

Leicester
City Council

MEETING OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

DATE: MONDAY, 4 OCTOBER 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

Attending meetings and access to information

You have the right to attend formal meetings such as full Council, committee meetings, and Scrutiny Commissions and see copies of agendas and minutes.

However, on occasion, meetings may, for reasons set out in law, need to consider some items in private.

Due to COVID restrictions, public access in person is limited to ensure social distancing. We would encourage you to view the meeting online but if you wish to attend in person, you are required to contact the Democratic Support Officer in advance of the meeting regarding arrangements for public attendance. A guide to attending public meetings can be found here: <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/decisions-meetings-and-minutes/public-attendance-at-council-meetings-during-covid-19/>

Members of the public can follow a live stream of the meeting on the Council's website at this link: <http://www.leicester.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcasts>

Dates of meetings and copies of public agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website at www.cabinet.leicester.gov.uk, or by contacting us using the details below.

To hold this meeting in as Covid-safe a way as possible, all attendees are asked to follow current Government guidance and:

- maintain distancing while entering and leaving the room/building;
- remain seated and maintain distancing between seats during the meeting;
- wear face coverings throughout the meeting unless speaking or exempt;
- make use of the hand sanitiser available;
- when moving about the building to follow signs about traffic flows, lift capacities etc;
- 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;
- if you are displaying Coronavirus symptoms: a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste, you should NOT attend the meeting, please stay at home, and get a PCR test.

NOTE: Due to COVID restrictions, public access in person is limited to ensure social distancing. We would encourage you to view the meeting online but if you wish to attend in person, you are required to contact the Democratic Support Officer in advance of the meeting regarding arrangements for public attendance.

Separate guidance on attending the meeting is available for officers. Officers attending the meeting are asked to contact the Democratic Support Officer in advance to confirm their arrangements for attendance.

This meeting will be webcast live at the following link:-

<http://www.leicester.public-i.tv>

An archive copy of the webcast will normally be available on the Council's website within 48 hours of the meeting taking place at the following link:-

<http://www.leicester.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcasts>

Making meetings accessible to all

Wheelchair access – Public meeting rooms at the City Hall are accessible to wheelchair users. Wheelchair access to City Hall is from the middle entrance door on Charles Street - press the plate on the right hand side of the door to open the door automatically.

Braille/audio tape/translation - If you require this please contact the Democratic Support Officer (production times will depend upon equipment/facility availability).

Induction loops - There are induction loop facilities in City Hall meeting rooms. Please speak to the Democratic Support Officer using the details below.

Filming and Recording the Meeting - The Council is committed to transparency and supports efforts to record and share reports of proceedings of public meetings through a variety of means, including social media. In accordance with government regulations and the Council's policy, persons and press attending any meeting of the Council open to the public (except Licensing Sub Committees and where the public have been formally excluded) are allowed to record and/or report all or part of that meeting. Details of the Council's policy are available at www.leicester.gov.uk or from Democratic Support.

If you intend to film or make an audio recording of a meeting you are asked to notify the relevant Democratic Support Officer in advance of the meeting to ensure that participants can be notified in advance and consideration given to practicalities such as allocating appropriate space in the public gallery etc..

The aim of the Regulations and of the Council's policy is to encourage public interest and engagement so in recording or reporting on proceedings members of the public are asked:

- ✓ to respect the right of others to view and hear debates without interruption;
- ✓ to ensure that the sound on any device is fully muted and intrusive lighting avoided;
- ✓ where filming, to only focus on those people actively participating in the meeting;
- ✓ where filming, to (via the Chair of the meeting) ensure that those present are aware that they may be filmed and respect any requests to not be filmed.

Further information

If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact:

Jason Tyler, Democratic Support Officer

Tel: (0116) 454 6359

Email: jason.tyler@leicester.gov.uk

For Press Enquiries - please phone the **Communications Unit on 0116 454 4151**

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
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

Acronym	Meaning
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
GSIUR	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
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

Acronym	Meaning
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

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.

AGENDA

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 6 September 2021 are attached and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

4. CHAIR'S 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. COVID 19 UPDATE

The Director of Housing will provide an update on the impact of Covid-19 on Housing Services.

8. AFGHAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME

The Director of Housing will give an overview of how Housing Services are supporting the resettlement programme.

9. HOUSING ESTATES SHOPS

Appendix B

The Director of Estates and Building Services will give a presentation on the position relating to estate shops.

The presentation slides are attached.

10. HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY UPDATE

Appendix C

The Director of Housing submits a report, which provides an update on progress in implementing the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-2023.

11. PROPOSED REVIEW OF TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Appendix D

The Director of Housing submits a report, which makes comment on the Government's Housing White Paper "The Charter for Social Housing Residents".

The Commission is asked to agree to a review of the current tenant and leaseholder involvement activities and the development of an Involvement Strategy, including the establishment of a Working Group of current Tenants and Leaseholders' Forum members to help inform the content of the Strategy.

12. DISABLED ADAPTATIONS, HRA AND DISABLED FACILITY GRANTS

Appendix E

The Director of Housing will give a presentation concerning the Disabled Adaptations, HRA & Disabled Facility Grants.

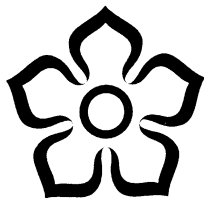
The presentation slides are attached.

13. WORK PROGRAMME

Appendix F

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

14. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS



Leicester
City Council

Appendix A

Minutes of the Meeting of the HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: MONDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 2021 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Westley (Chair)
Councillor Chamund (Vice Chair)

Councillor Aqbany

Councillor Gee

In Attendance:

Councillor Cutkelvin – Assistant City Mayor (Housing and Education)

* * * * *

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

18. 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.

19. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Commission held on 15 June 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

20. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair made the following announcements:

a) Task Group review into the role of the Anti-Social Behaviour Team

It was noted that the scoping document for the review was previously endorsed by the Overview Select Committee.

It was confirmed that the scope for the first meeting of the Task Group had been agreed and tenant representatives were also being invited to participate in the review.

b) Housing Overview Training Sessions

Members were reminded that a programme of sessions to provide an overview of major housing services had taken place.

Officers were thanked for all of their work in preparing and delivering the sessions and for those members that have been able to engage.

It was noted that the sessions had been useful to set the context for some of the more focussed work undertaken by the Commission.

c) Housing Acronym Sheets

A list of helpful acronyms had been included at the beginning of the agenda, in response to a request at the previous meeting.

21. PETITIONS

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

22. 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.

23. COVID 19 UPDATE

The Director of Housing gave a verbal update in order to provide the most up to date information to members on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

All Housing services were operational and significant progress had been made on the requirement to catch up on areas most affected by the pandemic.

The Homelessness had been particularly busy since the 'all in' initiative had been implemented and their aims to prevent homelessness and offer help was recognised. It was reported that 30 individual persons were currently in bed and breakfast accommodation and 4 families.

It was confirmed that the ambition of the Homelessness teams was to ensure that appropriate and more permanent accommodation could be provided without undue delay. The statutory period of 6 weeks in bed and breakfast accommodation was clarified and it was reported that this period was always met by the service.

In terms of the operational work, it was reported that levels of rent collection were very good and was the subject of a detailed report to be considered later in the agenda. The progress with the repairs and voids programmes were also reported and the significant reduction in outstanding works was welcomed. It was noted that the levels of outstanding repairs and void properties was nearing the expected and typical levels pre-pandemic.

Some longer delays in respect of capital works were accepted, due to the limited capacity of external contractors which had affected the programme. Some works would be rolled-over to the 2021/22 capital programme.

In terms of customer services it was noted that officers had returned to York House and that other District housing offices including St. Matthews were also reopened.

The Chair welcomed the update and Commission members joined him in extending thanks and appreciation to the staff for the significant levels of service and progress following the Covid lockdown.

In response to questions it was clarified that families in bed and breakfast accommodation would be provided adequate space for their needs. The Council's proud record in offering more suitable and permanent accommodation within statutory timeframes was reiterated.

In respect of the Afghan resettlement scheme it was confirmed that the Council had offered rehousing services and the communication with the Home Office was noted. It was clarified that the responsibility with holding hotels was a Home Office function and only some Council's had offered help.

Commission members expressed surprise at the reluctance of some other authorities to assist and again the Council's proud record and history in relation to resettlement schemes was acknowledged. It was also noted that the city had an existing Afghani community who were actively assisting with operational issues.

In terms of the problems and concerns reported with customer services and access to services it was noted that as this was a corporate issue and although being highly influenced by housing enquiries, the issue was being reviewed across the Council as a whole.

In conclusion, the Chair confirmed that ongoing updates on the effects of Covid-19 would continue to be reported to future meetings.

AGREED: That the update and position be noted.

24. 'WHO GETS SOCIAL HOUSING' AND OVERCROWDING REDUCTION STRATEGY

The Director of Housing submitted a report, which provided an update on the housing register and lettings data for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

A presentation was also given, which reflected the information in the report submitted and detailed the following key areas:

- Covid 19
- Housing Register – Headline Data
- Focus on Overcrowding
- Lettings – Headline Data
- Direct Lets

Graphs and charts were displayed, which provided greater detail on data relating to the following areas:

- General Needs Accommodation
- Adapted Accommodation
- Fully Wheelchair Adapted Accommodation

The data showing levels of demand for each band (bands 1-3) and numbers and percentage of applications were described and noted.

In concluding the presentation, data was also submitted relating to the housing register information, lettings information and waiting times, and customer information.

The Chair referred to the level of challenge over the previous 18 months and appreciated the pressures put on services in relation to the irregular data provided. He reiterated his previous comments thanking staff in the services affected by Covid-19.

In terms of the 'everyone in' initiative it was recognised that some complex cases existed with individuals that had complicated needs making them difficult to place.

In response to a question on Brexit it was reported that the data showing the number of tenants remaining and applying for citizenship and the numbers emigrating back to mainland Europe had not been collated. It was confirmed that some limited work on this intelligence could be undertaken and provided to a future meeting. It was not considered at this stage that there would be a significant 'freeing-up' of housing stock due to Brexit as many tenancies affected were private lets linked to employment opportunities.

The effect on the housing stock concerning mutual exchanges was also discussed and it was reported that this could be reported separately to members in due course.

In response to a question concerning sub-letting of properties it was clarified that the Council would only become involved in its own lets as tenancies were offered on the basis of need. Any sub-letting of private dwellings would be a private matter.

In respect of waiting times it was noted that these seemed lengthy in bands 2 and 3 and the influence of private rentals was discussed. It was noted that schemes to encourage and incentivise private landlords had previously been considered and a revised scheme was being launched.

In conclusion, the Chair commented on the need to ensure that all offers of tenancies were properly assessed in respect of suitable accommodation as anecdotal evidence of families being allocated high rise flats had been noted.

AGREED:

1. That the current position be noted and that further updates be provided in respect of:
 - the support for adaptive accommodation and the 'private landlords incentive' scheme; and
 - the effect of Brexit on the housing stock.
2. That the situation concerning families being allocated to high-rise accommodation be explored further and reported back to a future meeting.

25. ANNUAL RENT PERFORMANCE

The Director of Housing submitted a report, which provided information on the rent arrears progress over the full financial year from April 2020 to March 2021.

It was reported that at the end of the financial year to 4 April 2021 the cash amount outstanding for current tenant arrears were £1.799m, and this was 11% lower than at the same point in the previous financial year. The proportion of rent collected between April to March 2021 was 101.01% which was above target.

In addition to detailed data and analysis of financial information, including Discretionary Housing Payments and the impact of Universal Credit. The report also commented on the excellent performance of the Rent Management Advisory team and it was confirmed that no evictions were carried out over the period with limited legal activity taking place to pursue non-payment of rent.

The Chair commented on the outstanding performance of the team in light of the challenges faced and Commission members joined him in recording their appreciation of their efforts.

In response to questions it was noted that the Government were intending to make changes to Universal Credit (UC) with a reduction in allowances being recommended by the Department for Work and Pensions. It was expected that this would have a serious detrimental effect on the ability to collect rent and would impact many tenants. Incentives to assist those in hardship were being established to limit the likely impacts. In reply to a question requesting clarity on whether National Insurance and Pension contributions would be included in the future UC assessment criteria, it was noted that this required further investigation and an answer would be submitted separately.

It was reported and recognised that evictions were always avoided, and support was provided to vulnerable tenants in arrears, as any resulting homelessness situation would have a greater impact on resources.

In response to a question concerning alternative payment arrangements data concerning the numbers and categories of applicants could be collated and forwarded to members separately in due course.

In response to a further question concerning the succession of tenancies, it was emphasised and noted that this was a function of Neighbourhood Services and not the Housing Rental teams. Any individual cases or concerns from members could be forwarded to the relevant officers on request.

AGREED:

1. That the exceptional performance in rent arrears progress over the previous financial year be noted.
2. That additional information in response to queries concerning the Rent Support Pilot be considered in the review report to be submitted in due course.

Councillor Aqbany left the meeting at 7.10pm.

26. RENT ARREARS POLICY

The Director of Housing submitted a report, which provided information on the revised policy and allowed members to review the documents and provide comments for consideration as part of the development of the rent arrears policy.

It was noted that the report and documents presented a revised rent arrears policy, which was used to collect rent and service charges from Council tenants.

The Chair commented on trends noted as a result of Debt Respite scheme that had recently been introduced and the impacts on the policy were recognised.

AGREED:

That the policy be endorsed.

27. COUNCIL HOUSE BUILDING AND ACQUISITIONS PROGRAMME

The Director of Housing presented details of the Council House Building and Acquisitions Programme.

The presentation slides covered the following key issues on the relevant phases of works:

- Phase 1 completed and occupied
- Phase 2 contracts awarded –start on site dates being confirmed
- Phase 2b contracts awarded – start on site dates being agreed
- Phase 3, business case completed, mobilising the delivery team
- Phase 4 identifying sites

The Chair invited the Assistant City Mayor (Housing and Education), Councillor Cutkelvin, to comment on the presentation.

Councillor Cutkelvin referred to the ambition to increase the numbers of new social housing, against the loss of homes purchased under right-to-buy procedures.

The Chair commented that in respect of the Phase 2 developments and the inclusion of some housing for families, concern remained that there was a greater need for larger families. It was also recognised that an update on the Hospital Close acquisition would be submitted to the Commission in due course.

AGREED:

That the presentation and update be note.

28. WORK PROGRAMME

The Commission's Work Programme for the 2021/22 Municipal Year was submitted for information and was noted.

29. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.45pm.



Photograph: Aikman Avenue Shops

Purpose:

In response to matters arising at the meeting of 15 June 2021 and a request by the Commission for an update on the Neighbourhood / Housing Estate Shops 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.

Neighbourhood Shops Update

September 2021

1. Corporate Estate Overview

2. The Council's Retail Holdings

- Size and Scope
- Benchmark Comparison

3. Neighbourhood Retail Offer

- Location / Values
- Tenancies / Management
- Sector Performance

4. Capital Investment & Maintenance

Corporate Estate - Overview

The Corporate Estate is a commercial property portfolio consisting of the land and property owned and directly managed by the City Council predominantly for income generation or capital appreciation purposes.

The portfolio consists of land, small business units, office space, industrial units, along with city centre retail units and neighbourhood shops that are leased out to private sector organisations across the city. In addition, the Council leases out car parks, farms and grazing land as well as other land that houses anything from warehouses and factories, to sports facilities and substations.

Income is generated by letting out the land and property for market-competitive rents.



Locally-based – Leicester and Leicestershire



372 Sites / 1105 Lettable Units (including land) / 96% Occupancy



A diverse portfolio to minimise risk - ensuring that the Council has a balance of security, liquidity and yield



Generating a stable and sustainable revenue income – just over £7 million gross / £5 million net revenue contribution p.a.



Supporting local businesses by providing competitively-priced business accommodation



Valued at £113 million (March 2020)



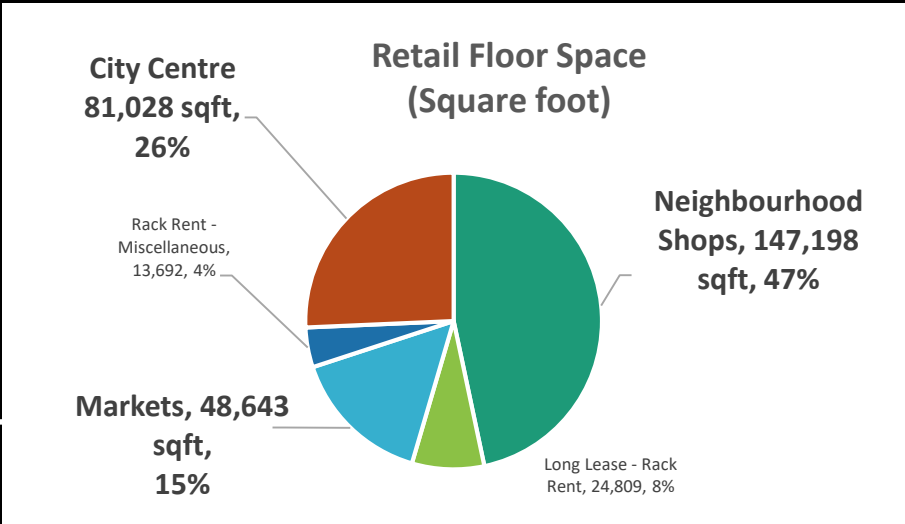
Accounting for more than 10% of the GIA of the Council's estate, has a significant role in our commitment to address the Climate Emergency

The Council's Retail Holdings

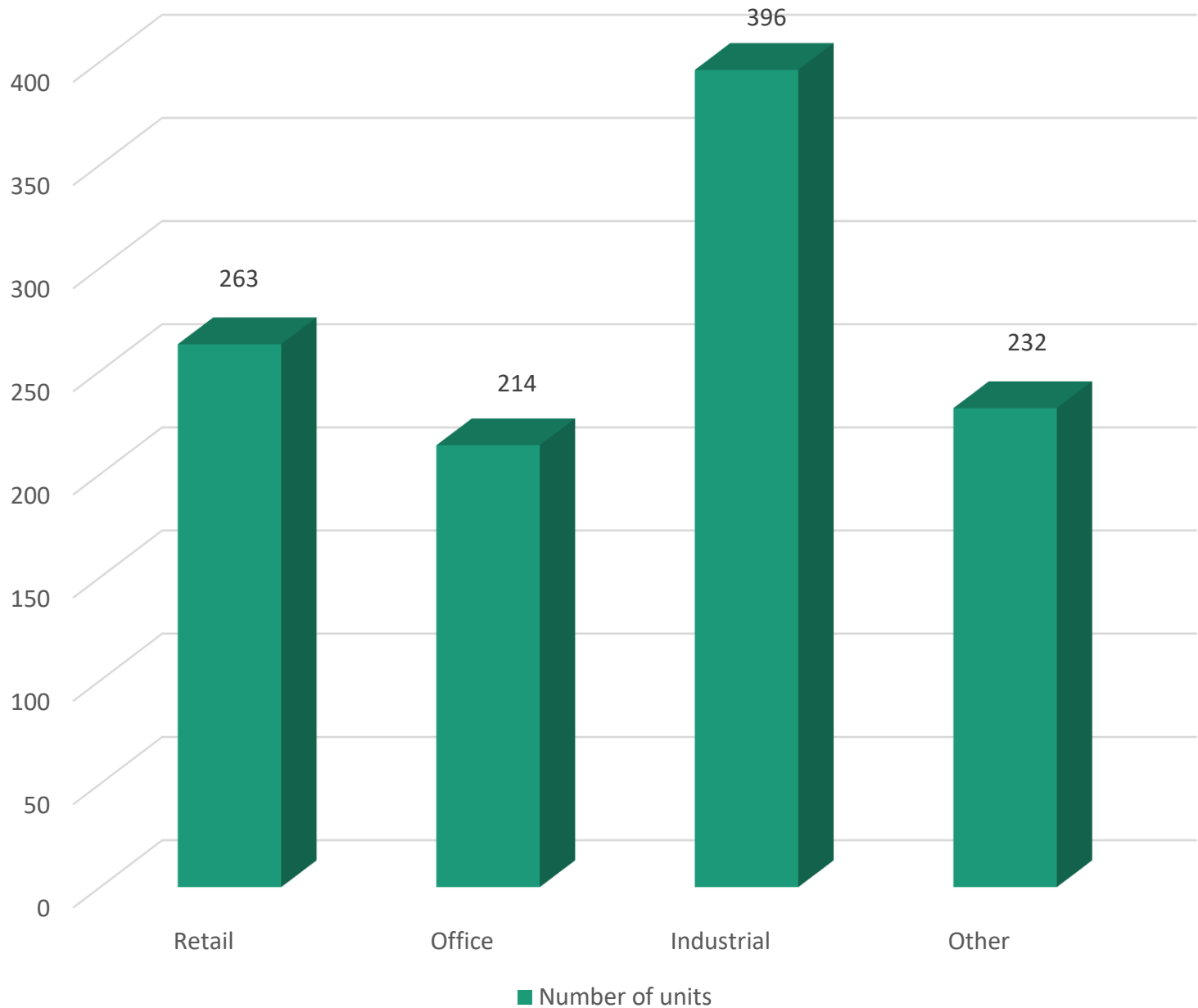
Size and Scope

Our land and property portfolio is made up of a number of lettable units. The block diagram shows us that - of the 210 sites and 1105 lettable units - 263 (24%) of these units are in the retail sector, generating an annual income of almost £1.4 million.

Our retail portfolio is made up of 263 units – 112 neighbourhood shops and 151 other retail spaces, with a gross internal area (GIA) of 315,000 square feet. The floor space is around one quarter (26%) of the overall floor space of our Corporate Estate.



Corporate Estate Assets (Lettable units)



The Council's Retail Holdings

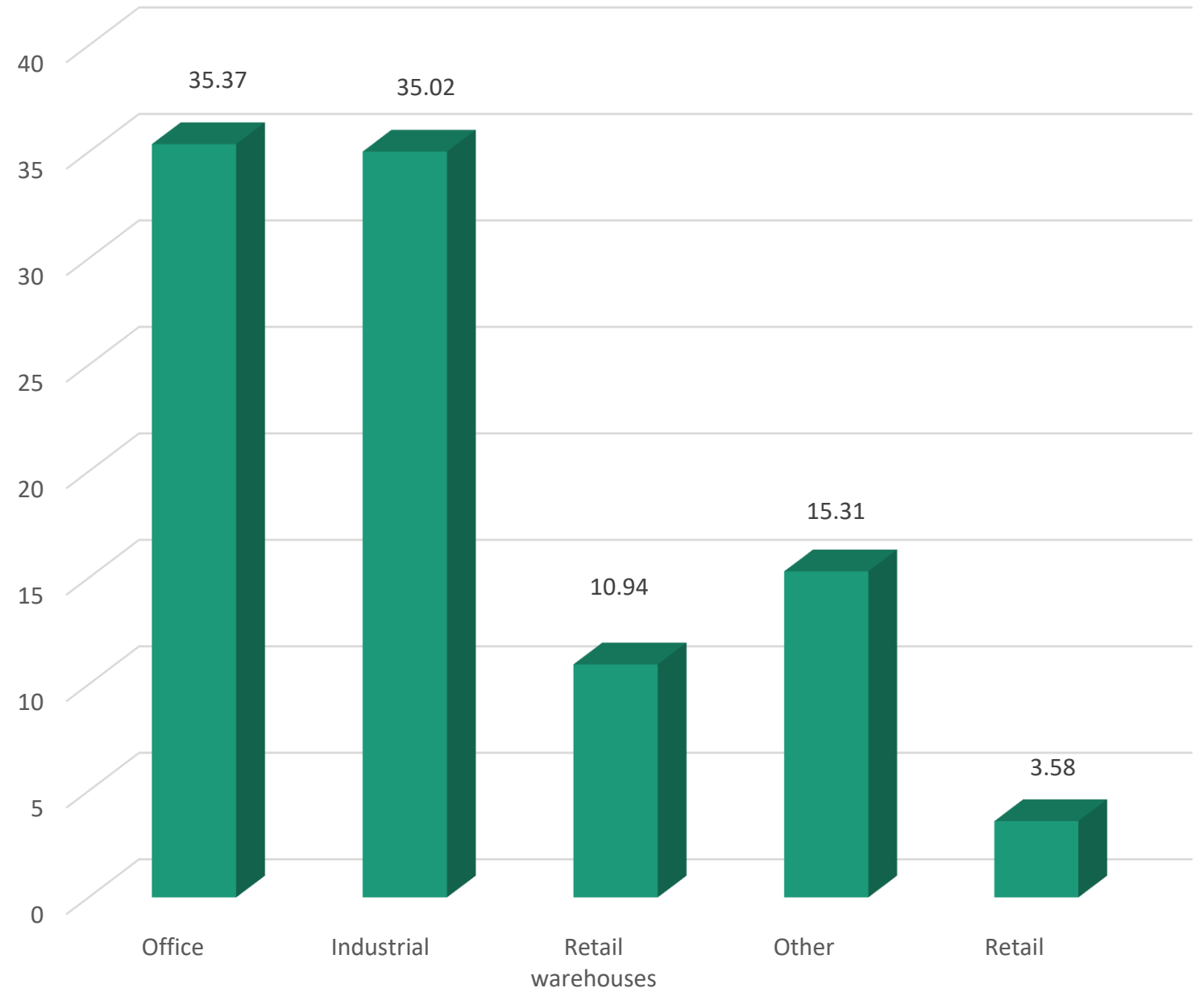
Benchmark Comparison

The CCLA Local Authorities' Property Fund has been used as a benchmark for the Council's Corporate Estate. The CCLA* reports the make-up of their property portfolio in terms of sector balance. Industrial units make up 35.02% of their portfolio; the office sector 35.37%, with the most significant difference being the fund's investment in the retail sector – only 3.58% (or 14.52% if we include retail warehouses) as compared to 23.80% in the Corporate Estate.

This emphasises the fact that, whilst the Council's portfolio is well-balanced, our investment in the retail sector is not purely for income generation, but also to provide a range of accommodation for our city centre and neighbourhood shopkeepers.

* Fact Sheet dated 30 September 2019

CCLA - Asset Allocation Percentages



Council Owned Neighbourhood Retail

Property Name

Total Net Valuation

Cross Hedge Close 11	£45,000
Hopyard Close 1-5	£64,000
Aikman Avenue 277-311	£1,264,000
Bewcastle Grove 12-22	£465,000
Thurncourt Road 166-200	£1,144,000
Home Farm Square 1, 5-8	£474,400
Bonney Road 56	£78,000
Cantrell Road 7	£90,000
Cantrell Road 9	£129,000
Charnwood Walk 5-11	£356,000
Hastings Road 80-86	£211,000
Lockerbie Walk 1-6	£381,000
Malabar Road 22-46	£940,500
Melbourne Road 100-114	£690,000
Netherhall Road 83-119	£855,000
Radstone Walk 35-41	£168,900
Home Farm Close Supermarket	£320,000
Malabar Road 26	
Malabar Road 34-38	
Malabar Road 48-50	
Manitoba Road 84	£148,000
Manitoba Road 86	
Manitoba Road 88	
Musson Road 6	£84,000
Heyford Road 73-75	£216,000
Manitoba Road 82	
Marwood Road 8-20 No 10 not included	£261,000
Sharmon Crescent 29-39	£334,000
Heyford Road 69-71	£122,000
Cantrell Road 29	£81,000
Aikman Avenue 120	£69,000

Neighbourhood Shops

Tenancies and Management

There are a range of tenants and businesses that occupy the spaces available in the neighbourhoods, including: small supermarkets, opticians, pharmacies, laundrettes, bookmakers and food takeaways.

Many of the businesses have been in situ for more than 10 years with current tenancy end dates ranging from 2021 through to 2029.

Most leases are full repairing and insuring leases meaning that the tenant has responsibility for general repairs and maintenance, with the Council retaining responsibility for the structures.

Rents range from around £5,000 up to around £30,000 subject to the size and location of the units.

Currently at 90% occupancy (with some units remaining vacant due to pending internal works).



112 Neighbourhood Shops – transferred from the HRA to the Corporate Estate in 2018 and managed by EBS



Valued at £9 million (March 2020)



Provide a good balance of non-competing day-time and night-time retail businesses and services to support local communities



Generating a moderate but stable revenue income from rents – around £750,000 p.a.



Supporting local businesses by providing competitively-priced business accommodation (generally on full R&I leases)



Occupied by a range of businesses including a significant number of long-term tenants



Management issues generally relate to litter / fly-tipping and overgrown vegetation – licensing promoted by City Wardens

Retail Sector Performance

Portfolio Sector	Yield	Indicator	Performance Review
City Centre Retail	8.8%	Good Yield / Turbulent	City Centre retail space that brings in an excellent yield. Yield performance is high due to the historic nature of the holdings and subsequent increase in value. The sector is particularly affected by current market turbulence. The Council plans to invest in some sites to maintain and / or enhance yield levels, with consideration being given to acquisitions (at the right price point) in line with our strategy to maintain an ongoing presence in City Centre retail.
Ground Lease Retail	5.8%	Good Yield / Low Risk	Longer-length leases with a lower risk than the City Centre retail space. A stable performer with low risk attached.
Neighbourhood Retail	3.1%	Low Yield / Held for Community Benefit	Based in community settings on our local authority housing estates, and generally tied to our housing portfolio by way of flats above the shops, this sector is held to provide communities with local, convenient, neighbourhood shopping facilities. High occupancy levels (more than 90%). Investment of almost £1 million in improvements – work already underway. Whilst there is potential to increase yield in future, given the challenging environment for small businesses, this would be a medium to long-term strategy.



Neighbourhood Shops

Capital Investment and Maintenance

Despite the challenges brought about by current market conditions, the Council will continue to:

- Support the local economy by maintaining a balance of commercialism and social value in our property offer;
- Acknowledge the importance of our locally-based shops in serving the communities, investing in improvements in this sector, including the Council's retail area improvement scheme;
- Invest in our estate to improve its appearance, longevity, and energy efficiency, and to ensure it continues to meet energy performance legislation.



Bewcastle Grove Shops

Neighbourhood Shops

Capital Investment and Maintenance

Current programme of works includes improvements and or replacements to the following:

- Electrics (inc. meters)
- Guttering, downpipes, fascias and soffits;
- Garage doors, car parking and paving
- Brickwork and canopies;
- Flat roofs;
- Timberwork inc. doors and windows;
- Paintwork;
- Vegetation clearance.



Neighbourhood Shops

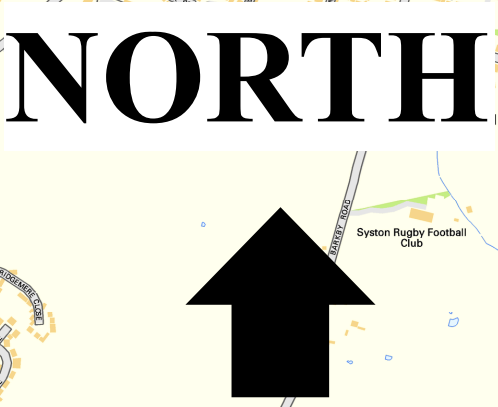
Capital Investment and Maintenance

Aikman Avenue
Bewcastle Grove
Bonney Road
Hastings Road
Heyford Road
Hopyard Close
Malabar Road
Manitoba Road
Marwood Road
Melbourne Road
Musson Road
Netherhall Road
Sharmon Crescent
Thurncourt Road





NEIGHBOURHOOD SHOPS



BASED UPON THE ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP WITH THE
SANCTION OF THE CONTROLLER OF H.M.STATIONERY OFFICE.
CROWN COPYRIGHT RESERVED. LICENCE No. LA 100019264

DRAWN BYRF..... PLAN No Neighbourhood Shops
CHECKED BYD.White..... DATE 10/09/2021.....

NOT TO SCALE
@ A0

DIRECTOR OF ESTATES & BUILDING SERVICES
LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL



Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy

For consideration by: Housing Scrutiny Commission

Date: 4 October 2021

Lead Director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report authors: Justin Haywood, Service Manager – Housing Solutions & Partnerships
- Author contact details: justin.haywod@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report provides a further update to Members of the Housing Scrutiny Commission on progress in implementing Leicester's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-2023¹, since the last update to Scrutiny in November 2020.
- 1.2. Ordinarily, 6-monthly updates are provided to City Mayor Briefing and Housing Scrutiny Commission, but the schedule was interrupted as a result of the pandemic. This report would have ordinarily been presented during May 2021.

2. Summary

- 2.1. Part 3 of this report gives important background information for the period.
- 2.2. Part 4 of this report shows the latest progress made since the last update (Quarter 3 & 4, 2020/21) across the key strategic aims:
 1. Anyone at risk of homelessness is aware of and has access to the services they may need to prevent it.
 2. Provide suitable accommodation and support options for people who are, or who may become homeless.
 3. Reduce rates of repeat homelessness amongst single people.
 4. Provide the right support and services so that no person needs to sleep rough in Leicester.
- 2.3. In summary good progress has been made on all points, although some objectives have had to be placed on hold or changed in order to respond to more immediate needs of the national COVID-19 pandemic, and subsequent service recovery.

3. Background

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

- 3.1. All housing authorities are required to complete a homelessness review for their district and formulate and publish a 5-year homelessness strategy based on the results of the review.

¹ [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-2023 \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://www.leicester.gov.uk/homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-strategy-2018-2023/)

- 3.2. Leicester City Council's fourth Homelessness Strategy was formally agreed May 2018 and coincided closely with the commencement of the Homelessness Reduction Act, which came into force on 3rd April 2018.
- 3.3. The Strategy factored in new pressures, and an updated landscape, and makes it clear that this is not a council endeavour alone, as tackling homelessness requires significant partnership working to address the root causes of homelessness, and provide the level of support and advice needed to those affected.
- 3.4. As such, Leicester City Council and key partners are undertaking an ambitious programme of work to tackle homelessness locally. Work has been ongoing to implement the agreed actions / proposals and build on the extensive work already in place.
- 3.5. Leicester City Council will shortly be beginning a new homelessness review ahead of formulating a 2023-2028 Strategy. In doing this, we will take the opportunity to consult all relevant partners in developing a strategy that involves them in our aims and objectives as the challenge of homelessness cannot be met by the local authority alone.

Homelessness Reduction Act

- 3.6. The Homelessness Reduction Act² significantly increased the depth and breadth of local authorities' statutory homeless duties. Most notably it added two new duties; the 'Prevention Duty' and 'Relief (recovery from homelessness) Duty'.
- 3.7. As a result, the workload of our front-line officers and the Service increased significantly, and the government have provided temporary funding to acknowledge these increased burdens upon local authorities. It is important that this funding continues to be made available by central government if they expect local authorities to continue to achieve the level of prevention and support currently being delivered.

Covid-19 Pandemic

- 3.8. In addition to existing pressures, local authorities have been put under additional pressure as a result of the Government's 'Everyone In' directive, which began at the end of March 2020. The directive ensured that people who were rough sleeping or in shared sleeping arrangements (for example, night-shelters) at the time of the first lockdown were provided with self-contained temporary accommodation (TA) reducing the risk of COVID-19 infection and transmission. This was necessary to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on people sleeping rough and at risk of rough sleeping and ultimately to prevent deaths during this public health emergency. However, it resulted in very high levels of demand within a short period of time, and this pressure continued throughout the year, only easing up in March of this current year. During this 12-month period, LCC accommodated a large number of individuals, ranking 11th of 314 LAs as at January 2021 (most recent benchmarking data available).
- 3.9. This is largely due to the humanitarian approach taken by LCC, opting to continue with the principles of 'Everyone In' to continue to protect individuals from COVID-19 for longer than the majority of other local authorities. Our focus is now on a combination of

² [Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities)

homelessness prevention to prevent people needing to enter temporary accommodation and moving those already in temporary accommodation on into settled accommodation.

- 3.10. Some of those accommodated had no recourse to public funds (NRPF), and as at the end of June 2021, 26 individuals with NRPF remain supported within the pathway. At the time of writing this report, this has now reduced to 22. Work is ongoing to ensure that support is maximised for these individuals within the constraints of the law, and where individuals cannot be assisted to get an eligible status, we are offering voluntary reconnection to their home state, where appropriate to do so. Individuals with support needs are signposted and referred to relevant supporting agencies where this is available.
- 3.11. In addition to the increased demand, supply was also affected when 45 bed-spaces we lost that were under the 'shared sleeping arrangements' category, namely the Outreach dormitory, the Safe Space, and our partner One Roof Leicester's Night Shelter.
- 3.12. LCC's homelessness services responded by extending the provision of TA to ensure we were able to respond to the crisis effectively, and that no one needed to rough sleep at this time.
- 3.13. This was achieved by the swift mass-procurement of safe, furnished accommodation - primarily additional self-contained flats and hotels – and working with charities, the NHS and public health in the provision of wraparound and specialist support.
- 3.14. The combined result of this is an overwhelmed Single Person & Childless Couple Homeless Pathway which the service continues to work hard to recover from.
- 3.15. LCC developed a 'Rough Sleepers Next Steps Strategy'³ to aid service recovery and ensure a uniform approach is taken to support individuals at risk of rough sleeping. Good progress is being made with this, with 470 'Everyone In' cases moved on into settled accommodation or supported pathways as at end of May 2021.

Family homelessness during the height of the pandemic

- 3.16. Conversely, family homeless reduced during the period, in particular during the first and second spikes. This was due to a combination of factors but largely around that fact that our two most common reasons for families to present as threatened with homelessness were postponed – the moratorium on evictions meant that homelessness from the private rented sector reduced, and the limits on personal movement prevented family exclusions.
- 3.17. The risk presented to the service upon the relaxing of those measures is an upsurge in threats of homelessness for families as the bottleneck is released. The service is preparing for this by readjusting resources between the family and single homelessness teams.

4. Progress on the Homelessness Strategy

- 4.1. **Strategic Aim 1: Anyone at risk of homelessness is aware of and has access to the services they may need to prevent it**

³ [covid-19-everyone-in-rough-sleeping-move-on-plan.pdf \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://leicester.gov.uk/covid-19-everyone-in-rough-sleeping-move-on-plan.pdf)

- 4.1.1. Homelessness Prevention is now part of the statutory duty. The duty requires an authority to provide help and advice to prevent homelessness for households in their district. Case officers work together with applicants to create and carry out a personalised housing plan. Applicants have a responsibility to carry out any reasonable action identified in the plan, and housing authorities can cease duties in cases where Applicants are non-cooperative.

Access and awareness

- 4.1.2. LCC Homelessness Prevention & Support services have made it a priority to ensure that; through effective comms, partners, information on the website, and referral processes; people at risk of homelessness are aware that services are available and are available to access when they need to. We believe this is the chief reason behind why historically we see more people presenting within the ‘threat of homelessness’ period rather than coming to us in crisis (60% and 40% of presentations respectively). Over the past 12 months this has differed as a result of the authority’s part in protecting the homeless during the national pandemic response, and over the past 6 months is close to a 50/50 split, similar to the national average. Homelessness Prevention & Support is much more likely to find successful outcomes for customers when they present early in the process, as sustainment of current accommodation is more likely to be a possibility, so part of service recovery post-COVID-19 will be to seek a return to earlier customer approaches.
- 4.1.3. LCC go further by offering a self-serve Early Prevention tool called MyHOME (My Housing Options Made Easy). The MyHOME App and website allows customers to get tailored advice 24/7, and whilst it can be used by anyone in housing difficulties, it is primarily aimed at people who are just starting to have difficulties, where getting plugged into the right services can make a key difference and prevent the need for statutory homelessness support later down the line.
- 4.1.4. MyHOME use has increased from 500 users in 19/20, to 680 users in 20/21. 39% of users self-refer into the service in order to get further advice from an officer where the app identifies that this is the most appropriate next step.
- 4.1.5. Beyond this, there is sometimes a need to bring people into service who are entrenched in homeless lifestyles and may need encouragement and persuading to enter service. This can be for a number of reasons, for example trauma, mental health difficulties, or disillusionment. In cases like these, Leicester City Council uses an enhanced Outreach team that includes LCC staff, voluntary sector staff, specialist rough sleeper navigators, peer support, and medical staff (mental health nurses and prescriber nurses). Making use of the range of knowledge and experience in the team can ensure that we maximise engagement for this particularly vulnerable group of people. During 20/21, using funding that we bid for we have also been able to add a 12 bedded unit (Flora Lodge), to the range of accommodation based support offers available, which provides accommodation, wrap-around health and substance use support for those most entrenched in homeless lifestyles.

Prevention solutions

- 4.1.6. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and additional service pressures, prevention solutions remain high for households who approach us with a threat of homelessness. LCC compare well against the National average, achieving solutions for 76% of applicants since the new Act was introduced. The National average is 67%.
- 4.1.7. Over the past 6 months this has reduced to 72%, largely as a result of much increased demand for relief support during the pandemic, and limited resources. While 72% is still above the national average, service recovery plans include increasing this back to prior levels as a priority. This will be especially important as private sector evictions resume following a pandemic moratorium.
- 4.1.8. The Service achieves high prevention rates by offering a multitude of interventions, and putting the focus initially into exhausting every possibility of sustaining the current accommodation. If that fails, we work with the customer to identify a new accommodation solution before homelessness occurs. Interventions include:
- Negotiation with family and friends, lenders, and landlords;
 - Affordability assessments, and maximising income;
 - Referrals and signposting to partner agencies and specialist advice;
 - Private Rented Sector solutions through financial help and incentive schemes;
 - Housing Register priority; and,
 - Advice about other housing solutions such as Shared Ownership, where appropriate.

4.2. Strategic Aim 2: Provide suitable accommodation and support options for people who are, or who may become homeless

Relief / Recovery support

- 4.2.1. If prevention does not work, or if applicants seek help when they are already homeless, there is a range of support available to work with the customer to help them recover as quickly as possible.
- 4.2.2. The success levels for applicants can depend on the applicant's flexibility in terms of willingness to explore all elements set out in the personalised plan. Applicants who explore all elements in full, rather than limiting themselves to preferences, have a high chance of getting a successful outcome.
- 4.2.3. The Service offers a variety of housing options to applicants, including the housing register, sign-posting to separate RP housing lists, Private Rented Sector solutions through financial help and incentive schemes, advice about other housing solutions such as Shared Ownership, where appropriate, and ensuring any support required to sustain solutions is made available. The applicant must then undertake the actions in their personalised housing plan in order to ensure that they make full advantage of the options and schemes available.
- 4.2.4. LCC compare well against the National average, achieving solutions for 56% of applicants since the new Act was introduced. The National average is 44%.

4.2.5. Over the past 6 months this has reduced to 53%, largely as a result of much increased demand during the pandemic, and limited resources. While 53% is still above the national average, service recovery plans include increasing this back to prior levels as a priority.

Increasing supply - stock

4.2.6. In addition to advice and support, the city council intends to deliver 1,500 new affordable homes over the next four years, including developing sites to provide the estimated 640 additional Extra Care supported living spaces needed over the next 10 years. For the first year, 340 new units were purchased from the private sector housing market with another 382 planned by 2023. This complements the new build properties additionally planned to meet the manifesto commitment. All units are going in to the HRA as Council properties.

4.2.7. Further to this, LCC were successful in achieving revenue funding for development of settled homes for the single homeless community.

Increasing supply - Private Rented Sector

4.2.8. With regard to the private rented sector solutions, we are now set to formally launch some recently piloted changes to landlord incentive schemes. The changes resulted in a significant increase in PRS tenancies available for let to homeless households. Including HomeCome, we created 131 tenancies through schemes in 2018/2019, which increased to 201 tenancies in 2019/2020, and successes continued throughout 2020/2021.

4.2.9. The scheme offer has been formalised and the new offer is now presented in a booklet, which was formally launched on 2nd July. A press release in June preceded the launch event, and a marketing campaign is currently underway to generate new landlord interest and encourage those landlords that may have overlooked us in the past to take a second look.

4.2.10. LCC plans to roll out licensing schemes across Leicester's private rented sector, as part of an overall Private Sector Strategy that is being developed. The strategy aims at improving the overall quality of accommodation. Options are being considered alongside other initiatives such as Landlord Accreditation which may be able to partially achieve similar goals. This will ensure that once licensing schemes are launched, it is proportionate to the needs of the city, and fair to local Landlords.

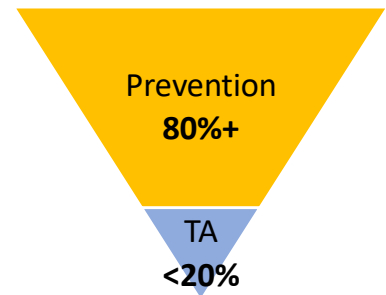
Temporary Accommodation (TA)

4.2.11. Importantly, the Council's duties at this stage also includes providing TA to families and vulnerable single-person households.

4.2.12. Broadly, Leicester City Council are committed to ensuring that people do not need to enter TA, but that when they do, they get all the support needed to spend as little time as possible in that situation, and move-on to settled accommodation.

Temporary accommodation for families

4.2.13. Generally speaking, less than 20% of families presenting as homeless or at risk of homelessness go on to need TA. As such, **in most cases where families seek assistance from the council when they are at risk of homelessness, they do not actually become homeless.**



- 4.2.14. On average, each quarter there are 55 new families requiring TA. In the last quarter, this increased to 62 families as a result of the resumption of evictions and lifting of COVID-19 restrictions resulting in family exclusions. This balances against the previous update where the influx was 31 as a result of factors relating to the COVID-19 pandemic at that time, primarily the amnesty on evictions.
- 4.2.15. We have been able to maintain a 100% record of ensuring all families placed in B&B do not exceed 6-weeks' occupancy, which is a legal requirement upon LAs. Furthermore, most families have been moved on from B&B within a very short period of time – days not weeks.
- 4.2.16. During the period, progress has been made on developing a new model of family TA to support the “Homes not Hostels” vision, and this is now out for expressions of interest. All the families that need to enter TA are now offered self-contained accommodation. This allows families to live as normal a family life as possible, whilst they find suitable settled accommodation for their family.
- 4.2.17. One key principle of this new model will be to have the accommodation as dispersed as possible across the City, to allow families to remain closer to support networks and educational infrastructure, where possible, and therefore reduce the impact of homelessness on the family and on the welfare and educational attainment of the children.

Temporary accommodation for singles

- 4.2.18. In the most recent HCS Strategy update we informed Members that we were looking to launch a new temporary accommodation Eligibility Criteria for singles which puts the focus on ‘best fit’ rather than circumstances alone, to make better use of the range of temporary accommodation LCC have available, and to ensure that the customer has the best pathway possible. We informed Members that this would be launched around April 2020.
- 4.2.19. Due to responding to the immediate needs of the COVID-19 pandemic, this development has been put on hold in favour of the ‘Rough Sleepers Next Steps Strategy’ and service recovery. The intention is now to launch the new eligibility criteria alongside the final stages of service recovery – initial predictions are April 2022.
- 4.2.20. As highlighted in previous updates, we have now embarked on an exciting piece of work to improve and reconfigure the Dawn Centre to increase the number of rooms that we have available. From a feasibility study, we believe that we can add an additional 8 rooms giving us a potential uplift from 44 to 52 bedspaces. These beds will support the multi-agency assessment approach with swift move-on within the single homeless

pathway to support the strategy objective that no one needs to sleep rough in our city. There will be a number of these rooms that will also be classed as medium-long-term for the most entrenched and complex cases that require intensive support. We are also looking, as part of our provisional 'Ending Rough Sleeping Plan' to develop a Hub at the Dawn Centre where anyone who is at risk of rough sleeping can access advice and support to prevent 'a first night out'.

Prison releases, and accommodation for offenders

- 4.2.21. Contracts remain in place with Adullam Housing Association who are a long-standing provider of accommodation support services for offenders locally. Specialist services help us support criminal justice agencies locally by ensuring the safety of the public and reduce reoffending rates.
- 4.2.22. The number of specialist accommodation units available for offenders is now 30 units. This accommodation includes a range of support levels and licence agreement terms, including 'step down' accommodation to assist Offenders to move on into independent accommodation.
- 4.2.23. We work very closely with Probation services and are currently embarking on the Accommodation for Ex-Offenders programme together, which involves getting recent ex-offenders into private sector accommodation with appropriate support.
- 4.2.24. Housing Advice surgeries at Leicester Prison are on hold due to the pandemic but are intended to resume in a COVID-safe manner as soon as possible. This may involve video-link rather than physical visits.
- 4.2.25. We have been working with all key organisations who provide support to Offenders / Ex-Offenders in order to develop an improved Prison Release Pathway. The new Pathway aims to plug gaps that have been collectively identified, and provide a smoother, more pro-active process. The Pathway is now due to launch in October 2021, following senior-officer sign-off.

Hospital Discharges

- 4.2.26. The referral and pathway set up with the NHS's Housing Enablement Team is continuously reviewed in partnership, and further improvements have been made to ensure LCC are alerted earlier and can take action more swiftly.

Accommodation for young people

- 4.2.27. The Joint working group established with children's services to develop a joint commissioning exercise continues to make progress and moves closer to completion. This will consider the supported accommodation needs of 16-25-year olds in the city. The driver behind the joint commissioning exercise is to allow LCC to provide a better range of options for young people from April 2022.
- 4.2.28. Strategy actions relating to younger persons will be aligned with the ongoing placement sufficiency work.
- 4.2.29. Pathways in place are now regularly monitored to ensure they continue to provide successful routes.

Housing-related Floating support

- 4.2.30. A range of support is available that can be used flexibly and effectively by the service to ensure that accommodation is sustained, whether that is existing accommodation or new accommodation arranged as a solution out of homelessness.
- 4.2.31. The majority of homeless applicants can move on into tenancies with no support requirement, but a minority have a much better chance of sustainment with pre-planning, and post-sign-up support.
- 4.2.32. In terms of pre-planning, Leicester City Council have a sensitive lettings policy that is invoked where special consideration needs to be given to placing an individual within a community, in order to both ensure that the arrangement is sustainable. We have seen huge successes with this approach, which is completed in partnership with Housing Management.
- 4.2.33. In terms of post-sign-up support, housing related floating support is commissioned by LCC in order to assist with sustainment of accommodation in the private rented sector, both existing and new. Where individuals enter into LCC Tenancies, the STAR Team will complete the same support. Referrals are made by case workers where it is deemed appropriate and needed.
- 4.2.34. In addition to this, the recently successful Changing Futures bid will seek to drive lasting change and long-term intensive support with regard to the most vulnerable people in our society. The Housing Division are not leading on the Changing Futures programme but will ensure it plays a key part. Successful delivery will be dependent on strong governance and partnership working.

4.3. Strategic Aims 3 and 4: Reduce rates of repeat homelessness amongst single people & provide the right support and services so that no person needs to sleep rough in Leicester

- 4.3.1. During the period, work has continued with local partners and charities, and we continue to fund and support various initiatives in the community, including day centres and specialist case workers (navigators).
- 4.3.2. Donation points across the city continue to raise money for One Roof Leicester, to support their work with homeless persons and rough sleepers.
- 4.3.3. Housing Scrutiny Members were previously advised that we have achieved an exciting partnership with St. Mungo's to open a recovery college for homeless clients within the Dawn Centre. This has now been launched and is in place at the Dawn Centre where specialist employment support workers are helping people to access training and employment opportunities.
- 4.3.4. We are also now working in partnership with an organisation (BEAM) who were introduced to LCC by MHCLG, citing us as an innovative and forward-thinking authority. We are now embarking on a pilot project together to create more employment, education, and training opportunities for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

- 4.3.5. Together, this is an important part of recovery and ending homelessness due to the intrinsic links between unemployment and homelessness.
- 4.3.6. In 3.11, it was stated that 45 units were lost as part of the pandemic response. The Safe Space at Andover Street in particular was an enormously important part of our offer to this cohort but had to be closed due to the nature of the accommodation, and the current pandemic. The offer included 16 bed spaces for rough sleepers. Individuals who did not want to access accommodation-based support services could access this service nightly for a safe space to sleep overnight and leave in the morning. This was attractive to some and improved engagement in the long run as they became aware of the support that was available and became more confident in accessing it. Currently individuals seeking this type of service are being encouraged to enter other forms of TA.
- 4.3.7. LCC continue to use funding secured under the Short-Term Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP), and longer-term Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP) to financially support the other forms of accommodation and support required to move people on into sustainable longer-term solutions.
- 4.3.8. LCC have developed a new 'Rough Sleepers Next Steps Strategy' which will help in monitoring and driving this work forward to enable to service to recovery effectively from the pandemic crisis.
- 4.3.9. The principles are set out as follows.
1. No-one who has been placed in emergency accommodation in response to the COVID-19 public health crisis is asked to leave that emergency accommodation without an offer of support into alternative accommodation options based upon individual needs.
 2. Resources will be developed, including additional move-on accommodation to ensure as far as possible there is capacity and capability to deliver and implement offers of support
 3. Continued protection from COVID-19 is provided for those who need it.
 4. There is an integrated housing approach with health and care to secure access to services and continuity of care
 5. The roll out is gradual, to avoid a 'cliff edge' and overload of services as lockdown is lifted.
- 4.3.10. This is also in the process of being worked into an 'Ending Rough Sleeping Strategy' as a coproduction process with the Ministry of Housing. Once this has been produced it can be shared and will act as a strategic basis for funding opportunities through the Rough Sleeping Initiative Round 5.

- 4.3.11. As a result of decentralised shopping behaviours (resulting from the public's pandemic response), we have seen a dispersal of rough sleepers who engage in begging activity and of non-homeless beggars *from* the city centre and *into* outlying hubs of the city.
- 4.3.12. Narborough Road and Belgrave have had a noticeable impact, and to a lesser degree; Queens Road.
- 4.3.13. Special working groups have been set up in affected areas. LCC engage regularly with the Police, local Councillors, and local businesses.
- 4.3.14. This has resulted in the matters improving significantly, but they continue to be carefully managed to ensure that support and enforcement are appropriately balanced.
- 4.3.15. The service now continues to monitor on their daily outreach work, for emerging hot-spots and responds quickly when they are identified.

Funding Opportunities

- 4.3.16. Jointly Working with other divisions and partners, we have seized every opportunity over the past year to bid for available funding made available through MHCLG to further support and enhance services and have been hugely successful. We have achieved additional funding streams through the following bids: -

Funding stream	Amt secured	Period of funding
Next Steps Accommodation Programme ⁴	£320,000	20/21
Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme ⁵	£1,000,000	21/22-23/24
Rough Sleeping Initiative year 3 (rescoped in light of the pandemic)	£627,529	20/21
The Protect Programme ⁶	£299,915	20/21
Rough Sleeping Initiative year 4 (which incorporates continuation of Protect objectives)	£1,000,000	21/22
Cold Weather Fund	£140,000	20/21
Emergency Accommodation uplift	£200,000	21/22
Total:	£3,587,444	

- 4.3.17. Homelessness services have also played a key part in the Community Safety bids for 'Respite Room' (domestic violence support) and 'Changing Futures'⁷, as well as the Public Health bid for 'Drug and Alcohol Support for Rough Sleepers'⁸.

⁴ [Next Steps Accommodation Programme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/next-steps-accommodation-programme)

⁵ [Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme 2021-24 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/rough-sleeping-accommodation-programme-2021-24)

⁶ ['Protect Programme': the next step in winter rough sleeping plan - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/protect-programme-the-next-step-in-winter-rough-sleeping-plan)

⁷ [Changing Futures: prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/changing-futures-prospectus)

⁸ [Extra help for rough sleepers with drug and alcohol dependency - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/extra-help-for-rough-sleepers-with-drug-and-alcohol-dependency)

4.3.18. Feedback from a recent visit in July, by MHCLG to Leicester was that they were hugely impressed with the range of services that we offer and were reassured that we are committed to the objective of ending rough sleeping with the initiatives we have developed. Leicester's rough sleeping figures are at an all-time low and MHCLG spent time on the streets and reported that there was little evidence of rough sleeping / begging at the time that they were out.

5. Summary of appendices: None.

6. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)? No

7. Is this a "key decision"? If so, why? No – update only.



Proposed review of tenant and leaseholder involvement opportunities

For consideration by: Housing Scrutiny Commission

Date: 4 October 2021

Lead Director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Helen McGarry, Programme Manager
- Author contact details: helen.mcgarry@leicester.gov.uk 0116 4545129
- Report version number: V1

1. Summary

On the 17th November 2021 the Government published its Housing White Paper “The charter for social housing residents.” This document outlines the Governments vision for social housing over the coming years. Further legislation, and guidance is required from the Regulator of Social Housing in relation to the specific actions we will need to implement. However, the publication of Housing White Paper provides us with an opportunity to start reviewing our approach to tenant and leaseholder involvement to enhance what is currently in place.

2. Recommended actions/decision

It is recommended that members of the Housing Scrutiny Commission agree to a review of our current tenant and leaseholder involvement activities and the development of an Involvement Strategy.

To do this it is also recommended that a working group of current Tenants and Leaseholders’ Forum members is set up to help inform the content of the Strategy.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

A meeting of the Tenants and Leaseholders Forum is taking place on the 23rd September 2021, where the content of the Housing White Paper will be discussed.

It is proposed that members of the Tenant’s and Leaseholders Forum are involved in a review of current involvement activities and the development of a new Involvement Strategy.

It is proposed the Housing Scrutiny Commission are consulted on the draft Involvement Strategy when this is developed.

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

On the 17th November 2020 the Government published its Housing White Paper “The charter for social housing residents.” This stems from the Grenfell Tower tragedy in June 2017, where questions were subsequently raised about the quality and safety of social Housing, and also how social housing tenants are treated and listened to. The key aim of this charter, and the reforms it proposes, is to raise the standard of social housing and meet the aspirations of residents throughout the country.

5. Detailed report

Leicester City Council currently has a range of options for Tenants and Leaseholders to be involved and have their say on how services are delivered to them, to help identify areas for improvement. These include informal involvement activities such as responding to surveys, for example when a repair is completed, providing feedback through the corporate complaints and compliments process, taking part in local estate inspections, engaging with local tenant associations and contributing ideas for spend against the Environmental Budget. Formal involvement arrangements are also in place through the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum and the Leaseholders Forum.

The Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum has been in place for several years. The Council consults this group when changes to services or new initiatives are being considered. The Forum is also consulted each year on proposals for the Housing Revenue Account Budget and Capital Programme. The Forum allows for a membership of 13 tenants and 2 leaseholder representatives from across the city. However, actual numbers have been declining over recent years and there are currently only 8 dedicated volunteer members who attend meetings. We have struggled to recruit new people onto the Forum. Generally, we have found people don't want to be involved at this level or through this format.

On the 17th November 2020 the Government published its Housing White Paper "The charter for social housing residents." This stems from the Grenfell Tower tragedy in June 2017, where questions were subsequently raised about the quality and safety of social Housing, and also how social housing tenants are treated and listened to. The key aim of this charter, and the reforms it proposes, is to raise the standard of social housing and meet the aspirations of residents throughout the country. The Housing White Paper is a visionary document. Further legislation is required to enable some of the actions to be implemented, whilst others are waiting for more detailed guidance from the Regulator for Social Housing. In late August 2021 the Government announced it would be setting up an expert panel to advise them on the implementation of the Social Housing White Paper over the next 12 months.

Implications of the Housing White Paper for tenant and leaseholder involvement

There are two key areas within the Housing White Paper that relate to tenant and leaseholder involvement. These provide an opportunity for us to start looking at our approach to this and to develop options to build upon what is currently in place.

The first area to consider is the Governments expectation that tenants and leaseholders know how their landlord is performing. To achieve this the Housing White Paper states
3
actions:

1. The introduction of a set of tenant satisfaction measures for landlords, the results of which will be published.

The Housing White Paper suggests 18 satisfaction measures to be reported on covering the areas of:

- Keeping properties in good repair
- Managing building safety
- Effective handling of complaints
- Respectful and helpful engagement
- Responsible neighbourhood management

These satisfaction measures are yet to be confirmed, but it is certain that we will have to measure areas of satisfaction that we don't currently. Therefore, a future action is required to determine how we will respond to this requirement to measure tenant satisfaction, when these have been confirmed.

2. The introduction of a new access to information scheme for social housing tenants so that information relating to landlords is easily accessible to them.

This scheme is yet to be set up, so it is unclear at present what requirements will be placed upon us.

3. Landlords will be expected to report to every tenant on its performance at least once a year, if not continuously, using technology.

We currently produce an Annual Report to Tenants that is published on the council website, which already contains performance information. It is likely that we will need to enhance the information contained in this in future years, particularly when additional satisfaction monitoring is in place. Consideration also needs to be given as to whether we provide information in other formats and more regularly than annually. We are waiting for further guidance from the Regulator for Social Housing in relation to this requirement.

The second area to consider is the Government's expectation that tenant's voices are heard by their landlord. The Housing White Paper states:

1. The Social Housing Regulator will require landlords to seek out best practice and consider how they can improve the way they engage with tenants.

Work has already commenced in this area and we continue to collate information that will be used to help inform our future options.

2. There is an expectation that landlords should tailor their engagement activities in the future, using a range of methods to seek out tenant's views.

Although we currently have engagement activities in place, this is an area we need to develop with a more structured approach and a greater range of options for people, who want to be involved. There is an opportunity to make greater use of technology and social media to engage with a wider number of tenants and leaseholders. We also

need to consider how the feedback we receive through these methods is used to inform the delivery of future services. There is a particular need to look at how we engage tenants and leaseholders at a strategic level to ensure these activities are effective.

3. The Government will deliver new opportunities and an empowerment programme for social housing residents, to support more effective engagement between landlords and residents, and to give residents tools to influence their landlords and hold them to account.

Further information from the Government in relation to this is pending.

Next steps

It is proposed that officers from the Housing Transformation Team lead on developing an Involvement Strategy for Leicester City Council tenants and leaseholders. This will bring a more structured approach to these activities. It is envisaged this document will set out the range of options available for people to be involved. In developing this strategy officers will consider the requirements placed upon us from the Housing White Paper and good practice, to widen involvement opportunities. This piece of work will need to take into account the resources we have available to deliver potential options.

To support this work, it is proposed that current Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum members are invited to be part of a working group to help inform the content of the strategy, prior to consultation with the Housing Scrutiny Commission.

It is envisaged that this strategy will have an accompanying action plan to implement change over a period of time, where this is required. This is recommended as a result of advice from the Tenant Participation Advisory Service, which states change to involvement activities "should be made incrementally over time to enable each one to be embedded. This is more likely to succeed than introducing a range of new activities in one go."

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

6.1 Financial implications

At this stage the financial implications are not known; clarity will emerge as the strategy is developed and specific proposals are considered.

Stuart McAvoy – Principal Accountant

6.2 Legal implications

There are no specific legal obligations arising from this report.

It is unlikely that the proposed legislation will pass through Parliament before 2023, but if enacted largely as proposed in the White Paper it will require action by the council as summarised in the report.

Jeremy Rainbow – Principal Lawyer (Litigation)

6.3 Equalities implications

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

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

The charter sets out the actions the government will take to ensure that residents in social housing are safe, are listened to, live in good quality homes, and have access to redress when things go wrong.

The report proposes a review of our current tenant and leaseholder involvement activities and the development of an Involvement Strategy. Although there are no significant direct equalities implications arising from the recommendations of the report, there may possibly be some positive equalities outcomes arising from the proposed changes.

Initiatives that make sure landlords look for new and better ways to involve residents should lead to positive outcomes for people from across all protected characteristics. Continued engagement with a representative range of people on individual proposals will aid in assessing the equalities implications,

Equalities implications of a strategy and the supporting actions would need to be assessed prior to the final decision to adopt them. Work has already commenced to do this via the range of engagement methods outlined within the paper. It is important to ensure that the range of input is representative of a range of people from across different protected characteristics and that the proposals are assessed robustly in relation to their impacts specifically on people with different protected characteristics and also to consider how we and any partnership will meet peoples' needs to ensure that the aims of the PSED are paid due regard in the design of the proposals.

Surinder Singh, Equalities Officer, Ext 37 4148

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

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

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

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

None

7. Background information and other papers:

The charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper:

[The charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612212/charter-for-social-housing-residents-social-housing-white-paper.pdf)

8. Summary of appendices:

None

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

Disabled Adaptations, HRA & Disabled Facility Grants. Housing Scrutiny Commission October 2021

HRA Disabled Adaptations – council tenants

All adaptations are recommended by Adult Social Care.

All adaptations up to £1,000 in value are classed as minors and completed straight away.

46 Major adaptations follow the agreed joint working protocol with ASC and are allocated priority points and completed in order of need, however these are currently actioned as the recommendation is received, we have no waiting list

All are directly funded and are not means tested.

Type of adaptation	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22 so far
Rails/handrails	437	358	90	tbc
Ramps	42	24	12	19
General layout alterations	0	7	6	
Level showers	43	74	31	16
Wash/dry toilets	7	7	5	
Stairlifts	39	38	56	12
Step lifts	0	7	3	
Through floor lift	15	16	11	6
Extensions	1	4	3	4 in progress
Total	524	525	217	

What do we spend each year

48

	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
Budget	£1.2m	£1.2m	£900k	£1.2m(inc £300k for adapt to let scheme)
Actual spend	£982k	£901k	£811K	£800K (est)

What is adapt to let

- Identifying void properties that can be adapted.
- 49 • Fully adapting partially adapted properties.
- Matching applicants with potentially suitable properties and adapting them for the new tenants.

Why is the spend reducing ?

- Reducing stock
- Positive impact from previous capital expenditure, eg. 'Bathrooms for life'
- Development of wheelchair accessible homes
- The impact of COVID.

50



51

52



Disabled Facility Grants (DFG's)

- The process is similar to that followed as HRA adaptations, but the applicants are homeowners or private tenants.
- Minor adaptations are carried out straight away
- Major adaptations follow the same joint working protocol, actioned in order of need, however there are some differences due to the addition of the means test.

Why do we have to do it?

- A Disability Facilities Grant (DFG) is a mandatory requirement (*which is 30 years old this year*), and forms part of the better care fund, this is a pooled fund which includes housing services and health and social care.
- The DFG grant is administrated by the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- The DFG grant is means tested, the means test identifies if the service user has to pay a contribution towards the adaptation if they are not on passported benefits i.e. Council tax support/reduction

What do we have to do ?

- Provide access to the front and rear of homes by providing:
 - Ramps front and rear
 - step lifts front and rear
 - Access to rear gardens
- Carry out adaptations to provide access into and around a service users home which meets their assessed needs by providing:
 - Level access showers
 - Stair lifts
 - Through floor lifts
 - Door widening

The last 3 years of funding

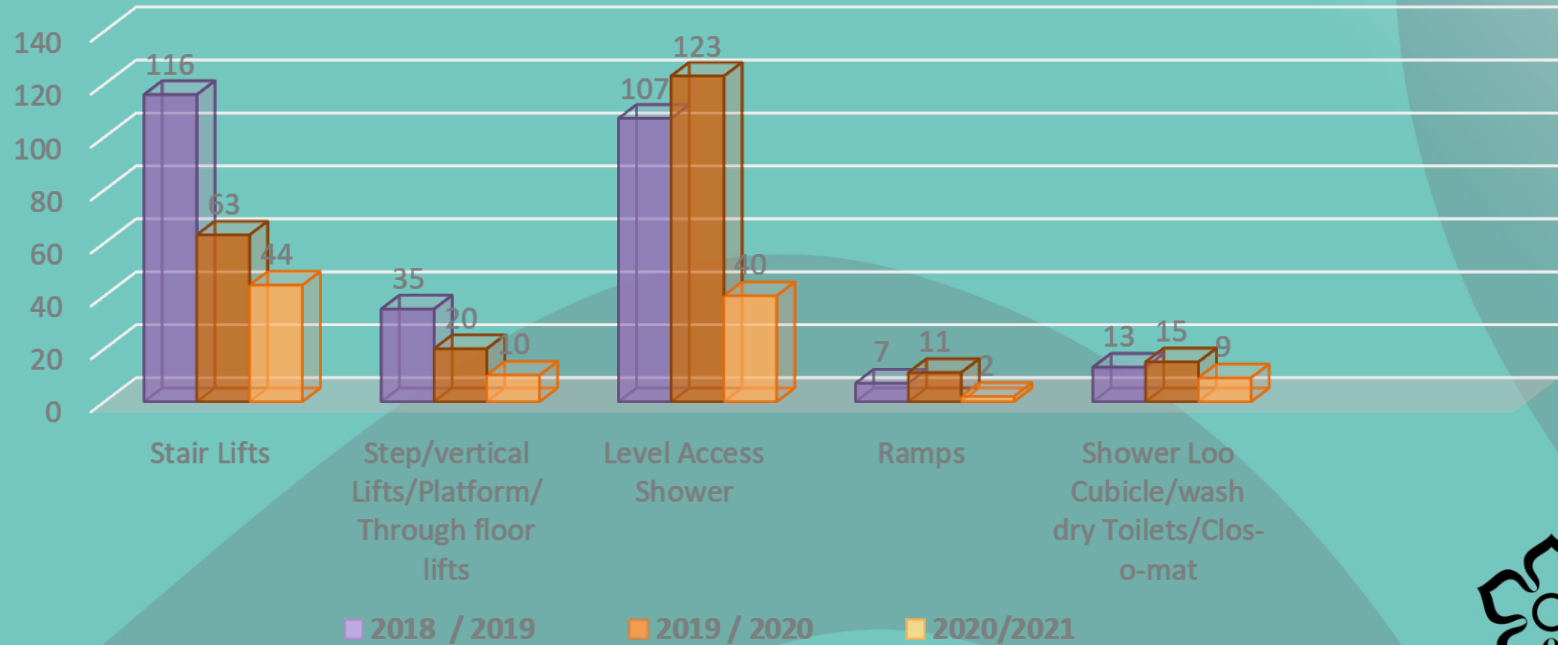
Year	Government Grant (£k)	Council Contribution (£k)	Total Budget (£k)
2018-2019	1,633*	367	2,000
2019-2020	1,539	461	2,000
2020-2021	1,538	1,461	3,000

*including Top up grant received late in year

DFG Housing Performance

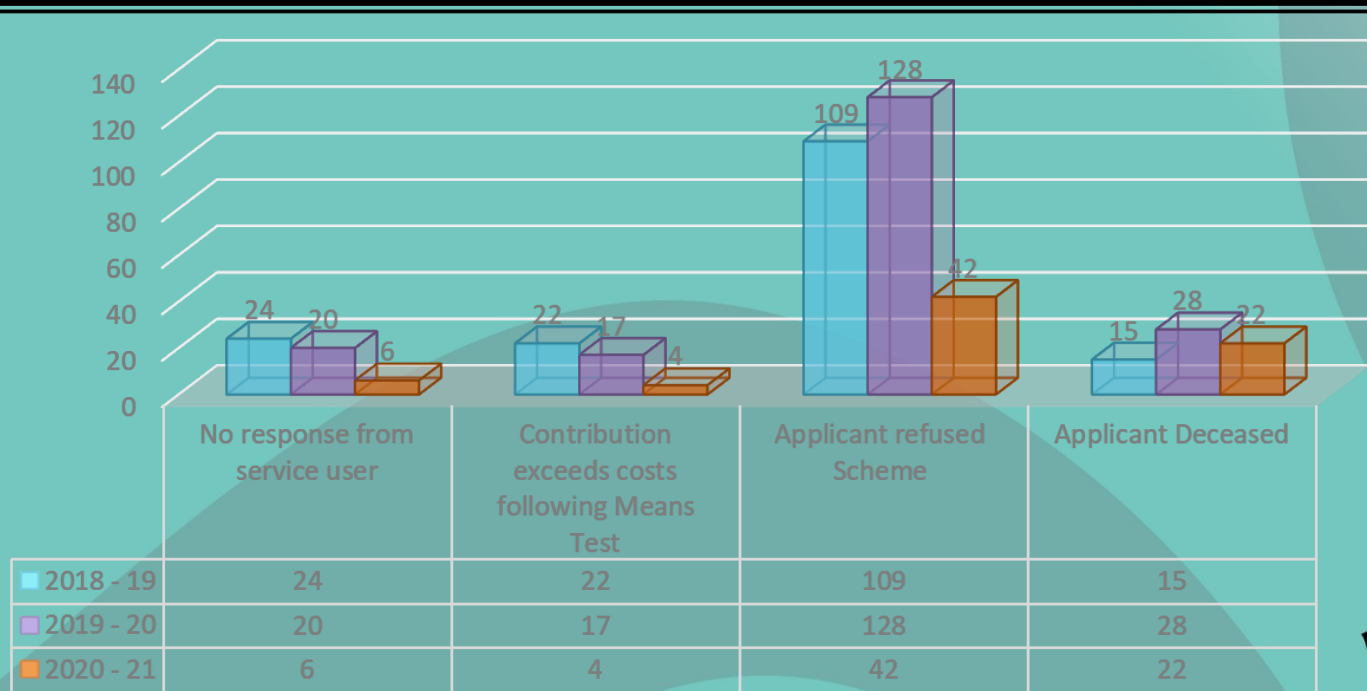
DFG	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Applications	430	532	339
5 Approved	247	248	139
Completed	220	190	86
Average cost	£9,686	£11,321	£7,716
Overall Spend	2.131m	2.151m	1.066m
Active caseload	117	63	105

DFG Housing - Types of Adaptations (Approved works) 2018/2019, 2019/2020 & 2021/22



Leicester
City Council

Cancellation categories for DFG's



Case Management

- End of Life` (EOL) Cases and Children cases prioritised.
- Equipment only Cases (Lifts etc. to access services) issued straightaway.
- 8 • External works – Ramps etc. issued straightaway.
- All other cases completed in priority order, based on pints awarded by the OT.
- Extensions take longer because we have to get planning permission etc.

Impact of COVID 19

- Prioritised end of life and bed blocking cases.
- Part completed recommendations where possible.
- Reduced contractor capacity due to furlough.
- Back log increased but it now reducing.
- People happy to wait for work.

A joint approach to Adaptations

- A single point for lift breakdowns and installations – all tenures
- A single point for lift invoices and payment processing – all tenures
- A standard specification for all adaptations & all tenures
- Co location with O/T's makes faster response to issues.
- Opportunities for streamlining process.

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

MEETING DATE	MEETING ITEMS	LEAD OFFICER	ACTION AGREED
63 15 th June 2021	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>Chris and Scrutiny Support Team to arrange a programme in conjunction with Chair/Vice-Chair</i>
	<i>Homelessness, Rough Sleepers, Property Lettings (CBL) and the voids process</i>	<i>Kevin Doyle, Robert Webster, Simon Nicholls</i>	
	<i>Repairs, Gas and Technical Services</i>	<i>Gurjit Minhas, Charlotte McGraw</i>	
	<i>Income Management, Tenancy Management & STAR</i>		

<p>6th September</p>	<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>4th October</p> <p>64</p>	<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>29th November</p>	<p>Manifesto Delivery update</p> <p>Repairs, Voids & Gas Performance report</p> <p>Empty Homes update</p> <p>Who gets Social Housing</p> <p>Investment in Council Housing</p> <p>Rent Support Pilot</p> <p>Succession Rights Policy</p> <p>Hospital Close</p>	<p>Chris Burgin</p> <p>Kevin Doyle</p> <p>Simon Nicholls</p> <p>Caroline Carpendale</p> <p>Simon Nicholls</p> <p>Zenab Valli</p> <p>Chris Burgin</p> <p>Simon Nicholls</p>	
<p>10th January 2022</p>	<p>HRA budget</p> <p>Environmental Budget – Update</p>	<p>Chris Burgin</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>	

