

# CHELTENHAM BOROUGH HOMES

WHO WE ARE

WHAT WE DO

WHY WE DO IT



**January 2023**  
[www.cbh.org](http://www.cbh.org)



Working in  
partnership  
with







"2023 marks 20 years in the life of Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH). Over this time the organisation has evolved from a traditional landlord, to a people-focused organisation embedded and trusted in communities across the town. With the support of Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC), CBH has continued to support its customers and communities throughout the most challenging of recent times whilst at the same time supporting CBC's wider aspirations for the town.

We are proud of our consistent delivery of high-quality and well-received services to our customers. Despite our past successes, we will not rest on our laurels as we endeavour to continue growing and improving the services and support we offer. To this end, we have just completed a thorough consultation with customers, and all other key stakeholders in order to develop the next five year HRA Business Plan. The plan highlights the challenging environment in which we will be working with many competing priorities for limited resources.

Looking ahead, there are economic and environmental challenges for people and organisations, and significantly increased scrutiny and regulation placed on social housing from government that applies to both CBH and CBC, which will require proactive work to ensure we remain compliant. However, there are significant opportunities ahead of us, such as our focus on supporting CBC in meeting its affordable housing and net zero carbon targets.

We have a solid foundation to support us through what continues to be volatile times and our fantastic relationship with CBC will enable the right decisions to be made at the right time. This will ensure challenges are overcome and opportunities taken without long-term negative impacts on financial plans, or short-term damage to reputation all while meeting evolving customer needs.

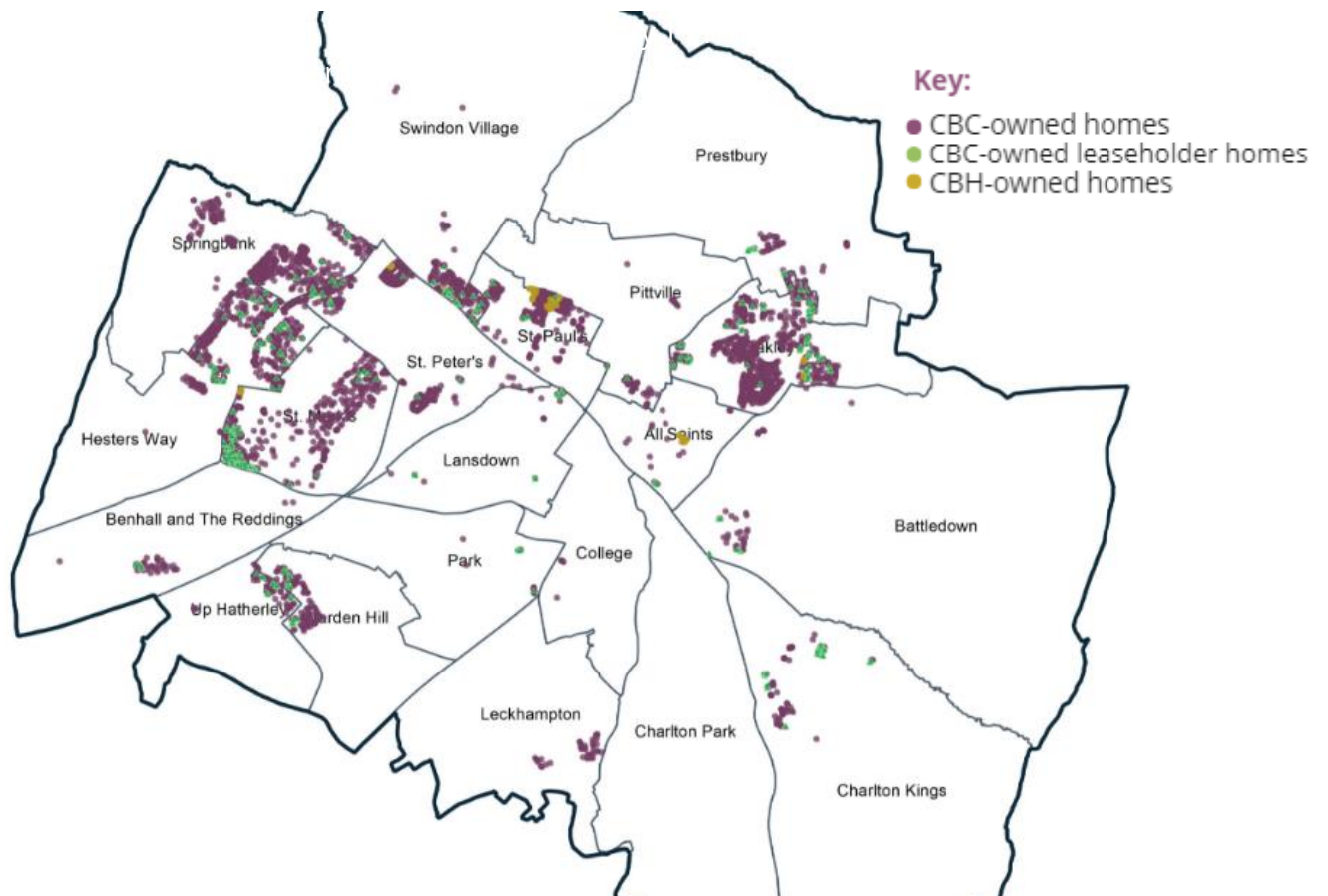
Understanding tenants' needs is fundamental to the continuing success of CBH. The need to give tenants opportunities to talk to us, for us to listen, and then act on that feedback appropriately is at the heart of our approach. This will ensure CBH keeps pace and evolves to meet customer need.

We look forward to another year of working closely with CBC to ensure we continue to deliver for our customers and ensure we play our part in building a brighter future for Cheltenham.

Steve Slater, CEO of Cheltenham Borough Homes



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



Almost 1 in every 11 homes in Cheltenham is managed by CBH

4,018



# WHAT WE DO

## Investing in tenants, homes, and Cheltenham

We support the Council to deliver the HRA Business Plan and deliver its ambitious aims for Cheltenham. We do this by providing **enhanced services** that make a **positive difference** to people's lives, and **providing** and **maintaining** safe, quality, **affordable homes**.

We offer **benefit and money advice**; help people **find work and training** opportunities; operate **community hubs** for delivery of **activities**; provide **social** and **digital inclusion** opportunities; and work closely with **local schools** to help students remain in mainstream education.

We are perfectly positioned to support customers and their families with the **rising costs of living** and other issues this can bring. Our people-focussed approach, **strong partnership working** and drive to go above and beyond, **enables people to thrive** and **create stronger, sustainable communities**.

We see the person not the tenancy, and our listening and acting approach puts **customers right at the heart of what we do**; ensuring their voices are heard and are shaping the services they receive.

As a trusted and effective partner, we are supporting the council to achieve its **ambitious 2030 carbon target**, through improving homes, driving increased standards for new build, and making changes to business operations; and its aims **more affordable homes** for the town.

The following pages provide a snapshot of our work and outcomes for people and families during 2021-22.



# WHAT WE DO

## Helping people into work, training, and education



For more than a decade, CBH's Training and Employment Service (TES) has supported people of all ages in finding work.

We deliver a variety of virtual and in-person support to assist customers in finding work and training opportunities, and we are proud to have developed an approach to support young people at risk of exclusion. We also provide equipment and materials where they are needed.

We continue to engage with the 'Thrive' programme and we deliver weekly back to work clubs.

During 2021/22, we:

**Helped:**

 <b>93</b> into work	 <b>143</b> into training	<b>100%</b> satisfaction achieved
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**“ I didn't think I would be able to get the job I wanted, now I enjoy work and have more money to spend. I am no longer stressed at work ”**

CBH customer



## Surprised our Thrive graduate Ollie...

with a gift package to support his development and to acknowledge his enormous achievements. Ollie has been an apprentice with Cheltenham Flooring and CBH since September 2019.

Thanks to the invaluable support from our local partners we were able to provide Ollie with his own range of work tools as he works more independently and takes on greater work responsibilities.



# WHAT WE DO

## Delivering through strong partnership working

We're passionate about creating stronger, vibrant, and resilient communities where families can thrive. We do this by working closely with local partners, including Cheltenham Borough Council. During 2021/22, we have achieved the following:

Secured

# £5,300

worth of funding to support community groups and bring people together



Over

# 300



customers involved in meetings and activities that directly influence our services



# 3,969

times people attended our events



# 16

Facebook live sessions receiving

# 2,278

views

## Maintaining high quality landlord services

We help people to maintain and stay in their homes, working with them to identify and engage with the right support. Helping the most vulnerable households to secure a long-term home they can sustain.



Number of people we helped access the right support so they were no longer at risk of losing their home and in a position where they can sustain their tenancy



**We offer free and confidential advice on all welfare benefits and day to day money management, including a free benefit and budget calculation. To know that I play a key role within the team in how people are living and when I can see what a difference a few changes can make to an individual or family is so rewarding**



Suzanne, CBH Benefit and Money Advisor (BMA)



Great Homes



Stronger Communities



Inspired People

# WHAT WE DO

## Making Cheltenham Net Zero Carbon by 2030

We're committed to supporting Cheltenham Borough Council's ambition to be carbon net zero by 2030. In 2021/22, we spent £1.8m improving the energy efficiency of homes. We're always looking for ways to help customers reduce fuel bills.

We secured **£40K** worth of funding as part of a pilot study to carry out deep retrofitting of two homes and further funding to improve the energy efficiency of homes during 2022/23.

## Investing in existing homes

The safety of our customers remains our top priority. We carry out thousands of responsive repairs and planned works each year. All part of our commitment to deliver quality homes and thriving communities.

We spent £4.7m on maintaining and repairing homes and achieved the following:



**99.6%**  
**of 5,713**

emergency, urgent  
and responsive repairs  
completed on time



We responded to

**559**

emergency repairs  
at night or over  
the weekend



We carried out

**846**

electrical tests to keep  
customers safe and  
secure in their homes



# WHAT WE DO

## Investing in new affordable homes

Great homes is what we're about. We continue to work in partnership with Cheltenham Borough Council to enable the £180m investment in quality homes and thriving communities, including affordable and private rent and through multiple opportunities. We will continue to play our part in progressing new and existing schemes - continuing our acquisition and regeneration programmes, and playing our part in the Golden Valley Development.

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 will also consider other aspects such as biodiversity and fuel poverty.

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

### Supplying more high quality homes for Cheltenham

**34** 

Number of new affordable homes we built to provide families with more opportunities to find their homes through social rent and shared ownership

**26** 

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

Worked in partnership with Cheltenham Borough Council to provide

**13** newly refurbished homes for private rent to provide people with more choice in finding a home that is high quality where they can feel happy and safe and secure



Part of the £180m investment in Cheltenham's future made by Cheltenham Borough Council and delivered by Cheltenham Borough Homes, to increase the supply of new and affordable housing throughout the town





# WHAT WE DO

## Listening and Acting

We work hard to provide the support our customers and their families need, and we're committed to listening and acting on feedback. We had 1,016 responses to our quarterly customer surveys during 2021/22. This is what we were told:

**84%**

of people said they are happy overall with CBH

**76%**

satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service

**90%**

of people thought their rent was value for money

**85%**

of people feel safe and secure in their home

**84%**

of people found it easy to get hold of the right person

**86%**

of people are happy with the quality of their home

CBH customers are at the heart of everything we do, and we are always looking ahead to make sure we continue to provide excellent services. Surveys and feedback groups help us to scrutinise and challenge ourselves and are a big part of our tenant engagement strategy.

Demonstrating excellent customer services at the right cost is crucial and ensures CBH is delivering value for money (VFM). We manage spend effectively to maintain strong core services and achieve positive outcomes for customers.

“

**...thank you for not giving up on me. You didn't give up on me when I turned you away.... The help to identify benefit issues, applying for help to support my rent shortfall and my new cooker is all amazing. I haven't had a cooker for over two years. I am so grateful. I made myself boiled potatoes, sausages, and garlic bread. I know you might laugh, I'm clearly not a chef but it was delicious! – Thank you**

CBH customer

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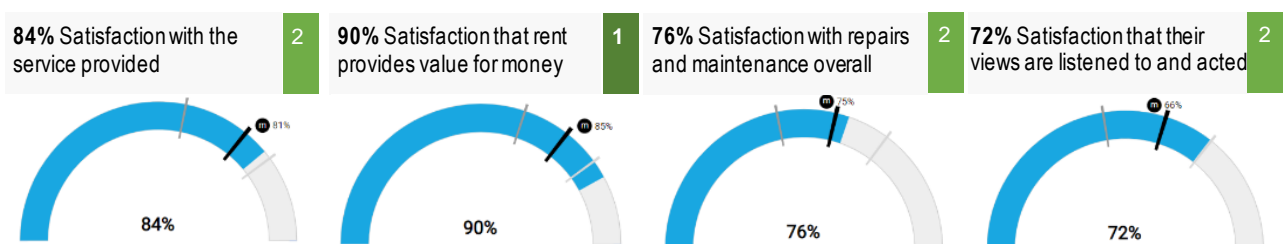
# WHAT WE DO

## 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.

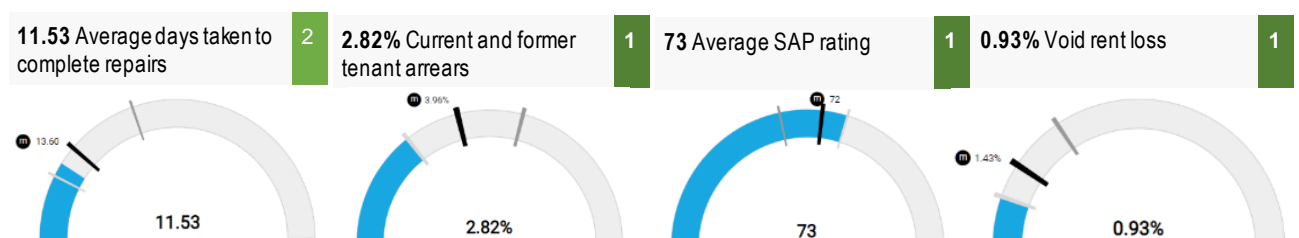
The following indicators are sourced directly from a tried and tested benchmarking model developed by an external third party and widely used in the sector. The infographics show which quartile we are in, in the top right corner (1 = top 25%, 2 = top 50%, and so on), and our current performance – the ‘m’ shows the average for our peer group.

**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.



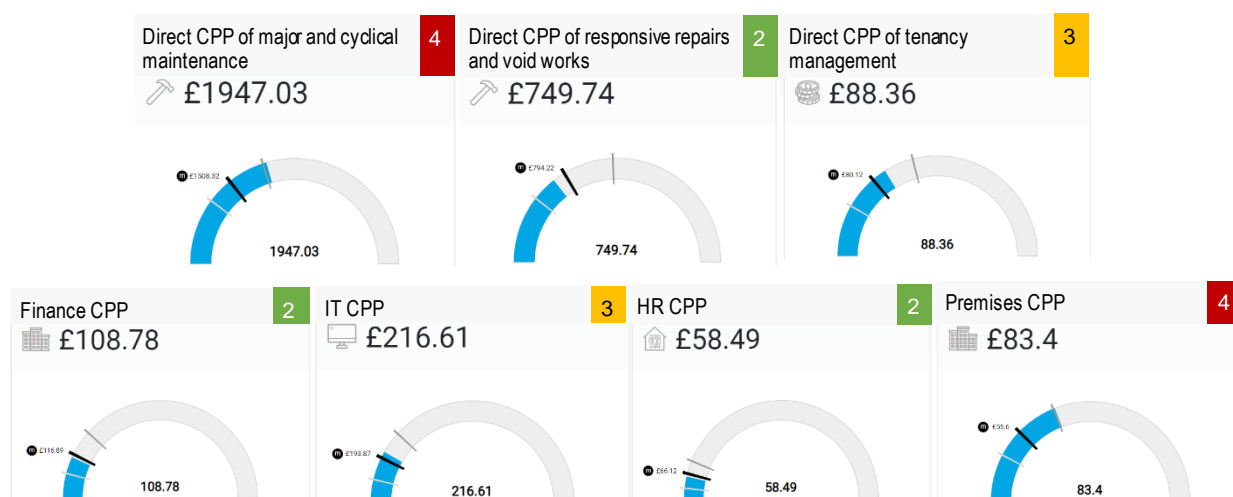
**Operating performance is also strong**, as shown by the indicators below, demonstrating that we are delivering high quality core landlord services. It is of note that the management of lettings and rent and arrears during a time of increasing pressure on tenants and CBH colleagues has remained well above sector medians. Health and Safety has always been a priority for CBH, demonstrated by our eighth 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 and as an average for all HRA properties is in quartile 1 for our peer group.



Our tenancy management team connect support from other CBH teams and 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 ensure all our communities benefit from the investment and growth in our town** to improve their quality of life.

This high level of satisfaction and performance comes from **investing in supporting strong communities** and this is reflected in our costs for housing management services are marginally 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** reflecting the approved level of planned investment in existing homes and the average age of the housing stock in the HRA which is significantly higher than our peer average. This level of investment is set to continue and includes investment 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 reflecting a good balance between reactive and planned works. Premises costs are higher than average however this does not yet take account of the savings made by CBH in office costs as part of the Stronger Working Partnership programme. Changes in IT recharges are also expected to reduce the IT CPP in the coming year.

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.



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