

East Riding of Yorkshire Council wishes all Homing In readers a very Happy Christmas and New Year

Homing In

WINTER 2017

TENANTS' AND LEASEHOLDERS' MAGAZINE



Easton Road estate improvements

Tenants on the Easton Road estate in Bridlington are benefitting from a £2.2m improvement scheme

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Council's Annual Report to Tenants 2017

Including information about how we have performed over the last 12 months

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EAST RIDING
OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

Easton Road estate

Tenants on the Easton Road estate in Bridlington are benefitting from a £2.2 million improvement scheme which will make their homes warmer, reduce condensation and cut heating bills.

The first phase of work on the 132-home scheme has just been completed, including replacement windows, re-roofing and external wall insulation, all of which meet current building regulation requirements.

The first phase has included refurbishing more than half the homes on the estate, with work on the others due to start in the spring.

Contractors Hobson and Porter Ltd were appointed by the council's infrastructure and facilities service to carry out the work. Similar schemes have already been completed in Goole and a number of East Riding

villages in recent years, and it is hoped that more homes will be refurbished in the future, depending on Government funding.

Tenants including resident Carol West are already enjoying the benefits of the refurbishments. "We have only had a few frosty mornings so far, but my flat seems to be warmer already and it looks very nice," she said.

Alison Hannah, the council's assistant principal building surveyor, who is project manager of the Easton Road estate project, said: "The homes were built in the 1960s with very little insulation. It is hoped that these works will address the real problem of the cost of heating the properties by providing energy efficiencies and thermal comfort for the residents well into the future."



CELEBRATING: On the front cover, Alison Hannah, centre, with residents Shirley Smith and Carol West, celebrating the completion of the first phase of the improvement scheme

Tenant representatives meet Housing Minister

Representatives of the East Riding Council Tenants' Forum were among around 80 social tenants who were invited to a recent meeting in York with Alok Sharma MP, Minister of State for housing and planning.

Allan Botham, chairman of the ER tenants' forum, and Mavis Vines attended the landlord and tenant engagement session, which was hosted by the Northern Housing Consortium alongside the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Discussions between tenants and the Minister took place in a round table format and covered a wide variety of topics, including tenant voice, funding and investment, quality of stock and recognition of local issues.

In the coming weeks, the Minister will be writing to all tenants who attended the session and he indicated that discussions on the day would help to shape the upcoming social Housing Green Paper.

Tracy Harrison, NHC deputy chief

executive, said the meeting was a 'golden opportunity' for those attending to make their voices heard. "The event presented our members and their residents with a real opportunity to discuss how they feel about where they live, and how services are provided to them by their landlord," she said.



TENANTS MEET MP: Mavis Vines, second left, and Allan Botham, right, at the meeting with the Housing Minister, and top right, Alok Sharma MP

CONTACT US

HOUSING SERVICE

For all housing service enquiries ring (01482) 396301, email housing.services@eastriding.gov.uk, or write using our Freepost address: FREEPOST RSRX-ALSK-RRHT, Housing, Transportation and Public Protection, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Cross Street, Beverley, HU17 9BA.

TENANT PARTICIPATION

For tenant participation services or to contact **Homing In**, ring Bob Blair, senior tenant participation officer, tel (01482) 396151 email bob.blair@eastriding.gov.uk

Want to buy a home but on a low income?

Low Cost Home Ownership schemes aim to help households who are unable to buy on the open market.

There are lots of schemes available, but the most common in East Riding are Shared Ownership and Discounted Market Sale.

If you can't quite afford the mortgage on 100 percent of a home, Shared Ownership offers you the chance to buy a share of your home (between 25 per cent and 75 percent of the property's value) and pay rent on the remaining share.

Later on, you could buy a bigger share when you can afford to. You'll need a deposit but this can be as low as 5 percent of the share you're buying. If you need to move, you can sell your share at any time.

Discounted market sale does exactly what it says on the tin! Properties are sold at a reduced price; this can be as low as 65 percent of market value.

You own 100 percent of the property but when you wish to move the discount must be passed on to the next buyer.



East Riding Tenants' Forum – everyone welcome

The East Riding Tenants' Forum (ERTF) is for ALL tenants and everyone is welcome to attend its meetings.

The ERTF is an umbrella group for all East Riding council tenant associations, informal groups and tenants.

It meets at least four times a year to discuss housing issues and receive presentations from council officers and other agencies on housing-related issues.

The forum has its own constitution and a committee made up of a maximum of eight elected tenants.

Members are involved in formulating and reviewing housing policies and procedure and providing customer feedback to guide the council's service provision.

Items for discussion include topics such as programmed

works (re-roofing and double glazing programmes), rents, tenancy fraud and much more.

This is your opportunity to find out more about issues affecting you.

The meetings are held at East Riding Leisure Beverley in Flemingate, Beverley, HU17 0LT.

Meeting dates for 2018 (Mondays 10am):

- 29 January
- 23 April
- 30 July
- 29 October.

Tenants wishing to attend forum meetings should contact the tenant participation team, email [tenant participation team](mailto:participation@eastriding.gov.uk), email participation@eastriding.gov.uk or ring (01482) 396301.

Sheltered housing proposals – deadline extended



The council would like to thank all tenants who have already taken part in the consultation on sheltered housing proposals.

The deadline for people to give their views has now been extended and more roadshows are planned in response to the feedback, so that tenants have even more chance to have their say.

The council is proposing a range of improvements to sheltered housing and associated services based on the response it received from residents in the first stage of a consultation process last year.

The suggestions include providing a more tailored service for tenants based on their individual needs by replacing the role of wardens with two new types of support and contact which would offer a more comprehensive service.

Currently, all sheltered housing tenants pay for a warden service whether they need it or not.

The proposals would offer a fairer model, with tenants able to choose the level of support they want.

The new support service would also be available to the wider community rather than just sheltered housing tenants so it would enable more people to live independently in their own home for longer.

It would also offer more 24/7 coverage to respond to emergency calls quicker.

Other proposals include improvements to sheltered housing stock and initiatives to address issues of social isolation and loneliness.

The second stage of the consultation was scheduled to end on 31 October but this has now been extended to 15 December in

response to feedback so tenants have even more time to have their say on the proposals.

Councillor Symon Fraser, the council's portfolio holder for asset management, housing and the environment, said: "We've had a good response to the consultation and offer a big thank you to everyone who has taken part so far.

"However, we want to make sure we reach as many people as possible, face-to-face, to answer questions and to help them be part of the process.

"We've listened to all the feedback so far and people have lots of questions about the proposals so we think it's important to extend the deadline and make further effort to speak to tenants so they can have their say on how we improve sheltered housing and support services.

"We held 20 drop-in sessions at sheltered housing schemes across the East Riding and we are now organising roadshows to visit more schemes so that we can hear from tenants who may not have taken part so far."

Every sheltered housing property received a questionnaire and about 900 completed forms have been received by the council, which Councillor Fraser said was a good response rate of about 50% – but the council wants to make sure that every tenant has as much opportunity as possible to air their views.

If any tenants would like more information about the proposals, or to request another consultation form, please email tenants.participation@eastriding.gov.uk or telephone the tenants' participation team on (01482) 396301.

Your Christmas recycling guide

More rubbish is generated over Christmas and New Year than any other time of the year – and most of it can be recycled.

Residents will soon be receiving their 2018 bin collection calendars through the post, which will show this year's festive collection dates for blue, brown and green bins.

Bin collections will be back to normal from Monday 15 January.

Blue bins can be used to recycle plastic sweet tubs, metal biscuit tins, wrapping paper, Christmas cards, all envelopes, cardboard

boxes, cardboard advent calendars, all glass and plastic bottles, jars, cans, books, egg boxes, plastic tubs and trays, juice cartons, newspapers, magazines and junk mail.

Large cardboard boxes can also be flattened and placed next to blue bins on collection days.

Brown bins can be used to recycle all your food and garden waste cooked or uncooked food including Christmas dinner plate scrapings, turkey carcasses, meat bones, fruit and vegetable peelings, leftover meat, and egg shells.

Real Christmas trees – with all lights and decorations removed – can



RECYCLING FESTIVE WASTE: Waste and recycling officers Chris Black and Karen Wagg

be recycled by placing them next to your brown bin for collection in January.

Or take them to a household waste recycling site.

Clothing banks can be used to recycle clothes, shoes, materials and bedding.

Local household waste recycling sites will be open from 10am to 5pm each day except Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve when they will shut at 4pm. They will be closed all day on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

For more information visit the website www.eastriding.gov.uk/bins

House exchange – free for council tenants

WANT to move house?

The council has signed up with www.houseexchange.org.uk a founder member of the national HomeSwap Direct Scheme. It is free for council tenants of the East Riding.

Need to move?

Visit the House Exchange website and search for a new home. It's quick, it's easy and helps over 800 people to move every month.

Part of the National HomeSwap Direct scheme, House Exchange is totally free for our tenants to use and can help you to find a place to move anywhere in the UK. Nearly 200,000 people are already registered – why not join them in your search for a new home?

House Exchange will match you with other people who need to move, so you can exchange homes as quickly as possible.



Find your move today by visiting www.houseexchange.org.uk



Council's Annual Report to Tenants 2017

Welcome to our Annual Report to Tenants 2017.

It includes information about how we have performed over the last 12 months.

If you would like to become a tenant representative and get involved in the way your home is managed more information is available on our website at www.eastriding.gov.uk/housing/council-tenants

or if you'd like to make any comments about this report please get in touch on (01482) 396301 or email tenant.participation@eastriding.gov.uk

The results of our most recent tenant satisfaction survey are referred to throughout this report.

We manage 11,354 council properties

including 4,868 houses
2,782 bungalows
3,622 flats
82 maisonettes
and 228 leasehold properties

We have 45 tenants' groups across the East Riding

Our Tenants' Forum is run by tenants and gets involved in housing-related issues.

During 2016/17 we

- allocated 961 new tenancies
- carried out 38,000 responsive repairs
- processed 140 Right to Buy applications
- dealt with 570 homeless applications
- increased our housing stock by 92 properties
- managed a waiting list of 8,000 applicants.

Tenant involvement and empowerment

- The Tenant Scrutiny Panel has looked into the housing strategy, the Annual Report to Tenants and the new tenancy visit questionnaire this year
- the Tenants' Complaints Panel was set up in 2014/15 to look into complaints referred to them by tenants
- we review the contents of our web pages every three months and update them as required
- 28 visits have been made as part of the re-launched Tenants as Inspectors programme
- 65 per cent tenants are satisfied with the opportunities to participate in the housing service
- 78 per cent tenants are satisfied with the Council as their landlord this is an increase of one per cent from 2014.

Home

- We completed a capital programme of £15.76 million in order to maintain the Decent Homes Standard, and improve the condition of our properties and estates
- we completed the purchase and repair of 19 properties, built 26 new homes and purchased 38 new homes through planning agreements with developers
- we spent £4 million on responsive repairs to council homes and £2 million on bringing empty homes up to standard before re-letting
- 84 per cent of tenants are satisfied with the overall quality of our repairs
- 92 per cent of repairs were completed right first time
- 78 per cent of tenants are satisfied with the way that Housing Services deals with repairs and maintenance
- 81 per cent of tenants are satisfied with the quality of their homes
- 91 per cent new tenants were satisfied with their homes.

Tenancy

- We continue to let our properties in line with our allocations policy, and we publish monthly information on those lettings on our website
- we continue to offer the House Exchange website for our tenants to use free of charge to help them move home. 527 tenants are registered for an exchange
- last year we re-let 961 properties, the average re-let time in 2016/17 was 29 days
- information on all aspects of holding a tenancy is available on our website, which is regularly updated
- 95 per cent of new tenants found our allocation policy clear and easy to understand
- we have trained and involved 29 tenant inspectors and have received 399 new tenancy responses from April 2016 to end of March 2017 – responses were either through the email link sent or a visit made by a tenant inspector.



Annual Report 2017 (cont)

Neighbourhood and community

- We gave out 20 garden maintenance grants
- we have £31,000 in our 'Safe and Sound' budget and £10,000 in the 'Safe and Secure Estates' budget. Both of which can be spent by tenants through the agreed criteria
- we continue to work jointly with other agencies to address issues relating to anti-social behaviour
- 82 per cent of tenants are satisfied with the safety and security of their home, and 77 per cent are satisfied with the safety and security of their neighbourhood
- 78 per cent tenants are satisfied with how the council maintains the open spaces around their home
- 86 per cent of our tenants are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live.

Value for money

- Our Housing Revenue Account records all income and expenditure relating to our council housing and the services we provide to tenants. We make every effort to provide value for money
- we increased our use of computer-generated letters to save time and money
- 77 per cent of tenants are satisfied with their rent as value for money
- in 2016/17 94 per cent of our income came from rents for council houses and garages, and one per cent from capital funding from the Government
- in 2016/7 we spent two per cent of our income on housing management and 49 per cent on improving our existing dwellings and estates.

Feedback

We are committed to being a good landlord and treating tenants fairly across all service areas.

However, as in all large organisations, occasionally things may not always work out as intended.

If this happens, we will try and resolve the problem by informal local agreement wherever possible.

If you have any comments, compliments or complaints please contact (01482) 396301 or email us at housing.services@eastriding.gov.uk

Contact us

For all council housing matters:

Telephone: (01482) 396301
Email: housing.services@eastriding.gov.uk

East Riding Tenants Forum:

Chair: Allan Botham
Telephone: (01482) 872313
Email: botham42@botham42.karoo.co.uk
Secretary: Colin Loveday
Telephone: (01964) 543028
Email: colin.loveday@email.com



Save money on your fuel bills

Tenants are being offered the chance to save money on their energy bills through a collective switching process.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council runs a scheme called YORSwitch which is part of a national collective offering people the chance to save money on their electricity and gas bills by switching suppliers.

Auctions are held in which energy companies submit tariff offers and the best one is offered to people who register for the scheme.

The latest auction again resulted in significant potential savings for customers. SSE secured the winning tariff for dual fuel and electric only tariffs.

The process is easy and East Riding of Yorkshire Council takes care of everything. Residents can register their energy consumption on the YORSwitch website www.eastriding.gov.uk/YORSwitch and, after the auction is held, can choose whether to switch to the winning tariff, although there is no obligation to do so.

Total savings for East Riding residents, since the scheme began in 2013, is just under £4.5million, with almost 20,000 households switching.

The next YORSwitch auction will open for registrations on Tuesday, 5 December.

The auction will take place on 13 February. Visit www.eastriding.gov.uk/yorswitch for more information or telephone (01482) 393939 – remember to have your latest energy bill to hand.

Rent: Direct Debit

New monthly payment date:

With effect from 1 January 2018 – you can choose to pay your rent by Direct Debit on either the 1st of the month, the 7th of the month, the 14th of the month, the 21st of the month, or fortnightly – on the second Monday of each rent fortnight.

Take the hassle out of paying your rent – set up a Direct Debit

Direct Debit is a secure, easy, convenient and cost effective way of paying your rent which takes the hassle out of paying.

Over 110,000 of our council tax payers and 3,400 council tenants are happy to use Direct Debit and it can save you time avoiding queues, writing and sending cheques and remembering to pay.

If you are in receipt of partial housing benefit and should your entitlement change at any time we will notify you of your new payment amount. Payments are protected by the 'Direct Debit Guarantee'

- This guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit – the council will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request the council to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request
- If an error is made in the payment of your

Direct Debit, by the council or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society

- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. You can set this up:
 - Online at www.eastriding.gov.uk/rentdd
 - If you currently pay by standing order and wish to switch to Direct Debit, you will need to cancel your standing order.

Puzzle time – sudoku and wordsearch

9	1						
		5		7		3	
		2		7			4
	8				4	2	
		8	5	4			
	1	3					6
3		4		2			
6	7			5			
					2		7

Sudoku answers on page 8.

W	S	W	R	N	O	S	A	E	S	K	Y
R	I	N	R	C	A	N	D	L	E	K	D
E	T	N	O	E	F	I	N	D	L	E	A
A	M	I	T	W	S	R	O	Z	E	N	E
T	O	B	O	E	B	A	O	O	N	S	R
H	S	V	R	D	R	A	Z	Z	I	L	B
I	F	I	S	I	D	T	L	I	E	M	R
S	F	F	R	E	E	K	I	L	K	N	E
E	B	C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	G
E	O	T	E	L	T	S	I	M	E	A	N
W	I	T	O	B	O	G	G	A	N	V	I
L	S	L	E	I	G	H	T	C	D	E	G

Prize wordsearch

Win a £10 gift voucher

IT'S CHRISTMASTIME...

Simply find the following words inside the grid: Wintertime, Fireside, Christmas, Gingerbread, Blizzard, Ski, Sleigh, Wreath, Toboggan, Mistletoe, Snowball, Candle, Season, Frozen.

To be in with a chance of winning a £10 gift voucher, send the solution to: **Bob Blair, FREEPOST RSRX-ALSK-RRHT, Housing, transportation and public protection, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Cross Street, Beverley HU17 9BA by Friday, 26 January 2018.**

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
TEL: _____

Extra help if there is a power cut...



Northern Powergrid, the company responsible for the electricity network that keeps the lights on for eight million people across the North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire, is raising awareness of its free Powergrid Care service for customers who may need extra support in a power cut.

Sometimes a power cut is more than just an inconvenience, and you may find that you need a little extra support.

This could be for many reasons; someone in your home may have a medical condition, be elderly or disabled, have young children, or

might rely on electricity for medical equipment.

If you feel that you, or a friend or family member, would benefit from the extra support, you can sign up to their free Priority Services Register.

Customers who register may be able to benefit from a range of services, depending on the nature of the power cut and their personal circumstances, including:

- Use of a special 24/7 priority phone number, which will get you through to one of their specially trained advisors straightaway. That number is 0800 169 2996.

- Extra contact with you throughout your power cut, to check you are OK. They may also be able to send one of their customer support vehicles to your area to provide hot drinks, snacks and charging points during longer power cuts.
- Advanced and appropriate notice if they need to turn your power off to carry out planned work, and will updates throughout the time your power is off.

Customers can sign up friends or family – as well as themselves – at any time by going to <http://www.northernpowergrid.com/care> or calling 0800 169 2996.

Customers can also follow Northern Powergrid's 24-hour Twitter (@northpowergrid) and Facebook pages or use their mobile to visit its online interactive power cut map (www.northernpowergrid.com/power-cuts).

Customer service advisors are also available 24/7 at the electricity distributor's contact centre and can be contacted by calling 105 – the new, free, easy-to-remember power cut phone number.

Electrical testing and smoke alarms in council properties

The council has a duty to make sure that all electrical fixed wiring in domestic properties are tested within the recommended five year duration.

At present we have two electrical contractors carrying out these tests and upgrade works, The Gas Company, and A Coole Electrical.

These two companies are in the process of sending out letters to properties where we have no record of an electrical test been carried out within the last five years.

In addition, the council has a legal duty to provide a working smoke alarm to each level of your home.

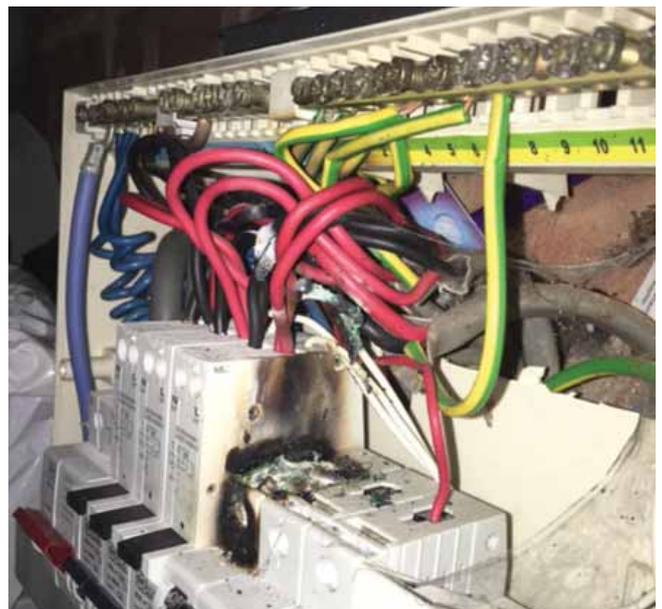
When the council, The Gas Company and A Coole Electrical carry out gas servicing and electrical testing/repairs to the council housing stock they will be highlighting where smoke alarms are required.

Your home could be at risk of an electrical fire if electrical fixed wiring within your home is not checked at five year intervals.

The photograph on the

right shows a consumer unit fitted in an under stairs cupboard with scorch marks due to an electrical fault, this particular property had not been electrically tested within the last five years.

If you believe that your electrical wiring has not been checked within the last five years or that your home is not fitted with a smoke alarm to each level please contact the East Riding of Yorkshire Council electrical housing maintenance team on (01482) 395830 or 395833.



RSA Low-cost home contents insurance for East Riding of Yorkshire tenants

Low-cost
Easy payment
No excess

East Riding of Yorkshire has negotiated a home contents insurance scheme specifically designed for our tenants giving you peace of mind against life's little accidents. Cover is provided from just £0.73 a week and may depend upon age and your postal code area. Call 01482 396151 to find out more

DO YOU HAVE AN INTERESTING STORY?

IF you know of an interesting person or project in your community that you would like to see featured in Homing In, please tell us about them.

It could be a charity campaign, an interesting hobby, a long-term resident or anything else you think people would be interested to learn about.

Call Bob Blair, senior tenant participation officer, on (01482) 396301, or email [bob.blair@eastriding.gov.uk](mailto:blair@eastriding.gov.uk)

Wordsearch winners

Last issue's winners, picked out of 'Bob's bucket', were: Mrs Booth, Withernsea, Mrs Foster, Anlaby and Mr Wilson, Bridlington. All win a £10 gift voucher.

Sudoku answers

9	7	1	3	4	8	6	5	2
8	4	2	5	6	1	7	9	3
5	3	6	2	9	7	1	8	4
7	8	5	6	1	3	4	2	9
2	6	9	8	5	4	3	7	1
4	1	3	7	2	9	8	6	5
3	9	8	4	7	2	5	1	6
6	2	7	1	3	5	9	4	8
1	5	4	9	8	6	2	3	7