



Please ask for: Matt Berry
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4 June 2024

Dear Councillor,

Cabinet

6:00pm on Wednesday 12 June 2024

Meeting to be held in the Esperance Room, Civic Centre, Cannock

You are invited to attend this meeting for consideration of the matters itemised in the following Agenda.

Yours sincerely,

T. Clegg
Chief Executive

To: Councillors:

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Johnson, T.B. | Leader of the Council |
| Newbury, J.A.A. | Deputy Leader of the Council and Regeneration & High Streets Portfolio Leader |
| Williams, D.W.G. | Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader |
| Wilson, L.J. | Environment and Climate Change Portfolio Leader |
| Thornley, S.J. | Housing and Corporate Assets Portfolio Leader |
| Preece, J.P.T.L. | Parks, Culture, and Heritage Portfolio Leader |
| Prestwood, J. | Resources and Transformation Portfolio Leader |

Agenda

Part 1

1. Apologies

2. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members

To declare any interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct and any possible contraventions under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

3. Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2024 (enclosed).

4. Updates from Portfolio Leaders

To receive oral updates (if any), from the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader, and Portfolio Leaders.

5. Forward Plan

Forward Plan of Decisions for June to August 2024 (Item 5.1 - 5.2).

6. Recommendations from Scrutiny Committees

Health, Wellbeing, and The Community Scrutiny Committee held on 18/03/24 - Recommendations from the Lettable Standards (Empty Properties) and Housing Affordability Working Group:

“That:

- (A) Cabinet approve the ‘revised offer’ of the letting standard as outlined within the report.
- (B) The revised offer made is to allocate a decoration pack to properties where no additional decorative works are required to be carried out by Housing Maintenance.”

The accompanying report for the above recommendations can be viewed on the [18 March 2024 Health, Wellbeing, and The Community Scrutiny Committee](#) meeting page on the Council's website.

7. Motions Referred from 17 April 2024 Council Meeting

To consider the Motions referred from the full Council meeting held on 17 April 2024 in respect of:

- Bleed Kits (Item 7.1).
- Supporting Our Armed Forces Community (Item 7.2 - 7.5).

8. Value for Money Progress Report 2023/24

Report of the Head of Transformation & Assurance (Item 8.1 - 8.25).

9. End of Year Performance Report 2023/24

Report of the Head of Transformation & Assurance (Item 9.1 - 9.40).

10. Strategic Risk Register

Report of the Head of Transformation & Assurance (Item 10.1 - 10.12).

11. Appointment of Representatives to Serve on Outside Bodies

Report of the Chief Executive (Item 11.1 - 11.5).

12. Housing Services Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and Self-Assessment

Report of the Head of Housing and Corporate Assets (Item 12.1 - 12.43).

13. Decarbonisation of Housing Stock Properties

Report of the Head of Housing and Corporate Assets (Item 13.1 - 13.5).

14. Increased Fixed Penalty Amounts for Environmental Offences

Report of the Head of Regulatory Services (Item 14.1 - 14.6).

15. Staffordshire Leaders Board - Terms of Reference

Report of the Chief Executive (Item 15.1 - 15.14).

16. Cannock Town Centre - Levelling Up Fund

Report of the Head of Economic Development (Item 16.1 - 16.15 includes Appendix 1).

Appendix 2 to this report (Item 16.16 - 16.20) is confidential due to the inclusion of:

- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council).

Cannock Chase Council
Minutes of the Meeting of the
Cabinet

Held on Thursday 25 April 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

In the Esperance Room, Civic Centre, Cannock

Part 1

Present:

Councillors:

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Johnson, T.B. | Leader of the Council |
| Newbury, J.A.A. | Deputy Leader of the Council and Regeneration and High Streets Portfolio Leader |
| Muckley, A.M. | Environment & Climate Change Portfolio Leader |
| Thornley, S.J. | Housing Portfolio Leader |
| Preece, J.P.T.L. | Parks, Culture, and Heritage Portfolio Leader |
| Prestwood, J. | Resources and Transformation Portfolio Leader |
| Fisher, P.A. | <i>Observer (non-voting)</i> |

113. Apologies

Apologies for absence were noted for Councillor J.S. Elson, Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader.

114. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members

No other Declarations of Interest were made in addition to those already confirmed by Members in the Register of Members' Interests.

115. Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2024 be approved.

116. Updates from Portfolio Leaders

(i) Leader of the Council

The Leader updated in respect of the following:

End of Year Overview

This was the last Cabinet meeting of the civic year, and thanks were given to all the Cabinet members for their hard work. It had not been an easy year.

As a Council under no overall control, we had faced even more challenges than was usually the case. However, the coalition had survived, thanks to both sides willing to

make compromises and ensure that we were not in any crisis that some would have the public believe.

Here were some of the things the coalition had achieved with the expert advice and support of our officers.

- A civic year of political stability.
- A balanced budget.
- A green light to start on the redevelopment of Cannock town centre.
- The plans for the redevelopment of the former Rugeley power station site.
- Overcome the obstacles to the Council's house building plans for the former Aelfgar site in Rugeley.
- Taken on board the recommendations of our external auditors in the Value for Money report. More than that, we will implement the actions that would enable us to improve our procedures and services, to ensuring that this Council meets the needs of the people it serves.
- The museum of Cannock Chase was still in place and open.
- The nature reserves bridges will be back soon.
- Community safety had improved and continued to do so.
- We were working closely with our partners to continue our work to reduce our health inequalities.
- The focus on the environment had been regained, the success of the 'Great Imagining' being just one example.
- Our partnership working had led to the new projects at the Cannock College campus. These were training young people for the skilled jobs we need for the future and upskilling our present workforce.
- We were delivering on a Fairer, Greener, Safer, Healthier, and More Prosperous Cannock Chase.

Again, thank you the Members and the Officers.

(ii) **Environment & Climate Change**

The Portfolio Leader updated in respect of the following:

- **'The Great Imagining' Debrief**

The Great Imagining Cannock Chase was an incredible event spanning 8 and 9 March, and yesterday a meeting was held with representatives of the House of Fairytales charity, Council officers and Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles (IHL) staff to discuss how to move this forward as it was vital it was not a one-off event - the climate emergency, how it will affect our district and residents and how we can adapt to cope with a changing climate must remain high on this Cabinet's agenda.

Thanks were given to IHL, Cannock Chase Cultural Education Partnership (CEP), the Council, House of Fairytales and all partner organisations and individuals who collaborated to bring about this event. We hope that the support will be long-standing for this incredible undertaking. Officers who had worked on this were phenomenal and would take this work forward regardless of the outcome of next week's election.

- **National Landscape Annual Meeting**

The annual meeting of the Cannock Chase National Landscape (formerly known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) had been held earlier today.

The topic was 'nature recovery' and much discussion was had about how to balance the need for the Chase to be a retreat for our residents on one hand, with the need for the Chase's natural inhabitants (flora and fauna) to be allowed to thrive on the other.

- **Forward Planning**

Moving forward, when a new corporate plan is developed, I would like to see 'Environment' as a key pillar of it as 2030 was fast approaching. I would like to see a structured plan on how to get there and officers had an appetite for it.

- **Footbridges**

The footbridges had now been replaced in Anglesey nature reserve and Rawnsley wood and were open for use.

- **Thanks to Officers and Members**

Thanks were given from me and the Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader to all officers who picked up calls, answered queries, and provided help, and particularly to those officers who get the least recognition.

Finally, thanks were given to colleagues in the Cabinet, and it was hoped all would continue to work well together.

(iii) **Resources and Transformation**

The Portfolio Leader updated in respect of the following:

Council Elections

Thanks were given to all staff involved with the forthcoming election. It was a big resource for the Council and a big ask to deliver. It was hoped it would be a very positive event and a positive outcome all round.

117. Forward Plan

Resolved:

That the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period April to June 2024 (Item 5.1 - 5.2) be noted.

118. Information Governance Policy

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Law & Governance (Item 6.1 - 6.14).

Resolved:

That:

(A) The Information Governance Policy attached in the appendix to the report be adopted.

(B) The Head of Law & Governance be authorised to review, amend, and adopt any related policies referred to within the Information Governance Policy for the

purposes of ensuring the lawful and appropriate management of information at the Council.

Reason for Decisions

The Information Governance Policy outlined the approach that the Council took to ensuring good information management practices were adhered to. The Policy was underpinned by several supporting policies and guidance that focused on specific processes.

119. Network Infrastructure Replacement

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Transformation & Assurance (Item 7.1 - 7.4).

Resolved:

That:

- (A) Council, at its meeting to be held on 22 May 2024, be recommended to move £243,410 into the revenue budget to be funded from reserves for the purchase of new network infrastructure equipment.
- (B) The spend of £243,410 on the procurement of updated network equipment be approved, to ensure the ongoing security of the Council's IT infrastructure.

Reason for Decisions

The network infrastructure equipment needed to be replaced as a priority to prevent a failure which would disrupt service delivery and have an impact on customers.

120. Senior Manager Restructure

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Executive (Item 8.1 - 8.11).

Resolved:

That:

- (A) The new joint senior management structure as set out in report appendix 2 be noted, along with the new pay and grading model for these posts set out in report appendix 3.
- (B) The redundancy and actuarial strain costs as set out in confidential report appendix 4 be approved. The costs were to be shared with Stafford Borough Council (CCDC 51% : SBC 49%).
- (C) The net saving of £178,000 be noted, which would be shared with Stafford Borough Council (CCDC 51% : SBC 49%).

Reasons for Decisions

The new pay, grading, terms, and conditions provided a framework for the combined service manager tier as part of the shared services arrangements with Stafford Borough Council. This followed on from the creation of a joint Leadership Team and was the next step in bringing the services and teams together.

There had been an overall reduction of six managers in the new structure; four of these had been achieved through the deletion of vacant posts and the remaining two through a selection process resulting in two officers being made redundant. However,

part of the saving had been used to create three new team leader posts to support some of the areas where there had been a reduction in management roles.

The creation of a new pay & grading model and terms & conditions supported the alignment of managers as part of the new shared management team.

The meeting closed at 6:26 p.m.

Leader

Forward Plan of Decisions to be taken by the Cabinet: June to August 2024

For Cannock Chase Council, a key decision is as an Executive decision that is likely to:

- Result in the Council incurring expenditure or making savings at or above a threshold of 0.5% of the gross turnover of the Council.
- Affect communities living or working in two or more Council Wards.

Representations in respect of any of matters detailed below should be sent in writing to the contact officer indicated alongside each item via email to membersservices@cannockchasedc.gov.uk

Copies of non-confidential items will be published on the Council's website 5 clear working days prior to the relevant meeting date.

| Item | Contact Officer / Cabinet Member | Date of Cabinet | Key Decision | Confidential Item | Reasons for Confidentiality | Representations Received |
|---|--|-----------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| June 2024 | | | | | | |
| Value for Money Progress Report 2023/24 | Head of Transformation & Assurance / Resources & Transformation Portfolio Leader | 13/06/24 | No | No | | N/A |
| End of Year Performance Report 2023/24 | Head of Transformation & Assurance / Resources & Transformation Portfolio Leader | 13/06/24 | No | No | | N/A |
| Strategic Risk Register | Head of Transformation & Assurance / Resources & Transformation Portfolio Leader | 13/06/24 | No | No | | N/A |
| Appointment of Representatives to Serve on Outside Bodies | Chief Executive / Leader of the Council | 13/06/24 | No | No | | N/A |
| Housing Services Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and Self-Assessment | Head of Housing & Corporate Assets / Housing and Corporate Assets Portfolio Leader | 13/06/24 | No | No | | N/A |
| Decarbonisation of Housing Stock Properties | Head of Housing & Corporate Assets / Housing and Corporate Assets Portfolio Leader | 13/06/24 | No | No | | N/A |
| Increased Fixed Penalty Amounts for Environmental Offences | Head of Regulatory Services / Environment & Climate Change Portfolio Leader | 13/06/24 | Yes | No | | N/A |

Item No. 5.2

| Item | Contact Officer / Cabinet Member | Date of Cabinet | Key Decision | Confidential Item | Reasons for Confidentiality | Representations Received |
|---|---|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Cannock Town Centre Levelling Up Fund | Head of Economic Development & Planning / Regeneration & High Streets Portfolio Leader | 13/06/24 | No | Yes (Appendix 2 only) | Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person (including the Council). | N/A |
| July 2024 | | | | | | |
| Dispersed Social Alarm Device | Head of Housing & Corporate Assets / Housing and Corporate Assets Portfolio Leader | 18/07/24 | Yes | No | | N/A |
| Feedback on the Regulation 19 Local Plan Consultation and Authority to Submit the Cannock Chase Local Plan to Examination | Head of Economic Development & Planning / Regeneration and High Streets Portfolio Leader | 18/07/24 | No | No | | N/A |
| Proposed Charging Scheme for Monitoring of Legal Agreements for Biodiversity Net Gain Sites | Head of Economic Development & Planning / Head of Operations / Regeneration and High Streets Portfolio Leader | 18/07/24 | No | No | | N/A |
| Business Growth Programme | Head of Economic Development & Planning / Regeneration & High Streets Portfolio Leader | 18/07/24 | No | No | | N/A |
| Weekly Food Waste Collections & Inclusion in Capital Programme and Permission to Spend | Head of Operations / Environment & Climate Change Portfolio Leader | 18/07/24 | No | No | | N/A |
| August 2024 | | | | | | |
| HRA Compensation Policy | Head of Housing and Corporate Assets / Housing and Corporate Assets Portfolio Leader | 15/08/24 | No | No | | N/A |

Motion 3 - Bleed Kits (submitted by Councillor O. Lyons)

“When severe blood loss occurs, such as following a stab or crush injury, a fatality can occur within as little 5 minutes. As a result, traumatic bleeding tragically takes many lives each year, some of which may have been prevented if a specialist bleed control kit had been accessible whilst awaiting the ambulance service.

Bleed kits are more advanced than general first aid kits. Specialist bleed control kits include tourniquets and pressure bandages to stem catastrophic bleeding, coagulation dressings and equipment to help reduce infection.

Locally, the West Midlands Ambulance Service have highlighted the need for bleed kits and our local First Responders have launched an initiative to increase the number of available bleed kits across Cannock Chase.

To help meet this need and to ensure that our local communities are as prepared as possible in the event of such an incident, I propose that this Council:

- (1) Undertake an imminent review of Council managed locations, such as the main parks across the District which are popular destinations for the public, to determine the most suitable and accessible sites in which to locate bleed kits;
- (2) Once suitable sites have been identified, introduce bleed kits; and
- (3) Ensure the bleed kits are checked as required and ongoing maintenance arranged.”

Motion 4 - Supporting Our Armed Forces Community (submitted by Councillor Williams)

The council notes that:

- The obligations it owes to the Armed Forces community within Cannock Chase as enshrined in the Armed Forces Covenant; that the Armed Forces community should not face disadvantage in the provision of services and that special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given the most.
- Our nation celebrates our Armed Forces and shows our support for the men and women who make up the Armed Forces Community (serving personnel, service families, veterans, and cadets) by holding an Armed Forces Day on the last Saturday each June. Celebrations begin on the Monday of that week with the unique role of the Reserve Forces who are celebrated on Reserves Day which is usually in the middle of Armed Forces Week.
- Cannock Chase has rich military history and served as a training ground for soldiers during the World Wars. The First World War saw the establishment of the Brocton and Rugeley camps, while the Second World War marked the opening of RAF Hednesford. Today, the Army Cadets continue this legacy at their training centre on the old Rugeley camp site.
- Four percent of constituents living within Cannock Chase are veterans with thirty-four percent of those constituents registered disabled.

This Council firmly believes that:

- We pay homage to the generations of service personnel who have come before us. Their sacrifices, made in the pursuit of our freedom and security, have shaped the world we live in today. These brave individuals, from various backgrounds and walks of life, stepped forward when their nation called upon them. They served with honour and distinction, often in the face of great adversity. As we remember their sacrifices, we reaffirm our commitment to supporting our current service personnel, forces families and veterans, ensuring they receive the recognition and support they deserve. Their service is a continuation of this proud tradition, and we owe it to them, and to those who came before, to honour this commitment.
- The Armed Forces community contributes significantly to our society, not only in terms of security but also in terms of skills, values, and diversity. Supporting them is a way of acknowledging and valuing this contribution.
- Veterans are an asset to society and deserve the best possible care and support in recognition of the service they have given and the sacrifices they have made; considers that those veterans and their families who have experienced pain and loss because of their or a loved ones' service in the Armed Forces are rightly compensated.
- Providing support to the Armed Forces Community is a matter of fairness and respect. They have served our country and protected our freedoms, and it is only right that we, as a society, ensure they are supported in return.
- Supporting the Armed Forces Community can also have broader societal benefits. For example, it can help promote social cohesion, community spirit, and a sense of shared responsibility.
- Finally, supporting the armed forces community sends a strong message about the kind of society we want to be - one that values service, sacrifice, and mutual support. It sets a positive example for future generations about the importance of contributing to society and supporting those who do.

The council welcomes that:

- Cannock Chase District Council, along with all other local authorities in Great Britain, has proudly signed the Armed Forces Covenant.
- Cannock Chase District Council has recognised its support for the Armed Forces and has received the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) Employee Recognition Scheme (ERS) Silver Award in 2021.
- The Cabinet has recently agreed to refer policy proposals regarding Veterans benefits to full Council.
- Following pressure from lived experience groups campaign groups, the government finally scrapped visa fees for Commonwealth Veterans.

The Council expresses concern that:

- Our council has fallen behind in our advocacy for the Armed Forces Community with other local councils who have recently been awarded Ministry of Defence's ERS Gold Award status. ERS Gold Status is the highest award from the MOD and demonstrates an organisation's increased commitment to the Armed Forces Community and excellent advocacy.
- Our service personnel, with their unwavering commitment and professionalism, have become the backbone of our public sector resilience. They are routinely called upon to maintain essential services amidst industrial action, often stepping into roles far removed from their military duties. This is a testament to their adaptability and dedication, but it also underscores the sacrifices they make on a daily basis. However, without a right to strike, it is the moral duty of their leaders to uphold the Armed Forces Covenant and the responsibility of elected bodies is to uphold their part of this obligation and insist that our service personnel and their families receive the support they deserve.
- A decade of pay cuts in real terms, coupled with the escalating cost-of-living crisis and delays in the Armed Forces pay award, are directly affecting our Service Personnel and their families. Amidst these challenges, it is charities and regimental associations that continue to step in, providing essential cost of living grants and vouchers to our veterans and their families. This situation underscores the urgent need for systemic change to better support those who have served our nation.
- In the aftermath of the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, the UK has become a sanctuary for many Afghan refugees. However, a significant number of these individuals are grappling with homelessness as they await confirmation of their status. Furthermore, there are still eligible Afghan refugees, including those who have supported the UK and NATO allies in Afghanistan, who remain stranded in their homeland. This situation underscores the urgent need for comprehensive solutions to address these challenges.
- While the government has commendably waived visa fees for Commonwealth Veterans, it has regrettably declined to extend this exemption to their spouses and children. This, coupled with the recent surge in visa fees, has resulted in families bearing the brunt of thousands of pounds in immigration costs amidst an ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

In light of the above, this council resolves

- To continue the role of Armed Forces Champion as there is a clear need for this role which acts as a bridge between the Council and our Armed Forces Community on issues which this Council has responsibility for and to act as an advocate for the Armed Forces Community to residents, community groups, local business, and partner organisations. This role will continue indefinitely with the role being appointed biennial at the Annual General Meeting. The Armed Forces Champion to have the support of a personal assistant to arrange affairs with external stakeholders. The Armed Forces Champion will report to the Cabinet on a biannual basis.
- To set up a short-term working group chaired by the Armed Forces Champion consisting of internal and external stakeholders to improve how the Council advocates and supports the Armed Forces Community. This working group will include the Leader of the Council and Leader of the Opposition, relevant senior officers, local veteran groups and charities, West Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadet Association, local Armed Forces Units and Cadet Units. However, the terms of reference will be developed by the working group when formed.
- For the outcome of the short-term working group to be considered by Cabinet and relevant local policies are amended to reflect such a position.
- To commit to obtaining ERS Gold Status within three years. The Council will develop a strategy to achieving this goal and operationalise this plan.
- To continue to support Armed Forces Week by supporting local Armed Forces Week events and to fly the Armed Forces flag during this time. In addition, the Council will consider extending an invitation to our community and Armed Forces Stakeholders to participate in a memorial service and celebration of our Armed Forces Community during this week so that we can continue to celebrate our Armed Forces Community in a positive way.
- Request the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council to write to Government, urging it to extend additional fundamental financial support to service personnel. This can be achieved by implementing a cap on food and accommodation charges for the forthcoming 12 months. Additionally, they should advocate for an immediate review of the current Armed Forces accommodation charges, food charges, and allowances.
- Request the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council to write to Government articulating concerns about the existing aid provided to Afghan refugees. The letter should appeal for suitable funding to facilitate housing for these refugees. It should also press the Government to expedite plans to ensure the safe arrival of Afghan refugees who have served, including those currently stranded in Iran and Pakistan, to the UK.
- Request the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council to write to both the Minister of State for Immigration and the Minister of State for Veteran Affairs. The letter should express this council's endorsement for granting the right to remain to all spouses and children of Commonwealth veterans concurrently with the serving Commonwealth veterans, and importantly, without any associated fees."

“With reference to the following hyperlinks:

- [Defence Employer Recognition Scheme](#)
- [2021 census: How many veterans are in my constituency? \(parliament.uk\)](#)
- [Armed Forces Day](#)
- [Commonwealth Visa Fees \(britishlegion.org.uk\)](#)
- [Credit their Service \(britishlegion.org.uk\)](#)
- [The Armed Forces Covenant \(britishlegion.org.uk\)](#)
- [Afghan Refugees”](#)

VFM Progress Report 2023/24

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Committee: | Cabinet |
| Date of Meeting: | 12 June 2024 |
| Report of: | Head of Transformation and Assurance |
| Portfolio: | Resources and Transformation |

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise Members on the progress in the delivery of the VFM Improvement Plan at the end of 2023-24. This is the first progress report since the Improvement Plan was approved.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the progress at the end of the 2023-24 in the delivery of the VFM Improvement Plan set out at Appendix 1.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 The information allows Cabinet to ensure that all appropriate steps are being taken to address the findings of the External Auditors and improve the Council's governance arrangements.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The Council's External Auditor's Annual Report (AAR) for 2021/22 and 2022/23, highlighted several significant issues relating to the Council's financial, governance and asset arrangements and made recommendations for addressing these.
- 3.2 An improvement plan to address the issues was drawn up and approved by the Audit & Governance Committee (7 February 2024) and subsequently by Council (21 February 2024).
- 3.3 This report sets out the progress made at the end of 2023-24 and is the first progress update since the improvement plan was approved.
- 3.4 Good progress has been made in delivering the actions set out for quarter 4 of 2023-24, with 56% of the actions having been completed in full and work in progress on the remaining actions.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities





- 4.1 Good governance and financial management specifically links to the Council's priority to be "a modern, forward thinking and responsible Council". It also underpins the delivery of the Council's other corporate priorities and operational services.

5 Report Detail

Background

- 5.1 As part of the work of the External Auditors, they are required to undertake a review of the Council's arrangements for Value for Money and their finding are set out in the Annual Audit Report for 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- 5.2 The AAR for 2021/22 and 2022/23 identified several areas of concern primarily:
- (i) the delay in preparation of and audit of final accounts and budget monitoring;
 - (ii) the management of our HRA and corporate assets;
 - (iii) weaknesses in our arrangements for our IT systems, fraud, procurement, performance management and managing our workforce.
- 5.3 None of the issues themselves are new; they were identified in the previous AAR, have been raised in reports issued by Internal Audit and/or have been raised as significant governance issues in the Annual Governance Statement over the same period. However, the External Auditors have raised the profile of these issues and the need to address them to prevent significant governance failings. Three statutory recommendations have been made and these are being progressed as a priority.
- 5.4 The External Auditors acknowledged that there has been a lack of capacity in key service areas to address these issues. The Council has sought to address this by agreeing additional funds as part of the budget process for the Finance and Transformation Teams. Additional resources have also been approved to address the HRA issues.
- 5.5 A VFM improvement plan has been produced to address the issues raised in the AAR and this is attached at Appendix 1.
- 5.6 A commentary on progress for each of the actions for quarter 4 of 2023-24 is set out in Appendix 1. Overall progress is summarised in the table below:

Table 1: Summary of Progress - VFM Improvement Plan

| Quarter |  |  |  |  | No longer applicable | Total Number of Projects |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|----------------------|--------------------------|
| | Action completed | Work on target | Work < 3 months behind schedule | Work > 3 months behind schedule | | |
| Q4 2023/24 | 10 | | 7 | | 1 | 18 |

5.7 At the end of quarter 4, of the 18 actions planned for delivery in 2023/24:

- 56% have been completed;
- 39% are being progressed but are slightly behind schedule; and
- 5% are no longer applicable.

Good progress has been made in 2023/24 with 10 key actions having been completed. Work is in progress on the other 7 actions. Most of these relate to the updating of policies and work is nearing completion on these; it is anticipated that they will be submitted to Leadership Team for approval in Quarter 1.

5.7 Progress in delivering the actions set out in the improvement plan are being overseen by:

- The Leadership Team; and
- Audit & Governance Committee.

The Audit & Governance Committee will escalate any concerns to Cabinet and the Cabinet will also receive periodic updates.

All actions relating to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) assets, will also be overseen by a Housing Board which is to be set up in 2024/25.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

Failure to deliver the improvement plan and address the External Auditor's recommendations has been included in the Council's Strategic Risk Register.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

None

6.6 Health

None

6.7 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: VFM Improvement Plan - Summary of Progress

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

Report to Audit & Governance Committee 7 February 2024

Contact Officer: Judith Aupers

Telephone Number: 01543 464411

Ward Interest: All Wards





Report Track: Cabinet 12/06/24 and




Audit & Governance Committee 18/06/24

Key Decision: No





VFM Improvement Plan - Progress Report





Summary of Progress as at 31 March 2024

| Quarter |  |  |  |  | No longer applicable | Total Number of Projects |
|--------------|---|---|---|---|----------------------|--------------------------|
| | Action completed | Work on target | Work < 3 months behind schedule | Work > 3 months behind schedule | | |
| Q4 2023/24 | 10 | | 7 | | 1 | 18 |
| Q1 2024/25 | | | | | | 13 |
| Q2 2024/25 | | | | | | 19 |
| Q3 2024/25 | | | | | | 15 |
| Q4 2024/25 | | | | | | 10 |
| 2025/26 | | | | | | 5 |
| TOTAL | | | | | | 80 |







| No | Theme | Action | Lead Officer | Timescale | Progress Update | Progress Rating |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| QUARTER 4 2023/24 | | | | | | |
| 1. | Financial Sustainability (Statutory Recommendation 1) | Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2024/25 to 2026/27 drafted and approved by Cabinet. Due for approval at Council 21 February 2024. Modelling, assumptions and risk assessment included as part of the budget report. MTFS includes assessment of likely future government funding. | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer | | Completed |  |
| 2. | Financial Sustainability (Statutory Recommendation 1) | Capital Strategy to be updated in accordance with the revised Prudential Code. | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer | | This is currently being worked on and will be completed in Quarter 2. |  |
| 3. | Financial Sustainability (Statutory Recommendation 1) | Bring treasury strategy and its reporting to members up to date | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer | | Completed |  |
| 4. | Financial Sustainability (Statutory Recommendation 1) | Produce draft financial statements in line with statutory requirements and working with external auditors to deliver audits effectively. (Decision to be made on outstanding audits as there is a consultation taking place as to how to clear the backlog of audits nationally at present) | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer | This is to be discussed with Azets as to approach | Agreed with Azets not to audit the 21/22 and 22/23 accounts. This is in line with the national statutory dispensation. | N/A |


Item No. 8.7

| No | Theme | Action | Lead Officer | Timescale | Progress Update | Progress Rating |
|----|--|--|---|---------------------|--|---|
| 5. | Financial Sustainability (Statutory Recommendation 1) | Draft accounts published up to 2023/24 | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer | Quarter 4 - 2023/24 | Publication of the draft accounts is currently under review due to competing demands on the Finance Team from the wider organisation. |  |
| 6. | HRA (Statutory Recommendations 2 & 3) | Appointment of additional senior resource (HRA Recovery Lead) to support the delivery of the HRA action plan and implement recovery actions (starting 26/2/24) | Deputy Chief Executive (Place) | | Completed |  |
| 7. | HRA (Statutory Recommendations 2 & 3) | Liaise with other HRA providers to determine best practice to aid our work and use this information to undertake appropriate benchmarking. | Head of Housing and Corporate Assets | Quarter 4 2023/24 | Completed. Members of HouseMark and annual Benchmarking exercise undertaken. Visit to Wolverhampton Homes and discussions with Housing Plus & WHG across subject areas |  |
| 8. | HRA 30 Year Business Plan (Statutory Recommendation 2) | Provision to be included in the capital programme for 2023/24 and 2024/25 to fund the stock condition survey. | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer Head of Housing and Corporate Assets | Completed | Approval as part of budget in February 2024 |  |


| No | Theme | Action | Lead Officer | Timescale | Progress Update | Progress Rating |
|-----|---|--|--|---------------------|--|---|
| 9. | HRA 30 Year Business Plan (Statutory Recommendation 2) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Housing Register to ensure it is maintained up-to-date • Larger scale review completed in October 2023; and • Ongoing monthly review of application forms on the anniversary of the application form date. | Head of Housing and Corporate Assets Tenancy Services Manager | | Completed On-going monthly review letters sent out and applicants removed from the list that do not re-register |  |
| 10. | Corporate Savings & Transformation Programme (Key Recommendation 1) | Align the MTFS to the corporate priorities in the Council's Business Plan including the costed climate change actions | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer and Head of Transformation & Assurance | | Completed as part of budget setting 2024/25 To be revisited in Quarter 2 2024/25 |  |
| 11. | Corporate Savings & Transformation Programme (Key Recommendation 1) | Review of risk management policy and framework - includes review of format of the SRR | Head of Transformation & Assurance and Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager | Quarter 4 - 2023/24 | Currently in draft to be presented to Leadership Team in May/June 2024 |  |
| 12. | Corporate Savings & Transformation Programme (Key Recommendation 1) | Review of guidelines on risk implications for committee reports | Head of Transformation & Assurance and Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager | Quarter 4 - 2023/24 | Currently in draft to be presented to Leadership Team in May/June 2024 |  |


Item No. 8.9

| No | Theme | Action | Lead Officer | Timescale | Progress Update | Progress Rating |
|-----|---|---|--|--|--|---|
| 13. | Corporate Savings & Transformation Programme (Key Recommendation 1) | Review of risks in annual budget report to be consistent with corporate process | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer | | Completed |  |
| 14. | IT (Key Recommendation 3) | Implement outstanding recommendation from Cyber and Network Security Audit - staff to complete cyber training | Chief Technology Officer and Information Manager | Quarter 4 - 2023/24 | In progress - chasing small number of outstanding staff who haven't completed training. To be brought to LT in May |  |
| 15. | IT (Key Recommendation 3) | Finalise the change management strategy | Chief Technology Officer | Quarter 4 - 2023/24 | Currently in draft to be presented to Leadership team in May 24 |  |
| 16. | IT (Key Recommendation 3) | Finalise Information Governance Framework | Head of Law & Governance | Quarter 4 - 2023/24 | Completed - approved by Cabinet |  |
| 17. | Procurement and Contract Management (Key Recommendation 7) | Update the contracts register and ensure it is compliant with transparency requirements | Head of Transformation & Assurance and Leadership Team | Quarter 4 - 2023/24 (this will be the first draft to be revisited Quarter 3 2024/25) | Work in progress. Draft to be issued to Heads of Service for updating in June. |  |
| 18. | Other Related Actions | Review of Audit Reporting to Leadership Team and escalation protocols | Head of Transformation & Assurance and Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager | Quarter 4 2023/24 | Completed - quarterly progress reports to be discussed at Leadership Team |  |


| No | Theme | Action | Lead Officer | Timescale | Progress Update | Progress Rating |
|--------------------------|---|--|---|---------------------|---|---|
| QUARTER 1 2024/25 | | | | | | |
| 19. | Financial Sustainability (Statutory Recommendation 1) | Restructure of the Finance Team and creation of additional capacity | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer | Quarter 1 - 2024/25 | Restructure agreed and job descriptions being drafted |  |
| 20. | Financial Sustainability (Statutory Recommendation 1) | Regular performance monitoring to be re-established with budget managers and Leadership Team. | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer | Quarter 1 - 2024/25 | | |
| 21. | Financial Sustainability (Statutory Recommendation 1) | Reporting on the delivery of savings to be established and discussed at Strategic Leadership Team meetings. Where appropriate, project plans will be developed to support the delivery of significant/complex savings. | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer | Quarter 1 - 2024/25 | | |
| 22. | HRA 30 Year Business Plan (Statutory Recommendation 2) | A review of the stock condition survey work undertaken to date will be used to help inform investment and the programme of works. | Head of Housing and Corporate Assets Housing Property Services Manager | Quarter 1 - 2024/25 | | |
| 23. | HRA 30 Year Business Plan (Statutory Recommendation 2) | Procurement of contractor to deliver the stock condition survey. Award notice planned for February 2024 with contractor to start March. | Head of Housing and Corporate Assets Housing Property Services Manager | Q1 2024/25 | | |

Item No. 8.11

| No | Theme | Action | Lead Officer | Timescale | Progress Update | Progress Rating |
|-----|---|--|--|---------------------|--|---|
| 24. | HRA 30 Year Business Plan (Statutory Recommendation 2) | Review and update of the Housing Allocations Policy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation complete, Policy going to Cabinet in March 2024 with implementation in April 2024. | Head of Housing and Corporate Assets Tenancy Services Manager | Q1 2024/25 | | |
| 25. | HRA Compliance (Statutory Recommendation 3) | Regular inspections of properties and blocks will continue to be undertaken and will be reported to Housing Board and Cabinet. This includes gas safety, electrical safety, asbestos, water hygiene and fire safety. | Head of Housing and Corporate Assets Housing Property Services Manager | Q1 2024/25 | | |
| 26. | Corporate Savings & Transformation Programme (Key Recommendation 1) | Training for Leadership Team, managers, team leaders/principal officers on risk management | Head of Transformation & Assurance and Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager | Quarter 1 - 2024/25 | | |
| 27. | IT (Key Recommendation 3) | Update IT security policy and adopt a cyber security policy | Head of Transformation & Assurance and Chief Technology Officer | Quarter 1 - 2024/25 | Policy being updated and will include cyber security |  |
| 28. | IT (Key Recommendation 3) | Provide refresher training to ensure compliance with process for 3 rd party data transfers and completion of privacy impact assessments | Chief Technology Officer and Information Manager | Quarter 1 - 2024/25 | | |

| No | Theme | Action | Lead Officer | Timescale | Progress Update | Progress Rating |
|--------------------------|---|---|--|---------------------|--|---|
| 29. | IT (Key Recommendation 3) | Complete the IT strategy | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer | Quarter 1 - 2024/25 | Strategy drafted - to come to LT in May 24 |  |
| 30. | HR related issues (Improvement Recommendations 1 and 2) | Establish our culture, values and type of organisation we want to be. This work will inform the following actions | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer and Head of Transformation & Assurance | Quarter 1 2024/25 | | |
| 31. | HR related issues (Improvement Recommendations 1 and 2) | Complete review of hybrid working. This will inform the development of the workforce strategy and the review of the Code of Conduct as well as support the development of an asset strategy | Head of Transformation & Assurance and HR Manager | Quarter 1 2024/25 | | |
| QUARTER 2 2024/25 | | | | | | |
| 32. | Financial Sustainability (Statutory Recommendation 1) | Commence recruitment to new Finance team structure | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer and Deputy S151 Officer | Quarter 2 - 2024/25 | | |
| 33. | Financial Sustainability (Statutory Recommendation 1) | Lesson learnt exercise to be undertaken of implementation of the finance system | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer | Quarter 2 - 2024/25 | | |

Item No. 8.13


| No | Theme | Action | Lead Officer | Timescale | Progress Update | Progress Rating |
|-----|---|--|--|---------------------|----------------------|---|
| 34. | Financial Sustainability (Statutory Recommendation 1) | Training of managers in budget management and use of the new finance system. | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer | Quarter 2 - 2024/25 | Presentation drafted |  |
| 35. | Financial Sustainability (Statutory Recommendation 1) | Review of Financial Regulations | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer | Quarter 2 - 2024/25 | | |
| 36. | Financial Sustainability (Statutory Recommendation 1) | Training for managers on Financial Regulations | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer | Quarter 2 - 2024/25 | | |
| 37. | HRA (Statutory Recommendations 2 & 3) | <p>Set up the new Housing Board to enhance governance and oversight of delivery of the improvement plan. The Board will comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Deputy Chief Executive - Place; • Head of Housing & Corporate Assets; • Cabinet Member for Housing; • Shadow Cabinet Member for Housing; • Tenant representatives from across the District; and • independent person with housing expertise | Deputy Chief Executive (Place) Head of Housing and Corporate Assets | Q2 2024/25 | | |

Item No. 8.14

| No | Theme | Action | Lead Officer | Timescale | Progress Update | Progress Rating |
|-----|--|--|---|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 38. | HRA (Statutory Recommendations 2 & 3) | A review is to be undertaken of existing systems and processes in the HRA and General Fund to align them to ensure that we have a standardised approach to building safety inspections. | Head of Housing and Corporate Assets Housing Property Services Manager Corporate Assets Manager | Q2 2024/25 | | |
| 39. | HRA 30 Year Business Plan (Statutory Recommendation 2) | Comprehensive external HRA review to be undertaken including Health & Safety (Compliance) and HRA Business Plan & Capital Investment. | Head of Housing and Corporate Assets | Q2 2024/25 | | |
| 40. | HRA Compliance (Statutory Recommendation 3) | A review of compliance against the housing consumer standards (July 2023), has been undertaken and an action plan is to be developed from this which will improve tenant engagement. A residents engagement officer post has been established. | Head of Housing and Corporate Assets Strategic Housing Manager | Q2 2024/25 | | |

Item No. 8.15

| No | Theme | Action | Lead Officer | Timescale | Progress Update | Progress Rating |
|-----|---|---|---|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 41. | Corporate Savings & Transformation Programme (Key Recommendation 1) | Develop risk registers for each Directorate, the HRA and ICT | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources), Deputy Chief Executive (Place), Head of Housing & Corporate Assets and Head of Transformation & Assurance | Quarter 2 - 2024/25 | | |
| 42. | Corporate Savings & Transformation Programme (Key Recommendation 1) | Establish escalation process between other risk registers and the SRR eg services, projects | Head of Transformation & Assurance and Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager | Quarter 2 - 2024/25 | | |
| 43. | IT (Key Recommendation 3) | Develop assurance reporting for IT eg report on outcome of annual health check / penetration testing to Leadership Team and Audit Committee | Head of Transformation & Assurance and Chief Technology Officer | Quarter 2 - 2024/25 | | |
| 44. | IT (Key Recommendation 3) | Review of what we include in procurements re ICT controls and information governance | Head of Transformation & Assurance, Chief Technology Officer, Head of Law & Governance and Information Manager | Quarter 2 - 2024/25 | | |

| No | Theme | Action | Lead Officer | Timescale | Progress Update | Progress Rating |
|-----|--|--|---|---------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| 45. | Performance Management (Key Recommendation 5) | Establish a Corporate Project Management Methodology. Provide templates, guidelines, and training for key officers (LT, Service Managers and key Principal Officers/Team Leaders). | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer and Head of Transformation & Assurance | Quarter 2 - 2024/25 | | |
| 46. | Performance Management (Key Recommendation 5) | Establish corporate project resources to support transformation work (funding allocated in 2024/25 budget) | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer and Head of Transformation & Assurance | Quarter 2 - 2024/25 | Job descriptions are being drafted |  |
| 47. | Performance Management (Key Recommendation 5) | Review of all projects, the current governance arrangements and establish project reporting to Leadership Team | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and Deputy Chief Executive (Place) | Quarter 2 - 2024/25 | | |
| 48. | Procurement and Contract Management (Key Recommendation 7) | Review and update the Procurement Regulations | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources), Head of Transformation & Assurance and Head of Law & Governance | Quarter 2 - 2024/25 | | |
| 49. | Procurement and Contract Management (Key Recommendation 7) | The key elements of the procurement strategy will be built into the procurement regulations rather than as a stand-alone document. | Head of Transformation & Assurance | Quarter 2 - 2024/25 | | |

| No | Theme | Action | Lead Officer | Timescale | Progress Update | Progress Rating |
|--------------------------|--|---|--|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| 50. | Procurement and Contract Management (Key Recommendation 7) | Provide training for managers on procurement and contract management | Head of Transformation & Assurance | Quarter 2 - 2024/25 | | |
| QUARTER 3 2024/25 | | | | | | |
| 51. | Financial Sustainability (Statutory Recommendation 1) | Follow-on zero-based budgeting session with managers to continue work started as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer | Quarter 3 - 2024/25 | | |
| 52. | HRA 30 Year Business Plan (Statutory Recommendation 2) | Review of HRA reserves to fund planned maintenance, compliance and works arising from the stock condition survey. | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer | Q3 2024/25 (linked to budget setting process) | | |
| 53. | HRA Compliance (Statutory Recommendation 3) | A full review will be undertaken of all records and information held to data cleanse and identify gaps/ weaknesses in the data held. All records will be held electronically so that there is one version of the data record. An on-going reconciliation will be undertaken of the HRA asset register to the health and safety checks completed, compliance data and other inspections. Options for a new single asset register compliance system will be explored. | Head of Housing and Corporate Assets All Housing Service Managers | Q3 2024/25 | | |


| No | Theme | Action | Lead Officer | Timescale | Progress Update | Progress Rating |
|-----|---|---|--|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 54. | Corporate Savings & Transformation Programme (Key Recommendation 1) | <p>Process to be established for developing savings options - this will comprise a service reduction programme and a service transformation/efficiency programme.</p> <p>Initial steps for both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a discussion with the Cabinet after the May elections to review priorities and key projects; • engagement with Heads of Service and Service Managers to review current service levels for statutory and discretionary services (to include high level benchmarking) - this will be a pre-cursor to bringing the services together and establish the baseline for service transformation (this will build on the initial work done on SLAs). • Range of options for service reduction and efficiency savings/transformation <p>Service Reduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savings options to be assessed for impact and deliverability and discussed with Cabinet. • Range of options to be refined and consultation exercise to | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer and Head of Transformation & Assurance | Quarter 3 - 2024/25 | | |

| No | Theme | Action | Lead Officer | Timescale | Progress Update | Progress Rating |
|-----|---|--|--|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | <p>be undertaken with public and partners where relevant;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome of consultation to be used to inform savings options to be progressed as part of development of budget <p>Transformation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformation options to be assessed and added to transformation programme for prioritisation. Will need to consider any investment required to deliver savings/service improvements; resourcing to deliver the changes, etc • Project Manager and Project support officer to be recruited to support delivery of transformation programme, funding allocated in budget 2024/25 to fund posts; • Training of managers and key officers in transformation techniques | | | | |
| 55. | Corporate Savings & Transformation Programme (Key Recommendation 1) | Consultation and engagement to be embedded into the planning for the delivery of key projects where appropriate to ensure schemes meet community needs eg regeneration projects, redevelopment of play areas | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer and Head of Transformation & Assurance | Quarter 3 - 2024/25 | | |


Item No. 8.20

| No | Theme | Action | Lead Officer | Timescale | Progress Update | Progress Rating |
|-----|--|--|--|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 56. | Fraud (Key Recommendation 4) | Review Anti-Fraud & Bribery Policy | Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager | Quarter 3 - 2024/25 | | |
| 57. | Fraud (Key Recommendation 4) | Review of Confidential Reporting Policy | Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager | Quarter 3 - 2024/25 | | |
| 58. | Fraud (Key Recommendation 4) | Assess compliance against Cipfa 2014 Code for Fraud and develop an action plan as necessary | Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager | Quarter 3 - 2024/25 | | |
| 59. | HRA and Corporate Asset Management (Key Recommendation 6) | A Corporate asset management strategy is in place and an action plan will be developed. | Head of Housing and Corporate Assets Corporate Assets Manager | Q3 2024/25 | | |
| 60. | HRA and Corporate Asset Management (Key Recommendation 6) | A full review will be undertaken of all records and information held to data cleanse and identify gaps/weaknesses in the data held. All records will be held electronically so that there is one version of the data record. An on-going reconciliation will be undertaken of the corporate asset register to the health and safety checks completed, compliance data and other inspections. | Head of Housing and Corporate Assets Corporate Assets Manager | Quarter 3 - 2024/25 | | |
| 61. | Procurement and Contract Management (Key Recommendation 7) | Work with managers and the County's Procurement Team to develop a procurement pipeline | Head of Transformation & Assurance and Leadership Team | Quarter 3 - 2024/25 | | |

| No | Theme | Action | Lead Officer | Timescale | Progress Update | Progress Rating |
|--------------------------|--|---|--|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 62. | Procurement and Contract Management (Key Recommendation 7) | Process to be established for publication of key data on the Council's website to meet transparency requirements re spend data, contracts register | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer and Head of Transformation & Assurance | Quarter 3 - 2024/25 | | |
| 63. | HR related issues (Improvement Recommendations 1 and 2) | Develop a hybrid working policy and review other related policies and processes. | Head of Transformation & Assurance and HR Manager | Quarter 3 2024/25 | | |
| 64. | HR related issues (Improvement Recommendations 1 and 2) | Review and update the Employee Code of Conduct | Head of Transformation & Assurance and Head of Law & Governance | Quarter 3 2024/25 | | |
| 65. | Other Related Actions | Establish an inventory of key policies and a programme of periodic reviews | Leadership Team | Quarter 3 - 2024/25 | | |
| QUARTER 4 2024/25 | | | | | | |
| 66. | Financial Sustainability (Statutory Recommendation 1) | Implementation of remaining module of the finance system, ongoing development and maximising use of system functionality | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer | Quarter 4 - 2024/25 | | |
| 67. | Financial Sustainability (Statutory Recommendation 1) | Performance reporting for Cabinet and Scrutiny to be developed. This will be done alongside the review and development of performance and risk reporting. | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer | Quarter 4 - 2024/25 | | |

| No | Theme | Action | Lead Officer | Timescale | Progress Update | Progress Rating |
|-----|--|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| 68. | HRA 30 Year Business Plan (Statutory Recommendation 2) | Undertake a full stock condition survey. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An approach to delivering the full stock condition survey has now been developed with the contractor on a phased basis. • Performance and programme delivery to be monitored on monthly and quarterly basis and reported to Housing Board. | Head of Housing and Corporate Assets Housing Property Services Manager | To be completed by Quarter 4 2024/25 | | |
| 69. | HRA 30 Year Business Plan (Statutory Recommendation 2) | As stock condition data increases a rolling programme of improvements will be developed and reported on to the Housing Board. | Head of Housing and Corporate Assets Housing Property Services Manager | Quarter 4 2024/25 | Procurement process completed, minor contract queries to be clarified to enable signing by end Q1 2024/25 Programme for delivery being developed to conclude surveys by December 2024 First reports planned to be made to Housing Board September 2024 and Cabinet meeting thereafter with further reports each quarter |  |

| No | Theme | Action | Lead Officer | Timescale | Progress Update | Progress Rating |
|-----|--|---|--|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 70. | HRA 30 Year Business Plan (Statutory Recommendation 2) | <p>Development of a place-based housing strategy, working in conjunction with key partners. This will be part of a longer-term project to understand the needs of the area and our tenants. It will also link in with the Local Plan process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Needs Assessment completed. • SHLAA and Brownfields register completed. • Draft Local Plan has well informed evidence base (proposed submission Summer 2024). | <p>Deputy Chief Executive (Place) Head of Wellbeing Head of Housing and Corporate Assets Head of Economic Development & Planning</p> | Quarter 4 2024/25 | | |
| 71. | Fraud (Key Recommendation 4) | Assess fraud risks and include in risk registers as appropriate | Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager and Leadership Team | Quarter 4 - 2024/25 | | |
| 72. | Performance Management (Key Recommendation 5) | Develop and adopt a performance management framework to establish golden thread from Corporate Plan to service plans through to employee reviews. Framework to include protocols for ensuring data quality | Head of Transformation & Assurance | Quarter 4 - 2024/25 | | |
| 73. | Performance Management (Key Recommendation 5) | Review our performance report style - delivery plans and KPIs. To consider the development of performance outcome measures | Head of Transformation & Assurance | Quarter 4 - 2024/25 | | |

| No | Theme | Action | Lead Officer | Timescale | Progress Update | Progress Rating |
|----------------|--|--|--|---------------------|--|---|
| 74. | Performance Management (Key Recommendation 5) | Performance reporting for waste and leisure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review of KPIs for monitoring and reporting on performance; • establish internal validation process of contract performance; and • review information reported to Cabinet / Scrutiny | Head of Transformation & Assurance, Head of Operations and Head of Wellbeing | Quarter 4 - 2024/25 | | |
| 75. | Other Related Actions | Review of Code of Governance | Head of Transformation & Assurance | Quarter 4 - 2024/25 | | |
| 2025/26 | | | | | | |
| 76. | HRA 30 Year Business Plan (Statutory Recommendation 2) | Revision of the 30-year business plan, informed by results of the stock condition survey and housing needs assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business plan to be updated on a rolling basis as stock condition data increases. • Business plan review to be undertaken on a quarterly basis. • HRA recovery lead to develop and roll out training for housing staff on business plan and assumptions. • Develop HRA asset management strategy | Head of Housing and Corporate Assets HRA recovery lead Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer Deputy Chief Executive (Place) | Quarter 2 2025/26 | Savills, working on Rapleys report covering 15% dwellings survey and 75 Blocks. Savills commenced analysis and developing a Financial BP and will continue to update as Rapleys data is received on a quarterly basis Savills working with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCE-S151 re treasury management & use of reserves fund • Head of Hsg & Corp Assets-re works |  |

Item No. 8.25

| No | Theme | Action | Lead Officer | Timescale | Progress Update | Progress Rating |
|-----|---|---|--|--|---|-----------------|
| | | | | | programme from survey information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This work will continue throughout the survey period and as Rapleys data is received. | |
| 77. | Fraud (Key Recommendation 4) | Review the information we report on fraud work (including data matching) to the Audit Committee. | Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager | 2025/26 | | |
| 78. | HR related issues (Improvement Recommendations 1 and 2) | Development of a workforce strategy that links to long term transformation / shared services | Head of Transformation & Assurance and HR Manager | 2025/26 | | |
| 79. | Other Related Actions | Development of Assurance Model | Head of Transformation & Assurance and Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager | 2025/26 | | |
| 80. | Corporate Savings & Transformation Programme (Key Recommendation 1) | Review current corporate plan and priorities to determine if an update is required and if so, engage with stakeholders as appropriate | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) & S151 Officer and Head of Transformation & Assurance | To be done for new Corporate Plan (s) and any savings exercises going forwards | | |

End of Year Performance Report 2023/24

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Committee: | Cabinet |
| Date of Meeting: | 12 June 2024 |
| Report of: | Head of Transformation and Assurance |
| Portfolio: | Resources and Transformation |

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise Members on the progress of the Priority Delivery Plans (PDPs) and Council's performance at the end of the fourth quarter of 2023-24, which also marks the end of the year.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the progress at the end of the fourth quarter relating to the delivery of the Council's priorities as detailed at Appendices 1a-1d and the performance information set out at Appendix 2.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 The performance information allows Cabinet to monitor progress in delivery of the Council's corporate priorities and operational services.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The Priority Delivery Plans set out the key projects and actions for delivery in 2023/24. These are based on the Corporate Plan 2022-26 and the supporting four-year delivery plans.
- 3.2 Overall, 74% of the projects have been delivered or are on schedule to be completed. Progress in delivering the PDPs is summarised in section 5 of the report and set out in detail in Appendices 1a to 1d.
- 3.3 With regard to the operational performance of the key services of the Council, 73% of targets have been met or exceeded. Further details can be found at 5.6 and in Appendix 2.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2022-26 was approved by Council on 27 April 2022, setting out the priorities and strategic objectives. The supporting four-year delivery plans were approved on 16 November 2022. The indicators and actions contribute individually to the Council's priorities and objectives.


5 Report Detail

Background

- 5.1 The Priority Delivery Plans (PDPs) set out in Appendices 1a to 1d to this report are the annual documents that set out how the Council will achieve progress against its strategic objectives; these plans establish the actions and timetable for delivery that are the basis of the Council's performance reporting framework.
- 5.2 In addition to the PDPs, performance is also reported against the delivery of key operational services; Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for these services are set out in Appendix 2.
- 5.3 Where applicable, we will also report on new or additional duties undertaken by the Council during the quarter, as part of this report.

Priority Delivery Plans

- 5.4 A commentary on performance and a rating for each of the projects/actions set out in the PDPs is given in Appendices 1a-1d. A summary of progress, by rating, is given in the table below.




| Corporate Plan Priority |  |  |  |  | Total Number of Projects |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|--------------------------|
| | Action completed | Work on target | Work < 3 months behind schedule | Work > 3 months behind schedule | |
| Economic Prosperity | 15 | - | 3 | 2 | 20 |
| Health and Wellbeing | 11 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 15 |
| Community | 9 | 6 | - | 3 | 18 |
| Responsible Council | 5 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 12 |
| Total | 40 | 8 | 5 | 12 | 65 |

- 5.5 At the end of quarter 4, of the 65 actions planned for delivery in 2023/24:
- 62% have been completed;
 - 12% are on target to be completed;
 - 8% have slipped slightly; and
 - 18% are more than 3 months behind schedule.
- 5.6 The key successes during 2023-24 are highlighted below:
- Phase one of LUF project approved by Cabinet.
 - UKSPF year 2 spend fully committed with projects underway and delivering required outputs.

- Rugeley Power Station - site now fully demolished and remediated and ready for development.
- Play areas improvements at Barnard Way and Wellington Drive.
- The creation of the Council's first learn to ride area at the Stadium site in Chadsmoor.
- 211 trees have been planted by the Parks and Open spaces team.
- The new customer portal has gone live.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

5.7 A dashboard of key performance indicators for the Council's operational services is set out in Appendix 2. In summary:

| Corporate Priority |  |  |  | Total Number of KPIs |
|---------------------|---|---|---|----------------------|
| | Performance exceeds target | Performance on target | Performance below target | |
| Economy Prosperity | 4 | | | 4 |
| Health & Wellbeing | 2 | | | 2 |
| Community | 4 | 2 | 1 | 7 |
| Responsible Council | 3 | | 5 | 8 |
| Total | 13 | 2 | 6 | 21 |

- 63% indicators show performance above target;
- 10% indicators show performance on target; and
- 29% indicators show performance below target.

The reasons for underperformance and the corrective action to be taken is set out in Appendix 2.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

The financial management of the PDPs is standard in accordance with Financial Regulations and any measure to address a performance shortfall as reflected in a PDP report will require compensatory savings to be identified in the current year and be referred to the budget process for additional resources in future years.

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

The Council's Strategic Risk Register sets out the risks the Council faces in delivering its priorities.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

Equality and diversity matters are addressed in individual services areas and by undertaking equality impact assessments for projects and programmes of work where this is necessary and appropriate.

6.6 Health

None

6.7 Climate Change

There are specific objectives within all of the priority areas which address the challenge of climate change.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1a: Economic Prosperity PDP

Appendix 1b: Health and Wellbeing PDP

Appendix 1c: The Community PDP

Appendix 1d: Responsible Council PDP

Appendix 2: Key Performance Indicators

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

Corporate Plan 2022-26 - Council 27 April 2022

4-Year Delivery Plans 2022-26 - Cabinet 15 September 2022

Contact Officer: Adrian Marklew

Telephone Number: 01543 464 598





Report Track: Cabinet: 12/06/24

Key Decision: No

Priority Delivery Plan for 2023-24

PRIORITY 1 - ECONOMIC PROSPERITY “To reinvigorate the economy and create a district that thrives”

Summary of Progress as at end of Quarter 4




|  |  |  |  | N/A | Total Number of Projects |
|---|---|---|---|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Action completed | Work on target | Work < 3 months behind schedule | Work > 3 months behind schedule | Action not yet due | |
| 15 | | 3 | 2 | | 20 |





Summary of Successes as at Quarter 4

Phase one of LUF project approved by Cabinet.
 UKSPF year 2 spend fully committed with projects underway and delivering required outputs.
 Rugeley Power Station - site now fully demolished and remediated and ready for development.
 Local Plan regulation 19 consultation complete.

Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 4

Cannock Railway station - business case work on pause pending review of funding opportunities.
 McArthurGlen phase 2 - delay to decision on planning application.





| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|--|---|-------|-------|-------|------|--|---|
| Attract investment to develop the district's economy | | | | | | | |
| Deliver the Levelling Up Fund regeneration scheme for Cannock Town Centre, creating a new cultural hub and high-quality public realm | • Secure outline planning consent for LUF scheme | X | | | | Outline planning consent has been granted subject to signing of S106 agreement. |  |
| | • Approval of design and cost plan | X | | | | RIBA 3 design and cost plan produced. Scheme has been reviewed in discussion with DLUHC Discovery team. | |
| | • Commence demolition and clearance of existing sites | | | | X | Permission to spend for phase one of the LUF project agreed by Cabinet on 28 March; procurement of demolition contractor underway. | |
| | • Compulsory Purchase Order approval from Secretary of State | | | | X | CPO process is continuing; Council remains in active discussion with key landowners. | |
| Work in partnership to secure investment in major projects to create confidence in our district | • Participate in the UKREiiF 2023 event to promote the district to developers/investors | X | | | | As noted in the Q1 update, the Head of Economic Development and Planning attended UKREiiF event as part of the 'We Are Staffordshire' team. Preparation underway for the 2024 event. |  |
| | • Re-development of former Rugeley Power Station as a Zero Carbon community - owner to commence build out of development scheme | | | | X | Site sale process yet to conclude. Site is now fully remediated and cleared ready for development. |  |

| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|---|--|-------|-------|-------|------|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cannock Railway Station - transformational upgrade. Detailed business case and funding strategy. | X | | | | Council officers are currently reviewing funding opportunities and working with partners to identify what work needs to be done to develop a detailed business case. |  |
| Identify a pipeline of future projects to support economic growth opportunities and the rejuvenation of our town centres across Rugeley, Hednesford, Cannock and the surrounding villages and maximise investment and funding into the district | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of projects set out in the Council's approved UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Investment Plan | X | X | X | X | Funding allocated for year 2 of UKSPF Investment Plan has been fully committed. |  |
| Encourage entrepreneurship, promote apprenticeships, and support business | | | | | | | |
| Seek to identify and promote employment sites for new and growing businesses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New employment allocations to be identified via new Local Plan | | X | X | X | Regulation 19 Local Plan identifies new employment allocations. |  |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop proposal for business workspace in Levelling Up Fund project | | X | | | This is currently being reviewed as part of a wider review of scheme delivery. |  |

| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|---|--|-------|-------|-------|------|---|--------|
| Work with established Growth and Skills Hubs to streamline and simplify access to business support services, access to training and apprenticeships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote availability of support from existing Growth and Skills Hubs to increase business referrals | X | X | X | X | <p>The Economic Development team send out e-bulletins to businesses on their database as and when information is shared by the Growth Hub.</p> <p>As part of the UKSPF funding for the Enterprise Advice & Support Programme we have additional Growth Hub Services including a dedicated Business Advisor for Cannock Chase.</p> | ★ |
| Continue to work with partners to secure additional funding to be able to continue business growth and start-up schemes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission and procure new start up support provision utilising UKSPF funding | | X | | | <p>Agreement from UKSPF Board in July 2023 for Staffordshire County Council to deliver the Enterprise Advice & Support Programme funded through UKSPF which will cover Working for Yourself / Loans to step up businesses / Get started and Grow.</p> <p>West Midlands SME Grant Programme is providing grants for start-up and growing businesses.</p> | ★ |
| Attract modern, green and skilled industries, and create jobs | | | | | | | |
| Work with our colleges and training providers to equip young people and all residents with skills they need to access employment opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission and fund Cannock Construction Excellence project (South Staffordshire College) utilising UKSPF allocation | X | X | X | X | <p>The facility is now completed and was formally opened in October 2023.</p> <p>The Council has also secured £73k of GBSLEP funding to finance the installation of an outdoor concrete construction pad to support learners.</p> | ★ |

| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|---|--|-------|-------|-------|------|---|--------|
| Work with partners to identify and support businesses to become more carbon efficient and identify opportunities to create green jobs in our district | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission and fund Staffordshire Net Zero pathfinder project | X | X | X | X | <p>The project has been launched and is being promoted to local businesses. Staffordshire University has planned a business breakfast event for early May for further promotion.</p> <p>Staffordshire Business & Environment Network's (SBEN) Green Solutions grant is also being promoted to businesses.</p> | ★ |
| Rejuvenate our town centres | | | | | | | |
| Identify opportunities to improve public realm in our town centres | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cannock Town Centre - LUF investment in public realm enhancements - sign off of detailed scheme and cost plan | | X | | | Cabinet approved permission to spend for phase one of the LUF project on 28 March; this includes the refurbishment of the Beecroft Road car park, new pedestrian crossing across the Ringway, new Northern Gateway including improvements to public realm and a new café. | ★ |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rugeley Boardwalk - replacement scheme - review inflation and construction cost pressures and present options to Cabinet | | | X | | Reported to Cabinet in October 2023 and agreed to consider potential future funding for Rugeley Boardwalk as part of the Council's wider capital budget setting process. | ★ |

| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|---|--|-------|-------|-------|------|--|--------|
| Work with town and parish councils, local businesses and traders to support the development of initiatives to increase vibrancy of our town centres and increase footfall | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular liaison meetings with town and parish councils to identify opportunities for joint working | X | X | X | X | The Economic Development Team are in regular contact with the seven town and parish councils (Hednesford / Rugeley / Cannock / Heath Hayes / Norton Canes / Chadsmoor / Bridgtown) involved in the Thriving Communities UKSPF project, to share ideas and best practices. | ★ |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch the Thriving Communities project and invite town and parish councils to bid for funding | X | X | X | X | The UKSPF allocation for the Thriving Communities project has been equally divided between the seven areas included in the project. Each area had £13,484.70 (£94,392.90 in total) to spend during 2023/2024. As at 31/03/2024 there is circa £40 left to spend across all areas. Spending has ranged from arranging community events, improving high streets with planters / plants / artwork, cleaning up areas, benches, speed control signs and much more. | ★ |





| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|--|--|-------|-------|-------|------|--|---|
| Support the development of our visitor economy | | | | | | | |
| Work with Destination Staffordshire (DMP) to promote our key attractions, accommodation providers and events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with DMP to deliver the county-wide visitor economy strategy | X | X | X | X | Staffordshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) has been accredited by Visit England. The LVEP will act as the successor to the DMP and new governance arrangements and delivery structures are being put in place. |  |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in joint marketing initiatives and development of themed campaigns | X | X | X | X | Cannock Chase continues to participate in Enjoy Staffordshire marketing campaigns as part of its membership of the DMP. |  |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of Destination Staffordshire investment | | | | X | Awaiting publication of the Economic Impact Assessment from Destination Staffordshire to inform future decisions on Council investment. LVEP accreditation will require the Council to review new governance and delivery arrangements. |  |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with McArthurGlen on encouraging overnight stay packages in the district | X | X | X | X | Regular meetings take place to discuss progress at McArthurGlen and opportunities for joint working. McArthurGlen has submitted a reserve matters application for phase 2 of the development and this will be presented to Planning Control Committee in due course. |  |

| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|--|--|-------|-------|-------|------|--|--------|
| Maximise the legacy of the 2022 Commonwealth Games by using the event to help boost the district's profile | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options for new visitor accommodation / eco accommodation to encourage those visiting Cannock Chase Forest to stay in the district | | | X | X | Forestry England is continuing to look at options and an update has been provided to Council officers to say that preparatory work is ongoing. | ★ |

Priority Delivery Plan for 2023-24

PRIORITY 2 - HEALTH & WELLBEING “To encourage and support residents to lead healthy and independent lives”

Summary of Progress as at end of Quarter 4

|  |  |  |  | N/A | Total Number of Projects |
|---|---|---|---|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Action completed | Work on target | Work < 3 months behind schedule | Work > 3 months behind schedule | Action not yet due | |
| 11 | 1 | 1 | 2 | | 15 |

Summary of Successes as at Quarter 4

Council officers have been working with IHL, Friends Groups, British Cycling and other partners on the improvements of our play areas and parks, including the creation of the Council’s first learn to ride area at the Stadium site in Chadsmoor. It is also constructing a wheeled sports plaza adjacent to the learn to ride area.


Both facilities are intended to increase access to wheeled sports and encourage longer-term active travel by residents and their families. These are part of the Council’s Commonwealth Games legacy and its links with Forestry England. Wheeled sports facility provision is being considered as part of the master planning for Cannock and Heath Hayes parks, and other play areas / parks, with the same long-term objective.


Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 4



The Integrated Care Board (ICB) is developing a health inequalities strategy to cover Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. Council officers are working with the ICB on the development of this strategy.




Cannock Chase Health and Wellbeing Strategy needs to align with this overarching strategy, so the District is in strong position to deliver in line with ICB priorities and attract any investment that is available to deliver the wider ICB strategy. The Cannock Health and Wellbeing Strategy will be completed when the Stoke and Staffordshire Strategy is complete.




Although the strategy hasn’t been completed, work to tackle health inequalities is proceeding at pace, enhanced by funding from Staffordshire County Council to deliver specific projects.

| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|--|--|-------|-------|-------|------|--|---|
| Provide opportunities for residents to lead healthy and active lifestyles and recognise the importance of mental health and wellbeing | | | | | | | |
| <p>Work with Inspiring Health Lifestyles (IHL) leisure trust and other stakeholders to deliver campaigns / programmes to promote the benefits of being active and living healthily</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with IHL, partners, stakeholders and schools on increasing participation in sports and wellbeing activities and bid for funding where appropriate | X | X | X | X | <p>Officers have been working with IHL and other partners on the master plan / redevelopment of Cannock Park. It will include improvements to the play areas, a new toddler play area, outdoor activities, safer routes to schools and cycling routes in and around the park.</p> <p>The brand-new wheel sports plaza and learn to ride area at Cannock Stadium, for all wheeled based sports activities, will also be available to programmed activities, via IHL should the need be identified by them.</p> <p>IHL hosted and supported the Great Imagining Cannock Chase event at Chase Leisure Centre in March in which 900 school children and 600 people attended over the 2 days.</p> <p>IHL have seed funded a new weekly Mini Kickers (football) session at Rugeley Leisure Centre which is being monitored so it can be self-sustaining from Q1 next year.</p> <p>Working with Manor Hall SEN, Chase High School 6th Form and Hednesford Valley SEN to deliver a variety of multi sports sessions such as spin, badminton and circuits.</p> |  |

| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|---|---|-------|-------|-------|------|---|---|
| Promote the use of the Cannock Chase Can online app to support people in leading healthy lifestyles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop evaluation tool - Cannock Chase Can portal | | X | X | X | Wellness Wheel evaluation functionality has been completed and is being prepared for community testing. |  |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new app features and functionality | X | X | X | X | Through receipt of funding to reduce health inequalities, new features are being developed to include an alcohol tracker. | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver activities within the community - bespoke projects | X | X | X | X | Ongoing projects taking place and new projects being developed with the additional health funding. | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise Cannock Chase Can showcase event | | X | X | X | Completed August 2023. | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Cannock Chase Can zone at Hednesford's annual festival | | X | X | X | Completed August 2023 and will continue to support. | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed Cannock Chase Can into the infrastructure of IHL (Wellbeing offer) | | X | X | X | This activity is ongoing. | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a Cannock Chase Can Wellbeing Hub using existing leisure and cultural venues | | X | X | X | This activity is ongoing. | |

| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|--|--|-------|-------|-------|------|---|---|
| Encourage residents to walk or cycle to and from work and school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt and work towards the objectives within the Council's green travel strategy | | X | X | X | <p>The Council has yet to finalise its green travel strategy, but officers continue to look at opportunities to increase the availability of walking and cycling routes throughout the district, with developers and partners such as Staffordshire County Council. Work on Cannock Stadium's new 237m long full off road learn to ride area has been completed and is due to be opened in the early summer, along with the wheeled sports plaza. It is intended that this facility will be used by children of all ages to practice riding on roads without the dangers that come with it.</p> <p>It is also intended that the facility will be used by schools, parents and family members to teach more formal road safety and cycling proficiency. The inclusion of wheeled sports facilities, cycling routes and learn to ride areas is seen as key in encouraging residents, especially younger ones, towards more active / sustainable forms of travel, that will stay with them in the long term.</p> |  |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners to create attractive and safe walking and cycling routes | X | X | X | X | Currently working with IHL, Friends of Cannock Park, Friends of Cannock Stadium, and other partners on developing additional cycling opportunities. |  |

| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|--|--|-------|-------|-------|------|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with schools to promote walking and cycling to school | | X | X | | <p>Worked with British Cycling to deliver sessions to young people aged 8-16 on mountain biking skills on Cannock Chase. This reached over 75 children.</p> <p>Get Set to Cycle is a £68K project aimed to be funded through the Heart of England Inclusive Communities Grant which would fund children's disability bikes and ensure the sensory room at Chase Leisure Centre can provide a cycling experience to both carers and people with multi complex needs.</p> |  |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities to be identified as part of the planning application process | | | X | | <p>Staffordshire County Council is continuing to develop the LCWIP plans for the district with the installation of further cycling lanes and improved walking routes along the A34 corridor and around Cannock town centre.</p> |  |
| Deliver lasting legacy projects from the Commonwealth Games' mountain biking event (i.e. Perry's Trail and Pedal and Play trail) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and incorporate cycle and wheeled sports play and areas into play areas / parks where possible | X | X | X | X | <p>The construction of the Learn to Ride area at Cannock Stadium has been completed. The Council is currently constructing the wheeled sports plaza adjacent to the above. Both facilities are planned to be opened in the early summer. Both are being provided to hone wheeled sports skills and encourage greener travel, as per the above.</p> |  |





| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|---|--|-------|-------|-------|------|--|---|
| | | | | | | Further cycle routes and learn to ride areas are being considered as part of the 4-year parks / play area improvement plan and included within the master-planning of improvements at Cannock and Heath Hayes parks. | |
| Embed health and wellbeing into all of our policies and everything that we do | | | | | | | |
| Develop a Health and Wellbeing Strategy (HWB) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present strategy to Cabinet for adoption | X | X | | | The Integrated Care Board (ICB) is developing a health inequalities strategy to cover Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. Council officers are working with the ICB on the development of this strategy. Cannock Chase Health and Wellbeing Strategy needs to align with this overarching strategy, so the District is in strong position to deliver in line with ICB priorities and attract any investment that is available to deliver the wider ICB strategy. |  |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate strategy actions / milestones into mainstream service delivery | | | X | X | As soon as the ICB strategy is finalised (anticipated June 2024), work will restart on the local strategy. |  |
| Work with partners to address health inequalities across the District | | | | | | | |
| Work with Staffordshire County Council to deliver the Better Health Staffordshire (BHS) Pilot Project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide constructive input, advice and assistance with the project to SCC and other partners | X | X | X | X | IHL has attended all meetings and has updated partners on activity. |  |

| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|---|---|-------|-------|-------|------|---|--------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure opportunities for the Cannock Chase Can initiative and app to contribute to BHS continue to be aired and maximised | X | X | X | X | As above, and a delivery plan has been confirmed in association with securing £215,000 in health funding to further develop projects for Cannock Chase Can. | ★ |
| Support residents that need our help | | | | | | | |
| Work with partners to encourage the take up of benefits by residents with low incomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Service Level and Grant Agreements include support for residents on low incomes | X | | | | The Citizens Advice Bureau provides a range of support for residents on low incomes and for those in financial difficulty, including benefit take up. Support Staffordshire's work for the year has included ensuring support is provided to residents as a result of the cost of living crisis. | ★ |
| Work with Support Staffordshire and Staffordshire County Council to support residents who need our help | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in partnership working to ensure Cannock Chase residents benefit from support available from county wide organisations and schemes | X | | | | Distribution of slow cookers to residents who need them took place during Q1. Significant work has taken place throughout the year with Staffordshire County Council which has been captured throughout these delivery plans, including work on reducing health inequalities, delivering on Better Health Staffordshire and working as the Community Safety Partnership to support vulnerable residents. | ★ |

| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|---|---|-------|-------|-------|------|--|---------------------|
| Work on fuel poverty with partners, such as Staffordshire Warmer Homes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Team to identify and assist households suffering fuel poverty, through awareness campaigns and promotion activity | X | X | X | X | <p>Awareness campaigns and promotion of support and advice available delivered.</p> <p>We have supported 24 Households to secure Energy Efficiency Obligation funding through flexible eligibility, with the most common eligibility route being that of poor health.</p> <p>Working with Beat the Cold we have supported 412 households, the majority with both low income and poor health. The direct financial savings for this cohort are £54,686.</p> <p>Working with the County Council and Staffs Community Foundation 126 Fuel voucher applications were processed with an estimated value of and additional £56,700</p> | ★ |
| Work with partners to safeguard the most vulnerable people within our district | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver partnership campaigns to raise awareness of key issues and support pathways for key issues affecting the district | X | X | X | X | <p>Campaigns are now delivered centrally by the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner - therefore no longer in-house. We do, however, continue to assist in determining their content and facilitating dissemination.</p> | No longer delivered |
| Provide funding to voluntary organisations to provide free independent, impartial, and confidential advice to our residents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant Agreement in place | X | | | | Funding provided to Citizens Advice. | ★ |

Priority Delivery Plan for 2023-24

PRIORITY 3 - THE COMMUNITY “To ensure Cannock Chase is a place that residents are proud to call home”**Summary of Progress as at end of Quarter 4**



|  |  |  |  | N/A | Total Number of Projects |
|---|---|---|---|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Action completed | Work on target | Work < 3 months behind schedule | Work > 3 months behind schedule | Action not yet due | |
| 9 | 6 | | 3 | | 18 |

Summary of Successes as at Quarter 4

Park and play area improvement works have been ongoing throughout the year as scheduled in the programme. Work is continuing well, as anticipated on the 4-year capital parks / play area improvement plan. Officers are continuing to hold quarterly meetings with the Council's main 'Friends of' groups. Friends Groups have been involved with the creation and publication of an excellent information booklet about the variety of volunteer groups and the support that is available across the district. Two hundred and eleven (211) trees have been planted by our parks and open spaces team and as part of parks / play area improvement programmes, during the 2023/24 planting season.






Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 4





While some individual parks / play area improvement programme timelines may have slipped during the year, the overall 4-year improvement plan remains on track, and in some areas is in front, as additional work phases have been included, such as at Laburnum Avenue.

| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|--|---|-------|-------|-------|------|---|---|
| Ensure our neighbourhoods are safe, clean, and tidy | | | | | | | |
| Engage with young people at risk of engaging in ASB through targeted diversionary activities across the District | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver annual programme of diversionary activities across the District | X | X | X | X | <p>Achieving Goalz and Dreams were commissioned through Locality Deal funding to deliver this initiative. Areas for engagement were based upon known peaks / hotspots, with additional flexibility to respond to emerging themes and trends, as required.</p> <p>Additional activities / providers (to supplement the offering) were also funded through the ASB Prevention Fund.</p> <p>A full district mapping of diversionary activities is currently ongoing.</p> |  |
| Maintain our local parks and green spaces | | | | | | | |
| Undertake a review of all our play areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out capital play area refurbishments as per the programme | X | X | X | X | <p>Park and play area improvement works have been ongoing throughout the year as scheduled in the programme.</p> <p>Additional phase 2 & 3 works have been undertaken on the Laburnum Avenue Park, which has extended the project.</p> <p>Work on the bike and play area at the stadium has been completed and is scheduled to be opened during the early summer, along with the wheeled sports area.</p> |  |

| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|--|---|-------|-------|-------|------|--|--------|
| Provide support and opportunities to community groups wishing to take on more responsibility for improving and developing open spaces and play areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve links with existing Friends Groups and create a `Friends of Parks Groups` Strategy | X | X | X | X | <p>Officers are continuing to hold quarterly meetings with the Council's main 'Friends of' groups. Officers and Friends Groups have produced an excellent booklet called 'Something for Everyone' which includes information about each of the friends' groups and their activities and other voluntary support bodies that operate within the district.</p> <p>The Friends of Parks groups are also being included in the development and master planning of park improvements, with the intention of extending this into future years.</p> | ★ |
| Encourage residents to live a sustainable lifestyle | | | | | | | |
| Work with partners and the local community to support appropriate tree and planting schemes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with internal and external partners, local schools etc to identify suitable sites for community planting schemes | | X | X | X | Planting has been carried out across a number of Council sites in co-operations with Forest of Mercia, friends of groups, local schools, and ward members. | ★ |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out community planting at suitable identified sites | | | X | X | In total 211 trees were planted during Q3/4 of 2023 - 24. | ★ |

| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|--|---|-------|-------|-------|------|---|--------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look to create wild planting areas on parks and open spaces | X | X | X | X | <p>Wildflower planting areas have been created at Wellington Drive and Pye Green Road Stadium sites.</p> <p>The Council's Parks and Open Spaces Team are considering spaces to leave fallow and areas to take part in No Mow May, later in the year.</p> | ★ |
| Undertake campaigns to raise awareness of the ways in which residents can reduce their impact on the environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out annual waste reduction / recycling / climate change campaigns | X | X | X | X | <p>The Council's waste & recycling and communications team have worked together on garden waste and information campaigns throughout the year.</p> <p>They have also provided an initial light touch around food waste information for residents in conjunction with Food Waste Action Week, in anticipation of the introduction of mandatory weekly food waste collections during 2026.</p> <p>Waste, street cleansing, parks officers, elected members, and a number of community volunteers were involved in the Great British Spring Clean during March, which also included Hednesford Hills. Well over 100 bags of litter were collected across the district by Council organised litter picks, and well over 200 in total, including community organised litter picks.</p> | ★ |

| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|---|--|-------|-------|-------|------|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with schools, other educational establishments and partners, to promote sustainability, environment, and climate change awareness | | X | X | | The Great Imaginings Event took place on the 8 th and 9 th of March, at this event over 1000 school children attended. The event focused on sustainability, environment, and climate change awareness |  |
| Develop a Sustainability Strategy and action plan to reduce the Council's impact on the climate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt a Council Sustainability Strategy | | | X | | A Strategy has not been developed due to lack of capacity. It will be prioritised in 2024/25 |  |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work towards the objectives of the Council's sustainability strategy | | | X | X | See above |  |
| Encouragement of District wide Sustainability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local government and external partners on improving the District's sustainability and lowering its carbon emissions | X | X | X | X | Working with the Energy Savings Trust (EST) and Staffordshire County Council (SCC) to install public EV chargers across Cannock and Stafford attending monthly meetings with SCC and quarterly with the EST. |  |
| Improve the housing offer across the District | | | | | | | |
| Increase housing choice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver sufficient supply of homes to provide for housing choice and ensure all people are able to live in a decent home | X | X | X | X | Policies on housing choice and a proposed uplift in the delivery of affordable housing have been included in the Regulation 19 Local Plan. |  |





| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|--|---|-------|-------|-------|------|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help meet local need for a wide variety of housing, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o affordable dwellings; and o aspirational housing | X | X | X | X | Affordable Housing as well as aspirational housing policies are set out within Reg19 Local Plan |  |
| Work with other housing providers and landlords to ensure that their properties are safe and healthy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update policies and procedures, as legislation is updated, changes and / or is created in relation to health and safety in public and private sector housing | X | X | X | X | <p>Completion of inspection programme for all known Houses in Multiple Occupation and new Licences issued.</p> <p>Project plans finalised and agency backfill post recruited to allow progress with grant funded damp and mould project</p> |  |
| Ensure our communities are well designed, accessible, and have inclusive environments | | | | | | | |
| Adopt a new Local Plan for the District | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council approval and Submission to Secretary of State for examination autumn / winter 2024. | | | X | | <p>New LDS approved at Cabinet in December and went to full Council on 24 January. Revised date for submission to examination autumn / winter 2024.</p> <p>Regulation 19 Consultation completed in March.</p> |  |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examination in Public | | X | | | Revised date in new LDS - summer 2025. |  |

| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|--|--|-------|-------|-------|------|--|--------|
| Support and build strong connections within our local communities | | | | | | | |
| Work with partners to support community events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular meetings with town and parish councils | | X | | X | The Economic Development Team have been in regular contact with the town and parish councils through the Thriving Communities UKSPF project. | ★ |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify options for supporting community events | | | | X | The Council has supported numerous community events over the past year. These have included Staying Well at Chase Leisure Centre, Creative Space Art Workshops and Cannock Chase Knits Together. | ★ |

Priority Delivery Plan for 2023-24

PRIORITY 4 - RESPONSIBLE COUNCIL “To be a modern, forward thinking and responsible Council”

Summary of Progress as at end of Quarter 4

|  |  |  |  | N/A | Total Number of Projects |
|---|---|---|---|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Action completed | Work on target | Work < 3 months behind schedule | Work > 3 months behind schedule | Action not yet due | |
| 5 | 1 | 1 | 5 | | 12 |






Summary of Successes as at Quarter 4



The new customer portal has gone live this year. The number of forms available on the system has expanded in Q4 and will continue to grow in 2024/25.

Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 4




There has been slippage on the two HR related projects due to capacity issues in the team. The focus has been on supporting the restructuring of the manager tier as part of the shared service development and transformation. This will set the foundations for work to progress in 2024/25.

| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|--|---|-------|-------|-------|------|---|----------|
| Improve our customers' access to services | | | | | | | |
| Develop a new customer portal to deliver better access to services online | Implementation of new system - Phase 1 | | X | | | The new system went live in December with the introduction of garden waste permits. | ★ |
| | Development of new e-forms and processes - Phase 2 | | | X | X | During Q4 a range of revenues and benefits forms have been added and work is ongoing on developing other waste related forms such as missed bins. | ★ |
| Enhance the use of technology and new ways of working | | | | | | | |
| Update our digital technology strategy and plan future improvements | Review of digital strategy and development of action plan | X | | | | A new digital strategy has been drafted and will be brought to Leadership Team in May and to Cabinet for approval in June. | ✘ |
| Develop our workforce to ensure they are suitably skilled | | | | | | | |
| Develop and deliver a workforce plan | Overarching framework for workforce plan to be developed | | X | | | Cabinet has approved deferring this to 2024/25. | Deferred |
| | Review of the trial of the hybrid working model and policy development | X | | | | The review of the pilot has slipped due to capacity issues within the HR team. The intention is to complete this in Q1 2024/25. | ✘ |
| Be a responsible Council that lives within its means and is accountable for its actions | | | | | | | |
| Set a Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A rolling MTFS produced each year | X | X | X | X | The Medium Term Financial Strategy has been produced and was approved by Council in February. | ★ |

| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|--|--|-------|-------|-------|------|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of savings for the budgets for 23/24 and 24/25 | X | X | X | X | A significant proportion of the savings have been delivered in 23/24 and others have been re-profiled as part of the MTFS for 24/25. |  |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation and transformation of shared services, including the delivery of savings | X | X | X | X | The new joint Leadership Team was established at the beginning of the year. Consultation has now been completed on the manager tier and the new structure for this will come into effect from 1 June. |  |
| Make the best use of our assets | | | | | | | |
| Undertake a corporate wide review of our assets and develop a new Asset Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a programme of strategic review of the Council's non-HRA land and property assets | X | X | | | An initial review has been undertaken and a number of assets are undergoing an options appraisal. Progress with the Asset Management Strategy is now paused pending wider review of one combined strategy with SBC. |  |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the business case to create a new Civic Hub in Cannock town centre as part of the Levelling Up Fund scheme | | X | | | The plans for a new civic hub are being considered alongside the review of the scope of the LUF scheme. |  |
| Identify opportunities for funding for green initiatives to improve energy efficiency of our buildings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an Energy Management Strategy | X | | | | An Energy Management Strategy has been drafted. This document will be reviewed following a wider review of the Asset Management & Sustainability Strategy in Q3 of 2024/25 |  |

| Projects | Actions and Milestones | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr4 | Progress Update | Symbol |
|----------|--|-------|-------|-------|------|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop asset management plans | | | X | X | <p>An Asset Management Strategy was approved in June 2022. However, the strategy now needs to be refreshed, working with colleagues from Stafford Borough Council and asset management plans will be developed as part of this. Options to externally resource this piece of work are currently being considered.</p> |  |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify `green` funding opportunities to support asset requirements | X | X | X | X | <p>Funding secured to put Solar PV on Rugeley leisure centre.</p> |  |

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2023/24 - as at end of Quarter 4

| Symbol | Description | Number of KPIs |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|
|  | Performance exceeds target | 13 |
|  | Performance on target | 2 |
|  | Performance below target | 6 |

KPIs for Priority 1 - Economic Prosperity

| Description | Symbol | Number of KPIs |
|----------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Performance exceeds target | ★ | 4 |
| Performance on target | ✓ | |
| Performance below target | ✗ | |




| Indicator | Target | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr 4 | Year End | Symbol | Comments |
|--|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------|--------|----------|
| Planning | | | | | | | | |
| Major Planning Applications determined within time | 60% | N/A | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | ★ | |
| Non-major Planning Applications determined within time | 70% | 96.6% | 95.5% | 92.4% | 93.8% | 95.58% | ★ | |
| Building Control | | | | | | | | |
| Applications registered and acknowledged within 3 days of valid receipt | 90% | 100% | 98% | 100% | 95% | 98% | ★ | |
| Full plans applications with initial full assessment within 15 days of valid receipt | 70% | 95% | 92% | 93% | 85% | 90% | ★ | |


KPIs for Priority 2 - Health and Wellbeing

| Description | Symbol | Number of KPIs |
|----------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Performance exceeds target | ★ | 2 |
| Performance on target | ✓ | |
| Performance below target | ✗ | |

| Indicator | Target | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr 4 | Year | Symbol | Comments |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------|--------|--|
| Leisure | | | | | | | | |
| Number of leisure and wellbeing service users | Out-turn (2022/23) 795,897 | 214,714 | 197,575 | 197,740 | 186,921 | 796,750 | ★ | Both Leisure Centres Learn to Swim programmes achieved pre Covid levels (prior to the closure of Rugeley Pool in December). At Cannock Chase Leisure Centre over 18 hours of swimming and 2 aqua aerobic sessions were added to the pool programme in response to customer feedback. |
| Number of individuals engaged through Cannock Chase Can activities and initiatives, including the app | N/A | 1,092 app users | 1,263 app users | 1,387 app users | 1,687 app users | N/A | ★ | In addition to users of the app, there have been 5,829 attendees at community projects during Q4. |

KPIs for Priority 3 - The Community

| Description | Symbol | Number of KPIs |
|----------------------------|---|----------------|
| Performance exceeds target |  | 4 |
| Performance on target |  | 2 |
| Performance below target |  | 1 |

| Indicator | Target | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr 4 | Year | Symbol | Comments |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---|--|
| Waste Collection | | | | | | | | |
| % Household waste sent for re-use, recycling and composting | 50% | 50.30% | 41.55% | 39.48% | 29.27% | 40.61% |  | The annual performance figure for the year is reflective of wider waste sector performance, which is also decreasing regionally and nationally. This may be attributable to the cost-of-living crisis, residents reducing their waste outputs, alongside general packaging weight reduction and ongoing packaging reforms across the industry. |
| <i>Breakdown:</i> | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Recycling (dry)</i> | | 20.23% | 19.04% | 23.62% | 23.47% | 21.43% | | Q4 performance had been predicted to see a significant reduction in garden waste yields, due to the poor weather / growing conditions and the |

| Indicator | Target | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr 4 | Year | Symbol | Comments |
|--|-----------------------|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--|
| <i>Composting (garden)</i> | | 30.07% | 22.51% | 15.86% | 5.80% | 19.18% | | introduction of the first year of the Council's chargeable garden waste subscriptions service. |
| Missed bin collections (including assisted) | 2022-23 out-turn 1669 | 157 | 217 | 152 | 205 | 731 | ★ | The 2023-24 figure (731) shows a significant improvement on the previous year (1,669). The introduction of blue bag collections for paper and card seems to have embedded well now into the collection service. |
| Environmental Health | | | | | | | | |
| % of food businesses inspected which are broadly compliant (rating of 3 or better) | N/A | 98% | 97% | 98% | 97% | 97.5% | ✓ | The broadly compliant figure is a snapshot in time showing how well our food businesses comply with food safety laws. A rating of 3 indicates the business is mainly compliant with only minor issues which will not affect the safety of the food sold. |
| Homelessness | | | | | | | | |
| % of homeless cases resolved through prevention assessed under prevention duty | N/A | 71% | 55% | 47% | 45% | 56% | N/A | Case dependant. We are seeing more people in a homeless situation this year, mainly driven by private sector affordability issues and section 21 notices. |
| % of homeless cases assessed under relief duty | N/A | 29% | 45% | 53% | 55% | 44% | N/A | Case dependant. As above. |

| Indicator | Target | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr 4 | Year | Symbol | Comments |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------|--|
| Housing | | | | | | | | |
| Rent collected as proportion of rent due | 100% | 98.74% | 97.04% | 99.31% | 100.20% | 100.20% | ★ | Good year for rent collection. Current tenant arrears under £200k for the first time. |
| Rent arrears - former tenants (FTA) | £500,000 | £453,302 | £459,514 | £452,041 | £466,222 | £466,222 | ★ | As above, FTAs kept well under target. |
| Average re-let time for Voids | 52 | 46.10 | 43.30 | 33.87 | 46.73 | 42.50 | ★ | Target exceeded. Good work by Voids and Allocations teams in driving down the re-let time from previous years' high figures. |
| % emergency repairs completed in time | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | ✓ | Target achieved, 100% of emergency repairs completed within 24 hours. |

KPIs for Priority 4 - Responsible Council

| Description | Symbol | Number of KPIs |
|----------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Performance exceeds target | ★ | 3 |
| Performance on target | ✓ | |
| Performance below target | ✗ | 5 |

| Indicator | Target | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr 4 | Year | Symbol | Comments |
|---|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|--------|--|
| Local Taxation and Benefits | | | | | | | | |
| Days taken to process new HB / CT Claims | 20 days | 37.6 | 40.2 | 21.9 | 12.5 | 27.0 | ✗ | Performance in the final quarter was well ahead of target and maintained the improvements from Q3. Unfortunately, the problems encountered earlier in the year meant that the whole year average did not achieve target. |
| Days taken to process new HB / CT change of circumstances | 9 days | 8.3 | 7.8 | 5.4 | 4.7 | 6.2 | ★ | Changes to benefit claims continue to be dealt with quickly and ahead of target. |

| Indicator | Target | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr 4 | Year | Symbol | Comments |
|---|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|---|
| % of Council Tax collected annually | 98% by year end | 28.0% | 54.7% | 81.6% | 96.8% | 96.8% | ✘ | Recovery from the effects of Covid and current cost of living issues have prevented us from achieving the 98% collections of the pre Covid era. The 96.8% collection rate is a significant improvement on last year's 95.9% and so we would hope to achieve 97.5% in 2024-25 and 98% in 2025-26 |
| % National non-domestic rates (NNDR) collected | 98% by year end | 25.7% | 54.2% | 80.1% | 97.3% | 97.3% | ✘ | Collection rates continue to improve but fall short of the 98%+ of the pre Covid era. Last year's rate was 96.6% and so a similar improvement in 2024-25 would see us achieve target. |
| Land Charges Searches | | | | | | | | |
| Turnaround time for land charges searches (excluding personal searches) - average no. of working days | 10 working days | 12.54 | 11.62 | 8.77 | 8.54 | 10.36 | ✘ | |
| Calls, Complaints and FOI requests | | | | | | | | |
| % of calls answered | 94% | 94.9% | 93.7% | 81.6% | 87% | 88.8% | ✘ | The high call volumes for the garden waste subscription service during December and January affected performance in Q3 and Q4. |

| Indicator | Target | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr 4 | Year | Symbol | Comments |
|---|--------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------|---|
| Average call wait time | 2 min | 1.02min | 1.18min | 2.53min | 2.18min | 1.55min | ★ | Despite the high call volumes for the Garden Waste subscription service resulting in longer wait times during December and January, the average call wait time for the year is lower than the target. |
| Complaints received and upheld: | | | | | | | | |
| Total stage 1 complaints | | 15 | 15 | 10 | 14 | 54 | | |
| <i>Upheld in full</i> | | 3 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 20 | n/a | |
| <i>Upheld in part</i> | | 0 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 6 | | |
| Total stage 2 complaints | | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 12 | | |
| <i>Upheld in full</i> | | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | | |
| <i>Upheld in part</i> | | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | | |
| FOI requests within time i.e. 20 working days | 85% | 89% | 79% | 90% | 87.5% | | ★ | |

Strategic Risk Register Update

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Committee: | Cabinet |
| Date of Meeting: | 12 June 2024 |
| Report of: | Head of Transformation & Assurance |
| Portfolio: | Resources and Transformation |

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To set out details of the Council's Strategic Risk Register as at 1st April 2024.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the Strategic Risk Register and considers the progress made in the identification and management of the strategic risks.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 Cabinet are required to approve the Strategic Risk Register.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 All strategic risks and associated action plans have been reviewed and the Council's risk profile is summarised in the table below:

| Risk Status | Number of Risks at 30th September 2023 | Number of Risks at 1st April 2024 |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Red (High) | 2 | 2 |
| Amber (Medium) | 3 | 6 |
| Green (Low) | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 5 | 8 |

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This report supports the Council's Corporate Priorities as follows:
- (i) Risk management is a systematic process by which key business risks / opportunities are identified, prioritised, and controlled so as to contribute towards the achievement of the Council's aims and objectives.
 - (ii) The strategic risks set out in the Appendices have been categorised against the Council's priorities.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 The Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 state that:

"A relevant body must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control which:-

- (a) facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and the achievement of its aims and objectives;

- (b) ensures that the financial and operational management of the authority is effective; and
 - (c) includes effective arrangements for the management of risk.”
- 5.2 Risk can be defined as uncertainty of outcome (whether positive opportunity or negative threat). Risk is ever present and some amount of risk-taking is inevitable if the council is to achieve its objectives. The aim of risk management is to ensure that the council makes cost-effective use of a risk process that has a series of well-defined steps to support better decision making through good understanding of risks and their likely impact.

Management of Strategic Risks / Opportunities

- 5.3 Central to the risk management process is the identification, prioritisation, and management of strategic risks / opportunities. Strategic Risks are those that could have a significant impact on the Council’s ability to deliver its Corporate Priorities and Objectives.
- 5.4 The risk register has been updated as at 1st April 2024 and a summary is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 5.5 The risk summary illustrates the risks / opportunities using the “traffic light” method i.e.,
- | | |
|--------------|---|
| RED | risk score 12 and above (action plan required to reduce risk and/or regular monitoring) |
| AMBER | risk score 5 to 10 (action plan required to reduce risk) |
| GREEN | risk score below 5 (risk tolerable, no action plan required) |
- 5.6 The overall number of risks has increased as three new risks have been to the Risk Register. All other risks remain at the same score. There are currently no Green Risks.
- 5.7 As part of this review the following changes have been made-
- 5.8 Three new risks have been added to the Risk Register
- (a) An amber risk has been added in relation to “Governance” following on from the VFM Report. This is to cover the risk that “If the recommendations from the External Auditor’s VFM report are not implemented it would lead to a failure in the Council’s governance arrangements”.
 - (b) An Amber risk has been added in relation to “Housing Compliance Risk” more specifically “The Council fails to comply with the requirements of the Social Housing Regulator and Housing Ombudsman leading to regulatory intervention and fines.”
 - (c) An amber risk has been added in relation to “Meeting its Homelessness Statutory Duty” specifically “Demand on the Homelessness Service is at the highest level recorded with an increase in presentations of over 100% between 2021/22 and 2023/24. The ability to place households in settled accommodation is increasingly challenging and the Council is incurring significant temporary accommodation costs and may fail to deliver its statutory duty.”

All other risks have remained at the same score, but comments detail the progress made to deliver the identified controls.

- 5.9 The key information and progress for each risk is set out in the strategic risk register attached at **Appendix 2**. A full strategic risk register including detailed controls and actions for each risk is held on file by the Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

None

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

The Risk Management implications are included within the body of the report and appendices.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

None

6.6 Health

None

6.7 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary of Strategic Risks – 1st April 2024

Appendix 2 – Strategic Risk Register Key Information – 1st April 2024

8 Previous Consideration

None.

9 Background Papers

File of papers held by the Chief Internal Auditor & Risk Manager.

Contact Officer: Stephen Baddeley

Telephone Number: 01543 464 415

Report Track: Cabinet: 12/06/24

Audit & Governance Committee: 18/06/24

Key Decision: No

Cannock Chase Council
Summary of Strategic Risk Register as at 1st April 2024

Red Risks

| Risk No | Risk | Risk Owner | Date Added to Register | Residual Risk Score at Sept 23 | Residual Risk Score at April 2024 | Direction of Travel over period reported |
|---------|----------------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| C1 | Finance Risk | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) | May 2020 | 20 Red | 20 Red | ↔ |
| C4 | Key Contractors Risk | Head of Operations / Head of Wellbeing | May 2020 | 15 Red | 15 Red | ↔ |

Amber Risks

| Risk No | Risk | Risk Owner | Date Added to Register | Residual Risk Score at Sept 2023 | Residual Risk Score at April 2024 | Direction of Travel over period reported |
|---------|--|---|------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| C2 | Economy Risk | Head of Economic Development & Planning | May 2020 | 9 Amber | 9 Amber | ↔ |
| C5 | Organisational Resilience Risk | Chief Executive | May 2020 | 10 Amber | 10 Amber | ↔ |
| C6 | Cyber Attack Risk | Head of Transformation & Assurance | May 2020 | 9 Amber | 9 Amber | ↔ |
| 2024-01 | Governance Risk | Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) | April 2024 | N/A | 9 Amber | New Risk |
| 2024-02 | Housing Compliance Risk | Head of Housing & Corporate Assets | April 2024 | N/A | 10 Amber | New Risk |
| 2024-03 | Meeting Homelessness Statutory Duty Risk | Head of Wellbeing | April 2024 | N/A | 9 Amber | New Risk |

Key to Direction of Travel

| | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|---|----------------------|---|--------------------|
| ↓ | Risk has decreased | ↔ | Risk level unchanged | ↑ | Risk has increased |
|---|--------------------|---|----------------------|---|--------------------|

Cannock Chase Council
Strategic Risk Register Key Information as at 1st April 2024

| | | | |
|--|---|------------------|------------------------------|
| Ref No: C1 | Risk Name: Finance Risk | | |
| Risk Description | Poor budget planning, over commitment of financial resources or inappropriate use of reserves leading to a financial shortfall or overspends that undermine the Council's ability to deliver services, corporate priorities or leading to external intervention | | |
| Risk Owner: Deputy Chief Executive Resources | Portfolio: Resources and Transformation | | |
| Gross Risk Score (i.e., without controls) | Likelihood: 4 | Impact: 5 | Total Score: 20 – RED |
| Residual/Net Risk Score (i.e., with controls) | Likelihood: 4 | Impact: 5 | Total Score: 20 – RED |

Overall Progress Summary:

The medium-term financial stability of the Council is dependent upon its ability to set a 2025-26 budget that minimises the use of reserves, and the impact of changes arising from the future funding regime for local government. Details in relation to the implementation of 50% Business Rates Retention, a Business Rates Reset and Fair Funding are still awaited.

A consultation document in relation to the Future of New Homes Bonus was published in February 2021 (a response from the Council was submitted in advance of the closing date). The Council is awaiting details of the financial Settlement for 2025-26, including New Homes Bonus, to be provided by Central Government, likely in the Autumn.

Events beyond the Councils control such as the geopolitical situation, energy crisis, inflation creating a cost-of-living crisis and interest rate rises have occurred in recent years and are likely to continue in the future. These issues, as well as uncertainty regarding national fiscal and monetary policy, the direction of the Government post general election and the impact on the local government financial settlement, have created substantial risk to financial sustainability. The council has sought to mitigate this by avoiding overextending its position beyond its ability to self-finance from finance streams which are as certain as possible e.g. council tax income.

| | | | |
|---|---|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Ref No: C2 | Risk Name: Economy Risk | | |
| Risk Description | Adverse macro-economic conditions lead to a serious impact on the performance of the District's economy | | |
| Risk Owner: Head of Economic Development & Planning | Portfolio: Regeneration & High Street | | |
| Links To Priorities: | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PRIORITY 1 - ECONOMIC PROSPERITY - "To reinvigorate the economy and create a District that thrives" | | | |
| Gross Risk Score (i.e., without controls) | Likelihood: 3 | Impact: 5 | Total Score: 15 – RED |
| Residual/Net Risk Score (i.e., with controls) | Likelihood: 3 | Impact: 3 | Total Score: 9 - AMBER |

Overall Progress Summary:

Economic conditions remain challenging, due largely to the current cost of living pressures and economic uncertainty.

Despite the current challenges, the District's economy continues to be resilient, with unemployment rates at a stable level and a large number of job vacancies available. The Council will continue to monitor local economic conditions and respond if the situation worsens.

Major investments such as the Levelling Up Fund scheme in Cannock Town Centre, the proposed phase 2 of the McArthurGlen Designer Outlet and re-development of the former Rugeley Power Station continue to be absolutely critical in supporting the prosperity and growth of the District. Furthermore, the £3m of UK Shared Prosperity Fund money is being invested by the Council to grow the District's economy and address current economic challenges.

| | | | |
|---|--|------------------|------------------------------|
| Ref No: C4 | Risk: Key Contractors Risk | | |
| Risk Description | Changes in the operational costs/income due to economic factors which impact on the sustainability key Contractors to deliver the required services. | | |
| Risk Owner: Head of Operations / Head of Wellbeing / Head of Housing & Corporate Assets | Portfolios: Community Wellbeing, Environment & Climate Change, and Housing | | |
| Gross Risk Score (i.e., without controls) | Likelihood: 4 | Impact: 5 | Total Score: 20 – RED |
| Residual/Net Risk Score (i.e., with controls) | Likelihood:3 | Impact: 5 | Total Score: 15 – RED |

Overall Progress Summary:

Regular contact continues to be maintained with the Council’s key contractors in relation to performance and operational matters.

Leisure and culture facilities and services remain at risk, with visitor numbers slowly recovering towards pre-pandemic levels, concerns still remain over the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and energy costs and the fact that in August 2024 IHL will lose their contract with Selby Council, leaving Cannock Chase District as the only client. The original Deed of Variation remains in place in regard to the pandemic recovery but requires reviewing in light of the changing support requirements towards energy costs, and as near pre-pandemic income levels return.

The Council has successfully retendered its kerbside collection contract for 2025 onwards and has included provision for statutory weekly food waste collections, and the continuation of its dual-stream dry mixed recycling and chargeable garden waste services.

Clarity has been received from government around consistency in recycling, which has now been rebranded as ‘simpler recycling’. The impacts of which are considered within manageable contract tolerances.

The Council is continuing to develop its new customer portal across its waste and collection service to assist with contract management, reporting and to improve the overall customer experience.

Concerns over the cost-of-living increases impacting upon staffing costs / wage bills, and increasing fuel/energy costs, such as electricity, gas, and petroleum-based products, impacting upon operational costs, have eased over the year. However, the impact can still be evidenced in areas such as leisure services, income, and costs. While current costs seem to have stabilized, they remain considerably higher than in previous years, which may have a marked impact upon contract pricing in the future, such as in the forthcoming waste collection contract.

| | | | |
|--|--|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Ref No: C5 | Risk: Organisational Resilience Risk | | |
| Risk Description | The Council doesn't have sufficient officer capacity or financial resources to sustain delivery of essential services and key projects. | | |
| Risk Owner: Chief Executive | Portfolio: The Leader and Resources & Transformation | | |
| Links To Priorities: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PRIORITY 4 - RESPONSIBLE COUNCIL "To be a modern, forward thinking, and responsible Council" | | |
| Gross Risk Score (i.e., without controls) | Likelihood: 4 | Impact: 5 | Total Score: 20 – RED |
| Residual/Net Risk Score (i.e., with controls) | Likelihood: 2 | Impact: 5 | Total Score: 10- AMBER |

Overall Progress Summary:

A number of services are continuing to experience capacity issues due to vacancies and problems in recruiting new staff. The major capital schemes funded by Future High Street monies and the Levelling Up Fund, together with the outcome of the recent Value for Money report have all resulted in significant demand on both front line and support services. Officer capacity continues to be reviewed and work prioritised. Funding for additional capacity in the Finance and Transformation Teams has been agreed and work has commenced on the preparation of job descriptions ready to go out to advert.

The Council's shared leadership team structure came into effect on 1 April 2023 and all posts are filled. Work is nearing completion on the consultation for the proposed new shared service manager tier, and this is due to be implemented with effect from 1 June 2024. Additional staffing resources are being identified to address key areas of demand.

| | | | |
|--|--|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Ref No: C6 | Risk Name: Cyber Attack Risk | | |
| Risk Description | Failure to repel or recover from a Cyber-attack including targeted ransomware, malware, and Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks leading to disruption to the delivery of services and communication with residents. | | |
| Risk Owner: Head of Transformation & Assurance | Portfolio: Resources and Transformation | | |
| Links To Priorities: | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PRIORITY 4 - RESPONSIBLE COUNCIL “To be a modern, forward thinking, and responsible Council” | | | |
| Gross Risk Score (i.e., without controls) | Likelihood: 4 | Impact: 5 | Total Score: 20 – RED |
| Residual/Net Risk Score (i.e., with controls) | Likelihood: 3 | Impact: 3 | Total Score: 9 – AMBER |

Overall Progress Summary:

Cyber-attacks are a global issue, and the operating environment means that new risks and challenges are always developing, and attacks are becoming more sophisticated.

The Technology Team has achieved Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation for 2024; this is a government-backed, industry-supported scheme to help organisations protect themselves against common online threats. About Cyber Essentials - NCSC.GOV.UK

A Security Officer role has been created within the team as part of the localised restructure. Cyber Essentials Plus renewal will be performed every December/January.

PSN certification is due to be renewed in June 2024 following the IT health Check in May.

Mobile Device management is in place and used to manage all our mobile devices, in the event of a lost or stolen device we can remotely wipe the machine/phone of any council data.

We have recently set up a network monitoring tool which enables the Security Officer to monitor network activity proactively.

The infrastructure hardware refresh is to be completed in 2024 providing a modern up to date infrastructure with enhanced security features.

| | | | |
|--|---|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Ref No: 2024-01 | Risk Name: Governance Risk | | |
| Risk Description | If the recommendations from the External Auditor's VFM report are not implemented it would lead to a failure in the Council's governance arrangements | | |
| Risk Owner: Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) | Portfolio: Resources and Transformation | | |
| Links To Priorities: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PRIORITY 4 - RESPONSIBLE COUNCIL "To be a modern, forward thinking, and responsible Council" | | |
| Gross Risk Score (i.e., without controls) | Likelihood: 4 | Impact: 5 | Total Score: 20 – RED |
| Residual/Net Risk Score (i.e., with controls) | Likelihood: 3 | Impact: 3 | Total Score: 9 – AMBER |

Overall Progress Summary:

The Improvement Plan to address the External Audit recommendations was approved in February 2024.

Progress has been made against a number of actions and the first update is due to be reported to Cabinet and the Audit & Governance Committee in June 2024.

| | | | |
|--|---|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Ref No: 2024-02 | Risk Name: Housing Compliance Risk | | |
| Risk Description | The Council fails to comply with the requirements of the Social Housing Regulator and Housing Ombudsman leading to regulatory intervention and fines. | | |
| Risk Owner: Head of Housing & Corporate Assets | Portfolio: Housing | | |
| Links To Priorities: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PRIORITY 4 - RESPONSIBLE COUNCIL “To be a modern, forward thinking, and responsible Council” | | |
| Gross Risk Score (i.e., without controls) | Likelihood: 4 | Impact: 5 | Total Score: 20 – RED |
| Residual/Net Risk Score (i.e., with controls) | Likelihood: 2 | Impact:5 | Total Score: 10 – AMBER |

Overall Progress Summary:

The Improvement Plan to address the External Audit recommendations was approved in February. Work has commenced on the external review of the Housing Revenue Account and to establish the Housing Board to oversee progress.

Contractors have been appointed to deliver the remaining stock condition survey.

Resources have been increased in the service to address ICT/software issues and Housing Consultant appointed to assist with the implementation of the Housing Improvement Plan.

| | | | |
|--|--|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Ref No: 2024-03 | Risk Name: Meeting Homelessness Statutory Duty | | |
| Risk Description | Demand on the Homelessness Service is high and accommodation supply is low leading to the lack of ability to place households in settled accommodation leading to a high number of households in long term temporary accommodation increasing costs and impacting on family life.” | | |
| Risk Owner: Head of Wellbeing | Portfolio: Community Wellbeing | | |
| Links To Priorities: | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PRIORITY 4 - RESPONSIBLE COUNCIL “To be a modern, forward thinking, and responsible Council” | | | |
| Gross Risk Score (i.e., without controls) | Likelihood: 4 | Impact: 3 | Total Score: 12 – RED |
| Residual/Net Risk Score (i.e., with controls) | Likelihood:3 | Impact:3 | Total Score: 9 – AMBER |

Overall Progress Summary:

The increase in the local housing allowance to the 30th percentile on 01 April 2024 may enable some more placements into the private rented sector.

The Renters Reform Bill is still in Parliament but in the meantime, eviction from the private rented sector remains the principal cause of homelessness.

Work ongoing to ensure correct housing benefit levels to minimise risk to the General Fund.

Policies on housing choice and a proposed uplift in the delivery of affordable housing have been included in the Regulation 19 Local Plan.

Cabinet Representatives on Outside Bodies 2024-25

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Committee: | Cabinet |
| Date of Meeting: | 12 June 2024 |
| Report of: | Chief Executive |
| Portfolio: | Leader of the Council |

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the appointment of representatives to outside bodies for 2024-25 as set out in the schedule of nominations as attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 To confirm the Chief Executive's authority, in consultation with the Leader of the Council to make appointments to any other outside bodies throughout the municipal year and amend existing appointments as necessary.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet determines the appointment of representatives to outside bodies for 2024-25, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.
- 2.2 The Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to make appointments to additional outside bodies and amendments to any existing outside bodies, as necessary, throughout the municipal year, that would otherwise be determined by Cabinet.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.3 To reflect the wishes of the Cabinet as to which Members it wishes to appoint to those outside bodies as listed in Appendix 1 of the report.
- 2.4 For practical purposes, Cabinet is also requested to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make appointments to any additional outside bodies, and amend existing appointments.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 Each year Cabinet is required to appoint representatives to several outside bodies as detailed in the schedule included at Appendix 1. This is normally done at the first Cabinet meeting following the Annual Council meeting.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The Council, through its democratic process, contributes to the Council's Corporate Priorities and promotes community engagement through the appointment of representatives to outside bodies.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 Determination of appointments to representatives on certain outside bodies (as detailed in Appendix 1) is a matter for Cabinet in the first instance. This is normally done at the first Cabinet meeting following the Annual Council meeting. The Chief Executive will consult with the Leader of the Council to make appointments to any additional outside bodies, or amend existing appointments, as necessary, subject to recommendation 2.2 being agreed.
- 5.2 The Staffordshire and Stoke-On-Trent Joint Waste Management Board merged with the Staffordshire Sustainability Board in 2023 and is now the 'Staffordshire Sustainability Board'. The appointed representatives would remain the same.
- 5.3 The Cannock Park Golf Club Committee has been removed following constitutional changes by the Golf Club which means councillor representation is no longer required.
- 5.4 As identified in the schedule of proposed appointees, the following outside bodies require a named substitute member to also be appointed:
- Cabinet Chase National Landscape (formerly AONB) Joint Management Committee - **substitute must be a Cabinet Member.**
 - Local Government Association General Assembly.
 - Staffordshire Police, Fire & Crime Panel.
 - Staffordshire Sustainability Board (formerly known as the Staffordshire & Stoke-On-Trent Joint Waste Management Board).

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any costs which arise from appointments determined as an approved duty, and thereby subject to travel and subsistence claims, will have to be met from existing Members' budgets.

6.2 Legal

Unless otherwise specified by statute, Section 101(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers the Council to arrange for the discharge of any of its functions by an officer of the Council in that:

"subject to any express provision contained in this act or any act passed after this Act, a local authority may arrange for the discharge of any of their functions-

(a) by a committee, a sub-committee or an officer of the authority..."

In respect of appointments related to executive functions, the power to delegate the making of such appointments to the Managing Director rests with the Cabinet in accordance with section 14 of the Local Government Act 2000.

6.3 Human Resources

None.

6.4 Risk Management

None.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

None.

6.6 Health

None.

6.7 Climate Change

None.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Schedule of proposed outside bodies appointments by Cabinet for 2024-25.

8 Previous Consideration

None.

9 Background Papers

None.

Contact Officer: Matt Berry
Telephone Number: 01543 464 589
Report Track: Cabinet: 12/06/24
Key Decision: No

Cannock Chase Council

Proposed Cabinet Appointed Representatives to Outside Bodies for 2024-25

Notes:

- All the below listed positions are appointed on an annual basis at the first Cabinet meeting after Annual Council.
- All bodies have one seat available unless otherwise stated.

| Name of Body | Current Representative(s) | Proposed Representatives(s) |
|--|---|---|
| Cannock Chase National Landscape (formerly AONB) Joint Management Committee | Environment & Climate Change Portfolio Leader Substitute - Parks, Culture & Heritage Portfolio Leader | Parks, Culture, and Heritage Portfolio Leader Substitute: Cllr. M. Freeman |
| Local Government Association General Assembly | Leader of the Council Substitute - Deputy Leader of the Council | Leader of the Council Substitute: Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader |
| Local Strategic Partnership (Chase Community Partnership) 5 seats to be filled | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader of the Council • Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader • Housing Portfolio Leader • Parks, Culture & Heritage Portfolio Leader • Leader of the Opposition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader of the Council • Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader • Housing Portfolio Leader • Parks, Culture & Heritage Portfolio Leader • Leader of the Opposition |
| Norton Canes Community Partnership | Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader | Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader |
| PATROL (Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London) Joint Committee | Environment & Climate Change Portfolio Leader | Environment & Climate Change Portfolio Leader |
| Poplars Landfill Site Liaison Committee | Environment & Climate Change Portfolio Leader | Environment & Climate Change Portfolio Leader |
| Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership | Regeneration and High Streets Portfolio Leader (or Head of Economic Development & Planning as nominee) | Regeneration and High Streets Portfolio Leader (or Head of Economic Development & Planning as nominee) |

| Name of Body | Current Representative(s) | Proposed Representatives(s) |
|--|--|--|
| Staffordshire Police, Fire, and Crime Panel | Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader Substitute - Housing Portfolio Leader | Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader Substitute: Leader of the Council |
| Staffordshire Sustainability Board (Formerly the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Waste Management Board) | Environment & Climate Change Portfolio Leader Substitute - Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader | Environment & Climate Change Portfolio Leader Substitute: Cllr. M. Dunnett |
| Staffordshire Playing Fields Association | Parks, Culture & Heritage Portfolio Leader (Note: Councillor Elson was appointed separately to this body by full Council in May 2024) | Parks, Culture & Heritage Portfolio Leader |
| West Midlands Employers | Leader of the Council | Leader of the Council |

Housing Services Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and Self-Assessment

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Committee: | Cabinet |
| Date of Meeting: | 12 June 2024 |
| Report of: | Head of Housing and Corporate Assets |
| Portfolio: | Housing |

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To note the contents of the revised Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and the requirement to complete an annual complaints performance and service improvement report, including a self-assessment against the code.
- 1.2 To seek Cabinet approval for the Housing Services Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report.
- 1.3 To note the contents of the self-assessment form and its subsequent publication on the Council's website.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the implications of the new Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approve the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and the outcomes from the self-assessment form, further to its subsequent publication on the Council's website.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.3 To adhere to membership requirements of the Housing Ombudsman and its Complaint Handling Code 2024 for Landlords to produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge by Cabinet, which must include the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure complaint handling policy remains in line with the Ombudsman's requirements.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The Council is required to comply with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, its latest revision being applicable from 1 April 2024.
- 3.2 One of the implications is the completion of an annual complaints performance and service improvement report, including a self-assessment against the Code. This report forms the annual complaints and service improvement report and the self-assessment is attached as Appendix 1. The Ombudsman expects landlords to report their performance report and outcome of their self-assessment to their board members or, in the case of local authorities, elected members.

- 3.3 The Ombudsman expects landlords to carry out regular self-assessment against the Code and take appropriate action to ensure their complaint handling is in line with the Code.
- 3.4 The updated self-assessment finds that Housing Services continues to adhere to the vast majority of the requirements in the Code as a result of the provisions set out in the Corporate Customer Feedback and Complaints Procedure.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This report supports the Council’s Corporate Priorities as follows:
 - (i) Adhering to the Complaint Handling Code will assist Housing Services in dealing with complaints and help achieve the Council’s ‘Responsible Council’ priority by delivering Council services that are customer centred and accessible - giving choice to our customers in how they access our services - and to be accountable for our actions.

5 Report Detail

Background

- 5.1 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (the Act) empowered the Housing Ombudsman to issue a code of practice about the procedures members of the Scheme should have in place for considering complaints.

[The Housing Ombudsman Scheme](#) sets out the membership obligations to which all landlords must adhere (see paragraphs 9-12). In particular, paragraph 9b specifies that landlords must establish and maintain a complaints procedure in accordance with [The Complaint Handling Code](#).

- 5.2 The Act also placed a duty on the Ombudsman to monitor compliance with the Complaint Handling Code. The statutory Code took effect from 1 April 2024, along with the duty to monitor compliance annually through a submission process, which includes a self-assessment exercise against the Code.
- 5.3 There were a number of changes made to the Code from the previous version issued in April 2022, the majority were minor amendments, clarifications, re-wording or removal of requirements. However, there were a few additions to the Code which should be noted, these are set out in the table below with commentary on how they will be met.

| Para. | New Requirement | How it will be met |
|-------|--|--|
| 2.3 | Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so. | The existing corporate Complaints procedure allows for this. |

| Para. | New Requirement | How it will be met |
|-------|--|---|
| 2.5 | Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint. | All complaints would be considered on their individual circumstances, the corporate procedure allows for this. |
| 8.1 | Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include: a) the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. | This report meets this requirement. |
| 9.5 | A member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC'). | As a social housing landlord function, the Housing Portfolio Holder will act as the member responsible for complaints. |
| 9.6 | The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings. | The Housing Portfolio Holder will be provided the necessary information on a regular basis to report to Cabinet Briefing. |

5.4 Full details of all the changes can be viewed on the [Housing Ombudsman's website](#).

The Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

5.5 The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must include the following:

- a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.**

This is provided as Appendix 1, also see paragraphs 5.17 and 5.18.

- b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept;**

See paragraphs 5.6 - 5.14 below

- c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;**

The Council was not subject to any findings of non-compliance by the Ombudsman.

d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;

See paragraph 5.15 below

e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman;

The Council was not subject to any reports about its performance from the Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman's latest landlord performance reports are for landlords with five or more findings made in cases determined between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023. The Council only had two cases determined by the Ombudsman in 2022/23.

f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.

The Council was not subject to any other reports from the Ombudsman specifically regarding its own work or services.

The Ombudsman produces a large number of reports throughout the year, available on their [website](#). These include Spotlight reports that look at thematic issues to special investigations into specific landlords' failings and quarterly Insight and Complaint Handling Failure Order reports. These reports are regularly digested by officers and any learning noted and implemented where possible.

Complaints Analysis

- 5.6 The Service Improvement Team administer Housing Services' complaints and service requests that get directed to the service. The team use a dedicated email account housingformalenquiries@cannockchasedc.gov.uk and maintain a register of all complaints and enquiries received. All formal complaints are directed through this inbox via the CEO office and their dedicated email account ceoformalenquiries@cannockchasedc.gov.uk.

The team logged a total of 259 enquiries and complaint contacts during 2023/24, with 36 Stage One complaints and 7 Stage Two complaints, the remainder being MP enquiries and service requests (or informal resolutions), this doesn't include a large number of other enquiries that go directly through managers, team leaders and other officers.

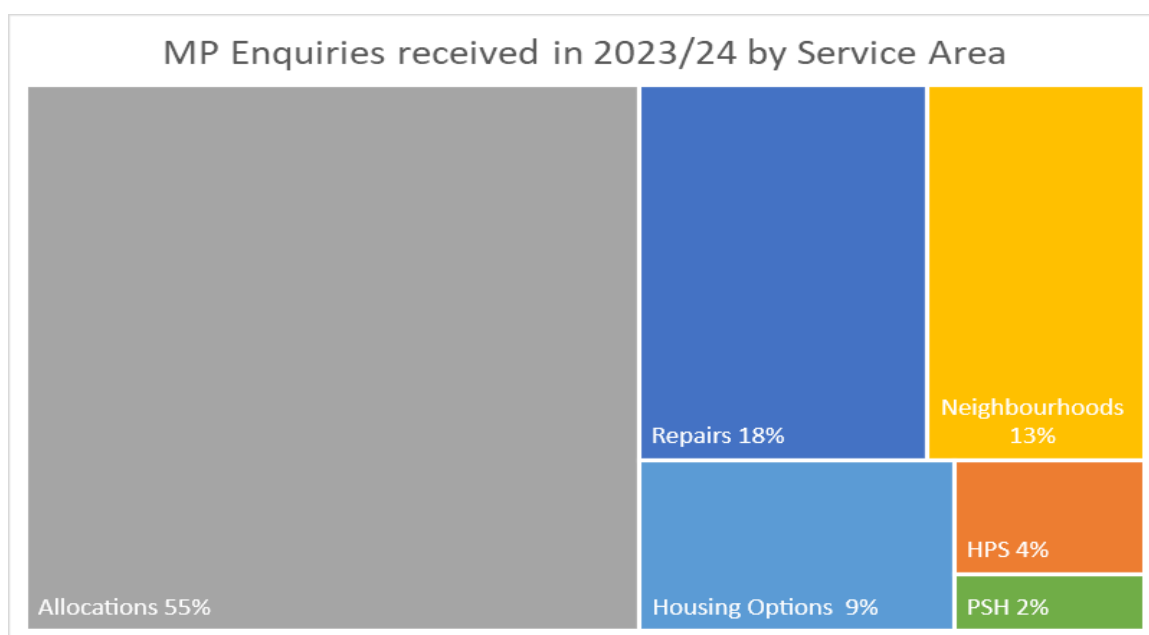
These MP enquiries and service requests were all considered 'informal resolutions' in accordance with the corporate Complaints Procedure and the Complaint Handling Code, they are generally first-time enquiries or where the service hadn't had opportunity to respond where an issue had arisen or it was a query over the service provision or delivery.

- 5.7 There were 113 MP Enquiries received throughout 2023/24, of which the Allocations team were the Service Area to receive the most - they received 62 enquiries which amounts to 55% of total MP Enquiries received. Generally these were queries about applying for housing, or, if they were already an applicant, enquiring about the periods of time they were awaiting for a property, if the banding they were awarded was correct or wanting to get updates on their pending application.

The chart below shows the proportion of MP enquiries received between areas of the Housing Service. The chart also includes Housing Options and Homelessness enquiries as these often involve the Allocations team in subsequent applications for social housing, these enquiries have still continued to be monitored since the move over to the Head of Wellbeing as a result of shared services arrangements. There were also a couple of Private Sector Housing (PSH) enquiries that came through to us that needed some input from Housing Services, so are also included.

Typical MP enquiries included:

- Housing application queries - requests for updates on pending applications, considerations of additional information not disclosed at application, disagreements with banding awards and dissatisfaction with the waiting time for a property.
- Length of time waiting for repairs (most often fencing);
- Repairs reportedly not completed or not attended to;
- Poor communication leading to tenants chasing up work;
- Neighbour issues, reports of ASB, trees in gardens or neighbours gardens, driveway and access queries;
- Homelessness applications - updates for progress, wanting temporary accommodation in closer locations, links with housing applications queries.

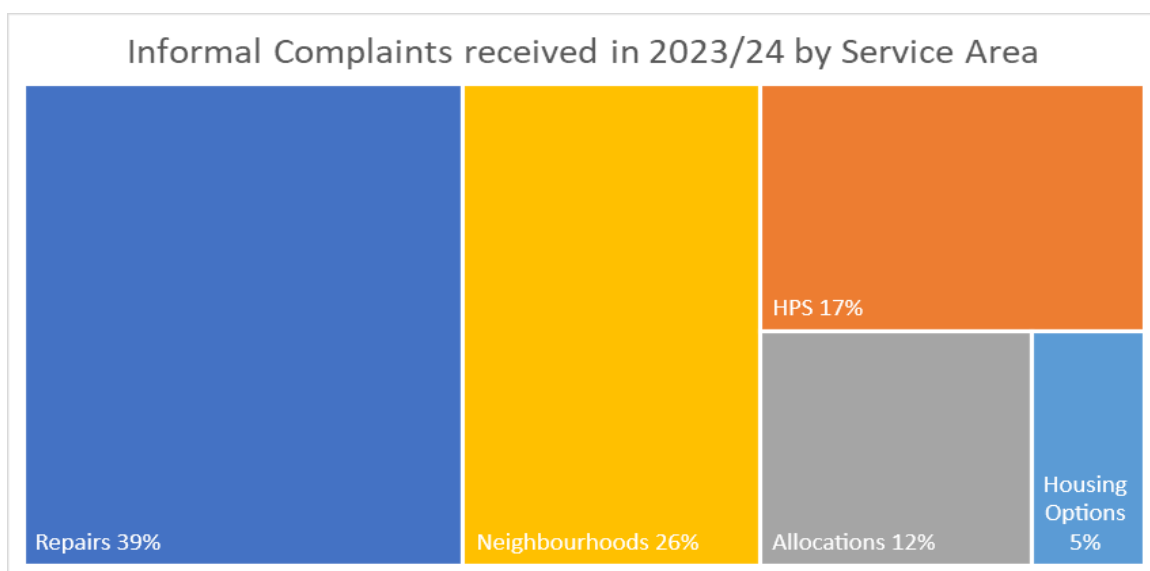


- 5.8 103 Service Requests (informal resolutions) were received during 2023/24. Repairs received 40 requests, giving them the highest percentage of 39%. The Service Area to receive the second highest number was Neighbourhoods, who received 27 requests (26%).

Similar to MP enquiries, typical service requests included:

- Length of time waiting for repairs (most often fencing);
- Repairs reportedly not completed or not attended to;
- Poor communication leading to tenant chasing up work;

- Gas servicing/repairs, and other issues with contractors undertaking programmed works;
- Neighbour issues, reports of ASB;
- Housing application queries - requests for updates on pending applications, considerations of additional information not disclosed at application, disagreements with banding awards and dissatisfaction with the waiting time for a property.

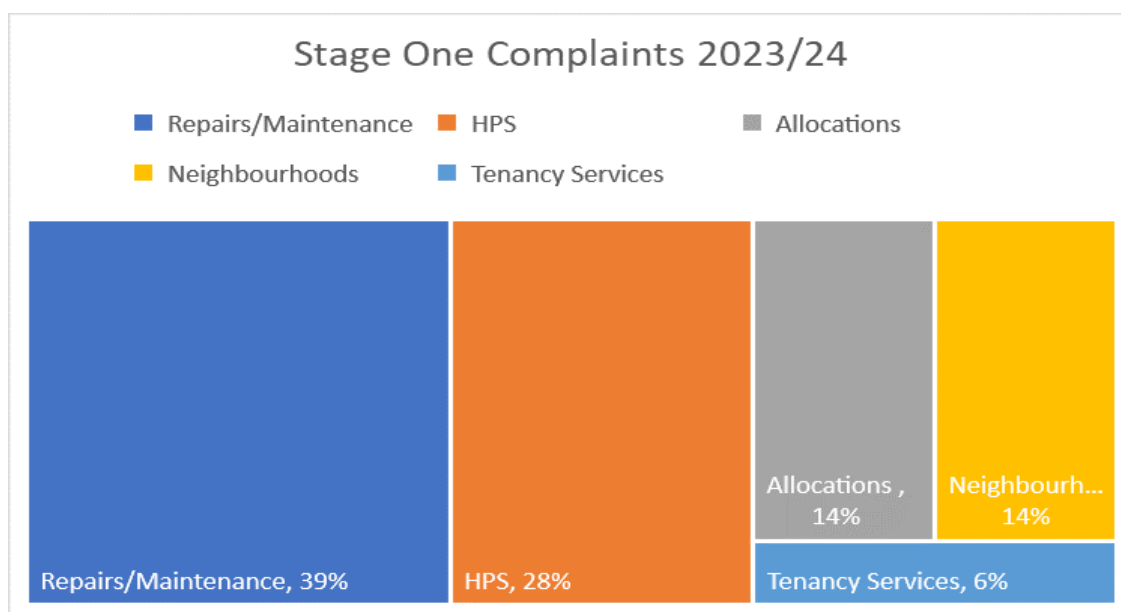


Stage One Complaints

5.9 A total of 36 Stage One complaints were received during 2023/24, this is slightly higher than last year's figure, where 29 were received.

| Service Area | Count | Percentage |
|---------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Repairs / Maintenance | 14 | 39% |
| Housing Property Services (HPS) | 10 | 28% |
| Allocations | 5 | 14% |
| Neighbourhoods | 5 | 14% |
| Tenancy Services | 2 | 6% |
| Total | 36 | |

The majority of Stage One complaints were around property issues with 15 complaints received around Repairs and Maintenance issues and 10 complaints around Housing Property Services. The Tenancy Services section received 11 in total across Allocations and Neighbourhoods teams (five each), and just one for the Rents (Income & Customer Contact) team. The graph below illustrates the proportion received by housing service area.



- 5.10 When looking further into the main areas of concern for Repairs and Maintenance complaints, three complaints were based around outstanding repairs at the time of moving in, and three were regarding repairs that were not resolved first time and therefore escalated into more serious issues. Another common theme was damage to fencing and it not being rectified within good time.

Housing Property Services received the second highest number of Stage One complaints with a total of 10 Stage One Complaints - equating to 28% of the total.

Seven of the Stage One complaints received for HPS were regarding our Contractor - Novus and the duration and poor standard of works carried out by them. Five of the complaints were in relation to kitchen upgrades and two of them were concerning bathroom upgrades.

Three out of the five complaints received for Allocations were based on lack of clarity during the application process and communication issues between the Allocations Team and the Applicants.

It is difficult to identify a common theme when looking into the Neighbourhoods team's complaints as no two complaints were based around a similar issue. Some examples of the complaints received were: the conduct of a Neighbourhoods Officer, Anti-Social Behaviour issues being dealt with by the Police and nuisance issues being dealt with by Environmental Health.

Rents were the department to receive the fewest number of complaints, they received just one complaint regarding the charging of rent during a 53-week rent year.

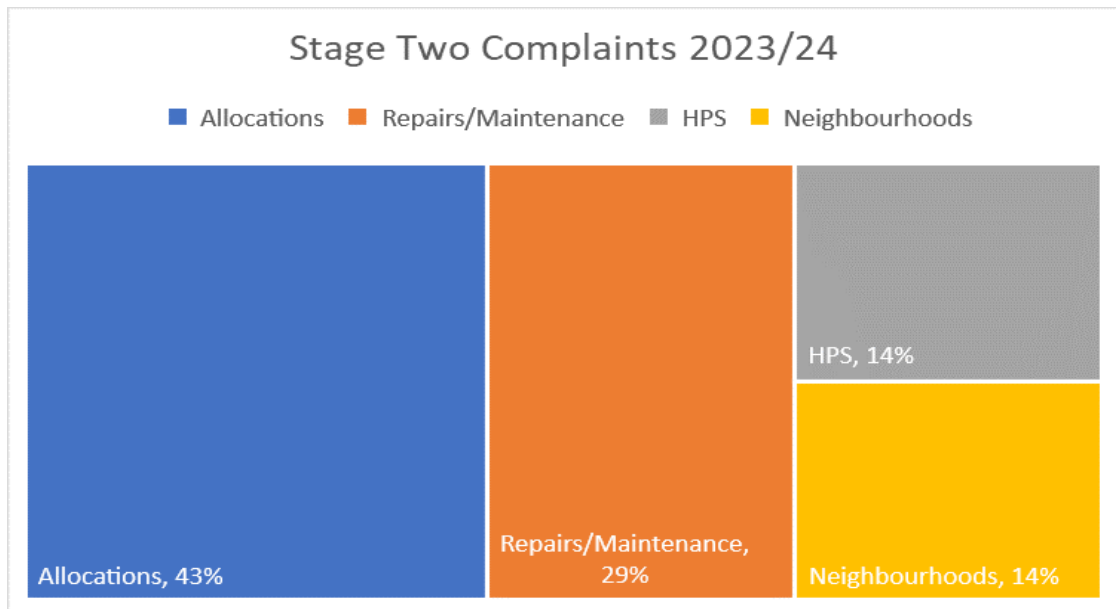
- 5.11 Of these 36 Stage One complaints, 53% of them were upheld fully, 19% were upheld partially, with the remaining 28% not upheld at all.

| | Upheld | Partially Upheld | Not upheld |
|------------------------------------|--------|------------------|------------|
| No. of Stage One Complaints | 19 | 7 | 10 |
| Percentage | 53% | 19% | 28% |

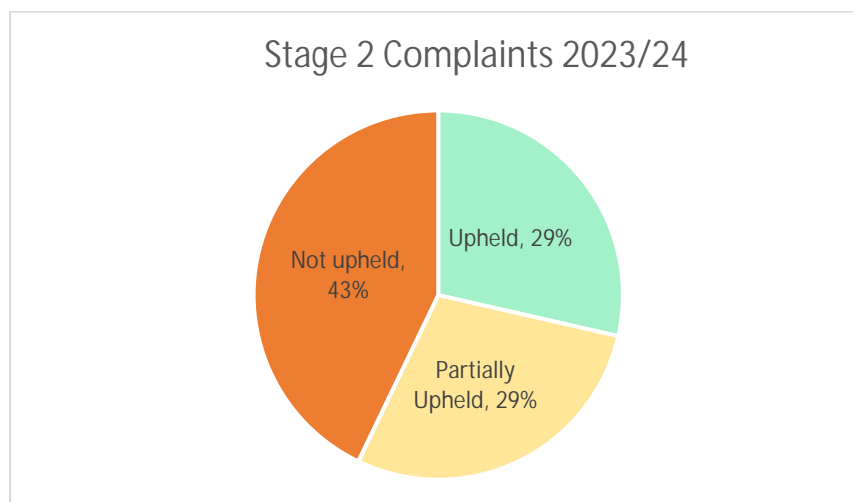
Stage Two Complaints

5.12 19% of Stage One complaints were escalated to Stage Two - putting the total number of Stage Two Complaints at just seven for the year.

The Allocations team received the highest number of these complaints, albeit only three, with Repairs receiving two and Housing Property Services receiving one individual and one involving a number of service areas. The proportion is shown in the graph below.



When looking at the upholding of Stage Two complaints, the majority were not upheld (43%). However, as previously mentioned, because there were only seven Stage Two Complaints received, so there is not much difference in the number of cases that were upheld (2), partially upheld (2) and not upheld (3).



Communication was a central theme in all of the Stage Two complaints. If the teams had communicated better with the tenant in most cases then a complaint could have been prevented from occurring. There was one case where a contractor was at fault and a compensation offer was made and accepted by the tenant, but this also stemmed from a lack of communication with the tenant.

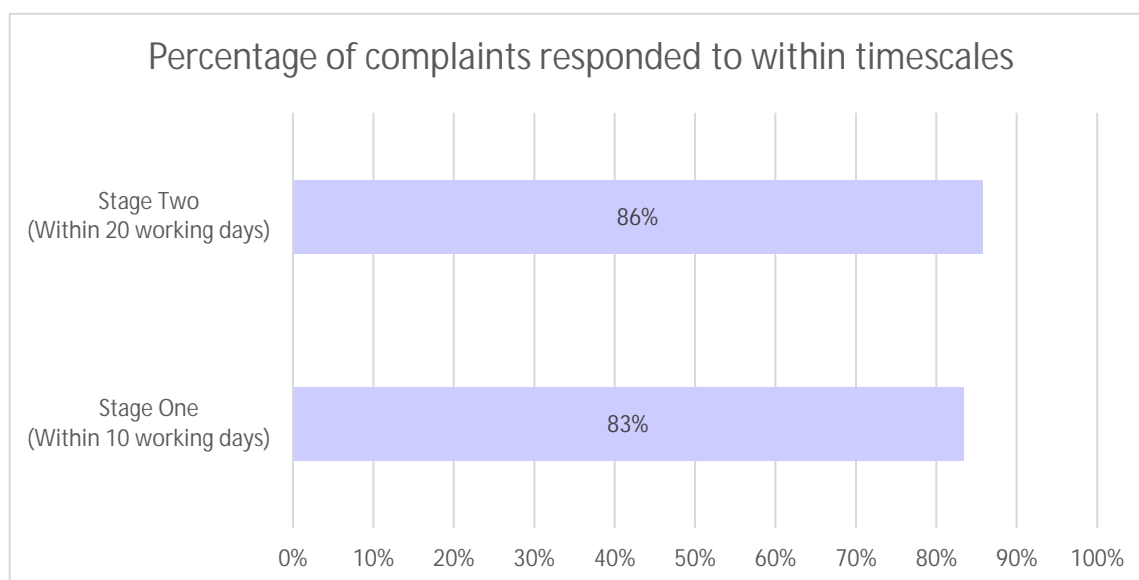
Further information on how we have learnt from the complaints is covered in paragraph 5.15.

Response times

- 5.13 30 Stage One complaints were responded to within timescales (10 working days). This amounts to 83% of them being responded to on time.

However, when we look further into the data, three of the Stage One complaints had their deadline extended as agreed between the Council and the complainant. Therefore, when factoring in these complaints as being responded to on time (as per an agreed extension), the figure rises slightly to 92%.

86% of Stage Two complaints were responded to within 20 working days. This means six were responded to within the timescales, leaving just one that wasn't. Again, an extension of the response due date was agreed for this complaint, meaning we could technically count it as being responded to on time. This would put the overall percentage at 100%.



Tenant Satisfaction Measures

- 5.14 The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) has created a new system for assessing how well social housing landlords in England are doing at providing good quality homes and services. In addition to introducing revised consumer standards, this will involve a set of tenant satisfaction measures (TSMs) that social housing landlords must report to the RSH annually.

Performance will be reported to the RSH by 30 June 2024 and will subsequently be published by the RSH in the Autumn of 2024.

There are 22 TSMs in total which cover five key themes, one of these themes is Effective Handling of Complaints. There are three tenant satisfaction measures linked to the Effective Handling of Complaints theme which include:

- CH01: Complaints relative to the size of the landlord, based on the number of complaints the Housing service receives for each 1,000 homes of the relevant stock type. This is recorded by the Service Improvement Team.
- CH02: Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales, based on the percentage of complaints the Housing service responds to within the timeframes set by the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. This is recorded by the Service Improvement Team.

- TP09: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints, measured by a tenant perception survey and will be based on the percentage of tenants who say they are satisfied with the approach to handling complaints. This was obtained by the TSM perception survey carried out in Summer 2023, and has already been reported to tenants through our newsletter and on our [website](#).

The performance to be reported to the Regulator will be as follows:

| CH01: Complaints relative to the size of the landlord | |
|--|-------------|
| Stage one complaints received per 1,000 homes during the reporting year. | 7.15 |
| Stage two complaints received per 1,000 homes during the reporting year. | 1.39 |
| <p><i>Commentary: This would appear low in comparison to the sector, a mid-year benchmarking exercise undertaken by Housemark of their registered provider members found that the median complaints received was 19.4 at Stage 1 and 2.4 at Stage 2.</i></p> <p><i>We are following the Corporate Complaints Procedure and identifying service requests and informal resolutions correctly in accordance with it. Other housing providers may determine more service requests/informal resolutions as formal complaints.</i></p> | |

| CH02: Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales | |
|---|------------|
| Proportion of Stage one complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales (10 days) | 83% |
| Proportion of Stage two complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales (20 days) | 86% |
| <p><i>Commentary: 30 out of 36 Stage 1 complaints were responded to within timescale, those complaints outside of the 10 working days were complex and we agreed extended timescales with the complainant. In comparison, 85% was the median in the Housemark benchmarking exercise, so we are close to the median performance.</i></p> <p><i>6 out of 7 Stage 2 complaints were responded to within 20 working days, the remaining case was complex and required compensation to be agreed from a contractor. The median was 82% for the sector in the mid-year benchmarking exercise, so we are performing just above the median level.</i></p> | |

| | |
|---|------------|
| TP09: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints | 41% |
| <p><i>Commentary: Whilst 41% may appear low, in comparison to other housing providers it is relatively good. In comparison to the Housemark mid-year benchmarking exercise the median score was 34% for satisfaction and was the lowest scoring TSM measure across the board.</i></p> <p><i>Looking at the data from the TSM perception survey a large number of tenants who responded to the question about complaint handling hadn't submitted a formal complaint. A number of these will have been from MP enquiries or Informal Resolutions where the complainant may believe they have submitted a complaint but actually have not.</i></p> <p><i>It is a contentious area as those responding could have a negative perception of the approach to our handling of the complaint if they did not achieve the outcome they wanted, whilst we always try to achieve outcomes for complainants it is not always possible.</i></p> | |

Learning from complaints

- 5.15 In the [Annual Report to Tenants](#) we have historically reported upon our learning from complaints, therefore previous years' have been published.

A learning from complaints form is completed by the responding manager shortly after each stage 1 complaint, or if escalated after the stage 2 response is completed. It allows the service to quickly put something right - either a policy or procedure change, or act quickly to implement any staff training, to ensure that no other tenant or resident has to go through the same experience and improve our services to them.

Not all complaints produce learning points, however a selection of cases and improvements made from complaints received in 2023/24 are included in the following table.

| Complaint outline (reasons etc.) | Our response | Learning implemented |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Poor performance of the contractors appointed to carry out the Bathroom installation to the property.</p> <p>(*Several similar complaints and re-enforced learning have occurred around this issue for both kitchen and bathroom upgrades. In a couple of cases, debris was left and damage caused to property)</p> | <p>The complaint was fully upheld and an apology was issued to the tenant.</p> <p>The contractor's performance was discussed at senior management level and a review of complaints received to date was made. Changes to their management team were made and the customer journey was focused upon and improved.</p> | <p>Changes to the design survey stage were agreed with the contractor to capture more relevant customer information to support the installation of works. Closer monitoring of this contractor's performance was required.</p> |

| Complaint outline (reasons etc.) | Our response | Learning implemented |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Complaint about a Neighbourhood Officer's visit to a property with a recently deceased tenant. Issue taken with the Officer's attitude in the way the visit was dealt with without investigation into the case and advising the customer with regards to a housing move.</p> | <p>The complaint was fully upheld, Officer should have dealt with the visit with more empathy. The Officer wrote a personal letter of apology and was to be enrolled on a housing law and customer care training course at the earliest opportunity.</p> | <p>Officer to check the file history and records. Officer to discuss the case with Line Manager and gather all of the facts. Procedure change - Succession checklist to be approved by Line Manager.</p> |
| <p>A complainant believed their Housing Application was not processed fairly; communication about the reasons for the decision on medical and social needs assessments was not clear and did not enable the application to be fairly considered. This resulted in the applicant not getting clear information about her application or how their housing need had been assessed initially and when they asked for clarification.</p> <p>(*Similar complaints along the same theme have occurred, whereby communication to the housing applicant has not been clear and resulted in misunderstandings with the Allocations Policy and the applicants resulting dissatisfaction with how their application has been handled.)</p> | <p>The Stage Two investigation partially upheld the complaint as the stage one response did not consider how the complainant did not receive a full and clear explanation for the considerations of social and medical needs. The Stage Two complaint letter included a clearer explanation of decision and reasoning.</p> | <p>Communication needs to be improved to explain the outcome of medical and social needs assessments in a manner that is clearer to applicants. When customers ask for clarity, we need to ensure we do not simply repeat what we have said before, but attempt to understand the reason for an applicant's query and respond appropriate to address their query or misunderstanding about what we first said. A review of the medical and social needs process (and overall allocations processes), to incorporate customer information has been done as part of the new Allocations Policy.</p> |

| Complaint outline (reasons etc.) | Our response | Learning implemented |
|---|--|---|
| <p>A number of repairs complaints centred around a lack of communication with tenants.</p> | <p>In the majority of complaints it was found communication needed to be improved between office staff, operatives and tenants.</p> <p>If communication was better it could have meant jobs were completed sooner, tenants not becoming unsatisfied with wait times if kept updated and jobs being missed/left uncompleted.</p> | <p>Communication with tenants and between staff has been re-enforced.</p> <p>Operatives instructed to report uncompleted works and when unable to attend (i.e. if jobs run over) to office to communicate to tenants.</p> |
| <p>A void property required extensive replastering works and the tenant was advised to remove the wallpaper prior to the plastering works being undertaken by the Housing Maintenance Team, the tenant incurred substantial costs. The tenant felt they could not move into the property whilst the works were being completed and made themselves homeless as they had already terminated their existing Housing Association tenancy.</p> <p>There was also an error in the banding awarded to the applicant, which later arose.</p> | <p>The complaint was upheld at Stage 2, and a settlement offered and accepted to cover the wallpaper removal and a gesture of goodwill for the situation experienced.</p> <p>There were also issues highlighted with communication to the tenant in the incorrect assessment of housing need and the subsequent banding and offer.</p> <p>Communication between Allocations team and Voids team also fell short of requirements.</p> | <p>A review of the voids process was carried out and has included proposed improvements to the 'standard' and what is feasible to be included in void works without being a significant detriment to the turnaround times or the standard.</p> <p>A review of all HA tenants who are joining the housing register will be completed.</p> <p>The letters the Allocations team produce need to detail the actual assessment of housing needs in full, this case didn't capture a full assessment of the need and circumstances.</p> <p>The Allocations team are to notify the Voids team on properties with applicants with an offer who have got a medical priority, so they can undertake works as required. Covered in weekly void meetings now.</p> |

- 5.16 There is record of only one determination being received from the Ombudsman during 2023/24, this complaint was found to be outside of their jurisdiction, so no learning received from them can be detailed in this report.

There is currently a significant waiting time for the Housing Ombudsman to provide determination decisions, around 6 months from the complainant's submission to them, so there is a time lag in complete complaint determinations going through to the Ombudsman.

The Self-Assessment 2024/25

- 5.17 As detailed above, the Complaint Handling Code requires landlords to undertake a self-assessment against the requirements set out. The self-assessment form is attached as Appendix 1.

For the most part the Council's corporate Customer Feedback and Complaints Procedure already makes provision for the majority of requirements set out by the Code.

- 5.18 As the Code contains a number of requirements and the vast majority of these are already being met as part of the existing corporate procedure and Housing Services procedures, the following table will just detail the requirements that are not being met and how Housing Services plan to address them.

| Code Reference | Requirement | Reasons not met | Proposal to address |
|-----------------------|--|--|--|
| 9.3 | Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees. | Learning from complaints is not reported on corporately across the Council. Housing Services have reported their learning from complaints to tenants via the Annual Report, but not to any members via committee(s). | As per recent Grant Thornton Auditor's report recommendations, we intend to form a new Housing Board to oversee Housing Services, and learning from complaints can be reported to this board/panel in future once established. |
| 9.6 | The Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings. | New requirement | As per para 5.3 above, the Housing Portfolio Holder will act as the member responsible for complaints. |

| Code Reference | Requirement | Reasons not met | Proposal to address |
|----------------|---|-----------------|--|
| 9.7 | <p>As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance; b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report. | New requirement | As per para 5.3 above, the Housing Portfolio Holder will be provided the necessary information on a regular basis to report to Cabinet Briefing. |

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

The increase in complaints may result in an increase in compensation payments being made in order to resolve complaints appropriately. Any costs arising from increased compensation payments can be met from within existing budgets.

6.2 Legal

As detailed above, the Council is obliged to adhere to the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman as a registered member.

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

None

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

None

6.6 Health

None

6.7 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Self-Assessment Form 2024/25

8 Previous Consideration

Cabinet - 28 January 2021

Cabinet - 12 October 2023

9 Background Papers

None

Contact Officer: James Morgan

Telephone Number: 01543 464 381

Report Track: Cabinet: 12/06/24

Key Decision: No

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-Assessment Form 2024/25 - Cannock Chase Council

This self-assessment form should be completed by the complaints officer and it must be reviewed and approved by the landlord's governing body at least annually.

Once approved, landlords must publish the self-assessment as part of the annual complaints performance and service improvement report on their website. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.

Landlords are required to complete the self-assessment in full and support all statements with evidence, with additional commentary as necessary.

We recognise that there may be a small number of circumstances where landlords are unable to meet the requirements, for example, if they do not have a website. In these circumstances, we expect landlords to deliver the intentions of the Code in an alternative way, for example by publishing information in a public area so that it is easily accessible.

Section 1: Definition of a complaint

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|---|---|
| 1.2 | A complaint must be defined as: <i>'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'</i> | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | Corporate Procedure states it slightly differently, but in essence follows the same lines. Definition considered when taking complaints, as per 1.4. What we mean by complaint <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if you are unhappy with a service we have provided or we have failed to provide that service. • if a member of our staff has been rude or unhelpful. • if we have not followed our own policies and procedures resulting in a negative outcome. |
| 1.3 | A resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | The word complaint doesn't have to be used for it to be accepted as such. Complaints determined by member of Service Improvement Team (explained further under 4.1) Complaints are accepted from third parties or representatives, however a form of authority is required to disclose information to third parties. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|---|---|
| 1.4 | Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | Difference explained with informal resolution and stage 1 complaints. Service requests are recorded, monitored and reviewed for escalations to stage 1. |
| 1.5 | A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | If a complaint is raised whilst a service request remains ongoing then a complaint would be logged and actions would continue whilst complaint is investigated further and responded to. |
| 1.6 | An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | As per corporate procedure, any dissatisfaction with the service would be addressed at informal resolution (as a service request) and the complainant explained how to escalate to a Stage 1 if they continue to be unsatisfied with the response/actions of the Housing Service. |

Section 2: Exclusions

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|---|---|
| 2.1 | Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | Explains broadly what will not be treated as a complaint. The following will not be treated as a complaint; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if you disagree with a decision of the Council, which has been taken in accordance with our policies and procedures; • where you have a right of appeal or review, whether internally to another person or body within the Council, or externally to some other person or body. |
| 2.2 | A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago. • Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | As above. Plus - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Complaints about incidents occurring more than 12 months ago will not normally be accepted.” Legal proceedings covered in external right of appeal or review. Not explicitly referenced, but previous complaint considered under the procedure would not be accepted. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy. | | | |
| 2.3 | Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | <p>“Complaints about incidents occurring more than 12 months ago will not normally be accepted.”</p> <p>Not normally accepted, therefore unless good reasons would not be, however complaints taken on own individual circumstances.</p> |
| 2.4 | If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | <p>An explanation would be provided to the complainant and details of the Ombudsman provided.</p> <p>Should the Ombudsman tell us to take on the complaint, we would do so.</p> |
| 2.5 | Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | As above, 2.3, complaints would be considered on each circumstances. |

Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|---|---|
| 3.1 | Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | To make a complaint you can do this online by completing the form, email ceoformalenquiries@cannockchasedc.gov.uk , by telephone on 01543 462621 or write to Complaints, Cannock Chase District Council, Beecroft Road, Cannock, WS11 1BG. Complaints can also be made direct to officers/members and be passed through the CEO office. As per the Equality Act 2010 that requires us to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled people, defined by the Act as those who have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, we would do everything possible to allow a complaint to be made. PA to Chief Executive and a Service Improvement officer would handle as required. |
| 3.2 | Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord. | Yes | No evidence possible to present. | As above, complaints can also be made direct to officers/members and be passed through the CEO office. Housing Services staff are aware of the complaints procedure. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|---|--|
| 3.3 | High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain. | N/A | No evidence possible to present. | Not a point able to action, other than to make clear that volumes of complaints are recorded and monitored. |
| 3.4 | Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right And www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/residents/housing/housing-complaints-and-compliments | Available on the website, both on the corporate page and duplicated on the Housing Services section of the website - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/residents/housing/housing-complaints-and-compliments These pages can be easily accessed by searching for 'complaints'. |
| 3.5 | The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | Both links provide information on the Ombudsman. The Housing Services page has information on the Code and a link to the self-assessment. |
| 3.6 | Landlords must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord. | Yes | Not explicitly referenced in the procedure, so no evidence to provide. | Complaints are accepted from third parties or representatives, however, a form of authority is required to disclose information to third parties before representation or accompanying at meetings etc. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|---|---|
| 3.7 | Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right And www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/residents/housing/housing-complaints-and-compliments | Information provided on the website and also on written responses at stage 2. |

Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|---|---|
| 4.1 | Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties. | Yes | No evidence available to provide, see commentary. | PA to Chief Executive receives complaint and forwards to officer in Service Improvement Team to distribute to correct Team Leader, Service Manager or Head of Service. Member of Service Improvement Team (currently Housing Strategy and Service Improvement Team Leader (Interim)) liaises with Ombudsman. Service Improvement Team log, monitor and manage responses to ensure timescales are met and complaint handled appropriately. |
| 4.2 | The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly. | Yes | No evidence available to provide, see commentary. | Housing Strategy and Service Improvement Team Leader (Interim) has access to staff at all levels and advises Managers to resolve disputes promptly and fairly. |
| 4.3 | Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively | Yes | No evidence available to provide, see commentary. | All complaints are subject to the completion of a learning from complaints form which is used to improve upon complaint handling and ensure similar complaints are not received. Housing Strategy and Service Improvement Team Leader (Interim) administers and oversees process with Service managers dealing with stage 1 complaints and Head of Service with stage 2. They have the required skills and training as detailed. |

Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|---|--|
| 5.1 | Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | Corporate procedure applies to all complaints. |
| 5.2 | The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | Audit trail of communication is kept. Resolutions are at the forefront of complaints received but do not obstruct access to the procedure. Whilst the procedure states an informal resolution stage, this will be for service requests or where no attempt has been made by the resident to bring it to the attention of the team/department responsible. Housing Strategy and Service Improvement Team Leader (Interim) or Service Improvement Team determine. |
| 5.3 | A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | Two stage process. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 5.4 | Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes. | N/A | No evidence available to provide. | Complaints would be handled by the Housing Service, response would be made conjunction with contractor etc. but led by the Housing Services. |
| 5.5 | Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code. | N/A | As above. | As above. |
| 5.6 | When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as "the complaint definition". If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | During complaint responses at stage 1 and 2, the manager/HOS contacts the complainant to understand the complaint fully and know what outcome the resident is seeking. This is communicated in the response. |
| 5.7 | When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | The contact with the complainant and the response would be clear which aspects of the complaint were being addressed and which were not. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 5.8 | <p>At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position; c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | <p>Housing Strategy and Service Improvement Team Leader (Interim) administers and oversees process with Service managers dealing with stage 1 complaints and Head of Service with stage 2. We would ensure all these are met through the process.</p> |
| 5.9 | <p>Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.</p> | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | <p>Should a complaint be approaching falling outside the timescale, the resident would be contacted to agree an extension of time and informed when the response would be provided.</p> |
| 5.10 | <p>Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.</p> | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | <p>As per 3.1.</p> <p>Any agreed reasonable adjustments would be recorded and kept under active review.</p> |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|---|---|
| 5.11 | Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | As per 2.1 - 2.5. |
| 5.12 | A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | A full record is kept of every complaint. A spreadsheet of all complaints is maintained with the required dates. Copies of all correspondence are also retained in relation to the complaint. |
| 5.13 | Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | Complaints can be resolved at any point, service request (informal resolution), stage 1 and stage 2. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|---|---|
| 5.14 | Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | As per 'Unreasonably Persistent and/or vexatious complaints and unreasonable behaviour' at bottom of page |
| 5.15 | Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | We would ensure any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour would be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. |

Section 6: Complaints Stages

Stage 1

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|---|---|
| 6.1 | Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | All complaints are aimed to be responded to in the prescribed timescales - 10 working days for stage 1, 20 working days for stage 2. It is not often where we require additional time even if complex, in those situations (as per 5.9) the complainant would be contacted and we would agree a new deadline for completion of the complaint investigation and response. |
| 6.2 | Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the complaint being received. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | All complaints logged and acknowledged within 5 working days, as per procedure. |
| 6.3 | Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | As per procedure, response provided within 10 working days of acknowledgement. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|---|---|
| 6.4 | Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | As per procedure, there are some occasions when a full response cannot be provided within this timeframe due to the complexity of the issues raised. We will keep you informed should an extended timeframe be anticipated. Housing Services contact the resident and agree an extension if required, giving an explanation as to why further time is required. |
| 6.5 | When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | Details are made available. |
| 6.6 | A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | This would be the case, details of actions would be included in the response and tracked to ensure they are completed by the Service Improvement Team. |
| 6.7 | Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | All points would be addressed, reasoned and referenced where required. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 6.8 | Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | This would be the case, and how we would approach new issues/complaints. |
| 6.9 | Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | A template response is used by Housing Services which covers all these points. |

Stage 2

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|---|---|
| 6.10 | If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | This is the procedure we follow. |
| 6.11 | Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | Acknowledged and logged within 5 working days. |
| 6.12 | Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | Head of Service would contact/meet with resident to understand why they remained unsatisfied as part of their complaint investigation and response at stage 2. |
| 6.13 | The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | As per 5.8, Housing Strategy and Service Improvement Team Leader (Interim) administers and oversees process with Service managers dealing with stage 1 complaints and Head of Service with stage 2. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|---|---|
| 6.14 | Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | We will provide you with a full response within a further twenty working days of being acknowledged. |
| 6.15 | Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | As per procedure, there are some occasions when a full response cannot be provided within this timeframe due to the complexity of the issues raised. We will keep you informed should an extended timeframe be anticipated. Housing Services contact the resident and agree an extension if required, giving an explanation as to why further time is required. |
| 6.16 | When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | Details are made available. |
| 6.17 | A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | This would be the case, details of actions would be included in the response and tracked to ensure they are completed by the Service Improvement Team. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|---|--|
| 6.18 | Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | All points would be addressed, reasoned and referenced where required. |
| 6.19 | Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | A template response is used by Housing Services which covers all these points. |
| 6.20 | Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response. | Yes | As per Corporate Procedure - www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/about-us/customer-feedback-help-us-get-it-right | Stage 2 is the final response, completed by the Head of Service who can involve all the suitable staff members needed. |

Section 7: Putting things right

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 7.1 | <p>Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologising; • Acknowledging where things have gone wrong; • Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons; • Taking action if there has been delay; • Reconsidering or changing a decision; • Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum; • Providing a financial remedy; • Changing policies, procedures or practices. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | We would try to provide the required remedy/outcome as appropriate, which includes those listed. |
| 7.2 | Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | We would assess the impact and try to offer the appropriate remedy. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|---|------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 7.3 | The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | Details of the remedy offered would be included in the response as required. |
| 7.4 | Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | We would listen to the Ombudsman and accept their recommendations on any remedies. |

Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|--|---|
| 8.1 | <p>Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept; c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman; d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints; e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord. | Yes | Will be submitted to Cabinet alongside this Self-Assessment. | Will be completed for 2023/24 and submitted to Cabinet by 30 June 2024 as required. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|---|--|
| 8.2 | The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this. | Yes | As above. | As above. Will be published on the Housing complaint webpage. |
| 8.3 | Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures. | Yes | Circumstances have not arisen, no evidence. | Should the circumstances arise the self-assessment would be carried out again. |
| 8.4 | Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation. | Yes | Circumstances have not arisen, no evidence. | Should the circumstances arise the self-assessment would be carried out again. |
| 8.5 | If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code. | Yes | Circumstances have not arisen, no evidence. | We would comply should the circumstances arise. |

Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|--------------------|--|--|
| 9.1 | Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | Learning from complaint forms are completed for all complaints, with a view to service improvement in each case. |
| 9.2 | A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery. | Yes | www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/residents/housing/housing-services-annual-report | 'What we learned from the complaints received and what we did' page in the Annual Tenants report. |
| 9.3 | Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees. | No (at present) | No evidence available to provide. | Learning from complaints is not reported on corporately across the Council. We intend to form a new Housing Board to oversee Housing Services, and learning from complaints can be reported to this board/panel in future once established. |
| 9.4 | Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | Housing Strategy and Service Improvement Team Leader (Interim) administers and oversees the complaints process, they report to the Housing Management Team on a regular basis regarding any themes/trends arising from complaints that require action through changes to policy/procedure etc. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| 9.5 | In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC'). | Yes | Housing Portfolio Leader | Head of Service regularly meets with the Portfolio Leader for Housing and discusses themes and trends arising from complaints. |
| 9.6 | The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings. | No (at present) | No evidence available to provide. | The Portfolio Holder for Housing will report to Cabinet Briefing on a regular basis information on Housing Services complaint handling. They will be given access to information and staff as required. This will follow consideration of the aforementioned information at the Housing Board as 9.3 above. |
| 9.7 | As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance; b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report. | No (at present) | No evidence available to provide yet. | This information will be reported for 2024/25 on quarterly/annual basis as required. |

| Code provision | Code requirement | Comply: Yes / No | Evidence | Commentary / explanation |
|----------------|--|------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 9.8 | <p>Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments; b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body. | Yes | No evidence available to provide. | Whilst nothing is set out in writing, Housing Services employees would deliver complaint handling with these requirements at the forefront. |

Decarbonisation of Housing Stock Properties

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Committee: | Cabinet |
| Date of Meeting: | 13 June 2024 |
| Report of: | Head of Housing and Corporate Assets |
| Portfolio: | Housing |

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To approve funding and resource to support the implementation of energy efficient retrofit work, including medium term plan designs, to dwellings managed through the Housing Revenue Account.
- 1.2 To approve reprogramming of retrofit work to 112 properties, to utilise funding from the government department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).
- 1.3 To approve measures to improve the energy efficiency of properties with an energy performance rating of D or below to a C.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That members agree to allocate £818,097 of CCDC funding to match West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) allocation of £818,097 to carry out and manage decarbonisation measures to dwellings managed by the HRA. The total project cost including professional fees (internal and external) on project delivery £1,636,194.
- 2.2 To enter into a grant funding agreement with West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) consortium for the purpose of delivery of the work and to accept allocation of £818,097 DESNZ funding.
- 2.3 To approve the use of WMCA to carry out property assessments, coordination and design to provide a 'medium term plan' for each property in line with PAS 2035 British Standard for retrofitting dwellings.
- 2.4 To allow the Head of Housing and Corporate Assets authority to finalise the project - Energy Efficiency Measures and complimentary works with WMCA and to delivery the project through to completion.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.5 The identified properties for this project do require energy efficiency measure to be undertaken. Approval of this funding will allow the Council to stretch it's budget by £818,097 doubling the number of units receiving work that could be funded through the Council capital budget alone.
- 2.6 All properties identified for this project will require 'energy efficiency measures' to be undertaken to meet regulatory requirements. The current approved budget, report dated 1 February 2023, allows for some capital spend on energy efficiency

measures but not to the extent of the match required for the WMCA funding allocation. There is however a contingency sum over the three year budget period of £2.5m, which could be used for identified works arising from the Stock Condition Survey and for works to stock to meet regulatory requirements.

- 2.7 Approving some spend from the contingency sum will provide, match to the WMCA funding and enable more property to immediately be improved with measures such as loft insulation top up and the installation of photovoltaic solar panels. Delivery of such measures will provide the following benefits:
 - 2.7.1 A reduction in carbon emissions from the stock.
 - 2.7.2 Improving energy efficiency will enhance the quality of life for residents, leading to healthier and more comfortable living environments.
 - 2.7.3 Improvement to living conditions, reducing fuel cost and fuel poverty for the most vulnerable and those facing financial difficulties.
 - 2.7.4 Investment in energy efficient technology measures
 - 2.7.5 Economic benefits creating local job opportunities and improving the skills of the workforce.
 - 2.7.6 Detailed retrofit assessments will support in the development of the asset management plans, providing data on the energy efficiency to allow for planning of maintenance, repairs, replacements and upgrades to inform the 30-year business plan.
 - 2.7.7 Reduction in reliance on the national grid.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 CCDC is party to the WMCA and signed up to WMCA consortium for this funding bid which was put in place in February 2023.
- 3.2 DESNZ funding spend of £818,097 deadline is March 2025. The WMCA and delivery partners including Procure Plus have undertaken similar project within the timeframe available for this scheme.
- 3.3 CCDC contribution spend of £818,097 deadline is September 2025. As above Partners have secured projects of this nature in these timescales. Note the WMCA capital spend will be defrayed earlier than that of the CCDC match funding the balance of the latter will be taken up in financial year 2025/26.
- 3.4 The Procurement Regulations promote the use of Frameworks for the delivery of project of this nature and the WMCA have tried and tested Partners in this area of work including Procure Plus. WMCA have secured the use of Procure Plus for consortium members in delivering these works through their dynamic purchasing system allowing for a compliant procurement route for each measure and providing a fair, value engineered approach to securing contractors.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 Priority 3 - The Community - Improve the housing offer across the District.
- 4.2 Priority 4 - Responsible Council - Make the best use of our assets.

5 Report Detail

Background

- 5.1 In 2022 the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) opened bidding of the social housing decarbonisation fund (SHDF) known as 'Wave 2'.
- 5.2 As with previous bidding rounds, the focus of Wave 2 is to encourage with match funding the upgrade a significant amount of the social housing stock currently below Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band C up to that standard. Supporting the installation of energy performance measures in social homes in England, and help:
 - deliver warm, energy efficient homes
 - reduce carbon emissions
 - tackle fuel poverty
 - support green jobs
 - develop the retrofit sector
 - improve the comfort, health and well-being of social housing tenants
- 5.3 The funding is now led by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).
- 5.4 Following a successful bid for the wave 1 funding, West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) consortium of housing providers of which Cannock Chase District Council (CCDC) became an additional party, bid and were successful in securing significant funding under Wave 2.
- 5.5 From the criteria of an Energy Performance certificate (EPC) rating of D or below, CCDC put forward 112 properties from EPC's carried out to a small number of the properties over the last 10 years, based on the criteria for measures on a fabric first approach, including increasing insulation levels to prevent heat loss.
- 5.6 Three areas were identified which covered:
 - 1) Southbourne Place - 17no. Bungalows - traditional build with poorly performing cavity wall insulation.
 - 2) Rawnsley Estate - 75no. Houses - Timber framed Mastrad dwellings.
 - 3) Springfield Avenue - 10no. Houses - Steel Framed (BISF) dwellings.
- 5.7 Initial retrofit assessments including updating EPC's by WMCA surveyors identified that 2) Rawnsley Estate and 3) Springfield Avenue estate the EPC's were C or above.

- 5.8 CCDC Housing Surveyors were able to identify a further 98 properties which qualified as having an EPC of D or below from 7 of the 53 estates spread throughout the housing stock, from stock condition surveys carried out in 2022-23. These include the following and surrounding streets:
- i) Avon Road
 - ii) Hunter Road
 - iii) Sherwood Drive
 - iv) Benion Road
 - v) Barnard Way
 - vi) Danby Drive
 - vii) Redbrook Lane
 - viii) St Michaels Road, Brereton
- 5.9 The WMCA have undertaken further retrofit assessments across CCDC's stock on these estates and subject to the approval of this report and match funding will develop the programme for the 112 properties (approximately £14k per property) to meet funding criteria from which the specification, contract documentation and tender will be developed.
- 5.10 Currently the HRA has £2.5M capital budget set aside for work following the stock condition surveys due to take place in 2024-25. This would include measures such as those set out in the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund bid. Utilising this budget will allow for the budget to be stretched by £818,097 and achieve double outcomes from the Council's match funding on works required under the regulatory regime.
- 5.11 From the Aecom Housing Costed Action Plan report it is estimated that Cannock Chase Council's housing stock contributes a baseline of 13% of total domestic sector carbon emissions in the district. Measures improving the energy performance of properties has a parallel effect with regards to reducing carbon emissions and will work towards this objective. Once retrofit assessments are completed a detailed saving on carbon emissions can be obtained.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

Total Capital Stock Decarbonisation budget required is £1,636k, to be financed by WMCA grant £818k and match funded from Cannock's own resources of £818k.

The current HRA capital programme has £2,500k Stock Condition contingency budget unallocated. This report is seeking to apply £818k of this budget to match the WMCA contribution for the Stock Decarbonisation capital project. (Leaving a £1,682k Stock Condition contingency budget unallocated.)

The project is to be profiled over two financial years, approx. £818k in 2024-25 and £818k in 2025-26. There are WMCA grant conditions to be met throughout the project which are outlined in the report.

6.2 Legal

6.3 The retrofit work will support the decent homes standard. There are no immediate legal implications or risks arising.

6.4 Human Resources

None

6.5 Risk Management

A contingency list has been established from the recent stock condition survey should measures established from the retrofit assessments be impractical.

6.6 Equalities and Diversity

None

6.7 Health

Positive health outcomes for residents.

6.8 Climate Change

Positive impact in the reduction in carbon emissions from Cannock Chase District Council housing stock. Full impact from baseline will be identified once suitable measures have been established.

7 Appendices

None

Previous Consideration

None

8 Background Papers

Rent Setting Policy - April 2023

Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2026/27 - 1 February 2024.

Contact Officer: Christian Hawkins

Telephone Number: 01543 456 805

Report Track: Cabinet: 13/06/24

Key Decision: Yes

Increased Fixed Penalty Amounts for Environmental Offences

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Committee: | Cabinet |
| Date of Meeting: | 12 June 2024 |
| Report of: | Head of Regulatory Services |
| Portfolio: | Environment & Climate Change |

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To propose increases to certain fixed penalties that authorised Council Officers may issue for a range of environmental crime offences including fly-tipping, household duty of care, littering and graffiti. The proposal is in line with the increase in the maximum levels of such penalties, introduced by The Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2023 ('the 2023 Regulations')

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet adopts the proposed new fixed penalty amounts detailed at Appendix 1, including the early payment provisions. The penalty amounts are set at the maximum levels introduced by the 2023 Regulations.
- 2.2 That the increase in revenue from such penalties continues to be ring fenced and used to support environmental projects to prevent future offences.
- 2.3 That the Head of Regulatory Services be authorised to extend the current £250 cash reward (offered to residents whose reports of fly tipping lead to successful prosecutions or offenders' payments of fixed penalty notices) to all enviro-crime offences, with rewards proportionate to the maximum penalty for each.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.4 The aim is to create a greater deterrent to committing environmental offences within Cannock Chase District; to ensure the punishment is proportionate to the offence, and to demonstrate the Council's commitment to a zero-tolerance approach towards environmental crime.

Environmental crimes like littering and fly-tipping harm wildlife and nature, create eyesores and spoil our citizens' and visitors' enjoyment of our public places and green spaces. It is hoped these new upper penalty limits will deter people from harming such spaces in the first instance and ensure that those who choose to offend face tougher consequences. The proposals seek to strike a balance between deterring repeat offending and ensuring that penalties are proportionate and affordable. This approach recognises the costs associated with the Council having to pursue legal proceedings.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 It has been more than five years since the Council last reviewed the fixed penalty amounts that it has the freedom to set within a range prescribed by law.
- 3.2 The Government has introduced new legislation to crack down on environmental crimes. This includes the ability to increase the Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) amounts for Littering, Graffiti, Fly tipping and Household Duty of Care offences (the latter being the duty placed upon households to responsibly dispose of their waste to an “authorised person”), to the maximum upper limit detailed in Appendix 1.
- 3.3 The Government hopes that introducing a stronger financial deterrent will help to reduce numbers of such crimes.
- 3.4 The introduction of the higher levels of FPN amounts may give rise to an increase in the number of non-payment cases. This could, in turn, lead to an increase in the number of prosecutions and add additional burden on resources, since bringing a prosecution involves many officer hours.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This report supports the Council’s Corporate Priorities as follows:

The Community- By providing an effective deterrent, the use of fixed penalty notices for environmental offences can have a positive impact on local environmental quality and contribute to the safer, cleaner, greener agenda.

Economic prosperity- Fixed penalties are a tool for encouraging responsible disposal of litter, and for supporting a fair waste industry by deterring people from operating outside of the regulatory regime. Removing rogue traders from the waste industry allows for responsible businesses to flourish.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 Since 2003, successive governments have taken steps to encourage greater environmental enforcement by local authorities. This has included increasing fixed penalties and maximum penalties upon conviction, giving Councils and Council Officers greater powers, changing the law to explicitly include cigarettes, and chewing gum as litter, allowing local authorities to retain fixed penalty revenue, and creating new offences.
- 5.2 This work is undertaken at Cannock Chase by officers within Regulatory Services. Aside from some fixed penalties for waste offences that can be issued by the Environment Agency in England, no other organisation or person can currently issue these FPNs locally.
- 5.3 FPNs provide a quick, visible, and effective way of dealing with low-level straightforward environmental crimes, and an alternative to prosecution. A fixed penalty is not a fine. Payment of the penalty by the recipient discharges their liability to conviction for the offence for which the FPN issued. It does not constitute an admission of guilt but removes the possibility of a criminal record.

- 5.4 The 2023 Regulations came into effect following the publication of the Government's 2023 Anti-social Behaviour Action Plan. This Plan was designed to enable Councils take a tougher approach on these forms of anti-social behaviour, providing local authorities with the ability to raise FPN amounts for various environmental crime offences to new maximum levels (varied per offence) (Appendix 1).
- 5.5 Prior to the 2023 Regulations, the levels for FPNs for Environment Crime offences were last increased in 2017 by the Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (England) Regulations 2017).
- 5.6 It has been more than five years since the Council last reviewed the fixed penalty amounts that it has the freedom to set within a range prescribed by law. Inflation has resulted in reducing both the punishment and deterrent elements of fixed penalties.
- 5.7 In the intervening period, the Council has moved towards a zero-tolerance approach to environmental crime. It is recognised that having fixed penalties that properly reflect the gravity of the offence can provide a proportionate punishment and act as a considerable deterrent.
- 5.8 The national fixed penalty approach for environmental offences is complex due to the involvement of several government departments, the need for parity caused by the ability of the Environment Agency to also issue fixed penalties for some of the offences, and the fact that some fixed penalties are set in law, whereas Councils can determine others within a prescribed range.
- 5.9 All fixed penalty revenue is retained by the Council and invested in undertaking further enforcement activity. The recent introduction of an online payment system has made it easier for offenders to pay fixed penalties.
- 5.10 It is however anticipated that increasing fixed penalty amounts will lead to increased numbers of offenders unable, or unwilling, to pay the fixed penalty. The Council has already demonstrated that it is robust in prosecuting in such circumstances and, overall, officers have been satisfied with the penalties imposed by magistrates (Appendix 2).
- 5.11 This policy does not apply to fixed penalties issued under the Health Act 2006 for smoke-free offences such failing to display no-smoking signs or smoking in a vehicle with a child present. These fixed penalty amounts are set by law and have a reduced amount for early payment.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

Fixed penalty revenue is retained by the Council and is invested in undertaking further environmental enforcement.

It is anticipated that the new penalties will result in a small increase in the number of prosecutions that become necessary. The Council always applies to the court for appropriate costs to be paid by the defendant.

6.2 Legal

Fixed penalties provide a legal tool to assist the Council in tackling enviro crime and protect the local environment.

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 provides the principal legislative framework for these Regulations.

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

None

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

It is recognised that increases to the fixed penalty amounts may reduce the number of people who have the disposable income to pay them. However, one of the purposes of a fixed penalty is to provide a punishment and therefore changes to spending in order to pay the fixed penalty is to be expected. These are people who have committed a criminal offence, and this approach supports the 'polluter pays' principle.

6.6 Health

None

6.7 Climate Change

More robust enforcement of environmental offences may see a reduction in harmful emissions to the air, for example from reducing the number of fly-tipped items such as refrigerators that contain harmful chemicals.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Proposed Revisions to Fixed Penalty Amounts.

Appendix 2: Fixed Penalty Notices and Prosecutions for Waste Crimes.

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

None

Contact Officer: David Prosser- Davies

Telephone Number: 01543 464202

Ward Interest: All

Report Track: Cabinet: 12/06/24

Key Decision: Yes

Increased Fixed Penalty Amounts for Environmental Offences

Changes to current amounts are highlighted in **yellow**.

| Code | Offence | Current Fixed Penalty (<i>reduction for early payment</i>) | New Maximum Permitted Penalty | Proposed Fixed Penalty Amount | Reduction if paid within 10 days | Maximum Penalty on Conviction |
|------|--------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 01 | Litter | £75 (£50) | £500 | £500 | £250 | £2,500 |
| 02 | Graffiti | £75 (£50) | £500 | £500 | £250 | 10 years imprisonment |
| 03 | Fly tipping | £400 (No reduction) | £1000 | £1000 | £500 | 5 years imprisonment and unlimited fine |
| 04 | Waste Duty of Care (household) | £200 (£150) | £600 | £600 | £300 | Unlimited fine |

Fixed Penalty Notices Issued and Successful Prosecutions for Waste Crimes

| Calendar Year | Litter | Duty of care | Fly tipping | Successful Prosecutions |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2021 | 12 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| 2022 | 9 | 5 | 1 | 5 |
| 2023 (to 8/2/24) | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 Cases pending. |

Staffordshire Leaders Board – Terms of Reference

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Committee: | Cabinet |
| Date of Meeting: | 12 June 2024 |
| Report of: | Chief Executive |
| Portfolio: | Leader |

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To ask the cabinet to note and agree to the updated Terms of Reference for the Leaders Board (see Appendix 1) to enable Stoke on Trent City Council to join the Board as a constituent authority.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Cabinet note and agree to the updated Terms of Reference for the Staffordshire Leaders Board (Appendix 1).

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 The County, City and Staffordshire's eight District and Borough Councils have worked together over a number of years in many ways to benefit residents. This includes our collective response to the pandemic, supporting businesses and the economy, creating jobs and opportunities, delivering nationally important housing employment sites (examples include the Commonwealth Games, South Staffordshire College and Rugeley Power Station), working to reduce waste and increase recycling, tackling climate change, and by reimagining and reshaping the future of Cannock Town Centre.
- 2.3 The Leaders Board was created to build on this collaboration by recognising that a formal joint committee would be able to speak to central Government for the area and our communities. It also provides the foundation for exploring the potential of a deal with government, when the right time comes to do so, for the devolution of powers and funding to the area.
- 2.4 Although Stoke-on-Trent were not one of the original members of the Leaders Board it was always hoped that they could be brought on board at some point, and agreement has now been reached to enable this to happen. This will however require a number of amendments to be made to the Terms of Reference of the Board, and these amendments need to be considered and agreed by all parties, hence this report.

3 Terms of Reference Updates

- 3.1 Further to the previous Cabinet agreement of the Terms of Reference (2022), the key changes to note are summarised below:
- Stoke-on-Trent City Council are added as a 'constituent authority', with the Board comprising of all ten authorities across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

- b. The Terms of Reference now include a clause allowing the Board to exercise additional functions given to it by members.
- c. The remit section has been reworded in a number of places largely to change the emphasis around the Board's role (e.g. "oversee" rather than "lead and oversee").
- d. Health, Housing and Homelessness remain in the Terms of Reference but with the Board's role being one of coordination.
- e. The Terms of Reference now make clear that the scope of any potential Devolution Deal is not limited by the Terms of Reference themselves.
- f. The Terms of Reference now reserve the co-option of additional non-voting members and winding up the Board to the constituent authorities rather than being dealt with by unanimous voting at the Board.
- g. The notice period for exit has been reduced to three months.

3.2 The remit for the Leaders Board will be:

- a. To develop options for a devolution deal or deals for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent with HM Government.
- b. To oversee the alignment of relevant local authority action on Climate Change, Waste and Sustainability.
- c. To oversee the alignment of relevant local authority plans for enterprise development and organisation of business voice.
- d. To coordinate the alignment of local authority interaction with the Health sector in Staffordshire.
- e. To oversee the alignment of relevant local authority plans for future development and infrastructure.
- f. To coordinate the alignment of relevant local authority plans in relation to Housing and Homelessness.
- g. To develop Staffordshire-wide joint initiatives to enhance local government efficiency and effectiveness.
- h. To develop plans and coordinate delivery for strategic economic growth that spans local boundaries.
- i. To develop opportunities for joint action with respect to addressing social inequalities across the geography.
- j. To act as a conduit for coordinated engagement with other sub-regional and regional bodies the Midlands Engine and Midlands Connect.
- k. Where appropriate, to agree shared priorities and bids for funding to existing and new external funding sources.
- l. To monitor and evaluate projects and programmes of activity commissioned directly by the Committee.
- m. To communicate and, where collectively agreed, to align activity across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent on a range of other key public priorities that affect citizens.
- n. To prioritise and make decisions on the use of the funding that the Committee may influence or control.

- 3.3 The full updated Terms of Reference proposed for the Leaders Board are attached as Appendix 1.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The priorities agreed by the Leaders Board are consistent with those of the District Council.

5 Implications

5.1 Financial

There are no immediate and significant financial implications arising from the updated Terms of Reference for the Leaders Board in itself. The Board will continue to derive its support from constituent members. As and when individual projects are commissioned the Board will consider the resource requirements necessary to deliver those projects.

5.2 Legal

The Joint Committee will continue to act as a Joint Committee under Section 9EB of the Local Government Act 2000 and pursuant to the Regulation of Local Authorities (Arrangement for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012.

5.3 Human Resources

There are no human resources implications arising directly from this report.

5.4 Risk Management

There are no risk management implications arising directly from this report.

5.5 Climate Change

As noted above a key remit of the Board is to oversee the alignment of relevant local authority action on Climate Change, Waste and Sustainability. This will further benefit the District Council's and Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent's joint Climate Change challenges and opportunities.

6 Appendices

Appendix 1: Updated Terms of Reference for the Staffordshire Leaders Board.

7 Previous Consideration

None.

8 Background Papers

None.



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The Staffordshire Leaders' Board Constitution for the Joint Committee

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To establish a Joint Committee of the local authorities in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to explore opportunities for improved joint working and to develop plans for potential devolution of powers from Government through a County Deal or similar arrangements.

2. Governance

- 2.1 The Joint Committee will act as a Joint Committee under Section 9EB of the Local Government Act 2000 and pursuant to Regulation 11 of the Local Authorities (Arrangement for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 2.2 The Joint Committee will be known as the Staffordshire Leaders' Board ("the Leaders' Board").
- 2.3 The Leaders' Board will comprise the local authorities within the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent area: Cannock Chase District Council, East Staffordshire Borough Council, Lichfield District Council, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, South Staffordshire District Council, Stafford Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Tamworth Borough Council ("the constituent authorities").
- 2.4 Political Proportionality rules will not apply to the Leaders' Board as constituted.
- 2.5 The Leaders' Board will be a legally constituted body with powers delegated to it by the constituent authorities in the following areas:
 - a) to prioritise and make decisions on the use of the funding that the Leaders' Board may influence or control.
 - b) to review future governance requirements and delivery arrangements and develop options as to how these can be best achieved in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent for consideration by the constituent authorities.



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- c) to have direct oversight of the projects and initiatives which the Leaders' Board has initiated or over which it has control of the funding.
 - d) to jointly discharge any function expressly given to it by any or all constituent members
 - e) to have oversight of other key projects and initiatives within its remit as set out herein.
- 2.6 The Leaders' Board will not hold funds or monies on behalf of the constituent authorities.
- 2.7 Should the Leaders' Board work plan necessitate a change in the delegated powers and terms of reference of the Leaders' Board any such change would require the approval of all the constituent authorities.
- 2.8 These terms of reference will be reviewed on a biennial basis or sooner if necessary.

3. Remit

- 3.1 The remit of the Leaders' Board will be:
- i. To develop options for a devolution deal or deals for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent with HM Government. For the avoidance of doubt, it is not intended that these Terms of Reference place any restriction on the form or scope such a deal or deals.
 - ii. To oversee the alignment of relevant local authority action on Climate Change, Waste and Sustainability.
 - iii. To oversee the alignment of relevant local authority plans for enterprise development and organisation of business voice.
 - iv. To coordinate the alignment of local authority interaction with the Health sector in Staffordshire.
 - v. To oversee the alignment of relevant local authority plans for future development and infrastructure.
 - vi. To coordinate the alignment of relevant local authority plans in relation to Housing and Homelessness.



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- vii. To develop Staffordshire-wide joint initiatives to enhance local government efficiency and effectiveness.
- viii. To develop plans and coordinate delivery for strategic economic growth that spans local boundaries.
- ix. To develop opportunities for joint action with respect to addressing social inequalities across the geography.
- x. To act as a conduit for coordinated engagement with other sub-regional and regional bodies the Midlands Engine and Midlands Connect.
- xi. Where appropriate, to agree shared priorities and bids for funding to existing and new external funding sources.
- xii. To monitor and evaluate projects and programmes of activity commissioned directly by the Committee.
- xiii. To communicate and, where collectively agreed, to align activity across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent on a range of other key public priorities that affect citizens.
- xiv. To prioritise and make decisions on the use of the funding that the Committee may influence or control.

4. Membership

- 4.1 One member from each constituent authority (such member to be the Leader from each constituent authority) and for the purposes of these terms of reference this member will be known as the principal member.
- 4.2 Each constituent authority to have a named substitute member who must be an executive member.
- 4.3 Where both the principal member and the substitute member attend a meeting of the Leaders' Board the principal member shall be deemed as representing their authority by the Chair or Vice Chair.
- 4.4 In the event of any voting member of the Leaders' Board ceasing to be a member of the constituent authority which appointed him/her, the relevant constituent authority shall as soon as reasonably practicable appoint another voting member in their place.



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- 4.5 Where a member of the Leaders' Board ceases to be a Leader of the constituent authority which appointed him/her or ceases to be a member of the Executive of the constituent authority which appointed him/her, he/she shall also cease to be a member of the Leaders' Board and the relevant constituent authority shall as soon as reasonably practicable appoint another voting member in their place.
- 4.6 Each constituent authority may remove its principal member or substitute member and appoint a different member or substitute as per that authority's rules of substitution, and by providing twenty-four hours' notice to the Chair or the Secretary.
- 4.7 The Leaders' Board may from time to time co-opt additional non-voting members ("co-opted members") with the agreement of all the constituent authorities but such co-opted members will not be members or officers of the constituent authorities.
- 4.8 Each constituent authority may individually terminate its membership of the Leaders' Board by giving three months written notice of its intent to leave the Leaders' Board to the Chair or the Secretary. At the end of these three months, but not before, the authority will be deemed to no longer be a member of the Leaders' Board.
- 4.9 Where an authority has previously terminated its membership of the Leaders' Board it may rejoin the Leaders' Board with immediate effect on the same terms as existed prior to its departure.

5. Quorum

- 5.1 The quorum shall be 5 members. No business will be transacted at a meeting unless a quorum exists at the beginning of a meeting. If at the beginning of any meeting, the Chair or Secretary after counting the members present declares that a quorum is not present, the meeting shall stand adjourned.

6. Chair and Vice Chair

- 6.1 The Chair of the Leaders' Board will be the principal member of Staffordshire County Council (subject to para 6.3 below)
- 6.2 The position of Vice Chair shall be filled by the principal member of Stoke-on-Trent City Council (subject to para 6.3 below)



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- 6.3 The Leaders' Board will vote annually at its first meeting after all the constituent authorities' annual meetings as to whether the Chair should continue to be the principal member of the County Council. An annual vote will also take place as to whether the Vice-Chair should continue to be the principal member of Stoke-on-Trent City Council, or in each case, should be the principal member of one of the other constituent authorities, with the option to rotate both roles annually.
- 6.4 The Chair or in their absence the Vice Chair or in their absence the member of the Leaders' Board elected for this purpose, shall preside at any meeting of the Leaders' Board.
- 6.5 Appointments will be made in May of each year.
- 6.6 Where, at any meeting or part of a meeting of the Leaders' Board both the Chair and Vice Chair are either absent or unable to act as Chair or Vice Chair, the Leaders' Board shall elect one of the members of the Leaders' Board present at the meeting to preside for the balance of that meeting or part of the meeting, as appropriate. For the avoidance of doubt, the role of Chair and Vice Chair vests in the principal member concerned and in their absence the role of Chair or Vice Chair will not automatically fall to the relevant constituent authority's substitute member.

7. Voting

- 7.1 One member, one vote for each constituent authority.
- 7.2 All questions shall be decided by a majority of the votes of the members present, the Chair having the casting vote in addition to their vote as a member of the Committee. Voting at meetings shall be by show of hands.
- 7.3 On the requisition of any two Members, made before the vote is taken, the voting on any matter shall be recorded by the Secretary so as to show how each Member voted and there shall also be recorded the name of any Member present who abstained from voting.

8. Sub-Committees and Advisory Groups

- 8.1 The Leaders' Board may appoint sub-committees from its membership as required to enable it to execute its responsibilities



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effectively and may delegate tasks and powers to the sub-committee as it sees fit.

- 8.2 The Leaders' Board may set up advisory groups as required to enable it to execute its responsibilities effectively and may delegate tasks as it sees fit to these bodies, which may be formed of officers or members of the constituent authorities or such third parties as the Leaders' Board considers appropriate.

9. Hosting and Administration

- 9.1 The Leaders' Board will at their first meeting decide which of the constituent authorities will be the host authority, and the Head of Democratic Services (or equivalent post) from that authority shall be Secretary to the Committee ("the Secretary").
- 9.2 The Leaders' Board will at their first meeting decide which of the constituent authorities will provide the s151 Officer role
- 9.3 The Leaders' Board will at their first meeting decide which of the constituent authorities will provide the Monitoring Officer & Legal Adviser to the Leaders' Board.
- 9.4 The administrative costs of supporting the committee will be met equally by the constituent authorities, with each authority being responsible for receiving and paying any travel or subsistence claims from its own members.
- 9.5 The functions of the Secretary shall be:
- a) to maintain a record of membership of the Leaders' Board and any sub-committees or advisory groups appointed
 - b) to publish and notify the proper officers of each constituent authority of any anticipated "key decisions" to be taken by the Leaders' Board to enable the requirements as to formal notice of key decisions as given under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 to be met;
 - c) to carry out such notification to and consultation with members of any appointing constituent authority as may be necessary to enable the Leaders' Board to take urgent "key decisions" in accordance with the requirements of the Local Authorities



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(Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012;

- d) to summon meetings of the Leaders' Board or any sub-committees or advisory groups;
- e) to prepare and send out the agenda for meetings of the Leaders' Board or any sub-committees or advisory groups; in consultation with the Chair and the Vice Chair of the Committee (or sub-committee/ advisory group);
- f) to keep a record of the proceedings of the Leaders' Board or any sub-committees or advisory groups, including those in attendance, declarations of interests, and to publish the minutes;
- g) to take such administrative action as may be necessary to give effect to decisions of the Leaders' Board or any sub-committees or advisory groups;
- h) to perform such other functions as may be determined by the Leaders' Board from time to time

10. Meetings

- 10.1 The Leaders' Board will meet no less than every four months and meetings will be aligned where necessary with deadlines for decisions on resources and investment plans.
- 10.2 Meetings will be held at such times, dates and places as may be notified to the members of the Leaders' Board by the Secretary, being such time, place and location as the Leaders' Board shall from time to time resolve.
- 10.3 Meeting papers will be circulated five clear working days in advance of any meeting. The Chair may choose to accept or reject urgent items that are tabled at any meeting.
- 10.4 Additional ad hoc meetings may be called by the Secretary, in consultation, where practicable, with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, in response to receipt of a request in writing, which request sets out an urgent item of business within the functions of the Leaders' Board, addressed to the Secretary:
 - (a) from and signed by two members of the Leaders' Board, or
 - (b) from the Chief Executive of any of the constituent authorities.



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- 10.5 The Secretary shall settle the agenda for any meeting of the Leaders' Board after consulting, where practicable, the Chair or in their absence the Vice Chair; and shall incorporate in the agenda any items of business and any reports submitted by:
- (a) the Chief Executive of any of the constituent authorities;
 - (b) the Chief Finance Officer to any of the constituent authorities;
 - (c) the Monitoring Officer to any of the constituent authorities; or
 - (d) any two Members of the Leaders' Board.
- 10.6 The Leaders' Board shall, unless the person presiding at the meeting or the Leaders' Board determines otherwise in respect of that meeting, conduct its business in accordance with the procedure rules set out in paragraph 13 below.

11. Access to Information

- 11.1 Meetings of the Leaders' Board will be held in public except where confidential or exempt information, as defined in the Local Government Act 1972, is being discussed.
- 11.2 These rules do not affect any more specific rights to information contained elsewhere under the law.
- 11.3 The Secretary will ensure that the relevant legislation relating to access to information is complied with. Each constituent authority is to co-operate with the Secretary in fulfilling any requirements.
- 11.4 Any Freedom of Information or Subject Access Requests received by the Leaders' Board should be directed to the relevant constituent authority(s) for that authority to deal with in the usual way, taking account of the relevant legislation. Where the request relates to information held by two or more constituent authorities, they will liaise with each other before replying to the request.

12. Attendance at meetings

- 12.1 The Chair may invite any person, whether a member or officer of one of the constituent authorities or a third party, to attend the meeting and speak on any matter before the Leaders' Board.



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- 12.2 Third parties may be invited to attend the Leaders' Board on a standing basis following a unanimous vote of those present and voting.
- 12.3 Where agenda items require independent experts or speakers, the Officer or authority proposing the agenda item should indicate this to the Secretary and provide the Secretary with details of who is required to attend and in what capacity. The participation of independent experts or speakers in Leaders' Board meetings will be subject to the discretion of the Chair.

13. Procedure Rules

13.1 Attendance

- 13.1.1 At every meeting, it shall be the responsibility of each member to enter their name on an attendance record provided by the Secretary from which attendance at the meeting will be recorded.

13.2 Order of Business

- 13.2.1 Subject to paragraph 13.2.2, the order of business at each meeting of the Leaders' Board will be:
- i. Apologies for absence
 - ii. Declarations of interests
 - iii. Approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the last meeting
 - iv. Matters set out in the agenda for the meeting which will clearly indicate which are key decisions and which are not
 - v. Matters on the agenda for the meeting which, in the opinion of the Secretary are likely to be considered in the absence of the press and public
- 13.2.2 The person presiding at the meeting may vary the order of business at the meeting.

13.3 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

- 13.3.1 If a Member is aware that he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting, the



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Member must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held:

- (a) in the case where paragraph 13.3.2 below applies, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence;
- (b) in any other case, wherever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at that meeting;
- (c) unless the Member has obtained a dispensation from their own authority's Standards Committee or Monitoring Officer. Such dispensation to be notified to the Secretary prior to the commencement of the meeting.

- 13.3.2 Where a member has a disclosable pecuniary interest in any business of the Leaders' Board, the Member may attend the meeting (or a sub-committee or advisory group of the committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the business, provided that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise.

13.4 Minutes

- 13.4.1 There will be no discussion or motion made in respect of the minutes other than except as to their accuracy. If no such question is raised or if it is raised then as soon as it has been disposed of, the Chair shall sign the minutes.

13.5 Rules of Debate

- 13.5.1 A Member wishing to speak shall address the Chair and direct their comments to the question being discussed. The Chair shall decide the order in which to take representations from members wishing to speak and shall decide all questions of order. Their ruling upon all such questions or upon matters arising in debate shall be final and shall not be open to discussion.
- 13.5.2 A motion or amendment shall not be discussed unless it has been proposed and seconded. When a motion is under debate no other motion shall be moved except the following:
- i. To amend the motion
 - ii. To adjourn the meeting



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- iii. To adjourn the debate or consideration of the item
- iv. To proceed to the next business
- v. That the question now be put
- vi. That a member be not further heard or do leave the meeting
- vii. To exclude the press and public under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972

13.6 Conduct of Members

- 13.6.1 Members of the Leaders' Board will be subject to their own authority's Code of Conduct.

14. Application to Sub-Committees

- 14.1 The procedure rules and also the Access to Information provisions set out at paragraph 11 shall apply to meetings of any sub-committees of the Leaders' Board.

15. Scrutiny of decisions

- 15.1 Each constituent authority which operates executive arrangements will be able to scrutinise the decisions of the Leaders' Board in accordance with that constituent authority's overview and scrutiny arrangements.

16. Winding up of the Leaders' Board

- 16.1 The Leaders' Board may be wound up immediately by the unanimous agreement of all constituent authorities.

17. Amendment of this Constitution

- 17.1 This Constitution can only be amended by resolution of each of the constituent authorities.

Cannock Town Centre Levelling Up Fund

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Committee: | Cabinet |
| Date of Meeting: | 12 June 2024 |
| Report of: | Head of Economic Development and Planning |
| Portfolio: | Regeneration and High Streets |

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the progress made to date with delivery of the Cannock Town Centre Levelling Up Fund (LUF) project and to confirm the necessary permissions and delegations to support the second phase of development being brought forward at pace.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the progress made on delivery of the project.
- 2.2 That Cabinet agree to the project scope for the second phase of town centre regeneration as set out in 5.7 below and the **CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX**.
- 2.3 That, subject to approval of the Project Adjustment Request (including a request for an extension of time) from the Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities, Cabinet approve permission to spend up to £8,750,000 from the capital programme allocation in respect of those works identified in 5.23 below.
- 2.4 That Cabinet decides whether it wishes the Council to accept a surrender of head leasehold interests and acquisition of a freehold interest in commercial properties in Cannock town centre, as set out in the **CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX** to facilitate the delivery of phase 2 of the town centre regeneration scheme, subject to Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities approval of the PAR (including a request for an extension of time) and VAT advice.
- 2.5 That Cabinet notes and endorses the withdrawal of the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for Cannock Town Centre.

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- 2.6 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Head of Economic Development and Planning in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive - Place, Deputy Chief Executive - Resources, Head of Law and Governance and Portfolio Leader for Regeneration and High Streets to finalise all matters relating to the surrender of the head leaseholds and vacant possession process, subject to DLUHC approval of the PAR which includes a request for an extension of time.
- 2.7 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Head of Economic Development and Planning in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive - Place, Deputy Chief Executive - Resources, Head of Law & Governance, Portfolio Leader for Regeneration and High Streets and the Levelling Up Fund Programme Board to take all steps to implement phase 2 of the programme within the agreed scope and budget. Should Cabinet be minded to progress with phase 2 (subject to DLUHC approval of the PAR which includes a request for an extension of time) members should be aware that there will be no available capacity or capital to deliver other projects across the district.
- 2.8 If Cabinet agree (based on the information in point 5.13 and subject to the recommendation in point 2.3) to proceed with accepting the surrender of the head leaseholds; freehold purchase and demolition programme; to approve proceeding with a competitive developer procurement process for the appointment of a preferred developer to deliver re-development opportunities for Cannock town centre; the detail of which will be subject to a future report to Cabinet.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.9 A significant amount of work has been completed to inform the detail of the second phase of this project. Detailed costings and design work have illustrated which elements of the original scheme were deliverable within the LUF funding timescales.
- 2.10 Colleagues from the Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC) have confirmed that planning and subsequent implementation of phase 2 of the Cannock Town Centre Regeneration programme should be progressed at pace.
- 2.11 The commercial transactions referred to in 2.4 will enable the Council to secure vacant possession ahead of proposed demolition works. Due to the Council negotiating agreements with the relevant landowners, the Council no longer needs to pursue a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) through to public inquiry.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 In June 2022 Cabinet resolved to pursue a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) in respect of land required to facilitate the regeneration proposals for Cannock Town Centre. The need to pursue a CPO has had a significant impact on the

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programme which then impacts on deliverability by the LUF spend deadline. Officers have worked with the design team to undertake a review of the scheme.

- 3.2 The review considered project budget and costings, programme, deliverability, development mix and outputs have been reviewed. This process resulted in two distinct phases of development being identified, the first of which was reported to Cabinet on 28 March 2024 where permission to spend was granted.
- 3.3 The first phase of works includes activity within the current footprint of Cannock Shopping Centre. These works were capable of progressing in advance of phase 2 but remain part of the wider vision for the town centre.
- 3.4 By approving phase 2 works (subject to DLUHC approval) the Council will enable the creation of an investment opportunity (subject to the information provided in 5.13) for the private sector within Cannock town centre.
- 3.5 Should Cabinet be minded to progress with phase 2 (subject to DLUHC approval) members should be aware that there will be no available capacity or capital to deliver other projects across the district and that if they choose not to proceed then the remaining LUF budget will be lost.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The Cannock Town Centre Levelling Up Fund transformation supports delivery of the following priorities within the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-26:
 - i) Economic Prosperity
 - ii) Health and Wellbeing
 - iii) Responsible Council

5 Report Detail

Scope of the Project

- 5.1 In October 2021 the Council secured £20m from the first round of the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) to support an ambitious and transformational town centre regeneration scheme that would deliver:
 - i) Re-development of the former Multi-Storey Car Park and Indoor Market Hall site; creating a new cultural hub which includes the refurbishment of the Prince of Wales Theatre.
 - ii) Business workspace linked with the leisure hub as part of the same mixed-use building.
 - iii) Creation of the Northern Gateway, removing the existing subway and connecting the town centre to the bus station and Beecroft Road car park via new high quality public realm and commercial space.

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- iv) Bike hub, storage, hire and repair within a dedicated new facility to encourage active sustainable travel.
 - v) Enabling work to pay for demolition and clearance works to unlock land for the scheme.
 - vi) New service access arrangements at street-level for existing tenants with servicing rights with removal of existing roof-top servicing to facilitate re-development of the existing shopping centre.
 - vii) Retirement living complex.
- 5.2 At the point that the LUF funding bid was submitted the total cost of the scheme was £44m with a deadline for spending the LUF element of funding by 31 March 2025. In addition to the £20m LUF award at its meeting in February 2022 the Council committed a further £17.2m with the remaining £6.8m anticipated to be met by an unsecured private sector investor in respect of the retirement living complex.
- 5.3 This level of Council investment was necessary to deliver a strong Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) which was a prerequisite to securing the LUF award. As the project has progressed through to detailed designs up to date cost plans have been produced and with the volatility of both construction costs and inflation the total project as originally set out is not currently deliverable within the previously approved budget. Alongside this the CPO process has impacted on the delivery programme.
- 5.4 To address concerns around land availability, cost control and deliverability officers have been working closely with DLUHC colleagues over the last six months to agree a deliverable alternative scheme, the first phase of which was approved by Cabinet on 28 March 2024.
- 5.5 DLUHC have clarified with the Council that the original spend deadline for the LUF grant of 31 March 2025 relates to demonstrating substantial progress by 31 March 2025.
- 5.6 The second phase of delivery relates to a wider area within the town centre which brings forward a different scheme to that originally envisaged. Phase 2 is now focussed on creating a future redevelopment opportunity that will attract significant investment in Cannock town centre.
- 5.7 The scope of works for Phase 2 is as follows:
- i. Acquisition and demolition of the Forum Shopping Centre
 - ii. Acquisition and partial demolition of retail units along Church Street, Market Street and Market Hall Street
 - iii. Public realm works

The acquisition and demolition of commercial and retail units as set out on the plan at **APPENDIX 1** is required to facilitate future re-development of the town centre.

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- 5.8 The rationale for this phase of works is best explained in the context of the original funding bid. The Levelling Up Fund proposal set out an ambition to deliver urban regeneration and placemaking for Cannock town centre, repurposing the central area of the town centre, and addressing long term decline. The funding was intended to deliver highly visible transformational change and act as a catalyst for the longer-term revival of the town centre.
- 5.9 Since the funding was awarded in 2021, the town centre has seen further decline with just one tenant operating in the Forum Shopping Centre and an increase in vacant units along Church Street. Most notably, Boots and Barclays Bank have recently closed which is further impacting on footfall within the town centre.
- 5.10 To ensure that the Council can deliver against the ambitions of the Levelling Up Fund project and to ensure that the Levelling Up Fund can be fully committed (£9m has been committed via phase one); the Council has entered into negotiations with the long leasehold owners of the Forum Shopping Centre and retail units along Church Street and Market Hall Street plus the freehold owner of the former Barclays Bank building in Market Place (site plan attached in **APPENDIX 1**).
- 5.11 The long leasehold interests are within the Council's freehold ownership but in order to get control of the properties the Council will need to agree terms with the leaseholders for them to surrender their leasehold interests back to the Council. The relevant leases are:
- (i) Forum Shopping Centre - currently on a long lease with 88 years unexpired at a peppercorn rent.
 - (ii) Church Street/Market Hall Street - Retail units on a long lease with 75 years unexpired (though the leaseholder has an option to renew the lease until 2149). The Council currently receives 26% of the net rent received by the leaseholder from its subtenants. Even if all of the properties are vacant the Council will currently still receive £30,000 per year.
- 5.12 The Council also has the option of acquiring the freehold interest in the former Barclays Bank building in Market Place. The Council currently has no legal interest in this unit but its acquisition is necessary to facilitate the Council's future redevelopment proposals.
- 5.13 The Council's design team has developed an outline masterplan for the site which could be used as a basis for a future development brief and/or planning application which could inform a developer procurement exercise with the aim of securing a development partner. Cabinet should note that it is not guaranteed that the Council would be successful in appointing a development partner for any future scheme and the site could sit empty for many years. However, by doing nothing, there is a risk that the town centre will further decline and suffer from a lack of investment.

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- 5.14 It is anticipated that a future cleared site will be attractive for a mix of uses including residential (market housing or retirement complex), commercial and business / educational workspace. There is the potential for a scheme to create active frontages to Church Street linking town centre uses to St. Luke's Church.
- 5.15 Negotiations have concluded, and advice has been provided by the Council's commercial adviser Savills as to the cost of acquiring these interests. Cabinet should note that the Council would be acquiring above market value and subsidy control advice has been obtained to demonstrate that the Council is acting in accordance with relevant subsidy control legislation.
- 5.16 Since January 2024 officers have been working closely with the DLUHC Discovery team to accelerate delivery of town centre regeneration. Following site visits and a review of the commercial case for Phase 2 the Discovery Team have suggested that phase 2 could be considered for funding via the Levelling Up Fund grant monies, subject to a formal Project Adjustment Request (PAR). The LUF Project Adjustment Request (PAR) process concludes, depending on the magnitude of the change proposed, with a decision by Ministers. Should Cabinet be minded to progress with Phase 2, the PAR will be submitted by the Council to DLUHC. Whilst there is a commitment from DLUHC to issue a decision within a set period, the announcement of the General Election means that the timescale for a decision cannot be confirmed yet.
- 5.17 DLUHC have confirmed that officials will be able to review the PAR in advance of the final decision-making process and officials would welcome the submission of a PAR at the earliest opportunity on the understanding that decision making is suspended during the pre-election period. Alongside this, work can progress in terms of procurement and acquisition of the Forum, with the remaining acquisitions subject to DLUHC approval, however the Council would only seek to acquire the Forum should DLUHC approve the entirety of Phase 2.
- 5.18 Two of the ten units within the Forum are still leased. One tenant has already vacated their premises and the Council is in advanced negotiations with this party with the view to agreeing a compensation package. The Council is in negotiation and has an agreement in principle with the tenant still in occupation for them to vacate their unit on terms to be agreed. The Council would aim to get the centre prepared for demolition as soon as possible after taking ownership, with the view to appointing a demolition contractor as soon as practicable.
- 5.19 In relation to the Church Street/Market Place units. Three units (former Boots, Barclays Bank and former Nightclub) are already vacant. There are two other tenants in occupation which the Council would need to relocate to secure vacant possession. The aim will be to agree a negotiated position with these tenants and relocate them to alternative premises within the town centre. A budget provision has been allocated within the LUF budget to fund these costs.
- 5.20 Cabinet should note that the units along Market Hall Street would not be earmarked for demolition and would be retained by the Council as commercial

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lettings and managed externally. The Council will need to consider whether to retain these units long term or to consider onward disposal to a third party.

- 5.21 Cabinet is therefore asked to approve the proposals to purchase the Forum Shopping Centre and adjacent retail units on Church Street with the view to demolishing these units to create development sites for the future and act as a catalyst for the transformation of the town centre. In addition, Cabinet is asked to approve the proposals to purchase retail units along Market Hall Street and Market Place. The plan in the **CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX** identifies the relevant units. Should approval from Cabinet be granted; **properties will not be acquired until DLUHC has determined and approved the PAR.**
- 5.22 Subject to finalising agreements to acquire the units, the Council will no longer need to progress a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) process for Cannock town centre. Therefore, having regard to the imminent risk of public inquiry costs being incurred, the Leader approved an urgent decision to formally withdraw the CPO and notify the Secretary of State of the Council's decision; reducing further costs and reputational risk of participating in a public inquiry (scheduled for late July).
- 5.23 The following programme for Phase 2 demonstrates that whilst substantial progress by March 2025 is achievable this is a challenging programme. As such a request for an extension of time will form part of the Project Adjustment Request to DLUHC. Quarters quoted relate to financial years:

| Milestone | Timescale | Notes |
|---|-----------|---|
| Commercial units for demolition | | |
| Complete acquisitions | Q2 2024/5 | |
| Achieve vacant possession | Q3 2024/5 | |
| Secure planning permission for demolition | Q4 2024/5 | Preparatory work already being undertaken |
| Appointment of demolition contractor and works commence on phased basis | Q4 2024/5 | Combined procurement with Phase 1 works |

| | | |
|--|-----------|--|
| Commercial units for retention | | |
| Complete acquisitions | Q2 2024/5 | |
| Public Realm Works | | |
| Finalise design | Q2 2024/5 | |
| Secure planning permission for works | Q3 2024/5 | |
| Appointment of contractor and works commence | Q4 2024/5 | |

Permission to Spend

5.24 Cabinet are asked to agree permission to spend for the LUF capital works to deliver the land acquisitions, demolitions, and improvement works for each of these elements is set out below.

| Work Package | Estimated Cost £ |
|---|-------------------------|
| Acquisition of commercial units (leasehold and freehold interests and securing vacant possession) | £3,800,000 |
| Demolition and associated compliance works | £1,600,000 |
| Public realm works | £3,000,000 |
| Contingency @ 10% on works costs | £350,000 |
| TOTAL | £8,750,000 |

5.25 On the basis that the costs quoted above are estimates subject to inflation and detailed procurement, Members are asked to provide permission to spend £8,750,000 from the capital programme in respect of the Phase 2 land assembly and works. With the approval of phase 2, the Council will be able to commit £18m of capital spend towards Cannock Town Centre regeneration.

5.26 Following a recommendation from the Council’s commercial advisor, Savills, Cabinet are asked to agree permission to spend to cover compensation costs plus professional fees and associated legal costs to achieve vacant possession of the relevant units within The Forum Shopping Centre and Church Street. Details of this and the supporting information around acquiring

head leases for The Forum and Church Street/Market Hall Street/Market Street properties are set out in the **CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX**.

- 5.27 There will be additional revenue budget implications as a result of delivering the phase 2 works. Whilst tenants continue to occupy units within the Forum and the retail units on Church Street, the Council would remain liable for all costs associated with managing and maintaining these units until vacant possession is obtained and demolition works commence. Some of the revenue costs can be quantified and will create a pressure on the Council's budget. Other costs are unquantified at this stage and further work will need to be undertaken to quantify these revenue costs to the Council.
- Business rates liabilities for 2024/5 associated with units on Church Street /Market Hall Street/Market Place and the Forum Shopping Centre - based on rates for the current financial year the void rates liability is estimated at £101,361 for the period prior to demolition (less income of £124,557 based on existing tenancies) and chargeable at £28,529 per month (less income of £10,958) until demolition works commence.
 - Service charges - the Council would be liable for service charges on any units that are vacant - it is estimated that the service charge liability for void units is £47,822.
 - Costs in relation to the management of the retained units along Market Hall Street. It is anticipated that the Council will need to bear the cost of any landlord improvements required to the properties. An initial estimate for external support on tenancy management, facilities management and utilities costs is £57,000.
 - Security costs - based on the indicative programme set out in 5.22 the Council should secure ownership of those units earmarked for demolition by Q2 2024/5 with demolition programmed to commence Q4 2024/5. During demolition, as part of the insurance requirements placed on the contractor, the responsibility for security arrangements moves away from the Council. For the intervening 7 months security costs are estimated in the region of £30,000.
 - Insurance - Whilst construction specific insurance will be required, in the first instance from acquisition an average figure of £120 per property has been applied (including insurance premium tax). The additional annual insurance cost is estimated at £2,280.
 - Income generated through ongoing letting of Market Hall Street properties. A schedule of existing tenancy arrangements is included in the

CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX. Cabinet should note that a number of these tenancies are due to end in 2025 / 26 and the Council will be responsible for negotiating lease renewals and/or securing new tenants.

- The demolition of The Forum and Church Street units will remove a liability to the Council and risk to the Council in terms of structural and security issues and any further mothballing costs.
- Until full building surveys and maintenance records are received an assumption has been made that the service charges already in place are sufficient to cover any repairs or maintenance however this position may change.

5.28 The opportunity to deliver phase 2 of the project needs to be considered against the need to deliver regeneration for Cannock town centre and the Council's challenging financial position going forward. Cabinet should note that progressing phase 2 will be a significant programme of work and create significant risks to the Council, both reputational and financial. Should Cabinet be minded to progress with phase 2 members should be aware that there will be no available capacity or capital to deliver other projects across the district.

5.29 Cabinet should note that officers are looking at options to fully utilise the £20m of LUF funding, this will be subject to a further report to Cabinet.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

The review of the programme scope has resulted in a phased approach to delivery. The council has a capital budget of approximately £27 million pounds available in relation to the revised LUF project, this includes £20 million of LUF funding, £6.6m of council funding and £0.4 million of UKSPF.

In respect of this funding the Council has spent or allocated funding to date including phase 1 of £10.234 million.

The report seeks permission to spend for phase 2 of £8.7 million, based on the overall requirement of a 20% match contribution to the levelling up grant used this would give a grant usage for LUF including costs to date and phase 1 of £15.187 million and £3.797 million of council funding and UKSPF.

It should be noted that to ensure this grant can be claimed from Levelling Up the council will need to be mindful of the current grant deadline of the end of March 2025 and that as set out in paragraph 5.16 there is a requirement on the Council to submit and receive approval of a Project Adjustment Request before all works can be committed.

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As well as the challenging deadline for capital spend there is also a significant implication in respect of the revenue budgets.

The known net additional revenue costs are set out in the table below, it should be noted that these do not include any potential maintenance costs which may be required as there is no condition survey information available on the properties at this time, we also do not know what type of lease is held by the current tenants in respect of repairs.

| | Pre demolition cost (assumed June to December) | Post demolition Annual cost 25/26 | Post 25/26 annual (assume units not relet at tenancy end dates) |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Passing rent | (126) | (143) | (15) |
| Current budgeted income | 33 | 57 | 57 |
| Vacant business rates liabilities | 134 | 49 | 97 |
| Service charge (empty units- cabot only) | 28 | 13 | 23 |
| Management of units | 33 | 29 | 29 |
| Security | 30 | - | - |
| Insurance | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Net additional revenue cost | 134 | 7 | 193 |

As can be seen from the table above this gives an additional net cost to the Council of £134,000 prior to demolition for the period of seven months, any delay from December will give an additional cost of £19,000 per month. With regard to the tenancies currently let there are only two out of the eleven units which will remain with the council post demolition (subject to any other party taking them on) that have a lease end date later than 2025/26 financial year, the additional cost to the Council should these not be relet is £193,000 per annum.

The phase 1 report also had additional revenue costs for the council of £41,000 in relation to business rates and reduced car parking income of approximately £4,000 per week, at present we are still not able to quantify the timeframe for those works.

6.2 Legal

The Cannock Town Centre Regeneration programme is already identified within the Council's capital programme but Cabinet approval is required for permission to spend.

As the Levelling Up Fund award is a grant Officers need to ensure that all associated grant conditions are monitored and met.

All elements of procurement must follow the relevant procurement rules when

awarding contracts.

6.3 Human Resources

The Council has procured project management services to ensure that the project delivers to budget and on time, the cost of which will be covered via existing budgets. Further specialist services in relation to commercial and legal advice, demolition consultancy and design / planning have been procured to support the delivery of the project.

It should be noted that any other regeneration projects to be managed by the Economic Development team will impact on capacity available to deliver this programme.

6.4 Risk Management

A full risk register is managed as part of the established governance arrangements and forms part of the quarterly performance returns submitted to DLUHC.

The greatest risk to the Forum and Church Street demolition project is cost control. Given the unpredictability of inflation and the costs of construction an additional contingency has been built into the cost plan (enclosed as a **CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX**).

The timescales for spending the LUF capital contribution have been impacted significantly by the CPO process however DLUHC's position on this has now been clarified to an expectation of contractually committed spend by 31 March 2025. Confirmation has been received that DLUHC will not seek to clawback any monies that have been properly incurred in terms of delivering the programme, ensuring that the Council can proceed with pace and with confidence.

The demolition works proposed will impact on neighbouring businesses and pedestrians accessing the town centre. Alternative access routes, communication plans and on-site signage will all be used to mitigate the impacts, however, there remains a risk of compensation claims during the works. This short-term risk has to be balanced against the long-term benefits of the regeneration scheme.

Acquiring properties that may become vacant whilst owned by the Council creates a potential additional revenue burden to the Council. The maximum potential liabilities that would be created have been considered as part of the rationale for acquiring the properties. Details of this are set out in the **CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX**.

All of these risks have been considered in the context of the benefits that the project as a whole can deliver for Cannock Town Centre. If the Council were

unable to implement this LUF supported scheme it may impact the Council's ability to secure future funding meaning that any regeneration of the town centre, and the associated positive outcomes for the local economy and community, would rely wholly on private sector investment which is not currently forthcoming.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

An Equality and Impact Assessment is in place for the project - there are no direct implications for this report.

6.6 Health

It is recognised that a redevelopment of this scale will have significant impacts on many of the wider determinants of health and the Project Delivery Team will work with colleagues and partners to ensure opportunities to reduce health inequalities are maximised.

6.7 Climate Change

This report relates primarily to land acquisition and demolition works rather than construction however climate change will be considered where appropriate within the procurement process.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1 - site plan

Confidential Appendix

8 Previous Consideration

Cabinet: 2 February 2022, 16 June 2022, 15 June 2023, 28 March 2024

9 Background Papers

None

