



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 21 APRIL 2026 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

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

Councillor Bonham
Councillor Gopal

Councillor Gregg
Councillor Singh Sangha

Councillor Surti

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In Attendance

Cllr Cutkelvin – Deputy City Mayor for Housing, Economy & Neighbourhoods

80. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr Aqpany and Cllr Zaman. Cllr Bonham and Cllr Surti were present as substitutes.

81. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

No interests were declared.

82. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

The minutes of the previous meeting held 17th March 2026 were agreed with the following amendment:

- For Cllr Gregg's declaration to state he applied to support Exempted Housing.

83. CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair announced that papers had been circulated in advance and were usually taken as read. It was noted that, due to the presence of substitute Members, a more detailed presentation from officers would be provided to ensure all Members were fully informed.

84. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

It was noted that none were received.

85. PETITIONS

It was noted that none were received.

86. PROVIDER IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE REPORT

The Director of Housing submitted a report providing an update on the progress made on the housing division's Housing Regulator Provider Improvement Plan (PiP). Key points included:

- This was the first progress report since the regulator inspection in July 2025. Since then, the service was now in the provider improvement phase, and meeting with the Regulator of Social Housing Team on a monthly basis, giving updates on areas identified in the inspection. This mainly included elements in the Safety and Quality standard and the Tenant Engagement Standard.
- The PiP included 26 specific actions as detailed in the report.
- There is an internal Board chaired by the Strategic Director of CDN, the Director of Housing and all Heads of Service whom meet monthly in advance of meeting with the regulator.
- Since the PiP had been generated, five of the 26 actions had been completed. These related to asbestos, water safety, mutual exchanges, the Tenant Scrutiny Panel and complaints.
- The areas were RAG rated (Red, Amber, Green). There are thirteen rated green and eight amber on the report, but since the report was published, this had changed to sixteen green and five amber.
- Actions had been impacted by unavoidable events, such as the winter and the implementation of legislation such as Awaab's Law.
- There are now 2600 out-of-category repairs, down from 6,250 in January 2025
- There are now 315 damp and mould cases, down from 539. We are on track to clear these down during 2026
- There had been a number of IT challenges which had caused some of the amber ratings, such as the roll out of new complaints IT system, health and safety and fire safety IT systems. Effective systems were

already in place for these, but the new systems would help the service to enhance reporting and pull all information in to one location.

- 3,347 Housing Health and Safety rating inspections (HHSRS) have been completed, up from the 2,800 noted in the report.
- The service was on track to complete the target of 60% of Electrical Safety inspections (EICRs) by the end of 2026 and to complete the full cycle by 2028.

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

- The report related to Council stock. With regard to registered providers, they were subject to the same regulations and inspection regime as the Council. Historically, there had been a degree of governance and financial oversight of registered providers in advance of the new Regulator. However, they now needed to comply to consumer standards. This was not necessarily the case of private providers, however, there were changes to renters' rights that would bring in new requirements for providers, and they would have to go on a national PRS Housing register. They would also now have to meet the Decent Homes Standard and would need to meet Awaab's law when they are introduced or PRS. This would bring private providers more into line with Local Authorities and registered providers.
- A private rented sector team could inspect properties for Hazards if reports of poor condition property is received.
- The Renters' Reform Act would give the Council more rights to intervene in the private rented sector. Currently a mismatch of different licensing schemes existed, including House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing, selective licensing and additional licensing. If these were in place then there were more rights to go into properties and inspect standards. It will be the duty of the Council to uphold increased standards in the Renters' Reform Act
- Residents could call the Private Sector Housing team and also report online. The team could do a Health and Safety rating and inspection and if a Category 1 hazard was identified then the team would negotiate and deal with the landlord. Civil penalties could be imposed.
- In terms of resources for new responsibilities under the Renters' Reform Act, the Government provided a degree of funding. Much of this sat under Regulatory Services. With licensing, the funding structure was aimed to be self-sustaining. There were set-up costs for renters' rights, this would be monitored. Once the Housing Crisis had been declared, a Private Sector strategy had been created for the City as there was a need to improve standards.
- Information could be provided on complaints received on housing condition (including numbers of complaints), and on what has been

completed on HRA stock. Members were encouraged to take details if people were dissatisfied with the way a complaint was dealt with so the team could unpack it.

- Housing HHSRS checks were done as a random selection process working clockwise around the City, picking 600 properties at a time. When they were completed, a further 600 were chosen. The properties chosen included a mix of types of housing and were spread around the city.
- The team were praised for having provided a good response.
- With regard to queries on how on-track the service was to go from C3 to C2, and on whether the housing regulator was measuring improvements and impact on feedback from tenant's scrutiny, it was noted that there were inspections every four years, but the engagement process would mean that the Regulator of Social Housing Team would not conclude their work with the Council until the RSH were reassessed and moved the Council to a new grade. They would likely reassess over the next year. It was important to give reassurance and evidence to the regulator that standards are being met. Each month the regulator was met with and updated with evidence from areas such as the Tenants' Scrutiny Panel. The annual report from the Panel was also important evidence for the regulators. It was hoped that there would be a re-grading going forward, but this could not be certain as it was dependent on how actions were proceeded with.
- Regulators were pleased with progress, particularly with regard to engaging people and training them and moving forward with the Tenant Engagement Team.
- With regard to repairs, this was an ongoing challenge, particularly with new legislation and additional demand. It was important to ensure external and political visibility. It was further noted that there were challenges in resource and in getting companies to do the necessary work. Reports regarding Awaab's Law and Health and Safety Reports would go to the regulators as evidence.
- A manager and three officers had been recruited for tenant engagement
- In terms of learning from best practice, feedback from complaints had been analysed, and an annual report was produced in relation to complaints. It was aimed to update IT systems to allow thematic reporting as currently topic areas were manually extracted to ascertain where complaints were coming from. The Complaints Manager had done a deep dive with the Complaints team on repairs, and a learning exercise had been conducted on different topic areas to take forward and look at ways to have fewer complaints. The example of rat complaints was given to illustrate how the service had learned from issues; the team had seen that the system had not been working, so a

specialist team was created and a process initiated to block holes and work with pest controllers, as a result, rat complaints were now very rare. Best practice reports and maladministration issues were monitored, and a quarterly report was received with topics identified as best practice by the Ombudsman which was looked at with the Senior Management Team in terms of whether action was needed and what form it should take.

- Every year a tenant satisfaction survey was required and last year had shown an improvement on the year before. This survey was used to see where investment was needed. The HRA budget had proposals for capital investment to deal with complaints that had been identified.
- In terms of the response rate on the survey, it was necessary to be statistically compliant and undertake a specific number. A company had been procured to undertake the Tenant Satisfaction survey and engage face-to-face, and the tenant populace could be engaged with and barriers removed with regard to the survey.
- With regard to increases in the repairs team, there was already a large in-house team and we have worked to increase this. Work had been done to simplify the recruitment process. A number of agency staff had been brought on and then made permanent if they reach the required standards. There were also now up to 50 posts for craft apprenticeships.
- There were challenges around having an aging workforce and the numbers replacing the team were just enough to keep afloat, but not enough to deal with increasing demands, this was the reason contractors had needed to be worked with. To ensure compliance, it was necessary to have a more split approach. There was a preference for in-house, but costs could be an issue. This was an issue sector-wide and not just for local authorities.
- In response to a question about solar panels, it was explained that there was currently no funding for them this year. Pressures on the HRA were significant as there was a requirement to meet consumer standards and there was a need to focus on this. It was hoped to do more regarding climate change issues and retrofit stock in future years. Lots of the stock was Energy Performance Certificate C and there were dedicated officers to look at retrofitting pathways.

AGREED:

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

87. HAZARDS IN HOUSING - SUMMARY REPORT IN RELATION TO LCC'S RESPONSE TO AWAAB'S LAW

The Director of Housing submitted a report to the Commission outlining the requirements of Awaab's Law and set out the division's arrangements to comply with the regulations underpinning Awaab's law.

The Head of Service for Housing presented the item and the following was noted:

- Phase 1 of Awaab's Law came into force on 27th October 2025 with accompanying non-statutory guidance.
- The legislation represented a significant change for social landlords, particularly in relation to damp and mould hazards, with a focus on tenant safety and managing health and safety risks. Statutory response times of 24 hours, 5 working days and 10 working days were highlighted
- From October 2026 Phase 2 of the regulations would be extended to cover hazards which presented a significant risk of harm, including excess cold and heat, falls, fire and electrical hazards, domestic and personal hygiene and food safety.
- In 2027, Phase 3 of the regulations would cover all Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) hazards, apart from overcrowding where they presented a significant risk of harm.
- Social Landlords were required to investigate potential emergency hazards and, if confirmed, undertake relevant safety work within 24 hours to make the property safe.
- Potential significant hazards were required to be investigated within 10 working days.
- Tenants would receive a written summary of findings within 3 working days of an investigation concluding.
- If a significant hazard was identified, safety work would begin within 5 days, and further follow on works must have started within 12 weeks of the hazard being made safe.
- Implementation had taken place during a period of high demand, particularly due to increased reporting and seasonal cold weather.
- The Council's approach focused on identifying root causes of issues through a range of repair responses, ensuring properties were made safe and enabling resources to be targeted effectively to meet legislative requirements. It was noted that processes, governance and oversight arrangements had been adapted to support delivery.
- Performance data indicated that 90% of emergency damp and mould cases had been responded to within the 24 hour timeframe. A revised approach aimed to ensure cases were assessed and reported within 3 days.
- Members were advised that a dedicated damp and mould team had been established, supported by additional budget growth of £170k to

recruit cleaning staff to address immediate risks.

- The revised process, implemented from October 2025, required tenants to report issues online or via telephone where necessary. All reports were assessed to identify root causes and consider tenant vulnerabilities, supported by a vulnerability matrix. Cases were categorised as emergency or significant hazards, with required response times applied accordingly. It was confirmed that properties were made safe within 24 hours where required, and that temporary accommodation could be offered, although this had not been required to date.
- Demand had increased significantly beyond initial expectations. The phased approach had supported prioritisation of emergency hazards and enabled capacity to be built. Additional funding had been directed towards contractors and resources to support compliance, with a hybrid delivery model in place combining internal teams and external contractors.
- Improvements to communication processes were outlined, including work to support tenants in preventing damp and mould and to improve access and engagement. Joint working across housing, social care and other services was taking place to ensure risks were understood and managed effectively.
- Ongoing work included reviewing processes to ensure compliance, regular reporting to the senior management team, and engagement with the Tenant Scrutiny Panel. Training and e-learning programmes had also been introduced to improve staff understanding of damp and mould risks.
- Progress since October 2025 had supported delivery of initial requirements and positioned the Council to meet future phases, with a continued commitment to improvement in response to demand and resource pressures.

In discussions with Members, the following was noted:

- Demand had increased and this may reflect previous under reporting of damp and mould issues. Information was available via the Council website outlining how tenants could report issues, supported by ongoing engagement, involvement of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel, and the development of literature to improve awareness and prevention.
- It was noted that a proportion of reported cases related to condensation rather than structural damp, although these still required investigation and resource to address within the required timescales, with additional work undertaken to address non-structural contributing factors.
- The challenges associated with damp and mould were highlighted, including the impact of overcrowding and limited ventilation within properties. While tenant behaviour could not be relied upon from a regulatory perspective, there remained a need to support and educate residents on preventative measures, particularly in the context of cost-of-living pressures.
- Concerns were raised regarding the potential long-term impact of

external wall insulation and the importance of adequate ventilation. It was noted that the most severe cases represented a small proportion of overall reports, with approximately 1% identified as high level cases, and that no cases had required alternative accommodation to date.

- It was confirmed that medical needs, including those linked to damp and mould, were taken into account within housing priority banding, and that in severe cases tenants could be decanted and supported to move where necessary. It was also noted that overcrowding remained a significant factor in housing demand, and that assessments considered what was reasonable within the context of household circumstances.
- It was queried whether the requirements of Awaab's Law would extend to private with implementation for the private sector anticipated around 2027.
- Concerns were raised regarding specific property types and areas with known ventilation issues, including whether there was a proactive approach to identifying and addressing these, and whether sufficient interventions such as dehumidifiers were being provided where required. It was reported that approximately 3400 property inspections had been completed, enabling identification of property types more prone to damp and mould and supporting targeted planned maintenance programmes.
- It was noted that specialist treatments, including spray systems such as TIC Mould Control designed to eliminate mould spores, were being used and had shown positive results in preventing recurrence.
- It was highlighted that damp and mould cases could take time to resolve, often requiring multiple visits to accurately diagnose and treat the issue, and that cases remained open until fully resolved.

AGREED:

- 1) That the Commission note the report.
- 2) Information would be shared with Members to support wider communication on damp and mould issues.

88. HEALTH AND SAFETY IN LCC PROPERTIES REPORT

The Director of Housing submitted a report outlining the Council's strategic approach and operational performance regarding health and safety (H&S) compliance across housing stock.

Key points included:

- This was the first comprehensive oversight on housing stock and steps were taken to ensure residents were safe and that health and safety was the highest priority.
- The reports were based on Key Performance Indicators (KPI)
- There was a compliance framework designed to mitigate risk.
- All performance issues went through scrutiny and tenants' scrutiny.
- There was a requirement to maintain accurate records.

- Evidence was collected on people-centric metrics, and evidence was provided every month on meeting outcomes.
- It was aimed to demonstrate 100% compliance across the stock.
- Gas risk was the highest, so 100% compliance was needed.
- During checks, a full service of boilers and heating systems was completed.
- Engineers checked smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.
- Risks such as leaks were undertaken to ensure properties were safe.
- Performance figures were set out in the report.
- In terms of next steps, there was an operational strain around access since people were often not home for appointments. Tenancy engagement was being conducted for hard-to-access cases.
- In terms of compliance, proactive communications were being conducted with tenants, and an access strategy was being undertaken. It was being looked at how tenants could be supported to help them understand safety.
- Regarding electrical safety, since April 2024, it had been mandatory for Local Authorities to carry out a five-year cyclical testing programme known as the EICR that identified faults, fixes and compliance. Critical repairs had been undertaken. In terms of assurance, the EICR programme had been implemented with an aim to reach 100% compliance by 2028.
- Communal space compliance was at 99%
- Over 2900 rewires had been undertaken over a five-year period.
- Minor work certificates had been issued.
- 99.8% of immediate danger reports had been done within the timescale.
- Additional budget had been allocated in 2025/26 to help establish a dedicated electrical safety team.
- There was a national shortage of electricians. There was a mixed delivery model of in-house and contractors to meet needs and the service was working to be fully compliant by 2028.
- All communal spaces had been inspected. All surveys had been completed and an annual re-inspection programme had been started which implemented the risk model. The Tenants' Scrutiny Panel would be reported to on this.
- Surveys were carried out regarding the ongoing management of asbestos.
- Fire Safety was managed based on risk and the information needed for this was all in place. Policies were in place on how properties were managed.
- All blocks had inspections on communal spaces, the frequency of this was based on risk.
- Fire risk assessments were carried out and Leicestershire Fire and Rescue were worked with. The Council had never required enforcement action to be taken against it.
- In terms of water hygiene, a legionella risk assessment of communal

water tanks was conducted. There were only 36 water tanks in council stock, mostly in sheltered housing, and all of these were 100% compliant. Most housing stock was mains-fed. All required properties had legionella risk assessments.

- Passenger lifts had annual inspections, and lifts that saw a lot of use were serviced every month.

In discussions with Members, the following was noted:

- With regard to a query about learning from other Councils on access issues, it was noted that other councils had been worked with in terms of communicating and educating. In the last six months, the access rate had improved. It was acknowledged that tenants often had other priorities, and they were worked with on this. Reminders were sent and they were checked on. The overall access strategy could help the division to engage with tenants to ascertain where they needed further support. Support workers were in place with Adult Social Care teams and there was also an income management team. Work was done to triangulate information across repairs and compliance checks and to get a strategy in place going forward. Getting access at the same time for all checks was being worked towards.
- In response to a point raised about lifts being out of actions, it was noted that a condition survey had been done on all lifts, with information on breakdowns to inform the renewals programme to see where lifts were coming to the end of their economic life and needed to be replaced. Officers could be contacted directly with regard to individual cases. A lift repair company had been procured through Estates and Buildings Services who had a response time of two hours for entrapments.
- With regard to a query about management structure, it was noted that Heads of Services were very busy and recruitment was under way to replace one who had recently left. It was necessary to look at the structure that had been set up in terms of additional responsibilities. There would be a repairs lead, technical lead and compliance lead and the division were also recruiting for an additional post to increase the capacity of the Senior Management Team. A business case was being put together to get a specialist on Housing delivery.
- In terms of risks not covered by the EICR, there was a Head of Service for tenancy who was doing communications on safety, including for electrical equipment. Work was done with the fire service, and if a trend in risks was identified, they would contact the council.
- The team were commended for taking their work seriously.

AGREED:

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

89. WORK PROGRAMME

It was suggested that regular updates come to commission regarding the Housing Regulator.

The work programme was noted.

90. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no further items of urgent business, the meeting finished at 19:07.