

Annual Report

for Tenants

2020/21



Welcome to the 2020/21 Housing Services Annual Report to tenants. Here we share information about our performance in the last financial year.

This annual report covers the period between April 2020 and March 2021. A tough year for everyone with the implications of Covid-19 continuing to impact on daily lives and upon our housing work. However, we would still like to acknowledge here the impressive way our Housing Services team have responded throughout the pandemic, from contacting all vulnerable tenants to make sure they are safe to delivering food parcels and PPE to areas of greatest need, as well as continuing to offer accommodation to local residents and tackling the increased cases of anti-social behaviour with risk-assessed visits or virtual visits.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your understanding and patience whilst we adapt and reshape our services to cope with the restrictions that Covid-19 imposed upon us all.



Councillor Adrienne Fitzgerald

Housing, Heritage and Leisure Portfolio Leader



Nirmal Samrai

Head of Housing and Partnerships



Priorities 2021-22



New Homes: We will continue working towards delivering further new council homes over the coming years using the Housing Investment Fund. The Hawks Green Depot development is on site and progressing towards completion by the end of the year, and two other sites are being progressed for starts in late 21-22 and 22-23. The latter two sites aim to provide high energy efficiency (passivhaus standard) homes which will provide affordable warmth for tenants. It will also assist in achieving the Council's strategic aim of working toward achieving zero carbon Council homes by 2030.



Quality Homes: We will continue to improve the quality of the Council's housing stock for the benefit of our tenants by ensuring that we continue to meet and exceed the Decent Homes standard. We are also exploring how we can move towards carbon neutrality through retrofitting the existing stock.



Support: We will make the best use of our stock, provide tenancy sustainment support, promote the provision of suitable accommodation, and provide information and advice to prevent and reduce homelessness.

Key facts

(as at 1 April 2021)



We provide 5,090 homes across the District



We lease 287 flats across the District on leasehold terms;



We have delivered 28 new homes in the last three years, however there were no new build completions in 2020-21.



We sold 29 properties through Right To Buy in 2019/20, with 95 properties sold in the last three years.



We spent approximately £6.45m on planned maintenance works and responsive repairs & maintenance to the existing housing stock in 2020/21 to ensure your properties are well maintained.



91% of respondents to our monthly repairs satisfaction survey said that were satisfied with the repair services we provided.

Understanding and responding to your needs

Tenant Profile
(from STAR survey 2021)

Tenants have on average held their tenancies for **13 years**
According to our records the longest tenancy held is an incredible **67 years!**



2021 one bed properties;

1444 two bed properties

1513 three bed properties

61 four bed properties

1 five bed property

56 sheltered bedsits

Average time on housing register **14 Months**
(increased since last year)

We also manage 836 garages, of which 439 were occupied
And we have 287 leasehold properties.

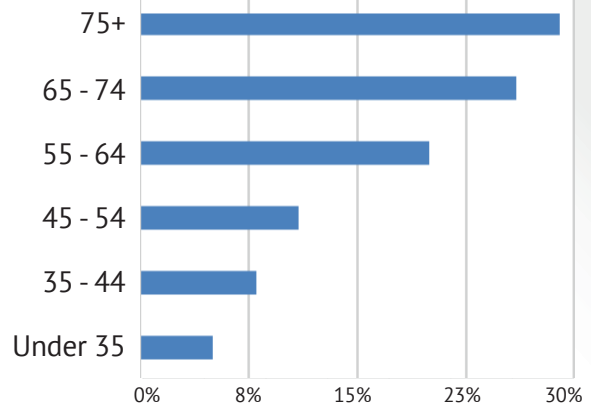
Our Tenants

Gender



56% 44%

Age



392 households requiring 1 bedroom accommodation

There were **964** households on the Housing Register as at 31/3/2021

44 households require 4+ bedroom accommodation

381 require 2 bedroom accommodation

147 require 3 bedroom accommodation

During 2020/21 we received 29,602 calls through the Contact Centre on Housing related matters and 346 visits to the Housing Bungalow.
There were also 141,543 views of the Council's Housing web pages.



Complaints and Compliments



10 Stage 1 complaints;
3 Stage 2 complaints;
1 Stage 3 complaint;
76 MP enquiries;
25 were recorded as informal (i.e. Councillor complaint on behalf of tenant, Anonymous or from another family member)

10 complaints reached Stage 1

5* from Neighbourhoods;
2 from Housing Repairs;
2 from Housing Repairs and Allocations;
1 from Allocations;

* This complaint, classed under the Neighbourhoods team, was a multi-service complaint and was escalated to Stage 3. The Housing elements were partially upheld.

Only 2 of the formal complaints were upheld.

1 jointly from Housing Repairs and Allocations (partially upheld)
1* from Neighbourhoods (partially upheld)

3 complaints were escalated to Stage 2

1^ from Allocations / Neighbourhoods;
1 from Housing Repairs;
1 from Neighbourhoods.

^ Carried over from 2019/20

This is a decrease on last year, where we received 16 Stage 1 complaints, of which two proceeded to Stage 2 and were resolved, and one proceeding to Stage 3.

What we learned from the complaints received and what we did:

A complaint was received on an electrical rewire repair job due to the unacceptably long time taken from the initial visit to the required work being done.

A conversation was held between Housing Maintenance senior managers to ensure that follow up work is correctly prioritised and also procedures are followed to ensure that work isn't forgotten when issues occur, whether they are beyond our control or otherwise. If correct prioritisation had been followed then the rewire would have been passed to an internal operative immediately as adequate resource was available at that time. Due to incorrect prioritisation the Assistant Managers should have identified this during their weekly meetings and this could have been passed to an external contractor sooner - whilst it was an input error, repairs planners have been reminded of the importance of correct prioritisation of jobs.

A complaint was received as a tenant had not received information as part of their sign-up pack, which led to a misunderstanding of verbal communication from Allocations staff.

We have revised our letter for the sign-up process and linked the void pack and sign-up processes. More detailed instructions were given to Allocations Officers as part of wider awareness training and the checklist for sign-up now covers the supplying of a void information pack.

We also reviewed the Tenancy Agreement to ensure tenants sign off they have fully understand all information given to them on signing up to a new property.

(Continued)

What we learned from the complaints received and what we did:

A customer was dissatisfied with the service they received when calling for assistance for their relative. The customer considered the Officer's manner blunt and abrupt, and little empathy was expressed for the difficult housing circumstances of their relative. The customer believed the call was managed unprofessionally.

The Team Manager discussed the situation with the Officer concerned and it was determined the call could have been handled much better. This complaint has been used as a learning exercise for all team members. The team has focused on improving telephone interviewing skills and undertook some internal training with the Manager.

As well as complaints, we also record compliments from tenants

Mrs D said:

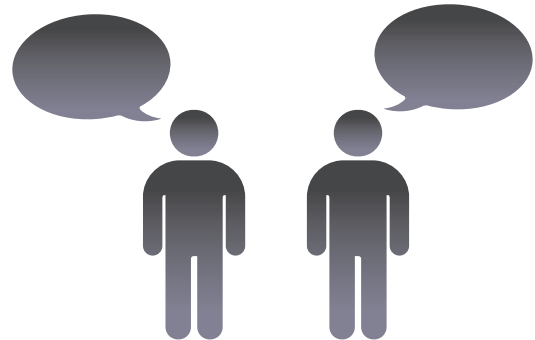
“I wanted to express my appreciation for all the support Andy has given to my brother and his partner over the last year. Andy has been very supportive to them at this time and this has been greatly appreciated by all our family.”

Mrs K said:

“You need a praise form, had another one of your workers out today to do a repair and like the last chap who came out, he was very professional and polite.”

Ms B said:

“Jo has been so supportive, helpful and efficient and has helped me through this difficult time. She has made turned the situation into a positive by trying to help me get a move quicker and liaising with the Police, she has always been there and happy to help.”



Mrs J said:

“I rang the out-of-hours number around 8.30pm and they were very helpful and thorough. We were in a panic, but didn't think we could expect a plumber until maybe the following morning. This is exceptional service, and we are bowled over! Within a short time, Pete was able to sort out the issue and we had a water supply once again!”

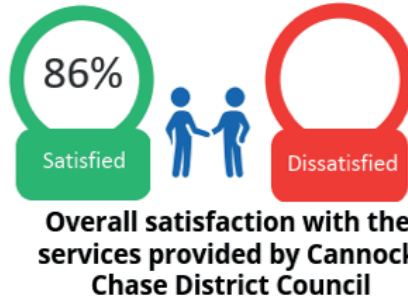
Mr T said:

“had a young man called Matt attend the property today to fix a socket - he was friendly, professional, polite, his workmanship was good and he kept his mask on making me feel safe. Big thumbs up for Matt!”

Tenants' Satisfaction Survey 2021

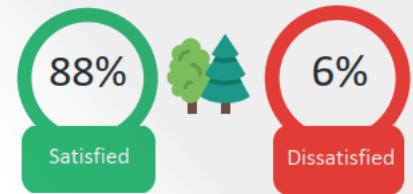
We commissioned M·E·L Research to carry out a residents' satisfaction survey to gather feedback, to better understand how satisfied residents are with their homes and associated services. Here are some of the things you told us:

86% of tenants were satisfied overall with our services, whilst Leaseholders were slightly less satisfied, with 78% satisfaction.



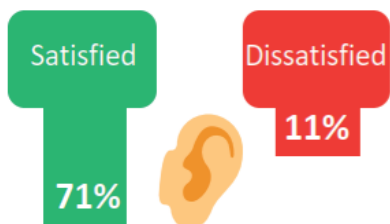
What we do well:

Providing a quality home, providing value for money on your rent and providing a pleasant and safe neighbourhood.



Where we need to improve:

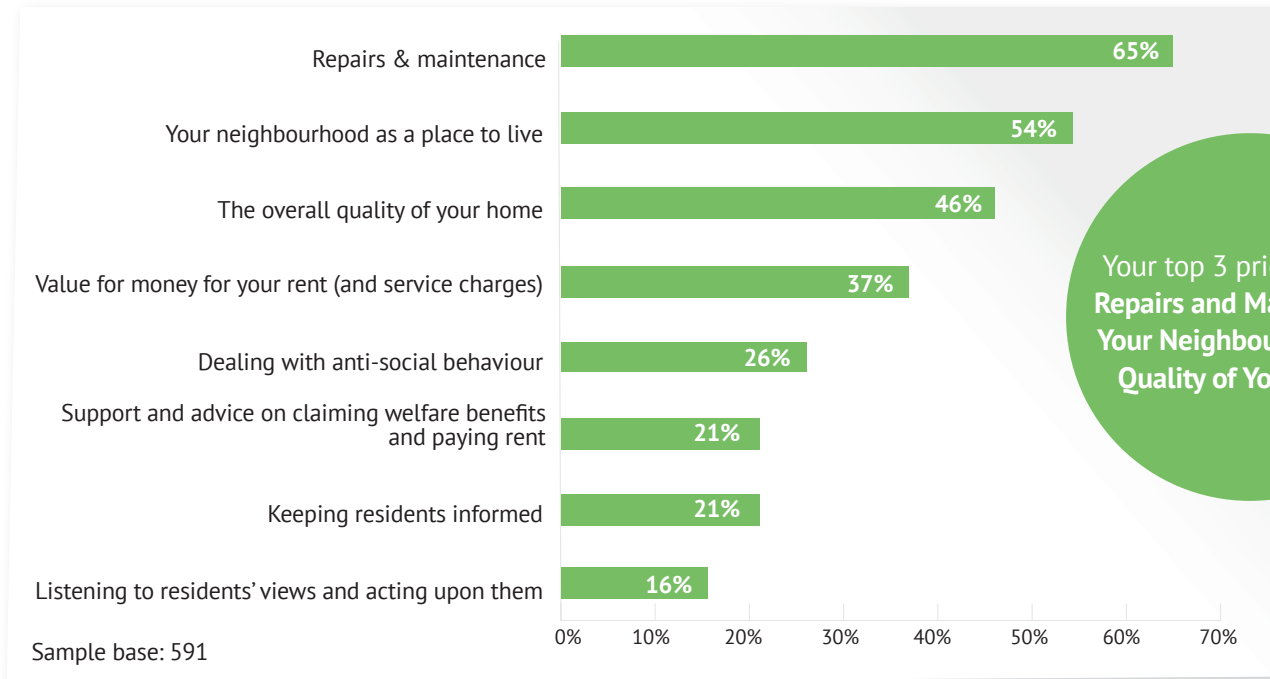
Listening to your views, dealing with complaints and dealing with ASB.



Leaseholders held similar views to tenants but with slightly lower levels of satisfaction, which is something we need to work on. Listening to and acting upon views was also an area we need to significantly improve upon, with just 59% of leaseholders satisfied. Differing from tenants, leaseholders felt that they were not as satisfied with their neighbourhood (65% compared to 88%) this is an area we will need to look into to see why tenants and leaseholders differ.



Tenants' Satisfaction Survey 2021 (Continued)



To improve our service further, the lowest levels of satisfaction were on repairs and maintenance regarding the time it took for the work to start, where 78% are satisfied. Another measure we need to improve is listened to your views and acting upon them.

For more information on the STAR survey findings visit:
www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/residents/housing/tenant-participation

Support for our customers

2020/21 was a tough time for everyone and the Housing Services Team have worked hard to provide support for our customers, particularly the most vulnerable or those who have been affected by Coronavirus.

We are proud to say that we were able to support all of our most vulnerable customers throughout the pandemic and ensured that no one lost their home due to financial issues caused by Coronavirus.

Much of the Government's financial support has now come to an end but we are still here for our customers, helping them deal with any issues they may have concerning their rent payments.



Telephone **01543 462621**



Email **moneymanagementteam@cannockchasedc.gov.uk**



Online **www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/residents/housing**



Repairs and improving your home

Repairs during 2020/21



10,605 repair jobs were completed fewer jobs were completed compared to last year but this was due to the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions on entering tenants homes for non-urgent repairs.

7,392 repairs appointments were made

7,381 repairs appointment were kept

We completed all repair jobs in 12.06 calendar days on average unfortunately due to the Covid pandemic this is a increase of 2 days on last year.

Whilst all non-emergency repairs were completed in an average of 13.14 working days unfortunately this is an increase of 3 days.

100% of emergency repairs were completed within 24 hours

The total cost of maintenance and repairs during 2019/20 was £5.05m

During 2020/21 we continued our monthly repairs satisfaction surveys sent to a random selection of tenants who had required a repair job to be completed during the previous month. We have found that:



91% were satisfied with the quality of the work.

87% were satisfied the repair was done right first time.

89% were satisfied overall with the service they received.

We know our performance in turning around void properties has worsened again since last year, but the Covid pandemic has made things difficult as we cannot repair and let properties as quickly as normal. We've made changes and are still implementing our Improvement Plan that includes a number of actions that we know will speed up the process for repairing and re-letting our properties, but these are taking time to bed in.

Average re-let time:
88.34 days
(51.63 days last year)

100% of our homes meet the decent homes standard (excluding where tenants have refused remedial work).

The increase in relet time meant the rent loss also increased significantly on last year, up from **£147K**.



We lost **£210k** in rent whilst properties were being repaired and let during the year.

Improving our homes



266 properties received electric upgrading works (wired in smoke detectors and provision of additional sockets)



285 properties benefitted from a central heating upgrade



42 properties had bathroom upgrades



95 properties benefitted from major disabled facilities work (safe WC and showering, alterations to rooms; heating and power improvements; safety related works)



These capital programme improvements cost **£1.4m**

Managing your tenancy

Your Rent

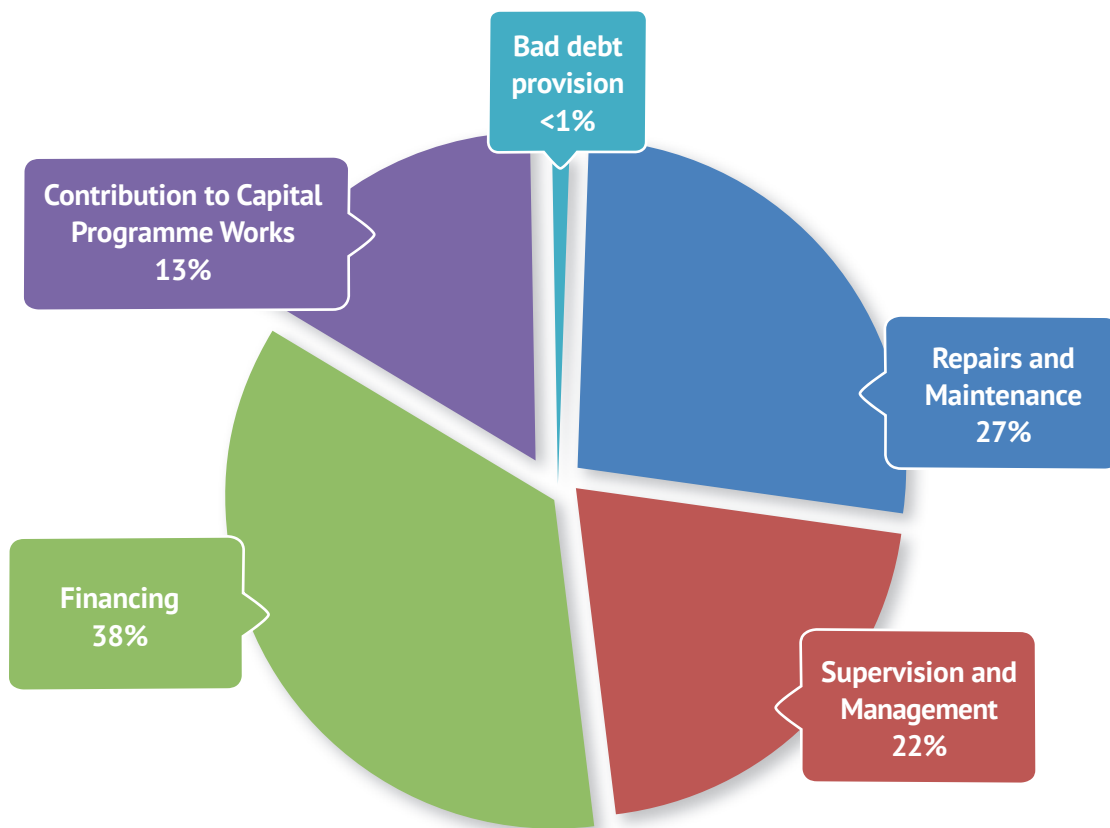
Following Government policy, we increased your rent by 1.5%. The policy for rent increases is based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1%. The CPI at the time of rent setting was 0.5%, hence the total 1.5% increase.



Your average rent in 2020-21 was £73.36 per week.



We received £19.34m in rent income during the year.



Current tenants were in arrears to the amount of £255,005 at the end of the financial year. Those tenants in arrears were behind with their payments by an average £289, just under 4 weeks rent, which is about the same as last year. And unfortunately some tenants are behind by a lot more.

We evicted 0 households as a result of their rent arrears.

97% of tenants felt fairly or very satisfied with moving between Council properties. 3% responded 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' likely because they had not moved, 0% of tenants indicated they were dissatisfied.



We recovered 11 abandoned properties



67 ASB cases were investigated, of which 61 were successfully resolved, 6 were closed due to disengagement or withdrawal.



We let 237 properties in total during 2020/21:



133 lettings were made to new tenants to social housing



73 lettings were to existing social housing tenants



31 mutual exchanges were completed

Lettings 2020/21



93% of new tenancies lasted more than 1 year. (However the Covid-19 pandemic has meant that fewer tenancies were ended than would normally be the case).



129 tenants received a new tenancy visit and 34 tenants were assisted by the tenancy sustainment service.



144 introductory tenancies were sustained for 12 months.

Building New Council Homes

During 2020/21 the development at Hawks Green started on site:



The scheme will deliver 22 new Council homes and is due for completion in winter 2021/22.

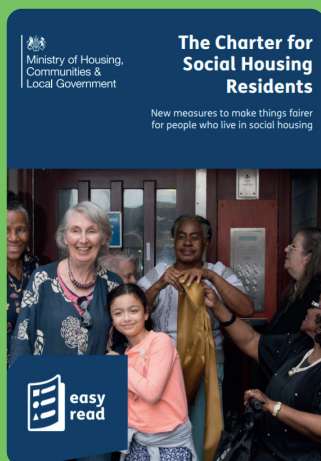
Plans were also being worked on for two further sites in the District that will deliver over 70 new dwellings for Council rent. In addition, these two schemes reflect the Council's commitment to the Climate Change agenda with the construction of ultra-low energy properties (passivhaus standard).



We sold 29 properties via Right to Buy.

This meant the stock decreased by 29 properties overall in 2020/21.

The Charter for Social Housing Residents



The Government's Social Housing White Paper titled 'The Charter for Social Housing Residents' sets out what every social housing resident should be able to expect.

To be safe in your home. We aim to provide safe and secure homes - 88% of tenants surveyed in the 2021 STAR survey were satisfied that we provided a safe and secure home.



To know how your landlord is performing. We aim to show you how we are performing through the Annual Report. We will look at providing more regular updates on our website for you on key indicators.



To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly. We are always looking to improve where we have provided a poor service or done something wrong. We operate in accordance with the corporate complaints policy and aim to deal with complaints within the timescales set out. Should you not be satisfied with our responses then you are able to take your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.



To be treated with respect. We aim to treat everyone with respect. There is a new strong consumer regulator who has introduced improved consumer standards for tenants and leaseholders which we will do our utmost to adhere to.



To have your voice heard by your landlord. We aim to listen to your views and act upon them. 71% of tenants surveyed in the 2021 STAR survey were satisfied that we listened to you, however we want to do better. We will continue with all our monthly satisfaction surveys to try to get your views and act upon them. Our tenant panel is still open for new members, and we will look to reconvene the panel when possible.



To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in.

We work hard to build new and maintain our homes and endeavour to provide safe and pleasant neighbourhoods to live in. According to the 2021 STAR survey 88% of tenants were satisfied with the quality of their home and also 88% were satisfied with their neighbourhood, but we won't rest on our laurels.



To be supported to take your first step to ownership. Should your circumstances allow and where appropriate we will support your right to buy. We can also offer information on other low cost affordable housing in the District.



Tenant Engagement in 2020/21

The Service takes a multi-agency approach by creating a sustainability plan to focus on tenants who are in financial hardship or at risk of losing their tenancy, with the aim to successfully keep them in their home.



During 2020-21 in the pandemic 144 new tenants engaged with the tenancy sustainment service and maintained their tenancies past 12 months.



We worked with a further 34 tenants/households with successful outcomes to sustain their tenancy to help them remain in their homes.



The below are just a few examples of our good work in 2020/21.



Supported a young female tenant experiencing ASB. Initially we provided some CCTV equipment to offer her protection and help gather evidence against the culprits. The tenant needed a larger property as she had a family but was struggling to keep on top of her rent, so we applied for DHP (Discretionary Housing Payments) to assist her and we have continued to support the tenant who will be moving to a new property in 2021/22, which will hopefully be her forever home.



A tenant in his late fifties, had an accident which affected his mobility. He was living in a private rent property which was in poor condition. He was unhappy and at times depressed due to the conditions he was living in and could not see a way out. We registered him on Cannock Chase Housing and although it has taken a while he has moved to a bungalow, it has been completely life changing for him, and saved him money.



A very vulnerable tenant, who unfortunately has a disability but was also the victim of abuse. We organised support from a local support group to have the garden cut at the rear of the property. The tenant has not been out of the property for over 10 years and we have now arranged for a member of the support group to collect and take the tenant to events at the Community Centre. This is a huge step for the tenant and is having a huge impact on their quality of life.



Neighbourhood Officers have attended a number of community engagement events held in Rugeley, at the Community Centre and even at a mobile Police station on a supermarket carpark. All have been well attended and we have connected people with partner agencies who can assist our residents further.



The Springfields Resident Association has been re-established with support from our Neighbourhood Team and there are now ten members in the group. The association currently makes up residents of the Springfields Estate in Rugeley and they represent different age groups for the estate. They have started to hold residents meetings again and more evening resident meetings, estate walks and work on the community garden are planned for 2021/22.



Looking forward to 2021/22

“ We will continue to maintain the quality of our housing stock beyond the Decent Homes Standard and deliver new Council homes for rent through good partnership working and proactively securing grant funding.

Now that plans for two further sites have been progressed for development the priority is to ensure new Council homes for rent are delivered as quickly and efficiently as possible, making the best use of the Housing Investment Fund. We are working towards developing zero carbon new homes on these two sites; and also a stock condition survey is to be undertaken to inform a new zero carbon retrofit programme for our existing stock.

As well as our cyclical maintenance and improvement work we will also continue to support independent living, with provision to improve the undertaking of major adaptations to properties for people with mobility and other health issues, which make it difficult for them to access the facilities within their home.”

Nirmal Samrai

Head of Housing and Partnerships

Housing Revenue Account Budget 2021/22

£20.04m	£19.95m
.....
HRA Income 2021/22	HRA Expenditure 2021/22

HRA Capital Programme 2021/22 Priorities

New Build	£2,971,000
External / Environmental Works	£1,476,000
Replacement of Central Heating	£971,000
Upgrading of Electrics	£911,000
Disabled Facilities Work	£665,000
Sheltered Schemes	£606,000
Replacement of Kitchens	£259,000
Replacement of Bathrooms	£229,000
Replacement of Housing Services vehicles	£201,000
Resurfacing of Driveways	£200,000
Communal Block Door Entry System	£65,000
Environmental Work	£60,000
Other Costs (inc. Double Glazing, Garage Demolitions, Social Alarms) and Contingencies	£150,000
Total	£8,764,000



In 2021/22 your rent has been increased by 1.5% in accordance with Government's rent policy, so average rents in 2021/22 will be:

1 bed = £ 67.77
2 bed = £ 76.90
3 bed = £ 81.33
4 bed = £ 88.03



Keep in touch...

→  Search for 'Cannock Chase Life'

→  @CannockChaseDC

→  www.youtube.com/CannockChaseDC

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