

Leicester  
City Council

## **MEETING OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

**DATE: MONDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2022**

**TIME: 5:30 pm**

**PLACE: Meeting Room G.01, Ground Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ**

### **Members of the Committee**

Councillor Westley (Chair)

Councillor Chamund (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Ali, Aqbany, Crewe, Fonseca, Gee and Pantling

Members of the Committee are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed overleaf.

For Monitoring Officer

#### **Officer contacts:**

**Anita James (Senior Democratic Support Officer)**

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Jerry Connolly (Scrutiny Policy Officer) email: [Jerry.Connolly@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:Jerry.Connolly@leicester.gov.uk)

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# **PUBLIC SESSION**

## **AGENDA**

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#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members are asked to declare any interests they may have in the business to be discussed.

#### **3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Appendix A  
page 1**

The minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Commission held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022 have been circulated, and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

#### **4. PETITIONS**

The Monitoring Officer to report on the receipt of any petitions received in accordance with Council procedures.

#### **5. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS OR STATEMENTS OF CASE**

The Monitoring Officer to report on the receipt of any questions, representations or statements of case received in accordance with Council procedures.

#### **6. RENT ARREARS REPORT (APRIL 2022 TO SEPT 2022)**

**Appendix B  
page 7**

The Director of Housing submits a report providing information on the progress of steps taken to address rent arrears during the period April 2022 to September 2022.

Members of the Commission will be asked to comment and note the contents of the report.

**7. HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND HOUSE BUILDING UPDATE** **Appendix C  
page 19**

The Director of Housing will provide a presentation giving details of the HRA Capital Programme and House Building update.

**8. HOMELESSNESS REVIEW 2022 REPORT** **Appendix D  
page 39**

The Director of Housing submits a report providing information on the Homelessness Review and the formulation of a Homelessness Strategy.

Members will be invited to comment on the report.

**9. DISTRICT HEATING SERVICE CHARGES PROPOSALS REPORT** **Appendix E  
page 131**

The Director of Housing submits a report on the District Heating Service Charges proposals which includes an overview of the charging arrangements for tenants and leaseholders in receipt of heating and hot water through the District Heating network and the recommendations which will be presented to Full Council for an in-year increase to service charges.

Members will be asked to comment upon and note the recommendations being taken to Full Council.

**10. PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR (PRS) STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT** **Appendix F  
page 169**

The Director of Housing submits a report providing a summary update on the implementation of the council's Private Rented Sector Strategy objectives.

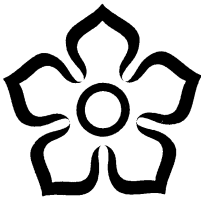
**11. WORK PROGRAMME** **Appendix G  
Page 179**

Members of the Commission will be asked to consider the work programme and make suggestions for additional items as it considers necessary.

**12. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

**13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note the next scheduled meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Committee will take place on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 5.30pm at City Hall.



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# Appendix A

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2022 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Westley (Chair)  
Councillor Chamund (Vice Chair)

Councillor Ali  
Councillor Gee

Councillor Aqbany  
Councillor Pantling

In attendance:

Councillor Kitterick  
Councillor Sandhu  
Councillor Waddington

Councillor Rae Bhatia  
Councillor Valand  
Councillor Whittle

Councillor Cutkelvin – Assistant City Mayor (Housing and Education)

\* \* \* \* \*

## **28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Fonseca, and from Councillors Joel and Porter as invitees of the Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission (Minute 33 refers).

## **29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest separate from those recorded in the Members' Register.

## **30. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

AGREED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 1 August 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

### **31. PETITIONS**

The Monitoring Officer reported that no Petitions had been received, in accordance with Council procedures.

### **32. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS OR STATEMENTS OF CASE**

The Monitoring Officer reported that no Questions, Representations or Statements of Case had been received, in accordance with Council procedures.

### **33. LEICESTER LOCAL PLAN (2020 - 2036) - PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON SUBMISSION PLAN (REGULATION 19)**

The Chair reminded the Commission that Members of the Economic Development Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission had been invited to attend the meeting and welcomed their participation.

The Head of Planning then submitted a report which outlined the main strategies and policies of the submission of the Local Plan for public consultation in November 2022. A presentation was also given, which covered the content of the report and related details.

It was reported that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) required all local planning authorities to produce a local plan and in view of this officers had been working on a new plan which would replace the current core strategy and saved policies from the previous local plan of 2006. The key consultation stages were outlined.

It was noted that the draft plan would cover the period 2020–2036 sought to:

- Meet the needs for homes, jobs, shopping, and leisure
- Allocate sites for development including strategic development sites
- Protect important sites such as those with heritage value
- Set clear policies that guide decisions on planning applications
- The plan was required to be viable and deliverable

It was clarified that this would be the final consultation before the plan was submitted to the independent Planning Inspectorate for an Examination in Public (EIP). The Chair commented on the consultation process, involving submission of comments to the Overview select Committee prior to final consideration by Full Council.

The Chair then referred to the attendance of Councillor Kitterick, who he had allowed to speak in accordance with Scrutiny Procedure Rules, alongside the Members of the Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission.

The presentation detailed the questions received in advance from Councillors Kitterick and Waddington and the following key points were noted:

In respect of the documents supplied referring to site allocations, it was suggested that they did not appear to be included within the policies document, and in response it was clarified that:

- Space standards had been considered and the issue with the potential "studio" loophole had been covered in the Draft Plan as defined in previous consultation in 2020. It was proposed that the standards would apply to all residential C3 accommodation, and it was confirmed that the case would be made to apply the standards to studio flats.
- In terms of the retention of "whole" houses and resisting sub-division of houses into flatted units where there was a proven demand for whole house accommodation, it was clarified that the new Policy drafted sought to secure this objective within approved Article 4 Direction areas.
- Purpose built student accommodation would be considered with the same criteria-based policy to that set out in the Regulation 18 Draft Plan
- An adapted policy on Hostel accommodation to the previous version is proposed sought to strengthen management controls.
- The Tall Buildings policy and city centre streetscape it was reported that Character Area assessments published in full at the previous consultation stage had been refreshed in line with new Government Guidance and new Supplementary Design Guidance to deal with specific tall building policy application would need to be prepared for further detailed consultation after the Local Plan adoption.

In terms of site allocations, it was questioned whether there had been any consideration to a much broader approach to changing planning designations where it is clear the location no longer fits the use. The recent development of the Freeman's Common area was debated. In response it was noted that allocations could only be made for sites which could be proven as available and deliverable, and as the estate was fully occupied it did not therefore comply with those requirements. It was also noted that as well as housing the Plan would accommodate employment need and the implications of the reliance on Charnwood District Council accommodating the unmet employment need was recognised and acknowledged.

It was also questioned that some of the figures for residential capacity were dubious where it was clear that capacity was greater than quoted and it was suggested that these should be explored further.

It was reported that the capacity formulas had been revised and reviewed especially in respect of the Central Development Area resulting in a substantial increase in plan supply capacity. This considered emerging proposals and planning approvals.

In respect of brownfield sites, it was requested that a map of sites should be made available and the example of the derelict factory sites in Woodgate in private ownership was suggested, including proposals and recommendations

for their future use for housing or employment.

In response it was noted that the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment was a full comprehensive database to support the plan and further documents would set out how site allocations were arrived at to provide this information.

The Chair thanked the Head of Planning and all Officers involved in the process for their detailed work in preparing the Local Plan.

Particular comments from Commission Members, and Members of the Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission were noted as follows. It was confirmed that these issues would be considered separately, and Members would be advised of updates accordingly:

- Details of the sites assessed including in the Woodgate area and the associated flood risks would be circulated.
- The previously submitted petition concerning the designation of land on the allocation 309 on Land adjacent to Anstey Lane would be clarified, it being noted that the allocation would not specify detailed site and open space layouts. The issue would be explored with the site promoters, and outcomes would be circulated.
- Similar to the above point, resident concerns about the proposed allocation on land at Netherhall Drive were reported. It was confirmed the Local Plan allocation was to identify around half the site for future potential land use but planning applications for development were not expected in the short term as there would be local engagement on site development and subsequent applications should the plan be adopted. It was confirmed residents would be able to register concerns at the upcoming consultation stage should this be approved by Council.
- Further information concerning the allocation and designation of permanent and temporary travellers' sites was requested. It was confirmed that the revised plan took forward the permanent site proposed at Western park Golf Course as per the previous consultation was proposed together with options for transit provision which would need to be subject to further consultation post Local Plan adoption.

Commission Members and invitees confirmed that they were satisfied with the responses provided arising from their questions and previous concerns.

The Assistant City Mayor (Housing and Education), Councillor Cutkelvin, was invited to comment, and it was confirmed that full consultation on any proposals would involve residents, relevant stakeholders and partner organisations to ensure that any development was sympathetic and of benefit to local communities.

In respect of the ongoing process, the Head of Planning also confirmed and advised that the comments on the Local Plan to be submitted to Overview Select Committee and Full Council would allow a further consultation period throughout November 2022.



In conclusion, the Chair thanked Members of the Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission, together with Councillor Kitterick for their input and participation.

AGREED:

That the key local plan strategies, policies, site allocations, and provisions for consultation be noted and supported prior to further consideration at Overview Select Committee and Full Council.

#### **34. HOUSING CRISIS IN LEICESTER - SCRUTINY REVIEW REPORT**

As Chair of the Task Group, Councillor Gee was invited to introduce the item.

The report of the review was submitted, and it was noted that the review was prompted by a range of factors, but most keenly felt was the erosion of affordable social housing through the right to buy mechanism which had reduced housing availability for those who most directly needed it. A principal objective was to capture and use the very detailed knowledge that members had within their own communities and their knowledge of local issues.

While a shortage of new social rented housing was a contributing feature of the housing crisis, a full range was highlighted, including problems facing those who own their own homes or living in the private rented sector (PRS). Members recognised the value of the PRS, while also pointing to adverse issues within the sector, particularly high rents, poor housing, antisocial behaviour by tenants, and landlords who failed to maintain the homes occupied by their tenants.

Frustration with the planning system, which appeared to freeze potential housing sites out of the reach of housing providers, and by extension was beyond the reach of those in greatest need, was also a feature of the review.

The related developing crisis of high inflation and energy costs also contributed to the housing crisis and the failures in Government policy were referred to and acknowledged.

The Executive Summary, background to the review and key findings were noted.

Councillor Gee commented on and welcomed the attendance of Councillors Kitterick, Waddington and Whittle, who were not Commission members but had remained in the meeting to discuss the item.

The Chair of the Commission thanked Councillor Gee for his introduction and asked for questions and comments.

It was suggested that the emphasis should be widened from Government blame and comment was made on the availability of Council owned and which

could potentially be developed for housing. The possibility of creating a development company to accelerate this proposal and the need for clear data was stressed to ensure that the work of the Task Group and the Review did not end up being wasted. In this regard it was confirmed that a report to update on progress would be submitted to the Commission at a future agreed meeting.

The Assistant City Mayor (Housing and Education) advised that she hoped for clear asks of Government to result from the review. She added that the crisis should be seen as a corporate responsibility across the Council, including consideration by public health, economic development and other services.

In conclusion the Chair referred to the possibility of a licensing scheme for private landlords to improve conditions which would be a factor for future deliberation.

**AGREED:**

1. To endorse the final Scrutiny Report - 'Housing Crisis in Leicester'.
2. That the Assistant City Mayor (Housing and Education) and the Executive be requested to consider the recommendations and calls for action to Central Government as contained in the final Scrutiny Report.
3. That an update report be submitted to the Commission at a future meeting.

**35. DISTRICT HEATING SERVICE CHARGES**

This item was withdrawn.

**36. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Commission's Work Programme was submitted for information and comment.

**37. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 7.05pm.

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# **Rent Arrears Report**

## **April 2022 to September 2022**

Assistant Mayor Briefing: 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022  
Housing Scrutiny Commission: 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022

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**Assistant Mayor for Housing:** Cllr Elly Cutkelvin  
**Lead Director:** Chris Burgin

## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: ALL
- Report author: Zenab Valli
- Author contact details: [Zenab.valli@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:Zenab.valli@leicester.gov.uk) Tel: 0116 4543573
- Report version number: V.1a

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Members of the Scrutiny Commission on the rent arrears progress over the last 6 months, from April 2022 to September 2022.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The report is for information and Members are asked to note the contents of the report.

## 3. SUMMARY

- 3.1 At the end of Quarter 2 (30<sup>th</sup> September 2022) the cash amount outstanding was **£2.471m**, for current tenant rent arrears within the general housing stock. This is **5% higher** than at the same point in the year 2021/22. (see 4.1, Table 1).
- 3.2 The proportion of rent collected over the last 52 weeks was **100.15%**.
- 3.3 The team support tenants to apply for Discretionary Housing Payments. A total of **£249,095k** was paid in DHP for all qualifying Council tenants over the last 6 months.
- 3.4 Over the last 6 months the team supported **1,958 tenants** with food, fuel, and basic essentials by referring them to the Household Support Fund. (See 4.33 Table 6)
- 3.5 The total value of the top 500 arrears cases **reduced by 16%** when compared to the performance at the same point in the last financial year.
- 3.6 By the end of quarter 2, a total number of **6,022** council tenants were claiming UC and 72% of those tenants were in rent arrears which is **1% higher** when compared to the same point in the previous year. (see 4.14, Table 5).
- 3.7 The Rent Management Advisors have been supporting tenants with welfare benefit claims. By the end of the year, the Rent Management Advisors received **440 referrals**. A total of **65%** of tenants required short-term support and **35%** are being provided with longer-term support.
- 3.8 A total of **2 evictions** were carried out over the last 6 months. This is **lower** than at the same point in the last year where the figure was 4. Since April 2022, an average of **3 cases per month** were pursued with **legal actions** which is a dramatic **reduction** compared to pre-coronavirus levels at 80 per month.

## 4. REPORT

### Current Tenant Rent Arrears

4.1 Rent arrears at the end of the second quarter (30<sup>th</sup> September 2022) and previous financial years were:

**Table 1.** Quarterly Arrears

End of Q2 Period	Arrears at End of Quarter 2
2019/20	£2,474,630
2020/21	£2,567,269
2021/22	£2,348,073
<b>2022/23</b>	<b>*£2,470,861</b>

\* All payments collected up to week ending 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2022 and direct debits paid in 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 are included in this figure

4.2 Table 1 shows the cash amount owing at the end of quarter 2 and comparisons against the same point in the last 4 years. The rent arrears are **higher by 5%** compared to the same point in the last year (2021/22) and resembles similarity to the performance in 2019/20, which saw the start of the covid pandemic. This figure does not represent non-dwelling properties.

This is an identifiable pattern seeing rent arrears at an upward trend during the first 6 months of the financial year. Furthermore, these are likely the first signs of impact due to the ongoing economic challenges. The cost-of-living is increasing at the fastest rate in 40 years and is driven by the record rises in the cost of food and energy. We are aware our tenants have started facing a struggling financial period in their lives and are left with making tough choices over their household budgets.

4.3 The team continue to adopt good working practices to ensure rent arrears are minimised and tenants are supported. Examples of this are shown below.

- Tenants are receiving ongoing support with Discretionary Housing Funds (DHP), Household Support Funds and food parcels. Referrals were made to specialist agencies for tenants that were facing financial, or debt worries.
- Effective joint partnership working with the District Managers (Tenancy management) and the repairs managers to agree decisions to progress complex cases and discuss any tenant issues which might be causing reasons to withhold rent payments.
- Developing system messages to identify cases at threat of legal action or where tenants are not engaging so all staff across Housing are able to identify tenants that need to engage with the team urgently enabling the team to offer them support.
- Developing electronic court files to improve efficiency of the court process and providing time savings for the team.
- Bulk text messages to tenants in rent arrears reminding them to contact the team
- Offering tenants, a more support-led approach compared to enforcement which is helping towards compliance of rent obligations.
- The Rent Management Advisors (RMAs) continue to deliver all financial and welfare benefit support for Council tenants in-house
- The Multi-Agency Meetings chaired by members of the team. This enables tenants, internal and external agencies to explore all available options and find solutions on tenant issues, to support tenancy sustainment and prevent homelessness.

- A non-engagement strategy has been launched to give the team a renewed focus on non-engagers and focussing on creative ways to enable tenant engagement.
- Frequent complex case review meetings with Manager and Team Leaders to explore serious arrears in excess of £1,500. The meetings help produce a plan of action and kept the team challenged as the cases were overseen by management.
- An ongoing emphasis on performance management to ensure output and productivity is not affected whilst the service continues operating from home.
- Regular training, briefings, and meetings with the team to support changes to ongoing working practices.

### Proportion of Rent Collected

4.4 The team have a key performance target to ensure the proportion of rent collected at the end of the financial year is 99%. The proportion of rent collected over the last 52 weeks is **100.15%**. The figure reflects a rolling 52-week performance and demonstrates the hard work and tremendous efforts made by the team in maximising rent collection.

### Number of Cases

4.5 The number of current tenants owing 7 weeks or more net rent is shown in table 2 below:

**Table 2.** Breakdown of 7 weeks or more net rent

End of Q2 Period	Owing 7 Weeks or more Net
2019/20	1,765
2020/21	1,771
2021/22	1,380
<b>2022/23</b>	<b>1,375</b>

N.B. Where no net rent is payable (i.e. on full benefit), full rent has been used as a default value to calculate number of weeks owing)

4.6 The number of cases in arrears owing 7 weeks or more net rent **reduced very slightly by 0.36%** in the same point in the last financial year. The 7-week arrears include lower amounts of net rent, so this is not a true reflection of the serious debt cases.

### Arrears Per Debtor

4.7 The total arrears divided by the total number of tenants in rent arrears at the specified intervals are shown in table 3 below:

**Table 3.** Average Arrears per Debtor by end of Quarter 2

End of Q2 Period	Average Arrears
2019/20	£259.49
2020/21	£267.05
2021/22	£252.70
<b>2022/23</b>	<b>£254.44</b>

4.8 Table 3 shows the average arrears increased slightly when compared to the same point in quarter 2 of the previous financial year. The current figure remains lower

than the earlier 2 years when the impact of Covid had started. This figure is variable depending on the number of tenants in arrears at any given time.

### Top 500 Arrears Cases (by value)

4.9 Table 4 (below) shows the top 500 accounts with the highest arrears and total value of arrears at the end of each quarter regardless of tenants payment methods.

**Table 4.** Top 500 Arrears Cases

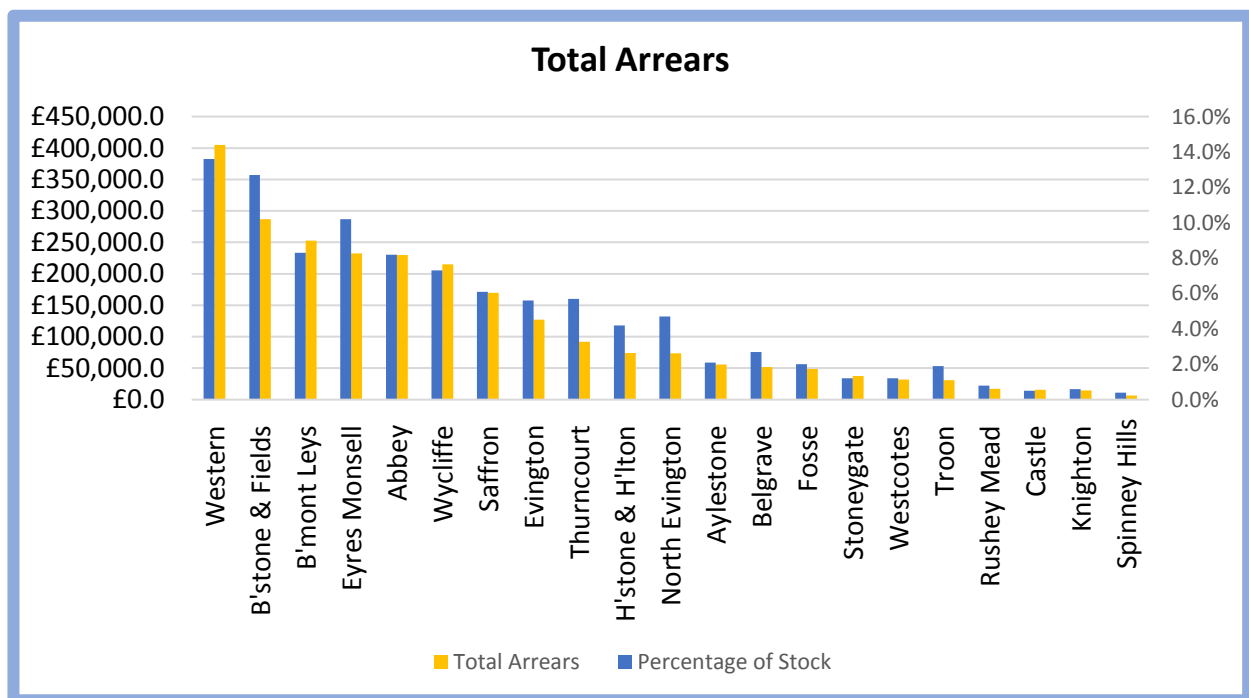
End of Q2 Period	Highest Case	Lowest Case	Average	Total Value
2019/20	£3,393	£750	£1,142	£571,079
2020/21	£5,152	£864	£1,459	£729,304
2021/22	£6,038	£781	£1,367	£683,502
<b>2022/23</b>	<b>£3,849</b>	<b>£777</b>	<b>£1,143</b>	<b>£571,770</b>

4.10 Table 4 shows that the total value of top arrears cases **reduced by 16%** when compared to the performance at the same point in the last financial year. The figure is similarly to the performance pre-coronavirus. Higher debt cases are generally more complex to manage and require intensive support from the team. The team work collaboratively and in partnership with other advice agencies and internal departments to help achieve positive outcomes and resolutions for tenants. At times these serious cases are influenced by courts preventing the team from taking possession actions until such time the court orders.

### Arrears by Ward

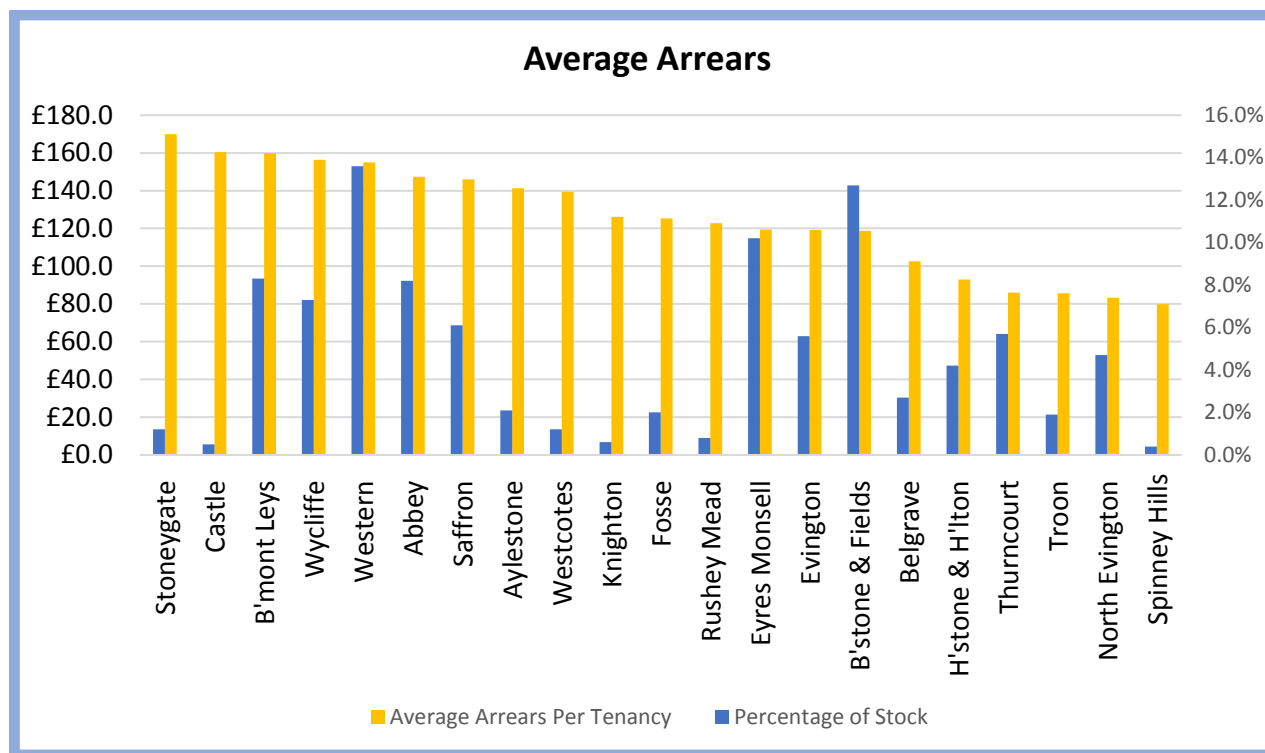
4.11 The graphs presented below show the total arrears and average arrears by ward at the end of quarter 2.

**Graph 1. Total Arrears by Ward**



4.12 The total arrears chart shows that the ward areas with the most stock have the highest arrears values and the arrears are proportionate against the percentage of stock.

**Graph 2. Total Average Arrears by Ward**



4.13 The average arrears chart presents the total average arrears per tenancy. Areas like Castle, Stoneygate and Rushey Mead are lower in stock but with high average arrears value. Despite low stocks sizes even the smallest number of cases with very high arrears can cause the average arrears to spike up.

Furthermore, these area's contain flats and bedsits which predominantly occupied by single people. We know from research that single people are known to have more changes in circumstances on multiple occasions within a year compared to families or tenants of pension age. Changes in circumstances when applying for welfare benefits can cause increase in rent arrears until such time benefit claims are resolved and in payment. Changes in employment status or zero-hour employment contracts can cause a spike in arrears whilst the tenant adapts to changes in their personal circumstances.

Comparing this with an area like Thurncourt where there are a higher number of houses and bungalows, the average in this ward is lower despite the higher percentage of stock. This shows the stability of Income expected from tenants in this type of accommodation such as, older tenants in receipt of Pensions with less changes in circumstances results in a more manageable arrears position within those areas.



## Universal Credit & Rent Management Advisor Support

- 4.14 It's 4 years since the introduction of Universal Credit (UC) in Leicester. Table 5 (below) provides information about Council tenants claiming this DWP benefit.

**Table 5.** Universal Credit Key Performance Indicators

End of Q2 Period	Number of UC Cases	% UC Cases in Arrears before UC Started	% UC Cases in Arrears at Quarter 2	Total Value of Arrears	Average Arrears per Debtor	No. of APA's*
2019/20	2,821	65%	80%	£918,374	£326	760
2020/21	4,766	65%	73%	£1,161,199	£243	1,135
2021/22	5,885	62%	71%	£1,278,576	£305	1,455
<b>2022/23</b>	<b>6,022</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>£1,285,421</b>	<b>£293</b>	<b>2,968</b>

\*APA = Alternative Payment Arrangements are when the DWP pay the housing Costs directly to the Council from the tenants Universal Credit Housing costs entitlement

- 4.15 By the end of quarter 2, a total number of **6,022** council tenants were claiming UC equating to **32%** of all current council tenants. This compares to **36%** of council tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit. By the end of the year a total of **72%** of tenants claiming UC were in rent arrears which is **1% higher** when compared to the same point in the previous year.
- 4.16 Table 5 shows when tenants moved onto Universal Credit, **59%** of tenants had pre-existing rent arrears on their rent account. This is a common theme when existing benefit claimants transition from one benefit to another, resulting in periods of non-payment of rent whilst the benefit payments are being processed. A tenants non-compliance with the process can add to rent arrears increasing and backdating of UC can only be granted under very exceptional circumstances.
- 4.17 By the end of quarter 2, a total of **2,968** tenants, had successful APA's in place which is almost half of the tenants on UC and double the figure compared to the same point in the last year. The remaining tenants on UC are either waiting for UC award, paying the council directly using other payment methods, waiting for APA approval or for the first payment to reach their rent account.
- 4.18 The team continue working collaboratively with the Department of Works & Pensions and Work Coaches from the local Job Centre Plus to minimise any impact of Universal Credit on rent arrears. Any issues with complex cases or with the joint working arrangements are escalated to the DWP Partnership Manager's for resolution. The team continue to provide an appointment service form the Job Centre Plus where appropriate and if tenants require urgent appointments to support benefit claims.
- 4.19 The DWP granted the council 'Trusted Partner' status which gives access to their Landlord Portal IT system. This has meant the Income Management Team can verify housing costs quickly to prevent delays in UC claims being assessed. The Trusted Partner status also allows the council to apply for Alternative Payment

Arrangements (APA's) for vulnerable people who may struggle to pay their rent and any arrears themselves.

- 4.20 The teams **8 Rent Management Advisors** (RMA) are responsible for supporting our most vulnerable tenants, or those with complex needs with claiming and maintaining Universal Credit claims. They have been helping tenants set up e-mail accounts, supporting people to make and manage their UC claims, supporting tenants with backdated payments and reconsideration of welfare benefits and encouraging people to consider digital learning courses. Additionally, they are regularly conducting research and sharing information within the team so we can respond to tenants needs and provide the most appropriate advice.
- 4.21 By the end of quarter 2, the RMAs received **440 referrals** which is **63% higher** than at the same point in the last year. From the 440 referrals a total of **167 cases** have now closed due to the support ending and **11 referrals** were refused as they did not meet the criteria for support. The current active caseload is **262 cases**.
- 4.22 The cases are separated into two types of support 'Short-Term' usually up to two months and 'Long-Term' up to six months. From the 167 cases that have been closed so far, a total of **65%** of the tenants required **short-term support** in making benefit claims or basic budgeting advice and the remaining **35%** required **longer-term support** to help manage their claims and also, to apply for any additional elements within their claim for example, Limited Capability for Work Related Activity which can take several months to resolve.
- 4.23 The average wait time for the referrals to be allocated was **2 working days** and the average time to make the first contact with the tenant was **1 working day**. This demonstrates a waiting list process did not need to be used, as the team effectively managed the workloads and tenants were offered support without any unnecessary delays.
- 4.24 The referrals were marked within a priority banding high, medium, and low. **High** defines tenants at immediate risk of homelessness i.e., pending evictions which amounted to **17%** from the 440 referrals received. **Medium** priority referrals where tenants who were at risk of court possession proceedings equated to **64%** of the referrals. **Low** priority referrals where tenants had low level arrears with no legal action being considered were **19%**.
- 4.25 The team pursue legal action only as a last resort when all opportunities to sustain tenancies have been exhausted. From the 167 closed cases, **11 cases were** pursued with legal actions due to non-engagement or persistent non-payment despite RMA intervention. This demonstrates that **93%** of households were supported with tenancy sustainment and any threat of possession proceedings as removed. On current and active cases, it demonstrates there is further scope to provide tenancy sustainment and support. For ongoing eviction cases RMAs provide frequent support and maintain efforts to engage with tenants until such time the eviction is cancelled or goes ahead.
- 4.26 RMA's supported tenants to claim welfare benefits, discretionary housing payments (DHP), backdated payments, reconsiderations, and underpayments. In the last 6 months a total value of **£102k** was achieved by supporting **167 households**. This amount includes any potential entitlements for the next 12

months for disability related benefits which are awarded for a minimum of 12 months before reviewed. Decisions on mandatory reconsiderations and backdates can take a few months to resolve and reconsiderations on disability related benefits can take even longer for resolutions.

- 4.27 RMAs measured “Soft Outcomes” to help identify tenants confidence levels *after* their support had ended. It also helped to determine if the tenant felt empowered to be able to manage their claims for benefits without support in the future. An initial assessment gives scores between 1 and 5 based on tenant confidence. When the case is closed the assessment is then carried out again and re-scored to establish any improvement. If the score is higher than when the support initially started, it demonstrates an improvement in tenants confidence. Based on the 167 closed cases, **75%** of tenants confirmed they had a **marked improvement** in their level of confidence. The remaining **25%** were tenants who felt their confidence levels **did not improve** or did not engage with the service

### **Court & Evictions**

- 4.28 The Coronavirus Act 2020, provided protection to tenants by delaying when landlords could evict tenants. Provisions in the act increased the notice periods landlords were required to provide tenants when seeking possession of properties. However, from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021, all notice periods returned to pre-pandemic positions and for many of our tenants this meant 4-weeks. The stay on possession proceedings, which was a separate measure imposed to mitigate the effects of the pandemic, expired on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and the Council was able to progress possession claims through courts from this date. Legislation also protected tenants from evictions until 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021.
- 4.29 The team have continued careful consideration before instigating possession proceedings and ensured all avenues of supporting tenants had been explored in advance of any legal action. Any potential court case was reviewed by management before submissions to courts. Since April 2022, a total of **20 cases** were submitted to court for rental possessions which equates to an average of **3 cases per month**. In previous years, the average has been around **80 cases per month**. This is a dramatic reduction in the number of cases being listed for possessions and demonstrates the effective prevention and management of rent arrears by the team, the tenancy sustainment support provided to tenants, all of which subsequently removed any threat of possession proceedings.
- 4.30 Evictions are being pursued only where it is absolutely necessary, with a view that ongoing efforts to sustain tenancies continue to be provided until such time an eviction takes place. Tenants were encouraged and provided with ample opportunities to reach reasonable payment solutions to avoid possession orders and evictions.

Management scrutinises all potential eviction cases to ensure that all avenues of maximising tenant income and sustaining tenancy have been explored. This includes ensuring that any vulnerability has been identified and the necessary referrals to supporting agencies are considered well in advance of any eviction process being followed. The eviction route is pursued as an ultimate last resort and after all efforts to sustain tenancy has been demonstrated and exhausted.

4.31 In the last 6 months, **2 evictions** were carried out for non-payment of rent, and this is the lowest number of evictions when compared to the same point in the previous financial year. This figure compares to 4 in year 2021/22 by end of quarter 2. Evictions remain at a relatively low level compared to earlier years despite the economic difficulties experienced over this period, the ongoing welfare reform challenges, and the continued aftermath of the pandemic. From the 2 evictions, both tenants were single households and in both cases the tenants had abandoned their homes.

### DHP's (Discretionary Housing Payment)

4.32 Between April 2022 and September 2022, the team supported tenants to apply for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs). A total **£249,095k** was paid in awards for all qualifying Council tenants. The team use DHPs to provide assistance to the most vulnerable tenants to sustain their tenancies and to safeguard them in their homes. The support helps alleviate poverty, prevent homelessness, and enables tenants time, to seek alternative accommodations and to better their financial position. However, in the recent months due to limited funding, many DHP applications are being rejected .

4.33 Table 6 shows the current DHP forecast in comparison to the last 2 financial years. The current years forecast is bleak and worrying as central government have **reduced DHP funding by 29%** compared to last financial year. Alternative sources of funding must be considered for supplementing the DHP fund to prevent council tenants being put at risk of homelessness. DHPs are a crucial lifeline for tenants and support reductions in rent arrears. It is anticipated that lack of funding will cause **rent arrears to increase** which makes it imperative to explore and pursue alternative funding.

**Table 6. DHP forecast for qualifying tenants and residents of Leicester City.**

Financial Year	DWP Grant	Council Funding	Total Awarded
<b>2020/21</b>	£1,139,971	£91,594	£1,231,565
<b>2021/22</b>	£884,372	£900,000	£1,784,372
<b>2022/23</b>	£626,948	TBC	£626,948

4.34 Historically, the use of monies provided by Central Government and the top up locally has always been positive helping to alleviate financial pressures for those on Housing Benefit or the Housing Element of Universal Credit (over 60% of council tenants are in receipt of these benefits). The release of funds from an alternative source will provide financial assistance and support, to those tenants experiencing significant financial hardship and those facing increasing worries, due to household budget deficits which impact tenants abilities to meet their housing costs. The funding will support Council tenants through their personal and difficult journeys and sustain local communities and keep families together, at a time of national crisis where the financial burdens could leave many families homeless and destitute.

### Household Support Fund (HSF)

4.35 Due to the impact of Covid and the cost-of-living crisis, the Government introduced

support funds which are being administered by the Council. The fund focusses on supporting people primarily with fuel, water costs, food, and white goods. Over the last 6 months the team referred **1,958** council tenants for this support which equates to 10% of all council tenants. Many tenants received multiple awards for different things. See Table 6.

**Table 7. Household Support Fund**

Description of Assistance Provided	Number of Households
Food	1,892
Utilities	1,804
Water / Sewerage	676
Other essential items (white goods)	563
Referral to Energy wise	63
HB / UC advice offered	112
Council Tax advice offered	174

## 5.0 Key Challenges 2022/23

- 5.1 The team continue to face significant challenges and pressures this year due to the cost-of-living crisis. The arrears performance may become unstable and a rise in rent arrears is expected as tenants are forced to choose between prioritising expenditure on their rent, or essentials such as food or heating. Despite this, the team remain resilient and will continue their best to respond to challenges. The primary focus during this difficult time will be on supporting tenants with their financial burdens, helping them to ease this by maximising incomes wherever possible and improving their financial stability.

## 6. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

### 6.1 Financial implications

This report sets out the position in relation to net rent arrears for current tenants at the end of September 2022. Not documented in this report are the arrears associated with non-dwelling properties (such as garages and parking spaces), hostel bedspaces and former tenants. The overall debt outstanding for all Council tenancies increased by 5% over the last 12 months; close monitoring of this trend will be required. A provision for bad debt is made to recognise that a proportion of debt will go uncollected.

Stuart McAvoy – Acting Head of Finance

### 6.2 Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Jeremy Rainbow – Principal Lawyer (Litigation) - 371435

### 6.3 Equalities implications

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; this includes the need to: (i) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; (ii) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.

Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, with due regard. The report is to inform the Members of the Scrutiny Commission on the rent arrears progress over the last 6 months, from April 2022 to September 2022.

There are no direct equality implications arising from this report, however it would be useful in relation to tenants in serious debt to have these monitored by protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act (sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, age) in order to address any adverse impact and put in place mitigating actions.

The cost-of-living crisis is having a huge effect across society, with tenants some of the hardest hit. It is important that officers continue to offer early appropriate professional support and guidance to tenants to reduce rent arrears. Some tenants may have an identified need for specific information in other formats such as large print or braille. The council provides a range of payment options suitable to tenants to maximise collection rates whilst ensuring that it can sustain tenancies and support the most vulnerable.

The work carried out by the Rent Management Advisors in relation to supporting vulnerable people some of whom will have complex needs helps to impact positively on people from across all protected characteristics. The report mentions that that amid the cost-of-living crisis, life will be made even harder for tenants in financial difficulty and could risk sending more people into arrears. Tenants have started facing a struggling financial period in their lives and are left with making tough choices over their household budgets.

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

### 6.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications directly associated with this report.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

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# **HRA Capital Programme and House Building update. Housing Scrutiny Commission November 2022**



# The main items in the Capital Programme

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- Kitchen and bathroom refurbishments
- Boiler replacements
- Rewires and electrical upgrades
- 20 • New roof and roofline upgrades
- Disabled adaptations
- Fire safety upgrades
- Delivery of new affordable housing
- One off projects



# How do we decide what work we do ?

- Life cycle data, eg 40 years for a kitchen, 30 years for a rewire
- Legislation, eg new wiring editions and new British
- 21 • Standards
- Building Safety Bill
- Condition survey data based on surveys
- Maintaining the decent homes standard
- Energy efficiency improvements.



Component for replacement	Leicester's Replacement Condition Criteria	Decent Homes Standard Minimum Age
Bathroom	All properties to have a bathroom for life by 2036	40 years
Kitchen	All properties to have an upgraded kitchen by 2036	30 Years
Central Heating Boiler	Based on assessed condition (from annual service)	15 years (future life span of new boilers is expected to be on average 12 years)
Electrics	Every 30 years	30 Years
roofs	Based on assessed condition (from Stock Condition Survey/HHSRS)	50 years (20 years flat roofs)
Doors and windows	Based on stock condition survey	40 years

# Who does the work

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- A variety of contractors that are either procured or appointed via corporate frameworks
- Current contracts have a total value of circa £130m
- Specifications are written and contracts managed by Technical Services.
- On site works are supervised by our in house Quality Control teams.

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We are spending a total of £13m(excluding the delivery of new AH) which includes:

Work area	Budget	Forecast spend	Work area	budget	Forecast spend
Kitchen and Bathrooms	£3m	£2.5m			
Boilers	£2.8m	£2.8m	Health and safety	£300k	£300k
Rewires	£1.76m	£1.76m	Fire safety	£890k	£840k
Roofs	£900k	£150k	Way lighting	£185k	£150k
Disabled adaptations	£1.2m	£1.2m	Property reconfiguration	£400k	£300k
Windows and doors	£50k	£50k	District Heating	£700k	£700k
Soffits and	£350k	£250k	Sheltered Acc.	£100k	£100k

# Projects in the capital programme

- Sprinkler installation – on site now
- Heat Metering feasibility
- 25 • Acquisitions that include former council houses and property portfolios.
- Goscote House demolition- in progress
- Social Housing Decarbonisation (EWI) and energy related pilot schemes

# House Building update

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- Phase 2, Saffron Velodrome and Lanesborough Road
- Phase 2b, Austin Rise, Rockingham Close, Whitteneay Drive and Hydra Walk
- 26 • Phase 3, a number of small sites citywide
- Forest Lodge Education Centre(proposed)
- Stocking Farm redevelopment
- Southfield and Newry former school sites

# Phase 2 and 2b

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- Contract awarded to Robert Woodhead Construction (RWC) and site works had begun at Saffron.
- RWC have gone into voluntary liquidation, officers are now carrying out all legal due diligence works to ensure that the council is not at risk.
- Procurement plan being agreed for all 6 sites affected, however there will now be a delay in the delivery of these new units.

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# Lanesborough Road

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PLOTS 01 & 02 (TYPE B) AT CENTRAL ROAD JUNCTION



PLOTS 07 – 11 (TYPES D & E)



# Whittoney Drive- Phase 2b

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# Phase 3

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- Several small sites at locations across the city
- Architect/consultants appointed.
- Currently carryout initial scheme layout/viability works so that an affordability assessment can be carried out.

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# Forest Lodge Education Centre(FLEC)

- Successfully bid for brownfield land release grant money from the government towards the cost of the demolition.
- Currently engaging consultants/architect to design scheme.
- Preparing a demolition spec for the school building for work to start summer 23.
- Looking at connecting to the District Heating network



# Stocking Farm redevelopment

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- Full redevelopment of site
- Community shop now open
- ☿ • Former farm house will be used for supported housing
- Existing shopping parade will be upgraded
- 45 new affordable homes





# Southfields and Newry former school

- School buildings currently being demolished.
- Underground shelters and potential asbestos contamination found on site, investigations underway.
- Brownfield land release grant money secured from Government.
- 50 new affordable homes

35





# Next steps

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- Delivery plan currently being devised for the next 4 years which will include:
- Direct delivery by the council
- Delivery by registered providers
- Working with private developers to bring sites forward.
- Continuation of the acquisition programme.

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# Homelessness Review 2022

Housing Scrutiny Committee: 07/11/2022

Asst Mayor: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin

Lead Director: Chris Burgin

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## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Julie Turner
- Author contact details: [julie.turner@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:julie.turner@leicester.gov.uk)
- Report version number: Draft

### 1. Summary

- 1.1 There is a requirement in the Homelessness Act 2002 for housing authorities to:
  - Carry out a review of homelessness in their areas.
  - Formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on this review;
  - Keep the strategy under review.
  - Consult other local or public authorities, or voluntary organisations before adopting or modifying the strategy.
- 1.2 During July to September 2022 we consulted with service users, stakeholders and the wider public on the current homelessness strategy, (2018-2023) for their feedback on the successes and gaps in homelessness services. This has informed the homelessness review 2022 and a new homelessness strategy will be developed from this review.
- 1.3 A homelessness strategy is defined as one formulated in order to:
  - a) Prevent homelessness in an authority's area;
  - b) Secure that accommodation is and will be available in that area for people who are or may become homeless; and
  - c) Provide support for such people or those who have been homeless and need support to prevent it recurring.

### 2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1 To seek the comments of the Housing Scrutiny Commission on the draft documents.

### 3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

- 3.1 A public consultation exercise was undertaken July to September 2022 and the key findings have been summarised in the review document (see Appendix A). The findings of the consultation will also inform development of Leicester's next homelessness and rough sleeping strategy.

### 4. Detailed report

- 4.1 There is a requirement in the Homelessness Act 2002 for local authorities to carry out reviews and publish strategies to tackle and prevent homelessness in their locality.

4.2 In carrying out a homelessness review, local authorities are required to present a current 'picture' of homelessness provision in their locality and to anticipate future levels of homelessness in their area. Activities and services to prevent homelessness, including the provision of appropriate accommodation and support, need to be identified and adequate resources made available to provide them.

**Summary from Leicester's homelessness review 2022** (full document at Appendix A)

**4.3 What is the current picture of homelessness in Leicester?**

- During the pandemic over 1,000 households were assisted with accommodation and support.
- Generally, the trend of the number of households approaching the Council for assistance have slightly increased year on year (since 2018/19).
- The top three reasons for homelessness are:
  - Eviction from private rented sector
  - Asked to leave by family or friends
  - Domestic abuse
- Support provided by homelessness staff prevent homelessness in over 2 out of 3 cases
- There is a lack of affordable housing options
- Around half of singles presenting to homelessness services have support needs. Of these a quarter have mental health support needs and over 1/5<sup>th</sup> have complex support needs (2 or more support issues)
- Number of individuals identified by Outreach services as rough sleeping has increased however numbers identified the official count night (yearly snapshot) has been decreasing year on year.

**4.4 Future levels of homelessness in Leicester?**

- Increasing numbers of households approaching homelessness services and requiring temporary accommodation. We expect this to continue with the cost-of-living and other pressures facing households.
- Seeing a large number of 'new' individuals not known to rough sleeping in the City.
- Limited affordable housing options available to households, which unless addressed will increase pressures on homelessness services, not just because additional households require support but because those in temporary accommodation do not have anywhere affordable to move-on to.

**4.5 Activities and services to prevent homelessness**

- Leicester's Homeless Charter launched in November 2018.

- Shared accommodation / dormitory accommodation for people sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough was closed during the Covid pandemic. Additional temporary accommodation was quickly mobilised, working with local hotels to provide self-contained accommodation to enable people to self-isolate and prevent the spread of Covid.
- Strong 'off the street' offer for those identified as rough sleeping. Extended outreach services (covering weekends) and supported by health services, and drug and alcohol and peer support services.
- Leicester, compared with other cities, has a wide range of homelessness services commissioned by the local authority as well as other provision funded by the third sector. This includes temporary accommodation, outreach services, one-to-one support staff, physical and mental health services, floating support services, substance use services, skills and employment services, day centres, food and arts services.
- Nationally recognised specialist health services for individuals who are homeless.
- Need to build on existing partnership working to meet the needs of individuals with complex needs.

#### 4.6 Resources available to fund homelessness services

- Over £5m spent annually by the Council's homelessness services.
- Since 2018 Leicester has secured an additional £10m to support work to tackle homelessness.
- LPT & Leicester City Council Public Health fund specialist primary health, mental health and drug and alcohol services.

### 5. Next stages

- 5.1 The homelessness review summarises the main points identified over the last 5 years and sets out some of the key challenges which will help inform a new homelessness strategy, paragraphs 5.41 to 5.62 (highlighted in Appendix B).
- 5.2 Local authorities are required to use the review to outline a strategy that plans changes to existing service provision to meet the needs of all homeless people, not just those whom they have a duty to re-house. We will use the evidence base and consultation feedback gathered as part of the review process to help inform a new homelessness strategy for Leicester.

## 6. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

### 6.1 Financial implications

Not required

**6.2 Legal implications**

Not required

**6.3 Equalities implications**

Not required

**6.4 Climate Emergency implications**

Not required

**6.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)**

None

**7. Background information and other papers:**

[Homelessness \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://leicester.gov.uk) - Link to Homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2018/23

**8. Summary of appendices:**

Appendix A: Homelessness Review 2022

Appendix B: Key points and challenges identified in the Homelessness Review

**9. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?**

No

**10. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?**

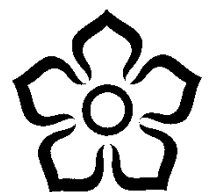
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# Homelessness Review 2022

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## 1. Introduction

### **Why are we carrying out a review of homelessness?**

- 1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on all local housing authorities to carry out a review of homelessness and homelessness service provision for their area and, in consultation with local partners and stakeholders, formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of that review, at least every five years. The last full review in Leicester was conducted in 2018 and the current Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy covers the period 2018-23. There has been continuous monitoring of the current strategy with regular update reports being submitted to Leicester City Council's Housing Scrutiny Commission.

### **What is homelessness?**

- 1.2 People can be homeless if they have nowhere to stay and are living on the streets, they can also be considered homeless even if they have a roof over their head.

Homelessness can include people:

- staying with friends or family
- staying in a hostel, night shelter or bed & breakfast accommodation
- squatting
- at risk of violence or abuse in their home
- living in poor conditions that affects their health
- living apart from their family because they don't have a place to live together

### **Scope of the review**

- 1.3 The review aims to develop a picture of homelessness in Leicester and looks at the current provision of services to establish whether the needs of homeless people and those at risk of homelessness are being met.
- 1.4 Services for people who are homeless are commissioned and/or funded by the local authority, other are funded by the third sector or other organisations (for example health care services for homeless people, including primary health care, mental health, drug and alcohol services are funded by the Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust).
- 1.5 The scope of this review does not include:
- Domestic abuse and sexual violence services, including refuge provision
  - Welfare advice services, including housing advice (except housing advice provided by Leicester City Council's Homelessness, Prevention & Support services)

### **How the review was undertaken**

- 1.6 The review was undertaken between April and September 2022. A broad range of information collection techniques have been used to inform this review, including:
- incorporating the regular monitoring of the most recent strategy

- service/performance data
- consultation (including service users, people who work in homelessness services, organisations that provide homelessness services, and the public)
- literature reviews.

### **Current strategy**

1.7 The 2018-23 homelessness and rough sleeping strategy focused on preventing homelessness and breaking the cycle of homelessness. The strategy committed to four strategic aims:

1. that anyone who is at risk of homelessness is aware of and has access to the services they may need to prevent it
2. the provision of suitable accommodation and support options for people who are, or who may become, homeless
3. reducing the rates of repeat homelessness amongst single people
4. working towards ending rough sleeping.

1.8 Some of the achievements during the 2018/23 strategy include:

- ✓ Implemented new ways of working and delivering services required by the Homelessness Reduction Act
- ✓ Launch of Leicester's Homelessness Charter
- ✓ St Mungo's opening a recovery college in Leicester
- ✓ Responded effectively to the pandemic, particularly the work implementing the 'Everyone In' directive and opting to continue these principles longer than many other authorities
- ✓ Essential homelessness services operating throughout the pandemic
- ✓ Leicester being part of the end street homelessness campaign
- ✓ Action Homeless & One Roof Leicester (local homeless charities) expanded accommodation and support services
- ✓ The Bridge reopening with more staff and an increased recreational arts programme
- ✓ Reviewed the LCC Housing Allocations Policy to give specified households who are owed a homelessness prevention or relief duty Band 1 priority in certain circumstances. Also, changes to the policy allowing statutorily or critically overcrowded households to be given a band 1 priority
- ✓ Numerous successful funding bids made to support work to tackle homelessness, securing nearly an additional £10m since 2018
- ✓ Launching innovative new private sector housing solutions, which includes working with landlords to increase the supply of suitable accommodation to those in need
- ✓ Maintaining a 100% record of ensuring all families placed in B&B do not exceed 6-weeks' occupancy, which is a legal requirement upon local authorities
- ✓ All families that need to enter temporary accommodation are now offered self-contained accommodation ("homes not hostels"). This allows families to live as normal a family life as possible, whilst they work with us to find suitable settled accommodation for their family

- ✓ Launched a prison pathway protocol with the surrounding districts to work more closely with probation services and prisons to have a seamless pathway to ensure that ex-offenders do not go onto rough sleep upon release
- ✓ Developed an ambitious 'Ending Rough Sleeping Plan' in coproduction with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
- ✓ Strengthened relationships and working together to provide strong homelessness services for the city, as well as working alongside statutory partners such as health, probation and domestic abuse services
- ✓ Developed an overcrowding strategy
- ✓ Developed a Private Rented Sector Strategy which helps increase the private rented sector solutions open to those who are homeless or threatened by homelessness
- ✓ Launched the MyHOME self-service website and app providing easily accessible homelessness advice, signposting and referral to services

### National context

1.9 The last few years have seen significant changes impacting on homelessness including:

- The implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act, in 2018, which extended statutory responsibilities for local authorities to provide meaningful support to single people as well as extending prevention & relief duties for all eligible households.
- Economic growth has been slow over the period of the strategy and economic forecasts suggest uncertainty in the coming years, particularly affected by the cost-of-living crisis and the decision to leave the European Union. The impact of the UK's decision to leave the European Union, presenting challenges for EEA nationals with uncertain statuses with regard to employment, benefits, and housing rights.
- The overall rate of new housing provision is not keeping pace with household growth and is failing to reduce housing market pressures.
- Affordable rental products are now beyond the reach of those on the lowest incomes and Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates remain lower than market rents.
- Welfare reform continues to have an impact on those receiving benefits (lower benefit caps, roll-out of Universal Credit, freezing of LHA rates).
- Cuts to local government funding.
- The diminishing stock of social housing due to the right to buy scheme and the lack of affordable homes.
- The COVID pandemic.

Key legislative / guidance introduced since 2018 impacting on homelessness.

Legislation/Guidance	HOMELESSNESS IMPLICATION
<a href="#">The rough sleeping strategy (2018)</a>	Lays out the government's plans to help people who are sleeping rough now and to put in place the structures to end rough sleeping for good.

<a href="#">The Duty to Refer</a> s213B Housing Act 1996 (1 <sup>st</sup> Oct 2018)	<p>The duty to refer is an additional route intended to encourage earlier identification of need, and to enable public authorities to work better together to meet those needs. If a service user needs more support to help them access services, public authorities should work together to provide this.</p>
<a href="#">Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018</a>	<p>To ensure that all rented accommodation is fit for human habitation and to strengthen tenants' means of redress against landlords who do not fulfil their legal obligations to keep their properties safe. There are no new obligations; the legislation requires landlords to ensure that they are meeting their existing responsibilities with regards to property standards and safety.</p>
<a href="#">The Tenant Fees Act (2019)</a>	<p>Came into force for new or renewed tenancies on 1 June 2019, preventing landlords and letting agents in England from charging certain letting fees to tenants. Improves access to PRS.</p>
<a href="#">2020 Public Health England and Dept Health and Social Care Guidance 2020</a>	<p>Guidance produced for commissioners and providers of services for people who use drugs and alcohol.</p>
<a href="#">Statement of changes to Immigration Rules (2020)</a>	<p>The Government has introduced a new immigration rule which means someone could have their permission to stay in the UK refused or cancelled, if they've been sleeping rough.</p>
<a href="#">Homelessness rights of family members of EEA nationals after Brexit</a>	<p>From 1 January 2021 homeless EEA nationals and their family members who approach the council for help are assessed under new rules.</p>
<a href="#">Domestic Abuse Act 2021</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the new statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' replaces the term 'domestic violence'</li> <li>• people made homeless due to being a victim of domestic abuse have automatic priority need for homelessness assistance</li> <li>• New priority need category for survivors</li> <li>• Vulnerability assessment no longer required</li> <li>• New definition of domestic abuse</li> <li>• Bed and breakfast accommodation is not safe accommodation &amp; is specifically excluded by regulations.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Case law: 2021 - Powers of local authorities to accommodate NRTPF people</a>	<p>Councils have powers to accommodate homeless people who have no recourse to public funds and are not eligible for homelessness assistance if there is an emergency or disaster which involves danger to life, or for public health reasons</p>
<a href="#">Government consultation on repealing the Vagrancy Act (03.05.22)</a>	<p>Replacing the offences in the Vagrancy Act which prohibit begging in a way that prioritises getting individuals' support, providing the right environment to</p>

	deliver effective services and engage with vulnerable people constructively.
<a href="#">Renters Reform Bill 2022</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· extending the Decent Homes Standard to the private sector for the first time &amp; giving all renters the legal right to a safe and warm home</li> <li>· it will ban Section 21 'no fault' evictions, protecting tenants from unscrupulous landlords, while strengthening landlords' legitimate grounds for taking back their property</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Police, Crime Sentencing and Courts Act 2022</a>	Contains a new criminal offence: a person sleeping in a vehicle – even temporarily – without permission from the land's occupier could now be arrested.
<a href="#">Levelling Up White Paper 2022</a>	A promise to build more social housing and rebalance the rights of renters.
<a href="#">The Debt Respite Scheme (Breathing Space) May 2022</a>	Will give someone in problem debt the right to legal protections from their creditors: standard breathing space – 60 days legal protection from creditors; Mental health breathing space – if someone is receiving mental health crisis treatment, it will last as long as the treatment, plus 30 days
<a href="#">Ukrainian Family Scheme (2022)</a>	People granted leave under the Ukraine Family Scheme, the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme, or the Ukraine Extension Scheme are eligible for homelessness assistance. They do not need to be habitually resident.

#### Summary of key benefit changes over the last 5 years

<b>2017</b>
From 3 April 2017, ESA claimants who are sanctioned will continue to receive 80% of their payments, instead of the current 60%.
<b>Support provided through Child Tax Credit and Universal Credit has been limited to two children since 6 April 2017</b> , so that any subsequent children born on or after this date will not be eligible for further support
<b>Tax family credits removed:</b> People starting a family after April 2017 will no longer be eligible for the Family Element in tax credits. The equivalent in Universal Credit, known as the First Child Element, will also not be available for new claims from April 2017.
<b>Change in Hardship Payments for the mentally ill and homeless (October 2017).</b> The government proposed that hardship payments (of 60% of the benefit amount) be automatically payable to jobseekers who are mentally ill or homeless when they are sanctioned. Previously claimants had to wait two weeks before they can apply for hardship payments when they've been sanctioned and may be refused.
<b>2018</b>
The government make it easier for claimants to have the housing element of their award paid directly to their landlord

<p><b>Universal Credit Housing Support for 18-21 year olds:</b> 18–21 year-olds will automatically be entitled to housing support in Universal Credit from December 2018. This reverses a cut that was previously introduced for this age group.</p>
<p><b>2019</b></p>
<p><b>Universal Credit Two-child Limit</b> - from 1st February 2019, families with more than two children who make new claims for Universal Credit will no longer be directed to claim Child Tax Credit instead. The two-child limit will apply to those families. Families will not be able to get a child element included in their Universal Credit for a third or subsequent child who was born on or after 6 April 2017, unless an exception applies.</p>
<p><b>Universal Credit Advance Recovery Reduction</b> - from October 2019, the maximum rate at which deductions can be made from UC will be reduced from 40% to 30%</p>
<p><b>2020</b></p>
<p><b>Temp benefit changes related to the Coronavirus pandemic:</b> job retention scheme, self-employed income support scheme; increase to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit; increase in LHA rates; suspension of the minimum income floor.</p>
<p><b>Benefit freeze end</b> - the freeze which has kept most working-age benefits at the same level for four years, ended April 2020. Most working age benefits increased by 1.3 %.</p>
<p>Claimants will receive an additional fortnight's worth of Income-based JSA, income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Income Support if they are on one of these benefits when they move over to Universal Credit.</p>
<p><b>2021</b></p>
<p>Changes to how the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) recovers Universal Credit advances. The maximum repayment period will go up from 12 months to 24 months.</p>
<p><b>Care leavers' exemption from the shared room rate</b> of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) will be expanded to include all care leavers under the age of 25</p>
<p>The additional £20 per week payment for people getting Universal Credit ended 5th October 2021.</p>
<p><b>2022</b></p>
<p>English local authorities given funding to provide emergency support to people struggling with food, housing costs and bills.</p>
<p>DWP to stop taking deductions from benefit for ongoing consumption of fuel. An exception can be made if the claimant requests it.</p>
<p><b>2023</b></p>
<p><b>Victims of domestic abuse and modern slavery</b> will be exempt from the shared room rate of Local Housing Allowance (LHA).</p>
<p><b>2024</b></p>
<p>By end of 2024, the DWP intends to have moved all recipients of legacy benefits to Universal Credit.</p>



## 2. Leicester and housing in Leicester

### About Leicester

#### People and Households

- 2.1 With 368,600 residents and 127,400 households<sup>1</sup>, Leicester is the eighth largest city in England and the most populous urban centre in the East Midlands. Leicester is one of the fastest growing cities in England, with the population having increased by 11.8% since 2011.
- 2.2 Leicester has a relatively young population with almost half of the city's residents aged between 5 and 35 (46%), compared with 37.2% for England, with student populations and inward migration contributing to this configuration. Leicester has a significantly smaller proportion of people over the age of 65, (11.8%) compared to the national proportion (18.4%). The city has a larger proportion of student only households (2.4% compared to 0.6% in the country as a whole – also 37.1% of those economically inactive in Leicester are students, compared with 28.4% for Great Britain) and a higher proportion of single parent households than is found nationally.<sup>2</sup>
- 2.3 The Office of National Statistics have estimated that by 2028 Leicester's population will have increased to 372,797.<sup>3</sup> The under 20 population and over 65 population are estimated to increase. This means the groups of people that regularly access education, health services, and social care are likely to increase at a faster rate than those in employment.
- 2.4 Leicester is home to a diverse range of faiths and communities. Leicester residents come from over 50 countries across the world, making the city one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse places in the UK. In 2020, around a third (36%) of Leicester residents were born outside of the UK. Also, as a designated National Asylum Seeker dispersal city, Leicester is home to a community of asylum seekers.<sup>4</sup> Leicester is a City of Sanctuary; a place of safety and welcome for people who have fled situations of extreme danger in their own countries.
- 2.5 Leicester has a larger average household size (2.78) than is the case nationally (2.37). The city experiences higher levels of overcrowding (9.8% of households) than is found nationally (4.6%) and in comparison to neighbouring authorities, Derby and Nottingham (5% and 6% respectively).<sup>5</sup>

#### Housing

- 2.6 There are 142,762 homes in the city. Leicester has a smaller proportion of owner-occupied homes than is the case nationally, and therefore a larger

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<sup>1</sup> 2021 Census

<sup>2</sup> 2011 Census

<sup>3</sup> 2018-based population projections – table 2. ONS

<sup>4</sup> Local area migration indicators - ONS

<sup>5</sup> 2011 census

proportion of social housing and private rented homes. The stock of council housing has been decreasing, mainly due to right to buy, while the number of households in private renting households has been increasing at a greater rate than any other tenure. However, due to Leicester City Council's recent acquisition scheme, buying back ex-council houses for those in need on the housing register, the rate of decrease in council homes is slower than it otherwise would have been.

- 2.7 All of Leicester's council homes meet the Decent Homes Standard. However, in the private rented sector research has indicated that there are significant numbers of homes that do not meet the standard.

#### Economic factors and deprivation

- 2.8 Economically, the city is recognised as a major commercial and manufacturing centre, known better for the diversity of its trade than for its dependence on a single industry.
- 2.9 The ONS Annual Population Survey (2021) reported Leicester had a (model based) unemployment rate of 7.2% compared with 5% for the East Midlands and 4.8% for Great Britain. Leicester's unemployment estimate has increased since the last homelessness review. Youth unemployment is also a significant concern. Higher levels of unemployment are also concentrated in pockets of the city.
- 2.10 Leicester is generally regarded as experiencing higher levels of deprivation than many parts of the country and has a relatively low wage economy. The average weekly gross wage is £515.50, compared to a national average of £613.10 (2021)<sup>6</sup>. Leicester is ranked the 32nd most deprived local authority in the Government's Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019 out of 307 authorities. 35% of the city's population reside in the most deprived 20% of areas nationally. In terms of the income element of the deprivation index, 40% of Leicester's population reside in the most deprived 20% of income deprived areas nationally.
- 2.11 Deprivation is linked with a range of poor health behaviours and outcomes such as smoking, obesity, and alcohol misuse. Those living in our most deprived areas have significantly lower life expectancies compared to those in our least deprived areas.
- 2.12 Leicester is estimated to have 28.3% of its children living in relative low-income households, compared with 18.7% nationally<sup>7</sup>. Research has suggested that there is a strong link between child poverty and future homelessness.

#### Health and wellbeing

- 2.13 The health of people in Leicester is varied compared with the England average. Leicester is one of the 20% most deprived districts/unitary

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<sup>6</sup> Earning by place of residence – NOMIS)

<sup>7</sup> Children in low-income families – local [area](#) statistics

authorities in England and about 23% (17,725) children live in low-income families. Life expectancy for both men and women is lower than the England average. Life expectancy is 8 years lower for men and 6.1 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Leicester than in the least deprived areas. The rate for alcohol-related harm hospital admissions is worse for Leicester than the average for England.<sup>8</sup>

- 2.14 The ONS measures of personal well-being suggest that Leicester's population suffers higher anxiety and issues with life satisfaction than is the case nationally. Local (health and wellbeing) survey data found that the unemployed, long-term sick/disabled and social renters are more like to report poor mental health.<sup>9</sup>

#### Fuel poverty

- 2.15 Government fuel poverty tables released in 2020 (2018 data) show that Leicester experiences a higher degree of fuel poverty than is the case nationally, with 14.6% of the city's households in fuel poverty compared to 10.3% in England.<sup>10</sup>
- 2.16 What has changed in Leicester since 2018?
- Leicester's population has continued to increase.
  - Average house prices have been increasing year on year.
  - The private rented sector has increased and set to continue to increase.
  - Average private sector rents are increasing at a significant rate<sup>11</sup>
  - Unemployment levels have increased.

### **Housing in Leicester**

#### Supply & demand of housing / affordable housing

- 2.17 An adequate supply of affordable housing makes a significant contribution to preventing many people experiencing the threat of homelessness or homelessness itself.
- 2.18 An assessment of housing need found that up to 2031, Leicester requires 1,692 new homes per year (33, 840 over the period 2011 to 2031). Of these, it was estimated that 786 should be new affordable dwellings per year to meet the need for affordable housing in Leicester<sup>12</sup>. Due to funding restrictions and a lack of available land, we have not been able to meet this affordable housing target over the last 5 years. Leicester City Council, in partnership with registered providers, delivered 366 new affordable homes last year (2021-22).

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<sup>8</sup> Local authority health profile – Public Health England

<sup>9</sup> ONS Measuring National Wellbeing

<sup>10</sup> Government Fuel poverty statistics

<sup>11</sup> RightMove rental price tracker

<sup>12</sup> Leicester and Leicestershire HEDNA 2017

Year	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21*	2021/22
<b>Affordable new homes delivered</b>	81	224	340	137	366

\* The delivery of new affordable homes was significantly affected by restrictions relating to the pandemic in 2020-21.

- 2.19 However, measures are being developed to address this shortfall. In November 2019, Full Council approved the addition of £70m for the purchase of properties and the extension of the Council's new-build programme; the 2021/22 budget increased this to £100m. An additional £100m was approved in the 2022/23 Capital Programme to enable the momentum of house building to be maintained, with further amounts expected to be added as part of future years' programmes.
- 2.20 The number of annual lettings from the housing register is not sufficient in preventing waiting times increasing year on year. Waiting times for most property types have more than doubled since 2019.
- 2.21 The housing market plays an important role in affordability as a shortage of housing is likely to lead to price rises and impact on households' ability to access housing. A lack of affordable housing can also lead to households becoming overcrowded and/or residing in unsuitable accommodation which is likely to increase the risk of homelessness.

#### Home ownership

- 2.22 There are a number of different indicators of housing affordability; however, the ratio of house prices to income is a key indicator of the relative affordability of a household to be able to afford to buy a home.
- 2.23 The average price of Leicester's homes has increased by 23% between 2018 and 2022. Data indicates that house prices are continuing to increase in the city as is the trend nationally.<sup>13</sup>
- 2018: £193,090
  - 2019: £197,197
  - 2020: £212,592
  - 2021: £234,738
  - 2022 - £237, 417 (year to date – August)
- 2.24 The average cost of homes is lower in Leicester than is the case nationally, although Leicester has a lower level of average earnings compared to the country as a whole. In 2021 the average gross annual pay for individuals in Leicester was £25,355<sup>14</sup>
- 2.25 Government guidance (2007) suggests that to be considered affordable, households should spend up to 25% of their gross income on housing costs and that mortgages should be based on 3.5 times income.

<sup>13</sup> Land Registry Price Paid Data – Standard reports

<sup>14</sup> Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings - NOMIS

- 2.26 An individual earning the Leicester average gross annual pay (based on 3.5 times income) may be able to borrow £88,742. This is well below the average property price in Leicester and even below the average property sale price of a flat or maisonette (£127,633) (average sale price in 2021).
- 2.27 Leicester's ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile work-based earnings has increased since 2017 (6.62). In 2021 this ratio had increased to 8.07 which demonstrates that it has become harder for those in the lower quartile income bracket to buy a home. Leicester's ratio is higher than the equivalent ratio for England (8.04) and Derby (5.38) and Nottingham (6.10). The ratio of median house price to median gross residence-based earnings is 7.57, illustrating how difficult it is for those on average incomes to access mid-price homes.<sup>15</sup>
- 2.28 Since 2017, Leicester has seen a significant reduction in both mortgage orders for possession and mortgage claims for possession, with an overall decrease of 55.3% in annual mortgage claims for possession between 2017 and 2021, and a 79.4% reduction in annual mortgage orders for possession between 2017 and 2021. There were a total of 60 mortgage claims and orders for possession in 2021.

#### Private rented sector

- 2.29 The private rented sector (PRS) provides an important housing alternative for low-income households who cannot access owner occupied homes and for whom the shortage in social housing means there is no realistic prospect of securing a home from the housing register.
- 2.30 Barriers to accessing the PRS for households on low incomes include issues relating to benefits, initial deposits, fees required, referencing requirements, high rents and in some cases landlords' reluctance towards letting to benefit claimants.
- 2.31 The Department of Communities & Local Government guidance (2007), suggests that to be considered affordable, rental costs should not exceed 25% of gross income. Based on resident median gross pay in Leicester in 2021 for a full-time worker and the average market rents, rental costs would be 29.7% of their gross monthly pay.
- 2.32 Based on 2021 data, for individuals who are in the bottom 25% of earners (work-based) in Leicester their rental costs for an average private rented home would be 36.2% of their gross monthly pay. For those individuals who are in the bottom 25% of earners looking to rent a lower quartile priced rental property, the ratio of rent to income is 28.5%. These figures relate to the earnings of those in work. Clearly, the affordability issues will be much more significant for those who are not in work.

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<sup>15</sup> House price to workplace-based earnings ratio

- 2.33 Living costs, including energy costs, have also been increasing significantly which disproportionately affects low-income households and can make it more difficult to sustain a home. Inflation is currently at a forty year high (10.1% August 2022) and is forecast to keep rising until early 2023.
- 2.34 Private rental prices paid by tenants in the UK rose by 2.1% across 2021. The East Midlands saw the highest annual growth in private rental prices (3.8%), while London saw the lowest (0.2%).<sup>16</sup> The private rents table below is ONS data which is an estimate based on a sample of properties, some of which are sampled in 2021.

Average monthly private sector rents in Leicester – (April 2021 to March 22)<sup>17</sup>

Year	Average of all bedroom sizes	3-bed average
2021/22	£661	£747

- 2.35 National research and the local experience of officers in the Leicester City Council Private Sector Relations Team suggests that PRS rents have been increasing significantly over the past 18 months. This is mainly due to:
- the supply of housing in the private rented sector not matching demand
  - costs of stamp duty and raising funds for a deposit, along with rising house prices are making it harder for people to get onto the property ladder.
- 2.36 Recent research carried out by the Private Rented Sector Team indicates that rents have risen to a point where properties are unaffordable for people on low incomes or in receipt of benefits. The average rent in Leicester is currently 30%-50% above the Local Housing Allowance, and without any financial assistance to bridge the gap these tenancies would not be sustainable.
- 2.37 Unwillingness to rent to tenants on welfare benefits has been a concern that has been raised at the local Landlord’s Forum and to the Private Rented Housing team. A 2022 House of Commons Library briefing paper reported that, over the years, it’s been fairly common practice for private landlords and letting agents to advertise properties saying they won’t accept applications from people reliant on Housing Benefit (HB) or the housing element of Universal Credit to pay their rent.
- 2.38 All average private market rents are higher than local housing allowance (LHA) rates and even lower quartile rents, 1 bed and 4+ bed market rates are above LHA levels. The experience of the Private Rented Housing Team confirms that there is a lack of private rental accommodation available at LHA rates to meet the demand for it by those who are in need. It is the tenant’s responsibility to finance any shortfall between LHA and their rent. Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP’s) can help with this shortfall however these payments are made for a 13-week period after which you have to reapply. Therefore, these payments are not a long-term solution.

<sup>16</sup> [Index of Private Housing Rental Prices, UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/housing/rental-prices)

<sup>17</sup> [Index of Private Housing Rental Prices, UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/housing/rental-prices)

Table weekly private rents\* (April 2021-March 22)) compared with LHA<sup>18</sup>

Property size	Lower quartile private rent	Mean private rent	LHA
Room	£76.85	£83.08	£78.00
1 bed	£114.23	£124.62	£103.56
2 bed	£126.92	£152.31	£130.03
3 bed	£150.00	£172.38	£155.34
4 bed +	£206.54	£270.46	£205.97

### Discretionary Housing Payments

The council can provide short term financial support in the form of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to some people to help meet the shortfall in their housing costs. The scheme is flexible and can assist people who have had their benefits capped, help with rent payments (for arrears or future shortfalls), and support those at risk of homelessness. However, DHP funding which the government has is down from £100m for 2022-23, compared to £140m that was made available in 2021-22.

The number of DHP applications and awards in Leicester over the last four years

Year	Number of DHP Applications	Number of awards made	% successful applications
2018/19	2,879	1,969	68.39%
2019/20	1,694	1,329	78.45%
2020/21	3,073	1,626	52.91%
2021/22	2,926	1,693	57.86%

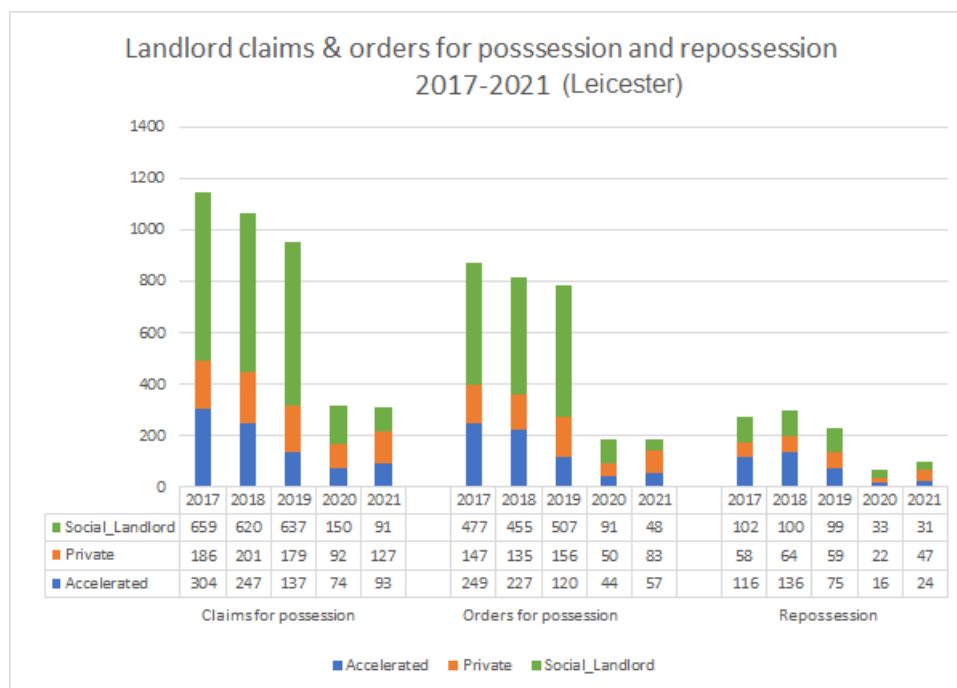
<sup>18</sup> ONS private rental market statistics

In 2021/22 although there were less DHP awards than in 2018/19, the total value of awards increased. Indications are that there are a number of households claiming this award to sustain their accommodation and who would be potentially at risk of homelessness if they did not receive these payments.

DHP Award reasons	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22	
Benefit cap	417	£222,746	168	£116,737	99	£75,319	77	£58,285
Under occupation	378	£201,820	139	£96,359	149	£113,057	110	£83,142
LHA restriction	405	£216,453	218	£151,305	295	£223,789	342	£257,812
Combination	117	£62,417	34	£23,725	55	£41,578	44	£33,317
Other (non-welfare reforms)	652	£348,147	769	£533,146	1,027	£777,722	1,119	£843,820
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,969</b>	<b>£1,051,582</b>	<b>1,329</b>	<b>£921,272</b>	<b>1,626</b>	<b>£1,231,465</b>	<b>1,693</b>	<b>£1,276,377</b>

- 2.39 LHA rates will be frozen for 2022/23 at the rates for 2020/21. Prior to this, they were frozen at 2016 levels until 2020. As a result, rental affordability is likely to be a continuing and increasing issue for more households. Also, as the amount of Local Housing Allowance received depends on household income, savings and any non-dependents living in the same property, as a household's circumstances change this could lead to their accommodation becoming unaffordable - as tenants are bound by a tenancy agreement, they might be unable to move for some months despite their change in circumstances.
- 2.40 In Leicester annual landlord claims and orders for possession both decreased, gradually between 2017 and 2019, and then significantly in 2020 and have then remained at a similar level for 2021. In England, legislation preventing bailiff enforcement of evictions has now expired. This was in place from 17th November 2020 until 31 May 2021. A landlord can apply for an accelerated possession order if their tenant has not left by the date specified in their Section 21 notice and they are not claiming rent arrears. This is sometimes quicker for the landlord than applying for a standard possession order.
- 2.41 Annual landlord repossessions decreased significantly in 2020, however, they have increased by 43.6% between 2020 and 2021. Private rented claims for possession and orders for possession have both shown a significant increase between 2020 and 2021. Private rented claims for possession increased by 38% and orders for possession by 66% during this period. Private rented annual landlord repossessions increased by 113.6%.





2.42 The most common form of tenancy is an assured shorthold tenancy. Section 21 of the 1988 Housing Act allows landlords to take back their property without giving any reason when:

- The tenants’ deposit is in a deposit protection scheme
- The tenant is given at least 2 months’ written notice
- The date the tenant must leave is at least 6 months after the original tenancy began
- It is a periodic tenancy, or a fixed-term tenancy and the leaving date is after the end of the fixed term

Homelessness, prevention & support continue to experience large numbers of tenants seeking advice because their assured shorthold tenancy has been ended.

2.43 The Renters Reform Bill, which was published in June 2022 and which the government aims to turn into law by the end of 2022, will abolish Section 21 ‘no fault evictions’. However, the Renters Reform Bill will extend the grounds for possession; under section 8 of the Housing Act 1988 so landlords can regain possession of homes more easily when a range of conditions are met – for example, relating to rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, abandonment and selling and moving on. It remains to be seen what impact these new measures will have on evictions from the private rented sector and their related impact on homelessness.

2.44 The availability of suitable and affordable PRS properties in Leicester has become a growing issue. Leases within the PRS market are used as a method of securing homes for use by the Home Office, and various forms of temporary accommodation. These commissioning agents are often able to offer large incentives and rates to landlords due to their paid-nightly, or

similar, models. In addition to this, other local authorities use PRS accommodation in Leicester to discharge homeless duties where the rates are relatively affordable compared to their own district. These local authorities may offer thousands of pounds in the form of an incentive payment.

- 2.45 There have also been several legislative changes affecting landlords of private rented properties, some of which have made renting out their properties less economically beneficial. This has meant that some landlords, particularly those with very small portfolios, and those who have mortgages, are selling their properties and leaving the market.
- 2.46 All of these factors influence market demand, and can influence market rates, subsequently making it harder for households to access the PRS at rates that are affordable, even with the aid of short-term support, such as discretionary housing payments.
- 2.47 The council has several initiatives in place to help improve the circumstances of households who are living in the private rented sector or struggling to access private rented housing:
- Private Rented Sector Strategy to ensure that housing in Leicester is the best standard it can be for those in need of housing.
  - Landlord incentive schemes where private landlords are being offered a package of support and help, including financial incentives, secure rental income, and trouble-free letting. Recent changes have resulted in a significant increase in PRS tenancies available for let to homeless households, now averaging around 200 new tenancies per annum.
  - LCC is introducing a private sector licensing scheme for three areas of Leicester. The scheme will protect tenants from rogue landlords whose properties do not meet required standards.
  - Securing additional funding through the accommodation for ex-offenders' programme to help secure private sector accommodation for individuals released from prison with appropriate support.

### Social Housing

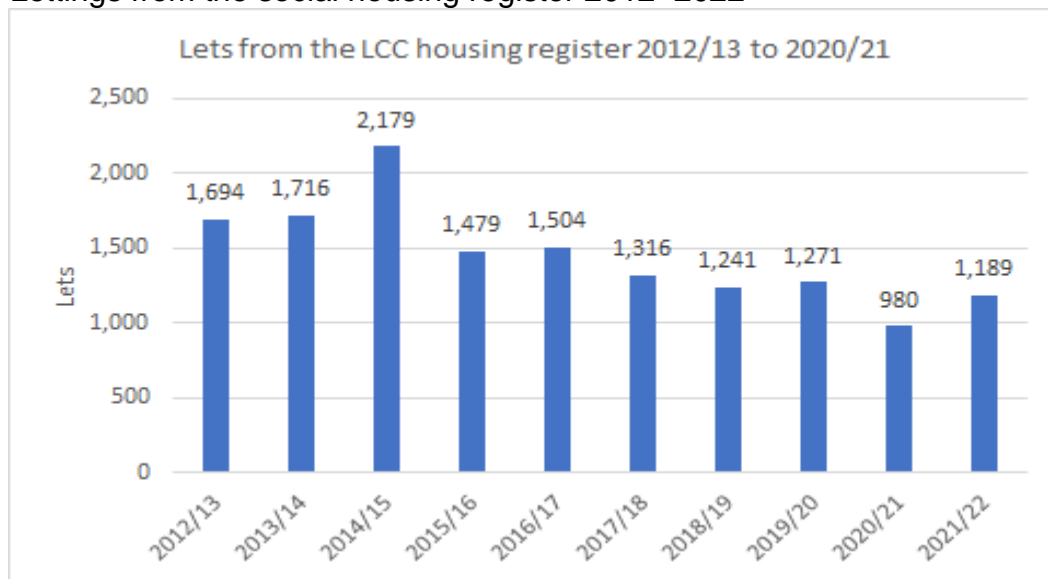
- 2.48 As of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022, there were 6,053 applicants on the housing register. The register has seen a significant reduction since the last homelessness strategy review. This relates to a policy change in 2017 whereby those who did not have a housing need recognised by the allocations policy could no longer appear on the council's housing register. As such, the difference should not be misunderstood as a reduction in demand.
- 2.49 Overcrowding remains the biggest reason for households joining the housing register and, as of April 2022, accounted for 59% of the register.
- 2.50 Since the last homelessness review there have been three significant revisions to Leicester City Council's allocations policy:
- Amendments to bring the Housing Allocations Policy in line the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This primarily introduced special

banding priorities for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and owed relevant duties by the Council

- Changes to bring the Housing Allocations Policy in line with Armed Forces Covenant Guidance and subsequent law
- Amendment to the banding criteria to create a band 1 overcrowding priority, to prioritise those with the most critical need

2.51 Over the last five years, the annual number of lettings from the social housing register has reduced significantly from (1,504 in 2016/17 to 1,189 in 2021/2022).

Lettings from the social housing register 2012–2022



2.52 52% of lettings in 2021/2022 were to applicants who were homeless, or at risk of becoming homelessness within the next 56 days. This was largely unchanged from the previous year but represents a 14% increase since 2016/2017. Just over half of all lettings (52%) were of 1-bedroom accommodation.

2.53 Since the last homelessness strategy review, average waiting times for family size accommodation have increased. For a band 2 household seeking a two-bedroom house or flat, waiting times have increased from 18 months to 29 months, and for those seeking a four-bedroom property waiting times have increase from 39 months to 48 months.

### Council Housing

2.54 The Council is the biggest landlord in the city and will generally be the most affordable rental option for many people. It is important that any tenants experiencing affordability issues are supported to maintain their tenancies to reduce the cycle of homelessness.

2.55 In 2021/22, of the 7 evictions from council homes that took place for rent arrears, 1 was a family and the other 6 were singles. In all cases, the tenants

had abandoned their homes, with almost half of the tenants known to have moved abroad.

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Evictions for Rent Arrears</b>	<b>Evictions for ASB</b>	<b>Total Evictions</b>
2016-17	<b>54</b> 13 families 1 childless couple 40 singles	4	58
2017-18	<b>37</b> 9 families 1 childless couple 27 singles	4	41
2018-19	<b>35</b> 8 families 27 singles	6	41
2019-20	<b>37</b> 6 families 31 singles	4	41
*2020-21	<b>0</b>	0	0
2021-22	<b>7</b> 1 family 6 singles	3	10

\*In 2020/21 there were no evictions because during the COVID pandemic there was a moratorium on evictions.

- 2.56 Leicester City Council scrutinises all potential council eviction cases to ensure that all avenues of maximising tenant income and sustaining tenancy have been explored. This includes ensuring that any vulnerability has been identified and the necessary referrals to supporting agencies are considered well in advance of any eviction process being followed. The eviction route is pursued as an ultimate last resort and after all efforts to sustain the tenancy has been demonstrated and exhausted.
- 2.57 Leicester City Council has a comprehensive range of support in place for council tenants who are potentially vulnerable and / or who may be struggling with their tenancies, including: the services provided by the Income Management Team to support tenants claiming benefits, maximising their income and assisting with repayment plans for those in arrears; the STAR team, which provide one-to-one support for tenants who may be in danger of losing their homes; and the tenancy management service, which operates a welfare support needs policy, which aims to provide support and guidance to households that have been identified as vulnerable.
- 2.58 Recognising the increasing pressure on council tenants in the current economic climate and the rising numbers presenting with complex needs, LCC have introduced new support initiatives, including:
- Extending the support provided by the Income Management Team

- Revised eligibility criteria for STAR services, implemented in May 2021, which prioritises those at risk of homelessness with multiple disadvantages.
- Tenancy management have introduced a sensitive lets and tenancy support procedure, which helps to identify suitable housing for tenants who are vulnerable and have complex needs and ensures tenants have the right support they need to manage in their tenancies
- Tenancy management working with Adult Social Care to develop supported housing options for tenants with complex needs who require long term support

#### 2.59 **Key points relating to housing in Leicester:**

- Need for more affordable housing
- Difficulty in meeting affordable housing targets due to funding restrictions and lack of suitable land
- Affordability is a barrier for people to access home ownership and to rent in the private sector
- Increasingly difficult for people receiving benefits to access private rented accommodation. Welfare changes have had, and continue to have an impact
- Increased demand for social housing - but there are fewer lettings available, which means waiting times are increasing
- The quality of housing in the private rented sector needs to be addressed
- Private rented claims for possession and orders for possession have both shown a significant increase between 2020 and 2021
- Overcrowding – due to affordability issues and availability of appropriately sized housing stock
- Most lettings in the private rented sector are assured shorthold tenancies which are insecure and often short-term
- Significant increase in private sector rents based on national data and local experience
- Work to make it easier and attractive for council tenants to downsize

### **3. Homelessness in Leicester**

#### **What is homelessness?**

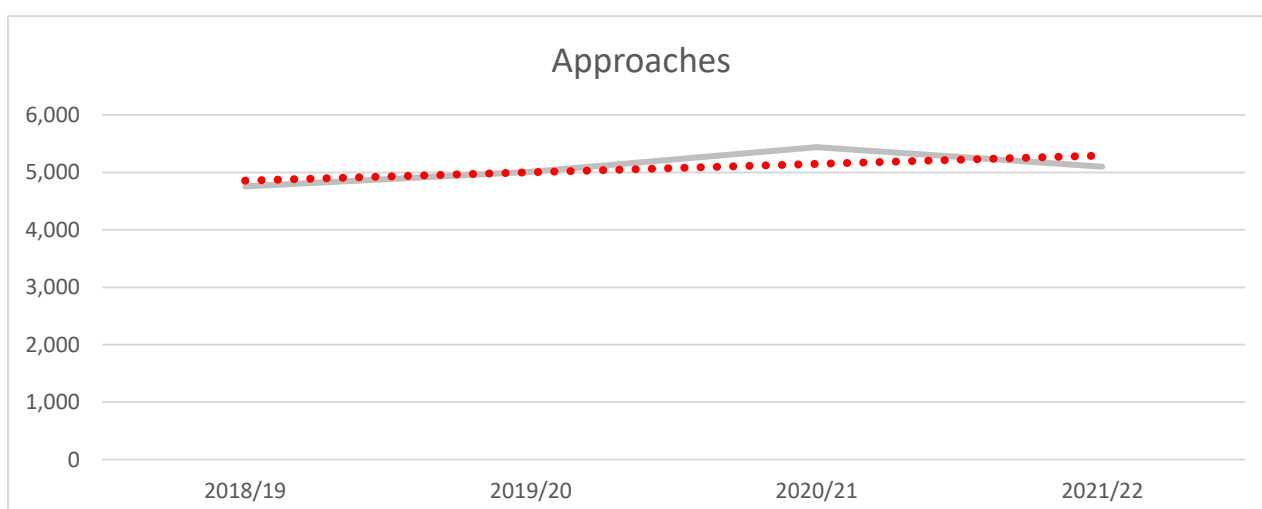
- 3.1 When we hear the term ‘homeless’ we often think of people living rough on the streets; but this is only one form of homelessness. It is the one we think of because it is more visible than people who may be living in temporary accommodation, or in unsuitable or transitory housing. Rough sleeping is a very small proportion of homelessness in the country, and in Leicester.
- 3.2 Homelessness can mean being without a home, but it can also apply to people living in homes that are unreasonable to continue to occupy due to poor conditions, for example it can also apply to people who have a home that isn’t available for their use right now.

- 3.3 The Housing Act 1996 (as amended) places a duty on Councils to provide advice and assistance to all those in housing need and who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 was introduced in April 2018, amending the 1996 Act to introduce stronger responsibilities on Councils, most notably introducing new duties on housing authorities to intervene earlier to prevent homelessness and to take reasonable steps to relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants. Importantly, Councils are also required to help where people are not yet homeless, but at risk of becoming homeless within 56 days. In Leicester, this service is provided by the Homelessness Prevention & Support Service.
- 3.4 Homelessness assistance broadly falls under three main activities depending on the circumstances presented, and how the case has developed:

Prevent	Intervene	Recover
Prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place by identifying people at risk and intervening earlier	Intervene rapidly if a homelessness crisis occurs, so it is brief and non-recurrent	Help people who are already homeless, or who become homeless due to inability to prevent, to recover from and exit homelessness by getting them back on their feet

- 3.5 Households approaching homelessness, prevention & support for assistance have increased year on year, with the exception of 2021/22 which is down from the upsurge in 2020/21 caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, but up from the year preceding this.

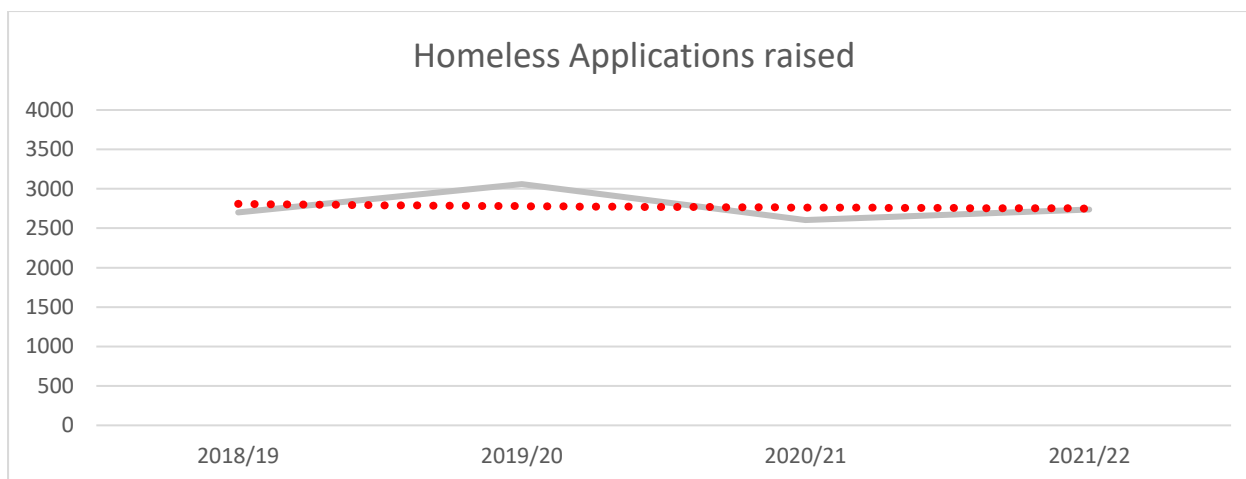
Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Approaches	4,756	5,008	5,440	5,098



- 3.6 Not all approaches result in a formal homeless person's application as some matters can be resolved in other ways, or via advice provision only.

We have seen a significant increase in the number of homeless applications since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act, but following the introduction in April 2018, the trend has been steady, although it should be noted that the pandemic has made trend analysis more difficult.

Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Applications	2,702	3,060	2,604	2,737



- 3.7 The main reasons households become homeless remain similar over the period and match the national picture, with the top 3 reasons being PRS evictions, family/friends exclusion (asked to leave) and domestic abuse.
- 3.8 Homelessness Prevention & Support offer a triage service so approaches can be prioritised. If customers tell us they are homeless already they will be offered 'Relief' services. If the customer is at risk of becoming homeless on the day they are making contact the case will be referred to immediate, specialist advice and assistance to see if there are any remaining opportunities to prevent homelessness from occurring. Other customers, who are at risk of becoming homeless within the next 56 days, will be booked an appointment to speak to a Homelessness Prevention Officer at the next earliest opportunity.
- 3.9 The customer service centre is open Tuesdays and Thursdays, and the telephone advice line is open Monday to Friday 8.00am – 6.00pm. Outside of these hours, in an emergency, there is an out of hours service available.

**Homelessness advice and prevention / intervention**

Advice

- 3.10 Access to timely advice is key in the prevention of homelessness, as is effective partnership working. As well as advice provided by homelessness prevention and support there is currently a range of other advice services available in the city and self-service information available through the

MyHOME website and app. There is independent homelessness advice provided by a local charity, Shelter Housing Advice & Research Project (SHARP).

- 3.11 Personal budgeting support is currently available in Leicester, provided by Citizens Advice LeicesterShire and the Community Advice and Law Society (CALS), for those claiming universal credit, to help people to manage their finances/ budget. Both services provide advice on benefits and allowances, debt management, direct payments and financial advice and money problems. The Welfare and Advice Service offers benefit checking and form filling appointments at the children, young people and family centres for pregnant women and families with children aged up to 19 years old. The ongoing availability of budgeting support will be essential to prevent homelessness when universal credit is fully implemented.
- 3.12 For the calendar year April 2020 to March 2021:
- Citizens Advice provided advice for 6,778 clients who reported 7,585 issues, of which 1,197 were housing issues.
  - The Welfare Rights Support Service had a 93% challenge success rate, meaning 9 out of 10 cases where a decision was challenged, the original decision turned out to be incorrect.
  - Debt advice provided by the Community Advice and Law Service (CALS) (an externally contracted service) - almost a third of all cases for which debt advice was provided was for issues relating to rent.

### Prevention

- 3.13 Enabling people to stay in their existing accommodation and avoiding the need for temporary accommodation makes economic and social sense. Evidence suggests that for some applicants, living in temporary accommodation can have a serious impact on health and wellbeing in the long-term, and disrupts family life, relationships & education.
- 3.14 Leicester’s prevention approach has been successful, especially in tackling family homelessness, and we compare well against national averages. Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018 Leicester’s Prevention of Homelessness performance has increased year on year, with the exception of 2021/2022 which saw a dip in performance related to pressures following the COVID-19 pandemic.

<b>Outcomes for those with risk/threat of homelessness</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Provided with prevention solution (inc. refused suitable offer) <sup>19</sup>				
Leicester’s performance - % of applicants provided with solutions to prevent homelessness	74%	75%	76%	70%
National Average performance - % of applicants provided with solutions to prevent homelessness	58%	59%	60%	57%

<sup>19</sup> [Live tables on homelessness - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)



National Ranking for Prevention of Homelessness based on comparative % measure	57 <sup>th</sup> of 309	59 <sup>th</sup> of 309	36 <sup>th</sup> of 309	43 <sup>rd</sup> of 309
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3.15 Sustainment of the existing home, if reasonable to do so, is always preferable due to the economic benefits, and the reduced impact on applicants and children. The table below shows how people were assisted to remain in their existing home.

Prevention Duty Outcome Date	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Provided with Prevention Solution (inc. refused suitable offer)	803	1289	891	752
Secured Existing Accommodation 6/12 months	542	713	454	347
% Secured Existing	67.50%	55.31%	50.95%	46.14%

3.16 This table shows how people were assisted to obtain alternative accommodation as a homelessness prevention outcome.

Prevention Duty Outcome Date	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Provided with Prevention Solution (inc. refused suitable offer)	803	1289	891	752
Secured Alternative Accommodation 6/12 months	254	555	425	387
% Secured Alternative Accommodation	31.63%	43.06%	47.70%	51.46%

3.17 Of the alternative accommodation solutions above approximately 39% were social tenancies (council or registered social providers / housing associations), 29% were private rented sector tenancies, and the remainder were other solutions, for example, arrangements made with family and friends. It can be seen above that the way we prevent homelessness is changing with a gradual move away from sustainment, and a gradual increase in new accommodation solutions instead.

3.18 Since the last review there have been continuous developments and changes to support the advice & preventative services available:

- Introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act, and with it, Personalised Housing Plans across a dedicated 'Prevention Duty' period to support all eligible persons who approach us at risk of homelessness to have the best opportunity to prevent homelessness from occurring.
- Introduction of dedicated housing register priorities for people threatened with homelessness, including a band 1 (maximum) priority for vulnerable/priority households, to enable better access to the housing register for those at risk of homelessness.
- A direct allocation process whereby a proportion of lets from the Housing Register are ringfenced to those with impending homelessness to allow prevention and intervention where cases

warrant priority consideration due to exceptional circumstances around managing emergencies and risks.

- Implementation of the MyHOME Self-Service Website and App which provides easily accessible and targeted self-accessed homelessness advice, signposting and referrals to services
- Implementation of Call Before You Serve – a free impartial advice service for landlords on a variety of tenancy-related issues, with the aim of supporting both landlords and tenants to enjoy long-term, stable private rented tenancies, preventing homelessness and the need for a move into alternative accommodation.
- Introduction of a Private Rented Sector specialism within the Homelessness Prevention Team to build a more knowledgeable and skilled case-offer team who can tackle this growing and complex area, sustain homes, and prevent evictions.
- Major improvements to Leicester’s Landlord Incentive Scheme, including introduction of a multi-option systems for landlords, to better able the service to secure suitable private sector properties for use as housing solutions to prevent homelessness
- Development of protocols and pathways with key partners, to support individuals who have no home to return to following discharge from hospital, release from prison, or in other similar circumstances.

3.19 Preventing homelessness is an ongoing challenge and prevention options are becoming more limited, mainly due to the availability of affordable housing solutions.

### **Relief of (Recovery from) Homelessness**

3.20 If prevention does not work, or if applicants seek help when they are already homeless, there is a range of support available to work with the customer to help them recover as quickly as possible.

3.21 The success levels for applicants can depend on the applicant’s flexibility in terms of willingness to explore all elements set out in the personalised plan. Applicants who explore all elements in full, rather than limiting themselves to preferences, have a higher chance of getting a successful outcome.

3.22 The Service offers a variety of housing options to applicants, including the housing register, sign-posting to separate registered providers housing lists, private rented sector solutions through financial help and incentive schemes, advice about other housing solutions such as shared ownership, where appropriate, and ensuring any support required to sustain solutions is made available. The applicant must then undertake the actions in their personalised housing plan to ensure that they make full advantage of the options and schemes available.

- 3.23 The relief duty will help all people who are already homeless, and who are eligible for assistance. Eligibility is dependent upon the applicant's immigration and residence status. Where applicable this relief/support can also include the provision of temporary accommodation.
- 3.24 LCC compare well against the national average of 44%, achieving relief solutions for 56% of applicants since the new Act was introduced.

### **Homelessness Services during the COVID 19 pandemic**

- 3.25 This was a very challenging time for individuals and services alike, however because of the commitment of staff and volunteers in the homelessness sector essential services continued to be provided and additional services were mobilised at short notice. The commitment and effort of all involved was truly extraordinary.

#### **Key achievements:**

- The Council sourced an additional 221 units of additional temporary accommodation, ensuring we had availability throughout the pandemic.
- Helped in excess of an additional 150 individuals with advice and assistance, including accommodation in most cases and when needed
- A local charity, Midland Langar Seva Society and school kitchen staff provided in excess of 1,000 meals delivered to people housed in bed and breakfast accommodation, Dawn Centre & food support packages to those in self-contained properties. Leicester YMCA provided meals to all the young people in their accommodation.
- The Homelessness Outreach Team (Help the Homeless & Leicester City Council), alongside Inclusion Healthcare and Turning Point provided help and advice.
- The Homeless Emergency Duty line was available seven days a week to ensure anyone facing homelessness could get help.
- Inclusion Healthcare organised a wide range of vaccination opportunities so those who are homeless, in temporary accommodation could easily access COVID vaccinations.

#### **Initial response**

- 3.26 At the end of March 2020, the Government wrote to the leader of every council in England asking them to accommodate all people sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough, and to find alternative accommodation for those in shelters where they could not easily self-isolate by the end of the weekend, in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This was called 'Everyone In'.

**What did ‘Everyone In’ mean for people presenting as homeless?**

Individuals who advised they may rough sleep were automatically provided with accommodation. Pre-pandemic these individuals were monitored to see if they did go on to rough sleep. Only in a few rare cases did we find that any individual did go on to rough sleep.

Individuals with no recourse to public funds, people who may have previously been banned and those with no local connection were provided with temporary accommodation.

3.27 The Government also put in place an eviction ban and bailiff enforcement action was not permitted during periods of national restrictions. The amnesty on evictions ended during September 2021. There was some protection offered by increasing the period of notice a landlord must give a tenant before they can start court proceeding to evict a tenant (this is now 6 months). This eviction ban prevented homelessness for many households over this initial period, however since this has been lifted, we have seen an increase in homelessness, especially families becoming homeless.

3.28 In Leicester homelessness services, including the provision of temporary accommodation, were extended. Help and support was offered to protect Leicester’s rough sleepers and also those who were at risk of rough sleeping at this time – on the streets, sofa surfing, in safe spaces and in hostels - from COVID-19 and to limit wider transmission. 45 bedspaces that were provided in shared sleeping arrangements, namely the Outreach dormitory, the SafeSpace, and our partner One Roof Leicester’s Nightshelter were all closed and everyone offered alternative accommodation.

3.29 Additional accommodation provision was achieved by the swift mass procurement of safe accommodation, self-contained flats and hotels. The Council worked with charities, the NHS and public health to provide wraparound and specialist support as many services had to close in response to the pandemic.

What we wanted to achieve:

- focus on people with a history of rough sleeping who are on the streets or in emergency accommodation where it is difficult to self-isolate or socially distance, such as safe spaces and shared hostel environments
- make sure that these people have access to the facilities that enable them to adhere to public health guidance on hygiene or isolation, including en-suite facilities and no shared sleeping spaces – to prevent and reduce infection
- utilise powers and funding in place as a result of the COVID-19 emergency to assist, where appropriate, those with no recourse to public funds who require shelter and other forms of support
- provide support to those accommodated, to both enable them to remain protected from COVID-19 and meet their wider needs.

3.30 In Leicester it was recognised that this was not just a matter of finding suitable accommodation at short notice, but that a health response was also required. A health group was set up involving the housing team, hostel managers (LCC and commissioned providers), health care provider (Inclusion Healthcare) and public health. This group worked together to highlight health issues, provide guidance for accommodation managing symptomatic residents, provide healthcare to people in accommodation, including outbreak management, provide COVID-19 testing and later deliver vaccines.

3.31 The demand for help and support was unprecedented and beyond all expectation and projection of need. This was compounded by the unexpected longevity of the pandemic and the need for lockdowns to be extended and continued. During 2020 there was only a very short period when restrictions were lifted in Leicester.

#### On-going response

3.32 The Council took a humanitarian approach, opting to continue with the principles of 'Everyone In' to protect individuals from COVID-19 for longer than the majority of other local authorities.

3.33 A Rough Sleepers Strategy, Next Steps, was developed in conjunction with partners and put in place. The aims were that:

- No-one who had been placed in emergency accommodation in response to the COVID-19 public health crisis would be asked to leave that emergency accommodation without an offer of support into alternative accommodation options based upon their individual needs.
- Resources would be developed, including additional move-on accommodation to ensure as far as possible there was capacity and capability to deliver and implement offers of support
- Individuals were provided with continued protection from COVID-19 for those who needed it
- There was an integrated housing approach with health and social care to secure access to services and continuity of care
- The roll out was gradual, to avoid a 'cliff edge' and overload of services as lockdown was lifted.

3.34 During the Everyone In approach, Leicester had already assisted and accommodated over 1,000 individuals under the Everyone In initiative.

3.35 By August 2020, 88 individuals had moved-on from temporary accommodation into settled accommodation and 28 individuals had moved into other non-temporary accommodation.

3.36 The Everyone In initiative has enabled some real positive improvements to services and has seen the number of rough sleepers at an all-time low in the city. However, it has significantly increased the number of single homeless / individuals who are at risk of homeless supported by the provision of temporary accommodation. This has meant existing services and staff were stretched and there were significant additional costs.

- 3.47 There were a number of initiatives to secure more move-on/settled accommodation including:
- prioritised letting of council housing when the housing register was suspended. This has continued to provide settled accommodation options
  - Action Homeless ensuring all vacancies across their service were made available
  - Action Homeless brought back into use a 10-unit property to provide next stage accommodation and support
  - emh plan to provide a next stage accommodation and support project for up to 7 individuals
  - request to all registered providers to offer vacancies of suitable accommodation to people accommodated during the Everyone In initiative
- 3.48 A new scheme, the Protect Programme, was launched November 2020 followed by the Protect Plus Programme in January 2021 to help areas that needed additional support during the restrictions throughout the Winter, to run alongside the Everyone In campaign, concentrating on areas with high levels of people experiencing street homelessness.
- 3.49 As new restrictions came into force in January 2021, DLUHC asked local housing authorities to once again make sure people experiencing street homelessness were helped to obtain accommodation and register with a GP. In December 2021, the government launched Protect and Vaccinate to help increase vaccine uptake among people who are homeless and sleeping rough and provide accommodation.
- 3.50 An additional 68 units of emergency temporary accommodation (as of June 22) is still in place specifically for singles and additional temporary accommodation is likely to be required for the rest of the 2022/23 financial year.

#### 4. Detailed breakdown and services provided

##### Family homelessness

##### Number of homeless families

- 4.1 Over a four-year period (2018/19- 2021/22) the number of families seeking homeless assistance has remained fairly consistent, if we put aside the dip seen during the pandemic period. This is shown below:

Initial duty Assessment	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
Applications	1,084	1,170	780	1,116

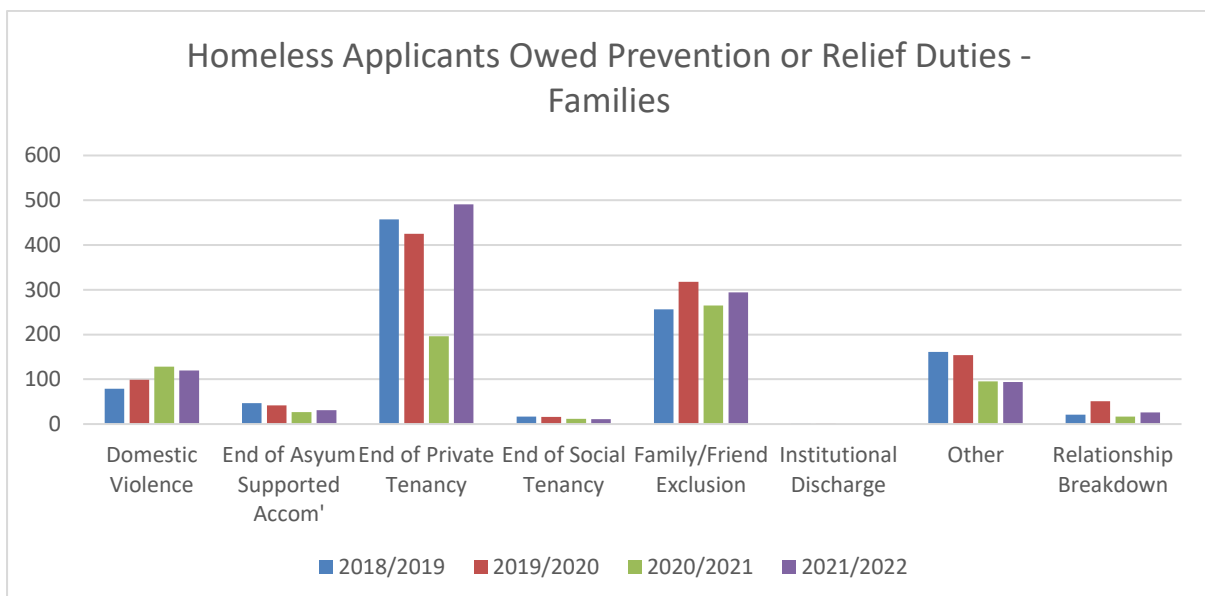


4.2 Approximately 78% of family presentations are during periods where a threat of homelessness exists (requesting help with preventing homelessness) whereas the remainder are already homeless.

4.3 The main reasons why families seek assistance from homeless prevention and support services were:

- end of their private rented tenancy (46% of all cases in 2021/22)
- family is no willing or able to accommodate them (23% of all cases in 2021/22).

Over the last years domestic violence has been increasing as a reason for homelessness (in 2021/22 this became the third main reason for families to seek assistance (11.1% of all cases).



4.4 The service places an emphasis on preventing homelessness and this has been largely successful:

<b>Outcomes for Family households with risk/threat of homelessness</b>	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Provided with prevention solution (inc. refused suitable offer)				
Leicester's performance - % of family households provided with solutions to prevent homelessness	72.34%	71.76%	79.90%	72.69%

4.5 Unfortunately the prevention of homelessness is not possible in all cases and the homelessness prevention and support service is the safety net for those who are in crisis and require emergency interventions.

4.6 Temporary accommodation usage, and in particular bed and breakfast (B&B) usage, has increased since 2021/22 as has the length of stay. B&B accommodation is only used when more suitable temporary accommodation is unavailable. B&B accommodation is not suitable for families with children, and we continue to meet the government's guidance to ensure this is not used for longer than six weeks.

Year	Number of families accommodated (number of occasions)	Average length of stay – days
2018-2019	53	19.29
2019-2020	19	11.79
2020-2021	17	11.88
2021-2022	110	14.30

4.7 For those households who are homeless as a result of domestic abuse, we work jointly with colleagues in Community Safety to provide 'safe temporary accommodation' as defined within the Domestic Abuse Act. Refuge accommodation or accommodation with specialist floating support is the preferred option,

#### Services for homeless families

4.8 Since the last strategy, for families where homelessness cannot be prevented, there has been a change in the focus of the provision of temporary accommodation, with the emphasis on providing "homes not hostels".

4.9 The aim for family homelessness is to have self-contained units of temporary accommodation where this is needed across the city. Ideally, for families in need of no to low accommodation-based support they will, where safe to do so, be accommodated in a unit of accommodation close to their support networks to allow family life to continue with the minimum disruption. Leicester City Council provides 17 self-contained 2 bed flats as temporary accommodation.



- 4.10 Whilst in temporary accommodation families are supported by family transitions workers to help signpost them to the services they require and provide housing support to help them in to settled accommodation.
- 4.11 Post covid and particularly, this year, there has been an increase in the number of families approaching for homelessness services and ultimately temporary accommodation. The Council has increased the number of self-contained properties and unfortunately the use of bed & breakfast accommodation has increased. Although, currently the Council has not placed any family in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks.

Other services (non-commissioned)

- 4.12 The Domestic Abuse Act of 2021 places a duty on local authorities in England to provide accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation. The Housing Division refers into Specialist Domestic Abuse projects, but these are procured by Community Safety.
- 4.13 Action Homeless' Building Blocks (funded by Children in need) provides one to one support and group play sessions to children affected by homelessness. There is a dedicated play worker onsite 5 days per week and the funding has enabled Action Homeless to buy new toys, play equipment and learning resources, as well as personalised aids to support establishment of routines and provide trips and days out for families.
- 4.14 Action Homeless Bridge offer 7 units of accommodation for women and children fleeing domestic abuse.
- 4.15 EMH Maple Park offer 7 fully furnished rooms with shared communal facilities. Staff offer intensive housing management services for women with low to medium support needs who are pregnant or who already have young children.
- 4.16 Key points relating to family homelessness:**
- Leicester, in comparison with other authorities, has a strong track record on preventing homelessness. Prevention options are becoming more limited due to the lack of available options including affordable housing.
  - Since 2021/22 there has been an increasing number of families that have needed to go into temporary accommodation and external pressures, such as cost of living pressures may lead to more family homelessness.
  - Currently there are no families in B&B for more than 6 weeks.

**Singles & childless couples' homelessness**

Number of homeless singles & couples

- 4.17 Numbers of homeless singles & couples seeking assistance have been consistent comparing 2018/19 and 2021/22. There was an increase in

2019/20 & 2020/21 which corresponds with the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a spike in numbers being placed in temporary accommodation in 2020/21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the 'Everyone In' initiative.

#### Homeless applications

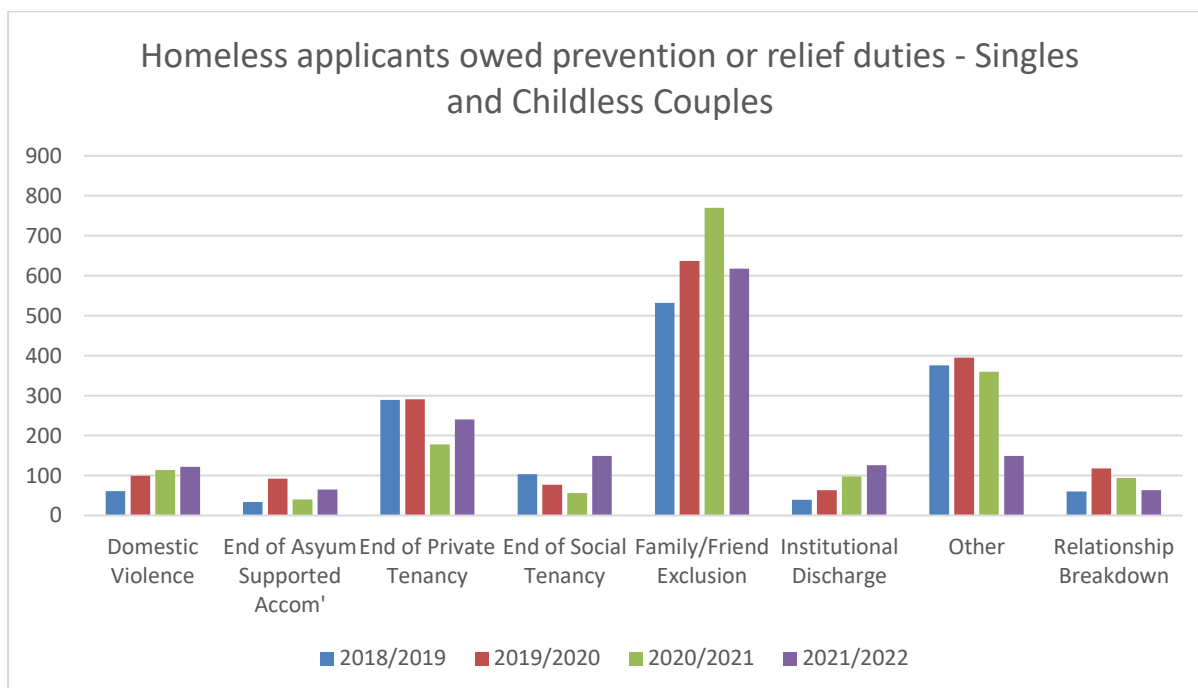
Year	Seeking Assistance	Owed Relief Duty*	% Owed Relief Duty
2018/2019	1,618	795	49.13%
2019/2020	1,890	1,050	55.56%
2020/2021	1,824	1,241	68.04%
2021/2022	1,619	883	54.54%

\* Owed relief duty as their initial duty assessment or following unsuccessful prevention

4.18 The number of unique individuals seeking assistance over the 4-year period was 6,951. Of these, 3,969 were owed a relief duty and 1,743 were placed in temporary accommodation which accounted for just under 44% of all customers owed a relief duty.

4.19 The main reasons why singles seek assistance from homeless prevention and support services were:

- family is no willing or able to accommodate them (29% of all cases in 2021/22)
- end of their private rented tenancy (16% of all cases in 2021/22)
- friends no longer willing or able to accommodate (11% of all cases in 2021/22).



4.20 Whilst the emphasis is on preventing homelessness, not all customers present at the point when homelessness can be prevented. In some cases, the prevention duty does not apply, and relief duty is owed from the beginning. This could be due to the customer approaching us too late or it could be an unexpected situation that was out of their control.

4.21 Bed & breakfast accommodation is only used when there is a statutory duty case and there is no other temporary accommodation available. Since the response to the COVID-19 pandemic was initiated, move-on slowed down significantly decreasing the fluidity of bedspaces. Once the 'Everyone In' initiative ended, unlike other local authorities, Leicester City Council made the commitment to work with the individuals accommodated to assist them in achieving positive housing solutions.

Average Number of Days for B&B Placements (ended placements)

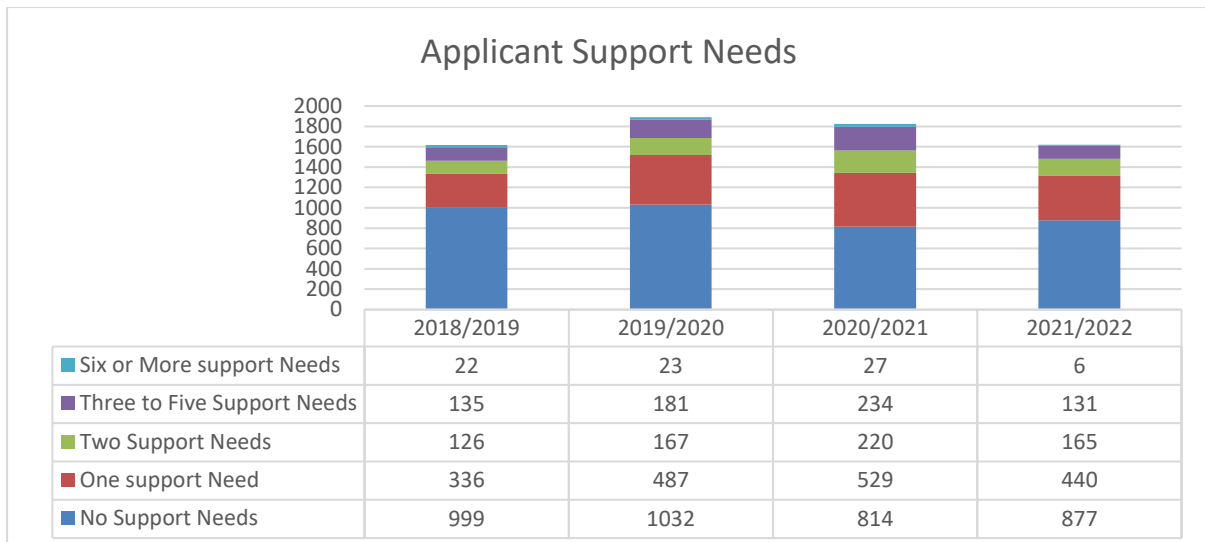
Placement Start Date	Average number of days	Total Placements
2018-2019	7	27
2019-2020	25	35
2020-2021	51	475
2021-2022	43	155

#### Complex cases

4.22 The total number of presentations over 4 years was 6,951 customers. The number of customers who presented with no support needs was 3,722, which accounted for over 53% of presentations. For the remaining cohort, the top 3 support needs in each year were mental health issues, physical health issues and those with an offending history. The number of customers with mental health problems was the highest by some margin.

Support needs	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
Mental Health	287	454	590	406
Offending History	187	207	290	149
Physical health (including disability)	169	291	311	259

Many customers present with more than one support need, and these are summarised in the table below.



About 25% of clients have mental health support needs and over 20% have many/complex needs (two or more support needs).

- 4.23 To help with complex cases the council and its partners hold multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meetings to discuss complex cases and identify solutions to resolve any outstanding issues.
- 4.24 Homelessness is not just a housing issue, but often involves a variety of other complex and overlapping factors. Clients often have a variety of needs and improving outcomes for homeless people requires services to work together to address these. Multi-agency work takes place between housing services, health services, mental health services, adult social care, children’s services the police, criminal justice services and employment services to support vulnerable clients.

Repeat homelessness

- 4.25 Over a 4-year period, 850 customers (12% of all presentations) have presented requesting assistance more than once.
- 4.26 Although progress has been made with reducing individuals with a high number of admissions re-entering homelessness services, there are still significant challenges in further reducing all repeat homelessness.

Services for singles & couples

- 4.27 There are generic services available for singles as well as specialist accommodation for young people and offenders. These services are detailed below.

*Housing Division commissioned accommodation-based housing related support for singles*

- 4.28 Action Homeless are commissioned to provide 72 units of accommodation for singles varying in support levels from low to high and Leicester City Council provide a further 44 units via the Dawn Centre. In addition, since July 2020, emh have been commissioned to provide 14 low to medium support units.

*Other accommodation services (non-commissioned)*

- 4.29 Nottingham Community Housing Association's Heathfield House provides 24 fully furnished one-bedroom flats for homeless adults aged 25+ who have low to medium support needs and can live independently.
- 4.30 Action Homeless provide a wide range of other temporary accommodation solutions. This consists of shared houses, bedsits, and one and two bedroomed flats across the city.
- 4.31 One Roof Leicester provide temporary accommodation for single people who are homeless. Their target group are local residents, refugees, refused asylum seekers and migrants.

*Housing support services*

- 4.32 Leicester City Council recognise the role of intensive support to help those most entrenched in a homelessness lifestyle to move on positively. The roles of transitions workers has recently been developed and introduced over the life of this strategy to provide individual tailored support for the individual to help them end their homelessness and have access to the support required.
- 4.33 The main objective of the team is to provide an intensive support service to customers with support needs (especially those with complex needs) who have experienced rough sleeping/repeat homelessness, regardless of whether it is their first approach or if they are already known to the service.
- 4.34 The Transitions team aim to:
- Provide customer focused quality service.
  - Empower vulnerable customers to achieve and maintain independent living by addressing support needs throughout their journey.
  - Increase self-confidence and build on their existing independent living skills.
  - Reduce rough sleeping in the city by providing support and assistance not only to those in temporary accommodation but also by working with those who will not come into temporary accommodation being offered.

Commissioned service performance

- 4.35 Over 4 years the commissioned generic singles accommodation utilisation has remained consistently high:

### LCC - Singles

	Utilisation (%)
2018/19	99.6
2019/20	99.6
2020/21	96.9
2021/22	98.4

### Action Homeless

	Utilisation (%)
2018/19	99.2
2019/20	98.0
2020/21	99.9
2021/22	98.5

### emh

	Utilisation (%)
2020/21	58.0*
2021/22	81.6*

\* Mobilisation of services was still ongoing, hence utilisation being lower than other accommodation.

- 4.36 Over the past 4 years generic accommodation for singles has been at an average utilisation of 98.6% (LCC Singles & Action Homeless).
- 4.37 Temporary accommodation is provided to resolve the immediate need for housing but also to provide support for the individual so that they will be able to move-on into settled accommodation. Many singles stay in temporary accommodation for more than 4 months. The longer length of stay reflects the complex needs of many individuals in temporary accommodation services and difficulties with pathways into settled accommodation.
- 4.38 Evictions as a percentage of ceased stays (quarterly) have been decreasing in both providers over the 4-year period. In LCC accommodation, the quarterly average in 2018/19 was 21% and 9.6% in 2021/22. In Action Homeless Accommodation, it was 26.4 % in 2018/19 and 10.2% in 2021/22.
- 4.39 Examples of the outcomes of homelessness services
- In 88% of cases the service worked in partnership with other agencies to deliver support
  - In 57% of cases there was a successful move from the support service
  - 55% of clients required support to better manage their mental health, 47% to better manage their substance misuse issues, and 36% to better manage their physical health
  - 70% of clients needed support to maintain their accommodation and avoid eviction and 77% to support to secure settled accommodation

- 51% of clients needed support in developing confidence and their ability to have greater choice and/or control and/or involvement
- 48% of clients needed support to maximise their income and 40% to help them reduce their overall debt

*Sample of outcomes from 2015 to 2022 of clients supported by Action Homeless*

#### 4.40 **Key points relating to singles and couples homelessness**

- Increasing numbers of singles and couples seeking assistance
- Increased preventions likely to be further strengthened following full recovery and return to business as usual following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Further development of the newly established Transitions Team to reduce the number of rough sleepers and repeat homelessness. We need to strengthen services to improve sustained outcomes and reduce abandonment / disengagement. For example, by ensuring support plans follow individuals through breaks in service
- Preventing homelessness is not just about housing. Many homeless people have complex needs which require a multi-disciplinary approach. We will continue to work with others and seek to forge strong working relationships with a range of services / organisations including physical and mental health services, social care services, criminal justice organisations, employment and advice services.

#### **Floating support services**

- 4.41 For customers moving into privately rented accommodation, P3 have been commissioned to provide a total of up to 94 cases of floating support at any given time. For customers moving into local authority properties, support is available through the STAR team for generic floating support.
- 4.42 Following a successful bid by Leicester City Council to the Homelessness Trailblazer Programme, P3 were further commissioned to provide a coaching service which supported 53 cases a year across 2018/2019. Individuals referred to the scheme were supported to build skills, knowledge, and resilience to contribute to the customer's ability to independently sustain accommodation and resolve housing difficulties in the future. This service proved a success but following the end of funding, was not able to be continued.
- 4.43 During the Covid pandemic the provider offered telephone/video calls whilst they were not able to offer face-to-face support sessions. The service offers a city centre location for individuals who prefer to come into an office and have communal facilities where group work can take place.
- 4.44 Floating support is support that is available for singles, couples, young people and families where there is a risk of homelessness, or the customer has just been re-housed after a period of homelessness and support is not tied to accommodation (as it might be for example in a hostel).

4.45 The aim for floating support that this was available for individuals to support, where required, between temporary accommodation and settled accommodation. However, these transitions have not always been made or done in a timely fashion. This has led to, on some occasions, delays in referrals, meaning that when the floating support service receives the referral and they make contact with the individual, the individual feels they no longer require support. There have also been limited referrals from homelessness prevention & support services to floating support services to provide support to those at risk of homelessness.

4.46 The aim of floating support services is to provide short-term support to enable people to establish and maintain independent living. This was achieved in at least an average of 90% of cases. During 2022 case numbers/referrals have been increasing and it is expected there will be increased demand to support people who are struggling as a result of cost of living pressures.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
P3	97.6%	98.4%	97.3%	98.5%	97.0%

4.47 When commissioned it was expected the average length of support would be no more than 6 months. In 2021/22 only 17% of cases lasted longer than 6 months.

**Examples of the outcomes of homelessness services**

- In 87% of cases the service worked in partnership with other agencies to deliver support
- In 73% of cases there was a successful end to the receipt of the support service
- 30% of clients required support to better manage their mental health, 6% to better manage their substance misuse issues, and 14% to better manage their physical health
- 70% of clients needed support to maintain their accommodation and avoid eviction and 77% to support to secure settled accommodation
- 42% of clients needed support in developing confidence and their ability to have greater choice and/or control and/or involvement
- 71% of clients needed support to maximise their income and 53% to help them reduce their overall debt

*Sample of outcomes from Sept 2018 to March 2022 of clients supported by P3*

**4.48 Key points relating to floating support services**

- Commissioned floating support services are effective to help individuals sustain their tenancies and prevent homelessness.
- The Council could improve processes to ensure support is available in a timely fashion when individuals are moving-on from temporary accommodation
- Demand for services is currently increasing



## Rough Sleeping

4.49 Leicester has been focussed on working towards ending rough sleeping and, over the life of the current strategy has seen a significant drop in the number of people sleeping rough. The number of people estimated to be sleeping rough on a single night in autumn has continued to reduce over 5 years, from a peak in 2016 (of 36). Although the current single night figure is reducing, our monthly encounters are increasing. These two things combined indicate a strong off-the-streets offer however the flow of individuals to the street remains high. We need to improve early intervention and access to advice, so individuals do not go on to rough sleep.

4.50 We have an enhanced offer for all individuals identified as sleeping rough that commits to the provision of suitable temporary accommodation which extends beyond the legal duties that may be owed. Due to a strong out of hours process and our enhanced offer, we achieve a robust 'no second night out' approach but are keen to move the service into a 'no first night out' approach bolstered by proactive preventative services. Our new RSI projects contribute to achieving this.

4.51 During the pandemic, the government and local authority put in place significant support to accommodate individuals sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough in order to protect them from COVID-19. In this period temporary accommodation was available to everyone who was homeless to protect their health and stop wider transmission of COVID-19.

### Numbers of rough sleepers

4.52 All local authorities must submit an annual figure to DLUHC (The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) to indicate the number of people sleeping rough in their area on a typical night (in the Autumn). This can be an estimate or a count. Since 2017 Leicester has undertaken a street count rather than an estimate, except during the pandemic.

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
31	31	22	12	8

4.53 This is a snapshot of one night, and many more individuals are assisted by services during the year, with basic needs, support and advice and housing so they do not need to sleep rough.

The number of unique individuals in a financial year found sleeping rough

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
186	179	139	293	362

4.54 Analysis done in conjunction with the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities concluded that the reduction in the nightly count figure, especially in the face of increased overall numbers encountered over time, is evidence of a strong 'off-the-street' offer. However, focus needs to be placed

on the rising number of rough sleepers encountered during outreach work, approximately 40% of which are not known to LCC and 'new' to rough sleeping in the city.

#### Rough Sleeping in Leicester

- 4.55 In 2017 a range of agencies, including De Montfort University, Action Homeless, Leicester City Council and other statutory and charitable bodies were involved in the European End Street Homelessness Campaign. In a week in early November 2017, 93 homeless people were surveyed and a street count was conducted, covering a wide area of Leicester.
- 4.56 Key findings from the survey:
- Most people surveyed had medium or high levels of vulnerability
  - Majority of survey respondents were men over the age of 30 who originated from the UK
  - 40% had last lived in permanent accommodation less than a year ago, 31% 1-2 years ago, 20% 3-5 years ago
  - 48 people said they most frequently slept outdoors
  - 34% said they had been attacked or beaten up since they had become homeless/started sleeping rough
  - 89% of those surveyed said that they were able to take care of their basic needs, such as bathing, changing clothes, using a toilet, getting food and clean water
  - 58% said that they felt a relationship breakdown or an abusive or unhealthy relationship, or the actions of a friend or family member resulting in eviction had been a precursor to their homelessness
  - Over a quarter of respondents (26%) reported long term physical health issues
  - 21% had been evicted from a hostel or other accommodation because of drinking and or drug use
  - 28% of respondents said their mental health issues would make it hard for them to live independently because they would need help

#### **Action Homeless service user profiles (2017-2022)**

Over this period Action Homeless has housed over 450 people who experienced rough sleeping:

- 16% were women
- 41% had 3 or more support needs
- 39% had substance use related support needs
- 30% during being accommodated felt better able to manage their mental health
- 28% moved in tenancies and 19% went back to family and friends

- 4.57 In 2021 the council and its partners begin a targeted programme of interventions and support for rough sleepers for individuals who had complex

issues/long history of rough sleeping. This had successful outcomes for the majority of individuals identified. An example of the type of support provided:

*Steve (name changed) was evicted from a housing association tenancy for anti-social behaviour. He was housed in bed and breakfast accommodation, Dawn Centre and residential placements including rehab. These placements all failed and there were periods when Steve slept on the streets with his dog. Steve has significant physical and mental health needs and substance use problems.*

*A wide range of partners all engaged to support Steve which included Adult Social Care, Turning Point, Homelessness Services, Help the Homeless, mental health services, LRI, RSPCA and the Police.*

*Steve is now being supported in a long-term residential care home with an intensive care package. His dog has been placed in an animal shelter.*

#### Services for individuals who are or are at risk of rough sleeping

- 4.58 In Leicester there is an outreach team who whenever they find someone sleeping rough, they encourage them to take up offers of accommodation or reconnect to their area of origin. They also receive Street Link referrals, from members of the public to identify individuals rough sleeping and offer them support. In 2017 additional funding was secured to extend outreach services into the evening. This extended outreach service is still operating as well as including services on the weekend. Services are provided by Leicester City Council and Help the Homeless and work in partnership with health services (Inclusion HealthCare) and drug, alcohol and peer support services (Turning Point and Dear Albert).
- 4.59 The council has also funded since 2019/20 more intensive support services for rough sleepers, Rough Sleeping Navigators, who help to 'navigate' individuals to the services they require and provide individualised support tailored to the needs of the individual. 3 local charities have used their expertise to support rough sleepers during this programme:
- The Bridge mainly supports individuals released from prison,
  - Help the Homeless mainly support higher need individuals, and
  - One Roof mainly support individuals with no recourse to public funds/persons from abroad.
- 4.60 Navigators have worked with over 100 individuals since 2019/20. Navigators provide ongoing, one to one, support to individuals sleeping rough who are unable/unwilling to access temporary accommodation. These can often be those with multiple complex needs where traditional processes/procedures do not work for them, who are unable to sustain accommodation, unable to engage with other services and where there is no model of temporary accommodation suitable to meet their needs. The Navigators have been able to build relationships, advocate on their behalf and look to progress alternative avenues to accessing accommodation. In 55% of individuals have been supported into accommodation.

*Simon (not his real name) was first found sleeping rough in 2020. He was involved in street begging and although on some occasions he would accept offers of temporary accommodation provided by Outreach Services he always returned to sleeping on the streets. He also was a known drug user. During 2022 concerns were raised by Outreach Services about Simon's physical and mental health.*

*A range of agencies were involved in Simon's case including the police, homeless mental health team, Outreach Services, Help the Homeless, Leicester City Council Tenancy Management, STAR, Adult Social Care, community psychiatrist.*

*Simon was encouraged to enter temporary accommodation and stayed at the Dawn Centre for a few months successfully and then was offered a council tenancy. Unfortunately, Simon was admitted to hospital due to his mental health deteriorated. However, there is a support package in place for when he does return home.*

- 4.61 The Councils Street Lifestyles Group ensures the safeguarding of people sleeping rough through multi-agency working between police and local partners, initially through support, but also includes an enforcement team where street lifestyles need to be more robustly managed. There is a Street Lifestyles Enforcement Team who can take enforcement action where individuals are involved in persistent aggressive begging. All individuals are also offered support alongside other interventions.
- 4.62 Action Homeless Flora Lodge. This service for the most entrenched rough sleepers identified through the target protect group. It first opened in 2020/21 and was a 12-bed accommodation project with treatment and interview rooms to enable partners to engage with individuals accommodated (including mental health services, Turning Point (substance use services), Inclusion HealthCare (primary care services), Turning Point (substance use peer support) and Action Homeless (team of support staff). The ethos of Flora Lodge is allowing as much flexibility as possible, for example, drinking on the premises is allowed, repeat couples are allowed, as well as individuals with dogs and individuals known to be current drug users.

After the first year of the project (sample monitoring of 17 people accommodated at Flora Lodge):

- 88% engaged with drug and alcohol treatment
- 60% were able to manage their substance use better
- 94% engaged with mental health services
- 25% were better able to manage their mental health
- 94% engaged with health services
- 52% were better able to manage their health
- 47% sustained their accommodation for over 3 months

Emergency bed provision

- 4.63 Leicester City Council provided up to 10 additional emergency bed spaces of dormitory style accommodation. Referrals for the emergency beds are primarily received from Leicester City Council's Outreach Team, but individuals may present out of hours at the Dawn Centre.
- 4.64 During 2018/19 the council also provided an additional 10-bed safe place to stay at Andover Street, which was extended to 14 beds in 2019/20. This provided beds in a shared space with access to laundry and showers.
- 4.65 Since 2015/16 One Roof Leicester had run a winter night shelter in Leicester. Shortly before the pandemic One Roof Leicester has opened a night shelter open all year. This type of accommodation (shared/dormitory style accommodation) was all closed during the pandemic.
- 4.66 During 2021/22 the council started providing up to 25 emergency access (touchdown) beds at the Dawn Centre.

#### Severe Weather provision

- 4.67 The definition of severe weather can include periods of heavy rain, gale force winds and extremes of temperature i.e., night-time temperatures of 2°C or below. In hot weather the Dawn Centre provides individuals with support to keep hydrated and sun protection (e.g., shelter / provision of sunscreen / showers).
- 4.68 The Council will ensure access to accommodation and during peak periods will utilise bed & breakfast/hotel accommodation if necessary to safeguard all individuals at risk of harm and death.

#### **4.69 Key points relating to rough sleeping**

- Rough sleeping has increased due to the increase in the flow of individuals to the street, however we have become better and faster at responding.
- Street begging continues to be an issue in the City
- We need to improve early interventions and access to advice, so individuals do not go on to rough sleep
- Most individuals who rough sleep have complex support needs, not just housing needs

#### **Young People**

- 4.70 Local authorities (housing and children's services) have statutory duties to provide support, including support with housing, to some groups of young people including young people aged 16 to 17, care leavers aged 18 to 20 (or until 24 for care leavers studying full time), and people considered vulnerable because they've been in care, the armed forces or prison, or because they've experienced violence, or the threat of violence.
- 4.71 Housing services have a joint working protocol with children's services. Arrangements include a single point of contact for any urgent cases that may

arise and joint assessments for all homeless 16/17-year-olds. Our allocations policy also recognises the need for the prioritisation of cases to primarily safeguard and protect the needs of the most vulnerable children. The allocations policy provides for two separate Band 1 categories, one specifically for the needs of those leaving care and one for priority cases referred by Adult Social Care and Children's Services to housing directorate that require urgent consideration. As of April 2022, there were 32 individuals who received Band 1 priority because they were leaving care, and 48 individuals for the corresponding period in 2021 and 41 in 2020.

- 4.72 The number of customers aged 16-24 who came to homelessness, prevention & support services because they were homeless or at risk of homelessness has remained consistent over the last 4 years but has slightly reduced since 2017/18. The number of approaches were as follows: 2018/19 = 346, 2019/20 = 397, 2020/21 = 384 and 2021/22 = 353.
- 4.73 Between April 2018 and March 2022, a total of 1,480 customers (singles and couples) presented. Of these, 228 were considered eligible for temporary accommodation because they were a 'vulnerable adult' and a further 68 were considered eligible for temporary accommodation because they were 'children leaving care'. Of these 68, in 8 cases, homelessness was prevented and the remaining 60 were owed a relief duty.
- 4.74 Singles private renters under the age of 35 are usually only entitled to the Local Housing Allowance shared accommodation rate. There are some exemptions to this rule if the following applies:
- Care leavers under 25.
  - Previously lived in a hotel for homeless people for at least 3 months in total.
  - Ex-offenders managed under an active MAPPA.
  - In receipt of the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP).
  - In receipt of the care component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) at the middle or highest rate
  - In receipt of Attendance Allowance
  - In receipt of Armed Forces Independence Payment
- 4.75 As of April 2022, there were 989 single people aged under 35 on the housing register. There is limited shared housing availability and as a landlord Leicester City Council does not have any general needs shared accommodation.

#### Services for young people

- 4.76 *Housing Division commissioned accommodation-based housing related support*

Following a joint commissioning exercise with Children's Services, we have the following units available for use by the Housing Division, although some are still in the process of mobilisation:

- 57 Units with YMCA Leicester
- 10 Framework Housing Association (in the process of mobilisation)
- 5 Units with Park Lodge (in the process of mobilisation)

*Other accommodation services (non-commissioned)*

- 4.77 HITS Home Trust provides 15 self-contained flats that are fully furnished for young people aged between 16 and 25.
- 4.78 Park Lodge Project has other accommodation for homeless young people aged 16-25.
- 4.79 Leicester YMCA also accepts direct referrals to their shared houses for young people who have low support needs who are in education, employment or training.

Commissioned service performance

- 4.80 Over 4 years the commissioned young person's accommodation utilisation has remained consistently high.

YEAR	YMCA – UTILISATION (%)
2018/19	95.9
2019/20	97.1
2020/21	98.3
2021/22	96.8

- 4.81 The housing division commissions 57 units of accommodation with Leicester YMCA. The housing division has also commissioned 10 units with Framework Housing Association and 5 with Park Lodge. We are hoping that this will assist in issues with placements, for example due to dynamics between individuals, or if individual has been excluded from one service provider they can be given an opportunity with another provider.
- 4.82 When commissioning services for younger people it was recognised this group often requires a longer stay in temporary accommodation. For example, because of the difficulties in securing independent accommodation for young persons. In over 80% of cases, young people are staying in temporary accommodation for more than 4 months. The percentage of evictions against ceased stays has remained low over the last 4 years. It was 12.2% in 2018/19 and 10.5% in 2021/22. Eviction rates remain slightly lower compared with generic singles accommodation.
- 4.83 Examples of the outcomes of homelessness services
- In 99% of cases the service worked in partnership with other agencies to deliver support
  - In 70% of cases there was a successful move from the support service

- 68% of clients required support to better manage their mental health, 40% to better manage their substance misuse issues, and 40% to better manage their physical health
- 54% of clients needed support to maintain their accommodation and avoid eviction and 82% to support to secure settled accommodation
- 85% of clients needed support in developing confidence and their ability to have greater choice and/or control and/or involvement
- 96% of clients needed support to maximise their income and 59% to help them reduce their overall debt

*Sample of outcomes from April 2020 to March 2022 of clients supported by Leicester YMCA*

#### 4.84 **Key points relating to homeless young people:**

- Limited affordable housing options available
- Preventing homelessness, and if young people become homeless preventing this from reoccurring helps break the cycle of repeat homelessness.
- The average length of stay in young person's accommodation is generally longer than other accommodation providers. This reflects the needs of this client group.
- Working with accommodation providers to address barriers for move-on.

#### **Persons from abroad with restricted eligibility to services**

4.85 Without a statutory safety net, non-UK nationals with restricted eligibility are more vulnerable to homelessness and destitution.<sup>20</sup> Key categories of people facing immigration-based restrictions<sup>21</sup>:

- People with leave to remain who have a NRPF condition attached
- People with no current regularised status
- EEA nationals with pre-settled status and their families, if they do not meet certain conditions
- People who have outstanding applications for leave

4.86 Some persons from abroad (non-UK nationals) immigration status determines whether they are able to access public funds. This is relevant to homelessness, as this limits the support the local authority can offer. The following types of housing assistance provided by a local council in England are classed as public funds for immigration purposes:

- Homelessness assistance under part VII of the Housing Act 1996

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<sup>20</sup> A Home For All: Understanding Migrant Homelessness in Great Britain. Crisis

<sup>21</sup> Facing up to homelessness among non-UK nationals. Homeless Link Policy Briefing Jan 2022



- A local authority allocation of social housing (i.e. a council or housing association tenancy) made under part VI of the Housing Act 1996

### **Who has no recourse to public funds (NRPF)?**

A person will have no recourse to public funds when they are 'subject to immigration control', as defined at section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. This can be the following types of immigration status:

- Leave to enter or remain, which is subject to the 'No Recourse to Public Funds' (NRPF) condition, such as:
  - Leave to enter as a visitor
  - Leave to remain as a spouse
  - Leave to remain as a student
  - Leave to remain granted under family or private life rules
- Leave to enter or remain that is subject to a maintenance undertaking, such as:
  - Indefinite leave to remain as the adult dependent relative of a person with settled status (five year prohibition on claiming public funds)
- Leave to enter or remain as a result of a pending immigration appeal: This could apply when a person has section 3C leave whilst an appeal against a refusal of leave to remain is pending
  - No leave to enter or remain when they are required to have this, such as:
    - A visa overstayer
    - An asylum seeker
    - An appeal rights exhausted (ARE) asylum seeker

NRPF Network [Who has no recourse to public funds \(NRPF\) | NRPF Network](#)

- 4.87 A person who is subject to 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF) conditions, or who does not have any current immigration permission, is not eligible for homelessness assistance or social housing and certain benefits. A person who is found to be ineligible for homelessness assistance by their local council must be provided with information and advice to help prevent their homelessness. This could include, for example, signposting to information about local immigration advisers or Home Office asylum support, or a referral to social services for support if they have children or care needs.
- 4.88 Not all non-UK nationals are excluded from 'public funds' however there can be other conditions. For example, an EU national with pre-settled status is eligible for public funds if they are in employment. Homelessness services will sign-post clients to access support from employment services such as St Mungos Recovery College who can support individuals into work. Outreach and Transitions Support workers helped individuals apply for settled status and provide other support and advice (for example support to apply for identify documents required). They will also work with individuals where they wish to return home, for example supporting with travel expenses.

### Services for person from abroad with NRPF conditions

- 4.89 Homelessness prevention and support staff will refer individuals who are subject to NRPF conditions to relevant support services in the city (including for Asylum Advice Migrant Help, Red Cross for support, casework and advocacy, ASSIST Inclusion Healthcare for health care needs).
- 4.90 In periods of severe weather Leicester City Council will provide accommodation to people with NRPF condition to prevent harm and ensure that no one dies on the streets during periods of severe weather.
- 4.91 One Roof Leicester through its charitable funds provides accommodation and support to single people who are homeless, including destitute refugees and EU migrants and refused asylum seekers. As part of the Rough Sleeping Initiative programme from 2022/23 One Roof Leicester will provide accommodation and support to some persons from abroad with restricted eligibility and work to establish/regularise their immigration status whilst accommodated. In earlier RSI programme One Roof Leicester were funded to provide a Navigator support worker helping individuals with restricted eligibility.
- 4.92 Key points relating to persons from abroad with restricted eligibility**
- It can take time to establish an individual's immigration status and there can be fear of disclosure with local authority staff. This can make it difficult to establish a person's immigration status and therefore provide appropriate advice and support
  - As individuals do not often qualify for statutory support from the Council or the Home Office housing schemes are often provided by the voluntary and community sector, as in the case in Leicester
  - Explore with third sector partners additional offers of accommodation that could be provided, for example hosting schemes.
  - Improve information sharing with the Home Office regarding the numbers of individuals who have been informed they have no leave to remain who were located within Leicester at the time of decision
  - Lobby government to review all immigration-based restrictions on public funds to ensure that local authorities have powers to provide emergency accommodation in order to prevent destitution.

### **Offenders / ex-offenders**

- 4.93 The council has statutory duties for re-housing ex-prisoners that are 'vulnerable' as a result of serving a custodial sentence or being on remand. The local probation service, community rehabilitation company and the housing division also work under a duty to cooperate to ensure those that may be homeless and at risk of reoffending can access homeless services with the aim of reducing reoffending. This is supported by a protocol. This includes working with the Multi Agency Public Protection Agency (MAPPA) which ensures cases that are deemed as high risk in relation to public protection are managed appropriately and accommodation needs are

prioritised where required. Leicester City Council sits as a core panel member within MAPPA, providing advice as well as practical help with accommodation and support. This often extends beyond Leicester-connected individuals.

There is one Prison, HMP Leicester within Leicester City. HMP Leicester is a Category B men's local prison that the prison holds people on remand to the local courts, as well as sentenced prisoners. The type of prison can present challenges to a planned response to releases, as people on remand can often be released at short notice, creating a homeless emergency if the person has nowhere to reside following release. A second prison, HMP Fosse Way, is opening in May 2023. This prison will be a Category C resettlement prison based in Blaby district.

- 4.94 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022, Leicester, along with districts of Leicestershire, and Rutland, launched a Prison Release & Ex-Offender Homeless Pathway Protocol. This Protocol aims to:
- provide agencies / organisations working with this client group with a defined pathway process which clarifies partner responsibilities for assisting an offender who will be homeless upon release, or an offender who is under supervision and at risk of homelessness.
  - enable and encourage effective joint working between appropriate agencies / organisations.
  - enable and encourage better information sharing at key points within the pathway.
- 4.95 Such that prisoners and offenders (18+) are:
- enabled to engage with statutory and non-statutory support at the earliest opportunity, thus improving housing outcomes and reducing inequality of access.
  - provided with holistic advice and support around their housing options prior to and following their release from prison.
- 4.96 There are a few exceptions to the protocol:
- MAPPA cases are to be treated separately from this pathway in order to appropriately manage associated risks and sensitivities:
  - Where there is an established or probable connection to a particular local authority area, these should be referred to that authority's Housing MAPPA Lead and dealt with under existing MAPPA protocols.
  - Where there is no connection, or legal barriers to connection, but MAPPA are seeking assistance from the LLR region to provide an accommodation solution, the local MAPPA Coordinator should conduct this request via the Chief Housing Officers Group MAPPA Lead.
- 4.97 Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) are delivered for People on Probation (PoP) by locally or regionally contracted providers, on behalf of the Probation Service. A referral to a CRS provider is made to enable the PoP to address certain aspects of their behaviour linked to offending or to stabilise them so that they can move forward in addressing that behaviour. Currently a holistic Women's CRS provision delivers both support and advice around

accommodation (and also social inclusion). A specific accommodation CRS is also delivered for men.

4.98 We also need to review homelessness prevention for offenders, including people on remand. The Homelessness Reduction Act has introduced a duty on public services, including criminal justice system services, to notify local authorities if they come into contact with people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This process ties in with the above protocol and the process is commenced by the probation services submitting a s213B Referral (Housing Act 1996) (commonly known as the Duty to Refer or DTR) to the local authority.

Services for offenders / ex-offenders

4.99 *Housing Division commissioned accommodation-based housing related support*

The last strategy proposed to commission a total of 30 units of temporary accommodation. This has been achieved via Adullam Homes Housing Association whereby we have 14 units at Norman House and 16 other dispersed units. These units provide low to high support.

4.100 In addition, in August 2021, the Homelessness Prevention Service launched the Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Scheme (AFEO). The local authority was able to obtain funding from the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities to enable the introduction of a new scheme specifically focused on supporting ex-offenders, increasing their access and sustainment of private rented sector tenancies. Our offer is to specifically build on the existing landlord incentive schemes in place, as well as working in partnership with Help the Homeless who are delivering the support element of the scheme to ensure tenancies are successful.

Commissioned service performance

4.101 Over 4 years the commissioned offender accommodation utilisation has remained consistently high:

Occupied units as a % of available units

	<b>NORMAN HOUSE</b>	<b>MOVE ON HOUSES</b>
2018/19	97.9	N/A
2019/20	97.7	92.6
2020/21	97.3	95.0
2021/22	96.9	91.9

4.102 Generally, the temporary accommodation for offenders is full or very close to fully occupied. The accommodation providers have worked closely with the Probation Service to ensure vacancies are managed. Achieving move-on is becoming more difficult, increasing the amount of time spent in temporary accommodation for offenders.

- 4.103 Over 3 years 47.2% of individuals at Norman House and 33.5% across Adullam's move on accommodation have moved on from supported housing in a positive planned way. This reflects the complex needs of individuals and that they may be recalled to prison (as they will often be on license) and this may not relate to how they are managing in the accommodation.
- 4.104 **Key points relating to homeless offenders / ex-offenders**
- Ensuring best use of limited offender provision to prioritise higher need clients (from offending and housing perspectives)
  - Work with Probation Services to identify appropriate and relevant pathways (including all services available not just commissioned housing accommodation services) for known homeless offenders.
  - Working with accommodation providers to understand the variation in length of stay and any barriers for move-on
  - Consider opportunities for more partnership working to identify early interventions that can prevent homelessness from occurring e.g., working with Leicester prison's 'through the gate' team
  - Building on joint work across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland councils, probation and prison services
  - Ensure HMP Fosse Way is linked with existing protocol agreements and processes to ensure risks of crisis homelessness are reduced to a minimum
  - Work with Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Chief Housing Officers Group to develop improved representation at MAPPA, potentially sharing the housing core panel member responsibility

### **Health & wellbeing and homelessness**

- 4.105 Having a place to call home is essential to health and wellbeing and is therefore a wider determinant of health. The right home environment protects and improves health and wellbeing and prevents physical and mental ill health. It enables people to manage their health and care needs; access and sustain education, training and employment; live independently and safely, and participate and contribute to society.<sup>22</sup> People experiencing homelessness have worse health and social care outcomes than the general population.
- 4.106 People who are homeless often experience severe and multiple disadvantages, and unmet health and social care needs, that can be contributing factors for becoming homeless as well as consequences of homelessness.<sup>23</sup> While ill health can be both a cause and consequence of homelessness, it is not always identified as the trigger of homelessness. For example, ill health may contribute to job loss or relationship breakdown, which

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-health-through-the-home/improving-health-through-the-home>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng214/resources/integrated-health-and-social-care-for-people-experiencing-homelessness-pdf-66143775200965>

in turn can result in homelessness.<sup>24</sup> Equally, lack of shelter can result in exposure to severe weather conditions, increased risk of accidents, exposure to crime, poor hygiene and poor oral health; limited privacy and space in communal dwellings can increase exposure to infectious diseases; and malnutrition can result in reduced immunity to disease and general ill-health.

4.107 Co-morbidity (2 or more diseases or disorders occurring at the same time in one person) is not uncommon for people facing longer-term homelessness. People who are homeless are known to have higher rates of common mental health problems, respiratory problems, oral health problems and gastro-intestinal problems compared to the general population. Experience of psychological trauma and adverse childhood events are common, and the prevalence of people who are neuro-atypical or have a brain injury is higher than in the general population. Chronic homelessness is an associated marker for tri-morbidity (combination of physical ill health with mental illness and drug or alcohol misuse), complex health needs and premature death. The complexity is associated with advanced illness at presentation to a health service.<sup>25</sup>

4.108 People experiencing homelessness use more acute hospital services and emergency care than the general population. When admitted to a hospital, the length of hospital stay is usually much longer because of multiple unmet needs. The average (mean) age of death of homeless people is 44 years, 32 years lower than the general population. This is even lower for homeless women, at 42 years.<sup>26</sup> Many of these premature deaths are from preventable and treatable conditions.<sup>23</sup> The most common cause of death of a person experiencing homelessness in 2020 was reported as drug-poisoning, followed by alcohol-specific causes and suicide- collectively this accounted for over 50% of deaths in people who are homeless in England and Wales.<sup>27</sup>

4.109 Barriers to access and engagement with preventive, primary care and social care services can mean that health problems remain untreated until they become very severe and complex. These barriers include stigma and discrimination; lack of trusted contacts; fragmented, siloed and rigid services; strict eligibility criteria; and lack of information sharing and appropriate communication.

4.110 The below table gives an indication of the health and wellbeing of homeless clients (singles and couples) in council funded services:

Support need	% clients recorded as having this support need
Mental health problems	56.2%
Drug problems	32.0%

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-applying-all-our-health/homelessness-applying-all-our-health>

<sup>25</sup> Homeless Health Need in Leicester (2021) LCC Public Health. Mark Wheatley.

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-applying-all-our-health/homelessness-applying-all-our-health>

<sup>27</sup> [Deaths of homeless people in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandcare/deaths/deaths-of-homeless-people-in-england-and-wales)

Alcohol problems	22.6%
Physical or sensory disability	14.2%
Learning disabilities	3.6%
People with HIV/AIDS	0.7%

Based on over 800 clients provided with temporary accommodation between 2015 to 2022

- 4.111 The support and outcomes of support received whilst clients are receiving housing funded homelessness services are recorded. The following table shows the health and wellbeing support needed and whether the client thought this outcome had been achieved:

Short term outcome	Support needed	Outcome achieved
Better managing physical health	36%	65%
Better managing mental health	55%	58%
Better managing substance misuse issues	47%	39%
Better managing self-harm	13%	63%
Avoiding causing harm to others	13%	47%
Minimising harm / risk of harm from others	21%	67%
Developing confidence and ability to have greater choice and / or control and / or involvement	51%	63%

- 4.112 As part of the end street homelessness campaign (November 2017) 91 surveys were completed by homeless people in the city, this included some questions about health. These surveys showed:
- 26% of respondents reported long-term physical health issues
  - 19% said that their physical disability would limit the type of housing they could access or would make it difficult to live independently because they would need help
  - 55% when feeling sick or unwell would avoid asking for help
  - 15% thought it would be difficult to stay housed, or to afford housing because of drinking or drug use
  - 28% felt their mental health issue/s would make it hard for them to live independently
  - 26% responded that they were not taking medication that they ought to be

#### Health and wellbeing services

- 4.113 Health care services for homeless people in Leicester including primary care, mental health, and drug and alcohol services, are commissioned by Public Health, Adult Social Care and the Integrated Care Board (superseding Clinical Commissioning Groups).

#### Hospital Housing Enablement Team (HHET)

- 4.114 A housing enablement team works with patients (from the Bradgate Mental Health Unit & University Hospitals Leicester) who are well enough to leave hospital but have no accommodation to return to or their current

accommodation is no longer suitable to prevent any delayed transfer of care. The service offers patients an early assessment and offers options to resolve their housing issues and offers support with the transition from hospital to home.

- 4.115 There are an extensive range of services to support homeless people and good evidence of collaborative working, enhanced by excellent healthcare services.<sup>28</sup> The Healthwatch report (September 2022) made 7 recommendations:
- Review hospital discharge referral procedures
  - On-going programme of training for new hospital staff
  - More partnership working between care services to improve discharge planning
  - Patients given information in accessible form about plans for their on-going care
  - Improve access to mental health services for patients with on-going mental health care needs after discharge
  - Review procedures for referral of patients in mental health facilities to consider earlier involvement of key housing and social services staff
  - Explore opportunities to develop temporary supported housing for people being discharged from mental health units with on-going care and support before they move on to an independent accommodation

#### Primary care services

- 4.116 In Leicester, there is a specialist service to provide primary care for homeless people (primarily rough sleepers and singles in temporary accommodation). The current service is provided by Inclusion Healthcare where GP, ACP and Nursing clinics are held Monday to Friday. While based primarily at the city centre location of Charles Berry House, the team are also able to provide outreach clinics at drop-in centres and aim to be flexible and responsive in meeting the needs of the homeless population. In addition to the usual GP services offered by practices, the following services are also provided:
- Midwife appointments
  - Specialist support for people with alcohol or drug related difficulties
  - Extended appointment times to acknowledge complex needs
  - Physiotherapy
  - Visiting secondary care healthcare professionals- for example, ADHD nurses
  - A proactive approach to preventative healthcare e.g., vaccinations and screening
  - A strong history of working collaboratively with partner agencies around the city

#### Homeless Mental Health Service

- 4.117 The Homeless mental health service offers engagement, mental health assessment and referral to mainstream mental health and support services.

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<sup>28</sup> Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire: Experience of Hospital Discharge and Post-Discharge Care – September 2022



This service provides a daily 'drop-in' service at the Dawn Centre and offer appointments at other homeless hostels. This service offers:

- Mental health assessment
- Access to mainstream mental health services
- Short term supportive counselling and coping strategies
- Access to mental health support, psychology talking therapies and psychiatric treatment
- Signposting to other relevant support services

#### Health visiting homeless families

4.118 All families with children under 5 years are provided with access to a Public Health Nurse (Health visiting) who monitors and promotes the physical and emotional health of mothers, babies and the general health of their families. The service is currently working on strengthening links with partner agencies on homelessness. They provide advice and support on:

- General health
- Nutrition
- Behavioural difficulties
- Child development, including specialist developmental needs
- Postnatal depression and emotional wellbeing
- Domestic violence
- Social issues e.g., housing and finance
- Child protection

#### Substance misuse recovery hub

4.119 Inclusion Healthcare manage the No.5 Recovery Hub based on Hill Street and in partnership with local recovery organisation Dear Albert deliver the service which includes the provision of a 'wet centre' for street drinkers and provides a range of services to people with a street lifestyle and who have problematic substance use. This includes practical help with food, shelter, laundry, and a shower as well as harm reduction advice and access to other services such as Turning point, homeless mental health service, health & well-being, and housing support.

4.120 It provides an important role for helping services contact people that do not take up traditional appointment-based services, working closely with partner agencies to provide an outreach model. The hub contract has recently been extended to the end of March 2025 and is also partly funded by the OPCC.

#### Drug and alcohol services

4.121 The council also funds Turning Point to provide drug and alcohol services who provide a range of services and support including:

- Group work sessions
- Recovery worker support
- Counselling
- Relapse prevention
- Peer mentors
- Substitute prescribing
- Mindfulness

- Harm reduction services
- Needle exchange

4.122 Of particular relevance is Turning Point's Homeless Outreach team which was set up in early 2019 but has expanded over 2022-3 thanks to central government funding through the Rough Sleepers Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant. This Grant focusses on the needs of rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping and has enabled the service to expand from 4 recovery workers to 11 alongside increased clinical and administrative support. This means that recovery workers can now increase their presence in time and place offering outreach and in reach to hostels and day services up to 7 days per week. This enables the service to move away from an appointment -based system and to spend time building trust and relationships with individuals who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping. The service also receives some funding from the Changing Futures programme.

Substance misuse housing related support

4.123 The Council funds Home Group to deliver supported housing and floating support for individuals with drug and alcohol problems.<sup>29</sup> Beds are available at Unity house on Ashleigh Road for individuals who are at risk of homelessness and engaged with Turning Point. Individuals can stay there for up to 9 months and build upon their recovery before moving onto more independent accommodation. The service also delivers floating support for those that move on to independent accommodation and others where substance misuse is a barrier to independent living and recovery. The service has developed a recovery community approach where residents have a strong voice in the development of the programme and house rules and opportunities exist for individuals in recovery to help shape the design and review of services elsewhere. The service is currently funded up to March 2023 but can be extended up to March 2025.

Action Homeless Community Transition Project.

4.124 This provides 5 units of self-contained accommodation commissioned by LPT. The Community Transitions Project offers housing and support to people leaving mental health wards who are at risk of homelessness. It is a safe and secure environment, where staff can understand the individual needs and goals of each client and provide tailored support to help meet them.

**4.125 Key points relating to health and wellbeing services:**

- Nationally recognised and CQC highlighted "Outstanding" rated care provided by Inclusion Healthcare
- Equity of healthcare outcomes for people experiencing homelessness is based on core principles of care including, continuity, multi-disciplinary approach, permanent registration, service user involvement, routine liaison with outreach teams and collaboration with wider services (housing, dentistry, podiatry, mental health).
- Whilst having a home is one determinant of health, good health and wellbeing cannot be achieved in isolation of the other wider determinants

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.homegroup.org.uk/>

of health such as employment or education. This requires partnership working and integration across a range of services and organisations including physical and mental health services, social care services, criminal justice organisations, employment and advice services to provide wrap-around support as part of the homeless pathway. Holistic, joined-up, co-ordinated person-centred care and service provision is crucial, especially for people with tri-morbidities or co-morbidities, and people who may find it difficult to look after themselves due to their circumstances.

- Continue to strengthen the links between homelessness services and health services, for example health visiting.
- Equitable access will require different approaches for different people - the COVID-19 pandemic exemplified the ability of services to be flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness, for example through digital/online connections. It is important to continue to assess and consider changing needs and adapt our services, systems and processes to engage with people and continually monitor the best way to do so. This includes taking into account each person's communication and information needs and preferences, and their circumstances, for example internet or phone access.
- The last Homelessness Health Care Needs Assessment/Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on Homelessness was published in 2016. The evidence base is to be refreshed to further understand the unmet needs and gaps in health and wellbeing provision for people experiencing homelessness.

### **Working in partnership**

- 4.126 Tackling homelessness is not just an issue of housing and Leicester has a strong record of charities, religious groups and other organisations that all aim to support people who are homeless.

#### Leicester's Homelessness Charter

- 4.127 The Charter was launched at Leicester Cathedral in November 2018. Its first signatories were the City Mayor, the Bishop of Leicester, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Dean of Leicester. Many others, including the Lord Lieutenant attended and pledged their support.
- 4.128 Leicester's Homelessness Charter is a call to action; to bring people together to work with one another to prevent homelessness. Citizens of Leicester, charities, the local authority, healthcare and other public services, faith groups, businesses, institutions and other organisations are asked to adopt the principles and values of this charter, pledge their support and work together with others to tackle key challenges and to prevent homelessness in the city. There are 150 signatories and 36 organisations working together to tackle homelessness.
- 4.129 The Charter exists to develop effective communication between those in the city working with people who are homeless, those affected by homelessness

and those supporting work to tackle homelessness. More can be achieved by working effectively together; reducing duplication and ensuring we have a shared vision about working to prevent homelessness.

- 4.130 Some key achievements of Leicester's Homelessness Charter:
- Facilitated the coming together of key agencies in the city to ensure there was coordination of the support to those experiencing homelessness throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - Instigated a multi-agency review of the needs of those experiencing homelessness but have no recourse to public funds (NRPF)
  - Enabled the bringing together of Leicester's homelessness day services to encourage greater collaboration.
  - Provided regular updates and information, via a monthly e-newsletter, to Charter signatories and supporters.
  - Initiated the development of a peer network of people with personal experience of homelessness, creating opportunities for those involved to contribute their expertise and insight. The HOPE Forum for people with lived experiences of homeless led by Dear Albert & the Homeless Charter is held monthly.
  - Launched a new website and refreshed city-wide services directory for use by the local community.
  - Supported the Give Leicester contactless donation initiative in raising over £30,000 to provide housing to people at risk of rough sleeping
  - Set up and facilitated MyPlace, a fund that aims to support people in Leicester to settle into a new home and support their reintegration into the local community following a period of homelessness. Leicester's Homelessness Charter and partner Dear Albert, have created the fund, in collaboration with DMU and Barclays.

#### Employment, education and training

- 4.131 St Mungo's Recovery College, a pioneering skills and employment service to support people into work, help to rebuild their lives and avoid repeat homelessness opened in Leicester in 2019 and has supported hundreds of clients to take up free courses, vocational training and learn vital skills as they rebuild their lives. A team of employment specialists provide intensive, individual support to those facing unemployment and homelessness, and building relationships with local employers to create opportunities in line with clients' skills and interests.
- 4.132 These include St Mungo's award-winning garden training project – Putting Down Roots – which has a permanent site on council land in Highfields. The project is supported by St Mungo's corporate partner Barrat Developments. It provides a gardening trainer who works alongside clients to teach them the horticultural skills needed to grow a wide selection of flowers, fruit and vegetables. And with the support of Taylor Wimpey and the city council, a new construction skills programme will train and prepare Recovery College clients for finding work in the construction sector. After completing the course, clients will have access to work placements, apprenticeships and jobs through St

Mungo's partnerships with local employers, as well as employment support and funding for tools, clothing and professional certifications.

- 4.133 Other courses on offer include Arts and Crafts, IT skills, Maths and English, Life Coaching, Digital Confidence and Digital Employability. Referrals to the St Mungo's Recovery College primarily come from housing providers, job centres, hostels and supported accommodation, and homelessness service providers across the city
- 4.134 In September 2021 a new initiative was established working in partnership between BEAM and Leicester City Council to support tenants and residents at risk of homelessness or already homeless to find work and access the support they need to make a fresh start. BEAM received referrals from IMT, Homelessness Services and the Homelessness Charter partners. They then assigned a specialist worker who worked with the tenant or resident to establish crowdfunding through local businesses and residents to access training and support, helping them into stable employment and have a positive impact on the tenant or resident's ability to maintain accommodation, or if they are homeless, to find and maintain this accommodation.
- 4.135 Action Trust is a social enterprise that supports Action Homeless by providing professional cleaning and gardening services to local companies, charities and homeowners in Leicester and Leicestershire. Action Trust offers supervised training and work placements, subject to availability, to people who have experienced homelessness and are usually long-term unemployed. Training and supervision are carried out by our Premises Manager and one of the Action Trust team. The work placement is structured over a six to twelve week period, giving our trainees the skills, confidence and independence to move into future employment and break the cycle of homelessness.

Day centres partially supported by LCC (The Y Support Service and Centre Project)

- 4.136 The Y Support service which was based within the Dawn Centre is grant funded to see up to 60 clients a day on a drop-in basis. Following the COVID pandemic, this service had to close for a temporary period and has resumed operation from East Street. The Y Support service provides a range of practical support as well advice and information. In 2021/22 the top 3 recorded reasons for visiting this service were:
1. Breakfast / refreshments
  2. Advice
  3. Mental health access worker
- 4.137 The Centre Project offer low threshold day services that provide a holistic approach to support resettlement and tenancy sustainment, in particular for those who experience loneliness and isolation. They support service users to access a wide range of services to address immediate and longer-term issues for tenancy sustainment and independent living. Through their drop-in service they encourage active participation, improving personal and social development towards re-integration and community cohesion. Following the

pandemic, the Centre Project now offers a foodbank service. In 2021/22 (first 3 quarters) the top 3 recorded reasons for visiting this service were:

1. Food parcel
2. Socialising / peer interaction
3. Emotional support

62% of those attending the Centre Project in 2021/22 (first 3 quarters) had a tenancy or own their own property.

#### The Bridge – Homelessness to Hope

- 4.138 The Bridge provides a safe and non-judgemental service to the homeless and vulnerably housed in Leicester. They offer support and mentoring to anyone who is homeless or who is at risk of becoming homeless, this includes rough sleepers, people that are sofa-surfing and those that are in temporary or unsuitable accommodation. The Bridge provides a safe space for people to wash and dry their clothing, shower, access WIFI, get clothes and toiletries as well as eat a hot meal whilst socialising with others. Since the pandemic the centre is open as a day centre, and they have increased the recreational arts as art therapy and have more staff at the centre.

#### Other services

- 4.139 The voluntary and community sector has an important role to play in preventing homelessness and supporting homeless people. These services are often provided by faith groups as free provision based on need.

- 4.140 There are a range of groups providing food and drinks; some provide other assistance and a place to meet and chat or creative activities:

- Midland Langar Seva Society
- Triangle at Holy Trinity Church
- Sound café, St Martins House
- Rachel's Table
- Lighthouse Saturday kitchen
- Church of the martyrs Tomatoes Café
- Chroma church / Vineyard
- St Peter's Lunch club
- Robert Hall Church
- Open Hands

- 4.141 **Key points relating to working in partnership**

- Leicester's Homelessness Charter now in place for over three years with committed oversight and management group and organisations actively working together
- Homelessness is not just a housing issue. Continue to build on existing partnerships and forge new strong working relationships with a range of services / organisations including physical and mental health services, social care services, criminal justice organisations, employment and advice services to provide wrap-around services as part of the homeless pathway

- A range of providers who are specialist at providing employment, training and meaningful engagement with people who are homeless so a wide range of choices are available for individuals who are looking for training and employment opportunities
- Work with the voluntary and third sector, empowering and growing their homelessness service provision so this is sustainable and resilient to future funding changes

## 5. Looking forward

### Consultation

5.1 As part of the review, consultation was carried out with service users and stakeholders between July to September 2022. The consultation was carried out on-line and was promoted through the council's social media, through the homelessness charter and promoted with local homelessness organisations & charities, etc.

5.2 A summary of feedback gathered is shown below. A full report of consultation findings is available in a separate report. There were 91 responses.

5.3 The groups responding to this consultation were:

	Number	%
On behalf of a group or organisation who provides homelessness services	12	13.2%
Someone who works in homelessness services	13	14.3%
A member of the public	29	31.9%
Someone who uses homelessness services	22	24.2%
Someone who has previously used homelessness services	7	7.7%
Other	6	6.6%
Not answered	2	2.2%

5.4 Responses from organisations/groups, staff or service users were received from the following groups (where details were provided):

- Action Homeless
- Changing Lives UK
- Emhomes
- FreeVA
- Homeless Mental Health Service
- Inclusion Healthcare
- Leicester City of Sanctuary
- One Roof Leicester
- P3
- Park Lodge project
- The Bridge (East Midlands)
- The Bridge Homelessness to Hope
- Leicester City Council Substance Misuse commissioning

- Leicester City Council Welfare & Advice
- Leicester City Council Tenancy Management
- Leicester City Council Homelessness Services

### Survey responses

5.5 We asked people whether they thought the principles of the previous strategy had been addressed.

5.6 Principle 1: Anyone at risk of homelessness is aware of and has access to the services they may need to prevent it (89 responses)

Option	Total	Percent
<b>This happens most times</b>	18	19.78%
<b>This happens occasionally</b>	31	34.07%
<b>This rarely happens</b>	25	27.47%
<b>Don't know</b>	15	16.48%
<b>Not Answered</b>	2	2.20%

5.7 Principle 2: Provide suitable accommodation and support options for people who are, or who may become homeless (89 responses)

Option	Total	Percent
<b>This happens most times</b>	20	21.98%
<b>This happens occasionally</b>	29	31.87%
<b>This rarely happens</b>	33	36.26%
<b>Don't know</b>	7	7.69%
<b>Not Answered</b>	2	2.20%

5.8 Principle 3: Reduce rates of repeat homelessness amongst single people (89 responses)

Option	Total	Percent
<b>This happens most times</b>	11	12.09%
<b>This happens occasionally</b>	29	31.87%
<b>This rarely happens</b>	27	29.67%
<b>Don't know</b>	22	24.18%
<b>Not Answered</b>	2	2.20%

5.9 Principle 4: Work towards ending rough sleeping in Leicester by 2020 (88 responses)

Option	Total	Percent
<b>This happens most times</b>	6	6.59%
<b>This happens occasionally</b>	13	14.29%
<b>This rarely happens</b>	56	61.54%
<b>Don't know</b>	13	14.29%



<b>Not Answered</b>	3	3.30%
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- 5.10 Comments on the 4 main principles (36 responses)
- difficult to know whom to approach when they were at risk of homelessness
  - Cuts to services & funding along with societal pressures results in many new cases & repeat homeless cases
  - We continue to see high rates of repeat homelessness within the city and believe that this is due to a lack of suitable accommodation and support options for people who are homeless together with re-offending rates and ongoing wellbeing issues (substance use, poor mental health, etc).
  - there is a severe lack of adequate and appropriate services to intervene and support these people, not just regarding their housing situation but also the reasons why they are homeless
  - there is not enough affordable or council housing for the people that need it
  - There are not enough different models of accommodation available to meet the range of needs required by homeless people in the city.
  - Leicester has good resources for individuals who are homeless. There could be better joint working between organisations to publicise accommodation options, especially for those who would not be viewed as being in priority need with low to no support needs.
  - Improved digital support required – it takes partner services away from their main focus to provide support

- 5.11 What are the main challenges in tackling homelessness in Leicester over the next five years. Each respondent was asked to pick up to four items listed.

Ranked by the number of respondents to each item.

<b>Availability of social rented housing</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Cost of living crisis</b>	54
<b>Not enough temporary accommodation for those who find themselves homeless</b>	49
<b>Cost of private sector renting</b>	36
<b>Low incomes (including benefits)</b>	30
<b>Number of people who have mental / physical health problems, and or drug / alcohol use issues</b>	29
<b>House building not meeting demand</b>	28
<b>Inadequate support to help people maintain their accommodation</b>	24
<b>Relationship breakdowns</b>	15
<b>Lack of affordable housing to buy</b>	14
<b>Overcrowding</b>	10
<b>Other</b>	2
<b>Lack of education, training or employment</b>	2

5.12 What have been the key successes in tackling homelessness in Leicester since 2018? (60 responses)

- Multi-agency and partnership working
- Reduction in rough sleeping assisted by the Rough Sleeper Initiative and the use of a person-centred approach
- The development of the Charter for Leicester is a great asset and can be built on to further support tackling homelessness
- Support services – particularly, Revolving Door, STAR, the Maple Mother and Baby Unit and the Outreach workers.
- Providing healthcare in accessible premises
- Reducing stigmatisation for people experiencing homelessness
- The COVID/ pandemic response
- Support for children and families facing homelessness
- Prioritisation of the homeless over normal housing applications
- Providing accommodation for those experiencing mental health crisis
- Additional funding secured by the council to tackle homelessness

5.13 Do you think there are any significant gaps in current provision or obstacles to accessing help for homeless people or those at risk of homelessness? If yes, please tell us what these are and who is affected. (72 responses)

- Not enough temporary accommodation hostels
- Waits to see homelessness prevention staff
- Increased support needed for those with mental health, drug and alcohol issues
- More support needed to manage the transition /support for those leaving NASS accommodation/provision of suitable accommodation
- More affordable housing
- Greater partnership working required to help make the best of limited resources and to provide more effective services
- More assistance with accessing the private rented sector
- There needs to be more information made publicly available and available to those who need it on what to do when faced with homelessness

5.14 Being mindful of the limited resources available, what developments / improvements could be made to homelessness services in Leicester? (68 responses)

- Larger duty team to improve access / more homelessness staff to speed up process and improve communication
- Make homelessness prevention service more accessible
- Fund development of specialised units/schemes to wrap around complex cases in a multi-agency approach. Accommodation for those excluded from generic accommodation

- More support – particularly for those with chaotic lifestyles, complex needs
- Resident involvement some of the management of the accommodation they live in

5.15 Do you have any final comments on homelessness services in Leicester? (37 responses)

- Greater focus on prevention
- Better trained, more empathetic staff
- Map customer journeys to see experience, time taken, system failures
- More consideration of the needs of the disabled – e.g. may need more time / assistance to engage

### Resources

5.16 Comparing 2017/18 to 2021/22 there has been an increase in council budgets for homelessness services. The below table shows budgets for homelessness services from 2017/18:

	2017/18 (£)	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
General fund – Homelessness	3,111,400	2,772,000	2,995,000	3,011,000	3,076,000
HRA - Homelessness	535,800	857,700	761,400	586,300	863,900
General Fund – STAR & FSS	23,900	4,100	0	0	0
HRA – STAR & FSS	1,889,800	1,937,400	2,024,200	2,063,300	1,934,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,560,900</b>	<b>5,571,200</b>	<b>5,780,600</b>	<b>5,660,600</b>	<b>5,874,000</b>
Total not including STAR & FSS	3,647,200	3,629,700	3,756,400	3,597,300	3,939,900

5.17 Council budgets include Homelessness Prevention Grant funding from the government. This is provided to all local housing authorities in England to support them in delivering services to prevent and tackle homelessness. The grant combined the former Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and the Homelessness Reduction Grant along with an uplift into one single Grant.

In 22/23, Leicester received £985,652 from the Homelessness Prevention Grant, which included £36,994 to support local authorities with the new burdens following introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act.

#### Additional funding secured

5.18 LCC has been successful in delivering additional revenue to enhance Homelessness services (more details below).

- 5.19 Further funding has been secured through the Health Inequalities programme to fund 2 additional social workers to work with individuals who are/were recently homeless who do not meet the Adult Social Care statutory threshold. Leicester City Council with partners also successfully bid for funding as part of the Changing Futures programme and secured £3m of funding to support adults experiencing multiple disadvantage (homelessness was seen as one factor of disadvantage). There was also a successful bid to the Rough Sleeper Drug and Alcohol treatment funding for £1.2m to provide extra support to help people recover from drugs and alcohol misuse.

### **2018/19**

- 5.20 Leicester City Council applied for and secured funding through the Rough Sleeping Initiative Programme for 2018/19 of £265,043. This funded:
- A specialist Rough Sleeping Coordinator role
  - 2 specialist rough sleeper support workers
  - An additional 20 units of accommodation and support provided by Action Homeless
  - Targeted personalised budgets to enable engagement and preventing rough sleeping

### **2019/20**

- 5.21 Through the Rough Sleeping Initiative Programme for 2019/20 additional funding of £349,688 was secured.

This continued to fund the initiative from the previous year as well as contributing to additional emergency access accommodation for rough sleepers (Safe Space at Andover Street).

- 5.22 Rapid Rehousing Pathway £211,774
- A specialist private sector officer to help secure properties for individuals who are rough sleeping or who are at risk of rough sleeping
  - Funding for 2 rough sleeper navigators provided by 2 local homeless charities, Help the Homeless & One Roof Leicester.

- 5.23 Cold Weather Fund £120,000, funding a range of additional accommodation provision over the cold weather period.

### **2020/21**

- 5.24 Through the Rough Sleeping Initiative Programme for 2020/21 additional funding of £566,783 was secured. The original proposals were adapted as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. This funded:
- An additional 20 units of accommodation and support provided by Action Homeless
  - A specialist private sector officer to help secure properties for individuals who are rough sleeping or who are at risk of rough sleeping

- Funding for 2 rough sleeper navigators provided by 2 local homeless charities, Help the Homeless & One Roof Leicester
- 70 units of accommodation in shared houses for a year for individuals who had been accommodated in hotels during Everyone In

5.25 Cold Weather Fund £140,000, funding a range of additional accommodation provision over the cold weather period.

5.26 Protect Programme 2021 £299,915 Dec 2020 – June 2021

- Identified target protect group to focus support
- Help the Homeless providing extended outreach over weekends
- Homeless Mental Health Service, Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP) & Mental Health nurse and Dear Albert Outreach supporting outreach
- Action Homeless open Flora Lodge with additional support provided by partner services 12 ensuite rooms
- Inclusion Healthcare GP & ANP sessions available and mental health nurse assessments
- Substance recovery support including access to a dedicated recovery worker, peer mentor, independent nurse prescriber, well-being nurse and inpatient detox for stabilisation
- Additional support for rough sleepers provided by Inclusion Healthcare, Dear Albert & Turning Point
- Dedicated peer mentor provided by Dear Albert

5.27 Accommodation for Ex-Offenders (AEFO) £91,500

- enabled the introduction of a new scheme specifically focused on supporting ex-offenders, increasing their access and sustainment of private rented sector tenancies
- Improved access to landlord incentive schemes in place
- Help the Homeless provide support to individuals to ensure tenancies are successful

5.28 Protect Programme 2021 £50,000 Jan 2021

- Navigator support with accommodation offer individuals who are homeless upon release from prison. Action Homeless providing 12 units of temporary accommodation for individuals who were homeless upon release from prison
- Help the Homelessness providing support for at least 18 individuals

## **2021/22**

5.29 Through the Rough Sleeping Initiative Programme for 2021/22, additional funding of £995,857 was secured. This funded:

- Specialist private sector support to help secure properties for individuals who are rough sleeping or who are at risk of rough sleeping
- Funding for 3 rough sleeper navigators provided by 3 local homeless charities, Help the Homeless, One Roof Leicester & The Bridge Homelessness to Hope

- 69 units of accommodation in shared houses for a year (for individuals who had been accommodated in hotels during Everyone In)
- Continued funding for Action Homeless operated Flora Lodge
- Prison release accommodation (co-funded by the Ministry of Justice)
- Funding for additional accommodation over severe weather periods
- Additional physical, mental health, substance misuse and peer support

5.30 Next Stage / Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme 2021-24 of capital and revenue funding to create more move-on homes to support the reduction of rough sleeping. LCC supported a bid from Action Homeless for a 10-bed accommodation programme (Bradgate House) for revenue funding for £59,280 pa.

5.31 Accommodation for Ex-Offenders

- As a continuation of the programme from 20/21, an additional £90,500 was secured to continue the work until the end of 21/22.

### **2022/23 onwards**

5.32 The Rough Sleeping Initiative programme was amended to a 3-year funding programme (for 2022-25). Leicester City Council was successful in obtaining nearly a total of £2.5m.

2022/23: £1,265,778

2023/24: £723,570

2024/25: £485,801

5.33 Led by emh as part of the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme 2021-24 a capital and revenue proposed scheme to convert an existing 7-bed unit into accommodation for individuals who have rough slept or to prevent from rough sleeping. Revenue funding of around £70,000pa and capital of £70,000. This is planned for works to be starting during 2023.

5.34 Accommodation for Ex-Offenders

The Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities have announced that they are initiating the next phase of the programme, whereby local authorities can apply for two-years of funding to continue this work. Leicester City Council intend to bid for this opportunity in order to continue to support ex-offenders to sustain and find private rented sector homes.

### Leicester City Council Budget Position

5.35 Between 2010 and 2020 the council had to make big cuts to our services because of the Government's austerity programme. The Council's Government grant in 2020 was over £100 million per year less than it was in 2010. Despite austerity, the council had to increase budgets to provide more social care for elderly people and adults with complex disabilities.

- 5.36 As in 2021/22, the council's budget planning has been disrupted by the pandemic. The budget provides for the same levels of service as the previous budget, with an additional £16m for adult social care - only £5m of this is being provided by the Government. We expect the costs of social care to increase substantially after 2022, with very little Government funding to support this. This means the council has to plan for substantial cuts in services and have started an exercise to reduce spending by £40m. Decisions have not yet been taken where to make savings, but unfortunately many of the city's most valued services are at risk. The council are reviewing everything provided, including libraries, museums, community centres, leisure centres and street cleaning services and will consult on plans before we make decisions.
- 5.37 Homelessness services are also funded by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). This includes the funding of council-run temporary accommodation, STAR tenancy support services for council tenants and family support services. The external pressures on the HRA include reduced rental income arising from the loss of stock through RTB sales, as well as inflation on staffing costs and materials and rising energy costs.
- 5.38 All council departments will be affected by financial cuts, including Housing, which delivers homelessness services on behalf of the council. As a result, it is important that this review enables us to target services where they are most needed, and that homelessness is prevented wherever possible.

#### Proposals that could affect homelessness services

- 5.39 The Regulator for Social Housing is consulting on a rent cap for social housing from which supported housing has not been exempted thus far. For supported housing tenants on Housing Benefit the situation is different. Provided that the Regulator for Social Housing is capping the core rent component only, and exempting service charges, it is both possible and necessary for supported housing providers to think about offsetting the additional costs of energy and maintenance and repairs by reviewing their enhanced Housing Benefit claims.
- 5.40 Consultation on the calculation of the Homelessness Prevention Grant. On the indicative allocation based on this new formula, Leicester would get a larger allocation. This is indicative at this time and could be changed as a result of the consultation.

#### **Summary of key points**

- 5.41 Below is a summary of key points from the review of homelessness services and the consultation exercise (with service users, organisations working with homeless people and members of the public):
- 5.42 **Housing in Leicester**
- Need for more affordable housing
  - Difficulty in meeting affordable housing targets due to funding restrictions and lack of suitable land

- Affordability is a barrier for people to access home ownership and to rent in the private sector
- Increasingly difficult for people receiving benefits to access private rented accommodation. Welfare changes have had, and continue to have an impact
- Increased demand for social housing - but there are fewer lettings available, which means waiting times are increasing
- The quality of housing in the private rented sector needs to be addressed
- Private rented claims for possession and orders for possession have both shown a significant increase between 2020 and 2021
- Overcrowding – due to affordability issues and availability of appropriately sized housing stock
- Most lettings in the private rented sector are assured shorthold tenancies which are insecure and often short-term
- Significant increase in private sector rents based on national data and local experience
- Work to make it easier and attractive for council tenants to downsize

#### 5.43 **Family homelessness**

- Leicester, in comparison with other authorities, has a strong track record on preventing homelessness. Prevention options are becoming more limited due to the lack of available options including affordable housing.
- Since 2021/22 there has been an increasing number of families that have needed to go into temporary accommodation and external pressures, such as cost of living pressures may lead to more family homelessness.
- Currently there are no families in B&B for more than 6 weeks.

#### 5.44 **Singles and childless couples' homelessness**

- Increasing numbers of singles and couples seeking assistance
- Increased preventions likely to be further strengthened following full recovery and return to business as usual following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Further development of the newly established Transitions Team to reduce the number of rough sleepers and repeat homelessness. We need to strengthen services to improve sustained outcomes and reduce abandonment / disengagement. For example, by ensuring support plans follow individuals through breaks in service
- Preventing homelessness is not just about housing. Many homeless people have complex needs which require a multi-disciplinary approach. We will continue to work with others and seek to forge strong working relationships with a range of services / organisations including physical and mental health services, social care services, criminal justice organisations, employment and advice services.

#### 5.45 **Floating Support Services**



- Commissioned floating support services are effective to help individuals sustain their tenancies and prevent homelessness.
- The Council could improve processes to ensure support is available in a timely fashion when individuals are moving-on from temporary accommodation
- Demand for services is currently increasing

#### 5.46 **Rough Sleeping**

- Rough sleeping has increased due to the increase in the flow of individuals to the street, however we have become better and faster at responding.
- Street begging continues to be an issue in the City
- We need to improve early interventions and access to advice, so individuals do not go on to rough sleep
- Most individuals who rough sleep have complex support needs, not just housing needs

#### 5.47 **Young People**

- Limited affordable housing options available
- Preventing homelessness, and if young people become homeless preventing this from reoccurring helps break the cycle of repeat homelessness.
- The average length of stay in young person's accommodation is generally longer than other accommodation providers. This reflects the needs of this client group.
- Working with accommodation providers to address barriers for move-on.

#### 5.48 **Persons from abroad with restricted eligibility**

- It can take time to establish an individual's immigration status and there can be fear of disclosure with local authority staff. This can make it difficult to establish a person's immigration status and therefore provide appropriate advice and support
- As individuals do not often qualify for statutory support from the Council or the Home Office housing schemes are often provided by the voluntary and community sector, as in the case in Leicester
- Explore with third sector partners additional offers of accommodation that could be provided, for example hosting schemes.
- Improve information sharing with the Home Office regarding the numbers of individuals who have been informed they have no leave to remain who were located within Leicester at the time of decision
- Lobby government to review all immigration-based restrictions on public funds to ensure that local authorities have powers to provide emergency accommodation in order to prevent destitution.

#### 5.49 **Offenders / ex-offenders**

- Ensuring best use of limited offender provision to prioritise higher need clients (from offending and housing perspectives)

- Work with Probation Services to identify appropriate and relevant pathways (including all services available not just commissioned housing accommodation services) for known homeless offenders.
- Working with accommodation providers to understand the variation in length of stay and any barriers for move-on
- Consider opportunities for more partnership working to identify early interventions that can prevent homelessness from occurring e.g., working with Leicester prison's 'through the gate' team
- Building on joint work across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland councils, probation and prison services
- Ensure HMP Fosse Way is linked with existing protocol agreements and processes to ensure risks of crisis homelessness are reduced to a minimum
- Work with Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Chief Housing Officers Group to develop improved representation at MAPPA, potentially sharing the housing core panel member responsibility

#### 5.50 **Health and wellbeing and homelessness**

- Nationally recognised and CQC highlighted "Outstanding" rated care provided by Inclusion Healthcare
- Equity of healthcare outcomes for people experiencing homelessness is based on core principles of care including, continuity, multi-disciplinary approach, permanent registration, service user involvement, routine liaison with outreach teams and collaboration with wider services (housing, dentistry, podiatry, mental health).
- Whilst having a home is one determinant of health, good health and wellbeing cannot be achieved in isolation of the other wider determinants of health such as employment or education. This requires partnership working and integration across a range of services and organisations including physical and mental health services, social care services, criminal justice organisations, employment and advice services to provide wrap-around support as part of the homeless pathway. Holistic, joined-up, co-ordinated person-centred care and service provision is crucial, especially for people with tri-morbidities or co-morbidities, and people who may find it difficult to look after themselves due to their circumstances.
- Continue to strengthen the links between homelessness services and health services, for example health visiting.
- Equitable access will require different approaches for different people - the COVID-19 pandemic exemplified the ability of services to be flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness, for example through digital/online connections. It is important to continue to assess and consider changing needs and adapt our services, systems and processes to engage with people and continually monitor the best way to do so. This includes taking into account each person's communication and information needs and preferences, and their circumstances, for example internet or phone access.
- The last Homelessness Health Care Needs Assessment/Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on Homelessness was published in 2016. The

evidence base is to be refreshed to further understand the unmet needs and gaps in health and wellbeing provision for people experiencing homelessness.

**5.51 Working in partnership**

- Leicester's Homelessness Charter now in place for over three years with committed oversight and management group and organisations actively working together
- Homelessness is not just a housing issue. Continue to build on existing partnerships and forge new strong working relationships with a range of services / organisations including physical and mental health services, social care services, criminal justice organisations, employment and advice services to provide wrap-around services as part of the homeless pathway
- A range of providers who are specialist at providing employment, training and meaningful engagement with people who are homeless so a wide range of choices are available for individuals who are looking for training and employment opportunities
- Work with the voluntary and third sector, empowering and growing their homelessness service provision so this is sustainable and resilient to future funding changes

**5.52 Consultation (Gaps & Suggested Improvements)**

- Not enough temporary accommodation hostels
- Waits to see homelessness prevention staff
- Increased support needed for those with mental health, drug and alcohol issues
- More support needed to manage the transition /support for those leaving NASS accommodation/provision of suitable accommodation
- More affordable housing
- Greater partnership working required to help make the best of limited resources and to provide more effective services
- More assistance with accessing the private rented sector
- There needs to be more information made publicly available and available to those who need it on what to do when faced with homelessness
- Larger duty team to improve access / more homelessness staff to speed up process and improve communication
- Make homelessness prevention service more accessible
- Fund development of specialised units/schemes to wrap around complex cases in a multi-agency approach. Accommodation for those excluded from generic accommodation
- More support – particularly for those with chaotic lifestyles, complex needs
- Resident involvement some of the management of the accommodation they live in

## Key challenges

5.53 At the current point of time, these are some of the key challenges for Leicester in effectively tackling homelessness. There will be new challenges emerging and there may be some mitigations, dependent on Government responses.

### Cost of living crisis

5.54 The 'cost of living crisis' refers to the fall in disposable incomes (that is, adjusted for inflation and after taxes and benefits) that the UK has experienced since late 2021. It is being caused predominantly by high inflation outstripping wage and benefit increases and has been further exacerbated by recent tax increases.

5.55 According to the Office for National Statistics, 87% of adults in the UK reported an increase in their cost of living in March 2022. The Office of Budget Responsibility expects household incomes after tax and adjusted for inflation to start falling in Q2 2022 and not recover until Q3 2024.

5.56 The ONS found that some of the most vulnerable groups to the crisis are:

- Those on low incomes
- Adults who rent their own homes
- Adults with no qualifications and those educated below degree level
- Parents with dependent children
- Adults who were divorced or separated
- Younger adults
- The disabled
- The unemployed and economically inactive
- Individuals from a BAME background

5.57 Leicester has a disproportionately high percentage of many of the affected groups, including those on low incomes, renting households, young adults, people experiencing unemployment, BAME households and areas experiencing deprivation.

5.58 The Survey of Leicester was conducted by Leicester City Council in the autumn of 2021 with the aim of better understanding the lives of Leicester's residents, their households, and communities.

5.59 Respondents' personal characteristics and the characteristics of their household were associated with having difficulty paying for living costs. 26-45 year-olds and Asian and Black respondents were more likely to have had difficulty paying for something. Renters, those with children in the household, and those with large households were also more likely to have experienced hardship.

- 50% of black households said that they had found it difficult to pay any living cost since the start of the pandemic.
- 54% of private renters said that they had found it difficult to pay any living cost since the start of the pandemic.

- 49% of 5+ person households had difficulty paying any living cost since the start of the pandemic
- 30% of renters who had had difficulty with living costs, said that rent was one of the costs they were struggling with.
- More than a third of those renting said that they couldn't cover living costs for more than a month if the main income was lost (38% of social renters and 36% of private renters).

### Benefit changes

- 5.60 Looking forward, the following are likely to have an impact on homelessness:
- the continued roll out of universal credit and the full migration from legacy benefits by 2024.
  - the continued application and impact of the universal credit two child limit (introduced on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2019)
  - the continued impact of the benefit cap, particularly on single parent households
  - the continued impact of the removal of the pandemic related Universal Credit uplift
  - the ending of some of the discretionary funding related to the pandemic – including the COVID Winter grant, COVID Local Support Grant, and the potential end of the Household Support Fund in 2024
  - reduction in the national funding that has been made available for Discretionary Housing Payments. Crisis warns this could lead to tens of thousands of people nationally falling into arrears and facing eviction as people struggle to stay afloat.

### Asylum & Immigration

- 5.61 As a national dispersal area, for Asylum seekers, since the pandemic we are seeing additional pressures in the number of cases being referred to the Authority to manage Home Office backlogs. These cases can be single or family households who have received their refugee status and want to remain in Leicester. However, at the present moment in time there are no additional pressures on homelessness services due to the Afghan Schemes or the Ukrainian emergency situation. We will continue to monitor this closely. In relation to the European Union (EU) - the application deadline for applications for settled status has passed and we are seeing more EU Nationals rough sleeping. We can offer to signpost to Migrant Help and if they have pre-settled status try and engage them with our employment, education, and training initiatives.

### Reduced funding

- 5.62 All council departments will be affected by financial cuts, including Housing, which delivers homelessness services on behalf of the council.

### **What next?**

- 5.63 The findings of this homelessness review will be considered further during the development of the new homelessness strategy. The role of partner

organisations is vital in the efforts to meet the housing needs of people in Leicester. We will continue to work with them to develop a new strategy to prevent homelessness.

- 5.64 The draft strategy will be circulated to our partners and made available for consultation on our website before going to the Executive for approval.

## **Summary of key points**

5.41 Below is a summary of key points from the review of homelessness services and the consultation exercise (with service users, organisations working with homeless people and members of the public):

### **5.42 Housing in Leicester**

- Need for more affordable housing
- Difficulty in meeting affordable housing targets due to funding restrictions and lack of suitable land
- Affordability is a barrier for people to access home ownership and to rent in the private sector
- Increasingly difficult for people receiving benefits to access private rented accommodation. Welfare changes have had, and continue to have an impact
- Increased demand for social housing - but there are fewer lettings available, which means waiting times are increasing
- The quality of housing in the private rented sector needs to be addressed
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- Most lettings in the private rented sector are assured shorthold tenancies which are insecure and often short-term
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- Since 2021/22 there has been an increasing number of families that have needed to go into temporary accommodation and external pressures, such as cost of living pressures may lead to more family homelessness.
- Currently there are no families in B&B for more than 6 weeks.

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abandonment / disengagement. For example, by ensuring support plans follow individuals through breaks in service

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with tri-morbidities or co-morbidities, and people who may find it difficult to look after themselves due to their circumstances.

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#### 5.52 **Consultation (Gaps & Suggested Improvements)**

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- Increased support needed for those with mental health, drug and alcohol issues
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- More affordable housing
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- More assistance with accessing the private rented sector
- There needs to be more information made publicly available and available to those who need it on what to do when faced with homelessness
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- The unemployed and economically inactive
- Individuals from a BAME background

5.57 Leicester has a disproportionately high percentage of many of the affected groups, including those on low incomes, renting households, young adults,

people experiencing unemployment, BAME households and areas experiencing deprivation.

- 5.58 The Survey of Leicester was conducted by Leicester City Council in the autumn of 2021 with the aim of better understanding the lives of Leicester’s residents, their households, and communities.
- 5.59 Respondents’ personal characteristics and the characteristics of their household were associated with having difficulty paying for living costs. 26-45 year-olds and Asian and Black respondents were more likely to have had difficulty paying for something. Renters, those with children in the household, and those with large households were also more likely to have experienced hardship.
- 50% of black households said that they had found it difficult to pay any living cost since the start of the pandemic.
  - 54% of private renters said that they had found it difficult to pay any living cost since the start of the pandemic.
  - 49% of 5+ person households had difficulty paying any living cost since the start of the pandemic
  - 30% of renters who had had difficulty with living costs, said that rent was one of the costs they were struggling with.
  - More than a third of those renting said that they couldn’t cover living costs for more than a month if the main income was lost (38% of social renters and 36% of private renters).

#### Benefit changes

- 5.60 Looking forward, the following are likely to have an impact on homelessness:
- the continued roll out of universal credit and the full migration from legacy benefits by 2024.
  - the continued application and impact of the universal credit two child limit (introduced on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2019)
  - the continued impact of the benefit cap, particularly on single parent households
  - the continued impact of the removal of the pandemic related Universal Credit uplift
  - the ending of some of the discretionary funding related to the pandemic – including the COVID Winter grant, COVID Local Support Grant, and the potential end of the Household Support Fund in 2024
  - reduction in the national funding that has been made available for Discretionary Housing Payments. Crisis warns this could lead to tens of thousands of people nationally falling into arrears and facing eviction as people struggle to stay afloat.

#### Asylum & Immigration

5.61 As a national dispersal area, for Asylum seekers, since the pandemic we are seeing additional pressures in the number of cases being referred to the Authority to manage Home Office backlogs. These cases can be single or family households who have received their refugee status and want to remain in Leicester. However, at the present moment in time there are no additional pressures on homelessness services due to the Afghan Schemes or the Ukrainian emergency situation. We will continue to monitor this closely. In relation to the European Union (EU) - the application deadline for applications for settled status has passed and we are seeing more EU Nationals rough sleeping. We can offer to signpost to Migrant Help and if they have pre-settled status try and engage them with our employment, education, and training initiatives.

Reduced funding

5.62 All council departments will be affected by financial cuts, including Housing, which delivers homelessness services on behalf of the council.





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## **District Heating Service Charges**

**Housing Scrutiny Commission : 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

**Full Council: 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

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*Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr. Elly Cutkelvin*

Lead director: Chris Burgin

## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report authors: Chris Burgin, Director of Housing

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 Energy prices have been rising at unprecedented rates since August 2021, with households across the country facing gas and electricity bills that have more than doubled in the last 12 months. The purpose of this report is to present Full Council with an overview of the charging arrangements for tenants and leaseholders in receipt of heating and hot water through the District Heating network, and recommends an in-year increase to service charges.

### 2. Summary

- 2.1 On average, the charges paid by tenants and leaseholders on Leicester's district heating network are **35%** cheaper than open market prices. Lower prices, along with the way in which the Council charges for heat, has allowed tenants and leaseholders to be protected from rising prices.
- 2.2 Despite being 35% cheaper than the open market, the unit price of the gas which feeds the network is **86%** higher in 2022/23 than in 2021/22. Current estimates are that this will rise in 2023/24 by up to a further 200%.
- 2.3 The escalation in gas prices means that the current service charges to tenants and leaseholders on the district heating scheme are significantly lower than the cost of providing the service. This will result in a budget shortfall to the Housing Revenue Account of **£1.7m** in 2022/23 and almost £8m in 2023/24 unless charges to tenants and leaseholders are increased.
- 2.4 The current average charge for heating and hot water is £14.65 per week. This report proposes an in-year increase of **£10.31** per week from around 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 (1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 for leaseholders) for the remainder of the 2022/23 financial year. This is a weekly increase of **70%** compared to the current charges. Since the charge would be introduced part-way through the year, this represents an annual increase of **18%**.
- 2.5 The average annual increase for households attached to the network is £134, which would be offset by the nationally available energy rebates being provided in 2022.
- 2.6 Since the proposed change to service charges would take place from the beginning of January, the shortfall to the Housing Revenue Account from April to December 2022 would not be borne by tenants or leaseholders. The HRA is also bearing increased fixed costs, which are linked to inflation and pay rates.

### 3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Full Council is recommended to:
- Note the increasing fuel prices being incurred for the District Heating network;



- ii) Approve a 70% increase in weekly charges to tenants and leaseholders from January 2023.

## 4. Report

### 4.1 Background

The Leicester District Energy scheme provides low carbon heat for c.2,500 housing tenants and leaseholders, Council administrative offices, De Montfort Hall, the University of Leicester and several other buildings, including schools. In addition to the city centre, it incorporates the St Matthews, St Marks, St Andrews, St Peters, Aikman Avenue and Beatty Avenue estates.

Due to the mechanism for recharging costs, non-domestic properties will already be paying higher rates for their utilisation of the district heating network. This report is focused solely on the proportion of costs that are attributable to domestic properties attached to the network. The proposal to increase charges to tenants and leaseholders would not result in any subsidy for non-domestic properties.

With the district heating network improved and extended by LDEC in 2011/12, the heat provided through the network is reliable, with carbon emissions being reduced by more than 73,000 tonnes in the 10-year period.

### 4.2 Heat Charges Mechanism

LDEC purchases its gas from a number of different sources as a way of balancing risk exposure to price changes, and the Council pays LDEC monthly for the heat consumed (a combination of LDEC's fixed costs and variable fuel charges).

The heat charge to households is set by Housing at a rate to recover only the cost of the fuel (gas) used by the network; fixed costs are assumed to be a standard housing cost covered by a tenant's rent (in the same manner as a boiler cost would be for someone not on the heating network). These service charges are set with the intention of recovering the variable costs on a rolling 3-year basis and serve to protect the tenants and leaseholders as much as possible from sudden gas price rises. This is unlike other community heat networks recently in the news, where all costs are passed on to consumers.

### 4.3 Fuel Prices

With fuel prices increasing at unprecedented rates since August 2021, residents across the City have seen significant rises in their energy bills – with the impact being greater on gas bills. According to BEIS, gas prices increased nationally by 95% between April 2021 and April 2022, with the average gas bill in the East Midlands standing at around £550<sup>1</sup> at the start of 2021 and doubling over a 12-month period to £1,103<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on a usage of 13,600kWh of gas per annum

<sup>2</sup> Tariff increase to 0.81 pence per kWh (assumes a dual fuel direct debit customer – residents that do not pay by direct debit will be paying more)

The energy price cap, set by Ofgem increased by 54% in April 2022, and a further 27% from October 2022 under the Energy Price Guarantee. According to the House of Commons Library Research Briefing on Domestic Energy Prices (9 August 2022), CPI Index data, and Cornwall Insight's recent forecasts suggest that energy prices in 2022-23 could be just over 200% higher than in 2020-21.

On 8<sup>th</sup> September central government announced a 'price guarantee' which caps the price per unit of energy such that the average energy bill would not exceed £2,500 per year. This is based on an average consumption of gas and electricity. In addition, there will be a fund to support people who do not pay energy companies directly, although details of how those on district heating networks may benefit is currently unclear.

Increasing fuel prices have also affected the LDEC district heating network with gas prices rising by 86% for the year April 2022 to March 2023.

It should be noted however that, unlike other residents contracted with a private gas supplier, the service charges for tenants and leaseholders on district heating were unaffected between April 2021 and March 2022. Prices remained fixed throughout the 12-month period, at an average annual charge of £683<sup>3</sup> (a weekly charge for 50 weeks of £13.65).

Had tenants and leaseholders been buying gas from a utility company, charges (for the same usage) would have been a typical £17.35 per week (£867 per year) in April 2021, rising throughout the year to reach £34.79 per week (£1,740 per annum) by April 2022.

#### 4.4 Setting Heating Charges for 2022/23

When the HRA budget was prepared for 2022/23 in autumn 2021 market pricing forecasts anticipated that LDEC's cost of gas would rise by 20%. Rather than apply a full 20% increase to the service charge for 2022/23, an approach was adopted to set the rate based on average costs over a 3-year period. This had the effect of reducing the increase to 7.29% for 2022/23, with the HRA being expected to recoup the deficit in future years.

Unprecedented market conditions, including the war in Ukraine, have however continued to put pressure on the gas supply market and pushed prices significantly higher. This includes the price of fuel (gas) for district heating, with LDEC heat charges (the variable fuel element) having increased by 86% for the year from April 2022 to March 2023.

Whilst this approach to setting charges lessens the impact of sudden fuel price rises it is not viable when fuel prices and heat charges are rising at significant levels at regular intervals over a number of years.

#### 4.5 Recommended Heat / Service Charges to Tenants and Leaseholders

Based on historic consumption levels, it is projected that the impact of the 86% price rise this year will be an annual increase in the gas element of residential district

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<sup>3</sup> Average annual usage of 21,450kWh of gas per annum (58% higher than the figure used by BEIS).

heating bills totalling just over £1.7 million. This would be the cost to the HRA if the gas charges are not passed on to tenants and leaseholders.

It is therefore recommended that an in-year increase in district heating service charges is introduced to recoup the full cost of the gas (with the fixed costs continuing to be covered by core rent). This would represent a 70% increase on current weekly charges.

The table below details the district heating charge for last year (2021/22) and the current charge to tenants and leaseholders for this year (2022/23), showing how this would change as a result of a 70% increase in the weekly charge.

Year	Average Weekly Charge	Average Annual Charge	Year on Year Increase (%)	Average Increase (£)	Cost of Living Support
2021/22	£13.65	£683	2.00%	-	-
2022/23 (Current Year)	£14.65	£733	7.29%	£50	-
<b>2022/23 proposed from 9 January 2023</b>	<b>*£24.96</b>	<b>£1,248</b> (full year)	<b>Weekly -70%</b> <b>Annual - 18%</b>	<b>Weekly - £10.31</b> <b>Annual - £134</b> (as part year)	<b>£550 (all)</b> <b>£1200</b> (based on eligibility)

The £24.96 proposed average weekly charge compares favourably to the £34.79 per week that would be paid to a utility company for the same level of usage. District heating gas unit prices would continue to be 35% lower than those charged by utility companies (although district heating tenants and leaseholders appear to use more than a typical resident paying bills directly).

The table below details the significant increases that are also projected for gas prices in 2023/24 and the impact it could have on district heating charges. It should be noted that these are only projections, with the charge for 2023/24 to be considered as part of the HRA budget setting report which will go to the Full Council meeting in February 2023.

Year	Average Weekly Charge	Average Annual Charge	% Year on Year Increase
2023/24 – Projected (as at Q2 2022)	£72.38	£3,619	190%

#### 4.6 Rationale / Considerations

In making the recommendation to increase the charges from January 2023 the following has been taken into consideration:

- i) Historically, the way in which LDEC procures its gas means that unit charges for heat, and the service charges to tenants and leaseholders, have remained lower than the cost of gas available through utility providers for the last decade – currently **35%** lower.

- ii) The heat / service charge approach adopted by the Council – smoothing out charges over a rolling three years - has protected tenants and leaseholders from steep and sudden price increases.
- iii) Whilst the proposed service charge is **86%** higher than 2021/22 charges, since the proposed increase is being introduced part-way through the year the actual impact on tenants and leaseholders will be an annual increase in charges of **18%** compared to the current annual charge, and an increase of **27%** compared to 2021/22.
- iv) Tenants and leaseholders will receive a **£400** energy rebate from government through their electricity supplier to help offset energy price increases, in addition to the **£150** council tax energy rebate they should have already received. Low-income households will also be eligible for a **£650** payment to assist in the general rise in the cost of living – applicable to 34% of households on district heating. These payments will offset the increase of **£134** (average) for the remainder of the 2022/23 financial year.
- v) Fixed charges mean that tenants and leaseholders do not need to consider switching off their heating and hot water in order to save money. However, further consideration should be given to installing heat meters to allow tenants and leaseholders to control how much they pay for heat.
- vi) If the intention was to recoup the full **£1.7** million shortfall in this financial year, service charges to leaseholders and tenants would need to increase to around **£54** per week at the beginning of January 2023. This represents an increase of 270% compared to the current charge, and nearly 300% compared to the 2021/22 charges.
- vii) Whilst the fuel (gas) costs of district heating customers could be absorbed by the HRA more widely, with tenants' rent being used to effectively subsidise the energy costs of people on the heating network, there is no real justification for other tenants to lose out on other services which could have been provided using that money. The HRA is facing a range of unbudgeted cost pressures. Those other tenants will of course be experiencing much higher energy bills themselves for both electricity and gas. In addition, it would not be acceptable for tenants to subsidise leaseholders.
- viii) A further significant increase is likely to be required from April 2023, if gas supply prices continue to rise in line with current projections, although tenants and leaseholders on district heating are far better protected than tenants and leaseholders buying gas from utility companies, with open-market gas prices continuing to rise much faster and higher than district heating charges.

## 5. Financial, legal and other implications

### 5.1 Financial implications

As detailed within the report, the Housing Revenue Account is forecasting a shortfall in income of £1.7m as a result of the cost of gas exceeding the charges being made to households on the district heating network. The proposal to increase charges from the beginning of January would reduce this shortfall by £0.45m.

Stuart McAvoy – Acting Head of Finance

## 5.2 Legal implications

In reaching its decision, Full Council must have due regard to section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty). This is addressed in section 5.4 and Appendix 3 of this report.

Consultation has taken place with the existing Tenant and Leaseholder Forum, a summary of which is at Appendix 2. Members must consider this feedback before making their decision.

### **Council Tenancies:**

The conditions of tenancy allow the council to change the rent by giving a 28-day notice to tenants.

The council as a Housing Authority must comply with the Rent Standard set by the Regulator of Social Housing and comply with the Policy statement on rents for Social Housing issued by the DLUHC, including that service charges must be reasonable and transparent.

### **Leaseholders:**

The council currently issues a service charge demand to its 1,631 leaseholders in March of each year. Of these, 889 are connected to the district heating network.

The council's standard Right to Buy lease requires leaseholders to pay on demand 'a fair proportion of the costs (reasonable or estimated) of any services incurred or to be incurred by the lessor in observing and performing...' the services provided under the lease.

It should be noted that the council does not have the option of subsidising the energy costs of leaseholders via the Housing Revenue Account.

The council is required to consult with leaseholders when entering into qualifying long-term agreements. The provision of heat for the purposes of residential district heating is subject to a 25-year contract with LDEC. Legal Services have been assured that the necessary consultation was undertaken with leaseholders at the time of entering into the contract with LDEC.

Kevin Carter, Head of Law - Commercial, Property & Planning

## 5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

The council's consumption of gas, electricity and district heating is responsible for around three quarters of its measured annual carbon footprint. The 2021/22 consumption outlined in this report (including district heating) equates to a footprint of 24,012tCO<sub>2e</sub> from gas use and 4,451tCO<sub>2e</sub> from electricity use. Following the council's declaration of a climate emergency in 2019 and its ambition for the city and the council to become carbon neutral by 2030, tackling emissions from our own energy consumption is essential to achieving that.

Both the council's Climate Emergency Strategy and the Carbon Neutral Roadmap highlight the importance of demand reduction in the council's approach to decarbonisation – by eliminating emissions from fossil fuel use and minimising the residual emissions from electricity use. As such, our approach to price risk mitigation therefore needs to begin with demand reduction. This potentially includes:

- improving the thermal performance of the building fabric through insulation, replacement of single glazed windows and improving air-tightness
- introducing improved controls on heating, cooling and hot water systems
- strengthening behavioural/procedural measures to reduce energy wastage including, for example, by switching off equipment promptly when not in use and ensuring that temperatures and timings for heating and cooling systems are set appropriately
- installing more renewable energy generation (principally PVs but could include solar thermal) along with battery storage.

Investment in demand reduction will achieve year-on-year increasing mitigation of price rise impacts/risks, although in the short term it won't prevent the need for budgetary provision also to be made to cover possible price increases.

Demand reduction is also an important enabling action in making buildings ready for heat pump installation – which is another key element of our Climate Emergency Strategy and Carbon Neutral Roadmap. The energy demand of our buildings needs to be reduced sufficiently before heat pumps are installed, to counteract the impact of higher per kWh prices of electricity compared to gas, as well as to ensure that the low temperature systems typically required to get the full efficiency benefit of heat pumps can cope during the coldest winter weather.

#### 5.4 Equality Implications

When making decisions, the Council must comply with the public sector equality duty (PSED) (Equality Act 2010) by paying due regard, when carrying out their functions, to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not.

We need to be clear about any equalities implications of the course of action proposed. In doing so, we must consider the likely impact on those likely to be affected by the options in the report and, in particular, the proposed option; their protected characteristics; and (where negative impacts are anticipated) mitigating actions that can be taken to reduce or remove that negative impact.

Protected characteristics under the public sector equality duty are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Increasing fuel prices have affected the LDEC district heating charges, the report sets out a proposal for an in-year increase in district heating / service charges to

tenants and leaseholders. Those affected by changes arising from the implementation of the increase should it be agreed, would be current tenants and leaseholders who will be from across a range of protected characteristics. Residents on low and/or fixed income will be affected by the changes.

In 2020, 19% of Leicester households were in fuel poverty – this is higher than the national average in England of 13% of households and the highest rate of all upper tier local authorities in the East Midlands. This does not take into account the impacts of recent energy price increases, but if this follows national estimates we could see 40% of Leicester households being in fuel poverty by October 2022.

It is important to ensure that information about the proposed increase is conveyed to all affected residents as a matter of urgency. This should include an unambiguous rationale of why the increase is necessary and information about where advice and support may be obtained.

In order to fully understand the impacts of the proposal, an Equality Impact Assessment is being undertaken to identify any potential disproportionate negative impacts on a particular protected characteristic. The Equality Impact Assessment, should influence decision making from an early stage and throughout the decision making process. The findings from any consultation should be used to further inform the Equality Impact Assessment and in identifying any mitigating actions that are required to lessen or remove any disproportionate negative impact.

**Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh**

**6. Background information and other papers:**

None

**7. Summary of appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Housing Scrutiny Commission Feedback  
Appendix 2 – Tenants and Leaseholder Forum Feedback  
Appendix 3 - Equality Impact Assessment

**8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?**

No

**9. Is this a “key decision”?**

n/a

## Appendix 1 – Housing Scrutiny Commission Feedback

To be added after HSC 7<sup>th</sup> November



## **Appendix 2 – Tenant and Leaseholder Forum Feedback**

### **Tenant and Leaseholder Forum consultation**

A telephone consultation took place with Tenant and Leaseholder Forum representatives during week commencing 12<sup>th</sup> September 2022 to gain feedback on the proposal to increase District Heating charges.

An explanation was given as to the reasons for the proposed increase in charges, as outlined in this report. Forum members were also advised about the additional financial support that households would be given to help with the rising cost of energy bills and the general increase in the cost of living.

Two Forum members stated they were disappointed with the proposal, but they understood the reasons behind this in the context of needing to address energy price increases.

One of these members stated that the additional money was required, or services could be lost. They also stated that vulnerable people could be impacted upon by the proposal and support needed to be provided to ensure they did not suffer. This also applied to people who can't manage their money. It was stated there could be issues where there is an irresponsible member of a household who does not use the support money appropriately, causing the rest of the household to suffer.

Two of the Forum members were completely against the proposal.

One of these Forum members stated the Council should be making this money back through reducing void property numbers. It was also stated that the Council Tax rebate has nothing to do with energy price increases. They felt that over the course of a year people will be worse off as energy prices will continue to rise and even with support money this will not be enough. It was stated that the increase would deprive poor people who need the money. The benefits, rebates and support shouldn't go to everyone, but targeted at those in most need. Concerns were raised that money given through rebates and support payments may be misuse if these are a direct payment. A comment was made that households should get their district heating replaced by central heating because it will be cheaper. It was felt elderly people could be in danger. Concerns were raised that people would not use the rebates and support money appropriately, in particular those with chaotic lifestyles or substance misuse issues. It was suggested that vouchers are given to vulnerable people instead of money to reduce the risk of money being used inappropriately. Concerns were also raised about people being unable to afford their rent and will face eviction. It was stated that the proposal disproportionately affects the poor and some people won't turn on their gas or electricity. In 12 months, all the support money will be taken back in price rises unless there is more support.

The second Forum member opposed to the increase asked whether this increase was in addition to the 7.5% increase in district heating at the start of the financial year. The Forum member did not agree that district heating households were benefitting from cheaper heating. This form of supply was intended specifically for poorer households and

you can't compare this with what everyone else is paying. The Forum member thought that not all households will be entitled to the £400 energy rebate. Also the problem with this rebate is that it won't be paid as a lump sum, and so households will struggle until it comes through. The current average charge of £14.25 was questioned and in reality, this is a lot higher. Also, the average £10.31 proposed increase, did not take into account that the rise will be a lot higher for households in larger properties so they will be impacted upon more. Concerns were also raised that there would be a further increase to charges in April 2023.

This Forum member also stated that more should be done to address issues with the number of void properties. This could offset some of the costs and shortfalls in the Housing Revenue Account.

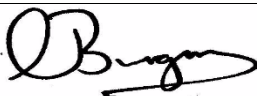
It was stated that everyone on the St Marks and St Matthews estates will be affected. It was felt people who are on a key meter, already paying high bills will be badly affected. Also poorer households who may be working, but on low incomes and do not qualify for the cost of living payment. Other people also effected will be those using gas, electricity and district heating, along with households in larger properties.

Generally, Forum members fed back that it was hard to understand the support being offered to people. This is in terms of whether everyone would be receiving the financial support being offered. If not, who would be eligible, are payments made automatically or do people have to apply for these?

## Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment

### Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Tool:

<b>Title of proposal</b>	Increasing district heating charges for tenants and leaseholders
<b>Name of division/service</b>	Housing
<b>Name of lead officer completing this assessment</b>	Debbie White / Helen McGarry
<b>Date EIA assessment completed</b>	09 September 2022
<b>Decision maker</b>	Full Council
<b>Date decision taken</b>	29 September 2022

<b>EIA sign off on completion:</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Lead officer</b>		09 September 2022
<b>Equalities officer</b>	Surinder Singh	13 September 2022
<b>Divisional director</b>		15 <sup>th</sup> September 2022

### Please ensure the following:

- a) That the document is **understandable to a reader who has not read any other documents** and explains (on its own) how the Public Sector Equality Duty is met. This does not need to be lengthy but must be complete and based in evidence.

- b) That available support information and data is identified and where it can be found. Also be clear about highlighting gaps in existing data or evidence that you hold, and how you have sought to address these knowledge gaps.
- c) That the equality impacts are capable of aggregation with those of other EIAs to identify the cumulative impact of all service changes made by the council on different groups of people.
- d) That the equality impact assessment is started at an early stage in the decision-making process, so that it can be used to inform the consultation, engagement and the decision. It should not be a tick-box exercise. Equality impact assessment is an iterative process that should be revisited throughout the decision-making process. It can be used to assess several different options.
- e) Decision makers must be aware of their duty to pay 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty (see below) and 'due regard' must be paid before and at the time a decision is taken. Please see the Brown Principles on the equality intranet pages, for information on how to undertake a lawful decision-making process, from an equalities perspective. Please append the draft EIA and the final EIA to papers for decision makers (including leadership team meetings, lead member briefings, scrutiny meetings and executive meetings) and draw out the key points for their consideration. The Equalities Team provide equalities comments on reports.

## 1. Setting the context

Describe the proposal, the reasons it is being made, and the intended change or outcome. Will the needs of those who are currently using the service continue to be met?

The Leicester District Energy scheme provides low carbon heat and hot water for around 2,500 housing tenant and leaseholder households (more than 4,000 individual tenants and leaseholders), incorporating households on the St Matthews, St Marks, St Andrews, St Peters, Aikman Avenue and Beatty Avenue estates. The Leicester district heating network is a proven, reliable, and cost-effective way of providing \*heat and hot water to homes. Note\*: Electricity is provided and billed separately by a utility company.

Leaseholders receive annual invoices with most opting to pay monthly by direct debit, whereas tenants pay for their heat as a fixed weekly service charge included as part of their rent. Payments can be made on-line via the Council's website, by direct debit, or at the Post Office.

Energy prices have been rising at unprecedented rates since August 2021, with households facing gas and electricity bills that have more than doubled in the last 12 months. Despite being 35% cheaper than current market prices, the fuel (gas) unit price for district heating is 86% higher in 2022/23 than in 2021/22.

The escalation in gas prices means that the current heat / service charges to tenants and leaseholders on the district heating scheme are significantly lower than the cost of providing the service. This will result in an HRA shortfall of £1.7m in 2022/23 and almost £8m in 2023/24 unless charges to tenants and leaseholders are increased.

The proposed in-year increase would result in a rise in district heating / service charges to tenants and leaseholders of £10.31 per week from the beginning of January 2023 for the remainder of the 2022/23 financial year. This is a weekly increase of 70% compared to the current charges for 2022/23 - representing an annual increase of 18% (as the increase is to be introduced part-way through the year).

Tenants and leaseholders will receive a £400 energy rebate from government through their electricity supplier to help offset energy price increases, in addition to the £150 council tax energy rebate they should have already received. These payments will offset the increase of £134 (average) for the remainder of the 2022/23 financial year.

Electricity suppliers will apply the discount directly to household electricity bills, with those on pre-payment meters receiving vouchers to redeem. The £150 council tax energy rebate has already been distributed in the form of vouchers that can be exchanged for cash at the Post Office until 18 September 2022. See: [www.gov.uk/guidance/getting-the-energy-bills-support-scheme-discount](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/getting-the-energy-bills-support-scheme-discount)

Low-income households (those in receipt of Universal Credit and some other benefits / tax credits) will also be eligible for a £650 payment to assist in the general rise in the cost of living – applicable to 34% of households on district heating. These payments will be made in two lumps of £326 and £324 in the same way as the benefits and / or tax credits are paid. See: [www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment)

Delaying the increase in heat / service charge could therefore make it more difficult for tenants and leaseholders to afford the charges in the future; and weaken the perception of the charges increasing in the context of the price cap and financial support.

The Government announcement made on 08 September 2022 in relation to the price cap does not suggest that any additional support will be available to households at this stage. The council will ensure that those affected will be signposted to appropriate advice and support to help them avoid arrears and financial hardship, including through [BetterOff Leicester](#)

## 2. Equality implications/obligations

Which aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) are likely be relevant to the proposal? In this question, consider both the current service and the proposed changes.

### a. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

- How does the proposal/service ensure that there is no barrier or disproportionate impact for anyone with a particular protected characteristic?
- Is this a relevant consideration? What issues could arise?

The Leicester District Energy scheme provides low carbon heat and hot water for around 2,500 housing tenant and leaseholder households (more than 4,000 individual tenants and leaseholders).

The proposed in-year increase would result in a rise in district heating / service charges to tenants and leaseholders.

Some of the potential barriers may relate to:

- Customer access to information about the changes
- How information is communicated to users
- The ease of use of information provided
- Availability in different language formats
- Information provided on rights and /or entitlements
- Information on which agencies can help with money/ debt advice (promotion of this to tenants)
- Physical access to services
- Monitoring of potential adverse impact on particular groups

### **b. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups**

- How does the proposal/service ensure that its intended outcomes promote equality of opportunity for people?
- Identify inequalities faced by those with specific protected characteristic(s).
- Is this a relevant consideration? What issues could arise?
- The Leicester District Energy scheme provides low carbon heat and hot water for around 2,500 housing tenant and leaseholder households (more than 4,000 individual tenants and leaseholders) people will be from across all protected characteristics.

### **c. Foster good relations between different groups**

- Does the service contribute to good relations or to broader community cohesion objectives?
- How does it achieve this aim?
- Is this a relevant consideration? What issues could arise?

The Leicester District Energy scheme provides low carbon heat and hot water for around 2,500 housing tenant and leaseholder households (more than 4,000 individual tenants and leaseholders) people will be from across all protected characteristics.

Who is affected?

Outline who could be affected, and how they could be affected by the proposal/service change. Include people who currently use the service and those who could benefit from, but do not currently access the service.

Residents on low and/or fixed income will be affected by the changes, and it is vital that residents are given appropriate advice to ensure that income is maximised and that residents do not accrue arrears.

2,904 tenants and 1,398 leaseholders (around 2,500 households) connected to district heating will be affected. The district heating charge cannot be claimed through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. All of these tenants and leaseholders will need to pay the additional costs themselves. The impact of the increased charge will be dependent on tenants' and leaseholders' financial situation, rather than any protected characteristic. We do know a that high number of properties that are provided with district heating are located within the Centre area of the city. We also know that a higher proportion of BAME households live in this area. However, the impact of the district heating charge will still be dependent on a person's financial situation rather than their protected characteristics.

Whilst the price increase will have an impact, district heating fuel costs are currently 35% lower than gas costs from utility suppliers, and the £134 increase in the annual charge will be offset by the 2022 council tax and energy rebates totalling £550.

### 3. Information used to inform the equality impact assessment

- What **data, research, or trend analysis** have you used?
- Describe how you have got your information and what it tells you
- Are there any gaps or limitations in the information you currently hold, and how you have sought to address this? E.g. proxy data, national trends, equality monitoring etc.

Data relating to the profile of tenants and leaseholders connected to district heating was taken from the Tenancy Management IT systems. Appendix 1 provide a profile of our tenants and leaseholders on the district heating scheme, in terms of protected characteristics. Data relating to energy / gas price trends was taken from BEIS, OFGEM and the House of Commons research libraries. See: [Annual domestic energy bills - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/annual-domestic-energy-bills) for more information and links.

### 4. Consultation

What **consultation** have you undertaken about the proposal with people who use the service or people affected, people who may potentially use the service and other stakeholders? What did they say about:

- What is important to them regarding the current service?
- How does (or could) the service meet their needs? How will they be affected by the proposal? What potential impacts did they identify because of their protected characteristic(s)?
- Did they identify any potential barriers they may face in accessing services/other opportunities that meet their needs?

The communication plan is as follows:

Date	Activity
24/08/2022	Brief Lead Member (Housing)
26/08/2022	Brief Lead Member (Climate Emergency)
08/09/2022	City Mayor Briefing
Throughout September	Informal consultation with tenants' / residents' associations / groups



TBC	Letter to Ward Councillors
22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2022	Housing Scrutiny
TBC	Full Council
TBC	Notification letters to tenants and leaseholders

## 5. Potential Equality Impact

Based on your understanding of the service area, any specific evidence you may have on people who use the service and those who could potentially use the service and the findings of any consultation you have undertaken, use the table below to explain which individuals or community groups are likely to be affected by the proposal because of their protected characteristic(s). Describe what the impact is likely to be, how significant that impact is for individual or group well-being, and what mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove negative impacts. This could include indirect impacts, as well as direct impacts.

Looking at potential impacts from a different perspective, this section also asks you to consider whether any other particular groups, especially vulnerable groups, are likely to be affected by the proposal. List the relevant groups that may be affected, along with the likely impact, potential risks and mitigating actions that would reduce or remove any negative impacts. These groups do not have to be defined by their protected characteristic(s).

### Protected characteristics

#### Impact of proposal:

Describe the likely impact of the proposal on people because of their protected characteristic and how they may be affected. Why is this protected characteristic relevant to the proposal? How does the protected characteristic determine/shape the potential impact of the proposal? This may also include **positive impacts** which support the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

#### Risk of disproportionate negative impact:

How likely is it that people with this protected characteristic will be disproportionately negatively affected? How great will that impact be on their well-being? What will determine who will be negatively affected?

**Mitigating actions:**

For disproportionate negative impacts on protected characteristic/s, what mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove the impact? You may also wish to include actions which support the positive aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations. All actions identified here should also be included in the action plan at the end of this EIA.

**a. Age**

Indicate which age group/s is/ are most affected, either specify general age group - children, young people working age people or older people or specific age bands

**What is the impact of the proposal on age?**

All tenants and leaseholders on the district heating scheme will be required to pay the additional charge, irrespective of their age.

Residents on low and/or fixed income will be affected by the changes,

**What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on age?**

No group will be disproportionately impacted upon by this proposal

**What are the mitigating actions?**

Tenants and leaseholders will have received the £150 council tax energy rebate, as well as a £400 energy rebate payable from October 2022, which can be used to pay the increased costs for the financial year 2022/23. Low-income households will also be eligible for an additional payment of £650 to assist with the general rise in the cost of living. 34% of the households will receive the additional benefit.

Information and advice regarding energy use, rent payments, tenancy support and benefits support are available via the following:

[Paying your rent \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://www.leicester.gov.uk/paying-your-rent)

[Tenant support - STAR \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://www.leicester.gov.uk/tenant-support-star)

[Benefits and other support \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://www.leicester.gov.uk/benefits-and-other-support)

Tenants and leaseholders have access to the Income Management Team or other financial support services in the city, who are able to provide support for households facing financial difficulties to maximise their income. See: [Benefits and other support \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://www.leicester.gov.uk/benefits-and-other-support) for more information and links to other agency support.

In addition, access to information can be by phone, email, face to face at Neighbourhood Services buildings (such as New Parks Library, the Brite Centre, Beaumont Leys Library) or at tenants homes.

## **b. Disability**

If specific impairments are affected by the proposal, specify which these are. Our standard categories are on our equality monitoring form - physical impairment, sensory impairment, mental health condition, learning disability, long standing illness or health condition.

### **What is the impact of the proposal on disability?**

All tenants and leaseholders on the district heating scheme will be required to pay the additional charge, irrespective of whether they have a disability. Residents on low and/or fixed income will be affected by the changes,

### **What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on disability?**

No group will be disproportionately impacted upon by this proposal

### **What are the mitigating actions?**

Tenants and leaseholders will have received the £150 council tax energy rebate, as well as a £400 energy rebate payable from October 2022, which can be used to pay the increased costs for the financial year 2022/23. Low-income households will also be eligible for an additional payment of £650 to assist with the general rise in the cost of living. 34% of the households will receive the additional benefit.

Tenants and leaseholders have access to the Income Management Team or other financial support services in the city, who are able to provide support for households facing financial difficulties to maximise their income.

The council can do home visits for people who are housebound, or unable to contact by phone. We offer information in different formats and languages on request, through the Community Language service. We have a range of officers who speak different languages or will arrange for interpreters if needed.

### **c. Gender reassignment**

Indicate whether the proposal has potential impact on trans men or trans women, and if so, which group is affected.

#### **What is the impact of the proposal on gender reassignment?**

All tenants and leaseholders on the district heating scheme will be required to pay the additional charge, irrespective of their gender reassignment.

#### **What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on gender reassignment?**

No group will be disproportionately impacted upon by this proposal

#### **What are the mitigating actions?**

Tenants and leaseholders will have received the £150 council tax energy rebate, as well as a £400 energy rebate payable from October 2022, which can be used to pay the increased costs for the financial year 2022/23. Low-income households will also be eligible for an additional payment of £650 to assist with the general rise in the cost of living. 34% of the households will receive the additional benefit.

Tenants and leaseholders have access to the Income Management Team or other financial support services in the city, who are able to provide support for households facing financial difficulties to maximise their income.

### **d. Marriage and civil partnership**

#### **What is the impact of the proposal on marriage and civil partnership?**

All tenants and leaseholders on the district heating scheme will be required to pay the additional charge, irrespective of marriage or civil partnership.

#### **What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on marriage and civil partnership?**

No group will be disproportionately impacted upon by this proposal

#### **What are the mitigating actions?**

Tenants and leaseholders will have received the £150 council tax energy rebate, as well as a £400 energy rebate payable from October 2022, which can be used to pay the increased costs for

the financial year 2022/23. Low-income households will also be eligible for an additional payment of £650 to assist with the general rise in the cost of living. 34% of the households will receive the additional benefit.

Tenants and leaseholders have access to the Income Management Team or other financial support services in the city, who are able to provide support for households facing financial difficulties to maximise their income.

### **e. Pregnancy and maternity**

#### **What is the impact of the proposal on pregnancy and maternity?**

All tenants and leaseholders on the district heating scheme will be required to pay the additional charge, irrespective of pregnancy or maternity.

#### **What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on pregnancy and maternity?**

No group will be disproportionately impacted upon by this proposal

#### **What are the mitigating actions?**

Tenants and leaseholders will have received the £150 council tax energy rebate, as well as a £400 energy rebate payable from October 2022, which can be used to pay the increased costs for the financial year 2022/23. Low-income households will also be eligible for an additional payment of £650 to assist with the general rise in the cost of living. 34% of the households will receive the additional benefit.

Tenants and leaseholders have access to the Income Management Team or other financial support services in the city, who are able to provide support for households facing financial difficulties to maximise their income.

### **f. Race**

Given the city's racial diversity it is useful that we collect information on which racial groups are affected by the proposal. Our equalities monitoring form follows ONS general census categories and uses broad categories in the first instance with the opportunity to identify more specific racial groups such as Gypsies/Travellers. Use the most relevant classification for the proposal.

**What is the impact of the proposal on race?**

All tenants and leaseholders on the district heating scheme will be required to pay the additional charge, irrespective of their race.

**What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on race?**

No group will be disproportionately impacted upon by this proposal

**What are the mitigating actions?**

Tenants and leaseholders will have received the £150 council tax energy rebate, as well as a £400 energy rebate payable from October 2022, which can be used to pay the increased costs for the financial year 2022/23. Low-income households will also be eligible for an additional payment of £650 to assist with the general rise in the cost of living. 34% of the households will receive the additional benefit.

Tenants and leaseholders have access to the Income Management Team or other financial support services in the city, who are able to provide support for households facing financial difficulties to maximise their income.

We offer information in different formats and languages on request, through the Community Language service. We have a range of officers who speak different languages or will arrange for interpreters if needed.

**g. Religion or belief**

If specific religious or faith groups are affected by the proposal, our equalities monitoring form sets out categories reflective of the city's population. Given the diversity of the city there is always scope to include any group that is not listed.

**What is the impact of the proposal on religion or belief?**

All tenants and leaseholders on the district heating scheme will be required to pay the additional charge, irrespective of their religion or belief.

**What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on religion or belief?**

No group will be disproportionately impacted upon by this proposal

**What are the mitigating actions?**

Tenants and leaseholders will have received the £150 council tax energy rebate, as well as a £400 energy rebate payable from October 2022, which can be used to pay the increased costs for the financial year 2022/23. Low-income households will also be eligible for an additional payment of £650 to assist with the general rise in the cost of living. 34% of the households will receive the additional benefit.

Tenants and leaseholders have access to the Income Management Team or other financial support services in the city, who are able to provide support for households facing financial difficulties to maximise their income.

**h. Sex**

Indicate whether this has potential impact on either males or females

**What is the impact of the proposal on sex?**

All tenants and leaseholders on the district heating scheme will be required to pay the additional charge, irrespective of their sex.

**What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on sex?**

No group will be disproportionately impacted upon by this proposal

**What are the mitigating actions?**

Tenants and leaseholders will have received the £150 council tax energy rebate, as well as a £400 energy rebate payable from October 2022, which can be used to pay the increased costs for the financial year 2022/23. Low-income households will also be eligible for an additional payment of £650 to assist with the general rise in the cost of living. 34% of the households will receive the additional benefit.

Tenants and leaseholders have access to the Income Management Team or other financial support services in the city, who are able to provide support for households facing financial difficulties to maximise their income.

## **i. Sexual orientation**

### **What is the impact of the proposal on sexual orientation?**

All tenants and leaseholders on the district heating scheme will be required to pay the additional charge, irrespective of their sexual orientation.

### **What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on sexual orientation?**

No group will be disproportionately impacted upon by this proposal

### **What are the mitigating actions?**

Tenants and leaseholders will have received the £150 council tax energy rebate, as well as a £400 energy rebate payable from October 2022, which can be used to pay the increased costs for the financial year 2022/23. Low-income households will also be eligible for an additional payment of £650 to assist with the general rise in the cost of living. 34% of the households will receive the additional benefit.

Tenants and leaseholders have access to the Income Management Team or other financial support services in the city, who are able to provide support for households facing financial difficulties to maximise their income.

## **6. Summary of protected characteristics**

### **a. Summarise why the protected characteristics you have commented on, are relevant to the proposal?**

All protected characteristics have been commented on because the additional district heating charge will need to be paid by all tenants and leaseholders on the scheme.

### **b. Summarise why the protected characteristics you have not commented on, are not relevant to the proposal?**

Not applicable



## 7. Other groups

### Other groups

#### Impact of proposal:

Describe the likely impact of the proposal on children in poverty or any other people who we may consider to be vulnerable, for example people who misuse substances, ex armed forces, people living in poverty, care experienced young people, carers. List any vulnerable groups likely to be affected. Will their needs continue to be met? What issues will affect their take up of services/other opportunities that meet their needs/address inequalities they face?

#### Risk of disproportionate negative impact:

How likely is it that this group of people will be negatively affected? How great will that impact be on their well-being? What will determine who will be negatively affected?  
Residents on low and/or fixed income will be affected by the changes.

#### Mitigating actions:

For negative impacts, what mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove this impact for this vulnerable group of people? These should be included in the action plan at the end of this EIA. You may also wish to use this section to identify opportunities for positive impacts.  
Residents will be signposted to appropriate advice and support to help them avoid arrears and financial hardship.

### a. Children in poverty

#### What is the impact of the proposal on children in poverty?

Services will continue to be received. Households with children living in poverty are likely to face difficulties generally, with the rising costs of living.

#### What is the risk of negative impact on children in poverty?

There is a risk that an increasing number of households with children living in poverty are unable to afford all essential items for day-to-day living.

**What are the mitigating actions?**

Tenants and leaseholders will have received the £150 council tax energy rebate, as well as a £400 energy rebate payable from October 2022, which can be used to pay the increased costs for the financial year 2022/23. Low-income households will also be eligible for an additional payment of £650 to assist with the general rise in the cost of living. 34% of the households will receive the additional benefit.

Tenants and leaseholders have access to the Income Management Team or other financial support services in the city, who are able to provide support for households facing financial difficulties to maximise their income.

**b. Other vulnerable groups****What is the impact of the proposal on other vulnerable groups?**

No potential impacts

**What is the risk of negative impact on other vulnerable groups?**

Not applicable

**What are the mitigating actions?**

Not applicable

**c. Other (describe)****What is the impact of the proposal on any other groups?**

No potential impacts

**What is the risk of negative impact on any other groups?**

Not applicable

**What are the mitigating actions?**

Not applicable

## 8. Other sources of potential negative impacts

Are there any other potential negative impacts external to the service that could further disadvantage service users over the next three years that should be considered? For example, these could include:

- other proposed changes to council services that would affect the same group of service users;
- Government policies or proposed changes to current provision by public agencies (such as new benefit arrangements) that would negatively affect residents;
- external economic impacts such as an economic downturn.

With fuel prices increasing at unprecedented rates since August 2021, residents across the whole city have seen significant rises in their energy bills – with the impact greater on gas bills. According to BEIS gas prices increased nationally by 95% between April 2021 and April 2022.

According to the House of Commons Library Research Briefing on Domestic Energy Prices, 9 August 2022, CPI Index data on energy price rises between 2020-21 and March 2022, plus the overall 54% increase in the price cap in April 2022 and Cornwall Insight's recent forecast of increases in October 2022 and January 2023 suggest that energy prices in 2022-23 could be just over 200% higher than in 2020-21. Further increases are expected through 2022 and 2023 as a result of a further rise in the price cap announced at the end of August 2022.

Increasing fuel prices have affected the district heating charges with prices rising by 86% for the year April 2022 – March 2023.

It should be noted however that, unlike other residents contracted with a private gas supplier, the heat / service charges for tenants and leaseholders on district heating were unaffected between April 2021 and March 2022. Prices remained fixed throughout the 12-month period, at an average annual charge of £683 (a weekly charge for 50 weeks of £13.65).

Had tenants and leaseholders been buying gas from a utility company, charges (for the same usage) would have been a typical £17.35 per week (£867 per year) in April 2021, rising throughout the year to reach £34.79 per week (£1,740 per annum) by April 2022.

Tenants and leaseholders will receive a £400 energy rebate from government through their electricity supplier from October 2022 to help offset energy price increases, in addition to the £150 council tax energy rebate they should have already received. Low-income households will also be eligible for a £650 payment to assist in the general rise in the cost of living – applicable to 34% of households on district heating. These payments will offset the increase of £134 (average) for the remainder of the 2022/23 financial year.

Delaying the increase in heat / service charge could therefore make it more difficult for tenants and leaseholders to afford the charges in the future; and weaken the perception of the charges increasing in the context of the price cap and financial support.

Fixed weekly charges (over 50 weeks) also mean that tenants and leaseholders do not need to consider switching off their heating and hot water in order to save money. However, further consideration should be given to installing heat meters to allow tenants and leaseholders to control how much they pay for heat. It is likely that metering would reduce overall usage.

## 9. Human rights implications

Are there any human rights implications which need to be considered and addressed (please see the list at the end of the template), if so please outline the implications and how they will be addressed below:

None

## 10. Monitoring impact

You will need to ensure that monitoring systems are established to check for impact on the protected characteristics and human rights after the decision has been implemented. Describe the systems which are set up to:

- monitor impact (positive and negative, intended and unintended) for different groups
- monitor barriers for different groups
- enable open feedback and suggestions from different communities
- ensure that the EIA action plan (below) is delivered.

If you want to undertake equality monitoring, please refer to our [equality monitoring guidance and templates](#).

Our IT system allows us to monitor tenants rent accounts, including district heating payments and see when accounts go into arrears. Our Income Management Team carries out this monitoring on a daily basis. We are also able to monitor increased arrears for people on the district heating scheme for most of the protected characteristic groups. Through this monitoring we will be able to identify any increases in rent arrears, relating to the increased district heating charge and provide support to tenants to reduce these and maximise their income.

## 11. EIA action plan

Please list all the equality objectives, actions and targets that result from this assessment (continue on separate sheets as necessary). These now need to be included in the relevant service plan for mainstreaming and performance management purposes.

Equality Outcome	Action	Officer Responsible	Completion date
All tenant and leaseholders are able to pay the district heating charges.	The service needs to ensure that the provision of information about the increase in charges as well what advice and assistance is available to tenants, so they are able to access benefits and entitlements.	Chris Burgin – Director of Housing	September / October 2022
Households have access to financial help and assistance if they find they are unable to pay for the additional charge	Referrals to the Income Management Team and financial support services in the city	Zenab Valli – Income Collection Manager	Ongoing
Communicate changes to all tenants and leaseholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informal consultation with tenants and residents' associations throughout September 2022</li> <li>Letters to residents with notification of increase in charge to be issued on 30 September 2022</li> </ul>	<p>Helen McGarry</p> <p>Kevin Wheeler</p>	September 2022

Equality Outcome	Action	Officer Responsible	Completion date

## Human rights articles:

### Part 1: The convention rights and freedoms

- Article 2: Right to Life
- Article 3: Right not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman or degrading way
- Article 4: Right not to be subjected to slavery/forced labour
- Article 5: Right to liberty and security
- Article 6: Right to a fair trial
- Article 7: No punishment without law
- Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life
- Article 9: Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- Article 10: Right to freedom of expression
- Article 11: Right to freedom of assembly and association
- Article 12: Right to marry
- Article 14: Right not to be discriminated against

### Part 2: First protocol

- Article 1: Protection of property/peaceful enjoyment
- Article 2: Right to education
- Article 3: Right to free elections



### Tenant and Leaseholder protected characteristics profile

#### Gender

	Tenants	Leaseholders	Total	Percentage
<b>Male</b>	1350	439	1789	41.6%
<b>Female</b>	1550	538	2088	48.5%
<b>Transgender</b>	2	0	2	0.0%
<b>Not Recorded</b>	0	423	423	9.8%
<b>Total</b>	2902	1400	4302	

#### Age

	Tenants	Leaseholders	Total	Percentage
<b>Not recorded</b>	7	419	426	9.9%
<b>18 to 21</b>	39	2	41	1.0%
<b>22 to 30</b>	249	26	275	6.4%
<b>31 to 40</b>	549	204	753	17.5%
<b>41 to 50</b>	637	320	957	22.2%
<b>51 to 60</b>	516	189	705	16.4%
<b>61 to 65</b>	220	74	294	6.8%
<b>66 to 74</b>	374	105	479	11.1%
<b>75 and over</b>	311	61	372	8.6%
<b>Total</b>	2902	1400	4302	

#### Ethnicity

	Tenants	Leaseholders	Total	Percentage
<b>Unknown / not recorded</b>	0	490	490	11.4%
<b>Any other ethnic group</b>	84	12	96	2.2%
<b>Any other heritage background</b>	18	7	25	0.6%
<b>Asian/Asian British or other Asian Background</b>	168	72	240	5.6%



<b>Asian/Asian British of Bangladeshi origin</b>	66	49	115	2.7%
<b>Asian/Asian British of Indian origin</b>	693	371	1064	24.7%
<b>Asian/Asian British of Pakistani origin</b>	50	13	63	1.5%
<b>Black/Black British of African origin</b>	263	79	342	7.9%
<b>Black/Black British of Caribbean origin</b>	57	1	58	1.3%
<b>Black/Black British of Other Black backgrnd</b>	37	2	39	0.9%
<b>Black/Black British of Somali origin</b>	107	26	133	3.1%
<b>Chinese or Chinese origin</b>	6	0	6	0.1%
<b>Chinese of other Chinese background</b>	1	0	1	0.0%
<b>Dual/multiple heritage Asian and White</b>	6	4	10	0.2%
<b>Dual/ multiple heritage Black African and White</b>	12	1	13	0.3%
<b>Dual/multiple heritage Black Caribbean and White</b>	19	0	19	0.4%
<b>Ethnicity unknown</b>	423	218	641	14.9%
<b>Other ethnic group Gypsy/Romany/Irish Traveller</b>	12	0	12	0.3%
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	87	44	131	3.0%
<b>White British</b>	696	6	702	16.3%
<b>White of European origin</b>	45	2	47	1.1%
<b>White of Irish origin</b>	14	0	14	0.3%

<b>White of other White Background</b>	38	3	41	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	2902	1400	4302	

### Sexual orientation

	<b>Tenants</b>	<b>Leaseholders</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Not recorded</b>	1235	1147	2382	55.4%
<b>Bisexual</b>	37	17	54	1.3%
<b>Gay (female) / Lesbian</b>	4	1	5	0.1%
<b>Gay (Male)</b>	3	2	5	0.1%
<b>Heterosexual / Straight</b>	1300	161	1461	34.0%
<b>Other</b>	47	6	53	1.2%
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	276	66	342	7.9%
<b>Total</b>	2902	1400	4302	

### Religion

	<b>Tenants</b>	<b>Leaseholders</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Not recorded</b>	1211	1141	2352	54.7%
<b>Atheist</b>	38	0	38	0.9%
<b>Christian</b>	326	10	336	7.8%
<b>Hindu</b>	207	71	278	6.5%
<b>Jain</b>	1	0	1	0.0%
<b>Jewish</b>	1	0	1	0.0%
<b>Muslim</b>	653	170	823	19.1%
<b>No religion</b>	280	1	281	6.5%
<b>Other</b>	33	0	33	0.8%
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	138	5	143	3.3%
<b>Sikh</b>	14	2	16	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	2902	1400	4302	

Disability

	<b>Tenants</b>	<b>Leaseholders</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	256	7	263	6.1%
<b>No / not recorded</b>	2646	1393	4039	93.9%
<b>Total</b>	2902	1400	4302	



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## **Private Rented Sector Strategy Progress Update**

Housing Scrutiny Commission: 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin

Lead Director: Chris Burgin

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## Useful information

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Report authors:** Justin Haywood, Head of Service (Homelessness Prevention & Support), with contributions from Dave Howard, Head of Regulatory Services, Grant Butterworth, Head of Planning, and Simon Nichols, Head of Housing Development

**Author contact details:** justin.haywood@leicester.gov.uk

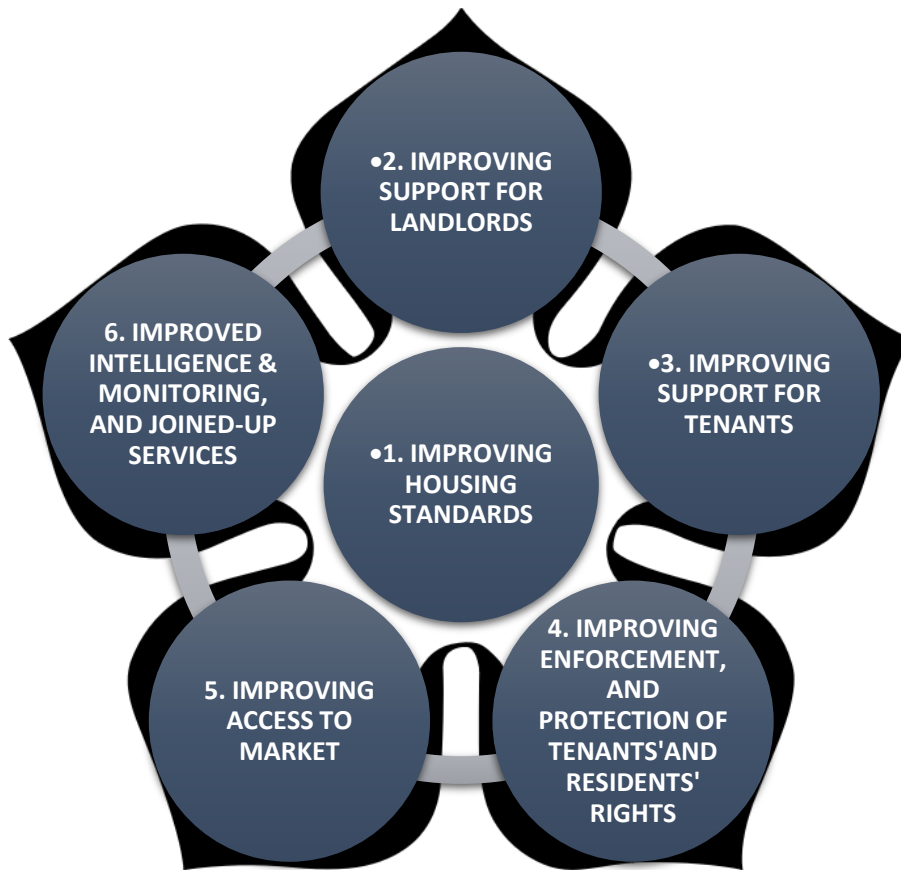
**Report version number:** 1.1

### 1. Purpose & Summary

- 1.1. This report provides a summary-style update on the implementation of LCC's Private Rented Sector Strategy objectives.
- 1.2. Good progress has been made across a range of workstreams, with some key workstreams now launched, others already ongoing with monitoring or further development/improvement, and the remainder on track for completion before end 22/23.
- 1.3. Monitoring and work to continuously improve and optimise initiatives will then be undertaken to ensure that the benefits of the Strategy are being realised.

### 2. Background

- 2.1. The City Council have an ambition to ensure the private rented sector in Leicester is fit for purpose and to address where this is not the case by raising housing standards.
- 2.2. The overall objective of the strategy is to have a holistic approach that ensures tenants and landlords are appropriately supported, as well as retaining and improving our ability to protect tenants' safety and rights, and tackle rogue/poor landlords. Maximising this, whilst maintaining a balanced, fair, and proportionate approach, will ultimately lead to the raising of housing standards within the sector.
- 2.3. This strategy focusses on six high-level priorities, five 'feeder' priorities with one central principle objective at the core – improving housing standards in Leicester's private rented housing sector:



### 3. Progress against the 6 priorities

#### 3.1. IMPROVING HOUSING STANDARDS ACROSS THE SECTOR

##### 3.1.1. Selective licensing (workstream O.1.9)

Lead Service: Regulatory Services. Status: Implementation pending

The Selective Licensing scheme was granted approval at Full Council on the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022. There followed a short intense period of formal notification of the intention to implement to all potential landlords in the areas covered and publication of the intention in the local press.

The service was launched early October, and applications are being received, as well as the first inspections being completed. Recruitment processes continue to complete the set-up of the new team to manage the expected workloads. Resources are being planned against predicted workloads but with some uncertainty we are building a base team to ensure we can implement and then scaling up after 3 and 6 months. Delivery Board are meeting regularly with executive members to ensure this is carefully managed.

Note: Two streets were omitted in the original plan, and those have now been added. This will not affect the overall scheme but means that the two streets will have slightly differing start and end dates.

##### 3.1.2. Making better use of Landlord Accreditation Schemes (workstream O.1.2)

Lead Service: Regulatory Services. Status: Implementation pending

Landlord Accreditation has been incorporated into the proposed Selective Licensing scheme with license fee discounts offered to accredited landlords. DASH accreditation is available to all Landlords with property in Leicester City.

Promotion of this will be undertaken as part of the comms package for Selective Licensing. This has now started following approval for the scheme. It's envisaged that while the promotion of accreditation is part of the selective licensing scheme and therefore applicable to those areas where the scheme applies, there will be a knock-on effect. Many landlords will have properties outside the Selective Licensing areas and therefore accreditation will be a positive impact on a wider basis.

##### 3.1.3. Consider the viability and benefits of extending Repayable Home Repair Loan (RHRL) into the private rented sector (workstream O.1.5)

Lead Service: Housing Development. Status: Implementation pending

A bid has been submitted via the General Fund capital bidding process for £200k in 23/24 to be able to continue with this scheme, and if successful we will look to extend the scope of the scheme to the private rented sector.

##### 3.1.4. Carry out a range of planning-based initiatives (workstream O.1.6)

Lead Service: Planning. Status: Implementation pending

The Draft Local Plan under preparation includes extensive policy and supporting evidence on design expectations, managing the impacts of HMOs and other typologies. The policies do however need to comply with Government Guidance and pass Examination by



a Government Inspector. The Draft Plan will be brought to Members for approval in the coming months.

'Article 4 Direction expansion:

Extensive assessment and consultation has been undertaken to recommend the substantial expansion of Article 4 Directions to allow control of overconcentration of Houses in Multiple occupation. The Draft Direction was published in November 2021, and it is proposed to formally approve the implementation of this as soon as the 12-month Notice period expires in November 2022. Upon confirmation, around 22,000 homes will be added into the area of control resulting in significant amenity improvements to residents.

'Planning enforcement:

In the last 5 financial years (01/04/2017 - 31/03/2022) there were 156 cases reported to the Planning Compliance and Monitoring Team alleging change of use of property as flats and houses in multiple occupation.

Of these, 43 cases were found to be no planning breach. Planning enforcement action is only taken in cases where there is evidence of significant harm to amenity, and in line with this there were 20 cases where it was decided to take no action due to the absence of such harm. There was one case where enforcement notice was served and complied with and there were 29 cases where retrospective planning applications was granted planning permission. 40 cases were resolved through negotiations without the need of a formal enforcement notice and there were 10 cases where formal enforcement notices were served.

The current on hand action/workload of the team has 28 cases which are related to unauthorised flats including 11 cases where formal enforcement notices have been served. In 1 case an injunction for the removal of unauthorised flat has been served. In 5 other cases enforcement notices are expected to be complied with. 4 Cases are where appeals against enforcement notices have been dismissed and further prosecution action is being considered. There is one case where an appeal against an enforcement notice is not decided.

A substantial achievement was the longstanding case St Clement's Court case which was resolved in July 2022 where an injunction to secure the removal of 2 unauthorised flats was complied with.

3.1.5. Operation EPC - Programme of works around pro-actively ensuring energy efficiency standards are met (workstream O.1.8)

Lead Service: Regulatory Services. Status: Ongoing, with developments planned

PSH Team have been successful in bidding for funding from East midlands Energy Hub to look at Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards in the Private Rented Sector. This funding will support a small team to concentrate on identifying low energy efficiency rated rented properties and then engage with landlords to support/require improvement. There is cross over with the Selective Licensing scheme.

Funding is to be utilised by end of 22/23.

### 3.2. **IMPROVING SUPPORT FOR PRIVATE SECTOR LANDLORDS**

#### 3.2.1. Website and information improvements for landlords (workstreams O.2.1 & O.2.2) Lead Service: Combined. Status: Implementation pending

A project is underway with the LCC Comms & Marketing Team to look at how best to introduce a dedicated section on leicester.gov.uk that provides a range of resources for landlords e.g. information about legal obligations & eviction processes, centralised bank of information on grants and incentives.

Work has been completed to benchmark offering from other local authorities, and analysis is now being undertaken on our offer, the customer journey, gaps, outdated information, and other aspects, before bringing the sum together within a new online 'portal'.

It is intended to complete this work and launch by end of 22/23.

#### 3.2.2. Leicester Landlord Forum and landlord liaison (workstream O.2.3) Lead Service: Homelessness, Prevention & Support. Status: Live and ongoing

Forums were re-launched in July 2021 with a positive and collaborative focus. The forum was well received, and continued with a second successful forum in January 2022, albeit attendance lower than desired.

Another Forum is now taking place in November, and some enhanced marketing efforts will be made to improve attendance.

We have also begun a series of less formal liaison groups with local Landlords and Managing Agents. These groups are aimed at creating a genuine 2-way dialogue, and we have started to now see these groups develop with some meaningful conversations being enjoyed by all in attendance.

#### 3.2.3. Implementation of 'Call Before You Serve' (workstream O.2.4) Lead Service: Homelessness, Prevention & Support. Status: Live and ongoing

This service was successfully launched on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2022. A comms and marketing plan is underway, and implementation is being closely monitored to allow for optimisation.

After 6 months of activity, a set of KPIs should be available to scrutinise the performance of the team, and whether the intended benefits are being released, namely an increase in prevention of homelessness, and a reduction in use of temporary accommodation for customers originating in the PRS.

### 3.3. **IMPROVING SUPPORT FOR PRIVATE SECTOR TENANTS**

#### 3.3.1. Website and information improvements for tenants (workstream O.3.1) Lead Service: Combined. Status: Implementation pending

As part of the project mentioned at 3.2.1, we are also looking at how best to introduce a dedicated section on leicester.gov.uk that provides a range of resources for tenants e.g. information about their legal rights and where they can get help and support.

It is intended to complete this work and launch by end of 22/23, alongside the landlord portal.

3.3.2. Implementation of Specialist PRS Housing Advice / Homelessness Prevention (workstreams O.3.2 & O.3.3.)

Lead Service: Homelessness, Prevention & Support. Status: Live and ongoing

This service was successfully launched on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2022 alongside the Call Before You Serve Offer. The launch included an extension to our Floating Support provision to provide ringfenced support for team and their tenant-customers.

This team will work closely alongside the Call Before You Serve to ensure that tenant and landlord expectations are met and managed, whilst maintaining a degree of independence to ensure that the support given to each group remains impartial.

After 6 months of activity, a set of KPIs should be available to scrutinise the performance of the team, and whether the intended benefits are being released, namely an increase in prevention of homelessness, and a reduction in use of temporary accommodation for customers originating in the PRS.

3.4. **IMPROVING ENFORCEMENT, AND PROTECTION OF TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' RIGHTS**

3.4.1. Continuing to establish the new "Corporate Landlord Taskforce" (workstream O.4.1)

Lead Service: Regulatory Services. Status: Ongoing, with developments planned

Progress has been made in formulating a wider strategy to coordinate operations and the compliant landlord taskforce, a partnership / multi-agency approach to dealing with rogue landlords. The Recruitment of a Senior EHO would be part of this strategy however this workstream must be resourced and linked in across wider Housing Services to be effective. Work will continue on this and a further update will be available at the next juncture.

3.4.2. Improving the Council's level of involvement in enforcement of rights within Protection from Eviction 1977 (workstream O.4.1)

Lead Service: Homelessness, Prevention & Support. Status: Implementation pending

This work will build on creation of the Specialist Team, discussed at 3.3.2. The team will be developed further to ensure LCC improves its level of advocacy regarding enforcement of rights within Protection from Eviction 1977 – Unlawful Eviction, Landlord Harassment, Breach of Quiet Enjoyment.

This will involve introducing practices around interviewing and warning landlords, helping with defence forms, helping with court representation, and potentially taking legal action where landlords are in breach of the Act.

This work is intended to be active by the end of 22/23.

3.5. **IMPROVING ACCESS TO MARKET FOR HOUSING SOLUTIONS**

3.5.1. We continue to monitor the impact of the improvements made to the scheme in July 2021, alongside the converse impact of rising rents and changing markets. Work is currently underway to review the viability of the schemes in the current market, and work through options and recommendations on any changes necessary to keep them attractive and competitive.

A report has been submitted to the Strategic Director City Development & Neighbourhood Services on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2022 and actions will follow feedback.

#### 3.6. **IMPROVED INTELLIGENCE & MONITORING, AND JOINED-UP SERVICES**

3.6.1. Workstreams within this priority will follow the creation of the new teams so that clarity is available on which systems are being used, at which point an analysis will be required to establish opportunities for sharing and integration.

#### 4. **Summary of appendices:**

- Appendix 1 – Key Performance Indicators and revised high level timeline.

#### 5. **Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications:**

- Not required

6. **Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?** No

7. **Is this a “key decision”?** If so, why? No – update only.

## Appendix 1 – Key Performance Indicators and revised high level timeline.

	Baseline	Target direction	Forecast for 22/23
<b>Compliance and Standards*</b>			
Number of mandatory licensed HMOs	901	Increase	▲ 1075
Number of properties licensed through Selective Licensing	N/A	Increase	Too early to produce
Accredited landlords	N/A	Increase	Too early to produce
<b>Homelessness &amp; Housing Need</b>			
Tenancies created via Incentive Schemes	164 <sup>1</sup>	Increase	▲ 203
PRS Tenancy sustainment	45%	Increase	Too early to produce
Prevention interventions resulting in homelessness	15%	Decrease	Too early to produce
Reduction in temporary accomm use as a result of PRS evictions	**	Decrease	Too early to produce
Reduction in non-budgeted temporary accomm cost as a result of PRS evictions	**	Decrease	Too early to produce

\* Note: Additional KPIs to be established as a result of Selective licensing to monitor the impact on the areas.

\*\* To be established as comparator at point of forecasting

Workstream	2022/23			2023/24			
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Compliance Landlord Taskforce	Live and ongoing - monitoring for KPIs						
Bringing empty homes back into use	Live and ongoing						
Increase in take-up of DFGs	Live and ongoing						
Leicester Landlord Forum and landlord liaison	Live and ongoing						
Planning to meet Housing need through the Local Plan process	Live and ongoing						
Operation EPC - energy efficiency standards	Live and ongoing - monitoring for KPIs						
Improved Landlord Incentive Schemes for housing solutions	Live and ongoing - monitoring for KPIs						
Call Before You Serve	Live and ongoing - monitoring for KPIs						
Specialist Housing Advice and Homelessness Team inc. extension of floating support	Live and ongoing - monitoring for KPIs						
Range of Planning-related activities	Conf	Adopt initiatives					
Improved legal advocacy re Protection from Eviction	Implementation		Go live				
Website improvements and centralised information – landlords & tenants	Planning & design		Go live				
Selective Licencing and opportunities around Landlord Accreditation	Full Cncl	Launch	Scale up				

<sup>1</sup> Based on total for the 4-quarter period directly before launch of the new incentives.



**HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION  
WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23**

MEETING DATE	MEETING ITEMS	LEAD OFFICER	ACTION AGREED
6 <sup>th</sup> June 2022	Housing Crisis (working group update) Rent arrears report – Year-end report Who gets Social Housing Homelessness Strategy Update Executive Response to the scrutiny review into “Examining the role and effectiveness of the proposal to establish a central housing Anti-Social Behaviour Team”. Discretionary licensing of private sector rented housing (new)	Cllr Westley / Chris Burgin Charlotte McGraw Caroline Carpendale / Justin Haywood Caroline Carpendale / Justin Haywood Cllr Cutkelvin/Chris Burgin Cllr Cutkelvin /Tony Cawthorne	Rescheduled
1 August 2022	Rent arrears report – Year-end report Housing manifesto Delivery update Update on House Building Repairs, Gas & Voids performance Report Disabled Facilities Grant / Housing Adaptation	Charlotte McGraw Chris Burgin Simon Nicholls Kevin Doyle Simon Nicholls	

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Appendix G

<p><b>22 September</b></p>	<p>'Housing Crisis in Leicester' review draft final report</p> <p>Local Plan consultation (with members of EDTC invited)</p>	<p>Jerry Connolly</p> <p>Fabian DCosta</p>	
<p><b>7 November</b></p>	<p>Income Collection Performance update</p> <p>Housing Capital Programme &amp; Housing Delivery update</p> <p>Homelessness Strategy Update</p> <p>District Heating charges,</p> <p>PRS Strategy update</p>	<p>Charlotte McGraw</p> <p>Simon Nicholls</p> <p>Caroline Carpendale/Justin Haywood</p> <p>Chris Burgin</p> <p>Joanne Russell</p>	
<p><b>9 January</b></p>	<p>Tenancy Support</p> <p>HRA Budget</p>	<p>Gurjit Minhas</p> <p>Chris Burgin</p>	
<p><b>27 February</b></p>	<p>Environmental Budget &amp; Public Realm Project update</p> <p>Repairs, Gas and Voids performance and update report</p> <p>Who gets Social Housing</p> <p>Overcrowding Strategy update</p> <p>Channel Shift update</p>	<p>Gurjit Minhas</p> <p>Kevin Doyle</p> <p>Caroline Carpendale / Justin Haywood</p> <p>Caroline Carpendale / Justin Haywood</p> <p>Charlotte McGraw</p>	

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<b>To be allocated</b>	Progress report for Goscote House & Sprinklers update Retrofitting & Climate Emergency update Empty Homes update  - Refugee Resettlement Programme - Update	Simon Nicholls  Chris Burgin Simon Nicholls  Caroline Carpendale/Justin Haywood	
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