shown how we did last year, what has gone well, where we need to improve and have highlighted our priorities for the year ahead to help achieve our aim of providing great homes and the best services for all our tenants and leaseholders.

As well as the Annual Report for Tenants we have also updated you on the services we provide, how we pay for them and our priorities for the year ahead through our website and City Housing Liaison Board (CHLB)

During 2018/19 we are pleased to inform you that we have made good progress in achieving the following service priorities:

- The annual Birmingham in Bloom event took place on the 7th November 2018. To celebrate local involvement and recognise residents taking a pride in where they live, the name of the event was changed to 'Birmingham in Bloom HLB Awards'. As well as a name change each Local District Judging Panel will now incorporate Neighbourhood Services entrants when judging each category to determine the district winner.
- We ran two successful training days for members of City Housing Liaison Board to support them in carrying out their co-regulation role.
- We started a review of the Block Champions initiative by sending out a questionnaire to our existing Block Champions asking them to share their experiences to help shape the future development of the programme.

- The repairs contractors have carried out 242,205 responsive and gas repair jobs across the city and 3,671 void refurbishments have been made available for re-letting.
- Capital improvements have been undertaken to 4,684 council homes across the city.
- The repair and maintenance contractors have continued to deliver a series of positive actions and achievements through the 'social value' element of the contract. These include – investing over £297,000 in community causes and local charities and 5,022 hours volunteering in the local community. They have also supported 155 local people with employment and training initiatives and currently support 39 apprentices across all contract areas.
- The programme of sprinklers in all 213 of our high-rise blocks is now well underway and enhanced fire safety work is being completed to upgrade all our high-rise blocks to meet the latest government guidelines.
- We have built 181 homes for rent and 91 homes for outright sale through the Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust (BMHT).
- BMHT have generated sales returns of £14.3m which have been re-invested into providing more social rented houses for council tenants.
- In July 2018 we celebrated the completion of our 3,000th home using Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust built on the Kings Norton Estate.
- We have introduced pre-tenancy workshops to assist prospective new tenants, help sustain tenancies and prevent homelessness.
- The rent service collected £752,417 from former tenants during 2018/19.
- Our established Neighbourhood Services Team have continued to work in neighbourhoods and carried out visits to engage and educate residents to encourage recycling and dispose of rubbish appropriately. During 2018/19 these teams collected and disposed of 1,750 tonnes of dumped waste from housing land. The reduction of 160 tonnes on last year is the likely result of the successful engagement and education initiatives carried out by the Neighbourhood Services Team in 2017/18.
- Many activities were carried out in partnership with HLB members, residents, some Councillors and community groups that helped improve the local environment including community litter picking and clear up events. To celebrate the 'Great British Spring Clean' 24 'clean up' events took place across the city, which resulted in around 13 tonnes of waste being collected and disposed of.

- We have continued to work with residents to carry out environmental improvement works in our neighbourhoods and 653 residents have now signed up to Good Neighbour Agreements which give a firm commitment to help maintain locations that have been cleared of rubbish.
- We have continued to support training and employment opportunities for our residents through the 'Estate Caretaker Apprenticeship Program' and have successfully recruited 23 apprentices into full time, permanent positions within the city council.
- We have continued to provide dedicated staff to manage actual sites of our sheltered schemes and offer floating support to older people in sheltered schemes that provide one to one guidance.
- As part of the new BRUM account the rent service launched their new 'housing online' platform to give tenants the opportunity to make payments or view their statements online.
- The new job management system has been fully embedded within the Tenancy Services Team allowing customers calling the contact centre to be given appointment times there and then.
- The Neighbourhood Relations Service was introduced on a three-year contract replacing the previous Mediation Service. This is an excellent way to resolve neighbourhood disputes or misunderstandings and of a total of 172 cases referred in 2018/19 the success rate was 83%.
- In March 2019 a new case management system was launched which has improved our capacity for reporting Anti-Social Behaviour demand, actions taken and outcomes. Training has been provided to all front-line officers and there is already an improvement in the data available to administer the ASB service.
- Throughout the year a total of 2,603 residents have been given advice and assistance through campaigns and events provided by the Financial Inclusion Partnership. This includes 1,100 residents given advice and information during the 'Talk Money and Pensions Week' (formally known as Financial Capability Week) and 930 residents were seen face to face and given benefit/fuel advice.

- The Financial Inclusion Partnership are working with a team of specialist work coaches from the Department for Work and Pensions to help 18-24-year olds overcome barriers to employment. They have supported 971 young people through this project into education/training.
- In November 2018 BMHT secured a further £720,000 from the Local Enterprise Partnership to help support our rented housing programme. This was in addition to the £510,000 already received.
- In January 2019 BMHT received planning approval for our very first modular prototype home which we aim to complete by Summer 2019.
- To help and support council tenants suffering hardship because of the Social Sector Size Criteria the Council awarded £1.722million in Discretionary Housing Payments in 2018/19.
- We piloted pre-tenancy workshops in the two letting suites to help and inform prospective new tenants.
- We introduced a pre-letting team, which is being supported by the Neighbourhood Advice and Information Service (NAIS) to give advice and guidance to prospective tenants before the letting so they are better prepared before signing for their tenancy.
- The Eviction Prevention Panel lowered the number of evictions which reduced homelessness and the associated high costs of temporary accommodation. Since the introduction of the Panel in 2016, 158 evictions have been prevented by their direct intervention up to the end of March 2019 and the rent arrears on these cases have reduced by a net value of £112,886.23.

For the year ahead Housing Management will continue to find ways to work more efficiently and effectively to improve the standard of services for tenants and leaseholders and to increase customer choice and flexibility.

To do this we will:

- Organise a city-wide launch event in July 2019 to celebrate '100 Years of Council Housing'. This will be followed by a series of local events which will highlight the importance and history of council housing in Birmingham and give us an opportunity to talk to tenants about priorities for their neighbourhoods.
- Review the Kitemark process for Housing Liaison Boards.



- Re-launch the Block Champions initiative to take on more Block Champions who will be involved in assessing the appearance of high and low-rise blocks of flats.
- Acknowledging the 100-year celebration of council housing in Birmingham we will review the format of the Birmingham in Bloom HLB awards ceremony for 2019, to recognise our repairs contractors for the great service they provide for tenants.
- Continue with the sheltered housing high rise stock review to support the council in trying to make the best use of its stock.
- Continue to complete our annual contract reviews with all contractors to review the year's performance and agree future performance improvement objectives.
- Connect newly installed fire and sprinkler panel alarms in high rise blocks through to the Careline control room which will make available emergency response services to residents.
- Complete 180 houses for rent and 100 for outright sale through Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust (BMHT).
- Continue to support the removal of waste by having locally based Neighbourhood Services Teams in place to remove fly tipped waste and carry out work that improves the appearance of those neighbourhoods.
- Local Neighbourhood Services Teams will continue to assist tenants living in high rise accommodation that need support to access the BCC chargeable bulky waste collection service.
- To improve customer service the 3 local team hubs will move to the corporate contact centre to ensure consistency in service delivery across the city.
- Introduce a new proactive campaign of visits to our 'under occupied' properties. This will educate our tenants on the benefits, possibilities and assistance available to them in actively downsizing thus enabling better use of stock.
- Work with the Performance Monitoring Group to provide greater detail relating to ASB investigations and actions taken following the implementation of the new case management system.
- Continue to review the overall performance of the Security Service and Night Time Security.

- Progress our phase 2 and 3 new BMHT modular home programme.
- Start on site with construction of the Athletes Village in preparation for the Commonwealth Games 2022.

We hope you enjoy reading our Annual Report and that it gives you an interesting and helpful snapshot of how we have performed and our priorities for the year ahead.



# Section 1: Working Together



## Involvement and Empowerment

Tenant Involvement is at the heart of everything we do at Birmingham City Council. We have a long-standing tenant involvement movement which we are proud of and want to build on to help shape the future of housing services in Birmingham.

### Key Achievements 2018/19:

- We have continued to promote the 'How to Get Involved' document at local events and encouraged the completion of the 'How to Involve' survey to get more tenants involved in Resident Involvement activities.
- The Annual Report to Tenants 2017/18 was prepared for tenants and leaseholders and made available on the BCC Website.
- We ran two successful training days for members of City Housing Liaison Board to support them in carrying out their co-regulation role.
- We started a review of the Block Champions initiative by sending out a questionnaire to our existing Block Champions asking them to share their experiences to help shape the future development of the programme.
- HLBs completed their kitemark assessments using readily available local evidence. To ensure consistency all HLBs were scored against the following categories: governance, representation & communication, co-regulation, and monitoring outcomes. A total of 8 HLBs received a 2 Year Certificate in last year's assessment. This year's results showed that 5 HLBs achieved a 2 Year Certificate, 10 HLBs achieved a 1 Year Certificate and 8 HLBs were classified as needing support.
- The 8 HLBs that were classified as needing support in this assessment have since worked with their TPOs to help them put together a 'HLB Improvement Plan'. The plan sets out the action or changes needed to be made by the HLB to address the areas of concern highlighted on their scorecard. This action will help these HLBs to hopefully achieve a 1 or 2-year certificate during the next period of kitemark assessments.
- TPOs worked with Housing Liaison Boards (HLBs) to complete an HLB Annual Report and Action Plan for 2018/19 setting out their priorities for the year ahead.
- The annual Birmingham in Bloom event took place on the 7th November 2018. To recognise residents taking pride in where they live and making a difference in their local neighbourhood, the name of the event was changed to 'Birmingham in Bloom HLB Awards'. As well as a name change each Local

District Judging Panel will now incorporate Neighbourhood Services entrants when judging each category to determine the district winner. Other changes include:

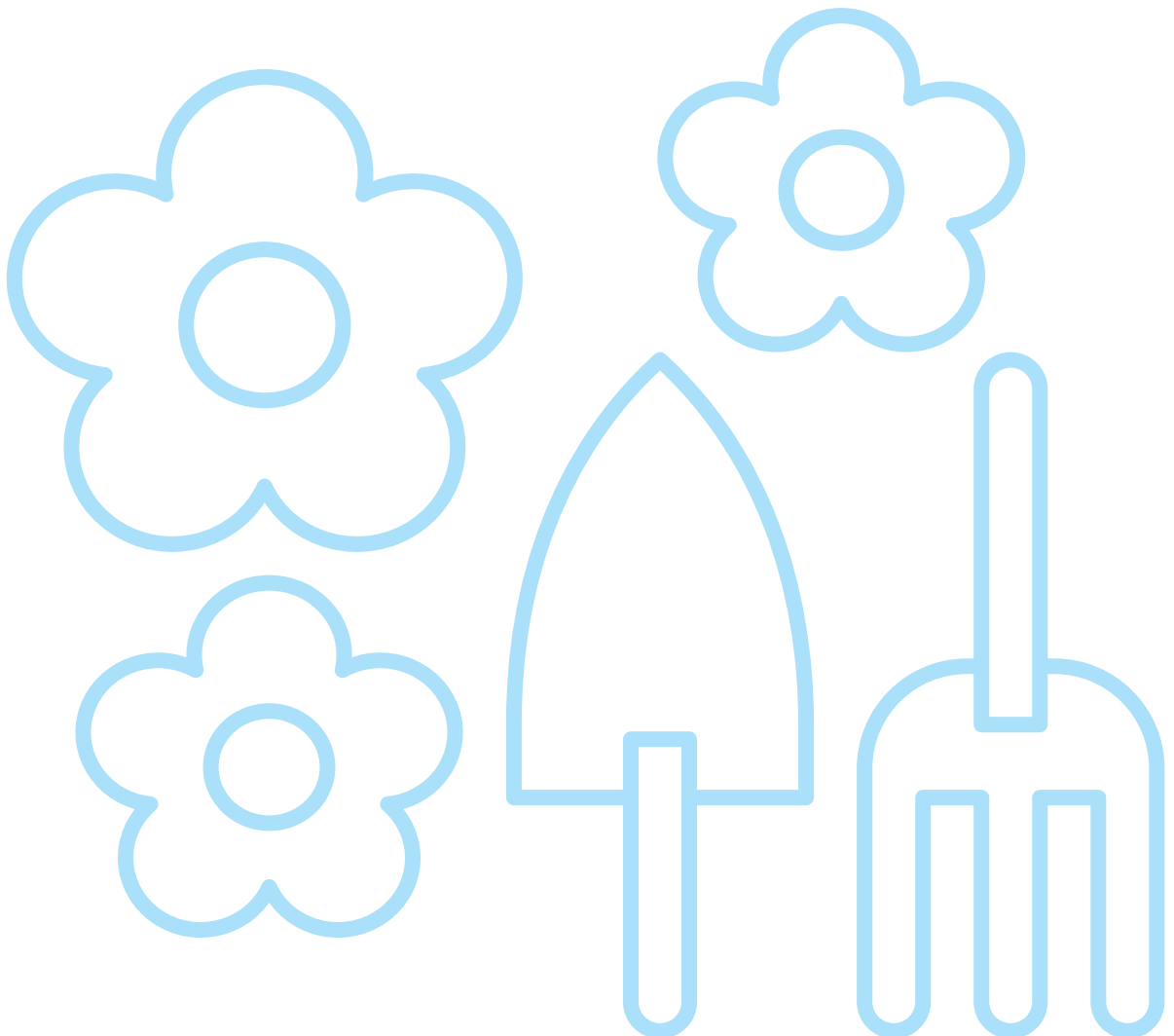
- A new category to become Best Front Garden and Best Back Garden for 2018.
- Best Community Garden to become Best Communal Garden for 2018
- To reinstate for 2018 Best Vegetable Patch/Container or Greenhouse.
- We have continued to support the work of the Performance Monitoring Group which is responsible for scrutinising city and district performance information with the aim of improving housing services. This Group has monitored the standard of work carried out by repairs contractors and has been instrumental in driving performance improvements in the Repairs Service. Joan Goodwin MBE who is Chair of the PMG group commented *"I am very proud of the involvement of our group members in helping to improve the standards we expect from our Repairs Contractors. By working in partnership through the PMG, tenant members scrutinise their performance and make sure our Contractors deliver what they have promised tenants when they were appointed. As Birmingham tenants deserve the best possible service! We are also highly energised to now be working with Government officials who have also recognised our achievements"*.
- The Leaseholder Liaison Board has involved members in a review of the Groups Terms of Reference. They have also received information on the installation of sprinklers in high rise blocks across the city.
- Housing Management revised the estate walkabout form in consultation with the Performance Monitoring Group. This form is now called the 'HLB Tenants Estate Walkabout Form' and improves the process for collecting and recording data. In 2018/19 HLB members conducted 221 walkabouts.
- During 2018/19 the Tenant Participation Officers (TPOs) have carried out many successful community events.
- Soho First is an active community group in Ladywood. They started work on the development of a Winson Green Road Peace Garden in 2018 with the aim of creating a beautiful and peaceful place for those who visit the prison and the local neighbourhood. The project was completed in early 2019 and the launch event was well attended bringing the community together and promoting resident involvement.

- In September 2018, Yardley Wood HLB members came together to support the community day at Billesley Fire Station. As well as several fun activities for all ages there were a few information and display stands from partner organisations who provided support and advice for members of the community. The event was well attended, and many residents took advantage of the services and advice on offer.
- In recognition of the tenants who took part in Birmingham in Bloom, an afternoon tea party was held for over 60 tenants at Baughan House in November 2018. To celebrate the efforts of residents maintaining their beautiful gardens and inspiring others to do the same.
- Majors Community weekend took place at Kingsdown Park, Perry Barr in June 2018. The theme of the event was 'community wellness', the event was well attended and enjoyed by all.
- The Welfare Reform Group (a sub group of CHLB) have a continuing action plan to help tenants to become capable of managing their finances and sustain their tenancy by holding several financial inclusion events across the city, supporting over 3,000 residents. The group have also been instrumental in co-designing the creation of pre-tenancy workshops within letting suites.
- We continued to work with the BCC Performance Monitoring Team and Asset Management Team to review, develop and agree a consistent and appropriate annual set of performance measures and corresponding targets with all 5 Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs)
- We worked with TMOs through our liaison meetings to maintain standards achieved, resulting from the Birmingham Audit recommendations.
- We have undertaken and completed annual and five-year total performance reviews for Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) in line with the requirements of their MMAs (Modular Management Agreement).
- We have worked closely with all TMOs to ensure their data processing agreements have been updated in line with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) requirements.
- Individual and 'All TMO' liaison meetings were carried out in line with MMA and TMO performance framework.
- Statutory checks have been carried out on the log books at all the Tenants Halls.

## Priorities for 2019-20

- To continue to support the strategic development of Resident Involvement.
- To celebrate the 100 Years of Council Housing, we will organise a city-wide launch event in July 2019. This will be followed by a series of local events which will highlight the importance and history of council housing in Birmingham and give us an opportunity to talk to tenants about priorities for their neighbourhoods.
- We will review the Kitemark process for 2019/20.
- We will produce an 'Annual Report to Tenants' for 2019/20.
- We will review the HLBs awarded Kitemarks for 1 year and those needing support to develop appropriate improvement plans.
- We will relaunch the Block Champions initiative.
- Considering the 100 years celebration of Council Housing we will review the format of the BIB HLB awards ceremony for 2019 to incorporate recognition and thanks for the great service our Repairs Contractors provide to tenants as part of the Performance Monitoring Group Awards.
- To review the terms and conditions of the BIB awards categories in relation to health and safety risk for displaying of plant boxes/pots/baskets. A charity calendar will also be produced, and the proceeds will be shared with local charities.
- The Welfare Reform Subgroup will continue to support tenants to be capable of managing their finances and sustain their tenancy. They will also work with the Financial Inclusion Team to co-design services.
- The Leaseholders Liaison Group will put together a work programme for 2019/20 that focuses on relaunching the group and getting new members, reviewing the leaseholders guide, understanding the terms of the lease and reviewing the block building insurance policy.
- We will continue to work with the BCC Performance Monitoring Team and Asset Management Team to review, develop and agree a consistent and appropriate annual set of performance measures and corresponding targets with all 5 TMOs.

- We will continue to ensure robust systems are in place to measure TMO compliance to health and safety procedures in tower blocks managed by them.
- We will continue to complete Annual and Five-Year Total Performance reviews for Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) in line with the requirements of their MMAs (Modular Management Agreement).
- In preparation for moving to the 2012 MMA template, the TMO Support Team and Asset Management Team will review the repair schedules for all TMOs in their respective MMAs, in order to ensure clarity of BCC and TMO responsibilities.
- We will host a networking event for various groups of tenants and leaseholders (including users of Tenant Halls) engaged with the Council.
- We will work with Tenant Hall Members to create a training programme specifically for their needs.
- We will continue to carry out annual statutory checks on the property log books of Tenant Halls to ensure they are up to date.





## Customer Service, Choice and Complaints

In June 2018, Birmingham City Council transferred from the previous 'Your Views' complaints management system to a new system called Icasework. The new system is largely online, making it more user friendly and environmentally friendly than the previous system. Providing they set up an account, it gives the complainant the ability to track the progress of their complaint from start to finish. The process now consists of two main stages: Investigation and Review. Each complaint received is assigned to a specific officer who is alerted to any further correspondence or escalation. The escalation process itself has improved and is more visible to the complainant.

The number of complaints received during 2018/19 at each stage is shown below; the figures for 2016/17 and 2017/18 are also provided for comparison.

	2016/17 Total number of complaints	2017/18 Total number of complaints	2018/19 Total number of complaints
<b>Resolved upon receipt</b> (Stage 1 – settled immediately)	6	8	44
<b>Investigation</b> (Stage 2 – investigated and a response within 15 working days)	4,295	3,751	4,230
<b>Review</b> (Stage 3 – Stage 2 decision is reviewed by a manager or designated officer)	239	198	445

The number of stage two-equivalent complaints (investigations) has increased from 3751 in 2017/18 to 4230 in 2018/19, an increase of 479 (13%). Of the 4230 complaints received across Housing, 25.5% were upheld, 29.5% partially upheld and 43.5% not upheld. A further 1.5% were either rejected, withdrawn or the outcome was not specified.

The number of stage three-equivalent complaints (reviews) has more than doubled from 198 in 2017/18 to 445 in 2018/19, an increase of 247. This may in part be due to the transparency and ease of use of the new system. Of the 445 reviews received across Housing, 22.3% were upheld, 24.9% partially upheld and 50.1% not upheld. A further 2.7% were either rejected, withdrawn or the outcome was not specified.

The number of compliments received from customers is also recorded. In 2018/19, 198 were received, a decrease of 25 from 2017/18. Of these, 56% were for Housing Repairs and 44% for Housing Services.

## Key Achievements in 2018/19

- The annual Birmingham in Bloom event took place on the 7th November 2018. To celebrate local involvement and recognise residents taking a pride in where they live, the name of the event was changed to 'Birmingham in Bloom HLB Awards'. As well as a name change each Local District Judging Panel will now incorporate Neighbourhood Services entrants when judging each category to determine the district winner.
- We started a review of the Block Champions initiative by sending out a questionnaire to our existing Block Champions asking them to share their experiences to help shape the future development of the programme.
- The repairs contractors have carried out 242,205 responsive and gas repair jobs across the city and 3,671 void refurbishments have been made available for re-letting.
- Capital improvements have been undertaken to 4,684 council homes across the city.
- The programme of sprinklers in all 213 of our high-rise blocks is now well underway and enhanced fire safety work is being completed to upgrade all our high-rise blocks to meet the latest government guidelines.
- We have built 181 homes for rent and 91 homes for outright sale through the Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust (BMHT)
- In July 2018 we celebrated the completion of our 3,000th home using Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust built on the Kings Norton Estate.
- Our established Neighbourhood Services Team have continued to work in neighbourhoods and carried out visits to engage and educate residents to encourage recycling and dispose of rubbish appropriately. During 2018/19 these teams collected and disposed of 1,750 tonnes of dumped waste from housing land. The reduction of 160 tonnes on last year is the likely result of the successful engagement and education initiatives carried out by the Neighbourhood Services Team in 2017/18.
- We have continued to provide dedicated staff to manage actual sites of our sheltered schemes and offer floating support to older people in sheltered schemes that provide one to one guidance.

- The Neighbourhood Relations Service was introduced on a three-year contract replacing the previous Mediation Service. This is an excellent way to resolve neighbourhood disputes or misunderstandings and of a total of 172 cases referred in 2018/19 the success rate was 83%.
- Throughout the year a total of 2,603 residents have been given advice and assistance through campaigns and events provided by the Financial Inclusion Partnership. This includes 1,100 residents given advice and information during the 'Talk Money and Pensions Week' (formally known as Financial Capability Week) and 930 residents were seen face to face and given advice about benefits and saving energy costs.
- We have implemented our visiting service and conducted 12,563 visits to our tenants, keeping in touch with our residents and dealing with their concerns and service requests.
- We have dealt with 2,612 tenancy breaches, successfully taking legal action against tenants who fail to maintain their gardens and in one case securing a 5-year injunction.
- Tenants are now able to access online application forms such as requests for mutual exchanges, creating joint tenancies and permission requests, such as requests to take in a lodger (introductory tenancies).
- We have completed over 500 visits to residents who are under occupying their properties and wish to down size. As a result of this incentive 70 residents have moved releasing large family accommodation.
- We achieved a cash collection of 99.53% against a council target 94.60%
- We lowered our arrears level to £12.5m compared to the council target level of £13.2m.

## Priorities for 2019/20

- Organise a city-wide launch event in July 2019 to celebrate '100 Years of Council Housing'. This will be followed by a series of local events which will highlight the importance and history of council housing in Birmingham and give us an opportunity to talk to tenants about priorities for their neighbourhoods.
- Re-launch the Block Champions initiative to take on more Block Champions who will be involved in assessing the appearance of high and low-rise blocks of flats.

- Continue with the sheltered housing high rise stock review to support the council in trying to make the best use of its stock.
- Connect newly installed fire and sprinkler panel alarms in high rise blocks through to the Careline control room which will make available emergency response services to residents.
- Complete 180 houses for rent and 100 for outright sale using Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust (BMHT)
- To improve customer service the 3 local team hubs will move to the corporate contact centre to ensure consistency in service delivery across the city.
- Introduce a new proactive campaign of visits to our 'under occupied' properties. This will educate our tenants on the benefits, possibilities and assistance available to them in actively downsizing thus enabling better use of stock.
- Progress our phase 2 and 3 new BMHT modular home programme.
- Start on site with construction of the Athletes Village in preparation for the Commonwealth Games 2022.
- Introduce an automatic customer satisfaction exit survey for complainants of ASB.
- Publish our revised Tenancy Services Standards.
- Carry out a reduced programme of annual visits and continue to provide fire safety visits to reassure our tenants, reinforce key health and safety messages and take enforcement action where required.
- Continue to lobby government for appropriate funding solutions for fire prevention works in high rise flats.

## Section 2: Your Home



## Repairs and Maintenance General Overview

We have now completed the third year of the present repairs, gas and capital works contracts. The services provided to our residents include responsive day to day repairs and maintenance, gas repairs and annual gas safety checks as well as major capital improvement works programmes and aids and adaptations.

We have three contractors delivering the contracts;

- Engie – North (Erdington and Sutton Coldfield).
- Wates Living Space – Central/West (Ladywood and Perry Barr).
- Wates Living Space – East (Hodge Hill, Yardley and Hall Green).
- Fortem – South (Selly Oak, Northfield and Edgbaston).

There has continued to be a real drive on the part of the BCC Client Team to ensure contractors perform at the highest level. To manage the successful delivery of the repairs and maintenance service to a total of 61,219 homes, the contractors have the following resources in place:

- Engie – 56 vans and 68 operatives
- Wates Living Space – 172 vans and 189 operatives
- Fortem – 155 vans and 160 operatives

## Key Achievements for 2018/19

For this financial year, we have successfully completed:

- 242,205 responsive and gas repair jobs.
- 100% gas servicing safety checks completed.
- 8,452 electrical test and inspections carried out
- 4,684 planned capital improvements were carried out to homes across the city neighbourhoods.
- Re-launch the Block Champions initiative to take on more Block Champions who will be involved in assessing the appearance of high and low-rise blocks of flats.

Works included:

- 609 kitchens modernised.
- 513 bathrooms modernised.
- 2092 central heating boilers replaced.
- 444 properties had windows replaced.
- 1,014 doors replaced.
- 477 roofs replaced.
- 477 soffits and fascia's replaced.

- 3,671 void refurbishments completed across the city.
- 299 aids and adaptations carried out.
- Other indicators – Importantly the general feedback about the repair’s maintenance and improvement services from Housing Liaison Boards members and our call centre has been positive. This positive feedback is also being received in respect of capital investment work including provision of major adaptations.
- Responsive and gas repairs jobs raised across the city are the lowest they have been for over 5 years, continuing with the declining trend that was only challenged in 2017/18 as a result of the severe weather experienced in that year.
  - 2014/15 – 285,260
  - 2015/16 – 280,096
  - 2016/17 – 262,224
  - 2017/18 – 266,075
  - 2018/19 – 242,205
- All contractors provided and delivered their winter plans and have responded well to inclement weather patterns and emergency situations.
- Contractors continue to co-locate with our contract management teams to improve joint working.

The contractors have also delivered a series of positive actions and achievements for 2018/19 linked to the social value element of the contract, such as:

#### **Wates**

- Invested £524,000 into training local people
- Invested £18,000 supporting education including safeguarding training and modern slavery sessions
- Spent £33million with local small businesses
- Donated 2952 hours to local community projects
- Generated £54m economic benefit locally

#### **Fortem**

- Donated 4880 hours to local community projects
- Invested £378,000 back into the local community
- Created 17 apprentice opportunities

## Engie

- Employed 16 apprentices, double their target
- Spent 93% of our supplier investment with local providers
- Spent 82% of our supply chain budget with local small and medium sized local enterprises against a target of 25%
- Worked with local schools to assist young people with careers advice

## Priorities for 2019/20

- Continue to complete our annual contract reviews with all contractors to review the year's performance and agree performance improvement objectives going forward.
- The programme of installing sprinklers in all 213 of our high-rise blocks is now well underway.
- Enhanced fire safety work is being completed to upgrade all our high-rise blocks to meet the latest government guidelines.
- Continue to work closely with West Midlands Fire Service to ensure continued fire safety measures are implemented as a result of Dame Judith Hackitt's Independent Review - Building a Safer Future 2018.
- Continue to invest in our council stock with an emphasis on green initiatives and improvements, focusing on our high-rise and low-rise stock.
- Work with our contractors to improve our stock information and develop planned maintenance programmes that will continue to reduce the number of responsive repairs requests.
- Continue the programme to carry out full stock condition surveys to 100% of our properties to ensure we have detailed and accurate up to date asset information.
- Continue to work with our contractors to implement the added value and additional social value elements included within their contracts.
- Continue to meet our statutory inspection and testing obligations under housing legislation, including fire protection, legionella, electrical, gas servicing, heating and hot water.
- Carry out structural works to prolong the life of high-rise and low-rise properties.
- Improve levels of thermal efficiency with the assistance of grant funding where available.
- Continue to provide aids and adaptations to assist residents to live more independently at home.

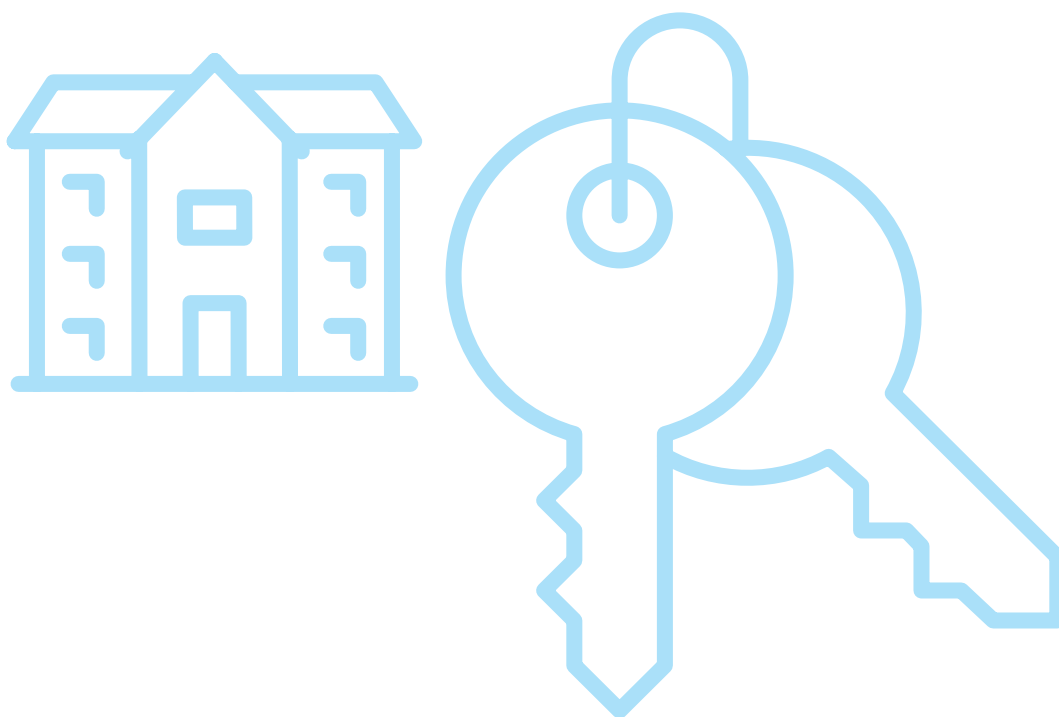


- The provision of additional temporary accommodation to maximise the supply of accommodation.
- Work with colleagues to support the work being done in respect of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- Aim to ensure that all our stock meets a minimum requirement of energy efficiency D rating.

## **The Voids Service**

### **Key Achievements for 2018/2019**

- 3,671 void properties have been made available for re-letting.
- Targeting and successfully re-letting previously long term hard to let dwellings helping to increase rental income to the Housing Revenue Account.
- Working with our void tenant inspectors alongside the council's technical officers to inspect properties before and after void repair work is completed to ensure standards are being met.



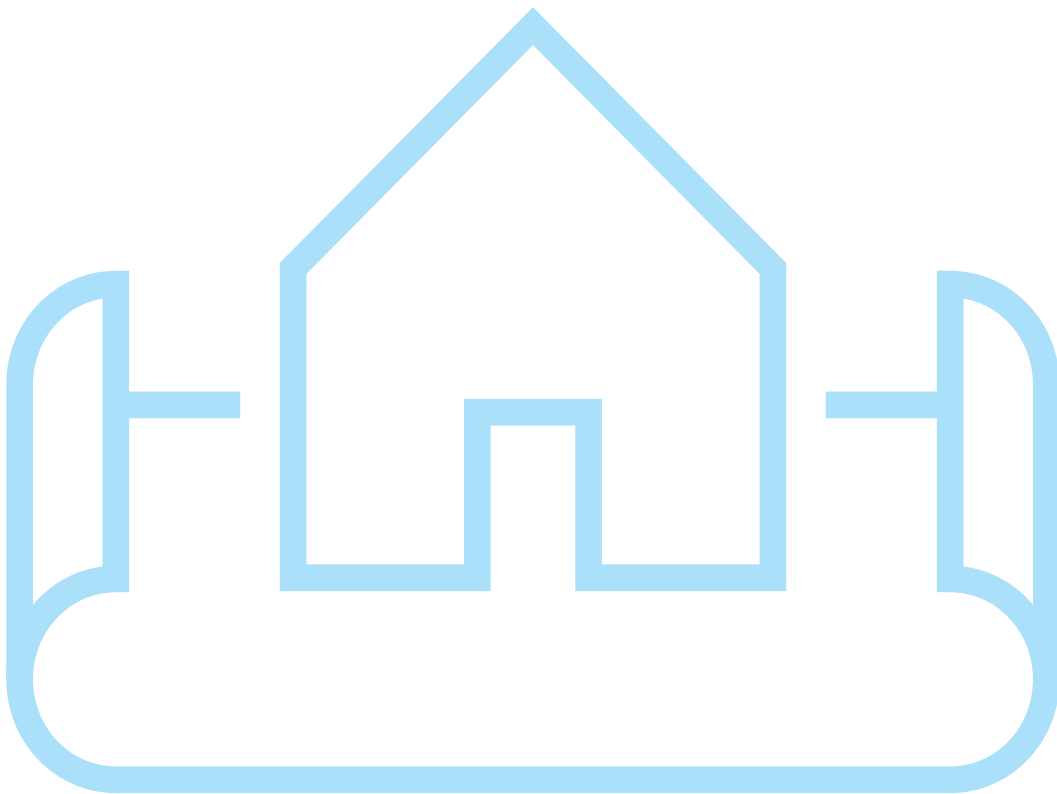
## Priorities for 2019/2020

- Working with our contractors to identify service improvements designed to further reduce void turnaround times and ensure that properties meet the Birmingham Void Property Standard.
- Continuing the approach to develop strategies to re-let any remaining long term hard to let dwellings helping to increase income to the Housing Revenue Account.
- Provide support to the Housing Options Service to ensure the effective delivery of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

The contracts awarded in 2016 have now been extended for a further 2 years. This means the existing contracts will run until 31 March 2022.

## Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust

Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust (BMHT) is the council's vehicle for building new rented and market homes across the city. Since 2009 the Council, through the BMHT, has become the single largest housing developer in Birmingham, and is now building over 20% of all the new homes in the city.



## Achievements for 2018-19

- We built 215 homes for rent and 91 homes for outright sale
- In July 2018 we completed our 3,000th home using Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust which was on the Kings Norton Estate.
- We continue to hold the prestigious title of Social Housing Developer of the Year from the Insider West Midlands Annual Property Awards Panel now holding it for 4 consecutive years.
- We have generated sales receipts of £19.5 million which have been re-invested into new homes for council tenants.
- In November 2018 we secured £720,000 from the Local Enterprise Partnership to help support our rented housing programme, in addition to the £510,000 already received.
- In December 2018 we secured planning permission on behalf of the council for the Athletes Village for the Commonwealth Games in 2022. Following the Games, this will provide around 1400 new homes for rent and sale.
- We obtained BCC Cabinet approval to embracing off-site manufacturing and to create a complementary programme to increase the level of social housing built using volumetric and modular methods across the city. This new initiative has been branded as 'BMHT Modular' and will see more new homes added to our overall housing programme over the next 12 months.
- In January 2019 we received planning approval for our very first modular BMHT prototype home to be completed in Summer 2019.
- In Summer 2018 we saw 18 of our Building Birmingham Scholarship (BBS) students graduate from university and we now have students who have subsequently secured permanent employment here with the city council; demonstrating the overall success of this skills pathway for low income applicants.
- We completed our major housing and regeneration scheme at Erdington Gardens which included the creation of another park funded by BMHT.

## Priorities for 2019/2020

- We aim to build 180 houses for rent and 100 for outright sale.
- Progress our phase 2 and 3 new BMHT Modular programme.
- Start on site with construction of the Athletes Village in preparation for the Commonwealth Games 2022.
- Secure a ten-year development programme which will seek to deliver a further 3000 new homes.
- Commence the initial phase of the Ladywood development with our partners to initiate the detailed planning and consultation phase for this major local area regeneration.
- Proceed with the Yardley Brook scheme to deliver 300 new homes, with the funding for remediation now secured.
- Continue to work with residents to bring forward the detailed proposals for the regeneration of the Druids Heath estate.
- Seek a manufacturing partner and opportunities to expand our modular homes delivery programme, following the success of our first pilot scheme.
- Explore opportunities to develop more high-density housing in city and local centres where they are popular with tenants.
- Build on the BBS success to secure more funding and placements for Birmingham residents wanting to grow their careers in construction.

## **Section 3:** Your Tenancy



## Supporting our Tenants with Welfare Reform

### The Social Sector Size Criteria

The Social Sector Size Criteria (under occupation charges) was introduced by the government in April 2013 as part of the government's welfare reform.

In Birmingham 6,212 households are subject to the Social Sector Size Criteria (SSSC).

There are two reductions in the amount to which the Housing Benefit can be restricted:

- 75% of households which are restricted by under occupying their property by one bedroom and are subject to a 14% reduction to their Housing Benefit. The average reduction is £13.30 per week.
- 25% of households which are restricted by under occupying with 2 or more bedrooms and are subject to a 25% reduction. Their average reduction is £23.75 per week.

To help and support council tenants suffering hardship because of the Social Sector Size Criteria the council awarded £1.722million in Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) in 2018/19.

### Benefit Cap

The government's Benefit Cap (BENCAP), was implemented in Birmingham in August 2013. This restricts the amount of all benefits that working age people can receive. The Government announced in 2015 that it would lower the benefit cap to £20,000 per annum from 7 November 2016. This limits total benefits to:

- £384.62 per week for couples (with or without children) and lone parents
- £257.69 per week for single adults

The government also made households who receive Carers Allowance or Guardian Allowance exempt from the benefits cap when the lower cap was applied.

There are 1,910 households subject to the Benefit Cap.

Tenure	No of households	% of total
Local Authority Tenants	1,008	53%
Private Tenants	524	27%
RSL Tenants	378	20%

To help and support tenants suffering hardship because of the Benefit Cap the council awarded £2,176 million in Discretionary Housing Payments for BENCAP in 2018/19.

## Benefit Service

The aim of the Benefits Service is to maximise income to claimants by awarding benefit promptly and accurately and promoting the take up of relevant welfare benefits. This is achieved by effectively administering the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support schemes, to enable maximisation of Government subsidy whilst providing service excellence. The Service also administers Local Welfare Provision (LWP) and the Discretionary Housing Payments. The aims are to help residents maintain their tenancy and reduce potential homelessness as well as to help to reduce the number of households in fuel poverty.

## Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

The Funding for DHP for 2018/19 was £4,781,876 the table below shows what categories the funding was awarded

<b>BENCAP</b>	29%
<b>SSSC</b>	35%
<b>General Hardship</b>	27%
<b>Local Housing Allowance</b>	9%

## Key Achievements for 2018/19

- The Benefit Service has continued to improve the collection of housing benefit overpayments
- The Benefits Advice Team have successfully maximised income to vulnerable residents in Birmingham by gaining an additional £2.25m of welfare benefits as of January 2018.
- Improved performance in average days to award benefit – exceeding the council's 24-day target with a turnaround time of 15 days for new claims and 5.5 days for changes.
- Remodelling of the Benefit Service.
- Absorbed DWP funding cuts whilst continuing to provide a service in line with Key Performance Indicators. (KPI)

- Benefits Customer Services team continue to respond to all Councillor enquiries, M.P.s enquiries, Local Government Organisation and Citizen Complaints within the target timeframe.
- Successful mitigation of the effects of Welfare Reform including Universal Credit.
- Contribution towards the Homeless Prevention agenda by:
  - Provision of priority review through the eviction line
  - Contributing to the activity of the Eviction Prevention Panel
  - Speed of processing KPI
  - Applying change of circumstances KPI
  - Provision of Discretionary Housing Payments
  - Provision of Local Welfare Reform
  - Advice and Guidance from the Benefits Advice Team

### Priorities for 2019/20

- To maximise efficiency and the needs of a changing benefit caseload with reduced DWP funding.
- Ensure ongoing needs of residents are met through quick and accurate benefit payments, recovered overpayments and delivery against KPI's.
- RSL Eviction Prevention Panel - To work with Registered Social Landlords identified by BSHP (Birmingham Social Housing Partnership) and replicate the work of the Eviction Prevention Panel.
- Overpayment remodelling.
- Brum Account - Implementation of the Citizens Access benefits (CAB) element of the Brum Account.
- Examine opportunities to improve efficiency by considering options for the redesign, and if appropriate implementing a revised Council Tax Support scheme for Birmingham in readiness for 2020/21.
- Maximise subsidy income to the council and safeguard against LA error and DWP financial penalties.
- Ensure that Benefit payments are accurate through participation in the continuation Verification of Earnings and Pensions (VEP) scheme.
- Ensure effective mitigations are in place to minimise any adverse impacts to citizens in the ongoing rollout of Universal Credit.
- Introduction of a Supported Exempt Accommodation Team (S.E.A.T)



## Birmingham Financial Inclusion Partnership

Birmingham Financial Inclusion Partnership is a multi-agency partnership that focuses on tenants to prevent poverty and financial exclusion throughout Birmingham.

### Key Achievements 2018/19

- A new strategy was launched and approved by Cabinet in April 2017. The strategy relates to 2017 to 2022. There are three underlying principles of: prevent, survive and recover and the strategy responds to the needs of our residents from childhood to retirement.
- An associated Action Plan was approved with 6 objectives:
  1. Financial Products and Services
  2. Advice, Information and Financial Education
  3. Food and Fuel
  4. Strategic Influence
  5. Employment, Education and Skills and Training
  6. Digital Inclusion
- Throughout the year a total of 2,603 residents have been given advice and assistance through campaigns and events. This includes 1,100 residents given advice and information during the Talk Money and Pensions Week (formally known as Financial Capability Week) and 930 residents seen face to face and advice given about benefits and saving energy costs.
- In partnership with Free Radio, and with the support of our HLB members, over 1,000 presents were given to children at Christmas.
- We worked with the main energy providers to support vulnerable people in fuel poverty by training all front-line staff. We also delivered free Key Stage 2 workshops to schools in highest fuel poverty as part of an awareness campaign.
- Birmingham has joined the LEAP (Local Energy and Advice Partnership) scheme to provide a single access point for advice and information.
- The money hub has increased its opening hours to support more people and 40 staff attended workshops on debt advice and loan sharks
- Over 100 care leavers have been supported and over 80 have sustained a tenancy with BCC
- We held 3 events in hospitals to support 'NHS Financial Well Being' and dealt with 493 enquiries as a result.

- We are working with a Department for Work and Pensions team of specialist work coaches to help 18-24-year olds to overcome barriers to employment and have supported 971 young people through this project into education/training.
- We held a Tackling Gambling Related Harm Summit in partnership with the University of Birmingham and England's Illegal Money Lending Team; the first of its kind in Birmingham. A task group has been set up to continue to co-ordinate our efforts in tackling this issue and raise awareness of harmful gambling.
- We have introduced a new delivery model to foster 'Financially Healthy Neighbourhoods' working alongside Neighbourhood Network Schemes in Selly Oak, Perry Barr and Druids Heath Communities

## Priorities for 2019/20

- To review the second year of the strategy.
- To deliver on the Priority Action Plan for the second year.
- To work with established task groups to deliver the strategy.
- To embed and align the strategy with other strategies and service delivery plans.
- Work in partnership nationally and locally in shaping financial services
- To develop funding streams where appropriate.
- Embed the new delivery model for Selly Oak, Perry Barr and Druids Heath

## Lettings Suites

The council has two letting suites – one in Sparkbrook covering the east, west and north of the city and one in Northfield covering the south. Residents are let properties and receive advice, guidance and support on how to manage and sustain their tenancy. To date all new tenants that have passed through the letting suites receive support where needed for the first 12 weeks of their tenancy.

## Key Achievements 2018/19

- The lettings procedures were refreshed to ensure a focussed service was provided to our tenants.
- Piloted pre-tenancy workshops in the two letting suites to help and inform prospective new tenants.
- Developed a pre-letting team to give advice and guidance to tenants before the letting so they are prepared before signing for their tenancy which is being supported by NAIS (Neighbourhood Advice and Information Service)
- Identified a triage approach to support those most at risk of not managing their tenancy.

- Developed a dedicated team to support those most vulnerable tenants for the first 12 weeks to sustain their tenancy.
- Provided a dedicated service for care leavers so that they are supported from the time they join as a housing applicant and for the first 12 months of their tenancy once allocated a property.
- Piloted the 'Housing First' project to support rough sleepers with Shelter.

## Key Priorities 2019/20

- To develop our approach towards preventative, proactive and early intervention work to sustain tenancies and prevent homelessness.
- To continue to support the most vulnerable tenants who are at risk of not managing their tenancy.
- To continue to support tenants moving on to Universal Credit.
- To review our processes including the triage, pre-letting and booking appointments to ensure an effective and efficient service is provided to our tenants.

## Rent Service

The aim of the Rent Service is to maximise the collection of rent by providing our tenants with advice and support in order to prevent rent debt. We aim to promote self-sufficiency and identify vulnerable tenants at an early stage, to work individually and collectively with our housing providers to ensure tenancy sustainment and support the homeless prevention strategy.

The Rent Service's greatest challenge to date has been how effectively we have responded to the introduction of the Welfare Reform Act in 2013 and continue to do so. There are in the region of 12,500 tenants who have moved to Universal Credit. Compared to this time last year we have had a 50% increase in cases. We are processing about 120 new cases per week which are actioned through the landlord portal.



## Key Achievements 2018/19

During the financial year 2018/2019 we have concentrated, with a collaborative approach, on how we deliver an efficient and robust service to meet the rent and arrears collection targets.

- We achieved a cash collection of 99.53% against a council target 94.60%
- We achieved an arrears level of £12.5m compared to a council target level of £13.2m

## Universal Credit (UC)

- Universal Credit has been in full service for new claimants in Birmingham since November 2017.
- The Universal Credit pilot team was set up in 2017 for the sole purpose of meeting the needs of those tenants who have transitioned to Universal Credit. The team members offer early intervention, intensive case management and have established themselves as a reliable service located within our Job Centres.
- The team continue to work collaboratively with both our partners and stakeholders at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Benefit Service, Birmingham Central food bank and the local Job Centres across Birmingham.
- The team provides early intervention for our tenants and assist with applications for backdated benefits, payment plans, discretionary housing benefit, food vouchers and embedding a payment culture of "rent first". The team also work closely with vulnerable tenants, helping them to become more independent by promoting the use of online services where possible.

## Process Re-design

In last year's annual report, we mentioned process redesign. This is where the service considers "why we do what we do" and how we can work more efficiently in providing our tenants with more effective help to sustain their tenancies especially considering the impact of Universal Credit.

- In January 2016 the service launched a "joint working officer" pilot. This is a specialist team with in-depth knowledge of Housing Benefit and Rent protocols. This team has been a valuable extension to the Rent Service to demonstrate we are taking every opportunity to maximise income for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- The activities of the team are varied, and work cross functionally with Tenancy Estate Management, Court, Lettings, Introductory and Benefit teams to provide a more holistic approach. During the last financial year, the team have

secured approximately £1.2 million Housing Benefit for our tenants, and has contributed to reductions in evictions, former tenancy arrears and a reduction in benefit overpayments.

- The Service has reviewed its arrears recovery processes and has gained further efficiencies by the automation of certain steps. This has reduced the processing time and released resources to focus on case management.

## Eviction Prevention Panel

The success of this initiative has been as follows:

- Reducing evictions – therefore reducing homelessness and the associated high costs of temporary accommodation. Since the introduction of the Panel in 2016, 158 evictions have been prevented by their direct intervention up to the end of March 2019, and the rent arrears on these cases have reduced by a net value of £112,886.23.
- Reducing the former tenants' debt to the city which, in many cases cannot be collected. This amounts to £752,417 up the end of March 2019, which has been prevented from being transferred to former tenancy arrears accounts for these cases. These are debts remaining when a former tenant abandons their tenancy or is evicted and the tenancy then ends. The debt is transferred to the Former Tenancy Arrears team who attempt to track down the former tenants and when found attempt to engage them into paying towards reducing or clearing this debt. These debts are far more difficult to pursue as there is no legal recourse that we can go to in order to secure payment, so the minimisation of debts going across to Former Tenancy Arrears actually saves the council money as we are able to work with tenants who stay in their homes in order to pay their rent, keep their homes and increase and maximise income to the City.
- Reducing the number of tenants being referred to expensive temporary accommodation for evicted families/individuals.
- Reducing the costs involved in making properties fit to be re-let and the costs to change locks at eviction.
- Reducing the risk of harm to families, children or vulnerable adults by preventing them from becoming homeless.
- Increasing social cohesion with a support network for helping people stay in their homes.
- Increasing the income to the city by getting more tenants on to an affordable payment plan.
- Increasing funds available to the city to support the provision of housing services to the required level.

## Communication

During the year the Service improved communications by:

- Introducing workshops with DWP for the wider Rent Service. This supports staff at all levels to be able to deal with all Universal Credit related enquiries
- Senior management continued to meet frequently with the DWP
- Improved cross- functional meetings
- Ongoing Universal Credit training for existing and new staff

## Direct Debit

The Rent Service has continued to promote Direct Debits and Bank Standing Orders as a method of payment particularly for tenants in receipt of Universal Credit. The total number of accounts where a Direct Debit is in place for payment of rent and associated debts is 11,020 - an increase of 798 on the previous year.

## Online Services

During the financial year 2017/18 Birmingham's BRUM account was launched for all citizens of Birmingham. This online platform has enabled citizens to track all their council requests in one place, such as: -

- Ability to edit and complete saved forms
- View local services and facilities
- Access to campaigns and marketing content

As part of the BRUM account the Rent Service's new online account (Housing Online) was launched in December 2018, and give tenants the opportunity to: -

- View their rent statements accounts
- Make a payment
- Set up a direct debit account for their Rent account
- Request a refund
- Contact the service
- Access information on Universal Credit

## Key Priorities for 2019/20

- Implementation of a new staffing structure to meet the demand of expanding UC claimants.
- Robust and challenging targets for cash collection.
- Minimise any further impact of UC on the HRA (Housing Revenue Account).
- Investment in IT processes.
- Implement action plan for barcoding on standard letters to replace payment cards.

## **Section 4:** Your Community and Neighbourhood



## Tenancy Management

The role of tenancy management includes:

- dealing with tenancy matters, such as tenants' right of succession.
- mutual exchange applications.
- introductory tenancy reviews.
- investigating abandoned properties.
- dealing with overgrown gardens.
- joint tenancies applications.
- dealing with unlawful occupiers.
- requests for written permissions.
- supporting action to tackle social housing fraud and enforcing tenancy breaches.

We have policies underpinning our tenancy management role, which we must comply with to ensure consistency and fairness in our service delivery.

Tenancy management is mainly delivered within the landlord and tenant relationship, as set out in the Council's Conditions of Tenancy.

As the landlord we have obligations to manage our tenancies well such as letting properties quickly to those in need, tackling unlawful subletting and taking firm action against those who breach their conditions of tenancy. In turn, tenants also have responsibilities, such as paying their rent, not causing anti-social behaviour or damage to their property or allowing their gardens to become overgrown.

We do try to assist tenants to keep their tenancy conditions by making referrals to agencies who may support them. However, if problems continue, we may have to resort to taking legal action to stop the behaviour or end the tenancy.

## Key Achievements for 2018-19

- We have implemented our visiting service and conducted 12,563 visits to our tenants, keeping in touch with our residents and dealing with their concerns and service requests.
- To support the continuous professional development of our staff we are working with the Chartered Institute of Housing to create an apprenticeship framework to upskill our housing officers and visiting staff to meet the changing needs of the housing service.
- We have dealt with 2,612 tenancy breaches, successfully taking legal action against tenants who fail to maintain their gardens and in one case securing a 5-year injunction.



- Tenants are now able to access online application forms such as requests for mutual exchanges, creating joint tenancies and permission requests, such as requests to take in a lodger (introductory tenancies).
- We have completed over 500 visits to residents who are under occupying their properties and wish to down size. As a result of this incentive 70 residents have moved releasing large family accommodation.
- We have investigated 946 abandoned properties and have been successful in identifying cases of social housing fraud.
- To assist with the detection and prevention of social housing fraud, we have increased the number of staff trained in the use of data warehouse tools, and security scanning systems, to verify information provided to us relating to tenancy changes, such as rights of succession claims or requests for the creation of joint tenancies.
- We have introduced a performance management framework to ensure we are meeting our service targets and standards.
- We have worked with our temporary accommodation team to ensure we are connecting services and reducing homelessness, by early intervention and support.

## Priorities for 2019 to 2020

- We will publish our revised Tenancy Service Standards.
- We will implement our programme of staff training through an apprenticeship framework.
- We will respond to the recommendations within the Social Housing Green Paper(2018) and ensure that all residents are consulted.
- We will expand our online facilities for customers.

## Quadrant Hubs

The Hubs provide front-line customer service support for our customers through several functions which includes advice, signposting and directly resolving customers issues and concerns.

## Key Achievements 2018/19

- Full implementation of the new job management system allowing customers calling the hub to be given appointments 'there and then' for officers to visit them with an allocated appointment time and date taking into account a customer's preference.
- 90,006 calls were taken by the Hubs, A breakdown of this by Quadrant is as follows:
  - South: 33,585
  - Central/North: 31,043
  - East: 25,378
- It was agreed by Cabinet that as a cost saving exercise the 3 local team hubs would move to the corporate contact centre at Woodcock Street. This was intended to happen by the end of 2018/19. The move took place in May 2019. This required a lot of detailed work including training and support for staff involved in the changeover.

## Priorities 2019/20

- To build on the relationship that has been established with the corporate contact centre and the local team following the move of the local hub staff.
- To ensure consistency in service delivery across the city
- To create a single, generic 'inbox' for all housing enquiries following the amalgamation of the 3 local teams.
- To build on and ensure up to date processes, policies and information is available to officers via the Sheldon guidance and information system.

## Annual Visits

In 2018/19 we continued to deliver a reduced programme of Annual Visits since priority was given to fire safety visits to residents in our high-rise blocks. Through a combination of education and support we have been able to reassure our tenants and reinforce key health and safety messages and take enforcement action where necessary. This has now become 'business as usual'.

## Key Achievements for 2018/19

- The job management system has now been fully implemented by the Tenancy Services team, allowing customers calling the contact centre to be given appointments 'there and then'. An allocated appointment time and date is provided taking into account a customer's preference.
- We carried out visits to individual flats in all our high-rise blocks to provide fire prevention advice and guidance.

- We have developed systems for recording how many visits we currently undertake and the case load for each officer. This has enabled the data to be analysed ensuring consistency and movement of resources as determined by service delivery requirements.
- We have developed a new way of reporting the type of visits and enquiries the local team are dealing with. This has enabled a greater understanding of the issues and needs of local communities.
- The introduction of key management reports has enabled work flows to be managed more effectively, with greater awareness of resource implications.

## Priorities for 2019/20

- To start a new proactive campaign of visits to our under occupied properties. This will explain to our tenants the benefits and assistance available to them by downsizing which would better use our housing stock.
- To build on and extend the key management reports that enable work flows to be managed more effectively, with greater understanding of local issues and resource implications.
- Carry out a reduced programme of Annual Visits and continue to prioritise fire safety visits to reassure our tenants, reinforce key health and safety messages and take enforcement action where necessary.

## Anti-Social Behaviour

### Key Achievements 2018/19

- In March 2019 a new ASB case management system was launched in collaboration with Customer Services to replace the previous corporate Customer Relationship Management system. Due to this transition reporting of ASB was not possible during the months of March and April 2019 because of the need to manually transfer records of all live cases. The Performance Monitoring Group has been kept updated throughout this process.
- This new system, CXM, has improved our capacity for reporting ASB demand, actions taken, and outcomes. Training has been provided to all front-line officers and there is already an improvement in the data available to administer our ASB service
- The Neighbour Relations Service was introduced on a three-year contract to replace the previous Mediation Service contract. In 2017/18 there were a total of 40 referrals made to the Mediation Service. In 2018/19 a total of 172 cases were referred to the new Neighbour Relations Service which achieved a tremendous success rate of 83%. This is an excellent result which has supported parties to find better solutions together and an opportunity to reflect.

- We continue our drive to intervene early and make relevant referrals to ensure the right support is provided at the right time. We have a range of tools available to us and those are applied on a consistent basis where appropriate to help tenants to resolve problems to help sustain tenancies and avoid homelessness. Officers are dealing with complaints of antisocial behaviour on a daily basis and it is only with the support of the local community that positive action can be achieved to improve neighbourhoods.
- On a strategic level, we are represented at the ASB Steering Group which feeds directly into the Birmingham Community Safety Board. We are also supporting the new Local Partnership Delivery Groups which will be launched in September 2019.

## Highlight case

- **An interim emergency Injunction was granted in March 2018, and full injunction granted in September 2018 for 1 year with power of arrest against a tenant for a prolonged campaign of ASB including: constant arguments, fighting, many visitors to the property and drunken behaviour.**

On one occasion, a witness stated that the residents were all fighting and arguing. The Housing Officer attended and tried to speak with the resident but could see that they were drunk and there was a strong smell of cannabis coming from the property. In the proceeding melee the officer was pushed by one of the tenant's friends and police were called. An emergency injunction was sought due to the risk and aggression towards BCC staff. This injunction was breached on several occasions and the perpetrator was found guilty of contempt of court and breach of a court order on 3 separate counts.

A committal order was issued at court in March 2019 and the tenant was sentenced to 6 months custodial sentence suspended for 1 year. In April 2019, a remand order was then issued for breaching this committal order, bail wasn't granted and due to attending court intoxicated was sentenced to 1 week in prison. A further remand order was then granted 1 week later and bailed away from the property every day between 9pm and 7am until the trial date. In June 2019 the Judge found the defendant guilty of breaching the injunction, committal order and 2 remand orders and was sentenced to 1-year imprisonment as the Judge agreed the council had tried all available avenues to help the perpetrator but who chose not to engage.

## Priorities for 2019/20

- Work with the Performance Monitoring Group to provide greater detail relating to ASB investigations and actions taken following the implementation of CXM.
- Promote the online incident diary capability to complainants of ASB.
- Introduce an automatic customer satisfaction exit survey for complainants of ASB.
- Review and improve our triage approach to ASB.
- Investigate potential opportunities for dealing with noise complaints in a new way.
- Better understand the customer experience and work with our tenants to improve processes.

## Domestic Abuse Service (BCC Tenancies)

The launch of the Domestic Abuse Service in June 2016 was an innovation for Housing Management. Previously BCC lacked a designated resource to focus on this important area of work and as a result, some victims either went unprotected or made multiple applications to escape the abuse by moving around the city. This also meant that the abusers often remained in council tenancies. Our new approach both protects victims to sustain their tenancies and also ensures we tackle abusers and regain valuable properties from abusers to make best use of our stock.

Domestic abuse has devastating consequences for victims and their children. It can lead to substance misuse, mental health problems, unemployment, and homelessness and can often be an underlying symptom and cause of anti-social behaviour. In 2018/19 the service received 694 domestic abuse enquiries.

The Domestic Abuse Officers work in close partnership with the Police and other agencies to tackle the perpetrators of domestic abuse using perpetrator programmes to challenge and change abusive behaviours and break the cycle of abuse as well as using the various legal actions.

Partnership working has been enhanced as DA Officers attend Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and have formed close working relationships with Police Public Protection Unit's to share information and take agreed actions. Links have also been forged with third sector support organisations to provide victims with specialist support.

- We continue our drive to intervene early and make relevant referrals to ensure the right support is provided at the right time. We have a range of tools available to us and those are applied on a consistent basis where appropriate to help tenants to resolve problems to help sustain tenancies and avoid homelessness. Officers are dealing with complaints of antisocial behaviour on a daily basis and it is only with the support of the local community that positive action can be achieved to improve neighbourhoods.
- On a strategic level, we are represented at the ASB Steering Group which feeds directly into the Birmingham Community Safety Board. We are also supporting the new Local Partnership Delivery Groups which will be launched in September 2019.

It is recognised that there is a need to continually review how our service delivery impacts on the community we serve. A health check analysis was undertaken between September – November 2018. A snapshot of some of the data collated in this period shows:

- 166 live cases
- 97 Referrers received from Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)
- 57 referrals made from housing teams
- 21 direct referrals from victims
- 67 cases where actions prevented homelessness
- 7 cases where legal action was taken by BCC

The customer journey was a primary focus for the service during the review. Tracey Radford, Head of Housing Management, gave a commitment to “work with Shelter and other agencies to speak to women regarding their journey to learn how services should be shaped. This will support the further development of intervention/prevention through role of DA officers in my service area”.

A number of DA customer journey reviews were attempted over the two month review period. It is recognised that more work needs to be undertaken to capture experiences as early as possible. A bespoke exit satisfaction survey is being developed and will be introduced into the service.

Some examples comments from  
the **Customer Journey**:

*"Currently in  
a good place"*

*"I am in a good  
place and feel safe at  
the property"*

*"The service was brilliant, and the DA officer  
was very nice all the way through"*

*"I cried when the officer said  
they could help me and I can't thank  
them enough"*

*"I can't thank her enough. I am  
overwhelmed with the amount of  
support that I received. Without the  
help I would never had had the courage  
to start afresh and move on. I would  
never have dreamt of all of this help  
and support. I feel much stronger  
now and everything has worked out  
perfectly for me"*



In September 2018, Birmingham City Council signed up to the Chartered Housing Institute's '**Make a Stand**' pledge. This pledge gives local housing organisations the opportunity to sign up to make four focussed commitments to provide support for people experiencing domestic abuse. It is a public commitment to act to support victims of domestic abuse.

## Make A Stand

- **Pledge 1** – Put in place and embed a policy to support residents who are affected by domestic abuse.
- **Pledge 2** – Make information about national and local domestic abuse support services available on your website and in other appropriate places so that they are easily accessible for residents and staff.
- **Pledge 3** – Put in place a HR policy, or amend an existing policy, to support members of staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse.
- **Pledge 4** – Appoint a champion at a senior level in your organisation to own the activity you are doing to support people experiencing domestic abuse.

Organisations are expected to complete these actions by September 2019.

## Priorities for 2019/20

- Introduction of a new case management system that will enhance the capture of key performance data that will be used to help shape the service.
- Continue to improve communications to promote to tenants the service provided to tackle domestic abuse in housing management.
- Further develop training packages for introduction and awareness of domestic abuse for all officers.
- Ensure we meet the actions set out in the Make a Stand campaign.

## Think Family Programme

**Think Family** is part of an overall shift in the way in which Housing Management responds to anti- social behaviour – the aim is to manage demand by having a real focus on early intervention and deterrence as opposed to enforcement. The Think Family workers have continued to play an integral part in ASB Service delivery and resolving ASB at a local level. Their early intervention and support mechanisms have supported families to develop strategies to facilitate long term, sustainable change and to contribute to sustaining tenancies and enabling best use of BCC stock. The programme in its current format is due to end in 2019/20.



## Key Achievements in 2018-19

Birmingham City Council continued in 2018-19 to provide Think Family support through Phase Two of the National Think (Troubled) Family Programme. The criteria to identify families for support continues to include at least two of the six outlined below.

### Think Family Programme

1. Parents/ children involved in crime/ASB

2. Children not attending school regularly

3. Children who need help

4. Adults out of work/ risk of financial exclusion YP at risk of worklessness

5. Families affected by domestic violence and abuse

6. Parents/children with a range of health problems

- Housing management continued in its journey to transform its approach to prevention and intervention with 5 dedicated family support workers based across the city, working with families with additional needs. The Think Family Workers had 142 allocations for support made during 2018/19.
- Family Workers continue to help families to seek support to address financial exclusion/debt and housing issues.
- Develop actions with the family to reduce the risk of continuing housing issues that may put them at risk of eviction.
- Provide guidance to support families to exit temporary accommodation. This will include seeking advice on finance and personal budgeting, implementing a payment plan to address rent arrears and looking at appropriate accommodation which may include private rented sector housing.
- The 5 family workers have taken the role of safeguarding champions within their local areas, providing support and guidance to officers to ensure referrals are made, but also provide support for families that do not meet the threshold of the Think Family Programme.

## Priorities for 2019/20

- Continue to work in partnership with the Children's Trust to contribute to the overall Think Family Phase Two Programme (2015-2020) of delivering family intervention to support to 14,300 families by March 2020.
- Ensuring that the Think Family approach is embedded in future service delivery when the current programme ceases in March 2020.
- Continue to work with partners to identify family problems at an early stage, rather than reacting when these escalate, causing a greater impact on the community.
- Continue to work with those families in greatest need with multiple problems.

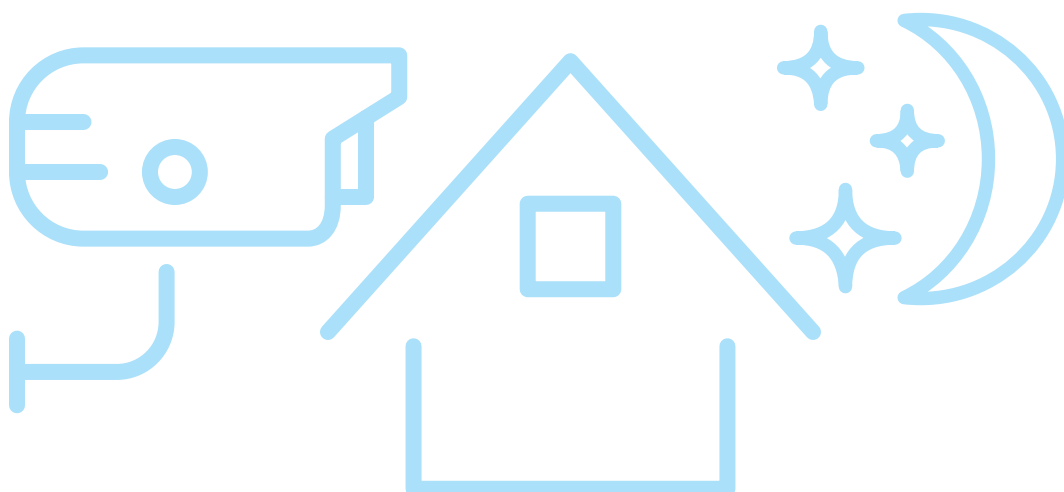
## Security Service and Night Time Security

Providing a 24/7, 365 days of the year service to its customers, this Chamberlain Award winning service consists of a Central Control Room, Call Monitoring Team, Mobile Patrol Officers and Team Supervisors.

The primary function of the Security Service is to:

Ensure the security of BCC property, tenants and visitors.

- A Central Control Team responding to door entry and property intercom requests from 103 BCC tower blocks.
- Respond to requests from visitors, tenants, delivery companies and emergency services requesting access to the building.
- Respond to property intercom calls from tenants calling for various reasons, including reporting anti-social behaviour, rough sleepers, lift faults, emergencies and general enquiries.
- Conduct 'tours of duty' in and around BCC housing blocks. Identifying and reporting emergency and routine housing repairs for communal areas.



- Respond to requests from the central control room for mobile patrol officers to investigate anti-social behaviour, reported repairs issues, water leaks, rough sleeping and providing onsite support to the emergency services etc.
- Complete detailed reports of all incidents ensuring that all relevant teams and senior officers are made aware where follow up actions are required.

## **Key Achievements – 2018/2019**

- The Central Control Team handled around 20,000 door entry and intercom calls per month.
- Mobile Patrol Officer Teams completed 'tours of duty' across all tower blocks subject to service charges.
- Effective partnership working with both internal and external partners, police, fire and ambulance, contractors, local housing teams.
- Responding to requests from local housing teams to provide evidence when dealing with ASB issues, rough sleepers etc.
- Supporting the Asset Management Duty Officer in responding to and resolving major emergency situations of flooding, fire and power loss in high rise blocks.

## **Priorities for 2019/2020**

- To monitor control room operator, call handling performance using system generated reports and voice recordings identifying areas for improvement.
- To identify high volume of visitor calls for individual properties which may be linked to illegal activity.
- To identify high volume of visitor calls for individual properties which may be linked to illegal activity.
- To continue to review the overall performance of the Security Service and Night Security.
- To continue to work in partnership with the councils Asset Management Team and external partners for continuous service improvement.
- Explore new business opportunities to generate income for the Security Service and Council.
- To relaunch the Security and Night Security Service with the intention of improving knowledge of the service held by tenants, internal and external partners.
- To promote the use of door entry fobs by all tenants.
- To reduce costs caused by vandalism, identifying and reporting to local housing teams and police any individual's causing damage to door entry panels.

## Services for Older People

Sheltered and Extra Care Housing Schemes provide support to their residents to help them live independently for longer. Birmingham City Council runs 126 sheltered housing schemes for older and vulnerable people across the city. We also manage 4 extra care schemes and there are a few others that are managed by Registered Social Landlords.

## Key Achievements for 2018/19

- Providing a dedicated floating support to clients that require one to one guidance.
- We have worked with our Temporary Accommodation Team & Homeless Centre to ensure we are connecting services and reducing homelessness, by early intervention and support.
- We have developed the use of our guest bedrooms to support homeless initiatives.
- We have worked jointly to better manage the city's stock and conducted visits for tenants who are under occupying and wish to move to smaller accommodation, thus releasing family homes.
- We have continued to provide dedicated staff to manage our Sheltered Housing Schemes.

## Key Priorities for 2019/20

- To continue to review current hardwired system connections through to Careline within sheltered housing.
- To continue with the sheltered housing high rise stock review to support the department in trying to make the best use of its stock.
- To further promote and develop the Floating Support Service, Extra Care and Category 2 schemes within the city.

## Careline Service

- Careline is a technology enabled care service run by a housing management team. The service supports older, frail, disabled and vulnerable adults to remain in their own home by providing a 24-hour, year-round (365 days) emergency monitoring service. The service is available to anyone living in and around Birmingham for a small weekly charge.
- The Careline entry level set up includes supply, installation, maintenance and call monitoring of a basic alarm base unit and wearable pendant.

- The team can also undertake Telecare Advanced Assessment to determine individual need, identifying risks within the environment and to the individual.
- The service is also able to offer a range of technology enabled care (TECs) such as fall, bed, flood and smoke detectors that raise an alert to our 24-hour control room at an additional cost.
- The Careline service also provides the following functions for Birmingham City Council.
- Out of hours emergency accommodation assessment and overnight placement into emergency accommodation for individuals meeting the criteria
- Out of hours monitoring and reporting of lift faults and incidents of people who may be trapped in high rise residential and City council buildings.

### **Key Achievements – 2018/2019**

- Generation of income for the Careline Service and council through provision of the Careline and Telecare Service.
- Achievement of maintaining the TSA Quality Assessment Framework (QSF) for installation, maintenance and call monitoring for the tenth year running.
- The purchase of new digital IP ready alarm equipment in preparation for BT's move to a new digital infrastructure.
- All Careline documentation reviewed and updated in line with GDPR and data protection changes.
- Responded to 245,081 alarm calls.

### **Priorities for 2019/2020**

- Maintaining the TSA Quality Assessment Framework (QSF) for installation, maintenance and monitoring of TEC (technology enabled care)
- Continue to generate income for the Careline Service and council
- Explore new business opportunities to generate income for the Careline Service and council.
- Explore and utilize new technology that maybe available on the TEC market in order to support people wanting to remain safely in their own home.
- Upgrade Carelines 'care control call monitoring' platform to meet the changes in BT's move to a new digital infrastructure.
- To connect all high rise blocks new installation fire and sprinkler panels alarms through to the Careline control room, allowing emergency response to all activations and fault reports.

## Neighbourhood Services

- Cleaner, greener strategies are an important part in improving the neighbourhoods of Birmingham. Cleaner, greener neighbourhoods enhance the quality of life for our residents, in turn creating pride in the places where they live, which is essential to building community cohesion and successful inclusive communities.

## Key Achievements for 2018/19

- Our established teams of Neighbourhood Services visiting officers have continued to work in our neighbourhoods and carried out many visits to locations and residents during the year. They engage with residents on how best to keep the local environment clean and tidy, encourage and give advice on recycling and educate residents on their responsibilities for disposing of rubbish appropriately and maintaining the cleanliness and appearance of neighbourhoods.
- We have continued to work with residents and carry out environmental improvement works in our neighbourhoods and over 650 residents have now signed up to Good Neighbour Agreements giving a commitment to helping maintain locations that have been cleared of rubbish and debris.
- Our Neighbourhood Services visiting officers investigate instances of rubbish dumping and fly tipping. Our teams actively challenge negative behaviour with positive results being achieved most of the time. Where offences are serious and offenders identified, we look to act in partnership with Regulation and Enforcement colleagues.
- In April 2016 we introduced locally based teams to remove dumped rubbish/ fly tipped waste and to carry out other environmental works in housing neighbourhoods. During 2018/19 these teams collected and disposed of 1,750 tonnes of dumped waste from housing land. This is a reduction of 160 tonnes of waste compared to the previous year. We think this reduction is in part down to the engagement and education work carried out by our neighbourhood services visiting officers.
- In early 2017 and in partnership with waste management colleagues, we publicised the council's chargeable bulky waste collection service to residents living in high rise accommodation. Housing Teams support residents who want to access this service which when used provides an income to the council and ensures that unwanted bulky rubbish is disposed of appropriately. From April 2018 and up to the end of March 2019 some 62 residents living in high rise accommodation had used this service.

- Once again, many activities were carried out with Housing Liaison Boards/ members, residents, some Councillors and community groups that helped improve the local environment including community litter picking and clean up events. A leading example of this is the great work done during March 2019, where housing teams, HLB Boards/members and tenants working with other council colleagues, various partner agencies, community groups and citizens, made a vital contribution to many of the 24 'clean up' events that took place across the city for the 'Great Spring Clean'. These events resulted in around 13 tonnes of waste being collected and disposed of.
- Another good example of officers and residents working together to maintain and improve housing neighbourhoods is our estate walkabout programme. This is where officers and tenants conduct a joint walkabout of a housing neighbourhood; the neighbourhood is assessed and where issues are identified officers and tenants work together to look at improvements that can be made. From April 2018 to March 2019, 221 estate walkabouts were carried out involving officers and HLB members and a further 31 were carried out with officers and other residents.
- The Neighbourhood Services categories have been successfully incorporated into the Birmingham in Bloom competition. These categories give recognition to volunteers who have helped transform the place where they live and who have contributed in making Birmingham a more pleasant, cleaner, greener and healthier city. The overall city winners for each category were invited to attend an award ceremony on the 7th November 2018 to receive a certificate, monetary prize and glass trophy.
  - Neighbourhood Cleaner and Greener Environment award recognises the achievement of local tenants, leaseholders, resident groups and HLB's transforming and caring for the place where they live to improve the appearance of their neighbourhoods to renew community spirit.
  - Neighbourhood Young Person/Group award – recognises the achievements of young people who have provided a positive contribution to the environment within the neighbourhood, this could be achieved through schools, afterschool activity groups, scouts, litter picking and clean up events, help with wildlife by planting trees, reusing materials and recycling.
  - Neighbourhood Helping Hand award – recognises volunteers, who have helped vulnerable people in their community such as elderly people or people with disabilities to enjoy their garden or assisting with wheelie bins and planting.

- We have continued to support training and employment opportunities for our residents. The 2018 Estate Caretaker Apprenticeship Programme was very successful, and we recruited 23 apprentices into full time permanent positions within Birmingham City Council. We currently have 17 apprentices working in our Neighbourhood Services Teams carrying out environmental cleansing and maintenance activity in our neighbourhoods.
- We have replaced our estate-based vehicle fleet during 2018. The numbers of vehicles have been reduced and emissions from our vehicle fleet are now air quality compliant. This will assist in improving the air quality of the local environment for residents.

## Priorities for 2019/20

- Locally based teams will continue be in place to remove fly tipped waste, carry out work that improves the appearance of our neighbourhoods and tackle environmental grot spots with the co-operation of residents.
- We will continue to engage and work with residents on how best to keep the local environment clean and tidy. We will support residents who want to make a positive difference and encourage recycling and waste reduction.
- We will investigate instances of 'fly tipping' and challenge negative behaviour. We will look to take enforcement action where we can and where it is appropriate to do so.
- We will continue to assist tenants living in high rise accommodation that need support to access the council's chargeable bulky waste collection service. This is important as we appreciate residents who care about the cleanliness and appearance of the local environment and look to dispose of their waste items appropriately.
- We will support HLB members and residents who want to participate with us in walkabouts of our neighbourhoods. We will also be looking to recruit more Block Champions and involve these residents in assessing the appearance of high- and low-rise schemes. We recognise the importance of involving residents in helping to maintain and improve neighbourhoods and appreciate residents who give up their time to participate.



- We will continue to support training and employment opportunities for our residents. There are currently 17 apprentices working in Neighbourhood Services and those who successfully complete the apprenticeship programme will be offered full time, permanent estate caretaker posts with Birmingham City Council.
- Building on the successful recognition of last year's Neighbourhood Services initiative, this year's Birmingham in Bloom 2019 event will continue to highlight the achievements of local tenants, leaseholders, resident groups and HLBs in transforming and caring for the place where they live. The Neighbourhood Young Person/Group award is an opportunity for young people who have provided a positive contribution to their local neighbourhood environment. The Neighbourhood 'Helping Hand' Award recognises volunteers who have helped vulnerable people in their community such as the elderly or people with disabilities to enjoy their garden or assisting with wheelie bins or planting.



## **Section 5:** Value for Money



## Strategic Overview and Context of Financial Pressures on the HRA

The HRA (Housing Revenue Account) is under considerable service and financial pressure to reflect national and local policy changes. The impact of the revised national rent policy (rent reductions of 1% per annum between 2016/17 and 2019/20) is estimated to result in a loss of HRA income increasing to approximately £42m per annum by 2019/20. In addition, there are statutory requirements to ensure that there is no cross-subsidy between the HRA and General Fund services (the “who benefits” principle – designed to ensure that council tenants do not pay twice for the same service, through both council tax and rents), that an annual balanced budget is set and that the service is sustainable and affordable in the long run based on the HRA Self-Financing Framework.

Impact of the Welfare Reforms and the introduction of the Universal Credit – research conducted by the Association of Retained Local Authorities indicated that rent arrears increased in those areas where Universal Credit has been introduced by an average of 16% in the first quarter following implementation. The percentage of HRA tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit has reduced from 70% to 55 %. Housing Benefit is a guaranteed income stream for the City. At March 2019 21% of our HRA tenants receive Universal Credit and are responsible for paying their full rent. The impact of this transition in Birmingham is significant as the move from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit continues; however, the Rent Service has strategies in place to mitigate this impact.

## Key Outcomes and Strategic Housing Service Objectives

The HRA Business Plan 2019+ is intended to support the following key strategic and housing service objectives:

### Building New Homes and Maintaining Stock

- Provision of new affordable housing to replace obsolete properties and provide a significant contribution to the Housing Growth Strategy (1,866 new council homes and 1,544 obsolete properties demolished over the next ten years with an associated investment of £401m)
- Maintaining properties in their current improved condition (to ensure that the properties are not impaired) with an investment of £594m over the next ten years. This will be achieved through the life-cycle replacement of property components (windows, heating, kitchens, bathrooms, roofs, electrical components)

- Fire Protection works to high rise flats (principally the installation of sprinkler systems), a total cost of £31m over 3 years
- Discharge of statutory day to day repairs and maintenance obligations (including compliance with health and safety on annual gas inspections) with investment of £669m over the next ten years
- Adaptations to properties to continue to promote independent living (an investment of £48m over the next ten years)

## Local Housing and Neighbourhood Services

- Continued modernisation of the delivery of local housing management services (e.g. annual visits, review and more rigorous enforcement of tenancy conditions, anti-social behaviour)
- Improving performance on rent collection and empty properties
- Secure efficiencies in Business Support Services to ensure that scarce resources are not unnecessarily diverted away from front line service delivery and investment priorities

## Rent Policy

- To ensure that the rent policy is consistent with the revised national rent policy (rents will further reduce by 1% per annum in 2019/20, followed by increases of CPI +1% for subsequent years)
- To ensure that service charges are set at a level that reflects the costs of service delivery, whilst ensuring value for money for tenants and ensuring that charges are eligible for support through Housing Benefit/Universal Credit, wherever possible.

## External Resource Generation

- Continuing to lobby for appropriate funding solutions for fire protection works in high rise flats, including the exploration of opportunities for partial funding from central government.
- Maximising the use of retained RTB receipts and access to Homes England grant and other grant funding programmes to support and increase the new build housing programme.

## Summary of Outturn - Key Financial Highlights

The key financial highlights are set out below:

- There was a small underspend of £0.6m on the HRA compared to the forecast balanced position (after taking into account additional repayment of debt of £35.4m from revenue balances). The debt now outstanding on the HRA is £1.1 billion.

The major variations during the year included:

- Substantially lower than budgeted expenditure on repairs to Council dwellings, due largely to reduced numbers of properties becoming void in the year (£2.650m), lower than budgeted performance related payments to contractors (£1.153m), reduced expenditure on lift repairs following the introduction of a new contract (£0.827m), lower than budgeted number of properties in HRA management (£0.805m), repairs expenditure identified as capital (£0.665m), saving on repair contractor pension costs due to use of provisions (£0.639m), and various other underspends (£0.815m)
- Reduced local housing management and estate services costs (£2.312m), mainly due to a significant number of vacancies not filled as service redesigns are progressed.

## Key Service Highlights for 2018/19

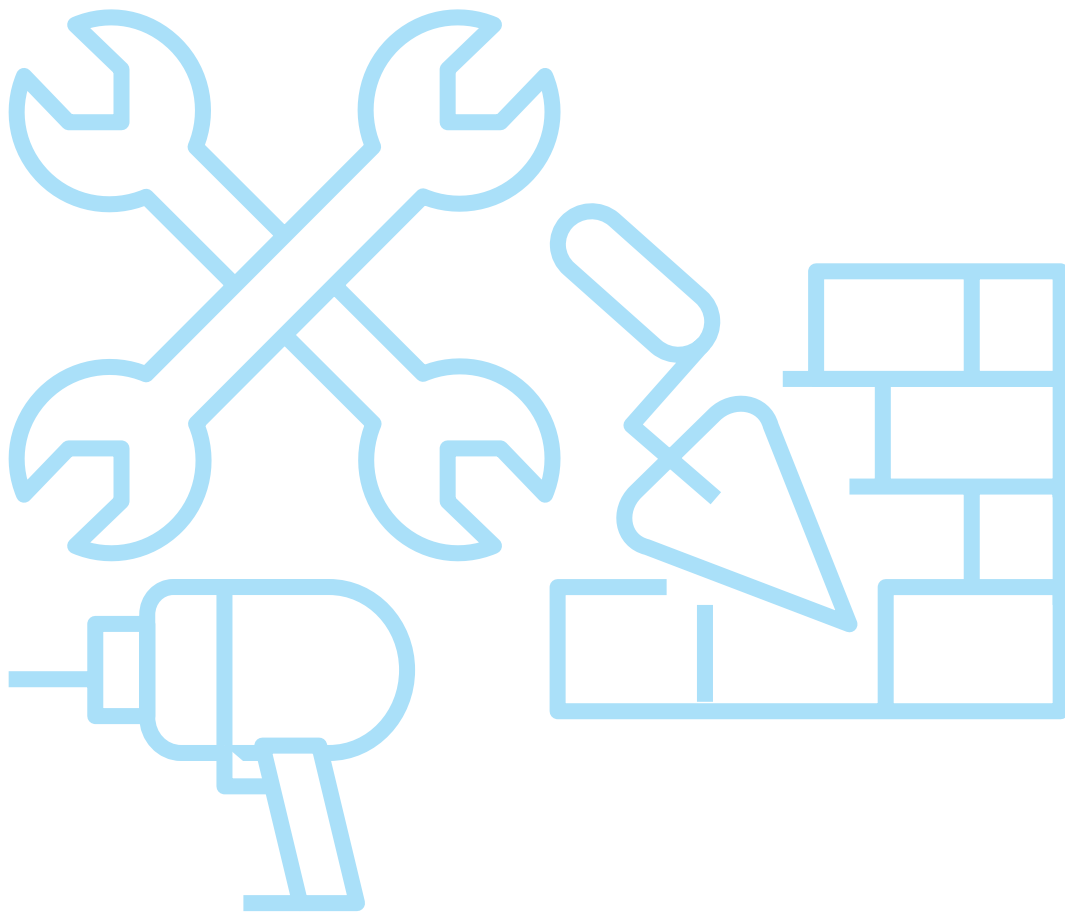
The following service achievements for 2018/19 should be noted:

### Investment

- Handover of a further 181 new affordable homes for rent under the BMHT programme
- Completion of the programme for the replacement of windows, heating systems
- Rewires to continue the on-going maintenance of properties, benefitting more than 7,000 homes
- External funding of £2.682m secured from Homes England

## Repairs Service

- The annual gas servicing programme was completed for all properties
- Emergency repairs were completed in line with agreed timescales
- All responsive and right to repair jobs were undertaken or issued to repairs contractors for completion, in line with agreed timescales
- All empty properties requiring repairs (where the property is to be relet) were completed or issued to repairs contractors for completion in line with agreed timescales



## Local Housing and Neighbourhood Services

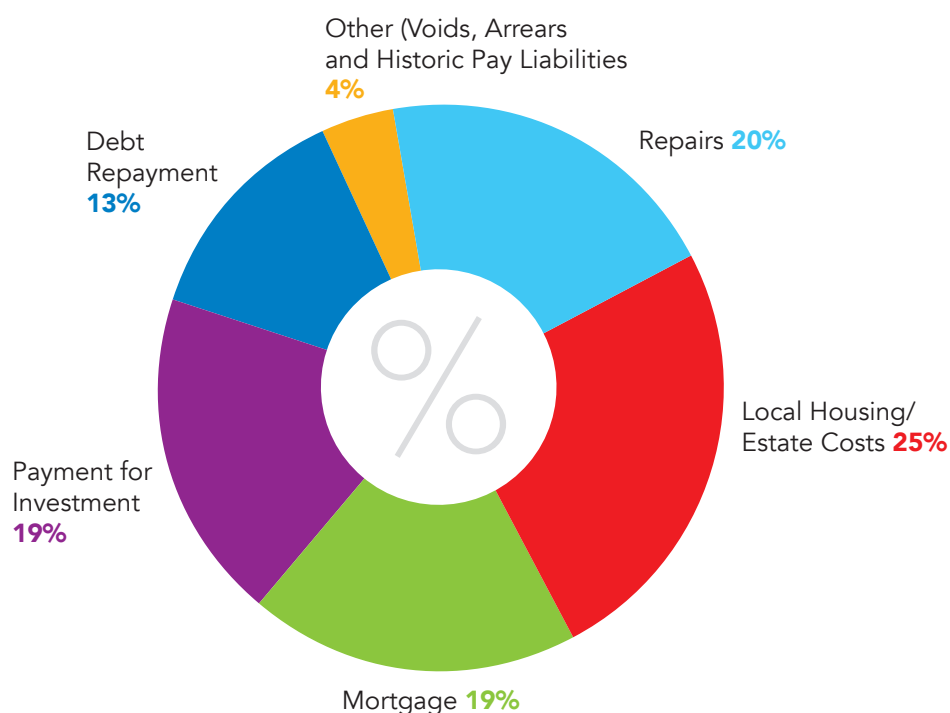
- Year-end current tenants' arrears of £12.5m (or 4.9% of the total rent due) in line with the target
- Delivery of key local estate services – night time security, caretaking, older people's accommodation
- Continuation of a low level of voids (620 at 31 March 2019 – equivalent to 1% of total dwellings) compared to a budget of 800 properties.

## How will we do better from 2019/20 onwards?

There are big issues and challenges facing the HRA, with current and pending legislation impacting on the responsibilities of social landlords. As a result, the service is currently going through a major redesign to meet the current and future requirements for a modern service. This will include efficiency through reduced duplication and more joined-up services. As a result, there should be improved value for money to the tenants in receipt of services. The redesign will ensure that there is no cross-subsidisation with other non-HRA services.

## Breakdown of how your weekly rent was spent

	Budget 2018/19 £ per week	Actual 2018/19 £ per week	Change	% age
Repairs	£18.73	£16.17	£-2.56	-13.67%
Local Housing/Estate Costs	£20.82	£19.98	£-0.84	-4.03%
Mortgage	£15.62	£15.03	£-0.59	-3.78%
Payment for Investment	£10.80	£15.47	£4.67	43.24%
Debt Repayment	£12.23	£10.56	£-1.67	-13.65%
Other (Voids, Arrears and historic pay liabilities)	£2.51	£3.51	£0.99	39.84%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£80.71</b>	<b>£80.72</b>	<b>£0.01</b>	<b>0.0%</b>





# Feedback



## How to give us your views

We would like you to tell us what you think of our services. It's always useful for us to hear about when things have gone right – and when they've gone wrong. There are a number of ways in which you can give us your comments, complaints or compliments about any aspect of the housing service.

Visit the website at

**[www.birmingham.gov.uk/yourviews](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/yourviews)**

## Annual Report to Tenants

We would really appreciate your feedback on the Annual Report by going to

**[www.birmingham.gov.uk/residentinvolvement](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/residentinvolvement)**

and making a comment. Your views will be very useful to us when we are producing future reports.

