



B3Living Annual Report 2017/18

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Welcome from Joe

“The year has been one of new beginnings. With political and economic changes ahead, we have reviewed how we work together and become financially self-sufficient as well as investing wisely to continue to be a strong landlord for our residents.

As well as achieving our development programme target of over 700 new homes by 2023, we are reinvesting in existing homes to ensure our residents live in quality, affordable homes.

This year we created a new community sustainability strategy. We consulted our community partners and have collaborated to co-ordinate local services for local people. B3Living is supporting community support organisations such as Citizens Advice and Broxbourne Foodbank rather than delivering such services ourselves. We recognise the importance of our relationship with our customers and have also improved our resident engagement approach. We are improving services through listening to our customers in specifically formed focus groups and shaping services around what we discover.

We recognise that to deliver something different we need to be something different. To achieve this, we have invested in

cultural shift and leadership development. This allowed our Heads of Service to take the lead on reorganising our operations to deliver greater accountability, flexibility and efficiency.

This year we began to implement our new values ‘Commercial, Adaptable, Innovative, Open and One Team’, bringing the whole organisation together in understanding the behaviours we are aiming for to deliver our future.

In 2017/18 we also reviewed our IT, since this will be an important part of delivering great services for our customers in the future, and supports our understanding of business performance, cost and value.

The highlight of our year was receiving an upgrade to our A3 rating from creditors Moody's. The upgrade comes a year after we were given the highest governance and viability rating (V1G1) from Homes England.

I look forward to seeing where the next few years take B3Living and believe that we continue to be a strong and customer focused business 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 we work in.

Customer satisfaction with B3Living services overall

92%

Customer satisfaction with B3Living repairs and maintenance service

84%

Customer satisfaction with their home

89%



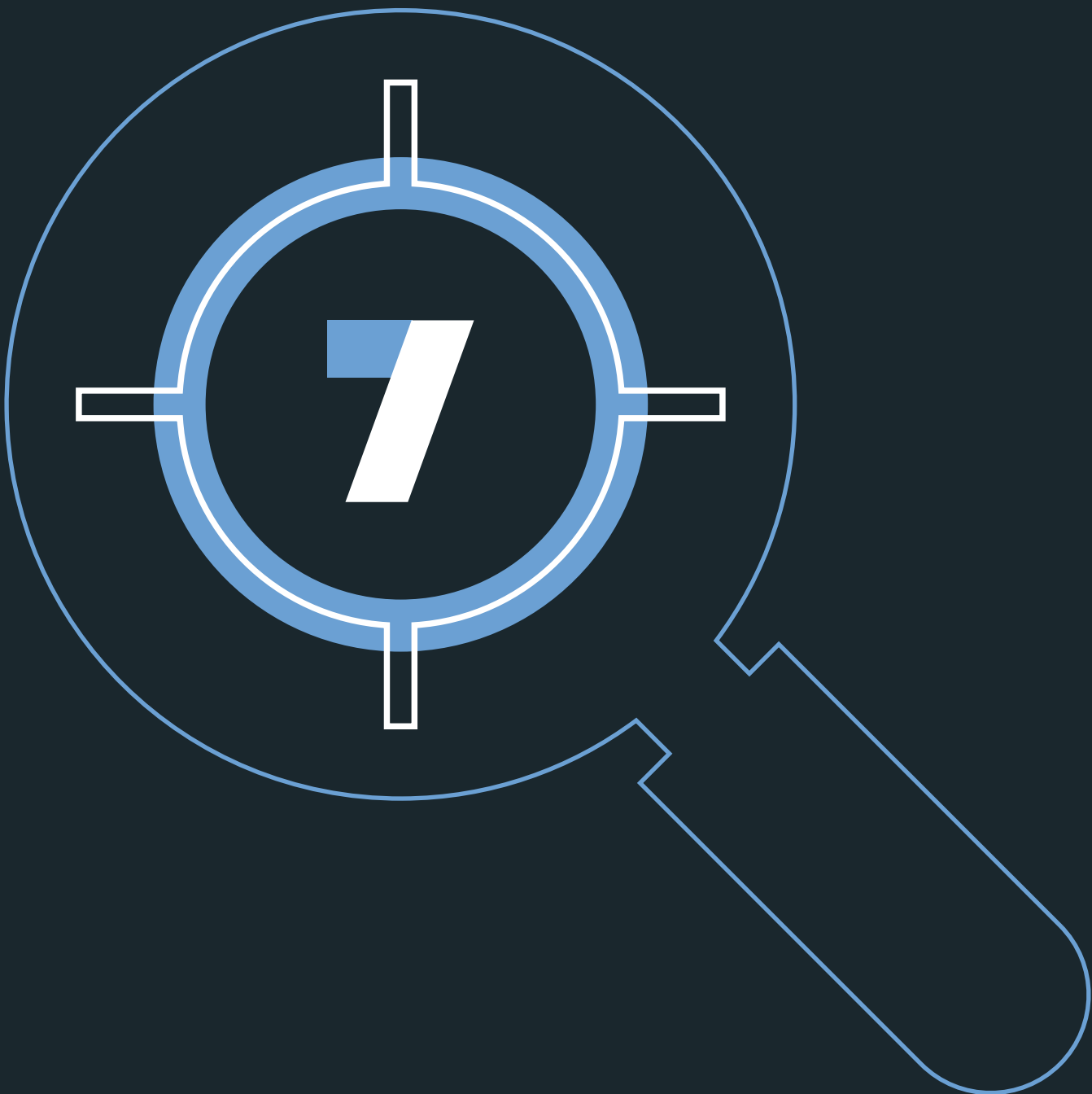
Vision 2023

In 2016/17 we began looking to the future and reviewed what we wanted 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 through our development programme but also by investing in our current homes.

We aim to continue to deliver efficient and effective services for residents, as well as striving to continuously improve.

Visit www.b3living.org.uk for a more in depth look at what we have planned to achieve by 2023.



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.

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





One Team
*Working together to
achieve our goals*



The Board

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

This year we said goodbye to Board Members Tony Infantino and Camelia Borg.

In 2017 B3Living maintained its VIG1 rating - the highest rating given by the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) for financial viability and governance.

We comply with the National Housing Federation Code of Governance and are regulated by the RSH.

Sandra Royer / Chair of the Board

Anne Shearman / Vice chair

Karen Forbes-Jackson

Chris Herbert

Chris Fawcett

Mark Davies

Joe Chambers / CEO

Mike Dempsey / Co-Optee

The Executive team

This year we welcomed our new Finance Director, Alex Sherlock, to our executive team.



Joe Chambers
Chief Executive



Steven Tarry
Development and Asset
Management Director



Alex Sherlock
Finance Director



Claire Howe
Head of Corporate Services



Francesco Elia
Interim Operations Director

Our team



157
Number of staff members



3
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.

Our team are encouraged to work flexibly and we give employees the responsibility to manage their own time and work load. We promote a strong work/life balance.

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. This year we’ve invested in our leadership team and encouraged the senior team members to understand and learn valuable management tools. We recognise good performance and reward value added to our business.

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 customers to find out how we can improve our services.



Adaptable

Continuously changing to improve the way we work



Changes to our repairs and maintenance teams

We're continuously looking to improve our repairs and major works service by working in a more joined up way. This year our repairs team and asset management team have worked closer than ever, helping to complete work and create value for money.

Year on year we invest around £4million in our homes, installing and replacing kitchens, bathrooms, renewing boilers and doors and upgrading 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.

Number of kitchens installed	58
Number of bathrooms installed	38

Our in-house repairs team continue to provide our residents with a reliable and quality service. We pride ourselves on our excellent customer service and continue to save money and reduce our maintenance costs year on year.

Repairs completed on time - emergency	100%
Repairs completed on time - routine	96%
Customer satisfaction with repairs was above our target this year with 87% of residents happy with work completed on their home.	87%



Housing Crisis

We understand that the housing crisis affects everyone, and our aim is to make as many people as possible aware that there is a housing crisis within Broxbourne, Hertfordshire and the rest of the UK.

The three main contributing factors to the housing crisis are:

Population growth – people are living longer, having more children and Hertfordshire is an attractive place for people to move to. Older people are staying in large family homes, meaning homes are significantly under occupied. Our plan is to create more housing for older people and to promote independent living, freeing up larger properties for families who are currently living in over occupied homes.

The high cost and high rent area – homes are too expensive for people to buy and the high prices of private rent are unaffordable for families with lower incomes.

We don't have enough homes and the demand for housing has risen significantly over the last few years. Because we have many more prospective tenants on the local housing allocations lists than we have available homes, there is a housing crisis. This is a situation which is repeated across the country.



Lettings

We pride ourselves on our quick turnover of homes once a resident has moved or left the property.

The average time a property is currently empty for is	20 days
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This is 11 days quicker than last year and meets our target of 20 days.



Innovative

Proactively challenging to maximise opportunities



Governance and accountability

We comply with the National Housing Federation Code of Governance and are regulated by the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH).



Everlea

This year we created a property company to build homes for the direct sale market, so we can become more commercial and generate new investments. Everlea will be launching its first homes in 2019. Looking to the future, we believe the investment made from building direct sale homes will help us build more affordable homes.



Customer insight

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 innovatively and in turn helps our development team understand what our residents require in terms of housing.



Open

Communicating and listening inclusively



Customer Service

We introduced a new appointment-based reception, making sure residents can meet face to face with members of the team. Flexible working and resident visits has meant that our office team aren't always based at our Scania House office and this new arrangement ensures we can meet with and communicate with our residents.

Customer satisfaction with B3Living overall	92%
Customer satisfaction with B3Living repairs and maintenance service	84%
Customer satisfaction with their home	89%



Complaints Procedure

We've changed the way we handle and manage the complaints we receive about our homes and services and will be reviewing feedback received from complaints to make further improvements to this service. This year we responded to 80 complaints as outlined in our complaints process. More details on the process can be found on the B3Living website, www.b3living.org.uk.

Complaints upheld 2017/18:





Caretakers

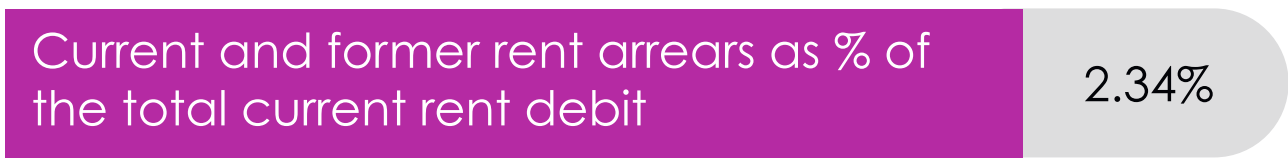
Our caretakers work hard to clean and tidy our estates and shared spaces.

This year we streamlined our caretaking team into two groups (North and South) with a team leader in each team. This means that teams can work more effectively and efficiently when tending to estates.



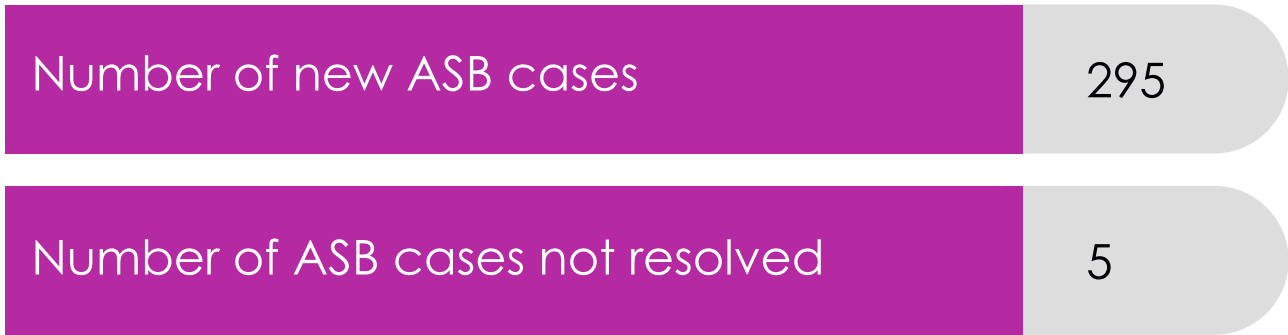
Rent Recovery

Our recovery team work hard to ensure that rent is collected, so money can be invested into both new homes and existing homes. They also look into why residents might be struggling to pay their rent, and work with local partners who offer advice on employment and financial issues.



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.

This means

274

of our homes may be occupied by people who don't have a genuine tenancy. We want to continue to work with local partners on this issue in the coming years.



Homes we own and manage

We own a variety of different properties from our rented homes to shared ownership and homes specifically designed and managed for older residents.

Social housing	2017/18	2016/17
General Needs	3,404	3,342
Housing for Older People	311	319
Shared ownership	192	179
Leaseholders	676	673
Intermediate rent	6	6
Total social owned & managed	4,589	4,519
Social owned but managed by others	49	49
Grand total social owned	4,638	4,568
Non-social	2016/17	2015/16
Market rent	4	2
Leasehold	103	103
Total non-social housing	107	105
Total homes owned by B3Living	4,745	4,673



Operational Costs



Housing Standards

Housing standards are really important to us and all of our homes pass the decent homes standard. We manage gas and boiler services and ensure our gas certificates never go overdue.





Commercial
Creating value and understanding costs



New homes 2017/18

80

Built or acquired

209

Under construction at the end of 2017/18

Development Programme

Year on year our development programme continues to grow with our team exploring new ways to build and create new homes.

The struggle to find land to build on our local area means we are growing as a company, with new homes being built further afield in Hertfordshire and expanding into the neighbouring county of Essex.

Homes built or bought during 2017/18	80
Homes under construction at the end of 2017/18	209

Areas where we have completed new shared ownership or rented homes this year:

- Mountnessing, Essex
- Radlett, Hertfordshire
- Cheshunt, Hertfordshire
- Buntingford, Hertfordshire

Number of rented homes built	60
Number of shared ownership homes built	15
Number of rented homes acquired	5

B3@Home

B3@Home is B3Living's shared ownership scheme helping people take the first step onto the property ladder. This year we launched a dedicated sales and marketing team to manage the sales. Shared Ownership will continue to be a big part of our development programme over the next few years especially with house prices being the highest they've ever been in Hertfordshire and Essex.

Areas where we are currently building in:

- Epping, Essex
- Newport, Essex
- Elsenham, Essex
- Cheshunt, Hertfordshire

Shared ownership homes to be completed in 2018	59
Completed shared ownership sales in 2017/18	11
Shared ownership homes confirmed to be built in 2019	30



Income and Expenditure

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

Income	£'000	%		£
Rental	23,962	75%	<div></div>	0.75
Service charges	1,156	4%	<div></div>	0.04
Government grants released to income	155	1%	<div></div>	0.01
Property sales	1,054	3%	<div></div>	0.03
Other income	591	2%	<div></div>	0.02
Investment income	121	0%		0.00
First tranche shared ownership sales	1,917	6%	<div></div>	0.06
Share of Joint Venture profit	2,875	9%	<div></div>	0.09
Total	31,831	100%		1.00

Expenditure	£'000	%		£
Management services (inc staff)	5,672	27%	<div></div>	0.27
Interest on loans	4,979	25%	<div></div>	0.25
First tranche shared ownership cost of sales	1,033	5%	<div></div>	0.05
Service charges	1,584	8%	<div></div>	0.08
Maintenance	3,451	17%	<div></div>	0.17
Depreciation	3,384	17%	<div></div>	0.17
Movement in fair value of investment properties	120	1%	<div></div>	0.01
Total	20,223	100%		1.00

Value for Money

This year, becoming more commercial across all areas of our work has been vital and as such, we've become more efficient and improved the way we spend our money.

Our main focus is to provide affordable housing for residents and to find new ways of generating income, so we maintain existing homes and create new ones. Our 2017/18 value for money goals are:



To provide a sustainable place to live for those who cannot afford to rent or purchase their home at open market rates and ensuring that we help create cohesive communities through supporting our residents.

To aid our customers to sustainable independence through developing "adult-adult" relationships.



To proactively utilize our regulators VFM Metrics.



To be a lean and efficient organisation with an empowered and motivated team, through investment in training and development.



To maintain our buildings to decent homes standard and improve on costs per home.



To improve our surplus year on year through reduction in operating costs. This will provide more cash to invest in new homes.



Farewell from Sandra

"I've seen many changes over the past 9 years having been Chair of B3Living through two different Chief Executives, government rent cuts and times of real change for the housing sector. Yet with these changes we continue to learn and to adapt to be a better and stronger landlord for our residents.

This year has been no exception. This report outlines our achievements over the past 12 months but also our commitment to change and adapt with the housing sector and our residents' needs. All whilst continuing to work collaboratively to create great homes and communities for our residents whilst maintaining a strong and reliable business.

Over the past few years 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 thrive long into the future.

Thank you to everyone who got involved in some way over the last 9 years, whether it be through meetings, panels or committees, questionnaires or just telling our staff what you would like to see happen or changed in the future. I've witnessed B3Living change and grow over the past decade and I know there are still great things to come for B3Living in the future. It's with a heavy heart I leave B3Living, but I know that our Board and Executive team are stronger than ever.

Thank you to all the B3Living team and to its residents for nine fantastic years as Chair."

Sandra Royer, Chair of B3Living



Looking Forward

Changes to the Board

Looking ahead we want to continue to have a strong Board and Executive team. In late 2018 we will have 3 new board members. Our Vice-Chair Anne Sherman will be stepping up as Chair of the Board. Our former Vice-Chair Karen Forbes Jackson will also be stepping down after nine years as part of our Board and we thank both Karen and Sandra for their dedication and service to the Board of B3Living,

Community sustainability strategy and customer insight

We hope to further implement our community sustainability strategy and work with residents through customer insight and better understanding of their needs. We have joined up with local community partners to review how we communicate with our residents.

Building new homes

We will continue to have a strong and full development programme and aim to reduce our build costs by 10% in the coming years. We will achieve this by reviewing the way we work, sharing our resources in house and considering modern methods against traditional build styles.



Visit the B3Living website

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