

**CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**15 SEPTEMBER, 2011**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING**

**RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO LEADER: HOUSING**

**HOUSING SERVICES – 2010 - 11 ANNUAL REPORT**

**KEY DECISION – YES**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To consider the draft 2010 - 11 Housing Services Annual Report to tenants as required by the regulatory framework for social housing in England.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the draft 2010 - 11 Housing Services Annual Report, including the local offers,(attached as Annex 1) is agreed for circulation to all the Council's tenants.
- 2.2 That if required the Head of Housing following consultation with the Housing Portfolio Leader is authorised to make amendments to the draft 2010-11 Housing Services Annual Report prior to circulation.

**3. Summary (inc. brief overview of relevant background history)**

- 3.1 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".

(Note: the Government are to abolish the current Social Housing Regulator (the Tenants Services Authority) and transfer responsibility for Social Housing Regulation to the Homes and Communities Agency).

- 3.2 As part of this regulatory framework, the Council is required to publish a Housing Services Annual report each year.

**4. Key Issues and Implications**

- 4.1 The Council is required to publish the 2010-11 Annual Housing Report by 1 October, 2011.
- 4.2 A draft Annual Report which has been formulated with representatives from the Chase Tenants and Residents Federation and is attached as Annex 1.

- 4.3 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 next edition of Hometalk. The cost of these actions can be accommodated within agreed budgets.

3. **Conclusion(s) and Reason(s) for the Recommendation(s)**

- 5.1 The Council is required to publish an Annual Housing Report in accordance with the Regulatory Framework for social housing.
- 5.2 A draft report for 2010-11 is attached as Annex 1 and it is proposed that this is agreed for circulation to Council tenants.

4. **Other Options Considered**

- 4.1 No other options have been considered.

7. **Report Author Details**

Janet Baldasera – Housing Strategy and Service Improvement Manager – Ex4317

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**Section 1**

**Contribution to Council Priorities (i.e. CHASE, Corporate Priorities)**

Meeting the regulatory requirements set out by the Tenant Services Authority will assist in improving the Housing Services and achieving priorities within the 2011-12 "Place" Priority Delivery Plan.

**Section 2**

**Contribution to Promoting Community Engagement**

The TSA is promoting and encouraging increased levels of tenant involvement in the provision of housing services. A working party of tenant representatives and Council officers was established to develop the first Annual Report and the Chase Tenants and Residents Federation have been consulted on the report for 2010-11.

**Section 3**

**Financial Implications**

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.

**Section 4**

**Legal Implications**

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.

**Section 5**

**Human Resource Implications**

There are no identified Human Resource implications arising from this report.

**Section 6**

**Section 17 (Crime Prevention) Implications**

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

**Section 7**

**Human Rights Act Implications**

There are no Human Rights Act implications arising from this report.

**Section 8**

**Data Protection Act Implications**

There are no identified implications in respect of the Data Protection Act arising from this report.

**Section 9**

**Risk Management Implications**

The Regulatory framework requires the Council to publish an Annual Report by October 1. Failure to do so will be a breach of the framework. The TSA have a number of powers which they could consider if they determined this was a serious breach.

**Section 10**

**Equality and Diversity Implications**

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

**Section 11**

**List of Background Papers**

**Section 12**

**Report History**

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
Housing Services – Annual Report	Cabinet	16 September 2010

**Annexes to the Report**

Annex 1      Draft Housing Services Annual Report



### Cannock Chase Council

Civic Centre, PO Box 28, Beecroft Road, Cannock, WS11 1BG  
Tel: 01543 462621 • Fax : 01543 462317  
Email: customerservices@cannockchasedc.gov.uk

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 করা যেতে পারে।  
如有要求的话我們可將此文件翻譯成中文  
বিনতী ক্রবার্থী তমনে আ দস্তাবেজ তমারী মাতৃভাষামাং মণী শক্তে छे.  
ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਚਾਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਬੋਲੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ  
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Ten dokument jest dostępny na żądanie w twoim języku

? =  01543 462621

August 2011

# Annual Report for tenants 2010-11

## INTRODUCTION

This is the Annual Report for Cannock Chase Council to 31 March 2011 as required under the 'New regulatory framework for social housing in England from 2010'.

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

### Local Offers

The five National standards are supplemented by local offers which are agreed between landlords and tenants on the issues that matter most on a local level. Local offers tailor services to what tenants want.

We set out in this report how the Council's local offers were put into place and came into force by 1 April 2011.

### How were tenants involved

Volunteers from the Chase Tenants' and Residents' Federation and Housing Sounding Board joined with housing officers to form a Project Group to prepare local offers and the Annual Report for 2009-10. Those volunteers have joined with housing officers to update the report for 2010-11.

## Notes

### Depool Service Charges

Additional services provided such as entry phones and grounds maintenance to communal flats will be 'depoled' or separated from the rent element of the weekly rent. The payment for these services will be through service charges and shown separately on the rent statement. The rent increase will apply only to the rent element. A service charge increase will apply to the service charge.

The depooling will take place during implementation of a new housing management system which will be undertaken during 2012-13.

### New Services

In order to provide new services such as cleaning of communal areas in blocks of flats the introduction of service charges will be consulted on prior to a decision.

**Myth** *"The Council can spend what they like - they have a limitless budget"*

**Reality** The housing service has a fixed budget each year, overseen by elected Councillors. The Council must meet the decent homes standard by end of 2010/11 and deliver this within this fixed budget.

## Tenants Empowered and Influencing their housing service in 2010/11

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 456816. 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 2010/11**

- 16,648 reception visitors served in Housing Reception
- 100% of interviews conducted without a wait of over 15 minutes
- 98% of customers satisfied with helpfulness of employees

**Customer Service – Our commitments to you**

**What we will do**

- Reception staff will be welcoming, friendly, informative and discreet
- 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
- Housing reception area is disabled-friendly and accessible, with private interview rooms and hearing loop available
- Service Standards have been 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 10 for details  
For more information about the Customer Service Standards of your housing service, just phone 01543 464757 and ask for the Service Improvement Team or email [serviceimprovements@cannockchasedc.gov.uk](mailto:serviceimprovements@cannockchasedc.gov.uk)

**Value of your money - Our Commitments to you**

**Meeting Decent Homes Standard**

The key requirement for the Council has been investing in the housing stock to meet the Decent Homes Standard by the end of 2010-11. The HRA Capital Budget has delivered four major improvement programmes. The Council has now completed the work and all Council homes now meet the Decent Homes Standard.

**Housing Maintenance Contract**

The Repairs and Maintenance Focus Group assisted Council Officers to select and procure the new contract for Housing Maintenance. The contract was won by Housing Maintenance, the Council's in house team.

**Minor Works Budget**

A budget is set aside each year for any Council tenant to put forward 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 Resident members of the Minor Works Panel and suitable projects are selected for action.

Chase Tenants' and Residents' Federation minor works budget was amalgamated with the main budget with effect from 1st April 2011 to ensure greater opportunity for all tenants.

**HRA Financial Reform**

The Government through the Localisms Bill intend to reform Council housing finance. It is proposed to replace the current Housing Revenue Account (HRA) subsidy system with a self-financing alternative which will become operational from 1 April 2012.

The proposed legislation will require the Council to implement this change through development of a 30 year business plan. Business Plan is subject to a consultation exercise with tenants and other stakeholders. Hometalk's Autumn 2011 edition and the Council's website will include an invitation for tenants to give their views on proposals for the Business Plan.

### Transfer Incentive Scheme

A new scheme was set up to encourage tenants who are underoccupying family houses to move to a bungalow or sheltered housing. A payment of £1500 is made when a transfer is undertaken to a pre 1970 one bedroom bungalow or sheltered housing scheme. In addition, where a tenant who requires disabled adaptations to be undertaken to their existing property but moves to a property already adapted a transfer incentive can also be paid. The aim is to increase the number of family houses available to applicants or transferring tenants and make better use of the disabled facilities budget.

### Budget Savings

About £450,000 in savings were made on expenditure in 2010-11.

## 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 Repairs and Maintenance Focus Group assisted Council Officers to select and procure the new contract or Housing Maintenance. The contract was won by Housing Maintenance, the Council's in house team.
- Tenants and residents have been working with Council Officers to set up a Housing Services Resident Led Scrutiny Group. Tenants have been invited to join the group which will carry out in-depth examinations of the way in which Housing Services operates. Their first task was to work with Council Officers last year to produce the Annual Report for 2009-10.
- Hometalk magazine for every tenant and leaseholder 4 times a year. The editorial team includes two tenants.
- 78% of tenants happy with how well the housing service keeps them informed.
- 62% of tenants feel their views are taken into account

### TSA Standard Summary for Cannock Chase DC

TSA Standard	Cost KPI	Cost KPI Quartile	Quality KPI	Quality KPI Quartile
		Cannock Chase (2009/10)		Cannock Chase (2009/10)
Tenant involvement and empowerment	Direct cost per property of resident involvement	●	Percentage of tenants satisfied that views are being taken into account (GN)	●
			Percentage of respondents who felt staff were able to deal with their problem (GN)	●
			Percentage of tenants satisfied with complaints handling	●
<b>Quartile Key</b>				
	Upper Quartile			
Valid Dataset	●			

### 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. A new agreement was signed in June 2010 and includes an undertaking to build capacity of resident volunteers to cover periods of absence of the Chase Tenants' and Residents' Support Worker. This experience and training should improve their opportunities for employment. When trained these residents would be considered for casual paid employment by the Council as required by circumstances of the Support Worker's absence. The agreement will be subject to an annual review.

#### 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.

#### New Publishing Focus Group

Members of Sounding Board meet to examine any new draft leaflets etc and make changes which are then incorporated into the final published article. Estate Management leaflets are also agreed by CTRF.

#### Minor Works Focus Group

A budget is set aside each year for any Council tenant to put forward 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 of the Minor Works Focus Group and suitable projects are selected for action. Chase Tenants' and Residents' Federation minor works budget was amalgamated with the main budget with effect from 1st April 2011 to ensure greater opportunity for all tenants.

### Surplus Stock

When less popular one bedroom bungalows built before 1970 become vacant they are assessed to find out the cost to maintain the property over the next 10 years. The most expensive are put up for sale through a local estate agent.

The funds raised from the sale of the bungalows has been used for the provision of additional homes through Housing Associations across the district.

### Repairs

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

	Target	Achieved
% of optitime repairs (but not emergency) which the authority made an appointment	85%	87%
% of responsive repairs appointments kept	98%	95%

### Rents

In 2010/11 we collected 100% of rent due from tenants and reduced the rents arrears total amount owed.

	Target	Achieved
Current tenant arrears amount owing	£315,000	£211,724

The four improvement programmes are:

Key Task Area	Performance 2009/2010	Performance 2010/2011	Target 2011/2012
Replacement kitchens	317	343	320
Electrical upgrading	625	638	600
Gas Central Heating upgrades	280	225	370
Proportion of homes which are non decent on 1 April	7	0	0

By using partnering approach for major contracts we saved 10% on kitchen/bathroom contract after market testing.

### Major Redevelopment Schemes

The Council has in the housing stock 381 defective houses. Built in boom house building years in 1950's and 1960's these homes are coming to the end of their life. They need either demolition and redevelopment or structural repair. Continuing upkeep of these properties is a serious issue and the Council's policy has been to deal with the worst first, in other words the houses with the shortest life span.

### Elizabeth Road Area Redevelopment Scheme

The economic recession has had a major impact on the scheme resulting in the start on site being delayed. However, during 2010-11 a new funding package was agreed and demolition was commenced in Spring 2011.

It is anticipated that the first phase of 50 properties will be completed by June 2012 followed by the completion of a further 100 homes for rent, shared ownership and outright sale.

### Moss Estate Regeneration Strategy

The Council commenced a review in 2010-11 and will be formulating and progressing a strategy for the redevelopment of the Reema Flats and structural reinstatement of the Council's Reema houses during 2011-12.

### Anti Social Behaviour Focus Group

This group works with officers to examine ways in which the Council works with partners to address issues around Anti-Social Behaviour. New initiatives are discussed and presentations from various agencies are delivered.

### Repairs and Maintenance Focus Group

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

### Tenant Inspectors

Two tenants have undergone training as inspectors.

### Bright Ideas

The Bright Ideas Scheme to encourage our tenants to submit ideas on how service 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 has worked with tenants to agree local offers for service delivery and opportunities for tenants to influence how the Council meets the T S A standards and to scrutinise both performance against standards and in development of Annual Report.**

Tenants and Residents of Chase Tenants' and Residents' Federation and Sounding Board members have attended seminars and training about T.S.A. standards and Local Offers.

An Annual Report and Local Offer Working Group was formed in July 2010. Four members of Chase Tenants' and Residents' Federation and two members of the Housing Sounding Board volunteered to join the Annual Report and Local Offer Working Group together with Senior Managers and Team Leaders for all areas of housing service delivery. Those volunteers have joined with Council officers to update the report for 2010-11.

**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 for general of £12,690 which include £2500 for training
- A part time support worker who works under the direction of C.T.R.F.
- Tenants' Resource Rooms comprising computers, telephone and photocopier.
- Use of mini conference facilities with overhead projector, television and video 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 quarterly 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.

19 tenants plus each Sheltered Scheme receive large print versions  
8 people receive tapes.

## Value for your money in 2010/11

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.
- Tenant and Resident Representatives are involved in choosing contractors to get the best value for money.

### Snapshot of some housing budgets in 2010/11

About £4 million spent on repairs and maintenance  
About £5 million spent on Decent Homes improvements and major works and other essential works such as asbestos removal  
About £400K spent on Disabled Facilities Works to Council properties  
About £17 million paid by tenants as in rent  
About £3.8 million was paid back to the Government in Housing Subsidy  
About £13 million in the housing budget  
About £4.6 million spent on capital financing (making loan payments)

### Increasing value for money each year

### Meeting Decent Homes Standard

The key requirement for the Council has been investing in the housing stock to meet the Decent Homes Standard by end of 2010/11. The HRA Capital Budget has delivered four major improvement programmes to reduce the proportion of homes not meeting the standard from 7% to 0% in 2010/11. The Council has now completed the work and all Council homes meet the Decent Homes standard.

### **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

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 a high incidence 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 UChoose 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.

### **Tenants involved and influencing - Local Offers - *Our Commitments to you***

**As an improvement for the future we undertake to work with Chase Tenants' and Residents' Federation to develop a pilot Estate Agreement to be signed off for April 2012**

**The Council will consult tenants regarding the new thirty year business plan. Hometalk's Autumn 2011 edition and the Council's website will include an invitation for tenants to give their views on proposals for the Business Plan.**

#### **Feedback regarding Local Offer 2010-11**

**The Repairs and Maintenance Focus Group assisted Council Officers to select and procure the new contract for Housing Maintenance. The contract was won by Housing Maintenance, the Council's in house team.**

## 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 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 2009 – 2010

Description	Target 2010-2011	Performance	Target 2011-2012
% of completed complaints resolved at stage 1	92%	88%	92%
% of customers satisfied with the resolved complaints process	92%	88%	92%
% of stage 1 resolved complaints upheld	90%	22%	90%
Number of cases referred to the Local Government Ombudsman	0	4	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.

### How we learned and changed

We reworded the Letting Standard to remove some ambiguity following a complaint from a tenant regarding safety glass in doors.

We also clarified the complaints mechanism following representation from a tenant.

### 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. 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.

## 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 2010/11

- 100% of serious ASB cases were responded to in 1 working day - There were 17 cases
- 100% of persistent ASB cases were responded to in working 2 days - There were 193 cases
- 100% of environmental ASB cases were responded to within 5 working days - There were 8 of these
- There were no cases of anti racial harassment
- 75% of tenants were satisfied with the management of their case

### In Cannock Chase...

#### Local Area Co-operation

- Anti-Social Behaviour Pledge – Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership has been formed
- Council are working with Police and Victim Support to tackle problems and provide practical support to victims and witnesses
- An Anti-Social Behaviour Focus Group of residents was formed to work with partners to tackle issues around anti-social behaviour

**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.

### In Cannock Chase...

Council staff working to support communities around Council estates include;

- Tenancy Support is provided by our partners. This service enables vulnerable tenants to maintain their tenancy and to be part of the community
- Visiting Officer- Who 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
- Community Development Officer - Works with residents and partners to identify opportunities for improvements in the district.
- Sheltered Scheme Managers - Local residents are encouraged to join activities in our schemes e.g. lunches and entertainment

**Myth** "Council estate areas are often dull and lack facilities"

**Reality** There are thriving, vibrant communities around Cannock Chase's estates, supported by Council staff providing support and advice.

TSA Standard Summary for Cannock Chase DC				
TSA Standard	Cost KPI	Cost KPI Quartile	Quality KPI	Quality KPI Quartile
		Cannock Chase (2009/10)		Cannock Chase (2009/10)
Neighbourhood and Community	Direct cost per property of Estate Services	●	Percentage of tenants satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live (GN)	●
	Direct costs per case of anti-social behaviour	●	Percentage of respondents satisfied with anti-social behaviour case handling	●
Quartile key				
	Upper Quartile	Middle Upper	Middle Lower	
Valid Dataset	●	●	●	

## 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 2009/2010	Performance 2010/2011	Target 2011/2012
Percentage of repairs undertaken as emergencies	20%	24%	15%
Percentage of urgent repairs completed within government time limits	98%	98%	99%
Percentage of routine repairs completed within government time limits	95%	93%	97%
Percentage of appointments kept	96%	95%	98%
Percentage of repairs completed on first visit	80%	79%	80%
Replacement kitchens	317	343	310
Electrical upgrading	625	638	580
Gas central heating upgrades	280	225	250
Proportion of homes which are non decent on 1 April	7	0	0
Tenant satisfaction with gas maintenance	98%	98%	98%

### 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 with the operatives name on it
- 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 15% of responsive repair work and 10% of gas service work after completion to ensure it meets quality standards
- We will not smoke in your home and we 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

### Performance Information

**Number and percentage of estate walks completed 100% - 133 walks.**

**Get together meetings will be held quarterly in each of the three areas of the district from April 2011. All residents who attend Estate Walks will be invited to discuss areas of concern with representatives of appropriate service providers e.g. County Highways and Police. The aim of these meetings is to encourage pride in the area and to deal successfully with issues in the neighbourhood and to increase accountability.**

**A quarterly prize draw is to be offered for each of the three areas of the district from April 2011. All residents who have attended walks will be entered for a prize of £25 of shopping vouchers.**

**A pilot scheme to carry out a few early evening estate walks is to commence in Summer 2011.**

### Services that build communities

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

#### Building communities

- Drama performances, funded by Housing Services took place in each of the three town centres in the district in June 2011. These were performed by local young people under the direction of a local theatre artist and aimed to raise awareness of the issues around anti-social behaviour and to demonstrate that young people wanted to make a difference in their community.
- Resident Champions from Housing Services Anti-Social Behaviour Focus Group awarded £10,000 of Government funding to launch the Right Stuff Project. This project led by Police involves local youngsters in a boxing project which also carries out community projects such as litter picks and gardening for the elderly.
- Housing joined a fun day organised by Norton Canes Community Partnership. Over a hundred residents came along to enjoy activities such as nail art and jewellery as well as getting information about the housing service.

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

**Traffic Light system**

The purpose of estate walks is to ensure that tenancy breaches and other problems are identified and dealt with as soon as they occur. We will also monitor and provide feedback on the performance of our Grounds Maintenance Contractor where appropriate.

**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).

This score will then be turned into a rating. The rating allows us to monitor the changes in the condition of the estate over time.

Estate Management Officers will walk around estates either twice, 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 2011-12 will be calculated based on an average of the scores taken from the 2010-11 programme. The frequency of each estate walk may be increased or decreased and each estate will be under constant review throughout the year.

All estate walks will 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 estate. 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.

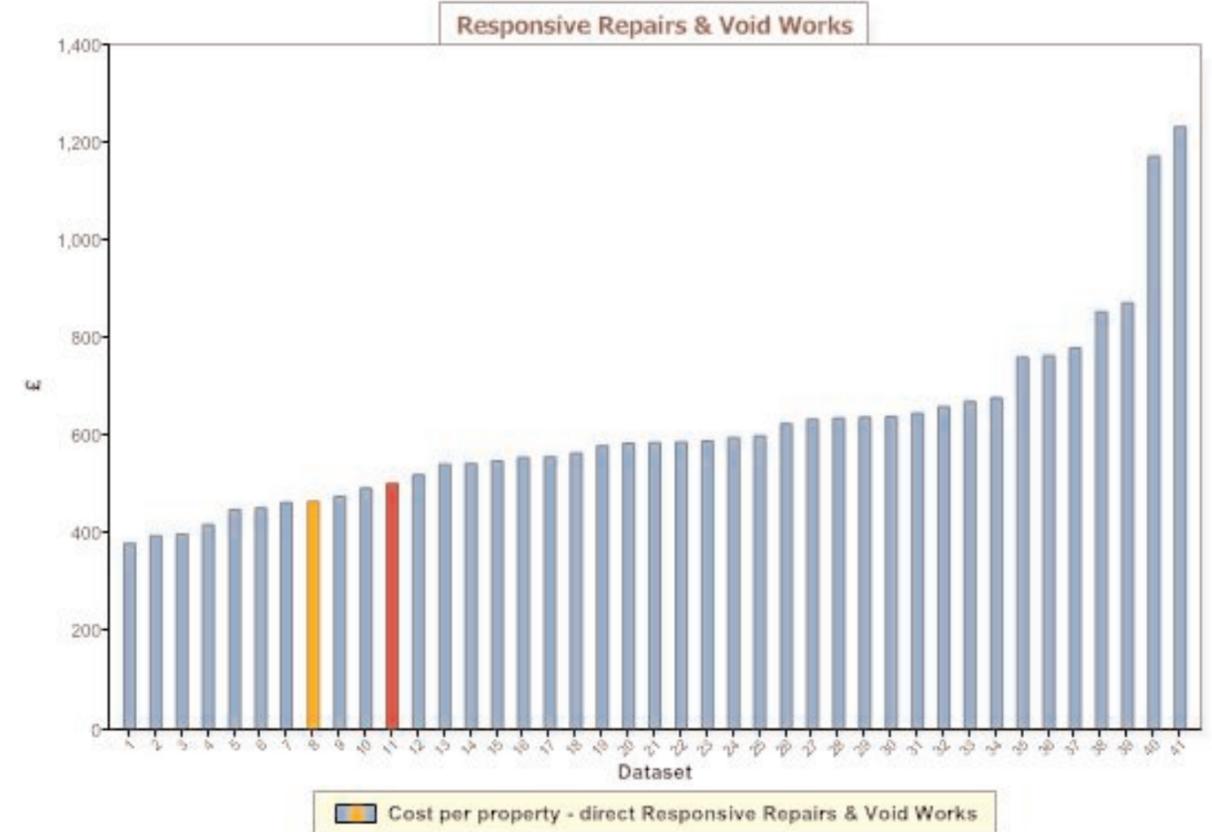
The Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) are giving consideration to using this system as an example of good practice.

**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 re-servicing cost per property**

The chart below shows the direct costs (including direct works costs, direct non-pay costs and direct employee costs) per property of responsive repairs and voids re-servicing compared to other organisations in the group.



TSA Standard Summary for Cannock Chase DC					
TSA Standard	Cost KPI	Cost KPI Quartile	Quality KPI	Quality KPI Quartile	Cannock Chase (2009/10)
		Cannock Chase (2009/10)		Cannock Chase (2009/10)	
Home	Direct cost per property of Responsive Repairs & Void Works	●	% of tenants satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service (GN)	●	
			Repairs completed 'right first time'	●	
	Direct cost per property of Major Works & Cyclical Maintenance	●	% of tenants satisfied with overall quality of home (GN)	●	
			% of dwellings failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard	●	
Quartile key					
	Upper Quartile	Middle Upper	Middle Lower	Lower Quartile	No Data
Valid Dataset	●	●	●	●	●

**Community Flatted Estate Inspections – 52 Blocks**  
**- Our Commitment to you**  
**- Local Offer**

- **Communal areas are inspected for environmental issues tenancy breaches, cleanliness, for fire regulations and health and safety. These inspections are carried out on a quarterly basis. Blocks which give cause for concern are classed as a priority and are inspected twice each quarter**
- **Performance Information – 100% of inspections were carried out in year 2010/11**

## Your Neighbourhood and Community 2010/11

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**

#### Your neighbourhoods in 2010/11

**86% of tenants satisfied with their neighbourhoods as a place to live**

#### 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
- Monitor and assist with the tenants' grass cutting service
- 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

## Your Tenancy in 2010 - 2011 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 2010 - 2011			
Description	Target 2010-11	Performance	Target 2011-12
Number of new tenancy audits carried out	77	97	80

Number of secure tenants 5139

Number of licence tenancies 13

Number of introductory tenancies 216

**Myth** *“The Council never take action against new tenants who cause trouble”*

**Reality** The Council has extended the introductory tenancy period for 10 tenants. There has also been 1 tenant (on an extended introductory tenancy) evicted for reasons not connected with rent payments.

### 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.

## Rents in 2010 - 2011

**Registered providers shall charge rents in accordance with the objectives and framework set out in the Government’s Direction to the TSA of November 2009.**

The average rent increase was £1.96  
The highest rent increase was £2.08

Description	2009-2010	2010-2011
Average arrears per household	£47.04	£39.03
Number of evictions for rent arrears	14	11

**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
- Provide two “rent free” weeks agreed after consultation with tenants who also chose the dates of the free weeks. Tenants in arrears will be expected to make payments to reduce their arrears during the “free weeks”

## 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 clear application, decision making and appeals process.

Applications April 2011

Band 1+	3
Band 1	146
Band 2	542
Band 3	227
Band 4	770
Total	1688

Lettings by Band 2010-2011

Band	Total Lets	Average Waiting Time
Band 1+	2	2 months
Band 1	250	6 months
Band 2	203	7 months
Band 3	27	14 months
Band 4	40	9 months

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.

In order to achieve these aims the Council operates a choice based lettings scheme within the UChoosehomes partnership. The Council is a major stakeholder and has worked alongside its partners to develop the system which operates across seven local authority areas and includes ten major housing providers.

The UChoosehomes Partnership is committed to making sure that the allocations system is accessible to all. They were a successful local offer pilot for the Tenant Services Authority. The UChoosehomes scheme produced a vulnerable persons toolkit designed specifically to make using the system easier for everyone. Uchoose Partners include: Cannock Chase Council, Rugby Borough Council, East Staffordshire Borough Council, Lichfield District Council, Trent and Dove Housing, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Homezone Living, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Tamworth Borough Council, South Staffordshire Council.

**Myth** "The Council only house homeless people"

**Reality** Only 1% of all allocations went to homeless households during 2009-10.

### 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 register your Application for Housing and notify you of the outcome within 10 working days
- We will return your application form if it is not completed correctly with an accompanying letter advising you of what you need to do
- We will reassess your application within 10 working days of receipt provided all the relevant information has been submitted
- We will notify you if we are considering deferring your application or excluding your application from the housing register and provide details of how to request a review
- We will re-register all Housing Applications 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 £230

### TSA Standard Summary for Cannock Chase DC

TSA Standard	Cost KPI	Cost KPI Quartile	Quality KPI	Quality KPI Quartile
		Cannock Chase (2009/10)		Cannock Chase (2009/10)
Tenancy (including Allocations, Rents and Tenure)	Direct cost per property of Housing Management	●	Average time in days to re-let empty properties	●
			Percentage of tenants satisfied with overall services provided (GN)	●
			Current tenant rent arrears as a % of rent due	●
Quartile key				
	Upper Quartile	Middle Upper	Lower Quartile	
Valid Dataset	●	●	●	●