

Contact



Annual report 2015/2016



www.mansfield.gov.uk/housing



Mansfield
District Council

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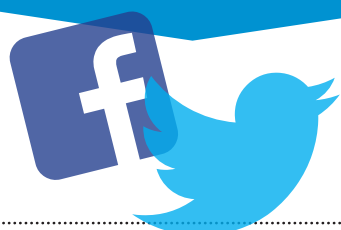


Want to contribute?

Do you have any suggestions or ideas for articles you'd like to see in Contact? If so, we'd love to hear from you. Please email us at MarketingandCommunications@mansfield.gov.uk.

Alternatively, you can write to the Marketing Team, Mansfield District Council, Civic Centre, Chesterfield Road South, Mansfield NG19 7BH.

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Welcome to Mansfield District Council's Annual Report for tenants which provides you with information about how we performed as your landlord during April 2015 to March 2016.

Foreword



Cllr Barry Answer

Portfolio Holder for Housing

“As Portfolio Holder for Housing I am delighted to share with you what we have achieved over the last 12 months and what we plan to do over the coming year.

I want to make sure that Mansfield delivers a service that tenants want and that we concentrate on the things that are important to you. The new involvement arrangements will help to ensure we remain focused in delivering this.”

The standards we work to

✓ YOUR HOME

This covers:

- the overall quality of your home
- how we repair, maintain and improve your home

✓ YOUR TENANCY

This covers:

- how we let our homes
- how we manage your tenancy

✓ YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY

This covers:

- how we invest in your neighbourhood to keep it clean, tidy and safe
- how we work with other partners in your neighbourhood
- how we tackle anti-social behaviour

✓ WORKING WITH YOU

This covers:

- how we get tenants involved in making decisions about our services
- how we deal with your complaints and feedback
- how we recognise and respond to the diverse needs of tenants.

Your home

Sustained investment in your homes has ensured all Mansfield District Council properties continue to meet the Decent Homes Standard. As a result **87.7%** of our tenants said that they were satisfied with the overall quality of their home.



WHAT WE DID

Most of the properties across the district have had new kitchens installed. Work continued during 2015/16 to upgrade kitchens in properties that had become void. Work has also continued on upgrading bathrooms across the district.

The difficult to let bedsits at The Willows in Warsop have been converted into one and two-bedroomed flats. The heating systems have been replaced with new modern central heating systems in both The Willows and River View.

A programme to remove the district heating system at Sandy Lane has also started. All council properties on Wallis Road, Recreation Road and Goodacre Street now have the benefit of an individual energy efficient central heating system.

The first phase of a programme to maximise the warmth of properties has begun. External wall insulation has been installed in solid brick properties and loft insulation levels have been topped up where necessary.

WHAT YOU SAID

In order to improve the way in which the programme is delivered, you have asked us to:

- Improve communication between the council, contractor and tenant before and during any improvement work commencing on your home.
- Take less time to complete the work.
- Improve the quality of the work provided.



DID YOU KNOW?

Matthews and Tannert have been awarded the contract to carry out the upgrades of bathrooms. CLC Group Ltd have been awarded the contract to carry out kitchen upgrades.

87.7%

of our tenants said that they were satisfied with the overall quality of their home.



OUR PLEDGE

We will ensure our homes meet your standards by:

- Continuing to invest in our properties ensuring they have modern facilities and are energy efficient.
- Improve how we communicate with you before and during the works.
- Work with contractors to reduce the time it takes to undertake improvements to your homes.



Repairs and maintenance

Overall levels of satisfaction with the way in which we deal with repairs and maintenance have increased. There has been increased satisfaction expressed about the attitude of workers with many being happy to be told when workers would call. Satisfaction levels have increased from 88% in 2013 to 92% in 2015.



WHAT WE DID

- Carried out over 28,000 repairs to our properties.
- Completed 92.6% of all repairs on the first visit.
- Kept 87% of all appointments made.

WHAT YOU SAID

To make our repairs service more efficient, you want us to:

- Complete routine repairs quicker.
- Have more specific appointment times.



DID YOU KNOW?

- There are an average of four repairs carried out per property.
- 99.7% of tenants who have had a repair completed are satisfied with the service they received.

Satisfaction levels have increased from

88%

in 2013 to

92%

in 2015.



OUR PLEDGE

In order to improve the service we will:

- Introduce mobile working technology for all our repairs team to help complete repairs more quickly.
- Provide an online service for reporting your repairs.
- Ensure we keep more of our appointments when carrying out repairs.



Allocating our properties

When we let our properties we ensure we house those people that are deemed at the time to be in housing need. We aim to make the best use of our housing including reducing overcrowding, tackling under occupation and making best use of adapted housing for those with a disability. We also aim to provide support to tenants when they need it to ensure they are able to continue their tenancies.



WHAT WE DID

- We let 632 properties to households in housing need. Of those properties: 197 were houses; 175 were bungalows; 260 were flats.
- 147 tenants were transferred into more suitable accommodation, either downsizing into smaller properties or moving from overcrowded homes.
- 15 households moved by having a 'mutual exchange.'

During 2015-16:

- 1,500 new households applied to join the waiting list.
- 95.9% of new applicants stated they were satisfied with the lettings process.

Tenants can register for a mutual exchange for free at www.swapandmove.co.uk.

Applications to join the Housing Register can be made on-line at www.amhomefinder.co.uk.

WHAT YOU SAID

Those applicants that completed and returned the satisfaction survey said they would like:

- A quicker registration service.
- Better communication between the Homefinder service and the applicants.



DID YOU KNOW?

- We now own 6,550 properties. This is because we have built new houses in Flint Avenue, Forest Town and Poppy Fields.
- There are currently 6,826 households on the housing register. This is 718 less than in 2013/2014.



OUR PLEDGE

We will:

- Continue to reduce the amount of rental income we lose each year by letting our properties quicker when they become vacant.
- Work with the Housing Services Panel to improve communication between the Homefinder service and its applicants.

Your tenancy

The money we get from renting our properties is used to pay for the management and maintenance of homes and neighbourhoods. It is therefore important that we collect all rent that is due.

Many of our tenants have been affected by the changes to benefits introduced by central government through the Welfare Reform Act. This, coupled with the fact that the price of food and fuel costs have risen and wages have fallen in real terms, means that more of our tenants are struggling to make ends meet.

We helped over
94.22%
of our tenants to
sustain their tenancies
over 12 months



WHAT WE DID

- Introduced checks to make sure properties are affordable before an applicant signs up for the property.
- Introduced a 'fast track' service for tenants awaiting housing benefit claims where there is an application for court action for outstanding arrears.
- Helped people to downsize to smaller properties.



DID YOU KNOW?

- We collected more than 98% of all the rent owed.
- We provided support to 138 tenants who received specialist money advice.
- We helped over 94.22% of our tenants to sustain their tenancies over 12 months.
- Had 603 tenancies terminated during the year. This is 64 less than the previous year.



OUR PLEDGE

- To ensure we continue to help our tenants to sustain their tenancies and manage their finances we will:
- Maximise our income by looking at reducing the number of tenancies that are terminated each year and directing resources to ensure all rent payments due are collected.
 - Increase and target the resources available to directly support tenants who are experiencing difficulties in paying their rent.



In 2015, 78.2% of you said you were satisfied with the appearance of your neighbourhood.



WHAT WE DID

- Demolished long-term empty blocks of flats on Bellamy Road.
- Improved the communal areas and door entry systems on homes in the Peafield Lane area.
- Continued to address neighbourhood issues needing attention as part of the estate walkabouts.

WHAT YOU SAID

Feedback provided through the tenant's satisfaction (STAR) survey carried out in 2015, told us the main issues you were most concerned with in your neighbourhood were:

- Rubbish and litter
- Car parking and parking areas
- Anti-social behaviour.



DID YOU KNOW?

- Housing officers undertake an estate walkabout in their area every three months. Dates are listed on page 12.
- We are continuing to look at garage sites and areas of land to improve the appearance of estates and provide extra land for housebuilding. We have improved Sandy Lane and Abbott Road drying areas.



OUR PLEDGE

- We will continue to carry out estate walkabouts in order to identify priority areas for improvement.
- We will commit a further £125,000 in 2016 to be used for environmental improvements.
- We will convert a grassed area on Newcastle Street into a car park to address car parking problems in the area.



Safe neighbourhoods

Reducing crime and disorder is a priority for the council. In 2015/2016 the housing department responded to 358 reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and resolved 93.40% of ASB cases reported.

? DID YOU KNOW?

The way partnership work is being delivered in Mansfield is different from how it has been in the past.

Mansfield Partnership Against Crime (MPAC) and Mansfield Community Safety Partnership are now known as Mansfield Community Partnership, removing the words 'crime' and 'safety' from the name so that it more accurately reflects the work undertaken by the partnership.

The creation and engagement of resident-led partnerships will be an important feature of the work going forward, as is the sustainability of them. It will enable communities to play a significant role in identifying and responding to the issues that most affect them.

In addition, the partnership's work aims to build stronger, safer communities which will help to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour.



WHAT YOU SAID

The Housing Services Panel took a close-look at the ASB service as a result of what you told us in questionnaires. As a result of the scrutiny exercise, the Panel recommended that we:

- Promote the ASB standards to ensure all tenants are aware of the standards and the level of service that they can expect.
- Review the policy and procedure for dealing with incidents of ASB.
- Look at ways to increase response rates on gathering customer feedback.
- Ensure an action plan is agreed with the complainant detailing how the officer will keep them updated on progress. We are currently working through the points raised.



OUR PLEDGE

To ensure your neighbourhoods are safe and sustainable we will:

- Continue to work with other agencies to deliver prevention, intervention and enforcement measures.
- Agree with you what support you may need and the frequency of contact you will be happy with during the investigations into your complaint.



Complaints and feedback

Mansfield District Council welcomes all feedback - good or bad.



WHAT WE DID

We have reviewed the way in which we deal with complaints and provided training to all staff on the revised policy and procedure. During 2016 / 2017 we intend to make further improvements to make sure it is easier for you to provide your feedback.

WHAT YOU SAID



59.6% of tenants said they were satisfied with the way their complaint was handled.

55.5% said they were satisfied with the outcome of their complaint.



DID YOU KNOW?

In 2015/2016 we received 60 formal complaints; 88.30% of those complaints were dealt with within 15 days.

56.7% of tenants are aware we have a formal complaints procedure.

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of tenants are aware
we have a formal
complaints procedure.



OUR PLEDGE

We are committed to providing services that you, our tenants want – and at a standard that has been agreed. If we don't meet that standard then we want you to tell us so we can:

- Learn from your feedback and improve our services.
- Tell you what we have changed as a result of your feedback.
- We now have a dedicated officer who deals with all formal complaints.





Tenant involvement

The council has undertaken a review of all its tenant involvement activities looking at both the opportunities and barriers to involvement.

The review took place during 2015 and a range of information was gathered and activities undertaken, with the following key issues identified:

- There is a genuine shared commitment to embrace tenant involvement activities and work with tenants to shape and improve services.
- There is a significant

commitment from tenant volunteers who put countless hours of their own time to ensure the formal involvement structure keeps working.

- Although the current involvement framework meets the needs of the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard set by the Housing Regulator, the current models of tenant involvement are no longer working effectively for the council, officers or tenants.

Jeanette Marples, Policy Unit Manager, responsible for the development and delivery of tenant involvement and community engagement, confirmed that the review provided a springboard to support the delivery of significant change in how tenant involvement is seen and delivered in Mansfield.

“We now offer a diverse range of new opportunities for tenants to get involved including the introduction of more innovative approaches and the wider use of technology and social media as part of the involvement options.”



OUR PLEDGE

We have developed a new Customer Involvement Strategy which outlines our aims and objectives for tenant involvement in Mansfield. A copy of the strategy is now available on www.mansfield.gov.uk/getinvolved.

People can get involved in many ways as the wide variety of photographs across this publication show.



DID YOU KNOW?

We have developed a range of ‘How to’ leaflets that provide information on how you can become involved in initiatives such as:

- Neighbourhood champions
- Community champions
- Mystery shoppers
- Scrutiny panel members

If you are interested in any of the above, you can find more information on

www.mansfield.gov.uk.

Alternatively you can contact the Tenant Involvement Officer directly on **01623 463485** or via email on policyunit@mansfield.gov.uk



Making a difference

Why not become a member of the **Housing Services Panel?**

The Housing Services Panel is Mansfield District Council's tenant led Scrutiny Panel and is made up of volunteers that work together to monitor the services delivered by council in its role as landlord.

The panel's role is to:

- To take an independent view of the council's performance against the standards tenants expect.
- To hold the council to account where performance fails to meet those standards.

Q Can I become a member?

Any Mansfield District Council tenant can sit on the panel if they are:

- Over 18 years old.
- Not in serious breach of their obligations as a tenant.

Q What skills or experience will I need to become a panel member?

- Experience of being a Mansfield District Council tenant.
- Basic knowledge or interest in how housing services are delivered.

- A common sense approach.
- Ability to challenge opinions.

We will provide full training and support.

Q How much time do I need to set aside?

The Scrutiny Panel meets once a month for about two hours. You may have to commit to time at home to read information as part of the scrutiny process.

All new members will also be expected to attend training courses from time to time. These will be arranged locally where possible and will be dependent on the individual member.

Q What if I am not able to get to meetings but would still like to be involved?

You can still be involved by becoming an Armchair Member, meaning you do not have to leave

the comfort of your own home. You will be able to select and take part in the areas for scrutiny by providing your feedback on the information.

You can make comments, ask questions and make suggestions and recommendations through the panel chair. Feedback will be provided through copies of the minutes of all meetings and reports.

Q What will I get out of being a panel member?

While panel members don't get paid for carrying out their role, all expenses are reimbursed so you will never be out of pocket.

There are many benefits to being part of the panel. You get to meet new people, find out how services are delivered, and develop new skills. That's not to mention building up your confidence and making a real difference!



Interested?

Why not check out www.mansfield.gov.uk/getinvolved and complete an application form?

For more details please call our tenant involvement officer on **01623 463485** or email malonso@mansfield.gov.uk

Neighbourhood walks

**Estate
Walkabout**

Estate-based walkabouts are held regularly to give tenants and residents the opportunity to meet up with housing officers to discuss issues affecting the neighbourhood.

Subjects can range from fly-tipping and overgrown gardens to graffiti.

Members of tenants and residents' groups, councillors and other council staff also take part in the walkabouts. If you'd like to join the walkabouts and need more details, please call the housing team on **01623 463463**.

Estate walkabouts schedule

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Dundee Drive Area
Meet: Outside Dundee Drive Community Centre, Mansfield
Date: 17 October at 10.30am |  Peafield
Meet: Ludborough Walk Centre, Ludborough Walk, Mansfield
Date: 6 December at 10am |
|  Brick Kiln Lane
Meet: Longstone Way, Mansfield
Date: 21 October at 2pm |  Eakring
Meet: Reindeer Pub car park, Southwell Road West, Mansfield
Date: 7 December at 2pm |
|  Burlington Drive
Meet: Outside William Ireland Hall, Mansfield
Date: 24 October at 10.30am |  Lower Ladybrook
Meet: Civic Centre car park, Rosemary Street, Mansfield
Date: 8 December at 10am |
|  Sherwood
Meet: Outside Sherwood Court Centre, Sherwood Street, Mansfield
Date: 14 November at 10am |  Nursery Court
Meet: Nursery Court car park, off Nursery Street, Mansfield
Date: 9 December at 10am |
|  The Woodlands
Meet: Outside the Harold Harvey Hall, Mattersey Court, Mansfield
Date: 25 November at 2pm |  Woodhouse
Meet: Park Road Resource Centre, Park Road, Mansfield
Date: 9 December at 10am |
|  Lawrence Avenue and Vale Road
Meet: Outside Park Road Resource Centre, Park Road, Mansfield
Date: 5 December at 10.30am |  Upper Oak Tree
Meet: Willingham Court car park, Mansfield
Date: 14 December at 2pm |

Get in touch

➔ Mansfield Housing Office	01623 463129
➔ Housing Repairs Contact Centre	01623 463500
➔ Out of hours Emergency Contact (repairs)	01623 463050
➔ Ashfield and Mansfield Homefinder	01623 463402
➔ Central Control	01623 463341
➔ Housing Advice Service	01623 463121
➔ Money Advice Officer	01623 463451
➔ Welfare Rights Officer	01623 463450
➔ Right to Buy/Leaseholders Officer	01623 463062
➔ Tenant Involvement Officer	01623 463485



Meeting your needs

We may be able to provide this information in larger print, in Braille, on audio tape, on CD or in another language. Contact **01623 463463**. Minicom: **01623 463444**. Email: **mdc@mansfield.gov.uk**