

Annual Report

2017/2018



Welcome...

This year has been a year of change for Southway Housing: moving into our new offices, providing state of the art facilities for staff and tenants. We also launched our new website for tenants to make requesting services and managing your tenancy easier than ever before.



We have also been working hard with a real focus on listening to what tenants are telling us.

We have lots of ways that tenants can provide feedback and make their views known to us; these range from our STAR survey where we ask all our tenants to let us know how we are doing, to groups and panels people can actively be involved in to help shape our services.

This annual report focuses on that feedback and how we have responded over the year. We get so much information from tenants (and always want more), so sometimes it may not always be clear how we act on that feedback, but this information is very much at the centre of all we do. This annual report looks at just some of the ways in which we have put your ideas, feedback and needs into action throughout 2017/18 and beyond.

Star Survey



You said

We did



The results of our 2016 STAR Survey told us that tenants felt we didn't listen to them or take their views into account. While consulting with tenants about the review of our Customer Involvement Strategy this year we asked you what would make you feel more listened to; tenants we spoke to told us that we need to demonstrate what we do in response to feedback received and make sure that staff take ownership and follow things up.

Priorities for improvement in 2016 were customer involvement and increasing satisfaction with quality of life in our neighbourhoods.

You will see lots of examples of actions throughout this report that demonstrate how we are listening to this feedback. In direct response to the survey, we have created tasks within the Customer Involvement Strategy Action Plan to ensure we are letting our tenants know how we act on their feedback (including our messages throughout this report.) Look out for more details in Southway Stories.

Scrutiny Panel

You said

Our tenant scrutiny panel is specifically designed for tenant feedback. The panel is made up of tenant volunteers who 'scrutinise' our services. They meet with staff, look at performance information, review policies, talk to other tenants, consider costs and then suggest changes to make. The goal is to provide the best services, for tenants.

...training has been provided to staff to increase consistency in how we administer our services.

We did

To date the panel has:

- Made changes to the complaints process and helped to set up an independent complaints review panel. **Result:** we reduced the stages of complaints that tenants have to go through and our approach has been adopted by other housing trusts.
- Requested a review of concessionary services. **Result:** a reduction in costs to the business, but retained an affordable subsidised service available for tenants who need it the most.
- Ensured training has been provided to staff to increase consistency in how we administer our services. **Result:** Improved satisfaction around complaints handling.
- Made amendments to various policies: **Result:** They are now easier to understand.
- Asked officers to ensure the Southway website is up-to-date and contains relevant information. **Result:** Our new website is now monitored and managed much more carefully, with each Southway team having a "website manager" making sure pages relevant to their team are up to date.
- Requested an anti-social behaviour customer group to be formed. **Result:** our tenants views are being considered within our approach to tackling ASB.
- Influenced the wording of letters sent to tenants for rent arrears. **Result:** Our letters are now much clearer and we receive less queries from tenants around these.
- Asked us to reduced the amount of colour printing we carry out. **Result:** significant savings are now being put back into our communities. Cost savings that are now being put back into our communities.
- Requested the new customer information leaflets to be produced so that tenants know what services they can expect from Southway. **Result:** we are currently working on this.



Development of Digital Services for tenants



 You said

We have various ways to help inform how we need to improve our digital service. From data analytics of our website and contact centre which tell us what information our tenants most need, to focus groups and surveys to understand more specific requirements.

We did 

We consulted with tenants through focus groups, email surveys and various other channels.

We used this feedback to create a new website that is clear, easy to navigate and contains information that is most relevant to your needs. Our repairs booking system and personalised tenant portals allow you access to far more information than ever before and the opportunity to book repairs in just a few clicks. We are currently monitoring the success and satisfaction of this.



Our new website is the biggest example...

You said our online services were confusing, difficult to navigate. Very low use of our online repairs booking and other transactional opportunities, compared to high call volumes for these types of services, told us our online option was not as good as it could be.

Quick Wins (digital)

 You said **We did** 

Tenants at local community centres asked for more laptops to borrow, as there didn't seem to be enough available.

We doubled the number of laptops available to borrow; all machines are now being used by tenants.

You wanted more intermediate computer courses so that tenants could progress their IT skills after completing the basic internet savvy course.

We made IC3 (a certification to teach essential computer skills) available to all tenants, helping to improve employability and life skills for tenants.

Universal Credit



You said

In 2017, Universal Credit introduced a huge change in the way tenants receive financial support. This meant a change in the types of service requests we had from tenants. Tenants reported claims were difficult to make for a number of reasons: lack of access to IT and being able to produce proof of identity were two of the biggest challenges people faced.

Tenants were struggling financially whilst they waited for their first payment.

We did

We recruited a Universal Credit Officer to provide intensive support to our existing tenants and new tenants moving onto Universal Credit for the first time.

Tenants were supported in the initial stages of application to make sure the first payment of Universal Credit was made promptly, minimising the impact on you as tenants and Southway.

Other ways that we reshaped our services included:

- One-to-one computer training for our most vulnerable customers
- Computer based training for our more able customers
- Producing 'How to' information leaflets and guidance on claiming Universal Credit
- Providing one-to-one advice and support ensuring hardship is minimised by accessing Alternative Payment Arrangements, advances, grants, loans and 'Quid's in' foodbanks
- Referring tenants for specialist advice and support where appropriate



Call backs



You said

Customers not receiving a call back when promised one was a cause of frustration for some tenants, reflected in complaints and survey responses.

We did

We closely monitored repeat calls and found that not having enough staff, caused a rise in missed call backs 2017/18.

We are pleased to report that these issues have been addressed and repeat calls are starting to reduce.

Age-friendly Services

Age-friendly Burnage Research



You said

We did



You wanted our services to reflect the needs of our older tenants. Compared to most other housing providers we have a higher percentage of tenants who fall into the category of 'older person'. This means that we have a team dedicated to working with these tenants to make sure their views are reflected in our projects and services.

Our Age-friendly team has worked with residents in Burnage for the last two years. The Age-friendly Burnage Research paper details the results of this work and contains a wealth of views, opinions and findings.

There are 50 recommended actions, directly fed back from tenants. The Board has approved 23 projects; some have been completed, many others are in action.

We set up the Burnage Age-friendly project thanks to Big Lottery Ambition for Ageing Funding.

We set up the following projects:

Life and Friendship Group - To help people through grief and loss via methods like home visits.

Spoon and Ladle - A coffee morning for older people to socialise. The project owner has now built a catering business from this event!

Men's Indoor Bowling - In partnership with local churches, we realised there was a lack of social opportunities for older men, so set up this bowling club for them to socialise with like-minded people.

Intergenerational Festival - For families to attend with grandparents or parents with the support of Friends of Ladybarn Park. There were fun and games, as well as information and signposting around various support services we offer.

Future projects

Art for Wellbeing - Art therapy to promote general wellbeing; art has proven health benefits including relieving stress, boosting self-esteem and increasing brain activity.

Burnage History Champions - They support other older people in Burnage to access heritage and share their lifelong memories with wider groups in the community, especially children and younger people.

And there are a lot more to come!

Peer Support Network

Chorlton Park

You said

In 2012, a study was undertaken based on the eight age friendly themes identified by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The project involved starting and maintaining a dialogue with older people in Old Moat. The research resulted in a ten-year action plan; one particular idea that came from a Southway tenant, Derek Taylor who has lived in Old Moat for forty years, was to develop a network for older people, run by older people.

Take a Seat

You said

As part of the Age Friendly project, we gained feedback from Southway tenants and other older residents telling us they did not use the local district centre, as it involved a long walk with no places to rest at the shops.

There are now around 220 sites for chairs have been identified across the area.

We did

Our Age-friendly team have now supported older people in Old Moat to create a Peer Support Network.

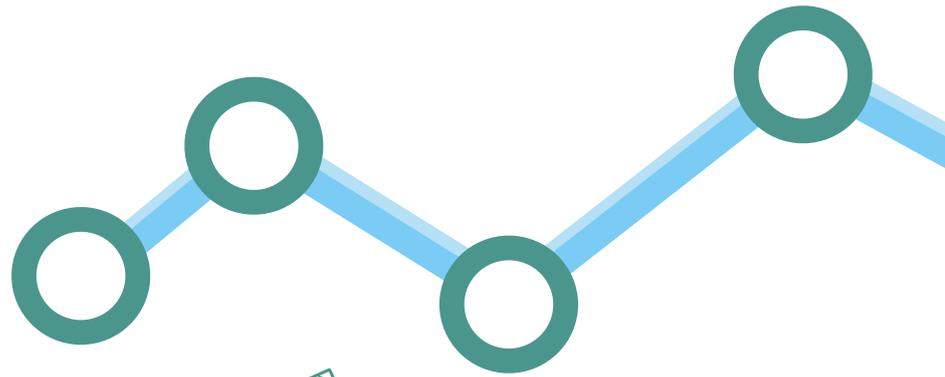
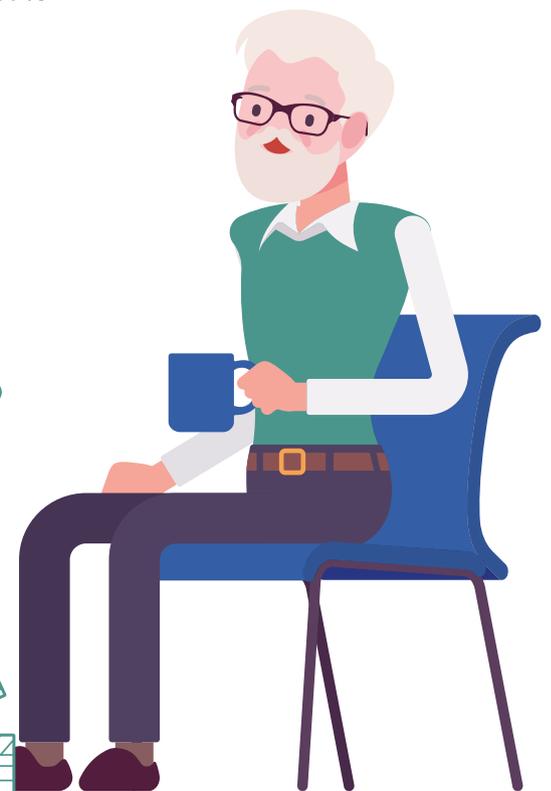
19 local residents were provided with training and are now organising regular activities to bring together older people living in the area. The network is open to all not just Southway tenants.

We did

We created the Take a Seat campaign for local shops to sign up to, where they would provide a resting place in case an older person needs to catch their breath and rest.

Participating shops were given a guide about how to make their premises more age friendly and dementia friendly. The scheme was a great success, with now around 70 sites with chairs in the core Southway Housing Trust area.

In 2017, the Take a Seat campaign was adopted by other housing providers across Greater Manchester,



Quids-in Food Clubs



You said

Members of the clubs tell us regularly how much this service helps them and how they now feel more in control when it comes to feeding themselves and their families and also, managing their money better. The clubs are very popular and in high demand.

We did

We set up the Merseybank Club in Chorlton nearly three years ago and this was followed by the Westcroft Club in Burnage about a year later.

There are now five Quids In Food Clubs across the Southway area enabling approximately 200 low income households to access £15 worth of food for £2.

Anti-Social Behaviour

You said

Satisfaction with confidence around our ASB action showed we could do more to inform tenants of what we do (STAR survey)



We did

Officers have completed the restructure of the trust's ASB service, which is now delivered across the Hub, Community Services and Community Action teams.

Escalating youth nuisance and a lack of community confidence in the commitment of the statutory agencies to tackle ASB has emerged as a work priority this year.

Over the past 12 months the Greater Manchester Police and Southway continue to work in a close partnership. This partnership working is increasingly important as resources across the public sector are limited. Criminals who are Southway tenants will face the prospect of eviction action by the trust. In Burnage we have worked

with local residents, Councillors and police to secure injunctions on local youths who had been causing anti-social behaviour in the locality; as a result of these injunctions, the offenders have curtailed their behaviour.

In Merseybank we have participated in community action events to challenge anti-social behaviour and offer support to local residents.

Overall, we have been successful in taking legal action in seven enforcement cases this year.

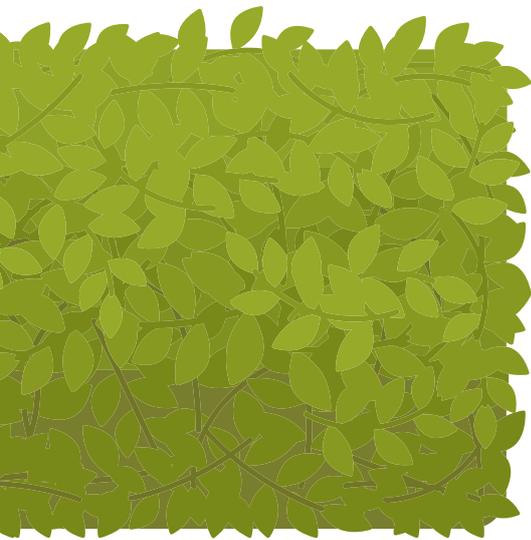


Neighbourhood



You said

Our STAR survey told us you could be more satisfied with your neighbourhood.



We did 

We continue to see high levels of satisfaction and resident participation with the public realm green space that we manage.

A number of high profile projects have been independently recognised as best practice throughout the year. The Environment team are leading on Southway's response to the sustainability and zero carbon challenges set out in the Greater Manchester Green Summit.

For the second year running, we are really proud to say the green spaces we own, develop and maintain have been recognised by the Green Flag Award Scheme as one of the very best in the world. This places them among a record-breaking 1,883

UK parks and green spaces that have received this internationally recognised, prestigious mark of a quality park or green space.

We manage 156 green spaces across Southway Manchester. The Green Flag site is Mottram Avenue. More than 1000 people participated in our events programme throughout the year with our Halloween event as popular as ever.

We also take our tree management role seriously, and replanted 49 trees in the year to replace the 48 trees that required removal.

Customer Service and telephone queue



You said

Call waiting times have improved over the past 12 months but there are periods when our customer hub gets extremely busy, so callers may be on hold for between 15 – 20 minutes. We understand this has caused frustration for some of you and has been a regular piece of feedback that we receive.

We did 

We developed options for accessing services online and have recently launched our new website which allows tenants to book repairs, view rent statements, make payments and access useful information relating to their tenancy agreement.

We are also making improvements to our call queue messaging to

better manage expectations. The new queue now provides a queue position and a message to indicate how busy we are.

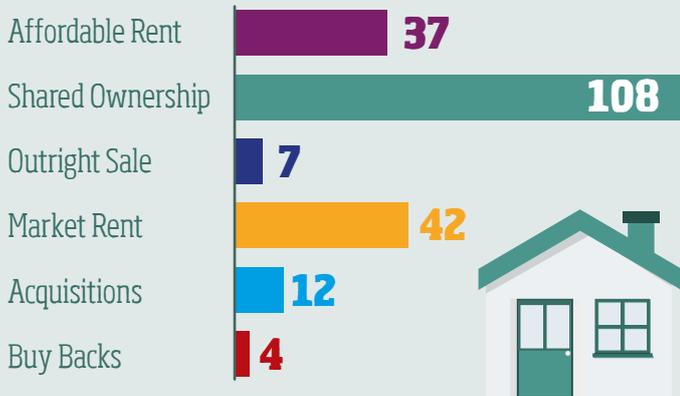
The queue also contains a mixture of 20 different songs, so you won't have to listen to the same track repeatedly. Though a small change, we've had great feedback on this.



The Year in numbers

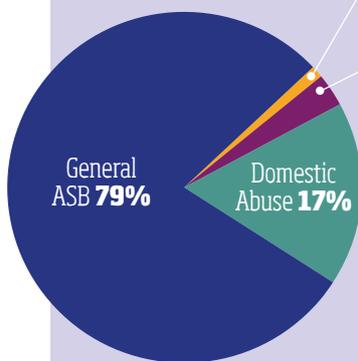
Development

During 2017/18, Southway planned to start on site with a minimum programme of **135** properties with a further **19** Acquisitions.



Anti-Social Behaviour

ASB complaints by %



Environment ASB **3%**

Hate Crime **3%**

The **most common** types of ASB recorded.



We issued court action for 7 cases last year

(with the help of our partnership work with Greater Manchester Police, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue and Manchester City Council.)

Repairs



22,600

repairs carried out

95.4%

completed on time

98.4%

completed first time

99.6%

satisfaction with repairs service

Advice & Support

£2,041,743

financial gains for tenants

132

tenants accessing Debt Advice

52

tenants assisted into paid employment

815

tenants with positive outcomes from Advice Services

165

Southway Solution Loans accessed



Environment



We retained our **Green Flag** award for a 2nd year.

We put up **29 bird boxes** across our estates

Hundreds of **flowers, plants and trees** were planted.



Customer Involvement



299

customers who had not previously been involved gave feedback or attended an event



52

tenants were helped into employment through the **Learning Hubs** we fund and our Employment and Money Coordinator



3 new Quids In Food Clubs were set up and over **200 households** were supported through our 5 Quids In Food Clubs



Tenant Scrutiny Panel

completed its **6th review** (Rent Communications) and started its **7th review** (Voids Process)



8982

volunteering hours were given through our Timebank



315

tenants actively volunteered in the Southway area



Held a successful **Fun and Feedback** event in the summer and provided advice and information to over **50 individuals**

Continued to deliver a full timetable of activities at **Westcroft Community Centre** including hobby sessions, coffee mornings, advice services, various training courses and employment support

Started review of 2015-2018 **Customer Involvement Strategy** and developed new one for 2018-2021

Online

1417

repairs were booked online 17/18



1860

tenants were considered digitally included at the end of 17/18 (able to use and have access to computers and the internet)



Lettings

This year there was a **20% decrease** from 2016/17 in the number of homes available to let.



Lettings	'17/18	'16/17	'15/16
Number of lets	208	259	326

In 2017/18 Southway let **93%** of its properties to applicants of the highest priority. This compares to **91%** in 2016/17 and current year statistics across Manchester of **59%**.

Demand for Southway properties remains extremely high; the average bid per property was **226**, an increase from **188** per advert in 2016/17.

There are large numbers of people experiencing homelessness. Southway let 15% of our homes to people who were homeless in 2017/18. This year we are letting 25%.

Customer Service Excellence



We gained our first Customer Service Excellence (CSE) accreditation* in 2012. We've improved each year over the last six years and this year gained 14 Compliance Plus ratings.

Compliance Plus is awarded when an organisation goes above and beyond the requirements of a standard. 14 awards are thought to be the highest number of recognitions ever achieved by an organisation.

Luke Benfield, Head of Customers and Communication explains: *"Our customer care framework is aligned to the CSE framework to ensure our approach is both efficient and effective and that customers are at the centre of our services. Many of Southway's tenants are involved with the accreditation process, meeting assessors and giving feedback on their experiences of the organisation."*

Commenting on our record-breaking accreditation, the **Operations Director** at CSE said: *"A Compliance Plus*

recognition is only given when an organisation goes above and beyond the requirements of one element of the CSE standard. Achieving one is considered a great achievement but to achieve 14 is an incredible accomplishment.

"Southway's clear focus on staff development and customer engagement shines through in their assessment, encouraging feedback from employees and customers alike and visibly applying that feedback towards improving the organisation as a whole."

* Customer Service Excellence is the Government standard measuring and ensuring customers and tenants are at the centre of business process, procedure and working practice.

Development



You said

We did



For our new developments, community feedback is key. In May 2017, extended consultation with residents, councillors, Withington Civic Society and the Old Moat Age Friendly panel took place. A main concern was that there had been 'extended anti-social behaviour occurring at St Christopher's close', a cul-de-sac street which backed on to our Minehead site.

Our Minehead development (see case study) saw design changes, to create a footpath joining St Christopher's near Dermot Murphy Close.

Residents expressed support for this as it would 'open up the area and prevent loitering and anti-social behaviour which had been occurring'.

Minehead development (Case Study)

Our vision was to build on the existing strengths of the area to create an age-friendly neighbourhood and homes for life which serves residents who currently live there and the wider community. The site is now under construction to deliver an age-friendly residential development with a small area for a 'café hub' and sociable meeting space for the scheme as well as the wider surrounding community. The design of the building and external landscaping complement the existing age-friendly accommodation with a 'village' feel and better links to local facilities.