

Response of the Member Responsible for Housing Complaints (Cabinet Member for Housing) to the following:

- **Chesterfield Borough Council's housing complaints performance for 2023/24**
- **Self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Code**
- **Action Plan to address any gaps in the self-assessment**

Today, I have attended a Cabinet Member briefing meeting focused on housing complaints and the Housing Ombudsman's new requirements. I was joined by the Cabinet Member for Customers and Business Transformation, Councillor Gavin Baldauf-Good, the Council's Executive Director, Christine Durrant, and the Service Director for Digital, HR and Customer Services, Rachel O'Neil.

Reports on complaints performance, and on the housing service's compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's new Complaints Handling Code, were presented by the Service Director for Housing, Jane Davies, and the Housing Strategy and Engagement Manager, James Crouch. The documents had been circulated prior to the meeting, and the detailed presentation and subsequent discussion offered the opportunity for myself and colleagues to ask questions and make suggestions.

As the Member responsible for housing complaints, I fully accept the contents of the performance report for 2023/24 and the self-assessment against the Code, and endorse the action plan devised by officers to address the few remaining gaps which, once completed, will ensure Chesterfield Borough Council is fully compliant with the Code.

I am committed to supporting the housing service to improve its performance on complaints handling. As Cabinet Member for Housing, I recognise the importance of providing good quality housing, and that responding to customer complaints forms an important part of that service. Complaints provide valuable feedback on our services and help us to continually improve.

The documents presented today, present an honest and comprehensive appraisal of the housing service's approach to complaints handling. The service is aware of areas for improvement, and has clear plans in place, and I expect to see significant improvements in performance levels next year.

A new Housing Advisory Board will be in place from October, bringing together tenants and Elected Members, including myself as Chair, to receive performance reports and other important documents relating to the housing service. I will be ensuring that complaints performance is discussed at each quarterly meeting of the Board, along with progress updates against the action plan to address gaps against the Code. I am pleased to see that the Council's Complaints Policy has already been revised to reflect the new requirements, and that this will be presented to Cabinet on 16th July for formal adoption and approval. The remaining gaps will be addressed through a series of minor procedure changes and a programme of training for employees, and I will monitor the housing service's progress against the target completion dates indicated in the action plan, provide constructive challenge, and take appropriate action to remove any barriers to progress.

Councillor Jean Innes, Cabinet Member for Housing, 17th June 2024