



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2025 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor O'Neill - Chair

Councillor Clarke
Councillor Mahesh
Councillor Zaman

Councillor Gopal
Councillor Singh Sangha

In Attendance:

Deputy City Mayor – Councillor Cutkelvin

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45. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

Cllr Clarke substituted for Cllr Aqbany.

Apologies were received from Cllr Gregg.

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

There were no declarations of interest.

47. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

- 1) That the minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Commission held on 26th August be confirmed as a correct record.

48. CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS

- It was noted that a site visit to the new Council houses on Saffron Lane

took place on 6th November. The Chair commented that it was good to see the developments and would like to have another visit at a later date to see further progress.

- It was advised to the Commission that the next scheduled site visit to Hospital Close is due to be held on Thursday 13th November and all members welcome.

49. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

50. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

51. TENANT SCRUTINY PANEL - VERBAL UPDATE

Members of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel gave a verbal update on the work of the Panel. It was noted that:

- It had been useful to exchange feedback. Particularly with regard to vulnerable people.
- The panel listened as much as possible to residents and tried to feed in any possible help from the Council.
- The panel could give residents insight into the difficulties faced by the Council and the work done to address them.
- The Director of Housing had attended meetings and given talks.
- It had been useful to engage with Housing Officers and to understand their role.
- There had been frustration amongst some residents about being unable to get through to officers. Tenants needed somewhere to report issues to and pass information on.
- As part of a response to this there was a reminder of the multiple Pop up Housing offices across the City including the Porkpie Library. This was a step forward in terms of being part of the Council structure.

In discussions with Members and Officers it was noted that:

- There were approximately 17 residents on the panel, from all wards of Leicester. It had been set up following sessions held the previous year with tenants, in which various communities had been engaged with to see how they wanted to engage with the Council. The Council were keen to ensure that anyone who wished to engage had the opportunity to do so. The Council were also ensuring that there were other types of opportunity for tenants to take part.
- It was aimed to look at the conditions of tenancy to ensure they were

adequately robust.

- The panel were keen to recruit.
- The group would join TPAS, who could provide training and support for tenants getting involved in scrutiny. This would help people to join and develop so that they could engage in the most effective way.
- A log was kept of the issues addressed by the panel. This could periodically come to the Commission to look at the impact of what as taken to the panel.
- The panel met every two months and decided on the agendas themselves. Officers from the council ensured that the panel was representative. Local engagement work was done to bring in people from all communities. Engagement officers worked with people from across the city to ensure the panel was representative.
- Officers organised Housing Pop-up offices every week. These had proven to be popular with residents.
- It was noted that the job of housing officers had changed. They now had more responsibility around such items as Fire Safety. Much of their work was not visible to tenants. As such, one of the reasons for Engagement Officers was to be more visible. Engagement Officers could be another point of contact for residents.
- One of the Engagement Officers came to a craft group in Saffron ward at which patch walks and community clear up days were discussed. Another idea discussed had been 'skip days' at which the community were informed they could dispose of things in the skip.
- Engagement Officers could fulfil roles that Housing Officers were no longer able to do. With Engagement Officers in place, Housing Officers could now focus more on the landlord function.
- Engagement Officers could find out the needs of residents. Engagement Offices could be more flexible and add capacity to more bespoke issues. This made the team more dynamic.
- A work programme for Engagement Officers was being developed, and would go to the tenant panel for their input.
- Consumer standards from the Housing Regulator needed to be complied with.
- It was suggested that residents who had difficulty leaving their homes could be communicated with by post in order to inform them of the work of the Council and the panel. Additionally, digital exclusion was an issue in communicating with residents.

AGREED:

- 1) That the update be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account.

Councillor Clarke left the meeting during the consideration of this item.

52. DISTRICT SERVICE PERFORMANCE 2025

The Director of Housing submitted a report providing an overview of the Tenancy Management Service, the support it provides and its performance as a social housing landlord to Leicester City Council tenants.

Key points included:

- The Director of Housing introduced the Head of Service for Housing to present the Tenancy Management Service overview.
- The performance report was brought forward every year, to review the standard of the housing support offered. The city was made up of three districts, which covers 20,000 tenancies, 1,800 Leaseholders and three traveller sites which are covered by the traveller team. There is also the Star Service and Help Beyond Housing Team, who help support and house the most vulnerable Council tenants.
- Particular attention was drawn to 3.6 which covers the priorities for the service. These include fires safety, customer care, better estates, LiveWell and specialist support. It was noted that the priorities reflect the key standards set out by housing regulator. Another area highlighted was 3.7 which details the role of housing officers and the work they are involved in.
- A key performance area is fire safety. There are 1500 communal areas that need to be inspected, which is carried out by Housing Officers as part of their role. Last year 95% of the fire safety inspections were completed on time. Personal emergency evacuation plans were carried out, so tenants with special requirements such as disabilities, are identified and evac plans are put in place for them. Currently, 352 plans are in place for tenants which is an increase from last year. Other areas of note include updates to E-bike and scooter fire safety. In particular, the storage and charging of the Lithium batteries.
- Tenants at the Burns flat raised issues about the conditions of cleanliness in communal areas. This was used as a chance to review all communal areas city wide improvements seen and revised improved services and intensive monitoring is now in place.
- Performance has been linked with the tenant satisfaction survey to highlight areas of improvement and how these targets were being met or worked towards.
- Customer engagement and care had been developed through the engagement team and a tenant scrutiny panel. Projects such as pop-up housing offices and meetings have been beneficial in collecting feedback from residents. This data has been important in shaping and

scrutinising the services provided. The team had been collecting the information on area and communities which the engagement was coming from so that it could be examined to see which areas and communities to focus on in the future. This also allowed for better communication between the Council and tenants about what could be achieved/delivered.

- Projects were explored, such as the Community Garden to help tackle loneliness amongst the elderly and the star team's work, helping residents with various issues.
- Challenges of the sector were featured. It was explained how it could be hard to meet expectations from residents when it came to Anti-Social Behaviour cases. Things could not be done straight away as there are legal processes that need to be followed.

In discussions with members, the following was noted:

- The increase in tenant satisfaction was praised and questions were raised about what is being done to increase it. It was noted that since the staffing issues have now been resolved and queried if there would now be a correlating uptake in the Fire Safety rating. In answer to this it was commented that the engagement team is already increasing, and this was being picked up from the positive interactions with residents. It was further advised that the fire safety rating has since increased from 95% to 98% which already showed an increase.
- There was talk around how the data for the surveys was collected. In response, it was advised that the first year of the survey was mainly online with a small number of face to face only, but this raised accessibility issues. This year a company had been hired to address this. The company picked a random selection of properties in the city to conduct door knock surveys, with translation teams on site to aid accessibility. To be statistically valid a minimum of 1,000 tenants needed to be asked for this survey to be statistically valid. We completed
- The issue of anti-social behaviour on Belgrave Road was raised by a Councillor. They were advised that their residents could contact the Community Safety Team who will come out and investigate any disturbance. The details to be shared after the meeting.
- Questions were asked about £200k environmental budget and how wards can apply for the funding. It was advised that every year Housing approach the ward Councillors and tenants to ask how they would like the money to be spent. It was stressed that suggestions are welcome.
- Further details about the personal evacuation plan for residents during a fire were requested. In response it was explained that a resident with issues would be identified, a plan for how they would escape in a fire would be planned and it would be assessed if they needed help

evacuating. These details would then be passed on to the emergency services and held in a local locked box that can be accessed by Fire services and kept up to date.

- A subsequent question was asked regarding the feedback from the pop-up housing offices and how the information was collected from these locations. It was advised that there was a QR code at the pop-up housing offices as well as on leaflets, so tenants can complete a three-minute survey either in the offices or at their own leisure.

AGREED:

- 1) That the presentation be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account.

53. HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME- UPDATE

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AGREED:

- 3) That the presentation be noted.
- 4) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account.

54. HOMELESSNESS SERVICES UPDATE

The Director of Housing submitted a report providing an update on homelessness in the City for 2024/25 and progress in relation to Leicester's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Key points included:

- The Director of Housing introduced the Head of the Homelessness Prevention to present the report.
- It was stated that for the financial year 2024/2025 there was an increase of 9% in people contacting the homelessness team compared to the previous year. The number one cause of homelessness was the end of private rented tenancies, due to no fault evictions with the landlords leaving the rental market. The second highest reason was individuals being asked to leave family accommodation.
- In 2024 there was a verified count of 61 rough sleepers up from 26 in

2023 which was a 135% increase. A further count has been carried out in 2025, and it was advised that the data will be published in due course.

- In July 2025, 600 families were in temporary accommodation, with 12 families in Bed & Breakfast (B&B) accommodation for more than 6 weeks, compared to 188 in B&B in July 2024 which is a 93% reduction. In July 2025, there were 76 households in B&B's regardless of length of time spent there compared to 262 in July 2024 which is a 71% reduction. There were also 415 single households in temporary accommodation in 2025 compared to 552 in 2024 and 88 were in B&Bs compared to 159 in 2024. The report highlighted that homelessness is an issue nationally and not just an isolated issue in Leicester.
- The average wait time for families in temporary accommodation was over 5 and a half months on average. The average wait time in 2025 for a 1-bed property was 7 months for high priority households, a 2-bed was 18 months wait, and a 3-bed property was 2 years.
- Changes to the area in response to the pressures were highlighted. The number of homelessness prevention officers had increased from 13 to 30 to help with demand. Formal training on homelessness support has also been delivered to staff using external consultants and a new domestic violence support coordinator has been appointed. A single point of contact for planned prison releases had been created and support for members of the public, who were discharged from hospital into a homeless setting has been developed. Self-contained, Council owned, temporary accommodation was now being used so there is less use of B&Bs.
- The partnership with voluntary groups was detailed. The voluntary groups helped to arrange meals, furnishing and white goods for homeless residents as well as helping to achieve more permanent accommodation from other sources. A forum has been developed with one voluntary group who were offering children's activities in addition to advice and practical support.

In discussions with Members, the following was noted:

- In response to a query about the reduction in B&B usage and the possibility of further reduction, it was stressed that officers looked daily for better accommodation alternatives for families in B&Bs and if something became available, they arranged to move families as soon as possible. It was commented that the use of in-house, Council owned temporary accommodation had been very beneficial towards this. It was further stated that through the preventative work and the use of Council accommodation, there would be a future where B&Bs are not used.
- It was highlighted that even though the Homelessness Team are well above the national average for the prevention levels achieved. The demand on the service has been increasing year on year. Currently, there were between 15-20 families a month becoming homeless in Leicester. Last year, Housing had approached Full Council to request

£45 Million Pounds to help resolve the B&B issue. The money was granted and helped in providing more suitable accommodation to B&Bs. Due to the increase in demand again this year, the Housing department are planning to request a similar figure at Full Council again. This was to provide more capacity for temporary accommodation and to prevent there being any fall back on the progress made in reducing B&B usage.

- Further support was given to the future request at Full Council for more funding to the service. It was highlighted how this would save money for the Council by reducing B&B usage and would positively impact the budget. The overall budget was explored and it was shown that due to the investments made last year, the budget for this year was £23 Million instead of the projected £60 Million.
- It was highlighted that there was currently a former Premier Inn site in Oadby and the possibility of it being purchased and utilised was raised. In response, it was advised that the Council was wanting to move away from temporary hotel/B&B accommodation to a more homely alternative with better facilities.
- Comments were made about the Renters Rights Bill and what sort of impact it will have on the homelessness issue. In the long term, it was argued that it would be a positive for the service as it will stop no fault evictions. However, in the short term it had created some additional strain as landlords were pushing through evictions now so they can sell up before the bill passes.
- The topic of rough sleepers was raised and what help was being offered to them over the winter period. In response, it was explained that there were Council outreach teams who identified rough sleepers and advised them of the help available, so they would know they did not have to sleep rough. The Council also worked with charities who assisted as there were some rough sleepers who did not want to engage with authorities. There had recently been some extra funding from central government to help support rough sleepers over the winter and help prevent rough sleeping.
- Details were revealed about the new One Hub project at the Dawn Centre that is due to be rolled out in Spring 2026, this would be a multi-agency approach to help the homeless. Various Council teams, Mental Health, Inclusion, Healthcare and the Department for Work and Pensions would all have representatives at the hub. This had the aim of providing a multi layered support system to individuals and families who were homeless and to prevent rough sleeping.

AGREED:

- 1) That the presentation be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account.

55. WORK PROGRAMME

District Heating could be added to future workplans.

Enquiries on District Heating could be signposted to the Deputy City Mayor for Housing, Economy and Neighbourhoods.

The work programme was noted.

56. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no further items of urgent business, the meeting finished at 19:04.