



## Tenant Standards Report 2015/16

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## Foreword from Stephen Stringer

*Housing legislation brought in by the new Government will both pose new challenges and offer new opportunities for the Trust. However, we remain committed to ensuring our customers continue to enjoy homes for **living**, communities for **life**.*

I became Chair of the Trust in April 2016. I'm pleased to confirm that, as in previous years, the Trust continues to meet the seven standards set out by the regulator, the Homes and Communities Agency.

I'm very pleased to be able to make the above statement. Our systems, processes and teams function well in delivering a high quality service. However, we do not take this for granted and we are always looking for ways in which we can improve our services or deliver better value for money. Our tenant groups, in particular the Residents Forum and Tenant Scrutiny Panel, ensure that we are never complacent about the quality of our services and their involvement is an integral part of the business.

Whilst the tenth anniversary in July 2016 is an opportunity to reflect on how much the Trust has achieved so far, I am looking forward to working on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, confident that we will continue to go from strength to strength.

More importantly, we will continue to strive to deliver the services our residents want and expect.

Stephen Stringer  
Chair of the Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust

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**Standard 1: Governance and Financial Viability**

*We are a well-governed, risk-aware and financially robust organisation. We continue to fully comply with the National Housing Federation code of governance.*

We have a clear governance structure, which includes detailed supporting documents, like the Trust's Memorandum and Articles of Association, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Standing Orders set out the essential duties of the Chief Executive and provide clarity over his legal responsibilities, delegated authority and relationship with the Board.

The Board is currently reviewing governance arrangements. A Risk Management Framework has been prepared and was approved by the Board in July 2015. The corporate projects which underpin the strategic planning framework are reviewed and approved annually. A rolling program of internal audit reviews is agreed annually by the Audit Committee.

As the Trust approaches its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a number of long-standing Board members have reached the end of their permitted tenure. There is a Board Member Recruitment and Retention Policy and a Board Continuity and Succession Policy in place that outlines the Trust's approach to ensuring that we have the right balance of Board member skills, knowledge and experience to support current and emerging business needs. The annual Board appraisal process considers any skill gaps there may be and how these will be addressed.

A Business Planning, Risk and Control Framework was approved by the Board in March 2016 which includes specific links to the Trust's Treasury Management Policies and Risk Management Frameworks. These outline the structures in place for maintaining access to sufficient liquidity.

Long term forecasts (our 30 year business plan) are reviewed and updated at least annually. This includes revisiting all assumptions, with reference to external data for inflation and interest rates. Assumptions and forecasts are considered in detail by a Budget Working Group each year and approved by the Board. In-year forecasts are reviewed quarterly against historical information and future plans at cost centre level. Quarterly management reports have been provided to update the Board on the Trust's performance against budget and compliance with loan covenants.

The Trust has an open and effective relationship with the regulator and any material issues that relate to non-compliance or potential non-compliance with the standards would be communicated. The Trust has prepared and submitted returns to the regulator in a timely fashion throughout the year.

Our Asset and Liability Register records all assets and identifies those used as security on loans. Stress testing is carried out on the Trust's business plan using risks from the risk register.

A review has been carried out of our compliance with the Governance and Financial Viability standard. The Board certified compliance with this standard in the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2016.

**What have we got planned for 2016/17?**

- The current Corporate Strategy expires at the end of March 2017. We will be consulting residents, stakeholders and employees throughout 2016 to develop a new suite of corporate objectives that will define the business' priorities moving forward. These will focus us on developing and delivering services that meet the changing needs of both the organisation and our customers.
- Improvements to our budgeting and forecasting processes to take a view beyond the current financial year and therefore improve our business planning.

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**Standard 2: Value for Money**

*We are committed to providing services that represent Value for Money (VfM) for our residents, and to delivering continuous improvement in the quality and range of our homes and services.*

We have several processes in place for monitoring VfM performance, for understanding the costs of delivering specific services and to provide assurance to Board on VfM delivery, which include:

- An established framework of policies and strategies which are aligned with our objectives and provide a consistent basis on which to develop our continuous improvement plans.
- Independent customer satisfaction feedback, coupled with resident involvement and scrutiny which allows customer views to be considered in setting plans.
- The establishment of a rolling corporate plan, with responsibilities clearly defined, that is aligned with the company's objectives.
- Regular reporting to senior management and Board of the company's performance against the corporate plan and thereby the delivery of its strategies.
- An annual budget and business plan approved by the Board in which resource requirements are identified and prioritised effectively, with detailed monthly management reporting that highlights financial performance to budget.

A VfM self-assessment is published annually within the financial statements. A stakeholder version is extracted from the financial statements and made available on the company website.

Overall service satisfaction has increased in the year to 90.6% from 84.9% last year. Customer satisfaction is a priority and this year's improved performance has been underpinned by the continued rollout of the transformation programme launched in 2014/15, called "Be the Difference". The percentage of tenants who are satisfied their rent provides value for money has improved again in 2015/16.

The direct cost per property of repairs has increased marginally over the previous year, where cost savings from area based working, reduced cost of materials and mobile working improvements have been offset by higher gas servicing costs.

Void costs have reduced from last year with the level of minor voids works being undertaken by the Trust's own voids team increasing from 92% to 95%. This led to a reduction in contractor spend of £87,000. However, despite this improvement, costs remain high when compared to the peer group and a review of void costs is to be undertaken in 2016/17 to seek further improvement opportunities.

Estate Services costs have, as anticipated, reduced from the previous year's levels which were impacted by one off costs for remedial tree works. They now compare more favourably with our peer group.

Rent Arrears have maintained an excellent performance in the year despite the increasing challenges posed by new legislation.

The following table details year on year comparison of relevant VfM measures for 2015/16, and the upper quartile performance from our peer group within Housemark for the previous financial year (the most recent available).

| Key Performance Indicator   | Actual 2013/14       | Actual 2014/15       | Actual 2015/16       | Upper Quartile |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Percentage of tenants satisfied with the company's overall service                      | 89.0%                | 84.9%                | 90.6%                | 85.5%          |
| Percentage of tenants who are satisfied the services provided represent Value for Money | 84.2%                | 86.9%                | 89.1%                | 83.6%          |
| Percentage of tenants satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live             | 91.0%                | 90.6%                | 90.3%                | 88.1%          |
| Direct cost per Property of Responsive Repairs <sup>1</sup>                             | £318.94 <sup>2</sup> | £364.88 <sup>1</sup> | £367.05 <sup>1</sup> | £381.49        |
| Direct cost per Property of Repairs to Empty Properties                                 | £169.83              | £172.17              | £153.97              | £116.12        |
| Calendar Days taken to re-let Empty Properties  | 46                   | 22.4                 | 18.4                 | 22.2           |
| Direct cost Per Property of Estate Services   | £127.98              | £145.62              | £121.81              | £127.36        |
| Rent Arrears excluding Housing Benefit as % of rent due                                 | 1.29%                | 1.00%                | 1.04%                | 1.57%          |
| <b>Notes</b>  |                      |                      |                      |                |
| <sup>1</sup> Includes heating/gas repairs. Targets have been adjusted by £63 for this.  |                      |                      |                      |                |
| <sup>2</sup> Excludes heating/gas repair costs  |                      |                      |                      |                |

### What have we got planned for 2016/17?

- Investment in the rollout of lean systems methodologies will continue. Reviews will provide service and cost benefits in each respective area, for example the repairs lean systems review outcomes will result in service improvement and a 1% reduction in the total cost per property.
- We continue to review and implement sourcing solutions across the business with a view to achieving future reductions in expenditure
- We plan to find staffing efficiencies through more rigorous review of vacant posts which arise in the normal course of business, and also through streamlining services to deliver more effectively.

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### Standard 3: Rent

*We establish rents in line with government guidance, which means we meet the requirements of the Rent Standard. Annual rent reviews are approved by our Board.*

### **How do we set your rent?**

The Trust's Rent Setting Policy outlines our approach for each of our tenancy types. The annual rent increase from April 2015 was 2.2%. This is based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) at September 2014 plus 1%.

We have an increasing number of Affordable Rent properties which have a different rent-setting arrangement to social rents. These rents are set at up to 80% of market level, based upon a current property valuation obtained from an appropriately qualified source, and are also increased at Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1% each year. This is all explained in our Rent Setting Policy.

### **How do we tell you about rent rises?**

Rent variation notices, referring to the relevant CPI base, are sent annually to all residents advising of changes to rents. We write to each of our tenants personally to let them know what their individual rent will be.

We also keep tenants informed about any changes to the rent, and how these are made, through a range of communications including Residents News, our website and social media.

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**Standard 4: Tenant Involvement and Empowerment**

*We are committed to ensuring that our customers are able to have a positive impact on how our services are delivered and monitored. But we will go further than this, and ensure that we are helping our residents maximise their choices and improve their lives wherever we can.*

### **Communication is a two way process**

We continue to offer access to services via telephone, post, email, text, face to face meetings, social media and the My@ccount self-service portal. These are promoted through newsletters, on the website and face to face at our offices.

Following the success of our text-out service launched last year, we have implemented two-way texting to enable our residents to contact us by text, 85% of which are responded to within 20 minutes.

During the year, we implemented a project to update and relaunch the website to be more accessible and user-friendly. Residents and employees at all levels were involved in the design process, with the new site going live in March 2016.

### **Developing services in response to residents' needs**

In Autumn 2015, we launched an Additional Housing Management Service (AHM). This aims to help residents to sustain their tenancies, reduce isolation and enable our older residents to live independently in their homes for longer. This has proved very popular with excellent feedback. The cost of the service is eligible for housing benefit where people are in need of financial support.

### **Complaints - how are we handling them?**

Complaints can be made using all of the contact methods listed above. Service standards are in place for acknowledging and responding to complaints with performance targets monitored by residents. Our complaints policy and procedure is shaped and approved by residents.

As a matter of course, any response letter advises the complainant what action to take should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome or handling of their complaint. The complaints policy and procedure allows for complaints to be made on any resident's behalf by authorised advocates.

The complaints policy and procedure has been subjected to independent scrutiny and assessment, and was found to be robust and easily accessible. We publish complaints information annually on our website, including number and nature of issues, and whether they were upheld or not. We also publish information on how the Trust has used complaints to improve services.

## **How you can be involved and help us to make the right decisions**

We currently have a register of 853 involved and interested residents, an increase of 235 on last year. Involvement opportunities offer a range in level of commitment from relatively little time, to in-depth involvement, for example, Tenant Scrutiny Panel, Resident Forum, and Resident Inspectors, responding to surveys, writing blogs or simply coming along to community events.

Customers who have expressed an interest in volunteering their time, either as an interested or involved resident, are kept up to date with latest opportunities and achievements via a dedicated newsletter, Impact, launched in October 2015. We are actively seeking to recruit more involved residents throughout the year, and to understand and resolve barriers to involvement.

## **How do we meet our residents' diverse needs and requirements?**

Resident profiling information is actively used to enable us to understand individual needs. To support this we have an Equality and Diversity Policy, and an Access and Customer Care Policy which are available on our website and are reviewed regularly.

Our offices have a comfortable and accessible reception area with private interview rooms, a range of play equipment for children, a hearing loop, and an accessible public toilet. We continue to work with our Disability Equality Action Group (comprising of residents and employees who have disabilities themselves) to understand the needs of disabled customers and ensure we are truly delivering accessible services and continuous improvement.

Although we subscribe to Language Line phone service, wherever possible, we utilise employees who speak different languages to translate when needed which offers better value for money and a more flexible service. For example, one employee who speaks Urdu and Punjabi attended a resident training course on First aid for Babies and Children. This enabled a group of residents to fully participate in the day, and far exceeded what we could achieve using a phone-based translation service.

## **What have we got planned for 2016/17?**

- The Trust celebrates its tenth anniversary in 2016, and we will use this as a focus for activity to recruit more interested and involved residents.
- Following the successful relaunch of the Trust's website, we will be putting more emphasis on digital communications, in particular looking at boosting engagement through social media channels. While the Trust has had a presence on Facebook and Twitter for some years, we aim to have a presence on Instagram, Google + and LinkedIn, using Issuu and Storify to enhance content.

- We continue to look at additional ways for tenants to access our services, and will be investigating developments in digital technology, as well as looking to update and improve My@ccount. Two-way texting continues to be rolled out across more services.
- The Trust has a Residents' led Complaints Group which acts as a Designated Panel and carries out audits of closed complaint cases. The group ensures a tenant perspective is considered as part of the complaints management process. Further training to enhance the skills and knowledge of group members and increase the capacity of the group as a whole will take place during the year. In addition we will seek further opportunities for the group to be involved in complaint resolution and service improvement.
- A new e-learning provider has been commissioned for 2016, which will enable us to revisit Equality and Diversity (E&D) e-learning, which will be refreshed. This will ensure staff are kept updated on all aspects of E&D requirements to enable greater awareness.
- The revision of our Customer Service Commitments in line with tenants' feedback is an opportunity for us to tailor our services more effectively. All feedback is welcomed and used to inform our services.

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## Standard 5: Home

*Our vision, 'Homes for living...' drives our purpose: to provide high quality homes to ensure people in housing need have a safe base from which to live their lives. We will ensure those properties are kept in good condition by providing an efficient and value for money repairs service, and a rolling programme of investment works. We will continue to build affordable homes to address the need for housing in the Vale.*

Our properties continue to meet the Decent Homes Standard. This has been achieved by using framework contractors who are appointed for 5 years to tender for improvement works. This system is working well and we will continue to use the framework for the next five years, whilst also looking to reduce the amount of work that is contracted out, by undertaking a proportion of the works using in-house operatives.

During the year we spent £13.6 million on property improvement and major repairs; and £7.2 million on routine maintenance. We carried out 23,662 repairs, which is 1,166 less than last year.

We upgraded 877 properties as part of our planned maintenance programme, installing 195 new kitchens and 283 bathrooms. We also delivered 1,029 external packages through the year, which consist of fascias, soffits, walls, rainwater goods, roofs and chimneys. Gas Servicing and Repairs was successfully transferred in-house from external contractors in 2013. The Trust has consistently maintained 100% of gas servicing targets.

A breakdown of how we performed against responsive repairs key performance indicators can be found below:

| Repairs  | Year 2015/16  | Year 2014/15  | Year 2013/14  |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Tenants satisfied with Repairs & Maintenance   | 82.31%        | 80.36%        | 86.68%        |
| Responsive Repair Appts kept   | 99.36%        | 97.67%        | 97.67%        |
| Jobs completed on 1 <sup>st</sup> visit  | 93.29%        | 92.68%        | Not recorded  |
| Emergencies completed on time  | 99.52%        | 99.47%        | 99.49%        |
| Urgent <sup>3</sup> Repairs completed on time  | Not recorded* | 94.17%        | 95.56%        |
| Routine <sup>4</sup> Repairs completed on time   | Not recorded* | 95.24%        | 93.63%        |
| Appointed Repairs completed on time  | 98.00%        | Not recorded* | Not recorded* |
| <b>Notes</b>   |               |               |               |
| *Where percentages were not recorded, this reflects change in classification of work types |               |               |               |
| <sup>3</sup> Urgent works were reclassified as Emergency                                   |               |               |               |
| <sup>4</sup> Routine repairs reclassified as Appointed Repairs                             |               |               |               |

There was a change to the Construction Design and Management (CDM) Regulations in 2015. All works are carried out in accordance with the CDM, employing a third party co-ordinator, as required by the regulations.

Our Aids and Adaptations (A&A) work continues to deliver high rates of satisfaction primarily due to a dedicated A&A surveyor who co-ordinates works with AVDC, Bucks County Council Occupational Therapy and other agencies, through to completion. Small value A&A work has been brought in-house this year as we seek to reduce the amount of work sub-contracted out.

We had the opportunity to expand the Trust's footprint when Sovereign Housing decided to rationalise their portfolio, and made Rossiter House in Brackley available for transfer. The 54 flats were transferred to our ownership at the end of 2015, following consultation with the existing residents. Our development programme continued:

- Friars House was completed (the former office block above Friars Square Shopping Centre in the market Square), consisting of eleven flats for affordable rent and seven for shared ownership.
- The Verney Road development in Winslow has proved popular, and phase 3b delivered 6 affordable rent family homes. Phase 3a is due to complete in 2017, providing smaller homes for 1 or 2 persons.
- Walton Court Centre (WCC) reached the final stages, with the Community Centre opening for business at the end of the financial year. The Healthy Living Centre has taken on the management of the Community Centre.

### **What have we got planned for 2016/17?**

- Goldswain End (the plot behind AVDC's Gateway offices), will complete following unavoidable delays. This development of 48 new homes is the largest development of its type that the Trust has undertaken to date. Twelve of these properties will be available for shared ownership, with the first tranche released early in the financial year.
- Garage Programme Phase 6 will deliver 12 rural homes, 11 will be affordable rent and one for affordable home ownership.
- Live-work units at Walton Court Centre will be available for let.
- We will reconfigure the Operatives team to start delivering a proportion of Investment Programme works in-house, including heating installations.

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## **Standard 6: Tenancy**

*We have revised our procedures to ensure that Voids are turned around quickly and re-let times are minimal, so families are not kept waiting for a home unnecessarily. If you experience difficulties while you are in your home, we will work to help you maintain your tenancy.*

### **Homes for Living... How can we help you find a home?**

We continue to work with the Buckinghamshire district councils as part of Bucks Home Choice (BHC), enabling future residents to exercise choice in where and when they will be offered a tenancy.

The BHC policy continues to give high priority banding to assist those who are under-occupying or overcrowding. The Trust offers incentives to encourage those residents under-occupying to move to smaller accommodation, i.e. removal costs and money towards carpets, etc. They are also signposted to HomeSwapper which is available to all residents.

We use a variety of tenures to ensure efficient use of stock. All new tenants are granted Assured Shorthold Tenancies (AST). We also grant Affordable and Fixed Term Tenancies in accordance with prescribed guidance.

All ASTs are granted initially on fixed terms (12 months). This enables the Trust to review conduct during the tenancy before granting an Assured Tenancy. Any serious breach of the tenancy is subject to investigation.

Affordable tenancies are granted for 5 years. They are reviewed annually and also when the tenancy is due to expire. The duration of a tenancy is made clear before sign-up and tenants are informed of the circumstances that may warrant the tenancy not being renewed. This is detailed in our Affordable Rent Policy.

Tenants are sent documentation about the route to appeal a decision if the tenancy is not renewed. We will also offer advice and assistance to tenants on finding alternative accommodation in the event that a decision is made not to grant another tenancy. The criteria for dealing with those tenants who do not sustain their tenancy either through the accumulation of rent arrears or anti-social behaviour is laid out in the tenancy agreement which is explained to them at sign up. In some cases we will refer them to our Welfare Advisors who will discuss budgeting support to help them keep their properties.

The main reason the Trust would not grant another tenancy would be in cases of extreme rent arrears and anti-social behaviour but in the unlikely event of a tenant not being granted another tenancy they are signposted to housing options such as private rental.

## **How have we helped our residents sustain their tenancies?**

The Trust has increased the welfare advice team and this has enabled them to carry out 1,243 visits. As well as providing advice on a range of subjects and signposting residents to agencies who can provide specialist support, they have also identified and secured £1.6 million in unclaimed benefits. This has resulted in rent arrears being reduced by £99,000, which has in turn enabled residents to sustain their tenancy and prevent eviction.

The Rent Managers work proactively to contact residents who drift into arrears and discuss possible arrangements to enable them to achieve a clear rent account.

An Additional Housing Management (AHM) service has been introduced to help residents living in our schemes and in general needs aged 55 and over. The service is designed to prevent residents needing more intensive, longer-term interventions or care, for example those with mental health issues or alcohol and substance dependencies.

The service offers advice and support in many different areas, working with individuals to identify and address challenges or barriers, or create opportunities to meet their goals, whilst supporting them to live independently.

## **What have we got planned for 2016/17?**

- We will be reviewing the Tenancy Agreement
- We will be improving our remote working for resident-facing employees. This will enable us to deal with some tenancy issues, like making referrals, while still in the property.
- We will seek to expand the AHM service to all residents who need this type of support

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## **Standard 7: Neighbourhoods and Communities**

*It's not just about what our properties are, but where they are that matters. We are working to make the neighbourhoods of the Vale safe, attractive and vibrant places to make your home and build your life – Communities for life.*

### **Communities for Life... How are we managing and making improvements to your neighbourhoods?**

Our Estate Management Policy Framework is in place, guiding the works to maintain and improve the estates and green spaces the Trust is responsible for. We now have a 10-day service standard in place for the removal of fly-tipping, and zero tolerance to items left in communal areas of flatted blocks to maintain fire regulation compliance. We have a close working relationship with Aylesbury Town Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Buckingham County Council and a number of local Parish Councils. We also attend an Estate Services Networking Group set up with a number of other local Registered Social Landlords to share best practice, review services and benchmark improvements.

Our Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping system is enabling us to be more efficient in respect of estates management. This gives us easy access to detailed information and location data.

We have set up a 'Nurture Your Neighbourhood Panel' to allow residents to bid for support from our Environmental Improvement and Community Safety funds to complete local improvement projects. This panel is made up of volunteer residents, who look at each application and decide whether the idea is viable. Although we have had some interesting and beneficial projects through this scheme, including widening pathways for wheelchair access and improving communal garden areas, we are seeking more applications.

For those who needed a helping hand, the Trust offered a cost effective garden service, with packages to suit a variety of needs and budgets. The service has been hugely successful to date with 99% satisfaction and excellent customer feedback.

### **Investing in your communities**

We continue to partner with AVDC to deliver the Community Chest, which during the year has provided £503,169 to 79 local voluntary and community organisations and projects. A recent analysis has shown that since set up in 2007, the Community Chest has enabled community and voluntary organisations to invest more than £32.5 million in services, activities and facilities to people living, working or visiting Aylesbury Vale.

Our Community Challenge, in partnership with local radio station Mix96 has become something of a fixture in the calendar. Our 2015 winner was Stocklake Park School (11 to 19 year olds with special needs) which is part of the Vale federation of special schools.

The school asked for the following works:

- Redecorate the sensory theatre ready for new equipment,
- add a roof to their existing pergola.
- paint existing planters and fencing,
- replace a concrete area,
- build new planters prepared for growing veg,
- power wash outdoor play areas, and
- erect a summer house.

The project was supported by additional donations from Travis Perkins. The Trust provided manpower with a value of approximately £1,600. While clearly there is a huge social value to Community Challenge, the Trust also gets excellent profile through association with the popular local radio station.

We ran our 'Litter Project' for the 2nd year, as part of the Clean for the Queen national campaign, with Thomas Hickman School, Quarrendon and Bearbrook School in Prebendal Farm. We wanted to continue the success from the previous year by educating young people on the effects of litter through engaging presentations, litter picks, recycling games and the chance to be a 'litter champion'.

We held our first garden competition for residents. Categories included tallest sunflower, best communal garden and best overall gardener. The competition proved very successful and demonstrated the benefits gained by residents in having well maintained garden areas that they can take pride in.

We undertook young person's work placements with Blake Morgan Solicitors. Four members of our Youth Panel spent a week in July at Blake Morgan LLB offices in Oxford. They attended court, met the Judge in Chambers, and worked with specialist departments. Three young residents spent the day with contractor Keepmoat to understand the work undertaken in an office environment.

We also worked in partnership with Thames Valley Police, Box Cleve and Aylesbury Boxing Club. Offering placements for young residents referred by either our Neighbourhood Managers (ASB) or the police, attendees were given the opportunity to learn new skills and understand boundaries set out by Box Cleve and the boxing club. On average a total of 13 children, aged between seven and 14, attended each week.

### **How we tackle Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) issues**

Anti-social behaviour policy and procedure is in place and embedded within the service. Our policy was renewed during 2015/16 incorporating changes in our operating structure following the introduction of specialist ASB Officers. We also fully incorporated the new powers introduced by the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014. We consulted with Aylesbury Vale District Council, Thames Valley Police and our Residents Forum on this review.

In addition, separate policies and procedures on adult and child safeguarding, and domestic violence are in place. All of these policies are contained within our ASB & Hate Crime Framework, ensuring we have a robust structure from which to address any issue that arises.

We have strong relationships with various partnership agencies across the Vale. We work closely with colleagues from Thames Valley Police, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, Bucks Fire Service and other registered providers in the area. This joined up approach is mainly facilitated by monthly Tactical Awareness Group (TAG) meetings. The introduction of a specialist ASB service within the Trust has also further clarified responsibilities internally and clearly identified leadership of the service.

Following introduction of the Crime and Policing Act, we consider utilising positive requirements as part of our preventative approach, like agreeing Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. We have excellent relationships with local supporting agencies such as SMART (drug and alcohol support), Bucks Mediation and Bucks Floating Support which feature heavily in all of our case management.

Our policy and procedures, as well as strong relationships, allow us to take swift and decisive action where it is required, whilst our aim is to intervene at an early stage using tools such as mediation, self-resolution and acceptable behaviour contacts. We are committed to taking enforcement actions to reduce ASB, and have been granted a number of Civil Injunctions during the course of 2015/16. However, we only seek this type of resolution after all other routes have been exhausted. We maintain contact with complainants every 10 days throughout an open and active ASB case to keep them informed of progress.

We ensure that victims and witnesses are at the heart of our investigation: we keep them informed and signpost to support services for victims such as Victim Support, Bucks Mediation and Buckinghamshire County Council's range of social care services.

During 2015 we introduced the Friday Night Project. This is a diversionary football project targeting young people between the age of 11-16 involved in ASB and criminal activity. We worked in partnership with Thames Valley Police, Aylesbury Vale District Council, and the Youth Offending Service to deliver a weekly football session for at risk young people using a local facility in Aylesbury. This project is fully funded by the Trust's Community Safety Fund.

## **ASB Results**

- We dealt with 412 cases of ASB during the year, 370 of these were successfully resolved, and 359 of those were through lower interventions. Our resolution rate for the year was 96%.
- Our new ASB Policy and procedure has been implemented, following its review and the introduction of the ASB, Crime & Policing Act 2014.

- During 2015 we introduced two specialised Neighbourhood Manager posts within our Tenancy Services Team to give an increased focus to ASB. These posts have now been fully embedded into the service.
- We have successfully engaged with 30 young people, identified as 'at risk', through our Friday Night Youth Divisionary Project.
- During the year the Trust applied for and was granted 4 civil injunctions, we also successfully gained possession of 6 properties after all other interventions failed.

### **What have we got planned for 2016/17?**

- Community Chest continues until March 2017.
- We will run Community Challenge again, which promises to be bigger and better!
- We will be extending our Friday Night Project utilising our Community Safety Fund into the next financial year.
- The Litter Project will again take place with more offerings at Bearbrook School, and we will look to work with another school.
- Our gardening assistance scheme will continue, and we will run the Gardening competition again. We will also be working with Action for Youth on garden improvements for communal areas.
- We will continue our relationship with Bucks Mediation, renewing our contract with them.
- We will be reviewing our Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Policies during 2016/17, which fall within our ASB & Hate Crime Framework.
- Review of communal cleaning to flatted blocks where sites require a more intensive clean.
- Undertaking a recruitment drive for residents in our flatted blocks to be 'Block Champions' - to be our eyes and ears, and a point of contact for reporting communal issues, including the monitoring of services.
- A review of the Tree Survey – we are responsible for approximately 3,000 trees.

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