



Friday, 11 July 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

A meeting of the Governance, Audit and Standards Committee will be held on Monday, 21 July 2025 in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Foster Avenue, Beeston NG9 1AB, commencing at 6.00 pm.

Should you require advice on declaring an interest in any item on the agenda, please contact the Monitoring Officer at your earliest convenience.

Yours faithfully

Chief Executive

To Councillors:	S J Carr (Chair)	K A Harlow
	K Woodhead (Vice-Chair)	S P Jeremiah
	M Brown	A Kingdon
	R Bullock	W Mee
	A Cooper	J M Owen
	S Dannheimer	E Winfield

A G E N D A

1. Apologies

To receive apologies and to be notified of the attendance of substitutes.

2. Declarations of Interest

(Pages 5 - 12)

Members are requested to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest and/or other interest in any item on the agenda.

3. Minutes

(Pages 13 - 14)

The Committee is asked to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2025.

4. Audit of Accounts and Associated Matters (Pages 15 - 40)

To receive the latest Audit Progress Report from the Council's external auditors and to note progress made with the 2024/25 audit.
5. Internal Audit Progress Report (Pages 41 - 48)

To inform the Committee of the recent work completed by Internal Audit.
6. Internal Audit Review 2024/25 (Pages 49 - 58)

To inform the Committee of the work of Internal Audit during 2024/25 and to provide an annual Internal Audit Assurance Opinion that can be used by the Council to inform its Annual Governance Statement.
7. Major Projects Governance Dashboard (Pages 59 - 80)

To provide the Committee with an update to the Governance Dashboard relating to the Council's major projects.
8. Review of Strategic Risk Register (Pages 81 - 96)

To approve the amendments to the Strategic Risk Register and the action plans identified to mitigate risks. This is in accordance with all of the Council's objectives and key priorities.
9. Complaint Report 2024/25 (Pages 97 - 168)

To provide Members with a summary of complaints made against the Council.
10. Findings of Fault Determinations Reported from the Ombudsman (Pages 169 - 218)

To provide Members with the recent findings of fault determinations made by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman.

11. Work Programme

(Pages 219 - 220)

To consider items for inclusion in the Work Programme for future meetings.

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Report of the Monitoring Officer

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1. Purpose of Report

Members are requested to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest and/or other interest in any item on the agenda. The following information is extracted from the Code of Conduct, in addition to advice from the Monitoring Officer which will assist Members to consider any declarations of interest.

Part 2 – Member Code of Conduct

General Obligations:

10. Interest

10.1 You will register and disclose your interests in accordance with the provisions set out in Appendix A.

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of Members of the Council. The register is publically available and protects you by demonstrating openness and willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting which allows the public, Council employees and fellow Councillors know which of your interests gives rise to a conflict of interest. If in doubt you should always seek advice from your Monitoring Officer.

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as defined in Appendix A of the Code of Conduct, is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

Advice from the Monitoring Officer:

On reading the agenda it is advised that you:

1. Consider whether you have any form of interest to declare as set out in the Code of Conduct.
2. Consider whether you have a declaration of any bias or predetermination to make as set out at the end of this document
3. Update Democratic Services and the Monitoring Officer and or Deputy Monitoring Officers of any declarations you have to make ahead of the meeting and take advice as required.
4. Use the Member Interest flowchart to consider whether you have an interest to declare and what action to take.
5. Update the Chair at the meeting of any interest declarations as follows:

‘I have an interest in Item xx of the agenda’

'The nature of my interest is therefore the type of interest is
DPI/ORI/NRI/BIAS/PREDETERMINATION
'The action I will take is...'

This will help Officer record a more accurate record of the interest being declared and the actions taken. You will also be able to consider whether it is necessary to send a substitute Members in your place and to provide Democratic Services with notice of your substitute Members name.

Note: If at the meeting you recognise one of the speakers and only then become aware of an interest you should declare your interest and take any necessary action

6. Update your Member Interest Register of any registerable interests within 28days of becoming aware of the Interest.

Ask yourself do you have any of the following interest to declare?

1. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS (DPIs)

A "Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" is any interest described as such in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 and includes an interest of yourself, or of your Spouse/Partner (if you are aware of your Partner's interest) that falls within the following categories: Employment, Trade, Profession, Sponsorship, Contracts, Land, Licences, Tenancies and Securities.

2. OTHER REGISTERABLE INTERESTS (ORIs)

An "Other Registerable Interest" is a personal interest in any business of your authority which relates to or is likely to affect:

- a) any body of which you are in general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority; or
- b) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) anybody directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a Member or in a position of general control or management.

3. NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS (NRIs)

"Non-Registrable Interests" are those that you are not required to register but need to be disclosed when a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial interest or wellbeing or a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate that is not a DPI.

A matter "directly relates" to one of your interests where the matter is directly about that interest. For example, the matter being discussed is an application about a particular property in which you or somebody associated with you has a financial interest.

A matter “affects” your interest where the matter is not directly about that interest but would still have clear implications for the interest. For example, the matter concerns a neighbouring property.

Declarations and Participation in Meetings

1. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS (DPIs)

- 1.1 Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests which include both the interests of yourself and your partner then:

Action to be taken

- **you must disclose the nature of the interest** at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent, whether or not such interest is registered in the Council’s register of interests of Member and Co-opted Members or for which you have made a pending notification. If it is a sensitive interest you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest
- **you must not participate in any discussion** of that particular business at the meeting, or if you become aware of a disclosable pecuniary interest during the meeting you must not participate further in any discussion of the business, including by speaking as a member of the public
- **you must not participate in any vote** or further vote taken on the matter at the meeting and
- **you must withdraw from the room** at this point to make clear to the public that you are not influencing the meeting in anyway and to protect you from the criminal sanctions that apply should you take part, unless you have been granted a Dispensation.

2. OTHER REGISTERABLE INTERESTS (ORIs)

- 2.1 Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests i.e. relating to a body you may be involved in:

- **you must disclose** the interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent, whether or not such interest is registered in the Council’s register of interests of Member and Co-opted Members or for which you have made a pending notification. If it is a sensitive interest you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest
- **you must not take part in any discussion or vote** on the matter, but may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting
- **you must withdraw from the room** unless you have been granted a Dispensation.

3. NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS (NRIs)

3.1 Where a matter arises at a meeting, which is not registrable but may become relevant when a particular item arises i.e. interests which relate to you and /or other people you are connected with (e.g. friends, relative or close associates) then:

- **you must** disclose the interest; if it is a sensitive interest you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest
 - **you must not take part in any discussion or vote**, but may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting; and
 - **you must withdraw** from the room unless you have been granted a Dispensation.
-

Dispensation and Sensitive Interests

A “Dispensation” is agreement that you may continue to participate in the decision-making process notwithstanding your interest as detailed at section 12 of the Code of the Conduct and the Appendix.

A “Sensitive Interest” is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the Member, or a person connected with the Member, being subject to violence or intimidation. In any case where this Code of Conduct requires to you to disclose an interest (subject to the agreement of the Monitoring Officer in accordance with paragraph 2.4 of this Appendix regarding registration of interests), you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, if it is a Sensitive Interest in such circumstances you just have to disclose that you have a Sensitive Interest under S32(2) of the Localism Act 2011. You must update the Monitoring Officer when the interest is no longer sensitive, so that the interest can be recorded, made available for inspection and published.

BIAS and PREDETERMINATION

The following are not explicitly covered in the code of conduct but are important legal concepts to ensure that decisions are taken solely in the public interest and not to further any private interests.

The risk in both cases is that the decision maker does not approach the decision with an objective, open mind.

This makes the local authority’s decision challengeable (and may also be a breach of the Code of Conduct by the Councillor).

Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officers, if you need assistance ahead of the meeting.

BIAS

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias. If you have been involved in an issue in such a manner or to such an extent that the public are likely to perceive you to be biased in your judgement of the public interest:

- a) you should not take part in the decision-making process
- b) you should state that your position in this matter prohibits you from taking part
- c) you should leave the room.

PREDETERMINATION

Where a decision maker has completely made up his/her mind before the decision is taken or that the public are likely to perceive you to be predetermined due to comments or statements you have made:

- a) you should not take part in the decision-making process
- b) you should state that your position in this matter prohibits you from taking part
- c) you should leave the room.

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Registerable Interests

These are interests that you are required to register in accordance with the Code of Conduct. They are interests that you would know about in advance of an item coming up (e.g. land you own) and you should have included them when filling in your register of interests.

What type of Registerable Interest do you have in this matter?

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

These are any interests that are described as DPIs under the Code of Conduct and include both the interests of yourself and of your partner.

Other Registerable Interests

These are personal interests that relate to certain types of bodies that you may be involved in as set out in the Code of Conduct.

Does the matter directly relate to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests?

No

Does the matter directly relate to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests?

No

Does the matter affect a financial interest or the wellbeing of yourself or of a friend, relative or close associate?

No

Is the financial interest or wellbeing affected to a greater extent than the financial interests or wellbeing of the majority of inhabitants?

No

Would a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest?

No

You must:

- Disclose the interest;
- Not speak on the matter;
- Not participate in any discussion or vote; and
- Not remain in the room unless you have a Dispensation

You must:

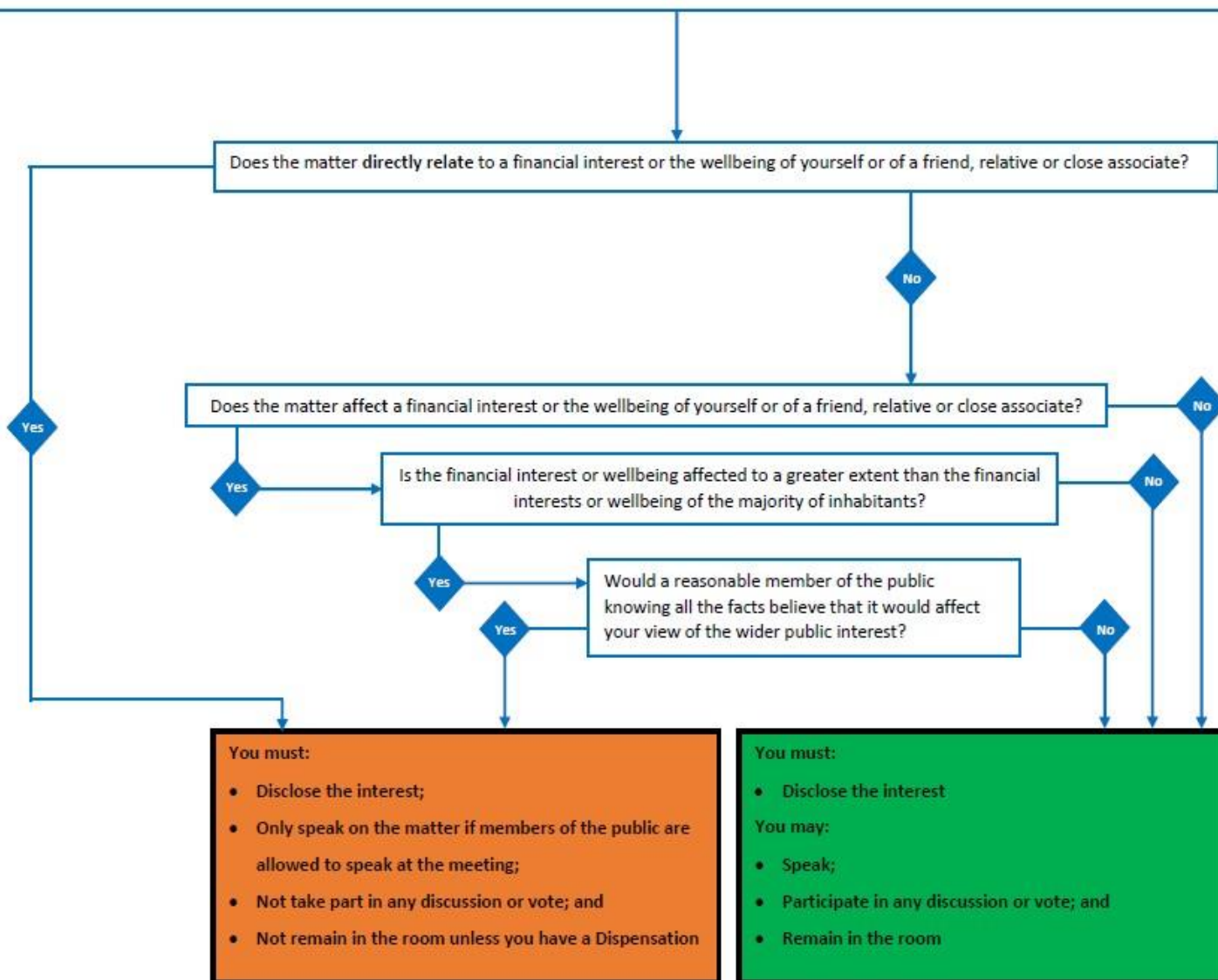
- Disclose the interest;
- Only speak on the matter if members of the public are allowed to speak at the meeting;
- Not take part in any discussion or vote; and
- Not remain in the room unless you have a Dispensation

You must:

- Disclose the interest
- You may:
- Speak;
 - Participate in any discussion or vote; and
 - Remain in the room

Non-Registerable Interests

These are interests that you are not required to register but may become relevant when a particular item arises. These are usually interests that relate to other people you are connected with (e.g. friends, relatives or close associates) but can include your own interests where you would not have been expected to register them.



GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 19 MAY 2025

Present: Councillor S J Carr, Chair

Councillors: K Woodhead (Vice-Chair)
M Brown
A Cooper
S Dannheimer
K A Harlow
G S Hills
S P Jeremiah
A Kingdon
J M Owen
E Winfield

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Bullock and W Mee.

1 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2025 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3 **AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS**

The Committee noted the Audit Strategy Memorandum for the 2024/25 audit of accounts and were informed of the progress made by the Council's appointed external auditors, Forvis Mazars. It was stated that the objective was to fully deliver the Audit for the year in accordance with the plan contained within the document.

4 **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

Members were informed of action taken to develop and comply with statutory obligations regarding corporate governance and noted compliance with the Code on Delivering Good Governance to make any further amendments deemed necessary.

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 required Authorities to conduct a review, at least once in each financial year, of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and this statement would be included within the statement of accounts.

Local Authorities were under a statutory obligation to follow the published approach using the CIPFA/SOLACE document, Delivering Good Governance in Local

Government Framework. There were seven core principles to follow. A summary of how the Council met each of the seven core principles, including evidence, and where improvement action or steps had been taken in 2024/25 was provided.

It was agreed to include the group leaders should be consulted in addition to the Chair of the Committee if any amendments to the document were necessary.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The Annual Governance Statement be approved in principle for inclusion in the Council's Statement of Accounts.**
- 2. Responsibility be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and the group leaders, to make any further amendments as necessary.**

5 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee was informed of the recent work completed by Internal Audit and noted the appendices within the report. Reassurance was sought with regards to stocktakes at the Depot Stores and the risks around fraud.

6 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the work programme.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be approved.

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

Audit of Accounts and Associated Matters

1. Purpose of report

To receive the latest Audit Progress Report from the Council's external auditors and to note progress made with the 2024/25 audit.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to NOTE report.

3. Detail

The Council's appointed external auditors, Forvis Mazars, presented their Audit Strategy Memorandum for the Council's 2024/25 audit to this Committee on 19 May 2025.

In accordance with the latest Accounts and Audit Regulations, the Council's draft Statement of Accounts for 2024/25 was approved by the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer and published on the Council's [website](#) in advance of the 30 June statutory deadline. The accounts will now be subject to inspection by the external auditors.

Forvis Mazars present an early update on progress made with the 2024/25 audit in their report at **Appendix 1**. The report also includes a summary of recent national publications and technical updates that the auditors wish to bring to Members attention.

A representative from Forvis Mazars will be available virtually at the meeting to introduce this report and respond to any related enquiries.

4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Assistant Director Finance Services were as follows:

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer were as follows:

The legislation in the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015) sets out the timescales for the production of the Council's accounts, including the dates of the public inspection period. The Statement of Accounts must be published by that date or as soon as reasonably practicable after the receipt of the auditor's final findings.

Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires the Council to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers (the Deputy Chief Executive) has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs, which include responsibility for preparing the Council's statement of accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

The Statement of Accounts is that upon which the auditor should enter his certificate and opinion which is prepared under the Local Government Finance Act 2003.

6. Human Resources Implications

There were no comments from the Human Resources Manager.

7. Union Comments

Not applicable.

8. Climate Change Implications

There are no Climate Change issues in relation to this report.

9. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

As there is no change to policy an equality impact assessment is not required.

11. Background Papers

Nil.



Audit Progress Report

Broxtowe Borough Council

10 July 2025

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Forvis Mazars LLP – The Corner, Bank Chambers, 26 Mosley Street, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 1DF - Tel: 0191 383 6300 – Fax: 0191 383 6350 – www.forvismazars.com/uk
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This document is to be regarded as confidential to the Council. It has been prepared for the sole use of the Governance, Audit and Standards Committee as those charged with governance. No responsibility is accepted to any other person in respect of the whole or part of its contents.

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Audit update

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01 Audit update

Purpose of this report

This report provides the the Governance, Audit and Standards Committee with information about progress in delivering our responsibilities as your external auditors for Broxtowe Borough Council. It also provides information on national publications and technical updates which may be of interest.

Audit for the year ending 31 March 2025

Our Audit Strategy Memorandum 2024/25, finalised on 7 May 2025, was presented to the Governance, Audit and Standards Committee meeting on 19 May 2025.

This set out our engagement responsibilities and summary, the key members of the audit team, outlined the audit scope, approach and timeline, materiality and misstatements, significant risks and other key judgement areas, value for money work, audit fees and confirmation of our independence.

The plan stated that Varsha Sharma was the Audit Manager. However, there has been a change in Audit Manager to Garima Garg which was explained at the Governance, Audit and Standards Committee meeting on 19 May 2025, and Garima attended the meeting to introduce herself.

At this stage, there are no other changes to the planned approach set out in the Audit Strategy Memorandum 2024/25.

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National publications and technical updates



National publications and technical updates

	Publication/update	Key points
Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy ('CIPFA')		
1	Audit Committee Update issue 41 – the local audit backstop	A guide for audit committee members at English local authorities to explain the local audit backstop arrangements. It covers key terms, dates, roles and responsibilities and how audit committee members can help. For information only.
2	CIPFA Consultation on updated guidance on the annual review and preparation of an annual governance statement	CIPFA has launched a consultation on its guidance on the annual review and preparation of the annual governance statements (AGS). For information only.
3	CIPFA Better Reporting Group consultation	CIPFA's Better Reporting Group (BRG) has been set up to identify and address challenges in local authority financial reporting. For information only.
4	CIPFA Advisory Note: Statement of Responsibilities	CIPFA has published an advisory note on the Chief Finance Officer's (CFO's) Statement of Responsibilities which provides guidance on informing the 'true and fair' assessment of the accounts at the reporting date. For information only.
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ('MHCLG') (formerly the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities ('DLUHC'))		
5	Code of Audit Practice 2024: Explanatory memorandum	This explanatory memorandum has been prepared by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and laid before Parliament in accordance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. For information only.
6	MHCLG Addressing the local audit backlog in England: Non-compliance lists	MHCLG has published a list of local bodies that did not publish one or more audited accounts for financial years up to and including 2022 to 2023 by the statutory backstop date of 13 December 2024. For information only.
7	Local audit reform: a strategy for overhauling the local audit system in England	MHCLG has published its response to the consultation on local audit reform. This included making some additional commitments in response to the findings of the consultation. For information only.
National Audit Office ('NAO')		
8	NAO overview: The impact of fraud and error on public funds 2023-24	This report provides an introduction to the impact of fraud and error on public funds, how public bodies can tackle fraud and error, and the NAO's examination of the topic. It is intended to support the Committee of Public Accounts, and Members across the House in their examination of how government manages fraud and error and some of the things it could do to improve. For information only.

National publications and technical updates

	Publication/update	Key points
9	NAO report: Whole of Government Accounts 2022-23	The Whole of Government Accounts consolidates the accounts of over 10,000 public sector bodies to provide the most complete and accurate picture of the UK's public finances. For information only.
10	NAO insight: Financial management in government: monitoring and forecasting	This guide is for senior finance leaders in government departments and other public bodies. It sets out insights and good practice on monitoring and forecasting for better financial management in government. For information only.
11	NAO insight: Government's approach to technology suppliers: addressing the challenges	This report examines government's overall approach to digital and technology suppliers. It sets out lessons for the centre of government and departments to learn from government's approach to digital procurement. For information only.
12	NAO insight: Financial management in government: allocating resources	This guide is for senior finance leaders in government departments and other public bodies. It sets out insights and good practice on how to allocate resources for better financial management in government. For information only.
13	NAO report: Managing conflicts of interest: value for money	This report looks at the governance, systems and processes that public bodies have used to manage conflicts of interest. For information only.
14	NAO Report: Good practice in annual reporting	The NAO has published its insight guide on Good practice in annual reporting. For information only.
15	NAO report: Local government financial sustainability	The NAO has published its report Local government financial sustainability. For information only.
16	NAO Insight: Managing the commercial lifecycle	The NAO has published good practice guidance Managing the commercial lifecycle that has been updated in response to the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023. For information only.
Other		
17	Audit opinion data 2023/24	An update was provided on the delivery of audit opinions for 2023/24 against the backstop date of 28 February 2025. For information only.
18	ICAEW and LGPS Scheme Advisory Board launch LGPS informer	This document explains how the Local Government Pension Scheme ('LGPS') works in practice, and other key information. For information only.
19	Major Local Audits Reports	The FRC have published their annual report on their inspection findings of Audit Quality Reviews of Major Local Audits. For information only.

National publications and technical updates

	Publication/update	Key points
20	Forvis Mazars - Annual Local Government Risk Report 2025/26	The report deep dives into the known and emerging risks for Local Authorities in 2025/26, as well as what they should include in their internal audit plans. For information only.
21	Forvis Mazars – Public Sector in Focus Report	Forvis Mazars report for the public and social sector outlining the top priorities and risks shaping the future of the sector. For information only.

Latest update, 5 June 2025

	Publication/update	Key points
22	NAO: Publication of Local Audit Reset and Recovery Implementation Guidance (LARRIG) 06	Provides guidance to auditors on special considerations for rebuilding assurance for specified balances following backstop-related disclaimed audit opinions. For information only.

National publications and technical updates

CIPFA

1. Audit Committee Update issue 41 – the local audit backstop

A guide for audit committee members at English local authorities to explain the local audit backstop arrangements. It covers key terms, dates, roles and responsibilities and how audit committee members can help.

Link: [Audit Committee Update issue 41 – the local audit backstop](#)

2. CIPFA Consultation on updated guidance on the annual review and preparation of an annual governance statement

CIPFA has launched a consultation on its guidance on the annual review and preparation of the annual governance statements (AGS).

The consultation is on a proposed Addendum to the current AGS guidance within Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (Governance Framework) (CIPFA and Solace, 2018). The purpose of the Addendum is to reflect the changes affecting governance in local government bodies since 2016, encourage robust reviews of governance arrangements and improve accountability to stakeholders, including local communities.

The consultation is applicable to all local government bodies that undertake an annual review and publish an AGS in accordance with the appropriate national regulations and the 2016 Framework. It is also relevant to external auditors and the stakeholders of local authorities.

Link: [Consultation on updated guidance on the annual review](#)

National publications and technical updates

CIPFA

3. CIPFA Better Reporting Group consultation

CIPFA's Better Reporting Group (BRG) has been set up to identify and address challenges in local authority financial reporting either through proposing amendments to the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting for the United Kingdom (the Code) or assisting to develop practical guidance to enhance its application.

Link: [Better Reporting Group](#)

4. CIPFA Advisory Note: Statement of Responsibilities

CIPFA has published an advisory note on the Chief Finance Officer's (CFO's) Statement of Responsibilities which provides guidance on informing the 'true and fair' assessment of the accounts at the reporting date. The advisory note applies to all local government bodies in the UK.

The note draws from lessons learnt from recent examples and a roundtable with CFO's and reinforces good practice principles that local government bodies in the UK should adopt. The CIPFA Practice Oversight Panel expects all local government bodies to be aware of the lessons learnt and therefore auditors may wish to ensure the bodies they audit are aware of this latest guidance.

Link: [Statement of Responsibilities](#)

National publications and technical updates

MHCLG

5. Code of Audit Practice 2024: Explanatory memorandum

The draft Code of Audit Practice 2024 has been developed by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) and laid in Parliament on his behalf by the government. The government has produced this accompanying explanatory memorandum.

The changes in the Code are part of wider measures to address the significant backlog of unaudited local body accounts in England. This backlog affects non-NHS bodies within the Code’s remit including local authorities, National Park authorities, fire authorities, police and crime commissioners, waste authorities and transport authorities

Link: [Code of Audit Practice 2024: Explanatory memorandum](#)

6. MHCLG Addressing the local audit backlog in England: Non-compliance lists

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has published a list of local bodies that did not publish one or more audited accounts for financial years up to and including 2022 to 2023 by the statutory backstop date of 13 December 2024.

Link: [Addressing the local audit backlog in England: Non-compliance lists - GOV.UK](#)

National publications and technical updates

MHCLG

5. Code of Audit Practice 2024: Explanatory memorandum

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Link: [Addressing the local audit backlog in England: Non-compliance lists - GOV.UK](#)

National publications and technical updates

MHCLG

7. Local audit reform: a strategy for overhauling the local audit system in England

Extracts from Press Release on 9 April 2025:

Road to recovery outlined in new commitments for local audit reform to streamline and fix the fragmented and broken system

New reforms to repair the 'broken' local audit system will boost taxpayers' confidence in council spending and streamline the sector so it's fit-for-purpose, legal and decent.

Today, 16 commitments have been set out to achieve this, including simplifying financial reporting requirements and increasing capacity to avoid reliance on a small number of auditors.

The reforms will be backed by up to £49 million of support to help councils clear their backlogs and cover the additional cost of restoring audit assurance. Releasing funds to councils will be reliant on compliance with statutory backstops and linked to the publication of audited accounts and audit fees being paid.

In addition, a further £15m of grant was paid to local bodies in March 2025 as part of an existing package to help meet the wider costs of meeting audit requirements and fees.

The 16 new measures follow an [open consultation](#) on the local audit strategy, which attracted hundreds of responses.

The measures build on an existing commitment to set up the Local Audit Office as an independent and unified body, which will stop fragmentation in the system by co-ordinating functions spread across different organisations including the Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd, the National Audit Office and the Financial Reporting Council.

These reforms will be crucial to fixing the foundations and bringing long-term stability to local government as committed in the Plan for Change.

Link: [Overhaul of local audit will restore trust in broken system - GOV.UK](#)

National publications and technical updates

NAO

8. NAO overview: The impact of fraud and error on public funds 2023-24

This report provides an introduction to the impact of fraud and error on public funds, how public bodies can tackle fraud and error, and the NAO's examination of the topic. It is intended to support the Committee of Public Accounts, and Members across the House in their examination of how government manages fraud and error and some of the things it could do to improve.

This overview summarises the key information and insights from our work. It includes:

- what we mean by fraud and error, and how government is structured to tackle it
- the fraud and error risk management cycle
- fraud and error against government, including in benefits, taxes and COVID-19 fraud
- emerging threats and opportunities
- what to look out for when thinking about fraud and error.

Link: [The impact of fraud and error on public funds 2023-24](#)

9. NAO report: Whole of Government Accounts 2022-23

The Whole of Government Accounts consolidates the accounts of over 10,000 public sector bodies, including central and local government and public corporations such as the Bank of England, to provide the most complete and accurate picture of the UK's public finances.

Link: [Whole of Government Accounts 2022-23](#)

National publications and technical updates

NAO

10. NAO insight: Financial management in government: monitoring and forecasting

Good financial management is critical in the public sector. For public services to be efficient and productive, the effective management of public finances is essential. This guide outlines how finance leaders across government can monitor budgets and their performance and ensure forecasting is effective. It focuses on three principles:

- Promote a culture of accountability – leadership emphasises the importance of budget holders being accountable for monitoring financial performance and ensuring forecasts are accurate and realistic.
- Develop the right skills and capabilities – finance professionals possess the skills and capabilities to monitor effectively and forecast with precision and leverage these to elevate the quality of the organisation's decision-making.
- Make the best use of data and information – high-quality data and information is used to enable better monitoring and more accurate forecasting, helping decision-makers respond to events quickly and effectively.

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Link: [Financial management in government: monitoring and forecasting](#)

11. NAO insight: Government's approach to technology suppliers: addressing the challenges

This report examines government's overall approach to digital and technology suppliers. It sets out lessons for the centre of government and departments to learn from government's approach to digital procurement. The NAO focus on major procurement of technology to support business change, including the digital transformation of government and planning for technology of the future. The report examines:

- the scale of the challenge of undertaking digital procurement in a way that supports the modernisation of the public sector to make it more efficient and effective, and government's response to that challenge;
- how the centre of government can adopt a more strategic approach to how it works with digital and technology suppliers; and
- how departments can better understand and manage the complexities of digital procurement, including making full use of their digital expertise.

Link: [Government's approach to technology suppliers: addressing the challenges](#)

National publications and technical updates

NAO

12. NAO insight: Financial management in government: allocating resources

This guide outlines how finance leaders across government can allocate resources effectively when resources are scarce and trade-offs need to be made. It focuses on three principles:

- Using information intelligently an organisation should use trusted and objective information intelligently, so it can allocate resources to support strategic objectives.
- Prioritising effectively – finance leaders should support decision makers to make difficult decisions and trade-offs to generate good value-for-money outcomes based on agreed priorities.
- Building for the long term – decisions need to balance short-term pressures with long-term priorities and align with the strategic objectives of the organisation.

Link: [Financial management in government: allocating resources](#)

13. NAO report: Managing conflicts of interest: value for money

This report looks at the governance, systems and processes that public bodies have used to manage conflicts of interest. It aims to answer the following questions:

- Is central government guidance effective in supporting public bodies to manage conflicts of interest?
- Do public bodies have effective and proportionate governance, systems and controls over the management of conflicts of interest?
- Have public bodies done enough to set a culture where conflicts are managed properly?

Link: [Managing conflicts of interest: value for money](#)

National publications and technical updates

NAO

14. NAO Report: Good practice in annual reporting

The NAO has published its insight guide on Good practice in annual reporting which showcases real-world examples of good practice for annual reporting from organisations from the public sector who are leading the way. The examples are laid out in relevant sections of an annual report:

- Strategy
- Risk
- Operations
- Governance
- Measures of success
- Financial performance
- External factors

The list is not definitive but should provide ideas on content and format for all bodies in both the public and private sector as they plan their annual reporting for 2024-25. Note that Great Ormond Street Hospital annual report and accounts 2023-24 features for use of graphics to support narrative and demonstrate performance regarding net zero for estate-based emissions.

Link: [Good practice in annual reporting - NAO insight](#)

National publications and technical updates

NAO

15. NAO report: Local government financial sustainability

The NAO has published its report Local government financial sustainability. The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, (MHCLG) is responsible for the accountability framework for local government and distributes core funding to local authorities. It leads on oversight of financial risk in individual local authorities and the system overall while responsibility for the services local authorities deliver is spread across government departments.

This report focuses on MHCLG as the department responsible for the framework within which local authorities operate, and provides transparency over the current position of local government finances. By examining the current finance system and context for local government finances, the NAO aims to help inform MHCLG's consideration of future reforms.

The report considers:

- the context of local government finances in 2024;
- service and financial pressures; and
- the government's approach to local government financial sustainability.

The report concludes that funding for local government has increased in recent years, reversing the long-term downward trend of the previous decade. However, while real terms funding has grown by 4% between 2015-16 and 2023-24, it has not kept pace with population growth or the demand for services, the complexity of need, or the cost of delivering services to people most in need of support.

Proposed reforms of the local government finance system have been repeatedly delayed. Some services are showing the strain, and more local authorities are requesting financial support, some due to the increasing costs of delivering essential frontline services such as homelessness and social care. Despite short-term measures to address acute funding shortfalls, there has been insufficient action to address the systemic weaknesses in local government financial sustainability.

As the government turns its attention to local government reforms, it is essential that this is part of a whole-system, cross-government approach to ensure local authorities are financially sustainable and can continue to provide essential services. This approach needs to ensure effective local accountability for the service and financial performance of each local authority, including robust independent assurance.

Link: [Local government financial sustainability - NAO report](#)

National publications and technical updates

NAO

16. NAO Insight: Managing the commercial lifecycle

The NAO has published good practice guidance Managing the commercial lifecycle that has been updated in response to the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023. It reflects upon findings and recommendations drawn from 200 reports concerning over 300 commercial arrangements that have been published over the past 20 years.

The ‘commercial lifecycle’ means the entire process starting with the identification of a requirement that may be delivered by a supplier to government through to the selection and appointment process, contract management activity, and ending with contract termination or transition to alternative arrangements.

This is a revised and condensed edition of commercial good practice guidance that has been updated regularly since 2008. It remains essential reading for policy and commercial staff involved at all levels of public procurement and commercial activities – including senior leaders and non-executive board members of public authorities. The guidance is presented in ten sections, addressing both strategic and procedural considerations.

To support this guidance, the NAO also updated its guide on the Commercial Audit Framework, which highlights the key questions at each of the ten key stages of procurement. Whether it's the commercial strategy for public procurement, the publication of good-quality, relevant information on a timely basis, or deciding whether to extend the contract or re-procure.

Link: [Managing the commercial lifecycle - NAO insight](#)

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National publications and technical updates

Other

17. Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) News - Audit opinion data 2023/24

Extract from PSAA Press Release on 11 March 2025

Auditors have reported issuing **224** disclaimed or qualified opinions due to the backstop of 28 February 2025 for the 2023/24 audits of accounts covered by PSAA’s appointing person scheme.

There were **7** modified opinions that auditors have not attributed to the backstop, including **2** disclaimed opinions.

There are a further **48** opinions that remain outstanding. This includes **6** authorities where there is an exemption due to a material objection or legal matter or due to VFM arrangements work.

Audit Opinion for 2023/24	Number	Percentage
Unmodified	174	37.9%
Unmodified with additional disclosures*	6	1.3%
Disclaimed (backstop)	216	47.1%
Qualified (backstop)*	8	1.7%
Disclaimed (non-backstop)	2	0.4%
Qualified (non-backstop)*	5	1.1%
Not yet delivered	48	10.5%
Total	459	100%

Link: [Press release: Local government audit opinion data - PSAA](#)

National publications and technical updates

Other

18. ICAEW and LGPS Scheme Advisory Board launch LGPS informer

This document explains:

- how the Local Government Pension Scheme works in practice;
- key information flows between employing bodies, pension funds and actuaries;
- the content and purpose of annual accounting reports and triennial valuations;
- key accounting requirements for employing bodies; and
- the role of external auditors.

Link: [ICAEW and LGPS Scheme Advisory Board launch LGPS informer](#)

19. Major Local Audits Reports

The FRC publish an annual report on the inspection findings of Audit Quality Reviews of major local audits in England, which includes large health and local government bodies. The audit of a relevant authority becomes a major local audit if it:

- has total income or expenditure of at least £500 million; or
- administers a local government pension scheme with at least 20,000 members or assets over £1,000 million.

In the 2023/24 inspection cycle, the FRC inspected six NHS and two local government audits. The results of these inspections are included in this report. The FRC acknowledge the unprecedented circumstances facing the local audit sector and have updated their regulatory approach to the monitoring of audit quality to support the reset measures and recovery period.

Link: [Major Local Audits Reports](#)

National publications and technical updates

Other

20. Forvis Mazars - Annual Local Government Risk Report 2025/26

The report deep dives into the known and emerging risks for Local Authorities in 2025/26, as well as what they should include in their internal audit plans.

Link: [Annual Local Government Risk Report for 2025/26](#)

21. Forvis Mazars – Public Sector in Focus Report

Forvis Mazars have issued a report for the public and social sector, Public sector in focus: Charting the road ahead. With over 390 responses from across the UK public and social sector, the study reveals the top priorities and risks shaping the future of the sector.

Link: [Public sector in focus: Charting the road ahead - Forvis Mazars - United Kingdom](#)

National publications and technical updates

Latest update, 5 June 2025

22. NAO: Publication of Local Audit Reset and Recovery Implementation Guidance (LARRIG) 06

Special considerations for rebuilding assurance for specified balances following backstop-related disclaimed audit opinion

This LARRIG, endorsed by the FRC, sets out guidance to auditors where the auditor's opinion on the prior year financial statements has been disclaimed because of backstop arrangements included in the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2024. Its purpose is to assist auditors in the process of rebuilding assurance for specific classes of transactions, account balances and disclosures which warrant special consideration beyond the general principles set out in LARRIG 05.

This guidance is critical where authorities have been subject to a disclaimed opinion in one or more previous years.

Link: [Guidance and information for auditors - National Audit Office \(NAO\)](#)

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Report of the Chief Audit and Control Officer

Internal Audit Progress Report

1. Purpose of Report

To inform the Committee of the recent work completed by Internal Audit.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to NOTE the report.

3. Detail

Under the Council's Constitution and as part of the overall corporate governance arrangements, this Committee is responsible for monitoring the performance of Internal Audit. A summary of the reports issued and progress against the agreed Internal Audit Plan is included at **Appendix 1**. A summary narrative of the work completed by Internal Audit since the previous report to this Committee is also included.

Internal Audit has also reviewed progress made by management in implementing agreed actions within six months of the completion of the respective audits. Details of this follow-up work are included at **Appendix 2**. Where agreed actions to address significant internal control weaknesses have not been implemented this may have implications for the Council. A key role of the Committee is to review the outcome of audit work and oversee the prompt implementation of agreed actions to help ensure that risks are adequately managed.

Further progress reports will be submitted to each future meeting of this Committee. A final report detailing the overall performance of Internal Audit for 2024/25 is presented to this Committee alongside this report.

4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Assistant Director Finance Services were as follows:

The work of Internal Audit continues to provide crucial and independent assurance to management and Members over the key aspects of the Council's governance, risk management and internal control arrangements. The cost of Internal Audit is included within the established Finance Services budgets.

5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

This report already sets out the legal framework for Internal Audit to provide a summary of Internal Audit work. It addresses the statutory obligations for local audit processes. The Local Government Act 1972 and subsequent legislation sets out a duty for the Council to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs. This report also complies with the requirements of the following:

- Local Government Act 1972
- Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015
- CIPFA/IIA: Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS)
- CIPFA/IIA: Local Government Application Note for the UK PSIAS 33.

The provision of an Internal Audit service is integral to financial management at the Council and assists in the discharge of its duties.

6. Human Resources Implications

Not applicable.

7. Union Comments

Not applicable.

8. Climate Change Implications

No climate change implications have been identified in relation to this report.

9. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

As there is no change to policy an equality impact assessment is not required.

11. Background Papers

Nil.

Appendix 1

Internal Audit Reports

The following table summarises the audit assignments and similar work completed by Internal Audit since the last meeting of this Committee.

Audit Title	Report Issued	Assurance Opinion	Actions (High Priority)	Actions (Other)
Financial Appraisals – Capital Works (x7)	29/04/25	Advisory Report Only		
Financial Appraisal – Prospective Tenants (x2)	29/04/25	Advisory Report Only		
Human Resources	09/05/25	Substantial	-	-
Council Tax	16/05/25	Substantial	-	-
Leisure Management System	16/05/25	Substantial	-	-
Financial Appraisals – UKSPF Grants (x20)	10/06/25	Advisory Report Only		
Key Reconciliations	19/06/25	Substantial	0	1
Commercial Property Management	At the time of writing, it is anticipated that these audits will be completed (or substantially completed) by the date of this meeting. A verbal update on any significant matters arising will be provided by the Chief Audit and Control Officer at this meeting.			
Homelessness				
Housing Repairs (Reactive)				

Remaining Internal Audit Plan 2025/26

Audit Title	Progress
Climate Change	In Progress
Licensing	In Progress
Waste Management (Garden Waste)	In Progress
Tenant Engagement	In progress
Anti-Social Behaviour	Not yet commenced
Bank Reconciliation System	Not yet commenced
Benefits	Not yet commenced
Bramcote Leisure Centre - Governance Review	Not yet commenced
Business Rates (NNDR)	Not yet commenced
Capital Works	Not yet commenced
Committee Management System	Not yet commenced
Corporate Governance	Not yet commenced
Creditors and Purchasing	Not yet commenced
Fire and Asbestos Risk Management	Not yet commenced
Hickings Lane Pavilion	Not yet commenced
Housing Disrepair	Not yet commenced
Housing Lettings	Not yet commenced
Human Resources	Not yet commenced

Audit Title	Progress
Information Management	Not yet commenced
Kimberley Depot - Compliance	Not yet commenced
Major Projects Dashboard	Not yet commenced
Payroll	Not yet commenced
Rents	Not yet commenced
Surveillance	Not yet commenced
Treasury Management	Not yet commenced

Completed Audits

A report is prepared for each audit assignment and issued to the relevant senior management at the conclusion of a review that will:

- include an overall opinion on the effectiveness of the policies, procedures and other systems of control implemented by management in mitigation of the specific identified key risks relating to the area under audit. This opinion is categorised as either 'Substantial', 'Reasonable', 'Limited' or 'Little' assurance;
- identify inadequately addressed risks and ineffective control processes;
- detail the actions agreed with management and the timescales for completing those actions; and
- identify issues of good practice.

Recommendations made by Internal Audit are prioritised, with the agreed actions being categorised accordingly as follows:

- High Priority – Action considered necessary to avoid unmitigated exposure to significant risks
- Medium Priority – Action considered necessary to avoid unmitigated exposure to other key risks
- Best Practice – Action recommended in order to improve existing procedures and other systems of internal control

The following audit reports have been issued with key findings as follows:

1. Financial Appraisals

Advisory Reports Only

Internal Audit is frequently requested to provide financial appraisals of companies, non-incorporated businesses and other organisations as part of the Council's 'due diligence' processes prior to the commencement of any commercial or similar relationship with the organisation in question. For each appraisal, Internal Audit provides a confidential report which summarises the

results of a review of information provided by the organisation, information provided by third-party organisations (such as credit-referencing agencies and the National Anti-Fraud Network) and any other publicly available information.

2. Human Resources**Assurance Opinion – Substantial**

The primary purpose of the audit was to provide assurance over the effectiveness of the policies, procedures and other systems of control implemented by management in mitigation of the following specific identified key risks:

- Retention of business-critical employees may not be appropriately prioritised.
- Processes for new starters may not be managed in an appropriate and effective manner.
- Appropriate initiatives may not be in place to provide for employee wellbeing.

Internal Audit was pleased to report that no significant issues were identified in the course of this review, with no formal recommendations being deemed necessary.

3. Council Tax**Assurance Opinion – Substantial**

The primary purpose of the audit was to provide assurance over the effectiveness of the policies, procedures and other systems of control implemented by management in mitigation of the following specific identified key risks:

- Council Tax may not be correctly calculated and/or bills may not be accurately and efficiently raised and distributed.
- Billed amounts may not be collected in an efficient manner and/or may not be accounted for correctly.
- Outstanding debts may not be managed efficiently and effectively.
- Applied reliefs and discounts to accounts may not be valid and/or managed efficiently.
- Refunds and write-offs may not be valid and may not be appropriately authorised.
- Robust arrangements for detecting and managing fraud risk may not be in place.

Internal Audit was pleased to report that no significant issues were identified in the course of this review, with no formal recommendations being deemed necessary.

4. Leisure Management**Assurance Opinion – Substantial**

The primary purpose of the audit was to provide assurance over the effectiveness of the policies, procedures and other systems of control implemented by management in mitigation of the following specific identified key risks:

- Memberships may not be managed in an efficient and effective manner.
- Facilities Bookings may not be managed in an efficient and effective manner.
- Income may not be collected and/or accounted for in an efficient and effective manner.

Internal Audit was pleased to report that no significant issues were identified in the course of this review, with no formal recommendations being deemed necessary.

5. Key Reconciliations**Assurance Opinion – Substantial**

The primary purpose of the audit was to provide assurance over the effectiveness of the policies, procedures and other systems of control implemented by management in mitigation of the following specific identified key risk:

- The Key Reconciliation processes may not be completed in a timely and accurate manner.

Internal Audit was pleased to report that no significant issues were identified in the course of this review, with a single recommendation ('best practice') relating to the documentation of the review of reconciliations being proposed to and agreed with management.

Current Audit Performance

Progress on the Internal Audit Plan for 2025/26 is considered to be satisfactory, taking into account a significantly higher than usual number of Financial Appraisals undertaken during April and June.

A final report on the performance of the Internal Audit Service for 2024/25 is presented to this Committee alongside this report.

Appendix 2

Internal Audit Follow-Up

Internal Audit has undertaken a review of progress made by management in implementing agreed actions within six months of the completion of the audit. The table below provides a summary of the progress made with high and medium priority agreed actions for such internal audit reports issued. Those audits where all actions have previously been reported as completed have been excluded from this list.

Audit Title	Report Issued	Original Assurance Opinion	Agreed Actions	Progress
Housing Delivery Plan	28/08/24	Reasonable	2	1 Outstanding
Benefits	03/12/24	Substantial	2	Complete
Payroll	09/12/24	Substantial	1	Complete

Further details of progress being made with high and medium priority agreed actions that have not yet been fully implemented are included below along with comments from management reflecting any updates on progress. Evidence of implementation will not be routinely sought for all actions as part of this monitoring process. Instead, a risk-based approach will be applied to conducting further follow-up work. Actions marked as 'superseded' refer to occasions where either 1) developments within the relevant Council department, or the environment within which the department operates, have occurred since the date of the original audit report and the action is no longer relevant or considered a priority in light of the consequent change to the Council's risk profile; or, 2) an alternative action has been implemented to mitigate the risk identified.

Where the agreed actions to address significant internal control weaknesses have not been implemented this may have implications for the Council. A key role of the Committee is to review the outcome of audit work and oversee the prompt implementation of agreed actions to help ensure that risks are adequately managed.

Additional Follow-Up – Stores Stocktake

Members may recall that at the previous meeting of this Committee the high-priority agreed action relating to the stocktake of the stores at Kimberley Depot was highlighted for accelerated follow-up. As at the date of submission of this report, Internal Audit is aware that a full stocktake has now been performed, however full audit follow-up procedures have not yet been completed. A verbal update will be provided at this meeting.

Outstanding Actions

1. Housing Delivery Plan	August 2024, Reasonable, Actions – 2
<div data-bbox="193 443 1444 801"><p data-bbox="193 456 715 499">1.1 Policy Refresh and Update</p><p data-bbox="193 510 628 548"><u>Agreed Action (Medium Priority)</u></p><p data-bbox="193 560 1444 667">A refreshed and updated Housing Delivery Plan will be developed and presented to Members for review and approval, with some specific focus on the development of policy / procedural provision for areas not currently specifically addressed.</p><p data-bbox="193 678 512 716"><u>Managers Responsible</u></p><div data-bbox="193 712 1444 784"><div data-bbox="193 712 817 784">Head of Asset Management and Development Interim Housing Delivery Manager</div><div data-bbox="991 712 1444 750">Target Date: 31 December 2024</div></div></div>	
<div data-bbox="193 801 1444 1088"><p data-bbox="193 813 683 851"><u>Update from the Change Manager</u></p><p data-bbox="193 855 1444 1025">Colleagues within Asset Management and Development are currently refreshing the Asset Management Strategy and Housing Delivery Plan. The documents will outline how we will invest wisely, build intelligently and spot opportunities to meet our housing needs going forward. The Strategy (condensed version) and the Plan have been dispatched ready for review at Policy Overview Working Group on the 3 July.</p><p data-bbox="193 1030 778 1068">Revised Target Date: 30 September 2025</p></div>	

Report of the Chief Audit and Control Officer

Internal Audit Review 2024/25

1. **Purpose of Report**

To inform the Committee of the work of Internal Audit during 2024/25 and to provide an annual Internal Audit Assurance Opinion that can be used by the Council to inform its Annual Governance Statement.

2. **Recommendation**

The Committee is asked to NOTE the Chief Audit and Control Officer's Annual Assurance Opinion and the work of Internal Audit in 2024/25.

3. **Detail**

Under the Constitution and as part of the overall governance arrangements, this Committee is responsible for monitoring the performance of Internal Audit.

In accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, developed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA), the Chief Audit and Control Officer must deliver an Annual Internal Audit Opinion and report that can be used by the Council to inform its Annual Governance Statement. The Internal Audit Annual Review Report for 2024/25 is included in the **Appendix**.

The Council has to conduct, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. This review is informed by the work of senior management who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Internal Audit Review Report and comments from external auditors and other inspectorates.

The system of internal control has been reviewed. On the basis of Internal Audit work completed, it is the opinion of the Chief Audit and Control Officer that the current internal control environment is satisfactory such as to maintain the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control. Further context relating to this assurance opinion, including details of any caveats and limitations in scope, are provided in the appendix.

Overall, 72% of the planned audits were complete or awaiting finalisation as at the year-end, below the 90% target. Audit completion to 31 March 2025 was negatively impacted by a combination of the lag of overdue audits from 2023/24 impacting on completion in the first quarter of 2024/25 and a period of sickness within the team in the fourth quarter. As at the date of submission of this report completion is approaching 100% with satisfactory progress being made on the Internal Audit Plan for 2025/26.

4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Assistant Director Finance Services were as follows:

The work of the Internal Audit team continues to provide crucial and independent assurance to management and Members over the key aspects of the Council's governance, risk management and internal control arrangements. The cost of Internal Audit is included within the established Finance Services budgets.

5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

This report already sets out the legal framework for Internal Audit to provide a summary of Internal Audit work. It addresses the statutory obligations for local audit processes. The Local Government Act 1972 and subsequent legislation sets out a duty for the Council to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs. This report also complies with the requirements of the following:

- Local Government Act 1972
- Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015
- CIPFA/IIA: Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS)
- CIPFA/IIA: Local Government Application Note for the UK PSIAS 33.

The provision of an Internal Audit service is integral to financial management at the Council and assists in the discharge of its duties.

6. Human Resources Implications

Not applicable.

7. Union Comments

Not applicable.

8. Climate Change Implications

There are no climate change implications relating to this report.

9. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

As this is a not a change to policy or a new policy an equality impact assessment is not required.

11. Background Papers

Nil.

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Appendix

INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REVIEW REPORT 2024/25**1. INTRODUCTION**

This report provides a summary of Internal Audit activities for 2024/25.

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Council to undertake an adequate and effective internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. The United Kingdom Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (the 'Standards') and the CIPFA Local Government Application Note constitute proper practices so as to satisfy the requirements for larger relevant bodies as set out in the Regulations.

The Standards requires the Chief Audit and Control Officer, as the Council's designated 'chief audit executive', to deliver an annual internal audit opinion and report that can be used by the Council to inform its governance statement. The opinion must conclude on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control. The report must incorporate:

- an opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's governance, risk and control framework – i.e. the control environment;
- a summary of the audit work from which the opinion is derived (including reliance placed on work by other assurance providers); and
- a statement on conformance with the Standards and the results of the quality assurance and improvement programme.

The annual opinion should also be guided by the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE OPINION

The Council has to conduct, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. This review is informed by the work of senior management who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, this Internal Audit Review Report and from comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

A review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit helps to ensure that the opinion in this report may be relied upon as a key source of evidence in the Annual Governance Statement. The latest review found Internal Audit to be sufficiently compliant with the requirements of the Standards to ensure that the opinion given can be relied upon for assurance purposes.

There are no causes of concern with regard to the independence and objectivity of Internal Audit. Whilst reporting on Internal Audit matters directly to the Deputy Chief Executive (fulfilling the duties of Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972), the Chief Audit and Control Officer also has:

- free and unrestricted access to the General Management Team.
- free and unrestricted access to the Governance, Audit and Standards Committee (the 'Committee') and attends all of its meetings
- the right to meet with the Chair of the Committee and/or other relevant Members to discuss any matters or concerns that have arisen from Internal Audit work.

3. AUDIT OPINION ON THE OVERALL ADEQUACY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COUNCIL'S INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

The system of internal control has been reviewed.

On the basis of Internal Audit work completed, it is my opinion, as the Chief Audit and Control Officer, that the current internal control environment is satisfactory such as to maintain the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control.

The framework for governance is as set out in the Annual Governance Statement and, in my view, is an accurate description of the governance arrangements. In relation to risk management, I have oversight of the risk management process and conclude that a range of significant risks for the Council have been identified and are being managed.

In terms of the audit assignments completed, services were found to be generally operating with an appropriate level of internal controls. Where weaknesses and exceptions were highlighted by Internal Audit work, any matters were discussed with management and recommendations made accordingly. Where improvement actions were agreed to address these matters, progress is being made for their implementation. Where this should not be the case, any outstanding significant recommendation is reported to this Committee as part of the regular progress reports.

The opinion has been arrived at with due regards to the following:

- The level of coverage provided by Internal Audit was considered to be adequate to enable this opinion to be delivered.
- Work has been planned and performed so as to obtain sufficient information and explanation considered necessary to provide evidence to give reasonable assurance that the Council's control environment is operating effectively.

- The independence and objectivity of Internal Audit has not been impaired in fact or appearance.
- Insight gained from interaction with senior management and this Committee.
- No adverse implications for the Annual Governance Statement have been identified from work undertaken by Internal Audit.
- The Internal Audit Plan 2024/25, as approved by this Committee on 20 May 2024, was informed by the Chief Audit and Control Officer's own assessment of risk and materiality, following consultation with senior management, to ensure it was aligned to the Council's corporate objectives and key strategic risks.
- The following table summarises the outcomes of audit assignments completed during and/or relating to the financial year 2024/25, including those audits completed from the previous year's plan that were finalised in the year:

Audit Title	Report Issued	Assurance Opinion	Actions (High Priority)	Actions (Other)
Local Elections (Accounts)	24/04/2024	Reasonable	-	1
Rents (2023/24)	07/05/2024	Substantial	-	2
Chilwell Olympia	08/05/2024	Substantial	-	-
Housing Repairs (Compliance)	10/05/2024	Reasonable	-	3
Tenancy Management	17/06/2024	Reasonable	-	3
Council Tax	02/07/2024	Substantial	-	1
Key Reconciliations	01/08/2024	Substantial	-	2
Car Loans and Leases	22/08/2024	Reasonable	-	5
Disabled Facilities Grants	23/09/2024	Substantial	-	-
Treasury Management	24/10/2024	Substantial	-	-
Benefits	03/12/2024	Substantial	-	2
Payroll	09/12/2024	Substantial	-	1
Sanctuary Scheme	09/12/2024	Substantial	-	-
Damp and Mould	27/01/2025	Reasonable	1	1
Sundry Debtors	31/01/2025	Substantial	-	-
Financial Inclusion	24/02/2025	Substantial	-	1
Allotments	05/03/2025	Limited	2	1
Business Rates (NNDR)	05/03/2025	Substantial	-	-
Creditors and Purchasing	03/04/2025	Substantial	-	-
Stores	08/04/2025	Limited	3	-
Waste Management (Recycling)	08/04/2025	Substantial	-	1
Rents	08/05/2025	Substantial	-	1
Human Resources	09/05/2025	Substantial	-	-
Leisure Management System	16/05/2025	Substantial	-	-

4. QUALIFICATIONS

The opinions expressed in this report have been based upon the work carried out by Internal Audit in 2024/25 (and subsequently beyond year-end) and other assurance reports received, including those from the external auditors.

In the context of the Standards, 'opinion' means that Internal Audit will have done sufficient, evidenced work to form a supportable conclusion about the activity being examined. Internal Audit will word its opinion appropriately if it cannot give reasonable assurance (e.g. because of limitations to the scope and/or adverse findings arising from its work).

In giving an opinion, it should be noted that assurance can never be absolute. The most that Internal Audit can provide to the Council is a reasonable assurance that there are no major weaknesses in risk management, governance and control processes. The matters raised in this report are only those which came to the attention of Internal Audit during the course of its work and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist, or of all the improvements that may be required.

The overall opinion is therefore provided with the following caveats:

- The opinion does not imply that Internal Audit has reviewed all the Council's risks, controls and governance arrangements. The opinion is substantially derived from the conduct of risk-based audit assignment work and, as such, it is only one component that is taken into account when producing the Annual Governance Statement.
- No system of control can provide absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss, nor can Internal Audit give absolute assurance.
- Full implementation of all agreed actions is essential if the benefits of the control improvements detailed in each audit report are to be realised.

5. ISSUES RELEVANT TO THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

This Committee considered significant governance issues as part of the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 that was approved on 19 May 2025.

The Chief Audit and Control Officer has reviewed the draft Annual Governance Statement. The significant governance issues raised in the statement were considered to be appropriate. It was also found that the issues carried forward from the previous year had been addressed or were ongoing items that are in the process of being addressed.

With regard to the audits completed during the year, no actions were classed as being critical where action was considered imperative to ensure that the Council was not exposed to high risks. Where a limited assurance opinion was issued, the outstanding actions from these audits are not thought to be significant to the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement.

6. SUMMARY OF INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITY

6.1 Performance Overview

Overall, 72% of the planned audits were complete or awaiting finalisation as at the year-end, below the 90% target. Completion to 31 March 2025 was negatively impacted by a combination of the lag of overdue audits from 2023/24 impacting on completion in the first quarter of 2024/25 and a period of sickness within the team in the fourth quarter. As at the date of submission of this report completion is approaching 100% with satisfactory progress being made on the Internal Audit Plan for 2025/26.

During the period, 24 audit reports were issued. The reports included 31 recommendations, of which 6 were considered to be high priority. No recommendation was considered to be so 'critical' as to be exposing the Council to intolerably high risks.

A limited assurance opinion was issued in respect of the audit of Allotments and Stores. This opinion is given where Internal Audit considered that controls within the respective systems provided only limited assurance that risks material to the achievement of the system's objectives are adequately managed.

6.2 Internal Audit Resources

The Chief Audit and Control Officer is pleased to report that, some sickness leave aside, no vacancy periods have arisen during the financial year.

6.3 Special Investigations

Internal Audit completed work on the following special investigations:

- A series of reviews of the financial background of applications to the 'Kimberley Means Business' Programme and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund where the application was for a direct grant from the fund.
- Assessments of the financial viability of potential tenants, suppliers and service providers applying to be considered for a number of tendered contracts and of potential tenants for the Council's commercial premises.
- Review of returns to Central Government grant-awarding bodies, providing assurance over the level of compliance with conditions attached to the relevant grant(s).

6.4 Corporate Counter Fraud Activity and National Fraud Initiative (NFI)

Internal Audit continues to take a prominent role in leading and co-ordinating counter fraud activities, committing approximately 40 days to counter fraud activity in 2024/25, which included work to co-ordinate and complete elements of the NFI data matching exercise.

An annual report on counter fraud activity will be presented to this Committee in September 2025 to provide Members with details of activity in 2024/25. The report will also include the outcome of a fraud risk assessment exercise, in conjunction with senior management, to inform the Fraud and Corruption Risk Register.

7. **QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME**

In order to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of internal control required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, it is necessary to complete a review of the effectiveness of its internal audit.

The latest review was completed as a self-assessment against 'proper practice' consisting of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and the Local Government Application Note. The effectiveness of Internal Audit is not solely judged against the extent of compliance with the Standards since the reviews are about effectiveness and not process. In addition to the self-assessment checklist, other aspects provide evidence to support the review including reports on the results of completed audit assignments and any significant findings; reports setting out the Internal Audit Plan for the forthcoming year; and an annual report on the performance of Internal Audit.

Members may recall that, in addition, and as required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, the Internal Audit Service was in March 2023 subject to an External Quality Assessment (EQA) by a qualified, independent assessor from outside of the organisation. The review concluded that the Internal Audit Service at Broxtowe 'generally conforms' with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (the highest level of opinion available), with the service considered to be 'established' in two of the primary assessment categories and 'excelling' in the third.

Report of the Chief Audit and Control Officer

Major Projects Governance Dashboard
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1. Purpose of Report

To provide the Committee with an update to the 'Governance Dashboard' relating to the Council's major projects.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to NOTE the report.

3. Detail

The Council currently has four major projects in progress: the Housing Delivery Plan, Stapleford Towns Fund, 'Kimberley Means Business' programme and the construction of the new Bramcote Leisure Centre. As part of Internal Audit's role in providing independent assurance over the governance arrangements in place at the Council, an annual 'Governance Dashboard' report relating to these projects is provided to this Committee.

The first part of this report (**Appendix 1**) provides an update on recent work performed by Internal Audit regarding the four projects. The second part of this report (**Appendix 2**) comprises the checklist, completed by managers involved in the projects, detailing the governance arrangements in place for each project.

Over the lifetime of these projects, Internal Audit also carries out scheduled audits of each project as part of the Annual Audit Plan. The findings, and any recommendations, arising from these scheduled audits, are reported to this Committee as part of the regular Internal Audit Progress Reports presented at each meeting.

Internal Audit is pleased to report that no issues have been noted with the governance arrangements for the four projects currently in progress.

4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Assistant Director Finance Services were as follows:

Under the Council's Constitution, this Committee is responsible for overseeing the maintenance of the Council's internal control environment and for monitoring and making recommendations regarding the Council's corporate governance arrangements. The importance of good governance cannot be overstated in the successful management of these major projects which are key to the delivery and sustainability of the Council's services to its communities. Whilst there are no direct financial implications resulting from this report, a strong governance, risk management and internal control framework will support sound decision

making and complement the financial and performance management arrangements in place.

5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

Whilst there are no direct legal implications arising from this report, the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 require specifically that a relevant body must 'undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, considering public sector internal auditing standards or guidance'. If sound governance measures are not put in place, then this will increase the risk of a legal challenge.

6. Human Resources Implications

The comments from the Human Resources Manager were as follows:

Not applicable.

7. Union Comments

The Union comments were as follows:

Not applicable.

8. Climate Change Implications

The climate change implications are contained within the report.

9. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

As there is no change to policy an equality impact assessment is not required.

11. Background Papers

Nil.

Appendix 1

Governance Dashboard – Internal AuditHousing Delivery Plan

A scheduled audit of the Housing Delivery Plan was completed as part of the Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24. The findings and recommendations arising from the audit were reported to this Committee as part of the regular Internal Audit Progress Report in September 2024.

The audit opinion was that of a 'reasonable' level of assurance with no significant issues identified in the course of the review. Three recommendations relating to the refresh and update of the Housing Delivery Plan, financial appraisal of development proposals and file management were proposed by Internal Audit and agreed with management.

Since the completion of the above-detailed scheduled audit, Internal Audit has continued to monitor the progress of the project. No issues with the governance arrangements for the Housing Delivery Plan have been noted during this time.

Stapleford Towns Fund

A scheduled audit of the Stapleford Towns Fund was completed as part of the Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23. The findings and recommendations arising from the audit were reported to this Committee as part of the regular Internal Audit Progress Report in March 2023.

The audit opinion was that of a 'substantial' (the highest) level of assurance. As no significant issues were noted during the course of the audit, no specific recommendations to address deficiencies in project governance arrangements were made.

Since the completion of the above-detailed scheduled audit, Internal Audit has continued to monitor the progress of the project. No issues with the governance arrangements for the Stapleford Towns Fund have been noted during this time.

'Kimberley Means Business'

A scheduled audit of the 'Kimberley Means Business' Programme was completed as part of the Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24. The findings and recommendations arising from the audit were reported to this Committee as part of the regular Internal Audit Progress Report in September 2024.

The audit opinion was that of a 'reasonable' level of assurance with no significant issues identified in the course of the review. Two recommendations relating to the communication of procurement requirements and the monitoring of procurement compliance were proposed by Internal Audit and agreed with management.

Since the completion of the above-detailed scheduled audit, Internal Audit has continued to monitor the progress of the project. No issues with the governance

arrangements for the 'Kimberley Means Business' Programme have been noted during this time.

Bramcote Leisure Centre

An audit of the governance arrangements for the Bramcote Leisure Centre Project is included within the Internal Audit Plan for 2025/26. This audit has not yet commenced and is scheduled for Autumn 2025. Internal Audit has, however, continued to monitor the progress of the project through review of relevant Cabinet reports, management reports and discussions with the project managers.

No significant issues have arisen during this time. The results of the scheduled audit will be reported to this Committee at the meeting immediately following completion.

Appendix 2

GOVERNANCE DASHHOARD – COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

The following table comprises the responses of the Project Sponsors and other relevant senior managers to the Compliance Checklist devised to provide an overview of the governance arrangements in place for each of the Council's four major projects.

Major Project:	Housing Delivery Plan	Stapleford Towns Fund	Kimberley Levelling Up Fund	Bramcote Leisure Centre
Project Board:	Cabinet	Stapleford Towns Fund has an Executive Board (51% of which, including the Chair, must be non-public sector). The Project Delivery Board sits underneath the Executive Board to drive delivery.	Strategic Board instituted, Chaired by the Chief Executive, with no more than 17 members. Broxtowe Borough Council has a majority on the Board. There is a Financial Control and Monitoring Group Chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive to ensure due diligence.	Cabinet, supported by the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive.
Officer Working Group or other Stakeholder Group:	Housing Delivery Group	All the projects are supported by a cross-departmental officer working group. Some projects also have a steering group; some have stakeholder consultation as a process. The grants programme had an independent advisory panel.	Each of the three projects has a working group that reports to both the Finance Control and Monitoring ('FCM') Group and, ultimately, the Strategic Board. These groups consist of stakeholders with officers as appropriate.	Deputy Chief Executive lead, supported by the Assistant Director Finance Services and Leisure Officer from Broxtowe Borough Council. An external firm and management from Liberty Leisure Limited complete the group.

Major Project:	Housing Delivery Plan	Stapleford Towns Fund	Kimberley Levelling Up Fund	Bramcote Leisure Centre
Project Sponsor and/or Senior Responsible Owner:	Deputy Chief Executive	Chief Executive Deputy Chief Executive	Chief Executive Deputy Chief Executive Head of Economic Development & Regeneration	Deputy Chief Executive lead, supported by the Assistant Director Finance Services and Leisure Officer.
Project Manager:	Interim Housing Delivery Manager	Head of Economic Development & Regeneration Supporting: Regeneration Manager	Head of Economic Development & Regeneration Supporting: KMB Regeneration Manager	Leisure Officer
Business Case/Project Plan: Has the business plan been approved by a Committee(s)?	The Housing Delivery Plan (including the business plan) was approved by Housing Committee in June 2019. A reviewed plan is due to be presented to Cabinet September 2025.	Yes. The six Stapleford Towns Fund final business cases have been fully approved by Government and were previously agreed when the Town Investment Plan ('TIP') was endorsed by the Council.	The bids included comprehensive business project case information approved by government in the Levelling Up Fund ('LUF') bid. Any adjustments to these require both Government and Governance support.	Yes a business case for RIBA Stage 4 and out to tender was approved by Cabinet during 2024.

Major Project:	Housing Delivery Plan	Stapleford Towns Fund	Kimberley Levelling Up Fund	Bramcote Leisure Centre
Has the project vision, objectives, delivery strategy been defined?	Project vision, objectives and delivery/action plan identified in the Housing Delivery Plan.	Yes. For each project a draft project vision was agreed by the Board, then business cases for each potential project were developed and went through an external assurance process. Then project summary reports were provided to Government. The updated Local Assurance Framework provided detail on delivery, governance and performance monitoring.	Yes. Vision and Objectives for each of the three main projects and a delivery strategy were written as part of the LUF bid.	Yes, they were to deliver the project to RIBA Stage 4, planning and tender. These are currently taking place.
Is there a delivery/action plan?	A delivery/action plan was identified in the Housing Delivery Plan.	Yes. A timeline for delivery of the bid has been agreed. Final business cases for each project outlines individual timelines. The amended programmed has been agreed by Government (May 2024) through the Project Adjustment Request process. Detailed action plans have been developed and projects are running to these.	A timeline for delivery of the bid has been agreed, and amended via a Project Adjustment Request to government, in July 2024. Individual timelines will continue to need refining as they develop.	Within the report there were key milestones, supported by Finance Services as required.

Major Project:	Housing Delivery Plan	Stapleford Towns Fund	Kimberley Levelling Up Fund	Bramcote Leisure Centre
Have outcome targets been set and is performance regularly monitored?	Targets are set by the Housing Business Plan. Targets are identified and monitored through the Housing Delivery Group meetings, the Housing Capital Programme and Cabinet reports.	Yes. Outputs and outcomes targets have been set in each project's business case and performance monitoring is detailed in the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for each project. Spend is also identified as a target. Progress is submitted twice annually to the MHCLG.	Outputs and outcome targets have been set and performance monitoring is reviewed regularly, both internally and submitted twice annually to MHCLG. Spend is also a target.	Yes, project meetings take place every 2 weeks with the officer working group/project team. Reporting back to the Members with an update takes place each quarter approximately or whenever decision require making with regards any changes necessary to meet the Members expectations for the project.
Is the Business Case subject to regularly review and updated?	Yes, through the Housing Delivery Group and Cabinet reports.	Business cases are not now subject to review. Rather, the projects are being reviewed via risk assessment. 'Programme and Viability' is one of the key criteria for projects that are now in the process of being delivered.	Business cases are not now subject to review. Rather, the projects are being reviewed via risk assessment. 'Programme and Viability' is one of the key criteria for projects that are now in the process of being delivered.	As above. The Deputy Chief Executive, Assistant Director Finance Services and Leisure Officer also review and update the finance each month following stage payments.
Project Board: Has a project board been established?	Yes – the Housing Delivery Group	Yes. Executive Board established since 2022, when meeting monthly. Now meeting on a quarterly basis. Delivery Board also in place and meets on a six-weekly basis.	Yes. The Finance Control and Monitoring Group has also been established and is meetings. Terms of Reference exist for the Board, FCM Group and Business Grants Panel.	Yes, as above.

Major Project:	Housing Delivery Plan	Stapleford Towns Fund	Kimberley Levelling Up Fund	Bramcote Leisure Centre
What is its meeting frequency?	The Housing Delivery Group ('HDG') meets every 4 weeks.	The Executive Board meets quarterly; Delivery Board, six-weekly.	Strategic Board meets at least three times a year. So far it has met as recently as 30 April 2025. FCM has meets at least quarterly to coincide with government monitoring deadlines, but additional meetings held when necessary.	Every two weeks for officers and each quarter for Members.

Major Project:	Housing Delivery Plan	Stapleford Towns Fund	Kimberley Levelling Up Fund	Bramcote Leisure Centre
Who attends the meetings?	The Group is chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive, serviced by the Interim Housing Development Manager and their team. HDG comprises of officers from Housing, Finance Services, Planning, Legal Services and Estates.	Meetings are well attended and always quorate. Executive Board Members who are entitled to attend: named private sector representatives from Stapleford, County and Borough Councillors, Council officers, the MP, voluntary sector representative, consultants and stakeholders by invitation, MHCLG representative, Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, and Heads of Service by invitation. The Delivery Board comprises the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Chair of the Board, Vice Chair of the Board Head of Regeneration & Economic Development and at least one other officer. Other officers and consultants attend as required.	Strategic Board meetings attended by Chief Executive, MP, Leader, Deputy Leader, Deputy Chief Executive, three members of Kimberley Town Council, one representative from Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC), three Broxtowe Ward Councillors, Deputy Monitoring Officer, Head of Asset Management and Development, a business member and a voluntary sector member. These last two are currently vacant, but the remaining members of the Board attend meetings regularly. The FCM is made up of the Deputy Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Responsible Finance Officer from Kimberley. All are regular attenders. Project stakeholders attend as necessary. Other Officers attend both meetings as required.	Cabinet members and Officers as set out above.

<p>How have Board Members been identified and appointed – is this based upon any particular skillset?</p>	<p>Officers from Housing, Finance Services, Planning, Legal Services and Estates as these are most directly relevant to the project.</p>	<p>Government Towns Fund guidance and the Local Assurance Framework have been followed as required by this funding. The Executive Board is made up of private, public and third sector members, with a majority from the private sector. The local MP, also has been offered a seat on the Board. Representativeness of tiers of government and private sector leadership is crucial. The membership is from the local town business owners, Town Council, local voluntary sector as well as Nottinghamshire County Council, Stapleford Town Council, the Broxtowe MP, and the third sector. New Business Board Members must apply and be voted on board. For the Delivery Board this is based on the key criteria commercial, finance, legal, procurement and construction. There is a need to provide secretariat too.</p>	<p>Terms of Reference largely identify members by their positions. The 17 members must include an MP. The Chief Executive Chairs and the Board must contain eight other representatives from Broxtowe Borough Council, identified by their positions (Leader, Deputy Leader, Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Asset Management and Development, Deputy Monitoring Officer and three Ward Councillors). Kimberley Town Council nominate four members, (Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk, plus one named Member). This Member was nominated for their interest in the project. The Nottinghamshire County Council member represents Nuthall and Kimberley. As a result of Kimberley and Bennerley Viaduct now being in two parliamentary constituencies, and with the change of MP in Broxtowe since the last meeting, it is intended to ask Alex Norris,</p>	<p>As above, as the officers most directly relevant to the project.</p>
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Major Project:	Housing Delivery Plan	Stapleford Towns Fund	Kimberley Levelling Up Fund	Bramcote Leisure Centre
			as the MP for Kimberley, to sit on the Board from the next meeting (he is also a Minister of State in MHCLG).	
Have roles been established and has authority and responsibilities been defined?	Roles have been established and responsibilities identified.	Yes. A chair/vice-chair have been appointed. Their powers are as agreed by the Board and outlined in the Local Assurance Framework. Otherwise they have no individual decision making authority. Broxtowe Borough Council is the Accountable Body.	Yes. The Chair of the Strategic Board is the Chief Executive; the Financial Control and Monitoring Group is led by the Deputy Chief Executive, with at least one member of Kimberley Town Council on this group along with the Monitoring Officer	Yes.
Has decision making authority been defined to comply with Financial Regulations/Scheme of Delegation (committee approval or delegated powers)?	All proposals are agreed by the Group and then taken to the General Management Team ('GMT') and Cabinet as required or dealt with under Delegated Powers and Financial Regulations.	Yes. Any expenditure complies with Financial Regulations and work is subject to tendering as required by Financial Regulations. The Deputy Chief Executive attends and has oversight of these meetings.	Yes. Any expenditure complies with Financial Regulations and work is subject to tendering as required by Financial Regulations. The Deputy Chief Executive Chairs the Financial Control and Monitoring Group.	Yes.

Major Project:	Housing Delivery Plan	Stapleford Towns Fund	Kimberley Levelling Up Fund	Bramcote Leisure Centre
Have any potential conflicts of interest been identified and duly declared?	Yes	Yes. Declarations of Interest is a required and regular item on the agenda of the Executive and Delivery Board meetings. Board membership includes developers and an estate agent. If there is ever a failure to declare any conflict, the Standards regime would be unable to hold private sector Board members to account. However, criminal law would apply if a fraud had occurred.	These are sought and declared at each meeting. Terms of Reference highlight the separation of financial affairs in a separate monitoring group, and project group members would not be able to vote on issues affecting 'their' projects.	None identified at this stage.
Is an agenda prepared and are meeting minutes taken?	Agendas and minutes are prepared for each monthly meeting. A report is presented to Members on a quarterly basis which includes a programme update, finance update and covers items for Committee approval.	Yes. Every meeting has an agenda and is minuted. For the Executive Board redacted versions of the Agenda and Minutes are made publicly available.	Yes. Every meeting of both the Strategic Board and FCM has an agenda and minutes are prepared.	Yes for the officer meetings.

Major Project:	Housing Delivery Plan	Stapleford Towns Fund	Kimberley Levelling Up Fund	Bramcote Leisure Centre
Project/Delivery Plan: Has a project/delivery plan been prepared?	The project has an approved Housing Delivery Plan which will be updated at key trigger dates. The September 2025 review will reference the approved Housing Delivery Plan and note performance against the plan.	Yes. There is a project plan which is kept up to date for each of the 6 projects	Yes. There is a project plan which has been updated at the recent Project Adjustment Request, submitted to MHCLG. A programme of work also exists.	Yes, as part of the regular updates. There is also a programme plan which has been completed by ReCreation, which we are all working towards.
Are these plans regularly reviewed and updated?	The plans are reviewed by the Housing Delivery Group and Cabinet. Next Cabinet review September 2025.	Yes. The Delivery Board reviews plans every six weeks. Overall Progress is reviewed on a quarterly basis in line with Executive Board meetings.	Yes, at each quarterly government monitoring report, and in between, as required.	Yes.
Reporting to Key Stakeholders and Members: Is there any scrutiny of strategic decision making by Members?	Yes – at Cabinet	Members are included on the Board (including opposition group members). Progress is reported to Cabinet where scrutiny occurs. Each progress submission to Government requires the signature of the s151 Officer and Chair of the Board.	Members are included on the Board. Progress has been, and will continue to be, reported to Cabinet. As Broxtowe is the accountable any decisions requiring binding legal agreements are reported into Cabinet	Yes, this is led by the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive.
What is the lead Committee?	Cabinet	Cabinet	Cabinet	Cabinet

Major Project:	Housing Delivery Plan	Stapleford Towns Fund	Kimberley Levelling Up Fund	Bramcote Leisure Centre
Are the outcomes of the Project Board meeting (i.e. minutes, action plans, risk registers) reported to GMT, political leaders and/or the appropriate Committee(s)?	Main outcomes from the Housing Delivery Group are reported to GMT, Committee Chairs and/or Cabinet. Senior officers have most of the authority required to approve the mechanics of delivering the programme within the agreed budget.	Yes. Cabinet receive reports on progress. GMT see all papers on their way to Cabinet.	These are shared with Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive and updates are periodically reported to GMT	Yes, when required.
What is the frequency of these update reports?	As per the appropriate Cabinet cycles.	Quarterly or as and when a major decision is required.	This are tri-annually or as and when a major decision is required.	The Deputy Chief Executive liaises regularly with GMT and the Members.
Budget/Financial Management: Do operations take due regard of the Council Financial Regulations?	All operations take regard of the Council's Financial Regulations.	Yes. Expenditure is in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations. This is overseen by the Deputy Chief Executive who attends Executive Board meetings and works with the Economic Development team. The Council needs to take into consideration the Memorandum of Understanding it has signed with MHCLG and their requirements.	Yes. A Financial Control and Monitoring Group exists outside the Strategic Board and is chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive. The Council needs to take into consideration the Memorandum of Understanding it has signed with MHCLG.	Yes

Major Project:	Housing Delivery Plan	Stapleford Towns Fund	Kimberley Levelling Up Fund	Bramcote Leisure Centre
Has the budget been approved? By whom and when?	Budget approved by Finance and Resources Committee on 19 October 2019 and revised in each subsequent years' budget process.	Yes, Government awarded £21.1m. The budget for the project is reported regularly to the Towns Fund Board. Capital Programme has been updated to include this	Yes, Government awarded £16.4 million, with specified budgets for each sub-project. Capital Programme has been updated to include this	Yes, by Cabinet during 2024.
What are the arrangements for monitoring and reporting financial performance?	Monitoring and reporting of Financial performance is undertaken by the Assistant Director Finance Services and the Project Manager on a quarterly basis for Cabinet.	Reported to every meeting of the Board and progress reported to the Cabinet. We also report into the Council's Capital Monitoring Group. The Delivery Board must sign-off MHCLG monitoring returns.	A Financial Control and Monitoring Group exists outside the Strategic Board. This feeds into both Quarterly LUF monitoring and the Strategic Board.	Undertaking monthly by the Assistant Director Finance Services.
Is financial performance considered by Project Board, GMT and/or Committee(s)?	Yes, by Cabinet.	Financial performance is a matter covered in progress reports to Cabinet and is also considered by the Project Board prior to making monitoring returns to Government	Financial performance is a matter covered in progress reports to Cabinet and is also considered by the Project Board prior to making monitoring returns to Government	Yes.

Major Project:	Housing Delivery Plan	Stapleford Towns Fund	Kimberley Levelling Up Fund	Bramcote Leisure Centre
Procurement/Contracts /Legal How do you ensure compliance with procurement regulations and internal process (Contract Financial Regulations)?	<p>The procurement of contracts is carried out in line with procurement regulations and the Council's Financial Regulations.</p>	<p>Tendering in accordance with Financial Regulations, as Broxtowe Borough Council is the Accountable Body for this funding. The Local Assurance Framework is a requirement of Government for this project – the Procurement Manager is also a member of the Delivery Board. The Deputy Chief Executive has final oversight.</p>	<p>Tendering in accordance with Financial Regulations. The Memorandum of Understanding provides another level of assurance and compliance to be followed. The Delivery Plan has further details on procurement. Permission from Cabinet has been agreed to use Framework Contracts where necessary.</p>	<p>The procurement of contracts is carried out in line with procurement regulations and the Council's Financial Regulations.</p>
How do you ensure compliance with contractual terms and other legal matters?	<p>All contracts are signed by the appropriate officer under delegated powers. The Legal department are consulted on significant contracts. Cabinet approval is also sought as required for each contract.</p>	<p>Written agreement as to the work that is required is agreed prior to the commencement of work. The Borough's Legal Team and Senior Solicitor always review major contracts. Should anything deviate from this, the agreed reporting procedures are used. For major works, a contract is always put in place and scrutinised before signing.</p>	<p>Written agreement as to the work that is required is agreed prior to the commencement of work. The Borough's Legal Team and Senior Solicitor always review major contracts. Should anything deviate from this, the agreed reporting procedures are used. For major works, a contract is always put in place and scrutinised before signing.</p>	<p>This has been undertaken using the procurement arrangement Broxtowe has with Nottinghamshire County Council.</p>

Major Project:	Housing Delivery Plan	Stapleford Towns Fund	Kimberley Levelling Up Fund	Bramcote Leisure Centre
Risk Management: Has the project 'risk appetite' been defined considering the acceptable levels of risk in strategic, financial, operational, regulatory and reputational terms, and is this used to inform risk management?	Risk is discussed at length at the Housing Delivery Group on a scheme by scheme basis. Also by GMT prior to submission to Cabinet.	Yes, this is in line with the Council's 'risk appetite'.	Yes, this is in line with the Council's 'risk appetite'.	Yes.
How are risks managed at project level? Do these feed into the Council's strategic risks?	Risk is discussed at length by the Group. Schemes have to work within the constraints of the HRA Business Plan and the Housing Capital Programme. Work is being undertaken to agree a financial appraisal for housing delivery programme. Risk for new opportunities is carefully considered by the Project Manager on a scheme by scheme basis.	Risk management will be in line with established techniques using a pre and post mitigation framework similar to those in the PRINCE2 risk management Framework and extended MHCLG M&E reporting. We have a risk register for each project which is reviewed, updated and managed regularly. This is a feature of our regular MHCLG reporting.	Risk management is in line with established techniques using a pre and post mitigation framework similar to those in the PRINCE2 risk management Framework. We have a risk register for each project which is reviewed and re-scanned regularly. This is a feature of our regular MHCLG reporting.	Managed by the officer project group and fed into the Council and GMT by the Deputy Chief Executive.

Major Project:	Housing Delivery Plan	Stapleford Towns Fund	Kimberley Levelling Up Fund	Bramcote Leisure Centre
Is a risk register prepared and is this regularly maintained and reviewed by the Project Board?	Yes.	Each business case and project has a risk register. This continues to be updated and reported throughout delivery. This risk register will be maintained by the Project Manager and is reported to the Delivery Board, and by exception to the Executive Board. It will then go through the normal internal reporting channels as outlined previously. Major risks are always flagged at the Delivery Board.	Each project has a risk register. This will continue to be updated and reported throughout delivery. This risk register will be maintained by the Project Managers and reported to the Financial Monitoring and Control Group and escalated to the Strategic Board as necessary and, where needed, other internal reporting channels. Major risks are always flagged with the Deputy Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer.	Yes.

Major Project:	Housing Delivery Plan	Stapleford Towns Fund	Kimberley Levelling Up Fund	Bramcote Leisure Centre
Is the risk register more widely reported and reviewed?	Not currently, but there are plans to report and review the risks more widely.	<p>The risk register is reported to the Delivery and Executive Boards more often as each of the projects move into their varying delivery phases at different times.</p> <p>This risk register will be maintained by the Project Manager and is reported to the Delivery Board, and by exception to the Executive Board. It will then go through the normal internal reporting channels as outlined previously.</p>	Each risk register will be updated and reported each quarter for LUF monitoring, and therefore have been agreed previously with the Project Groups and Strategic Board.	By the Deputy Chief Executive.

Major Project:	Housing Delivery Plan	Stapleford Towns Fund	Kimberley Levelling Up Fund	Bramcote Leisure Centre
Have risk tolerances been agreed in terms of cost, time and quality and are there clear escalation levels should the level of risk be outside these limits.	Schemes are not progressed where the likelihood of securing planning permission is not viable. The nature of residential development is that abortive costs will be accrued for development opportunities that are initially worked up but which are not ultimately developed. The level of acceptable abortive costs for sites (both Council owned and privately owned) needs to be agreed.	Yes. Project risks for each of the projects have been outlined with corresponding risk management plans that have been created in line with government requirements. Contingencies have been included to account for current market instability. This is a regularly reviewed and managed item within the register. The basic principle is that the Council will not fund above the grant ceiling. Currently there are options for Project Adjustment Requests if funding needs to be moved between projects. These will tighten as the project spend accelerates.	Project risks have been outlined with corresponding risk management plans created in line with requirements. The basic principle is that the Council will not fund above the grant ceiling. Currently there are options for Project Adjustment Requests if funding needs to be moved between projects. These will tighten as the project spend accelerates.	Yes, discussion is taken with Cabinet as part of the quarterly updates.
Other Considerations Any other considerations for inclusion in the dashboard report.	None	Funding is both finite and deadline driven by MHCLG enforced deadlines. A significant risk is that projects do not have enough time to be completed in physical or financial terms	Funding is both finite and deadline driven by MHCLG enforced deadlines. A significant risk is that projects do not have enough time to be completed in physical or financial terms.	None at this stage.

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Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

Review of Strategic Risk Register
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1. Purpose of Report

To approve the amendments to the Strategic Risk Register and the action plans identified to mitigate risks. This is in accordance with all of the Council's objectives and key priorities.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that the amendments to the Strategic Risk Register and the actions to mitigate risks as set out be approved.

3. Detail

In accordance with the corporate Risk Management Strategy, the Strategic Risk Management Group met on 24 June 2025 to review the Strategic Risk Register. General Management Team (GMT) has since considered the proposals made by the Group. The objectives of the review were to:

- Identify the extent to which risks included in the register are still relevant
- Identify any new strategic risks to be included in the register
- Review action plans to mitigate risks.

A summary of the risk management process is included in **Appendix 1**. The Risk Management Strategy includes a '5x5' risk map matrix to assess both the threats and opportunities for each strategic risk in terms of both the likelihood and impact. The risk map is included to assist the understanding of the inherent and residual risk scores allocated to each strategic risk. These scores will be considered further and amended as necessary in due course.

Details of the proposed amendments to the Strategic Risk Register and actions resulting from the process are attached in **Appendix 2**. The full Strategic Risk Register incorporating the proposed amendments is available on the intranet. An extract from the register of the entries relating to the highest rated 'red' risks are included in **Appendix 3** for Members consideration.

Further reviews of the Strategic Risk Register will be reported to future meetings of this Committee.

4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Assistant Director Finance Services were as follows:

There are no direct financial implications that arise from this report. Any future additional budgetary requirements will be considered separately by Cabinet.

5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

The Strategic Risk Register is the main mechanism used by the Council to identify, assess and monitor key risks. Whilst there are no direct legal implications arising from this report, it is important to assess whether the risks identified are being effectively mitigated and managed.

6. Human Resources Implications

There were no comments from the Human Resources Manager.

7. Union Comments

Not applicable.

8. Climate Change Implications

Climate Change is considered in this report as a strategic risk.

9. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

As there is no change to policy an equality impact assessment is not required.

11. Background Papers

Nil.

Appendix 1**Review of Strategic Risk Register****Introduction**

The Risk Management Strategy, as updated in July 2024, aims to improve the effectiveness of risk management across the Council. Effective risk management will help to ensure that the Council maximises its opportunities and minimises the impact of the risks it faces, thereby improving its ability to deliver priorities, improve outcomes for residents and mitigating legal action and financial claims against the Council and subsequent damage to its reputation.

The Strategy provides a comprehensive framework and process designed to support both Members and Officers in ensuring that the Council is able to discharge its risk management responsibilities fully. The Strategy outlines the objectives and benefits of managing risk, describes the responsibilities for risk management, and provides an overview of the process that the Council has in place to manage risk successfully. The risk management process outlined within the Strategy should be used to identify and manage all risks to the Council's ability to deliver its priorities. This covers both strategic priorities, operational activities and the delivery of projects or programmes.

The Council defines risk as "the chance of something happening that may have an impact on objectives". A risk is an event or occurrence that would prevent, obstruct or delay the Council from achieving its objectives or failing to capture business opportunities when pursuing its objectives.

Risk Management

Risk management involves adopting a planned and systematic approach to the identification, evaluation and control of those risks which can threaten the objectives, assets, or financial wellbeing of the Council. It is a means of minimising the costs and disruption to the Council caused by undesired events.

Risk management covers the whole range of risks and not just those associated with finance, health and safety and insurance. It can also include risks as diverse as those associated with reputation, environment, technology and breach of confidentiality amongst others. The benefits of successful risk management include:

- Improved service delivery with fewer disruptions, efficient processes and improved controls
- Improved financial performance and value for money with increased achievement of objectives, fewer losses, reduced impact and frequency of critical risks
- Improved corporate governance and compliance systems with fewer legal challenges, robust corporate governance and fewer regulatory visits
- Improved insurance management with lower frequency and value of claims, lower impact of uninsured losses and reduced premiums.

Risk Management Process

The Council's risk management process has five key steps as outlined below.



Process Step	Description
Risk Identification	Identification of risks which could significantly impact the Council's aims and objectives – both strategic and operational.
Risk Analysis	Requires consideration to the identified risks potential consequences and likelihood of occurring. Risks should be scored against the Council's risk matrix
Risk Treatment	Treat; Tolerate; Transfer; Terminate – Identify which solution is best to manage the risk (may be one or a combination of a number of treatments)
Completing the Risk Register	Document the previous steps within the appropriate risk register. Tool for facilitating risk management discussions. Standard template to be utilised to ensure consistent reporting.
Monitoring, reporting and reviewing the risks	Review risks against agreed reporting structure to ensure they remain current and on target with what is expected or manageable.

Risk Matrix

		Risk – Threats				
Likelihood	Almost Certain – 5	5	10	15	20	25
	Likely – 4	4	8	12	16	20
	Possible – 3	3	6	9	12	15
	Unlikely – 2	2	4	6	8	10
	Rare – 1	1	2	3	4	5
		Insignificant – 1	Minor – 2	Moderate – 3	Major – 4	Catastrophic – 5
		Impact				



Risk Rating	Value	Action
Red Risk	25	Immediate action to prevent serious threat to provision and/or achievement of key services or duties
	15 to 20	Key risks which may potentially affect the provision of key services or duties
Amber Risk	12	Important risks which may potentially affect the provision of key services or duties
	8 to 10	Monitor as necessary being less important but still could have a serious effect on the provision of key services
	5 to 6	Monitor as necessary to ensure risk is properly managed
Green Risk	1 – 4	No strategic action necessary




Appendix 2





Strategic Risk Register – Summary of Proposed Changes





Inherent Risk – Gross risk **before** controls and mitigation







Residual Risk – Risk remaining **after** application of controls and mitigating measures







Risk	Inherent Risk	Residual Risk	Changes
<p>1. Failure to maintain effective corporate performance management and implement change management processes</p> <p><i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged.</i></p>	20	<p>4</p> <p> Green</p>	<p>The action to consider an audit of project management as part of the Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25 was deleted. The audit will be considered as part of the regular audit planning meetings later in the year.</p>
<p>2. Failure to obtain adequate resources to achieve service objectives</p> <p><i>Although the residual risk score does not need to change, it was considered that the position with regards to this risk had worsened.</i></p>	20	<p>16</p> <p> Red</p>	<p>The impact of the local government financial settlement, which had not been favourable to district councils, means that this remains as one of the highest rated 'red' residual risks.</p> <p>The long-awaited government 'Fair Funding Review' is expected this year, along with the associated Business Rates reset, which could have a significant impact upon the Council's finances.</p> <p>A new action was added to monitor the funding implications of the increased scope of Domestic Homicide Reviews being completed by the Community Safety Partnership.</p> <p>The action to produce a new Commercial Strategy was updated to refer to an updated Commercial Strategy that will support the Business Strategy being refreshed as part of the annual budget setting process.</p> <p>The action to consider opportunities to utilise any identified surplus office space has been completed.</p>

Risk	Inherent Risk	Residual Risk	Changes
<p>3. Failure to deliver the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan</p> <p><i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged.</i></p>	25	<p>12</p>  <p>Amber</p>	<p>A new action was added to monitor the impact of government policy changes to the level of Right to Buy discounts in terms of both revenue and capital budgets and its ability to generate capital receipts for future investment.</p> <p>A new action was added to consider the outcomes and recommendations from the mock Housing Quality Network (HQN) audit and to develop and deliver on any action plans.</p> <p>The action to progress with the purchase and development of HRA rented and shared ownership properties on land at Bramcote Crematorium has been updated to acknowledge that the acquisition of land at 'Coventry Lane West' has now been completed.</p>
<p>3a. Failure to deliver a Housing Repairs and Compliance Service which meets Right to Repair and Compliance legislation</p> <p><i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged.</i></p>	20	<p>12</p>  <p>Amber</p>	<p>A new action was added to consider the outcomes and recommendations from the mock HQN audit and to develop and deliver on subsequent action plans.</p> <p>The action to implement recharges to increase HRA income was completed and replaced with an action to monitor the effectiveness of the Recharges Policy to increase the resources available to the HRA.</p> <p>The action to recruit a new Property Management Compliance Officer post was completed with an appointment being made for a start in July.</p>
<p>4. Failure of strategic leisure initiatives</p> <p><i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged.</i></p>	25	<p>20</p>  <p>Red</p>	<p>A new action was added to consider the outcomes of the asbestos survey at Bramcote Leisure Centre and to agree a robust management plan for the site in conjunction with Liberty Leisure Limited.</p>

Risk	Inherent Risk	Residual Risk	Changes
<p>5. Failure of Liberty Leisure (LLL) trading company</p> <p><i>Although the residual risk score does not need to change, it was considered that the position with regards to this risk had improved.</i></p>	25	<p>8</p>  <p>Amber</p>	<p>No significant changes were proposed to the key controls, risk indicators and action points for this strategic risk.</p> <p>The company had posted positive outturn figures for 2024/25 with efficient operating and improved revenues from membership sales.</p>
<p>6. Failure to manage the Beeston town centre development</p> <p><i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged.</i></p>	25	<p>9</p>  <p>Amber</p>	<p>No significant changes were proposed to the key controls, risk indicators and action points for this strategic risk.</p> <p>The risk from Local Government Reorganisation will be monitored.</p>
<p>7. Not complying with legislation</p> <p><i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged.</i></p>	25	<p>6</p>  <p>Amber</p>	<p>A new risk indicator was added which referred to the risks arising from a defective transaction, a claim being made (including a defence to a claim or a counterclaim) or some other legal event occurring which results in a liability or other loss, or a failure to take appropriate measures to meet legal or regulatory requirements and/or to protect assets.</p>
<p>8. Failure of financial management and/or budgetary control and to implement agreed budget decisions</p> <p><i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged.</i></p>	25	<p>4</p>  <p>Green</p>	<p>A new action was added to produce and launch a Financial Procedure Rules and Contract Procedure Rules awareness session for employees on the Broxtowe Learning Zone platform.</p> <p>The action to share access to the Contracts Register for enhanced internal reporting was completed.</p> <p>The action to ensure compliance with meeting transparency requirements relevant to public procurement, mandated by the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 in conjunction with the requirements of the new Procurement Act 2023 has been completed.</p> <p>The Local Government Transparency Code 2015 and the Procurement Act 2023 were added as key controls.</p>

Risk	Inherent Risk	Residual Risk	Changes
<p>9. Failure to maximise collection of income due to the Council</p> <p><i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged</i></p>	20	<p>9</p>  <p>Amber</p>	<p>No significant changes were proposed to the key controls, risk indicators and action points for this strategic risk.</p> <p>The new income management system and bank reconciliation module are now operational. This should improve the efficiency and effectiveness of transactional processing into the respective systems.</p>
<p>10. Failure of key ICT systems</p> <p><i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged.</i></p>	25	<p>15</p>  <p>Red</p>	<p>This remains a high rated 'red' risk given the national picture in terms of cyber security and associated risks.</p> <p>Resilient by Design (to remove single points of failure) was added as a key control, whilst PSN compliance was deleted as a risk indicator.</p> <p>With reference to the well-publicised power outage at the City Council, it was noted that Broxtowe has an Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) installed in its Data Centre. In the event of a power outage from the main electrical supplier, power will continue to run for a duration of time via batteries from the UPS unit. These are designed to provide time for a measured systems shutdown.</p>
<p>11. Failure to implement Private Sector Housing Strategy in accordance with Government and Council expectations</p> <p><i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged.</i></p>	20	<p>4</p>  <p>Green</p>	<p>No significant changes were proposed to the key controls, risk indicators and action points for this strategic risk.</p>
<p>12. Failure to engage with partners/community to implement the Broxtowe Borough Partnership Statement of Common Purpose</p> <p><i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged</i></p>	15	<p>4</p>  <p>Green</p>	<p>No significant changes were proposed to the key controls, risk indicators and action points for this strategic risk.</p> <p>The risk from Local Government Reorganisation will be monitored.</p>

Risk	Inherent Risk	Residual Risk	Changes
<p>13. Failure to contribute effectively to dealing with crime and disorder</p> <p><i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged</i></p>	15	<p>3</p>  <p>Green</p>	<p>The action to assess and report on the impact on local resources following the implementation of the PCC's Nottinghamshire ASB Pilot has been completed.</p> <p>The action to work in partnership to disrupt the activities of Serious Organised Crime Groups has been deleted as this is now considered 'business-as-usual' activity.</p>
<p>14. Failure to provide housing in accordance with the Local Development Framework</p> <p><i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged</i></p>	20	<p>12</p>  <p>Amber</p>	No significant changes were proposed to the key controls, risk indicators and action points for this strategic risk.
<p>15. Natural disaster or deliberate act, which affects major part of the Authority</p> <p><i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged</i></p>	15	<p>12</p>  <p>Amber</p>	No significant changes were proposed to the key controls, risk indicators and action points for this strategic risk.
<p>16. Failure to mitigate the impact of the Government's welfare reform agenda</p> <p><i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged</i></p>	20	<p>4</p>  <p>Green</p>	A new action was added to assess the impact of the Household Support Fund coming to an end in 2026.
<p>17. Failure to maximise opportunities and to recognise the risks in shared services arrangements</p> <p><i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged</i></p>	20	<p>9</p>  <p>Amber</p>	<p>No significant changes were proposed to the key controls, risk indicators and action points for this strategic risk.</p> <p>The risk from Local Government Reorganisation will be monitored.</p>
<p>18. Corporate and/or political leadership adversely impacting upon service delivery</p> <p><i>Although the residual risk score does not need to change, it was considered that the position with regards to this risk had worsened.</i></p>	20	<p>12</p>  <p>Amber</p>	<p>No significant changes were proposed to the key controls, risk indicators and action points for this strategic risk.</p> <p>With notice of the Chief Executive's retirement, the recruitment process for a new 'head of paid service' has begun with an appointment anticipated from September 2025.</p> <p>Earlier changes that had impacted on the political profile of the Council have now settled down after the County Council elections in May 2025.</p>

Risk	Inherent Risk	Residual Risk	Changes
19. High levels of sickness <i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged</i>	16	6  Amber	The positive movement with the levels of sickness absence was noted. No significant changes were proposed to the key controls, risk indicators and action points for this strategic risk.
20. Inability to recruit and retain staff with required skills and expertise to meet increasing demands and expectations. <i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged.</i>	20	8  Amber	The action to conduct annual Performance Appraisals was deleted as this is a 'business-as-usual' activity and is recognised as a key control. The risk from Local Government Reorganisation will be monitored.
21. Failure to comply with duty as a service provider and employer to groups such as children, the elderly, vulnerable adults etc. <i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged</i>	20	4  Green	The action to develop a Fuel Poverty Strategy was completed. The action to monitor the changing eligibility of employees for DBS checks was extended to include Police vetting in appropriate cases.
22. Unauthorised access of data <i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged</i>	20	6  Amber	The action to 'achieve compliance with ISO 27001' was replaced with a new action to achieve compliance with the Cyber Assessment Framework.
23. High volumes of employee or client fraud <i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged</i>	20	4  Green	No significant changes were proposed to the key controls, risk indicators and action points for this strategic risk.
24. <i>Failure to achieve commitment of being carbon neutral for the Council's own operations by 2027</i> <i>The position with regards to this risk is unchanged</i>	20	12  Amber	A new action was added to assess and plan for the impact of climate change on the Council's operations and to implement the appropriate actions to mitigate these risks. The risk from Local Government Reorganisation will be monitored.

Appendix 3

Extract from the Strategic Risk Register – June 2025 – Entries Relating to the Highest Rated ‘Red’ Risks**Risk 2 - Failure to obtain adequate resources to achieve service objectives**

Risk Owner(s)	Inherent Risk	Residual Risk
Deputy Chief Executive Assistant Director Finance Services	20	16

Key Controls

- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Business Strategy
- Economic Regeneration Strategy
- Procurement and Commissioning Strategy
- Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy
- Asset Management Strategy
- Energy Procurement Strategy
- Commercial Strategy
- Land Disposals Policy

Risk Indicators

- Local Government Finance Settlement
- Budget gap
- Fuel and energy prices
- Fees and charges and other income levels
- Failed bids for external funding
- General economic indicators
- Interest rates
- Fluctuations in planning application fee income
- Cost of planning appeal decisions

Action Points

1. Review service objectives in response to changing resources.
2. Identify and assess external funding opportunities and ensure accompanying targets are met.
3. Investigate and develop opportunities for shared service collaboration.
4. Monitor the impact of the collection of Business Rates on the resources available to the Council.
5. Seek the disposal of surplus assets to generate additional capital receipts.
6. Be alert to potential funding opportunities for town centre regeneration initiatives and other capital investment schemes.

7. Identify potential budget savings and maximise income generating opportunities.
8. Maximise income from commercial properties and industrial units.
9. Work collaboratively with Nottinghamshire local authorities to maximise the recovery of business rates income.
10. Assess the impact of the anticipated Fair Funding Review, including proposals for greater localisation of business rates and any reset in the baseline, upon the Council's finances.
11. Produce a new Commercial Strategy that will support the Business Strategy being refreshed as part of the annual budget setting process.
12. Progress with the delivery of the Stapleford Towns Fund project.
13. Progress with the delivery of the Kimberley Mean Business project.
14. Develop a Town Investment Plan for Eastwood.
15. Complete the full recovery of the agreed tram compensation claim against Nottingham City Council.
16. Monitor the impact of inflation and the cost of living on the Council's service provision and its financial position.
17. Assess the impact of the government's food waste policies and the potential receipt of New Burdens Funding to meet the additional capital and revenues costs associated with its delivery.
18. Monitor progress made by the DWP on the migration of existing Housing Benefit cases onto Pension Credit.
19. Be mindful of budget risks arising from planning appeal decisions and to report any uplift in costs to GMT at the earliest opportunity.
20. Review trade waste operations and its pricing structure to remain effective and competitive in the market and to report the findings to Cabinet.
21. Monitor the funding implications of the increasing scope of Domestic Homicide Reviews being completed by the Community Safety Partnership.

Risk 4 - Failure of strategic leisure initiatives

Risk Owner(s)	Inherent Risk	Residual Risk
Deputy Chief Executive	25	20

Key Controls

- Leisure Facilities Strategy
- Leisure and Culture Service Specification
- Liberty Leisure Limited Business Plan
- External legal advice and support

Risk Indicators

- Results of consultation exercises
- Progress against Business Plans
- Progress against the Capital Programme
- Events impacting upon any Joint Use Agreements
- Visitor numbers at leisure facilities
- Income at leisure facilities
- Financial viability of Liberty Leisure Limited

Action Points

1. Determine future strategy for investment in leisure facilities.
2. Review leisure opportunities arising from major developments.
3. Produce a programme to address the issues identified in the detailed property condition survey at Bramcote Leisure Centre.
4. Utilise external legal advice and support as required.
5. Work with Chilwell School to assess leisure facilities options at Chilwell Olympia Sports Centre and report back to Cabinet.
6. Forward plan any necessary capital repair works anticipated at Bramcote Leisure Centre and to submit, consider and profile the financial impact as part of the proposed Capital Programme.
7. Complete the planning application and development of the detailed design (RIBA4) for a new replacement Bramcote Leisure Centre.
8. Establish a cross-party members group, supported by key officers in leisure, property and regeneration, to identify leisure opportunities in the north of the Borough.
9. Progress with the development of the new Community Pavilion and Young People's Centre on Hickings Lane.
10. Consider the outcomes of the asbestos survey at Bramcote Leisure Centre and to agree a robust management plan for the site in conjunction with Liberty Leisure Limited.

Risk 10 - Failure of key ICT systems

Risk Owner(s)	Inherent Risk	Residual Risk
Executive Director Assistant Director Corporate Services	25	15

Key Controls

- ICT Strategy
- Service agreements
- Systems mainly supplied by external supplier
- Back-up server offsite
- Security Policies
- System availability
- Resilient by Design (remove single points of failure)
- Server virtualisation
- Provision of emergency power supply
- Identification of failure at points of entry
- Shared service arrangements with other local authorities
- Geo-location blocking on the firewall
- Warning, Advice and Reporting Point (WARP) service
- Cyber Security Information Sharing Partnership (CISP)
- Business Continuity Plans

Risk Indicators

- Viruses
- Computer downtime
- Overrun/failure of overnight processing
- Key financial reconciliation processes
- Customer complaints
- Backlog of works
- Appropriate officer resources to support key systems
- Number of security incidents

Action Points

1. Monitor implementation of and regularly test the Business Continuity Plan for ICT Services
2. Pursue partnership working initiatives, where appropriate
3. Assess the impact of the National Cyber Security Standard.
4. Address the matters raised by the independent LGA specialist review of the Council's cyber-risk arrangements and key controls.

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Report of the Monitoring Officer

Complaints Report 2024/25

1. Purpose of Report

To provide Members with a summary of complaints made against the Council.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to NOTE the report.

3. Detail

This report outlines the performance of the Council in dealing with complaints, including, at stage one those managed by the service areas, at stage 2, managed by the Complaints and Compliments Officer and at stage three passed to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) or Housing Ombudsman (HO).

- **Appendix 1** provides a summary of the Council's internal complaints statistics.
- **Appendix 2** provides a summary of the complaints investigated by the Council formally under stage two of the Council's formal complaint procedure.
- **Appendix 3** provides a summary of the complaints determined by the Ombudsman.

Of the 429 stage 1 complaints received overall, 81 were investigated under the stage 2 complaints procedure and seven were investigated by the LGO. Under the stage 2 complaints procedure, 39 complaints (48%) were not upheld, 41 complaints (50%) were upheld and one was withdrawn (2%). Further details can be found in **Appendix 2**. The Ombudsman investigated seven complaints made against the Council. Three complaints were recorded as not upheld, resulting in no further action being required by the Council, four complaints were upheld. Further details can be found in **Appendix 3**.

4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Assistant Director Finance Services were as follows:

The cost of compensation is charged either directly to the service or recognised in a central corporate budget. There are no additional financial implications associated with this report. Any significant additional budgets required, above virement limits, would require approval by Cabinet.

5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

Whilst there are no direct legal implications arising from this report, it is important to note that the Council's approach to handling complaints is within the parameters of the following key pieces of legislation: Part III of the Local Government Act 1974 and Chapter 6 of the Localism Act 2011 (for Housing Services complaints).

6. Human Resources Implications

The comments from the Human Resources Manager were as follows:

Whilst there are no direct legal implications arising from this report, it is important to note that the Council's approach to handling complaints is within the parameters of the following key pieces of legislation: Part III of the Local Government Act 1974 and Chapter 6 of the Localism Act 2011 (for Housing Services complaints).

7. Union Comments

The Union comments were as follows:

Not applicable.

8. Climate Change Implications

The climate change implications are contained within the report.

Not applicable.

9. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

Not applicable.

11. Background Papers

Nil.

Complaints received

The table below shows the figures for the overall complaints received in 2024/25 and the previous 2023/24 figures are shown in brackets for comparison.

	Total	Chief Executive	Deputy Chief Executive	Executive Director	Monitoring Officer	Liberty Leisure Ltd
Number of Stage 1 complaints	429 (407)	326	28	73	2	0
No. of complaints investigated under Stage 2	81 (73)	74	3	4	0	0
No. of complaints determined by the Ombudsman	7 (9)	5	1	0	1	0

The Council has registered a total of 429 stage 1 complaints in the year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, compared to 407 in the year 2023/24. The number of complaints concluded under stage 2 of the complaints procedure is 81, compared to 73 in 2023/24, and seven complaints, compared to nine in 2023/24 have been determined by the Local Government Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman Service.

The Housing Ombudsman created a new Complaint Handling Code that required all social landlords to adopt from 1 April 2024. The Council adopted this Code on 1 April 2024 and all employees have been train on the purpose of the Code and effective complaint handling.

The Complaints Team continues to monitor the Council's complaint handling and regular meetings with Assistant Directors and Heads of Service are undertaken. Where issues have been identified, such as Housing Repairs, the Complaints Team works with the Assistant Director to implement improvements in areas that are required. This is further reviewed by the Housing Improvement Board (HIB). The role of the HIB is to ensure that the Housing stock and practises are fit for purpose. The Complaints Team reports to the HIB on its findings regarding complaints and the learning outcomes that have been and require implementation.

Time taken to acknowledge receipt of stage one complaints (5 working day target)

	Total	Chief Executive	Deputy Chief Executive	Executive Director	Monitoring Officer	Liberty Leisure Ltd
Number of complaints acknowledged within 5 working days	429	326	28	73	2	0
Number of complaints acknowledged over 5 working days	0	0	0	0	0	0

429 stage 1 complaints (100%) were acknowledged within the 5-day deadline.

The Council has seen an improvement in the time taken to acknowledge complaints, through continued use of electronic facilities in order to keep complainants updated as to the progress of their complaint.

Time taken to respond to stage 1 Complaints (10 working day target)

	Total	Chief Executive	Deputy Chief Executive	Executive Director	Monitoring Officer	Liberty Leisure Ltd
Less than 10 working days	407	304	28	73	2	0
Over 10 working days	22	22	0	0	0	0

407 stage 1 complaints (95%) were responded to in 10 working days. 22 (5%) took longer than 10 working days to provide a response. In these cases, the Assistant Directors and the Heads of Service/Assistant Directors are asked to write to complainants to advise that a response will take longer and to provide the complainant with an estimated timescale for completion.

Reasons for delays could include:

- Further information being required from the complainant.
- Complexity of the complaint including in-depth research required.
- Resource issues.

There has been a significant rise in damp and mould complaints being received which coincides with increased media coverage. The Housing Repairs Team reports that this increase in complaints has had a significant impact on the service being able to respond to complaints within the 10 working days.

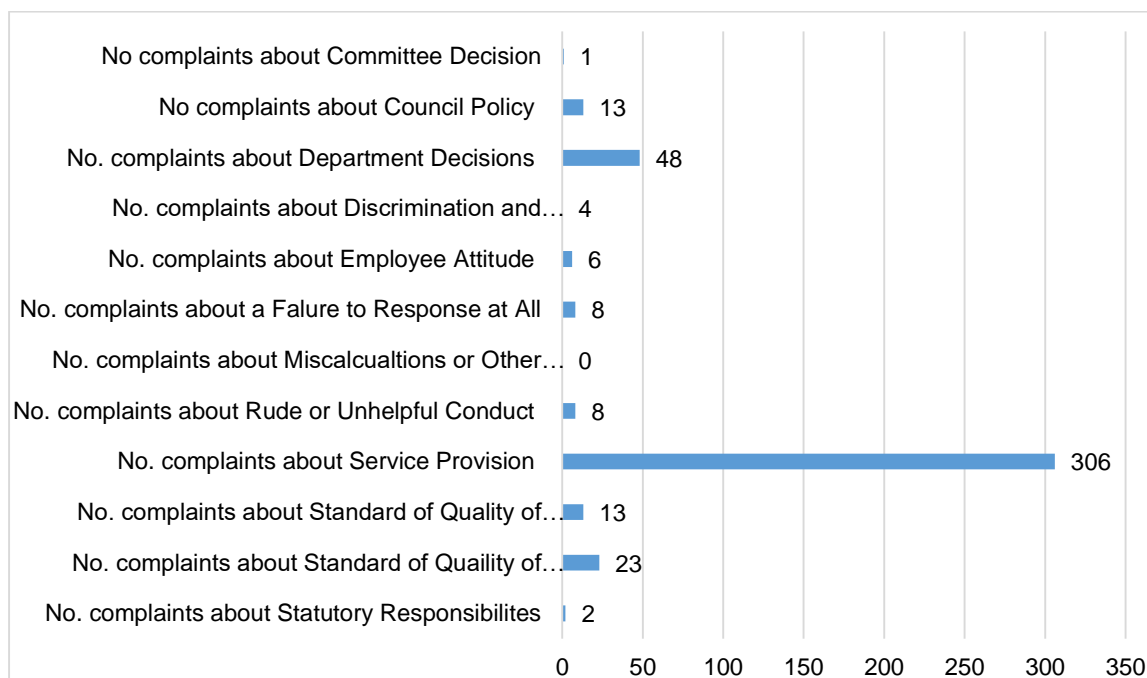
The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded by the Complaints Team of the need to contact complainants where the initial deadlines cannot be met. Furthermore, the Housing Repairs Team is provided a reminder to respond to the complainant with the full response or an extension by the Complaints Team when the 10 working day deadline is triggered.

It should be noted that the current responsiveness for stage 1 complaints within the Housing Repairs Team has improved for 2024/25 with the additional resources within the Housing Team and monitoring undertaking by the Complaints Team.

The Complaints Team pro-actively monitor the Housing Repairs Team stage 1 complaint responsiveness in order to these deadlines to be met.

Furthermore, all extensions are now approved by the relevant Heads of Service/Assistant Directors and reported to GMT bi-weekly.

What the complaints were about

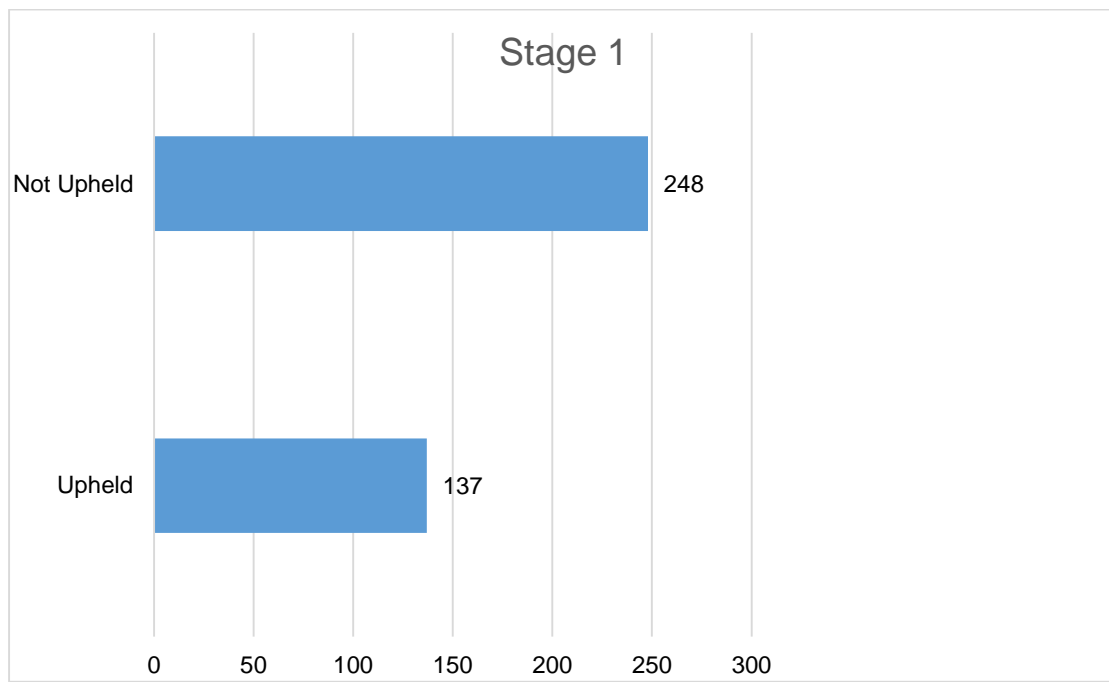


Complaints upheld

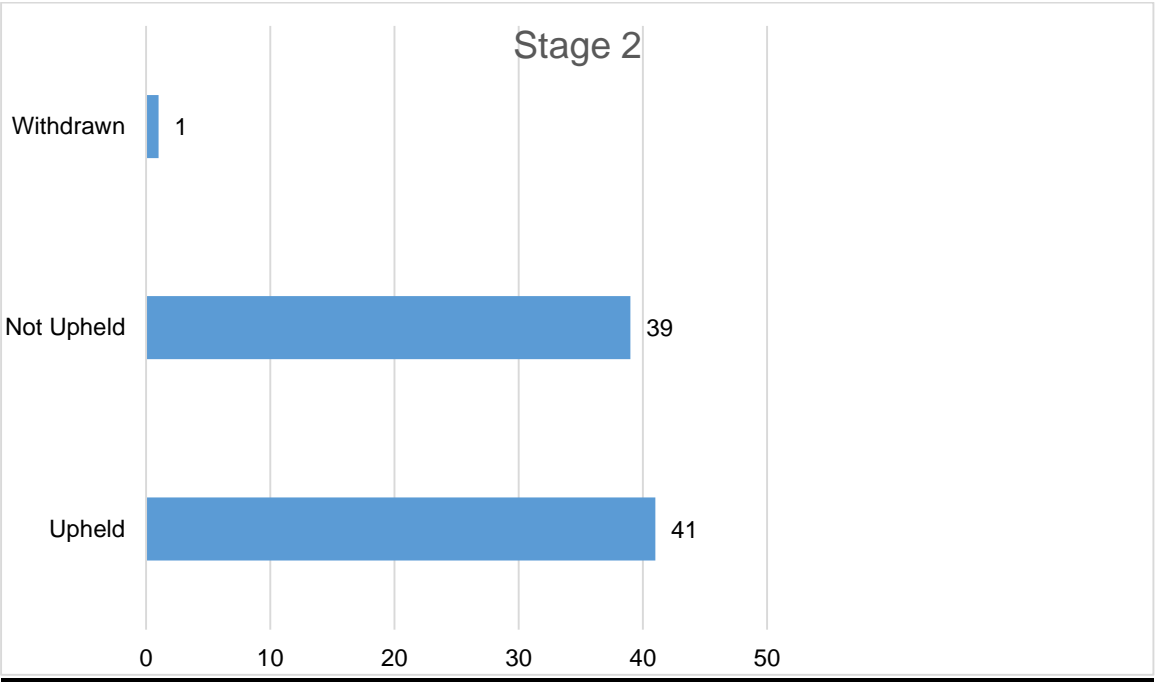
Of the 429 complaints received at stage 1, 248 were not upheld and 181 were upheld.

Stage 2 complaints saw 41 complaints being not upheld, 39 upheld and 1 withdrawn during the course of the investigation.

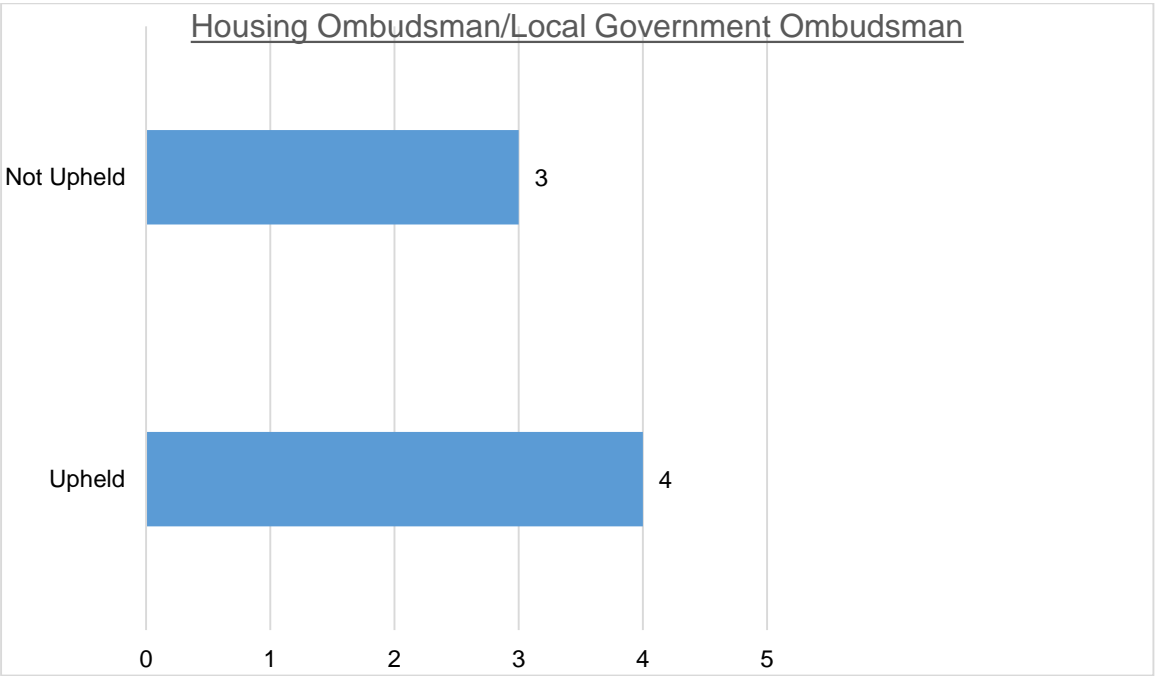
The Local Government Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman determined that three complaint were not upheld and four upheld.

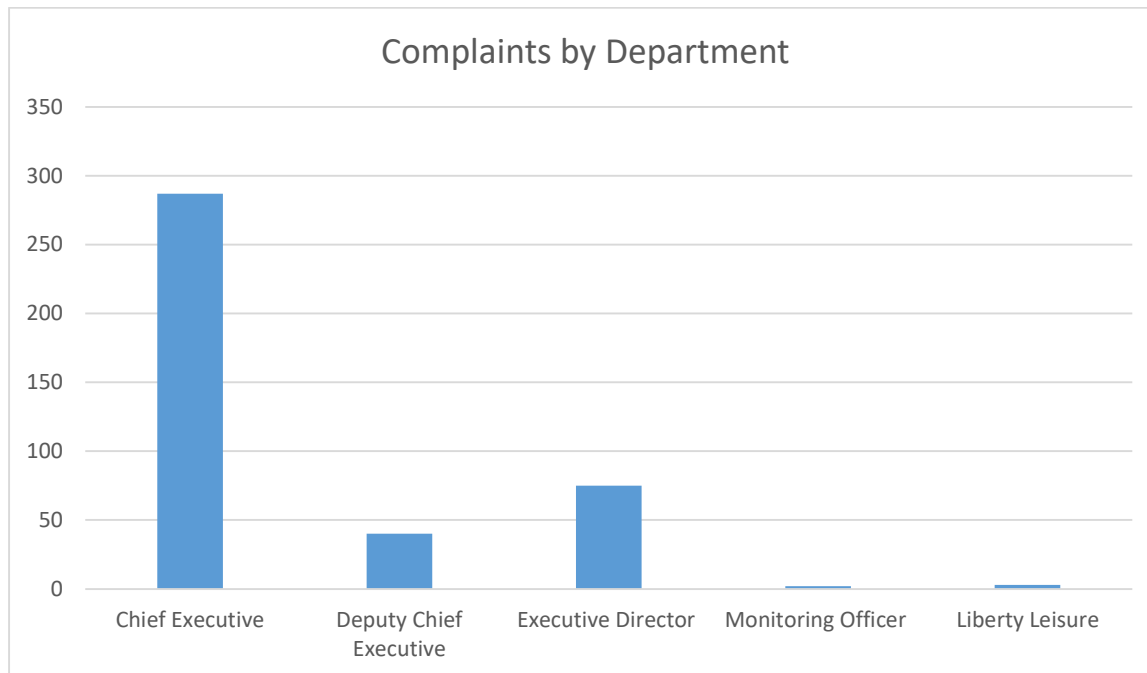
Stage 1

Stage 2



Housing Ombudsman/Local Government Ombudsman



Complaints by Department**Number of stage 2 complaints**

	Total	Chief Executive	Deputy Chief Executive	Executive Director	Monitoring Officer	Liberty Leisure
Number of Stage 2 complaints	81 (73)	74	3	4	0	0

Time taken to acknowledge to stage 2 complaints (5 working day target)

	Total	Chief Executive	Deputy Chief Executive	Executive Director	Monitoring Officer	Liberty Leisure
Acknowledged within 5 working days	81	74	3	4	0	0

Time taken to respond to stage 2 complaints (20 working day target)

	Total
Responded in 20 working days	78
Responded in more than 20 working days	3

78 complaints were investigated and responded to under stage 2 of the formal complaint procedure. 100% were acknowledged within five working days and 78 (96%) were responded to within the 20 working day timescale. All the complainants who received their responses after 20 working days were informed that there would be a delay and the reason for the delay.

Reasons for the delays include:

- Further information being required from the complainant.
- Further information being required from the Department complained about.
- Complexity of the complaint including in-depth research required.
- Resource issues.

(This list is not exhaustive)

As with stage one extensions being approved by the relevant Heads of Service/Assistant Directors, stage two extensions are now approved by the Head of Democratic Services and reported to GMT bi-weekly.

Equalities Monitoring

Of the 429 stage 1 complaints recorded, 302 were completed with some the monitoring data partially supplied.

Gender

Male – 175
Female – 254

Age groups

<17 – 1	45–59 – 87
18–24 – 25	60–64 – 36
25–29 – 34	65+ – 75
30–44 – 102	Not stated – 144

Ethnic Groups

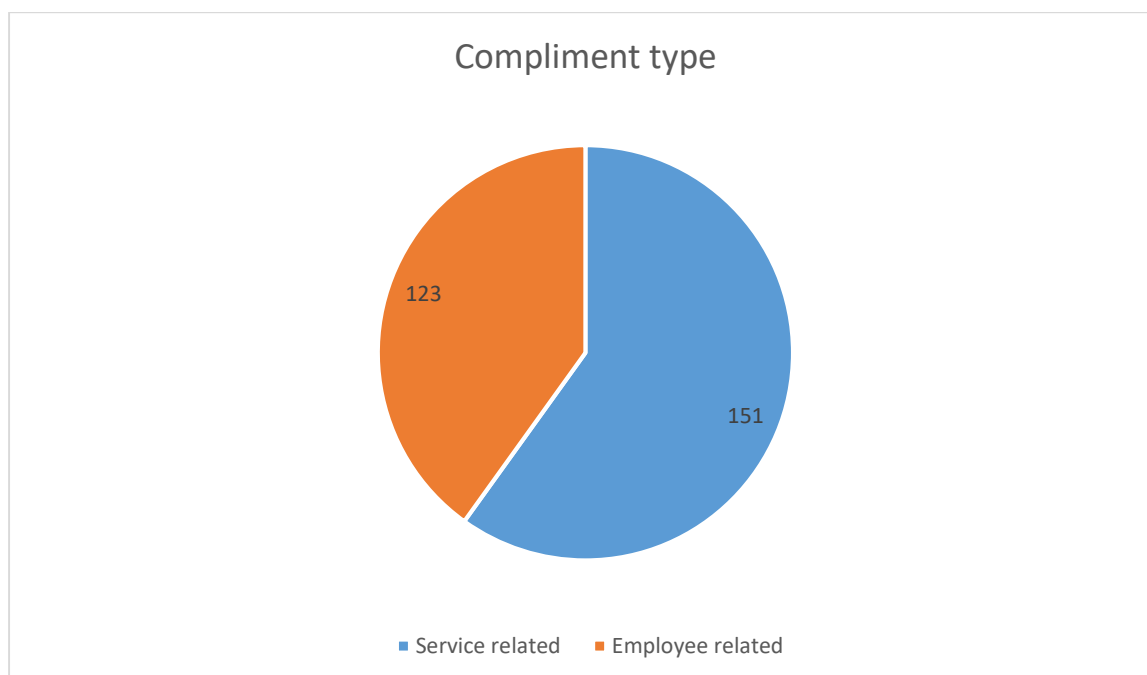
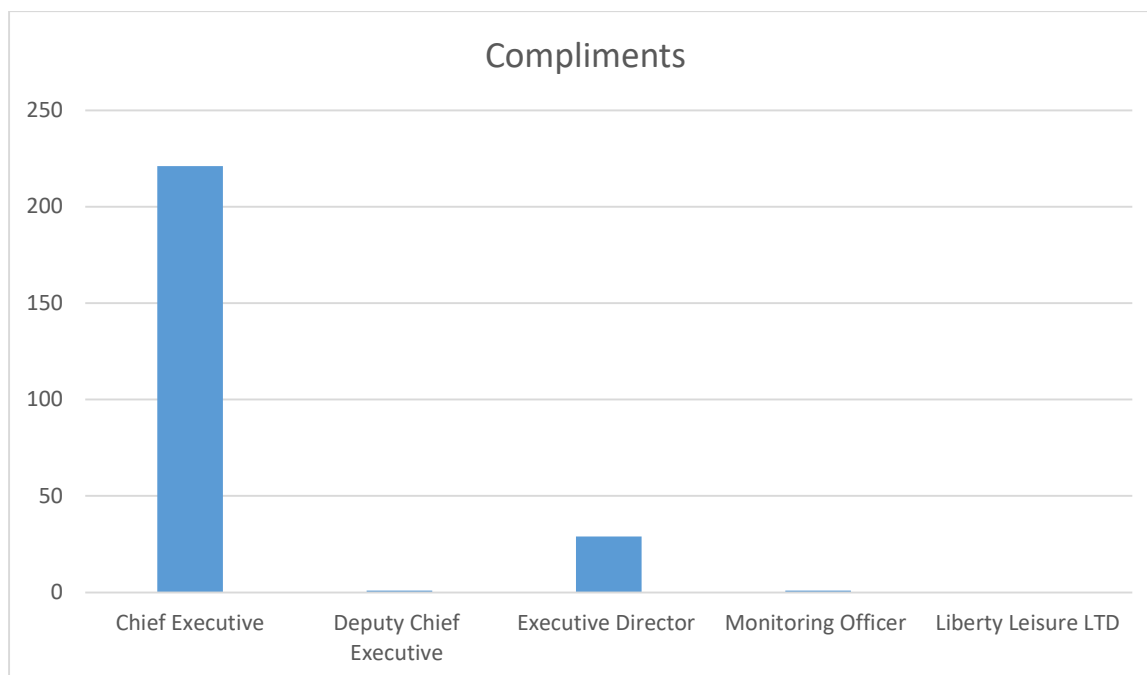
African - 3
British – 342
Caribbean - 1
Chinese - 0
Gypsy or Irish Traveller - 0
Indian – 3
Irish – 4
Other - 3
Not stated – 67
Pakistani - 6

Long term health problem that limits daily activity?

Yes – 136
No – 203
Not stated - 90

Compliments

There have been a total of 252 compliments registered in the period, 101 of which were in relation to specific employees and 151 were related to the service received.



Compliments are valuable, welcomed, and important in enabling the Council to understand that the services provided meet customers' satisfaction, provide positive feedback to employees, influence the organisational and service development and inform the Council's quality assurance.

Breakdown of Complaints and Compliments by Department and Section**Chief Executive's Department**

Service Areas	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Ombudsman Complaints	Compliments
Communities	1	1	0	0
Development Control	34	12	2	0
Environmental Health	2	0	0	1
Housing and Income	24	3	0	81
Housing Operations	97	26	1	91
Housing Repairs	140	28	2	38
Housing Strategy	28	4	0	10
Total	326	74	5	221

Deputy Chief Executive's Department

Service Areas	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Ombudsman Complaints	Compliments
Capital Works	13	0	0	1
Customer Services	1	1	0	0
Revenues	14	2	1	0
Total	28	3	1	1

Executive Director's Department

Service Areas	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Ombudsman Complaints	Compliments
Administration	3	0	0	0
Bereavement	1	2	0	5
Waste and Recycling	54	2	0	13
Environment	13	0	0	11
Data Protection	2	0	0	0
Total	73	4	0	29

Monitoring Officer's Department

Service Areas	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Ombudsman Complaints	Compliments
Democratic Services	1	0	0	1
Elections	1	0	0	0
Legal Services	0	0	1	0
Total	2	0	1	1

Liberty Leisure Ltd

Service Area	Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Ombudsman Complaints	Compliments
Bramcote Leisure Centre	0	0	0	0
Chilwell Leisure Centre	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

Financial Settlements

	Total	Chief Execs	Deputy Chief Execs	Executive Director	Monitoring Officer	Liberty Leisure
Stage 1	3	£3,100	0	0	0	0
Stage 2	20	£22,756	£314	0	0	0
Ombudsman	5	£4,400	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	28	£30,256	£314	0	0	0

Stage 2 – Formal Complaints

The complaints provided below have been summarised in order to prevent identification of individuals.

Planning

1. Complaint against Planning

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that their planning application was inappropriately refused permission.

Council's response

It was concluded that an appropriate level of service was received as the Planning Team had considered the application in line with the relevant policies.

The Planning Team has responded to the complainant's enquiries in a timely manner and had provided them with the necessary information in how to progress the application.

As concerns were raised by the Highways Authority, the Planning Team were unable to support the application until the concerns were addressed. The Planning Team had provided the complainant with these concerns and the details required to address these.

Head of Service Comments

The correct action was undertaken in line with legislation to ensure that the planning application met the standards set by the Council.

2. Complaint against Planning

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Planning Team had approved an application that was not appropriate for the area or the covenant of the area.

Council's response

It was concluded that an appropriate level of service was received as the Planning Team had considered the developments in line with the Council's Planning Policies and national legislation.

Covenants are a civil matter and are not the responsibility of the Council to enforce.

Assistant Director Comments

The correct action was undertaken in line with legislation to ensure that the planning application met the standards set by the Council. The Council is not responsible for covenants and these are not a material planning considerations.

3. Complaint against Planning (this complaint relates to the one but was submitted by another neighbour in the area of the development)

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Planning Team had approved an application that was not appropriate for the area or the covenant of the area.

Council's response

It was concluded that an appropriate level of service was received as the Planning Team had considered the developments in line with the Council's Planning Policies and national legislation.

Covenants are a civil matter and are not the responsibility of the Council to enforce.

Assistant Director Comments

The correct action was undertaken in line with legislation to ensure that the planning application met the standards set by the Council. The Council are not responsible for covenants and these are not a material planning considerations.

4. Complaint against Planning

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to investigate an issue of boundary encroachment and there had been a lack of communication from the Planning Team.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had not received an appropriate level of service due to a delay in correspondence being issued from the Planning Team.

An apology was offered to the complainant.

The Planning Team had determined that the boundary encroachment was a civil matter and that action cannot be taken by the Council. It was recommended that the complainant

seek independent legal advice which can be obtained from the Citizens Advice Bureau or from a solicitor that specialises in land dispute cases.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not correctly corresponding with the complainant. Officers were reminded of their responsibility to correctly communicate with individuals.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Planning Team had been reminded of its responsibility to return correspondence in a timely manner.

5. Complaint against Planning

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Planning Department did not make reasonable adjustment to assist them when requesting information.

Council's response

The Council had provided the complainant with detailed explanations, as requested, as part of the complainant's neuro divergence. The correspondence was polite and factual and adjustments were made when the complainant notified the Council of their neuro divergence.

Assistant Director Comments

The Planning Department had correctly supported the complainant during their correspondence.

6. Complaint against Planning

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that they had not been notified of an amendment to a planning application.

Council's response

It was concluded that the Planning Team had correctly notified the neighbouring properties of the development and its subsequent amended plans with the correct time frames.

The Officers had determined that the amended planning application did not require a full resubmitted application as the amendment was not a large departure from the original application.

Statutory timeframes for the consultation for the original application had been provided correctly. Furthermore, when receiving the amended application, the Planning Team provided an additional consultation for the neighbouring properties. The Council is only required to consult on the first occasion. Amended plans do not have a statutory requirement for the Council to re-consult. However, the Council undertook this process.

As no objections were received during either consultation periods, the Council deemed the application to be acceptable.

Assistant Director Comments

The Planning Department had correctly assessed the planning application.

7. Complaint against Planning

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Planning Teams online notification system was not working correctly, the site notices for a planning application were not correctly advertised and incorrect information was being used in the Planning Committee reports for HMOs.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had acted appropriately when displaying the site notice and notifying the statutory consultees adjacent to the site.

Furthermore, the Planning Team had correctly applied the Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document to the Planning Committee report. The Planning Committee report had included the percentage of Houses in Multiple Occupation as required.

The Council recognises that the website was not clear in the functionality of the notification system, in that it does not clearly explain that a notification would only be sent when an application had changed status and not when a document has been uploaded.

The Planning Team were currently exploring the option to update the wording with the supplier in order to make this clear.

Assistant Director Comments

The Planning Department had correctly displayed the site notice in line with statutory guidance and were correctly using the HMO information as stipulated by the Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document.

8. Complaint against Planning

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to undertaken enforcement measure against a neighbouring property.

Council's response

The Council had actively investigated the issues that had been raised and had provided the complainant with the correct advice.

As the development, for which complainant had raised the enforcement issue against does not have enforceable conditions attached to it, the Council was unable to take action.

Furthermore, the Environmental Health Team have been in regular contact with the complainant regarding the noise issues and had provided the correct advice by requesting that diary sheets are filled in and returned in order to monitor the noise. As the complainant did not provide the diary sheets, the Environmental Health Team were unable to take any further action.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council correctly investigated the reported breach of planning conditions.

9. Complaint against Planning

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to undertake enforcement measures against a neighbouring property.

Council's response

The Council had actively investigated the issues raised and had provided the correct advice. The Council had determined that no further action was required as the development would likely have been approved if the correct application had been submitted. Furthermore, it was determined that the structure did not affect the complainant's amenity and the complainant's local Councillors did not wish to pursue this matter following consultation.

The Council had taken the correct action while investigating this issue.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council correctly investigated the reported breach of planning conditions.

10. Complaint against Planning

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Council had altered a planning method statement resulting in the change of delivery times permitted at a development site.

Council's response

There was no information to suggest that the Council had altered the planning method statement. The revised statement had been provided by the applicant with the revised wording. The Planning Team had considered this application and statement and had concluded with their professional judgement that the statement is acceptable. The wording was created or changed by the Council.

Assistant Director Comments

The Planning Team appropriately considered the revised statement. These statements are not altered by the Planning Team but are considered when they are submitted by an applicant.

11. Complaint against Planning

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Planning Team had failed to achieve full compliance with regards to conditions 7, 8 and 12 prior to the sale and occupation of the dwellings.

Council's response

The responsibility for the discharge of the planning conditions rests with the developer. It is the responsibility of the Council to undertake action to ensure compliance with these conditions. On this occasion, the Council are currently undertaking works to ensure the developers comply with these conditions through its Planning Enforcement Team.

The exact nature of the works could not be confirmed to the complainant as there is a potential for this information to be used as part of a legal case.

Assistant Director Comments

The Planning Enforcement Team had correctly started the investigation into the failure to achieve compliance into the conditions when this was reported. This issue requires thorough investigation and the details cannot be confirmed due their legal nature.

12. Complaint against Planning

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Planning Team had failed to make reasonable adjustments toward their neuro divergence and deliberately delayed issuing responses toward their enquiries.

Council's response

The Council had provided detailed explanations, as requested, as part of the complainant's neuro divergence. The correspondence had been polite and factual and adjustments were made when notification was provided to the Council regarding the neuro divergence.

There was no information to suggest that the Council have purposefully delayed any of the correspondence being sent. All correspondence was issued within one to two days.

Assistant Director Comments

The Planning Team had correctly made adjustments to support the complainant's neuro divergence upon being alerted to this. All correspondence was issued in a timely manner.

Housing Repairs**1. Complaint against Housing Repairs**

Response – 30 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Council had left them with a gas leak.

Council's response

It was concluded that an appropriate level of service was not received as the Council's telephone systems did not allow the complainant to report the occurrence of a gas leak at the property in a timely manner.

While they were able to report the gas leak through their Independent Living Coordinator, the initial contact with the Council failed due to the Out of Hours Service not connecting the telephone call and the Housing Repairs phone lines being busy.

The Council recognised that this caused distress and uncertainty during a stressful period of the gas leak.

While a gas leak occurred at the property, and the boiler was subsequently isolated by Cadent, the two following checks undertaken by the Housing Repairs Team did not find any faults with the boiler or that a leak had occurred from it.

Due to the conflicting information from Cadent and the Housing Repairs Team, the Council were unable to verify the exact source of the gas leak. However, subsequent checks have confirmed that there was no longer a gas leak at the property.

The Council offered the complainant £250 for the failure to connect to the Out of Hours service. **This was not accepted.**

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not being able to connect to the Out-of-Hour's service. Several inspections were undertaken to the boiler following the report of the leak, but no evidence could be found that the boiler was leaking or faulty.

2. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that their garage was in a state of disrepair and had not been repaired despite being reported.

Council's response

It was concluded that an appropriate level of service was not received as the Council did not take a proactive approach towards offering an alternative garage and the communication from the Housing Repairs Team regarding the repairs had been substandard.

The Council's records indicate that the garage was left in a state of good repair when the tenancy began, upon reporting issues of water ingress, the Housing Repairs Team attended the garage in timely manner to inspect and repair the issues that were reported.

However, while the Housing Repairs Team attended the garage in a timely manner, there was a failure to identify that the walls and mortar required repair in the first visit, which resulted in delays in the correct repairs being undertaken.

Furthermore, while the complainant had been offered a temporary garage, the Home Ownership Team should have identified sooner that a temporary transfer of the garage was necessary due to the water ingress and the difficulties encountered in undertaking the

full repair of the garage due to the private homeowner's shed backing up to the wall that required repairing.

A fund of £120.18 was issued to the complainant for their garage rent while the garage was unusable, and an additional £180 compensation was offered and accepted.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not correctly identifying the repairs in the first instance and not identifying the need to undertake a temporary transfer of the garage sooner.

3. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team did not attend a scheduled appointment.

Council's response

It was concluded that an appropriate level of service was not received as the Housing Repairs Team did not attend the property for a scheduled appointment. Furthermore, the Housing Repairs Team did not correctly notify the complainant that they were unable to attend this repair.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not correctly attending the appointment in the first instance. The repair was rescheduled and undertaken correctly following this notification.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded to provide correspondence to individuals where delays in works arise.
- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded to attend appointments when these have been scheduled.

4. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a delay to repair an issue of damp and mould at their property.

Council's response

It was concluded that an appropriate level of service was not received as there were delays in the Housing Repairs Team undertaking repairs to the property's soffits and fascias.

While it was identified by the Council's contractor, Baggaley and Jenkins, that it would be beneficial to repair the soffits and fascias, this was not correctly booked by the Housing Repairs Team.

A further delay occurred in repairing the soffits and fascias when an asbestos survey was delayed.

The complainant was offered £500 compensation and an apology. However, **this was not accepted.**

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by delaying the repairs to the soffits and fascias.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility to ensure that works identified by external contractors are promptly undertaken.
- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility to undertake actions identified during the complaint process.
- Managers have been reminded of the importance of ensuring that employees undertake actions identified during the complaint process, and that they should be monitoring this.
- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded to provide correspondence to individuals where delays in works arise.

5. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team had not repaired an issue of cracked plaster at their property.

Council's response

It was concluded that an appropriate level of service was received as the Council records indicate that the plastering in the rear bedroom was sound and had not de-bonded.

As the plaster had not de-bonded, no work was required to repair the plaster. Furthermore, as the Right to Buy process had been started, the Council is no longer responsible for routine repairs at the property.

Assistant Director Comments

The Housing Repairs Team attended the property promptly and identified that the plaster did not require any work as it was sound. Individuals that start the Right to Buy process become responsible for the repairs of the property and the complainant was correctly informed of this.

6. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheldComplaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that an issue of decorating an area affected by damp and mould was not undertaken correctly.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had not received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Repairs Team incorrectly informed them that maintenance of the works to the paint in their bathroom was their responsibility.

While the work to repaint the bathroom following the plaster repairs was carried out by the Council's contractor, this was not undertaken correctly as a mist coat was not applied. By not applying a mist coat, this has caused the paint applied to bubble and peel.

Furthermore, the Housing Repairs Team had incorrectly informed the complainant that the painting was their responsibility to rectify despite being undertaken on behalf of the Council.

An apology was offered and works were undertaken to correctly paint the bathroom.

The complainant was offered and accepted £500 compensation for the issues highlighted above.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not correctly undertaking the works in the first instance. The Housing Repairs Team were reminded of their responsibility to correct assess and book works undertaken by contractors.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility to correctly identify repairs in the first instance. This includes inspecting any records of previous repairs undertaken by the Council or on behalf of the Council.
- The Council's contractors have been reminded of their responsibility to undertake works correctly in the first instance.
- The Housing Repairs Team has been instructed to attend your property to remedy the painting works.

7. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 30 working days. An extension was required to a stage 2 complaint due to the extensive information relating an individual's health issues.

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that an issue of damp and mould was not correctly prioritised despite their disability. Furthermore, the offer of a decant property while the damp works were undertaken was not appropriate for their needs.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had not received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Repairs Team had delayed several repairs to the damp and mould at the property.

While inspections and works were undertaken, there were delays in works being booked and subsequently completed. Furthermore, despite six separate reports of damp and mould at the property from 2021, the Housing Repairs Team failed to identify that the damp proof course had failed until 2024.

The Council recognised that having to report damp and mould on several occasions is not acceptable service delivery. A stock condition survey was being undertaken to review all Council properties for damp and mould, and this programme has been expedited. Any issues of damp and mould are then reported to the Housing Repairs Team and works are booked in to be completed in a timely manner.

Furthermore, the Council's Change Delivery Manager was reviewing the Housing Repairs Team's damp and mould processes to ensure that these are fit for purpose and align with the anticipated "Awaab's Law".

The Housing Repairs Team had correctly followed the decant process to enable the major works to be undertaken at the property, and booked a disabled access room and agreed to pay for any expenses towards the complainant's food cost during the decant. However, the complainant remained unhappy with the quality of the accommodation provided. This resulted in the complainant booking an alternative hotel while the works were undertaken.

The Council considered this aspect of the complaint, particularly the complainant's vulnerabilities and the length of time the Council took to identify the correct repairs to their property, and agreed to reimburse them for reasonable expenses toward their food, travel costs and the alternative stay at the Travelodge they had booked.

An apology was offered and the complainant was offered and accepted £4,776.98 compensation for the issues highlighted above.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not correctly identifying the extent of the works in the first instance. Reminders and additional systems have been introduced to mitigate this issue.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of the responsibility to correctly and promptly identify and diagnose repairs in the first instance. This includes inspecting any records of previous repairs undertaken by the Council or on behalf of the Council.
- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of the responsibility to undertake works correctly and promptly in the first instance.
- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of the responsibility to prioritise repairs where an individual has vulnerabilities that are directly affected by the necessary works.
- The Housing Repairs Team has been instructed to include any vulnerabilities in complaint responses that have a direct effect on an individual's complaint during the stage 1 complaint process.
- The Housing Repairs Team has been instructed to continue and expedite stock condition surveys at all Council properties to determine if damp and mould is present.
- The Change Delivery Manager has been instructed to conduct a review the Council's Damp and Mould policies to ensure that they are fit for purpose and align with the anticipated "Awaab's Law".
- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility to follow the repair timeframes as stated in the Housing Repairs Policy and the Damp and Mould Policy.

8. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld**Complaint**

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to investigate an of property subsidence.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Repairs Teams had correctly attended the property review the issues of subsidence in a timely manner.

The Council had routinely inspected the property when the issues had been raised with its potential subsidence. A survey was undertaken by a chartered surveyor and it was noted that the subsidence was minimal. As a result, the Council undertook further investigative works through a soil sample and an arboriculture assessment.

Further assessments were carried out by the Housing Repairs Team using Tell Tales and no further subsidence was reported.

Assistant Director Comments

The Housing Repairs Team had correctly investigated the issue of subsidence in a timely manner.

9. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to investigate a leak at their property.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Repairs Team repaired their boiler leak in timely manner when it was reported.

While the leak had been initially reported, the appointment to review the leak was cancelled by the complainant. This was reorganised and repaired correctly in the follow up appointment.

Assistant Director Comments

The Housing Repairs Team had correctly investigated the issue of the boiler leak in a timely manner.

10. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to stop their gutters becoming blocked.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Repairs Team had attended the property in a timely manner to clear the gutters when these have been reported.

The Housing Repairs Team had undertaken works to mitigate the leaves entering the guttering by maintaining the tree and by altering the gutter height to allow the water to flow freely.

Assistant Director Comments

The Housing Repairs Team had correctly investigated the issue of the blocked gutters in a timely manner.

11. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to investigate an issue of cracking plaster.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Repairs Team had attended their property in a timely manner to review the cracks in their wall.

The Housing Repairs Team had undertaken two separate investigations and had found that the plaster was sound with no signs of de-bonding. The Council's records indicate that there were no signs of damage to the wall to suggest that this was moving.

Assistant Director Comments

The Housing Repairs Team promptly investigated the issues of the cracked plaster and no further works were identified.

12. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to investigate an issue of damaged flooring and that they had been treated in a discriminatory way due to their sexuality.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Repairs Team visited the property promptly when it was reported and that further works were required by Council's contractor.

Upon receiving the report that the flooring required additional works, the Housing Repairs Team visited the property on the same day and confirmed that a decant was required in order for the works to be completed.

There was no evidence to suggest that the complainant was treated in a discriminatory way.

Assistant Director Comments

The Housing Repairs Team promptly investigated the issues with the complainant's flooring. The Council takes its responsibilities toward discrimination seriously and employees were required to complete training to ensure that individuals were treated fairly and with respect.

13. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that their neighbour had recently had their kitchen and bathroom upgraded but they did not.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Repairs Team had attended their property and determined that the kitchen and bathroom were in a serviceable and good condition. The Housing Repairs Team had confirmed that these do not require replacement at this time.

Assistant Director Comments

The Housing Repairs Team had correctly assessed that the kitchen and bathroom did not require replacement and informed the complainant of this.

14. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council to report that a lamp post was not working. The repair took more than eight weeks to expedite and there was a lack of response from the Repairs Team.

Council's response

It was concluded that the tenant did not receive an appropriate level of service as the Housing Repairs Team unreasonably delayed the repairing of the lamp post.

While the Housing Repairs Team correctly received the reports of the lamp post requiring repairing, delays occurred due to several of the appointments being missed by the Housing Repairs Team and the subsequent electrical contractor.

The Housing Repairs Team did not inform the tenant of these delays, nor did they inform them of rearranged appointments.

An apology for this was issued along with compensation of £250.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not correctly undertaking the works in the first instance. The Housing Repairs Team were reminded of their responsibility to correct assess and book works undertaken by contractors.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility to ensure that external contractors promptly undertake actions requested.
- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility to return correspondence in a timely manner.
- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility to undertake actions identified during the complaint process.
- Managers have been reminded of the importance of ensuring that employees undertake actions identified during the complaint process, and that they should be monitoring this.
- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded to provide correspondence to individuals where delays in works arise.

15. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to repair a roof leak at a block flats.

Council's response

It was noted that there had been unreasonable delays in the Capital Works and Housing Repairs Teams undertaking and completing the necessary works and keeping the complainant updated on their completion.

These delays occurred due to the Council not progressing the works or monitoring their completion to ensure that they were undertaken in a timely manner. Furthermore, works that were identified as part of the complaint were not undertaken.

During the stage 2 complaint process, the Council had since procured a contractor to repair the flat roof. As part of the complaint, the Council had agreed to prioritise the complainant's block and repair this first as it is the most affected by the leaking flat roof. The Council would continue to monitor the progress of the repair by undertaking weekly site visits to the block.

The Council would further ensure that the complainant was communicated to in a timely manner should there be any developments or updates. The Head of Housing and the Modernisation Manager had agreed to be the complainant's points of contact for these updates.

Furthermore, the complainant was offered and accepted £2,000 compensation.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to undertake the works and then delaying them. The Housing Repairs and Capital Works Team had been reminded of their responsibility in booking and completing works in a timely manner.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The responsibility to appropriately communicate with tenants/complainants.
- To accurately log necessary works in a reasonable period and to prioritise repairs where necessary.
- To monitor all works to ensure that they completed in a reasonable timeframe whether being completed by the Council or referred to our Contractors.
- To keep the tenant/complainant updated of any issue that would delay the completion of the works.
- To action and monitor complaints, within agreed timeframes until they are satisfactorily concluded.

16. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 30 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to repair a garden that had been reallocated to them.

Council's response

It was found that delays had occurred due to the Council delaying the inputting of the works on to the Housing Repairs system and incorrectly passing the works to an incorrect contractor to complete repairs.

This was further exacerbated by the Housing Repairs Team not following up on the completion of these repairs despite them being registered as part of the complainant's stage 1 complaint. The Housing Repairs Team acknowledged that the repairs were not entered on the system for an extended period of time or monitored to ensure their completion. Furthermore, the full requirements of the inspection that took place at the complainant's property were not correctly undertaken. This resulted in a further delay in the Housing Repairs Team undertaking the necessary works.

A full inspection of the complainant's property was subsequently undertaken to identify the full extent of the work needed to be complete the issues raised.

The complainant was offered and accepted £1,750 compensation.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to undertake the works and then delaying them. The Housing Repairs had been reminded of their responsibility in booking and completing works in a timely manner.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The responsibility to appropriately communicate with tenants/complainants.
- To accurately log necessary works in a reasonable period and to prioritise repairs where necessary.
- To monitor all works to ensure that they completed in a reasonable timeframe whether being completed by the Council or referred to our Contractors.
- To keep the tenant/complainant updated of any issue that would delay the completion of the works.
- To action and monitor complaints, within agreed timeframes until they are satisfactorily concluded.
- Increase checks, by an appropriate manager, on actions identified as part of the complaints process to ensure that these are completed in a timely manner.
- The Housing Department have undertaken a self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Record Keeping Guidance. The Council has implement actions to ensure that records are regularly monitored and updated.

17. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the damp proofing previously undertaken by the Council had been ineffective.

Council's response

The Council had undertaken inspections to the complainant's property in a timely manner to review the effectiveness of the damp proof works. However, there was a delay in completing the works to the door may have potentially exacerbated the damp issue.

Despite the recommendation provided by the Council's contractor, Baggaley and Jenkins, to ensure that the front door is water tight, the Council had failed to undertake this work. While the Housing Repairs Team attempted to remedy the issue but access could not be made to the property, there were no records to suggest that this was followed up or a return visit was arranged.

This has caused a 9-month delay in the door being repaired.

The complainant was offered and accepted £1,974 compensation.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to undertake the works and then delaying them. The Housing Repairs had been reminded of their responsibility in booking and completing works in a timely manner.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The responsibility to effectively communicate with tenants/complainants, especially where delays are anticipated or have occurred.
- To accurately log necessary works in a reasonable period and to prioritise repairs where necessary.
- To monitor all works to ensure that they completed in a reasonable timeframe whether being completed by the Council or referred to our Contractors.
- To keep the tenant/complainant updated of any issue that would delay the completion of the works.

18. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld**Complaint**

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team had failed to repair a leak at a neighbouring property which had caused damage to their property.

Council's response

It was found that there had been delays in the Council inspecting, and procuring, the necessary works from a contractor to repair the leak at the neighbour's property and also repairing the damage caused at complainant's property.

These delays occurred due to the Council not attending an inspection despite it being correctly scheduled. This resulted in the Council delaying the works necessary to repair the leak at the neighbouring property and repairing the damage caused by the leak.

Furthermore, the Housing Repairs Team delayed procuring a contractor to repair the bathroom leak at the neighbour's property. Part of the planned works were also to repair the damage caused to complainant's property by the leak, and as a consequence these were also delayed.

This delay occurred due the Housing Repairs Team not approving the quote for the works in a timely manner. This further delayed the repairs to the properties.

The complainant was offered and accepted £1,000 compensation.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to undertake the works and then delaying them. The Housing Repairs had been reminded of their responsibility in booking and completing works in a timely manner.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The responsibility to effectively communicate with complainants, especially where delays are anticipated or have occurred.
- To accurately log necessary works in a reasonable period and to prioritise repairs where necessary.
- To monitor all works to ensure that they are completed in a reasonable timeframe, whether being completed by the Council, or referred to Contractors.
- Additional training has been provided to the Housing Department regarding record keeping, complaint handling and monitoring the outcome of complaints. The Housing Repairs Team are required to actively monitor any repairs scheduled as part of complaints to ensure their completion following this training
- The Housing Department has undertaken a self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Record Keeping Guidance. The Council has implemented actions to ensure that records are regularly monitored and updated.
- The Housing Repairs Team has since updated its process for logging repairs. This includes, giving Housing Repairs Inspectors allocated times for logging works to ensure that these are done promptly.

19. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team had not repaired a roof tile at a neighbouring property which was causing their property to become damp.

Council's response

It was found that the Council has actively investigated the roof and the damp at the complainant's property.

The Council had attended the property on multiple occasions to inspect the damp and mould.

It had been identified that the damp and mould at the property was not being caused by the missing roof tile and this may be linked to the guttering. It was noted during a visit to the property that the complainant's guttering had vegetation within it and this might be the source of the damp and mould. As a private home owner, the clearance of the guttering would be their responsibility.

Assistant Director Comments

The Housing Repairs Team had correctly investigated and notified the complainant of the necessary works to rectify the damp at their property. As a private homeowner, it remains their responsibility to maintain their property.

20. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld**Complaint**

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to remove damp and mould from their property.

Council's response

There had been unreasonable delays in the Housing Repairs Team logging and completing the necessary works and keeping the complainant updated.

These delays occurred due to the Council not attending an inspection/or recording the result of the inspection. Due to the Council records being incomplete, this resulted in the Council delaying the works necessary to remove the damp and mould.

Furthermore, the Housing Repairs Team delayed procuring a contractor to repair the bathroom leak that may have been contributing the damp and mould at the property. Part of these works were to apply anti-fungal mould wash that were also delayed.

This delay occurred due the Housing Repairs Team not approving the quote for the works in a timely manner. This further delayed the repairs to the property.

This resulted in a 6-month delay in the Council initially undertaking the repairs to the bath and mould treatment.

The complainant was offered £2,000 compensation. This was broken down in to:

- £500 for the delays and inconvenience caused by the repairs not being booked in a timely manner in the first instance.
- £500 compensation for the distress and/or hardship caused by the poor communication provided by the Housing Repairs Team and for the delays that occurred in repairs being booked.
- £1,000 toward the items that have been damaged by the damp and mould.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to undertake the works and then delaying them. The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility in booking works in a timely manner.

21. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to repair a storage heater at their property and to make secure a roof that was letting pests in. This took place during the complainant's pregnancy.

Council's response

There had been unreasonable delays in the Housing Repairs Team logging and completing the necessary works and keeping the complainant updated.

These delays have occurred due to the Council not correctly logging and undertaking the repairs. This was further exacerbated by the Housing Repairs Team not following up on the completion of these repairs following their logging and cancelling them incorrectly.

Furthermore, when the repair was initially undertaken, the Housing Repairs Team did not have the correct part which further delayed the repair to the heater.

While the heater in the hallway had failed, the heating for the rest of the property was functioning correctly.

The Council recognises that the complainant had experienced an issue with pests at the property due to the coving not being sealed correctly. The Council attended to this issue when reported but it is recognised that this has caused further distress.

The complainant was offered £1,180 compensation. This was broken down in to:

- £500 for the inconvenience, delays, distress and/or hardship caused by Council delaying the repair of the heater in the winter months and during your pregnancy.
- £500 compensation is for the inconvenience, distress and/or hardship caused by the poor communication provided by the Housing Repairs Team.
- £180 for a pest control service.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to undertake the works and then delaying them. The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility in booking works in a timely manner.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- To monitor all works to ensure that they completed in a reasonable timeframe whether being completed by the Council or referred to our Contractors.
- To keep the tenant/complainant updated of any issue that would delay the completion of the works.
- Additional training has been provided to the Housing Department in March 2024 regarding record keeping, complaint handling and monitoring the outcome of

complaints. The Housing Repairs are required to actively monitor any repairs scheduled as part of complaints to ensure their completion following this training.

- The Housing Department have undertaken a self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Record Keeping Guidance. The Council has implemented actions to ensure that records are regularly monitored and updated.
- The Housing Repairs Team have changed the process for how jobs are abandoned on the logging system to ensure that repairs are being abandoned correctly and not in error. This involves checking the repairs to ensure that the appropriate action has been undertaken before it is closed.

22. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been delays in the Council repairing the floor at their property. Due to the extensive works, temporary accommodation was offered to the complainant. The temporary accommodation offered to the complainant was poor due to other guest staying at the location.

Council's response

The Housing Repairs Team undertook the appropriate action to repair the flooring and sourcing an alternative accommodation while the repairs took place.

In recognition of the complainant's items being removed from the lounge to the bedroom to facilitate the repair, the Council sourced the complainant alternative accommodation.

The Council expressed sympathy that the complainant did not feel comfortable at the temporary accommodation. However, there was no information to suggest that the Council acted inappropriately when sourcing this accommodation.

Furthermore, the Council undertook the repairs to the floor in a timely manner with works commencing on 2 April 2024 and being fully completed on 4 April 2024.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council had taken the appropriate action by inspecting and advising the complainant in a timely manner.

23. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been difficulties in contacting the out of hours' service and operatives did not wear overshoes when entering their property.

Council's response

There was an issue with the complainant contacting the out of hours' service in the first instance and the out of hours' operative who initially attended the property did not have overshoes. As the operative did not have overshoes, the complainant did not let them into the house and this caused an initial delay in the boiler being repaired.

The Council attended the repairs to the boiler when they were reported and the correct action was undertaken in undertaking surveys to determine the fault. Each repair was completed over bank holiday periods without the need for the complainant to wait until normal office hours to receive the service. However, a delay occurred when the out of hours' operative did not check the condensate pipe in the first instance. This was identified in follow up visit and was repaired.

A technical issue arose which meant that the calls were not being correctly transferred to the out of hours' service. The Council are continuing to monitor this to ensure that the systems are working as intended.

The complainant was offered £250 compensation. This was broken down in to:

- £250 for the inconvenience, delays, distress and/or hardship caused by Council delaying the repair in the first instance due to the fault in the telephone service and for the operative not having overshoes.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused the technical difficulty in reporting the repair in the first instance and for the operative not having overshoes.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- Ensure the Housing Repairs Team and out of hours' operatives are reviewing the condensate pipes in the first instance to ensure this is not the cause of the fault when attending to boiler repairs.
- Monitor the out of hours' service phone lines to ensure these are working correctly. This is being monitored by the Council's Tenant Panel and by the Housing Repairs Team.
- Remind the out of hours' operatives to always carry overshoes with them and not to be taking shoes off during repairs.
- Remind the out of hours' service to correctly manage the expectations of individuals.

24. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there were delays in repairing the guttering at their aunt's property despite being reported on several occasions.

Council's response

There had been unreasonable delays in the Housing Repairs Team identifying the necessary repairs in the guttering at the complainant's aunt's property.

While the Housing Repairs Team had attended the aunt's property in a timely manner and undertook works to remove blockages from the guttering, there was a failure to identify that the guttering required repairing to fix the leak on a permanent basis.

This resulted in the Council not permanently repairing the gutter for 2 years and caused an issue with damp and mould at the property.

The complainant and their aunt were offered £250 and £1965 compensation. This was broken down in to:

- £250 compensation is for the inconvenience, distress and/or hardship caused by the poor communication provided by the Housing Repairs Team and for the complainant having to repeatedly register the repair to the guttering on behalf of their aunt.
- £1,695 for the replacement of the decorating and carpet that have become damaged by the leak.
- £250 compensation for the inconvenience, delays, distress and/or hardship caused by Council not identifying the leak and permanent repair to the guttering in the first instance.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to undertake the works and then delaying them. The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility in booking works in a timely manner.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- Ensure that all repairs are fully investigated to ensure they are fully completed in the first instance.
- Ensure that tenants and their representatives are provided updates and communication in a timely manner and as requested.
- Specific training relating to complaint remedies and compensation has been provided to all complaint handlers at the Council on 31 January 2024 and 7 February 2024.

25. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld**Complaint**

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there were delays in repairing a back door at their property.

Council's response

There had been unreasonable delays in the Council repairing the back door of the property and not providing communication to ensure that the complainant was informed of the repairs progress.

These delays occurred due to a contractor not returning to the property following the initial visit and not providing an update to the issue in acquiring the necessary parts to complete the works.

The Council failed to monitor the progress of the repair and only picked this up following the registration of the stage 1 complaint.

The complainant was offered £250 compensation. This was broken down in to:

- £150 compensation is for the inconvenience, distress and/or hardship caused by the delays in the repair being undertaken and in recognition of the added inconvenience of not having access to the back door.
- £100 is for the inconvenience, delays, distress and/or hardship caused by Council not effectively communicating with you regarding the repairs and their progress.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to undertake the works and then delaying them. The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility in booking works in a timely manner.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- Ensure that all repairs are fully monitored through to completion.
- Ensure that tenants and their representatives are provided updates and communication in a timely manner, especially where delays are expected to occur.

26. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 30 working days

Complaint upheld**Complaint**

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there were delays in the Council removing damp and mould at their property and not correctly replacing skirting board.

Council's response

As the Council's records do not indicate that the full replacement of skirting board had been completed and that it had been report that the original skirting board had been used again, the complaint was upheld. The Housing Repairs Team attended the property to undertaken the full replacement of the skirting boards as per the original works quoted.

There was no information to suggest that the Council has acted inappropriately when dealing with the mould in the upstairs areas of the property. The Council had attended the property in a timely manner and determined that mould washes and repairing the bathroom walls are appropriate. In this instance, the Council had determined that while the moisture in the bathroom is caused by atmospheric condensation and it would be beneficial to replace the plasterboard with a thermal plasterboard to help reduce the moisture. The quote to undertake this work had been approved and the Council were due to make the necessary arrangements to complete the repairs.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not undertaking the full repair as originally quoted. The Housing Repairs Team attended the property to ensure that this was done correctly.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- An instruction has been issued to monitor all works to ensure that they are completed in a reasonable timeframe whether being completed by the Council or referred to our Contractors.
- An instruction has been issued to record completion of works and ensure that they are completed as exactly as required.

27. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld**Complaint**

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team had not repaired an issue with a hot water cylinder which resulted in the property only having 10 minutes of hot water at a time.

Council's response

The Housing Repairs Team had attended the property on each occasion the complainant had reported that they were unable to access hot water after 9/10 minutes of use. The Council had been unable to locate any faults with the hot water cylinder. The hot water cylinder only provides hot water for 9/10 minutes before it is required to re-charge the element that provides hot water.

The Housing Repairs Team had confirmed that this is working correctly.

While the Council was unable to locate any information to suggest that the hot water cylinder is not working correctly, the Council recognises that its record keeping and communication were not to a satisfactory standard.

The complainant and their aunt was offered £250 compensation. This was broken down in to:

- £250 compensation is for the inconvenience, distress and/or hardship caused by the lack of record keeping, the failure to return a telephone call and that advice/explanation surrounding the use of the hot water cylinder not being clear.

Assistant Director Comments

While the correct action had taken place regarding the inspection of the hot water cylinder, the record keeping and communication surrounding the work and operation of the water cylinder could have been better as to not increase the complainant's distress.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- An instruction has been issued that all records are to be correctly recorded and updated so repairs can be investigated fully and promptly.
- An instruction has been issued that all communication and telephone calls are to be undertaken promptly to avoid confusion or distress.
- An instruction has been issued that advice provided regarding the use of the hot water cylinder is clear and consistent.
-

28. Complaint against Housing Repairs

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld**Complaint**

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Repairs Team had not undertaken the appropriate repairs to their property before the commencement of their tenancy.

Council's response

There had been unreasonable delays in the Housing Repairs Team undertaking and completing the necessary works and keeping the complainant updated.

These delays had occurred due to the Council not progressing the works or monitoring their completion to ensure that they were undertaken in a timely manner. Furthermore, works that should have been identified and undertaken were only raised when a complaint was made to the Council.

This was further exacerbated by the Housing Repairs Team not following up on the completion of these repairs despite them being registered as part of the complaint made to the Council. While the Housing Repairs Team had acknowledged and logged the repairs, these were not monitored to ensure their completion.

While the works would not have stopped the complainant moving into the property, the Council recognises that due to the extent of works, further consideration should have been given as whether the property was ready to let.

The complainant and their aunt was offered £1,500 compensation. This was broken down in to:

- £1,000 for the inconvenience, delays, distress and/or hardship caused in the works being undertaken despite being investigated as an official complaint.
- £500 compensation is for the inconvenience, distress and/or hardship caused by the poor communication provided by the Housing Repairs Team.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to undertake the works and then delaying them. The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility in booking works in a timely manner.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The responsibility to appropriately communicate with tenants/complainants.
- To accurately log necessary works in a reasonable period and to prioritise repairs where necessary.
- To monitor all works to ensure that they completed in a reasonable timeframe whether being completed by the Council or referred to our Contractors.
- To keep the tenant/complainant updated of any issue that would delay the completion of the works.
- To action and monitor complaints, within agreed timeframes until they are satisfactorily concluded.
- The Housing letting team have been advised to thoroughly check before releasing a property that it is in a condition to be let or if works are required that this is properly communicated and works are addressed in a timely manner.
- Additional training has been provided to the Housing Department in March 2024 regarding record keeping, complaint handling and monitoring the outcome of complaints. The Housing Repairs are required to actively monitor any repairs scheduled as part of complaints to ensure their completion following this training.
- The Housing Department have undertaken a self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Record Keeping Guidance. The Council has implement actions to ensure that records are regularly monitored and updated.

Housing Operations**1. Complaint against Housing Operations**

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld**Complaint**

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Operations Team had not correctly dealt with an issue of drains being blocked by another tenant.

Council's response

It was concluded that an appropriate level of service was not received as the Tenancy Services Team had not proactively monitored the issues of food waste being disposed of via a drain.

The Council recognises that by not actively monitoring the issue, this had resulted in the complainant having to report the blocked drains on three separate occasions.

While the drains had been cleared on the same day that they had been reported as being blocked, by not monitoring the issue this had reoccurred.

It was requested that the Tenancy Services Team write to all residents to remind them that food waste should not be put in the drain.

Furthermore, it was requested that regular site visits are undertaken to the flats to monitor the situation. Additionally, the Tenancy Services Team would visit each of the residents at the block to remind them that food waste should not be disposed of via the drain.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not correctly monitoring the issue of the drains proactively which allowed it to re-occur.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Tenancy Services Team has been reminded of their responsibility to proactively investigate issues when they are raised.
- It was requested that the Tenancy Services Team write to all residents to remind them that food waste should not be put in the drain.

2. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld**Complaint**

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that they had been left with a standing charge on the electricity meter when they moved into their new property.

Council's response

It was concluded that an appropriate level of service was not received, as the property the complainant had recently moved in to already had a standing charge of £31 on the electricity meter.

The complainant was refunded the £31 and an apology was offered.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not clearing the standing charge on the electricity meter in the first instance.

3. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Operations Team had inappropriately provided personal details to a safeguarding board.

Council's response

It was concluded that an appropriate level of service was received as the Council is required to attend multi-agency meetings when invited regarding safeguarding issues.

The Housing Operations Team had appropriately attended these meetings when invited and shared information as appropriate.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council is required to share information regarding safeguarding when requested. This action was undertaken appropriately.

4. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a delay in the Housing Operations Team repairing a fence.

Council's response

It was concluded that an appropriate level of service was not received as there had been extended delays in the Housing Department undertaking repairs to the fence.

While reports of the need to repair fence had been received, through various Teams and the complaint process, there has been approximately a 12-month delay in completing the repairs.

The Housing Department correctly identified the fence as needing repair but could not undertake the repair until the garden of the Tenant had been cleared. Delays occurred in the fence being repaired when the Tenancy Services Team incorrectly identified the tenant whose garden required clearing.

A further delay occurred when the Housing Repairs Team identified that the boundary was not the responsibility of the Council and cancelled the repair.

The full repair was correctly undertaken a part of the stage 2 complaint process.

£500 compensation was offered and accepted.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience of not repairing the fence correctly in the first instance.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Housing Repairs Team has been reminded of their responsibility to undertake actions identified during the complaint process.
- Managers have been reminded of the importance of ensuring that employees undertake actions identified during the complaint process, and that they should be monitoring this.
- The Housing Repairs Team and Tenancy Services Team have been reminded to provide correspondence to individuals where delays in works arise.
- The Housing Department has been reminded of their responsibility to monitor complaint action that involve multiple Teams.

5. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Outcome upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that their homelessness application was not appropriately handled.

Council's response

While the Housing Options Team had communicated with the complainant promptly, the content of the communication had lacked empathy toward the complainant's current situation. The complainant was unable to provide identification to assist with their application. However, the Housing Option Team did not provide advice as to the alternative options for identification were not provided to them during their initial contact.

The complainant was offered and accepted £150 compensation for the issues highlighted above

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not correctly corresponding with the complainant. Officers were reminded of their responsibility to correctly communicate with individuals.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Housing Options Team has been reminded of their responsibility to provide all the necessary information regarding homelessness applications, specifically identification, in the first instance.
- The Housing Options Team has been reminded of their responsibility to provide communication in an empathic way.

6. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to investigate an issue of noise nuisance.

Council's response

The Housing Tenancy Team has assessed the complaint regarding Anti-Social Behaviour. However, by not responding to the complainant's correspondence in a timely manner and not acknowledging the complainant's complaint of Anti-Social Behaviour correctly, the Council recognises that this had caused additional confusion and distress.

An apology was provided for this and for any additional distress or confusion caused.

The Housing Tenancy Team had determined that issues that had been raised were not considered Anti-Social Behaviour and the noise monitoring confirmed that this is everyday living noise.

The complainant was offered and accepted £250 compensation for the issues highlighted above.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not correctly corresponding with the complainant. Officers were reminded of their responsibility to correctly communicate with individuals.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Housing Tenancy Team has been reminded of their responsibility to return correspondence in a timely manner.
- The Housing Tenancy Team has been reminded of their responsibility to appropriately acknowledge and manage complaints of Anti-Social Behaviour when they are received.
- The Housing Tenancy Team has been instructed to provide you with correspondence by 1 November 2024 to discuss any further concerns you have.
- A reminder has been provided to the Council's Customer Services Team to ensure that they correctly direct telephone calls regarding tenant noise nuisance to the Housing Tenancy Team.

7. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld**Complaint**

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the correct advice had not been provided regarding the storage of mobility scooters.

Council's response

It was concluded that the Housing Tenancy Team had failed to respond to the complainant's specific enquires regarding mobility scooters in a timely manner. Furthermore, during the complainant's initial correspondence with the Housing Tenancy Team, they should have been issued with the Council's Mobility Scooters Guidance for Tenants to assist with any enquiries or permissions they were seeking. The Council recognises that this was not done.

A copy of this guidance had been included with the stage 2 letter. The guidance document provides further details on how to apply for the use and storage of a mobility scooter within Council properties.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not correctly corresponding with the complainant. Officers were reminded of their responsibility to correctly communicate with individuals.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Housing Tenancy Team has been reminded of their responsibility to return correspondence in a timely manner.
- The Housing Tenancy Team has been reminded of their responsibility to refer individuals to the Mobility Scooters Guidance for Tenants document.

8. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to investigate an issue of noise nuisance.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had not received an appropriate level of service as the Tenancy Services Team had not provided communication in a timely manner or proactively investigated the concerns of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).

While the Council had correctly assessed the ASB issues based on the evidence that had provided, the Tenancy Services Team did not proactively investigate the concerns which resulted in the complainant having to contact the Council on multiple occasion and visit the Council Offices.

An apology was offered and the complainant was offered and accepted £500 compensation for the issues highlighted above.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not correctly corresponding with the complainant. Officers were reminded of their responsibility to correctly communicate with individuals.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Housing Services Team has been reminded of the responsibility to proactively investigate ASB complaints.
- The Housing Services Team has been reminded of the responsibility to provide correspondence to individuals in a timely manner.

9. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to activate their Homesearch account.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had not received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Operations Team incorrectly did not activate their Homesearch account when they had registered this.

While the complainant had submitted a Homesearch application, due to an administrative error, the Housing Operations Team did not activate the account which meant they were unable to bid on properties for several months.

Furthermore, it was identified that the complainant was not contacted by the Housing Operations Team despite a specific instruction to do so as part of the stage 1 complaint response.

An apology was offered and the complainant was offered but did not accept £150 compensation for the issues highlighted above.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by not activating the account correctly. Upon being alerted to this, the account was correctly activated.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Housing Operations Team has been reminded of their responsibility to return correspondence in a timely manner.
- The Housing Operations Team has been reminded of their responsibility to undertake actions identified during the complaint process.
- Managers has been reminded of the importance of ensuring that employees undertake actions identified during the complaint process, and that they should be monitoring this.
- The Housing Operations Team has been reminded to correctly process housing allocations in the first instance.

10. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to investigate an issue of noise nuisance.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had received an appropriate level of service as Environmental Health and Housing Tenancy had correctly investigated their complaints of noise nuisance.

The Council had correctly installed noise monitoring equipment at the property, and the complainant's neighbour's property, in order to investigate the alleged issues.

The Council had installed noise monitoring equipment over a period of two years and no evidence of noise nuisance has been recorded during this time.

Assistant Director Comments

The Housing Operations Team had correctly investigated the issue of noise nuisance in a timely manner.

11. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to investigate an issue their ceiling collapsing due to a leak.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Repairs Team repaired the roof leak in a timely manner when it was reported.

The Housing Repairs Team was only able to attend to repairs when they are reported. On this occasion, as previous reports of a leak had not been reported before to the Housing Repairs Team, they were unable to attend before the ceiling collapsed.

The Housing Repairs Team undertook the correct action in attending the complainant's property the following day to repair the leak and making their living room safe. The repair could not be undertaken on the same day as this would have required works to the roof during the evening. Due to health and safety, the Housing Repairs Team was unable to perform this work on the same day.

Assistant Director Comments

The Housing Repairs Team are only able to attend to repairs when they are reported. As no leak had been reported until the point of the ceiling collapse, the Housing Repairs Team was unable to attend promptly.

12. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to investigate an issue of noise nuisance.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Services Team had correctly investigated the complaints of noise nuisance.

The Council had correctly installed noise monitoring equipment at the complainant's property and no evidence of noise nuisance had been recorded during this time. Furthermore, no evidence of noise nuisance was captured while the complainant was using the noise monitoring app.

Assistant Director Comments

The Housing Operations Team had correctly investigated the issue of noise nuisance in a timely manner.

13. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council to complain about a number of issues, including anti-social behaviour from a neighbour, the behaviour of a Housing Officer, that their mental health was suffering because of the Council's lack of action, and that the accommodation they have been offered was inappropriate and had no heating.

Council's response

The complainant received an appropriate level of service as the Housing Services Team had correctly assessed their complaints of anti-social behaviour.

There was no evidence to support the accusations the complainant made against the neighbour. A visit from the Housing Officer resulted in the complainant's arrest and there was no independent evidence to corroborate the allegations made against the Housing Officer.

Further to this, there was no evidence that the repairs to the heating had not been actioned. The Housing Repairs Team attended the property the day after a report of the heating not working and this was repaired on the same day.

Assistant Director Comments

The Housing Operations Team correctly investigated the concerns raised by the complainant. No evidence was gathered to support their allegations and their own actions caused the Council to take action against them.

14. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

A tenant reported a communal door key as lost in July 2024 and ordered a new key which never arrived. A second key was ordered in October 2024, but it was incorrect. Another key was ordered and did not arrive. Being unable to access the property caused significant disruption to the tenant and their neighbours, who had to continually let them in.

Council's response

It was concluded that the tenant did not received an appropriate level of service as the Tenancy Services Team did not promptly obtain the key to the communal door in a timely manner.

Reports regarding the key were made on 12 July 2024 and again on 8 October 2024. Due to a delay in the supplier providing the key and the Tenancy Services Team not proactively chasing the manufacture, the tenant was left without a key to the communal area for over a month.

An apology and an offer of £250 compensation was made in acknowledgement of the distress and hardship caused by the poor communication and the delays in obtaining the communal door key by the Tenancy Services Team.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience of not proactively chasing the completion of the key order and not communicating correctly with the complainant. Reminders have been issued to the Housing Operations Team of the importance of this.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Tenancy Services Team have been reminded of their responsibility to ensure that external suppliers promptly undertake actions requested.
- The Tenancy Services Team have been reminded of their responsibility to provide correspondence to individuals to ensure that delays are communicated correctly.
- The Tenancy Services Team have been reminded of their responsibility to keep accurate records.

15. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld**Complaint**

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to provide them housing within the borough as part for their homelessness application.

Council's response

It was concluded that as the complainant had not been living within the Borough for a minimum period of 6 months, the Council were unable to evidence a local connection. As

the complainant did not have a local connection to the area, the Council were unable to consider their request for homelessness duty.

Furthermore, the Council were unable to progress the application as the necessary information was not received to demonstrate the complainant's local connection.

As the complainant had been living in the Nottingham City area for the past three years, their location connection was with Nottingham City. The complainant had been informed of this.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council is required to follow process defined by the Allocations Policy. This ensures fair treatment of all tenants.

16. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Allocations Team did not correctly register the death of their brother or issued a Notice to Quit correctly.

Council's response

It was found that the Housing Department had requested to that complainant contact a different Housing Team to inform them of their brother's passing. The Housing Department should not have requested this action from the complainant and should have been more proactive in registering the passing of the complainant's brother and requesting that the appropriate departments contact the complainant directly should they require any further information.

As this was not undertaken, this resulted in the complainant having to contact a different Housing Team to register the bereavement.

Furthermore, the Council did not provide the correct advice regarding the complainant's brothers passing by requesting that they notify individual Housing Departments of the bereavement.

Furthermore, it was found that the Housing Allocations Team did not issue the Notice to Quit correctly for the complainant's deceased brother which resulted in their rent account accruing arrears.

The complainant was offered and accepted £250 compensation.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the distress caused by requesting the complainant to contact the Council multiple different times to register their brother's death. The Housing Team have been reminded of their responsibility to register bereavements efficiently and sympathetically.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- Refer or advise bereaved individuals to the “Tell us Once” offered by the Government to register deaths.
- Provide a more proactive approach to registering bereavements. Where all details cannot be taken in the first instance, arrange for telephone calls to be made from the appropriate departments to minimise the bereaved having to make this contact.
- Issue Notice to Quits in a timely manner when a death is reported.

17. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to provide them housing within the borough.

Council's response

The Housing Allocations Team had correctly assessed the complainant's current housing band in accordance with the information that they had supplied and in line with the Council's Allocations Policy.

The complainant had not provided the necessary information for the Council to consider their requests for a higher banding and to demonstrate that they were eligible to enter the Independent Living scheme.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council is required to follow process defined by the Allocations Policy. This ensures fair treatment of all tenants.

18. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there had been a lack of action to provide them housing within the borough as part for their homelessness application.

Council's response

The Council were unable to progress the complainant's application as the necessary information was not received to allow further consideration toward their application.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council is required to follow process defined by the Allocations Policy. This ensures fair treatment of all tenants.

19. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld**Complaint**

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Operations Team had not provided adequate car parking provision at a block of flats or are enforcing the car park.

Council's response

The Council was not obligated to provide car parking at this site and the car parking currently provided was not enforceable.

To assist with this situation, the Council would erect additional signage indicating that the car park was for residents only as a deterrent for non-residents parking on the site. Furthermore, the Council would install new bays and a disabled parking bay to assist with the provision currently offered.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council correctly manages the parking provision provided at the site.

20. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld**Complaint**

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Operations Team had allowed them to bid on a property that they were not eligible for.

Council's response

It was found that the Council had allowed the complainant to bid on a property that they were not eligible for due to an administrative error.

While the Council had correctly advertised the property with the correct requirements, the administrative error allowed the complainant to bid on the property on multiple occasions.

The Council recognised that this has caused the complainant frustration and that their expectations were not correctly managed. The Housing Allocations Team have since rectified this issue and the complainant is now only shown properties on the Homechoice system that they are eligible for.

Head of Service Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by the administrative error. This has been identified and rectified.

21. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheldComplaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Operations Team did not correctly support them during a period of potential homelessness.

Council's response

It was found that the Housing Options Team did not respond to the complainant's correspondence in a timely manner.

While the Housing Options Team had correctly assessed the complainant's banding and Homelessness application, by not responding to their correspondence in a timely manner, the Council recognised that this had caused confusion and distress.

Furthermore, the Housing Options Team did not contact the complainant despite a specific action to do so as detailed in their stage 1 complaint response. The Housing Options Team had since contacted the complainant as part of the stage 2 complaint.

The Housing Options Team would continue to assist the complainant during their homelessness application and the prevention duty will be acted upon while that duty exists.

The Council encouraged the complainant to continue to bid on properties, inside and outside of their preferred area, and to explore the options provided by private rented and other social housing providers.

The complainant was subsequently housed with a social housing provider.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused not responding to the complainant's correspondence and that this caused distress that during their period of potential homelessness.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Housing Options Team have been reminded of their responsibility to return correspondence in a timely manner.
- The Housing Options Team have been reminded of their responsibility to undertake actions identified during the complaint process.

- Managers have been reminded of the importance of ensuring that employees undertake actions identified during the complaint process, and that they should be monitoring this.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The responsibility to effectively communicate with tenants/complainants, especially where delays are anticipated or have occurred.
- To accurately log necessary works in a reasonable period and to prioritise repairs where necessary.
- To monitor all works to ensure that they completed in a reasonable timeframe whether being completed by the Council or referred to our Contractors.
- To keep the tenant/complainant updated of any issue that would delay the completion of the works.
- Additional training has been provided to the Housing Department in March 2024 regarding record keeping, complaint handling and monitoring the outcome of complaints. The Housing Repairs are required to actively monitor any repairs scheduled as part of complaints to ensure their completion following this training.
- The Housing Department have undertaken a self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Record Keeping Guidance. The Council has implement actions to ensure that records are regularly monitored and updated.
- The Housing Repairs Team have since updated their process for logging repairs. This includes, giving Housing Repairs Inspectors allocated times for logging works to ensure that these are done promptly.

22. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that their neighbour had stolen part of their garden and the Council were not assisting in rectifying the issue.

Council's response

The Council had informed the complainant of which garden was allocated to their property in 2020. The entirety of the rear garden had been sold to the leaseholder in 2003 under the Right to Buy scheme. Therefore, this garden no longer belongs to the Council.

While the complainant had been granted access to the rear garden by the owner, this access has been removed.

The Council is unable to grant access to this garden as it no longer belongs to the Council and is owned legally by their neighbour.

The complainant had been informed of this and that the Council cannot return part of the rear garden.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council had undertaken the correct action by providing the complainant the details of which garden belonged to them.

23. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that there were delays in the Council offering the complainant a property and not progressing the adaptation of the property offered.

Council's response

The Council processed the application on the housing register correctly and banded the complainant accordingly at band 1, high priority. However, the type of property required as recommended by their Occupational Therapist and within their chosen location were limited in number and currently were unavailable due to being occupied.

The Council is obligated to act upon the information provided by Occupational Therapists and therefore the Council were unable to offer alternative properties outside of that recommendation.

Furthermore, the Council correctly processed the application for adaptations. The delay occurred due to the requested information not being supplied by the complainant in a timely manner. The Council made regular contact with the complainant to provide updates and request the outstanding information.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council is required to follow process defined by the Allocations Policy. This ensures fair treatment of all tenants.

24. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Operations Team cause them distress when requesting that they vacate temporary accommodation provided during their homeless application. The Housing Operations had not considered their mental health when undertaking this action.

Council's response

The Council had assisted the complainant through the homelessness process by arranging temporary accommodation earlier than normal to assist with their mental health and the issues they were experiencing with their private rented accommodation.

The Council further supported the complainant through the period of them not vacating the temporary accommodation when requested. The Housing Options Team visited and met with the complainant on multiple occasions to explain the process and consequences of not leaving the property. Furthermore, the Council had worked with and signposted the complainant to support networks, such as Citizens Advice, to assist with their homelessness case.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council is required to follow process defined by the Allocations Policy. This ensures fair treatment of all tenants.

25. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Council had not adequately dealt with an issue of dog fouling and unsupervised dogs in a communal area.

Council's response

The Council had actively investigated the concerns raised regarding the dog fouling and unsupervised dogs in the communal area.

The Council are required to work with the complainant's neighbour to ensure that the situation is resolved. The Council would not look to tenancy enforcement in the first instance but would look to assist and educate the complainant's neighbour regarding the concerns that have been raised.

The Council continue to do this through the Housing and Dog Warden Teams and improvements are currently being made.

Head of Service Comments

The Housing Operations Team are required to thoroughly investigate concerns regarding ASB to ensure any actions are appropriate and proportionate.

26. Complaint against Housing Operations

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Council had not adequately dealt with an issue of cars being sold at a property and lack of action to cut an overgrown hedge.

Council's response

The Council had actively investigated the concerns raised regarding the sale of cars and the overgrown hedge.

On this occasion, the evidence submitted to support the concerns was not sufficient for the Council to demonstrate a breach of tenancy. The Council has promptly informed the complainant of this.

Action was undertaken to ensure that the overgrown hedge was cut in a timely manner.

Assistant Director Comments

The Housing Operations Team are required to thoroughly investigate concerns regarding ASB to ensure any actions are appropriate and proportionate.

Housing Strategy

1. Complaint against Housing Strategy

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that their Right to Buy application was not subject to a greater discount.

Council's response

It was concluded that an appropriate level of service was received as the Council had correctly followed guidance provided by the Government regarding the Right to Buy scheme.

The Council is not responsible for the discount provided in the Right to Buy scheme.

Assistant Director Comments

The appropriate discounts were applied in line with the Government's Right to Buy scheme.

2. Complaint against Housing Strategy

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that they had been requested to remove their CCTV cameras from their property.

Council's response

The Council is obligated to investigate complaints of Anti-Social Behaviour by tenants and leaseholders when they are received. In this case, as complaints about the complainant's conduct and the installation of CCTV had been received from the local residents and Nottinghamshire Police, the Council was obligated to investigate these issues.

The Council, having noted the breaches of the complainant's Leasehold Agreement by installing CCTV cameras without permission, were obligated to contact the complainant to ensure that the appropriate action was undertaken to remove these.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council correctly investigated the issues raised by local residents and were obligated to request that the complainant remove the CCTV as this was a breach of their Leasehold Agreement.

3. Complaint against Housing Strategy

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Strategy Team had delayed in the acquisition of their property which caused them to lose money on their house sale. Furthermore, the Council Tax were inappropriately chasing the complainant for unpaid Council Tax.

Council's response

It was found that the Council incorrectly managed the complainant's expectations regarding the purchase of their property.

While the Home Ownership Team followed the correct process to undertake the potential purchase of your property, they had incorrectly informed the complainant that the Council were to purchase the property.

The Council recognised that Home Ownership Team may have influenced any decisions made regarding the sale of the property privately.

The Council Tax Team had acted appropriately when contacting the complainant or instructing solicitors to pursue the debt relating to their outstanding Council Tax.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises the inconvenience caused by agreeing to purchase the property prematurely. The Housing Strategy Team did not have the authority to undertake this and they have been reminded of their responsibilities and to correctly manage expectations.

Complaint Team Recommendations/actions

- The Home Ownership Team will review and amend any correspondence sent to potential vendors regarding the timescales of the acquisition process to highlight the likely timeframes the process takes.
- The Home Ownership Team have been reminded of their responsibility to manage an individual's expectations correctly.
- The Home Ownership Team have been reminded that they should not give their opinion on a likely outcome, as this can cause confusion and upset.

4. Complaint against Housing Strategy

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld**Complaint**

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Strategy and Repairs Team had agreed to undertake works to their garage but failed to action them.

Council's response

It was found that the Council has not correctly managed the complainant's expectations by not clarifying that only minor works would be undertaken to maintain the garage and that no major works would be completed before the results of a stock condition survey had been received.

While the stock condition survey was being undertaken, the Council was unable to undertake any major works to the garages as this may result in their demolition. The Council was required to effectively use resources and undertaking works to the garages that would be demolished would not be appropriate.

In this instance, the complainant's garage requires major works but is still in a usable condition. Therefore, the major works identified would not be undertaken.

Assistant Director Comments

The Housing Strategy Team have been reminded of their responsibilities and to correctly manage expectations.

Housing Income**1. Complaint against Housing Income**

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld**Complaint**

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that they had been requested to remove their personal items from the communal area of an independent living scheme.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had received an appropriate level of service as the Council had undertaken the correct action to request removal of personal items from the communal areas to ensure that residents are safe in the event of an emergency.

Following receipt of the Fire Safety Matters Notice following an inspection by the Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Service, the Council is obligated to undertake the actions contained within this Notice to ensure that residents are safe.

The Council had correctly informed residents of the need to remove personal items from the communal areas in order to comply with the Fire Safety Matters Notice.

Assistant Director Comments

The Housing Repairs Team had correctly requested that the complainant remove their personal items from the communal areas to ensure that all the residents are safe in event of an emergency.

2. Complaint against Housing Income

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Income Team had not investigated an issue of noise nuisance correctly.

Council's response

The Council had actively investigated the complainant's complaints of Anti-Social Behaviour when they had raised them.

On the occasions that the complainant had raised the complaints of Anti-Social Behaviour, the Independent Living Team had determined that the noise they were experiencing did not count as a nuisance and the case were subsequently closed.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council correctly investigated the issue of noise nuisance. As no evidence had been provided to substantiate the complaint, the case was correctly closed.

3. Complaint against Housing Income

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Housing Income mistakenly sent a text message intended for them to their neighbour.

Council's response

The Housing Income Team incorrectly sent a text message that was intended for the complainant to their neighbour. The text message requested that the complainant contact the Housing Income Team and did not disclose any further information.

While the text message did not disclose any personal details to the neighbour the Council recognises that this has caused distress.

Assistant Director Comments

It is recognised that the text message was incorrectly sent. A reminder of the importance of data protection was provided to the Housing Income Team.

Communities

1. Complaint against Communities

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Senior Communities Officer had spoken disrespectfully to their daughter when issuing a Community Protection Warning by using the phrase “how would you feel”.

Council's response

There was no information to suggest that the Senior Communities Officer acted inappropriately or unprofessionally during a visit to issue a Community Protection Warning.

Furthermore, Nottinghamshire Police, who also attended the visit had confirmed that they did not witness any inappropriate behaviour by the Senior Communities Officer nor that the phrase “how would you feel” was used.

Assistant Director Comments

The Senior Communities Officer acted professionally and appropriately during the visit to issue the Community Protection Warning.

Customer Services

1. Complaint against Customer Services

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

A caller made a number of accusations against the Council, including that the Customer Services Team were rude to them during a telephone call, that the Council had stolen their number and breached their GDPR, that the Business Support Team had blocked their number when they were enquiring about jobs and that there should be a financial resolution with regards to the stealing of their telephone number and creating a profile on them.

Council's response

It was established that the complainant had not received an appropriate level of service as the Customer Services Team did not correctly handle a telephone call in which they told the complainant to "get a life." It was noted this was after numerous telephone calls in which the caller had repeatedly sworn at and provoked the employee.

Although it was recognised that the Customer Services Team response was not appropriate, there was no evidence to suggest that the employee had shouted or sworn.

Further to this, there was no evidence to suggest that the Council stole or otherwise misappropriated the caller's telephone number, created a profile or blocked their telephone number. A telephone number was retrieved from the Council's systems, following the calls in order to assist the caller with their complaint.

An apology for the response provided by the Customer Services Officer was issued.

Assistant Director Comments

The Customer Services Team were reminded of their responsibility to behave in a professional manner despite the conduct of individuals.

Revenues**1. Complaint against Revenues**

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that they were being asked to pay toward an outstanding Council Tax bill.

Council's response

It was concluded that an appropriate level of service was received as the Council Tax Team has correctly obtained a Liability Order from the Magistrates Court on three separate occasions regarding the outstanding Council Tax payments.

Assistant Director Comments

The correct action was undertaken in line with legislation to ensure that the outstanding Council Tax payments were received.

2. Complaint against Revenues

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld**Complaint**

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that their Council Tax account had been incorrectly closed which resulted in several missed payments.

Council's response

It was concluded that the complainant had not received an appropriate level of service as the Council Tax Team incorrectly closed their Council Tax account based on the incorrect information provided by the Customer Services Team.

Due the Customer Services Team providing the incorrect address to the Council Tax Team the account was incorrectly closed and a final bill was issued.

Upon being alerted to this error the Council Tax account was re-opened and a new bill was issued.

An apology and £314 compensation was offered and accepted.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognised the inconvenience caused by acting upon the account being incorrectly closed. The compensation amount reflected the payments missed by the complainant and returned them to the position before the account was closed.

Waste and Recycling**1. Complaint against Waste and Recycling**

Response – N/A

Withdrawn**Complaint**

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that their bin was repeatedly missed.

Council's response

The Complaint was withdrawn during the course of the investigation.

Assistant Director Comments

N/A.

2. Complaint against Waste and Recycling

Response – 20 working days

Complaint upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Refuse Team had repeatedly missed their bin collection.

Council's response

It was concluded that an appropriate level of service was not received as there has been a failure to collect the bins on the designated days and return them to the correct position.

However, it was noted that the bins are not always placed on the curtilage of the property. The bins were put in several different places on the front of the property waiting for collection. Whilst the bins had been collected from these positions for a period of time, this may be contributing to the missed collections, as the bins are not correctly in a position all the time to indicate that they required collection. This meant a member of the Refuse Team must enter the property to retrieve the bin.

Further monitoring of the bin collection would take place for a month to ensure that the bins are being collected correctly.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council recognises that making an arrangement to collect the bins from the inside of the property was not appropriate. Further action is being undertaken to ensure the bins are correctly placed without the need for the Refuse Team to enter the property.

Bereavement**1. Complaint against Bereavement Services**

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that they had been asked to remove items from a family member's grave plot.

Council's response

The Bramcote Bereavement Team had appropriately requested that the grave be returned to its original state as per the terms of the Notice of Internment and the Cemetery Rules and Regulations.

The Bramcote Bereavement Team had requested that the grave be returned to its original state in order for maintenance of the site to be completed correctly and to ensure that the cemetery is a safe environment for other visitors. This decision was informed by the guidance provided by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management.

The Notice of Internment, which was signed by the grave owner, states that Kerbing/Edging/Planting is not permitted on any grave.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council sympathised that being asked to remove the items was distressing. However, as the agreement had been signed to not install additional items around the grave the appropriate action was taken in requesting that they be removed.

2. Complaint against Bereavement Services

Response – 20 working days

Complaint not upheld

Complaint

The complainant contacted the Council and complained that the Bereavement Team advised that a dog could attend an ash scattering services. However, when attending the dog was refused access to the gardens where the ashes were scattered.

Council's response

The Council had correctly informed the complainant that dogs are not permitted into the area where ashes are scattered. This in line with the policy and procedures of the Crematorium. Furthermore, there was no information to suggest that prior notification was provided to the Crematorium Team that a dog was attending.

The complainant's correspondence and booking of the ash scattering service was undertaken through a funeral director. No direct correspondence had occurred between the complaint and the Bereavement Team.

As part of the complaint, the Council has reminded all funeral directors that use the Council's Services that dogs are not permitted to attend ash scattering services.

Assistant Director Comments

The Council is required to follow process defined by the Crematorium's policies and procedure. This ensures fair treatment of all users.

Appendix 3

Stage 3 - Ombudsman Complaint**1. Complaint against Revenues (this was investigated by the LGO directly without following the Council's Complaint Policy)****Complaint Upheld.**Complaint

The concern raised was that the Council had adequately dealt with the complainant's vulnerabilities when dealing with their Council Tax account.

Ombudsman's conclusion

The Housing Ombudsman determined that the Council had not adequately considered the complainant's vulnerabilities when issuing Council Tax reminders and summons. The complainant had notified the Council Tax of the need for assistance and information was provided to the complainant of what support could be offered. However, the LGO determined that the information was not sufficient to assist the complainant with their vulnerabilities to manage their Council Tax account.

The LGO ordered the Council to issue £250 compensation. The Complainant has yet to accept this offer despite several reminders being issued by the Council and the LGO.

2. Complaint against Housing Operations (complaint concluded in 2023/24)**Complaint Upheld.**Complaint

The concern raised was that the Council had adequately dealt with the complainant's homelessness application.

Ombudsman's conclusion

The LGO determined that the Council had not adequately considered the complainant's homelessness application. The LGO determined that the Council failed to use its discretion when assessing the complainant's homelessness. Furthermore, the LGO stated that the Council had failed to evidence its decision making and its communication with the complainant about her housing banding.

The LGO ordered the Council to issue £3,000 compensation and this was undertaken.

As part of the complaint, the Council had provided case law to the LGO to support its position. However, the LGO did not believe this to be relevant.

3. Complaint against Planning (complaint concluded in 2023/24)

Complaint not Upheld.

Complaint

The concern raised was that the Council had adequately dealt with the complainant's complaint regarding a Planning Enforcement issue.

Ombudsman's conclusion

The LGO determined that they would not investigate the complaint about how the Council dealt with breaches of planning control. This is because they were unlikely to find fault with the Council's handling of the issue.

4. Complaint against Legal Services (this was investigated by the LGO directly without following the Council's Complaint Policy)

Complaint not Upheld.

Complaint

The concern raised was that the Council had adequately dealt with the complainant's complaint regarding a member standards issue.

Ombudsman's conclusion

The LGO determined that they would not investigate the complaint about how the Council dealt with its member standards issue. This is because they were unlikely to find fault with the Council's handling of the issue.

The LGO does not provide an appeal against the Monitoring Officer's decisions.

Stage 3 - Ombudsman Complaint

5. Complaint against Housing Repairs (complaint concluded in 2023/24)

Complaint Upheld.

Complaint

The concern raised was that the Council had not adequately dealt an issue of damp and mould.

Ombudsman's conclusion

The Housing Ombudsman (HO) concluded that the resident experienced damp and mould in the property for a significant period (since November 2019) and spent considerable time and trouble pursuing a resolution. Within the Council's responses, the HO acknowledged that the Council had not disputed that the Council failed to identify and resolve the damp within the property over several years, and that the Council had not communicated effectively, meaning that the resident needed to continue to report the damp. It was

recognised that the Council also acknowledged that it had not scheduled or logged the required works correctly which exacerbated the issues and led to further delay and distress.

The HO acknowledged that the Council had taken steps to put things right for the resident by acknowledging the delay and disruption caused, and offering a total of £4,380 compensation within its complaint responses. This offer is significant and is within a range the Ombudsman considers proportionate in instances of severe maladministration where there has been a serious impact on a resident and the redress required to put things right is considerable.

The HO order the Council to pay an additional £250 in recognition of the distress caused to the complainant.

6. Complaint against Planning (complaint concluded in Q1)

Complaint not Upheld.

Complaint

The concern raised was that the Council had not adequately dealt with a planning application. The complainant also raised concerns that information was removed from the Council's website and the Council prepared misleading and incorrect reports.

Ombudsman's conclusion

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) noted that the complainant had raised many concerns about how the Council had dealt with a planning application for a development in the area where they live. The Council refused planning permission for the development. However, the developer used their right to appeal to the Planning Inspector. The complainant had complained about incorrect information included within the planning report and raised concerns about misleading information being provided to the Planning Inspector.

However, the acceptability of the development would now be determined by the Planning Inspector. The LGO cannot investigate decisions made by the Inspector. It was noted that the complainant also had the opportunity to comment on the appeal and raise their concerns about the application.

The LGO cannot investigate decisions made by the Planning Inspector and there was no evidence of fault by the Council.

7. Complaint against Housing Repairs (complaint concluded in 2023/24)**Complaint Upheld.**Complaint

The concern raised was that the Council had not adequately dealt an issue of a leak at the complainant's property.

Ombudsman's conclusion

The Housing Ombudsman (HO) concluded that the first leak of February 2021 was attended within the landlord's emergency timescale of 3 working days, which was reasonable, and the hole in the kitchen ceiling was repaired within 20 working days, which was also reasonable.

However, there remained outstanding remedial work to the kitchen ceiling between February 2021 and June 2023. This was an unreasonable period of approximately 18 months beyond the Council's Repair Policy timescale of 20 working days for routine repairs.

The HO recognised that the Council had not disputed its repairing responsibilities in this case. The Council acknowledged delays in its repair services and explained that this was due to the works not being passed on to its operatives after being logged by the resident and inspectors. The Council apologised and acknowledged that it had not provided a reasonable repair service.

The HO ordered the Council to pay £900 in recognition of the distress caused to the complainant.

Report of the Monitoring Officer

Findings of Fault Determinations Reported from the Ombudsman

1. Purpose of Report

To provide Members with the recent findings of fault determinations made by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to NOTE the report.

3. Detail

This report outlines the recent determinations made by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) or Housing Ombudsman (HO) where a finding of fault has been recorded. The full reports by the LGO and HO are attached at **Appendices 1 to 7**.

4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Assistant Director Finance Services were as follows:

The cost of compensation is charged either directly to the service or recognised in a central corporate budget. Any significant financial implications relating to compensation and/or the operational recommendations from the Ombudsmen, over and above existing budgets and virement limits, would require approval by Cabinet.

5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

Under s5A of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the council's Monitoring Officer is legally obliged to report to Cabinet any findings of fault by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

6. Human Resources Implications

The comments from the Human Resources Manager were as follows:

Not applicable.

7. Union Comments

The Union comments were as follows:

Not applicable.

8. Climate Change Implications

The climate change implications are contained within the report.

Not applicable.

9. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

Not applicable.

11. Background Papers

Nil.

Housing

Ombudsman Service

REPORT

COMPLAINT 202301513

Broxtowe Borough Council

26 November 2024

Our approach

The Housing Ombudsman's approach to investigating and determining complaints is to decide what is fair in all the circumstances of the case. This is set out in the Housing Act 1996 and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme (the Scheme). The Ombudsman considers the evidence and looks to see if there has been any 'maladministration', for example, whether the landlord has failed to keep to the law, followed proper procedure, followed good practice, or behaved in a reasonable and competent manner.

Both the resident and the landlord have submitted information to the Ombudsman, and this has been carefully considered. Their accounts of what has happened are summarised below. This report is not an exhaustive description of all the events that have occurred in relation to this case, but an outline of the key issues as a background to the investigation's findings.

The complaint

1. This complaint is about the landlord's handling of the resident's reports about:
 - a. A leak into her home from the roof.
 - b. A faulty toilet and redundant stairlift in her home.
 - c. Its failure to mow her garden lawn.

Jurisdiction

2. What the Ombudsman can and cannot consider is called the Ombudsman's jurisdiction. This is governed by the Scheme. When a complaint is brought to this service, the Ombudsman must consider all the circumstances of the case, as there are sometimes reasons why a complaint will not be investigated.

Faulty toilet and redundant stairlift

3. The Scheme states at paragraph 42.a. that the Ombudsman may not investigate a complaint which is received prior to having exhausted a landlord's complaints procedure.
4. The resident's original complaint made to the landlord through the Ombudsman centred on repairs and maintenance. These included the roof, a faulty toilet, and the redundant stairlift. The landlord explained to the Service that some of these issues had not previously been reported. The landlord's repair records confirm that only the roof issue had been reported to the landlord in the months leading up to the complaint.
5. The Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code (the Code) requires a landlord to "recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. A service

request is a request from a resident to their landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests should be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly. A complaint should be raised when the resident raises dissatisfaction with the response to their service request.”

6. The landlord arranged appointments to address the toilet and stairlift issues, which its records show were completed by the time of the resident’s escalated complaint. As they had not been reported to the landlord it was appropriate for it to treat these particular matters as new service requests, and act on them accordingly. The resident did not raise any clear dissatisfaction with its actions, either in her escalation request or in her Ombudsman complaint. In these circumstances, and in line with the Code and paragraph 42.a., these issues have not formed the basis of a complaint to the landlord and will not be considered in this investigation.

Background and summary of events

7. The resident is a tenant of the landlord.
8. The landlord’s repair records show no significant repair issues reported to it in 2022 apart from a roof leak in October and November.
9. The resident approached the Ombudsman in April 2023. She complained about the way the landlord had dealt with issues relating to the roof leak, which she said was causing her ceiling to bulge. She also raised concerns about its handling of a fault with her toilet, issues with an un-needed stairlift in her home, and that the landlord had not mowed her garden for several years. We passed her concerns to the landlord and asked it to treat them as a complaint. It confirmed it would do so, but said that some of the repair issues had not previously been reported to it.
10. The landlord responded to the resident on 31 May 2023. It explained it had arranged an inspection of the resident’s home earlier in the month. Following that it was arranging appointments in June to remove the stairlift, fix the toilet, and resolve the outstanding roof work. It said that the resident was responsible for mowing her lawns, in accordance with her tenancy agreement. It apologised for what it said was its failure to provide an appropriate level of service, and said it upheld the resident’s complaint (it did not specify what it believed it had failed at or offer any remedies).
11. The resident contacted the Service again in June and July 2023. She confirmed the stairlift had been removed, but the other work had not been completed. She also spoke about additional issues, such as the landlord’s apparent decision to only visit in pairs. We asked the landlord to escalate the resident’s complaint

about the repairs and maintenance. We told the resident she should raise new complaints with the landlord about the additional issues.

12. The landlord sent its final complaint response on 30 August 2023. It explained the roof leak repairs had been completed at the end of June, as had the toilet repair and the stairlift removal. It said it had attempted unsuccessfully to contact the resident to clarify the basis of her escalated complaint, but had arranged a further inspection for September to identify any unresolved issues. It said again that the lawn maintenance was the resident's responsibility, and explained how it could assist her with that. It referred her to the Ombudsman if she remained dissatisfied with its handling of her complaint.
13. The landlord has told the Service that it inspected the resident's property on 13 September 2023 and found no unresolved repair issues.
14. The resident brought her complaint to the Ombudsman because she disagreed with its conclusions about the lawn. She said she had previously been told by the landlord she was eligible for its garden maintenance service. As part of that service it was already maintaining her garden hedges, but had neglected the lawn.

Assessment and findings

Investigation scope

15. Paragraph 42.a. of the Scheme explains the Ombudsman may not consider a complaint which has not yet exhausted the landlord's complaints procedure.
16. In her complaints and correspondence with the Service the resident has referred to a range of issues of dissatisfaction she has with the landlord, some of which are long running and refer to events in previous years. She has also commented on some of the explanations it gave in its complaint responses, explaining how her dissatisfaction with them was linked to its previous actions. This includes the issue of the number and gender of repair operatives the landlord sends to her home.
17. This investigation centres on the specific repair and maintenance issues raised by the resident with the landlord through the Service in April and July 2023, and the landlord's complaint responses. In accordance with paragraph 42.a. no other issues will be considered in this report. The resident should make new formal complaints to the landlord about these additional concerns if necessary. If she does so and her concerns are not resolved by its complaint investigations, the resident has the option of asking the Ombudsman to start a new investigation.

18. The resident should keep in mind that there are sometimes time limits on issues which can be complained about to the landlord and the Ombudsman, which may impact on what can be investigated.

A leak into the resident's home from the roof

19. The landlord's repair records confirm a roof leak was reported by the resident in October 2022, with follow up work in November. The work shows a completion date of 29 June 2023. That indicates the work was incomplete at the time of the resident's complaint to the landlord in May, and supports her concern.
20. This is confirmed by the landlord's surveyor's notes of the inspection on 26 May 2023, which observes that the work from October/November 2022 was incomplete and had been "forgotten about". This inspection was several days before the landlord sent its first complaint response, so the landlord should have been aware of it.
21. In its first complaint response the landlord acknowledged it had provided a poor service, but it did not explain how, nor did it refer to the incomplete roof repairs. It also did not offer any remedies for its poor service.
22. The evidence does not show a specific impact from the leak. The resident did not explain any, and the landlord's notes after a further inspection on 26 June 2023 (just before the final roof work was started) state the loft was dry with no sign of a leak.
23. Nonetheless, the landlord failed to resolve the roof repair as planned in 2022 and nothing in the evidence indicates why, or shows it updated the resident and attempted to manage her expectations. It then failed to properly identify, acknowledge, and remedy its failing when it investigated the resident's complaint about the issue.

The resident's reports about the landlord's failure to mow her garden lawn

24. The resident has explained that she understood the landlord to have committed to mowing her garden lawn. She complained that it had not done so for several years.
25. In both its complaint responses the landlord told the resident that the lawn maintenance was her own responsibility, in accordance with her tenancy agreement. The resident's tenancy agreement broadly supports the landlord's explanation. It is also typical of many standard tenancies that the tenant is responsible for any gardens which form part of the property.
26. However, during the landlord's inspection of the property on 26 May 2023 its surveyor noted that the resident "should have her hedges and grass cut.

However she is only getting her hedges cut and the lawn is always missed out being up to 1ft. high in places. Can you ensure it is on the rota and done ASAP please? Location is the rear of the property... . With regards to the Garden, Gardens are supposed to cut the hedges and the grass but only cut the hedge this has been chased before by tenancy and estates I will email chasing again.”

27. The note shows that not only should the resident’s lawn have been getting maintained and was not, but the issue had previously been raised and was still unresolved. As with the roof repair, this inspection and observation was shortly before the landlord sent its first complaint response, meaning it should have been aware of the actual situation and problem. Rather than acknowledge and remedy what seems to be a long running mistake, it inaccurately told the resident the lawn was her responsibility.
28. The landlord said the same in its response to the Service’s request for information for this investigation. When we queried the issue it realised its mistake, acknowledged the resident should have been on its garden maintenance list, and confirmed she now was.
29. It is not apparent from the evidence why the landlord was not aware of the inspection outcome when it investigated the resident’s complaints. It should have been, because it had arranged the inspection to look into the repair and maintenance issues the resident had complained about.
30. The landlord’s failure to maintain the resident’s lawn was long-running and appears to have previously been identified as an omission. At the time of the landlord’s first complaint response it held information confirming its obligation, but it incorrectly advised her in both its responses the responsibility was hers. It has subsequently accepted its responsibility, but has not remedied its failings.

Determination (decision)

31. In accordance with paragraph 52 of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme there was service failure by the landlord in its handling of the resident’s reports about a leak into her home from the roof.
32. In accordance with paragraph 52 of the Scheme, there was maladministration by the landlord in its handling of the resident’s reports about its failure to mow her garden lawn.
33. In accordance with paragraph 42.a. of the Scheme the resident’s complaint about a faulty toilet and redundant stairlift in her home is not one the Ombudsman will investigate.

Reasons

34. Despite her complaint about the issue the landlord failed to identify that it had delayed resolving a roof repair issue.
35. The landlord's response to the resident's concerns and complaints about its responsibility for maintaining her garden lawn was inaccurate and did not reflect the feedback given by its operatives on the subject.

Orders

36. The landlord has confirmed that the resident is now on its garden maintenance list for her lawns. Nonetheless, this omission appears to have occurred over multiple years and caused the resident inconvenience and distress. Because of that the landlord is ordered to pay her compensation of £450.
37. The landlord is also ordered to pay the resident £150 for its poor handling of her roof repair complaint.
38. This total payment of £600 must be made to the resident within 4 weeks of this report. Evidence of payment by that deadline must be provided to the Service.

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Housing

Ombudsman Service

REPORT

COMPLAINT 202311275

Broxtowe Borough Council

19 December 2024

Our approach

The Housing Ombudsman's approach to investigating and determining complaints is to decide what is fair in all the circumstances of the case. This is set out in the Housing Act 1996 and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme (the Scheme). The Ombudsman considers the evidence and looks to see if there has been any 'maladministration', for example whether the landlord has failed to keep to the law, followed proper procedure, followed good practice or behaved in a reasonable and competent manner.

Both the resident and the landlord have submitted information to the Ombudsman and this has been carefully considered. Their accounts of what has happened are summarised below. This report is not an exhaustive description of all the events that have occurred in relation to this case, but an outline of the key issues as a background to the investigation's findings.

The complaint

1. The complaint is about the landlord's response to the resident's reports of various repairs including: damp and mould, a leak in the bathroom, the kitchen ceiling, and repairs to radiators, windows, and doors.

Background

2. The resident is a secure tenant of the landlord, a local authority. The tenancy commenced in 2017 and the property is a 3-bedroom house. The household had no vulnerabilities recorded but the resident reported the impact of the damp and mould on her asthma to the landlord.
3. Repair records show reports of damp and mould in 2018 and 2019 and works raised by the landlord to remedy this (full scale of the works and outcomes are not known). The landlord communicated to the resident in its complaint correspondence related to this investigation that historic repairs had been completed so it was focusing on her new reports from 2021.
4. On 1 February 2021 the resident reported a leak in the bathroom and the landlord attended to seal the bath and identified repairs needed to the kitchen ceiling. The resident chased these repairs in March 2021 but the works were closed down by the landlord in November 2021 without completion.
5. The resident raised further repairs relating to bathroom leaks and the kitchen ceiling in August 2022 and inspections were carried out which identified additional repairs. These included works to: lighting, radiators, windows, a gully, and the kitchen ceiling. The landlord considered that these works were all completed by 17 November 2022.

6. However, in February 2023 the resident reported that there were still outstanding repairs and she provided details to the landlord. She also submitted a formal complaint around the same time, stating that she had developed asthma since living in the property and she struggled with breathing due to the damp conditions. She complained that the inspector of August 2022 said he would escalate the repairs, and she asked for a call back as she felt no one ever got back to her.
7. In the landlord's stage 1 response of 23 February 2023 it apologised if the resident had not received timely responses to her contacts, detailed the outstanding repairs, and confirmed that an inspection had been scheduled for 9 March 2023.
8. The resident escalated her complaint on 5 May 2023, as there had been no progress following the March 2023 inspection. The landlord investigated the delays internally and identified an error in the jobs not being progressed. It then re-raised works orders and multiple repairs were completed in June 2023.
9. In the landlord's stage 2 response of 28 June 2023, it gave its account of events between August 2022 and June 2023. It apologised for the delays in progressing the works after inspection, as they had not been passed to its operatives at the time. It further apologised for the delayed service the resident had received and for any distress or inconvenience caused as a result.
10. In early 2024, the resident reported electric shocks in the kitchen and, in March 2024, she reported a new leak from the bathroom and a damp patch on the kitchen ceiling. An operative attended to check for leaks and the bath panel was resealed. Further works were raised in March 2024 to clear gutters and make safe piping work.

Assessment and findings

Scope of investigation

11. The resident's historic reports of damp and mould from 2018 and 2019 are not considered in this investigation, as there is no evidence that they were raised by the resident as a formal complaint at the time (reflected at paragraph 42.a of the Scheme). The Ombudsman has considered the resident's reports from 2021 onwards, which were raised as part of her formal complaint.
12. The resident has told the landlord that this matter has negatively affected her family's health. The Ombudsman does not doubt the resident's comments, but it is beyond the remit of this Service to determine whether there was a direct link between the landlord's actions and her family's ill-health. She may wish to seek independent advice on making a personal injury claim if she considers that her health has been affected by any action or failure by the landlord

(reflected at paragraph 42.f of the Scheme). While the Ombudsman cannot consider the effect on health, consideration has been given to any general distress and inconvenience which the resident experienced as a result of any service failure by the landlord.

The landlord's response to the resident's reports of various repairs

13. The landlord is responsible for repairing and maintaining the structure of the property, including drains and gutters, space and heating equipment, installations for water and sanitation, common areas, plastering, kitchens and bathrooms. The landlord's Repair Policy sets out its varied repair timescales ranging from 3 to 7 working days for urgent repairs, to 20 working days for routine repairs, or longer for planned maintenance works. The landlord is ultimately expected to carry out repairs within a reasonable timescale. Repairs involving major works or damp may require pre-inspections which should be carried out within 5 working days of reports.
14. The landlord has not disputed its repairing responsibilities in this case. It has acknowledged delays in its repair services and explained that this was due to the works not being passed on to its operatives after being logged by the resident and inspectors. It apologised and acknowledged that it had not provided a reasonable repair service.
15. Despite this acknowledgement, the landlord failed to then take appropriate steps to fully address the complaint and put things right. It did not consider the impact of the long standing repeat issues that the resident had been raising about the bath leaks and the associated kitchen ceiling repairs. It did not consider the individual repair delays or go on to offer reasonable redress to put things right in line with the Ombudsman's Dispute Resolution Principles.
16. The first leak of February 2021 was attended within the landlord's emergency timescale of 3 working days, which was reasonable, and the hole in the kitchen ceiling was repaired within 20 working days, which was also reasonable. However, there remained outstanding remedial work to the kitchen ceiling between February 2021 and June 2023. This was an unreasonable period of approximately 18 months beyond the landlord's Repair Policy timescale of 20 working days for routine repairs.
17. There were also recurring reports of leaks in the bath with some instances where operatives were unable to trace the source, and a failure by the landlord to carry out an investigation into the repeat occurrences. Though the evidence shows that the landlord's operatives attended to carry out checks, make safe works, and resolve the leaks within the 1 to 7 day timescale under its Repair Policy for urgent works, it would have been reasonable for the landlord to have

carried out an investigation into the repeat issues to see if it could resolve them more permanently.

18. Repairs to the windows, doors, damp and mould, and radiators were outstanding from August 2022 to June 2023, approximately 6 months beyond a reasonable timescale under the Repair Policy. The repairs in full were not completed until June 2023. This represents a delay of approximately 18 months in total (including 6 months within this period for separate repair issues) that was beyond a reasonable timescale.
19. There were delays between inspections being carried out and actions being progressed after them, such as the inspections of August 2022 and then March 2023. It was not until the resident chased the landlord that the landlord sought quotes for works and then reasonably completed these between May and June 2023. While the landlord has since reviewed its repair reporting system and teams, and explained that the delays were partly due to the pandemic, there has still been an unreasonable service overall.
20. The landlord's response to the resident's report of damp and mould (carrying out an antifungal wash and repairing leaks in the radiator) were encompassed in the overall period of works. There has been no evidence of a pre-inspection of damp and mould as required by the landlord's Repair Policy. The landlord did not investigate the impact of the damp and mould on the household, despite being made aware of the resident's reports of worsening asthma. The landlord failed to respond in a timely manner which reflects the urgency of the issue, as recommended by the Ombudsman's Spotlight on: Damp and mould, it's not lifestyle report. The landlord's delayed and limited response to the damp and mould therefore represent a failure in service.
21. The Ombudsman's Spotlight report also recommends that landlords should ensure staff are able to identify early signs of damp and mould, making the most of every visit to identify this, even where this is not reported by a resident. The evidence indicates that there were multiple visits to the property during the period of outstanding repairs by operatives and inspectors but there was limited engagement with the reports of damp and mould.
22. The resident experienced unnecessary distress and inconvenience, as well as time and trouble, due to the delayed repair services. Therefore, taking into account all the circumstances of the case, the Ombudsman finds that there was maladministration. In line with the Ombudsman's Remedies Guidance, an order is made for the landlord to pay £900 for the overall detriment experienced by the resident for approximately 18 months of outstanding repairs. This is calculated as approximately £50 per month for detriment towards the resident in both time and trouble and distress and inconvenience.

23. It is understood that the specific repairs which were the subject of this complaint were resolved by June 2023. However, given the nature of those repairs, and the concerns identified in this report, the landlord is recommended to (if it has not done so already) discuss the status of any outstanding repairs with the resident and provide an action plan if this continues to persist, with a view to investigating the cause of any leaks and any associated damp and mould.

Determination

24. In accordance with paragraph 52 of the Scheme, there was maladministration in the landlord's response to the resident's reports of various repairs including: damp and mould, a leak in the bathroom, the kitchen ceiling, and repairs to the radiators, windows, and doors in the property.

Orders and recommendations

Order

25. Within 6 weeks of the date of this report, the landlord is ordered to pay the resident £900 compensation for the overall detriment in time and trouble and distress and inconvenience she experienced as a result of the failings identified in this report.

Recommendation

26. The landlord is recommended to discuss the status of any outstanding repairs with the resident and provide an action plan if this continues to persist, with a view to investigate the cause of any associated damp and mould.

Housing

Ombudsman Service

REPORT

COMPLAINT 202402396

Broxtowe Borough Council

7 January 2025

Our approach

The Housing Ombudsman's approach to investigating and determining complaints is to decide what is fair in all the circumstances of the case. This is set out in the Housing Act 1996 and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme (the Scheme). The Ombudsman considers the evidence and looks to see if there has been any 'maladministration', for example whether the landlord has failed to keep to the law, followed proper procedure, followed good practice or behaved in a reasonable and competent manner.

Both the resident and the landlord have submitted information to the Ombudsman and this has been carefully considered. Their accounts of what has happened are summarised below. This report is not an exhaustive description of all the events that have occurred in relation to this case, but an outline of the key issues as a background to the investigation's findings.

The complaint

1. The complaint is about the landlord's handling of the resident's reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Background

2. The resident holds a secure tenancy of the property, a 2 bedroom flat, where she lives with her young child. The property has a communal area which is shared with other flats. The landlord is a local authority.
3. The resident reported to the landlord on 1 February 2024 that her neighbour had 5 dogs that were running loose in the communal area. She reported that the dogs were fouling in the area, and this was being left for days and sometimes weeks before being cleaned. The resident said that she was scared of the dogs and felt unsafe being in the area with her young daughter.
4. The resident contacted the landlord numerous times in March, April and May 2024 and said the dogs were aggressive and her daughter was terrified of the dogs. She said the neighbour left the dogs to roam free and foul the area, and did not pick up the dog faeces. She said that delivery drivers were not coming into the property because of the dogs.
5. The resident made a stage 1 complaint on 17 May 2024 about the dogs being left unsupervised in the communal area and said that her daughter was scared of the dogs. She emailed the landlord on 23 May 2024 and said she was pregnant, and the ongoing situation was causing her stress.
6. The landlord responded to the resident's stage 1 complaint on 31 May 2024. It apologised for the inconvenience caused to the resident and the time she had

taken to make the complaint. It said it was working with the dog warden and the resident's neighbour to resolve the issue, and that it had responded to all the resident's reports made about the dogs since 1 February 2024. It said that the resident had stated that the dog fouling had been cleared, but the dogs were still running loose in the communal area and that it was still investigating this matter. It said that positive action had been taken and therefore it "did not feel that it had failed to provide an appropriate level of service." It did not uphold the resident's complaint.

7. The resident escalated her complaint to the landlord on 19 June 2024. She said she did not feel that the landlord had provided a proper service and that the situation was not safe for her and her daughter. She said that whenever they left or returned to the property they had to check if the dogs were in the communal area, and this was very stressful. She said that the 5 dogs were still being left to run free and foul the communal area, and she was now considering moving home because of the situation.
8. The resident continued to report the issue to the landlord in July 2024 and sent the landlord emails and video evidence of the dogs running loose and fouling the area.
9. The landlord responded to the resident's stage 2 complaint on 17 July 2024 and said:
 - a. It understood the resident had reported the issue on multiple occasions since December 2022.
 - b. It had appropriately dealt with the resident's reports on each occasion and was currently working with the neighbour and the dog warden to resolve the issue.
 - c. It understood that the dog fouling had now been cleared.
 - d. It apologised if the resident felt the situation was taking an extended time to resolve. It said it empathised with her and her daughter not feeling safe.
 - e. It would not look to take tenancy enforcement action in "the first instance" and would work with the resident to resolve the issue.
 - f. It would continue to monitor the situation until the issues were resolved.
 - g. It had provided an appropriate level of service.
10. The resident referred the matter to this Service in August 2024. She said that the 5 dogs were still running free in the communal area and fouling the area. She said the area smelled and she and her family were prevented from using it because of the dogs. She said she wanted the landlord to take effective action to resolve the issue. She said she wanted the landlord to ensure the dogs were

kept on leads and the communal areas kept tidy, and if the landlord could not do this she said she wanted to move.

Events after the end of the landlord's complaints process

11. The resident continued to report to the landlord on numerous occasions from July to November 2024 that the situation was still going on. She provided video evidence which she said was of the dogs running free and fouling the area on various occasions during this time.
12. The resident contacted this service on 20 December 2024. The resident informed this Service that the landlord said it was considering taking legal action against the neighbour in the new year.

Assessment and findings

Scope of the investigation

13. The resident has reported to this Service that the situation with the neighbour's dogs has been ongoing since December 2022. The landlord acknowledged in its response to the complaint that the resident had reported the issues "on an occasional basis" since December 2022, but since February 2024 had reported the issues a further 4 times. This Service encourages residents to raise complaints in a timely manner, normally within 12 months of issues arising, so that the landlord can consider them whilst they are still 'live' and whilst the evidence is available for it to properly investigate. The occasional reports made since December 2022 are noted above for context, however there is no evidence the resident complained to the landlord until May 2024. Therefore, this investigation will focus on events from February 2024.
14. As set out above the resident has informed this Service that the ASB situation is ongoing. We appreciate that this may be distressing for the resident, our role is to investigate complaints brought to us that have exhausted a landlord's internal complaints process. This investigation report, therefore, concerns the matters which were the subject of the resident's formal complaint in May 2024, and which were the subject of the landlord's final response on 17 July 2024.

The landlord's handling of the resident's reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB)

15. It is evident that this situation has been distressing to the resident. It may help to firstly explain that the Ombudsman's role is not to decide if the actions of the neighbour amounted to ASB, but rather, whether the landlord dealt with the resident's reports about this appropriately and reasonably.

16. The resident reported to the landlord on 1 February 2024 that her neighbour had 5 dogs that were being allowed to run freely in the communal area. The resident said that the dogs were fouling the area and that she and her young daughter were scared to come and go from her property. The landlord said it would visit the neighbour and advise her that the dogs should be on a lead and discuss the dogs fouling the area. The landlord said that the neighbour should not have permission to have 5 dogs in a flat. The landlord has a pet policy which states that a resident must ask for permission to keep dogs. It states that permission will only be given for a maximum of 2 dogs. Its pet policy says it will withdraw permission by giving 28 days' notice in instances where the pets cause nuisance and annoyance to residents.
17. The resident contacted the landlord on 14 March 2024 and said that the neighbour was still allowing the dogs to foul the communal area. The landlord contacted the resident on 15 March 2024 and said that steps were being taken to resolve the situation and that it had carried out a site inspection on that day.
18. The resident contacted the landlord on 16 and 21 March 2024 and said she was concerned for her daughter's safety. She said that the dogs were still running off the lead and fouling the communal area and if the situation didn't improve, she wanted to request a move. The landlord contacted the resident on 23 March 2024, in line with timescales in its ASB policy, and said the area would be inspected regularly and that it was considering further tenancy action. Its ASB policy states it will keep residents updated on the progress of a case so it would have been appropriate to give more information to the resident at this stage on the proposed actions and expected timescales.
19. The resident contacted the landlord in April and May 2024 to report that the dogs were still running loose and fouling the area. She said she could not allow her daughter to play outside because of the dogs and the dog fouling which was being left for days at a time.
20. The resident contacted the landlord on 9, 10 and 11 July 2024 and said there was no improvement with the situation. She sent video evidence of the dogs to the landlord, and it responded on 11 July 2024 and said it would "look to take further action". The landlord was aware of the distress the situation was causing, and it was therefore unreasonable not to provide further information to the resident. This was 4 months after it had told the resident it would look to take further action. Its ASB policy states it will keep the complainant fully informed of how the investigation is progressing. The policy says it will take the necessary early action to protect people and property once facts are established. The situation had been ongoing for many months and was having a considerable effect on the resident and therefore the landlord's actions were unreasonable.

21. The landlord has informed the resident that it issued a tenancy warning to the neighbour and served the neighbour with a Community Protection Notice. While these actions were in line with its ASB policy it is unclear when it informed the resident that it had taken these actions.
22. The landlord made apologies in its complaint responses for the length of time the situation had been going on and said it empathised with the resident that she and her daughter did not feel safe. It said it did not look to take tenancy enforcement action, "in the first instance." This situation had been reported for many months and therefore it would have been appropriate to consider further action, taking in to account the effect on the resident and her daughter. The landlord's ASB policy states it will escalate to more formal action where appropriate and enforcement action should not be a last resort but a proportionate response which will stop problems. It would have been proportionate to consider a Community Protection Notice in line with its policy, following the service of the Community Protection Warning, as it was clear the issues had not been resolved. The landlord could have also considered other measures such as an acceptable behaviour contract (ABC) or formally withdrawing permission for the neighbour to keep the dogs. These measures were not taken and therefore this was a failing.
23. The landlord failed to put things right during its complaints process and this Service has received evidence from the resident that shows the issue has not been resolved. Therefore, this investigation has found maladministration, and we have made an order for the landlord to pay the resident £300 in line with the Ombudsman's remedies guidance for situations such as this, where there was a failure which adversely affected the resident. We have also ordered the landlord to contact the resident and provide a clear plan on the actions it intends to take, with timescales.

Determination

24. In accordance with paragraph 52 of the Scheme, there was maladministration in the landlord's handling of the resident's reports of ASB.

Orders

25. Within 4 weeks of the date of this report the landlord is ordered to:
 - a. Pay the resident compensation of £300 for the distress and inconvenience incurred by the resident because of the landlord's response to her reports of ASB. This amount should be paid direct to the resident and not used to offset any monies she may owe the landlord.
 - b. Contact the resident to confirm whether she is currently experiencing any ASB. If the resident confirms that she is, within 2 weeks of contacting the

resident the landlord should agree a plan with her, with timescales for actions to be taken.

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Housing

Ombudsman Service

REPORT

COMPLAINT 202408760

Broxtowe Borough Council

30 January 2025

Our approach

The Housing Ombudsman's approach to investigating and determining complaints is to decide what is fair in all the circumstances of the case. This is set out in the Housing Act 1996 and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme (the Scheme). The Ombudsman considers the evidence and looks to see if there has been any 'maladministration', for example, whether the landlord has failed to keep to the law, followed proper procedure, followed good practice, or behaved in a reasonable and competent manner.

Both the resident and the landlord have submitted information to the Ombudsman, and this has been carefully considered. Their accounts of what has happened are summarised below. This report is not an exhaustive description of all the events that have occurred in relation to this case, but an outline of the key issues as a background to the investigation's findings.

The complaint

1. The complaint is about the landlord's response to the resident's reports of:
 - a. Defective storage heaters.
 - b. Damp and mould.

Background and summary of events

2. The resident is a secure tenant of the landlord. The tenancy began in February 2023. The property is a 1-bedroom flat. The landlord has no recorded vulnerabilities for the resident though throughout the course of the complaint she told the landlord that she had asthma.
3. The landlord installed 2 new storage heaters in the property on 19 June 2023.
4. The resident reported that the storage heaters were not working on 3 November 2023. The landlord visited the property on 7 November 2023. It told the resident that because the storage heaters were still under warranty, the supplier would need to attend. It supplied the resident with 2 oil filled radiators as a temporary measure on 13 November 2023.
5. The resident e-mailed her local councillor on 13 November 2023 because she was unhappy that she had been without heating for 2 weeks. The councillor contacted the landlord and raised a complaint on her behalf. The landlord contacted the resident to discuss her complaint. During that call she raised further concerns about damp and mould around the windows, caused by the storage heater issue.

6. The storage heater supplier attended the property sometime in November 2023 and identified that the cause of the issue was the electric meter. It told the resident to contact her electrical supplier. The electrical supplier resolved the issue by 15 November 2023.
7. The landlord provided its stage 1 response to the resident on 24 November 2023. It told her that it provided an appropriate level of service in dealing with the storage heaters. It said that she could open the trickle vents in her windows or use the extractor fans to help with the mould that had formed on the windows.
8. The resident asked to escalate her complaint to stage 2 on 6 December 2023 because she was unhappy at how long it had taken to resolve the issue with the storage heaters. She also felt that the damp and mould was an on-going concern.
9. The landlord responded to the stage 2 complaint on 5 January 2023. It told the resident that it had acted in a timely manner to assess and provide advice about the storage heaters. It also said that a contractor had completed a damp inspection and had found the cause of mould was atmospheric condensation. It agreed to refund the cost of purchasing a de-humidifier.
10. The resident e-mailed the landlord with a copy of a receipt for her de-humidifier on 15 January 2024.
11. The resident contacted this Service on 3 June 2024 as she was unhappy about the landlord's handling of the issues raised in her complaint. The resident wants the landlord to resolve the issues with damp and mould, reimburse her for purchasing the dehumidifier, and pay her compensation for distress and inconvenience.

Assessment and findings

Scoping

12. The resident has stated that she had to attend hospital after cleaning the mould in her property using bleach and white vinegar. She also says that the presence of mould continues to negatively impact her health. However, the Service is unable to draw conclusions on the causation of, or liability for impacts on health and wellbeing. Matters of personal injury or damage to health, their investigation and compensation, are not part of the complaints process. These are more appropriately addressed by way of the courts or the landlord's liability insurer as a personal injury claim. We have, however, considered whether any failings by the landlord have been the cause of distress and inconvenience to the resident.

13. The resident states that she had been reporting mould since the start of her tenancy. The Ombudsman encourages residents to raise complaints with their landlords at the time the events happened. This is because with the passage of time, evidence may be unavailable and personnel involved may have left an organisation, which makes it difficult for a thorough investigation to be carried out and for informed decisions to be made. Taking this into account, and the availability and reliability of evidence, the assessment of the damp and mould has focussed on the period from November 2023 onwards. The records indicate that this was the beginning of the events that led to the resident raising a formal complaint.

Handling reports of defective storage heaters

14. The landlord's repairs policy says that it should diagnose the repair during a call to ensure it assigns the correct category of priority to the works. It should complete urgent repairs within 3 working days and routine repairs within 20 working days.
15. When the landlord installed the new storage heaters in the property on 19 June 2023 it completed an electrical inspection the same day. In the resident's complaint she said that she the landlord had not given her any information on how to use the storage heaters. If a landlord installs new equipment in a property, it is important that it shows residents how to effectively use that equipment. The evidence supplied by the landlord does not show that it provided the resident with instructions or a demonstration of how to use the new storage heaters.
16. The resident next contacted the landlord about the storage heaters in November 2023. The resident said to this Service that she telephoned it on 3 November 2023 but the landlord's stage 1 complaint response said that the first contact was on 5 November 2023. The landlord inspected the storage heaters on 7 November 2023. The landlord responded promptly, therefore the discrepancy between dates does not change the outcome because it responded with its 3 working day timescale.
17. The landlord found that the storage heaters were still under warranty so it was reasonable that it arranged for its supplier to attend to the issue. It is not recorded exactly when the supplier visited but when it did it identified that the fault was due to an issue with the electric meter. It told the resident to contact her electrical supplier to resolve the issue.
18. Meanwhile, on 13 November 2023 the landlord raised an urgent job to provide the resident with temporary heaters having received an e-mail from her the same day. In that e-mail she told the landlord that she suffered from severe

asthma. It delivered those heaters on the same day, within its 3 day timescale. However, it was aware the resident was without heating when it attended her property on 7 November 2023 so it would have been appropriate for it to have supplied the temporary heaters following that visit.

19. The resident confirmed that she had resolved the issue with her electrical supplier and the storage heaters were working on 15 November 2023.
20. The landlord acted appropriately in arranging for its supplier to inspect the storage heaters. It resolved the issue within 2 weeks of when it was first reported. However, as it missed an opportunity to act quicker to provide temporary heating to the resident there was service failure in the landlord's handling of the resident's report of defective storage heaters.
21. As the resident was without temporary heating for a short duration a compensation amount of £100 has been ordered. This falls within the service failure banding of this Service's remedies guidance

Handling of reports of damp and mould

22. The landlord's damp and mould procedures say that following a tenant's report it should complete an inspection within 3 working days. If the inspection finds follow-up work is required, it sets target times depending on the works. It should clean the mould and treat with anti-fungal paint within 1 week of the inspection. It should repair defective extractor fans within 2 weeks of the inspection. The landlord considers minor instances of mould such as around window frames to be non-urgent and the same timescales do not apply. In households where a resident has a medical vulnerability such as asthma it will prioritise damp and mould works.
23. The resident told the landlord that the defective storage heaters had caused a damp and mould problem in the property on 14 November 2023. An internal e-mail sent the same day showed that the landlord was aware of her asthma because it was considering temporary accommodation if the storage heaters could not be repaired quickly.
24. The landlord called her back on 16 November 2023 and she said that the issue was mould forming around the windows. It asked her about the extractor fans and she said she had them switched off because the noise was causing issues with the upstairs neighbour. The landlord told her that they should remain on to prevent excessive moisture causing mould growth. It arranged an inspection of the mould for 27 November 2023. Although the mould around the windows meant that it would have been reasonable for the landlord to consider the issue non-urgent, its procedures state that residents with medical vulnerabilities

should be prioritised. That it raised the inspection to be responded to within 20 working days allowed for non-urgent repairs shows it did not consider the resident's vulnerabilities or prioritise appropriately. The landlord marked all subsequent follow-up works as non-urgent.

25. The landlord completed an inspection on 27 November 2023 and it identified that the trickle vents had not been correctly installed on the windows in the property. It raised a job to complete the repairs before 22 January 2024. It also arranged for a contractor to complete a damp survey on 6 December 2023. There is no record that it looked at the extractor fans during that inspection. It would have been appropriate to do so, as the resident had told it she was reluctant to use the extractor fans due to perceived excessive noise. Given its damp and mould policy says that it should repair defective extractor fans within 2 weeks it missed an opportunity to identify and repair any issues with the extractor fans within its timescales.
26. The contractor completed the damp survey on 6 December 2023. It found mould growth around the windows in the bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen. It concluded that atmospheric condensation was causing the mould. It recommended the landlord install a positive input ventilation (PIV) system to improve the ventilation, inspect the efficiency of the extractor fans, and remove all mould from the property. It provided the landlord with its findings on 20 December 2023.
27. It is acknowledged that landlords have a responsibility to manage their resources responsibly. For this reason, they are not obliged to carry out all works recommended following inspections. However, if this is the case, they would be expected to explain the reasons for not following those recommendations to the resident and make a record of this for future reference.
28. In its stage 2 response the landlord acknowledged the concerns the resident had about her neighbour's response to her using the extractor fans. It signposted her to its tenancy team if she had further issues. This response was reasonable and proportionate.
29. Following the damp survey and its stage 2 response the landlord completed the following works:
 - a. Repaired the trickle vents on 12 January 2024.
 - b. Completed a mould wash on the windows, walls in the kitchen and lounge and the kitchen cupboards on 19 January 2024.
 - c. Repaired the boost function of extractor fans on 1 March 2024 (the resident had not been at home for an earlier appointment).

30. While the landlord took some action following the damp survey it did not appear to have considered its damp and mould policy in arranging the follow up works. It did not complete the works within its target times set out for removing mould and repairing extractor fans. Nor did it consider whether it would have been appropriate to prioritise the works because of the resident's asthma. It also had not recorded its reasons for not installing a PIV unit in the property. For those reasons there has been maladministration in the landlord's handling of reports of damp and mould.
31. When deciding on an appropriate remedy, both the landlord's and this Service's remedies guidance have been considered. Although the landlord's failure to consider the timescales of its damp and mould policy adversely affected the resident it acted promptly in completing the repairs following the stage 2 complaint so an amount of £250 has been awarded. This amount falls within the maladministration banding of this Service's remedies guidance.

Determination (decision)

32. In accordance with paragraph 52 of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme there was service failure in the landlord's handling of reports of defective storage heaters.
33. In accordance with paragraph 52 of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme there was maladministration in the landlord's handling of reports of damp and mould.

Orders

34. Within 4 weeks of this decision the landlord should:
- a. Provide an apology to the resident for its failings in line with the Ombudsman's guidance for making apologies.
 - b. Pay the resident the compensation amount of £350 broken down as:
 - i. £100 for the delay in providing her temporary heating.
 - ii. £250 for the distress and inconvenience experienced by the resident because of its failings in handling her reports of damp and mould.
35. The landlord should update this Service when it has made the payment.
36. The landlord is also ordered to complete an inspection of the property to establish whether the works completed in January and March 2024 have improved the issues with damp and mould. If the damp and mould problems persist it should commission a further damp survey from an external contractor.

37. This inspection should be completed and the results shared with the resident and this Service within 8 weeks from the date of this report.

Recommendations

38. If it has not already done so the landlord should:
- a. Reimburse the resident for the de-humidifier she purchased.
 - b. Register the resident's medical condition on its internal systems.
 - c. Either provide the resident with an instruction manual for the storage heaters installed in the property or arrange for a visit where she is shown how to operate them.

Housing

Ombudsman Service

REPORT

COMPLAINT 202308938

Broxtowe Borough Council

25 February 2025

Our approach

The Housing Ombudsman's approach to investigating and determining complaints is to decide what is fair in all the circumstances of the case. This is set out in the Housing Act 1996 and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme (the Scheme). The Ombudsman considers the evidence and looks to see if there has been any 'maladministration', for example whether the landlord has failed to keep to the law, followed proper procedure, followed good practice or behaved in a reasonable and competent manner.

Both the resident and the landlord have submitted information to the Ombudsman and this has been carefully considered. Their accounts of what has happened are summarised below. This report is not an exhaustive description of all the events that have occurred in relation to this case, but an outline of the key issues as a background to the investigation's findings.

The complaint

1. The resident's complaint is about the landlord's response to her request for electrics to be reinstated in her outhouse.

Background

2. The resident holds a secure tenancy with the landlord. The property is a 2-bedroom ground floor flat.
3. On 18 February 2022, the resident called the landlord to report that the light in the outhouse was not working. The landlord's records indicate that it may have completed a physical inspection on 28 March 2022. There are no details of what took place during the appointment.
4. On 19 May 2022, the resident called the landlord to request an inspection to assess whether she would be able to have electric installed in her outhouse. The landlord booked an appointment for 25 May 2022; however, this was a missed appointment. The resident also requested a call back which the landlord did not return. The resident chased both on 6 June 2022, and the landlord rescheduled the appointment for 14 June 2022.
5. The resident called the landlord on 1 February 2023 and informed it that all her neighbours had electric going into their sheds. She informed the landlord that she would have nowhere to plug in her mobility scooter and would need to use extension cables which would be unsafe. The landlord informed the resident that this was not a repair, and the resident requested a call back.

6. The resident chased the call back on 16 February 2023. The landlord advised it was not a repair but if there was anything it could do, it would be in touch with her.
7. The resident made a formal complaint on 18 February 2023. She stated that she had called the repairs team 3 times for the electric to be restored in the outhouse as she planned to get a mobility scooter soon due to her health deteriorating. She noted that the repairs team had informed her that it was her responsibility to pay for it however, she was not able to do this.
8. The landlord issued a stage 1 response on 24 March 2023. The landlord stated that it had spoken to the senior maintenance officer for electric who confirmed that it now removes old electric supplies to properties when they are vacant and there was no requirement for the landlord to supply electric to an outhouse. The landlord informed the resident she would need to ask it for permission, employ an electrician and supply a certificate to it if she wished to have electric in her outhouse. The landlord partially upheld the resident's complaint due to the lack of communication.
9. The landlord acknowledged the resident's complaint at stage 2 on 6 July 2023 and advised a response was due by 3 August 2023. On 1 August 2023, the landlord informed the resident there would be a delay in issuing a response, and this was now due by 16 August 2023.
10. The landlord issued a stage 2 response on 16 August 2023. The landlord reiterated that it was not obligated to provide an electrical supply to the outbuilding, and this is why it had been removed.
11. The resident referred her complaint to this Service in August 2023. She outlined her health issues and her need for a mobility scooter soon. She stated that she found the matter distressing as she would have nowhere to charge her scooter.
12. The resident informed this Service in February 2025 that the landlord reinstated the electrics in the outhouse in November 2024.

Assessment and findings

The landlord's response to the resident's request for electricity to be installed in the outhouse.

13. The landlord's mobility scooter policy states that while it does not have a 'legal obligation' to provide scooter storage, there is a need to identify storage and charging solutions that support the safe use of mobility scooters whilst recognising that different solutions may be necessary in terms of building design, financial considerations and building use.

14. The policy shows that the landlord will not give permission to residents to run power to external sheds/units as the use of temporary extension leads and adaptors for charging mobility scooters should be avoided.
15. The policy also says that if a tenant wishes to alter their property to provide safe storage of their mobility scooter, they must request permission in writing. The landlord would consider permission in accordance with the alterations and improvement procedure and any work would be at the tenant's expense and paid in advance.
16. The landlord's aids and adaptations policy states that a resident may make a self-referral to an aids and adaptations officer for a minor adaptation. For major adaptations, the occupational therapy service at the local authority would assess the requirements and needs of the tenant and provide a recommendation. Alternatively, for less complex major adaptation requests, the aids and adaptations officer may assess the requirements and needs of the tenant.
17. When the resident first reported the lack of electrics in the outhouse in February 2022, it is unclear from the landlord's records what action it took and what information it gave to her. Although the landlord's records indicate that it may have completed a physical inspection on 28 March 2022, there are no written records detailing what occurred during the inspection. The lack of records has made it difficult for this Service to assess whether the landlord's actions were appropriate in the circumstances.
18. The Ombudsman expects landlords to maintain a robust record of contacts and repairs. This is because clear, accurate, and easily accessible records provide an audit trail and enhance landlords' ability to identify and respond to problems when they arise.
19. The resident's subsequent contact with the landlord to request an inspection on 19 May 2022 indicate that the inspection on 28 March 2022 did not take place or did not appropriately address or resolve her concerns. Although the landlord scheduled an appointment for 25 May 2022, this was a missed appointment. This was a failing by the landlord, and it is likely to have been frustrating for the resident who had to chase the landlord for an explanation and an update on 6 June 2022. This was approximately 2 months after the resident's initial report about the matter. It was unreasonable for the landlord to leave the resident's report unaddressed and the scheduled appointment unattended.
20. An appointment was scheduled to take place on 14 June 2022. However, due to the lack of detailed repair records, it is unclear whether the inspection took place and if any follow-on actions were recorded.

21. The resident next contacted the landlord's repair team about the matter on 1 February 2023. She notified the landlord that she wanted to be able to charge her mobility scooter in the outhouse, but she would be unable to due to the lack of electricity in the outhouse. The landlord appropriately informed the resident that this was not a repair. However, the landlord should have directed her to the relevant team to respond to her query concerning the installation of electrics in the outhouse.
22. The landlord failed to call the resident back despite logging this request on 1 February 2023. The resident had to chase the landlord for an update on her query on 16 February 2023. The landlord informed her that it was unlikely to reinstate the electrics in the outhouse as this did not constitute a repair. It would have been reasonable for the landlord to have explained to the resident at this stage why it was unable to reinstate the electrics and why it did not constitute a repair. The lack of transparency from the landlord is likely to have confused and frustrated the resident who had notified the landlord that other residents had electricity in their outhouses.
23. The landlord's handling of the matter and lack of clear communication led to the resident making a formal complaint on 18 February 2023. She notified the landlord that, although it advised her that it was her responsibility to pay for the installation of electricity, she was not in a financial position to do so. The landlord maintained its position that there was no obligation upon it to supply electric to the outhouse and any alterations would be at the cost of the resident. The landlord's advice was appropriate and in accordance with its policy which states that any alterations to the resident's property to provide safe storage and charging of a mobility scooter would be at her expense.
24. While there may not have been an obligation upon the landlord, it would have been reasonable for it to have considered the resident's individual circumstances and needs before communicating a decision to her. Given that the resident's electrics request was to accommodate her need for a mobility scooter, the landlord could have done more to identify alternative solutions to assist her. For example, it could have given the resident more information about the possibility of storing and charging a mobility scooter in her property and the process involved in obtaining permission for this.
25. The landlord could have also considered whether there was any scope under its aids and adaptations policy to accommodate the resident's request for it to reinstate electricity to the outhouse. While the resident has notified this Service that the electrics have now been reinstated, it was unreasonable that the landlord did not seek to consider whether there was any discretion (given the individual circumstances of the case) at an earlier opportunity.

26. Overall, there was service failure by the landlord in its handling of the resident's request to have electricity reinstated to her outhouse. The landlord failed to offer adequate and transparent communication with the resident following her initial report and delayed in considering whether it could apply discretion in this case. The landlord did not maintain adequate records, which has impacted this Service's ability to conduct a thorough investigation, as highlighted through this report. This was a failure by the landlord and contributed to the other failures identified in this report.
27. The landlord is ordered to pay the resident £100 in recognition of the service failures identified.

Determination

28. In accordance with paragraph 52 of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme, there was service failure by the landlord in its response to the resident's request for electrics to be reinstated in her outhouse.

Orders

29. The landlord shall take the following action within 4 weeks of the date of this report and provide the Ombudsman with evidence of compliance with these orders:
- a. Apologise to the resident for the service failures identified in this report.
 - b. Pay the resident £100 in recognition of the time, trouble and inconvenience caused by the service failures identified.

13 March 2025

Complaint reference:
24 011 362

Complaint against:
Broxtowe Borough Council

The Ombudsman's final decision

Summary: Ms X complained about the way the Council handled her housing case and how it delayed a disabled facilities grant process to carry out adaptations at their property for her late mother. Ms X also complained about the Council's poor communication with her. There was fault by the Council for its failure to provide Ms X with information about the disabled facilities grant process which caused uncertainty to Ms X. The Council will take action to remedy the injustice caused.

The complaint

1. Ms X complained about how the Council:
 - a) handled her housing allocation process between 2018 and February 2023
 - b) delayed her late mother's (Ms Y) disabled facilities grant process for adaptations in their property in 2023
 - c) poorly communicated with her.
2. Ms X said the matter caused her significant distress and frustration.

The Ombudsman's role and powers

3. We cannot investigate late complaints unless we decide there are good reasons. Late complaints are when someone takes more than 12 months to complain to us about something a council has done. (Local Government Act 1974, sections 26B and 34D, as amended)
4. We investigate complaints about 'maladministration' and 'service failure'. In this statement, I have used the word fault to refer to these. We must also consider whether any fault has had an adverse impact on the person making the complaint. I refer to this as 'injustice'. If there has been fault which has caused an injustice, we may suggest a remedy. (Local Government Act 1974, sections 26(1) and 26A(1), as amended)
5. If we are satisfied with an organisation's actions or proposed actions, we can complete our investigation and issue a decision statement. (Local Government Act 1974, section 30(1B) and 34H(i), as amended)

What I have and have not investigated

6. I have not investigated Ms X's complaint at point 'a' about how the Council handled her housing allocation process between 2018 and February 2023. This

complaint is late, I consider it reasonable for Ms X to have complained about the matter earlier, there is no good reason to investigate it now.

7. I have exercised discretion to investigate matters from March 2023 to September 2024 in relation to the disabled facilities grant (DFG) process. This period covers when Ms Y moved into their property and the Council received an email from her occupational therapist for DFG to when Ms X complained to the Ombudsman in September 2024. I consider the death of Ms Y is good reason for Ms X to complain to us after 12 months.

How I considered this complaint

8. I considered evidence provided by Ms X and the Council as well as relevant law, policy and guidance.
9. Ms X and the Council had an opportunity to comment on my draft decision. I considered any comments before making a final decision.

What I found

Disabled facilities grants

10. Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) are for people with a qualifying disability who need adaptations in their home to help them remain in their home. DFGs are provided under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.
11. The process of applying for a DFG usually requires:
 - a) **Assessment and recommendation** – usually by an occupational therapist or other qualified assessor to identify the person's needs
 - b) **Identification of works and submission of grant application** - a schedule of works setting out the adaptations to meet the identified needs and quotes for the cost of the works
 - c) **Decision on DFG application** - the council decides if the works requested are necessary, appropriate, reasonable, and practicable
 - d) **Where approved** – completion of works and payment of grant.
12. When the Council has all the necessary information, the formal grant application is complete.
13. Councils must decide a grant application within 6 months of receiving the completed application (i.e. from the end of step 'b' above). The works must be completed within 12 months of approved application.
14. DFGs are administered by a local housing authority (a unitary authority, district or borough council). The local housing authority is the decision maker.
15. In a two-tier authority, this means the county council conducts the assessment and identifies the disabled person's needs and then the district or the borough council decides the DFG application.
16. **Provisional Test of Resources (PTOR)** - will be carried out on each case, and this will decide how much grant a person is entitled to. A person may be asked to pay towards the cost of the adaptation works to the property depending on their income.
17. **Pension Credit** – is a means-tested benefit for people over the State Pension age who have a low income.

Council's DFG Policy

18. The county council occupational therapy (OT) service will make referrals to the Council (borough council) recommending work to be carried out which is necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of their client. The Council will approve grants if, amongst other things, it is satisfied that the work is reasonable and practicable to carry out.
19. Applicants for DFGs will be required to complete a statutory test of resources form (means test) to determine whether any contribution is to be paid towards the cost of works.
20. Where the statutory test of resources determines that the applicant has a contribution to make towards a grant, that contribution will be paid to the Council prior to the works commencing. The money will be retained by the Council and paid direct to the builder on satisfactory completion of scheduled works.

Key events

2023

21. Ms X, her child and her late mother (Ms Y) lived together in a three-bedroom property. They moved into the property in March.
22. Ms Y had mobility issues and Ms X was her carer.
23. In April, the Council received an email from the county council appointed occupational therapist (OT) for Ms Y. The correspondence stated the OT was in the process of confirming what adaptation works were needed to be included in Ms Y's OT referral for her DFG application. The OT also asked the Council to complete a Provisional Test of Resources (PTOR) for Ms Y to determine if she would be required to make any contributions towards the adaptation works.
24. The next day, the Council wrote to Ms Y and informed her it needed to complete a PTOR for her as requested by the OT. The Council also said if Ms Y decided to continue/apply for a DFG, then an official test of her resources would be carried out.
25. In May, the Council asked Ms X to provide it with evidence of Ms Y's Guarantee Credit Pension Credit. It said it needed the information for the DFG process to be progressed. Ms X told the Council she was unable to find the requested paperwork due to their recent house move. Ms X said she wrote to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and asked it to send a copy of Ms Y's Guarantee Credit Pension Credit to their new address. DWP did not send the requested document to Ms X.
26. The Council attempted on several occasions to access the DWP records on behalf of Ms Y, so it could get her pension credit information. It was unable to access the DWP records due to the Council's officer access issues and its technical errors.
27. In September, the Council said it was able to access DWP records to verify Ms Y's Pension Credit award. The Council completed a PTOR for Ms Y, and it found Ms Y was eligible for a DFG without a means-test.
28. On 12 September, the Council sent its PTOR decision letter to Ms Y. It advised Ms Y it had also sent a copy of its decision letter to her OT, who will discuss how to proceed and arrange for a formal DFG referral to be made.
29. A few days later, Ms Y passed away.

2024

30. In April, Ms X made a formal complaint to the Council about its significant delay in progressing the DFG process to carry out adaptations at their property for Ms Y. Ms X also complained about the Council's lack of support and communication with her about the DFG process.
31. In its responses to Ms X's complaint, the Council:
- said it was unable to progress Ms Y's DFG application after it received an OT referral without the required financial information which included evidence of Ms Y's Guarantee Credit Pension Credit.
 - acknowledged the adaptation request for their property was processed over a period of five months. The Council said the delay was because Ms X was unable to provide it with the requested financial information for Ms Y in a timely manner.
 - said it made a reasonable number of contacts with Ms X and kept her updated on the DFG process between May and September 2023.
 - did not uphold Ms X's complaint.
32. Ms X remained dissatisfied with the Council's responses, and she made a complaint to the Ombudsman.

Analysis

33. The Council in this case is a borough council and before it can process a DFG application, it needs an OT report to confirm adaptations are necessary and appropriate. The responsibility to complete an OT assessment and recommendation lies with the county council which is the first stage of the DFG process.
34. The correspondence the Council received from the OT in April was not an OT referral and/or report with recommendations for adaptation works at Ms Y and Ms X's property. Therefore, as of April when the Council requested Ms Y's financial information to complete her PTOR, the DFG process had not started. So, the Council's statutory responsibility to make a decision about a DFG application had not been engaged at this point and could not have resulted in a delay to the process. This was not fault.
35. However, I criticise the Council for its use of words in its responses to Ms X's complaint. In particular when it said it received an 'OT referral'. This suggested the Council had received a formal OT referral/report and it caused confusion to Ms X in thinking the DFG process had started.
36. As regards the PTOR for Ms Y, applicants are responsible for providing the Council with their financial information to be assessed. But Ms X was unable to obtain and provide the Council with Ms Y's pension credit information. There was no fault by the Council.
37. While I note, in the Council's attempt to obtain information about the Guarantee Credit Pension Credit for Ms Y, it experienced difficulties accessing the DWP records for approximately two and a half months (June to September 2023). The Council's inability to access the DWP records were due to issues relating to its officer's access and its technical errors. However, I do not find this delay caused any significant injustice to Ms X. This is because as at the time the Council obtained Ms Y's pension credit information and completed her PTOR in September 2023, the Council had still not received the OT referral/report and a DFG application for Ms Y.

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38. There was no evidence to show the Council informed Ms X about the stages, requirements and timelines of the DFG process. This was fault and it caused Ms X uncertainty.

Action

39. To remedy the injustice caused by the faults identified, the Council has agreed to complete the following within one month of the final decision:
- apologise in writing to Ms X to acknowledge the uncertainty caused to her by the Council's failings to inform her about the disabled facilities grant process. The apology should be in accordance with our guidance, [Making an effective apology](#)
 - the Council will work with the County Council to ensure applicants and/or their representatives are provided with written information at the start of the disabled facilities grants process which explains the requirements, stages and timelines of the process.
40. The Council should provide us with evidence it has complied with the above actions.

Decision

41. I find evidence of fault by the Council leading to injustice. The Council will take action to remedy the injustice caused.

Investigator's decision on behalf of the Ombudsman

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Housing

Ombudsman Service

REPORT

COMPLAINT 202330775

Broxtowe Borough Council

30 May 2025

Our approach

The Housing Ombudsman's approach to investigating and determining complaints is to decide what is fair in all the circumstances of the case. This is set out in the Housing Act 1996 and the Housing Ombudsman Scheme (the Scheme). The Ombudsman considers the evidence and looks to see if there has been any 'maladministration', for example whether the landlord has failed to keep to the law, followed proper procedure, followed good practice or behaved in a reasonable and competent manner.

Both the resident and the landlord have submitted information to the Ombudsman, and this has been carefully considered. Their accounts of what has happened are summarised below. This report is not an exhaustive description of all the events that have occurred in relation to this case, but an outline of the key issues as a background to the investigation's findings.

The complaint

1. The complaint is about the landlord's:
 - a. Handling of reports of a drain blockage.
 - b. Complaint handling.

Background

2. The resident is an assured tenant of the landlord. The property is a 1-bedroom ground floor flat.
3. On 11 August 2023, the resident reported to the landlord that the shower drain in her wet room was blocked and she was unable to use the shower. On the same day, a plumber inspected the property and undertook a repair to unblock the drain and restore the water flow.
4. Between August 2023 and January 2024, the resident reported a blocked shower drain on 10 occasions and that she was unable to use her shower during this period. The landlord responded to each request, and contractors inspected the property, cleaned the drain, and restored the flow before leaving. The resident disputed that the blockages were due to hair or wipes.
5. The resident made a formal complaint to the landlord on 15 November 2023. She was dissatisfied that despite multiple inspections, the blockage remained unresolved. She advised that she had not been able to use her shower since August 2023. She believed the problem was caused by work done to the building's drainage system. She has not had any further contact since 30 October 2023, when an inspector mentioned a drainage engineer would be

sent. She repeatedly called the repairs team and left voicemails. She also raised concerns about missed repair deadlines and lack of communication.

6. The landlord did not provide a formal stage 1 response within the expected timeframe and the resident contacted this Service for assistance. This Service wrote to the landlord on 6 February 2024 directing it to provide a response to the complaint by 13 February 2024.
7. The landlord issued its stage 1 complaint response on 12 February 2024. It stated it had provided an appropriate level of service based on number of visits. It found no fault with the drains beyond hair or wipes blocking the drain and reported no other related issues in the building. The complaint was not upheld.
8. The resident was unhappy with the landlord's complaint response and requested the escalation of her complaint on 19 February 2024. In addition to the stage 1 concerns, the resident stated that there had been a lack of communication regarding the repair. On 6 March 2024, a support worker helped the resident submit a further complaint about the repeated unaddressed reports of blockage. She disputed the stage 1 finding that this issue has been dealt with appropriately as the blockage was reoccurring. She considered that she was living in unsanitary conditions and had not been able to use her shower since August 2023.
9. The landlord issued its stage 2 response on 15 March 2024. It reaffirmed its earlier decision that an appropriate level of service had been provided. It stated that the repairs were attended to in a timely manner, with the majority attended to within 1 to 2 working days. The housing repairs team and 2 independent drainage and plumbing contractors found no issue with the drain. All inspections were completed, and drains were left in working order following unblocking and cleaning. The landlord stated there was no information to suggest the housing repairs team have not appropriately attended to the drain issue. It did, however, recognise that the drain issue caused the resident significant distress and apologised if it contributed to the distress.
10. The resident was not satisfied with the landlord's response and considered that the problem was still ongoing. She referred the complaint to the Ombudsman on 5 April 2024.

Assessment and findings

Scope of investigation

11. The resident has advised that the issues have been ongoing for a number of years. The Ombudsman may only investigate complaints that were brought to the attention of the landlord as a formal complaint within a reasonable period of the resident becoming aware of the issue, normally being within 12 months.

12. Therefore, this investigation has focused on the period from August 2022 onwards, being 12 months prior to the resident's formal complaint in August 2023.

Blocked drain

13. The tenancy agreement states that the landlord's repair obligations. The landlord is responsible for repairing drains, gutters and external pipes. However, the resident is responsible for clearing any hairs in the shower tray.
14. The landlord's repairs policy sets out the repair categories and timeframes for repairs. Urgent repairs will be attended to within 3-7 working days. Routine repairs within 20 working days.
15. The landlord's complaints compensation policy states that the landlord will pay compensation to residents if there has been a service failure or maladministration.
16. The landlord responded to the reports of blocked drain between August 2023 till January 2024 in 1 to 2 days. Prior to the contractors leaving the property, the drain would be cleared and water flow restored. This was appropriate given the nature of the issue and in line with the repair timescales mentioned in the repairs policy. It also demonstrated that the landlord took the resident's concern seriously and took appropriate action.
17. On one occasion, on 26 October 2023, there was no access to the property according to landlord. This is disputed by the resident, who explained that no one attended. There was no follow up on this. Given that the landlord was aware of an outstanding repair issue, the resident should have been contacted to discuss the no access and rearrange the appointment. The resident is also elderly and vulnerable, and this issue had been ongoing for months. Furthermore, the resident reported inconvenience in that she was unable to use the shower and was washing hair in the sink. It was therefore unreasonable that it failed to follow this up.
18. It is evident that multiple contractors determined that the issue was being caused by hairs and wipes blocking the drain. It was therefore reasonable for the landlord to inform the resident that this was her responsibility, as per the tenancy agreement.
19. Despite the multiple reports of the same issue and different contractors attending the property, the issue was not resolved to the resident's satisfaction. It is reasonable for landlords to rely on independent and professional contractor's advice. However, as this issue was repeatedly reported and there was a clear dispute on what was causing the blockage, the landlord should have considered at an earlier stage an alternative approach or done more to

investigate the resident's concerns. This is particularly important as the resident reported significant inconvenience that she was unable to use her shower for months and the inconvenience caused by the multiple visits. Despite a contractor recommending cameras should be used, this was not done. It would have been appropriate to follow the expert advice. Its failure to consider an escalated response was therefore unreasonable in the circumstances.

20. The resident also raised concerns about lack of communication during the repair. In the stage 2 response, the repairs were discussed; however, there was no consideration of communication failings or the impact on the resident. The resident's concerns about whether the property was unsanitary was also not addressed. The landlord therefore failed to use its formal responses as an opportunity to demonstrate that it had acted appropriately, or otherwise to have identified failings and offered a remedy. This was a failing in the circumstances.
21. While the landlord's repair responses were mostly timely, its failure to follow up a repair following access issues caused distress and inconvenience to the resident. It also failed to consider an escalated response given the repeated issue and the resident's vulnerabilities. Finally, it failed to address the resident's concerns about communication and the safety of her property.
22. A finding of maladministration has therefore been made in the circumstances, for which an order for £200 has been made. This is made up of £100 for distress and inconvenience, and £100 for the resident's time and trouble chasing the issues.

Complaint handling

23. The landlord's complaints policy states that the landlord operates a 2-stage process. At stage 1, it will respond within 10 working days of acknowledging the complaint and at stage 2, within 20 working days of acknowledging the complaint. At any stage, if it needs further time, it will update the resident.
24. These timeframes match this Service's Complaint Handling Code (the Code). The Code also states that complaints and escalations should be acknowledged within 5 working days.
25. The landlord failed to provide a formal stage 1 response within the expected timeframe. The response was sent on 12 February 2024, almost 3 months after the complaint was made on 15 November 2023. The resident was not updated during this period and therefore submitted a further complaint in late January 2024. Furthermore, the resident referred the complaint to the Service for assistance. The Service wrote to the landlord on 6 February 2024 directing it to provide a response to the complaint by 13 February 2024. The landlord provided a response on 12 February 2024; however, it did not acknowledge the

delay and inconvenience caused in its response. This was inappropriate and amounts to a service failure. Landlords must provide responses to complaints according to its complaints policy and the Code without direction from this Service. The landlord has therefore been ordered to pay the resident £100 compensation for failing to provide a response to her complaint in line with its policy and our guidance.

Determination (decision)

- 26. In accordance with paragraph 52 of the Scheme, there was maladministration in the landlord's handling of the repair of blocked drain.
- 27. In accordance with paragraph 52 of the Scheme, there was service failure in the landlord's handling of the complaint.

Orders and recommendations

Orders

- 28. Within 4 weeks, the landlord is ordered to:
 - a. Provide a written apology to the resident for the failures identified in this report.
 - b. Pay £200 compensation directly to the resident in recognition of the impact caused by its handling of the drain issues.
 - c. Pay £100 compensation directly to the resident in recognition of the time and trouble caused by the landlord's failures in the complaint handling identified by this report.
 - d. Contact the Service within 4 weeks to provide evidence of compliance with the above orders.

Recommendations

- 29. The Ombudsman recommends that the landlord reviews its processes to ensure that reoccurring repairs are monitored, and alternative investigations are explored in a timely manner.

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

Work Programme

1. Purpose of Report

To consider items for inclusion in the Work Programme for future meetings.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to consider the Work Programme and RESOLVE accordingly.

3. Detail

Items which have already been suggested for inclusion in the Work Programme of future meetings are given below. Members are asked to consider any additional items that they may wish to see in the Programme.

22 September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Progress Report • Annual Counter Fraud Report 2024/25 • Governance Dashboard – Major Projects • Review of Strategic Risk Register • Complaints report Quarter 1 • Statement of Accounts 2024/25– Going Concern • Annual Constitutional Review • Annual Code of Conduct Review
17 November 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Audit Letter – External Auditors Report on the Statement of Account 2024/25 • Internal Audit Progress Report • Review of Strategic Risk Register • Complaints report • Complaints report Quarter 2

4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

The terms of reference are set out in the Council's constitution. It is good practice to include a work programme to help the Council manage the portfolios.

6. Human Resources Implications

The comments from the Human Resources Manager were as follows:

Not applicable.

7. Union Comments

The Union comments were as follows:

Not applicable.

8. Climate Change Implications

The climate change implications are contained within the report.

9. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

As this is not a change to policy and no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

11. Background Papers

Nil.