

**YOUR HOME,
YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD**



Building Byker's future together... our journey so far

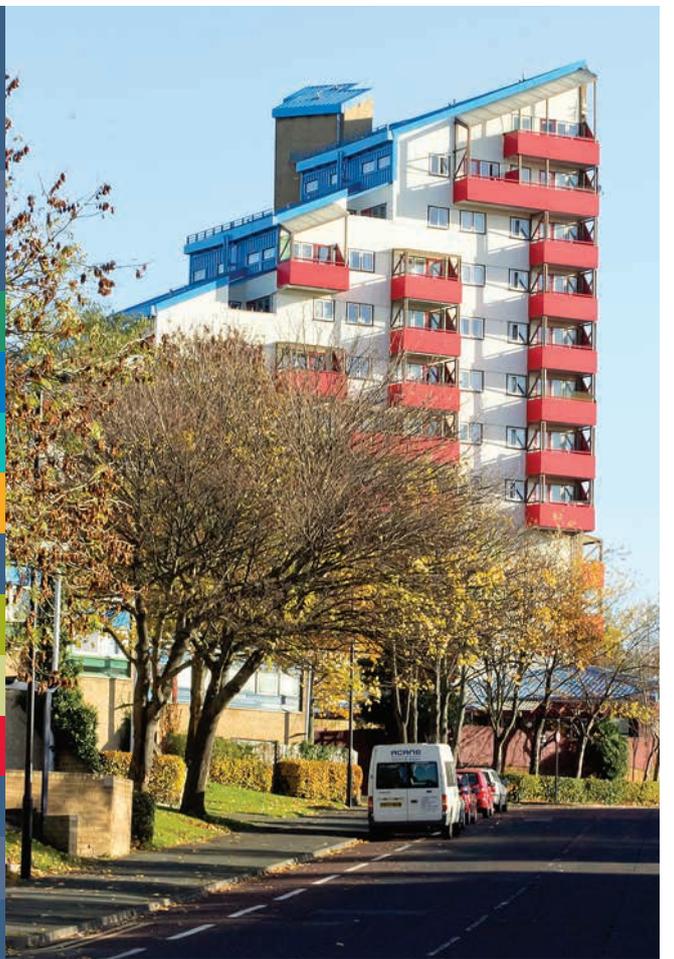


**Our Tenants' First Annual Report
October 2014**

www.bykercommunitytrust.org

CONTENTS

	Page
Foreword	3
Developing this year's Annual Report	4
The Chief Executive answers your questions	5
Home Standard	6
Neighbourhood and Community Standard	9
Tenancy Standard	12
Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard	14
Governance and Financial Viability Standard	18
Value for Money Standard	21
Awards	23
Rent Standard	25
Local Offers	28
Glossary of Terms	30
A Big Thank You	32



LANGUAGES

This information is about Byker Community Trust, which owns the Byker Wall estate in Newcastle upon Tyne. If you want this information in your own language an interpreter can help you on 0191 278 8633. This information is also available in large print, Braille and audio tape. We can also arrange for you to see a British Sign Language interpreter.

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České Tato informace je o Byker Společenství Trust, která vlastní majetek Byker zeď v Newcastle upon Tyne.
Czech Chcete-li tuto informaci ve vašem vlastním jazyce tlumočnick vám může pomoci na 0191 278 8633.

Français Cette information est d'environ Byker Community Trust, qui est propriétaire du domaine Byker mur
French à Newcastle upon Tyne. Si vous voulez cette information dans votre propre langue un interprète
peut vous aider sur 0191 278 8633.

Polonais Informacja ta jest o Byker Wspólnoty Trust, który jest właścicielem nieruchomości Byker ściany w
Polish Newcastle upon Tyne. Jeśli chcesz tę informację w swoim własnym języku tłumacza może pomóc na
0191 278 8633.

Português Esta informação é sobre Byker Community Trust, que detém a propriedade Byker parede em
Portuguese Newcastle upon Tyne. Se você quiser que essas informações no seu próprio idioma de um
intérprete pode ajudá-lo no 0191 278 8633.

русский Эта информация о Byker Community Trust, которая владеет недвижимости Byker стене в
Russian Ньюкасл-апон-Тайн. Если вы хотите эту информацию на своем родном языке переводчик
может помочь вам на 0191 278 8633.

FRONT COVER PHOTOS Main image: The Rapid Response Team. Second image: race at the Family Fun Day.
Third image: dressing up at Family Fun Day.

FOREWORD

Welcome to our first Annual Report to tenants called 'Building Byker's future together...our journey so far'. This document sets out some performance milestones which we have completed since stock transfer and celebrates early achievements.



Jill Haley
Chief Executive

“I could not miss this opportunity to once again request that you get involved because your views are extremely important to us.”

Firstly I have to say how struck I have been by the enthusiasm of everyone associated with the Byker Community Trust (BCT) and the great work that talented people in and around us are undertaking in order to make positive progress. All of which has helped us to achieve greater value for money and increased customer satisfaction.

Byker will undoubtedly experience significant change in coming years, given the substantial amount of capital investment which is planned for the estate and also the business improvement approach which BCT are adopting. For this reason we have repeatedly asked you in our newsletters and communications to get involved with us. I could not miss this opportunity to make that request to you once again because your views are extremely important to us.

I am of course delighted that more and more residents are already beginning to work with us, giving us their valuable opinions and advice on how we can improve services and customer experience. There is an exciting buzz about the place these days and I know from listening to BCT Board and staff that this always accelerates when we work together with you, our tenants. The Board and team are hugely grateful for the individuals who continue to come forward to work with us and help BCT drive further towards our goal for excellence in all we do.

We are indeed living through very challenging economic times at present and as a consequence many of our tenants are feeling the full force of that downturn. BCT along with our key partners, are working very closely together to make sure that we continue to support our tenants in every way that we can.

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to thank BCT Board, staff, partners and our tenants, for the continued enthusiasm and commitment which they have all shown. Together we have made a firm fist of our financial and business commitments, of delivering the Byker stock transfer promises and in making early improvements on the estate. We are at the beginning of our journey to make Byker the best that it can be and it's heartening to see so many individuals who are prepared to go above and beyond the call of duty, in order to achieve this.

Our commitment is to continue to work with our tenants to improve the business and ultimately to deliver the strong and vibrant future which Byker deserves.

DEVELOPING THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL REPORT

Meet the BCT Tenant Communications Group - they have been working hard to develop this, our first Annual Report to Tenants. They considered what information tenants might want and also what questions tenants might want to ask BCT. The Tenant Communications Group wanted to ensure that the report meets the needs of you, our tenants. Here is the answer to a few questions about what BCT does.



HOW WAS THIS, OUR FIRST ANNUAL REPORT TO TENANTS, DEVELOPED?

Our 'Annual Report to Tenants' has been developed by tenants, for tenants.

The report has been driven by the 'Tenant Communications Group' who have suggested the style, layout and pictures for the report. As tenants, they then designed questions for BCT staff to respond to and the answers given will hopefully provide you with the information you want.

In addition, the Tenant Communications Group have ensured that the content of this report is easy to understand. It is also a chance to give everyone an insight into what BCT has achieved and how BCT has continued to strive to put tenants at the heart of everything we do.

SOMETIMES I DON'T UNDERSTAND SOME OF THE TERMS USED. CAN YOU HELP?

To help you, we have put a 'glossary of terms' towards the end of this report to help you to understand some of the terms used.

We hope you will enjoy reading about the journey so far and BCT's plans for the future.



JILL HALEY (CHIEF EXECUTIVE) ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS

It sounds like life in BCT has been busy. What has been happening this year?

We celebrated our second birthday in July 2014, and I am proud to report that Byker Community Trust is in great shape.

Our first two years have seen the worst national financial crisis on record and huge changes for the housing sector, yet BCT has still managed to deliver everything it set out to deliver... and more. We are continuing to deliver our offer promises made to you, which include delivering our £26 million investment programme over the initial five year period.

Jim Coulter, who brings with him extensive knowledge and experience, became Chair of BCT in April 2013. Jim, who is also Chair of Age UK, North Tyneside, was previously Chief Executive of the National Housing Federation for 17 years. Our governance is in excellent health and we are looking to the future with real confidence.

My thanks go to all of the tenants who give their time so generously to help improve our services. You can be proud of the part tenants have played in supporting BCT's progress.



What does BCT want to achieve?

We want to develop thriving communities, where our tenants are proud to live in and other residents aspire to live in.

Our Vision is:

To secure for the Byker estate high quality sustainable housing and services, where people want to live and work with a sense of pride in their homes and community.

Our Mission is:

We are committed to improving the local environment in our community by building partnerships with businesses, community leaders and our neighbours to create a cleaner, safe place to live and work.

Our Values are:

- Doing our very best for the Byker estate.
- Respecting and valuing people.
- Being open, honest and approachable.
- Being positive about the challenges we face.
- Equality in everything we do.

It is important for us that we live by these values if we are to provide the best possible services for our tenants and communities.



HOME STANDARD

This is about repairs and improvements.

Michelle Bell (Head of Property Investment, Development and Asset Management) answers your questions.

Has Byker been given a special status?

Yes. English Heritage have given the Byker Wall Estate, Grade 2* listing. This means they are particularly important buildings that warrant every effort to preserve them. It is one of only two estates in the country which has this status. The other being in Tower Hamlets, London.

What is the relationship between BCT and Newcastle City Council (NCC) and Your Homes Newcastle (YHN)?

Both NCC and YHN supply some of the services that you receive on BCT's behalf. BCT is a Housing Association and NCC and YHN are our contractors.

How long after a repair is reported should it take to be repaired?

Currently, each repair is given a priority code which will depend on the nature of the fault and the possible risk to health and safety. From the priority code you will be able to get an indication of how quickly the repair will be carried out.

Priority	Target completion time
Emergency (Example)	Attend by appointment within four hours A leaking pipe that is causing damage to the property
Urgent (Example)	Attend by appointment within 1,3,or 7 working days A faulty socket that is not dangerous
Routine (Example)	Attend by appointment within 15 working days Fixing a kitchen drawer
Planned maintenance (Example)	Attend by appointment within 40 working days An estate fencing repair that is not dangerous



Nick Brown MP visits Avondale House.

Where necessary did you carry out Annual Gas Safety inspections to all of your properties?

Yes we did carry out all of our Annual Gas Safety Inspections and those with-out gas comply with the appropriate inspection regime.

Are BCT responsible for all repairs or are some repairs a tenant's own responsibility?

BCT are not responsible for all repairs. For example, if you lost your keys and we have to change the locks, then this repair, would be a tenant's own responsibility. If we carry out this repair, it is called a rechargeable repair.

If we know the repair being reported is rechargeable we will tell you. However, this is not always possible and sometimes the repair may only be identified as rechargeable when the tradesperson is on site. If this is the case, the tradesperson will make you aware of this.

How would I pay for rechargeable repairs?

You can pay for rechargeable repairs by using any of the methods which are available for you to use to pay your rent including paying by Direct Debit, Standing Order, using an Allpay Card, over the telephone, using the internet or by post. Payments should be made in full on receipt of the recharge invoice. If this will cause financial hardship then alternative payment arrangements can be considered.

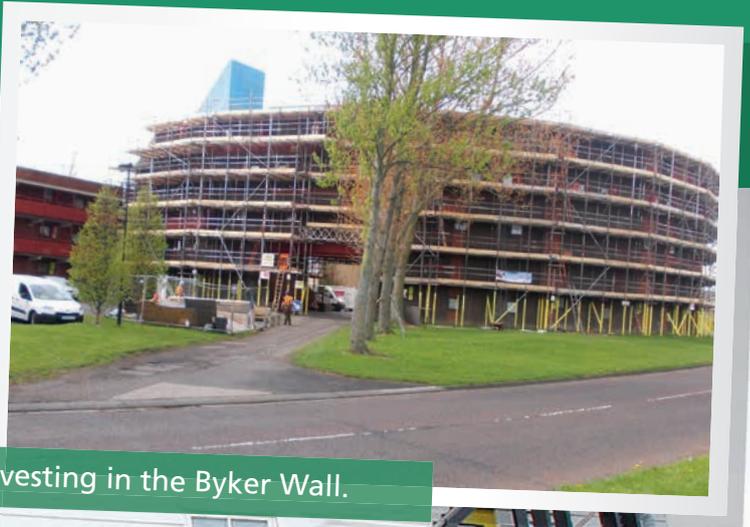
How much did BCT spend on repairs last year?

We spent £2.75 million on repairs and maintenance last year.

How can I find out if and when improvement works are to be carried out in my home?

We will always write to you in advance to tell you when we are going to carry out work to your home. In addition, we will always write to tell you when work on the investment programme is being carried out in your area.

If you have any questions in relation to improvement works please contact me, Michelle Bell on Freephone 0800 5335 442.



Investing in the Byker Wall.



Redeveloping Bolam Coyne.

What work is in the BCT investment programme?

We have already converted Avondale House from an under occupied sheltered housing scheme for older people, to become award winning homes for armed forces veterans, called Launch Pad.

BCT's present investment programme is made up of a number of different projects including; Byker Wall external upgrade, External Painting Programme, Concierge Upgrade, Chirton House Conversion (remodelling into apartments) and the Byker District Heating Upgrade.

Byker Wall external work

In March 2014, we started a huge 2 year programme of external works to the Byker Wall. This includes new windows, doors and a full new roof. Improvements are also being made to communal stairwells, entrances, deck access walkways and a complete repaint in line with the original colour scheme.

External Paint Programme

Last year we started a programme of External Painting across the estate. This programme, which started in Clive Place, Low Fold, is being rolled out across the estate over the next 5 years. Work includes painting doors, window surrounds, fences and all of the other external woodwork on the properties.

District Heating Upgrade

The refurbishment works to upgrade the Byker District Heating started in April 2014 and will continue over the summer months until October, with initial work beginning on the replacement of the main pipework. The upgrade will take approximately 2 years.

Concierge Upgrade/Digital Aerial System

Starting this year, we will be installing a new digital aerial system, and upgrading the concierge and camera system to the Byker Wall from Bamburgh Terrace to Salisbury House and all the link blocks. Cabling for high speed broadband connections will also be installed.

Chirton House Conversion - Remodelling

One of our 'Offer Promises' was to refurbish non-residential buildings where possible and find uses for buildings that are no longer needed for their original purpose. Working in partnership with NCC, we have taken over the ownership of Chirton House, which was a former social services care home, and are presently converting Chirton House into 16 modern 1 and 2 bedrooomed apartments for residents aged 50+. Two of these apartments have been designated for wheelchair users. The new apartments will be available from Spring 2015.

**Did you know you can contact BCT on
Freephone 0800 5335 442**



NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY STANDARD

This is about where you live.

Berni Dickson (YHN- Tenancy and Estates Manager) answers your questions.

What is BCT doing to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour?

BCT take anti-social behaviour very seriously. Unfortunately, over the past year we have had to evict families and individuals for anti-social behaviour. In addition if tenants experience difficulties with non BCT tenants on the estate we can work closely with our partners in YHN and NCC to try to resolve these problems.

As part of the Safe Neighbourhoods Actions and Problem Solving Group, BCT working with our partners including the Police, Fire Service, NCC and YHN, ensure that anti-social behaviour across the district is closely managed, monitored and acted on swiftly. To resolve anti-social behaviour issues it is important to remember that we rely on tenants to help us with this work. This includes tenants remembering to show consideration to others and keeping us informed of ongoing issues.

Are vehicles allowed to park on the grass?

The simple answer is no.

Vehicles parked on the grass can damage the environment and can also be a danger to pedestrians. Off-street parking is provided where we can, but we know this isn't possible in all areas. We really want to discourage anyone from parking their vehicle on the grass.



Community tidy up, Felton Walk.



The dangers of chip pan fires.

What do you do about untidy gardens?

We identify untidy gardens when we are carrying out estate inspections. When tenants sign their tenancy agreement, one of the terms they sign up to is that they will maintain their garden. Where they don't maintain their gardens to the required standard, we firstly visit them to encourage them to do so. If this does not work we formally write to them to ask them to bring their garden up to the required standard within a reasonable time scale. Ultimately, if tenants don't maintain their garden we will do it and bill them accordingly. Exceptions can be made for elderly or disabled tenants

Who do you report dog fouling to?

Dealing with dog fouling is the responsibility of our partners in NCC. If you experience a problem with dog fouling then you can report this to Envirocall on 0191 278 7878 or by emailing Envirocall@newcastle.gov.uk.

Peter Gray (NCC Head of Highways and Local Services) answers your questions.

How often do you cut the grass?

The NCC Ground Maintenance Team maintain the hedges and grass on the estate. They cut the grass between 12 and 16 times each growing season. The grass is kept to approximately 4 inches long and is maintained subject to the weather.

Do you have access to a gardening scheme which is available to everyone?

Yes, YHN have a service called 'Garden Care'. This service is available to all tenants, however, it costs £8.05 per week to receive this service, the exceptions being if you are in receipt of a health related benefit or have a doctor's letter.

If you are part of the scheme, the 'Garden Care' team will visit you 11 times in 12 months (although this will not be monthly). They will provide the following services; grass cutting, weed control, hedge trimming, pruning, border maintenance and litter picking. If it is something you might be interested in please don't hesitate to contact the Garden Care Team on 0191 278 8600 or email gardencare@yhn.org.uk.

How do we deal with issues related to trees?

If you have any issues with trees, they should in the first instance be reported to the Envirocall hotline 0191 278 7878 (Textphone: 0191 211 4944).

BCT will be looking at both trees and hedges as part of the planned Environmental Improvement upgrade of the estate.



The Rapid Response Team.

Why was the Rapid Response Team created?

The Rapid Response Team was established as a direct response to tenant feedback, which called for improvements to littering, graffiti, dog fouling, fly tipping and the general environment of the Byker Estate.

The new neighbourhood Rapid Response Team deal quickly and efficiently with all of these issues and this service is only available to BCT residents. The feedback that the team have received has been very positive with people describing the service as being 'excellent'.

Are there any community groups who represent the community?

Yes there are two Tenant and Resident Associations (TARA); The Byker Village TARA and Shipley Walk TARA. The Byker Village TARA meets in the Spires Lane Hobby Room and the Shipley Walk TARA meets in the Chevron.

For more information contact David on freephone 0800 3553 442.



The Byker Village TARA.



TENANCY STANDARD

This is about your tenancy agreement and how to get a house.

Gill Snowdon (YHN Housing Options Manager) answers your questions.

How can I apply for a BCT house?

All of BCT's vacancies are advertised through a Choice Based Lettings Scheme which is called 'Tyne and Wear Homes'. To be considered for a BCT property you will need to complete an application form, which you can get via the Tyne and Wear Homes website (www.tyneandwearhomes.org.uk), by the YHN website (www.yhn.org.uk) or by completing and returning a paper version which can be collected at any YHN office.

Your completed form will then be assessed and you will be placed in a 'band'. Which band you are placed in is dependent on your individual circumstances. It is only once you've been placed in a band that you will be able to bid for a property.



Byker in Autumn.

What does bidding for a property mean? Does it mean I have to pay?

The term "bidding" simply means letting us know you would like to be considered for a particular property. It does not mean you have to pay any money, nor does it mean you will have to attend an auction. We use the term "bidding" but another term for it is 'expressing an interest' or 'applying for a property'.

How do I know which properties are available to apply for?

All available properties are advertised on the Tyne and Wear Homes website (www.tyneandwearhomes.org.uk) and are also advertised in a weekly newsletter available in the Byker Community Housing Office or in any other YHN office. Properties are advertised each week on a Thursday. The advert closes for bids on a Monday night.

How long do I have to be in a property before I can 'bid'?

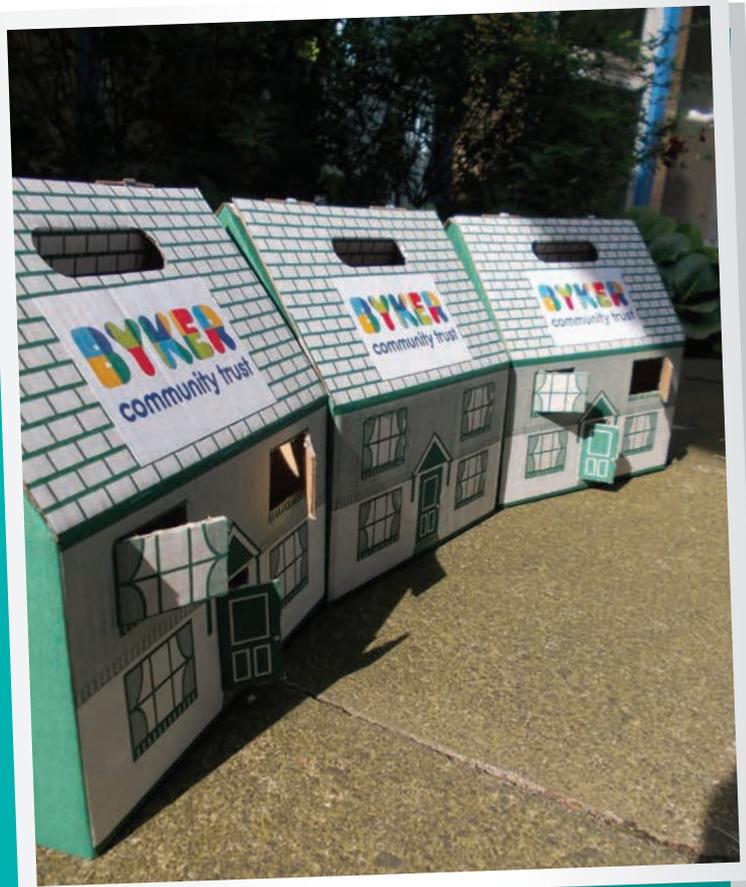
There is no time limit as to how long you have to be in a property before you can apply to be part of the Tyne and Wear Homes choice based lettings scheme. The scheme is open for anybody to apply.

How many properties can I refuse?

You can refuse any number of properties but if you have a higher band based on your circumstances, refusals will be taken into account when your band is reviewed.

How do you support tenancies?

We support tenancies in a number of different ways depending on the needs of individual households. For example, our Pre-Tenancy Advice and Support Officer supports new tenants, making sure they have the necessary support to give their tenancy the best chance of succeeding. We have in place an Adaptations Service to support tenants who have physical disabilities. The Advice and Support Service also helps tenants to maximise their income and support them through times of financial hardship.



Can I swap my home?

In principle, yes, providing it is with another social housing tenant. We have to consider a few things when this request is made. For example, property sizes, do both parties have clear rent accounts and have either parties carried out anti-social behaviour, that sort of thing.

How do I end a tenancy?

Naturally, we don't want any of our tenants to leave BCT; however if they decide that they wish to end their tenancy, there are a few simple steps that need to be followed. The rules can be slightly different depending on what type of tenancy the tenant has. However, most tenants need to give 28 days written notice of their wish to end the tenancy.

When they hand in their keys, they should leave the property in a condition ready for the next tenant to move into, otherwise, they will be charged for any work which has to be carried out. They also need to make sure they have cleared their rent account.

Did you know?... that you can pay your Home Contents Insurance weekly?

TENANT INVOLVEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT STANDARD

This is about communicating with and getting involved with BCT.

David Jones (Head of Engagement and Community Development) answers your questions.

Why is tenant participation so important?

At BCT, we are passionate about providing excellent housing and developing thriving communities, communities our tenants are proud to live in and that other residents aspire to live in. To achieve this, we know we need to work with and listen to tenants. If we do this, we will understand what tenants want and what they would like their homes and communities to look like.



Inspiring young people.



Bowled over in Byker.

What are the benefits of getting involved?

By getting involved you can:

- Help BCT improve the services we provide
- Work in partnership with BCT to improve your neighbourhood
- Learn more about BCT
- Build confidence and knowledge
- Meet other tenants and staff
- Have fun and help to make a difference

What involvement opportunities are available to tenants?

There are a wide range of opportunities from attending the annual Family Fun Day and attending tenant training events, through to becoming a Tenant Shareholder. We also have a Tenant Communications Group. There is the Participatory Budget to apply for and there's the Tenant Scrutiny Panel. Tenants are involved in many activities which BCT does and that includes being on the Board.

How do I find out what involvement opportunities are available?

Probably the best person to speak to is me, David Jones and I can be contacted on Freephone 0800 5335 442, or even better speak to a tenant who is already involved. They will be able to give you a flavour of what opportunities are available. There is also information on the website.

Do you help tenants to get involved?

We provide transport for tenants, or reimburse fuel costs to those who use their own cars. We will also pay for child minding and care expenses (which must be from a registered child minder or care agency). In addition, we offer extra

assistance for those with mobility difficulties as well as providing training. To help create an informal, friendly atmosphere we provide refreshments at our meetings where we ensure that everyone's views are valued and respected.



Knitting at the Community Centre.



All the fun of the fair.

HOW ARE BCT SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY?

Last year saw the first awards made from our £1 million Participatory Budget Programme, with 15 community projects awarded funding. The initiative is open for all projects or schemes in Byker that aim to make a difference in the community and need funding to support them.

Many of the projects are already in action, creating direct benefits and opportunities for Byker residents. These include the following:

- The Byker Community Centre was awarded support for three projects to benefit the local community:

- The creation of an activity club for 20 young people for two hours each week, providing sporting activities and games.
- A Friday Art Club for 13-15 year olds, where they learn to design and build their own models.
- A new cooker to continue the running of the luncheon club, which gives older residents a chance to get together.



- Byker Bowling Club has received a grant to help keep its bowling green up to English Bowls Association standards. The funding has also allowed for the purchase of junior bowls so that a junior team can be established.
- Funding has been awarded to the YMCA to extend their activities on the Byker Estate, working in partnership with BCT to provide much-needed outreach support over the next year. They have created two youth worker apprenticeships, including one from the Byker Estate.
- African Community Advice North East (ACANE) have been given support



towards the running of their facilities and the purchase of new computer equipment.

- The Byker Sands Sure Start Centre has received support for a family intervention project that will provide accredited training to two volunteers, offering ongoing support to families with children aged up to 12. We are also supporting the refurbishment of their garden with a healthy living theme.
- We also funded 240 hours of football development workshops to boys and girls on the Byker Estate, provided by Hat-Trick.
- Spires Lane Hobby Room received funds to provide a new WC, creating separate facilities for men and women.
- Funds were awarded to Shipley Walk Tenants and Residents Association to improve the traffic conditions on Conyers Road.
- Environmental upgrade of two specific areas between Felton Walk and Shields Road.
- Funding was awarded to Hannah Baker to provide holistic therapy.
- 'One Love' have been awarded funds to acquire a shop unit in Chirton Wynd to be used as a community internet access point which also includes a sound studio.
- St Lawrence Primary School has been given support to participate in the Newcastle EnviroSchools programme.



Do you have a project or scheme which will make a difference in Byker? If you need funding to support it, why not consider applying for a grant through the Participatory Budget Scheme? For more information, please contact David Jones or Steve Howells on Freephone 0800 5335 442.

Was BCT Family Fun Day a success?

The first BCT Family Fun Day was such a huge success with over 900 people attending, and the community asked that we hold another BCT Family Fun Day this summer. This time over 1000 people came. The day was a real community celebration with children and adults alike having a great day out. The photographs tell the story but you confirmed how successful the Fun Day was through the evaluation forms you completed on the day. Very positively, 98% of people who completed our feedback form, were very satisfied with the Fun Day and 98% told us that you would be very likely to attend future BCT events.

What does Equality and Diversity mean to BCT?

We know that Byker is a very diverse community. It's a community which has a rich ethnic mix which makes Byker a special place to be.

We want everyone in the community to get involved with BCT and we often go the extra mile to achieve this. You might not be aware but a Youth Forum has recently been established in Byker and BCT have supported the development of this. It's hoped that the Youth Forum will help to give the young people of Byker a voice, they are after all the future. It is key to us that everyone in the community is treated with dignity and respect.

How do I compliment staff, make a suggestion or complaint?

You could do this by using any of our usual communication methods including; phone, letter, email, face to face, or through BCT website (www.bykercommunitytrust.org).

Using the internet seems to be becoming more important and many people don't have access to a computer. How is BCT helping?

We have already funded the setting up of public access computer facilities in the community including in ACANE (whose premises are at Raby Cross) and also ONE LOVE (whose premises are at 2 Chirton Wynd). In addition, as part of the Byker Wall improvement works we are also installing broadband ready facilities to the 629 households who live in the Byker Wall.



Friendship and respect in Byker.



Help from the community to drive the bus.

GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL VIABILITY STANDARD

This is about how the Board works and how BCT manage your money

Jill Haley (Chief Executive) answers your questions.



What does the Board do and how is it made up?

The Board has ultimate responsibility for the governance of BCT. The purpose of the Board is to provide strategic direction and to scrutinise and evaluate BCT's affairs. Day to day management is delegated to the staff of BCT through the Executive Management Team.

There were 13 people on the Board; 4 tenants, 4 independents, 2 NCC, 1 YHN and 2 co-optees, until 1 of the co-optees left the Board in August this year. The Board is therefore presently made up of 12 people.

Each year, every Board member receives an annual appraisal to identify if any additional training is required. This is done to ensure that they have the skills necessary to perform effectively as Board members.

At the time of transfer from the Council, a number of 'Offer Promises' were made. Are they being delivered?

Yes. We continue to deliver the 'Offer Promises' which we made to you. Every three months I report to the Board on progress of these promises, you can also see that the work on the Byker Wall and the District Heating has started and tenants are having more influence on how the estate is managed and more opportunities to be involved in the work of BCT.

What methods of tenant scrutiny and co-regulation do you have?

As tenant participation becomes embedded in what BCT does, the opportunities for tenants to carry out meaningful scrutiny is increasing.

As well as advertising the opportunity to become a Tenant Board Member this year, the opportunity to join the Tenant Scrutiny Panel was promoted widely to all tenants and it is hoped that the Panel will start their first scrutiny exercise later this year.

The Participatory Budget Scrutiny Group, which contains tenants, was established last year to oversee BCT Participatory Budget, and Mystery Shoppers have been recruited and trained to help provide a real insight into customer experience. This insight will help BCT to improve the services which you receive.

It is important to realise that co-regulation within the BCT goes beyond just having a Tenant Scrutiny Panel.

What does becoming a shareholder of BCT mean?

BCT is committed to giving every tenant and the local community a say in the management of BCT. A key opportunity is by becoming a shareholding member of BCT.

Being a shareholder is not about stocks and shares. It only costs £1 to become a life tenant shareholder.

Membership of BCT enables a shareholder to;

- Attend and vote at the Annual General Meeting and any Special General Meeting.
- Receive copies of BCT's Annual Report.
- Vote on any changes to BCT's rules.

Who is eligible to become a Tenant Shareholder?

Tenant Shareholding membership is open to every tenant who has an up to date rent account and is not in breach of their tenancy conditions.

If you are interested in becoming a Tenant Shareholder please contact Phil Ambrose on Freephone 0800 5335 442.

How has BCT been performing in financial terms?

Overall, BCT is performing well financially and was within the annual budget for 2013/14. We continue to remain financially strong. The business plan has been out-performed each year since transfer with significant value for money savings being made. The pie charts on the following page give a summary of how we have been doing.



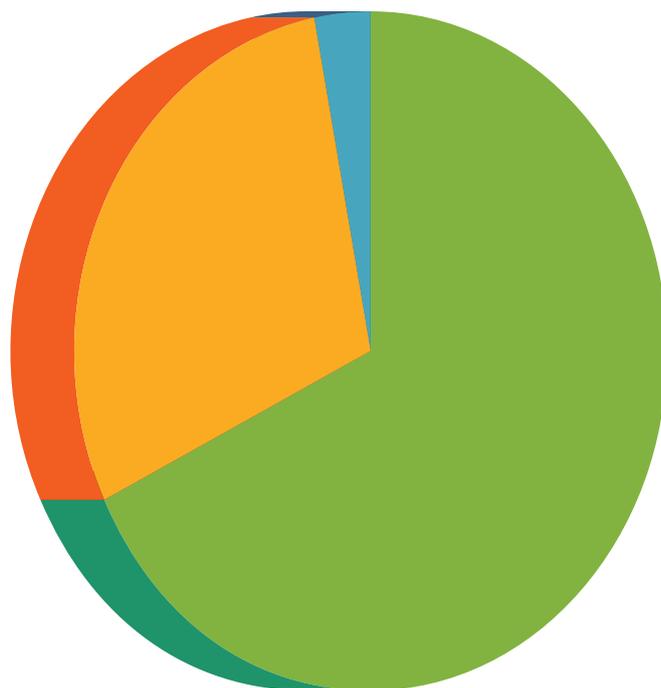
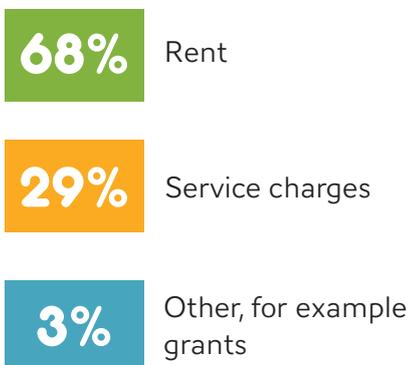
Family Fun Day, fun for all.



Income

Income for Year Ending March 2014

Total £9.43 million



Expenditure

(Outgoings for year ending 31st March 2014)

Total £8.09 million



These results confirm that BCT is on target against its financial plans.

VALUE FOR MONEY STANDARD

This is about making the best use of BCT's resources.

Phil Ambrose (Financial Controller) answers your questions

Has BCT been able to make value for money savings this year?

Yes. This past year has seen us make savings which we have been able to achieve by making both cashable and non-cashable savings.

This has allowed us to do three main things.

- Firstly, we haven't had to draw down as much money from our loan facility which has saved on interest payments.
- Secondly, we have been able to redirect our resources allowing us to provide better services for our tenants.
- Thirdly, by using efficiency savings achieved through our procurement arrangements, we have been able to include improvements to the Concierge system as part of the capital programme.

Who is the Housing Regulator and what is the Regulatory Framework?

The housing regulator is called the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and it has established a Regulatory Framework which has seven National Standards.

The Economic Standards are monitored by the HCA, and BCT, like all other Housing Associations, will be expected to monitor their own performance against the Consumer Standards. We do this by working closely with tenants. Regular performance reports are provided to the Board.

What was the HCA's Regulatory Judgement for BCT?

The HCA have said that BCT is 'Properly Governed', awarding us G1 governance and V2 for financial viability. So the regulator has said that BCT meets the requirements of the Governance and Financial Viability Standard.



The Byker Wall.

The regulator's assessment on compliance with the Governance and Financial Viability Standard is expressed in gradings from G1 to G4 for governance and V1 to V4 for viability. For both viability and governance the first two grades indicate compliance with the standard.

How does BCT monitor performance?

Within BCT we constantly monitor our performance and have a number of methods in place to ensure all areas of the Association are as efficient and effective as possible.

These methods include;

- Executive Team Meetings (fortnightly senior managers' meetings)
- Operational Support Meetings (monthly team meetings)
- YHN monthly contract performance meeting
- NCC monthly contract performance meeting
- YHN and NCC performance information reported to Board
- Reports from our Auditors
- Supporting this, we also ask tenants how they think we are performing, for example through the Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR Survey). We report these findings to the Board.

We also compare ourselves against other organisations as part of understanding how we are performing.

Key Performance Measures (April 13- March 14)

We monitor our performance to measure how well we are doing in key areas of our services and use this information to improve our performance and the services we deliver to you. The following 14 indicators are some of the key areas we regularly monitor.

Income collection

KPI	TARGET	ACTUAL	CONCLUSION
Reduce arrears to £310k (1.5% reduction)	£5k reduction (1.5%)	£97k increase (31%)	
Collect rent owed	96.56%	94.9%	
Collect leaseholder charges	97.5%	99.15%	

Property lettings

KPI	TARGET	ACTUAL	CONCLUSION
Average relet time	19 days	30 days	
Void rent loss	0.75%	1.78%	

Repairs

KPI	TARGET	ACTUAL	CONCLUSION
Total responsive repair costs	£477k	£564k	
Emergency repairs completed within target time	99.5%	99.9%	
Urgent repairs completed within target time	99%	100%	
Routine repairs completed within target time	99%	100%	
Satisfaction with the repairs and maintenance service	92%	98%	

CUSTOMER SERVICE

KPI	TARGET	ACTUAL	CONCLUSION
Correspondence replied to within 10 working days	100%	100%	
Formal complaints acknowledged within 3 working days	95%	100%	
Formal complaints responded to within 10 working days	95%	100%	
Satisfaction with investment works	88%	100%	

Key:  Achieved  Not achieved

Note: The targets set in 2013/14 were based on the targets set in 2012/13. They were not adjusted to take account of the potential impact of the government's welfare reform programme.

What this table shows

The results show underperformance on the key areas of income collection, property letting and repairs and maintenance expenditure. The government's welfare reform programme adversely affected the achievement of a number of the targets. One of the main influencing factors on this has been a much higher level of tenancy turnover (18%) than in previous years (8%). This higher tenancy turnover has adversely impacted on these 3 performance areas as follows:

- Arrears collection becomes more difficult as individuals move and become harder to track and trace.
- Repairs and maintenance costs increase as the number of void units requiring reinstatement increases.
- Welfare reform changes from April 2013 affect the demand for larger property types and this situation contributes to longer re-let times.

Our plans to improve performance

A Performance Improvement Action Plan is in place for 2014/15 to address this underperformance. The plan includes a wide range of general actions and actions within specific performance areas, all with clear target timescales and responsibility allocated to specific individuals. Specific actions cover the following areas:

- Arrears collection (current and former tenants).
- Empty property management.
- Property allocations.

A new set of housing management performance indicators has been developed for 2014/15 which will ensure that we are able to monitor performance more effectively.

AWARDS

Jill Haley (Chief Executive) answers your questions.

We are very proud that in our short 2 year history BCT have either received awards or have been short listed for so many awards. I have listed them below, which I hope you will agree makes impressive reading.

2013

AWARD	CATEGORY	RESULT
RICS Awards NE Renaissance	Regeneration	Bolam Coyne – Winner
National Housing Federation- SHINE Awards	Apprentices the STARS	Steve Howells – Highly Commended



2014

AWARD	CATEGORY	RESULT
RICS Awards NE Renaissance	Community Benefit	Avondale House – Highly Commended
Construction Excellence in the NE	Heritage	Avondale House – Commended
Construction Excellence in the NE	The Legacy Award – Sustainability	Avondale House – Achieving Excellence

What about awards in the community?

There is real reason to believe that community is continuing to grow in strength. Some of the projects that are taking place in the Byker Wall Estate are truly inspirational with one of them recently winning a prestigious regional award.

At the recent Chartered Institute of Housing, 'Celebrating the Region Awards 2014', the African Community Advice Centre North East (ACANE) won the 'Contribution to the Community Award'. ACANE were up against 16 other excellent projects from across the region so to come first was no mean feat. What's so inspirational about ACANE is how it supports the whole community. Why not pop in and visit ACANE at Raby Cross, and have a look for yourself?



The ACANE Advice Centre.

Then of course there are Byker's very own VOSCARS. Every project in Byker has its own heroes and I was proud to be there and see the Byker community celebrating their own, often unsung heroes. Well done to everyone who took part and won an award.



Gaby Kitoko, receiving the award on behalf of ACANE.

RENT STANDARD

This is about the rent you pay.

Questions to Hannah Adey -
YHN Income Recovery Manager



Providing help and support.

What is the rent we pay used for?

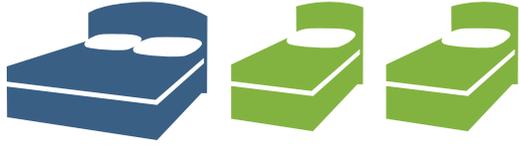
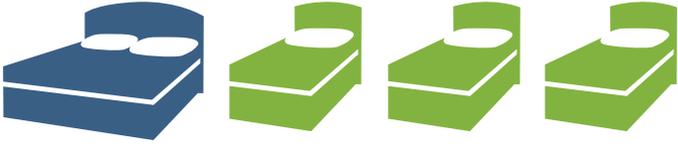
We use your rent to pay for the services you receive, including things like repairs and maintenance. In addition we use your rent money to carry out improvements to your estate. It is therefore essential that everyone pays their rent if we are to continue to improve the Byker estate.

What is BCT's average rent, and how does it compare for each property size?

Based on rent being paid over 49 weeks each year (excludes water rates and service charges) our average rent is £78.50.

The average rents for each of our property types are:

Average 49 week Basic Rent (current actual position)

Bedsit  £61.87	1 bedroom  £68.94	2 bedroom  £78.05
3 bedroom  £87.76	4 bedroom  £95.09	

If someone is having difficulties making ends meet, does BCT have anyone who can help?

We have Advice and Support Workers who are available to offer advice, information and support on all aspects of your finances and benefits, such as: budgeting, dealing with debts, benefit checks, welfare reform, utilities, insurance and much more.

The Advice and Support Workers are here to support you, our tenants, in making the most of your money, ensuring your money is working as hard for you as you are for it. We work with a number of partners around the City to ensure you receive the best advice for all your queries.

What has BCT done to prepare for the impact of Welfare Reform?

As part of preparing for the impact of Welfare Reform, BCT funded a full-time dedicated CAB Welfare Benefits Case Worker, called Andrew Young. Andrew's remit is to engage with and support the tenants of the Byker Wall Estate.

By the end of March 2014, the Welfare Benefits Case Worker had supported 313 tenants who had been granted £92,000 of additional entitlement, £4,000 of discretionary housing payments and £4,000 in small scale practical support grants.

If you have any concerns or would like to make an appointment with Andrew please phone BCT Freephone number 0800 3553 442.

CREATING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND DEVELOPING SKILLS

A key objective of BCT is to achieve new training and employment opportunities for tenants and residents on the Byker Estate. BCT work closely with Newcastle Futures and delivery partners like Keepmoat and others, to maximise their social investment into the estate.

The table below summarises what has been achieved to date.



DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY
EMPLOYMENT:	
• New apprenticeship opportunities created.	22 
• New jobs created.	5 
• Apprenticeships safeguarded.	28 
• Local jobs safeguarded.	5 
• Individuals progressing into employment opportunities of up to 6 months duration.	14 
• Individuals progressing into employment opportunities of over 6 months duration.	10 
TRAINING:	
• Attendees on health & safety training for construction trades.	171 
• Construction Skills Certification Skills (CSCS) cards issued.	123 
• Certified short courses delivered on construction trades.	72 
• Construction skills research visit by secondary school age children.	15 
• School leavers participating in construction skills work experience programme.	9 
• Primary school children participating in health & safety information sessions.	320 
• Number of school health & safety information sessions delivered.	144 
• School & college workshops delivered covering District Heating System Upgrade.	40 
• School children participating in work experience programme.	12 
EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SUPPORT:	
• Individuals worked with and registered by Newcastle Futures organisation.	148 
• Individuals supported into employment or training.	55 

What do I have to do to view my rent account online?

If you visit the YHN website, www.yhn.org.uk and click on 'View Your Rent Online' and then follow the on-screen instructions this will allow you to review your rent account online. You will need to have both your payment reference number and postcode to initially set this up.

Unfortunately, we hear more often of people having to go to Food Banks to get basic essentials. Does BCT have links with any of the local Food Banks?

Yes we do have links with several of the local Food Banks and our Welfare Benefits Case Worker regularly refers people who need assistance.

What you won't know is that staff have been independently raising funds for the North East Food Bank as well as supporting the Byker Sands. This has been done in a number of ways including getting sponsorship and running the Great North Run as well as taking part in other runs and sponsored cycling events. Only recently, staff presented a cheque for over £200 to the NE Food Bank.



Supporting the NE Food Bank.



Phil Ambrose (Financial Controller) competing in the Bupa Great North Run.

Did you know?... paying your rent by Direct Debit is the preferred payment method available for BCT

LOCAL OFFERS

Tailoring service delivery to reflect local priorities.

David Jones (Head of Engagement and Community Development) answers your questions.

We work with our tenants to understand their needs and to develop our 'Local Offers' (promises) as the H.C.A. calls them. This means making an agreement with you about how we will deliver and improve the services you receive.

Here are some of the promises we have already made to you;



Engaging with tenants.

Economic Standards

Governance and Financial Viability Standard

We will ensure full and individual Board appraisals are conducted annually and individual development plans are produced and monitored for Board members.

Value for Money Standard

We have developed a Capital Investment Strategic Brief to ensure we get added value from all of our capital contracts.

We secured grants which enabled us to bring underused buildings back to use. We attracted grants for Avondale House (£250,000) and Chirton House (£480,000).

We also attracted a grant of £25,000 to carry out a Hobby Room feasibility study.

Rent Standard

We have enabled a Welfare Benefit Advisor to work from BCT Office to ensure that this service is accessible to the tenants living on the estate.



Avondale House.



On target at the Byker Fun Day.



Your a star!

Consumer Standards

Home Standard	We have updated the business plan to reflect future investment programme priorities which reflects tenants' needs
Neighbourhood Standard	You told us you were concerned about refuse, dog fouling and graffiti on the estate, so we created the 'Rapid Response Team' to address these concerns.
Tenancy Standard	We reviewed our vacant property adverts to improve the information provided to future tenants.
Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard	<p>Following the success of our first Family Fun Day, we held a Family Fun Day again this summer.</p> <p>We developed a Tenant Communications Group to help us improve communication channels with you, our tenants.</p>

It is anticipated that further Local Offers will be developed following the evaluation of the Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR Survey) which was completed in July 2014.



Learning and having fun.

Glossary of Terms

BCT -

Byker Community Trust

Benchmarking -

A way of comparing the performance of one Association against another.

Board Appraisals -

An exercise which is used to see if any individual needs additional training.

CAB -

The Citizens Advice Bureau is a free national advice and guidance service. A general advice contact point.

Capital Investment Strategic Brief -

Guidance given to our contractors prior to them applying for work with BCT.

Choice Based Lettings Scheme -

The way all BCT properties are advertised.

Code of Governance -

The rules which BCT has to follow.

Co-regulation -

Tenants, the regulator and staff working together to monitor the Association.

HCA -

The Homes and Communities Agency is the regulator for social housing in England and Wales.

Envirocall -

Newcastle City Council's contact centre for environmental issues.

Financial Hardship -

Finding it difficult to make ends meet.

Housing Regulator -

The organisation responsible for monitoring the performance of Housing Associations (including BCT).

Investment Programme -

A plan for delivering the large improvements across the estate.

Local Offers -

An agreement of how service delivery can be tailored to reflect local priorities.

Mystery Shopping -

Checking out how a service works without the person who is providing the service knowing and reporting the findings.

National Standards -

The standards which all social housing providers are expected to either achieve or work towards achieving.

NCC -

Newcastle City Council

Participatory Budget -

A budget which is available for all community groups wishing to apply for funding to support them.

Performance Indicators -

Scores that give a sense of how we are doing.

Rapid Response Team -

BCT's quick response tidy up team.

Regulatory Framework -

The standards and rules which BCT has to follow.

Regulatory Judgement -

An assessment made by the regulator against set criteria.

Service Standards -

The standard of service residents expect to receive.

Scrutiny -

The act of examining something closely.

Sustainable -

Making something last for a period of time.

Tenant Communications Group -

The group of tenants who look at how we communicate with tenants.

Tenant -

A tenant or leaseholder of BCT.

Tyne and Wear Homes -

The name for the available property services which covers the region.

Void -

Another name for an empty house.

Welfare Reform -

Changes to the social benefits system.

YHN -

Your Homes Newcastle

Youth Forum -

A group of young people from different organisations who come together to discuss issues affecting the area.



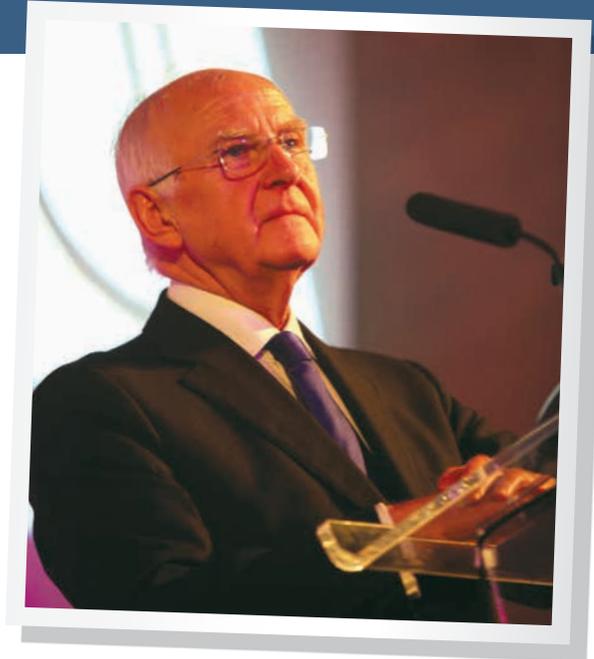
A BIG THANK YOU

We hope that you have enjoyed reading this our First Annual Report to Tenants.

The development of this report, 'Building Byker's future together... our journey so far 2013/14' would not have been possible without the help and support of the tenants from the Tenant Communications Group.

We would like to thank each and every one of you, without whose vision, passion and commitment, this report would not have been possible.

Jim Coulter (Chair of Board)



If you would like any further details about any of the information contained within this report or if you would like to get involved and help BCT improve the services provided to you and your community, please contact David Jones (Head of Engagement and Community Development) on Freephone 0800 5335 442.

Tel: 0800 5335 442

email: enquiries@bykerct.co.uk

www.bykercommunitytrust.org

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