

# ANNUAL REPORT 2010-11

2010-11 was our most successful year since we began in 2005



Throughout the year we continued to modernise services – improving value for money and customer satisfaction.

Rent collection rates have consistently been above 100% – because we have also reduced arrears to a record low of £1.8m. But we have also reduced the number of evictions for non-payment. Our comprehensive debt advice service has helped hundreds of tenants claim benefits and stay in their homes.

The Government's decision to make us re-tender for decent homes funding, in December 2010, could have put the whole 'Secure Warm Modern' improvement programme at risk. But our ability to deliver a great service and secure excellent value for money meant we were awarded the highest funding allocation outside London – enough to complete the programme by 2015.

With so many people looking for a council home, we have reduced the number of empty properties to an all-time low. And this year we built 31 new family homes – the first new council properties in Nottingham since the mid-1980s.



*Janet Storar*

**Janet Storar,  
Chair of the Board**



*Chris Langstaff*

**Chris Langstaff,  
Chief Executive**

## Improving communities

With our partners in Nottinghamshire Police and the Community Protection Team, we have continued to improve our success tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB). We intervened in more than 1,800 cases – and 74% were resolved first time.

Our caretakers work hard to keep our communities clean and tidy – all our estates are now rated as either two or three star by our own tenants.

By the end of March 2011, we had reduced the number of empty council properties to a record low of 258.

During the year we completed our 'better practice review' of the repairs service. Major changes to how we work came into effect on 1st April 2011. The changes have proved very popular with customers – along with significant improvements in value for money.

And our Secure Warm Modern programme continues to support hundreds of local jobs – plus almost 100 people have secured an apprenticeship with either us or our contractors.

## A challenging future

In October 2011, our new Chief Executive Nick Murphy takes over from Chris Langstaff. He arrives as the company faces a series of challenges – including the impact of the Housing Revenue Account 'self financing' changes and new welfare reforms.

These could have a profound impact on both our customers and the resources we have to deliver vital services during these difficult times.

Our challenge is to continually innovate and provide value for money – so our customers get the consistently high quality services they deserve.

- We will complete our project to transform customer services – through a single contact centre, so customers have just one number to ring for all our services.
- Our modernised tenancy and estate management service will see us working even closer with our partners – the city council, the Police and local community groups – to improve communities
- Our repairs service is set to complete more jobs first time – and get to them faster.

## Working with our customers

Nobody knows our services better than the tenants and leaseholders who receive them – so they are the best people to help us continually improve.

More than 4,750 tenants and leaseholders are now involved with us – telling us how we're performing, working with us to develop new policies and services, and vetting potential contractors for quality and value for money.

In some cases – such as the Secure Warm Modern programme – that's helped us save millions of pounds while improving quality.

Our team of tenant service inspectors has made a big difference in improving the quality of our estates and service in housing offices.

Over the year we reviewed our approach to tenant and leaseholder involvement – and during 2011-12 we will make a number of improvements to place customers even more at the heart of everything we do.

**Achieving our vision of homes and places where people want to live – through excellent services driven by empowered and involved communities!**

# How we want to involve our customers...



## About the housing standards

We operate under rules set out by the Tenant Services Authority (TSA).

The TSA has set out a number of national standards, which all housing providers have to meet. These are:

- Tenant involvement and empowerment
- Home
- Tenancy
- Neighbourhood and community
- Value for money

This annual report includes highlights of how we are meeting the national standards.

### What our customers think

This annual report contains marks out of 10 for our key services.

These are the results of regular feedback through our Vision Management System (VMS) – where customers tell us about how well we completed a task (such as repairs, letting properties and many more).



# Involvement and empowerment standard

We are committed to helping all our customers to have choice and control over the services we provide.

## What have we done this year?

### Customer service, choice and complaints

- Comprehensive range of customer information – including more than **30,000** website visitors a month
- Customer involvement in developing communications
- **98.8%** of complaints answered within five days.

### Involvement and empowerment

- **4,778** customers now involved
- **35** tenant inspectors driving up service standards and quality of estates
- **68%** of customers satisfied with decision-making opportunities
- Free training programme
- **Three** customers qualified and **four** in training for Chartered Institute of Housing Active Learning programme
- **30** accredited tenant and residents associations had training provided to them
- **135** tenants attended training during the year.



### Understanding and responding to diverse needs

- We know the race, disability, gender and age of **96.1%** of our customers – which helps us to shape services to meet their needs
- Challenging discrimination – established a Single Equality Scheme, awarded Stonewall accreditation and working in partnership with Rempoy
- Working with local support groups to advise vulnerable customers how to find a home.



Customer satisfaction:  
Training - 8.95/10



## Report card

### Last year we said we would make these improvements – how did we do?

- Completed a comprehensive review of our involvement service with our tenants and leaseholders. The proposals were approved by our Board in June 2011
- Plans developed with customers for our Resident Scrutiny Panel – to launch in Spring 2012
- Planned a Tenant Academy to improve customers' skills and confidence with local colleges
- Held a Get Involved month in September 2010 and developed a toolkit to help community groups organise events and more
- Supported the Brocklewood and Broxtowe Guardians and developed proposals for a Youth Board
- Hosted the second Homes4Us conference for disabled customers and carers in September 2010
- Set up a Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) customer forum, exhibited at Nottingham PRIDE and other events, and achieved Stonewall re-accreditation in February 2011
- Held a variety of cultural awareness events throughout the year to celebrate diversity – including Black History Month and LGBT History Month
- Worked with members of the Black Minority Ethnic (BME) Forum to review their constitution and role
- Set up Facebook and Twitter pages to improve communications – and drafted a social media strategy to make the best use of these and other channels
- Equality and Diversity themed edition of NCH News – March 2011
- Held two events to study our policies for allocations and customer surveys (Equality Impact Assessments).

### Improving our knowledge of our customers

We held a Diversity Week in April 2010 to improve our knowledge of customers. The more we understand, the better we can shape our services to meet their needs.



# Home standard

We are committed to improving the condition of thousands of council homes, improving our repairs service – using the latest technology to send the right person, with the right skills, to the right job as fast as possible.

## What have we done this year?

### Quality of accommodation

- **More than 26,000** new windows, **1,056** doors, **3,271** heating system upgrades, **3,007** bathrooms, **3,742** kitchens and **1,056** loft insulation upgrades installed under the Secure Warm Modern programme
- Installed internal insulation to **126** properties under the Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP) scheme
- External insulation to **59** energy-inefficient properties.
- **£14m** of capital works delivered for Nottingham City Council – including improving empty properties, fire safety work
- Built **31** new council homes.



### Repairs and maintenance

- **123,831** routine repairs requested
- **95%** of repairs completed on first visit.

### Emergency repairs

- **39,796** requests
- **99.5%** requests responded to on target.

**Customer satisfaction:  
Repairs service - 8.2/10  
Improving - let's go for  
excellent in 2011-12!**

### Gas servicing

- **99.98%** of properties have a safety certificate.

**Customer satisfaction:  
Gas service - 8.72/10  
Excellent!**



**Customer satisfaction:  
Quality of Secure Warm  
Modern work - 8.65/10**

## Report card

### Last year we said we would make these improvements – how did we do?

- Completed our Better Practice Review in March 2011 – and launched our new repairs service in April 2011 with a new payment scheme, mobile working and 'opti-time' appointments system to improve efficiency and tenant satisfaction
- Reviewed and subsequently streamlined our fleet of vehicles to 299 of schedule – providing digital aerials to **10,589** homes
- Established a team of tenant affordable warmth champions, who were trained by Nottingham Energy Partnership on energy efficiency. They are now offering advice and guidance to sheltered tenants
- Started to install internal insulation to properties in Aspley through the Community Energy Saving Programme
- Recycled **98%** of the waste generated by our Secure Warm Modern programme – smashing the target of 80% set last year.



# Tenancy standard

Everyone who wants to rent a home from us has the right to get clear, impartial advice from a service that lets properties quickly and fairly.

We want to keep rents affordable and keep tenants in their homes through effective debt advice.

## What have we done this year?

### Allocations

- Lead partner for 'Nottingham HomeLink' – 12 landlords, 36,713 properties, 2,812 new lettings
- Average of 2.41 days to register new applicants – down from 8.2 days in 2009
- 29.6 days to re-let a home – down from 49 days in 2009
- 1,748 people supported in their search for a new home, after asking us for extra help
- Empty properties reduced to a record low of 258 – worth more than £1m in extra income.

### Rents

- £86.9m rent income – a collection rate of 100.3%
- Rent arrears at record low of £1.8m (March 2011) – down from £2m in March 2010
- High levels of debt under control. Only one tenant owes more than 52 weeks rent
- 18,146 customers have either a zero credit balance
- 241 tenants evicted for rent arrears – down from 335 in 2009-10 – saving £376,000
- 2,477 tenants helped to claim an extra £842,665 in Housing Benefit
- New rents card offering discounts on travel and entertainment to all tenants.

Customer satisfaction: Debt Advice service - 8.13/10  
Doing well!

### Tenure

- 90% of new tenancies last more than 12 months (up from 87.5% in 2009)
- 84% of introductory tenancies became permanent (up from 72% in 2009).

Customer satisfaction: New tenants - 7.13/10  
Better, still room for improvement!

Customer satisfaction: 6.85 / 10  
Better, still room for improvement!



## Report card

### Last year we said we would make these improvements – how did we do?

- Our revised allocations policy was approved in September 2010, and ready to implement in April 2011
- We increased rent payments by direct debit from 24.36% to 26.83%
- We improved customer profiling information to help us identify and support vulnerable tenants and support through Homelink application process
- We now offer a range of payment options for leaseholders, including Direct Debit, standing order, online, Paypoint, Paypal and Payzone
- We developed a brand new Welcome Pack for new tenants
- We launched our Pathfinder scheme to help tackle under and over occupation. We released 66 under-occupied properties and made 213 bedroom spaces available to families in need. We now have a further two years funding for the Pathfinder scheme
- We launched a year-long campaign to tackle tenancy fraud – taking back 20 properties for sub-letting or non-occupation.

### Other achievements:

- All applications on housing register are now annually reassessed, support needs reviewed and updated with current information
- We now monitor diversity and current customer profile needs through monthly scrutiny meetings
- Centralised the appeals process for allocations, improving consistency and quality of customer advice.

### Plans for the future...

- Providing extra services to leaseholders, such as buildings insurance
- Working with leaseholders to improve literature and services and improve customers' understanding of costs for service charges and major works
- Review the way sign-ups take place, including locations and paperwork
- Work to provide more local information/maps.

# Neighbourhood and community standard

We aim to keep our estates clean and safe – with a team of caretakers and housing patch managers, and by working with our customers and partners.

We were the first ALMO to receive independent national accreditation for tackling anti-social behaviour. We shall continue to empower local tenants to push for improvements in their communities.

## What have we done this year?

### Managing your neighbourhood

- Tenant Services Inspection team helped improve estates – **100%** now two or three star (from 39% in 2007) and 81% of blocks now three star
- **100%** of offensive graffiti removed in 24 hours
- **330** square metres of graffiti cleaned from our land

### Tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB)

- Intervened in **1,869** cases (up from 1,850 in 2009-10)
- **96.4%** cases resolved in 2011 (up from 95.2% in 2010)
- **74%** of cases resolved on first intervention
- **415** court orders obtained
- Worked in partnerships to stamp out drug dealing in our estates
- Tenant-led ASB scrutiny group influencing strategy and policy.



**Customer satisfaction:  
Caretaking - 7.25/10  
Good - and we can do better!**



## Report card

### Last year we said we would make these improvements – how did we do?

- Developed a process for tenant lead inspection of low-rise blocks across the city, which started in May 2011
- Worked with tenants to review the role and working practices of housing patch managers
- New Customer Service Centre opened September 2011 – with full operation planned for April 2012
- Regular feedback to all our area panels about improvements on our estates, and we're working in partnership with local people to continually improve.

### Plans for the future:

- Aligning housing patch manager patches with those of the Police and wider partners
- Organise a Hate Crime Conference
- Review anti-social behaviour and hate crime policies and procedures
- Develop a DVD for new tenants and their children to prevent and deter anti-social behaviour and help sustain tenancies.

## Top marks!

We came top when we compared our estates and caretaking service with those of other big housing organisations – in Derby, Sheffield, Barnsley and Doncaster.

The 'peer review' – carried out by tenants from all five areas – gave us an average score of almost **91%**.



# Value for money standard

We want to provide services that are both high in quality and great value for money.

Working with our customers, we've saved millions of pounds by buying smarter and becoming more efficient this year.

## What have we done this year?

- Almost **£8.9m** saved through better purchasing for the Secure Warm Modern programme
- Cut the cost of rent collection by promoting Direct Debit, website and telephone payments while restricting payments at local housing offices
- Staff sickness absence down to average **10.47** days from 12.45 days in 2009-10
- Merged the delivery of NCH News and rent statements to save **£35,000** a year.



## Award winning in 2010-11

**Heating and Ventilation News Awards:**  
Partnering Initiative of the Year: BDR Thermea  
and Efficiency East Midlands  
Winner

**Midlands Excellence:**  
Innovation  
Finalist

**Association of Public Service Excellence:**  
Best Efficiency Initiative  
Finalist

**Housing Heroes:**  
Procurement Team of the Year  
Finalist

**East Midlands Centre for  
Constructing the Built Environment:**  
Client of the Year  
Finalist

**Tenant Participation  
Advisory Service:**  
Team of the Year  
Shortlisted

## Report card

### Last year we said we would make these improvements – how did we do?

Our overall performance and costs have continued to improve over the last year. We have adapted our processes to become more efficient and constantly seek out opportunities to learn from other organisations.

- Comprehensive review of our frontline and back office services in Autumn 2010 – how to maintain/ improve services while reducing costs
- Plans developed to relocate our rents and repairs contact centres at Hounds Gate – better 'one stop' services at lower cost
- Developed Efficiency East Midlands.

### Determined to get value for money

- Our award-winning Procurement Team, working with tenants, has helped us save millions of pounds this year – helping us improve more homes for less and provide better services
- The team has managed a wide range of tenders – from debt management to legionnaires control and many more – as well as managing contracts through Efficiency East Midlands
- We have also helped to create local apprenticeships and sustain local jobs, through good practice tendering.

### Efficiency East Midlands

- Efficiency East Midlands (EEM) was launched in July 2010 – a group of housing organisations using their buying power to secure big discounts on goods and services
- Beginning with five members, EEM now has 17 members. Together we're responsible for 156,000 homes. We are leading the consortium as the accountable body
- EEM has tendered for major contracts, including the supply and installation of solar photo-voltaic panels – worth up to £180m – and supplying building materials for the next 10 years. That could be worth up to £3.6 billion!

**EEM** Efficiency East Midlands Ltd



  
**Nottingham  
City Homes**

# How your money is spent

Summary of the Company's financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2011

<b>Profit and Loss Account</b>	<b>2010-11 £'000</b>	<b>2009-10 £'000</b>
Turnover	63,321	69,196
Other operating income	1,232	699
Operating expense exceptional item – pension scheme past service gain	11,686	-
<b>Operating cost</b>	<b>(64,328)</b>	<b>(68,152)</b>
Operating profit	11,911	1,743
Interest payable	(1,317)	(1,577)
<b>Profit / (Loss) on ordinary activities for the year</b>	<b>10,594</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses</b>		
Profit for the year	10,594	166
Actuarial (Loss) / Gain on pension scheme assets	(2,037)	18,037
Actuarial Gain / (Loss) on pension scheme assets	22,389	(43,805)
<b>Total recognised Gains / (Losses) relating to the year</b>	<b>30,946</b>	<b>(25,602)</b>
<b>Balance Sheet</b>		
Stock and work in progress	874	1,279
Debtors	11,493	6,541
Cash at bank and in hand	5	7
Creditors due within 1 year	(7,237)	(6,830)
<b>Net current assets</b>	<b>5,135</b>	<b>997</b>
Provision for liabilities and charges	(2,752)	(1,099)
<b>Net assets / (liabilities) excluding pension liability</b>	<b>2,383</b>	<b>(102)</b>
Pension liability	(18,627)	(47,088)
<b>Net liabilities</b>	<b>(16,244)</b>	<b>(47,190)</b>
Profit and loss account	9,011	(1,583)
Pension scheme reserve	(25,255)	(45,607)
<b>Deficit of Members' Funds</b>	<b>(16,244)</b>	<b>(47,190)</b>
<b>Cashflow Statement</b>		
Net cash inflow from operating activities	1,595	8,926
Liquid resources	(1,597)	(8,926)
<b>Decrease in cash</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>0</b>

## Managing and maintaining your homes and neighbourhoods

Tenants' rent and other housing related income collected within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was spent in the following areas in 2010-11:

NCH landlord activity	
<b>Repairs to dwellings</b>	£17.33m
<b>Planned repairs and maintenance</b>	£5.93m
<b>Property services management</b>	£3.88m
<b>Tenancy and estate management</b>	£5.44m
<b>Sheltered and supported housing</b>	£2.43m
<b>Voids, lettings and allocations</b>	£2.24m
<b>Rent and arrears management</b>	£1.61m
<b>Repairs and Customer Contact Centre</b>	£1.24m
<b>Estates and caretaking services</b>	£1.12m
<b>Support services</b>	£5.36m
<b>Central and shared services</b>	£3.22m

Nottingham City Council retained budgets

<b>HRA: Strategy and performance</b>	£1.67m
<b>HRA: Public realm and CCTV</b>	£4.06m

**TOTAL** £55.53m

### Investment in your homes and neighbourhoods

On behalf of Nottingham City Council we invested just over £51 million in 2010-11 to improve your homes and neighbourhoods as follows:

<b>Decent Homes</b> (Secure Warm Modern programme)	£36.66m
<b>Major Capital Works</b> (eg Empty properties, fire damage, TV aerials)	£10.27m
<b>Health and Safety</b> (eg Fire risk assessments)	£3.06m
<b>Decent Neighbourhoods</b> (eg Fencing, door entry systems)	£1.02m

**TOTAL** £51.01m



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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October 2011