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Doing things differently

The Coronavirus pandemic has had a dramatic effect on all aspects of our lives – how we live, work and in what we do in our recreation time.

We are having to do things differently, and that includes the way, we as your landlord, deliver our services and how you access them.

In accordance with government guidelines we are trying to minimise risk for everyone, and our usual face-to-face service access points, such as the Wilson Centre, are either operating an appointment only system or are closed. We also want to ensure that the 300 300 number for the call centre can concentrate on helping customers with real emergencies or with special needs in these difficult times.

However, there are lots of facilities available for you to do normal business online. The technology is in place so you can pay your rent, see your rent account, check your housing benefit, book and track a repair, bid for a property on Homesearch or access a range of other council services from your PC, laptop, tablet or smart phone. This can be done from anywhere, at any time of day, every day of the year!

You can take the hassle out of paying your rent every week or month simply by setting up a direct debit, plus you have the peace of mind that it has been paid.

During the pandemic, the majority of Neighbourhoods and Housing staff were able to work from home, thanks to the new working methods and equipment available. This has



meant that staff, including many front line workers, have been able to maintain contact with tenants, even though it may have been via technology such as video calling systems.

Social media, available through digital devices, is an area we are looking to expand for keeping in touch. It has already proved its worth as a key communications channel between the Neighbourhoods and Housing Service and residents. Look out for our news on our Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts. It's not just Housing and the Area Teams' feeds – the majority of service areas in the council use social media to convey essential information and engage with customers.

Not everybody has digital technology or even has the desire to go digital for online access. If this is you, get in touch with us and see what help we can offer.

Annual report

This issue of Hull Housing News includes information about our annual report on pages 4 and 5. Also, the bubbles on the inside pages tell you how well we performed over the last financial year. Our annual report in full is available on council's website hull.gov.uk



Voice of Tenants

Chat with the Chair

I want to start by wishing Dave Richmond all the very best in his new career at St Leger Homes of Doncaster.

As Assistant Director for Neighbourhoods and Housing in Hull, Dave has done a brilliant job. He has lived up to his promise for the service that “tenants are at the heart of everything we do”, ensuring that our voice is listened to. Thank you and good luck Dave.

Even though Coronavirus restrictions and safety precautions continue, we are getting our tenant engagement activity back on track, albeit doing it differently. Some Face-to-face meetings continue but with strict social distancing rules applied. Estate walks, with social distancing of course, are viable too.

Digital communication is the way forward. We’ve already tried using online video calls for some of our groups, and these seem to work well; and we will be continuing using social media, including Facebook Live. I’m not an



online whizz kid. I know everyone uses digital communications, and I am learning. I was nervous of the technology at first. If you feel like that, we can help. Please get in touch with the Tenant Participation Team and they can advise how you can become part of our online community.

Until next time.

Nev Allison

Chair of the Tenants’ Forum

Farewell Dave.....Welcome Nic



Dave’s enthusiasm and pride in heading up the The Neighbourhoods and Housing Service in his home city are unrivalled.

During his four years in post he was determined to put housing in Hull on the map

nationally. Our tenant participation work was the first in the country to be awarded Exemplar Status by Tpas, the experts in tenant participation. We have almost doubled the target set by government for building new homes. Our work supporting victims of domestic abuse achieved accreditation by the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance. We won a host of national awards for best practice, especially in the tenant participation sector; and won the ultimate prize – the Chartered Institute of Housing Award for Best Strategic Local Authority.

Dave said, “None of these would have been achievable without the contribution our tenants make through their involvement in helping us improve the services we deliver.”

Stepping into Dave’s shoes is Nic Harne.

Many of you will already know Nic, who has been with the council for twelve years and for the last five as Head of Housing Strategy, Market

Intervention and Growth. He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience relevant to the environment, planning, and housing in general. Nic has been at the heart of the nationally respected growth and regeneration work which has been undertaken in the city over recent years.

Like Dave, Nic too regards working in public service in his home city as a massive privilege. Nic takes over from Dave on 1 October. The next issue of Hull Housing News will include an interview with Nic.



How did we do?

92.7% new tenancies lasted more than 12 months.

Help Keep Hull Safe

People’s responses during the Coronavirus outbreak have been amazing.

Yet again the people of Hull have displayed one of the city’s greatest assets - its community spirit - in the way that they have pulled together to help others and by following government instructions to prevent the spread of the virus. As a result we have one of the lowest infection rates of any city in Yorkshire and the Humber. But we can’t be complacent.

With the outbreak still not under control, now more than ever, we need to work together to protect ourselves, our loved ones and our communities from Coronavirus. To keep our city safe for everyone, keep businesses open, keep enjoying the things we love, we all need to do three things:

- take care
- take notice
- take action

Take care by following the latest social distancing guidance; the numbers allowed in group gatherings inside and in the open air;

washing our hands regularly and thoroughly, with soap, for at least 20 seconds; wearing a face covering when necessary.

Take notice by recognising Coronavirus symptoms and the fact that these could change. Currently, symptoms are; a high temperature; a new continuous cough; a loss or change of sense of smell or taste.

Take action by staying at home if you or anyone in your household has symptoms, if you find you have had contact with someone with Coronavirus symptoms, or if you are asked to self isolate. Anyone with symptoms must get a test as soon as possible.

For more information about keeping safe from Covid-19 go to hull.gov.uk/coronavirus



CORONAVIRUS
TAKE: CARE
NOTICE
ACTION

How did we do?
99.9% of gas servicing was carried out within 12 months of the previous service

Don’t forget your flu jab

This year, more than ever it is vitally important that you have your flu jab. Flu – or influenza – can kill. Over the last five annual flu seasons, the average number of estimated deaths in England a year is more than 11,000.

In England, it will be offered free to:

- people who were required to shield from coronavirus - and anyone they live with
- people with some medical conditions, including diabetes, heart failure and asthma

- pregnant women
- pre-school children over the age of two
- all primary school children, as last year, and, for the first time, Year 7 pupils
- all people over 65
- some healthcare and social care staff

If you are not entitled to a free injection from the NHS, the vaccine will also be available privately in pharmacies and some supermarkets to adults. It usually costs about £20.

Get your flu vaccination now

More people are eligible this year. Get your flu vaccine now if you fall within any of these groups:

- everyone aged 65 and over
- everyone of any age, including children and babies over six months, with a qualifying medical condition - check what these are at nhs.uk/flu vaccine
- all pregnant women, at any stage of pregnancy
- all two- and three-year-old children (provided they were aged two or three years old on 31 August of the current flu season)
- all children in primary school
- all Year 7 secondary school-aged children
- everyone living in a residential or nursing home
- everyone who cares for an older or disabled person
- household contacts of anyone on the HS Shielded Patient List
- all frontline health and social care workers

For advice and information about the flu vaccination, speak to your GP, practice nurse or pharmacist. Check if you are eligible at: nhs.uk/flu vaccine

Hull City Council NHS

Flu Immunisation helping to protect people every winter

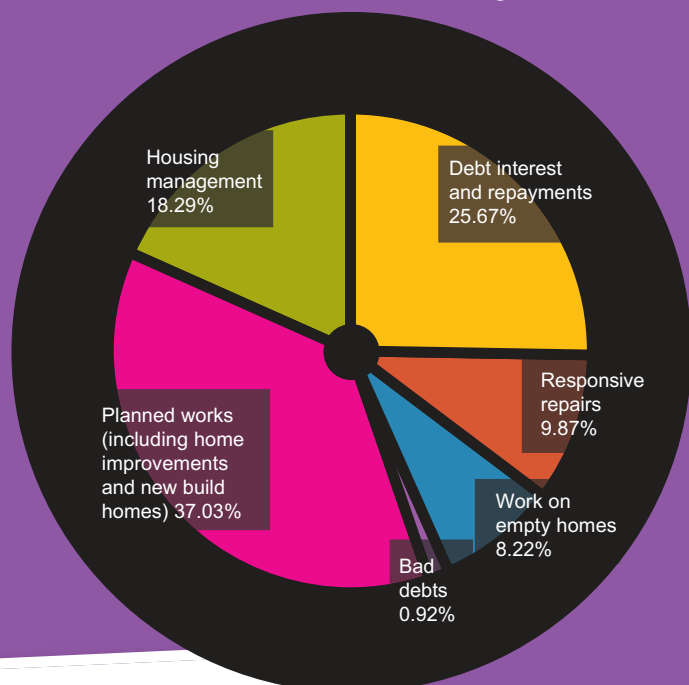
Annual Report 2019-2020

**How
did we do?**
88.2% of repairs
were completed
right first
time

Every year, we publish an annual report to tenants which reflects the highlights of the year, outlines some of the challenges faced, how well we have performed, and how we spent the budget.

The full report is available in video format on the Tenant Participation pages on the council's website hull.gov.uk. We hope you will watch the film and let us have your feedback.

Where the money went



The safety of our tenants is of utmost importance, therefore where possible we have aimed to exceed the standards.



The city's neighbourhoods benefitted from the colourful displays by our green fingered tenants, thanks to a record number entering the Annual Tenants' Garden Competition.

Hull City Council tenant?

Christmas can be expensive - don't forget to pay your rent. Don't delay in contacting us if you are struggling.



Call us on 01482 300 300 to see how we can help you

Our Rent First campaign stresses the importance of rent payment and, importantly, to get in touch with your housing officer if people think they may have difficulty paying because staff can help.

Voice of Tenants



“Homes for Heroes”. The Housing and Town Planning Act 1919 was passed to allow local councils to build large scale public housing developments. We held a party for past and present tenants to mark the centenary.



We almost doubled our Government target - and bucked the national trend - for building new homes.



We created Tenant Support Officer posts to help new tenants to keep on track.

How did we do?
141 estate walks were held with tenant volunteers



We became the first local authority in the UK to partner the British Council’s Active Citizen Programme to help build trust within and between neighbourhoods and communities by supporting people to take action on matters they care about. Here residents have got together to tackle litter and fly-tipping.



Last year, working with our partner KWL we carried out 83,206 repairs. 93.4% said you were satisfied with your repairs and maintenance service.

How did we do?
30 days was the average re-let time for an empty homes

Voice of Tenants

Blooming marvellous!

Yet again, the Annual Tenants' Garden Competition has been blooming marvellous.

Many of us took to our gardens during lockdown, and helped by April and May being among the sunniest months on record, our gardens have flourished.

To comply with Government guidance to prevent the spread of Coronavirus, the judging took place digitally and remotely. Videos of each entry were sent to our judges, the well-known local gardener Jeannie Webster from Rainbow Garden, and the

Tenants' Forum Chair Nev Allison, and a consensus was reached via an online meeting. Thank you Jeannie and Nev for all your hard work.

Commenting on this year's competition Jeannie said, "The number of entries received this year beat all expectations, and the quality was outstanding. 2020 has been a tough year, and I know from my own experience that during the lockdown, being able to get out into the garden has been a lifeline. Thank you to everyone who entered the competition and congratulations to our well-deserved winners."

The winners are:

- Mrs Doreen Hunt - winner of the Individual Garden Award (Park and East Area)
- Mr Victor Smart - winner of the Individual Garden Award (Riverside, West and Wyke)
- Mr Peter Weichardt - winner of the Individual Garden Award (Northern and North Carr)
- Bayswater Court Tenants and Residents Association - winner of the Communal Garden Award
- Mr Krzysztof Rapacz - winner of the ECO Garden Award

New bungalows to rent

The next phase of Hull City Council's ambitious housing growth programme is underway at Beckington Close and Plym Grove on Longhill, where nine, modern new bungalows to rent from the council are being built.

This phase is in addition to the large scale developments which are replacing substandard housing in neighbourhoods such as Mildane, Portobello Street and Ganstead Grove.

The new build bungalows meet high specification accessibility standards, which suit the needs of older tenants who may be becoming a little less mobile.

New local letting policies

We have two new local lettings policies which outline who will be prioritised for any new build council bungalows or houses

the first time they are let.

These policies give priority to council tenants who live in the same ward as the new property and have a good tenancy history. Council tenants in other areas will be considered secondary to those living in the same ward. These policies only apply when the properties are let for the first time, after which the normal allocations policy will apply. The policies explain how the lettings will work; for example to be given priority for a bungalow you must be freeing up a family house. Both policies are available in full on the council's website at hull.gov.uk by following the links 'Find a home' and then 'Allocations policy and local lettings policies'.

To be considered for a new build property you must be registered on the housing list and have



made sure you have provided us with all of the information we have requested from you to ensure your priority on that the list is correct. You can also tell us that you are interested in a new build property by including this in your application or notifying HomeSearch at homesearchregisterteam@hullcc.gov.uk (or by calling the call centre on 01482 300 300).

How did we do?
99.7% of anti-social behaviour cases were dealt with in the designated timescale

Domestic abuse – don't suffer in silence.

Everyone has the right to live a life free from harm, but unfortunately violence and abuse in the home are more widespread than you think.

It happens to men and women of all ages and backgrounds, regardless of race, or whether the relationship is heterosexual or between the same sex. Every year, nearly two million people in the UK suffer some form of domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse is defined as any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional).

If you are a victim of domestic abuse

- recognise that it is happening to you - it is a pattern of behaviour. Some abusers say they are sorry for their actions and persuade their partners that the abuse won't happen again, but the abuse usually gets worse over time
- accept that you are not to blame - it is not easy to accept that a loved one can behave so aggressively. Since you can't explain your partner's behaviour, you may assume that you are at fault. You are not, it is your abuser's behaviour that needs to change
- get help and support - the most important thing you can do is to tell someone that you can trust. Never be afraid to ask for help and remember in an emergency call 999, preferably using a mobile

phone. If you are too scared to speak, when prompted type 55 which is a way to alert the automated system that you need police assistance.

If you are experiencing domestic abuse, support is available.

You can contact Hull's domestic abuse partnership (DAP) in confidence on 01482 318 759. They can provide advice on your options, legal, financial and housing options, even if you are not ready to make any decisions. In an emergency, always ring 999.

There is more information about domestic abuse and the support offered by DAP on the council's website. If you are afraid that your online history may be traced on your personal devices, the computers in Hull libraries can be used free of charge.

Your invitation to join us online.

A third of our 23,500 tenants use the council's online facilities to pay their rent, track their rent account, report, book and track a repair and for lots of other council services such as renewing your library books, ordering a replacement waste bin or reporting ant-social behaviour. What's more using online services means that they can access them from anywhere at any time of day, every day from any mobile device.

Why not make life easier and more convenient for yourself and join our online community?

All you have to do is go on the council website hull.gov.uk and register for an account

How did we do?

96.6% of rent due was collected

Voice of Tenants

Win £250

Star survey

Your views matter!

You may be among the lucky 5,000 tenants who receive a questionnaire asking how we can improve our services. If you complete and return it no later than Friday 23 October, you will automatically be entered into a prize draw and could win £250 worth of shopping vouchers.

CORONAVIRUS

TAKE: **CARE** ♥

NOTICE ✓

ACTION ▶

KEEP HULL COVID-19 SAFE



TAKE: **CARE** ♥

Follow the latest advice



TAKE: **NOTICE** ✓

Look out for symptoms



TAKE: **ACTION** ▶

Got symptoms? Get tested



hull.gov.uk
#HullTogether

TENANT FORUM MEETINGS SUSPENDED

Coronavirus restrictions presented everyone, including tenant participation forums, with many varied and unanticipated challenges. As soon as lockdown began we suspended physical meetings of our Tenants' Forum and other working groups which involved people meeting in close proximity to each other.

There is no quick fix to the Coronavirus outbreak, and even though lockdown restrictions keep changing, it will be a long time until we can think about meeting together as a group. We are therefore looking at alternative ways, such as online and activities where we can ensure social distancing to help effective tenant participation in the housing service, and will be consulting with you about how we to take it forward.

How would you like to engage with us?

As we explore new ways of communicating with you, we'd like to know your preferred method. What's best for you – email, Twitter, Facebook, letter? You can let us know by:

Email: tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk

Twitter: @HCCTPT

Facebook: Hull City Council Housing

Letter: Tenant Participation Team,
The Guildhall, Alfred Gelder Street,
Hull HU1 2AA

This document can be made available in other formats (large print, audio, digital copy) and different languages. Call (01482) 300 300.



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