



Leicester
City Council

MEETING OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

DATE: TUESDAY, 12 MARCH 2024

TIME: 5:30 pm

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

Members of the Committee

Councillor Joel (Chair)

Councillor Zaman (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Adatia, Aqbany, Mahesh, O'Neill, Singh Patel and Waddington.

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

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

Georgia Humby (Senior Governance Officer)

Tel: 0116 454 6350, e-mail: committees@leicester.gov.uk

Leicester City Council, 3rd Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

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PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Appendix A

The minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Commission held on 9 January 2024 have been circulated, and Members will be 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. ENVIRONMENTAL BUDGET UPDATE

Appendix B

The Director of Housing submits a report providing an update on the improvements made to housing estates using the Environmental Budget in 2023/2024, and to highlight the current stage of consultation to identify future projects for 2025.

7. ADAPTATIONS STRATEGY

Appendix C

The Director of Housing submits a report providing an overview of the adaptations service and progress of the new Adaptations Strategy.

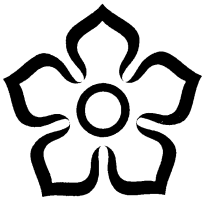
**8. HOUSING CRISIS DECLARATION AND ACTION PLAN [Appendix D](#)
UPDATE**

The Director of Housing submits a report providing a progress update on the delivery of the Housing Crisis actions to the Housing Scrutiny Commission.

9. WORK PROGRAMME [Appendix E](#)

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

10. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS



Leicester
City Council

Appendix A

Minutes of the Meeting of the
HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 9 JANUARY 2024 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Joel (Chair)
Councillor Zaman (Vice Chair)

Councillor Adatia
Councillor Mahesh

Councillor O'Neill
Councillor Singh Patel

Councillor Waddington

In Attendance

Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Cutkelvin – Housing and Neighbourhoods

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48. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received by Cllr Aqbany.

49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair asked members of the commission to declare any interests for which there were none.

50. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair highlighted that the minutes for the meeting on 28 November 2023 were included within the papers and asked members for comments. The Chair highlighted that the minutes for the meeting on 28 November 2023 were included within the papers and asked members for comments.

AGREED:

- It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2023 were a true and accurate record.

51. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer noted that none had been received.

52. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS OR STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Chair noted she had received a copy of the letter sent to the Deputy City Mayor for Housing and Neighbourhoods from the Centre Project and invited the questioner to ask his question.

The Chair of Trustees of the Centre Project, Martin Gage, asked:

Whilst appreciating the financial problems that Leicester City Council faces, does the City Council appreciate that scrapping relatively small grants to voluntary and community groups like the Centre Project, with a track record of preventing homelessness and isolation across the city, is only increasing problems for themselves further down the line? Housing is such a big issue for the Council that reducing the prevention services seems like a false economy.

The Director of Housing responded to the question in which it was noted that:

- The good work and positive impact the Centre Project have in supporting the community was recognised.
- Grant funding is provided to the Centre Project for day centre activities where a direct link to preventing homelessness is not easily identifiable. The authority provides similar activities such as warm spaces and other organisations who offer day centre support do not receive housing funding which is inequitable.
- Discussions between the housing division and Centre Project have been ongoing for several months to mitigate the loss of the grant funding and identify alternative funding that supports the good work of the organisation.
- The authority has offered the Centre Project the opportunity to operate from the Dawn Centre to work alongside other organisations to tackle homelessness and whilst this has been considered the Centre Project, this is not being pursued given their wider work.

In response to Members comments and questions it was noted that:

- The Centre Project receive a £24,500 grant fund from homelessness services from the general fund. The proposal is to withdraw the grant funding at the end of the current financial year along with other efficiency savings due to the significant financial pressures on the budget which will be scrutinised by OSC before Council.
- The Centre Project receive other sources of funding and officers are working with the organisation to identify appropriate funding for the great work in preventing social isolation and signposting residents to relevant services.

The Chair invited the questioner to respond in which it was noted that:

- The Centre Project has received £24,500 over the last 10 years which they are grateful of, although it has not increased with inflation.
- The withdrawal of funding will not threaten the existence of the Centre Project as it does receive funding from elsewhere although they may be year reduction of services and staffing to support vulnerable people.
- The Centre Project cannot relocate to the Dawn Centre due to its holistic approach, including provision of a food bank, tea and coffee and listening ear to prevent people from despair which may lead to homelessness.
- Some individuals are banned from organisations that offer homeless services and referrals can be made to the Centre Project.

The Chair highlighted that she had previously visited the Centre Project to observe the good work of the organisation and noted the Commission's thanks for the support provided to residents. It was further noted that the Commission were assured that withdrawal of funding will not put the Centre Project at risk and agreed that officers continue to liaise with the organisation to secure alternative funding.

53. CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS

It was noted that the Chair had no announcements to make.

54. WHO GETS SOCIAL HOUSING

The Director of Housing introduced the item, noting that an update is provided every quarter to the commission and all members regarding the current position of the housing register, the number of lets and wait times incurred. It was highlighted that the overall position continues to worsen, and additional pressures are expected given homelessness challenges in the city.

The Head of Service presented the report, and it was noted that:

- The number of applications on the housing register has increased by 7% since the previous update. The number of lets and new applicants to the register usually balances, the number of lets has increased but new applicants has also increased due to the housing crisis.
- Applicants across all bands have grown with the increase in applicants and band 1 has grown by 2%. The primary reason for joining the register has not changed with overcrowding and homelessness the main reasons.
- Demand for type and size of property has not changed with houses the higher demand to flats or maisonettes. 2 bedroom properties is demanded most followed closely by 3 bedroom properties. The highest demand is for the east of the city, including Belgrave, North Evington, Wycliffe and Stoneygate but Troon and Eyres Monsell have the highest need with applicants waiting in band 1.
- Overall lettings increased by 5% over the last six months but 53 additional nominations to housing associations. The number of council

owned available stock fell by 28.

- The housing division continue to utilise the acquisitions programme to increase available housing stock in addition to strengthening available private rented sector schemes for alternative solutions. The division support residents to bridge the gap to make private rented sector housing affordable whilst retaining their banding priority if active.
- Waiting times for band 1 increased by 4months for applicants seeking 2 or 3-bedroom properties but waiting times reduced or remained the same for bungalows and 1-bedroom properties. On average 1-bedroom property waits is between 3-6 months and families may be waiting between 12-18month. Band 2 waiting times increased for family accommodation but reduced for 1-bedroom properties and bungalows.
- Wait times for adapted houses reduced due to an increase of supply of fully wheelchair accessible properties and a proactive approach with housing working closely with occupational therapists to assess individual needs. The adapt-to-let initiative enables adaptable properties to be let and adapted to meet the tenants needs.
- 27% of lettings over the 6month period were direct allocation which is consistent with previous reports.

In response to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:

- Demand for wheelchair adapted housing has been higher than supply for some time which instigated the adapt to let work programme that enables adaptable properties to be offered to applicants on the housing register and adapted to meet the needs. It was agreed that information would be shared with the commission relating to wheelchair adapted property data.
- Private rented schemes enable the service to work with landlords and perspective tenants to provide alternative housing solutions to residents on the housing register. Four tiers are available to landlords offering a different level of service, including platinum, gold, silver, and bronze. Around 120 properties were utilised in the private rented sector last year and increased to 204 this year. It was agreed that further details would be circulated regarding the schemes and number of landlords the service work with.
- Private rented schemes have eligibility requirements, but if eligible residents are likely to secure a property quicker than waiting on the housing register. There is an expectation that individuals source potential accommodation and share the details with the housing service to liaise with the landlord to secure a tenancy.
- The housing division is allocated funding to award discretionary housing payments to bridge the gap between the local housing allowance (LHA) and rent to support residents to source accommodation in the private rented sector. The amount of support is tiered depending on need with up to LHA+35% for those with higher need and LHA+20% for lower housing need. Applicants retain their position on the housing register if they are active whilst support is being provided in the private rented sector as this is not perceived to be a long-term solution.
- Demand on the housing register is highest for 2bedroom properties,

followed closely by 3bedroom properties. National bedroom standard criteria is followed to identify bedroom need for applicants.

- The housing register is able to respond to demand and level of need but does not account for urgency of need. Direct allocations form part of the housing allocations policy and enable complexity and urgency of an application to be considered. Around 80% of direct lets for families is to prevent homelessness.
- Applicants can refuse three properties before removal from the housing register. Homelessness legislation is different, and refusal of a suitable property could cease the authority's duty and impact banding priority.
- Tenants can mutually exchange properties but will depend on criteria required to be met to successfully proceed.
- Advice is provided to applicants when they join the housing register about alternative solutions and average wait times which is updated on the website. It was agreed that consideration be given to the communication to applicants to share information whilst managing expectations.

The Chair invited the representative from the tenants and leaseholders forum to comment on the discussion and it was noted that management cases are included in the band 1 criteria for the housing register.

AGREED:

- The Commission noted the report.
- Additional information be circulated to Members.
- Consideration be given to communication with applicants on the housing register.

55. TENANCY SUPPORT

The Director of Housing introduced the item, highlighting the role of the Housing Revenue Account to fund services that provide support to tenants who live in council properties to enjoy their lives.

The Head of Service presented the report, and it was noted that:

- There are around nineteen thousand council tenancies in the city and a key responsibility as a social landlord is to provide support to tenants and prevent homelessness where possible as set out in a national tenancy standard which is monitored by the ombudsman and housing regulator.
- More residents are being identified with complex needs although not all council tenants require the support from services as they may be able to manage independently or have a support network. This enables services to be targeted to tenants.
- Support is provided to tenants by officers from various teams, including homelessness, tenancy management, support for tenants and residents (STAR), and income management.

- A homelessness assessment will be carried out for tenants who present as homeless or at risk of homeless and enable officers to identify whether an individual may require support. Risk assessments and sensitive information can be considered to establish whether an individual may need a direct let to ensure suitable accommodation to settle and sustain their tenancy and meet their needs.
- The housing service undertake visits within six weeks of a tenant moving into a property and can identify whether tenancy support is required. Referrals for support can also be made by officers throughout the tenancy, such as when visiting a property to complete a repair. Other organisations such as the police or health services may identify needs. Housing officers usually provide initial support and oversee the case to identify the appropriate support services are provided to the tenant, although not all tenants are willing to receive support and there may be pressures in services that delay support.
- Welfare visits are undertaken by housing officers, 1,500 visits were conducted between April 2022-23. Tenants identified to require support will be supported by STAR to ensure individuals are able to build confidence in order to sustain their tenancy and prevent homelessness. Between April 2022-23, over one thousand referrals were received and STAR supported 987 cases.
- STAR AMAL support refugees, including Syrian, Afghan and Ukrainian individuals.
- Funding has been secured for a drug and alcohol team and trainer accommodation will be provided to support individuals to build life skills and confidence to sustain their own tenancy. A consistent supported housing offer is also being developed with the appointment of a supported housing manager.
- The income management team includes eight rent advisors to support vulnerable tenants. Last year the team received 938 referrals – much higher than previously which correlated to the cost-of-living crisis. The team proactively work with tenants to collect rent through repayment plans and identify eligible benefits to maximise income for tenants. Rent arrears last year reduced by £206k.

The Commission endorsed the good work of tenancy support service. In response to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:

- Tenants may receive support from a temporary accommodation officer or a transitions worker whilst they are homeless but if longer-term support is required their case will be passed to the STAR team when resource is available.
- There are over 30 officers within the STAR team and additional officers supporting refugees. Support is targeted to tenants with the most needs - officers currently have around 20 cases each but additional supported housing is being explored to allow tenants to be appropriately supported and enable STAR officers to support other residents.
- The STAR team is funded through the HRA whereas the STAR AMAL team is funded by the general fund or government grants. Temporary accommodation officers primarily support homeless services and

therefore funded by the general fund.

- Five teams operate across the city within STAR and officers utilise multi-use centres such as Beaumont Leys Library.
- There are pressures across the housing division including the HRA and other services such as homelessness. An uplift to support homelessness is proposed and is due to be discussed at Overview Select Committee on Thursday 11 January.

AGREED:

- The Commission noted the report.

56. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET (INCLUDING CAPITAL PROGRAMME) 2024/25

The Director of Housing presented the report in which it was noted that:

- The Housing Revenue Account Budget is associated to the income generated through rent and service charges for around nineteen thousand council homes in the city. It is a legal requirement that the income generated be ringfenced to be spent on services for council property tenants and that the account must balance.
- Around £100m is generated through rent and service charges each year but a £10m budget pressure exists relating to pay inflation, running costs, loss of income through the Right to Buy scheme and other pressures as outlined in the report.
- To ensure the HRA budget can balance in 2024/25 it is proposed that core rent be increased to its maximum CPI+1% and the capital programme be suppressed.
- The proposed rent increase equates to 7.7% which on average will be a £6.58 per week higher and an overall average rent of £85.48 which remains the lowest rent in the city and surrounding area. A lower percentage increase in core rent would create a shortfall and consequently prevent programmes of work and investment to be reduced to balance the budget. Other proposed increases to rent include garage rent by 7.7%, hostel and service charges by 5%, and Gipsy and Traveller plot rent by 5%.
- A reduction to charges for tenants and leaseholders is proposed for waylighting by 10% due to a fall in electricity costs. District heating charges are also proposed to be reduced given forecasted lower gas costs – for properties with metres, fixed costs will reduce by 24% and variable costs by 29%. The annual charge to properties supplied by the district heating system without a metre will also see an average reduction of 9.4%.
- The proposed capital programme for 2024/25 is £25.86m, including £15m for investing in new council homes and £10.86 to improve housing stock. Budgets will be increased for capital programmes such as kitchen and bathrooms, boiler replacements, re-wiring properties, re-roofing, soffit and facias as well as disabled adaptations.

- A £0.9m unallocated reserve is forecasted but due to ongoing pressures it is proposed not to utilise it for the 2024/25 budget.
- The tenants and leaseholders forum have been consulted on the proposals who acknowledged them to be fair given the financial pressures and to ensure the capital investment and delivery of services can be maintained.
- Further discussions will be held with members at the Executive and Overview Select committee before Full Council.

The Commission expressed their concerns with the proposed increased rent charges to tenants but acknowledged the difficult financial situation to ensure the budget can balance whilst providing services and investing in housing stock.

In response to questions and comments from Members, it was noted that:

- Around 60% of council tenants receive housing benefits that will increase in line with the proposed rent charges. The income management team proactively work with tenants to maximise income and identify sustainable and affordable repayment plans if they find themselves in financial difficulty. Receipt of rental income remains on track to be almost 100% with few evictions that are usually associated to abandonment and refusal to engage with the income management team.
- The increase to rent is proposed to come into effect in the new financial year, 1 April 2024.
- The capital programme is utilised to acquire and build new council homes. The service will also continue to bid for eligible government grant schemes to maximise funding to increase housing stock to alleviate pressure on the housing register and generate rental income for the HRA.

The Deputy City Mayor for Housing and Neighbourhoods noted that other housing services are also delivered through the general fund and agreed to liaise with the Chair to ensure the Commission are able to scrutinise the HRA and wider budget moving forward.

The Chair invited the representative from the tenants and leaseholders forum for comments in which it was noted that the forum had been consulted on the proposals and overall in support. The Commission and Deputy City Mayor for Housing and Neighbourhoods expressed thanks to the Forum for their vital contribution and engagement.

AGREED:

- The Commission noted the report.
- The Chair to liaise with the Deputy City Mayor for Housing and Neighbourhoods and Director of Housing to determine how the Commission can scrutinise all budgets for housing services moving forward.

57. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair encouraged Members to share items of interest for consideration on the work programme.

58. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 19.46.



Environmental Budget 2023/2024

Housing Scrutiny Commission 12 March 2024

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin

Lead Director: Chris Burgin, Director of Housing

Report Author:

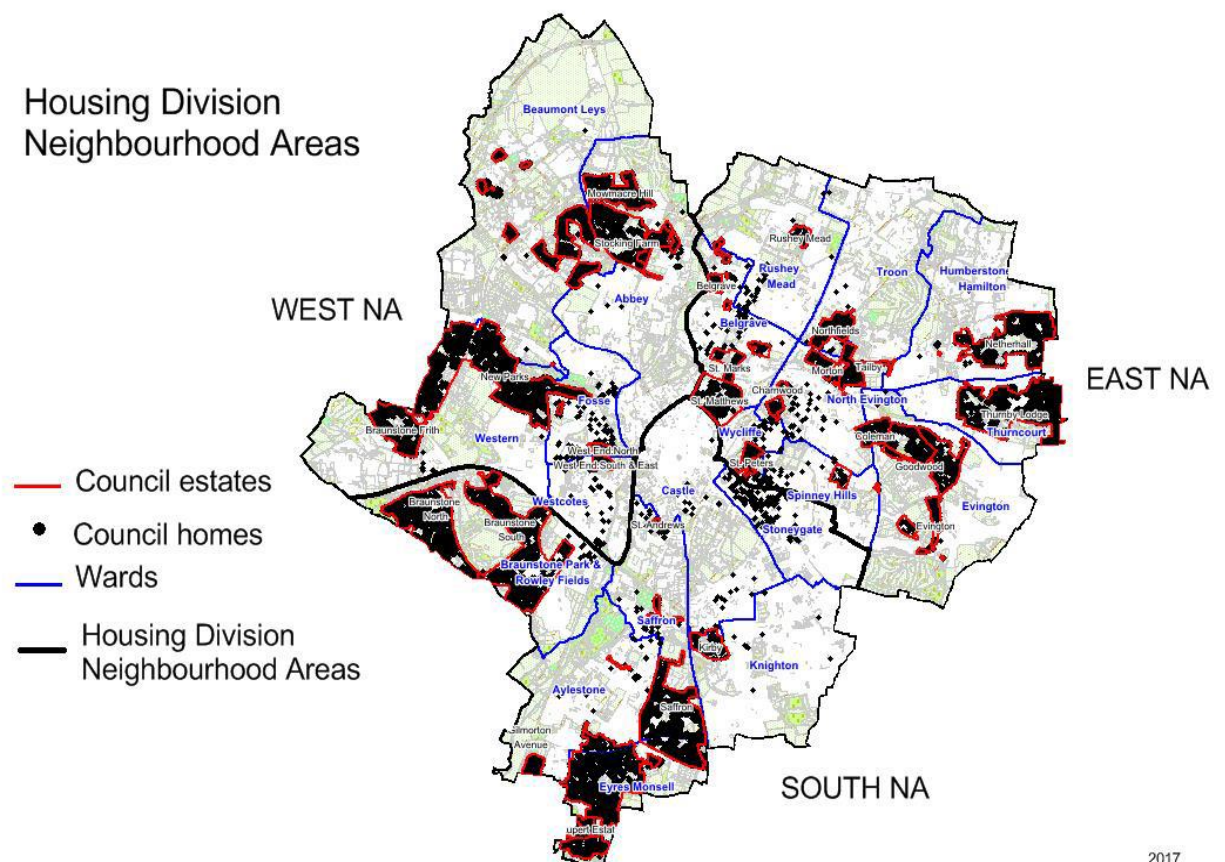
Gurjit Minhas – Head of Service, Housing Division

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the improvements made to housing estates using the Environmental Budget in 2023/2024 and to highlight the current stage of consultation to identify future projects for 2025.
- 1.2 The Environmental Budget is used to make improvements to council estates and is usually £750k per annum. Schemes and projects are identified through consultation with tenants, residents, ward Cllrs, housing staff and other key agencies like the Police. All the schemes are focused on improving council estates to make them safer and better places for people to live.
- 1.3 Due to current budget pressures on the Housing Revenue Account, the budget for 2023/2024 was set at £200k and for 2025 has been set at £200k again.
- 1.4 Prior to the budget being set in 2023, ward Cllrs had been consulted and proposals were put forward to the value of £775k. Many of these had to be put on hold due to the reduction in the budget.

2. Background

- 2.1 The schemes cover the city's three district management housing areas, East, West and South:



2017

2.2 The original proposals for 2023/2024 were supported by all ward Cllrs and came to £775k. The tables below indicate if there was specific Cllr involvement in identifying the schemes and which schemes were placed on hold.

2.3 In the **West District** the following 11 schemes were identified at a cost of £286,647:

Ward	Improvement	Cllr Involvement	Cost	Complete/funding source
Western				
	Burns flats improvements	Cllr O'Donnell	£55,351	On hold
	Dupont Gardens – security gates		£52,850	On hold
	Liberty Road – 4 parking spaces		£36,000	On hold
	Comet Close - bollards	Cllr Waddington	£3,615	On hold
Fosse				
	Flora Street – metal gates	Cllr Cassidy	£4,411	Completed
Westcotes				
	Wildflower planting	Cllr Russell	£2,500	Completed
Abbey				
	Thurcaston Road – knee rails		£9,135	On hold
	Mottisford Road – clear tree stumps		£4,995	Completed
B' Leys				
	Portmore Close - cladding		£104,000	On hold/Capital budget?
	Portmore Close – paint internal area		£4,340	On hold
	Portmore Close - grounds maintenance		£9,450	Completed

2.4 In the **East District**, the following 10 schemes were identified, costing: £219,250

Ward	Improvement	Cllr Involvement	Cost	Complete/funding source
Belgrave				
	Linford, Bath, Bernards and Jackson Street – deep clean internal areas		£650	Completed using the District Budget
Evington				
	Radstone Walk - clearing shrub areas		£3,000	Completed
Wycliffe Ward & Belgrave Ward				
	St Marks/ St Matthews - estate improvements to shrubbed areas and relocating recycling bins	Cllr Chamund	£15,000	On hold

	Paint bin rooms and communal areas		£20,000	On hold
	CCTV to tackle fly tipping and ASB		£25,000	On hold
	St Peters - Shopping precinct car park renovation	Cllr Aqbany/ Cllr Dawood	£20,000	Highways funding being sourced
Thurncourt Ward				
	Bowhill Grove - Painting		£6,150	On hold
	Kirmington Gardens - parking	Cllr Gee	£120,000	Not required
North Evington				
	Willowbrook Road – painting blocks		£6,150	On hold
Rushey Mead				
	Bath Street – install fencing to tackle ASB		£3,300	On hold

2.5 In the **South District** the following 8 schemes have been identified costing £269,000

Ward	Improvement	Cllr Involvement	Cost	Complete/funding source
All south				
	Estate landscape team		£135,000	Part - completed
	Meadow Gardens - Community food growing project	Cllr Dempster	£5,000	Completed
Saffron Braunstone & Eyres Monsell	Bungalow lighting	Cllr Clarke/ Cllr Pickering	£10,000	On hold
Saffron				
	Neston Gardens – Ball Court / Kingfisher Park	Cllr Cutkelvin	£45,000	On hold
Eyres Monsell				
	Featherstone Road - bins and bases	Cllr Pickering/Cllr Pantling	£34,000	On hold
	Caversham Road – verge hardening	Cllr Pantling	£15,000	On hold
Braunstone				
	Hockley Farm Road – Removing planters and replacing with bollards	Cllr Barton	£10,000	Completed
Aylestone				
	Gilmorton – Improvements to flat areas and bike stores	Cllr Clarke	£15,000	On hold

2.6 To prioritise where the £200k was spent in 2023/2024 the proposals were rated in relation to impact on the cost of living, environmental impacts and impact on crime and disorder and several other factors. Further consultation was also undertaken with ward Cllrs, including face to face meetings and as a result, it was agreed that the following proposals would be taken forward costing £175k:

District/Ward	Project	Cost
Fosse Ward	Flora Street - Install metal gates	£4,411
Westcotes Ward	Wildflower planting	£2,500
Abbey	Mottisford - clear brambles and grass	£4,995
Beaumont Leys	Portmore Close - Grounds maintenance	£9, 450
East		
Evington	Radstone Walk – Clear Shrub area, planting	£3,000
South		
All Wards	Landscape Team	£135,000
All Wards	Community Food Growing Project	£5,000
Braunstone	Hockley Farm Road – Remove planters and replace.	£10,000

2.7 I am pleased to report that most of the above work has been completed, however the landscape team could not retain its staffing levels, so there has been some underspend in this area.



2.8 Above are the six new planters that have been installed on Hockley Farm Road & Wyatt Close to replace the old wooden planters that were beyond repair and were slowly disintegrating. A local community group “The Friends of Highway Spinney” will be planting new plants in the planters and maintaining them throughout the seasons. The Housing Officer has been liaising closely with the group to ensure the location of the planters were suitable.

2.9 Some of the underspend from last year was used for security measures to deal with ASB issues in the West district.

2.10 It was originally thought that the projects put on hold would be either funded through this coming year's budget or alternative funding sourced. In some areas alternative funding has been sourced for example for the St Peter's shopping precinct carpark.

2.11 As this year's budget as remained at **£200k**, not all the hold projects can be progressed, and further consultation is required to determine where the funding should be directed. Many of the on-hold projects will have to be delayed until 2025, subject to funding agreed for the Environmental Budget going forward.

3 Consultation Status 2024/2025 Funding

3.1 Currently the District Managers are just beginning consultation to see if there are new proposals or priorities.

3.2 In the East we have a high number of enquires relating to cleaning and weed spraying, so the funding could be considered to address these issues.

3.3 In the West, Cllr Dempster, Cllr O'Neill and Cllr Cole have identified improvement work for the Burns flats on Aikman Road. Other Cllrs in the district still need to be consulted about their wards.

3.4 The South has identified some initial ideas for Meadow Gardens for food growing and footpath proposals costed at £19,000 and widening paths at the back of bungalows to accommodate mobility scooters costed at £20,000.

3.5 There may also be an opportunity for a joint project with PA Housing who have stock in some of our housing areas, which could potentially be jointly funded, this is currently being explored.

3.6 The environmental budget is only one part of the investment in our estates. We have the Public Realm Work project that has invested over £2m now in St Matthews and St Peter's estates. The estate warden service is funded to keep our estates clean and tidy and remove fly tipping. A grounds maintenance service is funded by the Housing Revenue Account, so that all the green areas are maintained and cut back. This investment and resources in housing estates helps to make them safer and better places for our tenants to live in.

4. Recommendations:

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Housing Scrutiny Commission note the improvements implemented as highlighted in section 2.6. and to provide any feedback on preferred priorities for the coming year.
- 4.2 Once consultation with residents and ward Cllrs is complete, to receive a further report on the proposals to be taken forward this year and wider investment in council estates.

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

The HRA Capital Programme for 2023/24 includes a sum of £200k for Communal and Environmental work. The allocation of £135k for the landscape team in 2023/24 is unlikely to be spent in this financial year and if slippage is approved would release funds for new proposals.

Julie Robinson -Accountant

5.2 Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Jeremy Rainbow – Principal Lawyer (Litigation) - 371435

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Implications

5.4 Equalities Implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The report outlines how the environmental budget will fund improvements on estates across the City in 2023/2024.

There are no direct equality implications arising from the report, however works that are focused on improving council estates to make them safer and better places for people to live in. should lead to positive impacts for people from across a range of protected characteristics, such as the provision cutting back of shrubs and trees and tackling anti-social behaviour. It is important that any consultation is accessible.

Surinder Singh, Equalities Officer, 454 4175

HSC Briefing Report

Disabled Adaptations
Housing Scrutiny Commission: 12th March 2024
Lead director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

- Ward(s) all
- Report authors: Simon Nicholls
- Author contact details: simon.nicholls@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version: v.1

1. Summary

The council deliver adaptations for residents that have been assessed as needing them regardless of the tenure of their home. This is achieved by Social Care and Education (SCE) and Housing working together to deliver the adaptations service.

This report talks about the process followed for the delivery of minor and major adaptations by tenure, council owned and all other, and the two distinct funding routes that apply.

The report will also update members on the progress of the new Adaptations Strategy.

2. Recommendation

That member of the Housing Scrutiny Commission note the contents of this report.

3. Supporting information including options considered:

The start of the adaptation journey is when a resident calls the Contact and Response Team in SCE. If the resident is known to SCE, they are referred to the locality teams for assessment if not then they are referred to the adaptations team, either way they are assessed by a member of staff from SCE.

The assessment is carried out by an Occupational Therapist (OT) who decides what level of support is required. This could be something simple like an additional stair rail or grab rail or a toilet frame or alternatively major adaptations may be required that require the installation of a wet room or additional ground floor facilities.

Whilst all requests for adaptations are dealt with in the same way initially, the funding routes are different, and this decides the journey the request takes.

Adaptations HRA.

All minor adaptations (work costing less than £1000) are completed as they are received by the division from SCE, some can be done very quickly if it's just a grab rail or additional stair rail that is required and others, like a ramp to the front door may take a little longer but they are completed by the in house craft staff in the order that they are received based on resources being available.

Major adaptations regardless of tenure are prioritised by the OT, this is because they have actually met and assessed the person, are familiar with their medical history and are qualified to recommend adaptations that will improve outcomes for the residents.

Housing's role is purely to carry out the works that have been recommended and to make sure we do this in priority order, so that those in the most need are waiting the least time. This is done based on the priority points allocated to each case by the OT and this is why it is difficult to respond to questions about waiting lists and waiting time because they are dependent on the number of cases we get and the number of points they are allocated, the list is constantly changing, it is a dynamic and designed to ensure that nobody in urgent need is waiting longer than it takes to practically complete the adaptations.

The following table shows the number and type of adaptations that are completed every year for housing tenants:

Type of adaptation	21/22	22/23	23/24*
Rails/handrails	340	335	94
Ramps	29	30	31
Layout alterations	0	0	0
Level access showers	75	70	40
Wash/dry toilets	4	3	3
Stairlifts	48	50	51
Step lifts	3	3	2
Through floor lifts	14	10	8
Extensions	3	3	3
totals	516	504	232

*to December 23.

HRA budget

Adaptations for council tenants are paid for from the HRA capital programme, the following table shows how much by year we spend on adaptations.

	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Budget	£1.2m	£1.2m (including £300k for adapt to let scheme	£1.1m (including £300k for adapt to let scheme	£1.2m* (adapt to let scheme % to be agreed)
Actual spend	£1.1m	£1.2m	£1.1m**	

*Proposed

**forecast

Other ways we deliver adaptations:

Adapt to let.

Due to the high demand for Adapted properties the HRA is also in a position to reconfigure some of its existing stock to try and support residents on the housing register, these may be tenants who live in homes that have been assessed as needing adaptations but they are unable to be carried out at their current home for technical reasons, or they may be new applicants who have faced similar issue in other tenure of accommodation.

If a property is partially adapted, then an assessment is made to see if it can be altered to become fully wheelchair accessible. This has proven to be a successful approach and we have housed 17 applicants this year that were waiting for accessible accommodation.

New build council housing:

As part of your local Authority new build programme all sites will deliver 10% wheelchair accessible homes. The following sites are in our current delivery pipeline and expected to deliver new wheelchair accessible homes in the next 3 years. These will be discussed in greater detail as part of the next update on the new build and acquisition programme that will come to a future Housing Scrutiny Commission meeting.

Saffron Velodrome
Stocking Farm
Southfield Newry
Forest Lodge Education Centre (FLEC)
Hospital Close

Non HRA housing.

The assessment by the OT is the same. Minor adaptations are not sent to housing but completed by contractors that SCE has appointed, once completed they are checked to be suitable by a member of SCE staff. They are paid for by SCE.

Major adaptations.

Major adaptations for all other tenures follow the Disabled Facility Grant process if the resident needs or wants help to finance the works. This is a means tested process so not all those that apply for a DFG will be eligible for one, some will only be eligible for part payment and will have to make a contribution themselves and others not eligible at all and they will have to directly fund the full cost of the adaptation, some applicants choose not to follow the DFG process at all.

The DFG grant has to follow a fixed process because we have to demonstrate that we have complied with the Housing Grant, Construction and Regeneration Act and we are audited every year to ensure compliance. The act makes it clear what a DFG can be used for:

Providing access into and out of the home by installing:

Ramps, front and rear
Step lifts front and rear
Access to rear garden

Providing access in and around the home so that a resident can meet their assessed needs by providing:

Level access showers
Stairlifts
Through floor lifts
Level access shower

The following table shows the type and number of adaptations that we have completed.

Type of adaptation	21/22	22/23	23/24*
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Stairlift	54	70	20
Step lift, platform lifts	6	16	6
Level access shower	101	131	72
Ramps	3	7	6
Combined shower and toilet cubicles	17	22	1

*to December 2023.

DFG Budget

The following table shows how much we spend each year on DFG's

year	Government grant	Council contribution	total
21/22	£1,538m	£1,461m	£3,000m
22/23	£2,080m	£20k	£2,100m
23/24	£1,931m	£250k	£2,182m
24/25	tbc	tbc	tbc

Adaptations Strategy

It has been agreed that we need an Adaptations Strategy to ensure that all the information is held in one place and future adaptation services meet the needs of Leicester residents. This is being supported by the Housing Transformation Team (HTT).

The initial scoping exercise has been carried out and initial milestones agreed.

Actions	Timescale
Undertake background research and data collection	complete
Develop draft key themes for the strategy	End of April 24
Consult with internal and external stakeholders of the key themes of the strategy	End of May 24
Write the draft strategy	End of July 24
Present draft strategy to relevant meetings for comment	End of August 24
Undertake a 2 nd . Consultation exercise	End of Sept/Oct
Final sign off.	

Members of the Housing Scrutiny will be consulted as part of the process.

4. Details of Scrutiny

Report prepared for information only.

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5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

No financial comments sought, report for information only.
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5.2 Legal implications

No legal comments sought, report for information only.
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5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

No climate change comments sought, report for information only.

5.4 Equalities Implications

No equality comments sought, report for information only.

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

n/a

6. Background information and other papers: None

7. Summary of Appendices: n/a

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”? no

10. If a key decision please explain reason

Update on the Housing Crisis Declaration and Action Plan

Housing Scrutiny Commission- 12th March

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Cutkelvin
Lead director/officer: Chris Burgin

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Chris Burgin
- Author contact details: chris.burgin@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: v1

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Council declared a Housing crisis on the 24th November 2022.
- 1.2 This report provides a progress update to the Housing Scrutiny commission setting out progress on delivery of the Housing Crisis actions.
- 1.3 Overall, good progress has been made with the delivery of the action plan, out of a total of 17 LCC actions 5 have been completed and 11 are in progress with only 1 action pending commencement.
- 1.4 Again, overall good progress has been made with the delivery of the action plan associated to Government demands. Out of 16 demands, 14 are in progress and 2 have been completed.

2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1 To note the progress made with the Housing Crisis Actions and provide any comments and feedback.
- 2.2 Support the need to review the Housing Crisis action plan to update it to reflect current Housing challenges and issues.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

- 3.1 Report is solely for Housing Scrutiny commission consideration

4. Detailed report

- 4.1 In November 2022 Leicester City Council declared a Housing crisis calling for urgent action from central Government to ease pressure caused by the growing demand for affordable, decent housing.
- 4.2 Factors including the loss of thousands of council homes under the Government's Right to Buy scheme, a growing population and the cost of living crisis mean that thousands of families in the city are in desperate need of homes.
- 4.2 In advance of the declaration the Housing Scrutiny committee undertook a task group on the matter, chaired by Cllr Stephen Gee. The outcome of this Task Group was a

number of recommended actions required of government and of Leicester City Council. The recommendations report is embedded in Appendix 3.

4.3 This report provides a progress update to the Housing Scrutiny commission setting out progress on delivery of the Housing Crisis actions.

Leicester City Council Actions

4.4 A full table containing the 17 actions required of Leicester City Council is contained within Appendix 1.

4.5 Overall, good progress has been made with the delivery of the action plan, out of a total of 17 LCC actions 5 have been completed and 11 are in progress with only 1 action pending commencement.

4.6 To draw out headline progress;

Maximise Council Housing Delivery

The Council has a very clear pipeline of Council and Affordable housing delivery for 2023 to 2027 of 1,500 new homes and the focus of attention has been on the delivery with good progress being made on these. The Council continues to be on track to deliver in excess of the 1,500 units. It should be noted that there continue to be additional barriers and challenge to delivery in this market including the current limitations to construction industry capacity and desire to take on new Housing building and conversion contracts and also the inflationary pressures that have had a significant impact on the cost of works and confidence in the market to take on new works. Reports have been provided separately to update the Housing Scrutiny Commission on this matter setting out how the Council has continued to work agilely to deliver the pathway and attract contractors and builders to bid for current procurement opportunities.

Work has also commenced on collating all available sites across Leicester available and suitable for Housing to deliver Affordable Housing beyond this 4 year period and for the next 10 years.

All applicable existing sites have been examined and a comprehensive list of sites believed to be available, suitable and deliverable for Affordable Housing delivery has been collated. Work is now ongoing with private owners around developing and bringing forward these sites, work has commenced on currently available sites within the Local plan and preparations taken place for those sites that could be available for Residential property building when the New Local Plan is approved.

Trainer accommodation units being developed as part of the ZIP acquisition. A report is planned to be submitted to Full Council to deliver 225 Temporary accommodation homes and 125 leased properties at a cost of £45m. The Dawn Centre is being developed to add a further 10 independent units of accommodation. Beyond this single units are being acquired that will enable some of this accommodation to be used as this type of accommodation for singles and families. The Housing Division have employed a Supported Housing Manager in a step towards developing a growing alternative offer for those that General needs Housing is not suitable for.

Tackle poor quality housing in the City

The council has a live Private Rented Strategy that has a robust action plan that is being actively delivered upon to tackle poor quality Housing in the City. Excellent progress has been made on most of the PRS strategy actions and this includes the delivery of a new Selective Licencing scheme in designated part of the City and a Call before you serve offer to PRS landlords and their tenants to prevent Homelessness. The Council has also recently enhanced its PRS offer to private landlords to work with them to increase access to the PRS for those facing Homelessness. The PRS strategy progress update is provided periodically to CMB & HSC

Work with other providers to facilitate affordable housing in the city

The Council continue to work with Registered providers in the City to deliver new Affordable Housing, Midland Heart are actively working on Abbey Park Road ex bus depot and will deliver 72 new units by 25/26 on this site and 13 on Barkythorpe Road site. Nottingham Community Housing association are actively delivering 58 new homes by July 2025 on Meadows Way in the City

Work is ongoing on the New Local Plan which will facilitate more Housing sites for LCC and partners to develop. Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan was consulted on in November 2022. Following review of consultation responses the new Draft Local plan was submitted to Govt for independent review. Examination in Public is expected in 2024 and adoption in 2025.

Plan evidence includes detailed central area brownfield assessment to identify potential development sites/urban capacity. Local Plan identifies city wide development sites that may be suitable for council housing and availability of non central brownfield sites should be kept under review.

Central Government demands & actions

4.7 A full table containing the 16 actions demanded and required of government is contained within Appendix 2.

4.8 Again, overall good progress has been made with the delivery of the action plan associated to Government demands. Out of 16 demands, 14 are in progress and 2 have been completed.

4.9 To draw out headline progress;

Funding for 150,000 new Social Homes a year

The Government committed £11.4 billion in funding over the five-year Affordable Housing Programme (AHP) and this is expected to support the delivery of up to 180,000 new homes with completions up to 2028. Homes England allowed councils to become strategic partners for the first time, with only housing associations previously permitted.

The Housing Delivery team meets regularly with Homes England over Affordable Housing delivery and are using these meetings to promote the need for extended AHP funding and secure funding for Leicester City Council.

Additional funding of almost £1m has been secured from Homes England towards the ZIP purchase, a bid is in for Homes England funding for 20 units of acquired accommodation. Other capital funding has been secured through the Local Authority Fund for 10 units of accommodation. A bid has also been submitted for a further 8 units of accommodation.

The Council is currently reviewing its full Housing delivery pipeline of delivery sites and intends to submit significant bids during 2024/25 to secure increased housing investment from the AHP in to Leicester for new Council Housing.

Large, sustained increase in Local Housing Allowance rates to address affordability

The council has successfully lobbied government on this matter and government have responded and agreed in the Autumn budget statement to increase National Housing Allowance rates to the 30th percentile level from April 2024.

Indicative rates are set out in the following table for Leicester.

Leicester	LHA Rate per week 2023/24	LHA rate per week 2024/25
Shared Accommodation	78.00	91.00
1 bed	103.56	124.27
2 bed	130.03	149.59
3 bed	155.34	178.36
4 bed	205.97	241.64

The Council is currently assessing if the proposed increased rates will meet the commitment of Government to achieve PRS rental at the 30th percentile rate.

Legislate to end Section 21 "no fault" evictions

Successful lobbying and meetings with Senior Directors have been undertaken and this matter highlighted this as a significant reason for Leicester's Homelessness promoting the need to change the law on this matter. Government have committed to change the law on S21 and abolish this.

New legislation is currently heading through parliament to change this and strengthen tenants rights in PRS (this could be 2025/2026).

Landlords will lose the "no fault" eviction option as "Section 21" is to be abolished and the new regime will allow landlords to regain possession of their property only in "reasonable circumstances" relying on statutory grounds for possession to be defined within the new legislation. New "beefed-up" grounds will permit a landlord to end the tenancy if they intend to sell or wish close family to move into the property, provided at least six months has passed since the beginning of the contract.

It will also become illegal to impose a blanket ban on renting to families with children or those in receipt of benefits.

Tenants will be permitted to end their tenancy at any time on giving two months' notice.

The government have however not gone as far as introducing legislation to create 5-year minimum Private Rented Sector tenancies, another Housing crisis demand of government.

Close loopholes with regulation on holiday accommodation

Govt consulted in May 23 on this issue but is yet to feedback its next steps on this matter. This consultation follows a commitment by government to introduce a short-term lets registration scheme through an amendment to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill.

The registration scheme will ensure England continues to provide safe and high-quality guest accommodation, as well as provide data that will help local authorities identify where premises are being let out in their area. It will provide valuable information to help local authorities enforce health and safety regulations and manage the housing market impact of high numbers of short-term lets (where this is an issue).

Give local control and ownership of setting Holiday Home Council tax levels

Homes empty for more than five years will be charged three times the council tax of occupied homes. From April 2021, homes empty for more than 10 years will be charged four times the council tax of occupied homes. Legislation passed in December 2023 allows local authorities to charge up to double council tax rates on second homes. The change will bring the second home council tax rules into line with long-term empty homes from April 2024.

Introduce a National Landlord Register

The Renters reform bill introduced in early 2023 included the possibility of the creation of a national landlord register. The Renters (Reform) Bill proposes the creation of a new government-operated Private Rented Sector Database which will support a new digital Property Portal.

Under this proposal landlords will be required to sign up and register all properties they let out or intend to let out. It's important to note that the Renters (Reform) Bill is not law as yet.

5. Background information and other papers:

6. Summary of appendices:

Appendix 1 – LCC Actions

Appendix 2 – Government Demands

Appendix 3 – Housing Scrutiny Commission Task Group Report

7. 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?

No

Appendix 1 – LCC Demand

Housing Crisis Action Plan - LCC actions						
Council Housing - general						
Outcome	Detail	Lead Task Owner	Resource requirement	Completion timescales	Progress update	RAG Rating
Maximise Council Housing Delivery	Develop an active Housing delivery plan for the next 10 years	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Ongoing	The focus of attention has been on the delivery of the existing 1,500 units in the 23 to 27 period, with good progress being made on these. Work has also commenced on collating all available sites across Leicester available and suitable for Housing to deliver Affordable Housing beyond this 4 year period and for the next 10 years. All applicable existing sites have been examined and a comprehensive list of sites believed to be available, suitable and deliverable for Affordable Housing deliver has been collated. Work is now ongoing with private owners around developing and bringing forward these sites, work has commenced on currently available sites within the Local plan and preparations taken place for those sites that could be available for Residential property building when the New Local Plan is approved.	Green

	Seek opportunities to invest in Council owned social housing with highly sustainable specification	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Ongoing	All available sites as being individually planned are considered to meet the highest sustainable specification. A number of existing sites are particularly focussed on delivering as examples of this including Saffron Lane, Lanesborough Road and Stocking Farm	Green
	Provide more suitable and affordable, temporary and stepped accommodation with a long-term sheltered accommodation offer	Chris Burgin	Officer time, development and building costs	Ongoing	Trainer accommodation units being developed as part of the ZIP acquisition. A report has been submitted to Full Council on the 18th February to deliver 225 Temporary accommodation homes and 125 leased properties at a cost of £45m. The Dawn Centre is being developed to add a further 10 independent units of accommodation. Beyond this single units are being acquired that will enable some of this accommodation to be used as this type of accommodation for singles and families. The Housing Division have employed a Supported Housing Manager in a step towards developing a growing alternative offer for those that General needs Housing is not suitable for.	Green
	The council delivery programme to have	Chris Burgin	Officer time	31 December 2023	A full delivery programme that sets out the total delivery expected for the next 4 years, annual delivery and also site	Complete

	clearly identified objectives and targets over the time of the programme.				delivery dates has been completed and agreed. This is now being monitored and overseen by the Housing Deliver Board and will report in periodically to LMB, CMB and HSC.	
Increase and free up existing Council Housing for those in greatest need	Use some of the Affordable Housing Revenue to introduce payments to those council tenants downsizing to make the move more attractive and affordable in order to free up homes for families	Chris Burgin	Recourses to be allocated from the Housing Revenue Account	01 April 2023	Housing have introduced a new scheme called 'Easy Move' to support and incentivise tenants moving out of underoccupied properties. Housing have also promoted the use of Mutual Exchange and the use of the national Home Swapper IT system to deliver more over and under occupying swaps. A budget is also available to facilitate extensions for suitable LCC owned properties to generate space to address overcrowding	Complete
The Council to deliver exemplar low and no carbon new build sites	The council establish the development of an exemplar site of low carbon modular housing, to	Chris Burgin	Officer time, development and building costs	ongoing	All available sites as being individually planned are considered to meet the highest sustainable specification. A number of existing sites are particularly focussed on delivering exemplar schemes including	Green

	show that developments like this can be both stylish and great to live in				Saffron Lane, Lanesborough Road and Stocking Farm	
Tackle overcrowding and the need for adaptations in the City	The Council utilises its Overcrowding Strategy and develops an Adaptations Strategy to help those on the Housing Register in the most serious housing need	Chris Burgin	Officer time Anything else?	Timescales set within the Overcrowding Strategy and Adaptation Strategy action plans	LCC now have a live Overcrowding strategy with a defined action plan to start to tackle the levels of overcrowding in LCC owned stock initially. Work has started to develop an Adaptations strategy	Green
Private Sector Housing						
Outcome	Detail	Lead Task Owner	Resource requirement	Completion timescales	Progress update	RAG Rating

<p>Tackle poor quality housing in the City</p>	<p>The Council to deliver its PRS Strategy, including PRS consultation and implementation to drive up the standard in this sector. Expand the PRS regulatory framework and improve the lives of tenants in the private sector</p>	<p>Chris Burgin / Sean Atterbury</p>	<p>Officer time Anything else?</p>	<p>Deadlines set within the Private Sector Strategy Action Plan</p>	<p>The council has a live PRS Strategy that has a robust Action plan that is being actively delivered upon. Excellent progress has been made on most of the PRS strategy actions. The PRS strategy progress update is provided periodically to CMB & HSC</p>	<p>Green</p>
	<p>The Council to rigorously pursue unauthorised developments and breaches of planning control to safeguard</p>	<p>Andrew L Smith</p>	<p>Officer time Legal fees</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing work by the Planning Enforcement Team to respond proactively to unauthorised development</p>	<p>Green</p>

	residential amenity and improve the quality of stock					
	Further promote the Private Rented Sector offer from the Council to Private Landlords to make properties available for local families in need	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Complete	Ongoing promotion of the live scheme. A review of the scheme has also been undertaken to ensure it continues to be good value in attracting more private landlords to the scheme. The scheme offer was strengthened as a result of this review and an increase in the level of support available up to 35% above LHR rate available as part of the scheme	Complete
Work with other providers to facilitate affordable housing in the city	Work closely with registered providers to ensure the best use of those properties, such as to encourage	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Ongoing	As part of development of a suite of sites for the next 4 and 10 years delivery of 1500+ units, specific sites have been identified that will be made available for RPs to deliver new affordable housing for the City. The release of these sites is subject to the Local Plan approval.	Green

	tenants to downsize where possible and make larger properties available for larger households					
Reduce the level of empty homes in the city	Development of an Empty Homes Strategy. Owners of empty homes to be helped by repurposing their empty homes or second homes back into use	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Summer 2024	The Empty Homes team remain focussed upon tackling properties that fit the criteria that are Empty for 18 months +	Green
Assessment of the viability and effectiveness of a Housing Company to meet market needs is delivered	Investigate the viability and justification for a Housing Company for Leicester	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Ongoing / Autumn 2024	A business case to consider the use of a Housing company associated with acquisitions has been written and considered. This determined that the best value option was to deliver such units was through the HRA and GF. The option of building other forms of Housing is yet to be considered.	Green

New House Building						
Outcome	Detail	Lead Task Owner	Resource requirement	Completion timescales	Progress update	RAG Rating
Work with other providers to facilitate affordable housing in the city	Secure more house building sites through a review of existing underdeveloped Local Plan sites, designated for non-housing purposes. To include a review of all brownfield sites in the city. Develop a programme for the delivery of new Council housing on these sites	An drew L Smith/ Chris Burgin	Officer time	Ongoing / 2025	Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan was consulted on in November 2022. Following review of consultation responses the plan was submitted to Govt for independent review. Examination in Public expected in 2024 and adoption in 2025. Plan evidence includes detailed central area brownfield assessment to identify potential development sites/urban capacity. Local Plan identifies city wide development sites that may be suitable for council housing and availability of non central brownfield sites should be kept under review.	Green
	Set up a mechanism to enable Ward Councillors to feed in any localised sites that	Chr is Burgin	Officer time	Nov-23	All site suggestions can be submitted for consideration and evaluation to HousingDevelopment@leicester.gov.uk. A process is in place to evaluate the site and provide direct feedback to the Ward Councillor	Complete

	should be reviewed for Housing						
	Maximise the opportunities with the new Local Plan to secure sufficient Housing land plots suitable to achieve the strategic and political aims of the local authority over the next 10 years	drew L Smith	An	Officer time	Ongoing / 2025	Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan was consulted on in November 2022. Following review of consultation responses the plan was submitted to Govt for independent review. Examination in Public expected in 2024 and adoption in 2025. Plan evidence includes detailed central area brownfield assessment to identify potential development sites/urban capacity. Local Plan identifies city wide development sites that may be suitable for council housing and availability of non central brownfield sites should be kept under review.	Green
	The work of the Housing Board to concentrate on identifying development or conversation opportunities to provide the urgently required social and	is Burgin	Chr	Officer time	Ongoing with 6 monthly report to Scrutiny	Housing Board is now embedded with an Housing Operational Delivery Board now being set up to manage a big uplift in work. Reports have been considered at the Housing, Neighbourhoods & City Centre Board on the 14th June 2023 and the Housing Scrutiny Commission on the 31st July 2023 and updates will continue to be brought to HNCC and HSC meetings periodically.	Complete

other housing needed in the city. The Housing Board to report to Scrutiny within 6-months on its aims, objectives and work done so far						
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Appendix 2 – Government Demands

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Housing Crisis Action Plan - Government Demands							
Central Government Demands - General							
Outcome	Detail	Action	Lead Task Owner	Resource	Completion timescales	Progress update	RAG
Funding for 150,000 new Social Homes a year	Fully fund councils to deliver the building of 150,000 social rent homes each year, including 100,000 council homes. Invest £12.8 billion a year over the next ten years to deliver the	Advocate this commitment at future meetings with Homes England	Chris Burgin / Andrew L Smith	Officer time	Ongoing	Regular meetings being held with Homes England to secure potential future grant funding to develop regeneration sites which may include social rented homes. Meeting in April with DHLUC	Green

	social rented homes needed to break the back of the national housing crisis.					senior civil servants to encourage investment in Leicester and every quarter.	
	Government to announce the next 10 years of the Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) now, rather than waiting until 2025/6 to announce the next tranche of funding.	Advocate this commitment at future meetings with Homes England	Chris Burgin / Andrew L Smith	Officer time	Ongoing	Chris Burgin & the Housing Delivery team meets regularly with Homes England over Affordable Housing delivery and are using these meetings to promote the need for extended AHP funding. Additional funding of almost £1m has been secured from Homes England towards the ZIP purchase, a bid is in for Homes England funding	Green

						for 20 units of acquired accommodation. Other capita funding has been secured through the H Local Authority Fund for 10 units of accommodation. A bid has also been submitted for a further 8 units of accommodation. BUT all of this remains short term funding bids and not the required long term funding investment required	
Long term, no-strings fully funded Climate Retro Fitting for Council Housing	Government funding for the retrofitting of council housing to cut greenhouse gases, provide jobs and promote a shift from	Advocate this commitment at future meetings with Homes England	Chris Burgin / Matt Wallace	Officer time	Ongoing	Available meetings and opportunities are being used to promote the need for this funding to enable this work (and the lack of funding in the	Green

	outsourcing to Direct Labour Organisations. To include a pilot programme of Net Zero social housing to help deploy and reduce the cost of technology needed to meet the Future Home Standard and deliver on our commitment to Net Zero					HRA to achieve the required work) - using data from LCC Housing stock on known pathways of net zero	
Cancel Housing Revenue Account Council house debt	Council housing debt is removed to address underfunding of Housing Revenue Accounts	Lobbying of government	Amy Oliver	Officer time	Ongoing	Amy Oliver to use available High level meeting opportunities to promote the need for this	Green

<p>End the Right to Buy Scheme</p>	<p>End the Right to Buy Scheme to stop the loss of truly affordable housing for those people that cannot afford to access other Housing</p>	<p>Political lobbying of Government</p>	<p>Cllr Cutkelvin</p>	<p>Councillor time</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Officer meeting have have taken place on the 2nd May 2023 and the 28 March 2023 with RTBR and the scheme being raised with Directors at Department of Levelling Up and also with Technical officers as part of their policy development in this area</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>Long term and increased levels of viability land funding</p>	<p>Government funding support to help with the release of new housing sites, including those on brownfield land, to increase viability and delivery</p>	<p>Advocate this commitment at future meetings with Homes England</p>	<p>Chris Burgin / Andrew L Smith</p>	<p>Officer time</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Regular meetings being held with Homes England to secure potential future grant funding to develop regeneration sites which may include social rented homes. Meeting in April with DHLUC senior civil servants to encourage investment in Leicester. Investment has</p>	<p>Green</p>

						been secured through the Brownfield land funding specifically for the development for the FLEC site (£xx	
Outcome	Detail	Action	Lead Task Owner	Resource requirement	Completion timescales	Progress update	RAG
Large, sustained increase in Local Housing Allowance rates to address affordability	Government to increase Local Housing Allowance levels in line with inflation. Local Housing Allowance must be unfrozen and kept in line with at least the 30th percentile of rents to enable people on benefits to access Private Sector Housing	Promotion at S151 officer and other appropriate meetings. Letter to the Minister responsible for DWP and this allowance	Amy Oliver / Cllr Cutkelvin	Officer and Councilor time	Complete	Amy, Cllr Cutkelvin and all relevant Directors have used the opportunities to set out the growing need for this and unaffordability of PRS in the City. Government have responded and agreed in the Autumn budget statement to increase NHA rates to the 30th	Complete

						percentile level from April 2024	
Legislate to end Section 21 "no fault" evictions	End Section 21 evictions to reduce the number of people going through homelessness and spending time in temporary accommodation	Political lobbying of Government	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Ongoing	Meeting with Senior Directors have been undertaken and this matter highlighted as a significant reason for Leicester's Homelessness promoting the need to change the law on this matter. Government have committed to change the law on S21 and have legislation currently heading through parliament to change this and strengthen tenants rights in PRS (this could be 2025/2026)	Green

Legislate to create 5-year minimum Private Rented Sector tenancies	To include a rolling back clause of 2 months to allow tenants flexibility to increase tenancy sustainment	Political lobbying of Government	Cllr Cutkelvin	Councillor time	Ongoing	As above, currently there are no proposals within the amended legislation to mandate a 5 year PRS tenancy.	Green
Close loopholes with regulation on holiday accommodation	Government to review policies to ensure all holiday accommodation is properly regulated, complying with local planning policies and taxes. This could include an extension of the 90-day short let legislation, a proper planning class for short lets and proper licencing for them. With the focus of preventing people finding loopholes in the taxation system and prevent too many local homes being	Political Lobbying of Government	Cllr Cutkelvin	Officer time	Ongoing	Govt consultation underway in May 23 on these issues- potential response to be discussed with new planning Executive lead once confirmed. Should new Usage Classes be established and the ability for Article 4 Direction be confirmed by the Govt in legislation officers to review the potential introduction of a Direction subject to evidential requirements	Green

	converted to holiday homes						
Give local control and ownership of setting Holiday Home Council tax levels	Local control of Government to allow local councils to be able to charge 200% Council Tax on second / holiday homes, as they do in Wales	Political lobbying of Government	Cllr Cutklevin	Officer and Councilor time	Ongoing	Homes empty for more than five years will be charged three times the council tax of occupied homes. From April 2021, homes empty for more than 10 years will be charged four times the council tax of occupied homes.	Complete

Policy change to help those with No Recourse to Public Funds access Housing	To support those currently unable to access benefits support to access Housing to be able to do so	Political lobbying of Government	Cllr Cutkelvin	Councillor time	Ongoing	Ongoing representations to government on this matter at available meetings with Senior Government officers	Green
Introduce a National Landlord Register	To give oversight of the Private Rented Sector, including rogue landlords	Political Lobbying for a National Landlord Register	Cllr Cutkelvin	Councillor time	Ongoing	The Renters reform bill introduced in early 2023 included the possibility of the creation of a national landlord register. The Renters (Reform) Bill proposes the creation of a new government-operated Private Rented Sector Database which will support a new digital Property Portal	Green

New House building							
Outcome	Detail	Action	Lead Task Owner	Resource requirement	Completion timescales	Progress update	RAG Rating
New Council Tax charges on undeveloped Housing sites	Government to allow a Council Tax charge on housing plots with planning permission if they have not been built after a specified period. This would encourage developers to build their sites without delay. Also lobby to introduce planning contracts rather than permissions with penalties for undue delays	Political lobbying of Government	Cllr Cutkelvin	Councillor time	Ongoing	Lobby of government on this matter at available meetings and opportunities	Green

<p>Enhance arrangements to enable developers deliver Affordable homes</p>	<p>In the wholesale review of S106 arrangements (linked to Levelling up) taking place, Government should strengthen arrangements to ensure delivery of the required affordable housing and remove the opportunity for developers to avoid Affordable housing delivery for "viability" reasons</p>	<p>Political lobbying of Government</p>	<p>Cllr Cutkelvin</p>	<p>Officer time</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>One of the main elements of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act is the Infrastructure Levy, which introduces a new way of calculating developer contributions towards affordable housing and infrastructure</p>	<p>Green</p>
<p>Government to review their Refugee Resettlement Programme</p>	<p>The city welcomes incoming communities, but the Government's refugee settlement programmes be on a national basis rather than focussed on already crowded urban settlements.</p>	<p>Political lobbying of Government</p>	<p>Cllr Cutkelvin</p>	<p>Councillor time</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Significant number of meetings with East Midlands Councils with the director of Housing and the Strategic Director of CDN to argue for the need for a National Dispersal Asylum scheme that is mandatory. This has now been accepted and launched and in</p>	<p>Green</p>

						the process of being rolled out	
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Appendix 3 – Housing Scrutiny Commission – Task Group report on the Housing Crisis



Final Version of
Housing TG Report.pc

Housing Scrutiny Committee

Work Programme 2023 – 2024

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
31 July 2023	Housing Overview (Chris Burgin)	The presentation be noted. Members of the commission invited to join this year's rough sleepers count. Discretionary licencing scheme and HMO's be considered on the work programme.	Date to be circulated later in the year to commission members regarding rough sleepers count. Private Rented Sector added to work programme to include update on the discretionary licencing scheme and HMO's.
	Who gets Social Housing (Justin Haywood)	The report be noted and a further update provided in six months.	Item added to work programme for update in January.
	Rent arrears report – Year-end report (Charlotte McGraw)	The report be noted. Further information to be provided to members of the commission in relation to outstanding repairs and the impact on rent payments.	Data shared with members of the commission.
	House Building & Acquisitions update (Simon Nicholls)	The report be noted. Further information to be provided to members of the commission in relation to the number of dwellings for proposed development at each identified site as well as timeframes for the completion of the site as Abbey Park Road.	Data shared with the commission. Further information on timescales to be shared when known.
	Disabled Facilities Grant / Housing Adaptation (Simon Nicholls)	The presentation be noted. Further work on the adaptions policy to be considered for the work programme.	Adaptations Policy added to work programme.

<p>19 September 2023</p>	<p>Homelessness Strategy Update (Caroline Carpendale / Justin Haywood)</p> <p>Damp & Mould (Sam Taylor / Alison Lea)</p> <p>Repairs, Gas & Voids Performance Report (Kevin Doyle / Sam Taylor)</p> <p>District Heating Metering update (Chris Burgin)</p>	<p>Figures on the current known position regarding homelessness in the city to be circulated to Members of the commission.</p> <p>Attention to be drawn to Members of the commission in relation to elements of communication within the Action Plan.</p> <p>Further information in relation to care leavers to be circulated to Members of the commission.</p> <p>Clarity to be sought on the decision-making process for strategies and the requirement for the Homelessness Strategy to go to Full Council.</p> <p>Online portal for private rented sector tenants to report damp and to be brought back to the commission when developed.</p> <p>Report to be noted.</p> <p>Options for Aikman Avenue flats to be shared with Members of the commission once identified.</p> <p>Costs to tenants and leaseholders for metre installation to be reviewed to ensure accurate for proposed timeframe.</p>	<p>Data shared with members of the commission.</p> <p>Actions contained within the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan shared with members of the commission.</p> <p>Data shared with members of the commission.</p> <p>Information shared with members of the commission.</p> <p>Added to the work programme.</p> <p>Noted that this may take some time. Has been added to the action tracker to be shared with members of the commission.</p> <p>Revised figures circulated to members of the commission.</p>
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Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
30 October 2023	Retrofitting & Climate Emergency update (Simon Nicholls)	<p>Officers to consider whether district heating is the most appropriate energy supply for new developments.</p> <p>Officers to liaise with economic development on consideration of potential bid for upskilling individuals in green industries if there are issues around capacity.</p>	<p>Officers met to consider the energy supply to the FLEC site which is proposed to be supplied by district heating. This remains the proposal but was agreed further consideration will be given again in February 2024.</p> <p>Consideration is currently being given to be part of a regional net zero building retrofit skills pilot.</p>
	Empty Homes update (Joanne Russell)	<p>Information to be shared on council tax charges.</p> <p>Information of number of empty homes in North Evington ward to be shared.</p>	<p>Information provided.</p> <p>Information provided.</p>
	PRS Strategy update (Justin Haywood and Sean Atterbury)	<p>Information to be shared on discretionary schemes to access PRS and average waiting list times for each band.</p> <p>Citizen portal to be added to work programme.</p>	<p>Information provided.</p> <p>Listed on work programme.</p>
	Migration update (Joanne Russell)	<p>Information to be shared on Migrant Help.</p>	<p>Information provided.</p>

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
28 November 2023	<p>Housing Capital Programme update (Simon Nicholls)</p> <p>District Service performance (Gurjit Minhas)</p> <p>Channel Shift – housing update (Charlotte McGraw)</p>	<p>Information to be shared on the make-up of the 200 acquisitions.</p> <p>The Commission requested at the meeting on 28 November that they receive regular updates on progress regarding new build developments.</p> <p>Information to be shared regarding sheltered housing, particularly how many currently operate across city, where schemes are located and what the criteria for referrals.</p> <p>Consideration to be given for Members to be part of training to be piloted to front line staff for improved customer care.</p> <p>Officers to speak with provider about whether digitally excluded individuals could call and press numbers for specific repairs etc.</p>	<p>Information provided.</p> <p>Added to work programme.</p> <p>Information provided.</p> <p>Confirmation has been sought and the provider has advised that this service is not unavailable.</p>

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
9 January 2024	<p>Who gets Social Housing? (Justin Haywood)</p> <p>Tenancy Support (Gurjit Minhas)</p> <p>HRA Budget (Chris Burgin)</p>	<p>Figures to be shared on the demand and supply of wheelchair adapted properties.</p> <p>Additional information to be shared on PRS including number of landlords works with across city.</p> <p>Consideration to be given to how communicate with applicants on housing register to share information whilst managing expectations.</p> <p>The Commission noted the report.</p> <p>Consideration to be given on how the commission can scrutinise all budgets associated to housing services moving forward.</p>	<p>Information provided.</p> <p>Information provided.</p> <p>Webpages are being reviewed to make information more prominent and attractive. Advice videos are also being produced.</p> <p>Draft revenue budget and capital programme to be added to the agenda in future budget rounds alongside the housing revenue account.</p>
12 March 2024	<p>Environmental Budget update (Gurjit Minhas)</p> <p>Adaptations Strategy (Simon Nicholls)</p> <p>Response to the Housing Crisis in Leicester commission review (Chris Burgin)</p>		

Forward Plan Items (suggested)

Topic	Detail	Proposed Date
Income Collection Performance update	To be scheduled following the year end.	
Homelessness Strategy Update		
Housing Allocations Policy		
Overcrowding Strategy Update		
Local Plan		
Damp & Mould – PRS Online Portal	Highlighted at meeting on 19 September that portal is in development and agreed to come back to the commission.	
Housing Capital Programme – New Build Developments	The Commission requested at the meeting on 28 November that they receive regular updates on progress regarding new build developments.	
Enhanced Rough Sleeping Provision	OSC requested at the meeting on 11 January 2024 that the commission look into.	
Regulator of Social Housing Update		