

# Housing Board

Information for  
Tenants and Leaseholders





# Welcome

## **Thank you for your interest in joining the Council's Housing Board.**

Following many changes in the external housing environment including the passing of new legislation which means council's are now inspected by an external regulator of social housing, we have reviewed our approach to how we understand the lived experience of tenants and leaseholders.

Whilst involvement of tenants and leaseholders has always been important to the Council, the time has come to build on this work in local communities and to bring that voice into the decision-making structure of the Council, by creating a Housing Board made up of three elected members, three independent members and three Cannock Chase tenants/leaseholders.

This represents a change in the Council's approach to working with its tenants and leaseholders. Our expectation is that the Housing Board will ensure that the wider diverse voice and experience of tenants and leaseholders is considered and heard before the Council makes decisions about housing policies and strategies. Having tenants and leaseholders on the Housing Board, working with councillors and independent members will ensure we have a wide breadth of experience overseeing the delivery of housing services across the district.

We recognise that working locally is the key to hearing the voice of tenants and leaseholders, and this work will continue and will be a focus for the Housing Board.

We look forward to receiving your application.



**Cllr Tony Johnson**

Leader of the Council and  
Chairman-elect of the  
Housing Board



## 10 Frequently asked Questions about a Housing Board



### 1. What's the reason for setting up a Housing Board?

Cannock Chase Council owns roughly 5,030 council rented homes and 300 leasehold properties. These homes and the landlord services we provide are checked by a government regulator called the Regulator of Social Housing. Since April 2024 the Regulator has legal powers to inspect the Council to ensure it is meeting legal and regulatory standards for safe, decent council housing. The Regulator has a set of Consumer Standards we have to meet. We must have evidence about how we are meeting these standards and how the wide and diverse voice and experience of tenants and leaseholders is influencing the decisions the Council makes about housing services and investment in housing.

### 2. Who will be on the Housing Board?

This is a brand-new Board and will have nine members.

- Three elected members
- Three independent members
- Three tenants/leaseholders

The Board will ensure that council tenants, prospective tenants and leaseholders receive good quality services and live in healthy and safe homes, communal areas and neighbourhoods. Members are equal, sharing the ability to make recommendations to the Council about housing services. The housing board will focus on the council's responsibilities as a social housing landlord.

### 3. What do mean when you talk about 'assurance'?

The Council will always want and expect assurance on the many aspects of its business including, for example, health and safety, finances, employment practices and that it is delivering housing services in the right way to all tenants and leaseholders. The Council seeks assurance from lots of different sources such as performance data, the executive team, external audits, specialist independent advisors and legal experts. The Housing Board will become one of the many ways the Council has of gaining assurance and, very specifically, assurance about the housing services across the district.

### 4. Who will benefit the most from the work of the Housing Board - the Council or tenants and leaseholders?

The Council and its tenants and leaseholders will benefit because it will put the 'tenant voice' at the heart of the Council's governance. It will ensure we meet all our commitments to all our tenants and leaseholders; and it will enable tenants and the Council to work on a shared vision of tenants and leaseholders receiving good quality services and live in healthy and safe homes, communal areas, and neighbourhoods.



### **5. I'm confused! You use the term 'tenant voice' but what does this mean?**

We regard anyone who has a tenancy agreement or a leasehold agreement with the Council as part of the 'tenant voice'. The term 'tenant voice' is one that the government regulator uses as they want to ensure that we know and understand the needs of all our tenants and leaseholders.

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### **6. What's in it for me if I am selected to become a member of the Housing Board?**

You will have the opportunity to influence housing services and policies at Cannock Chase Council on behalf of others. You will be given opportunities to develop your skills and knowledge of housing; and if you are motivated to improve lives and communities then you will see how good quality housing and housing services really do help to change individuals and communities.

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### **7. How much influence will the Housing Board really have?**

It will have a substantial influence because it will have a reporting framework to and from the Cabinet and Council (the legal decision-making body).

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### **8. How is the Housing Board different from tenant groups and other forms of tenant involvement?**

This role isn't about involvement, it's about governance and assurance. The formality of the Board makes it different as does the fact that it will have a direct reporting link to and from the Cabinet and the Council. The Terms of Reference for the Housing Board has more detail about its specific responsibilities, and this will be made available during the application process.

### **9. Is this the same as the scrutiny?**

No. In-depth scrutiny of our services will continue as a separate activity, carried out by other tenants and leaseholders, as part of the Housing Improvement Panel. We will be exploring new ways of involving more tenants and leaseholders in scrutiny activities and projects. The Housing Board would see the findings of scrutiny to ensure that recommendations and actions are followed through.

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### **10. Can I still be involved in local groups and activities if I become a member of the Housing Board?**

Yes. Local involvement and work in your community will remain important and we would always encourage and support local involvement activities, where and when we can. Developing ways by which the 'tenant voice' can be heard locally and individually through targeted involvement activities will be another way to ensure we are gathering views and ideas from all our tenants and leaseholders. This means building upon the local involvement work we currently do and finding new ways to engage with more people. The Housing Board will use the local and targeted work to understand the wider 'tenant voice'.





## Housing Board responsibilities

The Housing Board is made up of members with different skills knowledge and experience who all provide assurance to the Council on the performance of landlord services to tenants and leaseholders and the asset management and maintenance of existing homes. In addition, the Board oversees the Resident Involvement Strategy to ensure that the needs and experience of tenants and leaseholders influence its recommendations.

Housing Board members are drawn from three groups: elected members, tenants and leaseholders, and independent members. All members are equal, sharing the same responsibilities and ability to make recommendations and give assurance. The Housing Board will make recommendations to the Cabinet for the Cabinet to consider and approve or ratify (or, if required recommend to the full Council for approval).

The Housing Board has a Terms of Reference which details their responsibilities (this is a separate document that can be downloaded in the application process). The following is a summary of those responsibilities:

- Monitoring the priorities and objectives for the housing service
- Monitoring operational service delivery and tenant experience
- Providing assurance that there are effective mechanisms in place to gather and analyse the views and insight from tenants.
- Providing assurance that there is an effective mechanism in place to enable tenants to scrutinise performance of the landlord.
- Monitor complaints performance and consider the implications of learning from adverse outcomes from enquiries to the Housing Ombudsman.
- Recommending to the cabinet on an annual basis the Council's self-assessment of compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code
- Consider and make recommendations to the cabinet in respect of the Council's Asset Management Strategy
- Providing assurance that there is an effective approach to stock condition surveys and asset management.
- Monitoring delivery the annual capital investment programme
- Monitor landlord health and safety, compliance, and building safety.



- Make recommendations regarding policies and strategies.
- Consider and recommend to the cabinet on an annual basis the Council's self-assessment against the RSH consumer standards.
- Assist the cabinet to prepare for regulatory engagement whether proactive or reactive is showing the best possible outcome for the Council
- Monitoring the achievements of the HRA budget

## Time Commitment

The Housing Board will meet a minimum of FOUR times per year. Meetings will be a hybrid of virtual and in-person. Members should expect more meetings in the first year as the Board establishes itself. Members will be expected to attend training and strategy days. Considering preparation for meetings and events, as well as attending meetings, we estimate the time commitment to be about 15 days per year.



## Eligibility

Applications from Cannock Chase Council tenants and leaseholders are welcomed. You must not be in breach of your occupancy agreement - if this is the case your application will not be considered.

## Term of office

All Members will be appointed for an initial three-year term, subject to the satisfactory completion of a probationary review which will take place at the end of your first year.

Housing Board members may not serve for more than six years in total.

Tenant or leaseholder representatives will be expected to stand down during their term of office in the following circumstances at the request of the Council:

- They are no longer a tenant or leaseholder of Cannock Chase Council or if are in breach of the occupancy agreement.
- The Council decides that the composition and/or skills and experience required of the Housing Board should change.
- If a conflict of interest exists, your contribution does not meet the expected standards or your continued presence as a Housing Board member may damage the Council's reputation.



## Incentives

The positions on the Housing Board are on a voluntary basis, however a number of incentives are available for tenant and leaseholder members, these include:

- If required, loan of ICT equipment (laptop or tablet) to undertake the role and access meeting papers and reports.
- £10 per month contribution towards internet/telephone bills.
- All additional expenses incurred will be repaid, including travel expenses and care costs (for adults or children by a registered minder).
- Ongoing training programme



## Applications

Applications from Cannock Chase Council tenants and leaseholders are welcomed. To apply go to [www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/jobs/jobs-and-careers](http://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/council/jobs/jobs-and-careers). You will need to create an account in order to complete your application.

We will ask you to provide a written statement that shows how you meet the skills and experience requirements shown on the next page.



Applications must be received by **1st November 2024**

Interviews will be held week commencing **11th November 2024**.

To find out more about the Council's Housing Board visit [www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/tenantparticipation](http://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/tenantparticipation), telephone **01543 462621** or email [residentengagement@cannockchasedc.gov.uk](mailto:residentengagement@cannockchasedc.gov.uk) and we will contact you.

The Council will, of course, respect the privacy of any conversations regarding these roles.



## Person Specification



The Housing Board is made up of members with different skills, knowledge and experience who all provide assurance to the Council on the performance of landlord services to tenants and leaseholders.

In your application, please give example of how your skills and experience matches the criteria required to be effective in the role.

- ✔ **Customer focus** - The ability to draw on lived experience as a tenant or leaseholder in Cannock Chase and to understand and articulate the needs, priorities, and issues of all Cannock Chase communities.
- ✔ **Independence** - The ability to demonstrate objectivity, impartiality, and integrity in thinking and actions. To be able to focus on risk identification and mitigation so that the Housing Board can support the Council to achieve its long-term strategic aims for landlord services.
- ✔ **Analysis** - The ability to analyse and interpret complex information and evidence. Demonstrate flexibility and sound judgement in decision making.
- ✔ **Communication** - The ability to listen, support, communicate, challenge and influence effectively. To give, receive and act on feedback in a positive way. To use clear reasoning. Work effectively with other housing board members, council officers, and elected members develop an open positive relationship that generates confidence and trust.
- ✔ **Teamwork** - The ability to build supportive and collaborative relationships. To work as part of a team. Show regard to the differing views and advice of others. Motivate and empower others and inspire trust and confidence.
- ✔ **Leadership** - The ability to think strategically. To be held accountable and to hold others to account. Contribute positively to setting the Council's strategic direction for housing and housing services.
- ✔ **Governance** - The ability to understand the role of effective governance in decision-making, risk, and performance management
- ✔ **Equality, diversity, and inclusion** - A personal commitment to treating people fairly, honestly and with respect. An ability to understand discrimination and inclusion issues within the social housing sector and within Cannock Chase communities.
- ✔ **Housing** - An interest or awareness of the social housing sector and social, economic, and political environment



### **Cannock Chase Council**

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This leaflet can be provided in **large print** on request to  
**Cannock Chase Council** on **01543 462621**.