



**Cobalt**  
Housing

ANNUAL  
REPORT **17 | 18**

unlocking  
potential

# Unlocking potential



**Kieran Timmins**  
Chair

As the new Chair of Cobalt, I'm delighted to present my first Tenant's Annual Report. Firstly, I would like to thank my predecessor, Peter Mitchell, for all his hard work and outstanding leadership during his time with Cobalt. Without him the recent demerger would never have happened. This report provides a snapshot of our performance from 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018.

This year commemorates Cobalt's 15th anniversary, and we are very proud of our achievements to date. We must continue to improve, and we set ambitious targets to shape local services and meet the needs of individuals and communities.

We have several excellent new Board members who have hit the ground running, and with the other members and our Management Team, we are committed to delivering the targets within our Corporate Plan

In closing, I would like to thank all Cobalt staff and the Board for their commitment and hard work during this time of change. Thanks, are also extended to the Scrutiny Panel, all involved tenants and those who have taken the time to contact us with feedback during the year. You help us continually learn, improve and build on the high standards of service you rightly expect, and your voice is vital in our future.

## About Us

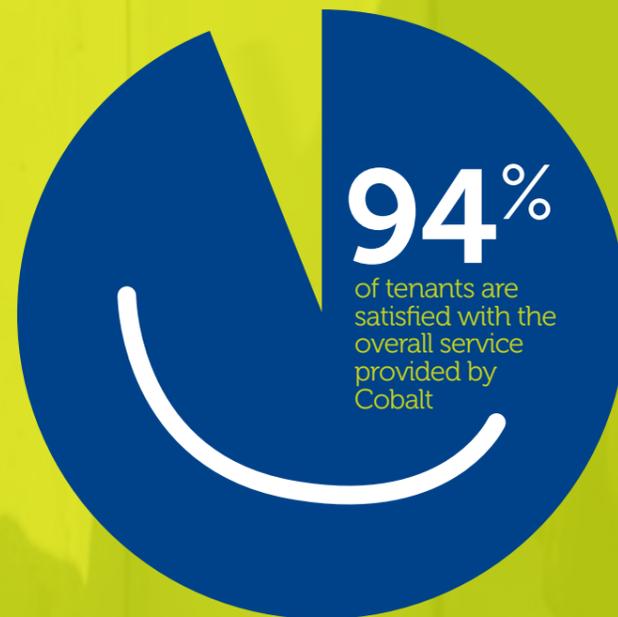


## Our purpose

Everyone deserves somewhere to call home, a place to make their own, feel safe and secure, and set down firm foundations. The right home will help people to live well, realise their potential and achieve the things that are important to them.

## Mission

By providing quality places to live, and support to those who need it, we play our part in developing thriving communities where people are proud to live and can be their best.



2nd out of 19 North West housing associations  
(Star Survey)\*

\*Data on HouseMark from Star Survey 2017

## Our Values

### Passion

We're passionate about the positive impact we can have on other peoples' lives

### Integrity

We act with integrity and do the right things instead of the easy things

### Commitment

We're committed to the long-term success of our people, communities and neighbourhoods

### Ambition

We are ambitious for ourselves and for those we help

## Our Corporate Objectives

Cobalt has 5 corporate priorities for 2018 – 2023

**1** - Be a well-run, effectively governed, successful social business.

**2** - Provide quality, well-maintained homes that are fit for the future.

**3** - Support people to create thriving communities.

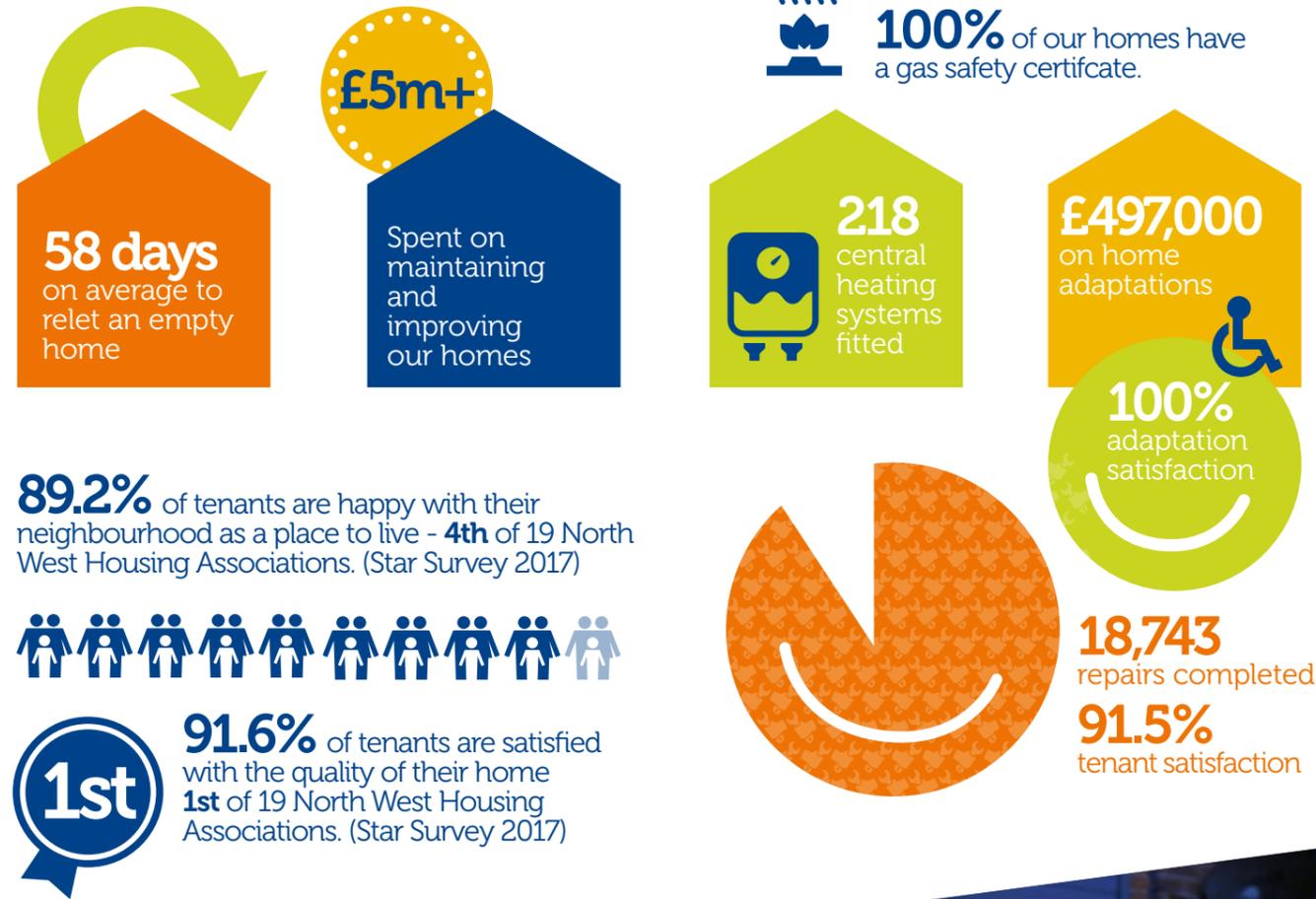
**4** - Deliver high quality services that meet our customers' needs.

**5** - Grow our business.

Find out more in our [Corporate Plan 2018 – 2023](#)



# Our Homes



**What's next?**  
We are implementing a new asset management system which will hold all our information on your home. We will then be in a position to report our 30 year business plan projections along with agreeing priorities for investing in homes and neighbourhoods.

**169** homes received new windows  
**Mr & Mrs Briscoe** from Fazakerley are delighted with the improvement works that have taken place on their home. They have benefited from new fascias and soffits, plastic cladding and new windows.

Over the last few years, **over 1000 homes** have received new windows.

# Getting in touch



## Complaints



**1307 Likes**

**2063 Followers**

## Apprentices

Cobalt Solutions continue to employ and develop two apprentice Customer Service Officers each year. Both apprentices gain NVQ 2 in Customer Service. This year, one apprentice has been re-employed within the team.

## What's next?

**Cobalt Click** a new 24 hour online service where tenants can access the following:

- Report a repair and request an appointment
- Obtain a rent balance
- Request a rent statement
- Make a payment
- Make a general enquiry



# Our Community

## Stonedale Regeneration

Cobalt successfully secured funding from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to explore options to improve Stonedale Crescent in Croxteth. Masterplanners and designers Gillespies were appointed to work on the estate regeneration plan which has been developed through extensive consultation with residents, partners and the wider community. The plan looks at regenerating existing residential streets and developing new, high quality homes and spaces.

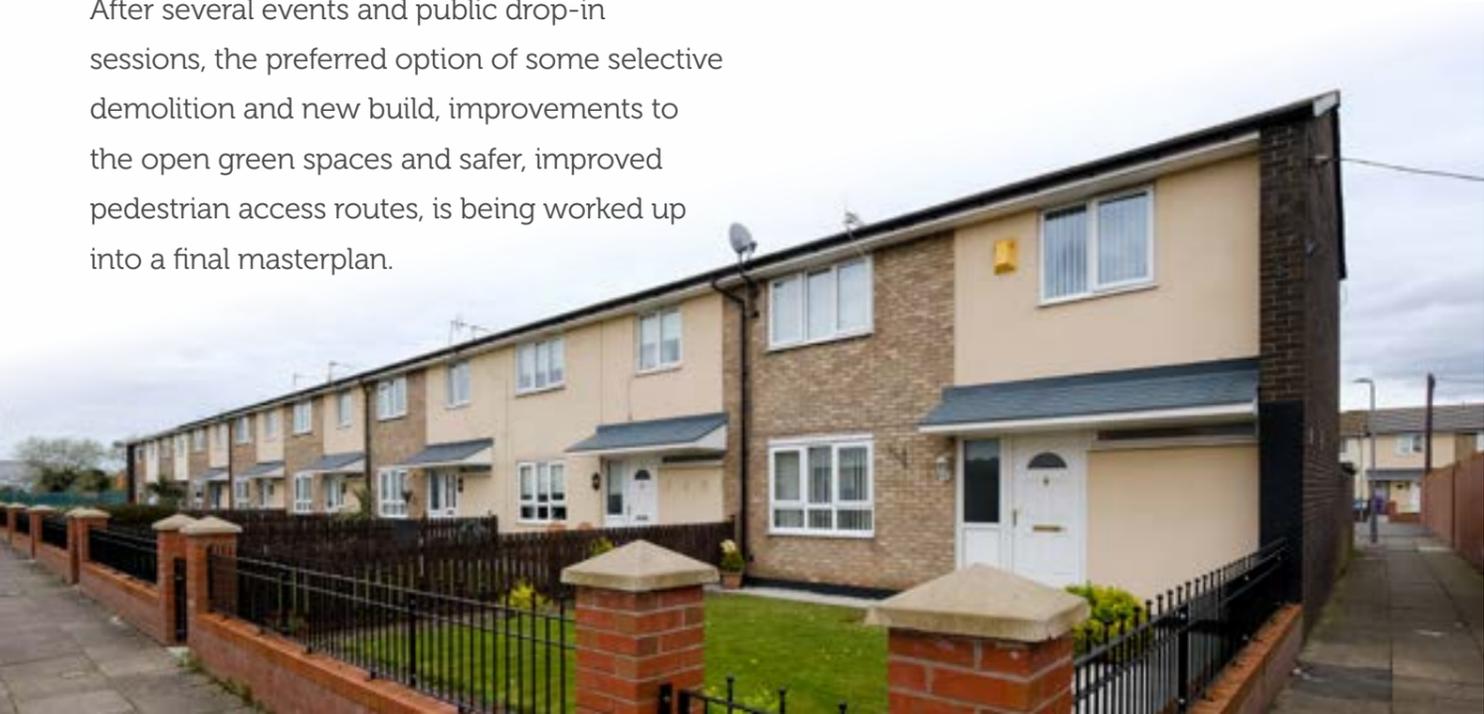


After several events and public drop-in sessions, the preferred option of some selective demolition and new build, improvements to the open green spaces and safer, improved pedestrian access routes, is being worked up into a final masterplan.



### What's next?

The construction of new homes will begin in early 2019 on the newly acquired land and Cobalt will seek funding to support the further estate regeneration work through central Government, Homes England, the local authority, and the private sector, as well as its own resources.



**Funding for community projects**

Cobalt's Community Fund allocated £39,899 to 44 local community organisations enabling 80 projects to happen in our neighbourhoods.



**Croxteth Gems Get on your bike and ride!**

Local community centre, Croxteth Gems, work with young people to encourage them to be healthier and more active. This project gave local children the opportunity to get out for a bike ride and learn about bike repairs.

*"The project gave 20 young people more confidence to get active, cycle to new places and learn how to maintain a bike so that they can continue to enjoy cycling"*

Jay, Youth Worker at Croxteth Gems.



**Norris Green Youth Centre Kids cook up a storm!**

Norris Green Youth Centre ran an exciting project called 'Cooking on 3 Burners'. *"The sessions involved teaching young people to cook healthy meals on a budget. We've had a cookery plan every week where the kids could make at least one meal and were responsible for picking out the recipe and working together to create it"* Christine, team member at the Centre.

## Keeping you safe

We work in partnership with Liverpool City Council, Merseyside Police, Liverpool Domestic Abuse Service and other agencies to support tenants who suffer from domestic violence, hate crime and other anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues.

We have received great feedback for our work and for the contribution we make to helping our most vulnerable tenants.

✓ **473** ASB cases resolved

**91%** of tenants satisfied with our ASB service

# Supporting You



**£2.53m**  
in benefits secured for tenants



**£370,646**  
secured in discretionary housing payments for tenants



**70** tenants represented at appeal tribunals



**Extra support** was provided to some tenants to help them pay their rent



**901** households affected by the Social Size Criteria (bedroom tax)

## Digital hubs

Helping tenants to get online, set up e-mail addresses, apply for jobs and much more. Basic training is provided by Cobalt and two tenant digital champions Julie Roberts and Eric Williams.



As Universal Credit is rolled out across all of our neighbourhoods by December 2019, we will offer additional support and clear communication to help our tenants access the welfare benefits they require.

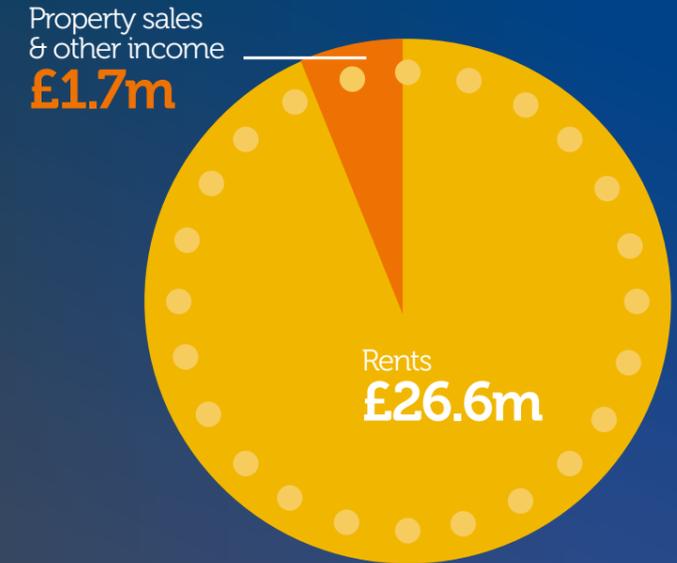
## Providing the best service for you during 2018/19 and beyond.

Last November, we began a review of our services. Many of you contributed and we listened to your feedback. Following this, we are planning to make the following improvements during 2018/19:

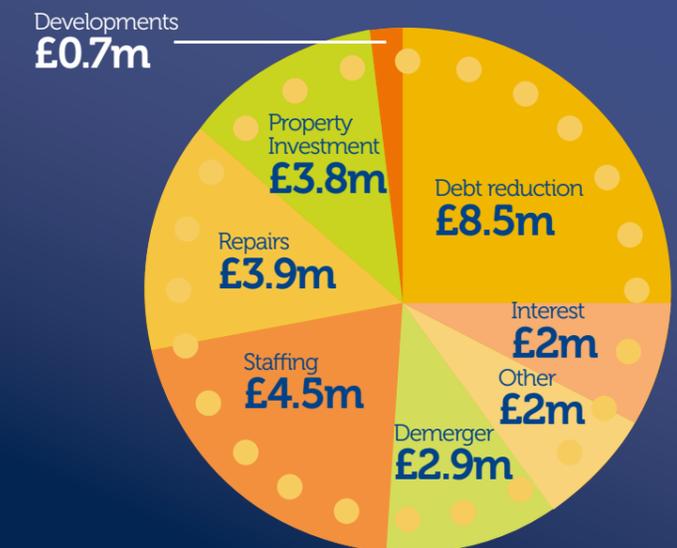
- We will move from a specialist team model (such as ASB, rents etc) to a neighbourhood model. This means that Croxteth, Fazakerley and Norris Green will each have a neighbourhood focused team providing services.
- We will be more visible and will give clarity about who does what in the organisation.
- We will closely monitor our changes, involving customers in target setting and defining the general approach in each neighbourhood
- We will roll out our digital service offer, with tenants having the opportunity to report repairs and manage their rent accounts via our website through the new online service, Cobalt Click.
- Our new neighbourhood focus will boost our approach to resident involvement by making it a significant part of everybody's role. It's vital that we fully engage with our residents to help us provide the best possible service.

# Value for Money

Where our money came from



What we spent it on



**313** households claim Universal Credit. We specifically contacted tenants who would be affected by Universal Credit and worked with our partners to provide additional support.

## Tenant scrutiny panel

The Panel scrutinised our performance on empty homes and put forward suggestions, including not removing non-standard items. This has now been introduced.



## Rent

A 1% rent reduction was applied in April 2017. Despite this reduction our rent collection rate remained high. We continued to gather as much income as possible which is reinvested back into our homes and communities.



**91.9%** tenant satisfaction that their rent is value for money.

3rd out of 19 North West housing associations (Star Survey)

# Round up of the year

We demerged from  
Onward Homes



We donated over £1000 and £300 of food to St Andrews Community Network to support the North Liverpool Foodbanks on the run up to Christmas



We contributed to local community projects



We carried out community clean up days helping tenants dispose of unwanted items and picking up fly tipping



We celebrated our apprentices during National Apprenticeship week



We have been awarded ISO 9001:2015 Quality

We supported Norris Green Carnival



Staff raised over £300 from a bake sale to purchase a range of Christmas gifts for the local foodbank

Congratulations to our garden competition winners



We supported tenants into employment and training





# Cobalt

■ ■ ■ Housing

🌐 [www.cobalthousing.org.uk](http://www.cobalthousing.org.uk)

✉ [info@cobalthousing.org.uk](mailto:info@cobalthousing.org.uk)

☎ 0330 303 2222

📘 CobaltHousing

🐦 @CobaltHousing