



Leicester  
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 17 MARCH 2026 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor O'Neill – Chair  
Councillor Bajaj – Vice Chair

Councillor Gopal  
Councillor Zaman

Councillor Gregg

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**68. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr Aqbany and Cllr Singh Sangha.

**69. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

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

Cllr Gregg declared that he had applied to support exempt housing. This did not pertain to anything on the agenda.

**70. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Commission held on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

**71. CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair made the following announcements:

- There would be a short break so that those observing Ramadan could

break fast.

- Members were reminded that scrutiny was a place of challenge, but with respect.
- Members were advised that some reports may be taken as read as members had received the papers.
- Representatives from the Regulator of Social Housing who were observing the meeting were welcomed via an online link.

## 72. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

Mr Raja submitted the following statement and questions:

Chair and Members of the Commission,

I am writing not to raise an individual complaint, but to draw attention to potential systemic governance risks within Housing; particularly in relation to complaints handling, procedural compliance and oversight transparency.

In August 2025, the Regulator of Social Housing identified gaps under the Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard, including enhanced complaints handling and formalised reporting on learning from complaints (*Point A*). In the same meeting, it was recorded that complaints were approximately 75% compliant with response timescales (*Point B*).

In June 2025, this Commission also considered an LGSCO maladministration finding relating to Housing procedural failures, including failure to notify statutory review rights and delays in responding to suitability concerns (*Point C*).

Since then, the corporate complaints function has been moved under the Housing Division itself (*Point D*), and a Regulator of Social Housing Oversight Board has been established reporting to Executive, with an intention to provide updates to Scrutiny (*Point E*).

Taken together, these developments highlight that complaint handling and procedural compliance are not peripheral matters; they are central governance risks.

My concern is not about disagreement with outcomes. It is about structural integrity. Specifically:

- Whether Stage One responses are consistently acknowledged within published timeframes.
- Whether escalation safeguards are sufficiently robust where compliant Stage One responses are not issued.
- Whether complaint investigations maintain visible independence following the structural move of the complaints team under Housing.
- Whether complaint performance data is scrutinised with the same rigour as operational metrics such as fire safety, voids or tenant satisfaction.
- Whether data usage practices in leasehold or enforcement matters are

governed by clearly documented policy and oversight. The minutes from November 2025 also record tenant frustration about difficulty contacting officers. My concern relates to what happens after contact is made; whether escalation pathways, review rights and complaint compliance are functioning as intended, and/or ignored.

Housing is currently operating under significant statutory, financial and regulatory pressure. In that context, procedural integrity, transparent reporting and independent oversight become even more important.

This is not about individual disputes. It is about ensuring that the governance framework around complaints is as strong as the framework around operational delivery.

Thank you.

### **Question 1 Complaint Acknowledgement Compliance**

In light of the previously recorded 75% compliance rate with complaint timescales (Point B), what percentage of Housing Stage One complaints in Q4 2025 and Q1 2026 were acknowledged within the published policy timeframe? How many exceeded 10 working days before acknowledgement?

### **Question 2 Procedural Escalation Safeguards**

Given the June 2025 maladministration findings involving procedural failures (Point C), what formal safeguard now exists to prevent residents from being procedurally blocked from escalating to Stage Two or to the Ombudsman where a compliant Stage One response is not issued?

### **Question 3 Independence of Complaint Investigations**

Following the structural move of the complaints function under the Housing Division (*Point D*), who independently investigates complaints made about Housing Complaints Officers / Housing Officers themselves, and how is operational separation maintained to avoid perceived internal bias?

### **Question 4 Data Governance**

What written policy governs the Council's use of Companies House or other external data sources in leasehold or enforcement matters, and has this practice been legally reviewed for proportionality and data protection compliance?

### **Question 5 Scrutiny Oversight of Complaint Trends**

In August 2025, the Regulator identified the need for enhanced complaints handling and formalised reporting on learning from complaints (*Point A*).

The Commission routinely receives performance data on fire safety inspections, tenant satisfaction, void times and homelessness prevention

outcomes.

Does the Housing Scrutiny Commission now receive equivalent anonymised performance data on:

- Complaint acknowledgement breaches
- Stage One response timeliness and procedural compliance
- Instances where escalation was delayed due to non-compliant Stage One responses
- Ombudsman findings of maladministration relating to Housing
- Information governance or data protection incidents within Housing Services

If this data is not routinely reported to the Commission, could Members clarify why complaint compliance metrics are not scrutinised in the same way as operational performance indicators?

It was noted that responses had been sent to members and Mr Raja (appended).

### **73. PETITIONS**

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

### **74. TENANTS SCRUTINY PANEL - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Deputy City Mayor for Housing, Economy and Neighbourhoods introduced the item noting the following:

- The Housing Service had completed engagement activity 18 months ago.
- The Tenants Scrutiny Panel had required an expansion to include ongoing recruitment of members and a broader remit.
- It was recognised that including officers with broad knowledge of council matters was essential.

The Policy and Engagement Officer and Tenant Scrutiny Panel members provided a verbal update. The following was noted:

- There were now around 17 panel members attending meetings. Collaborative working was key.
- Panel members noted that the meetings were useful and had resulted in positive outcomes.
- Panel Members had interviewed prospective officers, participated in the HRA consultation, completed patch walks, provided feedback to the ASB Team and added digital inclusion into the vulnerability policy.
- It was hoped that a user-friendly booklet could be produced for the communities on damp and mould.
- For the pop-up events, alternative venues had been suggested to alleviate parking problems.

- Panel Members highlighted mutual benefits to members and the community of having the Tenant's Scrutiny Panel. Becoming a member provided an outlet to engage with others, and to keep in touch with community matters.
- Engagement work with TPAS ([Tenant Participation Advisory Service](#) ) was currently taking place and would lead to reforms by the summer of 2026.

In response to member questions and discussion, the following was noted:

- Members acknowledged the importance of the panel and thanked them for their contributions.
- Engagement work had included parent's evenings at St Matthews Taylor Road School.
- The membership reflected a mixed demographic, with ongoing monitoring in place to identify any underrepresentation. Where gaps were identified, officers would take action to address them.

AGREED:

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

## **75. WHO GETS SOCIAL HOUSING OCTOBER 1ST 2024 - SEPTEMBER 31ST 2025**

The Director of Housing submitted a report providing an update to Members of the 'headline' Housing Register and Lettings data, relating to Leicester City Council's Housing Register.

The Head of Service for Housing provided an overview of the report, key points to note were as follows:

- The number of households on the register remained relatively unchanged, being at 6200 on the last report and now standing at 6448.
- The number of homeless households remained similar with 35 less households now on the register.
- Social Housing Tenants accounted for 22% of those on the register which was slightly lower than before.
- The register was made up of 3 banding priorities, priority 1 being those with the highest need.
- Those in the most priority need accounted for 28% which was slightly lower this year.
- Band 2 applicants accounted for 32% of those on the register.
- Overcrowding remained the most common reason for joining the register, there had been a 2% reduction in applicants since last year.
- The Easy Move scheme facilitated mutual exchanges and was on track to meet targets.

- Demand for all types of accommodation was high and outnumbered supply.
- The Council also enabled housing associations to let through the Choice based Letting system, this accounted for 29% off all lettings and was an increase of 12% since the last period.
- For adapted accommodation there was no longer a disparity between fully wheelchair-accessible applicants on the housing register and lets achieved, representing a positive improvement.
- Waiting times were higher but there had been some success in this area.
- The highest demand was for property size was for 2 bedroom properties.
- The highest need was in Castle North Evington, the lowest was Knighton and Thurncourt.
- The number of lettings in the last 12 months had decreased by 6% but numbers were affected by large acquisitions.
- 89% of properties went to band 1, 8% to band 2 and 3% to band 3.
- 64% of all lettings were for those who were homeless or at risk.
- New parks and Belgrave had seen the most lettings.
- Average waiting times had remained largely consistent but had increased for band 1.

In response to member questions and discussion, the following was noted:

- Numbers for those in oversized properties could be provided to the commission.
- A summary of the Housing policy would be shared with the Tenant Scrutiny Panel.
- Those unable to apply online could make contact by the telephone to receive assistance to register.
- An auto-bid system was in place for those who did not have capacity to bid.
- Information on care leaver banding (for those from outside of the city) would be circulated to the commission, it was noted that care leavers from the City were allocated to the highest banding.
- Regarding bungalow allocation, the Local Lettings Policies scheme ensured that lettings were allocated in a fair, transparent and equitable manner. Where a bungalow was allocated to a tenant under 60 years of age, full consideration would have been given.
- Band changes occurred due to change of circumstance. Within each band, priority increased over time, giving applicants a greater chance of moving up the list; those at the top had typically been waiting the longest.
- The number of lets given to band 2 had reduced. Those in band 3, were often advised about going into private accommodation, whilst retaining their banding. A Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) was available.
- The Council participated in a national scheme that enabled tenants to Exchange their accommodation with other tenants from other local authorities.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account.
- 3) Numbers for those in oversized properties could be provided to the commission.
- 4) Details on the Easymove House exchange scheme would be shared with the commission.
- 5) The proportion of care leavers from other local authorities coming to LCC would be shared with the commission.
- 6) A summary of the Housing policy would be shared with the Tenant Scrutiny Panel.

## **76. HOUSE BUILDING AND ACQUISITIONS UPDATE**

The Director of Housing submitted a report to update members of the Housing Scrutiny Commission on our house building and acquisitions programmes.

The report was taken as read.

In discussions with Members and Tenant Panel Members, the following was noted:

- With regard to a query about Right to Buy (RTB) receipts and how the Council built up properties, it was clarified that the Council were still receiving some RTB receipts as Leicester had many people who wanted to buy their council houses. All active schemes up to 2027 had funding allocated. The Council were bidding for a part of the £27bn Homes England scheme to help part-fund future development. It was further noted that RTB receipts were now fully-allocated and the Council were ready to go into trusted partnership status with Homes England.
- Responding to a query about how projects avoided spiralling costs, it was explained that the Council were always looking for ways to reduce the impact, such as funding from Homes England, and other funding such as funding that had been received to develop a brownfield site. There was also funding available for decarbonisation and energy efficiency. It was important to ensure that projects were managed and viability assessments were done.

AGREED:

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

## 77. HOUSING POP-UP OFFICE UPDATE - JANUARY 2026

The Director of Housing submitted a report providing an update on the latest review of the Housing Pop-up Offices.

The report was taken as read.

In discussions with Members, the following was noted:

- In response to points made about the location of the pop-up office at Porkpie Library, it was explained that this site was chosen as it could service residents of both Saffron and Eyers Monsell. It was important that places were picked that could service communities, and suitable council buildings were needed that could serve both main estates and pockets of housing. Whilst it would be desirable to service smaller community areas by using sites such as the Eyres Monsell Centre, there was a budget that needed to be worked within that came directly from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). However, it was aimed to keep open the possibility of setting up offices that were more local.
- The Tenants' Scrutiny Panel had given positive feedback on pop-up offices, and it was aimed to make the pop-up offices permanent, and it was being looked at as to how to roll this out. Mapping had shown that residents were accessing offices from their locations. The Tenants' Scrutiny Panel would be asked where they thought it would be best to invest.
- In response to a query about the small sample size for the survey of 53 responses, it was noted that more data-collection had been asked for. The reasons for people's attendance at the office had been looked at. It would be looked to collect more data. It was clarified that the responses came from a survey, and in December there had been a focus on the HRA consultation, and there had now been 136 surveys completed and there had been a 98% satisfaction rate.
- Responding to queries about cost and resources, it was noted that officer resource was made use of, when led to time taken away from other aspects of the officers' roles, however, more officer resource had been agreed in the HRA budget to support pop-ups.
- It was noted that feedback had been taken back to the Executive and it had been ensured that communities were mapped and services were provided to them. It was necessary to think strategically about which services were going where.
- It was important to ensure that there were buildings in key places to serve housing stock. The multi-service hub model was recognised, however, it was also important to note that some services differed depending on their communities. There could be benefits to combining services, but it was necessary to be strategic.
- With regard to opening times, these were limited with resources, however, there were other channels outside of opening times such as online and via telephone. It was necessary to open at the times which were busiest and which received the most enquiries. Timings had been

adjusted from 11am-3pm and were now 10am-2pm as people had expressed that they needed to attend earlier, for example, to tie in with school drop-off.

- Most people became aware of the f the hubs, through word-of-mouth, although information was sent out with rent letters, promoted online and through ward councillors. It was aimed to send out further communications via social media.
- Council tax staff had been asked to attend the pop-ups to assist residents. They had not been able to attend so far but had given numbers by which they could be contacted.

AGREED:

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

#### **78. WORK PROGRAMME**

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on 21<sup>st</sup> April.

The work programme was noted.

#### **79. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There being no further items of urgent business, the meeting finished at 19:22.



# Statement and Responses to Questions

## STATEMENT FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

[Start of public statement]

Chair and Members of the Commission,

I am writing not to raise an individual complaint, but to draw attention to potential systemic governance risks within Housing; particularly in relation to complaints handling, procedural compliance and oversight transparency.

In August 2025, the Regulator of Social Housing identified gaps under the Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard, including enhanced complaints handling and formalised reporting on learning from complaints (*Point A*). In the same meeting, it was recorded that complaints were approximately 75% compliant with response timescales (*Point B*).

In June 2025, this Commission also considered an LGSCO maladministration finding relating to Housing procedural failures, including failure to notify statutory review rights and delays in responding to suitability concerns (*Point C*).

Since then, the corporate complaints function has been moved under the Housing Division itself (*Point D*), and a Regulator of Social Housing Oversight Board has been established reporting to Executive, with an intention to provide updates to Scrutiny (*Point E*).

Taken together, these developments highlight that complaint handling and procedural compliance are not peripheral matters; they are central governance risks.

My concern is not about disagreement with outcomes. It is about structural integrity. Specifically:

- Whether Stage One responses are consistently acknowledged within published timeframes.
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- Whether complaint performance data is scrutinised with the same rigour as operational metrics such as fire safety, voids or tenant satisfaction.
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The minutes from November 2025 also record tenant frustration about difficulty contacting officers. My concern relates to what happens after contact is made; whether escalation pathways, review rights and complaint compliance are functioning as intended, and/or ignored.

Housing is currently operating under significant statutory, financial and regulatory pressure. In that context, procedural integrity, transparent reporting and independent oversight become even more important.

This is not about individual disputes.

It is about ensuring that the governance framework around complaints is as strong as the framework around operational delivery.

Thank you.

[End of public statement]

## **QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES**

The questions below were submitted alongside the statement, and the Council's responses are provided below each question.

### **Question 1 Complaint Acknowledgement Compliance**

In light of the previously recorded 75% compliance rate with complaint timescales (Point B), what percentage of Housing Stage One complaints in Q4 2025 and Q1 2026 were acknowledged within the published policy timeframe?

How many exceeded 10 working days before acknowledgement?

### **Answer to Question 1**

From October to December 2025, 94.8% of stage one complaints were acknowledged by the Council within five working days. There were eight stage one complaints that exceeded 10 working days before the Council acknowledged them.

Information for March 2026 is not available yet, but for January to February 2026, 98.3% of stage one complaints were acknowledged within five working days and no stage one complaints exceeded 10 working days before acknowledgement.

### **Question 2 Procedural Escalation Safeguards**

Given the June 2025 maladministration findings involving procedural failures (Point C), what formal safeguard now exists to prevent residents from being procedurally blocked from escalating to Stage Two or to the Ombudsman where a compliant Stage One response is not issued?

### **Answer to Question 2**

In the June 2025 maladministration report there were no findings of residents being "procedurally blocked from escalating to Stage Two or to the Ombudsman." In addition, it should be noted that members were satisfied that the LGSCO recommendations from the report had been implemented successfully.

Information on how to escalate complaints is publicly available on our website via the following link: [Give feedback about Leicester City Council | Leicester City Council](#) and is included in relevant correspondence. Complainants are always able to request escalation to stage 2 if they feel the complaint has not been resolved at stage 1. Likewise, they can refer to the appropriate ombudsman where they feel a complaint has not been resolved at stage 2.

### **Question 3 Independence of Complaint Investigations**

Following the structural move of the complaints function under the Housing Division (*Point D*), who independently investigates complaints made about Housing Complaints Officers / Housing Officers themselves, and how is operational separation maintained to avoid perceived internal bias?

### **Answer to Question 3**

Complaints made about staff are dealt with under the Council's HR policies and procedures. This includes (where appropriate) an investigation by an independent manager from outside the service area who is supported and advised by a HR advisor. In addition to this, we have recently created a new position of Complaints Manager to directly oversee the staff within the complaints team to ensure high standards and consistency of the service provided to residents.

### **Question 4 Data Governance**

What written policy governs the Council's use of Companies House or other external data sources in leasehold or enforcement matters, and has this practice been legally reviewed for proportionality and data protection compliance?

### **Answer to Question 4**

There is no formal policy in place, however staff are trained in safe and secure processing of data. Information that is freely in the public domain (such as Companies House information) is available for staff to use and act on where it is the interest of the Council and / or the Council deems it is in the vital interest of an individual. Where staff are unsure of the legality of such action, they refer it to their manager and where appropriate advice is taken from the Council's Information Governance and Risk Team.

### **Question 5 Scrutiny Oversight of Complaint Trends**

In August 2025, the Regulator identified the need for enhanced complaints handling and formalised reporting on learning from complaints (*Point A*).

The Commission routinely receives performance data on fire safety inspections, tenant satisfaction, void times and homelessness prevention outcomes.

Does the Housing Scrutiny Commission now receive equivalent anonymised performance data on:

- Complaint acknowledgement breaches
- Stage One response timeliness and procedural compliance
- Instances where escalation was delayed due to non-compliant Stage One responses
- Ombudsman findings of maladministration relating to Housing
- Information governance or data protection incidents within Housing Services

If this data is not routinely reported to the Commission, could Members clarify why complaint compliance metrics are not scrutinised in the same way as operational performance indicators?

**Answer to Question 5**

Annual information on the performance of the complaints service is submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee during August / September. From 2026, this report will also be presented to the Housing Scrutiny Commission to provide additional oversight of complaints handling and performance.