

CHELTENHAM BOROUGH HOMES

WHO WE ARE

WHAT WE DO

WHY WE DO IT



January 2022
www.cbh.org



Working in
partnership
with





" Cheltenham Borough Homes is driven by people who have a real passion to make a positive difference to the lives of people living in Cheltenham.

At its heart it has a tradition of putting people first, treating them well, and making a positive difference to their lives, by providing safe and secure homes, supporting strong and vibrant communities, and inspiring people to go beyond what is expected and deliver what can be imagined.

There are challenges ahead with the economic recovery post COVID-19 and meeting the challenges in the housing sector driven by the impact of Grenfell and the subsequent recommendations in the government's Social Housing White Paper, but we have a solid foundation to support us through what will be a time of significant change.

Following another year of uncertainty and challenge I am proud to work with colleagues who continue to go the extra mile for our customers and have maintained a great service for some of Cheltenham's most vulnerable people and families.

Working in close partnership with the Council we are delivering on ambitious plans to create a town where everyone thrives. To make this a reality we will continually improve our customer service and ensure we listen to and act upon feedback, look at ways to make customers' homes more energy efficient to support the council's aim to be net carbon zero, and ensure our new and existing homes are a place customers can call home."

Steve Slater

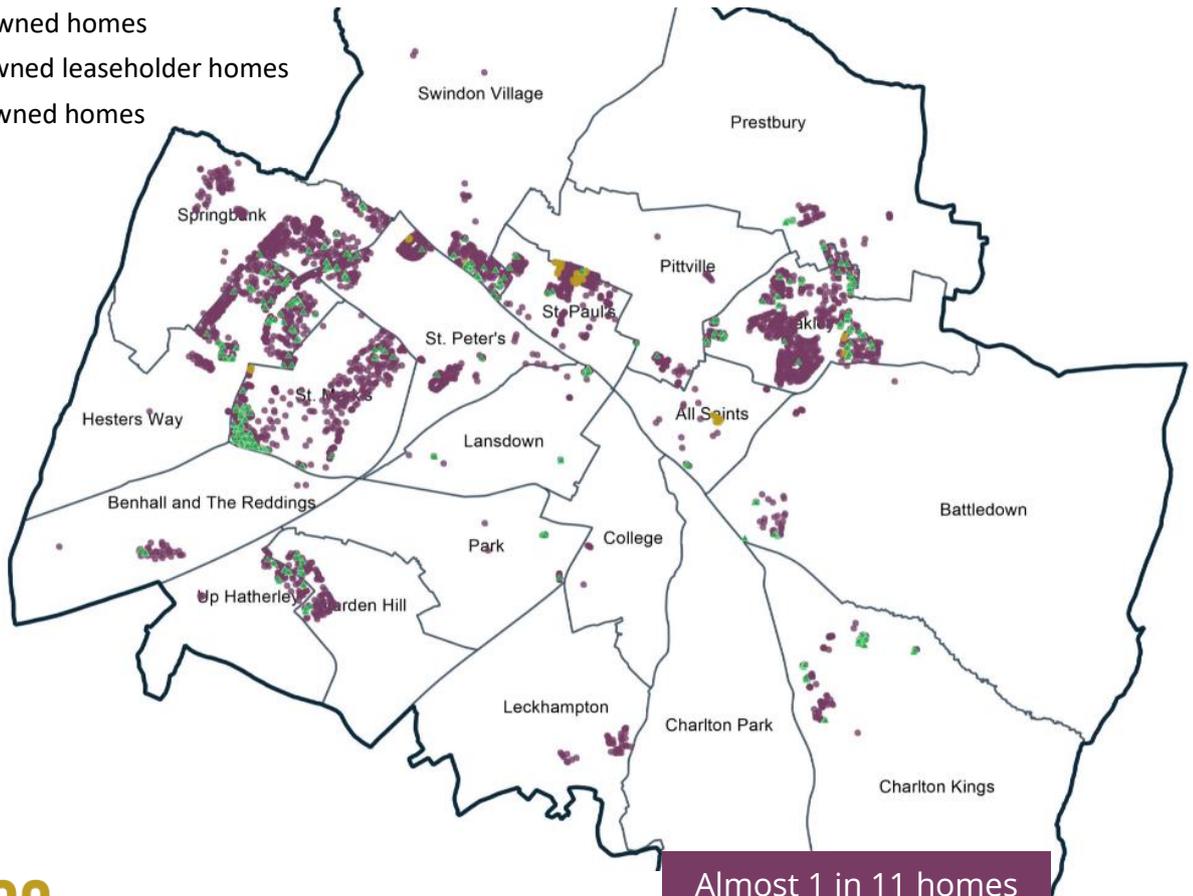
CEO, Cheltenham Borough Homes



Distribution of CBC-owned homes, garages, and leasehold properties

Key:

- CBC-owned homes
- CBC-owned leaseholder homes
- CBH-owned homes



Almost 1 in 11 homes in Cheltenham is managed by CBH

4,033

CBC
OWNED HOMES

35
CBC
SHARED OWNERSHIP HOMES

491
CBC
OWNED HOMES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

110
CBH
OWNED HOMES
= 95 RENTAL PROPERTIES & 15 SHARED OWNERSHIP PROPERTIES

445
CBC
LEASEHOLD HOMES

13
CBH
PRIVATE RENTED HOMES

WHO WE ARE

Investing in Cheltenham

We continue to **support the Council** to deliver its ambitious aims for Cheltenham and the town's **economic recovery** and are supporting achieving the **challenging 2030 net carbon zero target**, through **improving homes, driving increased standards** for new build, and making changes to business operation.

Operating within the most deprived communities across Cheltenham 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.

Alongside **providing and maintaining quality, affordable homes**, on behalf of the Council we provide advice for people dealing with **benefits and money issues**; support people to **find work and training** opportunities; hubs for and delivery of **community activities**; provide **digital inclusion** opportunities; and work closely with **local schools** to help students to remain in mainstream education.

As an effective delivery partner, trusted and valued by the Council, local partners, and our customers we are aware of the challenges our communities face and are perfectly positioned to support customers and their families with the rising costs of living and other issues this can bring.



WHAT WE DO

Helping people into work, training, and education

We deliver a range of virtual and in person support for people trying to find work and training opportunities. CBH's Training and Employment Service (TES) has been supporting the people furthest away from the labour market for over a decade and has developed an approach to support young people at risk of exclusion. For example, during 2020-21 our training and employment experts helped:



43
into work



68
into training



Safety equipment to people starting work in the construction industry



CSCS tests and cards



ASDAN training materials

Pino's story:

CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme)

Pino had an ambition to increase his employment prospects by gaining a CSCS construction card. The team worked closely with Pino to make sure that we were able to provide him with the right support safely and remotely so that he could thrive during the training. The support he received helped him to secure his Construction Skills Certification Scheme CSCS card after passing his test. In Pino's words:

"I was really nervous to start this at first, but I have gained so much confidence being able to practice the tests online with Lorna, visually seeing each question and answers helps me to remember them, especially the symbol questions, and knowing I am passing each time makes me feel ready to take the real test with confidence I can pass"



Tim's story:

Work clubs and one to one sessions

Tim had a long history of working and being self-sufficient, until recently, when he found himself in the unfamiliar situation of being unemployed. In need of advice and guidance, he contacted us to support him through his next steps. Our benefit and money advisors helped him improve his financial situation, so he could focus on gaining employment. He said:

"The help and support I have got from Caroline and Gayna has been amazing, they have been very supportive, and the service I received has been fantastic, thank you both"



Ollie's story:

ASDAN Careers and Experiencing Certificates

Working with two schools the award winning **Thrive programme** gives a real chance for young people to change their future by offering a different way of learning that can influence the rest of their lives. During his time on **Thrive** Ollie successfully secured his ASDAN Careers and Experiencing Certificates and received great feedback during his placements with our responsive repairs team and contractors. After graduating from **Thrive**, he continued to work hard to secure the qualifications he needed and secured a property maintenance apprenticeship with Cheltenham Flooring. In Ollie's words:

"I love doing my apprenticeship. I enjoy working with Cheltenham Flooring and CBH. I get treated very well. I even like going to college, it's going really well. Thank you all very much."



WHAT WE DO

Delivering through strong partnership working

We're passionate about reducing social isolation and increasing resilience within our communities and work closely with local partners to deliver virtual and face to face opportunities for learning and meeting up with others.

“ Vincent has made a huge impact in the last 18 months around his work with ACES in the St Paul's Community. He is kind, caring and has a natural ability to build rapport with children, youth and their families. His enthusiasm is infectious, and he is able to see the best in some extremely challenging situations. He has made a huge impact in the lives of many children and young people as he supports and champions them

Jennifer Fellows - Assistant Pastor,
St Paul's Church, Cheltenham

“ Vincent was involved with a young person, who had stopped engaging with professionals and we were stuck with next steps. It was unclear if the behaviour was in a wilful manner or if there were anxiety or confidence issues. He has been working with the young person and helped us understand there are underlying mental health concerns which has helped with a plan of action. This young person is now getting out, engaging in activities, and building confidence which is significant progress. This outcome is because of the direct work Vince is providing partners

Sinead Kirk - Families First Gloucestershire County Council

We are leading a successful pilot project aimed at tackling the impact of Adverse Child Experiences (ACEs). This includes working with partners to provide young people with the help they need to return to education following long periods of time away from school.

Maintaining high quality landlord services

We help people to maintain and stay in their homes and work with them to identify and engage with the right support. Helping the most vulnerable households to secure a long-term home they can sustain. **We provide housing and homelessness services for the whole of Cheltenham:**



£66,000 of arrears cleared

£1.3m of additional benefits we helped customers claimed

Teamed up with Severn Trent, helping us to reduce our customer's bills by up to **£300 per year** and clear historic debt of over

£1000



368



£2.3m



400



89



125

families provided with assistance to remain in their home or find a place to stay to prevent homelessness

in additional benefits we helped families across Cheltenham claim

families housed in Cheltenham through homeseekerplus

homes secured through the private rented access scheme to help those who are homeless

people helped off the streets through the 'Everyone in' scheme to provide them with the support they need

WHAT WE DO

Making Cheltenham Net Carbon Zero by 2030

To support the Council's response to the climate emergency we're developing a Carbon Reduction Strategy which includes plans for the existing social housing portfolio, taking account of associated HRA budget requirements.



Awarded grant funding from The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) as part of the social housing decarbonisation project to help Cheltenham become a carbon neutral town.

Investing in existing homes

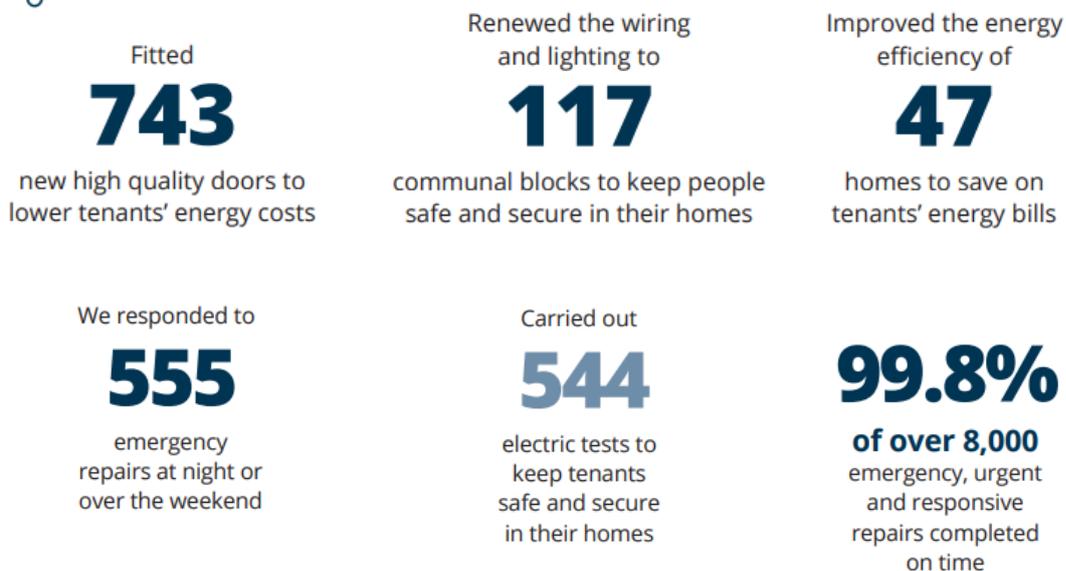
We know the value of home, which is why we have **listened to customer feedback** and are **embracing technology** to help us carry out more repairs each day.

To help tackle **fuel poverty** and **reduce the carbon impact** of our homes we are piloting an innovative scheme to carry out deep retrofitting works and monitor the effectiveness of the measures taken to inform future thinking.



To improve energy efficiency in the home and reduce fuel bills, we carried out the following works:

Last year we spent £6.2m to improve homes.



WHAT WE DO

Investing in new affordable homes

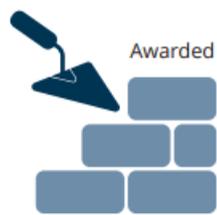
Working in partnership with the Council we're enabling the investment of **£180m in quality homes and thriving communities** across multiple tenures including affordable and private rent and through multiple opportunities including the Golden Valley Development, and other land-led schemes.

On schemes controlled by the Council, new homes will be designed to be net zero carbon buildings, helping to meet Cheltenham's aspirations to be net zero by 2030, and consider other aspects such as biodiversity and fuel poverty considerations.

This supports the wider housing strategy of the council in meeting future housing needs for Cheltenham.



homes we acquired on the open market, making good use of the money received from the properties sold under the right to buy scheme



£2.7m

From Homes England



homes freed up for families as part of our downsizing programme



homes completed via section 106 agreement for families

We built

35

new affordable homes providing more opportunities for families to find their home through social rent or shared ownership



WHY WE DO IT

Social Housing White Paper - People come first

At the heart of CBH are our customers and we are always looking ahead to make sure we are providing excellent services. We offer a variety of ways customers can get involved to share their thoughts and have their say in person and digitally. Carrying out surveys and feedback groups to help scrutinise and challenge us is a huge part of our tenant engagement strategy. During 2020/21 we've had a fantastic 1,034 responses:



85%

of people said they are happy overall with CBH



78%

satisfied with repairs and maintenance service



90%

of people thought their rent was value for money



89%

of people feel safe in their home



73%

satisfied we listen to views and act on them



80%

are happy with the quality of their home

“ They are sympathetic. They do listen. They have fantastic customer service. They get things sorted as fast as they can... ”
Tenant

“ 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 ”
Tenant

“ They do everything i always ask for. I've got a nice home. I feel safe ”
Tenant

Demonstrating excellent customer services at the right cost is crucial and ensures 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 continuing to achieve positive change and outcomes for customers. This ensures the rent paid into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) enables us to:



Deliver enhanced services



Maintain and improve homes



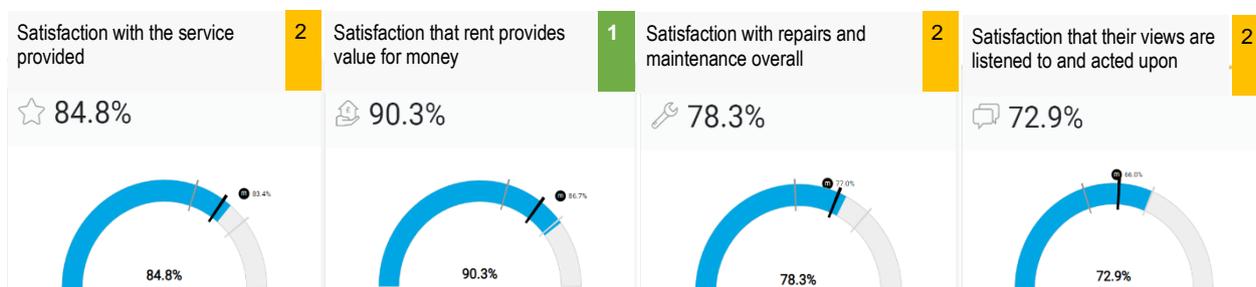
Provide more affordable homes

Providing value for money (VFM)

We set clear budgets and targets every year and monitor closely how we are doing to make sure we spend money in the best way to maximise the delivery of the services valued by our customers. 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.

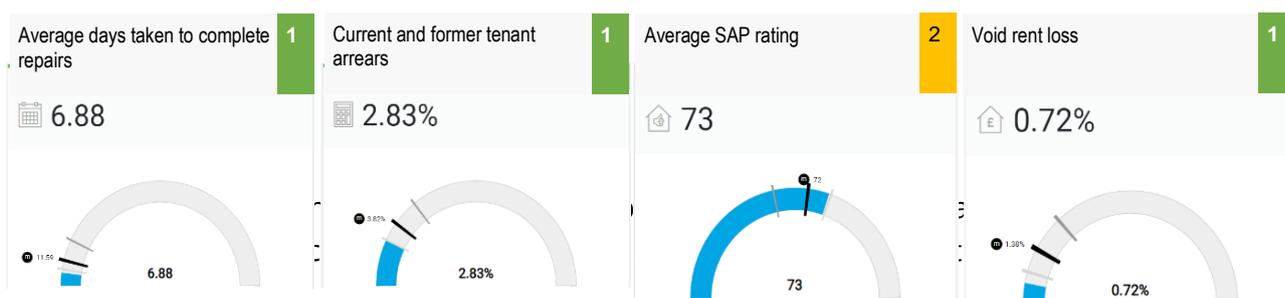
The following indicators are sourced directly from an external third party's tried and tested benchmarking model, widely used across the sector. The infographics show which quartile we are in, in the top right corner (1 = top 25%, 2 = top 50%, and so on), and our current performance.

Satisfaction levels are strong during challenging times, 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.



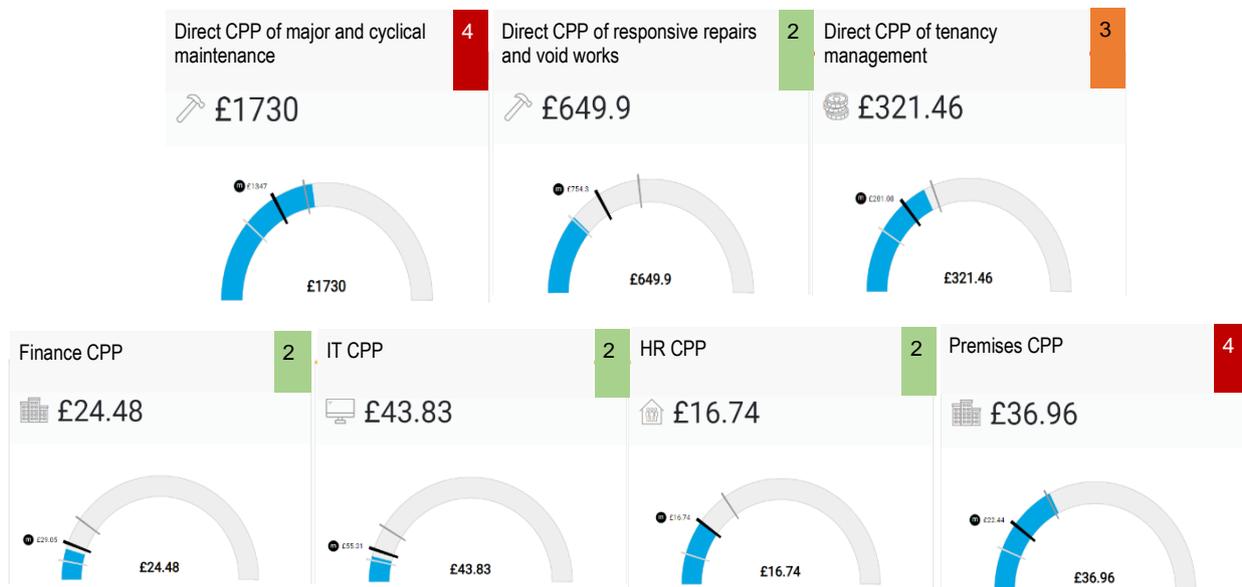
Performance is also strong, as shown by the indicators below, demonstrating that we are delivering high quality core landlord services. It is of note that the management of lettings and rent and arrears during a time of increasing pressure on tenants and CBH colleagues has remained well above sector medians. Health and Safety has always been a priority for CBH, demonstrated by our seventh 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 year on year.



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 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 per property (CPP) for major works and cyclical maintenance are **higher than average**. We continue to invest in existing homes, based on data sourced from our stock surveys, **enabling us to maintain safe, and high-quality homes**. This level is set to continue, reflecting the increase in some aspects of major work (e.g., windows and doors and showers) and starting to invest in specific carbon reduction measures on a 'fabric first' approach. Costs for **responsive repair and void works are lower than average** when compared with our peers as are overhead costs other than premises which will reduce in due course under savings plans being delivered by CBH for the HRA.

We believe the services we deliver on behalf of CBC are value for money. We 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 homes and communities where there is 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 |   

