



# B3Living Annual Report 2016/17

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## Welcome from Joe

Having completed my first year as Chief Executive, I am pleased to report that B3Living is a strong and growing business. We have a great team who are committed to providing a range homes for people who cannot afford the market, and who support our residents to create cohesive communities.

This year we've implemented a new strategy which outlines our objectives over the next 7 years as well refocusing our relationship with residents and local partners.

We've continued to invest in our development programme to create more homes, as we are still in the greatest housing crisis this country has experienced. We also want our homes to become more efficient by reducing our build costs to ensure we get the best value for money.

I look forward to seeing where B3Living will go next on its journey and thank the team and board members who have worked together as one team to create and maintain an excellent service for our residents.

**Joe Chambers** - B3Living Chief Executive



## About us

At B3Living we believe safe, warm and affordable housing is essential for us all. We work hard as a team to maintain our existing homes and make a difference to people's lives by building new ones across Hertfordshire and Essex.

To achieve this we have dramatically increased the number of new homes that we are building and have widened the area that we work in.

Customer satisfaction with B3Living services overall



Customer satisfaction with B3Living repairs and maintenance service



Customer satisfaction of their home





Purpose and values

This year the Board and B3Living team have created a new purpose and values for our business. We worked together to make sure our message was clear for residents and staff as well as re-evaluating our business goals and the way we work.

Our Purpose

"To provide a range of sustainable places to live for those who cannot afford the market, ensuring that we create cohesive communities through supporting our residents."

We also wanted clear and well rounded values for our team to work with to achieve the best possible service for our residents and partners.

Our Values

One Team

Working together to achieve our goals

Adaptable

Continuously changing to improve the way we work

Innovative

Proactively challenging to maximise opportunities

Open

Communicating and listening inclusively

Commercial

Creating value and understanding costs



Vision 2023

This year we've started to look to the future and what we want our business to be and become over the next few years. Our 7 year strategy outlines the areas we want to grow in to ensure we can continue to provide quality affordable housing across Hertfordshire and Essex.

We're committed to addressing the shortage of homes in our local and neighbouring areas by providing a range of sustainable homes. At the same time, we aim to continue to deliver efficient and effective services to our residents, as well as striving to continuously improve.

For more information on what we want to achieve in the next 6 years and beyond, visit [www.b3living.org.uk](http://www.b3living.org.uk)





## Our residents

Supporting our residents has always been important whether it is helping to find work and employment, or providing support with paying rent and managing finances. We've recently reviewed the way we work and the areas we focus on, so we can give our residents the excellent service that they have come to expect from us.

Feedback and customer insight has been at the forefront this year with us working with residents to find out how where and how we can improve our services.

Our Customer Insight team ran focus groups to gain views and opinions from residents aged 45 upwards to find out what types of housing they would want in the future. This feedback helps us think more commercially and in turn helps our development team understand what our residents require in terms of housing.

Our community hub in Waltham Cross has been a safe space for residents for the last 2 years providing free internet and commuter access, courses and money and financial guidance.



# 2,600

## Visitors to The Hub in 2016/17



### Complaints

This year we received 64 complaints, compared to the 72 we received in 2015/16. We have a comprehensive complaints process based on a three stage process. More details on the process can be found on the B3Living website, [www.b3living.org.uk](http://www.b3living.org.uk).

Complaints	2016/17	2015/16
Stage 1	25	38
Stage 2	1	5
Stage 3	1	1

### Tackling anti-social behaviour

We want our residents to feel safe in their home. Our Anti-social Behaviour team work closely with the community to make sure they feel secure in area where they live.

This year we've worked with partners to tackle tenancy fraud. It is estimated that between 2-7% of housing association or council homes are occupied by someone who shouldn't be living there, meaning that 300 of our homes may be occupied by people who don't have a genuine tenancy. Since Hertfordshire has a huge housing shortage, with 237 families in Broxbourne living in temporary accommodation, this has been an important project for us.

### Supporting older people

With the population living longer, our Independent Living schemes and services have never been more important. We continue to provide flexible care services helping our residents to live more independently for longer. This year we've started to upgrade our alarm systems to ensure the best quality service. We've recently promoted our flexicare and alarm systems to local residents, in a bid to become more commercial.



Our team

2016/17 was a big year for the B3Living team as Joe Chambers joined us as Chief Executive. We also said goodbye to Finance Director, Paul Williams, who retired this year after being with B3Living since we were formed in 2006.



Executive team



**Joe Chambers**  
Chief Executive



**Jo Moore**  
Finance Director



**Steven Tarry**  
Development and Asset  
Management Director

Paul Williams – Finance director (retired 2017)

Simon Walton – Operations Director (left 2017)



**178**

Number of staff members



**8**

Number of apprentices

Our 'one team' philosophy means that we promote ownership of our business throughout all teams and encourage cross departmental working as much as possible.

We encourage our team to work flexibly and give staff members the responsibility to manage their own time and work load. Career development is really important to us and we have helped our team reach important career goals and develop and grow. This is achieved through apprenticeships, traineeships and housing qualifications, as well as coaching and training. We recognise good performance and reward value added to our business



## Our buildings

Our homes are maintained and improved by Asset Management team to the high quality our residents have come to expect from us. We pride ourselves on our excellent customer service as well as pledging to reduce maintenance costs each year on year.



## Repairs

Our in-house repairs team continue to provide our residents with a reliable and quality service. Customer satisfaction was above our target this year with 84% of residents happy with the repairs carried out on their homes.



### Figures

Operational costs per home	£3,043
Management cost per home	£928
Service charge cost per home	£681
Maintenance cost per home	£656
Major works cost per home	£394



## Major Work programme

Maintaining our existing homes is a priority for us. Each year we invest in the region of £4million into our major works programme to ensure our homes are the highest quality for our residents.

Year on year we invest in homes by installing and replacing kitchens, bathrooms, renew boilers and doors and windows to make sure our homes are as efficient as they can be. This year we reviewed our processes for replacing bathrooms and kitchens, making sure we're getting the best value for money from our investment.

### Newly installed in 16/17:

Bathrooms	93
Kitchens	3

We also work to make our homes accessible to all. Our home adaptations mean that residents can feel safe and confident in their home.

Our caretakers team work hard to maintain our larger estates ensuring that homes look presentable and tidy.

Number of homes that fail to meet the decent homes standard	0
Number of homes with an overdue gas certificate	0



## Lettings

Our focus is to make sure the turnaround of our homes is done quickly and efficiently for our residents. Our Lettings team have reduced the numbers of days homes are empty, with our average re-let time reducing from 31 days in 2014/15 to 17 days this year.

Current and former rent arrears as a % of the total current rent debit	2.41%
Average calendar days to re-let empty homes including major works	17.44 days



## Special projects

This year our Asset Management team undertook an unusual project restoring a puddling mill and kiln which was part of the Pulham and Sons Factory in Broxbourne. The old kiln is situated on land managed by B3Living. We received Heritage Lottery funding and in collaboration with Broxbourne Borough Council and Lowewood Museum, we restored the site, including a landscaped seating area and permanent interpretation boards, which tell the Pulham and Son story.



## Housing Stock

	2016/17	2015/16
<b>Social housing</b>		
General Needs	3,342	3,306
Housing for Older People	319	325
Shared ownership	179	183
Leaseholders	673	673
Intermediate rent	6	8
Total social owned & managed	4,519	4,495
Social owned but managed by others	49	49
<b>Total social housing owned</b>	<b>4,568</b>	<b>4,544</b>
<b>Non-social</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2015/16</b>
Market rent	2	2
Leasehold	103	103
<b>Total non-social housing</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Total homes owned by B3Living</b>	<b>4,673</b>	<b>4,649</b>

## Our Finances

Our Income and expenditure shows our investment in maintaining and creating new homes to counteract the effects of the housing crisis.

Income	£'000	%		£
Rental	£24,081	89%		£0.89
Service charges	£899	3%		£0.03
Government grants released to income	£216	1%		£0.01
Property sales	£595	2%		£0.02
Other income	£657	2%		£0.02
Interest received	£55	0%		£0.00
Shared ownership sales	£550	2%		£0.02
<b>Total</b>	<b>£27,053</b>	<b>100.00%</b>		<b>£1.00</b>

Expenditure	£'000	%		£
Management services (including staff)	£5,253	26%		£0.26
Interest on loans	£5,244	26%		£0.26
Shared ownership costs of sales (first tranche)	£471	2%		£0.02
Services	£2,725	14%		£0.14
Maintenance	£3,064	15%		£0.15
Depreciation	£3,182	16%		£0.16
<b>Total</b>	<b>£19,939</b>	<b>100.00%</b>		<b>£1.00</b>

## Value for Money

We understand the need for commerciality in all areas of our work and why affordable housing is so important. This means we must understand our costs and make savings where possible. During 2016/17 our value for money targets included:

- Maintain our focused community investment at around 2% of turnover – working in partnerships to improve the life opportunities and wellbeing of our residents
- Improve on our surplus year on year – to provide more cash for investment in new homes
- Meet or better our annual value for money savings targets each year
- Contain year on year costs per home

Value for money underpins our new seven year strategy which was created in September 2016 and our targets for 2017/18 are drawn from the new seven year strategy.



Our new homes

2016 was a big year for B3Living's development team, seeing the team double in size to accommodate the work needed to be undertaken to build new homes.



New homes 2016/17

31

Affordable Rent

34

Built or acquired

3

Shared Ownership

We are currently expanding our portfolio of homes across Hertfordshire and Essex and this year we completed two new developments outside the Borough of Broxbourne.

Grasmere Lodge in Potters Bar created 4 new rental homes, two 3-storey, 3 bedroom houses and two 2 bedroom flats. These were the first properties owned by B3Living to be located in Hertsmere.

We also built 22 new homes in High Cross in East Herts, creating 16 affordable rent and 6 for shared ownership, which were managed by our Shared Ownership service, B3@Home.

We also purchased 9 homes this year from residents, which previously were B3Living housing stock. These were purchased under the Right to Buy act in conjunction with Broxbourne Borough Council.

2017/18 will see developments being completed in across Broxbourne, with 21 new homes at Hazelmere Marina in

Waltham Cross and a further 24 new homes at the former St. Mary's School site in Cheshunt.

We'll also be venturing further out with 5 new homes being completed in Enfield and Epping Forest.

We have spent £18.6m on acquiring land opportunities over the last year and also have committed scheme construction costs of £4.5m. As well as entering into 8 Section 106 contracts, which will produce 181 new homes and have successfully bid for an HCA grant, which will fund 232 affordable homes in the coming years.

**B3@Home – Shared ownership**

B3@Home was launched in 2015 as a dedicated shared ownership service. This year we've delivered 3 new homes in East Herts with more in the pipeline for 2017/18.

Our main focus is to create more homes to end the housing crisis within our local area. To do this we have invested in our development programme for the next 6 years and by 2023 we hope to build 725 new homes across Hertfordshire and Essex.



Our governance

“This year we have worked hard to mould and shape our business to make sure that we are providing the best service possible for our residents. With the implementation of our seven year strategy, we plan to review our services and make sure that B3Living continues to be a strong and reliable business in the next thirty years and beyond.”

Sandra Royer, Chair of the Board

B3Living is governed by a strong, skills based board who meet 9 times a year.



**Sandra Royer**

Chair of the Board

**Karen Forbes-Jackson**

Vice chair

**Camelia Borg**

Board Member

**Tony Infantino**

Board Member

**Chris Herbert**

Board Member

**Chris Fawcett**

Board Member

**Mark Davies**

Board Member

**Stewart Heath**

Board Member (Stepped down in September 2016)

**In Depth Assessment**

In April 2017 B3Living had an 'In Depth Assessment' conducted by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) which looked at how B3Living is governed and its financial viability. We maintained the highest rating as we continue to comply with the HCA's prime financial viability (V1) and governance (G1) standards.

**Day to day running**

We comply with the National Housing Federation Code of Governance and are regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).