

CHELTENHAM BOROUGH HOMES

WHO WE ARE

WHAT WE DO

WHY WE DO IT

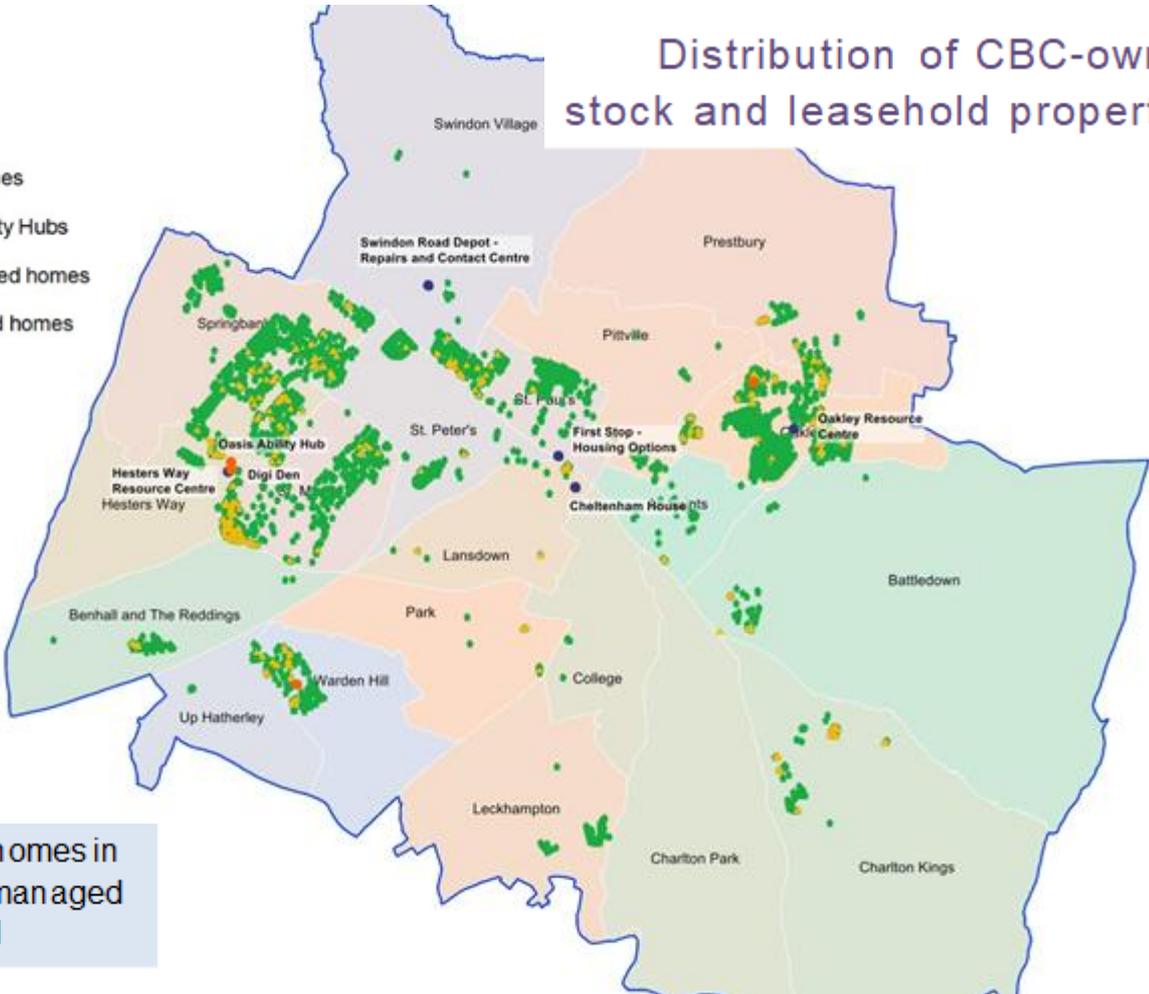


JANUARY 2021
www.cbh.org |



Distribution of CBC-owned stock and leasehold properties

- Legend:
- CBH Offices
 - Community Hubs
 - 🏠 CBC-owned homes
 - ▲ Leasehold homes



Almost 1 in 10 homes in Cheltenham is managed by CBH

3,970





"Wow, what unprecedented and challenging times we all find ourselves in. Despite the immense challenges we have all faced (and are still facing), I did not hesitate to accept the role of Interim CEO, when offered earlier in 2020. It is an honour to lead such a wonderful and caring organisation, and the decision was made even easier knowing the amazing people we have working for us.

People are the beating heart of CBH, whether they are customers or colleagues. Our colleagues are **professional, committed** and are **trusted and valued** by our customers because we always **see the person and not a tenancy** and are willing to go the extra mile. Our customers **have a major say in shaping the services** they receive, listening to and acting on customers' feedback means we continue to provide excellent services and develop in ways to **make a difference to the lives of people and families**.

Our future is really exciting: building on the solid platform of excellent people, strong performance and high satisfaction levels, and the recent external review which validated CBH as **a strong and valued partner**, we will continue to **grow the CBH offer**. Working closely with CBC we will understand how best to build on our existing partnership to do even more for our customers and communities **and support the wider aims for Cheltenham**.

We have a fantastic opportunity to enhance our collaboration with CBC and continue to support **the economic recovery in Cheltenham**. A key element of this recovery will be driven by an **increase in the supply of new homes:** as part of the council's **£180m housing investment** we will deliver a range of high-quality affordable homes across a variety of tenures. In addition, we will support the council in achieving their **target of carbon neutrality by 2030**, and will continue to modernise our services, increasing their efficiency and **ensuring we meet customers' needs**.

Our plans provide us with clarity and the focus to deliver this whilst also **meeting the challenges emerging** in the housing sector, including the Building Safety White Paper and Social Housing White Paper, both of which will usher in a period of **significant change and challenge** across the whole sector.

CBH already **delivers strong services and changes lives for the better**, but I am excited by the potential for us to do **even more** and I am confident that CBH colleagues, working together with CBC colleagues, will really **deliver on the aspiration to make Cheltenham a place where everyone thrives.**"



Our message is simple

With well looked after, supported colleagues working with a **clear focus on delivering for customers**, providing **great homes**, and **building stronger communities**, we will help to deliver the wider aims for a Cheltenham **where everyone thrives**.

We are providing Great Homes by:



Supplying more homes

In partnership with CBC, we have ambitious plans to supply more high-quality homes for Cheltenham across a variety of tenures, including affordable and private rented homes, whilst exploring the potential for outright sale. We have a growing pipeline of new homes, are starting to plan two regeneration schemes to improve the quality of life for residents and will continue to support the Golden Valley development.



Carbon Neutral focus

We are focussed on playing a key role in supporting the council to achieve its 2030 Carbon Neutral goal, by developing a strategy that invests appropriately in the new and existing homes we manage, to make them more energy efficient whilst maintaining long term viability of the HRA. This work will go beyond the physical homes and support changed behaviours of tenants and colleagues alike, in addition to positively impacting upon the sustainability of all aspects of our current operations.



Enhanced quality standard for homes

Our desire to narrow the gap between new and existing homes is driving us to develop an enhanced quality standard that means homes are safe and secure, that takes into account measures to support the Carbon Neutral agenda and improves communal areas in sheltered schemes. We will understand and meet the emerging requirements around building and fire safety and ensure compliance across the stock.



We are building Stronger Communities by:

Prioritising customer service

This is our top priority, and we will ensure that we continue to listen to and act on customer feedback, enhance access to services by improving our digital offer and make best use of the data we hold to tailor our services to meet need whilst meeting the challenges that the Government Social Housing White Paper sets out.



Helping neighbourhoods thrive through partnership working

We will continue to work proactively and collaboratively with local partners, including CBC, to help direct resources to the right place at the right time. These services focus on the person, not the tenancy and provide people with the skills, opportunities, and resilience to improve their quality of life and tackle inequality.



Preventing homelessness and reducing rough sleeping

Following the impact of the 'everyone in' project during the summer we will continue to develop a more proactive role, helping people and families secure and sustain a place they can call home for the long term. Working with local partners we will collaborate to provide more holistic solutions to prevent homelessness. The new Domestic Abuse Interventions role will co-ordinate support for victims with complex needs across the county.

We are delivering this with Inspired People by:



Delivering our People Plan:

We will retain and recruit talented people who share our values and passion for people. We will offer development and training opportunities for all and support managers to maintain a positive culture that puts the mental health and wellbeing of people first whilst enabling innovation and delivery.



Enhancing our operations

Following the successful investment in our IT infrastructure and housing management software our colleagues will be refining how we work to unlock the full potential in these to get the best outcomes for our customers. This will make it easier for customers to access services, particularly online, to shape those services and receive them in more efficient and effective ways.



Developing our accommodation

The world has changed a lot over the past year, and we are re-visiting our accommodation needs to reflect this. We will align our thoughts with CBC and ensure decisions are right for our customers and colleagues in delivering a solution which is flexible, a 'safe place', supports collaboration and creativity, and delivers a cost saving to the HRA.

What we do – delivering added value

We operate within the most deprived communities across Cheltenham. Our customers tell us what is important to them and with our knowledge of national and local pressures we provide **enhanced services** that make a **positive difference to people's lives**. We see the person not the tenancy, and our neighbourly approach and drive to go the extra mile enables people to thrive and create stronger, sustainable communities.

We deliver advice for people dealing with **benefits and money issues**; support people to **find work and training** opportunities; provide hubs for and deliver **community activities**; provide **digital inclusion** opportunities; work closely with **local schools** to help students to remain in mainstream education; and support local partners to help people start up their own businesses through the **'STRIVE' project**.



We are passionate about reducing isolation and increasing resilience within our communities. Last year we teamed up with other community organisations to lead a successful pilot project aimed at tackling the impact of **Adverse Child Experiences (ACEs)** within our communities. This includes working with young people to provide them with the help they needed to return to education following long periods of time away from school. We provide more opportunities for a better quality of life, our **Help2** project is an example of this and was set up by our colleagues to help people going through significant hardship. We also help people to maintain and stay in their homes and work with them to identify and engage with the right support. Our Housing Interventions Officer provides support to the most vulnerable households, helping them secure a long-term home that they can sustain.

This has never been more important than during the current pandemic, and we have continued to stay in contact with communities and people of all ages by adapting services to be delivered remotely.

- Online, live advice for people dealing with benefit and money issues
- Virtual support for people trying to find work and training opportunities
- Weekly live interactive sessions via our community pages on Facebook with free packs delivered to their door to learn recipe and crafts to relieve isolation

When restrictions eased, our **popular allotment scheme** brought people together in a safe, COVID secure way, helping those who felt isolated by teaming up with local partners to help those affected by these unusual times.

We have also **enhanced our digital offer** to customers so they can access services online if they choose to, providing us with more time and resource to focus on our most vulnerable customers.

Examples of outcomes in 2019/20

Building and maintaining homes that support strong, sustainable communities, and providing modern, efficient services that meet the needs of our customers

Over **5,000**



homes owned and managed

373

energy efficient boilers installed



average of **19** days to re-let



27 homes acquired on behalf of CBC from the open market - making good use of money received from properties sold under the Right to Buy scheme



37

non-traditional Cornish homes upgraded to be more energy efficient



99.6% of **11,200**

emergency, urgent and routine repairs completed on time



81%

satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service



£15m

Invested in new homes programme during 2019 /20

In year 4 of a 6 year Windows and Doors programme:

1,535



new windows and doors fitted



99.6% homes

meet decent standard end of 2019/20



only **0.6%**

of rental income lost to empty homes



current tenant arrears low at just

3.1%

of rental income



85% of tenants happy with the quality of their home



93%

of people thought their rent was value for money

Examples of outcomes in 2019/20

Building and maintaining homes that support strong, sustainable communities, and providing modern, efficient services that meet the needs of our customers



fun activities delivered alongside our local partners to bring people together



400

families housed in Cheltenham through Homeseeker Plus

4,576



homes visited in 2019/20 providing advice and support

600

families provided with assistance to prevent them from losing their homes



1,968



people supported across Cheltenham - reducing isolation



of tenants feel safe in their homes



£1m

for tenants struggling to deal with changes to benefits and/or who were facing financial difficulties

90% of tenants are satisfied with CBH



Helped



£10.6m



of social value delivered, equivalent to **£30** of social value per **£1** invested*



in additional benefits we helped families claim



97%

satisfaction from Employability Skills attendees



99%

satisfaction from work Club attendees

* Outcomes and community impact are measured through HACT's Social Value model

Why we do it

Our people are at the heart of what we do, **we care about people, their families, and the communities they live in.** Below is a selection of comments from our customers:

Thank you so very, very much for the help and support you have given me throughout what has been a very difficult period in my life"

CBH Benefit and Money Advice Customer

I feel more confident about getting into work"

CBH Employment and Initiatives Customer

Daunting as first house on my own but everything's lovely and the houses are great

CBH Tenant

I first came across the Facebook Lives run by CBH in the Summer when they delivered crafting packs along with video tutorials. This was one of the many lifesavers for me when I had the kids at home during the first lockdown.

CBH Volunteer

Overall really happy with how everything has gone and the house itself is lovely"

CBH Tenant

CBH has really helped my client out during the current COVID situation. She is anxious in general and the team really made her feel relaxed.

CBH Partner



Why we do it – People come first

Every quarter we carry out a telephone survey to get a better idea of how we are doing. The feedback from customers plays a crucial role in helping us improve our services in ways that meet our customers' needs and support those people who need it the most.

Insight gained from our customers led to the redesign of our Independent Living Schemes, so each site now has its own designated Housing Support Officer, to make it easier to maintain contact and provide support and guidance. The responses received have also shaped our approach to frontline customer contact, leading to significantly reduced call waiting times for tenants with **92%** of calls now answered within **60** seconds.



Demonstrating excellent customer services at the right cost is crucial and ensures that CBH is delivering value for money (VFM); it is about understanding the need to spend and managing that effectively to maintain strong core services and continue to achieve positive change and outcomes for our customers. This ensures that the rent that is paid into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) enables us to:



We set clear budgets and targets every year and monitor closely how we are doing throughout the year to make sure we spend money in the best way to maximise the delivery of the services needed. CBH does not make a profit, any surplus is re-invested back into providing services, maintaining existing homes and supplying new homes.

Providing value for money (VFM)

Ensuring our services are value for money is important to us and so we **regularly assess our satisfaction, performance, and costs with a comparable peer group** in the housing sector. The following indicators are sourced directly from an external third party's tried and tested benchmarking model that is widely used across the sector. The infographics show which quartile we are in, in the top right corner (1 = top 25%, 2 = top 50%, and so on), and our current performance. Our approach is focussed on investing in an informed and appropriate way and obtaining the right balance across these three areas for the benefit of our customers.

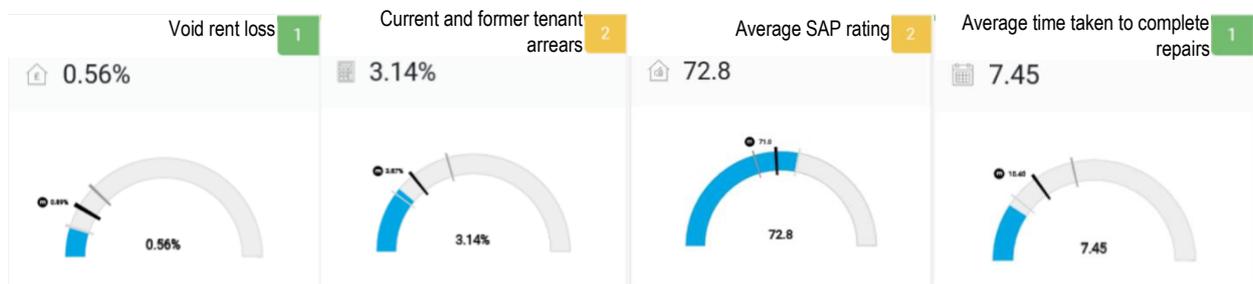
Satisfaction levels are very strong, suggesting that our services and how we operate are meeting the needs of our customers. This is a key part of our approach; we listen and then we act on feedback wherever possible.



In order to deliver more timely and more useful customer feedback a shorter, quarterly 'rolling' telephone survey was introduced for 2019/20. This approach provides a large amount of 'live' feedback direct from tenants. The insight this provides and feedback from customers informs our plans for the future. In this way we can continue to drive up levels of satisfaction, prioritise those areas most important to customers and shape them to meet needs and expectations.

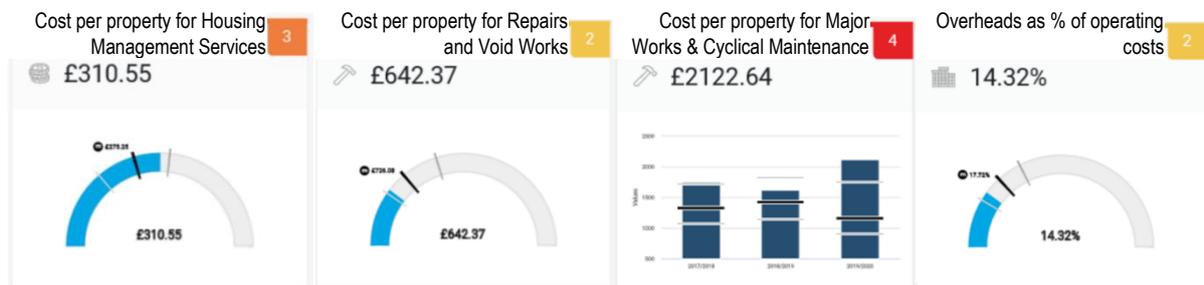
Performance is also strong, as shown by the indicators below, demonstrating that we are delivering high quality core landlord services. It is of particular note that the management of lettings and rent and arrears during a time of increasing pressure on tenants and CBH colleagues has remained better than average. Health and Safety has always been a priority for CBH, demonstrated by our sixth consecutive RoSPA Gold Award for H&S Management, ensuring effective management in this critical area.

Our planned programmes of investment in existing homes allow us to meet statutory compliance, improve energy performance and the quality of homes in ways that assist our customers and contribute to their satisfaction/quality of life. For example, this investment in homes has resulted in a SAP figure (an indicator of energy efficiency) that has increased to an above average level.



Our tenancy management team works to connect up support from other CBH teams and other local partners to achieve better outcomes for customers than would otherwise be the case. Our person-centred community-focussed approach supports CBC's aim to enable Cheltenham's communities to engage and thrive and support the most vulnerable to improve their quality of life.

This high level of satisfaction and performance comes from **investing appropriately in supporting strong communities** and therefore our costs for housing management services are higher than the peer group average. Effective neighbourhood and community investment, with the involvement of tenants, supports local aims led by CBC and which CBH is very well placed to help deliver.



Costs for major works and cyclical maintenance are **higher than average**. We maintain appropriate capital investment in existing homes, based on up-to-date data sourced from our stock surveys, **enabling us to maintain safe, and high-quality homes**. The level of investment will continue reflecting the increase in some aspects of major work (e.g., windows and doors and showers) and significant investment in non-traditional build properties. Costs for **responsive repair and void work and our overheads** as a percentage of operating costs are **lower than average** when compared with our peers.

We believe that the services which we deliver on behalf of CBC are value for money. We will continue to monitor and balance the three elements of VFM whilst seeking opportunities to become more efficient, find cost savings and free up further resources in the HRA for investment in services, existing homes, and new homes. CBH is uniquely positioned in Cheltenham, a trusted and valued presence in the homes and communities where there is the potential to make a huge positive difference to the lives of thousands of people and families. CBH is a catalyst for positive change, working closely and successfully with other local agencies to that end.

For further information about the contents of
this report please contact:
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| www.cbh.org |   



Great
Homes



Stronger
Communities



Inspired
People