

HULL

HOUSING NEWS



Developed for tenants, by tenants, working
in partnership with Hull City Council

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Tackling climate change

In November, the eyes of the world were on Glasgow when it hosted the United Nations summit on climate change. Hull had a particular interest in the outcomes from the summit because 90% of the city is below sea level. Since the devastating flooding in 2007, extensive flood protection work has been put in place ranging from four miles of walls and raised defences along the banks of the Humber, which protects some 113,000 homes, to creating aqua greens in open spaces for excess surface water storage.

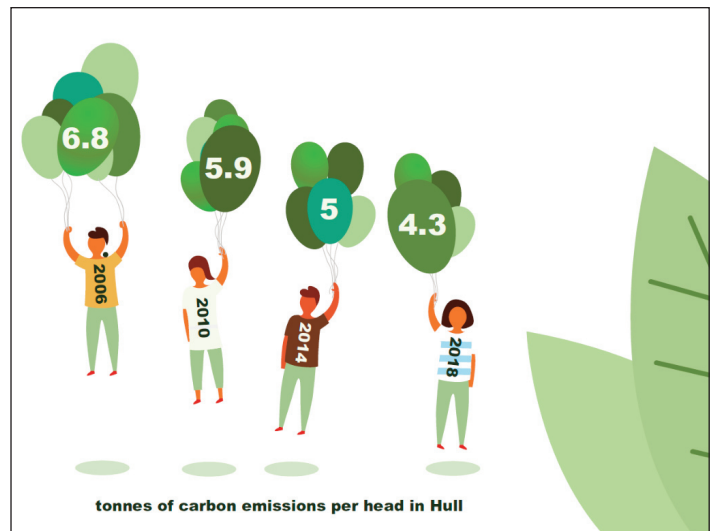
The council's ambition is to become a carbon neutral city by 2030; and Neighbourhoods and Housing is rising to the challenge. For example, the 99 new homes planned for Dane Park have a low carbon specification incorporating many of the latest energy saving features.

Our homes insulation programme is one of the biggest in the UK. It focusses on retrofitting better insulation at non-traditionally built homes on Orchard Park, Preston Road and Bransholme, in conjunction with our partner Fortem.

The council has more than 23,000 homes with varying levels of energy efficiency.

It is vital that they have better insulation levels not only to improve the efficiency levels but to help lift many of our residents out of fuel poverty. To achieve this we will start the programme of works by refitting non-traditionally built homes and then developing a plan for the rest of our housing stock.

We also worked in other areas of the city alongside Engie. We are in the final phase of making improvements to older, Victorian properties in west Hull so that their residents can also benefit from warmer, more energy efficient homes.



We're looking at innovative ways we can cut our carbon footprint via a number of pilot projects. We will be assessing the potential benefits of air source heat pumps and looking at the viability of district heating systems in blocks of flats.

Members of the Tenants' Forum are at the forefront of the climate change agenda too, playing an active role in the Northern Housing Consortium's representations to government and involved with Hull's Living with Water partnership on flood prevention.

Saving the planet is a tall order, but even the smallest changes can make a difference. There are lots of little things in our everyday lives that will help, so we've included some of them in the top tips throughout this newsletter.

We'd love to hear your top tips too.

Why not share them on our Facebook page hullcouncilhousing.gov.uk

Opening a window for just ten minutes an hour at a time can reduce COVID-19 infection by as much as 70%. It's very important to make sure you have fresh air in the house if you have visitors. It brings in fresh air and helps it circulate around your home and helps to stop coronavirus particles from lingering in the air. You can also help get rid of them by leaving the extractor fan on longer after you've used the bathroom. COVID-19 hates fresh air!

Opening the window for a short time doesn't mean you have to be cold, just put on an extra layer of clothing while it's open - and don't leave an open window unguarded so it becomes an invitation to an intruder.

There's another benefit from letting in more fresh air, it lets excess moisture flow outside instead of settling on your walls, floors, and ceiling which means mould, which can affect people's breathing, won't be able to grow.

Chat with the Chair

Happy New Year! And here's hoping that 2022 will be better than the last two.

We have to face the fact that we have to learn to live with COVID-19 in its various forms. Already, we are experiencing the Omicron variation which has meant that some of the lockdown precautions have been reinstated for the time being. Let's hope that they will help us get on top of this new form of the virus. However, having had all my vaccinations - and my flu jab too - I feel more confident about going out and about when I need to. Digital devices have been great for keeping in touch and getting things done, but I still enjoy meeting people face to face when that's possible. We are planning on having the Tenants' Forum in-person meetings up and running again when it's safe to do so, but when it's not there will still be ways to participate online.

Using online services were a vital service during the lockdowns. I think more and more people realised the convenience of them, after all you can use them from anywhere at any time. The council will be rolling out more online services this year to make it easier for you to make contact not only with Neighbourhoods and Housing but also with whatever council services you need.

You will be able to access these services through your laptop, computer, tablet or smart phone. Don't worry if you can't or don't feel confident about going online because we can help. We have a temporary laptop loan service and offer coaching through the Tenant Participation Team (TPT).

You get get a friend to email tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk if you're interested in the loan scheme, or phone the call centre on (01482) 300 300.



Plus, you can always use the computers in your local library to get in touch with us and the librarians will be able to help if you have any difficulty getting online.

The TPT has been very successful in helping people get online and I was absolutely delighted that their community digital offer programme won the national tpas (the experts in tenant participation) Community Focussed Service/Product of the Year award 2021. That's quite an achievement. Well done everyone!

Until the next time,
Nev Allison

Ask Nic

Can you tell me whether there is legislation on the percentage of social housing which must be adapted for wheelchair users? Also, what percentage of your current stock is wheelchair accessible and whether or not you have a goal percentage for adapted stock in the future?

There is no legislation that states how many of our homes should be adapted for people with disabilities or who are experiencing mobility problems as they get older. However, our aim is to provide a first class service to our residents and help those who are particularly vulnerable with the provision of aids and adaptations to promote safe, independent living. As such, we need to ensure that our adaptations policy meets our residents' needs and also makes best use of the council's adapted housing stock.

Currently 6,475 (27.6%) of our homes have internal adaptations. However, only 286 (1.2%) of properties have wheelchair accessible doors. We are starting to redress this imbalance through our new build programme. Our aim is to achieve 50% of our new build homes as wheelchair accessible. If we could achieve 100% being wheelchair friendly on site then, subject to viability, we would. However flood risk mitigation and raising of levels often means that we cannot always get level access to every single property.

As part of our new development specification we also try to make the space, and install the power supply for stair lifts in the event that a resident may need one in the future. We try to future proof as much as we can, notwithstanding the fact that every site and scheme needs to be assessed on its own merits.

Our new bungalows are a good example of how far we have pushed accessible housing and, whilst some still may only have one level access (front or rear), the home itself is set out in a way to allow a wheelchair user to move freely from room to room. The bungalows also have the bathroom located opposite the main bedroom.



**BUILDING GREAT PLACES
TOGETHER, PUTTING
RESIDENTS FIRST**



 **Hull**
City Council

**Annual Report
2020 / 2021**

Annual report 2020-2021

Our annual report for 2020-21 is now available. It sets out how we have performed across a range of national and local targets and how we have spent our money. We hope you find our annual report useful. We would love to have your feedback on how we've done and whether you agree with our priority activities. You can leave your views using the customer feedback and complaints form on the council's website or on the Facebook page, Hull City Council Housing.

You can download the annual report at:
Tenant participation | Hull City Council

If you would like a printed version of the report, please email tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk and we will post a copy to you.

Independent complaints panel

Are you interested in helping tenants to resolve their complaints against the council? If so, why not apply to join our Designated Complaints Panel. Successful applicants will receive full training and support. It's an opportunity to make a difference either by resolving the complaint locally or by referring it to the Housing Ombudsman.

Email tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk if you think you might be interested in becoming a member of the Panel.

Community Trigger

Everyone has the right to enjoy their home peacefully free from disturbance or nuisance. From time to time we receive complaints about anti-social behaviour (ASB) in our neighbourhoods, however we are usually able to nip them in the bud quite early. In fact, last year we resolved 99.8% of ASB complaints within the designated timescale.

If you think your anti-social behaviour complaint hasn't been resolved adequately, you can always submit a formal complaint to the council via the customer feedback page on its website. If, at the end of the council's own complaints procedure, you are still dissatisfied and feel it hasn't been dealt with adequately, you can ask for a case review, providing it meets the local threshold.

The threshold is that a victim, or other individual with the victim's consent, who has reported anti-social behaviour to the local council, police and/or social housing landlord three times about separate incidents in the last six months and considers that the response hasn't been adequate, can request a review. In Hull we have enhanced this threshold so that five individuals in the local community can trigger a review too, hence this process has become known as the Community Trigger.

For further information and how to activate the Community Trigger, visit the council's website <https://www.hull.gov.uk/crime-and-safety/anti-social-behaviour/community-trigger>

Recycle your gadgets

Did Father Christmas bring you some new electronic gadgets? Don't throw your old ones away - recycle them! This includes phones and chargers, CD players, speakers, kettles, videos, TV remote controls, indeed any electrical gadget. It doesn't matter if they use a plug, batteries or are rechargeable. It also doesn't matter if they don't work anymore because the plastic and small amount of metals contained in them, such as aluminium, copper, gold and steel can all be recycled.

You can take your redundant electrical gadgets to one of the council's three household waste recycling centres at Sutton Fields, Burma Drive and Wiltshire Road. The centres are open every day except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day from 10am to 5pm.

DID YOU KNOW...

in the run up to the 2020 Olympic Games, Japan collected 80,000 tonnes of redundant small electrical gadgets from across the country and then turned them into 5,000 gold, silver and bronze medals?



26% of waste in Hull black bins is actually food and could have been composted in the brown bins. Food waste squanders resources such as water and energy. You can help reduce the waste food mountain by buying loose fruit and vegetables so you get just the amount you need. Cutting food waste can save the average UK household up to £500 a year

Social Housing Charter

The Social Housing Charter in the Government's White Paper is one of the most important offers to social housing residents for decades.

It was the inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy highlighting the challenges faced by social housing residents and landlords which led to the Government's commitment to introduce new laws for the sector. The new legislation, through the Charter, will recognise that residents should live in safe, good quality homes; that they need to be protected, respected and their voices heard; and that landlords will be more accountable to the four million tenants who live in social housing in the UK.

This last point includes tenants having access to redress when things go wrong. Also the White Paper paves the way for new and improved standards for building and fire safety to be introduced.

The new Charter sets out that every social housing resident should expect to be:-

- safe in their home
- know how their landlord is performing
- have complaints dealt with promptly and fairly
- be treated with respect
- have their voice heard by their landlord
- have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in
- be supported to take their first step to ownership

You can cut down the rubbish you put in your black bin as general waste. Recyclable material like cardboard, cans and some plastics go in the blue bin. See the council's website hull.gov.uk for the materials you can put in your blue bin for recycling

Commenting on the proposed new Social Housing Charter, Nic Harne, Assistant Director for Neighbourhoods and Housing said, "Building great places together and putting our residents first is at the heart of our Neighbourhoods and Housing agenda, and we will have no hesitation in supporting the Charter. Most of these points are already embedded into the way we work with our residents. We will regularly assess how we are delivering and the performance achieved against them as we work to achieve our ambition of being the landlord of choice in the city."

For more detailed information about the Social Housing White Paper and the Social Housing Charter go to the Government's website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications>

We've done it again!

Great news - we are the UK's first social housing landlord to be accredited Exemplar status by tpas, the national experts in tenant participation, for the second time.

Exemplar status is the mark of excellence for tenant engagement, covering both what it has achieved and that it has a framework that's fit for the future too.

Housing Portfolio Holder Cllr John Black said, "Achieving back to back exemplar status is no mean feat, and I'm delighted that Hull is the first to do so. It is well deserved and reflects the dedication and enthusiasm of our staff and active tenants to offer engagement opportunities to all parts of our communities."



Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is abhorrent and unacceptable. It's a crime. It should be reported to the police and the perpetrator prosecuted.

Sadly in recent times we have seen an increase in domestic abuse crimes and according to figures from the National Office of Statistics, these crimes rose by 6% in the 12 months up to March 2021. That's 845,734 crimes reported to the police in a year.

Domestic abuse isn't limited to certain types of people. Anybody can be a victim or perpetrator, regardless of age, race, or gender, or whether they are heterosexual or LGBT+ couples or family members. However, analysis of domestic abuse cases shows that most occur between partners and ex-partners.



How to get help in Hull

Domestic abuse, also referred to as domestic violence, is defined as any of the following behaviours: physical or sexual abuse; violent or threatening behaviour; controlling or coercive behaviour; economic abuse, and psychological, emotional or other abuse.

If this is happening to you, you may not know what you want to do or be ready to make any decisions. It is important you tell someone and don't suffer alone. You can get help and support from Hull's Domestic Abuse Partnership (DAP) by telephoning (01482) 318 759. Remember to use a safe phone because calls can be traced. You can also contact DAP online at hulldap.co.uk. Each web page includes a "Hide This Site" button so you can cover your tracks immediately. If at any time you don't feel safe, call the police on 999.

Sanctuary Scheme

If you are living with domestic abuse, you may not want to move home to be safe. Some people choose to stay put, if that can be done safely, as part of a package of support known as a "Sanctuary Scheme". A Sanctuary Scheme will not be right for everyone, but it can work really well, especially when a survivor wants to stay in their local area and to avoid the disruption of moving home or schools.

How the scheme works

Victims/survivors of domestic abuse who choose to remain living in their own home can have additional security measures provided, including:

- "target hardening" - this is increased security, such as additional locks on external doors and windows
- Lifeline alarm with 24 hour access to support
- home fire safety check
- mobile phone and/or sim card
- personal safety alarm
- digital door viewers
- home safety planning, legal measures and support

If you are experiencing domestic abuse and feel that the Sanctuary Scheme will enable you to feel safer and remain in your own home, please contact Hull DAP and they will discuss the scheme with you and arrange an assessment of your home.

Meet John and Linda Hollingworth, winners of the 2021 garden competition.

It was a pleasure to meet the winners of the 2021 Hull City Council Tenants Garden Competition. Our award winner's presentation event saw John and Linda Hollingworth from Foredyke area awarded the top prize for the "Best Individual Garden" by the Lord Mayor, Councillor Lynn Petrini.

We asked them what their garden meant to them. Mr Hollingworth explained that they were 'chuffed' and 'really pleased' with winning the award as they both love and feel very proud of their garden. Yet it seems that Mr and Mrs Hollingworth aren't the only ones that feel this way, as it was also said that their garden attracts a lot of attention, with people often stopping to look and saying how nice it is.

Mr Hollingworth highlighted the many benefits of their garden transformation saying, "Gardening keeps you very fit and healthy from all the tough jobs such as digging. Also, having a nice garden improves the appearance of your neighbourhood and we try to attract wildlife by putting up bird foods and nesting boxes".

To create a great looking garden without having to spend lots of money, Mr Hollingworth shared his secret of making everything himself rather than buying tools and garden pieces, such as wooden arches from the shops. Mr Hollingworth said that he had no carpentry or woodwork experience before this, but he would just give it a go by taking photos and copying what he saw. Plus he always makes sure that he collects as many fruit seeds as possible, such as lemon and orange seeds, and prepares them for planting the following year.

The 2021 garden competition attracted a record number of entries. There was a category for everyone from whole gardens to window boxes and hanging baskets. We will be opening entries for the 2022 competition in April so look out for details about in the next issue of Hull Housing News and on the council's website.



HomeSearch

To make it easier for people to understand how to get on to the housing list and bid for a council home, we've made a video which explains the whole HomeSearch process.

Look out for the video on the council's website, YouTube page, and other social media.



Boiling the kettle accounts for about 6% of energy used in British homes every year. By not overfilling the kettle every time you use it could cut up to £19 off your annual electricity bill. When you boil the kettle for a cuppa, why not fill a thermos flask of hot water too – it means you'll have hot water without having to put the kettle on again

Vehicle drivers - If you are stuck in a queue of traffic or dropping someone off, switch off the engine. Idling engines use more fuel and emit more pollutants which contribute to climate change than stopping and restarting. It's also against the law to idle your engine unnecessarily when stationary and you could incur a £20 fixed penalty.

Hull City Council tenant?
Struggling to pay your rent due to a reduction in income or rising costs?

Seek support from your local housing team by visiting

Hull.gov.uk/RentAdvice



Find more great energy-saving tips on the website Simple Energy Advice
www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk

Tenants' Forum meetings

Provisional dates and guest speakers. Confirmation whether or not these meetings going ahead will depend on restrictions introduced to halt the spread of COVID-19. Please check the Hull Council Housing and Hull Tenants' Forum Facebook pages.

Date	Time	Guest Speaker
20 January	10am - 12pm	Debra Akester - Operations Manager (Rent recovery plan) Steve Shirra - Business Insight and Quality Manager Geoff Bradley - Performance Manager (Update on housing performance)
23 February	10am - 12pm	Councillor John Black - Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness (General update on housing)
21 March	1 - 3pm	Sean Dolan - Building Safety Manager

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