

Central Bedfordshire Council

# *housing*matters

Central  
Bedfordshire

## Contents

### Page

- 2** Foreword & Introduction
- 3** Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard
- 6** Home Standard
- 8** Tenancy Standard
- 11** Value for Money Standard
- 12** Neighbourhood & Community Standard
- 14** Local Offers
- 15** Housing Revenue Account



# ANNUAL REPORT

Developed in Partnership with  
Central Bedfordshire  
Tenants





# Foreword and Introduction

## Message from Tony Keaveney Assistant Director Housing



I am delighted to present our first Annual Report for the Housing Service. This year has presented us with many challenges not least the change from South Bedfordshire District Council to the new Central Bedfordshire Council. Alongside this we have had to deal with a change of central government to the current coalition and some real ongoing challenges around the economy and threats of cuts to the services we provide.

Regardless of this I am happy to present this report which is a true reflection of how our colleagues have performed against some testing standards. We continue to make steady progress in a number of areas and the report shows how we have met the Standards set out by the Tenants Services Authority (TSA) and how we have introduced a number of new initiatives. The report is an achievement of the excellent work to date plus recognition of how we work in partnership with our residents.

**Tony Keaveney**

## Message from Councillor Rita Drinkwater Housing Portfolio Holder

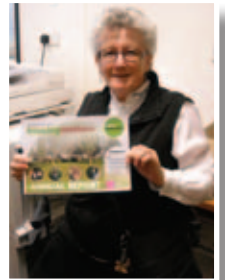


As Housing Portfolio Holder I am proud to say that we have published this Annual Report in consultation with our tenants. For the most part we have performed well against the standards set out by the TSA but it has highlighted areas for improvement.

We have already made some changes and our tenants have since benefited from improvements made to the way we work. It is my duty to make sure we continue to improve on the services we provide to our communities in social housing across the Council area and to ensure our tenants provide feedback to so that our direction of travel is the right one. This will assist in the future and will assist us with our Local Offers. I also look forward to the feedback from tenants regarding this report. Thanks to all who assisted with writing it.

**Rita Drinkwater**

## Message from Margaret Luther Way Forward Panel Member



My role has been to ensure that tenant's views and opinions have been listened to and used to shape and influence the content of this report. I, along with my colleagues on the Way Forward Panel hope you find this report interesting and we would welcome your feedback and comments. These will enable us to challenge future performance and improve the services we receive.

A huge thank you to all involved.

**Margaret Luther**

## Introduction

*This Annual Report has been written as a document to give all our residents an overview on how well we are performing as a Housing Service. It covers five main standards which have been noted as the priority areas of service by the Government's Housing regulator The Tenants Services Authority (TSA).*

*The five standards include:*

1. Tenant Involvement and Empowerment
2. Home
3. Tenancy
4. Value for Money
5. Neighbourhood and Community

This report has been written with the full involvement of tenants through a number of

formats including Tenants Conferences, Panel and Forum meetings and surveys. The Way Forward Panel have played a key part in producing this final document.

Central Bedfordshire Council manages a total of 5,215 homes in both urban and rural areas.

Unless otherwise stated all the figures are for the financial year from April 2009 to March 2010.

In some areas we have been able to make comparisons with our neighbouring local authority Luton Borough Council. The reason why we use Luton's figures is because our tenants requested this and they are funded in a similar way.

Finally, the report will show how we intend to gather information to set our Local Offers for April 2011.

# Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard

The Tenant Services Authority's Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard covers customer service, choice and complaints, involvement and empowerment and understanding the different needs of tenants. The standard makes sure that tenants can make informed choices and have information that is easy to understand.

## Customer service, choice and complaints

We provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of our tenants in the delivery of all standards. We do this through a number of sources. Housing Matters is our dedicated housing newsletter and this is hand delivered quarterly to our tenants across the area. We also use Update Letters that we send out whenever we have information we need to share with our residents. We introduced the Update Letters last year due to our tenants telling us that a letter is their preferred method of communication.

We also have a dedicated section of the website which is updated on a regular basis. There are links on the newsletter and the website for residents that do not have English as their first language or have problems with reading. This includes Browse Aloud which vocalises text for people with sight and reading issues.



## What did our tenants tell us?

We regularly ask our tenants what they think of the Housing Service. The figures below show an increase in satisfaction levels.



We also communicate with our residents through social networking sites such as Facebook, Flickr and Twitter.

The way to make complaints is advertised on our website, in our Service Standards and in the Tenants Handbook.

In order to be clear and open on how we deal with complaints and encourage residents to give us this feedback we proactively do the following:

- Place articles in Housing Matters and Update Letters
- Telephone Surveys after repairs and maintenance works
- Information on the website

Although we have robust mechanisms for recording complaints we are not so good at recording compliments. We need to get better at this.

We have recently introduced a new set of Service Standards. This included tenant involvement from a very early stage. Following months of consultation with residents and colleagues the new Service Standards were released. These are available for all tenants on request and new tenants will receive a copy when they sign up for their property.

## Total number of compliments

Luton Borough Council = 201

**26**

## Number of Tenant Involvement Activities

**2,820**

## Total number of complaints received and resolved

Luton Borough Council = 119

**63**



# Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard (cont)

## Involvement and Empowerment

We offer a diverse range of opportunities to be involved. This menu of involvement includes:

### Panels

- The Way Forward Panel
- The Housing Sounding Board
- Sheltered Tenants Action Group

### Questionnaires and Surveys

- New Tenants Visits
- Choice Based Lettings
- Status Surveys
- Tenant Profiling Survey
- Conference/meeting evaluation questionnaires

### Resident Association meetings

- Tithe Farm Residents Association
- Albert Court Residents Association
- Meadow Way Community Association
- Beecroft Residents Association
- Hockliffe Residents Association
- Kensworth Community Drop In
- Parkside Stakeholders Voice
- Gale Court Drop In
- New Woodfield Green Residents Association

### Forums

- Tenant Services Authority New Regulatory Framework
- Changes to Repairs and Maintenance
- Anti Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure Forum

### Contract procurement *(as part of renewal process)*

- Kitchens and Bathrooms
- Maintenance
- Cleaning

### Contract monitoring

- Enterprise Day to Day Repairs
- Quality Heating
- Sheltered Housing communal cleaning

### Maintenance plans

- Five year plan

### Void inspectors

- Inspecting empty properties

### Estate inspections

- Carried out by Estate Officers with resident involvement

### Mystery Shoppers

We have trained our residents to become mystery shoppers and we have carried out two sessions to date. The sessions focused on looking at the following services:

- Customer Service Centre
- Resident Involvement
- Housing Needs
- Repairs
- Maintenance

Tenants can choose from the above their preferred method of involvement. This increased involvement has had a marked difference on the way we keep our tenants informed and the service we provide.

We can also measure the level of involvement through a database called Tenant Participation Tracker (TPT). Every time a tenant gets involved with the Housing Service through the many ways listed, we record their involvement.

### Average number of tenants involved with the Housing Service April 2009 to March 2010

	%	actual number
Friends	24	1,489
Ambassadors	1.1	67

We have split the figures into Friends and Ambassadors. Friends are residents that have been involved through filling in a survey or attending a meeting. Ambassadors are residents that have had much more involvement including running residents associations meetings or being part of the Way Forward Panel. We recognise and value the commitment from all tenants that have chosen to get involved.

On a strategic level we work with the Way Forward Panel. This panel consists of tenants and leaseholders from across the district and has a diverse range of members. The Way Forward Panel has seen significant changes made to procedure and policy. (For a list see 'How were tenants involved' at the end of this section).

We also held a number of conferences to gather information for this Annual Report and to give access to our residents to all our services on Saturday mornings. The first of these conferences was held in September last year and over 250 residents attended to discuss any aspect of housing they wanted to as well as taking part in consultations. It was a great success and as a result we intend to hold them on a regular basis.



## Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants

- We have equality and diversity statements built in to all our policies and procedures and each policy receives an Equality Impact Assessment
- We also ensure all our contractors have equality and diversity policies and the contract demands the need for all their staff and sub contractors to adhere to the policy
- All staff must attend mandatory equality and diversity training
- All our supported resident groups must have equality and diversity policies
- We have focus panels specifically for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) tenants, tenants with disabilities and young tenants
- We record all involvement with Tenant Participation (TP) Tracker and we can demonstrate how we involve tenants from across the board
- We are continually gathering tenant profiling information and currently have 68% completed
- We have a specific Sheltered Tenants Action Group for tenants living in sheltered accommodation
- We have the mechanisms to translate letters, offer interpretation or offer publications in alternative formats or languages

**Satisfaction with the way you are kept informed**

**81%**

## How were residents involved?

Our tenants were involved in shaping and influencing the following:

- Transfer Incentive Scheme (March/April 2009)
- Choice Based Lettings (April/May 2009)
- Rights and responsibilities around repairs (March/April 2009)
- An overview of the Private Rented Sector 'Lets Rent' Scheme (June 2009)
- Priorities for the new Council (May 2009)
- Housing Service Standards (November 2009)
- Anti Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure (December 2009)
- Community Engagement Strategy (December 2009)
- Tenants Conferences (September 2009 and February 2010)
- Tenant Services Authority (January 2009 – February 2010)
- Governance and Scrutiny (November 2009)
- Training Programme (October 2009)
- Housing Priorities (August 2009)
- Review of Housing Revenue Account (November 2009)
- Shaping the Annual Report
- Developing Local Offers
- Performance monitoring of all major contracts
- Procurement of all major contracts
- Scrutinising all policies and procedures
- Attending training sessions to keep up to date with policy

## Plans for 2010/11

- We will continue to consult with our residents to develop Local Offers (*see full article on page 14*)
- We will increase the number of residents that actively take part in shaping the Housing Service
- We will increase the numbers of residents involved as recorded on TP Tracker
- We will increase the percentage of profiling information so we know our communities and respond to their needs
- We will continue to look at new ways of communication and involving tenants in the Housing Service

**The percentage of tenants that have provided us with equality and diversity information, such as their age, gender, ethnicity or disability to help us shape our services**

**68%**

*Luton Borough Council = 59%*

- We will continue to improve the satisfaction levels on the way tenants are kept informed
- We will work with partner organisations to share resources and offer a wider range of training opportunities for residents
- We will organise another Award Ceremony to celebrate the hard work our residents have done in helping us shape the Housing Service
- We intend to hold another Saturday Tenants Conference
- We will write a new Tenant's Compact
- We will get better at recording compliments
- We will form a new county wide tenants forum

# Home Standard

The Tenant Services Authority's Home Standard covers the quality of accommodation and repairs and maintenance. The standard includes making sure that tenants' homes meet the Decent Homes Standard, providing cost-effective repairs and meeting health and safety requirements.

It has been a busy year for the Asset Management Team repairing and improving your homes across Central Bedfordshire.

We are nearing the completion of major refurbishment works at Bedford Court in Houghton Regis to convert the existing 32 bedsits into 3 fully accessible 1-2 bedroom flats, 7 family 1-2 bedroom flats and 6 single person flats. The refurbishment also includes the upgrading of the communal areas, a new interview room, communal kitchen and office. The final phase is due for completion in 2010/11 and the project is projected to cost £570,000. The new facilities will offer high quality accommodation for families and individuals.



## Responsive repairs

We completed 13,004 repairs to our properties last year.

## Decent homes

During 2009/10 we completed the upgrade of 231 properties to meet the Decent Homes Standards (kitchen or bathroom refurbishments) investing £1,124,000 in the programme. We are on target to meet the Decent Home Standard by December 2010.

We will maintain the standard in 2010/11 with a budget of £1,228,000.

Health and safety of our residents is always a high priority and we completed rewiring (with hard wired smoke detectors) to 254 properties at a cost of £499,000.

We carried out a comprehensive electrical survey of a large sample of our properties and increased the rewiring budget to allow for 399 properties to be completed in 2010/11.

The majority of our properties with communal entrances now have secure communal door entry systems.

We continue to improve the environment within our estates and completed 45 estate improvement schemes this year, ranging from repairs to garage blocks, garage door replacements, replacement of communal paths and fences, resurfacing of car parks, upgrading communal drying areas, renewing estate lighting etc at a cost of £190,000.

Average number of days to make a property ready to let

10

Number of residents who have benefited from disabled adaptations over the past year ranging from grab rails to level access showers and stair lifts

365

1,050

properties have been externally decorated

1,000

carbon monoxide detectors were installed with back boilers

95%

of tenants were satisfied with the quality of workmanship



## How were tenants involved?

- Tenants helped to evaluate a number of contracts including internal and external decoration, kitchen and bathroom refurbishment and electrical day to day maintenance and rewiring
- A selection of tenants have been trained to be mystery shoppers and check the quality of repairs and maintenance
- We have consulted tenants to find out how satisfied they are with the repairs
- A project team has been set up to review the current day to day response and voids maintenance contract which ends in September 2012
- Small group consultations took place in respect of major works in selected areas.



**41**

properties in Aldbanks, Dunstable were re-roofed as part of phase 1 at a cost of

**£237,000**

## Plans for 2010/11

- We will again be investing nearly £1,228,000 to upgrade properties to meet Decent Homes Standards
- We will complete phase 2 of re-roofing Aldbanks
- The final phase of the £570,000 major refurbishment works at Bedford Court will be completed
- Central heating systems will be replaced at a cost of £1.44m
- The majority of our single glazed units have now been replaced and any outstanding homes will be completed in 2010/11
- 399 properties will be rewired
- A further 1,050 properties will be externally decorated at a cost of £488,000
- £471,000 will be spent on further aids and adaptations for people with disabilities
- Decent Homes Standard will be achieved by December 2010
- A budget of £311,000 has been set for 2010/11 for environmental improvements

Average cost of a repair (responsive)

**£119**

Number of repairs carried out (responsive)

**13,004**

Luton Borough Council = 34,219

**552**

properties were fitted with highly efficient condensing boilers or safety cut out immersion heaters

Luton Borough Council = 450

**261**

properties had their single glazed windows replaced with energy efficient double glazing at a cost of £817,000

Luton Borough Council = 35

**93%**

of tenants were satisfied with the repairs service

Luton Borough Council = 98.6

**98.4%**

of homes now have a gas safety certificate

Luton Borough Council = 99.4%

**254**

properties were rewired, this included fitting hard wired smoke detectors

Luton Borough Council = 597

# Tenancy Standard

The Tenant Services Authority's Tenancy Standard covers allocations, rents and tenure. The standard makes sure that our properties are let in a fair, transparent and efficient way, rent increases are capped and services are provided to support tenants to maintain their tenancy and prevent unnecessary evictions.

## Rents

- We are fully compliant with the government's policy of rent restructuring, which involves setting a formula rent per property based on property size, property values and local earnings, adjusted for the rate of inflation. This may explain why our rents are considerably higher than Luton Borough Council.
- This approach is designed to ultimately ensure that social rents of similar houses in the same area are the same, regardless of whether the Council is the landlord or a Registered Social Landlord, for example a Housing Association.
- As can be seen in the table Central Bedfordshire Council's rents are below the formula rent, so each year the council sets its rents in order that they reach formula rents.

All rents are subject to rent caps, so that no weekly rent exceeded the following amount for 2009/10:

Property Type	Central Bedfordshire Council (average rent)	Luton Borough Council (average rent)	Government Rent Caps
Bedsits	£65.75	£46.64	£113.77
1 Bed	£75.18	£52.61	£113.77
2 Beds	£83.61	£63.54	£120.46
3 Beds	£90.70	£74.20	£127.60
4 Beds	£99.00	£81.81	£133.85
5 Beds	£116.32	£87.83	£140.53

## Rent Arrears

The Estates Team had a busy year in 2009/10 as the recession has affected some tenants' ability to pay their rent. Outstanding arrears for collection in March 2010 was 2.64%, which was above our 2% target.

The Estates Officers have a number of options open to them to help tenants who are having difficulty paying their rent. These options include referral to one of the many agencies we work closely with regards debt counselling, welfare benefits advice and housing support services.

Estates Officers will write to tenants who fall into arrears as soon as the arrears show on the rent account. It is important that we make early contact with anyone who falls into arrears as debt can very quickly get out of control.

Other priorities for the Estates Team are dealing with tenancy management issues. In particular breaches of tenancy or tenancy changes. Breaches of tenancy can come in any form, but usually are a result of Anti Social Behaviour such as noise or unmanaged gardens. In most cases problems can be dealt with by a phone call, letter or home visit to discuss the issues. In cases where this approach does not work there are enforcement actions available to the team such as injunctions, demotion of tenancies or ultimately eviction.

Number of tenants evicted due to rent arrears

Luton Borough Council = 36

**12**

Former Tenant Arrears

Luton Borough Council = £1,43m

**£277,033**

Outstanding rent arrears

Luton Borough Council = 2.59%

**2.64%**



## Sheltered Housing

We have a stock of sheltered accommodation for people who are over 55 years old.

The Sheltered properties are split into three categories.

- Category 1 consists of 111 homes
- Category 2 consists of 544 homes
- Category 2.5 (Extra Care Scheme) consists of one scheme which houses 33 units. The Extra Care scheme has a team of social services carers that are based on site to respond to care needs

We employ 12 Sheltered Housing Officers who have contact daily with the residents who live at the Category 2 properties. The Category 1 properties have a varying degree of visits which is their choice dependent on their support needs. These schemes are also covered by the same 12 Sheltered Housing Officers. The Extra Care Scheme has a scheme manager who makes daily contact with the residents regardless of their need for care. There is also a night carer who sleeps in the building should an emergency arise.



## Lettings

Bedfordshire Homefinder is the new Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme introduced in June 2009.

The allocation of properties is managed through this system. Potential clients register an interest by completing an application form. Clients are assessed and rated by a banding system which is dependant on their needs. The client will bid for a property which will meet their needs. This is assessed by the CBL team and the available properties are let to the successful *bidders*, these will be the people who have the highest banding for that particular property.

Bedfordshire Homefinder is a well used and popular service. Properties are advertised on the website [www.bedfordshirehomefinder.co.uk](http://www.bedfordshirehomefinder.co.uk) and are also available in other formats.

Bedfordshire Homefinder provides choice to tenants and applicants about where they want

to live and the type of accommodation available through the scheme. In addition, Bedfordshire Homefinder allows more mobility to select homes throughout Bedfordshire which includes Luton, Bedford and Central Bedfordshire.

The introduction of Bedfordshire Homefinder has had a dramatic impact on the average number of days to relet a property. In 2009/10 it was 66. Our figures since March have recorded a reduction to an average of 51 days. Our latest monthly average has reduced further to 37 days.

## Homelessness Strategy

In 2009 we produced a new Homelessness Strategy.

The Strategy has defined a plan to identify the housing needs of the Council and has brought together a range of ideas through partnership working and consultation to meet both the supply and demand of housing and take into account all the options available to us.

## Choice Based Lettings

**June 2009**

**966**

**bids placed on Bedfordshire Homefinder June 2009 - March 2010**

**Number of applicants on the housing register**

**1,706**

**Average number of days for relet turnaround time**

**66**

*Luton Borough Council = 36*

**434**

**lettings to date  
(96 Transfers and 338 New Lets)**

**Households had at least one Notice of Seeking Possession served**

**347**

**Average cost to repair a void/empty property**

**£2,845**

# Tenancy Standard (cont)

## HomeSwapper

HomeSwapper is a way of helping tenants to move to a property or area of their choice by exchanging homes subject to certain conditions.

The figures below give an indication of how HomeSwapper has vastly improved opportunities for exchanging properties and includes a far wider community base:



Number of Exchanges Per Year		
Before HomeSwapper	With HomeSwapper	% Increase
60	72	20%

This method has allowed far more choice and accessibility for our residents wishing to move to an area of their choosing. We currently have almost 500 applicants on the system waiting for a suitable property in their preferred area.

## How were tenants involved?

- As part of our consultations with tenants they assisted with the style, content and layout of the following new initiatives:
- Bedfordshire Homefinder
- Let's Rent
- HomeSwapper
- Tenants assisted with the Sheltered Housing Open Days to promote sheltered housing
- Tenant Incentive Scheme

## Plans for 2010/11

We recently introduced a pioneering new housing option that works in partnership with the local private rented sector to improve access to the sector, promote better standards and aims to significantly improve the quality of life for people across Central Bedfordshire.

Let's Rent is the Housing Needs Service's new private rented sector housing option that will enable eligible families or individuals to have choice of good quality, well managed private rental sector accommodation. It will basically give any tenants or applicants for Council housing the opportunity to rent in the private sector.

To add to this:

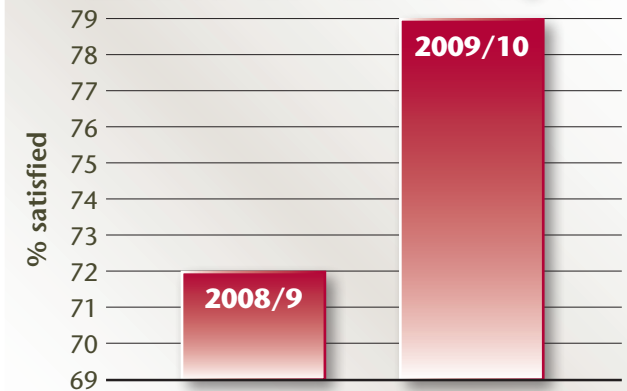
- We will hold Sheltered Housing Open Days to attract new tenants and to dispel myths about sheltered accommodation
- We will reduce rent arrears to our target of 2%
- Tenancy conditions will be reviewed to look at bringing in Introductory Tenancies
- We will introduce Rent Incentive Scheme
- We will review the allocation policy as Bedfordshire Homefinder has been in existence for a year
- We will be exploring opportunities to reduce under occupancy for family sized housing
- We will introduce a new aids and adaptations policy
- Further promotion of the Let's Rent scheme
- We will reduce re-let times



## What did our tenants tell us?

We regularly ask our tenants what they think of our rent charges. The figures below show an increase in satisfaction levels.

### Satisfaction with Value for Money Rent



Up from 72% to 79%





# Value for Money Standard

We must ensure that we are very efficient with every penny we spend. We have had to face many changes since April 2009 and none more than becoming a new Unitary Authority.

With this came changes which challenged us to become even more efficient, in fact we are attempting to get more for less on every penny we spend. A campaign called 'Every Penny Counts' was launched as a further incentive and reminder that we have to make savings wherever we can. This is ongoing and the Housing Service has been proactive in its approach to ensure that we make the most effective use of every pound spent. As an example, the production of this Annual Report has been kept to 50p per copy.

We have very robust ways of buying in new contracts, for example, cleaning contract, gas servicing, repairs contracts etc. We have listed some examples of how we have saved money and played our part in contributing to the Value for Money Standard.

## How were tenants involved?

- Tenants were involved in procuring the Kitchen and Bathroom contracts as part of our Decent Homes Programme
- Tenants have scrutinised every policy and procedure and looked at how this impacts on Value for Money
- Tenants have reviewed and made comments on the future of the Housing Revenue Account and considered the options put forward by the Government



## Plans for 2010/11

- We will re-write our Value for Money policy
- We will revise two major contracts and begin the process of procuring them with tenant involvement at a very early stage  
*This includes:* Electrical  
Repairs and maintenance  
Communal cleaning  
Gas servicing
- We will continue to monitor all our major contracts with tenants
- We have applied for external funding to get more computers and IT equipment in five of our sheltered housing schemes

External Decorations Programme  
Projected Savings over 7 year  
life of Contract

**£765,642**

The average cost of our  
bathrooms including fitting is

**£1,652**

The average cost of our  
kitchens including fitting is

**£2,653**

Re-Roofing Programme  
Projected Savings over 5 year  
life of Contract

**£302,53**

Our housing newsletter is delivered  
with our quarterly rent statements  
which each year  
saves over

**£2,000**

Our tenants conferences  
(including hire of venue)  
per session costs on  
average less than

**£40**

# Neighbourhood and Community Standard

The Tenant Services Authority's Neighbourhood and Community Standard covers estate management, partnership working and anti-social behaviour. The standard sets out how in areas where we own properties we should keep the neighbourhood and communal areas clean and safe, work with other organisations to promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing and prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour.

## Estate Management

Estate Officers deal with problems relating to both the estates and the tenancies held by our tenants. These issues can be reported to us by tenants, leaseholders and other service providers. Officers also carry out a monthly Estate Walkabout with residents to check on the areas we manage.

The Estates Team regularly monitor the cleaning of communal areas to ensure they are kept to a high standard. Regular meetings are held with the contractor providing this service to discuss progress and feedback from residents and staff who visit the sites.

We also employ five Handy Van Officers to assist with managing our estates. These officers act as caretakers for our estates and provide an invaluable service by carrying out the following duties:

- Graffiti removal
- Rubbish removal
- Grounds maintenance
- Assisting with Action Days

We have also organised a number of Action Days on our estates. Action Days are where we work in partnership with residents, council officers and representatives from other organisations such as the Police to tidy up an area that is in need of a makeover.

Last year we carried this out in a number of streets on the Parkside Estate and at Holts Court Sheltered Housing Scheme in Dunstable. These Action Days take up a lot of time and resources but vastly improve the area for the local residents. Work includes removing rubbish, overgrown hedges and trees, graffiti and abandoned cars. The feedback from local residents is always very positive.

## What did our tenants tell us?

We regularly ask our tenants what they think of the services we provide. The figures below show a **reduction in dissatisfaction** levels with the way we handle Anti-Social Behaviour.



## Number of Anti-Social Behaviour Evictions

Luton Borough Council = 3

0

## Notice of Seeking Possession/ Demotions served for Anti-Social Behaviour

Luton Borough Council = 22

4

## Anti-Social Behaviour Orders served

Luton Borough Council = 2

0

## Anti-Social Behaviour Notices issued

8

## Case Conferences to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour

57



## Anti-Social Behaviour

During 2009/10 the Tenancy Enforcement Officer dealt with 106 cases. The general pattern of complaints is similar to that of 2008/09, with complaints against youths being the highest category.

We are pleased to report that whilst 75% of cases were closed as a result of successful action/intervention we have not yet had to evict anyone for Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). This is due to early interventions and significant work put in by the Estates Team to work closely with both the Victim/Witnesses and Perpetrator. This is to find resolutions to the issues and the close contact between the team and the individuals involved. It is felt that one to one communication and early intervention is the key to resolving most cases without the need for legal action.

### Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC) signed

Luton Borough Council = 2

11

### Total number of recorded ASB cases

Luton Borough Council = 358

200

### Anti-Social Behaviour cases resolved

103

## Partnership Working

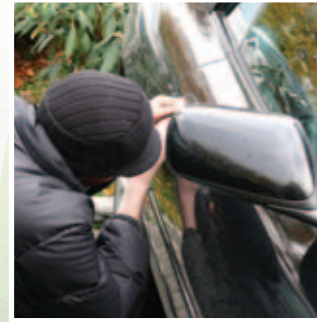
Partnership working is about different services, organisations and agencies working together to provide the best service that fully meets the needs of our communities.

We have forged many partnership links with organisations such as, the Police, Fire Service, NHS, voluntary organisations, private landlords and other support agencies.

Partnerships that we are currently involved in include:

- Tithe Farm and Parkside Neighbourhood Improvement Plans (2009-2017)
- Downside Neighbourhood Plan (2006-2015)

The Housing Service along with other teams within the Council support these plans to improve the lives of community members.



## How were tenants involved?

- Tenants identified areas that needed Action Days
- Tenants have been involved in Estate Inspections on a number of areas
- As part of our consultations with residents they assisted with the development of the Neighbourhood Plans for Parkside and Tithe Farm
- Tenants assisted with developing the Anti Social Behaviour policy and procedure



## Plans for 2010/11

- We will carry out a minimum of two Action Days at various locations to assist with improving the areas and lives for our communities
- We will continue to commit to working in partnership with organisations to tackle crime, health issues, worklessness and poverty in our neighbourhoods.
- We will involve tenants in the monitoring of the cleaning contract for all areas
- We will continue to involve tenants in Estate Inspections



# Local Offers - What's Next?

**By April next year we will need to have agreed a set of Local Offers or standards that we will aim to achieve over the financial year 2011-2012.**

The most important factor in setting these Local Offers is that they must be agreed with our tenants. These standards must link in with the National Standards but have a more local feel to further improve the services we offer our tenants. These standards can be as local as applying to a specific area (e.g. estate, block of flats) or they can relate to a specific area of work.

This section explains what we have done so far and what we intend to do to gather information to produce these Local Offers.

## **Actions to date:**

In June and July this year we held a series of seven meetings across the area at the following locations:

- The Council Offices, Central Bedfordshire Council, Dunstable
- The White House, Leighton Linlade Town Council, Leighton Buzzard
- Furness Avenue, Sheltered Housing Scheme, Dunstable
- Customer Service Centre, Bedford Square, Houghton Regis
- Manor Court Sheltered Housing Scheme, Caddington,
- Finch Crescent Sheltered Housing Scheme, Linlade
- Kensworth Community Drop In

We used these meetings as an opportunity for our tenants to come and discuss any aspect of housing. At the same time we offered them the opportunity to discuss Local Offers and asked them what their local priorities were for the Housing Service. We also used these meetings for tenants to inform us what they would like to see in this Annual Report. It is important to note that we worked side by side with tenant members of the Way Forward Panel who assisted us in gathering the information we needed. This was to ensure that what tenants told us would be addressed. We have and continue to hold regular meetings with officers from the Housing Service together with a tenant representative from the Way Forward Panel. This panel member has been involved in this process from the very beginning and will see it through to the end.

To add to this:

- We sent out questionnaires to our Housing Sounding Board to gather more information on both Local Offers and the Annual Report
- We made specific visits to Resident Associations and forums in the area to ask them directly about their priorities for the service
- We also published articles in Housing Matters and in our Update Letters to invite tenants to take part
- To date we have collected some very useful information which is included in this report and will be used for the Local Offers

## **Next Steps**

- We will continue to visit all residents associations in the area
- By November this year we will have all the evidence and information needed
- We will pull all this information together and write the Local Offers with tenant representatives
- Once a draft has been completed we will begin to go out to our tenants to make sure these are correct
- This will take place through residents associations and focus groups. We will also include an article in the winter edition of Housing Matters

We will also be working closely with the Bedfordshire Tenants Forum to look at comparable standards and see where we can work with other local authorities and housing associations in the area. Current membership includes tenant and officer representatives from the following organisations:

- Central Bedfordshire Council
- Aragon Housing Association
- Aldwyck Housing Association
- bpha
- Luton Borough Council

The final version will be approved in a February meeting of the Way Forward Panel followed by a conference in March 2011 to promote it. We will also be taking the report to our Council committees for their approval in the New Year.



# Housing Revenue Account

## INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR YEAR END 31/03/2010

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Notes/definition</b>
Total Gross Rent	<b>21,039,000</b>	Rent received for houses, flats, garages etc
Charges for services and facilities	<b>821,000</b>	Communal services such as heating, cleaning etc
Contributions towards expenditure	<b>631,000</b>	Supporting people and other grants
Interest and Investment Income	<b>216,000</b>	Interest earned on money invested
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b><u>22,707,000</u></b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Management and Maintenance	<b>9,366,000</b>	The money used by the Housing Service to manage and maintain homes
Rents, rates, taxes and other charges	<b>174,000</b>	Rent and water rates paid for properties with communal accommodation
Negative HRA subsidy payable	<b>8,729,000</b>	Money paid to the government as part of the housing subsidy scheme
Depreciation cost	<b>3,650,000</b>	The annual reduction in the value of properties due to wear and tear etc
Debt management Costs	<b>88,000</b>	The annual cost of managing debts owed to the Service
HRA Share of Corporate and Democratic Core	<b>104,000</b>	Democratic and Legal costs associated with running the service
Capital Expenditure funded by HRA	<b>343,000</b>	Payments made towards the cost of long term improvements to properties
Increased provision for bad or doubtful debts	<b>68,000</b>	The amount put aside to cover debts owed to the Council but unlikely to be repaid
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b><u>22,522,000</u></b>	
<b>SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b><u>185,000</u></b>	Income was this much more than expenditure
<b>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT SURPLUS BROUGHT FORWARD</b>	<b>4,039,000</b>	The amount of money held in the HRA at the start of the year
<b>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT SURPLUS CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<b>4,224,000</b>	The amount of money held in the HRA at the end of the year

# housingmatters

## ANNUAL REPORT



Developed in Partnership with  
Central Bedfordshire  
Tenants

## Alternative languages or formats

Would you or anyone you know like to receive this document in an alternative format?

If you would like a Braille, cassette or text only copy please contact the Council on:

Telephone: 0300 300 8000

Email: [zulf.awan@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:zulf.awan@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Or write to: Housing Services,  
Central Bedfordshire Council,  
The Council Offices, High Street North,  
Dunstable LU6 1LF

The Council also offers interpretation facilities in a variety of languages. If you, a member of your family or a friend would like assistance in reading this document in an alternative language or format, please do not hesitate to contact Zulf Awan on 0300 300 8000 who will be pleased to help.

આપણે આ દસ્તાવેજનું અન્ય ભાષામાં અથવા અલ્ટરનેટિવ ફોર્મમાં આપવા માટે તૈયાર છીએ. જો તમને અથવા તમારા કોઈક સભ્યને આ દસ્તાવેજનું અન્ય ભાષામાં અથવા અલ્ટરનેટિવ ફોર્મમાં મેળવવાની જરૂર હોય તો, કૃપા કરી 0300 300 8000 નંબર પર સંપર્ક સાધો.

જો તમને આ દસ્તાવેજનું અન્ય ભાષામાં અથવા અલ્ટરનેટિવ ફોર્મમાં મેળવવાની જરૂર હોય તો, કૃપા કરી 0300 300 8000 ઉપર સંપર્ક સાધો.

اگر آپ اس دستاویز کا ترجمہ اردو زبان میں حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم اس نمبر پر ٹیلیفون کیجئے  
0300 300 8000

Se desidera una copia di questo documento tradotta in Italiano, la preghiamo di telefonarci al numero 0300 300 8000

Jeślibyś chciał tłumaczenie tego dokumentu na język polski, proszę zadzwonić pod numer 0300 300 8000



on the telephone...

0300 300 8000



by email...

[customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)



on the web...

[www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)



Alternatively, you can write to:

**Housing Services**, The Council Offices,  
High Street North, Dunstable LU6 1LF