

Colchester Borough Homes Performance 2016/17

Scrutiny Panel
18 July 2017



Introductions

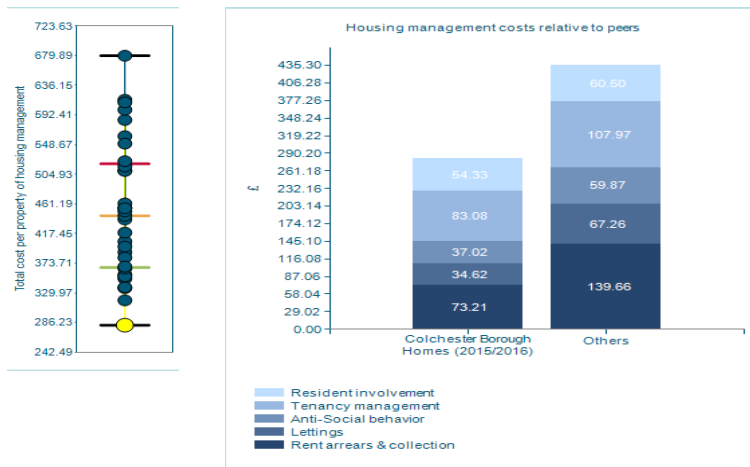
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Performance

- Good overall performance on Medium Term Delivery Plan targets
- Rent collection exceeded all targets
- Evictions for arrears down by 55% from previous year
- Residents helped to obtain £223K in additional welfare benefits
- Achieved 3-year target of 6,000 tenancy audits
- Lettings team turnaround at 6 days, down from 9 days
- 100% of properties have a valid gas certificate.

Housing management

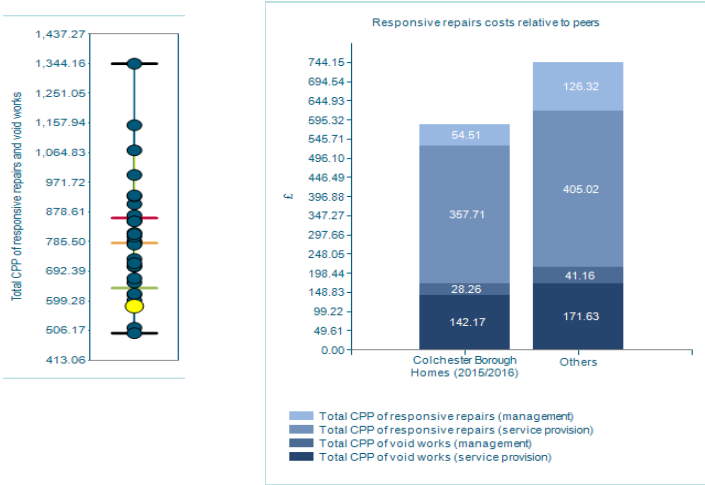
CBH has the lowest housing management costs in the Eastern region



2015/16 (latest figures) – source: HouseMark

Repairs & voids

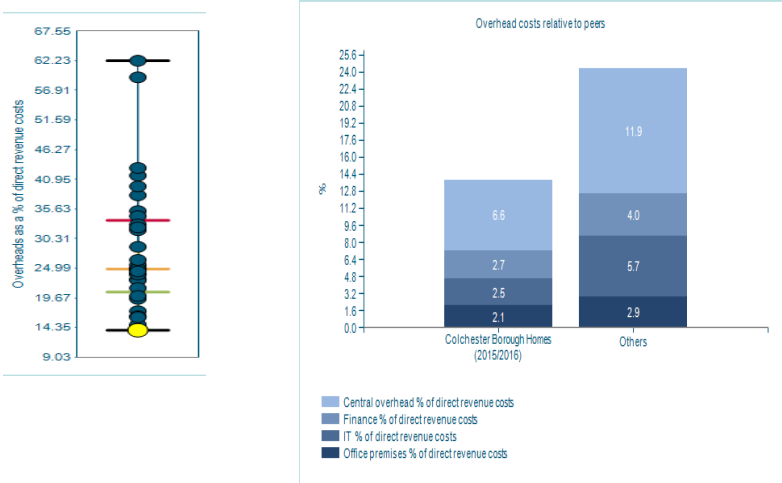
CBH has the third lowest repair and void costs in the Eastern region



2015/16 (latest figures) – source: HouseMark

Overheads

CBH has the lowest overheads in the Eastern region



2015/16 (latest figures) – source: HouseMark

Homelessness

- Increasing homelessness nationally – 2015/16 saw 6% increase from previous year and 44% since 2009/10
- Communities and Local Government Select Committee identified main factors as welfare reform, availability of social housing, ending of private sector tenancies
- **529** social properties let in Colchester in 2016/17 – down 30% from previous year
- **75** new social properties for rent in 2016/17 (down 26%)
- **318** households were accepted as being owed the full duty to accommodate (down from 375)
- **577** households prevented from becoming homeless (up from 481) – of these alternative accommodation was found for **275**
- **2488** approaches to the CBC Customer Service Team for housing issues (up 21%) - **788** of these customers were made an appointment with CBH's Housing Options Advisors (up 13%)

Homelessness

- Average of **33** households per week in bed & breakfast, peaking at 41 in September 2016
- **204** households in temporary accommodation at year end (13% in B&B) - up 11%
- Improving supply of temporary accommodation, including Private Sector Leasing scheme launched in November 2016 (6 units so far), several new “crash pad” units with Circle & YMCA & increased number of units available through partners
- Colchester Homelessness Agencies Service Users Panel (CHASUP) – joint working to get over 30 entrenched rough sleepers into housing
- Secured £239K government funding to tackle rough sleeping via joint bid with CBC & Tendring

Tenancy audit programme

- 3-year programme from July 2014 instigated by CBC Portfolio Holder
- Aim to visit 6,000 properties over 3 years
- 6,128 properties visited by the end of 2016/17
- Purpose of programme
 - Check property condition and update stock information
 - Update tenant details
 - Identify tenants who need additional support
 - Identify management issues
 - Identify underoccupying/overcrowded households
 - Reduce potential tenancy fraud

Tenancy audits - outcomes

- **562** properties with unauthorised alterations –from electric showers & ceiling fans to conservatories, extensions and loft conversions
- **10** abandoned homes relet (further 8 potentially abandoned) - **3** properties identified as being sublet
- **8** cases referred for Housing Benefit fraud
- **29** referrals for assistance with benefit claims and Discretionary Housing Payments
- **36** referrals to Tenancy Support for issues including condition of the home, hoarding , families struggling to cope, health issues

2016/17 Other Highlights

- Launched new approach to resident engagement & insight
- Make a Difference Days
- Sheltered Housing review – completion of Enoch House
- Garage refurbishment project complete & garage lettings up
- Successful DCLG Rough sleeper funding bid
- Establishment of Private Sector Leasing Scheme
- Investors in People Gold

Forward look

- Fire safety
- Housing Futures Programme
- Homelessness Reduction Act
- New government rent policy
- Fixed term tenancies
- CBC Housing Development Company
- New Medium Term Delivery Plan
- Strategic Plan 2017-22
- Working Smarter