



'Who Gets Social Housing' and Overcrowding Reduction Strategy

For consideration by: Housing Scrutiny Commission

Date: 6 September 2021

Lead Director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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- Report version number: 1

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report provides an update to Members of the 'headline' Housing Register and Lettings data, relating to Leicester City Council's Housing Register.
- 1.2. The report deals with the period starting 1st April 2020 and ending 31st March 2021.

2. COVID-19

- 2.1. From the end of March 2020 to the end of July 2020, 4 months in total, the Housing Register and Leicester HomeChoice was closed.
- 2.2. During this period, and especially at the beginning of the period, the availability of properties for allocation was minimal, as businesses worked on COVID-safe ways to continue with tenancy terminations, voids work, and other aspects of the property process.
- 2.3. The Government advised local authorities to progress limited allocations through a direct match & let process in order to ensure, insofar as possible, that those in critical housing need retain some access to social housing. Leicester adopted this approach, and it included a focus on;
 - Homeless applicants
 - Applicants at imminent risk of homelessness
 - Applicants at risk or harassment or domestic abuse
 - Priority referrals from Adult Social Care and Children's Services
 - Any other critical exceptional circumstance
- 2.4. The result of this was an increase in the proportion of lettings done via Direct Let during the period – 40% of all lettings.
- 2.5. Over the same period, and until very recently, Leicester City Council were operating an 'Everyone In' approach to homelessness assistance and temporary accommodation, to protect those who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping. This resulted in almost 1000 people being assisted across the year in a fantastic partnership effort which no doubt saved lives during the pandemic. Around 150 of these individuals remain within the pathway and require continued help into settled accommodation.
- 2.6. As an ongoing response to this crisis, and to aid service recovery, Leicester City Council are completing an increased number of direct allocations to persons within the Single Homeless Pathway, alongside other means of assistance.
- 2.7. Please note that a secondary effect of the Council's pandemic response and recovery, means that the statistics drawn from the Housing Register now have to be

viewed with caution as they do not represent a continuation of 'normal' i.e. are difficult to compare retrospectively. Statistics are expected to recover over 2021/2022.

- 2.8. With caution in place, Part 3 of this report now sets out the headline data for 2020/2021.

3. Headline data from the Housing Register

3.1. Overall number of households on the Housing Register

- The number of households on the Housing Register has decreased by 2% from 6486 at end-2019/2020 to 6366 at end-2020/2021.

3.2. Banding proportions

- Band 1 applicants account for 14% (869). The figure at end-2019/2020 was 14%.
- Band 2 applicants account for 38% (2404) of all households on the Housing Register. The figure at end-2019/2020 was 39%.
- Band 3 applicants account for 49% (3093) of all households on the Housing Register. The figure at end-2019/2020 was 47%.

3.3. Primary reasons for joining the Register

- Overcrowding remains the biggest reason for joining the Housing Register and currently accounts for 63% (4003) of the register.

Following a Summer 2019 Policy change, there are now three Overcrowding priorities, rather than the original two. This allows for overcrowding needs on the Housing Register to be better separated dependent on level of need, which in turn allows for those in the most critical housing need to be elevated and prioritised appropriately.

The following information summarises the differences between priorities:

- Band 1 Overcrowding priority is awarded to those whose overcrowding meets the most critical need – either meeting the statutory overcrowding definition within the Housing Act 198, or otherwise exceeding the property's maximum occupancy levels.
- Band 2 Overcrowding priority is awarded to those whose overcrowding falls short of Band 1 criteria, but is acknowledged within LCC's Allocations Policy as severe – generally those lacking 2 bedrooms or more.
- Band 3 Overcrowding priority is awarded to those whose overcrowding is not severe, but is acknowledged within LCC's Allocations Policy as causing potential houses difficulties – generally those lacking just one bedroom.

It's important to note that the number of critically/statutorily overcrowded households has decreased from 170 to 158 (7% decrease) in the last 12 months. This is primarily due to the higher banding priority (Band 1) awarded to those households with the severest overcrowding which has enabled them to secure more suitable housing.

This is evidence that the Policy change is working as intended.

Further to this, the Housing Division hold an Overcrowding Reduction Strategy to look at other ways to tackle the housing register, and are in the progress of extending homes where viable, and will shortly re-launch the Easy Move scheme to incentivise and assist with moves where people are under-occupying homes, to allow those homes to be better utilised.

- People who are homeless or threatened with homelessness accounts for 18% (1157) of all households on the Housing Register. The figure at end-2019/2020 was 17% so this remains relatively steady despite the unique challenges of 2020/2021.

3.4. Primary demand

- Demand across all types of accommodation is high, and outstrips supply.
- The highest General Needs demand is for 2-bedroom accommodation which accounts for 34% (2174) of total demand. The figure at end-2019/2020 was 33% so this remains relatively steady.
- Another primarily area of demand is for adapted accommodation. Work is ongoing to analyse this and determine how we can increase supply and make demand more equitable.

3.5. Other observations

- Social Housing tenants (Leicester) account for 24% (LCC tenants 1009, 16% & RSL tenants 488, 8%) of all households on the Housing Register. This is unchanged from 2019/2020.
- Applications from some wards are significantly higher than others, especially in wards where it is known that overcrowding is a major factor in housing need. Applications by Ward can be seen at Appendix 1.

4. Lettings Headline data

4.1. Overall number of lettings

- There were 980 lettings during 2020/2021. Lettings during 2019/2020 were 1271. The equates to a net reduction of 291 lets.
- As such, the number of lettings within 2020/2021 decreased by 23% compared to 2019/2020.
- This is primarily due changes in behaviour from Registered Providers during the pandemic (responses and recovery varied). 226 of the 291 lets (78%) can be accounted for by the net reduction in Housing Association offers to those on the Housing Register.
- Government statistics¹ show nationally there was a 39% decrease in the number of social lettings in the first 6 months of 2020/21.

4.2. Which applicants are getting the lettings?

- Of all lettings in 2020/2021;
 - Band 1 accounted for 67% (660) of offers;
 - Band 2 accounted for 28% (278) of offers;
 - Band 3 accounted for 4% (42) of offers.
- 517 (53%) of all lettings were for households who became homeless or were at threat of homelessness. This was a 7% proportionate increase from the corresponding period last year and is primarily due to the priority given for allocations to homeless households during the pandemic and whilst Leicester HomeChoice was closed.

4.3. Waiting times

4.3.1. General Needs

- For general needs properties that were not directly allocated, the current average waiting times for Band 1 households within 2020/2021 were (shown in months):

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed+
BAND 1				
House / Maisonette	N/A	9	9	14
Bungalow	6	N/A	N/A	N/A
Flat	6	7	N/A	N/A
Bedsit	4	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sheltered	2	N/A	N/A	N/A

* N/A indicates there were no lets of that type in the period.

¹ [Social housing lettings in England, April to September 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/social-housing-lettings-in-england-april-to-september-2020)

This has increased significantly from 2019/2020 where offers within Band 1 could be received within an average of 4 months. This is attributed to:

- Closure of Leicester HomeChoice for 4 months within Quarter 1
 - Direct allocation processes to those in critical need will have left some in less critical need waiting for a longer-than-normal period
 - Reduction in number of lettings available this period
 - 47% of lets were 1-bed accommodation
- For general needs properties that were not directly allocated, the current average waiting times for Band 2 households within 2020/2021 were (shown in months):

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed+
BAND 2				
House / Maisonette	N/A	29	45	38
Bungalow	9	N/A	N/A	N/A
Flat	14	15	N/A	N/A
Bedsit	6	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sheltered	6	N/A	N/A	N/A

* N/A indicates there were no lets of that type in the period.

This has remained relatively steady for those requiring 1-bedroom accommodation, but has increased for those waiting for 2-bedroom accommodation or larger, compared to 2019/2020 where offers within Band 2 could be received within an average of 18 months for 2-beds, and 24 months for 3 beds. This is attributed to:

- Closure of Leicester HomeChoice for 4 months within Quarter 1
- Direct allocation processes to those in critical need will have left some in less critical need waiting for a longer-than-normal period
- Reduction in number of lettings available this period
- 47% of lets were 1-bed accommodation

4.3.2. Wheelchair Accessible Accommodation

- For wheelchair accessible properties that were not directly allocated, the current average waiting times for households within 2020/2021 were (shown in months):

1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed
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BAND 1				
House / Maisonette	N/A	N/A	32	34
Bungalow	25	19	N/A	N/A
Flat	N/A	20	N/A	N/A
Bedsit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sheltered	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
BAND 2				
House / Maisonette	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bungalow	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Flat	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bedsit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sheltered	19	N/A	N/A	N/A

* N/A indicates there were no lets of that type in the period.

4.3.3. Other Adapted Accommodation

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed
BAND 1				
House / Maisonette	N/A	15	19	34
Bungalow	7	13	N/A	N/A
Flat	5	7	N/A	N/A
Bedsit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sheltered	5	N/A	N/A	N/A
BAND 2				
House / Maisonette	N/A	N/A	34	N/A
Bungalow	12	89	N/A	N/A
Flat	5	24	N/A	N/A
Bedsit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sheltered	5	N/A	N/A	N/A

4.3.4. Ground Floor Accommodation

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed
BAND 1				
House / Maisonette	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bungalow	7	N/A	N/A	N/A
Flat	10	9	N/A	N/A
Bedsit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sheltered	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
BAND 2				
House / Maisonette	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bungalow	12	N/A	N/A	N/A
Flat	5	9	N/A	N/A
Bedsit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sheltered	5	N/A	N/A	N/A

4.4. Housing Association & HomeCome Lettings

- Lettings to Housing Associations and HomeCome accounted for 146 (15%) of all lettings in 2020/2021. This compared to 372 (29%) of all lettings in 2019/2020. This is primarily due to the close of Leicester HomeChoice and the continuing effects of the pandemic, and more specifically the varying responses and recovery of Registered Providers.
- Midland Heart was the largest provider with 36 (25%) of these 146 lets with PA Housing the next highest provider with 35 lettings (24%).
- There were 185 lettings via the Housing Options Private Rented Sector Team, creating tenancies in the private rented sector via our incentive schemes. This was a 16% increase from 2019/2020, but fell short of the new target of 200. This was as a result of targets not being met within Quarter 1 following the market shutdown during the first COVID-19 lockdown.

4.5. Direct Lettings

- The number of direct lettings accounted for 38% (375) of all lettings in 2020/2021. This was a 100% increase from 2019/2020 which came in at 19%. This is attributed to;
 - the closure of Leicester HomeChoice for a 4-month period during the pandemic with all new voids being allocated on a direct let basis
 - an increased number of direct lets to those who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness, to aid homelessness services to recover from the government's pandemic 'Everyone In' initiative.

4.6. Other observations

- There was a total of 464 lettings of 1-bedroom accommodation in 2020/2021. This accounts for 47% of all lettings.
- The areas with the most available properties within 2020/2021 were New Parks (117), followed by Eyres Monsell (101).

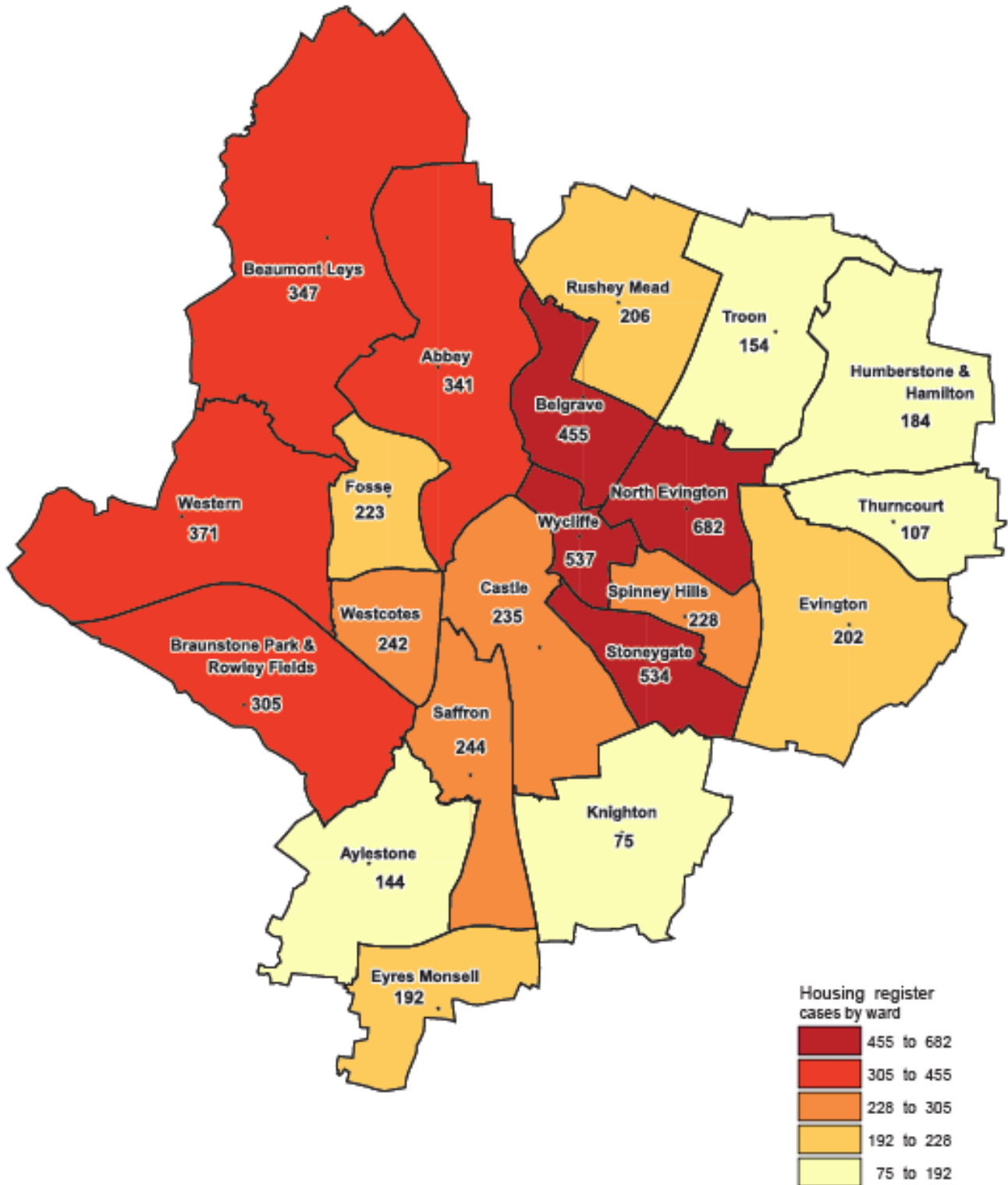
5. **Summary of appendices:**

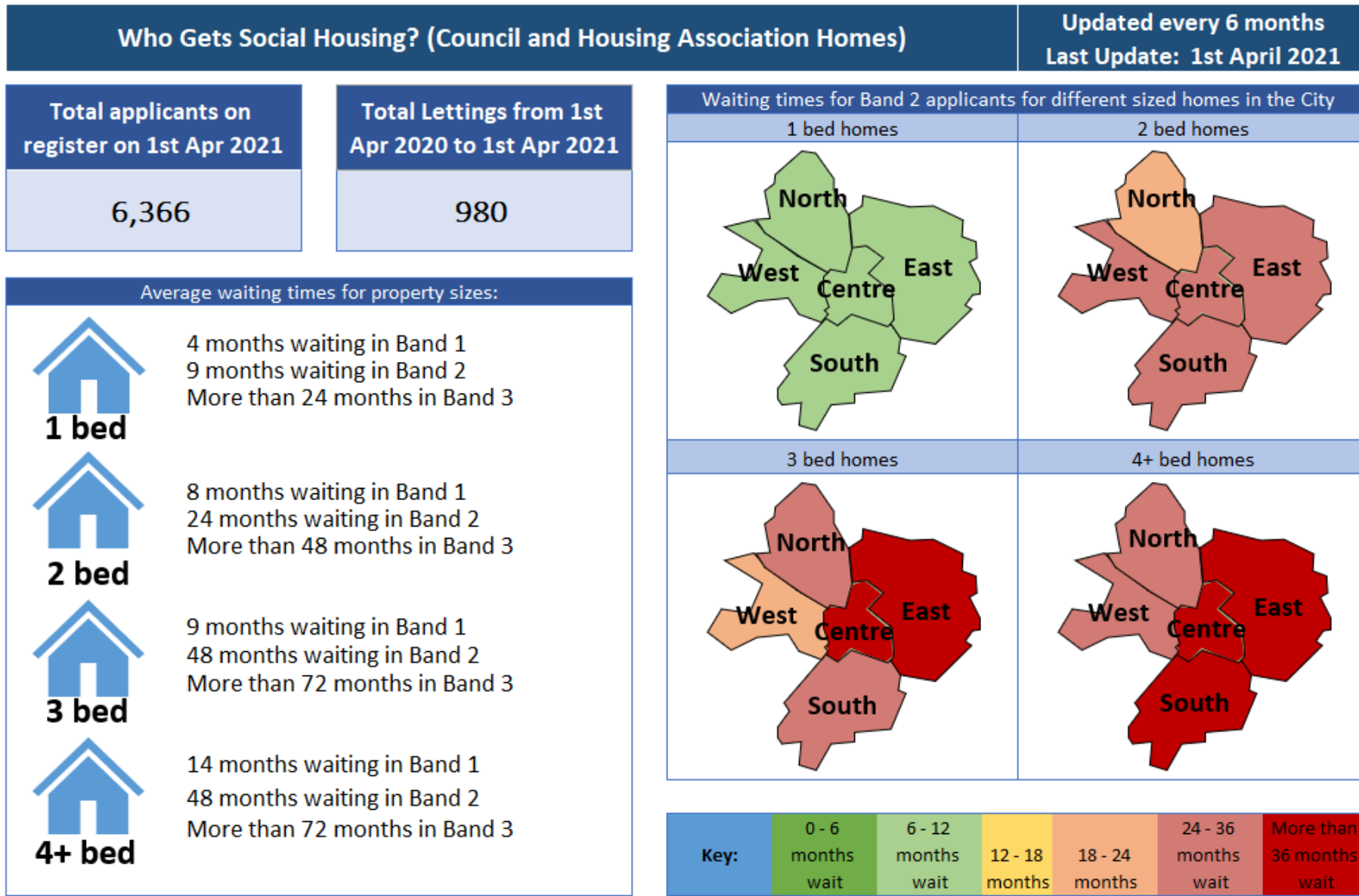
- Appendix 1 – Map - Number of Applicants on the Housing Register by Ward (01/10/2020)
- Appendix 2 – Dashboard – Customer Dashboard
- Appendix 3 – Dashboard – Management/Staff Dashboard

6. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)? No

7. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why? No – update only.

Number of Applicants on the Housing Register by Ward (01/04/2021)






For further information visit our website at www.leicester.gov.uk/housingapplications


Who Gets Social Housing? (Council and Housing Association Homes) 2020 - 2021
Housing Register Build Data

Total Applicants	
Period last year	As at 1st April 2021
6,486	6,366
% Increase / Decrease	
-2%	

Band Breakdown		
Band 1	Band 2	Band 3
869	2,404	3,093



Need (size of home) breakdown				
1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed +
2,021	2,174	1,374	601	196




Top 10 reasons for appearing on Register		
Priority Reason	Number of Applicants	As a % of all Applicants
Overcrowding (B3)	2927	46%
Homeless or threatened with (B1&2)	867	14%
Medium Medical (B2)	444	7%
Severe Overcrowding (B2)	302	5%
Temporary Accommodation (B2)	290	5%
High Medical (B1)	283	4%
Critical Overcrowding (B1)	158	2%
Sheltered Housing Only (B3)	116	2%
Priority Under-occupation (B1)	92	1%
Harassment (B1)	54	1%

Lettings Data

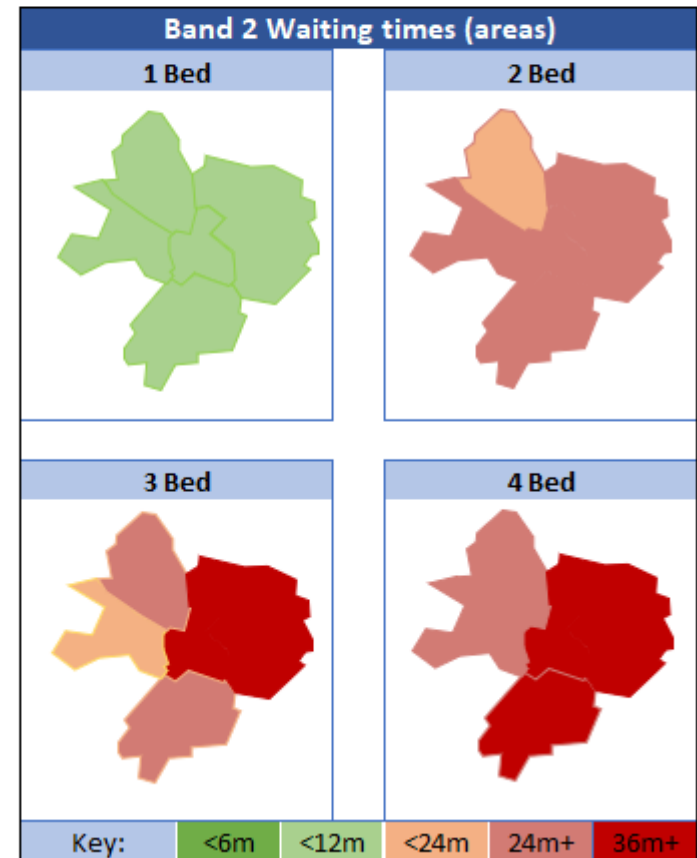
Total Lettings	
2019/2020	2020/2021
1,271	980
% Increase / Decrease	
-23%	





Band Breakdown		
Band 1	Band 2	Band 3
660	278	42



Lettings breakdown by size of home				
1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed +
464	248	245	17	6

Waiting times (months)					
	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed
BAND 1	4	8	9	14	14
BAND 2	9	24	48	48	-
BAND 3	-	-	-	-	-



Which priorities are getting the housing?	
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Temp Accom 2 Homeless 3 Medical 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Homeless 2 Overcrowding 3 Medical
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Homeless 2 Overcrowding =3 Management Case =3 Medical 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Overcrowding 2 Medical 3 Homeless