



Broxtowe
Borough
COUNCIL

Welcome to Your

HOUSING ANNUAL REPORT

1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021

This year has been a busy year for the Housing Department with a new Housing Strategy approved, plans developed for Phase 1 of the Housing Delivery Plan and a Stock Condition Survey completed to help inform our 30-year Asset Management Plan and Strategy.



www.broxtowe.gov.uk

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INTRODUCTION.....

The period covered by this report has seen changes in the way not only Housing, but the Council as a whole, has needed to work with residents, due to the on-going restrictions brought about by Covid-19.

Some services were affected more than others, but employees have continued to provide essential services, such as emergency repairs and office based employees were set up to be able to continue their vital work from home.



Most contact with customers was telephone based, as employees were unable to carry out home visits. They continued to provide essential advice and support to customers, especially where their personal circumstances may have been directly affected by Covid-19.

We are pleased to now be returning to some sense of normality as restrictions are lifted, with communal facilities in Independent Living Schemes now reopen and social activities being delivered once more.

Once again we would like to thank you for your patience during this difficult time. Also thank you to all employees in the Housing Department who have continued to deliver high quality services for our customers.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

This year has seen our new Housing Strategy 2020-2024 approved, which is based around the Housing priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan. These are:

- Build more houses, more quickly on under used or derelict land
- Invest to ensure our homes are safe and more energy efficient
- Prevent homelessness and help people to be financially secure and independent

The strategy is supported by an action plan and will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to meet the Council's priorities.

Plans have been developed for Phase 1 of Housing Delivery with 2 new dementia bungalows built in Beeston that are owned and managed by the Council. Tenants have now moved into these new homes. The homes include open plan living, with good visual connection of spaces and detailed design to address visual clarity. Colours and contrasts have been used, along with ergonomic handles and a variety of visual keys to support those living with dementia. The properties

have also been built to high energy efficiency standards and include photovoltaic panels and air source heat pumps, with underfloor heating, which will help with the Council's target to become carbon neutral by 2027.

Consultation has taken place around the provision of flats for ex-service personnel on a garage site in Stapleford, with work underway and expected completion Winter 2021/22.

Consultation has also taken place around plans to develop five garage sites in Chilwell and Watnall. The layout plans and initial proposals are now being reviewed and subject to

further feasibility work and detailed site surveys, planning applications will be submitted later this year.

A Stock Condition Survey has been carried out of the Council's housing stock, with 25% of properties surveyed, including their condition in relation to the Governments Decent Homes Standard and the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The results of the survey are being analysed against existing data to help inform and develop a revised 30-year Asset Management Plan and Asset Management Strategy. This will help to protect and maintain the standards of our housing stock in the short, medium and long term.

The Repairs Team has continued to complete emergency repairs and



gas servicing throughout the pandemic. They have ensured that jobs such as plumbing, loss of heat or power, loss of hot water and major roof leaks have been completed. Gas Engineers have continued to attend properties to complete gas safety checks and servicing, to ensure tenants and their families remain safe in their homes. Although there are some outstanding jobs to complete, these are at a low level as the team address the backlog with eased Covid-19 restrictions.

Following the recruitment of the Domestic Abuse and Private Sector Coordinator, the Council has been successful in retaining its White Ribbon Accreditation. Over 50 people from partner organisations, who work with survivors of domestic abuse, joined us for a virtual coffee morning to hear all the latest developments from domestic abuse services. Very positive feedback was received from the event and plans are being made to hold another similar virtual event this

year. The coordination of the Sanctuary Scheme sits within the Housing Department. The Scheme provides security improvements to allow survivors of domestic abuse to stay in their own homes. A new policy has been developed to set out how referrals to the scheme can be made, along with what works will be considered and how these will be carried out.

The Income Team have continued to work with and support tenants to pay their rent during this incredibly difficult time. Systems used by the team highlight accounts where contact or support may be needed, which enables them to prioritise their work loads. They are also able to send out text notifications to ask tenants to contact us about their rent account, or remind about payments that are due. This has helped the team to maintain a high level of rent collected as a proportion of the rent owed, which as at 31st March 2021 was 102.82%. This is above the target set for the year of 99% and

despite the number of Universal Credit claimants increasing over this period.

The Financial Inclusion Team continue to support tenants with free advice to help improve income and living standards. The service provides free, confidential and impartial support, which has been vital for tenants as other advice services have closed or seen an increase in waiting times for advice. During the last 12 months the service received 165 referrals. They have helped tenants claim £129,616.74 worth of back dated benefit and deal with £112,300 worth of debt.

**NEVER
COMMIT, EXCUSE OR
REMAIN SILENT ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN**



KEY FACTS AS AT 31ST MARCH 2021

Housing Department



4,398 Number of properties the Council owns

138 Households where homelessness was prevented as a result of housing advice

250 Homeless interviews completed

16 Properties sold under the Right to Buy



Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

In 2020/21 Broxtowe Borough Council received £16.4 million in income to the Housing Revenue Account. £15 million came from housing rents; the remainder from garage rents, Independent Living management charges and leaseholder service charges.

£72.86 Average weekly rent

Where the money was spent

£3.2 MILLION

Repairs and maintenance

(includes repairs costs, contractor costs, void work, electrical testing etc.)

£0.4 MILLION

Capital expenditure financed by HRA

(includes a direct contribution from the HRA towards capital expenditure costs)

£4.8 MILLION

Supervision and management

(Includes staffing costs)

£6.6 MILLION

Charges for capital

(includes depreciation, gains/losses on disposal of properties and interest payable on borrowing)



Repairs and Maintenance (day-to-day costs)

£1.1 MILLION 
Employee costs 

£412K Sub- contractors and specialist contractors

£430K Other expenditure
(includes vehicles, tools, materials, administration, premises, clothing etc.)



**TOTAL
£1.9
MILLION**


Your Homes


96  Kitchens and
bathrooms
modernised


25  Gas
central heating
replacements


91  Electric
heating and hot water
replacements


15  Garage
refurbishments

116  Homes repainted (including soffits,
fascia's and rain water goods)

184  Minor adaptations (including
handrails, half-steps etc.)


49  Garage
replacements

42  Homes benefitting
from footpath
and paving works

25  Major
adaptations
(including stair lifts,
wet rooms etc.)

77  UPVC
window
replacements

8  External wall
insulations

181  Roof replacement (including soffits,
fascia's and rain water goods)

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

Through listening and responding to views and feedback, the Housing Department can ensure that customers are at the heart of shaping services for the benefit of all our customers. Customer experience of services is essential for highlighting what is working well and where improvements are needed.

The Housing Engagement Strategy reflects national priorities, along with key priorities and objectives from the Council’s Corporate Plan and Housing Business Plan. The priorities and actions set out in the strategy ensure that our customers have a greater voice and can influence positive change.

A range of engagement methods are available for customers to choose from. These methods match customers’ areas of interest, the learning opportunities required and the time commitment available.

We ensure that getting involved is an enjoyable and rewarding experience. Customers are able to use and develop a range of skills through their participation that can support employment aspirations. Customers are supported by the Housing Engagement Team throughout their involvement and can access training to help them develop in their roles.



ENGAGEMENT METHODS

A good way for customers to start their involvement with Housing is by signing up to our low level engagement, which takes no more than 30 minutes and can be done from the comfort of their own home.



Housing Community Facebook Group

Join this growing group of Housing customers to:

- Share your views on Housing services
- Respond to polls, surveys, questions and more
- Share your ideas to improve services
- Get the latest Housing news

space we ask customers to complete three simple questions when requesting to join, so we can verify who they are.

It’s quick and easy to join, visit the Broxtowe Borough Council Facebook page –

@broxtoweboroughcouncil. Locate the group tab and click ‘Join Group’.



This is a closed group, just for Housing customers. To ensure it remains a safe

Housing News Bulletins

Sign up to monthly Housing News Bulletins through Email Me. Receive the latest news and information, including engagement opportunities direct to your inbox.

2,145 PEOPLE HAVE SIGNED UP TO HOUSING NEWS BULLETINS TO RECEIVE THE LATEST NEWS FROM HOUSING. HAVE YOU?
WWW.BROXTOWE.GOV.UK/EMAILME

Your Voice, Your Views

Complete our online form to join 1,155 customers who have signed up to tell us how they want to have a say in service improvements. By letting us know what service areas you are interested in and how you want to be involved, you will receive information about engagement opportunities tailored for you.

www.broxtowe.gov.uk/getinvolved



However, if you have a bit more time to spare and are looking for more active engagement methods, there are medium level opportunities, taking between 30 minutes to an hour.

Neighbourhood Champions

Tenants are supported to act as a link between their community and the Housing teams, providing feedback on how services can be improved.

Service Inspectors

Housing customers are supported to inspect services and ensure standards are being achieved. Currently this is for the Independent Living Cleaning Service, but will be extended into other service areas.

Social Activity Groups

Independent Living tenants who manage social funds and organise activities for the benefit of all tenants at their schemes.



Alternatively, if you're looking for something at a higher level that involves over an hour of your time on a regular basis, here are some opportunities.

Resident Involvement Group

Housing customers meet monthly and work with officers to support delivery of Housing Engagement and consider service improvements. They look at a range of information, such as performance information and recommendations from Task and Finish Groups.

Task and Finish Groups

Undertake scrutiny reviews of a service and make recommendations for improvements. The groups meet a maximum of six times to complete the scrutiny exercise and are able to get involved in further activities to inform the review, such as site visits and mystery shopping.



For more information about all our engagement opportunities visit www.broxtowe.gov.uk/housingengagement, or contact the Housing Engagement Team at housingengagement@broxtowe.gov.uk or call 0115 917 7777.

NATIONAL AWARD WINNERS

In last year's Annual Report, we introduced the work of the Activities Co-ordinator and the programme of activities they are providing to our Independent Living customers.

We are delighted to report this year that their hard work has been recognised with the Activities Co-ordinators, Lindsay Carter and Nicky Gilmour, winning the NAPA (National Activity Providers Association) Service Improvement Award.



The Service Improvement award is to celebrate those who've demonstrated a proactive approach to improving individual's wellbeing regularly through meaningful activities that are person centred. Creating an environment where individuals are engaged, stimulated and fulfilled.



Employees from Housing and Councillors attended a virtual awards ceremony and were thrilled that Lindsay and Nicky were announced as winners of the award, with judges commenting on how much they have achieved, across multiple sites, in such a short space of time.



Lindsay and Nicky were nominated after joining the Council in brand new roles in February 2019. They were tasked with providing a programme of social activities, tailored to the interests and needs of Independent Living customers, across all schemes with communal facilities. The activities aim to help maintain independence, reduce social isolation, keep residents active and end loneliness.

Nicky said ‘This award has definitely been a team effort and it was a fantastic surprise to win. I have been given tremendous support and guidance and this has enabled myself and Lindsay to embrace and develop our roles as Activities Co-ordinators. I would also like to thank all the residents within the Independent Living Schemes for attending our activities and getting involved, without their support we could not have won this award.’

The knowledge and understanding they have brought to this area of work, has been instrumental in ensuring they were quickly able to establish and develop plans for social activities. They regularly receive positive feedback from customers and their families for their hard work, dedication and approach to the activities they provide, which is a real testament to them.

Their commitment to their roles have seen some Independent Living schemes going from having little or no activities, to communal lounges becoming thriving places for customers to spend their time socialising together. One customer said “They have done so much for this place, before they came there was nothing, but now the place is alive.”

Lindsay said: ‘It is such an honour to have won the NAPA Service Improvement Award.



I feel it recognises the hard work myself and my colleague Nicky have put in to establish the role of the Activities Co-ordinators. We could not have got to the point we are now without the support of our manager. I look forward to continuing to deliver engaging activities for our tenants living in the Independent Living schemes.’

Claire Reed, Engagement Manager said “I’m so delighted for Nicky and Lindsay; they have worked so hard to establish the service and truly deserve this recognition. They are highly professional and skilled individuals who care deeply about the service they provide and strive to bring about positive changes for customers. I’m looking forward to supporting them to further develop the service and seeing what fresh and innovative ideas they come up with for future plans.”

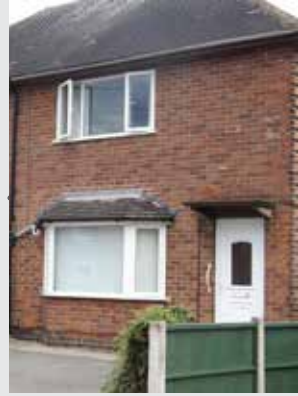
Although the pandemic has impacted on the delivery of social activities, as soon as restrictions allowed Nicky and Lindsay were back to delivering their full programme of activities for customers. They have been pleased to welcome new customers and also see so many return to activities. Customers have welcomed the return of activities, with one who had attended a performance of an Ukulele Band saying “It’s so nice to be doing things together again and it was lovely sitting outside listening to the band and singing along.”

HOUSING ACQUISITIONS.....

In July 2019, the Council approved a new Housing Delivery Plan to meet social and affordable housing need over the next 10 years by providing a minimum of 230 homes. The plan provides various mechanisms for increasing Council-owned social housing in Broxtowe. One of these is to acquire ex-Council properties in areas of current social housing.

To support this, an Acquisitions Policy was produced which ensured that each property referred to us was considered in a fair and consistent way. A Housing Acquisitions Officer was recruited to administer and facilitate the acquisitions process.

The Council can also purchase ex-Council properties. This is where a property sold under the Right to Buy scheme must be offered back to the Council within the first 10 years of being purchased, if the owner wants to sell the property. The Council has the right to purchase the property back in the first instance, and would pay the market value to the seller after obtaining an independent valuation.



Buying ex-Council properties means that similar properties are going back into the housing stock, and it is a quick way of providing a home to those in need on our waiting list.

Since the Council began acquiring properties in 2019, 13 have been purchased and are now in the Council's housing stock.

These consist of:

- **7 in Chilwell**
2 x 3 bed houses & 5 x 2 bed flats
- **3 in Beeston**
2 x 3 bed houses & 1 x 2 bed house
- **2 in Stapleford**
1 x 3 bed house & 1 x 2 bed flat
- **1 in Eastwood**
1 x 4 bed house

During 2021/22, the Council aim to purchase approximately 10 more properties to add to the housing stock, with a focus on properties in the North of the borough.

If you are a leaseholder, experiencing financial hardship and would like to find out more about the acquisitions process, please contact acquisitions@broxtowe.gov.uk or call **0115 917 7777**.

More information on the Housing Delivery Plan can be found on the Council's website: www.broxtowe.gov.uk/housingdelivery

TENANCY SUSTAINMENT

The Tenancy Sustainment Service assists general needs Council tenants who are at risk of having tenancy enforcement action taken against them. This may be due to a vulnerability rather than a deliberate act. The Service also works with new tenants moving into their first home, where an additional support need has been identified.

The Tenancy Sustainment Officer makes contact with the tenant and arranges to meet them to assess their support needs. The types of interventions that the Officer could make or assist with include;

- Referrals to furniture schemes to assist in furnishing a new home
- Supporting tenants in accessing health or social care support
- Grants for equipment to assist them in education, training or employment
- Additional support with claiming benefits
- Moving to more suitable accommodation where necessary

Due to the rising workload and successes achieved the service is expanding and will be supported by a new Tenancy Sustainment Officer role to enhance work already being done.

During the pandemic, the Tenancy Sustainment Officer has continued to work with tenants, ensuring frequent contact, either over the telephone or a visit, if this is preferred. During this time, 48 new referrals were received, alongside an existing open case load of 17 tenants.

Case Study

Support was provided to an elderly tenant who was hoarding, living in a third floor property; struggling to get about due to their health and had not seen their GP for many years. The Tenancy Sustainment Officer booked and attended a GP appointment with them and the tenant is getting medication for various medical concerns that were previously undiagnosed. The tenant was supported while they cleared up their home and are now maintaining its condition. The tenant was referred to a substance addiction agency and the Officer attended their first appointments to support their first steps. Assistance was provided to find more appropriate accommodation and the tenant is now housed in a property which is more beneficial for their health and well-being.

Case Study

A tenant, who had not previously engaged with the Council, was referred to the Service as their home was in an unacceptable condition. A support agency worked with the tenant to clear up their home, they continued to support the tenant with their complex needs and ensure their home was maintained. The Tenancy Sustainment Officer sourced furniture from a charity and referrals were made to counselling services and medical services. The tenant then started to work voluntarily in their locality and engaging with people in their community, which is greatly helping their progress.

COMPLAINTS

We value all feedback about services we deliver to customers and understand that at times we do not always get things right.

We want to hear from you if you do not feel you have received the level of service you expect from us, so that we can learn and make improvements to our services.

SERVICE AREA	COMPLAINTS RECEIVED
Housing Repairs	70
Housing and Income	28
Housing Operations	19
Housing Services and Strategy	2
TOTAL	119

The numbers of complaints received includes contact that has been logged as a formal complaint and not where contact is classified as a service request.



34 complaints not resolved under Stage One of the Complaints Process and investigated under Stage Two.

11 complaints investigated under Stage Two were upheld and **4** partially upheld.

A TOTAL OF 33 COMPLAINTS WERE UPHELD



Every complaint received is reviewed to identify any learning to be undertaken to improve services.

The main reason for complaints received in 2020/21 was that customers did not feel they had received the level of communication expected in relation to service delivery. Whilst we endeavour to ensure that processes and procedures cover every eventuality, we continually review and update these as issues arise. We also provide employees with further training to prevent similar issues arising again.

YOU SAID



“I have been on the Council waiting list for a long time waiting for rehousing.”

WE DID: We acknowledge that some people wait far too long for our general needs accommodation, so we have begun a programme to change some of our properties designated at Independent Living to general needs. This will mean there are more properties available for those waiting for accommodation.



Compliments and Comments

We also like to hear from you when we get things right, or go beyond your expectations. If you would like to compliment us for a job well done, or have suggestions about how we can improve, please let us know. Here are just a few compliments we have received.

“Without the Income Collection Officer’s help, understanding, compassion and consideration I hate to think how matters would have evolved, I can’t praise them highly enough.”

“I just want to say a big thank you for everything you have done for me. I am in my new home and it’s looking amazing. I’m over the moon, can’t stop smiling, thanks again.”

“I just want to take a moment to applaud your team, the Repairs Operatives were a dream team, polite and charming.”

“The Independent Living Cleaner delivers a fantastic service and is so efficient, hardworking and takes real pride in their work.”

“I just want to take the time to say how truly grateful me and my family are for your help and support, during what has been a really stressful time. You are an amazing officer and a true credit to your organisation.”

YOU SAID

“Can the Council provide top soil and plants at our Independent Living Scheme?”



WE DID: We have introduced a Community Fund so that tenants can bid for funding to improve their schemes and neighbourhoods.

YOU SAID

“I did not know how long my Right to Buy application would take and thought it took too long.”



WE DID: We follow timescales set out by Government and Right to Buy applications can take many months to process. We have reviewed our procedures to ensure they are as efficient as possible and that tenants are aware of the timescales from the outset.



STAYING UP TO DATE



Sign up to our email me service - subscribe to updates on the services that matter to you, all direct to your inbox with our Email Me Service.
www.broxtowe.gov.uk/emailme



Follow us on social media for daily updates and news from across the Borough. You can find us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube

Our Broxtowe Matters newsletter is delivered to every home and business in the Borough twice a year. It can also be read online at www.broxtowe.gov.uk/councilpublications



Visit our consultations page to see how you can have your say on Council services www.broxtowe.gov.uk/consultations

Community Action Teams (CAT) Meetings take place in the Borough and provide an opportunity to raise issues with local Councillors www.broxtowe.gov.uk/cat

The Council has Committees which make decisions about services or which have delegated powers to make decisions based on law. Most committees are public meetings so members of the public are welcome to attend. At certain meetings, like Full Council Meetings, members of the public can ask questions by prior arrangement. Agendas, minutes and meeting dates are published on our website at www.broxtowe.gov.uk/committees and decisions for many of the committees are shared on our Twitter account @broxtowebc.

ہماری خبریں ہر دو سالوں میں ہر گھر اور کاروبار کو دو بار بھیجی جاتی ہیں۔ اگر آپ اس خبریں کو دیکھنا چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم ہمیں 0115 917 7777 پر رابطہ کریں۔

如果您需要此傳單用其他的形式或文字寫成，請撥電話 0115 917 7777 與我們聯絡。

اگر آپ چاہتے ہیں کہ یہ لیفلٹ آپ کو آمدنیوں پر مشتمل سہولتوں کے بارے میں بتا دے تو براہ کرم ہمیں 0115 917 7777 پر رابطہ کریں۔

If you need this leaflet in other formats or languages contact us on 0115 917 7777

TYPETALK - TEXT DIRECT



Typetalk's purpose is to bring the benefits of the telephone network to deaf, deafblind, deafened, hard of hearing and speech-impaired people.

Managed from a state-of-the-art centre, Typetalk's highly trained operators understand the special requirements of its customers and provide a warm, friendly service in complete confidentiality.

For Broxtowe Borough Council telephone
18001 0115 917 7777.



**Broxtowe
Borough
COUNCIL**

Broxtowe Borough Council
Foster Avenue, Beeston,
Nottingham, NG9 1AB
Tel 0115 917 7777
www.broxtowe.gov.uk