

	<b>ITEM:</b>												
<b>NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>													
<b>REPORT OF THE NCH DIRECTOR OF CONSTRUCTION, REPAIRS &amp; MAINTENANCE</b>	<b>5 February 2020</b>												
<b>1.0</b>	<b>NCH REPAIRS SERVICE - INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT</b>												
<b>1.1</b>	<p>Repairs and maintenance of the homes we are responsible for is a major part of Nottingham City Homes' (NCH) overall activity. This report seeks to set out the context for that, indicate the levels of resources and investment relating to that work, explain how the service is delivered and details levels of customer service and satisfaction. This includes work to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver a major programme of capital investment to ensure all homes meet the Decent Homes standard.</li> <li>• Carry out cyclical maintenance and planned investment and repair work</li> <li>• Ensure empty properties meet our lettable standard before they are re-let</li> <li>• Maintain and invest in safety related work</li> <li>• Respond to repairs requests from tenants.</li> </ul> <p>Over and above investment to improve and modernise our homes, <b>NCH carries out over 130,600 responsive repairs a year</b> (on average almost 360 a day).</p> <p><b>Over 97% of our tenants reported that they are satisfied with their last repair.</b> This result places NCH in the top quartile of social housing providers in the country when benchmarked nationally (the national average score is 91.8%).</p>												
<b>2.0</b>	<b>HOUSING PROFILE</b>												
<b>2.1</b>	<p>NCH is responsible for maintaining over 27,300 homes. This includes 25,466 Nottingham City Council (NCC) tenancies, 1,330 council leasehold homes, almost 400 homes owned by NCH Group subsidiaries (including LiviNG, our market rented subsidiary) and over 150 homes managed for other landlords. Around a fifth of Nottingham households live in these homes.</p> <p><i>Table 1: Type of homes</i></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Property Type</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>House</td> <td>56%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bungalow</td> <td>9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Low Rise Flat</td> <td>27%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>High Rise Flat</td> <td>6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maisonette</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The council's homes have been built in every decade over the past 100 years, and some are even older. Nine out of 10 homes are more than 40 years old. This brings a wealth of challenges in looking after them. Homes are spread across the city, with property in every ward, as well as a small number located outside the city boundary.</p>	Property Type		House	56%	Bungalow	9%	Low Rise Flat	27%	High Rise Flat	6%	Maisonette	2%
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*Table 2: Age of Homes*

<b>Construction Date</b>	
Pre 1919	2%
1920-1939	27%
1940-1959	14%
1960-1979	46%
1980-2019	11%

**3 NCH APPROACH TO MAINTENANCE, REPAIRS AND INVESTMENT**

3.1 The approach taken is to invest in the stock to bring it up to and maintain it at the Decent Homes Standard, to ensure homes are safe, and to deliver cyclical, planned maintenance and investment to reduce the need for responsive repairs. Where possible, higher standards than the minimum set down by government for social housing are delivered. Examples include the Grander Designs upgrade of the communal areas in older people’s Independent Living Schemes and the work to improve the neighbourhood environment on the council’s estates that NCH manages – the Decent Neighbourhoods programme.

**Planned Investment**

When a component of a home is nearing the end of its expected lifecycle, it will be inspected, and unless the condition does not warrant replacement, a new installation will be scheduled.

*Table 3: A Decade of Investment*

<b>Component</b>	<b>Homes Improved</b>
New ‘Grade A’ energy efficient boilers	12,847
Heating Distribution upgrades	11,101
Kitchens	18,735
Bathrooms	15,149
Properties receiving ‘Secure by Design’ Exterior Doors	23,605
Properties receiving Grade A Windows	14,605
Property Rewires	2,642
Roofs	1,184
External Wall Insulation	3,915
Solar PV panels	3,377
Sprinklers installed in properties	1,526

Over the last 10 years Nottingham City Council have invested £424m in improving council housing.

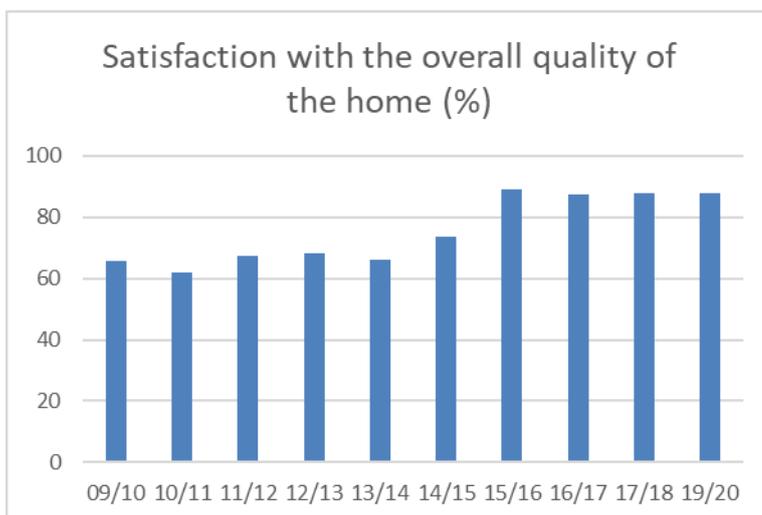
**3.2 Tenant satisfaction data with quality of their homes over the last 10 years**

Standards of maintenance and repair of the home are recognised as key drivers of satisfaction levels across the social housing sector.

Over the last 10 years customers have recorded an increase of 22 percentage points in satisfaction with the overall quality of their home as a result of the investment detailed in 3.1.

Table 4

Year (2009/10 to 2018/19)	Satisfaction with the overall quality of the home (%)
09/10	65.7
10/11	62.0
11/12	67.4
12/13	68.4
13/14	66.1
14/15	73.6
15/16	89.0
16/17	87.5
17/18	88.0
19/20	87.8



When compared with other social housing providers<sup>1</sup>, NCH is a top quartile performer, with a score 6.6 percentage points above the average for the sector.

3.3 Planning Ahead: Over the next 5 years Nottingham City Council plans to invest a further £86m to ensure homes continue to meet the Decent Homes Standard – it is planned that 5,000 new kitchens & bathrooms will be installed, 6,800 heating upgrades undertaken, 1,400 properties will receive new windows and 1,000 new doors will be fitted over that period.

These upgrades ensure that homes have modern, fit for purpose fittings that need less repair. Other maintenance work aims to reduce repair requirements across our homes and estates, whilst improving their appearance. This includes the planned programme of citywide painting, such as fascias and soffits on buildings, internal corridors and communal areas in flats, and fencing on estates.

4.0 **INVESTING TO DELIVER ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

4.1 NCH has delivered innovative energy efficiency projects drawing down external funding to help pay for them. Many of these investments serve to fit lower maintenance products and carry out refurbishments that reduce repairs requirements, such as insulated cladding and new, better quality, windows.

<sup>1</sup> HouseMark social housing benchmarking service

5.0	<b>BUILDING SAFETY</b>
5.1	<p>Every home should be a safe place to live. Our maintenance work prioritises safety as the number one priority.</p> <p>By law we have to service every property with a gas supply annually – this means services at around 24,000 homes every year. The associated servicing of boilers helps prevent faults and reduces repair requests. Our gas appliance servicing performance remains 100% compliant, and remains one of the best in the country.</p> <p>We also carry out regular checks on electrical installations, water hygiene (legionella), asbestos, lifts and fire safety in line with our Building Safety Policy and current legislation. It is critical that tenants allow us access to perform these duties, and being in for scheduled appointments forms part of the criteria for the Responsible Tenant Reward.</p> <p><b>Fire safety</b></p> <p>Since the fire at Grenfell Tower in London there has been a greater emphasis on fire safety improvements in tall buildings, including new government regulation.</p> <p>NCC and NCH have already committed to investing £8.5m, undertaking the following work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Installing Sprinklers, video door entry and public address systems into all of our 13 high rise blocks, as well as reviewing risks in our low rise flats.</li> <li>• Carrying out full Fire Risk Assessments, ensuring sterile corridors, and giving tenant advice and assurance.</li> </ul>
5.2	<p>There has been no additional government funding for Nottingham to carry out this work to council owned homes. As a consequence it has been necessary to redirect some of the planned housing capital programme from elsewhere to help finance this. For example the replacement lifecycle for kitchens and bathrooms has been extended.</p>
5.3	<p>Funding for investments and the repairs service has been further reduced by the Government's compulsory rent reduction over the past four years. This has taken £14m per annum out of the Housing Revenue Account, money which would otherwise have been spent on the city's council housing.</p>
6.0	<b>ENSURING EMPTY PROPERTIES ARE REPAIRED AND READY TO LET</b>
6.1	<p>Properties are repaired and brought up to the 'New Home Standard', before they are re-let. This standard was developed in partnership with tenants to ensure people can move into a safe, clean home in good condition and free from damage. Gas and electrical safety checks are carried out and the opportunity is taken to carry out any major works that are needed while the property is empty.</p> <p>This year NCH expects to complete work on 450 empty properties getting them ready for re-letting. Overall satisfaction with the service received is running at 98%.</p>
7.0	<b>RESPONSIVE REPAIRS SERVICE</b>
7.1	<p>A significant element of repairs work is responsive repairs carried out when tenants report matters for repair. This is supported by NCH's telephone contact centre, allowing residents to make contact 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. Main repairs' reporting is available via the contact centre between 8.30am and 5pm, Monday to</p>

Friday.

Outside of these hours emergency repairs requests, where there is immediate risk of serious injury or death, can be made at any time (we have staff available to respond at weekends, bank holidays and throughout the night). Repairs can also be requested by e-mail, on line, by post or in person. The service works to attend emergency repairs within 4 hours (with that target met in 96.5% of cases, against a target of attending 80% of emergency repairs within that time).

Non-emergency repairs are scheduled by appointment with the resident, with a target of 30 days to complete the repair. Almost 98% of appointments are kept against a target of 99%. Routine repairs are offered between 8am and 6pm on weekdays. Emergency repairs would also be carried out outside of those times, as necessary.

NCH aims to carry out repairs 'Right First Time', with the repair completed at the first visit. This is achieved in 94.6% of cases<sup>2</sup>, an improvement from 90% earlier in the year. The top quartile figure for benchmarking in the sector is 95%<sup>3</sup>.

Repairs services are delivered to a detailed set of published Service Standards<sup>4</sup> provided to tenants. This sets out the levels of service that residents can expect to receive, helps to explain what is classed as an emergency repair and a priority repair, publishes the targets we work to and details the range of minor repairs that are the tenants own responsibility. We offer tenant repairs training courses and have produced self-help videos online to assist tenants complete these types of repairs.

7.2

### Repairs Volumes And Costs

NCH carries out over 130,600 repairs a year (over 2,500 per week on average), in the following categories.

Table 5

	2018/19
Emergency Repairs	38,722
Non-Urgent Repairs	76,105
Out of Hours Repairs	15,789
	<b>130,616</b>

Key Performance Indicators are as follows:

- Appointments made and kept = 97.9%
- Average number of days taken to complete responsive repairs = 10.4 days
- Emergency repairs completed within target = 96.5%

The overall repairs and maintenance fee is £27m per annum, and this includes responsive repairs, major works which are revenue funded, planned and cyclical maintenance, getting empty properties ready for re-letting and other works.

<sup>2</sup> Performance Quarter 2, 2019/20, most recent figures available for benchmarking.

<sup>3</sup> HouseMark social housing benchmarking service 2018/19: Top Quartile 94.96%, Median 92.25%

<sup>4</sup> NCH Repairs and Maintenance Service Standards are published here:

<https://www.nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=6719>

8.0	<b>CUSTOMER SATISFACTION</b>																							
8.1	<p>Customers are invited to indicate their satisfaction with repair services provided. This is benchmarked against other housing providers, using the sector experts HouseMark. As can be seen, performance compares highly against other housing providers. For example the satisfaction with the repairs service is 83.9% which is almost 8% above the average for benchmarked organisations.</p> <p><i>Table 6: Benchmarking Customer Satisfaction</i></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Measure</th> <th rowspan="2">NCH Performance Quarter 2 2019/20</th> <th colspan="3">HouseMark Benchmark 2018/19<sup>5</sup></th> </tr> <tr> <th>Top Quartile</th> <th>Median</th> <th>Lower Quartile</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Satisfaction with last repair (Transactional survey)</td> <td>97.35%</td> <td>94.75%</td> <td>91.75</td> <td>88.78</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Overall Satisfaction with Repairs &amp; Maintenance (STAR survey)</td> <td>83.9%</td> <td>79.6%</td> <td>76%</td> <td>70%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Satisfaction with the overall quality of home (STAR)</td> <td>86.3%</td> <td>84.88%</td> <td>79.7%</td> <td>75.04%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Transactional survey relates to a survey carried out at the completion of each repair.</i></p> <p><i>STAR survey is a perception based quarterly survey sent to a random sample of tenants.</i></p>	Measure	NCH Performance Quarter 2 2019/20	HouseMark Benchmark 2018/19 <sup>5</sup>			Top Quartile	Median	Lower Quartile	Satisfaction with last repair (Transactional survey)	97.35%	94.75%	91.75	88.78	Overall Satisfaction with Repairs & Maintenance (STAR survey)	83.9%	79.6%	76%	70%	Satisfaction with the overall quality of home (STAR)	86.3%	84.88%	79.7%	75.04%
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8.2	<p><b>Learning when things go wrong</b></p> <p>Handling such large volumes of repairs across so many properties, means that on occasions things do not always go as planned. NCH has a robust complaints process and encourages customer feedback to help us learn from mistakes, so that standards of service can be improved.</p> <p>This is part of NCH's '3 Cs Process' which provides the ability for tenants to log any compliments, comments and complaints. NCH's central Customer Relations Team administers the handling of complaints, acknowledging them within 24 hours. Complaints are then formally investigated and responded to within 15 working days. Part of this process also identifies any learning outcomes. In many cases there is an opportunity to provide an early resolution/outcome for the customer and where possible this is offered. This '3 Day Fix and Resolve' solution is offered for issues that can be rectified quickly.</p>																							
8.3	<p><b>Repairs Complaints</b></p> <p>In 2018/19, repairs related complaints were made to NCH as follows:</p>																							

<sup>5</sup> Latest published comparable data. March 2019.

- Responsive repairs: 909
- Mechanical & Electrical: 534
- Major works: 220

This is in context of 130,616 repairs delivered over the year.

### **Independent Tenants Complaints Panel Cases**

Most complaints are satisfactorily resolved through the 3 day fix and resolve solution. However, if the customer is still not content NCH operates an independent panel of tenants who can review complaints should customers be unhappy with the way their complaint has been handled by staff. Of all appeals escalated to the Tenants Complaints Panel (23 appeals in 2018/19), 8 concerned repairs, of which in 3 cases the customer's appeal was upheld.

### **Housing Ombudsman**

Tenants can also refer their complaint to the external Housing Ombudsman Service. In 2018/19 there were a total of 28 investigations concerning NCH, of which 13 related to repairs issues. Following investigation the Ombudsman upheld the customer's complaints in 4 of these cases.

To set this in the national context, the Housing Ombudsman Service investigated about 8,500 complaints nationally in 2018/19. Over 3,000 of these concerned repairs<sup>6</sup>. The Ombudsman typically requires actions from the landlord and makes recommendations in such cases, and these are referred to the service area concerned.

9.0	<b>REPAIRS CASES RAISED BY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES</b>
9.1	<p>NCH receives issues that are raised by local councillors on a wide range of housing issues, including repairs. NCH works with NCC Member's Services section to ensure these are logged, investigated, and responded to, with follow up action as appropriate.</p> <p>These can include matters that have not previously been reported to NCH by residents (where the Councillor is the 'first reporter'), as well as more complex cases where residents have sought to engage the help and involvement of their elected representative. NCH welcomes this involvement as an important part of ensuring that we respond to the priorities of those elected to represent Nottingham's neighbourhoods, and the residents who live in them.</p>
10.0	<b>SERVICE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT</b>
10.1	<p>NCH works to a culture of continuous improvement and this applies to how repairs services are delivered. Repairs requests and faults are analysed to establish where planned maintenance programmes can help reduce responsive repairs requests, helping to deliver overall efficiency savings. Opportunities to design out repairs are sought.</p> <p>NCH has invested in ICT so that staff receive work through hand held mobile devices to help ensure time carrying out repairs is maximised. Staff receive core skills training</p>

<sup>6</sup> Housing Ombudsman Service report: Spotlight on Complaints About Repairs  
[www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Spotlight-report-on-repairs-complaints-final.pdf](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Spotlight-report-on-repairs-complaints-final.pdf)

	<p>across different trades to help them deliver more jobs 'right first time', and reduce follow-on work. This helps minimise scenarios where staff get to a repair job but find that unreported complexities would otherwise mean separately skilled staff are required to complete all aspects of the job.</p> <p>NCH has created the roles of Repairs Service Officers who act as a crucial and important voice for residents on behalf of NCH. The focus of this role is to ensure an immediate response to any customer query, whilst feeding back customer comments as part of learning from our services.</p> <p>Forthcoming plans include developments to improve the existing online repairs reporting facilities and plans to create a permanent 24 hour emergency response team to help deliver that service more efficiently, improving emergency responses to customer requests.</p>
11.0	<b>ARRANGEMENTS FOR MANAGING AND REPORTING NCH PERFORMANCE BY NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL</b>
11.1	<p>Strategically, NCH is closely aligned with the Council's policies and strategies – specifically the housing strategy, but also makes a contribution to wider agendas such as employability, community safety, health and wellbeing. There is a close working relationship between NCC and NCH. Formally, this includes Council nominees on relevant NCH Boards and Committees, and a regular Partnership Forum chaired by the Executive Member with responsibility for housing. NCH is linked into many Council systems, including the Member's casework system.</p> <p>NCC contributes to the development of, and approves, NCH's "Corporate Plan" which includes performance targets and commitments for service delivery. Through the Partnership Forum, NCC receives ongoing assurance of progress against the Corporate Plan including regular performance reporting of all key measures such as tenant satisfaction with repairs.</p> <p>The current Partnership Agreement 2011-2021 between NCH and NCC will shortly be replaced by a new agreement. It includes arrangements for NCH to deliver the repairs service based on a rigorous assessment of performance and value for money. In 2014 an independent study of the repairs service commissioned by NCC showed that the repairs service was good quality and delivered value for money. A further independent value for money review was commissioned by NCC in 2017 and overall gave a positive rating for the service. It will be a requirement of the new partnership agreement that a regular benchmarking exercise is carried out to demonstrate performance and Value For Money by NCH and this benchmarking will include repairs.</p>
11.2	<p>NCH's governance includes a tenant led ALMO Board which helps scrutinise the performance of services tenants receive. Tenants decide which services they want to look at in more detail and have chosen the repairs service as their focus for their March 2020 meeting. Feedback from tenants helps us to improve our services for the future.</p>
<b>Contact officers:</b>	Name: Delroy Beverley, Director of Construction, Repairs and Maintenance Services
	Harvey Road
	E-mail:Delroy.beverley@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk
<b>Date: 24 January 2020</b>	