

Leicester
City Council

MEETING OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

DATE: MONDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2021

TIME: 5:30 pm

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

Members of the Scrutiny Commission

Councillor Westley (Chair)
Councillor Chamund (Vice Chair)

Councillors Ali, Aqbany, Byrne, Crewe, Gee and Rahman

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

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contact:

Jason Tyler (Democratic Support Officer):

Tel: 0116 454 6359, e-mail: Jason.Tyler@leicester.gov.uk

Leicester City Council, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

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- maintain distancing while entering and leaving the room/building;
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- wear face coverings throughout the meeting unless speaking or exempt;
- make use of the hand sanitiser available;
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- comply with Test and Trace requirements by scanning the QR code at the entrance to the building and/or giving their name and contact details at reception prior to the meeting;
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HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

USEFUL ACRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning
ACM	Asbestos Containing Materials
AGSC	Annual Gas Safety Check
AHP	Affordable Homes Programme
ALMO	Arms' Length Management Organisation
APA	Alternative Payment Arrangements
ASC	Adult Social Care
AST	Assured Short Hold Tenancy
BAU	Business as Usual
B&B	Bed & Breakfast
BCP	Business Continuity Plan
BRE	Building Research Establishment
CBL	Choice Based Lettings
CIH	Chartered Institute of Housing
CIN	Children in Need
CiTAL	Citizens Advice LeicesterShire
CO	Carbon Monoxide
Co2	Carbon Dioxide
CORE	Continuous Recording of Lettings - independently compiled statistics of all Housing Association letting activity
CPO	Compulsory Purchase Order
CSC	Customer Service Centre
CT	Council Tax
CT	Community Transport
CTCE	Construction Training Centre of Excellence
DAR	Dial A Ride
DCPC	Driver Certificate of Professional Competence
DFG	Disabled Facilities Grant
DHF	Discretionary Housing Funds
DHP	Discretionary Housing Payments
DHS	Decent Homes Standard
DMA	District Management Area
DT	Digital Transformation
DTR	Duty to Refer
DVSA	Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EBS	Estate and Building Services
EHP	Empty Homes Premium
EHS	Empty Homes Strategy
EMH	East Midlands Homes

Acronym	Meaning
EOL	End of Life
EPC	Energy Performance Certificate
ERS	Emergency Repairs Service
Euro 6	The Latest Directive Set by The EU to Help Reduce the Level Of Harmful Pollutants Produced By New Vehicles.
EV	Electric Vehicle
EVCS	Electric Vehicle Charging Station
FHS	Future Homes Standard
FRA	Fire Risk Assessment
FS	Floating Support
FTA	Freight Transport Association
G&HS	Gas and Heating Services
GFT	Gas Fill and Test
GSUR	Gas Safety Installation and Use Regulations
GVM	Gross Vehicle Mass
GVW	Gross Vehicle Weight (Same As GVM)
H&WB	Health and Wellbeing
HA	Housing Application
HAF	Housing Application Form
HB	Housing Benefit
HCA	Homes and Communities Agency
HEDNA	Housing Economic and Development Needs Assessment
HHSRS	Home Health and Safety Rating System
HMO	House in Multiple Occupation
Hol	Housing Online
HPO	Homelessness Prevention Officer
HR	Human Resources
HRA	Housing Revenue Account
HSE	Health and Safety Environment
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
IMT	Income Management Team
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Children
LAHS	Local Authority Housing Statistics
LHA	Local Housing Allowance
LSOA	Lower Super Output Area
MAM	Maximum Authorised Mass (Same As GVM)
MCHLG	Ministry of Housing and Local Government
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities, And Local Government
MS	Method Statement
MSO	Multi Skilled Operative
MSOA	Middle Layer Super Output Area
NOSP	Notices of Seeking Possession
NOX	Nitrogen Oxides
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ONS	Office Of National Statistics

Acronym	Meaning
OOH	Out of Hours
OR	Outreach
OT	Occupational Therapist
PATS	Passenger and Transport Services
PI	Performance Indicator
PIE	Psychologically Informed Environments
PLT	Property Lettings Team
PRS	Private Rented Sector
PSL	Private Sector Leasing scheme whereby private sector properties are leased by the council for use as temporary accommodation for homeless households.
QC	Quality Check
R&M	Repairs and Maintenance
RA	Residents Association
RA	Risk Assessment
RD	Revolving Door
RMA	Rent Management Advisor
RSI	Rough Sleeping Initiative
RSL / HA / RP	Registered Social Landlord / Housing Association / Registered Provider
RTB	Right to Buy
RTL	Repairs Team Leader
RTL	Ready to Let
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SH	Sheltered Housing
SLS	Selective Licencing Scheme
STAR	Supporting Tenants and Residents Team
T&L	Tenants and Leaseholders
TA	Tenants Association
TA	Temporary Accommodation
TARA	Tenants and Residents Association
TARS	Tenants Advice and Repairs Service line
TBC	To be confirmed
TC	Traffic Commissioner
UC	Universal Credit
ULEV	Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle
VED	Vehicle Excise Duty
VPLS	Voids and Property Lettings Service
VT	Voids Technician
WIP	Work in Progress
YTD	Year to Date

PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

FIRE/EMERGENCY EVACUATION

If the emergency alarm sounds, you must evacuate the building immediately by the nearest available fire exit and proceed to area outside the Ramada Encore Hotel on Charles Street as Directed by Democratic Services staff. Further instructions will then be given.

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

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 4 October 2021 are attached, and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

4. CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS

5. PETITIONS

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

6. 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.

7. KEY HOUSING STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Appendix B

The Director of Housing submits a report, which provides an update on progress on the key strategic priorities, as set out in the Labour Manifesto.

8. HOME OFFICE BRIDGING HOTEL AND AFGHAN RESETTLEMENT ACCOMMODATION [Appendix C](#)

The Director of Housing submits a report, as presented to the Overview Select Committee, which provides a strategic update on the Home Office Bridging Hotel and the Leicester City Council offer to re-settle 10 Afghan families within the City.

The Minute Extract from the Overview Select Committee is also attached.

9. REPAIRS, VOIDS AND GAS PERFORMANCE REPORT [Appendix D](#)

The Director of Housing submits a report, which provides an update on the performance of the Division's Repairs and Maintenance, Voids and Gas functions during 2021-22.

10. EMPTY HOMES - UPDATE [Appendix E](#)

The Director of Housing submits a report, which provides information on the work of the Empty Homes Team to bring long term private sector homes back into use.

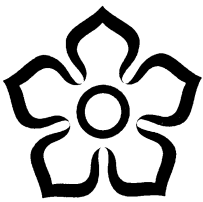
11. INVESTMENT IN COUNCIL HOUSING AND UPDATE ON HOSPITAL CLOSE [Appendix F](#)

The Director of Housing submits a report, which provides an update the ongoing investment in council housing and specific one off projects, including Hospital Close.

12. WORK PROGRAMME [Appendix G](#)

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

13. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: MONDAY, 4 OCTOBER 2021 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Westley (Chair)
Councillor Chamund (Vice Chair)

Councillor Ali

Councillor Rahman

Councillor Aqbany

* * * * *

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Byrne, Crewe and Gee.

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair declared an interest as members of his family lived in Council accommodation.

The Vice-Chair declared an interest as a member of her family lived in Council accommodation.

Councillor Aqbany declared an interest as members of his family lived in Council accommodation.

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, these interests were not considered so significant that they were likely to prejudice the Councillors' judgement of the public interest. The Members were not, therefore, required to withdraw from the meeting.

32. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 6 September 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

33. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

ASB Task Group Review

The Chair updated the Commission on the Task Group review into the role of the proposed Anti-Social Behaviour Team. It was announced that the first meeting had been arranged for Thursday 7 October 2021 and members of the Commission who wished to be involved were encouraged to attend. It was also confirmed that tenant representatives had been invited.

In conclusion, it was noted that the first meeting was to find out more about the current set-up for council tenants, the future proposal, and more about models of practice from other local authorities.

34. PETITIONS

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

35. 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.

36. COVID 19 UPDATE

The Director of Housing provided a verbal update in terms of the effect of Covid-19 on the department. It was noted that future updates would only continue where there were specific impacts on the work within the department.

The numbers of persons in Bed and Breakfast accommodation were confirmed and the intention to reduce homelessness through viable prevention measures were noted. It was recognised that the situation was now returning to the levels expected pre-pandemic.

In terms of repairs and maintenance, it was noted that the demand was also returning to the levels pre-pandemic and that significant progress had been achieved to reduce the build-up of outstanding repairs requests.

In response to a question from the Vice-Chair, it was noted that repairs could be delayed where stock items were unavailable. Individual cases could be referred to the Director separately for further consideration.

The increased numbers of applications for Council Homelessness services was noted, with a rise in private rental evictions being realised due to the pandemic, increasing demand for social housing. It was noted that the homelessness teams were working hard to reduce the impacts and all cases and applications for accommodation were being dealt with appropriately.

The update and position was noted.

37. AFGHAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME

The Director of Housing provided a verbal overview of how Housing Services were supporting the resettlement programme for Afghan Refugees.

The Chair commented initially on the impacts and implications of the resettlement programme being co-ordinated by Government under the Home Office. Commission members were reminded that the support to the process was therefore not an internal decision.

The Director of Housing referred to the links to the existing Afghani community in the city, referenced the fact that the STAR AMAL team was now working with those in the bridging hotel in the City ahead of them receiving accommodation offers potentially across the Country. Health & Wellbeing, Education and Financial matters are all being managed and addressed. The commitment of the City Council to house and help settle 10 families (60 people) to the City was noted and welcomed. Comparisons to the previous support offered in the Syrian resettlement scheme some years previously was described and noted.

The Assistant City Mayor (Housing and Education) was invited to comment. Encouragement to the support programme was encouraged and Members advised of programmes established in their Wards, including food banks and access to ESOL, which had provided positive impacts. Details of a conference concerning the national response to resettlement were also reported and welcomed.

The Chair advised that a written report be brought to the next meeting, and that the item would be added as a standing item on the Agendas for successive meetings until further notice.

AGREED:

That the update be noted and that the item be added as a standing item on Agendas for future meetings.

38. HOUSING ESTATES SHOPS

The Director of Estates and Building Services gave a presentation on the position relating to estate shops and the slides were submitted as part of the Agenda pack.

It was noted that the presentation had been prepared in response to matters raised previously, including the make-up of the units and their spread of use; the management and maintenance of the units; and their performance in the context of the Corporate Estate.

The following key points were presented:

- Corporate Estate Overview
- The Council's Retail Holdings
 - Size and Scope
 - Benchmark Comparison
- Neighbourhood Retail Offer
 - Location / Values
 - Tenancies / Management
 - Sector Performance
- Capital Investment & Maintenance

The Chair thanked officers for the presentation and commented on the need to ensure that cleansing and maintenance services in relation to the stock of neighbourhood shops were rigorous and effective. Examples of areas where shop canopies and frontages, together with where external 'street furniture' and planters had not been kept in good condition were discussed.

It was also noted that the Council had limited powers in terms of private businesses to enforce cleaning and maintenance of shopfronts and their surrounding area.

The Assistant City Mayor (Housing and Education) was invited to comment, and in agreeing the positive support for the work of the service, the vital role of the estate shops and their importance in serving communities was emphasised.

In terms of the need to ensure adequate cleaning and maintenance, it was confirmed that schemes for match funding existed, where private shopkeepers could apply for financial assistance. Individual cases and support, including associated financial support to community projects would be discussed separately with officers with a view to inspections being undertaken. In particular, officers agreed to contact Councillor Ali and Aqbany in relation to respective queries relating to the foodbank in Netherhall and the shopping units along Melbourne Road.

AGREED:

That the presentation and update be noted.

39. HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY UPDATE

The Director of Housing submitted a report, which provided a further update on progress in implementing the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-2023, since the last update to Scrutiny in November 2020.

It was noted that 6-monthly updates were ordinarily provided to the Commission, but the schedule had been interrupted as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. It was therefore recognised and accepted that the report submitted would have customarily been presented during May 2021.

The Commission welcomed the content of the report, particularly in terms of the progress made since the last update (Quarter 3 & 4, 2020/21) across the following key strategic aims:

- Anyone at risk of homelessness is aware of and has access to the services they may need to prevent it.
- Provide suitable accommodation and support options for people who are, or who may become homeless.
- Reduce rates of repeat homelessness amongst single people.
- Provide the right support and services so that no person needs to sleep rough in Leicester.

In summary, it was confirmed that significant positive results and progress had been made on all points, although some objectives had been placed on hold or changed in order to respond to more immediate needs of the pandemic, and subsequent service recovery.

Commission members requested a further update in 6 months' time and joined the Chair in extending thanks and appreciation to the staff involved in the success of the strategy.

It was suggested that the report be referred to the Overview Select Committee for information and comment.

AGREED:

1. To thank staff for the level of performance in dealing with the cases of homelessness, particularly given the challenges faced due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. That the report be forwarded to the Overview Select Committee for information and comment.

40. PROPOSED REVIEW OF TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Director of Housing submitted a report, which commented on the Government's published Housing White Paper "The charter for social housing residents." outlining the Government's vision for social housing over the coming years.

Further legislation and guidance was required; however the publication of the White Paper provided an opportunity to begin to review the City Council's approach to tenant and leaseholder involvement.

In terms of future stakeholder engagement, it was confirmed that a meeting of the Tenants and Leaseholders Forum had taken on 23rd September 2021, where the content of the Housing White Paper had been discussed. It was suggested that members of the Tenant's and Leaseholders Forum be contacted and the Vice-Chair and Councillor Gee be invited to be involved in the development of the new Strategy.

AGREED:

1. To review the current tenant and leaseholder involvement activities and the development of an Involvement Strategy.
2. That Councillor Chamund and Councillor Gee be included as the Scrutiny Committee's nominated participants in assisting with the development of the strategy.
3. That the Commission be invited to comment on the draft Involvement Strategy once it is developed.

41. DISABLED ADAPTATIONS, HRA AND DISABLED FACILITY GRANTS

The Director of Housing gave a presentation concerning the Disabled Adaptations, HRA & Disabled Facility Grants and the slides were submitted as part of the Agenda pack.

The presentation outlined the following key points:

- HRA Disabled Adaptations (for council tenants) with data being compared from previous years, the types of adaptations and the annual spend.
- A description of the 'adapt to let' scheme
- The reasons for the reduced spend, recognising Covid-19 impacts and the reduced stock
- Details of Disabled Facility Grants and their implementation (for homeowners and private tenants), including funding and performance data.
- Clarification of case management

In response to questions, details of the processes under the Home Swapper scheme were confirmed, whereby tenants could source more suitable accommodation.

The Assistant City Mayor (Housing and Education) commented on the response provided recently to a question at Full Council in terms of the numbers of people currently on the Register, the issues of overcrowding, homelessness and adaptations.

The Director of Housing advised that specific data on the numbers and timelines could be provided on request separately and asked the Commission to note that the demand was tenant led and the service had little or no influence.

In response to further questions from the Chair, it was confirmed that the £400k anticipated underspend was discussed in regular budget monitoring meetings and reassurance was provided that appropriate checks and balances were in place. In terms of the applications that had been refused, options to support individuals was a priority and in some cases, work was undertaken to allow applications to be resubmitted.

AGREED:

That the presentation and update be noted.

42. WORK PROGRAMME

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

The Chair and Director advised that the paper on Hospital Close would be combined with the Investment in Council Housing item.

The update on the District Heating item would be promoted in the programme, particularly in view of recent media reports concerning likely increased costs through winter.

AGREED:

That the Work Programme be noted.

43. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Ayleena Thomas (Democratic Support Officer).

The Chair advised that Ayleena Thomas was leaving the employment of the Council to pursue other opportunities. It was noted that Ayleena had served the Council for over 7 years as a DSO, including work to support this Commission.

Commission members asked that their thanks and best wishes be recorded.

44. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm.



Update on Key Housing Strategic Priorities

For consideration by: Housing Scrutiny Commission

Date: 29 November 2021

Lead Director: 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 This report provides a progress update to the Housing Scrutiny Commission setting out progress on delivery of the Labour manifesto commitments made in 2019, and is an update on progress since 22nd February 2021 when the last report was provided on the matter to the Housing Scrutiny commission.

1.2 Overall, good progress has been made with the delivery of the manifesto commitments. Some challenges exist in 21/22 to the speed at which delivery on these manifesto commitments can be achieved but overall good progress is being made.

2. Recommended actions/decision

2.1 For Housing Scrutiny Commission to note the progress made with the Key Housing Strategic Priorities and provide any comments and feedback

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

3.1 This report is solely for the purpose of scrutiny of the Housing Manifesto commitments.

4. Detailed report

4.1 Labour's Manifesto commitments 'For the Many not the few' has eight specific sections covered within the document and the Housing Division will continue to contribute towards many of the broader themes and elements within them.

4.2 The document contains 12 main Manifesto commitments that the Housing Division has primary responsibility for delivering. Most of these commitments sit under the Manifesto section 'Homes for All'.

4.3 A full table of the 12 commitments are included in Appendix A, included below are highlights and extracts.

4.4 Provide 1,500 more council, social and extra care / tackle housing shortages

4.4.1 The Executive have now approved a total of £100m to the delivery of this manifesto commitment. . A pipeline of delivery of 1500 units on multiple sites has been identified and agreed by the Executive for the 4 year term. The Council will by the end of 21/22 have delivered a total of 1242 social housing properties.

4.4.2 Delivery of Housing Leicester Phase 1 of new Council Housing has delivering 29 units across 6 small sites including bungalows which are wheelchair accessible.

4.4.3 Full planning has been secured on Saffron Velodrome for 38 properties and procurement has been completed and a builder secured for this site which is aiming to start build in Autumn 2021. Additional Phase 2 sites are also being worked on to deliver a further 18 new units during 22/23.

4.4.4 Work is now starting on Phase 3 has been agreed to proceed by CMB and this has started which should deliver 52 new homes.

4.4.5 An extensive Acquisitions programme has been going on for the duration of the manifesto commitment and by the end of this financial year 21/22 a total of 999 properties will have been acquired.

4.5 Undertake an ongoing £80m council home improvement programme

4.5.1 By the end of 21/22 Housing will have invested £72m in an ongoing council home improvement programme.

4.5.2. A programme of investment including installing Kitchens & bathrooms, Boilers, Rewiring properties, Re-roofing, Windows & Doors & Door Entries has continued to improve stock throughout the manifesto period.

4.5.2 It is proposed to continue to invest in our housing stock in future years which will meet this manifesto commitment.

4.6 Continue our environmental investment programme on council land and estates

4.6.1 It is expected that for the mayoral whole period these are expected to equate to a total of £8.5m of capital investment will be made by Housing in to Housing Estates. With to date over £5m has been spent/budgetted, this is made up of Environmental Budget & Public Realm and investment in such items as neighbourhood pathways.

4.6.2 Housing continue to invest in our estates by way of paying for an Estate Warden Service which costs £800k pa and this provides services on Council Housing estates over and above service levels to help maintain the quality of estates (eg/rubbish clearance on communal areas) and also pay for a Neighbourhood Improvement service £450k pa that also undertakes work on the estate to improve and develop local communal areas (while also providing 20 work placements for 12 months each year). These have been ongoing throughout the mayoral period so far and are planned to continue so would equate to a further revenue investment over the whole mayoral term of £4.8m for the 4 years.

4.7 Maintain our Adaptations service for all home owners & Council tenants

4.7.1 During the manifesto period it is expected to invest over £9m on the provision of adaptations. To date since the manifesto commitment in 2019 the Council has invested over £8m in to Disabled Facilities grant and Council House adaptations to facilitate the Adaptations service and help people that need adaptations to continue to be able to live in their current home.

4.7.2 A total of 1,889 adaptation/DFGs have been completed to date providing help to over 1000 people to stay in their own homes.

4.8 Reduce the number of families and individuals placed in temporary accommodation / Ensure that no one has to sleep rough

4.8.1 Ongoing strong delivery of the homeless strategy actions including procurement of Temporary accommodation for those leaving prison completed securing 30 units increased from 20 and a Leicestershire wide new Pathway has been developed and signed off by all District and City partners in conjunction with Prison and Probation

4.8.2 Temporary accommodation has also been re-procured for singles and wider work to develop the singles offer at the Dawn Centre is ongoing. Alongside this officers are working on the development of increased numbers and types of stepped accommodation for singles.

4.8.3 A joint procurement exercise to procure young person temporary accommodation has just successfully concluded and pending implementation.

4.8.4 Launch of the St Mungos Hub to facilitate work placement and work opportunities has now taken place. LCC are due to shortly start a pilot on employment opportunities with BEAM for 1 year to test this opportunity.

4.8.5 The Family offer of Homes not hostels is in progress with the development of a network of independent homes across the City available as the Family temporary accommodation offer moving away from an institutional hostel with the staffing elements almost complete and the procurement just commencing.

4.8.6 LCC has been successful in delivering £3.5m additional revenue across 9 external funding pots to enhance Homelessness services Further funding has been secured through the Health Inequalities fund for 2x additional Social Workers to work with those going through Homelessness whom do not meet the ASC Statutory threshold. The Changing Futures bid for £3m has been successful working with partners and also a further 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 has also been successful. A bid has also been submitted linked to Offenders Accommodation

4.8.7 . A Rough Sleepers Next Step Strategy has been developed and implemented and this will shortly be followed by an Ending Rough Sleeping strategy.

4.9 Make Leicester a place of refuge for those fleeing conflict across the world, with a comprehensive offer of housing, support and learning

4.9.1 The original commitment has now been achieved with 45 families moving in to Leicester with the support of the STAR AMAL team set up to support and coordinate the delivery. This team has been referenced as good practice by MHCLG for its delivery. The Vulnerable Person resettlement scheme has formally completed meeting its national target with the last people coming through the scheme in February 2021.

4.9.2 A new commitment has been made for the ARAP scheme to take 60 people in approximately 10 families and provide them with accommodation and settle them in Leicester, ongoing work is going well to set up the accommodation and this scheme which is being run by the STAR Amal team.

4.9.3 The STAR AMAL team are also now working with those people in the Bridging hotel in the City to ensure they receive good quality support.

4.10 Support further work to meet complex needs experienced by women and BAME communities who may not be sleeping on our streets but are homeless.

4.10.1 Wider engagement with key stakeholders and organisations has taken place to meet the wider manifesto commitment. It was identified that homelessness for women and BAME communities can be hidden and violence and abuse can be both the cause and consequence of homelessness.

4.10.2 An action plan has been developed which identifies barriers and actions, which will feed into the city-wide Leicester Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy. Key barriers include: poor mental health and access to health services; language needs; people with no recourse to public funds; racism faced by newer communities in particular when accessing services; the cultural competency of staff providing services and their understanding of domestic abuse in different cultural settings. Actions to address these barriers include improved monitoring information, training for staff, sharing the knowledge of domestic abuse services operating in the City. Sharing information about housing and support available to people in the City.

4.10.3 A start has been made on implementing some of these actions and further work will also be integrated into the Safe Accommodation Strategy and the work of the Housing Division. Work has commenced to shape this piece of work by meeting with partners to engage over the required remit and focus of this manifesto commitment. A resource has also now been set in place to work on reviewing the existing service offer in Housing linked to Domestic Violence. This work will extend to include specifically women and those from the BAME community fleeing their home and domestic violence.

5. Background information and other papers:

6. Summary of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Table of Manifesto commitments

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?

No

Appendix 1 – Table of Housing Manifesto Commitments

Ref	Theme	Commitment	Key Actions Required	Progress update
14	AFC 8	A Fair City Use our housing company to tackle housing shortages	1. Provide Social Housing through LCC HRA to achieve affordability and accessibility (especially for those with barriers to Housing for such reasons as on Benefits 2. Deliver new Affordable Housing for the same reason as above 3. Target hard to use/small/less profitable spaces that the open market would not develop 4. Provide housing types not delivered by the market including bungalows / adapted properties	The Executive have now approved a total of £100m to the delivery of this manifesto commitment. Delivery of Housing Leicester Phase 1 of new Council Housing has delivering 29 units across 6 small sites including bungalows which are wheelchair accessible. Two extra care units are identified (Tilling and Hamelin) and a revised plan for delivery of these units has been drawn together. Full planning has been secured on Saffron Velodrome for 38 properties and procurement has been completed and a builder secured for this site which is aiming to start build in Autumn 2021. Additional Phase 2 sites are also being worked on to deliver a further 18 new units during 22/23. Planning permission was submitted for Lanesborough Road on 4th May to build an additional 37 units. Planning permission is pending. Work is now starting on Phase 3 has been agreed to proceed by CMB and this has started which should deliver 52 new homes. A pipeline of delivery of 1500 units on multiple sites has been identified and agreed by the Executive for the 4 year term. The Council will by the end of 21/22 have delivered a total of 1242 social housing properties.
	HFA 1	Homes for All Provide 1,500 more council, social and extra care homes	Delivery of new residential acquisitions, new house building and Extra care schemes	See AFC8. A clear pathway of delivery has been agreed with Executive to deliver the 1500 units. In year 1 340 homes have been delivered, in year 2 a further 175 homes have been delivered and in the current year it is expected to deliver 727 properties including the UHL deal.

HFA 4	Homes for All	Provide free wifi on council estates	Delivery of new wifi networks on Council Housing estates and increased choice of ISPs and services for the home	Concessionary home WiFi available from internet operators on housing estates. Discussions with ISPs using City Fibre network being arranged. The digital connectivity board agreed to set up a wireless sub-group to review its existing public wifi (other than in council buildings) with a view to extend these to housing estates on expiry of current commercial agreements. Initial proposals for 5G and WiFi should be circulated by the end of the year.
HFA 5 15	Homes for All	Undertake an ongoing £80m council home improvement programme	Capital investment to maintain and improve the standard of Council housing continues in line with approved HRA Budget	The council housing improvement programme in 19/20 totalled £31m . A programme of investment for 20/21 including installing Kitchens & bathrooms, Boilers, Rewiring properties, Re roofing, Windows & Doors & Door Entries has invested a further £17m. The approved HRA budget for 21/22 includes ongoing investment in these areas totalling £24m. It is proposed to continue to invest in our housing stock in coming years to meet this manifesto commitment.
HFA 6	Homes for All	Establish a home extension fund for council tenants to reduce overcrowding in council properties	A fund is set up in the HRA to process and deliver house extensions for those housing register applicants that are Council tenants and are severely/statutorily overcrowded where is it possible to extend their existing property to meet their need.	This commitment has been met and a home extension fund for Leicester City Council tenants has been set up and funding of £500k has been set with the HRA budget for 2020/21. The focus of the scheme is those in overcrowded homes that can be extended. While this work has been challenging this year, four extensions have been completed and planning permission is pending for a fifth property spending a total of £70,000 of the funding. Other properties have been identified to be a part of this ongoing work and work is ongoing to identify other properties that are suitable for the scheme

16	HFA 7	Homes for All	Continue our environmental investment programme on council land and estates	<p>1. Joint annual programme of parking layby and hardstanding areas has been developed. Programme is part HRA funded and part Highways LEW funded. Programme to be taken to NPT Board for review. Executive decision required to release Highways LEW policy provision to support this work. 2. To continue to provide an Environmental budget for investment and improve Council Housing estates. 3. Continue to fund a Neighbourhood Improvement service that's primary focus is estate based improvement work 4. Estate Warden service provided on Council Housing estates is maintained 5. Continue to fund capital investment to enhance LCC Council owned stock to enhance its look 6. Strategic selection of new build sites on estates to address environmental issues</p>	<p>It is expected that for the mayoral whole period these are expected to equate to a total of £8.5m of capital investment will be made by Housing in to Housing Estates. With to date over £5m has been spent/budgetted, this is made up of Environmental Budget & Public Realm and investment in such items as neighbourhood pathways.</p> <p>Housing continue to invest in our estates by way of paying for an Estate Warden Service which costs £800k pa and this provides services on Council Housing estates over and above service levels to help maintain the quality of estates (eg/rubbish clearance on communal areas) and also pay for a Neighbourhood Improvement service £450k pa that also undertakes work on the estate to improve and develop local communal areas (while also providing 20 work placements for 12 months each year). These have been ongoing throughout the mayoral period so far and are planned to continue so would equate to a further revenue investment over the whole mayoral term of £4.8m for the 4 years.</p>
	HFA 8	Homes for All	Maintain our existing adaptation services for all homeowners and undertake a programme of council housing adaptations to allow people with disabilities to remain or move into our properties	Ongoing development and challenge to ensure effective delivery for service users in a timely way	During the manifesto period it is expected to invest over £9m on the provision of adaptations. To date since the manifesto commitment in 2019 the Council has invested over £8m in to Disabled Facilities grant and Council House adaptations to facilitate the Adaptations service and help people that need adaptations to continue to be able to live in their current home. A total of 1,889 adaptation/DFGs have been completed to date providing help to over 1000 people to stay in their own homes.

HFA 9	Homes for All	Ensure that no-one has to sleep rough on our streets	<p>1. Delivery of the Homelessness strategy actions</p> <p>2. Development and embedding of the Homelessness Charter (including delivery of diverted giving scheme, enhanced communications for the public service users and stakeholders and alternative forms of housing provision not currently available to meet the needs of those with NRPF)</p> <p>3. Continue to bid for additional pots of funding to invest in to Homelessness services across Leicester</p>	<p>See HFA 12 - Ongoing delivery of the homeless strategy actions including procurement of Temporary accommodation for those leaving prison completed securing 30 units increased from 20 and a Leicestershire wide new Pathway has been developed and signed off by all District and City partners in conjunction with Prison and Probation & Temporary accommodation for singles. Wider work to develop the singles offer at the Dawn Centre is ongoing. Alongside the development of increased numbers and types of stepped accommodation for singles. The service offer and internal configuration of this service area to deliver this has also started. A joint procurement exercise to procure young person temporary accommodation has just successfully concluded and pending implementation.</p>
				<p>Launch of the St Mungos Hub to facilitate work placement and work opportunities has now taken place. LCC are due to shortly start a pilot on employment opportunities with BEAM for 1 year to test this opportunity. The Family offer of Homes not hostels is in progress with the development of a network of independent homes across the City available as the Family temporary accommodation offer moving away from an institutional hostel with the staffing elements almost complete and the procurement just commencing.</p>
				<p>The Homelessness Charter has been launched and has to date delivered a Full City Wide offer for Diverted Giving achieving over £30k in its first year. It has also expanded information through the use of an online Directory. It has also enhanced relationships between LCC and key stakeholders in the Homeless sector and brought on board business to work together. A successful bid to the Lottery enables the Charter to bring on board staff to push its objectives forward and a full project plan has now been developed and is being delivered.</p>

				<p>LCC has been successful in delivering £3.5m additional revenue across 9 external funding pots to enhance Homelessness services. A Rough Sleepers Next Step Strategy has been developed and implemented and this will shortly be followed by an Ending Rough Sleeping strategy. Further funding has been secured through the Health Inequalities fund for 2x additional Social Workers to work with those going through Homelessness whom do not meet the ASC Statutory threshold. The Changing Futures bid for £3m has been successful working with partners and also a further 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 has also been successful. A bid has also been submitted linked to Offenders Accommodation</p>
HFA 10	Homes for All	Establish a residential facility for people experiencing multiple and complex needs, many of whom are rough sleeping	Business case setting out viability and pathway to delivery of the purchase of unit(s) for this purpose alongside the delivery of wrap around health and support services specific to these units	<p>In conjunction with Action Homeless we have recently mobilised a further 12 units of accommodation linked to the successful bid to the Protect pathway for those extremely complex Rough Sleeping cases. In conjunction with this there are enhanced, physical, mental health and substance recovery support packages provided through our partners at Turning Point and Leicestershire Homeless Mental Health Team & Inclusion Healthcare. Initial funding for 4 months through Protect Pathway has been extended and secured to take the unit up to 12 months and then plan is to continue to fund this unit through RSI funding.</p>
HFA 11	Homes for All	Support further work to meet complex needs experienced by women and BAME communities who may not be sleeping on our streets but are homeless.	A broad Service review is undertaken to establish existing provision in Leicester and to identify any weaknesses or gaps that can then be developed for ongoing consideration	<p>Wider engagement with key stakeholders and organisations has taken place to meet the wider manifesto commitment. An action plan has been developed which identifies barriers and actions, which will feed into the city-wide Leicester Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy. A start has been made on implementing some of these actions and further work will also be integrated into the Safe Accommodation Strategy and the work of the Housing Division</p>

<p>ASI C3</p> <p>19</p>	<p>A safe and inclusive city</p>	<p>Make Leicester a place of refuge for those fleeing conflict across the world, with a comprehensive offer of housing, support and learning</p>	<p>Ongoing delivery of the Vulnerable Person Resettlement scheme as per the original commitment and share lessons learned from this across services. Consideration of Govt's recent announcement re: extended Resettlement Scheme and agreement of a suitable response/target for Leicester going forward. Engagement directly with both the Govt and the Regional Migration Board to lobby for improvements to asylum seeker and refugee support and transition arrangements. Where possible (recognising the limitations placed on us by legislation) seek to avoid and relieve hardship for asylum seekers and refugees through our policies and provision for example access to foodbanks . Consider how we can improve internal co-ordination and improve information sharing e.g. possible option of a Co-ordinator role</p>	<p>The original commitment has now been achieved with 45 families moving in to Leicester with the support of the STAR AMAL team set up to support and coordinate the delivery. This team has been referenced as good practice by MHCLG for its delivery. The Vulnerable Person resettlement scheme has formally completed meeting its national target with the last people coming through the scheme in February 2021. A new commitment has been made for the ARAP scheme to take 60 people in approximately 10 families and provide them with accommodation and settle them in Leicester, ongoing work is going well to set up the accommodation and this scheme which is being run by the STAR Amal team. The STAR AMAL team are also now working with those people in the Bridging hotel in the City to ensure they receive good quality support.</p>
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<p>ASI C4</p> <p>20</p>	<p>A safe and inclusive city</p>	<p>Support communities to welcome refugees and asylum-seekers</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>See ASIC3 Advice services are accessible at the Customer Service Centre (1 787 appointments provided) and across 9 outreach locations with 259 advice sessions held (1 192 appointments provided), 12,891 calls answered and 80 home visits undertaken. In addition, 614 appointments have been facilitated in Children’s Centres for families and pregnant women.</p> <p>Housing have further developed a pathway for Asylum seekers that enter and exit NASS accommodation within the City for positive decisions. in 2019/20 197 asylum seekers (increased from 18/19 - 127) receiving decisions have been assisted with Housing including 144 that received more intensive support through the Homelessness route to secure homes. A dedicated Head of Service has been appointed to drive forward work in migration and asylum for the City and work has started to embed the work in BAU with a Strategic group being set up and run with Assistant ayMor Leads and Senior Officers attending. A number of operational meetings have also been set up with key stakeholders and VCS and partners to manage the ongoing situation re NASS accommodation, overflow accommodation and also the Afgan situation in the City.</p>
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Home Office Bridging Hotel and Afghan Resettlement Accommodation

For consideration by: Housing Scrutiny Commission

Date: 29 November 2021

Lead Director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Joanne Russell
- Author contact details: 0116 454 0245
- Report version number: 1

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a strategic update on the Home Office Bridging Hotel and the Leicester City Council offer to re-settle 10 Afghan families within the City.

2. Recommended action

- 2.1 That members read, note and comment on the report.

3 Background

- 3.1 Leicester has agreed to participate in the accelerated relocation of Locally Employed Staff (LES) who have been supporting the UK forces in Afghanistan. The scheme has been prioritised due to the withdrawal of military forces from Afghanistan, and the following escalation in violence.
- 3.2 The Afghan LES and their families are being offered relocation in recognition of the fact they were at increased personal risk, having worked side by side with coalition forces and officials.
- 3.3 The Home Office has currently placed a number of families within a bridging hotel in the City. Where these families will be settled permanently is still being determined, some may stay within Leicester.
- 3.4 The STAR AMAL team are now working with the families in the hotel, providing them with wrap around support.
- 3.5 The STAR AMAL team will also provide resettlement support to 10 families that will actually reside in Leicester once longer-term accommodation is identified for them.

5. Detailed report

5.1 Families within the hotel

- 5.1.1 There are 16 families made up of 74 individuals within the hotel (31 adults & 43 children) at the moment. All children of school age are in school and new arrivals have been found school places and are attending lessons and are doing well.
- 5.1.2 There have been a number of movements within the hotel of families leaving and being placed in their settled accommodation across the UK and others joining the bridging hotel from other areas of the country.

5.1.3 It should be noted that Leicester City is the only location in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to have a Home Office bridging hotel.

5.2 Support within the Hotel

5.2.1 Leicester City Council officially commenced wrap around support on the 4th October 2021 and work is underway with each family in the hotel. STAR AMAL have also begun the co-ordination of partners and external offers of support and a weekly meeting now takes place to co-ordinate these offers.

5.2.2 We are working with the Home Office to ensure all residents have their BRP (Biometric Residence Permits) and we are providing support in opening bank accounts and accessing GP services.

5.2.3 We have now engaged with both the male and female residents in the hotel to ask what enrichment activities they would like and that is now progressing. ESOL is underway for those in the hotel and childcare provision is also in place to allow parents to concentrate on their learning and family friendly sessions are being delivered at Leicester Central Library.

5.2.4 Leicester Diocese are delivering a 1 hour pre-natal session to pregnant mothers. The Minister delivering the sessions will also engage with the mothers on any clothing needs and will attend our weekly Bridging Hotel co-ordination meetings so that these need can be co-ordinated by STAR AMAL.

5.2.5 There is a Home Office representative now based in the hotel (since 11.10.2021) but their current focus is only on ensuring that the families have access to funds via their Aspen cards.

5.2.6 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Job Centre plus colleagues remain in the hotel 3 mornings a week working to organise benefit claims and support individuals into work. This has been challenging as individuals in the hotel are not there for long periods and may be offered settled accommodation anywhere in the UK. Therefore, focus has been for preparation to enter the job market at this stage.

5.3 Donations

5.3.1 The position remains the same in that there has been no need for donations identified. The City Council position therefore remains consistent in that financial donations to relevant charities is currently the best way to support this group or alternatively volunteering to help to support the work of the charities either as a direct volunteer or as a trustee or similar.

5.3.2 If needs are identified for those within the bridging hotel or for any re-settlement family within the City, we will use our existing links to source and co-ordinate offers to meet those needs.

5.3.3 A meeting has been arranged and will be ongoing chaired by Cllr Russell and Cllr Myers to co-ordinate the offers of support around not only the Afghan evacuees but also refugees and asylum seekers within the City. The first meeting took place on the 5th October 2021 and was well received by the voluntary, community and faith

groups in attendance. The meeting attendees specifically identified the need for volunteers noted in paragraph 5.3.1.

5.4 Re-settlement and Housing

- 5.4.1 Leicester City Council will re-settle 10 families which is 60 individuals as part of the re-settlement scheme. Many of those within the hotel are making requests to settle in Leicester and the Home Office has now confirmed that they will take into consideration the geographical preference of families, but this will not guarantee they would get the location they prefer.
- 5.4.2 We have had contact from 45 Landlords over the last 7 weeks offering a variety of accommodation from spare rooms in family homes to large residential properties some outside of Leicester itself. It should be noted that a number of the offers being made are not suitable for the scheme, but we are assessing and working with each Landlord on alternative letting options if they cannot be matched with the scheme requirements.
- 5.4.3 We expect to see our first re-settlement families arrive in the City in early November 2021.
- 5.4.4 We will be staggering the resettlement of families in the City and will be identifying accommodation a few units at a time. This is to ensure we can dedicate resources to re-settle each family appropriately and to reduce any impact on other residents also looking for accommodation in the City.
- 5.4.5 We do not expect the re-settlement of families to impact significantly on the Council's Housing Register as we are looking at accommodation options primarily in the Private Rented Sector.
- 5.4.6 The Home Office is funding support and resettlement for the Afghan LES and their families, this funding is being and will be utilised to carry out all this work.

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

6.1 Financial implications

6.1.1 There is no net cost to the Council of providing support for Afghan resettlement. The cost the Council incurs in providing support at the bridging hotel will be re-imbursed by the Home Office. For the 10 families resettling in Leicester, the Council will receive the following amounts over a 3-year period (which is in line with amounts received under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme):

- £20,520 per person for integration services
- Up to £4,500 per child for education provision (subject to age)
- £850 for adults requiring English language provision
- £2,600 for the provision of health services.

Stuart McAvoy – Principal Accountant

6.2 Legal implications

n/a

6.3 Equalities implications

n/a

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

n/a

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

7. Background information and other papers:

n/a

8. Summary of appendices:

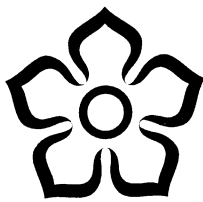
n/a

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?

No



Leicester
City Council

MINUTE EXTRACT

Minutes of the Meeting of the
OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

Held: WEDNESDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2021 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Cassidy (Chair)

Councillor Gee
Councillor Halford
Councillor Joel

Councillor Joshi
Councillor Kitterick
Councillor Porter

Councillor Thalukdar
Councillor Westley

Also present:

Sir Peter Soulsby

City Mayor

In Attendance

Councillor Cutkelvin

Assistant City Mayor, Education and Housing

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37. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Govind, and Deputy City Mayor Councillor Russell.

38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to disclose any pecuniary or other interests they may have in the business on the agenda.

With regards to agenda items, Councillor Westley declared that some of his family Members were tenants of private landlords.

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, these interests were not considered so significant that they were likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest. The Member was not, therefore, required to withdraw from the meeting.

46. HOME OFFICE BRIDGING HOTEL AND AFGHAN RESETTLEMENT ACCOMMODATION IN LEICESTER

The Strategic Director (City Development & Neighbourhood Services, Capital Programmes) and Director of Housing submitted a report to the Overview Select Committee, which provided a strategic update on the Home Office Bridging Hotel and the Leicester City Council offer to re-settle 10 Afghan families within the city.

The City Mayor introduced the report, noting the city continued to provide full support to those individuals based in the Home Office bridging hotel. He reported that wrap around support had begun on the 4 October 2021, with the STAR AMAL team providing a very wide range of support, such as, getting children in the hotel into school, GP access, ESOL learning where required, and engaging with charities on service provision.

The meeting was informed the Council had also been advocating with the Home Office for individuals. Currently there were 16 families (74 individuals) in the hotel, but was a changing picture as people moved in and out of the hotel, sometimes into permanent accommodation. Feedback had been good from those families who had thanked STAR AMAL during their time Leicester.

The Council had to date offered 10 properties to those from Afghanistan and were expecting the first family to take up that long-term accommodation in Leicester at the end of November 2021.

It was further reported that Home Office personnel were now regularly in the hotel so they could address families' issues directly, and as a result, families felt they were being listened to. The Council were pushing the Home Office for clarity on a number of things, such as the impact of employment and local placement of families.

The City Mayor said that as the scheme began to evolve, behind the Council's approach was a commitment to welcome and support where it was able to those seeking refuge, whether hotel or long-term accommodation, and that there was a determination to do all it could to help.

Members welcomed the update from the City Mayor, and the report which would be taken to Housing Scrutiny Commission. It was asked if it was known how long the Home Office would be in the city. The City Mayor noted the bridging hotel would be in place for some time to come as there were a significant number of people who would require long-term placements. He added that at this point it was difficult to assess a timeframe but would want to do all that was necessary longer term to provide support.

The Chair said the care in which the City through the City Mayor and Officers had shown towards those people who had found themselves in that position through no fault of their own was impressive, and there was a lot of work to be

done. The Chair looked forward to further reports at future meetings and added would remain on the Overview Select Committee workplan as a standing item.

AGREED:

1. That the report be noted.



Repairs and Maintenance, Gas and Voids 2021-22 year to date performance - Update

For consideration by: Housing Scrutiny Commission

Date: 29 November 2021

Lead Director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Kevin Doyle, Head of Service
- Author contact details: Ext 37 5415
- Report version number: - V1.3 - Final

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the performance of the Division's Repairs and Maintenance, Voids and Gas functions during 2021-22.
- 1.2 The 2021-22 performance statistics used in this report are those at Q2 (to September 21)
- 1.3 This report will provide an update on the continuing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on service delivery.
- 1.4 The report will also provide the Commission with an update about the implementation of service improvements that will drive improved performance into the future.

2. Background

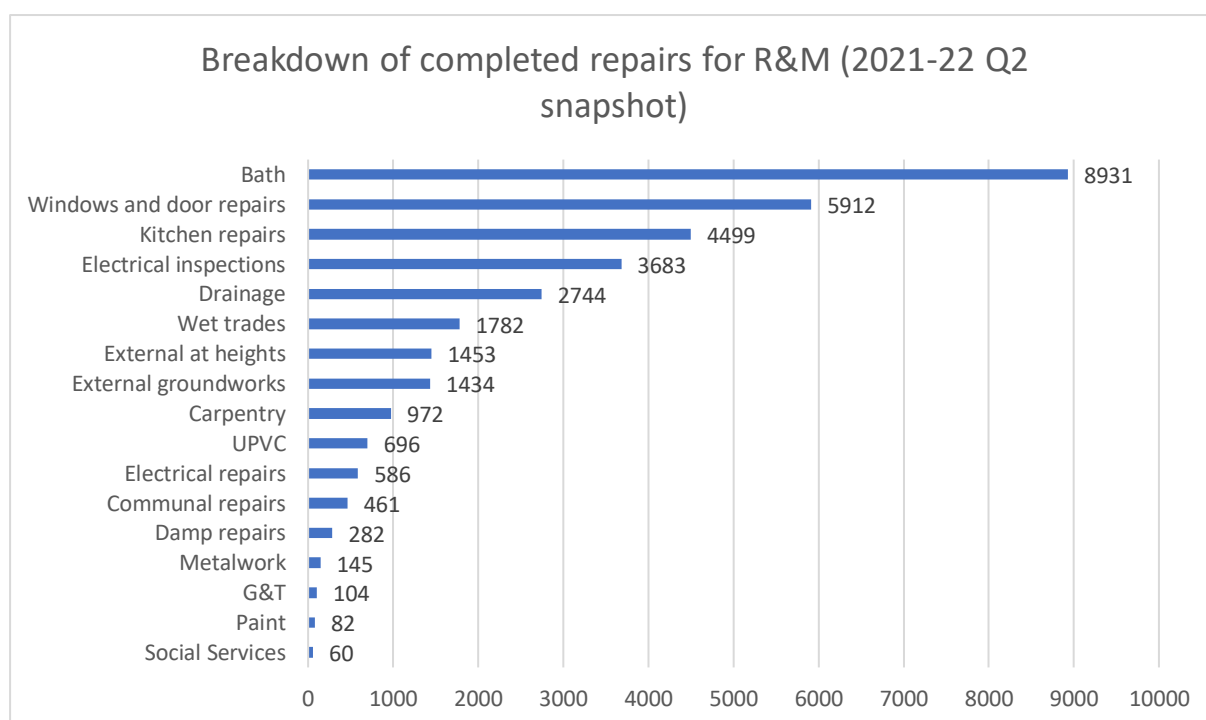
- 2.1 The repairs, gas and void functions operate across the City, providing services to 19,856 Leicester City Council owned homes and 1,536 Leasehold properties.
- 2.2 The current primary channel of access to the repairs and gas services is via the Customer Service Centre (CSC) Tenants Advice and Repairs Line (TARS) 0116 4541007 (option 1), Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm. We also provide an emergency repairs service outside of normal working hours, via the Emergency Repairs Line 0116 2549439.
- 2.3 Up to Q2 of 2021-22, the CSC received a total of 54,004 calls on the TARS line. This compares with 37,888 calls for the previous year. The Emergency Repairs Line received 7,184 calls, which compares to 5,866 for the same period last year.
- 2.4 Tenants can also register for an on-line account enabling them to book repairs and request progress updates on outstanding jobs via the Housing On-Line (HOL) portal 24 hours a day.
- 2.5 Up to Q2 of 2021-22, there were a total of 4,120 tenants registered with HOL. There have been 2,287 repairs reported and 179 updates requested by tenants using the on-line portal. A separate report on the Divisions on-line strategy is being prepared for the Commission.
- 2.6 Up to Q2 of 2021-22 there have been 1,748 tenant satisfaction forms returned, with 92% reporting satisfaction with the service.
- 2.7 As we recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020-21 we have seen workloads rapidly increasing towards pre-pandemic levels during the first two quarters of 2021-22.
 - 54% increase in the number of repairs completed within the R&M service.
 - 44% increase in the number of repairs completed within the Gas & Heating service.
 - 28% increase in the number of Void properties re-let within the Voids service.

2.8 The backlog of outstanding work currently sits at 7,609 jobs, which is 1,320 more jobs than we had outstanding prior to the pandemic in March 2020. This number of additional jobs within the backlog represents around 1-weeks reported Repairs under normal operating conditions.

3. Repairs and Maintenance (R&M)

3.1 Up to Q2 of this year we completed 33,826 repairs. This compares to 22,031 for the same period last year, when, for much of the year, we were only providing an emergency repairs service.

3.2 A breakdown of the type of repairs completed is provided below.



3.3 Key performance indicators for R&M

Indicator	Direction of travel (DOT)	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 Q2
Percentage of repairs completed at first visit (excludes external works)	Higher is better. Target is 90%.	77.0%	82.6%	80.2%
Number of repairs which are out of category (excludes Gas and Voids)	Lower is better. Target is 300.	*721	*912	1524
Percentage of repairs completed within target time	Higher is better.	82.6%	96.0%	89.5%

	Target is 92%			
Percentage of repairs reported where a complaint has been received	Lower is better. Target is <0.5%	0.1%	0.01%	0.02%

*snapshot at year-end.

4. Gas & Heating Services

4.1 Up to Q2 of this year we have completed 7,010 gas and communal heating repairs. This compares to 4,884 for the same period in the previous year.

4.2 Up to Q2 of this year, we completed 9,785 Annual Service Visits (ASV's), which is a similar amount to the previous year as we continued to carry out this essential safety work during the pandemic.

4.3 Key performance indicators for Gas & Heating Services

Indicator	DoT	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 Q2
Annual Service Visit compliance percentage	Higher is better. Target is 100%	99.99%	99.17%	99.99%
Percentage of gas repairs completed at first visit	Higher is better. Target is 90%.	74.8%	79.8%	68.6%
Number of gas repairs which are out of category (snap	Lower is better. Target is 0.	*843	*0	323
Percentage of repairs completed within target time	Higher is better. Target is 92%	91.5%	98.6%	93.1%

*snapshot at year-end.

5. Voids

5.1 Up to Q2 of this year, we have completed and re-let 442 Voids properties. This compares with and 346 for the same period last year.

5.2 The number of Voids held currently stands at 299. This represents a significant (40%) reduction from the 495 Void properties held during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2021.

5.3 Key performance indicators for Voids

Indicator	DoT	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 Q2
Average re-let times in days (all Voids)	Lower is better.	123.3	137.8	133.6
Rent loss	Lower is better.	£835,799.27	£1,115,966.74	£903,999.60*
Voids completed and let	Higher is better.	959	760	442

*part-year rent loss to Q2 of 2021-22

5.4 Void property clearance process

When a property becomes Void, a Voids Technician visits to assess the number of items needing to be cleared from the property. Items that are suitable for re-use, including white goods and items of furniture in reasonable condition, are collected by Work Link, a local charity.

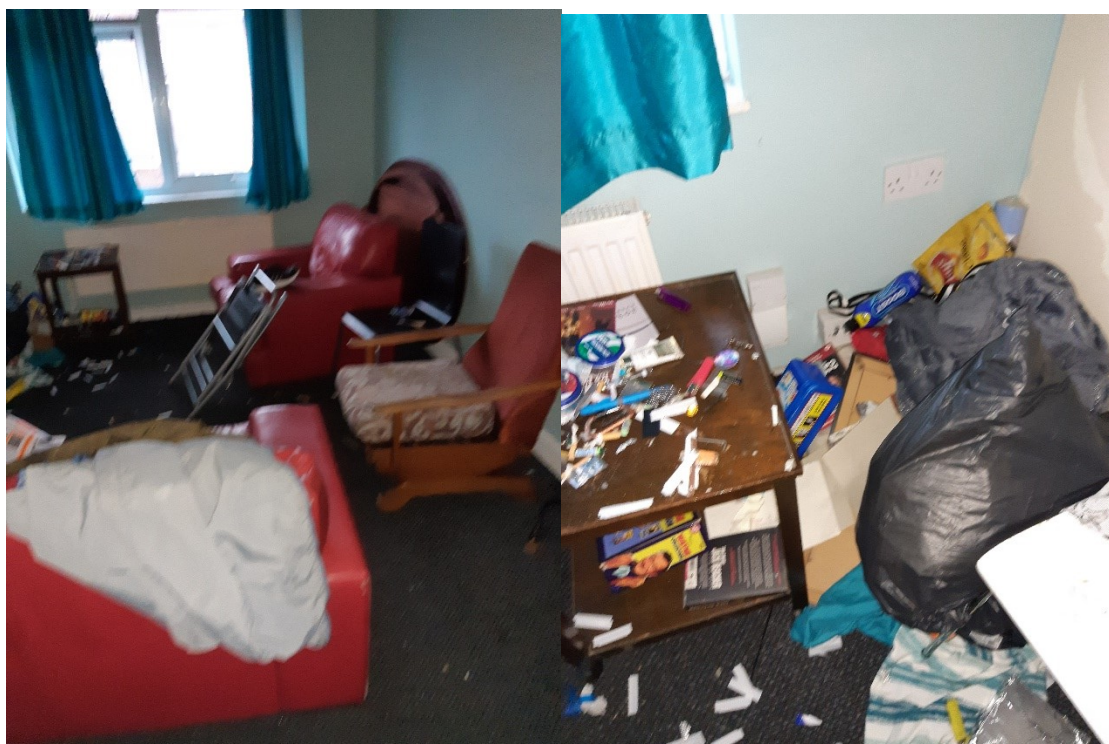
Remaining small amounts of items are then cleared free of charge, but where the time taken and amount of waste meets the limits below, exiting tenants are re-charged in accordance with the following charging schedule.

Volume (cubic yards)	Time taken	Recharge cost
4	Half day	£93.31
8	Full day	£193.31
12	Day and a half	£289.97

Void clearance jobs are raised on the system and planned into our clearance teams workloads, who use a 'bin lorry' type vehicle, known as a crusher, to compact the rubbish and take it away to our waste disposal site at 90 Leycroft Road. We also have a smaller lorry for work in inner-city areas, where street access is more difficult.

Void clearance work is just one stage of the overall Voids process, and whilst properties left in a poor state do inevitably take more time to clear, there are other factors adding to the overall delays in the Voids process, and these are being identified as part of the overall Voids Service Analysis mentioned below in this report.

Examples of Void property condition prior to clearance are shown below.



During 2019-20 we re-charged tenants for this work to the value of £4,245.00.

As a result of the closure of waste disposal facilities during the pandemic, the decision was made to cancel all re-charges for Void clearance work during the 2020-21 financial year. This policy remained

in place until May 2021, and we are now applying the re-charges to exiting tenants in line with the charging schedule above where appropriate.

So far during 2021-22 (Q2) we have re-charged tenants to the value of £1,171.00.

6. Impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on service delivery

Our immediate response to the pandemic in March 2020 was to implement our business continuity plans, which included the cessation of all non-urgent repairs, only allowing single-person working in our Void properties, and the isolation rather than the servicing of independent gas fires, to avoid unnecessary exposure within tenants homes when carrying out the annual service visit (ASV) within their homes. We also lost a significant amount of staff who were self-isolating due to their health vulnerabilities.

At the point we implemented our service delivery recovery plan, we were in the following position when compared to the position immediately before the pandemic.

Indicator	Pre Covid-19	Start of recovery	Current position
Total number of outstanding jobs (repairs and maintenance)	6285	8364	7605
Number of Voids held (snapshot)	295	495	299
Number of gas fires capped off	None	1000	None

We continue to work hard on bringing down the number of outstanding jobs, whilst dealing with new reported repairs, and we are enlisting the help of contractors to reduce both the number of Voids outstanding at any one time, and the length of time they remain Void before being re-let.

Another challenge is to manage the additional amount of annual leave being taken by staff during this year who were unable to take all their annual leave allowance during the various lock-down phases of the pandemic last year. This is impacting on our own resource levels and slowing the progress we are making on bringing the backlog of jobs down to pre-pandemic levels.

7. Improvement actions underway to drive improved performance

7.1 De-scaling programme

An initial de-scaling programme of the drainage system at the 'Burns flats' has commenced, with access issues proving a real barrier to progress. We are working with our Housing Management colleagues to coordinate our efforts to improve multiple property access arrangements at the same time, to undertake the necessary work that needs to be completed.

We are also exploring the option of renewing the external pipes outside individual properties as an initial attempt to improve drain performance without the need to gain access to individual properties. Initial inspection of these external pipes has shown excessive scale build up, that will be affecting overall performance.

Image of cross section of 4-inch stack pipe removed from Crayburn House.



7.2 Introduction of National Federation Schedule of Rates (SOR's)

We have recently purchased the National Federation of Rates, better known as a schedule of rates (SOR's), which are widely used by other local authorities and housing associations and allow the accurate standardised measurement of labour time associated with the various tasks within jobs. This will enable managers to plan work more effectively, maximising staff resources and availability, and providing accurate performance management data for individual staff. This data can then be used to drive productivity and improve overall efficiency.

Work is being planned in to integrate SOR's into our planning system, Total Mobile, after which we will used a phased approach to implementation, starting with the Gas and Heating Service section, then moving to our R&M and Voids functions.

7.3 Voids Service Analysis

Due to the on-going performance issues within the Voids and Property Lettings function, we initiated a service analysis in June 2021. This service analysis is designed to look at the current operating processes and procedures and is scheduled to report on its findings to the senior management team in December 2021.

7.4 Stores Managed Service

We are currently undertaking a procurement exercise to establish a managed stores service. The aim is to have the contract awarded by early 2022, with go-live planned for late summer 2022.

7.5 Emergency Repairs Service (ERS)

We are continually reviewing how we can make the out of hours emergency repairs service more effective, and we are working with colleagues within the Service Analysis and Improvement Team to improve guidance around correct job categorisation, to ensure that only genuine emergency jobs are responded to outside of normal working hours. Improvements in this area will ensure that the service remains fit for purpose, provides an effective emergency response to those that need it, and does this in the most cost-effective way.

Kevin Doyle

Head of Service - Housing Division

Leicester City Council

Appendix E



Empty Homes Update

For consideration by: Housing Scrutiny Commission

Date: 29 November 2021

Lead Director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: Citywide
- Report author: Simon Nicholls/Carole Thompson
- Author contact details: simon.nicholls@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: V.1

1. Purpose of report

To update members of the Housing Scrutiny commission on the work that the Empty Homes Team are doing to bring long term private sector homes back into use.

General overview:

The Empty Homes Team are a small specialist team that consist of 1 Team Leader, 4 Empty Homes Officers and 2 admin support post.

At the start of the pandemic the service was temporarily closed to enable the council to concentrate on its response to the pandemic but as soon as it was deemed safe the team re started their work albeit with the appropriate precautions in place. The impact of this was that the team's active caseload increased to 394 but by the end of the financial year it had reduced to 359, and the trajectory is now downwards.

The team's focus is to bring long term private sector residential properties back into use that have been empty for in excess of 18 months. 18 months was chosen as it was felt that this gives the owners adequate time to have done this themselves, for example a sale of house should be completed in this time or any issues with probate etc resolved. so, if it's been empty for longer than 18 month we intervene.

We get most of our information from our colleagues in council tax, they send us the details of all the homes that are listed as empty for 18 months. We also get referrals from members of the public, mainly the neighbours of empty homes who are suffering as a result and have turned to the council for help.

Once we receive the information we physically go out to the property to check that the information is correct and that the property is actually empty, if it is we add it to the caseload and if it isn't we class it as miss information and let council tax know that their records are wrong and help them correct them. We do this so that we are sure the figures we report are a true and accurate representation of the work the team does.

This is when we start work on the 20-stage process to bring the property back into use. Fortunately, a lot of homeowners work with us and we are able to bring many homes back into use by helping and assisting (more information below) but sometimes this isn't possible. In these cases, we have to follow the process to the end which can ultimately lead to us compulsory purchasing (CPO) the property. Whist we try to avoid this if we cannot reach an agreement, we will use CPO powers.

Rightly the CPO process is very thorough and takes time, we have to make sure everything is carried out correctly and that there is no cause for recompense from the owners, getting this wrong could cause reputational damage to the council.

We report on empty properties that have been empty for 18 months, 5 years and 10 years.

2. Supporting evidence

- Continue to maximise our efforts to reduce the total number of private sector properties empty over 18 months 5 and 10 years.
- Where we are unable to negotiate terms for the purchase of properties by agreement or are unable to locate owners, we will continue to use Compulsory Purchase Powers (CPO) to bring long term empty properties back into use.

Team Structure

See Appendix A – flow chart

2.1 Working Smarter

Empty homes officers are all highly experienced with good skills and local knowledge which is shared within the team. We are flexible and negotiate with owners on a wide range of individual and varied property situations, no matter what each empty property presents. We are committed to continually working with each owner to ensure properties are returned into occupation.

This involves:

- contacting all owners at an early stage.
- providing advice & support and information about their options.
- further information is available on the empty homes' website at: <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-community/housing/privately-owned-empty-homes/>
- owners can also complete the on-line statement of intentions e-form.
- agreeing Undertakings with timescales to bring properties back into occupation.
- practical assistance through leasing schemes.

2.2 Leasing options include:

- HomeCome/lease
- LeicesterLet or
- Renting through private agents

2.3 Over 5 Years Empty Letter

Once a property has been empty for 5 years and the owners have not acted on any of our previous help and advice we give them formal notice that if the property remains empty in a further 6 months we will seek Executive approval to take CPO action. This measure has proved successful in reducing the over 5-year empties currently down to 39. Many of these properties have works in progress, an owner in care or the property is at Probate. All our cases are continually monitored for change of circumstance or moved to the next stage on an ongoing basis as set out in the Empty Homes procedure.

2.4 Over 10 Year Empty Letter

Many of our properties empty over 10 years change owners' multiple times. Every time there is a new owner the process must start again at stage 1. This is because the CPO is against the owner not the property. Most owners are sent our "10-Year Empty Letter" (like the 5-year empty letter) giving them 6 months to improve and occupy these properties. This is an ongoing process. We have also had great success in reducing the number of over 10-year empties, currently at 10.

See Appendix E

2.5 Total Over 5 Year & 10 Year Empties from Apr 2020 to Mar 21:

The target for reducing total over 5-year empties is set at 45. Within the last year we have managed to reduce total 5-year empties from 47 down to 39 properties.

The 10-year total empties were 9 and is now 10.

This progress has only been achieved with continual concerted effort from the team.

See Appendices B, C & D tables 2-9.

2.6 CPOs Approved by the Executive:

During the last year the Executive have approved 1 CPO.

As at 31st March 2021 a total of 121 cases have been approved for Compulsory Purchase Orders to date. See Appendix F

2.7 CPO Forum:

Bi-monthly forums are held with Legal Services and Estates and Building Services to review and progress compulsory purchase cases and those undergoing negotiated purchase and sale at auction. The empty homes team also receives advice on CPO cases with complex or individual issues. The forum has proved to be invaluable for joined up thinking, deciding ways forward for complex cases and for sharing information.

2.8 Cases currently with Legal Services:

There is a total of 5 properties with Legal Services at various stages of compulsory purchase.

2.9 CPO Compensation as at 31/03/21:

Compensation has not yet been settled for 1 owner and is still outstanding.

2.10 Negotiated Purchase:

There were no negotiated purchases completed during the year.

Valuations for negotiated purchases by the council tend to be lower than the purchase price paid. Generally, when the property is sold at auction the council does not lose money.

2.11 Council Tax Data Source:

The Council Tax database is our prime data source for newly vacant properties.

Each month more houses become vacant whilst some are brought back into use. We identify those unsuitable for residential use (non-priority housing), misreported (misinformation - MI) or second homes (2nd homes).

2.12 Data Analysis (Empty Homes)

Data analysis is carried out on a monthly and quarterly basis for misinformation (MI), second homes (2nd Homes) and non-priority housing (NPH). If the original reason is no longer valid and properties have become empty again, these are added back onto our caseload. This exercise ensures the quality of data held by the empty homes team is as accurate as possible with only genuinely empty properties being added to our active caseload.

2.13 Council Tax Liability:

From April 2019 councils have new powers to increase council tax premiums on homes left empty over 2 years. In November 2018 the Council approved the following increases to take effect from April 2020:

FROM	EMPTY DURATION	PREMIUM
April 2019	Empty over 2 years	200%
April 2020	Empty over 5 years	300%
April 2021	Empty over 10 years	400%

2.14 Keeping Council Tax Informed

Following site visits the empty homes officers provide evidence confirming whether properties are found to be empty or occupied. This enables Council Tax to update their records. Our contribution ensures the information held on the

Council Tax database is up-to-date, accurate and meets General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

2.15 Council Tax Charging Orders

Council Tax now have a system in place to recover council tax arrears by using Enforced Sale or a Bankruptcy Orders. Empty Homes liaise closely with Council Tax, so once an empty property reaches the stage where we are considering CPO, if there are council tax arrears, a management decision will be made on who is best to pursue the case.

2.16 Second Homes (2nd Homes):

Second Homes are outside of the Empty Homes strategy and our remit for the following reasons:

A second home is considered to be “in use” as a 2nd home so there is no need for legislation to bring it into use as it is not “empty”. There is also no need to exclude or include it from Local Authority powers and legislation because taking action is not relevant.

Local Authorities have powers around the amount of Council Tax charged and the normal powers that apply to the condition of “in use” housing such as dangerous structures, overgrown gardens etc but there are no powers to intervene with “use” as a second home as mentioned before. The legislation around abandonment would not apply either unless there were clear or stated evidence of abandonment should owners walk away from any interest in their property.

Nationally and locally there is an ongoing concern that second homes often mask genuinely empty properties.

Council tax regulations split unoccupied properties into:

- “vacant” (unoccupied and unfurnished) and
- unoccupied and furnished (including second homes)

2.17 Council Tax’s Definition of Second Homes:

- Furnished property that is no-one’s main residence because they live elsewhere.
- Furnished and unfurnished homes ie a property is substantially unfurnished or furnished with a bed, chair furniture in situ like a holiday home.

If a property is classed as a second home on Council Tax and presents as boarded-up, inaccessible, overgrown gardens with numerous complaints, such properties are the cause of much frustration to all concerned as they can bear all the hallmarks of an empty property but will be outside our remit once Council Tax have classified them as furnished and no-one’s main home. Even if they are problematic Empty Homes Team cannot add them to our caseload.

3. Details of Scrutiny

This report is seeking The Housing Scrutiny Commissions comments and recommendations on the work of the team and the progress made over the last 12 months to bring long term empty private sector properties back into use.

4. Financial, legal and other implications

4.1 Financial implications

By bringing properties back into use, the Council benefits financially through increased collection of Council Tax and additional income through the New Homes Bonus.

Stuart McAvoy – Principal Accountant (37 4004)

4.2 Legal implications

The Council is entitled to acquire land and property for the purpose of providing housing in accordance with Sections 9 and 17 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended). This includes acquisition by or if considered appropriate by the use of compulsory purchase powers. As explained in this Report the Council will need to ensure that any acquisition or other action (including use of Compulsory Purchase powers) is in accordance with the Council's adopted Empty Homes Strategy and is compliance with both the legal basis and criteria for compulsory purchase (including published guidance), namely the Guidance of Compulsory Purchase issued by the Department for Communities, Local Government and Housing). In contemplating action to acquire by way of a CPO the Council must ensure that it is able to demonstrate a compelling case in the public interest to acquire the property in accordance with the guidance, and to also ensure that it has the necessary resources (including financial resources) to proceed with a compulsory purchase.

John McIvor, Principal Lawyer, ext. 37-1409

4.3 Climate change and carbon reduction implications

Homes are responsible for a third of Leicester's carbon emissions and tackling these emissions is a vital following the council's declaration of a climate emergency in 2019 and it's ambition to reach carbon neutrality. Where refurbishment work is carried out to bring empty properties back into use, this may provide opportunities to improve their energy efficiency and reduce their carbon emissions. For example this could include fitting insulation, draught proofing, low energy lighting and new heating systems, including low carbon options such as heat pumps. By reducing the need for new housing to be built, the service also helps to reduce the carbon emissions from the building of new homes, including the 'embodied' emissions of construction materials.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability, Officer, Ext 37 2284

4.4 Equalities implications

In carrying out its duties 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, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a 'protected

characteristic' and those who do not. In doing so, the council must consider the possible impact on those who are likely to be affected by the recommendation and their protected characteristics.

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.

There are no direct equality implications arising from the report as it is to provide an update. However, it is important to remember that bringing empty homes back into use can help to meet demand for affordable housing in the city and potentially households on the housing register and provide housing for people in need of a home. Empty homes brought back into use can help to meet the diverse housing needs of all sections of our communities

The benefits of returning an empty home into use can impact on the wider community, homes that are lived in help to support safer communities.

The impacts of returning empty homes into use would be positive on people from across all protected characteristics.

Surinder Singh Equalities Officer 37 4148

5. Background information and other papers:

Department for Communities & Local Government website

LCC Empty Homes Team e-files

LCC Citywide Empty Homes strategy

6. Summary of appendices:

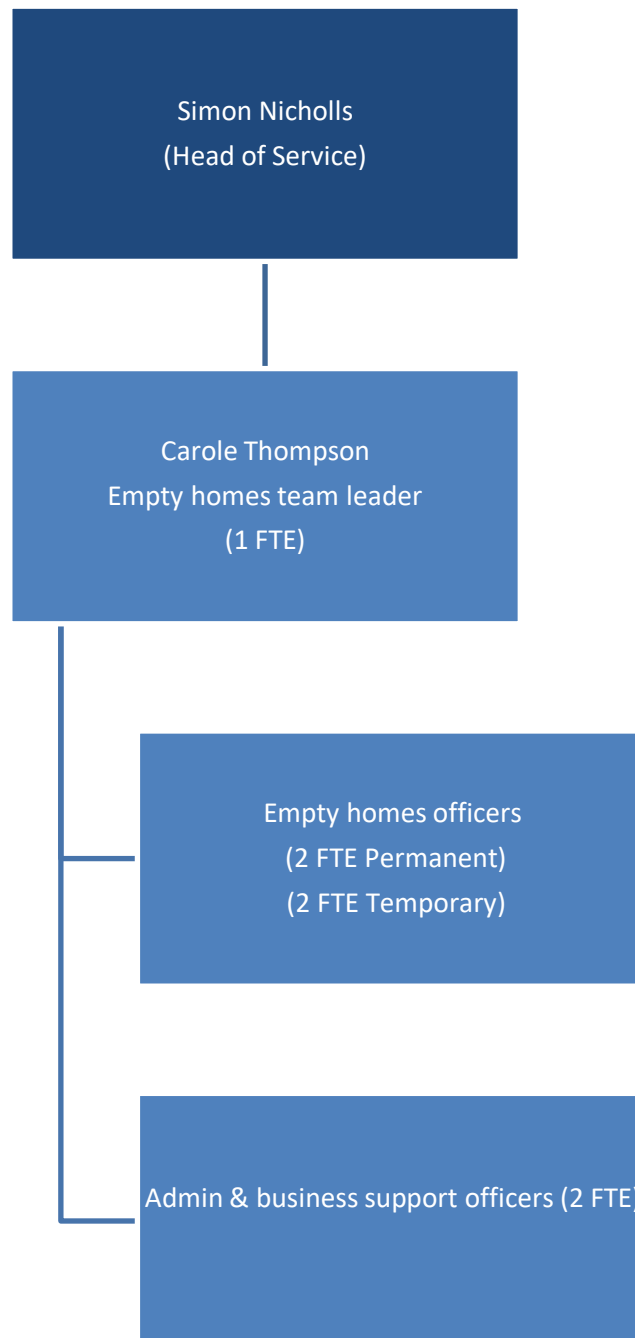
Appendix A	Empty homes team structure as at 31.03.21
Appendix B	Analysis of total empties showing current trend
Appendix C	Analysis of average totals showing current trend
Appendix D	Quarterly comparison of total vacant as at 31.03.21
Appendix E	Yearly comparison of vacant properties from 2017 to 2021
Appendix F	Outcome of CPOs annual progress

7. 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

8. Is this a “key decision”? No

Appendix A

EMPTY HOMES TEAM STRUCTURE CHART AS AT 31.03.21



Appendix B

Analysis of Empty Properties showing trend from 31.03.18 to 31.03.21

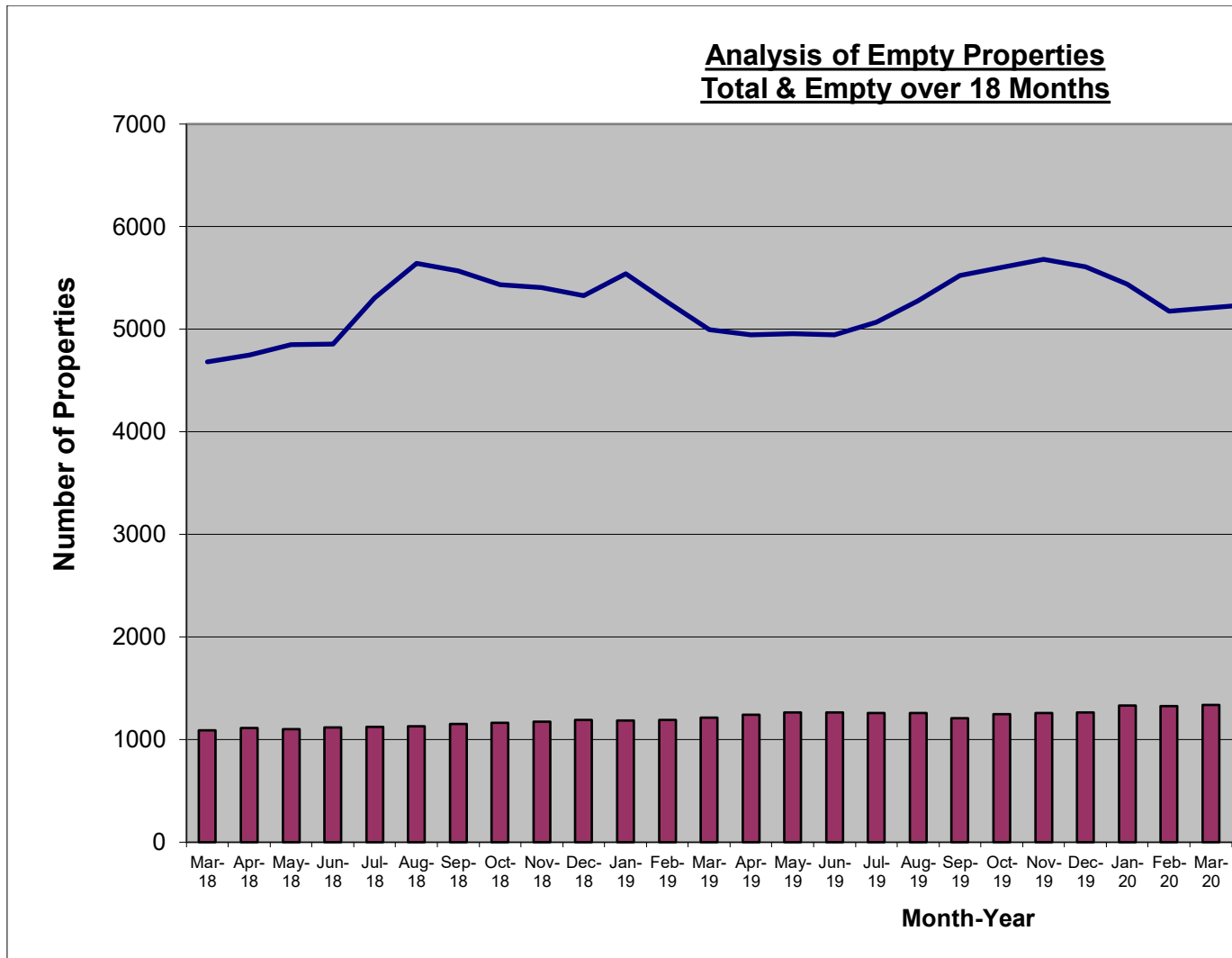


Table 2

Appendix C

Analysis of Empty Properties showing what is happening

2017-2018

Average Total Empty (up by 179)	4606
Average vacant over 18 months – up 23	1130

2018-2019

Average Total Empty (up by 596)	5202
Average vacant over 18 months (up by 20)	1150

2019-2020

Average Total Empty (up by 62)	5264
Average vacant over 18 months (up by 116)	1266

2020-2021

Average Total Empty (up by 295)	5559
Average vacant over 18 months (up by 175)	1441

The increase in total number of empty properties may be due to uncertainty in the housing market due to Brexit and COVID19.

Appendix D

	QUARTERLY COMPARISON OF TOTAL VACANTS AS AT 31/03/21						
Description	Baseline as at 31.03.20	Q.1 as at 30.06.20	Q.2 as at 30.09.20	Q.3 as at 31.12.20	Q.4 as at 31.03.21	Trend since last Quarter	Cumulative Trend
Active Caseload	307	307	248	306	328	Up by 22	Up by 21
Total Vacant over 18 Months	330	394	385	344	359	Up by 15	Up by 29
Sub Total Vacant over 5 Years	47	53	56	46	39	Down by 7	Down by 8
Sub Total Vacant over 10 Years	9	10	11	10	10	Unchanged	Up by 1

Baseline Comparison

Workstream Empty	31/03/17 Baseline	31/03/18	31/03/19	31/12/19	31/03/20	31/03/21	2017-21 %
18 Months	345	292	319	313	330	359	4%
5 Years	66	52	50	53	47	39	-41%
10 Years	15	7	7	8	9	10	-33%

Appendix E

**Comparison of Vacant Properties From 2017-2021
for Stage 0s, 18 Months, 5 and 10 Years**

51

Quarterly	JUN 17	SEP 17	DEC 17	MAR 18	JUN 18	SEP 18	DEC 18	MAR 19	JUN 19	Sep 19	Dec 19	Mar 20	JUN 20	SEP 20	DEC 20	MAR 21
Total Vacant over 18 months	354	348	338	292	313	307	329	319	324	314	313	330	394	385	344	359
Stage 0 only – Number where contact yet to be made with owner.	56	56	48	4	24	21	31	32	26	17	14	23	87	137	38	31
Number vacant over 10 years	16	13	12	7	6	6	8	7	7	8	8	9	10	11	10	10
Number vacant over 5 years (including those over 10 years).	64	58	56	52	50	51	54	50	54	51	53	47	53	56	46	39
Cumulative total brought back into use by City Council action since April 2017	42	91	144	213	255	310	360	418	460	519	563	599	599	655	723	764
Number of CPO's Approved by Executive	0	1	1	0	1	0	2	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

* Note: The majority of Stage 0 properties have had scheme referral letters so first contact has been made

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Outcome of all CPOs agreed by Executive as at 31.03.20

	Pre-April 2020	Apr – June 2020	July – Sept 2020	Oct – Dec 2020	Jan – Mar 2021	Total
Total Number of CPOs agreed by the Executive.	120				1	121
Withdrawn before Public Inquiry ie Occupied	56	1			1	58
Withdrawn before Public Inquiry ie Restarted, Misinformation, 2 nd Hm	20					20
Public Inquiry held - Order Confirmed by DCLG/LCC	8					8
Public Inquiry held - Order Not Confirmed by DCLG/LCC	3					3
Written Representation - Order Confirmed by DCLG/LCC	6					6
Written Representation - Order Not Confirmed by DCLG/LCC	4					4
Non contested CPO's Confirmed by DCLG/LCC	13					13
Non contested CPO's Not confirmed by DCLG/LCC						



Investment in Council Housing Update on Hospital Close

For consideration by: Housing Scrutiny Commission

Date: 29 November 2021

Lead Director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: potentially all
- Report author: Simon Nicholls
- Author contact details: Simon.nicholls@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: V.1

1. Summary

The Housing Division are responsible for circa 20,000 council houses and need to make sure that they continue to meet the Decency Standard, conform to all legislative health and safety requirements and meet the expectations of our tenants. To do this we have an extensive capital programme that ensures our homes are always being invested in and upgraded as well as a programme of planned maintenance work to ensure all elements of our homes continue to work and be safe.

In addition we also carry out one off projects that arise as a result of legislative changes and we are always looking at ways to replenish our lost stock as a result of tenants exercising their right to buy whether that be building new homes or buying homes off the open market.

2. Recommended actions/decision

none

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

This report has been prepared to update Housing Scrutiny Members on the ongoing investment in council housing and specific one off projects, to seek their comments and views

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

none

5. Detailed report

Investment in council housing falls into 4 distinct areas: planned programmes of works, ongoing maintenance contracts, one off projects and investment in new stock. Alongside this we have policies that influence how we deliver services, such as The Fire Safety Policy and the Asbestos Management Policy.

Planned Programmes:

The table below shows the major work areas that form our planned maintenance programmes.

Description	20/21 budget
Kitchen and bathroom refurbishments	4,500
Rewiring and electrical upgrades	2,200
Boiler replacements	4,780
Roofing	900
Soffits/facias and cladding	350
Disabled adaptations	1,200
New doors and windows	150
General Safety works	290
Door Entry	280
Way lighting	150
Concrete path repairs	100
Balcony works	600
District Heating	908
Fire Safety	1,615
Totals	18,023

**Major work areas in more detail.
Generally.**

At the start of the pandemic in March 2020 Technical Services, like all other teams in the council, could only carry out essential works. They worked with their staff and contractors to try and maintain certain work areas to ensure our houses remained compliant, this was particularly difficult in the earlier days, but they managed it. Priority was given to disabled adaptations, urgent boiler renewals and urgently required void properties, where we could assist the inhouse repairs service.

As time progressed the work areas started to come back online, the Phase 1 new builds first and then other external works, like roofing and cladding. Internal works started again, rewires for example but at a slower rate as tenants were not comfortable having operatives in their homes for an extended period of time.

Technical Services, their contractors and the inhouse teams have worked very hard against the backdrop of the pandemic and have continued to deliver a massive investment programme which has kept the tenants and leaseholders safe.

We now find ourselves in a improving situation and the volume of work we are able to carry out is increasing month on month but it is still challenging, there are nationally recognised labour shortages and supply chain issues that are having an impact on certain work streams, however despite this we have been able to complete some work areas a ahead of schedule and continue to look for ways to bring other work areas up to full capacity. We expect the situation to continue to improve into 2022.

Kitchens & Bathrooms

The number of refurbishments has reduced this year due to uncertainty due to COVID, some tenants have not wanted to have the work carried out and our contractors have experienced capacity issues. During 21/22 up to 600 kitchens and bathrooms will have been installed.

Boiler Replacements

Boilers are replaced when it come to the end of its economical life, and assessment is made by our inhouse gas servicing team. We have now started to fit boilers ourselves as well as with contractors. A total of 650 boilers will have been replaced in 21/22.

Re-Wiring

This is an ongoing programme, we have experience delays due to COVID but we are now getting to pre pandemic levels.

Roofing

We have continued to replace roofs and will have re roofed throughout and have completed more than expected.

Soffits and facias and cladding

We have been renewing the cladding to houses and blocks of flat in Beaumont Leys, this is going particularly well and we expect to complete the scheme ahead of schedule, which will mean we can move onto our next location sooner.

Way lighting

We have been upgrading all communal lighting with new energy efficient LED fittings, this has proved extremely popular and has had a positive effect on energy consumption, the residents have noticed a general improvement. The emergency lighting is also upgraded as part of this work and has impacted positively on fire safety.

Concrete path repairs

We have a long tern programme to renew the concrete footpaths to the rear of all bungalows, this year we have renewed the ones at Compass Road and Ocean Road.

District heating

We want to make the system more robust and less susceptible to unplanned outages. We have been renewing all the block entry pipework as historically this has proved to be an issue. This has had a positive effect and the number of unplanned outages has reduced significantly, this work is ongoing.

Fire safety

The Building Safety Bill is coming next year and all our high risk building will need to be registered with the new building safety regulator. We are currently working to ensure that we have all the documentation in place that means we can do this. We still have to manage the fire safety in all our blocks and we continue to carry out fire risk assessments, regular inspections and planned maintenance work to ensure our building are safe. One of our biggest areas of expenditure is ensuring that all front entrance doors are fire doors. We also do other smaller projects such as making sure all loft hatches in specialist houses are complaint, bin stores meet requirements, smoke ventilation is good etc. We have circa 1000 communal space we are responsible for, this is an ongoing area of work.

Disabled Adaptations

We have continued to carry out adaptation throughout however there has been limited capacity to make referrals for adaptations to properties to enable occupation by people on the housing register who are waiting for a suitable council property to become available. Slipping £300k of this budget will enable this work to be carried out in 2022/23.

How we decide what we do:

Component for Replacement	Leicester's Replacement Condition Criteria	Decent Homes Standard Minimum Age
Bathroom	All properties to have a bathroom for life by 2030	40 years / 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)
Chimney	Based on assessed condition (from Stock Condition Survey/ HHSRS)	50 years
Windows & Doors	Based on assessed condition (from Stock Condition Survey/HHSRS)	40 years
Electrics	Every 30 years	30 years
Kitchen	All properties to have an upgraded kitchen by 2036	30 years / 20 years
Roof	Based on assessed condition (from Stock Condition Survey/HHSRS)	50 years (20 years for flat roofs)
Wall finish (external)	Based on assessed condition (from Stock Condition Survey/HHSRS)	80 years
Wall structure	Based on assessed condition (from Stock Condition Survey/HHSRS)	60 years

We also carry out condition survey to make sure we are only replacing items that we need to and properties are not added to the programme based on date only.

Maintenance programmes:

We spend £2.5m every year ensuring that all existing facilities that deliver essential service are maintained, the follow is a list of those work areas.

Description	What we spend
Electrical work - miscellaneous	102,500

Door entry system repair and maintenance	76,900
Alarm systems repair and maintenance	117,900
Fire extinguishers repair and maintenance	15,400
Roofing repairs	35,900
Harassment – security packages	15,400
Water Hygiene management	256,300
District Heating maintenance	665,800
Lifts – communal areas	153,800
Lifts- disabled adaptations	76,900
Leicester energy company	8,200
Washing machine – repair and maintenance	25,900
Water main supplies	76,900
Communal TV aerials	76,900
Targeting rent cookers	5,100
Lightening conductors	20,500
External painting	76,900
Warden call systems	25,600
Structural works	156,300
Fall arrest systems	10,300
Asbestos Management	535,000
Total	2,534,400

These work areas are mainly concerned with pre planned cyclical maintenance but also include a provision for ‘call outs’ and to support the inhouse repairs service.

One off projects

- Demolition of Goscote House
- Refurbishment of The Leys
- Installation of Sprinklers
- Bungalow Conversion Project

Demolition of Goscote House:

An update report was brought to the HSC on the 12th. April 2021 since then and a demolition contractor has been appointed, DSM, and the building handed over to them to deconstruct the building.



The current situation:

- Soft internal strip complete
- Scaffolding being erected
- Site compound set up
- Piled foundations for crane complete

Next steps.

- Erect tower crane
- Complete scaffold – December 21
- Deconstruction starts January 22
- Deconstruction completes December 22

General:

The demolition is currently on target to complete on time and to programme. We are currently looking at options for the site, we are having initial discussion with Planning to help inform the decision-making process, however it is hoped that the site will be used to deliver new affordable housing but no decision has been made yet.

The Leys

Was bought as part of our ongoing acquisition programme, an 8-storey block of flats in Beaumont Leys that needs fully refurbishing.



What's happening now:

To try and bring the building back into use as quickly as possible it was decided to split the work into two specific work stream, the strip out and the refurbishment. The procurement exercise for the first work stream has been completed and the contractor is currently on site doing the strip out work. We are currently trying to work out the best way to procure a contractor to carry out the refurbishment, there is currently a lack of engagement with contractors to carry out work of this value so we are working with colleagues in

Procurement to establish the best and quickest way to do this. The number of flats will be increased from 31 to 33 by utilising former office space on the ground floor.

Next steps:

A procurement exercise needs to be carried out to appoint a contractor to deliver the refurbishment, once this has been resolved a contractor will be appointed, the expected completion date is late summer 2022.

Sprinkler installation

A full update was brought to the HSC on the 12th April 2021 since then the procurement exercise has finished and we are currently concluding the final part of the Section 20 process, this is where we have to consult with all leaseholders before the contract can be awarded to make sure they are fully aware what is happening and that they will have to pay a contribution. There is a legal process we have to follow, which has prescribed timelines. As soon as this is completed a programme of works will be agreed. By the end of 21/22, sprinkler systems will have been installed in 3 of the 5 high storey tower blocks, with the remaining 2 blocks scheduled in.

Bungalow conversion project

This forms part of the underoccupancy/overcrowding project that the Housing Division is running. These bungalows have a constrained layout and are unpopular due to the size of the kitchen. This project completely changes the internal layout to provide a bungalow with more balanced internal layout. They have proved popular and have all been let to tenants that have moved down from 2/3 bedroomed houses so that these can be let to people of the housing register waiting for larger homes.

Investment in New Stock

- Hospital Close – see below
- One off Acquisitions
- Acquisition of large portfolio.

Supporting policies

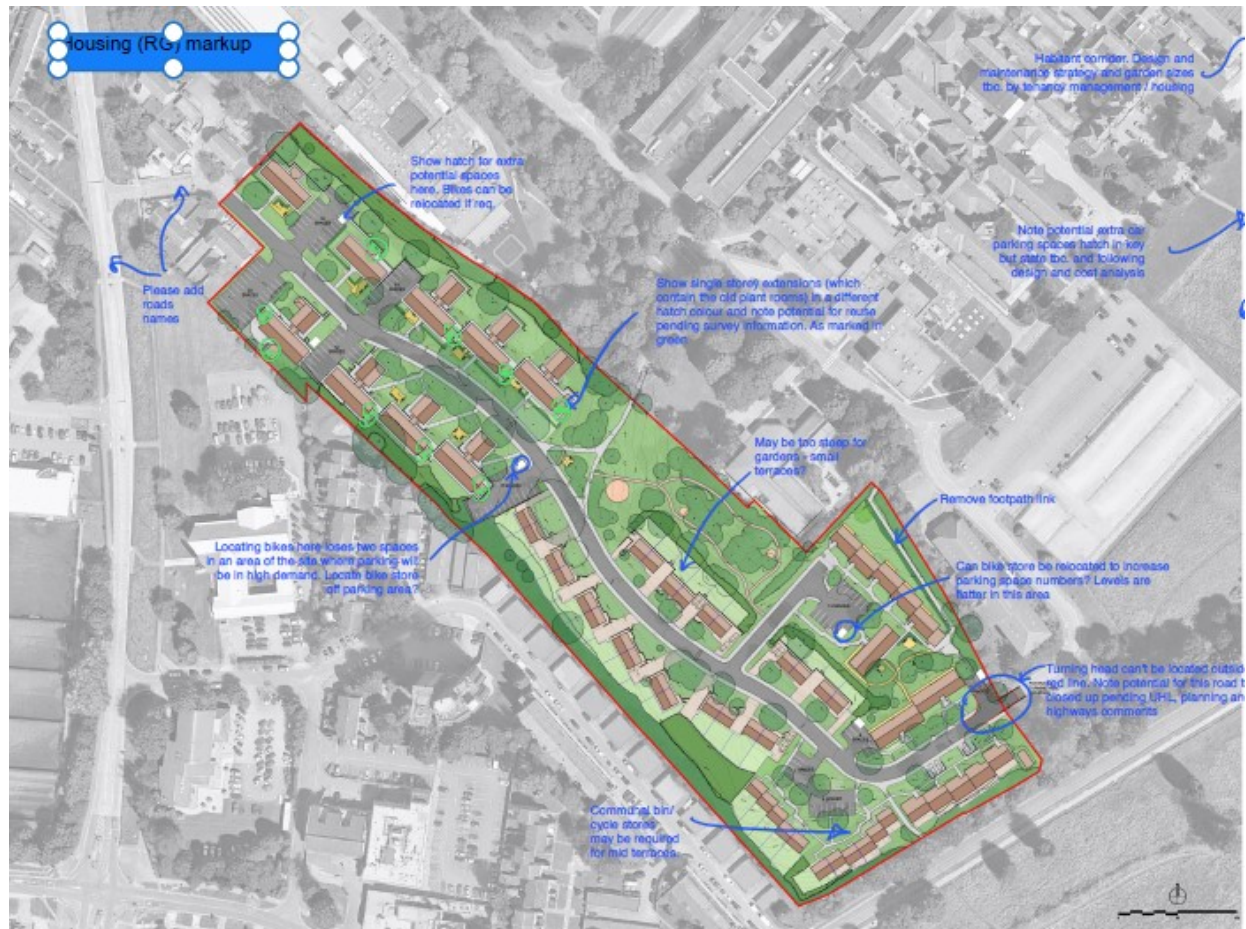
- Asbestos Management Policy
- Fire Safety Strategy
- Water Hygiene

Upcoming areas of work

- Building Safety Bill

Hospital Close update:

The purchase of Hospital Close completed on 1st. April 2021 and consisted of 174 unit of accommodation ranging from 3 storey blocks of former nurses' accommodation to more traditional 3 bedroomed semidetached houses:



A topographical survey has been carried out and the site plan above shows the proposed sit layout, including defined garden areas for the houses, pathways, landscaping and car parking provision.

What has happened so far:

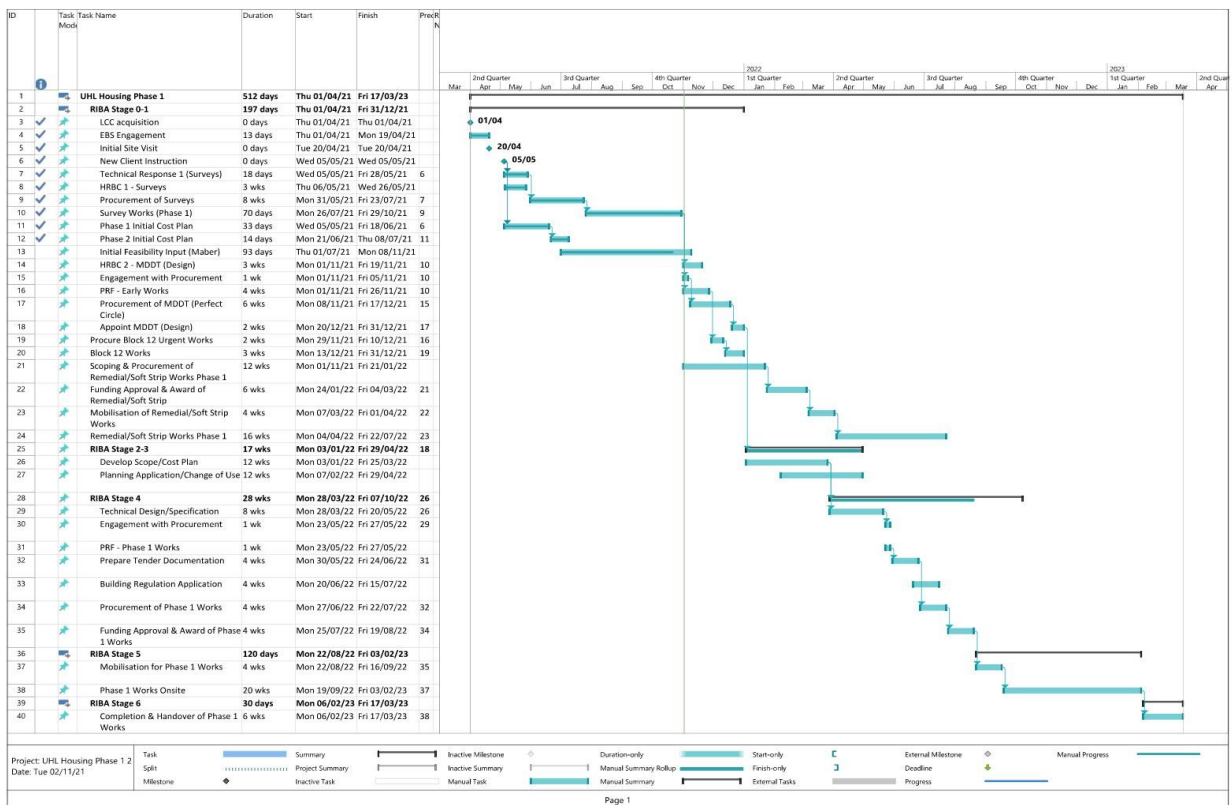
- All the properties have been cleared
- All graffiti has been removed
- All fly tipping removed, this is ongoing
- 24 hour site security is in place, this has been very positive
- A responsive repair team has been created to respond to urgent requests
- We have carried out asbestos surveys to all blocks
- Bat surveys have been carried out
- Tree surveys
- Topographical surveys
- Measured building surveys have been carried out.
- M&E condition surveys
- Structural surveys
- Drainage surveys

- The grounds cleared and a maintenance schedule is being drawn up.

What happens next:

We need to get the properties refurbished and back into use as soon as we can and to do this as quickly as we can the project will be phased. Phase 1 will consist of the 38 houses and Phase 2 will include all the blocks that are currently shared accommodation, both phases will run in tandem but phase 1 will start first.

The programme for phase 1 has been agreed, phase 2 is currently being finalised:



Photographs of the site:







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

6.1 Financial implications

No comments sought, for information only

6.2 Legal implications

No comments sought, for information only

6.3 Equalities implications

No comments sought, for information only

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

No comments sought, for information only

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

No comments sought, for information only

7. Background information and other papers:

8. Summary of appendices:

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)?

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

**HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION
WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22**

MEETING DATE	MEETING ITEMS	LEAD OFFICER	ACTION AGREED
<p>69</p> <p>15th June 2021</p>	COVID-19 Update – Impact on Housing services	Chris Burgin	Chris to provide verbal update
	Goscote House & Sprinklers redevelopment	Simon Nicholls	
	Environment Budget & Public Realm Project update	Gurjit Kaur Minhas	
	Repairs performance and update report	Kevin Doyle	
	Retrofitting & Climate Emergency	Simon Nicholls	
	ASB report	Gurjit Kaur Minhas	
	<i>Informal training sessions to be set-up on the following topics for after this meeting:</i>	<i>Caroline Carpendale</i>	
	<i>Homelessness, Rough Sleepers, Property Lettings (CBL) and the voids process</i>	<i>Kevin Doyle, Robert Webster, Simon Nicholls</i>	<i>Chris and Scrutiny Support Team to arrange a programme in conjunction with Chair/Vice-Chair</i>
<i>Repairs, Gas and Technical Services</i>	<i>Gurjit Minhas, Charlotte McGraw</i>		
<i>Income Management, Tenancy Management & STAR</i>			

6 th September	<p>COVID-19 Housing Service Update</p> <p>Who gets Social Housing & Overcrowding Reduction Strategy</p> <p>Annual Rent Performance</p> <p>Rent Arrears Policy</p> <p>Council Housing Building & Acquisitions Programme update</p>	<p>Chris Burgin</p> <p>Caroline Carpendale</p> <p>Charlotte McGraw</p> <p>Charlotte McGraw</p> <p>Simon Nicholls</p>	<p>Further update to be brought to 29/11</p>
4 th October	<p>Homelessness Strategy update</p> <p>Tenant Involvement</p> <p>Disabled Facilities Grant / Housing Adaptation</p> <p>Housing Estate Shops Presentation</p> <p>Resettlement of Afghan Refugees</p>	<p>Caroline Carpendale</p> <p>Charlotte McGraw</p> <p>Simon Nicholls</p> <p>Matt Wallace</p> <p>Chris Burgin</p>	<p>To be taken to OSC on 10/11</p> <p>Final strategy to be brought back at a later date</p> <p>Written paper to be brought to next meeting.</p>
29 th November	<p>Manifesto Delivery update</p> <p>Afghan Refugee Resettlement Programme update</p> <p>Repairs, Voids & Gas Performance report</p> <p>Empty Homes update</p> <p>Hospital Close/Investment in Social Housing</p>	<p>Chris Burgin</p> <p>Chris Burgin</p> <p>Kevin Doyle</p> <p>Simon Nicholls</p> <p>Simon Nicholls</p>	

<p>10th January 2022</p>	<p>HRA budget</p> <p>Tenancy and Rent Support</p> <p>Environmental Budget – Update</p> <p>Succession Rights Policy</p>	<p>Chris Burgin</p> <p>Chris Burgin</p> <p>Gurjit Minhas</p> <p>Gurjit Minhas</p>	
<p>28th February</p>	<p>Safety Compliance (including Fire Safety)</p> <p>Retrofit & Climate Reduction update</p> <p>Rent Arrears performance report (including update on Rent Support Pilot)</p> <p>Goscote House & Tower Block Sprinkler installation update</p>	<p>Simon Nicholls</p> <p>Simon Nicholls</p> <p>Charlotte McGraw</p> <p>Simon Nicholls</p>	

Additional Items – dates tbc:

Downsizing – briefing note
Scrutiny of the Local Plan
Who Gets Social Housing Update– moved from 29 November
Tenant Involvement Strategy – Post-Consultation
Update on district heating
PRS Housing Corporate Offer

