Lead Member Briefing (LMB) Private Rented Sector Strategy

Lead Member Briefing: 12 June 2025

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin

Lead Director: Sean Atterbury

Useful information

■ Ward(s) affected: All

■ Report authors: Rachel Hall, Head of Regulatory Services

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■ Report version number: v0.1

1. **Purpose**

1.1. This report provides an update on the proposed Private Rented Sector (PRS) Strategy, with specific reference to the impact of the Renters Rights Bill and the workstreams that need to be added as a consequence.

1.2. The report is a precursor to a series of reports to HNB, CMB and Housing Scrutiny in July and August 2025. This is a collaborative approach between Housing and Neighbourhood & Environmental Services, noting the far-reaching implications of this area of work.

2. **Background**

2.1. The PRS strategy sets out several key priorities, with delivery via a series of workstreams. The priorities are:
   i)   Improving housing standards across the sector
   ii)   Improving support for private sector landlords and tenants
   iii) Improving enforcement and protection of tenants' and residents' rights
   iv)   Improving access to market for housing solutions
   v)   Improved intelligence and monitoring, and joined up services

2.2. The strategy is inherently linked to forthcoming legislative changes including the Renters' Rights Bill and the Supported Housing Regulations, both of which are progressing via central government.

2.3. The Deputy City Mayor received a detailed briefing on the Renters' Rights Bill on 14 April 2025. Officers were asked to provide a separate update identifying any obvious gaps in the PRS Strategy in light of the Bill.

2.4. It was noted that the Renters' Rights Bill is the most significant reform the PRS has seen since the Housing Act 1988. It has wide-ranging implications for landlords, tenants, and letting agents alike.

2.5. The government aimed to have the new tenancy system in place by summer 2025, although this appears to have been an ambitious target. The government says it "will work closely with all parts of the sector to ensure a smooth transition to the new system and will provide sufficient notice ahead of implementation". This is expected to be a period of 6 months.

3. PRS Strategy project brief and workstreams

3.1. The overarching project brief for the PRS Strategy has been reviewed and is attached at **Appendix A**. This remains relevant and requires formal sign off to commence to project.

3.2. Individual workstreams for the new Strategy are made up of a combination of items carried over from the previous strategy and new tasks. Based on the five priorities, the workstreams are:

WS No.	Workstream Title	Lead Officer
1	**Improving housing standards across the sector**	
1.1	HMO Licensing task force	Jennifer Bradbury
1.2	Operation EPC	Jennifer Bradbury
1.3	Stock condition (BRE report or equivalent)	Jennifer Bradbury
1.4	Increase the take-up of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) within the sector	Simon Nicholls
1.5	Consider the viability and benefits of extending Repayable Home Repair Loan into the private rented sector	Simon Nicholls
1.6	Sustainability	
2	**Improving support for private sector landlords and tenants**	
2.1	Cost of living – Household Support Fund	Shuaib Esmail
2.2	Centralised online guide to grants / incentives for landlords & other online resources	Jennifer Bradbury
3	**Improving enforcement and protection of tenants' and residents' rights**	
3.1	Rogue Landlord Taskforce	Jennifer Bradbury
3.2	Specialist Housing Advice and Homelessness Prevention & Support team	Mussa Hajat
3.3	Online Tenant Resources / Improved mechanisms for members of the public to report identified PRS matters	Jennifer Bradbury
4	**Improving access to market for housing solutions**	
4.1	Incentive Schemes	Shuaib Esmail
5	**Improved intelligence and monitoring, and joined up services**	
5.1	Improvements around intelligence collection, sharing	Charlotte McGraw / Rachel Hall
6	**Cross-cutting workstreams**	
6.1	Renters' Rights Bill	Project Board
6.2	Supported Housing Regulations	Project Board
6.3	Additional Licensing	Rachel Hall / Jennifer Bradbury
6.4	Selective Licensing	Rachel Hall / Jennifer Bradbury
6.5	Sector monitoring	All

3.3. A performance dashboard will be created to track the progress of each workstream.

3.4.   It should be noted that immigration issues are being managed via multiple workstreams in the strategy, as well as a dedicated strategic board.

4.   Renters' Rights Bill

4.1.   Whilst there is a single workstream in the PRS Strategy for the RRB, there will be a number of workstreams that sit below this to ensure the legislation is properly implemented in Leicester. A dedicated project board is being set up with identified responsibilities for each work area in order to maintain focus and ensure the council is fully able to deliver on the new requirements.

4.2.   The legislation is still passing through Parliament and so there remains uncertainty about the final content of the Act and supporting regulations. However, it is clear that there will be significant additional workloads within both Housing and Regulatory Services. Particularly significant themes include:

   a)   Enforcement – the workload will increase significantly as the draft legislation introduces a raft of new requirements for the PRS sector, which the council will be responsible for enforcing. The council will also be required to monitor registrations and compliance within the new PRS database and ensuring landlords are compliant. Landlords must register themselves and their properties and pay the associated fee, and it is likely that many will be reluctant to do so. It is anticipated that a new team will be required in Regulatory Services to carry out this work, operating in a similar manner to the Selective Licensing team. New burdens funding is expected, but there is currently no detail on how this will be calculated or what will be covered.

   b)   HomeCome – the new legislation will have significant implications for HomeCome, including the application of the decent homes standards, the need for a stock condition survey, necessary changes to tenancy agreements, and the process for terminating tenancies as and when the lease for the property comes to an end.

   c)   Overall implications for the sector – it is recognised that there are risks attached to this change in legislation, for example there has already been a notable increase in the number of section 21 ("no fault") evictions in anticipation of their abolition and alongside changes to how rent increases can be implemented. There is potential for landlords to leave the sector altogether, which would reduce the overall availability of privately rented properties and increase demand and competition. This is a watching brief.

4.3.   A Project Manager, located within the Homeless Continuous Improvement Team, has been allocated to co-ordinate the changes required across the Authority to make sure that we are prepared and the Project will feed into the Housing Board for oversight. There will be key themes of work that need to be delivered across the Authority and the purpose of the Project Manager is to oversee, co-ordinate and manage these changes and ensure that services are prepared and delivering against their actions and monitoring progress and impact.

5.   Additional Licensing

5.1.   The council has expressed a desire to implement additional licensing. It was decided to proceed with selective licensing first and to implement additional licensing at a later date. Plans were in place to consult on a city-wide additional licensing scheme during summer 2025. However, given the likely implementation of the Renters' Rights Bill and other challenges for landlords, the introduction of another licensing scheme at this stage is likely to result in a significant burden on landlords in a short space of time.

5.2. In light of the imminent changes and uncertainty for landlords it is proposed to defer consultation on an additional licensing scheme until such time as the RRB is implemented and the consequences are known. This may align with consultation on selective licensing, noting that the current scheme is due to expire in October 2027.

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

6.1 Financial Implications
The cost of implementing the Private Rented Sector Strategy set out in this report will be managed within existing budgets across multiple teams. Once the Renter's Rights Bill becomes law, there will be greater clarity over the extent to which additional staffing resources may be required to undertake increased enforcement activity, along with the extent to which this will be covered by new burdens funding.

The introduction of an Additional Licensing scheme should be cost-neutral for the Council, with any costs being recovered through the fees charged to Landlords.

Finance should continue to be consulted, with revised comments being sought as this report progresses through to Scrutiny committees and Executive briefings. |
| Signed: Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance |
| Dated: 9th June 2025 |

6.2 Legal Implications
To follow.
Signed
Dated

6.3 Equalities Implications
Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have statutory duties, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, decision makers must 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.

Since the passing of the Equality Act 2010 landlords and letting agents in the UK have been legally prohibited from discriminating against potential tenants based on the protected characteristics under the Act, this includes refusing to rent or treating someone unfairly. Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The report provides an update on the proposed Private Rented Sector (PRS) Strategy, along with the impact of the Renters Rights Bill and associated workstreams and the potential implications for the council. The PRS strategy has five identified priorities with workstreams for each priority which take into consideration upcoming legislative changes. The Renters Right Bill is set to make significant changes in the private rental sector and aims to give private rented tenants greater protections. However, these changes also place additional responsibilities on the council as cited |

in section 4.2 of the report and we need to ensure that equality considerations are included and embedded in our processes as the strategy is implemented. It is recommended that Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are carried out as appropriate.
Signed: Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer, Ext 37 4175
Dated: 5 Jun 2025

6.4 Climate Change Implications
The priorities of the Private Rented Sector Strategy set out in the report align with the council's strategic aims for addressing the climate emergency by addressing the need to raise housing standards in the PRS and improvement enforcement of tenants' and residents' rights. Similarly, and subject to its final provisions, the Renters' Rights Bill is likely to have a positive impact on the energy efficiency of PRS homes in city through   - The extension of the Decent Homes Standard, which includes minimum requirements for insulation   - Mandatory disclosure of compliance information on the PRS database, coupled with increased investigatory and enforcement powers and duties for local authorities, which may lead to more identification of sub-standard properties in relation to energy efficiency – and subsequently more enforcement action.
Signed: Duncan Bell, Change Manager (Climate Emergency). Ext. 37 2249.
Dated: 3 June 2025

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

    N/A

7. **Background information and other papers**:
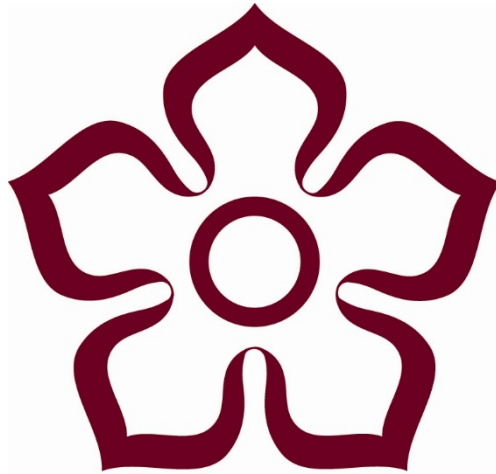
    N/A

8. **Summary of appendices**:

9. **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)?

    N/A

10. **Is this a "key decision"? If so, why?**

    No

APPENDIX A – PROJECT BRIEF

Private Rental   Sector
Programme   Brief
Document Version   0.1 (*draft*)
by Chris Hamilton,   Snr. Project Manager.
Regulatory Services, Neighbourhood & Environmental Services

Table of Contents

1.   Sponsor

The programme is sponsored operationally by the Director of Neighbourhood & Environmental Services Sean Atterbury and the Director of Housing Chris Burgin, and politically by Councillor Elly Cutkelvin.

2.   Background

Private Sector Housing (PSH) operational service delivery activity happens within different divisions of City Development and Neighbourhoods (CDN). Whist each division is operationally functioning, there is a lack of strategic coordination and corporate oversight on this important area for the city.

There is a need for the work that has been undertaken as a result of the Manifesto commitment to deliver licensing for the city and the newly developed Private Rented Sector (PRS) Strategy for the City to report into and be co-ordinated from one place, where decisions can be made about priorities and resources can be allocated accordingly. Also, to enable the Strategic Director and Lead Member to have oversight of activity.

A board has been set-up previously, however, there is now a need to manage the workstreams under a programme of works to aid with the overall governance of the individual projects that make up the overall strategy.

3.   Outline vision statement

The City Council's ambition is to ensure the private rented sector in Leicester is fit for purpose and to address where this is not the case by raising housing standards.

Strategic Fit & Business Justification

The overall objective of the strategy is to have a holistic approach that ensures tenants and landlords are appropriately supported, as well as retaining and improving the council's ability to protect tenants' safety and rights, and tackle rogue/poor landlords.

The Council's role, and therefore justification, is to maintain a balanced, fair, and proportionate approach across the city that will ultimately lead to the raising of housing standards within Leicester.

4.   Description of change

To ensure that the PRS strategy is delivered, a more robust governance process must be established to hold the Council, and its services, to account on its outcomes and deliverables. Thus, the reinstatement of a board and a programme of works provides a focus for the management and reporting of the individual projects, or workstreams, that aim to deliver on the overall strategy.

Business requirements

The programme must support and enable the following:

- To provide strategic coordination and oversight of the driver to improve PRS Housing standards in the city.
- To ensure that the City Mayor and Executive have corporate oversight of all PRS activity carried out by the authority, including but not limited to the PRS Strategy and its component parts.

- To record progress on the delivery of the PRS Strategy and its projects and to ensure that this strategy is refreshed periodically.
- To ensure external funding opportunities are explored and exploited.
- To ensure that development projects happen in a coordinated way.
- To ensure that all project areas are effectively resourced with gaps in resources identified, prioritised, and acted upon.
- To report on the progress of all PRS housing related key performance indicators.

Stakeholders

Internal

- City Mayor
- Lead Members
- City Development & Neighborhoods
- Housing Division
- Neighborhood & Environmental Services
- Regulatory Services

External

- Residents of City of Leicester
- Community Groups
- Landlord organisations such as EMPO and ARLA?

Dependencies and constraints

Impact of change

Regarding the strategy, the requirements for the PRS are:
- Improve support for landlords across the city.
- Improve local support for tenants.
- Improve enforcement and protection of tenants' and resident's rights.
- Improve access to market.
- Improved intelligence and monitoring and joined up services.

Interfaces

The programme will utilise standard reporting tools to manage and monitor the delivery of the workstreams to ensure they continue to meet the objectives set by the board. The programme will use Microsoft Teams to hold project documentation.

1. KPI's – Each project will have Key Performance Indicators to determine if the project is on track to deliver the benefits identified within the project plan.
2. Dashboard – A performance dashboard will provide a high-level view on the status of the programme/projects relating to the PRS Strategy.
3. Flash Reports/Updates – Regular written reports will be provided to the programme manager and the programme board. An executive summary of these reports will be used for lead members and/or City Mayor 1-to-1 briefings.
4. Project Roadmap/Timeline – A high level overview of programme delivery and a managed timeline of each of the projects.

TBC

5. Programme organisation
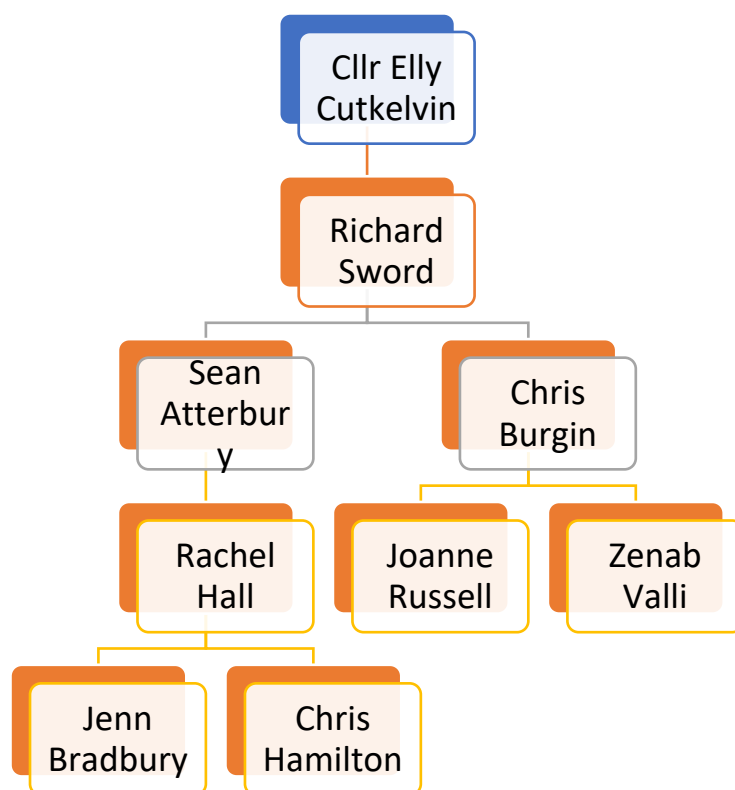
Initial Programme Roles

No	Role	Name
1	Executive Lead	Cllr. - Elly Cutkelvin
2	Strategic Lead	Strat. Dir. - Richard Sword
3	Project Sponsor	Dir. - Chris Burgin
4	Project Sponsor	Dir. - Sean Atterbury
5	Project Lead	HoS Housing - Jo Russell / Zenab Valli
6	Project Lead	HoS Reg Services – Rachel Hall
7	Programme Manager	Reg Services – Chris Hamilton
8	Project Manager	Service Manager – Jenn Bradbury

Organisation structure and reporting lines

Empowerment of teams

Empowerment strategy

The programme board will take responsibility for the PRS strategy and the overall programme of work, making decision on new workstreams, prioritisation and overall decision making. The programme board will meet each quarter, however if needed a meeting can be scheduled at any time.
The role of the programme manager is to ensure that the projects remain on track for delivery, on behalf of the programme board.

The role of the individual project managers is to ensure the delivery of the workstreams and report to the programme manager.

It is proposed that each quarter, during the board meeting, a spotlight report of one (or more) of the project workstreams will be presented to the board.

Escalation and resolution process

Each workstream/project will be assigned a project manager/named responsible officer from the lead service area. The workstream project managers will report each month to the programme manager, through scheduled project meetings, highlighting any issues, risks, highlights, outcomes etc. In agreement with the Project Manager, the programme manager will escalate any issues to the programme board in accordance with the following:

Priority	Description	Escalation
P1	High priority. RED • New risk/issue is highlighted as red on the risk register. • Existing risk/issue changes to red on the risk register. • Significant changes in resources – Board/Programme Level. • Significant changes in project outcomes/deliverables against KPI's. • Significant changes in agreed deliverables.	Immediate board update. If required, call board meeting. Communicate outcome.
P2	Medium priority. AMBER • New risk/issue added to the risk register. • Changes in resources – project level. • Changes in project performance against KPI's (**deliverables**) • Legislative changes updates. • Funding opportunities identified.	Update monthly dashboard. Highlight for quarterly board meeting. Communicate response.
P3	Low priority. GREEN • Changes to existing risks on the risk register (other than above). • Changes in project performance against KPI's (**milestones**) • No project update within timeframe from project manager.	Update monthly dashboard. Include in quarterly board meeting update. Communicate response.

Appendix A – Version Control.

Document Version	Date	Change Summary	Signed off
0.1 (draft)	26/07/24	Initial Brief – Sent to Rachel Hall.	
0.2 (draft)	08/08/24	Updated by RH	
0.3 (draft)	23/05/25	Updated by RH	