



ANNUAL REPORT 2013 / 2014

Southway Housing Trust

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It has been another year to be proud of for ourselves and for our tenants.

Southway Housing has had a landmark year. From amazing community work such as opening the new Barlow Centre with all the tenants and volunteers that helped to make it happen, to working with around 650 tenants to help them learn new skills and gain employment.

We have also put a lot of hard work in making sure we invest and spend money wisely, in ways that are most effective for our tenants and help us to provide the best services possible.

Throughout this report you can see brilliant examples in each of our neighbourhoods of how we've worked with you in 2013/14 to help improve the local areas and support our tenants. We have separated the report into three neighbourhood areas to focus on what matters to you, as well as covering overall business performance. Value for money (VFM) is also extremely important to us and features throughout the report as well as having a more in-depth VFM report later this year.

We are proud to be working with such great communities and helping to support their development and we would like to thank you for being such a big part of it.

I hope you enjoy reading this report and we look forward to another great year in 2014 - 15.

Karen Mitchell
Chief Executive, Southway Housing

Community Commitment Day 2014

Overall savings

Savings and efficiencies totalled £587k (5.2% of the operating cost base) in 2013/14. An extra £554k (4.9%) saving is forecast to be delivered in 2014/15.

In addition to these financial savings we plan to fully assess a number of services during 2014/15 to provide savings in future years.

Achieving Value for Money (VFM) is one of Southway's main priorities and is embedded in all of our activities. Our VFM strategy adopted in July 2012 includes:

- the approaches we will take when seeking value in everyday decisions,
- specific projects where there is potential to increase value,
- steps to measure value and account for how resources are used.

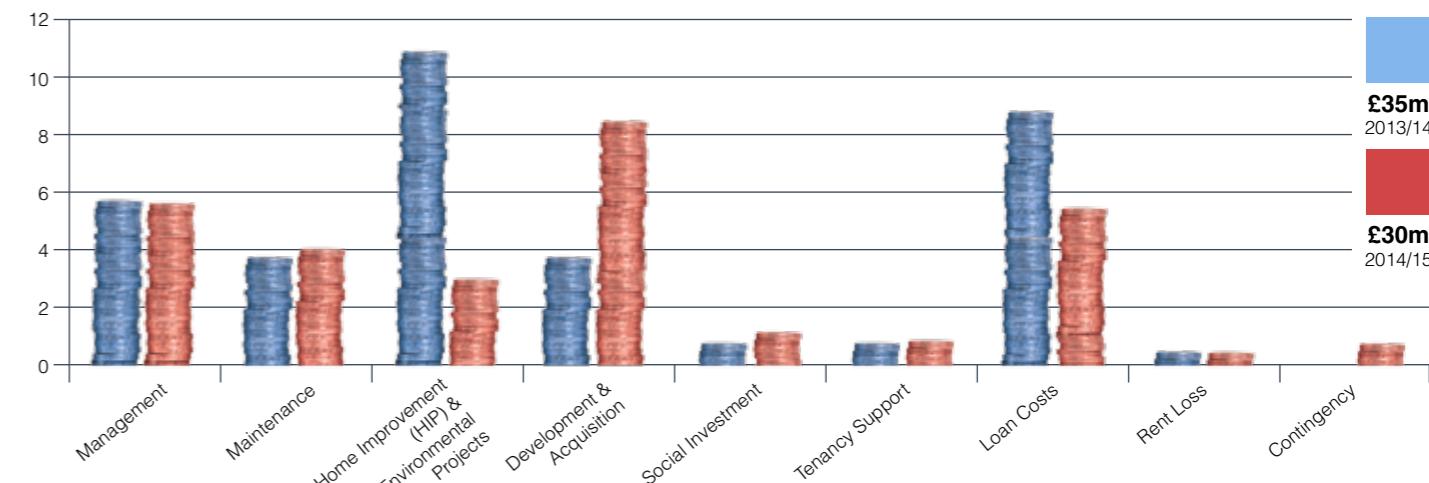
Examples of how we saved....

After a review of staff management costs (2012) we froze all pay bands until March 2015 delivering efficiency savings of £168k in 2013/14 and £218k 2014/15 (ensuring a below inflation movement in management costs).

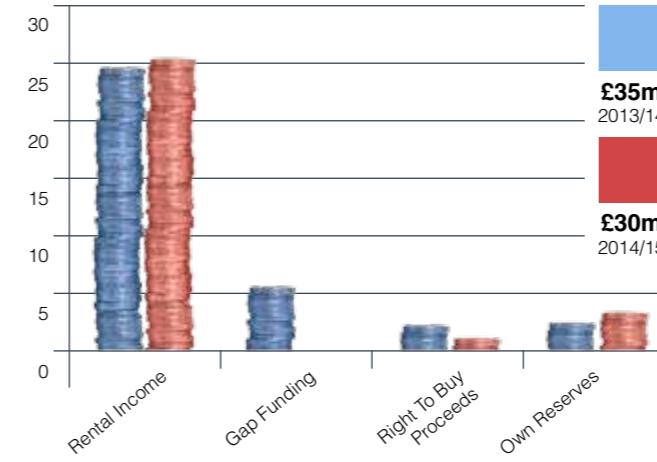
We negotiated a decrease in our office rent, saving almost £500k up to 2018.

Our repairs service performance is in the top 10% of UK Registered Providers, whilst our efficiency measures led to maintenance cost per property dropping from £807 to £636 per year over the past 3 years. Savings totalled £323k in 2013/14 and an extra £293k saving is targeted in 2014/15.

Total Spending (£m)



Total Income (£m)



| Spending & Income | 2013/14 | 2014/15 |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Management | 5.76 | 5.67 |
| Maintenance | 3.75 | 4.08 |
| HIP & Env Prog | 11.08 | 3.05 |
| Development & Acquisition | 3.89 | 8.48 |
| Social Investment | 0.62 | 1.24 |
| Tenancy Support | 0.64 | 0.72 |
| Loan Costs | 8.82 | 5.59 |
| Rent Loss | 0.50 | 0.45 |
| Contingency | 0.00 | 0.80 |
| Total Spending | 35.06 | 30.08 |
| Rental Income | 24.58 | 25.73 |
| Gap Funding | 5.84 | 0.00 |
| Right To Buy Proceeds | 2.22 | 1.00 |
| Own Reserves | 2.42 | 3.35 |
| Total Income | 35.06 | 30.08 |

Where do the savings go?

As a not for profit organisation we put this money back into providing better services and help for tenants. For example, we continue to develop and invest in support for households affected by welfare reforms and provide a thorough money management service for all tenants. Spend in this area is now projected to total £360k per year.

In 2014/15 our costs will increase by the equivalent of inflation plus:

- **New Social Investment** – (e.g. helping tenants learn new skills or gain qualifications/jobs) doubling existing spending to £1.2m.
- **New Financial Inclusion** - to help tenants affected by welfare reform and a new Rent Incentive Scheme (Southway Rewards) that rewards continuous rent payment and those who keep to their tenancy agreements.
- **A new painting programme.**



For a more in depth look at our finances and value for money, our full financial report will be available on our website later this year.



The leafy Kings Road Area

What did we promise?

On the 20th February 2013 a consultation event (held at the Westcroft Road Community Centre) was attended by residents living in the EAST area of South Manchester. Their feedback was used by Southway to draft a 'community agreement'. The priorities of these tenants are reflected in the various 'promises' or commitments that we make.

Attendees raised a number of issues, primarily around the environment including littering, fly-tipping, broken fencing and the upkeep of community gardens.

The proposed Neighbourhood Improvements included...

Continue to help people affected by the Government's Welfare reform changes by **providing advice around downsizing, debt and money management**.

Developing **new homes** on the former Burnage Laundry site.

Expanding the services provided at Westcroft Road around learning and support into employment.



Continuing the **parking improvements** and **fencing work** with schemes on Rosevale Avenue, Redcroft Gardens, Whitecroft Gardens and Woodbray Avenue.

Re-launch our **estate walkabout programme** starting 23/07/2013 at Green End Road.

Provide **support to older people** by promoting the concessionary gardening and decorating schemes.

Help tenants reduce their bills by for example championing schemes that promote garden space to grow food.

What did we deliver?



Downsizing, Debt Management and Welfare Advice Teams

Our Income Team and Neighbourhood Team carry out weekly calls to tenants affected by the bedroom tax.



We discuss support available to assist tenants downsizing their property. We ensure further support via an in-house advice team. We provide free impartial advice around all financial matters such as practical help opening bank accounts, accessing affordable



borrowing via the Credit Union and lots more. We also financially contributes toward Citizens Advice Bureau workers for those tenants who prefer to access a service entirely independent from their landlord.



Estate Walkabouts

Our estate walkabout programme continued throughout the year, with 10 completed.

Whilst resident involvement in the walkabouts has been limited, the Police are regularly in attendance and the walkabouts have proved successful in highlighting and targeting problem areas.

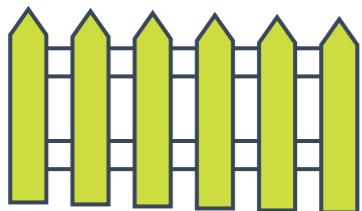
What did we deliver?



Burnage Laundry site

In December 2013 we consulted with local residents at Burnage Library on the proposed design of an Extra Care Scheme for older people.

The project team has this year submitted a funding bid and are awaiting decision from Manchester City Council on support. The project team are currently looking at various design options and it's hoped we can start on site in 2015.



Parking and fencing

By the end of 2013/14 we provided new and refurbished driveways on four avenues where parking was an issue and 14 prominent locations have received boundary work.



Concessionary services

35% of tenants who received the decorating scheme in 2013/14 were from the East area.

39% of tenants receiving the concessionary gardening service are from the East area.



We fund the running and staff costs of three learning hubs in South Manchester, including Westcroft Centre.



Energy bills, environmental works

Our East Neighbourhood Team attended Carbon Literacy training in 2013 so they can provide advice to tenants on reducing their energy bills as well as offering follow up referrals to the Energy Doctor in-house service.

We did work on Southlea Community Gardens on our Community Commitment Day planting, birdbox making, creating insect homes and wildlife habitats. We also worked with local schools planting herbs in the raised beds at Westcroft Road for the centre and the local community to use!



**COMMUNITY COMMITMENT DAY
HELD ON 20TH MARCH 2013**
PLANTING | BIRBOX MAKING
INSECT HOMES | WILDLIFE HABITATS

VALUE FOR MONEY

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

The key activity where we have achieved Value for Money in the East area, is around the provision of grounds maintenance.

In September we appointed an Environmental Manager to specialise in and coordinate the work carried out in our green areas.

This has led to a more productive relationship with the Grounds Maintenance contractor, for example the



work carried out at Southlea Community Gardens to clear the site was provided for free as the area was then incorporated into the contract.

Furthermore the Environment Manager has negotiated a deal with Manchester City Council in relation to the emptying of the litter bins on Southway's green spaces. These are done in conjunction with the MCC emptying programme to achieve cost efficiencies.



The Neighbourhood Budget was used in 2013-14 to co-fund activities and services to benefit residents in the East area, these included:

The Christmas celebration event on Fog Lane, an event that was also funded by MCC cash grants.

Burnage in Bloom hanging basket planting day.

Set up of Burnage foodbank by providing funds to register with the Trussell Trust.

Future Priorities

Within the East area, the Community Agreement has been agreed in consultation with Burnage TRA, Burnage Good Neighbours, Burnage Foodbank and Credit Union and MYUK.

Southway Housing Trust and the Community Groups/ Tenant Associations who are signatories to this Agreement have confirmed the following 2014/15 priorities for action within the East Neighbourhood Area.

Dealing with **parking on our grass verges** by monitoring damage caused, addressing this with individual residents and considering long term solutions.

Carrying out **estate walkabouts** in partnership with GMP to continue to increase visibility in the area, ensuring residents feel safe and secure.

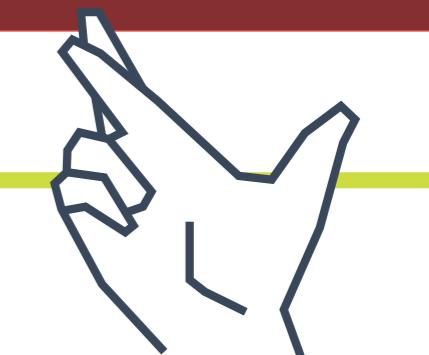
Inviting **partner agencies** to attend estate walkabouts too.

Upkeep the **raised beds** at **Westcroft Centre** in partnership with the community / centre users, in particular **Didsbury Diners** who use the centre to promote healthy eating.

Promote the **Credit Union** as a better alternative to doorstep lending and high interest loans, through our in-house Advice Team and the Neighbourhood Officers.

Support the set up of the **Burnage Food Bank**, including funding for the group to register with the Trussell Trust.

Use the **Burnage Notice boards** to promote campaigns / events / services, in particular events at Westcroft Road and events run by the Tenant Involvement Team and the Money Management Officer.



Neighbourhood Promises



Southway Housing Trust has established, and will deliver, the following Neighbourhood Promises during 2014/15.

These have been determined by reference to tenant feedback, learning points from complaints and using the local knowledge of Officers about the issues that tenants and residents have raised as areas of importance.



SUMMARY

Progress in delivering these Neighbourhood Promises will be reported in Southway Stories and on the Southway website. Regular reports will also be made to the Residents Consultative Group and annually to the Southway Board.

Southway Highlights

Merseybank Development Launch



"It was a fun and informative day"

Community Commitment Day



"Around 160 staff carried out tasks from **cleaning up community gardens** to hosting **international food events** with advice and information stands to help people in the area."

Awards



"Two awards have been won for our environmental sustainability work. Our work around switching, saving tenants an average of £100 annually and delivering advice to 374 tenants."

Customer Involvement

Set up of **3 new tenant groups** – two in Chorlton and one in East Didsbury. All now active in their neighbourhoods.

Delivery of **3 Fun & Feedback events** to replace our annual Residents' Conference. Overall attendance of 136 people (not including children!) Event show cased our services and positive feedback was received with request to run similar events in each area 2014/15.

Set up tenant **Rent & Welfare Reform Service Improvement Group**.



Burnage Library Opening



Age Friendly Work

Age Friendly work this year made a strong start and a series of smaller more focused projects have achieved some 'early wins', including **Winter Warmth** and **Safe and Secure** events where information and goodie bags were distributed, **Silver Click** which delivered **IT support to over 50s**, and **Age Friendly Gardens** where adaptations enabled older people to use their gardens again.



Rent Collection & Financial Advice



Rent collection has been relatively strong, being close to the ambitious target of 99.3% with **99.1%** achieved and excellent results have been reported by the **Advice Services Team** – achieving additional income sourced for tenants to a value of **£1.5 million!** We even had a theatre performance raising awareness and **helping tenants facing financial difficulty**.

Employment/Training/Volunteering



"Our projects have achieved **significant outcomes**"

Our Performance Highlights

We are **open** and **accountable** to our residents, and so regularly publish information about how we are performing on our website.

Here's a few of the **performance highlights** from 2013/14...



Repairs Service

Last year our **Repairs Team** carried out a staggering **28,000** repairs to our properties. As well as the usual boiler faults, lock changes, replacing light fittings etc. there were a few more unusual repairs such as rescuing a set of false teeth from behind a radiator!



Contact Centre

Last year our **Contact Centre** received just over **104,000** calls from our customers.



Voids

When a tenant moves out – our voids team move in!

This small but dedicated team are responsible for getting our vacated properties ready for the next set of tenants to move into and given that the waiting list for a southway property is over 15 years long they try to do this as quickly as possible.

98%
OF CUSTOMERS SATISFIED WITH CONDITION OF **THEIR NEW HOME**



Improvement Works

Several of our home improvement and environmental schemes reached completion last year.

Over the last year we have...



INSTALLED
3 MILES OF NEW FENCING



IMPROVED CAR PARKING FACILITIES AT 255 PROPERTIES



DEVELOPED 15 NEW HOMES ACROSS OUR COMMUNITIES



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
AROUND THE IMPROVEMENTS MADE WAS 97%

Advice Services

During 2013/14 various changes to the benefits system were introduced as part of the Government's **'Welfare Reform Act'**.

This essentially means less money for many of our residents. We have been working hard to try and minimise the impact of this by delivering help and advice to those affected. We are supporting these tenants in a variety of ways...

65 TENANTS SIGNED UP FOR OUR NEW **TIMEBANK SCHEME**

211 TENANTS ARE ACTIVELY VOLUNTEERING IN THE SOUTHWAY AREA.

9 TENANTS ACTIVELY EMPLOYED IN SOUTHWAY SPONSORED EMPLOYMENT.

340 HOUSEHOLDS NOW ACHIEVING **SIGNIFICANT SAVINGS** AVERAGING £289 PER YEAR AS A RESULT OF OUR ENERGY DOCTOR VISITS

HELD 3 MONEY MATTER WORKSHOPS FOR TENANTS

WE DELIVERED 48 FREE SEWING CLASSES, AND TWO 6 WEEK SEWING COURSES VIA OUR COMMUNITY CENTRES





A stroll in Chorlton Park

What did we promise?

A meeting was held with tenants to develop the promises included in the community agreement for the WEST area of South Manchester.

During this meeting tenants raised a number of issues that they wanted including such as the need for additional fencing work in the Chorlton Park Ward and the issue of fly tipping on the Arrowfield Road Estate.

The proposed Neighbourhood Improvements included...

Increase **supply of affordable housing** within the area (Mersey Bank Community Centre).

Work with local partners to provide **volunteering, learning and employment opportunities** for local people.

Develop **environmental sustainability programme**.



Promote/Publicise assistance available to help those **affected by Welfare Reforms**.

Work in partnership to **improve security/safety and support victims**.

Improve appearance of area through enforcement action on untidy/overgrown gardens.

Provide **support and assistance to older people** in the area, including promotion of concessionary gardening/decorating schemes.

What did we deliver?



Promote/Publicise assistance available to help those affected by Welfare Reforms Downsizing, Debt Management and Welfare Advice Teams.

The Income Team are supported by Neighbourhood Team who carry out weekly telephone calls to tenants affected by the bedroom tax.

The Neighbourhood Officer will discuss the package of support available to assist tenants moving due to downsizing and make referrals to the in-house advice team for further assistance.



Increase supply of affordable housing within the area.

13 flats have been built on the site of the old community centre on Mersey Bank Avenue.

Southway's comprehensive advice services team consists of five very knowledgeable and experienced staff who provide free, confidential and impartial assistance in debt advice, welfare rights advice, budgeting, and general money management skills. This includes practical help opening bank accounts, accessing affordable borrowing via the Credit Union, assisting tenants affected by the

benefit cap and a specialist DHP advice service etc. Southway tenants can access these services by phoning Connect. In addition Southway financially contributes to two Citizens Advice Bureau workers to provide welfare rights and debt advice for those tenants who prefer to access a service entirely independent from their landlord.

Develop environmental sustainability programme

A number of tenants from within the area have benefited from The Trust's Energy Doctor in-house service receiving advice and assistance on how to reduce their energy bills.

What did we deliver?



Improve appearance of area through enforcement action on untidy/overgrown gardens.

We also hold an annual Gardening Competition. This recognises the contribution made by individual tenants to improving the appearance of the area. The picture of this year's winning garden is above.



Work with local partners to provide volunteering, learning and employment opportunities for local people

In the West Area, we have continued to support Barlow Moor Community Association (BMCA) to deliver employment and training advice and support to local people through their learning hub. We also worked with Wates to secure four apprenticeship positions for

local tenants who worked on the construction of the Barlow Centre, a brand new community facility for BMCA on Merseybank Avenue.

Work in partnership to improve security/safety and support victims.

A number of events have been held in partnership with the local Neighbourhood Police Team to provide home security advice and target hardening equipment.



Provide support and assistance to older people in the area, including promotion of concessionary gardening/decorating schemes.

Through the tenancy audit process a number of elderly tenants have been visited in their home and provided with advice and assistance on the support that is available to them. This has included raising their awareness of the concessionary schemes and the eligibility criteria.

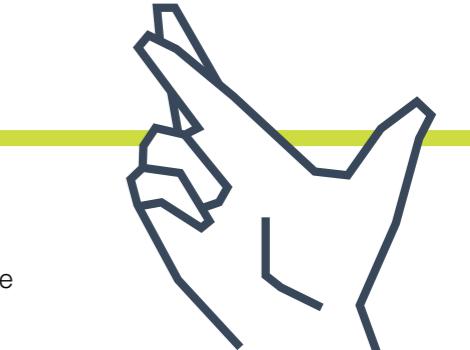
VALUE FOR MONEY

DOWNSIZING

Value for Money is a key part of everything we do in Southway Housing; so how have we tried to achieve VFM in your area?

In the West area, the main value money efficiency we have achieved is to have maximised the number of people who "downsized" from larger 3 bedroom family homes, into the flats at Mersey bank. These tenants have moved into brand

new flats with support from the Trust and will now be able to reduce household costs on bills, as well as in some cases avoid the Housing Benefit spare room charge. This is not only fantastic news for them but it also provides several family homes for reciprocal re-letting to local people in housing need.



Future Priorities

Southway Housing Trust and the Community Groups/ Tenant Associations who are signatories to this Agreement have confirmed the following 2014/15 priorities for action within the West Neighbourhood Area.

Tram works

Southway to be more proactive with Transport for Greater Manchester and a representative should be attending their future meetings.

Fly tipping

This is still a huge issue in the Arrowfield Road area and blights the improvement work on that estate. More needs to be done to deal with it.

Green spaces

Local groups would like to get involved in any plans for planting, and support Southway co-ordinated warm weather events.

Reduce speeding traffic

Particularly along Darley Avenue and within the Merseybank and Barlow Hall areas.

Traffic concerns

Southway should represent residents concerns about the work due to commence at the former Oakwood High School site, Darley Avenue – particularly around the traffic this will generate.

Lack of facilities

Provide benches for older residents on public green spaces.

Merseybank shops
The shops are a well known concern and the group would like the frontage to be improved including hanging baskets and planters.

Merseybank Neighbourhood Watch Scheme
Southway to provide assistance in developing a scheme.



Peaceful Old Moat Park

What did we promise?

The promises and community agreement for the CENTRAL area of South Manchester were set in 2013/14 following a detailed consultation exercise with tenants living in this area.

On the 18th February 2013 the following Neighbourhood Improvements were agreed...

The proposed Neighbourhood Improvements included...

Increase supply of **affordable housing** in the area.

Renew boundaries to properties in Old Moat area 3.

Improve **car parking facilities**.

Improve **security and environment** in Longport Avenue.



Deliver **plastering programme** in Old Moat.

Produce and publicise a schedule for **regular weekly estate visits** by Community Clean up Team.

Introduce programme of **estate walkabout** to include tenant representation.

Deliver key actions from **Age Friendly Plan** in Old Moat.

What did we deliver?

high demand for properties



Affordable housing developments

We began a project with contractor, Wates, to build £2.3M worth of affordable housing developments including a landmark site in Ladybarn. (previous site of Ladybarn Pub).

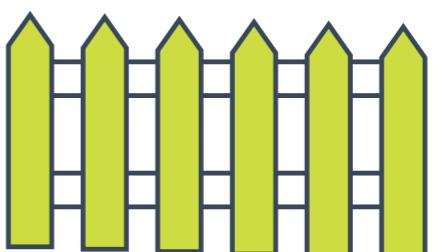
The sites are a product of detailed consultation with the local community, and address the very high demand for one and two bed properties across the area as well a regeneration of local spaces.



Parking Improvements

We carried out parking improvements at Rhos Avenue and Pensarn Avenue.

Proposals for Benham Close and Ferndene Gardens are still awaiting consultation with residents.



Boundaries Programme

We completed our boundaries programme which included many addresses on the Old Moat estate.

These included Alford Avenue, Combermere Avenue, Deepdale Avenue, Oldcastle Avenue, Parbold Avenue and Westcott Avenue.



Environmental Improvements

Proposals for environmental improvements were finalised and began in April 2014.

These include a new extended car parking area on Golborne Avenue and further Boundary work on Easthope Close.

What did we deliver?



Social Investment: Hugely successful fun day in Central area was held where we also had the opportunity to present awards to individuals and groups who help their community.



Plastering Work

Plastering work was done on around 300 non traditional properties on the Old Moat estate



Community Clean Up

Work schedules for the Community Clean Up team have been revised to provide better and more pro-active response.

These are published on Southway Stories and our Website.

Age Friendly Activity

Our study / report into Age Friendly activity on the Old Moat estate was published in May 2013.

Good progress was made on 10 pilot projects, with most completed and others still on-going. These saw improvements made to the lives of older people in areas such as garden maintenance, ICT training, winter warmth provision, transport facilities, neighbourhood notice boards, police partnership working, fall prevention, and preventing door stop crime.

VALUE FOR MONEY

VOIDS

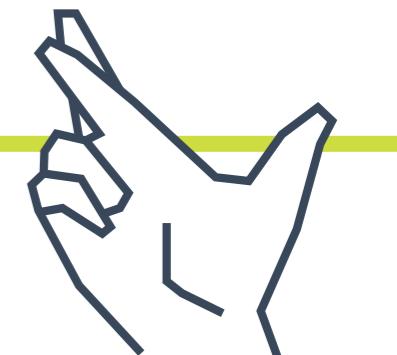
On average, more than 300 Southway homes will change tenancy during any 12 month period.

We seek to minimise the waiting times for new tenants and also the inevitable rent loss that occurs between each tenancy turnover.

In 2013/14 we commenced a new approach to void work where we sought to identify and target void properties that required only minor work to bring up to a suitable standard for the next tenant. The objective would be to re-let

these properties within just a 5 day void period; so called "quick wins".

In central area last year, we had a total of 113 void properties, approximately 50% houses and 50% flats. Of these, 79 were classed as routine voids and a further 34 were classed as major voids requiring improvement works such as new kitchens or bathrooms. Average re-let times for the routine voids was 17 days which is an improvement on the previous two years. A total of 15 of these routine voids were re-let within 7 days.



Future Priorities

Southway Housing Trust and the Community Groups/Tenant Associations who are signatories to this Agreement have confirmed the following 2014/15 priorities for action within the Central Neighbourhood Area.

Being more visible

Promote estate walkabouts with partners and get our communities involved.

Tackle concerns of dog fouling

This will be around the Old Moat, Withington and East Didsbury areas.

Parking problems

Help to address parking problems around Catterick Road/Benham Close.

Deal with fly tipping

More support from Southway to tackle littering and fly tipping on our estates.

Poor road surfaces

Raise the issue with Manchester City Council on behalf of tenants and residents.

Damage to and parking on grass verges

Address issues relating to vehicles parking on Parris Wood Road close to Minden Close.

Community groups

Provide more assistance to community groups by means of small grants.

Rehousing

Provide support for young people from the area wanting to access housing – e.g. an outreach surgery at Westcroft Road.



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