



Leicester
City Council

MEETING OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

DATE: MONDAY, 13 JANUARY 2020
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.

A. Thomas .

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

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Further information

If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact Ayleena Thomas, **Democratic Support on (0116) 454 6369 or email Ayleena.Thomas@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

Appendix A

The minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Commission held on 4 November 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.

6. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET (INCLUDING CAPITAL PROGRAMME) 2020/21

Appendix B

The Director of Housing submits a report to the Housing Scrutiny Commission to consider the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for the 3 years from 2020/21 to 2022/23.

The Housing Scrutiny Commission are recommended to:

- i. Note the financial pressures on the HRA and comment on the proposals for delivering a balanced budget;

- ii. Note the comments from the Tenants' & Leaseholders' Forum for discussion;
- iii. Comment on the proposed changes to rent and service charges for 2020/21:
 - 2.7% increase to core rent
 - 2.7% increase to garage rent
 - 2.0% increase to hostel rent
 - 2.0% increase to service charges
 - no changes to sundry payments and charges.

7. LEICESTER'S CLIMATE EMERGENCY CONVERSATION

Appendix C

The Director of Estates and Building Services submits a report to inform Members about draft proposals for the city's response to the climate emergency, as well as the associated programme of community consultation and engagement entitled "Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation".

The Housing Commission is recommended to:

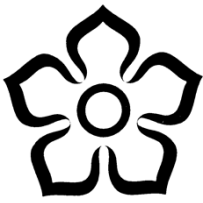
- a) note the progress made since the climate emergency declaration, including the consultation and engagement programme currently underway;
- b) comment on the proposals for discussion, including their implications for the city and for the Council;
- c) ask all Councillors to help to publicise the Climate Emergency Conversation through their role as Ward Councillors; and
- d) note the next steps for the development and adoption of a Council action plan to address the climate emergency.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

Appendix D

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

9. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS



Leicester
City Council

Appendix A

Minutes of the Meeting of the
HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: MONDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2019 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Westley (Chair)
Councillor Nangreave (Vice Chair)

Councillor Aqbany
Councillor Gee

Councillor O'Donnell
Councillor Pickering

In Attendance

Councillor Cutkelvin – Assistant Mayor, Housing and Education

* * * * *

29. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence. The meeting was informed Councillor Gee would be arriving late to the meeting.

30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Aqbany declared an Other Disclosable Interest in the general business of the meeting that he had family members who were council tenants.

Councillor Westley declared an Other Disclosable Interest in the general business of the meeting that he had family members who were council tenants.

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

31. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

that the minutes of the Housing Scrutiny Commission meeting

held on 7th October 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

32. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

33. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS OR STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Director of Housing was present to respond to three questions submitted.

Mrs Zina Zelter was invited to the table to ask her questions.

- 1) What is it that tenants do that make passivhaus homes not work well? Chris Burgin referred to this more than once at the last meeting, the implication being that it was a reason not to build passivhaus, and it would be helpful to know details.

Reply

The Director of Housing responded that it wasn't a case of not building Passivhaus homes, but there were some issues the authority was aware of. Feedback received by officers had been anecdotal and related to the volume of fresh air generated by the internal system and the need to open windows, which in a fully sealed house was contradictory, even though it was accepted that people did this to maintain the internal comfort conditions. It was noted that a meeting had been arranged with East Midlands Housing (EMH) to talk to them about their experiences of managing and maintaining this type of construction, to hear of the feedback they had received from the tenants and to learn from this for future phases of council house building.

It had further been identified that the authority needed to generate 876 homes and Passivehaus building reduced the numbers of homes that could be built due to the design.

The Chair informed Ms Zelter that further clarification if required could be requested from officers.

- 2) If council tenants want better insulation/energy efficiency measures on their homes can they request and would they get them? Specifically external wall insulation. Would that be something they could request and would they get it?

Reply

The Director of Housing replied that if tenants were concerned about the insulation levels in their homes they could contact Housing to request a visit. It was noted there was an annual budget which was spent increasing certain types of insulation, for example, loft insulation, double glazed windows could be added to the programme for replacement. If tenants were experiencing mould growth due to a potential cold bridge, it would be investigated and insulated.

It was noted that external wall insulation was not fitted on request, but on a programmed basis and only prioritised the most poorly performing homes, primarily the ones with solid 9inch walls. Two such programmes had been carried out in the past and externally insulated in excess of 1300 homes. All homes with a cavity had been filled with insulation.

The Chair informed Ms Zelter that further clarification if required could be requested from officers.

3) When doing voids work are homes given extra insulation/energy efficiency measures? If not, could they be? Again, specifically external insulation.

Reply

The Director of Housing responded that when a void property was inspected, all areas were looked at and if required loft insulation would be increased, windows checked, etc. but external wall insulation was not fitted on an ad-hoc basis as it was not efficient doing a single property but more efficient on a programme basis. Previous external wall insulation schemes had been part funded by central government initiatives, such as CESP and ECO. There was no match funding currently available, but it was hoped government would look at this as part of their response to the climate emergency and would be responded to by Housing accordingly.

It was further reported that when capital improvements were undertaken, Housing looked to increase insulation wherever possible. Most recently insulation levels had increased as part of the cladding programme. Properties in Beaumont Leys and being worked on in New Parks were all benefitting from increased insulation as part of the renewal of the external cladding, and Housing would continue to do this.

The Chair noted that further clarification required on the questions above would be provided in writing.

34. GOSCOTE HOUSE AND SPRINKLER INSTALLATION UPDATE

The Director of Housing submitted a report for information to update Members of the Commission on the current situation regarding the demolition of Goscote House and the installation of sprinklers in the four remaining tower blocks.

Simon Nicholls, Head of Service, presented the report, and the following information was highlighted:

- The original plan had been to refurbish Goscote House but a full structural survey confirmed the main elements of the block were at the end of their economic life, and the decision was taken on 8th January 2018 to demolish the block and redevelop the site for new affordable housing.
- Consultants recommended the block be deconstructed due to the

constrained site. It was anticipated demolition would start in Summer 2020 and take approximately 22 months.

- Sprinklers have been installed in Maxfield House prior to tenants moving back in.
- A specialist fire consultant was appointed to help with specification and officers had worked closely with Leicestershire Fire and Rescue to ensure they were happy with proposals.
- Large tanks had been fitted in the plant room to ensure pipes were full of water should a sprinkler head be activated.
- Sprinkler heads were activated at a certain temperature, and there had been no false activations to date. Tenants have received a guide to the sprinklers.
- The next challenge would be installing sprinkler systems in the remaining tower block flats with tenants in situ.

In response to Members questions the following points were noted:

- The decision had been made after detailed investigations and a report by specialists could not guarantee the building beyond a five-year review period.

At this point in the meeting Councillor Gee arrived at the meeting.

- Reference was made in the report to possible contingencies relating to the demolition of Goscote House. As part of the process surveys would be required on asbestos removal, scaffolding and crane with licence to overswing other buildings in the area, among other matters to be taken into consideration. The process being followed for Goscote House demolition was very robust and would impact on the final contingencies figure.
- Members asked that Ward Councillors be kept informed and that the local community was consulted on options being considered for the redevelopment.
- Members queried the £3million stated for demolition as being under budget and a more realistic figure needed to be provided. Officers reported that the figure could change and was based on previous similar demolitions and soft market testing. It was noted that on any site, issues would be different, but would ensure that final figures would be robust. The Assistant Mayor noted that it was fair to be cautious about the figure of £3million and would be challenging it.
- The building was not considered a dangerous structure, but its extended lifetime could not be guaranteed. Risk assessments were being undertaken so no decisions had yet been made to relocate anyone in the vicinity of the tower during demolition. Deconstruction would be top-down, and if a considered too great a risk, local consultations would be conducted.
- Pollution and dust were raised as an issue, but the Commission was told specialists would undertake the demolition professionally and competently.

The Chair welcomed the report and spoke on behalf of the Commission who supported the sprinkler project and the recent report from the Grenfell Inquiry.

AGREED:

that:

1. The report be noted.
2. Once the building was decommissioned a report on the future site development be brought to the Commission.

35. SAFETY COMPLIANCE

The Director of Housing submitted a report which provided information on how the Housing Division managed the risks associated to water hygiene, fire safety and asbestos in Council properties.

Simon Nicholls, Head of Service presented the report and the following information was noted:

- The Housing Division had a range of policy documents to ensure risks were identified and managed effectively and that everybody knew their roles and responsibilities and that they had been written to take into account the legal requirements of each area.
- Legislation and council policy ensured water systems were controlled to prevent a risk of legionella bacteria in communal water tanks.
- The primary purpose of the fire safety policy was to ensure all steps were taken to prevent a fire and to keep tenants and leaseholders safe. There was different legislation depending on the type of building and officers worked closely with Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service.
- A stay put policy was designed to stop residents in flats unaffected by fire from unnecessarily evacuating the building and blocking the stairways, and enabled fire fighters to quickly get to and extinguish a fire.
- Compartmentation was the use of construction techniques to divide the building into a series of fire tight boxes called compartments.
- There was a budget of £1million for 2019/20 to carry out fire improvement work in addition to the £1.3million budget for sprinklers.
- The asbestos policy complied with and reflected the legal framework and good practice. Asbestos was managed but not automatically removed if in good condition.

In response to Members' questions, the following responses were given:

- Sprinklers were in areas of the greatest risk, such as flats, and not generally in communal areas with no combustible materials.
- Additional resources had been arranged to undertake surveys for asbestos.
- With regards to water hygiene, work could be carried out by in-house staff, with contractors managing the more specialist climate air conditioning units. Officers would enquire as to whether contractors were local.
- Members enquired how many properties had been converted into flats. It was noted that Leicester City Council had around 200 properties with potentially 400 tenants. Information would be circulated to Members on the number of properties involved.

- Members were assured compartmentalisation was taken seriously. Officers were confident that tenants and leaseholders were living in well maintained blocks of flats with good fire safety measures in place.
- Members asked that the Tenants' fire sprinkler guide be written in clearer English and be more accessible. Officers said they would review the document and circulate it to members of the Commission.

AGREED:

that:

1. The report be noted.
2. Officers to enquire and inform Members of the Commission if contractors managing water hygiene were local.
3. The Tenants' guide to fire sprinkler systems be reviewed and circulated to members of the Commission.

36. COUNCIL HOUSING GAS & HEATING SERVICES - RESPONSIBILITIES AND WINTER PREPARATIONS

The Director of Housing submitted a presentation for noting which updated the Commission on the responsibilities and winter preparations for the Council's housing gas and heating services.

Rob Webster (Gas and Heating Services Manager) and Ed Quick (Customer Services Manager), delivered the presentation and the following additional points were made:

- The 'Beast from the East' (BFTE) had impacted across many services. The Housing Division had an extreme weather policy for Council owned properties and had been implemented during the extreme weather conditions.
- Every customer must have a gas safety inspection every 12 months.
- Some work is done by contractors, for example, heavy pipework.
- A big recruitment drive of Gas Service & Heating Engineers had taken place this last year and the service has increased overall numbers. Emergency out-of-hours cover had also increased from one engineer to two engineers during winter.
- It had been reported at a previous Scrutiny Commission meeting about the installation of Boiler Buoys to all properties, and the programme of installation continued, usually during the annual gas safety visit. Residents would be shown during installation what to do when boiler issues arose during severe weather.
- Customer Support was at the sharp end of the service, and during the BFTE had received a huge increase in the number of calls, including gritting and bin collections. Telephone systems had broken down and customers could not get in touch.
- Staff had been reluctant to give advice to customer on how they could repair the boiler themselves, as it involved hot water. As a result, engineers had received an influx of calls. The Team received training to give advice on boiler buoys. There was also an online video offering advice to people during severe weather conditions and this is available on the Council's main

web page.

- With emergency arrangements in place, extra staff members can be brought on board from repairs to increase craft staffing linked to weather related repair jobs.
- Previously from a telephony perspective lots of teams had reacted to their own services but could not be brought together to give unity of messages.
- A pre-greet message on the line with additional information and advice, and information to view the online video would be given.

In response to Members' comments and questions, further information was provided:

- People were prioritised into different categories following a series of questions. Sometimes people would be flagged in the system as vulnerable, having a disability / package of care. Prioritisation might also be made due to age or learning difficulty (picked up by staff training).
- Other calls received included enquiries regarding social welfare and benefits.
- A Communications Officer is now a standard response from Housing to improve communications to tenants, councillors and other stakeholders of issues, and to provide advice. Officers were working on additional general advice to go online.
- A number of changes had been made to the system. In the past, too many calls had broken the system which covered all areas, for example, leisure services. The throttle system meant that extra calls received than the system could handle would be kept on another system and played a message and would keep the call system afloat.

The Chair asked that information be made available in local Housing offices and libraries. He added that the Division needed to work in conjunction with Age Concern to pass on information to people. The meeting was informed it was a vital role of the Communication Officer to pass on information. The role was not a nominated person, but one person set by the Director as single point of contact to coordinate the Divisions communications in severe weather

The Chair thanked the officers for the information.

AGREED:

1. That the presentation and additional information received be noted.

37. HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Director of Housing submitted a presentation for noting to the Commission which provided information on the HRA Capital Programme.

Simon Nicholls, Head of Service delivered the presentation and the following information was noted:

- Condition surveys used scoring and criteria.

- The table of information showed Decent Homes Standard minimum age but works upon inspection might only require an upgrade.
- Generally more specialist work was outsourced, for example, sprinkler systems.
- KPIs were in place to ensure contractors delivered work to a high standard.
- £1.2million had been spent on disabled adaptations in Council Housing (£2m in other Housing in the City through DFGs)
- £1million had been spend on fire safety, with a significant number of good quality fire door upgrades. Bins were a fire risk, and there had been replacement of a number of these to robust bin stores.
- Insulation was installed at the same time when external cladding a building.
- All properties met the Decent Homes Standard.
- There were some properties in which new bathrooms were to be delivered.
- There were some parts of the capital programme that predominantly used contractors, for information, boiler installation, rewiring. For kitchen refurbishments it was reported to be a 50/50 split. Information on the locality of contractors would be emailed to Members.
- It was reported that work did have an impact on the carbon footprint, but that set carbon reduction targets had been met, for example through, 'A' rated energy boilers were installed. It was further noted that when a property was let it would have a valid Energy Performance Certificate.

The Chair stated he would like to see more spent on adaptations. He asked that future reports include statistics on people waiting for improvements.

Members reported they had received calls from residents about draughty bungalows, with vulnerable people complaining about being cold. It was reported that the bungalows were insulated but surveys would be undertaken to look into the situation.

Councillor Cutkelvin, Assistant Mayor for Housing and Education, informed the meeting the reductions in the carbon footprint and climate change were very much a priority for her and the City Mayor's team.

The Chair requested that the Deputy City Mayor with responsibilities for Environment and Transportation be invited to the next main meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Commission, to discuss the future of housing development in the city in the context of the climate emergency resolution adopted by the Council.

AGREED:

that:

1. The report be noted.
2. Information on the locality of contractors to be circulated to Members.
3. Future reports to the Commission contain statistics on the number of people waiting for adaptations.
4. The Deputy City Mayor with responsibilities for Environment and Transportation be invited to the next main meeting of the Housing

Scrutiny Commission to discuss the future of housing development in the context of the climate emergency resolution adopted by the Council.

38. MANIFESTO DELIVERY - HOUSING

The Director of Housing submitted a report which updated the Commission on progress on delivery of the Labour manifesto commitments made in 2019. On presentation of the report, the following points were made;

- Under acquisitions, the council had now acquired 140 properties.
- Six sites now had planning permission for our first 29 new build homes.
- Preplanning discussions were taking place for another four sites for a further 100 units.
- A significant amount of work was being undertaken to reduce the number of families in temporary accommodation.
- Delivery of the diverted giving scheme had gone live with BID and 10 sites had been launched. It was anticipated there would be a total of 16 units located in the city to divert money away from people begging on the street and would go directly to support the homeless and initially the charity One Roof to provide the Night Shelter
- The commitment to resettle 45 families by 2021 was almost met, with 42 families welcomed, and the final three families expected to arrive towards the end of the year.
- The home extension fund had been allocated £500k. The housing register and those most severely overcrowded would be reviewed as a desktop exercise to see if extension or loft conversions were viable to address overcrowding.
- The Division would continue to invest in council housing with £26m invested for 2019/20 alone.

The Chair thanked the Director for the report.

The Assistant Mayor for Housing and Education noted the work across the whole Division. She said that being mindful of rough sleepers and temporary accommodation work, she had been impressed with the work done with the voluntary and community sectors, delivering a committed multi-agency response. She reported that the diverted giving had raised approximately £1,000 in the first few weeks.

Members of the Commission expressed concern that anything not seen to be doing well was apportioned to the local authority, and that anything good was apportioned to the voluntary sector. The Director of Housing informed the meeting that a multi-agency team, which included the police, legal officer, housing officers and CRASBU, were using the arm of enforcement to get people to agree to accept services available and get people the alcohol and drug treatment they needed, and to get them off the street. It was noted that people refused assistance, and the enforcement side was welcome. There were different enforcement options for which the legal officer would build a case, for example, dispersals, injunctions, criminal enforcement.

It was reported that some people could not cope with existing accommodation offers especially issues over rules or move into a place with rules. Further discussions were taking place for a unit with less rules, but which provided wrap-around support. The Director of Housing informed the meeting of plans to visit St Mungo's in London, which operated something similar.

Members congratulated the department on developing the diverted giving scheme. The Chair thanked the Director for the report.

AGREED:

1. That the report be noted.

39. WHO GETS SOCIAL HOUSING

The Director of Housing submitted a presentation to update on the Housing Register, lettings, tenant overcrowding and under-occupation information.

Justin Haywood, Service Manager, Partnerships & Housing Solutions, delivered the presentation, and drew attention to the following information:

- Headline data for those facing homelessness largely remained the same at 21%.
- There had been an 11% increase in lets compared to the same period for 2018 (675). If the trend continued, the service would be on track to have an additional 100 lets, though there were ebbs and flows in the data.
-
- Band 1 had changed significantly over past six months, with numbers increasing by 23%, due to changes in policy to ensure those in most need were in the highest-priority band.
- There are now three distinct categories of overcrowding, within Bands 1, 2 and 3 to reflect the different degrees experienced. Band 2 had seen a 1% decrease as a result of policy changes, but there had been no significant change in Band 3.
- Under lettings information, there had been an increase in offers to Band 1 applicants due to policy change. It was reported that Beaumont Leys had the most vacancies during the period outlined.
- There were no family lettings in Band 3.
- Customer information was given to all new applicants and added to Leicester HomeChoice.
- A project working on tenant overcrowding and under-occupation had ended. Phase 2 had not been as successful and it had been concluded tenants were reluctant to move. The Tenants Incentive Scheme would be introduced to take the objectives forward with a different approach, alongside a budget to consider extensions for eligible properties.

In response to Members' questions, the following information was provided:

- When people applied for housing, they could bring to the attention of

officers an issue with overcrowding. There was also good management information on the number of tenants considered to be statutorily overcrowded. Band 1 had seen an 82% rise as a result of better identification and policy change.

- Phase 2 of the project to get tenants to swap had not replicated the success of Phase 1. It had highlighted that tenants would require incentives to move in significant numbers. As such, the next step was to recommend a tenants' incentive scheme.
- Around 45% of homeless applications were from households renting within the private rented sector, with 90% of these being made homeless through no fault of their own.
- When purchasing housing it took quite a while to bring back into Housing stock, as voids were prioritised with the use of resources, to the detriment of bringing those properties back on board.

The Assistant Mayor for Housing and Education noted that councillors were in a good position to provide advice to residents and visuals in the presentation were helpful. She reported that 'Right to Buy' had put huge pressure on council housing stock, and what could now be provided for residents had changed over the past ten years, but residents still applied for and expected to be provided with a council house.

The Assistant Mayor added that issues around the private rented centre would go the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission as a regulatory function, but the whole conversation around civil penalties, or selective licensing schemes could be brought to the Housing Scrutiny Commission.

The Chair agreed that housing was in crisis and needed a mass social housing building programme. He added that overcrowding had an impact on children and health of those people affected. He welcomed the commitment to new build housing.

The Chair further noted rough sleeping was happening around the country and was not acceptable, and with the housing crisis there would be more people being made homeless and more families split up. He added that people were at the mercy of landlords who served eviction notices for no reason, and tenants were too frightened to report repairs for fear of eviction.

The Chair thanked officers for their hard work.

AGREED:

1. That the presentation be noted.

40. TENANTS' AND LEASEHOLDERS' FORUM ACTION AND DECISION LOG

AGREED:

1. That the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum Action and Decision Log be noted.

41. WORK PROGRAMME

The Housing Scrutiny Commission work programme was noted.

Members of the Commission were asked to note that the next meeting of the Commission had been moved to Monday 13th January 2020.

42. CLOSE OF MEETING

There being no other items of urgent business, the meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Appendix B



Housing Revenue Account Budget (including Capital Programme) 2020/21

Housing Scrutiny Commission: 13th January 2020
Full Council: 19th February 2020

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr. Elly Cutkelvin
Lead director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report authors: Chris Burgin, Director of Housing & Stuart McAvoy, Principal Accountant

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for Housing Scrutiny to consider the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for the 3 years from 2020/21 to 2022/23.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The financial landscape of the four-year period from 2016 to 2020 has been dominated by the government requirement that rents be reduced by 1% each year. Despite this pressure, the HRA delivered balanced budgets. The government announced in October 2017 that for the 5 years from 2020 rents can be increased by up to CPI+1%. Whilst this relaxation is welcome from the perspective of financing the HRA and investing in housing, a number of other external pressures and changes brought about by central government persist; these include the impact of increasing Right to Buy (RTB) sales, the rollout of Universal Credit and inflationary pressures.
- 2.2 This report recommends that the budget for 2020/21 is set as a balanced budget, continuing the approach of only drawing on reserves to fund time-limited or one-off schemes. The provisional budgets for 2021/22 and 2022/23 are also shown as balanced budgets.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The Housing Scrutiny Commission is asked to:
- i) Note the financial pressures on the HRA and comment on the proposals for delivering a balanced budget;
 - ii) Note the comments from the Tenants' & Leaseholders' Forum at Appendix G;
 - iii) Comment on the proposed changes to rent and service charges for 2020/21:
 - 2.7% increase to core rent
 - 2.7% increase to garage rent
 - 2.0% increase to hostel rent
 - 2.0% increase to service charges
 - no changes to sundry payments and charges.

4. Report

4.1 Rents & Service Charges

- 4.1.1 The HRA operates in a self-financing environment. Spending priorities are made in the context of needing 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 £220m.

4.1.2 The HRA budget is set by modelling future levels of income and expenditure. Following four years of mandatory 1% rent reductions, which reduced rental income by £3.1m p.a. by 2019/20, 2020/21 is the first of 5 years in which rents may be increased by up to CPI+1%. CPI as at the end of September 2019 was 1.7%, meaning that rental increases of up to 2.7% are permitted. The recommendation of this report is to apply a rental increase of the full 2.7%, based on the unavoidable pressures detailed in this report; had 4 years of rent reductions not taken place then such an increase may have been avoidable. Whilst any decision on rents for 2021 and 2022 will be taken by Council at the appropriate time, the planning assumption is that CPI will be 2% and that rents will increase by the full CPI+1%. Since a decision is not being sought for rents beyond 2020/21, the capital and revenue budgets for these years are provisional and are shown for information only.

4.1.3 Service charges and garage rents are set separately to core rent. This report proposes an increase in service charges for 2020/21 of 2% which will raise an additional £37k a year. It is proposed to increase garage rents by 2.7% (September CPI+1%) in line with the core rental increase, which would increase the average weekly rent to £9.43. It is proposed that the sundry payments and charges listed at Appendix C remain unchanged.

4.1.4 Hostels fall outside the policy statement on social housing rents; these are periodically re-set to ensure that they are aligned with the actual cost of running the service. This re-set is scheduled to take place during 2020/21. For the coming financial year it is proposed that Hostel rents are increased by 2%, in line with the assumption on staffing costs.

4.2 Revenue Cost Pressures

4.2.1 The primary external pressure on the HRA continues to be the reduced rental income due to loss of stock through RTB sales. Table 1, below, summarises the known pressures and budget growth requirements within the HRA:

Table 1: Revenue Cost Pressures	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000
Rent Impact of RTB Stock Loss	1,544	3,079	4,558
Staffing Inflation	1,461	2,234	2,866
Other Inflation	691	1,261	1,846
Interest & Debt Repayment	1,184	1,754	2,312
Total Cost Pressures	4,880	8,328	11,582

Right to Buy

Sales of properties through Right to Buy can give discounts to tenants of up to 70% of the property value. From 2012 the government 'reinvigorated' the scheme by increasing the maximum discount, such that for Leicester it is now £82,800 compared with £24,000 in 2012. Sales have increased as a result, with a loss of over 1,275 properties in the last 3 years alone. The HRA loses rental income from properties sold in this way, and the economies of scale that come from managing a large portfolio are gradually being eroded. Over the next 3 years it is forecast that rental income will be £4.6m lower as a result of 1,200 Right to Buy sales.

Inflation

Employee costs are forecast to rise by £2.9m over the next 3 years based on assumed annual pay increases of 2%, and known increases to pension contributions. Material costs are expected to rise and provision is being made for increases of 2.5% per year, increasing annual spend by £0.5m. Inflation on running costs (including vehicle fleet) are expected to add a further £1.3m to total costs.

Interest & Debt Repayment

Countering the loss of stock through RTB, the HRA is undertaking a significant programme of acquiring and building properties. In November 2019, Council approved a £70m addition to the HRA capital programme for this investment. Part of this is being funded from borrowing, with interest payable on the debt. It is prudent to repay debt on an annual basis over the life of the assets being acquired and provision is being made for this. These costs will be fully funded from the additional income stream associated with the properties. In 2018 a tranche of Council debt was repaid leading to a significant reduction in the interest chargeable to the HRA.

4.3 Revenue Savings

4.3.1 The proposals within this report meet the identified budget gap of £4.9m in 2020/21 rising to £11.6m in 2022/23. Table 2, below, summarises the proposed budget reductions.

Table 2: Additional Income & Reductions in Expenditure	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000
Dwelling Rent & Service Charges	(2,170)	(4,203)	(6,140)
New Build & Acquired Rental Income	(1,014)	(2,154)	(3,471)
Homelessness Management Review	(108)	(108)	(108)
Stores Streamlining	(92)	(92)	(92)
Capital Funded from Revenue	(846)	(1,121)	(1,121)
Savings to be Identified	(650)	(650)	(650)
Total Savings	(4,880)	(8,328)	(11,582)

Rent & Service Charges

As outlined in section 4.1, the additional income shown here reflects the recommendation that rents, including garage rents, be increased by CPI plus 1%. The working assumption is that this approach continues in 2021/22 and 2022/23. It is proposed that service charges and hostel rents be increased by 2%, in line with the assumed rate of increase in staff pay since the costs of these services are heavily driven by such costs.

Rental income on New Build and Acquired Properties

The HRA has embarked on an extensive programme of acquiring properties on the open market to increase the number of homes available at an affordable rent. In addition, a programme of building new properties on Council-owned land is underway. Additional rental income will accrue of £1m in 2020/21, rising to £3.5m by 2022/23.

Homelessness Management Review

The management structure within homelessness services was reviewed during 2019 to ensure that it best meets the revised statutory responsibilities set out in the Homelessness Reduction Act, as well as delivering the homelessness strategy. The financial effect of this review is to save the HRA £0.1m.

Stores Streamlining

The Stores function holds the materials required by craft operatives to undertake repairs to the Housing stock. The function is currently consolidating from 2 sites within the city to a single site, allowing for the deletion of 3 vacant posts. This will generate a saving of £0.1m.

Capital Expenditure Funded from Revenue

The default source of funding for the HRA capital programme is from revenue resources, which in 2019/20 amounted to £17.1m. In 2020/21 the figure falls to £16.2m and is then forecast to drop again to £15.9m from 2021/22, freeing up revenue resources to meet the identified pressures. These schemes are detailed in section 4.4, below.

Savings to be Identified

Changes to the way in which accommodation services are being delivered are currently being considered, and are expected to deliver savings in the order of £0.7m. Subject to timings, details will be included within the final report to Council.

4.3.2 In summary, the HRA revenue budget savings proposed for the next 3 years will meet the amount required to balance the revenue budget without drawing upon reserves. Appendix A shows a high-level breakdown of the proposed HRA revenue budgets for the next 3 years.

4.4 Capital Expenditure

4.4.1 The 2019/20 capital programme (excluding budgets slipped from previous years) is £48m, with more than half of this relating to the Council House Acquisition and New Build programmes. In addition, a further £70m has been added in November 2019 following Council approval to extend the programme of increasing affordable housing.

4.4.2 Appendix E outlines the way in which capital works are identified as being required in council dwellings. Appendix F provides wider details of the priorities which direct HRA expenditure, including achievements throughout 2019/20.

4.4.3 Appendix B shows the proposed capital programme for 2020/21 and provisional budgets for the 2 following years. Other than one-off schemes falling out of the programme, the following projects are those for which changes are proposed:

Kitchens and Bathrooms

It is proposed that the capital budget for kitchens and bathrooms be reduced by £0.4m. Budget monitoring throughout the year has identified a forecast underspend on this budget, and in part this reflects the number of properties lost to RTB.

Re-roofing

Analysis of the remaining life of roofs has identified that a greater number of properties will need to be re-roofed over coming years than the current budget allows for. The budget increased by £400k in 2019/20 with a further increase of £150k identified for 2021/22.

Property Conversions

Overcrowding can be an issue within some properties, so work will be undertaken in 2020/21 to deliver a mix of loft conversions and extensions at a cost of £0.5m. This

will create properties with the capacity to house larger families in a more cost-effective manner than purchasing such properties on the open market.

Sheltered Housing

Following visits to schemes in other council areas, it is envisaged that refurbishment of some Sheltered Housing blocks may be required. Introducing a budget of £250k will enable feasibility works to explore this in more detail.

Public Realm Works

Whilst the existing budget includes £750k for Communal and Environmental works, an injection of £5m over the next 3 years will allow for significant improvements to the appearance of low-rise flats, communal areas, and estates more generally. Provision of £1.2m is included for 2020/21, rising to £1.9m for 2021/22 and 2022/23. Reserves will be used fund the full amount in 2020/21, with a mix of reserves and revenue contributions planned for financing the following 2 years.

Maintenance of Non-Dwellings

It is anticipated that additional work will be required in relation to the maintenance of non-dwellings, and the creation of a policy provision of £0.7m will facilitate this.

Business Systems

A long-standing budget for making improvements to Housing IT systems, including the increasing use of mobile working solutions requires a top-up of £175k to provide sufficient budget for 2020/21. Budgets for 2021/22 onwards will be considered during the next 12 months, taking into account any procurement requirements.

4.4.4 The funding of the proposed capital programme is shown in the table below. This results in a reduction in funding from revenue of £846k in 2020/21 and £1,121k from 2021/22, reflecting the figures at paragraph 4.3.1. The table reflects the programme for which approval will be sought from Council in February 2020, and as such excludes the £70m affordable housing approval, which is largely funded from RTB receipts and borrowing.

Table 3: Funding of HRA Capital Programme	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000
Funded From Revenue	17,081	16,235	15,960	15,960
Funded From Reserves	12,269	1,200	700	700
Funded From Right to Buy Receipts	8,430	0	0	0
Funded from Borrowing	10,250	0	0	0
	48,030	17,435	16,660	16,660

4.4.5 Authority for amendments to the HRA capital programme is in line with that for the corporate programme as set out in the report to Council on 30th November 2017.

4.5 HRA Reserves

4.5.1 Drawing down on reserves in an attempt to avoid the need to make savings is only viable as a short-term approach to meeting any budget shortfall. Reserves are better utilised in meeting one-off costs, to support the delivery of long-term efficiencies and in the replenishment of dwelling stock to increase the long-term financial viability of the HRA. In keeping with this approach, the only use of reserves in the proposed 2020/21 budget is for a time-limited enhancement of public realm works.

4.5.2 At the end of 2019/20, the total HRA unallocated reserves are forecast to be £1.1m. This is the amount available to support unplanned one-off expenditure or to meet in-year deficits.

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

5.1.1 This report is exclusively concerned with financial issues.

Colin Sharpe, Deputy Director of Finance (37 4081)

5.2 Legal implications

5.2.1 The Council is obliged to set a budget for an accounting year that will not show a deficit (S76 Local Government and Housing Act 1989).

5.2.2 The Council is also required to ring-fence the HRA to ensure that only monies received and spent for obligations and powers under the Housing Act 1985 can be paid into and out of the HRA (S75 and Schedule 4 Local Government and Housing Act 1989).

Jeremy Rainbow - Principal Lawyer (Litigation) – 37 1435

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

5.3.1 Housing is responsible for a third of Leicester's overall carbon emissions. Following the council's declaration of a climate emergency in February 2019, addressing these emissions is vital to meeting our ambition to make Leicester a carbon neutral city.

5.3.2 Opportunities to reduce the energy use and carbon emissions of properties should be identified and implemented wherever possible. In the case of newly built or purchased dwellings this means meeting a high standard of energy efficiency, as provided in climate change implications for relevant reports. Additionally, the programme of maintenance for existing housing properties should provide opportunities to improve their energy efficiency, which should be investigated where practical.

5.3.3 Improving energy efficiency should also help to ensure that housing reaches a high standard and reduce energy bills for tenants.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

6. Background information and other papers:

None

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix A: Proposed HRA Budget 2020/21 to 2022/23

Appendix B: Proposed HRA Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23

Appendix C: Other Service Charges and Payments 2020/21

Appendix D: Leicester Average Rents Comparison

Appendix E: Planning Capital Works in Council Dwellings

Appendix F: How Priorities are Assessed for HRA Expenditure

Appendix G: Feedback from Consultation with Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum

Appendix H: Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

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, as the decision will be taken by full Council.

**Proposed HRA Revenue Budget
2020/21 to 2022/23**

	2019/20 Current Budget £000	- 2020/21 -			- 2021/22 – Provisional – For Info			- 2022/23 – Provisional – For Info		
		2020/21 Budget Pressures £000	2020/21 Savings & Reductions £000	Proposed 2020/21 Budget £000	2021/22 Budget Pressures £000	2021/22 Savings & Reductions £000	Draft 2021/22 Budget £000	2022/23 Budget Pressures £000	2022/23 Savings & Reductions £000	Draft 2022/23 Budget £000
Income										
Dwelling & Non-Dwelling Rent	(72,961)	1,544	(3,147)	(74,564)	1,535	(3,133)	(76,162)	1,479	(3,213)	(77,896)
Service Charges	(5,671)	0	(37)	(5,708)	0	(40)	(5,748)	0	(41)	(5,789)
Total Income	(78,632)	1,544	(3,184)	(80,272)	1,535	(3,173)	(81,910)	1,479	(3,254)	(83,685)
Expenditure										
Management & Landlord Services	18,366	798	(484)	18,680	422	0	19,102	382	0	19,484
Repairs & Maintenance	24,795	1,272	(92)	25,975	838	0	26,813	750	0	27,563
Interest on Borrowing	7,766	1,184	0	8,950	570	0	9,520	558	0	10,078
Charges for Support Services	4,702	3	0	4,705	3	0	4,708	3	0	4,711
Contribution to GF Services	5,922	79	(274)	5,727	80	0	5,807	82	0	5,889
	61,551	3,336	(850)	64,037	1,913	0	65,950	1,775	0	67,725
Capital Funded From Revenue	17,081	0	(846)	16,235	0	(275)	15,960	0	0	15,960
(Surplus) / Deficit Before Reserves	0	4,880	(4,880)	0	3,448	(3,448)	0	3,254	(3,254)	0
Funding From Reserves	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contributions To Reserves	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Surplus) / Deficit	0	4,880	(4,880)	0	3,448	(3,448)	0	3,254	(3,254)	0

HRA Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23

The table below shows the 2019/20 capital programme as at December 2019 (excluding budgets slipped from previous years' programmes and the £70m Council approval for affordable housing). Other than non-dwellings maintenance, all of the schemes listed for 20/21 are immediate starts.

	2019/20 Capital Programme £000	Proposed 20/21 Programme £000	Provisional 21/22 Programme £000	Provisional 22/23 Programme £000
Kitchens & Bathrooms	4,000	3,600	3,600	3,600
Boilers	3,425	3,425	3,425	3,425
Re-wiring	1,760	1,760	1,760	1,760
Re-roofing	750	750	900	900
Soffits & Facia	350	350	350	350
Windows and Doors	150	150	150	150
Door Entry	150	150	150	150
District Heating Maintenance	725	725	725	725
Communal Improvements & Environmental Works	750	750	750	750
Disabled Adaptations	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200
Fire Risk Works	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Safety Works including Targeted Alarms	300	300	300	300
Loft Insulation	100	100	100	100
Waylighting	150	150	150	150
Sheltered Housing Improvements (ASC)	100	100	100	100
Concrete Paths Renewal	100	100	100	100
Sprinkler Systems	1,350	0	0	0
Goscote House Demolition	2,800	0	0	0
Parking - Spend to Save	250	0	0	0
Supporting Neighbourhood Hubs	550	0	0	0
New Build Housing	6,200	0	0	0
Property Acquisitions	21,180	0	0	0
Other Additions Within 2019/20	690	0	0	0
Property Conversions	0	500	0	0
Feasibility Study for Sheltered Housing	0	250	0	0
Public Realm Works	0	1,200	1,900	1,900
Maintenance of Non-Dwellings (policy provision)	0	700	0	0
Business Systems	0	175	0	0
Total Capital Programme	48,030	17,435	16,660	16,660

Other Service Charges and Payments

It is proposed that the payments and charges shown in the table below remain unchanged for 2020/21:

Service Charge	Details of Charges
Replacement Rent Swipe Cards	The charge for a replacement swipe card is £5.00.
Pre-sale questionnaires from solicitors and mortgage providers	Housing Services receive a large number of requests from mortgage providers and solicitors for information in connection with property type / condition and tenancy history. A charge is levied to recover the cost to the council of providing this information. The charge for this is £125 (Note that requests in connection with tenants' statutory rights under Right to Buy legislation are excluded from this charge).
Security Fob Replacements	Where tenants and leaseholders require a replacement security fob these are charged at £10 each.

Payments	Details of Payments																																
Disturbance Allowance	Disturbance allowances are paid when a full property electrical rewire is carried out to an occupied LCC-owned property. A disturbance allowance can also be paid where it is necessary to undertake major works in an occupied property. The disturbance allowance is £155 per dwelling.																																
Decorating Allowances	<p>Decorating allowances are paid to new tenants based on the condition of the property on a per room basis. The allowances are paid through a voucher scheme with a major DIY chain. Current allowances are set out below:</p> <table style="margin-left: 40px;"> <tr><td>Bathroom</td><td>£45.00</td></tr> <tr><td>Kitchen</td><td>£56.25</td></tr> <tr><td>Lounge</td><td>£67.50</td></tr> <tr><td>Dining Room</td><td>£67.50</td></tr> <tr><td>WC (where separate)</td><td>£22.50</td></tr> <tr><td>Halls (flats/bungalows)</td><td>£45.00</td></tr> <tr><td>Hall/Stairs/Landing</td><td>£78.75</td></tr> <tr><td>Large Bedroom</td><td>£67.50</td></tr> <tr><td>Middle Bedroom</td><td>£56.25</td></tr> <tr><td>Small Bedroom</td><td>£36.00</td></tr> </table> <p>The amount payable is capped as follows:</p> <table style="margin-left: 40px;"> <tr><td>3+ bed house / maisonette</td><td>£300</td></tr> <tr><td>3+ bed bungalow / flat</td><td>£250</td></tr> <tr><td>2 bed house / maisonette</td><td>£250</td></tr> <tr><td>2 bed flat / bungalow</td><td>£200</td></tr> <tr><td>1 bed flat / bungalow</td><td>£150</td></tr> <tr><td>Bedsit</td><td>£100</td></tr> </table>	Bathroom	£45.00	Kitchen	£56.25	Lounge	£67.50	Dining Room	£67.50	WC (where separate)	£22.50	Halls (flats/bungalows)	£45.00	Hall/Stairs/Landing	£78.75	Large Bedroom	£67.50	Middle Bedroom	£56.25	Small Bedroom	£36.00	3+ bed house / maisonette	£300	3+ bed bungalow / flat	£250	2 bed house / maisonette	£250	2 bed flat / bungalow	£200	1 bed flat / bungalow	£150	Bedsit	£100
Bathroom	£45.00																																
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2 bed flat / bungalow	£200																																
1 bed flat / bungalow	£150																																
Bedsit	£100																																

Average Rents Comparison

The table below compares the rent levels for different types of property in the HRA with rents for similar sized properties across the city.

Property Type	HRA 2019/20	Formula Rent 2019/20	Housing Assoc. 2018/19	Private Sector (LHA rate) 2019/20	Private Sector (city wide) 2018/19
Room only	-	-	-	£63.22	£84.69
Bedsit (studio)	£53.20	£62.75	£56.24	£86.30	£95.08
1 bed	£61.56	£66.99	£64.58	£86.30	£115.85
2 bed	£72.63	£77.20	£82.11	£109.32	£143.31
3 bed	£80.32	£85.76	£89.70	£130.38	£168.00
4 bed	£92.32	£96.99	£106.10	£163.16	£249.00
5 bed	£100.02	£104.77	£110.63		
6 bed	£115.32	£110.74	£123.90		

Planning Capital Works in Council Dwellings

Each defined element within a council property is upgraded or renewed in line with good practice, legislative requirements and the changing needs and expectations of our tenants. The table below identifies some of the main criteria for planning major works in council dwellings:

Component for replacement	Leicester's replacement condition criteria	Decent Homes Standard minimum age
Bathroom	All properties to have a bathroom for life by 2036	30 - 40 years
Central heating boiler	Based on assessed condition from annual service	15 years (future life expectancy of boilers is expected to be on average 12 years)
Chimney	Based on assessed condition from the Stock Condition Survey / Housing Health and Safety Rating System	50 years
Windows and Doors	Based on assessed condition from the Stock Condition Survey / Housing Health and Safety Rating System	40 years
Electrics	Every 30 years	30 years
Kitchen	All properties to have an upgraded kitchen by 2036	20 – 30 years
Roof	Based on assessed condition for the Stock Condition Survey / Housing Health and Safety Rating System	50 years (20 years for flat roofs)
Wall finish (external)	Based on assessed condition from the Stock Condition Survey / Housing Health and Safety Rating System	80 years
Wall structure	Based on assessed condition from the Stock Condition Survey / Housing Health and Safety Rating System	60 years

Asset data for all HRA stock is held on the Northgate IT system. This includes the age, construction type, number of bedrooms, type and age of boiler, the last time the lighting and heating circuits were rewired etc. Condition survey data is also held for certain external elements such as roofs and chimneys, external paths, windows and doors etc.

The 3-year plan outlined within this report is not purely based on life cycle and condition survey data; major elements are pre-inspected before they are added to the programme and the repairs history for the property is checked. For example, all roofs are pre-inspected before the order is sent to the contractor. Likewise, all electrical installations are tested at 30 years and a decision is made whether to carry out a full rewire or part upgrade of the circuits. Properties are not added to the kitchen programme if they have had major repair work carried out in the previous 5 years.

Requests for additions to the capital programme are also received from the Repairs Team if an element requires replacement rather than repair. For example, a roof repair may result in the property being added to the programme.

Some works are reactive such as Disabled Adaptations. There is a joint working protocol between Housing and Adult Social Care, which allocates priority points to each case.

How Priorities are Assessed for HRA Expenditure

1. Labour's Manifesto, For the Many not the Few, contains 12 main commitments that the Housing Division has primary responsibility for delivering. Most of the commitments sit under the Manifesto section Homes for all. These are to:
 - Provide 1,500 more council, social and extra care homes;
 - Use our Housing company to tackle housing shortages;
 - Reduce the number of families and individuals placed in temporary accommodation;
 - Ensure that no-one has to sleep rough on our streets;
 - Establish a residential facility for people experiencing multiple and complex needs, many of whom are rough sleeping;
 - Support further work to meet complex needs experienced by women and Black and Minority Ethnic communities who may not be sleeping on our streets but are homeless;
 - Make Leicester a place of refuge for those fleeing conflict across the world, with a comprehensive offer of housing, support and learning;
 - Maintain our existing adaptations service for all homeowners and undertake a programme of council housing adaptations to allow people with disabilities to remain or move into our properties;
 - Undertake an ongoing £80m council home improvement programme;
 - Continue our environmental investment programme on council land and estates;
 - Provide free Wi-Fi on estates;
 - Establish a home extension fund for council tenants to reduce overcrowding in council properties.

2. The overall aim of Leicester City Council's Housing Division is to provide a decent home within the reach of every citizen of Leicester. Under this aim the priorities for the HRA budget, incorporating support to deliver the Labour Manifesto commitments, are:
 - Providing Decent Homes;
 - Making our communities and neighbourhoods where people want to live and keeping in touch with our tenants;
 - Making Leicester a low carbon city by improving the energy efficiency of homes;
 - Providing appropriate housing to match people's changing needs;
 - Making Leicester a place to do business by creating jobs and supporting the local economy.

3. This appendix sets out how we meet our five major priorities for investment in our 20,830 council homes and their neighbourhoods.

Priority One – Providing Decent Homes

Why is this a priority and what is our planned approach to achieving this?

4. Nearly one in six homes in Leicester is a council house, flat, maisonette or bungalow. It is crucially important that we look after these assets, not just for current tenants but for those who will live in them for many years to come. When we plan the Housing Capital Programme we must consider what investment will be needed over at least the next 40 years, not just the next three or four years. We must ensure we do not let the programmes for essential items with long life spans fall behind, for example roofs, boilers, wiring, kitchens and bathrooms.
5. Providing decent homes is not just about 'bricks and mortar', it can also lead to improvements in educational achievement and health, help tackle poverty and reduce crime.
6. The Government's Decent Homes target was met in 2011/12. However, to meet the standard on an on-going basis further investment for major works is required.
7. Major works are planned for all council housing following an assessment of condition, age, tenant priorities and other criteria set as part of the Decent Homes Standard. We have a bespoke software package that enables us to analysis stock condition and plan major work accordingly, when it is required.
8. The Governments current definition of a Decent Home was set in 2006. A Decent Home must meet the following four criteria:
 - It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing;
 - It is in a reasonable repair;
 - It has reasonably modern facilities and services; and
 - It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

The Governments green paper "A new deal for social housing" was published and consulted upon in 2018. This document stated the Government was considering a review of the Decent Homes Standard. To date no new update on the Decent Homes Standard has been made as a result of this green paper, but the wider housing sector anticipate changes to the current criteria at some point in the future, for which we will need to respond to.

9. As well as achieving the Decent Homes Standard we also address tenants' priorities. The majority of tenants see improvements made within their home as a priority and the priority element for improvement is kitchens and bathrooms. Our current commitment is to refurbish all kitchens and bathrooms by 2036.
10. From time to time major refurbishment or redevelopment projects are required. The current ones are the kitchen and bathroom refurbishment programme, St Peters tower block refurbishment, St Leonards Court lift replacement and installation of a second lift,

demolition of Goscote House, central heating and boiler upgrades and the electrical improvement programme.

11. It is crucial we continue to repair and maintain homes. During 2019/20 90,039 repairs were completed and we anticipate a similar number for 2020/21. At the end of July 2019 737 responsive repairs were outstanding that were out of category and 205 jobs relating to gas repairs and district heating.
12. Work is taking place to reduce the length of time homes are vacant to ensure that new tenants are rehoused into suitable accommodation as quickly as possible and loss of income is minimised. During 2018/19 the average time to re-let a routine void property was 62.1 days. For the first 3 months of 2019/20 this had been reduced to 43.1 days.

Achievements in 2019/20 and Proposals for 2020/21

13. In 2019/20 approximately £25m has been invested in maintaining our homes and a further £17m for improvements through the Capital Programme.

Programmed element	Achievements and proposals
Kitchens and bathroom	We expect to have installed 710 kitchens / bathrooms in 2019/20. During 2020/21 we are expected to install a further 780 kitchens / bathrooms. As at the 1 st April 2019 75% of all council properties have had either a Leicester Standard kitchen or bathroom.
Rewiring	We expect to have rewired 810 homes in 2019/20 and a further 800 during 2020/21
Central heating boilers	Investment is calculated to replace boilers every 15 years based on condition data from the annual gas service. We expect to have replaced 1,148 boilers in 2019/20 and a further 1,150 2020/21
Roofing and chimneys	We expect to have installed 97 new roofs in 2019/20 and 100 in 2020/21. An additional £450k was invested in re-roofing activities during 2019/20 to enable the increased demand for this work to be undertaken.
Central heating systems	We have 143 properties without any form of central heating. In these cases tenants have refused to have central heating installed. Provision is made in the programme to install central heating on tenant request or when these properties become vacant.
Windows and doors	Excluding properties in Conservation Areas where there are often restrictions on the use of UPVC, we have 49 properties that do not have UPVC double glazed windows. In these cases tenants have refused our previous offers of installing double glazing. Provision is made in the programme to install windows / doors on tenant request or when these properties become vacant. Future investment will be targeted at installing secondary glazing to properties in Conservation Areas.
Structural works	Investment is required to address any structural works identified each year. As well as dealing with structural problems such as

	subsidence, issues such as woodwork treatment and failed damp proof courses are also dealt with when identified
Soffits, fascia's and guttering	By replacing these items with UPVC we reduce long term maintenance costs. During 2019/20 we anticipate replacing 142 soffits, fascias and gutters and a further 150 in 2020/21.
Condensation works	Investment is required to target those properties that have been identified as being more susceptible to condensation related problems because of their construction type or location. A multi option approach is adopted along with the use of thermal imaging technology to produce property specific solutions. In 2019/20 we expect to complete work on 520 properties and a further 550 in 2020/21. Advice to tenants is also important as their actions can alleviate condensation problems, for example opening windows when cooking.
Safety and fire risk work	Investment is required to implement the planned programme of fire safety measures, as agreed with the Fire Service (see point 15 below.) During 2019/20 an additional £150k was allocated to install fire doors that required replacement.

14. Fire safety is of paramount importance to us as a landlord. We have policies and procedures in place to reduce the risk of fires, for example our Assistant Housing Officers carry out regular fire inspections to properties with communal areas such as flats, maisonettes and houses in multiple occupation. All these buildings have their own fire risk assessments and people are provided with a personal evacuation plan in case a fire starts. We have a no tolerance policy on items left in communal areas. If found these are removed so evacuation routes remain clear and combustible items are not left to encourage the spread of fire. Our fire safety work includes implementing recommendations made by the fire service. None of our 6 tower blocks contain external cladding, which contributed to the spread of the fire at Grenfell Tower in 2017, nor do they have gas supplies. 4 of the 5 tower blocks in St Peters have had passive fire protection upgraded as part of the refurbishment work taken place. This includes communal fire doors and emergency lighting. During 2018 a decision was made to draw up plans to demolish Goscote House. The reason for this is that, although it is currently safe to live in, the projected longer-term structural costs of keeping it safe would be unviable. This demolition work is to be progressed during 2020/21. St Leonards Court has passive fire protection measures in place. The installation of a second lift at St Leonards Court is scheduled for completion during 2019/20. We have agreed to fit sprinkler systems at our 5 high storey tower blocks. Work installing sprinklers at Maxwell House has been completed and work on the 4 other blocks has been programmed to be completed by 2021.
15. During 2019/20 £50k was invested from the Housing Division's Spend to Save budget to introduce a programme to remove asbestos from void bungalows. This ensures that the new tenant does not have the upheaval of moving out of their property for this work to be carried out at a later date.

16. During 2019/20 £150k was also invested to improve the racking in Operatives vans to enable them to have materials readily available to complete more repairs on first visit.
17. In February 2019 a new mobile working solution called Total Mobile was rolled out to over 180 repairs Operatives. This improved technology has the ability to assign a qualified Operative and material to a repair job automatically. It also has the function of sending text messages to tenants reminding them of appointments and informing them an Operative is on the way. As part of this new technology, customer satisfaction monitoring of repairs work has been introduced. Between July and September 2019 8,365 tenants who had repairs completed had been surveyed, 99.9% of these people stated they were satisfied with the work.

Priority Two – Making our communities and neighbourhoods places where people want to live and keeping in touch with our tenants

Why is this a priority and what is our planned approach to achieving this?

18. Creating sustainable communities is about more than housing, it means cleaner, safer, greener neighbourhoods in which people have confidence and pride.
19. The environmental works and communal areas fund helps deliver significant environmental improvements on estates, such as landscaping, new security measures, community facilities, pocket parks, fencing and communal area improvements. Tenants and ward councillors help decide where this money should be spent, based on their local needs and priorities. These schemes have helped improve the overall image, appearance and general quality of life within our estates.
20. As part of the council's Transforming Neighbourhood Services programme housing office services are now in shared buildings within local communities.

Achievements in 2019/20 and Proposals for 2020/21

21. In 2019/20 the budget for environmental and communal works was £750,000. It was shared across the city in all neighbourhood housing areas. Works included parking improvements, resurfacing courtyards, improving the security of estates by the installation of gates and removal of bushes. Specific examples include:
 - Painting of communal areas of flats on Bridlespur Way, Modbury Avenue, Jersey Road, Hipwell Crescent and Millwood Close, Mowmacre;
 - The fitting of bird spikes on blocks of flats in Mowmacre to deter pigeons;
 - Removal of shrubs and slabs on Wymar Close, Beaumont Leys to improve the look of the area;
 - Removing tamac from the existing path of Collett Road, Beaumont Leys, to improve the appearance of the area and to create a clear pathway for residents;

- Demolition of garages on Beatty Avenue and Rowlatts Hill Road that are in poor condition, to create new parking spaces;
 - Footpath refurbishment to The Crossway, Saffron, where these are in disrepair and a trip hazard;
 - Creation of external bin storage areas for the flats on Neston Gardens and Heathcott Road, Saffron;
 - Carrying out a pilot project to steam clean the communal flooring to flats on Edmonton Road, St Matthews;
 - A joint project with Highways to remove overgrown trees/bushes and resolve parking congestion around Oak Street flats in Humberstone;
 - Re-configuring the entrance to Framland House on St Peters to improve security.
22. A further £250k has been invested from the Housing Division's Spend to Save scheme to introduce a pro-active programme to repair and maintain our 1,035 communal areas on estates.
23. During 2019/20 the HRA contributed £114k to the General Fund for investigating and enforcement work, such as fly tipping on estates, undertaken by City Wardens.
24. The Leicester to Work scheme (see also priority 5) carries out painting, clearing of alleyways, removal of graffiti and other works to improve the look of the local environment.
25. The Housing Division works closely with the Probation Service through the Community Payback scheme. During 2018/19 240 days of work was provide by people undertaking tasks such as litter picking and painting.
26. The programme of upgrading door entrance schemes will continue based on condition surveys. We expect to upgrade 10 door entrance schemes during 2019/20 and a further 12 in 2020/21.
27. We continue to provide our housing management service with local teams so that our staff know the neighbourhoods and communities in which they work. Housing Officers are out and about on their 'patches' and our craft workforce is fully mobile. During 2019 we have revised and consulted on our Conditions of Tenancy.
28. District Managers attend ward community meetings and other local forums. We work closely with the police and are involved in the local Joint Action Groups.
29. We publish an Annual Report to Tenants and information is also communicated through the Your Leicester electronic newsletter and the Council's Twitter and Facebook accounts.
30. The Customer Services Centre runs a telephone advice line during working hours where tenants can report repairs and tenancy issues. Out of hours emergency calls are taken by an external provider. Last year the Customer Service Centre received 206,900 calls

during the working day on the tenants' advice line. 119,556 of these calls were about repairs. A further 13,857 calls were made out of hours.

31. We are now working on a programme to provide greater on-line access to our services, through a portal on the Council's website. We have already set up the facility for tenants to view and download rent statements, register for direct debit rent payments, view repairs and send us an enquiry related to a repair they have reported. Further on-line developments we are working on include the ability for tenants to request a repair and select an appointment slot. Work has also started to look at providing free Wi-Fi on estates.
32. We respond vigorously to reports of anti-social behaviour and have CCTV on many parts of our estates. We also offer security packages to tenants who are victims of anti-social behaviour, such as secure letter boxes and alarms, to help them feel safe in their homes, whilst reports are investigated. In 2018/19 we received 1,322 reports of anti-social behaviour that were investigated and, where necessary, action was taken against perpetrators. This was 476 more reports than the previous year. In the first 3 months of 2019/20 we had received a total of 422 reports. During 2019/20 the HRA contributed £32k to the Council's Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Team to support the resolution of serious anti-social behaviour cases.
33. We work closely with the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum which has representatives from across the city. During 2019/20 the topics the Tenants and Leaseholders' Forum have discussed include:
 - The voids management process
 - The supply of new council housing
 - Free Wi-Fi on council estates
 - The Tenancy Management Service
 - The Housing Register and Homelessness service
 - Customer Services
 - Fire safety
 - The Repairs Service
 - Rent collection

The action log from the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum is attached to the documents for each Housing Scrutiny meeting. The Chair and/or Vice Chair of the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum will also attend Housing Scrutiny meetings to provide an update on the work of the Forum. The Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum have also been consulted on this year's HRA budget proposals.

34. To address the needs of leaseholders we have established a Leaseholders Liaison Team who are responsible for responding to leaseholder queries and improving services to meet their needs. Quarterly Leaseholder Forums now take place, to which all leaseholders are invited. Some of the topics discussed at these meetings during 2019 has included parking, grounds maintenance and trees and service expectations for leaseholders.

Priority Three – Making Leicester a low carbon city by improving the energy efficiency of homes

Why is this a priority and what is our planned approach to achieving it?

35. The council and its partners have committed to cut carbon emissions by 50%, relative to 1990 levels by 2025. Part of this target was to reduce residential CO2 emissions from 651,000 tonnes in 2006 to 530,000 tonnes by 2012, a reduction of 121,000 tonnes. Council housing accounts for approximately 16% of all residential housing in the city. Therefore, its pro rata contribution towards carbon reduction target is 20,268 tonnes. Through the Housing Capital Programme CO2 emissions from council houses reduced by 58,523 tonnes between 2005 and March 2017. This means that we have already exceeded our target by 180%.
36. This has been achieved by window replacements, new central heating installations, new energy efficient boilers and controls, internal and external wall and roof insulation and solar panels.
37. The most cost effective opportunities for carbon savings in the council stock are diminishing now that all properties have double glazed UPVC windows and all cavity walls have been insulated. However, any further reductions will help towards the city target and will improve energy efficiency for individual tenants and reduce fuel poverty.
38. There are three areas of energy efficiency work to prioritise as funds become available. These are:
- Completing external wall insulation on all suitable properties.
 - Installing individual meters for tenants on district heating schemes.
 - Doing specialist work on the hardest to heat houses. For example, those properties with small wall cavities which are not suitable for typical wall installation programmes.

Achievements in 2019/20 and proposals for 2020/21

39. During 2019/20 we continued our programme of installing more efficient boilers as boilers need replacing, increasing loft insulation to 250 mm and putting in double glazed windows and doors as demand arises. This work will continue in 2020/21.
40. Approximately 2,900 properties are on our district heating scheme. These tenants can control the heat in their radiators. However, without individual heat meters they cannot be charged exactly for the heating and hot water they use. A pilot scheme of installing 50 meters showed that, on average, tenants saved 33% when they could see the link between their heating and hot water consumption and the bill they pay.
41. We have been installing heat meters to our homes as part of the St Peters tower block scheme. 340 properties have been fitted with meters under this scheme. heating.
42. During 2019/20 £750k has been invested in the district heating scheme to upgrade pumps and heating exchanges in sub stations.

Priority Four – Providing appropriate housing to match people’s changing needs

Why is this a priority and what is our planned approach to achieving this?

43. Leicester is a city with relatively low household incomes. For many, renting from the council or a housing association is the only hope of a decent and settled home. In October 2019 there were 6,178 households on the Housing Register.
44. Right to Buy sales reduce the number of council homes available at an affordable rent. In 2018/19 we sold 424 homes. It is estimated that we will have sold a similar number by the end of 2019/20.
45. The most recent Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment in 2017 identified that Leicester’s net affordable housing need is 786 additional affordable housing homes per year to meet current and future demand from households who cannot afford to enter the private housing market. The city’s average annual new supply of affordable homes has been less than a quarter of this need over the past 10 years.
46. Issues affecting our ability to provide new affordable housing include:
- The limited land available in the city for residential development (including for Affordable Housing). The council has been reviewing its landholdings and, as part of its new Local Plans process, inviting others to put forward sites in any ownership which might be suitable for development.
 - The Government’s requirement that funds available to invest in the new supply of Affordable Housing from either Homes England’s programme or from Right to Buy receipts can only meet a portion of the total costs of new supply. Homes England funds and Right to Buy receipts cannot be used together towards the funding of any dwelling. The balance of the costs must be funded by other means.
47. Despite these constraints the Council has embarked on a new council house acquisition and building programme to help address housing need.
48. When a property, sold under Right to Buy, is placed back onto the market the council has the first opportunity to buy this property back before it goes onto the open market. We are increasingly taking this option to increase our supply of affordable housing.
49. Each year the Capital Programme funds the adaptations of tenants existing homes where Adult Social Care and Children’s Services identify the current tenant or family members needs those adaptations.
50. The service also works closely with Children’s Services to help looked after children, foster families, children leaving care and other vulnerable families.

51. During 2019 the Housing Allocations Policy was reviewed to strengthen the re-housing priority for people experiencing overcrowding and to address other needs, many of which can have an impact on health and mental health.
52. The Supporting Tenants and Residents (STAR) service provides one-to-one support for council tenants who might otherwise lose their homes. Priority is given to support those in rent arrears, those who have been previously homeless and those who have other problems which means they are not coping or complying with tenancy conditions.
53. Housing Officers undertake a programme of Welfare Visits to tenants who may be vulnerable. This is an opportunity for us to check whether the tenant is coping in their home and where appropriate we signpost or refer people to support services. This is a preventative measure to help sustain tenancies, ensure people are safe, well and enables us to act before a crisis point is reached

What will we achieve in 2019/20 and what are we proposing for 2020/21?

54. The Affordable Housing Programme delivered 224 new homes in 2018/19 and it is predicted that 302 will be delivered by the end of 2019/20.
55. During the first phase of council housebuilding 29 properties will be built on Ambassador Road, Selby Avenue, Maplin Road, Brocklesby Way, Felstead Road and Rosehill Crescent at a cost of £3.8m. These developments are due for completion in July 2020. Phase 2 of house building is also being planned, with potential sites at The Velodrome and Austin Rise being considered. In addition to this 2 Adult Social Care extra care schemes are in development which will provide an additional 155 units.
56. In 2018 a decision was made to set up a Housing Company, to further enable the supply of new affordable housing in the city. Although owned by the council, this is a private company. A Housing Company provides opportunities to build new accommodation for social or affordable housing, for market price sale and private sector rent. Whilst the focus is on council house building within the HRA at the present time the Housing Company may be used to develop further housing in the city in the future.
57. In 2018/19 the council bought back 33 homes that had previously been sold through the Right to Buy scheme. Between April and October, a further 23 had been purchased with offers made and accepted on 64 that were progressing through to completion.
58. During 2018/19 474 minor adaptations took place in tenants' homes, such as ramps and door widening. There were also 100 major adaptations, such as level access showers, stair lifts and through floor lifts. This work will continue in 2020/21 in response to assessments by Adult Social Care. To supplement this, a £3m programme of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) will support homeowners and those renting properties to continue living in their homes; this is a £1m increase on previous years' programmes.
59. Work has started on looking at a scheme to undertake extension work at properties where households are experiencing overcrowding, rather than them having to move through the Housing Register. We are currently reviewing our properties where there is over crowding to establish the feasibility of carrying out this work.

60. Vacant council and housing association properties are advertised through Leicester HomeChoice. Last year 194 council tenants transferred within the stock to homes better suited to their need and 704 households became new council tenants. A further 327 households obtained housing association tenancies. In the first 6 months of 2019/20 142 tenants had transferred properties, there were 343 new tenants and 178 had obtained housing association tenancies.
61. We subscribe to the national Home Swapper Scheme that enables tenants to identify mutual exchanges. This is particularly important for those tenants who want to move, but have a low priority on the Housing Register,
62. The Income Management Team continues to ensure rent is paid and tenants with arrears are given support to clear their debt. In 2018/19 99.46% of rent was collected, slightly less than 2017/18 due to the direct impact of the introduction of Universal Credit in Leicester. Total rent arrears, at the end of 2018/19, stood at £1,627,034. The team works closely with the Housing Benefits service and makes referrals for Discretionary Housing Benefit. In 2017/18 £234k in Discretionary Housing Benefit payments were made to council tenants. Only 43 tenants were evicted for rent arrears in 2018/19, the lowest number in the last 4 years. There are now greater challenges to collect rental income with the introduction of Universal Credit in Leicester in June 2018. The rent costs of the new benefit are now paid directly to the claimant and therefore tenants will be responsible for paying the rent themselves, unlike having their housing benefit paid directly to the council. At the end of 2018/19 1,879 tenants had made a new claim for Universal Credit. The council has taken steps to mitigate the risk of increasing rent arrears by recruiting to 4 new posts, Rent Management Advisors, to support tenants apply for Universal Credit, manage their claim and pay their rent. By the end of 2018/19 these officers had provided support to 798 tenants. The Department of Work and Pensions has granted the council Trusted Partner status. One of the benefits of this is that we can automatically apply for managed rent payments directly to us, for those tenants that are vulnerable or are likely not to pay their rent.
63. 89.8% of tenancies were sustained in 2018/19. This means that 89.8% of people who became new tenants in 2017/18 remained in their tenancy 12 months later. For the first quarter of 2019/20 this sustainment had increased to 90.6%. During 2018/19 STAR provided short term support to 1,759 tenants and longer-term support to 513. In the first quarter of 2019/20 the STAR service was providing longer term support for 509 tenants and provided short term support for 365 tenants. The STAR service also provides an intensive package of support to help Syrian refugees settled into their new homes and improve pathways into employment.

Priority Five – Making Leicester a place to do business, by creating jobs and supporting the local economy

What is our planned approach for achieving this?

64. Contracts are placed through the corporate procurement team which takes steps to use council spending to stimulate the local economy. All contracts have local labour and social value clauses.
65. The service will continue the excellent record of training craft apprentices so they can develop the skills and knowledge to join the workforce and help maintain the stock. Many steps are taken to encourage women and people from Ethnic and Minority backgrounds to join the craft workforce.
66. The Council's Leicester to Work initiative provides opportunities to the long term unemployed and work experience for school students, graduates and ex-offenders.

Achievements in 2019/20 and proposals for 2020/21

67. The total value of our contracts, funded through the HRA, is £132m in 2019/20. The Housing Division employs a workforce of over 850 staff funded through the HRA.
68. 11 Apprentice Maintenance Technicians completed their apprenticeships in 2019/20 and 7 of these successfully achieved permanent employment with the Repairs Service, 1 person moved within the Council to a follow-on apprenticeship and 1 person gained full time employment outside of the Council. 15 people started new Maintenance Technician Apprenticeships in September 2019. This scheme will be reviewed regularly to ensure it meets the needs of the service and the apprentices.
69. In addition to the apprentices in the Repairs Service we employed 5 people as apprentice Admin and Business Support Officers in 2018/19. This has increased to 13 in 2019/20.
70. Housing's Neighbourhood Improvement scheme continues to help the long term unemployed by giving pre-employment training and a period of work experience. During 2019/20 10 people completed 6-month fixed employment contracts as Neighbourhood Improvement Officers and a further 10 people have started employment with the Council under this scheme. Their work on our estates includes painting, clearing overgrown areas, tidying unsightly spots, cleaning UPVC windows and removing rubbish.

Feedback from Consultation with Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum

On December 5th, 2019 the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum was presented with an overview of how housing services were performing, and the key proposals contained within the HRA rent setting and budget report for 2020/21. The forum was consulted on the proposals and provided the following feedback.

The Forum agreed that the Housing Division should have a balanced budget; members felt it was important that Housing Services live within their means.

The Forum members raised concerns about Right to Buy and they felt that this should be abolished. Members also felt that monies from Right to Buy should not be returned to the government but instead used to build more affordable housing locally. They did not think it was fair that the discount transferred with the tenant when the tenant moved property. Forum members also felt that the number of years discounted should be limited. One member of the forum felt that if Right to Buy was to carry on, it should be allowed for Housing Association tenants too. Members of the Forum stated that they were going to approach local MPs about their concerns around Right to Buy.

Feedback on rent and service charge proposals:

- **Increase rents by 2.7%.** Although members of the Forum understood the need for a balanced budget, they thought this increase was too high and suggested that rents were increased by 2.5%.
- **Increase service charges by 2%.** Members of the Forum stated that they preferred service charges to be increased by 1.7%.
- **Increase garage rents by 2.7%.** Forum members agreed with this increase, but stated that they thought the garages were too small for most cars to be parked in.
- **Increase hostel rents by 2%.** Members did not agree with this rent rise in case it discouraged homeless people from going into a hostel.

Feedback on Capital Programme proposals:

- **£0.4m reduction in the kitchen and bathroom programme.** All forum members strongly disagreed with any reduction in this programme and felt that it should be a priority for the Housing Division to replace kitchens and bathrooms in all properties that required them.
- **Increasing the budget for re-roofing by £150k.** The forum agreed with this proposal and they recognised that roofs did need replacing. It was suggested by some Forum members that the Council should be replacing roofs rather than patching them up.
- **Budget of £0.5m to carry out property conversions.** Forum members agreed with increasing the property size to deal with overcrowding. Members of the Forum also suggested that the council build more three-bedroom houses. To address the housing shortage Forum members suggested that we buy Hospital Close and the 6000 empty student properties in the City.

- **Budget of £250k to enable feasibility work to take place on Sheltered Housing Blocks.** There were mixed views on this, some Forum members wanted to know exactly how many council owned sheltered schemes there were in the City. One member of the Forum agreed with this proposal.
- **Budget of £1.2m to carry out Public Realm works.** The Forum agreed with this spend as long as it did not leave the reserves significantly depleted. The Forum would like more information about how much money would be left in the reserves.
- **£0.7m for additional maintenance work on non-dwellings.** The Forum agreed that if this work was required then they agreed with this spend. One Forum member did state that they did not want any more money spent on dishwashers for St Marks.
- **Additional £175k for IT Systems.** The Forum members said that they did not agree with this spend as the Council's IT systems were unreliable and the Council should stop changing the systems.

Comments on capital budgets with no proposals for change:

- **Boiler replacements** - £3,425k – Tenant's Forum agreed with this spend.
- **Re-wiring** - £1,760k – Forum members were not sure about this, they wanted to know how many properties still required rewiring.
- **Soffits and fascias** - £350k – Forum members agreed with this spend.
- **Windows and doors** - £150k – Forum members agreed with this spend.
- **Door entry** - £150k - Forum members agreed with this spend.
- **District heating maintenance** – Forum members agreed with this spend.
- **Communal and environmental works** - £750k – Forum members agreed with this spend
- **Fire risk work** - £1m - Forum members agreed with this spend and thought this area of work should be a priority.
- **Safety works including targeted alarms** - £300k – Forum members agreed with this spend. Members wanted to know what the Council policy was on chains being fitted on doors for extra security.
- **Loft insulation** - £100k – Forum members agreed with this spend
- **Waylighting** - £150k - Forum members agreed with this spend
- **Concrete path renewal** - £100k – Forum members agreed with this spend. Members particularly highlighted the need for this work in the St Matthews and Neston Garden areas of the City.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Service Reviews/Service Changes

Title of spending review/service change/proposal	Housing Revenue Account Budget (including Capital Programme 2020/21)
Name of division/service	Housing
Name of lead officer completing this assessment	Helen McGarry, Business Change Manager, Ext 454 5129 helen.mcgarry@leicester.gov.uk
Date EIA assessment completed	
Decision maker	Full Council
Date decision taken	19th February 2020

EIA sign off on completion:	Signature	Date
Lead officer		
Equalities officer		
Divisional director		

Please ensure the following:

- (a) That the document is understandable to a reader who has not read any other documents, and explains (on its own) how the Public Sector Equality Duty is met. This does not need to be lengthy, but must be complete.
- (b) That available support information and data is identified and where it can be found. Also be clear about highlighting gaps in existing data or evidence that you hold, and how you have sought to address these knowledge gaps.
- (c) That the equality impacts are capable of aggregation with those of other EIAs to identify the cumulative impact of all service changes made by the council on different groups of people.

<p>1. Setting the context</p> <p>Describe the proposal, the reasons it is being made, and the intended change or outcome. Will current service users' needs continue to be met?</p> <p>The financial landscape of the four-year period from 2016 to 2020 has been dominated by the government requirement that rents be reduced by 1% each year. For the 5 years from 2020 rents can be increased by up to CPI+1%. Whilst this relaxation is welcome, a number of other external pressures and changes brought about by central government persist; these include the impact of increasing Right to Buy sales (where it is predicted £4.6m rental income will be lost over the next 3 years, leaving a gap in the budget), the rollout of Universal Credit and inflationary pressures. The Housing Revenue Account budget report recommends that the budget for 2020 / 21 is set as a balanced budget, continuing the approach of only drawing on reserves to fund time-limited or one-off schemes.</p> <p>The Housing Revenue Account Budget report is proposing a 2.7% increase to the core rents of Council homes, which is the maximum increase allowed under the government's new criteria. As well as this rent increase for 2020/21 the report is recommending:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing service charges by 2% • Increasing hostel rent by 2% • Increasing garage rents by 2.7%

In terms of spend, the Housing Revenue Account budget report is proposing an:

- Increase to the annual spend on employee costs (£0.5m) as a result of assumed pay increases and increased pension contributions
- Increase to spend on running costs by £1.3m (over the next 3 years) due to inflation
- A spend of £1,184k for interest and debt repayment
- It is proposed the £4.9m budget gap in 2020 / 21 will be addressed through:
 - Additional income from the increased rents and service charges mentioned above - £2m
 - Rental income from new build properties - £1m
 - Ongoing savings as a result of the Homelessness Management Review in 2019 - £0.1m
 - Reducing the amount given to the Capital Expenditure Fund - £950k
 - Expected savings from changes to the way accommodation services are delivered - £0.7m
 - Consolidation of the Stores facilities into one site to save £0.1m.
 - A further £600k savings to be identified

Apart for capital spend already agreed for new build properties a budget of £17,435k is proposed for the Capital Programme Fund. The following projects are those where it is proposed that changes will be made to the allocation of funding through this fund:

- As result of a predicted underspend during 2020/21 and to reflect the number of properties reduced through Right to Buy it is proposed that funding for kitchens and bathrooms is reduced by £0.4m.
- An increased budget of £150k for re-roofing to ensure this work takes place on the greater number of properties requiring this work during 2020/21.
- The allocation of £0.5m to carry out property conversions to create more space for households living in overcrowded conditions.
- Introduction of a £250k budget to enable feasibility work to be carried out in relation to the refurbishment of sheltered housing schemes
- In addition to the current Communal and Environmental works budget it is proposed an additional £1.2m from reserves, increasing to a total of £5m over the next 3 years, to improve the appearance of low-rise flats, communal areas and estates.
- £0.7m is added to support the work required to non-dwellings.
- The £175k allocated to improve IT systems will require a top up with the increase in mobile working solutions. Budgets for 2021/22 onwards will be considered during the next 12 months, taking into account any procurement requirements.

The main service need of tenants is that they have a suitably sized, Decent Home, maintained through an effective repairs service with quality tenancy and estate management services. Current service user needs will continue to be met with the recommendations being made.

2. Equality implications/obligations	
Which aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) are likely be relevant to the proposal? In this question, consider both the current service and the proposed changes.	
	Is this a relevant consideration? What issues could arise?
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation How does the proposal/service ensure that there is no barrier or disproportionate impact for anyone with a particular protected characteristic	From this equality impact assessment no significant impacts have been identified.
Advance equality of opportunity between different groups How does the proposal/service ensure that its intended outcomes promote equality of opportunity for users? Identify inequalities faced by those with specific protected characteristic(s).	The proposals continue to commit to the provision of decent homes to council tenants and equality of opportunity for people to have decent homes to live in. The standard of accommodation in council owned properties is higher than in some areas of the private sector.
Foster good relations between different groups Does the service contribute to good relations or to broader community cohesion objectives? How does it achieve this aim?	Maintaining properties and making improvements on estates creates an environment where people are satisfied with their homes and the area they live in, reducing the likelihood of anti-social behaviour and community tensions.

3. Who is affected?
Outline who could be affected, and how they could be affected by the proposal/service change. Include current service users and those who could benefit from but do not currently access the service.
<p>The proposal to increase rents will affect all Leicester City Council tenants across the city. Approximately 27% of tenants are in receipt of full housing benefit at present and will continue to have any rent payable covered by their benefit entitlement. We currently have over 2000 tenants in receipt of Universal Credit. These tenants will have their housing costs covered by the new benefit, even though the majority will be responsible for paying the full rent themselves. The negative impact of having to pay more rent will affect approximately 64% of tenants who are in receipt of partial or no housing benefit or Universal Credit. The impact of the rent increase will be dependent on the tenants' financial situation rather than any protected characteristic.</p> <p>Service charges are added to rent when improvement work has been completed in a property or extra services are provided, for example, new central heating systems. All tenants who pay these charges will need to pay 2% more each week for these. The charge will depend on what improvement work has taken place over time at each property. Work is carried out as a result of the condition of a property through the capital programme and is therefore not based on a persons' protected characteristic. Approximately 27% of tenants are in receipt of full housing benefit and they will continue to have the majority of service charge payable covered by their benefit entitlement. Tenants in receipt of Universal Credit will also continue to have the cost of service charges included in their housing cost element of the benefit. The negative impact of having to pay more for service charges will affect approximately 64% of tenants who are in receipt of partial or no housing benefit or Universal</p>

Credit. The impact of the service charge increase will in general be dependent on tenants' financial situations rather than any protected characteristic. The exception is the service charge for district heating, which is not covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. All tenants will have to pay this charge and any increase proposed. A high number of properties that are provided with district heating are located within the Centre area. We know a higher proportion of BME households live in this area. However, the impact of the district heating charge will still be dependent on a person's financial situation rather than their protected characteristic.

The impact of the proposed 2% increase to hostel rents will impact upon all homeless households currently living in temporary accommodation provided by the Council, and those who become homeless in the future and use these services. Our records show the majority of people accommodated receive full entitlement to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit and therefore this additional charge will be covered by these benefits. The impact of having to pay more will be for those people on partial or no Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. However, we know there are low numbers of people in this situation using the services. As with the proposed increase in Council core rents the impact will be determined as a result of a person's financial situation and not as a result of a particular protected characteristic.

Council owned garages are rented out to members of the public generally, not just council tenants. The charge is not covered by housing benefit or Universal Credit. We currently have around 1300 garages available for rent, so the proposed 2.7% increase could impact upon 1300 people, dependant on how many garages are actually let at any one time. Our protected characteristic profiling information in relation to people renting garages is currently limited, so it is not known whether there will be a bigger impact on a particular group. However, the impact is more likely to be as a result of a person's financial situation and ability to pay the extra rent rather than as a result of having a particular protected characteristic.

The Housing Capital Programme generally benefits all tenants in the city. Projects to improve individual properties are decided on their condition to meet health and safety regulations, rather than a protected characteristic of a tenant. Decisions on the Capital Programme are based on the age of properties, the predicted lifespan of when items will need to be replaced and health and safety regulations. The impact for tenants will generally be positive as properties and areas are improved.

- £0.4m reduction in the kitchens and bathroom budget – Decisions to replace kitchens and bathrooms are made on the condition and age of a property, not on the particular circumstances of tenants. Despite the reduction, the proposed budget allocation is £3.6m which will ensure funding is still available to carry out work where this is required.
- Increased funding for re-roofing - this proposal relates to properties across the city to meet health and safety requirements, all tenants effected will benefit from this work, not just those with a protected characteristic
- £0.5m budget allocation for property conversions to address overcrowding - This proposal is to address individual overcrowding situations of tenants irrespective of their protected characteristic. The properties where this work is to take place will largely be determined by the suitability of properties to be converted.

- £250k budget to undertake feasibility work to refurbishment of sheltered housing schemes - In general this accommodation is available to tenants over the age of 50. These people will benefit from the changes made but may be disrupted whilst the work is taking place.
- Additional £5m (over the next 3 years) to improve the appearance of low-rise flats, communal areas and estates – This work will be determined as a result of the condition of flats and communal areas and the appearance and safety of our estates. The work will not be determined as a result of the protected characteristic of a particular group or groups. Where improvements are made the benefits will be felt by all tenants living in the area.
- Potential increased budget to improve IT systems – This is internal funding to improve IT systems to enable increased mobile working opportunities for staff. However, the spend will have a knock-on benefit for all tenants, irrespective of their protected characteristic, providing a more flexible and responsive service to meet people’s needs.

4. Information used to inform the equality impact assessment

What **data, research, or trend analysis** have you used? Describe how you have got your information and what it tells you. Are there any gaps or limitations in the information you currently hold, and how you have sought to address this, e.g. proxy data, national trends, etc.

Tenant profiling information has been collected and analysed from the Northgate IT system (Appendix 1). This includes information on ages, ethnic origin, disability, gender, sexuality and religion. There are gaps in data in relation to gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity and sexual orientation. There is also limited information collected specifically about disabilities. An action within Housing’s Equality Action Plan is to increase the monitoring data we collect and over time the profiling information available will increase.

5. Consultation

What **consultation** have you undertaken about the proposal with current service users, potential users and other stakeholders? What did they say about:

- What is important to them regarding the current service?
- How does (or could) the service meet their needs?
- How will they be affected by the proposal? What potential impacts did they identify because of their protected characteristic(s)?
- Did they identify any potential barriers they may face in accessing services/other opportunities that meet their needs?

A meeting of the Tenants’ and Leaseholders’ Forum took place on the 5th December 2019 and they were presented with the proposals for the Housing Revenue Account rent setting and capital programme for 2020 / 21. The feedback the Forum provided is contained within Appendix G of the budget report.

Two particular areas identified that are important to Forum members regarding the current service is the availability of social housing in the city and property improvements through the kitchens and bathrooms scheme.

Forum members felt the Right to Buy scheme, which is resulting in the reduction of properties owned by the City Council, is a barrier to those people in housing need, which in turn is reducing their access to social housing. Also, it was felt increasing hostel rents may impact upon homeless people in terms of them accessing temporary accommodation, due to affordability issues. Although these barriers were raised, no potential impacts were identified for any particular group with a protected characteristic.

6. Potential equality Impact

Based on your understanding of the service area, any specific evidence you may have on service users and potential service users, and the findings of any consultation you have undertaken, use the table below to explain which individuals or community groups are likely to be affected by the proposal because of their protected characteristic(s). Describe what the impact is likely to be, how significant that impact is for individual or group well-being, and what mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove negative impacts.

Looking at potential impacts from a different perspective, this section also asks you to consider whether any other particular groups, especially vulnerable groups, are likely to be affected by the proposal. List the relevant that may be affected, along with their likely impact, potential risks and mitigating actions that would reduce or remove any negative impacts. These groups do not have to be defined by their protected characteristic(s).

Protected characteristic	Impact of proposal: Describe the likely impact of the proposal on people because of their protected characteristic and how they may be affected. Why is this protected characteristic relevant to the proposal? How does the protected characteristic determine/shape the potential impact of the proposal?	Risk of negative impact: How likely is it that people with this protected characteristic will be negatively affected? How great will that impact be on their well-being? What will determine who will be negatively affected?	Mitigating actions: For negative impacts, what mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove this impact? These should be included in the action plan at the end of this EIA.
Age¹	People living in sheltered housing are generally over the age of 50 and therefore	People over 50 may be disrupted whilst improvements to	Effective communication as to changes taking place and interim changes to

¹ Age: Indicate which age group is most affected, either specify general age group - children, young people working age people or older people or specific age bands

	any improvements to this type of accommodation will benefit these people	sheltered housing is taking place	service provision, if required. Some tenants may need to be temporary re-housed whilst the work is being carried out.
Disability²	No potential impact	No group will be proportionally impacted upon by this proposal	Not applicable
Gender Reassignment³	No potential impact	No group will be proportionally impacted upon by this proposal	Not applicable
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No potential impact	No group will be proportionally impacted upon by this proposal	Not applicable
Pregnancy and Maternity	No potential impact	No group will be proportionally impacted upon by this proposal	Not applicable
Race⁴	Tenants from a BME background in the Centre area of the City may be more impacted upon by the increased service charges for district heating	No group will be proportionally impacted upon by this proposal	The Income Management Team to continue to monitor rent arrears and provide support for those people struggling to pay as a result of the increased charges.

² Disability: if specific impairments are affected by the proposal, specify which these are. Our standard categories are on our equality monitoring form – physical impairment, sensory impairment, mental health condition, learning disability, long standing illness or health condition.

³ Gender reassignment: indicate whether the proposal has potential impact on trans men or trans women, and if so, which group is affected.

⁴ Race: given the city's racial diversity it is useful that we collect information on which racial groups are affected by the proposal. Our equalities monitoring form follows ONS general census categories and uses broad categories in the first instance with the opportunity to identify more specific racial groups such as Gypsies/Travellers. Use the most relevant classification for the proposal.

Religion or Belief⁵	No potential impact	No group will be proportionally impacted upon by this proposal	Not applicable
Sex⁶	No potential impact	No group will be proportionally impacted upon by this proposal	Not applicable
Sexual Orientation⁷	No potential impact	No group will be proportionally impacted upon by this proposal	Not applicable

Summarise why the protected characteristics you have commented on, are relevant to the proposal?

All protected characteristics have been commented on because work to improve the condition of properties and the environment of estates impact on all tenants.

Summarise why the protected characteristics you have not commented on, are not relevant to the proposal?
N/A

Other groups	Impact of proposal: Describe the likely impact of the proposal on children in poverty or any other people who we consider to be vulnerable. List any vulnerable groups likely to be affected. Will their needs continue to be met? What issues will affect their take up of services/other opportunities that meet	Risk of negative impact: How likely is it that this group of people will be negatively affected? How great will that impact be on their well-being? What will determine who will be negatively affected?	Mitigating actions: For negative impacts, what mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove this impact for this vulnerable group of people? These should be included in the action plan at the end of this EIA.
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⁵ Religion or Belief: If specific religious or faith groups are affected by the proposal, our equalities monitoring form sets out categories reflective of the city's population. Given the diversity of the city there is always scope to include any group that is not listed.

⁶ Sex: Indicate whether this has potential impact on either males or females

⁷ Sexual Orientation: It is important to remember when considering the potential impact of the proposal on LGBT communities, that they are each separate communities with differing needs. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people should be considered separately and not as one group. The gender reassignment category above considers the needs of trans men and trans women.

	their needs/address inequalities they face?		
Children in poverty	Children living in over-crowded conditions may benefit from the proposals to convert properties to address overcrowding.	There may be disruption in the home whilst conversion work is taking place	Provide temporary accommodation whilst conversion work is taking place, if necessary.
Other vulnerable groups			
Other (describe)			

7. Other sources of potential negative impacts
 Are there any other potential negative impacts external to the service that could further disadvantage service users over the next three years that should be considered? For example, these could include: other proposed changes to council services that would affect the same group of service users; Government policies or proposed changes to current provision by public agencies (such as new benefit arrangements) that would negatively affect residents; external economic impacts such as an economic downturn.

8. Human Rights Implications
 Are there any human rights implications which need to be considered (please see the list at the end of the template), if so please complete the Human Rights Template and list the main implications below:
 The budget proposals continue to support the Human Right of protection of property / peaceful enjoyment

9. Monitoring Impact
 You will need to ensure that monitoring systems are established to check for impact on the protected characteristics and human rights after the decision has been implemented. Describe the systems which are set up to:

- monitor impact (positive and negative, intended and unintended) for different groups
- monitor barriers for different groups
- enable open feedback and suggestions from different communities
- ensure that the EIA action plan (below) is delivered.

Monitoring systems in place include:

- Monitoring and analysing complaints received
- Feedback received from Tenants and Residents Associations and the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum
- Progress on actions resulting from the equality impact assessment will be monitored and reviewed by the Senior Management Team within Housing.

10. EIA action plan

Please list all the equality objectives, actions and targets that result from this Assessment (continue on separate sheets as necessary). These now need to be included in the relevant service plan for mainstreaming and performance management purposes.			
Equality Outcome	Action	Officer Responsible	Completion date
Actions are progressed to mitigate the potential negative impacts that are associated with the budget proposals	Effectively communicate proposed improvements to Sheltered Housing tenants. Provide temporary accommodation whilst improvement work is taking place, if necessary	Suki Supria	TBC
	Provide temporary accommodation to households where conversion work is taking place to address overcrowding, if necessary.	Suki Supria	TBC
	The Income Management Team to continue to monitor rent arrears and provide support for people struggling to pay rent / service charges as a result of any increase.	Charlotte McGraw	Ongoing

Human Rights Articles:

Part 1: The Convention Rights and Freedoms

- Article 2:** Right to Life
- Article 3:** Right not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman or degrading way
- Article 4:** Right not to be subjected to slavery/forced labour
- Article 5:** Right to liberty and security
- Article 6:** Right to a fair trial
- Article 7:** No punishment without law
- Article 8:** Right to respect for private and family life
- Article 9:** Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- Article 10:** Right to freedom of expression
- Article 11:** Right to freedom of assembly and association
- Article 12:** Right to marry
- Article 14:** Right not to be discriminated against

Part 2: First Protocol

- Article 1:** Protection of property/peaceful enjoyment
- Article 2:** Right to education
- Article 3:** Right to free elections

Profiling Information – Council Tenants

Breakdown by age band

Age of Applicant	Number of Tenants	Percentage of Tenants
16 to 19	116	0.58%
20 to 24	411	2.05%
25 to 34	2,465	12.32%
35 to 44	4,049	20.24%
45 to 54	4,168	20.83%
55 to 64	3,642	18.20%
65 to 74	2,685	13.42%
75+	2,173	10.86%
Not known	300	1.50%

Breakdown by disability

Disabled	Number of Tenants	Percentage of Tenants
Yes	167	0.83%
No / Not Recorded	19,842	99.17%

Breakdown by ethnic origin

Ethnicity	Number of Tenants	Percentage of Tenants
White British	9,436	47.16%
White – Irish	147	0.73%
Other Ethnic Group – Gypsy/Romany/Irish Traveller	14	0.07%
White – Other white background	486	2.43%
White – European	361	1.80%
Dual Heritage	415	2.07%
Asian	2,332	11.65%
Chinese	25	0.12%
Black	2,130	10.65%
Any other ethnic group	335	1.67%
Prefer not to say	501	2.50%
Not Recorded	3,827	19.13%

Breakdown by religion

Religion	Number of Tenants	Percentage of Tenants
Atheist	250	1.25%
Buddhist	14	0.07%
Christian	2,054	10.27%
Hindu	326	1.63%
Muslim	1,555	7.77%
Sikh	75	0.37%
No Religion	2,027	10.13%
Other	290	1.45%
Prefer not to say	709	3.54%
Not known / specified	12,709	63.52%

Breakdown by sexuality

Sexuality	Number of Tenants	Percentage of Tenants
Bisexual	139	0.69%
Gay female / lesbian	30	0.15%
Gay male	34	0.17%
Heterosexual / straight	5,951	29.74%
Other	173	0.86%
Prefer not to say	964	4.82%
Not known / specified	12,718	63.56%

Breakdown by Gender

Gender	Number of Tenants	Percentage of Tenants
Male	8,620	43.08%
Female	11,159	55.77%
Not Known	230	1.14%



Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation

For consideration by: Housing Scrutiny Commission

Date: 13th January 2020

Lead director: Matthew Wallace

Useful information

- Ward(s) All
- Report author: Duncan Bell, Corporate Environmental Consultant
- Author contact details: duncan.bell@leicester.gov.uk Tel: 37 2249

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To inform Members about draft proposals for the city's response to the climate emergency, as well as the associated programme of community consultation and engagement entitled "Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation".
- 1.2 To invite comments on the proposals, for consideration as part of preparations for a new council action plan to respond to the emergency.

2 Report

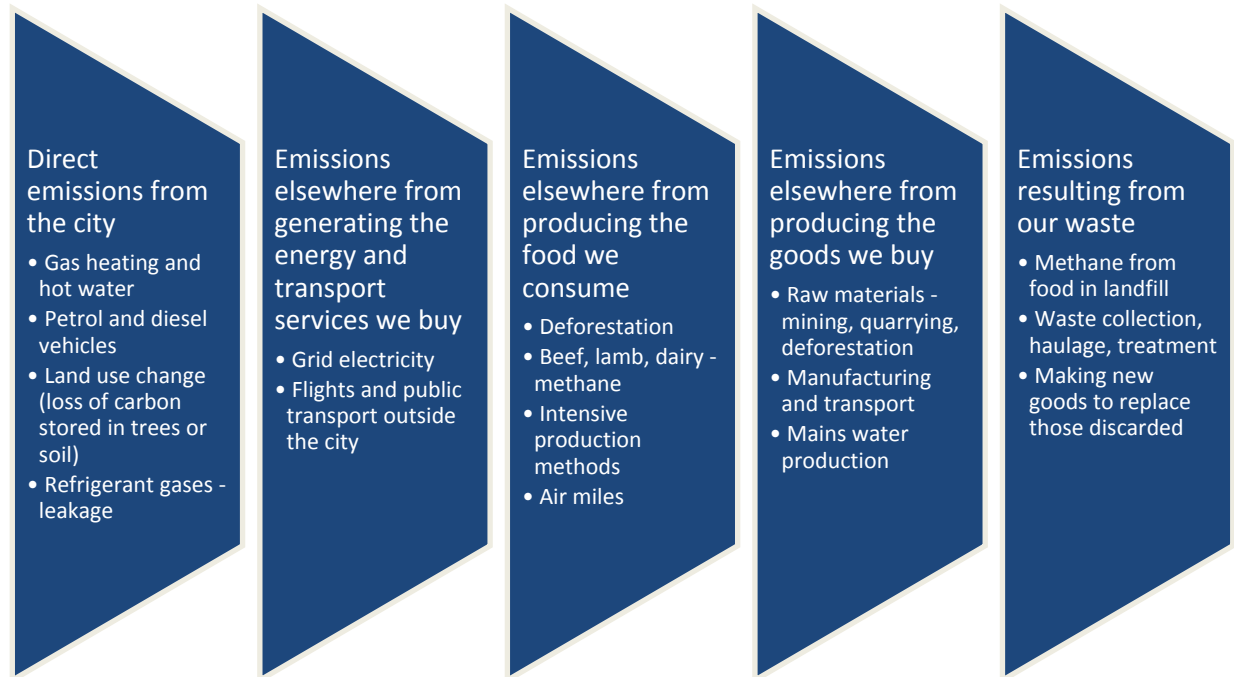
Background to the council's proposals

- 2.1 On 1st February 2019 Leicester City Council declared a climate emergency, in recognition that urgent action is needed to prevent global heating from exceeding 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. This is the limit beyond which scientists believe we could see climate change become irreversible, with catastrophic implications for humanity and the natural world.
- 2.2 In its declaration the council committed to produce a new action plan to address the emergency, and to review its existing climate change targets. This report addresses the first of those commitments.
- 2.3 Following the declaration, research was undertaken to identify:
 - How Leicester would need to change to become a carbon neutral and climate-adapted city
 - What the key opportunities are for the council to address the emergency through its own powers, responsibilities and service delivery
 - What current and forthcoming actions by the council will help address the emergency, and what the key opportunities for further action could be.
- 2.4 The research identified that far-reaching changes will be needed if Leicester is to become carbon neutral, affecting every individual and organisation. These include:
 - Homes and workplaces becoming much better insulated and gas heating systems being replaced with low-carbon heating
 - A lot more renewable energy being generated in the city – on homes, workplaces and other buildings
 - A big increase in the role of walking, cycling and public transport, as well as all petrol, diesel and LPG vehicles being replaced with ultra-low emissions vehicles
 - Dietary choices shifting towards more plant-based foods, with a much-reduced emphasis on meat, eggs and dairy produce
 - Consumer demand driving a transformation of manufacturing, distribution and service delivery towards a low-carbon, resource-efficient and low waste model producing long-lasting, sustainable products
 - A greener city, proactively using tree planting and green spaces to protect the city from the impacts of climate change, including heatwaves and flood risk –

while at the same time increasing biodiversity.

- 2.5 The research highlighted that Leicester's carbon footprint includes those emissions it causes indirectly outside the city boundaries (refer to Figure 1), as well as the direct emissions from within the city. Many of these emissions caused outside the city cannot currently be measured, but all the city's emissions will need to be reduced if the city is to become carbon neutral.

Figure 1: Components of the carbon footprint of a city



Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation

- 2.6 Based on the research, a set of proposals has been developed and published. A 12-week programme of consultation and engagement activities about the proposals began on 18th November 2019 entitled "Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation".
- 2.7 Through the conversation, the council is seeking to gain the views of the widest possible range of people and organisations in the city. The programme therefore combines traditional consultation methods with more innovative approaches, as summarised below:

Online questionnaire Available throughout the conversation period (18th November 2019 – 9th February 2020) on the council's [Consultation Hub](#).

Community discussions A conversation pack is available throughout the conversation period for any group of people wanting to run their own discussion event and to feed back the results. The pack is available by emailing sustainability@leicester.gov.uk

Leicester's Climate Assembly A one-day workshop event on Saturday 18th January 2020 run in partnership with the RSA. The event is designed to find out the views of a cross-section of Leicester's population. It will help people to learn

more about the climate emergency and our proposals, and to share their views directly. Anyone interested in applying to take part should complete the [online form](#). A paper copy of the form can be requested by telephoning the Sustainability Section on 0116 454 2110.

Young People's Climate Assembly A one-day workshop event on Monday 27th January 2020 for city secondary schools, supported by Leicester's Youth Council. Schools interested in taking part should contact Lee Jowett, Environmental Education Co-ordinator at the council. Email lee.jowett@leicester.gov.uk

Primary School discussions A conversation pack is available for primary schools, along with a flier for parents. Primary schools can also book a climate change presentation by contacting Lee Jowett.

Dialogue The council's online moderated forum opened for discussion of a series of climate emergency 'challenges' starting on Monday 16th December. In addition to challenges posted by the council, participants can post their own ideas too for comment.

- 2.8 The conversation is being publicised via print and social media, as well as officer attendance at events including Ward Community Meetings where these fall within the conversation period.

Next steps after the conversation

- 2.9 Following the Climate Emergency Conversation, feedback from the public will inform the development of a draft action plan for the council's response to the emergency.
- 2.10 The action plan will be adopted in 2020.

3 Recommendations

3.1 Members are asked to:

1. Note the progress made since the climate emergency declaration, including the consultation and engagement programme currently underway.
2. Comment on the proposals in Appendix 1, including their implications for the city and for the council.
3. Help to publicise the Climate Emergency Conversation through their role as Ward Councillors.
4. Note the next steps for the development and adoption of a council action plan to address the climate emergency.

4 Financial, Legal and other implications

4.1 There are no immediate significant financial implications. However, the costs of any future specific initiatives should be identified at the time, and similarly the costs of any required changes to embed climate change considerations in 'business as usual' activity.

Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance. Ext. 37 4081

4.2 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations of the report however legal advice must be sought as this work progresses.

Emma Jackman, Head of Law (Commercial, Property & Planning). Ext. 37 1426

4.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

Contained in the body of the report and in Appendix 1.

Duncan Bell, Corporate Environmental Consultant. Ext. 37 2249

4.4 Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't. Due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty should be paid before and at the time a decision is taken, in such a way that it can influence the final decision.

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

The report outlines the programme of community consultation and engagement entitled "Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation" to contribute towards the development of the approach and actions to address the climate emergency. An initial RAG rating has been undertaken to identify priority areas to target further work to understand the equalities impacts of possible approaches, however the RAG rating should be viewed as an initial assessment based on basic evidence and assumptions which will need to be explored in more detail before actions are implemented, rather than it being viewed as a comprehensive examination of the equalities and human rights impacts. It will be an iterative process to ensure that we pay due regard to our Public Sector Equality Duty at every stage of decision making due to the breadth of areas that the proposals will cover. The evidence and views gathered as part of the community consultation and engagement outlined within this report should be utilised to inform the equality impact assessment/s of different proposals along with other relevant evidence. Efforts to ensure that the engagement and consultation targets groups who may be disproportionately impacted by any of the proposals or suggestions, and to ensure that we receive views from a wide range of people with different backgrounds, identities, protected characteristics and needs will be vital in paying due regard to the general aims of the PSED.

As work progresses, service area leads looking at the feasibility of any suggestions coming from the engagement and consultation will need to robustly assess the equalities impacts of any proposals which may be taken forward, prior to a decision being taken. Where any disproportionate negative impact is identified on any protected characteristic group/s or individuals, steps must be taken to reduce or remove that impact.

The Equalities Team will provide continued advice and support to the sustainability team and service leads as required.

Hannah Watkins, Equalities Manager ext. 37 5811

5 Supporting information / appendices

5.1 Appendix 1: Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation – Proposals for discussion – November 2019.

6 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

7 Is this a “key decision”?

No



Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation

Proposals for discussion - November 2019



Leicester
City Council

Contents

Introduction	3
Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation	3
How to join the conversation	3
Terms used in this document	4
Part 1: Why have we declared a climate emergency?	6
Part 2: How is the climate changing?	7
Part 3: How will life in the city need to change and what should we do about it?	8
At home	8
Travel and transport	13
Our choices as consumers	18
Waste	22
At work	26
Land use, green space and development	31

Introduction

Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation

On 1st February 2019 Leicester City Council declared a climate emergency. The declaration is an acknowledgement that:

- climate change is happening, and threatens the wellbeing of everyone in Leicester and worldwide
- the speed and scale of global and local action to tackle the problem needs to be dramatically increased.

In its declaration, the council committed to developing a new action plan to address the emergency through our own services and projects – to follow on from our recently-completed Sustainability Action Plan. We also want to inspire others to join us and take action too.

Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation is a 12-week opportunity to raise the issue of climate change and start to map out how the city should respond. Through the conversation we want to involve local organisations, and individuals from all walks of life, in discussing what needs to happen. We believe this needs to include:

1. Understanding how Leicester and daily life here will need to change to respond to climate change.
2. Understanding what the implications will be for individuals and organisations – including the implications for people on low incomes and others who might be more vulnerable.
3. Discussing what action could be taken by the council, other local organisations, individuals and central government to bring about the change needed here.

How to join the conversation

Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation is taking place from 18 Nov 2019 – 9 Feb 2020. It will involve an online questionnaire, as well as interactive events and activities to provide opportunities for face-to-face discussion. In addition to the events being organised by the council, we are providing a conversation pack for groups to run their own discussion events too. We hope to see lots of groups making use of this to involve as many people as possible.

On the next page is a summary of the conversation activities and how local organisations and the public can get involved.

Activity	Target Audience
<p>Online questionnaire</p> <p>Seeking views on key proposals taken from this document. Available throughout the conversation period on the council's Consultation Hub.</p>	<p>Open to any organisation or individual throughout the 12-week period.</p>
<p>Conversation pack for community discussions</p> <p>For any group of people wanting to run their own discussion event and to feed back the results. This could be a community or campaigning group, a student group, a tenants group, a trade union or employees group, or any other group of people living or working in the city.</p> <p>For a copy of the pack please email sustainability@leicester.gov.uk</p>	<p>Open to any group of people living or working in the city throughout the 12-week period.</p>
<p>Leicester's Climate Assembly</p> <p>A one-day event designed to find out the views of a cross-section of Leicester's population.</p> <p>To apply to take part in this event email sustainability@leicester.gov.uk</p>	<p>Saturday 18th January 2020.</p> <p>To make sure we get a cross-section of people reflecting Leicester's population, there is an application process for this event.</p>
<p>Young People's Climate Assembly</p> <p>A one-day discussion event for city secondary schools, supported by Leicester's Youth Council.</p> <p>Schools interested in taking part should contact Lee Jowett, Environmental Education Co-ordinator at the council. Email lee.jowett@leicester.gov.uk</p>	<p>Monday 27th January 2020.</p> <p>Open to any secondary school based in the Leicester City local authority area.</p> <p>Places available for groups from up to 8 schools.</p>
<p>Dialogue – online discussion forum</p> <p>A moderated discussion platform providing an opportunity for interactive online debate and discussion of ideas. Users can join conversations started by the council or others, or start their own.</p> <p>A link to the Dialogue conversation will be available on the climate emergency page of our website from 16th December.</p>	<p>Open to anyone in the city.</p> <p>Forum opens 16th December 2019</p>

Terms used in this document

We have tried to keep technical terms to a minimum in our proposals, but we've had to use some. Here is an explanation of two key terms used:

Carbon emissions – by this we mean the gases released into the atmosphere which are adding to climate change. The main gas involved is carbon dioxide (CO₂) – hence the term 'carbon emissions'. Carbon dioxide is released when fuels such as natural gas, petrol and diesel are burned.

Carbon emissions can include other gases. The main one of these which is relevant to our proposals is methane. Methane can be released from waste food and other organic matter as it breaks down in landfill sites. It is also released by some farm animals including cows and sheep.

Carbon neutral - when we say in the proposals that Leicester will need to become carbon neutral, we mean that the total carbon emissions caused directly or indirectly by everyone here will need to reduce until they're as close as possible to zero.

Then, we will need to compensate for any remaining emissions. This is also known as 'offsetting' those emissions. This could be by doing something to absorb an equivalent amount of carbon emissions from the atmosphere as the emissions we emit e.g. by planting trees. Other ways could be to generate a surplus of renewable energy, or to pay for other people to do these things on our behalf through a commercial offsetting scheme.

'Net zero carbon' is another term which means the same as carbon neutral.

The term carbon neutral can be applied to a whole city, or to an individual part of it, such as a building or an organisation. Where we have used the term in the proposals, we have made it clear what we are applying it to.

Part 1: Why have we declared a climate emergency?

Scientists now agree that the climate is changing as a result of human activity. Global average temperatures have increased by 1°C from pre-industrial levels and sea levels are rising.

World leaders have set a target in what's known as the Paris Agreement to stop the temperature increase from going beyond 1.5°C. This is what scientists believe is needed to prevent catastrophic impacts.

It will require major changes over the next decade and beyond to stop temperature rise going past this limit. It has become clear that the speed and scale of change will need to be much greater than anything that's been done so far to tackle climate change.

Many people think that if humanity doesn't act decisively now, climate change could threaten the lives of many millions of people as well as much of the world's wildlife. This is why the term 'climate emergency' is now used.

In Leicester, the City Council took the decision to declare a climate emergency for several reasons.

- We believe that climate change poses a very great threat to the wellbeing of present and future residents of the city, and to Leicester's future success and prosperity.
- Cities including our own have been estimated to be responsible for about 70% of worldwide carbon dioxide emissions. We believe that the council and the rest of the city has a responsibility to play our part in tackling the challenge.
- Leicester has a lot to gain from acting decisively now, rather than waiting for other cities and other countries to act first. For example, many of the clean technologies required will make the city a healthier place to live. By adopting them as soon as we can, we think this could help our economy get a head-start in the new emerging low-carbon economic sectors, and the jobs being created in them.
- This could be the last opportunity to put the world on the right path in a planned and manageable way, rather than in a chaotic way which risks causing negative impacts – particularly on the more vulnerable members of society. We think Leicester should plan for change now, not wait for outside events to force change upon us.

Part 2: How is the climate changing?

Records show that global average temperatures have increased by around 1°C from pre-industrial levels already. Sea levels around the UK have risen by an average of 16cm since 1900 and they will continue to rise for centuries, even if we stop creating carbon emissions, due to time lags in the climate system.

For central England, the Met Office is predicting that average summer temperatures could rise by between 1.1 and 5.8°C by 2070 compared to the period 1981-2000 in a 'high emissions scenario'. Hotter summers are expected to become more common, with the chance of seeing temperatures similar to the 2018 heatwave increasing to around 50% by mid-century.

Summers could become drier and winters wetter on average, but with increasing variability. This means that Leicester and the surrounding area will need to cope with more frequent intense rainfall, and also prolonged dry periods.

Amongst the implications of these changes for Leicester:

- More frequent and severe heatwaves could present a risk to health. Children, older people and those with a pre-existing health condition tend to be more vulnerable.
- The risk of overheating and the need for, and expense of, air conditioning in buildings could increase if steps are not taken to adapt them. Public spaces could also be at risk – particularly those with little or no shade or vegetation in the most built-up areas.
- Key infrastructure can also be at risk during heatwaves.
- With more frequent intense rainfall, the city's drains and rivers are expected to come under greater pressure. Steps are already being taken to deal with these pressures in the River Soar corridor and elsewhere. Measures to slow rainwater run-off or disperse it in other ways will also be needed.
- While central England is not expected to be as severely affected by drought as the south-east, there will still be a greater need to conserve mains water to avoid the eventual need for new reservoir capacity.

Globally, sea level rise will increasingly threaten the safety of many millions of people living in lower-lying coastal areas. Changes in weather patterns will affect the productivity and even viability of farmland in some areas, threatening food production.

At the same time, biodiversity is already being affected over large areas and this will intensify. While some species may benefit from changes, a lot more are expected to be threatened by them. Many could be unable to respond quickly enough – resulting in potentially large-scale population reductions and extinctions.

The exact impact of these changes on Leicester are not known, but what we can say is that the city's future is bound up with that of the rest of the world in almost every aspect of life. Through the goods we import, family links between continents and in countless other ways, local interests and global interests are the same.

Part 3: How will life in the city need to change and what should we do about it?

This part of the document presents our proposals for how we think Leicester will need to change if it is to respond to the climate emergency. It is split into six themes.

For each theme we explain the reasons for our proposals. We also suggest some possible actions that could be considered by individuals in the city and organisations including the council itself.

Through the Climate Emergency Conversation, we welcome further ideas and alternative suggestions as well comments on our own proposals.

At home

Background and explanation of our proposals

Heating of homes and the use of electricity for lighting, appliances and gadgets causes about a third of carbon emissions in Leicester from our direct fuel and energy use. So housing will have to change. We think the following things will need to change.

1. Carbon neutral housing

For Leicester to become carbon neutral, housing will need to become carbon neutral too. This will mean changes to heating, insulation, lighting and appliances as well as a lot more generation of renewable energy.

There will be some houses which can't do as much as others. For example, historic buildings won't be able to have solar panels and may not be as easy to insulate. However, others will be able to do more and some will need to be 'carbon positive'. This means they will generate more renewable energy than they need.

2. Replacement of gas heating

Gas boilers will no longer be able to be used for heating because of the carbon emissions they create when gas is burned. Instead, homes will need to be heated, and hot water supplied, using low-carbon alternatives. The main options could be:

- Heat pumps – they use electricity to extract heat from the air or the ground. They are tried and tested and already used in many buildings. They work best when the building is very well insulated. They can struggle and be expensive to run if it isn't. For buildings that are less well insulated, a heat pump could be combined with a small boiler to boost the heating in very cold weather.
- Hydrogen boilers – hydrogen can be used as a fuel in the same way as gas and doesn't produce carbon emissions when it's burned. It's not available at the moment. Central government would need to step in to support zero-carbon hydrogen production and conversion of the gas network.

- Heat networks – Leicester already has many hundreds of homes supplied from underground hot water pipes connected to large neighbourhood boiler houses. Heat and hot water can be generated more efficiently at this large scale. Existing and new heat networks could be an option if they used large scale heat pumps or hydrogen boilers.

Wood-based fuel, known as biomass, and liquid biofuels made from other plant materials are sometimes suggested as alternative low carbon options for heating fuels. We are not proposing these as a solution for Leicester because we have concerns about the environmental impact of creating and transporting them. We are also worried about the risk of air pollution when they're burned.

We believe that the government needs to make decisions about the best way for homes and buildings to be heated in future – and make national plans for the changes needed to move away from gas. We think these plans will need to include proposals for how those on low incomes will be financially supported to make any changes.

At a local level, the council is encouraging the operator of Leicester's existing heat network to draw up plans for introducing low-carbon heating technologies. We also require new developments in the city to connect to the heat network where possible so that it can be expanded. We are proposing to continue to do this. We could start to introduce heat pumps in some of our council housing too.

3. Warm, insulated homes

We believe it will be necessary to make houses and flats very highly insulated to keep people warm with much less heating than a typical house today.

Warmer, low-energy homes will be needed for heat pumps to be effective and affordable to run. They will also be necessary to limit the extra pressure on the electricity grid as gas is phased out. Warmer homes should help to improve health too by reducing damp, draughts and underheated homes.

Making homes warmer will require large-scale programmes to fit draught-proofing, loft or roof insulation, cavity or solid wall insulation and double or even triple-glazing wherever they're not already installed.

The council has already made many of these improvements to council houses in the city. We could continue to invest in insulating council houses. A particular area where there's more we could do is in fitting external insulation to solid-walled houses which don't yet have it.

We are also considering introducing a Selective Licensing Scheme for private rented housing in parts of the city with a high concentration of privately rented property that are in poor condition. The issuing of a license would include an inspection of property and checks would be made to ensure they are in good repair and have adequate heating and insulation. This idea will be the subject of a formal consultation to gain the views of interested parties.

For other housing, we think that the government will need to step in to provide incentives for private landlords, housing associations and private homeowners to invest

in improving their properties. We think that these incentives will need to ensure that those on low incomes can benefit from better insulation along with everyone else.

4. Renewable energy

Even with lots of insulation and a low-carbon heating system, homes will still be responsible for some carbon emissions. This is because electricity from the grid will continue to be generated partly from gas-fired power stations for some time to come. To compensate for this, we think that wherever possible houses and blocks of flats will need to generate as much as possible of their own renewable energy. If possible, some will need to generate more renewable energy than they need, to make up for those which can't generate any (refer to point 1 above).

We think that most houses and flats with a suitable roof area will have to have solar panels. Panels which generate electricity (called photovoltaic or 'PV' panels) will probably be a more popular option in most cases than 'solar thermal' panels generating hot water because many homes no longer have a hot water tank.

The council has already fitted about 11,000 PV panels to council houses and we could continue this until all our suitable houses have them. We estimate that this could take many years to complete and would cost a significant amount of money, but it could make a big difference.

As the number of PV panels continues to go up, the capacity of the electricity grid may need to be increased in places to handle the extra input.

We are not proposing that wind turbines on or next to housing should have a role in powering homes in Leicester. They're usually not very effective with the low wind speeds in an urban area. They could also present a nuisance to neighbours and cause damage to buildings from vibration if they are attached to them.

5. 'Smart' energy controls

A whole generation of new 'smart' technologies is becoming available which provide opportunities to help Leicester become carbon neutral by making energy storage, distribution and use more efficient.

- Smart meters can help people save energy by showing where and when the most energy is used in the home – allowing them to spot excessive use and turn things off.
- Similarly, equipment is becoming available for people to remotely control their heating, lighting, appliances and gadgets.
- For those with PV panels, smart equipment will soon become available to control the storage of electricity from the PV panels in a battery. This could be the battery in an electric car or a battery to store electricity for use in the home. The equipment will also be able to sell the electricity to the grid at times of peak demand. This will make the best use of renewable electricity and generate a profit for the owner.

We propose that all of the above smart technologies should have a role in helping Leicester become carbon neutral by saving energy and supplying renewable electricity to the grid when it's most needed at peak times.

The council could encourage the introduction and uptake of these technologies by trialling them in our own buildings. We are already testing a system for storing electricity from our PV panels at City Hall in our electric fleet vehicles.

6. Keeping cool without air conditioning

As summers become hotter and heatwaves more common homes will be more at risk of overheating. As a result, more air conditioning use could undermine efforts to save energy.

Improved insulation of houses and flats as described under point 3 above will help by slowing down the rate that heat from the sun is transferred through the walls. Some homes will need other measures to cope with heatwaves too though without resorting to air conditioning. Options could include:

- fitting external shutters or shades
- fitting 'solar control' window glass which lets in less heat from sunlight
- planting deciduous trees to provide summer shade without blocking the light in winter.

The council could look at having an expert study done to find out whether tree planting can help prevent overheating in any parts of the city. Refer to the section on Land use, green space and development of the city for more on this.

7. Saving mains water

Periods of drought are expected to be more common in the East Midlands as the climate changes, making it increasingly important to make sure that water is not wasted.

We believe it will be important to save water through straightforward measures including dual-flush toilets and water saving taps, showers and appliances in all homes. Collecting rainwater will need to become the norm for watering gardens.

Refer to the section on Land use, green space and development of the city for details of our proposals for new homes.

Summary of our proposals

Vision for existing homes

- Homes will need to be very highly insulated to keep warm using much less energy. This will mean that fewer people get health problems from cold homes.

- Everyone will need to replace gas heating and hot water with low-carbon alternatives. Most often this will mean using heat pumps. They use electricity to extract heat from the ground or air.
- In areas with denser housing, low-carbon heat networks will be the best answer. These provide heat and hot water to whole neighbourhoods through underground pipes. In the future hydrogen could also replace gas as a fuel for boilers.
- The move away from gas will increase electricity demand. Homes will need to have their own renewable energy like solar panels. These will provide power to the house and owners could get money for selling back excess electricity.
- Houses will need 'smart' systems such as remote control for heating and lighting, and batteries to store extra energy from solar panels. They will also need to be able to charge electric cars.
- Homes will also need to be kept cool without air conditioning, as this uses a lot of energy. This might mean fitting shades and shutters, or planting trees for shade.
- Water use will need to fall, as low rainfall could become more of a problem.

Potential actions for existing homes

Potential actions by the council and other public service providers

1. The council could allocate money to continue improving insulation of council houses, prioritising those solid-walled houses which have not yet been insulated.
2. The council could allocate money to continue installing solar PV panels on suitable council houses.
3. The council could look at the potential to trial further replacement of gas boilers with heat pumps in suitably insulated council houses.
4. Housing associations could look at similar actions for their properties.
5. The council is considering introducing a Selective Licensing Scheme, subject to consultation. This could make sure that private rented homes in parts of the city have adequate heating and insulation.

Potential actions by businesses

6. Landlords of private rented homes could increase the insulation of their properties and install low or zero-carbon heating, along with solar panels where feasible.
7. Heating installers could prepare for the phase-out of gas by moving into low carbon systems including heat pumps and renewables.
8. The operator of the district heat network could make plans for upgrading the district heat network from gas to low or zero-carbon heating systems, so that homes supplied by the network can become carbon neutral.

Potential actions by individuals

9. Most homeowners will need to install more insulation.
10. Homeowners will need to replace their gas boiler with a heat pump or other low-carbon heating system in future.
11. Homeowners could fit solar PV panels if they have a suitable roof area, and a battery to store the electricity they generate.
12. Tenants in poorly insulated or heated housing could ask their landlord to make improvements. The landlord must make improvements if the property is below an 'E' energy efficiency rating.
13. Homeowners could choose water-saving fittings and appliances when replacing these items.
14. Gardeners could install water butts to collect rainwater instead of using mains water.

Potential actions by the government

15. The government could make a national plan for fitting insulation and low carbon heating in homes – including timescales and measures to help house-owners and occupiers during the changeover.

Travel and transport

Background and explanation of our proposals

Transport is responsible for a quarter of the city's carbon emissions from direct fuel and energy use. These emissions come from petrol, diesel and LPG vehicles.

Leicester's population is expected to keep growing, so more people will need to access work and facilities. If changes are not made this will add to Leicester's carbon emissions.

We believe that the way we travel and access the services we need will have to change to tackle the climate emergency. Ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs)* will need to be part of the answer. However, we don't think Leicester should rely only on ULEVs to make its travel and transport carbon neutral.

** Ultra-low emission vehicles or ULEVs produce a very low level of carbon emissions. They include electric and hydrogen vehicles. Some models of 'plug-in hybrid' electric vehicle also meet the definition.*

1. A much larger share of journeys taken by walking and cycling

We believe that the role of walking and cycling needs to substantially increase. These zero-carbon modes of travel can help Leicester avoid a rise in congestion as the population goes up. They can also reduce carbon emissions and air pollution. A bigger role for walking and cycling would help to limit the extra electricity demand from electric vehicles to ensure that the grid in Leicester can cope.

Many people in the city don't have access to a car. Making it easier to walk and cycle is a vital part of ensuring that everyone has access to convenient and affordable transport.

The council has been working over many years to promote walking and cycling. This includes providing a high quality network of safe cycle tracks along main roads and through neighbourhoods. We are proposing to continue this work. Upcoming projects include a bike share scheme and more cycle parking in the city. We are also developing walking and cycling routes and networks beyond the city centre.

We've seen positive results from our promotion of walking and cycling so far. However, in common with other UK cities, we have not seen the levels of increase that we think will be necessary. We aim to meet the government target for 2024 of a 10% share of journeys by bike. As such, we will need to look at new ways to increase uptake. We are interested to hear ideas from the public about this.

2. A much larger share of journeys on public transport

For journeys which can't be made by walking or cycling (or walking or cycling only), there needs to be an increase in the role of public transport. This will need to be provided by ultra-low emissions vehicles.

In terms of bus services, the council will need to continue working with the private bus companies. We have previously completed a range of projects to support increased bus use. These include the remodelling of Haymarket Bus Station to increase capacity and the creation of 'bus priority corridors'.

We are proposing to continue with measures to improve bus services and reduce emissions. These include more bus priority measures, connecting services, better links between bus services and other travel modes, more accessible bus stops, the introduction of smart ticketing and expansion of real time information.

We believe that park and ride services will play an important role. We are introducing electric buses for the Birstall Park and Ride site and an option for the future could be to convert the other sites to electric buses. We could also look at the potential for more park and ride services.

The council is considering the introduction of a Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) on employers who provide dedicated parking spaces for staff. Revenue from a WPL would be spent on sustainable transport improvements and a public consultation will be held on the proposals in due course. We are also preparing a new Local Transport Plan (LTP4). This will address the climate emergency by including measures which will reduce carbon emissions. There will be a separate public consultation for LTP4 too.

As with walking and cycling, we believe that a step-change in the role of public transport will be needed. We think there needs to be a focus on making it easier to make journeys by more than one mode without a car. Alongside steps to improve public transport, we think that measures will be needed to manage the demand for, and impact of, private vehicle journeys. This will need to include consideration of car parking, road capacity and access.

We would like to hear ideas from the public about how Leicester can achieve the big increase in the share of journeys by public transport that we'll need.

3. Moving to zero carbon vehicles

In the future all vehicles including private cars, public transport, taxis and business vehicles will need to be zero carbon. In the short term this means moving to ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs). We think that electric vehicles will be the main technology that's used. These will be capable of becoming zero carbon when coal and gas is no longer used in the generation of electricity for the national grid. In addition, hydrogen may be needed as a fuel for lorries.

The council has already started to replace our fleet vehicles with electric vehicles where we can. We could look at the potential to speed up this replacement programme. It would require increased spending on our fleet for a number of years. Businesses, other public service providers and residents could also look at replacing their diesel, petrol or LPG vehicles with electric or 'plug-in hybrid' electric vehicles (PHEVs) too.

Grants are available to encourage people to buy electric vehicles and the government could promote quicker uptake by increasing these grants or extending the grant scheme for longer. It could also bring forward the date of 2040 when it is planning to phase out sales of new petrol and diesel cars.

Electrification of the Midland Mainline would also reduce diesel engines travelling through the city.

4. Improved zero carbon vehicle charging and refuelling infrastructure

To support the use of electric vehicles there will need to be a big increase in the number of charging points. They will be needed in public and workplace car parks, at company fleet depots, on-street and at home.

The council has already installed a number of charging points in car parks and has plans to increase this number. We also have a pilot scheme coming up to install on-street charge points. The government provides a grant to support the installation of chargers in homes and businesses, and could support EV uptake by continuing this scheme.

To enable the large scale take-up of electric vehicles we expect that the local grid operator, Western Power Distribution, will need to increase the capacity of the grid in parts of the city. For those with solar photovoltaic panels and electric vehicles there will be an opportunity to use 'vehicle-to-grid' technology. This stores any extra solar energy generated from the panels in the electric vehicle battery, which can also be sold into the grid at times of peak demand. The council is carrying out a vehicle-to-grid trial scheme at the moment.

If hydrogen technology does also play a role, there will also need to be hydrogen refuelling stations developed locally.

5. Greater sharing of vehicles

Some people think that with new transport technologies and online booking systems we may start to see a culture change in which private car ownership starts to reduce. A proportion of people might opt to replace individual car ownership with a combination of walking, cycling, public transport and membership of e-bike share and electric car club schemes for those journeys where a bike or car is necessary. New types of 'demand responsive' transport service could become popular such as pre-bookable bus services and, ultimately, bookable driverless electric vehicle services. This type of shift in attitudes to individual car ownership could help speed up the reduction of carbon emissions from travel.

6. Reducing the need for travel

A further way to reduce carbon emissions from travel is to reduce the vehicle trips that people need to make to access services. This could mean making sure that as many services as possible are available online. Also, ensuring that services and facilities are provided within walking distance of where people live. The council's planning policies already promote key facilities and services in local neighbourhoods. Refer to the Land use, green space and development of the city section for more on this.

Summary of our proposals

Vision for travel and transport

- A much greater share of journeys will need to be made by walking, cycling and public transport. A city-wide network of walking and cycling routes, along with improved public transport, will be among the improvements needed to make this possible.
- Journeys that can't be taken by walking, cycling or public transport will need to be made by ultra-low emission vehicles. These will mainly be electric vehicles, although new HGVs may need to be hydrogen-powered.
- Electric charging-points will need to be widely available across the city. The electricity grid in Leicester may need upgrading to allow this. More solar panels will help provide some of the electricity needed.
- Some electric cars will need to be part of 'vehicle-to-grid' systems. These store surplus renewable electricity from solar panels in electric car batteries. They help the electricity grid by selling it to the grid when demand is high.
- Alternative travel and transport services, such as ride-sharing, electric car clubs and e-bike share could be used more instead of private car journeys.
- Services and facilities will need to be easy to access without car journeys. This includes making them accessible online, and available nearby within communities.

Potential actions for travel and transport

Potential actions by the council

1. The council could continue to invest in infrastructure for walking and cycling. It could also expand existing programmes to encourage people to walk and cycle.
2. Subject to consultation, the council could introduce a Workplace Parking Levy and use the funds to improve sustainable transport.
3. The council could continue to invest in improved public transport. It could consider an increase in the number of Park and Ride sites and convert more of the existing ones to use electric buses.
4. The council could look at further ways to reduce demand for private vehicle journeys. This could mean changing vehicle access to areas, changing parking, and supporting shared transport services.
5. More could be invested in replacing the council's own vehicles with ultra-low emission vehicles.
6. More publicly accessible electric vehicle charging points could be installed by the council.

Potential actions by businesses and other organisations

7. Employers could encourage staff to commute to work on foot, by bike or using public transport. They could also set a policy to reduce carbon emissions from business travel and deliveries.
8. Employers could replace their existing vehicles with 'ultra-low emission' alternatives and install charging points for fleet and staff electric vehicles.
9. Public transport providers could invest in new and improved services with smart ticketing and real-time information. They could also replace their fleet with 'ultra-low emission' vehicles.
10. Local companies could grow and create jobs by designing and building components for ultra-low emissions vehicles.

Potential actions by individuals

11. Individuals could switch to walking, cycling or public transport instead of using a car for journeys where possible.
12. Individuals could join car sharing schemes and car clubs in preference to owning private vehicles.
13. Instead of a petrol or diesel vehicle, individuals could buy an ultra-low emission vehicle.
14. Those with an electric vehicle and photovoltaic (PV) panels could buy 'vehicle to grid' equipment to store and trade their renewable electricity via the vehicle battery.

Potential actions by the government

15. The government could increase the funding available to local government to make improvements to walking, cycling, public transport and electric charging infrastructure.
16. The government could continue and increase the grants provided to individuals and businesses for ultra-low emission vehicles and charging points.
17. The government could end sales of new petrol and diesel cars earlier than 2040, as is currently planned.

Our choices as consumers

Background and explanation of our proposals

As well as the carbon emissions we produce within the city, we are also responsible for emissions elsewhere produced from making and delivering the products and the services we buy in from outside. They could add at least another 40% to the total. For the city to become carbon neutral we have to do something about them too.

1. Becoming informed consumers

Our impact from consumption results from the many weekly decisions we all make about what and how much to buy. We believe that to make progress in cutting the emissions from consumption, we all need to know more about which decisions have the biggest impact and what climate-friendly alternatives to look for.

Businesses are most important here. It is essential that they make information available to customers about the impact of different products, their durability and repairability. Without this, customers can't make informed choices.

Schools, colleges and universities have a role to play too, by giving students a good foundation of understanding about climate change, its causes and the possible solutions.

The council and other public sector organisations who have regular daily contact with the public could also look at what they can do as part of any information they provide. The council already supports schools through the Eco Schools programme. Similarly, local community projects, advice services and charities could have a role.

2. Changing our diets

Estimates suggest that food accounts for 20-30% of carbon emissions worldwide. Most experts believe that current western diets, with their emphasis on meat and dairy produce, are not sustainable because of the energy and resources used for intensive production, the land needed for growing animal feed and the methane generated by

cattle and sheep. (Methane is another gas that adds to climate change, alongside carbon dioxide).

So for Leicester to become carbon neutral, the typical diet will need to change considerably. The average household will ultimately need to consume a lot less meat – particularly beef and lamb – and a lot less dairy produce and eggs. Plant-based ingredients will need to play a much bigger role in a nutritionally balanced diet.

Food transport adds to the problem. Consumption of air-freighted food will need to reduce and an overall reduction of 'food miles' will be necessary.

Food businesses can – and many already are - helping make dietary changes easier for people by offering appetising, nutritionally balanced meat, egg and dairy-free options. They can also look to source ingredients locally where possible and pick 'in season' vegetables and fruit to reduce food miles.

Schools can look to do similar things and for those schools choosing to have their school meals provided by the council, these already include meat-free options and a proportion of fresh seasonal and local ingredients. Vegan menus are available where required. The council's School Meals Service has achieved the Food for Life 'silver award' standard.

Growing some of our own food can make a small contribution to reducing food miles too. It can also help raise awareness about this and other food and environmental issues where it's part of a community project. The council provides allotments and is supporting local growing projects through the Food Plan.

3. Our influence as individuals

Each of us can use our buying power to have an influence on how goods and services are produced. If we ask retailers and service providers for information and consider climate impacts when we're making our choices, this gives a clear message that there's demand for climate-friendly products.

Apart from food, some other products likely to have a big impact include: mobile phones, computers, other electrical goods and clothing – especially 'fast fashion'. Similarly, if we choose to fly that can add a lot to our carbon footprint – particularly if it's long haul. Unless or until zero carbon flights become possible, we will have to fly less.

When we're buying goods, important questions to ask are: "Will it last?" and "Is it designed to be repairable?" because the lowest-carbon product is the one that doesn't need to be replaced too often.

4. The influence of purchasing choices by organisations

Organisations including businesses, the public sector, schools, universities and community organisations are responsible for buying a significant amount of the goods and services coming into Leicester. Like individuals, they have an influence through their purchasing choices on how these goods and services are produced.

The council provides 'sustainable procurement guidance' for our staff and suppliers about environmental standards we expect goods and services to meet. This guidance was written before the climate emergency was declared and could be reviewed to see if it fully addresses the need to reduce emissions.

Proposals for businesses' purchasing are in the At Work section.

5. What is 'carbon offsetting' and does it provide an answer?

Many of us will have been offered the chance to 'offset' the carbon emissions from a purchase we're about to make – such as tickets for a flight – by paying a bit extra. Couldn't we all just pay to offset the emissions from what we buy?

The idea behind carbon offsetting is that the extra we pay funds a project somewhere else which will either absorb an equivalent amount of carbon emissions – often by planting trees – or will reduce someone else's emissions by the same amount – such as by saving energy or generating renewable energy to reduce fossil fuel use. There is disagreement about whether buying carbon offsets is a good way to deal with the impact of our purchases. Criticisms include:

- How do we know that the actions are really cutting emissions? (Although many offsetting schemes offer guarantees)
- By buying offsets instead of looking for alternative low or zero-carbon products, or finding different ways of doing things, we're not influencing suppliers to develop lower-carbon products
- We should be focusing on reducing our own emissions first.

Up to now the council has focused on reducing its own emissions and choosing goods and services which help us to do this. We don't currently pay to offset any of our emissions.

Is there sometimes a case for buying carbon offsets though? If so, is there any merit in considering a local offsetting scheme – which local individuals and organisations could pay into to fund projects in the city?

We would like to hear the public's views about carbon offsetting.

Summary of our proposals

Vision for consumer choices

- All of us will need to become well-informed about the climate impacts of what we buy – so that we can make climate-friendly choices.
- Customer demand for climate-friendly products and services will need to convince shops, manufacturers and suppliers to provide them.

- Customer demand will need to convince manufacturers to produce long-lasting products which can be repaired. Disposable and short-lived products cause extra carbon emissions when they have to be replaced.
- The overall consumption of beef, lamb and other meat, eggs and dairy produce will need to be a lot lower than today. There will need to be much more emphasis on plant-based ingredients. 'Food miles' will need to reduce too.
- Air travel will need to reduce a lot unless zero-carbon flights become possible.

Potential actions for consumer choices

Potential actions by the council and other public service providers

1. Schools could teach pupils about the causes of climate change including the impacts of what we buy.
2. The council could look at how we could help raise awareness amongst the public about consumer choices they could make to reduce their carbon footprint.
3. The council's school meals service could see if there is more it could do to reduce 'food miles' and provide appetising, healthy choices for pupils wanting to reduce or avoid meat, eggs and dairy products.
4. The council could keep supporting local food growing in the new Food Plan through allotments and the Get Growing scheme.
5. The council could lead by example with what it buys. It could see if its 'sustainable procurement guidance' for staff and suppliers needs changing in light of the climate emergency.

Potential actions by businesses

6. Shops and other businesses could provide more information to customers about the climate impact of their products.
7. Food businesses could ensure that they're offering an appetising, healthy choice of options for customers wanting to reduce or avoid meat, eggs and dairy products.

(Refer also to the At Work and Waste sections for more potential actions by businesses.)

Potential actions by individuals

8. Individuals could find out more about the climate impacts of goods and services. They could use this knowledge to reduce the carbon footprint of what they buy.
9. Individuals could create customer demand for climate-friendly products. They could choose long-lasting and repairable products for example and avoid disposable products.
10. Individuals could reduce their dietary impact by eating less meat, eggs and dairy produce. They could also reduce 'food miles' by choosing local and seasonal ingredients and buying less air-freighted food.
11. Individuals could grow some of their own food.

12. Individuals could choose to fly less.

13. Groups of people could set up community schemes such as 'tool banks' to share items that are only needed occasionally.

Potential actions by the government

14. The government could introduce mandatory labelling schemes for the carbon footprint of products.

15. The government could look at how it could encourage the supply of longer-lasting consumer goods.

Waste

Background and explanation of our proposals

Disposal and treatment of waste is a large source of carbon emissions in Leicester. Emissions come from the collection and transport of waste, the energy used to process it, and from the breakdown of waste in landfill sites. When things that could still be used, repaired or recycled are thrown away, more emissions are also produced to make new things to replace them.

The best way to reduce waste, and the carbon emissions it causes, is to follow the 'waste hierarchy'. This says that it is best to prevent waste in the first place, re-use what we can, and then recycle what can't be avoided or re-used. Anything that can't be recycled should be treated to recover energy or resources, for example through Energy-from-Waste or composting plants, with disposal to landfill as the worst option.

If the waste hierarchy is followed it will reduce emissions from collecting and disposing of waste, and from the production of new goods and raw materials.

To reduce these emissions, we think the following things will need to change:

1. Reducing the climate impact of domestic waste

Reduce

Households will need to reduce the amount of waste they produce, firstly by not buying things that aren't needed, and buy items and products that will produce less waste.

This could include buying more second-hand items, products with less packaging and, when choosing things like clothes and electricals, picking products that are designed to last longer and be repaired.

Food waste is particularly important, as a quarter of all food purchased in the UK is wasted, mostly by households. Carbon emissions are released during the production and transport of food. Food waste that is landfilled also emits carbon emissions when it decomposes.

Households will need to change their buying and consumption habits, to reduce avoidable food waste.

Reuse

Attitudes to throwing away things that are not working or are no longer needed will need to change, especially for waste electrical and electronic equipment.

Where possible, people will need to have things repaired or refurbished instead of buying new. Where usable items are no longer needed, they should be sold or donated.

The council already provides a reuse shop operated in partnership with LOROS at its Gypsum Close Recycling Centre, which diverts waste for resale. Opportunities for a second reuse shop could be explored.

Recycle

The council is responsible for organising the collection, treatment and disposal of household waste and recycling. The Council has a good overall recycling and composting rate for a large city, but the council will need to work to further increase this.

There is currently limited scope for changes to the system, as recycling services are provided through a long-term contract. However, the UK Government has recently consulted on their Resources and Waste Strategy, which aims to increase the recycling rate across the UK. The final strategy is likely to require changes to household waste and recycling collections. The UK Government plans to further consult on the strategy in 2020.

The council will need to produce a new Waste Strategy for the city following the final publication of the government's strategy. It will need to look at how to significantly increase recycling rates in Leicester, in line with the government's required changes.

Where food waste cannot be avoided it will need to be composted. More garden waste will also need to be captured and composted. Changes to food waste collection may be required as part of the Resources and Waste Strategy. The council already provides a garden waste service, and this could be more widely promoted to residents.

Expansion of UK domestic reprocessing capacity and end markets for recyclables is critical to improving recycling rates. Industry will also need to use materials and packaging that are easily recycled.

Recover

Whilst some waste could be sent to Energy-from-Waste plants, this should only be done with anything that can't practically be re-used or recycled. Whilst this can be better than simply landfilling waste, burning it does cause carbon emissions.

The majority of household food waste in Leicester is sent to an 'anaerobic digestion' plant. This breaks down the waste to produce biogas and soil conditioner. The biogas is burned to produce electricity. While burning biogas releases carbon emissions, it produces less than if the waste were landfilled.

2. Reducing the climate impact of waste from businesses and other organisations

Businesses and other organisations generate a significant amount of Leicester's waste. Like household waste, the carbon emissions it causes will need to be reduced substantially by following the waste hierarchy and ensuring that resources are continually reused in a 'circular economy'. The means that they will need to start by looking at their production processes, how their services are delivered and their distribution and logistics to find ways of reducing waste at source.

Where waste can't be prevented through efficient processes, it will need to be re-used where possible. This could mean using it within the organisation or finding ways to pass it to other organisations that are able to use it. Food waste from operations will need to be diverted from landfill and sent for composting, or potentially to plants that could use it to produce a 'biogas' fuel. Programmes that redistribute surplus edible food to those in need could also be expanded.

Any waste that can't be re-used should be recycled. All households, businesses and organisations have a Duty of Care to responsibly dispose of their own waste. Unlike households, businesses and organisations are responsible for organising their own waste collections. The council already operates a trade waste facility and could further work to promote this more to local SMEs.

Where waste services are provided by a waste contractor, businesses and organisations will need to ensure the provider collects recyclable materials separately, processes them correctly and recycles as much as possible. Waste from construction work will also need to be reduced, for example through the recycling of the vast majority of demolition waste.

Businesses will have to design, manufacture and sell products that enable these changes. For example, they will need to use more recycled materials, and make their products easier to repair and recycle. This is discussed further in the At Work section.

The council also produces waste from many of its own operations, much of which is already re-used and recycled. Examples of this include re-use of office furniture, recycling of aggregates from road repairs, use of tree waste to make fencing and mulch, and composting of green waste from parks. There is more however that it could do to further avoid, reduce, reuse and recycle its waste just like other organisations. The council should, where possible, take a leading role on this in Leicester, demonstrating good practice and sharing learning.

Summary of our proposals

Vision for waste and recycling

- Households will need to produce less waste. This will mean not buying things that will be wasted, buying products and services that are produced sustainably and re-using and repairing what they already own.
- Businesses and organisations will need to produce less waste. This includes reducing waste from what they make and sell and the services they provide.

Products and packaging will also need to be easier for consumers to re-use, repair and recycle.

- As much waste as possible will need to be recycled. The council will need to support homes to do this through the city's waste collection service. Businesses and organisations will need make sure their waste is disposed of responsibly. Food and garden waste will need to be composted.
- Where waste can't be recycled, it will need to be used for energy instead of landfilled. This includes a small amount of Energy-from-Waste and biogas.
- The council will need to lead by example, to reduce, re-use and recycle waste. The council will also need to educate residents and businesses and promote its existing waste and recycling services.
- The UK government will need to support this through their new Resources and Waste strategy. The council will need to produce a new Waste Strategy for the city based on this.

Potential actions for waste

Actions by the council

1. The council will need to produce a new Waste Strategy. This will need to follow the publication of the UK Government's Waste and Resources Strategy.
2. The council's existing household recycling and garden waste services could be promoted more, to encourage greater use.
3. The opportunity to develop a second reuse shop, to resell items that would otherwise be thrown away, could be investigated by the council.
4. More work could be done by the council to continue to promote the existing trade waste facility to more businesses and organisations.

Actions by businesses

5. Businesses and organisations could reduce the waste generated by their manufacturing, distribution and service delivery processes.
6. Waste generated by businesses and organisations could be re-used or redistributed to other organisations which can use it.
7. Businesses and organisations could ensure that the provider of their waste services is correctly processing their waste and recycling as much as possible.

(Refer also to the At Work section for more potential actions by businesses on sustainable production.)

Actions by individuals

8. People could change buying habits to produce less waste. This could mean buying items that will last longer, have less packaging and can be easily re-used or recycled.

9. Things that people no longer want could be sold or donated, instead of thrown away. Gadgets, appliances, clothes and other things could be repaired instead of buying new things.
10. People could make sure that as much of their household waste as possible is recycled through the council's household waste service.

Actions by the government

11. The government will need to publish the final version of the Waste and Resources Strategy. It could also make sure local councils have the resources and funding needed to improve their recycling, composting and waste reduction services.
12. The government could look at how to support an increase in UK reprocessing capacity for recyclable waste materials and create stronger end markets for recyclable materials.

At Work

Background and explanation of our proposals

Electricity and gas use by organisations in the city is responsible for over 40% of Leicester's carbon emissions from our direct fuel and energy use. Employee commuting and business travel, and transporting goods to and from businesses, also contributes a lot to the city's emissions from transport. The materials used by businesses have a carbon footprint of their own too. As well as reducing carbon emissions, to stay competitive business will need to provide sustainable products and services in order to meet changing consumer demands.

This section covers businesses in the city as well as organisations such as charities, educational institutions and public services including the council and NHS.

1. Carbon neutral organisations

For Leicester to become carbon neutral, businesses and organisations will need to play their part. This will mean changes to heating, insulation, lighting and equipment - and much more generation of renewable energy.

This will require support and funding from central government, and from the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP). The LLEP will need to take account of the climate emergency in local strategies, direct national funding to address these issues and lobby central government for the changes that are required.

2. Installing low carbon heating and cooling

Most businesses and organisations are still heated using gas boilers, or gas-powered blowers. Natural gas heating will need to be phased out due to the carbon emissions

from burning it. Instead heating and hot water will need to come from zero or very low carbon sources, such as:

- Heat pumps – these use electricity to extract heat from the air or ground, and are more energy efficient than standard electric heating.
- Hydrogen Boilers – hydrogen could replace natural gas as a fuel if it can be produced using a carbon neutral process. Hydrogen is not yet widely available though.
- Infra-red heaters – these heat a specific area instead of a whole space. They may be a more efficient way of heating large premises like warehouses, where heat is needed only in certain areas.
- Heat Networks – these generate heat more efficiently at a central boiler, and pump it to multiple buildings. More information can be found in the At Home section.
- Electric blowers – in some spaces, if heat pumps are not suitable these could replace gas blowers, but would likely use a lot of electricity so aren't ideal.
- Heat re-use – some machinery and processes produce lots of waste heat. This could be captured and re-used to heat premises.

As discussed in the At Home section, we are not proposing the use of wood-based 'biomass' fuel at a large-scale in Leicester.

Keeping buildings cool will become more important as hotter summers and heatwaves become more common due to climate change. This will need to be done without air-conditioning where possible, to avoid increasing electricity demand further. More information can be found in the At Home section.

3. Energy Efficient Workplaces

Many buildings are poorly insulated, and it will be necessary to improve their insulation to reduce the energy use and cost of heating them. High levels of insulation will be needed for heat pumps to be effective and affordable to run. They will also be necessary to limit the extra demand on the electricity grid as gas is phased out.

Non-domestic properties are often harder to insulate than homes, as there is a much wider range of building types and uses. They often have lower levels of existing insulation too. Solutions will need to be found to allow these buildings to be insulated.

All lighting in workplaces will need to be energy efficient. This will mean replacing halogen and fluorescent lighting with LEDs.

4. Renewable energy

Organisations will continue to have a carbon footprint from electricity use as long as gas is used to generate some of the electricity in the UK. Electricity demand is also likely to increase significantly in the future, meaning that more generating capacity will be needed.

We think that most organisations will need to have renewable energy generation systems installed. Those premises with a large roof space will be especially suitable for solar PV panels, and organisations with a high electricity demand will be able to use the energy on-site. Solar PV panels could also help to generate a financial return for the organisation.

Battery storage systems will be needed in some organisations to store excess electricity generated. These will allow self-generated renewable electricity to continue to be used on site when generation is low and can cut electricity costs.

Organisations which have high electricity demand but are able to vary the time at which they use it could benefit from taking part in 'demand response' programmes. These programmes can pay participants to reduce energy use when demand on the grid is high. As renewable energy is less predictable than fossil fuel sources, these programmes make it easier to utilise renewable capacity as it is produced

'Smart' energy controls will be appropriate for many organisations. This could include monitoring devices and software to show where energy is wasted, or usage could be reduced. More detail on other technologies is available in the At Home section.

5. Travel and transport

Businesses and organisations are also responsible for a lot of carbon emissions from travel. This includes emissions from vehicles they own or rent, employees commuting and business travel, and the transport of goods to or from the business.

The Travel and Transport section explains the overall changes that will need to be made, which businesses and organisations will need to implement.

6. Low-carbon production

Production and manufacturing services which use a lot of electricity and gas can be responsible for a large proportion of many organisations' carbon footprints. This includes energy use for computers and electronic systems used to provide services.

When buying new equipment and machinery organisations will need to choose the most energy efficient options. Existing machinery could also be refurbished to improve its efficiency. Whilst this may lead to a higher initial capital cost, the energy savings should provide pay-back over time.

Where these machines and processes use electricity, this will need to come from renewable sources. This will require organisations to install their own renewable energy technologies as discussed above. Where gas is used for production processes low carbon alternatives will need to be found.

Organisations will also need to look at ways to use behaviour change schemes to help staff reduce carbon emissions and save energy. This could involve using switch-off procedures or educating staff on energy-saving. Incentive schemes and improved facilities could also be used, for example making it easier for staff to walk or cycle to work.

7. Waste

The waste produced by businesses and organisations will also need to be reduced, as waste causes carbon emissions in a number of ways. This is discussed further in the Waste section.

8. Creating low carbon products

Manufacturers will need to design products so that they can be more easily repaired and refurbished, and retailers will need to supply them to consumers. Replacement parts and repair instructions for items will also need to be made available to consumers more easily. The government could support this through legal and regulatory changes to make it easier. Items such as clothes will need to be designed to last for more than one season.

Any organisations purchasing goods, including raw materials, components, ingredients and finished products need to buy them from sustainable sources, and suppliers that are tackling their own carbon footprints. This includes using as much previously recycled material as possible. Packaging materials will also need to change, with all products provided in recycled and recyclable or re-usable packaging. Local organisations will need to use their influence to drive these changes in their own supply chains.

These changes will also be driven by changing consumer demands, as public awareness of and engagement with the climate emergency increases. Demand for products that have been produced sustainably, have a small carbon footprint and can be re-used or recycled easily will increase. Businesses will therefore need to meet these demands to make sure they remain competitive in a changing market.

The council has already brought in sustainable procurement guidelines for its purchasing and can play a role in leading by example, ensuring the guidance is strengthened over time. We are also embedding 'social value' into our contracts, giving us the chance to seek additional outputs through our contracts where appropriate.

9. The public sector leading by example

Many of the largest employers in the city are public sector organisations. These include schools, the NHS and the council. These organisations should help to lead by example through addressing their own emissions.

The council has already invested in increasing the energy efficiency of its own buildings and fitting renewable energy sources. We will look to continue this work.

The council is also the landlord of a large number of business rental units. It could work to further improve the energy efficiency of these premises. Tenants could be engaged on how to reduce energy use and carbon emissions too.

Summary of our proposals

Vision for employers

- Businesses and other employers will need to use low or zero carbon heating and cooling systems and generate their own renewable electricity wherever possible. Workplaces will also need to be more highly insulated to reduce their heating need.
- Business processes and equipment will need to be much more energy and resource efficient. Production processes will need to be carbon neutral – using renewable energy generated on-site where possible.
- All items and materials procured by businesses and organisations will eventually need to come from sustainable sources, for example using recycled materials.
- Customers will expect the good and services they use and buy to be sustainable and zero carbon, so businesses and organisations will need to achieve this to stay competitive.

Potential actions at work

Potential actions by the council and other public service providers

1. The council could invest in improving the energy efficiency of the business premises they own and rent out, and educate tenants about energy savings and carbon reduction.
2. More could be invested in improving the energy efficiency of the council's and other public sector organisations' own buildings. This could include investment in more renewable energy systems.
3. The council could apply for more funding to support to local businesses and organisations, particularly SMEs, to increase the energy efficiency of their premises.

Potential actions by businesses

4. Employers could replace gas heating with low carbon alternatives such as heat pumps or connect to district heating networks. They could also improve building insulation.
5. More solar PV panels or other renewable energy systems could be installed by employers. Where appropriate they could also install battery storage systems to make full use of energy generated on-site.
6. Employers with high electricity demand could sign up to demand-response programmes where they are available.

7. Existing machinery and equipment could be replaced with more efficient alternatives by employers. They could also replace machinery using gas or other fossil fuels with electric alternatives.
8. Organisations could design, manufacture and sell products that use sustainable materials, and are designed to be re-used and repaired.
9. The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) could integrate the climate emergency into their strategies, direct national funding to the climate emergency and lobby government for more support.

Actions by individuals

10. Individual staff could encourage their employers to take action on the climate emergency, for example through staff incentive schemes and behaviour change programmes.

Actions by the government

11. The government could make a national plan for moving to low or zero-carbon heating and provide funding and support to employers.
12. Support and funding could also be provided by the government to improve other aspects of energy efficiency in businesses and organisations premises.

Land use, green space and development of the city

Background and explanation of our proposals

The quality of new development in the city, the management of green space and tree cover and planning for future land use and infrastructure will all be important to enable Leicester to become carbon neutral and to adapt as the climate changes.

With the city population predicted to continue growing, an estimated 29,104 homes will need to be built by 2036 (1,712 dwellings per annum between 2019-2036) along with more employment sites, schools, community facilities and infrastructure. This could add to Leicester's carbon footprint and affect its vulnerability to a changing climate unless steps are taken to make sure that development is carbon neutral and adapted to future conditions.

The proposals below set out how we think Leicester will need to change in terms of land use, green space and development if it is to become carbon neutral and adapt to the changing climate. They are aspirational and may not necessarily be achievable within the current constraints and limitations of the planning system, the property market and other factors. They are presented to prompt discussion and gain views on what might need to happen, both locally and in terms of action by national government, to bring about the changes we think are needed.

1. Making new homes and other new buildings carbon neutral and climate-adapted

We will need the levels of carbon emissions generated by new development of all kinds to reduce as quickly as possible, to the point where all new buildings are designed and built to be carbon neutral wherever possible. This will include very high levels of insulation, generation and use of renewable energy and an end to the use of gas for heating and hot water in new buildings. Refer to the At Home and At Work sections for more details.

Wherever possible, new buildings will also need to be designed for a changing climate:

- to keep cool without aircon where possible during more frequent heatwaves
- to use less mains water in response to prolonged spells of dry weather
- to be located and/or designed to protect occupants from the risk of flooding, and
- to reduce the pressure on the drainage and river system during intense rainfall by dispersing rainwater runoff in other ways (known as 'sustainable urban drainage systems' or SuDS).

While the design features and the technologies needed to create carbon neutral, climate-adapted buildings already exist and are being successfully used in buildings today, they do currently add to the cost of construction. This is hindering their wider uptake. The affordability of new housing is an acknowledged issue and developers are not confident that customers will be prepared or able to pay more for a low carbon building - despite it being cheaper to run. There are also currently other constraints within the planning system on all new development, including the need to make sure that development remains viable. This may impact on the ability of the council as Local Planning Authority to make low carbon, climate-adapted design a requirement on all developments coming forward.

For carbon neutral, climate-adapted development to become the norm, we believe that changes to minimum standards for new building will have a role to play. This is discussed below in point 5.

In the meantime, the council and other public service providers such as the NHS could all aim to set an example with their own developments immediately. Projects would cost more up-front, but the resulting buildings would be cheaper to operate and the future cost of upgrading them to be carbon neutral – which will be necessary for existing buildings - would be avoided. The cost of retrofitting buildings is typically much more than the extra cost of building them to be carbon neutral in the first place.

Similarly, where the council releases land onto the market for new development by private developers or others, there is the potential to seek a commitment from the developer to build to low carbon standards, as part of any sale or development agreement. The council has already done this successfully on some sites. In the current market it could result in a lower sale price for the land being realised by the council, which results in less capital income and therefore potentially less for spending on other projects. It would, however achieve significant and lasting emissions reductions.

2. Use of low-carbon building materials

The impact of new buildings on climate change goes beyond just the carbon emissions generated when construction is finished and they are in use. Research has shown that the emissions caused by the manufacture and transport of the building materials – such as cement and steel - is very significant too. Use of timber can also add to climate change and destroy wildlife through deforestation if it's purchased from companies who operate irresponsibly.

For these reasons, we believe that the climate change and other environmental implications of choices for construction materials will need to be given much more careful consideration. Less energy-intensive alternatives to concrete, steel and other products will need to be favoured, or suppliers found who manufacture using renewable energy. Responsibly-produced 'sustainable' timber is already widely available and its increased use could in fact be positive for climate change by 'locking up' carbon in the structure of new buildings to offset some of the other emissions caused by the building. We welcome views on how these changes to choices of materials could come about outside of the planning process.

The council has a long-standing policy of using only proven sustainable timber and is looking at what other environmental standards it should apply to its own developments. The use of low-carbon alternative construction products could be prioritised, as could the potential to make more use of sustainably sourced timber.

3. Development designed for zero carbon travel

The location of new development, the design of footpaths, cycleways and roads on the site and the inclusion of facilities such as cycle parking, bus stops and electric vehicle charging points will all affect how straightforward, safe and convenient it is to travel to and from the development using low or zero carbon modes of travel.

Development needs to be designed for a city in which ultimately all travel and transport must be by zero carbon modes. This will mean that homes, employment sites and public facilities will need, for example:

- more space for cycles and e-bikes,
- nearby bus services, with stops on or near the development, and
- enough electric vehicle charge points.

The council's planning policies in the Core Strategy already address some of these issues and the public will be able to comment on the proposed policies for the new Local Plan (see point 5 below). Even in the event that the Local Plan is able to develop and adopt such policies it should be noted that they will need to be balanced against other, sometimes competing, considerations in the planning system too.

4. Maintaining and adding to tree cover and green spaces

Trees in Leicester are estimated to be storing about the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide as the city generates in a 7-8 month period (826,000 tonnes). It is also estimated that if all of the suitable land in the city without trees was planted up, the

extra carbon dioxide absorbed over a 25 year period (279,000 tonnes) would be equivalent to about 2-3 months' emissions.¹ This suggests that an urban area like Leicester with limited space cannot rely very much on tree planting to offset our emissions, even if people were prepared to see much or all of Leicester's open green space covered in trees. However, it doesn't mean that we shouldn't look after and increase our tree stock.

As the biggest owner of green spaces and trees in the city, the council already has a Tree Strategy through which we maintain our existing tree stock, replace trees and plant more where we can. In response to the climate emergency, we propose to continue to do this, and to investigate how we can best target our planting to get the most benefits for the city including:

- Increasing biodiversity and providing beautiful spaces for recreation
- Limiting the impact of more frequent heatwaves by increasing summertime shade and reducing heat build-up
- Reducing flood risk by slowing down rainwater run-off - to stop rivers and drains being overwhelmed during intense rainfall
- Reducing people's exposure to air pollution
- Absorbing carbon emissions to the extent that we reasonably can.

Despite limited scope to absorb carbon emissions by new planting, due to the constraints on land we have available in the city, we propose to look for opportunities to increase our tree stock through the Tree Strategy. We will consider carbon storage as one of the factors when we decide which tree species to plant.

Aside from trees, Leicester's green spaces store relatively little carbon in other vegetation (only 3% compared to 97% in the trees) but they have an important role, like trees, in reducing the impacts as the climate changes: limiting heat build-up during heatwaves and slowing the run-off of rainwater to protect from flooding.

As well as managing a network of public open spaces across the city, the council has planning policies to protect green spaces and to make sure that new development includes an appropriate amount of green space and trees. Developers are also encouraged to consider including 'green roofs' in their designs and these can provide at least some of the benefits of green space at ground level for wildlife, flood risk reduction and heatwave protection.

The council as Planning Authority will continue to apply its planning and conservation powers to protect existing trees and a network of green spaces, and to make sure that new trees and green spaces are provided as part of development where appropriate and possible. Refer to point 6 below.

¹ Based on the results of research by Sheffield University and on Leicester's estimated city-wide carbon dioxide emissions for 2017 published by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

5. Planning policies and building standards to address the climate emergency

National minimum standards for energy efficiency and carbon emissions from new buildings are set by the government through the Building Regulations and the council applies planning policies (consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework or NPPF) to make sure that development addresses climate change. Current policies in the Core Strategy for the city cover areas including: energy efficiency, renewable energy, district heat networks, transport and accessibility, flood risk and open space.

The council is currently preparing a new Local Plan which will seek to include policies for land use and development to address climate change. We will be publishing a draft of the new Local Plan for consultation and if you would like to be notified when the consultation starts please email planning.policy@leicester.gov.uk.

The government is currently consulting on proposals to raise energy efficiency and low carbon standards in the Building Regulations from 2020, as a stepping stone to a new Future Homes Standard from 2025. Details are available on the [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk) where the consultation is open until 10th January 2020.

Summary of our proposals

Vision for land use, green space and development of the city

- All new buildings will need to be designed and built to be carbon neutral. This means they will need to be very highly insulated and use low-carbon heating instead of gas heating. Renewable energy such as solar panels will need to be installed.
- New buildings will need to keep cool in hotter weather without using air conditioning, as it uses a lot of electricity. They will also need to use less water. To reduce the risk of flooding they will need to disperse heavy rainfall without overwhelming drains and rivers.
- Building materials made with much less energy, or with renewable energy, will need to be used. To prevent deforestation, all timber used for construction will need to come from sustainably managed forests.
- Travel to and from new developments will need to be easy, convenient and safe on foot, by bike and on public transport. There will need to be charging points for electric vehicles too.
- Tree cover will need to be maintained and increased where possible. New planting will need to provide for recreation, wildlife, flood prevention and respite from heatwaves. It will also need to absorb carbon emissions.

Potential actions for land use, green space and development of the city

Potential actions by the council and other public service providers

1. The council, NHS, schools and other public service providers could lead by example in their own building projects. They could allocate money to make them as close as possible to being carbon neutral.

2. When selling land for development, the council could seek an agreement with the developer for the new buildings to be as low-carbon as possible.
3. The council and other owners of green spaces could plant more trees to help keep the city cooler during heatwaves and safer from flooding as the climate changes. More trees can also absorb some carbon emissions.
4. The council could make sure that the new Local Plan addresses the climate emergency.

Potential actions by businesses

5. Developers could more actively market the advantages of low-carbon homes and offices to create more customer demand. Low running costs are a particular advantage.
6. Construction companies could train more of their workforce to build to very low carbon standards. The industry needs to be ready for all buildings to be built this way.
7. Businesses commissioning new premises could specify high standards of energy efficiency, low carbon emissions, renewable energy and facilities for bikes and electric vehicles.

Potential actions by individuals

8. Those looking to buy a new-build home could ask developers for details of the energy efficiency and reduced carbon emissions of their properties for sale, to show that there is customer demand for higher standards.
9. Anyone can read the council's consultation draft Local Plan when it is published and comment on its policies for addressing climate change. They can also comment on the government's proposals for the Future Homes Standard.

Potential actions by the government

10. The government needs to make sure that its proposed Future Homes Standard and changes to the Building Regulations will raise carbon-saving standards quickly enough.

HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20			
MEETING DATE	MEETING ITEMS	LEAD OFFICER	ACTION AGREED
Meeting Date 5 August 2019 Agenda Date: 24th June 2019 Deadline for papers 24th July 2019 Papers despatch: 26th July 2019	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	
Meeting Date 7 October 2019 Agenda Date: 27 August 2019	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	

95

<p>Meeting Date 4 November 2019</p> <p>Agenda Date: 14 October 2019</p> <p>Deadline for papers 23 October 2019</p> <p>Papers despatch: 25 October 2019</p>	<p>Progress report for Goscote House & Sprinklers update</p> <p>Safety Compliance</p> <p>Preparing for winter</p> <p>Housing Capital Programme update</p> <p>Planning for delivery of Manifesto</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>Chris Burgin</p>	
<p>Meeting Date 12 January 2020</p> <p>Agenda meeting 9 December 2019</p> <p>Deadline for Papers 2 January 2020</p> <p>Papers despatch: 3 January 2020</p>	<p>HRA Budget</p> <p>Climate emergency</p>	<p>Chris Burgin</p> <p>Duncan Bell</p>	
<p>Meeting Date 17 February 2020</p> <p>Agenda Date: 27 January 2020</p> <p>Deadline for papers 5 February 2020</p> <p>Papers despatch: 7 February 2020</p>	<p>Repairs performance and update Report</p> <p>Homelessness update & Overcrowding project update</p> <p>Voids & 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>	

<p>Meeting Date 20 April 2020</p> <p>Agenda Date: 30 March 2020</p> <p>Deadline for papers 6 April 2020</p> <p>Papers despatch: 8 April 2020</p>	<p>Rent arrears report</p> <p>Goscote House redevelopment</p> <p>Sheltered Housing project update</p> <p>District Service Priorities & 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>97 To be allocated</p>	<p>Update on discretionary funding</p>	<p>Alison Greenhill</p>	

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