

Leicester
City Council

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

DATE: WEDNESDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2021

TIME: 5:30 pm

**PLACE: Meeting Rooms G.01 and G.02, Ground Floor, City Hall, 115
Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ**

Members of the Committee

Councillor Cassidy (Chair)

Councillor Govind (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Gee, Halford, Joel, Joshi, Kitterick, Porter, Thalukdar and Westley

Youth Council Representatives

To be advised

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

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

Francis Connolly (Scrutiny Policy Officer)

Angie Smith (Democratic Support Officer),

Tel: 0116 454 6354, e-mail: angie.smith@leicester.gov.uk

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

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Further information

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

Angie Smith, Democratic Support Officer on 0116 454 6354.

Alternatively, email angie.smith@leicester.gov.uk, or call in at City Hall.

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PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

NOTE:

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

[**Appendix A**](#)

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview Select Committee held on 16 September 2021 are attached and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

5. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS AGREED AT THE LAST MEETING

To note progress on actions agreed at the previous meeting and not reported elsewhere on the agenda (if any).

6. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer to report on the receipt of any questions, representations and statements of case submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures.

7. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer to report on any petitions received.

8. TRACKING OF PETITIONS - MONITORING REPORT [Appendix B](#)

The Monitoring Officer submits a report that updates Members on the monitoring of outstanding petitions. The Committee is asked to note the current outstanding petitions and agree to remove those petitions marked 'Petitions Process Complete' from the report.

9. COVID-19 VERBAL UPDATE

The Director of Public Health will provide a general update.

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

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

Members are recommended to note the report and provide any comments to the Strategic Director (City Development & Neighbourhood Services, Capital Programmes) and Director of Housing.

11. PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR HOUSING - CORPORATE OFFER [Appendix D](#)

The Strategic Director City Development & Neighbourhood Services, Director of Housing, and Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submits a report to the Overview Select Committee, the purpose of which is to brief Members on strategic plans for undertaking work within Leicester city's private rented sector.

Members of the Overview Select Committee are recommended to note the content of the report and provide and comment and/or feedback.

12. DISCRETIONARY LICENSING (SELECTIVE AND ADDITIONAL LICENSING) IN THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR [Appendix E](#)

The Strategic Director City Development & Neighbourhood Services, Director of Housing, and Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submits a report to the Overview Select Committee, the purpose of which is to brief Members on Licensing in the Private Rented Sector and share the key considerations with respect to the Council's existing Mandatory Private Rented Sector Licensing scheme, and the plans to potentially introduce a Discretionary Licensing Scheme in the City (Additional Licensing and/or Selective Licensing).

The views of the Overview Select Committee are sought on the proposals including suggested next steps.

13. HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY UPDATE [Appendix F](#)

The Director of Housing submits a report which provides a six-monthly update to Overview Select Committee Members on progress of implementing Leicester's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-2023 at the request of the Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Commission.

14. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2019 - 2021 [Appendix G](#)

The Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance, and the Chair of the Overview Select Committee submit the Scrutiny Annual Report which covers the 2019 – 2021 Municipal Years. Members are recommended to note the report and make any comments prior to submission to full Council on 26th November, to the Director or Chair as necessary.

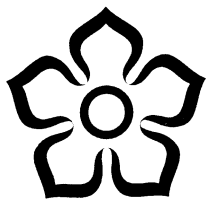
15. QUESTIONS FOR THE CITY MAYOR

The City Mayor will answer questions raised by members of the Overview Select Committee on issues not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

16. OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME [Appendix H](#)

The current work programme for the Committee is attached. The Committee is asked to consider this and make comments and/or amendments as it considers necessary.

17. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS



Leicester
City Council

Appendix A

Minutes of the Meeting of the OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

Held: THURSDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2021 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Cassidy (Chair)

Councillor Gee
Councillor Halford

Councillor Porter
Councillor Westley

Councillor Joshi
Councillor Kitterick

In Attendance:

Sir Peter Soulsby
Councillor Sue Hunter
Councillor Vi Dempster

City Mayor
Assistant City Mayor
Assistant City Mayor

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21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed those present at City Hall and via Zoom and led introductions.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Govind and Councillor Thalukdar.

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

There were no declarations of interest.

23. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair thanked officers and teams across the council for their ongoing work during the Covid 19 pandemic recovery.

The Chair welcomed the item on New Ways of Working and was pleased to

see some scrutiny commissions were undertaking member briefings and service overview sessions and noted that more general member development in relation to scrutiny was being arranged in Autumn.

24. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was noted that Councillor Porter was present on 15th July 2021 but did not received the notification of the reconvened meeting on 27th July 2021. The minutes were therefore amended to reflect Councillor Porter's presence on 15th July 2021.

AGREED:

That subject to the amendment above the minutes of the meeting held on 15th July 2021 and reconvened on 27th July 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

25. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS AGREED AT THE LAST MEETING

Court Costs

Councillor Kitterick confirmed that he had received details from the Deputy Director of Finance regarding the council approach to applying for court costs, which were claimed at a flat rate. It was noted that this approach took no account of the ability to pay by businesses/individuals and suggested this may be worth examination of whether there was a better way to claim back costs.

The City Mayor thanked Councillor Kitterick for bringing this to his attention and supported that being further explored.

Vice-Chancellor's of University of Leicester and De Montfort University

It was noted that the minutes of the last meeting referred to invitations being extended to the Vice Chancellor's to attend meetings of the Overview Select Committee. It was clarified that this was an action to be taken forward however, it was intended the invite would be to a future meeting not as stated. It was also clarified that although the Overview Select Committee had a statutory role in holding Health partners to account, it could not compel the attendance of other external people in the same way.

26. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that no questions, representation or statements of case had been received in accordance with Council procedures.

27. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

28. PETITIONS MONITORING REPORT

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report providing an update on the status of outstanding petitions against the Council's target of providing a formal

response within three months of being referred to the Divisional Director.

AGREED:

That the status of outstanding petitions and to remove those petitions marked “Petition Process Complete” from the report.

The Chair agreed to a change in the running order of the agenda to take the item Overview of New Ways of Working Programme next.

29. OVERVIEW OF NEW WAYS OF WORKING PROGRAMME

The Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance gave a presentation overview of the New Ways of Working programme.

The item was introduced by the City Mayor who observed that due to the Covid 19 pandemic new opportunities had arisen to accelerate changes positively that perhaps would have taken more time to do so before the pandemic.

During the presentation attention was drawn to the following points:

- The organisation was keen to achieve an agile work culture and environment and to improve its use of resources. Modern ways of working should also achieve financial savings too.
- Building on the lessons learnt during the Covid 19 pandemic one important point was around staff health and wellbeing, especially in how the council supported staff and their approach to deliver work. The pandemic had shown how quickly the organisation and workforce could adapt and make changes and there was more that could be done to leverage technology etc.
- The key aims of the programme were based around 3 strands: people and culture; technology and IT; and activity based workspaces.
- Surveys had been conducted with staff at three stages of the programme, this had helped determine role profiles, site specific activities, activities while in the office space and individuals' requirements such as special equipment or personal circumstances.
- Stage 1 had focused on the workforce profile and data showed that 15% of roles would always be office based, 37% were mostly out of office, 32% were always out of office and 16% were in and out of office. The survey data supported a 30% reduction in office desk space taking pre-Covid desk number of 2915 down to 2040 and the aim through a phased approach was to refine the workforce desk allocations and to realise efficiencies across 3 buildings: Phoenix House, Bosworth House and 10 York Road.
- The timeline for potential savings was set out noting that during the pandemic operational estate costs had dropped dramatically, most notably Bosworth House which was leased until 2023 and it was anticipated the closure of Bosworth House, 10 York Road and Phoenix House would save £0.95m by 2023 with York Road and Phoenix House then providing potential revenue income.
- In relation to workplace reoccupation, detailed work had been undertaken to map out allocation of space to key people and service

areas whilst looking to maintain stability although a third of staff would have to move much of this was service specific requests bringing teams closer and staff required to move would relocate from one city centre building to another so little or no impact on their commute. Building plans had been drawn up and were being overlayed with IT configurations needed.

- Work was also ongoing investigating changes to face to face customer activity in buildings, e.g. Youth offending; social care and coroner services.

Members welcomed the report and noted the next steps as set out in the presentation. During discussion, the following points were made:

In relation to providing appropriate IT support to those working from home or within an office it was noted at the beginning of pandemic as an organisation the council were able to move very quickly to sustain over 3000 people working from home and have invested in the resilience of the network and continued IT improvements.

There was concern at the loss of customer face to face services e.g. amalgamated housing offices, restricted opening times at the Customer Service Centre and some members noted that one of the most regular complaints from constituents was about not being able to see someone as well as concern around phone call response times.

The City Mayor thanked members for their comments and responded in relation to face to face customer services. The City Mayor was aware of comments regarding customer service and agreed that call times needed significant improvement and measures were being looked at to enable that to be improved. There had also been discussion around opening times of the Customer Service Centre but there had to be some balance as that would require reallocation of customer service staff who were answering calls. At the moment it was felt to be more beneficial to keep opening face to face on restricted hours and utilising staff to try and get call waiting times back down. It was noted that the volume of calls had increased dramatically causing the increased answering/wait times.

The Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance commented that the pandemic had presented opportunities to learn some positive things, and there was not just an assumption of reverting to old ways, however it was very much learning from everything and recognising some people still need face to face service. It was recognised that some discrete services such as Health Services, are necessary face to face but there were areas where we should have been offering online services sooner.

Reference was made to a national report that had come out today in which it was suggested around 80% of people were not happy about returning to work in an office and Members were reassured that there was mindfulness of people's situations being taken into account in relation to returning to the

office to work.

In terms of savings it was queried whether the Bosworth House lease could be renegotiated and/or terminated earlier to achieve a long term saving and officers agreed to investigate this. It was also suggested that any savings from buildings could be used towards achieving carbon neutrality and it was agreed there should be consideration of how some of the savings could be reinvested.

It was noted that as well as IT support, behaviours and people culture were also being considered and it was suggested that there should be more imaginative use of council buildings and that the flexibility of access would provide benefits for others too. Officers replied that they were seeing demand for more flexible work environments and workspaces to drop in and out of and officers were working on plans to develop the programme whilst taking manageable steps

Regarding “working from home” and environments which are not always conducive to working efficiently, where needed arrangements had been put in place to enable individuals to return to offices and staff had been supported to do that. In relation to handling staff return to work it was acknowledged that some were nervous and so autonomy was being given to teams to find solutions that work best for them. A lot of work had also been conducted around staff productivity; making sure staff have defined tasks, targets and quality performance conversations as well as manager and leader qualities to stop the view that staff could only be managed by presenteeism.

It was suggested that individuals working from home faced increased bills and queried how that might be met or balanced. In reply it was commented that some increased costs were offset by savings such as commuting.

The Chair enquired whether there was a piece of work to look at the impact on the local economy of new ways of working and was advised that officers were economy conscious and even before the pandemic there had been large parts of workspace unoccupied or underutilised. The programme was looking at demand for flexible workspaces and people still coming into City. Also, as staff had not seen each other for long periods it was noted more were making efforts to go out for lunch etc which would benefit the local economy.

The Chair thanked officers for the presentation and asked that a full update report be provided within 6 months to include full detail of equality impact as there may be some unforeseen circumstances of these changes.

AGREED:

That an update report on the New Ways of Working Programme be provided to a future meeting within 6 months including full details around equality impact.

18.36 Ivan Browne joins the meeting

30. COVID 19 VERBAL UPDATE

The Chair returned to the running order of the agenda.

The Director of Public Health provided a general update on the Covid 19 situation which included a focus on the impact of school re-openings and the vaccination programme.

Local Leicester picture showed hospital case numbers at 426 per 100,000 as of today, compared to the national picture of 308 cases per 100,000. Figures were relatively stable over past month and although Leicester was above average there had not been a sharp spike in cases.

In terms of a breakdown by age:

- Over 60's age group was seeing higher levels of hospitalisation/mortality and this was being monitored. Three weeks ago, over 60's was at 308 cases per 100,000 but that figure was coming down and was now at 211 per 100,000 which was higher than national but falling at rate of 9%.
- Those aged 17-24yrs (Uni age) 298 cases per 100,000 and below national at 395 per 100,000. It was noted that large numbers of students were due to return soon and public health officers were working closely with the universities to manage that. It was also noted that the rate of cases within this age group had been consistently below the national average.

A national area of focus was on the age group of 11-15 year olds. Leicester schools had returned earlier than elsewhere across the country and the rate of cases was 1053 per 100,000 this was higher than the national average of 704. It was felt the earlier return had impacted those figures and although it seemed a large number on a relative scale this was not as big a spike as it would seem, but it was being watched closely.

In terms of public health, officers remain focused on trying to maintain and keep hospitals functioning, and in the last week there had been a drop in hospital admissions from Covid. Whilst admission from Covid was not the main driver at moment the pressure on hospitals remained quite acute. With the start of other winter illnesses and respiratory illnesses, particularly in paediatrics, officers were seeing a lot of anxiety around those illnesses and presence of similar symptoms to Covid. The situation was very different from last year where there were lots of restrictions in place.

There had been a general increase in the number of deaths from Covid: 4 deaths 4 weeks ago; 6 deaths 3 weeks ago; 8 deaths last week and 9 deaths this week. This was a slow rise and gradual creep up which showed the vaccine was doing its job but there was concern that the number of deaths was going up and whether that was exponential.

In terms of overall positive cases there had been a significant dip around May 2021 to 139 cases per 100,000 and Leicester was going in right direction however since then and with the easing of restrictions there had been a gradual increase in cases, and now akin to 1500 new cases per 100,000 per week.

Regarding the number of deaths and what would normally be expected between Jan to March the figures were higher in the City than normal, April to July were below or around what would expect to see, with overall 1078 deaths in Leicester up to 31st July 2021 being Covid related.

In relation to the vaccination programme overall coverage of those over 50 years receiving 2 doses was at 83% and a single dose at 87%; of those over 60, 61% had received 2 doses and 70% a single dose but within those numbers there was huge variation around levels of coverage.

The number of vaccinations being conducted was falling and a lot of work around key messages was being done to get people to take vaccinations and there was more to do to be more effective at that. Across the City it was thought there could be as many as 100,000 that could be unvaccinated, but it was difficult to provide an exact figure as people were coming and going from the City. In context with the national picture:- over 50 year olds 89% of England population had received 2 doses, and in Leicester that was 83.3%. Leicester was not an outlier though and compared to Nottingham, Coventry, Birmingham we were middle of pack; 18-49 year olds 60% nationally had received 2 doses while in Leicester that was 52.2% and towards the top of comparators like Coventry and Birmingham that were around 45%

It was noted that the main areas with low uptake of the vaccination were student areas, the City Centre, West End and also areas such as Spinney Hills, Charnwood and Newfoundpool that had a low uptake in the population age group of 18-49 years.

The ensuing discussion included the following comments:

Referring to the announcement of a Covid booster combined with Flu vaccination the Director of Public Health advised that Clinical Commissioning Groups were starting the Covid booster programme next week using the Pfizer booster and there was confidence that there were sufficient supplies however there were some issues in terms of Flu vaccine supply. The vaccination programmes could not be delayed on basis of supply of another and those over 50 should therefore receive an offer of Covid booster and then wait for Flu vaccination to become available.

In relation to hospital admissions for Covid and whether those were vaccinated or not it was advised that $\frac{3}{4}$ of the population were vaccinated and $\frac{3}{4}$ of those in hospital were unvaccinated. 80% of those in ICU last week were unvaccinated so it was still important to make point that the vaccine mitigates the risk of more serious illness from Covid.

The Director of Public Health commented that in terms of guidance the stance is clear, Covid is not over and public health officers continue to ask people to take precautions, e.g. wear masks in buildings when moving around, albeit against the backdrop of challenge that everywhere else restrictions are being lifted. Regarding reliance on P3 masks those do have to be fit tested to ensure they are 100% protective.

The Chair commented that Covid was still clearly a worrying situation and thanked the Director of Public Health for the update.

AGREED:

That a further update on Covid 19 be brought to a future meeting.

31. TACKLING RACISM, RACE INEQUALITY AND DISADVANTAGE

The Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance submitted a report on Tackling Racism, Race Inequality and Disadvantage.

Councillor Hunter, Assistant City Mayor for Tackling Racism and Disadvantage introduced the report which arose following the response to the Black Lives Matter protests when it was agreed to establish governance arrangements and a programme of work in the form of an action plan around tackling racism, race inequality and disadvantage in Leicester with a particular focus on Black British, Caribbean, African and dual heritage communities.

The Chair welcomed and introduced David Shire, Race Equality Officer to the commission and invited him to give a brief outline of his background and the work he had undertaken in race equalities prior to taking on this role.

The Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance gave an overview of the report which provided the first update and covered progress on establishing the governance structures for this work, the development of the programme of work and a summary of some of the key actions to date.

It was noted that:

- A corporate internal steering group was now in place with senior representatives from all service areas and staff representatives too. The group met monthly and focused on themes each time, this week for example the theme focus was on museums and their work on exhibitions.
- An external steering group of community representatives had been established which will meet 3 to 4 times per year to maintain overview of progress.
- Appropriate resources would be recruited to support this work and drive key projects and activities. The new Race Equality Officer had been in post for a month and was building relations in the community. An area of focus would be how the council gathered and measured what it was doing with clear outcomes so there was a lot of work to be done around structure and resources.
- An action plan had been developed to bring together themes, headline

some of the work within those themes and show effort of colleagues.

- This work related to work across all departments and service areas and it was proposed in due course to bring further updates to OSC and other scrutiny commissions.
- Generally good progress was being made and the work was gaining momentum although more needed to be done around communication and improving communication with staff and wider communities.

The Chair welcomed use of an external reference group and the involvement with the DMU Stephen Lawrence Research Centre. The Chair also commented that external reviews of what the council were doing could be important to this piece of work too.

Members welcomed the initiatives being taken and during discussion made the following comments:

- Regarding public health and health inequalities it was suggested that the “data” explanation around tackling inequalities experienced by black people required some further explanation as there was more reasons for looking at services for black people than this suggested.
- Once this work was more established consideration should be given to new contracts with external partners ensuring their staff met the same standards set out in report for the council workforce.
- In relation to the people being engaged with and the external steering group it would be helpful to have the police on board and include senior police officers in those meetings.
- Regarding “themes” it was suggested there was a need to look at the disproportionate number of young people getting involved in crimes too.
- There was a need to continue to educate people of all ages as there were still people within communities with prejudice, it was also felt to be important to focus on younger children too, not just secondary school age.
- Ward councillors should be engaged in this work as they could highlight local issues.
- Noted that the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny task group were looking at inequalities in health service; collecting data was important but so too was trialling initiatives, providing meaningful job experiences and opportunities of experience that were not always there for people.
- Regarding development and roll out of a training programme on unconscious bias and anti-racism, there was concern that these were two separate things that should not be rolled together. The training should also be aimed at everyone and not just addressing middle managers.
- In terms of history and culture as well as raising awareness of Windrush Day consideration should be given to the Carnival which had issues and seemed to be over policed.
- In relation to the list of external reference group representatives it was noticed this did not include many young people, and more could be done to gain their buy in to the initiatives and to engage with schools, head

teachers and young people about their experiences, as younger people's experiences of racism/discrimination were likely to be different to older generations particularly around knife crime.

Responding to the various points made the Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance commented that:

Stakeholder involvement would be broader and would be part of the Race Equality Officer role to take that further.

Working with ward councillors was a good point and further consideration to engaging with them would be done.

Involvement of young people was a key aspect and the Race Equality Officer would be exploring that with colleagues and Leicester College. In terms of education, officers would also be asked to explore what was being done in primary schools.

In terms of the Youth Justice System involvement officers agreed to provide more information and details later.

The Race Equality Officer set out how this piece of work would be approached, and it was noted that approximately 60% would be about getting communities involved not just the external reference group. There would also be work to engage young people who might only be interested in one theme and begin by meeting people and using snowball effect to get them involved in other themes.

The Chair asked that a detailed update report be brought to the Spring 2022 meeting of OSC.

Councillor Hunter, Assistant City Mayor for Tackling Racism and Disadvantage thanked Members for their comments which would be taken on board.

AGREED:

That an update report be brought to the Spring 2022 meeting of OSC.

32. REVENUE MONITORING REPORT PERIOD 3

7.42pm meeting resumed.

The Deputy Director of Finance submitted the Revenue Monitoring Report, the first in the monitoring cycle for 2021/22.

The Deputy Director of Finance introduced the report, explaining that predictions at this stage of the financial year were always difficult especially with ongoing uncertainties around the pandemic and moving into winter.

Key points noted:

- The financial picture continued to be dominated by the Covid pandemic.

- Overspend was forecast at £7m, this was not unexpected and could be accommodated from one off sums made available for that purpose.
- Main income streams were being monitored closely to see how they recovered and to identify any potential long term future impacts.
- Despite the pandemic Adults and Children's services were forecasting to remain within their budgets, although Children's may have to call upon their reserves to a point to address the pressures set out in the report.
- City Developments and Neighbourhoods and Sports Services were forecasting overspends, this was mainly due to loss of income as a result of closure because of Covid.

Members were asked to note the emerging picture and approve the transfer of £3.3m of funding received from government to offset short falls in local taxation collection and additional business rates relief due to the pandemic, to an earmarked reserve.

The Chair invited Members to discuss the report.

The Deputy Director of Finance clarified that an earmarked reserve was an assigned or tagged pot that was kept aside for specific use. The funds had been reserved and as a reserve there would not be a specific time when that funding had to be used.

Reference was made to a forecast underspend on repairs and housing maintenance and the situation regarding empty properties/voids was queried and whether there were high levels of voids because they were awaiting repairs.

There was brief discussion on current Council Tax costs and queried whether there would continue to be an Adult Social Care precept on Council Tax if that service was anticipating an underspend.

The City Mayor responded that the government had allowed councils to transfer the burden of growing Adult Social Care costs to local taxation and latest reforms did very little to address this situation. It was the case that what the council had been allowed to do as a result of increase in the precept still fell short of the huge increase of Adult Social Care costs year on year.

Responding to the comments made on voids, it was noted that the Leicester Mercury on this occasion had published a confused story on the issue and they were talking about voids across the whole of the housing market not just council estate. However, Housing Scrutiny did regularly discuss voids across the council estate and there were not a significantly high number of vacant properties although the council did have an exceptionally high housing waiting list.

The Deputy Director of Finance replied that he did not have the exact number of vacant HRA properties, however generally the council had been buying properties to offset some right to buy losses. In terms of the underspend on repairs, certain materials and labour was in short supply so the service area

has experienced some difficulties. The Deputy Director of Finance agreed to provide more details to Councillor Porter outside this meeting.

Members noted that recent reports to Housing Scrutiny had also reflected the downward trend in terms of the number of void properties.

Returning to the comments made in relation to council tax it was noted that the ASC precept had raised about £3.6m and the ASC budget was raised by about £10m. Thus only £3.6m was funded through precept therefore although there was an underspend overall against the increased budget, the council still had to fund the extra costs. Announcements from the government last week suggested that next financial year there would be another Adult Social Care precept but at moment that was not clear.

The Chair referred to the rising costs related to Looked after Children and suggested this might be something for the Children Young People and Education scrutiny commission to explore further. Councillor Gee, Chair of Children, Young People and Education confirmed that could be taken up and included on future work programme of that commission.

AGREED:

1. That the emerging picture detailed in the report be noted.
2. That the Executive be recommended to approve the transfer of £3.3m of funding received to an earmarked reserve to offset shortfalls in local taxation collection and additional business rates relief due to the pandemic.
3. That the Deputy Director of Finance provide additional information on void properties and housing repairs to Councillor Porter.
4. That the Children Young People and Education Scrutiny Committee consider exploring the rising costs related to Looked after Children at a future meeting of that commission.

33. CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT PERIOD 3

The Deputy Director of Finance submitted the Capital Budget Monitoring Report, this was the first capital monitoring report of the financial year for the purpose of showing the position of the capital programme at the end of June 2021 (period 3).

It was noted that further update reports and an outturn report would be presented as the year progressed.

As reported previously there had been significant impact on the capital programme due to the Covid 19 pandemic with many schemes delayed. Increased costs of materials on schemes and supply were also now showing and so some schemes may start to forecast overspends.

Members were invited to make observations on the recommendations to the Executive namely:

- To note the total spend of £24m for the year to date,
- To note the following savings:
 - £7.1m for New School Places Policy Provision
 - £750k for Leicester Flood Strategy
 - £200k for Community & Environmental works
- To approve the transfers and additions as set out on page 70 and 71 of the report pack.

Members considered the report during which the following comments were made:

- Regarding funding additional external consultancy support to “land promotion work” it was queried what land promotion work was. Officers replied that in summary this related to the disposal of land where there might be a maximum capital receipt. The Deputy Finance Director agreed to provide further details to Councillor Kitterick outside of the meeting.
- More detail of Energy Efficiency Technology and feature lighting was sought. In response it was noted that the Energy Efficiency Technology was a long running programme and the council had recently bid for over £20m funding for energy efficient schemes, that had been added into the capital programme. The government had set a “spend it all” target of March 2022 so that was the reason for the figures given and the extended completion date.
- In relation to the demolition of Goscote House, it was suggested there might be opportunities with the building to make it into larger flats. The City Mayor responded that Goscote House had been the subject of a lot of deliberation which had been reported to Housing scrutiny. After careful consideration it was concluded the costs of refurbishment were far greater than could be justified as it had significant structural issues, notwithstanding that it has also been looked at by experts. Their overwhelming conclusion was it cannot be saved economically, and it would be better to put the money into new homes rather than try to save this building.

The Chair thanked officers for the report .

AGREED:

1. That the contents of the report be noted
2. That the recommendations for the Executive be supported.
3. That the Deputy Director of Finance provide further details on “land promotion work” to Councillor Kitterick.

34. QUESTIONS FOR THE CITY MAYOR

1. Question from the Chair, Councillor Cassidy: “We support the City Mayor and Executive statement of 19 August welcoming those seeking refuge from the awful situation in Afghanistan and question the underfunding by the Government of the ‘refugee and asylum system’.

Please can you provide detail of plans to date made by the City Council and

our partners in respect of the resettling of Afghan Refugees in Leicester? And can we ask that updates be brought back to OSC and that more focused work on particular strands of the resettlement programme be carried out in due course by relevant scrutiny commissions?

The City Mayor responded that he intended to make sure that there were regular updates at OSC and other scrutiny meetings as necessary on this situation. The City Mayor also undertook to provide all members with an update in writing.

It was also noted that:

- The City already had a few hundred people from Afghanistan who had made Leicester there home over last decade.
- The Council had committed to finding ten homes for larger Afghan families with a commitment from the government to financially support that.
- Currently there were 76 people including 23 children staying in a hotel in the City.
- Council officers were doing everything possible to ascertain their positions, but the Home Office had not yet put in place a full process.
- Representative from the local Afghan community had been met and they were keen to help and provide support to those coming here and they had given advice and officers were developing their willingness to engage
- Health and wellbeing checks had been carried out and the 76 refugees visited and provided with GP details. Officers were on hand to help too.
- Contact had also been made with Fire services and the council Health & Safety to ensure appropriate safety standards were being met where the people were placed.
- It was not clear at moment whether their cultural needs have properly been assessed and were being met, however it had been impressed on officers that those needs should be addressed as well.
- Of 23 children 15 were in school, it was uncertain how many remaining were school age and that was being checked.
- Adult education service was also offering support with ESOL.
- One issue was financial support whilst there. The hotel had access to government support which allowed full board, but the council had been told there were no funds for personal items such as clothing, nappies, sanitary items etc so that was also being checked. It had been suggested that the government were providing pre-loaded credit cards, again this was something that needed to be checked.
- Officers had been proactive with VCS and faith sectors and there are some particular VCS and charities giving support to refugees in leicester and those are all welcome offers of help.
- The Home Office would continue to be pressed to provide necessary wrap around support as this was an area of concern and Members would be kept up to date.

The Chair thanked the City Mayor for his response and indicated that this

would be taken as a standing item on the OSC agenda for next 6 months to receive regular updates.

Members sought clarity on the schemes that would be supporting the refugees, the number of children being placed in schools and the number of refugees being homed.

The City Mayor confirmed that the refugees were being supported through the Vulnerable Person Scheme and the National Asylum scheme, the council was committed at this stage to provide homes for 10 larger Afghan families. Separate to that there were 76 people in hotels in the City and the immediate focus was that those 76 people were being properly supported, of those 15 were children in school and 8 others were being checked on whether they were of school age.

Members suggested that until the complex needs of the 76 people were known that the council could perhaps support each from community ward funds. The City Mayor rebutted that suggestion as the Home Office were responsible for finances and the funding should be with government not with the council or local people.

The Chief Operating Officer Alison Greenhill advised that the refugees placed in Leicester had been placed through the temporary bridging scheme whilst more permanent homes were found, that may or may not be in Leicester. Through the Home Office the council would ascertain where they wanted to live. Home Office agreements with hotels had been made without consulting local authorities so money was not only key issue, wrap around support was about longevity and for those that settle in Leicester to have wider community support. The council had made a generous offer to the Home Office and would support those families that choose to settle in Leicester.

2. Question from Councillor Porter “regarding the Haymarket, this has been an issue for many years. Can we have an update on where things are now regarding the Haymarket?”

The City Mayor responded that the Haymarket Theatre issue was one that dated from the creation of the Curve and had been difficult. Bringing the Haymarket back into use had been broadly welcomed and at a tiny cost compared to the Curve or a new building. The Haymarket was remarkably good value for money, and it was unfortunate that the consortium was so adversely affected by the pandemic and hadn’t had an opportunity before that to build up any financial reserves.

At the moment the council was inviting people who had shown an interest to firm up their proposals and looking forwards as there was more opening up following the pandemic to try and reopen the building to the public.

The Chair thanked the City Mayor for responding to questions.

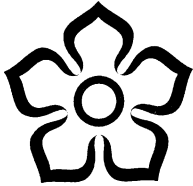
35. WORK PROGRAMME

Members received and noted the Work Programme.

- Session on Corporate Parenting to be added and hope to have some Young People attend the meeting to speak.
- Private Sector Housing item to come to November meeting.
- Extra meeting in January 2022 to be arranged to consider the Local Plan prior to its submission to Full Council

36. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.43pm



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED **All Wards - Corporate Issue**

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS: **Overview Select Committee**

10 November 2021

Tracking of Petitions - Monitoring Report

Report of the Monitoring Officer

1. Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update on the current status of responses to petitions against the Council's target of providing a formal response within 3 months of being referred to the Divisional Director.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the current status of outstanding petitions and to agree to remove those petitions marked 'Petition Process Complete' from the report.

3. Report

The Committee is responsible for monitoring the progress and outcomes of petitions received within the Council. An Exception Report, showing those petitions currently outstanding or for consideration at the current Overview Select Committee meeting is attached.

The Exception Report contains comments on the current progress on each of the petitions. The following colour scheme approved by the Committee is used to highlight progress and the report has now been re-arranged to list the petitions in their colour groups for ease of reference:

- **Red** – denotes those petitions for which a pro-forma has not been completed within three months of being referred to the Divisional Director.
- **Petition Process Complete** - denotes petitions for which a response pro-forma has sent to the relevant Scrutiny Commission Chair for comment, subsequently endorsed

by the Lead Executive Member and the Lead Petitioner and Ward Members informed of the response to the petition.

- **Green** – denotes petitions for which officers have proposed a recommendation in response to a petition, and a response pro-forma has been sent to the relevant Scrutiny Commission Chair for comment, before being endorsed by the Lead Executive Member.
- **Amber** – denotes petitions which are progressing within the prescribed timescales, or have provided clear reasoning for why the three-month deadline for completing the response pro-forma has elapsed.

In addition, all Divisional Directors have been asked to ensure that details of **all** petitions received direct into the Council (not just those formally accepted via a Council Meeting or similar) are passed to the Monitoring Officer for logging and inclusion on this monitoring schedule.

4. Financial, Legal and Other Implications

There are no legal, financial or other implications arising from this report.

5. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

The Council's current overall internal process for responding to petitions.

6. Consultations

Staff in all teams who are progressing outstanding petitions.

7. Report Author

Angie Smith
Democratic Services Officer
Ext. 376354

Date Petition referred to Divisional Director	Received From	Subject	Type - Cncr (C) Public (P)	No. of Sig	Ward	Date Receipt Reported to Council (C) / Committee (Ctee)	Lead Divisional Director	Current Position	Scrutiny Chair Involvement	Date of Final Response Letter Sent to Lead Petitioner	Current Status	Ref. No.
25/02/2021	Rumena Rahman	Petition requesting resident parking for Rowsley Street	(p)	58	Stoneygate		Andrew L Smith	The city council has a prioritised three-year programme of works for several areas of the city which it considers suitable for investigation and subsequent consultation with residents on a residents' only parking scheme. The areas in the current programme are as follows; Clarendon Park, Aylestone Park, Woodgate, Tudor Road, St Matthews and Stoneygate (which includes the requested area). It is expected that the consultation on residents only parking in Stoneygate will be undertaken in 2022/23 financial year. Rowsley Street, Linton Street, Sawley Street are already highlighted and included as part of a future Stoneygate scheme. The 8 petitioners whose addresses are outside the proposed scheme boundary will be considered and placed on the database of requests for residents' parking and will be used in the decision making process to determine which areas have significant parking problems and where a consultation process will likely result in a positive outcome for residents' parking.	Proforma returned by the Scrutiny Chair	14/06/2021	PETITION COMPLETE	21/02/01
20/04/2021	Mrs Sabaia Khan	Petition re the purchase of allotment land to the rear of properties	(p)	14	Evington		John Leach	It can be demonstrated that there the plots are in use, and there is a strong demand at this site. Because of this and the associated legislation, the request for the sale of the allotment plots cannot be granted.	Proforma returned by the Scrutiny Chair	02/09/2021	PETITION COMPLETE	21/04/02
09/07/2021	Cllr Pattick Kitterick	Petition requesting the Council establish a right of way across the Wyggeston & Queen Elizabeth I College	(c)	22	Castle		Andrew L Smith	The public do not enjoy a right of way across the path and the landowners can prevent access if they wish to do so. A user of the pathway has commenced a process outlined in section 53(2) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA81) to claim a public right of way following a period of prolonged use. Details of the claim and User Evidence Statement are on the Council's website. Users who signed the petition have also been asked to sign a User Evidence Statement each. Under the WCA81 the council has 12 months to make a determination on the claim based upon the evidence supplied by users, the landowners and any other documentary evidence which can be found. The Executive Member supports the legal process being undertaken.	Proforma returned by the Scrutiny Chair	29/09/2021	PETITION COMPLETE	21/07/01

RED - Pro-forma not completed within 3 months of being referred to Divisional Director

PETITION PROCESS COMPLETE - Scrutiny Chair commented on Pro-forma, Lead Executive Member signed off response and final letter sent to Lead Petitioner.

GREEN - Lead Executive Member consulted on proposed response and Pro-forma sent to Scrutiny Chair

AMBER - Petition response progressing within 3 months of being referred to Divisional Director

Date Petition referred to Divisional Director	Received From	Subject	Type - Cncr (C) Public (P)	No. of Sig	Ward	Date Receipt Reported to Council (C) / Committee (Ctee)	Lead Divisional Director	Current Position	Scrutiny Chair Involvement	Date of Final Response Letter Sent to Lead Petitioner	Current Status	Ref. No.
21/07/2021	Mahendra Modha	Petition asking or improvements on Rushey Mead Park - bins, toilets, lighting.	(p)	74	Rushey Mead		John Leach	The petition consists of three elements: lack of waste litter bins, lighting and lack of toilet provision. The location of bins on site has been reviewed and there are plans to replace single bins with double bins to increase capacity. A recent project was undertaken by Parks Services and Community Safety in partnership with Leicestershire Police to identify parks and open space sites with high crime rates for inclusion in a funding bid under the Safer Streets fund to receive resources. However, Rushey Fields did not fit the top ten sites for inclusion in the funding bid. To address reported ASB, a night time locking of the recreation grounds car park was introduced on 27 July 2021, supported by the local Police in an attempt to move people off site before dusk and would be monitored. There is current lighting at the recreation ground along the main footpath which is illuminated from Harrison Road to Gleneagles Walk and there are 25 lamp columns in total. There are no plans to light any other parts of the park which covers a large area. Lighting can have the effect of attracting people to an area and lead to more anti-social behaviour. The bowls pavilion at Rushey Fields Recreation Ground has recently become redundant. If the bowls pavilion were to be demolished, a new public toilet pvision could be built on this location if capital funding could be secured.	Proforma returned by the Scrutiny Chair	19/10/2021	PETITION COMPLETE	21/07/02
26/04/2021	Mr Altafbhai Sidat	Petition request to remove the 24 hour bus lane on Taylor Road.	(p)	75	Wycliffe		Andrew L Smith	A site visit took place on 30th July with the lead petitioner, Tenants and Residents Association, Executive Lead, Ward Councillor, City Highways Director, City Transport Director and Neighbourhood Housing Lead. Consultation has taken place with the wider community and with local public transport providers. Also, taking into account the unique nature of St Matthews Estate which is an island within a dense road network, a proforma has been prepared prior to formal approval by the Scrutiny Chair.			GREEN	21/04/03
04/06/2021	Residents of Cotton Close	Petition from residents in a sheltered housing complex experincing anti-social behaviour, and a request for the removal of a gate	(p)	29	Rushey Mead		John Leach	A site visit was held on 23 June, and PA Housing and ward councillors consulted. It has been agreed with PA Housing to restart regular resident meetings at which CCTV can be discussed, consult on the gate with residents and for LFRS to make Fire Safety visits to offer fire safety advice and reassurance. A response from Cllr Willmott was the gate should remain.	Proforma returned by the Scrutiny Chair		GREEN	21/06/01
23/09/2021	Sanjeev Sharma	Objection to the implementation of a one-way system from the	(p)	314	Rushey Mead		Andrew L Smith	Petition sent to lead director			AMBER	21/09/01

RED - Pro-forma not completed within 3 months of being referred to Divisional Director

PETITION PROCESS COMPLETE - Scrutiny Chair commented on Pro-forma, Lead Executive Member signed off response and final letter sent to Lead Petitioner.

GREEN - Lead Executive Member consulted on proposed response and Pro-forma sent to Scrutiny Chair

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Date Petition referred to Divisional Director	Received From	Subject	Type - Cncr (C) Public (P)	No. of Sig	Ward	Date Receipt Reported to Council (C) / Committee (Cttee)	Lead Divisional Director	Current Position	Scrutiny Chair Involvement	Date of Final Response Letter Sent to Lead Petitioner	Current Status	Ref. No.
23/09/2021	Akshay Patel	Objection to the Safer Streets Healthier Neighbourhoods Scheme for Rushey Mead	(p)	657	Rushey Mead		Andrew L Smith	Petition sent to lead director			AMBER	21/09/02
24/09/2021	Dilip Umeria	Concern re. speeding and unlawful driving down a one-way street. Request to turn Hardys Avenue into a cul-de-sac	(p)	23	Rushey Mead		Andrew L Smith	Petition sent to lead director			AMBER	21/09/03
05/10/2021	Sanjeev Sharma	Objection to residents parking on Harrison Road	(p)	65	Rushey Mead		Andrew L Smith	Petition sent to lead director			AMBER	21/10/01
11/10/2021	Helen Brookes	Petition requesting bollards outside Gerado's Hair Salon, 87 St Barnabas Road	(p)	58	North Evington		Andrew L Smith	Petition sent to lead director			AMBER	21/10/02

21

RED - Pro-forma not completed within 3 months of being referred to Divisional Director

PETITION PROCESS COMPLETE - Scrutiny Chair commented on Pro-forma, Lead Executive Member signed off response and final letter sent to Lead Petitioner.

GREEN - Lead Executive Member consulted on proposed response and Pro-forma sent to Scrutiny Chair

AMBER - Petition response progressing within 3 months of being referred to Divisional Director

Report to Overview Select Committee:

Home Office Bridging Hotel and Afghan Resettlement Accommodation in Leicester

Date of meeting: 10 November 2021

Strategic Director/Lead Director:
Richard Sword/ Chris Burgin

Useful information

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

1. Summary

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

2. Recommended action

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

3 Background

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

5. Detailed report

5.1 Families within the hotel

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

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

5.2 Support within the Hotel

- 5.2.1 Leicester City Council officially commenced wrap around support on the 4th October 2021 and work is underway with each family in the hotel. STAR AMAL have also begun the co-ordination of partners and external offers of support and a weekly meeting now takes place to co-ordinate these offers.
- 5.2.2 We are working with the Home Office to ensure all residents have their BRP (Biometric Residence Permits) and we are providing support in opening bank accounts and accessing GP services.
- 5.2.3 We have now engaged with both the male and female residents in the hotel to ask what enrichment activities they would like and that is now progressing. ESOL is underway for those in the hotel and childcare provision is also in place to allow parents to concentrate on their learning and family friendly sessions are being delivered at Leicester Central Library.
- 5.2.4 Leicester Diocese are delivering a 1 hour pre-natal session to pregnant mothers. The Minister delivering the sessions will also engage with the mothers on any clothing needs and will attend our weekly Bridging Hotel co-ordination meetings so that these need can be co-ordinated by STAR AMAL.
- 5.2.5 There is a Home Office representative now based in the hotel (since 11.10.2021) but their current focus is only on ensuring that the families have access to funds via their Aspen cards.
- 5.2.6 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Job Centre plus colleagues remain in the hotel 3 mornings a week working to organise benefit claims and support individuals into work. This has been challenging as individuals in the hotel are not there for long periods and may be offered settled accommodation anywhere in the UK. Therefore, focus has been for preparation to enter the job market at this stage.

5.3 Donations

- 5.3.1 The position remains the same in that there has been no need for donations identified. The City Council position therefore remains consistent in that financial donations to relevant charities is currently the best way to support this group or alternatively volunteering to help to support the work of the charities either as a direct volunteer or as a trustee or similar.
- 5.3.2 If needs are identified for those within the bridging hotel or for any re-settlement family within the City, we will use our existing links to source and co-ordinate offers to meet those needs.
- 5.3.3 A meeting has been arranged and will be ongoing chaired by Cllr Russell and Cllr Myers to co-ordinate the offers of support around not only the Afghan evacuees but also refugees and asylum seekers within the City. The first meeting took place on the 5th October 2021 and was well received by the voluntary, community and faith

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

5.4 Re-settlement and Housing

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

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

6.1 Financial implications

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

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

Stuart McAvoy – Principal Accountant

6.2 Legal implications

n/a

6.3 Equalities implications

n/a

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

n/a

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

7. Background information and other papers:

n/a

8. Summary of appendices:

n/a

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

No

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

No

Briefing Report

Overview Select Committee

Private Rented Sector Housing – Corporate Offer

Corporate Priorities for a holistic, balanced approach to issues arising from within the Private Rented Sector

Overview Select Committee: 10th November 2021

Lead Assistant Mayor: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin (Housing & Education)

Lead Strategic Director: Richard Sword

Lead Directors: Chris Burgin & John Leach

Useful information

■ Ward(s) affected: All

■ Primary report authors and contact details:

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■ Report version number: 1

1. PURPOSE

1.1. The purpose of this report is to:

- Brief Members of the Overview Select Committee on strategic plans for undertaking work within Leicester city's private rented sector.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1. The City Council have an ambition to ensure the private rented sector in Leicester is fit for purpose and to address where this is not the case by raising housing standards.
- 2.2. The overall objective of the strategy is to have a holistic approach that ensures tenants and landlords are appropriately supported, as well as retaining and improving our ability to protect tenants' safety and rights, and tackle rogue/poor landlords. Maximising this, whilst maintaining a balanced, fair, and proportionate approach, will ultimately lead to the raising of housing standards within the sector.
- 2.3. It is also a key objective to be able to access the sector in greater numbers in order to find good quality housing solutions for those in need, resulting from pressures on homelessness services and on the Housing Register that cannot be met with social housing alone.
- 2.4. The City Council also have duties to assist tenants with matters related to breach of rights, safety within the home, and threats of homelessness.
- 2.5. This briefing sets out several new areas of work, alongside existing and revised objectives, focusing on six high-level priorities, with one central principle objective at the core – improving housing standards in Leicester's private rented housing sector:



- 2.6. One major tool available to local authorities to improve housing standards is the use of licensing, but must be used proportionately, and cautiously.
- 2.7. Each objective within the strategy is supported by identified workstreams. The majority of workstreams can be accommodated with no additional pressure on LCC budgets, either being funded via grants, or absorbed via repurposing of existing resources within respective service areas. This is covered in more detail at Section 5, and then in full detail within Appendix 1.
- 2.8. Appendix 2 shows an indicative timeline for the strategy objectives, covering a period from 2020/2021 to 2024/2025. Work in some areas is already underway.

3. RECOMENDATIONS

- 3.1. Members of the Overview Select Committee are recommended to;
1. Note the content of this report and provide any comment/feedback.

4. BACKGROUND

Housing Standards & Compliance

- 4.1. The City Council's ambition to ensure the Private Rented Sector in Leicester is fit for purpose (and within that standards are improved in those areas where there are concerns) is clearly set out as a Priority in the City Mayor's manifesto. Metrics on work undertaken can be found at Appendix 1.

- 4.2. A housing stock condition report for the City has been produced by the BRE which identified there are 142,379 dwellings in Leicester, 43% are owner occupied, 35% private rented and 22% social rented. The report is helpful in terms of informing an intelligence led approach to stock improvement in the private rented sector. This work is considered alongside current service information and of course it is important to recognise that the approach of engaging, explaining and encouraging compliance is deployed in order to only use enforcement when that is necessary. Compliance is the overall objective leading to improved standards.
- 4.3. Housing is responsible for 33% of carbon emissions in Leicester and in line with the council's Climate Emergency Response this strategy will help tackle poor energy efficiency within the private rented sector.
- 4.4. The adoption of a Licensing Scheme has been considered in-line with the Council's Manifesto commitment. Its purpose is to enable the Council to impose additional licensing conditions and implement an intervention programme that targets existing or emerging problems associated with concentrations of privately rented accommodation.

Impact on Communities

- 4.5 In areas where there is a predominance of private rented sector housing that is being poorly managed by certain landlords, a number of community concerns can emerge that lead to the decline or feeling of decline within an area. Such decline can be seen physically and reflected in the movement of people into and out of an area, that does not encourage a sense of well being and belonging within communities.
- 4.6 The types of issues that impact on communities from poorly managed private rented stock include fly tipping, issues regarding bins being left on streets, anti-social behaviour, noise nuisance, unkept and filthy gardens leading to potential vermin infestations etc. Not only do these matters relate to environmental health concerns they also have an interplay with how people view and feel about the area they live in. Such environments may show a high churn in tenancies and therefore provide a reduced chance for a sense community that builds community cohesion amongst its residents.
- 4.7 Conversely well managed private rented sector properties can provide an attractive residence that adds value to areas and encourages behaviours that sustain peoples interest and desire to stay, invest and raise their families within.
- 4.8 Actions to improve the standard of private rented sector housing within an area, as set out in this strategy, encourage sustainable communities to thrive for the betterment of the overall locality and its surrounding environs.

Planning Alignment

- 4.9 Planning policies relating to housing development and standards is being reviewed as part of the new Local Plan. This will include a number of improved policy controls related to housing provision, condition and delivery which will impact upon the private rented sector and should assist delivery of and complement the PRS strategy objectives. Of particular note are the following policy areas:
- Arrangements to meet housing need targets including negotiation with adjacent districts, Registered Providers, Homes England and MHCLG
 - Policies to secure appropriate housing design

- Policies to secure appropriate housing mix including affordable housing development (s.106) including accessibility and adaptability standards subject to viability.
- Policies to meet the housing needs of different communities identified in the NPPF and findings in the Local Housing Need Assessment
- Delivery of housing site allocations
- Adoption of the Nationally Described Space Standards
- Policies to protect amenity of occupiers and adjacent residents
- Policies to deal with Houses in Multiple Occupation and the associated impacts

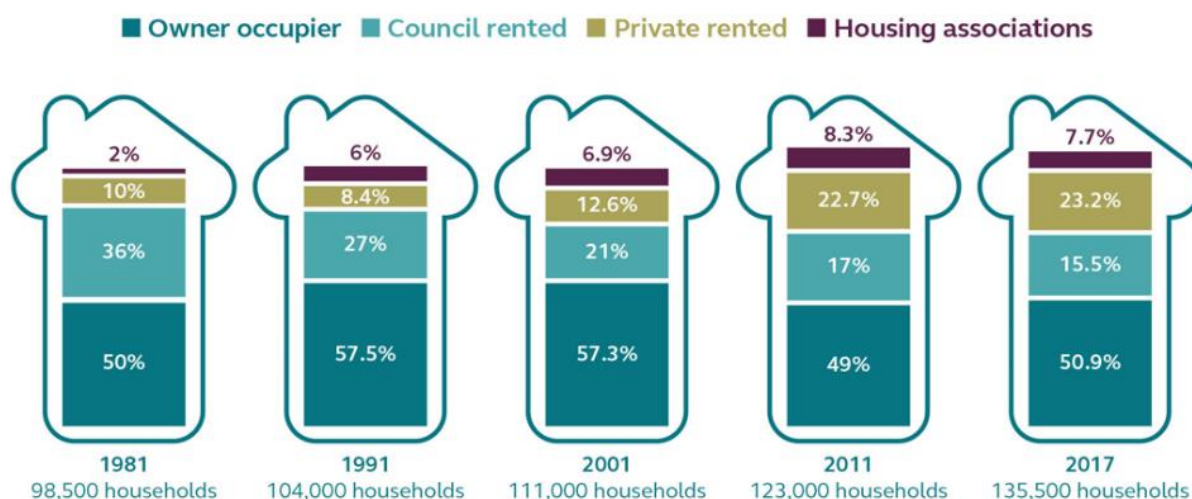
4.10 The Private Rented Sector will continue to be engaged through consultation on the planning policy development process.

Homelessness and Housing Need

4.11 The Council's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy¹, referenced in the City Mayor's objectives, is clear that preventing people from losing their homes is a top priority.

4.12 Over the past 10 years we have seen a gradual increase in approaches from households within the private rented sector, with the exception of 18/19 to 19/20 which saw a small reduction.

4.13. This is likely due to the changing nature of housing within the city, and nationwide. The graphic overleaf shows the changing make-up of the city, and the growth of the private rented sector, filling the gap left behind by diminishing council stock.



4.14. At point 3.2 it was stated that the 2020 figure now puts private rented accommodation even higher, at 35%.

4.15. In 2019/2020 there were 740 homeless applications arising from approaches by private rented sector tenants. This accounts for around a quarter of all threats of homelessness.

¹ <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/media/88282/homelessness-strategy-2018-2023.pdf>

- 4.16. Around 95% of these households presented as a result of receiving a notice to quit from the landlord.
- 4.17. There are a number of reasons why landlords seek to take back possession of the property, for example tenant-landlord disputes over disrepair, affordability issues, rent arrears. In many cases these matters are not as a result of fault by the tenant, and can often be resolved if addressed early. If left late, however, resolutions can be difficult to reach and/or landlord-tenant relations may have broken down to an irreconcilable state.
- 4.18. In 2019/2020, 80% of the households referenced above were provided with housing solutions. Around half of these solutions were as a result of sustaining current accommodation². The remaining solutions were as a result of providing a new accommodation solution. Further breakdown of metrics can be found at Appendix 2.
- 4.19. The Housing Register is overwhelmed by demand, and cannot act as a solution in many cases where time is of the essence. Sustainment of suitable accommodation is key to reducing the demand on the housing register to ensure that supply of social housing reaches those who need it most. In turn, timely notification from landlords/tenants, and timely action is key to successful sustainment.

Right to quiet enjoyment

- 4.20. In some instances, landlords' actions can breach the tenants' rights under the Protection from Eviction Act 1977. The council have seen a rise in private sector tenant complaints about illegal eviction and landlord harassment, with this type of presentation more than doubling since 2016/2017.

PRS as a housing solution

- 4.21. Further to reducing demand through sustainment, it is essential that the private sector is utilised fully to provide a supply of housing solutions.
- 4.22. In 2019/2020, 201 tenancies were created through the council's landlord incentives and leasing schemes. This was an increase from approximately 170 tenancies in 2018/2019. This was achieved through piloting improvements to incentives, and working more flexibly to the needs and wishes of local landlords.
- 4.23. It will be essential to continue to build on this success as social housing within the city continues to diminish, primarily as a result of Right to Buy.

5. ACHIEVING PRIORITIES – CONTRIBUTORY WORKSTREAMS

- 5.1. Delivery of each priority is supported by a package of workstreams.
- 5.2. In addition to the following workstreams the strategy as a whole will require programme management to coordinate workstream leads and Board priorities and outcomes. This will be absorbed within the Housing Transformation Team, although funding for a Business Change Manager for a period of 3 months would be required to complete initial set-up, and to produce a public-facing strategy document from this report. This will create a one-off cost of £15,000 (including on-costs) which will be covered from reserves.

² It should be noted here that LCC compare favourably on 'sustainment' when benchmarked against national figures, with 57% of homelessness preventions (all types of presentation) being achieved through sustainment compared to 37% as the national average.

5.3. With regard to the workstreams, a significant number will be achieved without any additional financial pressure on the local authority, achieved instead by absorption into, or re-organisation of, existing structures, or by Grant funding received by the local authority. These include:

5.4. **Priority: Improving housing standards across the sector by:**

O.1.1	Introducing better ways of reporting issues, for example the new online form to 'Report Unlicensed HMOs' which allows members of the public or tenants to report an un-licensed HMO, which can then be inspected <i>See Appendix 1 - O.1.1, for detail.</i>	To be undertaken within existing / repurposed resources.
O.1.2	Making better use of Landlord Accreditation Schemes, to improve the condition and management of the private rented sector in Leicester. <i>See Appendix 1 - O.1.2, for detail.</i>	To be undertaken within existing / repurposed resources.
O.1.3	Continuing work to bring empty homes back into use and occupation <i>See Appendix 1 - O.1.3, for detail.</i>	To be undertaken within existing / repurposed resources.
O.1.4	Increase the take-up of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) within the sector <i>See Appendix 1 - O.1.4, for detail.</i>	To be undertaken within existing / repurposed resources.
O.1.5	Consider the viability and benefits of extending Repayable Home Repair Loan into the private rented sector <i>See Appendix 1 - O.1.5, for detail.</i>	To be undertaken within existing / repurposed resources.
O.1.6	Carry out a range of planning-based initiatives to improve housing design, distribution and delivery and manage impacts of concentration of HMOs and other housing typologies <i>See Appendix 1 - O.1.6, for detail.</i>	To be undertaken within existing / repurposed resources.
O.1.7	Senior Environmental Health Officer (SEHO) to co-ordinate Operations such as Operation EPC, Operation Mandarin, and the Compliant Landlord Taskforce. <i>See Appendix 1 - O.1.7, for detail.</i>	This represents a cost of £53k per annum, which can be absorbed within existing staffing budgets.
O.1.8	Establishing a programme of works around pro-actively ensuring that properties are meeting energy efficiency standards – Operation EPC <i>See Appendix 1 - O.1.8, for detail.</i>	To be undertaken within existing / repurposed resources. See 5.11 in the event of mainstreaming, as resource requirement would arise.

5.5. **Priority: Improving support available for private sector landlords by:**

O.2.1	Introducing a centralised bank of information on grants and incentives for landlords, to enable a range of improvements e.g. Green Homes Grant. <i>See Appendix 1 - O.2.1, for detail.</i>	To be undertaken within existing / repurposed resources.
O.2.2	Introducing a dedicated section on leicester.gov.uk that provides a range of resources for landlords e.g. information about legal obligations & eviction processes <i>See Appendix 1 - O.2.2, for detail.</i>	To be undertaken within existing / repurposed resources.
O.2.3	Re-launching the Leicester Landlord Forum with improvements to ensure it is meeting the needs of local landlords <i>See Appendix 1 - O.2.3, for detail.</i>	To be undertaken within existing / repurposed resources.
O.2.4	Introducing a 'Call Before You Serve' model to allow for timely and pro-active sustainment of tenancies and prevention of eviction <i>See Appendix 1 - O.2.4, for detail.</i>	To be undertaken using the Homelessness Prevention Grant – funding identified within 22/23 grant (O.2.4, O.3.2, O.4.2, combined – identified £175,000). Breakdown can be seen at <i>Appendix 1 - O.2.4.</i>

5.6. **Priority: Improving support available for private sector tenants by:**

O.3.1	Introducing a dedicated section on leicester.gov.uk to provide a range resources and information for tenants e.g. advice about property condition, tenants' rights and eviction/homelessness, template letters for them to report concerns to landlords <i>See Appendix 1 - O.3.1, for detail.</i>	To be undertaken within existing / repurposed resources.
O.3.2	Creating a specialist PRS Housing Advice / Homelessness Prevention Team <i>See Appendix 1 - O.3.2, for detail.</i>	To be undertaken using the Homelessness Prevention Grant – funding identified within 22/23 grant (O.2.4, O.3.2, O.4.2, combined – identified £175,000). Breakdown can be seen at <i>Appendix 1 - O.2.4.</i>
O.3.3	Extending the existing Floating Support Provision to provide wider cover and greater support for Tenants within the private rented sector <i>See Appendix 1 - O.3.3, for detail.</i>	To be undertaken using the Homelessness Prevention Grant – funding identified within 22/23 grant (£20,000).

5.7. **Priority: Improving sector enforcement, and protection of tenants' / residents' rights by:**

O.4.1	Continuing to establish the new "Corporate Landlord Taskforce" – a partnership / multi-agency approach to dealing with rogue landlords	To be undertaken within existing / repurposed resources.
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	<i>See Appendix 1 - O.4.1, for detail.</i>	
O.4.2	Improving the Council's level of involvement in enforcement of rights within Protection from Eviction 1977 – Unlawful Eviction, Landlord Harassment, Breach of Quiet Enjoyment <i>See Appendix 1 - O.4.2, for detail.</i>	To be undertaken using the Homelessness Prevention Grant – funding identified within 22/23 grant (O.2.4, O.3.2, O.4.2, combined – identified £175,000). Breakdown can be seen at <i>Appendix 1 - O.2.4.</i>
5.8. Priority: Improving access to market in order to resolve housing need by:		
O.5.1	Launching recent improvements to LCC's PRS Incentive Schemes <i>See Appendix 1 - O.5.1, for detail.</i>	To be undertaken within existing / repurposed resources.
5.9. Priority: Improving 'joined-up' services around enforcement and support, joint intelligence & joint monitoring by:		
O.6.1	Establishing co-location of appropriate cross-Divisional teams as part of COVID-19 recovery plans, in order to reap organic benefits from proximity and development of relationships <i>See Appendix 1 - O.6.1, for detail.</i>	To be undertaken within existing / repurposed resources.
O.6.2	Establishing a method of cross-Divisional intelligence collection (inc. potentially establishing regular and in-depth sector analysis) & sharing <i>See Appendix 1 - O.6.2, for detail.</i>	To be undertaken within existing / repurposed resources.
5.10. Taking this further will require implementing new initiatives at cost. These include:		
O.5.2	Potential implementation of leasing scheme for 1-bed & shared accommodation. <i>See Appendix 1 - O.5.2, for detail.</i>	- Potential to cover this pressure from homelessness-related Grant Funding from Ministry of Housing. This is currently being explored with a potential bid. Failing this, we will review available options before seeking a decision on next steps. (<i>See Appendix 1 - O.5.2, for detail on estimated costs.</i>)
O.6.2	Improved sector intelligence. <i>See Appendix 1 - O.6.2, for detail.</i>	- Work is underway to identify the most appropriate route for undertaking this work, and whether capacity exists within current teams

O.1.9	Dependent on a review of key evidence; establishment of a licensing scheme, bolstered by additional enforcement measures, for key parts of Leicester City. <i>See Appendix 1 - O.1.9, for detail.</i>	- Any scheme would rely on income generation in order to balance out costs and become self-sustainable. A business case would be created for review ahead of any decision being sought, and would follow the governance flow detailed in Appendix 3, starting with review by the Board.
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- 5.11. We are working to investigate alternative sources of funding and opportunities to work with partners to deliver the objectives listed in 5.11 with minimal impact and pressure on the General Fund. Where this is not possible and a pressure would arise on the general fund if taken forward, each initiative will be appraised for cost/benefit in separate reports before a decision is sought via the governance system detailed at Appendix 3, beginning with challenge from the Board.

6. BENEFITS – TO LANDLORDS, TO TENANTS / PROSPECTIVE TENANTS, & TO THE COMMUNITY

- 6.1. The objectives sought in this strategic approach will have numerous benefits, as outlined below:

To landlords

- 6.2. Landlords without membership to associations, and without other means, often have to self-educate and independently keep up to date with what can be complex and fast-paced changed. Landlord will benefit from the improved educational materials made available, empowering them to be the best possible landlords and provide excellent services to tenants - as we know this desire is by far the norm amongst private sector landlords.
- 6.3. Improved and more frequent Forums and Liaison Meetings will improve the council's engagement with the landlord community. This will ensure that the 'voice' of the Landlord & Managing Agent (along with the local communities they often represent) is heard, and remains a strong central consideration as the strategy is implemented, and as future initiatives are developed.
- 6.4. Offering landlords a 'port of call' for failing tenancies, with financial and other assistance to relieve issues, will not only lead to better prevention of homelessness, but will ensure that matters are able to be raised and solved much earlier, so that landlords do not suffer from income loss, and have support, when needed, to tackle difficult tenant-relationships.

To tenants and prospective tenants

- 6.5. Increased enforcement where poor and non-compliant landlord behaviours arise within the sector will ensure that tenants benefit from improved housing standards, safer homes, and better quality of life including;
- 'Quiet enjoyment' of property as a result of improved enforcement of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977
 - Improved family life, health and wellbeing, & educational attainment standards as a result of better housing conditions.

- Reduced poverty as a result of improved housing conditions and improved energy efficiency, resulting in lowered costs of living related to housing utilities.
- 6.6. Tenant will also benefit from the improved educational materials made available to landlords and tenants as better educated landlords will result in fewer risks and issues within the sector, along with tenants themselves being empowered with information on their rights and how to enforce them.
- 6.7. Improved homelessness services for tenants being evicted from within the private rented sector will give tenants the best possible chance to avoid homelessness and ideally sustain their current accommodation. This means;
- Increased rates of tenancy sustainment and prevention of homelessness within the private rented sector via support and assistance delivered by an expert team
 - Consequently, a reduction in homelessness originating within the sector, and a lowering in the use of temporary accommodation, and related cost, leading to further improvement across family life, educational standards and attainment, health and wellbeing, poverty reduction
 - Robust advocacy for persons within the private sector whose rights are being infringed by poor or rogue landlord behaviour – increased enforcement of protection from eviction rights, and right to quit enjoyment free from landlord harassment
 - Future-proofed homelessness prevention services, ready for complex sector changes, for example, potential rescindment³ of Section 21⁴ and other potential reforms to the sector.
- 6.8 In relation to landlord licensing;-
- Good tenants will be more inclined to want to live in the selective licensed or additional licensed areas as they will know that properties are well managed.
 - Improved ability to identify and tackle poor landlords and managing agents; which will benefit tenants.
 - There will be increased confidence of tenants to report issues as licensing can help reduce the fear of eviction/bad management practice.

To the wider community

- 6.9. Increased licensing, introduction of accreditation, along with specialist oversight on enforcement / compliance operations, will lead to improved housing conditions, and better access to good accommodation.
- 6.10. Increased access to the private rented sector as a solution to housing need will lead to better housing outcomes, reductions in the need to use temporary accommodation, and will relieve some pressure from the housing register (consequently slowing the increase in waiting times).

³ [The end of 'no fault' section 21 evictions - House of Commons Library \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/libraries/commons/commons-library-research/evictions/no-fault-notice-to-quit/)

⁴ Section 21 (no defence) Notice to Quit - Housing Act 1988, section 21(1) and (4) as amended by section 194 and paragraph 103 of Schedule 11 to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and section 98(2) and (3) of the Housing Act 1996

- 6.11. Bringing empty homes back into use and removing eyesores from the cityscape. Consequently, encouraging economic investment in the city.
- 6.12. The introduction of easier and better methods of reporting issues to LCC will empower local communities, as well as having sight of educational materials related to what can and should be reported.

7. MONITORING

- 7.1. Each workstream will have associated performance measures, and will be monitored by divisional directors. The strategy as a whole will have a set of key performance indicators to allow for high-level monitoring by the Lead Members and relevant scrutiny commissions:

	Baseline	Target direction
Compliance and Standards		
Number of mandatory licensed HMOs	930	Increase
Compliance rate – number & % of PRS with Cat 1 (HHSRS) Hazards	8571 (17%)*	Decrease
Number of repeat complaints re landlords across the council	tbc	Decrease
Accredited HMOs	tbc	Increase
Homelessness & Housing Need		
Tenancies created via Incentive Schemes	200	Increase
PRS Tenancy sustainment	45%	Increase
Prevention interventions resulting in homelessness	15%	Decrease
Reduction in temporary accomm use	tbc	Decrease
Reduction in non-budgeted temporary accomm cost	tbc	Decrease

*Source: BRE Report

- 7.2. It should be noted that the next steps would involve establishing specific targets in addition to target direction, in order to better measure progress against KPIs.
- 7.3. Work will also be undertaken to benchmark with other comparable local authorities where possible (dependency on limited public data).
- 7.4. In addition to these performance indicators, we will also be able to infer progress and need for further / additional action by monitoring key contextual data. All of the data below can be produced on a Ward-Level to enable focussed monitoring, where required.

Monitoring		
No	Indicator	Deliverable
Please note that any of the below Indicators can be over laid with other data sets as required		
1.	Numbers of available dwellings within the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring increase/speed of increase of housing stock within the City
2.	Types of available dwelling within the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the changing/developing housing market within Leicester City Allow identification of HMO properties and location concentrations Overlay this data with external data sets to link issues to property type
3.	Ward share/spread of dwelling types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring increase rise/fall and ward location of types of housing in locations

4.	Number of category 1 hazards within the private rented sector properties and their type and concentrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitor effectiveness of education and targeted enforcement programmes on housing condition ○ Monitor hot spot locations ○ Monitor housing types linked to hazards ○ Overlay this data with Landlord information to assess patterns
	Number of dwellings (by type) who have an EPC at E or lower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Independent monitoring of energy performance of City dwellings generally and by type ○ Share this information to ensure rented homes reach the required legal standard
	Average Simple SAP rating by location and property type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitor SimpleSAP increase/decrease and linkages to fuel poverty and energy efficiency ○ Monitor SimpleSAP increase/decrease in HMO properties ○ Target resources/share information with key areas for holistic/corporate approach to less energy efficient homes
	Fuel poverty locations within the City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitor locations of fuel poverty and improvements/changes ○ Target resources/share information with key areas for holistic/corporate approach to fuel poverty in households
	Low income household locations and property types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitor concentrations/changes and property type linked to low income households ○ Target resources/share information with key areas for holistic/corporate approach to local income households

8. FINANCIAL, LEGAL, EQUALITIES, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

8.1. Financial implications

As detailed in the report, most of the work associated with the Private Rented Sector offer will be absorbed within existing budgets. £195k of funding from the Homelessness Prevention Grant has been earmarked for the creation of a PRS Team, implementing a 'Call Before you Serve' model, and extending the existing Floating Support Provision.

Further work will be required to establish the costs and potential funding for an extended leasing scheme with HomeCome for 1-bed properties. Any additional/selective licensing scheme would need to be self-financing, and this will be the subject of future reports to the Executive.

Stuart McAvoy – Principal Accountant

8.2. Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications arising as a direct result of this report.

Jeremy Rainbow – Principal Lawyer (Litigation) - Ext. 371435

8.3. **Equalities implications**

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, 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.

This report gives an overview on strategic plans for undertaking work within Leicester city's private rented sector, it focusses on six high-level priorities with the aim of improving housing standards with each being supported by identified workstreams. The work carried out under these priorities should lead to positive outcomes for people from across a range of protected characteristics.

Whilst the strategy is a strategic overarching document, the six high-level priorities and associated workstreams need to ensure equality considerations are embedded throughout them and it is recommended that Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are carried out as appropriate on identified areas within the workstreams, such as changes to policies/services/organisational change, to ensure any impacts are identified and addressed, and mitigating actions put in place.

The equality impact assessment is an iterative process that should be revisited throughout the decision-making process and updated to reflect any feedback/changes due to consultation/engagement as appropriate.

Further advice and guidance can be sought from the Corporate Equalities Team.

Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer, 454 4175

8.4. **Climate Emergency implications**

Housing is responsible for 33% of carbon emissions in Leicester, with PRS housing often the worst performing tenure in terms of emissions. Following the city council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019, and it's aim to achieve carbon neutrality, addressing housing-related emissions is therefore a vital part of the council's work, and this is noted as an objective within the strategy. A number of the existing and proposed pieces of work outlined in this report will assist in this goal.

Wherever possible other projects should also look from their earliest stages for further opportunities to reduce emissions and enable analysis of the their carbon impacts. This includes opportunities to provide support and advice to both tenants and landlords on measures such as improved insulation, efficient appliances and lighting, low carbon heating and renewable energy technologies. Additionally, many of the opportunities to reduce carbon emissions may also provide further co-benefits in terms of reduced fuel poverty and costs and improved health and wellbeing.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

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?

Yes.

Significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in two or more wards in the City.

11. Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Strategy Content - detail
- Appendix 2 – High Level Sequence
- Appendix 3 – High Level Governance Structure Chart
- Appendix 4 – Community Safety Service Information
- Appendix 4a – Key Findings and Monitorable Elements from BRE Report
- Appendix 5 – Homeless Services Information

APPENDIX 1 – EXPANDED DETAIL ON STRATEGY CONTENT

Important note: Costings outlined in this section are indicative.

Ref	Item	Benefits & Measures	Addition resource requirement & Indicative timeline
OBJECTIVE 1: Improving housing standards across the sector			
Could be accommodated within existing resources:			
44 O1.1	<p>Improved mechanisms for members of the public to report identified PRS matters</p> <p><i>Lead Area: Community Safety & Protection</i></p> <p>Related to O2.1, O2.2, and O3.1 (Landlord and Tenant webpages), work will be undertaken to create better ways of reporting issues via online forms from PCs or from mobile phones.</p> <p>An example of where this work has already proven successful is the un-licensed HMO reporting tool. A FirmStep on-line form was developed to allow members of the public or tenants to report an un-licensed HMO with a view to alert LCC so an inspection can take place by an environmental health officer.</p> <p>This resource should be positioned adjacent to educational material on the website developed as part of O2.1, O2.2, and O3.1 such that members of the public can better understand matters that should be reported, and how they identify them.</p>	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased reporting leading to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> better housing standards safer homes increased mandatory HMO licensing <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased service requests (<i>source: Analysis of service data</i>) Increased enforcement actions taken (<i>source: Analysis of service data</i>) Increased numbers of licensed HMOs (<i>source: Analysis of service data</i>) 	<p>Indicative costs: None.</p> <p>Indicative timeline: Q3/4 2021/2022</p> <p>Next Step: Specification of forms.</p>
O1.2	<p>Landlord Accreditation Scheme, to improve the condition and management of the private rented sector in Leicester.</p> <p><i>Lead Area: Community Safety & Protection</i></p> <p>A scheme will encourage, acknowledge and actively promote good standards of privately rented accommodation with the aim of assisting Landlords, Letting Agents and tenants to undertake their respective responsibilities.</p> <p>The least resource intensive route would be for the scheme to be delivered/offered by a third party such as EMPO or DASH. The Council is a member of DASH who offer an accreditation process as part of our membership contribution. As such, it would be prudent to consider DASH as a strong option. Process would be to council to signpost potential landlords who want to operate in Leicester to the partnered accreditation scheme. Prior to awarding an HMO license to a landlord, the council could stipulate that an accreditation (e.g. DASH, EMPO) must be attained.</p> <p>An in-house scheme would be very resource intensive and unnecessary given the above.</p>	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of an acceptable baseline for housing conditions. Improved housing conditions throughout the city (better and safer homes) <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the number of accredited HMO <p>Reduction in repeat complaints regarding rogue landlords across the Council</p>	<p>Indicative costs: If we were to use DASH, there would be no additional cost as included in services already procured.</p> <p>Indicative timeline: Q2 2021/2022</p>

45	O1.3	Bringing Empty Homes back into use <i>Lead Area: Housing Development</i> A continued drive to ensure empty homes are brought back into use and occupation. This will provide much needed residential accommodation, and helps to replenish the housing stock.	Benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> removes 'eyesores' within the city and makes Leicester a more pleasant place to live and work prevents further deterioration of properties currently in reasonable/good condition improves the local economy and environment reduces resident and Member complaints Measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target performance measures met (<i>source: Analysis of service data</i>) 	Indicative costs: None. Indicative timeline: N/A – Ongoing
	O1.4	Increase the take-up of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) within the sector <i>Lead Area: Home Improvement Team</i> Often tenants in private rented accommodation are unaware that they can apply for a DFG to provide adaptations to their current home. We need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make landlords aware that DFG funding is tenure blind and that their tenants can apply for a DFG and the implications this has for them as the property owner. Make tenants in private rented accommodation that have a need for a DFG and are trying to secure alternative accommodation that they should consider applying in their current home. 	Benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safer homes Improvements to meeting health needs, and better quality of life Relieves pressure from the housing register. Measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of DFGs undertaken for private rented sector homes. (<i>source: Analysis of service data</i>) 	Indicative costs: None. Indicative timeline: Comms at Q1/2 2021/2022
	O1.5	Consider the viability and benefits of extending Repayable Home Repair Loan into the private rented sector <i>Lead Area: Home Improvement Team</i> Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential need a review of eligibility Promotion of the scheme through agreed routes. 	Benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safer homes and improved standards of living Measures: TBC	Indicative costs: None. Indicative timeline: Q1/2 2021/2022
	O1.6	Range of Planning-related Activities <i>Lead Area: Planning</i> Concentrations of HMOs can lead to local issues of amenity and community impact. Small (3-6 persons) HMOs do not require planning permission unless located in areas subject to Article 4 Directions. Current Article 4 Direction were adopted in 2014.	Benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managed spread of HMOs in areas of concentration Improved amenity conditions in A4D areas Measures:	Indicative costs: None. Indicative timeline: Publish A4D summer 2021 Confirm summer 2022

	<p>In order to address this, a review of existing and the potential introduction of new Article 4 Directions to control concentrations of HMOs has been commenced, which will follow the steps below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with Members, • Publication and Consultation on Draft Non-Immediate Direction, • Subsequent confirmation upon expiry of 12-month notification period <p>The Review will use the BRE modelled data as well as existing datasets.</p> <hr/> <p>In addition to the above, the City's new Local Plan will review and update a wide range of policies affecting residential development including the private rented sector. The following policy areas are relevant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt new planning Policy to manage concentration of HMOs better through a more dispersed pattern of distribution. • Space standards - Adopt Policy to require NDSS • Strengthen Local Plan Housing policy to improve conditions and reduce impacts within PRS • Adopt new housing mix policies, affordable housing policies including new s106 Policies, spatial strategy policy – • Ongoing pursuit of unauthorised developments and breaches of planning control to safeguard residential amenity and improve quality of stock • Ongoing application of development management policies to improve design and quality of development where we have planning control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers of planning applications for conversion to HMOs received in A4D areas • % of appeals dismissed in A4D areas <p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing delivery • Increased council tax and New Homes Bonus • Improved affordability • Improved design and amenity conditions <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing reporting of delivery to CLG • Annual Housing Delivery test outcome • Affordable Housing S106 delivery 	<p>Indicative timeline:</p> <p>Publish consultation material - winter 2021, Confirm- summer 2022, Plan adoption - 2022/23.</p>
Would require additional resource:			
O1.7 & O1.8	<p>Operations Mandarin & EPC</p> <p><i>Lead Area: Community Safety & Protection</i></p> <p><i>Operation Mandarin</i></p> <p>Operation Mandarin is initially a task and finish exercise which has the aim of identifying unlicensed HMOs and then, by working with landlords, ensuring that licenses are explored and taken up. That said there will also be an on-going commitment to continue to analyse data and respond to intelligence about unlicensed HMOs after the operation is complete.</p> <p>This is currently resourced using existing resources within Community Safety establishment (EH Support Officer).</p> <p><u>Stage 1:</u> Project development using the BRE Conditions Report October-November 2020. Please note an Enforcement Officer was planned and recruited (is in post) to deliver this work and is funded by the mandatory licensing scheme.</p>	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated officer will allow focus on operations. • Better internal and external links are established and maintained. • Ensure that cross-service issues are identified and dealt with via partnership input. • better housing standards • safer homes • increased mandatory HMO licensing • improved energy efficiency • contribution to the council's Climate Emergency Response <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased numbers of licensed HMOs (source: Analysis of service data) 	<p>Indicative costs: Costs relating to this initiative will involve the recruitment of a Senior Environmental Health Officer (SEHO), whose role will be to co-ordinate Operations such as Operation EPC, Operation Mandarin, and the Compliant Landlord Taskforce.</p> <p>Operation Mandarin is currently underway but the SEHO would be required in order ensure meaningful continuation rather than task and finish. The role will also then allow for undertaking Operation EPC, identifying and operating new operations, as well as supporting various elements of the Team Manager's work.</p>

	<p><u>Stage 2:</u> In December 2020 printed postcards were sent to the occupiers of the identified properties and letters sent addressed to the 'legal owners' of those properties.</p> <p><u>(Current) Stage 3:</u> Based on responses received to the postcards and letters more targeted action is being undertaken in streets where there are already licensed properties (indicating the size and layout of property, allows for 5+ tenants) and local intelligence indicates the likelihood of licensable HMOs.</p> <p><u>Stage 4:</u> Enforcement Action: - If properties are found to be unlicensed, despite landlords/ owners being advised of licensing requirements, enforcement action can be taken. The enforcement options available are prosecution or issuing a Civil Penalty.</p> <p><i>Operation EPC - pro-actively ensure that properties are meeting the energy efficiency standards</i></p> <p>An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is issued when a property has been inspected and assessed for energy efficiency. Properties are given a rating from A (the most efficient) to G (the most inefficient). Current changes in legislation now requires that all new tenancies require an EPC of E or better from July 2020 and all tenancies from April 2021. It is our intension to rollout Operation EPC which will target the lowest rated (F and G) properties. Landlords will be required to make necessary energy efficiency improvements (or obtain an exemption). Where landlords fail to make the required changes, enforcement action will be taken.</p> <p>Data provided by BRE suggests there are approximately 1200 properties with an EPC of G and F in the Private Rented Sector. Enforcement of legislation that requires landlords to provide tenants with an EPC for the property is usually done by Trading Standards as it falls under their consumer protection function.</p> <p>A property in the PRS with an EPC of F or G is almost certainly going to score highly for Excess Cold in an HHSRS assessment and PSH would therefore take action with the landlord to reduce the hazard. As a matter of course, officers check the EPC register when dealing with a property brought to our attention, so some will be picked up as part of our routine work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in repeat complaints regarding rogue landlords across the Council (source: Analysis of service data) 	<p>The annual cost of £53k can be absorbed within existing staffing budgets.</p> <p>Indicative timeline: Mandarin – Ongoing, EPC - Ongoing</p>
O1.9	<p>Implementation of a Licensing Scheme <i>Lead Area: Community Safety & Protection</i></p> <p>There should be a substantial programme of Landlord engagement in considering this option generally, but also to avoid reduced engagement from the sector. At this time Landlords within the Private rented sector are particularly feeling fiscal pressure as an impact of COVID-19 which has prevented many tenants from meeting rent payments the Closure of the Courts preventing Landlords from taking timely action to remedy this.</p> <p>The adoption of a Licensing Scheme has been considered in-line with the Council's Manifesto commitment. Its purpose is to enable the Council to impose alternative licensing conditions and implement an intervention programme that targets existing or emerging problems associated with concentrations of privately rented accommodation.</p>	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving housing standards across the sector Improving support available for private sector landlords Improving support available for private sector tenants Improving protection of tenants' and residents' rights Ensuring that cross-service issues are identified and dealt with via partnership input. 	<p>Indicative costs: Costs relating to this initiative will be highly dependent on options identified and agreed in relation to an additional and/ or selective licensing scheme for the city. As such a detailed report with costing will be produced as part of the scoping and option identification stage.</p> <p>Indicative timeline: Intended go-live, November 2022</p>

	<p>Licensing forms an important strand of the work planned, and in conjunction with a number of building blocks that are being put in place, can make a real difference to improving standards within the private rented sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health, safety and welfare of the community are protected • landlords maintain their property and correct any deficiencies that may exist • reduce anti-social behaviour • prevent neighbourhood blight and conditions that can result from lack of care • ensure that minimum housing standards are met • educate landlords and tenants of acceptable private rented standards <p>Measures:</p> <p>TBC</p>	<p>Next Step: Public consultation on the different licensing options.</p>
OBJECTIVE 2: Improving support available for private sector landlords			
Could be accommodated within existing resources:			
O2.1 & O2.2 48	<p>Centralised online guide to grants / incentives for landlords & other online resources <i>Lead Area: Joint (Community Safety & Protection / Homelessness Prevention & Support)</i></p> <p>Development work is taking place to offer tenants and landlords enhanced web-based information. Landlord information will cover a number of aspects such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful tools (e.g. link to on-line licence application form, grant information) • Reference and/or educational information about legal obligations (e.g. EPC, Right to Rent, deposit schemes, fire safety, legal eviction process) • Key messages that LCC want the local community to be aware of (e.g. landlord accreditation, licensing). <p>There are a number of funding opportunities including information on energy efficiency grants, available to landlords to make improvement to their properties. These need to be shared and 'advertised' to landlords either through known links such as the Leicester Landlord Forum and included on the City Council website</p> <p>This project requires to be completed as part of the development 'private rented sector' web pages with the input of staff with expertise in this area.</p>	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better educated landlords, armed and able to deliver better, safer service • Improved housing standards • Improved energy efficiency • Contribution to the Council's Climate Emergency Response • Safer homes <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website "hits" and other analytics • Reduction in repeat complaints regarding rogue landlords across the Council • TBC 	<p>Indicative costs: None.</p> <p>Indicative timeline: Q2/3 2021/2022</p> <p>Next step: Content draft.</p>
O2.3	<p>Leicester Landlord Forum <i>Lead Area: Homelessness Prevention & Support</i></p>	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlord engagement • Access to honest feedback • Access to sector leaders to networking and education 	<p>Indicative costs: No additional direct cost. Senior EH Officer would be used to support Community Safety contribution.</p>

	<p>Leicester's private landlord forum gives landlords the opportunity to meet, learn more about legislative changes, and better engage with LCC. It also allows LCC and key partners (e.g. DWP, Police) to convey key messages and maintain a link with local landlords for informal and formal consultation purposes. Historically forums have had low uptake, and varying feedback.</p> <p>The next forum will be badged as a 'relaunch' with the following key differences, based on feedback received previously:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landlords will be consulted on the agenda and items of very low interest will be removed Dedicated time will be included on the agenda after each item to allow generous time for questions and answers. A dedicated agenda item will be added for LCC to field landlord-submitted questions 		<p>Indicative timeline: Q1/2 2021/2022</p> <p>Next step: Set date and complete comms for submission of questions and feedback on proposed agenda.</p>
O2.4	<p>Call Before You Serve</p> <p><i>Lead Area: Homelessness Prevention & Support</i></p> <p>'Call Before You Serve' encourages landlords, who are experiencing issues with their tenancies / tenants to contact services as early as possible, before they serve the legal notice to end the tenancy. The officer then investigates what measures can be introduced to re-stabilize that tenancy and prevent the notice from being served or in some cases to rescind the notice.</p> <p>Homelessness Prevention & Support already do significant homelessness prevention work, but the key differences with a 'Call Before You Serve' model are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Shifting from a total reliance on tenants alerting us to threats of homelessness, some of whom present to the service extremely late when problems have become unnecessarily large, and are more difficult/costly to resolve. In section 3 it was stated how important timely notification is to the action we can take to prevent homelessness. Landlords are more likely to seek timely assistance if they know it is available, due to a desire to minimise lost income. Sustained marketing and comms to ensure point 1 is maximised. <p>As such, 'Call Before You Serve' models can provide more-upstream intervention by resolving problems between tenant and landlord without needing to end the tenancy thus increasing prevention of homelessness and further avoiding the costs associated with case management and temporary accommodation. In addition to this, a tenancy saved is one less to procure moving forward, meaning that the limited housing solutions available to homelessness services can be re-directed to others in need.</p> <p>'Call Before You Serve' models have a proven track record in areas such as Derbyshire, where it is operated by DASH under the banner 'Call B4 You Serve' or CB4YS. The service provides local housing authorities with the opportunity of preventing homelessness in advance of the statutory 56-day 'prevention-duty' time period.</p>	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved homelessness prevention rates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost avoidance on interim accommodation and bed & breakfast. Avoid the social, economic and health impacts of losing your home or becoming homeless. Improved positive outcomes on H-CLIC Statutory return, and the reputational benefits of that Increased networking among landlords with property portfolios ready made to work with tenants on housing benefit, therefore increasing PRS supply Strengthening the PRS offer in relation to positive tenancy sustainment outcomes will help to relieve the pressures on the Housing Register. <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rates of successful prevention of homelessness for cases originating within the private sector (increase) (source: Analysis of HCLIC case-level data). Rates of homelessness for cases originating within the private sector (decrease) 	<p>Indicative costs: Costs covered by re-purposing of the Homelessness Prevention Grant</p> <p>Indicative timeline: Q1 2022/2023</p> <p>Next step: Organisational changes to repurpose resources, including recruitment to additional posts.</p>

	<p>There would be two ways for LCC to introduce this model:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Link into the DASH scheme2. Design and implement our own scheme <p>Cost estimates are based on the first option.</p>	<p>(source: Analysis of HCLIC case-level data).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rates of temporary accommodation usage for cases originating within the private sector (decrease) (source: Analysis of HCLIC case-level data).																			
OBJECTIVE 3: Improving support available for private sector tenants																					
Could be accommodated within existing resources:																					
O3.1	<p>Online tenant resources</p> <p><i>Lead Area: Joint (Community Safety & Protection / Homelessness Prevention & Support)</i></p> <p>Development work is taking place to offer tenants and landlords enhanced web-based information. Tenant information will cover a number of aspects such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Useful tools (e.g. template letters for reporting disrepair)• Signposting/routing into key services (e.g. link to MyHOME for housing advice / homelessness assistance)• Educational material (e.g. preventing damp and mould, advice on vermin, preventing infestation)• Key messages that LCC want the local renting community to be aware of.	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Empowered tenants leading to;<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ better housing standards○ safer homes <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Website “hits” and other analytics• Reduction in repeat complaints regarding rogue landlords across the Council <p>TBC</p>	<p>Indicative costs: None</p> <p>Indicative timeline: Q2/3 2021/2022</p> <p>Next step: Content draft.</p>																		
O3.2	<p>Specialist Housing Advice and Homelessness Support team</p> <p><i>Lead Area: Homelessness Prevention & Support</i></p> <p>This proposal recommends a re-structure of the current ‘Housing Options’ team within the homelessness, prevention & support service in order to create a specialised private rented sector housing advice & homelessness prevention team. This would be achieved by both the realignment of existing resources from the generic homelessness prevention team, and a growth bid in order to deliver new objectives and achieve meaningful output.</p> <p>This team would also be responsible for the casework element of O2.4 (Call Before You Serve) and would be the team responsible for the additional legal support and advocacy described within O4.2.</p> <p>Why is this needed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To respond to demand - Private rented evictions constituted 24% of all threats of homelessness in Leicester in 2019/2020 and along with family exclusions is a chief driver of homelessness within the city.• To do more – both in quantity, and in offering improved service.	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved homelessness prevention rates<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Cost avoidance on interim accommodation and bed & breakfast.○ Avoid the social, economic and health impacts of losing your home or becoming homeless.○ Improved positive outcomes on H-CLIC Statutory return, and the reputational benefits of that• Increased networking among landlords with property portfolios ready made to work with tenants on housing benefit, therefore increasing PRS supply• Better landlord compliance with regard to the Protection from Eviction Act 1977, resulting in more quiet enjoyment of property and lowered unlawful eviction rates.	<p>Indicative costs: Costs covered by re-purposing of the Homelessness Prevention Grant</p> <table><tr><th>Set-up</th><th>One-off</th></tr><tr><td>CBYS Toolkit</td><td>£2,500</td></tr><tr><td>CBYS DASH consultancy</td><td>£2,000</td></tr><tr><td>CBYS DASH implementation support (for the rec. 6 months)</td><td>£10,000</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>£14,500</td></tr></table> <table><tr><th>Staffing</th><th>Annual</th></tr><tr><td>Private Sector Coordinator / Team Leader</td><td>£53,000</td></tr><tr><td>Service re-alignment – 5x Hless Prevention Officers</td><td>£0</td></tr><tr><td>Additional officer to manage uplifted contact</td><td>£47,500</td></tr></table>	Set-up	One-off	CBYS Toolkit	£2,500	CBYS DASH consultancy	£2,000	CBYS DASH implementation support (for the rec. 6 months)	£10,000	Total	£14,500	Staffing	Annual	Private Sector Coordinator / Team Leader	£53,000	Service re-alignment – 5x Hless Prevention Officers	£0	Additional officer to manage uplifted contact	£47,500
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A specialist team model can support a more standardised and efficient approach, holding a greater caseload of similar matters.

Once the specialist team is created, a short programme of refresher training and process reviews will be undertaken with an understanding that the team will 'step-up' its work with regard to;

- Creative prevention of homelessness within the sector, aided by the introduction of 'Call Before You Serve', and a package of financial and non-financial tools
- Stronger interventions in cases of breaches of the right to quiet enjoyment of the dwelling, and/or landlord harassment / illegal eviction⁵, including assistance with defence forms, and representation in Court. *Note: This proposal would also include a recommendation for interviews under caution to be conducted by the specialist team, as opposed to remaining with the Corporate Fraud team.*
- **To do it better** – specialism is not always better than generalism within teams, but in this case a specialist team would have a number of advantages due to the complex nature of the legal mechanisms, and the need to carefully coordinate tools available to ensure best use of financial assistance, for example.
- **To prepare for the future** - Potential changes are planned to legislation in order to repeal section 21⁶ and remove the right of landlords to seek possession of Assured Shorthold Tenancies via 'no fault evictions'. These changes are widely considered to be likely to be adopted, and if so, will change the sector significantly, and change the way local authorities have to work to prevent homelessness.

As it stands, we are aware that many landlords will serve section 21 notices for ease, even where fault exists. This means that repealing of section 21 is likely to lead to a large rise in landlords using section 8⁷ to evict tenants. This, in turn, will enable a defence to be presented – something that local authority housing teams can assist with if enabled.

Having a specialist team will ensure that LCC has the infrastructure, resources, and skills required to be more effective in navigating the Court system.

- Strengthening the PRS offer in relation to positive tenancy sustainment outcomes will help to relieve the pressures on the Housing Register.
- Prepares the service with an expert staff-base for future legal developments in the sector (which are likely to involve a move to move Section 8 notice - more complex evictions with proven grounds, and court process).

Measures:

- Rates of successful prevention of homelessness for cases originating within the private sector (increase) (source: Analysis of HCLIC case-level data).
- Rates of homelessness for cases originating within the private sector (decrease) (source: Analysis of HCLIC case-level data).
- Rates of temporary accommodation usage for cases originating within the private sector (decrease) (source: Analysis of HCLIC case-level data).

resulting from CBYS and additional casework hours resulting from enhanced casework	
2 additional support officers (Band 4) to manage uplifted contact resulting from CBYS	£59,500
Interventions	Against DHP Fund
Total	£160,000

Indicative timeline: Q1 2022/2023

Next step: Organisational changes to repurpose resources, including recruitment to additional posts.

⁵ Protection from Eviction Act 1977

⁶ Housing Act 1988, section 21(1) and (4) as amended by section 194 and paragraph 103 of Schedule 11 to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and section 98(2) and (3) of the Housing Act 1996

⁷ Housing Act 1988 section 8 as amended by section 151 of the Housing Act 1996, section 97 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, and section 41 of the Immigration Act 2016 and modified by section 81 of, and paragraph 6 of Schedule 29 to, the Coronavirus Act 2020.

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O3.3	<p>Extension of commissioned floating support for PRS tenants <i>Lead Area: Homelessness Prevention & Support</i></p> <p>The Housing Division commissions a 3rd sector organisation to provide floating support to those who meet the referral criteria and are not living in a social tenancy.</p> <p>Increasing the level of provision, and tethering this uplifted support to the specialist team described at O3.2 could provide significant benefits, using the hours for specific targeted intervention rather than generalised support, and would be a cost effective way to replace the need to create a Tenancy Relations Support Officer role within Housing Options.</p> <p>This initiative could be done in isolation, and see benefits, but it is understood that benefits will be greater if implemented along-side, and appended to, the specialist team referenced at O3.2.</p>	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Having ring-fenced capacity for referrals from the specialist team would further enhance work undertaken in this area in a very cost-effective way.• Better tenancy sustainment rates <p>Measures:</p> <p>See O3.2.</p>	<p>Indicative costs: A contract variation to extend the support offered by 10% capacity. Costs covered by re-purposing of the Homelessness Prevention Grant</p> <table><tr><td></td><td>Annual</td></tr><tr><td>Extend existing support by 10% capacity</td><td>£20,000</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>£20,000</td></tr></table> <p>Indicative timeline: Q2 2022/2023</p> <p>Next Step: Contract variation and supplier planning.</p>		Annual	Extend existing support by 10% capacity	£20,000	Total	£20,000
	Annual								
Extend existing support by 10% capacity	£20,000								
Total	£20,000								
OBJECTIVE 4: Improving protection of tenants' rights									
Could be accommodated within existing resources:									
O4.1	<p>Compliance Landlord Taskforce <i>Lead Area: Community Safety & Protection</i></p> <p>In response to increasing concerns about landlords with significant property portfolios letting poor quality housing, a Compliance Landlord Taskforce has been established. This work is based on the approach currently undertaken in relation to St Clements Court where all aspects in relation to the property(ies) will be considered e.g. adherences to Private Sector Housing standards, planning, fly tipping, Anti-Social Behaviour, criminality etc.</p> <p>The Taskforce, which is due to meet every 8 weeks, beginning Mid-February 2021 will draw officers from across the local authority (Building Control, Planning, Council Tax, Housing Options, Private Sector Housing) and from outside agencies such as Leicestershire Fire and Rescue, Police. Furthermore, on a need's basis, officers from organisations such as GLAA, Home Office/Border Control, HMRC, Modern Day Slavery will be invited to the meetings. The meetings will be a forum for the above agencies to meet and discuss and contribute to a joined-up intelligence-based approach to target particular landlords/ agencies. This multi-agency/corporate approach has been found to be effective previously for example as indicated with reference to St Clements Court but also in tackling abandoned buildings such as the former International Hotel and people with street lifestyles.</p> <p>This work is conducted as business as usual and will not require additional resources.</p>	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contributes to a joined-up intelligence-based approach to target particular landlords/ agencies• More enforcement leading to;<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ better housing standards○ safer homes○ increased mandatory HMO licensing• Proven effectiveness <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduction in repeat complaints regarding specific rogue landlords in the city.• Increase in enforcement action against specific known landlords	<p>Indicative costs: None.</p> <p>Indicative timeline: N/A - Ongoing</p>						
O4.2	<p>Improved legal support and advocacy (for tenant's rights, protection from eviction, landlord harassment, and breach of quiet enjoyment)</p>	<p>See O3.2.</p>	<p>See O3.2.</p>						

	<p><i>Lead Area: Homelessness Prevention & Support</i></p> <p>Objective delivered as part of O3.2.</p>		
OBJECTIVE 5: Improving access to market in order to resolve housing need			
Can be accommodated within existing resources:			
53	<p>O5.1 Improved Schemes, inc. HomeCome <i>Lead Area: Homelessness Prevention & Support</i></p> <p>Over the past 2 years a number of approaches have been piloted and tested, resulting in a recent piece of work to bring the best parts together and formalise them into a new coherent Landlord Incentive Scheme offer.</p> <p>The new offer consists of a single umbrella scheme, with Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze options, aimed to suite the varying needs and wishes of landlords. The schemes are attractive and highly flexible.</p> <p>A final draft of scheme content, and a comms / marketing plan, was presented to Lead Member on 1st March 2021.</p> <p>Future Step: Following evaluation of the successes of the new improved incentive scheme, there will be a longer-term objective to explore stepping up the scheme model into something closer to a social lettings agency (SLA). SLAs are not-for-profit lettings agents that support low-income or vulnerable tenants in the private rented sector (PRS). The key features of an SLA are that typically it does not itself own the properties it lets, it works with low-income or vulnerable people and it provides those people with more support than might otherwise be available to them commercially. In addition, an SLA should be largely financially self-sufficient without dependence on ongoing grant funding.</p> <p>In many ways, the way Housing Options operates its landlord incentive schemes could be considered a proto-SLA, but there are a number of ways that this could be formalised and enhanced.</p>	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to the private sector for housing solutions, leading to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ cost avoidance on interim accommodation and bed & breakfast. ○ Reduced pressure on the housing register <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of tenancies created through leasing or incentive schemes (increase) (source: Analysis of service data) • Rates of temporary accommodation usage for cases originating within the private sector (decrease) (source: Analysis of HCLIC case-level data). 	<p>Indicative costs: None.</p> <p>Indicative timeline: Q2 2021/2022</p> <p>Next Step: Continued marketing following the successful launch Event which took place on July 2nd 2021.</p>
Would require additional resource:			
	<p>O5.2 Explore the viability and potential benefits of extending the Leasing Schemes to include 1-bedroom accommodation <i>Lead Area: Housing Transformation</i></p> <p>LCC's part-owned partner-company HomeCome Ltd. offer a leasing solution within the private sector landlords, and are used in tandem with the other scheme-levels dependent on the landlord's requirements.</p>	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathway fluidity, quicker move-on times • Better rate of vacancies as a result of above • Lowered rate of nightly accommodation use as a result of above • Cost avoidance on TA, esp. non-budgeted as a result of above 	<p>Indicative costs: Costs are highly dependent on whether an agreement with HomeCome is struck or whether we undertake this in-house, and if an agreement is struck it is dependent on inclusion of the 27% uplift in contributions to LCC in order to net off costs.</p> <p>Work is underway to determine the above, and a separate report will be</p>

	<p>HomeCome do not currently take on leases for 1-bedroom, or shared accommodation. This leaves a gap. We are often approached by landlords who are keen to explore this, but often results in generalised signposting to the voluntary sector.</p> <p>Moving forward, in light of the demand on temporary accommodation and the single homeless move-on pathway, it will be important for us to increase the supply of the low-cost PRS alternative. Such an approach would give much needed fluidity to the single homeless pathway, and allow for better use of commissioned stock, and reduction in the use of expensive bed & breakfast or other nightly-paid accommodation.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> This scheme would be a highly complex consideration, with several risks and dependencies. Lessons should be collated from the LeicesterLease project to factor into any decisions made. If taken forward, such a scheme would need a housing-division-wide commitment as there are dependencies and impacts on a number of areas such as Housing Management, STAR, Repairs and Maintenance, Property Lettings, and Voids. A detailed piece of work would be required to determine viability and cost-benefit. Some risks could be mitigated by persuading HomeCome to extend their scope, rather than having a second scheme running in tandem.</p> <p><u>Assumptions made in order to arrive at indicative costings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost based a stock of 250 properties, based on an assumption that we would build toward this at a rate of 50 properties per year, over 5 years. • Cost would begin to level out at the 5-year mark due to lease-length and turnover. • 27% uplift in maintenance costs compared to family model to account for cohort (primarily singles with low to medium support need but complex housing backgrounds). • Potential poor property condition at the start of the lease agreement with non-standard fixtures and fittings needing replacement/repair during the period of the lease. • Further 3% uplift due to private rented sector responsibility to carry out an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) every 5 years • 50% uplift in management costs compared to family model to account for additional support required by cohort. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced pressure on Housing Register <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rates of temporary accommodation usage (source: Analysis of HCLIC case-level data) • Cost of temporary accommodation usage falling outside of budgeted lines (source: Analysis of financial data) • Average time accommodated within commissioned accommodation (source: Analysis of 'bed board' data) 	<p>submitted to provide a full cost-benefit analysis before a decision is sought on taking forward this workstream.</p> <p>Indicative timeline: TBC</p> <p>Next Step: Divisional cost-benefit analysis to inform a recommendation for decision report, and exploration into whether Next Steps Accommodation Programme grant funding could be used to cover the cost.</p>
OBJECTIVE 6: Joined-up services, intelligence & monitoring			
Could be accommodated within existing resources:			
O6.1	<p>Co-location of private sector teams <i>Lead Area: Joint (Community Safety & Protection / Homelessness Prevention & Support)</i></p> <p>Co-location of teams with different responsibilities, but overlapping objectives. A good example of this is Private Rented Sector Officers (Housing) and Environmental Health Officers where although the roles are very different, referral processes are in place, and similar work is undertaken in some instances (i.e. HHSRS).</p> <p>Dependency on corporate policy on office-working (New Ways of Working) post-COVID-19.</p>	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved working relationships • Better understanding • Improved processes 	<p>Indicative costs: None.</p> <p>Indicative timeline: Q1 2022/2023</p> <p>Next Step: Build co-location into COVID-19 recovery plans such that co-location is an active consideration if and when teams return to office-based environments.</p>

Would require additional resource:			
O6.2	<p>Improvements around intelligence collection, sharing <i>Lead Area: Housing Systems Development / Application Support (IT) / Planning (GIS)</i></p> <p>Work is currently underway to scope out different elements of this workstream particularly in terms of what is needed by each business area, the information held, and how that information is held (which is key in whether it can be identified and drawn out easily by automated reporting mechanisms).</p> <p>Housing Systems Development are currently leading this work, with the objective of presenting a series of options for consideration (e.g. joint commissioning of IT, a CDI 'golden record, UPRN Gazetteer Record, SharePoint documents).</p> <p>The purposes are two-fold, in order to assist with evidence-based decisions on strategic and planning objectives, and in order to assist with operational (day-to-day, case-by-case) functioning of services. Data therefore will pertain to property and people.</p> <p>The Council's GIS and Open Data web sites including data sets such as the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and Council/Business rates will provide vehicles reference, and share relevant data and information relating to many of the strands of this Strategy. Of particular importance will be the ability to map and align different data sets to improve evidence-based decision making and improve efficiency of intelligence management.</p> <p>One key element of this may be obtaining a regular housing stock condition / sector intel report. A housing stock condition report for the City has been produced by the BRE which identified there are 142,379 dwellings in Leicester, 43% are owner occupied, 35% private rented and 22% social rented. The report is very helpful in terms of informing an intelligence led approach to stock improvement in the private rented sector and is being utilised to inform programmes of work such as the compliance landlord taskforce described at O4.1. Compliance is the overall objective leading to improved standards.</p> <p>There is no urgent need to commission new data as the current report is active. As such, before this work was undertaken, consideration around the following points would be good use of time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full appraisal of data received to inform cost-benefit analysis; • Ability to produce similar data in-house; • How we think the data can be further used within the authority to improve cost-benefit profile; • Future needs, and frequency. 	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved processes • Joined up intelligence on tenants and landlords, to flag risks or patterns between services rather than holding information in silo • Better, more pro-active decisions • Improvements to evidenced based decision making 	<p>Indicative costs: Work is underway to identify the most appropriate route for undertaking this work, and whether capacity exists within current teams</p> <p>Indicative timeline: TBC</p> <p>Next Step: Housing Systems Development to complete business analysis and options appraisal.</p> <p>In addition to the above, which is focussed on what businesses hold on a persons or property level, a piece of work should also be undertaken to determine what high-level intelligence each business area collects and how this could be supplemented.</p>

APPENDIX 2 - HIGH LEVEL SEQUENCE BASED ON RECOMMENDED OPTION

The sequence shown below has dependencies, but outlines the ambition.

	2021/22				2022/23				2023/24				2024/25			
Workstream	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Compliance Landlord Taskforce																
Bringing Empty Homes back into use																
Operation Mandarin																
Planning to meet Housing need through the Local Plan process																
Operation EPC - energy efficiency standards																
Landlord Accreditation Scheme																
Increase the take-up of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)		Comms														
Improved Schemes, inc. HomeCome		Launch														
Leicester Landlord Forum																
Centralised online guide to grants and incentives for landlords		Publish														
Online landlord resources		Publish														
Online tenant resources		Publish														
Extend leasing scheme to include 1-bed accommodation		Scoping		Report				Dependent								
Improved mechanisms for public to report matters			Publish													
Co-location of private sector teams					Implement											
Call Before You Serve					Prep & Implmnt			Continue								
Specialist Housing Advice and Homelessness Support team					Prep & Implmnt			Continue								
Improved legal support and advocacy					Prep & Implmnt			Continue								
Extension of commissioned floating support for PRS tenants							Implement	Deliver								
Range of Planning-related Activities		Consultation			Conf	Adopt										
Regular in-depth sector analysis								Refresh								
Implementation of a Licensing Scheme		Consult and implement - see below				Go live										

Range of Planning-related Activities – Further Detail

The timeline for the Article 4 Areas review is as follows:

- NPT/PDCC/Scrutiny – August 2021
- Exec decision sign-off and publication – September 2021
- Consultation – Sept-October 2021
- End of Notice period – Sept 2022

The timeline for the Local Plan is as follows:

- Revision of draft LP following Reg 18 public consultation – Jul-Sept 2021
- CM sign-off – Nov 2021
- Scrutiny of submission plan – Jan 2022
- Public consultation on submission plan – Feb-April 2022
- Submission to Gov – Nov 2022
- Examination by Planning Inspector – March 2023
- Local Plan Adopted – Sept 2023

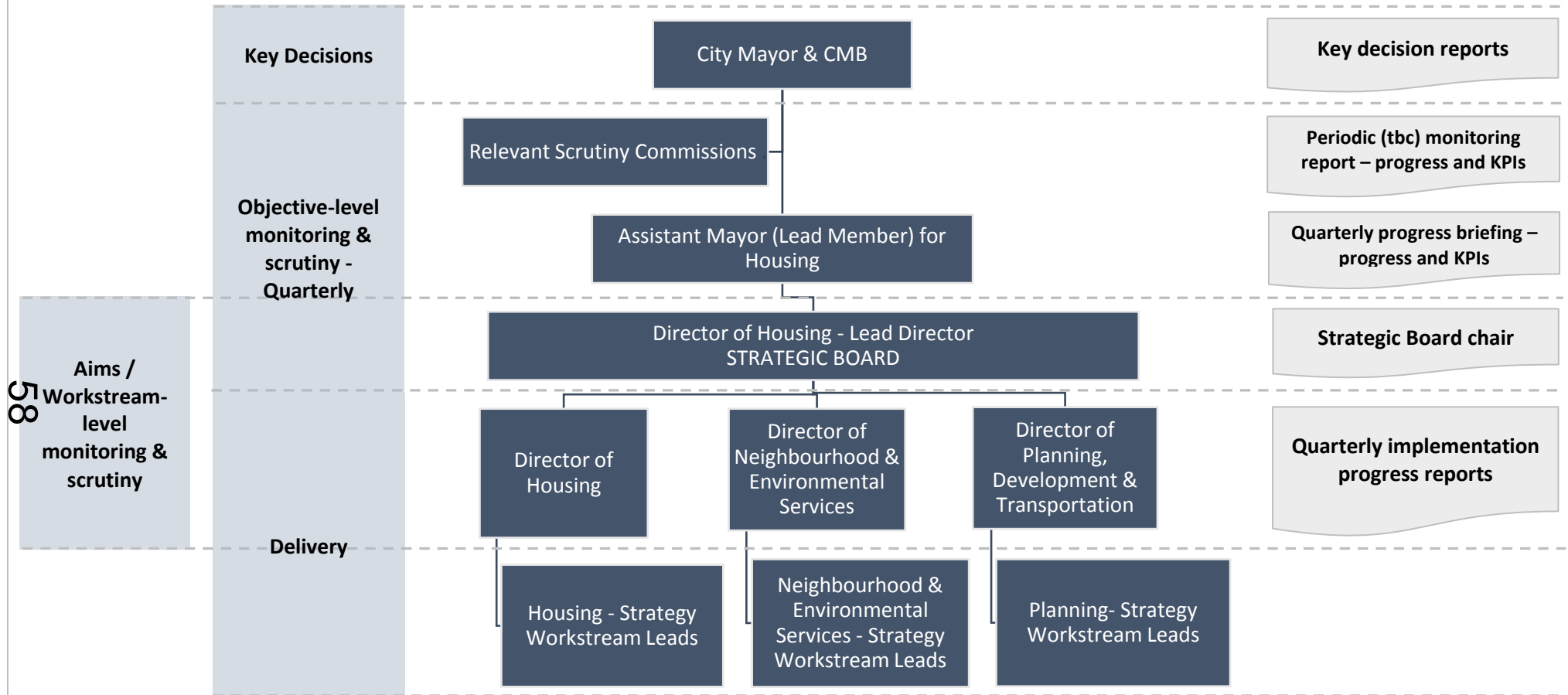
Implementation of a Licensing Scheme – Further Detail

On The indicative timeline is as follows:

- City Mayor Briefing – October 2021
- Agreement of consultation questions with lead member – by November 2021
- Agreement of approaches to consultation via communications plan with lead member by November 2021.
- Overview & Scrutiny Commission – 10th November 2021
- Launch of consultation (with press/ media coverage) – November 2021
- Attendance at key meetings and forums – between November 2021 and 9th January 2022.
- Establishment of focus groups – by 30th November 2021.
- Production of an interim report with key findings – by 13th March 2022
- Production of final report – by 17th April 2022, Brief lead member – 24th April 2022
- Presentation of full findings to City Mayor and the Executive - May 2022
- Scrutiny – June 2022, CMB – June 2022, Full-council – June 2022
- Decision Notice – June 2022, Standstill – June – August 2022
- Final CM Report – August 2022
- Recruitment of Team – August 2022
- Go-live – September/ October 2022

APPENDIX 3 - HIGH-LEVEL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE CHART

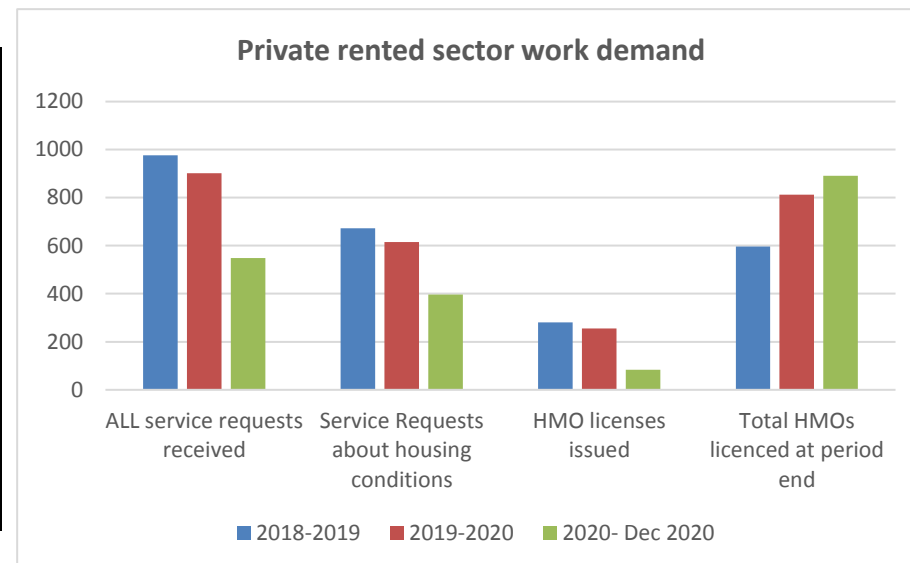
The chart below sets out the proposed governance structure.



APPENDIX 4 – Community Safety Service Information

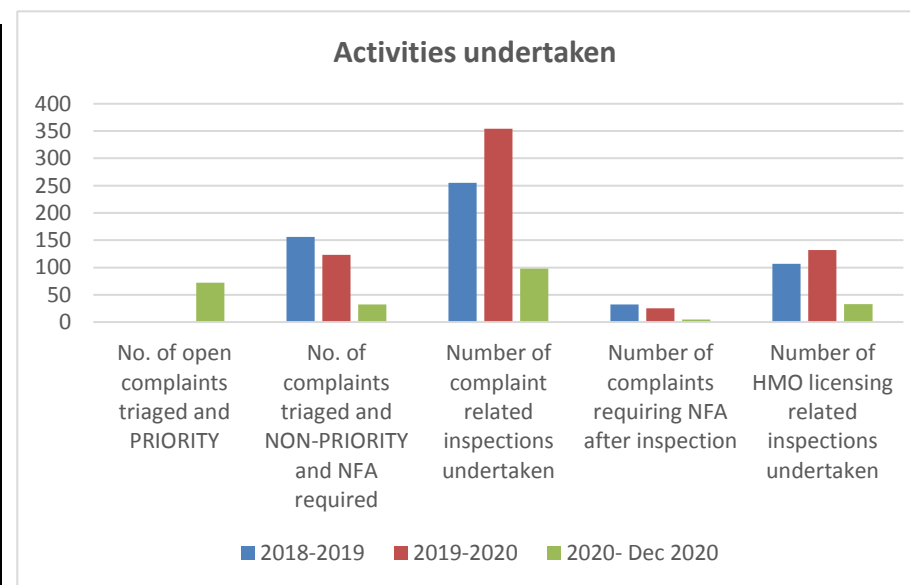
Private Rented Sector Work Demand

Financial Year	ALL service requests received	Service Requests about housing conditions	HMO licenses issued	Total HMOs licenced at period end
2018-2019	977	673	281	597
2019-2020	902	615	255	813
20/21 up to Dec2020	549	397	83	891



Activities Undertaken

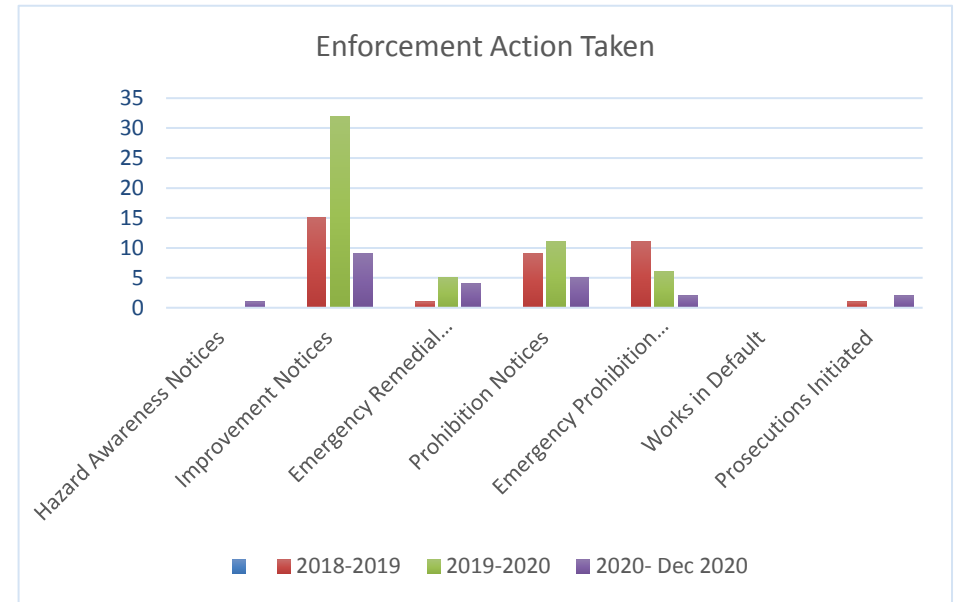
Financial Year	No. of open complaints triaged and PRIORITY	No. of complaints triaged and NON-PRIORITY and NFA required	Number of complaint related inspections undertaken	Number of complaints requiring NFA after inspection	Number of HMO licensing related inspections undertaken
2018-2019	Previous years cases c/f	156	255	32	107
2019-2020	Previous years cases c/f	123	354	25	132
20/21 up to Dec2020	72	32	98	5	33



Enforcement Actions Taken

Financial Year	Hazard Awareness Notices	Improvement Notices	Emergency Remedial Action	Prohibition Notices	Emergency Prohibition Order	Works in Default	Prosecutions Initiated
2018-2019	0	15	1	9	11	*	1
2019-2020	0	32	5	11	6	*	0
2020- Dec 2020	1	9	4	5	2	0	2

09 Not previously recorded on Uniform.



APPENDIX 4a – Key Findings and Monitorable Elements from BRE Report

5.1 Key findings

5.2 Number and type of dwelling within the city:

- There are 142,261 dwellings in Leicester of which 42% are owner occupied, 35% privately rented and 22% social rented.
- All Wards within Leicester have private rented housing stock in excess of the national average of 19%.
- There are an estimated 9,649 Houses in Multiple Occupation in Leicester.

5.3 Category 1 Hazards (HHSRS):

- 17% of privately rented properties (8,541 properties) have a category 1 hazard (s) (the Housing Health and Safety Rating System defines a category 1 hazard as an immediate risk to some ones health and safety and was introduced in Housing Act 2004 and applies to residential properties in England and Wales).
- HMOs have more fall hazards than other types of property

5.4 Energy efficient homes:

- 4.8% (2,378 properties) of Leicester's private rented dwellings are estimated to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating below band E.
- The average SimpleSAP rating (energy performance) of private rented stock is a score of 60 (out of 100 and this is the same as both England and the East Midlands)
- HMOs in Leicester have lower energy ratings compared to non-HMOs (average SimpleSAP score of 58 compared to 61)

5.5 Fuel Poverty (low income high costs definition):

- The highest concentrations of fuel poverty were found in Eyres Monsell, Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields and Saffron.

5.6 Low Income Households:

- 100% of private rented dwellings in Eyres Monsell are located in the 20% most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in England

APPENDIX 5 – Homelessness Service Information

Private rented sector housing assistance

Demand for statutory housing assistance from tenants within the private rented sector

2018/2019

Homeless Applications from households within the PRS 759

2019/2020

Homeless Applications from households within the PRS 740

Outcomes for those presenting with a threat of homelessness

2018/2019

Prevention - sustainment	44%
Prevention - new accommodation solution	26%
Other	13%
Became homeless	18%
Total	100%

2019/2020

Prevention - sustainment	47%
Prevention - new accommodation solution	29%
Other	13%
Became homeless	11%
Total	100%

Outcomes for those presenting already homelessness, or subsequent homelessness as a result of failed prevention

2018/2019

Accommodation solution from Relief Duty	50%
Accommodation solution from Main Duty	20%
Other	30%
Total	100%

2019/2020

Accommodation solution from Relief Duty	54%
Accommodation solution from Main Duty	11%
Other	35%
Total	100%

Overall Outcomes for those presenting for statutory housing assistance

2018/2019

Prevention - sustainment	35%
Prevention - new accommodation solution	21%
Accommodation solution from Relief or Main	24%
Other	20%
Total	100%

2019/2020

Prevention - sustainment	38%
Prevention - new accommodation solution	24%
Accommodation solution from Relief or Main	17%
Other	20%
Total	100%

Accommodation solutions via leasing and/or incentive schemes

Financial Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
2018-2019	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	170
2019-2020	35	52	53	61	201
2020-2021	23*	66	49	n/a	Forecasted 200

**Performance impacted by 1st pandemic lockdown*

Briefing Report

Discretionary Licensing (Selective and Additional Licensing) in the Private Rented Sector

Overview Select Committee: 10th November 2021

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin

Lead Strategic Director: Richard Sword

Lead Directors: Chris Burgin & John Leach

Useful information

■ Ward(s) affected: TBC

■ Report author: Jo Russell, Daxa Pancholi,

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■ Report version number: 1.0

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to: -

- 1.1 brief the Overview Select Committee on Licensing in the Private Rented Sector
- 1.2 share with the Overview Select Committee key considerations with respect to Leicester City Council's existing Mandatory Private Rented Sector Licensing scheme, and the plans to potentially introduce a Discretionary Licensing Scheme in the City (Additional Licensing and/or Selective Licensing).

2.0 Summary

- 2.1 This report provides background on the Private Rented Sector (PRS) in Leicester and the Council's ambition for there to be a strong PRS operating in the City that meets people's housing needs, alongside other sources of accommodation. In order to help achieve this, this report focuses on the part that Discretionary PRS Licensing (Additional and/or Selective Licensing) might play and discusses proposals for formal consultation with respect to Additional and/ or Selective Licensing options in the City.
- 2.2 Members of the Overview and Select Committee's views are sought on the proposals including suggested next steps.

3.0 Recommendation

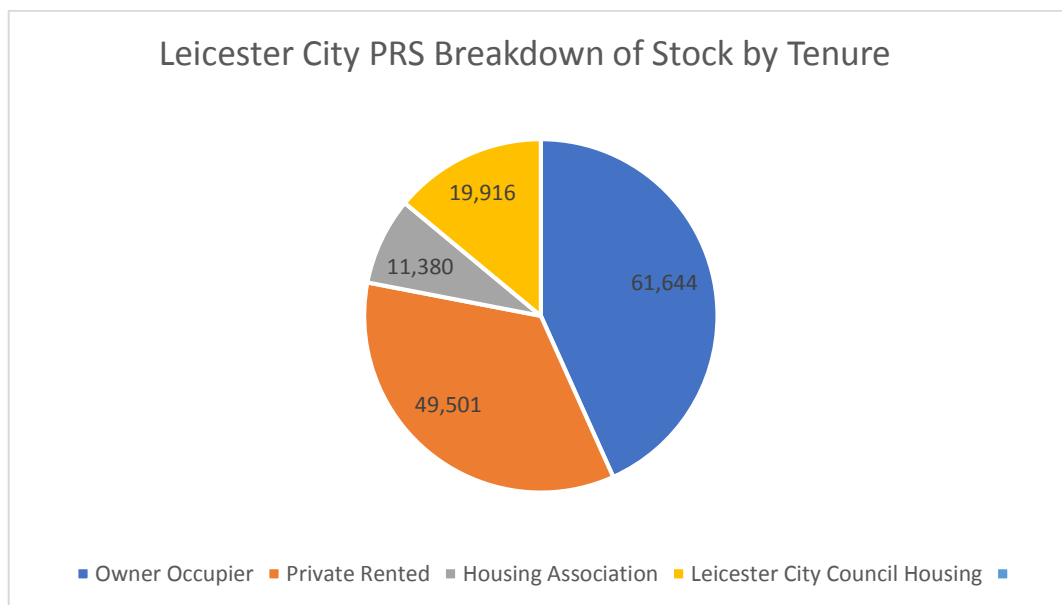
- 3.1 **The Overview and Select Committee is asked to note, comment and feedback on the report, including the proposed next steps in order to contribute to considerations regarding Discretionary Private Rented Sector Licensing (Additional and/or Selective Licensing) in Leicester.**

4.0 Background

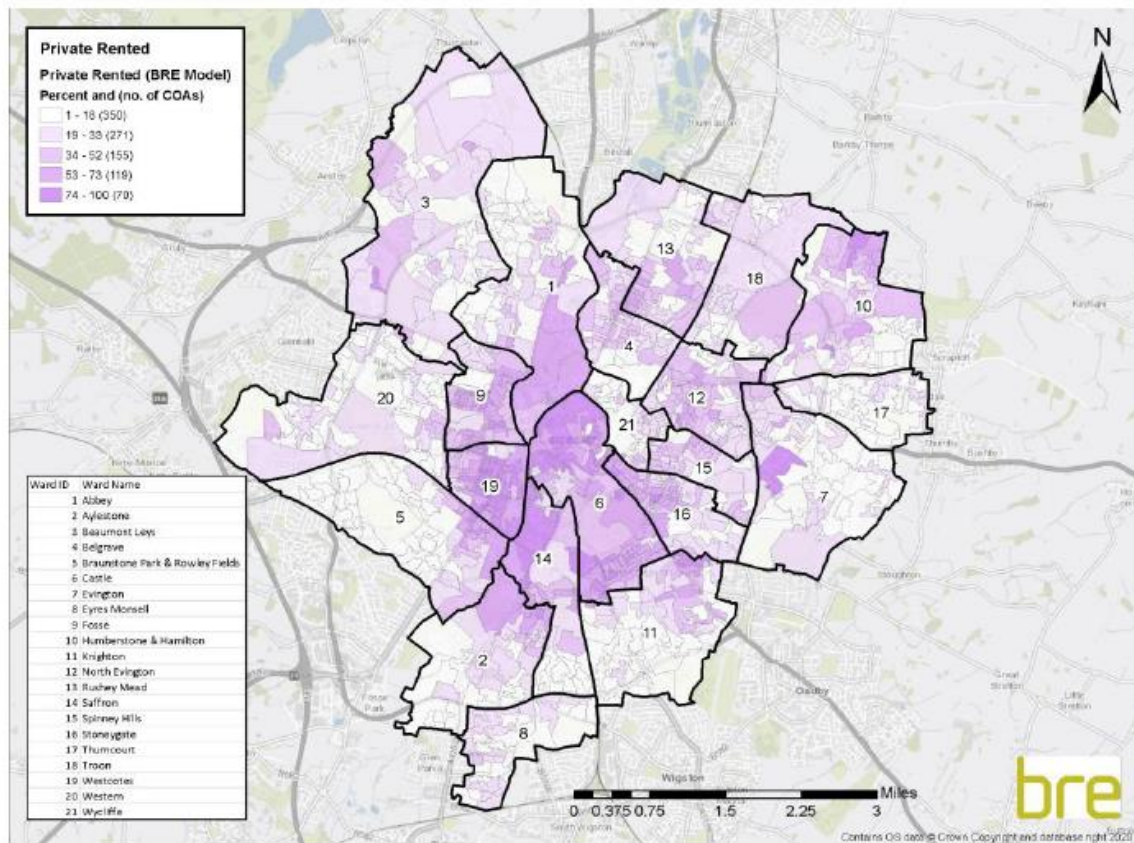
- 4.1 The City Council has an ambition to ensure the Private Rented Sector (PRS) in Leicester is fit for purpose and a key part of that is to ensure the Council raises housing standards in the sector.
- 4.2 The overall objective of Leicester's City Council's (LCC) Private Rented Sector Strategy (as set out in the report provided to the Overview Select Committee of 10th November 2021) is to have an holistic approach that ensures tenants and landlords are appropriately supported and engaged. The Strategy is designed to work with all aspects of the sector with a core focus on retaining and improving the Council's ability to protect tenants' safety and rights, and tackle rogue/poor landlords. Maximising this, whilst maintaining a balanced, fair, and proportionate approach, will ultimately lead to the raising of housing standards within the sector.
- 4.3 Driving up standards in the PRS seeks to protect the Council's most vulnerable residents against poor safety standards. It is also recognised that this work also contributes to safer communities and adds resilience in the local economy. The introduction of a Discretionary PRS Licencing scheme (Additional and/or Selective Licensing) forms a key part of the Council's broader PRS Strategy.
- 4.4 Leicester City has a diverse population of approximately 350,000 people and it is known that some of the Council's more vulnerable communities are at risk and can be unlikely to report property/accommodation that is unsafe, in poor condition and over-crowded. With the loss of council housing stock through Right to Buy it is also known that there are more families reliant on the PRS. In addition, Leicester hosts three hospitals and two major universities which bring significant additional demand for homes within the City.
- 4.5 In compliance with the Housing Act 2004 Leicester City Council currently delivers a scheme of Mandatory Licensing. This legislation requires Houses in Multiple Occupations (HMOs) properties **that have five or more** tenants that **share facilities** and are living together as two or more separate households to have a licence. The Housing Act 2004 was updated in October 2018 to remove a further requirement that stipulated not only the number of people/households but also that to be licenced the property must also have three or more stories.
- 4.6 Benchmarking of Leicester City Council's Mandatory Licensing Scheme shows the Council's performance to be broadly equivalent to a number of similar local authorities.
- 4.7 This report describes the two possible Discretionary PRS Licensing schemes - Additional Licensing and Selective Licensing. It also provides the key differences between these schemes including what aspects of the PRS they seek and are effective in addressing.

5.0 Detail

- 5.1 In order to scope out the extent to which Discretionary PRS Licensing might be utilised in the City to help improve housing standards, a Housing Conditions Report (HCR) was commissioned in 2019. Evidence from this report has recently been used to build a business case for consideration of the potential extension of an Article 4 Direction for Leicester which is proposed to go out to consultation between 18th November 2021 to 13th January 2022, further details of which will be made available on the Council's website.
- 5.2 The HCR demonstrates that the PRS makes up 35% of Leicester's housing stock in the City compared to the national average of 19%. A large portion of wards (19 out of 21) in Leicester have a percentage of Private Rented Sector dwellings greater than the national average.



- 5.3 The map below illustrates the density of PRS across Leicester.



5.4 The HCR for Leicester identified that property condition issues (levels of disrepair) are most prevalent in HMOs - of which there are modelled to be 9,649 in Leicester, with 6,188 situated within six Wards (Westcotes, Fosse and Saffron, Castle, Stoneygate and Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields) and that of these two (Westcotes and Fosse) have higher hazards, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and complaints reported. Looking at PRS stock generally Westcotes Ward has high levels of all hazards and excess cold and Fosse Ward has high levels of fall hazards and disrepair.

5.5 Please also see Appendix A which provides a short overview in relation to information on housing conditions in the Private Rented Sector in Leicester.

5.6 By combining the information within the HCR and looking specifically at HMOs, with other additional information held on Council systems covering issues such as fly tipping, pests, over-crowding, ASB, damp, fire safety, rubbish accumulation etc the wards of Westcotes, Fosse, Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields and Stoneygate stand out for greater attention, when considering candidates for Private Rented Sector housing improvement.

5.7 **Discretionary Private Rented Sector Licensing**

5.7.1 As described earlier there are two forms of Discretionary PRS Licensing Scheme, as set out below: -

(A) **Additional licensing**

5.7.2 Additional Licensing requires Houses in Multiple Occupations (HMOs) that have **three or more** unrelated tenants that **share facilities** such as kitchens and bathrooms, to have a licence. With a robust business case supporting the need, this can be applied either in a targeted way or city-wide without Secretary of State approval.

5.7.3 To justify the introduction of an Additional Licensing Scheme it needs to be demonstrated that a significant proportion of HMOs in the area are being managed sufficiently ineffectively as to give rise, or likely to give rise, to one or more particular problems for those either occupying the HMOs or for members of the public. This includes serious problems with poor property conditions, poor management, and ASB. This therefore also means that if there is a significant proportion of HMOs with high levels of compliance and low levels of complaints, an Additional Licensing Scheme would be hard to justify under these circumstances.

5.7.4 Section 56 of the Housing Act 2004 give the powers to licence all or some of the HMOs in the area that are not already subject to Mandatory Licensing and there is evidence of poor management.

5.7.5 In determining whether to progress an Additional Licensing Scheme a local authority must consider a number of things including whether there are any other courses of action available to them (of whatever nature) that might provide an effective method of dealing with the problem or problems in question. In making such a designation they must consider that it will significantly assist them to deal with the problem or problems.

5.7.6 (B) Selective Licensing Scheme

Selective Licensing gives local authorities the power to introduce, in a given area (see 5.7.7) licensing for all tenures in the PRS (exemptions include: holiday lets, business premises, student premises where the university is the landlord/manager and premises where the tenant is a family member)

5.7.7 To introduce a Selective Licensing Scheme without requiring Secretary of State approval, the area identified for Selective Licensing must only form 20% or less of the City's PRS and/or geographical area.

5.7.8 To justify the introduction of Selective Licensing, the Housing Act 2004 states that the Authority must not make a designation unless: -

- they have considered whether there are any other courses of action available to them that might provide an effective method of achieving the objectives that the designation is intended to achieve

and

- that making the designation will significantly assist them to achieve the objectives

5.7.9 The statutory grounds for designating an area for Selective Licensing are: -

- The area is, or is likely to become, an area of low housing demand:
- The area has a significant and persistent problem with ASB where the inaction of private landlords is a contributory factor;

OR

- The area has a high number of private rented properties in relation to total number of properties

AND

- It is believed the area is suffering from significant housing condition problems
- It has experienced a recent influx in migration, living in private rented accommodation, and there is a need to tackle poor management and overcrowding
- It suffers from a high level of deprivation which particularly affects the occupiers of private rented accommodation
- It suffers from a high level of crime affecting residents and businesses.

5.8 The obligations under both schemes confirm that the Council needs to demonstrate what else it is doing to improve housing standards in the City and for this reason the Council's PRS Strategy is considered vital.

5.9 Both schemes facilitate the proactive inspection of properties and seek appropriate certification of prescribed standards from the landlord. In the first instance this enables the local authority to check fundamental safety standards within a property. To be effective, adopted schemes need to operate within a licensing management regime that sits within a wider programme of enforcement and support for the sector.

5.10 Before granting a licence (under all licensing schemes), the authority must be satisfied that the: -

- proposed licence holder is a fit and proper person and is the most appropriate person to hold the licence
- proposed manager of the property (if different from the licence holder) is a fit and proper person
- proposed management arrangements are otherwise satisfactory

5.11 PRS Licensing Schemes cover prescribed conditions such as the production of a gas safety certificate, keeping electrical appliances in a safe condition etc and supplementary conditions such as a requirement for the landlord to take reasonable steps to prevent ASB by occupiers or visitors.

5.12 Licences can be granted on properties for a maximum of a five-year term.

5.13 It is important to note that licences may be revoked: -

- where there has been a serious breach or repeated breaches of a condition of the licence.
- the licence holder is no longer a fit and proper person.
- the property becomes structurally defective.

5.14 Where a property should be but has not been licensed, or a licence has been obtained but its conditions are breached, a range of sanctions may be available, such as a fine or civil penalty as an alternative to prosecution etc.

5.15 Whilst overtime you would expect both Discretionary PRS Licensing Schemes to contribute to the Council's broader strategic objectives as set out in the PRS Strategy, there are risks and benefits in relation to both which are described further in the table on the next page/s.

Benefits and Risks of Discretionary PRS Licensing Schemes (Additional and Selective Licensing)		
Scheme	Benefits	Risks
Both	Landlords details will be readily identifiable on a public register	Require robust business case and extensive formal consultation
	Add to LCC's powers to deal with poor standards in problematic areas of the city	Good landlords often feel that they are being unfairly penalised. This can undermine relationships with the sector and lead to negative press coverage
	Shown to increase standards of accommodation	Cost associated with the licensing fee may be passed onto tenants by an increase in rent (<i>although we know that this is tax deductible and therefore unnecessary</i>) This makes the sector less affordable for those on low income but also may put additional pressure on Council Discretionary Housing Payment schemes
	Increases desirability of living in the area	Potential to disenfranchise the sector at a time of existing fiscal pressure and when we need the market to be strong to provide housing solutions for vulnerable residents on the housing register
	Some evidence that it can lead to an increase in property values	Prohibitive cost of licensing: landlord may already be struggling with rent collection due to pandemic but also where the landlord has a multiple properties that require a licence
	Attracts tenants who are likely to be less transient and want to make the property their home	Need to ensure initial application and administrative process is not burdensome or acts as a barrier for vulnerable landlords
	Improved ability to identify and tackle poor and rogue landlords & managing agents	Whilst improvements in safety standards are quicker to realise it takes longer for wider community benefits such as a reduction in tenant turnover
	Seek to support existing enforcement legislation dealing with anti-social behaviour (including fly-tipping/ bins on streets/ noise/ general ASB)	Scale of schemes need to be appropriately resourced to enable proactive inspection
	Increased links and engagement with landlords - raises knowledge of good standards across the sector	Landlords who want to resist a scheme may aggravate the application process
	Licensing schemes provide councils with enhanced powers of entry in some circumstances not requiring notice (Although enforcement may be required through the courts)	In the first instance rouge/potentially less scrupulous landlords may not apply. Once the first tranche of licences are complete, the Local Authority will need to actively seek out remaining properties

	Increased confidence of tenants to report issues as reduces the fear of bad management practice including eviction	Some areas that have high concentrations of PRS property actually show a high level of compliance and low levels of complaints: evidence for the need for Discretionary Licensing in these areas becomes harder to demonstrate
	Licensed landlords find networking easier, enabling them to come together to influence and lobby on common issues	Require a three month stand still period
	Can design in discounts in the cost of the initial fee by using such mechanisms as accreditation schemes	
Additional [General]	Provides extra powers and protection for tenants living in the smaller HMO properties	Will not address problems in all tenures (in particular issues around singular family homes and homes that have been converted to studio flats)
	Can take a targeted approach or be introduced city-wide without Secretary of State approval	
Additional [City-Wide]	When applied city-wide this creates a level playing field for all landlords with smaller HMOs	
	Balances the housing market and prevents certain areas of the City being labelled as less desirable	
Selective	Whilst still requiring a robust business case, Secretary of State approval for schemes under 20% is not required	We would not be able to justify a city-wide scheme and therefore remaining under 20% seems appropriate. This inhibits an opportunity of providing equity across the City
	Captures the majority of tenure in the Private Rented Sector (exemptions include: holiday lets, business premises, student premises where the university is the landlord/ manager and premises where the tenant is a family member	By being focused in on certain areas it can create a perception of degeneracy

6.0 Key Learning from Professional Bodies and Other Local Authorities

Professional Bodies

- 6.1 To further inform the Council's considerations regarding PRS Discretionary Licensing Schemes information has been gathered from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government "Independent Review of the Use and Effectiveness of Selective Licensing" 2019. This report drew on the experience of a number of key national stakeholders including the Local Government Association, in depth interviews with 30 authorities, and a survey completed online by 273 local authorities (irrespective of whether or not they had a selective licensing designation in place.) The full review can be found at: [Title \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- 6.2 It is right to say that overall, the MHCLG Independent Review spoke very positively about what a Selective Licencing Scheme can achieve. However, key learning includes: -
- The process of evidence gathering and consultation prior to designation is rigorous and challenging
 - Study indicates that when implemented in isolation, the effectiveness of Selective Licencing is often limited
 - Largest cost of operating a scheme is staff
 - An effective policy for identifying unlicensed properties should be established at the planning stage
 - Robust financial modelling is required to get the fee level correct in the first instance and prevent the need for a change in the fee mid-scheme
- 6.3 Alongside this we have looked at the work of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and the Chartered Institute of Housing Report, "A Licence to Rent". The full report can be found at: [a-licence-to-rent.pdf \(cieh.org\)](https://www.cieh.org/a-licence-to-rent.pdf). Which made it clear for the 27 schemes considered Selective Licensing was not a 'quick win' in that it may take "several years before tangible outcomes are achieved". Nevertheless, many of the schemes they looked at were acknowledged to be delivering significant benefits.
- 6.4 To further inform the Council's considerations contact with, and review work on the experiences of individual local authorities has also taken place. In doing this insight into a number of authorities who have consulted on one or both Discretionary Licencing Schemes has been gleaned - many going on to introduce a scheme that responds to need in their local area. It is proposed that this networking and review work continues on an ongoing basis, and in doing so if Members have thoughts on any authorities or organisations that might be useful in contacting then their feedback would be welcomed.
- 6.5 Evidence that includes information on national trends on the introduction of Discretionary PRS Licensing Schemes continues to be sought to inform any future decision that the Council may make regarding Discretionary PRS

Licensing. A white paper spelling out the Government's plans for raising standards in the Private Rented Sector, including a potential national landlord register that would bring England into line with the rest of the UK, is expected by the winter. A national landlord register is something The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) first called for in 2019.

Other Local Authorities

- 6.6 In talking to and reviewing the individual experiences of other local authorities some in depth insight work has taken place regarding certain local authorities, in particular Stoke on Trent, Coventry, Liverpool, and Nottingham. Further information can be found in Appendix B of this report.
- 6.7 It is right to say that the vast majority of authorities remain in firm support of some type of local Discretionary PRS Licensing Scheme and will describe how it positively impacted on standards in the sector. However, the following was noted: -
- The need to ensure the business case is robust, tailored and evidenced to local need, and able to stand up to a potential judicial review
 - Good communication with the sector is essential and consultation must be robust
 - Those landlords who are in opposition to a scheme can find ways to aggravate the consultation and subsequent application process, this seems particularly evident when consulting on Selective Licencing
 - One authority needed to streamline their application process as it was too burdensome and proved to be a barrier for some landlords
 - As the application process was so burdensome, one authority only undertook compliance checks on a risk-based approach. The Authority needs to ensure a scheme is designed that is reasonable, deliverable and responds to the most acute need
 - A clear and coherent communication plan is needed to ensure that both landlords and tenants are aware of the scheme together with their rights and responsibilities. Along with the need to enable good communication with officers for guidance
 - Awareness raising campaigns and promotion is vital and must be ongoing
 - The need to ensure involve local accreditation organisations as any proposed discount for the fee will directly impact on their workload
 - Being able to identify the landlord does help improve overall management of properties, but enforcement action often relies heavily on existing legislation along with powers held by the Police

- It is a good idea to set up both a landlord forum and a separate managing agents forum to discuss proposals

7.0 Considering Specific Options for Discretionary PRS Licensing (Additional and/or Selective Licensing) in Leicester

A) Targeted Selective Licensing (Focussing on Westcotes and Fosse)

7.1 The HCR and associated evidence indicates that Westcotes and Fosse Ward has higher hazards, Anti-Social Behaviour and complaints reported than other wards.

7.2 It is apparent from the Council's research to date that evidence gathered does not sufficiently support a large or city-wide Selective Licensing Scheme but could warrant justification focusing on Westcotes and Fosse Ward (but not coterminous with the boundaries and created on the basis of the 20% or less criteria). This scheme would impact on up to approximately 2,000 privately rented dwellings that are located in the areas with the highest aggregate of issues of housing condition and ASB.

B) City-wide Additional Licensing Scheme

7.3 Section 5.4 in this report states, "The HCR for Leicester identified that property condition issues (levels of disrepair) are most prevalent in HMOs" as opposed to for example, single family homes. This is further supported by local data held on complaints which shows that using three years of data there were 1,640 complaints registered against the total 9,649 HMOs predicted to be in the City. This equates to 17% of HMOs attracting a complaint. Please see Appendix A. On that basis a city-wide Additional Licensing Scheme offers the opportunity/potential to drive up standards by focusing on HMOs who would be subject to licence conditions and the associated inspection/s that come with such a regime. This if sufficiently supported by evidence, would capture the modelled approximately 7,400 HMOs in the City that are in addition to those that relate to the Mandatory Licensing Scheme.

C) Targeted Additional Licensing Scheme (Focussing on Westcotes, Fosse, Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields, and Stoneygate)

7.4 As an alternative option to consider to a city-wide Additional Licensing Scheme, when considering which wards would most benefit the following four wards have been identified by looking at the concentration of HMOs, housing conditions and incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour.

- Westcotes
- Fosse
- Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields
- Stoneygate

7.5 This scheme (based on BRE modelled data) would require the Additional Licensing of a modelled 2,759 HMOs in these wards (in addition to those HMOs which are already captured under Mandatory Licensing).

8.0 Fees

8.1 Licensing fees are used to recoup the cost of administering PRS licensing schemes.

8.2 A search of the internet reveals fees levied vary across the country, including, the possibility of discounted rates. It is noted that there are a number in the region of £1,000 per 5-year licence.

8.3 Further work on what Leicester City Council might charge is in progress and would be further discussed as part of formal consultation.

9.0 Formal Consultation

9.1 During the “scoping” stages, in March 2019 initial consultation was undertaken by officers via public survey and attendance at key meetings with landlords to discuss the possibility of introducing a Discretionary PRS Licensing Scheme. This work was helpful in providing some early insight but was never intended to replace a formal consultation.

9.2 A formal public consultation for a minimum of ten weeks is required for both Selective and Additional Licensing.

9.3 A proposed timeline for a full and formal consultation and implementation are set out below. The proposal would be to consult on a city-wide Additional Licensing Scheme, a targeted Additional Licensing Scheme (focussing on Westcotes, Fosse, Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields, and Stoneygate) and a Selective Licensing Scheme under 20% and focusing on (but not coterminous with the boundaries of) Westcotes and Fosse Ward.

Action	Timeline
City Mayor Briefing	14 th October 2021
Scrutiny Report	10 th November 2021
Write draft consultation proposal for potential schemes based on the Housing Conditions Report and associated information	November 2021
Brief the Lead Member for Housing about consultation proposal and the potential schemes and proposed communications plan to obtain a decision on the final consultation and communication plan	November 2021
Finalise communication plan for the consultation	November 2021

Brief City Mayor on final draft proposal, consultation, and communications plan. Decision required to proceed to consultation.	November 2021
Start Consultation with Launch Event	November 2021
Attendance at key meetings and forums	November 2021 and 21 st February 2022.
Establishment of focus groups	November 2021
Brief City Mayor and Executive on the analysis of the consultation results	March – April 2022
Respond to consultees	March – April 2022
Brief City Mayor - final Officer report on scheme/revised scheme based on consultation responses. Decision Notice required to go to full Council.	May – June 2022
Full Council	May – June 2022 (Depending on date for Full Council).
3-month stand still period	June – August/Sept 2022
Recruit Staff	May/June 2022
Finalise fee	May/June 2022
Brief City Mayor - final report	September/Oct 2022
Go Live	November–December 2022

9.4 Consultation with landlords will be undertaken in the following way if licensing is approved: -

How we will seek to engage with these groups	Type of Landlords			
	Professional	Accidental*	Rogue	Other
Introductory forums	x	x	x	x
Training/education	x	x	x	x
Leicester Landlord Group	x	x		x
Mail shots and similar	x	x	x	x
Inspections	x	x	x	x
Enforcements			x	x
General campaigns	x	x		x
Targeted campaigns	x	x	x	x
Good news stories	x	x		x
Attending EMPO & similar	x	x		x

* Accidental landlord – For example through inheritance

10.0 Next Steps

10.1 The proposed next steps are: -

- a) To receive feedback from Overview Selective Committee on considerations relating to Discretionary PRS Licensing, and how that might be utilised in the City as part of the Council's Private Rented Sector Strategy, which seeks to improve housing standards in the Private Rented Sector in Leicester.
- b) To progress a formal consultation on Discretionary Licensing options as described in this report focussing on the potential for a city-wide Additional Licensing Scheme (that captures all HMOs, alongside those captured by Mandatory Licensing), consideration of an alternative Additional Licensing Scheme which focuses on Westcotes, Fosse, Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields and Stonegate, and/or a Selective Licensing Scheme focusing on Westcotes and Fosse Ward (capturing private rented properties in a defined area within these Wards (not coterminous with the ward boundaries), except for exempt properties).
- c) To receive feedback from Overview Select Committee with respect to their thoughts on the design of the formal consultation and other Members, including especially those whose Wards will be most impacted by any potential scheme.
- d) Finalise the consultation and an appropriate communications plan before launching at the end of November 2021.
- e) Review the responses received from the consultation and design if considered appropriate a Discretionary Licensing PRS Scheme or schemes for the City.
- f) Subject to the above finalize the business case ensuring appropriate scrutiny of the final proposals before progressing to a final decision at Full Council on any proposed Discretionary PRS Licensing Scheme or schemes for Leicester.

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

11.1 Financial implications

The Council is permitted to charge for Additional/Selective Licencing Schemes to cover the costs incurred. Provisional costing of the necessary team structures to carry out the work (alongside considerations of what other local authorities charge) indicate that there would be a charge in the region of £1,000 per 5-year licence. More detailed calculations will be undertaken in due course to support the actual charge that would be levied under the proposed schemes.

11.2 Legal implications

Mandatory Licensing of HMOs

From 1 October 2018, Mandatory Licensing extends to HMOs occupied by five or more persons who together do not form a single household. The HMO must also satisfy the “standard test”, the “converted building test”, or the “self-contained flat test” (save where it is a purpose-built flat situated in a block comprising three or more self-contained flats).

Additional Licensing

In circumstances where a local housing authority is considering licensing of HMOs within its district where Mandatory Licensing does not apply, the LHA must designate either its district or an area within the district as being subject to Additional Licensing (section 56(1), HA 2004). The intention behind the Additional Licensing is to enable the LHA to tackle specific problems in specific areas. There are limitations on this right, as the LHA cannot make an Additional Licensing Scheme unless a significant proportion of HMOs of the description within the scheme are being managed sufficiently ineffectively so that they are causing, or have the potential to cause, particular concerns for the occupiers of the HMOs or members of the public (including Anti-Social Behaviour). The 2010 MHCLG Guidance explains that a significant proportion does not mean the majority but means more than a small minority.

Selective Licensing

Part 3 of the Housing Act 2004 provides that an LHA may designate all or part of its district as an area to which Selective Licensing relates (section 80, HA 2004). This allows an LHA to require licensing of houses that are not HMOs. A Selective Licensing designation may be made:

- If the area is or is likely to become an area of low demand for housing, and the designation is likely to lead to improvements in the economic and social conditions of the area.
- If the area suffers from a significant and persistent problem caused by anti-social behaviour, attributable to occupiers of privately rented properties where some or all of the private sector landlords are failing to take action to combat the problem, and the designation is likely to lead to the reduction or elimination of the problems.
- If the area contains a high proportion of properties in the private rented sector, which are occupied under assured tenancies or licences to occupy, and one or more further conditions are satisfied (which relate to poor housing conditions, large amounts of inward migration or high levels of deprivation or crime).

As the report outlines, there are consultation requirements to be followed as part of a proposal to introduce Selective Licensing. The minimum consultation period is 10 weeks.

The consultation document should include, amongst other matters, information about:

- the proposed designation;
- the reasons for introducing the designation and why other alternative remedies are insufficient;
- how the designation will tackle the specific problems and the proposed outcome;
- the proposed fee structure and level of fees of licences under the scheme.

Jeremy Rainbow – Principal Lawyer (Litigation)

11.3 Equalities implications

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

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

This proposal looks to ensure conditions of accommodation are suitable regardless of protected characteristic, which should have the beneficial effect of better quality and well managed private rented housing.

The life chances of residents are closely linked to the quality of their neighbourhoods and their housing accommodation. The envisaged benefits of better-quality housing accommodation that is well managed and complies with all relevant standards will have a positive impact on people from across all protected characteristics.

Houses in Multiple Occupation are more likely to be occupied by young people under the age of 35 as shared accommodation is often the only type of affordable accommodation available to benefit reliant tenants as a result of housing benefit caps for young people. Many of these individuals rely on accommodation within the private rented sector as there is limited provision of social housing.

Those with disabilities are more likely to be negatively affected by poor housing conditions, therefore initiatives to ensure housing conditions are regulated will positively impact on disabled persons.

Vulnerable tenants, such as new arrivals in the country may be more likely to be exploited and affected by poor housing conditions. Those that live in deprived areas are statistically more likely to suffer from poor housing conditions, therefore improvements to housing will positively improve their health and wellbeing.

Moving forward, in order to demonstrate that the consideration of equalities impacts has been taken into account in the development of the proposals and as an integral part of the decision-making process, it is recommended that an Equalities Impact Assessment is undertaken. This should include findings from consultation and/or engagement with relevant groups/ individuals as appropriate, in order to fully understand the potential impacts. It is important that any consultation if undertaken is accessible.

Any recruitment should be carried in line with LCC's recruitment policies and procedures.

Surinder Singh, Equalities Officer, Ext 37 4148

11.4 Climate Emergency implications

Housing is responsible for 33% of carbon emissions in Leicester. Following the city council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019, and it's aim to achieve carbon neutrality, addressing housing emissions is a vital part of the council's work. The Council's housing condition report highlights some of these issues, in terms of the proportion of dwellings experiencing excess cold and fuel poverty and numbers of dwellings with lower EPC ratings.

As noted within this report, issues that could be addressed through PRS licensing measures include poor housing conditions, incorporating poor insulation, cold and letting of dwellings with EPC certificates below E. Taking action to require landlords to address these issues could lead to improvements in energy efficiency within dwellings, through improved insulation and other measures such as improved heating systems as relevant. Alongside improving comfort levels and reducing fuel poverty, this could deliver a positive climate emergency impact through reducing the corresponding carbon emissions from home heating, depending on the measures implemented.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

12. Is this a private report (If so, lease indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interests to dealt with publicly)

No

13. Appendices

- Appendix A – Information on Housing Conditions in the Private Rented Sector in Leicester
- Appendix B - Benchmarking Work on Selective and Additional Licensing

APPENDIX A

Overview in Relation to Information on Housing Conditions in the Private Rented Sector in Leicester

Leicester City Council have procured a Housing Condition Report to provide baseline data about our Housing stock so that we can evaluate if and/or where a Licensing scheme is required. This report has provided very detailed modelled data down to dwelling level.

Data has also been obtained from Council recording systems. A series of exercises have been carried out cross referencing the data in relation to both Additional and Selective Licensing which is detailed below.

Additional Licensing

The Council must consider that a significant proportion of HMOs in the areas are being managed sufficiently in-effectively as to give rise, or to be likely to give rise, to one or more particular problems either for those occupying the HMOs or for members of the public.

Selective Licensing

The Council must consider that an area is experiencing one or more of the following conditions for a Selective Licensing Designation to be made (Section 80 (7)): -

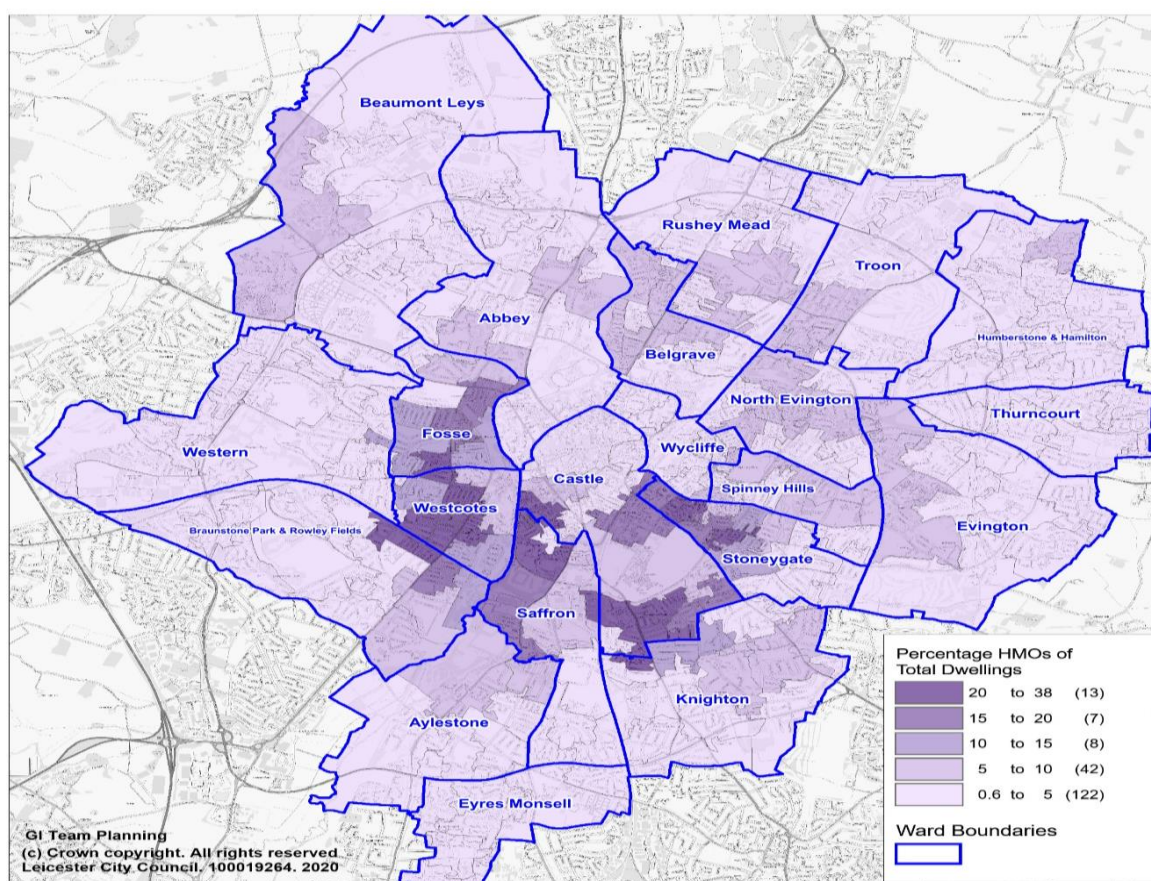
- Low housing demand (or is likely to become such an area)
- A significant and persistent problem caused by anti-social behaviour
- Poor property conditions
- High levels of migration
- High levels of deprivation
- High levels of crime
- A significant and persistent problem caused by anti-social behaviour

Performance of private rented sector in comparison with others

The housing condition report indicates that the private rented sector tends to perform less well than other sectors with the exception of fuel poverty and low income.

HMO density

The locations of the HMOs within the City is illustrated on the next page using the data from the Housing Condition Report:



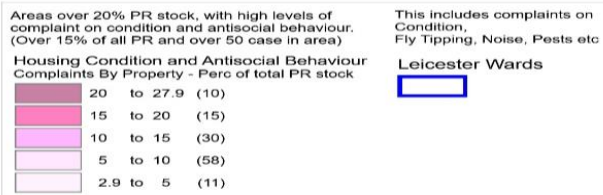
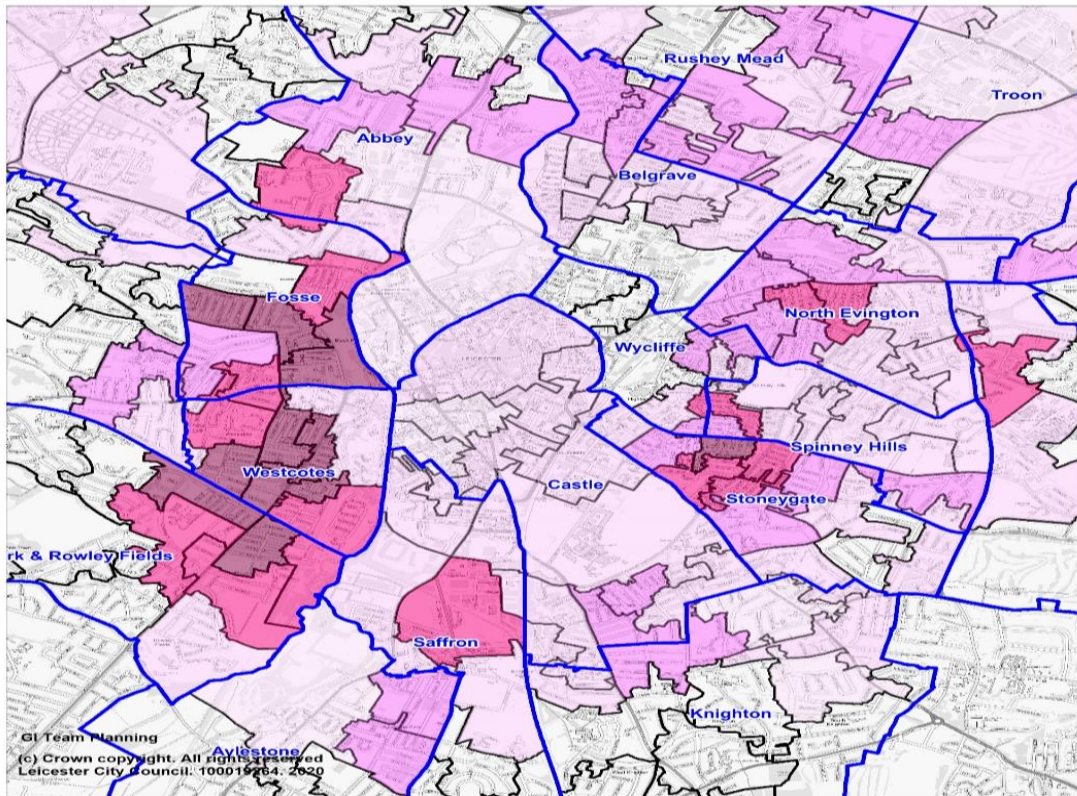
You will note that this map illustrates that there are high proportions of HMOs within the City, but that they are particularly concentrated in 6 Wards (where HMOs form over 20% of total housing stock). These Wards are, Westcotes, Fosse, Saffron, Castle, Stoneygate and Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields.

HMO & Private rented sector housing condition and ASB

Using data from the Council Uniform system looking at issues linked to Housing Condition and ASB both private rented sector and HMOs have notably larger number of complaints recorded against their tenure:

Tenure	All Housing Complaints		Noise		Housing Condition		Public Health		Fly Tipping	
Tenure	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number
All Stock	7.3%	10641	2.9%	4095	1.4%	2046	1.5%	2197	2.2%	3065
All Priv Rented	10.8%	5356	3.8%	1870	3.1%	1524	1.7%	837	3.6%	1771
HMOs – (BRE modelled data)	17.0%	1640	6.6%	639	4.3%	419	2.6%	247	6.3%	607
Priv Rented – Non HMOs	9.3%	3716	3.1%	1231	2.8%	1105	1.5%	590	2.9%	1164

Please note that the headers are general, and the issues included in this data include: Housing defects, overcrowding, fire safety, defective gas appliances, excess cold, damp, defective drains, pests, noise nuisance, rubbish accumulation and fly-tipping. The complaints have been plotted geographically across the City so that we have been able to identify the areas with the largest number of complaints. Please see the map below which illustrates the Wards with the highest level of issues are Westcotes, Fosse, Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields and Stoneygate.



APPENDIX B

Benchmarking Work on Selective and Additional Licensing

- 1.0 To further inform the Council's considerations regarding landlord licensing information has been gathered from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government "Independent Review of the Use and Effectiveness of Selective Licensing" 2019. This report drew on the experience of a number of key national stakeholders including the Local Government Association, in depth interviews with 30 authorities, and a survey completed online by 273 local authorities (irrespective of whether or not they had a selective licensing designation in place.) The full review can be found at: [Title \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk).
- 2.0 Alongside this the work of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and the Chartered Institute of Housing Report, in their report "A Licence to Rent" has also been considered. The full report can be found at: [a-licence-to-rent.pdf \(cieh.org\)](https://www.cieh.org.uk/a-licence-to-rent.pdf). Which made it clear for the 27 schemes considered Selective Licensing was not a 'quick win' in that it may take "several years before tangible outcomes are achieved". Nevertheless, many of the schemes they looked where acknowledged to be delivering significant benefits.
- 3.0 To further inform the Council's considerations contact with, and review work on, the experiences of individual local authorities has also taken place. Some examples are provided below for Members information.

(A) Stoke on Trent

- 3.1 Selective Licensing was first introduced in April 2014 in two areas of Stoke on Trent that had approximately 850 properties in the private rented sector, a small scheme that did not need Secretary of State approval. The schemes were to run for five years (until 2019).
- 3.2 In 2018 a second Selective Licensing Scheme was introduced in another two areas, these schemes covered another 1,400 properties in the Private Rented Sector.
- 3.3 Buoyed by the success of the 2014 and 2018 schemes and the improvements in the Private Rented Sector within the Selective Licensing areas, elected members were keen to extend Selective Licensing into more areas. This proposed increase in numbers of properties (3,000) and geographical area necessitated the need for Secretary of State approval.
- 3.4 The 2019 scheme was submitted to Secretary of State but was refused. It is understood that the reason for the refusal was "perceived problems" with the consultation process.
- 3.5 During the 2019 scheme consultation period there was a dedicated campaign by local landlords who were vehemently opposed to Selective Licensing.

Considerable lobbying of councillors took place, many of whom, themselves were opposed to any further licensing in the Private Rented Sector.

Key Learning

- Suggested schemes need to be evidenced based.
- Consultation requires to be robust.

(B) Coventry City Council

- 3.6 As Coventry City Council approached the change in mandatory licensing rules in October 2018 (described earlier in this report regarding the removal of the three or more-story rule) not unlike Leicester, they reported they had “around 500” mandatory HMO licences. They are currently reporting they have around (again not unlike Leicester) 1,000 HMO mandatory licences – supported by an enhanced/larger team following the introduction of additional licensing in the City. They report they have an estimated 2,400 licensable mandatory licences.
- 3.7 In early 2019 Coventry City Council consulted on proposals relating to both Additional and Selective Licensing. Following the consultation, the results were assessed, and it was determined: -
- To approve the scheme relating to the whole of the city being subject to Additional Licensing
 - Not to progress with Selective Licensing at this time
- 3.8 The consultation resulted in a number of issues being raised by both residents of HMOs and residents living alongside HMOs. There was strong support for the introduction of an Additional Licensing scheme.
- 3.9 Responses from the consultation found more people were in strong disagreement than those strongly supporting Selective Licensing. The vast majority of landlords are good and therefore believe Selective Licensing to be punitive. There was broad agreement that the majority of issues re standards and impact on community is caused by HMOs combined with the transient nature of tenant.
- 3.10 There was concern about how areas had been selected and in particular the use of 2011 Census data, and some ward councillors raised concern with some areas not being included when they considered there to be problems.
- 3.11 Mention was made of the Government’s July 2019 independent review of the use and effectiveness Selective Licensing Schemes that included recommendations to review the data sources used to specify the designated selective licensing areas.

- 3.12 Coventry City Council resolved to keep Selective Licensing under review. The non-HMO private rented housing will continue to be managed using existing enforcement powers.

Key learning

- Ensure that any scheme is tailored and evidenced to local need.

(C) Liverpool City Council

- 3.13 Liverpool introduced a five-year Selective Licensing in 2015 based on low housing demand, the scheme covered the entire City. The scheme was due to end 31st March 2020. An application to renew the scheme was submitted to the Secretary of State but it was not approved citing insufficient evidence of low demand to justify another citywide scheme.
- 3.14 Liverpool City Council are now pursuing a more targeted Selective Licensing Scheme.
- 3.15 Consultation took place for 12 weeks (3rd August to 26th October 2020), and they engaged with stakeholders affected by their new proposed schemes. The new schemes were more specific and targeted in areas of the City where there are acute housing problems and a high volume of Private Rented Sector and the scheme covered 75% of the City's rented sector.
- 3.16 The application was submitted in December 2020. A decision has not been announced yet.

Key learning

- Ensure there is robust evidence and business case to stand up to any challenge including a potentially costly Judicial Review.

(D) Nottingham City Council

- 3.17 On 18th July 2017 Nottingham City Council designated an area as that being under the Selective Licensing Scheme. Under section 82 of the Act, the Designation required the approval of the appropriate national authority before it could come into force. With that in mind, on the 8th February 2018 the Secretary of State for Housing, Local Government and Communities, in exercise of his powers under Section 82 of the Act 2004 confirmed the Designation and specified that it shall come into force on 1st August 2018. The Designation shall cease to have effect on the 31st July 2023.
- 3.18 Nottingham City Council conducted a mid-scheme review in April 2021. The review states that the Council is satisfied with how the scheme has developed. They also report that "The scheme outcomes are difficult to

measure currently as we are early on in the compliance activity.” However, they state, “when the scheme started a number of interventions and improvements took place that wouldn’t have taken place.”

3.19 Whilst noting the above the Council has reported that they also faced a number of challenges, for example: -

- “Despite the significant amount of awareness raising there is still a large number of landlords that have not applied for a licence and applications continue to be received at approximately 200 per month.”
- “We continue to identify a lack of awareness in neighbourhoods – amongst both landlords and tenants.”
- “The Council has continued to review and streamline its processes as new challenges were identified that were meaning landlords were not providing a full (duly made) application at first attempt. The Council continues to try to ensure landlords can make applications as efficiently as possible, to ensure the properties are within the regulatory framework of licensing. For example, at the start of the scheme due the requirement to check the application form against land registry the Council ‘rejected’, at one point 50% of applications, because the application didn’t match up with for example the land registry data.”
- “At the start of the scheme, using BRE modelling data it was suggested there could be up to 32,000 properties subject to licensing. The council based the fee on receiving 24,000 applications. Applications continue to be received and the Council is looking at where these applications are coming from.”
- “There is on-going investigation and enforcement work linked to continuing to identify as many properties as possible and bring them into the licensing regime.”
- “We continue to identify new properties and bring them into the licensing regime.”

Key learning – there are several pieces of key learning including: -

- Nottingham had two staff full time for two years in place to produce a robust business case in advance of consultation.
- Once in place the Licensing Team at Nottingham overall, has around 70 staff – managers, admin, analysts, project manager, licensing, and processing officers.
- The application process was very paper based and added an additional burden to the process.
- Because of the application process they were unable to begin compliance checks and enforcement work until year two of the scheme and a strategy to tackle rogue landlords was not in place until the third delivery year.
- They undertook a risk-based approach to inspections as undertaking all inspections in year one was unachievable.

- They recruited and trained the team during the three-month standstill period.
- Awareness raising and promotion of the scheme is vital.
- They had a higher level of temporary exemption requests and landlords signing up for DASH (Decent and Safe Homes) accreditation. This significantly impacted on DASH.
- The high take up of accreditation impacted the financial modelling and the fee had to be raised.
- It is recognised that Nottingham did have significant feedback from landlords, who often raised concerns through the local press. A clear and coherent communication plan is needed to ensure that both landlords and tenants are aware of the scheme together with their rights and responsibilities and it is important there is communication with officers on a regular basis.

Overview Select Committee

Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy Update

Overview Select Committee: 10th November 2021

Lead Member for Housing: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin

Lead Director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

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

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report provides a briefing to Members of the Overview Select Committee on progress of implementing Leicester's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-2023¹, at the request of Cllr Westley, Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Commission.
- 1.2. 6-monthly updates are provided to City Mayor Briefing and Housing Scrutiny Commission. A minute extract from the Housing Scrutiny Commission on 4th October 2021 is attached at Appendix A

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. Recommendation

- 3.1. Members of the Overview Select Committee are recommended to note the report and provide any comments to the Director of Housing and/or the Executive as it considers necessary.

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

4. Background

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

- 4.1. 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.
- 4.2. 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.
- 4.3. 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.
- 4.4. 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.
- 4.5. 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

- 4.6. 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'.
- 4.7. 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

- 4.8. 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

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)

large number of individuals, ranking 11th of 314 LAs as at January 2021 (most recent benchmarking data available).

- 4.9. 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 homelessness prevention to prevent people needing to enter temporary accommodation and moving those already in temporary accommodation on into settled accommodation.
- 4.10. 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.
- 4.11. 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.
- 4.12. 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.
- 4.13. 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.
- 4.14. The combined result of this is an overwhelmed Single Person & Childless Couple Homeless Pathway which the service continues to work hard to recover from.
- 4.15. 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

- 4.16. 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.
- 4.17. 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.

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

5. Progress on the Homelessness Strategy

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

- 5.1.1. 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

- 5.1.2. 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.
- 5.1.3. 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.
- 5.1.4. 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.
- 5.1.5. 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

- 5.1.6. 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%.
- 5.1.7. 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.
- 5.1.8. 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.

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

Relief / Recovery support

- 5.2.1. 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.
- 5.2.2. 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.
- 5.2.3. 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.
- 5.2.4. LCC compare well against the National average, achieving solutions for 56% of applicants since the new Act was introduced. The National average is 44%.

5.2.5. 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

5.2.6. 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.

5.2.7. 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

5.2.8. 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.

5.2.9. 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.

5.2.10. 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.

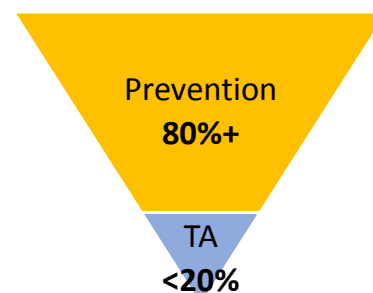
Temporary Accommodation (TA)

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

5.2.12. 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

5.2.13. 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.**



- 5.2.14. 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.
- 5.2.15. 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.
- 5.2.16. 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.
- 5.2.17. 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

- 5.2.18. 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.
- 5.2.19. 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.
- 5.2.20. 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

- 5.2.21. 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.
- 5.2.22. 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.
- 5.2.23. 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.
- 5.2.24. 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.
- 5.2.25. 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

- 5.2.26. 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

- 5.2.27. 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.
- 5.2.28. Strategy actions relating to younger persons will be aligned with the ongoing placement sufficiency work.
- 5.2.29. Pathways in place are now regularly monitored to ensure they continue to provide successful routes.

Housing-related Floating support

- 5.2.30. 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.
- 5.2.31. 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.
- 5.2.32. 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.
- 5.2.33. 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.
- 5.2.34. 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.

5.3. 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

- 5.3.1. 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).
- 5.3.2. Donation points across the city continue to raise money for One Roof Leicester, to support their work with homeless persons and rough sleepers.
- 5.3.3. 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.
- 5.3.4. 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.

5.3.5. Together, this is an important part of recovery and ending homelessness due to the intrinsic links between unemployment and homelessness.

5.3.6. In 4.11, 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.

5.3.7. 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.

5.3.8. 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.

5.3.9. 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.

5.3.10. 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.

Locality Matters

5.3.11. 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.

- 5.3.12. Narborough Road and Belgrave have had a noticeable impact, and to a lesser degree; Queens Road.
- 5.3.13. Special working groups have been set up in affected areas. LCC engage regularly with the Police, local Councillors, and local businesses.
- 5.3.14. This has resulted in the matters improving significantly, but they continue to be carefully managed to ensure that support and enforcement are appropriately balanced.
- 5.3.15. The service now continues to monitor on their daily outreach work, for emerging hot-spots and responds quickly when they are identified.

Funding Opportunities

- 5.3.16. 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	

- 5.3.17. 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.
- 5.3.18. 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.

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

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

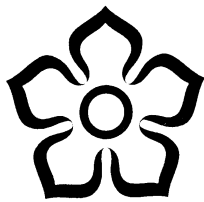
⁷ [Changing Futures: prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/programmes/changing-futures)

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

6. Summary of appendices: None.

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

8. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why? No – update only.



Leicester
City Council

MINUTE EXTRACT

Minutes of the Meeting of the HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

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

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Westley (Chair)
Councillor Chamund (Vice Chair)

Councillor Ali
Councillor Aqbany
Councillor Rahman

In Attendance:

Councillor Cutkelvin – Assistant City Mayor (Housing and Education)

* * * * *

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

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

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

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

39. HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY UPDATE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AGREED:

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

Scrutiny Annual Report 2019-21

Decision to be taken by:
Full Council

Decision to be taken on/Date of meeting:
Full Council – 25 November 2021
Overview Select Committee – 10 November 2021

Lead director/officer:
Miranda Cannon
Director – Delivery, Communications and Political
Governance

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Francis Connolly, Scrutiny Support Manager
- Author contact details: Francis.Connolly@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an overview of the Scrutiny Annual Report 2019-21.
- 1.2. The Chair of the Overview Select Committee has developed a summary of the activities undertaken during 2019/21 by all the scrutiny commissions. It covers the annual cycles of 2019/20 and 2020/21 and does not primarily cover work undertaken after May 2021.
- 1.3. The report is usually compiled on an annual basis, though in light of the implications of the coronavirus pandemic, no report was published to cover the 2019/20 municipal year, and it was agreed to instead produce a two-year document that included scrutiny of the pandemic to date. This report also highlights many other areas of work conducted by scrutiny and provides detail of many of the outcomes achieved.

2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1 Full Council is asked to note the report and endorse the work of scrutiny during 2019-2021.
- 2.2 The Overview Select Committee is asked to review the report and provide any comments/recommendations ahead of consideration by Full Council.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

- 3.1 The report details a summary of work and outcomes from scrutiny across OSC and the range of commissions during 2019-21.
- 3.2 Although it is a decision of Full Council to approve a scrutiny annual report, as it covers the work and operation of scrutiny, it is therefore appropriate that it is subject to consideration of the Overview Select Commission, and therefore each of the scrutiny commission chairs, ahead of its submission to Full Council.

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

- 4.1 The main report begins with an introduction by the chair of the Overview and Select Committee.
- 4.2 Given the unprecedented circumstances faced since March 2020, the report includes a section that sets out the work of scrutiny in relation to the pandemic.
- 4.3 The work of each Committee/Commission and the rest of their activities during the two years is summarised within the report.
- 4.4 The report provides a summary of many of the highlights of the scrutiny programme, though it does not serve as a definitive list of activity.
- 4.5 The report also includes a section that sets out how scrutiny seeks to develop beyond May 2021.

5. Detailed report

The full 'Scrutiny Annual Report 2019-21' is included on the subsequent pages.

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

6.1 Financial implications

There are no financial implications associated with the preparation of the Annual Scrutiny Report, beyond the use of existing resources.

(Colin Sharpe, Deputy Director of Finance)

6.2 Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report

(Kamal Adatia, City Barrister & Head of Standards)

6.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation 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 and sexual orientation.

There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report and equalities implications would have been considered for each of the areas mentioned when reports have been presented to the scrutiny commissions throughout the timeframe referred to in the report.

Kalvaran Sandhu, Equalities Manager

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no climate emergency implications arising from this report.

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

N/A

7. Background information and other papers:

8. Summary of appendices:

Scrutiny Annual Report 2019/21

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

No

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

No

Leicester City Council Scrutiny Report 2019-21

Message from the Chair of the Overview Select Committee, 2019-21

I have been delighted to serve as chair of the Overview Select Committee since May 2019 and I am very pleased to present a bi-annual report that reflects a wealth of work undertaken by chairs across our set of scrutiny commissions

It goes without saying that this period compares to no other. The pandemic has presented enormous challenges to individuals, families, communities, businesses and more generally, to the overall service delivery of local authorities. Here in Leicester, the pressures have been even more severe as a result of the periods of extended lockdown that we have all faced. The City and its people must reflect with great pride how it has coped during the most challenging of times and how we are now recovering from everything that we've endured.

Scrutiny during this period has focussed much of its energies on the impact and consequences of the pandemic. In doing so, we have sought to influence the response and recovery of our City for the good of the citizens that all elected members serve. The implications that the pandemic will have across society will not quickly disappear and scrutiny has and must continue to serve as a key vehicle for examining and evaluating the continued response to the pandemic.

As scrutiny chairs, along with our scrutiny commission members, my colleagues and I have been determined to continue to focus on and influence the every-day service delivery performed by the City Council. Both before and after the most critical times during the pandemic, scrutiny has completed a particularly impressive amount of work, not only in examining and influencing policy, but by engaging with partners, organisations and the public in considering the needs of the City. I offer my sincere thanks to all of those who have tirelessly contributed to the invaluable work that our scrutiny function performs.

As I look forward towards the end of 2021 and beyond, I'm fully aware of the challenges that our local authority and City, like so many others, will continue to face. Growing financial pressures and further uncertainty of the broader landscape as we recover from the pandemic are amongst the most significant of challenges. However, I am heartened by the great sense of passion and enthusiasm displayed towards scrutiny. I am also excited by our intentions to continue to examine critical local policy and to initiate work that will no doubt seek to offer improvements to the quality of lives of those in Leicester for many generations to come.

Councillor Ted Cassidy MBE, Chair of the Overview Select Committee

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Glossary

The following abbreviations are used throughout this report:

ASC: Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission

CYPS: Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission

EDTT: Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission

HCLS: Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Sport Scrutiny Commission

HSC: Housing Scrutiny Commission

HWB: Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Commission

NSCI: Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission

OSC: Overview Select Committee

Introduction

What is Scrutiny?

The Centre for Public Scrutiny defines scrutiny as “the activity by one elected or appointed organisation or office examining and monitoring all or part of the activity of a public sector body with the aim of improving the quality of public services. A public sector body is one that carries out public functions or spends public money. Scrutiny ensures that executives are held accountable for their decisions, that their decision-making process is clear and accessible to the public and that there are opportunities for the public and their representatives to influence and improve public policy.” As such, it is important that scrutiny is an essential part of ensuring that the council and its partners remain effective and accountable.

Leicester City Council’s Scrutiny Structure



As highlighted here, the council continued with the model of an Overview Select Committee supported by seven scrutiny commissions covering all facets of the council's business. Since May 2021, the City Council has also acquired responsibility for leading the support to the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Joint Health Scrutiny Committee; an arrangement that rotates on a bi-annual basis between Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council. A review of scrutiny functions also took place around this time and as a result, certain areas of responsibility were transferred between particular commissions, resulting in some minor title and terms of reference changes to several commissions.

Report Structure

This annual report differs from previously published versions given that it covers a two-year period. It also spans a time like no other, given that it covers the period that was, to date, most significantly affected by the coronavirus pandemic. From a practical sense and in respect of content, scrutiny has been very different. However, throughout this period, a significant amount of work has been undertaken through the form of reports to meetings, reviews, lodging call-ins, carrying out task and finish work as well as making recommendations from the various commissions to the Council's Executive and partner organisations. Such work naturally relates to the implications of the pandemic but has also been in connection with a vast range of many other significant matters.

In 2019, local and mayoral elections took place and as a result, City Mayor Sir Peter Soulsby was elected for a third term of office. He and his executive team have been working to a new set of priority commitments across a number of themes that replaced those to which previous versions of this report have had a focus on. This report again summarises scrutiny activity in respect of each of these themed areas, drawing on how scrutiny across the whole portfolio of commissions has issued challenge, support and influence. Scrutiny has however had a broader focus beyond those pledges of the City Mayor and Executive and the report draws upon this range of activity. Given the strength of work regarding the pandemic, this report begins with a section that sets out how scrutiny has examined and influenced the ongoing implications and response.

Scrutiny throughout 2019-21 has covered an enormous amount of ground and has widely influenced and offered recommendations in terms of future service delivery to improve the lives of the citizens of Leicester. The subsequent sections of the report summarise some of the highlights but do not serve as a definitive list of activity and achievements. Further comprehensive details of the work of all scrutiny commissions, including reports and full minutes can be found on the Council's website via the following link: <https://bit.ly/3o5clyL>

Scrutiny During the Pandemic

Although much of scrutiny is focussed on examining the operation and priorities of the City Council, it is fundamental that scrutiny is seen as responsive and that it examines key emerging issues that are often unforeseen and impact severely on service delivery and the wider landscape of the city. There is no greater example of this than responding to the circumstances faced as a result of the unprecedented coronavirus pandemic.

Scrutiny of the pandemic has been a feature of each scrutiny committee and commission since Spring 2020, and although this section sets out scrutiny's overall approach and impact, it also naturally relates to the thematic sections that follow and dovetails with much of the other work performed throughout this period.

From the outset of the pandemic, scrutiny has engaged directly with those who have led Leicester's response and been tasked to deal first-hand with the countless complex issues that have arisen. The City Mayor and Ivan Browne, Director of Public Health, have been called to attend each OSC meeting to outline the approaches to dealing with such issues. As the pandemic progressed, scrutiny has been quick to identify other key senior officers and partners, who have in turn contributed greatly in informing and responding to many associated issues.

Throughout the first year of the pandemic in particular, a large proportion of OSC's time was geared around this and members lodged a host of queries, comments and suggestions in response to the local position and the impact on local people and service delivery. In the early stages of the pandemic, OSC was quick to resolve that each scrutiny commission be tasked to scrutinise the response at a more focussed level in alignment with their respective portfolios. The main aim during this period was to monitor the progress of work in mitigating against the risks of the virus on the residents of the city. OSC and other commissions received regular updates on the latest data and the methods used across all our services to gain assurances that services were still able to be provided and could support the most vulnerable.

Some particular areas of scrutiny focus and challenge throughout this period are as follows:

- A condemnation by OSC and ASC in respect of the actions taken by Leicestershire County Care Ltd towards its staff during the early stages of the pandemic.
- Recommendations by ASC in terms of Public Health England's approach to those who were shielding.
- An exploration by ASC of the impact of the pandemic upon those who access day-care services.

- Ongoing monitoring by ASC of the vaccination roll-out within care homes and amongst care sector staff, and similarly, CYPS continually scrutinised the vaccination programme in respect of school staff.
- Further scrutiny by HWB in respect of the low-level of vaccination take-up amongst certain cohorts and geographical areas and recommendations to undertake a more targeted communication strategy.
- Monitoring by HCLS of fines issued to those in breach of pandemic guidelines.
- A call by HCLS to ensure that risk assessments be carried out prior to council facilities re-opening to ensure the safety of staff and the public.
- Recommendations by HCLS to ensure that additional safety measures were taken in the city's parks and open spaces.
- A request by HCLS to ask the Executive to recognise and remedy the particularly severe impact of the extended lockdown upon Sports Services, and the general impact of it upon the overall health and wellbeing of people.
- An involvement by HCLS in the marketing, communication and rebranding of activities relating to the culture, leisure and tourism sectors in the city in support of post pandemic recovery.
- A stance taken by NSCI for increased enforcement of those businesses not operating within covid guidelines.
- Close scrutiny by NSCI of the Council's approach in supporting communities in the absence of access to key community-based services such as libraries and community centres.
- Strong support by OSC in respect of the Council's approach in providing support to local businesses.
- Continual scrutiny by CYPS of the impact of the pandemic upon children's services and particularly upon schools.
- Extensive probing by CYPS regarding the approach and the handling of risk assessments, safeguarding issues and other incidents within schools.
- CYPS also undertook an analysis of the gap in learning as a result of the pandemic.
- A recommendation by CYPS for ward funding to assist with additional learning support.
- A strong view from CYPS to seek assurances that adequate support was being provided to school staff.
- A focus by EDTT on the economic and transport recovery plans.
- Consideration by EDTT of the temporary measures taken in respect of pavement widening and other highway-focussed initiatives.
- Scrutiny by HWB regarding the testing centre regime in the city
- Views expressed by HWB regarding the need for improved localised covid case data – in respect of ethnicity, workplaces and particularly with regard to care home cases.
- Probing by HWB regarding hospital admissions for those with long covid and a request for data regarding hospital re-admissions.

- An interest by HWB in terms of how Clinical Commissioning Groups were reaching those with immigration status issues as part of the vaccination programme.
- Strong support by HWB towards more work to identify the impact of the pandemic upon health inequalities amongst the local population.
- Regular reviewing and influence of the major recovery planning work by all scrutiny commissions.

It should also be pointed out that within its work, scrutiny has regularly paid thanks and appreciation for the considerable efforts of those who have led the local response to the pandemic.

The pandemic, and the issues that arise from it, will without doubt continue to be a prominent feature of scrutiny throughout 2021-22 and beyond. As pandemic implications will feature within the majority of mainstream council policy, it is anticipated that the format of its scrutiny may change. It is also anticipated that scrutiny work will become more focussed and may involve a number of service-based reviews and task and finish exercises to examine ongoing implications.

A Fair City

This first main theme focusses on work that relates to developing a local growing economy and ensuring that the economic needs of communities, families and individuals are adequately assessed and met.

During 2019-21, scrutiny closely examined several pieces of work around the provision of a fair economy in Leicester. Scrutiny commissions, led by OSC, have continued to monitor the financial situation the authority was facing and the uncertainty that the Council had around its future level of finance. OSC have maintained an interest in understanding the impact of council tax increases, particularly on vulnerable families. Such interest was also shared by NSCI and EDTT who sought more comprehensive datasets to better understand the overall extent of the impact.

OSC have remained committed to ensure that benefit payments are made available to those who qualify for them, both during and either side of the pandemic. The committee has championed the promotion of information relating to hardship funding and has particularly encouraged the use of this information by all elected members as part of their day-to-day work with constituents. OSC also sought a review of information on the Council's website regarding opportunities to apply for hardship support. Furthermore, OSC recommended the Executive consider deferring a decision on the proposal to repurpose the welfare reserve until a broad post-covid anti-poverty strategy was produced. OSC will be further examining the position of the Council's anti-poverty strategy later in 2021.

The interest in welfare support has not been limited to work by OSC. HSC and NCSI both examined the impact of the introduction of universal credit and raised a number of concerns and issued several recommendations.

OSC have received a number of reports in relation to income collection and showed particular interest in the procedures used to write-off parking and bus lane enforcement fines. OSC also probed the issue of companies using insolvency to avoid debt and sought detail on how this could be addressed.

The provision of social value in service delivery has become an emerging theme when scrutinising many of the most significant policy developments. In examining social value in procurement practices, both OSC and EDTT raised a number of points regarding contractual obligations and have continued to maintain their position on the imposition of a real living wage. A further example of scrutiny's interest in influencing this agenda is HSC's recommendation to include social value clauses in housing contracts which support training and employment at a local level.

EDTT have inspected issues of modern slavery and exploitation in the textile sector and have recommended several strands of support for staff, particularly in smaller workspaces.

Scrutiny has continued to exercise the use of service-based reviews and task and finish work when examining policy more closely or considering alternative means of provision. A scrutiny review on local level development was conducted prior to the start of the pandemic. The work yielded a number of recommendations that also fed into the proposals for the COVID Economic Recovery Plan, particularly in relation to greater investment into opportunities for young people. The review also strongly favoured the notion of inclusive growth as a means of reaching the most vulnerable members of society.

Secondly, over 2019/20 a scrutiny review into the viability of a community lottery for Leicester was carried out by NCSI with the findings resulting in a recommendation not to consider it. Both NCSI and OSC were of the view that a lottery would have a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable individuals, households and communities in Leicester and would not be consistent with the aims and objectives of the anti-poverty strategy. The report was fully supported by the Executive.

Scrutiny has also continued to exercise an ability to question the executive and particularly the City Mayor, with both EDTT and OSC including dedicated items to enable members to do so. Scrutiny commissions have examined the strategic commitments made by the City Mayor and Executive both in broad, overview terms and by also seeking to examine some pledges more closely. Further detail of some of this work can be found in subsequent sections of this document. In addition, OSC have maintained an interest in examining any revisions to guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local Authorities and continues to serve as the body for ensuring that scrutiny is serving in a meaningful and appropriate way.

Homes for All

This theme covers building and purchasing plans to increase the level of council housing in Leicester. It also captures the Council's work in preventing homelessness and for providing services for those that do lose their homes.

From the outset of 2019-20, HSC focussed on the significant number of housing-related strategic pledges. During this period, HSC also comprehensively examined policy in relation to the statutory services provided by the City Council's Housing division. In considering the Housing Revenue Account for 2021/22, HSC supported the suggested increase in rents of 1.5%. When examining budgets more corporately, OSC recommended to ensure that updates be provided in respect of anticipated pressures on the Housing General Fund, particularly in relation to temporary accommodation.

As a result of reviewing progress reports regarding outstanding rent arrears, HSC carried out a visit to the income collection team to establish a greater understanding of the work of the team. When reviewing the corporate capital programme for 2021-22, OSC also questioned the level of outstanding arrears and recommended that HSC continue to monitor the position.

HSC have been particularly effective in considering alternative methods of scrutiny when examining policy in greater depth and suggested the establishment of working parties to consider more closely both the overcrowding reduction strategy and voids performance. In addition, HSC recommended a number of all-member ward-based briefings relating to key housing initiatives. And similar to that described in other sections, HSC frequently advised that enhanced publicity of key housing services be communicated through the use of local libraries and neighbourhood centres.

When reviewing a proposal to transfer the responsibility of dealing with anti-social behaviour to the Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (CrASBU) service, HSC raised a number of concerns, and as a result, the proposal was amended to maintain a lead role with the Housing division. This work continues to be at the heart of HSC's agenda, with a task and finish exercise in conjunction with NCSI on the role of the new ASB team and its relationship with the Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (CrASBU) taking place throughout 2021-22.

HSC have held particular interest in reviewing who is entitled to social housing and have continued to receive regular updates in relation to housing allocation matters. An overwhelming ask of HSC has been for more to be done to increase the supply of affordable housing, which remains a key executive pledge. In particular, HSC recommended that work be undertaken to encourage more support in this field from

the private sector, and as a result, policy proposals are being drawn up for consideration by scrutiny in 2021-22.

When reviewing the Homelessness Strategy, members of the commission agreed to attend a street-count. HSC have and will continue to maintain an interest in the development of the MyHome app. Scrutiny of the pandemic has of course remained at the core of HSC's interests, and in particular, HSC examined the 'Everyone In' scheme, which proved to be extremely successful in assisting the homeless throughout the pandemic. HSC continue to monitor work to assist those that are still accessing the homelessness service. Moreover, in respect of homelessness, HSC have made several service improvement related recommendations, including increasing support measures for those staff who work with service users.

Since the Grenfell Tower tragedy of 2017, HSC have stringently examined accommodation safety standards, and in 2019, asked officers to review guidance around fire sprinkler systems in light of concerns voiced at a national level.

HSC also maintained oversight of council house building schemes and continue to monitor progress of the strategic priority to increase the overall supply in Leicester. Furthermore, ASC examined schemes to provide additional supported living and extra care units and made a number of recommendations in relation to the standard of accommodation units.

Connecting Leicester

In recent years, Leicester has seen national and international focus on the city and its heritage. The Connecting Leicester initiative has been fundamental in promoting the heritage of the city and connecting shopping, business, leisure, heritage, housing and transport facilities. There continue to be plans for further transformation of the city, including some significant and widespread schemes and programmes to facilitate this.

Such schemes include the plan to consult on a workplace parking levy as a measure to tackle problems associated with traffic congestion and air quality. EDTT have scrutinised these plans from concept phase and continue to be a central vehicle in examining the overall process behind the development of a potential levy. EDTT have shown particular interest in the potential economic impact of a levy scheme upon businesses and this remains at the core of their interests.

The plans for the further development of Connecting Leicester have been strengthened as a result of a successful bid to the government's Transforming Cities Fund (TCF). A £70million package of work is focusing on major sustainable transport improvements to provide attractive choices for people to get to work, support the city's growth and deliver on the council's climate emergency, air quality and healthy living commitments. EDTT have received several presentations on TCF proposals, both in terms of the overall position as well as individual schemes, such as the St Margaret's Bus Station development. The commission have made several recommendations to date, including voicing the need for increasing the overall level of investment in the east of the city. Throughout the period, EDTT regularly examined further elements of the Connecting Leicester programme ahead of their implementation and made several alternative suggestions to proposals.

A further aim of Connecting Leicester is to remove barriers that make it difficult for people to move from one area to another. As such, EDTT has closely examined issues around city centre accessibility. In doing so, the commission received evidence from local interest groups and arranged city centre site visits to identify potential issues for further discussion. EDTT remained committed throughout 2019-21 in striving to improve accessibility and have made a number of recommendations. These include a suggestion to use a proportion of future income generation from a workplace parking levy towards enhancing the overall level of accessibility, particularly in the city centre. More generally, EDTT sought an accessibility audit in respect of both City Hall and Town Hall, and this is another facet of work that will continue to be closely examined by the commission.

Scrutiny of Leicester's draft Local Plan has been a prominent feature amongst the majority of commissions. In examining the earlier phases of the production of the Local Plan and in contributing to its consultation, several key principles were identified by scrutiny and these include:

- A number of points were raised by EDTT in relation to the overall level of housing need, accessibility, Homes of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and public transport infrastructure.
- An interest by EDTT in references within the plan to the Evesham Road link.
- Concerns raised by EDTT in respect of the level of anticipated engagement in the consultation exercises as a result of the pandemic.
- A specification by HCLS that essential green and open spaces which were well used by residents for recreation, exercise and sports should be protected and improved, and not be considered for new developments and a change of use.
- A suggestion by HCLS for the creation of more 'green painted walls' as a means of offsetting and identifying areas where green space has been lost,
- Views from HCLS that existing heritage sites to be protected, and heritage forums in the city be consulted on the local plan
- Comments by HCLS in respect of the need to better reflect the culture, history and diversity of Leicester City.
- A request by HCLS for a further report in relation to sports and leisure facilities that are to be included within the final plan.
- General views from NCSI regarding the protection of existing green and open spaces to support well-being and wildlife, and the need to plan for additional amenities in the city to cater for population growth.
- Concerns by CYPs in respect of the effect that any loss of playing field space and learning centres could have upon the health and wellbeing of children.
- An examination by HSC of particular sites identified within the plan including Lanesborough Road and the Saffron Velodrome site.
- On a more general issue in respect of planning policy, OSC examined the impact upon City Council income of the imposition of charges for pre-planning applications.

In advance of its submission for approval to Full Council in 2022, scrutiny of the local plan will remain an imperative throughout 2021-22 and it is anticipated that commissions will focus on tailored elements of the final set of proposals and OSC will also examine the proposals and make recommendations to Full Council as they see fit.

Sustainable Leicester

A key ongoing priority area of work for the City Council is reducing the city's carbon footprint by focusing on reductions of greenhouse gas emissions from the council's own operations, as well as promoting sustainable travel and reducing emissions from homes and businesses.

At the heart of work by the City Council in respect of this theme has been the production of a climate emergency action plan. This was examined by a number of scrutiny bodies including OSC, who made a several recommendations such as:

- An encouragement for all Members to help publicise and champion the Climate Emergency Conversation through their role as Ward Councillors.
- Further scrutiny of the impact of schools declaring their own climate emergency.
- Encouraging work to on-board other organisations in joining the Council in taking action, including developing their own action plans and strategies.
- That further reports relating to the development of the strategy be reported back for scrutiny in due course.
- That a particular feature of the future strategy involves the steps required to increase the overall level of 'green' jobs.

In examining the Climate Change Conversation consultation, NCSI recommended that the exercise should include all school-aged children. Like OSC, when reviewing the draft Climate Emergency action plan, the commission requested further consideration of how proposals for 'green' jobs could be drawn-up. HSC encouraged greater lobbying of MPs, who were seen as being in a particularly strong position to influence change.

It was encouraging to experience a good level of public engagement at scrutiny in respect of a number of issues concerning sustainability; particularly at HSC. Public questions were raised in respect of passivhaus homes and in terms of carbon standards in housing developments. The latter led to the production of a detailed report on house-building standards, and HSC also reiterated the need for all corporate reports that were the subject of scrutiny to include detailed climate change implications. HSC also engaged with the relevant Assistant City Mayor to discuss the future of local housing development in the context of the climate emergency declaration. Furthermore, when reviewing energy efficiency of a particular new housing development, they recommended an upskilling of City Council staff for installations and requested the planning team to consider site layouts that would maximise solar power as an energy source. HSC have also sought to review the effectiveness of the district heating network including the network's contribution in addressing the city's declared Climate Emergency and opportunities that could be available to extend the scheme. In addition, when exploring a review of sport's

services in Leicester, HCLT urged the continuation of energy efficiency strategy work within all leisure centre facilities.

NCSI examined several strands of work with regard to waste management. When scrutinising recycling bring banks, the commission made suggestions in terms of greater promotion of the service. In addition, NCSI recommended greater engagement with schools in terms of raising awareness of waste management services in Leicester.

Health and Care

Leicester has poorer health outcomes on average compared to the rest of the country, so it is important to provide excellent healthcare and promote healthier lifestyles to close the gap. In doing so, scrutiny calls to account all health partners in the city.

Care for older people needs to be adequate for their needs and this is moving from traditional social support services towards the greater promotion of independent living. These services are also being increasingly aligned with healthcare to ensure an easier transition between the two. There is also a need to ensure that carers are well supported.

A significant amount of the work undertaken in relation to health and care services has not surprisingly centralised on the impacts arising from the pandemic and as such, scrutiny prioritised its discussion around key services to protect the most vulnerable. Scrutiny acknowledged that it was a particularly difficult time for the Leicester City area as the lockdown period had been prolonged. Regular updates were received on the overall position, the data, and the impacts on elderly and vulnerable residents requiring care. Scrutiny was reassured that a number of council divisions were working in collaboration to manage the crisis and to keep people and staff safe by providing extra support where required, and this covered matters including meals on wheels, access to food banks, PPE safety equipment and access to GP health services.

HWB closely examined the implementation of and issues surrounding the vaccination programme. The Commission reiterated the need for health partners to access hard-to-reach communities and encouraged vaccinations and regular testing regimes. This was also accompanied by an update on the yearly flu vaccination programme and the issues faced in conducting this alongside the covid19 vaccination programme. The latter part of the updates relating to covid19 in 20-21 began to focus on the impact on long covid, as well as the risks of health inequalities in Leicester being heightened by the pandemic. HWB intend to further examine these matters and others stemming from the pandemic into the 2021/22 municipal year.

Both either side and throughout the peak of the pandemic, there have been many other issues affecting health and care services that scrutiny has examined in detail.

In light of the well-documented increase in pressures on the care sector, ASC have continued to scrutinise and provide comments on the development of key strategies and plans essential to supporting and improving adult social care services and partnership working e.g. Mental Health, Dementia support services and Carers

support. In doing so, members valued hearing evidence and information directly from provider organisations such as Age UK Leicester, Leicester Carers Support Group and the Independent Chair of Leicester Safeguarding Adults Board. Some particular points highlighted when examining issues surrounding care provision and associated services were as follows:

- *Revision to ASC Charging Policy*– scrutiny recommendations influenced the council decision-making timeline. This resulted in no changes to charges during the pandemic, and that the council would then undertake another wider statutory consultation.
- *Carers Strategy* – engaged with partners including Age UK and Leicester Carers Support Service and recommended a simpler route for carers to access information and for increased awareness of voluntary sector services to be promoted. ASC also welcomed the City Council’s introduction of a Carer’s Passport.
- *VCS Review* – sought further detail on the impact and progress of the new Service User Participation Service.
- *Extra Care Housing* – voiced concern over development size and how the design would safeguard the mixed ages of vulnerable adults. ASC conducted site visits to Danbury Gardens and Abbey Mills which were seen as examples of good design practice.
- *Dementia Strategy Action Plan* - praised the recruitment of ‘Dementia Friends’ in light of the high rate of diagnosis in the city.
- *General Fund/Budgetary issues* – repeatedly raised concerns over the increasing cost of care packages. This has led to the initiation of a task group review during 2021-22.

In considering corporate budgetary matters, OSC made a number of observations and recommendations. These included seeking additional sets of information relating to revenue spending which covered detail of the number of children in care, and details surrounding reductions in the number of child protection plans as well as an explanation regarding the decline in the take up of sexual health services in Leicester. OSC also sought details of the nature of vacancies within the SCE department.

ASC also closely examined circumstances surrounding ‘Leicestershire County Care Limited’ which became subject to scrutiny over several meetings and included seeking evidence from the company director. Scrutiny recommended that concerns be raised relating to the company’s financial stability and changes to staff terms and conditions.

A scrutiny task group review into ‘Adult Social Care Workforce Planning: Looking to the Future’ was carried out. As part of this, evidence was gathered from Adult Social Care officers, unions and the Leicester Development and Skills group. The findings identified the urgent need to recruit many more care workers and provide better skills and training with accreditation. It also recommended the improvement of terms and conditions and pay grades. Scrutiny continued dialogue following completion of the review and in particular, sought more detail on how and by whom the responsibilities identified were going to be actioned.

ASC also examined the Joint Integrated Commissioning Strategy for Adult Mental Health and raised concerns surrounding a significant post-pandemic rise in people presenting with mental health issues and encouraged all to be done to address such issues and to serve need. Moreover, ASC recommended consideration of how the more granular detail in terms of a suicide response service could be built into the strategy. Members suggested that within the concept of building resilience, it would be helpful to share values around mental health across different communities. Officers agreed to take that suggestion to the relevant partnership board for further consideration.

Scrutiny of mental health issues and implications will feature prominently across a number of work programmes throughout 2021-22. In addition to the continued work by ASC, CYPS are set to continue some work scoped previously in terms of exploring interventions to help children and young people with mental health issues. HWB plan to hold meetings with a dedicated focus on mental health, and in doing so will work with several key stakeholders and witnesses. Much of the scrutiny around matters relating to mental health will relate to long-term implications following the pandemic.

Throughout 2019-21, HWB examined many of the key strategies and fundamental changes proposed by the leading health agencies in Leicester. Prior to the pandemic, HWB focused on the NHS Long Term Plan, the introduction of Primary Care Networks, as well as the urgent improvements required following inspections at local services such as the Bradgate Unit.

There was also a central focus on the £450m investment into Leicester's hospitals and the Building Better Hospitals consultation run by the CCGs to gauge support for 14 key proposals, and this led to heightened interest and engagement with scrutiny from the public. Over the course of 2020-21, HWB considered a pre-consultation business case and submitted separate comments in relation to the proposals and made several recommendations. This included initiating the transfer of control of the Hospital Close site from UHL to the City Council. Furthermore, the financial deficit in the UHL accounts was also scrutinised in detail, and in doing so, additional meetings with UHL board members were held. This work led to recommendations proposing a consideration of a cultural change at UHL and also identified the need to involve HWB into the selection process for new board members.

Other issues that HWB have examined in closer detail are as follows:

- *Primary Care Networks (PCNs) and the Introduction to the NHS Long-Term Plan* – concerns were raised in terms of the funding, operation and geographical spread of PCNs along with concerns around how they would address health inequalities and how the public could contribute to their development. A recommendation was proposed in respect of increasing nursing provision at GP surgeries. It was also voiced that the long-term plan did not adequately cover service provision in relation to dementia and frailty.

- *Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust – Steps taken on Regulatory Inspections* – recommended in-depth work in relation to equalities and sought a report that detailed progress with the redevelopment of the Bradgate Unit.
- *Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Primary Care Strategy 2019/21-2023/24* – sought further information on work to deflect away from the use of A&E services and requested Healthwatch to engage with the commission in terms of the development of the strategy.
- *LLR Urgent & Emergency Care Transformation Plan 2019/20* – focussed on issues in connection with an absence of GP surgery consultations, a decline in care home provision; digital exclusion to the vulnerable and elderly, detail around the ambulance handover process and expressed an urgent need for greater investment in mental health service provision.
- *0-19 Children's Offer* – sought further detail in relation to health visits and the extent of improved outcomes and raised issues of concern around parents experiencing judgement regarding oral health and obesity issues.
- *Updates on Obesity (including childhood obesity)* – recommended improved communication of particular projects and programmes aimed at school-aged children and also recommended that practitioners should focus on the issue of poor diet as much as encouraging the need to exercise.
- *Primary Care Hub Access at Merlyn Vaz Health & Social Care Centre* – the commission agreed that any in-depth review of the walk-in facility should reflect the demography of the city.
- *General Fund and Revenue Budget issues* – sought an update on the impact of the pre-exposure to the HIV service and further details were requested in relation to the overall funding of the service.

As reported elsewhere in this report, HWB also initiated a review in relation to the experience of black people working in health services in Leicester and Leicestershire. This work engaged extensively with and sought evidence from a range of health partner agencies and the evidence gathering continues into the 2021/22 municipal year ahead of the preparation of a set of recommendations.

During 2019-21, the administration of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Joint Health Scrutiny Committee was performed by Leicestershire County Council. However, the City Council has now assumed responsibility for the administration of the committee from 2021-23 and it is currently chaired by Councillor Patrick Kitterick. The committee will continue to examine health issues and consultations which impact upon the whole of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. In doing so, the committee will engage with key strategic health partners as well as encouraging wider participation in scrutiny from youth representatives and members of the public. The committee will explore a range of work, which will undoubtedly include the continuation of scrutiny of the UHL reconfiguration as well as many issues that form part of the long-term recovery from the pandemic.

Lifelong Learning

Ensuring that the Council protects its proud track record of supporting nurseries, schools and colleges to provide a high level of education for all remains a top priority. As well as meeting the needs of all children, opportunities are also made available for adults to continue their learning.

Prior to the pandemic, CYPS focused on the financial pressures faced by service areas, possible OFSTED inspections planned for the future, the position of academies in the city and the city-wide issue of knife crime and its impact on children and young people.

CYPS also continued to examine developments in respect of key statutory services which included adoption, fostering, edge of care interventions and SEND commissioning. The latter was scrutinised stringently, with requests for consultation outcomes and final key performance indicators to be shared with the commission. On a related matter, CYPS investigated the re-alignment of special school funding and expressed concerns regarding the documentation of parental feedback and the detrimental effect of setting a budget-cap.

In examining the 2021/22 draft revenue budget, CYPS requested a greater depth of scrutiny regarding the SEND transport budget. A further view expressed by the commission in respect of the draft budget concerned their support towards the retention of the connexions service.

CYPS also examined the Youth Justice Plan and raised concerns regarding the comparatively high level of entrants from Leicester into the system. The commission sought a more expansive explanation of work undertaken in respect of links between mental health and youth offending, as well as recommending closer scrutiny of the Knife Crime Strategy.

The commission continued work carried out previously in scrutinising the position of academisation in Leicester. In doing so, it raised concerns on the standards complaints process as well as governance structures and more specifically, the reduction in local governors. Furthermore, CYPS voiced concerns regarding the length of the initial inspection period for a school following academisation and requested closer examination of the role of the Regional Schools Commissioner.

In October 2019, CYPS commissioned an in-depth scrutiny review into 'The Underachievement of 'Black Caribbean' and 'White Working-Class' pupils of secondary school age in Leicester'. The work led to a number of detailed recommendations for schools as well as the City Council. An Executive response to the report was presented to the commission in June 2021 and further dialogue in terms of embedding some of the work that the commission supported will continue throughout the 2021-22 municipal year. In particular, the commission has requested

further insight into the interventions available for young people regarding mental health and plan to explore this via a task and finish group.

A number of other commissions also reviewed work that related to this area. When reviewing library services, NSCI raised concerns relating to the ability to engage with children from hard-to-reach communities. NCSI also queried library opening hours in general and the need for greater provision of digital skills courses, particularly for adults at risk of digital exclusion. Recommendations in respect of enhanced digital infrastructure and investment in further IT equipment within libraries and neighbourhood centres were also put forward. EDTT examined adult learning more generally and when looking at the LASALS service, queried the operation of clawback funding and recommended a more expansive offer in respect of re-skilling.

However, it goes without saying that a significant amount of the scrutiny in respect of learning outcomes and opportunities were in connection with the situation in schools throughout the pandemic. Particular areas of focus included scrutiny of the infection rate within schools where children of key workers were attending, as well as the quality of learning for children who were able to engage in home-schooling. Other identified issues included the confusing and often last-minute advice from the Department of Education, the quality of free school meals, appropriate access to laptops and study tools for children and the impact that the pandemic will have on the mental health of young people and children. CYPE were extremely supportive of the work of all council staff throughout the pandemic in supporting young people and children across the city.

It is envisaged that further work regarding the impact of lockdown on young people and children will be looked into by CYPS, as well as understanding how the upcoming OFSTED inspections will be conducted and finding out more about the impact of consulting on SEND funding for schools.

A City to Enjoy

This priority is focussed on enhancing the amenity of the city by developing the festivals offer, making improvements to the arts and museums services and providing capital investment for venues, new workspace and business support for creative businesses and organisations.

The severity of the lockdown period in Leicester impacted heavily on access to many of Leicester's main amenities and attractions. Many of the regular and most popular festivals were cancelled and scrutiny agendas were dominated by the impacts to services, such as venue closures across the city and staff being redirected to support essential services, as well as the recovery plans for re-opening safely. However, scrutiny continued to play an important role in examining the existing service and its future proposals. The majority of scrutiny in relation to this pledge theme was undertaken by HCLS.

In respect of arts and museums, in summer 2019, HCLS closely examined the use of additional funding provided by the Arts Council. It also spent much of its time looking at the Council's museums service, and made several recommendations in terms of enhancing the service including the carrying-out of more outreach work (especially for hard to reach communities) and requesting that ward councillors be better engaged in terms of community engagement work in respect of the museums service.

In addition, it strongly supported plans to create a dedicated educational space at Leicester Museum and Art Gallery for access by local schools. When examining the museums capital plans, HCLS proposed a transformation of the service's digital offer, and on many occasions, have made suggestions to consider making an overall better use of museum space when undertaking redevelopment work. The commission examined closely the Leicester Museum and Art Gallery redevelopment plans, and whilst being generally supportive of the proposals, sought regular updates on the development programme and budget and sought to undertake a site visit upon the completion of the work.

HCLS also scrutinised the Jewry Wall Museum redevelopment plans on several occasions. A number of information requests were lodged and the dialogue on this issue spanned several meeting rounds. Particular areas of interest included targeted visitor numbers, admission pricing and work to deliver energy saving initiatives in light of the climate emergency. More generally, HCLT challenged the length of time taken in delivering the programme and referred this also to OSC for a more corporate level of examination. An executive decision in relation to the works was called-in by scrutiny, and following lengthy dialogue, the call-in was withdrawn prior to being submitted to Full Council. HCLS have also monitored the progress of plans

to develop the former Haymarket theatre and the consultation exercise that was undertaken. The commission formed a number of views, principally stating a preference for a multi-purpose facility and seeking assurances that all accessibility requirements be responsibly fulfilled.

Along with EDTT, HCLS was briefed regularly on tourism-related activity and carefully reviewed the newly formed Leicester Tourism Strategy. Many of the comments and recommendations arising from the work focused on communication, including the request to consider a number of potential marketing and advertising campaigns, such as greater TV and radio coverage in relation to local tourism attractions. The continuation of the Council's heritage interpretation panel initiative was also scrutinised, and the commission raised a number of ideas for future panels and also expressed a desire for an improvement of local history education throughout the City's schools.

There were a number of high-profile sporting-related initiatives that were inspected by HCLS. When examining council-operated golf facilities, the commission recommended the exploration of 'golfing pop-ups' within under-utilised open space. Increasing the uptake of sport and leisure was at the heart of the thinking of HCLS's work, particularly in relation to golf services but also when scrutinising the football investment strategy. The commission asked for more work to be undertaken with the aim of increasing participation in sport, particularly amongst 11 to 17 year-olds. When reviewing sports and leisure facilities more generally, it was felt that an enhanced programme of staff training should be undertaken to help consistently achieve a good standard of customer service ratings.

A Safe and Inclusive City

This pledge sets out a range of commitments to enhance community support and safety and strives to become even more of an inclusive city. It covers how the City Council engages with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VC) as well as work carried out by the police and other community safety partners.

Scrutiny work in connection to this particular pledge spanned a range of commissions, with particular focus by NSCI.

NSCI and OSC in particular have been and will continue to be heavily engaged in work that stemmed from the Black Lives Matters movement. Work has become more focused over time with OSC having several opportunities to scrutinise the Council's corporate approach in tackling racism and inequality. In examining the corporate Equality Strategy and Action Plan, OSC encouraged more to be done to improve the level of black and minority ethnic representation at senior levels of the City Council.

Moreover, HWB initiated a review into experiences of black people working in health services in Leicester and Leicestershire and by working with a number of partners in the health sector, the evidence gathering in respect of this review continues into 2021/22.

HCLS also recommended an examination of how historical information was presented within the Council's Arts and Museums service, noting that similar exercises had been undertaken in other part of the country. In addition, CYPS pledged support for widening the scope of racial literacy training and embedding this into the corporate training regime for elected members.

A number of commissions engaged with the Women Talking City Listening Project, which from a scrutiny perspective, helped to place an importance on examining all matters concerning women's safety and led to a more focussed examination, particularly at OSC, around how improvements could be made by the council and its partners.

NSCI has been particularly active in examining community safety matters throughout the two-year period. In reviewing the Council's Community Safety Plan, concerns were raised in respect of cyber fraud as well as a potential spread of ASB and street lifestyle issues to areas of Leicester beyond the city centre and the commission remain committed to monitoring this. Stemming from this work, NCSI have also closely inspected the work of the Public Safety and Noise Control teams, and in respect of the latter, the commission strongly recommended work to help to reduce waiting times in responding to noise nuisance complaints.

NCSI have also maintained a close interest in the development of a knife crime strategy, and have recommended to enhance the level of resources targeted towards youth services and also recommended greater work on educating young people around potential dangers through schools and other agencies. Similarly, other key topics such as Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse support services have been explored, as well as community safety more generally, with members comments influencing the overall strategy development and a number of consultation exercises. A consistent point raised when examining such areas was the need to increase communication, particularly to elected members.

In looking beyond the remit of the City Council, the commission closely inspected the Safer Leicester Partnership Plan and recommended some joint scrutiny work between HWB and NCSI in respect of alcohol misuse and street drinking.

What next for scrutiny in Leicester?

This report has covered much of the activity undertaken by scrutiny during the past two years. The period has certainly been unconventional, both in terms of the format and practical sense of scrutiny and also due to scrutiny content being dominated by a focus on the pandemic. Whilst scrutiny began to focus on more typical service-based work, it is already evident that the legacy and impact of the pandemic will typically feature within policy implication moving forward, and as documented elsewhere, scrutiny has already and will undoubtedly continue to examine implications and outcomes from the pandemic over years to come.

Scrutiny in 2021-22 will offer commissions the opportunity to continue to examine some of the most critical work being undertaken across the city and to explore the implications of key issues as they emerge. For instance, scrutiny will be taking a leading role on reviewing the resettlement programme for Afghan refugees welcomed into Leicester after fleeing the hostile situation in their homeland. Scrutiny will maintain its work on some of those major ongoing schemes and programmes as documented within this report including work in relation to women's safety, work stemming from the Black Lives Matter movement, the UHL reconfiguration and work being undertaken in connection with some of the core strategic pledges, including the anti-poverty strategy, the response to the climate emergency and the proposal to consult on the introduction of workplace parking levy in Leicester. Several scrutiny task group reviews have already commenced in the earlier part of 2021-22 with the aim of concluding and forming recommendations by the end of the municipal year.

Scrutiny commissions will continue to inspect policy and programmes as part of their ongoing work and will also convene reviews and task group work as appropriate, undertake visits and invite the participation of external partners and witnesses to assist in helping to draw recommendations for future service delivery. As part of this, it is envisaged to promote wider stakeholder engagement in Leicester's scrutiny activity and in particular, to increase the level of youth participation in scrutiny work and to identify clear roles for those that will engage.

The scrutiny team and lead directors will continue to support the scrutiny process and will ensure that members are equipped with the skills and knowledge to deliver influence when examining scrutiny items. It is envisaged that a programme of scrutiny-based member training will again be delivered throughout 2021-22 and that scrutiny actions and recommendations will continue to be closely monitored in order to fully assess the impact of work undertaken by commissions.

Contacting Scrutiny

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Overview Select Committee
Draft Work Programme 2021 – 2022

Meeting Date	Topic	Actions Arising	Progress
27 May 21	1) Covid-19 Update on position 2) Womens Safety update report 3) Revenue Budget Monitoring 2020-21 outturn 4) Capital Budget Monitoring 2020 - 21 Outturn 5) Income Collection April 2020 – March 2021 6) Review of Treasury Management Activities 2020/21 7) Questions to City Mayor 8) Work Programme 2021/22 – draft planning	2) deferred to July meeting 3) - MFT to be taken to CYPE - NWOW/Service Transformation & IT Spending to go to future meeting	3) MFT scheduled for CYPE on 19 October 3) NWOW scheduled for OSC on 16 September
July 21	1) Covid-19 Update 2) Women's Safety update report 3) Living Wage Procurement 4) Local Plan Update 5) Scoping Document – Adult Social Care Budget 6) AOUB – Summer Holiday Food Provision	2) further report to 16 December OSC meeting. 4) Timetable for further scrutiny to be compiled	

Meeting Date	Topic	Actions Arising	Progress
16 th Sept	1) Covid Update 2) University of Leicester – Vice-Chancellor 3) New Ways of Working Update 4) Tackling Racism, Race Inequality and Disadvantage – update on plans and progress 5) Revenue Monitoring Period 3 6) Capital Monitoring Period 3 7) Questions for the City Mayor		
10 th Nov	1) Covid Update 2) Afghan Refugee Resettlement Programme 3) Private Rented Sector Housing – Corporate Offer 4) Selective Licensing Schemes 5) Homelessness Update – Referral from Housing Scrutiny Commission 6) Scrutiny Annual Report 2019-2021		

Meeting Date	Topic	Actions Arising	Progress
16 th Dec	1) Covid Update 2) Key Strategic Priorities Update – moved from November 3) Revenue Monitoring Period 6 4) Capital Monitoring Period 6 5) Income Collection Apr-Sept 21 6) Treasury Mid-Year 7) Women's Safety – Update 8) Domestic Abuse Services report 9) Equalities update including updated equalities action plan/workforce equalities. 10) Anti-Poverty Strategy – Update 11) Smart Cities Update 12) CYPE Scoping Document and other Scrutiny Commission updates		
January 2022	Possible additional meeting for Scrutiny of the Local Plan		
10 th Feb	BUDGET Corporate Parenting Session - Council wide approach and responsibilities		

Meeting Date	Topic	Actions Arising	Progress
24 th Mar	1) Covid Update 2) Revenue Monitoring Period 9 3) Capital Monitoring Period 9 4) Tackling Racism, Race Inequality and Disadvantage – update on plans and progress 5) New Ways of Working Update		

Forward Plan Items (suggested)

Topic	Detail	Proposed Date
Police and Crime Commissioner – overview of vision/priorities for the city		March 2022
Boundary Commission Review – follow-up		
Health and Wellbeing Strategy – <i>possible update</i>		
IT Transformation - update		March 2022