



Please ask for: Matt Berry
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23 July 2025

Dear Councillor,

Cabinet

6:00pm on Thursday 31 July 2025

Meeting to be held in the Esperance Room, 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:

Johnson, T.	Leader of the Council
Williams, D.	Deputy Leader of the Council and Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader
Preece, J.	Environment and Climate Change Portfolio Leader
Thornley, S.J.	Housing and Corporate Assets Portfolio Leader
Wilson, L.	Parks, Culture and Heritage Portfolio Leader
Freeman, M.	Regeneration and High Streets Portfolio Leader
Prestwood, J.	Resources and Transformation Portfolio Leader

Agenda

Part 1

1. Apologies

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

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.

3. Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2025 (enclosed).

4. Updates from Portfolio Leaders

To receive oral updates (if any), from the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader, and Portfolio Leaders.

5. Forward Plan

Forward Plan of Decisions for July to September 2025 (Item 5.1 - 5.3).

6. Permission to Spend - Swimming Pool Support Fund

Report of the Head of Wellbeing (Item 6.1 - 6.3).

7. UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025/26

Report of the Head of Economic Development and Planning (Item 7.1 - 7.9).

8. Cannock Chase District Council and Stafford Borough Council Joint Tree Management Proposals: Tree Management System and Tree Re-Inspections

Report of the Head of Operations (Item 8.1 - 8.8).

9. Development of Heath Hayes Park: Masterplan and Play Area Refurbishment

Report of the Head of Operations (Item 9.1 - 9.11).

10. Housing Services Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement and Self-Assessment

Report of the Head of Housing and Corporate Assets (Item 10.1 - 10.46).

11. Tenancy Management Policy 2025-2028

Report of the Housing and Corporate Assets (Item 11.1 - 11.19).

12. Exclusion of the Public

The Leader to move:

That the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3, 5, and 6, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

Agenda

Part 2

13. Housing Services - Repairs and Maintenance IT Transformation

Not for Publication Report of the Head of Housing and Corporate Assets (Item 13.1 - 13.12).

The report is confidential due to the inclusion of:

- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council).
- Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
- Information which reveals that the Council proposes:
 - (a) To give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person;
 - (b) To make an order or direction under any enactment.

Cannock Chase Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the

Cabinet

Held on Thursday 3 July 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

In the Esperance Room, Civic Centre, Cannock

Part 1

Present:

Councillors:

Johnson, T.	Leader of the Council
Williams, D.	Deputy Leader of the Council and Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader
Preece, J.	Environment and Climate Change Portfolio Leader
Thornley, S.J.	Housing and Corporate Assets Portfolio Leader
Freeman, M.	Regeneration & High Streets Portfolio Leader
Prestwood, J.	Resources and Transformation Portfolio Leader

Prior to the commencement of the formal business of the meeting, the Leader firstly welcomed back Councillor Prestwood, noting it was pleasing to see her return.

The Leader then spoke on the recent sad passing of former Councillor and Alderwoman, Muriel Davis, reflecting positively on her life and hard work in the many roles she had held during her time. The Council's condolences went out to Muriel's family members, and her funeral would be taking place at Cannock Chase Crematorium on 10 July at 11:30am, followed by a service of remembrance at Chads Moor Methodist Church at 12:15pm.

The Leader also passed on condolences to Councillor Wilson following the sad passing of her mother, and to Councillor Preece following the sad passing of his grandmother.

12. Apologies

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor L. Wilson, Parks, Culture and Heritage Portfolio Leader.

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

None received.

14. Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2025 be approved.

15. Updates from Portfolio Leaders

(i) Housing and Corporate Assets

The Portfolio Leader updated in respect of the following:

- **Reopening of the Housing Bungalow Reception**
- “The customer reception in the Housing bungalow had now re-opened. It was a superb setup including everything that tenants and applicants needed, such as a phone to report repairs, space to meet with staff to help with housing applications and spaces to hold private meetings where need be.”
- **Aelfgar Housing Scheme**

“The scheme was now moving at pace, with the first two Council homes hoped to be ready in September, with the remainder to following in Spring 2026. More land was needed so the Council could continue to build more homes.”
- **Housing Service Feedback**

“It was pleasing to report that the service had received 93 compliments about areas such as allocations, kitchens, leaseholder management and tenancy services, and only four complaints.

(ii) Regeneration and High Streets

The Portfolio Leader updated in respect of the following:

- **Cannock College Innovation and Skills Hub**

“On 5 June I attended the opening of the Innovation and Skills Hub at Cannock College, along with the Leader, Head of Economic Development & Planning and Economic Development & Regeneration Manager. £250,000 of UK Shared Prosperity Fund monies had been provided to the College to renovate the building and for the provision of technology. It is an excellent building with excellent work done in a short space of time.”
- **Coronation Court, Cannock**

“On 13 June I attended the completion of Coronation Court in Cannock, along with the Leader and the Head of Economic Development.

The site is a 33-bed care home which provides care to adults with complex care needs such as brain injuries, dementia, and neuro-disabilities, and is an excellent facility for Cannock Chase.

The home employs nearly 100 staff (some of whom are locally employed) such as nurses, unit managers and care staff and is split into 3 units consisting of therapy room, activity hub, hair salon, communal spaces and a large garden.

It delivers person-centred nurse-led care that empowers individuals to maximise their independence”
- **Meeting with Staffordshire County Council Deputy Leader**

“On 23 June, along with the Deputy Chief Executive-Place and the Head of Economic Development and Planning, I attended an introductory meeting with the new Deputy Leader of Staffordshire County Council, who is also the County Cabinet member for Economy and Skills.”

- **Armed Forces Day Flag Raising**

“Also on 23 June, I attended the Armed Forces Day flag-raising ceremony held here at the Civic Centre.”

- **Meeting with Cannock Town Centre Partnership**

“On 26 June, along with the Leader, Chief Executive, and Head of Economic Development & Planning, I attended a meeting with representatives from the Cannock Town Centre Partnership to discuss the Partnership’s future.”

(iii) **Community Wellbeing**

The Portfolio Leader updated in respect of the following:

- **Digital Innovation and Service Excellence**

“I’m pleased to report significant progress in modernising our services to better serve residents in the Community Wellbeing portfolio:

- *Housing Options Digital Transformation:*

The team has successfully implemented a new digital system for housing options. This provides rich data capabilities enabling targeted support for residents.

The enhanced data will drive improved service delivery and performance monitoring and residents will benefit from more responsive and efficient housing support.

- *Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) IT System:*

The new IT system was now operational, streamlining the DFG process. It delivers improved service quality with more timely installations and ensures residents receive essential adaptations more efficiently.

- *Growing Our Own Talent:*

An internal candidate for a Technical Officer post had been successfully promoted following open competition. This demonstrates our commitment to developing staff and creating career progression opportunities and was a genuine success story showcasing how we invest in our workforce.”

These developments reflect our commitment to innovation whilst maintaining excellent value for money for residents.”

- **Other Updates - Ward and Armed Forces Champion Responsibilities**

- *Rugeley Bypass Re-opening:*

“I am pleased to report Staffordshire County Council’s excellent progress on the A51 roundabout works at the former Rugeley Power Station site.

This vital infrastructure will significantly relieve traffic congestion that has affected residents in Brereton and Ravenhill, and Rugeley wards during the works. This has been a recent significant issue for the area.

This opens the way for major development on the site and supports the new John Taylor High School opening in September.

I want to thank Staffordshire County Council for their hard work in completing these works.”

- *Armed Forces Week (22-28 June 2025):*

“As Armed Forces Champion, I’m proud to report our Council’s continued strong support for our Armed Forces Community during Armed Forces Week. We stand four-square behind our armed forces, reservists, cadet adult volunteers, veterans and the families that support them.

The Armed Forces flag flew proudly at our Council offices throughout the week, marked by a well-attended flag raising ceremony.

This week saw excellent engagement with 116 Provost Company (1st Royal Military Police), strengthening our Council’s links with local reserve units. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council attended an insight day including shooting lessons and a competitive shoot using SA80 rifles after excellent coaching from the unit. Both came away with newfound respect for the excellent and sometimes unseen work our reservists undertake.

Our support aligns with the Government’s Strategic Defence Review (SDR25) emphasis on a “whole-of-society approach” to defence, demonstrating how local councils play a vital role in supporting our Armed Forces community.”

(iv) **Resources and Transformation**

The Portfolio Leader updated in respect of the following:

- **Climate Change Event**

“I attended the climate change event held in the Council Chamber on Monday at which children from Heath Hayes Academy were very engaged and informed on the subject matter and asking lots of interesting and challenging questions. They took part in lots of activities, and it was encouraging to see how engaged they were in climate change issues.”

16. Forward Plan

Resolved:

That the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period July to September 2025 (Item 5.1 - 5.2) be noted.

17. Housing Board Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Housing Board held on 15 May 2025 be noted.

18. Complaints Monitoring 2024/25

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Law & Governance (Item 7.1 - 7.5).

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

Reason for Decision

To update members on performance in relation to complaints for the previous municipal year.

19. Leisure Contract Procurement

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Wellbeing (Item 8.1 - 8.5).

Resolved:

That:

- (A) The procurement of a new leisure contract be noted, with the new contract being able to start delivery from April 2026. It be further noted that Cabinet would be asked to approve the appointment of the preferred contractor in a separate report to be presented in December 2025.
- (B) Delegated authority be granted to the Deputy Chief Executive-Resources, in consultation with the Head of Wellbeing, Leader of the Council and Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader, to draw down from the leisure reserve as appropriate to facilitate the procurement and any support required.
- (C) The review of the fixed assets within the leisure portfolio be noted, and the commissioning of necessary maintenance and enhancements to the facilities be agreed to ensure they support a commercially competitive response to the leisure procurement. It be noted that costs for this work would be funded from within the existing leisure reserve, and should forecast costs for this work exceed the amount in the leisure reserve then a business case would be brought back to Cabinet seeking approval for additional resources as needed.

Reason for Decisions

An independent review of the current leisure, culture and heritage contract suggested that elements of the service could operate with lower levels of subsidy than present. To achieve best value, it was important to carry out a procurement exercise for a new contract as soon as possible.

A leisure reserve was created, as per the outturn report, to facilitate this process to enable a new contract to be in place and able to deliver from April 2026.

The meeting closed at 6:32pm

Leader

Forward Plan of Decisions to be taken by the Cabinet: July to September 2025

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

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

Representations in respect of any of matters detailed below should be sent in writing to the contact officer indicated alongside each item via email to membersservices@cannockchasedc.gov.uk.

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

Item	Contact Officer / Cabinet Member	Date of Cabinet	Key Decision	Confidential Item	Reasons for Confidentiality	Representations Received
July 2025 (31/07)						
Permission to Spend Swimming Pool Support Fund	Head of Wellbeing / Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader	31/07/25	No	No	N/A	N/A
UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025/26	Head of Economic Development and Planning / Regeneration and High Streets Portfolio Leader	31/07/25	Yes	No	N/A	N/A
CCDC and SBC Joint Tree Management Proposals: Tree Management System and Tree Re-inspections	Head of Operations / Parks, Culture, and Heritage Portfolio Leader	31/07/25	Yes	No	N/A	N/A
Development of Heath Hayes Park: Master Plan and Play Area Refurbishment	Head of Operations / Parks, Culture, and Heritage Portfolio Leader / Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader	31/07/25	No	No	N/A	N/A
Housing Services Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and Self-Assessment	Head of Housing & Corporate Assets / Housing & Corporate Assets Portfolio Leader	31/07/25	No	No	N/A	N/A

Item No. 5.2

Item	Contact Officer / Cabinet Member	Date of Cabinet	Key Decision	Confidential Item	Reasons for Confidentiality	Representations Received
Tenancy Management Policy	Head of Housing & Corporate Assets / Housing & Corporate Assets Portfolio Leader	31/07/25	No	No	N/A	N/A
Housing Services - Repairs and Maintenance IT Transformation	Head of Housing & Corporate Assets / Housing & Corporate Assets Portfolio Leader	31/07/25	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council). Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings. Information which reveals that the Council proposes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) To give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed upon a person. (b) To make an order or direction under any enactment. 	None.
September 2025 (04/09)						
Quarter 1 Performance Report 2025/26	Head of Transformation and Assurance / Resources and Transformation Portfolio Leader	04/09/25	No	No	N/A	N/A
VFM Progress Report - Quarter 1 2025/26	Head of Transformation and Assurance / Resources and Transformation Portfolio Leader	04/09/25	No	No	N/A	N/A

Item No. 5.3

Item	Contact Officer / Cabinet Member	Date of Cabinet	Key Decision	Confidential Item	Reasons for Confidentiality	Representations Received
Strategic Risk Register Update - Q1 2025/26	Head of Transformation and Assurance / Resources and Transformation Portfolio Leader	04/09/25	No	No	N/A	N/A
Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Charging	Head of Operations / Environment & Climate Change Portfolio Leader	04/09/25	No	No	N/A	N/A
Vehicle Replacement	Head of Operations / Environment & Climate Change Portfolio Leader	04/09/25	Yes	No	N/A	N/A
Health and Safety Monitoring	Head of Operations / Environment & Climate Change Portfolio Leader	04/09/25	No	No	N/A	N/A

Permission to Spend Swimming Pool Support Fund

Committee:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	31 July 2025
Report of:	Head of Wellbeing
Portfolio:	Community Wellbeing

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To request retrospective approval to spend £145,000 installing Photo Voltaic Panels at Chase Leisure Centre, received from Sport England.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet recommends that Council include £145,000 in its capital programme for the installation of Photo Voltaic Panels at Chase Leisure Centre and, subject to Council approval, grants retrospective permission to spend.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 Funding has been awarded to Cannock Chase District Council for energy efficiency measures at Cannock Leisure Centre from Sport England's Swimming Pool Support Fund. To proceed with the interventions, permission to spend is required.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 Funding has been awarded to Chase Leisure Centre from the Swimming Pool Support Fund to install solar PV to reduce energy consumption and therefore running costs of the facility. In turn this will reduce carbon emissions and support a sustainable leisure offer in the District.
- 3.2 Permission to spend the funding is required, to enable this project to be delivered. In accepting this grant funding, the local authority agrees to continue to operate the swimming pool for a period of 10 years.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 Installing measures to improve the energy efficiency of Chase Leisure Centre directly supports corporate priority 2, Health and Wellbeing, 3, The Community and 4 Responsible Council.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 The Swimming Pool Support Fund is an £80million government funding programme administered by Sport England to ensure the viability of swimming pools across the country. Phase II was for capital interventions to improve the energy efficiency of public facilities over the medium to long term.

- 5.2 Initially, requests for funding to Sport England exceeded the total funding available; two bids were submitted in respect of Chase and Rugeley Leisure Centres. In the first round, funding was awarded to deliver solar panels at Rugeley Leisure Centre.
- 5.3 Cannock Chase District Council was notified in March 2025 of an opportunity to accept an additional Swimming Pool Support Fund Phase II capital award in respect of Chase Leisure Centre. Sport England had some wider underspends across their portfolio; therefore, this project was next in line to receive an offer.
- 5.4 The funding offer was to be accepted on the basis that the Council could deliver the work on site and claim the funding by 31st May 2025. The Council therefore had a very short time period to deliver this project.
- 5.5 In partnership with leisure operator Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles (IHL), Cannock Chase Council was already making positive progress delivering the solar installation at Rugeley Leisure Centre on time (permission to spend given for this on 18th July 2024). It was therefore possible and timely for IHL to quickly engage their contractors to accelerate the delivery of a similar intervention at Chase Leisure Centre to meet the deadline set by Sport England.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

The Council was awarded a capital grant from Sport England in respect of the swimming pool support fund. This amounted to £145,000 for the installation of Photo Voltaic (PV) panels. The Council has had to enter into a grant agreement with Sport England and has reporting requirements to comply with.

As set out in paragraph 3.3 funding needed to be spent by 31st May 2025 and the Council is required to operate the swimming pool for a period of 10 years.

6.2 Legal

The funding is only to be used in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the grant agreement with Sport England.

The procurement of all goods, services and/or works in connection with the installation must comply with the Procurement Act 2023 and the requirements set out in the Council's Procurement Regulations.

The Photo Voltaic Panels form part of the fixtures and fittings of the freehold property owned by the Council. The tenant managed the installation and is responsible under the lease for the ongoing maintenance to a satisfactory standard.

6.3 Human Resources

None applicable.

6.4 Risk Management

IHL delivered the installation project on behalf of Cannock Chase District Council. They have provided full documentation including a risk assessment, method statement and warranty information concerning the solar panels.

IHL is responsible for the maintenance and repair of the Premises under their lease, which includes all fixtures and fittings, and all alterations and improvements carried out during the term, including the PV Panels. Operating and maintenance manuals were included in the handover of the installation from the contractor.

Cannock Chase District Council has successfully claimed funding from Sport England for the Rugeley Leisure Centre solar PV installation, having demonstrated compliance with all funding requirements. The terms and conditions for funding at Chase Leisure Centre are the same, therefore we have considerable assurance that the grant funding will be paid; the financial risk is low.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

Chase Leisure Centre ensures its provision, including swimming is fully accessible and open to everyone. Maintaining an affordable offer for local residents ensures resilience of public leisure services, which in turn supports equitable access for all members of our community.

6.6 Health

Provision of swimming pools has a positive impact on health and wellbeing; this funding is designed to secure that provision. As well as swimming for the public, Chase Leisure Centre has extensive provision for school swimming.

6.7 Climate Change

These interventions will improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions. The installation includes 370 photovoltaic modules, generating 166.5kWp; this will produce an estimated saving of 39.3tonnes of CO2 in year 1. Energy performance will be monitored long term, a display is installed in the reception area of Chase Leisure Centre and data uploaded monthly to a national platform "Moving Communities" on both participation and energy consumption at the centre, this can be monitored by the Council and by our leisure operator.

7 Appendices

None

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

None

Contact Officer:	Anna Nevin
Telephone Number:	(01785) 619 176
Ward Interest:	All
Report Track:	Cabinet: 31/07/26
Key Decision:	No

UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025-26

Committee:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	31 July 2025
Report of:	Head of Economic Development and Planning
Portfolio:	Regeneration and High Streets

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Members on the successful completion of the UK Shared Prosperity (UKSPF) programme for 2022-2025 and to update on the programme as agreed via Urgent Executive Decision on 28 April 2025.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the success of the UKSPF 2022-25 programme and the impact the investments and interventions have had across the District.
- 2.2 That Cabinet note the content of the Urgent Executive Decision in respect of the UKSPF 2025-6 programme and delegations required to commence delivery (enclosed at **Appendix 1**) and notes the award to the Council of £988,573 UKSPF for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.
- 2.3 That Cabinet is asked to recommend to Council that the current Capital Programme is amended to accommodate the sum of £210,000 in respect of UKSPF to ensure delivery of capital projects identified in the UKSPF programme 2025-26.
- 2.4 That Cabinet delegates authority to the Head of Economic Development and Planning in consultation with the Regeneration and High Streets Portfolio Leader to take any associated decisions as required to ensure that the UKSPF programme is delivered on time and on budget, including, but not limited to:
- i. Producing and submitting s151 Officer certified financial and output returns and monitoring and evaluation information as required to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).
 - ii. Developing and commencing the commissioning of external projects to be funded by UKSPF and commence commissioning of Council led projects to be funded by UKSPF.
 - iii. To work with the Head of Law and Governance to develop and produce any legal agreements required for external projects funded by UKSPF.
 - iv. To continue the existing governance arrangements in respect of the UKSPF Board.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.5 Government announced in the autumn budget that the UKSPF programme would be extended by 12 months from 1 April 2025. Council allocations were provisionally announced in early March 2025 but only confirmed on 1 April 2025 once the 2022-25 programme was complete.

- 2.6 The way in which the UKSPF programme is administered has been modified for this extension period and the previously published Investment Plan is no longer a requirement of the scheme. Instead, MHCLG required all Councils to submit a forecast of their programme spend by no later than 1 May 2025, meaning that an Urgent Executive Decision had to be sought to secure the funding.
- 2.7 As with the original scheme, a proportion of the funding is specifically for capital projects which requires a recommendation to Council to amend the existing Capital Programme.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 All monies allocated under the UKSPF programme must be fully spent by 31 March 2026. As such, priority has been given to projects and investments with the lowest risks associated with delivery and to those projects that have a track record of meeting the criteria of the Fund.
- 3.2 As part of the risk management of the programme a number of 'reserve' projects have been identified and, should progress monitoring indicate that an area of spend is at risk of not being delivered, the alternative projects can be implemented.
- 3.3 The UKSPF scheme continues to require investments to achieve specific outputs and outcomes as a result of the funding and progress against these targets will continue to be monitored by the UKSPF Board.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The UKSPF programme supports the Economic Prosperity, Health & Wellbeing and Community Priorities within the Corporate Plan 2022-26.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 The core objective of the original UKSPF scheme was to build pride in place and increase life chances across the country. Local authorities, working with partners and stakeholders, had the flexibility to target investment to local priorities and needs by focussing on three key themes. For Cannock Chase, the applicable themes for the 2022-25 programme were Community and Place, People and Skills and Supporting Local Businesses. For each investment made the Council was required to monitor outputs and outcomes (the impacts and benefits) and to ensure all UKSPF eligibility criteria were met.
- 5.2 The original UKSPF allocation for Cannock Chase was £3,021,807 with a deadline for spending of 31 March 2025. At the close of the programme every agreed investment had been completed on time. The range of impacts and benefits created as a direct result of Council intervention are wide ranging and, in many cases, exceed the forecasted outcomes.
- 5.3 In Cannock town centre investment was focussed on both short- and long-term regeneration plans with Thriving Communities funding supporting the Town Centre Partnership to offer events to drive footfall into the high street and capital funding supporting the acquisition programme within the town centre regeneration programme. Having secured property within the town centre, UKSPF money was

then used to create an Investment Prospectus setting out the Council's ambition for the town which is now generating significant interest from developers.

- 5.4 In Rugeley an initial feasibility study looking at the opportunities that could form part of a future masterplan for the town centre was completed and has evidenced the need to progress this piece of work in the 2025-26 programme.
- 5.5 A significant proportion of the funding focussed supporting Cannock Chase residents via programmes such as Beat the Cold which tackles fuel poverty and reducing cold related ill health, the Youth Aspirations initiative which supports young people in the District's High Schools to raise their aspirations and to make informed decisions about their education and future careers and the Discovery Programme which improved skills levels and increase employment opportunities.
- 5.6 Across the whole of the District the Thriving Communities programme referenced in 5.3 was available to seven parishes and community groups to support our high streets. Over the course of the 2022-25 programme a vast range of projects chosen by the local communities were supported ranging from street furniture to play equipment and events. As a number of communities were keen to mark VE day in May of this year, Thriving Communities was extended into 2025-26 to support these activities.
- 5.7 Support for local businesses was delivered in a variety of programmes including the West Midlands Grant Programme aimed at start-ups, small and medium sized businesses based in the District whilst the Go Digital Accelerator programme connected businesses with students and academics to support the development of new products and developing knowledge of the digital sector. UKSPF was also used to fund a dedicated Cannock Growth Hub advisor which has been very well received and will continue to be funded over the coming year.
- 5.8 UKSPF has enabled the Council to continue to support further education in the district with two significant investments in the Cannock Chase College Campus in the town centre. In late 2023 UKSPF grant funding enabled the installation of a bespoke carpentry workshop for both site and bench carpentry and purpose-building trades workshops bricklaying, flooring, and painting. In March 2025, a further grant enabled the College to bring a mothballed building back into use as an Innovation and Skills Hub which will offer a range of programmes that enable local people to develop sector-specific skills with the support of the College and local employers
- 5.9 Having delivered this range and scale of investment across the District and identifying where further support is needed, the announcement of an additional year of funding means that those interventions that were particularly successful or were unable to meet demand can continue to be supported. The draft programme for 2025-26 as submitted to Government in May 2025 had to be capable of completion no later than 31 March 2026. Scoping the programme therefore followed two core principles: are the proposed projects addressing an identified need thereby meeting UKSPF eligibility criteria and can the risk of delivery not completing on time be adequately mitigated to ensure total spend of the grant.
- 5.10 Whilst some areas of the administration of the UKSPF allocation have changed, particularly in terms of the need for an Investment Plan akin to that provided to Cabinet back in February 2023 for the original programme, the three priority areas

remain the same - Communities and Place, Support for Local Business and People and Skills. As discussed and agreed with the Leader of the Council and the Group Leaders prior to submission to MHCLG the investment for 2025-26 has been indicatively split across the priority areas as follows (this excludes the administration of the programme):

Communities and Place	Support for Local Businesses	People and Skills
51%	22%	27%

- 5.11 The schedule of projects as set out in **Appendix 2** is the preferred programme for investment as submitted to MHCLG. As with the original programme, Members should note that due to the nature of project delivery there is a need to be flexible and respond to challenges quickly to ensure that no funding is unspent at 31 March 2026. As such the delegations recommended in 2.4 enable officer to deal with any emerging issues promptly and reduce the risk of underspend. Members will recall that the Let's Grow grant scheme (separate to UKSPF) has a residual balance that has proven challenging to distribute due to the original eligibility criteria. To maximise the amount of funding available to support local businesses Members are asked to note that the eligibility criteria for Let's Grow has been aligned to the new UKSPF business support grants to ensure the scheme is fully delivered.
- 5.12 Members are asked to note that the final monitoring return for the 2022-25 programme was submitted to Government and no queries around the spend have been raised to date. This is relevant as the award of monies for 2025-26 takes into account any unspent monies as at 31 March 2025. The Council have been notified by MHCLG that payment of the UKSPF 2025-26 allocation has been made.
- 5.13 Delivery of the 2025-26 programme will be reported to and monitored by the existing UKSPF Board and quarterly progress reports will be shared with Cabinet and Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

As set out in the report the Council was awarded an indicative allocation of £988,573 from the UK Shared Prosperity fund. The UKSPF guidance allows for a proportionate percentage of the total allocation to be used for delivery of the projects, which the Council has initially set at 4% which would give an allowance of £39,540 over the life of the programme.

The submitted investment programme proposes the following spending profile (including administration grant):

	Capital	Revenue	Total
	£	£	£
2025/26:	210,000	778,580	988,580

The funding will be spent in accordance with the Council's financial regulations and financial monitoring reports will be taken from the Council's finance system to enable completion of the financial aspects of the grant claims.

6.2 Legal

Depending on how the UKSPF monies are utilised, the Subsidy Control Act 2022 may have effect. The Subsidy Control Act 2022 came into force on 4 January 2023. The provisions of this Act have to be considered if the Council is giving a “subsidy,” The Act defines a “subsidy” as financial assistance which is:

- given directly or indirectly from public resources by a public authority
- confers an economic advantage on an enterprise
- is specific, i.e., benefits one enterprise over another
- has, or is capable of having, an effect on the UK or a territory outside the UK.

If the Council is giving a subsidy, then it must demonstrate it has considered and complied with the “subsidy control principles” of the Act. The Council must not give a subsidy unless satisfied that the subsidy is consistent with those principles.

Subsidies that do not exceed £315,000 over a three-year period are not subject to the subsidy control requirements of the Act. It is important to note that in all cases where a subsidy is more than £100,000 the Act requires details of the subsidy to be published on a public database, run by the Government Department for Business and Trade (DfT).

It is critical that the Council complies with the provisions of the Act in cases where it is giving subsidies. Failure to comply could lead to a challenge by an interested party via the Competition Appeal Tribunal, and the Tribunal has powers to set aside the Council’s decision to award the subsidy and to make a recovery order, requiring the Council to recover some or all of the subsidy from the beneficiary. The deadline for bringing a challenge is one month from when details of the subsidy are uploaded to the public transparency database

6.3 Human Resources

None.

6.4 Risk Management

A risk register for the programme will be monitored via the existing UKSPF Board. Within that, Members attention is drawn to the red risks as follows.

The greatest risk associated with this programme is that failure to fully spend all of the grant award by 31 March 2026 would result in unspent monies being returned to Government. In turn this may impact on future funding awards.

To mitigate this risk projects within the programme have been reviewed in terms of the factors that may lead to delayed delivery and priority has been given to those projects with a proven track record. Continual monitoring of progress will highlight any emerging issues and whether any of the projects require additional support or a revisiting of the brief to ensure delivery. Similarly, failure to meet the eligibility criteria of the UKSPF programme as set out by Government could lead to cost implications for the Council. To minimise the likelihood of this every project is assessed prior to inclusion in the programme to ensure that all requirements are met.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

An Equalities Impact Assessment forms part of the administration of the funding.

6.6 Health

Investments within the 2025-26 programme have been targeted towards leisure and recreation facilities to support healthy lifestyles.

6.7 Climate Change

The programme for 2025-26 earmarks £50,000 for feasibility work related to climate change and areas of the business support allocation will also contribute towards positive changes within that sector.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Urgent Executive Decision

Appendix 2: Indicative UKSPF Programme 2025-26

8 Previous Consideration

UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Cabinet - 26 January 2023

9 Background Papers

Shared Prosperity Fund Prospectus:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus

Contact Officer: Michelle Smith

Telephone Number: 01785 619 335

Ward Interest: All

Report Track: Cabinet: 31/07/25
Council: 24/09/25

Key Decision: Yes

Cannock Chase District Council: Urgent Executive Decision

Service Area: Economic Development & Planning
Brief description of the Decision:

Approval of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Project Allocations for financial year 2025 to enable a submission of the programme to MHCLG on 30 April 2025 and commence delivery in line with delegations for the previous programme.

The proposed programme of projects is appended to this decision form.

Nature of Urgency

MHCLG have advised that all programme information must be submitted no later than 30 April 2025 to enable drawdown of the funding.

Options considered

Not submitting the programme until after Cabinet have met to consider the detail - funding may be withdrawn or reduced as a result and the delivery timescale for the projects would reduce to 10 months as all funds must be fully spent by 31 March 2026.

Rationale of Decision:

Proceeding will enable the Council to maximise the time available to spend the grant, guarantee the full draw down of funding and enable best use of the fund. The projects identified have all been assessed as eligible within the UKSPF criteria.

Decision Making Body in accordance with Constitution Function

Delegation	Key Decision	General	Confidential
Council			
Cabinet		✓	

Estimated value of additional costs incurred:

N/A

Period of time decisions refers to:

The MHCLG return must be completed by 30 April 2025.

Funding available

All funding proposed for allocation is provided via the UKSPF grant totalling £988,573.

Consultees	Signature	Date
Head of Service		
Monitoring Officer:		
Section 151 Officer:		
Cabinet Member*:		

Proposed date of meeting to report decision:

Body:	Date:
Cabinet	5 June 2025

Urgency Approved by	Signature	Date
Chief Executive		
Leader of the Council	✓	28/04/25
Leader of Opposition		
2 nd Group Leader		

UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025-26: Appendix 2 Indicative Programme

Programme/Project	UKSPF Investment Priority	Revenue	Capital
Beat the Cold	Communities and Place	£16,500	
Benefits Advisor	Communities and Place	£80,000	
Rugeley Leisure Centre/Flooding	Communities and Place	£30,000	£160,000
Thriving Communities Events	Communities and Place	£21,000	
Union Street Play Area, Cannock	Communities and Place		£50,000
UKREiiF	Communities and Place	£5,000	
Rugeley Town Centre Masterplan	Communities and Place	£75,000	
Youth Aspirations	People and Skills	£79,990	
General and Life Skills	People and Skills	£180,500	
Green Solutions - Training	Supporting Local Business	£3,800	
Growth Hub	Supporting Local Business	£13,480	
Business Support	Supporting Local Business	£183,770	
Climate Change	Community and Place	£50,000	
Administration		£39,540	
Total		£778,580	£210,000

Cannock Chase District Council and Stafford Borough Council: Joint Tree Management Proposals: Tree Management System and Tree Re-inspections

Committee:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	31 July 2025
Report of:	Head of Operations
Portfolio:	Environment and Climate Change

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform cabinet of the proposed arrangements for the provision of tree services across Cannock Chase District Council (CCDC) and Stafford Borough Council (SBC).
- 1.2 To outline the plans for aligning the services across the two authorities.
- 1.3 To set out the business case for the purchase of an integrated tree management system and the need to procure tree risk inspections across both authorities.

2 Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Agrees to the procurement of a shared integrated software system for all areas of tree management; including Council owned trees, Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), and trees which are the subject of a Conservation Area designation,
- 2.2 Notes the drawing down from reserves to fund the procurement of a shared integrated electronic tree management software system, including a customer facing web portal,
- 2.3 Agrees to the carrying out of routine tree inspections at both Councils by an external contractor in parallel to the procurement and installation of the above system,
- 2.4 Notes that provision will be made in the budget for 2026/27 onwards for the routine inspection of the Council owned trees using external sub-contractor/s.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.5 The two services have the same remit in both Council's but there are some differences in the way the Council's manage and deliver them. It is intended to fully align the team and service provision across both Councils.
- 2.6 The management of TPOs and trees in Conservation Areas is guided by the statutory framework of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The related processes are not supported by any software at either Council - making the current processes time consuming for officers across a number of different sections. The majority of these enquiries could be addressed by a self-service customer facing portal.

- 2.7 In terms of the TPO's themselves, the majority of Cannock Chase TPO's have been digitised and partly reviewed, whereas Stafford Borough's have not. However, both authorities now are in a position where they need to comprehensively review and update all of their TPOs.
- 2.8 Similarly, one of the biggest sources of enquiries at both Councils, are trees on open spaces. Updating the software would allow tree enquiries to be more efficiently dealt with via a self-service customer portal.
- 2.9 Aligning the service and updating the software will support the Councils in meeting their legal requirements to have an effective system for managing trees.

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 The tree service currently operates differently across both authorities, and this is set out in Table 1 (below) along with any proposed future actions.

Function	CCDC	SBC	Proposal
Tree Inspections of Council owned trees	In-house	External Consultants	Move to external consultants (2025)
IT System	In-house - (Spreadsheet / Council GIS system / does not manage TPOs)	Off the shelf system (does not manage TPOs)	Migrate tree inventory data to new system (2025)
Tree maintenance work programmes	Delivered manually	Delivered from ICT system	Deliver from new ICT system (2026)
Tree Work	Internal Tree Team + Contractors	Internal Tree Team + Contractors	Continue current practice & go out to Tender for a Schedule of Rates call off Contract against a budget (2027)
Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) - Day-to-Day	In-house	External Consultant (due to long-term vacant post)	Move to In-house (2025)
Conservation Areas	8 areas managed In-house	30 areas managed by External Consultant (due to long-term vacant post)	Move to In-house (2025)
Planning Application Response	In-house	External Consultant (due to long-term vacant post)	Move to In-house (2025)

Function	CCDC	SBC	Proposal
Tree Preservation Order (TPO) Creation	In-house	External Consultant (due to long-term vacant post)	Move to In-house (2025)
Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) Numbers	665 estimated - (containing approximately 8,000 trees)	695 estimated - (approximate number of trees contained with TPOs is still under review)	n/a
Number of Council Owned / Managed Trees	Est. 38,000 (including approximately 8,000 on Housing (HRA) land and property gardens)	Est. 40,000	n/a
Number of Tree Team/Officer vacancies	1 x FTE Tree Officer (Covered by secondment)	2 x FTE Tree Officers, 2 x FTE Tree Operative (Covered by consultants)	Fill vacant posts and develop wider re-structuring proposals (2026)
Tree Policy and Procedures	Urban Forestry Strategy 2019-2024	Tree Management Policy 2024	Merge both documents into one written policy and procedure across both authorities

Table 1 - Tree Management Comparisons and Future Proposals

- 3.2 As demonstrated in Table 1, current working practices and structures differ. It is intended to merge the entire tree management operation under one senior officer and purchase an integrated tree management and software system to operate simultaneously across both authorities. This will allow the co-terminus inspection of both sets of Council trees, and the management of them via one unified system. The system will have a public facing portal for each Council, allowing residents to be logged on electronically and view, the inspection details of Council trees, the status of Tree Protection Orders (TPO) or Conservation Area (CA) applications or notices.
- 3.3 The provision of tree work operations would also benefit from standardisation to ensure that the service is sustainable across the two Councils.
- 3.4 The inspection of trees at both authorities is a matter of health and safety compliance which needs to be addressed as a priority, due to the length of time since the last set of full inspections were commissioned and/or undertaken. SBC's last round of inspections was undertaken between 2020-23; with CCDC's last inspections being undertaken during 2023. Following the procurement of an integrated tree management system, a contractor will be appointed to inspect the trees using an established industry best practice, risk-based approach.

- 3.5 There is currently no budget for the system at either Council, however, it is proposed to take the initial purchase sum out of the Councils' reserves and then build the ongoing costs into the budget setting process each year.

4. Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This report supports the Councils' Corporate Priorities as follows:

Priority 4 - Responsible Council (CCDC)/Effective Council (SBC)

By modernising our approach to tree management, it means that both Councils will have a modern, publicly available, legally defensible tree inspection and management system. This will speed up the customer interface and will channel shift enquiries from Customer Services to a self-service portal model, especially for developers and residents regarding TPO's.

5. Report Detail

- 5.1 Council owned trees form a significant part of the landscape across both Councils, with an estimated 78,000 trees spread over 261 Sq. miles, or for example, an area just under seven times the size of Coventry City. To manage this number of trees and an area this size, it is best practice for Council's to utilise the latest technology and tree management methodologies.
- 5.2 Residents, developers, and business expectations of local government tree management continues to increase, and they rightly expect ease of access to up-to-date tree information and the making of swift policy-based decisions. In addition to the above, each Council has a significant statutory duty, under health and safety legislation to manage its tree risk, and a statutory duty to protect trees, via the appropriate application of Tree Preservation Orders.
- 5.3 As part of the shared service restructure across both Councils it was agreed that tree management would be placed within one service area (Operations), under a single senior service manager. While at CCDC trees were already managed within one service (Parks and Open Spaces), at SBC they were managed across two (Streetscene and Planning) under different service managers. The services, now covered by Operations are split into three areas, with tree management now falling under the Natural Environment section.
- 5.4 Currently at CCDC, all requests to work on trees that are the subject of a TPO or within a Conservation Area are dealt with by the former Parks and Open Spaces (now Natural Environment) team, who inspect, decide, and send out a Decision Notice, as required by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). At SBC, such requests are received through the Councils Planning portal and passed onto the Streetscene section, where a consultant responds to the Planning Team. The Planning Section then processes the decision notice and sends it out via an appointed case officer. The Government sets an 8-week response deadline for the receipt of decision notices. A consultant tree officer has historically been, and is currently used, due to the difficulty in recruiting suitably qualified and experienced tree officers.
- 5.5 An identical approach is operated in relation to planning applications that involve trees at SBC, whereas at CCDC, the Natural Environment section deal with all planning related tree and soft landscaping matters.

- 5.6 As detailed in Table 1 (above) there is a requirement to fill the vacant posts and finalise the wider restructuring proposals. It may be that additional resources are required; this will be assessed once the tree inspection work has been completed and there is a clearer understanding of the needs of the service. If additional resources are required, this will be the subject of a future report.

Tree Management ICT System

- 5.7 Given the significant number of trees across both Councils (circa 78,000) it is considered that a modern, web based, integrated tree management software system, with a self-serve customer facing portal, is needed.
- 5.8 A shared modern integrated tree management system will allow the appropriate management of health and safety and tree preservation orders, alongside offering a customer facing portal for general tree and TPO enquiries. In addition, it can also be used for the measurement of carbon sequestration and monetary value of trees. This will also assist both Councils to establish the asset value of their tree stock.
- 5.9 SBC procured a tree management system some years ago which is no longer considered fit for purpose and does not allow modern functionality requirements. The system currently employed at SBC cannot be upgraded on the current contract.
- 5.10 CCDC uses an in-house GIS based system. That system is heavily reliant upon the input of data by the Council's GIS ICT team and is prone to issues in data refresh. It is now no longer considered as fit for purpose, or for future investment.
- 5.11 Both systems are in need of modernising to include a customer facing portal, and to better support the management of TPOs and tree risk surveys.
- 5.12 Procurement can be undertaken via the GCloud Procurement Frameworks designed for ICT system procurement and will be supported by the County Council's procurement team.
- 5.13 In January 2025, the Council was awarded a grant of £50k towards the cost of improving and making its tree related data public and business facing. The longstop date for this funding is March 2026, when, if not claimed, it will no longer be available for the Council to draw down. Both CCDC and SBC were awarded £50k, making a total of £100k for the overall project. This funding is for the digitisation of tree data via a web portal; however, this cannot be completed with either of the current tree systems.
- 5.14 While the above grant is an incentive, there is a pressing requirement for all Council's to publish data under FoI (Freedom of Information), INSPIRE (HM Gov. Index Polygons spatial data), HMLR (HM Land Registry) migration, (implementation phase in first quarter 2026), LURA / MHCLG (Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 / Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government), (March 2026 deadline), and data transparency obligations. Providing the data via open APIs (Application Programme Interfaces) will allow both Council's to meet the requirements in this regard. This will reduce the significant officer time spent on typical Freedom of Information requests for data, as the data will be available via an online public portal.

- 5.15 The purchase and implementation of the IT system is key to aligning and modernising the tree service.

Routine Tree Inspections

- 5.16 SBC has always outsourced its routine tree inspections to an external subcontractor. For a number of years now CCDC has undertaken its routine tree inspections in-house, by utilising a tree officer who undertook a proportion of tree inspections each year and carried out other tree related tasks, such as the management of the Council's general tree enquiries and operative tree team.
- 5.17 The CCDC tree officer post does not have sufficient capacity to support the numbers of annual routine tree inspections required, alongside the other operational work that has to be performed. The post is currently vacant, and the post is being covered in part (general enquiries and tree team management) by an officer seconded from within the Streetscene service, who is qualified and experienced in general arboriculture management and operations.
- 5.18 It is considered that CCDC should adopt the SBC model and at least outsource the next round of its routine tree inspections to a contractor, using a risk-based methodology.
- 5.19 The estimated costs associated with the externalisation of the routine tree inspections are given in the table below:

	CCDC	SBC
Number of Trees	38,000 (includes 8,000 HRA)	40,000
Estimated Costs (quote plus 10% contingency £5.00 per tree)	£190,000 (£40,000 HRA)	£200,000

- 5.20 The intention is to carry out the initial tree inspections for the entire tree stock over a period of 2-years. Following the completion of those inspections an annual inspection regime will be created whereby a proportion will be undertaken each year. Any additional cost will be picked up as part of the budget setting process.
- 5.21 The inspection regime in future will identify tree condition and associated risks, which will subsequently be addressed in accordance with their priority, using an industry standard risk management system. This creates a risk-based inspection schedule, rather than a more generic condition and hazard schedule. It will allow the Council to focus future inspections and resources on areas that pose the greatest risk, such as, high footfall and play areas, etc. The subsequent re-inspections will then be based on three Tree Zones; RED (reinspected annually); Amber (3-years) and Green (every 5 years).

6. Implications

6.1 Financial

The report sets out the requirement for a new tree management system to be procured to enable both Councils to have a modern system which also meets the digitisation requirements.

The initial purchase and first year licence are proposed to be met from reserve funding with the ongoing licence fee for future years to be picked up as part of the budget process for 2026/27. Initial quotes estimate a purchase cost of approximately £82,000 with a licence fee of £42,500 per annum. The cost to each authority for the initial purchase and licence would therefore be £62,250 to be met from reserves.

Both Councils also have an urgent requirement to undertake tree inspections, the report proposes that this is done by external consultants over a two-year period. Initial estimates are set out in paragraph 6.19. The cost for both General Fund and HRA will be met from reserves with an ongoing annual tree inspection budget to be built in as part of the budget process.

6.2 Legal

The Council has a statutory duty to manage the health and safety risk of trees on its land and under its management.

The Council has a statutory duty to protect trees across its borough and district areas via the appropriate use of Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) under the Town and County Planning Act 1999 (as amended).

Failure to implement an effective system to monitor trees could expose the Council to claims for negligence and breach of statutory duty resulting in financial and reputational risk.

The relevant contracts must be procured in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Council's own procurement regulations.

As the grant funding requires spend by March 2026, consideration must be given to the capacity of the in-house legal services team to provide urgent advice and drafting of the relevant contracts or whether the work will need to be outsourced.

6.3 Human Resources

The proposal to externalise tree inspections will have implications for the CCDC post that has responsibility for this. But as this post is currently vacant, it will not have an impact on an employee. The job description will need to be updated and re-evaluated. The proposals for the joint tree management team structure will be subject to consultation in line with relevant council policy.

6.4 Risk Management

Tree management is currently a red risk on the Council's Strategic Risk Register. The above proposals all form part of the strategy for managing and reducing this risk.

If the Councils do not maintain an effective system for tree management, they could face fines and/or insurance claims.

A robust tree management system and risk based informed tree inspection regime will enable the Council to ensure trees are maintained to protect the safety of the public and property.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

None.

6.6 Health

Trees are known to improve people's health as they absorb carbon dioxide and emit oxygen. They are also extremely effective in filtering out pollutants in the atmosphere, particularly PM10s, which are the more damaging solid particles in the atmosphere.

6.7 Climate Change

The intrinsic role of trees in climate change has been well documented. It is current Government policy to increase the amount of tree cover to over 20% in all areas. Research has shown that access to high quality outdoor spaces has a major impact on people's wellbeing and for that reason many Councils are increasing resources into tree planting and management.

7 Appendices

None

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

None

Contact Officer:	Tom Walsh
Telephone Number:	01543 464 482
Ward Interest:	All
Report Track:	SBC Cabinet: 24/07/25 CCDC Cabinet: 31/07/25
Key Decision:	Yes

Development of Heath Hayes Park: Masterplan and Play Area Refurbishment

Committee:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	31 July 2025
Report of:	Head of Operations
Portfolios:	Parks, Culture & Heritage and Community Wellbeing

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval to proceed with the development of Heath Hayes Park Masterplan and implement phase 1 of the improvements, as set out in the attached Draft Masterplan proposals at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 To obtain permission to spend £662,850, made up of £615,000 of the 2024 / 2025 to 2027 / 2028 capital programme budget and £47,580 Grant from the Forest of Mercia (all allocated to the Heath Hayes Park project)
- 1.3 To advise Cabinet of the proposed estimated capital cost for Phase 2 should it be approved at a later date.

2 Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Grants approval to proceed with the proposed development of the Phase 1 improvements to Heath Hayes Park, as set out at Option 2, item 3.8 in this report, and the proposals attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Seeks Council's approval to add £47,580 (Forest of Mercia Grant fund) to the capital programme 2025/26 and grants permission to spend £662,580 (CIL, S106 and Grant funds) as detailed in section 6.1. to deliver phase 1 of the Heath Hayes Park Development project, as set out in this report.
- 2.3 Approves the investigation of appropriate capital funding opportunities towards funding of phase 2, which will enable a further report to be considered when a clear funding strategy is in place.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.4 Councils have a major role in contributing to the promotion and delivery of increased participation in sport, recreation, and physical activity. The provision of first-class sports and recreation facilities that are sustainable and meet the needs of the community can assist in this role.
- 2.5 Heath Hayes Park sits within the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward, which has elevated levels of childhood obesity in the 0 - 5 age range and a higher number of households with dependent children (compared to the regional average). Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward currently has 4 small play areas. The development

of this park would enable Cannock Chase Council to continue its work to provide 7 main parks across the district, as per previous reports.

- 2.6 Outdoor spaces are essential in enabling the residents to have access to healthy and active lifestyle choices. This can be accomplished through play, sports, socialising, and or even, simply by walking through a site on the way to school, college, or work, or riding through and around a site for fun or social purposes. All of the above are proven to have a positive impact on physical health and supporting mental wellbeing. Heath Hayes Park is part of the Green Space Network, which falls within section 4.16 of the Local Plan Part 1, highlighting the need for good quality formal and informal outdoor spaces for recreation and nature conservation.
- 2.7 The proposed play area improvement scheme at Heath Hayes Park is already included within the CIL infrastructure list with a budget of £500,000 agreed for phase 1 of the works. The balance of the costs for phase 2 are to be considered once match funding can be obtained. Having scoped the works in detail it is considered that additional works are required to fully redevelop the whole site. Potential new local housing developments will lead to a larger demand on the park and play area facilities and provision. With this in mind, the council has been talking to the land developer with the option to allocate any Section 106 funds towards phase 2 of the works. Further cabinet reports will be submitted once the depth of this work and funding has been confirmed. The proposal aims to improve one of the Council's primary parks and encourage its links to, local history, Chasewater, and Cannock Chase National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).
- 2.8 It is proposed to split the scheme into 2 separate phases:
- Phase 1: Preparation, Junior / Toddler play spaces, main pathway construction, football pitch drainage and ground modelling and extending the existing parking area (appendix 1).
- Phase 2: Further pathways, site safety and security, infrastructure development and building.
- 2.9 Both phases of the works are considered too large and costly to be carried out in one, and as such the scheme has been split into 2 phases, as per the above. The cost to fully deliver both phases is currently estimated at circa £2,614,930.
- 2.10 Redevelopment works to Heath Hayes Park will link into several of the local plan objectives, via the inclusion of wide access corridors for walking and cycling, and improvements to the sport fields. Additional tree and orchard planting will not only protect habitats and wildlife but will also mitigate against pollution and its increasing environmental impact. The installation of accessible electric vehicle (EV) charging units on site are in line with the Council's climate change agenda and increase accessibility options to them, for local residents.
- 2.11 The Council is keen to progress the proposed Phase 1 development and for it to be completed within the 2026-27 financial year. To achieve this deadline, it has been necessary to include the estimated cost of the proposed Phase 1 scheme into the Council's Capital Programme for 2025-26 and to secure approval to spend the S106, CIL and Forest of Mercia funds.

- 2.12 It should be noted that given the level of information at this stage of the project, the estimated costs provided must be viewed as budget estimates only. They will need to be subject to further scrutiny at each element of the design and tender submission stage and may be subject to value engineering to ensure the final expenditure is within the approved budget.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 Heath Hayes Park is a large urban park measuring 10 hectares, nestled between Heath Hayes, Cannock Chase Cemetery and Crematorium and Cannock Chase Natural Landscape (former AONB). The park is situated within the Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Ward.
- 3.2 Heath Hayes and Wimblebury ward currently has five small play areas, including Heath Hayes Park. The proposed play area improvements are being undertaken in line with the requirements and priorities within the Councils 4-year parks improvement plan, as agreed previously. Heath Hayes as a ward has higher than average levels of childhood obesity within the 0-5 age range and also has a higher number of households of dependent children
- 3.3 The play area at Heath Hayes Park is outdated and not fully accessible. This will be rectified, and it will be made into a main play park that is fully inclusive, suitable for all members of our community. The site is set to become 1 of 7 main parks across Cannock Chase district. A play area in this location is considered essential, as currently there are limited quality outdoor play areas for children and families that are easily accessible within the locality.
- 3.4 The existing play area is some 735m² in size, is not inclusive and features a total of 11 individual pieces of formal play equipment, the last of which was installed in 2007 and subsequently maintained and repaired only as necessary. The site originally hosted 3 full size football pitches, allotments, tennis courts and a car park. The formal play provision area fronts directly onto the junction of Cannock Road and Wimblebury Road, which also accommodates main vehicle access and car parking, to the park.
- 3.5 The football pitches at Heath Hayes Park require regrading and drainage improvement works to FA standards, to allow their utilisation at a Sunday league level. This can be undertaken with support from the Football Foundation. The current pitches are waterlogged and cannot be utilised to their full potential. These pitches form part of the playing pitch strategy and the loss of the pitches will have implications on the number of teams that can play active sports and recreation within Cannock Chase district.
- 3.6 By making the pathways clearer and of a bound material, the paths will be improved and more frequently used. By adding further natural surveillance to the site it will hopefully increase the amount of recreational activity undertaken by all members of the general public. Increased use of cycling, walking, and planting trees and hedges will help absorb some of the greenhouse gases (GHG) that are produced within Cannock Chase. New seating and signage will help those with mobility issues to access the site. By creating stopping points and points of interest. These will aid those who cannot walk large distances to get some form of outdoor exercise without which their health (physical and mental) would suffer. By replacing, enlarging, and relocating the car park, it will help those who need

wheelchairs to get into the site. At present the car park suffers from potholes, causing it to be uneven, and is often filled to capacity. It is also used by parents on a daily basis to drop off and pick up their children from an adjacent primary school.

Funding Strategy and Options

- 3.7 Currently there is insufficient capital to deliver all the proposed improvements included within Phase 1 and 2 of the programme.
- 3.8 Consequently, to minimise the pressure on capital and revenue budgets the following options are suggested for consideration by Cabinet:
- **Option 1:** Put on hold Phase 1 works and develop a full funding strategy for the delivery of the entire project and receive a further report to Cabinet for consideration. However, this option would not deliver any improvements in the short term.
 - **Option 2:** Carryout Phase 1 of the development, utilising S106, CIL and Forest of Mercia Grant funding (if approved). This will enable the delivery of some key improvements, including the development of the two new play areas. This option would also allow further time to investigate the capital and revenue costs and associated operating income for the Phase 2 proposed facilities, thereby limiting the financial risk to the Council. In addition, it allows time to explore and submit possible funding bids to other potential partners such as Lawn Tennis Association, British Cycling, Sport England, and the Football Foundation for the second phase of the works.
 - **Option 3:** Do nothing at this time. This is not considered to be a realistic option, as the park is one of the districts main parks, it requires improvement, and has an established recognised need, as evidenced in the Councils 4-year play area improvement programme.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This report supports the Council's Corporate Priorities as follows:

Priority 2 - Health & Wellbeing

- Works with partners to address health inequalities across the district.
- Provide opportunities for residents to lead healthy and active lifestyles and recognise the importance of mental health and wellbeing.
- Creates opportunities for our residents to lead healthy lifestyles, be it walking in our parks, or cycling around the district.
- Encourages residents to walk / cycle to and from work and school.

Priority 3 - The Community

- Maintains our local parks and green spaces and ensures that local environments and biodiversity are protected, preserved, and enhanced for future generations.
- Works with partners and the local community to support appropriate tree planting schemes.

- Ensures our communities are well designed, accessible, and are inclusive environments.

Heath Hayes Park is within the Forest of Mercia boundary and as such funding has been requested and granted from the Forest of Mercia to help with the planting of trees. These are to aid the aesthetics of the site whilst at the same time contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from the local area and allows the local community to get involved with tree planting, whilst improving the quality of the environment.

5 Report Detail

5.1 The proposed Phase 1 scheme includes:

- 1) The replacement and relocation of the existing outdated junior play area situated in the southern end of the site, and the installation of a brand-new junior and toddler play area, including learn to ride arena and playground games.
- 2) Installing a new main footway through the park including improvements to the existing footways creating a hierarchy of pathways, retaining the original pathway widths, with a number of pathways being resurfaced in tarmac, making commuting, and walking across and around the site, far easier throughout the year. Installing ducting for future lighting of the footways (in parts).
- 3) Ground modelling and drainage to the existing football pitches to bring them up to a FA standards for 11v11 matches, 9v9 matches and also 7v7 sized matches.
- 4) Access and boundary improvements to make the space seem more appealing, safe, and secure. Making sure the access barriers are accessible to all users of mobility scooters and other accessibility aids. Creating a site that exploits natural surveillance but also adds to the protection of those that use it.
- 5) Installation of appropriate street furniture throughout the site, including display boards for historical references as well as day to day activities, and new benches and bins located at strategic points.

5.2 Heath Hayes Park has an established friends' group that has been in existence for several years. The group is keen to promote the history of the park and its development. The Friends group are also keen to see more people using the park on a daily basis, increased events, and activities for local residents, and to develop the park into a hub for the local community.

5.3 Whilst there are several reasonable footpaths across the site, there are a few key locations where formal surfaced paths seem to be missing, including adjacent the existing boundary woodlands. The play area is provided for by several formal pathways. This project will aim to formalise some of those paths and include lighting and CCTV for added security. Providing good quality formal safe surfaced pathways and maintenance access is considered essential as part of the proposal.

- 5.4 Budget cost estimates have been drafted using a 2-phase development model (See appendix 3), the following items of work have been included in Phase 1:

1.	Contract conditions and preliminaries	£5,000
2.	Preparation works - Ground modelling	£5,000
3.	Fencing, gates, and barriers	£3,000
4.	Pathways, surfacing, lighting, CCTV	£100,000
5.	Play areas	£318,750
6.	Landscaping & Woodland Management	£38,000
7.	Site furniture	£16,500
8.	Football pitches	£144,650
	SUB TOTAL	£630,900
9.	Contingency figure	£31,545
	TOTAL	£662,445

The remaining works will be included in phase 2 and total £1,952,350.

- 5.5 Whilst a draft budget estimate and masterplan have been proposed, a detailed design scheme is required to be drawn up. The proposed detailed design scheme will be drawn up and consulted upon with local / adjacent residents, site users, the Friends Group, other community groups, and ward members. This should lead to a final design proposal that has community and member support and ownership.

Funding for Tree Planting

- 5.6 Heath Hayes Park falls within the Forest of Mercia's administrative boundary, and as such funding has been requested and granted to assist the Council with tree planting. These are to aid the aesthetics of the site whilst at the same time contributing to the improvement of the environment and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by the implementation of an appropriate tree planting scheme.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

This report is seeking permission to spend £662,580. Comprised of £615,000 from the current capital budget 2025-26 approved programme and £47,580 grant funding from the Forest of Mercia. Phase 1 is to be financed by existing Section 106 receipt Q211 £115,000 towards the upgrading of the football pitch drainage system. £500,000 CIL contribution towards the replacement of the junior play area and inclusion of new toddler play zone, pathway, and car park improvements. Additional Grant funding from Forest of Mercia, £47,580 to tackle climate change

Phase 2 of the project works (Capital element) is estimated to cost circa £1,952,350 to be detailed in a future report to Cabinet. Both phases of the development works would total an estimated £2,614,930 for the entire project.

6.2 Legal

Any contracts for works/services relating to Phase 1 or Phase 2 works will be let in accordance with the Council's Procurement Regulations and the Procurement Act 2023. All contracts will need to be drafted to cover the obligations imposed on all parties involved in Phase 1 or Phase 2, including provisions for agreed specifications for works and/or services.

Timescales will need to consider the time needed for tender exercises and contract preparation work. Consideration will need to be given to the capacity within the Legal Services team for the drafting and provision of advice regarding contracts, and whether the work will need to be outsourced or can be carried out in-house.

Any terms and conditions governing grant funding awarded to the Council by third-party organisations will also need to be considered in each case.

The relevant S106 Agreements will need to be reviewed to ensure that the monies likely to be spent on this project from the particular S106 fund align with the spend purpose in that agreement.

6.3 Human Resources

Any implications will be met from the existing staff resources within the Council's Operations and other appropriate service areas.

6.4 Risk Management

There is a risk that the project costs may increase. The project may be exposed to severe market fluctuations and increases in construction costs. This can be mitigated to some degree by re-engineering the project to ensure that the final expenditure is kept within the approved budget.

There is also a risk that the additional funding required to deliver some elements of the Phase 2 works cannot be secured, however, those risks are not applicable at this stage if the reported recommendation (Option 2) is agreed.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

An equality and diversity impact assessment will be undertaken. It is anticipated that the new development and facilities will have a positive impact on a range of equalities groups and that current negative impacts will be negated through the design process.

6.6 Health

The Council's outdoor spaces are essential in ensuring that residents of Cannock Chase have access to healthy and active lifestyle choices. This can be through the playing of sports, walking or riding through the site on the way to school, college, or work, or for social purposes. Each of these activities has a proven link to improving both physical and mental health and wellbeing.

6.7 Climate Change

The landscaping (tree and hedgerow planting works) and pathway improvements as recommended in this report will enhance the natural environment, biodiversity, and will contribute towards the Council's climate change agenda.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Heath Hayes Park Draft Masterplan / Development plan

Appendix 2: Draft programme

Appendix 3: Budget estimate breakdown.

8 Previous Consideration

None.

9 Background Papers

None.

Contact Officer:	Colin Donnelly
Telephone Number:	01543 464 520
Ward Interest:	Heath Hayes and Wimblebury
Report Track:	Cabinet: 31/07/25 Council: 24/09/25
Key Decision:	No



New tree lined avenues - 3m wide tarmac surface with large park trees lined on both sides with plenty of benches and seating, lighting and green stations scattered around the site.



Learn to ride area for young children to learn balancing skills, bike handling skills and rules of the road. In a safe and enjoyable environment.



New play pavilion to house changing rooms, toilets and storage. Play areas located adjacent to new building and car park to include sensory play as a main focus. Play areas for all ages and abilities



Existing memorial gates to be retained and a social area included within the park to mark formal activities including personal announcements system (PA) and lighting for future use.



Quiet area / sensory area for contemplation. Including circular walk with plenty of seating, raised beds for community planting, care foot walk and specimen significant tree planting for chronological time frame and aboutetum feel to the park.

Possible housing development land

KEY:

Site boundary

Adjacent dwellings and properties - Mix of property styles and sizes.

Existing mature broad leaf woodland - containing species such as oak, Ash and Birch

Existing mature native hedegrows - containing species such as Hawthorn, blackthorn & Holly

Existing specimen trees located within the site, on the boundary & immediately adjacent the site. To include deer and rabbit guards

Re furbished Football pitches - to include re leveling, new drainage, seeding, rolling and lining to create good quality FA standard pitches of varying size

Proposed new changing facilities with public toilets, food and snack provision, and small community room

Storage containers for community facilities and parks maintenance equipment.

New visitor car park for 40 cars, 3 mini buses, 6 disability spaces and drop off point for coaches. Inc pedestrian footpaths throughout

Hard surfaced patio, display and outdoor social spaces located adjacent the new play areas and memorial

Additional junior tennis courts to Lawn Tennis Club specification.

New Concrete wheeled sports plaza suitable for rollerskates, skate boards, BMX stunts and Scooters. For all ages and abilities

Outdoor amphitheater, constructed using land form and grass banks for the back and hard paved surface to the front. to include new PA system and speakers

Formal tree lined avenue

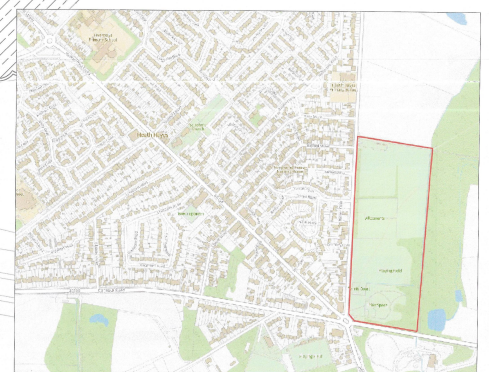
Existing car park for football to be resurfaced with a bound gravel cell construction to include tree planting, formal parking spaces and new access road

Tree planting to be carried out by the Forest of Mercia via the climate change programme. Species such as Oak, Birch

Orchard planting to be carried out by the Forest of Mercia via the climate change programme. Species such as Apple, Cherry, plum and pear

learn to ride area. Hard paved road for children to learn bike skills, road safety and have fun. With real road signs and markings.

SITE LOCATION PLAN - Not to scale



HEATH HAYES PARK - DRAFT MASTERPLAN

This is a draft masterplan and accuracy should not be relied upon for construction, setting out, service or scaling from.

Scale 1:1000 @ A1



		Scheme: HEATH HAYES PARK PARK REDEVELOPMENT	
Drawing No: ST/8/HH/6/MP/D-002		Scale: 1:1000 @ A1	
Drawing Title: MASTERPLAN DRAFT DESIGN		Date: 20th September 2024	
Client: Cannock Chase COUNCIL		Checked By: 	

[illegible]

HEATH HAYES PARK PROJECT FINANCES (Budget Estimates)				
INCOME				
			Phase 1	Phase 2
Inc1	Section S106 Funds (Est)	£500,000.00	£115,000.00	£385,000.00
Inc 2	Forest of Mercia funding - potential	£47,580.00	£47,580.00	
Inc 3	CIL Funding	£500,000.00	£500,000.00	
Inc 4	Football Foundation Funding bid	£200,000.00		£200,000.00
Inc 5	Furture Bids	£1,367,350.00		£1,367,350.00
Inc 6				
TOTAL INCOME		£2,614,930.00	£662,580.00	£1,952,350.00
EXPENDITURE				
Phase 1 Works -				
5.0	Contract conditions	£10,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00
5.0	Preliminaries	£20,000.00	£5,000.00	£15,000.00
5.0	Preperation works	£150,000.00		
	Earthworks			£100,000.00
	Removals - Play area / fencing / barriers			£50,000.00
-	Building refurbishments	£400,000.00		
	New pavilion with toilet ,café and changing facilities			£400,000.00
7.0	Fencing Gates and Barriers	£183,920.00		
	Boundary Fencing - 653 Linm @ £140			£91,420.00
	Wooden barrier fencing 50 Linm @ £80.00		£3,000.00	£1,000.00
	Sports safety Fencing - 320 Linm @ 150.00			£48,000.00
	Gates - 3 sets @ £3500			£10,500.00
	Barriers, bollards, guard rails			£30,000.00
6.0	Pathways, surfacing , lighting , CCTV	£690,000.00		
	New car park			£200,000.00
	Extend existing car park		£40,000.00	
	Main Pathway surfacing -		£60,000.00	
	Secondary pathway surfacing			£140,000.00
	Lighting - 30 Columns, ducting and cabling			£150,000.00
	CCTV -8 to 10 columns, installaiton and licenses			£100,000.00
8.0	Play areas	£635,000.00		
	Junior & Toddler		£200,000.00	
	Teenage play area		£60,000.00	£15,000.00
	Sennsory play area and woodland walk		£30,000.00	£10,000.00
	Skate Park - 400Sqm			£200,000.00
	Learn to ride		£28,750.00	£11,250.00
	Multi ball sports 20 x 15m			£80,000.00
9.0	Green Gym - 8 to 10 pieces	£40,000.00		£40,000.00
10.0	Landscaping Tress and shrubs	£124,840.00		
	Trees - 60 Trees @ £350		£18,000.00	
	Hedges - 1479Linm @ £20		£20,000.00	£9,580.00
	Shrubs - 1060sqm @ £30			£31,800.00
	Flower beds and borders - 2273 @ £20			£45,460.00
12.0	Site furniture	£92,000.00		
	Display boards - 4 @ £3000		£3,000.00	£9,000.00
	Benches - 20 @ £3000		£8,500.00	£51,500.00
	Bins - 20 @ £1000		£5,000.00	£15,000.00
11.0	Football Pitches	£144,650.00		
	Grass seeding - 17500 Sqm @ £3		£52,650.00	
	Goal posts - 6 sets @ 500		£2,000.00	
	Drainage to football pitches 3# @ £30,000		£90,000.00	
SUB TOTAL		£2,490,410.00	£630,900.00	£1,859,510.00
CONTINGENCY @ 5%		£124,520.50	£31,545.00	£92,975.50
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		£2,614,930.50	£662,445.00	£1,952,485.50

Housing Services Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and Self-Assessment

Committee:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	31 July 2025
Report of:	Head of Housing and Corporate Assets
Portfolio:	Housing and Corporate Assets

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To note the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code to complete an annual complaints performance and service improvement report, including a self-assessment against the code.
- 1.2 To seek Cabinet approval for the Housing Services Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report.
- 1.3 To note the contents of the self-assessment form and its subsequent publication on the Council's website.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet:
 - i) Note the contents of the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and self-assessment.
 - ii) Approve the Report and the outcomes from the self-assessment form, further to its subsequent publication on the Council's website and submission to the Housing Ombudsman.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 To adhere to membership requirements of the Housing Ombudsman and its Complaint Handling Code 2024 for Landlords to produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge by Cabinet, which must include the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure complaint handling policy remains in line with the Ombudsman's requirements.

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 The Council is required to comply with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, its latest revision being applicable from 1 April 2024.
- 3.2 One of the implications is the completion of an annual complaints performance and service improvement report, including a self-assessment against the Code. This report forms the annual complaints and service improvement report, and the self-assessment is attached as Appendix 1. The Ombudsman expects landlords to report their performance report and outcome of their self-assessment to their board members or, in the case of local authorities, elected members.

- 3.3 The Ombudsman expects landlords to carry out regular self-assessment against the Code and take appropriate action to ensure their complaint handling is in line with the Code.
- 3.4 The updated self-assessment finds that Housing Services continues to adhere to the vast majority of the requirements in the Code as a result of the provisions set out in the Corporate Customer Feedback and Complaints Procedure.

4. Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This report supports the Council's Corporate Priorities as follows:
- (i) Adhering to the Complaint Handling Code will assist Housing Services in dealing with complaints and help achieve the Council's 'Responsible Council' priority by delivering Council services that are customer centred and accessible - giving choice to our customers in how they access our services - and to be accountable for our actions.

5. Report Detail

Background

- 5.1 Cabinet considered the [previous year's Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report](#) at their 12 June 2024 meeting, this report contains the detailed background and purpose of the report.
- 5.2 The Housing Ombudsman requires Landlords to produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include the annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.

The Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

- 5.3 The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must include the following:
- a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.**
This is provided as Appendix 1, also see paragraphs 5.43 and 5.45.
 - b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept;**
See paragraphs 5.4 - 5.31 below
 - c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman;**
The Council was **not** subject to any findings of non-compliance by the Ombudsman.
 - d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;**
See paragraphs 5.32 - 5.37 below

e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman;

The Council was **not** subject to any reports about its performance from the Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman's latest landlord performance reports are for landlords with five or more findings made in cases determined between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024.

The Council didn't have any cases determined by the Housing Ombudsman in 2024/25. (See paragraphs 5.35 - 5.36 for more detail)

f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.

The Council was **not** subject to any other reports from the Ombudsman specifically regarding its own work or services.

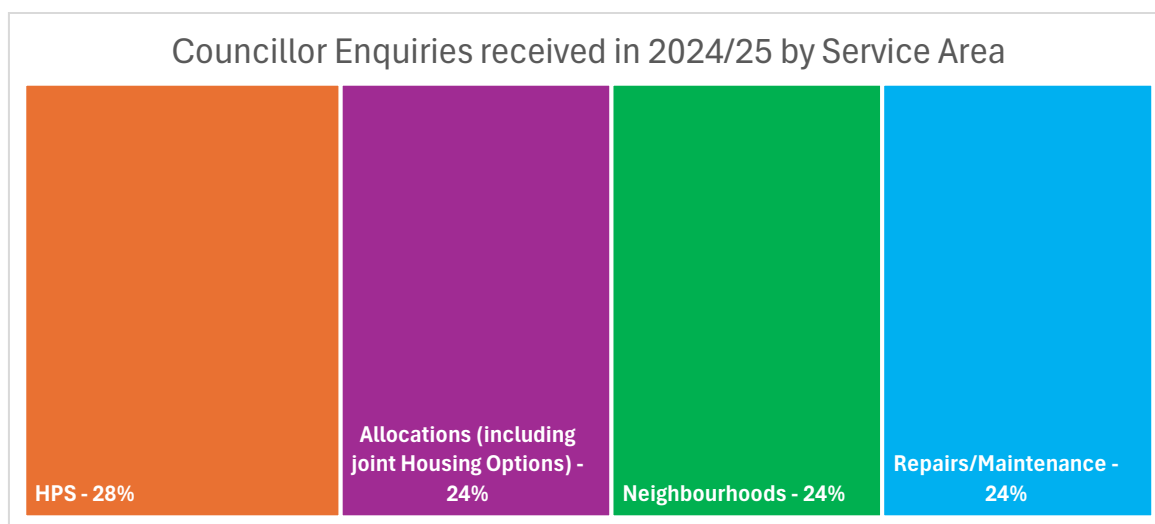
The Ombudsman produces a large number of reports throughout the year, available on their [website](#). These include Spotlight reports that look at thematic issues to special investigations into specific landlords' failings and quarterly Insight and Complaint Handling Failure Order reports. These reports are regularly digested by officers and any learning noted and implemented where possible, see paragraphs 5.38 - 5.42 below.

Complaints Analysis

- 5.4 The Service Improvement Team administer Housing Services' complaints and service requests that get directed to the service. The team use a dedicated email account housingformalenquiries@cannockchasedc.gov.uk and maintain a register of all complaints and enquiries received. All formal complaints are directed through this inbox via the CEO office and their dedicated email account ceoformalenquiries@cannockchasedc.gov.uk.
- 5.5 The team logged a total of 294 enquiries and complaint contacts during 2024/25, with 45 Stage One complaints and 7 Stage Two complaints, the remainder being Councillor enquiries, MP enquiries, and Service Requests (or informal resolutions), this doesn't include a large number of other enquiries that go directly through managers, team leaders and other officers.
- 5.6 These Councillor enquiries, MP enquiries, and Service Requests were all considered 'informal resolutions' in accordance with the Corporate Complaints Procedure and the Complaint Handling Code, they are generally first-time enquiries or where the service hadn't had opportunity to respond where an issue had arisen or it was a query over the service provision or delivery.
- 5.7 There were 25 Councillor enquiries received throughout 2024/25, with the majority being received for Housing Property Services (HPS), yet only by a small margin. HPS received 28% of total Councillor enquiries, which was 7 enquiries. However, Allocations, Neighbourhoods and Repairs/Maintenance each received 6 Councillor enquiries - accounting for 24% share each.
- 5.8 The majority of HPS Councillor enquiries were requests for works to be considered and undertaken, particularly in relation to lack of parking available within certain neighbourhoods.

5.9 Proportions of Councillor Enquiries received by service area can be seen in the chart below. The most common Councillor enquiries were:

- Updates as to when repairs can be expected.
- Updates on housing applications.
- Reports to Neighbourhoods Team about behaviour of neighbours and condition of properties.

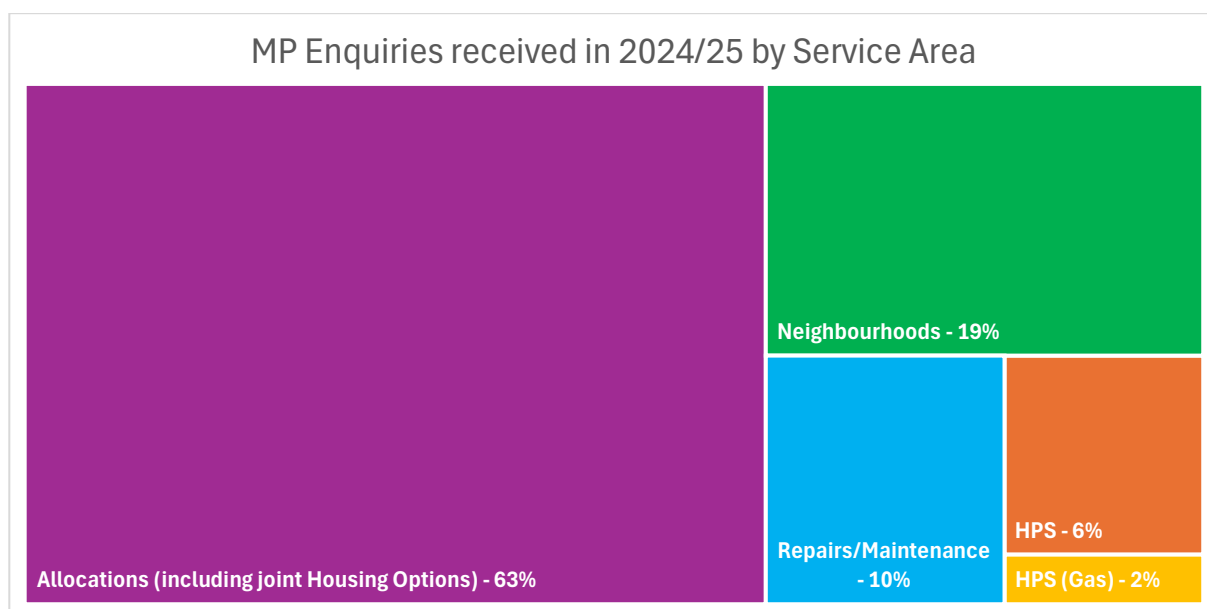


5.10 There were 62 MP Enquiries received throughout 2024/25, of which the Allocations team (including some jointly with Housing Options team on homelessness cases) were the Service Areas to receive the most - they received 39 enquiries which amounts to 63% of total MP Enquiries received. Generally, these enquiries were because applicants required further assistance with their housing application or placing a bid. There were several enquiries which requested a review of existing housing applications, especially regarding banding.

5.11 The chart below shows the proportion of MP Enquiries received between areas within the Housing Service.

Typical MP enquiries included:

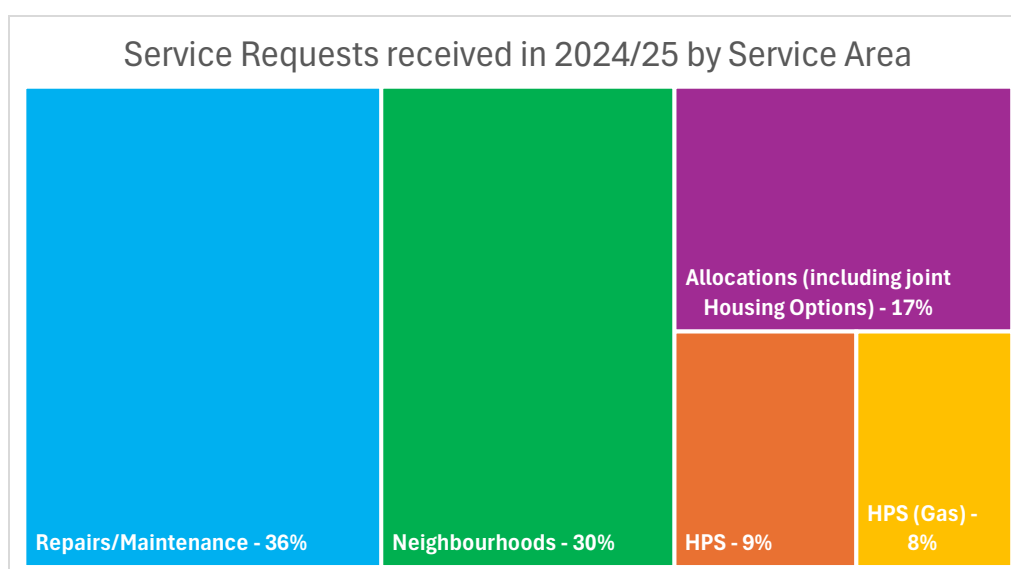
- Tenants unhappy with the timescales they have been given for repairs, especially for fencing
- Damp and mould issues that require investigation
- HPS had a few upgrade requests, queries about poor upgrade works and issues with shared driveways
- Neighbourhoods mostly received complaints about other neighbours - particularly the condition of their property and drug-related behaviour.



- 5.12 155 Service Requests (informal resolutions) were received during 2024/25. Repairs and Maintenance received 56 requests, giving them the highest percentage of 36%. The Service Area to receive the second highest number was Neighbourhoods, who received 46 requests (30%).

Similar to MP enquiries, typical service requests included:

- Outstanding repairs - the majority being fencing/gates
- Damp and mould issues that need to be addressed
- General assistance required from Allocations Team (inc. jointly with Housing Options) with housing applications and bidding
- Allocations also received several service requests from tenants who were unhappy with decisions made as well as the waiting times for a property
- HPS (Gas) enquiries mainly concerned issues with the boiler and our gas contractor not turning up to appointments
- Complaints to the Neighbourhoods Team again related to the condition of neighbouring properties - particularly their gardens.

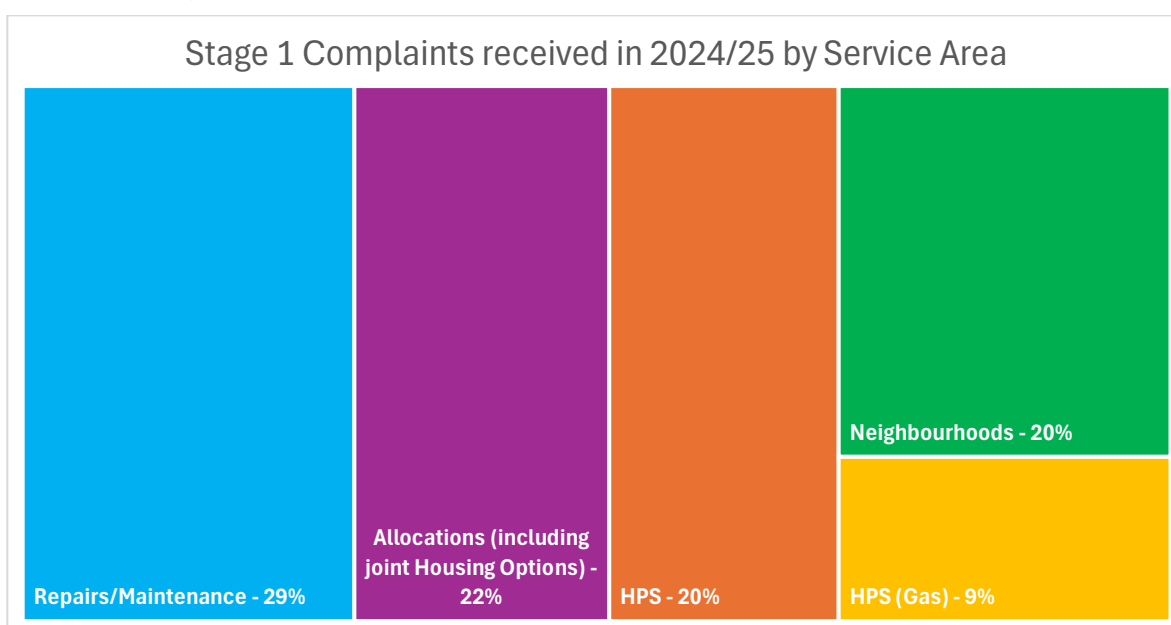


Stage One Complaints

- 5.13 A total of 45 Stage One complaints were received during 2024/25, this is slightly higher than last year's figure, where 36 were received.

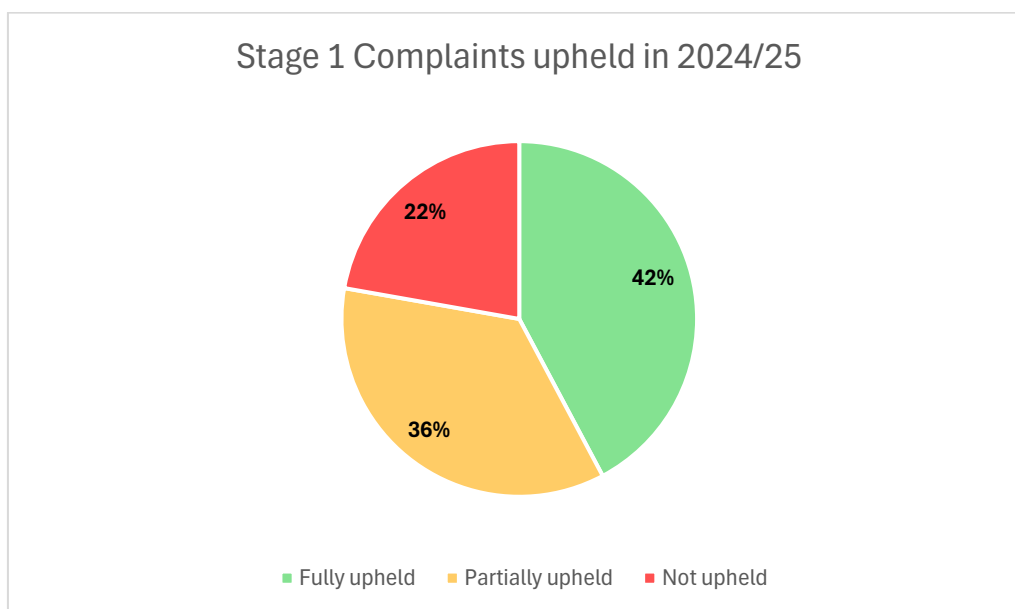
Service Area	Count	Percentage
Repairs/Maintenance	13	29%
Allocations (inc. joint Housing Options)	10	22%
HPS	9	20%
Neighbourhoods	9	20%
HPS (Gas)	4	9%
Total	45	

- 5.14 The majority of Stage One complaints were around property issues with 13 complaints received for Repairs and Maintenance issues and 13 complaints around Housing Property Services. The Tenancy Services section received 19 in total across Allocations (including jointly with Housing Options) and Neighbourhoods teams. The graph below illustrates the proportion received by each housing service area.



- 5.15 When looking further into the main areas of concern for Repairs and Maintenance complaints, nine complaints were based around outstanding repairs at the property - many of which had been outstanding since the tenant moved in. Five Stage 1 Complaints were due to tenants being dissatisfied with the condition of their property, which links very closely to outstanding repairs that have escalated into wider issues.
- 5.16 Allocations received ten Stage 1 Complaints; this included some homelessness cases dealt with by the Housing Options team. The majority of which were based around dissatisfaction with the length of time spent on the housing register and time taken to be allocated a suitable property A few applicants requested a review of their application and banding due to their medical needs.

- 5.17 HPS and HPS Gas received a combined total of 13 Stage 1 Complaints. HPS Gas' complaints mainly concerned the gas contractor (PH Jones and more recently Sure Maintenance) and outstanding boiler repairs. Unfortunately, several boiler issues remained unresolved with no adequate solution and some tenants were left with no heating or hot water. Four complaints were received for HPS regarding poor kitchen or bathroom upgrades which had been completed by our contractor, Novus.
- 5.18 Neighbourhoods received 9 Stage 1 Complaints, four of which were concerns about neighbouring properties and the condition of their properties and/or communal areas. Two complaints were based around on-going Anti-Social Behaviour issues.
- 5.19 Of the 45 Stage One complaints, eight were escalated from unresolved MP enquiries, Councillor enquiries or service requests, equating to an escalation rate of 18%. Three complaints went right through to Stage Two; however one was not upheld and two were only partially upheld - meaning that the complaints were not fully substantiated.
- 5.20 Four complaints were refused to be considered, this was because they were either a policy decision (three cases) or being unhappy with the length of time waiting for a non-emergency repair (one case - fencing, which was still within our target timescales). The Corporate procedure states that if the complainant just disagrees with a decision of the Council, which has been taken in accordance with our policies and procedures, then this will not be treated as a complaint.
- 5.21 Of the 45 Stage One complaints, 42% of them were upheld fully, 36% were upheld partially, with the remaining 22% not upheld at all.



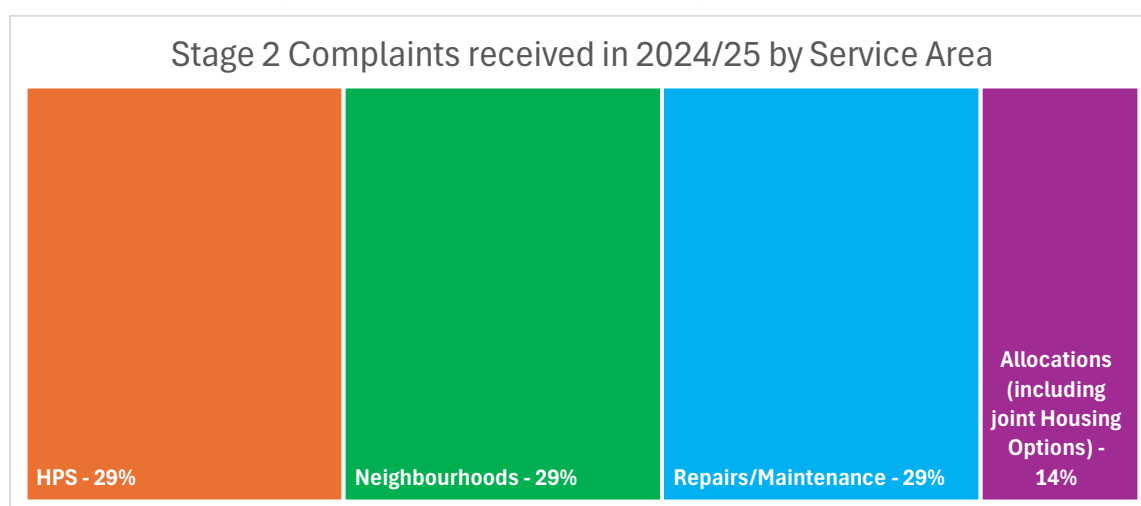
- 5.22 Upon investigation the majority were found to show error or fault from the team, therefore where there is found to be fault the team will own the mistakes, put them right and offer appropriate resolutions to the complainant - and most importantly learn from the issues raised, see paragraphs 5.32 - 5.38 for more detail.

Stage Two Complaints

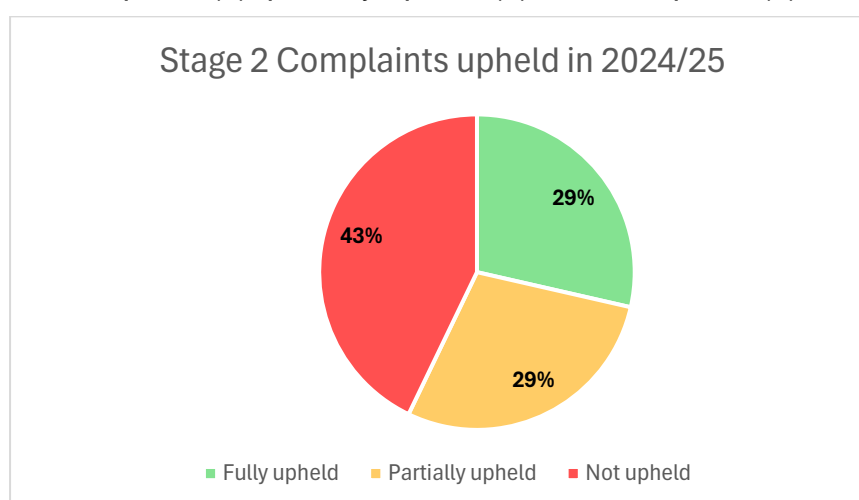
- 5.23 16% of Stage One complaints were escalated up to Stage Two - putting the total number of Stage Two Complaints at seven for the year, which is the same as the number received last year.

Service Area	Count	Percentage
Repairs/Maintenance	2	29%
HPS	2	29%
Neighbourhoods	2	29%
Allocations (inc. joint Housing Options)	1	14%
HPS (Gas)	0	0%
Total	7	

- 5.24 Stage 2 Complaints were distributed fairly evenly between each Service Area. HPS, Neighbourhoods and Repairs/Maintenance each received 2 Stage Two Complaints which equates to 29% each. Allocations and Housing Options received just 1 Stage Two Complaint - amounting to 14%.



- 5.25 When looking at the upholding of Stage Two complaints, the majority were not upheld (43%). However, as previously mentioned, because there were only seven Stage Two Complaints received, there is not much difference in the number of cases that were upheld (2), partially upheld (2) and not upheld (3).

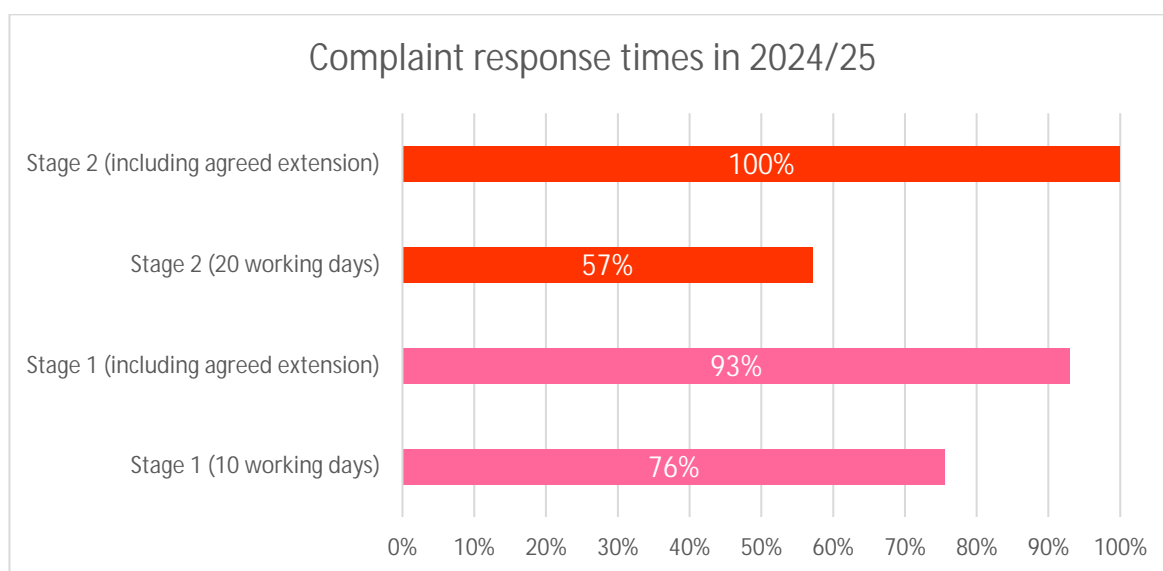


- 5.26 The majority of complainants that escalated their complaint to Stage Two stated they were dissatisfied with the Stage 1 response. A couple of complainants were offered compensation at Stage 1, however escalated to Stage 2 as they were in disagreement with the amount offered.

Further information on how we have learnt from the complaints is covered in paragraphs 5.32 - 5.38.

Response times

- 5.27 34 Stage One complaints were responded to within timescales (10 working days). This amounts to 76% of them being responded to on time. However, when we look further into the data, three of the Stage One complaints had their deadline extended as agreed between the Council and the complainant. Therefore, when factoring in these complaints as being responded to on time (as per an agreed extension allowed by the Complaint Handling Code), the figure rises slightly to 93%.
- 5.28 57% of Stage Two complaints were responded to within 20 working days. This means 4 were responded to within the timescale. Again, an extension of the response due date was agreed for the remaining three complaints, meaning we can count it as being responded to on time. This puts the overall percentage of Stage two complaints responded to on time at 100%.



Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

- 5.29 The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) created the TSMs system for assessing how well social housing landlords in England are doing at providing good quality homes and services. Performance is to be reported to the RSH annually (by the end of June) and will subsequently be published by the RSH in the Autumn of each year.
- 5.30 There are 22 TSMs in total which cover five key themes, one of these themes is Effective Handling of Complaints. There are three tenant satisfaction measures linked to the Effective Handling of Complaints theme which includes:
- CH01: Complaints relative to the size of the landlord, based on the number of complaints the Housing service receives for each 1,000 homes of the relevant stock type. This is recorded by the Service Improvement Team.

- CH02: Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales, based on the percentage of complaints the Housing service responds to within the timeframes set by the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. This is recorded by the Service Improvement Team.
- TP09: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints, measured by a tenant perception survey and will be based on the percentage of tenants who say they are satisfied with the approach to handling complaints. This was obtained by the TSM perception survey carried out in Summer 2024, and has already been reported to tenants through our newsletter and on our [website](#).

5.31 The performance to be reported to the Regulator will be as follows:

CH01: Complaints relative to the size of the landlord	
Stage one complaints received per 1,000 homes during the reporting year:	8.98
Stage two complaints received per 1,000 homes during the reporting year:	1.40
<p><i>Commentary: This is an increase on last year, where 7.15 stage 1 complaints were received per 1,000 homes. Stage 2 complaints received were at a similar level last year, 1.39 per 1,000 homes.</i></p> <p><i>This would appear low in comparison to the sector, the 23/24 national results found that the average number of complaints received per 1,000 homes was 42.5 at Stage 1 and 5.7 at Stage 2.</i></p> <p><i>We are following the Corporate Complaints Procedure and the Complaint Handling Code, identifying service requests and informal resolutions correctly in accordance with both. Other housing providers may interpret more service requests/informal resolutions as formal complaints.</i></p>	
CH02: Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales	
Proportion of Stage one complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales (10 days):	93%
Proportion of Stage two complaints responded to within the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales (20 days):	100%
<p><i>Commentary: 42 out of 45 (93%) Stage 1 complaints were responded to within timescale, those complaints outside of the 10 working days and without an agreed extension of time were complex and only missed the timeframe by a matter of a day or two. This is an increase from last year at 83%.</i></p> <p><i>In comparison, 82.3% was the average for all providers in 23/24, so we are exceeding the average performance from last year.</i></p> <p><i>All 7 (100%) Stage 2 complaints were responded to within 20 working days. This maintained the 100% level from last year.</i></p> <p><i>The national average in 23/24 was 83.6% for the sector, so we are performing well into the upper quartile of providers.</i></p>	

TP09: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints: 49%

Commentary: Whilst 49% may appear low, this is an increase on last year (at 41.5%) and in comparison, to other housing providers it is relatively good. The average score for this indicator in 23/24 for all providers was 34.5%, therefore we are comfortably in the upper quartile of all providers on this indicator.

As per the previous year, when looking at the data from the TSM perception survey a large number of tenants who responded to the question about complaint handling hadn't submitted a formal complaint - the numbers were vastly different. A number of these 'complaints' will have been from MP enquiries or Informal Resolutions where the complainant may believe they have submitted a formal complaint but actually have not.

It is a contentious area as those responding could have a negative perception of the approach to our handling of the complaint if they did not achieve the outcome they wanted, whilst we always try to achieve outcomes for complainants it is not always possible.

We intend to introduce complaint handling satisfaction surveys for 2025/26 and will monitor and analyse the findings to identify any improvements that can be made.

Learning from complaints

- 5.32 In both our regular [tenant newsletters](#) and the [Annual Report to Tenants](#) we have reported upon our learning from complaints, therefore previous years' have been published.
- 5.33 A learning from complaints form is completed by the responding manager shortly after each stage 1 complaint, or if escalated after the stage 2 response is completed. It allows the service to quickly put something right - either a policy or procedure change, or act quickly to implement any staff training, to ensure that no other tenant or resident has to go through the same experience and improve our services to them.
- 5.34 Not all complaints produce learning points; however, a selection of cases and improvements made from complaints received in 2024/25 are included in the following table.

Complaint outline (reasons etc.)	Our response	Learning implemented
A complaint from a leaseholder about the communication around service charges and programmed improvement works.	Complaint was partially upheld as there was found to be a lack of clarity and information provided around service charges. Communication around planned improvement works was also lacking.	We have improved our welcome information pack for leaseholders to include more clear guidance on service charges and, where known, details of upcoming planned works to the block.

Complaint outline (reasons etc.)	Our response	Learning implemented
<p>A complaint was received as a mutual exchange decision had not been made in a timely manner due to delays in the property inspection.</p>	<p>Complaint was upheld.</p> <p>Communication internally (within the Repairs team and between Repairs and Allocations) and with the applicant about the inspection process and the progress of the exchange more widely was poor and lacking.</p> <p>The Mutual Exchange process needs to be firmer in relation to the inspection process; the final decision timeline being achieved (or reasons for it being delayed where outside our control).</p> <p>Communication with tenants/applicants should improve around the process and more regular updates of the progress made.</p>	<p>We revised and agreed a new mutual exchange inspection process and incorporated in revised process documents.</p> <p>The Mutual Exchange Policy is also being updated to reflect all the changes.</p> <p>Conversations have been had with officers (at team meetings and toolbox talks) to ensure communication with applicants is more effective and timelier. The revised process incorporates more regular updates being made to the tenant/applicant.</p>
<p>Complaint received following an application being cancelled after the applicant did not provide a full list of proofs required. Complainant also believed we had not processed the application in line with our policy due to the length of time taken.</p> <p>Issue was that we had not explained this clearly, so it was unclear what was required. Also, this case was not escalated for internal review despite appearing several times at the Children's OT case meeting as not having been progressed.</p>	<p>Complaint was upheld.</p> <p>Whilst the application was processed within the terms of our allocations policy, we fell short of the customer service we would aim to provide and that the Allocations service is simple, easy to understand, transparent, open, and fair.</p>	<p>Process changed for OT cases. Where raised at 2nd time on agenda officer will check progress, on 3rd time on agenda where application not being progressed, case will be raised to Team Leader / Assistant Manager to review.</p> <p>Letter template was revised to be much clearer on the request of missing information and the consequence of information not being received (i.e. application closure).</p> <p>Notes on the Information Management System are to provide more detail, Officers reminded of the need for detailed case notes.</p> <p>Ongoing sample checks by the Assistant Manager will be made to ensure being complied with.</p>

Complaint outline (reasons etc.)	Our response	Learning implemented
<p>Complainant felt applicant was unfairly and unequally treated (compared to others) throughout period after transfer application, but especially after the applicant's pregnancy and subsequent decisions about her bedroom entitlement and a withdrawn nomination by a housing association.</p>	<p>Complaint was partly upheld as the service did fall short of what should be expected, despite the application being treated in line with policy.</p> <p>The NEC housing management system did not permit recognition of unborn children at 24 weeks - it applies 6 months (26 weeks), meaning it needed to be manually overridden to correct the bedroom entitlement for the applicant.</p>	<p>A procedure review was undertaken for such cases of existing high housing need, as they require individual review when a pregnancy affects the potential bedroom eligibility.</p> <p>Communication with and to affected customers needed careful consideration and to be effective.</p> <p>Officers to seek clarification related to eligibility elements of policy (and delegated authority) from Team Leader/Assistant Manager.</p> <p>Case review trigger guidance has been updated.</p> <p>All key decisions to be confirmed in writing with applicant/tenant, with clarity following new information or key conversations.</p> <p>Revised customer letters considered as part of procedure review.</p>
<p>Complaint submitted by tenant following multiple visits taken to rectify a fault with their central heating system.</p> <p>Contractor had on several occasions failed to communicate with the tenant where they were unable to attend due to staff absences and low engineer levels.</p>	<p>Complaint was upheld due to service delivery failure of contractor.</p>	<p>Housing Property Services (HPS) team requested that contractor processes were changed, so that if appointments needed to be rearranged contact is made before 10am for AM appointments or 3pm for PM appointments, to keep tenants informed.</p> <p>Periodic review to be undertaken by HPS Building Safety Team</p>

Complaint outline (reasons etc.)	Our response	Learning implemented
<p>A complaint about rubbish being dumped in drying area and brown bin overspill at flat block. Also, the time taken to repair blocked guttering and with communication of the appointment for a stock condition survey.</p>	<p>Complaint was upheld. Communication error between departments - Repairs should have been actioned sooner (resulted from a NEC system issue). Contractor left a contact card but did not get back in contact. Tenant had to chase this up via HPS and then tenant had to contact the contractor directly. Neighbourhoods conducted an estate inspection and did not action the rubbish removal. Tenant contacted the Neighbourhoods Team twice via email and nothing had been done.</p>	<p>Rubbish removal procedure reinforced with officers, and a new contract taken out with waste company. Communication issue with contractor resolved following contract management meetings. The repairs scheduler part of the NEC system is being reviewed, and a new solution is being sought - further detail below.</p>
<p>Several complaints about repairs service, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Housing Maintenance Operative carrying out a repair on a front window while tenant was not at the property, which was also the wrong address; and the length of time it had taken to complete a previous lounge window repair. • An unresolved damp issue on-going since 2023. Tenant had not been kept updated on the progress of the repair, and calls have not been answered. • Unresolved roof leaks and lack of communication. • Another unresolved roof leak of a complex nature, issue further worsened by poor communication. 	<p>All upheld, mainly as a result of the current NEC housing information management system causing errors and delays, data was lost, and information was not passing sufficiently between teams and operatives.</p>	<p>Procurement of a new software solution will begin subject to Cabinet/budget approval. It is required to better schedule and distribute work orders to operatives, which will avoid these types of errors, loss of data/bookings, delays and ensure repairs are completed right first time. Tool Box Talks to the trade teams to advise them to be more thorough when viewing repairs through their PDA to make sure they have the right property. More ownership within the Repairs team - Management and Trade to make sure that repairs are being carried out to the good standard required and a right first-time approach, combined with a more customer orientated communication focus.</p>

Summary

Communication was at the centre of a number of the complaints and learning from; therefore, this is an area that further attention needs to be paid to. Customer Service training will be revisited for the service, as well as undertaking some mystery shopping exercises and tenant engagement activities to review communication with customers. Hopefully, we can reduce overall complaint numbers in 25/26 and/or communication being a contributing reason to those complaints.

- 5.35 We have recorded a total of five complaints being escalated to the Housing Ombudsman or the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) during 2024/25, but no full determinations have been made.
- 5.36 Three complaints were decided not to be investigated further by the LGO due to there not being enough evidence of Council fault to justify Ombudsman involvement. The other two we are informed have been triaged for investigation by the Housing Ombudsman. Therefore, we have not received any full determinations from the Ombudsman during 2024/25, so no learning received from them can be detailed in this report.
- 5.37 We have found there is currently a significant waiting time for the Housing Ombudsman to provide determination decisions, around 6 months from the complainant's submission to them, so there is a time lag in complete complaint determinations going through to the Ombudsman. There can also be a delay in the complainant taking a complaint to the Ombudsman following our final Stage 2 response, further adding to the period of time.

Learning from reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.

- 5.38 The Housing Ombudsman issued a Spotlight report on attitudes, respect, and rights – relationship of equals in January 2024. Whilst over 18 months ago it was not covered in the previous report, and we would like to draw attention to the learning we have taken. The report made several recommendations for complaint handling, which have been addressed in the table below:

Recommendation	Action / Response
Raise awareness of the complaints procedure and ensure it is accessible for residents who may face barriers to raising a complaint, as required by the Complaint Handling Code.	Complaint procedure is easily accessible online, and staff know to signpost to this. Staff would assist those who may face barriers or are unable to raise a complaint.
Ensure the complaints policy permits complaints about staff conduct, attitudes and approach.	Corporate procedure allows complaints about staff conduct, their attitudes and approach.
Establish and enforce a clear process for how complaints about bullying / discrimination will be investigated.	As above, Corporate procedure allows for such complaints, and they are investigated in line with the procedure and complaint handling code. An 'independent' complaint handler would investigate for complaints within the same team/section.

Recommendation	Action / Response
Contact restriction policies must set out clear timescales, review, and appeals process. Where there is single point of contact, this should be applied consistently.	The 'Unreasonably Persistent and/or vexatious complaints and unreasonable behaviour' section of the Corporate procedure deals with this matter.
Calls to be recorded, either a physical recording or a contemporaneous telephone record.	<p>Housing Services will be moving onto the NetCall system where calls can be recorded when logged into the system. Meetings held virtually can be recorded i.e. on Microsoft Teams or Zoom.</p> <p>For complaints, notes from telephone calls at Stage 1 would be taken by the complaint handler and could be provided on request to the complainant. At stage 2, an in-person meeting is usually held, and this can be recorded on request. If virtual, the meeting could be recorded with the complainant's agreement.</p>
<p>Landlords need to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they provide clear explanations. • repeat information where needed, including in different formats. • offer face-to-face contact as much as possible and a named point of contact. • investigate concerns and share the outcome. • recognise when things have gone wrong, apologise and explain how these will be addressed; and • know when to make appropriate referrals to agencies and whom to signpost to. <p>Underpinning all of these should be a baseline of empathy and respect.</p>	<p>The current Housing Services procedure, alongside the Corporate procedure and adherence with the Complaint Handling Code will meet these requirements and ensure that we show empathy and respect. Clear explanations are made in responses and any communication.</p> <p>If different formats of information are needed, they will be provided.</p> <p>Complainants are offered face to face meetings at both stage 1 and 2. The complaint handler will make themselves known via phone call at stage 1 and the complainant is informed the Head of Service will investigate the stage 2 and meet face to face with them.</p> <p>We recognise when things have gone wrong, apologise and explain how they will be addressed. We have a HRA Compensation Policy which provides a guideline on offering appropriate resolutions. Where appropriate referrals are required to other agencies, we are proactive in signposting and linking up complainant and partner agency.</p>
Ensure disability or language needs are routinely considered as part of the complaints process and that extra accessibility support, or accessible materials, are offered where appropriate.	Support and reasonable adjustments would be made where appropriate and required.

Recommendation	Action / Response
Identify where more specific training, guidance or support is needed to fulfil complaint handling roles.	Assistant Housing Services Manager has undertaken several of the training and information sessions put on by the Housing Ombudsman and also available through their online 'learning hub.'
Maintain accurate records of residents' vulnerabilities and individual circumstances.	<p>NEC Housing Information Management System allows for the recording of tenant vulnerabilities and circumstances. Non-tenant complainants' details are recorded, if disclosed and permitted, as part of the complaint handling.</p> <p>Housing Services will be undertaking a tenant profiling exercise to capture this information as a census and then going forward through housing applications.</p>
Use mandatory checks, such as annual boiler checks, as a 'touchpoint' opportunity to undertake welfare checks with residents.	<p>Annual gas servicing undertaken by contractor, so not straightforward for them to perform welfare checks. They will be trained by their organisation to be able to identify any issues that would need reporting.</p> <p>All Contractors are made aware of our safeguarding procedures and the issuing of concern cards back to us if they have concerns about a tenant's welfare. All repairs operatives follow similar arrangements and will report any concerns they see with the concern cards. These reports are then followed up by the Tenancy Services team.</p> <p>Tenancy Services staff undertaking visits will complete a Vulnerability Profile Form to update tenant details on the NEC system and ensure support and referrals are put in place.</p> <p>An internal Vulnerability Policy and Procedure are in place and adhered to.</p>

5.39 In late May 2025 the Housing Ombudsman issued its latest Spotlight report on [repairs and maintenance – repairing trust](#). The report highlights the need to modernise maintenance operations and end poor practices, such as denying access to necessary repairs. Trust remains essential among landlords, residents, and contractors. The headline recommendations for landlords were as follows:

- i. Cultural shift: The report advocates for a cultural transformation within the sector, calling for empathetic communication and transparency. Landlords should treat residents as individuals deserving of a safe home. Language plays a key role, including avoiding impersonal language such as 'stock' and 'decants' when speaking to residents. Human-centred services that treat residents with respect and dignity is recommended.

- ii. Predictive maintenance models: Transitioning from reactive to predictive maintenance models can greatly enhance efficiency and service quality. By anticipating issues before they escalate, landlords can provide more timely and effective repairs.
 - iii. Strengthening relationships: Modernising and improving relationship management with both contractors and residents. Stronger partnerships will lead to better communication, quicker resolutions, and a more satisfactory experience for all parties involved.
 - iv. Code of conduct: Creating and promoting a Code of Conduct for all staff and contractors entering residents' homes. This code would set clear expectations for behaviour and communication, further building trust and accountability.
- 5.40 The Repairs spotlight report needs to be digested further, and individual recommendations considered for implementation. The Complaints Performance report for 25/26 will report on the recommendations in more detail, the learning we have taken from it and progress upon delivering the actions (if not already implemented).
- 5.41 In 2024/25 the Housing Ombudsman also issued a couple of Insight reports on Shared Ownership and Greater London, whilst both were not directly relevant for the Council they were digested but no major learning points were possible to take from these.
- 5.42 When issued (only one in 24/25), the Housing Ombudsman's Quarterly complaint handling reports are also considered to help improve and create a positive complaint handling culture.

The Self-Assessment 2025/26

- 5.43 As detailed above, the Complaint Handling Code requires landlords to undertake a self-assessment against the requirements set out. The self-assessment form is attached as Appendix 1.
- 5.44 For the most part the Council's corporate Customer Feedback and Complaints Procedure already makes provision for the majority of requirements set out by the Code. For the remainder the Housing Services team interpret the Code and act in accordance with it.
- 5.45 As the Code contains a number of requirements and we believe these are being met as part of the existing corporate procedure and Housing Services procedures, the following table will just detail the requirements that were not being fully met in 23/24 and how Housing Services has addressed them.

Code Reference	Requirement	Reasons not met	How we have addressed
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff, and relevant committees.	Learning from complaints is not reported on corporately across the Council. Housing Services have reported their learning from complaints to tenants via the Annual Report and regular newsletters, but not directly to any members via committee(s). The Annual Report is submitted to Cabinet, so the committee has had some sight of learning from complaints for Housing.	We have formed a new Housing Board to oversee Housing Services, and learning from complaints will be reported to this Board. Any recommendations will be noted in the minutes, which are then received by Cabinet.
9.6	The Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.	New requirement last year and we hadn't formalised the approach.	The Housing and Corporate Assets Portfolio Holder has now been established as the MRC. Quarterly meetings are held with the MRC, Head of Housing and Corporate Assets and the Assistant Housing Services Manager to provide the information in 9.7 below.
9.7	As a minimum, the MRC, and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: a. regular updates on the volume, categories, and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance. b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling.	New requirement last year and we hadn't formalised the approach.	See above. The MRC is now provided this information at quarterly meetings and will have first sight of the annual complaints performance and service improvement report.

Code Reference	Requirement	Reasons not met	How we have addressed
	c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.		

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

The increase in complaints may result in an increase in compensation payments being made in order to resolve complaints appropriately. Costs arising from increased compensation payments are anticipated to be met from within existing budget.

6.2 Legal

As detailed within the report, the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code became statutory on 1 April 2024. All members of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme are obliged by law to follow its requirements. The Housing Ombudsman has a legal duty to ensure landlords complaint procedures and responses are compliant with the Code. The Code requires landlords to self-assess and submit an annual submission of their performance against the Code.

Failure to comply with a requirement of the Code will result in Ombudsman intervention to gain compliance. Repeated or ongoing failures can result in a Complaint Handling Failure Order and subsequent referral to the Regulator for Social Housing. It is therefore essential that the Council ensures compliance.

6.3 Human Resources

None.

6.4 Risk Management

There is a risk of reputational damage to the Council if Complaints received are not handled in a timely manner and investigated thoroughly. Escalation to the Housing Ombudsman may result in the Council being fined and receiving negative publicity.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

None.

6.6 Health

None.

6.7 Climate Change

None.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Self-Assessment Form 2025/26

8 Previous Consideration

Cabinet - 28 January 2021

Cabinet - 12 October 2023

Cabinet - 12 June 2024

9 Background Papers

None.

Contact Officer: James Morgan

Telephone Number: 01543 464 381

Ward Interest: N/A

Report Track: Cabinet: 31/07/25

Key Decision: No

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: Self-Assessment Form 2025/26 - Cannock Chase Council

This self-assessment form should be completed by the complaints officer, and it must be reviewed and approved by the landlord's governing body at least annually.

Once approved, landlords must publish the self-assessment as part of the annual complaints performance and service improvement report on their website. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.

Landlords are required to complete the self-assessment in full and support all statements with evidence, with additional commentary, as necessary.

We recognise that there may be a small number of circumstances where landlords are unable to meet the requirements, for example, if they do not have a website. In these circumstances, we expect landlords to deliver the intentions of the Code in an alternative way, for example by publishing information in a public area so that it is easily accessible.

Section 1: Definition of a complaint

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: <i>'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'</i>	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	Corporate definition now updated to match.
1.3	A resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	The word complaint doesn't have to be used for it to be accepted as such. Complaints determined by member of Service Improvement Team (explained further under 4.1) Complaints are accepted from third parties or representatives, however a form of authority is required to disclose information to third parties.
1.4	Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored, and reviewed regularly.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	Difference explained with informal resolution and stage 1 complaints. Service requests are recorded, monitored, and reviewed for escalations to stage 1.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.5	A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	If a complaint is raised whilst a service request remains ongoing then a complaint would be logged and actions would continue whilst complaint is investigated further and responded to.
1.6	An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	As per corporate procedure, any dissatisfaction with the service would be addressed at informal resolution (as a service request). When receiving an expression of dissatisfaction through one of our regular satisfaction surveys the relevant team would be informed of the issue and look to put it right regardless. The person completing the survey would be informed of the complaint procedure by letter or email, as to how to escalate to a Stage 1 if they continue to be unsatisfied with the response/actions of the Housing Service.

Section 2: Exclusions

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	Explains broadly what will not be treated as a complaint. The following will not be treated as a complaint; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if you disagree with a decision of the Council, which has been taken in accordance with our policies and procedures; • where you have a right of appeal or review, whether internally to another person or body within the Council, or externally to some other person or body.
2.2	A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago. • Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court. • Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy. 	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	As above. Plus - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Complaints about incidents occurring more than 12 months ago will not normally be accepted.” Legal proceedings covered in external right of appeal or review. Not explicitly referenced, but previous complaint considered under the procedure would not be accepted.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.3	Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	<p>“Complaints about incidents occurring more than 12 months ago will not normally be accepted.”</p> <p>Not normally accepted, therefore unless good reasons would not be, however complaints taken on own individual circumstances.</p>
2.4	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	<p>An explanation would be provided to the complainant and details of the Ombudsman provided.</p> <p>Should the Ombudsman tell us to take on the complaint, we would do so.</p>
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	As above, 2.3, complaints would be considered on each circumstances.

Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	<p>Housing Services has a specific complaints webpage detailing how to make a complaint and contact details for assistance/further information: Housing Complaints Webpage</p> <p>To make a complaint you can do this online by completing the form, email ceoformalenquiries@cannockchasedc.gov.uk, by telephone on 01543 462621 or write to Complaints, Cannock Chase District Council, Beecroft Road, Cannock, WS11 1BG. Complaints can also be made direct to officers/members and be passed through the CEO office.</p> <p>As per the Equality Act 2010 that requires us to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled people, defined by the Act as those who have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, we would do everything possible to allow a complaint to be made. PA to Chief Executive and a Service Improvement officer would handle as required.</p>

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.	Yes	No evidence possible to present, see commentary.	As above, complaints can also be made direct to officers/members and be passed through the CEO office. Housing Services staff are aware of the complaints procedure.
3.3	High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.	N/A	No evidence possible to present, see commentary.	Volumes of complaints are recorded and monitored. Learning from complaints is embedded in the procedure, reported annually and more frequently via newsletter and website, and to MRC in quarterly meetings.
3.4	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure And Housing Complaints Webpage	Available on the website, both on the corporate page and duplicated on the Housing Services section of the website - Housing Complaints Webpage These pages can be easily accessed by searching for 'complaints.'
3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	Both links provide information on the Ombudsman. The Housing Services page has information on the Code and a link to the self-assessment.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.6	Landlords must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord.	Yes	Not explicitly referenced in the corporate procedure, so no evidence to provide, see commentary.	Complaints are accepted from third parties or representatives, however, a form of authority is required to disclose information to third parties before representation or accompanying at meetings etc. As part of the Housing Services procedure for dealing with a stage 2 complaint, the complainant would be offered the opportunity to have someone accompany them for a meeting with the Head of Service.
3.7	Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure And Housing Complaints Webpage	Information provided on the website and on written responses at stage 2. If an extension of time is required for a stage 1 response the complainant is also informed at this stage too.

Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
4.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer.' This role may be in addition to other duties.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	PA to Chief Executive receives complaint and forwards to officer in Service Improvement Team to distribute to correct Team Leader, Service Manager or Head of Service. Member of Service Improvement Team (currently Assistant Housing Services Manager) liaises with Ombudsman. Service Improvement Team log, monitor and manage responses to ensure timescales are met and complaint handled appropriately.
4.2	The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	Assistant Housing Services Manager has access to staff at all levels and advises Managers to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.
4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	All complaints are subject to the completion of a learning from complaints form which is used to improve upon complaint handling and ensure similar complaints are not received. Assistant Housing Services Manager administers and oversees process with Service managers dealing with stage 1 complaints and Head of Service with stage 2. They have the required skills and training as detailed.

Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.1	Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	Corporate procedure applies to all complaints.
5.2	The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	Audit trail of communication is kept. Resolutions are at the forefront of complaints received but do not obstruct access to the procedure. Whilst the corporate procedure states an informal resolution stage, Housing Services will use this for service requests or where no attempt has been made by the resident to bring it to the attention of the team/department responsible. Assistant Housing Services Manager or Service Improvement Team determine.
5.3	A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	Two stage process.
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.	N/A	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	Complaints would be handled by the Housing Service, response would be made in conjunction with contractor etc. but led by Housing Services.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	N/A	As above.	As above.
5.6	When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as “the complaint definition.” If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	During complaint responses at stage 1 and 2, the manager/HOS contacts the complainant to understand the complaint fully and know what outcome the resident is seeking. This is communicated in the response.
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	The contact with the complainant and the response would be clear which aspects of the complaint were being addressed and which were not. For example - if there was a personal injury claim we would make clear this would be dealt with by the Insurance team; or if a Freedom of Information (FOI) or Subject Access Request (SAR) it would be dealt with by the Information Manager.
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position; c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	Assistant Housing Services Manager administers and oversees process with Service managers dealing with stage 1 complaints and Head of Service with stage 2. We would ensure all these are met through the process.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.9	Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	Should a complaint be approaching falling outside the timescale, the resident would be contacted to agree an extension of time and informed when the response would be provided.
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	As per 3.1. Any agreed reasonable adjustments would be recorded and kept under active review.
5.11	Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	As per 2.1 - 2.5.
5.12	A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	A full record is kept of every complaint. A spreadsheet of all complaints is maintained with the required dates. Copies of all correspondence are also retained in relation to the complaint.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.13	Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	Complaints can be resolved at any point, service request (informal resolution), stage 1 and stage 2. HRA Compensation Policy now in place to guide resolutions.
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	As per 'Unreasonably Persistent and/or vexatious complaints and unreasonable behaviour' at bottom of page
5.15	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	We would ensure any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour would be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

Section 6: Complaints Stages

Stage 1

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.1	Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	All complaints are aimed to be responded to in the prescribed timescales - 10 working days for stage 1, 20 working days for stage 2. Due dates and timescales are recorded and monitored. It is not often where we require additional time even if complex, in those situations (as per 5.9) the complainant would be contacted and we would agree a new deadline for completion of the complaint investigation and response.
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined, and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the complaint being received.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	All complaints logged and acknowledged within 5 working days, as per procedure.
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	As per procedure, response provided within 10 working days of acknowledgement.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.4	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	As per procedure, there are some occasions when a full response cannot be provided within this timeframe due to the complexity of the issues raised. We will keep the complainant informed should an extended timeframe be anticipated. Housing Services contact the resident and agree an extension if required, giving an explanation as to why further time is required.
6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	Details are made available.
6.6	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	This would be the case, details of actions would be included in the response and tracked to ensure they are completed by the Service Improvement Team.
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law, and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	All points would be addressed, reasoned, and referenced where required.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.8	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	This would be the case, and how we would approach new issues/complaints.
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	A template response is used by Housing Services which covers all these points.

Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.10	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	This is the procedure we follow.
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined, and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	Acknowledged and logged within 5 working days.
6.12	Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	Head of Service would contact/meet with resident to understand why they remained unsatisfied as part of their complaint investigation and response at stage 2.
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	As per 5.8, Assistant Housing Services Manager administers and oversees process with Service managers dealing with stage 1 complaints and Head of Service with stage 2.
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	We will provide a full response within a further twenty working days of being acknowledged.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	As per procedure, there are some occasions when a full response cannot be provided within this timeframe due to the complexity of the issues raised. We will keep the complainant informed should an extended timeframe be anticipated. Housing Services contact the resident and agree an extension if required, giving an explanation as to why further time is required.
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	Details are made available.
6.17	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	This would be the case, details of actions would be included in the response and tracked to ensure they are completed by the Service Improvement Team.
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law, and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	All points would be addressed, reasoned, and referenced where required.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	A template response is used by Housing Services which covers all these points.
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	As per Corporate Procedure	Stage 2 is the final response, completed by the Head of Service who can involve all the suitable staff members needed.

Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	<p>Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologising; • Acknowledging where things have gone wrong; • Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons; • Taking action if there has been delay; • Reconsidering or changing a decision; • Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum; • Providing a financial remedy; • Changing policies, procedures, or practices. 	Yes	HRA Compensation Policy	We would try to provide the required remedy/outcome as appropriate, which includes those listed and detailed further in the HRA Compensation Policy .
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	HRA Compensation Policy	We would assess the impact and try to offer the appropriate remedy, as per the HRA Compensation Policy .
7.3	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.	Yes	HRA Compensation Policy	Details of the remedy offered would be included in the response as required, as per the HRA Compensation Policy .
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	HRA Compensation Policy	<p>We would listen to the Ombudsman and accept their recommendations on any remedies.</p> <p>Ombudsman guidance used in formulating the HRA Compensation Policy.</p>

Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting, and compliance

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	<p>Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept; c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman; d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints; e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord. 	Yes	<p>Submitted annually to Cabinet alongside this Self-Assessment.</p> <p>2023/24 Report</p>	Completed for 2023/24 and approved by Cabinet on 12 June 2024.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.2	The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.	Yes	As above.	As above. Published on the Housing complaint webpage .
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	Circumstances have not arisen, no evidence.	Should the circumstances arise the self-assessment would be carried out again.
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	Circumstances have not arisen, no evidence.	Should the circumstances arise the self-assessment would be carried out again.
8.5	If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.	Yes	Circumstances have not arisen, no evidence.	We would comply should the circumstances arise.

Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.1	Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	Learning from complaint forms are completed for all complaints, with a view to service improvement in each case.
9.2	A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.	Yes	Annual Report	'What we learned from the complaints received and what we did' page in the Annual Tenants report.
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff, and relevant committees.	Yes	Housing Board minutes when published.	Learning from complaints is not reported on corporately across the Council. We have formed a new Housing Board to oversee Housing Services, and learning from complaints will be reported to this board/panel going forward.
9.4	Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	Assistant Housing Services Manager administers and oversees the complaints process, they report to the Housing Management Team on a regular basis regarding any themes/trends arising from complaints that require action through changes to policy/procedure etc.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.5	In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC').	Yes	Housing Portfolio Leader appointed as MRC	Head of Service and Assistant Housing Services Manager meets quarterly with the MRC to discuss themes and trends arising from complaints.
9.6	The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	The Portfolio Holder for Housing will report to Cabinet Briefing on a regular basis information on Housing Services complaint handling. They will be given access to information and staff as required. This will follow consideration of the aforementioned information at the Housing Board as 9.3 above and the quarterly MRC meetings as 9.5.
9.7	As a minimum, the MRC, and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. regular updates on the volume, categories, and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance; b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report. 	Yes	No evidence available to provide yet, see commentary.	MRC receives information quarterly and annually as required.

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.8	<p>Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments; b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body. 	Yes	No evidence available to provide, see commentary.	Whilst nothing is set out in writing, Housing Services employees would deliver complaint handling with these requirements at the forefront.

Tenancy Management Policy 2025-28

Committee:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	31 July 2025
Report of:	Head of Housing and Corporate Assets
Portfolio:	Housing and Corporate Assets

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider a new Tenancy Management Policy for 2025-28, incorporating an updated Tenancy Strategy.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet is recommended to approve the proposed Tenancy Management Policy attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 That Cabinet note the contents of the Policy.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.3 An understanding of the rights and responsibilities of both landlord and tenant is a keystone for providing high quality council homes and landlord services. Having a clear, unambiguous Tenancy Management Policy is vital to this.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The Council is required to have an updated Tenancy Strategy as per the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.
- 3.2 The Tenancy Management Policy is an accompanying document to the recently approved Tenancy Agreements. The required contents of a Tenancy Strategy are met by some of the contents of the Tenancy Management Policy; therefore, the two documents have been merged into one all-encompassing policy.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The Tenancy Management Policy contributes directly to Corporate Priorities 2, 3 & 4:

Priority 2 - Health and Wellbeing:

We will continue to work with partners to make our homes, neighbourhoods, and estates safer places to live, work and visit.

Priority 3 - The Community:

The provision of good quality housing in the public sector is a priority for the Council and there is a commitment to achieve this by managing our Council homes efficiently and effectively. A Tenancy Management Policy clearly sets out the rights and responsibilities of tenants.

Priority 4 - Responsible Council:

Making the best use of the limited housing resource available by allocating council housing in a fair way, which supports sustainable tenancies and stronger communities.

5 Report Detail

5.1 The revised [Tenancy Agreements for Secure and Introductory Tenants](#) were approved by Cabinet on 24 April 2024. The Tenancy Management Policy is an accompanying Policy setting out the approach to providing an efficient and effective Tenancy Management Service. The Policy is attached at Appendix 1.

5.2 The Policy applies to secure and introductory tenants in housing owned by the Council. It does not cover assets such as garages, shops, or leasehold properties. The Policy focuses on managing a tenancy, in terms of Tenant rights and ensuring that Tenants are aware of their responsibilities and adhere to them. This policy is designed to inform staff and Tenants to ensure a fair and consistent service is provided.

5.3 This policy also meets the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 to produce and update a Tenancy Strategy, and as such replaces the Tenancy Strategy March 2012. The legislation requires a Strategy to cover:

- What kind of tenancies to offer
- Circumstances in which the landlord will grant a tenancy of a particular kind
- Where a tenancy is set for a fixed term, the length of term
- Circumstances where the landlord will grant a further tenancy on the ending of the existing tenancy

Registered Providers are expected to give 'due regard' to the objectives and principles set out in local authority Strategic Tenancy Policies.

5.4 In addition to the above, the Policy covers the following areas:

- Types of tenancy
- Creating a new tenancy
- Sole and Joint tenancies
- Changes in tenancies including succession, assignment, and mutual exchanges
- Managing and sustaining tenancies
- Our approach to relationship breakdown and the forming of new relationships
- Ending a tenancy.

5.5 The Policy was subject to a 6-week public consultation, with an online survey to gather feedback and any comments. A small group of engaged tenants was also consulted in the development of this Policy. As per the requirements of a Tenancy Strategy, Registered Providers were also sent a copy for comment, with no objections received.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

No new financial implications identified. It is not anticipated the revised Tenancy Management Policy will impact on rent and service charges collected.

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

This Policy will give tenants a clearer understanding of their rights. The Policy will manage expectations of tenants whilst they are undergoing difficult circumstances following bereavement, relationship breakdown etc.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and assessed as having a positive or neutral impact on the protected characteristic groups.

6.6 Health

None

6.7 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Tenancy Management Policy 2025-28

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

None

Contact Officer: James Morgan / Belinda Wildey

Telephone Number: 01543 462 621

Ward Interest: N/A

Report Track: Cabinet: 31/07/25

Key Decision: No



Tenancy Management Policy 2025 - 2028

(Incorporates Tenancy Strategy requirements.)

Version Control

Version	Approval Stage	Date
1	Internal	27/08/2024
2	Tenants/Public Consultation	29/04/2025
3	Head of Service sign off	15/05/2025
4	L.Team / Cabinet	

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1. Introduction

The Tenancy Management Policy sets out our approach to providing an efficient and effective Tenancy Management Service. The policy has several underlying procedures and guidance notes, which are in place to ensure we provide a service which reflects our responsibilities and good practice. By providing robust and consistent Tenancy Management we are doing everything reasonably possible to build thriving, resilient communities and deliver a high-quality customer service to residents who live in our properties and on our estates.

This policy supports the Council's commitment to championing equality by ensuring procedures are in place, so all residents are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination in line with the Equality Act 2010.

2. Scope

This policy applies to secure and introductory tenants in housing owned by Cannock Chase District Council (hereinafter referred to as CCDC or the Council). It does not cover assets such as garages, shops, or leasehold properties. The Tenancy Management Policy focuses on managing a tenancy, in terms of Tenant rights and ensuring that Tenants are aware of their responsibilities and adhere to them. This policy is designed to inform staff and Tenants to ensure a fair and consistent service is provided.

The policy covers the following areas:

- Creating a new tenancy
- Changes in tenancies including succession, assignment, and mutual exchanges
- Managing and sustaining tenancies
- Our approach to relationship breakdown and the forming of new relationships
- Ending a tenancy

This policy should be read in conjunction with our other Council and Housing policies detailed below:

- Anti-Social Behaviour policy
- Allocations Policy
- Income Collection policy
- Tenant Rechargeable Repairs Policy
- Tenancy Agreement

This policy also meets the requirements of the [Localism Act 2011](#) to produce and update a Tenancy Strategy, and as such replaces the [Tenancy Strategy March 2012](#). The legislation requires a Strategy to cover:

- What kind of tenancies to offer
- Circumstances in which the landlord will grant a tenancy of a particular kind
- Where a tenancy is set for a fixed term, the length of term
- Circumstances where the landlord will grant a further tenancy on the ending of the existing tenancy

Registered Providers are expected to give 'due regard' to the objectives and principles set out in local authority Strategic Tenancy Policies.

3. The Regulatory requirements

The Council will ensure that the Policy meets all legislative, regulatory, and good practice requirements and minimises eviction being carried out. This will include, but not limited to, the Housing Act 1985 and 1996, the Localism Act 2011, Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014, and the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing.

The Council will ensure that no tenant's human rights or statutory rights are breached by the implementation of this policy, in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998 and all relevant housing legislation. Consideration is given to the responsibilities of the Council to promote and assist in building sustainable and balanced communities.

4. Policy Detail

a. Types of tenancy-

CCDC offers the following types of tenancy:

Introductory tenancy

Section 124 of the Housing Act 1996 made introductory tenancies available to local authorities. All new Council tenants will be offered an introductory tenancy lasting up to 12 months. An introductory tenancy has the same rights as a secure tenancy but for this 12-month period a Tenant cannot:

- Buy their Council home.
- Make any alterations to the home.
- transfer or Mutually Exchange.
- take in a lodger without written permission from CCDC
- Create a joint or sole tenancy agreement different to the original agreement in place.

Throughout this 12-month period, the tenancy will be monitored. When a tenant has successfully completed their tenancy, they will then be automatically granted a Secure tenancy following a tenancy audit. If there is a breach of tenancy during this 12-month period, the Council can extend an introductory tenancy for a maximum period of a further 6 months. However, if the Council feels that the severity of the breach is high enough to render the tenant unfit to retain a council tenancy, it will take steps to terminate the introductory tenancy before the 12-month period or extended period ends. The tenant will be given notice of the intention to extend and will be given an opportunity to request a review of the decision.

Any introductory tenancy not ended within this period will automatically, by law, become a secure tenancy. If steps are taken to end an introductory tenancy, the tenant will be supported to access help and advice on alternative housing options if this occurs.

Secure Tenancy

A secure tenancy is a lifetime tenancy meaning it cannot expire and can only be brought to an end if the tenant breaches their tenancy conditions or in circumstances specified in the Housing Act 1985. Once the term of an introductory tenancy has been successfully completed, the tenancy automatically becomes a secure tenancy. A secure tenancy is a lifetime tenancy meaning it cannot expire, and a tenant(s) will keep the protection of a secure tenancy so long as they continue to live in their premises as their only or principal home. A failure to do so results in security of tenure being lost, automatically, in law. Whilst the tenancy remains secure the Council can only terminate the tenancy if the tenant has breached their tenancy conditions.

Secure Tenants can:

- In certain circumstances pass on their tenancy when they die if applicable and in accordance with the relevant laws (known as succession).
- Exchange homes with another tenant of the Council or another social landlord via mutual exchange
- Buy their home (under the 'Right to Buy' scheme) (Subject to relevant qualifying periods and properties)
- Make improvements or alterations to their home (subject to permission)
- Have lodgers, (except in Independent Living accommodation or if it breaches the 'permitted number' of people in a property).
- Seek to transfer to another Council property in which they would be granted a new secure tenancy

Demoted Tenancies

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced a power for local authorities to apply to the Courts to demote a tenancy where a tenant, resident or visitor to a property has engaged in, or threatened to engage in, anti-social behaviour or use of the premises for unlawful purposes. A demoted tenancy is a form of tenancy that reduces a tenant's security of tenure and rights for 12 to 18 months. When a tenancy is demoted, the rights to succeed to or assign that tenancy and the right to buy may be altered for the duration of demotion.

Fixed Term Tenancies

The Council previously decided, as part of the last [Tenancy Strategy](#), not to introduce fixed term tenancies and will continue the current policy of:

- Granting introductory tenancies to all new tenants; and
- Offering a secure “lifetime” tenancy provided that the introductory tenancy has been conducted satisfactorily (as detailed above).

The Council’s policy of not granting fixed term tenancies will be reviewed as part of the Tenancy Management Policy review in three years’ time.

N.B.: The [Renter’s Rights Bill](#) has proposed the abolishment of fixed term tenancies, therefore this is the position until the event of their abolishment through any subsequent Renter’s Rights Act.

Information for Registered Providers

The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England sets out the specific standards that registered providers of social housing must meet. Within this framework, the [Tenancy Standard 2024](#) places a number of required outcomes and specific expectations on registered providers, the Council expects these to be followed.

The Council recognise that fixed term tenancies* will help Registered Providers to make the best use of their housing stock but do not wish to undermine the creation of mixed and sustainable communities. It is considered important not to discourage people from seeking employment and if the security of their tenancies were linked to them not improving their circumstances it could help to create a ‘benefit trap.’ In addition, fixed term tenancies may not be appropriate for all tenants, particularly older people, and vulnerable people e.g. people with learning or physical disabilities or mental health problems who are receiving support that is linked to their accommodation.

Issues for Consideration

- Five years should be typically used as the minimum term for all fixed term tenancies*.
- Lifetime tenancies should continue to be used by providers of extra care housing.
- Those receiving long term support linked to their accommodation or have properties that have received major adaptations should receive lifetime tenancies or longer fixed terms based on an assessment of their future needs.
- Fixed term tenancies* should be renewed unless there has been a change in the tenants’ circumstances to the extent that they are able to afford a different tenure or they are under occupying their home by two bedrooms or more.
- Advice and guidance on alternative housing options must be given by the provider as soon as a decision is made to end the tenancy and a minimum notice period of six months should be given.

Facilitating appropriate move-on

The Council are committed to preventing homelessness and do not want to see an increase in homelessness due to decisions taken to terminate a fixed term tenancy. Tenants who have had their tenancy reviewed should be given a minimum of six months' notice if the provider plans to end the tenancy. Reasons for the decision must be given to the tenant and information on their right to appeal the decision.

Registered Providers must provide households affected by the termination of a tenancy with advice and assistance to secure alternative accommodation. This could include:

- Identifying more suitable accommodation that meets the households needs within their own stock
- Providing advice on low-cost home ownership options
- Welfare related advice and/or signposting to appropriate advice services
- Advising on renting in the private rented sector and assistance in identifying and securing a suitable property.

* As referred to above, the [Renter's Rights Bill](#) has proposed the abolishment of fixed term tenancies, therefore this is the position until the event of the abolishment of Fixed Term Tenancies through any subsequent Renter's Rights Act.

b. Creating a tenancy

For all applications, the Council offers either a sole or joint tenancy to new individuals or households moving into a new Council home. This is subject to eligibility. Where there is more than one housing applicant, it is the household's decision whether to apply for a joint or sole tenancy. The Council recognises applications for joint tenancies by two people who are married or in a civil partnership or live together as a couple. Joint tenancies will not be offered to any other pair of people, apart from siblings that have always lived together or where one is the carer of the other. Applicants for a joint tenancy, will need to provide proof of marriage or civil partnership or living together as a couple, for at least the last 12 months (or the relevant sibling relationship).

The tenant is responsible for telling CCDC when they have changes to their household. This includes persons moving in, persons leaving the property, and to their marital or relationship status with another joint tenant or the number of children in the household. This should also include changes to contact details or vulnerabilities. It is important if any of these changes have taken place that tenants contact the Contact Centre and ask to speak to their Neighbourhood Officer or notify Neighbourhood Service via Housing online.

Tenants who change their name will need to provide evidence of the change before a tenancy agreement can be updated. The Council will accept the following documents as evidence:

- Government issued documents, such as Passport or Driving licence
- Certificate of marriage, civil partnership, or divorce/dissolution
- Confirmation from High Court if the change is via Deed Poll

A tenant should not move person(s) into their property if this means their home would then become overcrowded.

Sole and Joint tenancies

A sole tenancy- is where one member of the household signs the tenancy and is responsible for ensuring the household fulfils the responsibilities set out within the tenancy agreement. This includes paying the rent and ensuring no one in the household is responsible for causing anti-social behaviour. Where there is a breach of tenancy, the sole tenant is accountable, even if a member of their household or guest is responsible for the breach of tenancy occurring.

A Joint Tenancy- is where two people have the responsibility for meeting the requirements of the tenancy agreement and enjoy equal rights to the tenancy and to being consulted by the Council. Both tenants are entitled to stay in the home until the end of the tenancy and both joint tenants will be responsible for all the rent regardless of whether they live in the property or not.

Sole to joint tenancy- it is not legally possible for a sole tenant to 'add' a joint tenant to their tenancy. The Council may agree to a surrender of an existing sole tenancy where there has been no succession and a re-grant to the original tenant and a new joint tenant, but it is not obliged to do.

So, a sole tenant can convert their current tenancy to a Joint Tenancy, but both parties must agree for the respective partner to be added to the tenancy.

Assignment - The Neighbourhood Officer will need to check whether it is lawfully possible for a joint tenancy to be assigned in accordance with s.91 of the Housing Act 1985. The tenant will be required to complete a Deed of Assignment. It is advisable that tenants seek independent legal advice. Where the tenant has a statutory right of assignment, then it is not necessary to sign a new joint tenancy agreement; this will instead be recorded on the Council's housing management ICT system and both tenants will receive written confirmation of their joint tenancy.

Where assignment is not possible or practical, the Council will consider granting a new joint tenancy to replace the previous sole tenancy. Any applications for a sole tenancy to be converted to a joint tenancy will be refused under the following circumstances.

- The household cannot provide proof of marriage or civil partnership, or of joint residency for at least 12 months prior to the application.
- There is outstanding action against the household for a breach of tenancy.
- There are outstanding debts.
- There is a history of tenancy breaches.
- The tenancy has been demoted.
- The applicant is already named on another tenancy.
- The tenancy would create an intergenerational tenancy.

- There is legal action being taken against the property including but not limited to a notice seeking possession has been served, an injunction is in force, a possession claim has been issued; a suspended possession order is in force.
- The house would become overcrowded or under occupied.
- The applicant is under 18 years old, unless it can be shown the joint tenancy is necessary for the minor.
- The applicant would not qualify for an allocation of social housing.
- There is a history of relationship breakdown between the sole tenant and the Applicant; or
- The Council has previously taken enforcement action against the proposed joint tenancy, or they are known to be anti-social or have engaged in criminal conduct.
- Where the property is Independent Living accommodation, only people 55+ will be able to become joint tenants. However Civil and married partners can live with their partners in independent living accommodation. This is subject to the permitted number of residents to the property type.

Joint to Sole Tenancy- The Council cannot legally remove a joint tenant from a joint tenancy, and it is not possible for a joint tenant to assign their tenancy to the other joint tenant.

A joint tenant may terminate the tenancy by serving a valid notice to quit which will have the effect of ending the tenancy for both. The Council can either take possession proceedings against anyone continuing to occupy the property or offer a new sole tenancy to the remaining occupier, although it is not obliged to do so.

Alternatively, the Council may agree to a surrender of the joint tenancy and a re-grant of a new tenancy to a sole tenant.

The tenant who wishes to remove themselves from the tenancy will be required to complete a Deed of Assignment.

Where an assignment cannot be agreed between joint tenants, those who are married or in a civil partnership can apply to the Family Court to transfer the tenancy.

When one of the joint tenants moves out of the home, the remaining tenant should notify the Council. A deed of assignment will only be agreed if:

- Both parties agree; and
- There are no outstanding breaches against the tenancy (this will not apply where the absent tenant was sole cause of antisocial behaviour)
- There are no outstanding rent arrears.
- The home being specifically adapted for the absent tenant (in this case an alternative home may be offered)

There may be circumstances where a property would be much more suitable for other individuals rather than a proposed sole tenant, for example if the tenant is significantly under occupying or the property is adapted for a disabled person.

In such circumstances we may look to rehouse the tenant into a more suitable property. The successor would be considered for a direct let.

The Council can refuse to consent to a new sole tenancy. Reasons for refusal include (but are not limited to) if:

- There has been a previous succession to the tenancy or an assignment to a potential successor.
- There are outstanding rent arrears.
- There is legal action being taken against the property including but not limited to: a notice seeking possession has been served, an injunction is in force, a possession claim has been issued, or a suspended possession order is in force.
- The house would become overcrowded or under occupied.
- The applicant is under 18 years old, unless it can be shown the joint tenancy is necessary for the minor.
- The applicant would not qualify for an allocation of social housing.
- There is a history of relationship breakdown between the sole tenant and the Applicant; or
- The Council have previously taken enforcement action against the proposed joint tenancy, or they are known to be anti-social or have engaged in criminal conduct.

Relationship breakdown

It is possible for a non-tenant occupier to obtain a court order in family or matrimonial proceedings to have a sole tenancy transferred into their name. It is also possible for a court to order that a joint tenancy should be transferred into a sole name. This can be under matrimonial or family law, or under the Children Act 1989. Where the court orders this, the Council will transfer the tenancy as ordered, unless the tenancy has already been brought to an end or will be brought to an end by a notice to terminate which was served before the court order.

It may be possible, prior to breakdown, for a sole tenant to request an assignment of the tenancy to someone who could be a successor. (The tenancy would remain a sole tenancy).

Where a joint tenant or occupier is a victim of domestic abuse, the Council will ensure referrals to partner agencies are made including (where appropriate) a MARAC referral. The Council will also consider use of its 'Safe As Houses' Scheme to complete minor works such as installation of security lighting upon recommendation from the Police. Where a joint tenant or occupier is convicted by the Courts of a domestic abuse related offence, the Council will interview the perpetrator and consider whether to take action to evict the perpetrator. A perpetrator is someone who uses, or threaten to use, violence or abuse (including physical, psychological, sexual, emotional abuse, or restricting financial control), or intimidates any person (including children) living with them.

c. Changes to tenancies

Succession - allows the tenancy to be passed on to certain qualifying people when the tenant dies. The tenancy agreement sets out the statutory rights to succession.

The law allows **only one** statutory succession to each tenancy. Consequently, on the death of the tenant there can be no further right of succession where the deceased tenant is classed as a successor. The deceased tenant is classed as a successor where:

- They will become the tenant by succession.
- The tenancy was assigned to them as a potential successor.
- They previously exchanged from another property and had been a successor at the previous property.
- They became the tenant under a court order and the previous tenant was a successor.

When a joint tenant dies, the tenancy passes to the surviving joint tenant/s automatically, regardless of the relationship between the joint tenants. This is called survivorship and counts as one succession. There can be no further statutory succession.

If a deceased tenant is not classed as a successor, an applicant will qualify to succeed to the tenancy if he/she was occupying the property as his/her main home at the date of the death and either:

- They were the tenant's wife, husband, civil partner, or partner (this includes same sex couples) provided they lived with the tenant in the home as their principal home prior to the death of the tenant or
- If there is no spouse/ partner in occupation the tenancy could pass to a partner or another relative, provided that person had been occupying the property as their only or main home with the tenant throughout the 12-month period before the tenant died.

Where there is more than one person qualified to succeed, the tenant's spouse or civil partner or partner is to have priority. If there are two or more family members entitled to succeed, then they must agree between them which one is to be the successor because only one person can succeed. If they cannot agree, a management decision will be made as to whom the tenancy should pass to. The Council does not have to explain the rationale for this decision where competing rights are deemed equal.

A person who succeeds to a tenancy is granted a continuation of the existing tenancy, (including all the rights, responsibilities and the charges made under that tenancy) not a new tenancy.

Under section 86A of the Housing Act 1985, a tenancy that started before 01 April 2012 can be succeeded to a wider group of family members i.e. brother, sister, grandparent, and grandchildren. Following the Localism Act 2011, where a tenancy is created after 1 April 2012 the statutory right of succession is limited to partners.

There may be circumstances where a property would be much more suitable for other individuals rather than a successor, for example if the successor is significantly under occupying or the property is adapted for a disabled person. In such circumstances we may look to rehouse the successor into a more suitable property. The successor would be considered for a direct let. If the successor refuses to move voluntarily then we may serve a notice on the successor between 6 and 12 months after the previous tenant's death. We would not look to seek possession of a property for under occupation if the successor was the spouse or civil partner of the deceased tenant.

Assignment- (passing on a tenancy) is only possible for secure tenancies in the following circumstances (as set out in the tenancy agreement):

- With agreement of all parties. The tenant can terminate the sole tenancy on the agreement that a new joint secure tenancy would be granted. Assignment will be refused if the tenant or the other party owes the Council arrears or there is currently outstanding Anti-Social Behaviour (* ASB) matters.
- As a mutual exchange. For this to apply the tenants must have no arrears and no outstanding ASB.
- Where a court orders, or as part of divorce or judicial separation proceedings on a termination of a civil partnership under the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973, Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984 or the Civil Partnership Act 2004 or Children Act 1989; where a court orders a granting of a tenancy to a specific tenant.
- To a potential successor, for example, someone who would have had the right to succeed to the tenancy on the death of the tenant. This is only possible if there has been no previous assignment or succession.

Demoted tenancies may only be assigned in pursuance of a court order.

Assignment by way of mutual exchange- a mutual exchange can be accepted from any Social Housing tenant who has either a secure or an assured tenancy. We will not permit exchanges with tenants of private landlords. We will only refuse consent on the same grounds as are available for secure tenants and outlined in Schedule 3 of the Housing Act 1985.

Where the tenant is in breach of their tenancy (including being in rent arrears) we can impose a condition requiring the breach to be put right. If a condition is imposed, the exchange cannot take place until the breach has been remedied.

We will give or refuse consent within 42 days of the application to exchange being received.

Tenant(s) can apply for an exchange as an introductory tenant with another introductory tenant or secure tenant or an assured tenant of a Registered Provider. Permission, which may be conditional on the tenant(s) paying any rent outstanding or remedying any other broken terms of the Tenancy Agreement, will be given subject to the grounds set out in Schedule 3 Housing Act 1985 and the agreement of any other landlord. Such an exchange must be carried out under the special introductory tenancy exchange procedure which requires the tenant(s) to surrender their current tenancy so that they can be given a new introductory tenancy of the property that they are moving to.

Introductory tenancies may only be assigned in very limited circumstances of a court order (as described above) to a potential successor to the tenancy.

d. Discretion

Granting of a discretionary tenancy- circumstances where no statutory succession right exists, we may consider the granting of a discretionary tenancy of the current property. This will be an introductory tenancy and will be let in accordance with the CCDC allocations scheme. Each case will be considered on its merits following receipt of a written request to remain in the property, which must be received no later than two months after the tenant's death. We may also consider a Use and Occupation Licence for a short time to allow the occupant to find alternative accommodation.

Exceptional Circumstances- a discretionary tenancy in exceptional circumstances, for example, if there are technical circumstances that prevent one of our properties being occupied. A new tenancy will be granted at the discretion of the management and in accordance with the Allocations scheme.

We may consider offering a property to one joint tenant after the tenancy has been terminated by the other joint tenant. A feature of a joint tenancy is that it can be ended by one of the joint tenants, acting unilaterally. There may be circumstances where one joint tenant does this with unfair consequences for the other joint tenant, e.g. following a relationship breakdown. In such circumstances the Council may agree to grant the other joint tenant a sole tenancy of the property, or of another vacant property.

This will include appropriate checks to ensure that the proposed tenant would be eligible to join the housing register, remaining household size (for example if the outgoing tenant is moving out together with children), previous history of antisocial behaviour, rent arrears and in relation to their immigration status.

e. Managing and sustaining tenancies

Effective management is necessary to ensure our customers can live comfortably in their homes. We expect that tenants will always maintain their properties in a reasonable condition in accordance with their tenancy agreement. We will monitor all our tenants to ensure they keep to the terms of their tenancy agreement and take appropriate action to resolve any breaches effectively. We will complete a tenancy audit at the beginning of your tenancy, after 8 months and at intervals during the tenancy.

Where a customer requires it, we will provide housing related support or signpost them to external support agencies.

We will use the tenancy audit, Income Officer visit, courtesy visit, and other contacts we have with tenants as a means of ensuring that we deliver an effective, efficient, and high-quality service including:

- To update Tenant profile information, identify vulnerable Tenants and refer Tenants to appropriate support where required.
- Pick up any repair or neighbourhood issues.

- Ensure that the Tenant is aware of the different ways of contacting us, promoting digital access.
- Refer the tenant to appropriate support where needed- this may be CCDC Tenancy Sustainment service or community-based support.

We will also take the opportunity during any visit to:

- Ensure the enforcement of tenancy conditions and that the property has not been damaged, neglected, over occupied, or used unlawfully.
- Ensure that the property is occupied by the tenant and has not been sub-let or abandoned.

f. Social housing fraud

Social housing is a scarce resource, with the need exceeding demand. The Council aims to ensure that social housing will be available for those in housing need at the time they need it. The Council will tackle fraudulent applications, unlawful subletting, and tenancy misuse promptly and effectively, to ensure its housing stock is used by those with a legitimate housing need.

Housing fraud can lead to increased waiting times for prospective and existing tenants in unsuitable housing, increased disrepair, property damage and lack of health and safety checks due to occupiers being unwilling to report issues in case the fraud is discovered. It is also a drain on the Council's resources as it will have to expend money on investigation and legal enforcement action.

There are a number of different types of housing fraud. The Council will take action where:

- A tenant has fraudulently obtained a social housing tenancy by misrepresentation of identity or circumstances.
- Engaged in unauthorised subletting, whether subletting the whole of the property to a single household or multiple sublets.
- A tenant has ceased to occupy as their only or main home
- A tenant has engaged in an unauthorised assignment of the tenancy – mutual exchange or unauthorised transfer of tenancy
- A tenant has engaged in 'key selling' – where the tenant leaves the property and passes on the keys in return for a one-off lump sum payment or favour
- A successor has falsely claimed succession – retention of a tenancy following the death or vacation of the tenant
- A tenant has fraudulently claimed a Right to Buy.

Where possible, the Council will aim to prevent fraud, this includes participation in the government's National Fraud Initiative - a data matching exercise within and between public and private sector bodies to assist in the prevention and detection of fraud. Where we believe fraud is being committed, the Council will consider a range of tools to tackle fraud including seeking possession of properties, seeking unlawful profit orders against those who have profited from social housing fraud and prosecuting (under criminal statutes) those who have committed fraud.

g. Abandoned properties

We recognise that tenants may be away from their homes for an extended period for a number of reasons. Where we believe that the tenant may have abandoned the property (including anonymous notification) or is not using it as their sole or principal home, we will take appropriate action, in accordance with the legislative requirements and our abandonment procedure.

h. Ending a tenancy

When a Tenant (or one or both joint tenants) wants to end their tenancy, they must give four weeks' notice in writing. Their tenancy can only end on the first Sunday, four weeks after the notice was received by the Council. A Notice to Quit or tenancy termination form should be completed. The grounds upon which a landlord can serve notice to end a tenancy are set out in the tenancy agreement. In the appropriate circumstances and by serving the appropriate statutory notice that will allow the Council to apply for a mandatory possession to be sought through the courts, the Council will offer the tenant a request for a review of this decision.

Where tenants are moving property, the Council will endeavour to identify rechargeable repairs at the pre-void inspection and notify the tenant of any rechargeable repairs that need to be carried out prior to termination of the tenancy. Any rechargeable repairs outstanding once the property is vacated will be repaired by the Council and recharged to the outgoing tenant. This may include the cost of cleaning and clearing properties and gardens and an administration fee.

Former tenants leaving with monies owed for previous rent will be written to by the Council, in accordance with the current policies. Appropriate resources (e.g. tracing agents) will be used to track down tenants who have either abandoned their homes or who have been evicted with no forwarding address.

i. Death of a tenant

The death of a tenant (or both joint tenants) does not formally end a tenancy although the tenancy will no longer remain secure. For the tenancy to be ended, notice to quit/termination must be supplied by either the landlord (the Council) or the former tenants' legal representatives. When a tenant dies, their executor or person holding letters of administration can end the tenancy by providing a Notice to Quit or by completing a tenancy termination form. If we do not receive a termination notice, then we will serve a Notice to Quit on the property, addressed to the Personal Representative and a copy is served on the Public Trustee.

j. Right to buy

Secure tenants have the right to buy their home. A tenant can apply to buy their Council home if:

- It is their main residence
- It is self-contained
- They have held a public sector tenancy (e.g. Landlord is a Council, housing association or NHS trust) for at total period of three years or more - it does not have to be three years in a row.

Some properties are excluded from the Right to Buy, including:

- Properties designated for people over 60 years of age (as per Right to Buy legislation).
- Properties designated for people who have special needs or who are physically disabled.
- Properties within rural exception sites.

The government has an official government right to buy website which tenants can check to see if they are eligible – www.righttobuy.gov.uk. Wherever possible, CCDC will support tenants into homeownership.

k. Running a business from home

Tenants must not run a business from their properties without obtaining prior written permission from the Council. Permission is discretionary and may be conditional.

Permission can be revoked at any time and for any reason, but reasons for refusing permission or revoking permission can include:

- The business not being suitable for a residential area.
- Where the business activity is likely to amount to or lead to a breach of other terms of the tenancy.
- Where the business causes or is likely to cause a nuisance or annoyance to anyone living, working, or visiting the neighbourhood of the property.
- Where the business causes or is likely to cause excess wear and tear or damage to the property or its fixtures and fittings.
- Issues with tenancy conduct.

If permission is granted, the tenant will still need to check with the Council's planning department to see if any additional consents are needed, and permission by the Council as landlord does not amount to permission on behalf of any other department of the Council nor imply that such permission will be forthcoming. The Council will not give permission for the property to be used as a B & B, Airbnb or holiday let. Such instances will be treated as tenancy fraud.

Where a business is run from a property without consent, the Council may take steps to stop such activity, for example seeking an order from the court to prevent the business activities or taking steps to end the tenancy

l. Tenancy Incentives

The Council is committed to ensuring that homes are made available to those in need. The Council operates different ways to encourage existing tenants to move from family sized accommodation to smaller properties and free up larger homes for those who need them.

5. Performance Monitoring

The Council will monitor performance on eviction and tenancy sustainment using a number of performance indicators, including but not limited to:

- The total number of tenancies sustained within the first 12 months
- The number of tenants supported per year
- Number of evictions

The above performance indicators will be reported to the Board and Senior Management as required.

6. Related Policies, Procedures and Guideline

The policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Tenancy Agreement
- Welcome pack
- Mutual Exchange Policy
- Joint to sole and sole to joint guidance
- Termination form
- Abandonment procedure
- Tenancy Fraud
- Neighbourhood standards
- Tenancy Sustainment Policy

7. Consultation and Equality & Diversity

An equality impact assessment has been completed in respect of this policy. No negative impacts are identified. Positive impacts are identified for all protected characteristics.

The policy was subject to a 6-week public consultation and also directly with a small group of engaged tenants. Registered Providers were also consulted as part of the development of the policy as per the requirements of a Tenancy Strategy.

8. Contact

To find out more about Tenancy Services Management Policy please contact:

Neighbourhood Team
Housing Services,
Cannock Chase Council
Civic Centre,
Beecroft Road,
Cannock,
Staffs,
WS11 1BG
Telephone: 01543 462621
E-Mail: emt@cannockchasedc.gov.uk