



Leicester
City Council

MEETING OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

DATE: MONDAY, 4 JULY 2016
TIME: 6:15 pm
PLACE: Meeting Room G.01, Ground Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

Members of the Scrutiny Commission

Councillor Newcombe (Chair)
Councillor Alfonso (Vice Chair)

Councillors Aqbany, Byrne, Cank, Dawood and Joshi
1 Un-allocated Non-Group Place

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

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

Jerry Connolly (Scrutiny Support Officer):
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Angie Smith (Democratic Support Officer):
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Leicester City Council, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

Information for members of the public

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- ✓ where filming, to (via the Chair of the meeting) ensure that those present are aware that they may be filmed and respect any requests to not be filmed.

Further information

If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact Angie Smith, **Democratic Support on (0116) 454 6354** or email Angie.Smith@leicester.gov.uk or call in at City Hall, 115 Charles Street.

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PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

FIRE/EMERGENCY EVACUATION

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Appendix A

The minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Commission held on 18th April 2016 are attached, and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Appendix B

Members are asked to note the Terms of Reference for the Housing Scrutiny Commission.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION 2016/17

Members are asked to note the membership of the Commission for 2016/17:

Councillor Newcombe (Chair)
Councillor Alfonso (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Aqbany
Councillor Byrne
Councillor Cank
Councillor Dawood
Councillor Joshi

6. DATES OF COMMISSION MEETINGS 2016/17

Members are asked to note that the meeting dates of the Commission for the 2016/17 municipal year are currently scheduled as follows:

Monday 4 July 2016
Monday 22 August 2016
Monday 10 October 2016
Thursday 17 November 2016 (Special Meeting)
Monday 28 November 2016
Monday 30 January 2017
Monday 20 March 2017

7. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer to report on the receipt of any petitions received in accordance with Council procedures.

8. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS OR STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer to report on the receipt of any questions, representations or statements of case received in accordance with Council procedures.

9. COMMITTEE PROCESSES - PRESENTATION

The Democratic Support Officer will present a short overview of some of the procedural aspects of how the Commission works. The Commission is recommended to note the information and comment as appropriate.

10. HOUSING DIVISION STRUCTURE [Appendix C](#)

The Director Housing will provide Members with details on the structure of the Housing Department.

11. RENT ARREARS PROGRESS REPORT - APRIL 2015 TO MARCH 2016 [Appendix D](#)

The Director of Housing submits a rent arrears progress report to update Members of the Scrutiny Commission of progress in the full financial year, April 2015 to March 2016.

12. EMPTY HOMES 2016 [Appendix E](#)

The Director of Housing submits a report following a request from Members of the Housing Scrutiny Commission, for information on empty homes in the city.

13. HOMELESSNESS, STREET BEGGING AND ROUGH SLEEPING [Appendix F](#)

The Director of Housing submits a report which sets out the policy on homelessness, rough sleeping and begging, and of support services in the city.

14. VOIDS TASK GROUP UPDATE

The Scrutiny Policy Officer will provide an update for the meeting.

15. WORK PROGRAMME

Appendix G

The current work programme for the Commission is attached. The Commission is asked to consider this and make comments and/or amendments as it considers necessary.

16. TENANT FORUM - MEETING NOTES

Appendix H

The Tenant Forum Meeting Notes from 31st March 2016 are attached for information.

17. MAYOR'S DELIVERY PLAN (HOUSING ISSUES)

Appendix I

The relevant sections from the Mayor's Delivery Plan relating to the Housing Scrutiny Commission are attached for information.

18. ANY URGENT BUSINESS



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: MONDAY, 18 APRIL 2016 at 6:15 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Newcombe (Chair)
Councillor Alfonso (Vice Chair)

Councillor Aldred
Councillor Aqbany

Councillor Cank
Councillor Joshi

In Attendance

Councillor Connelly – Assistant Mayor for Housing

* * * * *

66. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Byrne.

67. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillor Aldred declared an Other Disclosable Interest in the general business of the meeting that family members were council tenants.

Councillor Aqbany declared an Other Disclosable Interest that a family member was a council tenant.

Councillor Cank declared an Other Disclosable Interest that family members were council tenants.

Councillor Joshi declared an Other Disclosable Interest that a member of the family was a council tenant.

Councillor Newcombe declared an Other Disclosable Interest that family members were council tenants.

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, the interests were not considered so significant that they were likely to prejudice the Councillors' judgement of the public interest. Councillors were not therefore required to withdraw from the meeting during consideration and discussion of the agenda items.

68. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

that the minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Commission held on 4th February 2016, be approved as a correct record.

69. PETITIONS

In accordance with Council procedures, it was reported that no petitions had been received by the Monitoring Officer.

70. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS OR STATEMENTS OF CASE

In accordance with Council procedures, it was reported that no questions, representations or statements of case had been received by the Monitoring Officer.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair stated that he would take the reports out of the order given in the agenda, and would hear the report on Housing Voids Improvement Project Update first, in order to allow officers to attend another meeting.

71. HOUSING VOIDS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT UPDATE

The Acting Director of Housing submitted a report to inform Members of the Commission of the progress made on the Voids Improvement Project. The reported was presented by Simon Nicholls, Head of Service.

It was noted that improvements had been made. Next steps were to implement the process improvements aligned to the Housing Transformation Programme which would see improvements in re-let times.

Members asked questions and received the following responses:

- The Void Improvement Programme would enable officers to review changes made throughout the process;
- Liaison would take place with Tenants and Leaseholder Forum;
- With regard to concern raised over the 2015/16 forecast rent loss of £635k and Council Tax liability of £174k. It was recognised that turnaround time needed to be improved, and that through improved technology, and challenging people undertaking the work on repairs, re-let times would be

- improved;
- Members were assured the bidding process would be looked at in detail to ensure a smooth process for prospective tenants, and to reduce rent loss. There were many variables for those bidding to consider, for example, whether the property was high rise, a one bedroom flat, location, house, etc. Information would also be reviewed on the Home Choice website;
 - Properties were advertised pre-let before the repairs were complete, to reduce re-let times, rent loss and Council Tax liability;
 - The average re-let time was 66.5 days. The aim was to reach a 50 day average;
 - Members asked if smaller repairs could take place when the tenants were in situ. Officers responded the idea would not be discounted, but would be looked at on an individual basis;
 - In Paragraph 6.1 of the report, the £300K saving referred to staff changes under the Housing Transformation Review. Craft operatives roles were also changing, and was linked to the possibility that money spent on materials would be reduced.

The Chair requested void figures up to March 2016 when available, in addition to the appendices in the report. He also asked for further detail on St Peter's tower blocks refurbishment project, and how this had affected voids figures.

Councillor Connelly said the current figures for voids were disappointing, but was fairly confident that 2016/17 would see the figures improve. He acknowledged the financial challenges facing the Housing Revenue Account but assured Members that rental income lost would be minimal.

The Chair asked that the Scrutiny Policy Officer to set up an evening meeting for the Task Group. Provisional dates were 27th or 28th April.

AGREED:

that:

1. figures on voids and re-let times to March 2016 be provided to Members of the Commission;
2. further detail on St Peter's tower block refurbishment project be sent to the Chair;
3. the Scrutiny Policy Officer to set up an evening meeting for the Task Group, either 27th or 28th April.

72. AREA MANAGERS' BRIEFING: BRAUNSTONE / HUMBERSTONE & ROWLATTS HILL HOUSING MANAGEMENT AREAS

Ellen Watts, Area Manager, delivered the presentation on Braunstone. The following points were covered during the presentation:

- There were few younger tenants on the estate;
- The 'Farm' (community allotment) had had a huge impact, with gardening donations made by Housing and the tenants' incentive budget to fund a poly-tunnel.
- Conversions relocating bathrooms, using the smallest of the three

- bedrooms in properties had taken people out of the 'bedroom tax' bracket.
- Challenges included further funding to complete / continue renovation projects on the estate.

Members asked questions and received the following responses:

- High levels of deprivation, the lower life expectancy and use of food banks was noted.
- Work would continue with the 'b-connected' community group in Braunstone to promote health.
- Braunstone Park had been redeveloped with park run paths, and there were schemes to help people get into exercise.
- Hockley Farm health centre were addressing the health priority of smoking through the smoking cessation scheme.
- Insulating properties had had a big impact on health – properties were warmer, less damp, which led to less asthma.
- The void figure was usually around 20 properties, though turnover was usually good. Housing tried to convert where possible properties from three bedrooms to two bedrooms to accommodate and upstairs bathroom, usually when the properties were empty.
- The farm allotment volunteer base fluctuated seasonally. The intent was to get people growing at home, and send excess produce back into the community.

Councillor Connelly congratulated Ellen for bringing two houses on Raven Road back into use, and also noted that Ellen had put considerable effort into the external wall insulation scheme, which in itself had benefits in reducing heating bills for tenants, and improved the look of the properties. He also noted the levels of food poverty in the area which would benefit from a supermarket.

The Chair thanked Ellen for the area reports which provided a useful understanding of issues on other wards.

Suki Supria, Head of Service, presented the Humberstone & Rowlatts Hill presentation. The following points were covered during the presentation:

- Humberstone & Rowlatts Hill tended to have a larger proportion of empty private sector homes.
- Capital works had included the installation of parking bays on some roads, though parking still remained a concern across the area.
- Growth bid monies had been used to improve landscape issues. Use of knee-rail fencing had also been used, and the look of green areas had improved since its installation.
- Priorities for 2015/16 were established by tenants, and included resurfacing hard standing areas, improved lighting and shrub removal.

Members asked questions and received the following response:

- Parking was an intense issue across the city. Where feasible, car parking

spaces and laybys were created using the environmental budget. Car parking space for 6 cars cost approximately £20K. Work would have to be prioritised for the next year, as the level of spending could not be guaranteed year in, year out.

Councillor Connelly informed Members that with a 1% reduction in rent, there was a reduced amount of money that could be spent. For 2015/16 half a million pounds had been given to Highways to improve area roads, but that would not be possible for 2016/17. He added that the outside of houses was important, and when the financial opportunity arose landscaping works would continue. He also added it was hoped that knee-rail fencing could be introduced in other areas of the city.

That Chair thanked Suki for the presentation, and requested that larger maps included in the presentation be sent to the Scrutiny Commission Members.

AGREED:

that officers send larger paper copies of the maps, as outlined in the presentations, to Commission Members.

73. HOUSING DIVISION RECONFIGURATION AND CHALLENGES

Chris Burgin, Acting Director of Housing, presented the latest Housing Division structure chart. As outlined in the document, he set out the key service areas covered by the Heads of Service in the division.

Members were informed that a recruitment exercise had been undertaken to fill the roles vacated by Chris, and Vijay Desor who had moved to a part-time role. Caroline Carpendale and Charlotte McGraw were now Heads of Service in Housing.

Members were told the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) operated in a self-financing environment. Spending priorities were made in the context of a 30 year business plan and needed to achieve the right balance between investing in maintaining and improving the housing stock, providing landlord services to tenants, building new homes and supporting and repaying housing debt of £198m.

- The Government's summer budget statement in July 2015 had a profound impact on assumptions about future rent increases. All housing associations and councils were required to decrease rents by 1% each year for 4 years, compared to the previous national policy of increasing rents by CPI + 1%. It would result in £2.2m less income in 2016/17 compared to previous business plan expectations, rising to £11.7m a year in 2019/20. The overall Housing budget would reduce from £85m pa to £73m pa. Over the four years, it meant that total income of some £27.3m was expected to be lost.
- The Housing Transformation Programme began a programme of *efficiency savings* in 2013. To date, Spending Review Phases 1 and 2 had achieved revenue savings of £3.2m and capital savings of £1.1m. Totalling £4.3m.

- It was proposed that the Executive consider the outcome of work on the HRA Spending Review Phase 3 in the summer of 2016 to identify total reductions of £11.7m p.a. by 2019/20. Further efficiency savings and options for service reductions, with an analysis of their impact, would be made. Proposing capital reductions in the 15/16 budget and deferring revenue reductions until next year and beyond allowed for a planned approach to making the required savings.
- The single Central government decision to reduce rent by 1% for four years placed the HRA under significant pressures to deliver a balance budget. A number of other external pressures and changes also brought about by Central government placed the HRA at further risk.
- The Department of Work & Pensions commenced the roll out of a new combined benefit called Universal Credit. This would place individual pressure on tenants which was likely to impact upon their income, thus impacting upon their ability to pay their rent. The rent due and collected totalled £84,900,000. This solely finances Housing budgets and spending. Currently Housing achieved excellent rent collection rates exceeding 99%. If the collection rate was to reduce, this would directly impact the budget available to run the Housing service adding further to the size of savings that would be required to achieve a balanced budget.
- The significant difference and risk for Housing with the Welfare benefit change was that over 13,000 tenants out of the 21,900 (60%) that previously had an eligibility for Housing Benefit would now receive this money personally, and would now have to manage the money alongside other benefits they received directly and would be required to pay their rent. The welfare benefit changed placed over £50m of income formally paid directly to the HRA at risk.
- In the Comprehensive Spending Review in November 2015, the Government outlined plans to extend Local Housing Allowance (LHA) to social landlords. The Government would cap the amount of rent that housing benefit would cover in the social sector to the relevant Local Housing Allowance. The new rules would apply to affected individuals who signed their tenancy from April 2016 onwards, although the LHA rate of housing benefit entitlement would not apply until 2018.
- Central Government were also working legislatively to introduce a 'pay to stay' scheme in local authority properties. That would require further resource, development and change in order to meet the requirements of the new scheme. The scheme would place significant burden on the Housing service to collect income details annually from tenants and calculate and implement individual rental levels for those on income levels above a specific value.
- Central Government was also imminently due to introduce a high value vacant homes levy. That might require some Leicester City Council homes

to be sold when they became vacant. It was not yet known how much the levy would be or how many homes might have to be sold. Reserves might be required to pay the levy before the receipts from any sales had been received. There would also be a further impact on rental income should the housing stock numbers consequently fall at a faster rate than already anticipated.

- The Council faced significant financial pressures across its general fund with significant reductions in that budget over the coming years.
- Welfare reforms were pushing people into additional financial hardship and pressures, along with other factors, was culminating in a national increase in rough sleeping, homelessness and begging. Since 2015 the number of rough sleepers in Leicester had increased. There had also been a significant visible increase in the presence of rough sleeping and begging across the City Centre.

Members asked questions and received the following responses:

- New tenants would now pay rent through direct debit;
- People currently on Housing Benefit might have been on it for some time and would find it difficult to prioritise their money when Universal Credit was introduced. Education and communication with them was essential to make it clear that they must pay, or lose their home. It would be beneficial to all concerned to try and push people to move to direct debit payment, and take out the money the same day it went into their account;
- Where tenants were identified as vulnerable or got into arrears, payment of rent could be requested directly;
- Housing were looking at a roll-out of tablet devices to support mobile working, enabling officers to use live information, such as tenants' rent account balance when officers visited tenants in their homes, and also reducing duplication of work;
- Phase 3 of the implementation of the Northgate software system would enable tenants to access a number of services online including rent, report repairs, make payments, report estate or other issues/problems and track progress;

Cllr Connelly thanked Chris for the information and emphasised the challenges ahead for the Housing Division. He made the following points:

- He believed the Government wanted to eradicate social housing;
- HRA was self-financing, and with the 1% reduction in rent it would make it very difficult and challenging to continue to provide affordable social housing;
- With the 'Pay to Stay' scheme, he envisaged more people exercising their right to buy;
- The high value vacant homes levy might force the Council to sell properties of 3/4/5 bedrooms, preventing the authority from being able to tackle the blight of overcrowding.

The Chair thanked Chris for the update. He was interested to find out more on the high value levy on voids when it became available. He also requested a future report on homelessness and hostels challenges.

The Chair requested that the overview on the Housing service be made available to any new Members of the Housing Scrutiny Commission in the next Municipal Year.

AGREED:

that:

1. further information on the high value levy on voids be provided when it became available;
2. a report on homelessness and hostels challenges be brought to a future meeting;
3. the overview on the Housing service be made available to any new Members of the Housing Scrutiny Commission in the next Municipal Year.

74. WORK PROGRAMME OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

The Scrutiny Policy Officer submitted a document that outlined the Housing Scrutiny Commission's Work Programme for 2016/17.

The Chair noted the document, and suggested that further items be added to the work programme going forward, at the first meeting in the next Municipal Year.

AGREED:

that the work programme be noted.

Members thanked the Chair and Vice-Chair for their leadership over the past year.

The Chair thanked Officers and Members of the Commission. He added they had faced some difficult challenges, but looked forward to working with them on the Commission in the future.

75. CLOSE OF MEETING

Close of meeting 8.21pm.

Appendix B

SCRUTINY COMMITTEES: TERMS OF REFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

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

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

Scrutiny Committees may:-

- i. review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the City Mayor, Executive, Committees and Council officers both in relation to individual decisions and over time.
 - ii. develop policy, generate ideas, review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas.
 - iii. question the City Mayor, members of the Executive, committees and Directors about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects.
 - iv. make recommendations to the City Mayor, Executive, committees and the Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process.
 - v. review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the Scrutiny Committee and local people about their activities and performance; and
 - vi. question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent).
- **Annual report:** The Overview Select Committee will report annually to Full Council on its work and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate. Scrutiny Commissions / committees will report from time to time as appropriate to Council.

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

- Overview Select Committee (OSC)
- Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission
- Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission

- Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission
- Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Commission
- Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Sport Scrutiny Commission
- Housing Scrutiny Commission
- Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission

SCRUTINY COMMISSIONS

Scrutiny Commissions **will**:

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



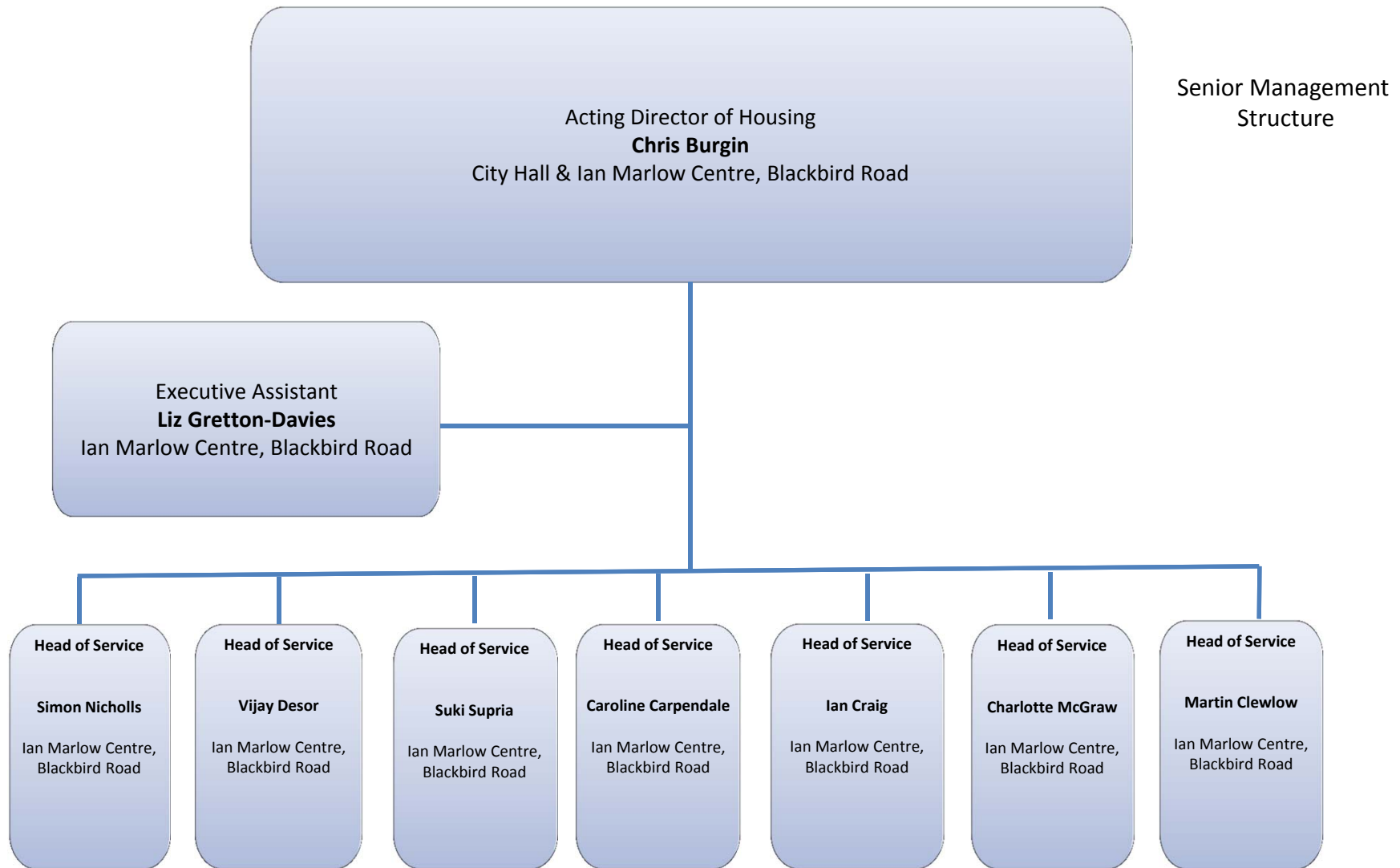
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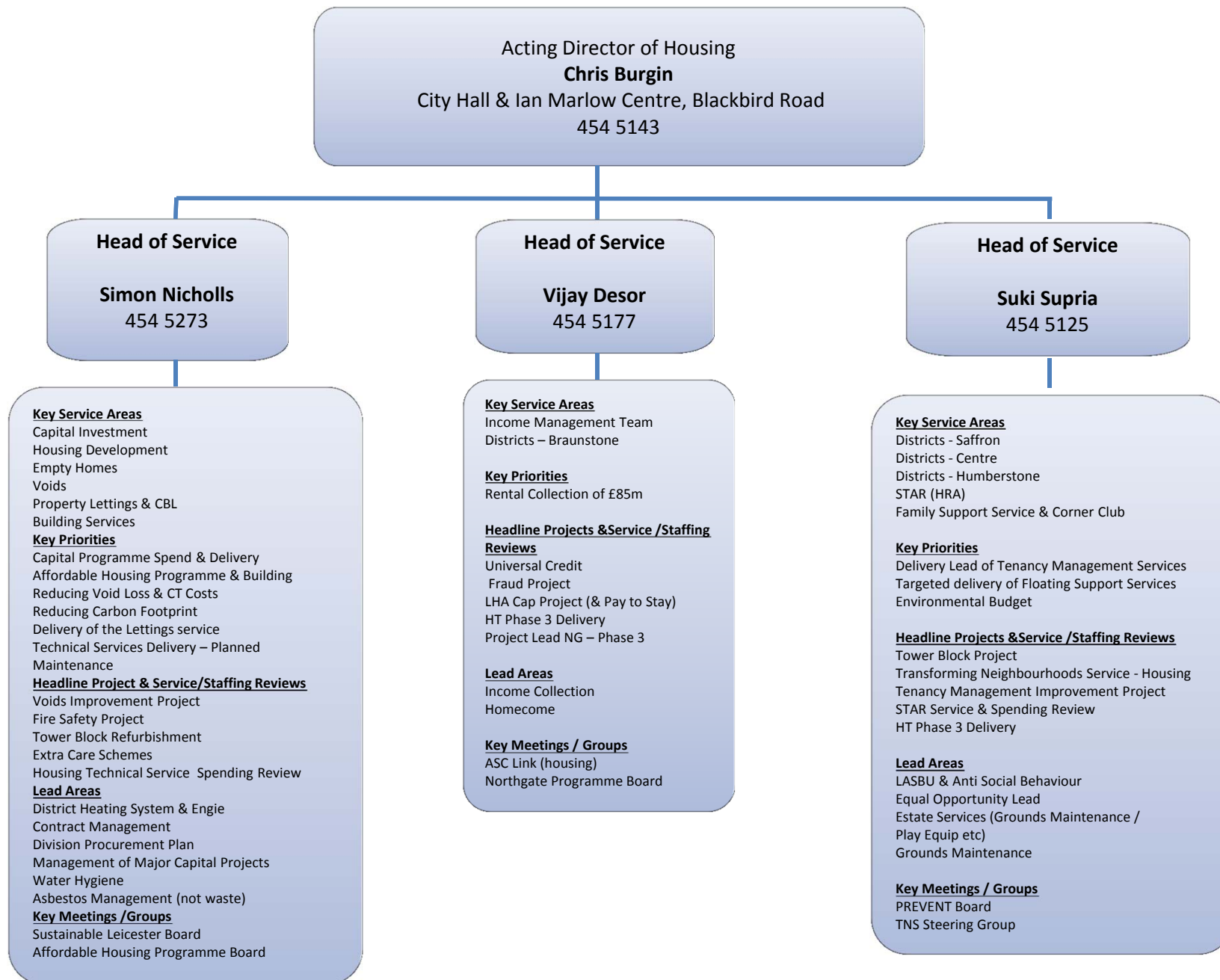
Housing Division Structure Chart

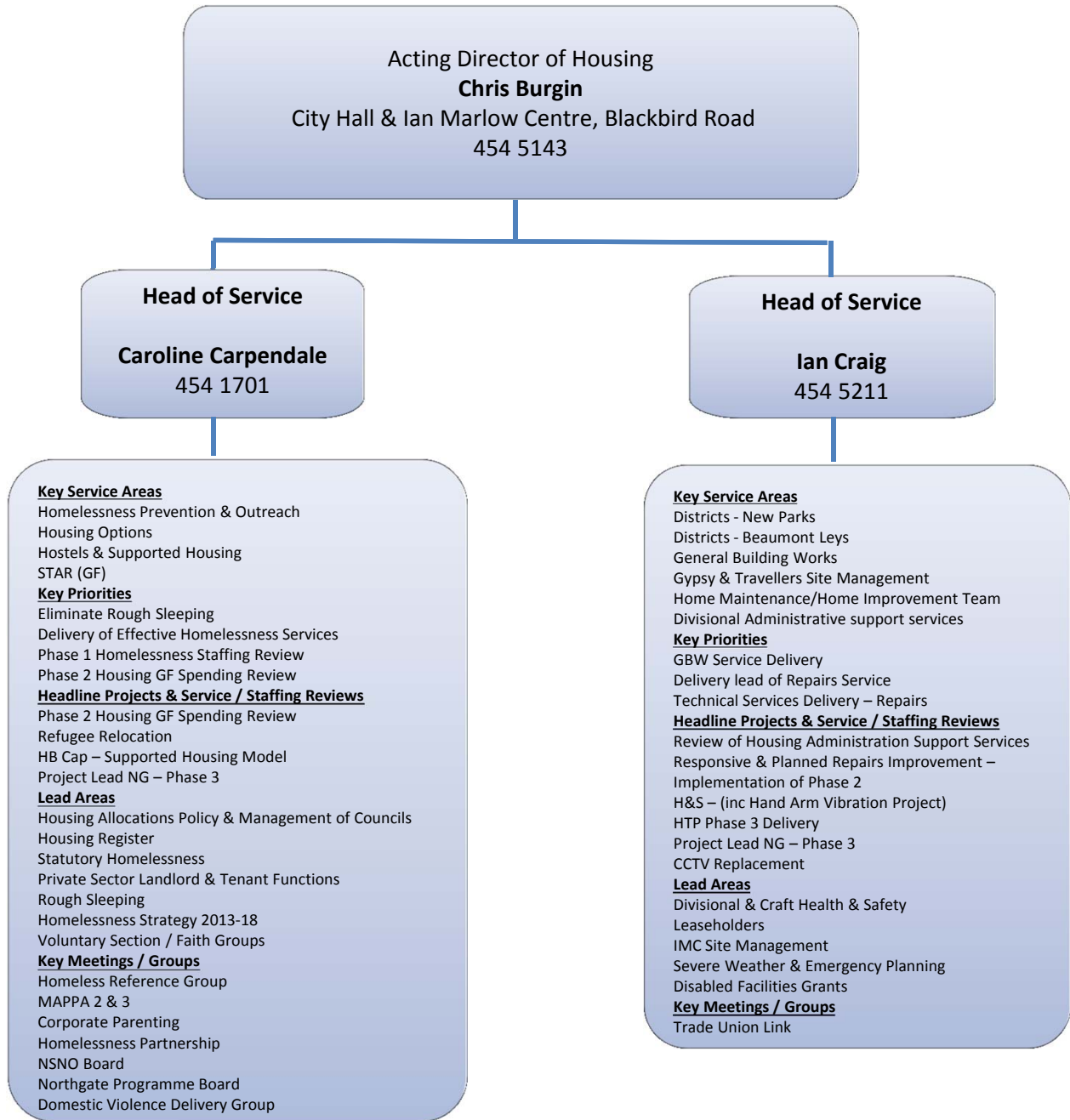


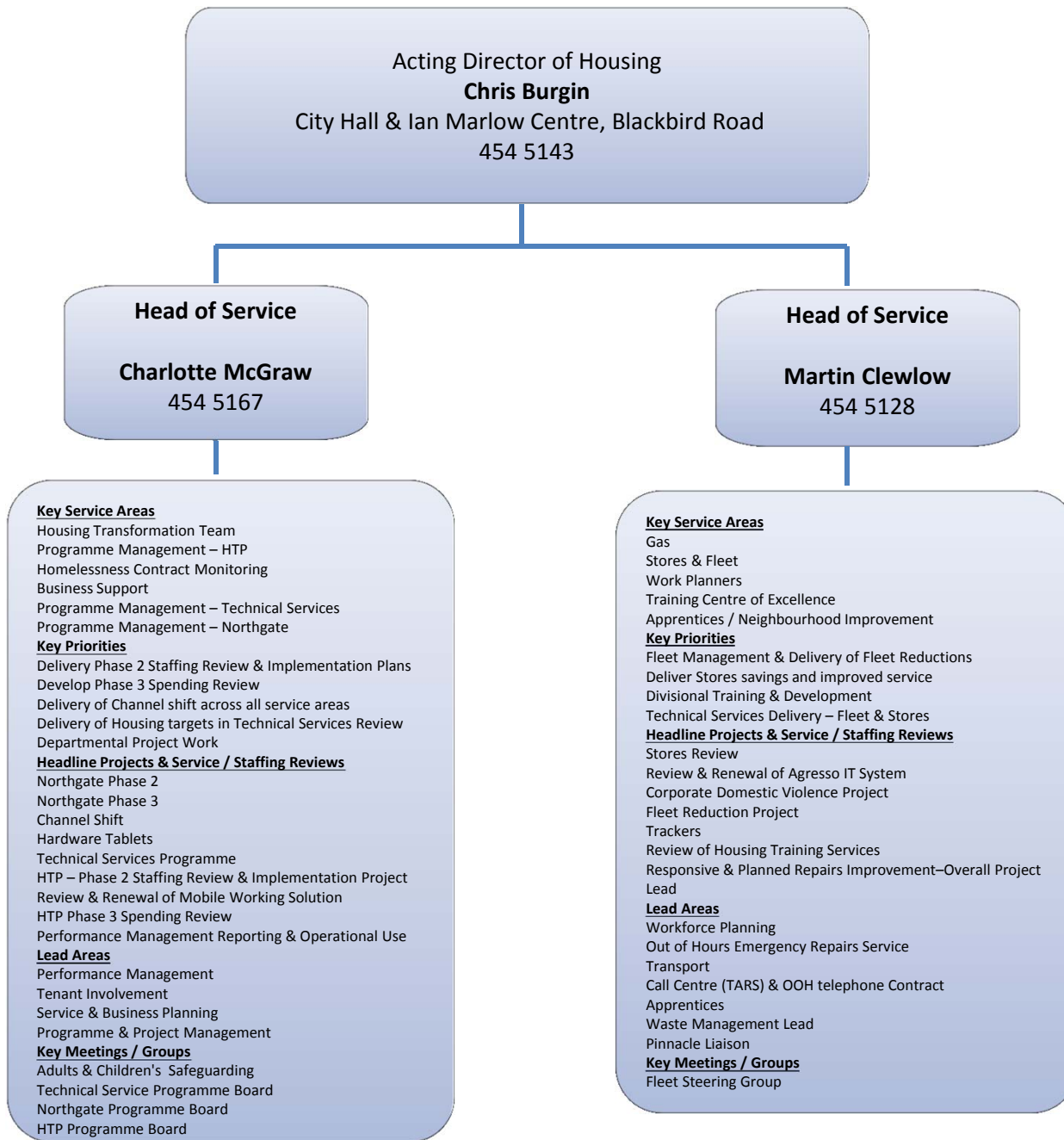
The Housing Division is responsible for Council Services to meet the aim of providing “a decent home within the reach of every citizen in Leicester”

11









Rent Arrears Progress Report

April 2015 to March 2016

Housing Scrutiny Commission: 4th July 2016

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Andy Connelly
Lead Director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

Ward(s) affected: ALL

Report author: Vijay Desor, Mike Watson

Author contact details: Vijay.desor@leicester.gov.uk Ext 37 5177

Report version number: V3

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Scrutiny Commission of progress in the above area of work over the full financial year, April 2015 March 2016.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The cash amount owing as at 3rd April 2016 was £1.533m, this is 0.3% **lower** than at the end of the previous financial year – see 3.1, table 2.
- 2.2 The number of tenants in arrears at the end of March 2016 was 4,350, which is 0.5% **less than** at the end of last year – see 3.5, Table 4.
- 2.3 The number of tenants in more serious debt, (owing more than 7 weeks rent) was 1,366, some 5.0% **lower** than last year – see 3.5, table 4.
- 2.4 For the financial year from April 2015 to March 2016, c. £1.25m **extra rent** was collectable as a result of the “bedroom tax.” see 3.16 below.
- 2.5 £258,356 was paid by Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP’s) for all Council tenants, of which £202,915 was for those affected by the Bedroom Tax, from April 2015 to March 2016. This compares to about £197k for Bedroom Tax the previous year.
- 2.6 The arrears among those affected by the Bedroom Tax **fell by £11,818** from £200,867 to £189,049 over the course of the 2015/16 financial year.

3. REPORT

Rent Arrears

3.1 Rent arrears at the end of each quarter for the financial year 2015/16:

Table 1. Quarterly Arrears

Period	Arrears at end of quarter
Quarter 1	£ 1,571,769
Quarter 2	£ 1,708,364
Quarter 3	£ 1,129,210
Quarter 4	£ 1,532,816

3.2 Comparison of year-end figures for the last four years:

Table 2 year end (quarter 4's) figures

Period	Arrears at end of financial year
2012/13	£ 1,281,757
2013/14	£ 1,545,119
2014/15	£ 1,537,967
2015/16	£ 1,532,816

3.3 There is a clear seasonal trend for rent arrears to increase in the first part of the year, falling rapidly towards the latter part of the financial year. The rent collection figures for Leicester remain good in comparison with other authorities.

3.4 Rents rose by 2.2% on average in April 2015. The arrears fell slightly between April 2015 and March 2016 by 0.3%, compared to a decrease of 0.5% over the same period in 2014/15. This shows that stability has now been achieved over the past two years.

Number of Cases

3.5 After removing monthly payers (i.e. Direct Debits, Wage Stops, Arrears Direct (DWP), Bank Standing Orders) the number of tenants with rent arrears is shown in tables 3 & 4 below:

Table 3. Breakdown of Arrears Cases by Quarter end 2015-16

Period	Owing 2 Weeks or more Net	Owing 7 Weeks or more Net **
Quarter 1	4,335	1,462
Quarter 2	4,883	1,492
Quarter 3	2,645	1,839
Quarter 4	4,350	1,366

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

****** Those owing 7 weeks or more rent are included within the figure for owing 2 weeks or more.

Table 4. Breakdown of Arrears Cases by Year Ends

Period	Owing 2 Weeks or more Net	Owing 7 Weeks or more Net **
2012/13	4,614	1,410
2013/14	4,310	1,841
2014/15	4,372	1,438
2015/16	4,350	1,366

- 3.6 The number of cases in arrears decreased by 0.5% over the previous year end figure. The number of more serious cases fell by 5.0%. There is a lot of variability in these figures, but the overall trend is stable.

Arrears per Tenancy

- 3.7 The total arrears divided by the total number of tenancies are shown in tables 5 & 6 below:

Table 5. Average debt by quarter end 2015-16

Period	Average Debt
Quarter 1	£74.74
Quarter 2	£86.02
Quarter 3	£53.35
Quarter 4	£72.59

Table 6. Average debt by year end (Quarter 4)

Date	Average Debt
2012/13	£59.36
2013/14	£72.44
2014/15	£72.27
2015/16	£72.59

- 3.8 These tables (5 & 6) reflect the slight decrease in the actual rent arrears over the period. As can be seen, arrears have been stable over three of the past four years.

Highest 10% of Debt (by value)

- 3.9 Tables 7 and 8 below shows the highest 10% of arrears cases:

Table 7 Highest 10% of arrears cases by quarter – end 2015-16

Period	No.Cases	Highest arrears case (of the top 10%)	Lowest arrears case (of the top10%)	Average	Total Value
Quarter 1	943	£3,441	£412	£680	£641,599
Quarter 2	825	£2,670	£376	£660	£698,179
Quarter 3	716	£3,195	£438	£675	£483,808
Quarter 4	776	£3,250	£420	£744	£678,231

Table 8 Highest 10% of arrears cases by year-end

Period	No.Cases	Highest Case (of 10%)	Lowest Case (of 10%)	Average	Total Value
2012/13	906	£2,543	£382	£630	£571,978
2013/14	810	£3,119	£460	£757	£613,186
2014/15	737	£2,607	£452	£745	£550,429
2015/16	776	£3,250	£420	£744	£678,231

- 3.10 Table 7 shows that the highest arrears cases have been varying over several years. Due to the volatility of these figures it is difficult to make a clear conclusion from them. However, the average value per case has stabilized and fallen slightly over the past 3 years, which corresponds with other figures for the same period.

Rent Arrears Comparison with 2014/15

- 3.11 Arrears started 2015/16 running consistently about £200k lower than 2014/15. However, over the latter half of 2015/16, performance has returned to the same level as last year.
- 3.12 Appendix 1 shows the detailed comparison of rent arrears for 2015/16 and 2014/15.

Impact of the Bedroom Tax

- 3.13 When the Bedroom Tax started (April 2013), 12% (2,701) of our tenants were affected by the bedroom tax and 39% (1,044) of these were already in rent arrears at the start of the scheme.
- 3.14 From the original 2,701 cases that were originally identified, by April 2016 the number of active cases had reduced to 1,749. This is because the numbers affected are constantly changing as people come out of the bedroom tax, and new cases arise, due to changes in household composition or financial circumstances.
- 3.15 At the start of 2015/16, it was estimated that an extra £1.28m would need to be collected over a full year. The actual figure at the end of 2015/16 financial year was £1.25m.

What we do know about Bedroom Tax cases is:

- 112 tenancies had terminated between April 2015 and March 2016.
- In April 2015, there were 54% of affected tenants in arrears. This fell to 50% by end of March 2016 (881 out of 1749).

- For the year from April 2015 to March 2016, a total of £258,356 of Discretionary Housing Payments had been received on behalf of all Council tenants, of which £202,915 was for bedroom tax cases.
- The arrears among those affected by the Bedroom Tax have decreased by £11.8k over the course of the 2015/16 financial year.
- These numbers will continue to change as the situation evolves.

Impact of Benefit Income Cap (BIC)

- 3.16 An estimated 83 LCC tenants were affected by the BIC at the start of April 2015, decreasing to 74 by the end of March 2016. The average loss of Housing Benefits for this group was £55.67 per week.
- 3.17 For the year from April 2015 to March 2016, this would equate to an extra collectable rent of about £206k.
- 3.18 The arrears among those affected by the Benefit Income Cap have increased by £484 (or 3.6%) over the course of the 2015/16 financial year, from £13,325 to £13,809.

Evictions

- 3.19 There were 52 evictions carried out for non-payment of rent from April 2015 to March 2016.
- 3.20 This compares to 103 evictions in whole of the previous year.
- 3.21 Of the 52 evictions, 10 were family cases, 1 was a childless couple, and 41 were single people.
- 3.22 There were 2 evictions whose debt included some Bedroom Tax.
- 3.23 Single people were more than 4 times as likely to be evicted as families.
- 3.24 Only 4% (2 out of 52) of the evictions were directly affected by the impact of Welfare Reforms. Bedroom Tax and BIC cases account for about 10% of all tenants. The majority of evictions, along with the majority of the rent debt, occurred among the 90% of tenants NOT directly affected by Welfare Reforms.

4. Priorities for Income Management Team 2016/17

4.1 The priorities identified for the coming year are:

- **Welfare Reform (WR) changes:**

- Raising awareness and training of housing staff to respond to future WR changes including the capping of social housing rents for under 35's, Pay to Stay and Fixed Term tenancies
- Raising awareness of WR to LCC tenants including targeted contacts to those affected.
- Establishing protocols with DWP to help sustain vulnerable tenancies through Alternative Payment Arrangements
- Adapt working practices to meet challenges faced in maximising income collection

- **Modernise ways of working:**

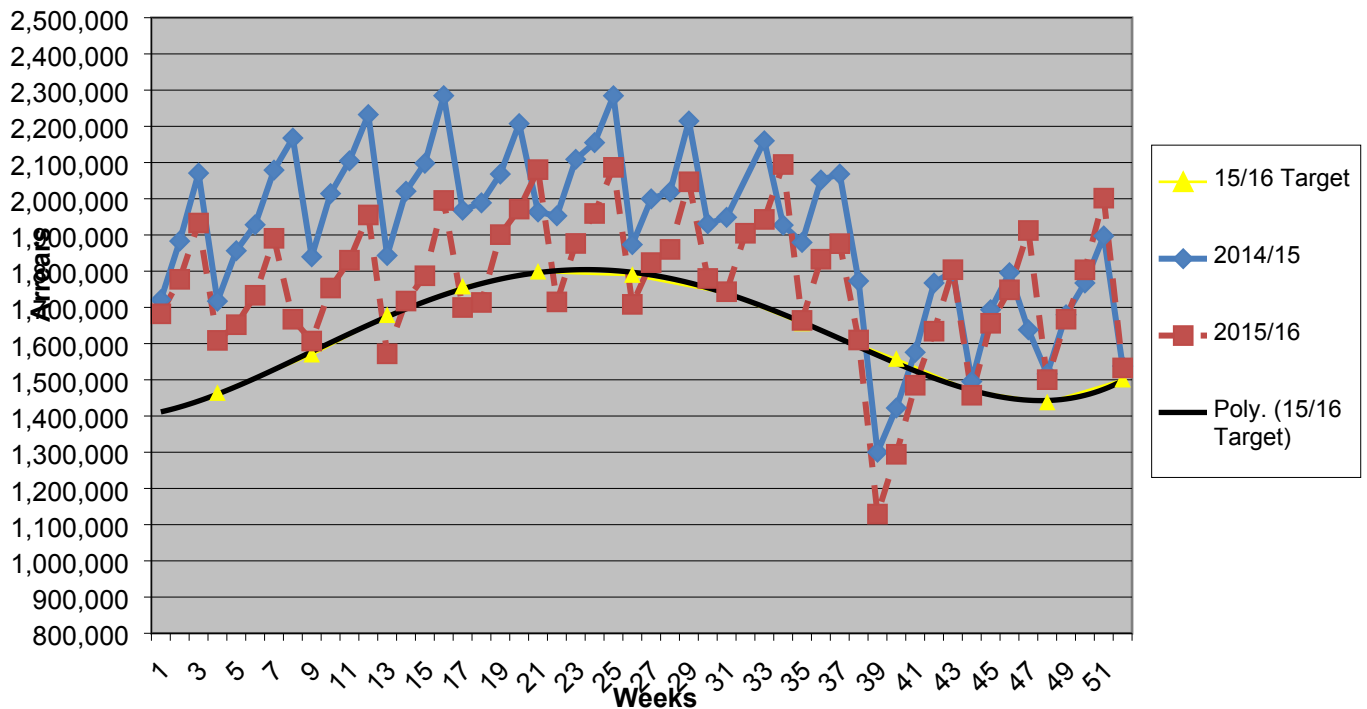
- Continue to introduce mandatory direct debits for new tenancies
- Continue to promote Rent Payment Accounts via ClockWise.
- Develop smarter ways of customer contacts including use of social media platforms e.g. mobile phone applications: text messaging, QR code scanning, email use etc.).
- Assist with Channel Shift implementation for income collection.
- Develop targeted customer contacts based on a credit risk profile- making methods of customer contacts more effective.

5. REPORT AUTHORS

5.1 Vijay Desor, Head of Service, tel.37 5177
Mike Watson, Income Collection Manager, tel.37 3571

Appendix 1 Rent Arrears Comparison With Last Year

Comparison with Last Year



GLOSSARY

Gross annual rent. This is the total amount due on a property over the course of a year. E.g. if the average rent is £78, times 22,000 properties, times 50 payable weeks = approximately £86m.

Collectable rent – the gross annual rent, plus the carried forward arrears, less Housing Benefit payments, less void loss or any other miscellaneous income. E.g. £86m (gross rent), plus £1.3m arrears, minus £50m Housing Benefit, minus £2m void loss, less £250k miscellaneous income, EQUALS £35.05m actual cash to be collected from tenants.

The percentage of rent collected shown is based on the proportion of gross rent, less void loss and miscellaneous income that has been received. HB received is included in this calculation, as is the arrears carried forward. This figure is used for comparative purposes only.

Poly. (Polynomial) – a statistical function used to generate a curved target line that reflects the established annual trend.

Report for Housing Scrutiny Commission

Commission meeting: 4th. July 2016

Empty Homes 2016

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Andy Connelly

Lead director: Chris Burgin



City Mayor

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: all
- Report author: Simon Nicholls
- Author contact details: simon.nicholls@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: V.2

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report has been prepared in response to a Housing Scrutiny Commission request for the following information:
- 1.2 A general update on where we are in dealing with private sector empty homes city wide.
- 1.3 An update on the recruitment of an additional 4 temporary Empty Homes Officers that were agreed as a result of a successful bid to the Transformational Fund.
- 1.4 A city wide map of all long term empty homes.
- 1.5 To review the point at which the current strategy starts, it is currently when a property has been empty for 18 months.
- 1.6 To review the 20 stage process that is used to return empty homes back into use.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the content of the report be noted, with regards to the current situation, the city wide map and the recruitment of the additional Empty Homes Officers.
- 2.2 The current strategy is reviewed in 12 months' time when the full effects of the additional Empty Homes Officers has been reviewed.
- 2.3 To continue with the current 20 Stage process.

3. Supporting information including options considered:

- 3.1 The work of the Empty Homes Team has been of particular interest to the Housing Scrutiny Commission for some time now. It is clear that there is a desire to assist officers in reducing the number of empty homes which in turn will reduce the impact these houses have on their neighbourhoods and return much needed housing to the rental or private sale market.
- 3.2 Housing Scrutiny Commission have asked for an overview of current situation relating to the work the Empty Homes Team does:

The current situation:

- 3.3 There are currently a total of 4425 empty homes city wide.(31st. May 2016)
- 3.4 When an empty home is bought back into use the council receive a New Homes Bonus from the Government equal to 6 years council tax.
- 3.5 Private sector empty homes are dealt with as follows:
- After a house has been empty for 6 months a letter is generated by council tax and the owner asked to confirm the properties current status. This is just the general churn of properties that are empty due to a variety of reasons, being sold, inherited etc.
 - The Housing Division have an Empty Homes Strategy that target homes that have been empty for longer than 18 months. The current total is 1097
 - A 20 stage process is followed which is centred on contacting the home owner and assisting them to bring the property into use themselves by offering support and advice. The majority of empty homes are bought back into use by stage 1a of the procedure which is monitoring after the Stage 1 letter has been sent.
 - If a home cannot be bought back into use with the consent of the owners then the Housing Division will apply for a compulsory purchase order (CPO).

Summary of Empty Properties as at 31st May 2016:	
Citywide Empty Properties	4425
Vacant 18 months or more	1097
Active Caseload includes 124 (Awaiting Allocation) + 250 Active Caseload	374
Properties brought back into use since April 2004	2479

Recruitment of Additional Empty Homes Officers:

- 3.6 In 2015 a bid was submitted to the Transitional Fund to increase the number of Empty Homes Officers, on a temporary basis, to deal with the backlog of properties.
- 3.7 An existing part time Empty Homes Officers has increase their hours to full time and we have interviewed 7 candidates to fill the remaining 3.5 posts.
- 3.8 These posts are temporary for 3 years.

City wide map.

- 3.9 See Appendix A.

Reviewing the point at which the strategy starts.

- 3.10 Bringing forward the point at which an empty home becomes a part of an officer caseload is obvious and something that we will work towards.

Reviewing the 20 stage process:

- 3.11 In April 2004 the Empty Homes Team was set up. A 13-stage process was prepared in consultation with legal services.
- 3.12 As some empty properties continued to progress through to Stage 13, in April 2005 the process evolved into its current version of 20 stages
- 3.13 The empty homes team now operate a robust 20-stage process which mirrors the legal process and is still the same as it was then.
- 3.14 This 20-stage process has proved extremely successful in bringing empty properties back into use in a timely manner. There are 23% of properties which reach Stage 4-20. These are either resolved or simultaneously being prepared to go to public inquiry and brought back into use by using CPO.
- 3.15 The strategy contributes towards Priority 11 of Leicester's Economic Action Plan 2012-2020, Growing City: "unlocking development opportunities to meet housing and business needs".

4. Details of Scrutiny

Report request by HSC

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

None sought for information only

5.2 Legal implications

None sought

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

None sought

5.4 Equalities Implications

None sought

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

n/a

6. Background information and other papers:

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix A , City wide map of private sector empty homes.

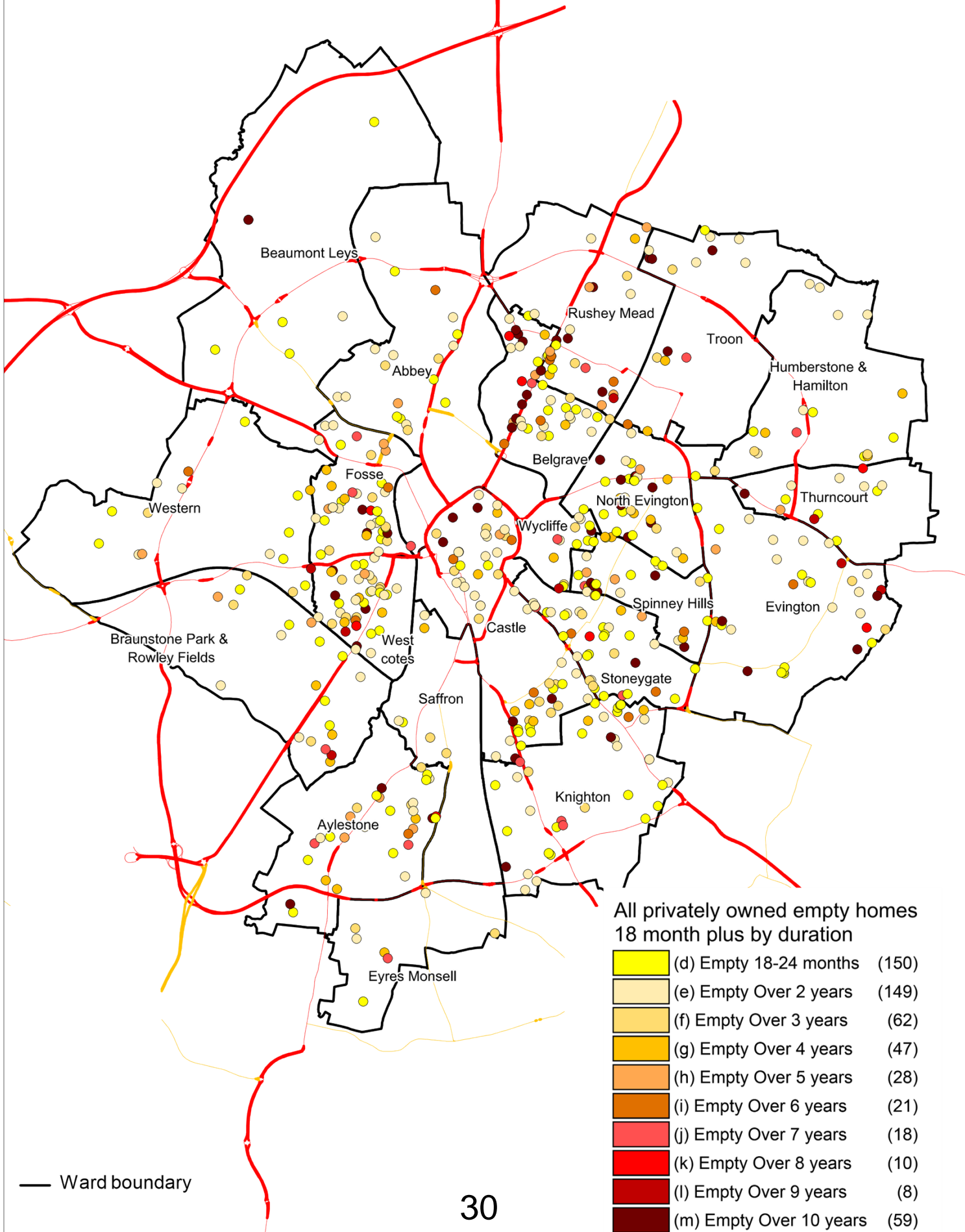
8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

9. Is this a “key decision”?

No

All privately owned empty homes (not inc second homes)
18 months plus by duration



— Ward boundary

Housing Scrutiny Commission

Commission Meeting: 4th July 2016

Homelessness, Street Begging and Rough Sleeping

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Andy Connelly

Lead Director : Chris Burgin



City Mayor

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: ALL
- Report author: Caroline Carpendale, (Head of Service)
- Author contact details: 0116 454 (37) 1701
- Report version number: V1.1

1. Definitions

The report starts with a definition of homelessness, rough sleeping and begging in order for the reader to understand that they are different.

- 1.1. Homelessness - There are a number of different factors that determine whether a person is homeless. The legal definition is *'a person is homeless if he or she has no accommodation in the UK or elsewhere which is available for his or her occupation and which that person has a legal right to occupy. A person is also homeless if he or she has accommodation but cannot secure entry to it, or the accommodation is a moveable structure, vehicle or vessel designed or adapted for human habitation (such as a caravan or house boat) and there is no place where it can be placed in order to provide accommodation. A person who has accommodation is to be treated as homeless where it would not be reasonable for him or her to continue to occupy that accommodation'*.
- 1.2. Rough sleeping - *People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents (inappropriate use of tents), doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or "bashes")*
- 1.3. City Centre Begging – usually involves individuals with complex needs and complicated lives who do not engage with support and services in place. The majority of these also have accommodation and drug and alcohol dependency.

2. Summary

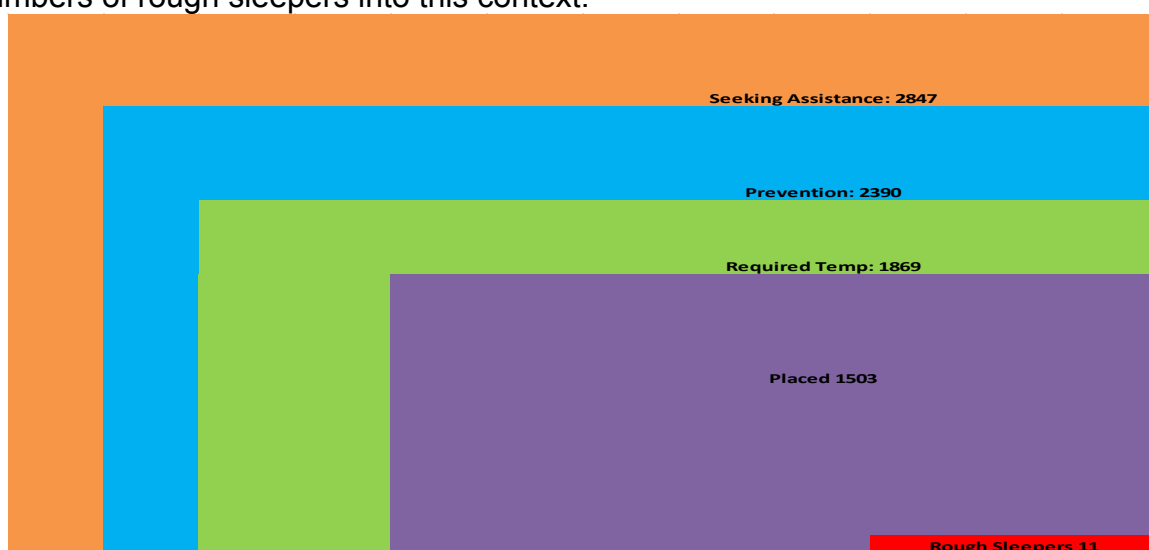
- 2.1. Leicester's approach to Rough Sleeping is "no one needs to sleep rough." We are committed to providing resolutions for those that will accept our support and services.
- 2.2. In Leicester we have a small number of problematic individuals and there is a heightened awareness of begging by the general public. The perception is that homelessness, begging and rough sleeping is one of the same. The reality is that they are different and the individuals experiencing or involved are in most cases unique.

3. This report provides and considers

- 3.1. The majority of those begging do so to fund drug and alcohol dependency and also in a lot of cases have their own accommodation or somewhere to stay and are not homeless.
- 3.2. A table of services and initiatives that are already in place to manage rough sleeping, begging and street drinking. (Appendix 1)
- 3.3. How we ensure and enable those who want to accept our support and services, including access to emergency accommodation.
- 3.4. The anti-social behaviour associated with begging.
- 3.5. Education of the general public to attempt to persuade them not to give to beggars, outlining why this can be detrimental.
- 3.6. The work in conjunction with the Police to manage the people who the public view as rough sleepers, but are actually beggars who do have somewhere to live or who have refused all offers of assistance.
- 3.7. A profile of case studies.

4. Service structure and other agencies

- 4.1. Homelessness prevention, advice and assistance are available to all citizens of Leicester as required. Prevention is seen as better than cure and the City have excellent outcomes for prevention of homelessness either by sustainment, intervention, or providing other housing resolutions.
- 4.2. Leicester's Homelessness Strategy 2013 -2018 committed to provide services including the provision of accommodation for more than just those to whom a statutory duty is owed.
- 4.3. Figure 1 below illustrates the full picture of homelessness in Leicester and puts the small numbers of rough sleepers into this context.



- 4.4 The Housing Division has strong and robust joint working arrangements in place across the Council to assist those in need of Homeless services, including Adult Social Care, supporting vulnerable adults, Children Services to safeguard and prevent children and young people from homelessness and Public Health who have targeted interventions for drug and alcohol services including outreach services. Close working arrangements with the Police, provide enforcement as a last resort to disperse beggars and rough sleepers causing anti-social behaviour (ASB); and the Community Rehabilitation Company, and the United Kingdom Border Agency assist where administrative removal is required.
- 4.5 Leicester City Council also have excellent working relationships with the Voluntary Sector to provide a community based approach to meet the aims and objectives of Leicester's Homelessness Strategy. The Leicester Homelessness Partnership provides a joined up approach across Council, Voluntary and Statutory services to meet the needs of those people who have multiple needs, are living chaotic lives, face chronic social exclusion and who are dying prematurely because they are failing to get the support that they need. Action Homeless is the lead partner for this.
- 4.6 A Single Access and Referral Service (SAR) located within the Customer Services Centre where an on-call duty team manage emergencies on weekdays for anyone who is homeless or threatened with homelessness. In addition an "out of hours" service is in operation after the close of business, weekends and bank holidays, managed through The Dawn Centre. The City Council's Outreach Team carry out daily street work from 6am each weekday to identify and support rough sleepers into accommodation and other services such as drug and alcohol support, mental and physical health services. The Outreach team also have access to emergency accommodation within The Dawn Centre.
- 4.7 A detailed breakdown is provided in Appendix 1 of the Homeless prevention and support services that are available to the people of Leicester.

5 Number of Hostel Places and Vacancy Rates

- 5.1 Access to emergency or temporary single homeless accommodation is primarily for those individuals that have had a settled address in the City of Leicester.
- 5.2 We have 291 bed spaces available within the City with an in house provision and the voluntary sector, namely Action Homeless, the Y, Addullam Homes and Stonham, part of the Home Group providing accommodation. The provision includes specialist accommodation for young people and ex-offenders.
- 5.3 As well as the 291 bed spaces we also have emergency beds available to those who may be found rough sleeping or who are at a high risk of rough sleeping. These beds are allocated on a nightly basis.
- 5.4 Whilst there is a high rate of occupancy for the available accommodation, 'no one needs to sleep rough'. However there are some individuals who choose to rough sleep, rather than access services or have excluded themselves due to their actions when in services.
- 5.5 Weekly monitoring of available bed spaces provides management information to ensure as far as possible that no-one is turned away from emergency beds because we have no room. Over

the last two years since April 2014, 2847 singles have sought assistance, requesting temporary accommodation, through Housing Options.

6 Numbers rough sleeping

6.1 A total of 159 people have been identified during 2015/16 rough sleeping in Leicester, this includes the 11 that had sought assistance through the SAAR and set out in Figure 1. The remaining 148 who have been found rough sleeping as part of the snapshot, were either, wanting assistance (and offered it through an alternative route), not wanting assistance and refusing help, excluded from services due to their own actions, or EU citizens unable to access services whom are refusing to be repatriated.

6.2 Leicester City Council works to the no second night out agenda and the majority of cases slept rough for 1-2 nights only. We believe that there is no one who rough sleeps because we do not have a bed space to offer with the exception of those persons from abroad that are ineligible for housing assistance of which 54 accepted the offer to be reconnected to their country of origin over the 24 month period (28 and 26 in 2015/16 and 2014/15 respectively).

6.3 A weekly snapshot of rough sleepers is carried out on a Friday to identify those who have been found rough sleeping. The last snapshot on Friday 3rd June 2016 identified 9 rough sleepers. This cohort had either previously been in services, including accommodation, were refusing to engage or accept the offer of support and assistance that had been offered, or had been excluded from services due to their own actions. In 2015/16 the range in numbers on the street was a minimum of 7 in December 2015 and maximum of 26 in August 2015.

7. Case Studies



7.1 This graphic represents the very small number of rough sleepers that also beg. This graphic is further illustrated by the case studies below.

Case 1 - Rough Sleeper – reason: Abandoned hostel, Heavy drinker. Has memory problems due to past brain injury which are heightened by alcohol intake. Evicted, from residential care for non-engagement and behaviour. Currently accommodated by ASC, whilst his social worker is trying to secure some appropriate accommodation. Service contacts – Outreach and Social Worker.

Case 2 - Rough Sleeper – reason: States he drinks too much and fails to return to his home (happens fairly regularly) Drug and alcohol use. All services are actioned to encourage use of his tenancy. RD workers are trying to make contact to offer further support.

Case 3 - Rough Sleeper – reason: Rough sleeping behind Marks and Spencers since leaving the Dawn Centre. He does not engage too well with Outreach but does speak to them and has stated he wants his own accommodation. Currently it is suspected he is using heroin, crack and New Psychoactive Substances, although he is not forthcoming with information on this. Refusing hostels, engagement limited.

Case 4 - Rough Sleeper – reason: Was living with his mum in her property but she became too ill and moved into a nursing home. Heavy alcohol and NPS drug use. - Refused two separate offers of permanent accommodation due to their location/ Enforcement: Issued Section 35 Dispersal, 1 x Verbal warning and 2 x written.

Some rough sleepers also arrive in the City from other parts of the UK and reconnection is offered.

Case Study - long term homeless in Derby but visiting Leicester and rough sleeping on numerous occasions. Mental health and substance use issues. Liaison with Derby who are

advise rough sleeper is known to services in Derby. Travel arrangements made to re-connect rough sleeper to Derby and services in Derby made aware of rough sleeper returning to ensure that re-connection is co-ordinated.

Case Study – was reconnected to Hungary back to parents and family. Came to England to look for work, but ran out of money and lost accommodation. Was some suspicion that was involved with street-working. Was using Class A drugs. Mother was contacted in Hungary to see if NK could return home. This was accepted and agreed. Flight booked and travel to airport arranged. Team accompanied NK to the airport to ensure check in.

All those found rough sleeping are encouraged to attend the day centres and made aware of the emergency provision that is available on a nightly basis.

Recent work with the police has highlighted again that many people who the public view as rough sleepers are actually beggars who do have somewhere to live. This can also include people who are staying in our hostels. The Rough Sleepers Outreach Team shares information with the Street Drinking Team and the City Centre police. A study of 12 prolific beggars revealed that 7 of the 12 had their own tenancies, 3 were living with family and friends, and 1 had a hostel placement. So out of the 12 that were begging only one was actually rough sleeping and begging.

Case Study 1 - Beggar - has been living in a tenancy in Beaumont Leys for a number of years. He is a prolific beggar in the City. He begs for money to fund his drug habit. He has breached his Community Protection Notices, and he is aware that if he continues to breach further enforcement may be considered. He is offered ongoing support in relation to tenancy sustainment.

Case Study 2 - Beggar - In tenancy and has sustained his tenancy for 2/3 years. He begs on a regular basis in the city. He openly admits he is begging for drug money and generally begs more when he is waiting for a benefit payment. Enforcement: 2 verbal, 1 written warning.

Case Study 3 - Beggar - Female, alcohol and drug use currently housed with LCC. Not engaging overly well with services at this point however she has recently started drug treatment.

8. Other Interventions including Enforcement.

8.1 The Police have served 4 Community Protection Notices and 1 Criminal Behaviour Order as well as dispersal notices, which in effect exclude individuals from the City Centre for a 24 hour period to manage the potential of professional begging rings and rotated 'pitches'. The Police have also welcomed our joint agency approach and information sharing on whether the beggars are actually homeless. This approach gives the Police more confidence that the Courts will support any actions that they may take against persistent beggars.

8.2 Leicester's experience mirrors the national picture with most cities reporting increases in begging on the streets. There are two cohorts of beggars identified, cohort one, individuals begging to fund a habit, predominantly drugs and predominantly accommodated. Cohort 2 is those individuals begging in an organised way, which can involve low level crime and ASB.

9. Conclusion

9.1 Leicester provide excellent Homelessness services to over 2847 single people seeking assistance, help and support.

9.2 In Leicester no one needs to sleep rough. Leicester has enough temporary accommodation to make sure no one has to sleep rough and support and assistance for those needing to reconnect back home.

9.3 Of those who we help by providing advice, assistance including accommodation the numbers of these who are problematic or entrenched is a small proportion.

9.4 The number of rough sleepers in Leicester is very small and this emphasises the strength of the existing services available to those at risk of homelessness.

9.5 The City Centre does have a number of Beggars. These beggars are often people that have homes or other accommodation to sleep in and do not rough sleep.

9.6 It is essential that the public are informed about these distinct groups through information and education that it is not helpful to give money to beggars or rough sleepers and alternative options are communicated to the public for those wanting to provide support and assistance.

10. Financial, legal and other implications

Financial implications – Peter Coles - Principal Accountant - Ext374077

10.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Legal implications – Jeremy Rainbow – Principal Lawyer (Litigation) – Ext 371435

10.2 There are no specific legal obligations arising from this report.

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

No

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

No

Appendix 1

Table of Services and initiatives associated with Rough Sleeping, Begging and Street Drinking

Accommodation	Communication	Support	Enforcement	Preventative Interventions
The Dawn Centre and LCC generic provision -131 units. (LCC)	Leicester City Council Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018	Action Homeless	Police	Hospital Discharge Procedure – Dedicated housing enabler role.
Mayfield House – 45 units Generic provision (Action Homeless)	Press and media campaigns to educate the public.	Floating Support Services – STAR Revolving Door Service People Places & Possibilities The National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders. NACRO	United Kingdom Border Agency	Adult Social Care Assessment of Community Care needs and vulnerable adult safeguarding procedure.
The Y- 85 units (The Y) Young people (16 – 25)	The Leicester Homelessness Partnership	The National Probation Service, and the Community Rehabilitation Company	Public Health Leicester – targeted interventions for drug and alcohol services.	Children’s Services – duty to cooperate, leaving care, safeguarding – joint assessment with housing options for any 16/17 year olds.
Adullam Homes- 16 units (Addulam Homes) Offender provision	Street Link (Homeless Link)	Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust/ The Homeless Mental Health Team	Neighbourhood and Environmental Services- support the Police in enforcement and licencing.	“Through the Gate” – for prison discharges to prevent “no fixed abode” upon release
Stonham- 14 units (The Home Group) Offender provision	Multi-Disciplinary Team Meeting	Inclusion Health Care	Criminal Justice Drugs Team	Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme.
	Annual Homeless Link Rough Sleeper Count/Estimate. (National)	The Y Advice and Support Centre	Street Drinking Management Group	Housing First- where an individual is rehoused in an LCC tenancy following a chaotic lifestyle.
	City Centre Patch Walks	The Anchor Centre/Recovery Hub – The proposed new Anchor Centre service will provide a recovery hub for those who live street lifestyles. It will have a wet facility, alongside structured interventions delivered by centre		

		staff and external agencies.		
	Publicity Campaign via The Leicester Homelessness Partnership	Street Link Homeless Link		
	Bench marking and sharing good practice with other cities.	Criminal Justice Drugs Team		
	Street Drinking Strategy – currently managed by LRP	Make Every Adult Matter (MEAM)		

Housing Forward Planner 2016/17 (23/06/2016)

HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17			
MEETING DATE	MEETING ITEMS	LEAD OFFICER	ACTION AGREED
18th April 2016	Housing Voids Progress report	Vijay Desor	
Agenda Meeting : 23rd March 2016	Area Manager's briefings: Braunstone and Humberstone wards	Ellen Watts	
Papers to be submitted on 5th April 2016	Housing Division Reconfiguration and Challenges	Chris Burgin	
	Housing voids task group	Jerry Connolly	

Housing Forward Planner 2016/17 (23/06/2016)

HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17			
MEETING DATE	MEETING ITEMS	LEAD OFFICER	ACTION AGREED
4th July 2016 Agenda meeting 8 th June 2016 42	Voids task group update Tenant forum – meeting notes Work programme Relevant key decisions/corporate plan Departmental structure Homelessness/rough sleepers: position statement Mayor’s delivery plan (housing issues) Rent arrears update Empty Homes	Jerry Connolly Jerry Connolly Jerry Connolly Jerry Connolly Chris Burgin Caroline Jackson/Miranda Jerry Vijay Desor	
22nd August 2016 Agenda meeting 27 July 2016	Homelessness - two year review St Peter’s tower block project update Council house-building update Voids task group Work programme Tenant forum – meeting notes Mayor’s delivery plan	Caroline/Miranda Chris Burgin Chris Burgin Jerry Connolly	

Housing Forward Planner 2016/17 (23/06/2016)

<p>10th October 2016 Agenda meeting 14 September 2016</p>	<p>Introduction of new departmental staffing structure - £1.5m savings. Review of the tenancy management service (minute 48: December 2015) Northgate IT update Rent arrears update Work programme Tenant forum – meeting notes Mayor’s delivery plan STAR</p>	<p>Suki Supria/ Gurjit Kaur Minhas</p>	
<p>17th November 2016 (provisional)</p>	<p>Special meeting to consider HRA proposals</p>		
<p>28th November 2016 Agenda meeting 2 November 2016</p>	<p>Stores service contract procurement Individual meters for district heating system tenants: legality and costs</p>		
<p>30th January 2017 Agenda meeting 4th January 2017</p>	<p>Area managers’ presentation – 12 month changes and challenges</p>		
<p>20th March 2017 Agenda meeting 22nd February 2017</p>	<p>Area managers’ presentation – 12 month changes and challenges</p>		

Housing Forward Planner 2016/17 (23/06/2016)

<p>To be allocated 2016/17</p>	<p>Rent arrears quarterly update Housing Voids Task Group New departmental management structure</p> <p>Homelessness strategy: update and progress HRA Budget and rent setting City Mayor's delivery plan: update against milestones and targets Tenants' and leaseholders' forum: report item Technical services programme: budgets, targets and delivery model Tower block management Goscote House remodelling Work of STAR (including refugee resettlement programme) Pay to stay High value vacant homes levy UC/HB cap/ bedroom tax/ rent arrears Northgate IT system</p> <p>Corporate plan: Future stores options for housing and highways (part of using buildings better review) Council house building Affordable housing programme annual review: 2015-2019 Key decisions: Syrian resettlement programme</p>	<p>Vijay Desor Jerry Connolly Chris Burgin</p>	<p>For info to new members of commission – going to first meeting of new year's meeting</p> <p>Late 2016</p>
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Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum Action and Decision Log

31st March 2016

Forum members present: Wendy Biddles (Chair), Joe Carroll (Vice Chair), Peter Hookway, Gwen Clifford, Ebrahim Jasat, May Jones, Pauline Lowey, Redvers Forryan

Also attended: Dipesh Joshi, Tim Draper, Suki Supria, Gurjit Minhas, Caroline Carpendale, Kanwaljit Basra

Apologies: Paresh Shah, Jean Williams, Janet Statham, Jamal Abdulla, Moussa Rugerinyange, Helen McGarry

Actions outstanding from previous meetings

No.	Agenda item	Actions and decisions
1.	Forum topic 2016	This item has been set to be discussed at today's forum meeting.
2.	Communal cleaning progress	This item has been set to be discussed at today's forum meeting.

Actions and decisions from the meeting on the 31st March 2016

No.	Agenda item	Actions and decisions
3.	Maintaining and Improving Neighbourhood standards;	The Forum was consulted on the draft Maintaining Neighbourhoods Policy, which housing providers are required to publish by the Homes and Community Agency. Forum members stated they were happy with the policy but that the challenge going forward was maintaining these standards.

4.	Transforming neighbourhood service; update	<p>Suki Supria and Gurjit Minhas attended the meeting to give the Forum an overview of the Transforming Neighbourhood Services (TNS) proposals for the North West area of the city.</p> <p>A public consultation on the proposals commenced on the 1st March and will close on Monday 11th April.</p> <p>Consultation questionnaires were handed out to all members. They were advised to submit comments, or questions they would like to be consider before the consultation deadline date. Should members want to complete the survey online, the web address is; www.leicester.gov.uk/tns</p>
5.	Communal cleaning update	<p>Suki Supria attended the meeting to provide an update regarding the communal cleaning project.</p> <p>Following a report being presented at the Housing Scrutiny Commission on 17th December 2015, it was recommended that the cleaning service would remain with the councils City Cleansing Team. Thorough monitoring measures will be put in place to tackle performance and quality issues.</p> <p>In the meantime, tenants have been advised to make contact with their local NHO's, should they feel dissatisfied with the service delivered.</p> <p>The City Cleansing Team have been given new 'Jetting back-packs'. It is intended that this product will help staff to complete jobs quicker and to a higher standard. The backpacks have been piloted at various council buildings in the city.</p> <p>The forum welcomed the measures which have been put in place.</p>

5.	Garage allocation policy; update	<p>Suki Supria consulted the Tenants Forum on the new draft Garage Allocation policy. It is proposed that garages are offered, in the first instance, to residents living in the local area. Should there be no interest in renting a garage vacancy from a local resident, this will then be opened up to anybody in the city, failing any further interest it will be opened up to anyone outside the city boundary.</p> <p>The Forum were in favour of this policy but raised concerns that some people were using the garages to store items other than vehicles.</p> <p>Suki agreed to discuss the draft policy with Cllr Connelly and provide feedback at the next meeting.</p>
6.	Repair Appointment card; update	<p>Suki Supria advised the Forum that the pink repairs appointment cards have now been replaced with appointment letters. These are for category 2 and 3 repairs.</p>
7.	Allocations Policy	<p>Caroline Carpendale and Kanwaljit Basra gave a presentation on the council's allocation policy. They explained how many people are on the current waiting list and the process of assessing new prospective applications.</p> <p>Copies of Caroline's presentation were given out to the members of the forum.</p>
8.	Customer Service Centre visit and Leicestershire & Rutland meeting; feedback	<p>Wendy Biddles gave a review of the visit to the Customer Services Centre on 17th March 2016. The members of the forum who attended agreed that the visit gave them a good insight in to how the Customer Services business operates, the amount of</p>

		<p>calls they handle daily and in the way they deliver a caring service to all customers. Members of the forum were very impressed.</p> <p>Joe Carroll gave feedback following his attendance to the Leicestershire and Rutland Tenant Participation Forum on the 8th January 2016 in Burbage.</p> <p>The theme of the meeting focussed predominantly on the subject of those people that are 'hard to reach' and how this could be overcome. The Forum also discussed modern digital media and how this could support "channel shift".</p>
9.	Housing rent account decision	The HRA budget report, including the Capital Programme for 2016/17 was approved by Council in February. At this meeting the Tenants Forum was thanked for all their work and feedback on the proposals.
10.	5 th May elections	Tim Draper reminded the forum of the local Police and Crime Commissioners elections taking place on the 5 th May. Tim explained how that since the declaration of the election, we are now covered by the 'Purdah'.
11.	Topics for future meetings	<p>The chair listed what is proposed for the 2016 meetings and asked each member what they would like to discuss in 2016. The following topics were agreed;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit to new buildings and a chance to see the initial drawings of these buildings • A workshop on Channel Shift • Being kept up to date with the Transforming Neighbourhoods Programme • Continuation of area profile presentations, from July

		<p>onwards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A visit from the safeguarding and Domestic Violence team • A presentation by the Police on crime and disorder issues affecting the city • A presentation on energy saving initiatives for tenants • Invite Chris Burgin (new interim Housing Director) to give us a talk about his vision for the Housing Division • Invite the City Mayor to talk about the priorities for the city council over the next 12 months
12.	Any other business	<p>Peter Hookway raised a concern regarding the lack of communication about future ward meeting dates in his area. Josh to chase.</p> <p>Advice was given that these dates are all listed on the council's web pages.</p> <p>May Jones wanted us to convey her thanks to the team who were responsible for changing the Home Choice system. The customer journey was truly considered when the pages were re-designed.</p> <p>Gwen Clifford would like an update regarding a request she put forward Simon Nicholls, regarding an interest she and forum members had of being part of the design team for the new kitchen layouts. Josh to chase.</p>
Next meeting date:		<p>Date: Thursday 26th May 2016 (1.00 – 4.00 pm) Venue: Ante room (1.24) Town Hall</p>

POLICY OBJECTIVE	HOUSING IMPLICATIONS WITHIN POLICY PRIORITIES
A place to do business	To ensure Leicester is able to grow in a sustainable way to deliver good quality housing, school places and employment sites across the city
A low carbon city	<p>To reduce emissions from homes through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting individuals and communities to develop micro-generation initiatives such as solar panels and wind turbines • delivering low carbon housing development through planning policies, development briefs and conditions on planning permissions • Improve the energy efficiency of council homes through solid wall insulation, solar panels and ground source heat pumps • Support private homeowners and landlords to improve the efficiency of their homes • Further develop district heat and power systems • Work to develop community tariffs to reduce the cost of energy to homeowners
The built and natural environment	Promote high quality inclusive design in the built and natural environment through both council and private sector projects
A healthy and active city	To support independence for people with long-term conditions, older people, people with dementia and carers
Our neighbourhoods and communities	<p>To ensure a decent home is within the reach of every citizen through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing quality rented homes • Make neighbourhoods places to where people want to live and to keep in touch with our tenants • Improve the energy efficiency of homes • Provide appropriate housing to match people's changing needs • Reduce the number of long standing empty private sector homes

