

Annual Report

2014/2015



South
Cambridgeshire
District Council





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Welcome



Welcome to the 2014-2015 Annual Report for Tenants and Leaseholders, which sets out how we are performing and what we have achieved during the 2014/2015 financial year.

The Council's overarching vision for housing in South Cambridgeshire is:

"To be the best housing service by providing good quality housing across all tenures that is accessible to all – that enhances residents' quality of life, their health and wellbeing, that supports economic growth and social opportunities, alongside improved energy security and reduced carbon footprints."

In essence, we want to promote and brand our Council's Housing Service as putting the  into Housing;

- Health & Wellbeing
- Affordable Housing
- Reducing Fuel Poverty and promoting energy efficiency
- Economic Growth & Development
- Tackling Homelessness



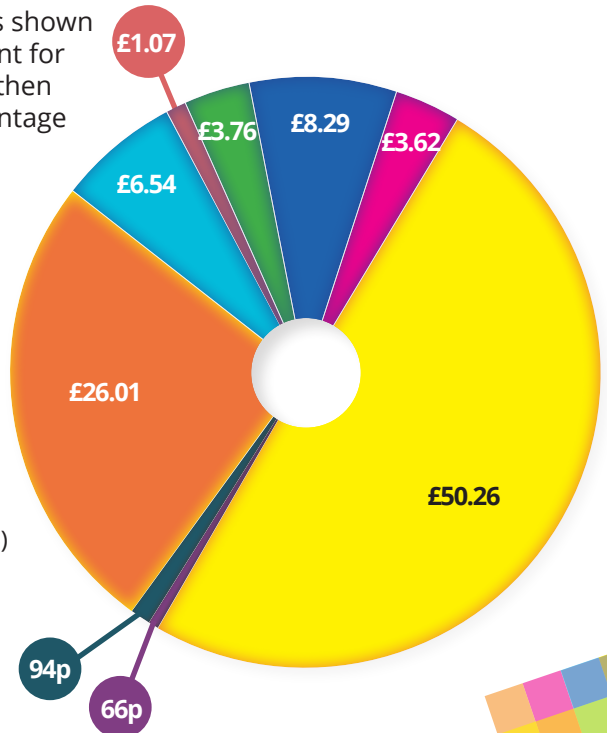
How your rent is spent



For every penny you spend in rent, we are investing it back into our housing, either through improving existing homes or providing new homes.

The pie chart gives an overview of where your rent is spent, this is shown by taking an average weekly rent for one of our properties which is then divided up to show what percentage of is spent where.

- General Management (8.20%)
- Loan Repayment Reserve (3.57%)
- Repairs & Maintenance (49.70%)
- Outdoor Maintenance (0.65%)
- Supported Housing (0.93%)
- Loan Interest Payment (25.71%)
- New Housing Provision (6.47%)
- Resident Involvement (1.05%)
- Other (net) (3.72%)





Planned maintenance

During this year we have invested £10 million into the improvement of our properties.

Some of the money will have gone into new kitchens, bathrooms, windows, doors, heating improvements and insulation (loft/wall) etc.

98
New kitchens
installed

37
Properties
re-roofed

82
Whole house
window
replacements

3
Garage sites
refurbished

143
New bathrooms
installed

78
Number of
internal
decoration jobs
completed

95
Level access
showers
installed

0
Number of
overdue gas
services

74.31
SAP
rating*

*SAP rating: Government standard assessment procedure on a scale of 1-100, providing a way of estimating the energy efficiency performance of a property.



Improvements to Non-Traditional Properties

Improvements to our 'non-traditional properties' is an on-going programme for the Council.

During the 2014-2015 financial year we began the project by improving some of our Hawksley bungalows in Duxford & Sawston.

These were manufactured by the Hawksley Aircraft Company and were built in the late 1940s, early 1950s. The properties are constructed from prefabricated load bearing timber studding panels framed with aluminium channel sections and clad with aluminium sheets.

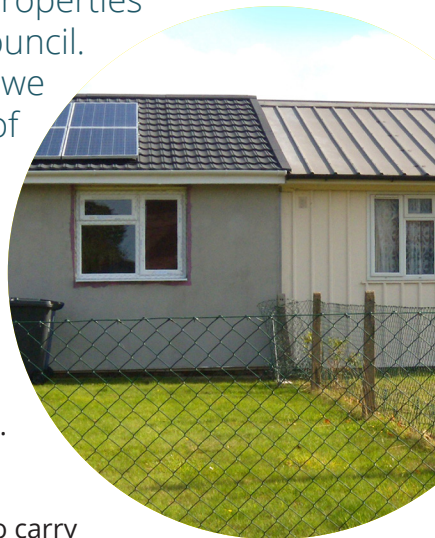
We externally insulated the properties, the roof support structure was strengthened to carry the new roof covering which included the mounting of photovoltaic panels (PV), enabling tenants to save approximately £210 per year on their electricity bills.

To enable the Council to showcase the work to Councillors and residents, a vacant property was selected to be completely refurbished (both internally and externally).

An event was funded by the contractors that were completing the works and was attended by residents, TPG members and elected members. This showcase property has since been re-let.

The tenants of these properties report much higher levels of thermal comfort and reduced energy bills overall.

We are looking to tender out a further project to renovate our non-traditional 'airy' properties in the future, using a repairing system which will enable tenants to remain within their homes.



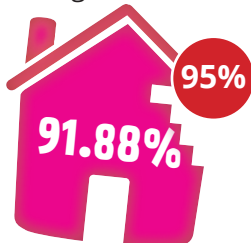


Repairs

The repairs service that we offer is an important part of our housing service and it is delivered in partnership with Mears. The circles represent our targets for this financial year; targets which have been met or exceeded are coloured green.



Emergency repairs attended to within 24 hours



Urgent repairs completed within 5 days



Routine repairs completed within 20 days



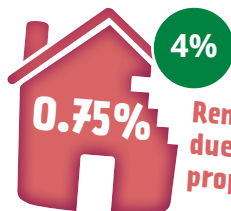
Customer satisfaction with repairs service



Average number of days to complete repairs



Repairs completed at the first visit



Rent loss due to void properties



Average time to re-let a general needs property (minor repairs)



Total cost per property for responsive repairs and voids

Performance

Reviewing our performance enables us to reflect upon on what we have done well, or not so well, during a financial year and is an integral part of ensuring that we provide a good quality housing service.

The 'achieved' figures are taken from statistics, as at 31 March 2015.



Allocations and Lettings

288

Total Local Authority dwellings let

1,515

Total number of households on the housing waiting list (1 April 15)

99

Lettings within sheltered housing

88

Total lettings to existing social tenants

860

Households requiring one bedroom

12

Households supported to downsize in relation to under-occupation

177

Total dwellings let to new tenants of social housing

749

Households requiring two bedrooms

189

Lettings within general needs housing

23

Total dwellings let through mutual exchanges



Customer service

South Cambridgeshire District Council
Contact Centre



12,729

Total number of calls for housing



10,259

Calls handled by contact centre



81%

Percentage of calls handled



4
minutes
53
seconds

Average call duration



86%

Percentage of calls resolved first time



1,473

Number of calls transferred to the
housing department



3
minutes
2
seconds

Average call answer



Customer service

Mears 24-7 Contact Centre



18,943

Calls handled



17

Seconds

Average speed of answer



243

Calls abandoned (short)



274

Calls abandoned (long)



3
minutes
6
seconds

Average delay to abandon



1.4%

Percentage calls abandoned



88.9%

Service level percentage



98.6%

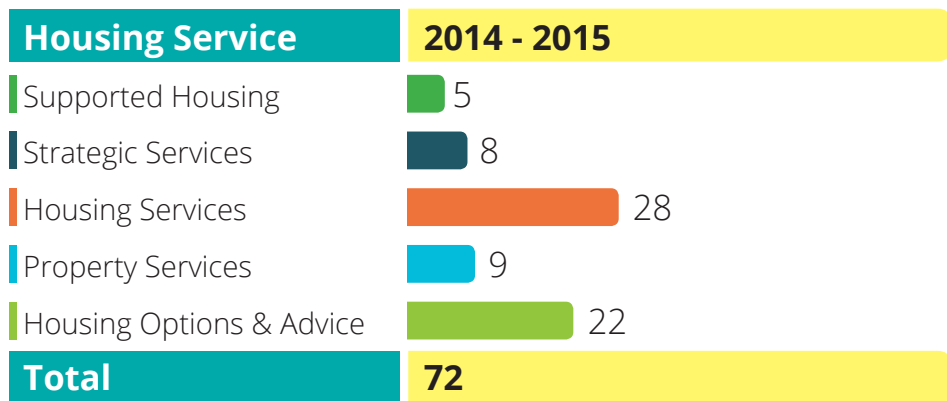
Answer percentage



Compliments and complaints

We really value feedback from our tenants and leaseholders; both positive and negative.

In order to move our housing service forward it is highly important to see where we are doing well and where there is room for improvement.
Number of Compliments

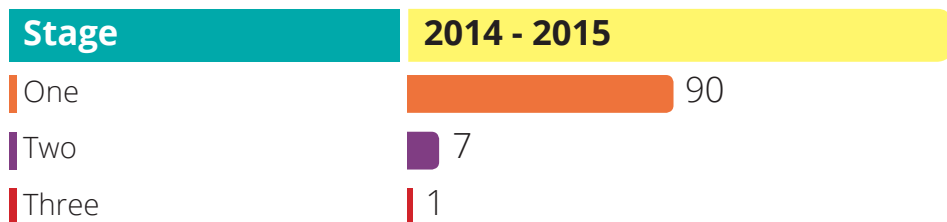
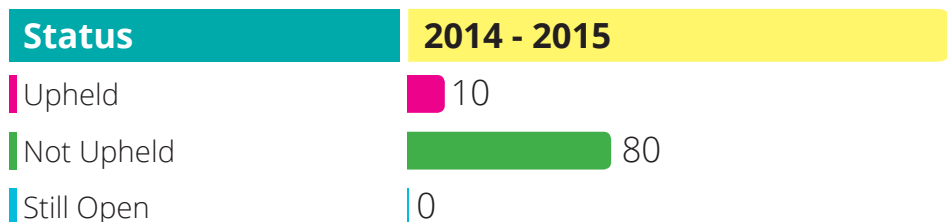




Complaints

During the 2014-2015 financial year we received a total of 90 complaints; seven of which reached stage two, and one of these continued to a stage three complaint.

Ten of these complaints were upheld (closed in favour of the complainant) and 80 were not upheld (closed not in favour of the complainant). 73% of the complaints we received were logged through our website, 27% through e-mail and 17% through the post.



Stage one complaints are an expression of dissatisfaction that is not able to be resolved at first contact, so requires investigation and response from service manager.

Stage two complaints are unresolved 'Stage one' so investigation required by head of service

Stage three complaints are looked into by the Housing Ombudsman

We are also carrying out a survey of our tenants and leaseholders (called the 'STAR' survey), which we are sending out an area of the district at a time. We would really appreciate your feedback if you would be able to send it back to us when you receive it.





Housing Development

Working with our key housing association partners, we enabled the development of 351 affordable homes during April 2014 and March 2015.

These included;

- **20 Social Rent** (approx 60% of market rent)
- **224 Affordable Rent** (approx 80% of market rent)
- **107 Shared Ownership** (inc. Rent to Mortgage)

The Council began its own wholly funded new build programme in 2013, which saw four new homes in Linton built, and 20 homes in Swavesey expected to be completed in May 2016.

Our aspiration over the next few years, funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) investment surplus, is to build around 25 new Council homes per year.

Our next identified site is for 15 new homes on the edge of Foxton. Work is expected to start on site in early March 2016.

We are also looking to review our current New Build Strategy and Design Brief, which will inform the way we develop new housing in the future.





Resident involvement

Our Vision for Housing

“To be the best housing service by providing good quality housing across all tenures that is accessible to all – that enhances residents’ quality of life, their health and wellbeing, that supports economic growth and social opportunities, alongside improved energy security and reduced carbon footprints.”

In order to achieve this, we are keen to work with residents to help improve the quality of life for all. We are passionate about involving, consulting and informing residents about the way that we operate, how we manage and maintain our homes, budget priorities and how we can improve on our performance and deliver customer focused services. We work with various groups to help us achieve this.

Tenant Participation Group (TPG)

TPG is a group which meets once a month and has a more strategic role. It is responsible for monitoring and developing tenant participation and getting more involved in the decisions, contributing to new SCDC Strategies and Policies. TPG is a friendly group of 15 independently elected members. Elections are held every 3 years.





Scrutiny

Our Scrutiny Review Team (SRT) has been working extremely hard to improve the services we provide. In 2014 the SRT looked at our grounds maintenance contract. Some of the recommendations for service improvements the scrutiny panel put forward have been implemented.

The second tenant led service review, which looked at our sheltered housing service completed in June 2015. This showed the fantastic commitment of our SRT members who put in over 1000 hours voluntary work over a period of nine months leading to a final report being presented to South Cambs. The recommendations for service improvements are currently being worked through and updates are provided via our Sheltered Housing Forum.

The SRT is very “hands on” and will look more in depth at services. Depending on the service being reviewed this could involve; several meetings, work shadowing and analysing policies and procedures over a period of several weeks. We appreciate the time commitment given by residents on a voluntary basis and in future will try and tailor reviews according to how much time people can give.

More information including copies of the reports and our responses is available on our website www.scambs.gov.uk/getinvolved

Training

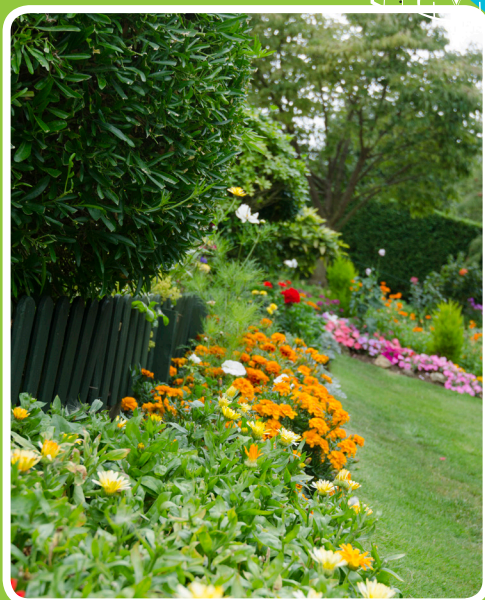
To support TPG and SRT members in resident involvement activities we organised training throughout the year. These sessions included IT training, report writing, public speaking & presentation, equality and diversity and scrutiny training.



Gardening Competition



Every year we hold a gardening competition which has been running for many years. We have a fantastic local sponsor who provides a venue for the competition winners presentation evening and donates prizes for the winners and runners up in each category.





Tenant and Leaseholder News

We send out two editions of this magazine each year and have a dedicated editorial panel of tenants and leaseholders that work with us to create them. The panel also looks at the design and content of our annual report to ensure it remains customer focused.

Disability open day

This was one of the highlights of the year within the resident involvement team. The aim of the day was to bring residents, tenants, service providers and charities together to create links that would enable those that need help and assistance being put in touch with those that can provide it. We had 34 charities & providers in attendance and were even lucky enough to have Ricky Gervais provide us with a short video to help promote the event!

Getting involved - What we can provide

To assist you where you might need it, to enable you to get involved, we can:

- Pay for travel costs to attend meetings including organising taxi's to and from meetings if you are not a car driver and using public transport would not be possible.
- Pay for reasonable and unavoidable childcare costs
- Pay Resident Group set up costs and contribute towards reasonable running costs via a small annual subsidy
- Provide Training opportunities - to grow your skills and confidence in making your views known. For example; I.T training, chairing a meeting and interview skills etc.
- Guidance/assistance on newsletter production
- Funding advice
- Telephone support

Get in touch

If you are interested in any of these opportunities to get involved you can visit www.scambs.gov.uk/getinvolved , email the Resident Involvement Team at Resident.Involvement@scambs.gov.uk or call 03450 450 051