

|                          |                               |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Report of:</b>        | <b>Acting Head of Housing</b> |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>  | <b>James Morgan</b>           |
| <b>Telephone No:</b>     | <b>01543 464381</b>           |
| <b>Portfolio Leader:</b> | <b>Housing</b>                |
| <b>Key Decision:</b>     | <b>Yes</b>                    |
| <b>Report Track:</b>     | <b>Cabinet: 24/09/15</b>      |

**CABINET**  
**24 SEPTEMBER 2015**  
**HOUSING SERVICES 2014-15 ANNUAL REPORT**

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To consider the draft 2014 -15 Housing Services Annual Report to tenants as required by the regulatory framework for social housing in England.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the draft 2014 -15 Housing Services Annual Report (attached as Appendix 1) is agreed for circulation to all the Council's tenants.
- 2.2 That if required the Acting Head of Housing and Waste Management following consultation with the Housing Portfolio Leader is authorised to make amendments to the draft 2014-15 Housing Services Annual Report prior to circulation.

**3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Council is required to publish the 2014-15 Annual Housing Report by 1 October, 2015.
- 3.2 A draft Annual Report is attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.3 The Annual Report must be circulated to all tenants and this will be achieved as part of the Autumn edition of Hometalk.

**4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 The Council is required to publish an Annual Housing Report in accordance with the Regulatory Framework for social housing.
- 4.2 Meeting the regulatory requirements will assist in improving Housing Services and the Council's housing stock to achieve the Council's strategic objective of 'More and Better Housing'.

**5 Report Detail**

- 5.1 Social housing (including the Council's housing stock) has to be provided in accordance with standards set by the Social Housing Regulator. These standards are formulated within a framework of "directions" provided by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and cover both "the nature, extent and quality of accommodation" and the "facilities or services provided in connection with social housing".
- 5.2 As part of this regulatory framework, the Council is required to publish a Housing Services Annual report each year. The Council is required to publish the 2014-15 Annual Housing Report by 1 October, 2015 in accordance with the Regulatory Framework for social housing.
- 5.3 A draft Annual Report is attached as Annex 1.
- 5.4 The Annual Report must be circulated to all tenants. As a result, it is proposed to place a copy on the Council's website and distribute a summary as part of the Autumn edition of Hometalk. The cost of these actions can be accommodated within agreed budgets.

**6 Implications****6.1 Financial**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. All costs associated with compiling the Annual Report have already been met from existing budgets.

Any costs arising from recommendations contained within the draft Annual Report can be met from within existing budgets.

**6.2 Legal**

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report save the Council's statutory duty to issue an annual report in accordance with the regulatory framework.

**6.3 Human Resources**

None.

**6.4 Section 17 (Crime Prevention)**

Services which can help combat anti-social behaviour are identified within the Annual Report.

**6.5 Human Rights Act**

None.

**6.6 Data Protection**

None.

**6.7 Risk Management**

The Regulatory framework requires the Council to publish an Annual Report by 1 October 2015. Failure to do so will be a breach of the framework.

**6.8 Equality & Diversity**

Copies of the Annual Report will be provided in a variety of formats including audio and large print.

**6.9 Best Value**

None.

|                                   |
|-----------------------------------|
| <b>7 Appendices to the Report</b> |
|-----------------------------------|

Appendix 1      Draft 2014-15 Housing Services Annual Report

|                               |
|-------------------------------|
| <b>Previous Consideration</b> |
|-------------------------------|

|  |                                      |                   |
|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Tenant Services Authority Briefing Paper   | Housing Policy Development Committee | 24 February 2009  |
| Consultation on the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 (Registration of Local Authorities) Order 2009 | Cabinet                              | 17 September 2009 |
| Consultation on the TSA Consultation – A new regulatory framework for social housing in England      | Cabinet                              | 21 January 2010   |

**ITEM NO. 9.4**

|                                  |         |                   |
|----------------------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Housing Services – Annual Report | Cabinet | 16 September 2010 |
| Housing Services – Annual Report | Cabinet | 15 September 2011 |
| Housing Services – Annual Report | Cabinet | 20 September 2012 |
| Housing Services – Annual Report | Cabinet | 19 September 2013 |
| Housing Services – Annual Report | Cabinet | 18 September 2014 |

**Background Papers**

# Annual Report for Tenants 2014-15

## INTRODUCTION

This is the Annual Report for Cannock Chase Council to 31 March 2015 as required under the 'Revised regulatory framework for social housing in England from 2012'.

The regulatory framework sets out 5 National standards against which Cannock Chase Council as a provider of social housing must report.

**The five National standards are:**

**Tenant involvement and empowerment standard**

**Home standard**

**Tenancy standard**

**Neighbourhood and community standard**

**Value for money standard**

Under each standard we set out:

- What services tenants can expect from the Council
- How we are performing
- How do we compare against other providers

## Tenants Empowered and Influencing their housing service in 2014/15

Customer service and involvement, and how these services performed

### Serving Customers

**Your housing service must give all customers, including those with diverse needs, quick and easy access to services**

#### In Cannock Chase...

##### Access to Services

The Council's Housing Services can be widely accessed:

- (i) In person:
  - Housing Reception in the Bungalow, Civic Centre
  - Rugeley Office
  - Hednesford One Stop Shop.
  - Repairs may be reported by visiting Reception at Housing Maintenance Section, New Office Building, Hawks Green Depot, Hawks Green Lane, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 6LH
- (ii) By telephone:
  - Via CRM System. All calls to the Council on 01543 462621 are routed through CRM system. Repairs calls are handled by CRM whilst all other service calls are passed to the relevant section to deal with the initial enquiry.  
Direct Extension Numbers are still available and given to customers where appropriate.
  - Mobile phones. All external employees are provided with mobile phones and in some cases e.g. Tenant Support Worker these numbers are given to customers.
  - 24 hour payment line - 0845 2340080
- (iii) By email:
  - General Enquiries address - [enquiries@cannockchasedc.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@cannockchasedc.gov.uk)
  - Housing enquiries - [housingrepairs@cannockchasedc.gov.uk](mailto:housingrepairs@cannockchasedc.gov.uk)
- (iv) In writing:
  - By letter
  - Submission of forms e.g. housing application
- (v) Via Internet:
  - Online rent payment
  - Online repair report – Interfinder.
  - Report abandoned vehicles

Outside of office hours an emergency service is available via the Council's number 01543 462621. Trained operators at the Council's Central Control Centre deal with out of hours calls.

**Myth** "Isn't it hard to get hold of the Council?"

**Reality** No – for a quick response just visit, phone or email the Council from 9-5 Monday to Friday, or visit online anytime or in case of emergency phone the emergency number 24 hours a day

### Serving you in Housing Reception 2014/15

- 9,358 reception visitors served in Housing Reception
- 100% of the 1078 interviews conducted without a wait of over 15 minutes

### Customer Service – *Our commitments to you*

#### What we will do

- Reception staff will be welcoming, friendly, informative, discreet and professional at all times
- Staff can be identified by name badges
- Phone calls will be answered promptly and politely, and your letters acknowledged in 3 days and replied to within 10 days
- A translation service will be provided on request
- The housing reception area is disabled-friendly and accessible, with private interview rooms and a hearing loop available
- Service Standards agreed with tenant representatives are available in leaflet form and on the Council's website [www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk](http://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk)

There is a clear and easy way for people to make complaints. All complaints are monitored, investigated and responded to, see page 9 for details.

For more information about the Customer Service Standards of your housing service, just phone 01543 462621 and ask for the Service Improvement Team or email [serviceimprovements@cannockchasedc.gov.uk](mailto:serviceimprovements@cannockchasedc.gov.uk)

## Tenants Involved and Influencing

**Your landlord must give you a wide range of ways to influence your housing service. They must give you choice, clear information and good two-way communication. Tenants must be involved in setting local standards and monitoring how services perform.**

### Tenants and Leaseholders influencing

- The Minor Works Focus Group assisted with the progress of the Minor Works Submissions and application forms.
- Hometalk magazine for every tenant and leaseholder 3 times a year. The editorial team includes a tenant representative.

### How our tenants influence strategic priorities and policies from a wide range of opportunities.

It is important to the Council that our residents are involved in shaping how services are delivered and there are a range of different options for involvement and empowerment.

#### Housing Liaison Meeting

Representatives of Chase Tenants and Residents Federation meet every six weeks with the Housing Leader and Head of Housing to discuss policies and strategic priorities.

#### C.T.R.F. Consultation Meeting

Every two months Chase Tenants and Residents Federation Consultation meetings are held and every Council tenant and Leaseholder is invited to join. New procedures and policies are discussed at this meeting with senior Council Managers and other partners.

#### Service Level Agreement between Chase Tenants and Residents Federation and Cannock Chase Council

This outlines the roles and responsibilities of C.T.R.F. and details the support which will be given by the Council.

### **Housing Sounding Board**

The Sounding Board offers a wide choice of methods for involvement for residents who live on Council estates. Residents choose the areas of service they are interested in, times they are available and the ways in which they would like to give their opinions or have a greater involvement by joining focus groups etc. This method of involvement is particularly suitable for people who do not have the time or inclination to join residents associations.

### **Minor Works Focus Group**

A budget is set aside each year for any Council tenant/Leaseholder to submit by application suggestions for small projects which would improve the area where they live and provide benefit to several homes, e.g. improving security or environmental improvements. The submissions are considered by the tenant members and Federation members representing the Minor Works Focus Group Panel and suitable projects are selected for action.

### **Contract Progress Meeting**

Each partnering contract, i.e. External Envelope Works, Electrical Upgrade or Kitchen and Bathroom replacement, hold regular site progress meetings. Resident volunteers attend the meetings to give their opinions on any matters raised, or raise any matters they feel would benefit the contract.

### **Anti Social Behaviour Focus Group**

Members of the focus group are made up of tenants and leaseholders and members of the Chase Tenants and Residents Federation. The group works with Officers to examine ways in which the Council works with various partners such as the Police to prevent and tackle issues with ASB. New initiatives are discussed, various service improvements are implemented and presentations from various agencies are delivered.

### **Repairs and Maintenance Focus Group**

This group meets quarterly with Senior Council Officers to discuss and decide on the way the repairs and maintenance service is delivered.

### **Bright Ideas**

The Bright Ideas Scheme encourages our tenants to submit ideas on how services can be improved. Tenants who make suggestions that are put into practice to improve the service, save money or just make things easier, are rewarded with a £25 voucher.

## How the Council supports tenants to build capacity and be more effectively involved

### Tenants and Residents Associations

Grants are provided to all constituted residents associations. These vary according to the number of properties covered with a minimum grant of £250 each year. These grants enable groups to hire rooms and to pay for printing and photocopying of newsletters and leaflets, etc. Communication is considered to be vital in sustaining associations and in successful community building.

### Support provided to C.T.R.F.

- An annual grant which now covers provision for a part time support worker employed by the CTRF
- Tenants Resource Room comprising computers, telephone and photocopier.
- Use of mini conference facilities with overhead projector, television and player.
- Tenants, prospective tenants, leaseholders and residents are encouraged to attend residential courses at the National Tenants Resource Centre at Trafford Hall.
- C.T.R.F. magazines are produced regularly and delivered with Hometalk.
- C.T.R.F. Business Plan provides a statement of commitment to encourage all involved residents to attend capacity building training. The Business Plan is reviewed annually.
- C.T.R.F. are members of the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS).
- No tenant, prospective tenant, leaseholder or resident should be out of pocket due to attendance at training courses.

### Travel and Care support available

The Council is keen to remove any barriers to involvement. Therefore to facilitate attendance at events, free transport will always be available or re-imburement of travel costs whichever is appropriate.

Care costs may also be paid for those residents with responsibilities for care of the infirm or children under fourteen years of age. £10 per meeting is available for qualifying residents. Application for care costs should be made in advance of a meeting or event.

### T.P.A.S. Membership

The Council are members of the Tenant Participation Advice Service.

#### Understanding and responding to diverse needs of tenants

The Council is committed to equal opportunities and valuing diversity and will consider the needs of all members of our community.

Every employee receives training in equal opportunities and diversity issues.

Hometalk is available in large print or spoken word tapes/CD's  
10 tenants plus each Sheltered Scheme receive large print versions  
6 people receive tapes/CD's.

Tenant Involvement leaflets and documents all include a statement offering translations in the following languages:

Bengali, Gujarati, Chinese, Urdu, Punjabi and Polish.

A portable hearing loop system is available for use at meetings.

A special taxi for wheelchairs is available to those who require this when attending meetings etc.

This District suffers from high levels of poor literacy. As a result D.V.D.'s are given to all new tenants when they receive an offer of accommodation. This film includes information on all aspects of the service including tenant involvement opportunities.

D.V.D.'s are available for housing applicants which includes signage.

D.V.D.'s have also been produced to promote the services we provide for older people.

The film is available to be shown to key partners to raise awareness of Sheltered Housing and a copy is given to people who are considering sheltered accommodation.

## Learning from Complaints

### Complaints

Your landlord should have an approach to complaints that is clear, simple and accessible that ensures that complaints are resolved promptly, politely and fairly.

Housing Services has a Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure which has been developed to work alongside the Council's Corporate Complaints process which ensures that complaints are dealt with fairly and promptly. The Complaints process is advertised and all complaints are investigated. The results of the complaints are fed back to the Housing Management Team. The Housing Management Team always look to learn from complaints and have made changes to the service as a result.



### Complaints in 2014/15

| Description  | Performance 2013/14 | Performance 2014/15 |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| No. of completed complaints resolved at stage 1            | 20                  | 16                  |
| No. of stage 1 resolved complaints upheld                  | 9                   | 5                   |
| Number of cases referred to the Local Government Ombudsman | 0                   | 0                   |

**Myth** *The Council will never admit they are wrong*

**Reality** If you don't think the Council has acted fairly you can take your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

### Complaints - Our Commitments to you

#### What we will do

- We will try to resolve all complaints at the first point of contact.
- Your complaint will be acknowledged within three working days of receipt by the Housing Service Improvement office. A full reply will be given within ten working days. You will be kept informed of where your complaint is in the process and of any potential delays in replying.
- We will inform you of the next step you should take if you disagree with the outcome of the complaint.

## Repairs & Maintenance

Keeping your home in good repair

**Your landlord will provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas that responds to the needs of, and offers choices to, tenants, and has the objective of completing repairs and improvements right first time. They will meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes.**

| Key Task Area  | Performance 2013/14 | Performance 2014/15 | Target 2015/16 |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Percentage of repairs undertaken as an emergency and urgent                    | 39%                 | 34%                 | 38%            |
| Percentage of emergency repairs completed within former government time limits | 98%                 | 99%                 | 98%            |
| Percentage of all reactive repairs completed within target                     | 96%                 | 97%                 | 95%            |
| Percentage of appointments made and kept                                       | 97%                 | 99%                 | 98%            |
| External Envelope works  | 813                 | 840                 | 950            |
| Replacement kitchens   | 88                  | 103                 | 70             |
| Electrical upgrading   | 701                 | 604                 | 610            |
| Bathroom upgrades  | 442                 | 340                 | 340            |
| Gas central heating upgrades   | 281                 | 364                 | 305            |
| Tenant satisfaction with gas maintenance                                       | 98%                 | 96%                 | 94%            |

### Repairs & Maintenance - *Our Commitments to you*

#### What we will do

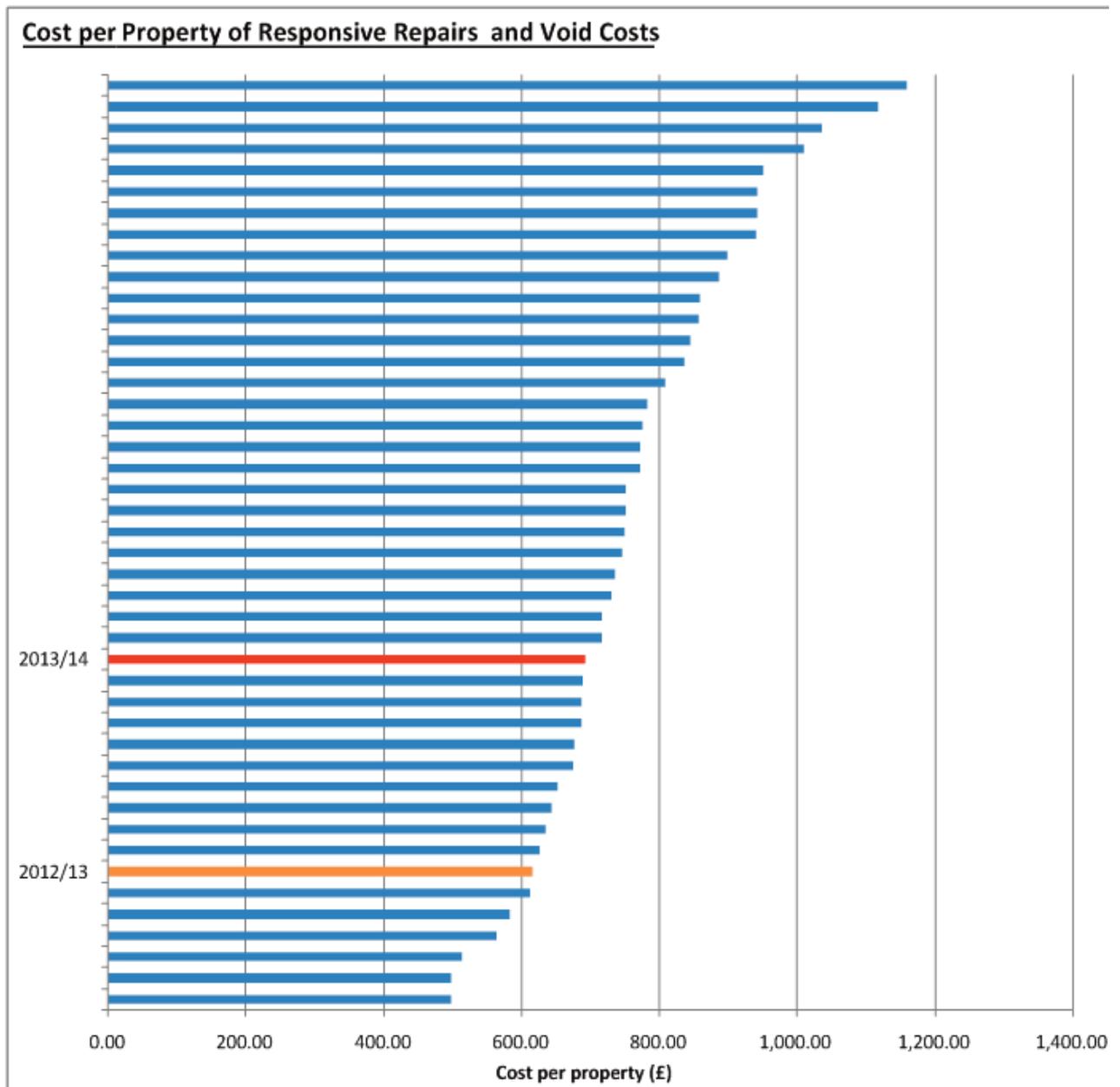
- Provide an emergency repair service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- Complete repairs within the priority times set out in the Repairs Handbook
- Offer an appointment for all internal work when you report your repair and provide you with a number for reference
- Agree a password with you if necessary, so that you can be sure that your visitor is genuine
- Give you advance warning if we have to cancel an appointment and offer you an alternative time
- Responsive repairs operatives wear a recognisable blue uniform with the Cannock Chase Council logo
- External contractors will wear their own recognisable uniform as follows:  
P H Jones, (Gas installation and Maintenance) wear blue, Lovell Partnership Ltd, (Kitchen and Bathroom work) wear navy and burgundy, Dodd Group (Midlands) Ltd (Electrical Work) wear dark blue
- Provide proof of identity before entering your home
- Not enter your home unless a responsible adult is present
- Not use inappropriate language or use radios in your home
- Respect your privacy and confidentiality at all times
- Keep all materials and tools safe and warn you if it is necessary to obstruct doorways, stairs etc.
- Tell you if we need to turn off services, and let you know how long they are likely to be turned off
- Use good quality materials, manufactured to the relevant British Standard
- Undertake all work in a safety-conscious manner in accordance with current health and safety guidelines
- Tell you if we need to leave the premises during the course of the job, tell you why and how long we expect to be away
- Clean and tidy our work area before we leave your home and keep noise and dust levels to a minimum
- Leave a calling card if no-one is at home, with contact details to rearrange another appointment
- Inspect at least 10% of responsive repair work and 10% of gas service work after completion to ensure it meets quality standards
- Not smoke in your home and expect you and any other people present not to smoke when we are working in your home
- Ensure new tenants will have properties which meet the Letting Standard
- Service lifts four times every year
- Send you a customer satisfaction questionnaire when a repair job is finished or randomly telephone you to obtain your opinion on the quality of our repairs service
- Reply to all letters within 10 working days, if this is not possible an acknowledgement will be sent within 2 working days providing a timescale for a full reply
- Carry out four inspections a year to communal fire alarms and emergency lighting

**Myth** *“The Council do repairs when they want to do them”*

**Reality** An appointment / time slot can be made to have the repair carried out when it suits you.

**Direct responsive repairs and voids cost per property**

The chart below shows the total costs per property of responsive repairs and voids works compared to other organisations in the Housemark Benchmarking group. The Council’s 2013/14 performance is shown alongside 2012/13 performance.



## Rents in 2014/15

**Local Authorities shall charge rents in accordance with 'Guidance on Rents for Social Housing' issued by Government in May 2014. This sets out the Government's Policy on rents for stock owning local authorities from April 2015 onwards.**

| Description                          | 2013/14 | 2014/15 |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Average Rent Increase                | 2.70    | 3.22    |
| Average arrears per household        | £53.94  | £55.24  |
| Number of evictions for rent arrears | 13      | 21      |

**Myth** *"The Council keep putting the rents up when they need more money"*

**Reality** There are strict Government guidelines which determine the level of rents

### Rents - Our Commitments to you

#### What we will do

- The Council will review the rent it charges annually
- The review is carried out in line with the Government's rent restructuring guidelines
- The Council will send a letter informing tenants of any changes at least four weeks before implementation, of the results of the rent review
- The Council aims to maximise rent collection and minimise rent arrears whilst enabling tenants to maintain their tenancy wherever possible. We assist with housing benefit advice, maximisation of income and will liaise with Citizens Advice Bureau or other tenant representatives
- Provide accurate and up to date information on the Council's policy and procedure in relation to rent collection and arrears management
- Provide a range of payment options.

## A Fair Lettings Service that is easy to use

### Allocations

**Registered providers shall let their homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way. They shall take into account the housing needs and aspirations of tenants and potential tenants. They shall demonstrate how they:**

- **make the best use of available housing**
- **are compatible with the purpose of the housing**
- **contribute to local authorities' strategic housing function and sustainable communities.**

**There should be a clear application, decision making and appeals process.**

Applications April 2015

|         |      |
|---------|------|
| Band 1+ | 0    |
| Band 1  | 164  |
| Band 2  | 200  |
| Band 3  | 229  |
| Band 4  | 698  |
|         |      |
| Total   | 1291 |

Lettings by Band 2014/15

| Band    | Total Lets |
|---------|------------|
| Band 1+ | 0          |
| Band 1  | 154        |
| Band 2  | 133        |
| Band 3  | 68         |
| Band 4  | 82         |

Housing conditions have a major impact on the health of occupants, particularly our more vulnerable residents. The Housing Strategy and our Strategic Housing Priorities have been developed to ensure the District has a decent affordable housing stock that offers appropriate housing and choice for all residents, and assists in creating sustainable and healthy communities.

### **Allocations - Our Commitments to you**

#### **What we will do**

- We will provide a toolkit which explains how to complete your application form
- We will provide a copy of the Allocations Policy (Somewhere to Live) at your request which will explain how properties are allocated
- We will verify your application made on cannockchasehomes within 10 working days
- We will contact you if your application is not complete or if further information is required
- Once all identification documents are received, we will complete a full assessment of your housing needs within 10 working days and notify you of your banding in writing
- We will notify you if we have given you reduced preference or if your application has been excluded from the Housing Register and provide details of how to request a review
- We will send you a review letter each year
- We will ensure that a Housing Officer views any property offered with you
- We will provide a welcome information pack to ensure you are aware of all available services before you move into your new home
- We will provide a decorating allowance to help you purchase the necessary decorating materials if it is felt that the property is not up to the lettable standard. The maximum allowance for a three bedroom house is £220

## Your Tenancy in 2014/15 Tenancy Management

### Tenure

**Registered providers shall offer and issue the most secure form of tenure compatible with the purpose of the housing and the sustainability of the community. They shall meet all applicable statutory and legal requirements in relation to the form and use of tenancy agreements.**

**Registered providers shall set out in an annual report for tenants how they are meeting these obligations and how they intend to meet them in the future. The provider shall then meet the commitments it has made to its tenants.**

| Tenancies in 2014/15                                  |                |             |                |
|---|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| Description   | Target 2014/15 | Performance | Target 2015/16 |
| Percentage of introductory tenancy audits carried out | 95%            | 93%         | 85%            |

**Myth** *“The Council never take action against tenants who commit illegal occupation or sublet their home”*

**Reality** The Council take tenancy fraud very seriously and have a dedicated Fraud Team to help detect fraudsters who illegally occupy or sublet Council homes.

### Tenancy Management - *Our Commitments to you*

#### What we will do

- Use a wide range of tenancies which are the most appropriate in the circumstances
- Carry out a new tenancy visit to each tenant within the first four weeks
- Take action against tenants who cause problems while they are introductory tenants
- Investigate all complaints about conduct of tenancies promptly and take appropriate action, including possible legal action
- Review introductory tenancies after nine months to make sure they are being conducted satisfactorily
- The Council have revised and reissued the Secure and the Introductory tenancy agreements
- Investigate promptly any breaches of the tenancy agreement and take appropriate action
- Acknowledge mutual exchange applications within 14 days and inform you of our decisions within 42 calendar days

## Your Neighbourhood and Community 2014/15

The neighbourhood services you received  
and how they performed

### Caring for your neighbourhood

**Your landlord must work in partnership with you and others to keep your neighbourhoods and communal areas clean and safe, in the most cost effective way possible**

**115 Estate Walks were carried out and 37% of these areas were given a 'green' traffic light group evaluation rating**

#### In Cannock Chase...

- We will inspect and in co-ordination with our partners ensure the removal of all fly-tipped items on housing land, communal areas and garage sites
- Arrange for the removal of graffiti on Council homes, estates and garage sites
- Arrange for the removal of abandoned vehicles on housing land
- Monitor the grounds maintenance contract and where necessary arrange with our partners for any remedial work required to bring the site up to an acceptable standard
- Inspect trees which are dangerous or causing nuisance on housing land
- Carry out regular inspections of all Council low rise flatted estates
- Carry out a programme of minor works both with Chase Tenants and Residents Federation and through applications from any Council tenant
- Monitor and assist with the vulnerable tenants grass cutting service
- Attend Estate Walks with Partner Agencies and local tenants and residents to look at areas of concern on estates

#### Neighbourhood Services – *Our commitments to you* Estate Walks - Local Offer

##### Traffic Light system

The frequency of the estate walks are determined by a score rating for each estate, based on the number and type of issues which were identified from the walks during the previous year. As a result of the evaluation, an estate is categorised into one of three “traffic light” group evaluation rating. The walks may be increased or decreased through each year as each walk is constantly under review.

Suggestions can also be made by participants for estate based improvements by application through the Minor Works Focus Group.

### How the rating of an estate is worked out

Each estate walk will produce an action sheet. After each estate walk the estate will be scored based on the number and type of issues identified. Issues such as tenancy breaches, untidy gardens, vandalism, litter, graffiti, abandoned vehicles, hard landscaping (such as fencing, walls and paving) and soft landscaping (such as trees, grass, shrubs and communal areas).

Estate Management Officers will walk around estates either two, three or four times a year depending on the score and rating of the estate. Red estates (below average) will be walked four times a year, Amber estates (good - average) three times a year and Green (excellent) estates will be walked twice a year. This is so that we can put our resources into the estates that are below average and require more attention. Estate ratings for 2015/16 will be calculated based on an average of the scores taken from the 2014/15 programme.

All estate walks have an open invitation for tenants and residents and at times we will invite and may be accompanied by other interested parties such as local Councillors, Highways representatives and other partner agencies, to identify any issues that affect the appearance of the estates. Residents associations will invite their members to join walks.

### Results

Details of the Estate Walk results can be found on the Council's website or by contacting the Estate Management Team.

### Performance Information

Number and percentage of estate walks completed 97% - 115 out of 118 walks.

## Services that build communities

Your landlord must work with other organisations to improve social, environmental and economic well being

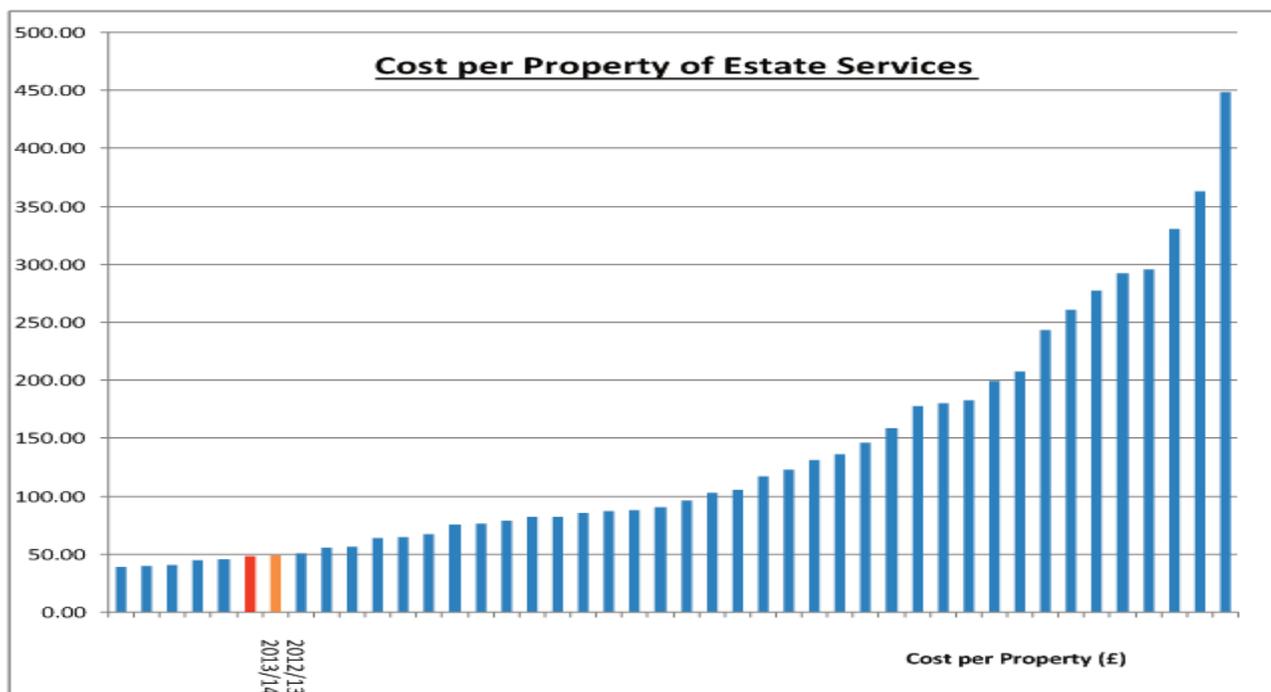
### In Cannock Chase...

Council employees working to support communities around Council estates include:

- Estate Caretakers
- Tenancy Support is provided by our partners Bromford Living. This service enables vulnerable tenants to maintain their tenancy and to be part of the community
- Visiting Officer - Assists both applicants and tenants in moving to accommodation suitable for their needs
- Alarms Visiting Officer - ensures a good understanding and benefits of the alarm system by vulnerable tenants
- Sheltered Scheme Managers - local residents are encouraged to join activities in our schemes e.g. lunches and entertainment

### Estate Services

The chart below shows the total cost per property of Estate Services compared to other organisations in the Housemark Benchmarking group. The Council's 2013/14 performance is shown alongside the 2012/13 figures and indicates a slight decrease in costs.



## Services preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour

**Your landlord must work in partnership with others to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour in your neighbourhoods**

### Tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) in 2014/15

- 100% of serious ASB cases were responded to in 1 working day - There were 9 cases
- 100% of persistent ASB cases were responded to in working 2 days - There were 49 cases
- 100% of environmental ASB cases were responded to within 5 working days - There were 20 of these
- 93% of tenants were satisfied with the management of their case

### In Cannock Chase...

#### Local Area Co-operation

- The Council's Community Safety Partnership has been formed to work with a wide range of Partners to prevent and tackle ASB
- We work closely with the Police and Victim Support to tackle issues and provide practical support to victims and witnesses suffering ASB
- The ASB Focus Group of residents was formed to work with partners to tackle issues around ASB and improve the service we provide
- Work closely with the Council's ASB Prevention Officer to promote support and implement initiatives to prevent ASB in partnership with other agencies
- Incidents of ASB can be reported on the Council 24hr ASB hotline 'Don't Live with it Report it' on 01543 462621 or by using the online 'Report it' section' on the Council website.

**Myth** *"Isn't the Council sometimes soft on anti-social behaviour"*

**Reality** No, Council officers are working to deal with these problems at an early stage to ensure the best rate of success.

### **Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour – *Our commitments to you***

- We will provide a dedicated Estate Management Officer to discuss the situation with you and advise you on what we can and cannot do, and in conjunction with you, formulate an Action Plan that will clearly set out what will be done and by whom
- We will ask you to keep diary sheets if necessary of any incident you experience or where appropriate, provide you with other ways to record information (e.g. Dictaphone)
- We will work closely with you and keep you informed of the progress made in dealing with the situation
- We will investigate all reports of anti-social behaviour promptly
- We will try to resolve any disputes between neighbours in the most effective and appropriate way
- We will consider where appropriate, taking legal action against any person who continues to cause anti-social behaviour and where all other attempts to stop them doing so have failed
- We will provide support and protection, wherever possible to witnesses and victims of ASB
- We will work with other agencies, including the Police, in tackling ASB and making the estate where you live a better place
- We will use mediation services where appropriate

## Value for your money in 2014/15

The housing budget and how it performed

**Your landlord must manage the housing budget in an open, cost-effective way, providing the best possible services for the money available. They must show tenants how the money is spent and involve tenants in planning and prioritising the budget. They must give customers choices where appropriate and be open about any extra costs involved in those choices.**

### In Cannock Chase...

- Housing budgets are reported to and voted on by the Council. The Council's Cabinet reviews the budgets during the year. All minutes are published on the website. The Council's Scrutiny Committee can call-in the reports if they wish to review them in detail
- Members of the Chase Tenants' and Residents' Federation meet regularly with the Council's Housing Portfolio Leader to discuss housing related reports

### Overview of some housing budgets in 2014/15

About £4.3 million spent on repairs and maintenance

About £450K spent on Disabled Facilities Works to Council properties

About £19.9 million paid by tenants in rent

About £6.6 million spent on capital financing (making loan payments)

About £9 million spent on improvements and enhancements including kitchens, bathrooms, double glazing, works to communal entrance halls to flat blocks

### Meeting Decent Homes Standard

The key requirement for the Council has been investing in the housing stock to maintain the Decent Homes Standard. The HRA Capital Budget has delivered six major improvement programmes to maintain the standard.

The six improvement programmes are:

| Key Task Area                | Performance 2013/14 | Performance 2014/15 | Target 2015/16 |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Replacement kitchens         | 88                  | 103                 | 70             |
| Replacement bathrooms        | 442                 | 340                 | 340            |
| Electrical upgrading         | 701                 | 604                 | 610            |
| Gas Central Heating upgrades | 281                 | 364                 | 305            |
| External Envelope            | 813                 | 840                 | 950            |
| Double Glazing               | 855                 | 1055                | 1130           |

### Repairs

Increasing the number of appointments made and kept reduces cost. Getting the job done on first visit also increases efficiency.

|  | Target | Achieved |
|--|--------|----------|
| % of repairs (but not emergency) which the authority made an appointment | 85%    | 89%      |
| % of responsive repairs appointments kept                                | 98%    | 99%      |
| % of all calls which resulted in an abortive visit                       | 3%     | 3%       |
| % of customers satisfied with the quality of repair                      | 98%    | 93%      |
| % of customers satisfied with the responsive repairs service             | 93%    | 92%      |

### Rents

The Council's objective is to maximise rent collection and minimise rent arrears, as such we adopt a fair but firm approach to rent arrears recovery. The Council's policy is to make contact at the earliest opportunity to enable tenants to maintain their tenancy wherever possible. Rent accounts that are in arrears are monitored weekly and the first contact is made when an account is two weeks in arrears.

|                                     | Target   | Actual   |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Current tenant arrears amount owing | £350,000 | £285,111 |

## Value of your money – *Our Commitments to you*

### Housing Revenue Account – 30 Year Business Plan

The Business Plan sets out the income and expenditure for the Housing Department for a 30 year period. Following the introduction of the new self-financing system the Council has agreed long-term plans and major investment for the future of the housing stock. Included are:

#### Kitchen Programme

To date, over 3,600 homes have benefitted from a new kitchen with additional properties having a replacement kitchen whilst void. As a result work has now be scaled back with 70 upgrades programmed for 2015/16.

#### Replacement Bathrooms

Work to 340 homes was completed in 2014/15 which included a new toilet and wash hand basin and the choice of a replacement bath or a shower - all in white. Shower installations include an electric shower, shower curtain rail and a shower curtain which are gifted to each tenant. (In some homes where some sanitary ware has already been replaced only the old items will be replaced).

#### Electrical Upgrades

604 properties underwent electrical upgrades during 2014/15.

#### Central Heating

During 2014/15, 364 central heating upgrades were completed.

#### External Works

840 properties on seven estates benefitted from replacement guttering, roof remedials and other outside jobs.

The provision of external insulation to 470 solid wall rendered properties was also undertaken during 2013/14 and completed in 2014/15, as part of the external works programme.

#### Disabled Facilities Works

Work to 114 homes was carried out during 2014/15. These included level access shower, stair lifts and kitchen alterations.

### **Double Glazing**

A contract for the Council's window refurbishment programme commenced in 2013/14 with 855 properties benefiting. Work on the programme has progressed well and 1055 properties were completed in 2014/15. The work is programmed to continue over the next three years, to provide ALL homes with double-glazed windows which have new locking handles.

### **New Council Houses**

Funding is available through the Business Plan to build 113 new Council houses. This includes new build units on the Moss Road Estate as part of the Reema Flats Redevelopment Scheme, Green Lane Housing Scheme and Development Scheme of former Garage and other Council owned sites.

### **Former Vacant Council Houses**

In 2014/15 the Council completed the purchases of three vacant former Council homes and an additional two former Council homes (which were not vacant 6 months), all of which were let through the Council's Choice Based Letting system, cannockchasehomes.

### **Major Redevelopment Schemes**

#### **Moss Road Estate – Reema Flats Redevelopment Scheme**

The 170 defective Reema flats are to be redeveloped and replaced with a mixed tenure scheme of 141 houses. These will comprise 65 new Council houses and 76 houses for sale. The scheme is progressing well with the first completions expected during Winter 2015 and full scheme completion by Spring 2018.

### **Green Lane Housing Scheme**

Construction of the Green Lane Housing Scheme, in partnership with local developers Jessup, commenced in April 2015 and is scheduled for completion in April 2016. The scheme will provide 23 new Council homes with a mix of flats, houses and bungalows.

### **Former Garage Sites and Other Council Owned Land**

The Council are currently tendering for a Development Partner to design and build new Council properties on a number of former garage sites and other Council owned land across the District. Resources are currently available through the Business Plan to build 25 new Council dwellings, which will provide a mix of houses and bungalows.

### Cannock Chase Council

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This leaflet can be provided in Braille, on audio cassette tape/disk,  
**large print** and in the following languages on request to  
 Cannock Chase Council on 01543 462621.

Bengali, Gujarati, Chinese, Urdu,  
 Punjabi and Polish

আপনি অনুরোধ জানালে এই কাগজপত্রগুলোর বাংলা অনুবাদের ব্যবস্থা

如有要求的话我們可將此文件翻譯

વિનંતી દ્વારાથી નમને આ દસ્તાવેજ નમાઈ માનભાષા:

Ten dokument jest dostępny na żądanie w twoim języku

? =  01543 462621

September 2015