



South
Cambridgeshire
District Council

Annual Report for tenants

2015/2016



www.scambs.gov.uk







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Welcome



Community grant funded improvement works carried out by local residents to communal area on local estate

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.”

We want to promote and brand our Council’s Housing Service as putting the

HEART into Housing;

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

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the residents that have been involved in helping to shape our service and to those that have given us their input in producing this annual report.



How your rent is spent

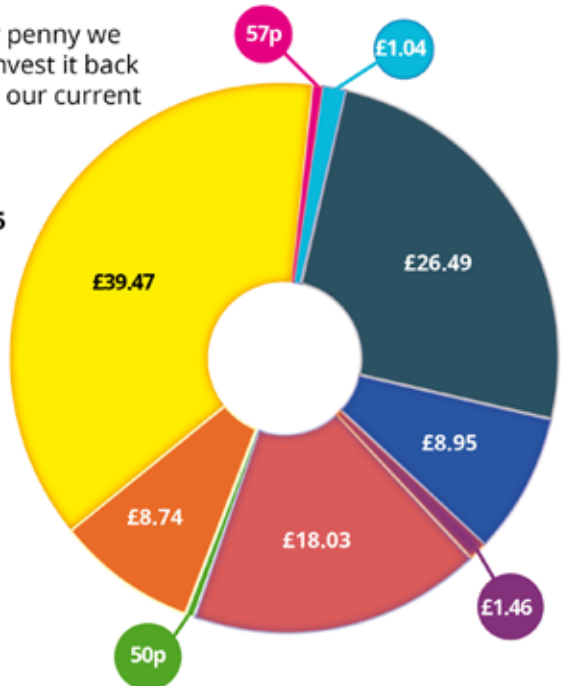


Here is an overview of how your rent has been spent during the 2015/2016 financial year. This is calculated by taking the average weekly rent that is charged for our properties and divided up into the percentage we have allocated for each area.

We continue to try and utilise every penny we get from our rental income and reinvest it back into our housing service, improving our current stock and developing new homes wherever possible along the way.

Our average weekly rent is £105.25

- Repairs & Maintenance - 37.50%
- Outdoor Maintenance - 0.54%
- Resident Involvement - 0.99%
- Loan Interest Payment - 25.17%
- General Management - 8.50%
- Supported Housing - 1.39%
- Spending deferred to future years for major capital improvements/ New Build - 17.13%
- Other (net) - 0.47%
- New Housing Provision - 8.30%





Resident involvement

Our aim is to provide the best housing services possible and in order to achieve this we rely on the help and support of our tenants and leaseholders.

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. Later in this report we set out the total number of hours of volunteering put in by residents last year broken down by type of resident involvement activity. The total number of hours when we added them all up was over 2500 which represents a fantastic effort from South Cambs tenants and leaseholders who have been working with us to make a difference.



We work with various groups on a regular basis the main one being our:

Tenant Participation Group (TPG)



TPG is a friendly group of 15 independently elected members who welcome co-opted members and observers to all meetings. Elections for the fifteen TPG members are held every 5 years and the election of officers - Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary are held every 3 years.

TPG members meet once a month and help with monitoring and reviewing our performance and contributing to new strategies and policies.

Tenant & Leaseholder volunteers spent a total of 2576 hours (including travel time) on Resident Involvement activities (see page 5).

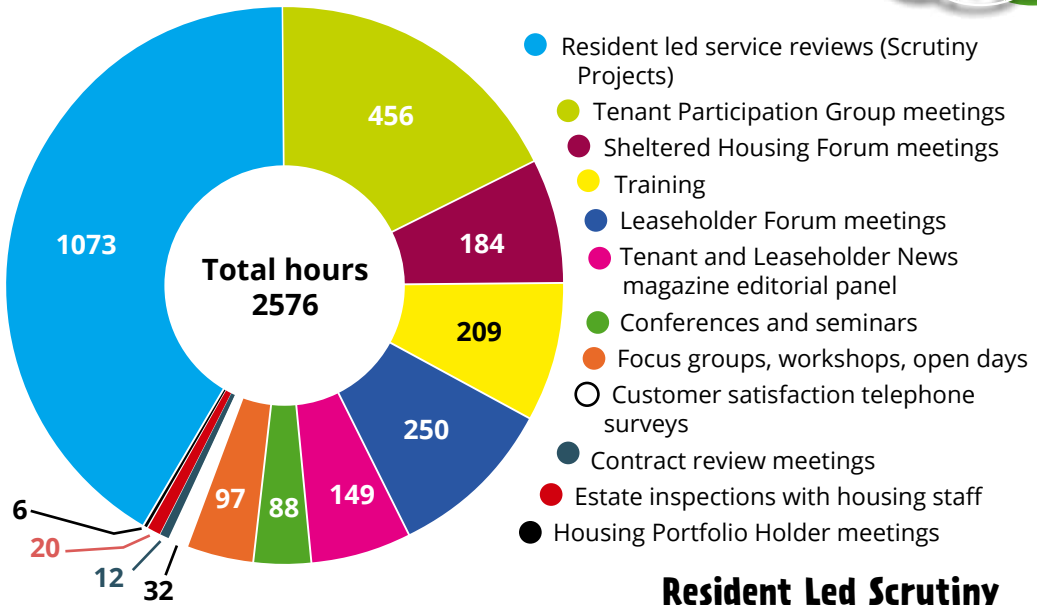




Outcomes/service improvements from resident Involvement (RI) activity in 2015/16	RI activity where decision made
Assisted gardening scheme reintroduced/ relaunched	Grounds maintenance service scrutiny review
£50,000 set aside for tenant led estate improvement works identified via estate walkabouts	Grounds maintenance service scrutiny review
Grounds maintenance service standards produced and advertised	Grounds maintenance service scrutiny review
Grounds maintenance area maps updated and re-issued	Grounds maintenance scrutiny review
Set up dedicated TPG email addresses	TPG
Tenant and Leaseholder news re-tendered, restricted number of pages and incorporated annual report summary	Editorial panel/TPG
Changed sheltered forum meetings from officer led to resident led	Sheltered service scrutiny review
Changed sheltered forum from 3 regional forums to 1 central forums per quarter	Sheltered service scrutiny review
Updated communal rooms charging policy	Sheltered forum feedback
Disability forum amalgamated within TPG	TPG
Sheltered housing surgeries introduced/trialed	Sheltered scrutiny and forum feedback
New tenant inspector charter introduced	TPG consultation & feedback
SCDC website updated/improved	TPG consultation & feedback
Disabled parking bays moved closer to front entrance of head office	Disability forum and TPG feedback
Attending Mears (repairs) and SP landscapes (grounds maintenance) contract review meetings	TPG volunteers
Mystery shopping/telephone surveys (repairs service)	TPG volunteers

The above table shows some of the main changes which have taken place as a result of resident involvement activity during the previous year with a resulting estimated annual cost saving of £17,000 per year.

Time (hours) spent on resident led activities 2015/16



Resident Led Scrutiny

You will see from the above pie chart that almost 42% of the time spent on RI activity was spent on service scrutiny reviews as reflected in the outcomes, 44% of which have resulted from resident led scrutiny work. Our Scrutiny Review Team (SRT) have been working extremely hard to help us improve the services we provide. In 2015 the SRT completed their second major scrutiny review totalling 1073 hours, looking at our Sheltered housing service. We are currently working through some of the recommendations from the final report the details of which can be viewed at www.scamb.gov.uk/getinvolved along with information about other projects.

Annual Gardening Competition

In the summer of 2015 we ran our 34th annual Garden Competition which is open to all South Cambs Tenants & Leaseholders. The competition was well supported and we received applications in eight different judging categories. We continue to receive fantastic support from a local sponsor, Scotsdales Garden Centre, who generously provided the venue for the presentation evening and donated garden centre vouchers as prizes for the winners and runners up in each category.

Tenant and Leaseholder News

Every year we send out two editions of this magazine one in the spring/summer and one in the autumn/winter. Our editorial panel made up of tenants and leaseholders work hard to create a fun, friendly and informative magazine. Editorial panel also look at the design and content of our annual report, a summary of which is published each year in the winter edition of the magazine.



Getting involved - What we can provide

We understand that it is sometimes difficult to set aside time, fund travel costs or organise childcare, so in order to try and make getting involved easier for you 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 be difficult.
- 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

Another measure we have introduced for 2015/16 is the number of residents we have engaged with during the year. This could be residents who have completed a customer satisfaction survey, been surveyed about major work (such as external wall insulation), had a disabled adaptation job carried out or attended a forum meeting.

We engaged with 3,681 tenants/leaseholders during the year, representing 64% of all households (excluding day-to-day repairs).





Our Stock



**General
Needs**



**Total number
of properties**



**Sheltered
Housing**



**Equity
Share**



**Right to buy
applications
received**



Leasehold



**Sales through
the Right to
Buy scheme**



**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.



Planned maintenance

80

new
bathrooms
installed

31

roof
coverings

371

properties
received
re-wiring

195

installations of
insulation*

0

Number of
overdue gas
services

121

new doors
installed

428

boiler
replacements

113

new kitchens
installed

*including solid wall, cavity wall and loft insulation



Project Spotlight

New Farm Travellers Site, Royston

The site is managed by South Cambridgeshire District Council on a long term lease from Cambridgeshire County Council. It was an old site originally set up as a transitory site in the 1970s. The facilities were basic, the repair costs were very high and the sewage pumping system was always breaking down.

The work commenced in March and was completed in December 2015. The actual scale of the work delivered in just nine months included;

- site clearance
- demolition of units
- installation of all new infrastructure (drainage, utilities and roads)
- creation of sixteen new build plots and day facilities



The aim of the project was to transform the site and provide the community with a nicer place to live. The day units that were built comprise of an open plan kitchen and sitting room and a spacious bathroom. The units are well insulated with high quality fittings, non-slip flooring and economical, easy to operate, heating systems. Where required the Council used their own budget to install specific aids and adaptations such as installing a wet room instead of a bathroom to meet residents needs.

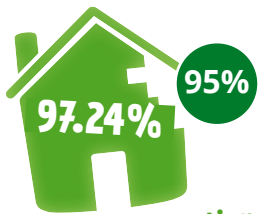
Without the commitment of all involved, this project would not have succeeded. There were many unexpected challenges along the way but the community, the contractors and the council all worked together to ensure that the project flourished. The final accolade was when the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), who part funded the project, visited to sign the project off and declared it truly to be exemplar.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved.



Repairs

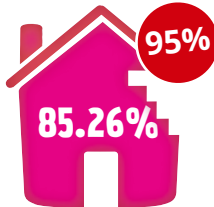
The repairs service we offer is an important part of our housing service and it is delivered in partnership with Mears. The circles represent our targets for this financial year; targets which have been met or exceeded are coloured green.



Customer satisfaction with repairs service



Overdue gas services



Urgent repairs completed within 5 days



Repairs completed at the first visit



Emergency repairs attended to within 24 hours



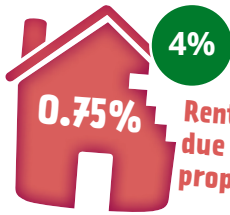
Average number of days to complete repairs



SAP rating



Routine repairs completed within 20 days



Rent loss due to void properties



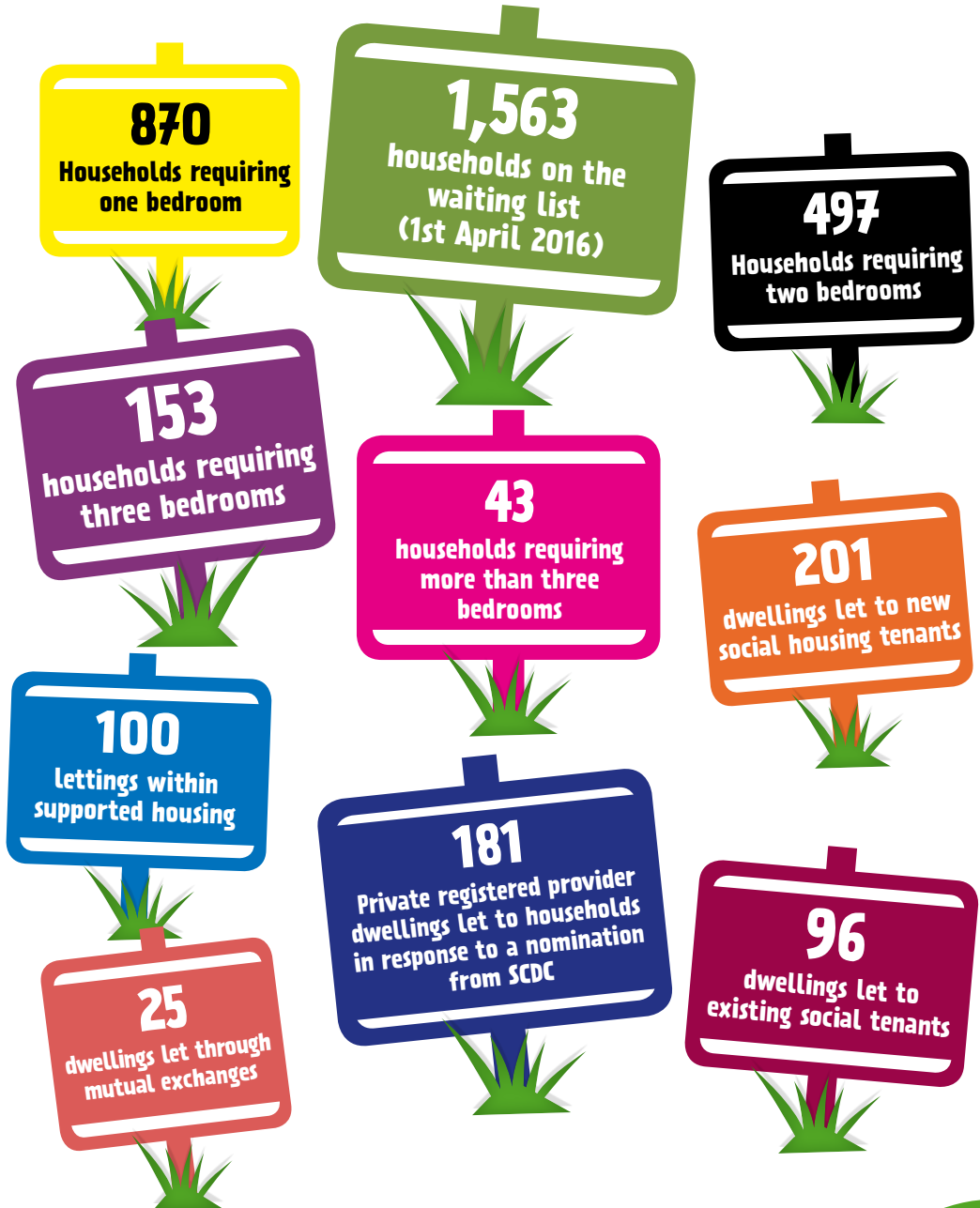
Average time to re-let a general needs property (minor repairs)



Level of rent arrears

We are planning to introduce an appointments system for all non-emergency repairs, which will help to improve response times and customer satisfaction with the service.

Allocations and Lettings





Customer service

South Cambridgeshire District Council
Contact Centre



Total number of calls for housing

11,209



Calls handled by contact centre

9,436



Percentage of calls handled

85%



Average call duration

4
minutes
40
seconds



Percentage of calls resolved first time

83%



Number of calls transferred to the
housing department

1,646



Average call answer

2
minutes
12
seconds



Customer service

Mears 24-7 Contact Centre (Repairs Service)



Calls handled

16,655



Average speed of answer

29

Seconds



Calls abandoned

733



Average delay to abandon

2
minutes
8
seconds



Service level percentage

74.4%



Percentage calls abandoned

3.2%



Answer percentage

96.8%



Compliments and complaints

We want to provide the best housing service, so taking note of feedback from our customers is massively important.

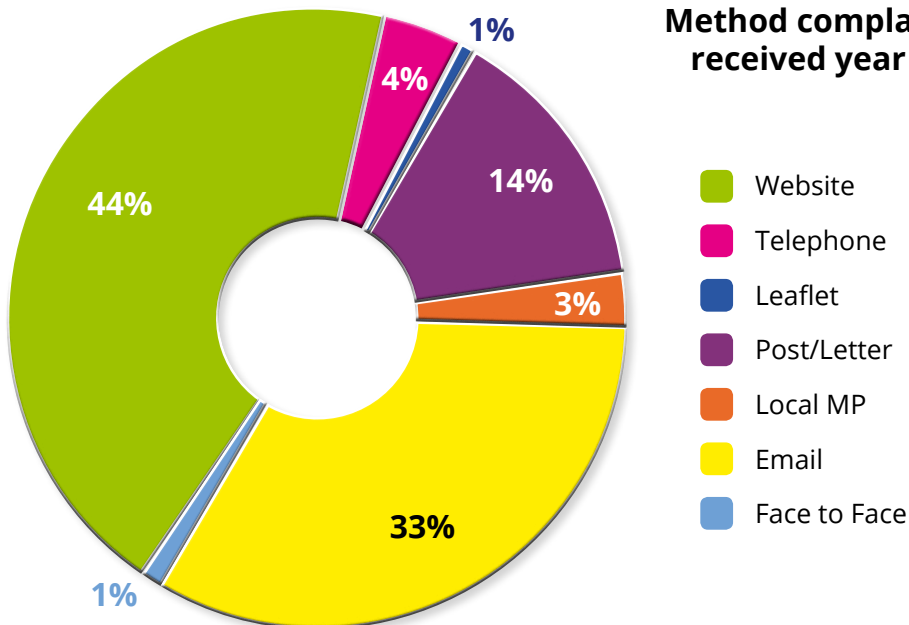
We want to tell our staff when they have done a good job and equally want to guide them in learning from any negative feedback.

We monitor our compliments, complaints and comments at all times and work hard at resolving any negative feedback as quickly as we can. At the end of each year, the annual report provides us with the opportunity to reflect upon the positive comments we have received and enables us to learn and improve from the negative ones.

Total number of complaints



Method complaints received year end





Stages of complaint

Stage	Year end totals
1 = Expression of dissatisfaction that is not able to be resolved at first contact so requires investigation and response from Service Manager	79
2 = Unresolved at stage 1 so investigation required by Head of Service	3
3 = Referred to the Housing Ombudsman	0

Complaint outcomes

Overview of closed complaints	Totals
Total closed / resolved	67
Upheld = closed in favour of complainant	6
Not upheld = closed not in favour of complainant	61
Outstanding = still open as at 31/03/2016	8

Compliments

Category	Q1	%	Q2	%	Q3	%	Q4	%
Allocations	0	0%	1	5%	0	0%	0	0%
ASB	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Estate Services	0	0%	1	5%	0	0%	0	0%
Rent & services	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Repairs & Maintenance	3	16%	2	11%	4	21%	0	0%
Staff & customer service	15	79%	15	79%	11	58%	8	100%
Tenancy management	0	0%	0	0%	4	21%	0	0%
Other	1	5%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	19		19		19		8	



Housing Development

We work closely with our housing association partners and this year we enabled the development of 119 homes.

Of these 119 homes;

- **7 were for social rent** (approximately 60% market rent)
- **58 were for affordable rent** (approximately 80% market rent)
- **54 were for shared ownership** (including 'Rent to Mortgage')

Our new builds

This year saw the council start on site at two exciting new developments.

In August 2015 we began work to construct 20 new council owned properties in Swavesey and January 2016 saw us begin at a site in Foxton, which will produce 15 new homes. We are hoping that work should be completed at Swavesey and Foxton in May 2016 and December 2016 respectively.



Foxton

Swavesey



Get in touch

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