

Norwich City Council

Annual report to tenants 2014-15 - Summary



Tenant
approved



NORWICH
City Council

Annual report to tenants 2014-15

The following four pages provide a brief overview of some of our key achievements over the last financial year (April 2014 to March 2015). Tenants and council officers work together to produce this report, which we hope you will find of interest.

If you have any comments about the report or would like to be involved in producing next year's publication, please email involvement@norwich.gov.uk or call the involvement team on **0344 980 3333**.

Tenant involvement, empowerment and customer care

Delivering Local Offers

Local Offers are a set of pledges we have made to you based on what you have told us is important with regard to keeping you involved.

Under the Local Offers, we will:

1 provide a variety of opportunities for you to help shape the service you receive

2 improve the way we communicate with you

3 work with you to make your neighbourhood cleaner and safer

4 offer you more chances to be involved in the delivery and monitoring of the repairs and maintenance service.

We have achieved the Local Offers in 2014/15 by:

- more than 1,500 people attending housing-related events
- forming a new tenant panel focused on sheltered housing
- forming a tenant group to advise us on their preferred materials for upgrade works
- tenant representatives joining the NPS Liaison Board
- completing our fourth tenant training academy

Whenever you see this logo it indicates the service has generated savings or improved value for money.



- organising contractor visits and staff shadowing days for involved tenants
- winning the ARCH Award for encouraging tenant empowerment
- increasing the number of patch panels
- organising fun days (attended by 1,300 residents)
- delivering three editions of *TLC* magazine, with all content approved by the tenant panel
- the readers' panel reviewing council documents and awarding the 'Tenant Tick'
- carrying out 37 estate improvement projects
- regularly keeping you up-to-date on our performance via the performance scorecard.



Customer contact team

- Increased staff training has led to improvements in quality of service and reductions in call waiting times.
- New computer software, which identifies required repairs from the initial enquiry, has increased the number of repairs being completed at first visit.



Tenants and staff visit Pointer's Field.

The families unit

The families unit provides specialist intensive support to families with multiple and complex needs. In 2014/15:

- a new three-year partnership was formed with Norfolk County Council to deliver family support under the Government's Troubled Families Programme.



- a new youth mediation role was created to prevent homelessness among 14 to 18-year-olds.
- short term targeted interventions were developed to reduce the number of children being taken into care.
- a new webpage was developed for the service to increase engagement with service users.

Sheltered housing

- The refurbishment of St James' House sheltered housing scheme is due for completion in March 2016 and will set the standard for future scheme development.
- Sheltered tenants moving to alternative city council

accommodation as part of the transformation received properties that were refurbished to an enhanced standard which is now being undertaken for all sheltered housing properties when they become vacant.

- The communal lounges and guestroom at the Silkfields scheme were refurbished.
- The former scheme manager's accommodation at Harry Perry Close was redeveloped to create two new one-bedroom sheltered flats.
- The sheltered housing improvement panel (SHIP) was formed to increase engagement and consultation with sheltered housing tenants.

Your Home

Upgrades, adaptations and improvements

We have completed the third year of our five-year programme to deliver the Norwich Standard to all homes by 2017 (below are this year's stats).

Further upgrades are planned for 2015/16. Energy efficiency improvements will meanwhile see a programme of loft and cavity wall insulations carried out, along with external wall insulation to 80 homes and the installation of solar panels at a further 200 properties.

New homes

- The completion of eight one-bedroom flats at Pointer's Field became the first council-owned homes to be built in the city since 1992.

- Plans were submitted for the second phase of the Three Score development, featuring 57 new council homes.
- Plans were drawn up for the redevelopment of Goldsmith St – featuring 105 new homes.
- A deal was made to purchase 23 council homes on the Brazen Gate development.



- Work started on converting former sheltered housing scheme, Britannia Court, into two separate blocks of refurbished flats that will be let through Home Options. It is due for completion in March 2016.
- A public consultation was launched for the development of 10 new flats on the site of the former area housing office at Hansard Close.

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| £18.7 million | spent on upgrades and improvements |
| £875,000 | spent on adaptations |
| 1,546 | new kitchens installed |
| 1,062 | new bathrooms installed |
| 863 | new heating systems installed |
| 2,650 | properties received new front and back doors |
| 288 | homes had their windows replaced |
| 92% | percentage of council homes that now meet the Norwich Standard |

Your Tenancy

Housing management

A total of 80 per cent of tenants have now had a tenancy health check in the last five years. As part of this process we're taking optional photos of existing tenants, which is now standard procedure for all new tenancies to help reduce tenancy fraud.



Income and rents

In 2014/15 the team have:

- successfully piloted the use of a computerised texting service to improve communication with customers
- provided money and budgeting advice to more than 800 tenants facing financial difficulties

- worked closely with other council teams to help tenants with multiple council debts
- continued to provide a variety of support to tenants affected by welfare reform, including help completing Discretionary Housing Payment claim forms.

Housing options

In 2014/15 the team have:

- processed 99 per cent of all new applications for housing within one day of receipt
- increased opening hours for the specialist housing advice drop-in service, enabling more clients to be helped than ever before



In March 2015 the housing options team was invited to give a presentation on its work in the field of homelessness prevention at the national Shelter Conference in London.



- introduced a text reminder service for property viewings
- introduced the attendance of occupational therapists at viewings for adapted properties so they can advise on suitability and further potential adaptations based on their specific needs
- prevented 596 instances of potential homelessness, with only 8 per cent of clients that present as facing homelessness, going on to make a homeless presentation.



| | 2013/14 | 2014/15 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Tenants' arrears as % of total rent due to the council | 2.65% | 3.14% |
| Average amount owed | £222 | £294 |
| Evictions for non-payment of rent | 19 | 13 |



New homes on the edge of Pointer's Field.

Your Neighbourhood

The neighbourhood teams work closely with residents, housing officers, police and other agencies to address ongoing local issues and improve where you live.

Walkabouts and estate inspections are just two of the many ways the council works with tenants and leaseholders.

The estate improvement projects carried out across the city include

new pathways, walls, railings, benches, bollards, improved parking facilities, gates, shed makeovers and the introduction of playground games.

All reports of antisocial behaviour are recorded and investigated, with the most serious cases referred to the antisocial behaviour and tenancy enforcement (ABATE) team.

***** Closure orders are civil orders which stop anyone entering, or residing, at a property. They require close partnership working with local police to obtain.



| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Walkabouts | 48 |
| Estate inspections | 23 |
| Estate improvement projects | 37 |

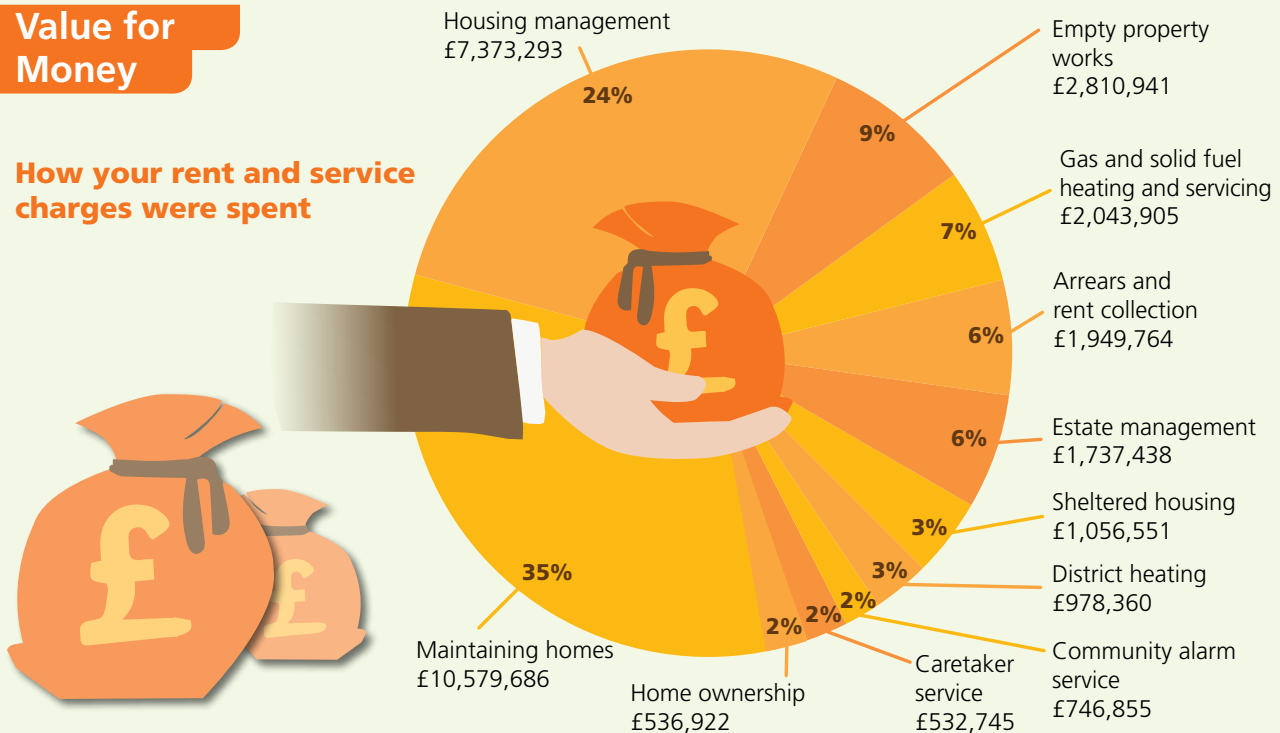
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| Reports of antisocial behaviour (ASB) | 3,060 |
| Reports of housing-related ASB | 2,071 |
| Most common complaint type | Noise |
| Cases referred to the ABATE team | 191 |
| % cases successfully closed | 92% |
| Closure orders* | 6 |



Estate improvements at St James and Barrack Street.

Value for Money

How your rent and service charges were spent



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To find out how you can get involved in next year's report or for more information on any of our involvement opportunities email: involvement@norwich.gov.uk



Produced by
Norwich City Council