



Leicester
City Council

MEETING OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

DATE: TUESDAY, 18 MARCH 2025

TIME: 5:30 pm

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

Members of the Committee

Councillor O'Neill (Chair)

Councillor Zaman (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Bajaj, Gopal, Gregg, Halford, Modhwadia and Waddington

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

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

Kirsty Wootton (Governance Services),

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

Leicester City Council, 3rd Floor, City Hall, 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: **Kirsty Wootton Governance Services on kirsty.wootton@leicester.co.uk**. Alternatively, email committees@leicester.gov.uk, or call in at City Hall.

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PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

FIRE / EMERGENCY EVACUATION

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

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To issue a welcome to those present, and to confirm if there are any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Appendix A

The minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Commission held on 7th January 2025 have been circulated, and Members will be asked to confirm them as a correct record.

4. CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair is invited to make any announcements as they see fit.

5. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The following representation has been submitted by Mr S. Raja:

1. Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) & Compliance

- The recent FOI response (Ref: FOIA 33570) confirmed that while all council-owned residential properties have an FRA, 700 properties have not had an assessment in the past three years.
- Can the council confirm its timeline for conducting up-to-date FRAs on these properties?

- Will residents be given access to FRA schedules for their buildings?
- If the council was so confident in the FRA from 2017, how has January 2025 on one of seven hundred properties found concerns? Were the internal reviews flawed?

2. Fire Safety Concerns & Transparency

- The council claims that no inquiries from Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) have gone unanswered.
- However, can the council provide a record of past concerns raised by LFRS, action taken, and deadlines met to ensure full transparency?

3. Right to Buy (RTB) Delays & Complaints

- The council has refused to provide data on financial losses or complaints related to RTB delays, citing retrieval costs.
- Given the significant increase in RTB applications, does the council have sufficient staffing and resources to process applications without unnecessary delays?
- Can the council commit to publishing RTB complaint statistics quarterly to improve transparency? I understand there is no measure at present and so the leadership demonstrates they have no control over potential improvements.
- I request a measurement of the RTB (Right to Buy) team's case response rates. How long do they currently take per case? Will the council commit to an improvement plan? Currently, there are no publicly available statistics, meaning no transparency or accountability on this matter.

4. RTB Lease Pack Charges & Accountability

- The council charges £125 per lease pack but does not track total revenue from these charges.
- Shouldn't this be a recorded financial transaction, given that it involves resident payments? How does the department ensure the finances are allocated correctly back to RTB or Housing?
- Can the council provide a breakdown of what this charge covers and how it is justified? If no account is kept, then how have they made up this figure and justify it?

5. Impact of RTB Sales on Affordable Housing Supply

- Given the budget strain expected from the spike in RTB applications, what specific measures is the council taking to offset housing stock depletion?
- Can the council outline its strategy to replenish lost social housing in the coming years?

6. Estate Management & Housing Services

- The last Scrutiny Commission meeting highlighted concerns about fly-tipping and estate maintenance in council-owned housing. I would think the estate maintenance would include

commitment to fire safety.

- What enforcement strategy is in place to tackle fly-tipping, particularly in council housing areas?
- Given the confusion around the roles of City Wardens vs. Estate Wardens, can a clear responsibility guide be provided to tenants?

6. PETITIONS

Any petitions received in accordance with Council procedures will be reported.

7. SUCCESSION POLICY

Appendix B

This briefing provides an update to the Commission on Leicester City Council's succession, change of name and sole to joint and joint to sole policies and gives an overview of the legislation which needs to be followed.

8. TENANT INVOLVEMENT PROPOSALS

Appendix C

This report provides an update to the Housing Scrutiny Commission on the formation of a Divisional Engagement and Communication Strategy for the Tenants and Leaseholders who live in properties owned and managed by Leicester City Council.

9. HOUSING CRISIS DELIVERY UPDATE

Appendix D

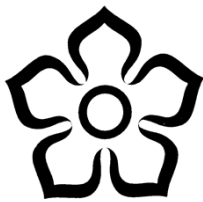
This report provides an update to the Housing Scrutiny commission setting out the progress on the delivery of the Housing Crisis actions, following the declaration of a Housing crisis on 24th November 2022.

10. WORK PROGRAMME

Appendix E

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

11. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 7 JANUARY 2025 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor O'Neill - Chair

Councillor Bajaj
Councillor Gregg
Councillor Modhwadia

Councillor Gopal
Councillor Halford
Councillor Waddington

* * * * *

In Attendance

Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Cutkelvin – Housing & Neighbourhoods

108. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None were received.

109. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

110. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair highlighted that the minutes for the meeting on 12 November 2024 were included within the papers and asked members for comments.

AGREED:

- It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2024 were a correct record.

111. CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair invited Members of the commission to attend a site visit to the development on Saffron Lane.

112. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

Mr N. Patel asked the following question:

“Hospital close in Evington has been a ghost town for over 5 years, filled with antisocial behaviour and fly tipping. Whilst there is a housing crisis within the city why is the council not prioritising completing the property ready for tenants? Can we have an update and a concrete deadline for this project please?”

The Director of Housing responded that:

- The property had been empty for far too long. It had been empty since before it was purchased by the council.
- Finance had been set aside from previous budgets for this project.
- Security for the site had been provided by the contractor at no cost to the local authority, and since the security had been in place there had been no reports of anti-social behaviour.
- The properties were in a state of neglect, so they have had to be made of an acceptable standard, all necessary surveys had to be conducted and the relevant planning permissions gained.
- There was 2 distinct phases to this project. The first of the family homes were to be ready for occupancy in March 2025. All 35 family units should be occupied by June 2025.
- Single accommodation was phase 2 due to the complexities in configuring the layouts to ensure suitability.
- The contract for phase 2 was much harder to secure but the first of the single accommodation should be ready March 2026.
- Contractors had been working hard to meet timescales. Separate contractors were used for specific aspects such as roofing to speed the process up.
- A bid had been placed to the Warm Homes Social Housing Fund to ensure the properties were as green as possible.

The Deputy City Mayor for Housing, Economy and Neighbourhoods commented that there have been many factors that have created additional barriers which had held this development up and it had been frustrating for residents and officers.

The Chair thanked Dr Patel for his question.

113. PETITIONS

It was noted that none had been received.

114. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET (INCLUDING CAPITAL PROGRAMME) 2025/26

The Director of Housing introduced the item, and it was noted that:

- Positively it was a balanced budget.
- The suggested rent increase was the maximum of 2.7% which equated to an average increase of £2.49 per week. Any increase below this level would have created a shortfall in the budget meaning cuts would have had to be made to the budget.
- Gypsy and traveller rent increase was higher as this had to fund itself.
- The service charges were only covering the cost of the services.
- The forecasted price of gas was significantly lower, so a reduction had been proposed to reflect this for those on meters.
- Properties with no meter have had a proposed reduction of fixed charges by 26%.
- The capital budget included £30 million for new housing. Pg 22 of the agenda pack gives a full breakdown of this.
- A consultation with tenants occurred which utilised online resources and 2 days of face-to-face responses. This had a good response rate, and the majority of tenants supported all proposals. The outcome of those who supported the rent increase compared to those who did not was a close call, however.

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

- There are 37 Gypsy and Traveller households split across 3 sites. The main site had 21 units. The rent increase was higher due to the account not sitting in the Housing and Revenue Account, meaning it needed to be self-funding. Any increase below 4% meant it would not cover the costs incurred.
- The Gypsy and Traveller Team supported the community. Most of the households received housing benefit, and this would cover the increase.
- There was a waiting list for the sites due to the quality of them and the support received by households on them.
- The service charge rise of 1.7% had increased in line with inflation to cover increased running costs. If the charge was not increased, there would have to be a reduction in services offered.
- There have been some miscommunications around meter installations. The meters weren't compulsory and if residents are not answering or say no, they have not been installed. However, most residents are making significant savings when they have moved to a meter.
- Where savings have not been made or high use is identified, officers have investigated to establish why and provide advice and support to tenants and leaseholders to help address this.

- The move to meters had been a success and the topic may want to come to the commission. The biggest issue faced was misinformation and communication.
- It was important to acknowledge that to reduce bills, it may mean changes were needed in behaviour.
- If there had been instances where meters had been thought to be faulty reported to Councillors, Councillors should take contact details so it can be addressed.
- It was important to highlight that the evidence had demonstrated that the vast majority of bills had reduced following the installation of a meter.
- The Income Management Team had demonstrated excellence in supporting tenants, maximising incomes and providing help in accessing services and schemes which had assisted tenants.
- The team collected 99% of rent, with only 7 evictions last year. There were 5 evictions in the previous year. Although classed as evictions, there were often instances where the property had been abandoned opposed to an eviction.
- 60% of tenants were on housing benefit so the increase would be covered. 10% of tenants were on partial housing benefit so will also be covered. The team had been working closely with the other 30%.
- The £30 million was to have covered the cost of a mixture of new builds and acquisitions to provide more homes.
- There had been over 750 applications for Right to Buy since changes had been announced by Government before the scheme change. The service had to estimate how many sales are likely to complete so it could be factored into the budget.
- Some Right to Buy receipts were unlikely to complete due to forms not being completed adequately.
- Due to the large number of applications, the time frame for responses was unclear but housing officers were to find out more from the corporate team responsible if addresses were provided for individual cases by Councillors.
- The increased number received was likely to have a negative impact initially, however it was hoped that because of the discount changes that there would be a slowing in applications which may protect the budget moving forward.
- To protect the Housing Revenue Account, all Right to Buy's would have had to cease.
- There had been a consultation ongoing by the Government on Right to Buy.
- Social housing demand means that both new builds and acquisitions had been required. The extent of new builds had been constrained by the industry surrounding house building.
- Alternative construction methods had been constantly reviewed and the most suitable methods were considered on a site-by-site basis.
- In relation to the block of flats, The Leys, procuring contractors had been difficult for renovating accommodation. The procurement failed twice which had meant that alternative methods were considered.

Proposals on a larger scheme had been taken forward following consultation with ward councillors that it was what was needed and wanted in the area and would have more success in attracting a contractor.

Agreed:

- The Commission noted the report.

115. DRAFT GENERAL REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26

The Head of Finance presented the item which focused on the strategy for balancing the council budget over the next 3 years. It was noted that:

- The financial outlook was the most severe the council had ever faced.
- This financial challenge stemmed from a decade of austerity, as well as recent cost pressures that had not been matched by corresponding grant income.
- Following the Chancellor's budget in October 2024, further budget constraints had been anticipated.
- Some authorities had issued Section 114 notices, and the budget strategy had aimed to avoid this and ensure financial sustainability until at least 2027/28.
- The council's financial strategy had 5 strands:
 1. Releasing one-off funds totalling £110m to buy time.
 2. Reducing the approved capital programme by £13m
 3. Selling non-residential assets to secure an additional £60m.
 4. Constraining growth in those statutory services under demand-led pressure.
 5. Making ongoing savings of £20m per year in the revenue budget.
- The financial strategy was heavily reliant on one-off funds and additional savings would be required after the first three years.
- Risks, such as government policy changes, must be considered, and with one-off monies being used, ongoing savings were critical.
- The strategy reflects estimates of 2025/26 government funding, since the Finance Settlement was not available when the report was written.

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

- The draft Local Government Finance Settlement had been received, and officers were digesting the detail.
- Whilst the settlement appeared to provide slightly more funding than expected, this did not affect the overall financial situation or alter the direction of the strategy.

Regarding the rationale for the figures quoted under the 5 strands, it was noted that:

- The capital programme had been financed through various means. £90m is the maximum amount of the 'capital fund' which had accumulated over previous years.
- The £13m reduction in the capital programme followed a full review of all uncommitted budgets and represents the maximum reduction from areas that were not of the highest strategic priority. Any deviation from the current strategy could undermine the ability to navigate the next three years.
- To realise the £60m one-off funds, the council had various assets/buildings currently used for commercial purposes or underutilised pieces of land etc. which could be disposed of, without impact on services or the community.
- Asset sale had to be considered strategically, considering the value of assets, potential future uses, loss of income etc.
- Directors and the Executive were working on ways to achieve the £1m savings target from housing.

Agreed:

- The Commission noted the report.

116. DISTRICT SERVICES

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

- The city was divided into 3 districts, each managed by a District Manager.
- The profile of tenants had changed significantly in recent years with many people having had multiple needs and requiring additional support.
- The vision of the service was to help tenants sustain successful tenancies.
- Many different functions were carried out by the service.
- In 2023/24, Housing Officers completed 927 first visits and 1500 welfare checks. Housing officers had a varied role due to the needs of tenants.
- There had been an increase in complaints related to domestic abuse and food poverty concerns. The team had been working with public health and domestic abuse services to ensure delivery of key services.
- The STAR service had been crucial in bringing in other services to support tenants in sustaining their contracts.
- Within the STAR team is the STAR AMAL, which had been set up to resettle Syrian refugees.
- Next steps included improving customer care, fire safety, communal work and carrying out some environmental projects.
-

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

- The report demonstrated positive work.
- Fly tipping had been found to be most prevalent in areas of council housing.
- There had been confusion around the role of City Warden and Estate Wardens and the responsibilities that each had. It was established that Estate Wardens did not hold enforcement powers.
- Photos from a patch walk showing fly tipping were shared with the Head of Service.
- Customer engagement exercises revealed that some residents prefer direct contact to other forms of IT-related communication.
- Housing Officer roles had evolved to them being field-based and first responder to issues, meaning they were not able to answer a phone at a desk as had been done historically.
- The Council had been exploring better ways of facilitating communication and engagement with residents such as 'pop up' housing offices.
- The goal had been for people to engage directly with the appropriate service.
- Tenants can contact the council through customer services or the emergency repairs line if needed.
- The numbers of calls received by the service had remained static, but the workload had increased due to the complexity of cases.
- Continued work has occurred on developing specialist housing to meet tenants needs.
- Working with ward councillors would be important in communicating the 'pop up' offices to generate engagement from tenants. It was hoped that this move will be refreshing for the tenants hoping for more direct contact following the move to online services.

Agreed:

- The Commission noted the report.
- A housing officer was to attend Belgrave ward meeting.

117. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair noted that any suggestions made during the meeting were to be added to the work programme.

118. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 19.13.

Briefing on Succession and Associated Policies

Housing Scrutiny Commission: 18 March 2025

Decision to be taken by:

Lead director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Nick Griffiths
- Author contact details: Ext 6258
- Report version number: Ver 3.1

1. Summary

- 1.1 This briefing paper sets out Leicester City Council's succession, change of name and sole to joint and joint to sole policies and gives an overview of the legislation which needs to be followed.
- 1.2 It is important to note that in law, a succession happens immediately after the moment of death where a person qualified to succeed exists. A person cannot "apply" for a succession, it either happens or it doesn't. There is a great deal of case law on the matter of succession. As long as the qualifying conditions apply, a person will succeed to a tenancy. It follows that where the conditions are not met, a succession will not occur.
- 1.3 A tenant can apply to carry out a "Change of Name" on their tenancy. This normally occurs upon the tenant's name being changed due to their personal circumstances.
- 1.4 Sole to joint and joint to sole. A sole to joint tenancy change takes place where a sole tenant wishes to add another person to their tenancy, certain criteria must be met prior to the joint tenancy commencing. A joint to sole tenancy change; also known as a "relationship change or relationship breakdown" is where a joint tenancy ends when one person leaves the joint tenancy by virtue of submitting a termination notice.
- 1.5 Officers do not "approve" or "deny" a succession. The conditions for a succession other than statutory succession are set out in the Council's succession policy.
- 1.6 The change of name is mandatory due to the nature of the evidence provided, which normally consist of deed poll documents, marriage certificate or divorce documents.
- 1.7 A sole to joint tenancy change is discretionary and not a legal requirement. A joint to sole tenancy change is actioned upon a termination being received, consequently bringing the whole tenancy to an end within the 4 weeks' notice period and a new sole tenancy being created in its place.

2. Recommended actions/decision

2.1 To note the current policies and outcomes.

2.2 To agree to the commencement of a review of associated procedures to bring them into line with current legislation and best practice.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

3.1 Residents and stakeholders will be consulted on any changes to the policies, and the approval process will be followed.

4. Background with supporting evidence

Succession

- 4.1 The 1985 Housing Act (as amended) sets down the legislation as regards to who may succeed a secure tenancy. The law on succession was substantially amended by the Localism Act 2012, which removed the right of succession for other family members apart from a spouse or partner. This applies to all tenancies signed after 1 April 2012. In these cases, only the spouse or partner can automatically succeed the tenancy. The law also allows for other succession to take place as specified in organisational policies.
- 4.2 Tenancies that commenced before 1 April 2012, have slightly different rights, providing that there has not been a previous succession. These rights remain as the previous legislation sets out. For a sole tenancy in the absence of a spouse or partner, another family member who has lived at the property as their main home for the 12 months immediately prior to the death will succeed, providing there has not been a prior succession.
- 4.3 When revising the Conditions of Tenancy in 2018, a decision was taken to continue to allow all tenants of Leicester City Council to continue to enjoy the same succession rights as before, regardless of the commencement date, so that a qualifying family member can also succeed, this is covered in Clause 86A 2(b) in the act and is an express clause of the Conditions of Tenancy (5.6.2). The clause sets out that succession may happen in line with the Succession Policy. This means that if changes are required, then there is no need to alter the Conditions of Tenancy, simply amending and approving the policy would allow a different approach to be taken.
- 4.4 In law, a succession happens immediately after the moment of death where a person qualified to succeed exists and there has not been a previous succession.
- 4.5 Where there is a joint tenancy, when one person dies, the tenancy will automatically pass to the remaining person (also known as survivorship).
- 4.6 In order for the right of succession to exist, there cannot have been a previous succession on the tenancy.
- 4.7 A succession is the continuation of a tenancy, with the successor inheriting all the rights and responsibilities, which includes any arrears and compliance with any court orders.

- 4.8 The current policy sets out who can succeed to a tenancy, providing the qualifying conditions are met. As this is a policy statement, it can be revised to bring it in line with current legislation if desired or altered in any other reasonable way. A flow chart of the process is enclosed at appendix I.
- 4.9 The current position is that where there is no spouse or civil partner, a family member may succeed to the tenancy providing that they have been residing with the tenant for a period of 12 months immediately prior to the death, and they have been using the property as their sole or principal home.
- 4.10 The family members who are eligible to succeed (under the terms of the policy) are:
- Aunt / Uncle
 - Brother
 - Daughter (and stepdaughter)
 - Father
 - Granddaughter
 - Grandfather
 - Grandmother
 - Grandson
 - Mother
 - Nephew
 - Niece
 - Sister
 - Son (and stepson)
 - Any half-blood relative of the tenant, including illegitimate children.
- 4.11 If there is more than one person who is eligible to succeed, they must make a decision on who will be the successor, as there can only be one person who succeeds. In the event of a dispute, we can make the decision for them (generally this will be by drawing names out of a hat).
- 4.12 The current policy also creates instances where a person under 18 years of age succeeds to a tenancy. This is called an Equitable tenancy and requires another person to become the responsible person.
- 4.13 Where a tenant dies, and there is no right of succession for example where there has been a previous succession or the people in the household are not family members, there are various actions which can be taken.
- 4.14 If the remaining person is a family member and they would have succeeded if there had not been a prior succession, we will consider if the property is suitable for their needs. Where the property is of the correct size for the remaining household, we may grant a new tenancy. If the property is not suitable, or the person is not eligible for the housing register, we will offer appropriate help, advice and assistance.
- 4.15 Where the remaining person is not a family member, they are an unlawful occupier. In this case, we will cease the tenancy and set up a Use and Occupation account and carry out further investigations. We will offer appropriate help, advice and assistance.

4.16 In all cases, we will look to avoid creating a situation where a person (or family) is made homeless and will look to make best use of our housing stock and resources.

Name Change

4.17 Name change applications are received from tenants following a change in their personal circumstances, either changing their name via deed poll, getting married or getting divorced.

4.18 This applies to all tenants, who are in a variety of tenures whether they be in a secure tenancy, introductory tenancy, demoted tenancy or HomeCome tenancy.

4.19 Supporting evidence of the name change is required when submitting a tenancy name change application, this could be in the form of a marriage certificate, deed poll document or divorce documents. This will enable the officer to facilitate the name change on the tenancy without any undue delay.

Sole to Joint

4.20 A sole to joint tenancy change this is where a tenancy originally commenced in a single(sole) name and the tenant applies for another person to be added onto their tenancy. Thus, changing their tenancy from sole to joint.

4.21 Only secure tenants (those being in a tenancy for the minimum 12 months) can apply to add a person onto their tenancy. The council has no legal obligation to allow a sole to joint tenancy change.

4.22 The persons eligible to be added to a tenancy are:

- wives,
- husbands,
- civil partners (including same sex partners)
- live-in carers

4.23 The current policy dictates that the applicant must meet the qualifying criteria which requires them to provide the necessary evidence to support the request.

4.24 The applicant must provide proof they have been living at the property for 12 months immediately prior to the application, as their only and principal home

4.25 Reasons for refusal of a sole to joint tenancy application:

- The current tenant is a successor (as defined in section 88 of the Housing Act 1985),
- The current tenant has rent arrears,
- A valid Notice of Seeking Possession has been served for a breach of tenancy conditions,
- There is a valid Court Order against the tenant for possession of the property. This also includes a suspended court order,
- The applicant owes money to the Authority for former tenancy arrears or other charges,
- The applicant owns a property or has a tenancy elsewhere,
- The applicant is under 18,
- One party does not intend to live in the property,

- The applicant is ineligible for an allocation of council accommodation.

4.26 Once the qualifying criteria is met the tenant must then terminate their sole tenancy.

4.27 The new joint tenancy will commence upon the expiry of the sole tenancy.

Joint to Sole

4.28 The joint to sole tenancy change is sometime referred to as either “a relationship change” or a “relationship breakdown”.

4.29 This is normally where the one person in a joint tenancy decides to leave the tenancy. This applies to those tenants who are Introductory, Secure and HomeCome tenants.

4.30 There are a few circumstances where this policy is applied.

- People who are unable to determine a tenancy through assignment.
- When a tenant leaves the property but does not terminate the tenancy

4.31 Demoted tenants are not considered as part of this process.

4.32 This policy is used when one tenant ends a joint tenancy leaving the remaining party in the property or when a tenant ends their sole tenancy leaving other family members in the property.

4.33 There is no legal requirement to consider a change in tenancy after a relationship change. However, it is good practice to do so.

4.34 A husband, wife and same sex civil partners can apply to take over the tenancy.

4.35 The other persons eligible to take over the tenancy are:

- Unmarried heterosexual partners
- Daughter (and stepdaughter)
- Son (and stepson)
- Grandfather / grandmother
- Uncle/ aunt
- Father / mother
- Nephew / niece
- Brother / sister
- Grandson / granddaughter
- A long-term carer

4.36 All applicants must meet one part of qualifying criteria to then be offered the sole tenancy.

4.37 The qualifying criteria is divided into two sections, the first section is where they must meet only one part, and the second section is that they must meet all parts in the section.

4.38 The first section of the qualifying criteria that an applicant must meet one part is

- The person remaining would qualify for the property if they had applied through the Housing Register. In addition to this, we will (other than in cases involving a single person or couple) approve cases where a family would be under-occupying the property by one bedroom.
- The person applying needs to remain in the property to give or receive support.
- The property has been adapted for the remaining person.

4.39 The second section of qualifying criteria where applicants must meet all parts are:

- The applicant must have been living at the property when the termination notice is received.
- The rent account must be clear, if the applicant had been the joint tenant, or no former tenancy arrears, if the applicant is not currently a tenant. Exceptional circumstances will be considered by a Head of Service.
- The applicant must be over the age of 18, or below this age with a guarantor.

4.40 Either party of a joint tenancy can terminate the tenancy, in which this will bring the whole tenancy to an end. Whereas the remaining party doesn't have the right to then take on the tenancy in their sole name.

4.41 If a joint tenant leaves without terminating the tenancy, the remaining joint tenant can continue living at the property, until a Termination Notice is received. The outgoing tenant is equally responsible for the property, and any rent due, while the tenancy remains joint.

4.42 If one tenant of an existing joint tenancy has given notice to terminate the tenancy, the remaining joint tenant may ask for the tenancy in his/her own right under the Relationship Change Policy. As long as this is dealt with before the joint tenancy ends.

4.43 The property must be suitable for their requirements in which they are not considered to have 'reasonable preference' such as:

- Homelessness
- Insanitary or overcrowding or unsatisfactory housing conditions
- Medical or welfare reasons

4.44 If the property is not suitable, the remaining joint tenant will have to register for re-housing with Leicester HomeChoice and will be subject to eligibility checks under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996.

4.45 Applicants who are not tenants, but who are applying for a joint tenancy under the Relationship Change Policy, must apply under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 and will be subject to eligibility checks. This is because a tenancy given in such circumstances is not exempt from the allocation provisions in the Housing Act 1996.

4.46 If an application doesn't meet the qualifying criteria the officer will provide the necessary advice, help and assistance. A Use and Occupation account will be created enabling the applicant to continue to reside at the property and carry out further investigations.

4.47 We will look to avoid creating a situation where a person (or family) is made homeless and will look to make best use of our housing stock and resources.

5. Number of cases

5.1 The division manages approximately 19,300 tenanted properties, a figure which has steadily declined from around 21,000 in 2017.

The number of successions carried out on an annual basis since 2018¹ is:

- 2018 150
- 2019 163
- 2020 129
- 2021 141
- 2022 160
- 2023 145
- 2024 133

The number of name change applications completed on an annual basis since 2018¹ is:

- 2018 105
- 2019 126
- 2020 63
- 2021 112
- 2022 82
- 2023 92
- 2024 80

The number of sole to joint tenancy changes completed on an annual basis since 2018¹ is:

- 2018 108
- 2019 146
- 2020 69
- 2021 114
- 2022 163
- 2023 149
- 2024 105

¹ Prior to 2018, a different ICT system was in use, and the method of recording succession was different. The data is held on the legacy/archive system

The number of joint to sole tenancy changes completed on an annual basis since 2018¹ is:

- 2018 70
- 2019 114
- 2020 112
- 2021 92
- 2022 97
- 2023 107
- 2024 81

5.2 An approximate average of succession is 150 per annum (three per week) so succession happens in around 0.75% of properties every year.

5.3 Where the division is notified of the death of a tenant, generally through the weekly list from the registrar, we will start investigations. In some cases, the executors will serve a Notice to Quit (NTQ) which ends the tenancy. In other cases, an investigation may be necessary to determine if the property still has occupants.

5.4 There are several possible outcomes for this:

- Where there is a person in the property who succeeds to the tenancy, then the necessary paperwork is completed, and the tenancy continues in the successor's name.
- There is no one left in the property. The tenancy is brought to an end and the property is relet.
- There are occupants in the property who are relatives of the deceased, and do not qualify to succeed. In this case, if the occupants would qualify for the property under the terms of the allocation policy. In these cases, a request is made to make a direct allocation which is considered by Head of Service.
- There are occupants in the property who do not qualify to succeed, and the property is not suitable for their needs. We will consider the individual circumstances and look to recover possession of the property so it can be relet. In some cases, we will find suitable alternative accommodation (such as a one bed flat) for the remaining person via a direct allocation. In some cases, we have no duty towards the remaining person, and we will ask them to leave. If they do not do so we will apply for possession order in the Court.

5.5 In terms of other instances where a tenant death leads to a tenancy change, the figures since 2020 are:
 (note, the figures for 2018 and 2019 appear to be low due to under-recording and a change of process so are not included below)

Year	Deceased tenant	Unlawful occupation	Succession
2020	429	42	129
2021	440	40	141
2022	480	45	160
2023	392	37	145
2024	402	47	133

5.6 As can be seen from the above figures, in around 10% of cases action is needed to deal with an occupier in the property who has no rights to remain there, and in around a third of cases there is a succession.

5.7 However, it is not possible to take from the figures alone what the effect of the succession is on housing stock i.e. if the succession was to someone other than the spouse.

5.8 In terms of property type, there have been 709 successions since 1 Jan 2020, of these:

Property type	Bedroom	Number	% of total
GN bungalow	1	133	18.7 %
GN flat	1	66	9.3 %
Sheltered flat	1	5	0.7 %
GN bungalow	2	13	1.8 %
GN flat	2	36	5.1 %
GN house	2	71	10.0 %
GN maisonette	2	28	3.9 %
Supported house	2	1	0.1%
GN bungalow	3	3	0.4 %
GN flat	3	2	0.3 %
GN house	3	291	40.9 %
GN maisonette	3	29	4.1 %
GN House	4	23	3.2 %
GN House	5	7	1.0 %
GN House	6	1	0.1 %

5.9 It is of note that 46% of successions have taken place in three-bed properties and 21% in two bed homes, both of which are in very high demand.

5.10 It is recommended that the policies are reviewed to bring Leicester into line with the current legislation and follow best practice adopted by other social landlords. The existing policies were last reviewed in 2017, and best practice suggests that policies should be reviewed every 3 – 5 years. There are already existing processes in place which allow an allocation to another family member where the property is suitable for their needs, and any amendments to these policies would also require that these processes are strengthened and clarified.

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

5.1 Financial implications

There are no significant financial implications arising from the contents of this report.

Signed: Jade Draper, Principal Accountant

Dated: 28/01/2025

5.2 Legal implications

The legislative background is as follows.

**Succession rights for tenancies granted pre-April 2012 are governed by S. 87 Housing Act 1985 (now repealed post 2012).
Persons qualified to succeed tenant.**

A person is qualified to succeed the tenant under a secure tenancy if he occupies the dwelling-house as his only or principal home at the time of the tenant's death and either—

(a) he is the tenant's spouse [or civil partner] , or

(b) he is another member of the tenant's family and has resided with the tenant throughout the period of twelve months ending with the tenant's death;

unless, in either case, the tenant was himself a successor, as defined in section 88.

**Succession rights for tenancies granted post April 2012 are governed by S. 86A of the Housing Act 1985
Persons qualified to succeed tenant**

(1) A person ("P") is qualified to succeed the tenant under a secure tenancy of a dwelling-house in England if—

(a) P occupies the dwelling-house as P's only or principal home at the time of the tenant's death, and

(b) P is the tenant's spouse or civil partner.

(2) A person ("P") is qualified to succeed the tenant under a secure tenancy of a dwelling-house in England if—

(a) at the time of the tenant's death the dwelling-house is not occupied by a spouse or civil partner of the tenant as his or her only or principal home,

(b) an express term of the tenancy makes provision for a person other than such a spouse or civil partner of the tenant to succeed to the tenancy, and

(c) P's succession is in accordance with that term.

(3) Subsection (1) or (2) does not apply if the tenant was a successor as defined in section 88.

(4) In such a case, a person ("P") is qualified to succeed the tenant if—

(a) an express term of the tenancy makes provision for a person to succeed a successor to the tenancy, and

(b) P's succession is in accordance with that term.

The legislation is clear on who is entitled to succeed and the criteria to be applied. LCC's policy on allowing other members of the deceased's family to succeed is contained at Part 5.6 of the LCC's Terms and Conditions of Tenancy 2020. These refer to the Council's succession policy (which is assumed to be the provisions of the Tenancy Policy relating to succession) and state as follows:-

A person can only succeed to a secure or flexible tenancy if they were occupying the dwelling as their only or principal home at the time of the tenant's death. Temporary absence from the dwelling at the time of death or exclusion under a court order (for example, an occupation order) does not prevent the condition being satisfied. Entitlement to succeed a tenancy, depends upon when the tenancy started.

The conditions of the legislation pre and post April 2012 are thereafter repeated.

The Terms and Conditions of Tenancy 2020 state (inter alia):-

5.6.1

Your tenancy may pass onto someone else after your death. This is called succession. Your tenancy may be passed to your husband, wife or civil partner or anyone living with you in such a relationship at the time of death.

If your tenancy was passed on to you following the death of someone else, you cannot pass the tenancy on again to another person following your death.

5.6.2

If there is no husband, wife or civil partner the tenancy may be passed to another member of your family who has lived with you for at least 12 months before your death in line with our Succession Policy.

The Terms and Conditions refer to a succession policy, however it is noted that there is no such policy document available.

A more controversial point arises in cases where a previous succession has already taken place, and the spouse / civil partner or other family member seeks to succeed the tenancy. In these instances, the legislation does not allow a further succession however some Council's do operate a 'discretionary' scheme which goes beyond the ambit of the

legislation (such discretion is not allowed under the legislation) in a bid to take a reasonable approach.

At the moment it is unclear whether LCC has such discretionary policies in place, however if they are available, they must be reasonable and applicable fairly to all applicants in such circumstances (case of *Holley v Hillingdon LBC* 2016).

It is recommended that a clear separate policy document is prepared which sets out the Council's position with respect to succession in line with the legislation and to cater for circumstances where the Council is likely to (or not) exercise discretion as above.

Signed: Shazmina Ghumra

Dated: 31 January 2025

5.3 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.

The briefing provides details of the Council's succession policy and gives an overview of the legislation which needs to be followed. Having a clear policy that is in line with current legislation and clarifies the rights and status of all tenants should lead to positive impacts for people from across all protected characteristics. As should improved operational practice and understanding of the terms and conditions: setting out the rights and responsibilities of both council tenants and the council (as a social landlord).

It is important to ensure equality considerations are taken into account as an integral part of any review of procedures - It is recommended that Equality Impact Assessments is carried out. Carrying out an EIA is an iterative process, which should be revisited throughout the process and updated to reflect any feedback/changes due to consultation as appropriate. The EIA findings should be shared with decision makers, throughout the process, in order to inform their considerations and used as a tool to aid consideration around whether we are meeting the aims of the PSED.

Any consultation with stakeholders in relation to any changes to the policy must be fair, transparent and accessible.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh

Dated: 30 January 2025

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

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

Signed: Duncan Bell, Change Manager (Climate Emergency). Ext. 37 2249

Dated: 29.01.25

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

6. Background information and other papers:

7. Summary of appendices:

8. 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)?

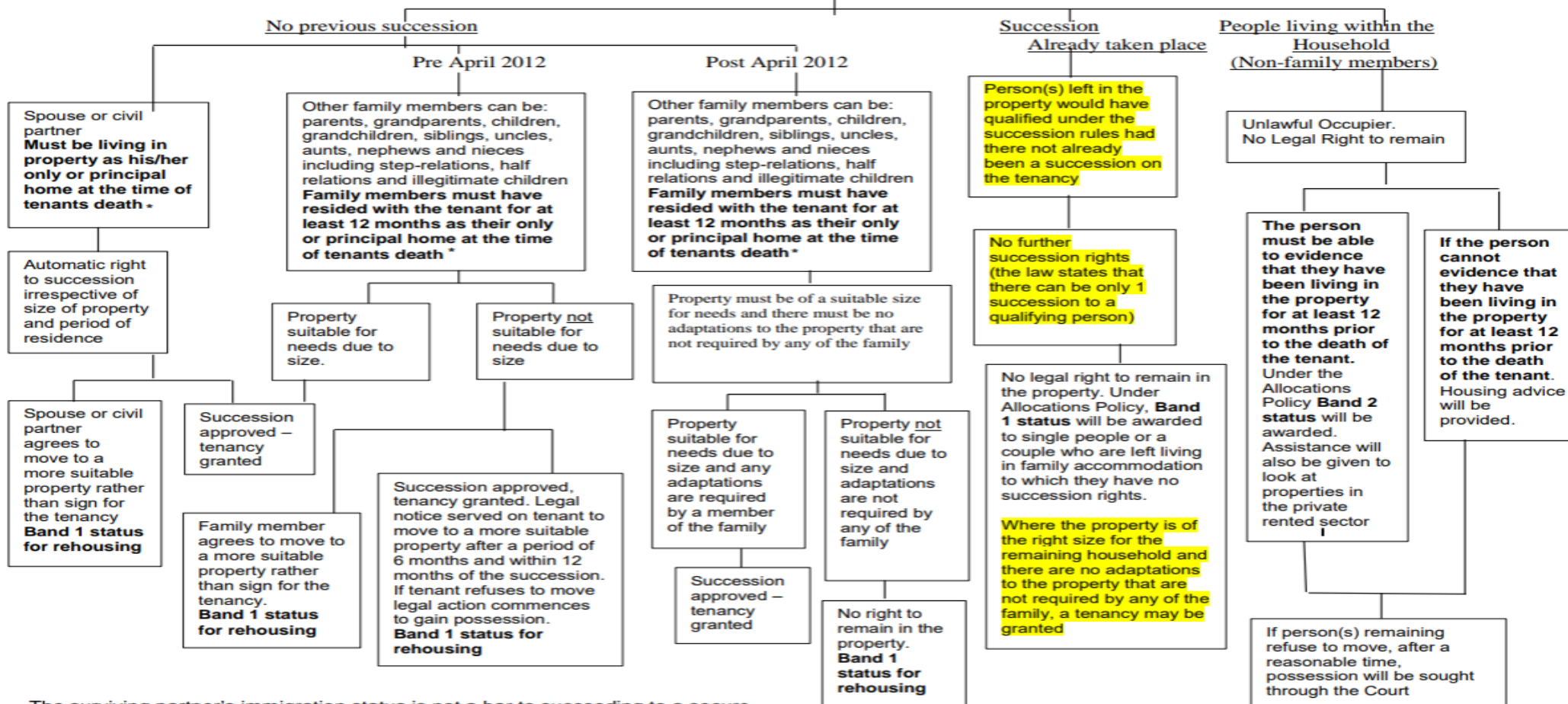
9. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?

Appendix 1

(Version produced 26.4.2013)

Guidance notes for where a person(s) has been left in a Council owned property following the death of the tenant

Death of Tenant



23

*The surviving partner's immigration status is not a bar to succeeding to a secure tenancy. Spouses and civil partners will succeed to a tenancy regardless of their immigration status. The same also applies to a qualifying family member.

Housing Division Tenant Engagement Strategy

Decision to be taken by:

Housing Scrutiny Commission: 18 March 2025

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Cutkelvin

Lead director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Nick Griffiths
- Author contact details: Ext 37 6258. Nick.griffiths@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: Ver 1.4

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the formation of a Divisional Engagement and Communication Strategy for the Tenants and Leaseholders who live in properties owned and managed by Leicester City Council.
- 1.2. The report also seeks to provide assurance on the progress made in setting up a robust structure so that tenants are able to scrutinise services, help shape service delivery, influence decision making and hold their landlord to account and that the division communicates effectively on important matters with residents.

2. Recommended actions / decisions.

- 2.1. That the revised approach of the engagement and communication strategy as set out in paragraph five (5) is approved.
- 2.2. That it is noted that the strategy is part of a phased approach to improving engagement with customers in Leicester.
- 2.3. The success of the strategy will be measured by the Annual Tenancy Satisfaction Measures (TSM) survey with an aim to improve satisfaction incrementally.
- 2.4. To note that the attached draft strategy is currently out for consultation.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement.

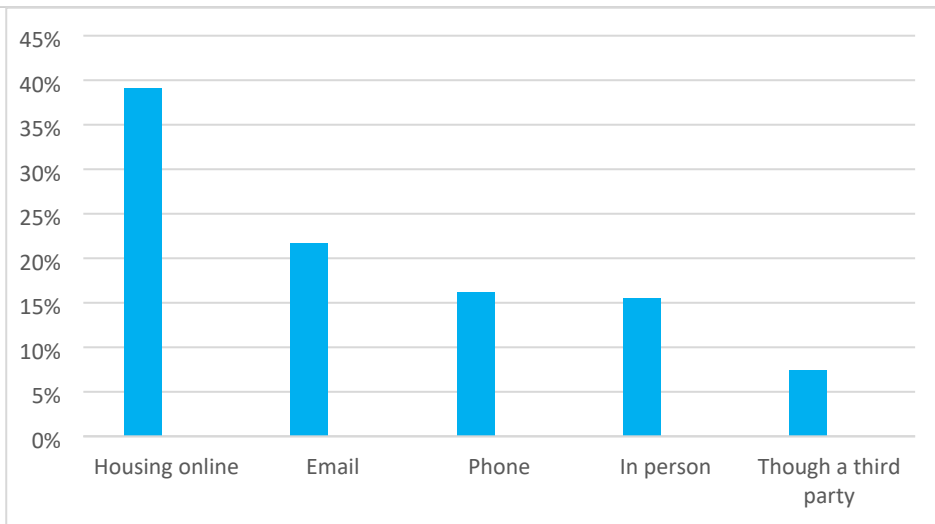
- 3.1. As part of our work, we have researched good practice around tenant engagement. A number of activities, at various levels, have been identified that could be included in our new engagement structure. These include completing surveys, carrying out consultations, Tenant and Resident Associations, community champions, themed groups e.g. around repairs and maintenance or sheltered housing, digital champions, a communication review group, estate walkabouts, mystery shopping and performance review groups. However, rather than officers imposing a new structure, it is essential that tenants (and leaseholders) are central to devising any strategy, action plan and structure for future engagement and communication activities, to ensure this meets the specific needs of tenants in Leicester.
- 3.2. In 2023, the division undertook the first annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) survey. In that survey, 40.2% of tenants felt that they were listened to and 46.8% thought that we kept them informed on important issues. This outcome has led to the need to revise the approach taken with engagement and communication.
- 3.3. Before any decision could be made, the views of customers was sought in a period of pre-engagement. This period was used to gather thoughts and ideas from tenants (and leaseholders), which will be taken forward to shape and inform both the

engagement and communication strategies. Alongside this, the lead member for housing spoke to front-line tenancy management teams to gather their views of the staff delivering services and the best way to get tenants involved in the sessions. Neighbourhood Housing Officers (NHO) tend to have the closest relationships with tenants and communities and have local knowledge of resident advocates and issues that tenants are concerned about.

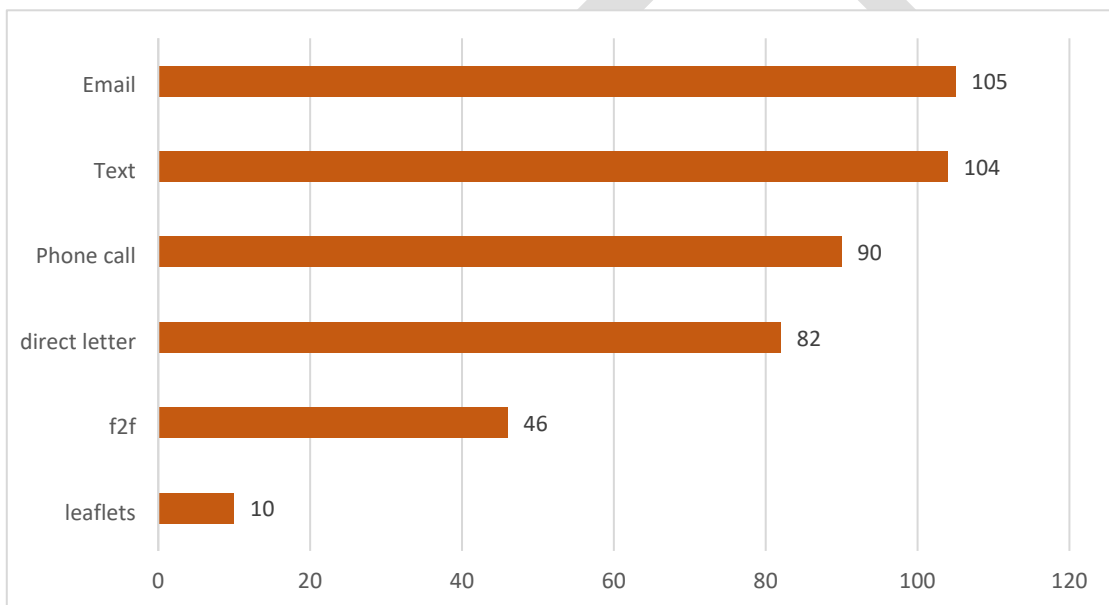
- 3.4. This took place over three weeks in September 2024 by inviting all tenants to attend one of a series of drop-in sessions. These were held at six locations across the city: Tudor Centre, BRITE centre, New Park Library, Eyres Monsell CC, St Matthews CC and Thurnby Lodge Centre. These locations were chosen as they are close to many of the council estates. On each day two sessions were held at different times to enable people with caring and work responsibilities to attend. Session, one ran from 14:00 to 16:00 and session two at 17:00 to 19:00.
- 3.5. At each of the sessions, council staff were on hand to speak to tenants on a one-on-one basis, where views were sought on their thoughts, needs and wants on the future direction of engagement and communication using an engagement survey.
- 3.6. While we believe this methodology captured as many tenants as we could, there will inevitably be some demographics who were not able to feed into the pre-engagement period. For those with mobility issues, it is anticipated that as the new engagement structure takes shape a variety of opportunities to be engaged with division will emerge, which will allow access to services for all demographics and customers.
- 3.7. Over the six sessions there were 181 responses from tenants. This gives a degree of confidence of 80% with a margin of error of 5%. There were some others who attended, mainly people who are on the waiting list and bidding for properties, and a small number from the PRS sector. While these enquires were dealt with on the day, no surveys were conducted as they were not tenants.
- 3.8. For 54% of tenants, the contact preferences for service updates (i.e. services which are being actively delivered) were either by email or text with 23% opting for phone.

How would you prefer us to contact you?		
Row Labels		%
Email	79	44%
Letter	43	24%
Phone	41	23%
Text	18	10%
Grand Total	181	

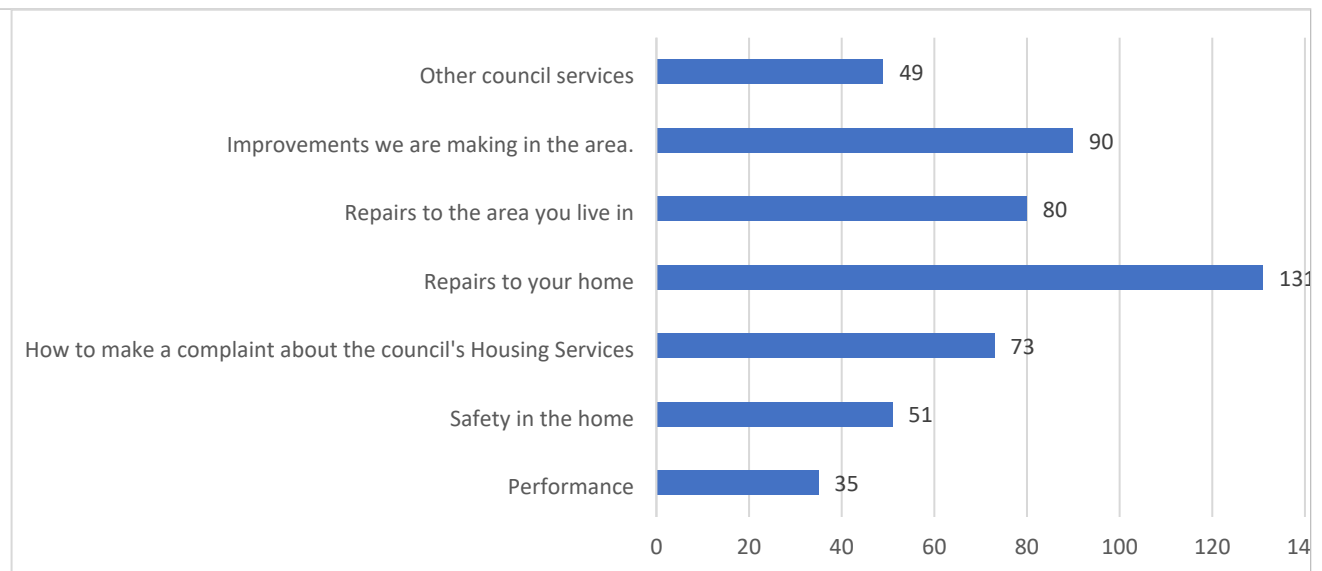
- 3.9. 71% of tenants had access to a mobile phone, with just over half (51%) using apps on a regular basis and 65% of respondents having full internet access at home. 56% of tenants stated they felt confident using emails.
- 3.10. When asked how tenants normally contacted the division, there were 161 replies. The use of housing online was most popular, followed by email, with phone in third position, closely followed by in person.



3.11. When asked about methods for receiving information from the Housing Division, email was the highest preference, followed by text/WhatsApp and then phone call.



3.12. In terms of what information tenants wanted, an overwhelming number wanted information about repairs, either to the home or to the area they live in, followed by information about improvements to the area.



3.13. Finally, tenants were asked about how they wanted to be more engaged with the division in the future, and if yes, what form of engagement they would prefer. The highest options chosen were attending in person events, community events and taking part in surveys.



3.14. In the survey, people were offered the opportunity to make comments on some of the reasoning behind their responses, and these have been collated into several themes:

3.14.1. When asked about receiving service updates, most responses were about keeping people more informed when they have an active call for service in progress. These include comments about getting more regular updates, the difficulties on getting through on the phone lines and not knowing or being able to contact the Neighbourhood Housing officer (NHO)

3.14.2. A number of tenants specifically stated they wanted more face-to-face opportunities.

3.15. From the conversations, it also became clear that one size does not fit all for customers. For some repairs it is easy to use Housing On-line, but sometimes there is a need to communicate directly, for example to explain and understand more difficult concepts.

4. Background and options with supporting evidence.

4.1. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act received Royal Assent in July 2023. This significantly increased the role and powers of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) to create a more proactive management regime for all providers of social housing. The Act also introduced a set of consumer standards which the RSH will use to assess performance and outcomes for customers. All social landlords are now subject to regulation from 1 April 2024, regardless of size, location or type.

4.2. Through the new Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard the Regulator states that “the requirement for effective resident engagement recognises that the method used will need to vary to meet a range of need and interests and others wanting to be kept informed. Landlords need to identify the most appropriate methods for their organisation and their tenants and make effective use of the information they get from engagement when making decisions about how landlord services are delivered.

4.3. In addition, landlords must provide information on services by “*communicating with tenants and provide information so tenants can use landlord services, understand what to expect from their landlord, and hold their landlord to account*” and ensure residents understand and are aware of performance by “*collecting and providing information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord’s performance in delivering landlord services*”.

4.4. It is important to note that in the same way as the Housing Division must comply with other pieces of legislation such as the Housing Acts (1985, 1996) and the Landlord and Tenant Act (1985), it must also comply with the consumer standards and regulatory regime.

4.5. Sitting alongside the regulatory requirements is a revised Code of Practice, which the RSH expects all landlords to have due regard to the code when designing and delivering services. It is of note that the code of guidance specifically references the role that members have in seeking assistance that tenants’ views are at the heart of the decision-making processes. The relevant paragraphs are set out below:

4.5.1. *Genuine consideration of tenants’ views should be at the heart of registered providers’ different levels of decision-making about the delivery of landlord services. This may include, for example, in relation to agreeing their asset management strategy, the setting of service standards, agreeing responsive repair timescales and setting performance targets for different landlord services.*

4.5.2. *Tenant’ views can be gathered in different ways. Boards and councillors of registered providers should assure themselves that tenants’ views have been actively sought and considered as part of their decision-making about their organisation’s landlord services. Registered providers should also communicate to tenants how tenants’ views have been taken into account in their decision making about how landlord services are delivered. In addition, consideration of how to improve and tailor landlord service across all areas of service delivery.*

- 4.5.3. *Registered providers should take reasonable steps to ensure that all tenants have an equitable opportunity to be involved in influencing and scrutinising strategies, policies and services, taking into account the diverse needs of tenants.*
- 4.6. Our current engagement structure enables tenants and leaseholders to be involved in a range of activities, such as:
- The Tenant and Leaseholder Forum.
 - Local Tenant and Resident Associations (TARA)
 - Leasehold Forum
 - Estate Inspections
 - Responding to surveys for example through our annual survey and transactional surveys such as on completion of a repair.
 - Having an input on proposed improvement to estates through the environmental budget.
 - Engagement with customers who live in High-Risk residential buildings (HRRB)
- 4.7. We also carry out ad-hoc engagement, for example, when conducting an ASB survey or engaging residents when carrying out estate improvements. Examples of this over the past year include:
- Consultation with residents at Gisbourne Court, Oransay Road and Gresley Close in relation to the refurbishment of external bin stores,
 - Seeking views from tenants in the St Peters area about a new parking scheme
 - Consulting with tenants in Framland House and Netherhall Road to gain their views to address anti-social behaviour in the area.
 - Consulting with tenants across the city to ask for projects to be put forward for the Environmental Budget
 - Consultation with tenants on the District Heating Scheme as part of the metering project
 - Consulting with residents of our tower block to form the HRRB engagement and communication strategy
- 4.8. The Tenant and Leasehold Forum has been in place for a number of years. Views are sought from the Forum on key changes to services before these are implemented, for example repairs reporting through Housing Online. The Forum is also consulted annually on the proposed Housing Revenue Account budget and their views are fed into the report as part of the decision-making process. However, membership of the forum has declined over the years, making meaningful engagement more challenging.
- 4.9. We engage with a small number of Tenant and Resident Associations (TARA) across the city with the St Matthews, St Peters and Braunstone Frith Tenant Associations being the most active. We also have some informal groups of tenants we engage with, notably in New Parks and Saffron. Officers have been working to identify residents who may want to be more actively involved and through this work.

Arrangements are being made to set up new Tenant Associations for the Burns Flats and at St Leonard's Court.

- 4.10. Separate forums for leaseholders are held on a regular basis to seek the views of this specific group of residents. Leaseholders were involved in the production of the revised Leaseholder's Handbook, and their views were sought separately on engagement and communication opportunities.
- 4.11. In some areas, formal Estate Inspections are carried out, and residents are invited to attend and participate in these events. The inspections are targeted to areas and estates which have a particular need or issues.
- 4.12. However, we need to revise and refresh our approach to both engagement and how we communicate with tenants to demonstrate we meet the requirements of the Consumer Standards. Setting up a comprehensive structure with a ladder of engagement opportunities should be seen as a medium-term process spread over several years. Once the foundations of engagement are laid, we will then be able to set up a Tenant's Scrutiny Panel.

5. Detailed proposal and considerations.

- 5.1. The results of the engagement sessions have been analysed, and there are three main conclusions that can be drawn:
 - Providing opportunities for tenants to speak to staff face to face.
 - Improve communications with tenants, for service updates and more regular updates on other issues and performance.
 - More use of emails / text / Whatsapp.
- 5.2. Considering the anticipated time scales and work involved, the engagement strategy will take incremental steps to build the engagement structure, taking residents views and needs into account at each stage.
- 5.3. The first stage of the engagement strategy, reflecting on the recent feedback received, will be to offer a series of "Pop-up Housing Offices" to be held at community venues on estates where LCC has housing stock. These will be in existing LCC facilities, in community centres and libraries which tend to be in the heart of estates or have easy access for tenants. Publicity for these is attached at Appendix 2.
- 5.4. A proposal has been put forward to recruit three District Engagement Officers (DEO) who will be responsible for arranging and coordinating the Pop-up Offices. These staff will be co-located with the three district teams in the East, South and West of the City.
- 5.5. The Pop-ups will be an opportunity for tenants to interact with Housing Division staff from different services, for example repairs, tenancy management, rent and support. In addition, they will provide an opportunity for us to engage with residents about local issues, particular to each area, and for tenants to provide feedback on services. It is envisaged that the DEOs will then be able to form a network of local champions/engaged residents, which will provide the foundation of more intensive engagement over the next 18-24 months.
- 5.6. It is recognised that some Pop-ups may be more successful than others, so the model and methodology employed will be kept under review. Each area will need a

bespoke solution to engage with local residents specific to their needs. We will ensure that we have access to community language speakers and all the venues are accessible.

- 5.7. Once the Pop-ups are established, the DEOs will have a better idea of the levels of enthusiasm for further engagement, for example by assisting people to form TARAs or become a community/block champion.
- 5.8. The DEOs will also work closely with the corporate “Let’s Get Together” initiative to encourage tenants to participate in existing services to combat social isolation and improve life skills. This will include a session on upskilling digital confidence and link in with corporate initiatives such as Leading Better Lives.
- 5.9. Taking this approach to build up capacity over a period of time will allow the division to shape the future engagement structure and build a ladder of opportunity, which meets the needs of the diverse demographic in the City.
- 5.10. We will measure the success of the Pop-up offices by measuring customer satisfaction at both a transactional level and through the annual TSM survey. Our target is to achieve at least median satisfaction¹ with TM06 “*how satisfied or dissatisfied are you that the Housing Division listens to your views and acts on them*”.
- 5.11. Customer’s feedback on communication was clear in that they wanted this to be improved, so in parallel to the Pop-up offices, the division will review communication and information sent out to customers. Feedback has suggested that tenants want more frequent updates on service requests, for example when they make contact with the NHO (or any other service request) they want to know the enquiry has been received. A number of years ago calls for service were acknowledged by a letter, but the cost of sending out several hundred letters per week is prohibitively expensive. We are currently looking at alternatives such as text messages or automated e-mails.
- 5.12. Following upgrades to our main computer system, NEC, it is possible to send a semi-automated email following the logging of a call, and this option will be explored in more detail over the coming months. It is also possible to send a SMS (text) message directly from a customer’s account, which is saved as a notepad entry so the records are kept. This would be an advantage over the current practice of using work mobiles to send SMS messages as there is greater visibility. From our recent engagement work we found that over 70% of tenants owned a mobile phone which they used on a regular basis.
- 5.13. We will also be reviewing the standard letters and information we send out to tenants on an annual basis, so that we can maximise value by using already scheduled mail-outs, such as the annual rent letters, to include pertinent information to customers. We already do this on an ad-hoc basis, but moving forward we want this to be more coordinated and planned.
- 5.14. We will also look at what information is provided, when it is provided, and the method used. The recent engagement survey set out that a majority of tenants wanted to be contacted by email or text (including WhatsApp), with some people wanting a letter or written communication. Our strategy will set out an approach to collecting communication preference information from all of our tenants and leaseholders, so that systems can be updated accordingly, and future communication can be delivered in a more considered and bespoke manner.

¹ Median satisfaction will be measured against the satisfaction results of comparable landlords, measured through the annual perception survey carried out by all social landlords and published by the RSH in the Autumn of each year.

- 5.15. Safety is a priority for us as a landlord, and it is also an important aspect for tenants' lives. During the survey, around one third of respondents wanted more information on safety in the home. Additionally, as part of changes brought about by the Building Safety Act, we need to be communicating with residents who live in flats to ensure they have been provided with regular updates on important issues, such as fire doors, testing fire alarms and the stay put/evacuate policy.
- 5.16. The third strand of the strategy will cover how the Housing Division is an integral part of the City Council as a whole and is involved in a number of corporate initiatives such as healthy weight and smoking reduction. Moving forward, the division will encourage tenants to get involved by using regular updates and communication channels with our residents. As we develop the strategy and Pop-ups, other divisions will be invited to attend to share knowledge and information about other local series such as adult education, warm space, libraries and other initiatives of relevance.
- 5.17. We will measure the success of the communication strategy by measuring customer satisfaction at both a transactional level and through the annual TSM survey. Our target is to achieve at least median satisfaction with TM07 *"How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that the Housing Division keeps you informed about things that matter to you?"*.
- 5.18. The final part of the strategy sets out the additional steps we intend to take in future years to consolidate the engagement structure at a strategic level. This will include opportunities for tenants to be involved in such areas as scrutinising our performance, be involved in reviewing and setting policy statements, be involved in the HRA budget setting process and assisting in making decision on planned maintenance issues and upgrades. As part of this, there is a requirement to adequately train tenants, and their skill sets are developed to enable them to take part in meaningful discussion and decision-making processes.
- 5.19. We will further explore this over the next final year and make decisions around setting up a "tenant academy" or similar training scheme so that our tenants are able to play a full part in delivering services.

Next Steps

- 5.20 An engagement plan to implement the strategy and an Equality Impact Assessment, will be informed and developed through the current consultation process.

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

6.1 Financial implications

There are limited financial implications arising from the report. However, if the recruitment of three District Engagement Officers is agreed then appropriate budget will need to be available to fund these posts. In line with internal procedures, finance will be consulted to ensure this happens.

Signed: Jade Draper, Principal Accountant

Dated: 27/01/2025

6.2 Legal implications

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2024 imposes obligations on all social landlords to meet new standards to:

- ensure tenants are safe in their homes;
- listen to tenants' complaints and respond promptly;
- be accountable to tenants and treat them with fairness and respect;
- know more about the condition of every home and the needs of those living in them;
- collect and use data effectively across a range of areas, including repairs.

The report provides an update on the steps the council has taken and is taking to ensure compliance with the legislation.

Signed: Jeremy Rainbow

Dated: 2 December 2024

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.

The report provides an update on the development of a Divisional Engagement and Communication Strategy for Tenants and Leaseholders who live in properties owned and managed by Leicester City Council and seeks approval for the revised approach of the engagement and communication strategy as set out in paragraph five of this report. If approved this would impact tenants and leaseholders who will be from across a range of protected characteristics and take into account, the demographic profile of the city.

To ensure equality impacts are being taken into account as an integral part of the decision-making process, it is recommended that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) be carried out on the proposed consultation of the strategy. This ties in with feedback from the pre-engagement sessions which took place with tenants and leaseholders and forms the basis of the work going forward on the strategy as cited in section five. It ensures that tenants and leaseholders are kept informed and have an opportunity to engage with Housing staff and in the longer-term other council services.

Carrying out an EIA is an iterative process, and the EIA should be revisited throughout the decision-making process and updated to reflect any feedback/changes due to consultation as appropriate. The EIA findings should be shared with decision makers, throughout the process, to inform their thinking and used as a tool to aid consideration around whether we are meeting the aims of the PSED.

Signed: Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer

Dated: 4 December 2024

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are limited climate emergency implications directly associated with this report. More widely, as housing a significant source of emissions in Leicester, engagement with tenants should consider opportunities to provide information on advice and support around energy efficiency, to assist occupants in reducing their carbon emissions and energy bills.

Signed: Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

Dated: 2 December 2024

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:

8. Summary of appendices:

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

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

Leicester City Council Housing Division	 Leicester City Council
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Engagement and Communication Strategy 2025

Version control

Version	Date	Changes	Owner
1.0	October 2024	Created	
1.1	November 2024	Amended	
1.2	January 2025	Comms amended	MB
1.3	January 2025	Amended	GM

Version Notes

Revision to version annotated by decimal places.
Review, increase integer.

1. Introduction

- 5.20. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 gave the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) enforcement powers to ensure social housing providers provide good quality services to their tenants. The Act introduced standards to help the RSH assess performance and outcomes for customers. From 1 April 2024, all social landlords have been regulated, no matter their size, location, or type.
- 5.21. The new Transparency, Influence, and Accountability Standard highlights the need for effective resident engagement. The Regulator states that landlords should adapt their engagement methods to meet different needs and interests. Landlords must choose the best methods for their tenants and organisation and use the feedback they receive to improve how they deliver services.
- 5.22. The RSH concentrates on services delivered to tenants. However, in Leicester we have responsibility for our leaseholders too, and we will treat leaseholders in the same way as tenants, providing opportunities for them to interact, scrutinise, engage and influence services.
- 5.23. We use the term “resident” in this strategy to refer to all of our tenants and leaseholders.
- 5.24. The vision for this strategy is to:
- Engage more with residents
 - Provide residents with a range of opportunities to interact with us to provide feedback
 - Listen to our residents and let them know how they have influenced our decisions
 - Improve what and how we communicate with residents
 - Be open and honest about our services and performance
 - Meet all our regulatory standards.

2. Priorities

- 2.1. Following the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) survey in 2023, we carried out an extensive engagement exercise with our residents in late 2024. We spoke to over 200 residents (181 tenants and 31 leaseholders) and asked a range of questions about what was important to them. The main themes identified were:
- Residents wanted more information and updates on services, particularly repairs to the home and in the area they live in
 - Residents wanted more opportunities to speak face to face with a member of staff.
 - Improved communication on performance updates and important information
 - Better use of email and text messaging.

3. Strategy themes

- 3.1. This strategy is broken down into five broad themes, based on what our residents have told us.
- 3.2. There are parts of each theme which are intertwined and interdependent which will be reflected in our action plan.

4. Theme one - opportunities to interact.

We will offer a range of engagement opportunities and ways to request services.

We will do this by

- Exploring options to enable us to offer a wide range opportunity to interact with us, including online, on the phone and in person (face to face)
- Updating and enhancing our online offer
- Recruiting dedicated engagement officers
- Embed engagement in our services and processes.

5. Theme two – engagement structures, influence, accountability and scrutiny.

5.1. We will work with residents to set up a ladder of opportunities to be engaged with the division. These will include:

- Local engagement opportunities
 - TARA
 - Block champion
 - Street champions
- Offering local focus groups
- Setting up and refreshing local tenant panels
- Creating policy review (task and finish) groups
- Mystery shopping.

5.2. As we develop our engagement structures, we will create opportunities for residents to work with us at a strategic level by:

- Creating an overarching Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP)
- Reporting our performance to the TSP on a regular basis
- Consulting with the TSP when we make decisions on policy matters
- Involving the TSP in setting our HRA budgets
- Ensuring the TSP is embedded in our governance and oversight processes.

6. Theme three – communications

- We will look at how we interact with customers
- Look at how we can make it easier to report issues to us
- Look at how we can make it easier for tenants to get updates when they have an issue we are dealing with
- Promote opportunities to use technology and offer training when needed
- Gather information on resident's preferred contact methods
- Review our regular contacts with residents and make sure the information is relevant and easy to understand
- Explore how we use text, email and WhatsApp to both deliver service updates and to inform tenants on important issues.

7. Theme four – working with other departments.

We will work with a range of internal departments and external partners to deliver services to enhance and enrich the lives of our tenants and ensure we promote these services appropriately, for example:

- Let's Get Together – free activities delivered in community centres, libraries and museums
- Leading Better Lives
- Healthy Weight
- Warm Welcome – offering warm spaces to relax, enjoy a puzzle, free WiFi and refreshments
- Adult Learning
- Anti-tobacco
- Community Safety and the Police.

8. Theme five – educating, training and empowering.

We will provide tailored training to residents so they can participate in discussions, review our performance, and take an active role in decision-making.



Pop up Housing Offices for Leicester City Council Tenants

Have your say!

From March 2025, we will be running a one year pilot of pop up housing offices. Your housing officer will be on site to answer any housing enquires you have and provide any further advice and assistance.

So please pop along and speak to a member of our team at any one of the local pop-up housing offices. We will be open at 11.00am to 3.00pm every week from March 2025 onwards on the following days. Every Tuesday at New Parks Library and the Tudor Centre. Every Wednesday at Pork Pie Library and The BRITE Centre and every Thursday at the St Matthews Centre and the Thurnby Lodge Community Centre - see below table.

New Parks Library 321 Aikman Avenue LE3 9PW	Tuesdays	11am – 3pm
Tudor Centre Bewcastle Grove, LE4 2JU	Tuesdays	11am – 3pm
Pork Pie Library Southfields Drive (Pork Pie Island), LE2 6QS	Wednesdays	11am – 3pm
The BRITE Centre 130 Braunstone Avenue, LE3 1LE	Wednesdays	11am – 3pm
St Matthews Centre 10 Malabar Road, LE1 2PD	Thursdays	11am – 3pm
Thurnby Lodge Community Centre Thurncourt Rd, LE5 2NG	Thursdays	11am – 3pm

If you would like to learn more about these sessions, please contact us on Tel: 0116 454 5133.



Update on the Housing Crisis Declaration and Action Plan

Housing Scrutiny Commission- 18th March 2025

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

Useful information

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

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Council declared a Housing crisis on the 24th November 2022.
- 1.2 This report provides a progress update to the Housing Scrutiny commission setting out progress on delivery of the Housing Crisis actions.
- 1.3 Overall, good progress has been made with the delivery of the action plan, out of a total of 16 LCC actions 11 have now been completed and are business as usual and 5 are in progress.
- 1.4 Again, overall good progress has been made with the delivery of the action plan associated to Government demands. Out of 16 demands, 12 are in progress and 4 have been completed. All actions are progressing positively and are expected to complete through 2025.

2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1 To note the progress made with the Housing Crisis Actions and provide any comments and feedback.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

- 3.1 Report is solely for Housing Scrutiny commission consideration

4. Detailed report

- 4.1 In November 2022 Leicester City Council declared a Housing crisis calling for urgent action from central Government to ease pressure caused by the growing demand for affordable, decent housing.
- 4.2 Factors including the loss of thousands of council homes under the Government's Right to Buy scheme, a growing population and the cost of living crisis mean that thousands of families in the city are in desperate need of homes.
- 4.2 In advance of the declaration the Housing Scrutiny committee undertook a task group on the matter, chaired by Cllr Stephen Gee. The outcome of this Task Group was a number of recommended actions required of government and of Leicester City Council. The recommendations report is embedded in Appendix 3.

4.3 This report provides a progress update to the Housing Scrutiny commission setting out progress on delivery of the Housing Crisis actions after the last report was provided on the 12th March 2024.

Leicester City Council Actions

4.4 A full table containing the 16 actions required of Leicester City Council is contained within Appendix 1.

4.5 Overall, good progress has been made with the delivery of the action plan, out of a total of 16 LCC actions 11 have been completed and 5 are in progress.

4.6 To draw out headline progress;

Maximise Council Housing Delivery

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

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

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

Trainer accommodation units being developed as part of the ZIP acquisition. A report was submitted and approved at Full Council to deliver 225 Temporary accommodation homes and 125 leased properties at a cost of £45m in February 2024. The Housing Division have employed a Supported Housing Manager in a step towards developing a growing alternative offer for those that General needs Housing is not suitable for.

Tackle poor quality housing in the City

The council has a live Private Rented Strategy that has a robust action plan that is being actively delivered upon to tackle poor quality Housing in the City. Excellent progress has been made on most of the PRS strategy actions and this includes the delivery of a new Selective Licencing scheme in designated part of the City and a Call before you serve offer to PRS landlords and their tenants to prevent Homelessness. The Council has also

recently enhanced its PRS offer to private landlords to work with them to increase access to the PRS for those facing Homelessness. The PRS strategy progress update is provided periodically to CMB & HSC and a review of the strategy and actions is currently being undertaken by Senior Officers to ensure the strategy and action plan has ongoing focus on the key priorities.

Work with other providers to facilitate affordable housing in the city

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

Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan was consulted on in November 2022. Following review of consultation responses the plan was submitted to Govt for independent review. Examination in Public of Local Plan has now taken place with positive feedback on the plan.

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

Central Government demands & actions

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

4.8 Again, overall good progress has been made with the delivery of the action plan associated to Government demands. Out of 16 demands, 12 are in progress and 4 have been completed.

4.9 To draw out headline progress;

Funding for 150,000 new Social Homes a year

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

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

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

The Council is currently reviewing its full Housing delivery pipeline of delivery sites and intends to submit significant bids during 2025/26 to secure increased housing investment from the AHP in to Leicester for new Council Housing.

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

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

Rates are set out in the following table for Leicester.

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

This enables more tenants to find more affordable PRS tenancies in the City. A rise from approximately 3% prior to the rise which was determined by De Montofrt university.

Legislate to end Section 21 "no fault" evictions

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

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

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

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

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

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

Right to Buy

At the budget the Government changed the rules involving the right to buy scheme. The changes are that:

- Discounts for purchases through the Right to Buy scheme will revert to pre-2012 levels and will be more reflective of local housing markets. (discounts now range from £16k to 38k)
- There will no longer be a requirement for both local authorities and housing associations to return a proportion of the capital receipt generated by the sale of the home.
- Discounts will no longer be automatically increased annually by CPI, but instead will be subject to review on an ad hoc basis.
- The cost floor period will increase from 15 to 30 years.

These changes came into effect on 21 November 2024 and any applications received on or after that date are subject to the reduced discount level.

The government is now seeking views on the next phase of reforming Right to Buy. Proposals in the consultation include:

- Increasing the three-year minimum tenancy period for tenants to be eligible to apply under the scheme.
- Reviewing the current exemptions to the scheme and whether newly built social homes should be exempt for a given period to encourage council investment in new homes.
- Seeking views on the replacement of homes with an emphasis on more social rent homes and if there should be a target to replace all future sales on a one-for-one basis.
- Increasing the period in which councils have the right to ask for repayment of all or part of the discount received when a property is sold from five to ten years.
-

The consultation is also proposing changes to the minimum and maximum discounts as a percentage of the property value and applying the same rules to both houses and flats. This is in addition to simplifying the receipts system to make it easier for councils to use this money to buy and build more social homes.

Close loopholes with regulation on holiday accommodation

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

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

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

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

empty homes from April 2024.

Cancel Housing Revenue Account Council house debt

The Council has been working with the twenty largest stock owning Local Authorities including Southwark, Bristol, Sheffield, Leeds and Birmingham to propose solutions to government which included the proposal to scrap existing HRA debt.

[20 largest local authority landlords call for new government to save council homes](#)

Their recommendations include urgent action to restore lost income and unlock local authority capacity to work with the new government to deliver its promises for new, affordable homes throughout the country.

The five solutions set out detailed and practical recommendations to the new government:

1. A new fair and sustainable HRA model – including an urgent £644 million one-off rescue injection, and long-term, certain rent and debt agreements.
2. Reforms to unsustainable Right to Buy policies
3. Removing red tape on existing funding
4. A new, long-term Green & Decent Homes Programme
5. Urgent action to restart stalled building projects, avoiding the loss of construction sector capacity and a market downturn

They make up a plan for a 'decade of renewal', with local authorities and central government working together to get 'Housing Revenue Accounts' (HRAs) back on stable foundations, bring all homes up to modern and green standards, and deliver the next generation of council homes.

Introduce a National Landlord Register

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

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

5. Background information and other papers:

6. Summary of appendices:

Appendix 1 – LCC Actions

Appendix 2 – Government Demands

Appendix 3 – Housing Scrutiny Commission Task Group Report

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

No

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

No

Appendix 1 – LCC Demand

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

	Seek opportunities to invest in Council owned social housing with highly sustainable specification	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Complete / Business as usual	All available sites as being individually planned are considered to meet the highest sustainable specification. A number of existing sites are particularly focussed on delivering as examples of this including Saffron Lane, Lanesborough Road and Stocking Farm	Complete
	Provide more suitable and affordable, temporary and stepped accommodation with a long-term sheltered accommodation offer	Chris Burgin	Officer time, development and building costs	Ongoing	Trainer accommodation units being developed as part of the ZIP acquisition. A report was approved at Full Council on the 18th February 2024 to deliver 225 Temporary accommodation homes and 125 leased properties at a cost of £45m. The Dawn Centre is being developed to add a further 10 independent units of accommodation. Beyond this single units are being acquired that will enable some of this accommodation to be used as this type of accommodation for singles and families. The Housing Division have employed a Supported Housing Manager in a step towards developing a growing alternative offer for those that General needs Housing is not suitable for.	Green
	The council delivery programme to have	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Complete / Business as usual	A full delivery programme that sets out the total delivery expected for the next 4 years, annual delivery and also site	Complete

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

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

Tackle poor quality housing in the City	The Council to deliver its PRS Strategy, including PRS consultation and implementation to drive up the standard in this sector. Expand the PRS regulatory framework and improve the lives of tenants in the private sector	Chris Burgin / Sean Atterbury	Officer time	Complete / Business as usual	The council has a live PRS Strategy that has a robust Action plan that is being actively delivered upon. Excellent progress has been made on most of the PRS strategy actions. The PRS strategy progress update is provided periodically to CMB & HSC. An update on the PRS strategy is now being planned for its second iteration.	Complete
	The Council to rigorously pursue unauthorised developments and breaches of planning control to safeguard residential	Andrew L Smith	Officer time Legal fees	Complete / Business as usual	Ongoing work by the Planning Enforcement Team to respond proactively to unauthorised development	Complete

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

	downsize where possible and make larger properties available for larger households					
Assessment of the viability and effectiveness of a Housing Company to meet market needs is delivered	Investigate the viability and justification for a Housing Company for Leicester	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Complete	Completed and consideration of this option which determined that at this time the best model for the Council remains internal delivery Leicester will continue to keep this option under review should there be further significant legislation or funding changes affecting future delivery.	Complete
New House Building						
Outcome	Detail	Lead Task Owner	Resource requirement	Completion timescales	Progress update	RAG Rating
Work with other providers to facilitate affordable housing in the city	Secure more house building sites through a review of existing underdeveloped Local Plan sites, designated for non-housing	Andrew L Smith Chris Burgin	Officer time	Ongoing / 2025	Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan was consulted on in November 2022. Following review of consultation responses the plan was submitted to Govt for independent review. Examination in Public of Local Plan has now taken place with positive feedback on the plan. Plan evidence includes detailed central area brownfield assessment to identify potential development sites/urban	Green

	purposes. To include a review of all brownfield sites in the city. Develop a programme for the delivery of new Council housing on these sites				capacity. Local Plan identifies city wide development sites that may be suitable for council housing and availability of non central brownfield sites should be kept under review. Working to maximise opportunities & usage of brownfield sites for new affordable housing	
	Set up a mechanism to enable Ward Councillors to feed in any localised sites that should be reviewed for Housing	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Nov-23	All site suggestions can be submitted for consideration and evaluation to HousingDevelopment@leicester.gov.uk. A process is in place to evaluate the site and provide direct feedback to the Ward Councillor	Complete
	Maximise the opportunities with the new Local Plan to secure sufficient Housing land plots suitable to achieve the strategic and political aims of the	Andrew L Smith	Officer time	Ongoing / 2025	Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan was consulted on in November 2022. Following review of consultation responses the plan was submitted to Govt for independent review. Examination in Public of Local Plan has now taken place with positive feedback on the plan. Plan evidence includes detailed central area brownfield assessment to identify potential development sites/urban	Green

	local authority over the next 10 years				capacity. Local Plan identifies city wide development sites that may be suitable for council housing and availability of non central brownfield sites should be kept under review.	
	The work of the Housing Board to concentrate on identifying development or conversation opportunities to provide the urgently required social and other housing needed in the city. The Housing Board to report to Scrutiny within 6-months on its aims, objectives and work done so far	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Completed / Ongoing with 6 monthly report to Scrutiny	Housing Board is now embedded with an Housing Operational Delivery Board now being set up to manage a big uplift in work. Reports have been considered at the Housing, Neighbourhoods & City Centre Board on the 14th June 2023 and the Housing Scrutiny Commission on the 31st July 2023 and updates will continue to be brought to HNCC and HSC meetings periodically.	Complete

Appendix 2 – Government Demands

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Housing Crisis Action Plan - Government Demands							
Central Government Demands - General							
Outcome	Detail	Action	Lead Task Owner	Resource	Completion timescales	Progress update	RAG
Funding for 150,000 new Social Homes a year	Fully fund councils to deliver the building of 150,000 social rent homes each year, including 100,000 council homes. Invest £12.8 billion a year over the next ten years to deliver the social rented homes needed to break the back of the national housing crisis.	Advocate this commitment at future meetings with Homes England	Chris Burgin / Andrew L Smith	Officer time	Complete / Business as usual	Additional £500m added to the Affordable Housing programme for 25/26 and promise of further funding to delivery more Housing from Government. LCC are working with Homes England to secure more funding from the City from these pots of funding.	Complete

	Government to announce the next 10 years of the Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) now, rather than waiting until 2025/6 to announce the next tranche of funding.	Advocate this commitment at future meetings with Homes England	Chris Burgin / Andrew L Smith	Officer time	Ongoing	Chris Burgin & the Housing Delivery team meets regularly with Homes England over Affordable Housing delivery and are using these meetings to promote the need for extended AHP funding. Additional funding of almost £1m has been secured from Homes England towards the ZIP purchase, a bid is in for Homes England funding for 20 units of accommodation. Other capita funding	Green
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						has been secured through the H Local Authority Fund for 10 units of accommodation. A bid has also been submitted for a further 8 units of accommodation. BUT all of this remains short term funding bids and not the required long term funding investment required	
Long term, no-strings fully funded Climate Retrofitting for Council Housing	Government funding for the retrofitting of council housing to cut greenhouse gases, provide jobs and promote	Advocate this commitment at future meetings with Homes England	Chris Burgin / Matt Wallace	Officer time	Ongoing	Available meetings and opportunities are being used to promote the need for this funding to enable this work (and the	Green

	a shift from outsourcing to Direct Labour Organisations. To include a pilot programme of Net Zero social housing to help deploy and reduce the cost of technology needed to meet the Future Home Standard and deliver on our commitment to Net Zero					lack of funding in the HRA to achieve the required work) - using data from LCC Housing stock on known pathways of net zero. LCC have formed a part of the top 20 Stock owned authorities to approach Government to ask for additional funding to meet this demand.	
Cancel Housing Revenue Account Council house debt	Council housing debt is removed to address underfunding of Housing Revenue Accounts	Lobbying of government	Amy Oliver	Officer time	Ongoing	Amy Oliver to use available High level meeting opportunities to promote the need for this / LCC have formed a part of the top 20 Stock owned	Green

						authorities to approach Government to ask for additional funding to meet this demand.	
End the Right to Buy Scheme	End the Right to Buy Scheme to stop the loss of truly affordable housing for those people that cannot afford to access other Housing	Political lobbying of Government	Cllr Cutkelvin	Councillor time	Completed & Business as usual	Significant changes to RBT scheme including the discounts have been introduced by Government and a further consultation on weakening the RTB scheme are currently happening. LCC have submitted a response to this consultation. LCC have also formed a part of the top 20 Stock owned authorities to approach	Green

						Government to ask for additional funding to meet this demand.	
Long term and increased levels of viability land funding	Government funding support to help with the release of new housing sites, including those on brownfield land, to increase viability and delivery	Advocate this commitment at future meetings with Homes England	Chris Burgin / Andrew L Smith	Officer time	Ongoing	Regular meetings being held with Homes England to secure potential future grant funding to develop regeneration sites which may include social rented homes. Meeting in April with DHLUC senior civil servants to encourage investment in Leicester. Investment has been secured through the Brownfield land funding specifically for the development fo	Green

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

	Sector Housing					increase NHA rates to the 30th percentile level from April 2024	
Legislate to end Section 21 "no fault" evictions	End Section 21 evictions to reduce the number of people going through homelessness and spending time in temporary accommodation	Political lobbying of Government	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Ongoing	Government have committed to change the law on S21 and have legislation currently heading through parliament to change this and strengthen tenants rights in PRS	Green
Legislate to create 5-year minimum Private Rented Sector tenancies	To include a rolling back clause of 2 months to allow tenants flexibility to increase tenancy sustainment	Political lobbying of Government	Cllr Cutkelvin	Councillor time	Ongoing	As above, currently there are no proposals within the amended legislation to mandate a 5 year PRS tenancy.	Green

Close loopholes with regulation on holiday accommodation

Government to review policies to ensure all holiday accommodation is properly regulated, complying with local planning policies and taxes. This could include an extension of the 90-day short let legislation, a proper planning class for short lets and proper licencing for them. With the focus of preventing people finding loopholes in the taxation system and prevent too many local homes being converted to holiday homes

Political Lobbying of Government

Cllr Cutkelvin

Officer time

Ongoing

Housing ministers propose changing planning rules for holiday lets and introducing a register of short-term lets for England 'as soon as possible'. The new legislation would require councils to grant planning permission to new holiday and short-term lets. Existing short-term lets will not need permission but must register with the database. Property owners who have been letting out their property before October 1st 2022 have until the 30th of September 2023 to apply for a licence. By 1st July 2025, all

Green

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

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

						Property Portal	
New House building							
Outcome	Detail	Action	Lead Task Owner	Resource requirement	Completion timescales	Progress update	RAG Rating
New Council Tax charges on undeveloped Housing sites	Government to allow a Council Tax charge on housing plots with planning permission if they have not been built after a specified period. This would encourage developers to	Political lobbying of Government	Cllr Cutkelvin	Councillor time	Ongoing	From 1 April 2025, a 100% council tax premium will be applied on properties which are occupied periodically. This premium is an additional charge on top of the standard	Green

	build their sites without delay. Also lobby to introduce planning contracts rather than permissions with penalties for undue delays					council tax, and therefore the actual charge will be 200% from the date the conditions below are satisfied.	
Enhance arrangements to enable developers deliver Affordable homes	In the wholesale review of S106 arrangements (linked to Levelling up) taking place, Government should strengthen arrangements to ensure delivery of the required affordable housing and remove the opportunity for developers to avoid Affordable housing delivery for "viability" reasons	Political lobbying of Government	Cllr Cutkelvin	Officer time	Ongoing	One of the main elements of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act is the Infrastructure Levy, which introduces a new way of calculating developer contributions towards affordable housing and infrastructure	Green

Government to review their Refugee Resettlement Programme	The city welcomes incoming communities, but the Government's refugee settlement programmes be on a national basis rather than focussed on already crowded urban settlements.	Political lobbying of Government	Cllr Cutkelvin	Councillor time	Ongoing	National Mandatory Asylum Resettlement programme now in operation for 12 months.	Complete
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Appendix 3 – Housing Scrutiny Commission – Task Group report on the Housing Crisis



Final Version of
Housing TG Report.pc

Housing Scrutiny Commission

Work Programme 2024 – 2025

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
11 July 2024	Housing Overview	<p>Information to be circulated to Members on demands of new Government to protect HRA and allow builds.</p> <p>Temporary Accommodation and progress on spend of £45m to be added to work programme to update Commission.</p> <p>Latest data on Who Gets Social Housing to be shared with the Commission.</p> <p>Data on percentage of applicants that apply to the housing register but do not meet eligibility criteria to be circulated.</p>	<p>Open letter to the Secretary of State and Interim Report provided.</p> <p>Added to work programme to seek updates.</p> <p>Information provided and updated report due to be discussed at 27 August 2024 meeting.</p> <p>Information circulated.</p>
	Housing Regulator	<p>The Commission recommended that housing enquiries from tenants, councillors and members of the public be responded to in ten working days.</p> <p>The Commission requested to be involved in tenant involvement discussions.</p>	<p>With officers to review the recommendation.</p> <p>Ward Councillors to be invited to sessions and added to work programme for further discussion.</p>
	Rent Arrears Annual Report	<p>The Commission noted the report and commended the work of the service.</p>	

	House Builds & Acquisitions Update	The Commission requested a site visit be arranged.	Site visit arranged and Members invited.
	Environmental Budget & Public Realm Works 2024-25	The Commission noted the report.	
27 August 2024	Repairs & Maintenance performance report	Information to be shared with the Commission on the updated communication regarding damp and mould and options when assessing a property.	Information circulated.
	Homelessness Services update	The Commission requested the City Mayor write to new Ministers regarding the impact and requirement for additional funding for asylum cases.	
		The Commission requested officers speak with Leeds about their policy to not use B&B's as temporary accommodation.	Benchmarking undertaken and information provided to Members.
		Data to be provided on the impact of services on people rough sleeping or entrenched street lifestyles being successful in retaining tenancies.	Information circulated.
		Information to be shared on a snapshot of families residing in temporary accommodation for longer than 6 weeks.	Information circulated.
		Links to private rented sector team schemes to incentivise landlords to continue for tenancies to be sustained to be shared.	Information circulated.

	<p>DFG / Adaptations update</p> <p>Impact of adaptations to be added to work programme for members to receive information on new feedback form.</p> <p>Adaptations Strategy to be added to work programme.</p> <p>Breakdown of adapted homes as part of new build programmes to be shared.</p> <p>Information to be shared on numbers of properties that have been adapted and not permitted to be sold through RTB.</p> <p>Who gets Social Housing?</p> <p>Information to be shared with the Commission on breakdown of housing demand/need by ward.</p> <p>Information to be shared on formal scheme of options/incentives for moving to more suitable sized accommodation.</p>	<p>Information circulated.</p> <p>Added to the work programme.</p> <p>Information circulated.</p> <p>Information circulated.</p> <p>Information circulated.</p> <p>Information circulated.</p> <p>Information circulated.</p>
<p>12 November 2024</p>	<p>Chair's Announcements</p> <p>Housing development site visit for early 2025 to be arranged.</p> <p>Homelessness & Complex Needs Inquiry Day Findings</p> <p>Homelessness services leaflet to be circulated to Members.</p>	<p>Completed.</p> <p>Sent to Members</p>

	Selective Licensing Housing Safety	Members invited to attend rough sleeper count.	Sent to Members
7 January 2025	Housing Revenue Account Budget Proposals 2025/26 General Fund Budget Proposals 2025/26 District Services	District heating to be added to the work programme. New build and Acquisitions profile to be shared with Members. A guideline on the timeframe of RTB applications to be provided if details are shared with officers. Alternative construction methods to be added to the work programme as either a topic or site visit. A housing officer to attend Belgrave ward at Member's request.	Complete. Information requested. Process shared with Members to provide details to officers. Complete. Complete
18 March 2025	Succession Policy Tenant Involvement proposals Housing Crisis update		

22 April 2024	Suggested items tbc: <i>Apprentice Programme & WIC</i> <i>Supported Housing proposals</i> <i>Maintenance Charges update</i>		
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Forward Plan Items (suggested)

Topic	Detail	Proposed Date
Adaptations Strategy	The Commission requested to be updated on development of an adaptations strategy. Further request that a report include the impact of adaptations to be discussed.	
Alternative construction methods	Discussed on 07.01.25 and interest shown to see alternative buildings either come as a topic or site visit. Site development with these methods is Lanesborough Road and not due to be developed until 2026/27.	
Channel Shift Update		
Damp & Mould – PRS Online Portal	It was highlighted at meeting on 19 September 2023 that portal is in development and agreed to come back to update the Commission.	
District Heating		
Housing Allocations Policy		

Housing Capital Programme Update	The Commission requested that they receive regular updates on progress regarding new build developments.	
Housing Crisis Action Plan	The Commission requested to be kept updated on action plan.	
Housing Support		
Local Plan		
Migration Update		
Overcrowding Strategy Update		
Private Rented Sector Strategy Update		
Temporary Accommodation	The Commission requested to be kept updated on the utilisation of the £45m agreed at Council to increase temporary accommodation units.	