



## Our Annual Report for 2016/17 - put together with customers, for customers

Before we get into the detail of our last financial year (1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017), here is a snapshot of the main performance areas for Red Kite. We've put together this small summary, so that if you choose not to read through the report in full, you can see at a glance, how we've done.



### Introduction

Welcome to our Annual Report for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. Each year, we produce an Annual Report so that we can look back over our achievements and summarise our performance in key areas of the business. As an organisation that is governed by our regulator, the Homes and Communities Agency, they expect to be able to look over our performance and understand a bit more about us.

As a tenant-led organisation, we share as much information as we can, in a way that is meaningful and interesting for our customers, which is why we worked with members of our Customer and Community Insight Group (CCIG) to understand what they'd like to know more about and which areas they wanted us to highlight. As a result, they decided that this year, we would develop something much simpler than in previous years – an infographic (or picture) to pick out the main points, and then include more details to follow.

So, our thanks go to Simon Archer (Chair of CCIG) and Angie West who helped us put this together for all of our customers! This document provides the detail behind the pictorial version of the information.

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## Our Corporate Journey

After we delivered all of our transfer promises in December 2016, we set out our new vision for the next five years, which we call our Corporate Journey. Since then, all of the things we do and all of the work that we carry out, is directly linked to one of the five ambitions that make up that journey.



Through this report, we've used symbols to show which area links to which ambition, so that it is clear how each one links to our main vision, which is to:

# Realise the potential in our communities

## Help and support for customers

- 11 people helped into employment through our team support
- 80 people helped through additional benefits
- 80 people attended interviews after our Job Fair in April 2017



Our dedicated Community Investment Team, together with the Relationship Management Team, support customers and community members in different ways, which develop all the time.

One of the most popular and successful initiatives we offer is our free Business Start-Up course which we run in partnership with Enterprise Cube. Open to all of our customers and members of the community, it is now in its third year and we've seen more than 52 people come through the course. Over 12 weeks, we work with people who have the start of a business idea and help them to bring it to life. We will be running a fourth course early in 2018.

We also held our very first Job Fair in April 2017 as part of our approach to encouraging inclusion and wellbeing, which saw more than 30 employers attend and over 300 people come along to find out about local employment.

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It was so successful that we had more than 80 people get job interviews as a result and we are holding another one in September 2017, with more than 50 employers joining in and more than 700 people invited! Our Relationship Management Team did a wonderful job with the event, working together to coordinate many different organisations and publicise the details across the district.

As well as the Business Start-Up course and our first Job Fair, we also work with customers, as much or as little as they need it, to give them budgeting advice and put them in touch with other local organisations such as the One Can Trust who can support them with things like food banks.

## Repairs

- **86% satisfaction with our repairs service**
- **£127 average cost per repair job (including VAT)**
- **15,291 repair jobs**
- **94% appointments kept**
- **93% jobs completed on time**



Repairs are the busiest part of our business and where we spend a significant amount of money, so it is a very important area for our customers.

Over the last year, satisfaction has been at an average of 86% and we've been able to complete jobs on time, in 93% of cases.

We use an independent company to carry out surveys that measure our customers' satisfaction, which they do in a variety of ways including email, text and phone. We contact about 10% of the people who have had repair jobs each month, and they can also choose to talk about their experience in more detail. This means that we can really understand what our customers think of our service and learn from it to get better.

With just over 15,000 repair jobs completed in this financial year (2016/17), we're starting to look at working with our customers in a more proactive way so that where we have homes with a high number of repairs, we can find out the reasons and see if there is any support we can offer to our customers.

## Rent debt

- **£155,463 reduction in rent owed to us**
- **8 evictions because of unpaid rent**
- **£799,467 owed in rent at 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017**





Rent collection and reducing customer debt have been the biggest successes of the Relationship Management Team in the last year. Overall, we have been able to reduce the amount of money that customers owe us by £155,463, which is the highest annual reduction of debt seen within the last five years.

We've been able to achieve this with one of the lowest eviction rates in the country, with 8 customers evicted for rent arrears.

Our aim is to support our customers as much as we can when they get into debt, so this demonstrates that we're able to achieve a high performance in rent collection, while at the same time, helping people to manage their tenancies. With that in mind, we continue to work with our customers to negotiate fair and sustainable repayment plans that work for everyone. We also work with people very early on, to set out the expectations for rent and budgeting so that they can sustain their tenancies.

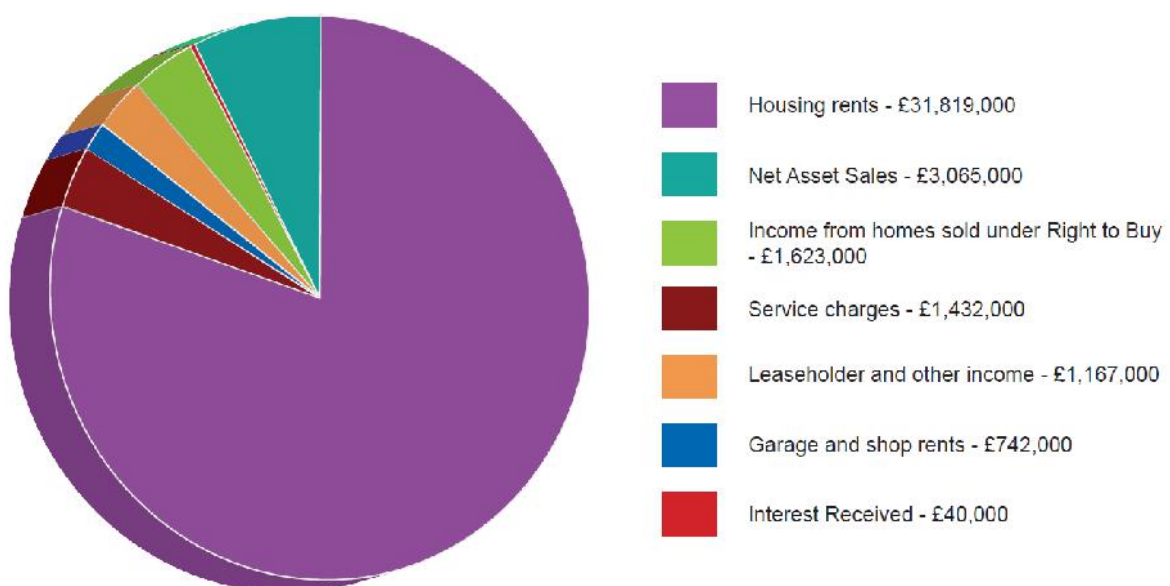
In the coming years, we will continue to work with our customers through things like welfare changes that many face, to promote a payment culture that allows them to manage any changes in their circumstances in the future.

## Our money

When it comes to our money, we want to be honest with our customers and the regulator about where it comes from, and also how it's spent. We've captured our income and expenditure in two simple pie charts to show this.

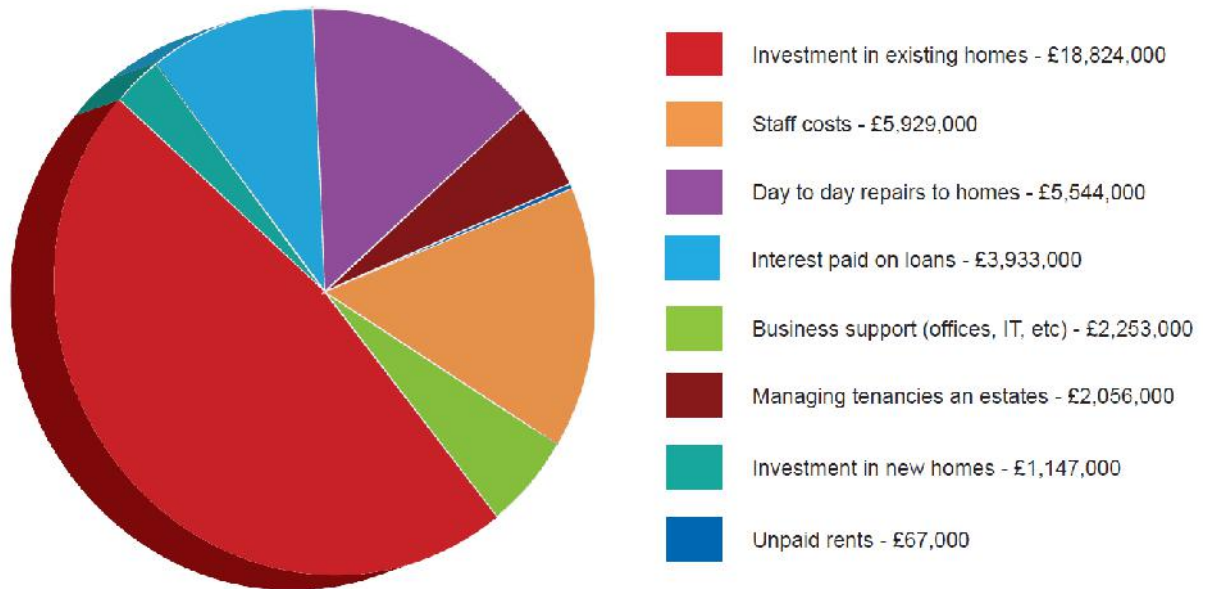


### Income (money we receive)





## Expenditure (money we spend)



Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, we received £39,888,000 and spent £39,753,000, resulting in a small, planned surplus. This surplus is largely from the sale of two sheltered blocks and other savings we have managed to make. This money will be used to invest in our current homes and also to build new ones.

## Empty homes

- **27.9 days to re-let a standard empty home (average) – (time between one tenancy ending and another starting)**
- **409 empty homes in 2016/17**
- **£3,372 to repair an empty home (average including VAT)**
- **89% satisfaction with the re-let service**



As with our money, this information is something that our regulator is keen to know about and is best practice for annual reports. Put simply, empty homes – which we call voids – are important to keep an eye on because the performance in this area tells us how quickly we are able to re-let a home to a new customer after it becomes empty. It also gives us an idea of how much rent is being lost through these homes not being lived in.

In previous years, the number of days before we have been able to re-let a home has been higher than we'd like, and while we have reduced the average time, we need to improve further.



Our sheltered homes take longer to let than other homes. Research carried out by the County Council shows that there are more sheltered homes than needed in the District and this is something reflected by our own experience. We therefore make sure that we promote this type of accommodation effectively and we will continue to look at homes to make sure our supply better fits the demand from customers.

We also work hard to keep the costs down when we get an empty home, while continuing to provide quality homes that customers want to live in. Our 'lettable standard' says that we will carry out redecoration where required and where a home is designated for older people. This commitment to quality and the frequency at which homes in sheltered schemes become available for re-let, means that our average void cost is higher than it otherwise might be.

(For information, standard voids include homes that are sheltered, general needs and temporary accommodation, and which don't require major work).

## Adaptation wait times

- **37 days to complete an adaptation (average)**



Adaptations are the modifications that some of our customers need in their homes, such as grab rails and wet rooms, so that they can continue to live independently.

We try to match our homes to customer needs as much as possible, to reduce having to adapt where we can. When we do put in something like a grab rail, the time taken has dramatically reduced over the years and is at our lowest ever figure in 2016/17 of just 37 days!

## Volunteering and people

- **50+ active volunteers**
- **4,858 volunteering hours**
- **27 ways to get involved**
- **54 decisions and changes made**



As a tenant-led organisation, we pride ourselves on making sure that our customers influence everything we do. Being tenant-led is not possible without a dedicated group of passionate volunteers and we are very happy to work with some truly committed people.

We have a wide range of opportunities available for tenants, leaseholders, and even members of the public, who want to get involved and become volunteers with Red Kite.

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Options for volunteering take into account the busy lives that we all lead and the desire to use technology and volunteer from the comfort of our own homes, so customers can get involved in phone surveys, estate inspections, testing out our website, and even on a much higher level influencing group (Customer and Community Insight Group - CCIG) and becoming a member of our Board.

We recognise that not everyone knows which skills make for good volunteers so we put a lot of time into developing our people and training them, if they want to, to realise their potential. Over the years, we have had volunteers from our CCIG move onto our Board and help make important decisions about the direction of the organisation, even taking part in joint Board and CCIG 'away days'. Volunteers have also played an important part in selecting new staff, which they really enjoy and demonstrates our tenant-led ethos to potential new members of Red Kite.

## Antisocial behaviour

- **£146,000 spent on dealing with ASB**
- **92% satisfaction with neighbourhoods**
- **168 days average resolution time**



Antisocial behaviour (ASB) is a serious issue that can have a significant impact on people's lives and we know that it affects many of our customers. As a tenant-led organisation, we continue to take robust action to tackle it wherever possible.

The main causes of ASB are noise, neighbour disputes, verbal abuse and litter. Dealing with these can be costly, complex and lengthy and the average resolution time is 168 days, although this is much shorter for ASB incidents (which we classify as one-off experiences) versus cases (which we classify as ongoing issues).

Since October 2016, we have evicted three tenants responsible for antisocial behaviour using legislation based on mandatory grounds that allows landlords to take possession of a property if a tenant has been convicted of a serious offence, or found by a Court to have breached an injunction relating to antisocial behaviour.

With that in mind, here are some examples of how we have been able to deal with ASB in the last year...

The mandatory grounds for possession have allowed us to evict a tenant in Lane End who was convicted of drug-related offences, including storing large amounts of Class A drugs within his home. The tenant was also sentenced to a term of five years' imprisonment.

In Micklefield, we obtained an injunction against a tenant who was causing nuisance with drunken behaviour, noise and threatening neighbours.



The tenant breached the injunction by assaulting his neighbour and was subsequently sentenced to 15 weeks in prison. We successfully evicted him when the Court agreed that his behaviour was unacceptable and causing a negative impact on those living around him.

In the third case, a tenant was convicted of numerous burglaries within the immediate area of his home in Marlow. He was sentenced to serve 40 months in prison and we successfully obtained a possession order at Court.

Most recently, we obtained a possession order on a property in Wycombe town centre that was being used for drugs. Six police warrants had been executed during the 14 months the tenants had lived there. In addition, we evicted a tenant from Micklefield who caused a nuisance to his neighbours over a period of three years with noise, drunken and threatening behaviour. Working with the local community affected by this behaviour, as well as the police, was essential in both these cases.

With these examples, it is clear that there is a lot of work that goes into taking the action that is necessary, so we keep the costs as low as possible by doing what we can in-house, including serving our own notices and managing the process internally. While many people are affected by antisocial behaviour, we are keen to spend customer's money in the right way.

While we try to avoid evictions, sometimes they are necessary to stop these problems affecting the local community. We would always encourage our customers to report instances of antisocial behaviour so that we can help resolve the situations and improve the lives of everyone. We do also try to refer neighbour disputes to Mediation Bucks – a local dispute resolution service - and find it a useful tool in helping our residents to live peacefully within their neighbourhoods.

Since we know that ASB is such an important subject for our customers, we have been exploring ways of managing it much more efficiently in the future, which involves setting up a new, charitable company. In July 2017, we carried out a consultation with all of our customers, asking them what they thought about being able to offer flexible rents that reflect ability to pay. In order to do that, we would set up a new company, which would also allow us to manage antisocial behaviour easier, fairer and faster, as it would be free from some of the restrictions that we face at the moment. As these plans develop, we will share more information with our customers,

## **Community work and partnerships**

- **15 new partnerships**
- **£95,898 spent on community initiatives**



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During 2016/17, we formed lots of new and exciting partnerships with local businesses and organisations, which all help to strengthen our links with people across the area.

To realise the potential in our communities, we explore as many avenues as we can when it comes to putting people in touch with new opportunities.

Through our Community Investment Team, we have formed numerous partnerships which include Wycombe Wanderers Sports and Education Trust, Wycombe MIND, Bucks New University, and many more. We have also strengthened and invested in many more local organisations, such as the Chiltern Rangers, Arts 4 Every 1 Centre, and local people through our Business Start-up course.

We are also working with High Wycombe Central AID, a new partnership which will look to make efficient use of items that are left in our homes when tenants move on. These items can now be recycled where possible and given or sold onto people who are in need of furniture at an affordable price.

We fund these diverse and exciting initiatives to help local communities thrive, whether it's with Chiltern Rangers and reviving the River Wye, bringing communities back in touch with local wildlife, or helping the local outdoor Bowls Club build a community clubhouse.

We plan to spend more within our communities over the next five years, especially as we come close to starting our 'Enterprise Fund' in early 2018, which will be open to the public to put in 'bids' for funding.

## Customer interactions

- 62,405 phone calls
- 29,764 emails
- 1,150 webchats
- 10,687 items of post
- 57 seconds average call answer time



58% of the contact that we receive in our Contact Centre is repairs related, so a lot of focus in the last financial year was given to repairs training.

This allowed us to equip our excellent Relationship Advisors with technical knowledge and empower them to make the right decisions at the first point of contact when diagnosing repairs with a customer. It also meant that we could focus on increasing customer satisfaction when booking repairs.

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The training has improved the amount of repairs that are logged in the right way, which really helps to get the job done for each customer first time and to pay our contractors correctly.

We've also been able to reduce the demand for our phone service by a substantial 20%, which we achieved through smoothing out our internal processes. With the additional capacity this has given us, we've been able to free up a member of staff to carry out more proactive work which has improved arrears and helped with booking in tenancy visits.

Webchat is an increasingly popular channel for our customers and we continue to promote it as a convenient way of getting in touch. All of our advisors are fully equipped to multi-task between phone and webchat, providing a high quality service to both.

Looking ahead, we have a brilliant new bit of technology coming in the next year which will really improve the way we manage our customer interactions and it will give all of our staff a much clearer view of customer communication. This will in turn improve the experience for our customers.

We're also looking at moving more customers from traditional channels to online platforms, to complement the way that many services, including the benefits system, are going.

## Home audits

This year, we introduced a new 'Home Audit' programme, which involves members of our Experience Team visiting customers' homes, checking on the condition of the home, who lives there and any support needs they may have that we could help with.



We are a responsible landlord and we need to know how our homes are being kept – mainly to make sure that customers are safe and keep to the conditions of their tenancy agreement.

So, what happens at a Home Audit visit? We have a set of questions that we go through with our customers and we look at both the inside and outside of the home as well as taking some photographs. This helps us to identify any repairs or improvements that are needed and record any special features such as adaptations.

During the visit, we also make sure that the information we keep on our customers is up to date, including emergency contact information, and that they have valid identification to confirm their right to rent.



The visit is also an opportunity for us to have a face-to-face chat with our customers about services that might help them, such as practical or financial help, and also to explain how they can get involved with us, if they want to help shape decisions and the future of Red Kite.

Overall, our Home Audit visits make sure that; our customers' homes are safe, secure and being maintained, that all our information is up to date, we prevent and detect possible tenancy fraud and support customers living in our homes.

## Feedback



- **739 pieces of feedback**
  - **385 complaints**
  - **354 compliments**
- **More than 5,000 responses through surveys**
- **55% complaints resolved at initial contact**
- **1% decrease in complaints and compliments**
- **Poor communication is the single biggest cause of complaint**
- **55% compliments related to repairs and improvements**
- **8 months where positive feedback outweighed negative**

We love feedback. In any shape or form, hearing from our customers about their experience is what we are here for – it's the best measure of knowing whether we are doing a good job or not.

With our new Knowledge and Feedback team set up at the end of 2016, together they make sure that all feedback, whether positive or negative, is received, actioned and used to inform improvements to our services.

With the new team came a focus to actively learn from everything being shared with us, which generated the set-up of a Feedback Champions working group to dissect feedback and use it to inform meaningful change that could improve processes and ultimately enhance the customer experience.

This year we also launched a digital repository for information, called the Knowledge Sphere, which gives staff immediate access to policies, procedures, how-to-guides, forms and anything else that helps to provide customers with what they need.

While the Knowledge Sphere is staff-focussed for now, we are working towards opening it up to our customers so that they too can access what they need, allowing people to self-serve and be more independent.



The Feedback Team also help us to gather feedback and one of the best ways that we do that is through customer surveys, where tenants of ours call other tenants and ask them about specific areas, like how happy they are with the estates that they live in. During 2016/17, our volunteer customers who carry out these surveys made 1,800 calls, which generated some really good, honest feedback.

In the future, we are going to put more emphasis on analysing our survey feedback to spot trends which could inform even more service improvement, and then look for ways to use this feedback to 'delight' our customers.

We welcome all feedback, which you can share in the following ways:

- On our [website](#)
- By email to [feedback@redkitehousing.org.uk](mailto:feedback@redkitehousing.org.uk)
- By phone on 01494 476100
- In writing or face-to-face at our offices:
  - Windsor Court  
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