



Leicester  
City Council

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

**DATE: MONDAY, 7 OCTOBER 2019**

**TIME: 5:30 pm**

**PLACE: Meeting Room G.01, Ground Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ**

### **Members of the Scrutiny Commission**

Councillor Westley (Chair)

Councillor Nangreave (Vice Chair)

Councillors Aqbany, Gee, O'Donnell, Pickering and Willmott

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:**

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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](mailto:Angie.Smith@leicester.gov.uk) or call in at City Hall, 115 Charles Street.

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# **PUBLIC SESSION**

## **AGENDA**

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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**

The minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Commission held on 5 August 2019 have been circulated, and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

#### **4. PETITIONS**

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

#### **5. 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.

Three questions have been submitted:

Ms Z Zelter submits the following questions:

- 1) "In light of the climate emergency and fuel poverty, does the council intend to require all its new developments to be to Passivhaus/Zero Carbon standard with renewable generation? If not, why? And if yes, what is the time line?"
- 2) "Would Leicester City Council consider actively checking and enforcing all private rental accommodation to ensure it is reaching minimum

carbon efficiency standards, and licencing them to cover the cost of checks and enforcement?”

- 3) “Given that there is to be a consultation in the next few months on a carbon action plan for the city, please would this commission press for an additional person to be added to the City Executive (beyond the deputy city mayor for environment) whose sole role would be to push for all council policy and actions to be in line with tackling the climate emergency to be part of that carbon action plan.”

**6. HOUSING LEICESTER** [Appendix A](#)

The Director of Housing submits a presentation to the Scrutiny Commission for noting to update on progress on the delivery of new housing.

**7. VOID PERFORMANCE REPORT: APRIL - JUNE 2019** [Appendix B](#)

The Director of Housing submits a report to the Housing Scrutiny Commission for noting to provide an update to Members on void performance for the first quarter of 2019/20.

**8. RESPONSIVE HOUSING REPAIRS PERFORMANCE REPORT** [Appendix C](#)

The Director of Housing submits a report to the Housing Scrutiny Commission for noting, which provides an update on the Division’s performance on the completion of responsive repairs to council properties, and an update about the implementation of service charges.

**9. HOUSING SYSTEM REPLACEMENT AND HOUSING CHANNEL SHIFT** [Appendix D](#)

The Director of Housing submits a report to the Housing Scrutiny Commission for noting which provides an overview and update of the Housing System Replacement programme and Housing Channel Shift.

**10. TENANTS' AND LEASEHOLDERS' FORUM ACTION AND DECISION LOG** [Appendix E](#)

The Scrutiny Policy Officer submits for noting the Tenants’ and Leaseholders’ Forum Action Log from 1 August 2019.

**11. WORK PROGRAMME** [Appendix F](#)

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

**12. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

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# HOUSING LEICESTER

## → Housing Scrutiny Commission



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# Housing Leicester

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# Where are we going to be building in Phase 1

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- Brocklesby Way
- Maplin Road
- ω • Selby Ave
- Ambassador Road
- Felstead Road
- Rosshill Crescent

# What's the timetable

Action	Date
Site clearance	complete
Appointment of contractor	July 2019
Start on site/set up	September 2019
Completion of houses – phased handover	From July 2020
Occupation	August/September 2020

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# How are we funding them ?

	19/20
Retained RTB receipts (£m)	1.1
HRA Reserves (£m)	1.4
HRA Borrowing (£m)	1.3
Total	3.8

- approximately £130k build cost per property
- No land costs (built on HRA land)
- 30% funding from retained RTB receipts
- Residual funding split between borrowing and HRA reserves(actual split to be agreed)

## Ambassador Road

Ambassador Road site is a former garage site that is bordered by existing housing stock.

9 We will be building 3 x two bedroomed houses with their own gardens and allocated car parking spaces. Each of the three houses will accommodate 4 people.



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# Maplin Road

Maplin Road is a former garage site that is bordered by existing housing stock.

∞ We will be building 1 one bedroom bungalow and 1 two bedroomed bungalow



# Brocklesby Way

Brocklesby Way is a former garage site located at the end of an existing residential street.

6 We will be building 1 two bedroom house suitable for four people and 1 three bedroomed wheelchair accessible bungalow.



# Felstead Road

Felstead Road is a former green space located in an established residential area.

We intend to build 12 two bedroom houses. Each house will accommodate

10 4 people

We have also included car parking spaces for the existing houses, which have not had the benefit of vehicular access before.



# Roshill Crescent

Roshill Crescent is a former green space situated in an existing housing estate.

We will be building 5 one bed roomed bungalows, 1 will be fully wheelchair accessible.

We will be retaining some of the open space for the benefit of the residents and the new bungalows will have their own parking spaces.



# What will they look like?

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# What's happening now ?

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- All sites have been through the planning process and we have approval for 5 sites
- We have procured a contractor called Robert Woodhead to deliver the new homes who will start in September 2019. The total cost is £3.8m
- We have identified the next phase of sites and are working with our Architect and Planning.



# Social Value

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- As part of the contract Robert Woodhead will be providing works experience days for our own apprentices and operatives. We will also be working with Leicester College.

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# Phase 2

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- We have identified more sites, The Velodrome, Lanesborough Road, Tatlow Road and Austin Rise.
- We are working with planning to agree the property types and mix.
- and with procurement to agree the best way to appoint a contractor.

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# Phase 3

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- We are currently reviewing the list of sites that will be consulted on as part of the adoption of the Local Plan.

# What else is happening to increase affordable housing in Leicester ?

- ASC have 2 extra care schemes in development. (155 units)
- ↕ • We continue to work with registered providers to help deliver more affordable housing
- Support community groups and coops
- Looking at long term lease options

# Aquisitions

- We have an active acquisition programme of buying back former council houses.(committed to 120 so far)
- • In 18/19 we purchased 33 houses
- So far in 19/20 we have purchased 23 houses
- And we have 64 more where we have had offers accepted and are proceeded towards completion
- The total cost of these purchases is approx. £16m



## Housing Scrutiny Commission

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Void Performance report: April – June 2019  
Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin  
Lead director: Chris Burgin  
Date: 7<sup>th</sup>. October 2019

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## Useful information

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

### 1. Summary

Void performance in the first quarter of 2019/20 has been very encouraging after a poor year end in 18/19. Average void times for June stood at 43.1 days for routine, 148.4 for long term and 87.3 for all voids with 86% of properties being let in under 7 days at an average of 4.6 days from ready to let to occupation.

### 2. Purpose of report

To update members of the Housing Scrutiny Commission on Void performance for the first quarter of 2019/20.

### 3. Supporting information including options considered:

The table below shows 1<sup>st</sup>. quarter 19/20 performance against 18/19- year end performance targets.

Measure	Target	Year end 18/19	Quarter 1 19/20
Routine Voids*	45 days average	62.13 days	50.6 days
Long term voids	90 days average	113.6 days	138.4 days
All voids	Maximum 90 days average	85.8 days	86.92
No. Voids Held	Less than 2% (421)	284	248 as at end of June now 230 as at 10.7.19
Total annual rent loss	No greater than £825k	£985k	£265k
Ready to let to Occupation**	10 days	5.9 days	5.4 days

\*This figure is the number of days void from the end of one tenancy to the start of the next including weekends.

\*\*This figure is the number of working days between when the property is ready to when the new tenancy starts.

#### **Terms & Definitions:**

The actual void time is measured in days from when the property is determined as a 'new void' on the system until a new tenancy commences. Sometimes the 'new void'



date is at the end of a one months' notice period but on other occasions it might be at short notice due to a death or with no notice.

Once we receive the keys to a property we get it cleared of any debris and carry out a survey. Once surveyed we categorise it as either a routine void or long-term void. We do this so that we can give the applicant a better idea when the property will be ready; this is based on the extent of work required.

### **Routine voids**

Are those properties that require a comparatively lower level of work prior to being re let.

### **Long term voids**

Are those properties which require a higher level of repair before it can be re let, the reasons maybe:

- Damp proof work, wood worm treatment.
- Asbestos removal (licenced)
- Structural repairs
- Major adaptations
- Fire damaged properties
- The property is being used as an office, by a resident's group or the police
- Projects (such as the tower blocks)
- New meters and supplies.
- Pest control.
- Rewires, new capital kitchens and bathrooms

### **All voids**

This is the term used when talking and reporting on all voids regardless of if they are routine or long term.

### **Number of voids held**

This is the number of vacant properties we hold at any one time; this should be less than 2% of the total stock and excludes decants

### **Total annual rent loss**

This is the amount of rental income we have lost as a result of a property being empty and is based on a daily rate, the longer the property is empty the greater the amount.

There are two weeks over the Christmas period that are defined as rent free, this means that December is traditional a low month for void income loss. The average weekly rental figure is: £69.97 (range £53.64 - £116.48)

### **Total annual council tax loss**

We become liable for paying council tax on void properties at a daily rate as soon as the property has been empty for 1 calendar month. There are exceptions around this

but this is the case in the majority of cases. We work closely with Council Tax to ensure this information is correct and it is audited quarterly.

### **Decants.**

Are properties that are being used as temporary accommodation for tenants whilst major repairs are being carried out to their home. Decants are technically considered voids as the tenant retains their tenancy on the property that is being repaired to which they will move back to. We currently have 12 properties being used as decants

### **The void journey**

The process is split into 3 distinct areas:

- The inspection
- The works
- The letting

#### The inspection

When we receive the keys to a property the clock starts ticking and the first thing that has to happen is an inspection needs to be carried out, this is done by the Voids Technician (VT), they are responsible for making sure that we comply with our obligations as a landlord with regard to making the property safe. They also ensure that all works are specified in order to meet our letting standard and any other actions ahead of the repairs being carried out are completed. They could include cleaning the property out, arranging for pest control to carry out a fumigation, carry out an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), an asbestos survey and possible asbestos removal and meter changes.

#### The works

The specification is issued to either the operatives or to one of our contractors. The city is split geographically into, East and West and a team of approximately 70 operatives are supervised by a team of 6 supervisors. The operatives carry out the full range of tasks required to ensure the property meets our Lettings Standard, see appendix B.

#### The letting

At void stage the property is advertised on 'Homechoice', a website that allows prospective tenants to bid for properties. They have the chance to bid on 3 properties per weekly cycle.

Once the advertising cycle is completed the Property Lettings Team then extract the shortlists for the properties advertised from the system and make offers to applicants from the housing register. Once the applicant has accepted the offer and the works are completed on the property, they arrange to meet the prospective tenant at the property to view and sign the tenancy agreement.

A new web link is in the final stages of construction with a range of information for new tenants- which will be promoted through the offer letter and minimise the use of paper handouts.

## **Impacts and Challenges on void time:**

### **Asbestos removal**

We must survey all void properties to locate and assess the condition of any asbestos containing materials. If the condition is poor or it's in a location where we will be carrying out other works, such as a kitchen refurbishment we have to arrange for it to be removed. Asbestos poses no risk to tenants so long as it is not disturbed. Some items can be removed by the void operative, such as floor tiles, but other items such as sprayed ceiling coating, must be removed under fully controlled conditions by a licenced contractor. We have to notify every removal to the HSE, we also have to give them 10 days' notice if the removal is under fully controlled conditions. We have a good knowledge of where the asbestos is in our properties, but we have no idea until we received notice which properties are going to become vacant.

### **Priority voids**

We are under pressure to return void properties back into use as quickly as possible. We have a waiting list in excess of 5000 applicants and so the demand and pressure for properties to be available is constant.

We also must respond to even more urgent requests for homes when people are fleeing domestic violence or harassment or waiting to be discharged from hospital and holding up a bed. We can normally accommodate up to 8 priority requests at any one time, however so far this year the priority void list has been consistently in excess of 25, this has been unsustainable and had a negative impact on the normal throughflow of properties, when all the voids you are working on are a priority then the priority ceases. For example, we may be picking out a recent void which we have had a request to prioritise due to the case type and this will be taken over and above an older void which does not have a priority case attached to it. As a result, we have had to prioritise the priority case.

We currently have 19 priority voids.

### **Fire doors.**

The world of fire safety has been challenging since Grenfell and the Hackett Report. As a result all fire door manufacturers have been asked to test the fire resistance of their doors more robustly. A significant number of doors failed and as a result all manufacturers stopped production for several months until new doors had passed the more rigorous testing.

For several months the manufacture of composite fire doors stopped. Some manufacturers have since started production but there is a backlog and a high demand. Something like normal supply did not happen until April this year so we are now recovering from this, but it caused delays to a number of lets.

### **Garden Clearance:**

This work was previously undertaken by Leicester to Work but they stopped being able

to resource this earlier this year. We are now in the process of upskilling the Driver Labourers to do this, however in the interim this work is being issued to other council departments and contractors to do.

### **Condition properties are returned**

We never know what condition a property is going to be returned in, some are clear and require no rubbish removal and minor repairs, but some are the complete opposite. Recently we are seeing an increase in voids that require lots of work. We do recharge the previous tenants, where possible, but this does add to the time it takes to return that property back into use.

### **What have we changed to try and addresses these challenges:**

#### **City wide approach to void repairs**

The city is split into 6 areas, 3 in the East and 3 in the West and they are all resourced to do all repairs in the voids in that area, sometimes helping in other areas if they have capacity. The city-wide approach to void repairs continues and has proved to be successful and has had a positive impact on working relationships and communications both inside and outside of the service area and has improved processes.

#### **Ongoing review of the asbestos removal policy.**

In the last 12 months the number of asbestos removals completed in void properties has increased by 300%. This has had a significant impact on void time because this work is carried out by licenced removal contractors and we have to give the Health and Safety Executive 10 days' notice prior to the asbestos being removed. In some cases, we can continue to work in the properties until the removal date but if the asbestos is loose or friable then we have to wait until the asbestos is removed. This is something we have accommodated in the past but there has been a spike in numbers, however more recently we have started to see a reduction. We are also looking to see if we can reduce the number of full removals by repairing rather than full removal.

#### **Completing works on occupation**

To try and reduce waiting times for priority voids we try to carry out works on occupation, in agreement with the new tenant, this has been successful where it has been possible, and we are looking to widen this out to other void properties.

#### **Recruitment:**

We are currently actively recruiting to fill the remaining vacancies in the voids team, there will always be vacancies due to the general churn of staff. We currently have 5 Multi Trade Electrical vacancies and we are currently issuing work to contractors to help us complete void repairs.

The voids team are an important part of the training programme for all apprentices so

that they are exposed to all trades, for example they can rewire a property or fit a full kitchen, something that would be difficult to do in a tenanted home. Whilst this is very important and the right thing to do it can sometimes slow down the work on the void property. However the apprentices gain valuable experience and this is a benefit when they have successfully completed their apprenticeship and hopefully secured a job with the Voids team.

We have previously delayed recruitment so that we would be able to offer apprentices coming out of their time an opportunity.

We have previously recruited a works Planner dedicated to Voids, this post plans the work of the driver labourers to make sure house clearances and rubbish removal is carried out efficiently. They also arrange for the delivery of materials to ensure operatives are not waiting for the materials they need to bring the property up to the letting standard, this is working well.

**Issuing work to contractors:**

To help assist the in-house craft teams return void properties more quickly we have recently appointed two contractors to help. This is working well and has contributed to the overall improvement in the figures. We are planning to continue doing this until the long term and all voids figures are on target, we will then review the situation.

**4. Details of Scrutiny**

**Report for HSC**

**5. Financial, legal and other implications**

5.1 Financial implications

None sought – for information only

5.2 Legal implications

None sought – for information only

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

None sought – for information only

#### 5.4 Equalities Implications

None sought – for information

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

## Report to Housing Scrutiny Commission

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### **Responsive Housing Repairs Performance Report**

Housing Scrutiny Commission: October 2019

Lead Member: Councillor Cutkelvin

Lead director: Chris Burgin

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- 2.4 In 2018/19 the repairs service completed 89.4% of repairs on the first visit and 88.4% within target time.
- 2.5 A total of 190 repairs complaints made in 2018/19 equating to 0.21% of all repairs completed.
- 2.6 The current primary channel of access to the service is through the telephone by calling 0116 4541007 (option 1), Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm. Outside of these hours customers call 0116 2549439. In 2018/19 the Call Centre received a total of 123,371 repairs related calls.
- 2.7 The online service of 'My Account' is also currently available to report repairs online 24 hours a day.
- 2.8 Front line staff such as Housing officers are also able to take reports of repairs.
- 2.9 Appointments are offered between the following times:
- Morning appointments between 8am and midday
  - Afternoon appointments are between 12pm and 4pm.
- 2.10 There are 3 different categories of repairs.

Category	Description	Timescale
Priority 1	Emergency Work	to be completed with 24 hr
Priority 2	Routine Repairs	to be completed within 10 working days
Priority 3	Programmed Repairs	Surveyed within 10 working days and completed within 8 weeks to 12 months according to job

Examples of priority 1 repairs are:

- Total failure of electrical power and/or lights
- Serious water leak
- Total loss of heating

Examples of priority 2 repairs are:

- Minor repairs to windows or doors
- Repairs to kitchens
- Ceiling repairs

Examples of priority 3 repairs are:

- Repairs to paths
- Repairs to guttering
- Repairs to communal areas

- 2.11 Tenants can access the Repairs handbook online which gives them detailed information about their property, the council's responsibilities and their own responsibilities.

<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/media/180950/repairs-handbook-2016.pdf>

### 3. Responsive Repairs Performance

3.1 Four key indicators evaluate the success of the repairs service. These are:

- Percentage of Day to Day repairs carried out within target time
- Number of Repairs which are outstanding and out of category
- Percentage of repairs completed on first visit
- Percentage of repairs which lead to a complaint

More detailed performance information against each is set out in 3.2 to 3.5 of this report.

Indicator	DoT	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Percentage of repairs completed at first visit – excluding external works	Higher is better	80.6%	89.3%	89.4%
Number of repairs which are out of category	Lower is better	1,851	813	753
Percentage of repairs completed within target time	Higher is better	84.3%	85.7%	88.4%
Percentage of repairs reported where a complaint has been received	Lower is better	0.5%	0.33%	0.2%

#### 3.2 Percentage of Day to Day repairs carried out within target time

Over 87.9% of repairs in 1<sup>st</sup> Qtr. 2019 have been completed within target time which continues to improve towards the target of 95%. In relation to the out of category jobs, management meet monthly to see what measures are needed to improve performance and address out of cat jobs including setting Repair Managers targets, prioritising resources to ensuring that these jobs are completed. Some of these jobs are not completed within category because of tenant's availability and convenience regarding arranging appointments.

#### 3.3 Number of Repairs which are outstanding and out of category

The number of outstanding repairs out of category at 18<sup>th</sup> July 2019 stood at 737 for responsive repairs and a further 205 relating to gas repairs and/or district heating.

This figure continues to reduce month-on-month now that the benefits of changed working arrangements implemented in November 2016 being realised, with further improvement expected for 2019-20. A break down by area is provided in Appendix 2.

#### 3.4 Percentage of repairs completed on first visit

Performance in relation to jobs completed at first visit during was 85.5%, exceeding the target set at 85%.

Several operational challenges were identified around reaching this target during the review period. Most of these issues have been addressed, however there are still

improvements to reach. These include better planning of work and rigorous challenges to ensure that we maximise completion on first visits.

### **3.5 Percentage of repairs which lead to a complaint**

Tenant's complaints about the repairs service have matched the significant reduction in historic outstanding jobs and these have remained consistently low in 2019-20.

The latest target set for 2019-20 was to achieve below 0.5%; to date performance at June 2019 performance is currently 0.17% which remains below and better than target.

### **3.6 Performance in 2019/20**

3.6.1 In 2019-20 1<sup>st</sup> quarter (April to June) a total of 21,715 repairs have been completed.

3.6.2 Over 87.9% of these repairs were completed within the target time and 85.5% of repairs undertaken have been completed on the first visit.

3.6.3 As at 14<sup>th</sup> July 2019 a total of 737 repair jobs remained outstanding and out of category. This figure does not include gas or district heating repairs.

3.6.4 Tenant complaints about the repairs service have continued to reduce now standing at 0.17% of all repairs completed.

## **4. Service Changes**

### **4.1 Channel Shift**

4.1.1 The Northgate IT system has now been running since January 2016 the next stage for day to day repairs is to introduce channel shift to provide tenants the opportunity to make their own arrangements in appointing repair work at their property. This will improve services for tenants, specifically improving communication with tenants and flexibility around appointments.

4.1.2 To achieve the introduction of online reporting it is necessary to change the existing mobile working solution. This work is now complete, the new Mobile working system was introduced in early 2019 and work has been ongoing to bed the system in including addressing some teething issues.

This implementation will enable much more effective online services for the repairs service, including tenants booking their own repairs alongside pictorial repairs related information to aid tenants select the correct repair details.

### **4.2 Customer Satisfaction Monitoring**

4.2. Customer Satisfaction monitoring has been introduced and the business is working through embedding this as part of its standard procedures ensuring it is embedded with staff. This will eventually enable the business to collect more timely data and respond to this quickly where there is dissatisfaction.

### 4.3 **Communal Area Planned Maintenance**

4.3.1 A programme of planned maintenance has now been introduced across the 1,035 communal areas. This will make the service more efficient and effective allowing early notification of works being carried out to tenants and reducing ad- hoc responsive repairs.

### 4.4 **Apprentices**

4.4.1 The Housing Division continues to invest in apprentices and is now undertaking the annual process of recruiting the next group of 15 craft apprentices.

4.4.2 This September one group of apprentices will complete, and permanent opportunities are currently being made available to them to secure work with the Council after the successful completion of their apprenticeships.

## 5. **Next Steps**

5.1 Channel shift - The introduction of online booking of appointments will enable tenants to book an appointment online directly and to choose a suitable appointment slot.

5.2 The service is still driving forward with improvements to bring about better service performance and ownership within the workforce.

5.3 Other ongoing service and operational improvements continue. These are focused around, improving our operating processes in being Customer focused and flexible to the tenants needs.

- Enhancing communications around materials, deliveries to homes so our tenants understand what is happening all the time in the repairs process.
- We also continue to challenge our fleet usage to make sure we are using it effectively and challenge our supply and delivery of materials to the Housing Service as part of a review under the Corporate Technical Services Review.
- Vehicles fitted with more modern internal racking to ensure that storage in vehicles is maximised and materials are available to complete as many repairs first time. Delayed due to contact issues with bidding contractors.
- A managed stores service that provides materials for repair works is being procured during 2018-19 and is expected to be introduced starting Oct 2020
- Introduction of de-scaling programme for soil and vent pipes in high rise dwelling 2019 there has been a delay due to specialised vehicle being delayed

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

**7. Summary of appendices:**

- Appendix 1 – Project key Performance Indicators
- Appendix 2 - Number of Repairs which are outstanding and out of Category by Type

**8. Key Decision**

**Is this a “key decision”? - No**

## Appendix 1 – Key Performance Indicators

Measure	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20 Target	YTD June 2019
Percentage of Day-to-Day Repairs carried out within target time	85.7%	88.4%	92.0%	87.9%
Number of outstanding repairs that are out of category	813	753	300	737 (As at 14 <sup>th</sup> July)
Percentage of repairs completed on first visit	89.3%	89.4%	92.0%	85.5%
Number of repairs related complaints	296	190	n/a	38
Percentage of repairs which lead to a complaint	0.33%	0.21%	0.50%	0.17%

## Appendix 2 – Number of Repairs which are outstanding and out of Category by Type June 2019

Function 1	Out of Cat	Function 2	Out of Cat	Function 3	Out of Cat
<b>Rob Pallatt</b>		<b>Tony Waterfield</b>		<b>Aidy Farmer</b>	
Carpentry	39	Bathrooms	79	DPC / Timber Treatment	0
Manufactured Joinery	0	Kitchens	56	Damp / Condensation	0
W&D Glazing	34	Drainage	6	Communal Internal	0
W&D Repairs	391	Wet Trades	34	External Ground Work	0
Communal Elec	4	Social Services	0	External Heights	0
Internal Elec	79			G&T Sites	0
				Metalwork	9
				Painting	0
				Signworks	6
<b>Function 1 Total</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>Function 2 Total</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>Function 3 Total</b>	<b>15</b>
				<b>Repairs Totals</b>	<b>737</b>



## ***Housing System Replacement and Housing Channel Shift***

Housing Scrutiny Commission: 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr E Cutkelvin

Lead Director: Chris Burgin

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## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Charlotte McGraw
- Author contact details: 0116 454 5167
- Report version number: 0.1

### 1. Purpose of report

This report provides an overview and update of the Housing System Replacement Programme and Housing Channel Shift.

### 2. Background

The current IT system within Housing is provided by Northgate and went live in 2016 replacing Open Housing which had become costly to support, was unreliable and would not meet the future needs of the business.

The new system brought a variety of benefits including increased productivity and efficiencies and increased reliability and stability which has reduced downtime and lost working hours. The existing contract with Northgate runs until June 2023 and work is commencing in 2019 to consider the options for the procurement of a new contract from this point with a new supplier or with Northgate. A further extension of the contract after 2023 is not permitted.

In addition to the Housing System Replacement the team is also focusing on the development and delivery of channel shift for Repairs and the further roll out of Rents online which are all high-volume call areas for the Councils' Customer Service Centre and the ongoing implementation of the new mobile working solution, Totalmobile which went live in February 2019.

#### 3.1 Channel Shift

Channel shift is the process by which the Council can encourage customers to access or interact with services via more effective methods. For most organisations, including Leicester City Council, this is to encourage customers to access services online rather than face to face or by telephone. Channel Shift is about providing more accessible services to our customers. Predominately this means our customers will be able to access more services online via the Leicester City Council website.

Channel Shift means giving better, more up to date information to customers. When we send letters out, often the details of that letter may go out of date before they have arrived (e.g. rent statements). Being able to view this information online means customers will have up to date information. It also allows us to make more information available which would otherwise be too costly to do so.



Channel Shift is not about removing our Customer Service Centre. We acknowledge that Channel Shift will not be suitable for everyone. Channel Shift will be an additional way to interact with our services should it be suitable for the user, we will of course encourage and support people who want to use online services where we can.

The key drivers for Channel Shift are;

- to reduce costs which are being incurred through the provision of services that a customer could potentially do themselves given on-line access. This enables more appropriate use of Council resources;
- to improve customer service by enabling customers to access services online and 24 hours a day

Channel Shift will also allow us to communicate with customers via email more effectively as we will have up to date email addresses for customers. This will allow us to send communication via email instead of physical letters where appropriate. This will allow for quicker communications and save money from printing and postage costs.

Channel shift is achieved through the use of technology by implementing software that will enable a customer to log onto a secure web portal 24x7 providing them with the benefit of accessing services at their convenience. Once logged into their account the customer will have access to carry out tasks such as report a repair and select an appointment, view their Rent Account, make a payment, access Rent Statement history, etc. The system is secure with access provided to only those who complete the registration process. A similar example is the use of On-line banking which is now very common.

It is widely accepted that “Self-Serve” is not a “one size fits all” solution and shouldn’t be used as such. Not all customers will use a self-serve solution, so the authority will still need to keep a range of service channels open for certain profiles of customer - this could include elderly and vulnerable customers.

It is worth noting that the Council have already successfully implemented a number of large-scale channel shifts within Housing including Choice Based Lettings, Housing Applications, and more recently Housing Options Tier 1 and Rents this year. These are currently provided by the Northgate Self-Serve portal.

### **3.2 Rents and Repairs Channel Shift**

Rents Channel Shift went live in February 2019, tenants are now able to login whenever they want and view and print their rent statement, much like online banking. They will also be able to register for Direct Debit payments if they wish with the new version of Northgate due to be installed in the Autumn 2019.

Housing have been actively promoting the uptake of Housing Online with flyers sent out with the annual rent letters, targeted emails sent out to tenants and the Tenancy

Management Officers promoting the service to tenants with the Income Management Team. Discussions are also taking place with colleagues in the Customer Service Centre to use recorded messages on the call lines for tenants to be informed of the service whilst they are waiting for their calls to be answered. In addition, a Frequently Asked Questions page has also been developed to inform and educate on this service.

Subject to a successful upgrade of our Northgate systems in autumn 2019 our tenants will be able to view repairs and send an enquiry regarding the repair directly from the portal. LCC staff will pick up the enquiry and be able to respond, which the customer can then see in the portal. Tenants will be able to see the status of the repair, the date it was first reported and the description of the repair.

Following on from this the next step will be for tenants to be able to request a new repair (for specific types of repair only) and this will raise the repair instantly in our Northgate and Totalmobile systems. There will be a set of pictures and derived questions to help ensure the correct type of repair is logged. Tenants will also be offered a suitable range of appointment dates and slots, they will also be able to change an appointment if it is no longer convenient. Tenants will also be able cancel repairs if they are no longer required.

Tenants will still be able to contact Customer Services and local Housing Offices if they prefer. We would like customers to use online services where possible, but this may not always be appropriate due to the circumstances involved.

#### **4.0 Mobile Working Solution**

To enable a full end to end online repairs service (from reporting a repair, to booking an appointment and the repairs being completed) to be provided to our customers this year the Council has successfully updated our mobile working solution. Housing have purchased a new mobile working solution called Totalmobile and successfully rolled it out to over 180 repairs operatives. The Mobile Working Solution sits alongside the Repairs Channel Shift and includes the following:

- The ability to assign a qualified operative and materials to the job automatically
- Manage the resources schedule / diaries for all operatives
- Deliver the job information to the relevant operative's mobile device
- Allow details to be sent back to Northgate Repairs by the operative
- Allow jobs to be completed or re-scheduled by the operative
- Text messages reminding tenants of appointments and informing them when an operative is on their way

In addition, the system has enabled;

- increased productivity as the system is more user friendly
- more control over the design to ensure we get what we need,
- improved reporting leading to more effective performance management;

- improved customer service as the operative can see historical and current jobs;
- the ability to be able to produce and view electronic gas safety certificates.

The following will also be enabled as the system is continually developed:

- emailing of gas safety certificates to tenants
- where a second visit is required, operatives will be able to agree and make the second appointment with the tenant while in their home
- improved monitoring of appointments that are at risk of being missed or late, allowing for more proactive intervention and communication to the tenant
- the ability for agency and contractor operatives to use the system on their own devices to send / receive work, reducing paper use and increasing flexibility and productivity

#### **4. Financial implications**

As outlined within the report, there are financial benefits associated with channel shift and mobile working, whilst improving the customer experience. Efficiencies arise from contacts being made through less costly routes, reduced duplication of communal repair requests, a reduction in postage costs, increased productivity and improved performance management.

Stuart McAvoy – Principal Accountant (37 4004)

#### **5. Legal implications**

None

#### **6. Equalities implications**

None



## Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum Action and Decision Log

1<sup>st</sup> August 2019, G0.3, Ground Floor, City Hall

### 1) Welcome and apologies

**Forum members present:** Wendy Biddles (WB), Joe Carroll (JW), Gwen Clifford (GC), May Jones (MJ), Peter Hookway (PH)

**Guest Speakers:** Sarah Statham (Voids and Property Lettings Team Leader) and Jon Coulton (Voids Senior Technician), Peter Kandola (Housing Development Manager); Vipul Bechar (Smart Cities Team)

**Facilitator(s):** Gurjit Kaur Minhas (LCC) (GM); Justin Haywood (LCC) (JH), Russell Taylor (LCC) (RT).

### 2) Action Log feedback

GM provided the following updates:

- a) Contact details to key housing services – this document has been prepared and given to forum members at the meeting.
- b) Feedback was provided on foodbank usage in the city – national research conducted by the Trussell Trust suggests that the use of foodbanks across the country has increased since Universal Credit started, however, members may have different experiences with local foodbanks depending on the eligibility criteria.
- c) Information about council tax allowance rates was made available to forum members.
- d) It was confirmed that a website link to the conditions of tenancy was given to prospective tenants when they are sent their offer letter of a council property. Arrangements are also in place for prospective tenants to request a printed copy of these if they do not have access to the Internet.
- e) Ian Craig, Head of Service, has visited Phillip Allen, as requested, to investigate his areas of concern.
- f) In relation to the older home that MJ had identified as not having been modernised, it was fed back this property was programmed for capital works during 2020/21.

- g) MJ concerns that an operative had attended an appointment outside of the allocated slot has been investigated. It was found that this was a result of the incorrect process being followed in the Works Planning Section. The correct process has been clarified with the officer involved.

**Action:** MJ requested that Ian Craig phones her to clarify the outcome of this investigation.

- h) The forum had requested information about the % of repair jobs completed on first visit. The forum was advised that 89.4% of repairs are currently completed on first visit.
- i) Members present stated that they would like to take up Councillor Cutkelvin's offer to meet with them separately outside of the forum meeting.

**Action:** Forum member meetings with Councillor Cutkelvin to be arranged.

- j) Nick Griffiths (District Manager) has fed back on Jean Williams request to change a key safe code to a block on St Matthews. As the key safe numbers are centrally controlled and shared with the blue light services it was not practical to make these changes at present. The local housing office has discussed this with Jean.
- k) Phillip Allen had enquired when the revised leaseholder handbook would be published. It was fed back that although no date had been set, work was progressing on the revised version. Forum members will receive a copy of the handbook when it has been finalised.
- l) Previously, Forum members had raised concerns about the loss of the Ian Marlow Centre name when the site closes. Members were advised that officers were giving consideration to naming a Housing Division building or room at City Hall in memory of Ian Marlow.
- m) Phillip Allen's request to convert a laundry room into a bike storage has been investigated by the local housing office, however, there is currently no funding available through the environmental budget to carry out this work.
- n) In response to forum members requests to attend regional and national forums, officers are to investigate improved ways to keep forum members advised of good practice within the housing sector.

**Action:** Investigate improved methods of sharing good practice in the housing sector.

### 3. Presentation: The Council Voids Process

Sarah Statham (Voids and Property Lettings Team leader) and Jon Coulton (Senior Technician, Voids).

#### Key points:

- Termination and adverts – dealing with the exiting tenant, keys received following a 4 week termination period, property inspection and the progression to advert.
- Following the inspection, the property is brought up to the LCC letting standard.
- Allocations process – properties advertised, offers made, escorted viewings conducted, followed by sign-up for successful applicants.
- Overview of Leicester HomeChoice – applying / registering, looking for a home, making a bid and offer followed by checks.
- Applicant moves into new home

**Action:** Joe Carrol to provide examples of people living in houses who would like to move to a bungalow, but are experiencing difficulties with this process for the Property Lettings Team to investigate.

### 4) Presentation: building new homes to be let from the Housing Register

Peter Kandola, Housing Development Manager.

Peter Kondola (Housing Development Manager) attended the forum to give a presentation on key issues relating to new house building.

#### Key points:

- Peter talked through the two phases of the current housebuilding programme
- Phase 1 includes 6 sites - Brocklesby Way, Maplin Road, Selby Ave, Ambassador Road, Felstead Road, Rosshill Crescent
- Currently Phase 1 at the stage of appointing a contractor and start on site / setup. Phase 1 homes aim to be completed / phased handover by July 2020
- Phase 2 - more sites have been identified as part of the house building programme, including The Velodrome and Austin Rise, with more sites to follow.

- We are currently working with Planning to agree the property types and mix of housing that will best meet the needs of those who require social housing.

**Action:** The feasibility of Tenant & Leaseholder Forum members visiting to view the new build council homes prior to letting to be investigated.

**5) Presentation: Vipul Bechar, Smart cities team, the roll out of fibre optics in the city.**

Vipul presented on the roll out of new future proof connectivity for the city.

**Key points:**

- Vipul talked about the work being undertaken by the Council working with network providers to upgrade the Internet connectivity to homes owned by the city council
- Illustrated the significant improvement in download and upload speeds as a result of the new connectivity
- That this will create work opportunities for the local workforce.
- That the competitive rates provided by this new service will be an incentive to all providers to reduce their costs to compete.

**No actions.**

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**6) Any other business**

**ACTIONS:**

- a) To contribute to reducing paper usage, Forum members are to bring relevant documents to the Forum meeting that they have received rather than officers bringing duplicate copies to the meeting.
- b) Officers to arrange for tenancy management officers to attend a future Forum meeting to clarify the roles and responsibilities of this service area.
- c) Arrange for the Gas and Heating Services manager to contact JC to discuss gas servicing appointments.
- d) Investigate the use of a hearing loop at future meetings.

**7) Date of next meeting**

Thursday 3rd October 2019 at City Hall, G.03 Meeting Room 3, City Hall  
.The meeting with then run from 1.00pm – 4.00 pm (lunch provided at 12.30)



HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20			
MEETING DATE	MEETING ITEMS	LEAD OFFICER	ACTION AGREED
<b>Meeting Date</b> <b>5 August 2019</b>  <b>Agenda Date:</b> <b>24<sup>th</sup> June 2019</b>  <b>Deadline for papers</b> <b>24<sup>th</sup> July 2019</b>  <b>Papers despatch:</b> <b>26<sup>th</sup> July 2019</b>	Housing Manifesto commitments  Rent arrears report – Year-end report  Empty Homes update report  Homelessness Strategy progress report  Tenants’ forum notes/report  Work programme	Chris Burgin  Charlotte McGraw  Simon Nicholls  Caroline Carpendale	
<b>Meeting Date</b> <b>7 October 2019</b>  <b>Agenda Date:</b> <b>27 August 2019</b>	Progress update on delivery of new Housing (Housing Company/Acquisitions)  Voids & Lettings Report – Year-end report  Repairs performance and update Report  Channel Shift/ IT update  Tenants’ forum report  Work programme	Simon Nicholls  Simon Nicholls  Ian Craig  Charlotte McGraw	

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<p><b>Meeting Date</b> 4 November 2019</p> <p><b>Agenda Date:</b> 14 October 2019</p> <p><b>Deadline for papers</b> 23 October 2019</p> <p><b>Papers despatch:</b> 25 October 2019</p>	<p>Progress report for Goscote House &amp; Sprinklers update</p> <p>Safety Compliance</p> <p>Preparing for winter</p> <p>Housing Capital Programme update</p> <p>Tenants' forum notes</p> <p>Work programme</p>	<p>Simon Nicholls/Suki Supria</p> <p>Simon Nicholls</p> <p>Martin Clewlow</p> <p>Simon Nicholls</p>	
<p><b>Meeting Date</b> 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020</p> <p><b>Agenda meeting</b> 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019</p> <p><b>Deadline for Papers</b> 19 December 2019</p> <p><b>Papers despatch:</b> 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2019</p>	<p>HRA Budget</p>	<p>Chris Burgin</p>	
<p><b>Meeting Date</b> 17 February 2020</p> <p><b>Agenda Date:</b> 27 January 2020</p> <p><b>Deadline for papers</b> 5 February 2020</p> <p><b>Papers despatch:</b> 7 February 2020</p>	<p>Repairs performance and update Report</p> <p>Homelessness update &amp; Overcrowding project update</p> <p>Voids &amp; Lettings Report Qtr 2</p> <p>Empty homes update</p> <p>Tenants' forum notes</p> <p>Work programme</p>	<p>Ian Craig</p> <p>Caroline Carpendale</p> <p>Simon Nicholls</p> <p>Simon Nicholls</p>	

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<p><b>Meeting Date</b> 20 April 2020</p> <p><b>Agenda Date:</b> 30 March 2020</p> <p><b>Deadline for papers</b> 6 April 2020</p> <p><b>Papers despatch:</b> 8 April 2020</p>	<p>Rent arrears report</p> <p>Goscote House redevelopment</p> <p>Sheltered Housing project update</p> <p>District Service Priorities &amp; performance including ASB service performance</p> <p>DFG/Adaptations report</p> <p>Tenants' forum notes</p> <p>Work programme</p>	<p>Charlotte McGraw</p> <p>Simon Nicholls</p> <p>Simon Nicholls</p> <p>Suki Supria</p> <p>Ian Craig</p>	
<p>47 <b>To be allocated</b></p>	<p>Update on discretionary funding</p>	<p>Alison Greenhill</p>	

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