

Dear Members

Cabinet

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held on **Thursday 22 January 2026** at **6.30pm** in the **Craddock Room, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford** to deal with the business as set out on the agenda.

Please note that this meeting will be recorded

Members are reminded that contact officers are shown at the top of each report and members are welcome to raise questions etc in advance of the meeting with the appropriate officer.



Head of Law and Governance

CABINET - 22 JANUARY 2026

Chair - Councillor A T A Godfrey

AGENDA

- 1 Minutes of 11 December 2025 as circulated and published on 12 December 2025
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Councillors' Question Time (if any)
- 4 Proposals of the Cabinet Members (as follows):-

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(a) RESOURCES PORTFOLIO	
(i) General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2025-28	3 - 61
(ii) Fees and Charges Review 2026/2027	62 - 67
(b) COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO	
(i) Allocation Policy Review and Changes	68 - 145

Membership

Chair - Councillor A T A Godfrey

A T A Godfrey	- Leader
R Kenney	- Deputy Leader (Town Centres Regeneration Portfolio)
R P Cooke	- Resources Portfolio
I D Fordham	- Environment Portfolio
J Hood	- Community Portfolio
G P K Pardesi	- Leisure Portfolio
A N Pearce	- Climate Action and Nature Recovery Portfolio
A F Reid	- Economic Development and Planning Portfolio

Agenda Item 4(a)i

General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2025-28

Committee:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	22 January 2025
Report of:	Deputy Chief Executive
Portfolio:	Resources Portfolio

The following matter is to be considered by Resources Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 20 January 2026 and Council on 10 February 2026 and submitted to Cabinet as required.

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To propose to the Council the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2026-27, the updated Capital Programme 2025-26 to 2028-29 and indicative budgets for 2027-28 to 2028-29.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the following be recommended to the Council:
 - (a) The Budget Requirement for the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2026-27 be set at £20.888 million;
 - (b) The indicative General Fund Revenue Budgets be set at £20.724 million for 2027-28 and £20.987 million for 2028-29;
 - (c) The General Fund working balance be set at a minimum of £1.0 million;
 - (d) The detailed capital programme as set out in **APPENDIX 2** be approved;
 - (e) That the Council Tax for 2026-27 be increased by 2.99% to £184.09;
 - (f) The Council's Tax Base be set at 50,296.31 (as determined by the Deputy Chief Executive Resources S151);
 - (g) Note that the inflation parameter for fees and charges for 2026-27 was generally set at 4%.

- (h) That delegated authority be given to the Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)/S151 Officer in consultation with the Resources portfolio holder to add items to the budget funded from reserves in line with the purpose of the reserve;
- (i) That the Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)/S151 Officer be authorised to adjust reserve contributions to reflect any grant and local taxation changes announced in the final 2026/27 Local Government Finance Settlement.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 As part of the council's annual budget setting process, it is required to determine its budget requirement and seek approval from council to approve it. The above recommendations allow the council to set the budget it needs to carry out its functions.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 This report is being delivered in a profoundly uncertain time for local government. Central government have moved forwards with the proposal to reorganise local government. As a result, the council submitted a preferred new unitary structure for Staffordshire with a North/South split. Several other proposals were submitted by other authorities in Staffordshire as well and these can all be seen in the documents presented to Council on 11 November 2025. This means that should the reorganisation programme move forwards in line with the timetable published, Stafford Borough Council will cease to exist in 2028.
- 3.2 The provisional local government finance settlement for 2026-27 included the long delayed implementation of the fairer funding review, the business rates reset as well as a three year provisional settlement. This is discussed in the body of the report.
- 3.3 With the above in mind, this report sets out the current position on the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2025-26 and indicative budgets for 2026-27 to 2028-29. It reflects the position on the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2026-27, the position on the Council's Collection Fund, the Council's Tax Base and the consequential Council Tax for 2026-27.
- 3.4 The budget for 2026-27 is based on the estimated outturn position for 2025-26, which has been updated to reflect known changes and estimates for 2026-27.
- 3.5 Indicative budgets have been set out for 2027-28 and 2028-29 which include the key issues that it is anticipated will have a potential impact on the Council's finances.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

4.1 The revenue budget and the capital programme supports the delivery of all of the Council's priorities but primarily relates to objective 4 "To be an effective Council; which delivers value for money to local taxpayers.

5 Report Detail

Changes in local government

5.1 Central government released a white paper on Monday 16 December 2024 which laid out its ambitions to reshape the local government landscape. The outcomes being sought is the ending of the current arrangement of district councils and county councils, the merging of smaller unitary authorities and the creation of a new tier of "strategic authorities" to sit above the new larger councils.

5.2 This has now progressed with the council submitting a preferred proposal for two new unitary authorities for Staffordshire, one for the North of the County and one for the South. Several other options have been submitted by other councils in Staffordshire. A consultation is planned to take place in February 2026 to give the public an opportunity to respond to the proposals. Following this the government is planning to announce its preferred option for Staffordshire in the Summer of 2026.

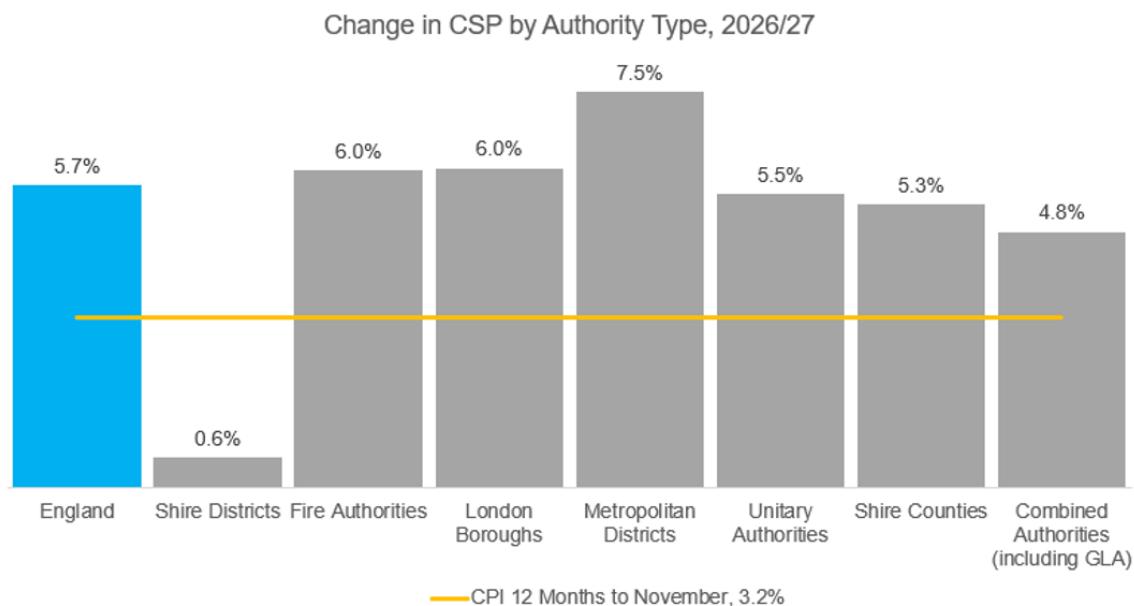
5.3 Following the choice of preferred option, there will be a two-year period before the new authorities are vested. Elections are planned to take place in 2027 to elect councillors to the new councils. It is anticipated that large amounts of work will be required by the existing councils to meet this incredibly challenging timetable.

5.4 It is unclear at this stage what costs are likely to occur as a result of this or the work needed to implement it, but it is anticipated that this will be significant and we need to plan for this accordingly.

5.5 The increase in business rates that many businesses will see in 2026/27 as well as the previous increase in national insurance is likely to have an impact on partners as well as indirectly on users of council services. This will cause increased pressures for them and they may in turn look to the council for greater support. In a worst case scenario organisations may be unable to continue to provide services at the same level or there will be an increase in the council's costs if companies the council works with seek to increase their charges. This in turn will require the council to evaluate the manner in which it delivers services to ensure best value and support stakeholders where possible.

Provisional local government settlement - fairer funding

- 5.6 Central government implemented the fairer funding review this year in its settlement as well as a business rates reset.
- 5.7 The driver behind this change was to allow funding to be allocated based on an updated needs formula. The last time the underlying distribution methodology was refreshed through changes to formulae and data was in 2013; which was at the time of the setting up of the business rates retention system.
- 5.8 The results of this change are fundamentally a shift of resources away from district councils and towards metropolitan councils. This is shown in the table below, with CSP standing for Core Spending Power. Metropolitan councils benefitted the most, as the methodology used to calculate need favoured them more than districts.



- 5.9 The review has also simplified the funding model by rolling in a number of specific grants to reduce the overall number of funding streams.
- 5.10 There has been considerable uncertainty in local government funding with single year settlements and particularly in the build up to this settlement, with changes to the formula occurring until shortly before the settlement was announced.
- 5.11 The reset of business rates meant that all previous growth over the old baseline amount was removed from the council. A new baseline has been introduced going forwards. Whilst it is anticipated that the council will be able to retain any growth which happens over this new baseline amount, at present the figures supplied in the settlement are built into the budget.

5.12 At the time of setting the budget there was no indication of transitional grant funding to protect the council's budget as a result of fairer funding or business rates reset. Due to this uncertainty the council sought to plan for a conservative but realistic scenario in budget setting in the previous year. This ensured that when the settlement arrived the council would be able to continue to deliver its services.

5.13 The settlement confirmed the continuation of the Council Tax referendum rules for lower tier councils. It is still possible to increase Council Tax by the higher of 2.99% or £5 (rather than the higher of 1.99% or £5) without holding a referendum. A 2.99% increase is reflected in the settlement calculation by central government.

5.14 The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement was announced on 17 December 2025. This included a large amount of information, with significant and complex changes to the funding methodologies as a result of the Fair Funding Review. The Settlement included allocations for three financial years, from 2026/27 to 2028/29.

5.15 The Settlement for 2026-27 is set out in table 1 below alongside the details for 2025 -26 as a comparator:

Table 1 - Financial Settlement

	£m	£m	£m
	25/26	26/27	Change
Transitional Protection Grant	-	0.3	(0.3)
National insurance grant	0.1	-	0.1
Section 31 grants	0.5	-	0.5
Business rates multiplier compensation	0.6	-	0.6
Business rates income	7.4	3.5	3.9
Council tax	8.9	9.3	(0.4)
New Homes Bonus	0.2	-	0.2
Funding floor	2.0	-	2.0
Revenue Support Grant	0.1	8.0	(7.9)
Total	19.8	21.1	(1.3)

5.16 The above settlement includes £300k for transitional protection. The transitional grant is intended to make sure that the council's overall funding does not drop below the floor of 95% of income protection against the base year calculation for 2025-26, based on the revised needs assessment.

5.17 It should be noted that the Revenue Support Grant increase is in part driven by a number of grants previously paid separately being rolled into it moving forwards.

5.18 The settlement that has been received is an increase on the amount that was received in the previous year. This however needs to be considered at the same time as the resource reallocation between council types and in the context of last year's flat settlement amount. The total increase is a little over 6%, but with inflation at just over 4% this covers the inflationary increases in service delivery as well as the removal of grants such as the national insurance guarantee grant.

5.19 Business rates have been reset, with all growth removed and a new baseline introduced as seen in the above table.

5.20 The Council is very dependent on locally raised income from council tax and business rates. Nationally this picture is repeated with 75% of the total increase in funding in the 3 year settlement amounts being raised from council tax increases.

Budget Issues and Adjustments 2026-27

Inflation

5.21 The budgets for 2026-27 reflect the nationally agreed pay award for 2025-26. A provision of 3% has been included for 2026-27; then 3% for 2027-28 and 3% for 2028-29.

5.22 Individual calculations have been carried out in respect of the budgets most affected by inflation. For October 2025 inflation is running at 3.8% CPIH (Consumer Prices Index with housing costs) and 4.3% RPI (Retail Prices Index). For contracts the estimated inflationary figure we have used is 4% for January 2026. For ongoing budgets, the general inflation assumption is 3%.

Spending changes

5.23 The detailed budgets have been refreshed to reflect the forecast outturn position for 2025-26. Additional provision has been made within Portfolio budgets for inflation and other general items, including for a pay award and increments.

5.24 We have reviewed all major income streams to ensure they are appropriate and they are reflected in the appendices.

5.25 The major changes on the 2026-27 Portfolio budgets (recurring in future years) are itemised below:

- Decrease in pension costs. Due to the recent valuation of the pension fund the actuaries determined that the fund was in a surplus position. This meant that the actuaries recommended reduced pension contribution levels by the council over the next three year period covered by the valuation cycle. This reduced the council pension costs by £610k against

budget in 2026/27. It needs to be recognised that there is a potential risk to this saving as central government is currently consulting on limiting/directing where pension funds make their investments which would potentially reduce investment returns. If this were the case, the council would have to make a greater level of contribution in the future.

- Utility costs have reduced by £157k for 2026/27.
- To give greater certainty to homeless services staffing a number of posts have been changed from grant to base budget funded.
- The council purchased the Civic Centre in 2025/2026. As a result of this the base budget has been reduced by £776k to reflect rent no longer needing to be paid.
- Additional rental income has been achieved at the Civic Centre of £140k.
- A revised recycling income stream of net £490k is anticipated in 2026/2027. This relates to a cautious estimate of the income from the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme.
- Due to the central government decision that the council will start to collect food waste from 1 April 2026 there is a new cost of £1.069m in 2026/2027.

In addition, there have been a number of budget requests from Heads of Service approved and added into the portfolio budgets. These are detailed in **APPENDIX 7**.

Fees and Charges

5.26 Fees and charges for 2026-27 have generally been increased in line with inflation at 4%. But there are two key fees and charges for which there will be no increase in 2026/27 and these are car park charges and the fee for chargeable garden waste collection. These will be frozen at 2025/26 prices. This is covered in more detail in the Fees and Charges 2026/27 Review report.

Business Rates Income

5.27 The Council's exposure to volatility in Business Rates is a key risk with a reduction in income from business rates due to the failure or temporary closure of a key industry and successful appeals against Rateable Values and backdated refunds. In order to mitigate this risk as much as possible, provision is made in both the budget and final accounts for a reduction in income due to appeals.

2025-26 Forecast Outturn

5.28 The Budget for 2025-26 is monitored against the profiled budget. The latest portfolio position reflects the inflationary increases in costs and known changes in the forecast and the impact of the savings achieved. The estimated outturn is a £1.6m portfolio surplus against the profiled budget. This can be seen in table 2 below.

Table 2 - Forecast outturn for 2025-26

	2025/26 budget	2025/26 forecast	Variance
Portfolio	£000	£000	£000
Community	1,311	1,178	(133)
Environment	4,383	3,187	(1,196)
Leisure	2,233	2,258	25
Planning	2,265	2,571	306
Resources	9,187	8,578	(609)
Total	19,379	17,772	(1,607)

5.29 The major changes in the environment and resources portfolio reflect the additional receipts in respect of the Extended Producer Responsibility Payments and there no longer being a rental charge for the council to occupy the civic centre. Vacancies and difficulties in recruitment are also reflected in the outturn forecast.

5.30 At present the council is forecasting a £0.5m deficit over the budgeted for position for investment income. This is due to reductions in the interest rate this year and the use of reserves in relation to the purchase of the council building. Taking into account other technical adjustments, this results in a favourable overall forecast outturn for 2025/26 of £0.460m. This can be seen in table 3 below.

Business Rates Pooling and Retention

5.31 Business rates pooling came to an end in 2025/26 due to the business rates reset. As there was no longer any growth in the system, there was no benefit in entering a pool. This will be kept under review going forwards for future years.

Revenue Budget Summary 2026-27

5.32 The Portfolio Budget position set out in table 3 below reflects the forecast outturn position for 2025-26, the proposed budget for 2026-27, and indicative budgets for 2027-28 and 2028-29. The detailed budgets are included in **APPENDIX 1**.

5.33 Table 3: Revenue Budget Recommended to Council

	Forecast Outturn 2025-26	Budget 2026-27	Indicative Budget 2027-28	Indicative Budget 2028-29
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Net Expenditure				
Portfolio budgets	17,772	20,564	20,663	21,479
Net investment income	(2,000)	(1,860)	(1,920)	(1,920)
Technical financing	3,587	2,184	1,981	1,428
Net Spending	19,359	20,888	20,724	20,987
Less: Government Grants				
Business rates grants - S.31	(1,115)	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus	(204)	0	0	0
Budget Requirement	18,040	20,888	20,724	20,987
Financing				
Business Rates	(7,422)	(3,456)	(3,535)	(3,607)
Revenue Support Grant	(142)	(8,048)	(6,033)	(3,955)
Council Tax Income	(8,881)	(9,259)	(9,584)	(9,920)
Council tax (surplus) / deficit	102	(179)	0	0
Funding Floor	(2,035)	0	0	0
National insurance grant	(122)	0	0	0
Transitional protection grant	0	(303)	(1,882)	(3,519)
Total Financing	(18,500)	(21,245)	(21,034)	(21,001)
Transfer from/(to) Balances	(460)	(357)	(310)	(14)

5.34 The above budgets are in general based upon the maintenance of existing service provision and delivery of the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan for 2025/26-2027/28. The only material change being the introduction of food waste collection from 2026/2027 in line with central government policy. There is no specific grant funding for this as it has been included in the revised needs funding assessment in the local government settlement.

5.35 Whilst the multi year settlement is welcome and allows for a degree of medium term planning it is important to note that this is a provisional settlement and subject to change. The central government ambition to reorganise local government in combination with this still limits the council's ability to plan strategically.

5.36 The major changes in the indicative Budget for 2026-27 when compared to the currently proposed 2026-27 budget are as set out in Table 4.

5.37 **Table 4: Changes in 2026-27 budget assumptions**

Description	Change £000
Portfolio budgets higher than anticipated	829
Investment income	440
NNDR multiplier	615
S31 grants	500
Business rates	1,574
Revenue Support Grant	(7,908)
Council tax income	(76)
Council tax surplus	(179)
Transitional protection grant	(303)
Total	(4,508)

5.38 There are numerous changes in the above table, reflecting the challenging landscape the council finds itself in. The primary changes are:

- The introduction of fairer funding including the business rates reset changed the funding methodology of local government.
- The increase in portfolio budgets and reduction in investment income is discussed in spending changes above in paragraphs 5.25 and 5.29.

5.39 Due to the council's prudent approach to budgeting it has been able to manage the business rates reset and change to funding methodology well. An example of this was not budgeting for national insurance support from central government for greater than one year in last year's budget setting and assuming no transitional relief from the business rates reset.

Reserves and Balances

5.40 Reserves and balances comprise general reserves, the Working Balance and Earmarked Reserves. They help the Council to cope with unpredictable financial pressures and plan for future spending commitments. They are an essential part of good financial management and assist the Section 151 Officer in providing reassurance to Council on the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of reserves. (see **APPENDIX 5**)

5.41 The Council holds a number of earmarked reserves for specific purposes. Earmarked reserves are itemised in **APPENDIX 3**.

5.42 The Working Balance - the current policy has for several years been to maintain the level of the General Fund balance at a minimum of £1 million. This is maintained over the planning period and supplemented by the Revenue Surplus reserve.

Capital Programme 2025-26 to 2028-29

5.43 The Capital Programme is attached as **APPENDIX 2**.

5.44 A new scheme has been included in the capital programme for natural environment vehicles. Other changes reflect schemes approved during the year, slippage has also been reflected in the schemes being presented for approval as appropriate. The funding mechanism for the former Wilko site has been changed from council resources to Future High Streets Grant.

5.45 The council has capital resources of £1.495 million general fund and £3.136 million of S106 resources not allocated at present.

Council Tax Base and Collection Fund

5.46 The final part of the consideration of the Budget is the Council Tax Base. This is the number of properties in the borough expressed in terms of Band D equivalents. (**APPENDIX 4**)

5.47 The Council's Tax Base is now estimated to be 50,296.31 representing an increase of 662.16 from the previous year.

5.48 The Council's Collection Fund has been reviewed as part of the budget process.

Council Tax 2026-27

5.49 In determining the level of Council Tax for 2026-27 Cabinet will need to take into account the medium term financial position and the Council Tax Referendum Thresholds.

5.50 The proposed increase of 2.99% is within the guidelines for district councils as contained in Government policy.

5.51 The proposed level of the Borough's Council Tax for 2026-27 is £184.09 for a Band D property with the overall level of Council Tax subject to final determination by Council in February 2026. The figures set out in this report may require minor amendment if any further information emerges before then.

5.52 The total Council Tax for the Borough will reflect the spending decision made by the County Council, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Fire Authority. In addition, in certain areas, parish council precepts are also added to the overall bill.

Risks and Future challenges

5.53 There are a range of significant risks which need to be carefully monitored and managed. In some cases, the risks may not materialise or can be managed to mitigate their impact on the budget. The risk of a major cyber security breach could have significant financial implications, which would involve use of reserves and there could also be significant resourcing implications which could impact on service delivery already in place. All of the changes in the above report, potential or known, are going to lead to challenges for the council. Recruitment was already very difficult for the council, competing with so many other organisations in both the public and private sector. With the additional uncertainty around the future structure of local government, it is anticipated that even less applicants will be interested in moving between councils or joining local government. This is likely to impact service delivery and the council will have to prioritise which areas it focuses on. This is the same as last year, and an element of the forecast underspends are due to staffing vacancies, despite the use of agency staff to cover where possible. It is reasonable to assume that this will continue to be an issue until local government reorganisation is resolved. This will be compounded by the additional work that it is anticipated that local government reorganisation is going to generate. Options will be considered as to how we best manage these challenges and provision has been made for this in the budget. There is a financial risk that preparation for the implementation of LGR could cost more than we have anticipated, given the level of uncertainty around this work and our capacity to deliver it.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

Contained in the report

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

A risk register is included in **APPENDIX 6**

Setting the budget is recognised as a significant risk to the council and included in the strategic risk register. The risks noted are both the setting of the budget within the timescales and the risks around setting a balanced budget. These are referenced throughout the report and the mitigations that have been put in place.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

As there are no proposed reductions in service and increases in fees and charges are in line with inflation, there is no significant impact on our community.

6.6 Health

None

6.7 Climate Change

Funding has been allocated to support the climate change agenda at the council. This will be managed by the appropriate service manager with reports being presented to members as appropriate to utilise the funds.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Detailed budgets

Appendix 2: Capital programme

Appendix 3: Reserves

Appendix 4: Band D equivalents

Appendix 5: Robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves

Appendix 6: Risk register

Appendix 7: Approved Heads of Service budget requests

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

None

Contact Officer: Chris Forrester

Telephone Number: 01543 464 334

Ward Interest: Nil

Report Track: Resources Scrutiny Committee 20 January 2026

Cabinet 22 January 2026

Council 10 February 2026

Key Decision: Yes

	<u>Resources</u>			
	Outturn 2025-2026	Budget 2026-2027	Budget 2027-2028	Budget 2028-2029
	£	£	£	£
1 Public Buildings				
Employee Expenses	89,470	88,150	90,360	92,680
Premises Related Expenditure	479,030	469,790	487,740	506,510
Supplies & Services	137,550	141,970	145,460	149,330
Total Expenditure	706,050	699,910	723,560	748,520
Income	(534,430)	(537,880)	(537,880)	(537,880)
Total Income	(534,430)	(537,880)	(537,880)	(537,880)
Public Buildings Net Expenditure	171,620	162,030	185,680	210,640
2 Facilities Management				
Employee Expenses	294,490	292,570	300,800	309,360
Transport Related Expenditure	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
Supplies & Services	104,660	33,860	13,860	13,860
Total Expenditure	403,150	330,430	318,660	327,220
Facilities Management Net Expenditure	403,150	330,430	318,660	327,220
3 Executive Management				
Employee Expenses	1,012,230	1,024,420	1,057,380	1,089,210
Supplies & Services	34,200	32,660	33,520	34,410
Total Expenditure	1,046,430	1,057,080	1,090,900	1,123,620
Income	(159,370)	(168,660)	(173,500)	(178,510)
Total Income	(159,370)	(168,660)	(173,500)	(178,510)
Executive Management Net Expenditure	887,060	888,420	917,400	945,110
4 Corporate Business and Partnerships				
Employee Expenses	217,800	208,210	214,460	223,070
Transport Related Expenditure	200	-	-	-
Supplies & Services	37,440	36,680	37,020	37,020
Total Expenditure	255,440	244,890	251,480	260,090
Corporate Business and Partnerships Net Expenditure	255,440	244,890	251,480	260,090
5 Communications				
Employee Expenses	168,270	167,930	173,050	178,320
Transport Related Expenditure	30	30	30	30
Supplies & Services	13,260	16,520	16,540	16,570
Total Expenditure	181,560	184,480	189,620	194,920
Communications Net Expenditure	181,560	184,480	189,620	194,920
6 Customer Services				
Employee Expenses	403,830	399,090	411,220	424,890
Supplies & Services	820	1,770	1,770	1,770
Total Expenditure	404,650	400,860	412,990	426,660
Customer Services Net Expenditure	404,650	400,860	412,990	426,660

	<u>Resources</u>			
	Outturn 2025-2026	Budget 2026-2027	Budget 2027-2028	Budget 2028-2029
	£	£	£	£
7 Grants & Contributions				
Employee Expenses	24,120	26,760	27,560	28,390
Supplies & Services	9,000	9,360	9,730	10,120
Total Expenditure	33,120	36,120	37,290	38,510
Grants & Contributions Net Expenditure	33,120	36,120	37,290	38,510
8 Law and Administration				
Employee Expenses	1,339,410	1,419,780	1,463,060	1,507,730
Premises Related Expenditure	2,410	2,460	2,530	2,610
Transport Related Expenditure	2,710	2,760	2,810	2,890
Supplies & Services	105,500	182,610	102,120	102,650
Third Party Payments	41,310	41,700	42,640	43,830
Total Expenditure	1,491,340	1,649,310	1,613,160	1,659,710
Income	(465,160)	(473,460)	(487,040)	(501,890)
Total Income	(465,160)	(473,460)	(487,040)	(501,890)
Law and Administration Net Expenditure	1,026,180	1,175,850	1,126,120	1,157,820
9 Finance				
Supplies & Services	14,350	1,350	1,350	1,350
Third Party Payments	876,810	899,690	920,160	947,830
Total Expenditure	891,160	901,040	921,510	949,180
Finance Net Expenditure	891,160	901,040	921,510	949,180
10 Human Resources Services				
Employee Expenses	674,560	662,980	684,520	705,230
Transport Related Expenditure	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Supplies & Services	111,390	141,950	113,170	114,430
Total Expenditure	787,950	806,930	799,690	821,660
Income	(291,900)	(317,240)	(296,810)	(306,010)
Total Income	(291,900)	(317,240)	(296,810)	(306,010)
Human Resources Services Net Expenditure	496,050	489,690	502,880	515,650
11 Technology				
Employee Expenses	1,261,260	1,242,080	1,287,640	1,332,000
Transport Related Expenditure	8,800	8,800	8,800	8,800
Supplies & Services	792,350	925,670	934,350	943,280
Total Expenditure	2,062,410	2,176,550	2,230,790	2,284,080
Income	(1,043,580)	(1,007,390)	(1,037,840)	(1,067,810)
Total Income	(1,043,580)	(1,007,390)	(1,037,840)	(1,067,810)
Technology Net Expenditure	1,018,830	1,169,160	1,192,950	1,216,270

	<u>Resources</u>			
	Outturn 2025-2026	Budget 2026-2027	Budget 2027-2028	Budget 2028-2029
	£	£	£	£
12 Members Services				
Employee Expenses	12,920	22,620	23,600	24,580
Transport Related Expenditure	1,250	1,250	1,250	1,250
Supplies & Services	338,610	365,210	375,840	386,800
Total Expenditure	352,780	389,080	400,690	412,630
Members Services Net Expenditure	352,780	389,080	400,690	412,630
13 Revenues & Benefits				
Supplies & Services	70,670	85,670	85,670	85,670
Third Party Payments	1,783,800	1,773,550	1,814,550	1,861,240
Total Expenditure	1,854,470	1,859,220	1,900,220	1,946,910
Income	(806,950)	(757,070)	(757,070)	(757,070)
Total Income	(806,950)	(757,070)	(757,070)	(757,070)
Revenues & Benefits Net Expenditure	1,047,520	1,102,150	1,143,150	1,189,840
14 Housing Benefit Payments				
Transfer Payments	14,843,200	15,295,910	15,762,200	16,242,480
Total Expenditure	14,843,200	15,295,910	15,762,200	16,242,480
Income	(14,637,490)	(15,076,620)	(15,528,920)	(15,994,800)
Total Income	(14,637,490)	(15,076,620)	(15,528,920)	(15,994,800)
Housing Benefit Payments Net Expenditure	205,710	219,290	233,280	247,680
15 Parish Councils				
Supplies & Services	51,000	51,000	51,000	51,000
Total Expenditure	51,000	51,000	51,000	51,000
Parish Councils Net Expenditure	51,000	51,000	51,000	51,000
16 Corporate and Democratic Core				
Supplies & Services	321,640	333,450	350,930	369,720
Total Expenditure	321,640	333,450	350,930	369,720
Corporate and Democratic Core Net Expenditure	321,640	333,450	350,930	369,720
17 Non-Distributed Costs				
Employee Expenses	222,560	229,240	236,120	243,200
Third Party Payments	44,170	45,050	45,950	47,330
Total Expenditure	266,730	274,290	282,070	290,530
Non-Distributed Costs Net Expenditure	266,730	274,290	282,070	290,530
18 Asset Management/Energy Conservation				
Supplies & Services	53,920	44,120	44,120	44,120
Total Expenditure	53,920	44,120	44,120	44,120
Asset Management/Energy Conservation Net Expenditure	53,920	44,120	44,120	44,120

	<u>Resources</u>			
	Outturn 2025-2026	Budget 2026-2027	Budget 2027-2028	Budget 2028-2029
	£	£	£	£
19 Electoral Registration				
Employee Expenses	2,150	2,150	2,150	2,150
Supplies & Services	45,050	40,590	40,590	40,590
Total Expenditure	47,200	42,740	42,740	42,740
Electoral Registration Net Expenditure	47,200	42,740	42,740	42,740
20 Elections				
Supplies & Services	39,500	39,500	39,500	39,500
Total Expenditure	39,500	39,500	39,500	39,500
Elections Net Expenditure	39,500	39,500	39,500	39,500
21 Items to be Allocated				
Employee Expenses	(39,240)	(103,470)	(102,670)	(101,850)
Supplies & Services	(100,000)	(100,000)	(100,000)	(100,000)
Total Expenditure	(139,240)	(203,470)	(202,670)	(201,850)
Items to be Allocated Net Expenditure	(139,240)	(203,470)	(202,670)	(201,850)
22 Audit, Risk, Resilience and Procurement				
Employee Expenses	4,320	4,450	4,580	4,720
Supplies & Services	2,060	2,120	2,180	2,250
Third Party Payments	267,760	267,230	273,950	280,840
Total Expenditure	274,140	273,800	280,710	287,810
Audit, Risk, Resilience and Procurement Net Expenditure	274,140	273,800	280,710	287,810
23 Insurance Premiums				
Third Party Payments	288,680	329,130	360,140	399,250
Total Expenditure	288,680	329,130	360,140	399,250
Insurance Premiums Net Expenditure	288,680	329,130	360,140	399,250
Resources Net Expenditure	8,578,400	8,878,050	9,082,240	9,415,040

Resources PortfolioVariation Statement 2026/2027 to 2028/2029

	2026/2027 Indicative	Real Terms / Efficiency Variations	2026/2027 Budget	2027/2028 Indicative	Real Terms / Efficiency Variations	2027/2028 Budget	Inflation	Real Terms / Efficiency Variations	2028/2029 Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Employee Costs	5,823	- 136	5,687	5,961	- 87	5,874	171	19	6,064
Premises Related Costs	1,342	- 870	472	1,377	- 887	490	19	-	509
Transport Related Costs	19	-	19	19	-	19	-	-	19
Supplies and Services	1,872	514	2,386	1,888	411	2,299	22	23	2,344
Third Party Payments	3,372	- 16	3,356	3,470	- 13	3,457	104	19	3,580
Transfer Payments	19,218	- 3,922	15,296	19,608	- 3,846	15,762	481	-	16,243
Total Expenditure	31,646	- 4,430	27,216	32,323	- 4,422	27,901	797	61	28,759
Income	- 22,214	3,876	- 18,338	- 22,638	3,819	- 18,819	- 525	-	- 19,344
Net Expenditure	<u>9,432</u>	<u>- 554</u>	<u>8,878</u>	<u>9,685</u>	<u>- 603</u>	<u>9,082</u>	<u>272</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>9,415</u>

Resources PortfolioProposed Real Terms Efficiency Variations2026/27 Change

	£'000	£'000
Real Term Variations		
Superannuation contribution changes	-207	
Civic centre rent no longer payable following purchase	-776	
Members national insurance cost reflecting threshold and rate change	19	
Civic centre additional rental income	-140	
Reduced utility charges	-72	
Reduced business rates	-15	
Contract cleaning increase	10	
Items to be allocated		
General reduced spend	-100	
Shared service saving remove	200	100
Apprenticeship levy		-3
Technology		
GIS cost	14	
Cyber security	25	
Device refresh	50	
Acronis	10	
Equipment budget transferred from capital	50	
Reduced recharges	31	180
Technology CRM and Netcall costs		
Supplies	115	
Income	-105	10
Reduced pension recharges		-16
Corporate HR costs		27
Human Resources self serve portal		
Supplies	30	
Income	-30	-
Insurance premiums		20
Shared Service Cost Rate (CCDC reflecting superannuation changes)	-35	
Shared Service Rate Reduced Income (reflecting superannuation changes)	49	14
Housing benefits review of spend		
Expenditure	- 3,932	
Income	4,026	94
Bank charges		16
Repairs and maintenance reallocation of budgets		-6
Facilities management		
RAAC survey	20	
Insurance valuations	10	30
Law and administration		
Contract staff	40	
Community governance review	36	
Parish council association	45	121
Audit fees		4
Taxation reduced use of reserves		36
minor variations		-
		- 554

2027/28 Change

	£'000	£'000
Real Term Variations		
Superannuation contribution changes	-161	
Civic centre rent no longer payable following purchase	-792	
Members national insurance cost reflecting threshold and rate change	19	
Civic centre additional rental income	-140	
Reduced utility charges	-76	
Reduced business rates	-14	
Contract cleaning increase	11	
Items to be allocated		
General reduced spend	-100	
Shared service saving remove	200	100
Apprenticeship levy		-4
Technology		
GIS cost	16	
Cyber security	25	
Device refresh	50	
Acronis	10	
Equipment budget transferred from capital	50	
Reduced recharges	31	182
Technology CRM and Netcall costs		
Supplies	121	
Income	-108	13
Reduced pension recharges		-14
Corporate HR costs		28
Insurance premiums		20
Shared Service Cost Rate (CCDC reflecting superannuation changes)	-32	
Shared Service Rate Reduced Income (reflecting superannuation changes)	36	4
Housing benefits review of spend		
Expenditure	- 3,856	
Income	3,956	100
Bank charges		25
Repairs and maintenance reallocation of budgets		-5
Facilities management - Insurance valuations		10
Law and administration contract staff		40
Audit fees		6
Taxation reduced use of reserves		36
minor variations		9
	- 603	

2028/29 Change

	£'000	£'000
Real Term Variations		
Increase in pension changes, increments and staffing		19
Insurance premiums		28
Shared services expenditure	- 9	
Shared Service income	1	-8
Bank charges		12
Technology CRM and Netcall costs		
Supplies	9	
Income	-2	7
Minor variations		3
		61

		<u>Community</u>			
		Outturn 2025-2026 £	Budget 2026-2027 £	Budget 2027-2028 £	Budget 2028-2029 £
1 Private Sector Housing (Standards)					
Employee Expenses		577,270	778,230	799,940	822,970
Transport Related Expenditure		15,540	20,230	20,320	20,410
Supplies & Services		13,910	30,540	30,540	30,540
Total Expenditure		606,720	829,000	850,800	873,920
Income		(443,710)	(605,930)	(621,700)	(638,720)
Total Income		(443,710)	(605,930)	(621,700)	(638,720)
Private Sector Housing (Standards) Net Expenditure		163,010	223,070	229,100	235,200
2 Housing Act Sewerage Works					
Premises Related Expenditure		2,210	2,250	2,320	2,390
Total Expenditure		2,210	2,250	2,320	2,390
Housing Act Sewerage Works Net Expenditure		2,210	2,250	2,320	2,390
3 Private Sector Hsg (Loans & Mortgages)					
Premises Related Expenditure		5,850	5,970	6,150	6,330
Total Expenditure		5,850	5,970	6,150	6,330
Income		(9,750)	(10,300)	(10,500)	(10,800)
Total Income		(9,750)	(10,300)	(10,500)	(10,800)
Private Sector Hsg (Loans & Mortgages) Net Expenditure		(3,900)	(4,330)	(4,350)	(4,470)
4 Partnerships					
Supplies & Services		25,140	106,490	106,490	106,490
Third Party Payments		72,380	-	-	-
Total Expenditure		97,520	106,490	106,490	106,490
Income		(72,380)	-	-	-
Total Income		(72,380)	-	-	-
Partnerships Net Expenditure		25,140	106,490	106,490	106,490
5 Homelessness & Housing Advice					
Employee Expenses		661,720	671,240	542,930	557,700
Premises Related Expenditure		127,300	125,480	128,580	132,650
Transport Related Expenditure		5,840	5,650	5,650	5,650
Supplies & Services		1,046,480	959,380	1,062,850	1,096,240
Third Party Payments		154,450	182,870	189,120	195,430
Total Expenditure		1,995,790	1,944,620	1,929,130	1,987,670
Income		(1,320,620)	(1,019,660)	(972,380)	(998,510)
Total Income		(1,320,620)	(1,019,660)	(972,380)	(998,510)
Homelessness & Housing Advice Net Expenditure		675,170	924,960	956,750	989,160

	<u>Community</u>			
	Outturn 2025-2026	Budget 2026-2027	Budget 2027-2028	Budget 2028-2029
	£	£	£	£
6 Glover Street				
Premises Related Expenditure	17,800	17,490	18,310	19,170
Supplies & Services	150	150	150	150
Total Expenditure	17,950	17,640	18,460	19,320
Income	(29,000)	(29,380)	(29,970)	(30,870)
Total Income	(29,000)	(29,380)	(29,970)	(30,870)
Glover Street Net Expenditure	(11,050)	(11,740)	(11,510)	(11,550)
7 Grants & Contributions				
Supplies & Services	145,250	141,370	145,620	149,990
Total Expenditure	145,250	141,370	145,620	149,990
Grants & Contributions Net Expenditure	145,250	141,370	145,620	149,990
8 CCTV				
Premises Related Expenditure	11,470	12,160	12,890	13,660
Supplies & Services	21,500	51,500	26,500	26,500
Third Party Payments	149,560	167,270	175,630	180,900
Total Expenditure	182,530	230,930	215,020	221,060
CCTV Net Expenditure	182,530	230,930	215,020	221,060
Community Net Expenditure	1,178,360	1,613,000	1,639,440	1,688,270

Community PortfolioVariation Statement 2026/2027 to 2028/2029

	2026/2027 Indicative	Real Terms / Efficiency Variations	2026/2027 Budget	2027/2028 Indicative	Real Terms / Efficiency Variations	2027/2028 Budget	Inflation	Real Terms / Efficiency Variations	2028/2029 Budget
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's		£000's	£000's
Employee Costs	1,020	430	1,450	1,040	303	1,343	35	3	1,381
Premises Related Costs	160	3	163	165	3	168	6	-	174
Transport Related Costs	21	5	26	21	5	26	-	-	26
Supplies and Services	454	835	1,289	459	913	1,372	7	31	1,410
Third Party	336	14	350	340	25	365	11	-	376
Total Expenditure	1,991	1,287	3,278	2,025	1,249	3,274	59	34	3,367
Income	- 649	- 1,016	- 1,665	- 659	- 976	- 1,635	- 1	- 43	- 1,679
Net Expenditure	<u><u>1,342</u></u>	<u><u>271</u></u>	<u><u>1,613</u></u>	<u><u>1,366</u></u>	<u><u>273</u></u>	<u><u>1,639</u></u>	<u><u>58</u></u>	<u><u>- 9</u></u>	<u><u>1,688</u></u>

Community PortfolioProposed Real Terms / Efficiency Variations2026/27 Change

	£'000	£'000
<u>Real Term Variations</u>		
Reduced utility charges		-6
Staffing variations		-10
Superannuation contribution changes		-30
Homelessness		
Employees additional posts in base budget	78	
Rates on rented properties	10	
Third Party	23	111
Disabled Facility Grants		
Employees additional posts in base budget	161	
Car allowances	4	
Income	-83	
Recharge to capital	-78	4
CCTV		
Maintenance and telephone costs	9	
Additional works	25	34
Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Grant		
Employees	146	
Supplies	679	
Income	-825	-
Environmental health restructure (change of portfolio posts)		76
Housing strategy		
Supplies	30	
Income	-30	-
Grants to outside organisations		12
Community safety		
ASB enforcement costs	10	
Mainstream initiatives funding	64	
Domestic homicide reviews	8	82
Minor variations		-2
		271

2027/28 Change

	£'000	£'000
Real Term Variations		
Reduced utility charges		-7
Superannuation contribution changes		-21
Homelessness		
Employees additional posts in base budget	81	
Rates on rented properties	10	
Third Party	25	116
Disabled Facility Grants		
Employees additional posts in base budget	164	
Car allowances	4	
Income	-89	
Recharge to capital	-79	-
CCTV Maintenance and telephone costs		9
Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Grant		
Supplies	807	
Income	-807	-
Environmental health restructure (change of portfolio posts)		77
Grants to outside organisations		17
Community safety		
ASB enforcement costs	10	
Mainstream initiatives funding	64	
Domestic homicide reviews	8	82
Minor variations		-
		273

2028/29 Change

	£'000	£'000
Real Term Variations		
Staffing variations		2
Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Grant		
Supplies	26	
Income	-26	-
Grants to outside organisations		4
Disabled Facility Grants		
Income	-7	
Recharge to capital	-10	-17
minor variations		2
		-9

<u>Leisure and Culture</u>				
	Outturn 2025-2026	Budget 2026-2027	Budget 2027-2028	Budget 2028-2029
	£	£	£	£
1 Leisure Section				
Employee Expenses	117,740	56,210	57,910	59,650
Transport Related Expenditure	2,250	2,250	2,250	2,250
Supplies & Services	4,610	4,310	4,310	4,310
Total Expenditure	124,600	62,770	64,470	66,210
Leisure Section Net Expenditure	124,600	62,770	64,470	66,210
2 Allotments				
Premises Related Expenditure	4,350	4,320	4,450	4,590
Supplies & Services	15,150	15,540	15,940	16,350
Total Expenditure	19,500	19,860	20,390	20,940
Income	(830)	(830)	(830)	(830)
Total Income	(830)	(830)	(830)	(830)
Allotments Net Expenditure	18,670	19,030	19,560	20,110
3 Ancient High House				
Premises Related Expenditure	10,540	12,000	12,360	12,730
Total Expenditure	10,540	12,000	12,360	12,730
Ancient High House Net Expenditure	10,540	12,000	12,360	12,730
4 Broadeye Windmill				
Premises Related Expenditure	820	4,560	4,710	4,870
Supplies & Services	70	70	70	70
Total Expenditure	890	4,630	4,780	4,940
Broadeye Windmill Net Expenditure	890	4,630	4,780	4,940
5 Izaak Walton Cottage				
Premises Related Expenditure	8,480	15,000	15,450	15,910
Total Expenditure	8,480	15,000	15,450	15,910
Izaak Walton Cottage Net Expenditure	8,480	15,000	15,450	15,910
6 Stafford Castle				
Premises Related Expenditure	12,940	13,200	13,600	14,010
Total Expenditure	12,940	13,200	13,600	14,010
Stafford Castle Net Expenditure	12,940	13,200	13,600	14,010
7 Leisure Management Contract				
Premises Related Expenditure	290,000	-	-	-
Supplies & Services	441,470	575,440	443,410	-
Third Party Payments	565,820	514,690	521,380	778,420
Total Expenditure	1,297,290	1,090,130	964,790	778,420
Income	(475,330)	(260,040)	(202,760)	-
Total Income	(475,330)	(260,040)	(202,760)	-
Leisure Management Contract Net Expenditure	821,960	830,090	762,030	778,420

<u>Leisure and Culture</u>				
	Outturn 2025-2026	Budget 2026-2027	Budget 2027-2028	Budget 2028-2029
	£	£	£	£
8 Leisure Strategy				
Employee Expenses	339,660	236,090	242,870	249,670
Premises Related Expenditure	5,050	5,500	5,670	5,840
Supplies & Services	89,630	66,800	16,800	1,800
Third Party Payments	62,530	63,090	64,980	66,960
Total Expenditure	496,870	371,480	330,320	324,270
Income	-	(65,000)	(15,000)	-
Total Income	-	(65,000)	(15,000)	-
Leisure Strategy Net Expenditure	496,870	306,480	315,320	324,270
9 Parks & Open Spaces				
Employee Expenses	300,300	282,160	289,860	298,440
Premises Related Expenditure	416,680	428,410	440,840	456,530
Transport Related Expenditure	3,420	5,230	5,340	5,500
Supplies & Services	116,690	114,490	114,500	114,940
Total Expenditure	837,090	830,290	850,540	875,410
Income	(108,910)	(106,410)	(106,980)	(107,880)
Total Income	(108,910)	(106,410)	(106,980)	(107,880)
Parks & Open Spaces Net Expenditure	728,180	723,880	743,560	767,530
10 Events				
Employee Expenses	35,200	36,130	38,480	39,640
Supplies & Services	-	15,000	15,000	15,000
Total Expenditure	35,200	51,130	53,480	54,640
Events Net Expenditure	35,200	51,130	53,480	54,640
Leisure and Culture Net Expenditure	2,258,330	2,038,210	2,004,610	2,058,770

Leisure PortfolioVariation Statement 2026/2027 to 2028/2029

	2026/2027 Indicative	Real Terms / Efficiency Variations		2026/2027 Budget	2027/2028 Indicative	Real Terms / Efficiency Variations		2027/2028 Budget	Inflation	Real Terms / Efficiency Variations		2028/2029 Budget
		£000's	£000's			£000's	£000's			£000's	£000's	
Employee Costs	759	- 149		610	778	- 149		629	10	9		648
Premises Related Costs	488	- 5		483	500	- 3		497	17	1		515
Transport Related Costs	7	-		7	7	1		8	-	-		8
Supplies and Services	793	- 1		792	661	- 51		610	-	- 458		152
Third Party Payments	568	10		578	571	15		586	18	241		845
Total Expenditure	2,615	- 145		2,470	2,517	- 187		2,330	45	- 207		2,168
Income	- 360	- 72		- 432	- 305	- 20		- 325	- 1	217		- 109
Net Expenditure	<u>2,255</u>	<u>- 217</u>		<u>2,038</u>	<u>2,212</u>	<u>- 207</u>		<u>2,005</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>10</u>		<u>2,059</u>

Leisure PortfolioProposed Real Terms / Efficiency Variations2026/27 Change

	£'000	£'000
Real Term Variations		
Superannuation contribution changes		-132
Projects manager post (changed portfolio)		-58
Events posts (changed portfolio)		36
Reduced Utility costs		-7
Leisure Management Contract		
Supplies	65	
Third Party Payments	10	
Income	-65	10
Leisure strategy reduced supplies		-88
Repairs and maintenance reallocation of budgets		12
Events budget		15
minor variations		-5
	- 217	

2027/28 Change

	£'000	£'000
Real Term Variations		
Superannuation contribution changes		-132
Projects manager post (changed portfolio)		-60
Events posts (changed portfolio)		38
Reduced Utility costs		-7
Leisure Management Contract		
Supplies	15	
Third Party Payments	16	
Income	-15	16
Leisure strategy reduced supplies		-88
Repairs and maintenance reallocation of budgets		13
Events budget		15
minor variations		-2
	- 207	

2028/29 Change

	£'000	£'000
Real Term Variations		
Increase in pension costs		8
Leisure Management Contract		
Supplies	-443	
Third Party Payments	240	
Income	203	-
minor variations		2
	10	

		<u>Environment</u>			
		Outturn 2025-2026	Budget 2026-2027	Budget 2027-2028	Budget 2028-2029
		£	£	£	£
1 Management & Support					
Employee Expenses		189,630	19,640	20,200	20,770
Transport Related Expenditure		1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Supplies & Services		43,450	42,650	42,650	42,650
Total Expenditure		234,080	63,290	63,850	64,420
Management & Support Net Expenditure		234,080	63,290	63,850	64,420
2 Regulatory Services					
Employee Expenses		802,900	790,080	611,990	630,390
Premises Related Expenditure		5,340	5,450	5,560	5,670
Transport Related Expenditure		23,500	24,700	24,720	24,720
Supplies & Services		69,190	82,970	83,950	84,930
Third Party Payments		-	22,000	22,660	23,340
Total Expenditure		900,930	925,200	748,880	769,050
Income		(234,560)	(233,040)	(233,270)	(233,670)
Total Income		(234,560)	(233,040)	(233,270)	(233,670)
Regulatory Services Net Expenditure		666,370	692,160	515,610	535,380
3 Strategic Health Delivery					
Employee Expenses		46,090	61,850	63,720	65,660
Transport Related Expenditure		500	500	500	500
Supplies & Services		300	300	300	300
Total Expenditure		46,890	62,650	64,520	66,460
Strategic Health Delivery Net Expenditure		46,890	62,650	64,520	66,460
4 Partnerships Environmental Management					
Employee Expenses		54,530	52,930	54,530	56,190
Premises Related Expenditure		30	100	100	100
Transport Related Expenditure		960	960	960	960
Supplies & Services		31,740	19,750	19,750	19,750
Total Expenditure		87,260	73,740	75,340	77,000
Income		(22,270)	(10,490)	(10,700)	(11,020)
Total Income		(22,270)	(10,490)	(10,700)	(11,020)
Partnerships Environmental Management Net Expenditure		64,990	63,250	64,640	65,980

		<u>Environment</u>			
		Outturn 2025-2026	Budget 2026-2027	Budget 2027-2028	Budget 2028-2029
		£	£	£	£
5 Waste & Recycling					
Employee Expenses		74,510	68,230	70,280	72,370
Premises Related Expenditure		1,610	1,710	1,710	1,710
Transport Related Expenditure		2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Supplies & Services		114,910	146,660	146,970	147,370
Third Party Payments		5,066,180	6,424,900	6,672,380	6,928,440
Total Expenditure		5,259,710	6,644,000	6,893,840	7,152,390
Income		(4,010,900)	(3,272,910)	(3,277,370)	(3,282,310)
Total Income		(4,010,900)	(3,272,910)	(3,277,370)	(3,282,310)
Waste & Recycling Net Expenditure		1,248,810	3,371,090	3,616,470	3,870,080
6 Bereavement Services					
Employee Expenses		291,580	336,550	344,550	351,800
Premises Related Expenditure		234,280	225,380	233,930	242,880
Transport Related Expenditure		5,870	5,870	5,870	5,870
Supplies & Services		335,510	329,290	330,500	332,170
Total Expenditure		867,240	897,090	914,850	932,720
Income		(2,013,800)	(2,010,420)	(2,071,600)	(2,133,300)
Total Income		(2,013,800)	(2,010,420)	(2,071,600)	(2,133,300)
Bereavement Services Net Expenditure		(1,146,560)	(1,113,330)	(1,156,750)	(1,200,580)
7 Misc Highways Functions (ex Planning)					
Premises Related Expenditure		44,940	47,870	49,630	51,680
Total Expenditure		44,940	47,870	49,630	51,680
Income		(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)
Total Income		(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)
Misc Highways Functions (ex Planning) Net Expenditure		39,940	42,870	44,630	46,680
8 Drainage Services					
Premises Related Expenditure		4,640	4,730	4,830	4,980
Supplies & Services		130,250	134,580	138,920	138,920
Total Expenditure		134,890	139,310	143,750	143,900
Drainage Services Net Expenditure		134,890	139,310	143,750	143,900
9 Street Scene					
Employee Expenses		2,220,310	2,374,920	2,444,440	2,512,470
Premises Related Expenditure		34,860	39,070	40,680	42,390
Transport Related Expenditure		315,800	315,560	321,860	331,310
Supplies & Services		478,640	483,960	486,170	488,720
Total Expenditure		3,049,610	3,213,510	3,293,150	3,374,890
Income		(725,900)	(738,340)	(744,320)	(753,450)
Total Income		(725,900)	(738,340)	(744,320)	(753,450)
Street Scene Net Expenditure		2,323,710	2,475,170	2,548,830	2,621,440

		<u>Environment</u>			
		Outturn 2025-2026	Budget 2026-2027	Budget 2027-2028	Budget 2028-2029
		£	£	£	£
10	Cleansing Services				
	Premises Related Expenditure	38,140	34,430	35,460	36,650
	Supplies & Services	81,730	19,640	19,650	19,670
Total	Expenditure	119,870	54,070	55,110	56,320
	Cleansing Services Net Expenditure	119,870	54,070	55,110	56,320
11	Pest Control				
	Employee Expenses	177,590	219,300	225,890	232,610
	Transport Related Expenditure	15,920	15,170	15,380	15,850
	Supplies & Services	43,870	43,870	43,870	43,870
Total	Expenditure	237,380	278,340	285,140	292,330
	Income	(161,030)	(184,660)	(188,360)	(194,010)
Total	Income	(161,030)	(184,660)	(188,360)	(194,010)
	Pest Control Net Expenditure	76,350	93,680	96,780	98,320
12	Dog Warden Service				
	Transport Related Expenditure	2,510	2,560	2,610	2,690
	Supplies & Services	3,920	3,920	3,920	3,920
	Third Party Payments	32,250	33,540	34,550	35,590
Total	Expenditure	38,680	40,020	41,080	42,200
	Income	(15,000)	(15,600)	(16,070)	(16,550)
Total	Income	(15,000)	(15,600)	(16,070)	(16,550)
	Dog Warden Service Net Expenditure	23,680	24,420	25,010	25,650
13	Off Street Parking Services				
	Employee Expenses	74,340	89,060	95,300	99,800
	Premises Related Expenditure	863,020	889,770	920,420	953,450
	Transport Related Expenditure	2,300	2,300	2,300	2,300
	Supplies & Services	193,000	173,660	175,800	175,820
	Third Party Payments	549,790	637,820	656,960	676,660
Total	Expenditure	1,682,450	1,792,610	1,850,780	1,908,030
	Income	(2,700,240)	(2,617,590)	(2,617,590)	(2,617,590)
Total	Income	(2,700,240)	(2,617,590)	(2,617,590)	(2,617,590)
	Off Street Parking Services Net Expenditure	(1,017,790)	(824,980)	(766,810)	(709,560)
14	Borough Markets				
	Employee Expenses	13,160	9,150	9,410	9,670
	Premises Related Expenditure	54,270	1,550	1,640	1,740
	Supplies & Services	36,640	36,710	36,710	36,710
Total	Expenditure	104,070	47,410	47,760	48,120
	Income	(27,300)	(33,070)	(33,070)	(33,220)
Total	Income	(27,300)	(33,070)	(33,070)	(33,220)
	Borough Markets Net Expenditure	76,770	14,340	14,690	14,900

		<u>Environment</u>			
		Outturn 2025-2026	Budget 2026-2027	Budget 2027-2028	Budget 2028-2029
		£	£	£	£
15 Climate Change					
Employee Expenses		50,990	-	-	-
Supplies & Services		20,000	-	-	-
Third Party Payments		-	57,820	59,530	61,290
Total Expenditure		70,990	57,820	59,530	61,290
Climate Change Net Expenditure		70,990	57,820	59,530	61,290
16 Trees					
Employee Expenses		143,530	143,310	147,680	152,170
Supplies & Services		101,870	145,660	85,660	85,660
Total Expenditure		245,400	288,970	233,340	237,830
Income		(21,750)	(510)	(520)	(520)
Total Income		(21,750)	(510)	(520)	(520)
Trees Net Expenditure		223,650	288,460	232,820	237,310
Environment Net Expenditure		3,186,640	5,504,270	5,622,680	5,997,990

Environment PortfolioVariation Statement 2026/2027 to 2028/2029

	2026/2027 Indicative	Real Terms / Efficiency Variations	2026/2027 Budget	2027/2028 Indicative	Real Terms / Efficiency Variations	2027/2028 Budget	Inflation	Real Terms / Efficiency Variations	2028/2029 Budget
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Employee Costs	4,229	- 64	4,165	4,325	- 237	4,088	111	5	4,204
Premises Related Costs	1,381	- 131	1,250	1,423	- 129	1,294	47	-	1,341
Transport Related Costs	372	- 1	371	378	-	378	10	-	388
Supplies and Services	1,416	248	1,664	1,426	189	1,615	6	-	1,621
Third Party Payments	5,563	1,613	7,176	5,725	1,721	7,446	184	95	7,725
Total Expenditure	12,961	1,665	14,626	13,277	1,544	14,821	358	100	15,279
Income	- 8,665	- 457	- 9,122	- 8,777	- 421	- 9,198	- 94	11	- 9,281
Net Expenditure	<u>4,296</u>	<u>1,208</u>	<u>5,504</u>	<u>4,500</u>	<u>1,123</u>	<u>5,623</u>	<u>264</u>	<u>111</u>	<u>5,998</u>

Environment Portfolio**Proposed Real Terms / Efficiency Variations****2026/27 Change**

	£'000	£'000
Real Term Variations		
Superannuation contribution changes		-157
Climate change posts employed by Cannock Chase Council		
Employees	-49	
Third Party	58	9
	<u>-49</u>	<u>9</u>
Environmental health restructure (change of portfolio posts)		-74
Events posts (changed portfolio)		-36
Projects manager post (changed portfolio)		58
Utility costs		-73
Reduced business rates		-67
Streetscene contract income and expenditure		141
Waste		
Contract	302	
Dry recycling gate fees reflect tonnages and prices	22	
Food waste	1,069	
Extended producer responsibility payments (net)	-490	
Chargeable garden waste	54	957
Schedule 2 waste		30
	<u>54</u>	<u>30</u>
Tree Maintenance		
Employees (change of portfolio posts)	52	
System costs	15	
Post safety inspection works	60	127
	<u>60</u>	<u>4</u>
Sow and penk drainage levy		
Dog warden		
Expenditure	-3	
Income	-6	-9
	<u>-6</u>	<u>-9</u>
Repairs and maintenance reallocation of budgets		12
Pest control additional transport costs		5
Bereavement income		16
Parking		
Contract	130	
Bank charges	11	
Income	-76	65
	<u>-76</u>	<u>65</u>
Additional staffing		
Food safety	98	
Private Water supply	98	196
	<u>98</u>	<u>4</u>
minor variations		<u>4</u>
		<u>1,208</u>

2027/28 Change

	£'000	£'000
Real Term Variations		
Superannuation contribution changes		-125
Climate change posts employed by Cannock Chase Council		
Employees	-50	
Third Party	60	10
	<u>—</u>	
Environmental health restructure (change of portfolio posts)		-77
Events posts (changed portfolio)		-38
Projects manager post (changed portfolio)		60
Utility costs		-77
Reduced business rates		-63
Streetscene contract income and expenditure		150
Waste		
Contract	350	
Dry recycling gate fees reflect tonnages and prices	35	
Food waste	1,101	
Extended producer responsibility payments (net)	-474	
Chargeable garden waste	88	1,100
	<u>—</u>	
Schedule 2 waste		32
Tree Maintenance		
Employees (change of portfolio posts)	56	
System costs	15	71
	<u>—</u>	
Sow and penk drainage levy		4
Dog warden		
Expenditure	-2	
Income	-6	-8
	<u>—</u>	
Repairs and maintenance reallocation of budgets		14
Pest control additional transport costs		5
Bereavement income		-4
Parking		
Contract	139	
Bank charges	11	
Income	-76	74
	<u>—</u>	
minor variations		-5
		<u>1,123</u>

2028/29 Change

	£'000	£'000
Real Term Variations		
Increase in pension costs		7
Waste		
Property growth	44	
Food waste	33	
Dry recycling gate fees	16	
Sale of recyclate	5	98
Minor variation	6	
		<u>111</u>

<u>Economic Development and Planning</u>				
	Outturn 2025-2026	Budget 2026-2027	Budget 2027-2028	Budget 2028-2029
	£	£	£	£
1 Management and Support				
Employee Expenses	218,020	208,590	214,540	220,640
Supplies & Services	43,770	49,530	49,530	49,530
Total Expenditure	261,790	258,120	264,070	270,170
Income	(14,270)	(14,530)	(14,810)	(15,100)
Total Income	(14,270)	(14,530)	(14,810)	(15,100)
Management and Support Net Expenditure	247,520	243,590	249,260	255,070
2 Building Control				
Supplies & Services	500	500	500	500
Third Party Payments	281,670	278,440	291,150	302,280
Total Expenditure	282,170	278,940	291,650	302,780
Building Control Net Expenditure	282,170	278,940	291,650	302,780
3 Development Management				
Employee Expenses	1,621,680	1,248,430	1,103,450	1,138,790
Transport Related Expenditure	24,690	24,690	24,690	24,690
Supplies & Services	670,410	504,740	200,740	201,050
Total Expenditure	2,316,780	1,777,860	1,328,880	1,364,530
Income	(1,639,140)	(1,239,500)	(756,500)	(756,810)
Total Income	(1,639,140)	(1,239,500)	(756,500)	(756,810)
Development Management Net Expenditure	677,640	538,360	572,380	607,720
4 Forward Planning				
Employee Expenses	262,670	424,550	437,420	450,600
Transport Related Expenditure	6,520	6,520	6,520	6,520
Supplies & Services	251,180	487,660	379,350	180,870
Total Expenditure	520,370	918,730	823,290	637,990
Income	(22,590)	(171,840)	(230,450)	(113,400)
Total Income	(22,590)	(171,840)	(230,450)	(113,400)
Forward Planning Net Expenditure	497,780	746,890	592,840	524,590
5 Land Charges - Local Searches				
Employee Expenses	63,630	62,670	64,580	66,560
Supplies & Services	45,680	32,860	31,500	31,500
Third Party Payments	-	27,830	28,680	29,560
Total Expenditure	109,310	123,360	124,760	127,620
Income	(102,110)	(97,840)	(97,840)	(97,840)
Total Income	(102,110)	(97,840)	(97,840)	(97,840)
Land Charges - Local Searches Net Expenditure	7,200	25,520	26,920	29,780

<u>Economic Development and Planning</u>				
	Outturn 2025-2026	Budget 2026-2027	Budget 2027-2028	Budget 2028-2029
	£	£	£	£
6 Land & Properties				
Premises Related Expenditure	561,000	299,380	156,210	161,110
Supplies & Services	60,590	19,840	6,840	7,000
Total Expenditure	621,590	319,220	163,050	168,110
Income	(265,770)	(122,880)	(90,260)	(90,260)
Total Income	(265,770)	(122,880)	(90,260)	(90,260)
Land & Properties Net Expenditure	355,820	196,340	72,790	77,850
7 Economic Growth and Strategic Projects				
Employee Expenses	388,730	400,200	406,430	418,350
Premises Related Expenditure	38,140	39,020	39,920	41,210
Transport Related Expenditure	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600
Supplies & Services	53,210	39,210	39,210	39,210
Total Expenditure	481,680	480,030	487,160	500,370
Economic Growth and Strategic Projects Net Expenditure	481,680	480,030	487,160	500,370
8 Borough Tourism				
Supplies & Services	20,640	20,640	20,640	20,640
Total Expenditure	20,640	20,640	20,640	20,640
Borough Tourism Net Expenditure	20,640	20,640	20,640	20,640
Economic Development and Planning Net Expenditure	2,570,450	2,530,310	2,313,640	2,318,800

Economic Development and Planning PortfolioVariation Statement 2026/2027 to 2028/2029

	2026/2027 Indicative	Real Terms / Efficiency Variations		2026/2027 Budget	2027/2028 Indicative	Real Terms / Efficiency Variations		2027/2028 Budget	Inflation	Real Terms / Efficiency Variations		2028/2029 Budget
		£000's	£000's			£000's	£000's			£000's	£000's	
		Employee Costs	Premises Related Costs	Transport Related Costs	Supplies and Services	Third Party Payments	Total Expenditure	Income	Net Expenditure			
	2,295	49	2,344	2,344	- 118	2,226	64	5	2,295			
	156	182	338	144	52	196	6	-	202			
	33	-	33	33	-	33	-	-	33			
	668	487	1,155	500	228	728	-	- 198	530			
	292	14	306	301	19	320	10	2	332			
	3,444	732	4,176	3,322	181	3,503	80	- 191	3,392			
	- 1,033	- 613	- 1,646	- 1,001	- 189	- 1,190	- 1	118	- 1,073			
	2,411	119	2,530	2,321	- 8	2,313	79	- 73	2,319			

Economic Development and Planning Portfolio**Proposed Real Terms / Efficiency Variations****2026/27 Change**

	£'000	£'000
<u>Real Term Variations</u>		
Superannuation contribution changes	-84	
Tree maintenance posts (changed portfolio)	-52	
Local Plan Expenditure rephasing		
Supplies	139	
Income	-139	-
Forward planning additional system costs	11	
Building Control Shared Service Adjustment	-14	
Land charges expenditure	28	
Street naming reduced income	9	
Repairs and maintenance reallocation of budgets	-16	
Guildhall expenditure	90	
Co-op business rates	56	
Former wilko business rates	70	
Development Management additional costs		
Staffing	179	
Supplies	304	
Use of planning reserve	-483	-
Attendance at Ukreiff	6	
Development management subscription	9	
Economic Development staffing	5	
minor variations	1	
		119

2027/28 Change

	£'000	£'000
<u>Real Term Variations</u>		
Superannuation contribution changes	-64	
Tree maintenance posts (changed portfolio)	-52	
Local Plan Expenditure rephasing		
Supplies	198	
Income	-198	-
Forward planning additional system costs	11	
Building Control Shared Service Adjustment	-10	
Land charges expenditure	28	
Street naming reduced income	9	
Repairs and maintenance reallocation of budgets	-16	
Guildhall expenditure	73	
Attendance at Ukreiff	6	
Development management subscription	9	
minor variations	-2	
		-8

2028/29 Change

	£'000	£'000
Real Term Variations		
Increase in pension costs		4
Local Plan Expenditure costs and rephasing		
Supplies	-198	
Income	117	-81
Building Control Shared Service Adjustment		2
Minor variations		2
		-73

Appendix 2

<u>DRAFT GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 TO 2028/29</u>					
	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	Program but not allocated £000
ENVIRONMENT					
Streetscene equipment	25	41	-	-	101
Streetscene Fleet replacement	154	414	-	-	-
Waste Contract - replacement green containers	72	35	35	35	-
Waste Contract - replacement blue bins	8	11	11	11	-
Waste Contract - replacement waste containers	76	4	4	4	-
Food Waste	1,463	-	-	-	-
Eccleshall Road Cemetery Biodiversity	-	14	-	-	-
Car Park systems	232	-	-	-	-
Tree Management System	41	-	-	-	-
Natural Environment Vehicles	-	153	-	-	-
Total	2,071	672	50	50	101
COMMUNITY					
Disabled Facilities Grants	2,369	1,522	1,522	1,522	3,434
Private Sector Housing Assistance	27	56	-	-	-
Empty Homes	9	62	-	-	-
Total	2,405	1,640	1,522	1,522	3,434
LEISURE					
Stone Leisure Strategy Phase 2 (part s106)	109	481	-	-	-
Victoria Park Pedestrian Bridge	-	-	91	-	-
Yarnfield Recreational Facilities	48	-	-	-	-
Yelverton Park	13	-	-	-	-
Haywood and Hixon	-	326	-	-	-
Rowley Park Stadium Play Facilities	-	1,091	-	-	-
Beech Road Play Area	90	-	-	-	-
King Edward and Stafford Hockley	49	-	-	-	-
Rowley Park 3G Pitch	-	195	-	-	-
Total	309	2,093	91	-	-
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING					
Growth Point capital	-	-	-	-	50
Stafford Town Centre Enhancement	-	19	-	-	-
Station Gateway	1,060	9,237	13,436	-	-
UK Shared Prosperity Hub	282	-	-	-	-
Rural England Prosperity Fund REPF	146	-	-	-	-
Future High Street Fund Co-op	9,734	-	-	-	-
Future High Street Fund Station Approach	147	-	-	-	-
Future High Street Fund Guildhall	3,797	-	-	-	-
Former Wilko Site	332	-	-	-	-
Total	15,498	9,256	13,436	-	50

<u>DRAFT GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 TO 2028/29</u>					
	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	Program but not allocated £000
RESOURCES					
Corporate IT equipment	69	-	-	-	-
Contact Centre Phone system	-	-	-	-	30
Civic Centre Generator	-	-	-	-	50
Civic Centre	20,766	-	-	-	-
Revenues and Benefits system	-	40	-	-	-
Total	20,835	40	-	-	80
TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME	41,118	13,701	15,099	1,572	3,665

APPENDIX 3

GENERAL FUND RESERVES AND BALANCES AND CAPITAL RESOURCES 2025 - 2028

	01/04/2026	01/04/2027	01/04/2028	01/04/2029
	£	£	£	£
Contingency				
Revenue Surplus	3,393,154	3,393,154	3,393,154	3,393,154
Insurance Reserve	703,073	703,073	703,073	703,073
VAT - Partial Exemption	195,300	195,300	195,300	195,300
Business Rates Pool Equalisation	431,825	431,825	431,825	431,825
Leisure Equalization Reserve	-506,050	-215,650	0	0
	4,217,301	4,507,701	4,723,351	4,723,351
Grants				
UKSPF Revenue Grant	1	1	1	1
Elections Voter accessibility	24,062	24,062	24,062	24,062
Council Tax Rebate	49,071	49,071	49,071	49,071
Fuel Payment Grant - Dept Energy	36,510	36,510	36,510	36,510
Domestic Abuse Grant 24/25	1	1	1	1
Domestic Abuse Grant 22/23	10,703	10,703	10,703	10,703
Domestic Abuse Grants 23/24 New Burdens Safe Accom	24,473	24,473	24,473	24,473
RSI 24/25 Grant	0	0	0	0
Levelling up capacity station gateway	76,000	76,000	76,000	76,000
Asylum Grant	50,250	50,250	50,250	50,250
Homeless Prevention Grant 24/25	4	4	4	4
Cyber Security	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
LUF Round 3 Station Gateway	53,800	53,800	53,800	53,800
Weekly Food Waste Collections	257,950	257,950	257,950	257,950
Digital Planning Improvement Fund Grant	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Business Rates New Burdens	6,632	6,632	6,632	6,632
HS2 BIF Stone Meadow Habitat Creation Scheme 10yr	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000
Homelessness Prevention Grant 25/26	47,150	0	0	0
Homelessness Prevention	20,887	20,887	20,887	20,887
Neighbourhood Planning Grant	34,257	34,257	34,257	34,257
Stafford & Surrounds Fund	5,723	5,723	5,723	5,723
Elector Grant	113,568	113,568	113,568	113,568
Inspire Grant	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000
Rough Sleeping Grant	42,508	42,508	42,508	42,508
Planning Registers New Burdens	36,241	36,241	36,241	36,241
Housing Benefit Admin Grant	71,632	71,632	71,632	71,632
Flexible Homelessness Support Grant	157,585	157,585	157,585	157,585
Homelessness Reduction Act Grant	75,744	75,744	75,744	75,744
PCC Locality Deal Funding	29,670	29,670	29,670	29,670
Garden Community Grant	393,099	393,099	393,099	393,099
Eastgate Masterplan	5,309	5,309	5,309	5,309
DCLG re Parks Improvement	0	0	0	0
Football Foundation Riverway ATP	8,849	8,849	8,849	8,849
Domestic Abuse Accommodation Duty New Burdens	18,555	18,555	18,555	18,555
Revs and Bens grants	5,820	5,820	5,820	5,820

	01/04/2026 £	01/04/2027 £	01/04/2028 £	01/04/2029 £
Council Tax hardship fund	64,667	64,667	64,667	64,667
Temporary Accommodation Grant	0	0	0	0
Support for Vulnerable Renters	3,425	3,425	3,425	3,425
Safety of Women at Night	144	144	144	144
OPCC Safer Streets	4,687	4,687	4,687	4,687
Homelessness Prevention Grant 22-23	10,018	10,018	10,018	10,018
	1,109,386	1,109,386	1,109,386	1,109,386
Donations				
Loans to Sports Clubs	22,088	22,088	22,088	22,088
Grants Sports Clubs	4,489	4,489	4,489	4,489
Castle Donations	9,628	9,628	9,628	9,628
High House Donations	23,072	23,072	23,072	23,072
	59,277	59,277	59,277	59,277
Shared Services				
HR Shared Service	180,796	180,796	180,796	180,796
IT Shared Service	101,378	101,378	101,378	101,378
Legal Shared Service	65,880	67,380	68,880	70,380
Shared Services Transformation	365,398	335,398	335,398	335,398
	713,452	684,952	686,452	687,952
Rolling Programme				
Housing Needs Survey	52,770	22,770	22,770	22,770
Elections	130,232	169,732	209,232	248,732
	183,002	192,502	232,002	271,502
Community				
Home Energy Conservation	31,700	31,700	31,700	31,700
Private Sector Housing	12,596	12,596	12,596	12,596
Sanctuary	6,009	6,009	6,009	6,009
Earned Autonomy Community safety	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Empty Homes Officer	19,051	19,051	19,051	19,051
DFG Balance of South Staffs Contributions	864	864	864	864
MEES Grant agreed carried fwd employee costs	744	744	744	744
Reserve for 3yr Tenancy Sustainment Officer	47,793	47,793	47,793	47,793
Reserve for 3yr Housing Options Officer	79,248	79,248	79,248	79,248
Taxi Marshalls 2024-2025	5,382	5,382	5,382	5,382
	228,387	228,387	228,387	228,387
Corporate				
Training	95,360	95,360	95,360	95,360
Budget support	750,100	1,750,100	2,750,100	3,400,100
Business Initiative	200,000	400,000	600,000	800,000
Business Support	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Local Government Reorganisation	0	250,000	500,000	750,000
Town Council	0	200,000	200,000	200,000
Climate Change	255,801	255,801	255,801	255,801
Provision for Future Maintenance	571,130	571,130	571,130	571,130
Pensions Reserve	249,040	157,040	65,040	40
Anchor Org for Clinically Vulnerable	271	271	271	271
Building Maintenance	36,350	36,350	36,350	36,350
Contracts reserve	800,356	800,356	800,356	800,356
Partnerships FPN Income	3,855	3,855	3,855	3,855

	01/04/2026 £	01/04/2027 £	01/04/2028 £	01/04/2029 £
Partnerships Contrib to Shared Community Dev	27,140	27,140	27,140	27,140
Post				
Asset valuation	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
IT Reserve	87,369	87,369	87,369	87,369
	3,376,772	4,934,772	6,292,772	7,327,772
Environment				
Streetscene Transformation	110,100	137,450	164,800	192,150
CAMEO - emissions trading scheme	57,768	57,768	57,768	57,768
Stewardship Rural Payments Agency	25,774	25,774	25,774	25,774
Cremator Maintenance Plan	80,453	80,453	80,453	80,453
Environmental Fines	10,147	10,147	10,147	10,147
Streetscene Trading	133,643	133,643	133,643	133,643
Taxi Licences	63,912	63,912	63,912	63,912
Operations Project Management	1,531	1,531	1,531	1,531
Tree System and Inspection	202,750	202,750	202,750	202,750
	686,077	713,427	740,777	768,127
Leisure				
Football development fund	23,823	32,823	41,823	51,203
Freedom Performance Bond	208,330	233,330	258,330	258,330
Leisure Management Contract Reserve	96,126	31,126	16,126	16,126
	328,279	297,279	316,279	325,659
Planning				
LDF	454,289	314,949	116,999	36,099
CIL Reserve	-20,250	-20,250	-20,250	-20,250
Dev Mgmt. Equalisation	483,414	414	414	414
20% Planning Increase	78,830	208,830	338,830	468,830
Stafford TC Strategic Review	71,763	71,763	71,763	71,763
Station Gateway	15,530	15,530	15,530	15,530
Stone Leisure Revenue Funding	59,213	59,213	59,213	59,213
Land Charges System	9,780	9,780	9,780	9,780
Land Charges Consultant	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
	1,177,569	685,229	617,279	666,379
Resources				
Localisation of Council Tax Support	151,633	115,273	78,913	42,553
Property Maintenance	9,340	9,340	9,340	9,340
Transformation Team	128,800	128,800	128,800	128,800
	289,773	253,413	217,053	180,693
Section 106				
Section 106 commuted sums	1,255,295	1,255,295	1,255,295	1,255,295
Cannock SAC contributions	343,844	343,844	343,844	343,844
S106 swimming pool	408,811	408,811	408,811	408,811
S106 Sports cts/hall	339,888	339,888	339,888	339,888
S106 Artificial Turf	61,889	61,889	61,889	61,889
Cannock SAC Partnership	1,246,878	1,153,638	1,127,078	1,127,078
Biodiversity Contributions S106	25,500	25,500	25,500	25,500
S106 Bowling Green Contribution	1,187	1,187	1,187	1,187
	3,683,292	3,590,052	3,563,492	3,563,492
Revenue	16,407,870	17,588,105	19,118,235	20,243,705

	01/04/2026 £	01/04/2027 £	01/04/2028 £	01/04/2029 £
Capital Programme Funding				
RCCO GF	545,842	716,842	1,006,842	1,096,842
Revenue Surplus	27,209	209	209	209
Invest to Save	8,414	3,414	3,414	3,414
Budget support	115,961	15,961	15,961	15,961
New Homes Bonus	279,989	54,989	54,989	24,989
VAT Shelter	126,562	126,562	126,562	25,562
	1,103,976	917,976	1,207,976	1,166,976
Rollovers				
Rollovers 19-20	11,318	11,318	11,318	11,318
	11,318	11,318	11,318	11,318
Capital Contingency				
RCCO HSF/SG	3,483,781	0	0	0
Working Balance Transfer	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus	431	431	431	431
Car Park System	43,000	43,000	43,000	43,000
Civic Car	246	246	246	246
	3,527,458	43,677	43,677	43,677
Capital Sinking Fund				
Cremator Sinking Fund	900,000	950,000	1,000,000	1,050,000
Pest Control Vehicles	32,800	49,200	65,600	82,000
Sweepers Sinking Fund	601,140	257,140	327,140	397,140
Rowley Park 3G Pitch Sinking Fund	195,000	15,000	30,000	45,000
Riverway	200,000	225,000	250,000	275,000
CRM replacement reserve	74,163	74,163	74,163	74,163
	2,003,102	1,570,502	1,746,902	1,923,302
Capital	6,645,854	2,543,473	3,009,873	3,145,273
Earmarked	23,053,724	20,131,578	22,128,108	23,388,978

Band Equivalents

Parish	Tax Base Post LCTS 2026-27
Adbaston	229.87
Barlaston	1,042.91
Berkswich	794.28
Bradley	230.92
Brocton	556.04
Chebsey	251.50
Church Eaton	306.30
Colwich	1,904.94
Creswell	975.74
Doxey	888.52
Eccleshall	2,183.52
Ellenhall	65.26
Forton	145.86
Fradswell	85.78
Fulford	2,305.24
Gayton	85.86
Gnosall	2,027.86
Haughton	457.08
High Offley	398.71
Hilderstone	288.50
Hixon	745.50
Hopton & Coton	846.05
Hyde Lea	187.89
Ingestre	83.48
Marston	96.96
Milwich	195.92
Norbury	204.34
Ranton	186.53
Salt & Enson	190.68
Sandon & Burston	176.30
Seighford	779.48
Stafford	20,247.36
Standon	342.53
Stone	6,439.20
Stone Rural	780.14
Stowe-By-Chartley	197.00
Swynnerton	1,364.50
Tixall	131.44

Parish	Tax Base Post LCTS 2026-27
Weston	473.69
Whitgreave	88.40
Yarnfield and Cold Meece	815.73
Subtotal	49,797.81
MOD Class O	498.50
Total	50,296.31

APPENDIX 5

Report of the Chief Finance Officer on the Robustness of the Budget Estimates and the Adequacy of the Council's Reserves

Introduction

Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 places a duty on the Chief Financial Officer (or Section 151 Officer, the Head of Finance) to make a report to the Council on the robustness of budget estimates and the adequacy of the Council's reserves. The Council must have regard to this report when making its decisions about budgets and council tax for the forthcoming year. This is because the Council is setting the council tax before the commencement of the year and cannot increase it during the year. An understanding of the risks of increased expenditure during the year in terms of likelihood and impact is therefore important.

Robustness of Budget Estimates

The Council's budget estimates for 2026-27, including the forecast outturn for 2025-26, have been prepared by appropriately qualified and experienced staff in consultation with Leadership Team. Budgets have been discussed and fully managed by the Leadership Team.

The budget for 2026-27 has been constructed based upon the maintenance of existing level of service, adjusted for known changes in 2025-26. It is considered to accurately reflect likely expenditure in 2026-27, being based on historic information, experience of expenditure in previous years and latest projections where appropriate.

The indicative budgets for 2027-28 and 2028-29 are similarly based upon the best information available at this moment in time.

The full risk assessment of the Council's Budget 2026-27 has been carried out and is included in APPENDIX 6.

The impact of the National Living Wage has been incorporated into the budget. Allowance has also been made for staff incremental progression. Sufficient provision has been built in for current employer pension contributions, in line with the 2026 actuarial valuation.

Inflation on contractor costs has been allowed based on the projected retail/consumer prices index increases and on energy budgets based on anticipated tariffs as well as specific reviews of particularly high value contracts such as the Freedom Leisure and Waste contract. Any differential inflationary uplift as required by contracts has been reflected.

Some fees and charges are budgeted to increase in 2026. Given the demand-led nature of some of the more significant income budgets such as development control and land charges, prudent but realistic assumptions have been made about estimated income. Major sources of income will continue to be closely monitored throughout the year with a view to protecting overall income to the Council as far as possible.

Net investment income of £1,860k has been included within 2026-27 budgets. This has been based on current projections of bank rate and cash balances held which are anticipated to continue to reduce through 2026-27. Prudent assumptions about cash flow have been made and the advice of the Council's treasury management consultants has been taken into account in determining the average rate of return.

No specific contingency budget is provided in 2026-27 as it is considered that the Council's overall revenue balances are sufficient to act as an overall contingency (see below). However, robust budget monitoring arrangements, including Business Rates monitoring, are in place and will continue throughout the year.

Significant expenditure and income budgets will be monitored closely during the year. Any projected variances will be addressed in a timely manner.

The Council has a Risk Management Strategy and has identified its key strategic risks. Significant financial risks will be managed appropriately. In addition, some financial risks will be mitigated by the Council's insurance arrangements.

I can therefore confirm that the budget estimates as presented are robust.

Adequacy of the Council's Reserves

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) has issued guidance on local authority reserves and balances. It sets out three main purposes for which reserves are held:-

- A working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing.
- A contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies.
- A means of building up funds to meet known or predicted liabilities, known as earmarked reserves.

The Council is projected to hold total General Fund reserves of £23.054 million at 31 March 2026 and £20.132 million at 31 March 2027. This includes S106 amounts of £3.683 million at 31 March 2026 and £3.590 million as at the 31 March 2027.

The Council also has a planned four-year capital programme which is financially sustainable based on current capital resources and a prudent assessment of future capital resources. The financial strategy includes the use of unallocated reserves and a Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay to supplement capital resources and mitigate any borrowing requirement; nevertheless, Prudential Borrowing to finance the Council's capital programme will be used where there is a robust business case.

The Council has set a policy of a minimum level of general reserves of £1 million. The Budget for 2026-27 has been constructed on the basis that there will be a level of general reserves in excess of £1 million.

I can therefore confirm that the Council's reserves are adequate.

Chris Forrester Deputy Chief Executive (Resources) and S151 Officer

Appendix 6

Working Balance - Financial Risks facing the Authority

Risk	Level of risk	Explanation of risk/justification for cover
Inflation	Medium	Inflation has been included in the Financial Plan in accordance with Government policy.
Investment interest	Medium	The amount earned depends on the prevailing interest rates and the level of cash balances held. Prudent assumptions have been made.
Major income sources:		
Planning fees	Medium	Dependent on economic conditions.
Land charges fees	Low	Dependent on the housing market/basis of determining recoverable expenses/proposed transfer to Land Registry.
Car parking	Medium	Certain amount of volatility based on demand.
Environmental services	Low	Licensing income dependent on renewals.
Bereavement services	Low	Some risk as it is a major source of income. For example, should new entrants to the market cause a reduction in income this would be a challenge to the service.
• Spending pressures:		
Waste and recycling	Medium	There is uncertainty with regards to waste and recycling moving forwards. The introduction of food waste collection has a significant potential impact on council budgets which is unclear at present.
Levelling Up	High	The Future High Streets Fund and LUF station gateway schemes represent major investment programmes over a number of years with substantial Council contributions. It includes obligations to Government, requires engagement of partners and carries high expectations locally. It therefore represents a major financial risk.
• Funding Sources:		
Volatility in Business Rates	High	The Council will be exposed to volatility or reduction in its business rates due to the failure or temporary closure of a key businesses and successful backdated appeals against Rateable Values. Greater control of Business Rates gives councils greater freedoms and removes dependency on central funding, but it passes on a greater risk to core funding if Business Rates income falls.
• Local Government Reorganisation:		

Risk	Level of risk	Explanation of risk/justification for cover
Recruitment	High	The plans by central government to effectively end the current local government structures and replace them with new much larger councils will have major impacts on the sector. The council was already experiencing difficulties with recruitment and retention but this move will create even more difficulty in the sector as people are less likely to be willing to join organisations which are planned to be wound up. This is in turn likely to result in higher use of consultants/agency staff to fill vacancies and increase costs. It may also harm the retention of staff as they look to move to roles with greater long term certainty in other organisations or sectors.
Enacting the changes	High	The move to new local government structures will require large amounts of investment, both staffing time and financial investment.

Authority Area	Request for	Justification	Total Amount requested	26/27	27/28	28/29
			£000	£000	£000	£000
Housing	Housing strategy	Forward looking review to assess the housing provision in Stafford at present and identify what needs the council needs to support moving forwards	30.00	30.00		
Community Safety	ASB enforcement costs	For external legal advice	30.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Strategic housing	Grant funded housing options post	Need permanent budget for, grant funding being rolled into core funding	105.00	35.00	35.00	35.00
Strategic housing	Grant funded tenancy sustainment officer	Need permanent budget for, grant funding being rolled into core funding	129.00	43.00	43.00	43.00
Community Safety	Cost of domestic homicide reviews		22.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
Leisure	Consultancy support		35.00	35.00		
Leisure	Legal costs		45.00	30.00	15.00	
Economic Development	Agency programme manager to complete returns post UKSPF ending	UKSPF grant cannot be spent past 31/03/26 but final returns are not capable of being completed until early May 2026	5.40	5.40		

Authority Area	Request for	Justification	Total Amount requested	26/27	27/28	28/29
			£000	£000	£000	£000
Economic Development	Ukreiff	Attendance already indicated for UKREiF 2026 event.	18.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
Planning	Planning appeals	Use of planning consultants to defend council case at hearing / public inquiry where application refused by Planning Committee against officer advice (assumes 2 x hearing and 2 x public inquiry)	115.00	115.00		
Planning	Agency Development Management Team Leader costs	Contingency in case vacant posts cannot be recruited to. (£10,650 per month - salary saving)	73.00	73.00		
Planning	Agency Planning Enforcement officer costs	Contingency in case 3 vacant posts cannot be recruited to. (£24,000 pm - salary savings)	179.00	179.00		
Planning	Planning Enforcement Officer recruitment	To cover cost of market supplements to increase potential of recruiting to the posts (2 x Enforcement Officer + 1 x Senior Enforcement Officer to bring up to the same salary as CCDC secondment into Senior role.)	14.00	14.00		

Authority Area	Request for	Justification	Total Amount requested	26/27	27/28	28/29
			£000	£000	£000	£000
Planning	Mondrem - continued support to service improvement	Support to the DM team and implementation of a Service Improvement Plan. Address backlog of applications and improve perception of the service internally and externally.	27.00	27.00		
Planning	Mondrem - renewal of Workview subscription	Workview measures and forecasts workload and capacity for the service.	27.00	9.00	9.00	9.00
Planning	Direct Action	To deal with problem enforcement cases where legal action has not secured the required improvement. Funding will allow the Council to pursue action through Section 215 of the T&CP Act and commission contractors to secure improvement and potentially recover costs through a land charge.	75.00	75.00		
Legal	Contracts locum agency	Increase in contract volumes reduced waiting times	120.00	40.00	40.00	40.00
Democratic services	community governance review	Proposal to set up a new town council - statutory requirement	36.00	36.00		
Democratic services	Parish council association	Proposal to set up a new town council support	45.00	45.00		

Authority Area	Request for	Justification	Total Amount requested	26/27	27/28	28/29
			£000	£000	£000	£000
HR	Self serve portal	Preparation for Local Government Re-organisation	30.00	30.00		
Technology	Cyber security		75.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
Technology	Acronis	Back-up software	30.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Technology	Device refresh		150.00	50.00	50.00	50.00
Natural Environment	Vehicles		153.00	153.00		
Trees	Additional post for safety inspection works		60.00	60.00		
Corporate Assets	RAAC Survey		20.00	20.00		
Corporate Assets	Insurance valuations		30.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Corporate Assets	Guildhall fire strategy	Required to determine need for a sprinkler system etc.	13.00	13.00		
Regulatory Services	Food agency post	cover staff vacancies and backlog	98.00	98.00		
Regulatory Services	Private Water Supplies agency	meet statutory requirements	98.00	98.00		
			1,887.90	1,381.90	260.50	245.50

Agenda Item 4(a)ii

Fees and Charges Review 2026/2027

Committee:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	22 January 2026
Report of:	Deputy Chief Executive (Resources)
Portfolio:	Resources Portfolio

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to propose to the Council the Fees and Charges for 2026/27.

2 Recommendation

2.1 That the proposed Fees and Charges for 2026/27 be recommended to Council for approval, specifically the new charges in paragraph 5.10 and the increases above 4.3% in **APPENDIX 1**.

Reasons for Recommendations

2.2 The report sets out the proposed changes to Fees and Charges for 2026/27. In accordance with the revised financial regulations agreed by Council on the 16 September 2019 the following items are included:

- Where a new charge has been introduced.
- The proposed increase is above the annual level of inflation.
- Where the power to set fees and charges has been specifically reserved by the Council.

2.3 In addition, this report includes those fees and charges where no increase is proposed from 1 April 2026, for noting.

3 Key Issues

3.1 The setting of fees and charges is an important part of the annual budget setting process. For October 2025 inflation is running at 3.8% CPIH and 4.3% RPI.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

4.1 This report supports all of the Council's Corporate Priorities.

5 Report Detail

5.1 The proposed charges will have a direct impact on the 2026-27 budget and beyond. Decisions that relate to next year's budget and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (2026-29) should be taken in the context of the Council's overall financial position and an analysis of any available data that can inform the direction of the Council's financial strategy.

5.2 The Council has received an indicative settlement allocation including business rates reset that covers the three year period to the end of 2028-29. Although the council has a balanced budget, this is heavily dependent on a large transitional grant whereby the Government's view is that the Council is overfunded based on the revised needs analysis. The transitional grant is intended to make sure that the council's overall funding does not drop below the floor of 95% of income protection against the base year calculation 2025-26 based on the revised needs assessment.

5.3 Apart from the risks regarding future Government support to local government, the council is facing increasing financial pressures from existing service delivery. It is also unclear at present what the impact of the increase in national insurance and minimum wage will have on partners providing services on behalf of the council as some contracts are still to be relet. Essential services will continue to be in great demand, and benefits and debt defaults may increase as businesses attempt to manage the increased costs that they face. Costs, including in respect of pay, supplies and contractors, are all likely to rise. The scope for the Council to increase income in real terms is limited: we have no control over Business Rates and Council Tax is effectively capped at the higher of 2.99% or £5.

5.4 The forecast budget should be considered when making discretionary decisions over income and expenditure. Put simply, the higher the yield from fees and charges, the greater the income which is reflected in the budget. This needs to be balanced by the fact that other things being equal the higher the charge for the service the lower the quantity demanded. Also, relatively high charges can have secondary impacts: they may exclude or discourage some customers from using Council services who would normally depend on such services; and they may have an adverse impact on the local economy.

5.5 The process for setting fees and charges reflects the revised financial regulations as agreed by Council on 16 September 2019. This set out the criteria for fees and charges which would be reported to Cabinet and Council for approval as follows:

- Where a new charge has been introduced.
- The proposed increase is above the annual level of inflation.
- Where the power to set fees and charges has been specifically reserved by the Council.

5.6 For 2026/27, inflation - as defined in financial regulations - is the Retail Prices Index, which currently stands at 4.3%. However, in general, where officers have delegated authority, charges will rise by approximately 4%, allowing for rounding.

5.7 Certain fees are set by reference to external bodies or set by legislation/regulations. These are included in the full list of published fees and charges but are not referred to in this report.

5.8 Fees and charges are also set after bearing in mind market conditions. As a result, some charges where the Council has the power to vary them will not rise, the most significant of which are:

- Taxi licence fees are subject to a separate review and require consultation.
- Car park and Chargeable garden waste collection charges are frozen at 2025/26 prices.

5.9 Charges for new services are as set out below.

- Crematorium double cremated remains casket £107.00
- Cemeteries - Themed Tribute £98.00
- Cemeteries - Download of Service without live link £45.00
- Cemeteries - Obitus late workings fee £22.50
- Cemeteries - Additional Photos £22.50
- Local Land Charges - One parcel of land - Commercial £174.00
- Local Land Charges - Each additional parcel - Commercial £39.29
- Local Land Charges - LLC1 - Commercial £28.00

- Local Land Charges - Standard enquiries Con29R - Commercial £146.00
- Legal fees - Deed of Surrender of Lease £535.60
- Estate management - Disposals (freehold) £439.45
- Estate management - Disposals (long leases) £513.50
- Estate management - New leases (land and other premises) £599.25
- Estate management - New leases (renewal) £359.55
- Estate management - Licence to occupy £399.50

5.10 There are some fees proposed to be deleted which are as follows:

- Allotments - Licence to use access roads at rear - historic charge no longer considered appropriate minimal income receivable
- Waterfront Multi storey car park - lost/damaged token - new system does not use tokens
- Riverside Undercroft car park - lost/damaged token - new system does not use tokens
- Waterfront Multi storey car park - Top up card - new machines with no top up cards

5.11 Proposed increases above the threshold of 4.3% are detailed in **APPENDIX 1**.

5.12 A full copy of Fees and Charges will be available on the Members' portal before the Council meeting and will be published on the website once approved by Council.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

Fees and charges are an important source of income to the Council. As costs rise with inflation, if income from fees and charges does not rise proportionately, this will add to the cost to the council of delivering the services.

6.2 Legal

As set out in the report.

6.3 Human Resources

As set out in the report.

6.4 Risk Management

The risk issues contained in this report are not strategic and therefore should not be included in the Strategic Risk Register.

The level of income generated by the Council from fees and charges is a key risk as a number of the Council's main income streams are sensitive to adverse economic conditions and can vary significantly as a result.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

The Council operates a concessionary fees and charges scheme.

6.6 Health

None

6.7 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices

None

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

File available in Financial Services.

Contact Officer: Emma Fullagar

Telephone Number: 01543 464 720

Ward Interest: None

Report Track: Cabinet 22 January 2026 (only)

Key Decision: Yes

**Stafford Borough Council
Environment Portfolio
Fees and Charges 2026/2027**

Fees and Charges 2026/27 Increases above or below 4.3% rounded inflation

	Existing Charge £ - p	VAT	Date Set	Proposed Charge 01-Apr-26
STAFFORD CREMATORIUM				
Fee for Burial of Cremated Remains				
Tixall Road Cemetery				
(g) Inscription on vase (per letter)	2.55	S	01/04/2025	3.50
Sanctum				
(c) Additional inscription per letter	2.55	S	01/04/2025	3.00
STAFFORD AND STONE CEMETERIES				
Use of Screen for Display of Photographs/ Videos Throughout the Service				
(d) Family supplied video formatting	21.60	S	01/04/2025	27.00
LOCAL LAND CHARGES				
(a) One Parcel of Land - Residential (including official LLC1)	104.65	S/NB	01/04/2025	124.28
(b) Each additional parcel - Residential	9.85	NB	01/04/2025	20.00
(c) LLC1 - Residential	9.85	NB	01/04/2025	20.00
(d) Standard Enquiries Con29R - Residential	94.80	S	01/04/2025	104.28
(f) Con29 Optional each printed enquiry	24.70	S	01/04/2025	29.50
each additional enquiry	24.70	S	01/04/2025	29.50

Agenda Item 4(b)i

Allocation Policy Review and Changes

Committee:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	22 January 2026
Report of:	Head of Wellbeing
Portfolio:	Community Portfolio

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To review and approve the proposed changes to the Council's Allocation Policy.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the proposed changes to the Council's Allocation Policy.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2 On 1 September 2025, Homes Plus changed the way they let social housing. Applicants no longer bid through Choice Based Lettings (CBL) but instead are nominated (put forward) for suitable properties.
- 2.3 Stafford Borough's current Allocation Policy - which sets out who is eligible and gets priority for social housing - is based on the current CBL system and needs to be updated to reflect the recent changes made by Homes Plus.
- 2.4 On 28 August 2025, permission was granted to consult on proposed changes to the Allocation Policy. Following consultation and data monitoring, it is recommended that Cabinet approve essential changes to the Allocation Policy only (detailed below), whilst demand on the Housing Register is monitored and reviewed over the next twelve months.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The Council's Allocation Policy has been reviewed in light of recent changes made by Homes Plus. During this review, officers have considered amendments to procedure, eligibility and categories of reasonable and additional preference and have recently completed an eight week public consultation on these changes.

- 3.2 During the consultation period, demand for social housing was closely monitored with a view to understand the practical impact of the proposed changes.
- 3.3 Whilst demand for housing need assessments has increased, it has not had the impact that was predicted based on previous data provided by Homes Plus. Since July 2025, households on the Council's waiting list have increased from 117 to 164 (at time of writing), compared to 995 households registered with Homes Plus who were assessed as having a housing need at the time the waiting list was closed.
- 3.4 The consultation responses were mixed, with 73% either in agreement, or in agreement with some but not all of the changes, with concerns raised over eligibility and reasonable and additional preference categories.
- 3.5 The recommendation is that we make essential changes to the Allocation Policy and review wider changes in six months, once we have a better understanding of the demands on the social housing register. We have not had the initial increase in demand that was anticipated and need to give time for the changes to embed.
- 3.6 The essential changes are:
 - Choice Based Lettings updated to Direct Nomination;
 - Move 'Supported Accommodation Move On' from Band B to Band A;
 - Update Local Connection to reflect changes in legislation for Care Leavers and victims of Domestic Abuse;
 - Update procedural guidance notes on assessment of 'unreasonable behaviour,' medical needs and additional bedroom criteria.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 The Allocation Policy ensures social housing is provided to those who need it most which directly contributes to Corporate Priority 2 Health and Wellbeing '*To encourage and support residents to lead healthy and independent lives.*'

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 On 1 September 2025 Homes Plus stopped using the Choice Based Lettings system and moved to a closed waiting list which means they will not be accepting direct applications for social housing. Instead, Homes Plus will allocate their social housing stock in Stafford Borough through existing nomination agreements with Stafford Borough Council.
- 5.2 Nomination Agreements gives the local housing authority the right to nominate a specific percentage of households to housing owned by local

Housing Associations. Whilst the local housing authority has the right to put forward households to properties, the final decision on whether to accept the household as a tenant lies with the Housing Association. This decision must be made in line with the Housing Association's Allocation Policy and the Council's Nomination Agreements.

- 5.3 In 2018, Stafford Borough Council agreed 75% nomination rights with Homes Plus (previously Stafford and Rural Homes). The nomination agreement was based on Homes Plus' system to allocate properties. Applicants would register with Homes Plus and bid for suitable properties each week through a system known as Choice Based Lettings. As the majority of applicants would approach Homes Plus directly, a working nomination target was agreed at 30%. This enabled Homes Plus to short-list their own properties whilst ensuring that those with the most acute housing need who had approached the local authority (mostly those who were homeless) would be offered suitable accommodation. The system was successful in allocating properties to those most in need whilst balancing local communities.
- 5.4 Homes Plus merged with Wrekin Housing Trust in January 2025. In June 2025, Stafford Borough Council were informed that an ambition of the merger was to move to a single housing management system that would combine all landlord functions, including social housing allocation. We were later informed that the housing management system would go live from 1 September 2025 and there would no longer be a facility to operate an open waiting list (via Choice Based Lettings). Instead, Homes Plus would send through 75% of their vacant properties to the Council who would nominate the next suitable household on our waiting list to the property. Homes Plus are in the process of updating their internal policies and procedures to reflect these changes.
- 5.5 This has a significant impact on the allocation of social housing in Stafford Borough, with Homes Plus owning 80% of social housing stock. In July 2025, there were 2991 applicants on Homes Plus' waiting list, with an average of 50 new applications received each week. This includes applications from outside of Stafford Borough and those with 'no housing need' who were able to register with Homes Plus. Whilst there were 2991 applicants on Homes Plus' waiting list, there were only 330 properties let per year which meant that the majority of those on the Homes Plus waiting list were very unlikely to be allocated social housing.
- 5.6 Going forward, those in need of social housing will apply to Stafford Borough Council, under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996. Whilst Housing Options has provided this function since 2017, the numbers approaching the service have been relatively low with most households choosing to approach Homes Plus directly. In July, there were 117 households on Stafford Borough Council's waiting list, with on average 18 applications for the housing register per month (not including homeless applications). At time of writing, there are 164

households on our housing register, with on average 30 applications being received each month.

- 5.7 It was originally envisaged that the above change would have a significant impact on demand to Housing Options for housing needs assessments and require significant changes to policy and procedure to ensure the service remained operational and we did not replicate the open waiting list previously held by Homes Plus.
- 5.8 Stafford Borough's Allocation Policy is designed to assess the most acute housing need and provide detailed housing and support needs assessment for the most vulnerable households. We do not have the resource to provide this level of case management to the number of applications that Homes Plus have previously received. In light of this, we were advised to update our Allocation Policy so that our procedures and priority assessments reflect the new system and focus on those with acute housing need, ensuring that social housing is allocated to those who need it most.
- 5.9 Since the introduction of direct nomination by Homes Plus we have closely monitored the waiting list figures and nominations received. Whilst contact to Housing Options has increased, we have not received the influx in demand that we initially envisaged. As of writing, there are 168 applicants on the waiting list, of which 62 are in the process of being offered accommodation. Whilst numbers of cases approaching Housing Options has increased, it has not reflected the demand previously seen by Homes Plus. We had initially envisaged a sharp increase in housing applications which would have required an immediate full review of the Allocations Policy. As it stands, this demand has not been seen by the housing options team.
- 5.10 It is recommended that we make essential amendments to the Allocation Policy, in line with the changes made by Homes Plus and re-consider a full review within the next twelve months when we have a full understanding of the number of residents likely to come through the housing options service and whether the Council can continue to be as flexible as it currently is in allocating housing.
- 5.11 Further detail to the essential changes are outlined in **APPENDIX 1** and a draft Allocation Policy is provided in **APPENDIX 2**.
- 5.12 In summary these are procedural changes to reflect the new direct nomination process, updated criteria to care leavers and victims of domestic abuse reflecting recent changes in legislation and additional guidance notes on assessments for 'unreasonable behaviour,' medical need and additional bedroom requirements.
- 5.13 In addition, we propose increasing the priority banding from those moving on from Supported Accommodation from Band B to Band A to alleviate pressures on supported accommodation and emergency accommodation.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

The changes made by Homes Plus to remove the choice based letting system and revert to nominations has resulted in additional numbers approaching the council for housing needs assessment. In Quarter 1 25/26, 601 households approached housing options for advice and assistance, this increased to 870 in Quarter 2 25/26 (after the Homes Plus changes came into effect). In Quarter 2, Housing Options received an additional 60 nominations. At time of writing, there is lack of clarity over future projection of those numbers although it is expected to create an additional resource requirement, this will be the subject of a separate report once the impact has been reviewed.

6.2 Human Resources

None

6.3 Risk Management

The changes proposed by Homes Plus require the Council to review the procedures within our Allocation Policy. Homes Plus had 2991 applicants on the waiting list, with only 330 lets per year. If we were to operate a similar Policy, we risk raising expectations that households will be allocated social housing. At time of writing, there are 164 applicants on our waiting list, of which 62 are on offer. Whilst there is a risk that those on the previous Homes Plus waiting list could apply to the Council for social housing, this has not happened. The Council does not have the staffing resource to assess a high volume of applicants who have a low housing need.

We have consulted on proposals to change the allocation policy. This will be reviewed again in Autumn 2026, or sooner if we see a significant increase in demand.

The proposed changes to the Allocation Policy comply with Part VI of the Housing 1996 Act. The policy should be kept under review and amended if appropriate.

6.4 Legal Implications

The proposed changes to the Allocation Policy comply with Part VI of the Housing 1996 Act. The policy should be kept under review and amended if appropriate.

6.5 Equalities and Diversity

A community impact assessment will be completed as part of the full review of the Allocation Policy.

6.6 Health

A secure, safe and affordable home is critical to a household's health and wellbeing. There is a limited supply of affordable housing and ensuring those who are unable to access market housing are prioritised for affordable housing is essential.

6.7 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices

Appendix 1: Proposed Changes to the Allocation Policy.

Appendix 2: Allocation Policy (Draft)

8 Previous Consideration

None

9 Background Papers

None

Contact Officer: Hayley Smith

Telephone Number: 01785 619554

Ward Interest: All

Report Track: Cabinet 22 January 2026 (Only)

Key Decision: No

Proposed Changes to the Allocation Policy

Section Change	Overview	Reason
Section 4: Nominations Direct Nomination	Updated to reflect the procedural changes to our Nomination Agreement with Homes Plus Remove reference to Choice Based Lettings and bidding for properties.	To reflect changes made by Homes Plus
Section 8: Suitability and Offers of Accommodation Direct Nomination	Updated to reflect the procedural change to our Nomination Agreement with Homes Plus. Remove reference to Choice Based Lettings, bidding for properties and management bids with Homes Plus.	To reflect changes made by Homes Plus.
Section 6 and Appendix C - Eligibility for the Housing Register Local Connection	Update local connection exemption for victims of domestic abuse and care leavers in accordance with the Allocation of Social Housing Regulation 2025.	Changes required by Regulation.
Section 9 - Banding System Exceptional Need to Move (Band A)	Replace separate bandings for 'harassment, domestic abuse, disaster or emergency' with 'exceptional need to move'.	To provide a clear, concise Allocation Policy that is easy to use for Housing Options Officers and accessible to members of the public and other stakeholders.
Section 9 - Banding System Supported Accommodation Move On	Move 'Supported Accommodation Move On' to Band A	There is considerable demand for single person supported accommodation, with limited move on options for those who are ready to live independently. Prioritising those who are ready to move

		on from supported accommodation improve the availability of bedspaces and reduce pressures on costly emergency accommodation.
Appendix D - How we will assess the unacceptable behaviour qualification rule	Additional information on how we will assess unacceptable behaviour	To improve clarity on how we will assess unacceptable behaviour
Appendix E - Examples of when an applicant may be awarded priority band A or B on the basis of a medical or disability need	Additional information on medical priority	To improve clarity on how medical need is assessed that will make the process simpler for Housing Options Officer to implement and improve transparency for members of the public and stakeholders.
Appendix F - How we will assess extra bedroom requests	Additional information on how to assess extra bedroom request	To improve clarity on how bedroom entitlement is assessed that will make the process simpler for Housing Options Officers to implement and improve transparency for the public and stakeholders.

Other changes

- Background and context has been updated to reflect local and national change since the previous Allocation Policy.
- Any references to Stafford and Rural Homes have been updated to Homes Plus
- The Allocation Policy has been drafted in a more accessible, user-friendly format that explains the process clearly for members of the public and wider stakeholders.

Allocation Policy



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1 Introduction and Background

Every local housing authority in England is required to have an allocation policy which determines who is eligible for social housing and how social housing will be allocated and prioritised between applicants in housing need within the area. The purpose of this document is to set out how Stafford Borough Council will allocate properties, it explains who is eligible and qualifies for social housing in Stafford, how people are prioritised and the process for nominating people to properties. The aim of this Policy is to ensure that affordable housing is allocated fairly to those with greatest housing need, in accordance with legislative requirements.

Stafford Borough Council is the strategic housing authority for the Borough but does not own any housing stock. The local authority has duties in accordance with Part 6 and Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) to provide housing advice and assistance and to prevent and relieve homelessness. The local authority works closely with all Housing Associations who own social housing within Stafford in order to discharge these duties and to increase the supply of affordable housing through new developments. This includes affordable housing for rent and low cost home ownership, in particular shared ownership. The Council also works closely with private landlords to increase access to the private rented sector for people in housing need where appropriate.

The Allocation Policy can be viewed online <https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/housing>. A copy of the full policy can be made available upon request. The Policy takes effect from **[insert new date]**.

2 Local Housing Context

In framing an allocation policy it is important to reflect the local housing context. Stafford is a predominately rural Borough within the County of Staffordshire; it is located just south of Stoke on Trent and between the main cities of Birmingham to the south and Manchester to the north. It has excellent north south transport links with two M6 motorway junctions and a station on the West Cost Mainline.

Stafford Borough is resident to approximately 138,670 people, with over half the population living in Stafford Town. The Borough has two main towns, the county town of Stafford and a smaller market town of Stone. A third of the population live in smaller rural settlements.

Although a relatively affluent area it contains some neighbourhoods experiencing social and economic deprivation, with 5% of Stafford residents living within the most deprived national quintile. Employment rates are high at 8.3% above national figures however Stafford has an aging population, with those aged 65 and over forecast to increase by 35% by 2040 making this the fastest growing age group in the Borough.

Stafford is a military town and home to a Ministry of Defence base at Beaconside Barracks which has expanded considerably since 2015.

Stafford Borough Council does not own any housing stock. In 2025, there were 8800 social rented properties in the Borough, with Homes Plus being the largest provider of social housing and owning approximately 80% of social housing stock within the Borough. As part of its current Local Plan (2014 – 2031), Stafford Borough Council has made a commitment to deliver 210 affordable homes per annum up to 2031. Since the local plan was adopted in June 2014, this target has been exceeded, but is expected to level in forthcoming years. The majority of these affordable homes have been delivered in the urban areas in line with the local plan, but equally there has been a significant number provided in the rural areas to meet the local need.

The social letting turnover rate in Stafford is less than the national average. Although Stafford has had a healthy supply of affordable housing; if this were to reduce, and assuming demand remains constant, this will impact on access to the social housing sector and potentially impact on the ability to respond quickly to emerging housing need. Stafford is the least affordable district in Staffordshire for house prices (based on median house price to income ratio), with average house prices 6.7 times average salary¹; making home ownership

¹ Housing rates (Public Health England / Stafford District Data Pack, Staffordshire County Council, September 2018)

out of reach for some residents. The average house price in Stafford was £256,000 in May 2025, up 6.4% from May 2024. This was higher than the rise in West Midlands (3.5%) over the same period.

Similar pressures are also faced in the private rented sector which has up to a 28% shortfall between lower quartile rent prices and local housing allowance rates which can make the private sector difficult to access for individuals in receipt of benefits. Demand for private sector properties in Stafford are competitive, resulting in increases in rents above the regional average.

Long term empty homes in the Borough are higher than the national and regional average and equate to just over 3% of dwelling stock. The Council are committed to reducing both long, and short-term, empty homes and work closely with the Housing Options Team to explore sustainable solutions for homeowners and the wider housing market.

Stafford has a small number of residents living in short term supported accommodation, including Eagle House and properties run by the League of Hospital Friends, amongst others, for individuals who are at risk of homelessness. ForWard House, is a purpose build refuge in the Borough for women and families who are experiencing domestic abuse. The supply of supported accommodation is limited and the local authority aims to facilitate move on as quickly as possible for those residents who are ready to move into general needs accommodation. Supported accommodation provision for those at risk of homelessness is currently low to general needs. The Housing Options Team are seeing increasing numbers of individuals (70%) who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, approaching the service with support needs. Increasingly individuals are presenting with multiple and complex needs and requiring additional support in order to sustain tenancies.

In recent years, Stafford Borough Council has seen increases in homeless applications in line with national trends. Since 2021, there has been a 120% increase in homeless applications, with corresponding increases households requiring temporary accommodation, placing significant pressure on housing options particularly for single people and those with support needs.

Stafford Borough Council remains committed to preventing homelessness at the earliest opportunity and work with partner agencies in order to sustain accommodation or, where this is not possible, to arrange a planned move into suitable alternative accommodation. Households who require temporary accommodation are closely case managed by the Housing Options Team in order to find suitable long-term properties at the earliest opportunity.

3 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the Allocation Policy is to ensure that best use is made of all affordable housing in Stafford Borough by allocating housing in a fair and transparent way, to applicants in most housing need within the Borough. The Allocation Policy recognises that those who are most vulnerable and in most housing need can often be excluded from housing registers and endeavours to provide such households with the opportunity for additional support in order to secure sustainable accommodation as outlined in our Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy.

The Scheme has been developed with a view to meeting the following principles and key objectives:

To have a clear, transparent and accountable system for assessing applicants and to allocate homes in a way that is easy to understand and administer.

To award preference for those in most housing need in order to make best use of limited social housing stock.

To take into account local priorities and support our Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy, along with our Housing Strategy.

To provide applicants with the best opportunity of creating a long – term, sustainable tenancy by assessing a households housing and support needs.

To develop positive working relationships with local Housing Associations, and other agencies, in order to provide vulnerable households with the opportunity to create long-term sustainable tenancies.

To support the development of strong communities that promotes the health and wellbeing of households.

To meet the requirement set out in legislation, regulation and guidance and promote best practice.

4 Nominations

In 2006, Stafford Borough Council transferred housing stock to Stafford and Rural Homes (a Housing Association), now called Homes Plus and part of the Housing Plus Group. Despite not owning any housing stock, the Council retains its duty to provide housing advice and assistance and to prevent and relieve homelessness in accordance with Part 6 and 7 of the Housing Act (as amended).

In order to fulfil this duty, the Council works in close partnership with Homes Plus, and other Housing Associations who own and manage social housing in the Borough (see Appendix A for a list of social housing providers in Stafford).

Housing Associations have a duty to cooperate with the Council in offering accommodation to people in housing need under the Council's Allocation Policy. The Council have entered into nomination agreements with Homes Plus, and other local Housing Associations that mean that a percentage of properties will be made available to the Council to offer to applicants from our waiting list in accordance with this Allocation Policy.

When a social housing property becomes vacant in Stafford Borough, the Council will put forward (nominate) a suitable applicant in accordance with the rules set out in this Policy and our nomination agreement with the Housing Association. Stafford Borough Council does not have nomination agreements for all social housing properties in the Borough so there may be properties that become vacant that Stafford Borough Council is unable to nominate households for.

The Housing Association, who own and manage the property, will then consider the nomination made against their own allocation criteria and will then make the final decision as to whether that household will be offered the property they have been nominated to.

The Council, along with local Housing Associations, will work in close partnership to deliver the policy and maximise the potential rehousing options available for applicants.

5 Accessing the Housing Register

Households can access the housing register by contacting Stafford Borough Council for a housing needs assessment. The Council does not operate an open Housing Register therefore applicants must be assessed as eligible and qualify for a housing need, as outlined by this Allocation Policy before they are accepted onto a waiting list for social housing.

Households can approach the Council in a number of ways including telephone, in person, via email and also via our online self-assessment tool that provides a detailed and immediate housing options assessments. A Housing Options Officer will assess the application and explore suitable options for eligible applicants with a focus on enabling a household to remain at home where it is safe and reasonable to do so. Depending on the household's circumstances, the Council may ask for additional information from the applicant in order to assess their housing need, taking into consideration all housing options including other tenures such as shared ownership or the private rented sector. The Council may take steps to discuss options with current Landlords to allow households to remain in their existing property (such as repayment agreements for rent arrears) or consider adaptations to properties or a Sanctuary Scheme where suitable. Depending on the household's circumstances, the Council may consider other tenures of housing including private sector and shared ownership (among others).

Households who are most vulnerable and would otherwise struggle to access social housing may be offered targeted support that can include budgeting advice and assistance, signposting to training and employment opportunities, referral to relevant supporting agencies and practical help with activities such as setting up bank account.

Where additional housing-related support is required to access and sustain accommodation, the Council can tailor an ongoing support package to enable the tenancy to start on a stable footing and provide additional housing options for vulnerable households . The length and intensity of the support is case dependent and agreed with the Landlord at the outset of the tenancy.

Support packages will be tailored in conjunction with other supporting agencies, including existing tenancy management functions of the Housing Associations, or other Landlords, with a view to empowering the household to live independently.

If the applicant meets the eligibility and qualification rules they will be registered and will then receive a registration letter that contains details for the Band they have been placed into according to their housing need; the size of property they are eligible for, and their case reference.

All applicants will be required to sign a declaration, or to give informed consent, to:

- (a) Confirm that the information given is correct and that they will notify the Council of any change in their circumstances.
- (b) Give consent to allow enquiries to be made concerning their eligibility for housing and level of priority.

(c) Give consent to allow information to be provided to another partner organisation in the scheme.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide the Council with all the information requested to assess their circumstances, and to provide any supporting information or documents that are required. Incomplete applications will not be made active until such time as the Council is satisfied that it has in its possession all of the information it requires to complete its assessment. All incomplete applications will be closed after a period of 28 days of inactivity from the applicant from the date information has been requested if it has not been provided. This cancellation does not prevent the applicant making a subsequent application at a later date, although all applicants should note that in such cases the effective date of registration would not be backdated to the earlier application date.

The Council may request information or a reference from an applicant's current or previous social landlord and may, depending on whether the application gives rise to any concern, request a reference from the most recent private sector landlord if there has been a private sector tenancy. Where a landlord does not reply a reminder will be sent and if still not forthcoming any other information or records available will be checked to try to determine whether there have been any concerns over the way an applicant may have conducted their tenancy. An applicant should not be disadvantaged if, despite every effort, it is not possible to obtain a reference from their current or previous landlord.

Applications are subject to verification checks and may be assessed:

- At the point of initial application
- Following any change of circumstance notified to the Council by the applicant
- Following routine validation audits
- Following an annual review of the application
- By a housing provider, at the point of an offer of accommodation
- By a housing provider, at the point of letting

Checks into any court cases or unspent criminal convictions

In the interests of assessing an applicant's eligibility to join the register all applicants and members of their prospective household will be requested to disclose any pending court cases or unspent criminal convictions.

The Council may use any information disclosed, or any other information obtained during the assessment or following registration, to ascertain whether the applicant should be disqualified from joining, or remaining on the register,

due to serious unacceptable behaviour and/or because depending on the facts they may pose a serious risk to a community where they might be housed. Where a criminal conviction is spent the Council will not take into account that an applicant had received a criminal conviction in assessing that person's eligibility to join the register. The assessment will reflect whether there is evidence of any current serious unacceptable behaviour regardless of whether a person has been convicted in the past for that behaviour.

Information gained will not automatically exclude an applicant from the register. It may also be used to make informed decisions about any nomination for vacant property.

All assessments will be carried out in accordance with the data protection and information sharing policies and legal requirements.

In Appendix B the policy sets out the rules on spent and unspent conviction rehabilitation periods that apply under national legislation.

How joint applications will be considered

Joint applications will be accepted and will be treated as one application. The housing need of the full household will be considered in assessing housing need. However, in relation to the Housing Associations that are part of this policy the individual association will decide whether to allow a joint tenancy depending on their own rules.

Households with children who do not permanently live with them

Social housing allocation does not provide a child with more than one bedroom allocation in situations where custody is shared between two parents. Bedroom allocation will only be provided to children whose primary residence is with the applicant and this will be assessed as the parent who receives the Child Benefit or Child Tax Credit award(s).

Applicants with shared custody will be considered on a case-by-case basis taking into account:

- (1) Shared residency or child arrangement orders;
- (2) The ability of the applicant to afford the rent with or without help from benefits;
- (3) The availability of family housing in any area that an applicant expresses a preference to live in. For example a Housing Association may be willing to be more flexible where a vacancy relates to a flat than a house if the flat is assessed as being affordable.

Housing Associations have their own Allocation and Lettings Criteria for children who do not permanently live with the household and will have the final decision on the number of bedrooms required by the applicant in accordance with their own Allocation Criteria.

The requirement to inform the Council of any change of circumstances

It is the responsibility of the applicant to inform the Council of any change of circumstances and, where requested, provide proof of that change.

Notification of a change in circumstances should be done without undue delay. Registered applicants should contact the Council to inform of any change of circumstances and, if requested, submit evidence. Examples of a change in circumstances include but are not limited to:

- (a) A change of address or contact details, for either themselves or members of their prospective household;
- (b) A change in their medical condition or disability (either existing or newly acquired);
- (c) Additional family members or other people they wish to add to their application (It will be for the Council to decide whether they will allow additional people to join the application);
- (d) Any family member or any other person on the application who has left the accommodation; and
- (e) Any significant changes in income, savings or assets, which may require a reassessment under the income and savings qualification rule.

It does not follow that every change in circumstance will result in a change in priority. However, a change may mean an applicant qualifies for additional priority and may move up a band or may mean that an applicant no longer qualifies for a higher band or in some circumstances will no longer qualify to be on the Housing Register. Applicants who move up a band will be provided with a new registration date which will be the date the change of circumstances was assessed by the Housing Options Officer. The Council will

verify and assess the extent of the change to ascertain whether this will result in a change in priority. Applicants will not actively be considered for housing whilst the change of circumstance is being verified and the Council will endeavour to assess the change of circumstances within a reasonable period of time to avoid any disadvantage to an applicant.

6 Eligibility for the Housing Register

Everyone can apply to join the Housing Register but there are some groups of people, who regardless of their housing need or circumstances, cannot be accepted by law. These are people who:

- Come under the Government's 'persons from abroad' eligibility rules and cannot lawfully be given housing help;
- Do not live habitually in the Common Travel Area (UK, Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland) for tax purposes;
- Do not have the right to live in the UK;
- Plus other categories of people who the Government may in the future, decide are not eligible for housing assistance.

To clarify the Council cannot nominate a person for housing if they are a person who is ineligible for an allocation of housing accommodation by virtue of being a person subject to immigration control or a person from abroad who is prescribed as ineligible: (s.160ZA (1), (2) and 4): The relevant Regulations that the Council applies are:

- Regulations 3 and 4 Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006, SI 2006/1294
- All subsequent amendments including 'The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/861)'

The rules are complicated and anyone who is impacted or believes they may be impacted by the rules can approach the Council for advice on the rules or seek independent legal advice.

Who can qualify to join our Housing Register

Our Allocation Policy has local rules about who can join our Housing Register (these are called qualification and disqualification rules). This section explains the rules we have chosen to adopt which explain when you may not be able to join, or be allowed to remain, on our Housing Register:

- (1) You need to be aged 18 or over to join our Housing Register - with some very limited exceptions (see below).
- (2) You must have a residential local connection to the Borough

- (3) You must have an assessed housing need as defined by the circumstances set out in bands A-D
- (4) You will not qualify if you are considered to have sufficient resources to find your own home, including current or recent home ownership
- (5) If there is evidence of unacceptable behaviour you may not be allowed to qualify
- (6) You may not qualify due to former or current rent arrears owed to any Council or Housing Association
- (7) We have evidence that you have made a fraudulent application you will not qualify

Age

Individuals under the age of 18 cannot by law be granted a tenancy.

Individuals under the age of 18 may be considered for nomination in exceptional circumstances where:

- Stafford Borough Council recognises that they will owe a homeless duty in accordance with Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended); and, or
- The individual is a young person who has been looked after, fostered or accommodated and has a duty of care accepted under the Children's Act 1989; and
- The individual is ready for independent living and has an agreed support package with partner agencies which includes pre-tenancy training and tenancy sustainment.

Any nomination to an applicant who is under the age of 18 will only be made after their ability to manage a tenancy has been fully assessed.

This assessment is to make sure that they can cope with being a tenant at a young age and that they do not risk losing that tenancy offered through a lack of support. Stafford Borough Council will work closely with Staffordshire County Council to arrange suitable packages of support.

This may include a referral and the need for an assessment to Staffordshire Social Services or other support services to ensure the appropriate support is in place. If a person who is 16 or 17 is granted a tenancy, this will be held in trust until they reach 18. This means that another suitable person (such as a parent, legal guardian, social worker or relative) will be responsible for the tenancy.

It is at the discretion of the relevant Housing Association to accept applicants under the age of 18. Individual Housing Associations may have their own requirements for individuals under the age of 18 to be granted a tenancy in accordance with their own Allocations and Lettings Policy.

Other persons who are incapable of holding a tenancy by law will be ineligible for the waiting list unless the person has an adult or adults who will act as a trustee(s) and hold a legal tenancy until the legal incapacity to hold a tenancy ends.

Local Connection

Only those applicants with a local connection to Stafford Borough, who also have an assessed housing need as defined by this policy, are eligible to be included on the Housing Register.

- (a) In order to demonstrate a local connection, one of the following must be satisfied:
 - (b) Lived in the Borough for the last two years at the point of application;
 - (c) Lived in the Borough for at least three out of the last five years;
 - (d) Is currently subject to a Homeless Duty (in accordance with Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996) and have lived in the Borough for the last six out of 12 months.
- (e) Has been employed in the Borough for the last two years;
- (f) You are under 25 and have left care and meet the definition set out below:
 - a. an eligible child as set out in paragraph 19B of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989. These are children who are: (a) currently being looked-after; (b) aged 16 or 17; and (c) have been looked after by a local authority in England or Wales for a period of 13 weeks, or periods amounting in total to 13 weeks, since the age of 14, at least one day of which must have been since attaining age 16;
 - b. a relevant child as set out by section 23A(2) of the Children Act 1989. These are children who are: (a) no longer a looked-after-child; (b) aged 16 or 17; and (c) a former eligible child;
 - c. a former relevant child aged under 25 as set out by section 23C(1) of the Children Act 1989. These are children who are: (a) aged 18 to 24; and (b) either a former relevant child or a former eligible child.

The exemption is regardless of which Council you were looked after.

- (g) If you come under the [Allocation of Housing \(Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) as amended which means we must not apply the local residency qualification rule to:
 - (a) those who are currently serving or have ever served in the Regular Armed Forces;

- (b) bereaved spouses or civil partners of those who have served in the regular forces where (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their spouse or civil partner, and (ii) the death was wholly or partly attributable to their service;
- (c) existing or former members of the reserve forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness, or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service;
- (h) Has a firm offer of permanent employment in the Borough, where failure to move into the Borough would result in that employment not being accepted. See Right to move criteria below in exemptions to the local connection rules for details of how a firm offer of employment will be assessed;
- (i) Receives support from close family members who have lived in the Borough for at least three years;
- (j) Has close family members in the Borough who they need to provide essential care for, or receive essential care from; or
- (k) Other specific circumstances that the local authority would wish to consider under a local connection criteria.

If you come under the armed forces regulations we will not apply the 2 year residency rule but the other qualification rules adopted will still be applied to your application such as the requirement to have a housing need, unacceptable behaviour or current or former rent arrears.

If you are a person who is or has been a victim of domestic abuse carried out by another person who needs to move for reasons connected with that abuse, the local connection rule will not apply.

This exemption recognises that victims of domestic abuse often have to leave their local area for their own safety, or to receive suitable support. We will assess whether the need to move is connected with the domestic abuse and if we agree there is evidence that you need to move as a result of domestic abuse, or a threat of domestic abuse that is likely to be carried out, then we will apply the exemption.

If someone is fleeing domestic abuse, it may be the case that they will flee somewhere temporarily first for safety before they make their application for social housing. This might be domestic abuse safe accommodation or the home of a friend or family member where you move into for a very short period of time. In these circumstances, we would still regard your application as being for reasons connected with the abuse when you seek to move on from that accommodation, as long as that accommodation is considered to be

short term accommodation and is not provided under an arrangement where you are able to stay in the longer term, for example where you have accepted a private sector tenancy or the arrangement you have with family is for an indefinite period. Once someone is in settled accommodation, and they are assessed as safe from the perpetrator of the domestic abuse violence, then we would not apply this exemption.

Applicants fleeing threats of violence or harassment, or placed in the Borough as a result of witness protection where it can be evidenced by a relevant professional will have the right to a local connection.

The Council recognises there may be exceptional circumstances where it becomes necessary to reconsider the qualification criteria in the case of individual applicants who would not normally qualify.

Further detail on local connection is found in Appendix C.

You must have an assessed housing need as defined by the circumstances set out in bands A-D

If you have applied to our Housing Register but we have not given you a priority for rehousing, meaning that your housing need circumstances are not enough to be given a band, you will not be able to join. This is because the number of households who need a home is much greater in the district than the number of homes that become available every year. Therefore, unfortunately only those households with the greatest need are allowed to join the Register.

However, you can join our Housing Register without any housing need as defined by bands A-D in this Policy if you are over 60 and would like to be considered for what we call 'Older Person designated housing'. You will still have to meet the other qualification rules but, if you do, you do not have to have a housing need as set out in this Policy. This is because most of the Housing Associations with homes in the Stafford Borough have a better supply of older person housing available for older people.

Disqualification for owner-occupiers or applicants with sufficient financial resources

Applicants who own their own home will not be allocated social housing other than in exceptional circumstances, for example, where it is not safe or reasonable to remain in owner occupation or where they require sheltered accommodation and are no longer able to remain in their own home.

Households who have sufficient means to find their own housing will not be accepted onto the Housing Register, for example owner occupiers who have recently sold their property and have equity of £30,000 or more. Equity that has been used to pay debts, excluding charges over the property, or used for

other purposes within twelve months of selling the property will still be counted for these purposes. Households found to deprive themselves of capital to meet this threshold will be excluded from the Housing Register.

Applicants who are considered to have sufficient financial resources to buy or easily rent suitable accommodation in Stafford Borough will not qualify for the Housing Register, including households with gross income of over £60,000 and/ or savings or assets totalling over £16,000. Assets may not be immediately available to the applicant, such as any residential or non-residential property that is owned, or part owned, elsewhere in the world. The Housing Options Service may ask for valuation evidence of any capital or assets.

Monies that can be evidenced as received as a compensation payment as a result of serving in the regular or reserved armed forces will be disregarded for these purposes.

The above limits do not apply to individuals, or households, who are applying for specialised sheltered accommodation only. Although this qualification rule will mean an applicant cannot join the Housing Register it does not prevent applicants from receiving advice on any 'Buy to Rent', Low Cost Home Ownership/Shared Equity schemes. Advice can be given on request regarding which Housing Associations or developers are currently operating any of the above schemes and how applications can be made directly to any provider.

Applicants who do not qualify under the 'sufficient financial resources or ownership rules' set out above may be considered as an exception if:

- (a) They own or part own accommodation or have a legal interest in accommodation; and
- (b) They are over state pension age or have a substantial disability; and their current home is not suitable for their specific needs and cannot be adapted, and
- (c) They have insufficient financial resources to buy accommodation that meets their particular housing needs in the private market in Stafford Borough despite owning a property, or having income or savings above the 'sufficient resources' thresholds set out in this policy

The possible exemption is intended to cover situations where a person owns their own home but where it is agreed by the Council that they are no longer able to manage in it due to their advancing years, or due to developing a substantial disability that makes living in their home impracticable. This would be the circumstances where selling would not provide sufficient funds to purchase a more suitable alternative in the area.

Applicants with previous failed tenancies or serious unacceptable behaviour, including rent arrears.

We think it is very important to make sure that all social housing tenants living in the Borough can enjoy their home and surroundings and do not have to put up with any anti-social or other forms of poor behaviour from their neighbours. Therefore, if we have evidence that leads us to believe that you or a member of your family that are part of any application have behaved in a way that makes you or them unsuitable to be a social housing tenant, you will not be able to join the Housing Register.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- violence, or threats of violence, harassment, crime or anti-social behaviour
- discriminating against anyone because of their sex, race, religion or faith, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or age or certain other personal characteristics
- physical or verbal abuse towards staff of the Council, its contractors, or Housing Association staff
- giving false or misleading information when trying to join our Housing Register, or when trying to find a home
- if there is evidence that you or a member of your family are using class A drugs you will normally be disqualified until there is evidence to show that the person using is adhering to a drug reduction programme

This unacceptable behaviour rule will also apply if you are already registered but there is evidence of recent unreasonable behaviour or new information has come to our attention.

Households who are working with the Housing Options Service to address the underlying causes of the unacceptable behaviour outlined above and demonstrate a change in behaviour will be considered for the Housing Register. Applicants who have a history of failed tenancies as a result of anti-social behaviour or rent arrears will be provided with a personalised housing plans and clear steps to take in order to address the causes for concern, for example, to enter into regular and consistent rent arrears repayments for a specified period of time or to attend appointments with relevant support agencies. Households who do not take steps outlined in their Personalised Housing Plan may be disqualified from the Housing Register and will not be nominated for a property. See Appendix D for specific guidelines relating to applicants with previous failed tenancies or serious unacceptable behaviour.

When assessing whether an applicant with previous unacceptable behaviour will qualify for the Housing Register, the Housing Options Service will liaise with other agencies (with the consent of the applicant) including probation, the police, housing providers and substance misuse services. This information may be shared with relevant housing providers in accordance with the

information disclosure agreement that is agreed and signed by the applicant at the point of application. Applicants who do not agree to disclose such information will not be able to receive a full housing assessment and may not be accepted onto the Housing Register in accordance with our Data Protection Statement.

Applicants may qualify for the Housing Register but may still be taking steps to resolve previous failed tenancies or unacceptable behaviour, for example, by demonstrating commitment to rent arrears repayment plans or by attending substance misuse programmes. Applicants who are taking steps to resolve previous unacceptable behaviour or outstanding rent arrears, will be accepted onto the Housing Register and placed into a relevant band but will not be nominated for an offer of accommodation. Steps required to be considered for nomination will be agreed with the applicant and outlined in their Personalised Housing Plan. Applicants will continue to accrue waiting time on the Housing Register despite not being able to be considered for a nomination or an offer of housing.

Where an applicant is disqualified for previous failed tenancies or unacceptable behaviour they will be told in writing the reasons why and informed of the actions they are expected to take to resolve the problem. They will also have a right to ask for a review of the decision made to disqualify them.

It is not the responsibility of Stafford Borough Council to make enquiries to an applicant as to whether they have resolved issues relating to previous failed tenancies or serious unacceptable behaviour.

Housing Associations have the final decision as to whether to accept an applicant with a history of tenancy breaches or unacceptable behaviour for example, some Housing Associations may require rent arrears to be cleared in full before applicants can be offered social housing.

Current or former rent arrears owed to any Council or Housing Association in the last 6 years, or a private landlord

Generally, if you, or a joint applicant, have current or former rent arrears owed to a Council or Housing Association you will either:

- (a) not be allowed to join the Housing Register if the debt is over £1,000, or
- (b) can qualify if the debt is under £1,000 but will not be considered for a nomination until the debt has been resolved as per the rules set out below. In these circumstances you will still be allocated a band based on your assessed housing needs but, cannot be nominated until you have resolved the debt as per the actions required and detailed below.

Current or former rent arrears owed within the last 6 years are defined as current or former tenant rent arrears or charges for use and occupation owed to any Council or any Housing Association whether that Association is based in the Borough or not.

When deciding whether someone with rent arrears is eligible for the Housing Register, the following will be taken into consideration:

- The reasons why you or a member of your family got into arrears and whether there are exceptional circumstances that we should consider when we make our decision, such as domestic abuse.
- Whether the debt has been caused by factors difficult for you or a member of your family to control, for example a case where we agree you were genuinely unable to pay the full rent due to being impacted by the 'spare room subsidy' rule commonly known as the "bedroom tax"
- Whether you still owe the debt, and if you do whether it is a recoverable debt, or a statute barred debt.
- Whether you have taken debt advice, acted on it, and entered into an arrangement to pay off the arrears/debt.
- If you have made an arrangement we will consider how much of the debt has been paid off and what is still outstanding, and how regularly you have made payments.

In cases of former or current tenant rent arrears of under £1,000 you must have made a repayment commitment to clear the debt and be making regular payments of an agreed sum which you have maintained for a period of at least 12 weeks. At this stage you would then be allowed to be considered for a nomination. However, you need to be aware that any Housing Association that we consider nominating you to may have their own rules on when they will consider making an offer to someone with current or former rent arrears and these rules may not be the same as adopted by the Council for to be able to join our Housing Register.

If you meet these rules and we decide to lift the restriction on considering you for a nomination you will still be expected to continue to make regular payments of the agreed sum until the debt is cleared – if payments are missed you might again be suspended until the arrears are cleared, or payments have been made satisfactorily for at least a further 12 weeks.

If we decide that you do not qualify you can apply again when you think the debt has been reduced to under £1,000 and we will then assess whether you have taken the required actions to address the debt.

Note: if you have had your rent arrears/housing related debt included in a 'Debt Relief Order', bankruptcy declaration or individual voluntary agreement (IVA) a period of at least 12 months has to pass from the declaration of insolvency to the point a debt is cleared. Should you maintain your finances

satisfactory for this period, this will be considered as strong evidence that you are likely to be able to maintain your rent for any new tenancy.

Current or former rent arrears owed to a private landlord

We recognise that someone might have had several private rented tenancies over say the last 5 years so we normally only consider whether there are rent arrears from your last private rented tenancy. If we are satisfied that a debt is owed we will decide on the level of debt and the reasons for it as to whether you should be classified as a not qualifying, or should be allowed to qualify, and if so whether they should be suspended from being considered for a nomination until the arrears are resolved. Where it is established that arrears are owed the same rules will apply as per a social housing debt above.

Where you or a joint applicant has held a private rented tenancy in the last 5 years we will normally write to your last landlord or lettings agency to ask the reasons why the tenancy was ended and whether there were any rent arrears at the point you left the property. We do not think it is fair to penalise someone if a landlord or lettings agency fails to reply within 6 weeks. We will send a further reminder and telephone them but if no reply has been obtained within 6 weeks, as long as you meet the other qualification rules, you will be allowed onto the register and will be able to be considered for a nomination.

Normally, we will only contact the landlord or agent for your last rented property. However, where it comes to our attention that there were significant rent arrears relating to a previous private rented tenancy in the last 5 years and this was not your last tenancy, a decision will be taken whether to still apply the rent arrears rule. For example you may have had a 6 month tenancy that you left with no rent arrears but the previous tenancy you were evicted for £5,000 rent arrears – in this case we would still have concerns as to whether this might happen again if we housed you and therefore may decide to apply the rent arrears qualification rules to your case.

We have evidence that you have made a fraudulent application you will not qualify

It is an offence for any person looking to join the Housing Register to make a false statement or to withhold information which is relevant to their application. Formally, this offence comes under Section 171 of the Housing Act and is punishable with a fine.

If you try to obtain a home by making a false or misleading statement or by withholding relevant information, or by failing to tell us of any material change in your circumstances we may decide that you won't be allowed to qualify, or where you are already registered, you may have your application cancelled.

We will also consider whether to prosecute if we think that a criminal offence has been committed.

Also if we find out after you have been given a tenancy based on a fraudulent application we let the Housing Association know and they may consider possession proceedings against you.

It will be for our housing team to decide in the first instance if any errors made in a person's application were deliberately made or not. If we decide that the errors were not deliberate, or that they were deliberate but minor and will have no impact on your application, then no action will be taken though we will warn you about the need to provide accurate information and the consequences for not doing so.

If you are disqualified from joining the register or removed from the register on this ground you will normally not be able to reapply for at least 2 years.

How and when we will consider exceptional circumstances for any of these adopted qualification rules, or for any other rule set out in our Policy

We have adopted a clear set of qualification rules but we will still consider whether to use our discretion and not apply a rule if someone makes a case for exceptional circumstances to be applied and we agree with the case made. Note, we will consider a claim for exceptional circumstances for any of the rules set out in our Policy and not just for the qualification rules.

If you apply to join the Housing Register and think that you may not qualify then you can make a case for discretion to be applied for exceptional circumstances as part of your application. Alternatively, where a request for discretion to be applied has not been made as part of your application, you will have a second chance to make a case through the review process.

It is your responsibility to make a case for why discretion should be applied to your application due to exceptional circumstances when you request a review, and please remember a request for a review must be made within 21 days of our decision being received by you.

Where requested, we will then consider whether your circumstances (or those of a member of your family) are so exceptional that we should apply discretion to your case. You will receive a written decision for any request that exceptional circumstances should be applied to your application within 56 days and, where our decision is that your case is not considered to be exceptional, we will give reasons why we have reached that decision.

It is important also to know that we cannot waive the eligibility rules for anyone who is not allowed to access social housing under the immigration and 'persons from abroad' laws set by the Government.

In deciding whether your circumstances are exceptional we will of course fully consider the responsibilities placed on the Council by the Equality Act 2010 and Children Act 2004, if there are dependent children as part of your application.

Decisions on Eligibility and Qualification

Where an applicant is deemed either ineligible or not to qualify for nomination they will be notified in writing and entitled to request a review (see section 14). Such a review will consider if there is any evidence to support that the behaviour or circumstances upon which the decision was made have changed.

Applicants who have previously been deemed not to qualify may make a fresh application if they consider they should now be treated as qualifying, but it will be for the applicant to demonstrate a change in circumstances.

7 Nomination Ready

The Housing Options Service will put forward (nominate) households to suitable properties in accordance with this Allocation Policy. Housing Associations who own, and manage, the properties have their own lettings criteria that need to be satisfied - if not, the household is unlikely to be offered the property. The Housing Options Service work closely with Housing Associations so households on the waiting list are likely to satisfy their lettings criteria.

To be accepted onto the Housing Register the below must be provided:

- Identification must be provided for all members of the household (passport, driving licence, birth certificate);
- Proof of residency for children included in the household (child benefit award, child tax credit, court order or residency order);
- Proof of income must be provided for all non-dependents in the household (Wages, Universal Credit Journal or Benefit Entitlement letter, self employed tax returns and bank statements);
- Bank statements must be provided for all non-dependents in the household for a minimum period of three months prior to application;
- Last five years address history;
- Income and Expenditure;
- Information regarding unspent criminal convictions;
- Details of how rent in advance is going to be paid.

Once this is provided, the application will be assessed and the relevant banding awarded in line with this Allocation Policy `Households accepted onto the waiting list will only be put forward for a property if they will satisfy the letting criteria for the relevant Housing Association.

This may include the following:

- A Landlord Reference from previous settled accommodation;
- Information regarding outstanding debts, including rent arrears and details of re-payment plans;
- Details of ongoing support or care plans from relevant agencies including substance misuse services, community mental health, probation or care leavers services amongst others.

Depending on an individual household's circumstances the criteria for being ready for a nomination may differ. For example those with a history of failed tenancies may be required to demonstrate that they are engaging with support services to address the underlying causes of homelessness. The Housing Options Service will make clear what is required to enable a household to be considered for a nomination by using an online personalised housing plan that will be published within seven days of initial contact with the service.

Households who do not have access to the internet will be provided with a paper copy of the personalised housing plan.

In exceptional circumstances, where households are vulnerable and unable to access key information (for example, individuals on nil income, fleeing domestic abuse or those with a history of entrenched rough sleeping), applicants may be nominated for a property whilst additional information is still being collected. Such nominations will be discussed with the relevant housing provider.

Although the Council may consider a household ready for a nomination, the Housing Association who manages the property will have the deciding factor in accordance with their own Allocations and Lettings Policy.

The Housing Register will be subject to a six monthly review. Applicants who are not taking steps outlined in their Personalised Housing Plan may be disqualified and not considered for nomination.

8 Suitability and Offers of Accommodation

When nominating for a property, the Council will take into account:

- The number of bedrooms required;
- Any essential requirement concerning the type or location of housing, including requirements relating to the medical needs of the household

relating to property type, essential facilities and number of bedrooms required;

- The housing band into which the applicant has been assessed;
- The Suitability of Accommodation Order 1996 (as amended) where the applicant has been accepted as homeless or threatened with homelessness in accordance with relevant legislation;
- Current permanent employment of the household and relevant transport links; Essential support links required by the household.

An offer of accommodation can be made in any area of the Borough that the Council and if appropriate, partners (such as the police) has assessed is suitable and safe for the applicant to live in. Criteria setting out what will be considered to be, and not be, a reasonable offer is set out in Appendix E. A refusal of an offer of the correct size and type will normally be considered unreasonable.

Applicants must disclose information relating to essential support links, or requirements for particular areas at the point of application. The Housing Options Service will ask all applicants to state those areas where they believe they cannot live due to fear of violence, harassment or domestic abuse. The Housing Options Service will use its discretion, along with supporting information received, to consider whether support is essential or that a particular area is either required or not suitable.

If the Council considers that the applicant has unreasonably refused three offers of suitable accommodation the applicant will no longer qualify for the Housing Register. The applicant will not be entitled to apply again within 12 months of the date of disqualification. Offers of accommodation include those offered directly by a **relevant housing provider** and those that are arranged by way of a nomination to a registered provider.

Applicants will be notified of such decisions and the applicant has the right to a review of any decision that is made (See Section 12).

Households owed a statutory homeless duty under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) will only be provided with one offer of suitable accommodation. If the offer of suitable accommodation is refused, they will lose the relevant homeless priority banding awarded to them. Unless they have another reason to be awarded a banding under this Allocation Policy, they will no longer qualify to remain on the register. If they have another reason to be awarded a priority banding, the offer will count as their first offer out of the 3 reasonable offers allowed in accordance with this Allocation Policy.

Any decision to waive the '3 reasonable offer disqualification rule' because of a claim that there is an exceptionally urgent and immediate need to be housed, will be made by a Senior Officer.

Offers of Accommodation

Once nominated and prior to an offer being made the Housing Association for the property will carry out a further verification of the applicant's eligibility and priority. Housing Associations often have strict turnaround criteria for letting properties and it is important that applicant's respond to the Housing Options Team and the relevant Housing Associations in a timely manner otherwise the property may be offered to the next suitable applicant.

In certain situations the offer of accommodation will not be made, or if made may be withdrawn if:

- Since joining the Housing Register an applicant has become ineligible.
- On verification of the applicants' details, the priority band has been incorrectly awarded due to the information received by the applicant, or due to mistakes in the assessment of the application itself.
- The applicants' circumstances have changed since the priority band was awarded and the applicant is no longer entitled to the same level of priority.
- The landlord has good housing management reason not to offer a property.

All offers will be formally made in writing. Notification in writing may be made by letter, email or in an urgent situation by text.

If an applicant does not reply to an offer, invitation to view a property, or to supply additional information, within the time specified by the relevant housing provider, then the offer will be deemed to have been refused and the property will be offered to the next household on the shortlist who qualifies for that offer. Time frames for a response will be specified at the time of offer.

In exceptional circumstances an offer may be withdrawn following notification of an invitation to view or following a viewing and before the applicant has signed a tenancy agreement. For example where the property is no longer available or where new information comes to light about an applicant's circumstances that has either been withheld or has changed since the initial application date.

- The property is not suitable for the households needs
- The property fails to become available
- There is an issue and concern for community safety
- It comes to light that information has been withheld
- It comes to light that that the household or member of the household has a property related debt
- The offer has been made in error
- The households circumstances changed
- The property is required for an emergency It transpires that the rent would not be affordable

Allocation Criteria

The number of bedrooms allocated will be dependent upon the number and age of the people living as part of the household, in order to make best use of housing stock.

The bedroom standard states that a separate bedroom shall be required for the following persons:

- Each adult couple;
- Any other adult age 18 and over
- Two adolescents of the same sex aged 10 – 18
- Two children regardless of sex under the age of 10.

When determining the size of the property for which applicants are eligible, the bedroom standard will usually apply. However there may be exceptions such as where there is medical evidence to support that an applicant requires an additional bedroom, or level access accommodation, on health grounds, or where the applicant requires the support of an overnight carer who cannot reasonably be expected to share a bedroom with another member of the household. Other examples include applicants who have been approved as foster carers/adopters and require larger accommodation that would normally be required.

Households who are currently undergoing gender reassignment or require specific bedroom allocation as a result of gender reassignment will be considered on a case by case basis.

Decisions on bedroom allocation, and suitability of accommodation, will be made in conjunction with the applicant and the relevant housing provider (including supported accommodation and hostels) as to what would be suitable.

The Housing Options Service, in conjunction with the relevant housing provider, may decide to allocate a larger property than the applicant's household qualify if the applicant requests it and the association are satisfied that the applicant can afford the rent.

Specialist accommodation, such as sheltered or adapted accommodation will be let to households with specific needs taking into account age and disability.

9 Priorities for Allocating Housing

The Allocation Policy intends to make best use of housing stock by prioritising social housing for those in most need, in a fair and transparent way, recognising that demand for social housing exceeds supply. There are 3 housing need bands with each band reflecting the level of assessed housing

need. Stafford Borough Council does not operate an 'open housing register'. If an applicant is not assessed as having a 'statutory housing need as defined by Housing Act 1996 Part 6 reasonable preference categories they will not be able to qualify for the Housing Register.

Band A- Very urgent need to move (reasonable preference and are granted additional preference): These are applicants that are owed a statutory award of *reasonable preference* but whom the Council believes should also be awarded *additional preference* Band A based on their very urgent need to move.

Band B – Urgent Need to move (reasonable preference): These are applicants that are owed a statutory award of *reasonable preference* under the policy and have been awarded Band B priority based on their urgent assessed housing need.

Band C - Housing Need to move (reasonable preference): These are applicants that are owed a statutory award of *reasonable preference* under the policy and have been awarded Band C priority based on their assessed housing need

Band D – Lower Housing Need to move (reasonable preference): These are applicants that are owed a statutory award of *reasonable preference* under the policy and have been awarded Band D priority based on a lower level of assessed housing need

For applicants that are not assessed as having a statutory housing need (Bands A-D) they can still approach the Council to receive advice on their housing options.

The Council also has an on-line housing advice portal that all applicants can access via <https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/housing>

The table setting out bands A-D and a description of the criteria used to award a Band

Criteria	Description
Main Housing Duty, or likely to be owed the Main Housing Duty under Homeless Legislation	Applicants owed a main housing duty (section 193(2) duty) or the section 193C(4) 'reduced' section 193 duty ² who are priority need and not intentionally homeless. Applicants who are homeless and are owed the relief duty (section 189B duty) and would be owed, or be likely to be owed, the main housing duty (Section 193(2) duty) if the relief duty were to come to an unsuccessful end

² Where the council has exercised its powers for homeless applicants who deliberately and unreasonably refuse to cooperate.

Criteria	Description
	<p>because they are, or would be likely to be found to be in priority need and unintentionally homeless.</p>
Medical Emergency	<p>Applicants who have nowhere to live, or have somewhere to live but it is unsuitable for their medical needs and cannot be made suitable through adaptions within a reasonable period of time and the living conditions has such a serious impact on the applicants health that it is life threatening and/or they are unable to carry out daily activities in their accommodation or access facilities such as bathroom, kitchen, inside or outside of their accommodation. See Appendix F for full details on how medical housing need will be assessed.</p> <p>Applicants who have urgent need to move due to them having medical problems or disabilities that are being worsened by their current housing situation which is having a life threatening impact on their health. This includes applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Whose life is at risk due to their current housing conditions or who are housebound, effectively housebound or cannot access the essential facilities in their home and there are critical concerns about their safety, for example through falls due to difficulties with access. (b) Whose condition is terminal and rehousing is required to provide a basis for the provision of suitable care (c) Whose condition is life threatening and their existing accommodation is a major contributory factor or whose health is so severely affected by the accommodation that it is likely to become life threatening. (d) With disabilities, who have restricted mobility and are limited by their accommodation such that they are unable to carry out day-to-day activities or have difficulties accessing facilities inside and outside of their accommodation and require rehousing into accommodation suitable for their use. (e) In overcrowded accommodation which puts the applicant at risk of infection, for example, where an applicant is suffering from late-stage or advanced HIV infection. <p>Applicants ready to be discharged from hospital who: have somewhere to live but their accommodation is unsuitable due to their medical needs and cannot be made suitable through adaptations because of cost</p>

Criteria	Description
	effectiveness or structural difficulties or the property cannot be adapted within a reasonable amount of time.
Harassment	<p>Applicants where there is a threats to life of a member of a household or where the continued occupation of the household would pose a significant threat to the community and an approved risk assessment has been received by the police.</p> <p>For example:</p> <p>(1) Applicants who are suffering extreme violence or harassment where there is strong police evidence that an urgent move is required to protect the life of an applicant or a member of their household and can demonstrate to the satisfaction of Stafford Borough Council that it is not safe for the applicant (and or their household) to remain in their present home.</p> <p>(2) Applicants who need to move immediately due to extreme violence, extreme harassment, or other extreme circumstances deemed to significantly affect a household's welfare and wellbeing.</p>
Domestic Abuse	Applicants where there is evidence of domestic abuse where the threat means it is imminently not safe for an individual to remain in their present home – verification by senior officers within the police, or other agencies or bodies such as MARAC, as necessary in conjunction with a Council approved risk assessment
Armed Forces	<p>Former, or serving, members of Her Majesty's Regular Armed Forces, or Reserves, who need to move because they are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partially) to their military service;</p> <p>Bereaved spouses or civil partners of members of Her Majesty's Regular Forces who have left or will be leaving services accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of their spouse or civil partner and whose death was attributable (wholly or partially) to their military service.</p>
Disaster or Emergency	Applicants whose homes are damaged by fire, flood or other disaster and it is not possible to repair the existing home, or if any work to repair is to take such a long period of time that there will be serious disruption to family life.
Care Leavers	A young person, who has been looked after, fostered or accommodated and has a duty of care accepted under the Children's Act 1989 who has been assessed as

Criteria	Description
	<p>suitable for independent living with an agreed package of support from relevant support services.</p> <p>Note: Applicants must be a former "Relevant Child" as defined by the Children Leaving Care Act 2002. The evidence to support this award will be provided by Staffordshire County Council's Leaving Care service and will consist of confirmation that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The care leaver is ready to move to independent settled housing and is genuinely prepared for a move to independent living (b) The care leaver possesses the life skills to manage a tenancy including managing a rent account. (c) The care leaver has either long term or medium term tenancy support arranged, as required. (d) Ongoing support needs have been assessed and, where appropriate, a support plan is in place that meets the requirements of being Tenancy Ready as defined by this Policy. <p>Note: If an application for housing is made before it has been determined that the individual is ready for independent living, taking into account information from the applicant's support worker and other agencies, the application will not be able to be nominated until the support worker presents the evidence to the Council that the individual is ready to move on and the council agree with that evidence.</p>
Entrenched Rough Sleepers	<p>Applicants who have a history of entrenched rough sleeping and are being considered for immediate accommodation and are engaging with intensive floating support as the only means of being able to access accommodation provision within the Borough.</p>
Supported Accommodation Move On	<p>Applicant is living in supported accommodation, including refuge and the Council has agreed a move on agreement with the housing provider. The applicant must demonstrate that they have the practical skills to sustain long-term independent accommodation and, where appropriate, have a support plan in place.</p>

Band B - (Urgent) Need to move (reasonable preference)

Criteria	Description
Acute Overcrowding	<p>Where an applicant household is severely overcrowded defined as being either statutory overcrowded or requiring 2 or more additional bedrooms to reach the bedroom standard. See Appendix G for the definition of statutory overcrowding and bedroom standard.</p>

Criteria	Description
Under Occupancy	Applicant is under- occupying a property by two or more bedrooms in accordance with statutory bedroom requirements. The bedroom standard, outlined in Appendix 8, will be used to define under-occupancy.
Housing conditions including housing that poses a serious risk to health, safety or welfare	A property that has been assessed by a qualifying officer within the Council as having a serious health and safety hazard and the property is not suitable for occupation for more than a short period of time as a result, which has resulted in the Council taking enforcement action and the property condition, cannot reasonably be rectified by the owner within six months. This may include applicants who do not have access to essential bathing or cooking facilities or access to running hot water or electric or gas.
Demolition or Compulsory Purchase Order	Applicants whose property is subject to a demolition or Compulsory purchase Order for redevelopment.
Foster Carers	Applicants approved as foster or adoptive parents who need to move to facilitate the placement of a child/children.
Releasing an Adapted Property	Transfer applicants residing in social housing that are releasing a property with major adaptations where the adaptations are no longer required and there is an identified housing need for the property. This excludes adaptations that do not alter the physical fabric of the building, for example, stair lifts, temporary ramping, ceiling track, hoists etc.
Homeless Relief	Homeless applicants who are owed the Section 189B Relief Duty for as long as that duty is owed to the applicant, and they would not be owed, or are unlikely to be owed, the main housing duty (Section 193(2) duty).
High Medical Need	<p>Applicants whose current housing situation is having a serious detrimental, but not life threatening, impact on their health so that they require re-housing based on medical grounds. The housing condition must directly contribute to causing serious ill health and the condition of the property cannot be resolved within a reasonable period of time. The applicant's accommodation is directly contributing to the deterioration of the applicant's health. See Appendix F for full details on how medical housing need will be assessed.</p> <p>The examples of when this will be awarded include:</p> <p>(a) The applicant's current accommodation to a significant extent directly exacerbates an existing medical condition, is the direct cause of a medical condition or impacts on the ease of use of the facilities within their home for a disabled person.</p>

Criteria	Description
	<p>(b) Applicants who have mobility issues and it has been assessed need to move to ground floor or level access accommodation</p> <p>(c) Applicants who have mobility issues and need to move to accommodation that has level access showering facilities</p> <p>(d) Applicants who have a significant physical or mental health condition that is directly affected by their accommodation and where a move to alternative accommodation would help to ease or resolve their condition. Applicants who have a medical need for an additional bedroom (e.g. because they need an overnight carer or need to accommodate a substantial amount of medical equipment)</p>
Domestic Abuse	Applicants who need to move due to threat of domestic abuse, violence or harassment but are not in immediate danger, as determined by an appropriate approved risk assessment by the referred agency.

Band C - Housing need to move

Criteria	Description
Overcrowding	Applicants who require one additional bedroom in accordance with statutory bedroom requirements. See Appendix G for the definition of statutory overcrowding and bedroom standard.
Under Occupancy	Applicants who are under occupying their property by one bedroom in accordance with statutory bedroom requirements. The bedroom standard defined in Appendix 8 will be applied to assess under-occupancy.
Homeless Prevention	Applicants who are owed a Section 195 Prevention Duty by Stafford Borough Council for as long as that duty is owed to the applicant.
Armed Forces	<p>Members of the Armed Forces persons who are serving in the regular forces who will be discharged within three months and have served for five years preceding their application as long as they have not left as a result of misconduct or a military conviction.</p> <p>This includes those who are leaving the Armed Forces having received their notice of discharge date; or have left in the last five years, having been medically discharged in the last five years; or served the required minimum level of service. This does not include Discharge As Of Right (DAOR).</p>
Sharing Facilities	Applicants, who are sharing facilities, such as a kitchen or bathroom, following an offer of accommodation from the local authority and/ or where the applicant has

Criteria	Description
	medical, care or support need that would benefit from self-contained accommodation.
Planned Move from insecure accommodation	<p>Applicants who are living with family and friends whilst looking for alternative accommodation and would otherwise be at threat of homelessness or would be likely to be excluded.</p> <p>Note: Family and friends must agree that it is likely that the applicant can remain at the property for a minimum period of six months whilst they look for alternative accommodation or are waiting to see if they will be able to be nominated to a social housing property under this Policy.</p>
Care and Support	<p>Applicants who need to move to give or receive care and support that is substantial and on going.</p> <p>There must be demonstrable evidence accepted by the Council that the household, or an individual/s in that household, provides or receives substantial and on-going support to or from relatives or friends, This will only be considered where there are significant medical or welfare issues including grounds relating to disability where moving would prevent significant physical or psychological hardship.</p>
Affordability	<p>Applicants whose current accommodation is not affordable for them to sustain. Applicants must engage with the Housing Options Team to complete a detailed budgeting exercise, including addressing priority debts, maximising income and reducing expenditure. Applicants housing cost must exceed one third of their net income and priority outgoings must exceed income following budgeting assistance. The Housing Options Team may refer to an external agency to provide budgeting advice before awarding priority under this banding.</p>
Hardship	<p>Applicants who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority where failure to do so would cause hardship as they would not be able to take up specialist employment.</p> <p>Priority will only be given in exceptional circumstances and applicants will need to show that they need to move to take up or continue an employment opportunity not available elsewhere. They will only be considered where they do not live within a reasonable commuting distance and will be required to provide confirmation of employment details from the employer</p>
Right To Move	<p>Existing social tenants of accommodation in England who wish to exercise their Right to Move (using the Government's Right to Move regulations) to a social tenancy in Stafford Borough do not have to meet the</p>

Criteria	Description
	<p>Local Connection criteria set out in section 2 if they are an applicant who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Is already either a secure or introductory tenant of a local authority or an assured tenant of a private registered provider; and (b) Needs to move to Stafford Borough where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others); and (c) Needs to move because they work, or have been offered work, in Stafford Borough. In the case of an offer of work the Council must be satisfied that the Applicant has a genuine intention of taking up the offer of work. A need to move which is associated with work, or the offer of work, which is a short-term or marginal in nature, ancillary to work in another district, or voluntary work will not qualify for exemption under this paragraph. <p>Applicants under the right to move criteria will be placed in Band C but will be given less priority than other Applicants in Band C who do have a local Connection to Stafford Borough. Allocation to those Applicants who qualify will be limited to a maximum of 1% of properties allocated each year. The Council considers this to be reasonable, taking into account the particularly high demand that exists from other Applicants who do have a Local Connection with Stafford Borough.</p>
Sheltered Accommodation	Older or disabled applicants assessed as requiring retirement, extra care or sheltered housing.

Band D – want to move (no reasonable preference)

Non- Violent Relationship Breakdown	Applicants living separately with their ex-partner following a non-violent relationship breakdown.
Intentionally Homeless	<p>Applicants who have been found intentionally homeless in accordance with Part 7 of the Housing Act (as amended) and not owed a full homeless duty and meet the eligibility and qualification criteria.</p> <p><i>Note to clarify the award where an applicant is found to be homeless but not in priority need or found to be homeless but intentionally homeless by Stafford Borough Council.</i></p> <p><i>This applies where Stafford Borough Council assess that the relief of homelessness duty has come to an end and the applicant is intentionally homeless and owed a section 190(2) duty for being intentionally homeless.</i></p>

	<p><i>This award will only be for the period that the Council is under a section 190(2) intentional homeless duty. This is normally for no more than 1 month, this being the period that an intentionally homeless household is owed a temporary accommodation duty.</i></p>
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When exceptions will apply to the ‘allocation by band and time within band criteria’?

Priority within a Band will be determined by the length of time the application has been placed in that Band and most allocations will be made to applicants in the highest band, and then by the time they have waited within that Band. In some circumstances an offer will be made to an applicant outside of the priority band and ‘time registered’ procedure. This is where there is an urgent need for an individual household to be housed or where there is an operational or financial need to house certain categories of applicants.

For example, where an applicant has been given additional preference due to an exceptionally urgent need for housing the Housing Options Team Leader responsible for the Housing Allocation Scheme may decide to place them at the front of Band A and to make an offer of housing as soon as possible.

In addition there may be other circumstances where there are urgent operational or financial reasons to make a direct offer of housing outside of the band and date order criteria. Such as:

- People that need to move due to a fire or flood, or severe storm damage to their home.
- People who are at imminent risk of violence and are to be housed through a witness protection programme.
- People who it has been agreed must be housed urgently as part a multi-agency protocol such as a MAPPA, MARAC case or a protocol between Stafford Borough Council’s Housing Service and Staffordshire Social Services Department, where there is a need agreed between housing and Social Services to provide a specific property for a vulnerable individual.
- Where an applicant is homeless and in temporary accommodation that would not be suitable for more than a short period of time or where the Council needs to move applicants out of temporary accommodation to manage the budgetary impact on the Council as a whole.
- Where a vacant adapted property or a property designed to disability standards becomes available it may be offered to those customers with a need for this property type regardless of the date they were registered.

In some circumstances, qualification criteria for a property will be restricted to households that meet specific criteria therefore an applicant may be bypassed for a nomination. Restrictions may apply to:

- Properties subject to a local lettings policy;
- Properties situated on rural exception sites;
- Properties subject to an agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Applicants who deliberately worsen their housing situation

Where there is evidence that a customer has deliberately made their housing situation worse in order to gain a higher priority on the register, the assessment of their needs will be based on the circumstances before their situation changed through their deliberate worsening of their circumstances.

Examples of this are:

- Customers who have allowed family members or others to move into their property, who previously had suitable accommodation or the financial means to secure their own accommodation, and this has resulted in the property being overcrowded.
- Customers who have moved from previously suitable or more suitable accommodation which it were reasonable for them to continue to occupy, into a less suitable property.
- Homeowners who have transferred their property to another family member within the last 5 years from the date they make their application to the Register.
- Giving up affordable and suitable private rented accommodation which they are able to maintain, to move in with other relatives or friends, creating a situation of overcrowding and/or sharing of bathroom/kitchen and/or a split household;
- Requesting or colluding with a landlord or family member to issue them with a Notice to Quit

These are examples only. There will be other circumstances considered to decide whether an applicant has deliberately worsened their circumstances. Applicants will be informed in writing of this decision.

10 Management of the Scheme

The Council will make available information and offer advice to assist applicants in understanding how the scheme operates.

The Council will provide a summary of the allocation scheme along with details of how applications will be treated and whether they will be given any

preference. Information will be provided as to how applicants will be nominated for properties with relevant housing providers in accordance with the Council's nomination agreements, along with information about review procedures.

Applicants will receive information regarding the banding they have been awarded under the Scheme, along with the properties the applicant is considered suitable for. If the applicant does not qualify, or is found to be ineligible, this decision will be notified in writing giving clear grounds for the decision based upon the relevant facts of the case.

If the applicant is not eligible, or does not qualify for an allocation, they will be offered advice and assistance on alternative housing options available.

Applicants who have difficulty reading or understanding this allocation scheme are encouraged to contact the Council to be offered alternative services, which can include interpretation services, provisions of documents in larger prints or a face to face interview to explain the content of this document and information.

The Council will, upon request from the applicant, provide such information that is practicable and reasonable to supply, in order to explain the applicant's position and priority for an allocation in relation to an offer of suitable accommodation. Any applicant has the right to be informed of any decision regarding their application.

11 Review of the Waiting List

Applicants will be reviewed after being on the waiting list for six months. Applicants will be contacted on the last known contact details via email, or their preferred method of contact and asked to update to the Council of their housing situation within a reasonable period of time. It is the applicant's responsibility to keep their contact details up to date. Applicants who do not respond to the review request, or whose circumstances have changed so that they are no longer have a preference under the Allocation Policy or are no longer eligible, will have their circumstances updated or be removed from the waiting list accordingly. Applicants will be informed in writing and have the opportunity to review this decision.

If upon the Council's reassessment a lesser priority banding is given, the applicant will retain the original assessment date from when they first qualified for the Housing Register.

12 Request for Review

Applicants have the right to information about decisions and right to review the following decisions made relating to their application:

- The customer disagrees with the Band in which they have been placed.
- The customer considers that a decision has been reached based on incorrect information.
- The customer has been treated as ineligible on the basis of their immigration status.
- They have been treated as ineligible to join the register due to serious unacceptable behaviour coming under the non-qualification criteria set out in the policy.
- Their application has been given reduced preference

The below outlines the procedure to be followed for a review of a decision made in accordance with this Allocation Policy:

- (1) Applicants will be notified in writing of decisions made in respect of the review.
- (2) An applicant, or their representative, must request a review of a decision within 21 days of being notified in writing, unless there are exceptional circumstances that they did not request a review within that timescale. They must give reasons why they wish to have the decision reviewed including where they believe an incorrect decision has been made on the facts.
- (3) The review will be carried out by an officer more senior than the original decision maker and that officer will not undertake the review if they have been involved in making the original decision.
- (4) The review will be considered on the basis of this allocation policy, any legal requirements and all relevant information. This will include information provided by the applicant on any relevant developments since the original decision was made
- (5) The Council will aim to complete and inform the applicant in writing of the decision within 56 working days, after taking into account any additional information that has been provided by the customer. Alternatively, the customer will be advised of any time extension required to make the decision.

The Council's decision on review is final and can only be challenged by way of judicial review.

The Housing Option Service will inform Homes Plus of any banding changes, or decisions on eligibility for the waiting list accordingly.

13 General Provisions

Local Lettings Criteria

Some homes in the Borough may have restrictions placed on who qualifies to live there by planning regulations, for example, those with a local connection to a specific village, parish or rural area. In these instances, the planning related restrictions will take priority over any qualifying criteria in this Allocation Policy.

Section 166A(6)(b) of the 1996 Act enables the Council to allocate particular accommodation to people of a particular description, whether or not they fall within the reasonable preference categories, provided that overall the authority is able to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of Section 166A(3). This is the statutory basis for 'local lettings policies' which enable the Council to set aside homes in a particular location, or certain types of properties across the stock, for applicants who meet a certain criteria.

Local lettings policies may be considered in order to achieve a wide variety of housing management and policy objectives such as achieving balanced sustainable communities.

Where the Council has agreed a s.106 agreement regarding new affordable 'developments', the specific allocations criteria (regarding local connection to a defined area) as agreed as part of the planning consent for the site will take priority ahead of the criteria set out in this Allocations Policy.

Right to information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 makes it a requirement for every public authority to produce a Publication Scheme which sets out all the information it makes available to the public, and whether copies of that information are available free of charge. The Publication Scheme includes information that the Council is legally obliged to publish. The Scheme is also intended to assist in developing a culture in which openness and transparency are encouraged which supports the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000.

Statement on Choice

The Council wishes as far as possible to give choice to customers who are looking to obtain social housing.

For all applicants eligible and registered under the scheme the Council believes that any applicant should be able to express a preference over the area in which they would like to live and the type of property they would ideally like, but all applicants should be fully aware that the Council's ability to satisfy a preference may be severely limited. The more flexible an applicant is in their

preferred choice of areas, the sooner they are likely to be successful in being offered a property that meets their need.

In certain circumstances, the housing pressures faced limit the degree of choice that the Council is able to offer, along with the responsibility the Council has to some groups in urgent housing need and to reduce the financial impact of temporary accommodation on the Council. Expressing a preference over where an applicant would prefer to live does not mean that the Council will be able to meet that preference, or that the Council will not offer suitable accommodation outside of a preferred area. For applicants owed the section 195(2) Prevention of Homelessness duty, or a 189B(2) Relief of homelessness duty, or the main section 193(2) duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, or other applicants who have an urgent housing need that must be met immediately the Council is of the view that there may be circumstances where urgent housing need outweighs a location preference.

Data Sharing and Information Sharing

We will only ask applicants to supply information that is required as part of the application process to determine eligibility, qualification and assessment of housing need. We will only record and store information that is necessary for the assessment and allocation of social housing.

As part of the assessment process, we will make enquiries into an applicant's housing history and to support their assessment of housing need. By applying to the Council for housing priority an applicant will be requested to agree with us to make those enquiries. If an applicant does not agree to us to make these enquiries, we are unable to fully consider their housing priority and will not accept an individual onto our waiting list.

We will ensure that all information held by the Housing Options Team remains confidential. This will not be disclosed to a third party without prior consent from the applicant.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, applicants have the right to request a copy of all the information held about them.

Privacy Notice

We have a duty to protect the public funds we administer. The Council may share an applicant's personal data, provided for housing application purposes; internally to provide statutory services or other functions the Council is empowered to exercise. We may pass the information to other agencies or organisations, as allowed by law. We may check information that has been provided, or information about the applicant that someone else has provided, with other information held by us.

We may also get information about the applicant from certain third parties, or give information to:

- Prevent or detect crime or fraud
- Protect public funds
- Make sure the information is correct

These third parties include government departments, local authorities and private sector companies, including companies that assist us in fraud detection and prevention, such as Credit Reference Agencies. We may also obtain information about an applicant from social media. We will not give information about an applicant to anyone else, or use information about them for other purposes, unless the law allows us to.

Any use of personal data will be in full accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998

Fraudulent Activity and Withholding Information

Fraudulent behaviour is taken very seriously and all appropriate action will be taken to address this. It is a criminal offence for an applicant or person on the applicant's behalf to knowingly or recklessly give false or deliberately misleading information or withhold information which is reasonably required. A person found guilty of such an offence will be removed from the waiting list for a minimum period of six months.

Offences under the provisions are prosecuted in the magistrates' court and carry an unlimited fine. Failure to inform of changes to an application, or deliberately withholding information relevant to, or misrepresenting housing circumstances, may result in criminal prosecution. A Housing Association may seek possession of a tenancy that was granted as a result of a false statement and may also attempt to recover costs incurred.

Letting to staff, Council Members and relatives of these groups

Applications can be made by employees or elected members. Applicants must declare this at the time of application. Applications will be assessed in accordance with the Allocation Policy for eligibility, qualification and housing need. Any priority awarded and any subsequent offer of accommodation will be authorised by the Housing Manager.

Equality and Diversity

We are committed to promoting equal opportunities, embracing diversity and preventing and eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

The Council's aim is to implement and maintain services that ensure that no potential or current applicant is treated less favourable on the grounds of gender, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, age or sexual orientation, nor is disadvantaged by the application of a rule, condition or requirement, which has a discriminatory effect which cannot be justified by law. Policies and procedures will be compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.

Stafford Borough Council is committed to ensuring that its policy and procedures in the letting of property are non-discriminatory and that all customers are able to access the service, especially taking account of any vulnerability or other specific needs, and also the needs of different groups protected by the Equality Act 2010.

To identify the needs of our customers the application form will have specific questions relating to vulnerability, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disabilities and other relevant criteria. This information will be used to monitor the impact of the policy on minority and specific needs groups and to make such amendments, as may be required, to ensure no group is disadvantaged by the policy.

Under the Equality Act 2010 and in particular section 149 of the Public Sector Equality Duty, Local Authorities are required to give due regard to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, in their exercise of a public function.

The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Council will ensure that its policy complies with the current equality legislation and with the relevant statutory codes and guidance. The new policy will be subject to a full, detailed Equality Audit before it is adopted and this will be regularly reviewed as monitoring information about the impact of the policy is obtained. This Equality Audit is set out as part of the Council's '*Community Impact Assessment*' that has been attached to this Policy and fully considered by Council members when the revised Policy was adopted in January 2020.

The outcomes for customers identified as having specific needs or who meet the definition of a protected characteristic under the Equality Act will be monitored regarding the outcomes for applications to join the register and offers of social housing.

The Council will monitor the policy and outcomes to ensure that it is meeting all legal requirements and that the aims and objectives set for the policy are being met.

Complaints

Complaints should first be made using the Council's complaints procedure. A copy of the current procedure is available on the Council's website (<https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/complaints>).

Complaints regarding the handling of an application by a partner Housing Association should be made through that Association's complaints procedure which will be detailed on the Association's website.

Where a complaint relates to how an applicant has been dealt with under this policy they have the right to continue with their complaint to the Ombudsman service once the council's own complaints process has been exhausted without resolution.

The Local Government Ombudsman is an independent service run by Central Government to make sure that Local Authorities provide the required standard of service to their customers.

The Ombudsman can investigate complaints about how the Council has done something, but they cannot question what has been done simply because someone does not agree with it.

The Ombudsman will normally deal with a complaint if a customer feels they have been treated unfairly as a result of maladministration.

For example, if the Council has:

- Delayed taking action without good reason
- Taken into account facts which are not relevant or ignored facts which are relevant
- Not followed their own rules or complied with the law
- Not taken action that they had promised to
- Given a customer the wrong information
- Not reached a decision in the correct way

The Ombudsman will not normally investigate:

- Until after Council has had the opportunity to review its decision (normally by accessing the complaints process)
- Matters which have been, are, or could be dealt with by the courts or the internal review procedure
- Matters which the customer was aware of more than twelve months before making the complaint

- The aim of the Ombudsman is to have the Council put right any wrongs which may have been done to the complainant and to ensure that things are done right in the future.

All complaints to the Ombudsman must be in writing. The contact details for the Local Government Ombudsman are:

Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry CV4 0EH
Tel: 0300 061 0614.
You can also text 'call back' to 0762 480 3014.
Fax: 024 7682 0001
Website: www.lgo.org.uk

Monitoring of the Scheme

Review and monitoring of the allocations policy will take place at least twelve months after the allocation scheme start date to ensure that it is working effectively and to review its impact. It is recommended that a full review shall take place after a period of three years, or sooner should a change in legislation dictate a review is required.

Any major changes to the allocation policy will require consultation with those potentially affected by the changes. All Housing Associations operating in the Borough will be part of this consultation. The Council will consider good practice guidance to public bodies on undertaking consultation on important policy matters when deciding the appropriate level and method of consultation for any changes.

Cabinet will approve all major changes to this allocations policy. Any major changes should go to Cabinet, but I would say that minor changes should be delegated to Head of Service in consultation with the portfolio holder.

The Council will notify within a reasonable period, any major changes in policy to those it may affect.

Appendix A: A list of social housing providers in Stafford Borough

Aspire

Kingsley
The Brampton
Newcastle Under Lyne
ST5 0QW
Tel: 01782 635200

Midland Heart

20 Bath Row
Park Central
Birmingham
B15 1LZ
Tel: 03456020540

Homes Plus

Acton Court
Acton Gate
Stafford
ST18 9AP
Tel: 0800 048 8955

Midland Heart

20 Bath Row
Birmingham
B15 1LZ
Tel: 0345 6020 540

Platform Housing Group

1700 Solihull Parkway
Birmingham Business Park
Solihull
B37 7YD
Tel: 0333 200 7304

Sage Housing

Onion House
5 Upper Street
Martins Lane
London
C2H 9EA
Tel: 020 8168 0500

Bromford Housing Group

1 Venture Court
Broadlands
Wolverhampton
WV10 6TB
Tel: 0330 1234 034

Sanctuary Housing

164 Birmingham Road
West Bromwich
B70 6QG
Tel: 0800 1313348 or 0300 1233511

Staffordshire Housing Association

308 London Road
Stoke On Trent
ST4 5AB
Tel: 01782 744533

Walsall Housing Group

100 Hatherton Street
Walsall
WS1 1AB
Tel: 0300 555 6666

Wrekin Housing Trust

Colliers Way
Old Park
Telford
Shropshire
TF3 4AW
Tel: 01952 217100

Appendix B: Rehabilitation periods

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) allows most convictions and all cautions, reprimands and final warnings to be considered spent after a certain period. This period - known as the rehabilitation period - is determined by the sentence or disposal given, rather than by the type of offence.

The rehabilitation periods for custodial sentences (including suspended prison sentences) and community sentences, after which a conviction will be spent, are shown in the table below.

Sentence	Time it takes to become spent (age 17 or under at time of conviction)	Time it takes to become spent (age 18 or over at time of conviction)
Prison [1] term of over four years	Never	Never
Prison [1] term of more than 30 months and less than, or equal to 4 years [2]	Sentence + 3.5 years	Sentence + 7 years
Prison [1] term of more than 6 months and less than or equal to 30 months [3]	Sentence + 2 years	Sentence + 4 years
Prison [1] term of 6 months or less [4]	Sentence + 18 months	Sentence + 2 years
Detention and Training Order (over 6 months)	As prison sentences	
Detention and Training Order (6 months or less)	As prison sentences	
Sentence of Detention (over 6 months but not exceeding 30 months) [5]	As prison sentences	As prison sentences
Sentence of Detention (6 months or under)	As prison sentences	As prison sentences
Removal from Her Majesty's Service [6]	6 months	1 year
Service detention [7]	6 months	1 year
Community Order [8]	6 months	1 year
Youth Rehabilitation Order [9]	6 months	
Fine [10]	6 months	1 year
Compensation Order [11]	Once paid in full	Once paid in full
Hospital Order [12]	End of the order	End of the order
Conditional discharge, binding over, Care Order, Supervision Order, Reception Order	End of the order	End of the order

Sentence	Time it takes to become spent (age 17 or under at time of conviction)	Time it takes to become spent (age 18 or over at time of conviction)
Absolute discharge	Spent immediately	Spent immediately
Disqualification	End of disqualification	End of disqualification
Relevant Order	End of the order	End of the order
Conditional cautions	Once conditions end	Once conditions end
Caution, warning, reprimand [14]	None	None

Notes:

If a sentence/disposal is not covered in the table above, under the changes it has no rehabilitation period and becomes spent immediately (unless it is attached to another sentence/disposal which does have a rehabilitation period).

- (1) The term 'prison' includes suspended prison sentences, youth custody, and detention in a 'young offender' institution or corrective training.
- (2) From the day on which the sentence (including any licence period) is completed.
- (3) From the day on which the sentence (including any licence period) is completed.
- (4) From the day on which the sentence (including any licence period) is completed.
- (5) Passed under section 91 of the Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000 or under section 206 of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1975
- (6) Starting from the date of conviction relating to the sentence.
- (7) Starting from the day on which the sentence is completed.
- (8) From the end of the order. This period starts from the last day of when the order given by the court has effect. Where no such date is provided, the rehabilitation period for the order is 2 years, starting from the date of conviction.
- (9) From the last day on which the order is to have effect.
- (10) From the date of conviction.
- (11) The date on which the payment is made in full.
- (12) Under the Mental Health Act 1983
- (13) The day provided for by or under the order as the last day on which the order has effect.
- (14) Spent as soon as issued.

Appendix E: Definition of a reasonable offer

A refusal of an offer of the correct size and type will normally be considered unreasonable.

Guidance on reasonable and unreasonable refusals**Property Size**

The property must be the appropriate size for the household's needs at the time of making the offer. Where the family composition has changed, so that the property offered is too small or large for the applicant's needs, the refusal will be recorded as reasonable.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that they register any change in their circumstances that will affect the number of bedrooms to which they are entitled.

Where the applicant refuses a property because it is too small on grounds of the need for an additional or larger bedroom(s) due to medical/mobility factors, but it meets the Council's housing standards, this will normally be considered to be an unreasonable refusal unless the applicant provides new medical information at the offer stage that is accepted by the Council.

Property Type

It will not be considered to be a reasonable refusal due to a dislike of the property type. Therefore an applicant cannot reasonably refuse an offer because for example, it is in a tower block, it does not have a garden or a particular heating system, it is on a wrong floor, or does not have a lift. If the applicant states medical grounds for refusing the property, these should already have been disclosed and considered as part of the assessment of their application unless new information is submitted that is accepted by the Council.

Where specialist accommodation is offered to a household inappropriately this is considered to be a reasonable refusal. This may be for example:

- (a) Offers of wheelchair standard housing to households that do not have wheelchair users;
- (b) Offers made to disabled applicants that are unsuitable for their needs, e.g. where they are unable to open a door entry system because the doors are too heavy;
- (c) Offers of sheltered housing where the applicant is not of the appropriate age.

Property Condition

Where a property is refused on grounds of repair/decoration, this will be considered an unreasonable refusal unless assessed as not suitable for long term occupation by the Housing Standards Team.

Area of Choice

The Housing Options Service will endeavour to nominate households to preferred areas however in areas of limited housing stock this may not always be possible.

Households will not be nominated to areas where it is not safe for the applicant to live, based on information provided by supporting agencies at the time of application. Households are responsible for informing the Housing Options Service of any changes to areas of choice. The above applies for applicants have been excluded from a particular area by the police or probation.

Where the offer is not within one of the applicant's specified areas, the refusal will not be considered to be reasonable.

Pets

Permission to keep domestic pets must be obtained by the relevant Housing Association prior to the commencement of the tenancy agreement. Refusing an offer of accommodation on the basis that permission to keep a domestic pet has not be granted will not be considered reasonable.

Appendix C: Local Connection Criteria

Only those applicants with a local connection to Stafford Borough, who also have an assessed housing need as defined by this policy, are eligible to be included on the Housing Register.

In order to demonstrate a local connection, one of the following must be satisfied:

- (a) Lived in the Borough for the last two years at the point of application;
- (b) Lived in the Borough for at least three out of the last five years;
- (c) Is currently subject to a Homeless Duty (in accordance with Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996) and have lived in the Borough for the last six out of 12 months.
- (d) Has been employed in the Borough for the last two years;
- (e) You are under 25 and have left care and meet the definition set out below:
 - a. an eligible child as set out in paragraph 19B of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989. These are children who are: (a) currently being looked-after; (b) aged 16 or 17; and (c) have been looked after by a local authority in England or Wales for a period of 13 weeks, or periods amounting in total to 13 weeks, since the age of 14, at least one day of which must have been since attaining age 16;
 - b. a relevant child as set out by section 23A(2) of the Children Act 1989. These are children who are: (a) no longer a looked-after-child; (b) aged 16 or 17; and (c) a former eligible child;
 - c. a former relevant child aged under 25 as set out by section 23C(1) of the Children Act 1989. These are children who are: (a) aged 18 to 24; and (b) either a former relevant child or a former eligible child.

The exemption is regardless of which Council you were looked after.

- (f) If you come under the [Allocation of Housing \(Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) as amended which means we must not apply the local residency qualification rule to:
 - (1) those who are currently serving or have ever served in the Regular Armed Forces;

- (2) bereaved spouses or civil partners of those who have served in the regular forces where (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their spouse or civil partner, and (ii) the death was wholly or partly attributable to their service;
- (3) existing or former members of the reserve forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness, or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service;
- (g) Has a firm offer of permanent employment in the Borough, where failure to move into the Borough would result in that employment not being accepted. See Right to move criteria below in exemptions to the local connection rules for details of how a firm offer of employment will be assessed;
- (h) Receives support from close family members who have lived in the Borough for at least three years;
- (i) Has close family members in the Borough who they need to provide essential care for, or receive essential care from; or
- (j) Other specific circumstances that the local authority would wish to consider under a local connection criteria.

Note 1 for a) and b) residence - The applicant must have lived in the area continuously for 2 years and that residence was of their choice

Note 2 for d) employment - The applicant or a member of their household must be in permanent employment in the area. Employment is defined as paid employment for 16 hours or more per week for period of 2 years or self-employment for 2 years where an applicant can demonstrate that the self employed work they perform is in the Stafford Borough area and is on average 16 hours a week or more. The employment must be their actual place of work in area and not employment based on a head office or regional office situated in the area but from which the applicant does not work. Where working hours fluctuate i.e. casual or zero hour's contract, an average will be taken over the last 3 months.

Note 3 for h) and i) family connection and support - The applicant or applicant's partner must be able to demonstrate that they have close family (normally mother, father, brother, sister, son or daughter) that have lived in the area for a minimum of the past 5 years. In addition the circumstances must be that the applicant needs to give or receive essential support for the foreseeable future. It is for the Council to assess and decide if the claim of support, to be received or given, is essential. The Council will consider

whether there are exceptional circumstances where other family members may be considered as close. For example, the circumstances where an extended family member brought up a person, in the absence of their own parents.

The level of support received or needs to be given must be significant and cannot be short term or low level e.g. to carry out shopping once a week. Evidence will need to show there would be savings to the public purse i.e. via the health budget or reduces pressure on the care system especially where there is no existing support package in place

For the purposes of determining local connection the Council will include:

- (a) Residency in a non-traditional dwelling, such as a mobile home that is placed on a residential site in the area, or an official pitch
- (b) People who are forced to sleep rough in the area

An applicant will retain their local connection where they have left the area due to:

- Being in hospital;
- Having to move out the area for care;
- Being accommodated in supported accommodation outside the district;
- Have been placed into temporary accommodation outside of the area by the Council.

Exemptions to the local connection rules

The only exemptions to the local connection rules are as follows:

- (1) They are homeless and Stafford Borough council has accepted a full duty to them under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) S193(2); or
- (2) Applicants who are owed a S189B Relief duty by the Council for as long as that duty is owed to the applicant

Note: There is an exemption to the qualification rule for applicants to whom Stafford Borough Council has accepted a homelessness duty under section 189B(2) or 193 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 because either a) They have a local connection with the Council under the definition of local connection set by Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 but do not otherwise meet the local connection criteria for joining the register or b) they do not have a local connection with this council but do not have a local connection with any other area therefore they remain the responsibility of this Council.

There is however, no exception for applicants owed any homelessness duty by any other council and have:

- (a) Been placed into temporary accommodation by another council in Stafford Borough; or
- (b) Been placed into private rented accommodation of any tenure in Stafford Borough by another local authority to end any homelessness duty owed to that applicant. A homeless duty includes any accommodation to end a section 195 prevention duty, 189B relief duty, any 193 duty or to meet any intentional homelessness duty under section 190 of the Housing Act 1996 Part 7. These applicants will be regarded as non-qualifying persons regardless of the length of time they have been placed unless the period of time is longer than 3 years since they were placed; or
- (c) Do not reside in the district but have applied to join the councils housing register but are owed a statutory homeless duty by another local authority. Households owed a homeless duty by any other local housing authority under the Housing Act 1996 Part 7 (this includes households owed a s.188, s.190, s.198, 195, 189B, 193(2) or 193C(4) duty will be regarded as non-qualifying persons regardless of whether they have been placed in this district or not. This rule is justified because that other local authority retains the responsibility for housing or helping the applicant to obtain housing

Where there are significant and special circumstances with overriding reasons requiring a) either a move into the area or b) where 2 continuous years residence has not been obtained, the Council will consider exempting an applicant from the local connection rules. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis following a request from the applicant or from the information submitted on their housing register application.

Examples include:

- (a) Reasons of safety; i.e. when an applicant is fleeing domestic abuse or hate crime from another area,
- (b) Is on a witness protection program or
- (c) Where by not moving to the area this would be significant detriment to their wellbeing or cause significant hardship.

This will require approval from the Housing Options Team Leader.

Applicants who are leaving an institution outside of Stafford Borough such as a prison or secure unit or a hospital, rehabilitation centre, refuge, hostel or supported accommodation scheme and were resident in settled accommodation within Stafford Borough for the 2 years immediately before they moved into their current accommodation will be allowed to qualify as an exception to the 2 continuous years rule.

The Council will consider under exceptional circumstances any application from a gypsy or traveller household that does not meet the continuous period of residence rule as the period may have been broken by periods of travelling. The Council will consider the facts of each case to decide whether circumstances are exceptional and will make its decision in full consideration of the policy intention behind the local connection qualification rule which is that due to there being limited social housing resources available in the district the Council wishes to prioritise offers of social housing to applicants who have a strong connection to the area based primarily but not exclusively on residence

To qualify to the Right to Move the applicant must:

- Be social housing tenant living in England
- Wish to join the Housing Register in Stafford Borough due to work related reasons to avoid hardship are able to do so provided that they can provide evidence to that effect that the Council accept.
- Satisfy the council that the tenant needs, rather than wishes to move for work related reasons and if they were unable to do so would result in hardship.

In determining whether the tenant needs to move the council will consider the following factors:

- (a) The distance and/or time taken to travel between work and home
- (b) The availability and affordability of transport, taking into account level of earnings
- (c) The nature of the work and whether similar opportunities are available closer to home
- (d) Other personal factors, such as medical conditions and childcare, which would be affected if the tenant could not move
- (e) The length of the work contract
- (f) Whether failure to move would result in the loss of an opportunity to improve their employment circumstances or prospects.

Appendix D: How we will assess the unacceptable behaviour qualification rule

Examples of unacceptable behaviour that may result in a decision that an applicant will not qualify to join the housing register include:

- (a) they or a member of their household has committed anti-social behaviour in or around the vicinity of their home that has resulted in an ASBO, ABC, injunction or other legal deterrent being issued within the past five years.
- (b) they or a member of their household have a conviction for using their accommodation, or allowing it to be used, for illegal or immoral purposes such as drug dealing, within the past five years.
- (c) they have been evicted from a tenancy by a social or private landlord for a breach of tenancy conditions, including non-payment of rent, within the past five years.
- (d) failing to maintain any previous social rented or private rented property within the terms of their tenancy agreement, or committing acts causing or likely to cause nuisance or annoyance to neighbours or others in the area where they live or have previously lived.
- (e) conduct likely to cause nuisance or annoyance if they were to be offered a tenancy. This is conduct or behaviour that does not only relate to a previous social housing or private rented sector tenancy. It may include the circumstances where an applicant, or a member of their current or prospective household, is the subject of actions being taken by any Council (or some other recognised body) on grounds of alleged antisocial behaviour (ASB).
- (f) circumstances where the applicant, or any member of their household, has assaulted a member of the Council's staff, whether or not an injunction is being sought, or has been obtained.
- (g) being subject to a court order (including an interim order) for breach of tenancy conditions.
- (h) conviction for illegal or immoral use of their current or former home.
- (i) causing nuisance and annoyance to neighbours or visitors.
- (j) committing criminal offences that still pose a threat to neighbours or the community such as drug dealing.
- (k) being violent towards a partner or members of the family. The Council does not **tolerate any form of domestic abuse**.
- (l) allowing the condition of the property to deteriorate in avoidable circumstances.
- (m) paying money illegally to obtain a tenancy.
- (n) unlawfully subletting their tenancy.
- (o) applicants who have been convicted of housing or welfare benefit related fraud, where that conviction is unspent under the Rehabilitation Offenders Act 1974.
- (p) having unspent convictions where an assessment by the Council concludes that the applicant is unsuitable to be a tenant due to a significant risk to potential neighbours and/or communities.
- (q) an applicant or any member of their household has been responsible for any racial harassment or other hate crime. 'Racial harassment' and

'hate crimes' are defined as racist, religiously aggravated, faith, gender, age, disability, and trans phobic or homophobic or gender re-assignment harassment or hate crime. A hate crime or racist incident is defined as any incident which is perceived to be racist or hate crime related by the complainant or any other person.

The assessing officer will be guided by the following framework when assessing whether an applicant should not qualify based on their unacceptable behaviour:

- (a) The behaviour need not have led to possession, prosecution, or other enforcement action by a statutory agency, provided that, on the balance of probability, the household is responsible.
- (b) in normal circumstances the behaviour concerned should have occurred within the last five years. In cases of a more serious nature, for example, those involving criminal prosecution, a longer timescale may be appropriate if the applicant still poses a threat to neighbours and community.
- (c) there must be reasonable grounds for believing that the behaviour could continue or be repeated. For example, the applicant may have issued threats, or there might be a history of repeat offending.

When assessing whether behaviour may result in the applicant not qualifying the assessing officer will consider:

- (a) the seriousness of the applicant's behaviour.
- (b) the duration of the behaviour and/or the number and frequency of incidents.
- (c) the length of time that has elapsed since the behaviour took place.
- (d) any relevant vulnerability or support needs that may explain the behaviour.
- (e) whether there is meaningful engagement with support agencies.
- (f) critically, whether there has been a significant and sustained change in the applicant's behaviour.
- (g) whether they believe on the evidence that the behaviour is likely to still reoccur now or at the point a tenancy was offered or commenced.
- (h) whether the circumstances that caused the behaviour have changed. For example, whether nuisance was caused by drug or alcohol problems that the applicant has since successfully resolved.
- (i) whether the member of the household responsible for the behaviour is still a member of the household.
- (j) whether the Council can accept a voluntary acceptable behaviour agreement from the applicant setting out the behaviour that is expected of them for future tenancies.
- (k) if the unacceptable behaviour is believed to be due to physical, mental or learning difficulties, whether, with appropriate support, the applicant could maintain a tenancy.

Applicants to whom the rule is applied will be written to and informed that:

- (a) the unacceptable behaviour rule has been applied to their case and either they do not qualify, or that they qualify but cannot be considered for an allocation until the behaviour has been resolved.
- (b) what they must do to resolve the problem.
- (c) where an applicant is disqualified for unacceptable behaviour they will be informed that they have a right to ask for a review of the decision made to disqualify them.

Non-qualification will apply until the applicant (or a member of their prospective household) has demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the Council, their previous unacceptable conduct is unlikely to reoccur. This may include demonstrating cooperation with support agencies leading to a substantial improvement in behaviour.

Where an applicant is disqualified, any new application will only be reconsidered at the request of the applicant and only where there has been no reasonable cause for complaint or concern against the applicant (or members of their prospective household) for a continuous period of 12 months. It is the applicant's responsibility to notify the Council when they have, in their view, resolved the issue and they will need to present evidence to back up their view as part of any new application.

An applicant may re-apply to join the housing register after 12 months. During this time they will be expected to demonstrate behaviour that would make them suitable to be a tenant, such as no further anti-social or criminal behaviour in or around the vicinity of their home and/or no further breaches of tenancy conditions.

Appendix F: Assessing Medical Priority and when an award of priority will be made. Awarding Additional Medical Priority

Some residents in the Borough have long-term health problems that make it very difficult to continue to live in their current home. Usually, these are physical health problems including problems with mobility (e.g. using stairs), but they also include mental health problems.

We do not award a priority band because you, or a household member, has a health problem. We look instead at how your current home affects the person with that health problem for example, how difficult it is to get in and out of your current home or how difficult it is to move around inside your home, or to cook and to wash yourself, or to receive the treatment and care you need inside your current home.

How we assess health priority banding is perhaps the area in any Allocation Policy that people are most confused about as understandably many applicants believe that it is the extent of their health condition that qualifies for a priority band whereas this is not the test we apply - the test is how the person's current housing impacts on their health condition plus in addition we have to decide whether their health would be significantly improved by rehousing, otherwise a move will have no beneficial impact.

If we think that rehousing you to a more suitable home is the right way to help you, there are two different bands that we will consider awarding you. The first is Band A where we have assessed there is a very urgent or emergency need for you to move due to the impact of your current housing on your health condition. The second is a high priority need to move.

When will we award Band A – for an urgent or emergency need to move

We will award Band A where:

- (1) there is substantial evidence from specialist services (and we agree with their assessment) that you (or a member of your household's) disability or severe and enduring medical condition is so serious that it makes it virtually impossible for you to continue living in the current home, and it would be life-threatening for you to do so; and
- (2) there is substantial evidence from specialist services that you need to move to a more suitable home so that you can receive appropriate support and care to safeguard health, independence and wellbeing; and
- (3) all other options to address your difficulties have been explored, including in relation to medical treatment, care, your current home (including adaptations), and other suitable rehousing options; and
- (4) there are properties available which are likely to meet your needs better than where you are now.

As medical conditions may change over time, these awards will be reassessed regularly to establish whether or not the award should continue.

Situations where an award of emergency need to move will be relatively few, usually because essential treatment and care can be provided in the existing home.

When will we award Band B – for a high priority need to move

We will award Band B where:

- (1) there is extensive evidence from specialist services (and we agree with their assessment) that you (or a member of your household's) disability or severe and enduring medical condition substantially impacts on your health and independence in your current home; and
- (2) there is extensive evidence from specialist services that you are unable to enter or leave the home and/or access essential facilities within the home; and
- (3) all other options to address your difficulties have been explored, including in relation to medical treatment, care, your current home (including adaptations), and other suitable rehousing options; and
- (4) there are properties available which are likely to meet your needs better than where you are now.

We will also award Band B in relation to mental health conditions or neurodivergent conditions where:

- (1) there is substantial evidence from specialist services (and we agree with their assessment) that you (or a member of your household) have a severe and enduring mental health condition or neurodivergent condition, which substantially impacts on your health and independence in your current home; and
- (2) there is substantial evidence from specialist services that you have suffered or will suffer a severe, long-term and detrimental deterioration in this condition as a direct result of your home, and you will not recover from this if you remain in your home; and
- (3) all other options to address your difficulties have been explored, including in relation to medical treatment, care, your current home, and other suitable rehousing options; and
- (4) it is evidenced that moving to a more suitable home will have a substantial positive impact upon this condition and your independence; and
- (5) there are properties available which are likely to meet your needs better than where you are now.

When assessing whether to award you Band A or B or no priority, we will follow the five-stage assessment set out below:

- (1) Is the medical/disability issue serious enough for a priority banding to be considered?
- (2) If the medical condition is serious enough for a priority banding to be considered we will then decide if there is a direct link between the identified medical problem your current housing accommodation/situation, i.e., on the facts obtained (from you and any medical information or reports submitted including any advice from an independent medical advisor or occupational therapist if we need to seek their advice) do we accept that your current housing accommodation/circumstances are making the medical condition or disability identified substantially worse, or will make it worse?
- (3) In practical terms we will consider the adverse effect this has on your ability to manage day-to-day tasks in your current home. The current housing accommodation/circumstances may be impacting on you or a family member's medical condition or disability but not to the extent that an award of Band A or B priority should be granted under the criteria we have adopted for this policy.
- (4) Before making an award we will need to be satisfied there is a realistic expectation that the impact on the identified medical condition/disability would be removed or significantly improved through the provision of alternative accommodation.
- (5) If we are satisfied that the impact on the identified medical condition/disability would be removed or significantly improved, we will then decide whether to award Band A or B depending on the severity of the impact. In most cases the assessing officer will make this decision based on the guidelines set out in the Policy. However, we may make the decision after obtaining an opinion from a medical adviser or Occupational therapist and they will be guided by this five-stage assessment process.

When will we not normally award a priority band for health - medical or disability circumstances

Medical/health priority will not normally be awarded in the following circumstances:

- (a) where you or a member of your family have a health issue, however severe, that is not impacted by the accommodation occupied
- (b) health problems that are not affected by housing or cannot be improved by moving
- (c) where a move would only make a marginal improvement to that condition
- (d) medical impacts caused by housing defects that are likely to be rectified in a reasonable time frame
- (e) where another reasonable course of action is available to you to resolve the impact on your health

- (f) time-related medical or health problems (e.g., pregnancy-related problems or a broken leg)
- (g) disrepair problems not impacting significantly on your medical condition. (Note: under the Policy you may receive priority separately for living in unfit or unsatisfactory housing depending on the assessment made of your circumstances and impact)
- (h) overcrowding not impacting significantly on your medical condition. (Note: under the Policy you may receive priority separately for being overcrowded)
- (i) if the situation can be resolved by equipment or minor adaptations which can be implemented in a reasonable period of time
- (j) If you moved into a home that, from the start, was not suitable due to any family member's health problems. We look at these kinds of cases very carefully. For example, we will consider the reasons why you moved into an unsuitable home, and whether it might have been possible and reasonable for you to move into a more suitable home elsewhere.

Medical assessments are not just related to banding. We will also consider recommendations for future housing, for example regarding the floor level you may need and whether an extra bedroom is required due to a child having autism.

Examples of circumstances to help the assessing officer to decide when Band 1 (Emergency) may be awarded on medical or disability grounds

The following examples are intended to guide the assessing officer on the threshold set for a Band A award. They can also serve to help an applicant understand the threshold for a priority award to be granted. A Band A award is for *“Applicants who are suffering sudden or severe progressive life-threatening medical conditions and need an immediate move (e.g., to facilitate hospital discharge) because their current home is unsuitable (as it does not meet their medical needs and/or cannot be adapted) and poses an immediate and serious danger to the individual.”*

- (a) where an applicant's condition is expected to be terminal within a period of 12 months and rehousing is required to provide a basis for the provision of suitable care
- (b) the condition is life threatening and the applicant's existing accommodation is a major contributory factor
- (c) the applicant has severe mobility issues, is housebound and is unable to leave their accommodation except with assistance that will result in high risk to themselves or their carer. They have an assessed need to move to accommodation that meets their needs
- (d) the applicant is not ambulant and a wheelchair user who is unable to use their wheelchair within their current accommodation and has an assessed need to move to suitable accommodation

- (e) the applicant's accommodation is directly contributing to the deterioration of the applicant's health such as severe chest condition requiring intermittent hospitalisation as a result of chronic dampness in the accommodation and the condition of the property cannot be resolved within a reasonable period of time – usually six months
- (f) where overcrowding in the property leaves the applicant at risk of life-threatening infection
- (g) Applicants who have a progressive, chronic or life-threatening medical condition and cannot be discharged from hospital because they do not have any accommodation, or their accommodation is unsuitable for example, because they cannot access toilet and/or bathing facilities in the property. This will include cases that cannot be discharged from hospital because their home is, and will remain, permanently entirely unsuitable or entirely inaccessible to live in
- (h) Where the assessing officer accepts that the evidence from a relevant health professional indicates that there is a significant risk of serious and permanent injury and/or permanent disability
- (i) Applicants who have a progressive, chronic or life-threatening medical condition as diagnosed by a healthcare professional and urgently need to move to accommodation with significant disabled adaptations, such as accommodation suitable for a wheelchair user
- (j) A serious illness, where an applicant is receiving palliative care and urgently requires rehousing to facilitate the on-going provision of that care
- (k) The applicant's health is so severely affected by the accommodation that it is likely to become life threatening, e.g., applicant has severe mental health problems that are significantly exacerbated by their accommodation and that opinion is fully evidenced by the applicant's consultant or mental health services
- (l) Due to limited mobility a person is unable to access essential parts of the property e.g., bathroom/toilet and no adaptation is possible
- (m) A member of the household is elderly or disabled or has a progressive illness and is likely to require admission to hospital or residential/nursing care in the immediate future and re-housing would enable the person to remain at home
- (n) Where the applicant is prevented from having access to kidney dialysis, respiratory, or other similar essential equipment. This will normally apply where these circumstances are likely to prevent someone from remaining in their home for all or most of the time. Such a condition would be likely to be ongoing, rather than a temporary condition

Examples of circumstances to help the assessing officer to decide when Band B should be awarded on medical or disability grounds

- (a) A life-threatening condition which is seriously affected by the current housing and where re-housing would make that condition significantly easier to manage
- (b) A life limiting condition and their current accommodation is affecting their ability to retain independence or enable adequate care
- (c) A new and life-changing condition that severely impairs their mobility, meaning they are unable to carry out day-to-day activities, or have difficulty accessing facilities inside and outside of their accommodation and require housing into suitable accommodation
- (d) An applicant or member of his/her household usually has a chronic condition; examples might include a respiratory condition, severe asthma or emphysema - and that the condition is being made worse by the current accommodation
- (e) Where their current property leaves a person at risk of infection, e.g., where an applicant is suffering from late-stage or advanced AIDs
- (f) People who have a severe mental health or learning disability which significantly affects their ability to lead a normal life, and which puts them at risk of admission to hospital or residential care. Evidence would normally need to be provided from a specialist consultant psychiatrist or a certified paediatric nurse that their current accommodation is having a significant detrimental impact on the mental health of any member of the household
- (g) People living in a mobile home, caravan or converted vehicle which, due to medical conditions, the vehicle cannot meet their essential needs
- (h) Where remaining in the current accommodation poses a significant risk of serious and permanent injury and/or permanent severe disability
- (i) Someone with a medical or disability who's housing has rendered them housebound
- (j) Where a move would avoid the need for another service (e.g., Social Services) from having to provide a significant level of support. This might include for example residential care, overnight care provision, or other support with similar resource implications
- (k) Where someone suffers with epilepsy or other conditions that cause frequent and unpredictable falls and all medical interventions to prevent them have been investigated. This will involve an assessment of the layout of their current accommodation, for example the number and nature of steps, stairs or other hazards that may increase the risk of serious injury
- (l) The applicant or household member requires significant disabled adaptations to meet their needs and this is not possible in their current accommodation or would not be cost effective

- (m) Armed forces personnel who need to move to suitable adapted accommodation because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability that he or she has sustained as a result of service
- (n) Veterans who have actively served in the armed forces and are suffering from severe post-traumatic stress disorder or serious illness directly related to service in the forces
- (o) An occupational therapist has identified that the current accommodation is partially suitable but:
 - the applicant or member of his/her household needs a major adaptation, such as a level access shower; or
 - the applicant or member of his/her household has significant difficulty managing stairs or difficulty accessing the property owing to stairs or slopes leading to doorways and the occupational therapist recommends a lift, ramped access or ground floor living; and
- (p) Applicants who have significant mobility issues and would benefit from a move to ground floor or level access accommodation
- (q) Applicants who have significant mobility issues and would benefit from a move to accommodation that has level access showering facilities
- (r) Children with severe conditions and a formal diagnosis such as autism, or cerebral palsy or ADHD where their long-term needs cannot be met without long term settled accommodation
- (s) A person with a severe disability requiring some adaptations to their property that cannot be provided for in their current accommodation
- (t) Where an applicant can access their home but struggles to access normal day-to-day facilities within it (e.g., bath/shower/toilet) without experiencing significant difficulty, pain or other discomfort, confirmed with evidence from a healthcare professional. This would include cases where an adaptation is possible but cannot be undertaken in a reasonable period of time. (Note: any priority would be removed if an adaptation is completed, or work started)

Appendix G: Overcrowding

Stafford Borough Council uses the bedroom standard when assessing whether an applicant is overcrowded for the purpose of determining housing need in accordance with the Allocation Policy.

The Bedroom Standard requires one bedroom for:

- each adult couple
- any other adult aged 18 or over
- two adolescents of the same sex aged 10 to 20
- two children regardless of sex under the age of 10.

When determining whether a household is statutorily overcrowded, the Council whether either or both of the standards below apply:

The room standard

The room standard is based on the number and gender of people who must sleep in one room. The room standard will be contravened in a situation where two people of the opposite sex must sleep in the same room. The exceptions to this rule are:

- cohabiting or married couples, who can live in the same room without causing overcrowding
- children under the age of ten, who are completely ignored in the calculation.

All living rooms and bedrooms are included in the calculation (this could include a large kitchen). However, the standard does not limit the number of people of the same sex who can live in the same room (but see 'the space standard', below).

The space standard

The space standard is based on the number of people who may sleep in a dwelling of a particular size. The number of people depends on the size of the room, the number of living rooms and bedrooms in the building and the age of the occupants. There are two ways of calculating the space standard.

Method 1

Number of rooms	1	2	3	4	5+
Number of people	2	3	5	7 1/2	2 per room

Method 2

Floor area of room (square feet)	110	90 –109	70 – 89	50 – 69
Number of people	2	1 1/2	1	1/2

For both methods:

- children under one year old are ignored
- children under ten years old but not under one count as a half
- rooms under 50 square feet are ignored
- a room is counted if it is either a living room or a bedroom

The space and room standards apply to any premises let as a separate dwelling (such as a house, a flat or even just a room if it is let separately from the rest of the building). They apply to both tenancies and/or licences. Both standards define a room as available as sleeping accommodation 'if it is of a type normally used in the locality either as a living room or as a bedroom' (in one case a large kitchen was held to meet this definition).

Requests for additional bedrooms for those with learning difficulties, sensory impairments, mental or physical health problems.

In making an assessment for an extra bedroom for ADHD, Autism, sensory processing difficulties, and other mental or physical health problems the Council will consider the following framework to help guide the assessing officer:

- the nature and severity of the disability
- the nature and frequency of any care required during the night; and
- the extent and regularity of the disturbance to the sleep of the child who would normally be required to share the bedroom

In all cases this will come down to a matter of judgement on facts of each individual case.

A claim should normally be supported by medical evidence and many children will be in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) care component at the middle or highest rate for their medical condition.

Requested evidence will include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- medical evidence detailing the nature of the disability, how this is affected by the home environment and the impact on other members of the household
- other supporting information from care and support agencies involved with the child and family (this should be specific information relating to the request for re-housing rather than a general letter of support and is likely to be from specialist rather than universal services); and,
- proof of DLA entitlement

The circumstances where a possible award of an extra bedroom may be made include a consideration of all of the facts set out below:

- (a) Supporting letters for example from school SENCO stating that they also use a calm room at school and why, a letter specifying aggressive behaviour and frequency, behaviour flow chats, list of aggressive behaviours displayed at school, also stating the danger of child sharing alone with another child, their sensory issues, their inability to cope with small changes and reaction as a result
- (b) Where there is professionally assessed evidence of a child or young person up to the age of 25 in the household who has a severe or profound learning difficulty, with a presentation of behavioural or emotional difficulties who exhibits sexually exploratory behaviour or other inappropriate behaviour of a serious nature and has a limited understanding around the impact of this on others. This may need to be certified by a consultant psychiatrist
- (c) The applicant or a member of their household (adult or child), need major medical equipment for the long term, such as home dialysis, equipment for percutaneous external gastrostomy feeding, long term large assistive equipment or and/or bulky medical supplies which need to be used and stored on a permanent basis
- (d) A DLA award letter stating high care and low mobility
- (e) An assessment of need which supports the claim for an additional bedroom based on a severe impact where that assessment has been undertaken by the appropriate health or care professionals. The assessment would need to evidence that sharing with another family member who has care needs or behavioural problems that severely affect that family members ability to sleep, which in turn is having a very significant negative impact on their employment (to the extent that they may lose their permanent employment), or on their mental health (to the extent that they have been assessed with a severe mental health condition, or their current condition has become more severe, as a result of having to share)
- (f) Carers award letter stating care award is due to care needing to be given day and night

Examples unlikely to qualify include:

- (a) Circumstances, for example, where the claimant is one of a couple who is unable to share a bedroom
- (b) Where children share and the claim is that by having to share this is impacting on their ability to study and complete homework but there is evidence that they are able to study elsewhere in the home or at relatives or using library services
- (c) Where family members provide overnight care and support only at weekends or for part of the year
- (d) People with mental health issues who say they want an extra room for a friend or relative who provides support
- (e) A claim based solely on the wish that the applicant requires an additional room so that a child can cut themselves off from the world, which they claim is essential to their mental wellbeing
- (f) People who are in receipt of formal overnight care (provided by NHS continuing care nurses, visiting agency carers, etc)

Requests for an extra bedroom for a live in Carer

We will consider requests for an extra bedroom where someone in your household requires and has been approved for a 24 hour live-in carer (which does not extend to a waking care presence), and no one in your household is able to provide this.

We will need clear evidence that there is an exceptional need for the person to live with you. With regards to a person who needs to live with you in order to receive care or support, this evidence must ordinarily be provided by their treating specialist services.

With regards to a carer who needs to live with you, this evidence must be an assessment completed under the Care Act 2014 by an authority that assesses, approves and provides or funds a live-in carer, such as Adult Social Care, mental health services or NHS continuing healthcare.

The inclusion of such a person on your Housing Register application will be subject to assessment and agreement by ourselves and not just based on the recommendation of a health advisor or specialist.