

Leicester
City Council

MEETING OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

DATE: MONDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER 2026

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 Agath (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Bora, Chauhan, Gopal, Halford, 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:

Ed Brown and Oliver Harrison (Governance Services)

e-mail: governance@leicester.gov.uk

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

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Further information

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

Edmund Brown, Edmund.Brown@Leicester.gov.uk, or Oliver Harrison, Oliver.Harrison@Leicester.gov.uk. Alternatively, email governance@leicester.gov.uk, or call in at City Hall.

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PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

FIRE / EMERGENCY EVACUATION

If the emergency alarm sounds, you must evacuate the building immediately by the nearest available fire exit and proceed to the area outside the Ramada Encore Hotel on Charles Street as directed by Democratic Services staff. Further instructions will then be given.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Appendix A

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th July 2026 have been circulated, and Members will be asked to confirm them as a correct record.

4. CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

5. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

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

6. PETITIONS

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

7. INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING: LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND (LAHF) [**Appendix B**](#)

The Director of Housing submits a report to the Commission on the fourth round of Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) funding. For Information & Questions Only

8. UPDATE ON THE HOUSING CRISIS DECLARATION AND REFRESH [**Appendix C**](#)

The Director of Housing submits a report to the Commission which sets out the progress on delivery of the Housing Crisis actions.

9. PRIVATE RENTAL SECTOR STRATEGY [**Appendix D**](#)

The Director of Housing submits a report to the Commission which sets out the Council's strategic plans for undertaking work to improve the private rented sector (PRS) across the City of Leicester.

10. THE RENTERS' RIGHTS ACT - UPDATE REPORT [**Appendix E**](#)

The Director of Housing Submits a report to the Commission which provides an update on the previous report provided in March 2026 regarding the Renters' Rights Act phase 1, which has now been implemented.

11. REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE SERVICE PERFORMANCE UPDATE REPORT 2026 [**Appendix F**](#)

The Director of Housing submits a report to the Commission that provides an updated overview of the Repairs and Maintenance (R&M) Team's performance for 2025-26. For Information & Questions Only.

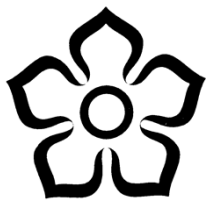
12. ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2025/26 [**Appendix G**](#)

The Director of Housing submits a report to the Commission which provides an annual update on the Council's Corporate Complaints service.

13. 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.

14. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS



Leicester
City Council

Appendix A

Minutes of the Meeting of the HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 9 JULY 2026 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

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

Councillor Bora
Councillor Chauhan

Councillor Gopal
Councillor Singh Sangha
Councillor Zaman

In Attendance:

Deputy City Mayor – Councillor Cutkelvin

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91. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr Halford.

92. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

93. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Commission held on 21st April 2026 be confirmed as a correct record.

94. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION 2026/27

The Membership of the Commission was confirmed as follows:

Councillor Molly O'Neill - Chair

Councillor Nags Agath – Vice Chair
Councillor Elaine Halford
Councillor Mohinder Singh Sangha
Councillor Syed Zaman
Councillor Yogesh Chauhan
Councillor Jayanti Gopal
Councillor Aasiya Bora

95. DATES OF MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION 2026/27

The dates of the meetings for the Commission were confirmed as follows:

9 July 2026
7 September 2026
10 November 2026
18 January 2027
1 March 2027

96. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Commission noted the Scrutiny Terms of Reference.

97. CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the new municipal year.

The Chair reminded members that the Commission scrutinised Housing policy in the city, and that if there were any casework issues in their wards that were about specific individual enquiries, these should be addressed through the appropriate channels.

The Chair announced that some reports would be taken as read.

98. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

It was noted that none had been received.

99. PETITIONS

It was noted that none had been received.

100. INTRODUCTION TO HOUSING

The Chair noted that the presentation had been sent out previously and invited members to ask questions or seek clarification on any aspect of the presentation.

No comments or questions were raised.

101. MR X VERBAL UPDATE

The Head of Housing provided a verbal update on Ombudsman case relating to Mr X & Ms X:

- It was highlighted that Mr X had complained to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). He argued that the Council had failed to provide sufficient support with his homelessness, his housing application and that it had also failed to provide suitable accommodation for him and his family.
- The Ombudsman report was formally published on 6th November 2025 and outlined a list of recommendations. Those recommendations were that the report be considered at the appropriately delegated committee of elected members, the Council apologised to Mr X for the faults identified and that two symbolic payments were made. One of £500 to Mr X for the distress and uncertainty caused and another of £3,525 for the distress caused to Mr X and his family by living in unsuitable B&B accommodation for longer than they should have done.
- It was noted that the Council had implemented all agreed remedies, including the combined payments of £4,025 which had been paid to the family via bank transfer.
- A separate case involving Ms X was also highlighted. It was detailed that Ms X complained to the Ombudsman that the Council had failed to provide sufficient support with her homelessness and failed to provide suitable accommodation for her and her children.
- The Ombudsman report was formally published on 14th November 2024 and outlined a list of recommendations. Those recommendations were that the Council was to send a written apology to Ms X, make a symbolic payment of £500 to acknowledge the distress and a further symbolic payment of £1,300 for the distress caused to the family for staying in B&B accommodation. In addition, a further £150 per month was to be paid to Ms X for every month her and her family remained in unsuitable accommodation. Finally, the Council was to review template letters used by the operational services and deliver training to front line Homelessness Officers. It was confirmed that all recommendation had been complied with and a total payment of £2,250 was paid to Ms X via bank transfer.
- It was explained that there were no outstanding recommendations or remedial actions remaining, and the cases were therefore regarded as closed from an operational and the Ombudsman's perspective.
- The Executive Member for Housing, Economy and Neighbourhoods reiterated the position made by a statement at full council. The ombudsman had made it clear that this was not setting a precedent for

other cases.

- The Director of Housing explained that as result of the ombudsman's verdict, he had requested a meeting with the ombudsman regarding the present situation of housing in the city. During the meeting the director detailed the homelessness situation and housing crisis which the ombudsman was not fully aware of. Following the meeting, the ombudsman understood the position of the Council and acknowledged the work done by the Council. The ombudsman accepted that the Council had done everything possible.

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

- Members asked for further clarity on the causes of the cases of Mr X and Mrs X. The Director of Housing explained that the issues went back to the pandemic, when the Council opted to house Leicester's homeless and the Council's commitment following the end of lockdown to keep them housed. This combined with increased Section 21 notices following the end of the pandemic lead to a sudden surge of homelessness cases for families. The Director highlighted that the Homelessness team had seen an increase of 200% in homelessness cases in the 10 years since 2023, many of these cases were families. The total lack of affordable housing in city was detailed, 50,000 of the rental accommodation within the city was private rented and only 3% of that was affordable for people on benefits or low wages. It was noted that this contributed to the council declaring a housing crisis in 2022. The Council had on many occasions a duty to house these people, but the Council's existing stock of temporary accommodation did not have the capacity, so many were put into B&B's. This situation led to many cases of the 6-week deadline being breached. In 2025, Full Council approved £45 million which was spent on 225 units and renting 125 more and again in 2026, a further £50 million was authorised to purchase more accommodation. As a result of these actions, a large number of people were moved out of B&B and into self-contained temporary accommodation and currently there were no breaches of the 6-week rule. However, there were still 700 families living in temporary accommodation and within those families, 1000 children. The Council had also launched the private renters sector strategy, worked with licensing to improve private accommodation and lobbied the government to increase the housing benefit level for private renting which they have done. The director stated that despite the hard work of the Housing Department, there was still a housing crisis and that it was a self-perpetuating issue which required constant attention.

- Members raised questions about the current situation of the Housing department and how the 6-month rule was currently being monitored. It was detailed that the Housing department had the Temporary Accommodation Team who handled the entire process and a Team Leader who monitored B&B cases daily and attempted to move them on as quickly as possible.

AGREED:

1. The verbal update was noted.

102. RENT ARREARS REPORT - APRIL 2025 TO MARCH 2026

The Director of Housing submitted a report on the annual rent arrears progress within the general housing stock.

The Head of Service attended the meeting to assist with discussions.

Key points included:

- It was highlighted that the total tenant rent arrears for general housing stock were £1.57 million compared to £1.7 million in the previous year. This represented a reduction of 8%. The rent collection rate was 98.96% which was exceptional, considering the backdrop of the cost of living.
- The team successfully administered £946,428.81 in Household Support Fund (HSF) awards which assisted tenants impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. The fund supported 1,500 households of this 600 were families, 200 had disabilities and 700 had complex vulnerabilities.
- The team used multi-channel communications to contact tenants. It was noted that the team conducted 120 phone calls, sent 100 emails and 100 letters a day to tenants. They also conducted 786 home visits in the last year.
- It was stressed that the improvements had been seen in several areas. The number of tenants who owed 7 or more weeks of rent had reduced from 477 to 285. The average arrears per debtor had reduced from £226 to £215 and the total value of arrears owed by the top 500 debtors had reduced from £440,000 to £424,000.
- At the end of March 2026, 10,482 tenants (which was 57% of council tenants) were claiming Universal Credit (UC) of that total, half were in rent arrears. A further 17% were on housing benefit. As UC was paid one month in arrears it was noted that there were usually technical rent arrears on some tenant accounts and tenants often had pre-existing

arrears when they applied for UC. The Income Support Team coordinated with partner agencies such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Job Centre Plus to help mitigate rent debt and support tenants.

- There was a team of 8 Rent Management Advisors (RMA) who were responsible for supporting the most vulnerable tenants. As part of this role, the team helped tenants manage tenant benefit claims, helped set up email accounts and encourage tenants to undertake digital learning. The team handled just under 1000 referrals last year, with 75% coming from households with at least 1 vulnerability. At the time, 727 cases were successfully closed and 200 were ongoing. The RMA function resulted in the reduction of £524,000 in rent arrears and 77% of tenants have said that they increased in their confidence and ability to manage benefit claims.
- It was stressed that the housing department only sought possessions as a last resort. In the last year 90 cases were submitted to court for possessions which was 90% lower than pre-covid levels where on average 80 cases were submitted a month. Last year 5 tenants were evicted from council properties which was from 4 cases the previous year.
- The Head of Service commented that this figure was lower than the national average. The low evictions rate alongside the high collection rate of income underlined the hard work of the housing team and it was advised that there had been positive feedback from tenants.

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

- Members requested clarification as to why there was such a discrepancy between percentage of stock and rent arrears for Beaumont Leys, compared to other areas in the city. Officers commented that there was often a fluctuation in stock and arrears for areas and that it was often difficult to trend. Officers highlighted that there was often a spike in rent arrears during or just after the summer holidays. This was due to family expenditures increasing as the children were at home and then subsequently in the back-to-school period.
- Members also asked about the engagement process for tenants who went into arrears. It was detailed that tenants are supported throughout their tenancy. Officers engaged in pre-tenancy interviews with prospective tenants, assessed their needs and signposted them to further support, if they were eligible. The Housing team employed a hands-on approach to tenancy support and reached out to tenants the

second they went into arrears, by phone or with in person visits. The overall aim was to understand the situation of tenants and provide discretionary support if they were eligible.

- Members asked what processes were in place to enable officers to differentiate and focus on high need cases and how officers supported tenants with a language barrier. Officers advised that tenants were required to elaborate on their personal circumstances and provide accounts of their income and expenditure. It was noted that the full array of housing services was used to support tenants. Regarding language barriers, it was detailed that several officers in the department were fluent in other languages and the Housing department also utilised the support of the translation services team.
- Members sought further clarity on how serious arrears cases were handled. It was explained that the crisis and resilience fund would be utilised in cases which met the guidelines but there was some flexibility in certain cases. Officers explained that high arrears cases were highly scrutinised and evictions were only ever a last choice. The Hosing team engaged in a multi-agency approach with all services involved and made numerous attempts to reach out to tenants and resolve the issue without evictions.

AGREED:

- 1) That members note the report.

103. ENVIRONMENTAL BUDGET 2026/2027

The Director of Housing submitted a Report outlining the amount of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funding that will be invested on housing estates across the city in 2026/2027. This included the Environmental Budget.

The Head of Service, Housing Division attended the meeting to assist with discussions.

Key points included:

- It was explained that Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funding was invested on housing estates across the city. It was estimated that over £3 million was allocated each year, which included the £200k for the Environmental Budget. The Environmental Budget was distributed across the three housing districts, this equated to roughly £66k for each ward
- The Housing Division contributed £1.1 million to the grounds maintenance service which looked after housing areas across the city,

this involved mowing the grass on housing land, cutting back shrubs and maintaining greenery. The Housing Division also contributed over £1.2 million towards the estate warden service. The teams of wardens maintained housing estates across the city with activities such as clearing rubbish and the removal fly tipping.

- In addition, the Housing Division invested £315k in the Neighbourhood Improvement Team which helped bring people back into employment, 6 to 12-month work placements were offered to 10 individuals.
- Consultation was carried out with tenants (including members of the Tenant's Scrutiny Panel), local ward Cllrs, and housing staff to identify possible proposals for environmental schemes. It was noted that the level of feedback for the year was much higher than in previous years. The full list of proposals was listed on Appendix 2 of the report.
- Due to restrictions of the budget, the proposals were prioritised based on various factors (See Appendix 3) such as cost, the need of funding in the area and whether the area in question had any Pride in Place funding allocated. These proposals were then scaled on a range of 5 and above as listed in the report.
- Various projects listed in the report were highlighted, such as the new benches and refurbishments at St Andrews Estate in Saffron ward, the demolition of garages and waste removal on Colhurst Way in Thurncourt ward and the introduction of new bins and pest control at various location in St Matthews in the Wycliffe ward.
- It was stated that as part of future proposals, tenants were required to submit a proposal between the price range of £1,000 and £20,000. This was to set tenants expectations on the scale of each project.

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

- Members praised the work detailed in the report.
- Certain members advised that they were unaware of the consultation process that was detailed in the report. The Head of Service advised that a letter was written to all ward councillors regarding the environmental budget and the engagement was ongoing. It was highlighted that ideas can be raised during patch walks or by responding to the emails and letters which are sent out.
- It was suggested by a member that presenting residents with a 'menu' of potential options would be beneficial and would give residents an idea of their choices. The Head of Service welcomed the suggestion but

caveated that there was slight differences in cost between wards due to the level of work required.

- Several questions were raised regarding possible deterrents for fly tipping and whether the perpetrators were residents or external. The executive member for housing stressed that the education and enforcement of fly tipping prevention was a broad issue that required the involvement of the whole city and not just the responsibility of the housing department. It was detailed that several comms programmes were being developed to highlight the Council's free bulky waste collection offer and the new changes regarding food waste that were due to be introduced in 2028. The executive member stated that she had been attempting the trial of a skip day as an easy solution to some of these issues but had encountered a degree of difficulty in arranging this. It was noted that this was something that the Council wished to trial and review its results.
- Members suggested that it would be beneficial for the council to work in partnership with local communities to help support the initiatives. The executive member detailed that several communities within Leicester had already taken ownership of their local area's upkeep and that the Council aimed to ensure that a good dialogue remained in these areas.

AGREED:

- 1) The report was noted.
- 2) Officers to consider creating a 'menu' of options available to residents.

104. MUTUAL EXCHANGE SWAP SCHEME

The Director of Housing submitted a report outlining the current Mutual Exchange Swap Scheme available to LCC Housing Tenants who have a secure tenancy.

The Head of Service, Housing Division attended the meeting to assist with discussions.

Key points included:

- The scheme helps to support tenant choice and mobility. There was a legal right for them to exchange homes.
- Feedback from complaints and reviews had shown that people wanted clearer information on the process. Therefore, improved communications throughout the process had been recommended, as well as a final property inspection from the tenant before the exchange

was completed.

- A swaptracker had also been launched. This was a self-service online tool to track the progress of the exchange.
- It was aimed to have information online, explaining the officer leads on processes and how people could contact officers.
- In 2025/26, 281 mutual exchanges were initiated by LCC tenants and 158 completed.

The reason for the lower completion rate was:

- Exchanges were refused following initial checks
- A party pulled out of an exchange part way through
- Tenancy breaches were identified that need to be rectified
- Major repairs had been identified which needed to be addressed
- The Tenants' Scrutiny Panel had wanted to strengthen communications and transparency.

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

- Tenants had a right to have issues in the properties repaired.
- The potential incentive was only available for those in overcrowded or underoccupied housing, so that better use could be made of the stock available.
- The Council were affiliated with the national scheme, therefore if people could find a suitable swap in another local authority, then such a swap could be feasible.
- Local Government Reorganisation could facilitate the council having more stock if boundaries expanded. In this instance, additional stock would be in areas such as Oadby, Wigston and Syston.
- It took 42 days to make a decision, but this could sometimes take longer as the decisions were sometimes conditional. Delays were often caused by issues around officer capacity.

AGREED:

- 1) That members note the report

105. TENANCY SCRUTINY PANEL ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26 AND THE ENGAGEMENT TEAM WORK PROGRAMME - APRIL 2026

The Director of Housing submitted a report providing the Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP) Annual Report 2025/26 and the Engagement Team Work - Programme 2025/26.

The Chair outlines the TSP and noted that the commission was reported to regularly by them.

The Head of Service attended the meeting to assist with discussions.

Key points included:

- The TSP had a successful first year. The Annual Report highlighted how tenant involvement had helped services and how the engagement team had supported tenants.
- The report was largely for information and went over the work of the panel and noted which services had been improved. There was also evidence of increased accountability, future direction and continued partnership work.
- The work programme had been developed by structured overview.
- The report had been co-produced with the TSP, and the Chair of the TSP was happy with its content. The work programme had also been reviewed by tenants.

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

- In response to a query about the formation of the TSP and its engagement, it was explained that a strategy on engagement had been produced, and as part of this it had been aimed to increase tenant engagement, and part of this had been the establishment of the TSP. Tenants had been asked to volunteer at a conference in the city centre and the TSP had been established in March 2025 with around six to ten people. This had been promoted and publicised through a letter and through pop-up housing officers. Now 20 people participated on a regular basis, and attendance was monitored to check for underrepresentation. If underrepresentation was noticed from a particular area of the city, then the TSP was promoted in that area. The Chair added that there had been positive engagement the last time TSP members attended a Commission meeting.
- In response to a suggestion about having smaller scale activity on a particular estate, it was noted that this should be aspired to, however, there were budget constraints and competing priorities around support, investment, repairs and maintenance and the environmental budget. It was further noted that the latest tenants and residents' association had been in New Parks, and where people were involved, the Council had tried to enable it. Additionally, it was noted that five and a half posts had been added to help with pressures around additional work, however, there was no additional capacity.
- In response to a query on whether pop-up housing officers could maintain a level of service, it was noted that this was why the additional officers had been recruited. It was further added that it was necessary to look corporately at the delivery of services locally.

AGREED:

- 1) That members note the report.

106. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair encouraged members to email her if there was anything they wished to be considered.

Members would be kept up to date on potential future site visits.

The Work Programme was noted.

107. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no other items of urgent business, the meeting ended at 19:09



Increasing the Supply of Affordable Housing: Local Authority Housing Fund

Report to Full Council

Lead Member Briefing: 29th.June 2026

CMB: 23rd.July 2026

Housing Scrutiny Commission: 7th. September 2026

Decision to be taken by: Council

Decision to be taken on: 17th. September 2026

Lead director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: City wide.
- Report author: Simon Nicholls
- Author contact detail: simon.nicholls@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: V2.1

1. Summary

The council has previously been allocated £6,638k in Local Authority Housing Funding (LAHF) to deliver 59 new homes. In December 2025 the government confirmed a fourth round of LAHF funding and Leicester City Council has been offered a four-year settlement consisting of £6,675k grant funding to part-fund an additional 56 units between 26/27 to 29/30. The funding is designed to reduce local housing pressures, reduce temporary accommodation costs, and provide sustainable housing for Afghan citizens settling in the UK.

This report seeks approval to add £15,434k to the HRA Capital Programme to secure 56 affordable housing units in years 26/27 to 29/30 across the city, funded from £6,675k of LAHF capital grant and £8,759k of HRA borrowing.

2. Recommended actions/decision

The Council is recommended to approve:

- i) the acceptance of £6,675k of LAHF grant to secure 56 affordable housing units across the city to meet the objectives outlined in this report;
- ii) the addition of £15,434k to the HRA capital programme financed from £6,675k of LAHF grant and £8,759k of prudential borrowing, profiled across the following years:
 - 2026/27 - £3,062k
 - 2027/28 - £2,908k
 - 2028/29 - £6,960k
 - 2029/30 - £2,504k

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

Discussions on this scheme have been held with DLUHC.

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

The Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) launched the LAHF Round 1 in December 2022, round 2 in June 2023 and Round 3 in July 2024. The reason for LAHF funding is to reduce local housing pressures, reduce temporary accommodation costs and provide suitable accommodation for Afghan citizens entering the UK. Leicester has been offered a settlement in all three previous rounds and have successfully delivered 59 units of accommodation that meet the criteria set out by DLUHC.

DLUHC contacted the council in December 2025 with details of a potential round four settlement, this time being a multi-year settlement running up to 2029/30 with 15 units in year one, 10 in year two, 23 in year three and 8 in the fourth and final year.

The grant being awarded is £94k per property for 46 standard-sized properties, rising to £117.5k per property for 10 larger properties. There is an additional £21k per property for fees incurred and works required, and a fixed revenue grant of £67k to cover officer cost.

Proposed grant funding, numbers and types of units to be delivered are shown below:

	Grant Funding	T/A units	Resettlement Units	Large Resettlement Units
2026/27	£1,796k	9	3	3
2027/28	£1,197k	6	2	2
2028/29	£2,739k	15	4	4
2029/30	£943k	6	1	1
Totals	£6,675k	36	10	10

The following is a breakdown of LAHF grants previously awarded.

LAHF Grant	LAHF Grant amount	Total units provided
LAHF R1 (main) eligible Ukrainian rehousing	£1,159k	13
LAHF R1 (bridging) eligible Afghan rehousing	£770k	4
LAHF R2 (resettlement) eligible Afghan resettlement schemes	£867k	8
LAHF R2 (TA) eligible homeless households	£217k	2
LAHF R2(additional monies) TA eligible households	£867k	8
LAHF R3(TA) eligible homeless households	£1,921k	17
LAHF R3(resettlement) eligible Afghan resettlement scheme	£565k	5
LAHF R3(resettlement) eligible Afghan resettlement scheme, large properties	£272k	2
TOTAL	£6,638k	59

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

6.1 Financial implications

This report seeks to add £15,434k to the HRA capital programme for the acquisition of 56 units of accommodation, financed by £6,675k of LAHF grant and £8,759k of prudential borrowing. The grant funding represents 43% of the total cost of acquisition, which compares favourably with other funding sources for affordable housing. Because public subsidy is being used to part-fund the purchase, Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) will not apply.

The residual purchase cost will be financed from prudential borrowing, and reflects assumed property inflation over the 4-year period. The acquisitions will provide the HRA with a long-term income stream to repay the cost of this borrowing, along with associated interest costs, and make a positive contribution to long-term HRA finances.

Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance

6.2 Legal implications

Commercial

Commercial Legal

The report seeks executive approval of the Authority's involvement in the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) for the use of grant funding from DLUHC to provide temporary accommodation. The Authority will need to consider any funding obligations attached to the use of the funds including any funding agreement is reviewed so the Authority can comply with its obligations, further whether relevant obligations are cascaded down to ensure delivery of the Project meets the funding objectives. Legal Services can assist with this.

Subsidy control advice should be sought from Legal Services to ensure that the grant from DLUHC will not constitute a subsidy for the purposes of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 including any forward funding.

In delivering the project any commissioning will need to be in accordance with the Authority's Contract Procedure Rules and the Procurement Act 2023 – early Procurement and Legal engagement to be sought.

In relation to any suggested prudential borrowing for the capital spending plans these should be affordable, prudent and sustained in adherence to the Local Government Act 2003 and CIPFA Prudential Code.

Mannah Begum - Principal Solicitor, Commercial Legal
Date: 08 January 2026

6.3 Equalities implications

When making decisions, the Council must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (Equality Act 2010) by paying due regard, when carrying out their functions, to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not. In doing so, the council must consider the possible impact on those who are likely to be affected by the recommendation and their protected characteristics.

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 seeks approval to add £15,434k to the HRA Capital Programme to secure 56 affordable housing units in years 26/27 to 29/30 across the city, funded from £6,675k of LAHF capital grant and £8,759k of HRA borrowing.

Provision of good quality homes that help to address housing need are likely to have positive impacts in terms of the aim of the PSED to advance equality of opportunity for people from across all protected characteristics.

It is important that any new housing is well designed and can contribute to a good quality of life and meet the diverse needs of residents. Accessible and inclusive design will support the general aims of the PSED. The Council must ensure that all LAHF funded activity is delivered in accordance with its obligations under the public sector equality duty (PSED).

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148
Dated 9 June 2026

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

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

Opportunities to ensure that these acquisitions will provide energy efficient low carbon housing should be investigated as relevant, which is likely to depend on the status of the buildings at the time of purchase. This could include consideration of the levels of insulation, use of low energy lighting and appliances and the installation of low carbon heating and renewables and potential improvements that could be made. Achieving a high level of energy efficiency would reduce the energy bills and carbon emissions of the property and could also increase its value and the level of comfort for occupants.

Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 372246
9th. June 2026

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:

None

8. Summary of appendices:

None

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)?

No

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

n/a

Update on the Housing Crisis Declaration and Refresh

Lead Member Briefing – 3rd August 2026

CND 1:1 – 2nd September 2026

HEN Board – 16th September 2026

Housing Scrutiny Commission -7th September 2026

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Cutkelvin

Lead director/officer: Chris Burgin

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Chris Burgin
- Author contact details: chris.burgin@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: v1

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Council declared a Housing crisis on the 24th November 2022.
- 1.2 This report provides a progress update to the Lead Member, City Mayor and Housing Scrutiny commission setting out progress on delivery of the Housing Crisis actions.
- 1.3 The report sets out the National & Local Housing landscape and pressures in 2026 and proposes new National & Local Government actions required to continue to tackle the crisis.
- 1.4 Very good progress has been made with the delivery of the action plan from 2022 associated to Government demands. Out of 16 demands, 10 have been completed and 6 remain ongoing.
- 1.5 Excellent progress has also been made with the delivery of the action plan in relation to Local Authority demands and progress. Out of 16 actions, 15 have been completed and 1 remains ongoing.
- 1.6 The report considers and draws together a new set of next step actions and demands for both Government and the Council.

2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1 To note the progress made with the Housing Crisis Actions from 2022
- 2.2 To consider proposed Housing crisis actions and steps in 2026.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

- 3.1 Report is to be considered by the Housing Scrutiny commission on the 7th September 2026

4. Detailed report

4.1 In November 2022 Leicester City Council declared a Housing crisis calling for urgent action from central Government to ease pressure caused by the growing demand for affordable, decent housing.

4.2 Factors including the loss of thousands of council homes under the Government's Right to Buy scheme, a growing population and the cost of living crisis meant that thousands of families in the city are in desperate need of homes.

4.2 In advance of the Council declaration the Housing Scrutiny committee undertook a task group on the matter, chaired by Cllr Stephen Gee. The outcome of this Task Group was a number of recommended actions required of government and of Leicester City Council. The recommendations report is embedded in Appendix 3.

4.3 This report provides an update setting out progress on delivery of the Housing Crisis actions.

4.4 Leicester City Council Actions

A full table containing the 16 actions required of Leicester City Council is contained within Appendix 1.

Overall, very good progress has been made with the delivery of the action plan, out of a total of 16 LCC actions 15 have been completed and 1 is in progress.

To draw out headline progress;

Maximise Council Housing Delivery

The Council has a very clear pipeline of Council and Affordable housing delivery for the period 2023 to 2027 of 1,500 new homes and the focus of attention has been on the delivery with good progress being made on these. The Council continues to be on track to deliver 1,500 units with over £400m being invested in the City delivering Affordable Housing. Reports have been provided separately to update the Housing Scrutiny Commission on this matter setting out how the Council has continued to work agilely to deliver the pathway and attract contractors and builders to bid for current procurement opportunities. This delivery is in extension to the 1,100 Affordable homes delivered during the period 2019 and 2023. The Council have continued to work to maximise the use of brownfield sites such as Border House, Stocking Farm and Southfields & Newry

Trainer accommodation units have been launched as part of the ZIP acquisition with additional funding of over £1m secured from Homes England towards this acquisition.

A successful bid is in for Homes England funding for 20 units of acquired accommodation securing £1.5m. The Council has also secured a total of £6.6m of Local Authority Housing funding, has delivered a total of 59 units and now has secured funding to deliver 56 units with a further £6.6m funding.

The Council has also submitted a bid to Homes England for £54m of Homes England Social Affordable Homes Programme to support the development of 5 new build sites and a total of 169 units

A further 225 Temporary accommodation homes and 125 leased properties have been bought at a cost of £45m in 2024 and 2025. All have now been purchased. A further approval of £50m to increase LCC owned self contained Temporary accommodation units by 250 in 25/26 was approved in February 2026 and work has commenced on the delivery of these units. This has avoided financial pressures for Leicester City Council in the region of £29m by 26/27 with this impact expected to grow to £36m in 27/28. Strong wrap around support and help has been provided to families in Temporary accommodation with the procurement of specialist services directly linked to the accommodation. Beyond this additional support has been provided through Public Health, Help the Homeless and Help Beyond Housing.

The Housing Division have employed a Supported Housing Manager in a step towards developing a growing alternative offer for those that General needs Housing is not suitable.

Tackle poor quality housing in the City

The council has a live Private Rented Sector Strategy that has a robust action plan that is being actively delivered upon to tackle poor quality Housing in the City. Excellent progress has been made on most of the PRS strategy actions and this includes the delivery of a new Selective Licencing scheme in designated part of the City and a Call before you serve offer to PRS landlords and their tenants to prevent Homelessness. The Council has also recently enhanced its PRS offer to private landlords to work with them to increase access to the PRS for those facing Homelessness. The PRS strategy progress update is provided periodically to CMB & HSC.

Work with other providers to facilitate affordable housing in the city

Partners are set to deliver 346 units between the period 2023 to 2027. The Council continue to work with Registered providers in the City to deliver new Affordable Housing, Midland Heart delivered 72 new Affordable homes on Abbey Park Road ex bus depot and 13 on Barkythorpe Road site. Nottingham Community Housing association have also delivering 58 new homes in 2025 on Meadows Way in the City.

4.5 Central Government demands & actions

A full table containing the 16 actions demanded and required of government is contained within Appendix 2.

Again, overall good progress has been made with the delivery of the action plan associated to Government demands. Out of 16 demands, 10 are complete and 6 are in progress.

To draw out headline progress;

Funding for 150,000 new Social Homes a year

The Government has committed £27.3 billion in funding for the period 2026 to 2036 over the ten year Affordable Housing Programme (AHP) with all this money funnelled through Homes England and this is expected to support the delivery of up to 180,000

Large, sustained increase in Local Housing Allowance rates to address affordability

The council has successfully lobbied government on this matter and government have responded and agreed in the Autumn 2023 budget statement to increase National Housing Allowance rates to the 30th percentile level from April 2024.

Rates are set out in the following table for Leicester.

Leicester	LHA Rate per week 2023/24	LHA rate per week 2024/25
Shared Accommodation	78.00	91.00
1 bed	103.56	124.27
2 bed	130.03	149.59
3 bed	155.34	178.36
4 bed	205.97	241.64

Legislate to end Section 21 "no fault" evictions & Legislate to create 5-year minimum Private Rented Sector tenancies

Successful lobbying and meetings with Senior Directors have been undertaken and this matter highlighted this as a significant reason for Leicester's Homelessness promoting the need to change the law on this matter.

The Renters Right Act has change and significantly strengthen tenants rights in PRS

The main actions and rules of the Act include:

- **No-Fault Evictions Banned:** Section 21 evictions are abolished. Landlords must now have a valid legal reason (such as selling the house or tenant rent arrears) to evict someone.
- **Rolling Tenancies:** Fixed-term tenancies are banned. All tenancies now roll from month to month. Renters can leave by giving just 2 months' notice.
- **Rent Increase Limits:** Rent can only be raised once a year. Landlords must use a special form and give 2 months' notice.
- **Ban on Rental Bidding:** It is illegal for landlords or agents to ask for or accept offers higher than the advertised rent. Advertised properties must list the asking price.
- **No Blanket Bans:** Landlords cannot refuse to rent to people on benefits or tenants with children.
- **Right to Keep Pets:** Tenants can ask to keep a pet. Landlords must consider the request and cannot say no without a good reason.
- **Renting Limits:** Landlords cannot ask for more than one month's rent in advance.
- **Strict Rules for Landlords:** Landlords must provide a written tenancy agreement and give renters the new RRA Information Sheet to explain their rights.
- **New Landlord Database:** Landlords will need to register themselves and their properties on a new government database.

Right to Buy

The UK government has significantly scaled back the Right to Buy in England. Reforms include increasing the qualifying period to 10 years, drastically cutting discount percentages, and allowing councils to retain 100% of sales receipts to build new homes.

Here is a summary of the major rule changes:

Eligibility & Rules

- **Longer Wait:** Government has announced reforms which will require tenants to registration be a public sector tenant for **10 years** (up from 3 years) before you can apply.
- **Prior Owners:** Existing property owners or those who have previously used the scheme are generally banned.
- **Family Rules:** Family members who are not joint tenants must live with you for **5 years** before qualifying (up from 12 months).

Reduced Discounts

- **Lower Starting Rates:** The starting discount is now just **5%** of your home's value (down from 35% for houses and 50% for flats).
- **Capped Limits:** The discount increases by **1%** for each additional year you are a tenant. It is capped at a maximum of **15%** or the regional cash cap, whichever is lower.
- **Smaller Cash Caps:** Maximum cash discounts are much lower, ranging between **£16,000 to £38,000** depending on where you live.

Selling Your Home Later

- **Longer Repayment Period:** If you sell your home, your local council can ask you to pay back all or part of your discount if you sell within **10 years** (up from 5 years).
- **Right of First Refusal:** Councils now have an indefinite right of first refusal to buy the property back if you decide to sell.

Protecting Social Housing Stock

- **New Build Exemption:** Newly built social homes cannot be sold under Right to Buy for **35 years** after they are built.
- **Cost Floor Protection:** Councils can now limit discounts for up to **30 years** (up from 15) to ensure homes are not sold for less than what was spent on building or maintaining them

Close loopholes with regulation on holiday accommodation

The UK government has closed major tax for short-term holiday lets to protect local housing markets. Key reforms include abolishing the Furnished Holiday Lettings (FHL) tax regime, tightening the **70-day rental rule** for business rates,

These recent regulatory changes completely overhaul how second homes and holiday lets are treated:

1. Abolition of FHL Tax Reliefs

- **The Old Way:** Landlords used to get special tax breaks, lower capital gains taxes, and perks for their pension contributions.
- **The Change:** The FHL tax regime is completely abolished. Income and gains from short-term holiday homes are now taxed just like standard residential property income.

2. The 70-Day Business Rates Rule

- **The Old Way:** Second homeowners used to declare a property was a holiday let to dodge Council Tax and claim small business relief, even if it sat empty.
- **The Change:** To qualify for business rates, owners must prove the property is actually rented to guests for at least **70 days** in a year, and available to let for 140 days.

Give local control and ownership of setting Holiday Home Council tax levels

Recent UK legislation shifts power to local councils, granting them the ability to raise council tax premiums and regulate holiday lets. These changes aim to address housing shortages and ensure properties contribute fairly to local economies.

Local authorities can now implement the following controls over holiday homes:

- **Increased Council Tax Premiums:** Under the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023, local councils in England have discretionary powers to charge up to 200% extra (triple the standard bill) on second homes. Many local authorities now utilize these new premium tiers.
- **Business Rates Reclassification:** To avoid higher council tax bills, some owners previously registered their properties for cheaper business rates. Stricter regulations now require owners in England to prove their holiday home is available to rent for at least 140 days and actually let for a minimum of 70 days per year to qualify.
- **Devolved Regional Rules:** In Wales, rules require self-catering properties to be available to let for at least 252 days and actually let for 182 days per year, or face higher second-home council tax charges.

In Leicester this has been applied by utilising the **Second Home Double Charges:** Leicester City Council approved these changes to tackle housing shortages, bringing in a full 100% premium for second homes.

With the implementation of the higher charges, official figures have shown a significant shift: the number of registered second homes in Leicester plunged by more than 40% (from over 4,400 to around 2,600) as owners either sold up or reclassified their properties

Cancel Housing Revenue Account Council house debt

The Council has been working with the twenty largest stock owning Local Authorities including Southwark, Bristol, Sheffield, Leeds and Birmingham to propose solutions to government which included the proposal to scrap existing HRA debt.

[20 largest local authority landlords call for new government to save council homes](#)

Their recommendations include urgent action to restore lost income and unlock local authority capacity to work with the new government to deliver its promises for new, affordable homes throughout the country.

The five solutions set out detailed and practical recommendations to the new government:

- A new fair and sustainable HRA model – including an urgent £644 million one-off rescue injection, and long-term, certain rent and debt agreements.
- Reforms to unsustainable Right to Buy policies
- Removing red tape on existing funding
- A new, long-term Green & Decent Homes Programme
- Urgent action to restart stalled building projects, avoiding the loss of construction sector capacity and a market downturn

They make up a plan for a ‘decade of renewal’, with local authorities and central government working together to get ‘Housing Revenue Accounts’ (HRAs) back on stable foundations, bring all homes up to modern and green standards, and deliver the next generation of council homes.

The UK government is under intense pressure to cancel historic Housing Revenue Account (HRA) debt but has not yet committed to a blanket write-off. Housing charity Shelter and the Chartered Institute of Housing have urged the government to forgive this debt to help councils build more homes.

Introduce a National Landlord Register

The government is introducing a **National Landlord Register** in England.

Known officially as the **Private Rented Sector (PRS) Database** or **Property Portal**, this new system is being rolled out as a central part of the **Renters' Rights Act**.

Key details of the new register:

- **What it is:** A mandatory digital database where every landlord in England must register themselves and their rental properties.
- **Timeline:** Registration opens in late 2026, and full mandatory compliance is expected for all landlords by 2027.
- **Fees:** Landlords will pay an annual registration fee for each property they let.
- **Penalties:** Unregistered landlords may face fines of up to £40,000 and will lose the ability to reclaim their properties through certain legal possession grounds.

5.0 The Current 2026 Position

The housing crisis in 2026 remains a **systemic national issue**, characterised by a sustained imbalance between housing supply and demand, worsening affordability, and increasing levels of homelessness.

In Leicester, these national pressures are **amplified**, resulting in:

- Significant growth in homelessness demand
- Increased reliance on temporary accommodation
- Escalating financial pressures on the Council
- A widening gap between housing need and supply
- Increasing delays in accessing Council and Affordable Housing

Headline statistics show that;

- **Homelessness demand up 219%** since 2014/15
- **700 families + 400 singles in Temporary Accommodation**
- **£24m+ annual revenue cost** – (was £5m) unsustainable financial pressures on General Fund
- **£95m** spent on new self contained Temporary Accommodation
- **Housing Register: 6,368 households** waiting for housing
- **82% of need driven by overcrowding (54%) and homelessness (28%)**
- **Demand vs supply gap (2 bed): 2,093 demand vs 320 lets (15%)**
- **Waiting times doubled (2 bed 8 to 18 months)**
- Only **3% of PRS is affordable** to those on benefits or low salaries
- **Forecast revenue pressure of £8m extra by 27/28 taking budget to £32m+ a 540% increase in budget in 4 years.**

The core conclusion is that **housing demand continues to rise faster than supply, affordability, and delivery capacity**, both nationally and locally.

6.0 National Housing Crisis Context (2026)

Structural Nature of the Crisis

Across England, the housing crisis is no longer cyclical but **structural**, driven by long-term imbalances including:

- Chronic under-supply of affordable housing
- Loss of social housing stock over decades
- Rising private sector rents and reduced affordability
- Increasing population and demographic pressures
- Greater complexity of housing need

Nationally, homelessness and housing pressures are widely recognised as **multi-factor and system-wide**, not confined to housing services alone.

Demand Pressures

Evidence reflects sustained and increasing demand pressures:

- Rising numbers of households seeking housing assistance
- Increasing use of temporary accommodation
- Continued reliance on the private rented sector

Demand is being driven by a combination of:

- Affordability challenges in the PRS
- Section 21 evictions and insecurity of tenure
- Institutional discharges (prison, hospital, care)
- Impact of Renters Rights Act

- Cost of Living – Conflict in Iran
- Youth Homelessness (NEET)
- Increase complexity of support needs
- Migration and asylum pressures
- Institutional discharges (prison, hospital, care)
- Cost of living impacts

These factors combine to create **persistent inflow into homelessness systems**.

Supply Constraints

At a national level:

- Housing supply is not keeping pace with demand
- Affordable housing delivery remains insufficient
- Viability and construction market constraints are limiting delivery

While national policy includes ambitions such as delivering **1.5 million homes**, the available evidence indicates that **delivery is not yet closing the gap** between supply and need.

Affordability Crisis

Affordability remains a central issue:

- Private rents have increased beyond wage growth
- Access to PRS is restricted for low-income households
- Housing benefit (LHA), while improved, does not fully bridge affordability gaps

The consequence is that **more households are priced out of the market**, increasing demand for social housing.

System-Wide Impacts

The housing crisis is increasingly seen as:

- A **cross-government issue** impacting health, justice, and social care
- A driver of inequalities and poverty
- A major pressure on local authority finances

National policy direction reflects this, with increased emphasis on:

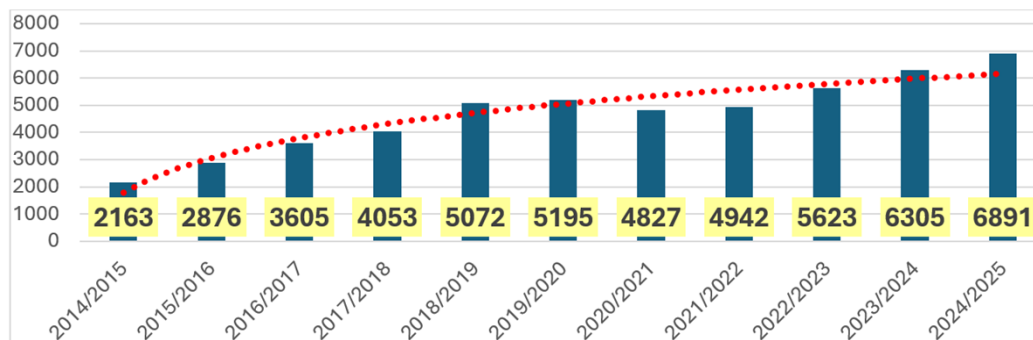
- Prevention
- Cross-agency responsibility
- Long-term housing supply solutions

7.0 Leicester Housing Crisis Context (2026)

7.1 Scale of Demand

Leicester reflects and intensifies national trends:

- Homelessness demand has increased by **219% since 2014/15**



- Annual approaches have risen from approximately **2,100 to nearly 6,900 households**
- Over **6,300 households are currently waiting for housing**
- This demonstrates **sustained and accelerating system pressure**.

7.2 Temporary Accommodation Pressures

- Around **700 families** are in temporary accommodation
- A further **400+ single households** rely on hostel, B&B or commissioned provision

Temporary accommodation is:

- Increasing in scale
- Being used for longer periods
- Becoming a core part of the housing system rather than a short-term solution

7.3 Financial Impact

The financial implications are substantial:

- Temporary accommodation costs have risen from **£5m to over £24m annually**
- Forecast pressures could increase total costs to **£32m+ by 2027/28**

This represents **unsustainable pressure on the General Fund**, limiting wider service capacity.

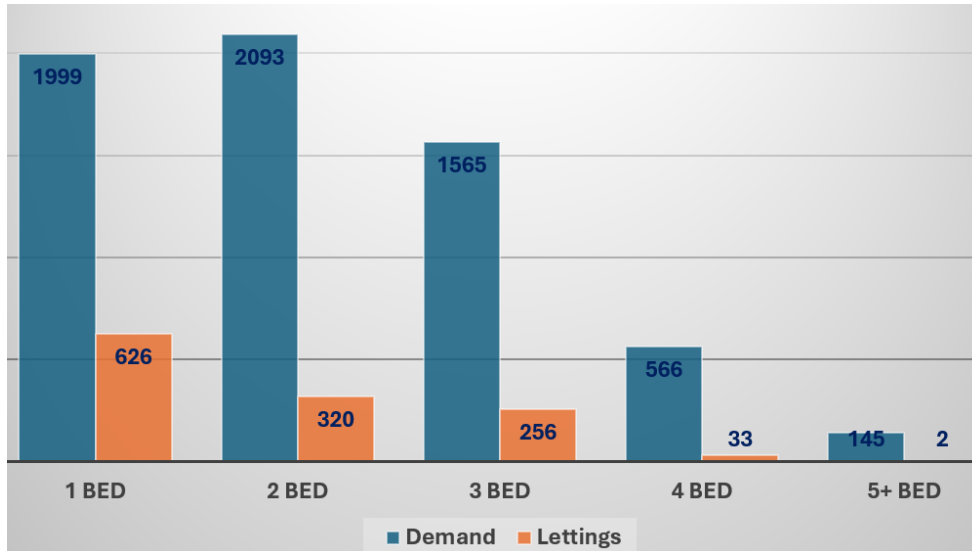
7.4 Supply vs Demand Gap

The Leicester data clearly illustrates the structural imbalance:

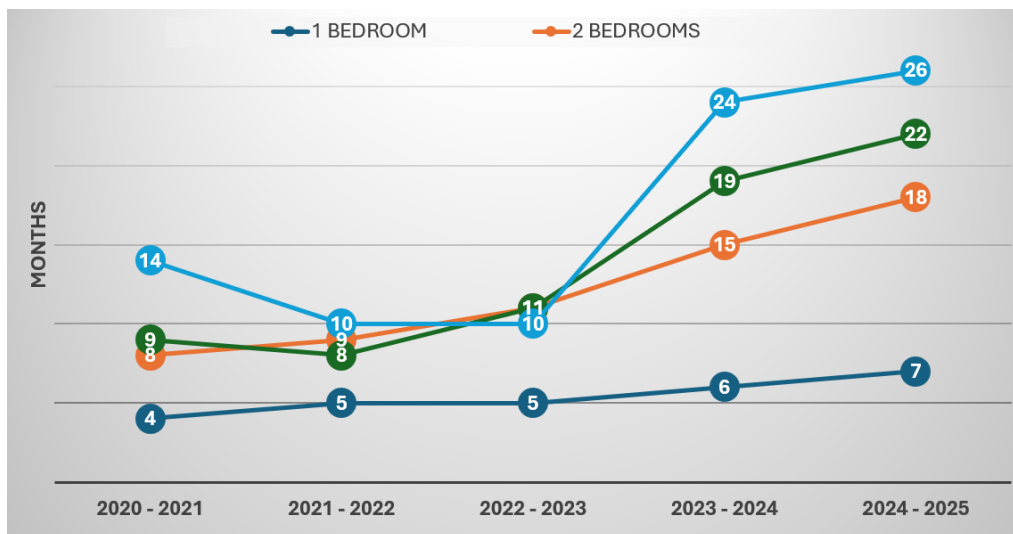
- Example: **2,093 households needing 2-bed homes vs ~320 lettings available**
- Only **~15% of demand is met through lettings annually**

The result is:

- Increasing waiting times (e.g. 2-bed properties rising from 8 to 18 months)



- Limited move-on pathways from temporary accommodation



The lack of affordable housing supply in the City and the lack of Council Housing has led to a doubling of wait times for those seeking 2 to 4 bed Council properties even for those in the highest band 1.

7.5 Affordability and PRS Challenges

- Only **~3% of PRS properties are affordable** to households on benefits or low incomes

This significantly restricts the role of the PRS in relieving pressure, meaning:

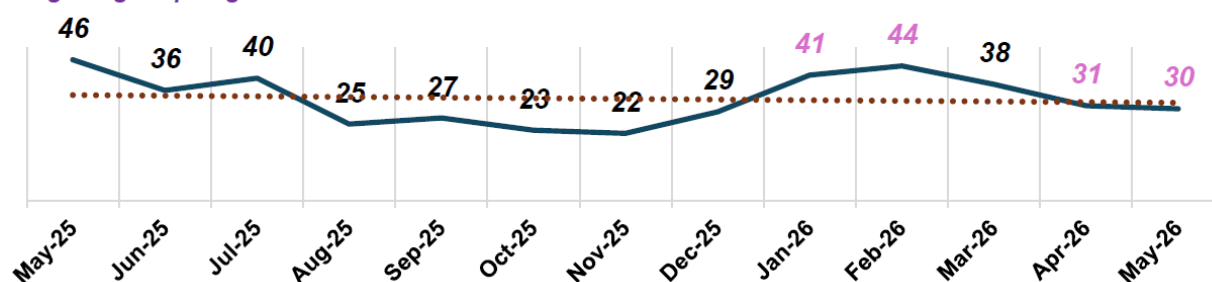
- More households rely on council housing

- Prevention options are limited
- Homelessness duration increases

7.6 Rough Sleepers

Although the total number of rough sleepers on the streets has remained consistent. The table below demonstrates that the total numbers seen on our streets has grown significantly with over 1,000 people seen during April 2025 and April 2026

Single Night Spotlight EBC /SBC

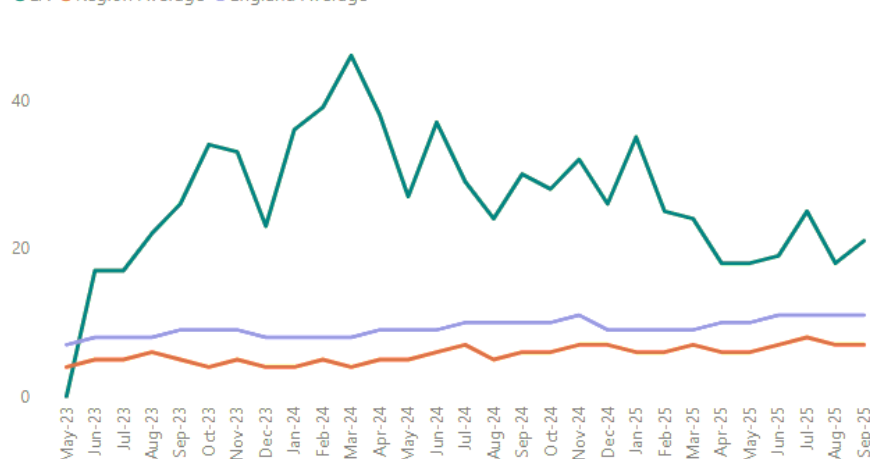


	Apr-26	Mar-26	Feb-26	Jan-26	Dec-25	Nov-25	Oct-25	Sep-25	Aug-25	Jul-25	Jun-25	May-25	Apr-25
Total rough sleepers found each month.	87	102	92	97	93	89	125	111	73	121	128	105	107
Long term rough sleepers found each month.	15	16	24	29	21	20	27	21	18	25	19	18	18
% of all rough sleepers found each month that are classed as long term.	17%	18%	28%	33%	24%	23%	31%	24%	21%	29%	22%	21%	21%

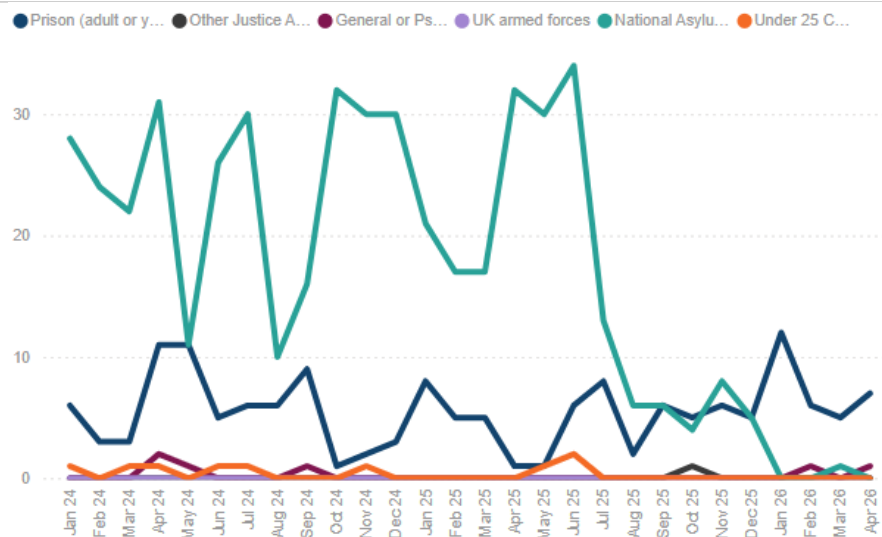
The chart below clearly sets out that Leicester has consistently recorded higher levels of long-term rough sleeping than both the regional and England averages throughout the reporting period. Whilst the regional average has generally remained between 4 and 7 individuals per month and the national average between 7 and 11 individuals, Leicester's figures have been higher.

People sleeping rough over the month (long term)

● LA ● Region Average ● England Average



The chart below clearly shows that until the middle of 2025 the biggest issue faced was from those leaving asylum accommodation and sleeping rough which accounted for 20 to 30 individuals per month at its peak. There are however multiple routes that feed in to Rough Sleeper numbers in the City including prison leavers which typically accounts for between 3 and 12 individuals.



7.7 Lack of funding to deliver new Affordable Housing

While the Council has sufficient funding to deliver the existing 1,500 between 2023 and 2027 mainly through the use of Right to Buy receipts and loans, the success and level of delivery leaves the Council with very limited Right to Buy receipts beyond 2027.

In order to deliver a similar programme of new Affordable housing in the City the total cost to deliver the programme is around £400m and the Council currently have is £88m (a combination of expected Retained Right to Buy Receipts (RTRB), allowable debt and prudential borrowing) assuming the current Homes England (HE) bids are successful (if not then this is lower at £54m). This leaves a significant gap of between £312m to £346m that we will need to work with HE and Registered Providers to fill to facilitate a robust affordable housing pipeline for the city.

This creates significant uncertainty and risk around the Council's ability to be able to deliver new Affordable Housing because it will now be reliant on external funding sources.

7.8 Key Drivers in Leicester

The main drivers of the crisis locally align with national factors:

- Affordability challenges in the PRS
- Section 21 evictions and insecurity of tenure
- Institutional discharges (prison, hospital, care)
- Impact of Renters Rights Act
- Cost of Living – Conflict in Iran
- Youth Homelessness (NEET)
- Increase complexity of support needs
- Migration and asylum pressures

- Institutional discharges (prison, hospital, care)
- Cost of living impacts
- These issues are **interconnected and cumulative**, rather than isolated.

7.9 Core Insight – Nature of the Crisis

Across both national and Leicester contexts, the housing crisis in 2026 can be summarised as:

A structural imbalance where demand for housing consistently outstrips supply, compounded by affordability constraints and increasing complexity of need.

In Leicester specifically:

- The system is **absorbing more households, for longer, with fewer exit routes**
- Demand continues to grow faster than interventions can offset
- Short-term measures (TA, PRS schemes) are necessary but insufficient

7.10 Conclusion

The housing crisis in 2026 is:

- **Deep-rooted and structural**
- **National in scale but locally intensified**
- **Driven by both supply failure and affordability pressures**

For Leicester:

- Strong delivery and intervention activity is underway
- However, the scale of demand means the system remains under sustained pressure

The central conclusion remains clear:

The only long-term solution to the housing crisis is a substantial and sustained increase in the supply of genuinely affordable, permanent homes.

8.0 Future Options & Actions

8.1 Refreshed Council Priorities (2026–2028)

Accelerate Housing Delivery through the delivery of Council Housing in the City with the ongoing development of a clear delivery plan from 2027 onwards and work to secure funding from the Affordable Housing fund 2026 – 2036 along with maximization of use of Local Plan sites. To achieve this a demand has also been placed on Government to provide adequate Affordable Housing funding.

Full review of the current PRS Strategy to create new actions to continue to drive forward improvement in standards in the PRS.

Review of the Housing Allocations Policy to ensure those in most urgent need are prioritised

Strengthen Private Rented Sector (PRS) Intervention and continue to offer an enhanced offer to attract PRS landlords and their stock.

Work with Registered providers to increase the supply of permanent affordable housing in the City

Work with Homecome to increase the supply of permanent Affordable Housing in the City

Development of a Supported Housing strategy for the city and creation of the nationally mandated supported housing standards, developing effective accommodation and support pathways to meet different needs

Strengthen both singles and families Temporary Accommodation pathways

Increasing the number of self contained Temporary accommodation units and also the pathways and support surrounding these

Maximise use of existing housing stock through the ongoing review of the Housing Allocations policy by prioritization of band 1 priorities, simplifying overcrowding & under occupation rules, ensuring that Council Housing continues to be targeted at those most in need including financially and working to achieve full use of properties offered

Consider the implementation of fixed term tenancies to ensure Council Housing continues to be used by those most in need and meets the needs of those in it.

8.2 Refreshed Government Priorities

Ongoing delivery of existing asks from 2022 including;

- Enhance arrangements to enable developers deliver Affordable homes
- Long term, no-strings fully funded Climate Retro Fitting for Council Housing
- Cancel Housing Revenue Account Council house debt
- Long term and increased levels of viability land funding
- End the Right to Buy Scheme
- Policy change to help those with No Recourse to Public Funds access Housing

New Government demands;

Direct allocation of the Affordable Housing funding to Local Authorities to enable LA's to deliver new Affordable homes along with increased grant rates per unit

Reform of government funding and fiscal rules to incentivise long-term public investment in social housing

Delivery of ongoing Right to Buy reform

A new fair and sustainable Housing Revenue Account model – including an urgent £644 million one-off injection, and long-term, certain debt agreements

Delivery of the actions within the Renters Rights Act including the creation of a PRS landlord register

Realignment & Annual Local Housing Allowance LHA uprating

Review and increase of HB rates for Temporary accommodation units

Increase national funding capital & revenue funding for Domestic & Sexual abuse accommodation.

Planning reform to enable fast track planning permissions, increasing the number of planning officers and redefining underutilized land.

Specialist NHS help and support for more complex individuals facing Homelessness as part of the Local Area based provision

Long-term, ring-fenced and increased funding for supported housing and support services

Increase funding and the number of approved Probation premises to support people coming out of prison in their journey (currently only 106 nationally) and this needs to increase as SOMETIMES people leaving prison are too high risk for LA accommodation

Legal Comments

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Kevin Carter, Head of Law – Commercial, Property and Planning

18th July 2026

Finance Comments

The report is primarily a progress update on the Housing Crisis Action Plan and sets out strategic priorities for future delivery. Existing housing delivery and temporary accommodation programmes referred to within the report are being delivered through previously approved capital and revenue budgets.

Delivery of the future ambitions set out in the report will be dependent on securing external funding, future Government policy decisions and approval through the Council's normal budget and decision making processes. Any additional financial commitments

arising from these proposals will therefore be subject to separate consideration and approval

Jade Draper – Principle Accountant – HRA

22nd July 2026

Climate Comments

There are no climate emergency implications arising directly from this report. However, the energy efficiency of housing contributes to the affordability of tenancies, as well as to reducing carbon emissions. So, if opportunities arise to make energy improvements to properties alongside other refurbishments as part of the provision of new social housing, then this could help reduce fuel poverty while cutting emissions.

Duncan Bell, Change Manager (Climate Emergency)

21st July 2026

5. Background information and other papers:

6. Summary of appendices:

Appendix 1 – LCC Actions

Appendix 2 – Government Demands

Appendix 3 – Housing Scrutiny Commission Task Group Report

7. 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)?

No

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

No

Appendix 1 – LCC Demand

37

Housing Crisis Action Plan - LCC actions						
Council Housing - general						
Outcome	Detail	Lead Task Owner	Resource requirement	Completion timescales	Progress update	RAG Rating
Maximise Council Housing Delivery	Develop an active Housing delivery plan for the next 10 years	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Ongoing	The Council has a very clear pipeline of Council and Affordable housing delivery for 2023 to 2027 of 1,500 new homes and the focus of attention has been on the delivery with good progress being made on these. The Council continues to be on track to deliver 1,500 units. Reports have been provided separately to update the Housing Scrutiny Commission on this matter setting out how the Council has continued to work agilely to deliver the pathway and attract contractors and builders to bid for current procurement opportunities.	Ongoing
	Seek opportunities to invest in Council owned social housing with	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Complete / Business as usual	All available sites as being individually planned are considered to meet the highest sustainable specification. A number of existing sites are particularly focussed on delivering	Complete

	highly sustainable specification				as examples of this including Saffron Lane, Lanesborough Road and Stocking Farm	
	Provide more suitable and affordable, temporary and stepped accommodation with a long-term sheltered accommodation offer	Chris Burgin	Officer time, development and building costs	Completed	Trainer accommodation units being developed as part of the ZIP acquisition. A report was submitted and approved at Full Council to deliver 225 Temporary accommodation homes and 125 leased properties at a cost of £45m in February 2024. All have now been delivered. A further approval of £50m to increase LCC owned self contained TA units by 250 in 25/26 was approved in February 2026 and work has commenced on the delivery of these units. The Housing Division have employed a Supported Housing Manager in a step towards developing a growing alternative offer for those that General needs Housing is not suitable for.	Complete
	The council delivery programme to have clearly	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Complete / Business as usual	A full delivery programme that sets out the total delivery expected for the next 4 years, annual delivery and also site delivery dates has been	Complete

	identified objectives and targets over the time of the programme.				completed and agreed. This is now being monitored and overseen by the Housing Deliver Board and will report in periodically to LMB, CMB and HSC.	
Increase and free up existing Council Housing for those in greatest need	Use some of the Affordable Housing Revenue to introduce payments to those council tenants downsizing to make the move more attractive and affordable in order to free up homes for families	Chris Burgin	Recourses to be allocated from the Housing Revenue Account	Complete / Business as usual	Housing have introduced a new scheme called 'Easy Move' to support and incentivise tenants moving out of underoccupied properties. Housing have also promoted the use of Mutual Exchange and the use of the national Home Swapper IT system to deliver more over and under occupying swaps. A budget is also available to facilitate extensions for suitable LCC owned properties to generate space to address overcrowding	Complete
The Council to deliver exemplar low and no carbon new build sites	The council establish the development of an exemplar site of low carbon modular housing, to show that development	Chris Burgin	Officer time, development and building costs	Complete / Business as usual	All available sites as being individually planned are considered to meet the highest sustainable specification. A number of existing sites are particularly focussed on delivering exemplar schemes including Saffron Lane, Lanesborough Road and Stocking Farm	Complete

	s like this can be both stylish and great to live in					
Tackle overcrowding and the need for adaptations in the City	The Council utilises its Overcrowding Strategy to help those on the Housing Register in the most serious housing need	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Timescales set within the Overcrowding Strategy and Adaptation Strategy action plans	LCC now have a live Overcrowding strategy with a defined action plan to start to tackle the levels of overcrowding in LCC owned stock initially. The Council also amended its Housing applications policy to add additional priority for those facing the most severe Statutory overcrowding which has had a positive impact on helpful those in this position to secure a let.	Complete

Private Sector Housing						
Outcome	Detail	Lead Task Owner	Resource requirement	Completion timescales	Progress update	RAG Rating
Tackle poor quality housing in the City	The Council to deliver its PRS Strategy, including PRS consultation and implementation to drive up the standard in this sector. Expand the PRS regulatory framework and improve the lives of tenants in the private sector	Chris Burgin / Sean Atterbury	Officer time	Complete / Business as usual	The council has a live PRS Strategy that has a robust Action plan that is being actively delivered upon. Excellent progress has been made on most of the PRS strategy actions. The PRS strategy progress update is provided periodically to CMB & HSC.	Complete

	The Council to rigorously pursue unauthorised developments and breaches of planning control to safeguard residential amenity and improve the quality of stock	Andrew L Smith	Officer time Legal fees	Complete / Business as usual	Ongoing work by the Planning Enforcement Team to respond proactively to unauthorised development	Complete
	Further promote the Private Rented Sector offer from the Council to Private Landlords to make properties available for local families in need	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Complete / Business as Usual	Ongoing promotion of the live scheme. A review of the scheme has also been undertaken to ensure it continues to be good value in attracting more private landlords to the scheme. The scheme offer was strengthened as a result of this review and an increase in the level of support available up to 35% above LHR rate available as part of the scheme	Complete

Work with other providers to facilitate affordable housing in the city	Work closely with registered providers to ensure the best use of those properties, such as to encourage tenants to downsize where possible and make larger properties available for larger households	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Complete / Business as usual	As part of development of a suite of sites for the next 4 and 10 years delivery of 1500+ units, specific sites have been identified that will be made available for RPs to deliver new affordable housing for the City. The release of these sites is subject to the Local Plan approval.	Complete
Assessment of the viability and effectiveness of a Housing Company to meet market needs is delivered	Investigate the viability and justification for a Housing Company for Leicester	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Complete	Completed and consideration of this option which determined that at this time the best model for the Council remains internal delivery Leicester will continue to keep this option under review should there be further significant legislation or funding changes affecting future delivery.	Complete

New House Building						
Outcome	Detail	Lead Task Owner	Resource requirement	Completion timescales	Progress update	RAG Rating
Work with other providers to facilitate affordable housing in the city	Secure more house building sites through a review of existing underdeveloped Local Plan sites, designated for non-housing purposes. To include a review of all brownfield sites in the city. Develop a programme for the delivery of new Council	Andrew L Smith Chris Burgin	Officer time	Ongoing / 2025	A review of the Local Plan has completed and a new Local Plan has been launched in 2026	Complete

	housing on these sites					
	Set up a mechanism to enable Ward Councillors to feed in any localised sites that should be reviewed for Housing	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Nov-23	All site suggestions can be submitted for consideration and evaluation to HousingDevelopment@leicester.gov.uk. A process is in place to evaluate the site and provide direct feedback to the Ward Councillor	Complete
	Maximise the opportunities with the new Local Plan to secure sufficient Housing land plots suitable to achieve the strategic and political aims of the local authority	Andrew L Smith	Officer time	Ongoing / 2025	New Local Plan launched in 2026	Complete

	over the next 10 years					
	The work of the Housing Board to concentrate on identifying development or conversion opportunities to provide the urgently required social and other housing needed in the city. The Housing Board to report to Scrutiny within 6-months on its aims, objectives and work done so far	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Completed / Ongoing with 6 monthly report to Scrutiny	Housing Board is now embedded with an Housing Operational Delivery Board now being set up to manage a big uplift in work. Reports have been considered at the Housing, Neighbourhoods & City Centre Board on the 14th June 2023 and the Housing Scrutiny Commission on the 31st July 2023 and updates will continue to be brought to HNCC and HSC meetings periodically.	Complete

Housing Crisis Action Plan - Government Demands							
Central Government Demands - General							
Outcome	Detail	Action	Lead Task Owner	Resource	Completion timescales	Progress update	RAG
Funding for 150,000 new Social Homes a year	Fully fund councils to deliver the building of 150,000 social rent homes each year, including 100,000 council homes. Invest £12.8 billion a year over the next ten years to deliver the social rented homes needed to break the back of the national housing crisis.	Advocate this commitment at future meetings with Homes England	Chris Burgin / Andrew L Smith	Officer time	Complete / Business as usual	Additional £500m added to the Affordable Housing programme for 25/26 and promise of further funding to delivery more Housing from Government. LCC are working with Homes England to secure more funding from the City from these pots of funding.	Complete

	Government to announce the next 10 years of the Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) now, rather than waiting until 2025/6 to announce the next tranche of funding.	Advocate this commitment at future meetings with Homes England	Chris Burgin / Andrew L Smith	Officer time	Ongoing	Additional funding of over £1m has been secured from Homes England towards the ZIP purchase, a successful bid is in for Homes England funding for 20 units of acquired accommodation securing £xxm. The Council has also secured a total of £6.6m of Local Authority Housing funding, has delivered a total of 59 units and now has secured	Complete
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						funding to deliver the remaining 56 units with a further £6.6m funding. The Council has been working with Homes England on a bid for £30m of Homes England Social Affordable Homes Programme.	
Long term, no-strings fully funded Climate Retro Fitting for Council Housing	Government funding for the retrofitting of council housing to cut greenhouse gases, provide jobs	Advocate this commitment at future meetings with Homes England	Chris Burgin / Matt Wallace	Officer time	Ongoing	Available meetings and opportunities have been used to promote the need for this funding to enable this work (and the	Ongoing

	and promote a shift from outsourcing to Direct Labour Organisations. To include a pilot programme of Net Zero social housing to help deploy and reduce the cost of technology needed to meet the Future Home Standard and deliver on our commitment to Net Zero					lack of funding in the HRA to achieve the required work) - using data from LCC Housing stock on known pathways of net zero. LCC have formed a part of the top 20 Stock owned authorities to approach Government to ask for additional funding to meet this demand.	
Cancel Housing Revenue Account Council house debt	Council housing debt is removed to address underfunding of Housing Revenue Accounts	Lobbying of government	Amy Oliver	Officer time	Ongoing	All opportunities have been taken to promote the need for this action	Ongoing

End the Right to Buy Scheme	End the Right to Buy Scheme to stop the loss of truly affordable housing for those people that cannot afford to access other Housing	Political lobbying of Government	Cllr Cutkelvin	Councillor time	Completed & Business as usual	Significant changes have been made to the RTB scheme to reduce down its impact on loss of Social Housing stock but the scheme has not ceased	Ongoing
Long term and increased levels of viability land funding	Government funding support to help with the release of new housing sites, including those on brownfield land, to increase viability and delivery	Advocate this commitment at future meetings with Homes England	Chris Burgin / Andrew L Smith	Officer time	Ongoing	Regular meetings being held with Homes England to secure potential future grant funding to develop regeneration sites which may include social rented homes. Meeting in April with DHLUC senior civil servants to encourage investment in Leicester. Investment has been secured through the Brownfield land funding specifically for the	Complete

						development fo the FLEC site	
Outcome	Detail	Action	Lead Task Owner	Resource requirement	Completion timescales	Progress update	RAG
Large, sustained increase in Local Housing Allowance rates to address affordability	Government to increase Local Housing Allowance levels in line with inflation. Local Housing Allowance must be unfrozen and kept in line with at least the 30th percentile of rents to enable people on benefits to access Private	Promotion at S151 officer and other appropriate meetings. Letter to the Minister responsible for DWP and this allowance	Amy Oliver / Cllr Cutkelvin	Officer and Councillor time	Complete	Amy, Cllr Cutkelvin and all relevant Directors have used the opportunities to set out the growing need for this and unaffordability of PRS in the City. Government have responded and agreed in the Autumn budget statement to	Complete

	Sector Housing					increase NHA rates to the 30th percentile level from April 2024	
Legislate to end Section 21 "no fault" evictions	End Section 21 evictions to reduce the number of people going through homelessness and spending time in temporary accommodation	Political lobbying of Government	Chris Burgin	Officer time	Ongoing	Removed S21 as part of RRA	Complete
Legislate to create 5-year minimum Private Rented Sector tenancies	To include a rolling back clause of 2 months to allow tenants flexibility to increase tenancy sustainment	Political lobbying of Government	Cllr Cutkelvin	Councillor time	Ongoing	RRA has moved to periodic tenancies to strengthen tenants rights	Complete

Close loopholes with regulation on holiday accommodation	Government to review policies to ensure all holiday accommodation is properly regulated, complying with local planning policies and taxes. This could include an extension of the 90-day short let legislation, a proper planning class for short lets and proper licencing for them. With the focus of preventing people finding loopholes in the taxation system and prevent too many local homes being converted to holiday homes	Political Lobbying of Government	Cllr Cutkelvin	Officer time	Ongoing	The UK government has closed major tax and planning loopholes for short-term holiday lets to protect local housing markets. Key reforms include abolishing the Furnished Holiday Lettings (FHL) tax regime, tightening the 70-day rental rule for business rates, and introducing mandatory planning permission	Complete
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						for frequent letting	
Give local control and ownership of setting Holiday Home Council tax levels	Local control of Government to allow local councils to be able to charge 200% Council Tax on second / holiday homes, as they do in Wales	Political lobbying of Government	Cllr Cutklevin	Officer and Councillor time	Ongoing	Homes empty for more than five years will be charged three times the council tax of occupied homes. From April 2021, homes empty for more than 10 years will be charged four times the council tax of occupied homes.	Complete

Policy change to help those with No Recourse to Public Funds access Housing	To support those currently unable to access benefits support to access Housing to be able to do so	Political lobbying of Government	Cllr Cutkelvin	Councillor time	Ongoing	Ongoing representations to government on this matter at available meetings with Senior Government officers	Ongoing
Introduce a National Landlord Register	To give oversight of the Private Rented Sector, including rogue landlords	Political Lobbying for a National Landlord Register	Cllr Cutkelvin	Councillor time	Ongoing	RRA confirms this is to be rolled out in 2026 to 2027	Complete
New House building							
Outcome	Detail	Action	Lead Task Owner	Resource requirement	Completion timescales	Progress update	RAG Rating

New Council Tax charges on undeveloped Housing sites	Government to allow a Council Tax charge on housing plots with planning permission if they have not been built after a specified period. This would encourage developers to build their sites without delay. Also lobby to introduce planning contracts rather than permissions with penalties for undue delays	Political lobbying of Government	Cllr Cutkelvin	Councillor time	Ongoing	To date the Government have not introduced New Council tax charges on undeveloped Housing sites	Ongoing
Enhance arrangements to enable developers deliver Affordable homes	In the wholesale review of S106 arrangements (linked to Levelling up) taking place, Government should	Political lobbying of Government	Cllr Cutkelvin	Officer time	Ongoing	Ongoing Political lobbying	Ongoing

	strengthen arrangements to ensure delivery of the required affordable housing and remove the opportunity for developers to avoid Affordable housing delivery for "viability" reasons						
Government to review their Refugee Resettlement Programme	The city welcomes incoming communities, but the Government's refugee settlement programmes be on a national basis rather than focussed on already crowded urban settlements.	Political lobbying of Government	Cllr Cutkelvin	Councillor time	Ongoing	National Mandatory Asylum Resettlement programme now in operation for 12 months.	Complete

Appendix 3 – Housing Scrutiny Commission – Task Group report on the Housing Crisis

Leicester City Council

Scrutiny Review

Housing Crisis in Leicester

A Review Report of the Housing Scrutiny Commission

**Housing Scrutiny Commission
22 September 2022**

**Overview Select Committee
27 September 2022**

Contents

	Page
Chair's Foreword	2
1 Executive Summary	3
1.1 Background to the Review and Key Findings	3
1.2 Recommendations	4
2 Report	10
2.1 Background	10
2.2 Conclusions	13
3 Financial, Legal and Other Implications	14
3.1 Financial implications	14
3.2 Legal implications	15
3.3 Equality Impact Assessment	15
4 Summary of Appendices	16
5 Officers to Contact	16

Housing Scrutiny Commission

Task Group Members:

Councillor Stephan Gee (Chair of the review)
Councillor Hanif Aqbany
Councillor Padmini Chamund
Councillor Luis Fonseca
Councillor Patrick Kitterick
Councillor Gary O'Donnell
Councillor Vandeviji Pandya
Councillor Elaine Pantling
Councillor Sharmen Rahman
Councillor Sue Waddington
Councillor Paul Westley (Chair of the Commission)
Councillor Geoff Whittle

Chair's Foreword

I would firstly like to thank the many members from across the authority who took the time and trouble to take part in this review. Membership came from not just the Housing Scrutiny Commission but all members who were not executive members were invited to attend, and the expertise and observations they provided were deeply appreciated.

On behalf of the Task Group, I would also like to thank the many officers, from inside the housing department and across other departments, for the contributions they have made to the work.

The review was prompted by a range of factors, but most keenly felt was the erosion of affordable social housing through the right to buy mechanism which has put a choke on housing for those who most directly need it.

One of the upshots of the review was to look to capture and use the very detailed knowledge that members have within their own communities and reflected the many comments and observations that came from members and their knowledge of local issues.

While a shortage of new social rented housing was a contributing feature of the housing crisis, a full range was highlighted, including problems facing those who own their own homes or living in the private rented sector (PRS).

Members recognise the value of the PRS, while also pointing to adverse issues within the sector, particularly high rents, poor housing, antisocial behaviour by tenants and landlords who fail to maintain fully the homes occupied by their tenants.

Frustration with the planning system, which appears to freeze potential housing sites out of the reach of housing providers, and by extension was beyond the reach of those in greatest need, was also a feature of the review.

The related developing crisis of rocketing inflation and energy costs only highlights and underscores the issues which have contributed to the housing disaster facing so many people.

And so does the failure of government policy to even begin to recognise, let alone solve, the problems tens of thousands of people across our communities' face.



Councillor Stefan Gee; Task Group chair

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Background to the Review and Key Findings

- 1.1.1. A national picture of growing pressure on housing and other services is described in this review. Within the city of Leicester one figure stands out which maybe above any other reflects the crisis and pressures facing the city council and its residents.
- 1.1.2. Since the early 1980s the council has lost around 14,000 homes through the right to buy (RTB). Council tenants within the city have been targeted by agencies encouraging them to take up RTB. They have been helped in this by the standards of housing maintained by the city council.
- 1.1.3. The reduction in available social rented housing to 19,673 by the end of the last financial year would have been even lower without the acquisition or building of 1,150 new council homes. How the council can use RTB receipts has changed and the rules governing them have become more restrictive.
- 1.1.4. Leicester is a generally low-wage city, and this is reflected in the difficulties people have faced in getting housing and staying in the housing they have. Housing conditions mean that one of the major reasons for being accepted as homeless stems from overcrowding.
- 1.1.5. Overcrowding featured as the main reason for households being put on the housing register more than three times the number being homeless or facing the threat of homelessness. 2,927, or 46% of those being put on the register, cited overcrowding, against 867 (14%) who were homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- 1.1.6. Rising population numbers, now and in the future, underscored the need for further housing. Population trends include rising numbers of older people and/or households including disabled people.
- 1.1.7. The task group highlighted the need for housing which could be adapted to cater for those needs without requiring people to move out of their own home.
- 1.1.8. A theme from members through the inquiry was the inability to get land which had been zoned for other uses, for example industrial development, but which had remained undeveloped, to be re-allocated for housing, and specifically for social rented housing.
- 1.1.9. A further planning issue for members was the time taken to produce and approve a new Local Plan for the city, although they also recognised national government had not helped the process by making changes to the rules around local plans.

- 1.1.10. The most recent changes, in May 2022, saw the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) introduce planning reforms via the Queen's Speech in and alongside a new [Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill](#). The reforms outlined in [DLUHC's policy paper](#) "seek to improve the planning system and further empower local leaders to regenerate their local area and will be introduced through primary and secondary legislation, and through non-legislative measures."

1.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Assistant Mayor for Housing and the Executive consider the following recommendations:

Call for action by Central Government

This Commission calls on the Government to act now to end the housing crisis by:

1.2.1 Funding for 150,000 New Social Homes a year

Fully funding councils to deliver the building of 150,000 social rent homes each year, including 100,000 council homes. Invest £12.8 billion a year over the next ten years to deliver the social rented homes needed to break the back of the national housing crisis.

1.2.2 Announce the next 10 years of the Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) now, rather than waiting until 2025/6 to announce the next tranche of funding. This will provide long-term certainty to local authorities and housing associations, allowing them to deliver far more homes at a faster pace.

The government must also significantly increase the proportion of the AHP which is spent on genuinely affordable social rented housing

1.2.3 Long term, no-strings fully funded Climate Retro Fitting for Council Housing

Fund the retrofitting of council housing to cut greenhouse gases, provide jobs and promote a shift from outsourcing to Direct Labour Organisations. & Pilot a programme of Net Zero social housing to help deploy and reduce the cost of technology needed to meet the Future Home Standard and deliver on our commitment to Net Zero.

This should be funded in addition to the AHP and co-owned by BEIS and MHCLG to reduce to cost of the Net Zero transition in a socially equitable way

1.2.4 Cancel Housing Revenue Account Council house debt

Removing council housing debt to address underfunding of Housing Revenue Accounts.

1.2.5 End the Right to Buy Scheme for Council Housing

End the Right to Buy Scheme to stop the loss of truly affordable housing for those people that cannot afford to access other Housing

1.2.6 Longer Term and increased levels of Viability Land Funding

Govt funding support to help with the release of new housing sites including on brownfield land to increase viability and delivery.

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

1.2.7 Large, sustained Increase in Local Housing Allowance rates to address affordability

Government to increase Local Housing Allowance levels in line with inflation. Local Housing Allowance must be unfrozen and kept in line with at least the 30th percentile of rents to enable people on benefits to access Private sector housing

1.2.8 Legislate to End Section 21 'no fault' evictions

Ending Section 21 (no fault) evictions to reduce the number of people going through homelessness and spending time in temporary accommodation

1.2.9 Legislate to create 5-year minimum private sector tenancies

Demand government legislate for five-year minimum tenancies as standard, with a rolling break clause of 2 months to allow tenants flexibility to increase tenancy sustainment

1.2.10 Close loopholes with regulation on holiday accommodation

Government to review policies to ensure all holiday accommodation is properly regulated, complying with local planning policies and taxes. This could include an extension of the 90-day short let legislation, a proper planning class for short lets and proper licencing for them. With the focus

of preventing people finding loopholes in the taxation system and prevent too many local homes being converted to holiday accommodation

1.2.11 Give Local control and ownership of setting Holiday Home Council tax levels

Local control of Government to allow local councils to be able to charge 200% Council Tax on second / holiday homes, as they do in Wales.

1.2.12 Policy change to help those with No Recourse to Public Funds access Housing

Lobby government to push for change in no recourse to public funds policies to support those currently unable to access benefits support to access Housing to be able to do so.

1.2.13 Introduce a National Landlord register

Government introduce a National Landlord register to give greater oversight of the PRS including rogue landlords

1.2.14 Fund the retrofitting of council housing to cut greenhouse gases, provide jobs and promote a shift from outsourcing to Direct Labour Organisations. & Pilot a programme of Net Zero PRS housing to help deploy and reduce the cost of technology needed to meet the Future Home Standard and deliver on our commitment to Net Zero.

NEW HOUSE-BUILDING

1.2.15 New Council tax charges on undeveloped Housing sites

Government to allow a Council Tax charge on housing plots with planning permission if they have not been built after a specified period. This would encourage developers to get on and build their sites without delay. Also lobby to introduce planning contracts rather than permissions with penalties for undue delays

1.2.16 Enhanced arrangements to enable developers deliver Affordable Homes

In the wholesale review of S106 arrangements (linked to Levelling up) taking place Government should strengthen arrangements to ensure delivery of the required affordable housing and remove the opportunity for developers to avoid Affordable housing delivery for 'viability' reasons.

- 1.1.17 The city welcomes incoming communities, but the Government's refugee settlement programmes be on a national basis rather than focussed on already crowded urban settlements.

1.3 City Council Asks

COUNCIL HOUSING

1.3.1 The Council to maximise its own Council Housing delivery

The Council to develop an active Housing delivery plan for the next 10 years.

Leicester City Council continues to actively seek opportunities to invest in Council owned social housing with highly sustainable specification.

The Council to provide even more suitable and affordable temporary & stepped accommodation with a long-term sheltered accommodation offer.

The council delivery programme to have clearly identified objectives and targets over the time of the programme.

1.3.2 Increase and free up existing Council Housing for those in greatest need

Use some of the affordable housing revenue to introduce payments to those council tenants downsizing to make the move more attractable and affordable in order to free up homes for families

1.3.3 The Council to deliver Exemplar Low and No carbon new build sites

The Council establish the development of an exemplar site of low carbon modular housing, to show that developments like this can be both stylish and great to live in

1.3.4 Tackle Overcrowding & the need for Adaptations in the City

The Council utilises its Overcrowding Strategy and develop an Adaptations Strategy to help those on the Housing Register in the most serious Housing need

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

1.3.5 Tackle poor quality PRS housing in the City

The Council to deliver its PRS Strategy including PRS consultation and implementation to drive up the standard in this sector and expand the PRS regulatory framework to drive up standards and improve the lives of tenants in the PRS.

The Council to rigorously pursue unauthorised developments and breaches of planning control to safeguard residential amenity and improve quality of stock

There should be further promotion of the Private Rented Sector offer from the Council to Private landlords to make properties available for local families in need.

1.3.6 Work with other providers to facilitate affordable housing in the City

The City Council work closely with registered providers to ensure the best use of those properties, such as to encourage tenants to downsize where possible and make larger properties available for larger households

1.3.7 Reduce the level of empty homes in the City

Development of an Empty Homes strategy. Owners of empty homes be helped by repurposing their empty homes or second homes back into use

1.3.8 Investigate the viability and effectiveness of a Housing company to meet market needs

The Council urgently investigates the viability and justification for a Housing Delivery company vehicle for Leicester.

NEW HOUSE BUILDING

1.3.9 Work with other providers to facilitate affordable housing in the City

Secure more house building sites through an urgent review of existing undeveloped Local Plan sites designated for non-housing purposes e
To review all Brownfield sites within the City and develop an urgent programme for the delivery of new Council housing on these sites
A mechanism be set up to enable Ward Councillors to feed in any localised site (brownfield/greenfield/conversion) that should be reviewed for Housing with a mechanism for review by senior officers and the Lead member for Housing

To maximise the opportunities within the new local plan to secure sufficient Housing land plots suitable to achieve the strategic and political aims of the Local Authority over the next 10 years

- 1.3.10 The work of the recently created housing board be concentrated on identifying development or conversion opportunities to provide the urgently required social and other housing needed within the city. That the housing board report to scrutiny within six months on its aims, objectives and work done so far.
- 1.3.11 The task group is asked to engage in the formulation and oversight of a target-based action plan to deliver the Council asks, and that regular reports be submitted for consideration on progress and delivery, including an update at the first Housing Scrutiny Commission meeting in 2023.

2 REPORT

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 A national picture has emerged, which is reflected perhaps even more acutely in Leicester, of growing pressure on housing and other services. The Office for National Statistics estimates there will be a population increase of 11m over the next two decades.
- 2.1.2 This task group was shown evidence of trends within this increase: “People are growing older and living longer. It is estimated that over the coming years the population of over-65s will rise by 7m.”
- 2.1.3 Meanwhile, 2.9m people aged 20-34 are living with parents, and for many, home ownership is no longer a tenure of choice or aspiration, and the private sector is often the only choice for newly formed households, which is producing “generation rent.”
- 2.1.4 The 2016/2017 English House Condition Survey concluded that “while the under-35s have always been under-represented in the private rented sector (PRS), over the last decade or so the increase in the proportion of such households in the PRS has been particularly pronounced. In 2006/2007 27% of those aged 25-34 lived in the PRS. By 2016/2017 this had increased to 46%.
- 2.1.5 Over the same period the proportion of 25-34-year-olds in owner-occupation fell sharply, from 57% to 37%, meaning households in the 25-34 age range were more likely to be renting privately than buying their own home.
- 2.1.6 Other issues, including quality of living in households, demonstrated signs of erosion of standards and quality. For example, in 2016/2017 five per cent of households in the PRS were living in overcrowded accommodation.
- 2.1.7 The supply of truly affordable homes for rent falls well short of what historically was delivered to meet the needs of people living in inadequate housing. [The Centre for Social Justice](#) reported in November 2021 that:
- tonight, over 90,000 families and more than 120,000 children will go to sleep in ‘temporary accommodation’ (including bed and breakfasts), with serious implications for health and education.
 - over two thirds (69 per cent) of private renters in the lower two income quintiles spend 30 per cent or more of their disposable income on rent, representing 1.2 million households.
 - an estimated 150,000 properties see parents sharing a bedroom with their children.
 - high housing costs have critically undermined the impact of positive government initiatives to raise incomes among lower earners (such as

increasing the minimum wage and personal tax allowance), constituting a key driver of 'in-work poverty'.

- 60 per cent of private renters have less than £100 in savings, making even low-cost home ownership affordable housing products (such as Shared Ownership or First Homes) unattainable.

2.1.8 The financial consequences of this multi-faceted housing crisis are just as stark with housing benefit spending rising dramatically to account for the systemic changes which have been made in the way our nation is housed.

2.1.9 With more reliance on the PRS to house lower-income households spending on housing benefits (HB) was forecast to be £30.5bn by 2021-22, more than double the total government grant allocation for affordable housing until 2026, in just one year.

2.1.10 While the total benefit spending is higher in the social rented sector the spending per home in the PRS is considerably higher.

2.1.11 Other social attitudes are amplified within the housing crisis. Two million adults in Britain say they have faced discrimination when looking for a home. The housing crisis is likely to have a greater impact on you if you are Black or Asian, gay or bisexual, disabled or a single mother.

2.1.12 Structural racism and discrimination means many marginalised groups are likely to be on low income and thereby forced into unsuitable housing. The Government's "no recourse to public funds" policy stops many migrants from accessing Universal Credit (UC) and homelessness assistance, disproportionately affecting people of colour.

2.1.13 Nearly 1.4m people are affected by the "no recourse to public funds" policy which disproportionately affects people of colour and is directly responsible for forcing people into homelessness.

2.1.14 "No DSS" policies and practices from private landlords and letting agents have created huge barriers to accessing PRS homes, a discriminatory practice with greatest impact on women, disabled people and Black and Bangladeshi families.

The changing face of housing

2.1.15 While owner-occupancy (65% of households) remains the most common housing tenure, but recent decades have seen seismic shifts within the rented sectors of the housing system.

2.1.16 In the early 1980s just under a third of households lived in homes let by either a council or housing association. This proportion has fallen to 16.7%, with the social rented sector down from 5.4m households to 4m.

- 2.1.17 At the same time the PRS has grown sharply; after housing one in ten households in the early 1980s the PRS has increased by 2.4m since 2000 and now houses nearly one in five households.
- 2.1.18 This growth has been driven in part by the inability of tenants to become home-owners. In 2004 nine per cent of those aged 34-44 lived in the PRS. By 2020 this had tripled to 27% while the rate of owner-occupancy in the sector had fallen from 74% to 56%.
- 2.1.19 Another trend has been for those on low or modest incomes who might once have lived in council or HA social rented housing but who now struggle to access social housing due to a limited and shrinking housing stock and rising demand.
- 2.1.20 Today 1.15m households are on official social housing waiting lists and the Local Government Association (LGA) estimates this figure could almost double to two million as the economic effects of Covid-19 continue to materialise.¹

The position in Leicester

- 2.1.21 Leicester is the largest city in the East Midlands and has two universities and three hospitals. The combined student population was just over 43,000 in the 2017/18 academic year.
- 2.1.22 By 2021 a BRE survey showed the city had around 142,000 dwellings; 43% were owner-occupied, 35% PRS and 22% social rented homes. But Right to Buy (RTB) sales saw the stock reduce by 409 homes in 2020/21. The council has lost 1,890 homes in the last five years.
- 2.1.23 Since 1980s the city council has lost more than 14,000 homes and its share of housing in the city has fallen to 15.5% in 2017 from 36% in 1981. Around 6,000 households are waiting for council housing and are on the register. In 2020/21 2,600 households approached the authority saying they were homeless or being threatened with it.
- 2.1.24 Growth of the PRS in the city means it now stands at 50,000 homes (35% of the stock, against a national average of 19%). Nineteen out of 21 wards have a proportion of PRS housing higher than the national average.
- 2.1.25 Leicester's people suffer lower incomes than those in many cohort communities. Recent research has concluded that Leicester has seen
- A worsening of its housing affordability ratio
 - A level of unemployment (7.5%) which is almost double the regional average
 - A high proportion of residents in elementary occupations and/or low-level earnings

¹ This is without taking into account the further impacts of inflation and heating costs.

- 2.1.26 The rate of housing overcrowding in the city at 15.2% is almost three times the regional figure. Between 2001 and 2011 there was a rise of almost 60% in the level of overcrowded households -almost double the national growth.
- 2.1.27 Overcrowding is given as a major reason for appearing on the city council's housing register at almost three times the rate of those applying through homelessness or threat of homelessness.
- 2.1.28 In Leicester there are around 9,600 houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). Around 2,250 have come under the influence of a newly created mandatory licensing scheme. 48% are in the Westcotes, Castle, Stoneygate and Fosse wards.
- 2.1.29 The licensing system is aimed at driving up housing standards and housing management quality in a sector to which the council has had to look increasingly for help in easing the pressures caused by increased homelessness (4,803 in 2019/20 approached the council for help), the collapse in the supply of truly affordable housing and the continued erosion of stock through RTB.
- 2.1.30 Members during the review expressed concern about the flexibility of the planning process. Work was continuing on a new Local Plan, and Leicestershire district councils had agreed² to take the pressure off the city's development programmes by taking 18,700 new homes from the Government-imposed target for the city.
- 2.1.31 However there was support for the view that where industrial, commercial, or other non-housing sites had not been developed, perhaps for decades, those sites should be re-zoned as housing.

2.2. Conclusions

- 2.2.1 The wide-ranging and deeply damaging impacts of the crisis in housing, in terms of standards, quality of buildings and the sheer lack of enough affordable housing for the communities within the city was set out in graphic detail in the data and information provided for this review.
- 2.2.2 The loss of social housing through the right to buy does not mean the housing is "lost" but it does become beyond the reach of those who through a variety of reasons cannot gain access to housing.
- 2.2.3 The task group did not take evidence on the way in which rising inflation, particularly relating to heating costs, will affect the city's communities. The sense is that the sharply rising cost of heating will act as an accelerator for all the issues which have driven so many people into housing poverty over the past two decades.

² [Thousands of new homes need to be built in Leicestershire](#)

3 Financial, Legal and Other Implications

3.1 Financial Implications

3.1.1 Overview

The general principle for assessing the financial viability of a site is to consider (a) the total expenditure that will be incurred in building the dwellings, bringing them to a lettable standard, and managing them over their life, and (b) the total income that will be received over that same period through the rent that can be charged.

3.1.2 Expenditure

Expenditure on managing and maintaining the dwellings on an on-going basis is projected forward, including capital maintenance, day-to-day repairs, property management costs, interest, and debt. Because of the high up-front costs, new builds and acquisitions are typically financed with 50% from prudential borrowing. This borrowing is repaid on a flat line basis over a 50-year period, subject to the length of the asset life. Interest is charged on the debt, with annual interest charges reducing over the life of the asset as the borrowing is gradually repaid. Whilst interest rates are currently low, these are assumed to rise in the long-term.

3.1.3 Income

For most Council-owned new build or dwelling acquisition projects Right to Buy (RTB) receipts are used to part-finance the build; where this is the case, the Council charges 'Affordable Rent', equal to 80% of market rent for those properties. Rents are capped at the LHA rate to ensure they are genuinely affordable. Assumptions are made as to likely void levels and debt that may have to be written off. Together these give an estimate of the annual net rental income.

3.1.4 Financial Affordability Assessment

As a general rule of thumb, the desire is for the cumulative income over a 30-year period to equal or exceed the cumulative expenditure over the same period. However, since most dwellings are expected to have a life of at least 50 years, a longer period of time will also be considered. It is important to note that this is not an exact science; assumptions need to be made about what will happen over a long period of time.

The outcome of a financial assessment will provide an indication of whether proceeding with a site is likely to provide a positive financial impact to the HRA; this can then be considered alongside other factors so that a decision can be made whether to proceed with a site.

The level of funding available to the Council is limited, and for the HRA specifically this is limited to the amount of money raised through rents & service charges, plus grants from central government. The financial implications of initiatives will be considered at the time of proposals being developed. The Council will remain alert to government funding opportunities to help address the issues identified in this report.

Stuart McAvoy – Acting Head of Finance

3.2 Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications arising out of this review. If proposals are developed into potential policy or decisions, then detailed legal advice would need to be taken nearer the time.

Kamal Adatia, City Barrister ext 37 1401

3.3 Equality Implications

This report highlights a number of equalities issues that may impact people from a range of protected characteristics in relation to housing in the city. As proposals are developed, there needs to be greater consideration given to the impacts with the need to give due regard to how it will affect people who share a protected characteristic.

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.

Kalvaran Sandhu, Equalities Manager, Ext 37 6344

3.4 Climate change Implications

Housing is the biggest single source of carbon emissions in the city, and is responsible for a third of Leicester's carbon footprint. Following the city council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019, and its aim to achieve carbon neutrality, addressing these emissions therefore vital in achieving this ambition. Tackling this challenge will require funding and support on a massive scale, to meet the challenge of retrofitting the city's housing stock.

This report calls for further support from Government, to fund the measures required to achieve net zero for both the council's own housing stock and within the private rented sector. As noted within the report, home energy costs are also a major contributor to the current cost of living crisis, with Leicester facing high rates of fuel poverty due to the condition of its housing stock, which can also be mitigated through increasing the energy efficiency of housing.

The report also sets out the need to ensure that new council housing is delivered to the highest possible standards of carbon reduction. This should include the installation of high-performing insulation, energy efficient heating, low energy lighting and low carbon/renewable energy systems such as solar PV panels and heat pumps. Any development will nonetheless be required to follow policy CS2 of the Adopted Leicester Core Strategy and relevant Building Regulations. A toolkit is also being developed to support the achievement of reduced carbon emissions in council capital construction and renovation projects.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

4 Summary of Appendices

Appendix A – Scoping document
Appendix B – Meeting notes
Appendix C – Report to the Task Group in August 2022
Appendix D – Report to the Task Group in February 2022

5 Officers to Contact

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Scrutiny Policy Officer
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APPENDIX A: Scoping document

The scoping document below was agreed by the Overview Select Committee on 24 March 2022

To be completed by the Member proposing the review		
1.	Title of the proposed scrutiny review	<u>Housing Crisis in Leicester</u>
2.	Proposed by	Cllr Paul Westley (Housing Commission chair)
3.	Rationale	To understand and influence the factors which have combined to create a shortage of affordable housing for the communities within Leicester. Influences will include regional and national policy and economic and social factors
4.	Purpose and aims of the review	To propose changes to local and national policy to mitigate the effects of housing shortages and poor-quality housing. To provide a platform for campaigning on a local basis for a wider pool of affordable social and other housing. To contribute by so doing to council (and other) policy formation and to encourage outside agencies
5.	Links with corporate aims / priorities	Housing, and good quality housing, have a direct bearing on homelessness, overcrowding, mental and physical health and employment and education performance. Social housing in particular helps the life chances of the most deprived members of our communities.

6.	Scope	The review will include issues relating to the • housing department, which has direct responsibility for the council's housing stock, • environmental health, which has oversight of private rented sector housing conditions; • economic development, which covers skill supply and shortage issues within the construction sector; • Planning and development control, and the clear definition of section 106 objectives to support the growth of social housing on a site-specific and more city-wide basis.
7.	Methodology	The review will be conducted by a task group chaired by Cllr Gee. Membership need not be confined to members of the housing scrutiny commission. A series of meetings will receive local and national evidence on the issues set out in sections 4-6. The meetings will look at a range of issues, including tenure, supply of housing and affordability. The commission will seek information from local interested organisations and individuals, and will be provided with summaries of and links to national reports and data.
	Witnesses	City council witnesses (officers, executive members and councillors) Local organisations dealing with homelessness and associated issues (health, poverty, private housing standards) may also be called upon.
8.	Timescales	Up to six months
	Proposed start date	April 2022
	Proposed completion date	By September 2022

9.	Resources / staffing requirements	Scrutiny officer time within existing workload. The officer time from services within Housing and possibly other divisions contributing to the review. It is not anticipated that any additional resources will be required.
10.	Review recommendations and findings	Executive
11.	Likely publicity arising from the review	The review will from time to time attract media attention depending on the nature and quality of the material provided.
12.	Publicising the review and its findings and recommendations	These will go to the OSC (and executive). Usual media resources will be used to highlight the work in progress and the outcomes
13.	How will this review add value to policy development or service improvement?	The issues are national and regional, but the impacts are regional and local. They may help influence and frame policy development at council level.
To be completed by the Executive Lead		
14.	Executive Lead's Comments	I warmly welcome the Housing scrutiny reviews focus on the housing crisis which is probably one of the biggest challenges we face as a City now and also going in to the future. Failure by Central government to lead the way and affect new build delivery because of poor policies and lack of financial investment in new build housing has led us to a crisis where people's health and wellbeing is being significantly affected because they are unable to find the home that meets their and their families' needs. It is essential from this piece of work that as a local authority we are able as a single voice to loudly call for much, much more to be done by Central government to rectify their failings and help the people of Leicester to get the home they deserve.

Comments from the relevant Director		
15.	Observations and comments on the proposed review	The Scrutiny review working party by Housing scrutiny commission is welcomed to focus more attention on the Housing crisis that the City is facing. Highlighting the significant challenges and issues that brings for the people of Leicester and the ability for the City Council to be able to meet its statutory legal duties in relation to Homelessness and to enable people to be able to find suitable, secure and long term homes that meet their needs.
	Name	Chris Burgin
	Role	Director of Housing
	Date	14/3/2022
To be completed by the Scrutiny Support Manager		
16.	Will the proposed scrutiny review / timescales negatively impact on other work within the Scrutiny Team?	The review as anticipated can be carried out within existing team resources.
	Do you have available staffing resources to facilitate this scrutiny review	Yes
	Name	Francis Connolly
	Date	15 March 2022

APPENDIX B

Task Group meetings – notes of proceedings

Wednesday 27 April 2022

In attendance

Cllr Gee (Chair)
Cllr Fonseca
Cllr Kitterick
Cllr O Donnell
Cllr Pandya
Cllr Pickering
Cllr Rahman
Cllr Waddington
Cllr Whittle

Cllr Cutkelvin

Chris Burgin, Director of Housing
Jerry Connolly, Scrutiny Support Officer
Francis Connolly, Scrutiny Support Manager

Introductions

Cllr Gee welcomed all present to the meeting. He explained that this work would examine both the issues and challenges facing communities and individuals in Leicester as well as possible initiatives to confront such issues and challenges. It was noted that given the broad remit of the review members from across the City Council had been invited to participate.

Cllr Gee noted that this initial meeting would receive an outline presentation from Chris which set out some of the factors that have led to the current crisis, as well as the broader local and national context.

Presentation on the 'Housing Crisis'

Cllr Cutkelvin welcomed the work of this task group. She referred to the many occasions in which she and other councillors deal with those who are facing severe problems in respect of housing, with the most fundamental issue being an overall shortage of homes. She invited the group to inspect these problems in detail and to draw conclusions around what else can be undertaken by the City Council to support people and how the government can create better conditions to effectively deal with the problems.

Cllr Cutkelvin felt that it was vital that the extent of the current pressures was communicated publicly in a meaningful way and invited the task group to recommend appropriate action in respect of this.

Chris provided a presentation which set out some of the fundamental points that the task group could examine and was based upon a contextual paper that had been submitted to Housing Scrutiny Commission on 28 February. The following key points were made:

- The three key factors that have led to a crisis are population increase, lack of land/house building and tenure change/affordability.
- A national population increase of 11m over the next two years is anticipated.
- Due to the population increase, a further 1.5m new homes in the UK are required by 2031.
- There has been a sharp decline in access to affordable homes, and the government's target of 300,000 new homes each year has not been achieved since 1969.
- As a result, homelessness has increased, there is a lack of truly affordable housing and a lack of suitable housing to meet changing and more complex needs.
- Nationally, there has recently been a significant increase in the number of private renters as opposed to social renters.
- In Leicester, there has been a 20% reduction in the percentage of Council rented properties since 1981.
- Council stock continues to be lost via the Right to Buy scheme with 1,890 properties being lost in the past five years.
- Housing problems have led to increased health issues. 1 in 9 children now live in overcrowded properties. Poor housing standards are linked closely with chronic ill health, debt, disruptive child development and relationship breakdown.

Contributions from Task Group Members

Following the presentation, members asked questions and raised suggestions in terms of the future activity of the task group. The key points raised were as follows:

- (i) The review should explore in more detail the availability of land in the city for house building ventures.
- (ii) The review should also examine problems and constraints with the planning system that pose additional difficulties in helping to address the overall shortage of homes.
- (iii) This should include interaction with those developing the Local Plan in terms of how opportunities to develop more social housing are being taken forward. In particular, it was felt that the designation of some particular sites should be questioned and that more imaginative solutions (including greater provision of social housing) for the city's more significant sites should be proposed.

- (iv) The review could to some extent consider how some services to tenants could be improved such as improvements to home maintenance. It was accepted that the review will primarily focus on the key themes that contribute to the housing crisis and the overall shortage of housing, and that issues that relate to various channels of LCC service delivery would be raised, and in many cases, it may be recommended for these to be examined as part of the Housing Scrutiny Work Programme.
- (v) In addition to improvements to home maintenance, one issue suggested for separate exploration by the Housing Scrutiny Commission concerned the process behind void property and the need to understand more about void turnaround times.
- (vi) The issue of imposing rent caps was raised, with it being noted that this may be an area to seek further exploration by national government.
- (vii) Consideration could be given in seeking the views of Housing Associations/Shelter on the issues faced by the housing crisis.
- (viii) Further information was sought in respect of the level of overcrowding that related specifically to City Council tenants.
- (ix) It was also questioned whether land owned by the city council beyond the LCC boundary could be utilised to help fulfil house building requirements. Chris sought to find out more detail.

Next Steps

- A programme of further task group meetings should be arranged throughout the summer.
- That the next meeting would focus on the need to provide more homes and would examine the challenges to house building with the Head of Planning and other key internal stakeholders.
- Further sessions would then be held to cover the broader themes set out in Chris' presentation and suggested by members as above.
- Consideration was needed in respect of the involvement of external stakeholders including those suggested in point vii above.
- Further information be provided by the Director of Housing in response to the points outlined in points viii and ix above.

Wednesday 29 June 2022

In attendance

Cllrs Whittle; Westley; Cutkelvin; Fonseca; Kitterick; Pandya
Chris Burgin, Director of Housing
Richard Sword: Director: City developments and neighbourhoods
Grant Butterworth: LCC Head of Planning
Jerry Connolly, Scrutiny Support Officer
Francis Connolly, Scrutiny Support Manager

Apologies

Cllrs Gee; Waddington: O'Donnell; Pickering

Richard Sword opened the meeting by setting the local and national context. There was a national crisis in housing... with Leicester part of that pattern.

What challenges face us? Leicester is quite small, and available sites are small and quite complex.

We needed to deliver 14,700 new homes in ten years... Planning team had been conducting development work and consultation on local plan...

During preparation the government had added 35% to development numbers from original targets in 2020.

There were 18,700 homes to deliver that we can't deliver on the sites on the city...

He said that while it was easy to focus on negatives there are lots of positives in the development picture. For example, housing associations had delivered effectively. Difficulties included cost inflation and many sites were in private ownership and this provided a barrier to development of social rented housing. Cllr Westley commented that the government wanted private developments and not social housing and suggested housing associations were a law unto themselves...

Grant Butterworth introduced a review of progress on the Local Plan.

He said there were a number of major routes to affordable housing provision

- Via housebuilders through S106 funding
- Direct delivery by council housing or development teams (supported by HRA funds, Homes England sometimes with S106 funds)
- Direct delivery by Housing associations (who act as developers)
- Through the council acting as a master developer bringing sites to market

He said that for the next Local Plan we were looking with five strategic sites, not all owned by the council, but that some of the sites may not be allocated...

With small sites, many are owned by the council, most are designated open space but have been subject to opposition through the consultation process.

Cllr Kitterick asked: Are student numbers included?

The response was that student accommodation does count towards the target and had contributed to up to half the delivery target in some previous years.

Grant Butterworth said the government kept increasing targets... the new 35% increase for the 20 largest Cities was undeliverable for many including Leicester. Unless districts agree to take some of the city's allocations the City would not be able "we cannot meet to meet the unmet housing need target. "

The previous local plan target had been c 30k houses. The Strategic Growth Plan envisaged Districts taking around a third of city growth to 2031 and two-thirds to 2050. The 35% uplift now means around 19,000 of the new local Plan target would need to be met across the county between now and 2036.

If county district councils don't sign up the local plan could not progress, he told the task group.

Delivering affordable housing was more difficult on brownfield sites.

He was asked: Why can't we deliver social housing on all sites?

He responded that the Government Guidance required a Local Plan supply to be proven as being viable and deliverable so such an aspiration would not comply with this.

Cllr Kitterick pointed to the undeveloped Dover Street site. He said it was allocated for prime office development. This will not happen. Why can we not reclassify it? The meeting was told there were two active sites, including Dover Street, under discussion. We are still seeing strong demand for high grade office land.

Cllr Kitterick responded that the land "has been empty for decades." He felt there was a lack of imagination in the development team. He commented that the private sector would build houses on Dover Street.

The chair asked: "Are the needs of Leicester people taken into account in the local plan?"

Grant Shuttlesworth responded that we did housing demand assessments to establish an evidence-based assessment of this.

He was asked: Could we demolish bungalows?

He responded that the accessible single storey dwellings such as bungalows were in demand and needed as part of the supply but were not provided by developers so re-provision would fall to the council to deliver and such developments were land hungry.

Cllr Cutkelvin said: "We are looking to secure a policy of housing crisis to embed it in wider council policy."

Future action: Members were told about the setting up and early operations of a city council **Housing Delivery Board...**

Tuesday 26 July 2022

Present

Cllr Geoff Whittle, Cllr Gary O'Donnell, Cllr Sue Waddington, Cllr Stephan Gee (chair), Cllr Fonseca
Cllr Paul Westley, Cllr Patrick Kitterick
Sean Atterbury; Chris Burgin, Simon Nichols, Justin Haywood, Alison Lea.

Homeless Prevention and Support

Justin Haywood briefed members on issues relating to how market pressures are affecting communities within the city. He indicated that being excluded from a family home was a significant cause of evictions.

Renting itself was becoming more expensive and presented the following data:

- £85 a week for 3-bed council house
- £89 a week for ha housing
- £150 or more in the private sector

He said the freezing of the Housing Support limit was an issue which contributed to rising housing-related debt and poverty and said that 30% of tenants experienced in-work poverty, a rate which had doubled since 2000.

Private rented sector (PRS)

Alison Lea, manager of the PRS licensing team, spoke about the trends and issues found in PRS housing. For tenants, issues mainly related to housing disrepair, but overcrowding was also an issue.

PRS was not a solution to housing problems but it did provide an avenue of relief, Cllr Cutkelvin said. Generation rent people may spend their whole lives in the private rented sector.

Forty-six per cent of those under 35 were renting. There was an entire generation renting rather than buying. House prices had risen, but rising rents have meant people cannot afford to save up to make a deposit.

Looking at Leicester, of the 142k homes in city 35% were in the PRS; this compared with a 19% PRS share in the national picture. 50k homes in Leicester were PRS and some wards had 70% PRS housing. 43k students might contribute to the growth and concentrations in some areas of the city of PRS.

Common issues within the sector's housing included mould, disrepair and overcrowding. Alison stressed, however, that large numbers of PRS homes were in good condition.

Within Leicester, part of the PRS team deals with houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). There were around 1k licenced HMOs Alison said: We have a push to find unlicensed HMOs. the evidence was that there were more HMOs which should be licensed.

Around 50 properties had been licensed within the last few weeks, she said. We have signposted tenants to getting rent rebates because of the unlicensed HMOs, she told the Task Group.

There were two different licensing schemes, relating to:

- Smaller HMOs
- Selective licensing for areas where all rented homes are licensed...

The selective licensing scheme went live on 7 July. There is a three months freeze before it goes live in October.

Officers think there are 9k properties whose owners will need to apply for a licence.

Members were invited to comment on issues raised during the meeting.

On control of HMOs Cllr Kitterick said Article 4 directions had resisted attacks on it.

Cllr Waddington asked Cllr Cutkelvin why the authority had been worse hit by right to buy (RTB) sales than comparable authorities. A combination of the council's housing being kept in good condition and tenants being targeted by organisations encouraging people to buy their homes had contributed to the higher RTB sales.

Tuesday 2 August 2022

Present

Cllr Gee, (Chair); Cllrs Whittle, Pandya, Chamund, Fonseca, Waddington and Kitterick

Apologies

Cllr Westley

UPDATED REPORT ON HOUSING DELIVERY NUMBERS

Simon Nicholls briefed members of the Task group on progress towards the Labour Manifesto commitment of 1500 homes during the four-year term of the administration.

His report was based on report to the Housing Scrutiny Commission on 1 August covering the same topic.³ The report suggested that the department was likely to achieve at least 1100 new homes. This was 77% of the manifesto target, and a 37% increase on any previous administration's provision of affordable housing in the city.

Simon said a number of factors had combined or were combining to slow the development programme. Covid 19 issues had hit development and building programmes since 2020, and high inflation and materials and labour shortages were affecting current and future building rates.

A further factor was a growing shortage of housing development land. This was an issue relating to the delay in setting a new Local Plan. Sites available on the current Local Plan were becoming more expensive to develop in terms of both ground conditions and diminishing size of sites available for housing development.

The department had been able to use receipts from right-to-buy (RTB) sales to buy private or non-affordable homes to add to the council's stock. Changes to the rules governing how much RTB funds could be used to buy housing made this a more difficult option.

In response to questions from members of the task group Simon said the council was keen to influence space standards; many of those in need of housing were family units with several children.

Members were also keen to know if homes could be adapted for use of people with disabilities, including wheelchair access. Officers said space standards were an important factor in both development of housing and when acquiring homes from the private sector.

³ [House Building Delivery: Housing Scrutiny Commission, 1 August 2022](#)

In a wider development context members were directed to the Stocking Farm redevelopment, which included housing and local facilities and amenities.

Member local knowledge

Discussion with members indicated that local councillors might be aware of homes, sites or developments which had been empty or under-occupied, and it was suggested a mechanism be devised for members to provide potentially useful information to officers be devised. (Possible recommendation).

Local housing company

Work had been done to prepare the way to set up a third-party local housing company controlled by the council but this had been deferred for a variety of reasons. With the increasing restrictions being brought in by government, particularly relating to RTB rules and rules relating to spending RTB receipts it was suggested that further work be done on establishing a local housing company.

Work could include research on the economics and finances of housebuilding.

Members also asked for information on formulae used to define what was affordable. Officers said this could be provided.

IMPACT OF HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

Justin Haywood presented a report to members.

He said the reasons for homelessness were complex but that homelessness was likely to increase. A shortage of homes and high private sector rents made it hard for families to move into permanent accommodation

The department was finding itself increasingly using temporary accommodation, and the lengths of stay in the accommodation were also increasing. This was putting stress on the functioning of the homelessness unit.

Staff had found there was an increase in street homelessness (with for example sofa surfers being evicted by friends and family). This was a change in pattern from the entrenched street homeless cadre.

The private rented sector (PRS) played a vital role in housing people. We should not turn away from it, should embrace good landlords and taking actions to improve landlord behaviour as well as preventing evictions.

“We try to reach out to and help landlords who are prepared to rent homes to “difficult” clients. It’s increasingly difficult to find housing affordable to tenants but we are looking to provide pathway from homelessness to tenancies.

We ringfence a proportion of housing for vulnerable families and single people. Vulnerable clients were often in danger of or recovering from rough sleeping...

Also, we are seeing more new faces.

It is hard to stress too highly the danger which the housing crisis poses ... we will see the approach of the crisis - with rising evictions through rent or mortgage arrears.

Cllr Waddington commented that officers had referred to the problem of affordability and the use of discretionary housing support (DHP) for at least an interim period for households but felt that this was not a sustainable model.

Cllr Cutkelvin said vulnerable family groups being put into the PRS to remove the threat of homelessness were able to stay on the council's waiting list as priorities.

The meeting was told that around a third of council home lettings went to people who were homeless or on the verge of being homeless. While it was hard to get data from other authorities it was estimated that in a major East Midlands authority up to 80% of lettings went to homeless or near-homeless households.

Cllr Fonseca commented that rents in the private sector in the east of the city were escalating.

Cllr Pandya said that most of her casework related to housing problems.

Justin Haywood commented that there was a huge variance in rental rates across the city...N Evington rents were very high, he said.

Cllr Cutkelvin said this working party can put pressure on other parts of the council to recognise there is a wide-ranging housing crisis. The crisis spread to other services, including health and mental health issues.

But she added that some work with private landlords had been going on for some time... feedback from landlords was vital in developing useful measures to help people who were homeless or threatened with it. Members asked whether Border House might ever be viable.

Cllr Cutkelvin said it had been condemned by the Fire Service and added that the units at Border House were very institutionalised.

Current planning was not to increase temporary accommodation but to increase the supply of stepped housing, with Dawn Centre being adapted for use as an assessment centre.

IMPACT OF THOSE WITH NO RESOURCE TO PUBLIC FUNDS

Officers said these client groups were among the most vulnerable. Typically they might be coming through the refugee resettlement system –

Afghan, Ukraine and other troubled nations- or be described as illegal immigrants.

Rough Sleepers Initiative funding combined with severe weather periods helped the authority to work with inkling groups or individuals within this general heading.

Cllr Waddington commented that (due to their vulnerable status) this was almost the most worrying group. "I find it worrying that people are on the streets and there is nothing we can do. Can we support charities to help these groups?" she asked.

Officers said:"We work with One Roof. We allocate RTB receipts to homes they are buying.

We are working with the homelessness charter..one thing they are considering is having a scheme (like with Ukrainians) but also looking at the safety issues

" We've been working with some quite large organisations to see if they can provide housing..

Members asked about severe hot weather, as well as cold.

The task group was told a severe weather protocol (over 25deg for two days) had been signed off by government. But we would like to be able to help more quickly.

COMPLEX NEEDS OF TENANTS

Gurjit Minhas commented that housing and other service areas were affected, but the housing department has ended up dealing with a wide range of issues. These included working with refugees, more people with complex needs and often without any other support. Housing staff have been providing mental health and health support.

The STAR service helped tenants with most complex needs...

Trainer accommodation (stepped with training on life skills). We are working with ASC – that is what is needed in very many cases.

HOUSING REGISTER

Members were told that the numbers on the register were consistent but that this was not a measure of housing need. This was more reflected in an increase in waiting times: band one waiting times had doubled (and band two times extended by a year. People were having to go to the PRS.

Later this year there will be a review of housing allocation policy to make sure people in most need have best access to housing. Those with lesser need will wait longer.

APPENDIX C

A summary of the work & Proposals by the Council to tackle the crisis

To: Housing Scrutiny Commission: 1 August 2022

Housing Crisis Working Party

From: Chris Burgin, Director of Housing

Purpose of Briefing Note

To inform the Working party about the ongoing work taking place to tackle the Housing Crisis by the Council and pressures and proposals to consider to further tackle it.

Summary

This briefing contains potential Central Government asks and actions and also Local Authority asks and actions under the following areas;

- Council Housing
- Private Sector Housing
- New Builds

The options are intended to drive national policy change and alongside this be clear about local commitments to address the Housing crisis.

Leicester City Council has been working hard to tackle the Housing challenges in the City and this has been driven by the Councils political priorities.

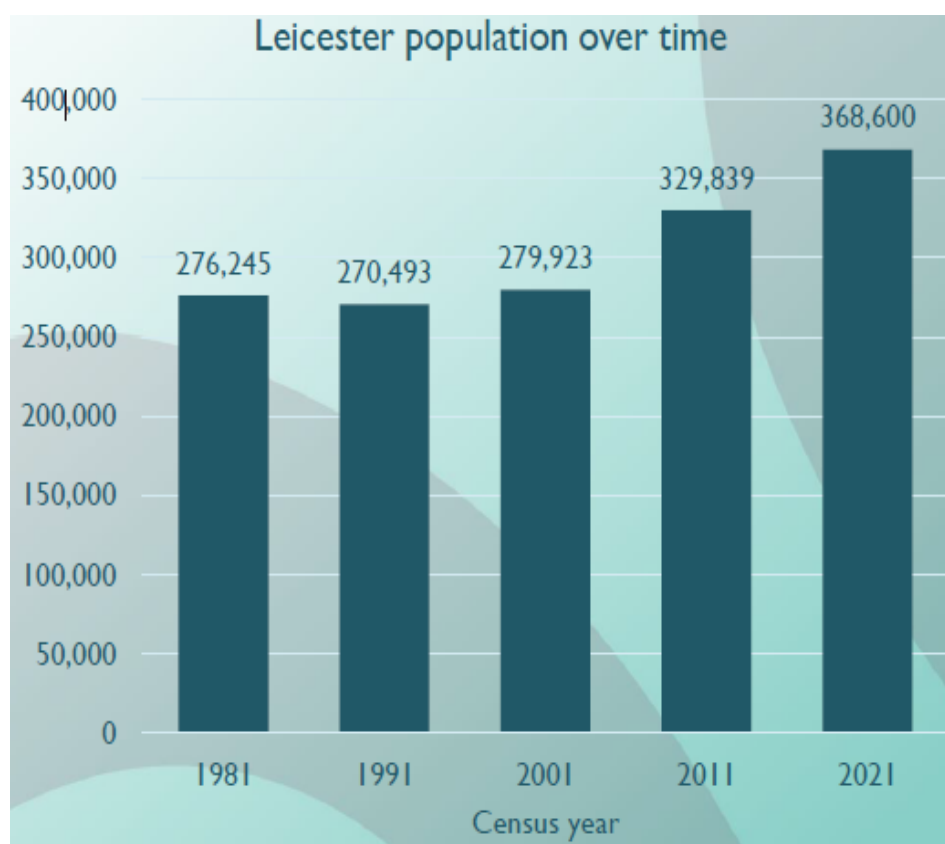
BACKGROUND

Leicester City is the largest City in the immediate area of the East Midlands. It is a predominantly urban areas located in the centre of the County of Leicestershire.

East Midlands City Populations				
Area	Status	Census 2001	Census 2011	Census 2021
Derby City	Unitary	221,708	248,752	261,400
Leicester City	Unitary	279,923	329,839	368,600
Nottingham City	Unitary	266,988	305,680	323,700

Leicester provides housing, employment, shopping, public administration, leisure and has three Hospitals and two Universities. The Universities had a combined student population of 43,100 students in the 2017/2018 academic year.

Leicester is one of the fastest growing Cities in England as can be seen by the changing table set out below which demonstrates a continual growth in households and homes and the changing face of Housing over the years 1991 to 2021.



Leicester City's Current Actions to Tackle the Housing Crisis

Leicester City Council has been working hard to tackle the Housing challenges in the City and this has been driven by the Council's political priorities. In the context of the challenges set out Nationally and in Leicester, highlights of the efforts being made by the Council are set out below.

The Affordability of Housing

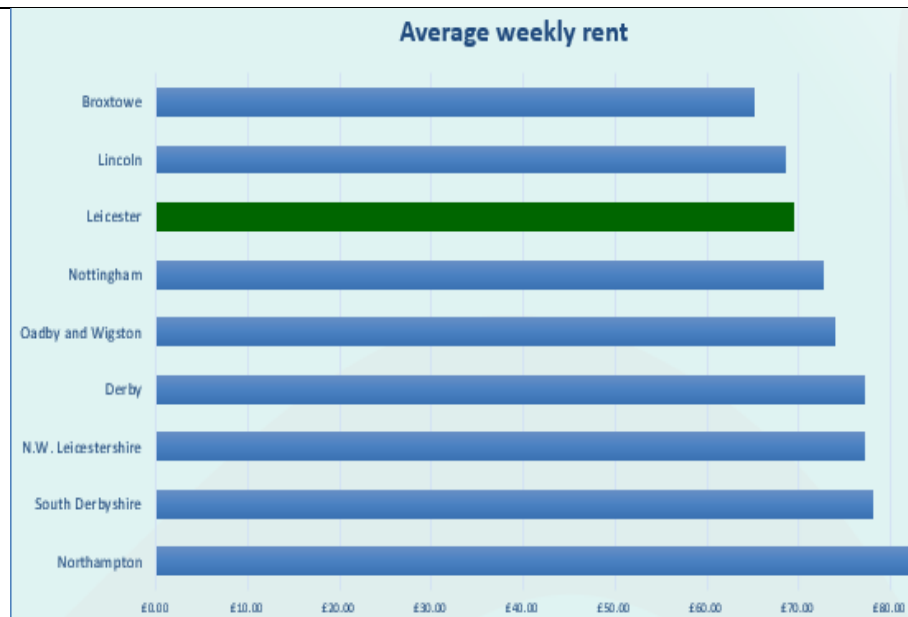
Our council rents remain the lowest in the city for any tenure type making them the most affordable. Average private rented sector rents for a 3-bedroom house are currently around £155 per week, average Housing Association rents average out at £89 per week, whilst council rents are £85, for this type of property.

Tenure Type	Average weekly rent
LCC	£85.22
Housing Association	88.59
Private Rented Sector	155.34

Comparing ourselves with other local authorities in the country and Leicester's overall average council rents are amongst the lowest in the country, 19th lowest out of 20 for comparator authorities.

Authority	Average rent	Authority	Average rent
1. Slough	£102.83	11. Wolverhampton	£77.34
2. Bradford	£100.07	12. Derby	£77.26
3. Liverpool	£85.45	13. Newcastle	£74.53
4. Milton Keynes	£84.59	14. Manchester	£74.19
5. Luton	£82.37	15. Nottingham	£72.78
6. Salford	£82.04	16. Kingston	£72.21
7. Birmingham	£79.82	17. Leeds	£72.01
8. Oldham	£79.78	18. Sheffield	£71.13
9. Bristol	£79.29	19. Leicester	£69.57
10. Sandwell	£79.06	20. Stoke	£69.04

Even when comparing ourselves with other local authorities in the East Midlands we have amongst the lowest rents. Northampton's average weekly rent is £82, North West Leicestershire's is £77 and Oadby and Wigston's is £74. We have only found Lincoln and Broxtowe to have slightly lower average rents than our £69 per week.



The Council has strong services to support and assist tenants living in Council housing, ensuring tenancies are sustained and maintained and income is maximised for both the local authority and for the tenants. In 2021/22 the Income Management collected a total of 99.86% of rent due with only 7 evictions taking place in that year for rent arrears.

A total of 95.6% of new Council tenancies have been sustained in 2021/22 by the hard work and efforts of our Tenancy Management team and STAR team, with the STAR team helping tenants to generate and maximise income totalling over one million pounds of additional income claimed over the 21/22 year.

Work is ongoing to improve the thermal efficiency of Council Housing stock with ongoing investment through the Housing capital programme to maintain Council Housing while improving the thermal efficiency and reduce running costs for those living in these properties.

During the manifesto period the Council have invested over £80m on improving our Council Housing which includes work to improve the thermal efficiency of these properties such as external wall insulation. The Council has been successful in securing £1.8m of funding from the Green Homes grant towards this work on Council Housing and has recently been successful in securing £3.4m of funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation fund towards this work.

A Quality PRS Sector

Council housing now makes up only 15.5% of Leicester's properties and while low rental levels can help those in the greatest need from an affordability perspective, wait times and very limited supply mean that

the City must have a quality private rented sector because of the growing size of this sector standing at 35% of the City's housing stock.

To this end the Council has launched a Private rented sector strategy that has the driver of improving Housing standards in the Private rented sector to ensure that housing in Leicester is the best standard it can be for those in need of housing.

Another key strand is to increase tenancy sustainment in the sector.



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 our ability to protect tenants' safety and rights, and tackle rogue/poor landlords. Maximising this, whilst maintaining a balanced, fair, and proportionate approach, will ultimately lead to the raising of housing standards within the sector

Included within the strategy and already being consulted upon is the option to utilise licencing scheme to drive up standards. This is a key strand in targeting and addressing unfit accommodation in the City.

Another key strand is supporting and helping the sector to improve its climate credentials in accessing and drawing in funding to achieve this work. The Council successfully secured £6.37m from the Green Homes Grant funding with over 1,100 households having bid for support through the local scheme.

A further key strand is the Homelessness Call before you Serve offer & strengthened Homelessness offer to PRS landlords and managing agents to aid the increase in tenancy sustainment in this sector.

Beyond these items, work is ongoing to improve our communications online to ensure we have quality advice and information to landlords and agents linked to the PRS.

Our PRS team is working hard focussing on Multi use HMO buildings that are not correctly licenced with good success in identifying these and tackling landlords. This team is also working on wider property compliance and tackling rogue landlords.

Homelessness

The City Council's current Homelessness strategy 2019 – 2023, drives ongoing strong delivery of the homeless services in the city.

LCC has been successful in securing over £6m additional revenue across 10 external funding pots to enhance and strengthen Homelessness services in the city.

Further funding has been secured through the Health Inequalities fund for 2x additional Social Workers to work with those going through Homelessness who do not meet the ASC Statutory threshold. The Changing Futures bid for £2.6m has been successful working with partners to help and support the most complex clients. A further bid to the Rough Sleeper Drug and Alcohol treatment funding for £1.2m to provide extra support to help people recover from drugs and alcohol misuse has also been successful. A bid has also been submitted linked to Offenders Accommodation & a recent bid to undertake a pilot providing additional Respite Rooms for those suffering Domestic Abuse and facing Homelessness has also strengthens the offer.

The Council has significantly reduced the number of rough sleepers on the street and is clear that 'No one needs to sleep rough on Leicester streets'. Over recent years significant investment and efforts have gone in to reducing down Rough Sleepers to single figures with anyone on the streets refusing to come into available Temporary accommodation. A Rough Sleepers Next Step Strategy has been developed and implemented and this has now been superseded by an Ending Rough Sleeping strategy.

Services continue to be strengthened through the Strategy actions including procurement of Temporary accommodation for those leaving prison completed securing 30 units increased from 20 and a Leicestershire wide new Pathway has been developed and signed off by all District and City partners in conjunction with Prison and Probation

Temporary accommodation has also been re-procured for singles and wider work to develop the singles offer at the Dawn Centre is ongoing. Alongside this officers are working on the development of increased numbers and types of stepped accommodation for singles. Through the acquisitions strategy, additional accommodation has been secured to facilitate this accommodation type.

A joint procurement exercise to procure young person temporary accommodation has just successfully concluded and being implemented.

Launch of the St Mungos Hub to facilitate work placement and work opportunities has now taken place. LCC are also piloting development of employment opportunities with BEAM for 1 year to test this opportunity.

The Family offer of Homes not hostels is in progress with the development of a network of independent homes across the city available as the Family temporary accommodation offer moving away from an institutional hostel with the staffing elements complete and the procurement just concluding.

Officers are now preparing the evidence base that will form the basis of the new Homelessness strategy for the city for the period 2023 to 2028.

Collapse in the supply of truly affordable homes

The Council has now approved over £200m to the delivery of the manifesto commitment to increase the supply of affordable housing. A pipeline of delivery of 1500 units on multiple sites has been identified and agreed between 2019 and 2023. The manifesto target has resulted in long-term concerted efforts across the council to seek to deliver more affordable housing and, by 13th June 2022, 853 new affordable housing homes had been completed, and a further 298 are currently in the pipeline

Delivery of Housing Leicester Phase 1 of new Council Housing has delivering 29 units across 6 small sites including bungalows which are wheelchair accessible. Full planning has been secured on Saffron Velodrome for 38 properties and procurement has been completed and a builder secured for this site which is now in the process of building these homes. The Lanesborough Rd site is pending full planning permission and this will deliver a further 37 units. Additional Phase 2 B sites are also being worked on to deliver a further 18 new units during 22/23 and other work on Stocking Farm (50), FLEC (33 units) , Southfields Newry (30). Early preparations work is now starting on Phase 3 which should deliver 53 new homes across a further 7 sites.

A roadmap of delivery is now being created to maximise the Council's opportunities to build more new homes for the City in the coming years.

An extensive Acquisitions programme has been going on for the duration of the manifesto commitment and by the end of this financial year 21/22 a total of 664 properties will have been acquired.

During the manifesto period it is expected to invest over £9m on the provision of adaptations to ensure that this Housing is suitable for those living in it. To date since 2019 the Council has invested over £8m in to Disabled Facilities grant and Council House adaptations to facilitate the Adaptations service and help people that need adaptations to continue to be able to live in their current home. A total of 1,889 adaptation/DFGs have been completed to date providing help to over 1000 people to stay in their own homes.

The Council has also recently launched an Overcrowding Strategy to tackle the significant challenges faced in the City, which far exceed regional neighbours.

Appendix D

Housing crisis assessment: Housing Scrutiny Commission: 28 February 2022

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the Housing crisis that is going on in this country and in Leicester.
- 1.2 The report guides you through why the Country is facing a Housing crisis and how the changing face of Housing in this country and this City mean that for many Home ownership is not even a dream, renting in the ballooning private rented sector is unaffordable and the severe lack of truly affordable homes is placing peoples finances, health and wellbeing at serious risk.
- 1.3 This report contains and covers;
 - The Changing face of Housing in this country and Leicester (3.2 & 4.1)
 - The Affordability of Housing (3.3 & 4.2)
 - Homelessness (3.4 & 4.3)
 - Collapse in the supply of truly affordable homes (3.5 & 4.4)
 - The Council's efforts to tackle the Housing Challenges
- 1.4 The report is intended to drive national policy change and alongside this be clear about local commitments to address the Housing crisis.

2. Recommended action

- 2.1 That the Housing Scrutiny Commission note the urgency of action on the Housing crisis and in response set up a task group to determine clear asks of central government and the local authority.

3. Background – The National Context

- 3.1.1 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reports that there will be a population increase of 11 million over the next 2 decades. People are growing older and living longer. It is estimated that over the coming years the population of over 65's will increase by 7 million.
- 3.1.2 2.9 million people aged 20-34 are living with parents and for many home ownership is no longer a tenure of choice or aspiration and the private rented sector is often the only choice for newly forming households which is producing "generation rent".
- 3.1.3 The English Housing survey 2016/2017 reports that "While the under 35s have always been overrepresented in the private rented sector, over the last decade or so the increase in the proportion of such households in the Private Rented Sector has been particularly pronounced. In 2006-07, 27%

of those aged 25-34 lived in the private rented sector. By 2016-17 this had increased to 46%.

- 3.1.4 Over the same period, the proportion of 25-34 year olds in owner occupation decreased from 57% to 37%. In other words, households aged 25-34 are more likely to be renting privately than buying their own home.
- 3.1.5 In 2016/2017 5% of households in the Private Rented Sector were living in over-crowded accommodation.
- 3.1.6 The supply of truly affordable homes for rent still falls well short of what was delivered historically to meet the needs of the population living in inadequate housing and for whom buying remains a distant dream. Research by the Centre for Social Justice found that;
- tonight, over 90,000 families and more than 120,000 children will go to sleep in 'temporary accommodation' (including bed and breakfasts), with serious implications for health and education;
 - over two thirds (69 per cent) of private renters in the lower two income quintiles spend 30 per cent or more of their disposable income on rent, representing 1.2 million households;
 - an estimated 150,000 properties see parents sharing a bedroom with their children;
 - high housing costs have critically undermined the impact of positive government initiatives to raise incomes among lower earners (such as increasing the minimum wage and personal tax allowance), constituting a key driver of 'in-work poverty'; and
 - 60 per cent of private renters have less than £100 in savings, making even low-cost home ownership affordable housing products (such as Shared Ownership or First Homes) unattainable.
- 3.1.7 The fiscal consequences of this hidden crisis are just as stark, as housing benefit spending has risen dramatically to account for systemic changes in the way our nation is housed. With more reliance on the ballooning private rented sector to house lower earners, expenditure on housing benefits is forecast to be £30.3 billion by 2021–22 – more than double the total government grant allocated for new affordable housing until 2026, in just one year. While the total benefit expenditure is higher overall in the social rented sector, the spending is considerably higher per home in the private rented sector.
- 3.1.8 Two million adults in Britain say they've faced discrimination when looking for a home. If you're Black or Asian, gay or bisexual, disabled, or a single mum, the housing crisis is much more likely to impact you. Structural racism and discrimination mean the odds are stacked. For example, many marginalised groups are more likely to be on a low income, so are forced into unsuitable homes. The government's 'no recourse to public funds' policy stops many migrants from accessing Universal Credit and homelessness assistance, and disproportionately affects people of colour. And 'No DSS' policies and practices from private landlords and letting

agents create huge barriers to accessing private rented homes. This discrimination is more likely to affect women, disabled people and Black and Bangladeshi families.

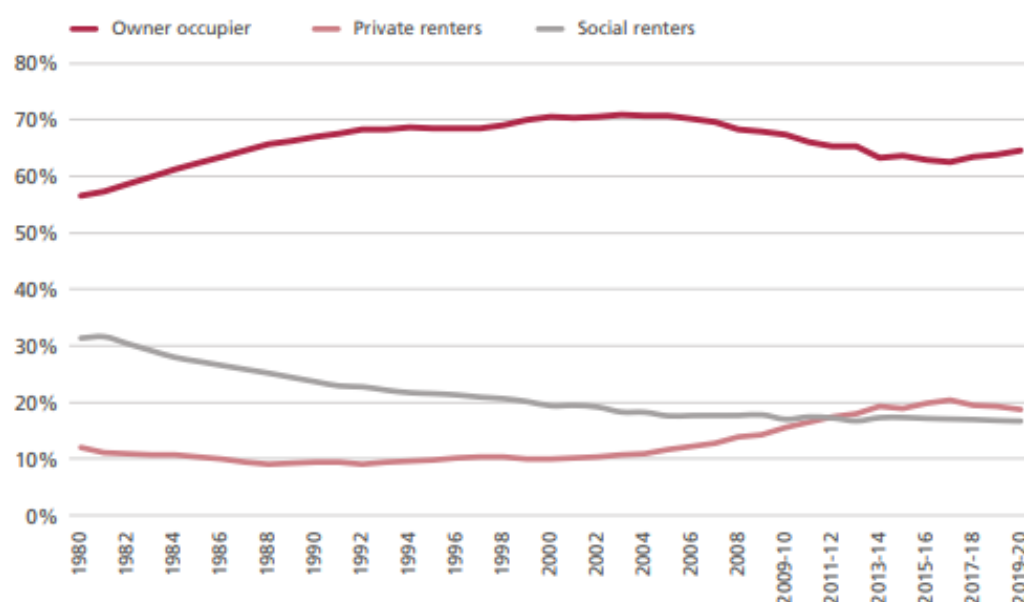
- 3.1.9 Nearly 1.4 million people are affected by the 'no recourse to public funds' policy. No recourse to public funds stops migrants with time-limited leave to remain in the UK from accessing statutory homelessness assistance or welfare benefits. The policy disproportionately hits people of colour and is directly responsible for forcing people into homelessness.

3.2 The Changing Face of Housing

- 3.2.1 Housing tenure has changed significantly exposing the underbelly of the housing crisis means appreciating the extent to which housing in England has changed in recent decades.
- 3.2.2 Over the course of the twentieth century, English society transformed from one primarily composed of private renters in the Edwardian era to one of 'mass homeownership'. But while owner-occupancy remains the most common housing tenure (at 65 per cent of households), recent decades have seen seismic shifts in the rented sectors of the housing system.
- 3.2.3 In the early 1980s, 31.7% of households lived in homes let by either a council or a housing association. Today this has fallen to 16.7%, the social rented sector having contracted from 5.4m households to 4m. Over the same period we have seen explosive growth in the private rented sector (PRS). Where this accommodated just one in ten households in the early 1980s, the PRS has since doubled to house nearly one in five (19%). This represents an increase of 2.4 million households since 2000.

Figure 1. Trends in tenure (%), 1980 to 2019–20

Figure 1. Trends in tenure (%), 1980 to 2019–20



Source: English Housing Survey

- 3.2.4 A large proportion of the growth of the PRS can be explained by the increase in ‘would-be homebuyers’ spending more time renting: in 2004, 9 per cent of those aged 34–44 lived in the private rented sector; by 2020 this had tripled to 27 per cent. Meanwhile, the rate of owner occupancy in this age band fell from 74 per cent to 56 per cent.
- 3.2.5 Yet a less remarked upon driver of growth in the PRS has been the influx of those on low to modest incomes who might once have lived in a council or housing association home, but now struggle to access social housing due to the limited, shrinking stock and increased demand. Today, 1.15 million households sit on official social housing waiting lists; the Local Government Association estimate that this could double to two million as economic impact of Covid-19 continues to materialise.
- 3.2.6 As such, the PRS now accounts for a much larger proportion of people living in ‘relative low income’ – that is, below 60 per cent of the median income. The tenure shift for this group has been particularly stark: in 2000, social rented housing provided 40 per cent of homes for those of working age on relative low incomes while the PRS housed 18 per cent. By 2020, the number of working age households on relative low incomes living in social rented housing had fallen to 33 per cent while the PRS had grown to 32 per cent.
- 3.2.7 There are now 1.6 million families raising children and 371,000 older households living in the PRS. It is the case that the private rented sector is much more expensive than other tenures. As such, the tenure shift described above has had profound implications for both the costs of living for people on low incomes and the Government’s welfare expenditure as this group is supported through housing benefits.

- 3.2.8 43% of families worry about their landlord ending their contract early, and section 21 means this is a constant possibility. Moving is expensive, you might lose your deposit, you have to pay moving costs, and rents might have risen since you last moved, so you might have to move away, or into a smaller place. Living in an insecure home has an impact on mental health. Children who moved once in the past year were almost 50% more likely to have lower wellbeing than those who hadn't. Chronic instability is particularly detrimental to children, affecting cognitive skills, academic achievement, social competence and behaviour. Children living in private rents and homeless accommodation may have to move frequently (as many as 5-10 times), disrupting their education and affecting their grades. Government research found that frequent movers are significantly less likely to obtain five A*-C GCSEs, or to be registered with a GP. Our broken private renting system is overdue serious reform.

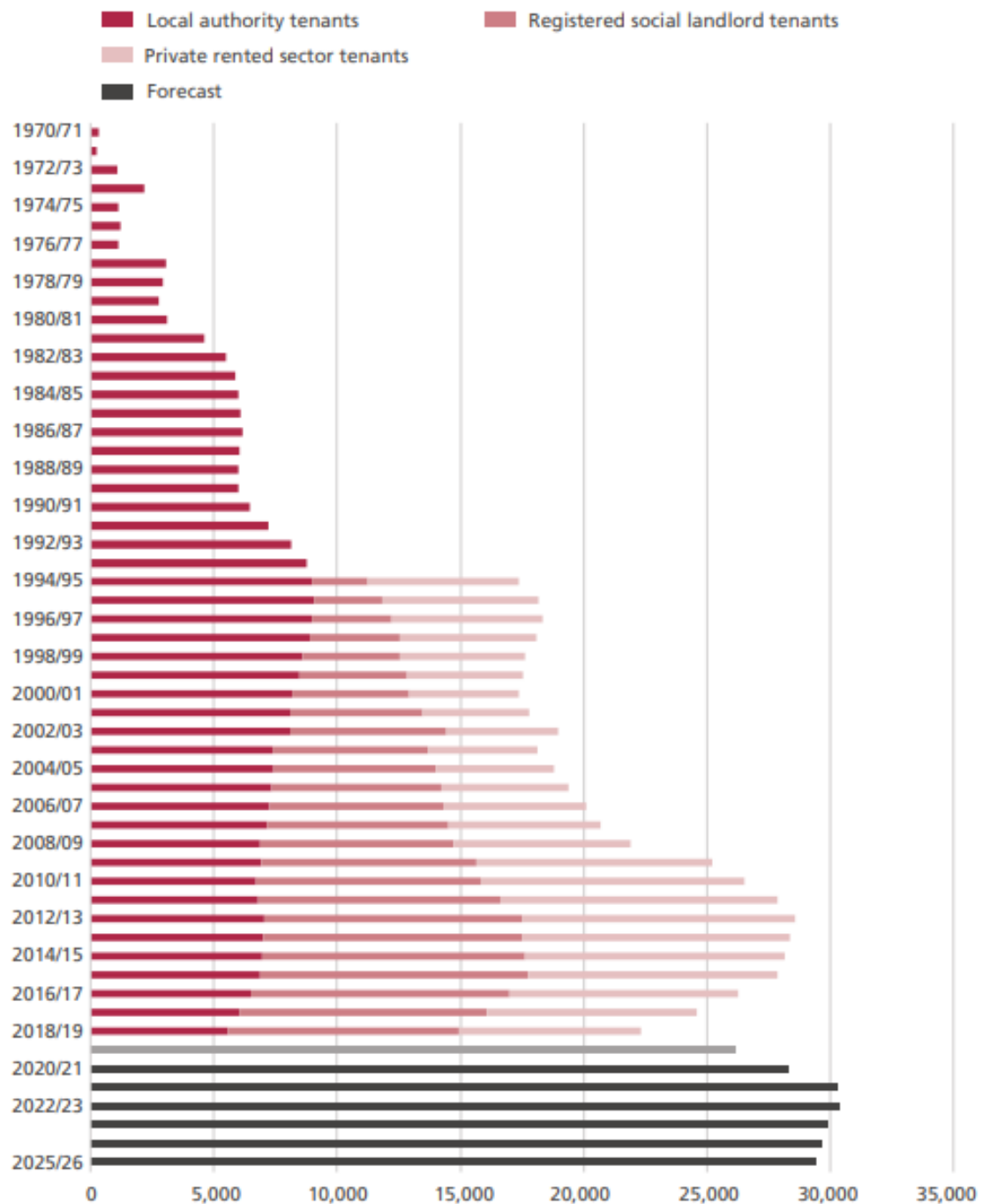
3.3 Affordability of Housing

- 3.3.1 A 2019 study by the Institute for Fiscal Studies found housing costs to have undermined positive steps to increase incomes in recent years, such as rising minimum wage levels. It concluded: 'the factor that has increased in-work poverty the most has been increased housing costs for lower income households compared to higher income households.'
- 3.3.2 The latest research on housing affordability among low-income private renters has been conducted by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF). Focusing on 1.8 million low-income private renting households, they have found that 55 per cent of these – close to one million – are struggling to afford their rents. Of these households, 624,000 have rents which are 'unaffordable' where this is defined as spending more than 30 per cent of household income on costs of accommodation (a widely-accepted definition). Crucially, this is measured after housing benefit is factored in. More than a fifth (22 per cent) of the overall group (and more than half of the group whose rents are unaffordable) in fact spend 40 per cent or more of net income on housing costs, representing a major squeeze on household budgets.
- 3.3.3 In addition to those whose rents are formally 'unaffordable', many experience 'affordability pressures'. This means that although they spend less than 30% of household income on rental costs (after housing benefit), their gross rental levels are disproportionately high as compared to their incomes. The JRF point out that those in this group have incomes that are so low that 'the vast majority of this group are in [relative] poverty after housing costs'.
- 3.3.4 Looking at the issue of work and housing affordability, the JRF analysis further bolsters the evidence that housing costs are undermining the financial benefits of employment for many low-income families. They note that '748,000 families who cannot afford their rent have one or more adult in work, two-thirds of whom work full-time'. This means that 'four in five

low income, private renting households who are in work find too much of their earnings are eaten up by high rents’.

- 3.3.5 One might think that affordability issues are at their most acute in London and the South East of England where rental costs tend to be highest, but the JRF analysis shows that high numbers of private renters with low incomes in the North and **Midlands** are still facing ‘substantial affordability pressures’. They point out that the differences in rental costs between north and south are also counterbalanced by the fact that, among privately renting households, a substantially larger proportion are on low incomes in the north than in the south: 55 per cent in the North and **48 per cent in the Midlands**, as compared to 35 per cent in the South and 25 per cent in London. Housing affordability must be understood as a crucial component of regional inequality in the UK today.
- 3.3.6 In recent decades government have decided to reduce the supply of low-cost rented homes on the supply-side and shift the primary source of government intervention to the demand-side, in the form of housing benefit.
- 3.3.7 As the number of low-income households living in the private rented sector has grown dramatically, this has contributed extraordinary and highly inefficient costs to the welfare system. The ‘strain’ taken by housing benefit as the supply of truly affordable homes has collapsed (see below, Figure 3) hit £26.1 billion in 2020. For context, this represents four times the Government’s budget for building homes in the same year – or twice the national police budget.
- 3.3.8 By 2021, in the fallout of the pandemic, this had risen to ‘almost’ £30 billion according to the Department for Work and Pensions. Critically, housing benefit is on average 25 per cent more expensive in the private rented sector than the social rented sector. The annual housing benefit spend on private rented housing support more than doubled to £9.3 billion in the 10 years between 2005–06 and 2015–16 as the sector grew. This has averaged approximately £8 billion every year thereafter. While data is not available for 2020–21, housing benefit spending on the PRS this year is likely to exceed £10 billion – a record high. Housing benefit spent on private rents exits the public purse in the form of an income transfer to private landlords, critically producing scant additional housing in the process, whereas spending directed at social landlords is reinvested into the construction of new homes. It has been estimated that every new social home built realises £780 in annual housing benefit savings.

Figure 3. Housing benefit expenditure (£ million real terms)



Source: DWP, Benefit Expenditure Caseload Tables, Outturn and Forecast: Spring Budget 2021

- 3.3.9 Consequently, private renters are growing as a proportion of the claimant population. In 2019, around a fifth of existing benefit claimants were renting in the private rented sector where rents are high – often surpassing housing benefit allowances and passing on high housing costs to low-income tenants. This has risen to a third after Covid-19. Given the rising number of older private renters – and families renting for longer

periods. The Government has been warned by internal forecasters that the total bill could reach £50 billion by 2050.

3.3.10 Housing benefit plays an important role in support families with the high costs of the private rental market as seen above. However, its role in taking the strain of the profound growth of the PRS fuelled by lower-income households is unsustainable and fiscally inefficient. Whilst it is true that public spending on housing costs are still larger in the social rented sector, crucially, as mentioned, the significant difference is that public funds spent in the social rented sector tend to produce additional social housing, marking a significant difference between the sectors.

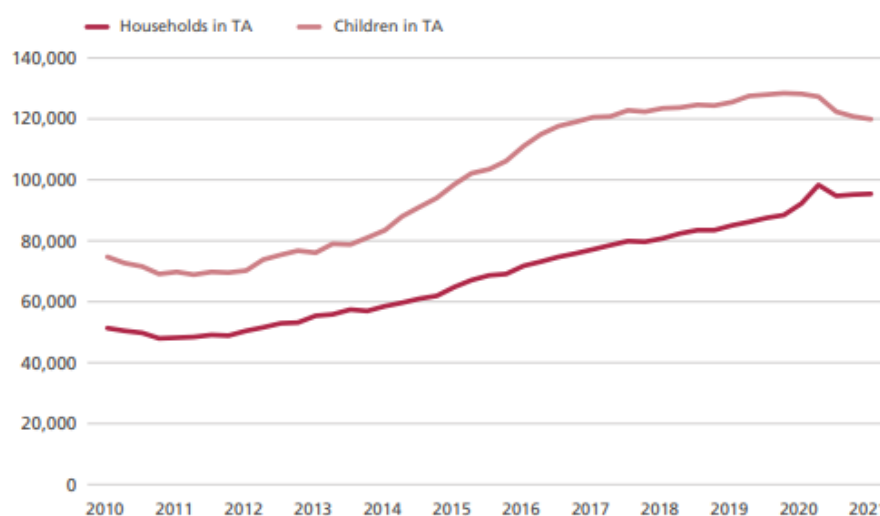
3.3.11 The hidden housing crisis far from excluding people from home ownership alone carries with it a range of social, economic, and fiscal costs. These are holding back the gains of employment and making it harder for families to reverse the pathways to poverty. But we have also found ourselves with a deeply inefficient reliance on housing benefit.

3.4 **Homelessness**

3.4.1 At the sharpest edge of the hidden housing crisis are those without a home at all. A key consequence of England's changing tenure balance has been the rapid increase in homelessness seen in recent years. Despite the effective 'Everyone In' programme, it remains the case that rough sleeping has risen at an alarming pace in the past decade. In 2019, the total rough sleeper count was 141 per cent higher than in 2010 with 4,266 sleepers on any given night. Recent government initiatives in response to the Covid-19 pandemic have brought the numbers of people sleeping rough down to the snapshot figure of 2,688 in those sleeping rough since last year.

3.4.2 Yet most people who are considered homeless are not sleeping rough on the street but are living in emergency or 'temporary' accommodation. This can range from temporary self-contained flats, to hostels with shared facilities, bed and breakfasts (B&Bs) or converted office blocks.

Figure 2. Households and children in temporary accommodation



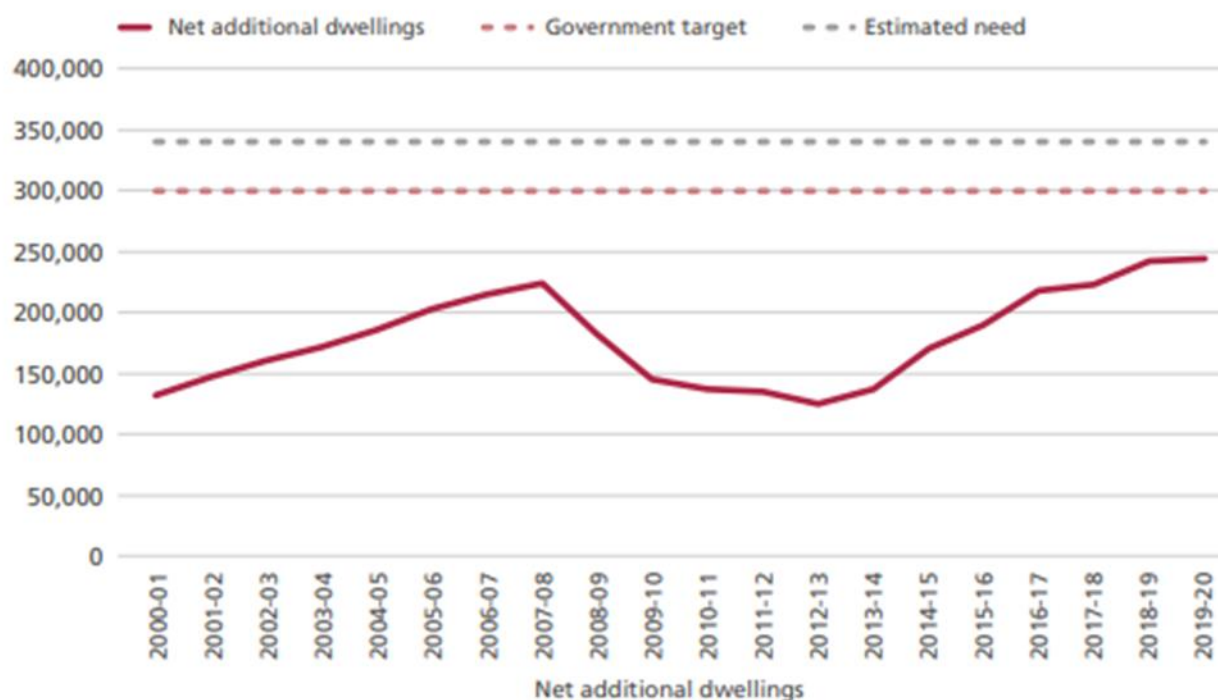
Source: MHCLG, Statutory Homelessness Live table TA1

- 3.4.3 As a larger proportion of low-income households have experienced less secure and more expensive private rentals, official data shows that the termination of a private tenancy has become the principal trigger for statutory homelessness in England. In the absence of sufficient social housing, the number of families housed in ‘temporary’ accommodation (including hotels and B&Bs) has reached 95,000, rising from 51,000 in 2010. Within these households are over 120,000 children, whose significantly worsened educational outcomes and mental health has been highlighted by the Children’s Commissioner as a consequence of the associated disturbance to their lives.

3.5 Collapse in the supply of truly affordable homes

- 3.5.1 The latest authoritative studies suggest there is ‘housing need’ of 1–1.5 million homes, requiring the annual delivery of new homes to reach 340,000 per year until at least 2031 to account for new household formation, concealed households and the backlog of existing need for suitable housing.
- 3.5.2 Recent governments have adopted 300,000 new homes a year as a target (with varying degrees of formality). Net additional dwellings in 2019–20 reached 243,000, a record high since the millennium. Still, the long-held 300,000 a year target has not been achieved since 1969 (see Figures 4 and 5). Meanwhile there have been prolonged periods of limited supply, for example between 2001 and 2010 where an average of 144,000 new homes were completed annually – 100,000 fewer per year than in the 1970s. In addition, recent prolonged periods of low interest rates, as well as fiscal schemes to support new homeowners, have added pressure on the demand-side of the market as well.

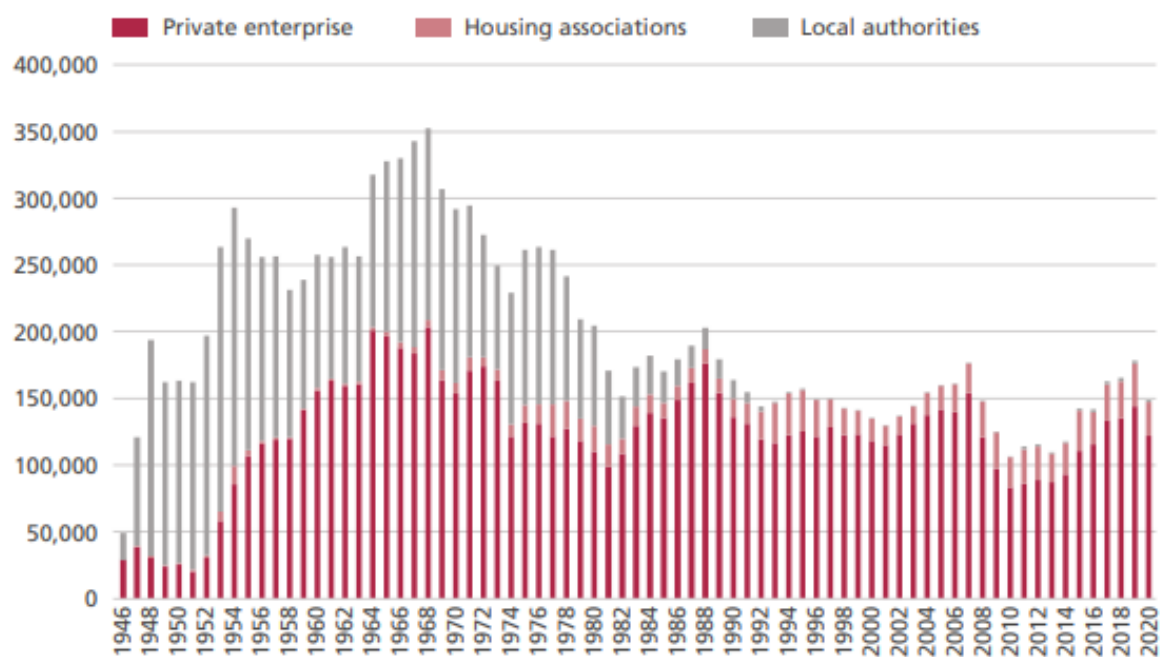
Figure 4. Net additional homes and estimated 'housing need'



Source: MHCLG Live Table 120, ONS Household projections for England⁵¹

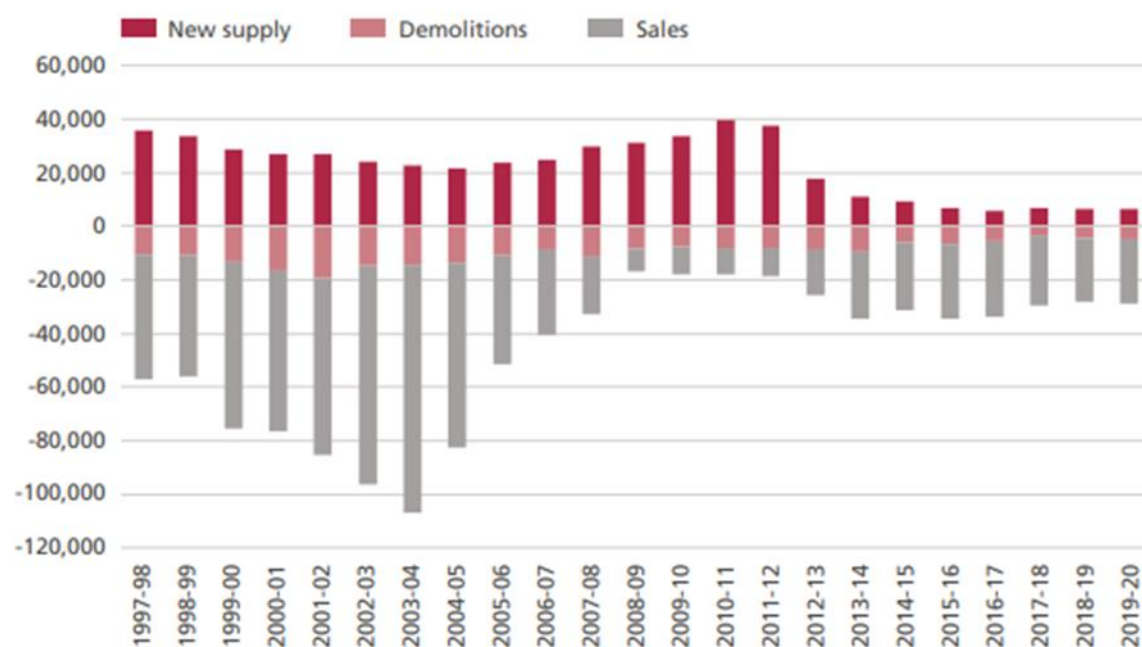
- 3.8.3 Focusing on the gross number of homes delivered does not tell us much about the types of homes being built, and for whom they best cater. For while additional housing supply at the higher end of the market can trickle down – eventually – to reduce demand at the lower end, the scale of need at the lower end of the market is so high that the Government intervenes to support the delivery ‘sub-market’ or ‘affordable homes’ at reduced rents and prices. £11.5 billion in central government grant has been committed to the Affordable Homes Programme 2021–26.
- 3.8.4 Historically, state intervention in delivering ‘affordable housing’ took the form of ‘social housing’ – provided by either local authorities or housing associations to meet the demand for affordable and secure housing at the lower end of the income distribution (see Figure 5). However, since the late 1980s there has been steep decline in the delivery of new social housebuilding. By 2019–20, social rented housing delivery was just over 6,600 while the Government has focused on the delivery of ‘affordable rented’ housing. Around 28,000 ‘affordable rented’ homes (set at 80 per cent of market rents) were delivered in 2020, in contrast to the 40,000 social rented homes completed in 2010 and 100,000s built annually in the 1960s.

Figure 5. Permanent dwellings completed in England



Source: MHCLG Live Table 244

Figure 6. New supply, sales and demolitions of social rented housing in England



Source: MHCLG Live tables 1000c, 678 (sales) and 684 (demolitions)⁶⁷

- 3.8.5 Critically, while the supply of new social housing has collapsed, the existing stock is also shrinking rapidly. Sales, demolitions, and conversions from social rent to less affordable tenures, including private rent, mean that approximately 31,000 units of social housing are lost each year. Right to Buy has provided millions of social renters with a pathway to home ownership. However, the lack of a replacement for homes sold has denied thousands of others this transformative hand-up. When newly delivered social rented housing is factored in, we have still seen a net loss of around 17,000 social rented homes every year.
- 3.8.6 The impact of the lack of decent, affordable and secure housing goes far beyond reducing the amount of money households have to live on; this also has a wider social impact. The cost of housing is directly related to housing quality and standards. For many, being unable to afford decent housing means having to live in poor quality homes unfit for habitation or overcrowded conditions to reduce costs, to the detriment of physical and mental health. Analysis of the English Housing Survey shows that around one in nine children today – that is, 1.36 million – are living in overcrowded accommodation. An estimated 150,000 families with children in England share properties with just one bedroom. Nearly a quarter of private rented homes (23.3 per cent) are officially deemed ‘non-decent’ by Government (that is, falling short of required standards of health and safety, repair, and thermal adequacy), compared to 16.3 per cent of social rented homes and 12.3 per cent of owner-occupied homes.
- 3.8.7 There is increasingly strong evidence to show housing problems being linked to broader social issues such as family breakdown, low productivity, chronic ill-health, disrupted child development, poor educational outcomes, and problem debt. A study conducted by the JRF found that households on low incomes under the combined pressure of expensive rents and housing insecurity were more likely to respond poorly to ‘complex life events’ such as relationship breakdown, job insecurity, and the onset of poor health or caring responsibilities than those in stable and affordable housing. Yet the tenure shift and attendant issues with housing affordability and quality is not only marked by its social impact, but also its fiscal consequences.

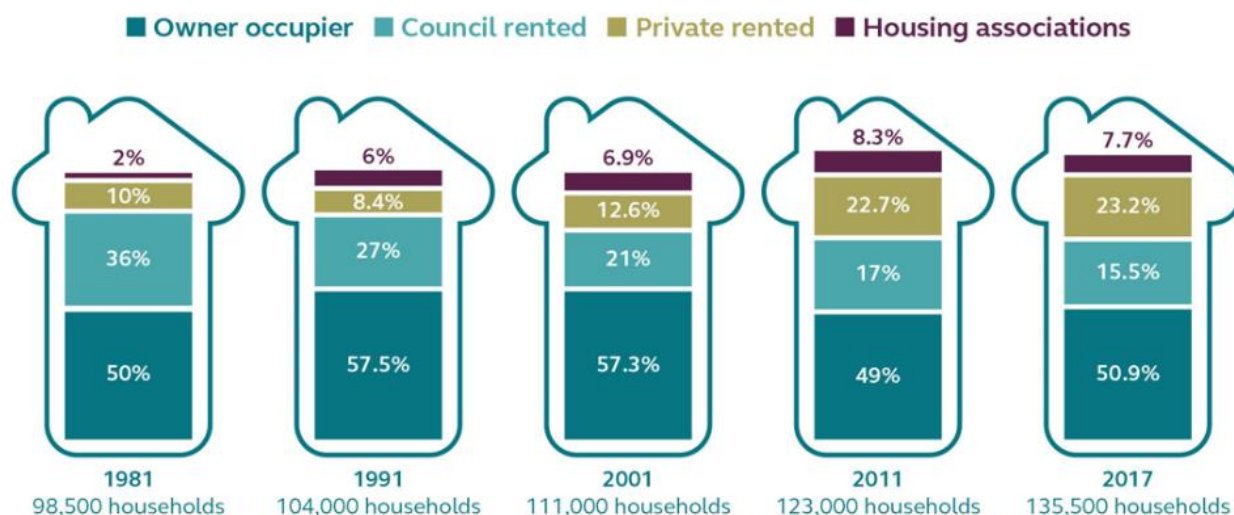
4. The Leicester Context

4.1 The Changing Face of Housing

- 4.1.1 Leicester City is the largest City in the immediate area of the East Midlands. It is a predominantly urban areas located in the centre of the County of Leicestershire.
- 4.1.2 Leicester provides housing, employment, shopping, public administration, leisure and has three Hospitals and two Universities. The Universities had a combined student population of 43,100 students in the 2017/2018 academic year.

- 4.1.3 Leicester is a growing City as can be seen by the changing table set out below which demonstrates a continual growth in households and homes and the changing face of Housing over the years 1981 to 2017.

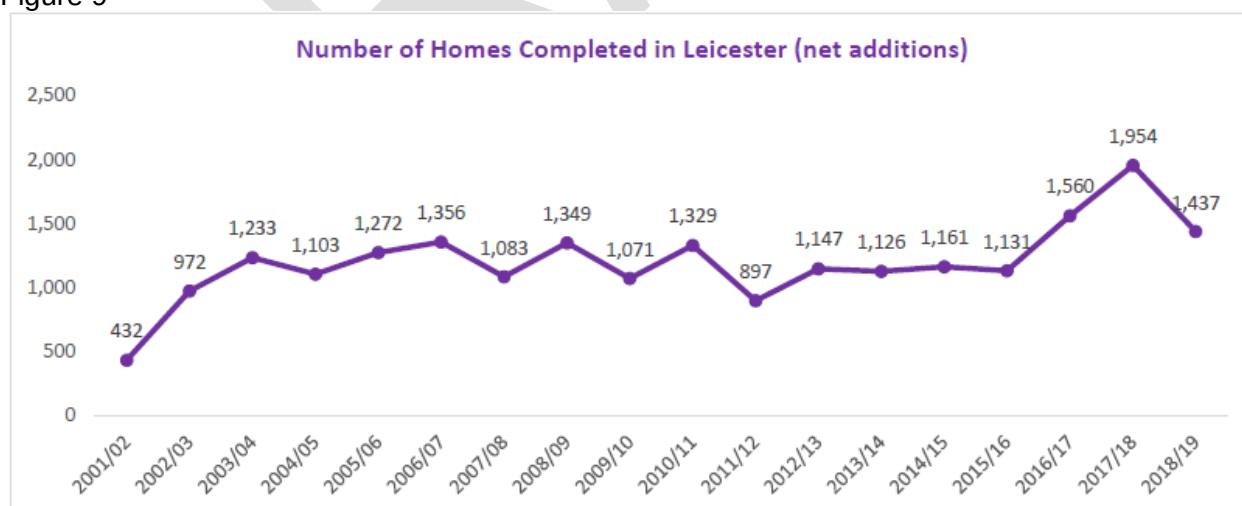
Figure 8



- 4.1.4 By 2021, a recent housing stock condition report for the City has been produced by the BRE which identified there are 142,379 dwellings in Leicester, 43% are owner occupied, 35% private rented and 22% social rented.

- 4.1.5 Delivery of new build homes in Leicester has increased since 2001 with a peak reached in 2017/18 of 1,954 new homes completed, with 1,437 delivered in 2018/19 and a 1,448 delivered in 2019/20.

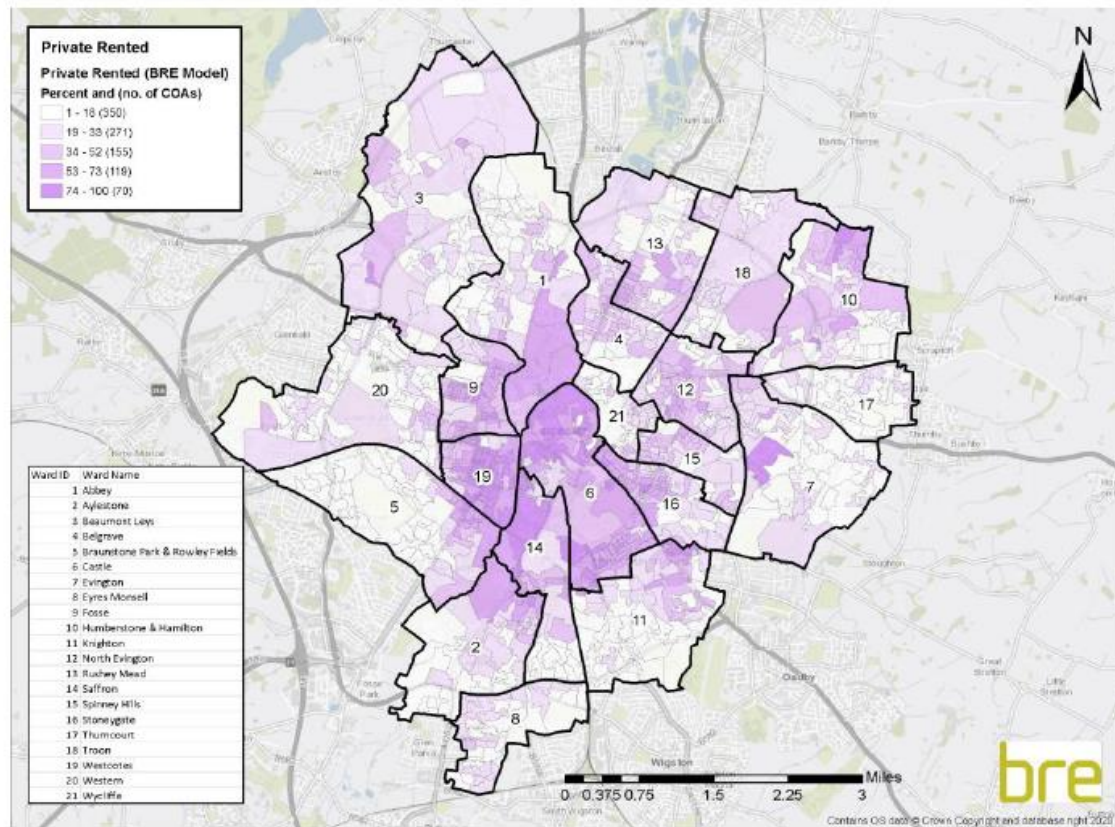
Figure 9



Source: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756098/Live_Table_123.xls

- 4.1.6 The City Council will have since the start of the manifesto period and up to the end of the current 21/22 financial period delivered over 1,250 additional Council homes spending £100m on the delivery of these additional Council properties. The Council now has a total of 20,011 council properties.

- 4.1.7 In Leicester, the latest available Housing Needs Assessment sets out a need for 33,840 new dwellings over the period 2020 to 2030 (1,734pa) for Leicestershire with 14,734 of these needed in Leicester. The Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) 2017 established that the city has a need for an additional 718 new Affordable Housing dwellings a year for the period 2020 -30.
- 4.1.8 Conversely to a growing Private Rented Sector, Leicester City Council's role as landlord is diminishing, from 36% of all dwellings in 1981, to 15.5% in 2017.
- i. Taken together, and additionally combined with market rent increases, puts huge demands on the city's social housing register.
 - ii. Currently around 6000 households are waiting for accommodation on the register, with an average of just 1,200 lets each year. Furthermore, 2,600 households approached the authority as homeless, or at risk of homelessness, in 2020/2021.
 - iii. Prioritisation by level of housing need ensures that those in greatest need have best access to limited stock, but waiting times are increasing year on year and not all households who apply to the register will be successful in realising an offer of accommodation.
- 4.1.9 We still have the challenge that we continue to lose Council Housing stock through the right to buy. Since the 1980s the Council has lost over 14,000 homes. In 20/21 it lost another 409 properties or over 2% of stock. Leicester is the worst affected area against comparators. The City Council has lost 1,890 properties in the last 5 years.



- 4.1.11 There are an estimated 9,649 Houses in Multiple Occupation in Leicester, of which approximately 2,249 potentially come under the mandatory licensing scheme; with 48% of them in the Westcotes, Castle, Stoneygate and Fosse Wards. The proactive acquisition of this commissioned research data is feeding into the work of the Council's Private Rented Sector Team and their resourcing requirements to support the identification of any unlicensed property. It is also helping to inform the consideration of other discretionary licensing schemes.
- 4.1.12 The data from our housing condition report shows that the performance of the housing stock in Leicester compared to the English Housing Survey (EHS) average is generally worse with the exception of excess cold which is slightly better in Leicester.
- 4.1.13 Levels of all hazards and fall hazards are notably higher in Leicester, and the proportion of low income households is high compared to the England average. In Leicester, 17% of Private rented sector accommodation is believed to have category 1 hazards.
- 4.1.14 Compared to the regional average the picture is similar with Leicester generally performing worse with the exception of excess cold and fuel poverty.

- 4.1.15 Market rental prices in the East Midlands increased by 2.1% in the past 12 months⁴ and are now on average 20-30% higher than Local Housing Allowance rates, creating a market that is difficult to access for those on low incomes, or those dependent on welfare benefits.

4.2 Affordability of Housing

- 4.2.1 Not all households have sufficient income to buy or rent a home in the private sector in Leicester that adequately meets their housing needs at acceptable standards.
- 4.2.2 Whilst Leicester's cheapest homes to buy or rent (those within the lower quartile of sale prices and private rents) might appear affordable compared with the city's average full-time resident earnings, they are not always affordable to those in the city with the lowest incomes.
- 4.2.3 In fact, recent research has concluded that Leicester has seen;
- An increase (ie worsening) in its housing affordability ratio;
 - Leicester's level of unemployment (7.5%) is almost double the regional level;
 - The city has a relatively high proportion of its population employed in Group 9 elementary occupations; Leicester's residents' earnings were the lowest in the Housing Market Area;
 - Leicester's overcrowding rate (15.2%) was almost three times the regional figure (5.5%); between 2001 and 2011 there was an increase of almost 60% in the level of over-crowded households in Leicester – almost double the national growth;
 - Leicester is the only authority across the HMA that has a higher rate of concealed and shared households than the regional and national average.
- 4.2.4 Affordable Housing itself includes several tenures including Intermediate Affordable Housing for sale, Intermediate Affordable Housing for rent and social/affordable rent. The table below sets even for "affordable housing options" in Leicester, those with incomes in the lower of median quartiles still cannot afford many of these so-called affordable options.

Figure 12

AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS	New households accessing at LHA rates	Lower quartile income	Median income
Starter homes	N/A	x	x
Intermediate (shared ownership/shared equity)	N/A	?	✓
Median private rented	x	?	✓
Affordable social rents	x	?	✓
Social rents	✓	✓	✓

KEY: **✓** should be able to access this housing option ; **x** = unlikely to be able to access this housing option; **?** = marginal that this housing option could be accessible; **N/A** = this housing option is not available

This table is based on resident-based earnings and does not take into account that some households will use multiple incomes as part of a household to access housing that would otherwise be unaffordable to a single income (this can also be a barrier to access where it causes a household to exceed the housing register income threshold). In addition to this the requirement for different size homes will also impact on affordability.

Starter homes

The income required in Leicester to access starter homes (HEDNA) is £26,100, while £22,199 is the median gross annual residence based earnings for Leicester, 2016. It is also not considered affordable for individuals whose income is in the lower quartile.

Intermediate options

The HEDNA estimates that an income of £16,800 is required to access this housing option. This is around the lower quartile income levels in Leicester (of £16,980) so may not be affordable to all households whose income is in the lower quartile.

Private renting

For individuals in Leicester who receive the gross median monthly salary, median rents in the private sector would make up 32% of their income. This figure is higher than that which the HEDNA considers to be a reasonable start point (25% of income) – however, the HEDNA suggests other sources (letting agencies and housing benefit calculations) raise this figure as high as 40%+. So, in this context, this option is considered affordable for individuals whose income is at median levels however it will

become more unaffordable for those with lower incomes (estimated ratio of their earnings would be 39%). People on lower incomes may be able to access cheaper housing options in the private rented market. Private rented accommodation is not generally accessible to new households accessing at LHA rates – national survey showed that 63% of landlords would prefer not to let to HB claimants, and research undertaken by Housing Options Private Rented Housing Team found a significant difference between private market rents and LHA rents.

Affordable social rent

Affordable social rent are rents set at up to 80% of market rent. Local housing allowance is 30th percentile of market rent, meaning at its higher levels this housing options is unaffordable for LHA households. An assessment % rent of incomes indicates at lower quartile incomes rent would be 32% of their total income (again higher than the 25% HEDNA level but lower than 40%). At medium incomes % rent to income level is 24% so would be affordable for the majority of households.

Social rent

Social rented properties are generally available at local housing allowance rates therefore would generally be affordable to all households at different income levels. However there is an income cap to be able to be eligible for the housing register so is not currently available to any households with a single income of £25,000 or a joint income of £30,000.

- 4.2.5 The HEDNA calculated that 19% of households in Leicester who require Affordable Housing can afford Intermediate Housing; that's 149 households a year (of our total of 786). The remaining 81% (637 households a year) will need social/affordable rented housing.
- 4.2.6 Social/Affordable Rent is affordable to a range of households as long as the rent to be paid falls at or below Local Housing Allowance (LHA) limits (many of the households will need to claim housing benefit). Council housing is generally the most affordable rental option. Where households are eligible, council rents will be fully covered by benefits unless the household is under-occupying. There may be a small number of households who are affected by the introduction of the LHA shared room rate for people aged under 35. This is likely to result in a relatively small shortfall between their benefits and rent. The benefit cap has only affected households in the very largest of council properties (ie 6-bedroomed).

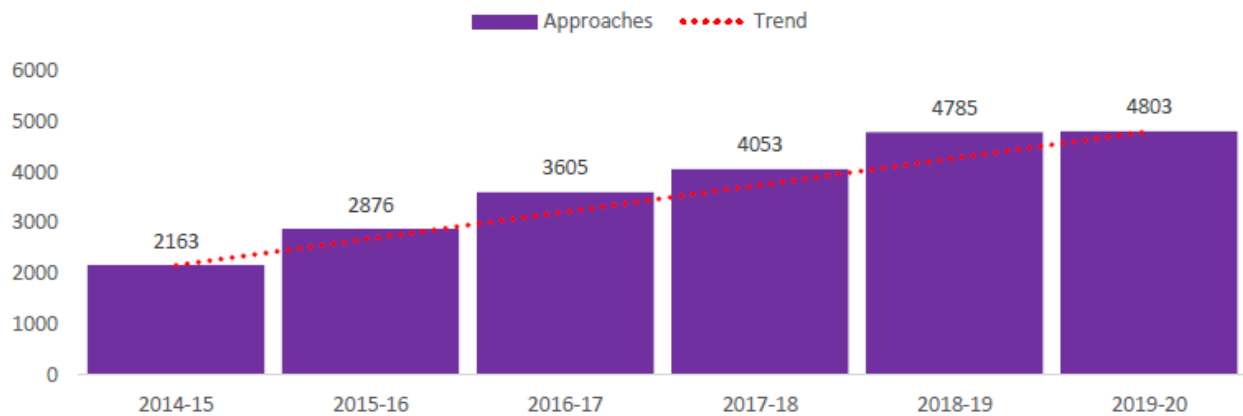
4.3 Homelessness

- 4.3.1 Homelessness services in Leicester have faced year-on-year increases in people approaching the Council for help who are facing Homelessness (4,803 in 2019-20) and positively, the Council continue to provide strong

services, maintaining strong services and prevention rates at over 85% in 19/20.

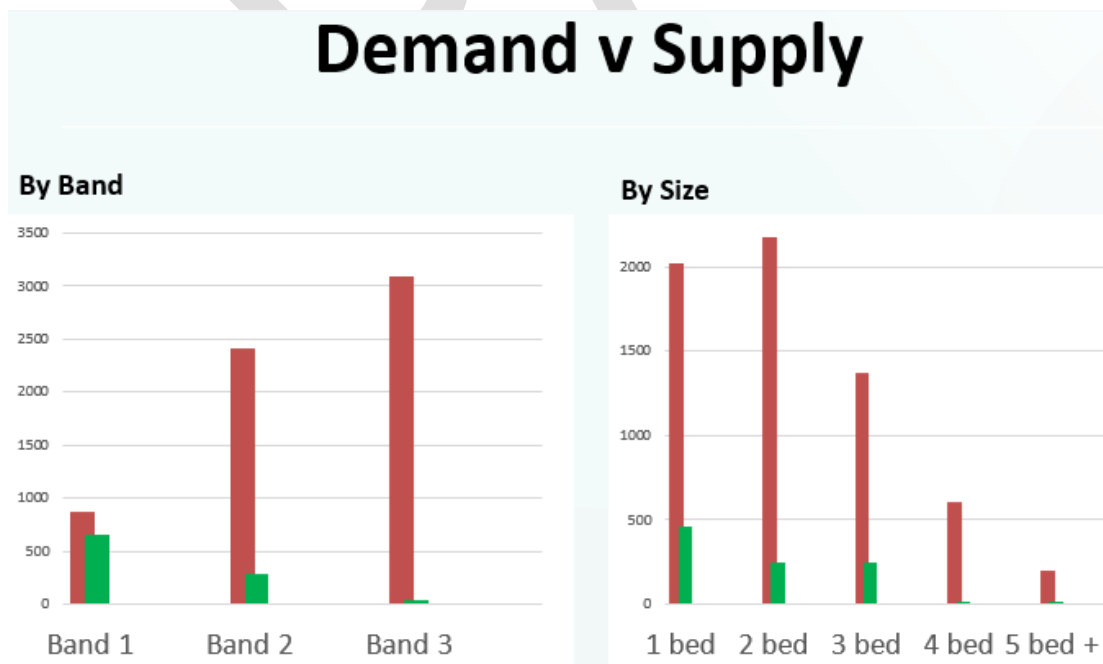
Figure 13

Number of Households approaching Housing Options for advice and support



4.3.2 From the Who gets Social Housing data the Council has an increasing number of people on the Housing register, up to 6,366. Overcrowding continues to be a significant problem in the city with more than 15% of households stating they are overcrowded overall. This is supported by our Housing Register data where 46% of the applicant on the register are overcrowded.

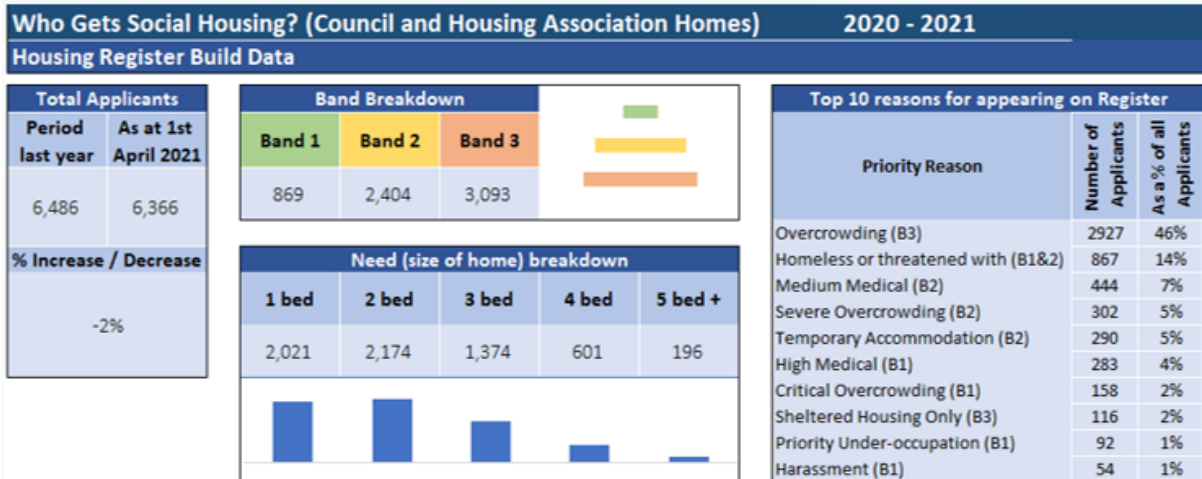
Figure 14



4.3.3 Demand for Council Housing far outstrips supply. The average wait times for LCC housing shows significantly increasing wait times for all sizes of

properties with minimum wait times now at 4 months for the highest Band 1 priority cases and significantly higher wait times for those in the lowest band 3.

Housing Register Information



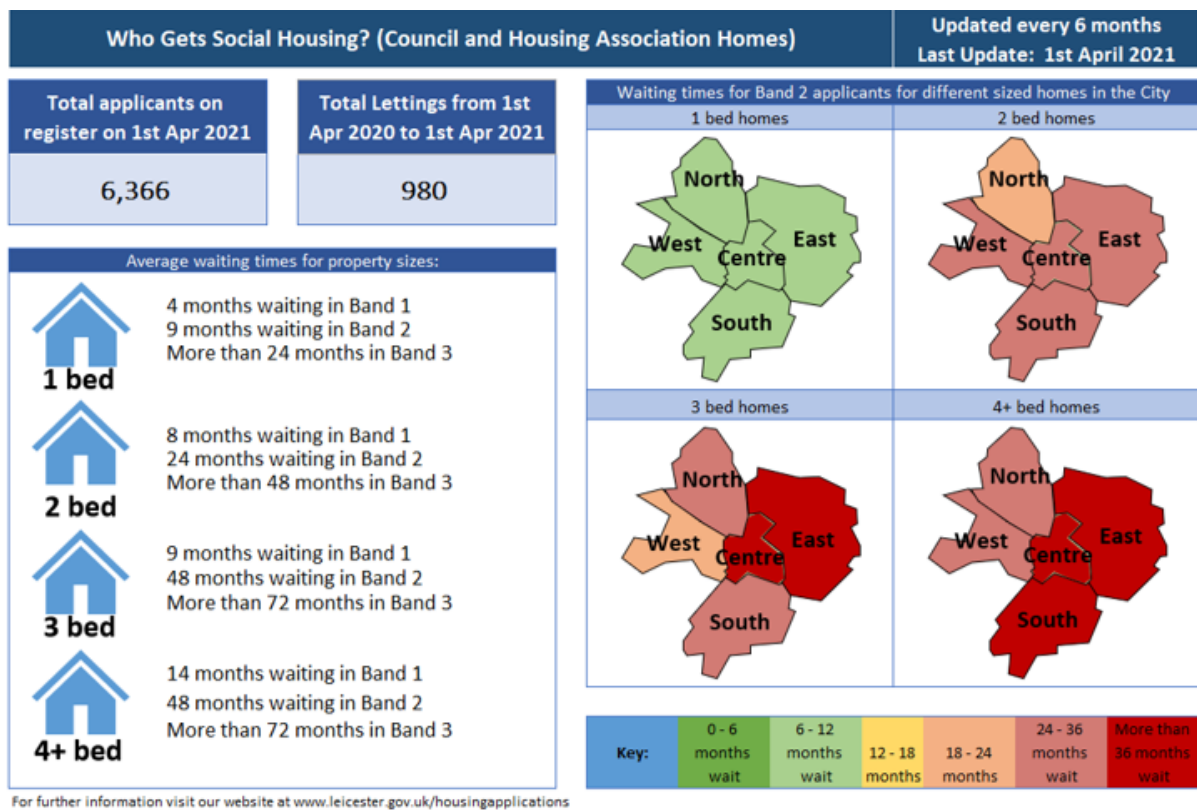
4.4 Collapse in the supply of truly affordable homes

- 4.4.1 As can be seen in Figure 8 above and 4.1.4, the make-up of the Housing market in Leicester has changed significantly, with Council housing which is for many the only affordable housing now becoming a scarce resource with limited supply, very large demand (6000) and a growing need for it (786pa) as the City grows.
- 4.4.2 The loss of Council Housing through the right to buy scheme for the City has already been referenced in 4.19, this is very relevant to the collapse in the supply of truly affordable housing because, while efforts are being made in the City to increase new housing (see Figure 9) this is being undermined by the ongoing sale and reduction in Council Housing through the Right to Buy scheme of over 400 homes on average each year and 14,000 overall since the 1980's.
- 4.4.3 Although house building in the city is at the highest it has been for many years (1,437 in 18/19), the lack of land in the city has seriously undermined this delivery.

5. Leicester City Council's effort to tackle the Housing crisis

- 5.1 Leicester City Council has been working hard to tackle the Housing challenges in the city and this has been driven by the Council's political priorities. In the context of the challenges set out Nationally and in

Leicester in this report, highlights of the efforts being made by the Council are set out in the following section.



5.2.1 The Affordability of Housing

5.2.2 Our council rents remain the lowest in the city for any tenure type. Average private rented sector rents for a 3-bedroom house are currently around £155 per week, average Housing Association rents average out at £89 per week, whilst council rents are £85, for this type of property.

Figure 17

Tenure Type	Average weekly rent
LCC	£85.22
Housing Association	88.59
Private Rented Sector	155.34

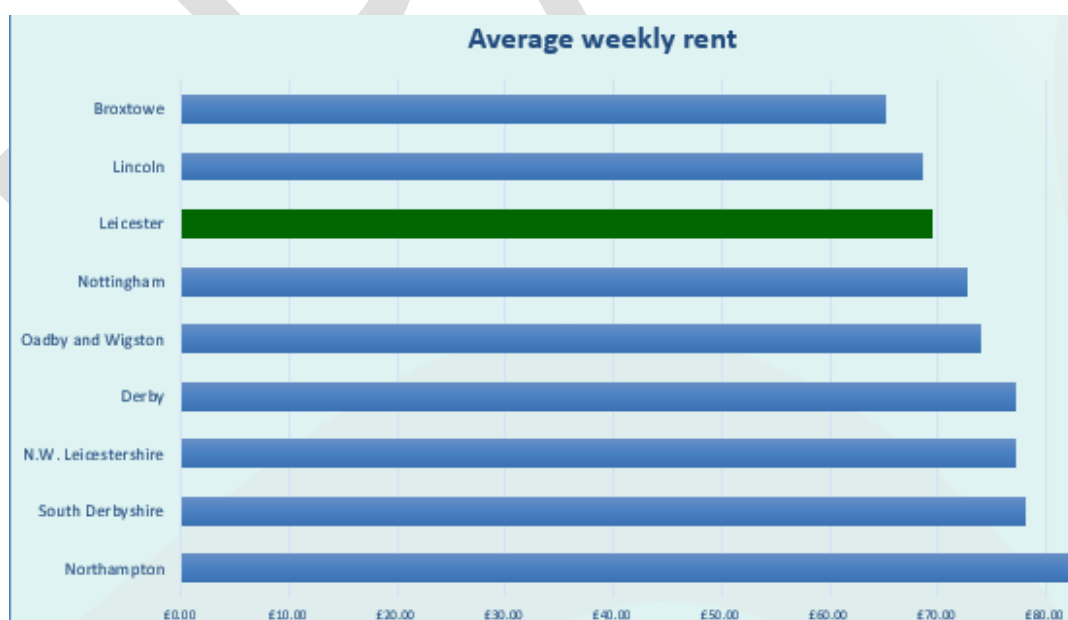
- 5.2.3 Comparing ourselves with other local authorities in the country and Leicester's overall average council rents are amongst the lowest in the country, 19th lowest out of 20 for comparator authorities.

Figure 18

Authority	Average rent	Authority	Average rent
1. Slough	£102.83	11. Wolverhampton	£77.34
2. Bradford	£100.07	12. Derby	£77.26
3. Liverpool	£85.45	13. Newcastle	£74.53
4. Milton Keynes	£84.59	14. Manchester	£74.19
5. Luton	£82.37	15. Nottingham	£72.78
6. Salford	£82.04	16. Kingston	£72.21
7. Birmingham	£79.82	17. Leeds	£72.01
8. Oldham	£79.78	18. Sheffield	£71.13
9. Bristol	£79.29	19. Leicester	£69.57
10. Sandwell	£79.06	20. Stoke	£69.04

- 5.2.4 Even when comparing ourselves with other local authorities in the East Midlands we have amongst the lowest rents. Northampton's average weekly rent is £82, North West Leicestershire is £77 and Oadby and Wigston is £74. We have only found Lincoln and Broxtowe to have slightly lower average rent than our £69 per week.

Figure 19



- 5.2.5 Council housing now makes up only 15.5% of Leicester's properties and while low rental levels can help those in the greatest need, wait times and

very limited supply mean that the City must have a quality private rented sector.

5.2.6 To this end the Council has written and launched a Private rented sector strategy that has the driver of improving Housing standards in the Private rented sector to ensure that housing in Leicester is the best standard it can be for those in need of housing.

5.2.7 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 our ability to protect tenants' safety and rights, and tackle rogue/poor landlords. Maximising this, whilst maintaining a balanced, fair, and proportionate approach, will ultimately lead to the raising of housing standards within the sector

5.2.8 Included within the strategy and already being consulted upon is the option to utilise licencing scheme to drive up standards. This is a key strand in targeting and addressing unfit accommodation in the City.

5.3 Homelessness

5.3.1 The City Council's current Homelessness strategy 2019 – 2023, drives ongoing strong delivery of the homeless services in the city.

5.3.2 LCC has been successful in delivering £3.5m additional revenue across 9 external funding pots to enhance Homelessness services Further funding has been secured through the Health Inequalities fund for two additional Social Workers to work with those going through Homelessness whom do not meet the ASC Statutory threshold. The Changing Futures bid for £3m has been successful working with partners and also a further bid to the Rough Sleeper Drug and Alcohol treatment funding for £1.2m to provide extra support to help people recover from drugs and alcohol misuse has also been successful. A bid has also been submitted linked to Offenders Accommodation

5.3.3 The Council has significantly reduced the number of rough sleepers on the street and is clear that 'No one needs to sleep rough on Leicester streets'. Over recent years significant investment and efforts have gone in to reducing down Rough Sleepers to single figures with anyone on the streets refusing to come in to available Temporary accommodation. A Rough Sleepers Next Step Strategy has been developed and implemented and this will shortly be followed by an Ending Rough Sleeping strategy.

5.3.4 Services continue to be strengthened through the Strategy actions including procurement of Temporary accommodation for those leaving prison completed securing 30 units increased from 20 and a Leicestershire wide new Pathway has been developed and signed off by all District and City partners in conjunction with Prison and Probation

- 5.3.5 Temporary accommodation has also been re-procured for singles and wider work to develop the singles offer at the Dawn Centre is ongoing. Alongside this officers are working on the development of increased numbers and types of stepped accommodation for singles.
- 5.3.6 A joint procurement exercise to procure young person temporary accommodation has just successfully concluded and being implemented.
- 5.3.7 Launch of the St Mungos Hub to facilitate work placement and work opportunities has now taken place. LCC are also piloting development of employment opportunities with BEAM for 1 year to test this opportunity.
- 5.3.8 The Family offer of Homes not hostels is in progress with the development of a network of independent homes across the City available as the Family temporary accommodation offer moving away from an institutional hostel with the staffing elements complete and the procurement just concluding.

5.4 Collapse in the supply of truly affordable homes

- 5.4.1 The Council has now approved over £100m to the delivery of the manifesto commitment to increase the supply of affordable housing. A pipeline of delivery of 1500 units on multiple sites has been identified and agreed between 2019 and 2023. The Council and partners will by the end of 21/22 have delivered a total of 871 social housing properties.
- 5.4.2 Delivery of Housing Leicester Phase 1 of new Council Housing has delivering 29 units across 6 small sites including bungalows which are wheelchair accessible. Full planning has been secured on Saffron Velodrome for 38 properties and procurement has been completed and a builder secured for this site which is aiming to start build in Autumn 2021. Additional Phase 2 sites are also being worked on to deliver a further 18 new units during 22/23. Early preparations work is now starting on Phase 3 has been agreed to proceed by CMB and this has started which should deliver 52 new homes.
- 5.4.3 An extensive Acquisitions programme has been going on for the duration of the manifesto commitment and by the end of this financial year 21/22 a total of 572 properties will have been acquired.
- 5.4.4 During the manifesto period it is expected to invest over £9m on the provision of adaptations to ensure that this Housing is suitable for those living in it. To date since 2019 the Council has invested over £8m in to Disabled Facilities grant and Council House adaptations to facilitate the Adaptations service and help people that need adaptations to continue to be able to live in their current home. A total of 1,889 adaptation/DFGs have been completed to date providing help to over 1000 people to stay in their own homes.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 This report clearly sets out the National and Local Housing challenges and problems that are causing a perfect storm for a housing crisis. It clearly demonstrates that holistic and national policy change is required by Central Government to deal with the crisis and this is why it is essential the Council have very clear demands and asks of government.

DRAFT

Executive Response to Scrutiny

The executive will respond to the next scrutiny meeting after a review report has been presented with the table below updated as part of that response.

Introduction

...

Scrutiny Recommendation	Executive Decision	Progress/Action	Timescales

Private Rented Sector Strategy

Housing Scrutiny: 7 September 2026

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin

Lead Director: Sean Atterbury

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 presents the proposed Private Rented Sector (PRS) Strategy to Housing Scrutiny.

1.2. Members are invited to comment prior to the strategy being confirmed.

2. Background

2.1. The Private Rented Sector (PRS) Strategy 2026-2031 sets out Leicester City Council's strategic approach to improving standards, outcomes and access within the city's private rented housing sector. The strategy responds to the significant role of the PRS in Leicester, where approximately 40,000 properties are privately rented and the sector provides housing for many residents who are unable to access social housing or home ownership.

2.2. The strategy has been developed in the context of the Council's declared Housing Crisis, rising homelessness demand, increasing private rents and significant forthcoming changes arising from the Renters' Rights Act 2025. The Act introduces the most substantial reform of the sector in a generation, including the abolition of Section 21 "no fault" evictions, new duties on local authorities, strengthened tenant protections and enhanced enforcement powers.

2.3. The strategy aligns with key corporate priorities and related Council strategies, including the Housing and Homelessness Strategy, Climate Emergency Strategy, Local Plan and Community Safety Strategy. It recognises that the private rented sector has a direct impact on housing quality, homelessness prevention, public health, community safety, climate objectives and economic wellbeing.

2.4. Delivery is proposed through a coordinated programme of work led jointly across Housing, Regulatory Services, Planning and other Council services, supported by monitoring arrangements and annual reporting.

3. PRS Strategy document

3.1. The proposed PRS Strategy is attached at **Appendix A**.

3.2. The strategy's central objective is:
To improve housing standards in Leicester's private rented sector for the benefit of tenants, landlords and the wider community.

3.3. To achieve this, the strategy is structured around six strategic objectives as follows:

WS No.	Workstream Title
--------	------------------

1	Improving housing standards across the sector
1.1	Renters' Rights Act 2025: Preparation and implementation
1.2	Energy performance and Operation EPC
1.3	Supported Housing Regulations
2	Improving support available for private sector landlords
2.1	Financial support and Household Support Fund / Crisis Resilience Fund
2.2	Improving online resources for private sector landlords
2.3	Landlord Forum and engagement programme
2.4	Call Before You Serve
3	Improving support available for private sector tenants
3.1	Disabled Facilities Grants in the PRS
3.2	Sustainable leases and tenancy security
3.3	Public reporting portal for unlicensed properties
3.4	Better access to information and resources for tenants
4	Improving sector enforcement and protection of tenants' rights
4.1	Selective licensing and enforcement
4.2	Criminal Landlord Taskforce
4.3	HMO Licensing and Taskforce
4.4	Additional licensing scheme
5	Improving access to market to resolve housing need
5.1	Expanding leasing and incentive schemes
5.2	Impact of local government reorganisation
6	Improving joined-up services, intelligence and monitoring
6.1	PRS programme management (PReSS Programme)
6.2	Updating data sources and PRS intelligence

- 3.4. The strategy seeks to balance support for compliant landlords with robust action against poor-quality and non-compliant accommodation.
- 3.5. The strategy is intended to deliver benefits for both landlords and tenants through a balanced approach of support, engagement and proportionate enforcement. Landlords will benefit from improved access to advice, training, forums and online resources, helping them understand and meet their legal obligations, navigate changes arising from the Renters' Rights Act and sustain successful tenancies. Tenants will benefit from improved housing standards, stronger protection of their rights, greater access to information and support services, enhanced tenancy security and improved homelessness prevention measures. Collectively, these actions are expected to contribute to safer, better quality homes and a more sustainable and effective private rented sector across Leicester.

4. Governance

- 4.1. Section 15 of the strategy document refers to governance and programme management.
- 4.2. Delivery of the strategy will be overseen through the Private Rented Sector Strategy (PReSS) Programme Board, providing strategic oversight of all PRS-related activity across the Council. The Board will meet quarterly and bring together key services including Housing, Regulatory

Services, Planning, Community Safety and other relevant functions to monitor performance, manage risks, coordinate delivery of workstreams and oversee annual reporting to Members and Scrutiny.

- 4.3. Progress will be tracked through a programme dashboard and a suite of performance indicators to ensure accountability and effective delivery of the strategy's objectives.

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

5.1 Financial Implications

Implementation of the strategy is intended to be delivered through a combination of existing budgets, fee-funded activity and external grant funding where available. Any developments throughout the roll-out process which result in the need for additional expenditure, staffing requirements or financial commitments will require separate consideration.

The Council will need to monitor whether Government new burdens funding is sufficient to meet ongoing statutory responsibilities arising from the Renters' Rights Act. Similarly, whilst the intention is for the additional licensing scheme to be self-financing (through the license fee income it would generate) this will need to be monitored.

If successful, the strategy will assist in the avoidance of temporary accommodation costs for the authority.

Signed: Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance

Dated: 19th August 2025

5.2 Legal Implications

Section 3 of the Housing Act 2004 places a duty on a local Housing Authority to keep housing conditions under review with a view to identifying any action that may need to be taken by them under the provisions set out in section 3(2) of the Housing Act 2004. These powers apply across all housing including the private rented sector. The PRS strategy complies with the requirements of this and other linked legislation. Officers should ensure that the strategy compliments other housing strategies and needs assessment and particular attention should be given to any Directions issued by the Secretary of State.

Signed: John Moss, Senior Solicitor

Dated: 20 August 2026

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 presents the Private Rented Sector Strategy 2026-2031 and sets out Leicester City Council's strategic approach to improving standards, outcomes and access within the city's private rented housing sector.

The Private Rented Sector Strategy is expected to have an overall positive equality impact. Improving housing standards, tenancy security, access to advice, energy efficiency, Disabled Facilities Grants, licensing and enforcement should particularly benefit residents who are more likely to experience poor housing, homelessness, overcrowding, discrimination or difficulty accessing suitable accommodation. This will include people from across many protected characteristics. The PRS strategy has six identified priorities with workstreams for each priority which take into consideration upcoming legislative changes. The Renters Right Act will make significant changes in the private rental sector and gives private rented tenants greater protections. It is recommended that Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are carried out as appropriate.

Signed: Surinder Singh, Equalities Officer

Dated: 20 August 2026

5.4 Climate Change Implications

As set out in section 17.4, page 45 of Appendix A: Private Rental Sector Strategy Document:

Housing is responsible for a third of Leicester's overall carbon emissions, with PRS housing frequently the worst-performing tenure in terms of energy efficiency and carbon output. This strategy includes dedicated workstreams (particularly Workstream 1.2 — Operation EPC) that directly address the Council's Climate Emergency objectives through improving the energy performance of PRS properties.

Other workstreams also contribute indirectly to the Council's net zero ambitions: improved housing conditions reduce the need for energy-intensive temporary accommodation; better engagement with landlords on retrofit opportunities signposts available funding; and the forthcoming mandatory EPC C standard for the PRS (anticipated by 2030) will drive significant investment in insulation and low-carbon heating.

Signed: Duncan Bell, Change Manager (Climate Emergency)

Dated: 20 August 2026

5.5 Other implications

N/A

6. Background information and other papers:

Housing Scrutiny 10 July 2025

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix A – PRS Strategy

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 A

Private Rental Sector Strategy Document

Private Rented Sector Strategy

*Corporate priorities for a holistic, balanced approach to issues
arising from within the Private Rented Sector*

Lead Assistant Mayor: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin (Housing & Education)

Lead Strategic Director: Richard Sword

Lead Directors: Chris Burgin & Sean Atterbury

Useful information

■ Ward(s) affected: All

■ Primary report authors and contact details:

Neighbourhood & Environmental
Services

Housing

Planning

■ Report version number: 6

Contents

This document sets out the Council's strategy for the Private Rented Sector (PRS).

Table of Contents

1. Purpose
2. Foreword from Lead Member
3. Executive Summary
4. National and Local Policy Context
5. The Private Rented Sector in Leicester
6. The Renters' Rights Act 2025: Implications for the Council
7. Strategic Vision and Objectives
8. Objective 1: Improving Housing Standards
9. Objective 2: Supporting Private Sector Landlords
10. Objective 3: Supporting Private Sector Tenants
11. Objective 4: Enforcement and Protection of Rights
12. Objective 5: Improving Access to Market to Resolve Housing Need
13. Objective 6: Joined-Up Services, Intelligence and Monitoring
14. Benefits: Landlords, Tenants, and Community
15. Governance and Programme Management
16. Performance Monitoring and KPIs
17. Financial, Legal, Equality and Climate Implications

Appendix A: Governance Structure

Appendix B: Legislative Reference Framework

Appendix C: References & URL

1. Purpose

This strategy document sets out the Council's strategic plans for undertaking work to improve the private rented sector (PRS) across the City of Leicester. It serves the reader four core purposes:

- Describes the strategic vision and high-level objectives for the PRS in Leicester, spanning 2026–2030, referencing historic strategic-led objectives.
- Setting the context and situation relating to the city's private rental sector, whilst also referencing the national picture.
- Outlines the workstreams relating to each PRS objective.
- Outlines the governance of the PRS programme of work and the monitoring of the strategic goals and objectives.

The PRS is not an isolated sector. As well as the regulatory function the strategy and workstreams intersect across several council services and divisions, including homelessness prevention, economic wellbeing, sustainability, public health, planning and community safety.

This strategy references and reflects that complexity. Therefore, the strategy should be read with the context of the declared Housing Crisis and alongside other council policy documents including the; City Mayor Manifesto, Housing & Homelessness Strategy, Climate Emergency Strategy & Action Plan, Local Plan and Community Safety Strategy.

2. Foreword from Lead Member

Councillor [NAME], Portfolio Holder for Housing

3. Executive Summary

The Council has an ambition to ensure the private rented sector (PRS) in Leicester is fit for purpose and to address where this is not the case by raising housing standards for all residents who rent their homes within the city.

The PRS is the only tenure available to many citizens, where they are unable to access social housing or buy their own home. Yet nationally, the private rental sector remains an insecure, expensive and, on average, the lowest quality of housing options available to tenants.

The overall objective of this strategy is to ensure a holistic approach to the sector that ensures tenants and landlords are appropriately supported, whilst retaining and improving the Council's ability to protect tenants' safety and rights.

As well as supporting landlords and tenants the strategy will also focus on tackling non-compliant, rogue and criminal landlords.

The strategy maintains a balanced, fair, and proportionate approach, which will lead to the raising of housing standards across all wards of the City of Leicester.

Central Objective:

To improve housing standards in Leicester's private rented sector — for the benefit of tenants, landlords, and the wider community.

This strategy sets out six high-level objectives, listed below to support the central objective. Each objective is supported by several related workstreams

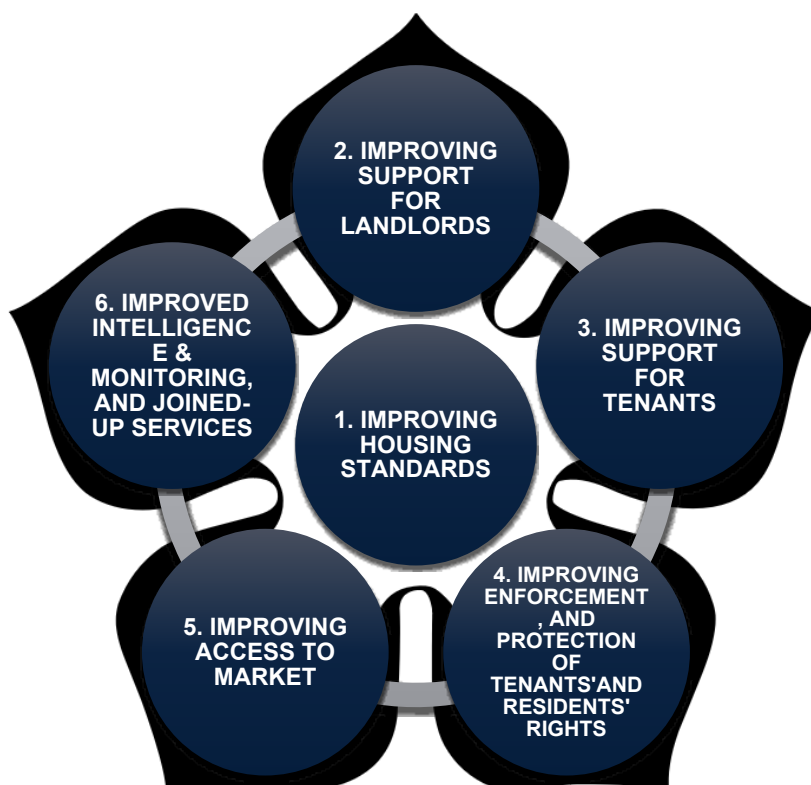


Figure 1: Leicester's PRS Strategy Diagram

It is also worth highlighting in the strategy the changes that are required as part of The Renters' Rights Act 2025, which received Royal Assent on 27 October 2025. The Government have initiated a phased rollout of the Act from 1 May 2026, see Section 6. The Act will fundamentally reshape the legislative landscape for the privately rented sector.

The Renters Right Act (RRA) will create new and significant duties for local housing authorities in enforcement, data reporting, and tenant protection. This strategy is shaped by, and responds to, those new obligations, and will link in with the RRA programme of work led by Housing and Regulatory Services.

The workstreams within this strategy have been designed to be deliverable within existing and secured resources wherever possible, supplemented by grant funding where available. Where additional resources are required, it is clearly identified within each workstream.

4. National and Local Policy Context

4.1 National Legislative Framework

The regulation of the private rented sector sits within a complex and evolving legislative landscape. The key pieces of legislation shaping this strategy are:

- Housing Act 2004: the basis for Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), HMO licensing, selective licensing, and additional licensing schemes.
- Housing Act 1988: the legislative basis for assured tenancies, to be amended by the Renters' Rights Act 2025.
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985: landlord repair obligations.
- Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 — Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES): currently EPC E; government consultation underway on raising to EPC C by 2030. Reference: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-the-energy-performance-of-privately-rented-homes-2025-update>
- Protection from Eviction Act 1977: tenant protection against illegal eviction and harassment.
- Equality Act 2010: Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED); also prohibits discriminatory 'No DSS / No children' policies in PRS lettings (reinforced by Renters' Rights Act 2025, in force from 1 May 2026).
- Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023: Supported Housing Regulations; expected secondary legislation 2026/27.

Renters' Rights Act 2025 (Royal Assent: 27 October 2025; Phase 1 commencement: 1 May 2026)

The most significant reform to the PRS in a generation. Key provisions include: abolition of Section 21 'no-fault' evictions; replacement of all assured shorthold tenancies with assured periodic tenancies; mandatory Decent Homes Standard for the PRS (from 2035); extension of Awaab's Law to the PRS; new local authority enforcement duties and civil penalty powers (up to £7,000 for initial breaches; up to £40,000 for repeat breaches); a new national PRS Landlord Database; and a new PRS Landlord Ombudsman (mandatory membership).

Reference: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-the-renters-rights-act>

4.2 National Context: The State of the Private Rented Sector

The private rented sector makes up approximately 19.4% of all households nationally, the second largest tenure after owner occupation. Key national data points are:

- Average private sector rents in England increased by 8.6% in the year to July 2024 (9.7% in London). Source: *Office for National Statistics*.
- Approximately 17 households are now competing for each available rental property. Source: *Rightmove, cited in the Renters' Rights Act 2025 Wikipedia article*.

- 45% of private renters have no savings; only 9.5% have savings adequate to achieve a 95% Loan To Value mortgage. Source: *DLUHC White Paper 'A Fairer Private Rented Sector', 2022* (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-fairer-private-rented-sector>).
- PRS housing is on average the poorest quality of all tenures in terms of Category 1 hazards, EPC ratings, and space standard, with 21% failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard. Source: *English Housing Survey 2022 to 2023: housing quality and condition*.

4.3 Local Policy Alignment

The PRS strategy does not operate in isolation. It should be read alongside and align with the following Council strategies and commitments and in consideration of the Housing Crisis declared in 2022.

- City Mayor Manifesto
 - [My vision for Leicester | Leicester City Council](#)
- Housing & Homelessness Strategy
 - [Housing and homelessness | Leicester City Council](#)
- Climate Emergency Strategy & Action Plan
 - [Environmental policy | Climate Ready Leicester | Leicester City Council](#)
- Local Plan
 - [Adopted planning policy | Leicester City Council](#)
- Community Safety Strategy
 - [Leicester Community Safety Partnership plan | Leicester City Council](#)

4.4 Planning Alignment

Planning policies relating to housing development and standards are reviewed as part of the Local Plan process. This includes several improved policy controls related to housing provision, standards, design, and delivery which will impact upon the private rented sector and should assist delivery of and complement the PRS strategy objectives. Of note are:

- Arrangements to meet housing targets by allocating sites and areas for growth to be delivered by the council, developers, and registered providers, including negotiation with adjacent districts over any unmet need.
- Policies to secure appropriate housing design, including adoption of the Nationally Described Space Standards.
- Policies to secure appropriate housing mix including affordable housing development (Section 106) including accessibility and adaptability standards subject to viability.
- Policies to meet the housing needs of different communities identified in the NPPF and findings in the Local Housing Need Assessment.
- Policies to deal with Houses in Multiple Occupation and the associated impacts, including licensing requirements. The recent extensive review of HMO Article 4 Directions in respect of controlling the concentration of these properties has had a significant impact in improving local community balance. The Planning service continues to successfully secure appeal

dismissals for applications to convert houses to HMOs in the areas subject to these directions.

- Policies (available at: Leicester City Council Planning Enforcement Policy and Procedure 2020) to pursue planning enforcement action against inappropriate development

The private rented sector will continue to be engaged through consultation on the planning policy development process.

5. The Private Rented Sector in Leicester

Section 5 establishes the analytical baseline for Leicester's Private Rented Sector (PRS) using data compiled from a BRE report published in 2020. It is recognised that this data has changed and a workstream to develop and update this data is proposed within this strategy document. The figures are provided for context and reference to help frame the subsequent workstreams and proposals aimed to improve the private rental sector across the city.

5.1 Scale and Nature of the Sector

5.1.1 Number and type of dwelling within the city:

- There are approximately 150,000 dwellings in the City of Leicester.
- The private rental sector is dominant in the city with around 40,000 dwellings utilised for private rent (*including HMO's*).
- All wards within the City of Leicester have private rented housing stock more than the national average (*nat. ave. 19.4%*).
- The estimated number of HMO properties is between 9,000 and 10,000 dwellings.

5.2 Housing Conditions

A housing stock condition survey has previously been undertaken to assess the quality and condition of the housing stock. This data informs an intelligence-led approach to stock improvement in the private rented sector.

5.2.1 Category 1 Hazards (HHSRS):

- 17% of privately rented properties (8,541 properties) have a category 1 hazard(s).
 - The Housing Health and Safety Rating System defines a category 1 hazard as an immediate risk to someone's health and safety and was introduced in Housing Act 2004 and applies to residential properties in England and Wales).
- HMOs have more fall hazards than other types of property.

5.2.2 Energy efficient homes:

- 4.8% (2,378 properties) of Leicester's private rented dwellings are estimated to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating below band E (*SAP score of 54 or below*)

5.2.3 Fuel Poverty (*low-income low energy efficiency (LILEE) definition*):

- The average fuel poverty rate across the City of Leicester stands at 19.8%, higher than the 9.4% national average

5.2.4 Low Income / Deprivation:

- From the 153 upper-tier local authorities, Leicester is ranked as the 22nd most-deprived area in England.
- This translates to 45% of Leicester total population residing in areas in the lowest 20% nationally of deprived areas.

5.3 Homelessness and Housing Need from the PRS

Nationally, the private rented sector is a contributor of homelessness presentations to local Councils. The loss of a private sector tenancy, whether through a Section 21 notice (prior to 1 May 2026), landlord sale, or rent arrears, is also a driver of homelessness.

The graph below demonstrates a sustained and substantial increase in homelessness-related demand over the last decade. The number of households approaching for homelessness related advice, support and assistance has increased from 2,163 in 2014/15 to 6,157 in 2025/26, representing a rise of almost 200%.

This growth reflects a combination of legislative, economic and housing market pressures. The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 increased the duties on local authorities and encouraged households to seek assistance earlier, leading to greater demand for Housing Options services. More recently, demand has been driven by a significant increase in households threatened with homelessness due to Section 21 notices (no-fault evictions), households being asked to leave by family or friends, increasing private sector rent levels, and wider cost of living pressures affecting household affordability and financial resilience. This trend is something that other LAs are facing nationally and is not unique to Leicester.

Homelessness - Demand

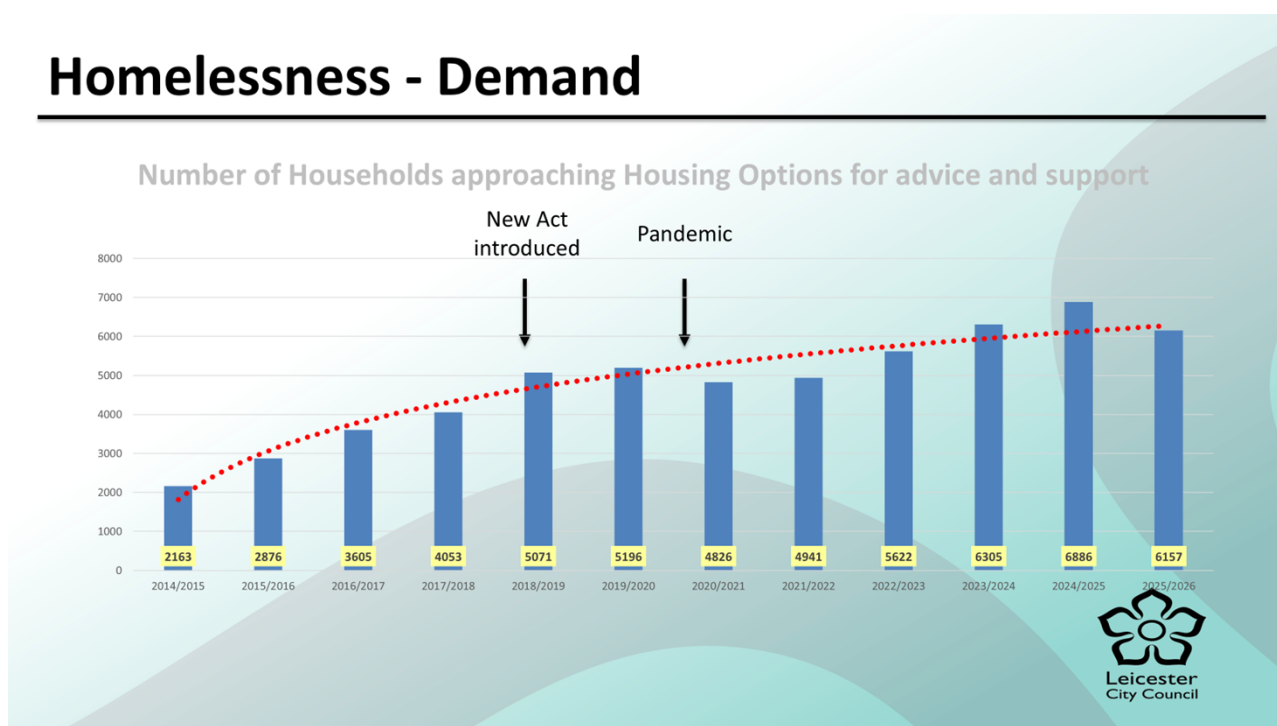


Figure 2: Number of households approaching Housing Options for advice and support.

Although demand reduced slightly from the peak of 6,886 households in 2024/25, the latest figure remains the second-highest level recorded and is almost three times higher than a decade ago. The data suggests that homelessness demand is no longer driven by short-term factors alone but reflects longer-term structural challenges within the housing market, including housing affordability, supply constraints, and increasing financial pressures on households.

Overall, the trend indicates a sustained and significantly higher level of need than historically experienced, creating ongoing pressure on homelessness prevention, housing options, temporary accommodation and wider housing services across the city.

Spend by the Council on Homelessness services has increased from £5m to £24m, numbers approaching the Council for Homelessness assistance have grown by over 200%, numbers of families and singles in temporary accommodation now exceed 1,000 because of the lack of permanent affordable housing in the City for the reasons set out in this report above and below. Action to tackle this crisis in the City are taking place but these stark facts highlight the reason firstly for the Housing Crisis declaration in 2022 and its refresh in 2026 along with strategic actions for the Council and Government to impact and tackle the crisis. Access to good quality affordable PRS accommodation absolutely forms a part of these actions and solutions.

5.4 Rent Levels and Affordability

The Office for National Statistics outline the current affordability of housing in the City of Leicester.

When assessing at private rental properties the trend over the past 10 Years for Leicester has been more erratic, and typically higher, than the regional and national average, see graph below.

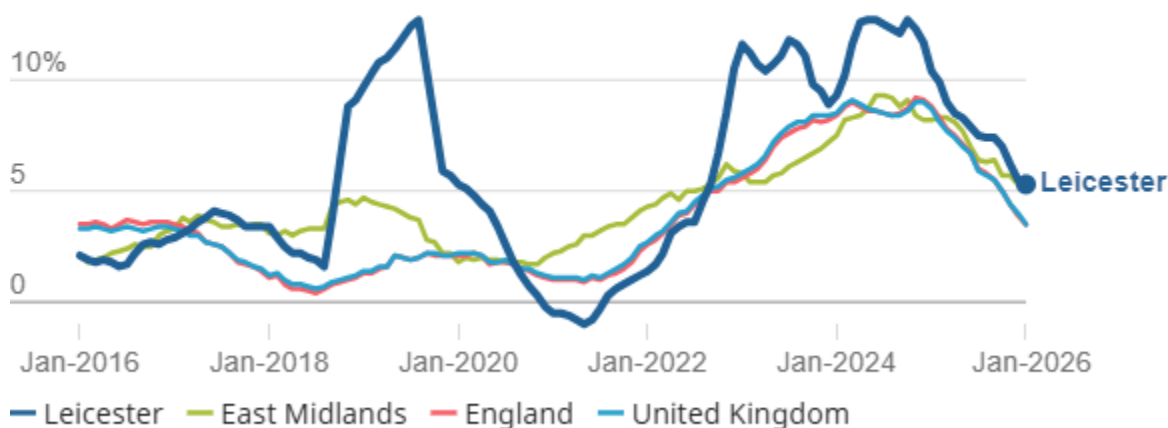
More recently the Leicester average is in line with the local and national averages.

Average Monthly Rent in Leicester (Jan '26) - £1,024

- Private rents rose to an average of £1,024 in January 2026, an annual increase of 5.3% from £973 in January 2025. This was similar to the rise in the East Midlands over the year.

Annual change in rents in Leicester

Private rental price annual inflation, Leicester, January 2016 to January 2026



Source: Price Index of Private Rents from the Office for National Statistics

The Renters Right Act aims to regulate rent increases in the PRS by establishing a single, standardised legal process to protect tenants. The legislation rules include:

- Once a year limit:** Landlords can only increase rent once per 12-month period.
- Banning rent review clauses:** Contractual "rent review clauses" that automatically trigger increases are nullified.

- **Two months' notice:** Landlords must provide at least two months' written notice.
- **Market rate alignment:** Rent increases must not exceed the open market rate.
- **Right to challenge:** Tenants can challenge increases at the First-tier Tribunal, which can lower the rent if it deems the increase unjustified.

5.5 Letting Agents

The private rented sector (PRS) is a critical pillar of Leicester's housing infrastructure. Effective engagement with letting agents is paramount to achieving high housing standards.

Leicester operates a highly active rental ecosystem, sitting significantly above the national benchmark with a workload density of 18.6 property listings per agency branch. While the city features a consolidated network of active agencies compared to regional hotspots like Nottingham, 35 listings per branch, Leicester's market still demands some oversight.

Local Authority Area	Approx. Active Branches	Key Market Characteristic	Avg. Listings per Branch
Nottingham	106	Highest branch workload in the UK	35.0 properties
Leicester	80 - 90	High volume, fast turnover, balanced density	18.6 properties
Derby	60 - 70	Moderate volume, consolidated local market	14.5 properties

This strategy establishes a workstream to work alongside Leicester's letting agents, ensuring compliance, elevating tenant protections, and monitoring regional consistency alongside peers like Derby and Nottingham.

The following metrics define the relationship between these agents and the local PRS market in Leicester.

- **Workload per Branch:** Each letting agent office branch in Leicester manages an average of 18.6 property listings, higher than the national average of 13.5.
- **Agent Utilisation:** Locally, about 43% of landlords use agent letting services, while only 18% use full management services, this aligns to the national average.
- **Leading Entities:** While over 100 branches exist, a smaller group of approximately 58 agents accounts for the majority of active digital advertisements, currently listing close to 1,000 properties.
- **Rental Supply:** In recent years, Leicester has seen an average of approximately 1,000 new rental listings per month.

[Data taken from Rightmove, Zoopla and Knightsbridge Estate Agents]

6. The Renters' Rights Act 2025 — Implications for the Council

The Renters' Rights Act 2025 received Royal Assent on 27 October 2025. Phase 1 of implementation commences 1 May 2026. This is the most significant reform to the private rented sector in a generation and creates substantial new duties and opportunities for local housing authorities.

Full government guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-the-renters-rights-act>

Implementation Roadmap: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/renters-rights-act-2025-implementation-roadmap>

6.1 Key Provisions and Commencement Dates

Phase 1 — 1 May 2026

- Abolition of Section 21 'no-fault' evictions: all tenancy endings must be on statutory Section 8 grounds.
- All assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs) replaced by assured periodic tenancies: no more fixed-term tenancies for residential lettings.
- Rent increases limited to once per 12 months via Section 13 notice process; tenants may challenge at First-tier Tribunal.
- Blanket 'No DSS' or 'No Children' advertising practices made unlawful.
- Tenant right to request to keep a pet.
- Local housing authorities granted new investigatory powers (already in force from 27 December 2025): to inspect properties, demand documents, and access third-party data.
- Duty on local housing authorities to enforce the legislation and report to the Secretary of State on enforcement activities.
- Civil penalties for breaches: up to £7,000 for initial breach; up to £40,000 for repeat breaches.

Phase 2 — From Late 2026

- Mandatory landlord registration on a new national PRS Database: first regional rollout from late 2026, with further national rollout following.
- PRS Landlord Ombudsman: mandatory membership for all residential landlords; anticipated launch 2028.

Further Phases — To Be Confirmed

- Extension of Awaab's Law to the PRS: legally enforceable timeframes for landlords to remedy serious hazards including damp and mould.
- Decent Homes Standard applied to PRS: confirmed target implementation date: 2035.
- EPC rating requirements: government consulting on raising MEES to Band C for all new PRS tenancies by 2030.

6.2 Council Responsibilities Under the Act

Local housing authorities are central to the enforcement architecture of the Renters' Rights Act 2025. The Act creates specific new legal duties for the Council:

- A duty to enforce the new legislation: local authorities cannot choose not to act on substantive breaches.
- New investigatory powers: inspection, document production, third-party data access (in force from 27 December 2025).
- Annual reporting to the Secretary of State on enforcement activities: a new transparency and accountability mechanism.
- Civil penalty powers of up to £7,000 (initial) and £40,000 (repeat) for breaches of tenancy legislation, including failure to join the Landlord Ombudsman.
- Rent Repayment Order enforcement extended: local authorities can apply for RROs; maximum now doubled for repeat offenders.

The Government has allocated £18.2 million nationally to local housing authorities in 2025/26 to support preparation and enforcement capacity building, distributed based on the number of PRS properties. The Council should seek to maximise the benefit of this funding through the workstreams identified in this strategy.

Operation Jigsaw

The Government is also supporting councils through 'Operation Jigsaw' — a cross-local councils initiative providing training, webinars, and resources on the Renters' Rights Act 2025. Shelter will also deliver training to local council officers on various aspects of the Act, funded by government. The Council should ensure all relevant staff complete this training programme ahead of 1 May 2026.

Reference: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/renters-rights-act-2025-implementation-roadmap>

7. Strategic Vision and Objectives

7.1 Our Vision

Need to add

7.2 Our Objectives

Delivery of the vision is structured around six high-level objectives, with the following core principle at their centre:

CORE PRINCIPLE:

To improve housing standards in Leicester's private rented sector

High- Level Objective Summary:

1	Housing Standards	Improve housing standards across the sector through licensing, EPC enforcement, and the new Renters' Rights Act 2025 regime including the Decent Homes Standard.
2	Landlord Support	Improve support available for private sector landlords to understand and comply with their obligations, including tenancy sustainment and in respect of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.
3	Tenant Support	Improve support available for private sector tenants, including access to information, Disabled Facilities Grants, tenancy sustainment, and homelessness prevention.
4	PRS Enforcement	Improve sector enforcement and protection of tenants' and residents' rights, including through licensing schemes, criminal landlord action, and new Renters' Rights Act 2025 powers.
5	Market Access	Improve access to the private rented sector as a housing solution to resolve housing need and reduce pressure on statutory homelessness services.
6	Joined-up Services	Strengthen joined-up services around enforcement and support, joint intelligence sharing and monitoring across the PRS programme.

The workstreams within the six objectives are detailed in the following section, however, a tabled summary is also provided in Appendix

OBJECTIVE 1

Improving Housing Standards Across the Sector

Housing standards in the private rented sector are a primary driver of health inequalities, fuel poverty, and quality of life for tenants. The Council's approach should be intelligence-led: engaging, and encouraging compliance before using any enforcement, but using enforcement decisively when and where required.

The workstreams under this objective address the principal legislative and operational mechanisms for driving up standards.

Workstream 1.1 — Renters' Rights Act 2025: Preparation and Implementation**Theme: Legislative Implementation**

The Renters' Rights Act 2025 represents the most significant change to the PRS since the Housing Act 2004. It places new enforcement duties on the Council and introduces new rights for tenants that the Council has a statutory responsibility to uphold. This workstream covers preparation for, and implementation of, the Act's requirements.

Key Actions:

- Ensure all relevant staff complete Operation Jigsaw and Shelter-delivered training ahead of 1 May 2026 commencement date.
- Review Council-specific enforcement protocols and a decision-making framework for civil penalty issuance.
- Review and update all Council tenancy and licensing documentation to reflect the new periodic tenancy regime.
- Establish reporting mechanisms to meet the new statutory duty to report enforcement activities to the Secretary of State.
- Engage with landlords and letting agents proactively in advance of May 2026 — run a landlord awareness campaign on key changes.
- Prepare for the PRS Landlord Database (Phase 2, from late 2026) — establish data systems that will support integration with the national register.

Resources:

Resources will be utilised from both Housing and Regulatory Services Teams. This will be monitored as the RRA is implemented.

New burdens funding has been confirmed and will be provided by Central Government for training existing staff.

KPIs:

- Number of staff trained on Renters' Rights Act 2025 (target: 100% of relevant officers by April 2026).
- Number of civil penalties/enforcement action taken and issued under the new Act (see *Duty to Report*: [Guide to the Renters' Rights Act - GOV.UK](#)).
- Landlord awareness campaign reach (number of landlords contacted / attending events).

Workstream 1.2 — Energy Performance and Operation EPC

Theme: Sustainability / Climate Emergency

An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is issued when a property has been assessed for energy efficiency, with ratings from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient). Current legislation requires all new tenancies to have an EPC rating of E or above, with all tenancies meeting this standard from April 2021. The government is consulting on raising this to Band C for new tenancies by 2030. Poor energy efficiency in PRS properties contributes directly to fuel poverty and carbon emissions. Housing is responsible for approximately 33% of carbon emissions nationally. PRS properties typically perform worse than other tenures. In line with the Council's Climate Emergency Response, this workstream targets the worst-performing properties — those rated F or G.

Key Actions:

- Identify all PRS properties within the Council area with an EPC rating of F or G using national EPC register data cross-referenced with licensing databases.
- Issue targeted engagement letters and informal notices to landlords of F/G rated properties requiring improvement or exemption applications.
- Proceed to formal enforcement (civil penalties up to £5,000 per property) where landlords fail to comply.
- Monitor compliance and repeat inspections, escalating to £5,000 penalty for continued non-compliance.
- Prepare for the anticipated raise to EPC C standard — identify D/E-rated properties and develop a forward engagement programme.
- Signpost landlords to government grant schemes and Council-facilitated funding where available.

Resources:

Enforcement of the workstream lies with the current Trading Standards Team, whilst the investigation sits with the current Housing Standards Team. Resources would need to be evaluated with any resource gaps being addressed through a business case.

KPIs:

- Number of F/G rated PRS properties identified.
- Number of landlords engaged / notices served.
- Number of properties improved to E or above.
- Percentage of PRS properties at Band D or above (annual tracking).

Workstream 1.3 — Supported Housing Regulations

Theme: Housing Standards / Legislative Implementation

The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 introduces a new regulatory framework for exempt accommodation and supported housing in the private rented sector. Secondary legislation implementing the framework is expected in 2026/27. The Council will have new licensing and oversight responsibilities for supported housing providers operating within its area.

This is a distinct workstream with its own emerging legislative framework and, when implemented, will have its own project governance. It is included here as it is directly relevant to the PRS strategy.

Key Actions:

- Monitor government consultation and secondary legislation timetable closely.
- Identify all exempt/supported accommodation providers operating in Leicester.
- Create and deliver an overarching Supported Housing Strategy
- Assess resource and capability requirements for administering the new licensing regime.
- Prepare licensing systems, staff training, and public communications ahead of commencement.

Resources:

A separate project board has been set up to oversee this significant piece of work. Consequently, reporting to the PRS Strategy will be high level to confirm general progress.

KPIs:

- Supported Housing Strategy in place
- Supported housing register established.
- Licensing regime operational by implementation date.
- Number of supported housing licences issued / compliance inspections.

OBJECTIVE 2

Improving Support Available for Private Sector Landlords

Most private sector landlords are well-intentioned who wish to provide good homes and comply with their obligations. Supporting landlords, through clear information, accessible engagement and practical assistance, is the most cost-effective route to compliance and standard improvement. The identified workstreams under this objective focus on reducing barriers to compliance with the aim of improving the Council's relationship with the landlord community.

Workstream 2.1 — Financial Support and Household Support Fund/Crisis Resilience Fund

Theme: Cost of Living / Homelessness Prevention

The Household Support Fund provides grant funding to assist households in financial difficulty, including assistance that may help sustain tenancies in the private rented sector. Utilising this fund, and any successor schemes, to prevent eviction through rent arrears is a key preventative tool. Landlords also benefit from the Council providing tenants with financial support, as it reduces the risk of rent arrears and tenancy breakdown.

Key Actions:

- Ensure the Housing Solutions team can refer PRS tenants at risk of rent arrears to Household Support Fund (or successor scheme) at the earliest opportunity.
- Explore development of a dedicated Rent Arrears / Tenancy Sustainment Fund using a proportion of HSF allocation.
- Promote the 'Call Before You Serve' approach (see Workstream 2.4) as the gateway for landlords to access this support.

Resources:

Utilise existing Housing Solutions Team.

KPIs:

- Number of HSF payments preventing PRS eviction (quarterly).
- Value of HSF used for PRS tenancy sustainment.

Workstream 2.2 — Improving Online Resources for Private Sector Landlords

Theme: Landlord Information and Compliance

The Council website is a primary point of contact for landlords seeking information on their obligations, licensing requirements, and how to access support. Many landlords, particularly

accidental or single-property landlords without membership of professional bodies, rely on the Council's online resources to remain informed.

These resources must be clear, comprehensive, up to date and easy to navigate.

Key Actions:

- Audit existing online landlord resources for accuracy, completeness, and usability — including all licensing information, the impact of the Renters' Rights Act 2025, EPC requirements and how to report concerns.
- Update the landlord section of the Council website, including clear signposting to the new national PRS Landlord Database (from late 2026) and Landlord Ombudsman registration requirements.
- Streamline online processes: applications for licences, fee payment, complaint reporting and general enquiries.
- Produce a Renters' Rights Act 2025 plain-English guide specifically for landlords in Leicester.

Resources:

Utilise the existing resources across Housing and Regulatory Services.
Engagement/Collaboration with Web and Communication Teams.

KPIs:

- Website audit completed and new content live (date).
- Number of website page views for landlord content (quarterly).
- Monitor basic enquiry calls to Housing Standards / Licensing teams.

Workstream 2.3 — Landlord Forum and Engagement Programme

Theme: Landlord Engagement and Partnership

Regular, structured engagement with the landlord community is essential for building trust, sharing information, and ensuring the 'voice' of landlords is heard in the development of the strategy. Landlord forums provide an accessible route for the Council to communicate legislative changes, explain its approach, and gather feedback. They also enable landlords to network, learn from each other and access expert speakers.

Key Actions:

- Review the frequency, format, and content of existing landlord forums to ensure they are accessible and well-attended by a broad cross-section of landlords.

- Consider whether additional sessions (e.g. smaller pre-booked groups, area-specific events, online webinars) would improve reach.
- Explore partnership with neighbouring authorities or the county council on a sub-regional landlord forum, particularly around key issues such as the Renters' Rights Act 2025 implementation.
- Ensure the forum programme includes sessions specifically on: Renters' Rights Act 2025 obligations; EPC/MEES requirements; HMO licensing; Supported Housing Regulations; and Council support services.
- Formalise a landlord representative or consultative group to provide ongoing input into strategy development and review.
- Further develop signposting to training for landlords across the city
- Encourage local landlord accreditation (such as DASH / EMLAS) alongside national schemes such as NRLA (National Residential Landlords Association).

Resources:

Currently being picked up within the existing resources within Regulatory Services Housing Standards & Selective Licensing Teams.

KPIs:

- Number of landlord forum events held (target: at least 2 per year).
- Number of landlords attending (target: 220)
- Landlord satisfaction rating with forum content (survey-based).

Workstream 2.4 — Call Before You Serve

Theme: Homelessness Prevention / Landlord Support

'Call Before You Serve' (CBYS) is a well-established homelessness prevention model, funded under the Homelessness Prevention Grant, which encourages landlords to contact the Council before serving a notice seeking possession. Early contact enables the Council to intervene proactively — resolving financial issues, mediating between landlord and tenant, and sustaining tenancies before they reach the point of homelessness. This approach is both cost-effective and produces better outcomes for all parties.

Key Actions:

- Actively promote the CBYS service to all landlords via the forum, website, licensing correspondence and direct mailouts.
- Develop a clear protocol for CBYS referrals to Housing Solutions, Household Support Fund, mediation services, and floating support.

- Monitor outcomes and report quarterly: tenancies sustained, evictions prevented, temporary accommodation days avoided.

Resources:

Already in use - utilise existing Housing Teams.

KPIs:

- Number of CBYS contacts received.
- Number of tenancies sustained following CBYS contact.
- Number of evictions prevented.
- Estimated saving in temporary accommodation cost (calculated per prevented TA night).

OBJECTIVE 3

Improving Support Available for Private Sector Tenants

Private sector tenants — particularly those on lower incomes, those with disabilities or complex needs, and those facing homelessness — need clear and accessible support from the Council. This objective covers the range of services the Council provides to help tenants understand their rights, maintain safe and decent homes, and access help when their tenancy is at risk.

Workstream 3.1 — Disabled Facilities Grants in the PRS**Theme: Tenant Support / Accessibility**

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are means-tested, mandatory grants that local authorities must provide to assist disabled people to continue living independently in their homes. DFGs can fund adaptations such as level-access showers, stair lifts, widened doorways and ramp access. Take-up within the private rented sector is often low because tenants are unaware of their eligibility.

Key Actions:

- Work with the Council's Adaptations team and Adult Social Care to promote DFG availability to PRS tenants and landlords, including via the landlord forum and tenant-facing website.
- Develop a clear consent and communication process to engage PRS landlords in the DFG process early, addressing concerns about property condition or reversibility of adaptations.
- Track DFG applications and approvals in the PRS separately to enable benchmarking and performance monitoring.
- Explore whether financial incentives for landlords who grant consent for major adaptations (e.g. fee waivers, linking to licensing goodwill) could increase take-up.

Resources:

Already available - utilise existing resources across Housing Teams.

KPIs:

- Number of DFG applications from PRS tenants (quarterly).
- Number of DFGs approved and completed in the PRS.
- Average grant value in the PRS.
- Number of landlords engaging in the DFG process.

Workstream 3.2 — Sustainable Leases and Tenancy Security

Theme: Sustainability / Tenancy Security

The abolition of Section 21 'no-fault' evictions under the Renters' Rights Act 2025 (from 1 May 2026) will significantly change the nature of PRS tenancy security. The new assured periodic tenancy regime means that tenants can no longer be evicted without a statutory ground giving them greater security of tenure

Key Actions:

- Implement and monitor the requirements of the Renters' Rights Act and undertake any related advice and enforcement actions
- Engage with landlords to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities under the Renters' Rights Act

Resources:

Utilise the existing resources across Housing and Regulatory Services working group relating to the Renters Rights Act.

KPIs:

- Number of landlords registered on the PRS database
- The number of civil penalties issued for Renters' Rights Act offences
- Strong attendance at Landlord Forums and regularly promoting the PRS scheme

Workstream 3.3 — Public Reporting Portal for Unlicensed Properties

Theme: Digital / Compliance Intelligence

Community intelligence is a valuable source of information about unlicensed or poorly managed properties in the private rented sector. A clear, easy-to-use online reporting mechanisms, promoted to residents and community organisations, can significantly enhance the Council's ability to identify non-compliant properties and target its regulatory resources effectively.

Key Actions:

- Develop or enhance an online reporting portal enabling members of the public to report suspected unlicensed HMOs, Selective Licensing breaches and housing conditions concerns.
- Ensure the portal is accessible (meeting WCAG 2.1 AA standards), mobile-friendly and available in key community languages.
- Promote the portal widely through community networks, ward councillors, voluntary sector partners, GP surgeries, schools, and foodbanks.

- Establish a clear response protocol: what happens to each report, timescales, and feedback to the reporter.

Resources:

Utilise the existing resources across Regulatory Services, Housing Standards Team, include working group relating to the Renters Rights Act.

KPIs:

- Portal live (date).
- Number of reports received via the portal (quarterly).
- % of reports leading to an inspection.
- % of reports resulting in action (notice, penalty, or licensing compliance).

Workstream 3.4 — Better Access to Information and Resources for Tenants

Theme: Tenant Empowerment

Many private sector tenants do not know their rights, or do not know how to enforce them. Clear, accessible information about tenant rights, how to report concerns, and where to get help is a low-cost but high-impact intervention that can reduce the number of tenants suffering in poor conditions or at risk of illegal eviction.

Key Actions:

- Promote tenant-facing content through schools, libraries, GP surgeries, community centres, and housing support organisations.
- Ensure resources are available through multiple sources to ensure fair and equal access to tenant information.
- Produce a Renters' Rights Act 2025 plain-English guide for tenants, covering: the abolition of Section 21; the new periodic tenancy system; how to challenge rent increases; Awaab's Law; the Landlord Ombudsman; and how to report concerns to the Council.
- Translate key tenant information into the main community languages spoken in Leicester.
- Audit existing tenant-facing web content for accuracy, usability, and accessibility.
- Include prominent signposting to the national PRS Landlord Database (once live) so tenants can check whether their landlord is registered.

Resources:

Utilise the existing resources across Regulatory Services, Housing Standards Team.

KPIs:

- Website audit and redevelopment completed (date).
- Number of tenant web page views (quarterly).
- Number of tenant enquiries resolved via self-service (proxy measure).
- Content available in different languages.

OBJECTIVE 4

Improving Sector Enforcement and Protection of Tenants' Rights

The Council's enforcement approach is proportionate and intelligence-led. Most landlords are well-intentioned and will comply with reasonable guidance and education. However, a minority of landlords, whether through ignorance, negligence or deliberate exploitation, cause significant harm to tenants and communities. The workstreams under this objective target the most serious non-compliance with robust enforcement action.

Workstream 4.1 — Selective Licensing & Enforcement**Theme: Compliance / Housing Standards**

Selective Licensing is a power available to local authorities under the Housing Act 2004 Part 3, enabling them to designate areas where all privately rented properties (not just HMOs) require a licence. It enables the Council to impose additional licensing conditions, carry out proactive inspections, and implement intervention programmes in areas with concentrations of poorly managed or low-quality PRS accommodation.

The current Selective Licensing areas include parts of Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields, Fosse, Westcotes, Stoneygate, and Saffron wards. This current scheme expires in October 2027, as of December 2025 total licences granted – 5296.

This workstream will continue the current scheme and present recommendations for any future scheme and the considerations that need to be made for any implementation.

Key Actions:

- Continue to operate any existing Selective Licensing designations in accordance with their approved conditions, carrying out a full programme of inspections, compliance checks, and enforcement action.
- Prepare a detailed evidence base for the renewal, extension, amendment, or discontinuation of any existing designation ahead of its expiry date.
- Carry out full statutory consultation on any proposed new or renewed designation.
- Ensure licensing conditions are updated to reflect the Renters' Rights Act 2025 requirements once implemented.

Resources:

The Selective Licensing Team is currently in place and is funded by the Selective Licensing Fee. Any expansion or extension of the Selective Licensing area will also be covered through a review of the license fee.

KPIs:

- Number of licences issued and in force.
- Number of inspections completed per year.
- Number of civil penalties / prosecutions arising from Selective Licensing.
- Number of HHSRS hazards identified and remedied.
- Evidence base for next designation decision [late 2026]

Workstream 4.2 — Criminal Landlord Taskforce

Theme: Enforcement / Rogue Landlord Action

A small minority of landlords and letting agents operate in a manner that is deliberately exploitative or criminally negligent. These landlords cause the greatest harm to tenants and communities, and require a dedicated, coordinated, and multi-agency enforcement response. The creation of a dedicated Criminal Landlord Taskforce will ensure the most serious cases are investigated thoroughly and pursued to the fullest extent of the law.

Key Actions:

- Establish a dedicated Criminal Landlord Taskforce, drawing together officers from Housing Standards, Environmental Health, Planning Enforcement, Community Safety, Council Tax and Benefits.
- Develop intelligence-led targeting criteria to identify the landlords of greatest concern — using HHSRS inspection data, data from the national landlord register (when live), complaint data, benefits data, and Police intelligence.
- Pursue the full range of enforcement tools available: civil penalties (up to £40,000 for repeat Renters' Rights Act breaches), rent repayment orders, banning orders, prosecutions under the Housing Act 2004 and Housing and Planning Act 2016.
- Develop referral protocols with the Police, Crown Prosecution Service, HMRC and the national Rogue Landlord Database (now replaced by the Rogue Landlord Checker).
- Publish annual enforcement data in accordance with the new Renters' Rights Act 2025 reporting duty.

Resources:

A dedicated Criminal Landlord team has been implemented within Regulatory Services. The team will be funded via the portion of the HMO/Selective Licence Fee and Civil Penalties that are issued.

KPIs:

- Number of cases investigated by Taskforce.
- Number of civil penalties issued (total value).
- Number of banning orders sought and granted.

- Number of prosecutions.
- Number of properties brought up to standard as a result of Taskforce action.

Workstream 4.3 — HMO Licensing & Taskforce

Theme: Housing Standards / Licensing Compliance

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) typically accommodate some of the most vulnerable tenants and historically exhibit the highest rates of Category 1 HHSRS hazards. Mandatory HMO licensing applies to properties occupied by five or more people from two or more households, sharing facilities.

This workstream focuses on identifying unlicensed HMOs and working with landlords to achieve licensing compliance, using enforcement proportionately where engagement fails.

Key Actions:

- Maintain a proactive intelligence-led programme to identify properties operating as HMOs without a licence, using data from Council Tax, planning, complaints, and benefits databases.
- Prioritise inspections and engagement in wards with the highest concentration of HMOs and highest complaint rates.
- Prosecute or issue civil penalties for persistent unlicensed operation where engagement has been exhausted.
- Review licence conditions annually to ensure they remain fit for purpose and reflect the latest HHSRS standards.
- Prepare for the PRS Landlord Database (from late 2026) — cross-reference HMO licensing data with national register.

Resources:

A dedicated HMO team has been implemented within Regulatory Services.

The team will be funded via the HMO Licence Fee and any Civil Penalties that are issued.

KPIs:

- Number of HMO licences issued (new and renewed).
- Number of unlicensed HMOs identified and subsequently licensed.
- Number of civil penalties / prosecutions for unlicensed HMOs.
- Average time to process licence applications.
- Number of HHSRS inspections of licensed HMOs.

Workstream 4.4 — Additional Licensing Scheme

Theme: Housing Standards / Licensing

In addition to Mandatory HMO licensing, local authorities have the power under the Housing Act 2004 to designate Additional Licensing schemes covering smaller HMOs (typically those occupied by 3 or 4 people from 2 or more households). Additional licensing enables the Council to extend licensing conditions and intervention programmes to a broader range of HMO properties than mandatory licensing alone allows.

Key Actions:

- Commission or update an evidence base to assess whether an Additional Licensing scheme is justified and where it should apply.
- If supported by evidence, conduct a full statutory consultation process on a proposed Additional Licensing designation.
- If adopted, implement and manage the scheme with appropriate fee structure, licence conditions, and inspection regime.

Resources:

If Additional Licensing is considered for the City, the team will be self-financing through the licence fee income and this will be modelled in the same way as the Selective Licensing scheme.

Consultation and officer time costs will be recouped through the Additional Licensing scheme.

KPIs:

- Evidence base & Analysis.
- Consultation.
- Scheme designated or decision not to proceed.
- If active: number of licences, compliance inspections, enforcement actions.

OBJECTIVE 5

Improving Access to Market to Resolve Housing Need

With social housing supply continuing to decline and the Housing Register growing, the private rented sector is an essential part of the housing solution for households in need. The Council's ability to access and retain good quality private sector accommodation through leasing, incentive and partnership schemes is critical to reducing homelessness and reducing spend on costly temporary accommodation.

Workstream 5.1 — Expanding Leasing and Incentive Schemes**Theme: Housing Supply / Homelessness Prevention**

The Council operates landlord incentive and leasing schemes through which private sector accommodation is accessed to provide housing solutions for households on the housing register, homeless households, and those with support needs. These schemes typically offer landlords a guaranteed rental income, managed tenancy support, and protection from tenant damage. Expanding these schemes — particularly to one-bedroom properties — will help address the significant unmet housing need for single households.

LCC's part-owned partner-company HomeCome Ltd. offer a leasing solution within the private sector landlords and are used in tandem with the other scheme-levels dependent on the landlord's requirements. HomeCome do not currently take on leases for 1-bedroom, or shared accommodation. This leaves a gap. We are often approached by landlords who are keen to explore this, but often results in generalised signposting to the voluntary sector.

FROM PREVIOUS WORKSTREAM:

225 self-contained units being sourced as temporary accommodation.

125 leases to be leased through HomeCome

27 Temp Acc. Units coming online LAHF (local area housing fund).

Key Actions:

- Continue the assessment of extending the existing leasing scheme to include 1-bedroom accommodation, including market rent analysis, LHA comparison, and cost/benefit modelling.
- If viable, develop a business case for the scheme extension and seek Member approval.
- Actively recruit new landlord partners to the leasing scheme, focusing on areas of high housing need.
- Review any incentive package offered to landlords (e.g. rent guarantee periods, damage deposits, management support) to ensure it remains competitive with the open market.
- Consider further partnership with registered providers or social enterprise organisations (e.g. social lettings agencies) to manage leased properties.

Resources:

Use existing resources from Housing Teams.

KPIs:

- Number of identified units available.
- Number of successful units sourced as accommodation.
- Measures available through funding.

Workstream 5.2 — Impact of Local Government Reorganisation

Theme: Accessing the Market & Housing Supply

LGR offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape how local government works across the whole Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR) area. It establishes two balanced unitary councils, with the plans to simplify the current system by replacing multiple and confusing layers of responsibility with a structure residents can understand more easily. They create councils focused on the distinct needs of urban and rural communities and provide room for much needed local homes and jobs. LGR will, therefore, have a significant impact on the private rental sector for the area defined as Leicester Council.

Key Actions:

- Assess impact of the LGR in the private rental sector for Housing and Regulatory Services, and the wider Council.
- If applicable, write a business case outlining the issues and impacts on the PRS of the new boundary for Leicester Council.

Resources:

Utilise existing resources from Regulatory Services for the initial assessment.

Look at new burdens funding to form financial position for the new boundary.

KPIs:

- % changes in PRS across the defined area of Leicester Council.
- Determine net additional dwelling in the PRS per year.
- Monitor affordable rent (%) in the LGR of total market rent.

Workstream 5.3 — Letting Agents: Trading Standards/RRA

Theme: Letting Agents**1) Enforcement of the Tenant Fees Act 2019 (England) (amended by Renters Rights Act 2025)**

- Letting agents are required to indicate the fees, charges, and penalties payable to landlords and/or letting agent
- Charging Certain fees are prohibited (e.g., admin fees, reference checking fees)
- Holding deposits may not exceed one week's rent and tenancy deposits do not exceed five weeks' rent

2) Enforcement of compliance with the Client Money Protection (CMP) Scheme

- Enforcement of the requirement for agents to protect client funds.
- Enforcement of the requirement letting agents who handle client money belong to an approved Client Money Protection scheme.
- Ensuring that letting agents display their CMP certificate in their branch and on their website.

3) Enforcement of the requirement to be in a Redress Scheme Membership (The Property Ombudsman or Property Redress Scheme).**4) Enforcing the requirement for landlords of privately rented domestic and non-domestic properties in England to ensure that their properties reach at least an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of E before granting a new tenancy to new or existing tenants.****5) Renters Rights Act; Enforce the ban of Rental bidding and Discrimination on the grounds of Receipt of benefits or having children****Key Actions:**

- Enforcement of items 1-3 above has so far been on a reactive basis. Compliance advice has been provided and if not complied with the matter referred to the NTS team to consider enforcement action.
- Proactive enforcement; market surveillance could be undertaken with a view to enforcing our own civil penalties.
- Enforcement of item 4 is not something that we have undertaken at all so far but a similar approach as indicated in items 1-3 above could be adopted.

Resources:

We currently have no dedicated resource for any of these activities.

We look at complaints as they come in and determine what action will be taken based principally on risk and detriment

Look at new burdens funding from RRA activity.

KPIs:

For EPC Enforcement we are required to complete a return with the following questions;

1. The number of inspections and other compliance and enforcement activities undertaken during this period.
2. Numbers of complaints made by members of the public.
3. Other authority/authorities which it has entered into enforcement agreements (if any) (please also identify any changes to such agreements during the reporting period).

Renters Rights Act will introduce some reporting requirements, the definitive description of which are yet to be fully confirmed.

OBJECTIVE 6

Improving Joined-Up Services, Intelligence and Monitoring

Effective delivery of the PRS strategy requires strong programme management, cross-service coordination, and a robust evidence base. The workstreams under this objective create the infrastructure that enables the other five objectives to be delivered effectively, monitored consistently, and adapted over time.

Workstream 6.1 — PRS Programme Management (PReSS Programme)**Theme: Governance / Programme Management / Intelligence Sharing**

The Private Rental Sector Strategy (PReSS) Programme provides the strategic coordination and corporate oversight of all PRS-related activity across the Council. Without central coordination, the multiple workstreams that constitute the PRS offer risk operating in silos, duplicating effort, missing opportunities for cross-service intelligence sharing, and lacking visibility for senior leadership and Lead Members.

Key Actions:

- Refresh a PRS Programme Board, chaired by a senior officer, with membership from all relevant service areas: Housing Standards, Housing Solutions, Environmental Health, Planning, Community Safety, Finance, Digital.
- Appoint a Programme Manager (or equivalent) with responsibility for coordinating workstream leads, managing risks and issues, and reporting to the Board.
- Develop a Programme Dashboard providing real-time visibility of KPI performance across all workstreams.
- Establish a quarterly cycle of Programme Board meetings with a structured reporting template.
- Produce an annual PRS Strategy Progress Report for Lead Members and Overview/Scrutiny.
- Develop cross-service data-sharing protocols, subject to GDPR compliance, to support intelligence-led targeting of enforcement and support.

Resources:

Use existing project and programme management resource across Regulatory Services and Housing.

KPIs:

- Annual progress report published.
- All workstream KPIs reported within the Programme Dashboard.
- Data sharing agreements in place across all contributing service areas.

Workstream 6.2 — Updating Data Sources and PRS Intelligence

Theme: Data and Evidence

An effective, intelligence-led approach to PRS regulation requires up-to-date, high-quality data on the condition, distribution, and characteristics of the private rented sector housing stock. The Council's current data — including any historic housing stock condition survey — should be reviewed and updated to provide a robust baseline for targeting resources and measuring outcomes.

Key Actions:

- Commission a review of existing data sources available to the Council regarding the PRS — including EPC register, Council Tax records, Benefits data, licensing databases, complaint records, and HHSRS inspection data.
- Strengthen links to Community Safety Team and Intelligence, including Community Safety Partnership to ensure neighbourhood issues are shared, addressed, and considered as part of any new initiatives across the PRS.
- Assess whether existing data provides a sufficient picture of the sector or whether a commissioned housing stock condition survey (equivalent to a BRE-style analysis) is required.
- If a new survey is commissioned, use the findings to update the strategy's evidence base and to inform targeting of enforcement and licensing activity.
- Integrate the national PRS Landlord Database (once live from late 2026) into the Council's intelligence framework.
- Continue to develop a data strategy for the PRS that sets out how data will be maintained, quality-assured and used for decision-making on an ongoing basis.

Resources:

Utilise existing project and programme management resource across Regulatory Services to determine the resources required to deliver this item of work.

KPIs:

- Data audit completed (*6-months after agreement of strategy*).
- Updated stock profile published.
- National PRS Database integrated into Council intelligence systems (date after national launch).
- Annual data refresh cycle established.
- Ensure data-led approach utilising data sets in Community Safety intelligence.

14. Benefits — Landlords, Tenants, and the Community

14.1 Benefits to Landlords

Most private sector landlords are well-intentioned individuals who wish to provide good homes and comply with their legal obligations. This strategy is designed to make it easier for them to do so. Key benefits include:

- Clear, accessible information on the Council website and through the landlord forum will reduce the compliance burden for landlords who self-manage, particularly in respect of the major legislative changes brought by the Renters' Rights Act 2025.
- Improved landlord forums and liaison meetings will ensure that the voice of landlords is heard and remains a central consideration in how the strategy is implemented.
- The Call Before You Serve service provides landlords with a proactive 'port of call' for failing tenancies, with financial and practical assistance that can save landlords from the time and cost of possession proceedings.
- Leasing and incentive schemes provide landlords with guaranteed income, managed tenancies and reduced void risk — an attractive proposition in a period of legislative change.
- A proportionate, intelligence-led enforcement approach ensures that compliant landlords are not burdened with unnecessary inspections or bureaucracy.
- Working with landlords and planning in relation to HMO Article 4 Directions in respect of controlling the concentration of properties within the city.

14.2 Benefits to Tenants and Prospective Tenants

A good home can provide tenants, and their families with significant financial, physical, and mental health benefits. The introduction of the Renters Rights Act aims to address the key issues tenants face, however, additional benefits include:

- Increased enforcement where poor and non-compliant landlord behaviours arise will ensure that tenants benefit from improved housing standards, safer homes, and a better quality of life.
- Tenants will benefit from their right to 'quiet enjoyment' being better protected — including through improved enforcement of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977 and the new Renters' Rights Act 2025 regime.
- Improved information resources will empower tenants to understand and enforce their rights, including in respect of repairs, rent increases and the new periodic tenancy protections.
- Improved homelessness prevention services — including CBYS and tenancy sustainment support — will give tenants the best possible chance to avoid homelessness and remain in their homes.
- Reduced fuel poverty and improved health outcomes resulting from better energy efficiency and property standards.
- Tenants will benefit from the Council's new enforcement obligations under the Renters' Rights Act 2025, which creates a duty on the Council to act on serious breaches.

14.3 Benefits to the Wider Community

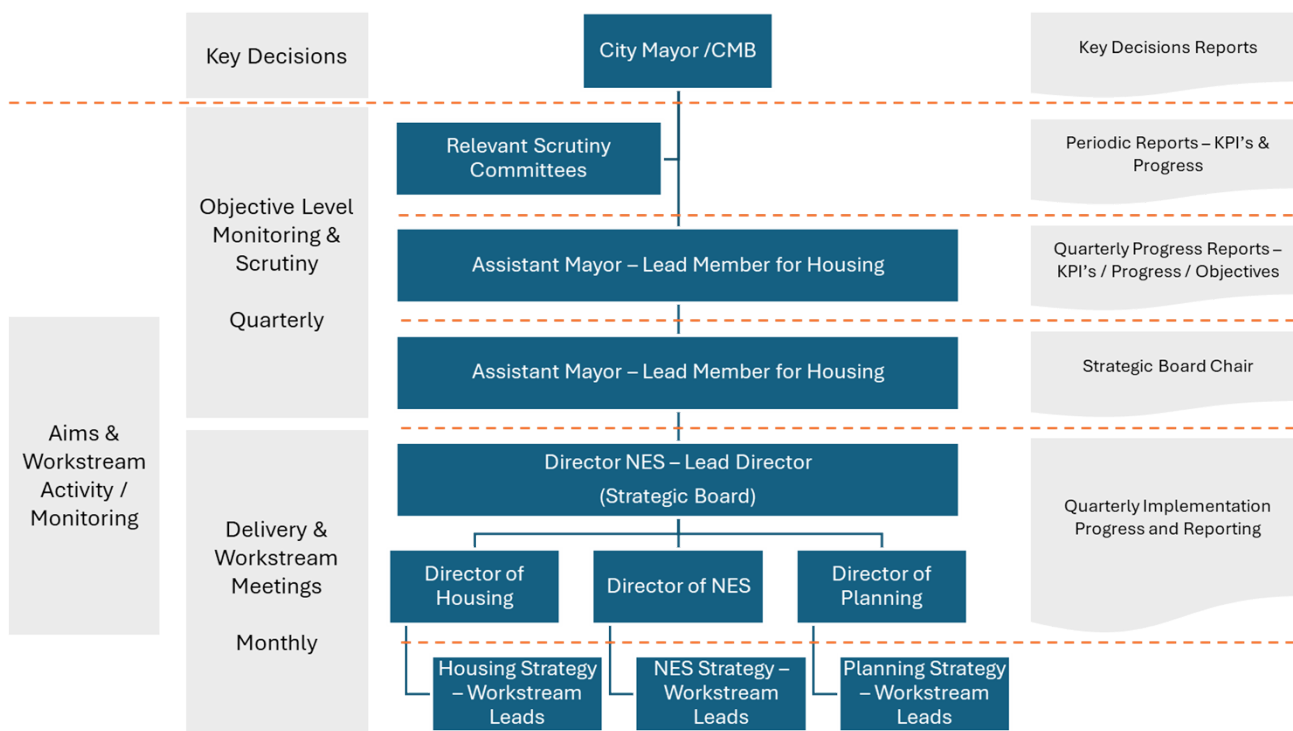
In addition to Landlords and Tenants, who benefit directly, there are also citizens who indirectly benefit from an improved private rental sector, these benefits are:

- Improved licensing coverage and proactive enforcement leads to better housing conditions and more appropriate distribution of accommodation types across the area.
- Increased access to the PRS as a housing solution reduces pressure on the housing register and on temporary accommodation — with consequent cost savings and better outcomes for families.
- The introduction of easy and better methods of reporting issues will empower local communities and neighbourhoods.
- Improved energy efficiency in the PRS contributes to the Council's Climate Emergency commitments and to reduced carbon emissions from the housing stock.
- Addressing rogue landlord activity improves the reputation and attractiveness of Leicester's neighbourhoods.

15. Governance and Programme Management

15.1 Governance Structure

The PRS Strategy is governed through a structured programme management approach. The proposed governance structure is set out below:



15.2 Programme Board

The PRS Programme Board has strategic oversight of the delivery of the strategy and its workstreams. It meets quarterly and is responsible for:

- Reviewing performance against KPIs and workstream milestones.
- Managing strategic risks and issues.
- Making decisions on resource allocation and workstream prioritisation.
- Receiving annual progress reports and directing any necessary strategy refresh.
- Ensuring cross-service coordination and resolving interdependencies.

15.3 Reporting to Members

The Lead Member for Housing (and relevant portfolio holders) will receive:

- Quarterly performance dashboard updates via briefing or portfolio holder report.
- An annual PRS Strategy Progress Report.
- Specific reports to Overview and Scrutiny on matters of strategic significance (e.g. Selective Licensing renewal, major enforcement outcomes).

- An annual report on the Council's PRS enforcement activities as required by the Renters' Rights Act 2025.

16. Performance Monitoring and KPIs

16.1 Approach to Performance Monitoring

Each workstream within this strategy has associated performance measures (KPIs), set out within the workstream descriptions in Sections 8–13 above. The strategy is monitored through a set of high-level indicators that enable senior leadership and Members to track overall progress and impact.

It is recognised that the next steps — once the strategy is agreed — will involve establishing specific baseline data and targets to better measure progress. The KPIs below indicate the direction of travel; specific numerical targets will be agreed through the PReSS Programme Board once baseline data has been established.

16.2 High-Level Strategic KPIs

Objective Reference	KPI / Indicator	Direction
#1	% of PRS properties inspected with no Category 1 HHSRS hazards	Increase
#1	% of PRS properties with EPC D or above	Increase
#1	Number of enforcement actions (civil penalties/prosecutions)	Increase initially (decrease as compliance improves)
#2	Number of landlords attending forum events per year	Increase
#2	Number of CBYS contacts received and tenancies sustained	Increase
#3	Number of DFG completions in the PRS	Increase
#3	Number of tenant enquiries resolved via online self-service	Increase
#4	Number of Selective Licensing inspections per year	Maintain / Increase
#4	Number of Criminal Landlord Taskforce cases resolved	Increase
#5	Number of PRS tenancies created via Council schemes	Increase
#5	Estimated TA nights saved via PRS lettings	Increase
#6	Programme Board meets quarterly	100%
#6	Annual PRS Progress Report published	100%

16.3 Contextual Data Monitoring

In addition to these KPIs, the Council will monitor key contextual data that helps assess the condition and trends within the sector more broadly. All data below should be produced at ward level where possible to enable targeted monitoring:

- Number of homeless presentations from the PRS per quarter.

-
- Number of illegal eviction complaints per quarter.
 - Number of complaints about housing conditions in the PRS.
 - Volume of applications for HMO and Selective Licences.
 - Fuel poverty rates in the PRS (annual, by ward).

The Council will also seek to benchmark its performance against other comparable local authorities where publicly available data permits.

17. Financial, Legal, Equalities and Climate Implications

17.1 Financial Implications

As referenced within this document the PRS strategy impacts several Council services and Divisions. There are no additional costs falling to the Council as a result of the actions outlined in the strategy. This is because:

- Some are self-financed, such as mandatory and selective licensing, for which fees are charged to landlords to cover the costs;
- Some are financed from external grant, including Disabled Facilities Grant and the Homelessness Prevention Grant;
- Some actions are absorbed by the activities of staff where services are already embedded within teams.

Where there are proposals to explore or develop actions throughout this strategy, the financial implications of these will need to be considered as and when they are put forward.

Stuart McAvoy, Head of Finance

2nd March 2026

17.2 Legal Implications

Section 3 of the Housing Act 2004 places a duty on a local Housing Authority to keep housing conditions under review with a view to identifying any action that may need to be taken by them under the provisions set out in section 3(2) of the Housing Act 2004. These powers apply across all housing including the private rented sector. The PRS strategy complies with the requirements of this and other linked legislation. Officers should ensure that the strategy compliments other housing strategies and needs assessment and particular attention should be given to any Directions issued by the Secretary of State.

Feizal Hajat, Qualified Lawyer

27 April 2026

17.3 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, 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, sexual orientation.

This report gives an overview on strategic plans for undertaking work within Leicester city's private rented sector. It focusses on six high-level priorities with the aim of improving housing standards, with each being supported by identified workstreams. The work carried out under these priorities should lead to positive outcomes for people from across a range of protected characteristics who are disproportionately represented in the private rented sector. For instance, nationally, younger

people (with approximately 46% of PRS households headed by someone aged 25-34), single-parent families (who are predominantly female), disabled residents, and individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds are significantly more likely to rent privately. Furthermore, data indicates that Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic households are over twice as likely to rent privately compared to White British households and are disproportionately impacted by Category 1 hazards and fuel poverty.

Whilst the strategy is a strategic overarching document, the six high-level priorities and associated workstreams need to ensure equality considerations are embedded throughout them. It is recommended that Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are carried out as appropriate on identified areas within the workstreams, such as changes to policies/services/organisational change to ensure any impacts are identified and addressed, and mitigating actions put in place.

The equality impact assessment is an iterative process that should be revisited throughout the decision-making process and updated to reflect any feedback/changes due to consultation/engagement as appropriate.

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148
Dated 11 March 2026

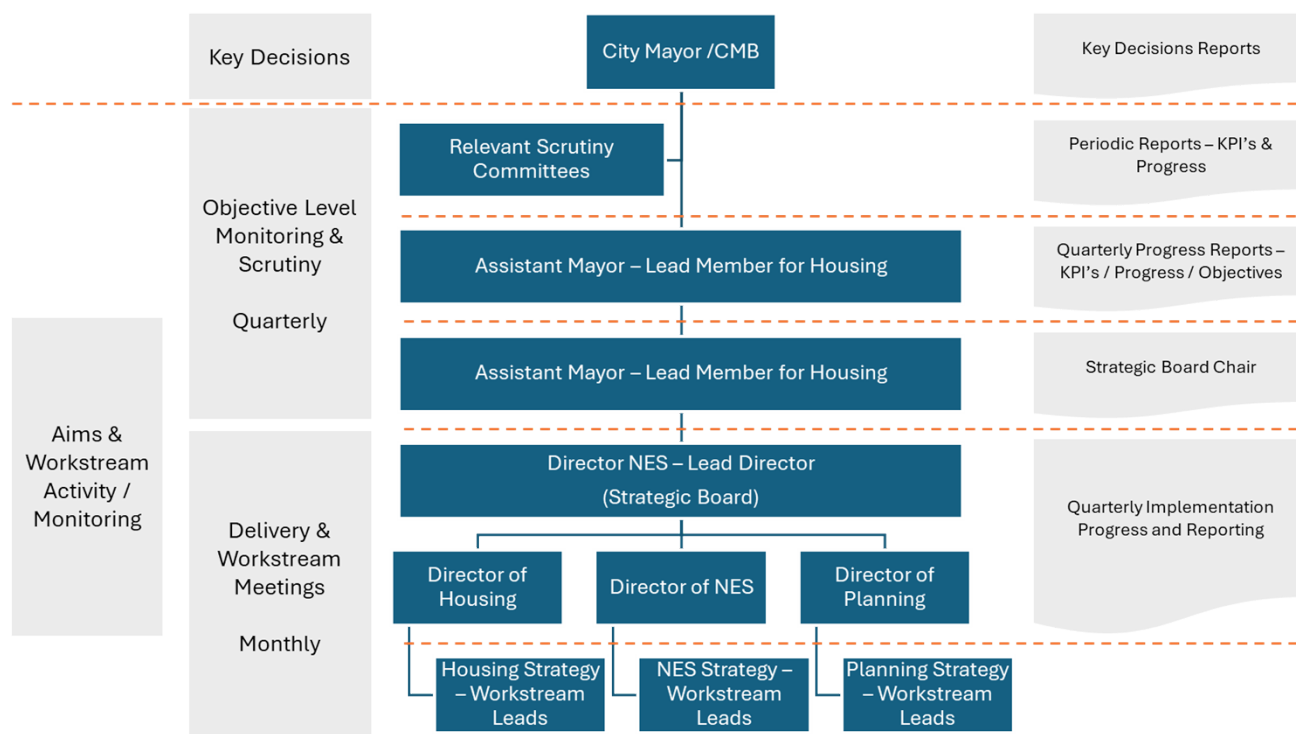
17.4 Climate Emergency Implications

Housing is responsible for a third of Leicester's overall carbon emissions, with PRS housing frequently the worst-performing tenure in terms of energy efficiency and carbon output. This strategy includes dedicated workstreams (particularly Workstream 1.2 — Operation EPC) that directly address the Council's Climate Emergency objectives through improving the energy performance of PRS properties.

Other workstreams also contribute indirectly to the Council's net zero ambitions: improved housing conditions reduce the need for energy-intensive temporary accommodation; better engagement with landlords on retrofit opportunities signposts available funding; and the forthcoming mandatory EPC C standard for the PRS (anticipated by 2030) will drive significant investment in insulation and low-carbon heating.

Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer
4th March 2026

Appendix A: Governance Structure



Appendix B: Legislative Reference Framework

Legislation	Relevance to PRS Strategy	Status / Commencement
Renters' Rights Act 2025	Abolition of S21; periodic tenancies; new LA enforcement duties; PRS Database; Landlord Ombudsman; Decent Homes Standard; Awaab's Law extension.	Royal Assent 27 Oct 2025. Phase 1: 1 May 2026. Further phases 2026–2035.
Housing Act 2004	HHSRS; HMO Mandatory Licensing; Additional and Selective Licensing; civil penalties for housing offences.	In force. Amended by RRA 2025.
Housing Act 1988 (as amended)	Basis for assured tenancies; to be reformed by RRA 2025.	AST regime ends 1 May 2026.
Landlord and Tenant Act 1985	Landlord repair and maintenance obligations (s.11); fitness for human habitation (s.9A, amended by Homes Act 2018).	In force.
Energy Efficiency (PRS) Regs 2015 (MEES)	Minimum EPC E standard for all PRS lettings. Government consulting on raising to C by 2030.	In force. Consultation ongoing.
Protection from Eviction Act 1977	Prohibition on illegal eviction and landlord harassment. Council enforcement role.	In force.
Equality Act 2010	PSED; prohibition on discriminatory No DSS / No Children practices (reinforced by RRA 2025).	In force. RRA 2025 provisions from 1 May 2026.
Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023	New regulatory framework for exempt / supported accommodation. Secondary legislation expected 2026/27.	Primary legislation in force. Regs pending.
Housing and Planning Act 2016	Banning orders; Rent Repayment Orders; Rogue Landlord database (now replaced by national PRS Database under RRA 2025).	In force. Amended by RRA 2025.

Appendix C: References & URL

References and Key URLs:

Renters' Rights Act 2025 — Guide: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-the-renters-rights-act>

Renters' Rights Act 2025 — Implementation Roadmap: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/renters-rights-act-2025-implementation-roadmap>

A Fairer Private Rented Sector (White Paper, 2022): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-fairer-private-rented-sector>

MEES / EPC Consultation 2025: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-the-energy-performance-of-privately-rented-homes-2025-update>

PRS Learning Toolkit for Local Authorities: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/private-rented-sector-learning-toolkit-for-local-authorities>

Local Authority Enforcement in the PRS — Headline Report (2022): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-enforcement-in-the-private-rented-sector-headline-report>

English Housing Survey — Rented Sector Statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey>

Appendix D: Workstream Table

WS No.	Workstream Title	Lead Officer
1.1	Renters Rights Bill	Alexander Wragg
1.2	Energy Performance and Operation EPC	Jenn Bradbury
1.3	Supported Housing Regulations	Project Board
2.1	Financial Support and Household Support Fund	Shuaib Esmail
2.2	Improving online resources for private sector landlords	Jenn Bradbury
2.3	Landlord Forum and Engagement Programme	Jenn Bradbury
2.4	Landlords: Call before you serve.	Shuaib Esmail
3.1	Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) in the PRS	Simon Nicholls
3.2	Sustainable Leases and Tenancy Security	Joanne Russell
3.3	Public Reporting Portal for Unlicensed Properties	Jenn Bradbury
3.4	Improve online information & resources for tenants	Jenn Bradbury
4.1	Selective Licensing & Enforcement	Jenn Bradbury
4.2	Criminal Landlord Taskforce	Jenn Bradbury
4.3	HMO Licensing & HMO Taskforce	Jenn Bradbury
4.4	Additional Licensing Scheme	Jenn Bradbury
5.1	Expanding Leasing and Incentive Schemes	Joanne Russell
5.2	Impact of Local Government Reorganisation	Rachel Hall
5.3	Letting Agents: Trading Standards & Renters Rights Act	Ronald Ruddock
6.1	Private Rental Sector Strategy (PReSS) Programme	Chris Hamilton
6.2	Updating data sources & PRS statistics and insights on housing stock across the city.	Jenn Bradbury

The Renters' Rights Act – Update Report

Housing Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: 7th September 2026

Lead directors: Chris Burgin & Sean Atterbury

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 is an update to the previous report provided in July 2025 regarding the Renters' Rights Act, phase 1 of which has now been implemented. The previous report is attached at **APPENDIX 1** for reference.

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 Act 2025 is a transformative piece of legislation. The previous report set out the details of the changes the legislation will bring about and the anticipated impacts on the private rented sector (PRS) and the local authority.
- 3.2 The key changes and their scheduled implementation are listed below and this also includes the services leading in each of these areas in phase 1. It should be noted that all changes will impact across multiple teams, but we have now completed the mapping of which team leads in which area and who undertakes which part of the process so we are working efficiently and collaboratively. We are keeping this under review as more and more queries come into the Local Authority.

Planned Implementation of the Renters Rights Act	
Phase 1	
Commencement May 2026	
This phase introduces the most significant changes to the private rented sector (PRS).	
Abolition of Section 21: "No-fault" evictions using Section 21 notices became illegal for all private tenancies. The last day to serve a Section 21 notice was 30 April 2026.	
Teams leading/most impacted on Abolition of Section 21	
Homelessness Teams (prevention) Housing Solutions (PRS Team)	
New Tenancy Regime: Existing assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs) automatically convert to Assured Periodic Tenancies (rolling contracts). New fixed-term tenancies are prohibited.	

Teams leading/most impacted New Tenancy Regime
Homelessness (Prevention) Housing Solutions (PRS Team) Tenancy Management (HomeCome)
Reformed Possession Grounds: Landlords must use one of the updated, valid grounds for possession under Section 8 (e.g., selling the property, moving in a family member, tenant anti-social behaviour, or rent arrears).
Teams leading/most impacted by reformed possession grounds
Homelessness (prevention) Housing Solutions (PRS Team)
Formalised rent Increase process: Rent increases are limited to once per year, and must follow the Section 13 procedure (using a new Form 4A) with at least two months' notice.
Team leading/most impacted by the rent increase process
Homelessness (prevention) Housing Solutions (PRS Team)
Discrimination and Pets: It is illegal to discriminate against tenants who receive benefits or have children. Landlords must consider tenant requests to keep a pet and cannot unreasonably refuse them. Responses must be provided within 28 days.
Team leading/most impacted by the discrimination and pet clauses
Trading Standards Housing Standards
Bans: Rental bidding wars (accepting offers above the advertised price) and requesting more than one month's rent in advance are banned.
Team leading/most impacted by the rental bidding wars clauses
Trading Standards
Phase 2 From Late 2026 This phase focuses on new infrastructure and enforcement mechanisms PRS Database: A mandatory national database for all PRS properties will be rolled out regionally. Landlords must register their details and property compliance information (e.g., gas, electric, EPCs). Landlord Ombudsman: A new mandatory Ombudsman service will be established to provide redress for tenants and resolve disputes outside of court. Mandatory landlord membership is expected by 2028.
Phase 3 Commencement date subject to consultation

Decent Homes Standard: The government will consult on applying the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector, with full implementation expected around 2035.

Awaab's Law: Legally enforceable timeframes for addressing serious hazards like damp and mould will be extended to private landlords following further consultation.

- 3.3 The large raft of changes that accompany the implementation of the Renters' Rights Act will impact on the work of a number of Council services and as a result a Project Board has been established with a dedicated Project Manager and this will continue to monitor the progress of the Renters Rights Act provisions. This is to ensure that as an Authority we are prepared and that we are engaging early with key stakeholders to provide information and reassurance to those who will be impacted by these changes.
- 3.4 Other than monitoring the changes that are already in place, it is important that we also keep an eye to the future as the PRS Database will allow a much more targeted enforcement response from Regulatory Services.
- 3.5 Although the decent homes standard is not set to be introduced until 2035 (including Awaab's Law) this is likely to cause issues for the sector as bringing many PRS properties up to the standard will be significantly costly and in some cases exemptions may be required (Grade 2 listed buildings for example). This may again bring about a period where Landlords consider leaving the sector due to the cost implications but as we do now, we will continue working with the sector to help them get ready for these changes.
- 3.6 **Phase 1 implementation update**
- 3.7 Phase 1 came into effect on 1 May 2026. We are aware that there was a significant increase in the number of section 21 notices given to tenants leading up to this date, noting that these 'no fault' evictions have been abolished by the new legislation. Any Notice served under Section 21 up until the 30th April 2026 will still be processed by the Courts under the previous legislation if they were served correctly. We are aware that there is a backlog and so we will still be seeing the impact of this for in the region of another year.
- 3.8 Other than a noticeably increased number of Section 21 Notices being served in advance of the 1st May 2026, so far we have seen little change in workload or new issues being raised with the council as a result of the Renters' Rights Act. However, we anticipate that there will be a gradual increase in the coming months as issues arise that fall under the new provisions.
- 3.9 As noted above we are proactively monitoring this to ensure that we are responsive as an Authority.
- 3.10 **Enforcement**
- 3.11 Formal enforcement will be carried out by staff within Regulatory Services. Where information and/or evidence of breach has been gathered by teams within Housing

there will be an appropriate handover to ensure continuity of evidence and to maintain efficient work practices.

- 3.12 For example, in a case where a landlord seeks to regain possession of their property the Homelessness Prevention / Housing Solutions would check the validity of the notices and take steps to resolve differences or find alternative accommodation for the residents. However, if an unlawful eviction follows or if there is any other breach of the legislation, any formal enforcement action including prosecution or civil penalty would be undertaken by Housing Standards / Trading Standards.

3.13 **Funding**

- 3.14 The Government committed to provide new burdens funding to Local Authorities to assist with the implementation of this new Act and the associated works. The funding in the 2025/26 financial year was calculated based on the number of privately rented properties within each Authority captured at the census in 2021.

- 3.15 The initial new burdens funding for 2025/26 was allocated to enable the Regulatory Services IT system to be updated to capture the additional area of work, provide a comprehensive schedule of training across multiple services and to meet some of the costs of the preparatory work that has already been undertaken.

- 3.16 New burdens funding of £306k has been provided for the regulatory functions for 2026/27. This will be spent on additional staffing to meet increased demand in Housing Standards and Trading Standards. It is unclear whether further funding will be provided in subsequent years. The legislation imposes a duty to enforce, as opposed to just a power, and it is anticipated that this will result in income from civil penalties. Any such income is ring-fenced to housing enforcement and so will be used to support the regulatory function.

- 3.17 Separate funding has been given to support our housing / homelessness prevention work. This has been announced for the current and next financial year with £255,291 for 26/27 and a further £120,203 for 27/28. This will be spent on the additional staffing required to meet the demand in Homelessness and Housing Solutions. it is not clear if further funding will be required in subsequent years.

3.18 **Communications**

- 3.19 A comprehensive communications plan is in place and as a result we are confident that we have reached as wide an audience as possible to make sure renters and landlords but also services are aware of the changes and any new responsibilities.

- 3.20 We have provided detailed and specialised training to 100 staff across Housing and Regulatory Services and have a further 200 licences for more generic on-line training which is available to any staff who require this over the next year.

- 3.21 We have also been provided, as part of the training package, with 20 free memberships to the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA) which includes access to template documents, forums and a helpdesk with experts to provide us advice on complex or unusual cases.

- 3.22 We have updated our web-pages and run a social media campaign with our communications team so we reach as wide an audience as possible.
- 3.23 We have attended a number of Landlord forums speaking about the changes and also organised 2 specialist forums just on the Renters Rights Act which were well attended. We will go on to organise a further forum for Landlords "Renters Rights Act, 6 months in" so we can engage with them to understand any issues or impacts and give suitable advice.
- 3.24 We have provided written and verbal presentations to a number of services including adults and children's social care and delivered a training session to Councillors. We have also briefed customer service team and first contact teams and provided them with guidance on how to deal with queries and where to send them within the organisation.
- 3.25 We have also undertaken an engagement exercise with letting agents to ensure that they are also aware of their responsibilities.
- 3.26 We have engaged with Tenants for Justice to ensure that they are prepared and ready for any potential increases on tenants seeking Rent Repayment Orders.
- 3.27 The Ministry of Housing and Local Government has also run a social media campaign and provided template letters for landlords although they did not provide a Local Authority Communications pack.
- 3.28 As you can see we have undertaken a significant amount of communications around the implementation of the act and this also may be a contributing factor to the low number of contacts we have had to date as we have made a lot of effort to ensure that Landlords, tenants and services knew in advance about the changes.
- 3.29 The Ministry of Housing and Local Government has also run a social media campaign and provided template letters for landlords.

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

4.1 Financial implications

As an update report, there are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Known new burdens funding for the implementation of the Renters Rights Act and associated homelessness prevention work is outlined in the table below:

	Renter's Rights Act	Homelessness Prevention
2025/26	£142k	£0
2026/27	£307k	£255k
2027/28	not known	£120k

Signed: Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance

Dated: 27 May 2026

4.2 Legal implications

This is an updating information report for noting and whilst no direct legal implication arise, lead teams and Regulatory services should capture enforcement activity to evidence compliance with the general statutory duty under section 107 of the Renters Rights Act 2025 and be in a position to comply with the duty to report (section 110) when the Secretary of State publishes Regulations.

Signed: F. Hajat Qualified Lawyer

Dated: 28 May 2026

4.3 Equalities implications

Our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires us to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010 (sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, age) and those who do not. The Council also has an obligation to treat people in accordance with their Convention rights under The Human Rights Act, 1998.

This update report sets out progress on the implementation of the Renters' Rights Act and the associated changes to council services. The Act is expected to have a positive impact for many tenants in the private rented sector, including people from protected groups who may be at greater risk of disadvantage or discrimination.

It is important to monitor service demand, customer contact and emerging issues to identify any disproportionate impacts and ensure communications, engagement and enforcement activity remain accessible and inclusive. Equality Impact Assessments should be completed or updated where appropriate as further phases are introduced and services are developed.

Signed: Surinder Singh, Equalities Officer

Dated: 27 May 2026

4.4 Climate Emergency implications

Housing is responsible for around a third of direct carbon emissions in Leicester, with PRS housing often being the lowest performing in terms of energy efficiency.

The Renters' Rights Act is likely to have a positive impact on raising standards of energy efficiency and therefore reducing fuel poverty and carbon emissions, including through:

- Mandatory disclosure of compliance information on the PRS database may lead to more identification of sub-standard properties in relation to energy efficiency and subsequently more enforcement action.
- The introduction, subject to the outcome of consultation, of the Decent Homes Standard in the PRS will lead potentially to energy efficiency improvements where required to meet the standard.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer Ext. 37 2246

Dated: 27 May 2026

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

N/A

5. Background information and other papers:

N/A

6. Summary of appendices:

7. 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)?

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

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

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 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 (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
Additional Investigation & Enforcement	
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: 18th 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: 13th 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: 18th 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: 16th 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?

Repairs and Maintenance Service Performance Update Report 2026

Housing LMB: 20/07/2026

HEN Board: 29/07/2026

Housing Scrutiny Commission: 07/09/2026

Lead Member: Councillor Cutkelvin

Lead director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Nilkesh Patel, Head of Service
- Author contact details: 0116 454 2505
- Report version number: - V1

1. Summary

This report provides an updated overview of the Repairs and Maintenance (R&M) Team's performance for 2025-26. It highlights ongoing and emerging challenges, including new legislative requirements (notably Awaab's Law Phase 2, HHSRS, and Decent Homes Standard changes), recruitment issues, and increased demand.

The report details recent achievements, key performance indicators, and outlines improvement action.

This report excludes health and safety compliance, which will be reported separately later in the year and will cover Asbestos, Electrical Safety, Fire Safety, Gas Safety, Lift Safety, and Water Hygiene.

All data within this report is accurate as of 28/05/2026.

2. Recommended actions/decision

It is recommended that the report is noted.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

The report has been shared with the Heads of Service for Technical Services and Tenancy Management for comment. Repairs performance continues to be formally evaluated at:

- Social Housing Regulator Board –monthly
- Housing Senior Management Team Meetings – Quarterly
- Housing Lead Member Briefing – Bi-annually
- Housing, Economy and Neighbourhoods Board – Bi-annually
- Housing Scrutiny Commission – Bi-annually

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

General

The Council manages approximately 19,500 properties and 1,700 leaseholders. Services provided include:

-
- Responsive repairs
- Emergency out of hours repairs
- Compliance works (Gas, Fire, Electrical)

- Pre-planned maintenance
- Void property renovation

Repairs are reported via:

- Compliance works (Council-driven)
- Responsive repairs (tenant-driven)
- Complaints/enquiries (tenant/Councillor-driven)
- Internally reported (proactive officer reporting)

Repairs fall into three main categories:

- Priority 1 (emergency, 24-hour SLA)
- Priority 2 (routine, 10 working day SLA)
- Priority 3 (programmed, 8–52 week SLA)

Additional categories exist, e.g. for damp and mould, dictated by policy or legislation.

Challenges

Challenges facing the Repairs & Maintenance (R&M) service remain relatively consistent and difficult to overcome. The R&M service continues to face persistent and new challenges:

- National skills shortages remain acute, impacting both direct recruitment and contractor capacity. The service currently has 28 vacancies, despite recruiting 26 operatives in the past year. The workforce plan is under constant review, with a strengthened apprenticeship programme and succession planning.
- New legislative requirements have increased workloads and compliance obligations. The phased implementation of Awaab's Law (Phase 2 from October 2026), the updated Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), the requirement to undertake Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICRs) and changes to the Decent Homes Standard will require significant changes to processes, resourcing, and reporting. The team is preparing for mandatory reporting and tighter timescales for a wider range of hazards.
- Demand for repairs remains high, driven in part by heightened tenant awareness and changes in reporting channels. The introduction of the Decent Homes Standard update in April 2026 is expected to trigger a further increase in demand, particularly for issues relating to damp, mould, insulation, and safety.
- Contractor capacity is stretched, especially for specialist works. The procurement of a new long-term contractor is underway, with the aim of stabilising capacity by early 2027.
- Job cancellations and access issues persist, particularly for multi-visit and external works. The new repairs dashboard introduced in late 2025 has improved visibility of these issues, and targeted actions are being developed to address root causes.

Repairs

Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicator	Actual (29/07/2025)	Previous Report
Repairs Outstanding*	8,394 ↓	9,240
Repairs Out of Category*	2,411 ↓	4,206
Percentage of all repairs completed within category	83% ↑	80%
Percentage of emergency repairs completed within category	95% ↑	92%

*Excluding damp and mould

As can be seen from the data above, there has been continued progress in reducing the outstanding works and improving completion rates. External works and window and doors remain the main source of outstanding repairs, though numbers have fallen by 9% since July 2025 in overall outstanding and a 42% decrease in out of category repairs. Internally, the focus has shifted to persistent routine repairs and quicker turnaround on programmed works, working closely with contractors to ensure the demands are met and focus is not lost.

The most notable decreases correlate to external works which since July 2025 has seen a decrease of 33% from 1,111 to 738 outstanding repairs which are out of category. We now continue to maintain this progress as well as focusing on other areas which are not progressing as positively.

Repairs Trends

Repairs Trends	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26 (actuals)
Repairs Raised	122,111	126,406	126,786 —
Repairs Complete	101,604	103,647	113,232 ↑
Repairs Cancelled	20,090	20,819	19,050 ↓
Repairs cancelled as a %	16%	16%	15% ↓

The table above shows good progress for repairs completed and a slight reduction in repairs cancelled, which will contribute towards reducing the overall repairs outstanding.

Repairs Profile for Priority 1,2 and 3 repairs

Repair Category	Number of jobs out of category	Average days job is out of category	Number of jobs over 12 months out of category	Number of jobs over 24 months out of category	% of repairs that have been visited
R1	0	0	0	0	100%
R2	1,893	93	0	0	67%
R3	502	123	162	0	63%

The table above shows work is still required to improve the overall position of the Repairs team; improvement actions are listed below in the report. However, as the overall repairs position continues to improve, so will the other metrics, such as wait times and satisfaction over a period as tenants feel satisfied and custom to our improvements. Our internal transactional surveys, completed following completion of jobs, does clearly demonstrate a satisfactory position for our tenants. Currently our performance is as:

Quality of Repairs: 76% satisfied
Resolved on 1st visit: 62% of repairs
Polite and Professional: 78% satisfied

Repairs Improvements

Following on from our last report, presented towards the end of Q2 2025, the Repairs team have continued to work through the improvements listed, as well as identifying further improvement opportunities.

Key improvement actions since the last report include:

- Further integration of new and specialist contractors, offsetting workforce shortages. Longer term procurement is ongoing to offset the challenges around contractor capacity being stretched,
- The works planning team continues to optimise scheduling and communication with residents, reducing missed appointments and improving satisfaction. This will be further improved once our new mobile working solution is live in November 2026 allowing for auto scheduling of works according to the skill sets of our operatives removing manual intervention where possible.
- Team structures have been refined to better respond to multi-discipline repairs and new compliance needs. Further changes are expected in November 2026 where we are looking to operate in a hybrid way including a geographical / city wide approach to handling repairs, which is expected to bring a better customer experience for our residents.
- The dashboard initiative launched in late 2025 has improved operational visibility and allowed for proactive intervention on trends, workforce planning, and demand spikes.
- Internal training on new legislative requirements has been accelerated in preparation for Awaab's Law Phase 2 and Decent Homes changes.

The Housing apprenticeship programme has been increased from 40 to 50 over the last few years to bolster our workforce planning strategy. This year, we have already had 7 qualified tradespeople join our service and we have recruited a further 13 apprentices who are due to start in September.

Repairs Projections

To project the reduction of outstanding out of category repairs, over the next 6 months. is difficult to achieve for various reasons, listed below:

- Staffing levels remain lower than anticipated
- Contractor capacity has been stretched with other priorities, i.e. damp and mould, EICRs
- Contractor delays in achieving optimum performance due to setting up processes and undertaking surveys
- Continued issues with no-access
- Awaab's law phase 2 going live from October 2026
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) surveys increasing over the next 6 months resulting in increased reports of repairs.

Based on current performance levels, anticipated increases in demand and resourcing levels and increased contractor capacity, we are projecting by the end of April 2027 the number of out of category repairs will be reduced by 75% to close to 500 outstanding. At which point, we are confident we will be nearing completion of the procurement for a new large contractor to carry out void remedial repairs and move resources into responsive repairs in order to fully balance the service and re-establish a healthy level of outstanding repairs into the future.

Voids

As part of the improvements outlined around damp and mould within the report in April 2025, integration of damp and mould works within the voids process has become business as usual.

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

Voids Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicator	Year end 2022-23	Year end 2023-24	Year end 2024-25	Year end 2025-26
Number of Voids (excluding projects, decants, RTL and supported living)	426	363	268	398
Number of Voids as a % of total housing stock	2.17%	1.85%	1.36%	1.92%
New Void to Let Time (days)	195	188	147	176

Target Let times (days)	87	63	54	65
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The above illustrates the positive voids journey over the last few years, this helps towards reducing rent-loss, providing decent homes for those in need, particularly in relation to homelessness and those staying in temporary accommodation. As expected, the last year has seen an increase in the number of voids outstanding as the team has embarked in supporting on meeting the timescales and requirements regarding Awaabs Law phase 1 and around outstanding damp jobs. Balancing the resources to ensure voids are returned at the earliest and managing emergency / significant hazard remedials within 24 hours and 5 working days, has been challenging.

A significant budget, of £2.1m, has been committed to supporting the reduction of void properties by ensuring a contractor oversees all the remedials, allowing for resources to support on responsive repairs further reducing current waiting times. We anticipate that these investments and operational changes will deliver tangible improvements including with shorter return to let times.

Damp and Mould

With the first phase of Awaab's law being introduced, successfully on 27th October 2025, the service is focusing on ensuring we continue to meet the legislative requirements, whilst continuing to reduce the current outstanding remedial repairs related to damp.

The Council continues to prioritise damp and mould remediation particularly where health concerns have been raised, in light of Awaab's Law.

Over the past 12 months we have made key improvements and undertook actions to reduce down our outstanding damp works and start delivering against Awaab's Law requirements. Improvements such as:

- Rapid response teams and specialist contractors are now standard for all (emergency) damp and mould jobs.
- A dashboard has been developed to allow real time tracking and case escalation.
- Proactive communication with tenants (calls, texts, visits) is embedded as business as usual.
- Multi-agency review meetings continue for complex or vulnerable cases.

Whilst the improvements are welcomed, the team are faced with challenges such as:

- The introduction of Awaab's Law Phase 2 (October 2026) extends mandatory response and reporting to a wider range of hazards such as excess cold and heat, fire and electrical safety hazards, falls (associated with baths, stairs and level surfaces) and structural instability. This will again require significant process changes and increased resources. The Council has been carrying out various workshops for the past few months with colleagues within Housing and wider services to ensure a collective approach is undertaken to meet the requirements. A detailed report on the council's response to Awaab's law phase 2 will be presented in November 2026.

- The revised HHSRS and Decent Homes Standard (2026) increase the scope of what must be investigated and remedied, especially for excess cold/heat, structural hazards, and safety.
- Cancellations and no-access issues remain, though improved resident communications are helping. We are in the process of developing an access strategy which aligns across the division on how to support access requirements. It is clear external works (roofing, pointing, etc.) continue to generate high volumes of damp related reports.

Performance as of 28/05/2026 for pre Awaab's law damp works:

Key Performance Indicator	Target	28/05/2025	Projection April 2027
Repairs outstanding	0	247	0
Repairs out of category	0	227	0 (by September 2026)

Performance as of 28/05/2026 for post October 2025 Awaab's law damp works is:

1. Volume of Cases

- **Total number of damp and mould reports received in the period:** 137
- **Active (open) inspection reports at period end:** 95, with 0 Emergency inspections outstanding.
- **Breakdown of open inspections by risk category (Emergency/ Significant):** 0 Emergency, 95 Significant.
- **Percentage of cases where initial inspection commenced within statutory timescales (e.g., 10 days):** 61.7% of significant hazards completed within 10 working days.

2. Timeliness of Response

- **Percentage/number of emergency hazard cases responded to/attended within 24 hours (in line with Awaab's Law):** 100% of hazards were responded to and works began within 24 hours.
- **Percentage/number of significant hazard cases responded to/attended within 5 working days following conclusion of investigation to make safe:** 74.5% of all significant hazards are attended to within 5 working days (or earlier) to make safe.
- **Percentage/number of cases where preventative works have started between 5 days and 12 weeks:** 87% of preventative works has within the prescribed timeframe.

3. Completion Times

- **Percentage of remedial works completed within set timeframes (24 hours high risk, 5 days to make safe for significant hazard and up to 12 weeks for any additional remedial works:** Of the emergency hazards identified, 62.5% are resolved within 24 hours. For significant hazards, 63.8% are made safe within the required timescales. Overall, 85% of all remedial works are completed within 12 weeks.

4. Outstanding Cases

Number and percentage of cases unresolved beyond statutory or policy timeframes:

720 outstanding cases, of which 247 pre-date the introduction of Awaab's Law. Whilst the current performance in regard to remedial repairs following a damp and mould report is not where we expect it to be, the improvements are clear to see with our outstanding and out of category repairs reducing.

The Council accepts this is not an ideal position and to address this we are in the process of increasing resources dedicated to damp remedial works, with additional capacity expected to be in place imminently.

Conclusion

The Repairs and Maintenance Team have achieved significant improvements in performance, with continued reductions in outstanding repairs and positive transactional feedback from residents. However, new and emerging legislative requirements, increased demand, and resource pressures present ongoing challenges. The service is actively adapting to these changes, with a focus on compliance, customer service, and proactive improvement.

More detailed reports on health and safety compliance and the council's response to Awaab's Law will be presented later in 2026.

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

5.1 Financial implications

As an update report, there are no direct financial implications arising from its contents. Finance work closely to monitor the performance of the HRA and this is reported quarterly to OSC through the budget monitoring process. The challenges raised in this report, notably the work to continue the repairs programme whilst also meeting legislative requirements and respond promptly to cases of damp and mould, create budget pressures which will need to be managed by the HRA in-year and suitably reflected in future years' budgets.

Signed: Jade Draper, Principal Accountant

Dated: 08/07/2026

5.2 Legal implications

This is a performance update, and while obviously the remit of it is incredibly broad and the legal implications of not complying with the legislation are widespread, as a report per se reporting on performance, there aren't any particular legal implications arising.

Signed: Zoe Iliffe, Principal Lawyer

Dated: 13/08/2026

5.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, 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

partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. The Equality Act 2010 protects tenants from discrimination in housing, including in relation to repairs.

This report provides a performance update for the Repairs and Maintenance service for 2025–26. Whilst there are no direct equality implications arising from the recommendation to note the report, the delivery of repairs services has an indirect impact on tenants with protected characteristics. Delays in repairs and poor housing conditions, particularly damp and mould, may disproportionately affect vulnerable groups including older people, disabled people, those with long-term health conditions, and households with young children.

The introduction of Awaab's Law and ongoing service improvements, including prioritisation of high-risk cases and enhanced communication with tenants, are expected to have a positive impact by improving response times, accountability, and the overall quality of housing conditions. Increased compliance should lead to the provision of better quality services to Council tenants through enhanced consumer standards, which will have a positive impact on all of the Council's tenants across all protected groups. Repair processes should be transparent, with clear communication and information provided to tenants about their rights and responsibilities.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

Dated: 6 July 2026

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

In some instances, the timely completion of repairs and pre-planned maintenance may contribute to the continued energy efficiency of properties and resulting reduced carbon emissions. As Awaab's Law is phased in, there may be specific opportunities presented to improve energy efficiency in respect to remedial work that addresses excess cold and heat hazards.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 372246

Dated: 8th July 2026

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: N/A

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)? No

9. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why? No

Annual Corporate Complaints Report 2025/26

Lead Member briefing: 20th July 2026

Tenant Scrutiny Panel: 29th July 2026

City Mayor Briefing: 6th August 2026

Housing Scrutiny Committee: 7th September 2026

Governance and Audit Committee: 16th September 2026

Assistant Mayor: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin

Lead Director: Chris Burgin

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

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

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Helen McGarry, Programme Manager (Housing)
- Author contact details: 0116 454 5219
- Report version number: v2.1

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an annual update on the Council's Corporate Complaints service, which excludes complaints about:

- Statutory Adult Social Care
- Statutory Children's Social Care
- Elected officials

these complaints are handled by separate teams and have different reporting arrangements.

- 1.2 Leicester City Council serves around 380,000 citizens and manages high levels of customer contact. During 2025/26 the Council received 1,435 formal complaints from customers in relation to service delivery. As the Council takes its responsibility for managing complaints seriously, this annual report sets out how these complaints have been handled, what we have learnt from the complaints we have received and what service improvements we have implemented (or are implementing) as a direct result of these complaints.

2 Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members on the delivery of the Corporate Complaints Service for 2025/26.
- 2.2 Members of the Governance and Audit Committee are asked to review the report and provide a feedback statement on its content and the Council's approach to complaint handling, so these can be published as part of the self-assessment report. This is a requirement placed upon us by the Housing Ombudsman.

3 Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

- 3.1 Complaint performance related to Housing Ombudsman cases was presented to the Tenant Scrutiny Panel on the 29th July 2026.
- 3.2 Housing Ombudsman complaints performance for 2025/26 was presented at the Housing Scrutiny Commission on the 7th September 2026.
- 3.3 This report will be subject to scrutiny at the Governance and Audit Committee on the 16th September 2026.

4 Complaints Policy

- 4.1 The Council operates a Corporate Complaints Policy which can be found at [Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy | Leicester City Council](#)
- 4.2 A review of the Complaints Policy took place during 2025/26; this has been scrutinised by the Housing Ombudsman, who have confirmed that the revised Policy meets their Complaint Handling Code, which we must adhere to in relation to complaint handling.
- 4.3 The definition of a corporate complaint is:
- “an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by us, our staff, or those acting on our behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.”
- This may include but is not limited to such things as unreasonable behaviour or conduct by a council employee, poor quality service provision, unexpected delay for agreed actions, a policy or procedure not being followed or poor-quality work undertaken. Generally, issues brought to the council’s attention for the first time are dealt with as a service request and are not processed as a complaint. However, these are escalated to a formal complaint if the customer remains dissatisfied with our response to the service request.
- 4.4 The Corporate Complaints Policy sets out how individual members of the public can complain to the council about matters that are covered by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman. It also sets out what is not covered by this Policy, which includes:
- A new request for a service, or a report of an issue that we have not previously been made aware of
 - Statutory Adult Social Care complaints, such as a delay in the Council making arrangements with a care agency following an assessment of social care needs. A separate team within Adult Social Care deal with these complaints
 - Statutory Children’s Social Care complaints, such as where a social worker may have failed to progress actions recommended at a child protection conference. We also have a dedicated team who handle these complaints
 - Complaints about elected officials, these are handled by the Council’s Monitoring Officer and the Standards Committee
- 4.5 As with many other local authorities the complaints we are receiving are becoming longer more complex in nature, particularly due to the increasing use of AI generated complaints, and investigations requiring involvement from more than one service area. Due to this, it is taking longer to investigate and provide a comprehensive response to complaints, and we cannot always respond within the

target times, reflected in our current performance. This is something we are looking to address as part of our improvement plans.

5 Housing Complaints (under the jurisdiction of the Housing Ombudsman)

- 5.1 The Housing Ombudsman specifically deals with complaints made by social housing tenants and leaseholders in relation to the housing services we provide as a social housing landlord, such as repairs, rents, service charges and anti-social behaviour.
- 5.2 A total of 1,435 corporate complaints were received in 2025/26, of which 787 (55%) were Housing Ombudsman related matters. The highest number of complaints were in relation to repairs to council homes.
- 5.3 For these complaints we have a two-stage process in place. At stage one we acknowledge the complaint within five working days and advise the tenant how we will deal with it. The issues will be investigated and Complaint Officers within the Corporate Complaints Team will provide a response to the issues raised. Our Policy states we have 10 working days to provide this response, following the issuing of the complaint acknowledgement. However, the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code enables us to extend this response date by a further 10 working days if the issues raised are complex or we have good reason to do so.
- 5.4 Of the 787 stage 1 Housing Ombudsman complaints received, 499 (63.1%) were responded to within timescale. Performance against this indicator for all local authorities for 2025/26 will be published by the Housing Regulator in the Autumn. However, the 2024/25 national average for local authorities for this indicator was 75%. This shows that most local authorities are struggling to meet the Ombudsman response targets. The main challenges are ongoing budget pressures across the sector and an increase in the length and complexity of complaints received due to complainants using AI to write complaints. We are committed to improvement our response timescales and have already increased resourcing in the Complaints Team and are actively implementing a new IT system to help manage complaints which will improve efficiencies.
- 5.5 If the tenant is dissatisfied with the response to their stage 1 complaint, they have the right to escalate this to stage 2 of our complaints process for a review. Our Policy states we have 20 working days to provide a response to this. However, the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code enables us to extend this response date by a further 20 working days if the issues raised are complex or we have good reason to do so.
- 5.6 118 out of the 787 stage 1 complaints progressed onto stage 2 of the process and 79 (67%) of these were responded to within timescale. When looking at the 2024/25 results for this indicator the national average among local authorities was 72.5%.
- 5.7 If the complainant remains dissatisfied after the stage 2 process, they can escalate their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman for an independent investigation of the issues raised and of our response to these.

5.8 The Housing Ombudsman has not formally published figures for 2025/26, however they have provided their provisional figures which are discussed below.

5.9 Between 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, 57 complaints were determined by the Housing Ombudsman. Of these, 5 were closed without investigation because they did not fall under the remit of the Housing Ombudsman, as such the Housing Ombudsman made determinations on 52 complaints.

5.10 Of the 52 complaints determined:

- 12 cases were found to have no maladministration and not upheld
- 40 cases were upheld with the determination being:
 - 17 cases of service failure (minor failing)
 - 22 cases of maladministration (moderate to high failing)
 - 1 case of severe maladministration (significant / serious failing)

5.11 The maladministration rate is 76.9% (40 cases out of 52), a lower percentage is typically seen as better and the national average for similar sized authorities in 2024/25 was 80%.

5.12 This also means that just 5.1% (40 out of 787) of Housing complaints received resulted in the Housing Ombudsman determining maladministration.

5.13 Complaints determined related to:

Theme	Number of cases
Communication and managing relationships	22
Repairs	13
Anti-social behaviour/abuse/nuisance	7
Estate management	5
Moving home	1
Occupancy rights	1
Health and safety	1
Information and data management	1
Financial issues	1

5.14 Under the Housing Ombudsman Scheme, the Housing Ombudsman can make orders, including orders to pay compensation. Social landlords are expected to comply with those orders, and the Housing Ombudsman has powers to issue Complaint Handling Failure Orders and make findings of non-compliance where a landlord fails to do so. This amount totalled £8,227 in 37 cases with individual payments ranging from £50 to £1,152.

5.15 The Housing division provides well over 100,000 services and interactions each year and the fact that the Housing Ombudsman found fault in only 40 cases shows that the Council is delivering good quality services in most cases, although there is continual learning to improve services as a direct result of complaints and feedback.

- 6 Corporate Complaints (under the jurisdiction of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman)**
- 6.1 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) complaints relate to all other non-social housing services provided by the Council.
- 6.2 A total of 1,435 complaints were received by the corporate complaints team in 2025/26, 648 (45%) of these were Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman related matters. Areas with the highest number of these complaints were in relation to:
- housing applications and homelessness
 - housing benefit and council tax support
 - roads, pavements and streetlighting
 - waste collection, rubbish and recycling
- 6.3 During 2025/26 there was a one stage process in place for dealing with these complaints. When we receive a complaint, this is acknowledged within five working days. The issues will be investigated and Complaint Officers within the Corporate Complaints Team who will provide a response to the issues raised. Our Policy states we have 10 working days to provide this response, following the issuing of the complaint acknowledgement. However, we can extend this response date by a further 10 working days if the issues raised are complex or we have good reason to do so.
- 6.4 442 (68%) of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman complaints were responded to within timescale.
- 6.5 During 2025/26, if the complainant remained dissatisfied after the response, they could escalate their complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for an independent investigation of the issues raised and our response to these.
- 6.6 Although the stage 1 process has been in place for several years, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman has bought in a new requirement from the 1st April 2026, for Local Authorities to now have a 2-stage process in place, similar to that of the Housing Ombudsman. Our Complaints Policy has been reviewed to reflect this new arrangement and working practices have been in place since the 1st April 2026 to manage this.
- 6.7 Between 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman dealt with 143 complaints referred to them in relation to the council. Of these:
- 43 were closed because they did not fall under the remit of the Ombudsman.
 - 79 were closed requiring no further action following their initial assessment
 - 21 were progressed to a full investigation

- 6.8 Of the 21 complaints fully investigated, 15 complaints were upheld in favour of the complainant, which equates to 71% of complaints that were investigated being upheld. This compares with an average 85% upheld rate of other similar local authorities. Complaints upheld related to:
- School transport (2)
 - Special Educational Needs (6)
 - Social care support (1)
 - Safeguarding actions (1)
 - Housing applications and homelessness (4)
 - Delays in processing a business invoice (1).
- 6.9 This also means that just 2.3% (15 out of 648) of LGSCO complaints received resulted in the Ombudsman determining maladministration.
- 6.10 Unlike the Housing Ombudsman, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman cannot make legally binding orders. Instead, it may recommend remedies, including the payment of compensation. Whilst such recommendations are not legally binding, councils are generally expected to comply with them and any decision not to do so would require careful consideration and justification. The Council paid compensation in 8 of the 15 upheld cases, which amounted to a total of £11,900.
- 6.11 Leicester City Council provides thousands of services and interactions with the public each day and with only 15 cases being upheld by the ombudsman, this demonstrates that the Council is providing good services on a regular basis.
- 6.12 Further information about cases investigated by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman in 2025/26 can be found at [Leicester City Council - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)
- 7 Learning from complaints and service improvements resulting from complaints**
- 7.1 As a large local authority delivering a vast number of services to the residents of Leicester each year, it is inevitable, that on some occasions we get things wrong. When this happens, we welcome complaints, so we have an opportunity to put things right. A fundamental part of the complaint management process is to learn lessons from complaints investigated internally as well as from the failings identified by the Ombudsman through their external investigation of cases. Since the complaints team joined the Housing division in 2025, we have undertaken a review to identify common themes around the complaints we have received. We then use this information to implement service improvements where appropriate.
- 7.2 During 2025/26, 55% of complaints related to issues covered by the Housing Ombudsman and the majority of these were related to Housing repairs. Our key areas for learning have therefore been focused on these cases; however, the intention is then to broaden the learning out to other areas moving forwards. There

are 5 key learning themes from the complaints we have investigated, and service improvements have been implemented to help address these. The 5 key themes are:

- Time taken to complete repairs to council tenant homes
- Quality of repair work in council tenant homes
- Communication
- Meeting the needs of vulnerable tenants
- Complaint handling

Time taken to complete repairs to council tenant homes

- 7.3 These complaints relate to missed targets or delays to work being completed. We know at the start of 2025 we had a high volume of out of category repairs, and this resulted in a backlog which meant we were unable to complete repairs as quickly as we would like.
- 7.4 As a result of this we undertook the following actions:
- significant additional funding and staffing resources have been assigned to our repairs service
 - implemented a re-structure of how some complex repairs are managed
 - implemented a single supplier framework for materials, ensuring we have a stable supply of items needed to complete repairs more quickly
 - improved our reporting information to better inform us of the demand on the repairs service and provide future projections
- 7.5 These actions have already had a positive impact on the repairs service, and we have seen a reduction in outstanding responsive repairs from 12,709 at 31st March 2025 to 9,467 at 31st March 2026, and this number continues to drop.
- 7.6 Reducing the number of outstanding repairs helps us to reduce the backlog which in turns helps complete newly reported repairs within our target timescales. While significant progress has been made, there is further work to do to reduce our outstanding repairs, but plans are in place to continue this during 2026/27. Further actions that will take place include:
- reviewing our categorisation of repairs, to reduce our target timescales
 - implementing a new IT solution for repairs, allowing for more efficient scheduling
 - further resources in targeted areas to manage ongoing demand
 - communication to raise tenant awareness of the impact on the service when we attend to undertake a repair and we cannot gain access to their property to complete the work

Quality of repair work in council tenant homes

- 7.7 These complaints are in relation to the quality of repair work undertaken, for example issues not fully put right. We have taken the following action to address this:
- increased resources within the Quality Control Team. This team sample checks jobs once they are completed to ensure the quality of work. This means any outstanding issues can be addressed and any performance related issues with our workforce are identified and training and guidance is provided.
 - reviewed the questions we ask in our repairs satisfaction survey we send to tenants after a repair is completed. This is helping to identify and resolve issues before a formal complaint needs to be raised.
 - implemented a single supplier framework for materials, ensuring we have quality materials needed to complete repairs to the appropriate standard.
 - established a learning from complaints workshop for repairs, to discuss complaints
- 7.8 We are committed to ongoing learning and improvement, in addition to the above we will:
- fully embed our learning from complaints for the repairs service. Regular workshops will be held with our Repairs Managers to review a sample of repair complaints received to capture learning and to agree service improvements.
 - once this structure has been embedded within the repairs service, we will roll out these learning workshops to other service areas within Housing and then the wider Council.

Communication

- 7.9 Communication issues are raised in most complaints we investigate. This can include not being kept up to date with the progress of a service request, delays in being provided with information or being provided with the wrong information. We know that improved communication with our tenants is a key service improvement required of us and the following steps have been taken to address this:
- We have improved the information we give to tenants prior to a repair's appointment, through telephone calls, text and email messages.
 - Tenants have told us that they want more face-to-face communication with our housing staff. As a result of this we have put in place "pop up" housing offices on our estates where tenants can discuss the resolution of issues before these are escalated to formal complaints.
 - We have established and consulted with the Tenant Scrutiny Panel to understand what information tenants want communicating to them, the frequency of this and their preferred methods of contact.

7.10 We acknowledge there is further work to be done, this includes:

- funding from the Housing Revenue Account has been allocated to fund a new Information and Knowledge Co-Ordinator post, who will start in the summer of 2026, specifically tasked with ensuring our communication is appropriate, in terms of content, timescale and communication channel.
- this postholder will lead on further developing our communication with tenants, taking on board the consultation feedback we have received from the Tenants Scrutiny Panel.
- the Information and Knowledge Co-ordinator will review the housing information we publish on our website, develop a tenant's newsletter and other communications, regular updates will be sent to tenants via email, text and in the post.
- the implementation of a new IT system for repairs will enable to us provide more real-time updates via email / text to tenants to confirm appointment details.

Meeting the needs of vulnerable tenants

7.11 There are processes and structures already in place to provide substantial support to vulnerable council tenants through our Supporting Tenants and Residents (STAR) team, our Income Management Team and through our Housing Officers. However, we have learnt, that on occasion, we don't always make appropriate reasonable adjustments to assist vulnerable tenants with their service delivery. This learning has been identified from some of the complaints that were investigated and upheld by the Housing Ombudsman during 2025/26. As a result of this we have:

- implemented a Vulnerable Person Policy that has been communicated to all staff.
- improved reporting on tenant demographics to ensure our services are being accessed by all.

7.12 We are committed to further improving in this area, and will:

- review the level of detail we hold on vulnerabilities within our IT systems, so we can ensure reasonable adjustments are undertaken for individual tenant's needs
- the implementation of a new IT system for repairs will allow us to provide our repairs staff with more information around reasonable adjustments required for our tenants

Complaint handling

7.13 Since April 2025 the Corporate Complaints Team has been managed within the Housing Division. Since this time, through the handling of complaints we have learnt that our approach to this needs to be improved. The key learning identified that has now led to service improvements include:

Learning	Service improvements
The staffing structure within the Complaints Team was insufficient to manage the volume of complaints received	Additional funding has been allocated for a new Corporate Complaints Manager role and an additional 1.5 FTE Complaints Officers. These new roles have now been recruited to.
The Complaints Policy did not meet all the requirements set down in the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code	A full review of the Complaints Policy has taken place. Confirmation has been received from the Housing Ombudsman that the Policy is now compliant with their Code. Complaint information on the website has also been reviewed to ensure this reflects the revised policy and our complaints process is clear to residents
We needed to introduce a 2 stage complaints procedure for Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman complaints, as required by this Ombudsman from 1 st April 2026	This procedure was put in place from 1 st April 2026, and our Complaints Policy reflects the new 2 stage approach. Residents are now able to have their stage 1 complaint response reviewed, prior to escalating issues to the Ombudsman
We established that our IT Complaint Management System was not fit for purpose. This has meant that we have not been able to extract robust complaint performance management information from the current system	Approval has been granted to develop a new IT Complaints Management System. During 2025/26 our requirements for this have been scoped out and DDaT are currently developing the new system for implementation over the summer. We anticipate that enhanced complaint reporting will start to become available from the Autumn 2026.
We learnt that our template response letters to complaints were not fit for purpose and left out key information we needed to include.	We have reviewed all our template response letters, particularly to ensure complainants are clear on the next steps to take if they are not satisfied with the complaint response and to provide information about the relevant ombudsman
There were gaps in the knowledge in terms of effectively managing, investigating and responding to complaints	All Complaint Officers have received formal training on effective complaint handling, provided by an external organisation, Housing Quality Network. This training incorporated good practice guidelines in relation to complaint investigation and responses. This learning is now embedded in our working practices. On going support and training is now being provided by our Corporate Complaints Manager.
Each month the Housing Ombudsman produces a report with their learning from all Social Landlord cases where they have determined severe maladministration has	A quarterly report now goes to the Housing Senior Management Team meeting to enable discussion on this learning. Actions

occurred. There were no structures in place to consider this learning or to implement our own service improvements from this learning.

required are identified and a log in kept, to monitor the completion of these actions.

7.14 Although we have made these service improvements as a result of our learning from complaint handling, we know there is still more work to do, and we have a Complaints Service Improvement Plan in place. Key actions we will be progressing from this learning in 2026/27 includes:

- Implementation of the new IT Complaints Management System
- Enhanced complaints performance information for managers, the Tenant Scrutiny Panel, our wider tenants and political governance
- The development of a Complaints Remedy and Compensation Policy which will ensure appropriate action is taken as a result of upheld complaints
- Embed our structured approach to learning from complaints and implementation of service improvements resulting from the learning
- Undertake transactional surveys of residents submitting complaints to establish their satisfaction with the complaint handling process. Their feedback will help to identify further service improvements we can make
- Review our communications to ensure information about how to make a complaint is widely available
- Complete the review and implement of our Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy. This will provide guidance on what constitutes unacceptable behaviour, including those who make vexatious complaints. The policy will also state the actions available to the Council when managing unacceptable customer behaviour, but still ensuring these customers have access to the services they need.

7.15 While individual complaints relate to specific services, the broader picture shows that there are common themes in complaints across the Council:

- service accessibility
- communication failures
- delays in service delivery
- complex processes

7.16 Additional learning and actions have taken place for specific cases that fall under the jurisdiction of the Local Government and Social Care ombudsman. An overview of the main cases is provided below.

7.17 We identified the need to set up more robust checking processes for Education, Health and Care Plans. This led to the setting up of a process to ensure all sections within Education, Health and Care Plans are checked to enable additional funding requests to be considered in a timely manner. Also to ensure measures are put in place to ensure children with Speech and Language provision in an EHC Plan receive that provision while on a waiting list for an NHS therapist

- 7.18 The Council's response to a special educational needs and disability (SEND) school transport appeal lacked the detail required by the statutory guidance. A review of the SEND school transport policy and procedures took place to ensure it complies with the statutory guidance.
- 7.19 We identified that reasonable adjustments were not always considered when dealing with a service request in housing benefits. Guidance was given to staff to consider and provide reasonable adjustments to service users, specifically regarding how service users may require assistance to provide relevant information that may affect their benefit entitlement.
- 7.20 We identified there were sometimes delays in issuing accurate business invoices. A review of processes took place to ensure no ongoing delays to issuing accurate invoices.
- 7.21 We are already analysing complaints received between 1st April and 31st July 2026 to identify additional areas for learning, which is likely to include:
- Housing applications and homelessness
 - Housing benefit and council tax support
 - Waste, streets and environmental services

8 Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code – Self-Assessment

- 8.1 Each year the Housing Ombudsman requires social landlords to carry out a self-assessment of their approach to dealing with complaints to see how this meets the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, which can be found at [The Complaint Handling Code | Housing Ombudsman Service](#)
- 8.2 The findings from our 2026 self-assessment can be found in Appendix A. It is a legal requirement to include this in our annual report to the Governance and Audit Committee.
- 8.3 There are 73 individual requirements set out in the Complaint Handling Code. Our 2025 self-assessment established that we were not fully compliant in 10 of the requirements. Improvement work has taken place to address most of these and our 2026 self-assessment has evidenced that there are now only 2 requirements with further work required:
- (Appendix A, 1.6) An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain. An action has been added to our Complaints Improvement Plan to review the surveys we undertake with Council Tenants to ensure this information is made clear.
 - (Appendix A, 3.5) The Complaints Policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code. Our Complaints Policy states we will publicise how people can make a complaint in our public buildings. An action has

been added to our Complaints Improvement Plan to review our approach to this to ensure the requirement is met.

9 Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

9.1 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, if the Council accepts fault for any complaints, this may include making a financial compensation payment to the complainant. Similarly, where either Ombudsman finds the Council at fault, compensation may also be required. In 2025/26, the Housing Ombudsman required payments totalling £8.27k and the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman £11.9k. It is essential that we minimise the need for such payments, all of which need to be managed in current budgets.

Signed: Jade Draper, Principal Accountant

Dated: 15th July 2026

9.2 Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report although it should be noted that effective complaints management can assist in some circumstances to mitigate the likelihood of legal action against the Council.

Signed: Kevin Carter, Head of Law – Commercial, Property and Planning

Dated: 18th July 2026

9.3 Equalities implications

Public authorities have a continuing Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their activities (including designing and operating complaints procedures), 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 to Members on the delivery of the Complaints Service for 2025/26. There are no direct equality implications arising from the report. Complaints are a valuable source of information which can help to identify recurring or underlying problems and potential improvements. Having a transparent, accessible complaints process provides a mechanism for people to hold the council accountable for its decisions, actions, and the services it delivers (or fails to deliver).

The revised complaints policy, the introduction of a two-stage process for Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman complaints, and the work to improve reasonable adjustments and complaint information will help ensure the process remains fair, accessible and responsive to residents' needs.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148
Dated: 10 th July 2026

9.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications directly associated directly with this report.
Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2246
Dated: 14 th July 2026

10 Background information and other papers: N/A

11 Summary of appendices:

Appendix A – Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment

12 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)? No

13 Is this a “key decision”? If so, why? No

Appendix A: Self-assessment form

This self-assessment form should be completed by the complaints officer and it must be reviewed and approved by the landlord's governing body at least annually.

Once approved, landlords must publish the self-assessment as part of the annual complaints performance and service improvement report on their website. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.

Landlords are required to complete the self-assessment in full and support all statements with evidence, with additional commentary as necessary.

We recognise that there may be a small number of circumstances where landlords are unable to meet the requirements, for example, if they do not have a website. In these circumstances, we expect landlords to deliver the intentions of the Code in an alternative way, for example by publishing information in a public area so that it is easily accessible.

Section 1: Definition of a complaint

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.2	A complaint must be defined as: <i>'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'</i>	Yes	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	This definition is stated in our Complaints Policy
1.3	A resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them	Yes	Complaints Policy	We take this approach and this is confirmed within our Complaints Policy

	the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord's complaints policy.		Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	
1.4	Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.	Yes	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	We clarify the difference between service requests and complaints within our Complaints Policy
1.5	A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.	Yes	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	This approach is taken and confirmed within our Complaints Policy
1.6	An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person	No		We do not take dissatisfaction raised through a survey as a complaint. However, we

	completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.			need to review our survey forms over the next 12 months to ensure information is provided on how to make a complaint
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Section 2: Exclusions

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits	Yes	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	Complaints are accepted unless they meet our exclusion criteria within the Complaints Policy
2.2	A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include:	Yes	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	Complaint exclusions, including those quoted in the Complaint Handling Code are included in our Complaints Policy

	• The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago. • Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court. • Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.			
2.3	Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.	Yes	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	Our Complaints Policy states we will accept complaints received within the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue. The Policy also states we will apply discretion for complaints received outside of this timeframe
2.4	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that	Yes	Template response documents	When we do not accept a complaint we advise the resident of the reason. We also provide information about contacting the Ombudsman

	the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.			
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	We do not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints, these are considered on an individual basis. Complaints are excluded only when they meet our exclusion criteria within the Complaints Policy

Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.	Yes	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	We have a range of ways people can make complaints e.g. online, by telephone, in person. These and our approach to making reasonable adjustments is contained in our Complaints Policy

3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.	Yes	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	Our approach to this requirement is contained within our Complaints Policy
3.3	High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.	Yes	Not applicable	We do not consider high volumes of complaints as a negative
3.4	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.	Yes	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	Our Complaints Policy is published on our website, paper copies are available and in other formats / languages on request.
3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	No	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	Information about how we will publicise complaint information is contained within our Complaints Policy. During 2026 / 27 we intend to provide more information about making a complaint to

				be displayed in our Council buildings
3.6	Landlords must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord.	Yes	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	This opportunity is stated in our Complaints Policy
3.7	Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.	Yes	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council Template complaint responses	Information is contained in our Complaints Policy. We also provide information about the Ombudsman when we provide responses to complaints

Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
4.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties.	Yes	Corporate Complaints Team	We have a dedicated Corporate Complaints Team that is responsible for complaint handling and liaison with the Ombudsman

4.2	The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.	Yes	Complaint case records	The Corporate Complaints Team liaises with officers at all levels to facilitate the resolution of complaints
4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively	Yes	Learning from complaint information	A dedicated Corporate Complaints Team is in place. Work has started to put structures in place to more robustly learn from complaints and this will be further developed during 2026/27

Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.1	Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.	Yes	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	We have a single Complaints Policy

5.2	The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling. It is not appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.	Yes	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	We do not have informal or additional complaint stages, that sit outside of the Complaint Handling Code
5.3	A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.	Yes	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	We only have a two stage complaints process in place
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.	Yes	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	This is confirmed in our Complaints Policy. Where a complaint refers to a third party our Complaints Officers will liaise directly with them. Residents are not expected to resolve their complaint directly with the third party
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	When a third party is involve the Complaints Officer will ensure the Complaint Handling Code requirements are met

5.6	When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as “the complaint definition”. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.	Yes	Complaint response examples	The complaint definition is provided in all our complaint responses. An internal process is in place to seek clarification about the complaint from the resident if this is needed.
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.	Yes	Complaint response examples Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	Our Complaints Policy states that this approach is taken
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position; c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and	Yes	Complaint case records	Complaint Officers are trained to ensure this requirement is met through their investigations and complaint responses

	d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.			
5.9	Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.	Yes	Complaint case records Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	When this happens we liaise directly with the resident to agree timescales for keeping them informed about their complaint. This is also confirmed in our Complaints Policy
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.	Yes	Complaint case records Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	This occurs on a case-by-case basis. Our commitment to making reasonable adjustments is stated in our Complaints Policy
5.11	Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.	Yes	Complaint case records	All requests for complaints to be escalated are accepted

5.12	A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.	Yes	Complaints IT system	Information is recorded on our Complaints IT system. Work is taking place to develop a new IT system for managing complaints which will enhance our record keeping
5.13	Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.	Yes	Complaint case records	Our focus is to resolve issues raised in complaints at stage 1 but we will continue to seek remedies if the complaint is escalated to stage 2
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.	Yes	Unacceptable behaviour policy	We have a policy in place and a monitoring system that records reasons, restrictions and reviews
5.15	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard	Yes	Unacceptable behaviour policy Case records	Restrictions on contact are considered on a case by case basis and a range of

	for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.			options are available. This is to ensure residents can still access services they require
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Section 6: Complaints Stages

Stage 1

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.1	Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.	Yes	Complaint case records	All complaints are assessed when they are received to establish whether they can be addressed straight away or require more in-depth investigation
6.2	Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure <u>within five working days of the complaint being received.</u>	Yes	Complaint case records Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	These timescales are defined in our Complaints Policy

6.3	Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Complaint case records Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	These timescales are defined in our Complaints Policy
6.4	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	This approach is defined in our Complaints Policy
6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	Complaint response examples	The Ombudsman contact details are provided on all correspondence we have with complainants
6.6	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding	Yes	Complaint response examples Complaints Policy	Our commitment to this is referenced in our Complaints Policy

	actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.		Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	
6.7	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Complaint response examples	Information is provided on a case-by-case basis when this information is required
6.8	Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.	Yes	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	Our approach to this requirement is stated in our Complaints Policy
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint;	Yes	Complaint template letters Responses to complaints	Our complaint response templates include the requirement for this information to be provided

	d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.			
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Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.10	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.	Yes	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	This approach is confirmed in our Complaints Policy
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.	Yes	Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	Our commitment to this is detailed in our Complaints Policy

6.12	Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.	Yes	Complaint case records	We do not require residents to explain why they want to escalate their complaint to stage 2 of the process
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	Complaint case records	Internal processes are in place to ensure a different Complaints Officer considers stage 2 complaints, to the officer dealing with the case at stage 1
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Complaint case records Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	These timescales are defined in our Complaints Policy
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident	Yes	Complaints Policy	This approach is defined in our Complaints Policy

	of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.		Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	Complaint response examples	The Ombudsman contact details are included in all our correspondence with complainants
6.17	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	Complaint response examples Complaints Policy Leicester City Council corporate complaints policy Leicester City Council	Our commitment to this is referenced in our Complaints Policy
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Complaint response examples	Information is provided on a case-by-case basis when this information is required
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: a. the complaint stage;	Yes	Complaint template letters Responses to complaints	Our complaint response templates include the requirement for this information to be provided

	b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.			
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	Complaint case records	Complaint Officers ensure all relevant staff are involved to investigate and respond to the stage 2 complaint

Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
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7.1	Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include: • Apologising; • Acknowledging where things have gone wrong; • Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons; • Taking action if there has been delay; • Reconsidering or changing a decision; • Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum; • Providing a financial remedy; • Changing policies, procedures or practices.	Yes	Complaint case records	This approach is taken on a case-by-case basis. The actions taken will vary, dependant on the complaint investigation outcome
7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	Complaint case records	This approach is taken on a case-by-case basis. The actions taken will vary,

				dependant on the complaint investigation outcome
7.3	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.	Yes	Complaint case records	This approach is taken on a case-by-case basis. The actions taken will vary, dependant on the complaint investigation outcome
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes	Complaints case records	We consider the Ombudsman guidance when considering remedies. We are currently reviewing our internal remedy policy to ensure it is fit for purpose

Section 8: Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include: the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.	Yes	Annual complaints performance and service improvement report Annual complaints performance and service improvement report 2024-2025 Leicester City Council	Our complaints performance and service improvement report is produced annually

	b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept; c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman; d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints; e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord.			
8.2	The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the on the section of its website relating	Yes	Annual complaints performance and service improvement report Annual complaints performance and service improvement report	The annual report is presented to the Governance and Audit Committee. The Committee's in relation to

	to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.		2024-2025 Leicester City Council	the report are published on the website, alongside the annual report
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	Not applicable	We are committed to this requirement, but no circumstances have arisen over the last 12 months where this has been required
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes	Not applicable	We are committed to this requirement, but no circumstances have arisen over the last 12 months where this has been required
8.5	If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.	Yes	Not applicable	We are committed to this requirement, but no circumstances have arisen over the last 12 months where this has been required

Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.1	Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	Yes	Complaint case notes	Lessons learnt are identified on a case-by-case basis. Further work is taking place to enhance our approach to learning from complaints
9.2	A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.	Yes	Complaint case notes	Issues are identified on a case-by-case basis. The implementation of the new Complaints IT system over the summer of 2026 will enable us to have more robust intelligence information to enhance our approach in this area
9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.	Yes	Lead Member briefings Annual Report to Tenants	A piece of work is currently taking place to enhance our approach to this requirement. This will include more robust reporting to managers, Lead Members, the Housing Scrutiny Commission, our Tenants Scrutiny Panel and

				information for our wider tenants
9.4	Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.	Yes	Not applicable	This role is fulfilled by the Director of Housing
9.5	In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC').	Yes	Not applicable	The Lead Member for Housing fulfils this role
9.6	The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.	Yes	Annual Complaint report Annual complaints performance and service improvement report 2024-2025 Leicester City Council	The annual complaints report is presented to the MRC for approval, prior to being submitted to the Governance and Audit Committee meeting

9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance; b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report.	Yes	Lead Member briefings	A reporting schedule for the MRC is in place. The information contained in these reports will be enhanced during 2026/27 when enhanced reporting can be extracted from our new complain handling IT system
9.8	Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to: a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;	Yes	Complaint case records	This requirement is adopted throughout our complaint handling processes

	b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.			
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Housing Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme 2026-2027

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
9 July 2026	Introduction to Housing Mr X – Verbal update Income Collection Annual update Environmental Budget & Public Realm update Mutual Exchange Swap Scheme Tenant Engagement - Annual Report 25/26 & proposed Tenant Engagement Team work programme		
7 September 2026	LAHF 4 (for information & questions only) Housing Crisis PRS Strategy Renters Rights update Repairs & maintenance update (for information & questions only) Housing Complaints.		

10 November 2026	Tenant Scrutiny Panel update. Health & Safety Compliance Update (Gas, Electrical, Fire, Legionella, Asbestos Management, Lifts) Housing Regulator update Homelessness Strategy & Operational performance update (inc Temporary accommodation & £50m update) Who gets Social Housing		
18 January 2027	Housing Support and District Service performance (inc update on Tenant Engagement & Pop Up Housing Offices) HRA Budget 27/28 proposals Council GF Budget proposals		
1 March 2027	Maintenance Charges update Awaabs Law update Stock Condition and Housing Capital Programme update (including District Heating investment) Housing Building & Acquisition update Supported Housing Act update		

Forward plan items 2026-27:

Topic	Detail	Proposed Date
Allocations Policy		
Leaseholder Services and Operational Performance Update		TBC
District Heating investment		TBC
Adaptations Strategy		TBC
Mr X - update		TBC

