



Leicester
City Council

MEETING OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

DATE: TUESDAY, 22 APRIL 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: governance@leicester.gov.uk

Leicester City Council, 3rd Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

Information for members of the public

Attending meetings and access to information

You have the right to attend formal meetings such as full Council, committee meetings, City Mayor & Executive Public Briefing and Scrutiny Commissions and see copies of agendas and minutes. On occasion however, meetings may, for reasons set out in law, need to consider some items in private.

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

Making meetings accessible to all

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Further information

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

Kirsty Wootton (Governance Services) on Kirsty.Wootton@leicester.gov.uk. Alternatively, email governance@leicester.gov.uk, or call in at City Hall.

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

PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

NOTE:

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

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

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

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

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 Housing Scrutiny Commission meeting held on 18 March 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

Any questions, representations and statements of case submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures will be reported.

6. PETITIONS

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

7. SUPPORTED HOUSING PROPOSALS **Appendix B**

The report seeks to assess the current and projected need for supported housing within Leicester for LCC tenants with substance, alcohol dependencies and/or mental health needs. It also examines the legislation introduced by central government to regulate Supported Housing.

8. REPAIRS PERFORMANCE **Appendix C**

This report provides an update on the current position of the Repairs and Maintenance Team and its performance throughout 2024-25.

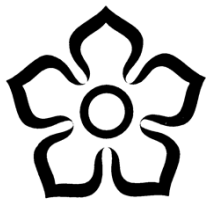
9. APPRENTICE PROGRAMME & WIC **Appendix D**

This report provides an update to the Housing Scrutiny Commission on the delivery of the Women in Construction programme and the craft apprentice recruitment for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

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

Appendix A

Minutes of the Meeting of the HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 18 MARCH 2025 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor O'Neill (Chair)
Councillor Zaman (Vice Chair)

Councillor Bajaj
Councillor Gopal

Councillor Gregg
Councillor Halford

Councillor Joshi
Councillor Waddington

* * * * *

In Attendance
Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Cutkelvin – Housing & Neighbourhoods

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received by Cllr Modhwadia, Cllr Joshi attended as substitute. It was noted that the Regulator of Social Housing representatives were in attendance online.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair highlighted that the minutes for the meeting on 7 January 2025 were included within the papers and asked members for comments.

AGREED:

- It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 January 2025 were a true and accurate record.

4. CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair updated the commission on the site visit to Saffron Lane, which took place on 6 February 2025. She noted that the visit gave members the opportunity to view the early stages of the development. This visit was the final one in the series of highlighted sites scheduled for the commission's visit.

5. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The following representation was 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?

In Mr Raja's absence, the representation was taken as read. The Director of Housing provided a summary response, and it was noted that:

- The full, written response was to be sent to Mr Raja in due course.
- All council-owned blocks of flats have a Fire Risk Assessment, the frequency of which are based on the block risk. The block this enquiry referred to held the lowest risk and there was no mandatory timescale for conducting the assessment. The FRA was last carried out 7 years ago. The new FRA had now been completed and it identified a few minor issues that had since been completed. The process was not felt to be flawed.
- Leicester City Council's working relationship with Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service was very good. Independently chosen sites were audited, and any further requests for information had to be met by a specific date which had always occurred on time.
- There had been a significant increase in Right to Buy applications, which has affected turnaround times.
- The lease pack charge of £125 reflected administrative costs and established financial governance procedures had been followed to ensure appropriate management of payments.
- Estate Wardens carried out regular ongoing maintenance of estates, while City Wardens worked with Housing officers to address instances where waste had been fly-tipped, and tenants needed to be interviewed and possibly fined for the offence.

The Chair asked whether members had any questions or comments. It was noted that:

- City wardens were going to be working outside of their usual locations for several weeks, meaning more pressure may fall on Housing Officers. Appropriate communications were suggested.

6. PETITIONS

It was noted that none had been received.

7. SUCCESSION POLICY

The Director of Housing submitted a report to set out Leicester City Council's succession policy and to give an overview of the legislation that undergirds this policy.

It was noted that:

- Succession occurred when a qualified individual took over the tenancy of a deceased tenant. This process did not require permission from the council or a formal application.
- Under the 1985 Housing Act, family members who had resided in the property for at least 12 months before the tenant's death were entitled to succession. However, the Localism Act 2012 amended this provision, limiting automatic succession rights to spouses or partners only.
- The council's policy on succession had not been reviewed since 2020 due to the pandemic and other factors. Therefore, it retained the old position of permitting other family members to succeed in a tenancy.
- The succession procedure in the council had been to assess the suitability of the surviving family member who meets the succession criteria, to continue to live on the property. Where the property was deemed unsuitable, the council assisted with relocation to a more appropriate home.
- The succession policy also contained specific guidelines on changes from sole to joint, and joint to sole tenancies.
- When a bereaved family member occupant was deemed not to have the right to remain on a property, conversations about relocating them would be challenging and sensitive. This ensured the Council approached such discussions with empathy and understanding.
- Notices were generally served no more than 6-12 months following the tenant's passing.
- The future options for the council to explore were whether to adopt an automatic right of succession or allow officers to exercise discretion based on individual circumstances.
- A key consideration in formulating the succession policy was to encourage communication regarding succession rights to the council's tenants, particularly when they were adults who were dependent on

care.

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

- The council did not have the authority to grant succession; it occurred automatically when the legal criteria have been met.
- Where an individual was unlawfully occupying a property, the council was entitled to charge mesne profit, which was the equivalent of the rent that would have been payable on the property. In such cases, the council could also work with the occupant to review their other rights and explore alternative housing options, which could lead to them being relocated to a more suitable property.
- The council tried to prevent homelessness as much as possible. Therefore, if an occupant was not qualified to succeed, they would normally be allowed to remain on the property until they are rehoused.
- If a decision was made against a tenant's succession claim, they would have no legal right to appeal.
- Rehousing rightful tenants was not done through direct let, eliminating the need for tenants who were waiting to be rehoused to join a waiting list.
- The council's policies were expected to align with the legal frameworks on succession, and best practice was to review every 3-5 years.
- In a case of joint tenancy, both tenants held equal rights. Either of them could give notice, which effectively brought the tenancy to an end.
- Extending the timeframe for informing bereaved occupants about their lack of succession rights or potential rehousing would impact other benefits, such as Universal Credit.
- Tenancy succession was not a gift, but a right bestowed by law that is non-transferable. Consequently, a couple could not decide if their child would succeed them.

AGREED:

The Commission noted the report.

8. TENANT INVOLVEMENT PROPOSALS

The Director of Housing submitted a report which provided an update on the formation of a Divisional and Communication Strategy for the Tenants and Leaseholders who live in properties owned and managed by Leicester City Council.

The Deputy City Mayor introduced the item, and it was noted that:

- Previously, the infrastructure that existed in the local authority

and VCS was far larger and there were far more active tenant associations in the city. Unfortunately, years of austerity, budget cuts and the Covid pandemic fundamentally eroded them.

- A key complaint faced was that tenants had not been able to contact their housing officer. The role of the housing officer had evolved to meet the increasingly complex needs of tenants which meant that the service had changed as well.
- The Council recognised the role they needed to play in responding to tenants.
- Tenancy engagement was first discussed 18 months ago. The Council wanted to provide a more consistent offer that allowed equal opportunity for engagement.
- Engagement sessions had begun last year. Out of these had come clear messages from tenants which had led to the development of the pop-up Housing offices. Further work was needed to build on what had been started and to use the good practises found and this was to form a bigger piece of work moving forward.

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

- The report provided an update on the strategy and structures that were being put in place which would allow tenants to scrutinise the Council, including the Tenant Engagement Strategy.
- It was highlighted that this was a journey to improve engagement, and success was to be measured by tenant satisfaction.
- The first Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) occurred in 2023. This showed that 40.2% of tenants felt that they were listened to, and 46.8% thought that they were kept informed on important issues.
- The tenants were asked for their preferences, and alongside this were conversations in a pre-engagement process with tenants, the Tenancy Management Team and Neighbourhood Housing Officers.
- 6 engagement sessions occurred across the city, either on or near council housing estates in September 2024. The sessions provided a representative sample of tenants through face-to-face conversations and surveys. The methodology used attempted to capture the views of as many tenants as possible. However it was recognised that some demographics may not have fed into the pre-engagement period. It was hoped that these demographics would be captured as the engagement progressed.
- 54% of the respondents wanted service updates by email or text and 23% via phone.
- Respondents wanted more information on repairs, a means for contacting their housing officer, and concerns were raised on the difficulty of getting through via phone lines.
- For future engagement with the Housing Division, the majority of

respondents were in favour of in-person events, community events or the use of surveys.

- The Social Housing (Regulation) Act received Royal Assent in July 2023 which granted more powers to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). This allowed a more proactive management regime for the providers of social housing. The Act introduced consumer standards, which were to allow assessment of performance and outcomes for customers. A Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard was also introduced. Along with this, there was a variety of legislation which the Housing Division must comply with, including the Housing Acts and the Landlord and Tenant Act.
- A revised Code of Practice was published, which advocated for tenants being at the heart of decision making. This was taken forward in the strategy.
- The current engagement structure had allowed tenants to be involved in shaping a number of services through consultation and engagement.
- The survey had informed the strategy and had increased the focus on opportunities for face-to-face interactions, improved communications and increased use of WhatsApp, email and text.
- The recruitment of 3 district engagement officers was planned. These were to work across the city to help engage with tenants and facilitate the pop-up housing offices.
- The strategy had been launched at a city-wide event in January. 80 tenants attended and the response appeared enthusiastic.
- Tenants were encouraged to be involved in the tenant's scrutiny panel which was to scrutinise the housing services. The first meeting took place on 18th March. The initial meeting considered the terms of reference, agenda and work programme. The tenants had already identified areas of performance they wanted to monitor.
- It was noted that linking the two scrutiny commissions would be beneficial.
- It was an ongoing part of the strategy to consider how to encompass the diverse population of the city.

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

- Attempts had been made to engage with as many tenants as possible using alternative methods, such as leaflets and the incoming engagement officers who would be able to visit tenants in their homes or arrange sessions out of working hours, which allowed for work or childcare.
- The buildings that housed the housing offices were closed many years ago due to the cost of running them and the decreased footfall. Many of the housing offices and front of house service offer had been incorporated into other community hubs such as

libraries.

- There had been a move to online services, but there remained a cohort of tenants who want face-to-face interaction. The advantage of the pop-up offices was that they allowed face-to-face interactions without the associated costs of running a building.
- Concerns were raised that there was a lack of communication for those applying to be council tenants, particularly while on the register. The development of an engagement strategy aimed at those applying or waiting would be useful.
- There were around 6000 people waiting to be council tenants. Once they had applied, a letter of acknowledgement is sent, which makes the lack of social housing clear.
- A different team was allocated to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The drop-in sessions demonstrated that Homelessness Officers needed to be out in the community in a similar way to the Housing Officers. There was a lack of Homelessness Officers, but recruitment had now taken place with 30 officers in position, and the team was now looking to set these sessions up.
- It was queried whether AI technology could be used to help tenants, particularly with different languages. There was an ongoing corporate piece of work ongoing which was considering the use of AI to respond to basic enquiries.
- Members requested that pop-up housing office dates and locations were to be circulated for them to share with their constituents.
- There remained a landline for Housing Options which is 0116 454 1008. The Council needed to make better use of social media and WhatsApp. Doctors and dentists for example, were far more adept at using these channels for communications.
- Members asked that updates and the outcomes of the tenant panels be brought to this Commission.
- The most marginalised communities still faced barriers such as language and technology access including lack of email addresses.
- There were those who were illiterate in their first language, demonstrating the importance of engaging with local community groups with community language speakers.
- It was intended that the engagement officers would start work on how to reach and engage with the pockets of hard-to-reach communities in the city.
- The workforce was representative of the city, and the officers were deliberately placed in areas where their language skills would be of the most use. There was also a telephone translation service, and if IT literate, the web system can translate automatically if needed.
- The pop-up offices were a pilot which was to be reviewed after 12 months. At this point, it was intended to consider how it had

worked and what could be taken forward based on the need and benefit found in the communities.

- The housing team had several initiatives in mind and there were different ways that tenant engagement could be incorporated. However, this was to be dependent on the engagement that was received and whether it was representative. It was intended that a periodic report would measure this as the strategy was rolled out.
- There were 500 tenant responses on the consultation which resulted in changes after it was considered by the Deputy City Mayor and the Director of Housing. This was done in addition to a consultation on anti-social behaviour and took nearly a year to finalise as it was continuously reviewed based on the feedback received from tenants and partners. If changes were not feasible, feedback was always provided to explain why.

AGREED:

1. The Commission noted the report.
2. A report to come back the Commission on engagement with prospective tenants who have applied or are waiting on the social housing register. Including developments of the Homelessness Officers work in the community.
3. Update to be brought from tenants' scrutiny and ensure that their attendance at Housing Scrutiny Commission is enabled.
4. Pop-up office dates to be circulated to Members.
5. A report on the pop-up office pilot to come back in 12 months.

9. HOUSING CRISIS DELIVERY UPDATE

The Director of Housing submitted a report to update the commission on progress made on the delivery of the Housing Crisis actions. It was noted that:

- The capacity of the Council to respond to housing needs had been significantly undermined by the introduction of the Right-to-Buy (RTB) scheme. In response to this, the council declared a housing crisis in 2022.
- This report served as an update to the one presented previously 12 months. It showed good progress had been made on the delivery of the LCC action plan. Of the 16 actions, 11 had been completed and 5 were in progress. Of the actions set out by the Government, 12 were in progress and 4 had been completed. The council remained on track to deliver 1500+ homes by 2027.
- An additional £500m had been added to the Affordable Housing programme by Government and the council was accessing this funding.
- In line with its commitment to strengthening private rental sector quality, the council had also made progress on its Private Rented

Sector (PRS) strategy, including the introduction of a Selective Licensing scheme.

- No increase to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) was expected in 2025.
- The Renters Reform Bill would introduce changes including a national landlord register. Other proposed legislative changes included the abolition of Section 21 'no-fault' evictions, new rules around holiday accommodation, and changes to council tax on second homes. These changes were expected to have a positive impact. Section 21 was a significant contributor to homelessness, with many affected individuals needing the council for support.
- The council had provided a strong response regarding the qualification period before RTB. Local authorities would also be able to retain capital receipts from RTB sales.

In response to comments and questions, it was noted that;

- The national housing allowance had been set at the 30th percentile of local rents. However, with rising mortgage costs for landlords, rent affordability remained a challenge.
- Only 3% of the market was affordable for the PRS tenants on low income before the Local Housing allowance uplift in 2024.
- The Renters Reform bill was progressing through political processes and was expected to be completed in 2025.
- To meet the city's housing needs, the council had a well-established programme targeting 1500+ units.
- The new Local Plan would allocate new housing sites for development and was expected to be completed between late 2025 and early 2026. Work was already underway on sites currently allocated to Housing, and this positioned the council to be ahead of schedule once the Local Plan was approved.
- The status of the Local Plan was that certain modifications had been agreed upon with the inspectors following the initial examination. There would be further consultations on these modifications.
- The applicability of changes to the law on section 21 would be to all tenancies, both existing and new.
- Council tax on second homes would be subject to double council tax. If the property remained vacant for an extended period, the council could charge up to 400% as this time increased.
- There had been national challenges with the construction industry because of factors like COVID-19, the Ukraine War, and other factors. The strategy deployed by the council to mitigate this was ensuring that builders would have early sight of its plan, allowing them ample time to decide whether to tender any bids. This approach has led to more submissions and fostered long-term partnerships with contractors.
- The council had reviewed its procurement policy to ensure it was amenable to the market.
- The Selecting Licensing Scheme had recorded successes, and

- there were measures in place to address defaulting landlords.
- Some properties are excluded from the RTB scheme. The exclusion of some ground-floor flats in the Right to Buy (RTB) scheme would only occur if there had been adaptations made to the properties.
 - The impact of government policies in Leicester could mean the Council would face a £6M overspend on temporary accommodation for 2025/26; this would have been significantly worse without the current strategy.

AGREED:

The Commission noted the report.

10. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair invited members to make suggestions, and it was noted that Maintenance Charges should be included on the agenda for the next meeting, if possible, since it was previously postponed.

11. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 19.39.

Supported Housing for LCC Tenants

Decision to be taken by:

Housing Scrutiny Commission: 22 April 2025

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Cutkelvin

Lead Director: Chris Burgin

For internal use only during drafting stage only
Delete from the final report.

| | |
|---|--|
| If this is a key decision has it appeared on the published forward plan | |
| Anticipated date for decision (if required) | |
| Date of relevant scrutiny commission – please detail name of commission(s) | |
| Date of paperwork entering public domain (note: if considered by scrutiny, this will be the scrutiny agenda publication date) | |
| Media considerations: Is a press release required? Will this be proactive or reactive? | |
| Please include details of other relevant meetings/briefings as part of decision/consultation process: This should include details of discussions with relevant stakeholders and/or ward councillors. | |

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Angelita Dyer
- Author contact details: Angelita.dyer@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: V1

1. Summary

- 1.1 The provision of supported housing is a vital service for vulnerable people and is critical in the role of supporting people who cannot live independently. Having appropriate housing is crucial in the work of preventative services and necessary to those who require support to live in a settled and secure environment.
- 1.2 This report seeks to look at the current and projected need for supported housing within Leicester for LCC tenants with substance, alcohol dependencies and/or mental health needs, including current and viable options in the future to acquire accommodation suitable for the identified need and demand.
- 1.3 This report also looks at the legislation introduced by central government to regulate Supported Housing with the enactment of the Support Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 and the requirement of local authorities to tackle issues around the quality of accommodation, care and support provided in supported exempt accommodation.

2. Recommended actions/decision

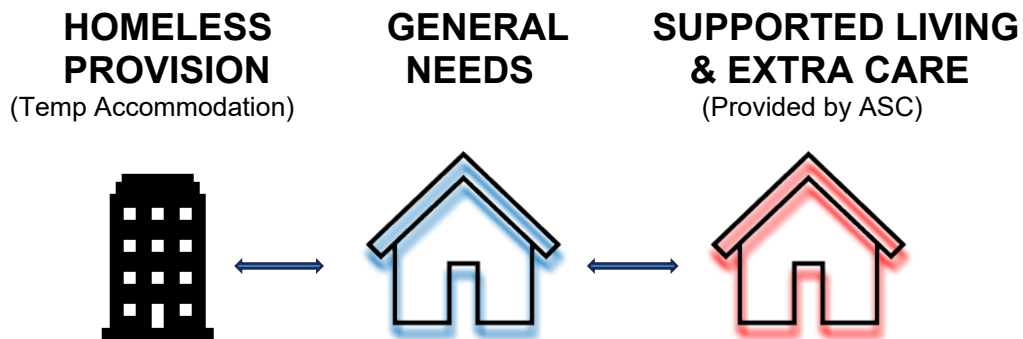
- 2.1 To support the recommendation of the repurposing of suitable or vacant LCC buildings which are fit for the purpose for supported housing.
- 2.2 To support looking at options for procurement of properties to provide supported housing within Leicester to meet the current and future demand where needed.
- 2.3 To support the recommendation for the proposed mixed model of floating support and accommodation-based support including support provided by external agencies.
- 2.4 To note the enactment of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 and what its introduction will mean for Leicester City Council.

3. Background and options with supporting evidence

- 3.1 Supported Housing for adults with substance use was previously provided by Leicester City Council with accommodation being available at Evesham House and Heathfield House.
- 3.2 **Evesham House** - Evesham House provided temporary accommodation-based support for individuals with substance use (alcohol dependency). The use of this accommodation changed in 2014, to provide supported living to people receiving ASC support.
- 3.3 **Heathfield House** – Heathfield House provided short term supported housing for adults' recovering from substance misuse (drug/alcohol dependency). Heathfield House was owned and operated by Midland Heart and comprised 24 self-contained units. Heathfield House is now run by Nottingham Community Housing Association. It is a supported housing project for homeless adults aged 25+ who have low to medium support needs and can live independently. Referrals to Heathfield House can only be made via Housing Options.
- 3.4 Currently for there are very limited options for LCC tenants who require supported housing. We have many tenants who cannot successfully manage a LCC tenancy due to a variety of factors which include, but are not limited to substance use, mental health illness, domestic abuse, and prison leavers or a combination of all these circumstances. This in turn is placing additional pressure on services with these tenants repeatedly failing tenancies due to rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, or abandoned tenancies.
- 3.5 Additional pressure is also being felt within the Homelessness service due to those who fall into the bracket of homelessness and requiring supported housing being placed into temporary accommodation. The limited supply of Council specialist supported housing within Leicester for those individuals who cannot cope independently in social or private sector housing is creating greater pressure on budgetary demands due to the length of time within which individuals need to be provided accommodation as part of the statutory duty which Leicester City Council holds under the Housing Act 1996.

Current Leicester City Council Supported Housing Provision

3.6 Currently in Leicester there are the following council funded housing options for residents:



3.7 **Supported Living and Extra Care** - Extra care is a type of independent living where individuals live in self-contained apartments with support staff available when required by the individual. These staff may be present on-site or be off-site. This type of housing is typically for those over the age of 55 and is commissioned by Adult Social Care. Supported living is classed as specified accommodation in the Care Act 2014. There are a range of accommodation options for people who are working with Adult Social care. This accommodation provision will suit a range of residents including those who have a learning disability, mental health related needs, older people, and vulnerable young people.

3.8 **Homeless Provision** – Currently residents who are owed a housing duty by Leicester City Council are placed in temporary accommodation which includes hotels, B&B's, and hostels. Some residents who find themselves not eligible for the Housing Register, or who have abandoned their tenancies due to substance misuse, anti-social behaviour or cuckooing may find that they are placed in temporary accommodation for a considerable time as they may not fit the eligibility criteria for any of the housing provision which are shown above.

3.9 **General Needs Housing** – Leicester City Council have a choice-based lettings, called Leicester Home Choice, giving access to homes via the council or housing association partners who advertise available affordable housing to let. Eligible residents on the Housing Register for Leicester can bid for these general need's properties, however some individuals may find that they are not eligible to join the Housing Register for a few reasons, including those who are excluded due to anti-social behaviour.

3.10 The lack of supported housing for individuals who are living with multiple disadvantages including substance misuse is having an impact on suitability of accommodation which can be provided. Tenants of Leicester City Council who need support in their tenancies can be provided floating support to assist, however in some cases some tenants still struggle to maintain their tenancies, managing their rent or avoiding issues around anti-social behaviour. Many of the housing options available do not include options for those individuals who struggle with substance use, alcohol dependency often combined with poor mental health, and therefore the gap for this type of housing provision still exists.

- 3.11 **Supporting Tenants and Residents (STAR)** service was developed 25 years ago to provide housing related floating support to the most vulnerable tenants within Leicester City Council. The service works alongside Tenancy Management helping vulnerable residents who are at risk of losing their home. This form of support includes help with income maximisation, help with utilities, assisting with applications for funding to furnish their homes, and assistance with referrals for mental health and substance misuse and generally help with anything that will help the tenant sustain their tenancy. This engagement has been a vital, as in the last year over 900 households have been helped to remain in their home, reduce rent arrears and engage with services which they would not have done previously. We often receive compliments from service users, highlighting the support they have received as life changing.
- 3.12 An offshoot of the STAR service was created in 2023 following the successful bid for funding from the Department of Health via the Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Housing Support Grant 2022/23 as part of the National Drug Strategy. **Help Beyond Housing** was developed to support the most vulnerable and high risk/high need residents who were having difficulty maintaining their tenancy and were living with drug or alcohol dependence. These residents are either in treatment and engaging with drug and alcohol services or are not currently engaging and are in need for referrals to substance use services. This service has supported over 80 tenants over the last year and has significantly reduced tenants rough sleeping on the streets of Leicester.
- 3.13 **Unregulated Supported Housing** - There is currently a large amount of unmapped and unregulated supported housing provision within Leicester and there is currently no referral process which can be used for current tenants of LCC who would benefit from the provision. The referral process into other providers of supported housing is an action that has been identified as a matter of importance as well as the regulation of supported housing in Leicester, which has now been highlighted by the Government for all local authorities with the implementation of The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023.

The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023

- 3.14 The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023¹ became law on 29 August 2023 following a Private Members' Bill proposed by Bob Blackman MP. The aim of the Act is to tackle issues around the quality of the accommodation, care and support being provided in supported exempt accommodation. Prior to the Act being enacted there was no legislation in place regulating supported housing and the standard of support provided to residents, or giving enforcement powers to local authorities to tackle the issues which were being raised in relation to the quality of service provided. It had been identified that some providers were seen to place profits over the actual provision of care and support.
- 3.15 Supported housing is characterised as accommodation which provides residents with care, supervision, or support. It is usually managed by a local authority, housing association, charity, or voluntary organisation. Examples of supported housing include group homes, hostels, refuges, supported living complexes and sheltered housing.

¹ [Supported Housing \(Regulatory Oversight\) Act 2023 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/12/section/1)

3.16 Supported exempt accommodation (SEA) is housing where vulnerable adults are supported to live independently and includes the following:

- Care leavers.
- Survivors of domestic abuse
- People with substance dependencies
- People with mental health illness
- Refugees
- People recently released from prison.

3.17 Supported housing which meets the definition of being SEA are exempt from the usual caps on housing benefit levels, meaning that residents can receive a higher amount of housing benefit than usual. This additional housing benefit usually assists with the costs of providing care and support.

3.18 The Act will:

- Require local authorities in England to review supported housing in their areas and develop strategies.
- Provide for the creation of a national expert advisory panel to advise on matters related to supported housing.
- Give the Secretary of State power to introduce national support standards.
- Give local authorities power to create local licensing schemes for exempt accommodation, and
- Give the Secretary of State an option to introduce a new planning Use-Class for exempt accommodation.

4. Detailed report

4.1 One of the key priorities within the Housing Division Service Plan for 2024/2025 was the development of a support housing option for tenants. The development for this has begun with a new service being created, Help Beyond Housing.

Impact on Tenancy Management

4.2. Leicester City Council's Tenancy Management team have been having a high tenancy sustainment rate. This is currently at 95% and along with the support of the STAR floating support service and Help Beyond Housings floating support service the work to engage with tenants and provide the support needed to enable such a sustainment level continues. STAR have supported approximately 900 households within the last year in various ways to engage and maintain tenancy sustainability.

4.3 However some Council tenants who receive assistance via housing related support services still fail in their tenancies and are being given management moves to maintain the duty of care to the tenant, but to also resolve situations relating to the health and wellbeing of the tenant, impact on other households, and the wider community due to the increase in anti-social behaviour. Subsequently this can lead to one resident having more than one management move due to them not having the necessary skills and support to understand how to manage their tenancy and due to

the complexity of their substance use/mental health illness they may present with chaotic and entrenched lifestyles, will affect their engagement with housing and other services to resolve their housing related issues. In the last year (2023/24) it was identified that there were 11 single households who had failed **successive** tenancies and would benefit from housing with in-house support due to their risks/needs. In the most extreme circumstances failure to provide support can lead to the death of the individual, due to not being able to access the support and care needed. The resource required to manage these chaotic tenancies and the impact on other residents is significant and leads to numerous complaints, enquires and crime and disorder issues on estates. There are also significant impacts in relation to costs for temporary accommodation, moving households, repair costs and compensation awards.

Substance Misuse

4.4 The Leicester Drug and Alcohol Needs Assessment has shown that in 2021-22 18.1% of adults who were at the beginning of their drug treatment journey had a housing problem. This is significantly larger than in England which was 13.5%. Of those individuals who were No Fixed Abode at the start of their treatment journey 14.8% had an urgent housing problem compared to 7.5% in England. The need to have supported housing for individuals who fall into this category to be able to access housing is acute. This information is shown in the table below.

Table 20: Accommodation need at the start of treatment journey for adults starting drug misuse treatment in 2021-22 in Leicester and England

| | Leicester | | England | |
|--|-----------|--------|---------|--------|
| | Count | % | Count | % |
| NFA - urgent housing problem | 107 | 14.8% | 5616 | 7.5% |
| Housing problem | 131 | 18.1% | 10123 | 13.5% |
| No housing problem or other/not answered | 485 | 67.1% | 59276 | 79.0% |
| Total | 723 | 100.0% | 75015 | 100.0% |




| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
|  | Significantly lower than national |
|  | Significantly higher than national |
|  | No significant difference to national |

Table taken from Drug and Alcohol Needs Assessment in Leicester City 2022

Homelessness Pathway

4.5 The trend across England relating to homelessness shows that the number of households needing assistance from local authorities, who are experiencing homelessness is increasing year on year. The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government dataⁱ covering statutory homelessness for Leicester (Jan-March 2024) shows that the following households were owed a duty under homelessness:

- 403 households in Leicester with one of more support needs
- 20 households with drug dependency needs
- 31 households with alcohol dependency needs
- 32 households with repeated history of homelessness

4.6 The table below provided by the Homelessness pathways shows data relating unique* rough sleepers who were discovered by the Outreach team over the past 12 months:

| Month | Unique Rough sleepers discovered by the Outreach team this month |
|--------|--|
| Jun-24 | 96 |
| May-24 | 86 |
| Apr-24 | 126 |
| Mar-24 | 98 |
| Feb-24 | 94 |
| Jan-24 | 102 |
| Dec-23 | 73 |
| Nov-23 | 94 |
| Oct-23 | 120 |
| Sep-23 | 113 |
| Aug-23 | 116 |
| Jul-23 | 82 |

Graph relating to Homelessness Pathway with data incorporated from Jul 2023 – Jun 2024

** a unique rough sleeper is a term used so that individuals are not counted more than once*

Leicester's Homelessness Strategy 2023-2028

4.7 The Homelessness Strategy for Leicester² has indicated that the number of households approaching for assistance has increased year on year. It shows that around half of singles presenting to homelessness services have support needs, and of those a quarter have mental health support needs and over 20% have complex support needs (2 or more issues). The strategy also notes that due to limited affordable housing options available to households' pressure will be increased on homelessness services not just because of additional households requiring support, but those in temporary accommodation do not have anywhere affordable to move-on to.

Leicester Supported Living and Extra Care Housing Strategy 2021-2031

4.8 The Supported Living and Extra Care Housing Strategy 2021-2031³ has outlined the plan of Leicester Social Services to develop supported living and extra care services for the next 10 years. The strategy shows that the demand for supported living and extra care will increase. A forecast shows that within the next 7 years 396 additional spaces will be needed to meet the need for those in the categories of:

- Young people provision (16-25 years old)
- Replacement of sub-standard existing provision for statutory care and sheltered housing
- Respite provision.
- New provision to delay entry into statutory care.
- New provision for statutory cases

² [Leicester's homelessness strategy 2023-2028](#)

³ [Supported Living and Extra Care Housing Strategy 2021-2031 \(leicester.gov.uk\)](#)

➤ Adult provision

Identified need for supported housing using current data from Housing and Homelessness Services

- 4.9 The current data provided from Tenancy Management cases and the Homelessness Pathway shows that there are currently approximately 36 single households who would benefit from supported housing to meet their needs. In addition to this there are approximately 35 households currently being supported by the STAR team who would also benefit from supported housing. These households are those identified as the highest risk with the potential to need permanent supported housing due to the complexity of their substance use and/or mental health condition.
- 4.10 The need for supported housing is such that no one option of supported housing will fit every circumstance. Each project will be nuanced ranging from the lowest need Trainer Accommodation to the highest need accommodation which will also provide 24-hour support.

Proposed Two Year Plan for Supported Housing in Leicester

- 4.11 The current proposal for the provision of supported housing will include various forms of housing provision which will range from:

Based on the current data we have available to us we predict the need for:

11 units of trainer accommodation for low needs/low risk – 2024/25

24 units of medium risk short term supported housing. - 2025/26

36 units of high-risk long term supported housing. - 2025/26

Low
2024/25

- Trainer accommodation to be provided for residents on the homelessness pathway who are very low/no risk. Support provided in office hours.
- 11 bed unit (Zip Building) which will provide intensive one to one support for single occupancy on a 12 month licence.
- Pre-tenancy training opportunities to develop independent living skills.

Medium
2025/26

- Shared house or self contained units to provide longer term accommodation for individuals who have some substance use and are working with substance use teams to manage and begin process of withdrawal.
- Licences to be flexible dependant on need of resident.
- Policies to be created to ensure for assessment of risks around substance use

High
2025/26

- Mixed model of communal living and shared houses for permanent accommodation for high risk, complex need residents.
- Support to be provided 24 hours per day, 7 days per week to ensure on site support is provided.
- Staff to be trained on all levels of risks including, intensive support for substance use, health and safety, domestic abuse and mental-health illness.

Trainer accommodation for residents with low needs/low risk

4.12 Help Beyond Housing has begun the provision of trainer accommodation with the acquisition of the Zip building by Leicester City Council. This project will provide an 11-bed housing with support scheme for individuals through the homelessness pathway. The accommodation will provide:

- Placements in the Trainer Accommodation which will be offered for up to 12 months to single occupancy households with a range of support needs, who would benefit from the intensive one to one support that supported housing can provide.
- Pre-tenancy training opportunities to build confidence and develop independent living skills before residents move into their own tenancies.
- Opportunities to gain educational skills and employment training to enable residents to get back into the workforce.
- Joint working with drug and alcohol services, mental health services and Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust to assist with the provision of services in-house.

This accommodation will be provided as short-term temporary accommodation for homeless people with low or no support needs and low or no risk. The licence agreement for this project will be 12 months and residents will move from this property, into social housing via the housing register.

4.13 Supported Housing for residents with medium need

This model will provide accommodation for individuals identified as have a housing need, but also living with complexed needs including substance use, domestic abuse, and mental health illness. Residents in this model will have been identified as unsuitable for the communal living model due to potential risks which are identified to themselves and/or others due to their chaotic lifestyles. This will also assist Leicester City Council in meeting its duty to other statutory services. The model most suited to this form of supported housing would be a shared house model (HMO) as it will provide support within a smaller group per property whilst helping the individual to develop their independent living skills. It will also provide the flexibility needed to help the individual work towards changing their behaviour and lifestyle. Support will be provided during office hours, with an out of hours duty presence should this be needed, or 24 hours per day, 7 days per week dependent on the individuals in residence at the time. This accommodation will be on a Licence basis, with terms agreed and approved by the Service Manager/Head of Service on a case-by-case basis. This is to allow for the opportunity for longer term licencing if needed.

4.14 High Risk

The highest current demand is for Leicester City Council 24 hour covered supported housing for residents. This accommodation will be assigned on a permanent licence/tenancy based on proof of the resident's inability to cope with independent living. A decision will need to be taken as to whether this will be a mixed model of communal living and shared housing based on several factors including:

- Substance use history – if current then will need to ensure that other residents who may be in treatment do not relapse.
- Domestic abuse cases – there will likely need to be single sexed models to mitigate risks and ensure resident safety is not put at risk.
- Mental Health illness – ensuring that support is provided in line with CMHT to ensure the resident is supported in a safe and well environment.

A Leicester City Council property has been identified as a possible viable option for the provision of high risk supported housing and a feasibility study is attached at Appendix A.

4.15 Additional support opportunities to be provided with supported housing.

Supported housing on its own is an essential need, however there are also other areas in line with supported housing which should be looked at to ensure that residents are encouraged to reintegrate with the community, change their lifestyle habits, and break the cycle of entrenched lifestyles. The following are also to be included with the supported housing package:

- **Additional support from external partners** – Many individuals who are vulnerable adults with multiple disadvantage struggle with maintaining engagement with external services. This includes mental health; GP practices and substance use teams. It is envisaged that this service will work with external services from all the above to provide in-house support for those individuals who are identified as having inconsistent engagement with external services. Those individuals will be supported to try and build trust between themselves and services until they can be encouraged to attend appointments outside of their housing.
- **Educational opportunities** – The service will look to engage with education services such as Leicester Adult Education to enable residents to take educational courses should they wish to gain skills and to assist with reintegration into the community. This will also include pre-tenancy training which will assist in the development of independent living skills.
- **Employment** – Help Beyond Housing will work with residents living in supported housing to encourage them back to work, should they wish, by working with businesses and educational training in the local authority to put plans in place for employment opportunities and training. This will in turn support the residents to be able to move into independent living and to provide support to other residents through lived experience.
- **Lived experience support network** – it is envisaged that a project is up and running and residents have been successful in their accommodation a network can be built with former residents who have been through the process and can provide a mentor service to other supported housing residents.

The following options have been considered, but it is recommended that we pursue option 2 and option 3:

Option 1 – Do nothing. This is not an option as there are implications relating to the current levels and future levels of failed tenancies with housing management and cases coming via the homelessness pathway. Tenants who have multiple/complex support needs will continue to struggle to maintain their tenancies which will have an impact on rent arrears and abandoned tenancies. These additional issues will impact on housing related floating support being provided adequately, support from a range of other services and sectors and outreach/rough sleepers teams as well as an increase in anti-social behaviour and churn on estates.

Option 2 – The City Council to identify buildings to be repurposed and/or purchased for the use of supported housing. This will assist in the delivery of a much-needed resource to enable residents who are currently struggling to sustain tenancies due to complex needs including substance misuse to access housing with support. This level of supported housing will vary from low/medium/high risk with the potential for a supported housing project that will be based on a permanent residency basis. Affordability will be considered, and schemes will aim to reduce overall budget pressures for services, by supporting people into more appropriate settled accommodation. A feasibility study is set out in Appendix A for Welford Road, which is currently a block of general needs housing. This project will need full costings and implications if we can agree to progress this.

Option 3 – The City Council to look at commissioning leased-based options of supported housing. This will mean entering into a long-term lease agreement to deliver the housing and support rather than acquiring new stock or using own housing stock. There is also the option to develop referral pathways for LCC tenants into provision already established in the city.

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

5.1 Financial implications

Option 2 is proposing to facilitate tenants who are currently struggling to remain in current tenancies due to mental health and substance issues. Without intervention in such cases, tenants may be reduced to staying within temporary accommodation which already has a large budget deficit even after a £10m budget increase for 2024/25.

For any option that is pursued, a financial review will need to be undertaken to ensure that it is affordable and sustainable and won't add further cost pressures to an already stretched area.

Consideration will also need to be given to the cost of the additional resource required for assisting tenants at each risk level. No calculations have been provided to support how much each support package costs for each risk criteria.

Any work that can be done to reduce the deficit within temporary accommodation and homelessness is a positive one, however more financial insight would be required to provide further comment and to be comfortable with any of the outlined options to be agreed.

5.2 Legal implications

6.2.1 As the appendix to this report acknowledges, there may be difficulty in securing vacant possession of 100 Welford Road if those tenants who occupy on secure tenancies are unwilling to move voluntarily.

6.2.2 The Homecome tenants will be in occupation by way of assured shorthold tenancies, and these can be determined by appropriate notices under S21 of the Housing Act 1988.

6.2.3 If the two secure tenants are unwilling to leave, the only potential ground for seeking possession would be ground 10 in Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1985:

The landlord intends, within a reasonable time of obtaining possession of the dwelling-house—

(a) to demolish or reconstruct the building or part of the building comprising the dwelling-house, or

(b) to carry out work on that building or on land let together with, and thus treated as part of, the dwelling-house, and cannot reasonably do so without obtaining possession of the dwelling-house.

To satisfy this ground the council would have to demonstrate that the work required to the flats occupied by the secure tenants would be subject to a level of reconstruction such that it could not be undertaken without possession being recovered and that the flats, once reconstructed, would not be suitable for the tenants to return to.

The making of a possession order on this ground is also subject to the court finding it reasonable to do so.

Jeremy Rainbow – Principal Lawyer (Litigation)

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. Due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty should be paid before and at the time a decision is taken, in such a way that it can influence the final decision.

The PSED cannot be delegated and therefore, the responsibility remains with the authority to put into place mechanisms by which these statutory duties can be stipulated as a requirement and monitored.

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 is seeking agreement for option 2 which is to identify buildings to be repurposed and/or purchased for the use of supported housing. If agreed this should lead to positive outcomes for people from across a range of protected characteristics who would need supported housing in the city, such as those with mental health illness, substance use. The availability of three types of supported housing along with additional support as mentioned in the report will help individuals to manage tenancies and gain relevant skills to live independently in the community. Option 2 will help us to achieve the aims of the PSED.

Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer
27 August 2024

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

Housing is one of the largest sources of carbon emissions in Leicester, responsible for 33% of emissions. Following the city council's declaration of a Climate Emergency and its aim to achieve net zero carbon emissions, addressing the emissions from housing is vital to the council's efforts to reduce carbon emissions. This is particularly important within the council's own housing stock, including new purchases and the refurbishment of existing buildings, where it has the greatest level of control.

Opportunities to ensure that any refurbishments or acquisitions will provide energy efficient low carbon housing should be investigated and taken forward as new projects are proposed and developed. Potential measures could include improved insulation, the use of low energy lighting and appliances and the installation of low carbon heating and renewables. As well as reducing carbon emissions, achieving a high level of energy efficiency could provide further benefits including reduced energy bills, increased value of the building and improvements to the level of comfort for occupants.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

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?

ⁱ [Statutory homelessness in England: January to March 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statutory-homelessness-in-england-january-to-march-2024)

Appendix A

100 Welford Road - Report on feasibility of the potential for change of use to Supported Housing

Date of report: 30 October 2024

Lead officer: Angelita Dyer – Service Manager (Housing
Support Services)

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: Castle
- Report author: Angelita Dyer
- Author contact details: 375152
- Report version number: V1

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report concerns the potential change of use of 100 Welford Road, Leicester, LE2 7AB from HRA property to Supported Housing for Leicester City Council.

2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1 To consider the findings of this report and to further investigate the viability of changing the use of 100 Welford Road to supported housing accommodation.

3. Background

- 3.1 100 Welford Road is within a conservation area. The building currently contains 5 flats and 6 bedsits. The freehold interest is owned by Leicester City Council, with access to the main road. The property fronts onto Welford Road and there is access to the rear courtyard which is currently open access and is being used as unofficial parking areas for the local shopkeepers.
- 3.2 The tenure of the currently residents are 2 residents with secure tenancies and 9 residents on Homecome tenancies.
- 3.3 The proposed plan for 100 Welford Road is to create a supported housing unit for 9 single residents, each with their own self-contained flat. This property will be for residents who would be categorised as having the highest need for supported housing due to variety of complex issues. The accommodation would be on a temporary to permanent basis dependant on their need. Support would be provided on a 7 day per week, 24-hour basis with the support workers being based on site. This would mean that 2 of the flats (flats 1 and 2 on the ground floor) would need to be retained for office use.
- 3.4 The alternative option would be for the property to be used for low to medium risk residents who may require housing with an element of support. This would be from Monday to Friday during office hours with support workers based on site.

4. Detailed report

- 4.1 This report asks for consideration to be given to whether supported housing provision is suitable for 100 Welford Road. The property has the potential to house 9 service users who would need support with various complex care needs and would not be suitable for general needs social housing or private sector housing. This would include individuals with the following combination of some or all the needs listed below:
- Support for people with substance misuse or a history of substance misuse.
 - Support for people who are alcohol dependent
 - Support for people at risk of offending.
 - Support for people with ill mental health
 - Support for people with a history of domestic abuse
- 4.2 The current layout of 100 Welford Road incorporates 11 flats. We would look to reduce this to 9 flats with flats 1 and 2 on the ground floor to be turned into office space and a respite/treatment room for other external agency appointments.
- 4.3 The proposal is for there to be staff on site 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. This is due to the complexities around providing support for those who are the most high-risk people, and to ensure that anti-social behaviour and substance misuse issues can be monitored for the safety of the individuals within the accommodation and also to ensure that outside influences do not pose a risk to vulnerable residents.

Potential Issues

- 4.4 There are several factors which would need to be looked at in relation to changing the use of 100 Welford Road into supported housing. Some of these considerations are as follows:
- 4.4.1 **Moving current tenants** – The current tenants of the property are on two different tenancies. Two of the flats are on secure tenancies and the nine other residents are on HomeCome tenancies. A discussion will need to be carried out with Legal Services to look at how the tenancies can be ended and managed moves be carried out with minimal disruption to the residents. The two flats which are on secured tenancies will be liable for home loss payments. The current rates for these are approximately £6,700 per property.
- 4.4.2 **Location** – 100 Welford Road has a history of anti-social behaviour with a particular issue relating to drugs. There will need to be some work in place to ensure that the building and external access is secure. The access road which runs next to the property allows for blind spots in which anti-social behaviour and drug use/dealing could occur. This could potential be managed by installing barriers to the access and the installation of CCTV cameras and extra external lighting which would allow 24-hour monitoring.

4.4.3 Building issues – Although 100 Welford Road is not a listed building it is within a conservation area. This would mean that any external works deemed necessary, including installing of CCTV would need an application for Listed Buildings Consent. Further consultations would need to be conducted with the Planning Department to ensure that any alterations and works are included. There is currently no up to date fire risk assessment and at the date of this report access could not be gained to inspect each flat within the building. Plans will need to be drawn up to enable further investigations into the viability of each flat and the potential conversion of 1 flat into office spaces. We would also need to factor in any planning applications to develop the nearby plot and the use of any future development, which if approved will be in very close proximity to 100 Welford Road.

4.4.4 Impact to local community – there is the potential for complaints from residents/businesses if the project is not managed sufficiently. This could potentially have a reputational impact on Leicester City Council. There is also a risk of increased anti-social behaviour and drug activity. The project would have to work closely with CRASBU and Leicester Police to ensure that information sharing is in place and any risks can be managed in a timely manner to ensure proactive work is being carried out to stop potential issues.

4.4.5 Cost implications – Works will need to be carried out to ensure that the property is fit for its purpose. These costs could include, but not be limited to:

- CCTV installation internally and externally
- Lighting installation externally
- Provision of broadband throughout building
- Safety measures to include installation of gated access to rear of 100 Welford Road
- Ensuring that all fire safety regulations are up to date including fire doors, signage, and fire prevention measures
- Internal works required to create office spaces to flats 1 and 2.
- Installation of intercom system

5. Options

5.1 There are three potential options for the use of 100 Welford Road to consider, option 3 is recommended. This is where we have greatest level of need and the building is already comprised of self-contained units:

Option 1 – No supported housing

100 Welford Road to remain as general needs housing.

Option 2 – Low/medium risk supported housing.

Provision of supported housing for residents who are substance free (post detox) who need support within a structured supported environment. This provision would need to ensure that a detailed drug/alcohol policy is in place. Consideration would also need to be made for potential relapses and therefore flexibility would need to be taken into consideration around sanctions for breach of licence/tenancy. The potential issues raised at point 4 above would need to take into consideration. This option would

require 24-hour support in place 7 days a week. This would mean having a minimum of 4 staff members per day.

Option 3 – High Risk

Option 3 is the option which is currently needed. This will need to have a detailed drug/alcohol policy in place with knowledge that residents will more than likely be currently using substances. We will need to work closely with CRASBU, Police, and Probation to ensure that any risks are kept to a minimum. Support would need to be in place 24-hours a day, 7 days a week and monitoring of residents will need to be stringent to ensure that risks to the local community are minimised.

Report to Housing Scrutiny Commission

Repairs and Maintenance Service Performance Update Report 2024-25

April 2025

Lead Member: Councillor Cutkelvin

Lead director: Chris Burgin

Will need to be filled in for Governance Services to proceed with publishing the decision. DO NOT DELETE. Governance Services will delete once they are satisfied due diligence has been done and the report is ready to publish.

| | |
|---|--|
| If this is a key decision has it appeared on the published forward plan | |
| Anticipated date for decision (if required) | |
| Date of relevant scrutiny commission – please detail name of commission(s) | |
| Date of paperwork entering public domain (note: if considered by scrutiny, this will be the scrutiny agenda publication date) | |
| Media considerations: Is a press release required? Will this be proactive or reactive? | |
| Please include details of other relevant meetings/briefings as part of decision/consultation process: This should include details of discussions with relevant stakeholders and/or ward councillors. | |

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Samuel Taylor and Nilkesh Patel, Head of Service
- Author contact details: 0116 4540674
- Report version number: - V1

1. Summary

This report is intended to provide an update on the current position of the Repairs and Maintenance Team and its performance throughout 2024-25. The report will detail the challenges faced, such as, changes in legislation, recruitment and increased demand. It will also outline improvement actions and projected timelines for reducing outstanding repairs. The report will also cover data reassurance.

All data within this report is accurate as of 28/02/2025.

2. Recommended actions/decision

It is recommended that the report is noted.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

The report has been sent to the Heads of Service for Technical Services and Tenancy Management for comment. It has also been to the Housing Lead Member Briefing and the HRA Property Safety Oversight Board.

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

General

The Council has around 19,500 properties and 1,700 leaseholders across the city, the services provided are below (Leasehold properties may differ):

- Responsive repairs
- Emergency out of hours repairs
- Compliance works for Gas, Fire and Electrical
- Pre-planned maintenance
- Renovation of Void properties to prepare them for re-letting

The way in which repairs are reported can vary, but will generally be one of the following:

- Compliance works – driven by the Council as we have an obligation to complete.
- Responsive repairs – generally driven by the tenant due to something going wrong, usually reported via Housing Online, or Customer Services.
- Complaints/Enquiries – tenant driven by escalating through different routes, for example, complaints or via Councillors.
- Internally reported – where officers encounter repairs and pro-actively report them on behalf of the tenant.

Repairs will generally sit in three main categories:

- Priority 1 – these are emergency repairs, the SLA to respond is 24 hours.
- Priority 2 – these are routine repairs, the SLA to respond is 10 working days.
- Priority 3 – these are programmed repairs, the SLA to respond is between 8 to 52 weeks.

We also use additional categories, these are dictated by legislation or policies, for example, response times for damp and mould works are dictated by the damp and mould policy.

Data Quality Assurance – Provided by Helen McGarry, Programme Manager

Management Information and Reporting Analysts (MIRA's) within the Housing Transformation Team are responsible for producing independent performance reports for the Repairs Service.

Pre-2020 these reports were produced monthly to provide a snapshot of key performance measures. Whilst giving a useful overview of performance in the previous month, they lacked the detail of reporting on individual repair areas and the information was often out of date when the monthly report was produced.

In 2020/21 we started a journey to overhaul our repairs performance reporting arrangements, using new technology available to us, through the creation of Power BI dashboards for the Repairs Service. These dashboards present information on key performance areas such as reported repairs, completed repairs, outstanding repairs, repairs completed within target times and out of category repairs, to name but a few. The development of these dashboards mean that information can be filtered to enable reporting on individual trades as well as high level service wide performance, along with trend graphs to track the direction of travel over a longer period of time. Performance is also reported through the dashboards at an Operative level to provide information to Repairs Team Leaders and Repairs Managers to help them manage individual performance. The dashboards are updated every night, so the service now has access to much more up to date information than the monthly reports previously provided.

The benefit of introducing these dashboards and the information they provide, has been that we have been able to identify where data quality may have been an issue and steps have been taken to rectify this. The dashboards contain a huge amount of performance data and through their use it has helped to re-enforce the key indicators we need to monitor, broken down by trade where applicable, in the delivery of the Repairs Services which are:

- Repairs reported
- Repairs completed
- Outstanding repairs
- Outstanding repairs which are out of category (timescale for completion)
- Repairs cancelled as a result of the tenant not being at home
- Repairs cancelled by the council
- Gas compliance
- Electrical domestic compliance (EICRs)

- Electrical communal compliance (EICRs)

We have also learnt that we need to be clearer on what information is included within the dashboards and our counting rules. For example, our Operational Repairs Dashboard does not report on cancelled works orders. Whereas a bespoke report produced to show total reported repairs would include these, and therefore different figures would be produced to what is shown in the dashboard. We have found that this sometimes leads to confusion.

As we have now had the opportunity to learn from the implementation of our first Repairs Service dashboards, we have a project planned in during 2025 to redevelop these to ensure effective reporting mechanisms are in place for the future and to meet the changing needs of the service.

Consistency of Reporting

To ensure the data being produced for repairs reporting purposes is consistent, the approach will be to include all reports of repairs and to not remove cancellations from 'tenant not in' and 'duplicate' repairs. This will initially show an uplift in comparison to previous reporting; however, this will provide transparency, particularly in terms of jobs cancelled due to residents not being home, which is an important factor to consider.

This new approach to reporting on repairs performance and improvements will be consistent with the expectations of the Social Housing Regulator, therefore, they will be broken down into the following:

- Repairs
- Health and Safety Compliance
- Damp and Mould
- Voids

Challenges

There are various challenges which are consistent across all repairs teams, one of the main ones is resourcing. During the last 12 months we have consistently operated with vacancies, currently at 15FTEs, but it has at times been higher. To contextualise this, we have 13FTEs working on our damp team, they are generally completing around 50% of the work coming in, these vacancies, if deployed into the damp and mould team would remove the deficit.

Through collaboration with colleagues in recruitment, we have seen some recent success, and we currently have candidates going through our onboarding process, this will provide us with some much needed capacity. Growing our apprenticeship programme is another positive action that will help with succession planning, this is set to increase to 50 this year.

Job cancellations is another barrier for the team, these can be for various reasons, but in most cases, they relate to tenants not being home when we visit. Around 20,000 repairs have been cancelled so far this year, this equates to roughly 16% of all repairs. Work is required in this particular area with colleagues in tenancy management to help bring this figure down.

Repairs

Key Performance Indicators

| Key Performance Indicator | Target | Actual | As a % of Repairs Reported |
|---|--------|--------|----------------------------|
| Repairs outstanding | 6,000 | 10,897 | 14.16% |
| Repairs out of category | 0 | 4,849 | 8.23% |
| Percentage of all repairs completed within category | 85% | 75.0% | N/A |
| Percentage of emergency repairs completed within category | 90% | 86.0% | N/A |

There are various reasons why jobs remain outstanding for longer than they should, the main contributors for this are as follows:

- Lack of resources
- Difficulties engaging with tenants to book appointments
- Awaiting special order materials
- Other priorities, i.e. damp and mould
- Tenants not being home for appointments

Repairs Trends

| Repairs Trends | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025* |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Repairs reported | 80,772 | 81,449 |
| Repairs completed | 64,027 | 64,342 |
| Repairs cancelled (including tenant not in, duplicates, misreporting) | 15,774 | 16,113 |
| Repairs deficit | 971 | 994 |

*Based on projection from data between 01/04/2024-28/02/2025

Whilst the data above remains relatively stable, it is a concern to see an increase in repairs cancelled, this often results in wasted time for our works planning team in cancelling duplications, or for our operatives attending appointments, only for the tenant to not be in, or refuse access. This causes unnecessary administrative time and reduced productivity.

Repairs Profile for Priority 1,2 and 3 repairs

| Repair Category | Number of | Average days | Number of | Number of |
|-----------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-----------|
|-----------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-----------|

| | jobs out of category | job is out of category | jobs over 12 months out of category | jobs over 24 months out of category |
|----|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| R1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| R2 | 2,508 | 70 | 0 | 0 |
| R3 | 1,888 | 192 | 186 | 0 |

Out of Category Risk Management

Whilst the out of category repairs are of concern, from a safety perspective there are factors which help to reduce the risk associated with these repairs:

- Most repairs which are out of category are regarding:
 - External works
 - Windows and doors
 - Plastering
- All emergency repairs are either fully resolved during the first visit or made safe. In some scenarios, we may also look to decant tenants while repairs are undertaken.
- Most of the out of category repairs are 'in progress' in the sense that they have had an initial visit to survey for the repairs required.
- Operatives are able to recategorise repairs with their Team Leader if they feel it needs a quicker resolution.
- We will, where necessary, raise non-urgent jobs as emergencies if residents in the household have vulnerabilities.
- Tenants are able to report emergency repairs 24 hours per day, 365 days per year, even if they already have a repair logged for the same issue.
- Tenants are able to liaise directly with the appropriate Works Planner should they have any issues relating to repairs already raised. Based on the concerns, this may expedite the appointment.
- We visit most properties at least once per year where they have the opportunity to raise concerns directly with operatives.

Repairs Improvements

Due to the backlog of works and continued consistency with repairs reported, the following measures are being implemented to increase capacity and reduce cancellations:

- Use of contractors and other internal resources, i.e. Highways for external repairs
- Increased performance expectations
- Availability of overtime for repairs staff
- Follow-up repairs appointments confirmed by telephone wherever possible
- Housekeeping
- Migration of resources to meet demand

The current projections for improvements are as follows:

| Key Performance Indicator | Actual | Projection by 31/03/2025 | Projection by 30/04/2025 | Projection by 31/05/2025 | Projection by 30/06/2025 | Projection by 31/07/2025 | Projection by 31/08/2025 |
|---------------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Repairs out of category | 4,849 | 4,383 | 3,823 | 3,263 | 2,703 | 2,143 | 1,583 |

This will be a welcomed improvement on the current position but does come with the caveat outlined later in the report in relation to damp and mould remediations, which could slow down progress in these repairs area in order to expediate much needed progress with addressing the backlog in the damp and mould service area.

The areas with the most significant reduction are external works, which is projected to see a reduction of around 1,400 repairs during the period outlined above.

In addition to this, we will also be arranging a further meeting with colleagues in Procurement to explore other options available to assist in delivering further reductions to the outstanding repairs figures.

Compliance

Key Performance Indicators

| Compliance | Target | 2024-2025 |
|------------------------------|--------|-----------|
| Annual Gas Safety Checks | 100% | 99.66% |
| Communal EICRs | 100% | 63% |
| Domestic EICRs | 100% | 24.28% |
| Fire Inspections | 100% | 100% |
| Smoke Alarm Checks | 100% | 95% |
| Carbon Monoxide Alarm Checks | 100% | 97.7% |

Compliance will always be a priority, and we will always strive to be at 100%, where we are not, we endeavour to demonstrate reasonable attempts have been made to undertake the necessary checks. One of the main challenges we face is where tenants do not allow access or are not home for appointments, an example of this is annual gas safety checks, where we have a tenant not in rate of 25%. As explained above, this results in increased administrative work and reduced productivity and reduces our ability to effectively maintain high compliancy levels.

Compliance related works are setup to ensure they cannot be cancelled, and we follow our access procedure in conjunction with colleagues in Tenancy Management, whilst this can be effective, it is another time-consuming task that prevents officers from being

effective in delivering on their core duties; this is at the detriment to other residents and service users.

Compliance Related Repairs Key Performance Indicators

Whilst not all compliance related repairs naturally sit within compliance, for simplicity and consistency, this report includes them here.

Gas Repairs (including district heating)

| Key Performance Indicator | Target | Actual |
|---|--------|--------|
| Gas Repairs outstanding | 500 | 1,307 |
| Gas Repairs out of category | 0 | 582 |
| Percentage of all repairs completed within category | 85% | 84% |
| Percentage of emergency repairs completed within category | 90% | 84% |

Work is already underway to reduce the outstanding works within the gas repairs team, this includes:

- Use of contractors
- Increased performance expectations
- Availability of overtime for repairs staff
- Follow-up repairs appointments confirmed by telephone wherever possible
- Housekeeping

This has already had a positive impact and we continue to push this forward. One of the main issues we have seen when looking at the data is device management, an example of this is a recent exercise to look at 123 emergency jobs that remained open longer than 24 hours, all 123 had been visited and either completed, cancelled or surveyed for materials, however, all were left open. Briefings have been held with operatives to advise them on the correct process for each scenario they may encounter so we do expect this to improve.

Gas Repairs Trends

| Repairs Trends | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025* |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Gas Repairs reported | 20,769 | 22,140 | 21,507 | 23,481 |
| Gas Repairs completed | 17,025 | 18,116 | 17,211 | 18,337 |
| Gas Repairs cancelled (including tenant not in, duplicates, misreporting) | 3,683 | 4,004 | 4,487 | 4,713 |

| | | | | |
|---------------------|----|----|------|-----|
| Gas Repairs deficit | 61 | 20 | -191 | 431 |
|---------------------|----|----|------|-----|

*Based on projection from data between 01/04/2024-28/02/2025

As can be seen above, there has been a significant uplift in repairs over the last 12 months, most of these can be attributed to the heat metering project, where we have identified a lot of system improvements being required.

Gas Repairs Improvements

| Key Performance Indicator | Actual | Projection by 31/03/2025 | Projection by 30/04/2025 | Projection by 31/05/2025 | Projection by 30/06/2025 | Projection by 31/07/2025 | Projection by 31/08/2025 |
|---------------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Repairs out of category | 582 | 502 | 422 | 342 | 262 | 182 | 102 |

Fire Inspection Repairs

Fire inspections are undertaken by tenancy management as part of their building responsible officer role, the frequency of the inspections will vary depending on the risk associated with the building. We currently have a 100% compliance rate with all inspections.

Following an inspection, repairs are raised under a variety of categories, these are:

F1/R1 – 24 hours
F2/R2 – 10 days
F2A – 13 weeks
F2B – 26 weeks
F3/R3 – 1 year

We measure performance based on whether we complete the necessary repairs within the target time. Whilst some improvement is required, generally the performance is good.

| | 24/25 YTD | | |
|-------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Completed | On Time # | On Time % |
| F2 | 420 | 320 | 76.2% |
| F2A | 135 | 135 | 100.0% |
| F2B | 146 | 143 | 97.9% |
| F3 | 588 | 585 | 99.5% |
| R1 | 67 | 57 | 85.1% |
| R2 | 345 | 282 | 81.7% |
| R3 | 53 | 52 | 98.1% |
| Total | 1,754 | 1,574 | 89.7% |

As with all repairs, we still have issues with access and in some cases ordering bespoke materials, such as windows and fire doors, this can prolong the time taken to complete the job.

Damp and Mould

Key Performance Indicators

| Key Performance Indicator | Target | Actual |
|---|--------|--------|
| Repairs outstanding | 500 | 1,787 |
| Repairs out of category | 0 | 1,514 |
| Percentage of all repairs completed within category | 85% | 24.6% |

Again, the current performance is not where we expect it to be, the number of out of category repairs is of grave concern and requires immediate intervention, as outlined below.

Damp and Mould Trends

| Repairs Trends | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025* |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Repairs reported | 904 | 844 | 1,620 | 1,601 |
| Repairs completed | 549 | 673 | 840 | 735 |
| Repairs cancelled (including tenant not in, duplicates, misreporting) | 192 | 163 | 146 | 92 |
| Repairs deficit | 163 | 8 | 634 | 774 |

*Based on projection from data between 01/04/2024-28/02/2025

The table above gives an insight into the increase in reports of damp and mould remediations which has put a huge strain on the team to meet the demand coming in.

One of the main challenges has been the increased works being specified to provide lasting defences against damp and mould, whilst this is of course a positive, it does somewhat inhibit the team in completing as many damp and mould remediations as we would like.

Jobs being cancelled continues to be a consistent theme throughout this report. Generally, as indicated above, damp and mould remediations tend to be much larger than the average repair, it can often be several days' worth of work and involve larger quantities of materials. It is therefore extremely disruptive when tenants do not accommodate the repairs to go ahead, this leads to excessive downtime and administrative commitment in returning materials and re-booking appointments. It is important to note that all damp and mould appointments are booked in agreement with the tenant and a courtesy call is undertaken the working day before to confirm our attendance. Despite the improvements this has evidenced, cancellations remain high.

Damp and Mould Improvements

The Council has initiated the following interventions to increase capacity and complete more damp and mould remediation works:

- Use of contractors
- Increased performance expectations
- Availability of overtime for repairs staff
- Housekeeping
- Migration of resources to meet demand

Despite these efforts it is still proving to be a challenge to make a significant impact into the overall out of category damp repairs. However, due to the elevated concerns with the impacts of damp and mould, the Council are proposing 2 significant changes:

1. Migrating all damp and mould remediations to the Voids Team: this will considerably increase the most effective resources for this type of work.
2. Cleaning and applying a mould inhibiting solution to all damp and mould jobs where a priority has been identified; this will remove the immediate risk to the residents. All necessary remediations will then be treated as programmed works and provisions will be in place to allow tenants to report any reoccurrence in the interim period and we will revisit where required.

Applying these two changes will drastically improve the overriding priority: to remove the risk. This will result in having 0 outstanding properties within 3 months with an immediate risk of damp and mould in the following scenarios:

- Within living areas, such as bedrooms.
- Properties where residents have ailments that may be exacerbated by damp and mould.
- Properties where vulnerabilities are identified, i.e. age.

We will then treat all new damp and mould remediation repairs in the same way as this approach becomes embedded into business-as-usual processes. This will also meet the requirements of the pending Awaab's Law due to come into effect in October 2025.

The impact of this option has been alluded to previously in this report, in increasing efforts to focus on damp and mould, there may be slippage against other areas. However, it is advisable to concentrate efforts to tackle the current backlog of repairs in this specific work area to mitigate against the associated risks.

Voids

Our Voids team have been on an improvement journey for the last 3 years, this has seen positive trends, and we are now in a relatively stable position, as outlined above, we will be looking to merge our damp and mould team within the voids team, whilst this may have a slightly negative impact on voids initially, it will in the long run ensure we have adequate resources and skills to undertake both elements at the required pace.

It is important to note that we often use the void stage to undertake our capital investment works, such as, kitchens, bathrooms, rewires, boilers. Also, where required, we try to remove asbestos while properties are empty as this is the safest time to remove it.

Voids Key Performance Indicators

| Key Performance Indicator | Year end 2021-22 | Year end 2022-23 | Year end 2023-24 | Year end 2024-25 |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Number of Voids (excluding projects, decants, RTL and supported living) | 404 | 426 | 363 | 285 |
| Number of Voids as a % of total housing stock | 2.06% | 2.17% | 1.85% | 1.45% |
| New Void to Let Time (days) | 169 | 195 | 188 | 159 |
| Void with 'Repairs to Ready to Let' time (days) | 89 | 87 | 63 | 70 |

The above illustrates the positive voids journey over the last few years, this helps towards reducing rent-loss, providing decent homes for those in need, particularly in relation to homelessness and those staying in temporary accommodation.

The voids team will continue with the improvement actions, with one of the main priorities being the transition to mobile working in 2026-27 to align them with the rest of the workforce and allow better management of the end-to-end process.

Senior management will be monitoring any impacts resulting from the additional damp and mould works to ensure properties are still being prepared for letting at a reasonable pace.

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

5.1 Financial implications

Finance-Capital@leicester.gov.uk

TBC

Signed:

Dated:

5.2 Legal implications

legal.property@leicester.gov.uk

legal.commercial@leicester.gov.uk

| |
|---------|
| TBC |
| Signed: |
| Dated: |

5.3 Equalities implications

| |
|--|
| equality@leicester.gov.uk |
| TBC |
| Signed: |
| Dated: |

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

| |
|--|
| climatechangeimplications@leicester.gov.uk |
| TBC |
| Signed: |
| Dated: |

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?

Women In Construction/ Apprentice Programme Update

Assistant Mayor Briefing: 2nd September 2024

Housing and Neighbourhoods Board: 18th September 2024

Housing Scrutiny Commission: 22nd April 2025

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin
Lead Director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

■ Ward(s) affected: ALL

■ Report author: Charlotte McGraw

■ Author contact details: charlotte.mcgraw@leicester.gov.uk Tel: 0116 4545167

■ Report version number: v1.2

1. Summary

1.1 This report provides an update on the Women in Construction and Apprentice Programmes within Housing delivered by Leicester City Council.

2. Recommended actions/decision

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members on the delivery of the Women in Construction programme and the craft apprentice recruitment for 2024/25 and 2025/26. Members are recommended to review the report and provide any comments for consideration.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

3.2 This report will be subject to scrutiny at Housing Scrutiny Commission.

4. Background

4.1 Women in Construction was established in partnership with Leicester College well over 20 years ago and is run every year in February at Leicester College. This year for the first time the Council also ran an additional Women In Construction week at the Construction Training Centre of Excellence to encourage an even greater take up by running the programme over two weeks from two different locations.

The main objectives of the programme are to;

- Provide an environment that challenges the outdated stereotype that trades (carpentry, plumbing, tiling, painting and decorating etc) are only suitable for men;
- Showcase Leicester City Council tradeswomen who are qualified in their respective trades and to pass on some of their knowledge to the women who attend the workshops, raising confidence and skills in women in the community in practical trades;
- Actively demonstrate that Leicester City Council is a forerunner in implementing diversity and inclusion within its trade workforce. Currently 20% of our craft workforce is made up of women. Nationally this stands at 13% in the construction industry with just 1% working on site;
- Provide a supportive and positive environment to enable women of any age or background to take part in taster sessions in a chosen trade. In turn increasing women's confidence in their own ability.
- Promote, encourage and support applications to the trade apprenticeships from the attendees.

4.2 Until 2023 Leicester City Council employed 30 apprentices within Housing in craft trades providing on the job experience with qualified operatives and educational attainment through Leicester College and Stephenson's College. In 2024 to reflect the growing need to develop our own talent to fill roles in Repairs, Gas and Voids the apprenticeship programme was extended from 30 to 40 posts, supported and mentored by three Operational Development Supervisors. This year the programme has grown again from 40 to 50 apprenticeships with an additional supervisor in place to support and mentor them. In addition, the Council also now works with SmartGas to deliver Gas apprenticeships and from September 2025 will work with Langley to deliver a roofing apprenticeship.

5. Main report

5.1 Women in Construction

The 2025 Women in Construction programme was run for one week during February half term at Leicester College. Leicester College provided this venue free of charge to LCC as part of a longstanding partnership and half term week is selected as the college is empty whilst students take a break from their studies. In addition, for the first time the Council also offered a further week for women to attend Women in Construction in March 2025 at the Council's own, Construction Training Centre of Excellence. This was in response to feedback that some women could not attend during half term week due to childcare arrangements.

These weeks were well promoted in advance through schools and colleges, social media and local advertising including billboards within the City at the ice rink and on bus stops. The Unions also provided sponsorship to assist with promoting the programme in the community.

Women were asked to sign up to attend one or more sessions during the week. Sessions were focused around the core trades of carpentry, plumbing, tiling, painting and decorating.

This year we had female and male craft operatives attend to support the week long sessions in teaching women basic craft skills, three female supervisors, 1 male Team Leader and two managers (including a female Repairs Manager who came through the apprentice route into a craft role so is hugely inspirational to more junior members of staff and new recruits.) The emphasis is very much on promoting LCC as a female friendly working environment to encourage women to apply for craft roles through our apprenticeship programme and to promote the good work the Council is doing around increasing the number of women in craft trades. Below is a picture of Leicester City Council staff taken at the start of the week ready to meet the potential new recruits.



During the two weeks nearly 130 women attended a variety of sessions, scheduled from Monday to Friday. Feedback from the women was hugely positive with many feeling it supported their confidence in developing practical skills and their knowledge around job opportunities within the Council.

5.2 Apprentice recruitment

This year our apprentice recruitment programme has started as it always does with Women in Construction in February following on from this we are currently working closely with local schools, colleges, the DWP and through social and other local media to promote our apprentice vacancies which will be filled by September 2025. We also work very closely with Children's Services to promote these opportunities to Looked After Care Children (LACs) and leaving care to ensure we fulfil our obligations as a corporate parent. We have a successful history of mentoring and supporting LACs and Care leavers within our apprentice programme. Last year the Council advertised 18 apprentice vacancies, 5 in Gas, 5 in Carpentry, 5 in Electrics and 3 Property Maintenance Operatives. These apprenticeships vary in length from 2.5 years to 5 years long and are delivered in partnership with Leicester College, SmartGas and Stephenson's College. In 2025, the Council is advertising for 10 new apprenticeships in Roofing to meet a need in the service provided by Langley, and a further 2 x Electrical, 2 x Gas and 2 x Carpentry.

In 2024 we received 326 applications, of which 22 were from Women, 57 candidates were BME and 8 were from LACs/Care leavers. These applicants were then put through a variety of practical and written tests before they were invited to interview. At this stage the 326 applicants were reduced to 66 applicants including 11 women, 5 LACs/Care leavers and 28 BME candidates.

Following on from interview all 18 positions were offered including to 3 women. The 18 successful candidates included 3 BME candidates, 2 LACs/care leavers, 2 candidates with disabilities, 1 candidate from LCC's own Leicester to Work (Neighbourhood Improvement) programme and 1 Armed Forces candidate.

The successful candidates commenced employment with Leicester City Council in September 2024. They all have a detailed induction programme and are assigned a supervisor in the workplace, an onsite mentor (operative) and a tutor at college. The Council works closely to ensure adequate support is in place to enable all our apprentices to have a positive work

experience and to also mould and shape the next generation of our workforce. Pictures below show the apprentices in their first week of employment at City Hall for their induction.



5.3 Next steps

The Council will continue to build on its existing apprentice programme, delivering high quality apprenticeships which build a robust workforce for the future which is representative of our tenant profile. With the success of running an additional session at CTCE this year, the Council will build on this and aims to deliver future sessions during 2026 to enable future employees to have access to the programme and to make best use of our facilities.

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

6.1 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.
Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance
19th August 2024

6.2 Legal Implications

The report is an update on the programme and therefore no direct legal implications arising at this stage.

Mannah Begum, Principal Solicitor, Commercial and Contracts Legal Services, Ext 1423
Date: 20 August 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, to advance equality protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

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

The report provides an update on the delivery of the Women in Construction programme for 2024 and the craft apprentice recruitment for 2024. Both have had a positive impact across a number of protected characteristics as highlighted in the report, e.g. disability, race, sex. The next steps identified in the report continue to take equality considerations into account and promote the aims of the PSED.

Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer, 22 August 2024

6.4 Climate Emergency Implications

Construction and buildings are a major source of carbon emissions in Leicester. Following the city council's declaration of a Climate Emergency, and its ambition to achieve net zero carbon emissions, addressing these emissions is vital in meeting this aim.

To tackle the climate emergency future construction will need to meet higher standards of environmental sustainability, with a corresponding need for training in the relevant skills and technologies such as insulation, heat pumps and renewables. As such, opportunities for the project to support training in these areas could be investigated, in order to help prepare Leicester's construction industry for a low carbon future.

Additionally, the provision of services contributes to carbon emissions, for example from the use of buildings, equipment and transport. To minimise these impacts staff and partners should be encouraged to reduce energy use, use sustainable transport and procure low carbon equipment and materials.

Housing Scrutiny Commission

Work Programme 2024 – 2025

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

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--|---|--|
| | 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. |

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

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--|--|--|
| | <p>Selective Licensing</p> <p>Housing Safety</p> | Members invited to attend rough sleeper count. | Sent to Members |
| 7 January 2025 | <p>Housing Revenue Account Budget Proposals 2025/26</p> <p>General Fund Budget Proposals 2025/26</p> <p>District Services</p> | <p>District heating to be added to the work programme.</p> <p>New build and Acquisitions profile to be shared with Members.</p> <p>A guideline on the timeframe of RTB applications to be provided if details are shared with officers.</p> <p>Alternative construction methods to be added to the work programme as either a topic or site visit.</p> <p>A housing officer to attend Belgrave ward at Member's request.</p> | <p>Complete.</p> <p>Information requested.</p> <p>Process shared with Members to provide details to officers.</p> <p>Complete.</p> <p>Complete</p> |
| 18 March 2025 | <p>Succession Policy</p> <p>Tenant Involvement proposals</p> | Pop up housing offices pilot to be added to work programme once complete (12 months) | Added to future items. |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | <p>Dates and locations of housing pop up offices to be circulated to Members</p> <p>Tenant scrutiny panel updates to be provided to the commission</p> <p>Discussion on tenants engaging with Housing Scrutiny</p> <p>Report to be brought back to scrutiny on engagement strategy for those on the waiting list for social housing - Add to work programme</p> <p>Report to be circulated/ brought back on work done by Southwark Council mentioned by Cllr Cutkelvin</p> <p>Renters Reform Bill to be added to work programme to come back</p> <p>Private rented sector update and refresh to be added to work programme to come back</p> <p>Selective licensing update to be added to work programme to come back</p> <p>Answer to be provided on process and charge of council tax on second homes that are empty for a period of time</p> | <p>Completed.</p> <p>Action circulated.</p> <p>Action circulated.</p> <p>Action circulated. Added to work programme.</p> <p>Complete.</p> <p>Added to work programme.</p> <p>Added to work programme.</p> <p>Added to work programme.</p> <p>Complete.</p> |
|--|--|--|--|

| | | | |
|----------------------|--|--|--|
| 22 April 2024 | Apprentice Programme & WIC Supported Housing proposals Repairs Performance | | |
|----------------------|--|--|--|

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. An update was received on 18 March 2025. | |
| 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. | |
| Engagement Strategy | The Commission requested a report to be brought back to scrutiny on the engagement strategy for those on the waiting list for social housing | |
| Renters Reform Bill | | |
| Selective Licensing Update | | |
| Maintenance Charges Update | Still awaiting. The Commission is keen to see this report as soon as it is ready. | |
| Pop up Housing Offices | The pilot will be complete in early 2026. A request for an update to be brought back once it is completed and information on how the programme will continue moving forward. | |

