
District Service Performance

Housing Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: [07/01/2025]

Lead director: Chris Burgin

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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- Report version number: V1

1. Summary

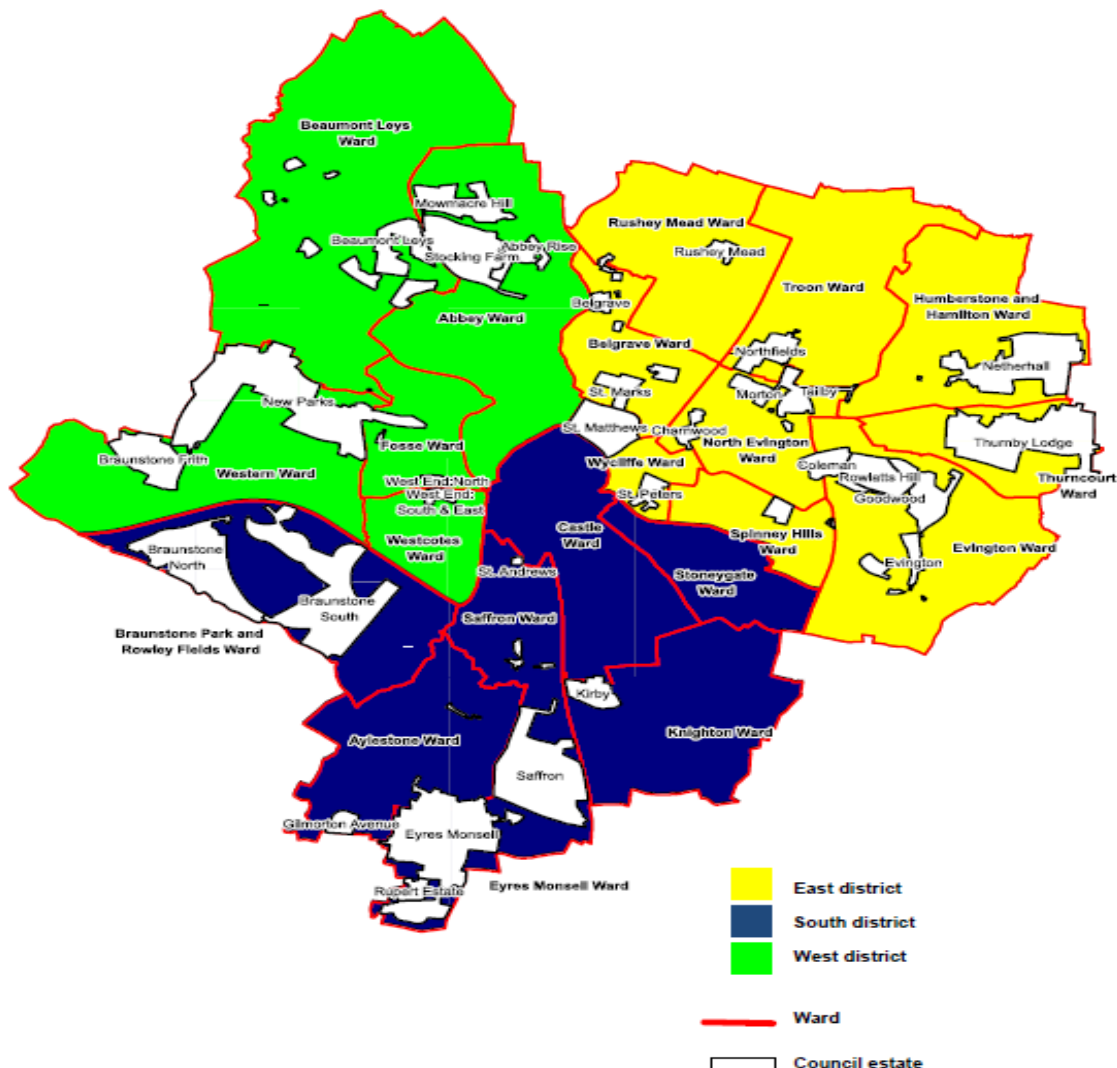
1.1 This report provides an overview of the Tenancy Management Service, the support it provides and its performance as a social housing landlord to Leicester City Council tenants.

2. Recommended actions/decision

2.1 To note and comment on the contents of the report.

3. Background and options with supporting evidence

3.1 The Tenancy Management service provides the landlord role to council tenants, there are just under 20,000 council owned properties in the city. The service operates on a geographical basis in the city, in three districts, East, South and West. Each district is managed by a District Manager.



3.2 The District Managers oversee tenancy management staff, which include housing officers and assistants to provide the landlord function to council tenants.

3.3 There is a small Leaseholders Liaison Team to support the 1800 leaseholders in the city and a Gypsy and Traveller Team managing our 3 permanent sites in the city.

3.4 The profile of tenants has changed significantly over recent years as the criteria for social housing tightens because of the housing crisis. We continue to re-house more people with multiple complex needs. To support our tenants who struggle to maintain their tenancy we have the in-house Supporting Tenants and Residents (STAR) service and the Help Beyond Housing Team.

3.5 The vision for the tenancy management service is set out as below:

Vision:

“A customer focused landlord service that enables and supports tenants to have successful tenancies and live safely adhering to their Conditions of Tenancy”.

3.6 An improvement plan for the service was developed in 2022 to implement the vision and listed the following priorities:

- **Live Well**
- **Specialist Support**
- **Customer Care**
- **Fire Safety and Communal Areas**
- **Better Estates**

3.7 The functions carried out by the service, broadly correspond to the priorities set out above, customer care is integral to delivering all functions.

3.8 In line with live well priority the tenancy management staff carry out:

- First visits
- Dealing with complaints and enquiries
- Welfare visits
- Domestic Abuse Cases
- Management case - where tenants need to relocate.
- Decants - which is a temporary relocation whilst repairs are carried out.
- Access to properties
- Condition of Tenancy breaches
- Mutual Exchanges
- Tenancy Changes
- Unlawful Occupiers
- Safeguarding and risk cases
- Emergency situations – flood /fire
- Out of Hours Service jointly with Repairs Service

3.9 In line with the specialist support priority:

- Tenancy Management staff manage sheltered accommodation.
- Tenancy management staff refer tenants who need support to appropriate services.
- STAR provide tenancy sustainment support to vulnerable tenants.
- Help Beyond Housing which is currently funded by the Department of Health provide intensive housing support to tenants who are dependent on drugs and alcohol and have multiple complex needs. The service is also now working on developing specialist supported housing for council tenants with these needs.

3.10 In line with the fire safety and communal work priority, tenancy management staff carry out:

- Fire inspections of communal areas in flatted accommodation
- Fire risk Assessment Reviews
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan
- Cleaning inspections

3.11 In line with the better estate's priority, staff carry out:

- Estate inspections
- Identify and implement estate improvements (Environmental Budget work)
- Cleaning inspections
- The Anti-Social Behaviour service is now delivered through Community Safety, although reports of incidents can still be made directly to housing officers.

3.12 The Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 has put the key landlord functions of social housing under a regulatory footing and introduced new consumer standards that the service must comply with.

4. Detailed report

Performance in Key areas:

4.1 Live Well

4.1.1 During 2023/24, Housing Officers have carrying out:

- **927** first visits. These visits are carried out to new tenants to ensure they have settled into their new property and understand how to access services. Referrals to support services are made if it is identified that tenants need support with any aspects of managing their tenancy or wellbeing.
- **1500** welfare checks. A welfare visit is conducted when there is some indication that a tenant maybe struggling to cope in their tenancy. There may be signs of self-neglect or other safeguarding issues, referrals can be made, by the Police, ASC or another service area within housing. The Housing Officer will visit and ensure referrals to appropriate support are made to assist the tenant to stabilise their tenancy and to help improve their health and wellbeing.
- Overall the service dealt with **13,416 calls** for service in 2023/24.

- The tenancy sustainment rate for 2023/24 was **95%** which is a real success and reflects the commitment of tenants themselves and services who provide support to them to help maintain their tenancies.

Next Steps:

4.1.2 A further focus on performance management to ensure key services are delivered in a timely manner. To work closely with the domestic abuse services to increase referrals to safe accommodation. We are working with Public Health to review the first visit paperwork to enable officers to pick up food poverty concerns and make appropriate referrals.

4.2 Specialist Support

4.2.1 We have **14** units of **Sheltered Housing Accommodation** across the City, and support approximately **400** tenancies within these units. Sheltered housing is communal housing for older people with staff based on site part time. Daily checks are carried out on those residents who wish to have them, and pendant alarms are provided to all residents.

4.2.2 Housing Officers will arrange to refer any tenant who is identified as requiring support in sheltered housing or in general needs housing to a range of support services to help them sustain and maintain their tenancy. A referral could be to Adult Social Care, Childrens, or to the in-house team STAR team.

4.2.3 The **STAR service** provides wrap around support; the service is committed to stabilising the tenancy to prevent homelessness by developing a personalised support plan with tenants. The service has 5 community teams supporting Leicester City Council tenants and has developed the service around trauma informed practice. This is a strength-based approach, which values the capacity, skills, knowledge, connections and potential in individuals and communities. The aim is to understand and respond to the impact of trauma on people's lives. It emphasises physical, psychological, and emotional safety for everyone, aiming to empower individuals to re-establish control of their lives. The service understands the importance of building trust with individuals, who have experienced trauma-so they feel safe enough to build effective relationships and move forward with their recovery. The STAR service understands that before we can support people to affect change in their behaviour, the basic needs of a home, food, warmth, income, security must be met. Over the last year the service has had:

- **743** referrals have been received from a range of agencies.
- **550** of the most vulnerable tenants with multiple disadvantage cases were supported during this period.
- **139** cases currently presenting with abuse suicide or self-harm.
- **75** hoarding cases.
- **282** households have been homeless within 2 years.
- **273** tenants referred were requiring mental health support.
- **230** vulnerable adults at risk of self-neglect
- **377** households require help with furniture and household items.
- **£300,957** income maximised on average per quarter.

Case Study 2024 Hoarding

The case involved a tenant with physical health issues, learning difficulties and hoarding behaviours. The tenant was at risk of losing their tenancy, a fire risk, risk of self-neglect and suicidal. Tenant was digitally excluded and had benefit sanctions. The case was referred by the housing officer to STAR, the housing related support worker spent time trying to engage with the tenant, several visits had to be made before the tenant engaged and felt they could trust the STAR worker. Through the intervention of the STAR worker, 24 home visits, 65 phone calls and 37 e-mails to other services. continual encouragement to de-clutter and ongoing support, the hoarding has reduced. Benefits have been re-instated, liaison with ASC has led to care and support being put in place, GP appointments made to access mental health support and applications to charities have helped to fund an orthopaedic bed. Now the property is close to standards the fire service has set, and they will continue to monitor on an annual basis.

4.2.4 **The STAR AMAL team** was set up in 2015 to resettle Syrian refugees through the government foreign aid funded Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. STAR AMAL has had specialist training, knowledge and specific experience of working with newly arrived refugees and has extensive experience of the practicalities of managing refugee families fleeing conflict and persecution. In 2021 the team began to provide support to Locally Employed Staff (LES), evacuated from Afghanistan, who had been supporting the coalition forces in Afghanistan. The STAR AMAL team works with over 15 Afghan families who were in the Leicester bridging hotel, who they have supported into settled accommodation around the country, including 10 in the city, including some council tenancies. The team has also been part of a successful bid to the Anti-Poverty fund to deliver a food poverty related project with Soft Touch to Afghan and Syrian families.

4.2.5 **The Homes for Ukraine Team** sits under the STAR umbrella and provides resettlement support to people fleeing the war from Ukraine who have come to Leicester. The team is made up of Ukrainian speaking support workers, and refugee support workers experienced in resettlement and safeguarding. The scheme is part of the nationally funded Homes for Ukraine project. Currently the team has supported **145** households in the city, some in their own accommodation, but mostly people living with sponsors in the city. The team complete DBS checks for sponsors, property inspections, home visits on arrival and administration of the welcome and thank you payments. Of the Ukrainian guests **95% are employed, 7% are volunteers, 20% in higher education, 15% engaged in ESOL.**

4.2.6 Through a successful funding application to the Department of Health a specialist drug and alcohol team has been set up within housing services called the **Help Beyond Housing** in July 2023. The team are working with some of most complex needs tenants who have a combination of drug, alcohol and mental health issues. Often coming from a background of entrenched rough sleeping, who are not coping in

tenancies. The team is providing intensive long term floating support to assist people back into recovery in partnership with Health and Drug and Alcohol Services in the city. The team are currently working with **67** cases. Due to the hard work of this team no tenants were found rough sleeping on this year's rough sleeping count. In 2023 we identified 5 tenants rough sleeping; these individuals have now all been helped to access appropriate accommodation or return to their tenancy.

4.2.7 We have purchased the Zip building which contains cluster flats, and the Help Beyond Housing Team have set up **9 units of Trainer Accommodation**. This will be for people who have little experience of living independently or have had previous tenancy breakdowns. It will be for people with low level to medium needs and the team will provide support and training to upskill people to be able to live independently before they are allocated an independent tenancy.

4.2.8 Right to Buy has resulted in many council tenants purchasing their properties or their leases if they live in flatted accommodation. A landlord and tenant relationship still exists with leaseholders; therefore, we have a **Leaseholder Liaison Team** who provide support to the **1800** leaseholders, we have in the city. Due to the changes announced in the Budget from 31st of October 2024, we expect to see a decline in Right to Buy sales. Maximum discounts to properties in the East Midlands are reducing from £107,000 to £28,000.

Next Steps:

4.2.9 The Department of Health funding has also been utilised to develop **Supported Housing** in the city for council tenants and a Supported Housing Manager is now in post. The aim is to develop supported housing units for our very complex tenants who are struggling and not coping in general needs housing. Intensive support will be attached to the accommodation, the cases placed in this accommodation will be people that are not sustaining independent living and therefore at constant risk of becoming homeless or making others homeless. These cases result in constant churn on our estates and an increased turnover of properties, which results in increased pressure on services and finances.

4.3 Customer Care

4.3.1 Conflict resolution and de-escalation training has been rolled out to housing staff to support them to deal with tenants who have complex needs in challenging situations.

4.3.2 The government introduced Regulatory Consumer Standards as part of the Social Housing Act 2023. We have a programme in place to ensure we are carrying out actions necessary to comply with the new standards and the legislation.

4.3.3 We have reviewed most of our tenancy management policies in line with the standards and responsibilities as set out in the legislation.

4.3.4 We currently run 3 well attended housing surgeries in St Peters, the Burns Flats and Thurnby Lodge Community Centre, where tenants can come to see their housing officer with any questions or concerns, they have about their tenancy or local estate. These surgeries have been run on an adhoc basis.

4.3.5 The housing service works closely with tenants' groups and representatives in St Matthews, St Peters, New Parks areas. Recently we helped residents set up a new group, called "We are the Burns Flats" on Aikman Avenue by refurbishing the community rooms for their use. This is now a thriving hub where tenants can drop in and can get support on a range of issues. Jo Randall a director of the New Parks Hub was instrumental in setting up the new group.



Next Steps

4.3.6 In a recent engagement exercise, tenants have told us they want to be able to speak to their housing officer in person and to access advice and assistance at a local level. The lead member for housing has been involved in this work and is supporting the creation of local pop-up offices. In March 2025 we will be piloting pop-up housing offices across the city in 6 locations on a weekly basis. We will advertise these, so tenants know where they can come to speak to housing staff. Offices will be held in a range of council buildings in localities where we have a high percentage of council housing.

4.4 Fire Safety and Communal Work

4.4.1 Fire safety inspections are carried out in all communal areas of flatted accommodation to ensure that all the fire safety equipment is in good working order and areas are free of obstacles to enable safe evacuation. In the last year **99%** of our Fire Inspections were carried out in time.

4.4.2 For all tenants who will need assistance to evacuate a building in case of an emergency, Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are drafted and shared with emergency services. We currently have over **300** in place to ensure we keep people safe.

4.4.3 Communal areas are regularly cleaned, and housing officers carry out checks to ensure that good standards are maintained, however it has been identified that

improvement to the standards of cleaning and monitoring arrangements are required.

Next Steps

4.4.4 We have been working with tenants in New Parks to improve cleaning in the Burns Flats area and we are now rolling out the good practice that has been adopted across the city. **£950k** is spent on cleaning housing communal areas every year, a review of cleaning charges will also take place in the coming year.

4.5 Better Estates

4.5.1 We have improved the process on how we deal with reports of pests so that the Repairs Service, the Pest Control Team, and Tenancy Management carry out joint working and ensure that vulnerable tenants are supported. The pest control team are called out to deal with rats, bedbugs, squirrels, and other pests. Housing fund a specialist bedbug team to stop infestations spreading. Last year the team dealt with **136** new cases of bed bugs which were treated successfully, this represents a downward trend in repeat visits.

4.5.2 Work is ongoing with the Grounds Maintenance Service to ensure that a consistent service is provided across the city on housing estates. Proposals to improve the service level agreements are being considered. At present 10 grass cuts are carried out on land, pruning of shrubs takes place once a year. The Neighbourhood improvement Team also carries out focused work on hotspots.

4.5.3 The Housing Division contribute over **£1,01m** towards the estate warden service. Teams work on housing estates across the city clearing rubbish, fly tipping and maintaining the estates to keep them tidy.

4.5.4 The Housing Division contribute **£1,16m** to the grounds maintenance service to look after housing areas across the city, this involves mowing all the grass on housing land, cutting back shrubs and maintaining greenery.

4.5.5 Neighbourhood Improvement Team helps to bring people back into employment, by offering 6 to 12-month work placements. The housing division invests **£235k** to provide this opportunity to 10 Neighbourhood Improvement Officers. The team works across the city carrying out work such as clearing communal garage sites, edging path and walkways, cutting back overgrown trees, hedges and bushes that can be a hazard in public areas. At the request of housing officers, the team will clear and tidy gardens of vulnerable tenants who are unable to do it themselves.

4.5.6 Anti- Social Behaviour on council estates is now investigated by the Community Safety Team. Within the Community Safety Service, a dedicated team, the Housing Anti- Social Behaviour Team (HASBU), has been set up to deal with council housing related ASB, the service can be accessed by phone, QR code and online. Tenants can also report ASB to their Housing Officer and this will be referred through to the new team. The Housing Regulator now requires us to report ASB per 1000 properties. **In 2023/24 we had 11.1 ASB cases per 1000 properties which included 0.6 hate crimes per 1000 properties.** There have been some resourcing issues with HASBU, however, over the last year, there has been some excellent joint work between housing, community safety and the police in hotspots in the city.

Housing officers have been able to provide support and reassurance to tenants and the HASBU team and Police have taken enforcement action.

4.5.7 The Environmental Budget was **£200k** this year, we have focused keeping estates tidy and maintenance work.

4.5.8 Work on the St Mathews and St Peters Public Realm project continues. Following the major improvements made in St Matthews, this year we have focused on improving managed parking in St Peters. We have demolished outdated garages and created over 50 parking spaces. A resident only parking scheme has been introduced, which has brought much needed controlled parking on this busy estate and has been welcomed by local people. One local resident said: "It is absolutely great, Lovely! Residents were struggling to find parking spaces but now it is better, I can park outside my home every day."



Next Steps:

4.5.9 Due to the changing needs on housing estates and the change in inclement weather we are reviewing the grounds maintenance contract to include additional work required on the estates to keep them well maintained and safe.

4.6 Key Performance Indicators: Please note overall performance for the service is captured in the table below:

Performance Indicator	2021-22 Final Outturn	2022-23 Final Outturn	2023-24 Final Outturn
Percentage of fire inspections carried out on time	97.8%	95.1%	99.2%
Welfare Visits	1126	1515	1500
Percentage of new tenancies sustained for over a year	95.6%	96.3%	95.0%
Total number of ASB Cases	1,199	1,416	11.1 per 1000

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

5.1 Financial implications

There are no significant financial implications arising from this report.

Jade Draper – Principal Accountant

5th December 2024

5.2 Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report, which is for information only.

Jeremy Rainbow – Principal Lawyer (Litigation)

5.3 Equalities implications

When making decisions, the Council must comply with the public sector equality duty (PSED) (Equality Act 2010) by paying due regard, when carrying out their functions, to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not.

Protected characteristics under the public sector equality duty are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

There are no direct equality implications arising from this report as it provides an update on the Housing ASB Team and Tenancy Management District performance. Tenants will be from across a range of protected characteristics and equality considerations need to be taken into account as part of the ongoing work on the identified areas listed in the report. Any areas of concern need to be addressed and mitigating actions put in place as appropriate. It is considered best practice under Housing Regulatory Standards to provide tenants and customers with information that helps them understand their contractual obligations, and their rights as tenants, when engaging with people it is important that accessibility is considered.

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

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

6. Background information and other papers:

7. Summary of appendices:

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

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