

Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum Action and Decision Log

30th July 2020 – Telephone Conference

1) Welcome and apologies

Forum members present: Wendy Biddles, Joe Carroll, John Gater, Gwen Clifford, Phillip Allen, Peter Hookway, Jean Williams, Jill Rhys

Apologies: May Jones, Ann Green

Guest Speakers: Gurjit Minhas (Head of Service) Daxa Pancholi (Head of Community Safety and Protection)

LCC Officers present: Chris Burgin, Helen McGarry, Shain Mohammed

2) Feedback on actions from the previous meeting:

- a) Shain Mohammed contacted Forum members about the facility to mute and unmute phones. However, some of the phones do not have this functionality.
- b) At present it is not viable to conduct Forum meetings via MS Teams as some Forum members do not have internet access or MS packages.
- c) Contact was made with Forum members where individual and local issues were raised at the previous meeting.
- d) The request for key performance indicators to be included at the Forum was taken forward and is an agenda item at today's meeting.
- e) The request for text message satisfaction surveys when repairs are completed has been actioned and the new process started last week.

3) Anti-Social behaviour service proposals

Gurjit Minhas explained some of the issues being faced in relation to resolving anti-social behaviour in terms of responsibility between Housing Officers and Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Unit and the duplication of work between the two teams. To resolve this, a proposal is being put forward to bring the responsibility of dealing with all reports of anti-social behaviour under the Crime and Investigation Unit (CRASBU) and streamline current processes.

Daxa Pancholi the proposal was that the first point of contact for all housing tenures would be through CRASBU.

Chris Burgin explained this is an early proposal and requested feedback from Forum members.

Several members of the Forum stated the current service should remain within Housing due to the knowledge Housing Officers have on their local areas and tenants. It was raised that officers currently don't have enough time to deal with ASB due to capacity, and consideration should be given to increasing the number of Housing Officers' to enable them to deal with ASB cases. The current performance of CRASBU was questioned along with their ability to take on additional work. The Forum members asked for assurances that the new proposals would work and be successful. It was suggested that KPIs should be introduced for the Forum to monitor performance. It was questioned why the HRA money should pay for the CRASBU when the service could still be provided by Housing?

A couple of Forum members stated they felt tackling anti-social behaviour should be dealt with by one team as a "one stop shop", irrespective a tenancy type.

Concerns were raised by Forum members about access to services for people who do not have online facilities and that there was still a requirement for face to face and telephone appointments.

Action: Tenant Forum members to provide Helen McGarry with examples of cases where they feel anti-social behaviour has not been dealt with appropriately so these can be investigated and used as case studies.

Action: A written response to be provided to the concerns raised by Forum members in relation to the anti-social Behaviour service proposals.

Action: Council Officers to review the proposals in light of the feedback from the Forum and consult on updated proposals when these are developed.

4) Recovery planning update:

Chris Burgin provided an update on the following:

- The housing service has been working on recovery, but due to the local lockdown this has caused delays.
- The Housing register is now open, and Choice Based Lettings went live again from the 22nd July 2020.

- The rough sleepers next stage strategy has now been developed. 85 of these people have moved into self-contained temporary accommodation and hostels. Housing are working towards procuring 170 additional units to support with accommodating homeless people, whilst working with support and health services to move people through the homeless pathway.
- Repairs, Gas, Voids and Tenancy Management are prepared to expand services as soon as the Leicester Lockdown allows. Arrangements are in place to make sure our working practices are Covid safe.
- 7,000 non priority repairs are outstanding due to Covid. If necessary, we will look at using additional resources, including contractors, to address this, but it could take several months to complete the outstanding repairs.
- Domestic violence and anti-social behaviour cases have increased since the start of lockdown and we are working with CRASBU and the Police to resolve these issues. Any urgent moves have been, or are, being processed.
- Rent arrears are currently £2.6m, an increase from £1.5m at the start of the year. Indications show that the ongoing collection of rent will be a risk. To address this, we are increasing the number of Rent Management Advisors to the Income Management Team to support people to be able to pay their rent.
- Tenancy management are continuing to support the most vulnerable of our tenants.

Concerns were raised that no information was sent to tenants who paid their rent by cash or details of alternative arrangements that were in place. Chris Burgin advised that members of the Income Management Team had been contacting tenants to advise them how to pay their rent during the Covid 19 situation.

Action: If there is to be a further lockdown in Leicester, consideration to providing an alternative facility for people to pay their rent by cash.

5) Key Performance Indicators

Chris Burgin talked through the Housing key performance indicators which included:

- In 2018-19, 887 new builds were completed in Leicester, and a further 552 residential properties were added to the local stock through conversions. Two properties were demolished during the year, meaning that net additions to dwelling stock came out at 1,437
- Growing pressures on homelessness in the city demonstrates the need for more affordable housing
- In 2019-20 a total of 340 affordable homes were delivered

- 4,803 households approached Housing Options for advice and support. Of these, 2,982 applied formally for homelessness assistance
- In 2019-20, the repairs service completed a total of 88,052 responsive repairs at council properties; this represented a 2.2% reduction on the volume of repairs completed twelve months earlier
- 77% of repairs were completed on first visit which is down on the previous few years. Work is taking place to increase this performance.
- 18,600 repairs were in relation to bathrooms – Forum members thought this figure was high and requested further information in relation to this
- As at the end of Quarter 4 (2019-20), current tenant debt for Leicester City Council was calculated at £2,866,488.5
- In 2019-20, a total of 37 Leicester City Council tenants were evicted due to rent arrears. Whilst this represented a small increase on the previous year, it is known that Leicester has some of the lowest eviction rates across the country.

Action: Repairs to bathrooms to be an agenda item at the next Forum meeting.

6) Any other business

Action: Information to be provided on the council's approach to the external painting of properties and timescales for this at the next Forum meeting

7) Date of next meeting

Thursday 29th October 2020 – 2pm until 3:30pm, via telephone conference