



March 2026

Your Housing

In this issue

- Tenant satisfaction results
- Making recycling easier
- Housing Allocations Policy review
- Housing Improvement Programme
- A day in the life
- Downsizing scheme
- New warden call system
- Historic housing investment
- Eco-friendly family homes ready

Welcome to the latest edition of Your Housing

It is an important time for the Housing Service as we begin delivering our new 30-year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan. This is a long-term plan with a separate, ring-fenced budget. It represents a once in a generation commitment to improving the Housing Service across Castle Point and making sure that every tenant has a safe, secure and well maintained home for the future. Find out more on page 12.

Over the past year, we have taken major steps to put our Housing Service on the right path. The Leader and I gave a personal commitment to the Regulator of Social Housing, and to you, that we would put right the wrongs of the past and rebuild your trust. We know there is still further to go, but this significant investment places us in a much stronger position to deliver the improvements you rightly expect.

In this edition, you'll find a double page feature on our Housing Improvement Programme, looking at what has already been achieved and what you can expect over the next 12 months. This includes work on repairs, safety, energy efficiency and upgrades to homes and communal areas — all designed to raise standards and ensure our homes meet the needs of residents both now and in the future.



It was great to catch up with staff and residents and hear their thoughts on the new warden call system.

Recently, I had the opportunity to visit Willalla House, one of our Sheltered Housing schemes on Canvey, to see a demonstration of the new warden call system. Spending time with residents and speaking with staff made it clear just how important this investment is. It provides not only improved safety and monitoring, but also peace of mind. Seeing this work happening first hand reinforces why our long-term investment plan is so vital.

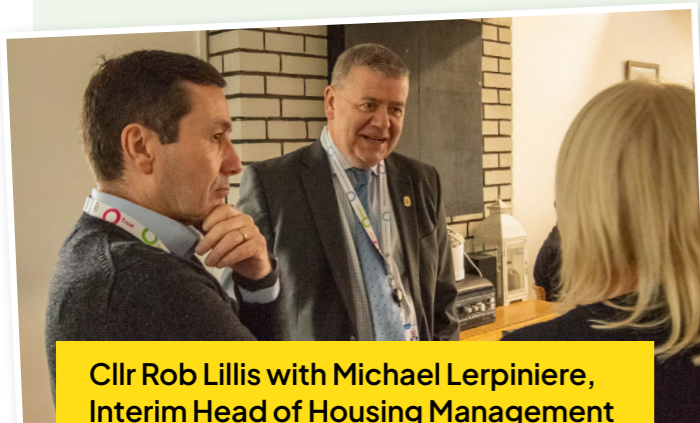
This magazine is here for you, and we want to make sure it covers the topics and stories that matter most to our tenants. If you have ideas, suggestions or features you'd like to see in future issues, please get in touch by emailing: communications@castlepoint.gov.uk.

“ Your feedback helps shape our services and ensures this magazine remains genuinely useful. ”

Thank you for taking the time to read this edition, and I look forward to continuing to meet more of you over the coming months as we continue our Housing Improvement Programme journey together.

All the best,

Cllr Rob Lillis
Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Housing



Cllr Rob Lillis with Michael Lerpiniere, Interim Head of Housing Management at Willalla House.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures

How we're performing and what we're doing to improve



Since April 2023, the Regulator of Social Housing has required all social landlords to carry out a survey asking tenants to rate how they feel their landlord is performing.

Between September and October 2025, we carried out the first wave of surveys of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM). The survey is conducted by Acuity, an independent research company, using questions set by the Regulator of Social Housing.

A total of **173 tenants** took part in this round. There is a second round planned this month.

The results are beginning to show the positive impact of our Housing Improvement Programme. Many areas have improved since last year but some areas have been identified as needing further attention.

What tenants told us

Below is a summary of the 2025/26 mid-year satisfaction scores compared with last year's results.

| Measure | 2024/5 score | 2025/6 score (Sep-Oct) | Change |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------|-----------|
| Overall satisfaction | 54% | 60% | +6% |
| Well-maintained home | 54% | 66% | +12% |
| Safe home | 63% | 69% | +6% |
| Repairs in last 12 month | 63% | 67% | +4% |
| Time taken to complete a repair | 65% | 66% | +1% |
| Neighbourhood contribution | 49% | 52% | +3% |
| Approach to antisocial behaviour | 43% | 45% | +2% |
| Landlord listens and acts | 40% | 50% | +10% |
| Being kept informed | 58% | 66% | +8% |
| Being treated fairly and with respect | 65% | 67% | +2% |
| Communal areas | 56% | 56% | No change |
| Complaints handling | 23% | 23% | No change |

Where we've improved

The biggest improvement so far has been around well-maintained homes, where satisfaction has risen by 12%. Tenants have also reported better experiences with:

- ✓ Repairs completed in the last year
- ✓ Tenants feeling safe in their home
- ✓ How we are listening and taking action
- ✓ How well we keep tenants informed

These improvements reflect the ongoing work across the Housing Service with a renewed focus on customer service, communication and building safety.

Where we need to do better

There is more work to be done especially in the following areas:

- ➔ Complaints handling
- ➔ Antisocial behaviour handling
- ➔ Communal areas

Work is already underway to address these. We are reviewing how we respond to complaints, strengthening follow-up between officers and tenants, and planning improvements in communal areas once surveys and safety assessments are complete. We've developed a new Antisocial Behaviour Policy and procedure and are providing some training for the team who manage the antisocial behaviour cases.

➔ Look out for the next tenant survey and please take part to help us improve.



Making recycling easier for our tenants

We've been working hard to make recycling simpler, clearer and easier for residents living in our housing blocks.

Over the past few months, we've been working with the Waste and Recycling team to improve bin stores, introduce recycling facilities where there weren't any before, and support residents with new signage and helpful communications.

Three blocks in particular have seen big improvements:

Orange Flats Rosberg Road

Residents here now benefit from renewed bin stores, improved signage and an increased number of recycling bins. These changes are helping everyone sort their waste more easily and reduce overflowing refuse bins.



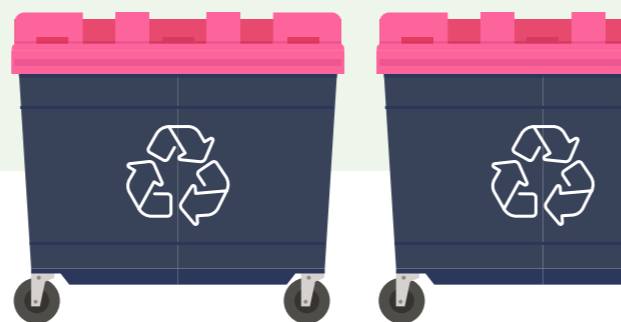
Ozonias Gardens Dovercliff Road

This block previously had no recycling facilities at all. We've now introduced clearly labelled recycling bins, making it easier for residents to recycle at home and keep more waste out of landfill.

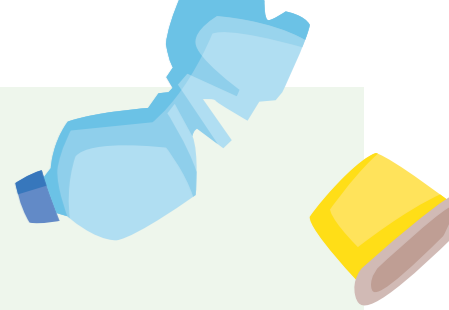
Drapers Court Long Road

Like Ozonias Gardens, Drapers Court had no recycling bins before. New recycling bins and easy to follow signage are now in place, helping residents recycle with confidence.

All remaining blocks will be visited this year to improve recycling areas.



Tips to help you recycle correctly



Do:

- ✓ Use the right bin for the right materials, including paper, card, plastics, tins, cans, aerosols, foil and glass.
- ✓ Rinse containers before recycling them as clean items help prevent contamination.
- ✓ Flatten cardboard and squash plastic bottles to save space in the recycling bins.
- ✓ Remove plastic film lids from pots, tubs and trays and put this film in the general rubbish bin.
- ✓ Use your food recycling caddy for all food waste including peelings, bones, leftovers, rice and pasta and then empty it into the communal food bin.
- ✓ Tie your food caddy liner before taking it to the bin store to prevent spills and odours.
- ✓ Report fly-tipping to us at www.castlepoint.gov.uk/fly-tipping.
- ✓ Take large items to a recycling centre or book a bulky waste collection at www.castlepoint.gov.uk/w/bulky-waste-collection.

Don't:

- ✗ Don't put general rubbish in the recycling bins – this contaminates the whole load.
- ✗ Don't use black or pink sacks in the recycling bins – place loose recycling only.
- ✗ Don't put food in the general rubbish – always use the food caddy and communal food waste bin.
- ✗ Don't place plastic film, plastic bags or flexible plastics (like cling film) into the recycling bin – these must go in general rubbish.
- ✗ Don't put drinking glasses, pyrex dishes or broken glassware in the glass recycling bin – glass bottles and jars only.
- ✗ Don't leave bulky items in the bin store – this is classed as fly-tipping.
- ✗ Don't pour liquids (such as milk or oil) into any bin.
- ✗ Don't put textiles, nappies, sanitary waste, pet waste or electronics into any recycling bin.

Reviewing our Housing Allocations Policy



We have recently been consulting on proposed updates to our Housing Allocations Policy – the rules that set out how social housing is prioritised and allocated across the Borough.

The Policy is designed to:

- clearly explain how social housing is allocated and let
- ensure decisions are fair, transparent and easy to understand
- improve accessibility and make it easier for people to check if they are eligible

- better prioritise applicants, reflecting the high demand for a limited number of homes
- comply with the latest legislation and best practice
- make the best use of the social housing available in Castle Point

Feedback shared by residents during this period is being carefully considered to shape the Policy which the Council will adopt later this year.

We'd like to thank everyone who took the time to share their views.



The Housing Improvement Programme: One year on

It has been just over a year since the Council received a C4 judgement from the Regulator of Social Housing.

Over the past 12 months there has been a lot of work happening to improve the services you receive and set the foundations for long-term future investment. Our achievements in 2025 show the progress that we have made and we are committed to delivering even more in 2026.



Highlights of what the Housing Service achieved in 2025 include:

- We have updated and created multiple policies across the Housing Service, including: Antisocial Behaviour; Asbestos Safety; Damp, Mould and Condensation; Disabled Adaptations; Domestic Abuse; Electrical Safety; Fire Safety; Gas Safety; Lift Safety; Neighbourhood Management; Repairs and Maintenance; Tenancy Management; Temporary Relocation; Voids; Water Safety.



You can find all our policies at:

www.castlepoint.gov.uk/housing-policies

- We introduced a new damp and mould procedure and specialist contractor to ensure that all reports of damp and mould are actioned swiftly. This work ensured that we were compliant with Awaab's Law when it was introduced in October 2025.

- We introduced a new Housing Complaints Policy which aligns to the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. When tenants raise complaints, we don't just fix the issue, we are using what we learn to strengthen our services and stop the same problems happening again.



- We combined our repairs, compliance and improvement work into one new in-house Housing Technical Services team.
- We introduced a new Compliance IT system to effectively monitor essential health and safety compliance works to ensure our residents are safe in their homes.
- We published the results of our Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) for the year 2024/2025 to demonstrate how our residents feel we are performing as a landlord. You can also **read the latest TSM results for 2025/2026 on page three.**
- With the support of independent tenant engagement experts, Tpas, we completed an engagement project where some of our residents provided us with honest feedback on how the Council can improve the way it works with our tenants. This project sets the foundations for the way in which we will engage with tenants in the future and how their feedback will be used to influence the development of the Housing Service going forward.



- With input from our tenants, we developed our Housing Service Promise which sets out our commitment to our tenants and what they should expect from us. We also developed the Contractor Code of Conduct which sets out the behaviours tenants can expect from our contractors when they visit your home.
- We have substantially completed a programme of stock condition surveys across all our housing stock to establish a clear understanding of the condition of our tenants' homes. This information guides us in making informed decisions about investment and prioritising maintenance work where it is most needed.
- We have agreed a 30-year Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, which commits major long-term investment to maintain and improve Housing Services. It represents a once in a generation commitment to put right years of underinvestment in the Council's housing provision.



- We reviewed the Housing Service and reshaped the team so we can give tenants a better, more reliable service. By increasing the number of permanent staff and making everyone's roles clearer, tenants will get quicker responses, better continuity and a team that has the right skills.
- We have relaunched this newsletter to keep you informed.
- We achieved full compliance with statutory health and safety inspections, known as the 'Big Six' (gas, electric, fire, water, asbestos and lifts).



More to come in 2026:

- We will be installing a **new warden call system** for our sheltered housing schemes to enable our tenants to call for assistance in an emergency, ensuring their safety and promoting independence.
 - **Read more on page 10**
- We are updating the **Housing pages of the Council website** to make it easier for our residents to find and access information.
 - Keep an eye out for updates at: www.castlepoint.gov.uk/housing
- We have procured a **new contractor, Wates Property Services**, to deliver our day-to-day repairs and maintenance works (see page 9). Applying the learning from feedback received about our repairs service, we have ensured that robust monitoring is in place within the new contract so tenants can expect a quality service. The new contract goes live in April 2026.
- We are continuing to work with independent tenant engagement experts, Tpas, to **increase the opportunities for meaningful tenant engagement**. This includes being more transparent with how our services are performing for our tenants to scrutinise and influence improvements.
- Investment to ensure **all Council homes are maintained at the Decent Homes Standard** with all properties identified as requiring remedial action expected to be compliant by the end of the 2026/7 financial year.
- **£1.2 million investment** to improve communal areas across Council homes and a **further £1.3 million** to deliver improvements within sheltered housing schemes in 2026/7.

We are embedding everything we have learned in 2025 to ensure we deliver a quality Housing Service that is sustainable through 2026 and beyond.

A day in the life of a Housing Repairs Manager

In this issue, we meet Barry Euesden, our Repairs Manager.



How long have you been in housing and repairs?

I've worked in housing and repairs for around 20 years, starting with scheduling repairs and working my way through various roles into management. That journey has given me a really practical understanding of the whole repairs service — from the first contact right through to completion and performance reporting.

Can you describe a typical day in your role?

No two days are the same, but it usually involves reviewing performance data, managing risks, supporting the team, dealing with escalations and making sure tenants with the highest needs are prioritised.

What part of your job do you enjoy the most?

I enjoy turning performance around, spotting patterns in the data and working with the team to tackle the root cause rather than just dealing with urgent issues.

What do you wish tenants knew about the work your team does behind the scenes?

I wish tenants knew how much coordination and decision making happens behind the scenes to make repairs safe, fair and right first time. Every job is triaged using data on risk and vulnerability, resources are planned daily and performance is monitored to prevent delays and repeat repairs. Most of that work isn't visible, but it's all focused on improving outcomes for tenants.

What's one thing tenants do that really helps make repairs easier?

Clear information when reporting the issue and being available for access. Those two things alone improve first time fix rates and reduce delays.

What are the most common types of repairs you see day to day?

Leaks, blockages, heating issues and general wear and tear repairs. These make up the bulk of demand and are where consistency of service really matters.

Can you walk us through what happens from the moment a tenant reports a repair?

The repair is logged, prioritised based on risk and vulnerability, scheduled, completed and then quality checked. Performance is monitored throughout to make sure timescales are met and the job is completed right first time.

What's the most memorable repair case you've dealt with?

A case that really stood out to me involved a vulnerable tenant who'd had several repair requests but the bigger risks hadn't been recognised. When I looked through the repair history, I realised the problem was more about how it was affecting their health and wellbeing than the repair itself.

I escalated it as a safeguarding case, changed the approach and made sure everyone involved communicated clearly. Once the repair was finally fixed, the tenant's situation improved. It reminded me how important it is for the Repairs team to recognise vulnerability, not just focus on the technical issue.

What advice would you give someone who wants to work in social housing repairs?

Learn the basics, understand the tenant perspective, and use data to guide your decisions.

“ Repairs is about people just as much as it's about buildings. ”



Repairs service update

At the end of last year, our previous repairs and maintenance contractor, MCP, stopped trading at very short notice, which caused short-term disruption as we quickly put a temporary contract in place with MCP Plus. Since then, our priority has been restoring a reliable repairs service. We continue to monitor MCP Plus closely through weekly performance checks and recent results show steady improvement.

We are pleased to confirm that Wates Property Services has been awarded the new five-year repairs and maintenance contract, starting on 1 April 2026. We are already working with Wates Property Services (WPS) to get everything ready for when they take over, making sure they can deliver the level of service you expect. The next edition of Your Housing will include more information about WPS, along with invitations to tenant events so you can meet the team.

What this means for you

Please continue reporting repairs in the usual way — the phone numbers and online portal remain the same for now.

We will write to all residents with more details about WPS and any updated contact information ahead of the next issue of Your Housing. As a large, nationally recognised contractor, WPS has the capacity to provide a reliable day-to-day repairs and maintenance service and deliver the major investment planned for your homes.

Making the move easier: our Downsizing Scheme can help

Are you living in a home that's bigger than you need?

Our Downsizing Scheme can help you move to a property that suits you better, with support throughout the process.

As circumstances change, your housing needs may change too. Children may have moved out, a larger home may be harder to manage, or you may simply want a more affordable, easier to run property. Downsizing can offer more comfort, lower costs and improved wellbeing.

Interested in finding out more?

If you'd like to explore whether downsizing is right for you, our Housing Team is here to help. Call **01268 882200** or email tischeme@castlepoint.gov.uk for more information.

What the scheme offers



Financial incentives

Eligible tenants receive a cash payment to help with the costs of moving.



Practical moving support

We offer hands on help, including packing and organising removals, to make the move as stress free as possible.



Help with storage

If you need temporary storage during your move, we can help arrange secure space while you settle in.



Why downsizing helps everyone

Moving to a home that fits your needs can benefit you and helps to free up larger properties for families waiting for housing.

New warden call system coming to our sheltered housing

A new warden call system will be installed in all our sheltered housing schemes. This upgrade will give tenants reassurance, improved safety and access to help whenever they need it.

What the new system does

The system provides emergency support from your home if you feel unwell, unsafe, or need assistance. It connects to the on site warden, support staff or a 24/7 call centre.

How to call for help

- pull cords in your home
- a pendant worn around your neck or wrist
- a wall unit with a speaker

When tenants use any of these above, a signal goes straight to the warden or call centre who will make contact straight away.

Two way communication

Each home will have a small screen and speaker so the warden can speak to the tenant directly if an alert is triggered.



Connected to smoke alarms

The system links to the property's smoke detectors. If an alarm sounds, staff or the call centre will be alerted automatically.



When the work is happening

Installation is planned for March 2026 to September 2026 alongside additional fire safety improvements.

Tenants will be invited to meet the contractors at informal drop in sessions with light refreshments. **You'll be able to ask questions and learn what to expect during the installation.**



Supporting rough sleepers in our community

Castle Point Borough Council works in partnership with **CHES** (Churches Homeless Emergency Support Scheme) to support anyone sleeping rough in our area. CHES provides specialist outreach services across Castle Point offering immediate help and a route away from the streets.

How the service works

- If someone is seen sleeping rough, a referral can be made through StreetLink – a free national service that alerts local outreach teams.
- CHES Outreach will visit the location, assess the person's needs and offer essential items such as food, warm clothing and hygiene packs.

- Where appropriate, individuals are supported into safe accommodation, including CHES-supported housing.

This partnership helps ensure that rough sleepers receive quick, compassionate support and reduces the risks associated with sleeping outdoors.

How you can help

If you're concerned about someone sleeping rough, you can make a referral at www.streetlink.org.uk. A location and brief description will help the outreach team to find the person quickly.

Together, we can make sure everyone in our community has access to safety, support and the chance of a fresh start.

New

Eco-friendly family homes occupied by first tenants

Two new family homes have now been completed in Benderloch Gardens, Canvey Island, transforming a former garage site into modern, affordable housing.

Each semi-detached home has three bedrooms, a good-sized garden, and a lockable shed with space for secure bike storage.

The properties have been built with energy efficiency in mind. They include Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) that provide underfloor heating, solar panels to generate electricity, and electric vehicle charging points.

These homes are part of a wider programme to build more high-quality housing across



the Borough. More new properties are currently being developed at Carlton Drive and Linden Way. Work is also underway at Abbeyfield House, where 19 new temporary accommodation units are being created to support our residents who need short-term housing.

By redeveloping brownfield sites, the programme is helping to improve neighbourhoods and increasing the supply of affordable homes across the Borough.



Picture Perfect: We Have a Winner!

Thank you to everyone who took part in our photography competition featured in the last issue.

We're delighted to announce that the winner of the £50 Love to Shop vouchers is **Lisa Macdonald**, who sent us a lovely photo taken along Canvey seafront. Lisa told us, "It was a beautiful day," and her picture perfectly captures the calm, bright spirit of our coastline. You can see Lisa's winning picture on the front cover.



Winner: Lisa Macdonald





Historic investment in the Housing Service announced

Castle Point Borough Council has approved a long-term Housing Investment Plan that marks the most significant commitment to Council Housing Services in the Council's history.

The new Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan sets out a 30-year programme designed to transform the quality and condition of every Council-owned home in the Borough, as well as improve the safety of homes and communal areas.



Highlights include:



£6 million for disabled adaptations over the 30-year period.



£125.7 million over 30 years to maintain all Council homes at the Decent Homes Standard. All homes needing remedial work are expected to be compliant by 2026/27 and over £5 million is allocated to energy efficiency improvements to ensure every Council-owned home reaches an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of C or above by 2030.



Nearly £6.9 million for fire safety works over the next three decades.



More than £1 million over the next two years to replace pathways on housing land, improving safety and accessibility.



£1.2 million in 2026/27 to upgrade communal areas across Council housing.



A further £1.3 million in 2026/27 to improve sheltered housing schemes, supporting our older and more vulnerable residents.



This is a **once in a generation investment** focused on putting things right, modernising homes and ensuring tenants feel safe, supported and proud of where they live.

