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6 March 2024

Dear Councillor,

Health, Wellbeing, & The Community Scrutiny Committee

6:00pm, Monday 18 March 2024

Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Cannock

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

Yours sincerely,



T. Clegg
Chief Executive

To: Councillors:

Williams, D.W.G. (Chair)

Kenny, B. (Vice-Chair)

Arduino, L.	Johnson, P.
Aston, J.	Jones, V.
Bishop, L.	Kruskonjic, P.
Boyer, M.	Owen, P.
Buttery, M.S.	Stanton, P.
Foley, D.	

Staffordshire County Council Appointee for the purposes of the Committee's Statutory Functions under the National Health Service Act 2006:

- County Councillor P. Hewitt

Independent Co-opted Representative:

- Healthwatch Staffordshire

Agenda

Part 1

1. Apologies

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

- (i) To declare any interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct and any possible contraventions under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- (ii) To receive any Party Whip declarations.

3. Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2023 (enclosed).

4. Statutory Health Scrutiny Items

(i) Staffordshire County Council's Health and Care and Overview Scrutiny Committee

Please refer to Staffordshire County Council's [website](#) for details of all recently held meetings of the Health and Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Alternatively, the Chair may provide verbal updates on any recent meetings attended.

5. PDP 2023/24 - Quarter 3 Performance Update - Health, Wellbeing and The Community

To receive the Quarter 3 performance information for the Health, Wellbeing and The Community Priority Delivery Plan 2023/24 (Item 5.1 - 5.15).

6. Recommendations from the Lettable Standards (Empty Properties) and Housing Affordability Working Group

Report of the Head of Housing and Corporate Assets together with the Chair of the Committee (Item 6.1 - 6.15 - includes notes of all Working Group meetings).

Cannock Chase Council
Minutes of the Meeting of the
Health, Wellbeing and The Community Scrutiny Committee
Held on Tuesday 5 December 2023 at 6:00 p.m.
In the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Cannock
Part 1

Present: Councillors:

Williams, D.W.G. (Chair)
Kenny, B. (Vice-Chair)

Arduino, L. Dunnett, A. (Substitute)
Aston, J. Johnson, P.
Bishop, L. Jones, V.
Boyer, M. Kruskonjic, P.

Also present: County Councillor P. Hewitt, Staffordshire County Council.

16. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. Buttery, D. Foley, P. Owen, and P. Stanton

Notification had been received that Councillor A. Dunnett would substitute for Councillor D. Foley.

17. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restrictions on Voting by Members and Party Whip Declarations

No declarations of interests in additions to those already confirmed by Members in the Register of Members Interests were made.

18. Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2023 be approved.

19. PDP 2023/24 - Quarter 2 Performance Update - Health, Wellbeing and The Community

Consideration was given to the latest performance information for the Health Wellbeing and The Community Priority Delivery Plan 2023/24 (Item 4.1 - 4.16).

In response to a Member question regarding the green travel strategy, the Head of Operations reported that work was currently being undertaken around many different projects and it was hoped that this would be available next year. He also discussed with Members and provided further detail of green travel and the work that was being undertaken by both Staffs County Council and the Council.

A Member was keen to know if the cycle routes would be accessible to all. The Head of Operations confirmed that the width of the cycle routes would be accessible and they would be built to standard sizes. He indicated that the Council were working with IHL on cycling schemes and accessibility.

In response to a Member question, he advised that street enforcement would need to be taken up with Staffs County Council given that this had been their responsibility since 2015. He advised that they could only enforce where there was a traffic regulation order, however if there was an obstruction, the Council should be notified.

A Member referred to the document around affordable housing and was keen to know why the local plan for the district had been delayed. The Head of Operations responded and reported that there had been a few delays with obtaining evidence, however, it was almost ready to go out to consultation. The Head of Wellbeing added that the Council still had some pipeline sites and would still be looking at delivering housing.

The Chair referred to the document and the Cannock Chase App and asked if the dashboard was ready to view. The Head of Wellbeing reported that the dashboard was still being developed and this would be available soon for Members to view.

He also asked about the distribution of slow cookers to support residents. He was keen to know how successful the take-up had been. The Head of Wellbeing reported that all the slow cookers had been distributed and positive feedback had been received.

The Chair referred to the document and in particular supporting and building strong connections with local communities and asked if regular meetings had taken place with Town/Parish Council's in Quarter 3. The Head of Operations responded and advised that the Chief Executive would be undertaking meetings during this quarter.

The Head of Operations responded to a Member question and reported that in terms of identifying options for supporting community events a number of events had been held. He also reported that two Friends Groups had also become registered charities, and this would give more assurance to both the groups and the Council.

The Chair referred to the KPIs for Quarter 3 and asked if the missed bin collections had improved. The Head of Operations discussed with Members the number of collections in the district which was around 2.2 million and reported that the figure was improving and generally the performance was good.

Members noted the Quarter 1 performance update.

20. Presentation

The Head of Operations gave a presentation to Members on the results from the Resources and Waste Strategy.

The first part of the presentation covered the national resource and waste strategy 2018 consultation outcomes.

The first slide shown discussed the consultation over 4 years and the delays with the consultation. The results being announced in September 2023. The Prime Minister set out

his approach to Net Zero and on 21 September it was confirmed that consistency legislation would go ahead under a new name 'Simpler Recycling'.

The Head of Operations showed a slide that provided information on Simpler Recycling and information which showed that the consultation outcome was issued without warning on 21 October.

A further slide was shown which provided more detail on the outcomes and included garden waste, food waste, source separation, film, residual waste and non-domestic properties.

He showed a slide which provided more in-depth information around the new waste and recycling requirements (2018) for Cannock Chase Council and discussed extended producer responsibility and deposit return schemes.

The Chair asked Members if they had any questions.

A Member asked if Tetrapak cartons should still be taken to the Household Waste Recycling Centre as this was the current advice given to residents in the local area. The Head of Operations confirmed that this was still the case. He advised that the centre may have a small local contract with a business that could break these down. However, in terms of the Council contract, businesses would usually advise the Council what they could process hence the reason why Tetrapak cartons should still be sent to the recycling centre.

In response to a Member question concerning recycling/food waste, the Head of Operations responded and advised Members that a number of years ago a piece of work was undertaken with 'Wrap' to try and find what the best ways were of recycling. He indicated that around £1million in capital would be required to implement a food waste initiative and suggested that being wasteful with food was a problem.

The Councillor for Staffs County Council highlighted the good work being undertaken by both the County Council and Cannock Chase Council in terms of recycling. He suggested that further education around recycling was needed but generally, local people understood the need to recycle. He discussed the issue around the use of plastic bottles and a comment made by a Member around going back to glass, and suggested that the only way to revert their use, was by way of government legislation. Furthermore, the Head of Operations responded and advised that none of the waste collected from Cannock was sent to landfill.

Members expressed their interest in undertaking a visit to the waste recycling plant used by the Council at Four Ashes. The Waste and Engineering Services Manager would contact Members separately regarding a visit.

A Member asked about the additional cost of the use of vehicles to make more frequent collections. The Head of Operations responded and provided further detail around recycling and how other Local Authorities such as Staffordshire Moorlands reduced their bin sizes several years ago. He advised that the Council would retain the 2 weekly residual collections and a weekly food waste collection.

The Head of Operations continued with the second part of his presentation.

The Head of Operations then showed a slide to Members regarding chargeable garden waste. The slide provided details of what the Council would put in place and the 'go live' would be on 6 December with the first collection scheduled for week commencing 22 January

2024. There would be online signs ups, dedicated staff to deal with calls and drop-in sessions.

The Chair asked Members if they had any questions.

In response to several Member questions, the Head of Operations reported that residents could pay the charge using a cheque or they could visit the Council on 'chip & pin' days to pay. He also provided further detail as to why the payment needed to be made in full and explained the reason why brown bins would remain with the property. He advised that information was available on the Council's website and those people that did not require a collection during the winter period could register to start later in the year, however the full payment would still be required.

A Member was keen to know how the contractor would recognise those households who had made the payment for their bins to be collected. The Head of Operations responded and advised that there would be permit fitted securely to the bin. The Council had been in discussions with the company that supply the permits, and these were not easily removed. All information would be provided to the contractor in advance on those households that required a collection.

The Waste and Engineering Services Manager thanked Members for working with residents and explaining the new process.

Resolved:

That the Waste and Engineering Services Manager would contact Members separately regarding undertaking a visit to the Four Ashes waste recycling plant.

The Chair thanked the Head of Operations for his presentation.

21. Update - Scrutiny Review

A brief update was given on the work currently being undertaken by the Lettable Standard (Empty Properties) and Housing Affordability Working Group.

The Chair reported that the Working Group had met twice. The focus of the meetings was how a void property could be improved for its new tenant(s). He explained that Officers had provided information on housing data and information/photographs of void properties left in a poor state. The next meeting would be held on 8 January, and it was hoped that some proposals could be produced.

The Head of Housing and Corporate Assets further added that it would be advantageous for Members to view a property that was in a poor state and view again once work had been undertaken. She stated that one of the KPIs in housing was the turnaround time of voids, however work was needed to reduce the timescale. The Council's decorating scheme had been discussed and she reported that other Local Authorities did not provide an allowance however would supply a decorating pack.

The Housing Maintenance Manager also added that work was being undertaken around the lettable standard to try and ascertain the further costs to improve the standard.

The Head of Housing and Corporate Assets indicated that there had been a 'refresh' of the housing waiting list and this had reduced from 1,800 to 1,100 people now on the list.

However, the Head of Housing and Corporate Assets reported that there had been an increase in homelessness cases. She suggested that the number of empty homes was reducing, and this was because of people staying longer in their homes, people living longer and more costly rents.

The Democratic Services Officer would liaise with the Housing Maintenance Manager and the Head of Housing and Corporate Assets and provide some availability of dates to those Members on the Working Group to undertake a visit to a void property.

Resolved:

That the Senior Committee Officer liaise with the Housing Maintenance Manager and the Head of Housing and Corporate Assets and provide some availability of dates to those Members on the Working Group to undertake a visit to a void property.

22. Statutory Health Scrutiny Items

Update – Staffordshire County Council's Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Chair reported that Councillor P. Stanton had attended the last meeting and then read out the following statement:

"1. Update in maternity and neonatal services.

Profound workforce challenges. Attempting to address this with positive recruitment policies.

Concern also expressed that Stoke on Trent has the highest neonatal mortality rate in England, this would appear to be impacted by workforce limitations also, other causes being reviewed including housing and lifestyles.

2. Presentation by Paul Brown Chief Finance Officer Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent ICB. Performance and finance overview - difficult financial outlook impacting on services and not meeting performance targets.

The role of LA's role noted in that improving healthy lifestyles long term may help to reduce demand".





The meeting closed at 7:20pm.

Chair

Priority Delivery Plan for 2023-24

PRIORITY 2 - HEALTH & WELLBEING “To encourage and support residents to lead healthy and independent lives”

Summary of Progress as at end of Quarter 3


				N/A	Total Number of Projects
Action completed	Work on target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	Action not yet due	
3	9	1	2		15


Summary of Successes as at Quarter 3




Work is due to start on schedule on the Council's first Bike and Play area at the Stadium Park during Q4, where young people, and people of any age, will be able to develop their cycling skills towards on-road use. Where possible, play area / open space development is being undertaken to include the installation / improvements of circular perimeter pathways, green gyms, and walkways, designed to encourage outdoor activities such as walking, cycling, and running.





Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 3





The health and wellbeing strategy is being drafted and will be shared with partners for comment in Q4.



Projects	Actions and Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
Provide opportunities for residents to lead healthy and active lifestyles and recognise the importance of mental health and wellbeing							
Work with Inspiring Health Lifestyles (IHL) leisure trust and other stakeholders to deliver campaigns / programmes to promote the benefits of being active and living healthily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with IHL, partners, stakeholders and schools on increasing participation in sports and wellbeing activities and bid for funding where appropriate 	X	X	X	X	<p>Successful 'Staying Well' event held at Chase Leisure Centre, in partnership with Cannock North and Cannock Villages PCN, to promote the IHL sports and wellbeing activities</p> <p>Other activities started this quarter include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with students from Cannock Chase High to offer taster sessions for activities they may not have tried before - Spin sessions introduced as part of the Pedal to Empower project for participants of the Chase Recovery sessions - Supported Hednesford Valley High School with arts and horticultural activities - Worked with students from Staffordshire University Academy and South Staffordshire College on the Living Colour project - Started 'Cannock Chase Knits Together' with the support of schools, community groups, libraries and community centres <p>£10,000 grant awarded from Awards for All to run an initiative to support vulnerable residents in the District struggling with the cost of living and rising household bills</p>	

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
Promote the use of the Cannock Chase Can online app to support people in leading healthy lifestyles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop evaluation tool - Cannock Chase Can portal 		X	X	X	Evaluation tool is currently in development and testing will take place at the end of January 2024	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new app features and functionality 	X	X	X	X	Developments are ongoing. The Council has been successful in receiving funding to reduce health inequalities which will enable further developments to be made over the next 12 months.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver activities within the community - bespoke projects 	X	X	X	X	Projects ongoing and new projects being developed i.e. alcohol project, healthy eating, Warm Hubs programme, and Treasured Times. A bespoke project for each wellness theme is being explored as part of the above funding.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise Cannock Chase Can showcase event 		X	X	X		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Cannock Chase Can zone at Hednesford's annual festival 		X	X	X	This took place in Q2	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed Cannock Chase Can into the infrastructure of IHL (Wellbeing offer) 		X	X	X	This is ongoing and work is underway to ensure data can shape future decision making	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a Cannock Chase Can Wellbeing Hub using existing leisure and cultural venues. 		X	X	X	Work is underway to progress this	

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
Encourage residents to walk or cycle to and from work and school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt and work towards the objectives within the Council's green travel strategy 		X	X	X	The Council is yet to finalise and agree its green travel strategy. However, it is working where it can within its draft objectives. For example, the Local Plan contains over 140 references to cycling and walking. The Council is committed to include cycling and walking facilities into its parks and open spaces, especially around early years learning and general development and training. It has developed a masterplan for Cannock Park to enable local school children and the public to walk and cycle through the park more easily. This will be delivered as part of the development project.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners to create attractive and safe walking and cycling routes 	X	X	X	X	Circular pathways and green gym are being included into all new developments where space permits. Play areas that have had new green gyms and routes recently include Laburnum Avenue and Wellington Drive. In addition, Staffordshire County Council continues to develop its roadside cycle ways and pedestrian improvements as per the below.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with schools to promote walking and cycling to school 		X	X		IHL and CCDC officers continue to work with schools and community groups in preparation for the opening of the Stadium bike and play area and look at training opportunities that the new facility will offer.	

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities to be identified as part of the planning application process 			X		Staffordshire County Council is continuing to develop the LCWIP plans for the District with the installation of further cycling lanes and improved walking routes along the A34 corridor and around Cannock town centre.	
Deliver lasting legacy projects from the Commonwealth Games' mountain biking event (i.e. Perry's Trail and Pedal and Play trail).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and incorporate cycle and wheeled sports play and areas into play areas / parks where possible 	X	X	X	X	Cycling and wheeled sports play provision to be incorporated in the new masterplans for both Cannock Park and Heath Hayes Park. Groundwork is due to begin on the Bike and Play area at the Stadium park site during Q4.	
Embed health and wellbeing into all of our policies and everything that we do							
Develop a Health and Wellbeing Strategy (HWB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present strategy to Cabinet for adoption 	X	X			A draft health and wellbeing strategy is being produced. It has been delayed due to capacity issues. When the draft is completed, it will be shared with partners for comments before a final strategy is presented.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate strategy actions / milestones into mainstream service delivery. 			X	X	See above	





Projects	Actions and Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
Work with partners to address health inequalities across the District							
Work with Staffordshire County Council to deliver the Better Health Staffordshire (BHS) Pilot Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide constructive input, advice and assistance with the project to SCC and other partners 	X	X	X	X	IHL is aligning programmes to BHS priorities. The funding that the Council has been allocated to tackle health inequalities will be invested in Cannock Chase Can and further progress the work of BHS.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure opportunities for the Cannock Chase Can initiative and app to contribute to BHS continue to be aired and maximised. 	X	X	X	X	IHL and CCDC have highlighted what initiatives are active that contribute to this agenda.	
Support residents that need our help							
Work with partners to encourage the take up of benefits by residents with low incomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Service Level and Grant Agreements include support for residents on low incomes 	X				The Citizens Advice Bureau provides a range of support for residents on low incomes and for those in financial difficulty, including benefit take up. Support Staffordshire's work for the year includes ensuring support is provided to residents as a result of the cost of living crisis.	
Work with Support Staffordshire and Staffordshire County Council to support residents who need our help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in partnership working to ensure Cannock Chase residents benefit from support available from county wide organisations and schemes 	X				Distribution of slow cookers to residents who need them took place during Q1	

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
Work on fuel poverty with partners, such as Staffordshire Warmer Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Team to identify and assist households suffering fuel poverty, through awareness campaigns and promotion activity 	X	X	X	X	Awareness campaigns and promotion of support and advice available delivered	
Work with partners to safeguard the most vulnerable people within our District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver partnership campaigns to raise awareness of key issues and support pathways for key issues affecting the District 	X	X	X	X	Campaigns are now being delivered by the Commissioner for Police, Fire and Rescue, and Crime and therefore no longer in-house	No longer recorded
Provide funding to voluntary organisations to provide free independent, impartial, and confidential advice to our residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant Agreement in place 	X				Funding provided to Citizens Advice	

Priority Delivery Plan for 2023-24

PRIORITY 3 - THE COMMUNITY “To ensure Cannock Chase is a place that residents are proud to call home”

Summary of Progress as at end of Quarter 3

				N/A	Total Number of Projects
Action completed	Work on target	Work < 3 months behind schedule	Work > 3 months behind schedule	Action not yet due	
	14	2		2	18




Summary of Successes as at Quarter 3

Play areas refurbishment is on track with the completion of another two at Barnard Way and Wellington Drive. Relationships continue to grow with the Council's Friends Groups, some of which have been working alongside officers on play area improvements and parks masterplans. Council officers maintain and develop their work with partners around the ongoing 'Small Change-Big Difference' campaign around sustainability and recycling, and are expanding it to look at food waste and waste reduction, going forward.





Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 3

Work has been delayed on the creation of a Council sustainability strategy due to officer capacity limits and other environmental type works and projects that are being undertaken from within the limited capacity available.

The Local Plan has been delayed with a new timetable approved by Cabinet. This went to Council on 24 January 2024.

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
Ensure our neighbourhoods are safe, clean, and tidy							
Engage with young people at risk of engaging in ASB through targeted diversionary activities across the District	Deliver annual programme of diversionary activities across the District	X	X	X	X	Achieving Goalz and Dreams has been commissioned through Locality Deal funding to deliver this initiative. Areas for engagement are determined based upon known peaks / hotspots, with additional flexibility to respond to emerging themes and trends as required. Additional activities / providers have been funded through the ASB Prevention Fund and a full District mapping of activities in currently ongoing.	
Maintain our local parks and green spaces							
Undertake a review of all our play areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out capital play area refurbishments as per the programme 	X	X	X	X	Completion of the following capital parks improvements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellington Drive play area Barnard Way play area 	
Provide support and opportunities to community groups wishing to take on more responsibility for improving and developing open spaces and play areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve links with existing Friends Groups and create a `Friends of Parks Groups` Strategy 	X	X	X	X	Strengthen links with Brereton Millions and Friends of Cannock Park via masterplan development and parks improvements programme. Continuous quarterly meetings with all friends of groups.	

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
Encourage residents to live a sustainable lifestyle							
Work with partners and the local community to support appropriate tree and planting schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with internal and external partners, local schools etc to identify suitable sites for community planting schemes 		X	X	X	Planting carried out at the following sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laburnum Avenue Barnard Way Wellington Drive 	✓
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out community planting at suitable identified sites 			X	X	Two native hedges row planting projects have been identified in Heath Hayes Park and Cannock Park. Planting is due to be started during January - February with approximately 30 people involved at each of the sites.	✓
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look to create wild planting areas on parks and open spaces 	X	X	X	X	Created wildflower mounds and planting at Wellington Drive as part of the play area and open space development	✓
Undertake campaigns to raise awareness of the ways in which residents can reduce their impact on the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out annual waste reduction / recycling / climate change campaigns 	X	X	X	X	Officers have been researching food waste and the upcoming Food Waste Action Week. They have been working on an upcoming campaign to educate residents and encourage resident take up when food waste collections are launched nationally in 2026. In addition to the above officers continued to work on garden waste and Christmas campaigns during Q3.	✓

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with schools, other educational establishments, and partners, to promote sustainability, environment, and climate change awareness 		X	X		Officers have been working with partners including IHL, the Globe Foundation and the House of Fairy Tales in the Great Imagining Cannock Chase event to be held on 8 and 9 March 2024. Prior to the event, artists will be going into schools as a continuation of the small change big difference campaign.	
Develop a Sustainability Strategy and action plan to reduce the Council's impact on the climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt a Council Sustainability Strategy 			X		Work on the Council's Sustainability Strategy has been held up due to officer capacity. The limited capacity available has been taken by other, mainly environmental type, works and projects.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work towards the objectives of the Council's sustainability strategy 			X	X	See above	
Encouragement of District wide Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local government and external partners on improving the District's sustainability and lowering its carbon emissions 	X	X	X	X	Continuing to work alongside all other Staffordshire councils as part of the Staffordshire Sustainability Board. As an example, the Council is also working with the Globe Foundation on Staffordshire's COP24, the Energy Saving Trust on taxi engagement and moves towards ULEV, and the Forest of Mercia CIC to develop and implement tree planting schemes within Council parks as part of their refurbishment.	

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
Improve the housing offer across the District							
Increase housing choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver sufficient supply of homes to provide for housing choice and ensure all people are able to live in a decent home 	X	X	X	X	Policies on housing choice and a proposed uplift in the delivery of affordable housing have been included in the Regulation 19 Local Plan.	✓
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help meet local need for a wide variety of housing, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ affordable dwellings; and ○ aspirational housing 	X	X	X	X	Affordable Housing as well as aspirational housing policies are set out within Reg19 Local Plan	✓
Work with other housing providers and landlords to ensure that their properties are safe and healthy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update policies and procedures, as legislation is updated, changes and / or is created in relation to health and safety in public and private sector housing 	X	X	X	X	Successful bid submitted for funding of housing projects dedicated to identifying and addressing key health issues within private sector housing	✓
Ensure our communities are well designed, accessible, and have inclusive environments							
Adopt a new Local Plan for the District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council approval and Submission to Secretary of State for examination spring 2023 	X				New LDS approved at Cabinet in December and went to full Council on 24 January 2024. Revised date Summer 2024	✓
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination in Public summer 2023 		X			New LDS approved at Cabinet in December and went to full Council on 24 January 2024. Revised date Autumn / Winter 2024	✓





Projects	Actions and Milestones	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr4	Progress Update	Symbol
Support and build strong connections within our local communities							
Work with partners to support community events	• Regular meetings with town and parish councils		X		X	Final action not yet due	N/A
	• Identify options for supporting community events				X	Action not yet due	N/A

KPIs for Priority 2 - Health and Wellbeing

Indicator	Target	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year	Symbol	Comments
Leisure								
Number of leisure and wellbeing service users	Out-turn (2022/23) 795,897	214,714	197,575	197,740			✓	
Number of individuals engaged through Cannock Chase Can activities and initiatives, including the app	N/A	1,092 app users	1,263 app users	1,387 app users			N/A	There were also 1,235 attendances at events over the quarter.

KPIs for Priority 3 - The Community

Indicator	Target	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year	Symbol	Comments
Waste Collection								
% Household waste sent for re-use, recycling and composting	50%	50.30%	41.55%	40.52%			✗	Dry recycling performance remains high, however, quarter 3 performance has been affected by a poor end to the growing season, with lower than expected garden waste tonnage. The national average recycling figure currently stands at around 44%.
<i>Breakdown:</i>								
<i>Recycling (dry)</i>		20.23%	19.04%	24.93%				
<i>Composting (garden)</i>		30.07%	22.51%	15.59%				
Missed bin collections (including assisted)	2021-22 out-turn 732	140	204	152			N/A	
Environmental Health								
% of food businesses inspected which are broadly compliant (rating of 3 or better)	N/A	98%	97%	98%			N/A	

Indicator	Target	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Year	Symbol	Comments
Homelessness								
% of homeless cases resolved through prevention assessed under prevention duty	N/A	71%	55%	47%			N/A	Case dependent and previously more cases incorrectly judged as prevention rather than relief, this has been corrected over time More cases have been taken this year than last, reflecting increased occurrences of homelessness in the District, mainly driven by private sector affordability issues and section 21 notices
% of homeless cases assessed under relief duty	N/A	29%	45%	53%			N/A	As above.
Housing								
Rent collected as proportion of rent due	100%	98.74%	97.04%	99.31%				Improved Q3 performance on rent collection (includes difficult Christmas period where collection usually dips slightly), on target to achieve 100% at year end
Rent arrears - former tenants (FTA)	£500,000	£453,302	£459,514	£452,041				
Average re-let time for Voids	52	46.10	43.30	33.87				Another improved quarter for re-let performance. Long term void re-lets all cleared and procedures back on track
% emergency repairs completed in time	100%	100%	100%	100%				

Review of the 'Lettable Standard'

Committee:	Health, Wellbeing and The Community Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	18 March 2024
Report of:	Chair of the Health, Wellbeing, and The Community Scrutiny Committee

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update the Health, Wellbeing and The Community Scrutiny Committee on the progress and outcome of a review of the Councils 'Letting Standard' carried out during the 23/24 financial year.
- 1.2 To report on the process and options considered in relation to the 'offer' when letting our properties following void works.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve the 'revised offer' of the letting Standard as outlined in the report.
- 2.2 The revised offer being to allocate a decoration pack to properties where no additional decorative works are required to be carried out by Housing Maintenance.

2.3 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.4 The Letting Standard provides a guide of what tenants can expect from the offer of a void property and what the minimum standards are to be achieved in the repairs and maintenance of such properties.

A review was carried out with focus on the following to ensure that: -

- We are meeting the minimum requirements of our obligations as a landlord.
- We align the standard with the Decent Homes Standard.
- We deliver value in our offer to our tenants and prospective tenants.
- We 'increase our offer' whilst maintaining sound financial management of costs.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 During the review, several options were considered and explored. Having due consideration for several factors that would form the basis for decisions on the options available.

- What are the tenants' expectations?
- Budget
- Resources
- Work turnaround times
- Works in progress
- Key to Key times
- Industry standards
- Regulatory requirements

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

4.1 Priority 3: To ensure Cannock Chase is a place that residents are proud to call home.

- Improve the housing offer across the district.

Priority 4: To be a modern, forward thinking and responsible council.

- Make the best use of our assets.

5 Report Detail

5.1 On the 17 July 2023, the Health, Wellbeing and The Community Scrutiny Committee discussed the work programme for the forthcoming year. The Committee agreed that one area for review would be the Cannock Chase District Council (CCDC) Letting Standard, and it was agreed to form a Working Group to discuss and work through options.

5.2 The 'Lettable Standard (Empty Properties) and Housing Affordability Working Group' was then established and included the following Councillors who all wished to contribute to the Scrutiny Review.

- Councillor D. Williams (Chair)
- Councillor D. Foley
- Councillor P. Stanton
- Councillor P. Kruskonjic
- Councillor V. Jones
- Councillor L. Arduino
- Councillor P. Johnson

5.3 The Review centred around the current Letting Standard with the understanding that any change to the Letting Standard would be a positive one and the standard would not reduce in any way.

5.4 The group looked at whether an 'enhanced' standard could be offered that would make CCDC properties more appealing in the early stages of the letting/allocation process, and explored aspects of the process that would enhance the offer and not: -

- Increase costs if possible.
- Have any significant impact on resources.
- Have any significant impact on turnaround times.
- Have an impact on rentable income.

But would: -

- Improve the 'take up' by reducing the number of refusals (although this was a small number generally).
- Increase the 'basic' standard offer in some way.
- Align the Letting Standard with the governments Decent Homes standard on components such as Kitchens.

5.5 Suggestions put forward for discussion and exploration were: -

A comparison of the Letting standard against the Decent Homes Standard.

- Are they aligned.
- Are any changes required.

First impressions

- Additional garden works.
- Decoration of Hall/Stairs/Landing as a matter of course

Prevention

- The legal process
- Pre termination inspections
- Recharges
- Tenants' responsibilities.

(Details of the above are included in Appendix 1 of the report).

5.6 Further exploration of enhancements centred around the proposal to decorate all properties throughout, and a comparison of costs exercise was conducted by the Housing Maintenance Manager to establish the impact this would have.

5.7 It was clear that the requirement to decorate 285 properties (detailed in appendix 2) would not be an option as the initial costings were in the region of £500,000.00 having considered the increase in labour x 5 operatives, transport x 5 vehicles, materials, time and rent loss impacts in year 1 with a reduced outlay in years 2 to 6 of circa £340,000.00 per annum as no vehicles or additional labour would be required. *Cyclical vehicle replacement occurs every 6/7 years, and so the vehicle procurement would require factoring in again during year 6/7.

5.8 It was noted that approximately 20% of void properties require some decorative remedial measures as a matter of course to bring the property to a minimum standard and those properties were not in a position to 'hand over' to tenants without the initial intervention from Housing Maintenance.

- 5.9 The Working Group discussed a 'Decoration Pack' to be allocated to properties and an exercise was conducted to establish costs.
- 5.10 It was evident that the costs of a full pack (with accessories to carry out the tasks) would be a viable option and would not incur any further costs than what was currently allocated to tenants in the 'Decoration Allowance' scheme.
- 5.11 The current spend on decoration allowances was estimated to be in the region of £70,000.00.
- 5.12 The chart on page 3 of Appendix 1, itemises the current cost of a Decoration Pack. Taking 80% of properties where this could be offered (using a typical 2 bedroomed house as the basis) equates to circa £56,000.00 - some £14,000.00 less than the current estimated spend on the decoration allowance offer (estimating against a 3 bedroomed property equates to £59,799.00).

(Details of the comparison are contained in Appendix 2 of the report).

- 5.13 Having considered the information and evidence in the attached reports in Appendix 1 and 2, the conclusion of the working group was to increase the offer by: -
- Providing a decoration pack with accessories that was sufficient to decorate the property (as opposed to a decoration allowance).
 - Ensure that the property was 'ready for decoration' when repair works were completed.
 - Ensure the letting standard mirrored the Decent Homes Standard for major component replacements.
 - In the case of vulnerable tenants, works would be carried out by the in-house team.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

Initial costings show no impact on budgets or costs.

The cost of providing the 'enhanced offer' would be contained in current budget allocations.

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

Enhancing the 'offer' would increase customer satisfaction by providing the customer with sufficient means to decorate their property to their own tastes and would reduce the risk of dissatisfaction and complaints.

The risk of doing nothing would mean CCDC would fall behind in our priorities, and not deliver on those priorities which were: -

- Supporting residents that need our help.
- Improving our housing offer across the district.

6.5 Equalities and Health

We provide opportunities for our residents to lead a healthy and active lifestyle.

6.6 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Briefing note comparing Standards, looking at prevention and first impressions.

Appendix 2: Briefing notes for cost comparisons on decorations, resources and rent loss.

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

Notes of the Lettable Standard (Empty Properties) & Housing Affordability Working Group meetings:

30 August 2023

23 October 2023

8 January 2024

22 January 2024

Additionally - 16 October 2023 (All Members invited to receive a presentation and discuss whether Sustainability should form part of the work programme).

Contact Officer: Nirmal Samrai

Telephone Number: 01543 464 210

Ward Interest: N/A

Report Track: Cabinet (TBC)

Key Decision: N/A

Appendix 1

Health, Wellbeing and The Community Scrutiny Committee

During discussion by The Health, Wellbeing and The Community Scrutiny Committee on the Voids Lettable Standard, it was requested that a comparison of the **Decent Homes standard against the Letting Standard** be evidenced along with what could be considered by way of **Prevention** of properties being left in a condition that requires more remedial works than would be considered ‘acceptable’ and also to consider the **First Impressions** and what this may look like and entail.

Comparison between the Decent Homes Standard and the Lettings Standard.

Property Type	Storage Capacity	Decent Homes				Lettings Standard	
		Quantity	Unit Type (These are for guidance only)	Single units	Single unit equivalent	Unit Type (These are for guidance only)	Single units
Sheltered	As per no. of bedrooms below	1	1000mm Wall Unit	2 single wall units	6	3 - 5 single wall units	7 to 10
		1	1000mm Sink Unit	2 single base units		4 - 5 single base units	
		2	600mm Base Unit	2 single base units			
1 Bed	1.0 – 1.25m ³	1	1000mm Wall Unit	2 single wall units	6	3 - 5 single wall units	7 to 10
		1	1000mm Sink Unit	2 single base units		4 - 5 single base units	
		2	600mm Base Unit	2 single base units			
2 Bed	1.25 – 1.5 m ³	1	1000mm Wall Unit	2 single wall units	8	3 - 5 single wall units	7 to 10
		1	500mm Wall Unit	1 single wall unit		4 - 5 single base units	
		1	1000mm Sink Unit	2 single base units			
		1	1000mm Base Unit	2 single base units			
		1	600mm Base Unit	1 single base unit			
3 Bed	1.5 – 2.0m ³	2	1000mm Wall Unit	4 single wall units	11	3 - 5 single wall units	7 to 10
		1	1000mm Sink Unit	2 single base units		4 - 5 single base units	
		2	1000mm Base Unit	4 single base units			
		1	600mm Base Unit	1 single base unit			
4 Bed	1.5 – 2.0m ³	2	1000mm Wall Unit	4 single wall units	12	3 - 5 single wall units	7 to 10
		1	500mm Wall Unit	1 single wall unit		4 - 5 single base units	
		1	1000mm Sink Unit	2 single base units			
		2	1000mm Base Unit	4 single base units			
		1	600mm Base Unit	1 single base unit			

In addition to the above, we also need to consider:-

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed
Cooker Space 640mm	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
Washing Machine 640mm	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
Tumble Dryers 630mm	If Practicable	If Practicable	If Practicable	If Practicable
Fridge Freezer 630mm	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
Dishwasher Space 630mm	If Practicable	If Practicable	If Practicable	If Practicable

Prevention

The tenancy conditions are currently being updated and within them there are certain stipulations placed upon our tenants to ensure they keep the property in a clean and acceptable condition, including decorations and external areas.

When a property is to become void (whether by termination, transfer, or Mutual Exchange), there is a requirement on the outgoing tenants to ensure they leave the property in a good, clean, safe condition. Sadly, this is not always the case and is often difficult to police and administer, as some terminating tenants will often leave properties in a condition that is below the standard and condition stipulated in the tenancy agreement and then, having moved out of the district, will be reluctant to reimburse the Council for monies owed.

Some tenants will unfortunately pass on and without supporting family to deal with their estate, the Council will be left to resolve.

Whenever possible, Officers will visit the property prior to the outgoing tenants vacating and will inspect the general condition and advise on any works that may be required prior to vacating. If no works are carried out, the tenants will have been made aware that they will be recharged for any remedial works we have to carry out that are deemed as 'beyond normal wear and tear' or can be attributed to the tenants (or members of their household or visitors) neglect/damage.

The tenancy agreement also refers to the condition of properties and tenants' obligations in order to prevent properties being left in an unacceptable condition (and refers to recharges).

Our commitment and process to securing any monies owed is: -

- To instigate any legal process open to us to recover.
- Pre-termination inspections to advise tenants of what we expect (and what they should do).
- Our recharge policy.
- 'Returning tenants' can bid on properties, but our recording process ensures that they will not have bids accepted and subsequently offers until accounts are cleared.

First Impressions

When offering properties to prospective tenants, we will have completed repairs to the current lettable standard, but this may not be to the incoming tenants' expectations. Managing expectations is a subject that can cut across all areas of our services and none more so than the 'offered property'.

First impressions set the tone for 'what is to come' or at least sets the level of expectations at a point in time and if tenants are aware of our standard and are expecting more than what they are offered, the chances are they will be disappointed before they enter the property.

Would providing a 'little extra' within our standard make our properties more desirable? If we are to assume the answer is yes, we then must manage the provision of resources and budgets and to what extent would increasing the 'first impressions' impact?

What might this look like: -

- Neatly cut and trimmed front Lawns close to any viewings?
- Clean and weed free paths leading to the property.
- A clean appearance of the front door (washed down)
- In general needs properties, a freshly painted Hall/Stairs/landing - or a number of rooms or: -
- Consider decorating all rooms to 'set the new standard' with consideration on the impact on budgets, resources and turnaround times this will have.
- Clean and clutter free communal stairs/areas (in our blocks).
- Decorate/Tidy up communal areas in blocks?
- Floor finishes to be uniform. No screed? New floor tiles?

Would enhancing the offer from a 'decorating allowance' to a 'Void Pack' be an option? The void pack consisting of sufficient paint and accessories to decorate the property throughout that would: -

- Maintain the minimum 'first impression' of the access view (garden and paths) but offer our properties with a standardised 'welcome pack' consisting of decorating materials and tools dependent on room numbers.
- Enhance this by offering a choice of Wallpaper as part of a 'Pack' rather than just paint?

Having looked at possible suppliers and what could be offered by way of a 'void pack' we would be able to offer sufficient decorating materials and accessories across all of our property types that would offer an alternative to carrying out decorations during the void period (notwithstanding some properties WILL require some form of cleaning down and decorative finish as the condition of some properties will no doubt necessitate 'intervention' which is estimated to be in 20% of properties).

The below list shows the current costs for each property type for a typical void 'Paint Pack.'

Social Housing Paint Pack Price List Nov 2023

Nov 2023 Prices			Cannock Chase
Paint Pack			
GB73	Armstead	1 Bedroom	135.77
GB74	Armstead	2 Bedroom	175.47
GB75	Armstead	3 Bedroom	190.54
GB76	Armstead	1 Room (excl Accessories)	78.44
GB77	Armstead	1 Room (incl Accessories)	69.91
GB78	Armstead	Kitchen / Bathroom	72.08
GB73	Dulux	1 Bedroom	186.65
GB74	Dulux	2 Bedroom	246.90
GB75	Dulux	3 Bedroom	262.28
GB76	Dulux	1 Room (excl Accessories)	91.42
GB77	Dulux	1 Room (incl Accessories)	82.89
GB78	Dulux	Kitchen / Bathroom	112.45
GB79	Dulux	Mould Treatment (Fung. Matt PBW)	142.25
GB80	Dulux	Mould Treatment (Fung. Egg PBW)	166.97
GB81	Dulux	Mould Treatment (Fung. Matt Tint)	149.78
GB82	Dulux	Mould Treatment (Fung. Egg Tint)	181.13

One advantage of the above is that tenants could also chose a wider range of colours to suit their own personal preferences.

Costing

If we were to consider 20% of our void turnover of properties will require some form of remedial works to the walls and ceilings, due to the condition at void stage, then we could start to estimate the cost of decoration packs as follows.

*Figures are based on 300 properties per year and based on a 2 bedroomed property with Dulux paint and the accessory pack to give sufficient scope in costing.

- 240 properties (80%) @ 2 bedrooms (with accessories (Dulux GB74)) = £59,256.00
- If we were to 'enhance the offer' by including a choice of 15 rolls of wallpaper at an average cost of £15.00 per roll, this would be estimated at £54,000.00.
- This would equate to a cost in the region of £113,256.00.

It is estimated for the in-house team to carry out a full decoration of a 2 bedroomed property, this would be circa £156,768.00 based on material and labour requirements.

If we are to estimate each property as requiring an additional visit for path and garden clearances as £100 per property, this is estimated as £24,000.00.

By including a much better finish on floor surfaces by providing floor tiles rather than a standard screed, we estimate that 25% of properties would benefit from this and further calculations on areas and numbers identifies this as being circa £1,046.00 per property on 25% of the overall number of voids, and so estimates to £78,000.00.

The total estimated outlay for the 'first impressions' and an enhanced lettings standard would be circa £260,000.00, however, the difference between this proposal and what we currently do, would be communicated to Members at the meeting held on 8 January to give a true reflection of the costs associated with improving the standard.

A point to note: -

If we were to compare offering a decorating allowance to the same 240 properties for the average of a 2 bedroomed property, this would equate to approximately £200.00 per property (based on current allowances per room) giving an outlay of £48,000.00.

However, our current spend on decorating allowances across CCDC during the 23/24 financial year is circa £36,000.00 which pro rata would be in the region of £70,000.00 per annum.

It should be noted that since the Housing regulators letter of November 2022, any properties that are identified as suffering from Dampness/Mould Growth, will be treated in the first instance by the voids team prior to letting.

Comparison between Lettable Standards

The Housing Maintenance Manager contacted a number of surrounding social landlords in relation to a comparison of letting standards.

Obtaining copies of any standards proved to be difficult as very, very few published their standards for viewing.

In the majority of instances, contact by telephone had taken 10 minutes before it was possible to speak with anyone and in the majority of cases the Contact Centre personal did not know who to ask or where to forward the call to and promised callbacks that did not materialise.

Sandwell, Wolverhampton Homes, Walsall Housing Group, Wrekin Housing Group, Dudley and Tamworth councils were contacted and only 3 Standards were obtained, those being Northwest Leicestershire District Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Council and Blaby District Council (DC).

Websites visited (in addition to the above) were Bromsgrove DC, Hinckley and Bosworth, Newcastle Under Lyme, South Derbyshire DC, Wyre Forest DC.

When comparing the standards, it was noted that 'in essence' the standards were not too dissimilar, with some notable differences being in the 'regulatory' standards for Smoke and Fire protection with some landlords specifying 'hard wired' alarms and others being happy to install battery powered, however, the primary aim of compliance was satisfied in all cases.

External works to gardens were similar in works carried out as are internal works in respect of cleanliness, fixtures and fittings.

Blaby DC differed from others in the stated provision of units within the kitchen, stating that:

Where the size of the existing kitchen permits:

- 1 Double sink Base with single drainer
- 1 double base unit
- 1 single wall unit
- 1 double wall unit with work top.

This differs from the 'standard offer' and differs quite noticeably from our own as the Blaby DC offer was the equivalent of 4 single base units and 3 single wall units.

Recharge procedures for unauthorised works or excessive damage was fairly uniform in all cases.

Appendix 2

Lettable Standard (Empty Properties) & Housing Affordability Working Group

Further to the recent meeting of the Working Group, the Housing Maintenance Manager was asked to report on costs to decorate all properties, the following provides an outline of initial and future costs.

A comparison was also included to show the costs of offering a decorating pack for all, or those properties that required additional 'enhancement'.

Background Data

In identifying the requirements to deliver, it was first established the number of properties that became void over a 4-year period and to establish the number of rooms that required decorations based on property type: -

	Void turnover by financial year			
	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Bedsit	6	9	8	18
1 bed	92	184	166	98
2 bed	64	113	123	70
3 bed	45	60	73	50
4 bed	0	4	2	2
Total	201	361	364	220

Average turnover per year 286.5

The above was rounded to 285 for calculation purposes.

The Council's repairs team estimated an average of 5 days to carry out decorations (which included stripping walls, plaster repairs, preparations, primer, undercoat, gloss and emulsion) and this was a minimum.

To identify the number of operatives required, the number of days required divided by the number of working days available will give the number of operatives required.

Operatives required.

285 voids @ 5 days each	1425 person days	
220 working days available	1425/220	6.5 round to 7

The Council currently has 2 decorators allocated to voids and so would require an additional 5 operatives with vehicles to be recruited to carry out the decoration to all properties with an estimated initial outlay of £385,400.00 (includes add ons, vehicle procurement and year 1 estimated fuel requirement).

Calculating the cost of decoration, we looked at the cost of materials for the property types as an average.

Materials	Bedsit	£	115.56
	1 bed	£	133.24
	2 bed	£	162.68
	3 bed	£	192.12
	4 bed	£	221.56

Due to the additional time required to decorate each property, we would need to factor in the rent loss based on an additional 5 days of works required in the 285 properties. The average rent is estimated at £85 per week: -

285 x £85 = £24,225.00 loss

Having sourced the raw data, we are now able to calculate an estimation of costs to decorate all properties by the average property type: -

In year 1, consideration needs to be made for the procurement of operatives and vehicles and this cost is factored into the calculation (detail can be given if required).

Yr1	
5 days labour	£ 866.92
Vehicle yr 1	£ 615.38
	£ 1,482.31

Bedsit	£ 1,597.87	
1 bed	£ 1,615.55	
2 bed	£ 1,644.99	
3 bed	£ 1,674.43	
4 bed	£ 1,703.87	
Year 1		
Average numbers per year	to decorate each	
Bedsit	10.25	£ 16,378.14
1 bed	135	£ 218,098.94
2 bed	92.5	£ 152,161.36
3 bed	57	£ 95,442.38
4 bed	2	£ 3,407.74
		£ 485,488.56
Factor in rent loss of		£ 24,225.00
	Basic cost	£ 509,713.56

In years 2 to 6 there was no vehicle procurement and so the following was based on labour, materials and rent only: -

Yr2	
5 days labour	£ 866.92
Vehicle yr 2	£ 38.46
	£ 905.38

Bedsit	£ 1,020.94	
1 bed	£ 1,038.62	
2 bed	£ 1,068.06	
3 bed	£ 1,097.50	
4 bed	£ 1,126.94	
Year 2 onwards up to year 6		
Average numbers per year		to decorate each
Bedsit	10.25	£ 10,464.68
1 bed	135	£ 140,214.32
2 bed	92.5	£ 98,795.98
3 bed	57	£ 62,557.76
4 bed	2	£ 2,253.89
		£ 314,286.63
Factor in rent loss of		£ 24,225.00
	Basic cost	£ 338,511.63

Costs comparison of Decorating packs being offered to all tenants (based on the more expensive 'Dulux' paints).

Decorating Packs			
	Cost	Ave number	Tot cost
Bedsit	£ 186.65	10.25	£ 1,913.16
1 bed	£ 186.65	135	£ 25,197.75
2 bed	£ 246.90	92.5	£ 22,838.25
3 bed	£ 262.28	57	£ 14,949.96
4 bed	£ 290.60	2	£ 581.20
			£ 65,480.32

If the decoration packs were offered to the 80% of properties only (Members will recall the previous report) then taking the average 2 bedroomed property, this would be circa £56,293.32.

Current estimations are for decoration allowances for the year 23/24 will be in the region of £70,000.00.

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL

**NOTES -
LETTABLE STANDARD (EMPTY PROPERTIES) & HOUSING AFFORDABILITY
WORKING GROUP**

WEDNESDAY 30 AUGUST AT 4.30 P.M.

REMOTE MEETING VIA MS TEAMS

Present: Councillors:

D. Williams (Chair)
L. Arduino
A. Dunnett (attending as substitute for Cllr. D. Foley)
P. Johnson
V. Jones
P. Kruskonjic
P. Stanton

Officers:

A. Nevin	Head of Wellbeing
G. James	Housing Maintenance Manager
J. Hunt	Senior Committee Officer

1 Apologies

Apology given for Councillor D. Foley.

Councillor A. Dunnett would substitute for Councillor D. Foley.

2. Declarations of Interest from Members

None.

3. Welcome and Introductions

Members and Officers introduced themselves.

4. Focus of the Working Group

The Head of Wellbeing discussed the role of the Working Group and suggested that following previous discussions, the focus of the review would be around the lettable standard. The Health, Wellbeing and The Community Scrutiny Committee had also previously discussed other areas such as rents, affordability, other housing options and how the Council's housing stock fitted in the wider housing offer. She advised Members that she could give a brief presentation of the data available to show the importance of the Council's housing stock in the market. This would put in context the work on the lettable standard and empty properties.

Background Papers

5. Housing Affordability Data

(Councillor L. Arduino joined the meeting).

The Head of Wellbeing advised that she could provide Members with an overview of the data at a future meeting.

Members discussed the data that they were keen to understand more about. This included lettings, affordability, affordable housing delivery and homelessness. The Head of Wellbeing agreed to source as much of this as possible and present it at the next meeting

6. The Lettable Standard

The Housing Maintenance Manager provided a presentation to Members on the Lettable Standard.

He suggested that Members receive the presentation, and any questions or comments could be brought back to a further meeting.

A copy of the presentation would be emailed to Members.

The presentation covered:

- Walkthrough the current standard.
- Policy statement
- Aims of the Council
- Decent Homes Standard
- Internal Works
- The Lettable Standard
- The Lettable Standard - External Works

Member Question:

A Member asked about property renovations and referred to the planned programmes undertaken by the Council and asked if there was any issue with programmes overlapping.

The Housing Maintenance Manager advised that the Council carry out as many works as possible on the planned programme. In terms of renovations, he advised that where a property would need to be brought up to a certain standard, this would fall under the Government's Decent Home's Standard and commented that this should not be anything less than the lettable standard.

- Electrical Works
- Gas and Heating
- Kitchens (Existing programme 1 April to 31 March). Kitchens and bathrooms are improvements and capital investment.

Members Question:

Background Papers

Members were keen to know how the kitchen programme worked.

The Housing Maintenance explained that where a void property required a kitchen, under the lettable standard it would be replaced after the tenant moved in.

The tenant would be notified within 16 weeks of commencement of the tenancy and the kitchen would be replaced under the current refurbishment programme. However, if on 1 December a void property required a new kitchen, it would need to be included on the programme and the Council's contractor would install the kitchen within this financial year before 31 March.

However, If the tenant moved on 15 December, they would be notified within 16 weeks of a new kitchen being fitted. The tenant would have a kitchen installed before 31 March as it would have been included on the existing programme.

The Housing Maintenance Manager advised that the Issue was that within 16 weeks of the tenancy starting they would be notified, but in less than 16 weeks the year would end.

Member Question:

The Chair asked that some information be provided on the current programme against lettable standard for the next meeting.

- Bathrooms

Member Question:

A Member asked about provisions for those tenants with disabilities. He asked if a property would need to be adapted or, would the Council try and find a suitable property for the needs of the tenant.

The Housing Maintenance Manager advised that this would be dependent if there was a DFG in place. He advised that the Tenancy Services Team would identify those tenants who qualified. There would then be an assessment carried out and a request established for minor works. If the adaptation was a large job, and a DFG grant was in place, this would go through Property Services to arrange.

- Non-Standards Internal Works
- Decoration
- Re-let pack
- Warning!

The Chair thanked the Housing Maintenance Manager for his presentation and suggested that Members have a think about the presentation and any questions they may have.

In response to a Member question, the Housing Maintenance Manager reported that surveys on properties were carried out as part of the asset management strategy and usually undertaken within 5 years.

Background Papers

The Chair in response to a question raised by a Member, asked if some comparison figures could be made available over the years on the number of properties the Council have lost as a consequence of the right to buy.

The Head of Wellbeing indicated that she would try to include this information in the presentation at the next meeting.

A Member commented and asked if other Members were aware of the number of vacant properties within their wards. She suggested that it would be useful to have updates on this.

The Housing Maintenance Manager would try and provide some information to Members on this.

In response to a Member question around field trips to void properties, the Housing Maintenance Manager suggested that this was something that could be arranged for those Members interested.

7. Next Steps

Following this, it was agreed:

- (A) That the Head of Wellbeing will do a presentation at the next meeting to show the wider housing context in which Cannock Council's stock operates.
- (B) That Members consider the information contained within the presentation and dependent upon the questions/items Members raised, the Housing Maintenance Manager would provide something further for Members.
- (C) That a field visit be undertaken to view a void property (Members to first receive a video walkthrough and photographs at next meeting). This could then be followed up with a field visit for those Members that wish to participate.
- (D) That the next meeting of the Working Group to be arranged in 4 to 6 weeks.
- (E) That the presentation slides be emailed to all Members on the Working Group.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 6.00 pm

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL

**NOTES -
LETTABLE STANDARD (EMPTY PROPERTIES) & HOUSING AFFORDABILITY
WORKING GROUP**

MONDAY 23 OCTOBER 2023 AT 4.30 P.M.

REMOTE MEETING VIA MS TEAMS

Present: Councillors:

D. Williams (Chair)
L. Arduino
P. Johnson
V. Jones
P. Kruskonjic
P. Stanton

Officers:

A. Nevin	Head of Wellbeing
N. Samrai	Head of Housing and Corporate Assets
G. James	Housing Maintenance Manager
J. Morgan	Housing Strategy Officer
L. Tandy	Housing Strategy and Service Improvement Team Leader
J. Hunt	Senior Committee Officer

1 Apologies

Apology given for Councillor D. Foley.

2. Declarations of Interest from Members

None.

3. Notes

That the notes of the Working Group meeting held on 30 August 2023 be agreed.

4. Presentation

The Head of Wellbeing reported that both James Morgan, Housing Strategy Officer and Louise Tandy, Housing Strategy and Service Improvement Team Leader were available to answer questions in relation to the presentation that was being given today.

The Head of Wellbeing gave a presentation to Members of the Working Group on housing data. The presentation slides would be emailed to Members following the meeting.

Background Papers

Slides were shown to Members that included the following:

- Housing Tenure
- Stock in Cannock Chase
- Right to Buys
- New Build - Cannock - 154 new homes built by the Council.
- Affordable Housing - supply
- Affordable Housing - Pipeline
- Affordable Housing - Local Plan
- Affordable Housing - policy requirements
- Affordability - house prices
- Affordability - private rent
- Affordability - comparison
- Affordability - comparison
- Lettings
- Housing register
- Expressions of Interest
- Homelessness: Cases
- Conclusion

Questions from Members

In response to a Member question around the bidding process and waiting times, the Head of Wellbeing referred to the presentation and reported that the figure of 104 homeless people would be those who approached the Council with a valid claim. She gave an example and suggested that there could be 50 that remained in their property through Council negotiation, some in temporary accommodation or some staying with relatives. She advised that prevention was of importance and important that those classed as homeless would have somewhere to stay although the circumstances were different.

A Member also asked if the Council was aware of any future demands that may exacerbate these issues.

The Head of Housing and Corporate Assets reported that different individual factors could make up the banding process. She advised that a person may be classed as band 1 but have certain needs and those circumstances could determine where the person was placed within the band. She suggested that with the increase in homelessness cases, there was a need to ensure that people retained their tenancies.

She advised that the Tenancy Sustainment Team helped those with complex needs in maintaining their tenancies. She also indicated that some people who would have previously used a registered provider to find a home, had now come back to the Council due to rising rents and affordability.

The Head of Wellbeing reported that there was pressure on the Council's homelessness service as rent through registered providers was not now affordable. She advised that the local housing allowance had been frozen for some time and pressure was being placed on household budgets. She suggested that in the future

Background Papers

either the local allowance would need to increase, or the cost of living reduce, because the Council would see an increase in people needed homes.

She also reported that there was an increase in people with more complex needs requesting assistance from the Council, and possibly further issues with asylum cases in the future.

A Member referred to a piece of 1970s legislation which protected tenants and asked if this was still in place. She also asked if the Council could help subsidise rents.

The Head of Housing and Corporate Assets advised that only certain tenants would be protected by this legislation. In terms of subsidising, she reported that discretionary housing payments could be provided, however they would be time limited and allocated from central government. She indicated that if a tenant was employed, they could still apply however this would be means tested.

The Head of Wellbeing concurred and added that incentives were already being provided to landlords, and landlords could take advantage of any sort of subsidising scheme.

A Member was keen to know the number of houses that were currently being modernised prior to being let and how long was spent undertaking the work. She also asked if there was an inspector to check work and asked how the Council could speed up the process in order that contractors did not take advantage.

The Housing Maintenance Manager reported that at the end of last week there were 15 properties. He advised that the number could fluctuate on properties coming in and work that was required to be undertaken. He advised that the Council employed operatives/supervisors who attended the properties, and having changed the process recently, further inspections were now being undertaken in between the work being carried out. He reported that currently there was a 43-day turnaround from the property being handed back to the Council, to a new tenant being handed the keys.

A Member asked if there were any incentives available such as a free rent week to those tenants that had left their property in a decent state.

The Head of Housing and Corporate Assets reported that the Council had previously considered incentives. She advised that there was a scheme in place although this had not made much difference. She indicated that prior to a tenant vacating their property, the Council would try to access it within a 4-week period to evaluate the condition. She suggested that the Council would try and make a re-charge for a property being left in poor condition.

The Chair highlighted the increase in Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and asked if the Council was seeing an increase in Cannock, and if this was due to current market conditions.

The Housing Strategy and Service Improvement Team Leader suggested that Private Sector Housing would be able to provide relevant information regarding HMOs.

The Chair referred to the video circulated by the Housing Maintenance Manager on housing standards and showed part of video to Members of the Working Group.

Background Papers

The Chair reported that there was pressure to provide Council housing and indicated that the Lettable Standard was important.

The Housing Maintenance Manager referred to the video and commented that there was a need to try and identify where there may be gaps between the Lettable Standard and the Government's Decent Homes Standard. He referred to the Lettable Standard and indicated that the the Decent Homes Standard which was the minimum standards that must be met was focused by the Council on kitchen and bathroom replacements, and the main capital investment projects were focussed on tenanted properties.

In response to a question by a Member, the Housing Maintenance Manager provided the background to the empty property shown on the video.

The Chair suggested that it may be useful for Members to have a document that details both the Decent Homes Standard and the Lettable Standard.

The Head of Housing and Corporate Assets advised that the current Lettable Standard was very basic, and that this should be improved. As an example, she questioned whether something such as the decorating allowance should be changed and improved as part of the standard.

The Housing Maintenance Manager referred to the previous discussions about the Lettable Standard and advised Members that the Council could not reduce the standard and concurred that it was already at a basic level. He suggested that improving it should also include people's perceptions of Council properties. He would however provide further information as requested on both Standards to Members of the Working Group.

In response to a Member question, the Head of Housing and Corporate Assets reported that the Tenancy Sustainment Team worked with tenants to try and improve their new home environment. The Team received goods that were donated, and these would be distributed to tenants that required items. She reported that the area was lacking a charity that recycled and donated larger items to people in need, however the Council were trying to engage with organisations/charities.

In response to a question raised by a Member, the Head of Housing and Corporate Assets responded in terms of preparing people with life skills prior to people taking up a tenancy. She advised that providers who would help new tenants, would charge an intensive housing management charge. She advised that the Council were unable to charge this fee and there were not the resources to undertake this work. However, she advised that the Council worked with providers to try and signpost people to access this type of service.

The Housing Maintenance Manager touched on voids by ward as requested at the last meeting. He advised that a report was now produced on the first of each month and of 15 wards, there were currently 12 wards that had voids since 1 April. He advised that there would be some wards that did not have any void properties, or no voids in that ward for this year. He would however provide further information on this to Members of the Working Group.

The Chair and Members discussed the next steps in detail.

Background Papers

Following this, it was agreed:

- (A) That the Housing Maintenance Manager email information on voids by ward to Members of the Working Group.
- (B) That information is produced that details the comparison between the Lettable Standard and the Decent Homes Standard.
- (C) That proposals be produced around prevention and first impressions of Council properties.
- (D) That information be produced on the Council's decorating scheme in relation to the Lettable Standard.
- (E) That information is produced detailing the comparison of the Council's Lettable Standard with other local Councils.
- (F) That information is produced on the costs associated with improving the Council's Lettable Standard.
- (G) That the presentation slides be emailed to all Members on the Working Group.
- (H) That the next meeting of the Working Group to be arranged in 6 to 8 weeks.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 6.00 pm

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL

**NOTES -
LETTABLE STANDARD (EMPTY PROPERTIES) & HOUSING AFFORDABILITY
WORKING GROUP**

MONDAY 8 JANUARY 2024 AT 4.30 P.M.

REMOTE MEETING VIA MS TEAMS

Present: Councillors:

D. Williams (Chair)
L. Arduino
P. Kruskonjic
P. Johnson
P. Stanton
D. Foley

Officers:

N. Samrai	Head of Housing and Corporate Assets
G. James	Housing Maintenance Manager
J. Hunt	Senior Committee Officer

1 Apologies

Apologies given for Councillor V. Jones and A. Nevin, Head of Wellbeing.

2. Declarations of Interest from Members

None.

3. Notes

It was noted that page 3, 4th paragraph from bottom - 're-change' should be amended to read 're-charge'.

Arising from the notes, it was reported that visits to several void properties had been undertaken by Councillors P. Stanton, P. Kruskonjic and L. Arduino.

The Housing Maintenance Manager reported that he had not previously undertaken visits to the properties and was not aware of their condition.

He reported that the first property was a bungalow, followed by a house that was in the process of being cleaned out and not in the best condition. Members were emailed photographs of the condition of the property.

A Member reported that the condition of the properties viewed was as expected. She explained that the bungalow was in a good standard when work was undertaken to

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the bathroom and kitchen, however she was conscious of the expectations of a new tenant moving into a property. She suggested that if a property was safe and rooms painted throughout, this should be all that was required.

A Member commented that the first property he visited was in very good condition and required a clean, although he was aware that bungalows were prone to damp issues. He referred to the second property, and whilst not aware of the circumstances of the previous tenant, the property had been left with all belongings and this would be required to be cleaned out prior to a new tenant moving in.

He asked if the previous tenant would be liable to pay for the cleaning and removal of goods if they ever decided to re-register on the Council's housing waiting list. The Head of Housing and Corporate Assets advised that if a tenant was transferring to another property, the Council could re-charge as they would be aware of where they would be moving too.

The Housing Maintenance Manager advised Members that he was not sure of background to this property, however if it was related to Domestic Violence, the Council would be more lenient. However, if the property was abandoned, there was a robust process in place to recover any costs should the previous tenant re-register with the Council.

The Member referred to the last property and was keen to know the circumstances of why the previous tenant left. The Housing Maintenance Manager explained that the previous tenant could have simply moved out and left everything.

In response to a Member question, the Head of Housing and Corporate Assets reported that prospective tenants were not allowed to simply turn up and view a property they were interested in. This was due to health and safety and issues around the state of the property or work being carried out on the property. However, she reported that it had been known occasionally for someone to turn up at a property they were interested in whilst a tradesperson was working and ask to view it. She commented that arrangements would be made at the appropriate time for a prospective tenant to view a property when it was safe to do so.

A Member referred to one of the properties he had visited and reported that work to the kitchen and bathroom had been undertaken to good standard. He also commented that the living room was to a nice standard and this property would be lettable. He explained that the bedroom would require some work to be undertaken as there was mildew on walls and due to this the carpets would need removing. Overall, he felt that this property was to a good standard.

The Housing Maintenance Manager reported that although this property was completed, he advised that it was evident that there had been a wardrobe placed against the wall at some point in the north facing room and this was the area where there was mould growth. However, he reported that this would be dealt with prior to the property being let.

A Member asked if a prospective tenant would have to accept a property they viewed. The Head of Housing and Corporate Assets reported that they would not have to accept the property, however she indicated that there would be people classed as homeless on the waiting list who would only have one chance to move. Homeless

Background Papers

applicants would be placed in Band 1 and if they did not put in reasonable bids within 6 months, the Housing Options team could place bids on their behalf for suitable properties.

In response to a Member question, the Head of Housing and Corporate Assets advised that the vulnerable persons decorating scheme was free to tenants eligible and the Council would not pay external private contractors to carry out decorating work.

That the notes of the Working Group meeting held on 23 October 2023 be agreed.

4. Decent Homes Standard Comparison with Letting Standard

Comparison information/Prevention

The Housing Maintenance Manager touched on highlights and key points within the document. He explained to Members some key points around the fitted units and the Decent Homes Standard. He suggested moving forward and that the current Decent Homes Standard would move into becoming the Letting Standard.

The Head of Housing and Corporate Assets reported that the Council had tightened up and added additional resources over the past few years. She advised that people were holding longer tenancies in Council properties which could be due to several reasons such as finances and living longer etc. She advised that the Council was one of the only local authorities in Staffordshire that still retained its housing stock. She commented that there was a need to understand tenants first impressions of a new property and understand their experiences when dealing with Council departments, therefore she was considering the idea of a survey which would be sent to new tenants.

A Member referred to the document and the sizes of the wall/base units fitted in kitchens and asked if smaller sized cupboards be fitted if the kitchen was smaller. The Housing Maintenance Manager reported that the area of units was based on cubic capacity for storage and explained how this was worked out. He advised that the cubic capacity for storage would need to satisfy the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard.

First Impressions

The Housing Maintenance Manager referred to the document and what the first impressions to a prospective tenant would be. He discussed re-decoration, the impact on budgets, decorating packs costs compared against the current decorating allowance, properties that had damp and mould that would need to be treated and the cost of decoration allowances this year based on properties let which was in the region of £70K.

A Member asked about paint colour options and the decorating pack based on who would be moving into the property. The Housing Maintenance Manager advised that discussions would be held with the allocations team to ascertain whether decoration of a property was required. It was not always possible to know who would be moving into a property, therefore work would continue in the normal way. If it was known who would be occupying the property, the housing teams would liaise. He commented that some

Background Papers

properties may not need decoration and if this was the case, it would be because it was due to the condition it had been left in.

The Head of Housing and Corporate Assets reported that there was a different offer for care leavers. She advised that the Tenancy Sustainment team would give help and assistance to care leavers with their first property. They would be supplied with the decorating pack, however if a care leaver wished to have the property decorated, then this would be offered. She advised Members that the Council could not decorate every property and much larger housing associations were equipping new tenants with certain skills for them to undertake certain tasks within the home themselves.

A Member referred to the decoration of properties and suggested that they should all be a basic standard and all rooms painted throughout. She also commented that the vulnerable persons decorating scheme could be offered to those that needed it.

The Housing Maintenance Manager discussed with Members how the allocations team would allocate properties and how the time being taken to complete any work including extensive works would impact when it was let. He also advised that once the allocations team were in receipt of the keys to a property, it was unlikely that his team would have any further dealings with it.

Separately, the Head of Housing and Corporate Assets advised that it was important for properties to look well-kept when vacated and to be mindful of neighbours as well.

The Housing Maintenance Manager advised that every property could not be decorated due to the cost. The turnaround would also increase, and this would have an impact on rents. He suggested that if each of the 240 properties was decorated (based on a 2 bed) it would cost around £157k extra for the Council.

The Head of Housing and Corporate Assets referred to a past Committee where a Scrutiny review was undertaken around the vulnerable persons decorating scheme. Previously all bungalows were decorated, however she advised that within 3-6 months those tenants had requested that they wished to re-paint to their own tastes. Therefore, the Council moved away from decorating all the bungalows and moved to a case-by-case decorating scheme.

In response to a Member question regarding re-decoration of all properties and the decorating voucher scheme, the Head of Housing and Corporate Assets reported that there would be significantly higher costs due to the need for additional people, materials, and labour if it was intended to decorate all properties. She reported that most Lettable Standards of other Local Authorities did not decorate every property.

Additionally, Members made many comments around the decorating allowance vouchers, additional costs for properties to have different flooring and garden visits.

Comparisons between Lettable Standards

The Housing Maintenance Manager reported that he had found this process very difficult to try and find comparison information from other Local Authorities. He indicated that of those listed, many had the same standards. He would also be happy to circulate any of the standards received if Members were interested.

Background Papers

5. Next Steps

The Chair reported that the next Health, Wellbeing and The Community Scrutiny Committee was scheduled for 18 March and the Working Group should start to think about any proposals to take forward.

The Chair summarised the main points from the meeting below:

- discussion around the decent homes standard baseline.
- survey based on first impressions.
- first impressions of new tenants.
- figures around the costs associated with the decoration pack.

The Chair and Members discussed the next steps in detail.

Following this, it was agreed:

- (A) That the Housing Maintenance Manager produce average costs over the past 3-4 years on decorating all empty properties throughout. This will then be compared against offering the decoration pack and deep clean of properties.
- (B) That a further meeting be arranged to consider all information received by the Working Group and discuss any proposals.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 6.05 pm

Background Papers

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL

NOTES - LETTABLE STANDARD (EMPTY PROPERTIES) & HOUSING AFFORDABILITY WORKING GROUP

MONDAY 22 JANUARY 2024 AT 4.30 P.M.

REMOTE MEETING VIA MS TEAMS

Present: Councillors:

D. Williams (Chair)
L. Arduino
D. Foley
P. Johnson
V. Jones
P. Kruskonjic
P. Stanton

Officers:

N. Samrai	Head of Housing and Corporate Assets
G. James	Housing Maintenance Manager
J. Hunt	Senior Committee Officer

1 Apologies

None.

2. Declarations of Interest from Members

None.

3. Notes

That the notes of the Working Group meeting held on 8 January 2023 be agreed.

4. Comparison Information

The Chair explained that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the comparison information that was requested at the last meeting and provide a summary from previous meetings. He suggested that any proposals should be agreed by Members of the Working Group, and these would then be recommended to the Health, Wellbeing and The Community Scrutiny Committee meeting on 18 March.

(Cllr Arduino joined the meeting at 16.37pm).

The Housing Maintenance Manager outlined the document previously circulated to Members and asked if there were any questions.

Background Papers

In response to a question raised by a Member, the Housing Maintenance Manager confirmed the figures for years 2 to 6 of £338K which did not include vehicle procurement, whereas in year 1 vehicle procurement was included and the basic cost around £600K. He also highlighted the need to factor in interest between now and year 6. He indicated that years 6 to 7 would cost approximately £600k to undertake the same amount of work and procurement of vehicles. This would then revert to the £338K per year. He advised that realistically it was not affordable to decorate all properties and an additional £500K would be required on top of £600K.

In response to a Member question, the Head of Housing and Corporate Assets reported that the Council did not have a separate void decoration budget for operatives to carry out decoration of properties, however there was an existing void allowance for new tenants, and this was administered through vouchers.

A Member asked if there was a budget for decoration packs.

The Housing Maintenance Manager advised that there was a separate budget, and the budget was around £70K. He advised that the decoration allowance was available for certain properties and the decorating packs for all properties.

A Member referred to the visits previously undertaken on some voids, with some being in good condition and where only a small amount of work was required to be undertaken. Referring to this, he then asked if every painter would have their own vehicle or if multiple painters would go to one property to carry out work.

The Housing Maintenance Manager advised that it was dependent on the type of work being undertaken. However, he explained that one painter could not be the driver for all the others as this would involve picking up/dropping off and transporting tools/materials, and this person was also responsible for undertaking the same job. He also advised that one painter would paint one property and this could enable at least 7 void properties to be painted and completed in a week.

The Chair moved onto the discussion around proposals and provided a summary from previous meetings around the letting standard and Decent Homes Standard. He explained that Members of the Working Group had agreed that there was a need to be at the Decent Home's Standard and discussed how value could be added. He then referred to the information and discussion today around the estimated figures for decoration costs and packs for all properties.

The Chair then outlined the following recommendations and sought comments from Members.

- To move to the Decent Homes Standard as the Letting Standard (the Council currently had their own letting standard which was close to the DHS).
- To move to the Decent Homes Standard and include the decoration packs
- To move to the Decent Homes Standard with all properties being decorated (however financial costs incurred)

Background Papers

The Chair advised that the third proposal would be very costly and was minded to remove this depending on the views of other Members. Members discussed this and agreed that it would be costly.

In response to a Member question, the Head of Housing and Corporate Assets reported that the Council would endeavour to try and inspect properties before keys were handed back. However, she advised that not all tenants would hand over the property in the same condition as when first they first had their tenancy. She advised that Information was always included in the regular tenant newsletters around maintenance of properties in accordance with the tenancy agreement. She indicated that if there was damage in a property the Council could make a re-charge.

The Housing Maintenance Manager added that where a re-charge could not be made, the tenant who had occupied the property would not be allowed to hold a further tenancy until the charge was cleared. The Head of Housing and Corporate Assets further added that improving the condition of the property could include making the void 'decoration' ready by removing wallpaper, and this could be incorporated as part of the Working Group's recommendations.

A Member asked about tenancy agreements and whether there were reviews undertaken annually. The Head of Housing and Corporate Assets advised that at some point a policy would be presented to Cabinet and a consultation would be undertaken with residents in terms of tenancies.

In response to a Member question around feedback from previous tenants, the Head of Housing and Corporate Assets advised that at the last meeting a discussion had taken place, and a review would be undertaken of the new tenant satisfaction form which would mean real data would therefore be available. She also indicated that there were rarely complaints, and of the complaints received, the main issue was around plaster coming away from walls where several layers of wallpaper had been put up.

5. Proposals and Next Steps

Following the Working Group meetings and discussion by Members, it was agreed that the following be recommended to the Health, Wellbeing and The Community Scrutiny Committee on 18 March 2024 for consideration:

That the Council move towards the Decent Homes Standard, ensure all properties are 'decoration' ready and offer Decoration packs to all tenants.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 5.21pm

Background Papers

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION

MONDAY 16 OCTOBER AT 4.30 P.M.

REMOTE MEETING VIA MS TEAMS

Present: Councillors:

Cllr. D. Williams
Cllr. V. Jones
Cllr. M. Buttery
Cllr. L. Arduino
Cllr. B. Kenny
Cllr. D. Foley
Cllr. P. Kruskonjic
Cllr. L. Bishop
Cllr. P. Stanton
Cllr. M. Boyer
Cllr. P. Owen
Cllr. P. Johnson

Officers:

J. Presland	Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles
J. Hunt	Senior Committee Officer

1 Apologies

None received.

2. Presentation & Discussion- Sustainability

The presentation slides were previously circulated to Members.

Joss Presland gave the presentation to Members on the Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

Slides were shown to Members that included the following:

- Sustainability - includes climate change, biodiversity recovery, resources, and waste management.
- Eco Films Festival - discussion around two films from the recent Eco films festival premier at Staffordshire University Academy.
- CCDC Original Ambition - including being carbon neutral districtwide by 2030, a cost of £4.7 billion and £21m public and private sector investment.
- National Ambition - carbon neutral 2050 - was the national ambition until more recently and a number have been pushed back.

Background Papers

- Corporate Plan 2022-29 - this is included in Priority 1, 3 and 4 outlined.
- Previous Events/Consultations - including Small Change BIG Difference, which was a social media campaign, Green Travel consultations, a resident's views 2022 consultation and Bin World which involved 1550 pupils, 19 schools, 31 environmental sessions and 5 theatre performances - videos available to view, and some Councillors were also involved.
- Previous Events/Consultations - Woodland Wonder, Cannock Chase Can, Zero Carbon Rugeley (coming to an end) and community planting with the first urban community forest.
- Upcoming and Additional Events/Consultation - Eco Film Day on 18 July, Carbon Bubble, Hednesford Festival 12 August (hoping to be held again on 9 March 2024), Let's Talk - 'Our Environment' - 9 March and Cannock Chase Climate/Sustainability Commission.
- Slides were shown of photographs from the Echo Workshop, Teachers' Workshop, Binworld Cast and the Environmental Awareness session with Community Hero.
- Information around the organisational target, building decarbonisation costs around building and vehicles/RCV's. Slide shown of building decarbonisation AECOM Study 2022 - 3 pieces of work discussed, to go forward to Cabinet early 2024.
- Next steps - Districtwide slide shown. This included information around the Local Plan, biodiversity net gain regulations, increasing appropriate tree and wildflower planting and encouraging green travel with young children at an early age.

Questions from Members

A Member referred to the presentation in terms of encouraging green travel and asked if those areas would be inclusive to other modes of transport such as trikes, 3-wheel tandem's etc.

The Head of Operations responded and advised that there was an inclusive group already in operation through Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles (IHL) and they held certain pieces of equipment. He commented that work/projects within parks and open spaces was now designed to be inclusive.

A Member referred to decarbonisation towards net zero and asked how the Council managed the progress of this.

The Head of Operations referred to the Staffordshire pledge to measure the Council's own carbon footprint which was published every year. The Council's had been carried out earlier this year and Stafford Borough Council's a few months ago. Cannock Chase Council produced approximately 2,200 tonnes of carbon each year and this was measured through a tool available on the LGA's website. Various pieces of information would be submitted, and an estimate would then be produced.

A Member referred to the high cost of becoming a carbon neutral district and questioned both the progress that would be made and at what point it was felt some of the targets/goals would be achieved.

The Head of Operations referred to the £4.7 billion which would be required district wide and indicated that there were several other factors involved within this figure. He

Background Papers

indicated that the target and costs involved around some ideas would need to be led nationally. He referred to electricity and power which decarbonised more quickly, and other forms of generation and renewables would need to be considered. He suggested that district wide there was a need to influence others, residents, and businesses. He asked what do the Council believe the target should be and that this required some consideration.

Presentation continued...

- Next steps slide continued - included an upcoming consultation, sustainability climate group, waste hierarchy, implementation of resources and waste strategy 2018 (still awaiting consultation) and the Staffordshire Sustainability Board. Food waste - this is the second largest emitter of gases that are detrimental to the environment.
- Slide shown which provided information on next steps - Council. This included creating a smart action plan, low emission fuels, electric vehicles etc. The Great Imagining in March 2024 - all encouraged to attend.
- Challenges - including resident attitudes/behaviour, funding and resourcing.

Members were then given the opportunity to ask questions.

A Member advised that the Government would be bringing in food waste collections this year, and she asked if the Council were waiting for guidance for this or, would the Council be pro-active and bring this in earlier.

The Head of Operations advised Members that the Council would wait as the Government had promised net burdens payments (which he explained to Members) and would fund the capital element. They would be providing funding of £295 million into food waste and this would be distributed across all LA's cross the Country.

He suggested that if the Council pushed this sooner, we would not receive any funding. He advised that the Government had set a mandate, however the Council were waiting for a date to go ahead.

Members then discussed the high costs to achieve net zero and the impact that some countries around the world were having which was not sustainable in the future.

The Head of Operations responded and suggested that with the right work and people, a lot could be achieved. He commented that even other developing countries would at some point need to do something and acknowledged the impact that the developed world was having on parts of the developing world.

A Member commented on the use of an alternative fuel such as hydrogen and how this would bring costs down if it was something that could be eventually used with vehicles.

The Head of Operations responded and advised that there was always premium pricing with new technology, however things could change including pricing. He suggested that it was best to not jump too soon into new ideas/technology.

Background Papers

The Chair reported on a recent meeting he had attended, and one area discussed was around the use of hydrogen. He was keen to seek views on this.

The Head of Operations explained that one of the downsides was the whole infrastructure network around new technology. He advised that there was a Climate Officer Group made up of around 12 Officers that would meet once per month to discuss such topics. He referred to a Plan for a Rugeley development for vehicle charging points to be installed, however there was not the power/infrastructure to do this and there would have been an objection made.

The Chair was keen to have further information around zero carbon Rugeley coming to an end.

The Head of Operations explained that whilst funding would be coming to an end in April, the group would still be active and there would still be small one-off projects, given that there was still some residual funding. There was also some funding that existed which would be used jointly between the new owner of site and Keele University. He explained that the plan was still to create a community that was low carbon.

In response to a Member question around the end of life for vehicles and costs for replacements, the Head of Operations indicated that he was currently working on a vehicle fleet replacement plan which would cover both Councils. He suggested that the setting up of a 'sinking' funds had never happened, however the Deputy Chief Executive was encouraging the setting up of a capital programme for this.

A Member commented on the information provided and was interested in how the Council would move from the strategy to a consultation and then a plan.

The Head of Operations suggested that this was around funding and if this was seen as a corporate priority, it would need to be resourced this way. He suggested that both built assets and the fleet required consideration and explained that the reason for all the engagement work was because it did not come at a huge cost.

Potential Work Programme

The Chair reported that the purpose of the meeting was to receive the presentation given by the Head of Operations and discuss whether there were any item(s) Members considered should be scrutinised.

He suggested that Members should also consider the timeframe available as there were two meetings of the Health, Wellbeing and the Community Scrutiny Committee left which would be held in December and March and suggested that things may be clearer following the consultation event.

The Head of Operations suggested that further information could be provided at one of the Committee meetings if there was anything Members wished to raise.

He also reported that a Climate Change Officer had been recruited by Stafford Borough Council and eventually would work across both Councils at some point in the future as shared services developed. He was currently working on a report that would identify the area of work where both Council's would benefit mostly. It was

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likely that the work would not be ready for this cycle, however this could be brought back later.

Members commented that they would be happy to meet with the new Climate Change Officer at some point.

The Chair suggested that he would recommend this as a theme for next year's Health, Wellbeing, and the Community Scrutiny Committee. He indicated that if anything was raised by Members, he would liaise with the Head of Operations to see if those ideas/suggestions could be brought forward to one of the Scrutiny Committee meetings.

The Head of Operations then played videos about the environment/climate change which involved local schools and school children.

The Chair and Members thanked the Head of Operations for his presentation and discussion.

The meeting closed at 6.00 pm