

Leicester  
City Council

## **MEETING OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

**DATE: THURSDAY, 10 JULY 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 Bajaj (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Gopal, Gregg, Mahesh, Pickering, Singh Sangha and Zaman

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

For Monitoring Officer

### **Officer contacts:**

***Katie Jordan (Governance Services), Governance Services (Governance Services) and Kirsty Wootton (Governance Services)***

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### Further information

If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact: **Kirsty Wootton** on [Kirsty.Wootton@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:Kirsty.Wootton@leicester.gov.uk). Alternatively, email [governance@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:governance@leicester.gov.uk), or call in at City Hall.

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## **PUBLIC SESSION**

### **AGENDA**

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#### **1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

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

#### **3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

#### **APPENDIX A**

The minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Commission held on 22 April 2025 have been circulated, and Members will be asked to confirm them as a correct record.

#### **4. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION 2025-26**

Members will be asked to note the membership of the Housing Scrutiny Commission for 2025/26:

Councillor Molly O'Neill (Chair)  
Councillor Deepak Bajaj (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Karen Pickering  
Councillor Mohinder Singh Sangha  
Councillor Syed Zaman  
Councillor Jaiantilal Gopal  
Councillor Ravi Mahesh  
Councillor Mick Gregg

## **5. DATES OF THE COMMISSION 2025-26**

Members are asked to note the commission meeting dates as follows:

- Thursday 10 July 2025
- Tuesday 26 August 2025
- Tuesday 11 November 2025
- Tuesday 13 January 2026
- Tuesday 17 March 2026
- Tuesday 21 April 2026

## **6. SCRUTINY TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**APPENDIX B**

Members are asked to note the scrutiny terms of reference.

## **7. CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

## **8. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE**

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

## **9. PETITIONS**

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

## **10. HOUSING SCRUTINY OVERVIEW**

**APPENDIX C**

The Director of Housing submits a presentation that provides an overview of the Housing Division. Members will have the opportunity to ask questions and request any necessary clarifications.

## **11. INCOME COLLECTION ANNUAL UPDATE**

**APPENDIX D**

The Director of Housing submits an update on the progress of rent arrears within the general housing stock for the financial year April 2024 to March

2025.

**12. STOCK CONDITION - PROPERTY MOT**

**APPENDIX E**

The Director of Housing submits a report on how the Council manages the condition of its homes, as a social landlord, with a focus on compliance with the new Social Housing Regulation Act 2024. *The report is for information.*

**13. FIRE SAFETY**

**APPENDIX F**

The Director of Housing submits a report on how the Housing Division manages fire safety in its residential buildings. *It is for information.*

**14. PRS STRATEGY/RENTERS REFORM BILL**

**APPENDIX G**

The Director of Housing submits a report which outlines the implementation of the Renters' Rights Bill, the Supported Housing Act 2023 (regulations), and the introduction of the Private Rented Sector Strategy.

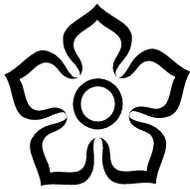
**15. WORK PROGRAMME**

**APPENDIX H**

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

**16. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**





Leicester  
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 22 APRIL 2025 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Zaman (Vice Chair)

Councillor Bajaj  
Councillor Gopal

Councillor Halford  
Councillor Modhwadia

In Attendance

Deputy City Mayor, Councillor Cutkelvin – Housing and Neighbourhoods

\* \* \* \* \*

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors O'Neill and Waddington. Cllr Greg was absent.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Chair highlighted that the minutes for the meeting on 18 March 2025 were included within the papers and asked members for comments.

AGREED:

- It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2025 were a true and accurate record.

#### **4. CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

#### **5. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE**

It was noted that none had been received.

#### **6. PETITIONS**

It was noted that none had been received.

#### **7. SUPPORTED HOUSING**

The Deputy City Mayor for Housing, Economy and Neighbourhoods introduced the report. They noted that it was a very important piece of work, with unique challenges that focused on the best practice nationally.

The Head of Service for Housing delivered the report, and it was noted that:

- Previous reports had been brought to the Commission, which highlighted how the tenant population had changed in recent years.
- There was an increasing number of tenants with complex health and support needs who were unable to sustain independent tenancies. The purpose of the report was to propose the development of further options for supported housing for Leicester City Council tenants and to assess the projected needs of tenants.
- In the past, the council had supported housing available for tenants. However, the schemes had now closed, leaving limited options available for Leicester City Council tenants.
- The STAR Service had bridged the gap by offering floating support. Following this, the service had received excellent feedback, with users describing the support received as life changing. However, there were still some tenants that the service was unable to support effectively. This was due to a variety of factors, such as: substance abuse, mental illness, domestic abuse, being prison leavers or a combination of all these factors. These factors could result in antisocial behaviour, cuckooing, rent arrears and homelessness.
- The impact of these pressures on local services and residents could be quite substantial. Similarly, the impact on individuals was very harmful as they were often placed in tenancies that they were unable to sustain with the Leicester City Council.
- To alleviate this, a Help Beyond Housing Team had been formed with funding awarded from the Department of Health. The team had worked with the most complex tenants and had been successful in stabilising tenancies. This had significantly reduced instances of rough sleeping among council tenants.

- Currently in Leicester, there were three (3) council-funded housing options for residents:
  - Homelessness Provision (Temporary Accommodation)
  - General Needs
  - Supported Living and Extra Care (Provided by Adult Social Care)
- There were currently no suitable accommodations to place tenants who had failed their tenancies a few times as a result of substance use and alcohol dependency, particularly within the Council's funded housing options.
- Leicester also had a significant amount of unmapped and unregulated supported housing. Under new legislation, local authorities were now required to oversee and regulate these services, which would be undertaken as an additional project.
- The supported exempt accommodation was being proposed to target tenants who were currently unable to sustain successive tenancies. The proposal for this specialised housing option was driven by the following:
  1. It had been identified that managing such tenancies required significant resources, and the associated impact on other residents led to numerous complaints, enquiries, and incidents of crime and disorder on Council estates.
  2. Temporary accommodation presented a significant cost, particularly due to the need to move not only individuals, but sometimes neighbouring households affected by tenants' behaviour.
  3. In some cases, tenants had to be relocated because they had become targets of criminal activity, including cuckooing and similar issues.
  4. Associated costs, including voids, repair works, and compensation awards following complaints, were continuing to increase.
- Data from homelessness assessments and drug and alcohol needs assessments showed that Leicester had a higher percentage of individuals in drug treatment with housing problems compared to national figures:
  - 18.1% in Leicester vs. 13.5% across England.
  - 14.8% of those with no fixed abode in Leicester had urgent housing needs, compared to 7.5% nationally.
  - Within the homeless pathway, 20% of single people were identified as having complex support needs.
  - Current data identified 71 tenants who would benefit from supported housing.

The projected need included:

- 11 units of low-level "trailer" supported accommodation
- 24 units of medium-level supported accommodation
- 36 units of high-risk, long-term supported accommodation

The high-risk accommodation had been identified as the most urgently needed, and the recommendation was for identified buildings to be repurposed or purchased for use as supported housing.

- Affordability would be a key consideration, with the schemes intended to reduce overall budget pressures by enabling people to move into more appropriate, settled accommodation.
- An initial feasibility study had taken place for Welford Road, currently a block of general needs housing. Local ward councillors would be consulted if this site proved feasible.
- The Zip Trainer Flats scheme had already been established and had proven successful in helping tenants develop the skills needed to integrate back into the community before moving on to an independent tenancy.
- The lower-level accommodation had already been set up as part of this initiative, but higher-level supported accommodation was now urgently needed for those unable to sustain tenancies in general needs housing.

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

- An analysis had been carried out to ascertain tenants who needed to be moved and the reasons why, and the data identified a number of people who were continuously failing successive tenancies. The STAR Service was typically used to support people for 6-12 months, but some people were being supported for years, due to their need for on-site support which was unlikely to end. Work was continuing to source suitable accommodation for these tenants, including options like the Welford Road Study and supported accommodation that was available through Adult Social Care.
- The Council needed to be mindful to ensure that sourcing additional supported living accommodation would not affect the general housing provision. There was a separate acquisitions programme that focused on general needs housing. Existing stock within the city would be reviewed, as it may not be utilised to full capacity. The report showed that general needs housing was not appropriate for the people who needed supported housing. As such, there might be a change from what was historically 100% general need housing to 95% general need and 5% supported housing.
- The Supported Housing Act 2023 was voted in by the previous government and had cross-party support. Due to the change of government following the General Election, there was a delay to the Act being implemented. The consultation started around a month ago and was still ongoing.
- Leicester's higher percentage of individuals in drug treatment with housing problems compared to national figures was partly due to the level of deprivation in Leicester, which could lead to more complex lifestyles. Additionally, local authorities had faced significant funding cuts from the Central Government, which caused local authorities to suffer disproportionately and had taken away their ability to be able to support people in high need.
- The local plan sets out that the council could ask providers of larger sites to facilitate 30% affordable housing. The new local plan proposals

also included the requirement for people to include larger sites of 30% affordable housing. When the owner/developer believes they cannot meet this requirement for smaller sites, it becomes a localised discussion between the planning department and the actual owners of the land in relation to what level of affordable housing development was appropriate for that specific smaller site.

Members congratulated the Housing Team on The Zips Building, following a site visit.

AGREED:

1. The Commission noted the report.
2. Feedback from residents of the Zip Building to be added to the work programme.

## **8. REPAIRS PERFORMANCE**

The Housing Heads of Service provided an update on the Repairs and Maintenance team's performance. The following key points were noted:

- The report was written in February 2025, and the presentation would highlight areas of concern and the progress recorded to date.
- The council managed 19,500 properties and 1,700 leaseholders across the city. The repairs team were responsible for repairs, compliance works (gas, fire, electrical, lifts), maintenance, and renovation works across the property stock. These were categorised under responsive repairs, emergency out-of-hours repairs, compliance work, planned maintenance, and renovation of void properties.
- Repairs generally fell into three categories:
  - Priority 1 (emergency repairs): Response time within 24 hours.
  - Priority 2 (routine repairs): Response time within 10 working days
  - Priority 3 (programmed repairs): Response time between 8 – 52 weeks.
- The team were working on improving current performance timescales in the coming months and adopting a new approach to ensure consistent data reporting and alignment with the requirements of the Social Housing Regulator.
- A major challenge faced by the team was resourcing, which was a national issue, particularly within the construction industry. However, there had been some recent improvements given the collaboration with the recruitment team through the apprenticeship programme.
- Another concern was job cancellations, with around 20,000 jobs cancelled this financial year, representing about 16% of all repairs. It was noteworthy that the repairs trend showed an increase in repairs reported, completed and cancelled in 2024/25.
- There had been improvements in the repair KPIs since the report was written. An example given was that outstanding repairs had now reduced

to less than 10,000, while out-of-category repairs were now about 4000. The team, however, recognised that the overall performance was below target on the percentage of repairs for general repairs, and efforts were underway to close this gap.

- The out-of-category repairs primarily involved external works, which were relatively low risk. Over 60% of the outstanding repairs had had an initial visit, which helped to evaluate vulnerabilities and expedite the repairs (if necessary), based on findings.
- The reduction of out-of-category repairs was, however, a priority, and the HRA Safety Oversight Board had been set up to receive a monthly progress report on the set targets. The Board had also agreed on a set of options to increase capacity and reduce the number of outstanding jobs, including additional contractor support, overtime support for operatives, implementing increased performance targets, and changing the process of how jobs are dealt with.
- Most properties had annual visits (eg/ Annual Gas Safety check), which allowed tenants to raise concerns. Tenants could also report repairs through other available channels, and staff were trained to proactively identify repair needs during their visits.
- The team was on track to meet the current projections for improvements over the next months, and steps had been taken to achieve this. Some of these were moving forward with a dedicated repairs contractor that meets the scope of requirements. The team also ensured that the right types of contractors were doing the required work, additional support was provided when needed, and resources were moved to areas where there was an increase in demand to enable the right level of capacity.

### **Compliance-Related Repairs**

- The team were well-established and had good processes in place for gas and fire. However, electrical EICR compliance was relatively new because it came into effect in April 2024, when domestic properties were mandated to carry out testing on a 5-yearly basis. To meet this requirement, a contractor had been engaged, and there was additional support in place internally. It was also planned that the apprenticeship programme would bring 11 more electricians onboard, which would improve the overall position of the team.
- The communal EICR (Electrical Installation Condition Reports) compliance was currently at 89 % and was expected to be 100% in the next few weeks. The goal was for domestic EICR to be 60% compliant by financial year-end.
- The challenge of the unavailability of tenants, leading to cancellations, also manifested under this category of repairs. There were plans to improve this via Housing Online and through improvements of the processes by which tenants were engaged.

## **Gas Compliance**

- The compliance rate was currently at 99.78%, but for some years, the compliance rate had been 100%, and the plan was to keep it this way. The principle utilised to maintain this high level of compliance would be extended to electrical compliance, including embedding similar processes, quality assurance, and quality control.
- There had been an improvement to the performance since the report was written, for example, the total outstanding repairs had reduced to 825 and out-of-category repairs to 459. The out-of-category target for gas by year-end was 0.
- There were no gas safety critical repairs that were out-of-category because of the established process for dealing with this. Where there was a complaint of a potential gas leak, the contractor would attend within 4 hours to investigate. A follow-up visit would also be arranged, and any necessary works undertaken. Tenants would be given safety advice, e.g., ventilating the property, etc.

## **Fire inspection**

- Performance was generally good, though further improvements were required. 90% of the repairs were completed within the category, with most issues stemming from the inability to gain access to the properties.
- Another challenge was the wrong categorisation of complaints, which usually required housekeeping and re-categorisation.

## **Damp & mould**

- There continued to be an upward trend in demand, which had doubled compared to 2021-2023. This was a priority, with a new contractor engaged and the internal processes changed to ensure the right resources were available. There had been significant improvements since writing the report. Repairs in out-of-category, which were previously 1514, were now down to 1127. Based on the current progress being maintained, the team was projecting 0 out-of-category repairs by year-end.
- The team's approach was to ensure compliance with Awab's Law (which was due to come into force in October 2025), refocus resources, and remove immediate risk by visiting properties which had outstanding damp work. The team was also collaborating with the Public Health team for a strategic needs assessment to understand vulnerabilities.

## **Voids**

The voids team had made significant improvements over the last three years, achieving a sustainable vacancy rate of 1.45%, which was below the standard 2% target. Traditional capital works continued to be undertaken, including boilers, kitchen refurbishment, etc.

In response to comments/questions, the following points were made:

- Regarding concerns about the level of electrical safety compliance, it was clarified that:
  - the need for an ongoing 5-year compliance electrical safety check was a new requirement and mandatory for local authorities. Previously, the council ensured safety by undertaking rewire and upgrade programmes, which ensured that no property was left with a wiring system older than 30 years. Additionally, EICR was carried out during mutual exchanges or new lettings, and Minor Work Certificates were issued for circuit upgrades to the kitchen/bathroom refurbishments. Emergency electrical issues reported by tenants were addressed within 24 hours. Therefore, the housing stock was safe in the first instance.
  - There was an ongoing procurement exercise ending in June, which would facilitate 4000 EICR annually. It was projected that by year 4, the council would be fully compliant.
  - Additional electricians and Quality Control (QC) officers were being recruited, with a projected 60% completion rate by the end of the first contract year.
- Assurance was given that out-of-category repairs did not include gas safety concerns, and as such, did not pose any immediate risk to the tenants. If a repair was deemed critical, the operators would attend within 24 hours to make it safe. All gas staff were also trained and competency tested every 5 years to ensure they could identify gas safety issues and unsafe situations. The Quality Control team also regularly checked that inspections were carried out on operatives and compliance with regulations was ensured.
- It was observed that the report seemed imbalanced by placing the responsibility for all cancellations on tenants, and a more balanced view was encouraged to help identify improvement areas. In response, it was noted that steps were being taken to ensure operatives genuinely attempt to reach tenants rather than simply marking jobs as visited. An example was to build some questions that allow the council to monitor the amount of time spent by and attitude of the contractor on the property during visits.
- Additionally, there was no motivation for contractors to leave the jobs undone as they were not paid for uncompleted tasks. The council was already using text messages and advance phone calls to inform tenants before arriving for jobs, but cancellations remained a challenge. It had been observed that the rate of cancellation was higher for compliance works, compared to repairs raised by tenants.
- It was suggested that financial penalties could be imposed to curb frequent cancellations, but this was deemed inappropriate given the financial vulnerability of many tenants. Other suggestions explored were for the system to allow tenants to select suitable appointment times, extend the hours dedicated for repair work, and incorporate the options for tenants to be able to amend or reschedule their appointments. While these suggestions were acknowledged, it was noted that the uptake of evening and Saturday appointments had been low.

- There was a call for improvements to repairs to match the standards of gas safety, through improved communication with tenants and the full use of available tools.
- With the increased reporting of damp and mould, it was noted that this only reflected rising demand and remained a priority for the council. Officers were usually quick to respond to complaints and would visit the property to assess the risk levels. However, there was more work to be done on getting the right message out during the first visit.
- Over 95% outstanding damp and mould jobs referenced in the report had already been assessed by a fully qualified technician. Cases that were deemed urgent were usually escalated for immediate remedial action. As part of the technician's visit to assess the level of damp and mould, there would be a full specification of all things required to be done.
- Addressing damp and mould often required multiple visits due to case complexity, requiring a phased and monitored approach. The council would, however, not remove the jobs from the system until completion was attained.
- The council had increased its resources within the damp and mould team, as well as contractor capacity, and this was already making a massive difference. An end- to-end process review was underway, and a risk-based approach was being adopted to support vulnerabilities.
- On voids, the vacancy rate was currently 1.45% which was lower than the standard 2%.
- Duplicate repairs often arose from the same issue being reported via different channels or descriptions. The council was reviewing its systems to streamline this process.
- Regarding the timeline for radiator replacement, it was stated that this could be immediate or require a special order depending on the size or type of radiators. While the council kept a good stock, it was unlikely to have all the specs required. A procurement exercise for a new materials framework had just been completed and would see daily replenishment of commonly required items like radiators.
- On the concern raised about the high cost of district heating, it was noted that installation of meters was voluntary, and the data and statistics showed that users typically saved money from having a meter installed. Complaints tended to come from those with technical issues or systems on continuous hot water loops.
- Persons experiencing technical issues with their heating were encouraged to report so that the faults could be addressed, and overcharges (where found) could be refunded.
- A proposed property MOT for properties was suggested, to enable the council to move from reactive to proactive maintenance. It was noted that the council was considering a housing health and safety system model that proactively identifies issues.

Action:

1. The commission noted the report
2. A bi-annual performance update on repairs to be provided to the commission.
3. The recommendation for annual proactive property MOTs to be added to the work programme.

## **9. APPRENTICE PROGRAMME AND WIC**

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

- The report provided an update on Women in Construction and Apprenticeship Programmes within the Housing Division, delivered by Leicester City Council.
- The Women in Construction initiative had been run in partnership with Leicester College for over 20 years and took place annually in February.
- In 2024, for the first time, an additional Women in Construction Week was held at the Council's Construction Training Centre of Excellence (CTCE) to increase uptake by delivering the programme across two weeks and two venues.

The programme aimed to:

- Challenge outdated stereotypes that trades were only suitable for men.
  - Showcase the Council's qualified tradeswomen, many of whom had progressed through the apprenticeship route.
  - Demonstrate the Council's leadership in diversity and inclusion within its trade's workforce, which had received national recognition.
  - Provide a supportive environment for women of all ages to try different trades, build confidence, and develop skills for use at home and in work.
  - Promote and encourage applications for trade apprenticeships.
- The Council had historically offered 30 apprenticeship posts but increased this to 40 last year and then to 50 for the current year, starting in September, which was ahead of many similarly sized local authorities.
  - The Council expanded its partnerships beyond Leicester College, now also working with:
    - Stephenson College
    - Smart Gas (gas apprenticeships)
    - Langley's (roofing apprenticeships, addressing a key skills gap)
  - The Women in Construction initiative had traditionally been held during February half term, but recognising the challenges this posed for caregivers, an additional term-time session was delivered in March at CTCE.
  - The additional session proved very popular, with positive feedback received, and plans were in place to continue offering multiple sessions in future years.

- 130 women attended over the two-week programme, participating in sessions focused on carpentry, plumbing, tiling, and painting and decorating.
- Most sessions were led by female operatives, although some male staff also participated to reflect the mixed-gender nature of the workforce.
- Feedback highlighted increased confidence in practical skills and improved awareness of job opportunities within the Council.
- Promotional work had been carried out via colleges, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), social media, and other local media outlets.
- The Council had also begun engaging more with faith groups to better promote opportunities among women and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, with plans to expand this approach.
- In the previous year, the Council received 326 applications for its advertised apprenticeship vacancies. Of the successful applicants:
  - 3 were BME candidates
  - 3 were female
  - 2 were LAC/Leaving Care candidates (LACs)
  - 2 declared a disability
  - 1 was from Leicester to Work
  - 1 was from the Armed Forces community
- All apprentices remained in employment, which was considered a significant achievement, particularly for care leavers who often faced personal challenges.
- The Council continued to work closely with Children's Services to both promote apprenticeship opportunities and ensure care leavers received sustained support.
- Some care leavers had successfully progressed into permanent operative roles and were now actively promoting apprenticeships to other LACs.
- Work would continue to improve opportunities -the next steps were:
  - Continue running multiple Women in Construction sessions annually.
  - Deliver programmes both via Leicester College and its own CTCE site.
  - Further develop outreach to faith and community groups, with a focus on increasing uptake from BME candidates.

In response to questions from members, it was noted that:

- In Leicester, women made up 20% of those entering craftwork roles, significantly higher than the national average of just 1%, and twice the rate of comparable local authorities.
- The Women in Construction (WIC) and apprenticeship programme traditionally targeted the 16-25 age group (a younger dynamic). However, recent cohorts have seen participation from a broader age range, including individuals in their 50s making complete career changes. This diversity was seen as a brilliant influence on the younger participants.
- The team worked closely with schools and colleges to encourage participation from sixth form and GCSE students in the programmes.

- The apprenticeship framework was designed to meet the needs of the council workforce. As such, there was a pathway for the apprentices to transition into permanent roles, provided they met the requirements.
- The apprentices received guidance on development opportunities that had proved effective. Currently, there were three female supervisors in the craft workforce, 2 of whom came through the apprenticeship route.
- A recommendation was made to include children with special educational needs in future apprenticeship programmes to enhance inclusivity.

Agreed:

1. The commission noted the report.
2. The application link for the apprentice recruitment programme was to be shared with members.

## **10. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair informed members that they were welcome to recommend items that they wished to be included in the work programme for the new municipal year.

## **12. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

The chair thanked members for their contributions throughout the municipal year. There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 19:37.

## SCRUTINY COMMITTEES: TERMS OF REFERENCE

### INTRODUCTION

Scrutiny Committees hold the Executive and partners to account by reviewing and scrutinising policy and practices. Scrutiny Committees will have regard to the Political Conventions and the Scrutiny Operating Protocols and Handbook in fulfilling their work.

The Overview Select Committee and each Scrutiny Commission will perform the role as set out in Article 8 of the Constitution in relation to the functions set out in its Terms of Reference.

Scrutiny Committees may:

- i. review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the City Mayor, Executive, Committees and Council officers both in relation to individual decisions and over time.
- ii. develop policy, generate ideas, review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas.
- iii. question the City Mayor, members of the Executive, committees and Directors about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to their initiatives or projects.
- iv. make recommendations to the City Mayor, Executive, committees and the Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process.
- v. review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the Scrutiny Committee and local people about their activities and performance; and
- vi. question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent). •

**Annual report:** The Overview Select Committee will report annually to Full Council on its work and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate. Scrutiny Commissions / committees will report from time to time as appropriate to Council.

The Scrutiny Committees which have currently been established by the Council in accordance with Article 8 of the Constitution are:

- Overview Select Committee (OSC)
- Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission
- Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission (which also sits as the statutory Education Committee)

- Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission
- Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission
- Housing Scrutiny Commission
- Public Health and Health Integration Scrutiny Commission

The key work areas covered by each Scrutiny Commission are to be found here <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/decisions-meetings-and-minutes/overviewand-scrutiny>

## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE**

The Overview Select Committee **will**:

- Scrutinise the work of the City Mayor and Deputy City Mayors and areas of the Council's work overseen by them.
- Consider cross cutting issues such as monitoring of petitions
- Consider cross-cutting issues which span across Executive portfolios.
- Manage the work of Scrutiny Commissions where the proposed work is considered to have impact on more than one portfolio.
- Consider work which would normally be considered by a Scrutiny Commission but cannot be considered in time due to scheduling issues.
- Report annually to Council.
- Be responsible for overseeing the work of scrutiny and the commissions and to refer certain matters to particular commissions as appropriate.

## **SCRUTINY COMMISSIONS**

Scrutiny Commissions **will**:

- Normally undertake overview of Executive work, reviewing items for Executive decision where it chooses.
- Engage in policy development within its remit.
- Normally be attended by the relevant Executive Member(s), who will be a standing invitee.
- Have their own work programme and may make recommendations to the Executive on work areas where appropriate.
- Consider requests by the Executive to carry forward items of work and report to the Executive as appropriate.
- Report on their work to Council from time to time as required.
- Be classed as specific Scrutiny Committees in terms of legislation but will refer cross cutting work to the OSC.

# Housing Scrutiny Commission Introduction to Housing

June 2025

Director of Housing



# Housing

The overall aim of Leicester City Council's Housing Division is to provide a decent home within the reach of every citizen of Leicester. Under this aim the priorities for the HRA budget are:

- Providing Decent Homes
- Making our communities and neighbourhoods places where people want to live and keeping in touch with our tenants
- Making Leicester a low carbon city by improving the energy efficiency of homes
- Providing appropriate housing to match people's changing needs
- Making Leicester a place to do business by creating jobs and supporting the local economy

# Housing Development

17



- HEDNA identified need for 786 additional new homes per year
- Loss of 350 homes RTB per year
- 6500 on waiting list
- Development of new Council Housing
- Over 1100 Council Homes delivered over last term
- Ongoing delivery of 1,500 new build and acquisitions

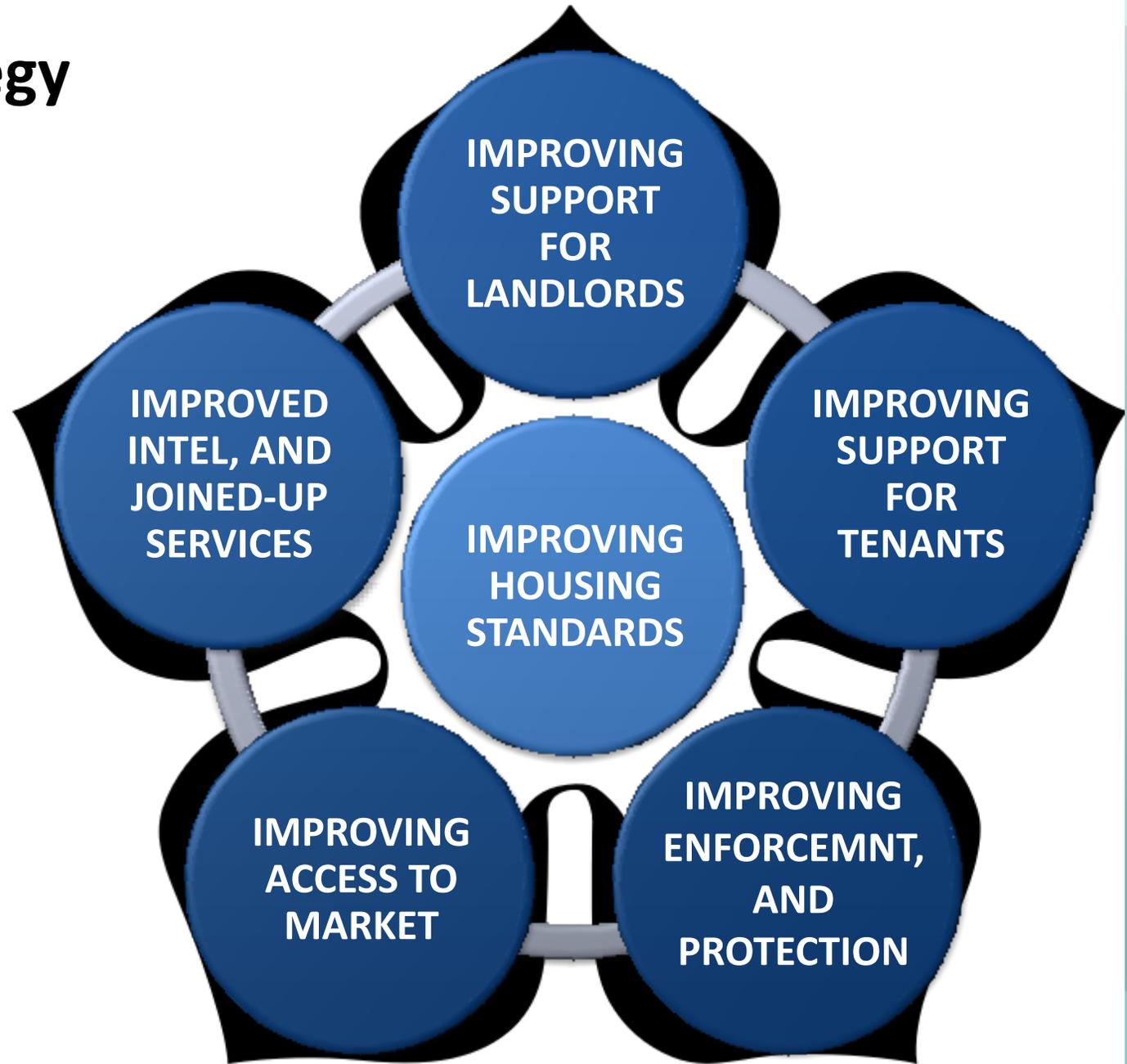
# Homelessness Services

- Service Objective - to continue to deliver strong, effective homelessness functions to prevent, relieve and support the most vulnerable households facing homelessness.
- Commitment to work towards ending rough sleeping with a strong service offer and strategy over the next 3 years, supported by a successful bid of £2.3m.



# Private Rented Sector Strategy

- Strategy led jointly by Housing, Neighbourhood and Environment, and Planning.
- Overarching aim to improve housing standards and conditions in the sector.





# Investing in Council Housing

- Investment into Council Housing through the capital programme every year
- 80,000 repair jobs completed annually
- <sup>21</sup>Over 800 Void properties brought up to the 'decent home standard' every year
- Major refurbishment programme
- Environmental and communal works
- £4m invested in Public Realm Improvement Programme
- Estate improvements



# Housing Senior Management Team

## Contacts and Key Responsibility Areas



**Chris Burgin**  
 Director of Housing  
 0116 454 5143



**Simon Nicholls**  
 Head of Service  
 0116 454 5273



**Gurjit Minhas**  
 Head of Service  
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**Caroline Carpendale**  
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**Zenab Valli**  
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 0116 454 3573



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 Head of Service  
 0116 454 5167



**Joanne Russell**  
 Head of Service  
 0116 454 0245



**Sam Taylor**  
 Head of Service  
 0116 454 0674



**Nilkesh Patel**  
 Head of Service  
 0116 454

- Capital Investment
- New House Building and Acquisitions
- Home Improvement Team
- Housing Development
- Building Services
- Quality Control

- Districts – East
- Districts – West
- Districts – South
- Gypsy & Travellers Site Managements
- STAR (HRA)
- STAR (AMAL)

- Families Homelessness Housing Options
- Single Homelessness & Housing Options
- Rough Sleeping & Outreach

- Income Management Team
- Housing Administration
- Housing Transformation Team
- Programme Management – HTP/NEC
- Training Centre of Excellence, Apprentices, NIO Scheme

- Housing Registration & Allocations
- Property Lettings & Leicester Home Choice
- Private Rented Sector
- Fleet – Transport (Maintenance)
- Corporate Fleet
- Empty Homes
- Asylum

- Voids
- Housing Repairs & Maintenance
- Gas
- Electrical
- Stores (including DCI team)
- Housing Health and Safety
- Damp and Mould

Adaptations  
Housing Register  
Fleet maintenance  
Ukraine refugee support  
Repairs and maintenance  
Property lettings  
Rent collection  
Leaseholder management  
Homeless services  
Fire safety  
Gypsy and traveller site management  
Tenancy management  
Tackling ASB  
Sheltered housing  
Void repairs  
Tenant involvement  
Tenancy support  
Passenger transport service  
Housing advice  
Temporary accommodation  
New build and acquisitions  
Support for rough sleepers  
Private rented sector advice  
Building safety  
Private rented sector advice  
Environmental improvements  
Homelessness Strategy  
Private Rented Sector Strategy  
Tenancy Strategy  
Overcrowding Strategy  
Adaptations Strategy



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# **Rent Arrears Report**

## **April 2024 to March 2025**

Assistant Mayor Briefing: Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025

Housing Scrutiny Commission: 10<sup>th</sup> July 2025

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

## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: ALL.
- Report author: Natasha Pau
- Author contact details: [Natasha.Pau@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:Natasha.Pau@leicester.gov.uk) Tel: 0116 4542644
- Report version number: v.1.2.

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Members of the Scrutiny Commission on the rent arrears progress within the general housing stock, over the full financial year, from April 2024 to March 2025.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The report is for information and Members are asked to note the contents of the report.

## 3. SUMMARY

- 3.1 At the end of the financial year (31<sup>st</sup> March 2025) the cash amount outstanding was **£1.704M**, for current tenant rent arrears within the general housing stock. This is **15% lower** than at the same point in the previous financial year. Like many Social Landlords nationally, the team faced significant challenges in collecting rent and service charges, due to the cost-of-living crisis which continues to impact tenants' financial circumstances. Notwithstanding the team have delivered outstanding performance and the rent arrears are much lower when compared to previous years. The team have managed to control rent arrears from increasing to unmanageable amounts and continued with sustaining tenancies despite the economic pressures. (See 4.1 to 4.5, Table 1 & 2).
- 3.2 The proportion of rent collected between April and March 2025 was **98.84%**. The figure reflects a rolling 53-week performance and demonstrates the hard work and tremendous efforts made by the team in maximising rent collection.
- 3.3 The team supported tenants to apply for Discretionary Housing Payments. A total **£259,153** was paid in awards for all qualifying Council tenants. This is a **29% Increase** in awards compared to the previous financial year. (See 4.32 to 4.33)
- 3.4 The team successfully processed Household Support Fund (HSF) applications to award **£970K** worth of housing costs to tenants affected by the cost-of-living crisis. A total of **1399 tenants** were supported by this scheme. This year the scheme was offered in two phases, the HSF5 scheme which was available from May 2024 – September 2024, with an allocation of £500K. HSF6 Scheme which was available from October 2024 – March 2025 with an allocation of £470k. The allocation and successful distribution of DHP and HSF funding has had a significant impact on the Council's ability to support tenants in sustaining their

tenancies which is of paramount importance alongside collecting the income which sustains Housing's services.

- 3.5 A further **5,319** tenants which is **28%** of all Council tenants were supported with Utilities and/or Food. Like the Household support fund for rent support, this support was offered in two phases, HSF5 and HSF6. This shows a **1% Increase** in support in comparison to the previous year. (See 4.34 to 4.37, Table 10).
- 3.6 The total value of the top 500 cases at year-end 2024/25 **decreased** by **20%** when compared to the same point in the previous year. (See 4.11 to 4.13 & Table 7 & 8).
- 3.7 By the end of the financial year 2024/25, a total number of **9,305** council tenants were claiming UC equating to **49%** of all current council tenants. This compares to **24%** of council tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit. By the end of the year a total of **52%** of tenants claiming UC were in rent arrears (See 4.17 to 4.22, Table 9).
- 3.8 The Rent Management Advisors (RMA) have been supporting tenants with welfare benefit claims. They received a total of **1,111 referrals** throughout the year, which is **9% higher** than at the same point in the previous year and **77%** of the households had some type of vulnerability. (See 4.23 to 4.31). The work of the RMAs is critical to tenancy sustainment, and they regularly receive positive feedback for their excellent work in supporting tenants.
- 3.9 In the last financial year, only **4 evictions** were conducted for non-payment of rent, and this figure compares to 7 in 2023/24 and 7 in 2022/23. These were all single households; no families were evicted during the year. Since April 2024, a total of **59 cases** were submitted to court for rental possessions which equates to an **average of 5 cases** per month and this compares to 81 court submissions in the year 2023/24. Pre-Covid, the average court submissions were around 80 cases per month which represents **94% annual reduction** in possession actions. (See 4.38 to 4.40) This is a fantastic achievement and represents some of the lowest levels of eviction across the whole of the country. When reviewed alongside the high levels of income collection this is indicative of the outstanding performance of the team.

## 4. REPORT

### Current Tenant Rent Arrears

4.1 Current Rent Arrears at the end of each quarter for the financial year 2024/25:

**Table 1.** Quarterly Arrears

Period	Arrears at Quarter End
Quarter 1	£2,715,523
Quarter 2	£3,210,877
Quarter 3	£1,789,044
<b>Quarter 4</b>	<b>£1,704,319</b>

4.2 Comparison of year-end figures over the last four years:

**Table 2.** Financial Year End Figures

<b>Period</b>	<b>Arrears at Financial Year End</b>
2021/22	£1,576,981
2022/23	£1,724,846
2023/24	£1,974,282
<b>2024/25</b>	<b>£1,704,319</b>

- 4.3 Table 1 shows the cash amount owing at the end of each quarter in the last financial year. The arrears were higher at the start of the year and decreasing towards year-end which historically, are normal patterns and trends that are seen.
- 4.4 Table 2 shows the cash amount owing at week ending **31<sup>st</sup> March 2025**. The total arrears were **£1.704m**, which is over **15% lower** compared to the same point in the previous financial year. This figure does not represent non-dwelling properties.
- 4.5 The proportion of rent collected between April and March 2025 was **98.84%**. The figure reflects a rolling 53-week performance and demonstrates the hard work and tremendous efforts made by the team in maximising rent collection. The rent collection figures for Leicester remains excellent in comparison with other authorities with only **40%** of our current tenants in rent arrears.
- 4.6 The list below sets out a summary of some good working practices and achievements of the team.**
- Processed Household Support Fund applications to award **£970k** worth of housing costs to tenants affected by the cost-of-living crisis. A total of **1399 tenants** were supported by this scheme. A combined total of 547 children living within these tenancies benefited from this support. A total of 226 tenants with disabilities received this support along with 41 Pensioners. The remainder of the award supported 585 households with vulnerabilities.
  - The team communicate with tenants in various ways to encourage rent payments, maximise rent collection and reduce rent arrears. A total of **44,409 telephone contacts** were made or received by the team in the financial year 2024/25 including duplicated contacts made by the team to the same tenant, averaging 171 calls per working day.
  - A further **7,437 text messages** were sent by the team to reach out to tenants for payment and support. This does not include the automated bulk texting facility.
  - **Emails** were also sent and received to tenants and a total of 17,529 were sent and 11,146 were received which is a **combined total of 28,675** throughout the year, averaging 110 emails per working day.
  - A total of **962 home visits** were completed to tenants' home which is an average of 4 visits per working day throughout the year.
  - The team produced and issued **24,986 letters** throughout the year not including the system generated automated letters. This includes a combination of general rent

payment reminder letters and invites to appointments alongside anything more serious where legal actions due to persistent non-payment is being considered. This equates to 96 letters per working day.

- We collaborated with the Councils IT department to develop the **Housing Online** system enabling tenants to access a breakdown of their service charges. This allows tenants to provide DWP a breakdown of their rent and service charges to support their Universal Credit applications and ensure claims can be updated and processed in a timely way. The system has been further enhanced allowing tenants to see any additional amounts owed in their sub-accounts for example warden or alarm charges.
- We referred over **110 tenants to the National Energy Action** who provide a single point of contact service for people with health conditions or vulnerabilities that put them at greater risk of being affected physically or mentally by the cold. The resolute energy advisers provide tailored support to tenants with their energy bills, negotiating with energy suppliers, adding them to the Priority Services Register, if eligible, as well as long-term energy advice.
- Effective **partnership working** with the District Managers (Tenancy management) and the Repairs managers to agree decisions to progress complex cases and discuss any tenant issues which might be causing reasons to withhold rent payments.
- A joint approach and attendance at **Corporate Income Collection meetings** to identify any emerging patterns and trends impacting debt collection. Sharing performance information and good practice to ensure there is a consistent culture in corporate debt collection across the council.
- Continuing cross cutting and **multi-agency work on non-engagement cases** by using the strategies that were developed in the recent years. For example, applying internal system messages alerting all Housing staff that tenants need to engage with the team urgently. Enabling the tenants to discuss their position and offer proposals in writing opposed to speaking or meeting with us. Consulting with the tenancy management teams and police to conduct welfare checks or checking hospitals, Social Care, and prisons on tenant whereabouts.
- Frequent **complex case review meetings** with Manager and Team Leaders to explore serious arrears of more than £1,500. The meetings help produce a plan of action and kept the team challenged as the cases were overseen by management.
- An ongoing **emphasis on staff performance management** to ensure output and productivity is not affected whilst the service continues operating from home.

### Number of Cases

4.7 The number of current tenants with rent arrears owing 7 weeks or more net rent is shown in tables 3 & 4 below.

**Table 3.** Breakdown of Arrears Cases by Quarter end 2024-25

Period	Owing 7 Weeks or more Net
Quarter 1	1,070
Quarter 2	1,002
Quarter 3	571
<b>Quarter 4</b>	<b>477</b>

Where no net rent is payable (i.e. on full benefit), full rent used as a default value to calculate number of weeks owing)

**Table 4.** Breakdown of Arrears Cases by Year End

Period	Owing 7 Weeks or more Net
2021/22	956
2022/23	968
2023/24	862
<b>2024/25</b>	<b>477</b>

4.8 The number of cases in arrears owing 7 weeks or more net rent, **decreased by 45%** over the previous year end figure. The 7-week arrears include lower amounts of net rent, so this is not a true reflection of the serious debt cases.

#### **Average Arrears Per Debtor**

4.9 The total arrears divided by the total number of tenants in rent arrears at the specified intervals are shown in tables 5 & 6 below:

**Table 5.** Average Arrears per Debtor by Quarter End 2024/25

Period	Average Arrears
Quarter 1	£277.07
Quarter 2	£297.22
Quarter 3	£247.48
<b>Quarter 4</b>	<b>£226.01</b>

**Table 6.** Average Arrears per Debtor by Financial Year End

Period	Average Arrears
2021/22	£233.14
2022/23	£246.94
2023/24	£273.79
<b>2024/25</b>	<b>£226.01</b>

4.10 Table 5 shows the average arrears fluctuated at each quarter end and Table 6 demonstrates, by year end they were lower by 17% compared to the previous year end which correlates with the decrease in the value of the rent arrears.

#### **Top 500 Arrears Cases (by value)**

14.11 Table 7 & 8 (below) shows the top 500 accounts with the highest arrears and total value of arrears at the end of each quarter and year end regardless of tenants' payment methods.

**Table 7. Top 500 Arrears Cases by Quarter End**

Quarter End 2023/24	Highest Case	Lowest Case	Average	Total Value
Quarter 1	£5,797	£852	£1,285	£642,713
Quarter 2	£6,495	£797	£1,193	£596,399
Quarter 3	£5,293	£612	£1,012	£505,756
<b>Quarter 4</b>	<b>£3,787</b>	<b>£582</b>	<b>£882</b>	<b>£440,904</b>

**Table 8. Top 500 Arrears Cases by Year End**

Period	Highest Case	Lowest Case	Average	Total Value
2021/22	£3,569	£607	£940	£470,151
2022/23	£3,009	£650	£930	£464,865
2023/24	£5,889	£717	£1,101	£550,651
<b>2024/25</b>	<b>£3,787</b>	<b>£582</b>	<b>£882</b>	<b>£440,904</b>

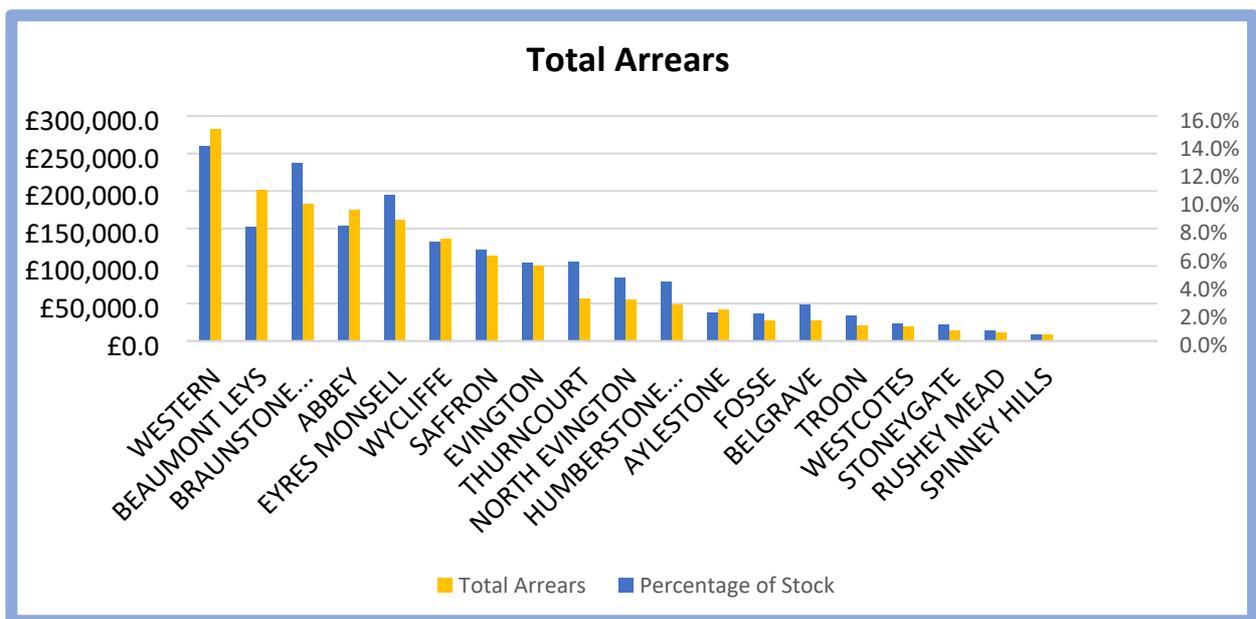
4.12 Table 7 shows that the total value of top arrears cases **decreased by 31%** at year end when compared to quarter 1. The total value figures within this table have been relatively stable throughout the year.

4.13 Table 8 shows the total value of the top 500 cases at year-end 2024/25 was **lower by over 17%** when compared to the same point in the previous year.

**Arrears by Ward**

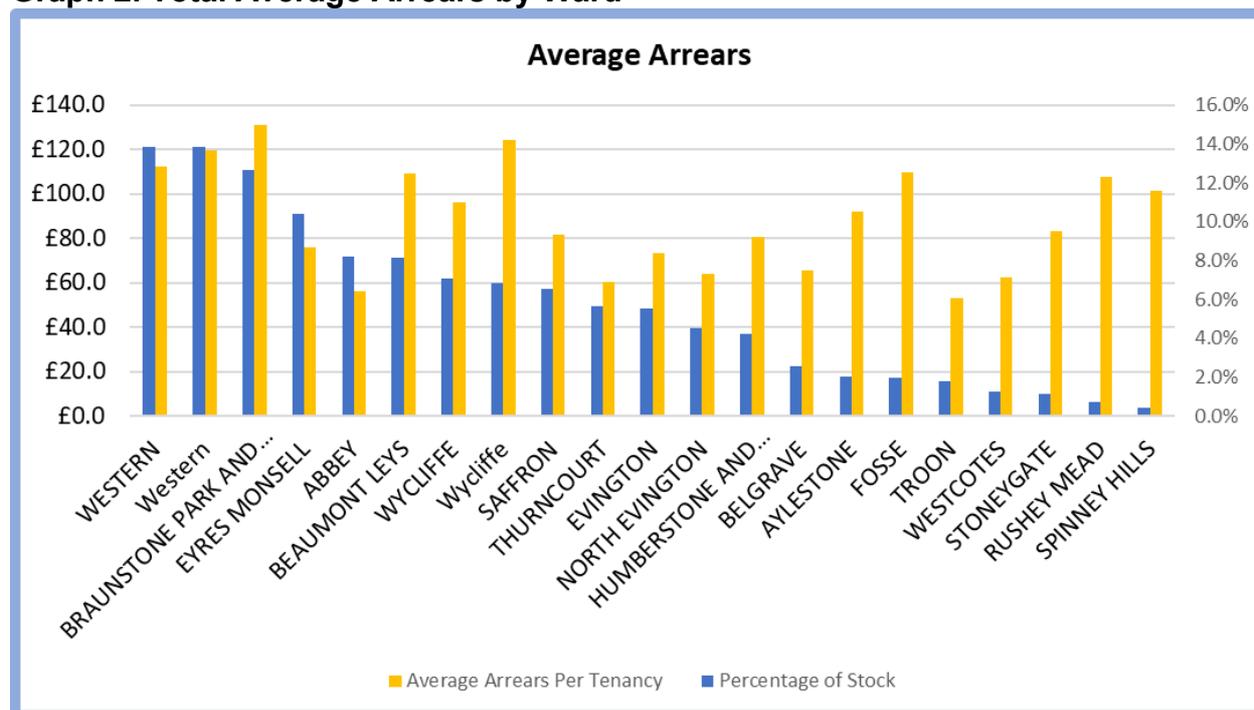
4.14 The graphs presented below show the total arrears and average arrears by ward at end of financial year 2024/25.

**Graph 1. Total Arrears by Ward**



4.15 The total arrears chart shows that the ward areas with the most stock have the highest arrears values, and the arrears are proportionate against the percentage of stock. There are no significant changes compared to the wards in comparison to last year. There is a combination of reasons for rent arrears to fluctuate for example, an increased number of monthly payers that fail to pay their rent on time or, opting to use pay point causing delays in payments reaching rent accounts in time for year-end. Historically, some tenants need persistent reminders and encouragement to pay rent in a timely way and therefore, pockets of staff underperformance or absence related issues where tenants are not being pursued for rent, can lead to negative impacts within ward areas.

**Graph 2. Total Average Arrears by Ward**



4.16 The average arrears chart presents the total average arrears per tenancy.

As the chart illustrates areas which are lower in stock have higher average arrears value. Despite low stocks sizes even the smallest number of cases with very high arrears can cause the average arrears to spike up. Areas with flats and bedsits can be predominantly occupied by single people. We know that single people are known to have more changes in circumstances on multiple occasions within a year compared to families or tenants of pension age. Changes in circumstances, benefits sanctions or transitioning in between different benefits or employment can cause an increase in rent arrears until such time the situation is resolved. Changes in employment status or zero-hour employment contracts can cause a spike in arrears whilst the tenant adapts to changes in their personal circumstances.

## Universal Credit & Rent Management Advisor Support

4.17 Table 9 (below) provides information about Council tenants claiming Universal credit from the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP).

**Table 9.** Universal Credit Key Performance Indicators

Quarter End 2024/25	Number of UC Cases	% UC Cases in Arrears before UC Started	% UC Cases in Arrears at Quarter End	Total Value of Arrears	Average Arrears per Debtor	No. of APA's*
Quarter 1	7,673	58%	70%	£1,635,657	£305	4,493
Quarter 2	8,284	57%	76%	£1,999,646	£318	4,935
Quarter 3	8,820	56%	47%	£1,110,778	£258	5,333
<b>Quarter 4</b>	<b>9,305</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>£1,158,299</b>	<b>£238</b>	<b>5,670</b>

\*APA = Alternative Payment Arrangements are when the DWP pay the housing Costs directly to the Council from the tenants Universal Credit Housing costs entitlement

4.18 By the end of the financial year 2024/25, a total number of **9,305** council tenants were claiming UC equating to **49%** of all current council tenants. This compares to **24%** of council tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit.

Universal Credit is credited to tenants a month in arrears which means tenants rent account can display virtual or technical arrears until such time that payment is received.

4.19 Table 9 shows when tenants moved onto Universal Credit of tenants had pre-existing rent arrears on their rent account. This is a common theme when existing benefit claimants transition from one benefit to another, resulting in periods of non-payment of rent whilst the benefit payments are being processed. A tenant's non-compliance with the process can add to rent arrears increasing and backdating of UC can only be granted under very exceptional circumstances.

4.20 By year end a total of **5,670** tenants had successful APAs in place. The remaining tenants on UC are either waiting for UC award, paying the council directly using other payment methods, waiting for APA approval or for the first payment to reach their rent account. Again, the delay in payments will result in the account showing rent arrears which contributes to the overall arrears position in the earlier tables.

4.21 The team continue working collaboratively with the Department of Works & Pensions and Work Coaches from the local Job Centre Plus to minimise any impact of Universal Credit on rent arrears. Any issues with complex cases or with the joint working arrangements are escalated to the DWP Partnership Manager's for resolution. The team continue to provide an appointment service form the Job Centre Plus where appropriate and if tenants require urgent appointments to support benefit claims.

4.22 The DWP granted the council 'Trusted Partner' status which provides access to a Landlord Portal IT system. This has meant the Income Management Team can verify housing costs quickly to prevent delays in UC claims being assessed. The

Trusted Partner status also allows the council to apply for Alternative Payment Arrangements (APA's) for vulnerable people who may struggle to pay their rent and any arrears themselves.

- 4.4 The teams **8 Rent Management Advisors** (RMA) are responsible for supporting our most vulnerable tenants, or those with complex needs with claiming and maintaining Universal Credit claims. They have been helping tenants set up e-mail accounts, supporting people to make and manage their UC claims, supporting tenants with backdated payments and reconsideration of welfare benefits and encouraging people to consider digital learning courses. Additionally, they are regularly conducting research and sharing information within the team so we can respond to tenants needs and provide the most appropriate advice.
- 4.24 The RMAs received a total of **1,111 referrals** which is just over **9% higher** than at the same point in the previous year and **77%** from the total number of referrals had an identified vulnerability disclosed by the tenant. From the **1,111** referrals a total of **1075** were accepted (**97%**) and **3%** of referrals were **refused** as they did not meet the criteria for support. A total of **72%** of cases are **now closed** due to the support ending and **15%** of the closed cases failed to engage with RMAs. The current active caseload is **165 cases**.
- 4.25 The cases are separated into two types of support 'Short-Term' usually up to two months and 'Long-Term' up to six months. From the **883 cases** that have been closed so far, a total of **81%** of the tenants required **short-term support** in making benefit claims or basic budgeting advice and the remaining **19%** required **longer-term support** to help manage their claims and, to apply for any additional elements within their claim for example, Limited Capability for Work Related Activity. This is worth an extra **£423.27 per month** to tenants, however it can take several months for this to be awarded as tenant would usually be required to complete a Work Capability Assessment (WCA) to qualify for this payment.
- 4.26 The average wait time for the referrals to be allocated was **4 working days** and the average time to make the first contact with the tenant was **3 working days**. This demonstrates a waiting list process did need to be used, to allow the team to effectively manage the workloads.
- 4.27 The referrals were marked within a priority banding high, medium, and low. **High** defines tenants at immediate risk of homelessness i.e., pending evictions which amounted to **28%** from the **1,075 referrals that were accepted**. **Medium** priority referrals where tenants who were at risk of court possession proceedings equated to **59%** of the referrals. **Low** priority referrals where tenants had low level arrears with no legal action being considered were **13%**.
- 4.28 The team pursue legal action only as a last resort when all opportunities to sustain tenancies have been exhausted. From the 883 closed cases, **8%** of cases were pursued with **legal actions** due to non-engagement or persistent non-payment despite RMA intervention. This demonstrates that **92%** of households were supported with **tenancy sustainment** and any threat of possession proceedings as removed. On current and active cases, it demonstrates there is further scope to provide tenancy sustainment and support. For ongoing eviction cases RMAs provide frequent support and maintain efforts to engage with tenants until such time the eviction is cancelled or goes ahead.

- 4.29 RMA's supported tenants to claim welfare benefits, discretionary housing payments (DHP), backdated payments, reconsiderations, and underpayments. In the last 12 months a total value of **£398,000** was achieved by supporting **883 households**. This amount includes any potential entitlements for the next 12 months for disability related benefits which are awarded for a minimum of 12 months before reviewed. Decisions on mandatory reconsiderations and backdates can take a few months to resolve and reconsiderations on disability related benefits can take even longer for resolutions.
- 4.30 Due to RMA involvement and contributions in rent arrears cases the total value of **reduction in rent arrears** through RMA intervention equated to **£372,000**. This figure has been drawn out by taking the value of rent arrears at case opening stage and subtracting this from the value at the time of closing the case, resulting in the difference RMA intervention made to the rent arrears.
- 4.31 RMAs measured "Soft Outcomes" to help identify tenants confidence levels *after* their support had ended. It also helped to determine if the tenant felt empowered to be able to manage their claims for benefits without support in the future. An initial assessment gives scores between 1 and 5 based on tenant confidence. When the case is closed the assessment is then carried out again and re-scored to establish any improvement. If the score is higher than when the support initially started, it demonstrates an improvement in tenants' confidence. Based on the 883 closed cases, **70%** of tenants confirmed they had a **marked improvement** in their level of confidence. The remaining **30%** were tenants who felt their confidence levels **did not improve** or did not engage with the service.

#### **DHP's (Discretionary Housing Payment)**

- 4.32 Between April 2024 and March 2025, the team supported tenants to apply for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs). A total **£259,153** was paid in awards for all qualifying Council tenants, this is a **29% Increase in awards** compared to the previous financial year. The team use DHPs to provide assistance to the most vulnerable tenants to sustain their tenancies and to safeguard them. The support helps alleviate poverty, prevent homelessness, and enables tenants time, to seek alternative accommodations and to better their financial position.
- 4.33 The current years forecast remains bleak as central government continue to reduce funding however, the team have successfully bid for a top up allocation from the Household Support Fund (HSF) in this new financial year (2025/26) to prevent Council tenants being put at risk of homelessness. The team have been awarded £500k HSF however there is no DHP allocation for the year ahead. Therefore, the allocated HSF is to support the tenants throughout the financial year and will need to be used to prioritise and support those experiencing income shock for example, redundancy, reduced hours at work, illness or caring responsibilities which can often lead to sudden financial hardship due to fluctuating incomes. Support will also be offered for those households on low incomes, affected by the cost-of-living crisis and who are struggling to manage day to day expenses due to high inflation.

## Household Support Fund (HSF)

4.34 Due to the impact of Covid and the cost-of-living crisis, the Government introduced support funds which are being administered by the Council. This year the fund focussed on supporting people primarily with utilities and food. Over the year a **total of 5,319** tenants were supported which equates to **28% of all council tenants**. Tenants who did not qualify for HSF support were provided with advice on HB/UC and council tax which in total was 602 tenants.

Like the Household support fund for rent support, this support was offered in **two phases, the HSF5 scheme** which supported **1712 council tenants** with Utilities and the **HSF6 Scheme** which supported **1830 council tenants** with Utilities and **1777 with food**. The table below demonstrated the overall support provided including advice given to tenants who did not qualify for support. See Table 10.

**Table 10. Household Support Fund**

Description of Assistance Provided	Number of Households	Percentage of tenants supported
Food	1,777	9%
Utilities	3,542	19%
HB / UC advice offered	212	1%
Council Tax advice offered	390	2%

4.35 The Household Support Fund was also used to support tenants in exceptional cases where there was a genuine emergency and where tenants did not meet the qualifying criteria for existing housing support schemes for example, DHP, Housing benefit or Universal Credit. A **total award £970K** worth of housing costs to tenants affected by the cost-of-living crisis. A total of **1399 tenants** were supported by this scheme. This year the scheme was offered in **two phases**, the HSF5 scheme which was available from **May 2024 – September 2024**, with an allocation of £500K. HSF6 Scheme which was available from **October 2024 – March 2025** with an allocation of £470k.

4.36 A total of **54%** of the tenants had rent arrears only and **4%** required support with fixed District Heating debts only, the remaining **42%** had combined rent arrears plus, other service charges. Over **80%** of tenancies were at legal action stages for example, a legal notice was served or there was pending court or eviction actions. Through the support that was offered all pending legal activity is now aborted.

4.37 We obtained income and expenditures to maximise incomes and identify hardship. Using this sample of cases, we noted some clear patterns and emerging trends. The biggest factor affecting this group of tenants was low income, unemployment due to ill health, multiple debts combined with significant vulnerabilities and mental health related conditions which were compounded further due to their debt situation. The team were able to offer basic budgeting support and refer tenants for more specialist support to agencies like CITAL, Community Advice & Law Service, National Energy Action, Turning point and STAR.

## Court and Evictions

- 4.38 The team have continued careful consideration before instigating possession proceedings and ensured all avenues of supporting tenants had been explored in advance of any legal action. Any potential court case was reviewed by management before submissions to courts. Since April 2024, a **total of 59 cases** were **submitted to court** for rental possessions which equates to an average of 5 cases per month and this compares to 81 court submissions in the year 2023/24. Pre-Covid, the average court submissions were around 80 cases per month which represents 94% annual reduction in possession actions. This demonstrates the teams' efforts in effective prevention and management of rent arrears and the offer of tenancy sustainment, all of which subsequently removed any threat of possession proceedings.
- 4.39 Evictions and warrant requests were being pursued only where it was necessary, with view that ongoing efforts to sustain tenancies continue to be provided until such time an eviction takes place. Tenants were encouraged and provided with ample opportunities to reach reasonable payment solutions to avoid possession orders and evictions. Management scrutinises all potential eviction cases to ensure that all avenues of maximising tenant income and sustaining tenancy have been explored. This includes ensuring that any vulnerability has been identified and the necessary referrals to supporting agencies are considered well in advance of any eviction process being followed. The eviction route is pursued as an ultimate last resort and after all efforts to sustain tenancy has been demonstrated and exhausted.
- 4.40 In the last financial year, **4 evictions** were carried out for non-payment of rent, and the number remains low compared to pre-Covid levels. This figure compares to **7 in 2023/24** and **5 in 2022/23**. Evictions remain low compared to earlier years despite the economic difficulties experienced over this period, the ongoing welfare reform challenges, and the continued impact due to the cost-of-living crisis. The household make up for majority of the evictions were single people who had abandoned their homes and chose to not continue with their Council tenancy and a small number of childless couples who failed to make regular payments. The team are exceptionally proud of their achievements in ensuring families were supported with sustaining their tenancies.

## 5. Key Challenges & Priorities for Year 2025/26

- 5.1 The last few years have been incredibly difficult and tough, the team will continue to face significant challenges and pressures in the coming year which are set out below.

### Nil Award for Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)

- 5.2 For the financial Year 2025/26 IMT have not been allocated a DHP budget. The team only have funding from Household Support Fund (HSF) of £700K to support tenants throughout the financial year. This DWP grant was substantial as the team use DHPs to provide assistance to the most vulnerable tenants to sustain their tenancies and to safeguard them. The support helps alleviate poverty, prevent homelessness and enables tenants time, to seek alternative accommodation and to better their financial position. Without this support the team are heavily reliant on

HSF funding, however with the substantially reduced grant compared to previous years, applications will need to be scrutinised to ensure tenants meet the criteria's and are able to demonstrate tenancy sustainability. We expect that the rent arrears will rise and with funding support streams being limited we may also see an increase in legal action being pursued. The team will ensure their primary focus is to intervene with tenants at an early stage to avoid arrears increasing and ensure support is provided to sustain tenancies.

### **Rising Inflation / Cost of Living Crisis**

- 5.3 Rising inflation and costs of fuel and energy, and the ongoing cost of living crisis. The team will also be collecting additional rents due to the 2.7% increases from 1st April 2025 to core rents. **The rent arrears are expected to rise, and performance is likely to be very unstable.** The team will continue prioritising the Household Support fund enabling assistance with housing costs where tenants are struggling with rent arrears and facing hardship. The Rent Management Advisors will continue their primary focus in supporting tenants with applying for welfare benefits and maximising their incomes.

### **Welfare Benefit Changes**

- 5.4 The government has announced plans to deliver £4.8 billion in savings by making change to the welfare system, which may disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, such as disabled people. These changes include freezing the health-related element of Universal Credit for existing recipients and halving its value for new claimants. There are also plans to tighten eligibility criteria for Personal Independence Payments (PIP), which may lead to some people losing entitlement and facing reduced household income. This will cause more financial Hardship. We have already seen an increasing number of vulnerable tenants requiring support. It is crucial for our team to stay informed about the welfare benefit changes for them to help and support tenants. The team have an additional RMA joining later this year to help with managing this. The RMA team have good relationships with Cital, DWP and Trun2Us and therefore will be able to support tenant with support, advice, and signpost tenants to the support service available.

### **Managed Migration**

- 5.5 Managed Migration is approaching its final stages of the rollout of Universal Credit (UC) nationwide. The DWP are gradually moving those claimants still claiming legacy benefits on to UC. They will be notifying the claimants that their benefits are ending and inviting them to make a new claim for UC instead. Impacted tenants include those in receipt of Tax credits, Employment & Support Allowance (Income Related), Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance (Income Related), Housing Benefit or with Tax credits. Tenants in receipt of Pension related benefits are unaffected by this change but all other sickness related benefits will transition across by December 2025 with all legacy benefits ending by March 2026.

All tenants will be required to make a claim to move on to UC which will be worrying for some, and failure to make the claim in a timely way, might result in existing benefit awards being terminated, tenants losing out on transitional

protections and backdates considered under very exceptional circumstances only. This will potentially cause **rent arrears to increase** during the period whilst tenants transition on to UC where they will be waiting 5 weeks to receive their first payments. Many vulnerable tenants will struggle with this change and may not claim in a timely way resulting in increased rent arrears, hardship, and risk of homelessness.

Tenants are fortunate to have Rent Management Advisors who can support them with making claims and to navigate the benefit system however, this is under the provisions that tenants are willing to cooperate and engage with the service. We will be providing training events on “DWP’s managed migration” (Move to UC) to the team and wider Housing staff and tenants’ associations to ensure they can provide our tenants with the best possible advice and support.

### **Local Council Tax Support Scheme**

- 5.6 This year, Revenues and Customer Support service has introduced a new council tax support (CTS) scheme to create a fairer, simpler, and more stable system. It aims to help low-income and vulnerable households by improving access to support and reducing financial fluctuations. The previous system led to frequent council tax bill changes whenever incomes shifted, making budgeting difficult. The new scheme simplifies the process for easier management, reduces bill changes for greater financial stability and provides fairer support for those in need. However, the challenges faced is that the income being used within the eligibility criteria includes disability benefits and Personal Independence payments, therefore increasing the income threshold for some of the most vulnerable households. Causing further financial hardship as they may not be entitled to benefit support. The team are in discussions with Revenues and Customer support to set up regular review meetings on their high cases, to ensure they do not impact the rent. In addition, we will also be able to support tenants with council tax discretionary support applications should be find tenants are struggling to manage. Our RMA’s and IMO’s have received tabletop training regarding the new scheme that will help them manage tenants’ expectations.
- 5.7 Despite another challenging and tough year ahead, the team continue to be supported to maintain resilience in a forever changing climate and are confident they will continue to deliver outstanding service to our tenants. They endeavour to stay focussed and positive, aim to continue delivering the outstanding performance and maintaining exceptional standards that have become synonymous with IMT. Tenant support will remain at the forefront alongside consistency in service to assist tenants with reducing financial burdens, maximise their incomes and referrals for specialist support where appropriate.

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

### 6.1 Financial implications

This report sets out the position in relation to net rent arrears for current tenants at the end of March 2025. Not documented in this report are the arrears associated with non-dwelling properties (such as garages and parking spaces), hostel bedspaces and former tenants. The overall gross debt outstanding for all Council tenancies decreased by 15% compared to March 2024; this reduction will result in a corresponding decrease in the provision for bad debt.

Support from Discretionary Housing Payments and the Household Support Fund has been instrumental in helping tenants sustain tenancies and manage arrears, though future funding constraints may present challenges.

Jade Draper, Principal Accountant  
28/05/2025

### 6.2 Legal implications

Recovery of rent and possession proceedings continues to be an area of work in which a number of instructions are received every year.

However, before the matter comes to legal services, the Council will have engaged with the tenant through the housing officers and other departments to assist them as much as possible. Whether this be through instalment payments or applications for additional funding. It is only if the tenant fails to engage, or the arrears become significant when legal services will truly be involved.

Once with legal the process is initiated through an initial letter before action which usually triggers the tenant to respond and enter into a payment arrangement to clear the arrears or engage with us to reach a resolution. Where such arrangements cannot be entered into it is at that time that a view is taken as to whether possession proceedings should be initiated or a simple debt recovery claim through the Court. The decision to do so it will be dependent on a number of factors such as the level of debt, historic payment patterns, and whether there are any other associated breaches of tenancy conditions.

The aim is to assist and encourage the tenant to bring their account up to date failing which litigation and possession proceedings are a last resort. We must be certain in the action to be taken as the Court must be persuaded that it would be reasonable to recover the arrears as sought (in a debt matter) or in a possession case that in the circumstances it is reasonable to make a possession order (which can be suspended provided that the tenant continues to make payments towards any arrears and pays the ongoing rent as it falls due).

Shazmina Ghumra  
27 May 2025

### 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 of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

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

The report provides an update on the rent arrears progress within the general housing stock, over the full financial year, from April 2024 to March 2025.

There are no direct equality implications arising from this report, however it would be useful in relation to tenants in serious debt to have these monitored by protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act (sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, age) in order to address any adverse impact and put in place mitigating actions. It is important that officers continue to offer early appropriate professional support and guidance to tenants to reduce rent arrears. Tenants will continue to face challenges and pressures in the coming years due to the cost-of-living crisis and as central government continue to reduce funding. The work carried out by the Rent Management Advisors in relation to supporting vulnerable people some of whom will have complex needs helps to impact positively on people from across all protected characteristics. While maintaining a robust approach to rent collection, policies must be fair and proportionate, recognising that financial difficulties can arise from various circumstances, some of which may be linked to protected characteristics.

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

### 6.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report, although it is worth noting that the success in reducing rent arrears and sustaining rental income will be contributing to ensuring the council has the funds needed to maintain an energy efficiency stock. This not only reduces carbon emissions, but also helps reduce fuel poverty.

Duncan Bell, Change Manager (Climate Emergency). Ext. 37 2249.  
22<sup>nd</sup> May 2025



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# Stock Condition Briefing Report

Lead Member Briefing

To be considered by: Cllr Cutkelvin

Date of meeting: 17<sup>th</sup> February 2015

City Mayor CDN 1-2-1

Date of meeting: 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Housing Scrutiny Commission

Date of Meeting: 10<sup>th</sup>. July 2025

Lead director: Chris Burgin

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## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: potentially all.
- Report author: Simon Nicholls
- Author contact details: [simon.nicholls@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:simon.nicholls@leicester.gov.uk)
  
- Report version number: v.1

### 1. Summary

This report has been prepared to update members for the Housing Scrutiny commission on how the Division manage the condition of its homes.

Compliance is at the heart of the new Social Housing Regulation Act 2024 and as a social landlord we need to demonstrate compliance with the consumer standards as set out in the act. One of these relates to knowing the condition of your stock.

We consider that our stock is currently 99.5% compliant with the Decent Homes Standard and we are satisfied that it is in good condition. Every home has been visited by a council staff member in the last 5 years who is able to identify any risks and arrange for them to be remedied. Whilst it is accepted that we do not yet have a rolling 5-year programme of Home Health Safety Rating System (HHSRS) inspections in place as evidence this report will go into more detail on how we establish the current condition of our stock and propose a way forward to ensure that we have a full understanding of our stock's condition and that this is maintained going forward.

The new Assets module in NEC will be key to demonstrating compliance. The Organisational Review (OR) in Technical Services will ensure that we have the permanent physical resource needed.

In the interim we are currently carrying out HHSRS surveys ahead of the new NEC module and OR, progress will be reported to the Director of Housing monthly from April 2025.

### 2. Recommended actions/decision

That the contents of this report are noted.

### 3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

### 4. Background and options with supporting evidence

What information do we have on stock condition now?

Current IT system

When the NEC Housing System was first introduced in January 2016, an integrated assets module was not available and has only recently become available and therefore not included. Therefore, it was agreed any processing of this data, such as decent homes reports or future element replacement planning, would be carried out on a separate, but related system, called SAM (Strategic Asset Management). Technical Services have been managing two separate systems.

### Capital works.

We have a significant capital programme that is agreed as part of the HRA budget and rent setting report.

	24/25 Capital Programme £000	25/26 Capital Programme Additions £000
Kitchens & Bathrooms	2,800	2,400
Boilers	2,500	2,000
Re-wiring	1,610	1,610
Re-roofing	1,000	1,500
Soffits & Facia	150	150
Windows and Doors	50	50
District Heating Maintenance	500	500
Communal Improvements & Environmental Works	200	200
Communal Flat Improvement Programme	0	200
Disabled Adaptations	1,200	1,200
Fire Risk Works	500	500
Safety Works including Targeted Alarms	100	100
Loft Insulation	50	100
Affordable Housing - Acquisitions & New Build	15,000	30,000
St Matthews Balcony/walkway Estate Work	200	200
Door entry replacements	0	250
<b>Total Capital Programme</b>	<b>25,860</b>	<b>40,960</b>

Elements on NEC are updated as part of the contract management process for capital works; for example, when we replace a roof, rewire a property or fit a new boiler, all of the information is recorded on NEC. This means that we have comprehensive records of all the works that we have carried out to our properties including what work was performed, the date it was completed and what the work cost.

Programmes of works are produced based on the last install date and remaining life (in years) of an element. The remaining life of older elements was derived from an estate condition survey carried out almost 16 years ago and therefore the usefulness of that information has since decreased over time. Where elements, such as new roofs, are identified for replacement based on estimated remaining life, these are all pre-inspected prior to an order being placed to ensure that we are only prioritising work that actually needs completing.

One of the biggest areas of work is kitchen and bathroom refurbishments. Our original target was to refurbish all kitchens and bathrooms by 2036. However, because of the pressures on the HRA capital budget and a significant increase in construction related inflation in recent years, our priority now is to ensure that all kitchens and bathrooms meet the decent homes criteria and to ensure that all properties have had either a new kitchen or bathroom as soon as possible. We currently have around one thousand eligible properties where tenants have not had the opportunity of having either a new kitchen or bathroom on this Programme. We aim to target these over the next 3 to 4 years. As this is one of our tenant's most popular and requested improvements, we also receive many requests from our Repairs Service, Housing Management and from other LCC colleagues such as those in Adults & Social Care, about reportedly poor condition kitchens and bathrooms. These are all investigated by Technical Services and any issues resolved.

**Capital programme main element completions over the last ten years**

	201 4/1 5	201 5/1 6	201 6/1 7	201 7/1 8	201 8/1 9	201 9/20	202 0/2 1	202 1/2 2	202 2/2 3	202 3/2 4	10 Year Average	Total s
<b>Kitchens/Bathrooms</b>	103 4	129 7	965	824	735	641	487	566	320	299	717	<b>7,168</b>
<b>Rewires/Upgrades</b>	153 7	158 9	940	818	835	707	453	641	600	502	862	<b>8,622</b>
<b>Boilers</b>	181 9	185 9	136 2	134 3	106 8	103 1	675	764	703	601	1123	<b>11,225</b>
<b>Roofs</b>	67	96	77	108	79	90	108	113	12	22	77	<b>772</b>
<b>Total all elements</b>	<b>4,457</b>	<b>4,841</b>	<b>3,344</b>	<b>3,093</b>	<b>2,717</b>	<b>2,469</b>	<b>1,723</b>	<b>2,084</b>	<b>1,635</b>	<b>1,424</b>	<b>2,779</b>	<b>27,787</b>

**Other ways we establish the condition of our stock.**

Although we have not carried out a full stock condition survey for a number of years, we continuously assess the condition of our stock in the following less formal ways:

- We carry out approximately 1,060 surveys of void properties every year which gives us an opportunity to assess their condition and specify for works required to bring them up to our letting's standard, and to confirm compliance with the Decent Homes Standard. Therefore, we can be confident that over the last 5 years 5,300 properties, which is approximately 27% of our stock, has been through the process of a physical inspection. We do not currently do inspections on occupied properties specifically to ascertain their condition. We also carry out an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) as part of the void process.
- Every year we carry out a gas safety inspection to 17,000 of our properties. The Gas Engineer's primary function is to ensure the safe operation of the gas appliances; however, they are also expected to report any concerns they have that relate to the property condition, this is then followed up by a further visit from the Neighbourhood Housing Officer.
- We have an ongoing 5-year electrical inspection programme for all our properties.

- We receive approximately 450 requests from tenants for permission to carry out their own alterations and improvements, again this means that a technician will visit the property and will identify any repair issues.
- We receive around 200 requests from existing tenants to mutually exchange into another LCC property. All of these are inspected by a technician as an exchange is not allowed to progress unless the properties meet both the Decent Homes standard and a HHSRS assessment. If any repair issues are identified these are reported to the relevant Housing Officer who will refer these to Repairs where appropriate. We also carry out an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) as part of the mutual exchange process.
- We receive approximately 1,300 requests every year from tenants experiencing damp and mould. We have an established process for dealing with these requests which ensures that an inspection is carried out within 4 weeks and any priority repairs are identified and completed in 4 weeks.
- We receive approximately 700 disrepair claims every year where a full property inspection is carried out and any concerns identified and rectified.
- We carry out 80,000 responsive repairs every year. We have directly employed operatives attending to these repairs and if they identify any issue with the property these are escalated to Technical Services and appropriate action taken. For example, responding to a roof repair may result in a referral for a new roof.
- We also have 30 Neighbourhood Housing Officers who respond to tenancy management enquiries from tenants they carry out 6000 home visits per year. This may be to check on the welfare of the tenant however, if they identify any repair issues/risks they are referred to Technical Service to resolve.
- We work with our colleagues and partners within our organisation such as Social Workers, Occupational Therapists, Tenancy Support Workers and Environment Health Officers to investigate and resolve any reported repair issues that they and/or their LCC council tenant service users may have concerns about.
- We receive daily, several referrals from tenants through various LCC Customer Services Lines, direct tenant correspondence, MPs and Councillor enquiries about various disrepair issues that are investigated and resolved by Technical Services.
- We have resourced temporary HHSRS surveyors ahead of the roll out of the Organisational Review in Technical Services to carry out surveys, progress will be reported to the Director monthly from April 2025 until the implementation of the assets module on NEC when reporting will be via the compliance dashboard.
- Technical Services and Housing Management carry out regular fire safety audits of our communal areas and any disrepair issues such as damaged fire doors, inoperable bin chutes and defective way lighting are reported and dealt with by Technical Services.
- All communal areas that have been identified as having asbestos containing materials (ACMs) present are inspected annually.

- All communal areas have an electrical test carried out every 3 years.
- All communal areas have a fire risk assessment (FRA) carried out periodically based on risk.
- 160 communal areas inspections are carried out annually linked to Right to Buy applications.

Our Housing IT system confirms that all of our properties have been visited at least once in the last 5 years.

#### What will we be doing.

In Summer 2025 the new Technical Services structure will be in place. The primary reason for the Organisational Review is to ensure that the team has the skills and resources to meet the ongoing compliance requirements for the stock. Two specific areas have been prioritised ahead of full implementation:

#### Compliance Team:

We had previously recruited a Building Safety Manager as part of our approach to managing our high-risk high-rise blocks to ensure that we could meet the requirement of the Building Safety Regulator. This was the first stage of developing a Compliance Team that would form part of a revised structure in Technical Services. The creation of the team was advanced ahead of the full roll out and we now have a Fire Safety Compliance Officer, Water Hygiene and Electrical Safety compliance officer. There is an existing Asbestos Coordinator who manages a team of Asbestos Surveys, this currently sits in Quality Control, but this will be transferred to the Building Safety Team as part of the full roll out.

#### Building Safety Inspector Team.

As part of the new structure there will be a team that is solely responsible for condition surveys and HHSRS surveys. Information gathered as part of these surveys will be held on the new Assets Module on NEC and used to inform the 30-year business plan, as, until now, this has been ad hoc due to the current IT system, as explained in the following paragraphs.

Fundamental to its success will be the development and implementation of a comprehensive 'Asset Management Strategy' in order to provide clarity and direction for the Division and to ensure all employees understand their role in supporting the execution of the strategy in order to:

- Maintain compliance with the decent homes standard and provide safe homes for our residents.
- Meet all legislative compliance regarding Health & Safety.
- Continuously improve the understanding of our stock and its condition to enable effective investment decisions.
- Develop planned improvement programmes based on accurate asset data.

- Ensure the best use of adapted stock and deliver an efficient adaptation programme to meet the changing requirements of our residents.
- Reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency.
- Use the options appraisal process to influence our investment decisions.
- Ensure value for money is considered when procuring works and services.

#### What IT we have now

We currently have a Strategic Asset Management System (SAM) that is used to inform our short term (1 year), medium term (3 – 5 years) and long term (30 years) capital programmes/business plans. It is also used to assess our housing stock's compliance to the Decent Homes Standard (DHS).

SAM is a bespoke standalone system that that has a number of limitations:

- It is presently only available to the Capital Programme Planner and the Application Support Team (AST).
- SAM is not directly linked to NEC and imports are required from NEC
- SAM requires information to be exported into Excel.so reporting is limited
- There is no current functionality within SAM to output mobile surveys, such as estate condition surveys, to external devices.

#### Where we aim to be following the implementation of the new Assets Module and post Technical Services Organisation Review

The new asset module is part of the main NEC housing system resolving all of the issues identified above.

Following the conclusion of the Technical Services Organisation Review in May 2025, a new team will be set up to manage all future stock surveys, these will be carried out on a rolling 5-year programme. They will be able to utilise the mobile surveys functionality, within the new asset module, to carry out various surveys including stock condition and HHSRS. This will enable surveyors, using their mobile devices in real time, to review and amend, where appropriate, existing element data. It will also allow them to add new data and to complement their findings where necessary with supporting photographic evidence.

Once stock surveys have recommenced, we will gradually gain a more comprehensive and accurate picture about the condition of our housing stock. This together with the new functionality within the asset module of being able to produce 1-to-30-year plans, and the ability to carry out scenario planning, will help to better inform our future expenditure requirements and the resulting programmes of work.

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

### 5.1 Financial implications

There are no significant financial implications arising from the contents of this report. If the new Assets module is coming at a cost, this is likely to be in consultation with finance. Any system improvements that can help the accuracy of planning and reporting will also help finance better understand current works and assist housing colleagues as necessary.

Signed: Jade Draper, Principal Accountant

Dated: 28/01/2025

### 5.2 Legal implications

The Social Housing Regulation Act 2024 came into effect on 1 April 2024 and is designed to protect tenants and to improve the service they receive from landlords. It applies to all social landlords, including councils and housing associations. Arising from the Act, the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) issued new standards that councils must comply with and the requirements of those standards as set out in this report. Landlords will be subject to inspections by the RSH to ensure that they are complying with the 2024 Act.

RSH have powers of enforcement under the Act and they have issued guidance entitled *“Investigating and taking action on serious failures in landlords”* which sets out their powers should landlords be found to be failing to comply with the 2024 Act. This ranges from setting out steps in writing that they expect a landlord to take, or to the service of formal performance improvement notices, to the taking of more serious enforcement action such as taking over management responsibilities, removing officers and even, in the most serious of cases, the power to transfer land from the non-complaint landlord (although this does not appear to apply to local authorities).

Signed: Zoe Iliffe, Principal Lawyer (Property, Highways and Planning)

Dated: 05/02/25

### 5.3 Equalities implications

The council has a duty to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as set out at section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The broad aim of PSED (also known as the general equality duty) is to integrate considerations of equality and good relations into the day-to-day business of public authorities, so that when exercising their functions, they have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

The general equality duty covers the following protected characteristics: age (including children and young people), disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Marriage or civil partnership is also a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, although this is only relevant to the first aim of the general equality duty (eliminating discrimination etc.)

There are no direct equality implications arising from the report as it is for noting. However, it is important to note that having a better understanding of housing stock may help to improve the condition of social housing, which may have a positive impact on people from across all protected characteristics, especially older and disabled tenants, who are more likely to be impacted by poor quality housing.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh

Dated: 24 January 2025

#### 5.4 Climate Emergency implications

Housing is one of the biggest sources of carbon emissions from the city and the council's strategy for decarbonising existing housing is to focus on increasing energy efficiency of the stock and facilitating a transition from gas boilers to electric heating.\* Heat pumps are favoured where suitable, due to their much greater efficiency than other types of electric heating. By first making homes as energy efficient as they can be, the aim is to make sure that the change to electric heating, as and when it takes place, is affordable for people.

As the landlord for around ?? social housing tenants, the council has a key opportunity to progress the decarbonisation of housing. It has consistently invested in improved insulation and more efficient (generally gas) heating systems over many years and, as this report explains, is continuing to do so. This, along with the use of district heating in parts of the city, has delivered many thousands of tonnes of carbon emissions reductions.

As part of the council's Climate Ready Leicester Plan, the Housing Division has developed a decarbonisation plan for the council housing stock, focused initially on improving energy efficiency. This stage of the plan is being implemented as quickly as financial and other resources allow and it is to be hoped that future Government grant funding might allow the rate of stock condition improvement in terms of energy efficiency to be substantially increased.

In addition to improving the existing stock in terms of energy efficiency, the Housing Division is targeting high levels of energy efficiency in new council housing, along with the installation of heat pumps. By gaining experience of managing properties with heat pumps, this should help the council when it comes to starting to roll out heat pumps to suitably efficient properties in the existing stock, when affordable.

\* The Government is aiming for grid electricity to be net zero carbon by 2030, making electricity the only realistic solution for decarbonising domestic heating at scale in the foreseeable future. While hydrogen boilers are technically possible, net zero hydrogen is not expected to be widely available for domestic heating and will need to be prioritised for users with no alternative means of decarbonising, such as heavy industry.

Signed: Duncan Bell, Change Manager (Climate Emergency). Ext. 37 2249.
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Dated: 29.01.25
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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?**

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# Fire Safety Briefing Report

Lead Member Briefing

Decision to be taken by: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin

Date of meeting: 2<sup>nd</sup>. June 2025

Housing Scrutiny Commission

Date of Meeting: 10<sup>th</sup>. July 2025

Lead director: Chris Burgin

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## **Useful information**

- Ward(s) affected: Potentially all
- Report author: Simon Nicholls
- Author contact details: [simon.nicholls@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:simon.nicholls@leicester.gov.uk)
- Report version number: v.1

### **1. Summary**

This report has been prepared to update members of the Housing Scrutiny Commission how the Housing Division manage fire safety in its residential buildings.

Different property types have different risks, and the division manage fire safety based on the risk a particular building type poses; this risk will determine the fire safety measures we have in place.

This report will give an overview of our approach to managing fire safety from our tower blocks, that are in scope of the Building Safety Act to stand alone residential houses where we have no legislative fire safety responsibility.

### **2. Recommended actions/decision**

That the contents of this report are noted.

### **3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement**

### **4. Background and options with supporting evidence**

The Housing Division manages fire safety in our properties based on risk, this report will provide an overview of how we achieve this.

The management of the fire safety in our residential building's cuts across Technical Service and Tenancy Management, Chris Burgin, Director of Housing is the health and safety lead for tenants.

The Compliance Team, headed by the Building Safety Manager, in Technical Services main function is to ensure that we have contacts in place to ensure that the different fire protection measures are maintained such as emergency lighting, door entry systems, fire extinguishers and communal alarms etc. They also arrange for Fire Risk Assessments to be carried out and are the link to Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS). The Compliance Team are also responsible for water hygiene and will also look after asbestos management after the implementation of the organisational review in Technical Services.

Tenancy Managements main function is to ensure that the cyclical programme of block inspections are carried out and action taken as a result of any non-compliance are reported and recorded as complete and that all the policies in place that ensure the communal areas in blocks of flats are safe are implemented.

The management of fire safety across all our property types is governed by legislation:

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
- Building Safety Act 2022

### **High Rise Buildings**

The highest risk buildings we have are our 5 high rise blocks, these buildings are in scope of the Building Safety Act. A separate report has been prepared which can be found at APPENDIX A, in summary:

- Relates to building in excess of 18m or 7 storeys which have been registered with the Building Safety Regulator
- Provides an overview of the safety measures, risk assessments and management systems in place
- Assess the buildings compliance with regulations and identifies any potential risks or areas for improvement
- Provides layouts of the buildings and details of the responsible persons
- Details the Safety Management System in place
- Details the Golden thread of information
- Details RES and Specific requirements that relate to knowing who occupies the building
- Details Specific information about the passive fire protection measures
- Has a Resident Engagement Strategy in place.

The Building Safety Regulator (BSR) has requested building safety cases for 4 of the 5 blocks, these have all been provided. The Regulator have since asked for additional information which again was provided. More recently they have asked us to carry out some additional structural surveys of the buildings, these have been commissioned and are due to take place in the next few weeks, once we have the results for the surveys they will be provided to the Regulator. Once approved we hope to receive our first Building Safety Certificate, however we understand that no Local Authority has yet received a Building Safety Certificate.

### **Fire safety in all other flatted accommodation**

The fire safety of all other blocks is managed as per our Fire Safety Management Standard (FSMS) APPENDIX B. in summary:

All blocks have had a fire risk assessment (FRA) carried out, the frequency of these is based on risk and typically range from 2 to 5 years, however it can be longer.

FRA's are currently being carried out by MGR Fire Safety Consultants LTD, and we are currently in the process of procuring a new supplier to carry out more FRA's for us.

We also have a directly employed Fire Safety Compliance Officer, who is qualified to carry out our FRA's who oversees the FRA process and also carries out FRA's and audits those FRA's carried out by procured suppliers.

We are audited by Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) who audit 20 of our blocks every 12 months. These are on site audits conducted with the Building Responsible Officer (BRO) and our Fire Safety Compliance Office present. Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) issue a certificate based on the outcome of the audit, this can either confirm that the block is broadly compliant, issue a deficiency notice (informal action) or an enforcement notice (formal action). This is a formal process and if a response or works are required, we are given a specific timeframe in which to comply with the notice. In certain circumstances LFRS can also issue an alteration notice, in which a change to the premises or services would be required or a prohibition notice which would mean that we would have to empty the block, neither of these actions have ever happened.

We received the following statement from Vince Hyde, Group Manager, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service:

"Leicester City Council pro-actively carry out joint visits with Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service on housing stock. If issues are identified these are quickly resolved and officers work together to identify solutions to any Fire Safety concerns. If improvements are considered following a visit Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service and Leicester City Council work together to agree improvements across all affected sites not just the single site being visited"

Each block has a nominated Building Responsible Office (BRO) who ensures that regular block fire safety inspections are carried out, the frequency depends on the block type, and this is documented. Cyclical inspections are carried out by Assistant-NHOs, with the BRO undertaking regular spot checks, dependant on risk. In real terms, this means the BRO visits blocks which have a weekly check on a monthly basis, and blocks that are due monthly checks are visited by the BRO quarterly. See APPENDIX C.

All BRO's have received the appropriate training.

All staff who undertake cyclical fire inspections have completed bespoke BRO e-learning. The package was developed by a leading industry expert and covers the essential items that a BRO needs to know when dealing with fire safety in blocks.

Fire safety is managed alongside the ongoing tenancy management of the block, which includes other areas such as anti-social behaviour, cleaning, zero tolerance policy for items in communal spaces etc.

Dates of inspections are recorded on the fire safety data base, this is currently a standalone system, to ensure compliance, an example of a report can be seen at

APPENDIX D. Once the Fire Safety Modules is implemented this will be recorded on NEC.

All residents in blocks of flats receive annual fire safety information.

All fire doors are inspected annually.

### **Fire Safety Repairs**

If during a block inspection works are identified, these are given a category for completion based on the risk of the block and the work required. For example, a damaged communal fire door in a high-risk block would be given a higher priority than a similar repair in a low-risk block, this is to make sure that the repairs are completed in priority order. The following is a list of outstanding fire safety repairs and their category.

Priority	Timeframe	Total Outs
F2	FINSPW (10 Working Days)	32
F2A	FINSPW (13 Weeks)	22
F2B	FINSPW (26 Weeks)	29
F3	FINSPW (12 Months)	452
Total	N/A	535

### **Domestic dwellings**

There is no specific legislation or guidance that relates to fire safety in domestic properties, however we do the following to help reassure our tenants:

- Provide fire safety advice at the start of their tenancy
- Send out fire safety information as and when we become aware of an issue such as the dangers of e scooters etc.
- Carry out annual gas safety checks
- Carry out annual checks on their smoke detection to check it's to current standards that is working.
- General fire safety advise is available online

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

### 5.1 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, Leicester City Council have an obligation to comply with the outlined legislation. £500k is included in the 2025/26 capital budget to support the ongoing programme of fire risk works.

Signed: Jade Draper, Principal Accountant

Dated: 20/05/2025

## 5.2 Legal implications

As the report is generally for note only, there are no legal implications arising from the report itself. However, the report details statutory requirements under a range of complex pieces of legislation. Failure to comply with that legislation and the resultant failure to comply with housing statutory duties brings about extensive and wide-ranging implications including a range of potential legal action, which is too large a field to provide specifics implications.

Signed: Zoe Iliffe, Principal Lawyer (Property Highways & Planning)

Dated: 1/7/25

## 5.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a continuing Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in making decisions and carrying out their activities they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

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

This report provides an overview of the council's approach to managing fire safety in its residential buildings

People will be from across many protected characteristics, and fire safety plans should work for all residents, especially those who might need extra help. It is important that communication with residents about fire safety must be inclusive and effective. Fire safety information, including emergency procedures and notices, should be provided in accessible formats.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

Dated: 20 May 2025

## 5.4 Climate Emergency implications

Where fires occur in buildings of any kind, they can generate substantial carbon and air pollution emissions, alongside the obvious risk of death or serious injury. In addition, the subsequent need to refurbish or, in the most serious cases, demolish and rebuild properties can also generate substantial embodied carbon emissions from the manufacture and transport of the construction materials needed and from the refurbishment or construction process. Therefore, all measures in place to reduce the risk of fire and to prevent its spread are extremely important from a climate emergency perspective as well as a health and safety one.

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

Dated: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025

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:**

**APPENDIX A-**

**APPENDIX B –**

**APPENDIX C-**



FRI frequency.xlsx

**APPENDIX D –**



Sample FRI Report  
01012025 to 310120:

**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?**



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## **The Renters Rights Bill, Supported Housing Act and the Private Rented Sector Strategy**

Housing Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: 10th July 2025

Lead directors: Chris Burgin & Sean Atterbury

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## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Joanne Russell Head of Services (Housing) and Rachel Hall – Head of Regulatory Services
- Author contact details: 0116 454 0245 / 0116 454 3047
- Report version number: v0.1

### 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report details the implementation of the Renters Rights Bill, the Supported Housing Act 2023 (regulations) and the introduction of a Private Rented Sector Strategy.

### 2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1 That members read and comment on the content of the report.

### 3. Detailed report

- 3.1 The Renters Rights Bill 2025 and the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 are two key pieces of legislation that are going to have significant impact on the work of Local Authorities.
- 3.2 The Renter Rights Bill is currently at Report stage in the House of Lords and it is likely to come into force in Summer 2025 but the timetable is moveable due to the passage of the legislation through the parliamentary process.
- 3.3 The Supported Housing Act came into force on 29 August 2023. The key provisions in the Act require the government to publish regulations or take other steps before these measures take effect. The exact date these measures will take effect is not currently known.
- 3.4 The report will go on to provide details of the changes and their inclusion in our Private Rented Sector Strategy that is currently under development.
- 3.5 **The Renters Rights Bill 2025**
- 3.6 A detailed report on the provision and implications is attached at **APPENDIX 1** but a summary of the key provisions are as follows:
- a) Abolish fixed-term assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs) - as a result of this, all tenancies will become periodic
  - b) Limit rent increases - the shift to periodic tenancies means Section 13 notices will be the only way for landlords to raise the rent; these can only be served once per year
  - c) Abolish Section 21 evictions - landlords will no longer be able to serve “no-fault” notices to regain possession of their properties

- d) Expanded Section 8 possession grounds - the Government is adding and updating both mandatory and discretionary grounds due to the abolition of Section 21
- e) Ban rental bidding wars - landlords and agents can't accept offers above the advertised price
- f) Introduce a landlord ombudsman - this will help resolve disputes between landlords and tenants impartially
- g) Create a private rented sector database - designed to compile information about landlords and properties and provide visibility on compliance
- h) Apply the Decent Homes Standard - all rental properties must meet minimum quality standards
- i) Prohibit discrimination - landlords can't refuse tenants on benefits or with children

3.7 It is important to note that the Government has confirmed that the provisions will be rolled out in a staged process, but we have no further detail at this time on which provisions/regulations will be published first or a related timescale.

3.8 These changes have wide reaching implications across a significant number of services across the council and the following is an at a glance guide to the scope of this impact:

New provision	Main Services impacted
Abolish fixed-term assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs) - as a result of this, all tenancies will become periodic	Housing Solutions Tenancy Management – HomeCome Legal Services (advice)
Limit rent increases - the shift to periodic tenancies means Section 13 notices will be the only way for landlords to raise the rent; these can only be served once per year	Homeless Services Housing Solutions Trading Standards/Private Rented Sector (EHO function) Legal Services
Abolish Section 21 evictions - landlords will no longer be able to serve “no-fault” notices to regain possession of their properties	Homeless Services Tenancy Management - HomeCome
Expanded Section 8 possession grounds - the Government is adding and	Homeless Services

updating both mandatory and discretionary grounds due to the abolition of Section 21	Housing Solutions
Ban rental bidding wars - landlords and agents can't accept offers above the advertised price	Homeless Services & Housing Solutions  Trading Standards/Private Rented Sector Team (EHO function)  Legal Services
Introduce a landlord ombudsman - this will help resolve disputes between landlords and tenants impartially	Homeless Services & Housing Solutions  Private Sector Housing (EHO function)
Create a private rented sector database - designed to compile information about landlords and properties and provide visibility on compliance	Any service with a need to access this information should have this made available.  Private Sector Housing (EHO function) and associated teams.
Apply the Decent Homes Standard - all rental properties must meet minimum quality standards	Private Sector Housing (EHO function)  Housing Solutions
Prohibit discrimination - landlords can't refuse tenants on benefits or with children	Housing Solutions  Trading Standards/Private Rented Sector Team (EHO function)  Legal Services
<b>Additional Investigation &amp; Enforcement</b>	
A Duty to Report Enforcement Activity	Any Service carrying out enforcement under this Act.
Additional Investigation and enforcement Powers inc. Harassment Act	Private Sector Housing (EHO function)  Trading Standards  Housing Solutions – PRS Team  Legal Services

- 3.9 Given the scope of the changes there is a dedicated Project Manager and Board co-ordinating the corporate response to this significant legislative change.
- 3.10 The Government has committed to undertake a new burdens assessment and fully fund any additional costs incurred to fulfil this reporting duty. We are yet to have contact or confirmation about how and when this assessment will be carried out.
- 3.11 The Supported Housing Act 2023**
- 3.12 A detailed report on the provisions and implications is attached at **APPENDIX 2**.
- 3.13 Supported accommodation is characterised as accommodation which provides residents with care, supervision, or support. It is usually managed by a local authority, housing association, charity, or a voluntary organisation. Examples of supported accommodation include group homes, hostels, refuges, supported living complexes and sheltered housing.
- 3.14 Supported exempt accommodation (SEA) is housing where vulnerable adults are supported to live independently and includes the following:
- a) Care leavers
  - b) Survivors of domestic abuse
  - c) People with substance dependencies
  - d) People with mental health illness
  - e) Refugees
  - f) People recently released from prison.
- 3.15 The Act covers the following areas:
- a) Supported Housing Advisory Panel
  - b) Local Supported Housing Strategies
  - c) National Supported Housing Standards
  - d) Licensing
  - e) Consultation
  - f) Local housing authority functions
  - g) Planning
  - h) Homelessness
  - i) Sharing information related to supported exempt accommodation and use of information
  - j) Interpretation and final provisions
- 3.16 A project board has been set up which is jointly chaired by the Director of Housing and Director of Adult Social Care. A project plan is being developed to support the implementation of the legislation across the Council and a dedicated Project Manager is being recruited.
- 3.17 The key themes of the project are as follows:
- a) Establishing supported living provision in Leicester
  - b) Establishing a partnership board and governance arrangements
  - c) Developing a supported housing strategy for Leicester and review current provision linked in with best practice

- d) Look at licensing and regulation with the Private Rental Sector (PRS) team. This will include developing a gateway, establishing fees and resourcing for the scheme, developing an inspection regime using a proforma which includes the support and property aspects, enhanced scrutiny of new and existing Housing Benefit claims and establishing a new or extending the current PRS team to carry out the additional work
  - e) Review of supported housing provision
  - f) Future Commissioning to be led by Adult Social Care and Housing
- 3.18 Alongside the implementation of the provision of this Act, the city council has launched its [ten-year strategy for supported living and extra care](#). This is an ongoing piece of work which is working to deliver against its objectives.
- 3.19 We are awaiting confirmation on new burdens funding to assist in the implementation of this Act.
- 3.20 The Private Renter Sector (PRS) Strategy**
- 3.21 The PRS Strategy is being developed to provide a holistic approach that ensures tenants and landlords are appropriately supported, as well as retaining and improving the council's ability to protect tenants' safety and rights, and tackle rogue/poor landlords and ultimately raise housing standards within the City. A detailed report is attached at **APPENDIX 3**.
- 3.22 The PRS strategy will include our responses to the above new legislation noted in paragraphs 3.5 and 3.11 and will set out several key high level priorities, with delivery via a series of workstreams. The priorities are:
- a) Improving housing standards across the sector
  - b) Improving support for private sector landlords and tenants
  - c) Improving enforcement and protection of tenants' and residents' rights
  - d) Improving access to market for housing solutions
  - e) Improved intelligence and monitoring, and joined up services
- 3.23 This strategy is being led by Regulatory Services with the Housing Division as a key stakeholder as there is significant cross over in these areas of work.
- 3.24 Once the strategy has been drafted a consultation will be carried out and further reports will be provided in advance of publication.
- 3.25 Next steps:**
- 3.26 As noted throughout the report there are many aspects of the new legislation that we are awaiting confirmation about, however preparatory work in anticipation of these changes is underway to ensure we are prepared to respond when these additional requirements of Local Authorities are fully enacted. Having individual Project Boards for both the Renters Rights Act and the Supporting Housing Act is the key Governance that will ensure preparedness and delivery.
- 3.27 As noted above, the Private Rented Sector Strategy is also being developed to support the implementation of these new pieces of legislation to ensure that we have

a fully holistic approach not only internally, but also considering the wider implications within all Housing Sectors in the City.

3.28 Further reports will be provided in due course delivering key updates as both the legislation and supporting strategies develop.

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

### 5.1 Financial implications

Once the Renter's Rights Bill becomes law, there will be greater clarity over the extent to which additional staffing resources may be required to undertake increased enforcement activity, along with the extent to which this will be covered by new burdens funding. Similarly, while it is clear that there will be additional costs associated with the introduction of the Supported Housing Act, details of funding to support this has not yet been received. The cost of implementing the Private Rented Sector Strategy set out in this report will be managed within existing budgets across multiple teams.

Finance will continue to support the work being undertaken and the financial implications of specific aspects of these workstreams will be provided as the actions to deliver each of the strategies progress.

Signed: Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance

Dated: 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025

### 5.2 Legal implications

There are no direct legal implication flowing for this report which is essentially an information report identifying the need for a project board to implement legislation currently going through parliament. Officers should, once a project plan is finalised, seek specific legal guidance for the identified workstreams, legislation and development of the PRS strategy

Signed: Feizal Hajat

Dated: 13<sup>th</sup> June 2025

### 5.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have statutory duties, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, decision makers must 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.

Since the passing of the Equality Act 2010 landlords and letting agents in the UK have been legally prohibited from discriminating against potential tenants based on the protected characteristics under the Act, this includes refusing to rent or treating someone unfairly. 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 implementation of the Renters Rights Bill, the Supported Housing Act 2023 (regulations) and the introduction of a Private Rented Sector Strategy. A PRS strategy is being developed which has five identified high-level priorities with associated workstreams which include the upcoming legislative changes ensuring a holistic approach is taken across the council and the city's housing sectors. These changes place additional responsibilities on the council and we need to ensure that equality considerations are included and embedded in our governance processes and the priorities and workstreams identified in the strategy. We need to ensure that consultation on the draft strategy is accessible and targeted at relevant stakeholders.

It is recommended that Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are carried out as appropriate for example when reviewing provision, commissioning services, etc, and take into account the demographic profile of the city.

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

Signed: Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer

Dated: 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025

#### 5.4 Climate Emergency implications

Housing is responsible for 33% of carbon emissions in Leicester, with PRS housing often the worst performing in terms of emissions. Following the city council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019 and its aim to achieve net zero carbon emissions for the city and council addressing these emissions is vital to meeting our ambition, particularly where the council has a higher level of influence and control.

Previous commentary on items such as the PRS strategy update and the impact of the Renters Rights Bill advised that emissions reduction and carbon impact analysis should be carried out wherever possible at the earliest possible stages, along with providing advice on practical energy demand reduction solutions for landlords and tenants in addition to low carbon heating and renewable energy technologies. It was also noted that the PRS strategic priorities aligned with those of the climate emergency response through raising housing standards and improvement enforcement of tenants' and residents' rights.

The Decent Homes Standard is being reviewed to include an updated list of building components and services that must be in a reasonable state of repair and meet modern expectations. The standard will have stronger rules around damp and mould, including minimum timeframes for repairs and heating and ventilation systems will need to meet new energy efficiency standard.

The Renters' Rights Bill is likely to have a positive impact on the energy efficiency of PRS homes in city through:

- The extension of the Decent Homes Standard, which includes minimum requirements for insulation and heating systems.
- Mandatory disclosure of compliance information on the PRS database, coupled with increased investigatory and enforcement powers and duties for local authorities, may

lead to more identification of sub-standard properties in relation to energy efficiency and subsequently more enforcement action.

Improvements to the register of rented accommodation could lead to easier access to information on the status of properties, energy performance and better enforcement of standards.

With regards to Supported Housing Act, all opportunities to incorporate measures to improve the energy efficiency should be explored and take into account the new standards.

Many of the opportunities to reduce carbon emissions may also provide further co-benefits in terms of reduced fuel poverty and costs, increased indoor air quality, more robust climate change resilience and an improvement in health and wellbeing.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext: 37 2246

Dated: 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025

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:

N/A

## 7. Summary of appendices:

### APPENDIX 1 – Renters Rights Bill Report



RRB Briefing - March  
2025.docx

### APPENDIX 2 – Supported Housing Act Report



Supported Housing  
(Regulatory Oversight)

### APPENDIX 3 – Private Rented Sector Strategy Report

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?



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# **Lead Member Briefing (LMB) Renters Rights Bill**

Lead Member Briefing: 24th March 2025 (TBC)

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

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## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report authors: Sarah Statham, Service Manager Housing Solutions / Jo Russell, Head of Service (Housing)
- Author contact details: 0116 454 5191 / 0116 454 0245
- Report version number: v0.1

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report provides a briefing on the Renters Rights Bill and the potential implications for Leicester City Council. The Bill proposes to make provision to change the law about privately rented homes, including abolishing fixed term assured tenancies and assured shorthold tenancies, imposing obligations on landlords and others in relation to privately rented homes.
- 1.2. The report has been written collaboratively with Housing and Homeless Services alongside Neighbourhood and Environmental Services.

### 2. Background

- 2.1. The Renters' Rights Bill is a piece of upcoming legislation designed to deliver reforms to the Housing Private Rented Sector (PRS). Its primary goal is to give tenants more security to stay in their homes with the abolition of no fault evictions (known as Section 21 evictions) , move to a simpler tenancy structure where all assured tenancies are periodic, providing more security for tenants and empowering them to challenge poor practice and unfair rent increases without fear of eviction.
- 2.2. The Renters' Rights Bill is the most significant reform the PRS has seen since the Housing Act 1988. Introduced to Parliament on 11 September 2024, the Bill has wide-ranging implications for landlords, tenants, and letting agents alike.
- 2.3. On 11 September 2024, the United Kingdom's Renters' Rights Bill received its first reading in the House of Commons. The Bill follows on from the Renters (Reform) Bill 2023, and will, if successfully passed into law, mean a number of significant changes relevant to the private-rented sector as described in section 3 of this report.
- 2.4. The government aims to have the new tenancy system in place by summer 2025. The government says it "will work closely with all parts of the sector to ensure a smooth transition to the new system and will provide sufficient notice ahead of implementation". This is expected to be a period of 6 months.

### 3. Overview and summary of the new measures within the Bill:

- 3.1 The following is an at a glance guide to the key new measures that will be introduced within the bill:
  - a) Abolish fixed-term assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs) - as a result of this, all tenancies will become periodic

- b) Limit rent increases - the shift to periodic tenancies means Section 13 notices will be the only way for landlords to raise the rent; these can only be served once per year
- c) Abolish Section 21 evictions - landlords will no longer be able to serve “no-fault” notices to regain possession of their properties
- d) Expanded Section 8 possession grounds - the Government is adding and updating both mandatory and discretionary grounds due to the abolition of Section 21
- e) Ban rental bidding wars - landlords and agents can’t accept offers above the advertised price
- f) Introduce a landlord ombudsman - this will help resolve disputes between landlords and tenants impartially
- g) Create a private rented sector database - designed to compile information about landlords and properties and provide visibility on compliance
- h) Apply the Decent Homes Standard - all rental properties must meet minimum quality standards
- i) Prohibit discrimination - landlords can’t refuse tenants on benefits or with children

3.2 The following table indicates the areas of work that these changes will impact upon:

<b>Change</b>	<b>Main Services impacted</b>
Abolish fixed-term assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs) - as a result of this, all tenancies will become periodic	Housing Solutions Tenancy Management – HomeCome Legal Services (advice)
Limit rent increases - the shift to periodic tenancies means Section 13 notices will be the only way for landlords to raise the rent; these can only be served once per year	Homeless Services Housing Solutions Trading Standards/Private Sector Housing Team (EHO function) Legal Services
Abolish Section 21 evictions - landlords will no longer be able to serve “no-fault” notices to regain possession of their properties	Homeless Services Tenancy Management – HomeCome Income Management Team – Homecome
Expanded Section 8 possession grounds - the Government is adding and updating both mandatory and discretionary grounds due to the abolition of Section 21	Homeless Services Housing Solutions

Ban rental bidding wars - landlords and agents can't accept offers above the advertised price	Homeless Services & Housing Solutions Trading Standards/Private Rented Sector Team (EHO function) Legal Services
Introduce a landlord ombudsman - this will help resolve disputes between landlords and tenants impartially	Homeless Services & Housing Solutions Private Sector Housing (EHO function)
Create a private rented sector database - designed to compile information about landlords and properties and provide visibility on compliance	Any service with a need to access this information should have this made available. Private Sector Housing Team (EHO function) and associated teams.
Apply the Decent Homes Standard - all rental properties must meet minimum quality standards	Private Sector Housing Team (EHO function) Housing Solutions
Prohibit discrimination - landlords can't refuse tenants on benefits or with children	Housing Solutions Trading Standards/Private Sector Housing Team (EHO function) Legal Services
<b>Additional Investigation &amp; Enforcement</b>	
A Duty to Report Enforcement Activity	Any Service carrying out enforcement under this Act.
Additional Investigation and enforcement Powers inc. Harassment Act	Private Sector Housing (EHO function) Trading Standards Housing Solutions – PRS Team Legal Services

3.3 As noted above there are some significant changes required in response to this new piece of legislation which has broad reaching impacts across the Local Authority.

3.4 While the Bill has not yet been enacted, it is at Committee stage within the House of Lords (at the time this report is being prepared) so we anticipate it passing into Law in summer 2025. It should be noted that there are a number of amendments to the Bill that have been proposed so the following report is based on what we know today but is subject to change as a result of this.

3.5 A Project Manager, located within the Homeless Continuous Improvement Team, has been allocated to co-ordinate the changes required across the Authority to make sure that we are prepared and the Project will feed into the Housing Board for oversight. There will be key themes of work that need to be delivered across the Authority and the purpose of the Project Manager is to oversee, co-ordinate and manage these changes and ensure that services are prepared and delivering against their actions and monitoring progress and impact.

#### 4. Detailed Report

4.1 A more detailed look at the key themes of the Bill:

4.2 **Abolish fixed-term assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs)** - as a result of this, all tenancies will become periodic.

4.1 Fixed-term tenancies mean renters are obliged to pay rent regardless of whether a property is up-to-standard, and they reduce flexibility to move in response to changing circumstances, for example after relationship breakdown, to take up a new job or when buying a first home.

4.2 Instead under the Renters Right Bill, all tenancies will be periodic, with tenants able to stay in their home until they decide to end the tenancy by giving 2 months' notice. This will end the injustice of tenants being trapped paying rent for substandard properties and offer more flexibility to both parties to respond to changing circumstances.

4.3 A tenant will be able to end a tenancy by giving 2 months' notice. The end date of the tenancy will need to align with the end of a rent period.

4.4 This change is designed to ensure possession grounds are fair to both parties, giving tenants more security, while ensuring landlords can recover their property when reasonable. The bill introduces new safeguards for tenants, giving them more time to find a home if landlords evict to move into or sell their property, and ensuring unscrupulous landlords cannot misuse grounds.

4.5 **Limit rent increases** - the shift to periodic tenancies means Section 13 notices will be the only way for landlords to raise the rent; these can only be served once per year.

4.6 This is intended to provide more protection for tenants from "backdoor eviction" by ensuring tenants are able to appeal excessive above-market rents which are purely designed to force them out. As now, landlords will still be able to increase rents to market price for their properties and an independent tribunal will make a judgement on this, if needed.

4.7 All rent increases in the private rented sector will be made using the same process. Landlords will be able to increase rents once per year to the market rate. To do this, they will need to serve a 'section 13' notice, setting out the new rent and giving at least 2 months' notice of it taking effect. Whilst the introduction of rent controls is not supported by the bill, private rented sector tenants will be empowered to challenge unreasonable rent increases above market prices. If a tenant believes the proposed rent increase exceeds market rate, they can then challenge this at the First-tier Tribunal, who will determine what the market rent should be.

4.8 The Tribunal will no longer be able to increase rent beyond the amount the landlord initially proposed, and the practice of backdating rent increases will end, with the new rent instead applying from the date of the Tribunal determination. In cases of undue hardship, the Tribunal

will have the power to defer rent increases by up to a further 2 months. This will give tenants confidence in the appeal process and will ensure they are not unexpectedly thrust into debt. Rent increases by any other means will not be permitted under the Bill. This will also ensure all parties are clearer on their rights and responsibilities.

- 4.9 **Abolish section 21 evictions** and move to a simpler tenancy structure where all assured tenancies are periodic, providing more security for tenants and empowering them to challenge poor practice and unfair rent increases without fear of eviction. This new system will be implemented in one stage, giving all tenants security immediately.
- 4.10 Under the Housing Act 1988, landlords must serve a legal notice to end a tenancy. If the tenant does not leave, the landlord must go to court, which can instruct bailiffs to enforce eviction.
- 4.11 Currently, a landlord can evict a tenant with an assured shorthold tenancy without providing any reason – a section 21 eviction. This requires the landlord to give the tenant 2 months' notice. After this, it is always mandatory for the court to order eviction of the tenant if the tenant does not leave during the notice period.
- 4.12 The Renters' Rights Bill will abolish assured shorthold tenancies and with them, section 21 evictions, meaning landlords must instead use a section 8 ground for possession. These are specific circumstances in which a landlord can regain possession. This will protect tenants from section 21 (no fault) evictions, and mean landlords can only end tenancies in specific circumstances set out in law, including where the tenant is at fault or if the landlord needs to sell. See **Appendix 1** for further detail on these grounds.
- 4.13 This gives tenants more security, while ensuring landlords can recover their property when reasonable. The bill introduces new safeguards for tenants, giving them more time to find a home if landlords evict to move into or sell their property, and ensuring unscrupulous landlords cannot misuse grounds.
- 4.14 Where a tenant is at fault, landlords can give notice using the relevant grounds at any point in the tenancy. This includes where a tenant commits antisocial behaviour, is damaging the property, or falls into significant arrears.
- 4.15 There will however be new protections for tenants who temporarily fall into rent arrears, supporting both parties by preventing tenancies which are otherwise viable from ending. The mandatory threshold for eviction will be increased from 2 to 3 months' arrears and the notice period will be increased from 2 weeks to 4. This will allow tenants more time to repay arrears and remain in their homes, while ensuring landlords do not face unsustainable costs.
- 4.16 The bill includes strengthened rights to reclaim properties when it's necessary, for example when the landlord wants to sell or move into the property. Tenants will benefit from a 12-month protected period at the beginning of a tenancy, during which landlords cannot evict them to move in or sell the property. Landlords will need to provide 4 months' notice when using these grounds, giving tenants more time to find a new home, and reducing the risk of homelessness.
- 4.17 Another key new provision of the Bill is that Landlords will be prevented from gaining possession if they have not properly protected a tenant's deposit or registered their property on the private rented sector database. Landlords will always be able to rectify non-

compliance, so they are not prevented from regaining possession indefinitely. These restrictions will not apply to antisocial behaviour grounds.

- 4.18 **Expanded Section 8 possession grounds** - the Government is adding and updating both mandatory and discretionary grounds due to the abolition of Section 21.
- 4.19 This ground will now include the new rent arrears requirements, anti-social behaviour or the landlord wanting to sell the property.
- 4.20 **End the practice of rental bidding** by prohibiting landlords and agents from asking for or accepting offers above the advertised rent. Landlords and agents will be required to publish an asking rent for their property and it will be illegal to accept offers made above this rate.
- 4.21 Once enacted, the Renters' Rights Bill will require landlords and letting agents to publish an asking rent for their property. It will also prohibit them from asking for, encouraging, or accepting any bids above this price.
- 4.22 **Introduce a landlord ombudsman** - this will help resolve disputes between landlords and tenants impartially.
- 4.23 According to the briefing documents published about the new PRS Housing Ombudsmen, it is noted that the ombudsman service will provide a "quicker, cheaper resolution when there are disputes" between private landlords and tenants, and "provide fair, impartial and binding resolution" while reducing the need to go to court.
- 4.24 The existing Housing Ombudsman Service only deals with social housing providers and voluntary members from the private sector but it is proposed to expand this existing service to include the new Ombudsmen functions within the Renters Rights Bill.
- 4.25 There has been no further publication of guidance on how this will work in practice at the date of this report.
- 4.26 **Create a Private Rented Sector Database** to help landlords understand their legal obligations and demonstrate compliance (giving good landlords confidence in their position), alongside providing better information to tenants to make informed decisions when entering into a tenancy agreement. It will also support local councils by helping them target enforcement activity where it is needed most. Landlords will need to be registered on the database to use certain possession grounds.
- 4.27 All landlords of assured and regulated tenancies will be legally required to register themselves and their properties on the database and could be subject to penalties if they market or let out a property without registering it and providing the required information. Additionally, they will not be able to get a possession order except if the ground under which possession is sought is ground 7A or ground 14 (tenant anti-social behaviour).
- 4.28 For tenants, the database will increase transparency and the information available before they decide to rent a property and throughout their renting journey. This will allow them to take effective action to enforce their rights and be aware when they can escalate issues with their property to their local council or the Private Rented Sector Ombudsman.
- 4.29 The database will provide local councils with more data about private rented sector properties. One of the biggest and most time-consuming barriers faced by local councils is

identifying poor quality and non-compliant private rented sector properties and who owns them. The database will provide a trusted and consistent intelligence source which will remove unnecessary, frustrating administration, meaning council staff will be able to focus on enforcement against criminal landlords.

- 4.30 Regulations on the database will follow, with the intention that local authorities will be the enforcers of the database. The database will hold landlord information such as which landlords have received banning orders, convictions or financial penalties in respect of their management for rented accommodation.
- 4.31 Local councils will be able to take enforcement action against private landlords that fail to join the PRS Database. If a landlord lets or advertises a property without it first being registered on the database, they can be issued with a civil penalty of up to £7,000 by the local council. If a landlord repeatedly breaches the requirement, or if they commit a serious offence such as providing fraudulent information to the database, they may be issued with a civil penalty of up to £40,000 or could face criminal prosecution.
- 4.32 Landlords will be required to pay to join the register. The cost of this is yet to be confirmed and will be contained in further regulations published in due course.
- 4.33 It is intended that the database will support Councils who have implemented selective licensing. Selective licensing remains a valuable tool when used appropriately and combined with other measures. It enables local authorities to target the improvement of standards and safety in areas suffering from issues such as poor housing quality, high levels of deprivation and anti-social behaviour. It has the ability to drive better outcomes for local residents, tenants and responsible landlords.
- 4.34 **Apply the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector** to give renters safer, better value homes and remove the blight of poor-quality homes in local communities.
- 4.35 The Decent Homes Standard will now apply to the vast majority of private rented homes, including all PRS homes let on assured tenancies.
- 4.36 If a privately rented property fails to meet DHS requirements, the local council will have a range of enforcement mechanisms available. This includes, for example, issuing an improvement notice requiring the landlord to remedy the failure within a specified timescale.
- 4.37 Landlords who fail to comply with enforcement action can be subject to a civil penalty or criminal prosecution. If such an offence is committed, the tenant or local council can also apply to the First-tier Tribunal for a rent repayment order.
- 4.38 **Make it illegal for landlords and agents to discriminate against prospective tenants in receipt of benefits or with children** – helping to ensure everyone is treated fairly when looking for a place to live.
- 4.39 Rental discrimination against families with children or people who receive benefits have no place in a fair and modern housing market. Everyone in the private rented sector is entitled to a safe and decent home and prospective tenants should be considered on an individual basis.
- 4.40 The Renters' Rights Bill will take direct action to address rental discrimination practices in the private rented sector. It will address both overt discriminatory practices, such as 'No DSS'

advertises, and situations where landlords or letting agents use other indirect practices to prevent someone entering into a tenancy.

4.41 Landlords and agents will continue to have the final say on who they let their property to and can carry out referencing checks to make sure tenancies are sustainable for all parties. They will be able to do this based on affordability, but not on the basis the prospective tenant has children or is in receipt of benefits.

#### **4.42 Additional protections of note afforded by the Renters Rights Bill:**

4.43 Tenants will have strengthened rights to request a pet in the property, which the landlord must consider and cannot unreasonably refuse. To support this, landlords will be able to require pet insurance to cover any damage to their property.

4.44 Being a pet owner can often be a barrier to accessing the Private Sector Housing market and relieving homelessness.

4.45 This will also require the review of the current approach to pet bans in some Leicester City Council Housing stock.

4.46 **Apply 'Awaab's Law' to the sector (damp and mould in homes)**, setting clear legal expectations about the timeframes within which landlords in the private rented sector must take action to make homes safe where they contain serious hazards.

4.47 The Renters' Rights Bill will now extend Awaab's Law to privately rented homes. This will ensure that all renters in England are empowered to challenge dangerous conditions and that all landlords must take swift action to make sure homes are safe.

4.48 The measures in the bill will allow new requirements to be set requiring private rented sector landlords to address hazards, such as damp and mould, within a specified time. If landlords do not comply, tenants will be able to bring enforcement action against them through the courts.

#### **4.49 Renters Rights Bill - Strengthening local authority investigation & enforcement powers**

4.50 The Renter Rights Bill sets out the additional enforcement powers that will be open to Local Authorities. This will be by way of expanding civil penalties, introducing a package of investigatory powers and bringing in a new requirement for local authorities to report on enforcement activity.

4.51 **Duty to report** – The Bill sets out that a local housing authority or a county council which is not a local housing authority, must report at the request of the Secretary of State on the exercise of its functions under this landlord legislation.

4.52 The Government's private rented sector white paper included a commitment to "bolster national oversight of local councils' enforcement, including by exploring requirements for councils to report on their housing enforcement activity. The Government wants to be able to collect and analyse data on local authorities' enforcement activities in order to evaluate the impact of reforms and understand the action that local authorities are taking against the minority of landlords who flout the rules. Officials will work with local authorities to agree a data reporting framework that is rational, proportionate and helpful to both local and central

Government, and in line with other similar data collections. The detail of this will follow in Regulations.

- 4.53 The Government have committed to undertake a new burdens assessment and fully fund any additional costs incurred to fulfil this reporting duty.
- 4.54 **New investigatory powers** to help to support local authorities tackle unscrupulous landlords.
- 4.55 The Government's private rented sector white paper included a commitment to "take further steps to help local councils pursue the worst offenders by stripping away red tape, including exploring ways to increase local councils' investigative powers to target illegal business activity by enabling them to require financial information.
- 4.56 The clauses would strengthen local authorities' investigatory powers to respond to landlord practice. For example, they would confer powers on local authorities to require information from property owners, their agents and others for the purposes of investigating whether there had been a breach of, or an offence under, the legislation. They would also confer a power on local authorities to enter premises (without force), to investigate whether there had been certain unlawful conduct in relation to them.
- 4.57 These powers will be available for breaches relating to the new Bill and wider housing legislation.
- 4.58 Civil penalties and rent repayment orders will be extended, placing a new duty on councils to take enforcement action and enhancing their powers of investigation to make that easier.
- 4.59 Local councils will be able to issue civil penalties against landlords who fail to comply with reforms. For example, if they fail to register on the Private Rented Sector Database or with the ombudsman or abuse the new grounds of possession.
- 4.60 First or minor non-compliance could incur a civil penalty of up to £7,000 and serious or repeat non-compliance a civil penalty of up to £40,000.
- 4.61 Local councils will also be able to issue civil penalties against landlords who evict their tenants illegally.
- 4.62 There will be enhanced investigatory powers that will make it easier for local councils to obtain financial information from landlords and third parties when seeking to build a case against landlords for suspected abuses.
- 4.63 Strengthening rent repayment orders by extending them to superior landlords, doubling the maximum penalty and ensuring repeat offenders have to repay the maximum amount.
- 4.64 Proposals to implement new Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) aimed at improving tenant welfare through warmer homes and low energy bills for privately rented sector, led by Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), will be set out in a consultation planned for early 2025. Landlords in the private rented sector will need to make improvements to their properties by 2030 to meet the MEES of EPC. Local authorities will be provided with effective and proportionate enforcement powers.
- 4.65 **Risks and Potential Impact of the Renters Rights Bill:**

- 4.66 The abolition of Section 21 evictions and Assured Shorthold Tenancies.
- 4.67 Landlords; The proposed changes have caused some concern for some Private Landlords with a feeling that they will have less control over their properties and tenancies, more responsibilities in relation to maintaining the property and potentially, a higher financial burden due to the introduction of the Private Landlord database and increased powers for the Local Authority to impose financial sanctions.
- 4.68 Homeless Services; Already, Homelessness Services have seen an increase in the number of households approaching after being served a Section 21 Notice with advice that the landlord wants to sell their property. It is likely that there will be some landlords who will take advantage of the “No Fault” eviction process whilst it still exists to evict tenants on lower incomes who cannot afford to pay higher rent levels so they can relet it at a higher rate before the changes are introduced.
- 4.69 Leicester County Court officials are reporting a significant increase in landlords applying for evictions (double the normal monthly average in December and this continuing in January 25) and we are already seeing the impact of this within Homeless Services.
- 4.70 Housing Solutions will need training and to develop new processes to support tenants and landlords with this change and there will be notable additional work streams to manage as a result.
- a) The team will have to validate notices and address the issues laid out under section 8, be it rent arrears, anti-social behaviour or the landlord wanting to the sell the property.
  - b) Interventions to sustain tenancies will need to be timely specifically for rent arrears before matters are progressed to court stage.
  - c) The service will also need to adopt a pro-active approach by enhancing mediation between tenants and landlords to resolve matters before notice or court action. The current CB4YS service is well placed to continue to act as a bridge to resolving matters before action is taken.
- 4.71 The Protection from Harassment Act 1977 provides the legislation to deal with both unlawful evictions and the harassment of a residential occupier by the landlord or the landlord’s agent. To evict or attempt to evict a person who is entitled to a possession order without the having first obtained a possession order is to commit a criminal offence under the Protection from Eviction Act 1977. It is the local authority not the Police that prosecutes under this legislation. [Private renting for tenants: evictions in England: Harassment and illegal evictions - GOV.UK](#)
- 4.72 It is envisaged that the introduction of limited grounds under section 8 may lead to an increase in landlord harassment cases and illegal evictions. Teams will need to be well positioned to take urgent action when dealing with threats of illegal evictions and be in a position to protect the rights of tenants and significant. Teams will require training to enable them to advocate on behalf of tenants on legal matters including completing legal court documents and defending possession proceedings.
- 4.73 The Private Rented Sector Team will need to review and amend tenancy agreements to align with the new Assured Periodic tenancy type and will need to review its practices for paying rent shortfalls in advance to ensure payments made successfully sustain tenancies for the intended period.

#### **4.74 HomeCome Tenancies:**

- 4.75 Currently, The Council brings all HomeCome tenancies to an end by issuing a section 21 notice. Following introduction of the changes, where the reason for eviction is rent arrears or anti-social behaviour, a relevant Section 8 Notice will be required.
- 4.76** Where the HomeCome property is leased from a Private Landlord, the lease period is coming to an end and the Landlord wants HomeCome to return the property to them so they can let it out again themselves, we currently have a process in place whereby the tenancy is brought to an end by serving a Section 21 Notice and the tenant is rehoused via the Housing Register. This will no longer be possible.
- 4.77** Whilst there is provision to seek possession by serving a Section 8 where there is a superior landlord requiring the return of their property at the end of a lease period (See appendix 1), we have not been able to establish a criterion that aligns with our working agreement with HomeCome. This means that we are unlikely to be able to evict a HomeCome tenant to return the property to the landlord in these circumstances. We will have to review our processes to facilitate return of properties to landlords in these circumstances.
- 4.78 Currently, all HomeCome tenancies are Assured Shorthold Tenancies. This tenancy type will cease to exist, and all existing tenancies will flip to Assured Periodic tenancies with all new tenancies being signed up as such. Whilst there is provision for Private Registered Providers to be given additional time with an extended period of consultation to implement this change, HomeCome is not a Private Registered Provider so it is envisaged that all HomeCome tenancies will be affected by this upon introduction of the changes.
- 4.79 HomeCome will be required to provide a revised tenancy agreement with conditions of tenancy to account for the new assured tenancy type and changes to ending the tenancy.
- 4.80 Existing HomeCome Assured Shorthold Tenancies will need to be changed to HomeCome Assured Tenancies and we will need to write to all affected tenants to advise them of the changes in their tenancy type, explaining how this impacts on their rights.
- 4.81 Create a Private Rented Sector Database**
- 4.82 All private landlords will be required to register themselves and their properties on the PRS Database. Landlords who fail to do this or provide false or misleading information will be subject to enforcement action by the local housing authority.
- 4.83 The government have confirmed that the PRS database will not replace either of the two discretionary licensing schemes (selective and additional licensing) and it is intended for the database to run in parallel with discretionary and mandatory licensing schemes.
- 4.84 It is intended that the new PRS database will also include details about persons who are subject to banning orders, who have been convicted of offences and who have been financially penalised for breaches of housing legislation. This will replace the existing Database of Rogue Landlords and Property Agents as provided under the Housing and Planning Act 2016.

- 4.85 This database will allow a Local Authority to target resources towards non-compliant Landlords which may initially increase the enforcement workload and potential legal action adding pressures to existing team and also Legal Services.
- 4.86 **Application of the Decent Homes Standard (DHS) and Awaabs Law.**
- 4.87 The bill proposes to amend the Housing Act 2004 which provides for the existing housing hazards regime to allow DHS requirements to be set in regulations and enforced by local housing authorities. This aims to allow a legally binding DHS, comprising clear minimum standards of safety and decency to be introduced for private rented homes.
- 4.88 The DHS will bring parity between homes within the PRS and social housing. This will also bring into scope homes let at sub-market rent that may be considered social housing but are let by providers that are not recorded as Registered Social Housing.
- 4.89 The bill will allow 'Awaab's Law' to be applied to the private rented sector. It will enable timeframes to be set out in regulations within which PRS landlords must make homes safe where they contain serious hazards such as damp and mould.
- 4.90 The government intends to consult on how these changes should be introduced in recognition of the differences between the private and social rental sectors.
- 4.91 It is anticipated that if a PRS landlord fails to comply with Awaab's Law, their tenant can bring a claim for breach of contract for damages and/or report the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service. Landlords could also face significant penalties including fines up to £7,000 and criminal prosecution.
- 4.92 Whilst the local housing authority will not have direct enforcement powers in relation to Awaab's Law it is anticipated they will experience increased pressure to support tenants in addressing significant hazards with their landlord.
- 4.93 **Make it illegal for landlords and agents to discriminate against prospective tenants in receipt of benefits or with children**
- 4.94 A financial penalty may be imposed on a person if on the balance of probabilities, if it is satisfied what there has been a breach of a rental discrimination measure.
- 4.95 While which team will enforce that will form part of our planned response to the Renters Rights Bill it is likely to be Trading Standards or the Private Sector Housing Team (EHO function), and this would be additional workload for already stretched teams.
- 4.96 **End the practice of rental bidding by prohibiting landlords and agents from asking for or accepting offers above the advertised rent.**
- 4.97 This is likely to be enforced by the Trading Standards Team or the Private Sector Housing Team (EHO function) and which team should enforce this will be clarified as part of our planned response; this is again an additional enforcement responsibility for already stretched teams.
- 4.98 **Strengthen local authority enforcement**

- 4.99 The bill will place a new duty on local authorities to enforce landlord legislation (currently we have powers to enforce, but are not obligated to use the powers).
- 4.100 This will have a significant impact on teams across the authority who will have a Duty to enforce rather than a power that allows discretion.
- 4.101 The bill's provisions to strengthen enforcement has been broadly welcomed but stakeholders such as the LGA and professional bodies such as the Association of Chief Environmental Health Officers have stressed that local authorities must be adequately resourced and that there must be a realistic assessment of the resources local housing authorities need to regulate the PRS effectively.
- 4.102 It is anticipated that there will be significant 'new burdens' funding to help local housing authorities implement the new duties within the bill in 2025-6 and 2026-7. It is anticipated by government that on-going resourcing will be found in the increased use of financial penalties, and PRS Database fees.
- 4.103 Given that the Bill is likely to become law in Summer 2025, we have had no contact or guidance about this at this stage.

#### **4.104 Next Steps**

- 4.105 Commence the corporate co-ordination of the response required for the bill with the appointment of the Project Manager in mid April and attribute key workstream leads to deliver against each area of work.
- 4.106 Monitor the progress of the bill through the final stages and note any amendments and incorporate into the delivery plan.
- 4.107 Provide Corporate oversight of the delivery plan through a defined Governance structure – likely at this stage to the Housing Board.

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

### 5.1 Financial Implications

The Renters Rights Bill has outlined new legislation both for tenants and private landlords. The removal of Section 21 means that no fault evictions are no longer permitted, however updated terms in Section 8 will still allow evictions for various reasons with the current terms being expanded. This could lead to changes in homelessness presentations in the city; either decreasing due to the abolition of Section 21 or increasing due to the wider Scope of Section 8. The expectation is that significant resource will be required to understand this legislation and enforce it as necessary, however New Burdens funding will contribute towards this. A project manager is being appointed to monitor this, and updates at Housing Board will allow finance to assess this risk regularly and liaise with the service on the financial implications of this regularly. If the report progresses after LMB, finance would need to be consulted again to ensure no further comment is required.

Signed: Jade Draper, Principal Accountant

Dated: 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025

### 5.2 Legal Implications

There are a number of legal implications which arise as a result of the Renter's Right's Bill, although predominantly these relate to assured shorthold tenancies, such as those provided by HomeCome. The impact of the changes to these tenancies has already been set out in this paper above.

LCC tenancies are secure and the changes are not applicable to these tenancies. Notice provisions and action taken within and around these tenancies remains as before.

There are significant changes to the Council's enforcement powers where landlords have not complied with their duties, have failed to keep the property in a decent standard and have carried out illegal evictions. Again this has been set out in this paper above.

Signed: Shazmina Ghurma, Principal Lawyer

Dated: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025

### 5.3 Equalities Implications

Since the passing of the [Equality Act 2010](#) landlords and letting agents in the UK have been legally prohibited from discriminating against potential tenants based on the protected characteristics under the Act. This includes refusing to rent or treating someone unfairly based on factors like race, sex, disability, religion, or sexual orientation.

The report provides a briefing on the Renters Rights Bill and the potential implications for the Council. There are no direct equality implications arising from the report.

The Renters Right Bill is set to make significant changes in the private rental sector. It aims to give private rented tenants greater protections, including: abolishing section 21 evictions, strengthening action against failing landlords, introducing a Decent Homes Standard for the Private Rented Sector and making it illegal for private landlords to discriminate against people who receive benefits or have children.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

Dated: 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025

### 5.4 Climate Change Implications

Based on its current proposals, the Bill is likely to have a positive impact on the energy efficiency of PRS homes in city through

- The extension of the Decent Homes Standard, which includes minimum requirements for insulation
- Mandatory disclosure of compliance information on the PRS database, coupled with increased investigatory and enforcement powers and duties for local authorities, which may lead to more identification of sub-standard properties in relation to energy efficiency – and subsequently more enforcement action.

Although separate from the Bill, the report also highlights (para 4.64) the forthcoming Government consultation on changes to Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) for private rented housing. If, as expected, the consultation proposes increasing the MEES from the current level of an 'E' Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating to a 'C' from 2030, then the combination of this and the increased responsibilities, powers and duties around the state of properties, investigations and enforcement action proposed in the Renters' Rights Bill should act as a very significant driver for improved energy efficiency in the city – feeding through ultimately into reduced carbon emissions.

Signed: Duncan Bell, Change Manager (Climate Emergency). Ext. 37 2249.
Dated: 27th March 2025

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

N/A

6. **Background information and other papers:**

N/A

7. **Summary of appendices:**

**Appendix 1 – Grounds for eviction**

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)?

N/A

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

No

## Appendix 1: Grounds for possession

Ground		Summary	Notice period
<b>Mandatory grounds</b>			
1	Occupation by landlord or family	The landlord or their close family member wishes to move into the property. Cannot be used for the first 12 months of a new tenancy.	4 months
1A	Sale of dwelling-house	The landlord wishes to sell the property. Cannot be used for the first 12 months of a new tenancy.	4 months
1B	Sale of dwelling-house under rent-to-buy	The landlord is a private registered provider of social housing and the tenancy is under a rent-to-buy agreement.	4 months
2	Sale by mortgagee	The property is subject to a mortgage and the lender exercises a power of sale requiring vacant possession.	4 months
2ZA	Possession when superior lease ends	The landlord's lease is under a superior tenancy that is ending. Can only be used by private registered providers of social housing, agricultural landlords, a person who held the dwelling for the purposes of making it supported accommodation or a company majority owned by a local authority.	4 months
2ZB	Possession when superior lease ends	The landlord's lease is under a superior tenancy that is coming to an end or has ended. Can only be used if the superior	4 months

Ground	Summary	Notice period
	lease was for a fixed term of over 21 years.	
2ZC	Possession by superior landlord	4 months
2ZD	Possession by superior landlord	4 months
4	Student accommodation	2 weeks

Ground		Summary	Notice period
		educational establishments.	
4A	Properties rented to students for occupation by new students	A HMO is let to full-time students and is required for a new group of students in line with the academic year. Cannot be used if the tenancy was agreed more than 6 months in advance of the tenancy starting (i.e. the tenant moving in).	4 months
5	Ministers of religion	The property is held for use by a minister of religion to perform the duties of their office and is required for occupation by a minister of religion.	2 months
5A	Occupation by agricultural worker	The landlord requires possession to house someone who will be employed by them as an agricultural worker.	2 months
5B	Occupation by person who meets employment requirements	A private registered provider of social housing holds the property for use by tenants meeting requirements connected with their employment and it is required for that purpose (and the current tenant does not fulfil those requirements).	2 months
5C	End of employment by the landlord	Previously ground 16 (expanded). The dwelling was let as a result of the tenant's employment by the landlord and the employment has come to an end OR the tenancy was not meant to last the duration of the	2 months

Ground		Summary	Notice period
		employment and the dwelling is required by a new employee.	
5D	End of employment requirements	A private registered provider of social housing, included an employment requirement in the tenancy agreement that the tenant no longer fulfils (e.g., key worker).	2 months
5E	Occupation as supported accommodation	The property is held for use as supported accommodation and the current tenant did not enter the tenancy for the purpose of receiving care, support or supervision.	4 weeks
5F	Dwelling-house occupied as supported accommodation	The tenancy is for supported accommodation and one of the circumstances set out in the ground, making the accommodation no longer viable or suitable for that tenant, has occurred.	4 weeks
5G	Tenancy granted for homelessness duty	The property has been used as temporary accommodation for a homeless household, under s193 of the Housing Act 1996, and a local housing authority has notified the landlord that the tenancy is no longer required for that purpose. The landlord can only use this ground if within 12 months of the date of the notice from the local housing authority.	4 weeks

Ground		Summary	Notice period
5H	Occupation as 'stepping stone accommodation'	A registered provider of social housing or a charity lets to a tenant meeting eligibility criteria (e.g., under a certain age) at "affordable rent", to help them access the private rented sector and/or transition to living independently, and the tenant no longer meets the eligibility criteria, or a limited period has come to an end.	2 months
6	Redevelopment	The landlord wishes to demolish or substantially redevelop the property which cannot be done with the tenant in situ. Various time limits and/or notice requirements exist for this ground depending on the circumstances. The landlord and tenancy must be of the kind listed in the table. A relevant social landlord who intends to carry out redevelopment work and seeks possession on Ground 6 either through case A or B will need to provide alternative accommodation that meets specific conditions set out in case A or B and is either available or will be available when an order for possession takes effect.	4 months
6A	Decant Accommodation	The tenant has been provided with alternative accommodation by a relevant social landlord	4 months

Ground	Summary	Notice period	
	while redevelopment affecting the tenant's original home is carried out.		
6B	Compliance with enforcement action	The landlord is subject to enforcement action and needs to regain possession to become compliant. Under this ground, the court will be allowed to require the landlord to pay compensation to the tenant when ordering possession.	4 months
7	Death of tenant	The tenancy was passed on by will or intestacy, and proceedings began within the requisite period of 12 months. The ground can only be used if the new tenant wasn't living in the property immediately before the previous tenant died, the previous tenant also inherited the tenancy or it is a "special tenancy", e.g. supported accommodation.	2 months
7A	Severe ASB/Criminal Behaviour	The tenant has been convicted of a type of offence listed in the ground, has breached a relevant order put in place to prevent anti-social behaviour or there is a closure order in place prohibiting access for a continuous period of more than 48 hours.	Landlords can begin proceedings immediately
7B	No right to rent	At least one of the tenants has no right to rent under immigration law as a result of their immigration status and	2 weeks

Ground	Summary	Notice period	
	the Secretary of State has given notice to the landlord of this.		
8	Rent arrears	The tenant has at least 3 months' (or 13 weeks' if rent is paid weekly or fortnightly) rent arrears both at the time notice is served and at the time of the possession hearing.	4 weeks
<b>Discretionary grounds</b>			
9	Suitable alternative accommodation	Suitable alternative accommodation is available for the tenant	2 months
10	Any rent arrears	The tenant is in any amount of arrears	4 weeks
11	Persistent arrears	The tenant has persistently delayed paying their rent,	4 weeks
12	Breach of tenancy	The tenant is guilty of breaching one of the terms of their tenancy agreement (other than the paying of rent).	2 weeks
13	Deterioration of property	The tenant has caused the condition of the property to deteriorate.	2 weeks
14	Anti-social behaviour	The tenant or anyone living in or visiting the property has been guilty of behaviour causing, or likely to cause, nuisance or annoyance to the landlord, a person employed in connection with housing management functions, or anyone living in, visiting or in	Landlords can begin proceedings immediately

Ground	Summary	Notice period	
	the locality of the property. Or the tenant or a person living or visiting the property has been convicted of using the premises for illegal/immoral purposes, or has been convicted of an indictable offence in the locality.		
14A	Domestic Abuse	A social landlord wishes to evict the perpetrator of domestic violence if the partner has fled and is unlikely to return.	2 weeks
14ZA	Rioting	The tenant or another adult living at the property has been convicted of an indictable offence which took place at a riot in the UK.	2 weeks
15	Deterioration of furniture	The tenant has caused the condition of the furniture to deteriorate.	2 weeks
17	False statement	The tenancy was granted due to a false statement made knowingly or recklessly by the tenant or someone acting on their instigation.	2 weeks
18	Supported accommodation	The tenancy is for supported accommodation and the tenant is refusing to engage with the support.	4 weeks

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# **The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023**

Decision to be taken by: Cllr Dawood & Cllr Cutkelvin

Decision to be taken on/Date of meeting: 6 May 2025

Joint - Adults Social Care & Housing LMB:

Lead Directors:

Chris Burgin - Director of Housing

Kate Galoppi Adult Social - Care & Commissioning

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## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Angelita Dyer
- Author contact details: Angelita.dyer@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: V4

### 1. Summary

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023, which came into force on 29 August 2023 specifically dealing with the provision and oversight of supported exempt accommodation (SEA) and the impact of its implementation for Leicester City Council.

### 2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1 To consider the content of the Support Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 and consult on necessary measures to assist with its implementation within the supported housing sector within Leicester.
- 2.2 To agree the resources required to start planning the implementation of the legislation to regulate supported housing in the city.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023<sup>1</sup> 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.
- 3.2 Supported accommodation is characterised as accommodation which provides residents with care, supervision, or support. It is usually managed by a local authority, housing association, charity, or a voluntary organisation. Examples of supported accommodation include group homes, hostels, refuges, supported living complexes and sheltered housing.
- 3.3 Supported exempt accommodation (SEA) is housing where vulnerable adults are supported to live independently and includes the following:
- Care leavers
  - Survivors of domestic abuse

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<sup>1</sup> [Supported Housing \(Regulatory Oversight\) Act 2023](#)

- People with substance dependencies
- People with mental health illness
- Refugees
- People recently released from prison.

3.4 Supported accommodation 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.

#### **4. Areas covered under The Act**

4.1 The Act covers the following areas:

- Section 1: Supported Housing Advisory Panel
- Section 2: Local Supported Housing Strategies
- Section 3: National Supported Housing Standards
- Section 4-5: Licensing
- Section 6: Consultation
- Section 7: Local housing authority functions
- Section 8: Planning
- Section 9: Homelessness
- Section 10 & 11: Sharing information related to supported exempt accommodation and use of information
- Section 12 & 13: Interpretation and final provisions

##### 4.1.1 Section 1 of The Act - Supported Housing Advisory Panel

Section 1 of the Act requires the government to create a Supported Housing Advisory Panel before the end of the first year of Acts enactment. The panel will provide information and advice about supported exempt accommodation to the Secretary of State, local authorities, and social services departments.

The panel must include at least one person who represents the interests of different key groups including:

- Social landlords
- Local authorities
- Social services
- Charities providing supported exempt accommodation.
- Residents of supported exempt accommodation.

##### 4.1.2 Section 2 of the Act - Local Supported Housing Strategies

Under section 2 of the Act local authorities must carry out a review of supported exempt accommodation in their area and following this publish a supported housing strategy. This review must include the authority's assessment of all supported exempt accommodation available in its area and the expected need for this accommodation in the next five years.

The government will publish regulations stating the date by which local authorities must comply with this requirement.

Local authorities and social services departments must have regard to the supported housing strategy once it has been published.

#### 4.1.3 Section 3 of the Act - National Supported Housing Standards

Section 3 of the Act will allow the Secretary of State to create National Supported Housing Standards, which will set out minimum standards for supported exempt accommodation. The standards will address the type and condition of accommodation, as well as the care and/or support provided. It is not currently known what the standards will specify and there is no set date for these standards to be introduced.

#### 4.1.4 Sections 4 & 5 of the Act - Licensing

Section 4 provides the Secretary of State with the authority to make regulations requiring individuals with control of or managing supported exempt accommodation to obtain and comply with a licence issued by the relevant local housing authority. Regulations adopted under section 4 will aim to ensure compliance with National Supported Housing Standards.

Section 5 outlines the scope of issues that licensing regulations may include, such as enforcement, consequences of non-compliance, exemptions, and fees. Existing local authority enforcement powers for housing offences, including banning orders and rent repayment orders, may be applicable.

#### 4.1.5 Section 6 of the Act – Consultation

Section 6 relates to the government consulting statutory consultees before exercising the power to make licensing regulations under Section 4(1) and 4(3) of the Act. These statutory consultees include the National Housing Federation and the Regulator of Social Housing.

#### 4.1.6 Section 7 of the Act – Local housing authority functions

Under section 7 of the Act a local housing authority must, in the exercise of its functions under licensing regulations, have regard to National Supported Housing Standards (if any) and any guidance issued by the Secretary of State for the purposes of Licensing regulations.

#### 4.1.7 Section 8 of the Act – Planning

Under section 8 a new duty is placed on the Secretary of State to review the effect of the licensing requirements within three years of regulations being made. It will focus on the type and condition of premises used as exempt accommodation and the standard of care, support and supervision provided. Once the review has been conducted the Secretary of State is required to consider whether to exercise power under section 55(2)(f) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to specify exempt supported accommodation as a use-class which would require planning permission in certain circumstances.

#### 4.1.8 Section 9 of the Act - Homelessness

Section 9 of the Act will amend section 191 of the Housing Act 1996 (Intentionality) with regard to anyone who is leaving supported exempt accommodation which means that anyone in this category will not be treated as intentionally homeless where the reason for leaving related to the standard of the accommodation or care, support or supervision provided, and if the accommodation does not meet the National Supported Housing Standards.

#### 4.1.9 Sections 10 & 11 of the Act - Sharing of information relating to supported exempt accommodation

Section 10 of the Act gives the government power to make regulations relating to information on exempt accommodation which may be shared:

- by a local authority in England;
- a registered provider of social housing in England;
- the Regulator of Social Housing;
- the Secretary of State.

Information sharing must ensure that there is no violation of data protection laws.

Section 11 of the Act provides that information obtained under section 134 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992 (Housing Benefit), or Part 1 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (Council Tax) may be used “for any purpose connected with the exercise of any of the authority’s functions under or by virtue of this Act” or for investigating potential offences committed under this Act.

#### 4.1.10 Section 12 of the Act - Interpretation and final provisions

Section 12 of the Act gives definitions for the meaning of supported exempt accommodation.

## 5. Detailed report

### 5.1 Issues relating to unregulated supported exempt accommodation

The consultation around the debate about supported housing legislation began following negative feedback on several providers of supported exempt accommodation in the media. An enquiry was launched in December 2021 into exempt accommodation due to reports of “*unscrupulous landlords failing to provide the support and care that vulnerable tenants need, or to maintain the properties to a decent standard*”<sup>2</sup> Several areas were raised as areas of concern within the sector which are listed below:

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<sup>2</sup> [Levelling Up Committee launches inquiry into exempt accommodation - Committees - UK Parliament](#)

- No overarching regulation or oversight
- Exploitation of Housing Benefit provisions
- Poor standards of accommodation and care
- Limited planning regulations regarding Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and no requirement to seek a licence to operate certain HMOs where the landlord is a registered provider.
- No specified funding to provide adequate support in exempt accommodation. This cost cannot be covered by Housing Benefit.

## 5.2 Supported Exempt Accommodation in Leicester

5.2.1 Currently within Leicester properties which will come under the new legislation will include hostels, refuges, supported living and supported housing units, whether private landlords, registered providers or future council owned supported housing, as well as accommodation provided by the probation service, adult social care and children services. We are currently aware of approximately 1,218 units of accommodation which are identified as apparent supported exempt accommodation and claiming housing benefit for individuals who are currently registered there, but future investigation work is being carried out.

5.2.2 An initial project board has been set up which is jointly chaired by the Director of Housing and Director of ASC. A project plan is being developed which highlights the work streams required to implement the various areas of the legislation: to establish supported housing provision in the city, establish a partnership board and governance arrangements, develop a supported housing strategy, licencing and regulation, review provision and future commissioning.

5.2.3 The areas that are of particular focus of the project board has been to identify the following work streams which need to be undertaken to ensure that the local authority can implement all areas of the new legislation:

- Establishing supported living provision in Leicester
- Establishing a partnership board and governance arrangements
- Developing a supported housing strategy for Leicester and review current provision linked in with best practice
- Look at licencing and regulation with the Private Rental Sector (PRS) team. This will include developing a gateway, establishing fees and resourcing for the scheme, developing an inspection regime using a proforma which includes the support and property aspects, enhanced scrutiny of new and existing Housing Benefit claims and establishing a new or extending the current PRS team to carry out the additional work
- Review of supported housing provision
- Future Commissioning to be led by Adult Social Care and Housing

5.2.4 A major part of the work to be carried out will centre around the needs assessment for Leicester. This will include looking at the information which is in the current local housing needs assessment and data which is being held by Adult Social Care. There needs to be an understanding of how the current provision of supported housing is being facilitated in Leicester and also look at the current need, future need and referral processes into supported housing. This will also include the creation of new pathways to enable all residents of Leicester the opportunity to access supported housing as and when needed.

5.2.4 Significant progress has been made to map out provision using business as usual resources, but to take the project forward a dedicated project manager is required. There are already in place several linked strategies in ASC and Housing, and we have a Private Sector Licencing Team.

5.2.5 Several local authorities have started this work and have already developed supported housing strategies including Birmingham and Bristol. Although we are still waiting on central government to carry out consultation on the implementation of this legislation, the portfolio will sit under Rushanara Ali MP.

5.2.6 The benefits of progressing this work and starting to consult with and inform local providers is that we can more accurately identify what provision is out there, start having an impact on the quality and standard of provision and identify access pathways. It will also in the long term help us identify duplication and gaps to enable better commissioning to meet the supported housing needs of Leicester, to achieve value for money and reduce the supported housing bill in Leicester.

#### 5.2.7 Planning Implications

In planning terms any new supported housing Use Class should be reviewed as part of a wider range review of Use Classes C2 & C3 to allow for clearer planning considerations and outcomes. There is currently an ambiguity about which use class types of supported housing fall into- a separate use class could resolve this doubt, providing other residential use classes are reviewed at the same time.

There are limitations of how the planning system can enable more effective regulation of supported living/residential care. Planning is primarily concerned with development and land use- it is not the role of planning to monitor management of care homes. The need for privacy and safety of residents needs to be reconciled against the planning application requirements to be publicised with a clear description of development.

#### 5.2.8 Housing Benefit Implications

Service impacts are difficult to accurately predict, bearing in mind the changes proposed include additional criteria based on successful licensing (partially defined), a potential new definition of “personal care” (defined) and a potential new definition of “care, support and supervision” (not defined), as well as other potential changes such as mandating the provision of evidence. Its likely direct impacts will however include:

- Resource required to support the new licensing regime, particularly in respect of existing schemes for which evidence and operational data is retained;
- Inter-department cooperation to ensure consistent decision-making between Housing Benefit & the licensing regime, including shared data, evidence and the outcome of site visits etc;
- Likely increased volume of disputes requiring reviews, Appeals preparation and Tribunal Representation;

- Likely increased contact from households concerned regarding changes, and seeking support and alternative accommodation if adverse decisions are subsequently made;
- Increased administration as schemes either reconfigure or close, and as households are displaced between accommodation within the city.

5.2.9 Adult Social Care Implications: The introduction of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act is welcome as it will enable us to better manage and track future schemes and ensures developments are either built or designed (if existing buildings) with the support of the department to a good standard and reassurance about the levels of care and/or support to be provided. It should be noted though it will add additional burdens across the authority to support a successful implementation.

5.2.10 The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act will facilitate the provision of good quality accommodation, with the range of checks and balances it introduces to ensure that it caters for people with diverse needs ultimately enabling them to live an ordinary life in a place they can call home.

5.2.11 Adult social care has access to a range of supported living accommodation across the city. Most of these schemes provide support to those with mental ill health and learning disabilities. This model of housing and support can help people retain or regain skills and confidence and prevent needs or delay their deterioration wherever possible. Our supported living services therefore can offer a way of achieving the vision as expressed in the Care Act for preventing and delaying the care and support needs of adults in the city.

5.2.12 The importance of supporting people to live as independently as possible, for as long as possible, is a guiding principle of the Care Act 2014. The 'suitability of living accommodation' is also one of the nine areas of wellbeing that local authorities must pay attention to when looking at the needs of an individual.

5.2.13 Properties are generally self-contained flats for rent. Schemes incorporate appropriate design features, additional security, and communal lounges/café. In supported living, the type and frequency of support will vary; some people may need a few hours a week, whilst others might require 24-hour support. The key factor that differentiates extra care from sheltered housing or other forms of retirement living is the presence of care staff onsite.

5.2.14 Adult Social Care (ASC) has access to 698 units of supported living accommodation which is used to support people with statutory care needs. These units are spread across 112 schemes. These schemes are either owned by the council, private landlords or are provided by registered social landlords.

5.2.15 The city council launched its [ten-year strategy for supported living and extra care](#) in 2021, since then we have worked to try and achieve key developments in line with the strategy and will continue to do so.

5.2.16 In relation to care and support, it should be noted, there is an element of surveillance in place for some sections of the ASC market delivering that care and/or support through formal contractual routes. The markets may also be subject to inspection by the regulator of Social Care – the Care Quality Commission, who have

responsibility for the registration and rating of the services delivered by providers who offer personal care in these types of settings.

5.2.17 However, there is a section of the market where oversight is welcome particularly for those arrangements which are made directly between the provider and the individual through a direct payment mechanism which may have no commissioner involvement as to the arrangements.

5.2.18 The licensing function will require the creation of a dedicated team within the Housing Regulation side of Regulatory Services. The team will receive and process applications, carry out property inspections, issue licences, monitor during the licensed period, and enforce where required. The team will need support and input from Housing / ASC in relation to the supported living aspects of the scheme. The scheme should be cost-neutral and therefore it is anticipated that a fee-setting exercise will be necessary to ensure that the fees paid by applicants/ licence holders fully meet the cost of running the service. It should be noted that this remains an area of uncertainty until the regulations are published. By recruiting a specific team for this area of work there should be no additional impact on other work within Regulatory services, although it will add to the workload of the Service Manager and Head of Service.

### **5.3 Next Steps**

5.3.1 To agree to the recruitment of a dedicated project manager to take this work forward, taking a joint approach across departments and external partners.

5.3.2 To agree to resource the project and the early implementation. we need to establish if there is sufficient new burdens funding or be able to access the Corporate Transformation Fund.

5.3.3 The national consultation on the legislation is taking place and the response from LCC has been drafted and can be accessed via the link. In summary our response to the consultation is broadly supportive but due to the level of detail and the requirements of the standards being proposed it was difficult to have overall consensus, as the impact will be different for each department. It was felt that one size may not fit all providers, smaller providers may find it more challenging to comply with the standards and that may impact market availability to meet current and future need.

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

### **6.1 Financial implications**

The implementation of the Act is going to require extra resourcing, to cover elements affecting both the general fund and the HRA. Finance are currently unaware of any New Burdens or similar grant funding, therefore, both the general fund and HRA will have to contribute towards any measures required to ensure LCC are complying with the act. Once a strategy has been agreed to comply with the act Finance can review what the wider financial impact to LCC will be. The impact on private sector supported housing will also have cost implications on LCC, due to Housing Benefit often not covering the full cost of the

property and supported services. If a decision progresses relating to this, then Finance would like to review again for any updated financial implications.

Jade Draper, Principal Accountant  
23/04/2025

## 6.2 Legal implications

## 6.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

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

The report provides an overview on the content of the Support Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 and the necessary measures to assist with its implementation within the supported housing sector in Leicester. The legislation aims to introduce new regulations to tackle any poor quality supported exempt housing and protect residents. This should have a positive impact on vulnerable adults who as tenants will be from across a range of Protected characteristics by ensuring that they are provided with suitable support to live independently and help towards meeting the aims of the PSED.

It is important to ensure equality considerations are taken into account as an integral part of the project plan that is being developed and the associated workstreams required to implement the legislation. It is recommended that Equality Impact Assessments are carried out as appropriate for example, when reviewing provision, developing a supported housing strategy, etc, and to take into account the demographic profile of the city.

Carrying out an EIA is an iterative process, which should be revisited throughout the decision-making process and updated to reflect any feedback/changes due to consultation as appropriate. The EIA findings should be shared with decision makers, throughout the process, in order to inform their considerations and used as a tool to aid consideration around whether we are meeting the aims of the PSED, and to further inform the work being progressed on implementing the Support Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023.

Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer  
18 December 2024

## 6.4 Climate Emergency implications

Housing is responsible for around a third of Leicester's overall carbon emissions. Following the city council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019 and its aim to achieve net

zero carbon emissions for the city and council addressing these emissions is vital to meeting our ambition, particularly where the council has a higher level of influence and control.

The implementation of this regulation should include consideration of all opportunities to incorporate measures to improve the energy efficiency of supported exempt accommodation in the city, taking into account the new standards once these have been developed. Alongside reducing carbon emissions, this has a direct link to improving the condition of this accommodation, through tackling cold homes, increasing comfort and reducing energy bills.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284  
17 December 2024

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

**7. Background information and other papers:**

**8. Summary of appendices:**

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

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



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# **Lead Member Briefing (LMB) Private Rented Sector Strategy**

Lead Member Briefing: 12 June 2025

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin

Lead Director: Sean Atterbury

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## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report authors: Rachel Hall, Head of Regulatory Services
- Author contact details: 0116 454 3040
- Report version number: v0.1

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the proposed Private Rented Sector (PRS) Strategy, with specific reference to the impact of the Renters Rights Bill and the workstreams that need to be added as a consequence.
- 1.2. The report is a precursor to a series of reports to HNB, CMB and Housing Scrutiny in July and August 2025. This is a collaborative approach between Housing and Neighbourhood & Environmental Services, noting the far-reaching implications of this area of work.

### 2. Background

- 2.1. The PRS strategy sets out several key priorities, with delivery via a series of workstreams. The priorities are:
  - i) Improving housing standards across the sector
  - ii) Improving support for private sector landlords and tenants
  - iii) Improving enforcement and protection of tenants' and residents' rights
  - iv) Improving access to market for housing solutions
  - v) Improved intelligence and monitoring, and joined up services
- 2.2. The strategy is inherently linked to forthcoming legislative changes including the Renters' Rights Bill and the Supported Housing Regulations, both of which are progressing via central government.
- 2.3. The Deputy City Mayor received a detailed briefing on the Renters' Rights Bill on 14 April 2025. Officers were asked to provide a separate update identifying any obvious gaps in the PRS Strategy in light of the Bill.
- 2.4. It was noted that the Renters' Rights Bill is the most significant reform the PRS has seen since the Housing Act 1988. It has wide-ranging implications for landlords, tenants, and letting agents alike.
- 2.5. The government aimed to have the new tenancy system in place by summer 2025, although this appears to have been an ambitious target. The government says it "will work closely with all parts of the sector to ensure a smooth transition to the new system and will provide sufficient notice ahead of implementation". This is expected to be a period of 6 months.

### 3. PRS Strategy project brief and workstreams

3.1. The overarching project brief for the PRS Strategy has been reviewed and is attached at **Appendix A**. This remains relevant and requires formal sign off to commence to project.

3.2. Individual workstreams for the new Strategy are made up of a combination of items carried over from the previous strategy and new tasks. Based on the five priorities, the workstreams are:

<b>WS No.</b>	<b>Workstream Title</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Improving housing standards across the sector</b>	
1.1	HMO Licensing task force	Jennifer Bradbury
1.2	Operation EPC	Jennifer Bradbury
1.3	Stock condition (BRE report or equivalent)	Jennifer Bradbury
1.4	Increase the take-up of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) within the sector	Simon Nicholls
1.5	Consider the viability and benefits of extending Repayable Home Repair Loan into the private rented sector	Simon Nicholls
1.6	Sustainability	
<b>2</b>	<b>Improving support for private sector landlords and tenants</b>	
2.1	Cost of living – Household Support Fund	Shuaib Esmail
2.2	Centralised online guide to grants / incentives for landlords & other online resources	Jennifer Bradbury
<b>3</b>	<b>Improving enforcement and protection of tenants' and residents' rights</b>	
3.1	Rogue Landlord Taskforce	Jennifer Bradbury
3.2	Specialist Housing Advice and Homelessness Prevention & Support team	Mussa Hajat
3.3	Online Tenant Resources / Improved mechanisms for members of the public to report identified PRS matters	Jennifer Bradbury
<b>4</b>	<b>Improving access to market for housing solutions</b>	
4.1	Incentive Schemes	Shuaib Esmail
<b>5</b>	<b>Improved intelligence and monitoring, and joined up services</b>	
5.1	Improvements around intelligence collection, sharing	Charlotte McGraw / Rachel Hall
<b>6</b>	<b>Cross-cutting workstreams</b>	
6.1	Renters' Rights Bill	Project Board
6.2	Supported Housing Regulations	Project Board
6.3	Additional Licensing	Rachel Hall / Jennifer Bradbury
6.4	Selective Licensing	Rachel Hall / Jennifer Bradbury
6.5	Sector monitoring	All

3.3. A performance dashboard will be created to track the progress of each workstream.

- 3.4. It should be noted that immigration issues are being managed via multiple workstreams in the strategy, as well as a dedicated strategic board.

#### **4. Renters' Rights Bill**

- 4.1. Whilst there is a single workstream in the PRS Strategy for the RRB, there will be a number of workstreams that sit below this to ensure the legislation is properly implemented in Leicester. A dedicated project board is being set up with identified responsibilities for each work area in order to maintain focus and ensure the council is fully able to deliver on the new requirements.
- 4.2. The legislation is still passing through Parliament and so there remains uncertainty about the final content of the Act and supporting regulations. However, it is clear that there will be significant additional workloads within both Housing and Regulatory Services. Particularly significant themes include:
- a) Enforcement – the workload will increase significantly as the draft legislation introduces a raft of new requirements for the PRS sector, which the council will be responsible for enforcing. The council will also be required to monitor registrations and compliance within the new PRS database and ensuring landlords are compliant. Landlords must register themselves and their properties and pay the associated fee, and it is likely that many will be reluctant to do so. It is anticipated that a new team will be required in Regulatory Services to carry out this work, operating in a similar manner to the Selective Licensing team. New burdens funding is expected, but there is currently no detail on how this will be calculated or what will be covered.
  - b) HomeCome – the new legislation will have significant implications for HomeCome, including the application of the decent homes standards, the need for a stock condition survey, necessary changes to tenancy agreements, and the process for terminating tenancies as and when the lease for the property comes to an end.
  - c) Overall implications for the sector – it is recognised that there are risks attached to this change in legislation, for example there has already been a notable increase in the number of section 21 (“no fault”) evictions in anticipation of their abolition and alongside changes to how rent increases can be implemented. There is potential for landlords to leave the sector altogether, which would reduce the overall availability of privately rented properties and increase demand and competition. This is a watching brief.
- 4.3. A Project Manager, located within the Homeless Continuous Improvement Team, has been allocated to co-ordinate the changes required across the Authority to make sure that we are prepared and the Project will feed into the Housing Board for oversight. There will be key themes of work that need to be delivered across the Authority and the purpose of the Project Manager is to oversee, co-ordinate and manage these changes and ensure that services are prepared and delivering against their actions and monitoring progress and impact.

#### **5. Additional Licensing**

- 5.1. The council has expressed a desire to implement additional licensing. It was decided to proceed with selective licensing first and to implement additional licensing at a later date. Plans were in place to consult on a city-wide additional licensing scheme during summer 2025. However, given the likely implementation of the Renters' Rights Bill and other challenges for landlords, the introduction of another licensing scheme at this stage is likely to result in a significant burden on landlords in a short space of time.

5.2. In light of the imminent changes and uncertainty for landlords it is proposed to defer consultation on an additional licensing scheme until such time as the RRB is implemented and the consequences are known. This may align with consultation on selective licensing, noting that the current scheme is due to expire in October 2027.

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

### 6.1 Financial Implications

The cost of implementing the Private Rented Sector Strategy set out in this report will be managed within existing budgets across multiple teams. Once the Renter's Rights Bill becomes law, there will be greater clarity over the extent to which additional staffing resources may be required to undertake increased enforcement activity, along with the extent to which this will be covered by new burdens funding.

The introduction of an Additional Licensing scheme should be cost-neutral for the Council, with any costs being recovered through the fees charged to Landlords.

Finance should continue to be consulted, with revised comments being sought as this report progresses through to Scrutiny committees and Executive briefings.

Signed: Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance

Dated: 9<sup>th</sup> June 2025

### 6.2 Legal Implications

To follow.

Signed

Dated

### 6.3 Equalities Implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have statutory duties, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, decision makers must 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.

Since the passing of the Equality Act 2010 landlords and letting agents in the UK have been legally prohibited from discriminating against potential tenants based on the protected characteristics under the Act, this includes refusing to rent or treating someone unfairly. 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 proposed Private Rented Sector (PRS) Strategy, along with the impact of the Renters Rights Bill and associated workstreams and the potential implications for the council. The PRS strategy has five identified priorities with workstreams for each priority which take into consideration upcoming legislative changes. The Renters Right Bill is set to make significant changes in the private rental sector and aims to give private rented tenants greater protections. However, these changes also place additional responsibilities on the council as cited

in section 4.2 of the report and we need to ensure that equality considerations are included and embedded in our processes as the strategy is implemented. It is recommended that Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are carried out as appropriate.

Signed: Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer, Ext 37 4175

Dated: 5 Jun 2025

#### 6.4 Climate Change Implications

The priorities of the Private Rented Sector Strategy set out in the report align with the council's strategic aims for addressing the climate emergency by addressing the need to raise housing standards in the PRS and improvement enforcement of tenants' and residents' rights.

Similarly, and subject to its final provisions, the Renters' Rights Bill is likely to have a positive impact on the energy efficiency of PRS homes in city through

- The extension of the Decent Homes Standard, which includes minimum requirements for insulation
- Mandatory disclosure of compliance information on the PRS database, coupled with increased investigatory and enforcement powers and duties for local authorities, which may lead to more identification of sub-standard properties in relation to energy efficiency – and subsequently more enforcement action.

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

Dated: 3 June 2025

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

N/A

7. **Background information and other papers:**

N/A

8. **Summary of appendices:**

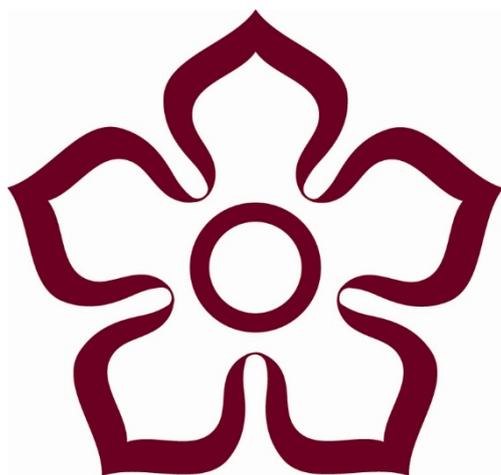
9. **Is this a private report** (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

N/A

10. **Is this a "key decision"?** If so, why?

No

## APPENDIX A – PROJECT BRIEF



Private Rental  
Programme  
Document Version  
by Chris Hamilton,

**Leicester  
City Council**

Sector  
Brief  
0.1 (*draft*)  
Snr. Project Manager.

Regulatory Services, Neighbourhood & Environmental Services



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## Programme Brief: Private Rented Sector

### 1. Sponsor

The programme is sponsored operationally by the Director of Neighbourhood & Environmental Services Sean Atterbury and the Director of Housing Chris Burgin, and politically by Councillor Elly Cutkelvin.

### 2. Background

Private Sector Housing (PSH) operational service delivery activity happens within different divisions of City Development and Neighbourhoods (CDN). Whilst each division is operationally functioning, there is a lack of strategic coordination and corporate oversight on this important area for the city.

There is a need for the work that has been undertaken as a result of the Manifesto commitment to deliver licensing for the city and the newly developed Private Rented Sector (PRS) Strategy for the City to report into and be co-ordinated from one place, where decisions can be made about priorities and resources can be allocated accordingly. Also, to enable the Strategic Director and Lead Member to have oversight of activity.

A board has been set-up previously, however, there is now a need to manage the workstreams under a programme of works to aid with the overall governance of the individual projects that make up the overall strategy.

### 3. Outline vision statement

***The City Council's ambition is to ensure the private rented sector in Leicester is fit for purpose and to address where this is not the case by raising housing standards.***

#### *Strategic Fit & Business Justification*

The overall objective of the strategy is to have a holistic approach that ensures tenants and landlords are appropriately supported, as well as retaining and improving the council's ability to protect tenants' safety and rights, and tackle rogue/poor landlords.

The Council's role, and therefore justification, is to maintain a balanced, fair, and proportionate approach across the city that will ultimately lead to the raising of housing standards within Leicester.

### 4. Description of change

To ensure that the PRS strategy is delivered, a more robust governance process must be established to hold the Council, and its services, to account on its outcomes and deliverables. Thus, the reinstatement of a board and a programme of works provides a focus for the management and reporting of the individual projects, or workstreams, that aim to deliver on the overall strategy.

#### *Business requirements*

The programme must support and enable the following:

- To provide strategic coordination and oversight of the driver to improve PRS Housing standards in the city.
- To ensure that the City Mayor and Executive have corporate oversight of all PRS activity carried out by the authority, including but not limited to the PRS Strategy and its component parts.

- To record progress on the delivery of the PRS Strategy and its projects and to ensure that this strategy is refreshed periodically.
- To ensure external funding opportunities are explored and exploited.
- To ensure that development projects happen in a coordinated way.
- To ensure that all project areas are effectively resourced with gaps in resources identified, prioritised, and acted upon.
- To report on the progress of all PRS housing related key performance indicators.

### *Stakeholders*

#### *Internal*

- City Mayor
- Lead Members
- City Development & Neighborhoods
- Housing Division
- Neighborhood & Environmental Services
- Regulatory Services

#### *External*

- Residents of City of Leicester
- Community Groups
- Landlord organisations such as EMPO and ARLA?

### *Dependencies and constraints*

### *Impact of change*

Regarding the strategy, the requirements for the PRS are:

- Improve support for landlords across the city.
- Improve local support for tenants.
- Improve enforcement and protection of tenants' and resident's rights.
- Improve access to market.
- Improved intelligence and monitoring and joined up services.

### *Interfaces*

The programme will utilise standard reporting tools to manage and monitor the delivery of the workstreams to ensure they continue to meet the objectives set by the board. The programme will use Microsoft Teams to hold project documentation.

1. KPI's – Each project will have Key Performance Indicators to determine if the project is on track to deliver the benefits identified within the project plan.
2. Dashboard – A performance dashboard will provide a high-level view on the status of the programme/projects relating to the PRS Strategy.
3. Flash Reports/Updates – Regular written reports will be provided to the programme manager and the programme board. An executive summary of these reports will be used for lead members and/or City Mayor 1-to-1 briefings.
4. Project Roadmap/Timeline – A high level overview of programme delivery and a managed timeline of each of the projects.

*Known risks and issues*

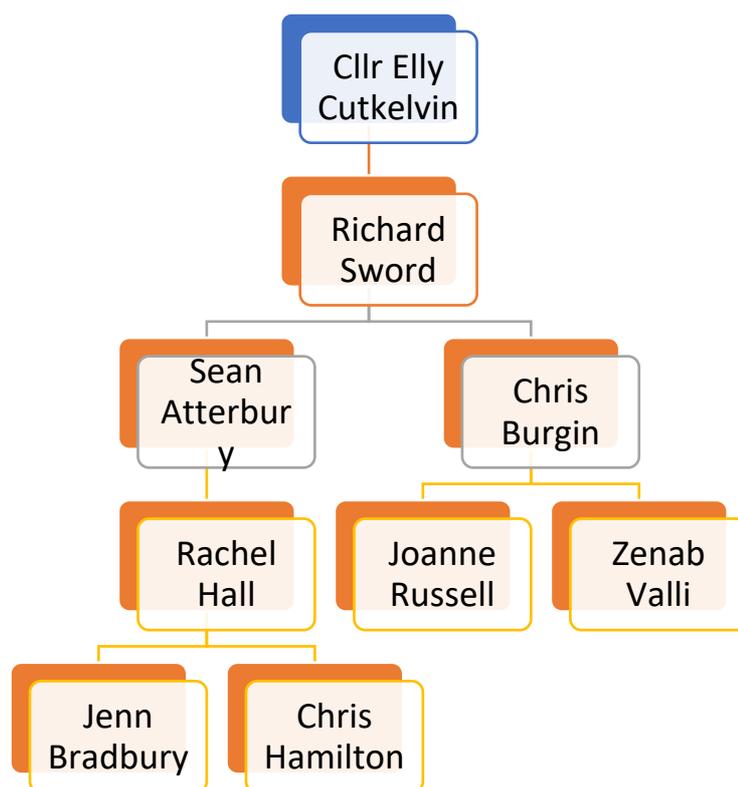
TBC

## 5. Programme organisation

*Initial Programme Roles*

No	Role	Name
1	Executive Lead	Cllr. - Elly Cutkelvin
2	Strategic Lead	Strat. Dir. - Richard Sword
3	Project Sponsor	Dir. - Chris Burgin
4	Project Sponsor	Dir. - Sean Atterbury
5	Project Lead	HoS Housing - Jo Russell / Zenab Valli
6	Project Lead	HoS Reg Services – Rachel Hall
7	Programme Manager	Reg Services – Chris Hamilton
8	Project Manager	Service Manager – Jenn Bradbury

*Organisation structure and reporting lines*



*Empowerment of teams*

*Empowerment strategy*

The programme board will take responsibility for the PRS strategy and the overall programme of work, making decision on new workstreams, prioritisation and overall decision making. The programme board will meet each quarter, however if needed a meeting can be scheduled at any time.

The role of the programme manager is to ensure that the projects remain on track for delivery, on behalf of the programme board.

The role of the individual project managers is to ensure the delivery of the workstreams and report to the programme manager.

It is proposed that each quarter, during the board meeting, a spotlight report of one (or more) of the project workstreams will be presented to the board.

[Escalation and resolution process](#)

Each workstream/project will be assigned a project manager/named responsible officer from the lead service area. The workstream project managers will report each month to the programme manager, through scheduled project meetings, highlighting any issues, risks, highlights, outcomes etc. In agreement with the Project Manager, the programme manager will escalate any issues to the programme board in accordance with the following:

Priority	Description	Escalation
P1	<p>High priority. <b>RED</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New risk/issue is highlighted as red on the risk register.</li> <li>• Existing risk/issue changes to red on the risk register.</li> <li>• Significant changes in resources – Board/Programme Level.</li> <li>• Significant changes in project outcomes/deliverables against KPI's.</li> <li>• Significant changes in agreed deliverables.</li> </ul>	<p>Immediate board update.</p> <p>If required, call board meeting.</p> <p>Communicate outcome.</p>
P2	<p>Medium priority. <b>AMBER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New risk/issue added to the risk register.</li> <li>• Changes in resources – project level.</li> <li>• Changes in project performance against KPI's (<b>deliverables</b>)</li> <li>• Legislative changes updates.</li> <li>• Funding opportunities identified.</li> </ul>	<p>Update monthly dashboard.</p> <p>Highlight for quarterly board meeting.</p> <p>Communicate response.</p>
P3	<p>Low priority. <b>GREEN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to existing risks on the risk register (other than above).</li> <li>• Changes in project performance against KPI's (<b>milestones</b>)</li> <li>• No project update within timeframe from project manager.</li> </ul>	<p>Update monthly dashboard.</p> <p>Include in quarterly board meeting update.</p> <p>Communicate response.</p>

Appendix A – Version Control.

<b>Document Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Change Summary</b>	<b>Signed off</b>
0.1 (draft)	26/07/24	Initial Brief – Sent to Rachel Hall.	
0.2 (draft)	08/08/24	Updated by RH	
0.3 (draft)	23/05/25	Updated by RH	



## Housing Scrutiny Committee

### Work Programme 2025-2026

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
<b>10 July 2025</b>	Income Collection Annual update Stock Condition – Property MOT Fire Safety PRS Strategy / Renters Reform Bill		
<b>26 August 2025</b>	<i>Items TBC:</i> <i>Housing Regulatory Inspection update</i> <i>Who gets Social Housing</i> <i>Repairs &amp; maintenance update (inc Damp &amp; Mould)</i> <i>Maintenance Charges</i>		
<b>11 November 2025</b>	<i>Items TBC:</i> <i>District Service performance (inc update on Tenant Engagement &amp; Pop Up Housing Offices) to include Tenant Scrutiny Panel &amp; Tenant Associations</i> <i>Housing Capital Programme update</i>		Housing Allocations Policy Review

	<i>Homelessness Strategy &amp; Operational performance update (inc Temporary accommodation &amp; £45m update)</i>		
<b>13 January 2026</b>	<i>Items TBC:</i> <i>Housing Support</i> <i>HRA Budget 25/26 proposals</i> <i>Council GF Budget proposals</i>		
<b>17 March 2026</b>	<i>Items TBC:</i> <i>Who Gets Social Housing (possible remove)</i> <i>Environmental Budget &amp; Public Realm update</i> <i>Housing Building &amp; Acquisition update</i>		
<b>21 April 2026</b>	<i>Items TBC:</i> <i>Housing Regulator update</i> <i>Adaptations Strategy</i> <i>Repairs &amp; Maintenance update (including all Housing Safety items)</i>		

**Forward plan items 2025-26:**



