

ASHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL



Council Offices,
Urban Road,
Kirkby in Ashfield
Nottingham
NG17 8DA

Agenda

Cabinet

Date: **Monday, 17th June, 2024**

Time: **10.00 am**

Venue: **Council Chamber, Council Offices, Urban Road,
Kirkby-in-Ashfield**

For any further information please contact:

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01623 457317

Cabinet

Membership

Chairman: Councillor Jason Zadrozny

Councillors:
Samantha Deakin
Tom Hollis
Rachel Madden
Matthew Relf
John Wilmott

Vicki Heslop
Christopher Huskinson
Andy Meakin
Helen-Ann Smith

FILMING/AUDIO RECORDING NOTICE

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SUMMONS

You are hereby requested to attend a meeting of the Cabinet to be held at the time/place and on the date mentioned above for the purpose of transacting the business set out below.



Theresa Hodgkinson
Chief Executive

AGENDA

Page

1. To receive apologies for absence, if any.
2. **Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and/or Non-Registrable Interests.**
3. To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 8 April 2024. 5 - 10
4. **Corporate Plan Delivery - Year-End 2023/24.** 11 - 38
Key Decision
Councillor Jason Zadrozny – Leader of the Council
5. **Corporate Risk Year-End Position 2023/2024.** 39 - 58
Non-Key Decision
Councillor Jason Zadrozny – Leader of the Council
6. **Major Projects and Funding Update.** 59 - 78
Key Decision
Councillor Matthew Relf – Executive Lead Member for Growth, Regeneration and Local Planning
7. **Rural Leisure Provision.** 79 - 82
Non-Key Decision
Councillor Chris Huskinson – Executive Lead Member for Leisure, Health and Wellbeing
8. **Housing Complaints – Annual Performance Report and Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment.** 83 - 128
Key Decision
Councillor Andy Meakin – Executive Lead Member for Social Housing and Assets

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CABINET

**Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,
on Monday, 8th April, 2024 at 10.00 am**

Present: Councillor Jason Zadrozny in the Chair;

Councillors Samantha Deakin, Vicki Heslop,
Tom Hollis, Christopher Huskinson,
Rachel Madden, Andy Meakin, Matthew Relf,
Helen-Ann Smith and John Wilmott.

Apology for Absence: Councillor Kier Barsby (Principal Select
Committee Chairman).

Officers Present: John Bennett, Craig Bonar, Lynn Cain,
Paul Coffey, Ruth Dennis, Louise Ellis,
Theresa Hodgkinson, Peter Hudson,
Abbie Smith, Antonio Taylor and Shane Wright.

CA.64 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and/or Non-Registrable Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

CA.65 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19 February 2024, be
received and approved as a correct record.

CA.66 Principal Select Committee: Petition Consideration and Recommendations

The Council's Governance Manager presented the report and two
recommendations for Cabinet Members to consider in relation to a petition
submitted in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme and Constitution.

Members considered the alternative option of declining to agree the
recommendations as submitted by the Principal Select Committee.

RESOLVED that

- a) Cabinet agrees to ensure that an appropriate consultation exercise is
undertaken alongside any future repurposing of Council owned community
centres within the District;

- b) in conjunction with the above, Cabinet will ensure that all user groups are identified and contacted as a matter of course should any public consultation or engagement exercises be carried out to determine the future use of Council owned community centres.

Reason:

The Council received a petition submitted with 866 signatures. In accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme, the submitted petition met the signature threshold for consideration at a meeting of the Principal Select Committee. This consideration was given at a meeting in January 2024. Following consideration, the Principal Select Committee agreed recommendations to be submitted to Cabinet.

CA.67 2023/24 Forecast Outturn for General Fund, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital Programme as at December 2023

Cabinet received a summary of the Council's forecast financial outturn position as at December 2023 compared to the latest approved budgets for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the Capital Programme.

Due to the fact that there is a requirement for the Council's financial position to be reported to those charged with Governance, there were no alternative options for Members to consider.

RESOLVED that

- a) the current forecast outturn for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital Programme for 2023/24, be received and noted;
- b) Council be recommended to approve the amendments and the addition of new schemes to the Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28 and the funding of the Capital Programme as set out in Section 6 and Appendix 3 of the report;
- c) the monitoring of Prudential and Treasury Management indicators for 2023/24, as detailed in Appendix 4, be also noted.

Reason:

In accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations to report to those charged with Governance the financial position.

CA.68 Major Projects & Funding Update

Cabinet was updated in respect of funding allocations and progress of funded programmes. Members were additionally asked to agree the addition of Public Open Space Section 106 contributions to the Capital Programme and to accept funding from the Levelling Up Fund for Hucknall Town Centre.

Members considered the alternative options of declining to approve the allocation of Section 106 funding to the Capital Programme and the acceptance of the Levelling Up Funding for Hucknall, but these were not

recommended as public open space improvement projects would not be delivered and potential investment in Hucknall would not be realised.

RESOLVED that

- a) progress for the Regeneration programmes, as presented, be received and noted;
- b) Council be recommended, following receipt of funds, to include Section 106 monies in the Capital Programme as outlined in the report;
- c) it be agreed to accept the funding from the Levelling Up Fund for Hucknall Town Centre of up to £9,281,283 and to enter into agreements with DLUHC (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) as required, including the addition of the funds to the Capital Programme.

Reasons:

1. To ensure that Cabinet is kept updated on progress with the funding programmes.
2. To ensure that projects and spend within the funding programmes are delivered within the set timeframes and programme budgets.
3. To ensure delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and improvements to parks and green spaces with a rolling programme of investment.
4. To ensure funding streams are utilised collaboratively and effectively.

CA.69 Public Spaces Protection Order 2024 (PSPO) Renewal and Variation (Consultation)

Cabinet was requested to approve a consultation exercise to extend and vary the existing 2021 Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO), before its expiration on 30 September 2024.

Members considered the alternative option of declining to undertake the necessary consultation and notification to extend and vary the existing 2021 PSPO before its expiration on 30 September 2024 but this was not recommended, as it would result in officers not being able to take action under these provisions in the future.

RESOLVED that

- a) approval be given to undertake the necessary consultation, publicity and notification for the extension of the existing 2021 Public Spaces Protection Order for a further period of 3 years;
- b) approval be also given to undertake the necessary consultation, publicity and notification to vary the existing 2021 Public Spaces Protection Order to include a new prohibition for addressing street harassment and to vary the prohibition for vehicle nuisance (previously called "Car Cruising") by increasing the Restricted Area to the entire District of Ashfield.

Reason:

To ensure the Council has a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in place to enable officers to regulate activities in particular public spaces that have a detrimental effect on the local community.

CA.70 Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Cabinet was requested to consider and formally approve the adoption of the proposed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy to replace the former Corporate Equality and Inclusion Policy 2017-2021.

Members considered the alternative option of declining to approve the Policy but this was not recommended as it could result in the Council not achieving its equality objectives and not complying with legislative requirements.

RESOLVED that

- a) the proposed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy be formally approved and adopted to replace the former Corporate Equality and Inclusion Policy 2017-2021;
- b) the initial findings of the recent review of equalities across the Council and the suggested improvements including the establishment of an Equalities Monitoring Group, be received and noted.

Reason:

To demonstrate the Council's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) and to comply with equality legislation.

CA.71 Interim Corporate Health and Safety Report 2023/24

Cabinet was presented with details of the Council's corporate health and safety performance by means of an interim report covering the six-month period 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023.

As the report was for information purposes only, Members did not have any alternative options to consider.

RESOLVED

that the Interim Corporate Health and Safety Report 2023/24, as shown at Appendix 1, be received and noted.

Reason:

To ensure Cabinet are informed on corporate health and safety performance across the Council, to provide assurance that the Council's statutory health and safety obligations are being met and to provide an understanding that the health and safety risks created by the Council's services and operations are being managed effectively, as required by law.

CA.72 Volunteer Policy Update

Cabinet was presented with an updated Volunteer Policy for consideration and approval.

Members considered the alternative option of declining to approve the updated Volunteer Policy, but this was not recommended as the current version did not accord with recent changes in policy, procedure and legislation.

RESOLVED

that the updated Volunteer Policy, as presented, be approved.

Reason:

The Council's Volunteer Policy was last updated in 2020 and it is timely to review the Policy to ensure it is fit for purpose and compliant with any changes in legislation.

The meeting closed at 11.20 am

Chairman.

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Report To:	CABINET
Date:	17 JUNE 2024
Heading:	CORPORATE PLAN DELIVERY – YEAR-END 2023/24
Executive Lead Member:	LEADER
Ward/s:	ALL
Key Decision:	YES
Subject to Call-In:	YES

Purpose of Report

This report presents to Cabinet progress updates regarding delivery of the new Corporate Plan 2023-2027 and the April 2023 to March 2024 performance position against the associated Corporate Performance Scorecard.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. For Cabinet to consider and proactively review the levels of delivery achieved against the Corporate Plan Priorities.**
- 2. For Cabinet to consider and proactively review the levels of performance achieved against the Corporate Scorecard as of March 2024.**

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

The Council's ambitions for the next four years are clearly identified in a set of revised and updated Corporate Priorities which are presented in the new Corporate Plan. These have been developed by Cabinet.

The Corporate Plan sits above a wider strategic context which includes the Corporate Project Management Framework, Corporate Performance Indicators and a range of strategic documents relating to the Council and its services. The Corporate Plan aligns to the Council's overarching Strategic Direction.

Our priorities for the future, as identified in the new Corporate Plan, have been translated and cascaded into specific projects and initiatives, the successful delivery of which is being monitored through our Performance and Strategic Planning Framework, into Service Plans to facilitate focussed delivery.

The Council remains ambitious, and as such, the new Corporate Plan captures and reflects our ongoing ambitions for the next four years.

Our performance framework incorporates performance scorecards on three separate levels as indicated below.



The Council regularly engages with the Local Government Association (LGA) sector led improvement offer, for independent evaluation of the organisation, most recently (January 2023) a peer review of housing was completed. Key recommendations from the LGA support work have been integrated into the refresh of the Corporate Plan and Strategic Direction. A follow-up Corporate Peer Challenge is scheduled for 4-7 June 2024.

Through the Council's new Policy and Performance Function, a specific focus will be placed on continually improving the Council's approach to performance and improvement in line with the updated best value guidance and introduction of Oflog.

The Council's performance framework incorporates inputs, outputs, and outcomes, directly aligned to the Corporate Plan. This has been reviewed and enhanced, following the approval of the new Corporate Plan 2023- 2027, and in line with Best Value expectations and Oflog benchmarking dataset measurement. The revised Corporate Scorecard incorporates both place level measures and corporate delivery measures.

Alternative Options Considered

To consider and adopt different key priorities and themes within the review of the Corporate Plan and Strategic Direction. The proposed priorities, themes and actions best capture and reflect the future strategic direction of the Council.

Detailed Information

The Council's new Corporate Plan 2023 - 2027 was approved by Cabinet and endorsed by Full Council in September 2023. Our Council Plan sets out what we want to achieve in the next four years. Our ambition is to be 'Great' across all our services and to look forwards. Our 6 priorities have been developed based on knowledge and understanding of the needs of Ashfield residents and businesses.

The Corporate Plan sits above a wider strategic context which includes the Corporate Project Management Framework, Corporate Performance Framework and a range of strategic documents relating to the organisation and its services.

The Corporate Plan progress is monitored through both the effectiveness of successful delivery of key projects and initiatives and performance achieved against the Corporate Scorecard.

The Corporate Performance Scorecard has been developed alongside the delivery plan to help us monitor the progress of achieving our ambitions. Our scorecard is split into 2 sections, Delivery and Living In Ashfield. The Living in Ashfield indicators provide contextual data of Ashfield as a place. The Delivery indicators are used to track our performance against the Councils key priorities.

This report details progress against delivery of the new Corporate Plan, to date, and the April 2023 to March 2024 year-end performance position against the associated Corporate Performance Scorecard 'Delivery' key performance measures.

A summary Corporate Performance Scorecard Report is appended which includes benchmarking data where this is available. The Council is keen to understand performance against relevant peer groups, particularly aligned to Oflog published datasets, to drive our ambition to deliver great services.

Overall Position

Overall, the corporate scorecard position of corporate 'delivery' measures for the full financial year indicates the following positive position: -

- 75% of measures achieving or exceeding target, or within 10% variance of target.
- 94% of measures indicating an improved position compared to the same period in the previous year, or within 5% of previous year's performance levels.

(data awaited for 1 KPI)

Specific deliverables in 2023/24 are: -

Health and Happiness:

Best Start

- Increasing access to leisure services and activities for children, and young people
 - Star foundation funding is continuing to come into the local authority and now has a robust way of allocation, monitoring and making best use of funds by providing opportunities for some of our most vulnerable children and young people.
 - The U17s programme continues to be delivered by Everyone Active during school holidays.
 - A new learner pool was opened at Hucknall Leisure Centre on 15th July 2023.
- Increasing the number of breastfeeding community places - most Council owned buildings, our Leisure Centres and 13 businesses across the District are now breastfeeding community places. Due to changes within public health and the way in which breastfeeding is promoted and supported within the community. This has proven difficult to expand and reach its full potential.
- Through the work of the Ashfield Children and Young People's Network, capacity funding was secured to enable a focus on understanding children, young people and their family's mental health concerns. Conversations took place with families, education providers, mental health service providers, and commissioners. This information was presented to a subgroup, who have agreed short- and long-term actions to address some of the issues and challenges presented.
- More than ever before primary schools across the district participated within the Christmas light switch on within all three town centres. The schools have also got involved with the Art Explora Mobile Museum that came to Kirkby, Sutton and Hucknall. Some primary schools have also applied for UKSPF green grant and been successful with their application.

KEY SUCCESSES

- Leisure transformation – new learner pool at Hucknall, new sauna/steam room at Kirkby, and completion of Papplewick Sports Hub.
- £5.4m of social value has been delivered through the Leisure Operating Contract.
- Significant 18% increase in attendances at our leisure centres, which is a 50% increase over the last 2 years.
- 11 groups have been supported with a grant as part of the UKSPF Green Social Prescribing Fund and 130 families have received a growing pack to encourage them to grow fruit/vegetables at home.

Living Well

- The Money Management Advice Service has been reviewed along with processes.
- A new resettlement officer was successfully recruited in January 2024. They have been developing further links with existing and new providers of support for households accommodated under the numerous resettlement schemes. This includes, but is not limited to, setting up and running drop in 'advice surgeries' and conversation classes., working with voluntary and faith groups and developing existing relationships with partner agencies. We have established available budget and are currently examining the accommodation needs of those who have been placed and need to be rehoused and the likely numbers.
- Deliver Outdoor Sports Transformation Programme: -
 - Kirkby and Sutton Lawn Sports Hubs - both projects are progressing well with the facilities due to completion in 2025.
 - Papplewick Sports Hub - Everyone Active took over management of the facility in November 2023. Two changing rooms have been converted to a community room/

studio space. We are working with local football clubs with an interest in leasing single pitch sites.

- We have been working with Notts. FA and the Football Foundation to identify sites for new 3G pitch provision in Hucknall.
- A new sauna/steam room opened at Kirkby Leisure Centre in December 2023.
- Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) funded works to Hucknall Leisure Centre have now commenced with the offsite manufacture of the units and ancillary items required to replace the existing fossil fuel heating with air source heat pumps. The bid to the Sport England Swimming Pool Support Fund for solar panels for Lammas Leisure Centre was successful, works are being planned in for the autumn 2024.
- £5,396,142 social value has been delivered through the Leisure Operating Contract during 2023-24, an increase of half a million pounds delivered for the same period last year. Over 7,000 attendances have been recorded from April 2023 - February 2024 on the Active Communities programme. This includes GP Exercise Referrals, memberships for care experienced young people, seated exercise, MSK, Parkinsons, COPD and people experiencing domestic abuse.
- 1,587,573 attendances at the Leisure Centres between April 2023 and March 2024, an 18% increase compared to attendances in 2022/2023 (1,348,688) and nearly 50% increase since 2021/2022.
- The review of rural leisure provision has been completed which has identified gaps in provision. Discussions have begun with Everyone Active and Selston High School to consider how we can coordinate and increase provision. Selston has been included as a potential location for a Playzone.
- 3 x £1,000 grants have been awarded to encourage more walking within Ashfield, and 9 new Walk Leaders have been trained.

Ageing Well

- The Commercial and Environmental Protection Team have designed a leaflet and distributed it to local retailers to raise awareness about accessibility requirements for customers using their premises.

Health Inequalities

- Coordinating and influencing organisations and service providers in Leamington, Coxmoor, Broomhill/Butler's Hill.
 - Coxmoor - Significant progress has been made on the Coxmoor estate due to increase of partnerships capacity to directly work with residents and collaboration and trust continues to be developed.
 - Broomhill/Butler's Hill - two Community Interest Company (CIC) groups have received lottery grant money to enable stability for the next two years. Meetings have taken place and a framework around the 'building blocks of health' has now started to take shape with a 3 main hub approach for the local area.
 - Leamington – Work continues to develop within the community network. 'Tuesdays together' continues to happen in partnership with Ashfield Voluntary Action (AVA). A new group started at St Modwins court in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) communities' team for residents. Sport England are also starting a programme of work in partnership with the Council through the Place Expansion Fund. Community planters are also now in place for residents to maintain.
- Linking allotments to foodbanks to reduce food waste. - 11 groups have been supported with a £500 grant as part of the UKSPF Green Social Prescribing Fund. 130 families have received a growing pack to encourage them to grow fruit/vegetables at home. The Feeding Ashfield Network continue to meet quarterly.

Homes and Housing:

Housing Development

- A successful acquisitions programme has been delivered, with 12 ex-Council homes being bought and made available for residents in housing need.
- Successful bid has been made to DLUHC under their Local Authority Housing Fund Scheme which has enabled to buyback an additional 6 ex-Council homes.
- Warwick Close in-fill affordable housing development was completed at the end of January 2024.
- Energy efficiency of new homes is improving. Latest homes included SPV, electric car charging points, etc, with an ongoing priority to maximise carbon reduction measures in each new home.

KEY SUCCESSES

- The Affordable Housing Development Programme has delivered over 100 new homes and there are plans to develop on a further 5 sites.
- 20 self-contained flats have been made available for use as temporary accommodation, whilst over 650 families have been assisted and prevented from becoming homeless.
- Over 1,000 tenants have been supported with welfare and money management advice.
- Tenant satisfaction feedback is well above Housemark benchmark averages.
- Only 2.81% of our housing stock is assessed as non-decent, which is well below national averages

Tackling Disrepair and Poor Housing Conditions

- The Council have utilised a wider range of powers to take enforcement action against non-compliant landlords. Proceeds from civil penalty fines has been reinvested in the Environmental Health service.
- A new Re-let Standard for vacant Council homes has been introduced to ensure new tenants have an awareness of property condition before they view and sign for their new home.

Suitable and appropriate housing

- The Council have processed almost 500 referrals relating to local residents seeking carbon reduction and energy efficiency measures under the Government's ECO4 scheme.
- Following the introduction of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, multiple sections of the Council continue to work to ensure that the necessary compliance is in place to meet the new statutory requirements in relation to the Council's social housing stock. Work was also carried to ensure ongoing compliance with several pieces of new fire safety legislation, introduced in 2022/23.
- A Damp and Mould Policy has been written and endorsed at the Tenant Gateway. In addition, a new Damp and Mould Technical Officer will be inspecting and monitoring reports of damp and mould. A tenant's guide has also been produced including social media campaigns. Training has also been provided to technical and non-technical employees on damp and mould. The Council have responded to Awaabs Law consultation and work is underway to implement the targets in the reporting of repairs processes.
- Most carbon monoxide alarms have now been installed, there is just 1 remaining in a difficult to access property.
- We are currently in the final stages of agreeing with partners the implementation of a countywide private sector stock condition survey.
- Improvements have been made to the thermal efficiency of targeted properties, aided through Government funding (Social Housing Decarbonisation). £583k has been received associated with Devolution Retrofit funding from the Midlands Net Zero Hub (MNZH) to retrofit energy efficiency measures to social housing, which will largely comprise solar photovoltaic panels (SPV).

- As of 31 March 2024, only 2.81% of Local Authority housing stock is assessed as non-decent, which is well below national averages. Data continues to be cleansed and validated which is expected to reduce this figure further.

Reduce and prevent homelessness.

- A review of temporary accommodation needs has been completed. An additional 20 self-contained flats have been made available for use as temporary accommodation, reducing the Council's need to use unsuitable and expensive bed and breakfast type accommodation and ensuring homeless households have the support they need.
- We continue to work in partnership with other Nottinghamshire Districts and statutory agencies to deliver a range of measures under the Rough Sleeper Initiative Programme aimed at eliminating street homelessness. In Autumn 2023, data showed rough sleeping in Nottinghamshire has not risen at the same rates as nationally.
- Review of the Homelessness Strategy has been completed and associated action plan implemented. This is now monitored through the Strategic Homeless Group.
- 59% more applicants have been prevented from becoming homeless (652 April 2023 to March 2024, compared to 409 April 2022 to March 2023). The target of 300 per annum has been significantly exceeded due to the hard work of the Housing Options and Tenancy Sustainment Teams. The number of households assisted by the Housing Options Team to either remain in their current accommodation or secure alternative accommodation has increased quarter on quarter. This was particularly evident in the number of successful 'preventions' as defined by the homelessness legislation. There is an ongoing focus and work to try to assist households when they are threatened with homelessness rather than at point of homelessness.
- The Landlord Forum has been successfully reinvigorated with positive engagement with landlords in the selective licensing area. Our intention is to engage further as extra funding is received under the healthy homes programme.

Compliance with Social Housing Regulatory Act

- A significant amount of preparation has been made in advance of a potential inspection, including improvements to data and review of policies. This work is ongoing.
- The new Consumer Standards have been reviewed and a gap analysis is being produced to show what actions are required.
- The 2023/24 Tenant Satisfaction Measures have been collected and the results are being prepared for submission to the Regulator.
- The Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure have been reviewed in line with the revised Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. A self-assessment against the code and complaints performance report are being presented to Cabinet before publication and submission to the Ombudsman, to demonstrate compliance with the statutory Code.
- Work has also been carried to ensure ongoing compliance with several pieces of new fire safety legislation.

Customer Focus

- 12% more tenants have been assisted with welfare and money management advice between April 2023 to March 2024 (1071) compared to April 2022 to March 2023 (955), significantly exceeding target.
- The project to modernise housing system solutions is currently progressing well. This is enabling the teams to deliver a fully agile service to tenants.
- The Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey has been completed and the results analysed. Benchmarking against peers through Housemark, shows a broadly positive position.
- Housemark annual performance benchmarking feedback shows service provision/value for money is good in social housing provision, some examples: -

- 88% of Ashfield District Council tenants surveyed in 2023 indicated overall satisfaction, significantly above Housemark sector average of 72% satisfaction.
- tenant satisfaction with the safety of their home and the home being well maintained is significantly above Housemark averages at 89% and 81% respectively.
- Tenant satisfaction of being treated with respect and being kept informed were also significantly higher than Housemark averages at 92% and 83% respectively.
- A review of tenant engagement methods and opportunities have been undertaken alongside Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS).

Economic Growth and Place:

Businesses and Investment

- Deliver specialist business and skills events - an Automation for You event was delivered in May 2023 and a Green Business event in November 2023. The Council also recently delivered a further event on 23rd April 2024 themed around the UKSPF project of Global and Overseas Trading. Speakers from The Department of Business and Trade, Mentor City delegates from Ohio and a Global trading specialist adviser were well received. Work is now commencing on an event for early Nov-24 around innovation and this will be linked to the Council's UKSPF Ashfield Accelerator Project.
- The UKSPF Ashfield Accelerator contract has been awarded to East Midland Chamber of Commerce and is in delivery. The programme was launched at the Councils' Green Business event. We have agreed a target support 198 businesses by 31st March 2025 (in line with the Council's UKSPF investment plan) to help them develop new skills and expertise to launch new products or secure investment. We have also agreed to support 82 businesses to produce a decarbonisation plan for their business and assist them towards net zero, and to support 50 businesses to develop global trading opportunities (importing and exporting).
- The Council entered a Tail Spend arrangement for the ordering of low value/high volume goods which allows local suppliers to onboard through the supplier's marketplace when conditions have been met. The tail spend solution will also be able to report on the procurement impact on the carbon footprint with the first year's data available in January 2025.
- A re-launch of the Council's Local Supplier directory is being aligned to the new procurement legislation which will come into force in October 2024, with internal promotions taking place.

KEY SUCCESSES

- The Levelling Up Fund bid for Hucknall, for £9.2m, was approved by government in March.
- Footfall across all three town centres has increased by 9%.
- A significant number of events have been delivered attracting over 16,000 visitors.
- Regeneration projects continue to be successfully delivered - 14 Low Street and High Pavement House have been completed whilst construction is well underway at Kings Mill Reservoir and for the new Planetarium at Sherwood Observatory.

Infrastructure and Connectivity

- The Local Plan has progressed in accordance with milestones. On 29th April 2024 the Council submitted its Local Plan and supporting documents to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for independent examination.
- Approximately £18M in S106 has been received in the last 3 years which is being invested in infrastructure across the District, including approximately 5,200 jobs relating to industrial site developments.
- Processing of planning applications outturn average performance for April 2023 to March 2024 showed improvement compared to the previous year and was above national

standards. Processing of minor applications within 8 weeks improved by 12% (83.56% 2023/24 compared to an average of 74.4% 2022/23), and processing of other applications also improved (88.69% 2023/24 compared to an average of 83.57% 2022/23). On average 79.31% of Major planning applications were processed within 13 weeks, which is above national standards of 75%.

Regeneration

- Work continues on the delivery of the Towns Fund, Future High Streets, Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund programmes. 14 Low Street and High Pavement House renovation work has been completed whilst construction work to enhance the area's visitor economy is well underway at Kings Mill Reservoir and for the new Planetarium at Sherwood Observatory.
- Delivery of the ADMC (Automated Distribution and Manufacturing Centre) - the site on Lowmoor Road is being acquired and included in the draft Local Plan allocations. Work is continuing to develop the building design and operating model. Engagement with potential suppliers and business beneficiaries is underway. A planning application has been submitted.
- The Levelling Up Fund bid for Hucknall, for £9.2m, was approved by government in March and planning for delivery is currently underway.
- Work is well underway to develop the Kirkby Long-term Plan, 10-year vision and 3-year investment Plan. The Kirkby Town Board has been created which will oversee the plan's delivery over the next 10 years, initial public consultation has been completed.
- The Council continues to focus efforts on bringing empty and dilapidated sites back into takes time and often the interventions that are taken by the Council are only seen several years later. Successful intervention has now been completed on five properties which were long standing problem properties across the district; The Wine Cellar – Kirkby in Ashfield which has undergone refurbishment; 1a Edward Street – Kirkby in Ashfield which has undergone a complete building overhaul; 30-32 Spring Road – Sutton in Ashfield which has been completely refurbished and now seeking a new premises licence for use as a convenience store, The Old Blue Bell – Lammas Rd, Sutton in Ashfield, a Grade II Listed pub which closed in 2010 and has now been completely refurbished into a 15-bed rented accommodation; and Greenwood Falls Farm – Huthwaite which had been subject to multiple ASB problems and arson attempts. The Council continues to intervene and take appropriate action for commercial residential dilapidated empty properties across the district.

Skills and Employment

- project involves working with selected primary and secondary schools to provide extra support in embedding quality and sustainable careers provision within their school curriculum.
- Futures continue to deliver 'Transform Your Future' (a UKSPF project) to support Ashfield residents who are economically inactive. The project aims to work with ex-offenders, residents who are 50+, single parents, those with a disability or health condition and young people not in education, employment, or training.
- Futures are also delivering The Essential Skills for Life Programme on behalf of Ashfield District Council, which will help unemployed residents develop key life skills such as confidence, budgeting, basic digital skills, and motivation to help them gain employment. Residents will be able to access in-person workshops, giving them the opportunity to mix and connect with other residents, whilst gaining support from dedicated Skills Tutors, and receiving one-to-one mentoring and guidance.
- Our digital support package delivered by Academy Transformation Trust Further Education (ATTFE) College, based in Sutton in Ashfield has already supported 32 people who have attended training sessions and a further 15 referred on to employment and skills

programmes. The project supports residents to develop the basic digital skills needed for day-to-day living, such as using a mobile phone, online banking and applying for jobs online.

- A contractor is about to be appointed to deliver the Council's UKSPF Ashfield Graduate Talent Match Project. The project aims to connect local businesses with Ashfield undergraduates that are studying at the East Midlands Universities (those due to graduate during Summer 2024 and Summer 2025). The appointed contractor will also support unemployed Ashfield graduates progress into employment within the district.
- Students from Vision West Nottinghamshire College are delivering a pilot project working with the traders in the Idlewells Indoor Market. The aim is to support the traders to use digital devices and marketing platforms effectively to expand their communication, help them to understand and reach out to their customer base, develop their skills, and allow them to take advantage of new and emerging technologies to enable their businesses to be sustainable and grow.
- A successful Careers Fair was held in October 2023, with 730 attendees, 68 exhibitors from across 10 sectors, 113 follow up appointments made, and 595 vacancies promoted through the event. Work has now commenced on preparing for this year's Careers Fair.
- Taxi licensing – successfully implemented English Language Qualification / Assessment Certificate for all new Taxi Drivers.

Town Centres and High Streets

- The Hucknall High Street grant scheme is being supported by a 6-month pilot project delivered by Save the High Street.
- A significant number of events and improvements have taken place in our town centres throughout 2023/24, some examples being Hucknall Food Festival with significant increases in footfall, and Idlewells Indoor Market is now over 90% occupied.
- Footfall data is now collated through our new visitor insight tool which allows us to capture anonymous data on dwell time, demographics and catchment information for our town centres, parks, and events.
- Town centre visits (April 2023 to March 2024) across all three town centres has increased by 9% (17,042,320) when compared to 2022/23 (15,637,980). Kirkby town centre has seen an 11% increase in footfall (6,008,344 compared to 5,404,092), Sutton has seen a 6% increase in footfall (6,336,385 compared to 5,987,898), and Hucknall has seen an 11% increase in footfall (4,697,5912 compared to 4,245,991).

Visitor Economy, Arts and Culture

- A draft Destination Management Plan (DMP) for the district has been produced in consultation with key stakeholders. The plan is due for adoption in July.
- A Place Partnership bid was submitted to the Arts Council earlier in 2024 with the outcome due by early June. The project would support arts activity across the District and bring over £1m of investment.
- Delivery of events programme 2023/24 – The events calendar was delivered in full, attracting over 16,000 attendances. An opportunity to host the Art Explora Mobile Museum tour was maximised, with over 3,000 attendances during the three-week period. The corporate events programme is being delivered by an external provider for the next three years, a Bonfire Night event has been added to the calendar as well as a three-day Ashfield Show.

Cleaner and Greener:

Cleanliness of the District

- The Council continues to drive forward recycling, local residents are currently achieving a magnificent recycling rate of 36% of all household waste generated, in line with CIPFA nearest neighbour averages.
- The team continue to extend knowledge of recycling and the environment across residents through initiatives such as the Big Ashfield Spring Clean which this year included new initiatives involving schools, volunteers and the public at large through tangible constructions such as pollinators and bug hotels. 4,053 free bulky collections were made as part of the 2024 Big Ashfield Spring Clean initiative.
- Between April 2023 and March 2024, the council emptied 3,757,979 refuse bins, collecting nearly 6,300 tonnes of garden waste, 2,500 tonnes of glass and over 7,100 tonnes of dry recycling.
- A number of interventions have been undertaken to address fly tipping, waste on land, littering, abandoned vehicles, graffiti and dog fouling across the District. The Council have issued Fixed Penalty Notices, statutory notices and undertaken environmental improvements over the past year to tackle environmental crime. This includes investigations, gating of alleyways, installation of additional streetlights, educational programmes, media campaigns and the delivery of the annual big spring clean. DEFRA last published data confirmed that the authority is ranked 80th out 309 local authorities for incident occurrences for fly tipping (second quartile).
- In response to wider concerns of environmental crime, including waste on land, littering and dog fouling, dedicated action days have taken place across the District since April involving targeted high visibility patrols to act as a deterrent for offenders, as well as community engagement to raise awareness and educate the public on the Council's approach to tackling environmental Crime.
- A variety of positive interventions have been undertaken in response to reported incidents, including school awareness and enforcement. Resulting in notices, engagement and community litter picks being delivered.
- Between April 2023 and March 2024, the council swept 691 km of highways and pavements and collected over 660 tonnes of litter and street waste including litter picking and emptying litter bins.

KEY SUCCESSES

- Over 4,000 free bulky waste collections were made as part of the Big Ashfield Spring Clean
- Keeping the District clean, the Council swept 691 km of highways and pavements and collected over 660 tonnes of litter and street waste.
- Over 1,000 trees were planted by the Council.
- Successful 7th Green Flag Award for Kingsmill Reservoir.
- The Council's Scope 1 and 2 footprint has reduced by a significant 21.3%

Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability

- The Council continues to work towards meeting the tasks contained within the Carbon Management Plan, including the development of a number of projects to further reduce the Council's scope 1 and 2 emissions. The Council continues to purchase zero carbon electricity certified under the Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin (REGO). The electricity is generated from wind, solar, hydro, landfill gas and biomass pellets.
- The Council continues to bid for Govt. funding associated with thermal efficiency/carbon reduction initiatives to meet Govt. emissions targets, including delivery where appropriate: -
 - Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) wave 2.1 funding project in development.

- £583k received associated with Devolution Retrofit funding from the Midlands Net Zero Hub (MNZH) to retrofit energy efficiency measures to social housing, which will largely comprise solar photovoltaic panels (SPV).
- Delivery of Decarbonisation works as contained in the Decarbonisation Plan: including Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) projects about to commence which covers replacement fossil fuel heating with air source heat pumps to the Council's Centralised Offices and Hucknall Leisure Centre. Anticipated completion later in 2024.
- A domestic Asset Strategy, incorporating carbon reductions, has been finalised and approved by the Tenants Gateway.
- The planning team has been securing opportunities to improve biodiversity throughout the year. Conditions and negotiations have either been placed on planning applications or contributions negotiated for an increase in biodiversity through S106 agreements.
- The Council continue to work in partnership with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Project Team in the development of a strategy.
- Delivery of carbon emission reduction schemes for the private sector – HUG2 and ECO4 specifically: HUG2 and ECO4 schemes remain on track and working well. Now looking to identify the benefits achieved through the schemes, including the measures installed and carbon savings.
- The Council planted circa 1,050 trees during 2023/24.
- The Council's carbon data for 2021/22 has now been updated to be used as a baseline against which to track performance. The Council's Scope 1 and 2 footprint as at March 2023 shows a significant 21.3% reduction compared to March 2022.

Parks and Green Spaces

- Selston Country Park – a new play area and works to refurbish and increase capacity of the café were completed in the spring.
- Green Space Assets Review - a review of cafes and visitor centres has been undertaken with recommendations due to be reported in early summer.
- The six Green Flag Awards for the main parks were retained this year with an additional Green Flag successfully awarded for the Kings Mill Reservoir site bringing the total to seven sites.
- Between April 2023 and March 2024, the council maintained 2,766,000 square metres of grass and planted over 5,000 bedding plants.

Safer and Stronger:

A Safer District

- The Council responded to 5,316 reports of anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood nuisance and environmental crime reports between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024. Based on the reporting period for the previous year of 4,890 reports, this is a 9% annual increase. Of these demands, 12% were resolved through specialist triage advice at the initial point of contact.
- In April ambitious plans of preventing demand and improving feelings of safety came to fruition, through the enactment of a local bylaw referred to as a Public Spaces Protection Order resulting in 8 Alleyways being shut and gating installed to reduce environmental crime and nuisance in these areas. The council have also recently produced a public notice and

KEY SUCCESSES

- Increased CCTV cameras from 29 to 59 devices across the District in the last two years
- Successful in securing £212,000 as part of the Safer Streets Round 5
- Successful in securing over £74,000 to support domestic abuse survivors and improve their safety, already resulting in 50 survivors being supported.

draft order relating to the renewal and variation of the District Wide Public Space Protection Order to include; vehicle nuisance and street harassment prohibitions, whilst increasing restricted areas for dog exclusion in parks and children's play areas.

- The Council and Police partnership initiative (Operation Springboard) continues to be effectively delivered to provide high visibility reassurance in neighbourhoods, town centres and public spaces through targeted patrols. This assists in obtaining local intelligence and taking positive action, resulting in the partnership successfully managing and tackling trends and emerging issues across the District.
- The Council, Police, Fire Service, and health services continue to deliver engagement events across the super output areas of the District building and fostering positive relationships to understand community need and assist them to become self-sustaining, through self-help and resident participation. Successful events have taken place in Sutton, Hucknall and Kirkby-In-Ashfield including the successful delivery of district wide 'Anti-Social Behaviour Roadshows' as part of ASB Awareness week in July.
- Operation safekeep is a multi-agency initiative set up by ADC, Police and NFRS that provides reassurance, promotes fire safety and tackle anti-social behaviour throughout the Halloween and Bonfire period. Throughout the operation, 21 incidents were responded to, 46 premises, off licenses and supermarkets were visited and received advice letters, and 6 notices, 3 seizures and 2 breaches of the PSPO were undertaken. Throughout the operations the teams also assisted vulnerable residents with concerns relating to the floods that took place over this period.
- In January 2024, the Council was successful in securing an additional £169,494 to assist the community safety partnership identify ASB offenders for the 'Immediate Justice Scheme' that is being delivered across the county. This is part of the HM Government initiative in trailblazing community payback and restorative justice techniques for anti-social behaviour.
- As part of the Council's statutory responsibilities to respond to serious violence, a new local response plan has been published which outlines how the Community Safety Partnership will share information and undertake measures to prevent and reduce serious violence. This includes identifying types of serious violence, the causes of that violence and preparing and implementing a strategy for reducing it.

Community Safety Strategy

- The renewed Community Safety Strategy has been agreed with partners and approved at Cabinet in January 2024.
- The Community Safety Partnership works together to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour through the facilitation of neighbourhood tasking meetings, community action days, problem solving activities, enforcement and joint patrols in neighbourhoods, town centres and public spaces across the District. The framework enables the Council to have a co-ordinated approach to tackle trends and emerging issues across Ashfield.

Our Communities Feeling Safe (projects)

- The Council has increased its public space CCTV cameras from 29 to 59 devices across the District in the last two years to help promote feelings of safety, detect, and deter crime and anti-social behaviour. The cameras are monitored from Nottinghamshire Police Headquarters 24 hours, 7 days per week and include 3 Safe Point Cameras in each town centre, which provides a means to request urgent assistance for anyone who feels in danger; before a crime occurs. The work has been commended by the Home Office and the Safe Point Camera's which were installed first in Ashfield has gained national attention.
- The Council, alongside partners and PCC secured £750,000 for the Ashfield and Mansfield CSP to deliver Safer Streets Round 4 and initiate community safety interventions to tackle anti-social behaviour neighbourhood crime and improve feelings of safety. The project has now been completed and Nottingham Trent University are finalising an academic report to

evaluate project delivery. As part of the Safer Streets 4 benefits analysis, perception of feelings of safety for women and girls in the two Safer Streets intervention areas are also being finalised.

- In November 2023, Ashfield District Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) have been successful in securing £216,094 in funding under Safer Streets round 5, to enhance community safety in the 'Carsic Estate' of Sutton. The new funding will be used in several proactive ways to improve feelings of safety for women and girls, tackle neighbourhood crime, and address anti-social behaviour. All interventions have now been delivered.
- In October 2023, £22,000 was secured under the PCC's fund to support the development of a 'shop watch' scheme safe spaces accreditation for local business and promote violence against women and girls' signage in Sutton-In-Ashfield. Following successful delivery of schemes for Kirkby and Sutton, the Council has also been working with businesses in Hucknall to develop a further Shop Watch and Safe Space Accreditation Scheme. The scheme provides retailers with radios, signage, lighting and cameras to improve safety across town centres and act as safe haven for local visitors to the town.
- £86,000 from the Councils' Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) and has successfully been delivered in Hucknall over the past 12 months, leading to 5 new re-deployable cameras being installed across ASB hotspots, 1 new Safe Point camera installation, QR coded signage developed and installed to report Environmental issues, and the roll out of the Shop Radio Scheme in the town centre.
- Over the last 12 months, youth engagement programmes have been delivered across Kirkby and Hucknall to divert young people away from crime and anti-social behaviour and create safe spaces for them in the heart of their communities.

Supporting Vulnerable People

- From April 2023 to March 2024, 168 referrals were made to MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) and other support agencies to safeguard vulnerable adults and children and protect them from further harm or abuse.
- Complex Case Panels take place monthly to discuss escalating safeguarding scenarios. Through the development of risk management action plans, targeted interventions are undertaken to assist those who are vulnerable or considered at significant risk. The Complex Panel reviews approximately 10 highly complex cases each month.
- Ashfield District Council Complex Case Team continue to deliver the Vulnerable Adult Support Scheme in partnership with the Police and Social Care to protect our most vulnerable individuals at risk of cuckooing, exploitation, drugs misuse and other criminal activity.
- The council has been successful in securing over £74,000 to deliver safer accommodation duties to support domestic abuse survivors and improve their safety. The scheme has resulted in 50 survivors being supported throughout 2023/2024. Ashfield District Council is proud to be White Ribbon accredited and is working towards the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation to further support survivors of domestic abuse. The Council has recently employed a second domestic abuse worker to support delivery of this work.
- In December 2023, it was confirmed that the Ashfield CSP secured a further £20,000 Home Office funding to help prevent radicalisation. The work will build critical thinking and personal resilience with young people in the area as well as targeted intervention work with residents who are susceptible to being radicalised towards violent extremism. The Council has produced a 'Prevent Plan' which is currently being reviewed by partners.
- Over the past 12 months, commissioned domestic service 'Equation' supported the Council to deliver healthy relationships programmes across selected Ashfield schools resulting in increased awareness, knowledge for learners and teachings.
- The Council have undertaken various initiatives to address violence against women and girls over the past year. Recent activities include working in partnership with students at Vision

West Nottinghamshire College to design and produce digital posters to highlight Violence Against Women and Girls. Posters have been digitally displayed across the district and provides national statistics as well as information on how to report incidents. The Council has also been working in partnership with domestic abuse services to run annual white ribbon campaigns and deliver healthy relationships programmes in primary schools.

- In addition, the Council has confirmed that it is undertaking the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) to further enhance the way domestic abuse incidents are reported and responded to. This will involve a review of safeguarding and support provision across services within the authority. The Council has secured external funding to deliver this, with a dedicated project worker employed by Juno finalising the coordination of our DAHA accreditation submission.

Innovate and Improve

Positive and Proactive Communications

- Our Aspiring Leadership Cohort have led a task and finish project reviewing the current embedding of logo/brand cross-Council and making recommendations for improvement which are now being incorporated into the Council's Improvement Programme.

Customer Experience and Customer Focus

- Average call waiting times have reduced by a substantial 25% (average 4 seconds in 2023/24 compared to an average 1 minute 6 seconds in 2022/23). Abandonment rates have also reduced significantly, by 37% (3.32% abandoned calls in 2023/24 compared to 5.3% abandoned calls in 2022/23).
- Creation of a new Customer Services function – Phase 2 and Phase 3 reviews are now making good progress. Customer journey mapping and process analysis in progress to identify potential for transfer of transactional interactions within Revenues and Benefits, Strategic Housing, Community Safety, Planning, and Housing repairs.
- A resident survey was successfully re-introduced in 2023, with more than 1,000 respondents. Analysis has now been finalised with additional context to be sought through face-to-face focus group meetings with our Citizens Panel scheduled for July 2024.
- A marketing campaign has now been finalised with the aim of attracting more residents to our re-invigorated Citizens Panel.
- Our Aspiring Leadership Cohort have finalised a review of customer service standards, researching best practice to provide recommendations.

Digital and Service Transformation

- The level of take-up for making payments easily, using digital channels, continues to increase with 90% of payments received during 2023/24 being made either by direct debit, online, automated telephone or recurring card payments. Paypoint and post office transactions which are more expensive for the customer continue to decrease with a further 11% reduction during 2023/24 (a significant 49% decrease over the last 5 years, resulting in over £118,000 cumulative transaction cost savings). Online payments have increased by

KEY SUCCESSES

- Digital transformation successes continue with significant reductions in more costly channels - an overall 7% reduction in phone calls, 12% reduction in face-to-face visits, 11% reduction in Paypoint/Post Office payment transactions and a significant 86% increase in the use of council developed online forms. Over 20,000 residents are now signed up to Ashfield 24/7
- Approximately £3.9m of financial benefits (cashable and cost avoidance) have been delivered through the digital transformation programme over the last 6 years.
- Over £2.1m social value delivered through our procurement activity since April 2021
- Sickness levels have reduced significantly by 19%.

11% (64,828 payments made between April 2023 and March 2024 compared to 58,410 payments made between April 2022 and March 2023).

- Throughout 2023/24 the Council answered 79,504 calls, an overall 7% reduction on the previous year, of which there were significant reductions in calls to revenues (-17%), residential environmental health (-20%), and housing repairs (-13%). Face to face visits to the Council also reduced over the same period by 12%.
- The use of the council developed online forms, in our low code solution, have increased by a significant 86% compared to last year (9,379 forms 2023/24 compared to 5,043 forms 2022/23). Most of the increase in use has been for waste related requests such as bulky waste and garden waste collections, indicating successful ongoing development of the online form integration with the operational back-office system. There has also been a 14% increase in the use of revenues and benefits specific online forms.
- Several digital sessions have taken place at the Council Offices at Urban Road to assist residents in increasing their digital skills. 23% of Council Taxpayers and 83% of Business Rates payers are now signed up to the Revenues portal. The Ashfield 24/7 Customer Portal has been in place since February 2022 and now has over 20,183 residents signed up.
- The Digital Transformation Programme continues to deliver approximately £3.9m of financial benefits (cashable and cost avoidance) over the last 6 years. Work has progressed since July 2022 to migrate many key systems used by the Council to 'Cloud' based solutions to support improved access and resilience, alongside increased functionality. In house digital development is now also leading more modern approaches in community projects, including the intelligent automation of several operational processes.

Financial Sustainability

- The 2022/23 Audited Statement of Accounts is on the Council's website along with the unqualified audit opinion. The Accounts show healthy levels of reserves which are expected to be needed to smooth the transitioning to revised levels of funding once Local Government Funding Reform has been implemented.
- The 2024/25 Annual Budget Report includes details of savings and efficiencies included in setting the budget for 2024/25.
- A review of fees and charges has been completed and was presented to and approved by Cabinet in January 2024.
- The Service Review programme continues to identify cashable efficiencies and invest to save opportunities, which, once approved, will be factored into the 2024/25 revised budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The new Policy and Performance function are leading a revised, proactive, programmed approach to service reviews.
- Depot - we currently reviewing options for future service delivery requirements for the Neighbourhoods and Housing Repairs services, to feed into options for how the depot site is taken forward in the future. Consideration is also being given to how the site can be used to generate greater social impact beyond the public services delivered from there already including accommodating Vision West Notts College's vehicle maintenance and civil engineering departments.
- The Council Tax collection rate as of March 2024 is 96.3%, slightly higher than 95.79% collection rate in March 2023, comparable to our CIPFA nearest neighbour averages and higher than national averages. As this outturn is below target the recovery team have been working through reports and taking recovery action. The collection rate for Business Rates has remained static when compared to the previous year at 97.78% against a target of 98%.
- The collection of 97.8% of business rates is above national, East Midlands and CIPFA nearest neighbour averages.
- The procurement partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council has been in place for 9 months and during that period eleven projects were completed all within budget despite economic challenges in the market which was an achievement as they were mainly works

contracts where prices had increased. Joint procurement exercises have been undertaken in an effort to seek savings through aggregation.

People and partnerships

- The Council's People Strategy review is now complete and has been renamed Organisational Development Strategy. This is underpinned by a delivery action plan.
- We are on track to complete a workforce planning assessment against LGA Workforce Planning Maturity Matrix through a series of workshops with LGA support, producing improvement plans to reach level 4 maturity.
- 47 employees have been trained as Mental Health First Aiders, and 6 employees have also completed training to become Carer Champions. The access to mental health at work service has also recently been launched.
- A review of Ashfield's Strategic Partnerships is currently being undertaken and will feed into a wider Nottinghamshire review of strategic partnerships involving Local Authorities, Health, Police and Crime Commissioner, Universities, and the Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Average days of employee absence has reduced by 19% (8.88 days average per full time equivalent April 2023 to March 2024, compared to 10.93 days average per full time equivalent April 2022 to March 2023).

Performance, Data and Change Management

- A 'Knowledge Hub' dashboard of data and data analysis has been successfully developed using powerbi, which is accessible across the organisation and is used to understand performance delivery, eg the Corporate Plan, and benchmark against other local authorities (we have replicated and improved upon the Oflog Data Explorer). The Knowledge Hub also incorporates dashboards for place level data and other key datasets such as Education and skills, Economic Growth, visitor footfall insights and the resident survey. The data is updated frequently through API integrations with key external data sources. We are ambitious in our ongoing development of our datasets within the hub and continue to embed this new approach to data sharing to inform strategy and policy and decision making, whilst also driving our improvement journey towards excellence.
- A corporate approach to awards submissions has been introduced, an awards calendar created, and several submissions have recently been made for LGC and MJ awards.
- The Council's performance management framework is currently being reviewed in alignment with Best Value and Oflog approaches. An improved approach to Performance Board's has recently been introduced. The review of Corporate and Place scorecards has been finalised, aligned to the new Corporate Plan, incorporating output and outcome measures.
- Excluding the social value delivered from our leisure centre contract, cumulative social value delivered since the measurement via the Social Value Portal from April 2021 is now over £2.4m. Most of the procurement activities are delivering more than targets set. The two largest deliverables by outcome are: -
 - More people in local employment £1.4m
 - More opportunities for local Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and Voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSEs) £754,381

Areas for Improvement and Development

- The Council's Major Works delivery partner for Housing Capital Investment works entered administration in July 2023, leaving projects unfinished and new projects unable to be started. The process of re-procurement is a long process so delivery of Capital works will be severely delayed. Interim arrangements are being put in place to complete the projects which were in progress but were left incomplete by the previous delivery partner. Works will be carried forward, predominantly under the new contract.
- Stock condition surveys of our housing assets are in progress. Access issues are requiring multiple visits, and there remain significant numbers of surveys to complete. Significant IT

developments are required, and actions are ongoing to improve data capture and system input. Once the data is collected, the Council will engage a consultant to undertake an independent validation of the data to develop an updated investment plan for major works and repairs. This independent validation and 30-year investment plan update is carried out approximately every five years.

- Average turn-around time for re-letting void Council homes has increased from 23.8 days (March 2023) to 28.1 days (March 2024). The causes of the delays continue to be assessed and improvement plans put in place, including weekly monitoring of key movements. More recent April 2024 out-turn indicates an improving position with re-let times reducing to 27.6 days.
- Rent collection rates have reduced slightly (97.02% April 2023 to March 2024, compared to 97.77% April 2022 to March 2023). Re-shaping of resources has focussed on increasing Income Officer capacity, with the introduction of area-based targets that give clear guidance. Rent arrears levels however continue to reduce as Income Officers and Money Management Advisors have continued to deliver improving performance in a challenging financial environment with an increasing numbers of tenants "migrating" from Housing Benefits to Universal Credit.
- The level of payments made via direct debits has reduced slightly by 0.7% (489,312 payments made in 2023/24 compared to 492,911 made in 2022/23). The Call monitoring service ceased in December 2023, having an reducing impact of between 800 and 1,000 direct debit transactions each month. This accounts for the reduction in direct debit payments from January to March 2024. All other services collecting payment by Direct Debit have seen an increase from the previous financial year.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

The report relates to the delivery of the Corporate Plan Priorities. The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's priorities for the period 2023 to 2027 and intended deliverables which were monitored and managed through the Corporate Performance Framework.

Legal:

The Council's new Corporate Priorities and strategic plans have been developed in consideration of current and forthcoming legislative requirements. [RLD 30/05/2024]

Finance: [PH 29/05/2024].

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	The new Corporate Plan has been developed in alignment with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the financial sustainability of the organisation. The 'Innovate and Improve' Priority incorporates key programmes and projects which are focussed on identifying and delivering efficiencies and more effective working practices to support financial sustainability, whilst concurrently delivering improved customer service.
General Fund – Capital Programme	
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	Financial performance during the 4-year term of the Corporate Plan has been considered on a regular basis via financial monitoring reports to both Cabinet and Council.

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Absence of a Corporate Plan would result in a lack of prioritisation and focus on delivering what matters	Agreed Corporate Plan every four years which is delivered via the organisation's project management framework and reviewed annually.
Poor performance would potentially result in inability to deliver the Corporate Priorities as specified in the Corporate Plan	Regular monitoring of performance and robust performance management through the authority's performance management framework.

Human Resources: [KB 30/05/2024]

The 'Innovate and Improve' Priority incorporates key programmes and projects which will be focussed on delivering the Organisational Development Strategy and developing employees.

High levels of performance can have a positive impact upon employee engagement and retention which in turn can enhance performance further.

Environmental/Sustainability:

The 'Cleaner and Greener' Priority incorporates key programmes and projects which will be focussed on delivering environmental improvement.

Equalities:

There are no direct implications on equality and diversity as a consequence of the proposals and recommendations outlined in this report.

Other Implications:

Not applicable

Reason(s) for Urgency

Not applicable

Reason(s) for Exemption

Not applicable

Background Papers

Corporate Plan 2023-2027
Corporate Plan Performance Report

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Welcome to our Corporate Plan Performance Report!

Our Council Plan for 2023 to 2027 sets out what we want to achieve in the next four years. Our ambition is to be 'Great' across all our services and to look forwards.

Our 6 priorities have been developed based on knowledge and understanding of the needs of Ashfield residents and businesses. This performance scorecard has been developed alongside the delivery plan to help us monitor the progress of achieving our ambitions.

Our scorecard is split into 2 sections, Delivery and Living In Ashfield. The Living Ashfield KPIs are highlighted with an asterix (*) at the end of the title. The Living in Ashfield indicators are use to provide contextual data so Ashfield as a place. The Delivery KPIs are used to track performance against the Councils key priorities.

All performance data is exported from Ideagen's Risk Management System (also known as Pentana). The last updated date can be found below.

For any queries please contact: ADCPentana@ashfield.gov.uk

**Health &
Happiness**

**Homes &
Housing**

**Economic
Growth &
Place**

**Cleaner &
Greener**

**Safer &
Stronger**

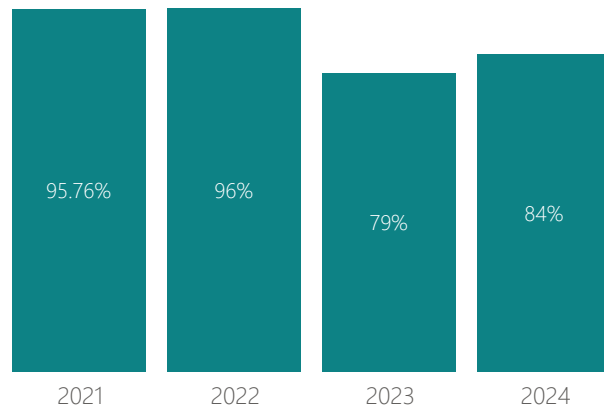
**Innovate &
Improve**

Corporate Level

Progress of Corporate Priorities

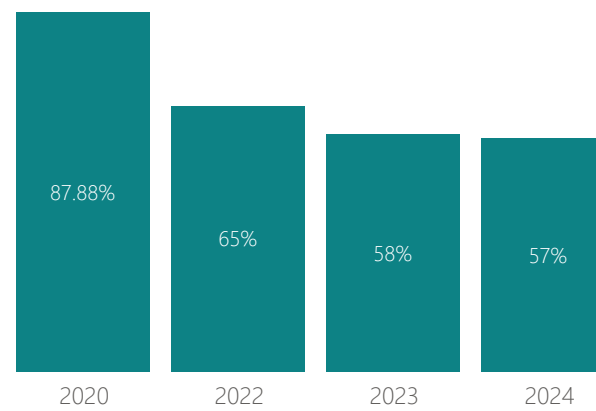
Corporate Actions Implemented or on track

Within Target & Improving



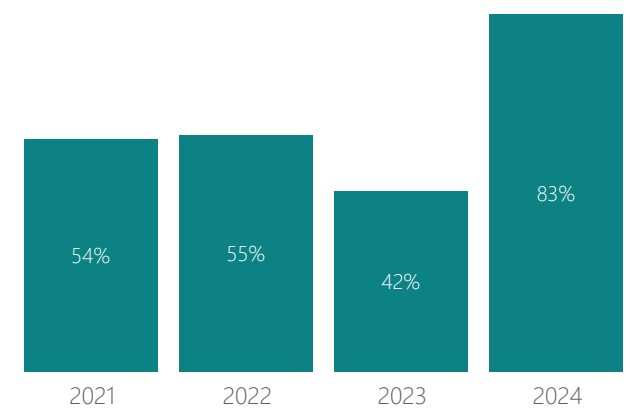
Corporate PIs met or exceeded target

Off Target & Getting Worse



Corporate PIs with an improving trend

On Target & Improving



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Audit Progress

New to 2023/24

Number of Moderate or Low Risk recommendations made

84

Number of Critical or Significant Risk recommendations made

1

Number of No Assurance or Limited Assurance Ratings issued

2

Number of recommendations overdue by 6+ months (All Risks)

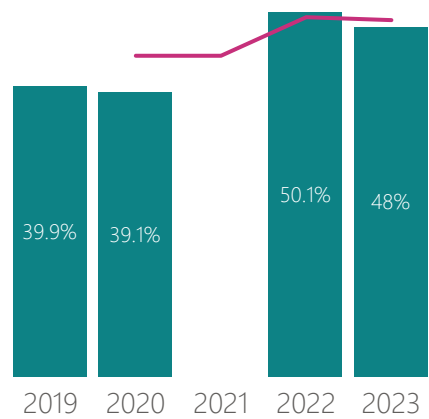
40

Health & Happiness

Best Start: Increase access to leisure services and activities for children and young people

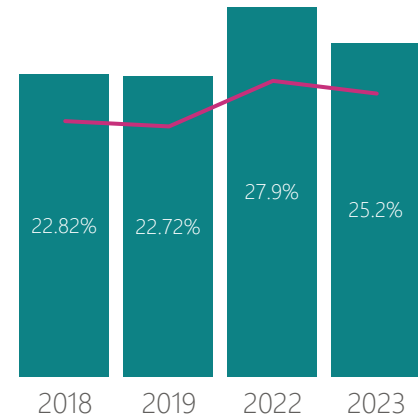
% of Children who are active *

● Ashfield ● East Midlands



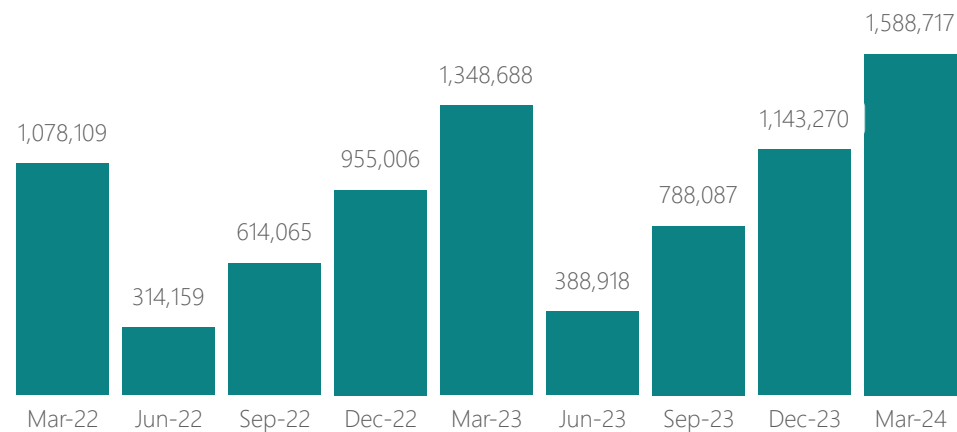
% of Children who are obese *

● Ashfield ● East Midlands



User Attendance at ADC Leisure Centres

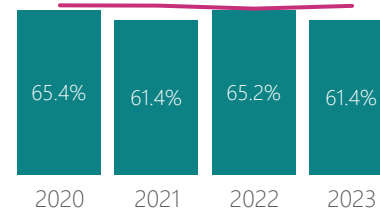
On Target & Improving



Living Well: Ongoing enhancement and continuing transformation of our leisure provision and health offer across the district

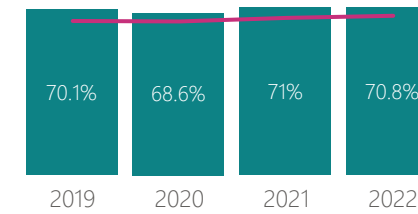
% of Physically Active Adults *

● Ashfield ● East Midlands



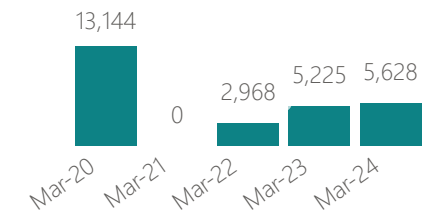
% of Adults overweight or obese *

● Ashfield ● East Midlands



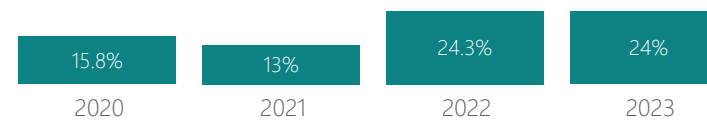
Community Centre Usage (Hours)

Off Target & Improving

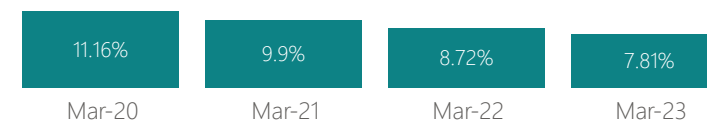


Living Well: Provision of financial advice and support

% Children living in low income families *



% of households receiving housing benefits *



No. tenants assisted with welfare and money management advice

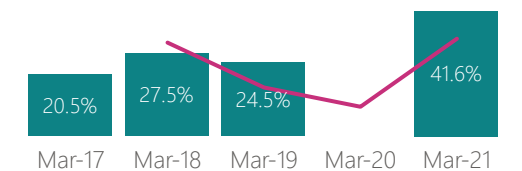
On Target & Improving



Health Inequalities

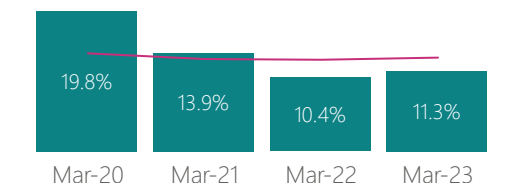
Excess winter mortality index *

● Ashfield ● East Midlands



Smoking prevalence in Adults *

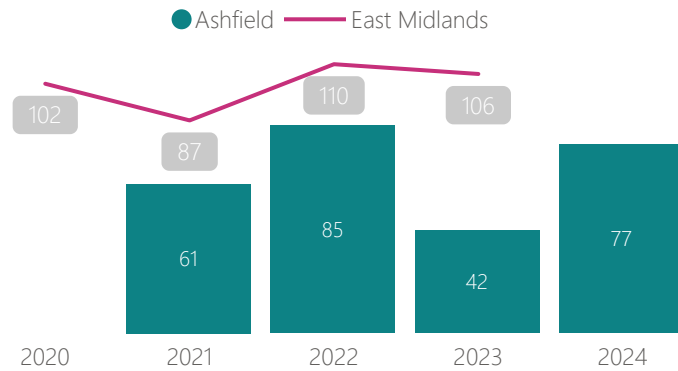
● Ashfield ● East Midlands



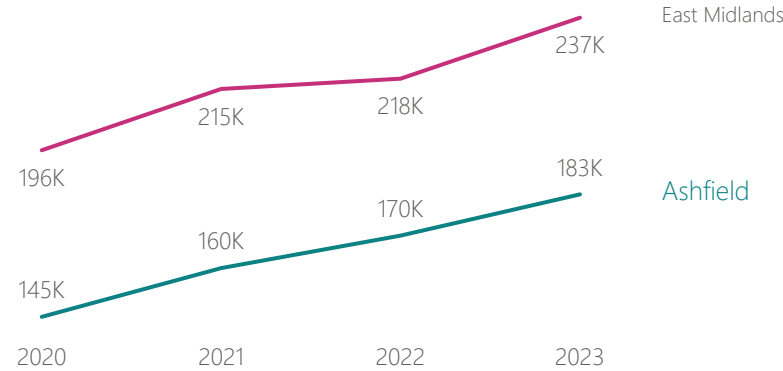
Homes & Housing

Housing Development: Delivering provision of affordable housing developments

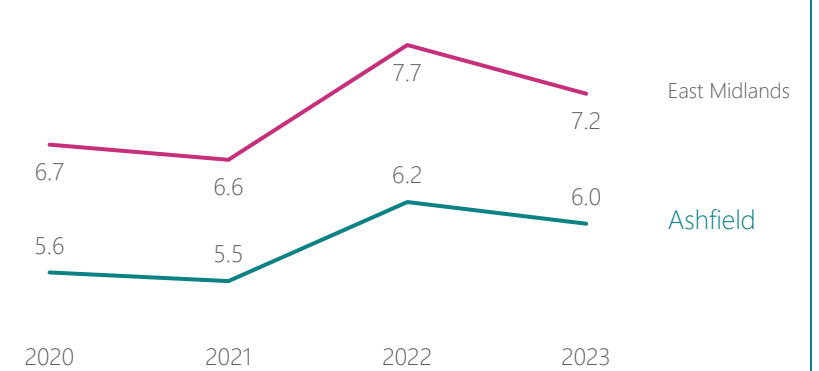
Affordable homes delivered



Median House Price *



Affordability Ratio *

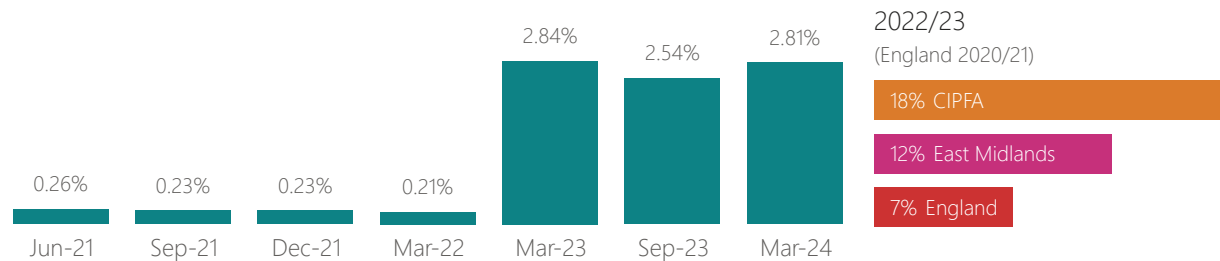


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Tackling Disrepair and Poor Housing Conditions

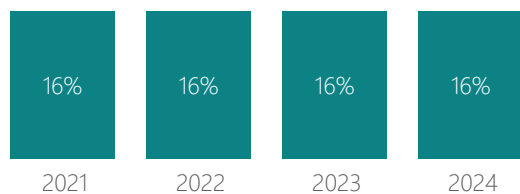
% of Council housing stock non-decent

Off Target & Improving



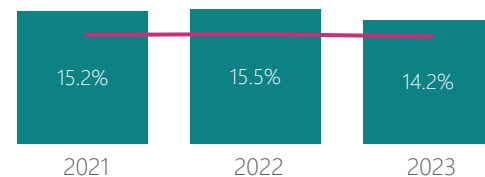
% of private sector homes non-decent *

On Target & No Change



% of households in fuel poverty *

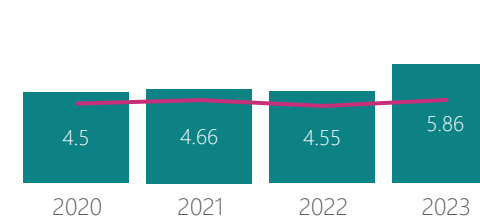
Ashfield East Midlands



Reduce and Prevent Homelessness

Households assessed as homeless * (Per 1,000)

Ashfield East Midlands



Number of applicants prevented from becoming homeless

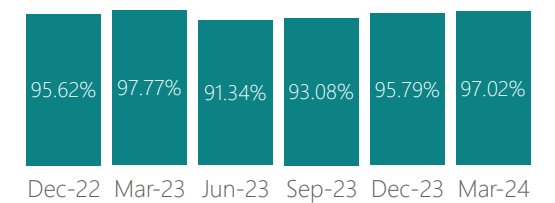
On Target & Improving



Customer Focus

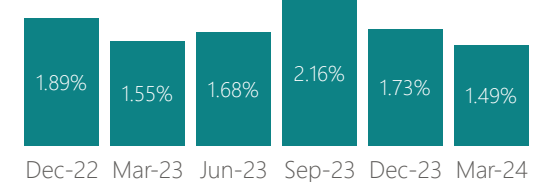
% of rent collected from rent due

Within Target & Getting Worse



Rent arrears as a proportion of rent roll

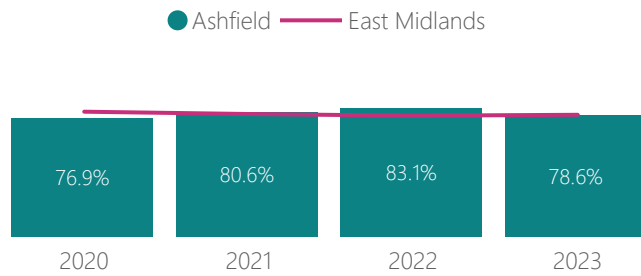
On Target & Improving



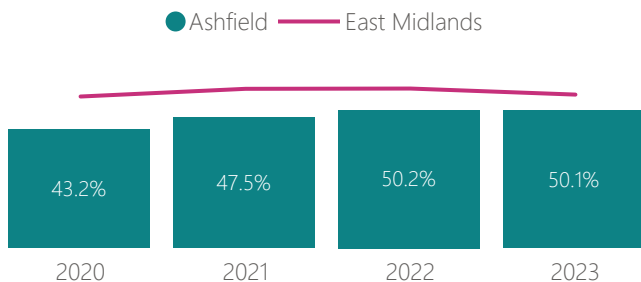
Economic Growth & Place

Skills and Employment: Development through the delivery of the Education & Skills Plan

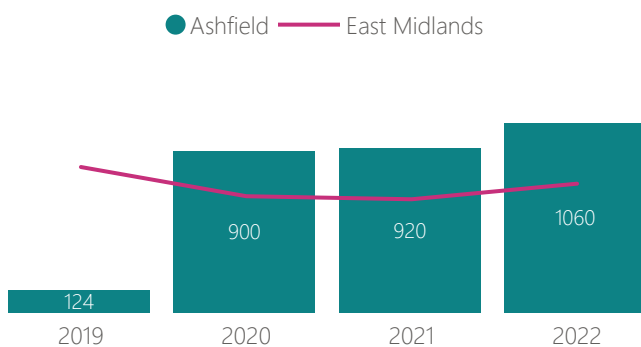
**% of population economically active *
(16-64 year olds)**



**% of population qualified to level 3 or higher *
(16-64 year olds)**

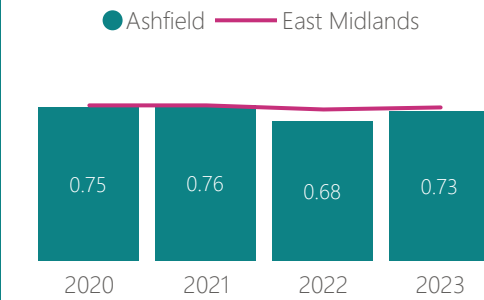


Number of Apprenticeship starts *

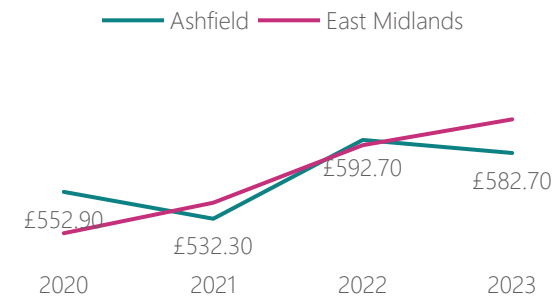


Businesses and Investments

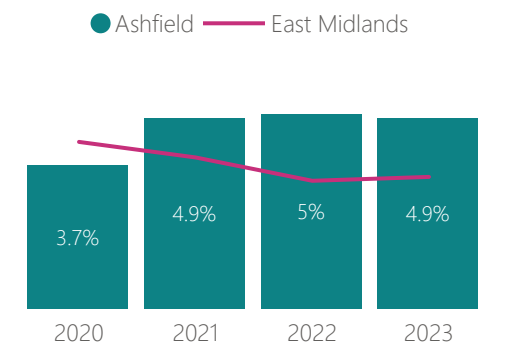
**Job Density *
(employees per working age population)**



**Median gross weekly pay *
(Residence based)**

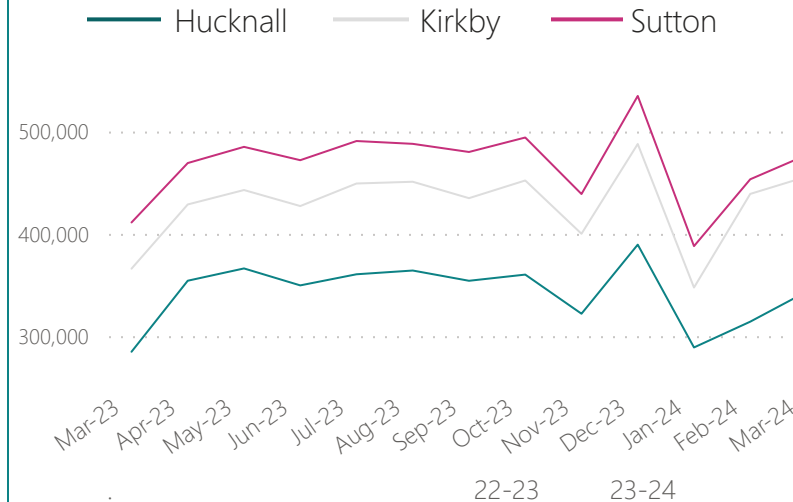


% of High Growth Enterprises *



Town Centres

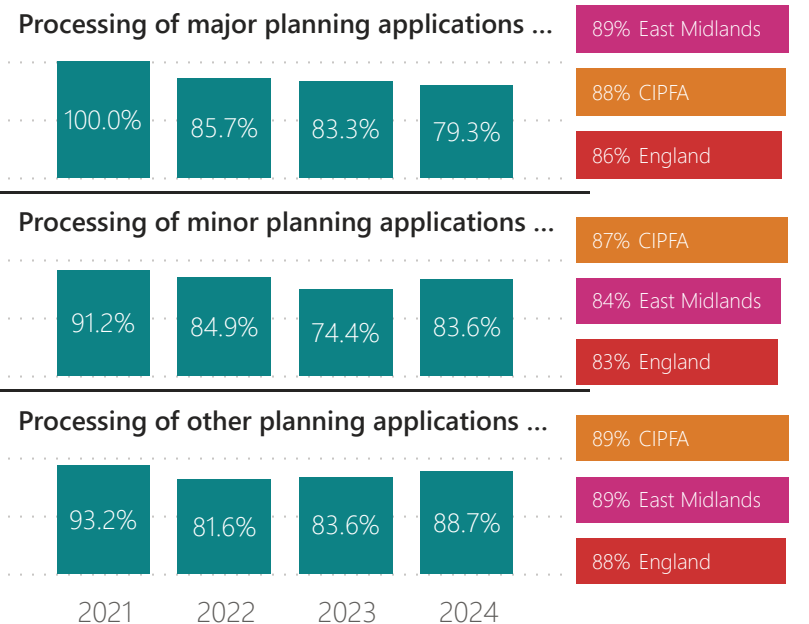
Town centre footfall



	22-23	23-24
Town centre footfall Hucknall	3,731,102	4,167,174
Town centre footfall Kirkby	4,639,238	5,216,549
Town centre footfall Sutton	5,264,792	5,671,518
Total	13,635,132	15,055,241

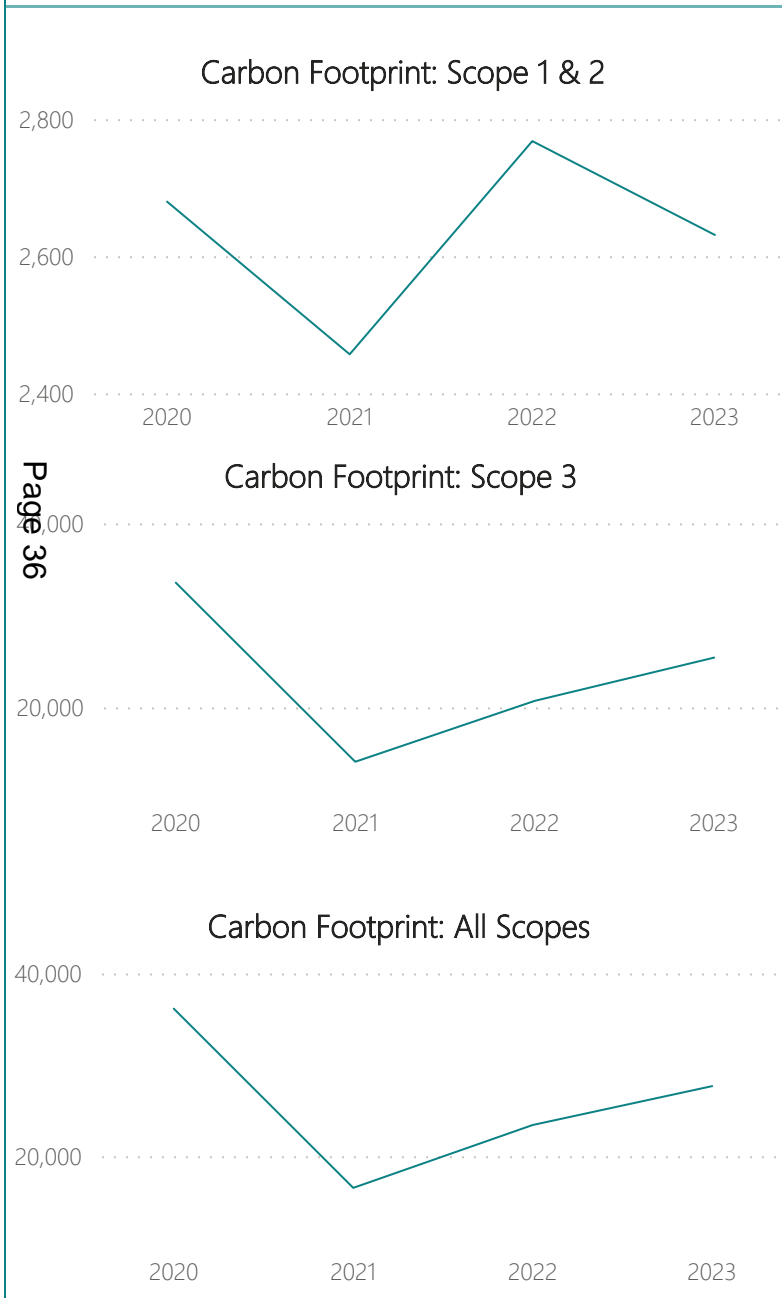
Regeneration

Processing of Planning Applications

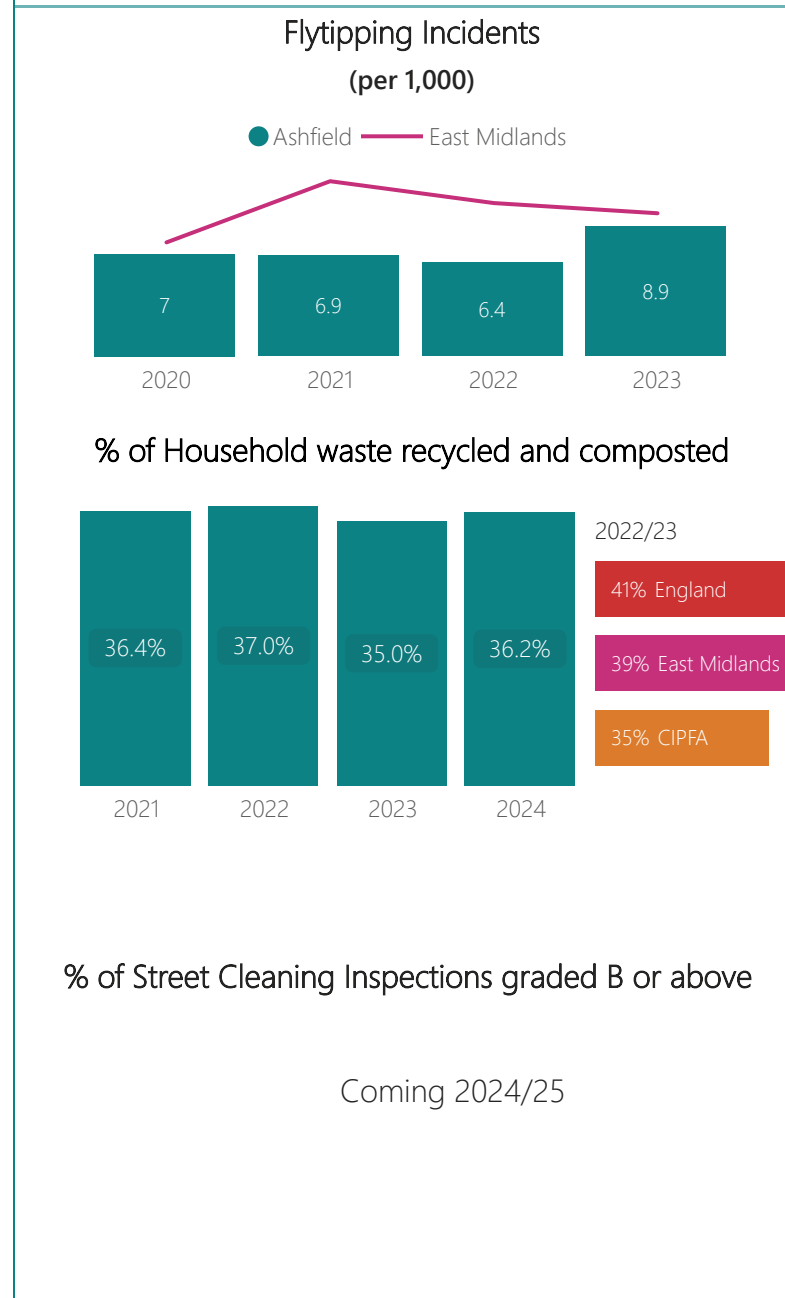


Cleaner & Greener

Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability



Cleanliness of the District



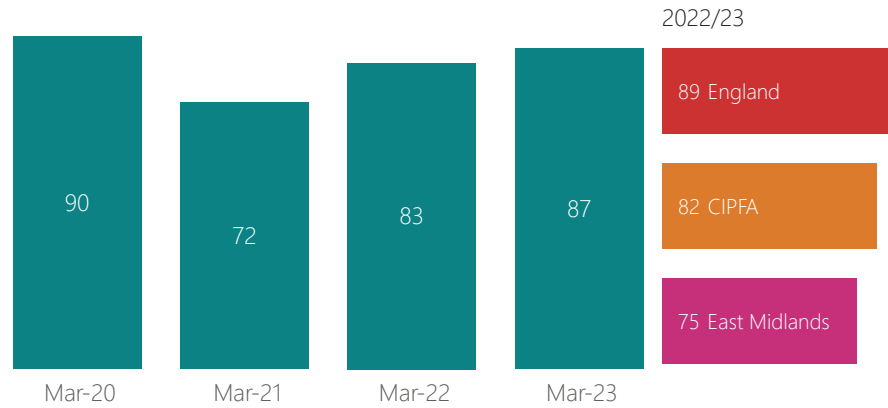
Parks and Green Spaces



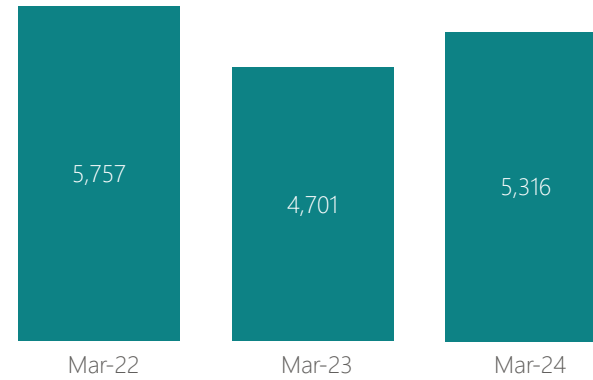
Safer & Stronger

A Safer District

Total Recorded Offences (per 1,000 population) *



Number of Service Requests into Community Safety



Number of reported serious violence incidents

Coming 2024/25

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Communities Feeling Safer

% of Residents who feel safe outside during the day

Under development

% of Residents who feel safe outside after dark

Under development

% of residents who felt safer in their neighbourhood as a result of action taken by the Council

Under development

Supporting Vulnerable People

% of Residents experiencing domestic abuse in the last year *

Coming 2024/25

Domestic Abuse repeat victimisation rate *

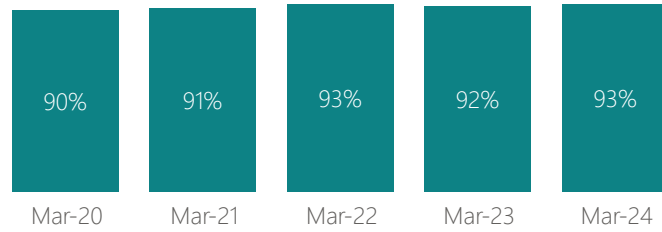
Coming 2024/25

Innovate & Improve

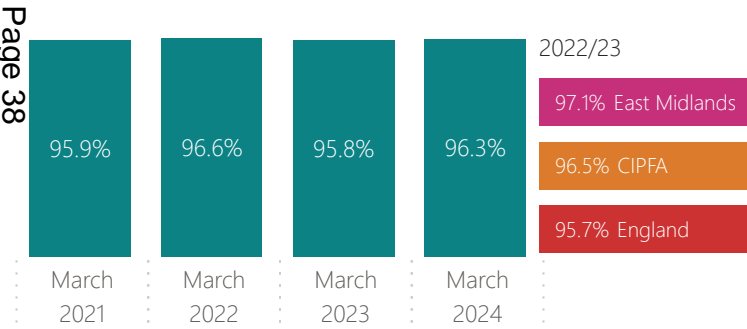
Financial Stability

Occupancy of ADC commercial property portfolio

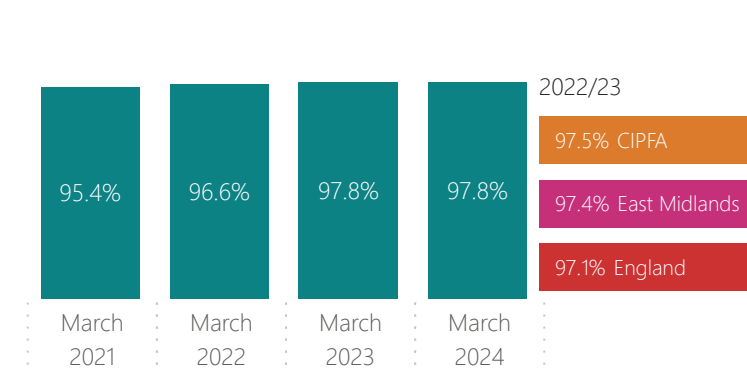
On Target & Improving



% of Council Tax Collected



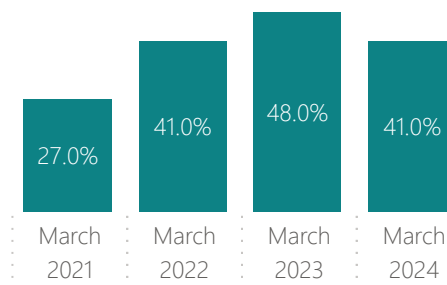
% of NNDR Collected



People & Partnerships

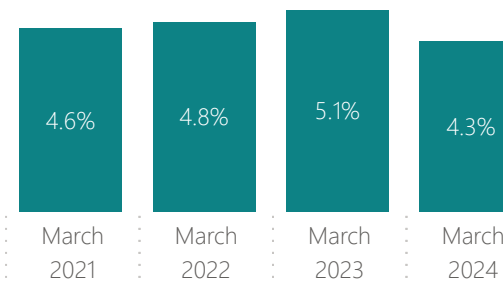
% of PDRs Completed

Off Target & Getting Worse



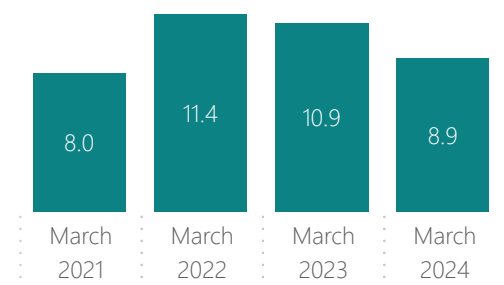
% of workforce that are young people

Off Target & Getting Worse



Average days absence per FTE

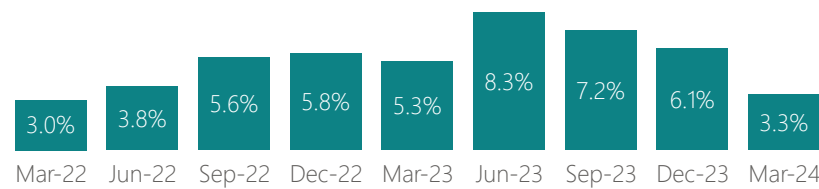
On Target & Improving



Digital Transformation

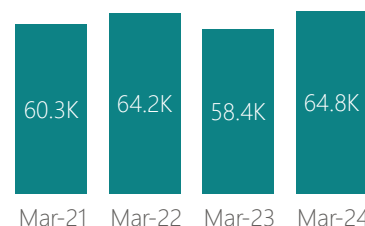
Call Abandonment Rate

On Target & Improving



Number of Online Payments

On Target & Improving



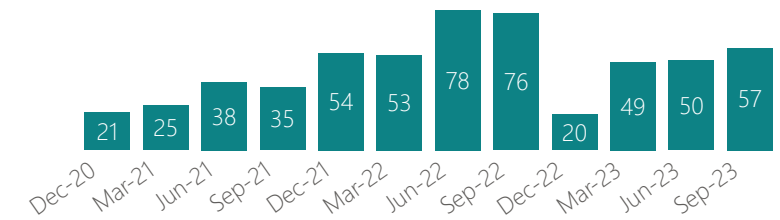
Number of Direct Debit Payments

Within Target and Worsening

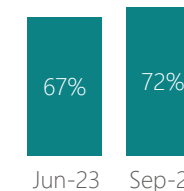


Customer Experience

Number of formal complaints received



% of Stage One Complaints dealt with in time



% of Stage Two Complaints dealt with in time



Report To:	CABINET
Date:	17 JUNE 2024
Heading:	CORPORATE RISK – YEAR-END POSITION 2023/2024
Executive Lead Member:	LEADER
Ward/s:	ALL
Key Decision:	NO
Subject to Call-In:	NO

Purpose of Report

For Cabinet to review the Corporate Risk Register and the analysis of movement in risk and mitigating actions in respect of those risks.

Recommendation(s)

- **To note the current significant items on the Corporate Risk Register and to consider whether any further immediate actions are necessary to mitigate those risks.**

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

To prioritise and manage the mitigation of risk in order that the Council can achieve its objectives.

Alternative Options Considered

None. In accordance with the Corporate Risk Strategy, it is the role of Cabinet to monitor the Council's risk management and internal control arrangements, as part of the established quarterly monitoring and to recommend action where necessary.

Detailed Information

All organisations are required to consider potential risks which may impede the delivery of corporate objectives. Effective risk management processes strengthen the ability of the Council to react to all situations and protect its own interests and those of the District, ensuring essential service delivery, through actively managing and mitigating risk effectively and innovatively. The management of risk forms an integral part of the Council's business. Effectively managing our risks means that we can maximise opportunities and minimise the costs and disruption to the Council which may possibly be caused by undesired events.

All strategic risk at corporate and service level is incorporated into the Pentana performance system to enable quarterly updates at the same time as updating performance, therefore enhancing the consideration of risk in the delivery of services. All levels of risk are discussed bi-annually in detail with each Assistant Director as a standing agenda item for Performance Boards, led by the Chief Executive and Assistant Director – Policy and Performance.

In summary, overall, the current corporate risk position indicates the positive management of risk in 2023/24: -

- **A total of seven risks have been removed from the Corporate Risk Register in the last 12 months.**
- **All of the remaining corporate risks have been effectively managed without an increase in risk assessment rating in the last 12 months.**
- **Positively, 38% of corporate risks have been effectively managed and mitigated with a reduction in risk assessment rating in the last 12 months.**

Corporate Risk Register

The Corporate Risk Register (position as at end March 2024) is appended to this report.

Analysis of risks - Risk Rating Summary

	2016/17 Qu4	2017/18 Qu4	2018/19 Qu4	2019/20 Qu4	2020/21 Qu4	2021/22 Qu4	2022/23 Qu 4	2023/24 Qu4
Significant	9	7	4	12	11	7	7	5
Medium	6	10	10	12	12	7	6	8
Low	2	3	6	4	10	2	0	2
Total	17	20	20	28	33	16	13	15

The total number of Corporate Risks had previously increased significantly throughout the pandemic (2019 – 2021); however, our level of corporate risk has reduced since coming out of the pandemic. There has been an increase of two additional risks compared to March 2023, these new risks are detailed in the report.

There is a continued review of our corporate risk in alignment with the Corporate Risk Strategy and Risk Appetite Framework, and as such, several risks which were deemed low level or mitigated were removed from the Corporate Risk Register during 2022/23, some of which are now monitored at service level.

Those corporate risks which remain significant are: -

- Ability to meet statutory obligation process timescales (e.g. gas servicing). Following the introduction of a new servicing contractor we are experiencing a very challenging period in

terms of contractor performance. We are also still encountering numerous difficult to access properties who are reluctant to provide access to their home for these essential services to be completed. This risk therefore remains significant.

- Ability to comply with the regulatory regime set out by the Regulator of Social Housing - Work continues to be undertaken across the Operations Directorate (Housing) to ensure we meet the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing and prepare for forthcoming inspections. An action plan is also in place, however whilst there are ongoing actions to be completed, this risk remains significant.
- Workforce planning – inability to recruit and/or retain filled positions to critical posts. An LGA facilitated Workforce Planning review and action planning are now being undertaken by all services involving identification of the use of different approaches such as graduates, apprentices, growing our own, and work shadowing job redesign.

Digital Services are also participants in a separate National LGA facilitated Programme to review and assess approaches to help mitigate the significant challenges with digital and ICT recruitment.

Two new risks, assessed as significant, have been added to the Corporate Risk Register recently: -

- Failure to comply with the provisions of the Procurement Act 2023 - The new Act comes into force in late October 2024. Failure to comply could result in potential claims against the Council from procurement bidders, intervention from the Procurement Review Unit at the UK Cabinet Office as well as reputational damage to the Council. All staff involved in procurement are undertaking intensive training through the UK Commercial College and this is being managed and monitored. Internal processes are also being developed in which to manage the provisions of the new Act.
- Northern Depot – condition of buildings and ability to adapt to changes in fleet energy requirements has the potential to impact on the delivery of key Council services such as waste collection, grounds maintenance and housing repairs. Monthly assessment by structural engineers with recommended mitigations has been implemented, this currently includes scaffolding to the roof of the two main buildings. A project is underway to consider the Depot site including necessary repairs or construction of replacement facilities to be able to deliver future service requirements e.g. the new Environment Act which will impact on waste and recycling collections.

Other risks

Project related risks- continue to be managed by both internal and external project managers and where the risk is close to or exceeding the tolerances acceptable then these are referred to the project sponsors for input. A risk register is required and is in place for each project and the project management framework is to be used as guidance for the management of all projects.

Fraud Risks – An Anti-Fraud and Corruption Project Group has been set up and is chaired by the Corporate Resources Director (S151 Officer) and has a selection of stakeholders from across the Council including a representative from the Central Midlands Audit Partnership (CMAP). The group has been set up to monitor and report on fraud related risks. The group meets every 3 months.

Programme Risks - The risks related to programmes are managed by each programme board that has been established. A separate Towns Fund risk register has been established and the Programme Risk Register is reviewed by the Discover Ashfield Board.

Service Level Risks – These are managed by each individual Assistant Director/Service Manager and where there are tolerances expected to be exceeded beyond the levels set out in the Risk Appetite Framework then these are to be referred for discussion with the relevant Executive Director

who will then decide if these need to be included in the Corporate Risk Register. It may be that additional measures can be implemented to manage the risk and reduce the likelihood and impact.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

Effective risk management will enable the delivery of corporate and service level priorities, particularly ensuring our people, structures, systems, processes and practices are ‘fit for purpose’ and remove barriers to improvement and growth.

Legal:

No direct legal implications in respect of the recommendations in the report. Governance risks are outlined in the report and in the Corporate Risk Register. [RLD 29/05/2024]

Finance: No direct financial implications arising from this report. [PH 29/05/2024].

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	No direct financial implications arising from this report. There may be resource implications to the improvement or mitigation of risk. Financial risks are incorporated into the Corporate Risk Register.
General Fund – Capital Programme	
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Lack of an effective risk management framework could result in the organisation having a poor understanding of the major obstacles or blockages that could potentially impact upon its ability to maximise the delivery of its objectives and provision of services to customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make risk management part of normal business and therefore incorporate within all decision-making processes, including key project delivery. • Integrate risk management into the culture of the Council and cascade awareness through all levels of leadership and beyond. • Ensure the organisation has a clear understanding of its risk maturity level and is taking steps towards improving this to a desired level.

Human Resources:

There is a need to ensure that Assistant Directors are clear with regards to the Corporate Risk Strategy and the requirement to follow the consistent processes contained therein. Risk Management training is a priority and online refresher training has been designed and is currently being scheduled for Members and Officers. [KB 30/05/2024]

Environmental/Sustainability:

No direct implications

Equalities:

No direct implications

Other Implications:

Not applicable

Reason(s) for Urgency

Not applicable

Reason(s) for Exemption

Not applicable

Background Papers

Detailed Corporate Risk Register – Quarter 4 2023/24

Report Author and Contact Officer

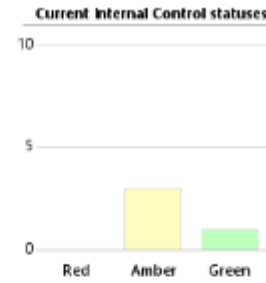
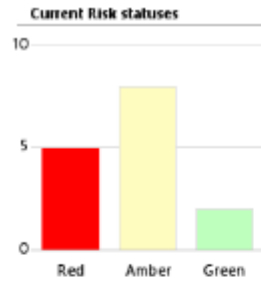
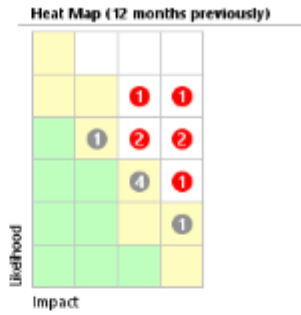
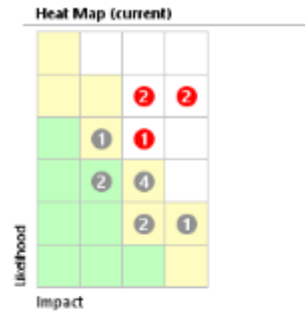
Jo Froggatt
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01623 457328

Sponsoring Executive Director

Craig Bonar
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TRANSFORMATION
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Corporate Risks



Highest Score (Overall)

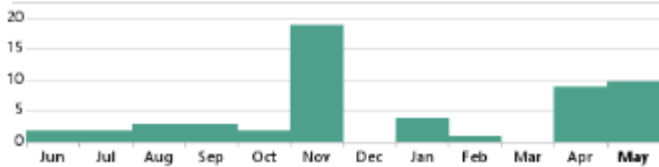
Risk ID	Description	Score	Impact	Likelihood
(ADQ) CR102	Ability to comply with the regulatory regime se...	20	High	High
(ADQ) CR104	Northern Depot – condition of buildings and ...	20	High	High
(ADQ) CR098	Ability to meet statutory obligation process tim...	15	High	Medium
(ADQ) CR105	Failure to comply with the provisions of the Pr...	15	High	Medium
(ADQ) CR090	Workforce planning – ability to recruit and/or ...	12	Medium	Medium
(ADQ) CR003	Ethical Governance –ability to implement chan...	9	Medium	Medium
(ADQ) CR032b- c	Level of central government funding	9	Medium	Medium
(ADQ) CR088	Sustainability of HRA business plan and ability...	9	Medium	Medium
(ADQ) CR091	Ability to deliver Regeneration Programmes	9	Medium	Medium
(ADQ) CR005	Levels of sickness absence	8	Medium	Medium
(ADQ) CR103	Ability to successfully implement the new legal...	8	Medium	Medium
(ADQ) CR029	Ability to identify savings required by MTF5	6	Low	Medium
(ADQ) CR040	Having an adopted LDF / Local Plan	6	Low	Medium
(ADQ) CR086	Planning appeals	6	Low	Medium
(ADQ) CR096	Loss / delays in receipt of key income sources (...)	6	Low	Medium

Lowest Score (Overall)

Risk ID	Description	Score	Impact	Likelihood
(ADQ) CR029	Ability to identify savings required by MTF5	6	Low	Medium
(ADQ) CR040	Having an adopted LDF / Local Plan	6	Low	Medium
(ADQ) CR086	Planning appeals	6	Low	Medium
(ADQ) CR096	Loss / delays in receipt of key income sources (...)	6	Low	Medium
(ADQ) CR005	Levels of sickness absence	8	Medium	Medium
(ADQ) CR103	Ability to successfully implement the new legal...	8	Medium	Medium
(ADQ) CR003	Ethical Governance –ability to implement chan...	9	Medium	Medium
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(ADQ) CR090	Workforce planning – ability to recruit and/or ...	12	Medium	Medium
(ADQ) CR098	Ability to meet statutory obligation process tim...	15	High	Medium
(ADQ) CR105	Failure to comply with the provisions of the Pr...	15	High	Medium
(ADQ) CR102	Ability to comply with the regulatory regime se...	20	High	High
(ADQ) CR104	Northern Depot – condition of buildings and ...	20	High	High

■ Current ■ Target

Recent Assessments



0 Risks have not had an assessment in the previous 12 months.

Scheduled Reviews

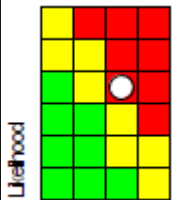
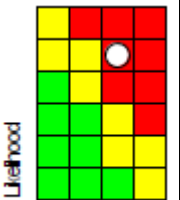
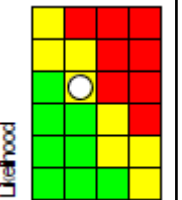


0 Risks do not have an assessment scheduled in the next 12 months.

Rows are sorted by Objective

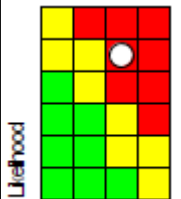
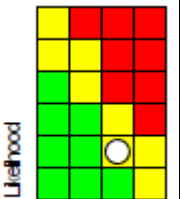
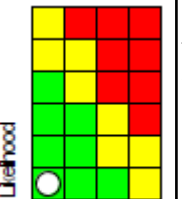
Trend: Constant 8 Decreasing 5 New Risk 2

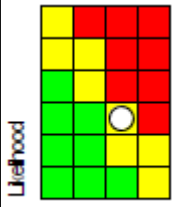
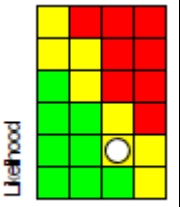
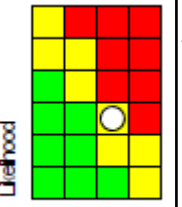
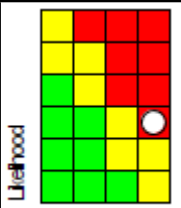
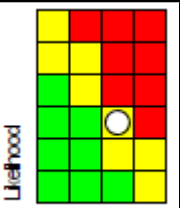
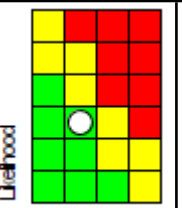
ADC Corporate

Title	Original Matrix	Current Risk Matrix	Target Risk Matrix	Trend last 12 months	Consequences	Mitigating Actions	Officer Responsible	Comments	Latest Assessment	Next Assessment Date
(ADC) CR105 Failure to comply with the provisions of the Procurement Act 2023	 <p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>	 <p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>	 <p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>	New risk	If materialised this risk could result in potential claims against the Council from procurement bidders, intervention from the Procurement Review Unit at the UK Cabinet Office as well as reputational damage to the Council	The implementation of the new finance system will include a procurement module as well as a contract management module. This will assist in being able to manage both the procurement requirements as well as the contract management process. By introducing a system-based approach it is considered that this will further reduce the possibility of the risk materialising.	Chris Clarke	<p>The new Act comes into force in late October 2024 and all staff involved in procurement are undertaking intensive training through the UK Commercial College and this is being managed and monitored by L&D</p> <p>Regular project team meetings are being held involving Legal, L&D, NCC Procurement and the Procurement and Projects Officer.</p> <p>Internal processes are being developed in which to manage the provisions of the new Act including the consideration of a Contracts Administrator position to manage and monitor compliance with the publishing of notices which is a key</p>	20-May-2024	01-Jul-2024

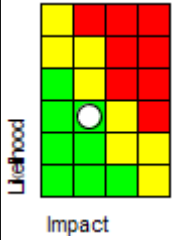
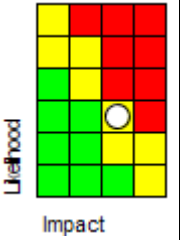
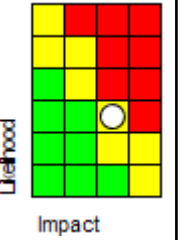
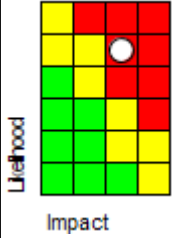
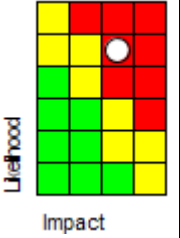
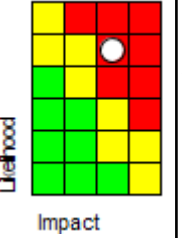
Title	Original Matrix	Current Risk Matrix	Target Risk Matrix	Trend last 12 months	Consequences	Mitigating Actions	Officer Responsible	Comments	Latest Assessment	Next Assessment Date
								output of the new Act. The Contract Procedure Rules are being updated to capture the changes as a result of the new Act.		

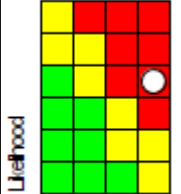
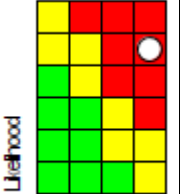
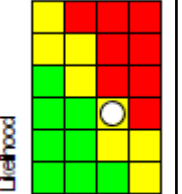
Economic Growth & Place

Title	Original Matrix	Current Risk Matrix	Target Risk Matrix	Trend last 12 months	Consequences	Mitigating Actions	Officer Responsible	Comments	Latest Assessment	Next Assessment Date
(ADC) CR040 Having an adopted LDF / Local Plan	 <p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>	 <p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>	 <p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>	Reduced from significant to medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diminish ability to stimulate economic growth • Increase likelihood of a developer lead approach to devt. • Maximises potential for a significant award of costs against the authority • Local Plan now at preferred approach. Need to publish next stage. Failure to achieve will set back timetable. • If plan requires subsequent revision, will add delays. 	Regular engagement with Members to bring them on board ; Keeping abreast of latest challenges; work with Planning Advisory Service and Planning Inspectorate ; Keeping a clear audit trail of engagements with developers and consultees ; work with Elected Members to address concerns ; Provide professional guidance	Christine Sarris	The Local Plan has progressed to the Regulation 19 stage. Currently awaiting Full Council approval to consult. There are risks associated with the plan moving forward. These have been identified in reports. Members and officers have worked hard together to minimise the risks particularly in association with the housing number and green belt issues. There are still likely to be some challenges but the Government is keen for Council's to progress plans.	08-Apr-2024	01-Jul-2024

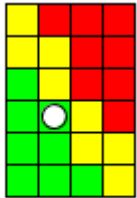
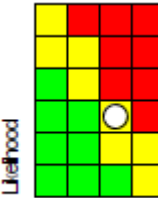

Title	Original Matrix	Current Risk Matrix	Target Risk Matrix	Trend last 12 months	Consequences	Mitigating Actions	Officer Responsible	Comments	Latest Assessment	Next Assessment Date
(ADC) CR086 Planning appeals	 Likelihood Impact	 Likelihood Impact	 Likelihood Impact	Reduced from significant to medium	Surpass the 10% limit and end up in special measures	Councillor training, Officer training & monitoring	Christine Sarris	The Council have had refusal of a major application which will impact on our percentages significantly if allowed at appeal. The proposal at Teversal has the potential for a costs award.	08-Apr-2024	01-Jul-2024
(ADC) CR091 Ability to deliver Regeneration Programmes	 Likelihood Impact	 Likelihood Impact	 Likelihood Impact	Constant – remains medium	Opportunity lost to regenerate and re-purpose town centres and local centres Reputational damage	Specialists appointed to support business case development for Towns Fund and Future High Streets Funding projects ; Future High Streets Fund and Towns Fund delivery monitored through Pentana, Regen, Board and Discover Ashfield Board ; Team structure being reviewed to ensure sufficient resource	Sarah Daniel	There are some changes to project risks which are being addressed where required. No change to overall programmes delivery risk level. A recruitment drive for vacant posts in the Investment Team was successful with some key posts filled, some adjustments to the management structure are being implemented to further support programme delivery.	24-May-2024	01-Jul-2024

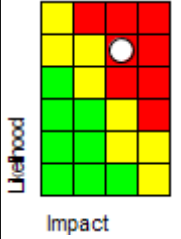
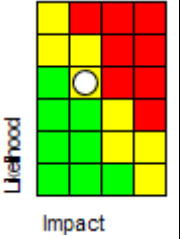
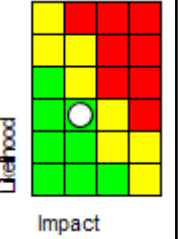
Homes & Housing

Title	Original Matrix	Current Risk Matrix	Target Risk Matrix	Trend last 12 months	Consequences	Mitigating Actions	Officer Responsible	Comments	Latest Assessment	Next Assessment Date
(ADC) CR088 Sustainability of HRA business plan and ability to invest in current and new stock				Constant - Remains medium	Inability to provide services and meet regulatory requirements Inability to build new housing stock Inability to cross fund general fund services	Regular review of HRA 30 Year Business Plan White Paper Action Plan	Phil Warrington	No change to impact or likelihood. Risk is reviewed regularly, as is early warning indicators. Seasonal rent arrears do create concern but monitored closely and no current concerns	25-Apr-2024	01-Jul-2024
(ADC) CR098 Ability to meet statutory obligation process timescales (eg gas servicing, CO alarm installation)				Constant – remains significant	Loss of life through explosion or carbon monoxide poisoning Reportable breach to Housing Regulator Govt intervention and/or corporate manslaughter	Following current Govt guidelines in terms of evidencing all 'refusals' Tenants provided with safety leaflet relating to CO Weekly report to Housing Regulator	Chris Clipstone; Richard Davis	Following the introduction of a new servicing Contractor we are experiencing a very challenging period in terms of Contractor performance. We are also still encountering numerous difficult access properties who are reluctant to provide access to their home for these essential services to be completed	02-May-2024	01-Jul-2024

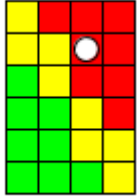
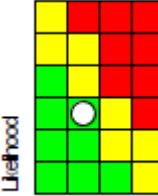
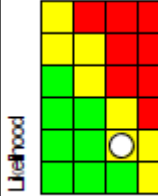
Title	Original Matrix	Current Risk Matrix	Target Risk Matrix	Trend last 12 months	Consequences	Mitigating Actions	Officer Responsible	Comments	Latest Assessment	Next Assessment Date
(ADC) CR102 Ability to comply with the regulatory regime set out by the Regulator of Social Housing	 <p>Life/hood</p> <p>Impact</p>	 <p>Life/hood</p> <p>Impact</p>	 <p>Life/hood</p> <p>Impact</p>	Constant – remains significant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Safety prosecutions. • Appearing on the Regulator of Social housing's 'Watch List'. • Regulator Inspections. • Inspection downgrade following inspections. • Regulatory downgrade from current status. • Unlimited fines. • Removal of the Housing Stock. • Reputational damage to the Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Monthly updates at DMT against the Housing and Asset Corporate Risks to identify early warning indicators and tolerances . Monthly review/updates against Social Housing White Paper Action Plan . Quarterly reports on performance on Complaints . Monthly updates to DMT on determinations from the Housing Ombudsman and failings from the Regulator of Social Housing for the sector . Quarterly updates on our position against Regulatory Consumer Standards . Quarterly key performance indicator report . Quarterly review of Tenant Satisfaction Measures . Quarterly FLEGAL update report 	Nicky Moss	<p>Work continues to be undertaken across the Operations Directorate (Housing) to ensure we meet the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing and prepare for forthcoming inspections.</p> <p>An action plan is in place.</p>	09-Apr-2024	01-Jul-2024

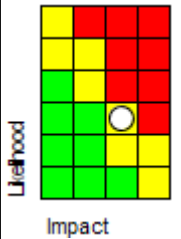
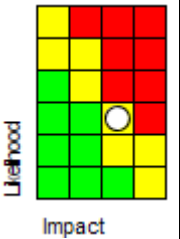
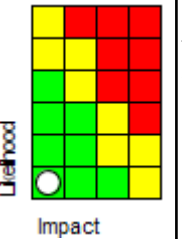
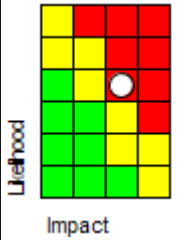
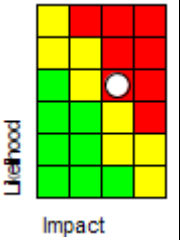
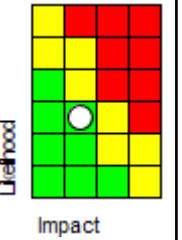
Innovate & Improve

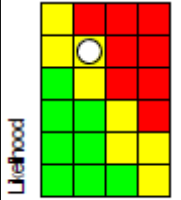
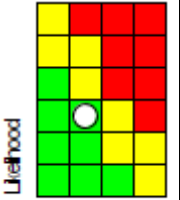
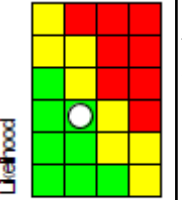
Title	Original Matrix	Current Risk Matrix	Target Risk Matrix	Trend last 12 months	Consequences	Mitigating Actions	Officer Responsible	Comments	Latest Assessment	Next Assessment Date
(ADC) CR003 Ethical Governance – ability to implement changes to the Members' Code of Conduct and recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) and Peer Challenge	 <p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>	 <p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>	 <p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>	Constant – remains medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Significant resource to deal with implications of proposed Code of Conduct changes. •Significant resource to deal with implications of implementing the recommendation of the CSPL •Potential for negative perception of the Council which impacts upon the Council's reputation •Potential for adverse impact upon the workings of the Council • Without new legislation does not provide holistic response to the recommendation 	Ongoing work by the Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee in relation to the the Committee on Standards in Public Life – report on Local Government Ethical Standards ; Members received training regarding the Code of Conduct, their behaviours and roles and responsibilities as part of the induction in May 2019. In line with the Corporate Peer Challenge recommendation further training will be organised. ; Present Quarterly Complaint Monitoring reports to Standards and Personnel (Appeals) Committee ; Responding to the LGA's consultation on its draft Model Code of	Ruth Dennis; Michael Joy	Quarterly Complaint Monitoring reports presented to Standards and Personnel (Appeals) Committee Numerous reports relating to the Committee on Standards in Public Life – report on Local Government Ethical Standards have been presented to Committee over the past 4 years. The Council at its AGM on 20 May 2021 approved the revised Code which incorporates elements of the LGA Model Code. The Standards and Personnel Appeals Committee approves a work plan each municipal year. The 2024/25 work plan will be approved at the Committee meeting in July 2024.	30-May-2024	01-Jul-2024

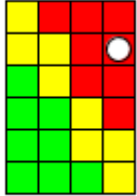
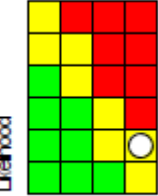
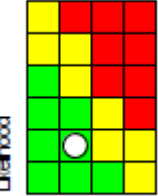
Title	Original Matrix	Current Risk Matrix	Target Risk Matrix	Trend last 12 months	Consequences	Mitigating Actions	Officer Responsible	Comments	Latest Assessment	Next Assessment Date
					of the CSPL	Conduct.		<p>The work plan for 2024/25 will include a significant programme of work to review the Members' Code of Conduct and related policies and procedure in line with the recommendations put forward as part of the Internal Audit Review undertaken during 2023/24..</p> <p>As part of the induction programme for Members after the elections in May 2023 ethical governance training was provided to Members which included the Code of Conduct and Members' roles and responsibilities; the LGA supported this training</p>		
(ADC) CR005 Levels of sickness absence	 <p>Liability Impact</p>	 <p>Liability Impact</p>	 <p>Liability Impact</p>	Constant – remains medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productivity • Financial • Employee morale • Service delivery • Remaining staff placed under increased pressure • Reputational damage 	Robust management of sickness absence procedures by managers and robust procedures - Revised Absence Mgt Policy implemented ; Effective monitoring - monthly monitoring	Nikki Morris; Rachel Ward	Average days of employee absence has reduced by 19% (8.88 days average per full time equivalent April 2023 to March 2024, compared to 10.93 days average per full time equivalent April 2022 to March 2023)	28-May-2024	01-Jul-2024

Title	Original Matrix	Current Risk Matrix	Target Risk Matrix	Trend last 12 months	Consequences	Mitigating Actions	Officer Responsible	Comments	Latest Assessment	Next Assessment Date
						<p>reports highlighting service area absence to assist CMG and managers in absence management ; Employee support mechanisms - Employee assistance programme implemented ; Appropriate occupational health support - Occupational Health provision reviewed</p>		<p>A number of interventions have been put in place to support employees. These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of Attendance Management Policy to ensure a more streamline, fit for purpose policy is embedded 2. HR are undertaking training for new managers and refresher training current managers to help them apply AMP and manage absence. This is currently on an adhoc basis however there will be a full training program as part of the launch of the revised policy 3. Ongoing robust management of absence cases and HR work closely with managers accordingly. 4. Improved communications in regards to wellbeing 		

Title	Original Matrix	Current Risk Matrix	Target Risk Matrix	Trend last 12 months	Consequences	Mitigating Actions	Officer Responsible	Comments	Latest Assessment	Next Assessment Date
								<p>support mechanisms in place to facilitate employees back in to the workplace or remain in work.</p> <p>5. Review of wellbeing initiatives and working with Health and Wellbeing to look at targeted interventions to raise awareness and signpost for support</p> <p>6. Continue to provide statistical data and information to CLT for discussion</p> <p>7. Absence data reviewed within HR for targeted actions.</p>		
(ADC) CR029 Ability to identify savings required by MTFS	 <p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>	 <p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>	 <p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>	Reduced from medium to low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council cannot fund full range of services in future • Pressure on General Fund reserves 	CLT and Cabinet work together to identify savings and income generation opportunities and to consider use of reserves in setting the budget for each year	Pete Hudson	Service Reviews and identification of income generating opportunities will continue throughout 2024/25 to aid the setting of a balanced budget for 2025/26 and a more sustainable MTFS.	13-May-2024	01-Jul-2024

Title	Original Matrix	Current Risk Matrix	Target Risk Matrix	Trend last 12 months	Consequences	Mitigating Actions	Officer Responsible	Comments	Latest Assessment	Next Assessment Date
(ADC) CR032b-c Level of central government funding				Reduced from significant to medium	Negative impact a MTFS ; further savings required	The Council will contribute to any consultation when proposals are announced, emphasising the need for resources to be allocated to deprived areas.	Pete Hudson	There remains considerable uncertainty about the timing and potential effect of implementation of Local Government Funding Reform. 2024/25 was again a one-year funding settlement. With a General Election taking place during 2024/25 this is again indicating that LG Funding Reform will not take place in time for the 2025/26 Annual Budget round.	13-May-2024	01-Jul-2024
(ADC) CR090 Workforce planning – ability to recruit and/or retain filled position to critical posts				Constant – remains significant	Inability to provide critical service functions including statutory services whilst vacant Negative impact on delivery of critical functions that directly affect Corporate Plan priorities,, productivity, MTFS	Implementation of Workforce Plan ; Identify Critical Posts and implement strategic plan to mitigate against risks of failure to recruit/retain quality staff to these positions	Craig Bonar	LGA facilitated Workforce Planning review and action planning now being undertaken by all services involving identification of use of different approaches such as graduates, apprentices, grow our own, work shadowing job redesign. Digital Services are also participants in a separate National LGA facilitated Programme to review and assess approaches to help	17-May-2024	01-Jul-2024

Title	Original Matrix	Current Risk Matrix	Target Risk Matrix	Trend last 12 months	Consequences	Mitigating Actions	Officer Responsible	Comments	Latest Assessment	Next Assessment Date
								mitigate the significant challenges with digital and ICT recruitment		
(ADC) CR096 Loss / delays in receipt of key income sources (Business Rates, Council Tax, Housing and Investment Property Rents)	 <p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>	 <p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>	 <p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>	Reduced from significant to low	Loss of income – increased write offs. Delays in receiving income leading to potential cashflow issues. Increased debt management and recovery costs. Potential impact on payment of preceptors and having sufficient income to meet cost obligations as they fall due.	Government deferral of paying Central Business Rates contribution until end of June 2020. ; Reserve to cushion delays in payment of Investment Property income. Arrangements in place with some Investment Property tenants re agreed delays in rent income. (Exceptions basis only). Currently expected that all accounts will be up to date by 31/03/21. ; Healthy HRA balances to manage short term cashflow issues from reductions/delays in housing rent ; Option to scale back costs associated with non-critical functions.	Pete Hudson	At present recovery levels overall are at an acceptable level. This will be continually monitored during 2024/25 and any change to this position will be reported through to SLT and Cabinet.	13-May-2024	01-Jul-2024

Title	Original Matrix	Current Risk Matrix	Target Risk Matrix	Trend last 12 months	Consequences	Mitigating Actions	Officer Responsible	Comments	Latest Assessment	Next Assessment Date
(ADC) CR103 Ability to successfully implement the new legal requirements placed up on the Council as a result of the Elections Act 2022	 <p style="text-align: center;">Impact</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Impact</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Impact</p>	Constant – remains medium	Risk of non-compliance with new legislation due to lack of timely clarity and detailed guidance from Government in relation to new requirements under the Elections Act 2022 and lack of information of new burdens funding in order to plan resourcing accurately.	Service Review to implement new structure in accordance with Council process to ensure the Council has the right resources in place to meet existing and new service demands ; Develop and implement project plan for the implementation of the Election Act requirements. ; Develop and keep under review detailed Risk Register as part of Project Plan ; Regular project meetings with key staff across the Council ; Communications / engagement plan as part of the project plan ; Keep abreast of Government and sector guidance and advice. ; Collaborate with peers ;	Ruth Dennis	The risk associated with the new requirements of the Elections Act 2022 and the impacts of embedding these into the election and electoral registration processes has significantly reduced following the successful delivery of elections during May 2023 and May 2024. Learning has been put in place to improve processes following these elections. The Parliamentary election in July 2024 will test how the requirements have been embedded and may provide further learning; the electorate may be more engaged in the Parliamentary elections and so we may see an increase in electoral registration, absent voter and voter authority certificate applications. Measures have been put in place to deal with a potential	30-May-2024	01-Jul-2024

Title	Original Matrix	Current Risk Matrix	Target Risk Matrix	Trend last 12 months	Consequences	Mitigating Actions	Officer Responsible	Comments	Latest Assessment	Next Assessment Date
								increase in applications.		
(ADC) CR104 Northern Depot – condition of buildings and ability to adapt to changes in fleet energy requirements	<p>Lifehood</p> <p>Impact</p>	<p>Lifehood</p> <p>Impact</p>	<p>Lifehood</p> <p>Impact</p>	New	Impact on delivery of key council services such as waste collection, grounds maintenance and housing repairs.	<p>Monthly assessment by structural engineers with recommended mitigations implemented – this currently includes scaffolding to the roof of the two main buildings.</p> <p>Project underway to consider the Depot including necessary repairs or construction of replacement facilities to be able to deliver future service requirements e.g. the new Environment Act which will impact on waste and recycling collections</p>	John Bennett	Identification of future service requirements underway to consider recent legislative amendments and service efficiencies. This will inform options for future use of the Depot site.	01-Apr-2024	01-Oct-2024



Report To:	CABINET
Date:	17TH JUNE 2024
Heading:	MAJOR PROJECTS AND FUNDING UPDATE
Executive Lead Member:	CLLR MATTHEW RELF, EXECUTIVE LEAD MEMBER FOR GROWTH, REGENERATION AND LOCAL PLANNING
Ward/s:	ALL WARDS
Key Decision:	YES
Subject to Call-In:	YES

Purpose of Report

To ensure that Cabinet is kept updated on funding allocations and progress of funded programmes.

To agree to accept capacity funding from the Levelling Up Fund for Hucknall Town Centre.

To agree to submit the vision and three-year investment plan for the Kirkby Long-term Plan by 1st August.

Recommendation(s)

1. To note the progress for the Regeneration programmes.
2. To agree to accept capacity funding from the Levelling Up Fund for Hucknall Town Centre of £200,000 and to enter into agreements with DLUHC (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) as required.
3. To agree to submit the vision and three-year investment plan for the Kirkby Long-term Plan by 1st August following approval by the Kirkby Town Board.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

1. To ensure that Cabinet is kept updated on progress with the funding programmes.
2. To ensure that projects and spend within the funding programmes are delivered within the set timeframes and programme budgets.
3. To ensure funding streams are utilised collaboratively and effectively.

Alternative Options Considered

1. Not to accept the Levelling Up Funding for Hucknall. Rejected – Not accepting the funds would mean additional pressures on resourcing the LUF Hucknall programme.
2. Not to submit the Kirkby Long-term Plan documentation to Government by 1st August – this is the deadline for submission.

Detailed Information

The report provides an overview of programme performance.



1. Future High Streets Fund



1.1 Finance:

There are no changes since the last Board report, the approved budgets are shown in annex 1.

1.2 Progress

A progress and risk-based summary for each project is provided below.

Project	Achievements/ progress/next steps	Start / Completion Dates	Next key Milestone	Risk Level / programme and cost
Cornerstone Theatre	<p>The principal contractor has been appointed under a framework contract and has submitted their cost plan. There are some cost items still to resolved to bring the scheme within budget.</p> <p>The risk has elevated because there has been a delay in the contract start due to progressing access agreements and partnership agreements between all parties. The estimated contract completion will now be Jan 2025.</p>	<p>S: May 2024 C: Jan 2025</p>	Start on Site Spring 2024	 Elevated
Low Street	9-11 Low Street – The contract work is progressing well and due for completion in June.	<p>S: Dec 2023 C: June 2024</p>	Securing a tenancy / Social value delivery	

High Pavement House	<p>The High Pavement House renovation work is completed.</p> <p>The Makerspace CIC (Community Interest Company) was established, however following challenges with the structure, steps have been taken by the group to close the CIC.</p> <p>A new Maker space model is now being considered by the Council to improve governance.</p> <p>Recruitment to the Makerspace was delayed due to the successful candidate being offered another role, but the role has now been filled following a further recruitment.</p>	C: Nov 2024	Inspire Collaboration and Maker Space – Officer Appointment/ May 2024	 Remains Elevated
Fox Street	<p>Lindum’s have been appointed as the principal contractor for the project.</p> <p>The project will commence on site on 21st May starting with the Fox Street works and then progressing onto the Portland Square refurbishment.</p>	S: May 2024	Start on site 21 st May 2024	


2. Towns Fund






2.1 Finance






There are no changes since the last board report, the approved budgets are shown in annex 1.




2.2 Project highlights report



A progress and risk-based summary for each project is provided below.

Project	Achievements/ progress/next steps	Start / Completion Dates	Next key Milestone	Risk Level / programme and cost
Be Healthy Be Happy				
North Kirkby Gateway	<p>Negotiations for the land assembly are progressing well.</p> <p>Risk is elevated, the project is behind programme due to delays in securing all the land required for the project.</p> <p>Positive progress has been made on options to purchase the main site.</p>	S: Jan 2025 (Est) C: March 2026	Land assembly / masterplan May - Jun 2024	 Remains Elevated

Kirkby Sports Hub	<p>The planning application has been submitted and is being progressed.</p> <p>The design team are progressing RIBA stage 4 ready for procurement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bowls pavilion, car park and floodlight work Q4 2024 • Main changing pavilion/pitch works Q1 2025 <p>A temporary welfare unit is in place to enable the decommissioning of the existing bowls pavilion.</p>	<p>Part 1: S: Nov 2024 C: March 2025</p> <p>Part 2: S: April / May 2025 C: Feb 2026</p>	Demolition of Bowls pavilion/ securing planning approval.	
Sutton Lawn Sports Hub	<p>The planning application has been submitted and is progressing.</p> <p>The design team are progressing the project in two parts ready for the procurement stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car park/pavilion/shale pitch: Q1 2025 • 3G pitches: Q3 2025 <p>The tennis court improvements are /completed, and the courts can be booked via the app.</p>	<p>Part 1: S: March 2025 C: August 2026</p> <p>Part 2: Sept 2025 S: March 2026</p>	Securing planning permission.	
More to Discover				
Sutton Town Centre				
Portland Square	<p>Lindum's have been appointed as the principal contractor for the project.</p> <p>The project will commence on site at the end of June.</p>	<p>S: June/ July 2024 C: Dec 2024</p>	Official appointment of the contractor and works start.	
Visitor Economy				
Cycling and walking routes	The design team has been appointed and is progressing the stage 2 and feasibility phase.	<p>S: May 2024 C: April 2025</p>	Release plans for route upgrades and improvements	
Visitor digital offer	<p>The new website is live. Additional content is being developed / added and a marketing plan is being prepared.</p> <p>The risk has been elevated: The marketing plan was due to be in place in May and is slightly delayed.</p>	C: June 2024	Marketing / and press release	 Elevated

Science Discovery Centre and Planetarium	<p>The construction work is progressing well with the steel work for the building and the planetarium dome now in place.</p> <p>National Grid installed a new substation to serve the new development and the surrounding houses.</p> <p>Ongoing cost risks are being monitored and where practicable mitigation measures are offsetting the risks.</p>	C: Nov 2024		
Kings Mill Reservoir leisure development	<p>The construction phase remains on programme and within budget. An agent is marketing the property for let. The risk has been elevated because the marketing plan has been delayed.</p> <p>The Council is progressing an arrangement with the Sea Cadets to have access to the facilities from September.</p>	C: July 2024	Operator procurement May - June 2024	 Elevated
Succeed in Ashfield				
ADMC (Kirkby/Sutton)	<p>The appointment of a principal contractor has been completed for the RIBA Stage 3-4 phase under a pre-construction services agreement (PCSA).</p> <p>The planning application has been submitted and is due to go to Planning Committee in June. The land purchase is proceeding and is dependent on planning approval on the site.</p>	S: July /August 2024 C: Sept 2025	Secure planning permission: June 2024	
Ashfield Construction Centre and Satellite	<p>Portland College: Construction works have been completed.</p> <p>Vison West Notts College: A new site option has been identified and VWNC and the Council are progressing the due diligence on the site acquisition.</p> <p>The revised project plan indicates completion of the construction works at the Julia's Way campus in September. Development work is ongoing to explore increasing parking provision.</p>	Part 1 Portland College: S: Nov 2023 C: May 2024 Part 2 VWNC: S: July / August 2024 C: Dec 2024	Launch of new Portland facilities June 2024	
Ashfield Civil Engineering Centre	Further options are being explored for the phase 1 rail track works at WNC's Oddicroft site. A partnership for the machinery	C: Dec 2025	Depot plan to be agreed	 Remains Elevated

	training is being explored with a local earthworks company. There is also an intention to bring some of the Civils offer onto the council's Depot site.																																			
Enterprising Ashfield	<p>Risks remain elevated because the target outputs are behind plan at this point in the programme. As can be seen in the table below, some project outputs are doing well, such as the Headstart programme which offers a corn seed grant. Also delivering to plan is the non-financial support to growth businesses. It should be noted that whilst the closer collaborations delivered/ in delivery are behind those planned, we are confident that this will be delivered by 31 March 2026. However other aspects need to be addressed. A proposal is in section 2.8 of this report. An overview of outputs achieved against the project target is provided below to the end of March 2024.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Project Output</th> <th>Total</th> <th>Total plan to date</th> <th>Total delivered to date – March 2024</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Headstart- Entrepreneur Enterprise ready</td> <td>225</td> <td>70</td> <td>88</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Headstart seed corn grant</td> <td>225</td> <td>70</td> <td>83</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Growth -Businesses/ Enterprises receiving non-financial support</td> <td>121</td> <td>33</td> <td>54</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Growth – Businesses/Enterprise receiving financial support</td> <td>172</td> <td>70</td> <td>1*</td> </tr> <tr> <td>New Learners- Skills</td> <td>900</td> <td>340</td> <td>259*</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Internships- Graduate placements</td> <td>150</td> <td>43</td> <td>21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Closer Collaborations- R&D</td> <td>50</td> <td>27</td> <td>7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Project Output	Total	Total plan to date	Total delivered to date – March 2024	Headstart- Entrepreneur Enterprise ready	225	70	88	Headstart seed corn grant	225	70	83	Growth -Businesses/ Enterprises receiving non-financial support	121	33	54	Growth – Businesses/Enterprise receiving financial support	172	70	1*	New Learners- Skills	900	340	259*	Internships- Graduate placements	150	43	21	Closer Collaborations- R&D	50	27	7	C: March 2026	24th January Free Enterprising Ashfield Business Support Event.	 Remains Elevated
Project Output	Total	Total plan to date	Total delivered to date – March 2024																																	
Headstart- Entrepreneur Enterprise ready	225	70	88																																	
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Growth – Businesses/Enterprise receiving financial support	172	70	1*																																	
New Learners- Skills	900	340	259*																																	
Internships- Graduate placements	150	43	21																																	
Closer Collaborations- R&D	50	27	7																																	
Library Innovation Centres - Kirkby & Sutton	Project planning is progressing for the Sutton project in collaboration with Nottinghamshire County Council and Inspire. Provisionally due to start in December 2024/ January 2025.	Anticipated S: Q3 2024	Project announcement - Start date.																																	
Greener Ashfield																																				
West Kirkby Gateway & public transport hub	The design team are progressing RIBA Stage 3 plans. The planning application has been delayed whilst bat surveys are undertaken May – June, the project remains on track.	S: July 2024 C: July 2025	Planning application submission – July 2024																																	

	An agent has been appointed to market the project.			
Green Ashfield	<p>The project delivery plan is being prepared and the procurement strategy is progressing.</p> <p>The risk remains elevated slightly because the project programme has slipped due to delays in agreeing the project plan and performance of the lead consultant.</p>	C: Dec 2025	Retrofit PR - Carbon saving to existing project sites.	 Remains Elevated
High Street Property Fund	<p>Initial appraisal and project planning is progressing with Vision West Notts to renovate the space above Moor Market. It is envisaged the students will progress the project from September onwards.</p> <p>A market assessment has been completed of available properties across Sutton, Kirkby, Huthwaite, Annesley and Stanton Hill.</p>	S: April 2024 C: March 26	PR on the collaboration with VWNC.	


3.0 UK Shared Prosperity Fund




3.1 Programme update

The UKSPF year-end programme report has been submitted to DLUHC. The year-end expenditure was £836,918.78, which was 82.18% of Year 1 and 2 funds. This means we received 100% of Year 3 funds which will be £2,029,950.00 together with £181,510.65 of funding received brought forward to spend this financial year.


3.2 Project highlights report


A progress and risk based summary are provided below for the three themes of the fund.

Programme	Achievements/ progress/next steps	Risk Level / programme and cost
Communities and Place Projects		
Hucknall Town Centre- High Street Property Improvement Fund	We have appointed the Save the High Street team, to undertake a pilot working with Hucknall town centre businesses. They are engaging with the businesses building on the engagement undertaken for the Hucknall safety improvement measures. As a result, five businesses have signed up for support who will form the first cohort and develop their business investment plans. Learning from the pilot will help to shape the programme.	

Selston Country Park Phase 2 improvements	A significant investment was made at Selston Country Park to provide a new adventure style play area, and accessible path. The timber framed play equipment has been installed close to the café and provides an enhanced play experience in the heart of Selston. To complement this, the Council has made a significant investment into the refurbishment of the café. This project is now completed.	
Coxmoor Estate, Kirkby – environmental improvements	The contractor is engaged, and the programme is being developed. The funds for this project were carried forward for delivery into 2024/25.	
Sutton – environmental improvements	Completed. Outputs and outcomes have been reported. This investment has enabled us to tackle local safety issues that the communities have been facing. Building on the Hucknall Safer Streets, in particular mobile CCTV, Shopwatch radio and working with local businesses on safe spaces have helped local people feel safer on the streets. The outputs and outcomes for this continue to exceed expectations.	
Hucknall Safer Streets	Completed. The project included community outreach, counselling, and mentorship sessions. This investment has also enabled us to tackle local safety issues that communities face such as fly tipping. By working with communities, this targeted approach has seen a reduction in fly tipping and an improvement in the streetscape. security measures such as mobile CCTV, Shopwatch radio and working with communities, schools, and local retailers to participate in providing Safe Spaces. This has included investment in CCTV cameras that allow vulnerable individuals to communicate instantly with the CCTV control room. Our investments have provided added value to other funding such as the Safer Streets programme and Police and Crime Commissioner’s funding. The outputs and outcomes have exceeded expectation and provide a firm basis for engagement for projects in the future.	
Events and Activities	The investment in events has seen 12 events provided to date, attracting attendance of 16,750. 236 organisations took the opportunity to promote their services and there were 55 volunteering opportunities, which involved both individuals and groups.	
Visitor economy	Gateway signage has been procured and designs are being finalised. The draft Destination Management Plan (DMP) has been completed and will be brought to Cabinet in July. £25k has been allocated to support the development of the visitor experience project at St. Mary Magdalene Church which is part of the Hucknall Levelling Up Fund programme. This will support design work, bid-writing and match funding for a bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). The bid would fund much needed restoration works to this historic asset as well	

	as creating a five-year activity plan for the visitor experience.	
Ranger / activities	The project is building on the Mill Waters project and started in January. A joint project with Nottinghamshire County Council, its delivery was brought forward into 2023-24. A more detailed report will be presented at the next board meeting.	↔
Green social prescribing	The social prescribing programme focusses on community growing. We have match funded the Food Coordinator who works with communities across our priority areas of Coxmoor, Leamington and Broomhill/Butler's Hill. Planters have been purchased for the 3 areas which are currently being installed, working with residents and groups to agree locations and support with upkeep. In September we launched a £6k Community Growing Grants scheme of £500 per group to support groups to establish their own community growing schemes. Uptake for the grants has been high with 11 of the 12 grants awarded to date.	↔
Cycling and Walking	Our Walking and cycling scheme with Ridewise has expanded from Hucknall to Kirkby with a youth cycling/scooting programme. Activities took place at Holidays Hill Park (Coxmoor) and Kingsway Park (Kirkby) working with partners including Nottinghamshire Police and Youth services. The Sutton programme provides weekly cycling sessions and started at Sutton Lawn in February. Sessions have also started at Kings Mill Reservoir. We have also put in place a grant funding scheme with up to £1k per organisation to support the delivery of a range of community walking schemes. We have funded three schemes to date: Your Time Believe, Belong, at Titchfield Park, Hucknall to improve mental health; Our Centre's Cosey Mosey walking group in Kirkby for people with mobility issues and Byron's Rest Walking Club in Hucknall who have regular twice monthly Sunday walks. The funding enabled the club to purchase a defibrillator to be taken out on walks and it is also available to other community groups.	↔
Community Vertical Farming	Officers are working with NTU on a proposal.	↑
Digital support for local communities	Work continues at the Kirkby Job Centre as an ongoing session. The programme expanded to individuals at Sutton Job Centre from 15th April until the centre's closure. 3 learners who were waiting for a Digital Skills course have completed Basic Skills with a tutor at Sutton Community Academy alongside a Personal and Social Development qualification to build their general confidence. It is hoped that they will now feel confident to progress onto an E3 Digital Skills course.	↔

	<p>11 volunteers from Teversal Visitors Centre are to complete an online L2 Food Hygiene Course to support their volunteer roles. Many of the volunteers lacked confidence with computers and so linking this work with the digital skills project with a tutor was required to support with digital skills online to complete the course and upskill them with required Food Hygiene skills at the same time.</p> <p>ATTFE is working to establish participation in the Hucknall area. They also promoted the project at the Coxmoor Partnership meeting and Ashfield Wellbeing Network. ATTFE is also working with Portland Pathways to support their service users with digital skills.</p>	
<p>Supporting Local Business</p>	<p>The Ashfield Accelerator is being delivered by East Midlands Chamber of Commerce, providing Digital, Innovation, Specialist staff workshops, and support for Overseas Trade and Decarbonisation. A new grant has been introduced which provides up to £30k per Small, Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) to support projects, based on feedback from local businesses. The new grant fills a funding gap for companies looking to innovate, decarbonise and upskill.</p> <p>We are working with the Chamber to ensure it complements other support programmes. The uptake for the Enterprise Development Grant has continued to improve with match funding being higher than anticipated.</p> <p>West Nottinghamshire College is piloting a scheme to support Idlewells Market traders in Sutton with promoting their businesses online. The pre-opening programme of support for the Automated Distribution and Manufacturing Centre (ADMC) has been accelerated. A website has been launched and there has been significant work with both suppliers and potential businesses. Of the 236 businesses to be targeted, 176 have been contacted. There has been good engagement with the ADMC events programme including the Business Breakfast held in Kirkby. Companies such as School Blazer Limited and Nottingham Zinc Group have been keen to share the benefits gained along with the challenges in automating their production processes.</p> <p>We continue in providing specialist business events to build on the Careers Fair in October and a Decarbonisation event in November. These events have been well received. The High Pavement House completed its transformation in November 2024. In January the Council launched the UKSPF funded rent relief grant to offset three months of rent. Marketing material was developed as well as the grant scheme. Currently £501 of support has been provided to a small organisation to move into the offices.</p>	

<p>People and Skills</p>	<p>We have procured and commenced delivery of 3 People and Skills programmes to support the economically inactive and provide basic and lifestyle skills. These are being delivered by Futures. We are working closely with our delivery provider, and we are on target to deliver the outputs and outcomes.</p> <p>Ideas for Careers is mobilising the delivery of the Education and Business Collaboration programme for 2024-25. Currently they are engaging with businesses and schools.</p> <p>The Careers advice tender has been advertised with six bids submitted. Officers are currently reviewing the bids.</p> <p>The procurement for the Ashfield Digital Hub and the Ashfield's talent attraction failed to attract any competent bids.</p>	
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4. Kirkby Long-term Plan for Towns

Work to produce the 10-year vision and three-year Investment Plan is well underway led by the newly formed Kirkby Town Board. An Engagement Subgroup has been set up to oversee the public consultation. A number of in-person sessions were supported by partners and council officers which included Outwood Academy and Our Centre. The initial survey closed on 2nd June. A Board meeting was held on 14th June to review the results of the consultation and a long list of potential projects. Further consultation will be undertaken on the long list of projects which will support the Board in deciding on which projects to prioritise.

The Investment Plan will focus on the three themes of Safety and security, High streets, heritage, and regeneration and Transport and connectivity. The vision and plan need to be submitted to government by 1st August.

A request to include Annesley and an area on the southern side of Kirkby which includes Portland Park was accepted by Ministers.

The Council has now received the full capacity funding of £250k (part of the £19.51m allocation). The capacity funding will be used to fund consultation and engagement activities and support to develop the plan.

5. Hucknall Levelling Up Fund

It was announced as part of the Spring Budget that the Council has been provisionally awarded up to £9,281,283 as part of the Government's Levelling Up Fund programme.

The ambitious plan to drive economic regeneration in Hucknall is centred around three main themes – Skills and Economic Regeneration, Cultural and Heritage Gateway, and Access to Hucknall town centre.

The project was developed in the summer of 2022, and has now been reviewed with a revised proposal identified which can be delivered within the shortened timeframe of 24 months.

The revised proposals have been discussed with local councillors and the MP for Hucknall who were all supportive. The revised plan was submitted to DLUHC on 2nd May.

Workshops have been held with strategic delivery partners, to establish the delivery models for the different areas of the investment and a project manager for the programme has been appointed.

A capacity grant of £200k has been received to support resourcing the development of the programme.

6. Place Partnership bid

The full bid was submitted to the Arts Council in March, with a formal announcement now expected after the elections. We are currently developing the specification for the project management of the programme so that this can be tendered if the bid is successful.

7. Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS)

Leisure Energy (LE) were appointed under the Everything FM framework to deliver the two PSDS funded projects to replace the existing heating systems at the Council's Centralised Offices and Hucknall Leisure Centre (HLC).

Both projects have been progressing in terms of design, however Leisure Energy (LE) are behind programme and have not fully completed the designs and as such are not able to confirm final costs of the project, although LE indicate that costs may increase further. LE have been asked to review design options to mitigate any further increases where possible, which remains ongoing, in conjunction with Mace, the Council's consultant partner overseeing the Green Ashfield and PSDS Decarbonisation Plan. An initial contract was entered into with LE relating to the ordering of key materials for both projects, including a variation to increase the contract value and payment up-front in order to maximise the external funding available. Materials are being manufactured and stored off site currently. Once contract prices are agreed, and any further relevant approvals have been obtained, the Council will enter into further contracts with LE regarding the remaining works, predominantly installation. Planned completion of the projects is currently Autumn 2024.

There remain significant risks which the Council has little control over, namely:

- 1) Third party approvals/interventions (Planning approval/ District Network Operator responses installation timeframes (once designs are completed to RIBA Stage 4).
- 2) Agreeing contract terms with Leisure Energy in relation to the final Contract inclusions and costs.
- 3) Funder (Salix) approach to project delivery (ultimate possible loss of funding) although it is considered that Salix will not look to recoup any funding as long as the funding total was committed by 31st March 2024 and delivery of the projects is ultimately achieved.

Members are asked to note that costs are still unknown and that a future request for Council funding may be requested if the cost pressures materialise as expected or funding is withdrawn if the project cannot be delivered as a consequence of the above risks.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

Economic Growth and Place priority, the regeneration programmes contribute to a number of the six key ambitions: • Skills and employment • Businesses and investment • Regeneration • Visitor economy, arts and culture • Infrastructure and connectivity • Towns centres and high streets.

Cleaner and Greener priority, the PSDS project will contribute to the key ambition: - Climate Change and Sustainability • Ensuring the green agenda is at the centre of our decision making, leading by example, and working together across the organisation to reduce carbon impacts from our own assets.

Green space projects - maximising available grants and successfully delivering externally funded projects, Parks and Green Spaces • Ensuring our parks and green spaces are well maintained • Delivering our five-year green space improvement programme • Developing and delivering our transformation programme for outdoor sports facilities and visitor centres/ cafés.

Legal:

The Legal Team and the Executive Director of Governance are actively supporting and advising in relation to all Towns Fund projects. Where required specialist external legal advice is being obtained to advise on the funding programmes to ensure all risks to the Council are fully considered [LE 31.05.24]

Finance: As set out in the body of the report. [PH 29/05/2024].

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	As set out in the report.
General Fund – Capital Programme	As set out in the report.
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	No implications
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	No implications

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Grant agreements and partner delivery arrangements	Risk is mitigated by the due diligence work undertaken as part of the sign off process, internal and external legal advice.
Resourcing and delivery risks associated with multiple project/programme delivery.	Corporate Risk identified. Appointment and engagement of staff and consultants to support the programmes where necessary. Project Management for each programme.

Human Resources:

There are no direct HR implications contained in the report in relation to the funding. However, the projects relating to the funding may have a HR implication which would be identified in subsequent reports.

Environmental/Sustainability:

Not applicable for this report as this is managed within the programmes.

Equalities:

No issues identified for this report. Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken to support delivery of the regeneration programmes.

Other Implications:

Not applicable

Reason(s) for Urgency

Not applicable

Reason(s) for Exemption

Not applicable

Background Papers

Not applicable

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Annex 1 – FHSF approved budgets.

Project	RDEL/CDEL	21/22 (£)	22/23 (£)	23/24 (£)	24/25 (£)	25/26 (£)	Total (£)
FHSF Sutton Academy Theatre / Cornerstone	RDEL (Revenue)	-	-	-	-	-	-
	CDEL (Capital)	48,545	143,287	2,155,287			2,347,118
		48,545	143,287	2,155,287	-	-	2,347,118
	Co-funding			100,000			100,000
TF18 Cornerstone	CDEL	-	1,496	-	874,304	-	875,800
	TOTAL						2,947,118
FHSF High Pavement	RDEL						-
	CDEL	988,342	148,812	514,511			1,651,665
	Sub Total	988,342	148,812	514,511	-	-	1,651,665
	Co-funding		-	937,289			937,289
	Total						2,588,954
FHSF Low Street 9-11 and No 14	RDEL						
	CDEL	86,920	1,081,310	581,770			1,750,000
	Co-funding			647,933			647,933
	Total						2,397,933
FHSF Fox Street pop-up food court and car park	RDEL						
	CDEL	67,314	44,397	419,378			531,088
	Co-funding	-		70,912			70,912
	Total						602,000

Annex 1 - Towns Fund DA Board approved budgets.

Project	RDEL/CDEL	21/22 (£)	22/23 (£)	23/24 (£)	24/25 (£)	25/26 (£)	Total (£)
TF-01 Ashfield Civil Engineering Centre	RDEL (Revenue)	-					-
	CDEL (Capital)	6,902	46,865	2,047,367	-		2,101,134
	Sub Total	6,902	46,865	2,047,367	-	-	2,101,134
	Co-funding		453,017	250,000	60,500		763,517
TOTAL							2,864,651
TF-02 Ashfield Construction Centre	RDEL	-	-	-	-	-	-
	CDEL	14,746	21,377	733,077	4,032,555		4,801,755
	Total	14,746	21,377	733,077	4,032,555	-	4,801,755
	Co-funding		-	1,837,500	-	-	1,837,500
TOTAL							6,639,255
TF-03 Automated Distribution and Manufacturing Centre	RDEL	-	-	500,000	375,000	125,000	1,000,000
	CDEL	17,035	153,724	19,079,241	233,141	-	19,483,141
	Sub Total	17,035	153,724	19,579,241	608,141	125,000	20,483,141
	Co-funding				467,000	934,000	1,401,000
TOTAL							21,884,141
TF-04 Cycling and Walking Routes	RDEL	-	-	-	-	-	-
	CDEL	1,142	30,000	1,808,138	97,000	-	1,936,280
	Total	1,142	30,000	1,808,138	97,000	-	1,936,280
	Co-funding			-	45,000		45,000
TOTAL							1,981,280
TF-05 Enterprising Ashfield	RDEL	2,344	681,553	1,360,103	985,000	816,000	3,845,000

	CDEL	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Sub Total	2,344	681,553	1,360,103	985,000	816,000	3,845,000
	Co-funding						3,746,867
TOTAL							7,591,867
TF-06 Green Ashfield	RDEL	-	-	-	-	-	-
	CDEL	1,142	114,457	1,684,401	398,048		2,198,048
	Sub Total	1,142	114,457	1,684,401	398,048	-	2,198,048
	Co-funding			2,812,134	317,167	-	3,129,301
TOTAL							5,327,349
TF-07 High Street Property Fund	RDEL	-	-	-	-	-	-
	CDEL	18,265	4,631	876,305			899,201
	Sub Total	18,265	4,631	876,305	-	-	899,201
	Co-funding			100,000			100,000
TOTAL							999,201
TF-08 Kings Mill Reservoir Leisure Development	RDEL	-	-	-	-	-	-
	CDEL	23,196	459,422	2,059,125	810,257		3,352,000
	Sub Total	127,000	2,414,743	2,414,743	2,414,743		3,352,000
	Co-funding			192,000	456,000		648,000
TOTAL							4,000,000
TF-09 Kingsway Sports Hub	RDEL	-	-	-	-	-	-
	CDEL	5,640	87,059	1,898,977			1,991,676
	Total	5,640	87,059	1,898,977	-	-	1,991,676
	Co-funding	39,000			300,000		339,000
TOTAL							2,340,676
TF-10 Library Innovation Centres	RDEL	-	-	48,000	51,000	51,000	150,000
	CDEL		3,375	509,625	38,000	36,478	587,478
	Sub Total	-	3,375	557,625	89,000	87,478	737,478

	Co-funding				113,000		113,000
TOTAL							850,478
TF-11 North Kirkby Gateway	RDEL	-	-	-	90,000	90,000	180,000
	CDEL	7,935	83,605	1,520,583	3,330,797	3,786,727	8,729,648
	Sub Total	7,935	83,605	1,520,583	3,420,797	3,876,727	8,909,648
	Co-funding				2,155,000	2,985,999	5,140,999
TOTAL							14,050,647
TF-12 Portland Square Refurbishment	RDEL	-	-	-	-	-	-
	CDEL	65,000	400,000	764,352	-	-	1,229,352
	Total	65,000	400,000	764,352	-	-	1,229,352
	Co-funding	-		136,000			136,000
TOTAL							1,365,352
TF-14 Science Discovery Centre & Planetarium	RDEL	-	-	-	-	-	-
	CDEL	149,500	385,786	1,554,714	208,004		2,248,004
	Total	149,500	385,786	1,554,714	208,004	-	2,298,004
	Co-funding	-	29,000		956,000		985,000
LUF- Science Discovery Centre	CDEL	-	250,000	1,425,000	1,425,000	-	3,100,000
Total							6,333,004
TF-15 Sutton Lawn Sports Hub	RDEL	-	-	-	-	-	-
	CDEL	5,661	113,904	651,435	2,047,633		2,818,633
	Total	5,661	113,904	651,435	2,047,633	-	2,818,633
	Co-funding			107,973.86	264,000	1,650,000	2,021,973.86
TOTAL							4,840,606.86
TF-16 Visitor Digital Offer	RDEL	-	-	-	-	-	-
	CDEL	11,474	58,539	144,797			214,809

	Total	11,474	58,539	144,797	-	-	214,809
	Co-funding			45,000			45,000
TOTAL							259,809
TF-17 West Kirkby Gateway	RDEL	-	-	-	-	-	-
	CDEL	6,908	250,128	959,965	2,741,041		3,958,041
	Total	6,908	250,128	959,965	2,741,041	-	3,958,041
	Co-funding				3,920,000		3,920,000
TOTAL							7,878,041

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Report To:	CABINET
Date:	17TH JUNE 2024
Heading:	RURAL LEISURE PROVISION
Executive Lead Member:	CLLR CHRIS HUSKINSON, EXECUTIVE LEAD MEMBER FOR LEISURE, HEALTH AND WELLBEING
Ward/s:	ALL RURAL WARDS
Key Decision:	NO
Subject to Call-In:	YES

Purpose of Report

To update Cabinet regarding Rural Leisure Provision.

Recommendation(s)

To note the contents of the report.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

Rural leisure provision is a key priority for the Council.

Alternative Options Considered

None – the report is for information only.

Detailed Information

Rural leisure provision is a key priority for the Council and we are working with partners including Selston High School and Selston Parish Council to establish community leisure provision in the Rural area in the short and longer-term.

In the short-term as part of Phase 1 we are exploring opportunities to provide activities within the school's existing sports hall for public use on evenings and at weekends. The small synthetic pitch will also be opened up to further community use, once some renovation work has taken place.

In the medium-term the small synthetic pitch will be replaced with new carpet and fencing and will be open for community use outside of school hours. The Council is submitting an application to the Football Foundation’s Playzone programme for funding, this site is one of seven planned across the District which are due to be installed next year.

Phase 2 will see the school invest in a new four court sports hall with studio space as part of a comprehensive programme to transform the school’s facilities. The leisure facilities will be run by an operator on behalf of the school at evenings and weekends for community use. Works are aimed to be started in 2027.

The Council is also working with the school, parish council, Notts. FA, the Football Foundation and Selston Football Club to develop a funding application for a full size 3G pitch which will provide training and match facilities for local teams as well as daytime use for the school.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

The project supports the Council’s corporate priorities as follows:

Health and Happiness: Best Start

- Increasing access to leisure services and activities for children, and young people
- Ongoing enhancement and continuing transformation of our leisure provision and health offer across the District.

Cleaner and Greener: Parks and Green Spaces

- Delivering our five-year green space improvement programme
- Developing and delivering our transformation programme for outdoor sports facilities and visitor centres/ cafés.

Legal: No specific comments. Legal Services will provide advice and assistance as necessary to ensure any transactions are formalised by way of the correct legal documentation. [LE 31.05.24]

Finance: A budget for this provision will be created and will be funded through the Leisure Reserve. [PH 29/05/2024].

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	Costs for the activities programme in the short-term can be met through the Leisure Reserve.
General Fund – Capital Programme	N/a
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	N/a
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	N/a

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
No risks identified at this stage.	Not applicable.

Human Resources:

No implications identified.

Environmental/Sustainability:

Providing leisure facilities in the Rural area will provide improved access and reduce car travel to facilities outside of the Rural area.

Equalities:

The programme will provide better quality and more local and accessible facilities for all.

Other Implications:

Not applicable

Reason(s) for Urgency

Not applicable

Reason(s) for Exemption

Not applicable

Background Papers

Not applicable

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Report To:	CABINET
Date:	17 JUNE 2024
Heading:	HOUSING COMPLAINTS – ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT AND COMPLAINT HANDLING CODE SELF-ASSESSMENT
Executive Lead Member:	CLLR A MEAKIN, EXECUTIVE LEAD MEMBER FOR COUNCIL AND SOCIAL HOUSING AND CLLR S DEAKIN, EXECUTIVE LEAD MEMBER FOR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE (LEAD MEMBER FOR COMPLAINTS)
Ward/s:	ALL
Key Decision:	YES
Subject to Call-In:	YES

Purpose of Report

To provide Cabinet with an overview of the Housing Ombudsman Service’s Complaint Handling Code, the requirements for the Council to ensure full compliance and explain how the Council meets these.

To seek approval from Cabinet to publish the revised Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment to the Council’s website and submit this to the Housing Ombudsman Service, in line with our statutory requirement.

To seek comment from Cabinet, as the Council’s Governing Body, on the Annual Housing Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2023/24, prior to publishing this and submitting to the Housing Ombudsman Service, in line with our statutory requirement.

Recommendations

Cabinet is requested to: -

- Acknowledge the requirements and obligations on the Council under the Housing Ombudsman Service’s Complaint Handling Code.
- Approve the revised annual Self-Assessment and its publication on the Council’s website and submission to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

- Make comment on the Annual Housing Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2023/24, prior to submission to the Housing Ombudsman Service and publication. It is recommended that comments consider the following:
 - The Council's approach to understanding the importance of complaints and instilling a culture of welcoming complaints to ensure that the best possible services are provided to residents.
 - The Council's open, accessible, and transparent complaints process.
 - The Council's compliance with the Complaint Handling Code and an acknowledgement of our failure to comply with providing acknowledgements and responses within the required timescales, in a small number of cases, along with the improvements made in this area, as the year progressed.
 - The Council's understanding of the importance of complaints as a learning opportunity and the adoption of a culture where learning outcomes should be maximised and implemented as quickly as possible to improve services to residents.

Reasons for Recommendations

Membership to the Housing Ombudsman Service's (HOS) Scheme is mandatory for all social housing landlords and compliance with their Complaint Handling Code forms part of the membership obligations. Landlords must comply with all requirements of the Code or offer an explanation to HOS for any areas of non-compliance. Following the introduction of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, the Complaint Handling Code, is now a statutory instrument and failure to comply with it effectively amounts to regulatory failure.

The Act also placed a requirement on the HOS to monitor compliance with the Code, social housing landlords have until 28 June 2024 to publish and submit their Self-Assessment and Complaint Performance and Service Improvement Report to the HOS and publish it publicly.

Alternative Options Considered

There is no alternative option, adoption of all requirements of HOS' Complaint Handling Code is a mandatory statutory requirement. Failure to comply would result in the HOS issuing a Complaint Handling Failure Notice, due to a breach of membership obligations. It is also likely that the HOS would report the regulatory failure to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). RSH has the ability to apply sanctions and unlimited fines on landlords failing to adhere to their regulatory obligations.

Detailed Information

On 08 February 2024 the HOS published the outcome of their consultation on their proposed revised Complaint Handling Code. The new Complaint Handling Code came into effect from 01 April 2024. The Code was revised following the introduction of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, which made the Code a statutory instrument. The Code was initially intended to be shared with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman; however, two separate Codes were introduced with shared principles.

The Code sets out the HOS' expectations on members of their scheme, which is mandatory for social housing landlords, to ensure that complaints from their residents are dealt with fairly, consistently and in line with good practice. The Code also ensures that landlords have an accessible and transparent complaints process, to ensure that tenants can hold their landlord to account, where they are dissatisfied with their service provision.

The full Complaint Handling Code can be found at:

<https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords-info/complaint-handling-code/the-code-2024/>

The Code requires landlords to publish a Self-Assessment and Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report annually, so their residents can scrutinise their complaint handling activities. Both reports must also be submitted to the HOS, to enable them to fulfil their statutory obligation to monitor compliance with the Code.

The Code supports the regulatory approach to complaints ensuring that landlord's complaint processes are clear, simple, accessible and that complaints are resolved promptly, professionally and fairly.

The Housing Ombudsman works in conjunction with the Regulator for Social Housing, who are leading on reforms in the sector following the Grenfell Disaster and can report concerns of non-compliance to the Regulator, which could trigger inspections/interactions with the landlord. The Regulator for Social Housing has the authority to apply sanctions on social housing landlords and can issue unlimited fines, which will present a potentially significant financial and reputational risk to the Council.

Upon publication of the new Complaint Handling Code a review was undertaken of the [Corporate Complaints and Compliments Policy](#). Amendments to the Policy were proposed to the Corporate Leadership Team, who approved these. The new Policy was published to the Council's website on 01 April 2024 and has been adopted for complaints received since this date.

Following the amendments to the Complaints Policy, the [Housing Complaints Procedure](#) has been amended, distributed to relevant officers and uploaded to the Council's internal intranet. The revised procedure has been adopted for all complaints received since 01 April 2024.

The Complaint Handling Code stipulates that both a Self-Assessment and Complaint Performance and Service Improvement Report must be reported to the landlord's Governing Body, prior to publication and submission to the HOS. The Governing Body's response to the Performance Report, must also be published and submitted to the HOS.

The Council's position against the Code

The self-assessment against the HOS' Complaint Handling Code can be found in appendix 1 of this report. The review found that the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure ensure the Council is fully compliant with the requirements of the Code. The Policy and Procedure have been shared with officers handling complaints to ensure compliance is achieved and expectations met. It is noted in the Housing Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report that a small number of stage one complaints were not responded to in line with the HOS' then Complaint Handling Code.

Previously the Tenant's Gateway group have undertaken a review of the complaint handling practices and have been asked to feedback as part of the self-assessment process. Whilst changes to the Policy/Procedure have been discussed with the Gateway, they have not formally been involved in the self-assessment process, due to the timescales to approve and implement changes, then reporting these to Cabinet and the HOS. Prior to the next self-assessment, consultation will be made with the Gateway group regarding their view of the Council's housing complaint handling practices and compliance with the Complaint Handling Code.

Annual Housing Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

The Annual Housing Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report details information relating to the complaints received during the 2023/24 financial year, including analysis of the complaint handling and outcomes.

The Report also details information relating to the learning outcomes identified and the position relating to their implementation. Complaints are a valuable source of information, and officers are encouraged to maximise the learning opportunities, to ensure that service improvements can be driven forward to minimise resident dissatisfaction moving forwards.

The Report also looks at trends around complaints, so this can be used to review working practices to ensure that the complaints process is as accessible and transparent as possible.

Cabinet should note that the Report also highlights where it has been identified that complaints have not been responded to within the guidelines set out in the Complaint Handling Code. Where these have been identified, guidance and training has been provided to the relevant officers or teams, to mitigate against future recurrence. As the financial year progressed, performance has improved, resulting in all complaints responded to within Q4 being responded to within the timescales set by the HOS.

The report has been distributed to the Tenant's Gateway group and was discussed at the latest meeting on Wednesday 29 May 2024.

The full Report can be found in Appendix 2.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

Fully meets the Corporate Plan priority of leading a customer focussed service, which engages our tenants and adheres to all of our regulatory requirements.

Legal:

The report and its recommendations ensures statutory compliance as detailed in the report. [RLD 29/05/2024]

Finance:

No direct financial implications arising from this report. [PH 22/05/2024].

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	See above
General Fund – Capital Programme	
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
<p>Significant reputational risk – A ‘Complaints Handling Failure Order’ could be served on the Council. This is an Order to rectify within a given timescale and referral to the Regulator of Social Housing. An adverse inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing could result in the removal of the Council’s housing stock or the levy of an unlimited fine.</p> <p>Key policies/procedures/self-assessments related to housing services must be consulted on and be reviewed by tenants as part of regulation.</p>	<p>Full compliance with the Complaint Handling Code as set out by the Housing Ombudsman Service. Small number of exceptions noted around acknowledgement and response times, guidance has been provided to relevant officers and performance has improved.</p> <p>The Code and potential changes to the Policy and Procedure have been discussed with Tenant’s Gateway. The Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report has been distributed to the Tenants Gateway and discussed with the group at the meeting on 29 May 2024.</p>

Human Resources:

There are no direct HR implications contained within the report (KH 21.05.24)

Environmental/Sustainability:

N/A

Equalities:

This is strengthened by the continued requirement to publish the Council’s Reasonable Adjustments Policy on the website. The Council’s Complaints and Compliments Policy sets out information around how tenants can access support to access the complaints process, if required. The Housing Complaints Procedure sets out guidance to officers around making adjustments for complainants and assessing any vulnerabilities to ensure access is provided and tenants are able to engage with the complaints process.

Other Implications:

N/A

Background Papers

Appendix 1 - Self-Assessment - Complaint Handling Code – May 2024

Appendix 2 – Annual Housing Complaints Performance and Service Improvements Report 2023/24

Report Author and Contact Officer

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Ashfield District Council - Self-Assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Service's Complaint Handling Code

The Housing Ombudsman Service states that:

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.

Assessment Completed By: Peter Curry, Consumer Standards Lead Officer

Assessment reported to and approved by the Council's Cabinet on: Monday 17 June 2024

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	Definition set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and the Housing Complaints Procedure	
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	Expectations around wording of complaints is set out in the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure. The ability to submit complaints through third parties is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	
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	Yes	This is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	

	recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.			
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	This is set out in the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure and is common practice throughout the organisation.	
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	This approach is set out in the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure	

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	This approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and the Housing Complaints Procedure.	
2.2	<p>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:</p> <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	The Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy sets out a number of exclusions and confirms these will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.	

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	The Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy states in its exclusions " <i>The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago (without good reason for the delay in raising a complaint), except where there are health and safety issues or safeguarding concerns</i> " and confirms that exclusions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.	
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	The approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy. The Housing Complaints Procedure confirms this approach and stipulates that the complainant must be informed of a decision to exclude in writing, providing a sample letter that includes the contact details for the Housing Ombudsman Service.	
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	This approach is confirmed in the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure.	

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	The Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy lists a number of methods residents can make a complaint to the Council, including in person and by phone. The Policy also provides advice on what residents should do, if they require support to make a complaint, along with signposting to the Council's Reasonable Adjustments Scheme, which has been created in line with the Equality Act 2010. The Council's Housing Complaints Procedure also provides information relating to ensuring the complaints process is accessible to all residents.	
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	Guidance is available to all officers on complaint handling via the Council's internal intranet. Complaints are routinely discussed as part of regular team meetings.	
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	Yes	The Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy states " <i>We understand the importance of complaints in providing valuable</i>	

	complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.		<i>feedback on the quality of services we provide to residents. The Council do not see complaints as negative, as the outcomes are used to help improve the services we provide to our customer and appreciate that high complaint volumes can be expected as we have adopted an open and accessible Complaints Policy”.</i>	
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	The Council’s Complaints and Compliments Policy is published on the website and available in alternative formats, upon request. A two-stage process is adopted and the policy provides process steps, and associated timescales.	
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	The Council’s Complaints and Compliments Policy provides an explanation of the publicising of the Complaints Policy, it also includes details of the Housing Ombudsman Service, along with contact details and links to the Ombudsman’s website. The Policy signposts to the Housing Complaints section of the website with further information relating to the Housing Ombudsman Service.	

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	This approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	
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	Housing Ombudsman details are contained within the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy, on the Housing Complaints Page of the website and within standard letter templates set out in the Housing Complaints Procedure. Housing Ombudsman Posters are also displayed in public areas of the Urban Road Office.	

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	The Consumer Standards Officer is the Complaints Officer for the Council's housing complaints.	
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	The Consumer Standards Lead Officer has access to all levels within the Council, to ensure complaints are resolved 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	This expectation is set out within the Housing Complaints Procedure.	

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	The Council have a single Complaints Policy and a culture where any type of discrimination is not tolerated.	
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	The Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure both focus on facilitating resolving and responding to complaints as quickly as possible. There are no pre-complaint or informal complaint stages in the Council's Complaints Policy.	
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	The Council has adopted a two-stage complaints 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	Yes	The Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy stipulates that complaints relating to third parties providing services on behalf of the Council will be investigated and responded to by the commissioning department	

	expected to go through two complaints processes.		within the Council, in line with the Council's Policy.	
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	The Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy stipulates that complaints relating to third parties providing services on behalf of the Council will be investigated and responded to by the commissioning department within the Council, in line with the Council's Policy.	
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	This approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	
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	This approach is set out in the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure.	
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; 	Yes	The approach is set out in the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 			
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	This approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	
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	This approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	
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	The Council's Housing Complaints Procedure contains a letter template, which includes detailing the reasons for the decision not to escalate a complaint and includes HOS' contact details so the decision can be challenged, if required. No guidance is provided on	

			exclusions from escalation, as it is confirmed in the letter template that it is expected that this would only take place if one of the exclusions set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy came in to effect between stage one and two of the process.	
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	Guidance is set out for officers in the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure. The Housing Complaints Officer co-ordinates storage of housing complaint documents.	
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	This approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	
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	Yes	This approach is set out in the Council's Unreasonable or Unreasonably Persistent Complaints Policy.	

	must keep restrictions under regular review.			
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.		This approach is set out in the Council's Unreasonable or Unreasonably Persistent Complaints Policy.	

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	This approach is set out in the Housing Complaints Procedure.	
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <u>within five working days of the complaint being received</u> .	Yes	This approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	It is noted that a small number of complaints were not acknowledged within this timescale during the 2023/24 financial year. Guidance and information has been provided to relevant service areas and performance in this area improved as the year progressed.
6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <u>within 10 working</u>	Yes	This approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and	It is noted that a very small number of complaints were not responded to within this

	<u>days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.		Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	timescale (excluding those cases subject to an extension to the response deadline) during the 2023/24 financial year. This related to confusion regarding a period of enforced closure (Christmas) and the calculation of working days. Guidance and information has been provided to the relevant service area and performance in this area improved since.
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	This approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	
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	This approach is set out in the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure.	
6.6	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the	Yes	This approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and	

	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.		Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	
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	This approach is set out in the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure.	
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	This approach is set out in the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure.	
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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; 	Yes	This approach is set out in the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure.	

	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.			
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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	This approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	
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	This approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	
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	This approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	This approach is set out in the Housing Complaints Procedure.	

6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	This approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	
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	This approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	
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	This approach is set out in the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure.	
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	This approach is set out in the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure.	
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	This approach is set out in the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure.	

6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 			
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	This approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	

Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologising; 	Yes	This approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 			
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	This approach is set out in the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure.	
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	This approach is set out in the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure.	
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	This approach is set out in the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure.	

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>The Report has been produced and has been presented to the Council's Cabinet.</p>	

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	Following review of the report and this self-assessment, the outcome and Cabinet's response will be published on the Council's website.	
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	This approach is set out in the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure.	
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	Whilst this is not detailed in Council Policies and Procedures, this is noted by the Council.	
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	Whilst this is not detailed in Council Policies and Procedures, this is noted by the Council.	

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	This approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	
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	This approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	
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	This approach is set out in the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure.	
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	This person is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	It is noted that this post is currently vacant. However, the Chief Executive Officer is the senior officer responsible for all social housing regulatory compliance as an interim arrangement. Housing

				complaint performance/trend information is currently communicated with all Assistant Directors, Executive Directors and the Chief Executive Officer.
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	This approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	
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	This approach is set out in the Council's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure.	
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;	Yes	This approach is set out in the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure.	

	<p>b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;</p> <p>c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and</p> <p>d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.</p>			
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> <p>a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;</p> <p>b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and</p> <p>c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.</p>	Yes	This approach is set out in the Council's Housing Complaints Procedure.	

Housing Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report - 2023/24

To be uploaded as a webpage to the Council’s website following review and comment by Cabinet.

1. Summary

This report sets out a summary of the complaints received by Ashfield District Council in relation to the delivery of its housing services that fall within the jurisdiction of the Housing Ombudsman Service during 2023-24. These are broken down and analysed by stage, service, complainant’s ethnicity, compensation award and type. Customer feedback is also set out alongside the learning from complaints, along with any changes we have made to services following complaints received during 2023-24.

2. Complaint Analysis

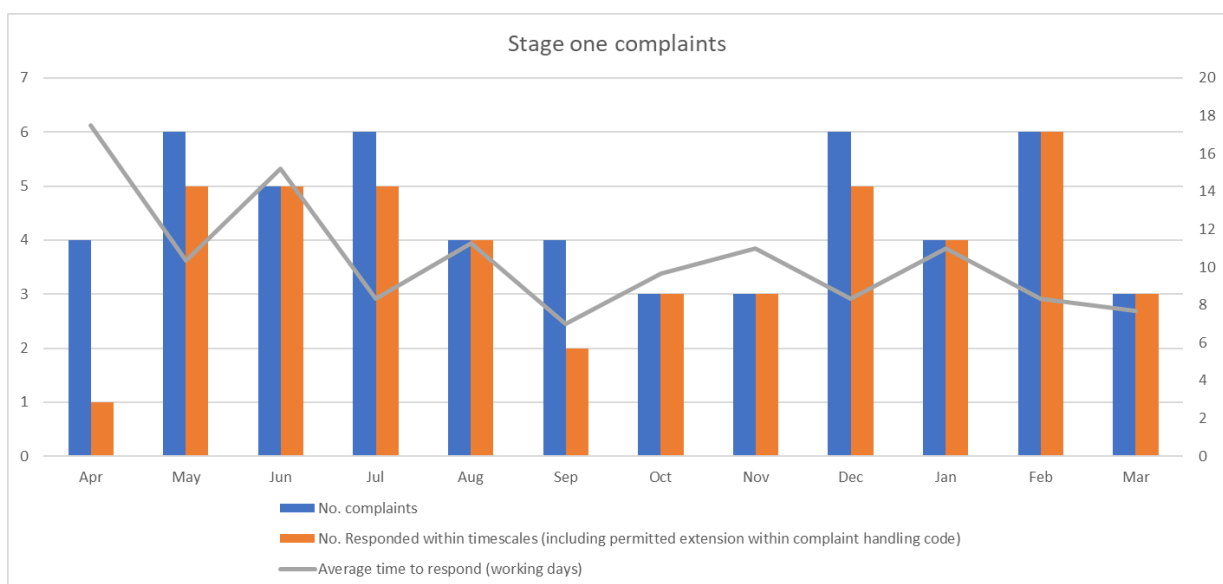
2.1 Number of complaints

During 2023-24, 54 **Stage One** housing complaints were received, broken down as follows:

- Q1 - 15
- Q2 - 14
- Q3 - 12
- Q4 - 13

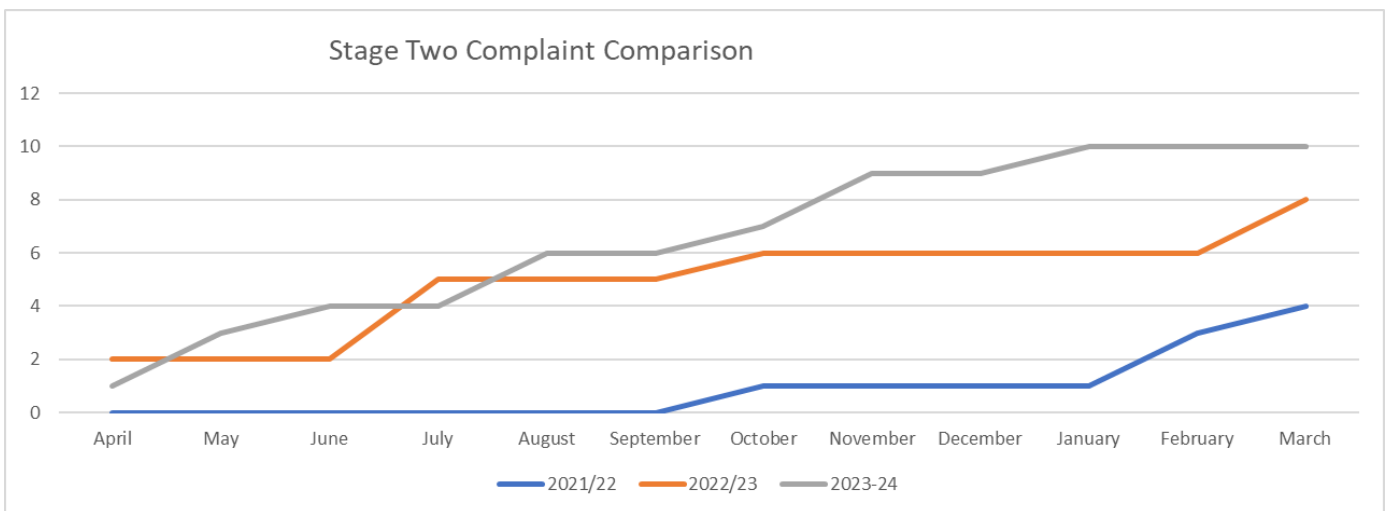
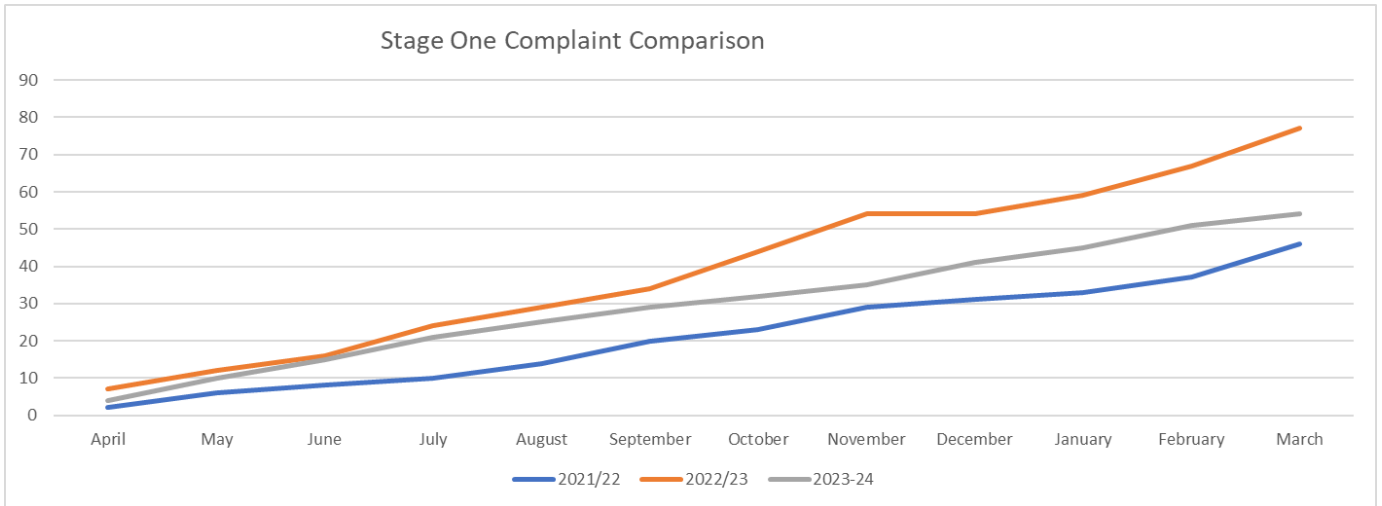
We also received 10 **Stage Two** formal complaint escalations.

Shown below is a breakdown of the stage one complaints received during 2023-24 and the average time taken (working days) to respond on the right axis.



2.2 Performance

There has been a 29.9% reduction in the number of stage one complaints received in 2023-24, compared to the previous year. However, stage one complaint volumes remain higher than 2021-22. Stage two complaints have increase by 25%, compared to the same period last financial year. However, the proportion of complaints escalating to stage two remains relatively low at 18.5%.



In 2023-24, stage one complaints took an average of 10.7 days to respond to, which is 14.8% higher than the previous years and slightly over the target. Extensions to response times above the target response time are permitted under the Housing Ombudsman Services' Complaint Handling Code and have been utilised in all but one case where the response time exceeded target. In this case failure to implement a permitted extension was the result of confusion regarding the definition of 'working days' over the period of enforced office closure period during the Christmas period in December. 85% of stage one complaints were responded to within complaint handling timescales, as defined by the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenant Satisfaction Measures guidance, which was predominantly due to delays in acknowledging the complaint.

51.9% of the stage one complaints received in 2023-24 were found to be upheld or partially upheld, which is consistent with the previous year's decision rate.

2.3 Breakdown of stage one complaints/service requests by service area YTD

Service Area	Number received	Days taken	Average time to respond	% responded to within target	Justified/Part Justified complaints	Number of Service requests (Not Complaints)
Assets	6	54	9.0	66.67	6	1
Support Services	1	9	9.0	100	1	11
Lettings	2	14	7.0	50	0	1
Planned & Cyclical	2	16	8.0	100	2	2
Tenancy Services (ASB – CST)	10	130	13.0	70	3	29
Responsive Repairs	22	208	9.5	95.5	9	1
Housing Management	11	147	13.4	90.9	7	0
Total	54	578	10.7	85.2	28	46

2.4 Breakdown by stage of complaint

Stage one - target (5 working days for acknowledgement; 10 working days for response)

2023-24	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
No. complaints	4	6	5	6	4	4	3	3	6	4	6	3	54
No. Responded within timescales (including permitted extension within complaint handling code)	1	5	5	5	4	2	3	3	5	4	6	3	85.2%
No. Service Requests (not complaints)	3	3	7	1	1	4	4	3	2	8	5	5	46
No. days	69	62	76	50	45	37	29	33	51	44	59	23	578
Average time to respond (working days)	17.25	10.33	15.20	8.33	11.25	9.25	9.67	11.00	8.50	11.00	9.83	7.67	10.7

Non-compliant stage one responses (Complaint Handling Code timescales)

Below is a list of complaints that were not responded to within complaint handling timescales, along with the reason why and the relevant department.

- **Tenant – Kirkby** – took 11 working days to acknowledge (Community Safety)
- **Tenant – Sutton** - took 11 working days to acknowledge (Community Safety)
- **Tenant - Hucknall** – took 7 working days to acknowledge (Community Safety)
- **Tenant – Sutton** - took 6 working days to acknowledge (Assets)
- **Tenant – Sutton** – took 8 working days to acknowledge (Assets)
- **Tenant – Sutton** – took 10 working days to acknowledge (Housing Management)
- **Former Tenant – Sutton** – took 9 working days to acknowledge, as former tenant failed to engage with a request for additional information to facilitate acknowledgement (Lettings)
- **Tenant - Kirkby** – took 6 working days to acknowledge and responded outside of deadlines without an extension (Responsive Repairs)

As non-compliance with the requirements of the Code have been identified, these have been raised with the relevant department and advice given on how to achieve compliance.

Additional guidance was published in September 2023 regarding the definition of how to calculate performance against the complaints responded to within complaint handling timescales, which confirmed the requirement to include complaints acknowledged outside of timescales. As the financial year progressed, compliance improved. A Housing Complaints Procedure is in place to support officers/managers to comply with the requirements of the Complaint Handling Code. Non-Compliant cases were broken down as follows:

- Q1 - 4
- Q2 - 3
- Q3 – 1
- Q4 - 0

Stage two – target (20 working days)

We received 10 stage two complaints in 2023-24. 6 of the stage two complaints were found to be upheld or partially upheld, these 6 complaints are broken down as follows:

- length of time taken – 3
- State of property – 2
- Attitude or conduct of employee – 1

In only 2 or 20% of the stage two investigations the decision made at stage one was changed.

2023-24	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
No complaints	1	2	1	0	2	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	10
No. Responded within timescales (including permitted extension within complaint handling code)	1	2	1	0	2	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	100%
No. days	16	124	15	0	32	0	30	31	0	18	0	0	266
Average time to respond (working days)	16	62	15	0	16	0	30	16	0	18	0	0	26.60

- Tenant - Sutton – State of property, brickwork, windows and mould.
- Tenant - Sutton – unhappy with decision and way complaint dealt with
- Tenant - Sutton – dispute over use of a drive
- Tenant - Sutton – length of time to complete repairs
- Tenant - Sutton – Heating issue not rectified continued to be charged
- Tenant - Kirkby – Took several weeks to bring up to a habitable standard.
- Tenant - Hucknall – Conduct and actions of various officers in Community Safety Team (CST)
- Tenant - Skegby – Continued issues with leaking roof
- Tenant - Hucknall – Conduct of officer from CST and actions taken when investigating alleged ASB
- Tenant – Sutton – Length of time taken to replace communal door.

Non-compliant stage two responses (Complaint Handling Code timescales)

- All the stage two have been complainant in meeting target.

2.5 Proportion of complaints received that relate to leaks, floors or damp and mould

The Council’s handling of damp and mould cases within our housing stock presents a serious risk to both our tenants and the Council. The future introduction of Awaab’s Law, will place more stringent requirements on social housing landlords regarding how they

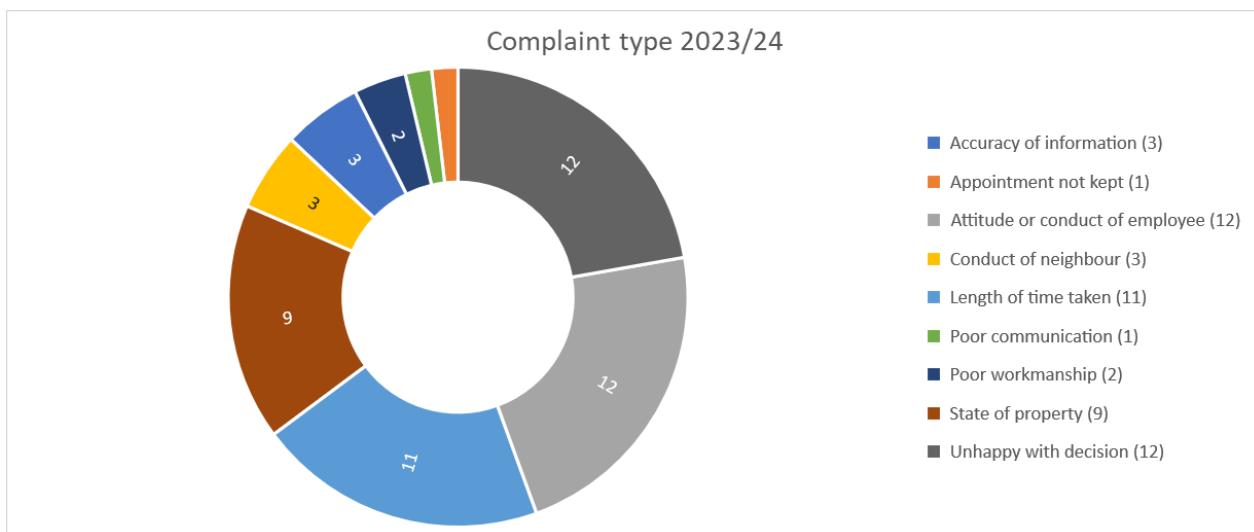
handle and address reports of damp and mould within their housing stock. As a result, we monitor the number of complaints we have received which relate to this subject area, to assist with identifying any systemic issues.

	Complaint Stage		
	One	Two	Service request
Number of complaints (Leaks, Damp & Mould)	11	4	13
Total No Complaints	54	10	
Leaks, Damp & Mould complaints as a Percentage of all complaints	20.37%	40%	28.26%
Leaks, Damp & Mould complaints: Upheld	(4) 36.36%	(1) 25%	N/A
Upheld partial:	(1) 0.09%	(1) 25%	N/A
Not upheld	(6) 54.55%	(1) 50%	N/A

One fifth of all stage one complaints received included leaks/damp and/or mould, and two fifths of the stage two complaints.

2.6 Breakdown by type of complaint

The stage one complaints received within the financial year were broken down as follows:

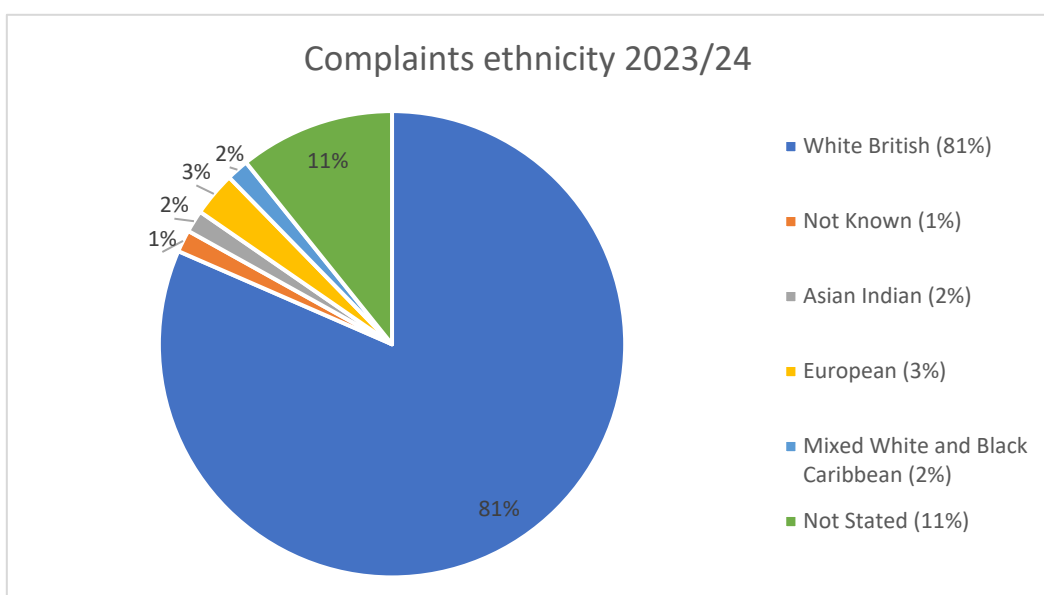


The percentage of complaints by type is shown below and is compared to the previous financial year. Green colouring denotes this year's proportion is lower than last year and red denotes a higher proportion this year. "Unhappy with decision" is the highest complaint reason and equates to nearly a quarter of all complaints and is higher than same period last financial year. Whereas we have seen a significant decrease in the number of complaints relating to "poor workmanship" and "poor communication" based on the proportions of the last financial year.

Complaint Type	% of complaints within financial year	
	2023-24	2022-23
Attitude or conduct of employee	22.22% (12)	31.2% (24)
Unhappy with decision	22.22% (12)	5.2% (4)
Length of time taken	20.37% (11)	18.2% (14)
State of property	16.67% (9)	14.3% (11)
Conduct of neighbour	5.56% (3)	1.3% (1)
Accuracy of information	5.56% (3)	5.2% (4)
Poor workmanship	3.70% (2)	14.3% (11)
Poor communication	1.85% (1)	10.4% (8)
Appointment not kept	1.85% (1)	0% (0)

2.7 Breakdown of complaints by complainant's ethnicity

The ethnicity of the complainant (including both stage one and two) is monitored based on the information held in the Capita OpenHousing system, at the time of making the complaint and is not collected as part of the complaints process, to avoid any allegations of bias. The breakdown continues to be relatively consistent with the tenant base. A project group is currently reviewing the diversity information held on tenants and the implementation of tenancy audits to ensure that tenant data is reviewed with tenants on a regular basis, to ensure accuracy.



2.8 Compensation awards as part of complaint outcomes

A total of £1814.48 has been offered to tenants, in compensation or ex-gratia payments, as a remedy for resolving the complaints and acknowledging the impact of service failure, this incorporates complaints at all levels, including awards made by the Housing Ombudsman Service.

2.9 Expressions of dissatisfaction excluded from the complaint process

There have been four expressions of dissatisfaction received, which were not accepted for investigation through the complaints process, as they met one of the exceptions within the Complaints and Compliments Policy. Details of the cases are as follows:

May – Tenant - Sutton – dissatisfaction related to a legal decision, in relation to the enforcement of an access injunction awarded by the Courts. An additional element of the dissatisfaction related to allegations of ASB, which was considered to be a service request.

May – Tenant - Sutton – Expression of dissatisfaction submitted on tenant's behalf by HOS. Dissatisfaction related to the care of the tenant's dog whilst the tenant was in Police custody. Complaint not accepted as the Council believed the duty of care lies with Nottinghamshire Police to ensure wellbeing of the dog whilst owner was in custody. Further information was subsequently received from HOS, following a review of the dissatisfaction and the complaint accepted on their instruction. The complaint was not upheld at stages one and two. The tenant has recently requested that the Housing Ombudsman service investigate the case.

June – Tenant - Sutton – The request to make a complaint was the first report of concerns relating to the condition of the property following being re-let. The complaint was not accepted and the dissatisfaction was responded to as a service request.

August – Tenant - Sutton – A representative submitted a complaint on behalf of the tenant, in relation to the Council's handling of an alleged pest infestation at the property. Upon seeking authority from the tenant to disclose information to the representative, they advised that they had no knowledge of the complaint being made on their behalf and that they were satisfied with the Council's actions to address their service request. The representative was notified that the complaint would not be accepted as the tenant had confirmed they were not dissatisfied with the service provided by the Council.

2.10 Housing Ombudsman Complaints

During 2023/24 1 new complaint was referred to the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) for investigation. All relevant supporting information was provided to HOS in March 2024, to assist the HOS with their investigation. A determination is expected by the end of June 2024.

One complaint remained with the HOS for investigation following a referral by a tenant in 2022/23. In November 2023 we received notification that the HOS had concluded their investigation and had determined that there had been no service failure on behalf of the Council.

3. Customer Feedback

A complaints satisfaction survey is sent to all stage one complainants as part of the resolution documentation for their complaint. We also provide complainants with the option to complete an online survey, where they can send feedback online about the process and learning from the complaints process.

During 2023/24 only 5 complainants have returned a completed satisfaction survey of their own accord, which is a response rate of 9.26%, which is slightly higher than historical response rates. Low response rates and low rates of escalation to stage two are considered as a positive. In 2024/25 the approach to surveying tenants regarding their satisfaction with the complaints process is to be reviewed to attempt to encourage more complainants to provide feedback on their experience with the complaints process.

Below is a breakdown of the responses submitted by the survey respondents. The responses are relatively consistent with historical responses where the complainant is typically either very satisfied with the complaint handling and does not wish to escalate to the next stage or they are very dissatisfied with the complaint handling and wish to escalate to stage two.

Question	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3	Respondent 4	Respondent 5
Overall how satisfied are you with the handling of your complaint?	Fairly Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Very Satisfied
How satisfied are you that the staff who dealt with your complaint were helpful and polite?	Very Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Very Satisfied
How satisfied are you that the complaints process is easy to access and understand?	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Neutral	Very Dissatisfied	Very Satisfied
Overall how satisfied with the outcome of your complaint?	Very Satisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Very Satisfied
How Satisfied are you that all areas of your complaint were addressed?	Very Satisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Very Satisfied
How satisfied are you that the reasons for the	Very Satisfied	Neutral	Very Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Very Satisfied

outcome of your complaint were fully explained?					
If you are not fully satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, do you accept that explanation that has been offered?	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, will you be taking it to the next stage?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

4. Learning

4.1 Actions from learning from complaints

We record any learning outcomes from complaints that require further action or changes to policy, process, or procedure.

A colour coded risk rating for each of the actions coming out of complaints is assigned to each action. This is based on the level of potential risk to the Authority/Tenant for not addressing the action and a future complaint relating to these actions occurring, which may result in a service failure or maladministration finding from the Housing Ombudsman.

From the complaints responded to during 2023-24, 41 learning outcomes were identified, to date 34 or 83% of which have all been implemented by service areas.

Complaint learning outcomes have reduced by 56% since the same period last financial year. Whilst complaint volumes fell, this was by a significantly smaller amount and case outcomes rates remain relatively similar.

A summary of the learning outcomes is as follows:

Risk Category	Number of Learning Outcomes	Number Implemented	Percentage Implemented
Red	8	8	100%
Amber	21	18	86%
Green	12	8	67%
Total	41	34	83%

A breakdown of the learning outcomes identified is as follows:

- Officer was reminded to ensure formal warnings are served in line with investigation processes and procedures.
- Voids Team were reminded to inspect all lofts when the property is void and ensure that the previous tenants' items are cleared during the void period.
- The Leaseholder permissions process is to be streamlined and officers made aware of the process.
- Joint contractor and council visits to be undertaken in the future at a specific address during major works project to ensure consistency.
- Call centre team received refresher training on the process relating to reports of drainage issues from tenants and what information can be passed to tenants wishing to make a complaint.
- Call centre team reminded of the importance of listening to all the tenant's query to help with better understanding and response to the issue.
- Discuss missed appointment/delays with the third-party contractor to help with improving their service when working on behalf of Ashfield District Council.
- Refresher session provided to officer on improving communication to provide clear understanding to tenants so they have understanding how we are dealing with their concerns.
- Assets to liaise with lettings when major works being undertaken in a void property to identify how quickly the property will be let.
- Call recordings shared with officer, so that they can reflect on their tone and some of the comments made. Officer reminded to remain courteous and professional during interactions with tenants.
- Officer reminded to re-direct ASB related calls to the allocated case officer where there is an open case, and the investigation is ongoing.
- Feedback/guidance provided to officer on how to manage similar types of calls more effectively.
- Officer reminded to review tenancy records prior to undertaking visits, consider vulnerabilities and involve support agencies when attempting to resolve tenancy issues.
- Officer reminded to fully investigate an issue before reaching a conclusion and to remain impartial throughout investigations.
- Officer (and the wider team) provided with refresher training on how to deal with vulnerable tenants.
- Works continuing to suppress appointment confirmation text messages being sent to tenants when all works are external, and the tenant is not required to be home for the appointment.
- Officers reminded to ensure that materials are ordered and are ready in time for the work order to be completed. If not, ensure that the tenant is kept fully informed.
- Contingency plan put in place during long term sickness for inspectors' calendars to reduce requirement for rescheduling appointments.
- Major works contractors to highlight addresses where tenants are unable to remove flooring to the Council and are not commence works until issue resolved.
- Officer reminded to allow a postponement of meetings where a tenant wishes to seek legal advice and in consideration of any other circumstances around impact of the service of legal documents on a tenant's health.

- Complaint investigators to check that relevant GDPR forms are completed at the beginning of the complaints process to avoid unnecessary delays in sending the response.
- Officer to be reminded of the process to follow when receiving service requests from other departments and of the customer service standards expected.
- Discussions had with contractor on how to improve their service and expectations when working on the Councils behalf.
- Call centre team received refresher training on consistency when dealing with calls.
- Timescales to be put in place for officer to complete internal checks required for rent refund applications within 5 working days of receipt, to ensure that target overall response time of 28 working days is met.
- Officer reminded of the complaints process and to be given feedback on the call with advice on how to remain impartial and manage calls more effectively.
- Officers reminded to be mindful not to stand on tenants' personal items during visits.
- Review of the 'no gas' process to take place to ensure appropriate steps are taken/support provided to attempt to reinstate the gas supply as soon as possible.
- Alleged inappropriate comments to tenant when reporting ASB issues to Police call centre to be raised with the area Police contact.
- Responsible team reminded of need to expediate the collection of needles/drugs paraphernalia when reported.
- Officer reminded of GDPR requirements and not to discuss personal circumstances of residents in public areas of the court at any time.
- Officer reminded that if they are made aware of any issues concerning the welfare of residents, these should be reported to the appropriate officer within the Council or their line manager as soon as possible.
- Support referrals to external agencies to be reviewed by a Team Leader or Manager in 1:1s with support officers to ensure these are pursued with the agency concerned or for alternative action to be taken.
- Officers reminded, that any part required must be ordered within a satisfactory timeframe.
- Officers reminded of the processes and procedures for recording visits where they feel under threat of violence or harassment.
- Refund of Overpaid Rent Application form and declaration to be updated to make clear how the refund will be calculated, and that it will be reduced by the equivalent of one week's rent.
- Guidance provided to officer regarding the process for the delivery of formal notices and including their communication styles ensuring that full consideration is given in particularly sensitive situations.
- Contractor reminded of expected/appropriate behaviour when working on behalf of the Council.
- Officers reminded not to pass comment regarding matters when they do not have all the information.

4.2 Changes to complaints process

There have been no changes to the complaint handling process during 2023/24. However, amended Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure were implemented on 01 April 2024.

4.3 Emerging themes from complaints

Analysis has taken place across the themes/types of complaints we have received. The main areas and lessons emerging for services are:

- **Stage one complaints not responded to within complaint handling code timescales** – A small number of stage one complaints have not been handled in line with the deadlines set out in the Housing Ombudsman Service’s Complaint Handling Code. It is imperative that all complaints, are handled in line with the code, including the requirements for acknowledging complaints. Compliance with the complaint handling code is now a statutory requirement and will be closely monitored by the Housing Ombudsman and forms part of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures return to the Regulator of Social Housing. Service areas are reminded to follow the requirements set out in the Council’s Complaints and Compliments Policy, and the Housing Complaints Procedure to ensure that complaints are thoroughly investigated and responded to as quickly as possible, to minimise the impact on the complainant.
- **Declining complaint volumes** – Whilst stage one complaints remain higher than historical levels, the number of complaints received during 2023/24 has reduced against the previous year. From 01 April 2024 the Housing Ombudsman Service’s Complaint Handling Code has removed the ability to resolve complaints informally, service areas should ensure that all expressions of dissatisfaction are logged as a formal complaint (subject to the exceptions permitted in the Complaints Policy) and are formally investigated in line with the Complaints Policy, and that all officers are aware to the complaints process to ensure that they support complainants to access the process, by assisting to overcome any barriers, where possible. Complaints are a valuable source of information around the performance of teams/processes and should be welcomed by all areas of the business.
- **Proportion of complaints escalating to stage two** – The proportion of complaints escalating to stage two of the process has increased since the last financial year, despite stage one complaints reducing. Stage two decisions and the correlation of these against stage one decisions are being monitored, to ensure that all efforts are being made to ensure that all efforts are being made to attempt to resolve complaints as early as possible. Currently the rate of stage two complaints overturning stage one decisions and escalations to the Housing Ombudsman Service (and their findings against the Council) are relatively low, which suggests that stage one outcomes are appropriate.
- **Declining Learning Outcomes** – Learning outcomes have decreased considerably during 2023/24 compared to the previous financial year, despite similar proportion of the complaints being upheld or partially upheld. Complaint volumes have, however, decreased which could account for some of the reduction. Complaints are a valuable source of learning, and it is important that service areas are mindful of any learning outcomes that could be implemented, regardless of the outcome of the complaint, to ensure that tenants or leaseholders do not experience similar dissatisfaction in the future. Learning outcomes should be maximised and implemented ASAP to ensure the improvement of services through the tenant/leaseholder voice.

5 Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

The Authority's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Housing Complaints Procedure remained in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code during 2023/24.

Both documents have now been updated and implemented to ensure compliance with the new Complaint Handling Code, which went live on 01 April 2024. A further amendment has been made following a change of correspondence address for the Housing Ombudsman Service.

A self-assessment against the Code is being conducted and will be presented to Cabinet in June 2024, before being published to tenants and submitted to the Ombudsman.

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