

Please ask for: Matt Berry

Extension No: 4589

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13 May, 2020

Dear Councillor,

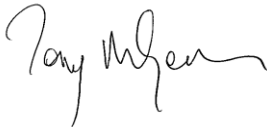
CABINET

4:00 PM ON THURSDAY, 21 MAY, 2020

MEETING TO BE HELD VIA REMOTE ACCESS

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

Yours sincerely,





T. McGovern,
Managing Director

To: Councillors:

Adamson, G.	Leader of the Council
Alcott, G.	Deputy Leader of the Council and Town Centre Regeneration Portfolio Leader
Preece, J.P.T.L.	Corporate Improvement Portfolio Leader
Muckley, Mrs. A.M.	Crime and Partnerships Portfolio Leader
Mitchell, Mrs. C.	Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader
Johnson, T.B.	Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader
Woodhead, P.E.	Environment Portfolio Leader
Martin, Mrs. C.E.	Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Leader
Kraujalis, J.T.	Housing Portfolio Leader

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A G E N D A

PART 1

1. Apologies

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

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

3. Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 April, 2020 (enclosed).

4. Forward Plan

Forward Plan of Decisions to be taken by the Cabinet: June to August 2020 (Item 4.1 – 4.2).

5. (i) Covid-19: Response of Cannock Chase District Council and Partners (Verbal Update)

(ii) Approach to Recovery Planning From the Impact of Covid-19

Report of the Managing Director (Item 5.1 – 5.8).

6. Adoption of the Revised Housing Assistance Policy (Independent Living) 2020

Report of the Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles (Item 6.1 – 6.37).

7. Development of New Cemetery, Hednesford Road, Norton Canes

Report of the Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles (Item 7.1 – 7.11).

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET

HELD ON THURSDAY 23 APRIL 2020 AT 4:00 P.M.

VIA REMOTE ACCESS

PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors:

Adamson, G.	Leader of the Council
Alcott, G.	Deputy Leader of the Council and Town Centre Regeneration Portfolio Leader
Pearson, A.R.	Corporate Improvement Portfolio Leader
Bennett, C.	Crime and Partnerships Portfolio Leader
Mitchell, Mrs. C.	Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader
Johnson, T.B.	Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader
Preece, J.P.T.L.	Environment Portfolio Leader
Martin, Mrs. C.E.	Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Leader
Kraujalis, J.T.	Housing Portfolio Leader
Woodhead, P.E.	<i>Invitee (non-voting Observer)</i>
Muckley, Mrs. A.M.	<i>Invitee (non-voting Observer)</i>

Prior to the commencement of the formal business of the meeting, the Leader advised that this was the first 'remote' meeting of the Cabinet held under the 'Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020' ('The Regulations').

The meeting was being held in public, and as such, Members and Officers were reminded that members of the public may be watching or listening in. The Regulations required that the meeting be broadcast live; and that it may be recorded or replayed at some future date. Therefore, Members were asked to be mindful of the Council's Rules of Conduct and Debate.

The Leader then provided the following welcome and introduction:

"Welcome to our first virtual Cabinet meeting. A different way of doing things but necessary to ensure democratic scrutiny and approval of any actions taken in the current crisis.

Before I go any further, I would like to record my thanks, and I am sure, those of the whole Cabinet, to our staff who have been working tirelessly, in very different circumstances as we will hear, to ensure that as many of our services to the public as possible have continued.

Homeworking has become the norm for many people, and this will have a lasting impact on how we carry out our jobs in the future I am sure.

Other colleagues have had to go into work such as our refuse collectors, park staff etc.

I know that people do appreciate what they are doing – our bins are emptied as normal, our parks look wonderful and the extra jobs placed on our staff such as paying out business grants, have been carried out brilliantly.

Up to yesterday, nearly 60% of grants had been paid out. This morning I heard of one authority that had only paid out 10% by last Monday.

It has been difficult, but our staff and colleagues have stepped up to the mark and are doing a great job.

Many other colleagues, such as Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles (IHL) staff on furlough have been volunteering to help our community.

Also, a big thank you to the public of Cannock Chase, the vast majority of whom are following the guidelines to Stay Safe and Protect the NHS.

We are also looking forward to the recovery phase for when the crisis is over. Working with our partners, we want to try to get things back to as normal as we can. It will not be easy, some businesses will not survive, others will struggle, and, sadly, a lot of people will not survive, but as a Council, we'll be here to help.”

130. Apologies

None.

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

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

132. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March, 2020, be approved as a correct record and signed.

133. Forward Plan

The Forward Plan of Decisions for the period June to August 2020 (Item 5.1 – 5.2 of the Official Minutes of the Council) was considered.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period June to August 2020 be noted.

134. Covid-19: Response of Cannock Chase District Council and Partners

Consideration was given to the Report of the Managing Director (Item 5.1 – 5.31 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Leader moved the following amendment to the report recommendations, which was duly seconded:

At the end of recommendation 3.3, insert the following wording – ‘in conjunction with the Leader of the Council, the Head of Housing & Partnerships, and the Managing Director.’

The Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader then moved a further amendment to the report recommendations, as follows, which was duly seconded:

Insert new recommendation 3.4 – ‘To improve democratic oversight, the Managing Director or his Deputy must liaise with the Leader of the Council, or his Deputy, on a daily basis, as to actions taken and decisions made, in light of democracy.’

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The current position regarding service delivery and the actions taken by Officers to ensure the delivery of critical services and compliance with Government guidance be noted.
- (B) The following Urgent Decisions made be noted:
 - (i) Financial assistance to Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles following the closure of Leisure and Cultural Facilities;
 - (ii) Consideration of requests from Biffa in relation to the review and payment of invoices for the waste collection contract;
 - (iii) The suspension of Pay and Display requirements at Brunswick Road Car Park to support NHS staff, patients and visitors using Cannock Chase Hospital.
- (C) A budget of £5,000 be approved to cover the costs of additional referrals being made to the various Foodbanks, in conjunction with the Leader of the Council, Head of Housing & Partnerships and the Managing Director.
- (D) To improve democratic oversight, the Managing Director or his Deputy must liaise with the Leader of the Council, or his Deputy, on a daily basis, as to actions taken and decisions made, in light of democracy.

Reason for Decisions

Cabinet noted: the Council’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the details of decisions made by Officers under the Urgency procedure rules since the last meeting of Cabinet held on 18 March, 2020, and considered providing grant support for the District’s two food banks.

It was further requested that the Managing Director or his Deputy liaise with the Leader of the Council or Deputy Leader on a daily basis to improve democratic oversight of any decisions made or actions taken in relation to the pandemic.

The meeting closed at 5:10 p.m.

LEADER

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FORWARD PLAN OF DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN BY THE CABINET: MAY TO JULY 2020

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

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

Further information about key decisions and the Forward Plan can be found in Sections 10 and 28 of the Council’s Constitution.

Representations in respect of any of matters detailed below should be sent in writing to the contact officer indicated alongside each item c/o Democratic Services, Cannock Chase Council, Civic Centre, PO Box 28, Beecroft Road, Cannock, Staffordshire, WS11 1BG or via email at membersservices@cannockchasedc.gov.uk

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

Item	Contact Officer / Cabinet Member	Date of Cabinet	Key Decision	Confidential Item	Reasons for Confidentiality	Representation Received
May 2020:						
Adoption of the Revised Housing Assistance Policy (Independent Living) 2020	Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles / Environment Portfolio Leader	21/05/20	Yes	No		
Development of New Cemetery, Norton Road / Hednesford Road, Norton Canes	Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles / Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader	21/05/20	Yes	No		
June 2020:						
Representatives on Outside Bodies 2020/21	Managing Director / Leader of the Council	18/06/20	No	No		
Review of Leisure Concessions to Serving Members of the Armed Forces 2020/21	Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles / Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader	18/06/20	Yes	No		

Item	Contact Officer / Cabinet Member	Date of Cabinet	Key Decision	Confidential Item	Reasons for Confidentiality	Representation Received
July 2020:						
Annual Performance Report 2019/20	Head of Governance and Corporate Services / Corporate Improvement Portfolio Leader	15/07/20	No	No		
Strategic Risk Register	Head of Governance and Corporate Services / Corporate Improvement Portfolio Leader	15/07/20	No	No		
Annual Performance Review 2019/20 of Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles	Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles / Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader	15/07/20	No	No		
Revenues and Benefits Collection Report Quarter 4 (2019/20)	Head of Finance / Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Leader	15/07/20	No	Yes (Appendices only)	Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council)	

Report of:	Managing Director
Contact Officer:	Tony McGovern
Telephone No:	01543 464347
Portfolio Leader:	Leader of the Council
Key Decision:	No
Report Track:	Cabinet: 21/05/20

CABINET**21 MAY 2020****APPROACH TO RECOVERY PLANNING FROM THE IMPACT OF COVID-19****1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this briefing note is to outline the proposed approach to recovery from the response to the pandemic and to agree that the existing priorities of the Council as set out in Priority Delivery Plans will need to be reviewed in light of the consequences of COVID-19.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Cabinet agree the proposed framework for planning for the recovery from the consequences of COVID-19.
- 2.2 That Cabinet agree to a review of the existing priorities of the Council, as set out in Priority Delivery Plans, in light of the consequences of COVID-19.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for RecommendationsKey Issues

- 3.1 Having dealt with the immediate response to COVID-19 and the Government led lockdown, it is now time to consider how we maintain resilience of critical services, reintroduce other services (where appropriate) and plan for longer term recovery.
- 3.2 As part of our approach to recovery, it will be necessary to take a strategic look at how the pandemic situation may change life on an ongoing basis for our residents, businesses and the Council as an organisation.
- 3.3 It is likely that a new “normal” will need to be established. It will take time to resume service delivery; some services may be reduced for some time to come, the focus of services may change and some may not return. The way we do things will change with a move to more on-line transactions for our customers and more homeworking for our employees.

- 3.4 There is still much uncertainty about the pandemic, when and how the lockdown might be eased and ultimately lifted. Government guidance is awaited and will be fed into our response and recovery planning. In the meantime, we have begun to formulate a local approach to recovery. This work is in its infancy and has neither a timeline nor resources allocated to it yet. This will be developed as Council officers scope the work and gain a better understanding of the emerging picture.
- 3.5 The Council will continue to remain in the response phase for some time to come and this will occur in parallel with the challenges that the recovery will bring.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.6 Effective planning will be essential to aiding the recovery of the District and the Council over the coming months.
- 3.7 The lockdown has changed the way the Council, residents and businesses are operating and this needs to be considered in planning for the future. The Council's priorities and plans made before the pandemic will need to be reviewed in light of these changes and the impact that COVID-19 has had on the District.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This report proposes that "Supporting Recovery" should be adopted as the overarching priority for the Council moving forwards. The Council's current two priorities of Promoting Prosperity and Improving Community Wellbeing will need to be re-focussed as part of the recovery planning.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on our community, the local economy and the Council. Planning for recovery, both short and longer term, will be key as we move forward. It is proposed that "Supporting Recovery" will become the overarching priority for the remainder of the current Corporate Plan 2018-23.
- 5.2 The Council will need to consider how our existing priorities of "Promoting Prosperity" and "Improving Community Wellbeing" need to be re-focused to support the work on recovery and vice versa. The projects planned for delivery in 2020/21 will need to be re-assessed as part of the work on recovery to determine whether they:
- (i) are still essential;
 - (ii) in need of re-scoping; or
 - (iii) should be deferred.

Objectives

- 5.3 It is proposed that the following objectives should be used to underpin the "Supporting Recovery" priority:

- (i) To understand the challenge of recovery across the District in the short, medium and long term, identifying impacts, critical areas of activity and key services.
 - (ii) To maintain public trust and confidence in the effective co-ordination of recovery.
 - (iii) To ensure that affected communities (of interest, geography, impact and others) are fully involved in the recovery process.
 - (iv) To mitigate and manage the long-term impacts upon the resident population.
 - (v) To support the economy, businesses, partners and infrastructure of the District to a position of stability and functionality in a constructive manner whilst seeking to support access to all opportunities for assistance and growth.
 - (vi) To mitigate and manage the effects on the Council's budget and medium term financial plan.
 - (vii) To seek to identify and embed the benefits of initiatives and developments that have arisen throughout the response to maximize the reach of new arrangements which replace pre-COVID-19 systems.
 - (viii) To ensure that critical services are resilient and continue to operate effectively over the coming months alongside plans to clear backlogs in work that have accumulated during the response phase.
 - (ix) To undertake a post incident debriefing and identify lessons learnt.
- 5.4 These objectives are based on those being proposed by the Staffordshire Resilience Forum (SRF) Recovery working group and have been adapted to suit the needs of Cannock Chase Council (see 5.22 for more details).

Work Streams

- 5.5 It is proposed that the approach to recovery planning should be split into 4 work streams to support the delivery of the objectives outlined in 5.3:
- (i) Economic;
 - (ii) Financial;
 - (iii) Community; and
 - (iv) Organisational

Economic Recovery

- 5.6 It is anticipated that the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will be significant. At the time of this report, it is not known whether the current lockdown will be extended or if there will be a gradual easing of restrictions. This makes it difficult for businesses to plan with any certainty.
- 5.7 Economic forecasts published by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) on 14th April suggest that there will be a contraction in the UK economy of up to 35% in the quarter to June 2020 alongside a 10% unemployment rate. A report published by the West Midlands Regional Development Institute (WMREDI) in

late April, set out the likely impact of COVID-19 on the regional economy. This report indicates that the District's GVA is forecast to reduce by 44% in the quarter to June 2020, above the national rate. This is particularly worrying as the District would be one of the worst hit areas in the region if not the country. There is a large amount of uncertainty as to the overall effect of the Government's business support measures in cushioning any impact on the local economy.

- 5.8 It is highly likely that the pandemic will have a significant impact on key sectors within Cannock Chase, but at present it is not fully known if these impacts will be short term or lead to longer term structural change. These sectors include retail/wholesale, tourism/hospitality, transportation and storage, construction and manufacturing. Furthermore, the District has a large percentage (98%) of small businesses (with less than 50 employees) and these businesses are particularly vulnerable at this time.
- 5.9 The Council's Economic Prosperity Strategy was only approved by Cabinet in January 2020, but there will be a need to review and refresh the Strategy to ensure that 'economic recovery' is included as a key objective/priority. Resources that have been allocated to the Strategy may need to be reviewed/re-allocated to ensure that they are directed to recovery. It is likely that the Council will need to consider and address issues such as unemployment, reduction in GVA, business failure and the impact of social distancing on the local economy which were not part of the original strategy.
- 5.10 The Council will work closely with the LEPs, West Midlands Combined Authority and other key partners to ensure that its recovery framework is strategically aligned and to lobby for Government investment to support the region to rebuild its economy.

Financial Recovery

- 5.11 The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy will need to be reviewed. Aside from additional funding received to support the local response to the pandemic, It is unknown at this time what the Government's plans are regarding local government funding in the short to medium term. Funding to date effectively only deals with the loss of income for April to June whereas although the review of Fair Funding and implementation of 75% Business Rates will not now take place in 2021/22 other details of the 2021/22 settlement are not known. In particular the Government are considering the treatment of Business Rates growth to date and no news is available about the replacement of the New Homes Bonus (Housing Growth) incentive scheme.
- 5.12 Until there is further clarity the Council needs to work on the assumptions in the current Medium Term financial strategy which estimates a need for savings of nearly £600,000 in 2022/23. Consequently, the work done to date regarding service reviews will continue. The reviews will be re-visited to consider whether any changes need to be made in light of the changes that have happened over the last few weeks and are likely to remain going forwards. The intention will still be to identify options for Cabinet to consider in due course, and to realign resources to priorities, but the timeline may change depending on the Government's plan for Local Government financing.

Community Recovery

- 5.13 Building and restoring confidence of the community in the Council will be essential over the coming months. This work stream will include dealing with the practicalities of dealing with the impact that COVID-19 has had on the community eg loss of life, increases in ASB, domestic violence. There is also an opportunity to build on the positive elements that have emerged in terms of volunteering and community spirit.

Organisational Recovery

- 5.14 This will focus on the changes and challenges we will need to address to return to normal operations. There will be 2 elements to Organisational Recovery:

- (i) Operational recovery; and
- (ii) Transformational recovery.

- 5.15 **Operational recovery** – this will involve the need to plan for the practicalities of employees returning to working from Council sites in accordance with social distancing requirements. It will also include planning how we deal with backlogs of work and manage our resources effectively – this will include management and the potential reallocation of employees to critical services. The recovery arrangements of our key contractors such as IHL will be included in this work stream.

- 5.16 **Transformation** – consideration will need to be given to what a return to “normal” will be moving forward; it is likely that a “new normal” will emerge. We will need to identify the changes we have made over recent weeks that have worked well and we would like to keep. Further work will need to be done to embed and improve these. There is also an opportunity alongside this to consider what other changes we might want to make. A business case will need to be made for any changes that have financial / corporate implications.

- 5.17 The Organisational Recovery work stream will focus initially on the short/medium term with the emphasis on operational resilience and some limited transformation that is key to resilience. As referenced in 3.16, there is the opportunity for some longer term planning in terms of transforming the Council and how we operate. This would link in to work already planned around the replacement of the current Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and the move towards greater use of on-line forms etc. If there is a move towards more homeworking, this would free-up office space and allow for a review of our accommodation needs.

Governance Structure

- 5.18 It is proposed that working groups should be set up for each of the 4 workstreams led by a Head of Service:

- (i) Economic Recovery – Head of Economic Prosperity
- (ii) Community Recovery – Head of Housing and Partnerships

(iii) Financial Recovery – Head of Finance

(iv) Organisational Recovery – Head of Governance & Corporate Services

5.19 Leadership Team will maintain oversight of the working groups. It is anticipated that there will be some overlap between the 4 work streams and this will be co-ordinated via Leadership Team. The Lead Officer will be responsible for providing regular updates and reports to Leadership Team and facilitating initial discussions to shape work programmes. Leadership Team will review existing Council PDP priorities and identify proposals and options as part of the recovery phase.

5.20 Cabinet will be briefed on the plans and progress being made by the work streams. Key decisions will be referred to Cabinet in line with normal working protocols.

5.21 It is proposed that the Corporate Scrutiny Committee will take the lead on scrutiny of the Council's response and recovery plans. In order to engage more widely with Scrutiny, the Chairs of the other Scrutiny Committees could be invited to attend the Corporate Scrutiny Committee meetings.

Staffordshire Resilience Forum (SRF) /County Wide Recovery

5.22 In addition to our own local plans for Recovery we will also need to work within the context of the SRF's plans for recovery. The SRF Recovery Group has proposed number of objectives to guide its work. These have been adapted to form the basis of the Council's recovery objectives.

5.23 The approach to be adopted by the SRF is one of collaboration and support. It was recognised that the approach by each District/Borough will be tailored to suit their own local needs.

West Midlands Regional Recovery

5.24 The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and Local Enterprise Partnerships are also formulating arrangements for the strategic co-ordination of regional recovery and reset and a number of taskforces and working groups have already been set up. The Council will fully participate in this work in informing our recovery strategy and plans for the district; this will be particularly important for the Economic Recovery work stream. The District will also work with the District Council Network and the Local Government Association on recovery issues that are common across the Local Government sector.

5.25 The West Midlands Combined Authority has launched a high level economic recovery plan focused on the following 10 priorities:

- Ensure residents are kept safe and healthy
- Accelerate transport construction plans
- Build more homes faster and reshape town centres
- Get people who lose their jobs back into work quickly
- Support local businesses
- Secure huge new investment in technology and innovation

- Make sure the recovery is inclusive and works for everyone
- Step up green growth plans
- Take the West Midlands out to the world and bring the world into the West Midlands
- Regain control of the region's own recovery
- The Council will consider these objectives when determining the economic recovery strategy for the District.

The Government's Plans for Recovery

- 5.26 The Government's recent announcement and proposals for easing the current lockdown arrangements together with future plans for supporting recovery will be factored into the Council's recovery planning work streams.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

There are no direct financial implications arising from the report

Paragraphs 5.11 and 5.12 highlight the Financial Recovery issues with the Financial Implications arising from the overarching recovery strategy and individual work streams will be subject to a further report to Cabinet.

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

Human Resources implications will present in more detail from the Organisational work stream as well as the Financial work stream groups as they progress. No specific implications in respect of this report at this time

6.4 Section 17 (Crime Prevention)

None

6.5 Human Rights Act

None

6.6 Data Protection

None

6.7 Risk Management

COVID-19 presents a number of risks for the Council and the District. The Strategic Risk Register will be reviewed and used to inform the recovery planning process.

6.8 Equality & Diversity

Equality Impact Assessments will be completed where necessary as part of the recovery planning process.

6.9 Best Value

None

7 Appendices to the Report

None

Previous Consideration

None

Background Papers

None

Report of:	Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles
Contact Officer:	Mike Edmonds
Telephone No:	01543 464 416
Portfolio Leader:	Environment
Key Decision:	Yes
Report Track:	Cabinet: 21/05/20

CABINET
21 MAY 2020
ADOPTION OF THE REVISED HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY
(INDEPENDENT LIVING) 2020

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present to Cabinet the revised Housing Assistance Policy – Independent Living 2020 and to seek Cabinet’s approval and adoption of the revised policy, as recommended by the Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

2 Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Notes the work of the Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee in reviewing and revising the current Discretionary Housing Assistance Policy March 2017 at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Approves and adopts the revised Housing Assistance Policy – Independent Living 2020 at Appendix 3.
- 2.3 Delegates authority to the relevant Head of Service in consultation with the Environment Portfolio Leader to make minor amendments to the policy which do not affect the broad thrust of the Policy’s purpose and direction.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendations

Key Issues

- 3.1 The Council’s current Discretionary Housing Assistance Policy approved by Cabinet on 16 March 2017 is 3 years old and now due for review (Appendix 1).
- 3.2 This provided the opportunity for the Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to review the current policy and to propose a number of wide ranging; flexible options to speed up the administration process, broaden the scope of the work that could be

undertaken and introduce new forms of financial assistance that is not covered by mandatory disabled facilities grants.

- 3.3 The Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on 3 March 2020 endorsed the revised Housing Assistance Policy – Independent Living 2020 and supported a recommendation for Cabinet to approve and adopt the revised policy.
- 3.4 In order to offer wider assistance the local housing authority must adopt a policy that explains how the authority will use its powers. This policy must be notified to the public and a copy made available at the Council offices.

Reason for Recommendations

- 3.5 The adoption and publication of a policy is a requirement of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (“the Order”) before assistance can be offered.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This Policy supports the Council's Strategic Priorities of Community Wellbeing and Promoting Prosperity through increasing and improving housing choice, sustaining safe and secure communities and supporting the elderly and vulnerable.

5 Report Detail

Background

- 5.1 Local housing authorities have a statutory duty to provide disabled facilities grants (DFGs) to qualifying applicants under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.
- 5.2 In addition to providing mandatory DFGs, the Council has the power to offer discretionary financial assistance by virtue of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. (“the Order”).
- 5.3 The Council's current Discretionary Housing Assistance Policy approved by Cabinet on 16 March 2017 is 3 years old and due for review.
- 5.4 This review provided the opportunity for the Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to look at the current policy and to propose a number of wide ranging, flexible options to speed up the process by reducing administration, broadening the scope of works undertaken and increasing the Council's ability to provide discretionary financial assistance that is not covered by mandatory DFGs.
- 5.5 A Task and Finish group was established by the Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to:
- (a) Look at the current policy and examine any problems with the existing system and processes;

- (b) identify any opportunities to develop a more efficient and effective service for the Council's more vulnerable, elderly and disabled residents who need adaptations to be made in order for them to live independently, safely, confidently and with dignity in their own homes, for longer; and
 - (c) make suggested amendments to the policy to improve its effectiveness and enable those with disabilities to regain their independence faster.
- 5.6 The Task and Finish Group met on two separate occasions and reported back to the Wellbeing Scrutiny formally on 3 March 2020 with a revised Housing Assistance Policy – Independent Living 2020.
- 5.7 The Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee at this meeting endorsed the revised policy 2020 and supported a recommendation for Cabinet to approve and adopt the Housing Assistance Policy – Independent Living 2020.

Housing Assistance Policy – Independent Living 2020.

- 5.8 The revised policy sets out the way in which Cannock Chase Council will provide both mandatory DFGs and discretionary housing assistance for private sector residential adaptations with the aim of supporting people to live safely, independently, confidently and with dignity in their own homes for as long as possible.
- 5.9 The revised policy includes new forms of financial assistance including:
- Hospital Prevention and Discharge Assistance
 - Dementia Friendly Assistance
 - Carer Support Assistance
 - Assistive Technology Assistance
 - Discounting Applicants' contributions
- 5.10 With the exception of mandatory disabled facilities grants, all of the forms of assistance in the policy are at the Council's discretion and subject to available budget.
- 5.11 The table at Appendix 2 provides a summary of the main changes included in the revised Policy.

Other options considered

- 5.12 The Council does not have to offer discretionary financial assistance, but failure to do so could leave vulnerable people at risk of avoidable harm.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

Grants and assistance to individuals as outlined in this report will be provided only up to the limit of the total DFG grant funding received by the Council. As

such, there will be no direct financial impact on the Council's other financial resources.

6.2 Legal

The Council must adopt a policy for discretionary housing assistance before it can utilise its powers under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (as amended).

The proposals further support the requirements of the Care Act 2014 which require local authorities to deliver services built around an individual's (and their carers) care and support needs in order to promote wellbeing and, where possible, support independent living.

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Section 17 (Crime Prevention)

None

6.5 Human Rights Act

None

6.6 Data Protection

None

6.7 Risk Management

There are no identified major risks associated with the revised policy. Not having a policy could mean that the Council would be unable to utilise the Better Care Fund for anything other than mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant. Any financial assistance in excess of mandatory disabled facilities grant is discretionary and will be reduced/ceased subject to funding.

6.8 Equality & Diversity

The revised Housing Assistance Policy has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. The proposed changes to the policy will have a positive impact on elderly, disabled and more vulnerable people, with no negative impact on any person with a protected characteristic.

6.9 Best Value

This Policy seeks to achieve best consideration in the administration of mandatory and discretionary assistance.

7 Appendices to the Report

- Appendix 1: Discretionary Housing Assistance Policy March 2017
- Appendix 2: Main changes included in revised Policy
- Appendix 3: Mandatory DFG and Housing Assistance Policy – Independent Living 2020

Previous Consideration

None

Background Papers

Cabinet Report - Delivery of Disabled Adaptations and Policy for Discretionary Housing Assistance 16 March 2017
Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee – 3 March 2020
Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee – 9 September 2019
Task and Finish Group Meeting - 29 October 2019
Task and Finish Group Meeting - 19 November 2019

ITEM NO. 6.

Cannock Chase District Council

Housing Assistance Policy

March 2017

This policy describes discretionary assistance available to residents across the Cannock Chase District to enable them to occupy a safer or healthier home, to reduce time spent in hospital/care and to promote independence. It has been developed as a result of changes to the funding mechanism for Disabled Facilities Grants (Better Care Fund) and in response to enhanced budgets. It will require review as budget information emerges. It will take immediate effect once approved.

All requests for assistance are subject to the discretion of the authorised officer and budget availability.

All assistance will be subject to the mandatory means test in force at that time and will require an application in accordance with the applicable disabled facilities grant legislation.

All quotes for assistance will be assessed for value for money. Quotes which are considered excessive will be rejected or approved at the value considered reasonable

All assistance will include a requirement that the monetary value of the assistance is repaid upon transfer of ownership and will be registered as a charge on the property. This requirement will be limited to 10 years from final payment at which point any charge will be removed.

Maintenance and Servicing

The grant available will not extend to the provision of maintenance and servicing contracts for any equipment installed at a property. The applicant will be responsible for ensuring that all such equipment provided is properly serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and at the recommended intervals.

All applications are subject to property owner's written agreement.

ITEM NO. 6.

Appendix 2**Summary of changes to Housing Assistance Policy**

Description	New /Existing/ Amended	Funding	Means Test	Land Charge	Objective
DFG (Mandatory Assistance)	Existing	£30,000	Y except where a child or on passported benefits	For cost over £5,000 Max charge £10,000 Duration 10 years	Adaptation of the home in accordance with the criteria in the Housing (Grants, Construction and Regeneration) Act 1996
Discretionary Assistance - Top- up grant	Amended	£20,000	As above	Y Full amount of grant	Provide for cost of the adaptation scheme where works exceed the Mandatory £30,000 limit
Discretionary Hospital Prevention and Discharge Assistance	New	£12,000	N	Y Full amount of grant 10 years	Minor adaptations and other works designed to prevent admission to hospital, care or nursing home or assist with speedy discharge from hospital
Discretionary Dementia Friendly - Dementia Cognitive and Behavioural conditions Adaptations Grant	New	£10,000	N	Y Full amount of grant 10 years	Adaptations to assist the person diagnosed with dementia or cognitive/behavioural conditions to manage their surroundings and retain their independence.
Discretionary Relocation Grant	Amended	£7,000	Y except where a child or on passported benefits	Y Full amount of grant 10 years	To meet the reasonable costs associated with moving where the existing home is not suitable for adaptations
Discretionary Carer support assistance	New	£15,000	Y except where a child or on passported benefits	Y Full amount of grant 10 years	Provision of appropriate accommodation for a carer where required to provide 24/7 care.
Discretionary OT Assessment assistance	New	£200	N	N	Provision of Occupational Therapy report where an organisation/charity is to fund adaptation scheme

Description	New /Existing/ Amended	Funding	Means Test	Land Charge	Objective
Discretionary Assistive technology assistance	New	£3,000	N	Y Full amount of grant 10 years	Supports a technology based approach to keeping people safe and well in their homes. eg life line, fall detectors, key safes – for purchasing equipment and monthly fee to connect with call centre (if required)

Other Measures

Description	New /Existing/ Amended	Funding	Means Test	Land Charge	Objective
Extended warranties: 3 years	New	As appropriate	Included in grant	As per grant	For all adaptations which require electrical installations such as through-floor lifts, step lifts, stair lifts, closomats etc.
Local Council Tax Reduction to be considered a DFG passport benefit	New	Not applicable	N	Not applicable	Anticipated to help people in sole receipt of this benefit to access necessary adaptations.
Discounting of first £5000 of applicants contribution following means testing	New	£5,000	Y	N	Anticipated to help people who are obliged to make a significant or unaffordable contribution to the adaptations required.

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY

This policy document sets out the way in which Cannock Chase District Council will provide both mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants and discretionary housing assistance for private sector residential adaptations.

INDEPENDENT
LIVING - 2020

1. Introduction

Cannock Chase District Council, in its role as a local housing authority, has a statutory duty to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to qualifying applicants under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

In addition to providing mandatory DFGs, the Council has the power to offer discretionary financial assistance by virtue of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.

This policy document sets out the way in which Cannock Chase District Council will provide both mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFGs) and discretionary housing assistance for private sector residential adaptations.

This document contains information on eligibility criteria for grant assistance, conditions relating to applications, approval and payment of grant and other relevant conditions and requirements.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to enable the Council to provide more flexibility and discretion in the allocation and delivery of the Disabled Facilities Grants and housing assistance, thereby providing eligible residents of the District greater access to home adaptations, in order to support people living safely, independently, confidently and with dignity in their own homes for as long as possible.

3. Policy Statement

Cannock Chase District Council is committed to ensuring that all eligible Disabled Facilities Grants and housing assistance applicants receive the appropriate home adaptation to meet their needs.

Where residents have a disability we will work with them and other agencies to arrange adaptations or provide advice about moving to a more suitable home.

4. National Context

Cannock Chase District Council, in its role as a local housing authority, has a statutory duty to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to qualifying applicants under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 gives councils the power to provide financial assistance for home repairs, adaptations and other improvements to reflect local needs, conditions and resources.

The assistance provided under this Policy is subject to individual terms and conditions, including a requirement to contribute or repay some or all of the assistance in certain circumstances.

From the 1st April 2015 there was a significant change in the way that national government funding for the provision of home adaptations grants (DFGs) is paid to local authorities. Instead of making a direct payment to the local housing authority (Cannock Chase District Council) to meet the cost of providing DFGs, the allocation of the funds is now made through the Better Care Fund managed by Staffordshire County Council.

However the statutory duty to deliver DFGs for residents of this district remains with Cannock Chase District Council.

5. Local Context

Cannock Chase Council is ranked overall as the 126th¹ most deprived local authority district in England where 1 is the most deprived and 317 the least deprived. Cannock Chase is also ranked 13th most deprived in the Region.

The IoD 2019 ranks Cannock Chase 106 out of 317 districts in England for health deprivation and disability. The District is within the more deprived 50% of local authority districts for this domain which measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health²

Life expectancy at birth in Cannock Chase was below the England average for both men and women between 2015 and 2017.

Men living in the most deprived areas of Cannock Chase had a life expectancy 6.9 years below that of their peers living in the least deprived areas of the District during 2015 – 2017. This was similar for women in Cannock Chase with those living in the most deprived areas of the District estimated to have a life expectancy shorter by 6.8 years.

The proportion of Cannock Chase population aged 65+ is forecast to increase by nearly fifth by 2027 (19.8%), with a rise of 37.7% estimated in residents aged 85+³

This increase in older age people raises the profile of health conditions associated with older age, particularly dementia. Cannock Chase is a dementia friendly district supported by the Dementia Action Friendly Alliance formed in 2016.

The estimated dementia diagnosis rate for people aged 65+ in the District in 2019 is 73.9% - above the England average of 68.7%.

¹ English Indices of Deprivation 2019 (IoD)

² Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, The English of Indices of Deprivation 2019 (September 2019)

³ Staffordshire County Council, Cannock Chase Locality Profile Data Pack (September 2018)

Health related quality of life for older people in the District was below the England average in 2016-17 when around 17.9% of people aged 60+ were living in income deprived households.⁴

The 2011 Census revealed that a high proportion of Cannock residents provided substantial amounts of unpaid care.

Cannock Chase District Council is committed to ensuring that all eligible Disabled Facilities Grants applicants receive the appropriate home adaptation to meet their needs, in order that they and their families can remain living in their own homes safely, independently, confidently and with dignity for as long as possible

In 2017 Cannock Chase District Council withdrew from the Staffordshire-wide Home Improvement Agency and since then Council officers have been working closely with Occupational Therapists (OTs) to deliver DFGs to disabled residents of the district.

Staffordshire Better Care Fund Plan 2019-20⁵, produced in response to national guidance and designed to support the intergration of the NHS and social care, identifies three schemes, namely

- Scheme A - Admission Avoidance/Discharge to Access
- Scheme B – Ensuring the Sustainability of Adult Social Care
- Scheme C – Enhanced Primary and Community Care

Cannock Chase Council acknowledges the focus of these schemes and is committed to utilising the DFG allocation to further its contribution towards achieving the goals of the schemes. In particular the Council will pursue improvements in working practices, the promotion of independence, the sustainment of carers services and the commission of new arrangements for DFGs, along with measures to support frail elderly residents, those with dementia and to reduce the number of hospital admissions. (Scheme C)

6. Links to Council's Strategic Objectives

This policy supports the Council's Strategic objectives of increasing housing choice, sustaining safe and secure communities and supporting the elderly and vulnerable, given that its intention is to enable residents who choose to live independently in their own home, have the ability to do so rather than being obliged to move into residential or nursing care homes.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

This revision of the Housing Assistance Policy has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

⁴ Public Health England, Public Health Outcomes Framework <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public-health-outcomes-framework> (September 2019)

⁵ Staffordshire Better Care Fund Plan 2019-20

8. Principles of Assistance

The Council is a Housing Authority and under the Housing (Grants, Construction and Regeneration) Act 1996 has a statutory duty to provide grant aid to disabled people for a range of adaptations to their homes.

The Council recognises the vast majority of disabled people (all ages) live in general, non-specialist, housing. Home adaptations therefore play a key role in enabling these residents of the district to live a safe, healthy and independent life at home.

Home adaptations can be effectively used to reduce health and social care costs, decrease the risk of injuries in the home, e.g. from falls, enable faster hospital discharge, delay the point at which residential care is required and support individuals who experience functional and cognitive difficulties or have long-term chronic conditions e.g. dementia.

The Council is committed to using the available public funds to fulfil its statutory responsibilities towards the adaptation of the homes of eligible residents living with a disability through its Disabled Facilities Grant programme.

The policy aims to provide flexibility in order to deliver an efficient and effective response to the need for property adaptations for disabled persons, to reduce the number of people living in homes in the private sector that have category 1 hazards and to increase the number of people able to live independently at home. The provision and performance of mandatory grants and financial assistance in accordance with this policy will be subject to regular monitoring.

The Council recognises that these policies cannot cover every likely situation and there will be people who genuinely are in need of some form of urgent support or assistance that they are precluded from accessing. In these situations this policy provides the opportunity to consider offering assistance in exceptional circumstances as determined by the Head of Service.

Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to the following:-

- the needs of the individual applicant are extreme
- the adaptations or equipment required are of a specialist nature .
- the adaptations or equipment is expensive and would cause financial hardship

9. Better Care Fund (BCF) Supporting Measures

Agency Fees and charges

The Government funding made available through the Better Care Fund (BCF) to the Council in support of its Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Programme may be used for activities in addition to the provision of mandatory DFGs where the activities support the national aims of the Better Care Fund. This includes reasonable agency fees and

charges (staffing and resources costs) associated with delivering this policy, including managing the adaptation project on behalf of the applicant, providing OT advice and support, scheme design and specifications, appointing the contractor, applying for Planning and/or Building Control permissions, agreeing a commencement date, supervising the works on site by carrying out regular site visits, agreeing the completion of the works and making grant payments.

Although the demand for DFGs must be met first, the Council's agency fees associated with the delivery of the DFG programme and this policy will be assessed in total and drawn down from the annual DFG allocation, rather than being charged to each individual grant, thereby reducing the full grant entitlement to the applicant. Qualifying applicants will therefore be able to utilise the full amount of their grant entitlement on the provision of the necessary adaptations and, in the absence of the administration fees, the ongoing financial burden (land charges) on them will be lower.

It is accepted that the Council's fees and costs will not be fully recovered, as they do not take account of the full staff time engaged in the process of administering and delivering DFGs in accordance with this policy. The proportion of the annual BCF used to contribute towards the administration processes includes the costs incurred by the Council for abortive work, namely work undertaken in good faith which does not conclude in the successful completion of an adapted home. This may arise at any stage in the process, from initial enquiry to final completion, normally as a result of a change in the applicant's circumstances, such as they enter nursing/residential care, are taken into hospital or sadly pass away.

Monies reimbursed to the Council in accordance with the application of the local land charge following the sale or disposal of a property which has been the subject of a Disabled Facilities Grant are returned to the Service's budget, to fund further grant applications.

The Council reserves the right to review the level of reclaimed costs for administering and delivering this policy as part of its annual budget setting process.

Other schemes targeted at supporting the aims of the BCF and included in this policy are:

- **Hospital Prevention and Discharge Assistance** - aimed at providing minor adaptations and other works designed to prevent admission to hospital, care or nursing home or to assist with speedy discharge from hospital
- **Discounting Applicants Contribution up to £5,000** – aimed at providing assistance to applicants who are required to make a significant or unaffordable contribution to the adaptations following the means test.
- **Dementia Friendly Grant** – aimed at providing adaptations required to assist the person diagnosed with dementia or cognitive/behavioural conditions to manage their surroundings and retain their independence.

- **Relocation Grant** - To meet the reasonable costs associated with moving where the existing home is considered not suitable for adaptations
- **Passported Benefits** – To include entitlement to Local Council Tax Reduction as a passported benefit
- **Assistive Technology Grant** – aimed at supporting a technology based approach to keeping people safe and well in their homes. For example, the provision of life line, fall detectors and key safes.
- **Carer Support Grant** – aimed at providing appropriate accommodation for a carer where they are required to provide 24/7 care
- **OT Assessment assistance** – to provide Occupational Therapy assistance in the development of reports for non for charitable organisations/institutions operating in the Cannock Chase District.
- **Extended warranties** – assistance with the provision of extended warranties for 3 years for all adaptations which require electrical installations such as stair lifts, closomats etc.

10. Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant

Cannock Chase District Council, in its role as a local housing authority, has a statutory duty to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to qualifying applicants under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

The purpose of the mandatory grant is set out in section 23(1) of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act and includes:-

- Facilitating access to and from the dwelling
- Making the dwelling safe
- Facilitating access to a room usable as a principal family room
- Facilitating access to a room used for sleeping
- Facilitating access to a room in which there is a lavatory
- Facilitating access to a bathroom
- Facilitating access to a room in which there is a wash hand basin
- Facilitating the preparation and cooking of food
- Improving or providing a heating system to meet the needs of the disabled occupant

- Facilitating the use of a source of power, light, or heat by altering the position of controls
- Facilitating access and movement around the dwelling to enable the care of a person who is normally resident there and is in need of such care
- Access to the garden

Further detail on the nature of the work that may be grant aided is provided at **APPENDIX 1**

The provision of a DFG is dependent on the work being both necessary and appropriate and reasonable and practicable

Necessary and Appropriate – in order to determine if the works are ‘necessary and appropriate’ the Council has engaged an Occupational Therapist to assess the disabled person’s needs and provide a report indicating the nature of the adaptations and aids required to meet the needs identified.

Reasonable and Practicable – the Council must decide whether the works required are ‘reasonable and practicable’ considering the age and condition of the dwelling, along with the nature and cost of the works required.

Amount of Mandatory DFG

The maximum mandatory grant payable for a single application is set by order and is currently £30,000. This amount is reduced by any contribution assessed as payable by the grant applicant.

Mandatory Assistance Requirements

- Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are grants that local Housing Authorities must make available to residents who meet defined disability and financial criteria.
- The applicant for a DFG must be assessed as being disabled in accordance with the provisions of Section 100 of the Housing (Grants, Construction and Regeneration) Act 1996.
- For the purposes of the legislation a person is disabled if:
 - Their sight, hearing or speech is substantially impaired;
 - They have a mental disorder or impairment of any kind; or
 - They are physically substantially disabled by illness, injury or impairment present since birth or otherwise.
- A person aged 18 or over is considered to be disabled if:
 - They are registered as a result of any arrangement made under section 29(1) of the national Assistance Act, or

- They are a person for whose welfare arrangements have been made under that section or might be made under it
- A person aged under 18 is considered disabled if:
 - They are registered in register of disabled children maintained under the Children Act, or
 - In the opinion of the social services authority (Staffordshire County Council) they are a disabled child as defined for the purposes of Part III of the Children Act 1989.
- The proposed work must meet one or more of the assessed needs of the disabled occupant.
- The grant is subject to a means test for adults and this will determine what, if any, financial contribution the applicant must make towards the cost of the adaptation work are exempt from the means test.
- Applications from adults in receipt of specified (“passported”) benefits and for children under the age of 19 are exempt from the means test. Further information on passported benefits can be found at **APPENDIX 2**.
- Assistance is available to an applicant who currently does not live in the district but intends to relocate, either alone or with family, to a property which is, and requires adaptations to the property to meet his/her identified needs. This is subject to all other criteria for the grant being met.
- The disabled person must intend to remain in the property as their only or main residence for a minimum period of five years or such shorter period as health and other relevant circumstances permit.
- The Scheme of adaptation work must be necessary and appropriate to meet the assessed needs of the disabled occupant.
- The work must also be determined by the Council as being reasonable and practicable, having regard to the age and condition of the property to be adapted and the nature of the proposed adaptation(s).
- Any charges and fees associated with the administration of the grant application will be drawn directly from the Better Care Fund allocation to the Council and will not affect the grant maximum value.
- In the event that available funds are limited, applications may be placed to a Waiting List and subject to prioritisation. Further information on the prioritisation process can be found at Section 13 “ Prioritisation and Waiting list”
- Where the applicant is the owner, or has an owner’s interest in the property, a land charge for between £5,000 and a maximum of £10,000, depending on the

cost of the works will be applied for a period of 10 years following the completion of the work. Further information on the application of land charges can be found at Section 12(t) "Repayment of Grants and Land Charges"

11. Discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance

In addition to providing mandatory DFG's, the Council has the power to offer discretionary financial assistance by virtue of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.

Using these powers and in certain specific circumstances, this policy includes discretionary DFG assistance for private sector adaptations that do not meet the criteria for a mandatory grant, or exceed the maximum level of funding available (currently £30,000).

All discretionary grants are subject to sufficient funds being available for the Council to meet its legal duty to provide adaptations for cases where a mandatory grant is required.

In cases where funds are limited, new enquiries will be placed on a Waiting List and the Council will assess each case on its own merits and the priority of each case will be determined in accordance with the Prioritisation Criteria set out at Section 13 "Prioritisation and Waiting list"

Discretionary Top-up Assistance to Mandatory DFG Grant

A top-up grant up to a maximum of £20,000 (previously £15,000) in those cases where the proposed works identified a part of a comprehensive adaptation scheme exceed the maximum grant limit applicable to the Mandatory Assistance grant.

Each case will be considered on its own merits by the Head of Service and one or more of the following criteria must be met :-

- The applicant has been assessed and is eligible for a mandatory grant
- The household is considered to be in financial hardship
- All other means of funding have been explored and discounted.

Successful applications will receive the funds in the form of a discretionary grant.

Where the applicant is the owner or has an owner's interest in the property a land charge for the full amount of the discretionary top-up grant will be applied for a period of 10 years following the completion of the work.

Grant maximum £20,000

Discretionary Hospital Prevention and Discharge Assistance

This discretionary grant is available for cases where the disabled person is in urgent need of adaptation work to assist them to live independently in their own home, to prevent them from becoming an in-patient in a hospital, care home or nursing home or to assist with their discharge from hospital at the earliest opportunity.

The maximum grant is £12,000 and will include adaptations such as:-

- Stair lifts (straight or curved)
- Vertical “through floor” lifts
- External step lifts and ramps
- Door widening
- Small scale bathroom, bedroom or kitchen adaptations
- Ceiling track hoists

The type of works may also include, but are not limited to, repairs to bring a property up to decent homes standard, to remove identified Category 1 hazards, for example boiler/central heating repairs, house clearances/disinfestations, structural repairs to address damp and mould.

The grant will not be subject to a means test to enable it to be processed as quickly as possible.

As a discretionary grant, if the applicant is the owner or has an owner’s interest in the property, a land charge for the full amount of the discretionary top-up grant will be applied for a period of 10 years following the completion of the work.

Grant maximum £12,000

Discretionary Assistance discounting up to £5,000 contributions

For those applicants undergoing the Test of Resources, contributions may range from “nil” to several thousands of pounds and is calculated based on their financial status and assumed capacity to secure a loan for the relevant contribution.

In many cases this is not feasible and consequently a proportion of grant applications do not progress to completion, because the applicants do not have the financial resource to meet the assessed contribution.

This discretionary assistance is aimed at discounting the first £5,000 of the applicants assessed contribution thereby reducing the number of abortive applications and encouraging a greater number of applications to progress through to completion; resulting in more disabled residents being able to live independently and safely in their home for longer.

Grant maximum £5,000

Discretionary Dementia Friendly Assistance

Where the disabled person is diagnosed with dementia, or other cognitive impairment or a recognised long term behavioural condition including but not limited to such conditions as Autism, Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) etc., works to make homes friendly and to help the person live safely, manage their surroundings and retain their independence for longer will be eligible for funding.

The types of works available may include:-

- Provision of a safe space
- Colour and contrast decorating
- Carbon monoxide/ cold/heat alarms
- Lighting
- Safety flooring
- Digital assistive technology

This list is not exhaustive and each case will be considered with the assistance and advice from the Council's external Occupational Therapist.

The grant will not be subject to a means test.

Grant maximum £10,000

Discretionary Relocation Assistance

A relocation grant may be available to an applicant who owns or privately rents their property and the identified adaptations involve substantial structural alterations or extensions that are considered not to be feasible or reasonable.

Applicants must be 18 or over on the date of the application and in the case of a disabled child, the parent(s) would make the application.

Any application must be supported by a recommendation made by an Occupational Therapist and the Council and the OT must be satisfied that the proposed property already meets the needs of the disabled person without further adaptation or are satisfied that it can be adapted at a reasonable cost.(If the combined cost of adapting the new home and specific relocation expenses are less than the cost of the adaptation of the existing home).

Applicants must be relocating within the Cannock Chase District.

Applications must be submitted prior to relocation; grants cannot be paid retrospectively and assistance will not be given towards the purchase price of the new property.

The new property must be the disabled person's main residence.

The specific eligible relocation expenses are:-

- Estate agents fees
- Solicitors costs
- Survey costs
- stamp duty
- Removal expenses
- Disconnection/reconnection of appliances

The relocation grant will be subject to the same test of resources as the mandatory DFG unless the relocation is for a disabled child in which case no test will be applied.

Grant maximum £7,000

Discretionary Assistive Technology Assistance

Advances in assistive technology are currently available to support disabled and older people living in their own home. This discretionary grant of up to £3,000 is designed to cover the purchasing of such technology including life lines, fall detectors, flood detectors, extreme temperature sensors, GPS Tracker pendants, key safes and for the payment of the monthly monitoring fee to the call centre (if required) for a period of up to 3 years. However following the expiry of this period, the applicant will be responsible for continuing with the monitoring fee.

Any application must be supported by a recommendation made by an Occupational Therapist or GP.

The grant will not be subject to a means test. However a land charge for the full amount of the discretionary top-up grant will be applied for a period of 10 years following the installation of the required equipment.

Grant maximum £3,000.

Discretionary Carer Support Assistance

In the relatively rare cases where the disability of an individual is so profound that care for that person is required 24 hours per day, and no existing provision is available to accommodate the carers providing such care, the cost of the adaptation to property in order to accommodate the carers may be met from the grant.

Such costs may include adaptation of a suitable room within the existing dwelling, the provision of a bed and locker for personal items.

The grant will be subject to the same test of resources as the mandatory DFG unless the grant is for a disabled child in which case no test will be applied.

As a discretionary grant, if the applicant is the owner or has an owner's interest in the property, a land charge for the full amount of the discretionary top-up grant will be applied for a period of 10 years following the completion of the work.

Grant maximum £15,000

Discretionary OT Assessment Assistance

This discretionary assistance is available to charitable organisations /institutions that are operating in the Cannock Chase district and require an OT Assessment Report in order to assess adaptation schemes to meet the needs of their residents.

An application can be made for assistance of up to £200 towards the cost of the OT assessment.

The grant will not be subject to a means test or a land charge.

Grant maximum £200

Local Council Tax Reduction (LCTR)

Applicants in receipt of LCTR will be exempted from the requirement of the Test of Resources. (Means Test) Prior to the Government's revision of the list of passported benefits in 1996, applicants in receipt of Council Tax Benefit were exempt from the Test of Resources. Council Tax Benefit is a similar benefit to LCTR, but is no longer available. Inclusion of entitlement to LCTR as a passported benefit restores the pre-1996 position and consequently will enable a number of residents receiving LCTR to apply without undergoing the Test of Resources.

Extended Warranties.

Extended warranties for 3 years will be provided for all adaptations which require electrical installations such as stair lifts and closomats

12. The Application Process

(a) Eligibility

Any person who makes an application for mandatory and discretionary DFG assistance must

- (i) be disabled, as set out in criteria of Section 100 of the Housing, (Grants, Construction and Regeneration) Act 1996,
- (ii) be over 18 years of age at the date of the application,
- (iii) live in, or intend to live in, a dwelling, a qualifying houseboat, or a qualifying park home, within the district of Cannock Chase Council, as his/her only main residence.
- (iv) have an owner's interest in the dwelling (other than an interest by virtue of being a Registered Social Landlord under Part 1 of the Housing Act 1996 or being eligible for such registration), or be a tenant or licensee of the dwelling,

- alone of jointly with others but not being a member of the landlord's family, with a tenancy or licence permitting occupation of the dwelling for a minimum period of 5 years after the completion of the relevant works.
- (v) have the power or duty to carry out works and where appropriate the owner's consent in writing to carry out the works
 - (vi) satisfy such test(s) of resources as the Council may from time to time have in place. Children and young people under the age of 19 are exempt from the test of resources.
 - (vii) not be ineligible, by virtue of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, or regulations made under the Act or any other enactment.

The Council acknowledges that homeowners have the primary responsibility for ensuring that their homes are properly maintained. However the Council reserves the right to offer assistance to home owners deemed to be vulnerable or in cases of hardship, where the works would ensure that the home is made safe, healthy and appropriately adapted to meet the needs of the disabled individual.

(b) Enquiry

Initial enquiries from adult Disabled residents are directed to Staffordshire Cares, part of Staffordshire County Council, which has a responsibility as Social Care Authority to provide community care equipment and minor adaptations (which a person has been assessed to need and for which he/she is eligible) free of charge, provided the cost is less than £1,000.

If a more comprehensive scheme is required to adapt the person's home because the person's needs cannot be fully met in this way and it will cost more than £1,000 Staffordshire Cares will refer the person to Cannock Chase Council for a Disabled Facilities Grant.

Enquiries in relation to DFGs for disabled children and young people are generally received from Occupational Therapists in Staffordshire County Council's Children's Disability Service.

(c) Referral

For DFG cases Staffordshire Cares will complete a form providing Cannock Chase Council with their contact details and identifying the person's needs. If the disabled person is a Council tenant, the referral will be forwarded to the Council's Housing Maintenance Team, which is responsible for carrying out adaptations to council properties and the case will not progress into the DFG system.

(d) GDPR and Data Protection

New legal requirements apply to the sharing of sensitive personal information which is required to ensure that the home adaptation meets the identified needs of the disabled person. An appointment will be made with the person to explain the data protection requirements and obtain written permission to share medical information about the disabled person with the Council's appointed Occupational Therapy Service, suppliers of specialist equipment and building contractors who will be engaged to carry out the necessary construction work.

In the absence of this permission no further progress can be made on the referral.

(e) Test of Resources (Means Test) and Benefits Check.

In the case of adults it is necessary to carry out a Test of Resources (means test) to determine if the person is required to make a contribution towards the cost of the works to adapt their home. If, however they are in receipt of particular benefits they are "passported" through the means test and will not have a contribution to make. Further details on "passported" benefits are available in [Appendix 2](#)

Similarly children and young people under the age of 19 years are not required to make a contribution.

The means testing is conducted by the Council's Benefits Team and is an essential part of the process. If people require assistance in completing the mean test, arrangements are made for an officer to visit and assist as far as possible. Where people are unwilling to provide the necessary financial information, the Council will unfortunately, be unable to proceed to the next stage of the process.

If a person is required to make a contribution, this will be explained by one of the Service's Technical Officers. Contributions are collected by the Council and placed in an account ready to transfer to the building contractor on satisfactory completion of the works.

In the absence of a means test result, where one is required, no further progress can be made on the referral.

(f) OT Assessment

The Council's Occupational Therapy Service will be notified of the person's details and will arrange to visit the property to assess the person's needs and how they may be met in their particular home circumstances. The Occupational Therapist (OT) will determine what is "**necessary and appropriate**" and will then produce a report which is submitted to the Council's Technical Officers.

(g) Design of Scheme

The Council's Technical officers work with the recommendations of the OT to design the scheme of works to adapt the home to meet the needs of the disabled resident.

In doing so the Technical Officer must assess whether the works required are both "**reasonable and practicable**". The Technical Officer will explain the proposed scheme to the disabled person and will endeavour to answer any questions that arise.

This assessment must consider:-

- The layout, construction age and condition of the accommodation.
- The number, ages and needs of the other occupants of the accommodation.
- The use of the accommodation by the disabled person and any other occupants
- The location of the accommodation e.g. steep access to the property.
- Any other options that have been considered less practicable than the proposed work
- The cost of the proposed work is assessed as reasonable having regard to the likely cost of any alternatives.
- The success of adaptations carried out in similar types of accommodation
- The implications of carrying out the required adaptation with regard to its future use and classification and potential hardship issues, particularly with regard to spare room subsidy.

Where it is not reasonable and practicable to adapt the property to meet the identified needs other options, for example relocation may be considered.

If other work, not specified by the Occupational Therapist, is requested by the disabled person, the homeowner may make arrangements directly with the building contractor to carry out the works. However, the Council will be unable to supervise such additional work, nor will it be able to fund them as part of the grant and the cost must be met by the homeowner/applicant.

(h) Estimation of Costs

The Council will provide details of the proposed scheme to one or more building contractors who are experienced in carrying out adaptation work so that an estimate of the cost can be made. The Council is legally obliged to allocate the work to the contractor offering the lowest estimate.

Applicants may, if they wish, select their own building contractor to carry out the work. This is called a “**preferred scheme**” and the Council would not be involved in managing the delivery of the scheme of works in such cases.

The Council will only be able to fund the work to the value of the lowest estimate. Consequently, any additional cost must be met by the applicant.

(i) Grant Application

Once the scheme has been designed and the estimates produced, a formal application can be made. In addition to the scheme and the estimate the following information will be required in support of an application:-

- A certificate of Future occupation (confirming the applicant’s intention to stay in the property for at least 5 years)
- An Owners certificate from either the applicant (if an owner) or the relevant landlord (if the applicant is a tenant).
- Confirmation of ownership, e.g. land registry certification or equivalent; or permission from the owner.
- Proof of financial information and a test of resources to determine grant eligibility, or alternatively proof of a qualifying benefit dated within 6 months of grant approval.
- A completed referral from a suitably qualified person (The OT Assessment report).

If any of this information is not available it will delay progress of the application for a grant.

(j) Grant Determination

On receipt of a full and valid grant application the Council must issue a decision on approval within 6 months.

All applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of the application.

Where the Council is likely to refuse an application for a DFG, the Council will contact the applicant to give them the opportunity to provide additional information prior to a formal refusal being made.

Where the Council has no option but to refuse an application for a grant, the Council will advise the applicant of the reasons for the refusal.

(k) Appeals and Reviews

An applicant has a right to request a review of this decision which should be made in writing to the Private Sector Housing Team Leader within 28 days of the date of the refusal letter.

Where a Review of a refusal is requested the Private Sector Housing Team Leader will provide a written response to the applicant within 10 working days.

If the applicant is dissatisfied with the response they have the right to escalate the matter to the Head of Service.

Where the applicant remains dissatisfied they may pursue a complaint through the Council's Corporate Complaints procedure, details of which are available on the Council's website.

(l) Unexpected Additional Costs

In circumstances where, following the approval of the grant, additional unforeseen works are required to address problems or issues that arise on site, such as poor ground conditions, unknown locations of utilities, dry/wet rot, etc. the Council will have due regard to the increase of the level of funding awarded to ensure that the issue does not prevent the completion of the agreed scheme of adaptation work.

The applicant will be notified in writing of any amendment to the grant award.

(m) Additional Client Works

Applicants may, if they wish, have the work done to a higher specification than that of the proposed scheme. This is called a "preferred scheme" and may include the use of higher value or non-standard items than have been estimated for by the Council's contractor, such as decorative tiles, or other specific equipment or aids.

The Council will only be able to fund the work to the value of the lowest estimate. Any additional cost must be met by the applicant.

(n) Permissions and Consents

Some schemes of work will require permission or consent from a range of organisations. These consents may include, but are not limited to, building regulations approval, planning permission, build-over agreements, and Party Wall Act agreements. In addition where gas and electrical systems are affected, gas and electrical safety certificates will be required. The Council will ensure that the specific permissions/consents/certificates required will be obtained by the contractor and provided to the applicant on completion of the work.

(o) Supervision

Site supervision will be carried out by the Council's Technical Officer who will make records of the visits made, and of any advice or instructions given to the contractor and any complaints or concerns of the applicant.

In particular site supervision will cover the following:-

- A full inspection of the works carried out to date.
- An assessment of the standard of work and in particular an assessment of whether the works carried out complies with the specification and plans
- Any concerns or complaints of the applicant.
- The availability of services; e.g. water, gas, electricity and heating whilst the works are in progress.
- Any problems with the proposed works specification that would require the input of the OT or the owner of the property; e.g. the landlord.

(p) Completion of Works

Adaptation schemes must be completed within 12 months of the approval date. However in exceptional circumstances this period may be extended.

On notification of the completion of the approved work the Council's Technical Officer will visit the adapted property to confirm that it has been completed in accordance with the approved plans and specifications and has been done to a satisfactory standard.

The Council will issue a completion pack to the applicant containing all the documentation in relation to the permissions, consents, warranties and certificates generated during the course of the work.

(q) Payment of Grant

Where an application for a Disabled Facilities Grant (mandatory or discretionary) has been approved, the grant may be paid

- In whole after the satisfactory completion of the eligible works, subject to any delayed payment notification in the approval document; or
- In part by instalments as the work progresses to an approved standard and the balance after the satisfactory completion of the works subject to any delayed payment notification in the approval document.

If a grant is paid by instalments, the aggregate of the instalments paid before completion of the eligible works shall not exceed 90% of the amount of the grant awarded.

Where a dispute arises regarding the standard of the works the Council will withhold any payment until the works have been satisfactorily completed in the professional opinion of the Council's Technical Officer.

If the works meet the Council's approval but the applicant is not satisfied the Council will not unreasonably withhold payment to the contractor.

(r) Maintenance and Warranties

All equipment and fixtures, and associated modifications to properties undertaken as part of a DFG are "gifted" to the applicant. Cannock Chase Council is not responsible for the maintenance or repair of items or the restoration of properties to their condition prior to the award of a DFG

Equipment supplied such as stair lifts, Closomat toilets ,etc.will be subject to an extended 3 year manufacturer's warranty including servicing. The grant funding covers this extended warranty. However following the expiry of this period, the applicant will be responsible for the servicing and maintenance of any equipment provided.

Staffordshire County Council is notified of the installation of all ceiling track hoists, step lifts, through floor lifts, because as the Social Care Authority it is responsible for ensuring that such equipment is subject to regular safety checks.

(s) Changes in Circumstances

Certain changes in the applicant's circumstances may affect the payment of grant.

Such changes, prescribed by legislation, are:

- where the works cease to be necessary or appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled person;
- the disabled occupant ceases to occupy the dwelling; or
- the disabled occupant dies.

In such circumstances the Council can decide:

- not to pay the grant, or pay any further instalments;
- that some or all of the works should be completed and grant or partial grant will be paid; or
- that the grant application should be re-determined.

(t) Repayment of Grant/Land Charges

Where the Council approves an application for a mandatory grant amount exceeding £5000 and the applicant has an owners' interest in the premises on which the works are to be carried out, the Council will demand the repayment of the grant which exceeds £5000 up to a maximum of £10,000 if-

- a)** the recipient disposes (whether by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise) of the premises in respect of which the grant was given within 10 years of the certified date; and
- b)** the Council is satisfied that it is reasonable in all the circumstances to require the repayment having considered-
 - i.** The extent to which the recipient of the grant would suffer financial hardship were s/he to be required to repay all or some of the grant;
 - ii.** Whether the disposal of the premises is to enable the recipient of the grant to take up employment, or to change the location of his employment;
 - iii.** Whether the disposal is made for reasons connected with the physical or mental health or wellbeing of the recipient of the grant or a disabled occupant of the premises; and
 - iv.** Whether the disposal is made to enable the recipient of the grant to live with, or near, any person who is disabled or infirm and in need of care, which the recipient of the grant is intending to provide, or who is intending to provide care of which the recipient of the grant is in need by the reason of disability or infirmity.

This condition places a local land charge on the property which is binding on any person who is the owner of the dwelling or building.

In cases of financial hardship and on representation from the grant recipient, consideration will be given on a case by case basis to further reduce the grant repayable, however this is likely to only occur if the recipient is in negative equity.

The Council may demand the repayment of a grant that has already been paid, together with any interest in the circumstances outlined above. However, each case will be considered on its merits.

The right to demand repayment also applies where an applicant ceases to be entitled to a grant before completion of the works. An example of where this may apply would be if the applicant ceases to own or have the tenancy of the dwelling to be adapted.

The Council may refuse to pay the full grant, pay any further instalments or recalculate the grant in such circumstances if:

- The grant was approved on the basis of inaccurate, incomplete or false information
- The cost of works is less than the original estimates

The Council will register a charge with Land Registry in respect of all mandatory grants that meet the above criteria and for the specified discretionary grants the full amount of the award will be registered.

In all cases the charge will remain in force for a period of 10 years following the completion of the scheme.

The relevant Head of Service has the discretion to waive the registration and repayment of land charges in relation to individual grants in cases where it would not be financially expedient to apply or recover them, such as where the charge is of low value or the action would cause hardship.

13. Prioritisation and Waiting List

Where there is a waiting list, cases will be split into High, Medium and Low priority groups and will be moved off the waiting list in batches on the basis of the oldest cases within that group.

Higher Priority Cases will include:-

All children's cases

Cases where the person has two or more needs as defined under the Care Act;

Any Medium Priority Cases which have been waiting over 6 months;

Any Lower Priority Cases which have been waiting over 12 months.

Medium Priority Cases will include:-

Cases where the person has only one need as defined under the Care Act;

Any Lower Priority Cases which have been waiting over 6 months.

Lower Priority Cases will include:-

Cases where the person doesn't have any needs defined under the Care Act.

Armed Forces Personnel

Cannock Chase District Council has marked its support for the local armed forces services community by adopting the Armed Forces Community Covenant⁶. The covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local armed forces representatives. It not only recognises the contribution of serving personnel, their families and veterans but

⁶ Cabinet on 20th December 2012 resolved and delegated authority to the Chief Executive to sign the Armed Forces Community Covenant (Minute 103A)

importantly it identifies practical ways the Council can help them access support to help them adjust to life after leaving the services.

In this regard, where a priority system is in place this policy will class an application made by or on behalf of ex-service personnel as a priority 1 providing the priority status is supported by an Occupational Therapist and/ or GP.

14. Complaints

Complaints about service delivery should be made in writing or by phone to the Private Sector Housing Team Leader. Efforts are made to resolve complaints informally at the initial stage. However, if the complaint is not resolved in this manner, it will be investigated in accordance with the Council's Corporate Complaints procedure, details of which are available on the Council's website.

15. Policy Audit, Amendments and Review

The provision and performance of mandatory grants and discretionary financial assistance will be subject to regular monitoring and to internal and external auditing in order to ensure adequate procedures are in place and followed and that there is an appropriate use of public funds.

The relevant Head of Service acting in conjunction with the Portfolio Leader may from time to time make minor policy amendments which do not affect the broad thrust of the policies purpose and direction.

This Policy will be reviewed every 3 years or following significant changes to relevant legislation, Government guidance and local conditions and circumstances.

Next Review Date: March 2023

Appendix 1

Works Eligible for Grant Aid

Examples of the type of work that may be included in each of the purpose categories is listed below. It should be appreciated that this list is not exhaustive and other adaptations/aids may be considered if recommended by the Occupational Therapist.

Facilitating access to and from the dwelling

- Ramped access to the main entrance door
- Widening doors
- Resurfaced path to the entrance door
- Structural alterations for the installation of a stair lift or step lift
- Handrails

Making the dwelling safe

- Provision of lighting where safety is an issue
- Adaptations designed to minimise the risk of danger where a disabled person has behavioural problems

Facilitating access to a room used for sleeping

- Provision of door widening
- Installation of a through-floor lift where the living area is on the 1st floor.

Facilitating access to a room usable as a principal family room

- Provision of a room usable for sleeping where the adaptation of an existing room in the dwelling (upstairs or downstairs) or the access to that room is unsuitable in the particular circumstances.

Facilitating access to a room in which there is a lavatory

- Provision of access to a room in which there is a lavatory.
- Provision of door widening or a through floor lift
- Provision of an adapted toilet

Facilitating access to a bathroom

- Provision of a level access shower or wetroom
- Provision of a thermostatically controlled shower or specialist bath
- Door widening

Facilitating access to a room in which there is a wash hand basin

- Provision of a wash hand basin, normally in the same room as the toilet.
- Relocation of a wash hand basin
- Replacement with a more suitable type.

Facilitating the preparation and cooking of food

- Alteration to the height of the kitchen sink

- A cooker point and oven-housing in a safe position and the provision of worktops either side if possible
- Work surfaces located beside the sink and each side of the cooker having a total length of 1.5m where spacing allows
- Accessible cupboards for food storage on an essential basis and space for a refrigerator

Please note

- Full adaptation will only be considered where the disabled person is the main or only user of the kitchen.
- Certain adaptations may be carried out to enable the disabled person to perform minor functions in the kitchen, such as preparing light meals or hot drinks, where most of the cooking and preparation of meals is done by another household member.
- Hobs, ovens, extraction systems and white goods are not provided under a DFG

Access to heating, lighting and power

- Provision or improvement the existing heating, lighting or power system in the dwelling to meet the disabled person's needs.
- relocation of power points or controls.

Please note

- A grant will not be given to adapt or install heating in rooms which are not normally used by the disabled person.
- The installation of central heating to the dwelling will only be considered where the well-being and mobility of the disabled person would otherwise be adversely affected.

Access to a garden

- Improving existing access where access cannot be gained via the main entrance.
- Provision of a suitable outdoor space that can be accessed safely from the dwelling to allow appreciation of the outdoor area by the disabled person.

Appendix 2

Test of Resources (Means Test)

A standard test of resources is undertaken for all applicants applying for a DFG in accordance with the Act to determine what, if any, contribution they are expected to make towards the cost of the adaptation work.

Children and young persons (under the age of 19 years) are exempt from the means test.

The Test of Resources only takes into account the resources of the disabled applicant and their spouse or partner, where applicable. It does not take into account the applicant's outgoings.

Applicants in receipt of one of the following types of income will be 'passported' through the means testing process:

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income Based Job Employment Support Allowance
- Guarantee Pension Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Working/Child Tax Credit (if income for tax credits is below a specified amount)
- Universal Credit
- This list is prescribed by Central Government and may be amended from time to time.

Please note

Cannock Chase Council has resolved to remove the requirement for a Test of Resources for the following cases:-

- Applicants in receipt of the benefit called "Local Council Tax Reduction"
- Applications for Discretionary Hospital Prevention and Discharge Assistance
- Discretionary Dementia Friendly/Cognitive Behavioural Conditions Assistance.
- Discretionary OT Assessment Assistance

Appendix 3

Summary of Assistance available

The tables below summarise the measures covered in the Housing Assistance Policy

Description	New /Existing	Funding	Means Test	Land Charge	Objective
DFG (Mandatory Assistance)	Existing	£30,000	Y except where a child or on passported benefits	For cost over £5,000 Max charge £10,000 Duration 10 years	Adaptation of the home in accordance with the criteria in the Housing (Grants, Construction and Regeneration) Act 1996
Discretionary Assistance - Top- up grant	New Limit raised from £15,000	£20,000	As above	Y Full amount of grant	Provide for cost of the adaptation scheme where works exceed the Mandatory £30,000 limit
Discretionary – Hospital Prevention and Discharge Assistance	New	£12,000	N	Y Full amount of grant 10 years	Minor adaptations and other works designed to prevent admission to hospital, care or nursing home or assist with speedy discharge from hospital
Discretionary – Dementia Friendly - Dementia Cognitive and Behavioural conditions Adaptations Grant	New	£10,000	N	Y Full amount of grant 10 years	Adaptations to assist the person diagnosed with dementia or cognitive/behavioural conditions to manage their surroundings and retain their independence.
Discretionary – Relocation Grant	New Limit raised	£7,000	Y except where a child or on passported benefits	Y Full amount of grant 10 years	To meet the reasonable costs associated with moving where the existing home is not suitable for adaptations
Discretionary – Carer support assistance	New	£15,000	Y except where a child or on passported benefits	Y Full amount of grant 10 years	Provision of appropriate accommodation for a carer where required to provide 24/7 care.

Description	New /Existing	Funding	Means Test	Land Charge	Objective
Discretionary – OT Assessment assistance	New	£200	N	N	Provision of Occupational Therapy report where an organisation/charity is to fund adaptation scheme
Discretionary – Assistive technology assistance	New	£3,000	N	Y Full amount of grant 10 years	Supports a technology based approach to keeping people safe and well in their homes. eg life line, fall detectors, key safes – for purchasing equipment and monthly fee to connect with call centre (if required)

Other measures

Extended warranties: 3 years	New	As appropriate	Included in grant	As per grant	For all adaptations which require electrical installations such as stair lifts, closomats etc.
Local Council Tax Reduction to be considered a DFG passport benefit	New	Not applicable	N	Not applicable	Anticipated to help people in sole receipt of this benefit to access necessary adaptations.
Discounting of first £5000 of applicants contribution following means testing	New	£5,000	Y	N	Anticipated to help people who are obliged to make a significant or unaffordable contribution to the adaptations required.

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Report of:	Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles
Contact Officer:	Mike Edmonds
Telephone No:	01543 464 416
Portfolio Leader:	Culture and Sport
Key Decision:	Yes
Report Track:	Cabinet: 21/05/20

CABINET
21 MAY 2020
**DEVELOPMENT OF NEW CEMETERY, NORTON ROAD / HEDNESFORD ROAD,
NORTON CANES**

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the progress made to date with regard to the proposal to develop a new cemetery at Norton Canes.
- 1.2 To seek Cabinet agreement to the allocation of the additional funds required to enable the proposed works relating to the development and operation of the new cemetery to be progressed.
- 1.3 To seek approval for permission to spend in relation to the proposals.

2 Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Agree and approve the additional capital funds required to enable construction to start on the new cemetery and to fully deliver phase 1 of the project, totalling £100,000
- 2.2 Request that Council approves the revised capital programme for the scheme amounting to £1.411 million.
- 2.3 Agree and approve the additional revenue /capital budget totalling £53,870 required to start-up and operate the facility when opened. To note the cemetery will be self financing within a 3 year period.
- 2.4 Grant permission to spend in respect of the delivery of this project.
- 2.5 Delegate authority to the relevant Head of Service in consultation with the Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader to take such actions and enter into such contracts as necessary to progress the above scheme within agreed budgets.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for RecommendationsKey Issues

- 3.1 There is a lack of burial space in the southern part of the District and the Council has been searching for many years to establish a new cemetery that would serve the burial requirements of the residents in this part of the District. Cannock cemetery has been closed to new burials since April 2006.
- 3.2 Tender exercises have been undertaken for the two key elements of phase 1 of the project; for the civil works and the reception building and contractors are now awaiting award confirmation, subject to Cabinet approval.
- 3.3 Additional capital costs for the provision of a road crossing point by the Council and shared access works with the crematorium facility have been identified, together with the capital and revenue budgets required to run and operate the facility when it is completed.
- 3.4 The proposed phased development will provide local access to burial facilities in the south of the District for at least the next 25 years.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.5 To ensure that sufficient resources are made available to enable construction to start on the new cemetery, to fully deliver phase 1 of the project and to operate the facility when it is opened, Cabinet are asked to consider the recommendations set out in this report.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This report supports the Council's Corporate Priority of Improving Community Wellbeing and the provision of a new cemetery features in the Council's Priority Delivery Plan for 2020-21.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 Officers have been investigating sites that would potentially provide the opportunity for the Council to develop a new cemetery for the southern part of the District in a similar way to that of Stile Cop cemetery which serves the northern part of the District.
- 5.2 Many sites have been identified over the last decade but have been discounted as being unsuitable for a variety of technical and financial reasons.
- 5.3 The Council originally approved and allocated £1.5m towards the delivery of a new cemetery in the district, of which £983,780 remains after the purchase of site, planning application and site specific surveys.
- 5.4 A further £327,000 has been earmarked for the project.

- 5.5 On 18 December 2014 Cabinet approved the purchase of the ex-Bleak House Colliery site for use as a new cemetery subject to planning consent being granted.
- 5.6 Planning consent for a proposed cemetery on the site was granted on 28 January 2015 and the purchase of the site completed on 22 October 2015.
- 5.7 Since the purchase of the site Members have received a number of update reports, the last being on 23 August 2018 when Cabinet resolved that the Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles be authorised, in consultation with the Culture and Sport Portfolio leader to:
- (A) Submit an outline planning application for a crematorium on the site and commence the process to identify a partner to deliver the cemetery and crematorium proposals
 - (B) An additional capital resource of £327,000 be earmarked to deliver the cemetery – only if the above option was unsuccessful.
 - (C) Further reports to be received on progress of the above decisions.
- 5.8 Before any of the above recommendations could be developed Horizon Cremation Limited submitted a planning application in October 2018 to develop a new crematorium on the site adjoining the Council's site. Planning consent for the development of a crematorium was approved on 21 January 2019.

Current position

- 5.9 In order to provide the capacity to progress this project and a number of other key capital projects a dedicated Capital Projects Officer post was created and appointed to in October 2019.
- 5.10 The project works have been split into 4 key elements for Phase 1¹:
- 1. Civils contract (Groundworks/earthworks/drainage/roads/pathways/street furniture and concrete runners);
 - 2. Reception building (Staff welfare/storage/public toilets and reception room);
 - 3. Landscape works (Tree / shrub planting and grass seeding;
 - 4. Services provision. (Electric/water/CCTV and sewerage).
- 5.11 In December 2019 the additional estimated sum of £327k was included the capital budget for 2020/21, making a total available budget of £1,310,780.
- 5.12 A competitive tender process has now been undertaken in January 2020 using one of Staffordshire County Council's framework agreements to select a contractor to build the civils element of the project. This resulted in tender returns adding a circa £500k increase on the original budget estimate. This is due to the original budget being an estimate of costs at the time against actual

¹ See Site Location Plan – Appendix 1 and Phase 1 works – Appendix 2

prices given in the tender returns and an element of inflation due to the time between the 2018 budget and the 2020 returns.

- 5.13 A re-engineering exercise was carried out with both tenderers. This resulted in elements of the specification being reduced and cut back, without compromising on the project outcome, to ensure the final submissions were in line with the estimated budget. Discussions were also held with the new crematorium operator to identify where costs could be shared. Following a full evaluation a preferred contractor has been identified and informally advised of their intended selection, subject to Cabinet's approval of the recommendations set out in this report.
- 5.14 A tender exercise has also been carried out for the Reception building and submissions from 5 contractors are currently being evaluated by council officers. The tender costs will be kept within the estimated budget.
- 5.15 Additional capital work for the cemetery has been identified since the original cost estimate. This relates to a highway planning obligation to establish a road crossing point and shared access works identified with the new crematorium operator. These additional works have pushed the costs of the scheme up by £100,000. These costs could not have been foreseen at the planning stage and have only recently been clarified and confirmed by all parties involved.
- 5.16 All other costs and estimates will be kept within the available budget.

Capital Build Project Costs and Capital Funding

- 5.17 The Capital Build Project costs required to deliver the phase and the identified capital funding streams are set out in the table below:

Capital Project Costs	£
Civil works (Actual)*	1,023,250
Reception building (Estimate)*	200,000
Landscape (Estimate)*	51,420
Highways agreement (Actual)	63,360
Shared access arrangements (Actual)	37,000
Services (Electric/water/sewers) (Actual)	28,620
Contingency	7,130
Total Cost	1,410,780
Capital Project Funding	£
Original remaining budget	983,780
Estimated Additional funds earmarked for project	327,000
Additional capital build budget required	100,000
Total Funding	1,410,780

*Includes contingency

- 5.18 Permission is now required to increase the budget by £100,000
- 5.19 It is also considered prudent at this stage, to set out for Members the estimated start-up and ongoing revenue operational costs for the new cemetery facility so that they do not go unaccounted for.

Revenue Operational Costs

- 5.20 The day to day revenue operational costs for the new cemetery are set out in the table below:

Revenue Operational Costs	Jan 2021 – March 2022	Full Year 2022-23
	£	£
Employee	31,420	25,820
Premises	11,220	12,310
Transport	5,790	5,010
Supplies and Services	4,890	4,020
Total Expenditure	53,320	47,160
Income	(38,770)	(51,980)
Net Running Costs	14,550	(4,820)
Set up costs	39,320	
Total	53,870	(4,820)

- 5.21 There will be additional operational costs required to start-up the new cemetery. The costs may be subject to leasing or capital funding as appropriate.

Start-up costs for new cemetery provision	£
Dumper	16,090
Van	10,000
Telescoping Shoring	4,250
Burial Register	1,000
Storage container (sea container)	3,200
Office furniture / work tools	4,780
Total cost	39,320
Funding	
Leasing or Capital Funding as appropriate	39,320

- 5.22 Permission is now required to provide a revenue (capital) budget of £53,870 until 31 March 2022 when the facility is anticipated to generate income sufficient to break even.

Project Management and Timeline

- 5.23 The project will be overseen and managed by the Council’s Capital Projects Officer
- 5.24 Subject to Cabinet approval to progress Phase 1 of the project, the estimated timeline for the delivery of the project is as follows:

1.	Let Civils contract	Q1 2020-21
2.	Let contract for Reception building	Q1 2020-21
3.	Tender Landscape works	Q2 2020-21
4.	Start civil works on site	Q2 2020-21
5.	Reception building on site	Q2 2020-21
6.	Let Landscape contract	Q3 2020-21
6.	Landscape contractor on site	Q3 2020-21
7.	Consecrate ground	Q3 2020-21
8.	Open cemetery	Q4 2020-21

Alternative Options

- 5.25 Other alternative options to consider include:
 - (a) Do nothing – this would not be in line with Cabinet’s original intentions to provide a new cemetery in the south of the District, neither would it meet the burial needs of the residents of Cannock Chase.
 - (b) Reduce the specification or area of cemetery build scheme further to fit within the existing budget – given the re-engineering exercise already undertaken this would compromise the quality and sustainability of the scheme and also reduce the burial capacity further.
 - (c) Operate the new cemetery within existing resources and budgets – this would severely impact the Council’s ability to operate and run its other 3 cemeteries and 6 closed Churchyards effectively, transporting equipment and staff across the District.

Conclusion

- 5.26 Cabinet are therefore asked to agree the recommendations in this report to enable construction to start on the new cemetery.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

The Council originally approved and allocated £1.5m towards the delivery of a new cemetery in the district, of which £983,780 remains after the purchase of site, planning application and site specific surveys.

A further £327,000 has been earmarked for the project

The total cost of the scheme is expected to be £1.41m. As the Council has already secured £983,780 previously and earmarked a further £327,000 due to financial shortfall, it is envisaged that a further £100K would be required to deliver the completed capital scheme.

However the revenue costs for the first 1.25 years, together with associated set up costs -would need to be approved until the site becomes self-funding from the financial year 2022 – 23 onwards.

Whilst the Council has identified significant funding for the project, the scheme is still dependent on additional capital and revenue budgets.

Subject to Cabinet approval:

- a supplementary capital budget of £100,000 is required to deliver the scheme. The approved Capital Programme includes uncommitted resources of £567,000 of General Fund resources. However it should be noted that this position includes capital receipts forecast from the sale of residual property of £1.7 million which are yet to be received.
- Provision of £53,870 will be included in the revenue budget for the operating and start-up costs up to 31 March 2022 when the facility is anticipated to generate income sufficient to break even.

6.2 **Legal**

Any legal implications are set out in the report.

6.3 **Human Resources**

Costings for the additional Cemetery team member are made on the assumption that the post will operate as part of the group of three Cemetery and Maintenance Operatives currently engaged within the service who are each graded within C of the Council's pay scaling. Should the requirements of this post differ from that of the existing Operatives based at the other Cemeteries in the District then a revised Job Description and Job Evaluation will be required.

Recruitment to this additional post will need to follow standard recruitment protocols and as such a period of approximately 12-16 weeks should be factored in to account for the recruitment, offer and appointment stages of the process to be undertaken in good time to ensure full staffing from the expected opening date of January 2021.

6.4 **Section 17 (Crime Prevention)**

This proposed facility would be designed in conjunction with secure by design standards and Cannock Council standard policy around crime prevention.

6.5 **Human Rights Act**

None

6.6 Data Protection

None

6.7 Risk Management

Escalating costs - One of the main risks will be that of escalating costs. Ensuring robust, effective and appropriate procurement processes are in place and followed will assist in mitigating this. The two key phases for this project have also been subject to tender so most project costs are now known. Having a dedicated Project Manager following strict project management principles throughout the project will also mitigate this risk as well as ensuring tight budget control.

Project Delays - Delay in delivering the project could lead to a gap in burial provision within the district and hence reputational damage to the Council. There is currently adequate provision at Stile Cop Cemetery although this provision will be reviewed regularly to ensure space is maximised should any delays become evident.

The proposed measures aim to ensure the continuity of service provided by the Council's Bereavement Services to provide burial space for residents of the District

6.8 Equality & Diversity

The new site has been designed to be compliant with all current equality legislation. It will be fully accessible by all residents and groups within the District and religion and belief have been a key consideration in the design of the site. The site is close to public transport and car parking will be provided on site including the provision of spaces for Blue Badge Holders. Consultation has been undertaken as part of the planning process.

6.9 Best Value

Best Value will be sought for the delivery of the project through a robust, effective and appropriate procurement process and tight budget control.

7 Appendices to the Report

Appendix 1: Site location plan

Appendix 2: Phase 1 works

Previous Consideration

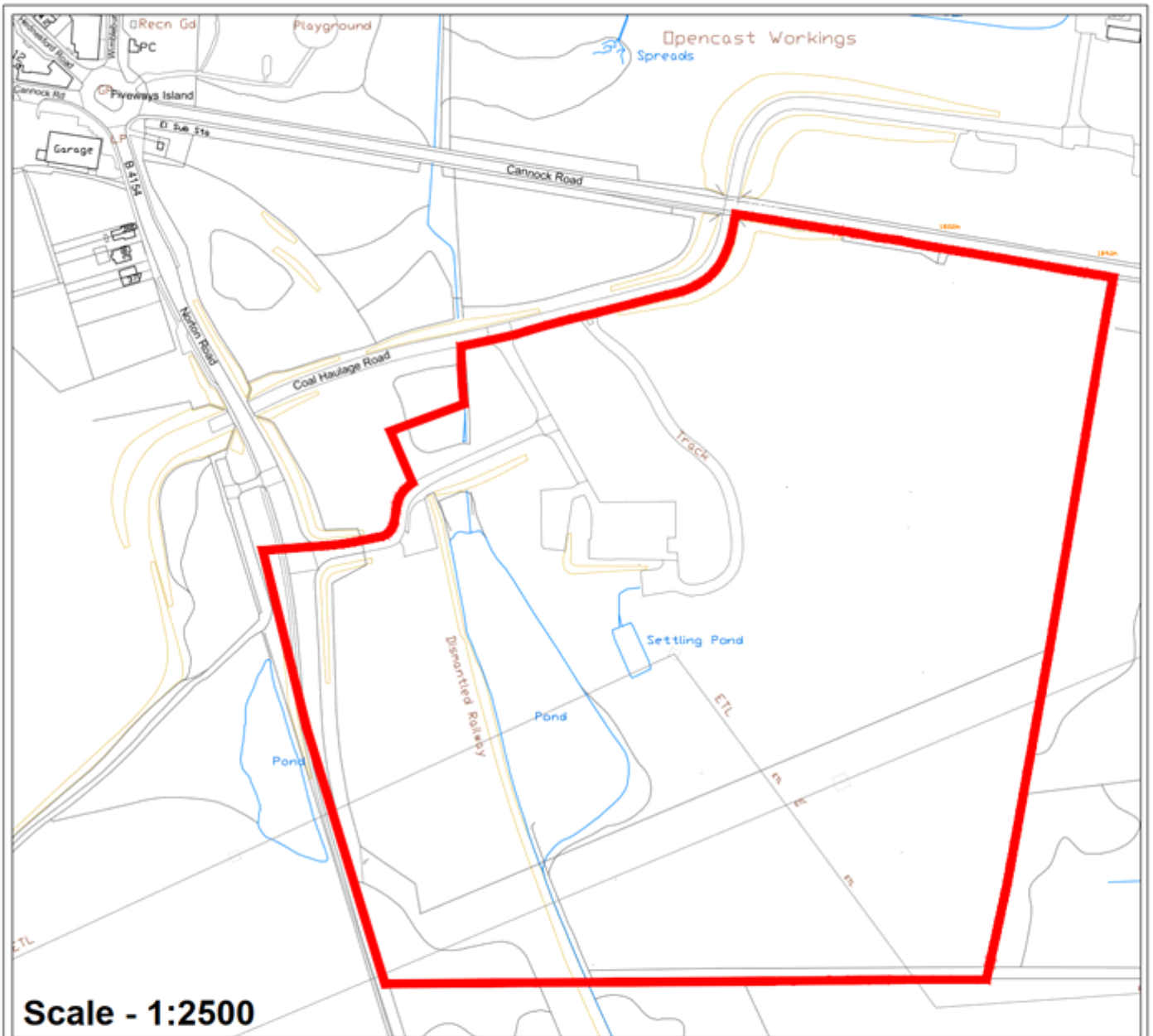
Options for the development of new cemetery and crematorium	Cabinet	23 August 2018
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Capital and Revenue Costs for development of a new cemetery	Cabinet	25 August 2016
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Purchase of a new cemetery budget - General Fund Capital Programme 2010/11	Cabinet	18 December 2014
Provision of a new cemetery in Cannock – Update Report	Cabinet	17 March 2011
Provision of additional cemetery land	Health Select Committee	6 February 2007
Provision of additional cemetery land – Cannock	Healthier Communities, Housing and Older People Select Committee	4 December 2007
New Cemetery Site - Cannock	Policy and Resources Committee	24 June 1999

Background Papers

Technical information relating to the Bleak House ex colliery site – Tests etc.



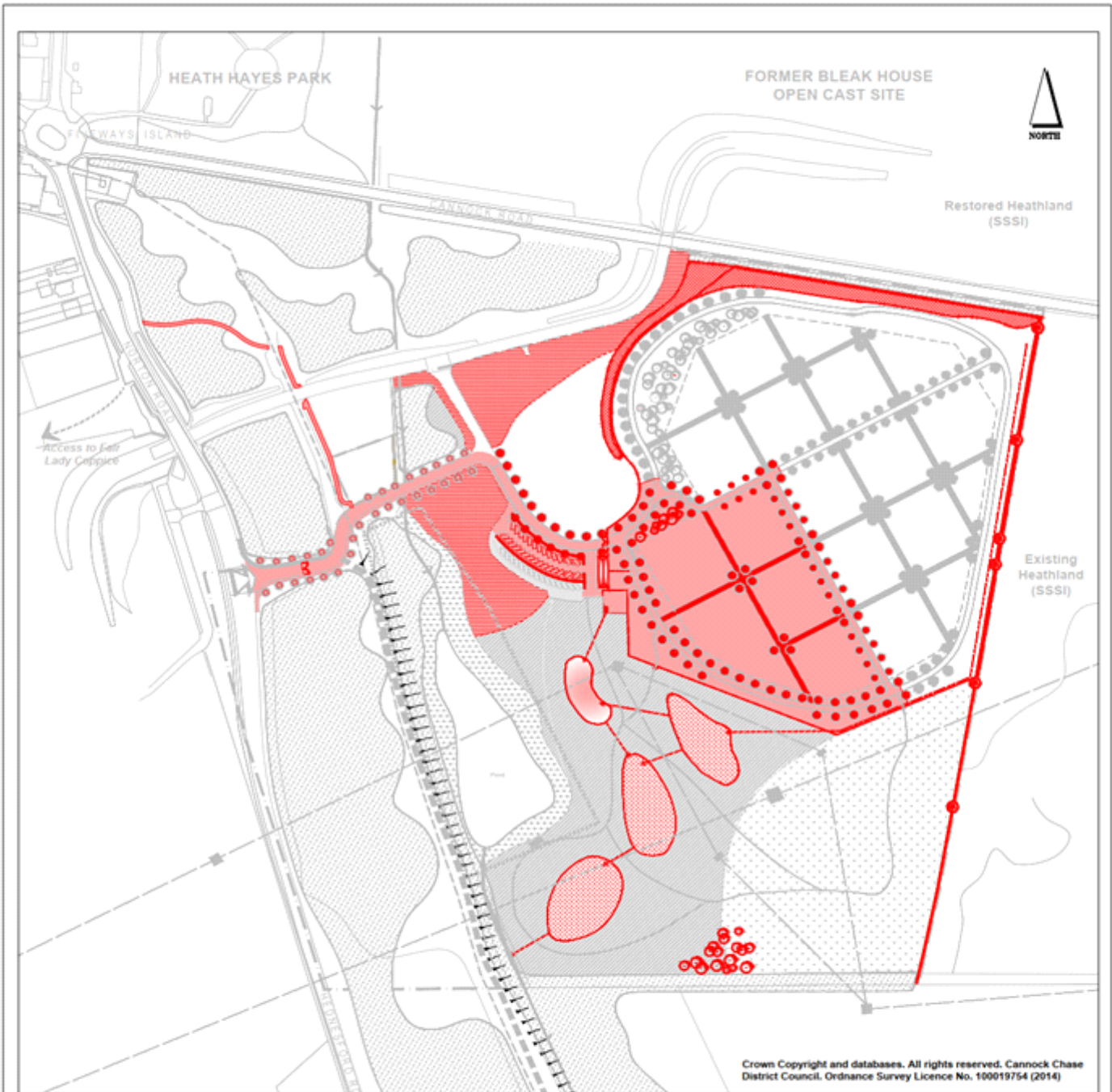
Revision A - Boundary Revisions

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Scheme PROPOSED CEMETERY	
Drawing Title Site & Location Plan	
Drawing No. ES/PR/NC/005-A	Scale As shown @ A3
Drawn By JPS / JW	Date JULY 2014
Checked By	Date



PHASE 1 : All elements highlighted in red / pink

 <p>Cannock Chase COUNCIL</p> <p>1000000000 1000000000 1000000000</p>	Scheme PROPOSED CEMETERY	
	Drawing Title Phase 1	
	Drawing No. ES/PRNC/PH1	Scale 1:1250 @ A1
	Drawn By CwD	Date April 2020
Checked By:	Date:	