



**Leeds & Yorkshire**  
Housing Association

# Annual Report for Customers



2018/19

# Welcome from Mark Pearson

## Chief Executive

Welcome to this year's Annual Report to Customers: our chance to share how we have performed over the 2018/19 financial year, the investment we've made in customers' homes, and our priorities for the year ahead.

We have been working hard to improve our services: a key part of this has been forging stronger relationships with our customers to find out what matters to you and how we can offer a better service. For example on our Elmetes Estate where residents are playing a key role in steering the current improvement programme (see page 10).

We believe consultation is key and are delighted to be working with an increasing number of customers on our Scrutiny Group and Customer Experience Committee, ensuring that LYHA's decisions reflect the needs and priorities of our residents. Our Scrutiny Group recently worked with us on the improvements to our telephony system and I am delighted by the positive feedback we have received.

After our disappointment at being downgraded to G2 last year, I am delighted to announce that we have recently been regraded back to the highest governance

rating: G1. We have also been confirmed in our V1 rating for financial viability, again the highest rating.

The G1 rating acknowledges how we have strengthened our approach to health and safety and improved our internal controls. Our customers' safety is of utmost importance to us and we are delighted to report that we are 100% compliant in all areas, including: fire, electricity, gas, water and asbestos safety.

During the year we have made significant investment in additional fire safety measures, including our new block inspectors, who are doing a sterling job carrying out checks throughout our estates. To find out more about their role, read our interview on page 4.

We have continued to invest in both the maintenance of our existing stock and our new-build programme, which is helping to meet the demand for more affordable housing in our region.



Beyond the homes you live in, one of our priorities for the year ahead is committing time and resources to wider community investment activity. We want to deliver tangible benefits to our customers and projects which will have a positive impact on the areas where you live.

There is, as ever, a lot to do. However, working with a dedicated team of colleagues and board members, I feel confident that we are headed in a positive direction and am delighted that recent customer feedback supports this.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Pearson'.

**Mark Pearson**  
Chief Executive

# Welcome from Jon Prashar

## Board Member and Chair of our Customer Experience Committee

It's very important to us to find out what matters to you and how we can offer a better service both now and in the future.

We have been working very hard with customers to improve our services. I am convinced that meaningful consultation is key and I'm delighted to be working with an increasing number of customers on our Customer Experience Committee and Scrutiny Panel ensuring that LYHA's key Board decisions reflect the needs and priorities of our customers.

We have carried out lots of activity in partnership this year and I am proud of our growing relationships with our customers. One such area is the Elmetes Estate,

where the recent achievements are something to be proud of, whilst highlighting learning for the future.

Customer safety is at the heart of all that we do. We have invested significantly in this area during 2018/19 and as a volunteer on the Board I am committed to working hard to continually improve what we deliver now and in the future.

I am very proud of the team at LYHA and the positive work they are undertaking. Together we will continue this progress during the months ahead to ensure we continue to deliver high quality local services in true partnership with our customers.



**Jon Prashar**  
Board member and Chair of  
our Customer Experience  
Committee

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# Customer safety is our top priority

Following a full health and safety audit, we completed an extensive programme of works to ensure all our properties are fully compliant. The Regulator of Social Housing has now graded LYHA as G1 V1 - the highest possible governance rating.

**We are delighted to report that we have completed our safety programmes and we are fully compliant in all aspects.**

This includes gas, electrical and fire safety inspections, as well as water hygiene and asbestos risk assessments.

We are now carrying out follow-on programmes and investing in additional health and safety software to improve the way we work.

*“Help us to help you by keeping your communal areas free of personal items that may block your means of escape in the case of an emergency.”*

During 2018/19 we carried out the following:

1,019

Gas services

1,546

Electrical inspection certificates completed

1,530

Smoke detectors fitted in your homes

24

Fire safety inspections of communal areas

138

Water hygiene inspections

28

Asbestos surveys

5,374

Total repairs completed

27

Customer consultation events around our estates

## Meet our new safety inspectors

To reinforce our commitment to health and safety we have appointed Block Inspectors, Andy Foster and Graham Spark, who visit all our properties with communal areas once a week to test the fire safety equipment. We caught up with Graham to tell you a bit more about what they do.

### What does a typical day involve?

*I am responsible for inspecting properties from Scarborough, Whitby and Settle in the north to Barnsley to the south, so I do a lot of travelling. At each property I record every aspect of the inspection electronically via a mobile phone app. If I meet a customer who needs an issue addressing with their property, I will try to help while I'm there.*

### What do you check as part of your fire inspections?

*We check the fire alarms, smoke vents, emergency lighting and fire doors are all operating correctly and*



*ensure that corridors are not blocked.*

*Whilst we are there, we look out for litter problems, anti-social behaviour and other issues, such as graffiti. We then report back so that these things are dealt with.*

**How many sites do you visit every week?**

*Between us, Andy and I carry out safety checks at 90 sites per week.*

**How can our customers help us keep their homes safe?**

*It would be a great help if customers could avoid storing personal items in communal areas, such as bikes, toys and pushchairs. These can block the means of escape and prevent people exiting properties safely in the case of an emergency.*

## Fly tipping

Fly tipping is illegal. If you have bulky, unwanted items that you wish to dispose of, you need to contact your local council or many charities offer a free collection service for items that can be reused.

As an organisation we currently spend upwards of £30,000 a year collecting illegally dumped items. This equates to 15 new boilers or 8 new kitchens and could have been spent on improving homes and neighbourhoods.

If you notice any fly tipping near your home and/or you are aware of who has done this, please contact us (in confidence) so that we can take the appropriate action: Tel: 0113 278 3335 or Email: [info@lyha.co.uk](mailto:info@lyha.co.uk)



The LYHA Estates Team



# Creating a customer focussed culture

We want to provide the best customer service we possibly can. We know that in the past we have sometimes fallen short, but we are listening to what you tell us and doing our best to make positive improvements. These changes won't all happen overnight, but we think we are heading in the right direction.

**You said:** You want us to answer the phone quicker.

**We did:** We have recruited more customer service staff and worked with our Customer Scrutiny Group (see opposite) to upgrade our telephone system. If all our customer service advisors are busy when you call us, you are now given your position in the queue.

This has led to positive feedback from customers and we now have an average waiting time of under two minutes.

Our busy Customer Services team receives more than 1,500 calls every month and each advisor helps around 35 customers every day.

**You said:** The heating system on the Elmetes Estate was unsatisfactory.

**We did:** We have begun a £1.5 million improvement programme at the Elmetes (see full story on page 10). This has already included the installation of cavity wall insulation, new recycling points and we are currently installing new gas heating and hot water systems.

All plans are being developed in partnership with our Elmetes Customer Steering Group to ensure that we understand and respond to customers' needs.

**You said:** You want us to listen more to the views of our customers.

**We did:** Over the last year we have held more than a dozen drop-in events around our estates to meet customers and find out how we can improve the service we offer. After all there's no-one better placed to tell us about the services we provide than the real experts - you, our customers. If you would be interested in us holding a drop in session where you live, please get in touch.

We have also held customer focus groups on specific subjects such as improving our repairs process and how we can improve our technology (such as our website and customer portal). We'd like to thank all of you that took part.

If you'd like to find out more about getting involved and sharing your views, please email [info@lyha.co.uk](mailto:info@lyha.co.uk)





**You said:** You want us to make improvements to the facilities where you live.

**We did:** We have taken on board your suggestions and made various estate improvements throughout the year. These include additional car parking spaces at St John's House; a new drying area at Hawk Street in Barnsley; the enabling of high speed broadband at St Ann's, St Mary's and The Elmetes estates; and deep cleaning of the carpets at our two largest sheltered schemes at St Cyprian's Gardens and West Thorpe in Whitby.

**You said:** You wanted support around the roll out of Universal Credit.

**We did:** We have provided training for our income officers and neighbourhood teams around the latest welfare reforms. They are always available to answer your questions around Universal Credit and benefits in general and should be your first point of contact if you are struggling to pay your rent, as they can signpost you to the right sources of support.

We are working in partnership with Citizens Advice Bureau to deliver dedicated support for customers experiencing financial difficulty, to help them maximise their

income and manage their debts. Referrals are made via our Income Officers.

Many of our customers have now been transferred onto Universal Credit and many more will be affected in the future. To ensure you are ready, you will need a bank account, email address and internet access, as all new Universal Credit claims must be made online at [www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit). If you are unsure how you will be affected financially by the change, you can get free advice from Citizens Advice Bureau [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) or try a benefits calculator such as [www.turn2us.org.uk/benefits/calculator](http://www.turn2us.org.uk/benefits/calculator) or [www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators](http://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators).



## Need Help With Benefits?

If you would like advice from us about benefits, please call us now on 0113 278 3335. We can help.

## Need Help With Debts?

We can help you take the first step to get your finances and debts under control. Call us today and ask to speak to an Income Officer.



# Striving for improvement

We are firmly committed to transforming the organisation by listening to what our customers tell us and taking action.

We are in the process of relaunching our Scrutiny Panel and are delighted to welcome six new members to the group.

The role of our Scrutiny Panel is to ensure that customers are involved in co-producing our improvement plans. The group recently played an important role in helping us redesign our call handling process and we will be working with them on projects throughout the coming year.

In addition to our Scrutiny Panel, we also have a number of residents who sit on our Customer Experience Committee. This is a sub-committee of our Board and is responsible for monitoring and holding LYHA to account on customer related matters. They act as a consultative body, providing feedback and insight, to ensure our policies and services are developed in conjunction with customers.

*"I have been on the Scrutiny Panel now for 3 years and since the recent changes within the LYHA Management team, my voice and our collective*

*voices have been heard and listened to. Because I am interested in supporting my community and its tenants, I was then asked to join The Customer Experience Committee, which reports to the Board. I was very nervous, but this new group made me feel very welcome and encouraged me to share a constructive view. So much so...I have decided to become a long-term member of the committee."*  
Linda



## Our commitment to equality and diversity

Fostering equality and diversity is very important to us. This year the team at LYHA has been delighted to receive the Housing Diversity

Network Accreditation, presented to us by Raj Patel of the Housing Diversity Network. All LYHA staff have also received equality and diversity training to ensure that inclusion is at the heart of all decision making.



Diversity has always been central to our philosophy. One of LYHA's parent organisations, Aggrey Housing (founded in 1955), was the first UK housing provider to focus on providing homes for newcomers to the UK from the former colonies at the end of World War Two. Today we continue to be a diverse organisation, serving communities throughout the Leeds and Yorkshire region and many of Aggrey Housing's original properties, such as Consort Terrace in the Belle Vue area of Leeds, remain part of our housing stock.



## Listening to our customers

Over the last eighteen months we have focused on transforming our operations and delivering an improved service to our customers. We know that we still have some way to go but we believe we are headed in the right direction.

We have recently received the results of our STAR survey, which was sent out to all customers earlier this year. We are encouraged by the results as it shows an uplift in customer satisfaction in nearly all areas. However, we recognise that it takes time to rebuild trust and confidence. Our results are still not up to the highest levels we would like and we will be continuing our improvement drive over the coming year.

- In 2018/19 our overall satisfaction level was **70%** (up from 66% in 2017/18)
- **77%** of respondents told us they are happy with the quality of their home (up from 76% in 2017/18)
- **82%** are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live (up from 78% in 2017/18)
- **83%** feel that their rent represents 'value for money' (up from 77% in 2017/18)
- **65%** feel we provide sufficient opportunities to make your views known (up from 54% in 2017/18)

- **72%** believe we are good at keeping our customers informed (up from 66% in 2017/18)

- The percentage of customers who feel their views are being 'listened to and acted upon' remains the same as last year at **53%**.

This survey (together with other insight gleaned from telephone surveys, focus groups etc.) highlights where we need to focus our efforts going forward.

## Focusing on repairs

We appreciate that repairs is always a key driver of overall satisfaction and we have worked hard over the last 12 months to improve our service. As a result our customer satisfaction has increased significantly, with **83%** of customers telling us they were satisfied with their repair in 2018/19.

We recently held a customer focus group to help us reshape our repairs service and gained valuable insight from customers on how we can make further improvements.

**Percentage of repairs completed on time:**

**97%**  
Emergency

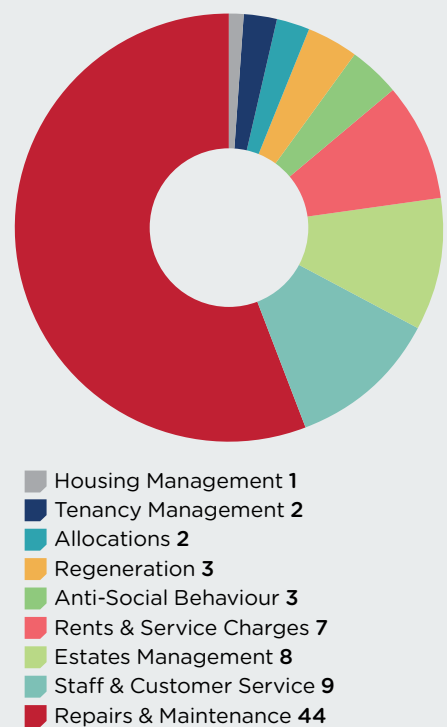
**87.2%**  
Non emergency

## Customer Complaints

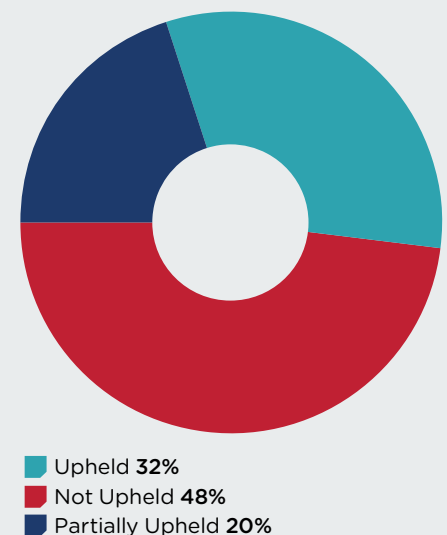
We take all customer complaints very seriously and do our best to resolve them quickly, fairly and effectively. By telling us what has gone wrong, we can help put things right.

We aim for a first time fix and are pleased to see that satisfaction with how we handle complaints has increased by 10% this year.

### Complaint Type



### Complaints Upheld



# Investing in your homes

In 2018/19 we significantly increased what we our spent on our stock.

A significant part of these large increases in spend can be attributed to our additional health and safety testing/inspections and to our estate improvement works at The Elmetes.

**£1,522,490** on repairs - up from £796,000 in 2017/18

**£551,950** on health & safety investment (see page 3)

**£305,330** on maintaining our estates - up from £26,503 in 2017/18

**£1,310,370** on planned improvements to our homes - up from £625,000 in 2017/18

This included: 85 new boilers, 26 new kitchens and 14 new bathrooms.



## Taking action at The Elmetes

Our largest current investment programme is at The Elmetes estate in North Leeds and we are pleased to report that significant progress is being made.

We regret that the heating system installed four years ago did not deliver the promises of improved fuel efficiency that were made to us. Over the last 18 months we have been working hard to try and remedy this situation.

In 2018, after commissioning an in-depth review and consultation with customers, our Board made the decision to replace the heating system and commence a £1.5 million improvement programme on the estate. The Elmetes Customer Steering Group was formed to provide vital customer insight and they have been instrumental in developing proposals.

We undertook a wide ranging search to find a competent and reliable contractor and work has now begun on installing the new

heating/hot water system in all the affected homes.

Other improvements at The Elmetes include resurfacing the stairways, creating improved recycling points and installing cavity wall insulation throughout the estate. Cavity wall insulation has also been installed at St Ann's and St Mary's.

There is still some way to go but we are confident that the improvements being made will make a positive difference to the estate. We are very pleased to be carrying out the programme in partnership with customers.

***“ Being part of the Elmetes Steering Group and seeing the improvement programme move forward has been particularly rewarding; many of the suggestions put forward by the group have either been or will be acted upon in the near future. LYHA have always listened, now they are taking heed and, where feasible, they act. ”***

Steve

***“ We’ve just got a fresh, modern new kitchen and it’s fantastic. We’re also getting a new shower and tiling in the bathroom shortly. LYHA are doing so much to the properties on The Elmetes at the moment, with the new heating system and improvements to our homes. ”***

Christine



Our Elmetes Steering Group is playing a central role in guiding the improvement programme.

# Community investment

LYHA's corporate vision is "To provide quality affordable homes and services that make a positive impact on people and communities".

We are adopting a fresh approach to supporting our wider communities and have recently launched a new Community Investment Strategy.

This focuses on investing resources and delivering activity in the areas where you live, such as improving the physical environment or creating opportunities for people to come together. We will do this in a range of ways and we'd love to hear from you if you have any suggestions.



Our team making a difference on the St Ann's estate in Autumn 2018

There will be lots more about this in our monthly Customer Bulletins. If you don't currently receive these it's because we don't have your email address. So please email: [georgina.thompson@lyha.co.uk](mailto:georgina.thompson@lyha.co.uk) and we will add you to our distribution list.

To view our full strategy, please visit: [www.lyha.co.uk/news/our-new-community-investment-strategy](http://www.lyha.co.uk/news/our-new-community-investment-strategy)

## Why not take advantage of our community fund?

Do you have an idea you think would benefit your local community? Tell us about it and you could be awarded up to £300 from our Community Fund to make it happen!

The aim of our Community Fund is to create opportunities for customers to work together with neighbours and members of their community. You could, for example:

- Provide activities or events to bring the local community together, such as a coffee morning, exercise sessions, summer party or picnic
- Purchase items to improve the look of your surrounding areas, such as benches, plants, hanging baskets etc.

Previous grants we have awarded include: a community Christmas party, large oak barrel planters, a six-seater table and chairs and several raised beds to create a community seating and garden area.

If you have an idea for a project and could use some help from our Community

Fund to make it happen, please email [community.fund@lyha.co.uk](mailto:community.fund@lyha.co.uk) to find out more.



Donations to local Trussell Trust foodbanks for UK Housing Fast

## Supporting our local Foodbanks

Over the course of 2018/19 we have made several donations of food and household provisions to our local Trussell Trust food banks. All these items were very kindly donated by LYHA staff and Board members and we look forward to supporting them once again this year.

The Trussell Trust does a fantastic job of supporting people in need both here in Yorkshire and nationwide. During 2018/19 they gave 89,841 emergency three-day food parcels to households here in Yorkshire and sadly people's reliance on foodbanks continues to rise.



# Delivering new homes

There is a real shortage of affordable housing in both Yorkshire and across the country, so building new homes, in the areas people want to live, is very important.

In 2018/19 we built 42 new homes (30 in Leeds and 12 in Barnsley), bringing the total number of homes owned and managed by LYHA to 1,579.

## Rosemary Thompson House

2018/19 saw the completion of our Burley Lane development in Horsforth, Leeds. This fantastic looking scheme comprises two family houses and eleven two-bedroom apartments for over 55s in a very popular area of Leeds.

The new homes have quite a back story as the land was originally left to us in the will of a long-time Horsforth resident, who wanted it to be used for affordable housing. The development took a number of years to come to fruition due to complications during the legal and planning processes, but we are delighted that it is now complete and fully let.

***“Rosemary Thompson House is a fantastic place to live. It’s well built, in a wonderful location, with lots of amenities on the doorstep. Moving there is***



Celebrating the opening of Rosemary Thompson House in May 2019 with the local Councillor and one of the benefactor’s trustees.

***one of the best things we’ve done; we were so lucky to get one of the homes.”***  
**Mr Whiddup**

We’ve also worked with local conservation volunteers to transform an overgrown area adjacent to the homes into a new community garden, complete with bird and bat boxes and an insect hotel.

## Catherine’s Walk

Work began in August 2018 on our Catherine’s Walk development in Barnsley. This is the largest development that LYHA has undertaken in many years and once complete will comprise 54 affordable homes for families and older

people: including 40 two- and three-bedroom houses, eight apartments and six bungalows.

The new homes will be completed in Autumn this year and five will be available for shared ownership.



We have worked with local school children to come up with the names for the new streets

## Working with partners

Many of the new homes we build are what is known as 'Section 106' properties, where a developer is building a new estate and a percentage of the homes are allocated for affordable housing.

We work in partnership with the developer to deliver these affordable homes and then manage them for rent and shared ownership. These new-build properties are always popular with customers as they offer high spec, modern accommodation and the chance to be part of a community.

## About Shared Ownership

Shared Ownership is a government scheme designed to help new buyers get on the property ladder. Put simply, it allows you to buy a share of a property (anywhere between 35% and 75%) and rent the remaining share; with the option to increase the share you own later (up to 100% when you own your own home outright).

It is mainly aimed at first time buyers and families whose circumstances change, but if you can't afford to buy outright and only have a small deposit, this could be a great option for you.

*"I moved into a LYHA shared ownership property about 8 months ago and it's been such a positive move. I'd previously owned a property with my husband, but when we split up, I struggled to find somewhere that suited my needs. I wanted to live as*



*part of a community, somewhere light and bright, with easy access (as I have a long-term health condition). Then I saw an advert for this shared ownership property and it's perfect for me. It's all on one level, close to where I lived before and I'm near to lots of local amenities, so it ticks all the boxes. I think a lot of people don't know about shared ownership or realise it could be for them, but it's a great option that could work for so many people."*  
Suzie

To find out more about the LYHA shared ownership scheme, please email: [helptobuy@lyha.co.uk](mailto:helptobuy@lyha.co.uk)





# Meet the team

Contracts Manager, Russell Beavers, has been part of the LYHA Property and Assets team for 18 months. He oversees our repairs and planned works programme and manages the contractors who carry out the work on our behalf.



My job is really varied; no two days are the same. I typically spend about three days out of the office every week, visiting customers and schemes throughout our region to assess repairs and arrange for the necessary new or remedial works to be carried out. My role predominantly takes me to Whitby, Scarborough, Barnsley and Leeds. Some days I can visit up to a dozen properties if they are in close proximity, other days it's more like four or five. On a bright, sunny day the journey over the North York moors is beautiful and because I live in York, I'm pretty central.

The other two days a week I try to spend more time at my desk. I manage the day to day negotiations and agree work with our contractors which means I have a lot of meetings, so my time in the office tends to be very busy. We have recently welcomed an additional surveyor to the team which I hope will help us pick up more long-standing repairs and improve our levels of customer satisfaction.

One of the things I love most about my job is getting to meet customers. I think that face to face contact is vital: sometimes I'll visit to discuss one thing but end up helping customers with lots of other queries whilst I'm there. Because we're a small team it's easy to get other colleagues involved and although we have to be realistic in terms of budget, I will always do whatever I can to help. It's gratifying to pick up a situation, put the necessary action in place and have a happy customer at the end. That's a successful outcome for me. Everyone deserves to live in a good quality home and we try our best to provide that.

Of course, there are challenges, many of which are beyond my control: everything from extreme weather conditions and nesting seagulls can mean that we are unable to carry out the work we want to do. And, of course, we don't have a limitless budget, so we have to prioritise

However, I really enjoy my job. I've worked in the building industry for 40 years and the Property and Assets team here at LYHA is a great bunch of people. We work well together and everyone is prepared to help each other out.



The LYHA Property & Assets Team



# Money matters: how we've spent our rent and service charge

We are pleased to have retained our V1 rating for financial viability, which is the highest grade awarded by the Regulator of Social Housing. This means we are managing our finances in the best possible way and providing value for money to the customer.

For us 'value for money' is all about efficiency, economy and effectiveness.

The charts below show where we spent our rent and service charges during 2018/19.

**Total amount we spent on repairs and maintenance (excluding additional Health & Safety)**

2018/19: **£1,522,490**

**Planned works**

2018/19: **£1,310,370**

**Estates**

2018/19: **£305,330**

**Health & safety/compliance**

2018/19: **£551,950**

**Community investment**

2018/19: **£23,510**

**Elmetes improvement programme**

2018/19: **£587,920**

**New builds/developments**

2018/19: **£5,486,000**

## Funded from

Surplus from operations:  
**£1,722,920**

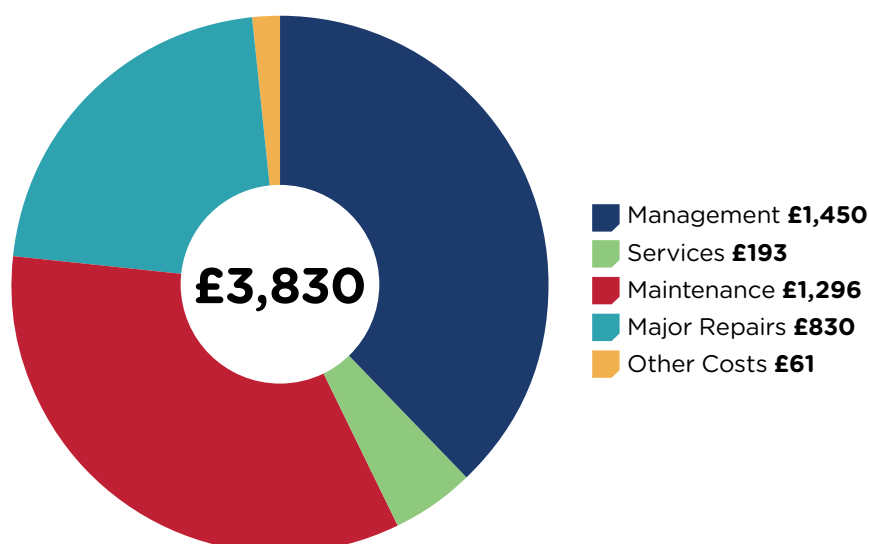
Home sales: **£1,134,000**

Grants received: **£1,625,000**

New loans: **£3,500,000**

## How we've spent our rents and service charges in 2018/19

These figures equate to an average spend per home of **£3,830**



## Forecast spending for 2019/20

Repairs & maintenance:  
**£1,311,000**

Planned works: **£711,580**

Estates: **£440,350**

Community investment:  
**£40,000**

Elmetes improvement programme: **£700,000**

New developments:  
**£5,486,000**

# Our Team

## Executive Management Team

- **Mark Pearson**  
Chief Executive
- **Adam Hutchinson**  
Director of Resources
- **Joanna Chambers**  
Head of Home & Growth
- **Gavin Fisk**  
Director of Customer Services

## Operational Managers

- **Michael Driscoll**  
Neighbourhood Services Manager
- **Wayne Fox**  
Property Services Manager
- **Russell Beavers**  
Contracts Manager
- **Jason Hutchinson**  
Estates & Facilities Manager
- **Joe Taylor**  
Customer Services Team Leader
- **Craig Warren**  
Neighbourhood Services Team Leader

# Our Board

- **Mike Gaskell (Chair)**
- **Liz Sandwith**
- **Jon Prashar**
- **Adele Rae**
- **Philip Johnson**
- **Gail Teasdale**
- **Anne McMaster**
- **Simon Edwards**
- **Victoria Tolmie-Loverseed**

# Thank you

A big thank you to everyone - customers, colleagues and partners - who have helped us to produce this annual report.

If you have any comments or questions, or would like this report in large print or a different language, please contact: [georgina.thompson@lyha.co.uk](mailto:georgina.thompson@lyha.co.uk)

# Get in touch

For all general enquiries:

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- 📘 /LeedsYorkshireHA

