

Annual Report for Eastbourne Homes' residents 2015/16



Eastbourne Homes...
At the heart of your community



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by the Chair of the Board Roger Eastwood

A lot has happened over the past year! Whilst it presented challenges, it also saw significant achievements. We replaced 68 bathrooms, 73 kitchens and decorated the outside of 50 maisonette blocks as part of our programme of continued investment in your homes.

In partnership with Eastbourne Borough Council, we won the UK Housing Award for outstanding new developer of the year for our work in the Devonshire ward, including the new homes built on the old Coventry Court site and other locations. This is a big achievement and we intend to continue building much needed new homes in Eastbourne. More information is on page 6.

We know the coming year presents challenges as we find out what we will have to do to implement the Housing and Planning Act changes. We know that there will be changes to tenants' rights to succession, fixed term tenancies for all new tenancies, higher rents for households earning more than £30,000 per year and that we will have to sell empty properties to raise funds to pay the government to fund housing association Right to Buy.

The details of how all this will work in practice are still being worked out by the government, but rest assured that although this will be a difficult course to chart, we will work with you and continue our focus to help residents sustain their tenancies.

We are already working closely with Eastbourne Borough Council and Lewes District Council to make savings whilst protecting front line services and our vision continues to be creating communities and homes where people are proud to live. On pages 4 and 5 you can see examples of how our resident Area Panels have made this happen with the community initiatives they have funded.

Finally, as I have said before, we want residents to be involved in how Eastbourne Homes works and always need more people to make that happen, so please get involved. I hope you enjoy reading the rest of this report and let me know at chair@eastbournehomes.org.uk if you have any comments or questions.

Resident Scrutiny Panel

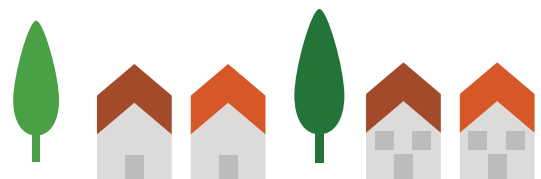
The Scrutiny Panel carried out a review of our Open House newsletter during the first quarter of 2015/16.

The review encompassed:

- Past and current editions of Open House
- Looking at procedures and processes used to develop and deliver four newsletters a year (Terms of Reference, Communications Strategy, Service Standards, Code of Conduct, checklist for customer representatives and tenant survey feedback from 2013)
- Interviews with key staff members involved with the process
- Observation at the Editorial Panel meeting to observe the process followed to deliver the magazine
- Online survey for residents using the Eastbourne Homes website
- Direct emailing of survey to other Panel members
- Meeting residents at retirement courts to seek feedback
- Review of financial costs
- Web search and benchmarking against other ALMO and housing providers

Key findings and recommendations

Recommendations that have been implemented include more information on planned events and making savings through joint procurement of the PR contract with Eastbourne Borough Council.



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Area Panels

The four Area Panels have a budget to spend on community initiatives and improvements to their areas. Below are just a few.



Old Town Area Panel

gave the local library a much-needed boost by donating £14,000 to help fund a refurbishment. Our repairs contractor Mears agreed to donate labour costs and some materials for free.



Members of Central & Archery Area Panel

noticed that all the swan rescues in Hampden Park and Princes Park were undertaken by volunteers and without the aid of a boat, so they offered to contribute £800 towards the purchase of an inflatable boat and engine to make the rescuers' job quicker, easier and safer. Local councillors topped up the balance through the Devolved Budget scheme.



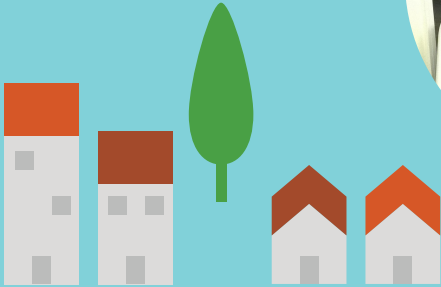
Hampden Park & Willington Trees Area Panel

The reading results at Parkland Infant School have been better than ever since Hampden Park & Willington Trees Area Panel paid for a wide selection of books to fill the new school library. The Panel donated £1,000 towards stocking the shelves of the new library.



Langney Area Panel

has funded A-board signs for Langney Primary, West Rise and Shinewater schools, to encourage parents to park sensibly around their schools.



Awards

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Stan Coombe

We were very proud of our entry into the National Federation of ALMOs competition. The theme was 'Ordinary People – Extraordinary Lives'. The purpose of this theme is to exhibit positive images of everyday people who make a positive impact on their communities, and show photos which challenge the negative stereotypes of social housing tenants.

The award aims to illustrate those people living within social housing who have extraordinary stories – something they have accomplished, or achieved within their own lifetime, or that demonstrates the extraordinary gestures shown to others within their community on an everyday basis. We told the amazing story of Hampden Park Area Panel member Stan Coombe and his hunt for Spitfires in Burma. The photograph went on to be displayed in the House of Commons.



Shinewater

Last year saw the bi-annual Shinewater Community Champion awards. We were thrilled with the number of nominations from all the schools in the Shinewater and North Langney area.



Involved residents

Some excellent times have been had with residents this year, from the Sunday Funday, 999 Show and parties to celebrate the Queen's birthday, VE Day and National Housing Day.



Riverbourne House orchestra

A 37-piece student orchestra from Germany entertained residents at Riverbourne House. The orchestra was made up of children aged between 11 and 16 years old who belong to the Altes Gymnasium Schule in Bremen. A group visits Eastbourne every two years and stays with local families.



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Update

Housing and Economic Development Partnership

The Housing and Economic Development Partnership (HEDP) team has continued to deliver an ambitious programme of new housing and regeneration within the town.

2015/16 has been a good year for HEDP, ending on a high with a nomination for the UK Housing Awards' Outstanding New Developer of the Year 2016, which the team went on to win.



Left to right: Rory Bremner with Cllr David Tutt, Paul Turton and Robert Cottrill from Eastbourne Borough Council
Photo Credit: SIRASTUDIO

Key achievements for 2015/16 include:

Local Authority New Build Programme

Phase 1, 31 new homes have now been built, including 23 at Coventry Court with eight of these offered as shared ownership properties for the first time. Eight new homes were also built at Longstone Road, four for affordable rent and four for outright sale. All four properties sold within six months. As part of Phase 2, another 28 new build homes are planned for completion by 2018.

Empty Homes Programme

Empty properties are carefully selected to make the most impact in improving the local area. A total of 24 empty properties have been refurbished or converted in Phase 1 of the programme, with a focus on the Devonshire Ward. Properties have been purchased and refurbished in Langney Road, Arch Mews, Glynde Avenue, Bourne Street, Seaside and Seaside Road. All of these have tenants. A further 20 properties will be refurbished by 2018 in Phase 2. There will be a total of 96 new homes provided within these two housing programmes by 2018.



Before



After





Key achievements for 2015/16 continued:

Driving Devonshire Forward

In addition to new housing, HEDP has secured nearly £5 million in grant funding for improvements to the Devonshire Ward. Projects include improvements to Princes Park and its café, Seahouses Square, façade improvements to the Elms buildings on Seaside Road and the refurbishment of commercial properties ready for new businesses.



At the winners' event



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Eastbourne Re-bourne
by Calder Peel

The team developed an innovative competition for architects and local community groups to design unusual 'iconic' beach huts, which attracted entries from around the world. The huts will be built on the seafront, to the east of the pier.

HEDP continues to work with a range of partners to deliver opportunities for local people in the Devonshire Ward and attract visitors to the area. In 2015/16, HEDP worked with the Towner Gallery on community arts projects, the Coastal Culture Trail, Tech Resort on digital training and support for the digital business sector, and Building Partnerships on providing training and jobs in the local construction industry.

Services for Local Authorities

Following its success in Eastbourne, other local authorities have asked HEDP to help them set up their own housing development programmes. HEDP has worked with Lewes District Council and Arun District Council on identifying potential sites for development and setting up asset-holding companies.





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Financial Summary 2015-16

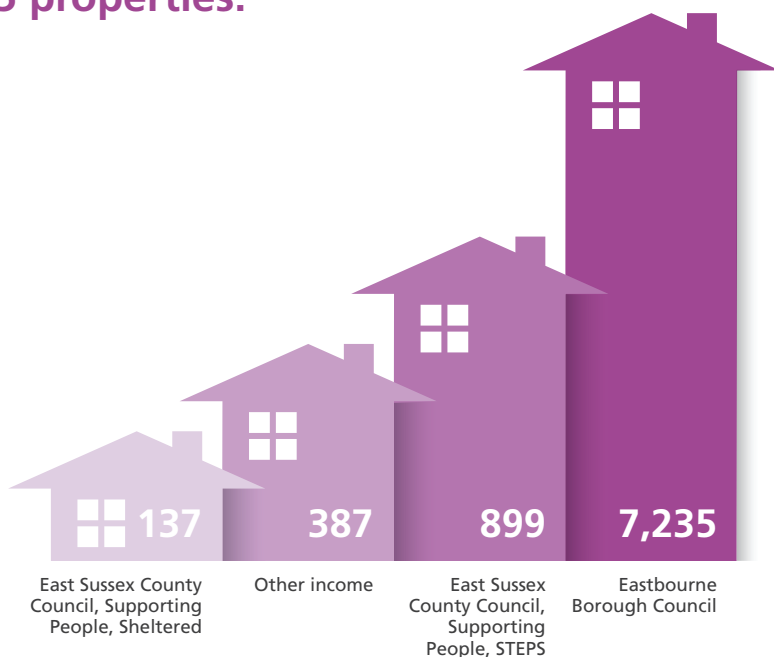
We manage 4,105 properties:

2015-16	Stock
General needs	3,181
Sheltered	290
Shared ownership	29
Leasehold	605
Total	4,105

Income £8.7m

Eastbourne Homes Group Limited

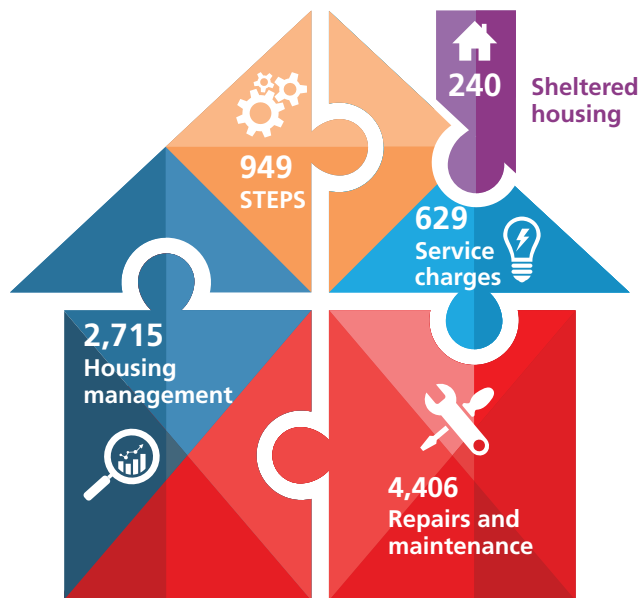
	2015-16 £'000	2014-15 £'000
Income received from:		
Eastbourne Borough Council	7,235	7,148
East Sussex County Council, Supporting People, STEPS	899	844
Other income	387	464
East Sussex County Council, Supporting People, Sheltered	137	160
Total	8,658	8,616



Expenditure £8.9m

Eastbourne Homes Group Limited

	2015-16 £'000	2014-15 £'000
Expenditure incurred on:		
Repairs and maintenance	4,406	4,196
Housing management	2,715	3,209
STEPS	949	793
Service charges	629	671
Sheltered housing	240	265
Operational surplus / (deficit)	(281)	(518)



Service Standards: How are we doing?

Performance

Customer Contact

Telephones - percentage of inbound calls answered year to date

2014/15	2015/16	
97%	96.4%	▶

Average time taken to answer inbound calls year to date (seconds)

12	6	▲
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Complaints

Total number of complaints received

2014/15	2015/16
85	36

90% of complaints answered in target time

90%	96%	▲
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Aids and Adaptations

We will carry out 95% of major adaptations within 150 working days from the date of order

2014/15	2015/16	
98.9%	98.6%	▲

We will carry out 97.5% of minor adaptations within 17 working days from receipt of request

91.3%	87%	▼
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Gas

We will ensure that all of our contractors are 'Gas Safe' registered

2014/15	2015/16	
100%	100%	▲

Properties without a landlord's gas safety certificate for more than 4 weeks at end of year

0	0	▲
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Planned Works

We will ensure that all properties are maintained to the government's Decent Homes Standard from January 2013

2014/15	2015/16	
99.9%	98.14%	▶

Responsive Repairs

98% of responsive repairs to be completed within target time

2014/15	2015/16	
96.5%	96.8%	▶

Tenancy Management

We will re-let properties within the appropriate target time

2014/15	2015/16	
100%	100%	▲

We will respond to reports of anti social behaviour within target time (28 days)

100%	100%	▲
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Rent arrears

Current tenant arrears as a % of rent debit (target – 2%)

2014/15	2015/16	
1.8%	2.21%	▶



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Services

Housing and Neighbourhood Services

We set up our new Eastbourne Homes Neighbourhood Casework team in 2015 in order to build even stronger links with our customers and communities, and to build better access to the services wanted and needed by local residents. We have widened our services to include:

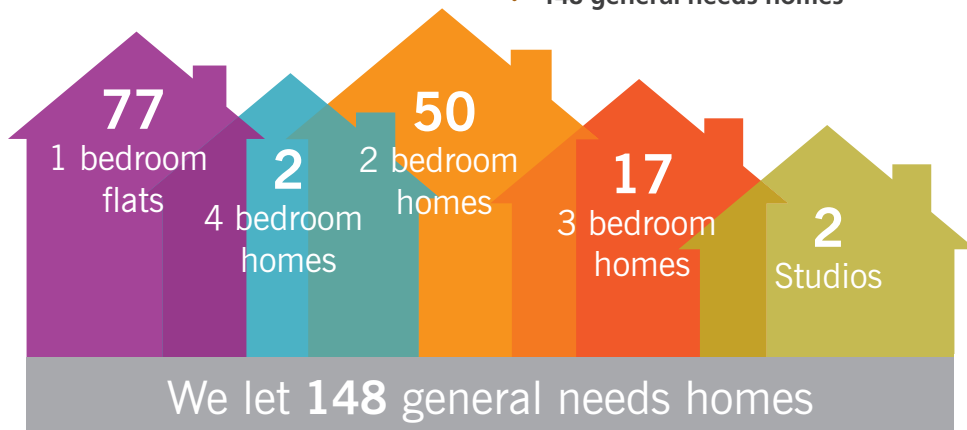
- Responding to complaints about private housing standards
- Supporting residents with complex needs
- Tackling residential noise issues throughout Eastbourne

How we let our homes

We continue to let our homes through the regional choice-based lettings scheme, Sussex Homemove, ensuring that we follow Eastbourne Borough Council's allocation policy and let our homes to people in priority need.

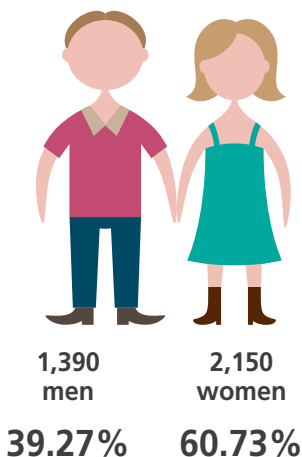
In 2015/16 we let 186 homes, made up of the following

- **38 sheltered homes** (10 studios, 25 x 1-bedroom flats and 3 x 2-bedroom flats.)
- **148 general needs homes**

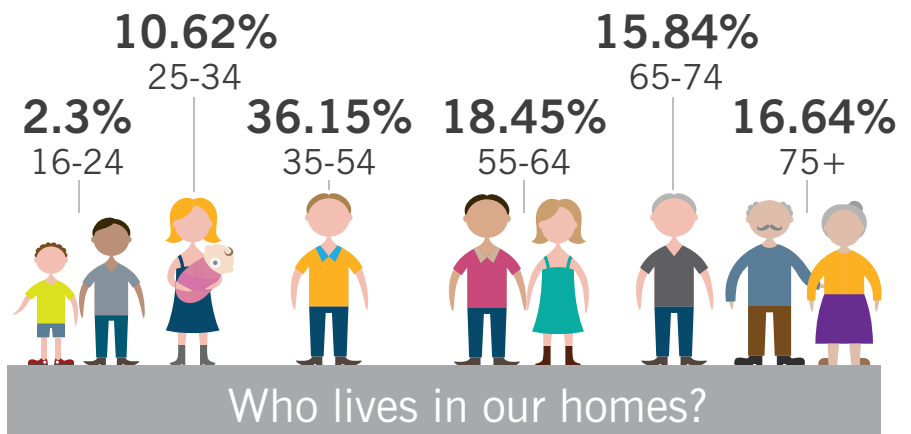


Who lives in our homes?

Gender percentage of 3,540 residents



Age range of our (lead) residents, based on 3,437

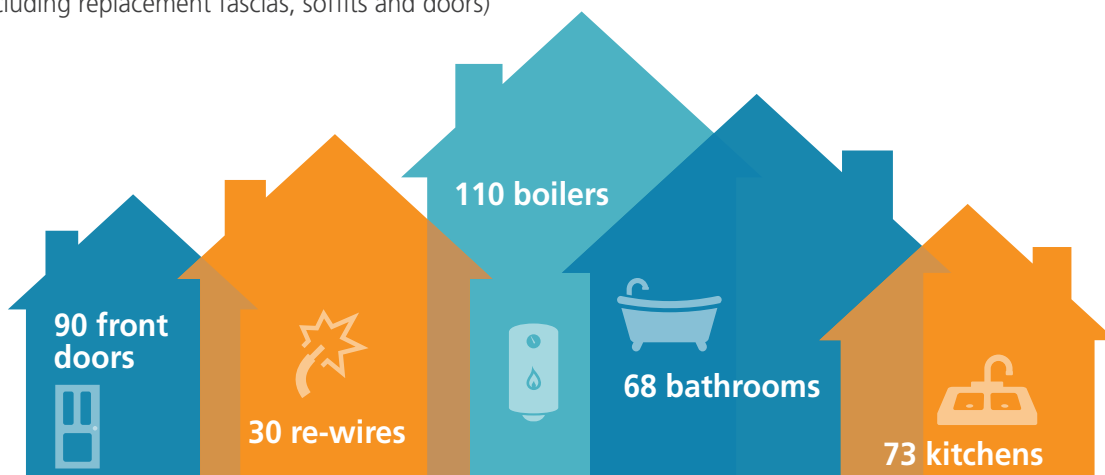


This information is linked to our profiling information gathered from residents and is based on what residents have declared to us. Percentages from a total of 3,572 residents

Repairs and Maintenance

Eastbourne Homes is constantly investing in improvement to its properties. Below shows some of the works that have been undertaken across the town in the 2015/2016 financial year:

- Re-roofed **8 houses** and **3 blocks of flats**
- Replaced **90 front doors**
- Replaced **73 kitchens**
- Replaced **68 bathrooms**
- Replaced **110 boilers**
- External decorations on **255 houses** (including replacement fascias, soffits and doors)
- External decorations to **50 maisonette blocks** (including replacement fascias, soffits and doors)
- External decorations to **blocks of flats** (including replacement fascias, soffits and doors)
- **569 properties** had electrical safety checks, which generated **30 re-wires** and a huge amount of updating to old wiring and fuse boards to bring them up to the current standards
- An ongoing programme is running to replace gas fires with **electric fires**
- Refurbished two sheltered **communal living areas** and **external areas**



St Mary's Court

St Mary's Court had a major refurbishment, both internally and externally. We redecorated internal walls and added a splash of colour to upgrade this court (which was recognised as a good home for dementia/ Alzheimer's sufferers). We replaced all the residents' front doors and replaced all of the windows in the block.

During 2015/16 we:

- Completed 10,318 repairs, of which 9,554 were completed in target time
- Carried out 303 disabled adaptations
- Out of the 10,318 repairs we completed, we received 2,442 customer satisfaction surveys (a survey is sent out for every repair completed)

What we have done to combat tenancy fraud during 2015/16

We have joined forces with the East Sussex Fraud Hub to tackle tenancy fraud. Together we will raise the focus on the importance of reporting and combating tenancy fraud across our communities.

Over the coming months, we will be encouraging our residents to report tenancy fraud and promoting how this can be done through social media, our website and posters.

Investigations into potential tenancy fraud have resulted in two residents handing back their keys, allowing the properties to be made available to people who actually need them. The team has also become involved with all potential Right to Buy applications, resulting in four applications being withdrawn or refused.

Working together we can combat fraud!

Some of our achievements during 2015/16



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Secured the new STEPS contract providing support services in the private sector in Eastbourne, Lewes and Wealden

Secured Public Health funding to deliver the 'Winter Warmth' programme through the STEPS service for a second year

Delivered an £8 million refurbishment of retirement homes

Procured a new measured term contract for repairs and maintenance

Established a new panel for leasehold services

Commenced joint working with Lewes District Council by providing senior management support to their property services department for housing

During 2016/17 we will:

Develop new housing and regeneration activity through the Housing and Economic Development Partnership

Procure a new term contract for servicing, repairing and installing heating and hot water appliances

Maintain 100% of the housing stock at, or above, the Decent Homes Standard

Continue to explore with Lewes District Council opportunities to integrate services or work jointly in areas of service development and procurement

Deliver improvements to our service offer for older people in sheltered housing

Review our approach to resident involvement

Continue regeneration – the promotion of sustainable communities by the targeted acquisition of buildings in key areas and through associated public spaces and community investment

Promoting new housing supply – both directly and through the strategic facilitation of key sites across the borough that would otherwise remain undeveloped

Meeting strategic housing priorities – the programme will significantly address a shortage of affordable housing choice for older residents in the borough and will provide Eastbourne Borough Council with the financial capacity to invest in other forms of affordable housing. The transfer of assets to Eastbourne Housing Investment Company Limited also provides additional capacity in the overall strategic asset management of Eastbourne Borough Council's housing stock

The complete Eastbourne Homes Annual Service and Financial Plan 2016/17 is available on our website: www.eastbourne.gov.uk

